

RIVEREAST

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Lake Pocotopaug, shown here in a 2013 file photo, has once again seen its beaches closed, due to an algae bloom. The bloom is an annual occurrence for the East Hampton lake – although this year it happened sooner than last year.

Belltown Beaches Closed Due to Algae Bloom

by John Tyczkowski

During Tuesday's East Hamptons Town Council meeting, the latest Lake Pocotopaug blue-green algae bloom was the subject of a large discussion between councilors, the Chatham Health District and other lake stakeholders.

The beaches at Sears Park and Schoolhouse Bay have been closed since Thursday, Aug. 6, when Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said elevated blue-green algae counts were found in lake water test results received that day.

"The results pushed us into a Category 3 bloom situation," he said. "Within 45 minutes we had the beaches closed and were working on posting signs at both Sears Park and Schoolhouse Bay."

As part of its bloom contingency plan, the town deployed four lifeguards on the scene – two at each beach – to advise potential lakegoers of the situation until the signs were posted.

Maniscalco also authorized a reverse 911 phone call to notify residents of the bloom, and talked with the Friends of the Lake in order to notify private beach associations.

However, the town does not own the entire lake, only the two beaches, so those with private beach access are free to use the lake at their own risk.

Finally, the town set up a blinking red emergency banner on the town website, easthamptonct.org. Clicking on the banner leads

to a number of fact sheets for the public on blue-green algae, algae bloom water safety, lake testing reports and related health information from the Chatham Health District.

"We're well on our way to assuring the public's safety," Maniscalco said. "Since that time [the results came in] I think we've done a decent job of making sure no one enters the water at Sears Park, and the community has done a very nice job at spreading the news as well."

Town Council Chair Barbara Moore praised the town response to the bloom.

"I think the process has worked really well, and you reacted very quickly," she said to Maniscalco.

On the state Department of Health scale, a Category 3 algae bloom necessitates a swimming ban, while a Category 2 bloom allows swimming and lake use, but requires the posting of signs describing possible health risks.

According to a press release from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, toxins found in blue-green algae can cause mild to severe health problems such as irritation and rashes from skin contact, as well as liver and kidney failure if large amounts are ingested through the water.

However, a large blue-green algae bloom doesn't necessarily mean toxins are present. On a document from the Environmental Protection

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Beetles Wreaking Havoc on Area Trees

by Geeta Schrayter

Ever since man has had the ability to sail from continent to continent, the shipment of goods from one place to another has taken place. But along with the intentional movement of items, the unintentional spread of invasive plants, insects and disease has also occurred.

"One of the things humans have gotten very good at is moving things around the world," Chris Donnelly, State Urban Forester with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection shared Wednesday. "Every day, thousands of large cargo ships move from continent to continent and inevitably they take a little piece of wherever they're from."

And one such stowaway was the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Native to the area of China, North Korea, Russia and Mongolia, the Emerald Ash Borer is a small, bright metallic green beetle that was first detected in the United States in 2002.

Donnelly was present at the Douglas Library in Hebron Wednesday evening to talk about the beetle, sharing information about its life cycle, detection, treatment, and ultimately, what the insect means for their tree of choice – ash trees.

In its native area, the EAB isn't a problem. As one species evolves, Donnelly explained other species in the same area tend to as well. Hence, where it's from, there are enough para-

sites to keep the EAB population in check.

"The problem is when a plant or animal is moved somewhere else," Donnelly shared. "And suddenly there are no checks on population growth."

Although the EAB was first detected in 2002, Donnelly said it's likely they had been there 2-3 years prior to that and came over on wood shipping materials. Since that initial detection, the insect has spread as far west as Colorado, as far south as Louisiana and up into three New England states – Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Regarding Connecticut, the EAB was first detected in Prospect in 2012 and has now been found in 67 towns and seven counties in the state, including Hebron.

"It's a lot," said Donnelly. He added the concern is not necessarily with the insect itself, but the destruction of the country's ash trees as a result of their arrival; female beetles lay eggs in the cracks of ash bark, and the larvae then move through to the nutrient-rich cambium layer of the tree, creating S-shaped tunnels that get larger as the larvae grows and can kill the tree in three to five years. Once the larvae molts into an adult, they then chew a D-shaped hole through the bark and exit the tree.

The ash tree, Donnelly noted, is important

to wildlife. It provides forage for ducks, finches, squirrels and more. In addition, the foliage and seeds are used by butterfly and moth caterpillars as well as other insects.

Ash wood is also used for baseball bats such as the Louisville Slugger, bows, tool handles and other products that require durability, strength and resilience – and the trees are commonly used in landscaping.

But this invasive insect is taking its toll on the trees; tens of millions of ash trees have been killed in southeastern Michigan alone.

The EAB is a winged insect that "does a good job of spreading itself." But in addition to its own efforts, the rapidity of the insect's spread is also attributed to the lumber and nursery trade, "but the most likely is firewood," Donnelly stated.

Ash trees, he explained, make excellent firewood because they dry rapidly and generate good heat. But once the trees are cut they're usually split, stacked and left to season for a year or two.

"Any insects inside then have the opportunity to spread out and into the surrounding woods."

In addition, the transport of firewood from one place to another moves any insects in the wood from place to place – this is why there

are regulations prohibiting the transport of firewood to campgrounds, parks or other areas apart from where it originated.

There is no expectation that the EAB will be eliminated from the country. In the article *Guidelines for Preserving Trees in The Presence of the Emerald Ash Borer* by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station it's written, "Although EAB is still a federal and state regulated pest, the beetle is clearly established in the United States, eradication is impractical, and efforts are now directed towards a slow-the-spread program by limiting the movement of infested ash and related wood materials like firewood and by protecting trees with insecticides."

Donnelly said spreading information about the EAB is important in curbing the beetles' spread, and different ways to track the EAB were shared Wednesday. These include scraping away some of the bark to look for the tell-tale S-shaped trails; and "wasp watching," which is when the wasp *Cerceris fumipennis*, which goes after jewel (metallic) beetles, is monitored. The wasp is intersected when it catches some prey, and the prey is taken away and examined to determine if it's an EAB. This, it was explained Wednesday, was how the first

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Beaches Closed cont. from Front Page

Agency on seasonal algae blooms it's explained only certain types of blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, secrete toxins – and only under certain conditions.

Maniscalco said the town has only sampled water for algae counts, not algae type, which would require a much longer testing process. But the town implemented its plan to preempt any possible dangers if the blue-green algae started producing any toxins.

This year's bloom arrived approximately one month earlier than last year, when a Category 3 bloom shut down public lake access over Labor Day weekend.

George Knoecklein of Northeast Aquatic Research, the environmental consulting firm the town partners with, was present Tuesday and said due to the nature of the blue-green algae as free-floating organisms with no means of locomotion, different parts of the lake may have different bloom densities at different times of the day due to water turbulence and wind.

"The system is dynamic and they move continually throughout the water column," he said. "For example, good steady wind from north to south would tend to push the blue-green algae south. So if you're standing at the north end of the lake, it might not look so bad."

Still, he said, the closure was warranted due to the average density of blue-green algae in the lake, along with the possible health risks from large blooms.

Knoecklein also took the opportunity Tues-

day to explain to councilors the importance of a hydrologic study describing the volume of water that flows into the lake, and from which sources.

"We want to find out: why does the lake keep turning green, is it getting worse over time and is there a tendency for it to continue getting worse, if so?" he said.

Specifically, Knoecklein said the water volumes need to be known in order to create a comprehensive watershed management plan to find where excess nutrients, like phosphorous, are entering the lake and then define a plan to filter out those nutrients.

"Based upon the numbers, you can plan and build some sort of remediation device such as a detention pond or rain gardens, whatever it is," he said. "You can't do anything until you know water volume and flow characteristics."

Also, a survey of the lake will determine the primary cause of the blooms: whether it's internal loading, the process by which phosphorous trapped in the lake bed is brought up to the surface, which feeds blooms; or surface runoff from the watershed.

Knoecklein added Tuesday collecting data from last year has already made a difference.

"For example, we're in a position to say whether the bloom started earlier or later, and whether the water at the time was warmer or cooler," he said. The date, he furthered, can be used to help "figure out why the lake is different this year than last year."

Along with the above measure in response



Beaches at the lake have been closed since Aug. 6 – when elevated blue-green algae counts were found on lake water test results received that day. "The results pushed us into a Category 3 bloom situation," according to the East Hampton town manager.

to the bloom, Maniscalco said he had met with state Rep. Melissa Ziobron and Councilor Patience Anderson at the State Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven this week in order to learn more about what the state could do to help with the lake.

In a phone call, Ziobron said she had managed to help appropriate state money that could be used to combat the blooms, but she said first

a plan must be developed to determine what kind of fix the lake needs.

Ziobron has a track record of aiding environmental causes in her district, including helping clean up and revitalize Sunrise State Park in Moodus, the Salmon River State Forest and local lakes and streams. She is also a member of the General Assembly's Environment Committee.

Wreaking Havoc cont. from Front Page

EAB was found in Connecticut – and in Hebron.

Another method for finding EAB is the use of purple sticky traps which are hung in trees and emit an aroma that mimics the scent of a stressed ash tree, which draws in insects.

Along with refraining from the transportation of firewood, another way to help slow the spread is for individuals to examine their own ash trees to determine if the EAB is present. Along with the S-shaped tunnels and the D-shaped exit holes, other symptoms of the presence of EAB are sprouts growing at the tree base, die-back at the top third of the tree, unusual activity by woodpeckers, and vertical splits in the bark.

Trees with two or more symptoms should be reported to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station by sending digital photos to CAES.StateEntomologist@ct.gov.

But even if people take positive steps towards slowing the spread of the EAB, the fact remains that the insect is now firmly planted in the United States. And so, what does that mean for the future of America's ash trees?

Donnelly explained.

"The good news about ash [trees] is there are a lot of seeds out there and the tree does grow from stumps," he shared. And so, "we will

get a killing wave [due to EAB]. Then they'll grow back."

And during that time, he continued, a predator to the EAB would hopefully have a chance to take hold – something that's already in the works.

To combat EAB, another foreign insect is being introduced in the country. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is – very carefully, Donnelly said – working with the Forest Service and Agricultural Research Service to raise and harvest stingless wasps – a natural enemy of the EAB and another insect native to China – for monitored releases in select EAB infested areas.

These wasps, which target EAB eggs and larvae and use them as hosts to support their own species, have already been released in 17 states including Connecticut.

"We do need to do more to get the word out," Donnelly concluded Wednesday. "The trees do need us to be aware of what's going on with them and then to step in when needed. We shouldn't take the forests for granted."

For more information on the EAB, go to emeraldashborer.info, ct.gov/deeb/eab, or ct.gov/caes.

Marlborough Teen Injured in Bonfire Explosion Caused by Trash

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

A Marlborough teen was seriously injured Sunday night after an explosion at a bonfire he was attending.

State Police Trooper Kelly Grant reported that Robert Hill, 18, of 7 Finley Hill Rd., suffered serious abdominal and other injuries as a result of the explosion. Hill was airlifted by LifeStar to Hartford Hospital for his injuries.

As of Thursday morning, Hill was reported still at Hartford Hospital.

The explosion happened around 9:45 p.m. Sunday behind 342 Jones Hollow Rd. Grant said police secured the area and searched for other victims; however, none were found.

According to town records, the property is owned by Dorothy Sousa.

Members of the Marlborough Fire Depart-

ment and Fire Marshal Joe Asklar reported to the scene to extinguish a small fire that resulted from the explosion.

Police said while investigating the explosion, police found that Hill, along with several other teens, had been having a bonfire in the back of the home when a plastic bag of trash was thrown in the fire. Police said an object in the bag exploded, resulting in fragments of the debris striking Hill and injuring him.

State Police Detectives from the Eastern District Major Crime and the Fire and Explosion Investigation Unit responded to assist with the investigation, Grant said. It is an active investigation and police are trying to determine the item that exploded.

Motor Vehicle Stop Leads to Pursuit, Narcotics Arrest in East Hampton

by John Tyczkowski

A Portland driver who went through a stop sign while talking on a cell phone acquired nearly a dozen additional charges, after leading police on a high-speed pursuit.

Stephen Pierson, 50, of 19 Karen Drive, first caught the eye of Officer Hardie Burgin when, around 5 p.m. July 25, Pierson rolled through a stop sign at Lake Drive and Mott Hill Road while on his cell phone, East Hampton Police Department Sergeant Paul Battista said.

"Officer Burgin smelled marijuana when he pulled over the guy in the car, and then asked him to get out of the car, which is standard," he said. "The guy then put his car into drive and took off, almost striking Officer Burgin."

"He had also almost hit Officer Burgin initially when he rolled through the stop sign as well," Battista said.

Pierson led police on a "very short high-speed pursuit," Battista said, which Burgin broke off due to the preponderance of children and pedestrians in the area around the two streets.

"There were kids all around that road," Battista said. "In fact, two kids pointed in [Pierson's] direction, and they told Burgin 'that SUV almost hit us.'"

During that pursuit, Pierson also passed a car in a no-passing zone while attempting to evade police.

Police were able to obtain Pierson's home address in Portland, where his mother was also

living.

"They were able to have his mother convince him to return home," Battista said. "And then based upon what had transpired, they initiated the charges against him."

Upon Pierson's arrival, officers searched his car and found the marijuana Burgin had smelled, as well as butane honey oil, pills and drug paraphernalia.

Pierson was charged with operating a motor vehicle while using a cell phone, failure to stop at a stop sign, reckless driving, risk of injury to a child, engaging police in pursuit, passing in a no-passing zone, failure to drive right, failure to carry license, possession of narcotics, possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and interfering/resisting arrest.

Risk of injury to a child and possessions of narcotics are Class C and Class U felonies, respectively.

A Class C felony carries a prison sentence of one to 10 years, and this specific Class U felony carries a maximum prison sentence of seven years on first offense.

Resisting/interfering with an officer is a Class A misdemeanor with a penalty of a prison sentence of up to one year, and possession of drug paraphernalia is a Class C misdemeanor with a penalty of up to three months in prison.

Pierson was released after posting a \$250,000 surety bond, and is scheduled to appear in court next on Sept. 1 to enter a plea.

Portland School Lunch Prices On the Rise

by John Tyczkowski

Last Tuesday, the Portland Board of Education reviewed an increase in school lunch prices necessary to stay in compliance with federal law they had voted on in January.

In January, the school board voted unanimously to raise school meal prices by 10 cents, which would result in \$2.50 prices at Valley View and Gildersleeve, and \$2.75 prices at Brownstone Intermediate, the middle school and high school.

John White, a general manager with Sodexo, the company that handles school meals in Portland, said the increase in prices is due to the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act passed in 2011.

Under the act, school districts receive federal reimbursement for their free and reduced-price lunches served from the Department of Agriculture. Full-price lunch fees must be adjusted accordingly each year, to make sure federal funds are not subsidizing ineligible full-price meals.

"In the past, some districts used to keep their regular prices unrealistically low, and use free and reduced lunch reimbursements to fund their budget," White said. "You can't do that anymore."

Also, during the spring the district underwent a state and federal audit of its food service program for cleanliness, food choices and wellness

policies, which it passed on all counts.

Another new point, White said, is this school year marks the first full year of the district's new point-of-sale program, which involves students being able to swipe reloadable cards to pay for their meals.

While the bar-coded, scannable cards had been introduced in February, the second implementation phase – which would allow parents to load students' cards online via a credit card and check their balances online – will begin with the start of school later this month. Each credit card transaction will carry a \$2 fee.

Parents will still be able to load the cards using cash or check.

* * *

Also at the meeting, Superintendent of Schools Philip B. O'Reilly shared that 16 new children have registered for Portland Public Schools under the schools' Open Choice program. This is in addition to the 39 children already attending the schools through the Open Choice program.

In the spring, the school board had approved allowing 4 percent of the students enrolled at Portland Public Schools be Open Choice students, "and we are very close to that number with these students," O'Reilly said.

The largest proportion of those students, six,

are entering kindergarten, O'Reilly said.

According to the state Department of Education, the Open Choice program allows students from urban areas to attend public schools in suburban areas, and allows suburban and rural students the chance to attend public schools in urban areas.

The program is for students in kindergarten through grade 12, and is in place for Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and their surrounding school districts.

In addition to the 16 new children registered, there are an additional three students "in the queue," O'Reilly said – meaning the kids have been accepted, but haven't registered yet.

"How Open Choice works is, there's a lottery process where parents put in for certain districts," he said. "Then when you're accepted, you have to register. And until you register, they're not ours."

If those three students register by the start of the school year, that would lead to a total of 19 new students.

The district receives a per-pupil grant from the state per registered Open Choice student, O'Reilly said.

According to the state Department of Education, such grants can be put toward capital expenditures for "improving the educational

experiences for students" at Open Choice participant districts.

Currently, as the number of Open Choice students totals less than 4 percent of the district's total enrollment, that grant equals \$6,000 per student, plus an extra \$4,500 per kindergarten student.

Once the percentage exceeds 4 percent of total enrollment, the grant is increased to \$8,000 per student. The district's open choice percentage is nearing 4 percent, O'Reilly said, but could change depending on the district's total final enrollment for this year.

Also, starting this year, the district will receive a literacy and math facilitator one day a week for the kindergarten class from the Capitol Region Educational Council.

"That is a significant gain for us," O'Reilly said. "We've demonstrated that Portland is interested in expanding the program and has a long-term commitment to it."

"For example, already every new principal has contacted every new registrant. We've shown that we're open, and welcome," he said.

* * *

The next Board of Education meeting will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 25, at 7 p.m. in the Portland High School media center.

Tierney Receives Praise, Three Percent Raise in Hebron

by Geeta Schrayter

This week, the Board of Selectmen concluded its mid-year review of Town Manager Andrew Tierney's performance, praising him for his work and giving him a 3 percent raise.

The raise brings his salary to \$118,455.

In a memo submitted to Tierney by the selectmen Tuesday, they wrote they felt Tierney overall "performed better than average with summary total of 3.3 out of [five]" with five being the highest.

As part of the review, 28 areas were examined, and the selectmen wrote there were "many positive individual categories" within those areas, including his attendance and participation in board meetings, town events and with the public; delegating responsibilities to the staff to further their personal development; being receptive to advice; his development and administration of a responsible system of business management; and his continuous study and investigation into all aspects of town operation in an attempt to improve said operation.

This week, Board of Selectmen Chairman Jeff Watt said, "I think we're all feeling that here's a town manager that puts in 60, 70 hours

a week trying to do the best he can for the Town of Hebron."

He added Tierney regularly meets with people in the local towns to get feedback, and mentioned his work to regionalize services in town, increase efficiency and "really trying to step up from a service standpoint" as positives.

As far as areas to focus on moving forward, the selectmen expressed a desire for Tierney to have weekly conversations with each board member to see if there were any topics they'd heard about in the community that they'd like to discuss. In addition, they wanted Tierney to summarize for the selectmen key community activities for the week.

The selectmen also asked Tierney to initiate the process of updating the personnel manual in town ("There have been a lot of changes at the state and local level so we're just starting the process," Watt said this week), and to periodically attend RHAM Board of Education meetings and provide updates during public comment.

Watt elaborated on the latter.

"There are some other areas we saw coming

down the road that we wanted Andy to pay some attention to, to make sure we're being proactive," he stated. "I think one of those areas is communication with RHAM. We already do a lot of work as far as helping them out – servicing their fields, talking about a resource officer – and since their budget is one of the biggest things that'll be impacting all three towns, we're asking him to maybe go to more meetings, speak at forums, work with the three towns to give more of a focal point and attention to RHAM to help them out."

Speaking on the review this week, Tierney said, "I think it went well. After talking to the selectmen they seem to be very happy with my performance in how I handle the Town of Hebron."

The Marlborough resident added, "I love Hebron and I appreciate the opportunity to be a town manager here."

But the credit for a positive review, he said, wasn't only due to him: "I'm blessed with having really good staff. That always helps in achieving really good reviews with the selectmen; we work as a team."

Watt furthered Tierney, who became town manager in October 2012 following his second stint as Hebron's interim town manager, is "not a new town manager anymore. He's an experienced town manager, and I think what's showing up at the state level is he's seen as kind of a leader now. He's showing not only what the people of Hebron are doing but what his team is doing, and I think he's a great example for the other towns as well as the state of Connecticut. We're all very proud of him and all he's done."

Board of Selectmen Vice Chairman Brian O'Connell shared his thoughts as well, saying Wednesday, "I believe Andy is doing a very good job for the town of Hebron. His personal skills and personality are a very good fit."

The selectmen added in their memo that they appreciate Tierney's "performance, energy and management of town and personnel and have complete confidence" in his leadership.

"Thank you for all your efforts," they concluded. "We look forward to you and your team continuing to make a positive impact on Hebron."

Andover School Board Appoints Assistant Principal

by Geeta Schrayter

Just in time for the start of the new school year, the Board of Education last week appointed a new assistant principal and director of special education.

Barbara Wilson will begin working in the district Aug. 24 for an annual salary of \$97,000. She was appointed Aug. 6 and replaces Dawn Davis, who left to become the director of special education for the RHAM schools district.

Wilson, meanwhile, is joining Andover after spending the last 18 years in Hebron, where she's worked as a speech language pathologist, a head teacher and, most recently, a special education facilitator/supervisor.

Wilson graduated from Central Connecticut State University with a bachelor's degree in secondary education. She went on to graduate from the University of Connecticut, where she received her master's in communication sciences, and then later, her administrator's certificate from Sacred Heart University.

In the cover letter she sent when she applied for the job, Wilson shared, "I have been wait-

ing for the right administrative position that would match my desire for continued work in a Connecticut school district and a district's desire for a competent and motivating school leader who wants to make a long-term commitment to a district."

She added "I feel my skill set would be a perfect match for Andover Elementary School. My expertise in the area of special education involves an in depth knowledge of special education laws (including laws and regulations pertaining to the [Planning and Placement Team] process and [Individualized Education Programs]), related services, inclusion, transportation, and curriculum."

Wilson furthered in her current role she's in charge of the coordination of special education at Gilead Hill School.

"I am responsible for the School Readiness state grant and budget and assist in writing of other grants and the special education budget. I am involved with curriculum development as it applies to special education and the [Com-

mon Core State Standards]."

Wilson added she is also responsible for the school's Scientific Research Based Intervention process and has experience with the implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) – something schools superintendent Sally Doyen specifically mentioned.

Wilson "comes to us with a tremendous amount of experience in special education and related services as well as having responsibility for other building-wide initiatives," Doyen shared this week. "So her hat as the assistant principal will also reflect many of the things that she's always done. In fact, one of those is called PBIS and that is a way of developing a positive behavior program for kids throughout the whole school, so teachers are doing the same thing in all the classrooms. Barbara has had experience in doing that in Hebron, so that's one area we were interested in."

Doyen added Wilson "also has a good understanding of the relationships between special education and regular education curricu-

lum areas, so that was another aspect of her background we found very appealing."

Doyen said everyone at the school was "very excited and pleased" Wilson was joining the district.

"We are very much looking forward to her starting, which will be on Aug. 24, so she'll be here to barely get her feet wet, but a little before school gets started," Doyen said.

Board of Education Chairwoman Christina Tamburro felt similarly, sharing this week, "We're very happy to have her and we're thrilled with her experience that she's had in Hebron, as well as the fact that she is already experienced in a system that will be feeding into RHAM. She brings a lot to the table with her experiences."

Tamburro added, "We had a good applicant pool and we had several very qualified candidates, but she was the best."

"We're happy," Doyen concluded. "We got a great person."

Colchester Cracking Down on Out-of-State Cars

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Colchester tax assessor John Chaponis is cracking down on residents who dodge local car taxes by registering their vehicles in other states.

Registering your car in another state while primarily living in Connecticut is illegal, and Chaponis said the problem is becoming prevalent.

“There has always been a problem in Connecticut with residents trying to avoid paying local property taxes on their motor vehicles by registering them in another state,” Chaponis said. “However, in the last few years, the problems have grossly mushroomed.”

Just a few weeks ago, Chaponis said, Colchester won over \$5,000 in court from a resident who had four cars that were registered in Vermont.

In November 2014, Chaponis said he filed the lawsuit against Gregory Royce of 92 Windham Ave., after he had been registering the vehicles in Vermont when they were primarily parked in Colchester for over a decade. The town was awarded \$5,581 in debt and interest that Royce owed.

According to records, Royce first declared himself a Colchester resident in September

2000 and purchased the home he was renting in February 2004. The entire time his vehicles were registered with Vermont license plates, and none with Connecticut.

“Since 2002, my office has attempted to assess and tax these vehicles with Vermont plates,” Chaponis said. According to state statute, any vehicle not registered in Connecticut is taxable in Connecticut if it “most commonly leaves from and returns to a Connecticut location.”

The problem got worse, Chaponis said, because any bill Royce would receive he would throw out and never pay.

“He has been thumbing his nose at the local property tax system for 13 years,” Chaponis said.

Royce could not be reached for comment by the *Rivereast*.

Most taxpayers cannot re-register their car when they owe delinquent taxes to a town; however, local assessors have a harder time enforcing taxes when the owner is violating another state statute that requires every resident to register their car within 60 days of establishing residency.

Chaponis said the only recourse the town had

was to sue Royce and it took nine months for the case to go through the courts.

Royce isn't the only one dodging taxes by registering their cars out of state, Chaponis said.

“We have others and are actively pursuing them,” he said.

Determining just how much the town has lost to these tax avoiders is difficult to estimate.

“Regrettably, there is no way to put a finger on the total of lost revenue because it is so difficult to track down offenders,” Chaponis said. “Finding them is definitely difficult.”

Chaponis said the town contacts other states, asking for a list of cars whose mailing addresses are in Colchester. The town also does inspections and keeps track of out-of-state plated cars returning to the same location in town regularly.

“We add it to a spreadsheet we keep and continue inspecting,” Chaponis said. “If we continue to see it, we add it to our Grand List as taxable.”

In Colchester, there are approximately 19,000 cars registered annually, Chaponis said. From the lists from Vermont and Maine, 70 cars have Colchester mailing addresses.

Other complaints also come from neighbors.

“You would be surprised how many times we get calls from the neighbors about someone on their street with two to four vehicles registered out of state while they live in town,” Chaponis said. “We follow up on all of those calls.”

According to state law, drivers who receive a summons for illegally registering their car out of state can receive a fine up to \$1,000.

Chaponis said he is hoping to draw some attention to the issue to help the town recover some of the lost revenue.

“I am hopeful that drawing some attention to the matter may assist us in that some offenders may come back to registering in Connecticut as well as some neighbors may alert us to additional offenders,” Chaponis said.

Chaponis said he met with Randy Collins of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, who confirmed that it is a serious problem and revenue loss for Connecticut towns.

Chaponis, who also represents the Connecticut Association of Assessing Officers on legislative matters, said he plans to meet with Andres Ayala Jr., the new commissioner of the state Department of Motor Vehicles, to search for a solution.

Doreen's Dance Center Turns 30 in Colchester

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

What started in the basement of the Rathbun Free Memorial Library in East Haddam has grown significantly for Wallingford resident Doreen Freeman – and now her Doreen's Dance Center will turn 30 during the upcoming season.

Freeman began the studio in January 1986 at the library, eventually renting space at a day care center in East Haddam. She moved to Colchester in 1992, setting up shop at 711 Middletown Rd. Freeman went from a part-time, one-class-at-a-time studio to filling half a building with four studios – all operating simultaneously. Each year, approximately 300 students flock to DDC to dance, express themselves and have fun.

Freeman never imagined she would still own the studio 30 years after opening.

“I didn't plan it,” Freeman said. “I didn't sit down when I was young and say this is what it would be.”

Freeman began her love of dance when she was a child.

“I had a neighbor who ran a dance studio out of her house,” Freeman said. “I just fell in love with it.”

Freeman began dancing at Judyth Parks Academy of Dance and Music in Wallingford. She worked her way up to assistant teacher, apprentice teacher and then part-time teacher. It was then suggested to her to start a studio in the East Haddam/Colchester area, as there wasn't much of anything there in the way of dance studios.

“I went to a lot of teacher-training seminars, conventions, and master classes in New York City,” Freeman said. “My teacher mentored me and helped me learn how to run a studio and a recital.”

Freeman has a total of eight instructors, four of which are previous students of Freeman's. One of the instructors is Ali Durham of Colchester, her assistant director, and, Freeman said, “If all goes according to plan, one day she will become manager to continue on for the next 30 years.”

Students aged 2 and a half to senior citizens

come to DDC to participate in a variety of styles and levels from introduction to pre-professional advanced training. Dancers can train in ballet, jazz, tap, contemporary, hip hop, Irish step, a boys-only break-dancing class and more.

At its launch, the dance center only featured recreational students. In 1999, it grew to include DDC Company, the performance competition side of the center. The company – which includes four groups (dance, two acrobatics and a performance team) – performs in many locations from senior centers to day cares to full competitions.

“It kept growing and kept going,” Freeman said. “Every season I said ‘I should add this’ or ‘I should try this program.’”

Doreen's Dance Center also hosts Dancers' Give Back as a way to participate in charity events. In the past, Freeman said, the studio has held food drives, adopted a family at Christmastime, put on a benefit performance for the disabled, and collected money for families at the studio whose parents are ill.

Over time, as the studio has evolved, so have the students, Freeman said.

With television shows such as *So You Think You Can Dance* on the air, Freeman said the students are becoming very savvy and also realize what competition they may face if they decide to dance professionally.

Also, with kids' schedules often more full now than they used to be, Freeman said students have to grapple more with how best to manage their time. But, she said, she's found dancers who devote a lot of time to dance do better with time management, and have higher grades.

But, in some ways, the students haven't changed, Freeman said. “Kids are kids,” she said, and the studio continues to help instill self-confidence, grace, and strength in the students.

To celebrate the 30th season, Freeman said the studio plans on including an alumni dance and video montage of students over the years during its recital next May. During the year, the studio also has planned thank-you events for students and parents for helping the studio achieve 30 years.



A group of dancers from Doreen's Dance Center perform a contemporary piece. Pictured performing are Sammie Soucier (left), Megan Barstow (back), Anna Link (front center), Meghan Quinn (back right), and Sara Rosenthal (back far right).

“It really hits me when I look back at the scrapbook we're building,” Freeman said.

Freeman recently held a scrapbook night, where 20 students came and helped make scrapbook pages. Freeman said she had boxes of memorabilia from over the years hanging around and she wanted a way to put it all together.

“The kids were laughing at the 80s costumes and the Spandex unitards,” Freeman said. “They were impressed by some of the things. It was fun.”

Freeman said it also “hits home” when she receives a letter or email from a former student thanking her for something they've accomplished – even when many times the accomplishment is not dance-related.

“That brings me the most joy,” Freeman said. “My personal philosophy is that I was given a

gift and meant to help others in some way.”

Freeman said the rewards more than outweigh the day-to-day challenges of owning and operating a business.

“It's a passion; it's not just a job,” Freeman said.

She said she is also thankful for all of the parents and students that have supported her over the years.

“I'm very grateful for all who have come here and brought their kids,” Freeman said. “They have been incredibly supportive of me and the staff and the program at the studio.”

To learn more about Doreen's Dance Center, go to doreensdancecenter.net. Also, Freeman asked that former students contact her, either through the website or by calling 860-267-7756, if they'd like to participate in the alumni dance for the recital.

Colchester School Board Reviews Special Ed Recommendations

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Now that there is a new special education director in place, the school board Tuesday began diving into recommendations that arose following complaints about the previous special education director.

At Tuesday night's education board meeting, Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu gave an update on the recommendations, which were drafted by Frank Stuart, who was hired as a temporary assistant director of pupil services and special education to look into parent complaints that arose earlier this year. Currently the recommendations are stalled until new director Kelly McNamara can go over the report.

Tuesday was only McNamara's third day on the job, and Mathieu stated she "hasn't rolled up her sleeves and gotten into the report yet."

Parents began complaining to the Board of Education this past January regarding some of the actions and decisions of then-current special education director Kathy Shaughnessy. Those complaints included Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) being changed without parents' knowledge, accommodations not being given to a student, services being denied, and derogatory comments Shaughnessy allegedly made about students. The complaints arose after word got out the board planned to retain Shaughnessy for an additional two years after her planned retirement in November. Follow-

ing the complaints and a subsequent investigation by the school board, Shaughnessy stepped down this past July.

Some of the recommendations listed in Stuart's report include sponsoring a workshop on the responsibilities of general education teachers; surveying parents and students on the effectiveness of accommodations and medications in their IEP; being more transparent regarding the responsibility for conducting independent education evaluations; reviewing special education eligibility processes, reviewing the protocol for addressing any inconsistencies in the IEP document;

changing the practice of the chairperson of the meeting also recording the IEP document; reviewing how sensitive information regarding a student goes from one school to another; developing an Ombudsman program; hiring a permanent associate special education director; implementing an educational program for parents about programs and procedures; requiring the special education director to form an advisory committee with staff, parents and community professionals; and hiring a professional to monitor the implementation of the recommendations.

There is an action plan in place to deal with Stuart's recommendations, and the plan is "an evolving, living document," Mathieu told the

school board Tuesday. He clarified he has not changed any of the recommendations since Stuart first presented his report in June.

While McNamara has yet to fully review the report, she did see a copy of it in the final stages of her interview process with the school system.

"What stood out for me was three items to address: concerns with the relationships with parents, some policies and procedures, and areas of communication not always where we want between special education and regular education," McNamara told the board at the Tuesday meeting. "I have a vision of where to move forward."

McNamara said she would like to strengthen the pupil services part of her title and work to unite special education and regular education to work together more cohesively.

During meet-and-greets at the town's four schools Monday, Aug. 24, and Tuesday, Aug. 25, parents will get a chance to meet McNamara, Mathieu said. Also in the works is a special education PTO, headed by teacher and special education parent Josh Vinoski.

"For some of the action plan, the ball is rolling," Mathieu said.

According to Mathieu, Colchester used to have a formal special education PTO, complete

with a charter, but that group dissolved years ago when parents didn't attend meetings.

Ron Goldstein, chairman of the Board of Education, did ask Mathieu update the board "very often" on how the recommendations are going.

* * *

Also Tuesday, Goldstein updated the board on the progress of the William J. Johnston Middle School Building Committee.

Goldstein said the committee is currently moving forward and putting out requests for qualifications (RFQs) for an architect and for project management services. The committee has to put out a new RFQ for an architect because Tecton Architects were hired for pre-ref-erendum work. The state hasn't been clear if Tecton would still qualify going forward as the architect under the old RFQ and the committee is putting out a new RFQ to be safe. In the new RFQ, it does state the project is going forward with Tecton's design and dollar amount.

The RFQs for an architect close Aug. 17. The RFQ for project management services has not yet been released.

* * *

The next Board of Education meeting will be Tuesday, Sept. 8, at 7 p.m., in room 120 at Jack Jackter Intermediate School.

Colchester Building Official's Widow Says She's Owed Money

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The widow of the former town building official is still fighting the town for funds she says she deserves.

Janet York of North Stonington spoke to the *Rivereast* Monday, stating her husband had 504 accrued sick days, none of which were paid out after he passed away last year.

York's husband, Tim, was the town's building official for 20 years, up until his death in a New London motorcycle accident June 16, 2014. York said that, while she did receive some funds after her husband's passing – including a portion of salary owed, a portion of his vacation time and a portion of personal time – sick time was not included. With the amount of hours he had accrued for sick time, York is estimating the town owes her between \$18,000 and \$20,000.

"Tim gave 199 percent of his life to this town," Janet said. "He didn't choose to die."

York said it's not a "matter of the money, but a matter of the principle."

York contacted First Selectman Stan Soby in July 2014, following Tim's death. She said it took until November of that year for Soby to send her a letter saying she was not getting a portion of the accrued sick time. York said the letter claimed because Tim had been an "at will" employee and not collective bargaining, the town did not have to pay it out.

"You give your whole life, die, and 'too bad,'" York said. "Don't disregard Tim's wife and family."

"After reviewing all of the documents in terms of the policy document and in the personnel file, there wasn't any basis for making a payout of sick time," Soby told the *Rivereast* Wednesday. "I did inform [York] of that."

Soby said that, in the letter he sent last fall, he told York that if there were any documents he was not aware of, that he would be interested in reviewing that information.

"I reviewed the documents that were avail-

able to me," Soby said.

According to the town's personnel policy, which is available online, "earned but unused paid sick leave cannot be redeemed for cash. Should employment be terminated (either voluntarily or involuntarily), the town will not compensate the terminating employee for any unused accrued sick leave."

"Town policy for employees who are not covered by collective bargaining does not include a payout of accumulated sick time," Soby said this week. "The most recent version of the policy does not include it. I checked the previous policy and it [also] did not include it."

However, the policy also states personal time is not paid out – and that is something York said she received following Tim's death.

"The Town of Colchester does not reimburse, or in any other manner compensate, employees for unused personal leave days upon termination of employment," according to the policy.

As for vacation though, the policy states, "upon termination or retirement, each employee will be paid for accrued vacation at his/her current base rate of pay."

"I know the policy of the town," York said. "I'm questioning what they decided."

On Monday, York said she went to Town Hall to confront Soby and obtain some paperwork regarding her husband's employment with the town.

"Soby didn't say a word," York said of the meeting. York said Soby only asked what paperwork she wanted and gave it to her.

"Soby needs to recognize he was a great asset to this town," York said. "I touch base with the town[speople] and they can't believe he's gone."

Although she said she doesn't want to bring a lawsuit against the town, York does have a lawyer who will draft a letter to the town – and a lawsuit, she said, may follow.

Andover Murder Investigation Continues

by Geeta Schrayter

The investigation into last month's murder of Andover resident Jason Marchand is ongoing, according to Andover Resident State Trooper Rob O'Connor.

Marchand, 38, was shot and killed over the Fourth of July weekend following a verbal altercation on Lakeside Drive, according to police.

Troopers responded to the scene at Andover Lake a little after 10 p.m. July 3 after receiving a report that a person had been shot. Upon arrival, they found Marchand with multiple gunshot wounds; he was transported to Windham Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Troopers learned Marchand had an alter-

cation with a male suspect about an hour before the shooting. Witnesses reported that same individual – described as a white male in his 20s with a blue and white sport-type motorcycle wearing a helmet with a face shield – was the one who later returned to the area.

Police said Marchand confronted the suspect in the street, where he was shot multiple times. The suspect then fled the scene.

"We'll take any and all information" relating to the murder or the shooter, O'Connor said this week. Anyone with information is asked to call Eastern District Major Crime at 860-896-3230 or Troop K at 860-465-5411. Calls will be kept confidential.

Glastonbury Man Dies in Motorcycle Crash

by John Tyczkowski

A Glastonbury man was killed in a motorcycle crash in Meshomasic State Forest in Portland last Saturday afternoon, Aug. 8.

Eden Cook, 52, died when he fell off his motorcycle, a Honda XR650, and hit his head on a rock, Dennis Schain, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Communications Director, said.

A passerby discovered Cook on the ground on Woodchoppers Road shortly before 3 p.m.

State Environmental Conservation (EnCon) Police are handling the investigation, which is ongoing, Schain said. They have jurisdiction in this case because the crash happened in a state forest.

Bicyclist Injured on Route 16 in Colchester

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

A New Hampshire bicyclist was airlifted by LifeStar to Hartford Hospital Wednesday night after he was hit by a car on Route 16.

John Seymour, 52, of 67 Main St., Pittsfield, N.H., sustained life-threatening injuries after the accident on Middletown Road.

State Police reported that Seymour had pulled out onto the road on his bicycle from a driveway near Buckley Hill Road at around 7 p.m. A car coming down Middletown Road driven by Kevin Dean of Colchester hit Seymour. Dean was not injured, police said.

The accident is currently under investigation and anyone with information can call Trooper Darrell Tetreault at 860-465-5400.

Maniscalco Gets 3 Percent Raise in East Hampton

by John Tyczkowski

Tuesday evening, the Town Council evaluated Town Manager Michael Maniscalco's performance in open session – giving him positive marks as well as a 3 percent raise, which brings his annual salary to \$123,130.

The raise was not without controversy, however, as it passed via a 4-3 party-line vote.

The evaluation process began in July but was postponed to August, while the town was in the midst of continuing budget referendums.

Town Council Chairwoman Barbara Moore said some of Maniscalco's strengths included "giving his time willingly" to the town, as well as a professional appearance and demeanor and treating people "with respect and dignity."

Regarding challenges, Moore said Maniscalco had improved from his last evaluation a year ago, but could still improve on communicating with Town Hall employees.

"Communication can be a real challenge sometimes here," she said to Maniscalco. "It isn't really a criticism, because I don't think past town managers have ever had to deal with as many challenges with people as you have."

Moore also said in the future she wanted to see Maniscalco "be more outspoken on issues supported by the Town Council and be our spokesman for projects that we approve, and/or have put in motion."

At the same time, Moore praised Maniscalco's work advocating for East Hampton outside the town with regional and state organizations, including the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments, and as a member of the state's Commission on Municipal Opportunities and Regional Efficiencies.

Maniscalco had provided a summary of his accomplishments to councilors on Aug. 4, by which time vice chair Kevin Reich said he had

already completed his evaluation.

However, he did still review the summary, and said Maniscalco had "taken a very thoughtful approach to going through what you felt your accomplishments were."

Maniscalco's summary of accomplishments based upon previous council recommendations regarding staff relations included the creation of an Employee Morale Task Force and a department spotlight program, and holding an employee appreciation picnic.

In addition, Maniscalco's summary showed the town has reduced legal expenses by nearly \$40,000 compared to the previous year, addressing the council's recommendation that he be more comfortable making decisions without seeking a legal opinion.

Finally, in response to the council's recommendations that he be more proactive in handling questions and concerns, Maniscalco launched the "Coffee with the Manager" initiative to hear residents' concerns, and joined Twitter, with the handle @EH_Townmanager, to notify residents of important news.

Other accomplishments included removing the Village Center water tower without incident, and the fact that no new or pending grievances have been filed against the town so far in the past seven months – the first time that's happened in five years.

Reich especially acknowledged Maniscalco's improvement in interacting with town staff, citing the success of the business coach the council had asked Maniscalco to work with last year.

"I think we seriously consider continuing that because it's been such a good experience for Mr. Maniscalco, and I got the sense it was an experience well worth the time for all of our staff," he said.

Reich also said he "marveled at the hours Maniscalco puts in."

"There's no question: he's here, there and everywhere. It's pretty impressive," he said. "And he's answering emails into the late hours of the night, and keeping us informed."

In particular, Reich said Maniscalco had "been a part of some pretty impressive hires" for the town, citing as examples the chief of police, the public works director, the parks and recreation director and the town assessor.

"Your strength is in being able to select some very impressive people, and that bodes well for both you and this community," he said.

Councilor Ted Hintz Jr. said he felt Maniscalco had been making steady improvement overall since his last annual evaluation and his mid-year evaluation earlier this year.

However, he said Maniscalco still needed to improve his interaction with town staff.

"I have noticed some good improvement in that area and recommend continuing on with the business coach," he said.

In addition, Hintz said he wanted to see "more attempted improvement" regarding cross-training town employees to perform jobs in different departments, citing reorganization in the building department following Jim Carey's retirement as an example of the need for versatile employees.

Lastly, Hintz said he wanted Maniscalco to work on getting information to councilors before meetings, instead of "at the table."

"Most of the time now things are emailed to us the day of, but sometimes we're still getting things at the meetings," Hintz said, "and I'm not real comfortable with agreeing to all this stuff that's coming through at the table."

Hintz also said Maniscalco needed to make a better attempt to work with the minority party

on the council, saying Maniscalco is "more comfortable with certain members of the council and bounces his ideas off of them more."

"That is one of my concerns, and has been from day one, though not just with you, but with other town managers as well," Hintz said to Maniscalco. "I think that does need to be worked on."

Councilor Patience Anderson praised Maniscalco for his relations with local media, as well as surrounding towns and within the community.

However, Anderson said she wanted Maniscalco to improve on relations with the council's minority party as well, "anticipate and do more research on potential retiree job duties" and to better understand the challenges facing each town department.

Anderson also said Maniscalco "has shown a genuine effort to do a better job, and he deserves credit for that."

"In the future, I think he should work on follow-through to setting priorities; try to be more apolitical, and take it to the next level with the coach, and allow more council input in between evaluations," she said.

Councilor George Pfaffenbach made a motion to increase Maniscalco's salary by 3 percent, which passed 4-3, with Democrats Moore, Reich, Pfaffenbach and Philip Visintainer voting in favor, and Republicans Hintz, Anderson and Mark Philhower voting against it.

Maniscalco's previous annual evaluation occurred last August and September, and was held in executive session over a series of meetings regularly totaling close to two hours.

At that time he received a 2 percent salary raise, as well as an increase to his transportation allowance, used for gas, car repairs and car insurance.

Questions Mount on Middle Haddam Library Annex

by John Tyczkowski

Questions surrounding an annex the Middle Haddam Public Library Board of Directors has been moving along with have been mounting.

Four years ago, Leonard Blake, a library patron, left \$335,301 in his will for the creation of an annex, in memory of himself and his partner, Paul Carrier.

The exact language of the will specifies "a glass-enclosed porch area overlooking the wild-life areas surrounding the library," and the library board has worked to create a proposal fitting that, while also bringing the library into Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

But Margaret Faber, a Middle Haddam resident and member of the state's Historical Preservation Council, said ADA compliance isn't mandatory.

"If they leave the building alone, they don't trigger compliance requirements," she said. "As long as the librarians are willing to provide curbside services, which they are, we're fine."

Alternate access options are listed at middlehaddamlibrary.org.

Faber said average library attendance is 3-4 people on weekdays, and 5-6 on weekends.

"These are the same people over and over, and they don't require ADA access," she said. "The board is using ADA compliance to try to justify the expansion of the library."

James Royster, board chair, said the board would not change its stance on ADA accessibility, saying "the board made that decision as a matter of policy that it was the right thing to do."

Royster also said the library board has never considered walking away from the bequest money.

"We can do nothing and give the money back, or we can do something that closely approximates the bequest in a good faith effort and meets ADA compliance," he said. "And we never considered giving the money back."

By accepting the bequest, the board is legally obligated to make a good faith effort to meet its terms.

Also, Royster said the board is not worried about alienating the library's patrons and donation base, despite disagreements surrounding ADA compliance and expansion.

"We're hoping by making the library handicap accessible, and by proving additional space for programming and meetings, we can enhance our offerings to the community," he said. "This isn't Sturbridge Village; the library's charter is to maintain this not as a historical artifact, but as a functioning library"

"Changes will take place," he continued. "And that's OK, as long as they're done in good taste and in keeping with the overall character of the community."

Royster also responded to Faber's allegation that the board had rejected an alternate use of the bequest money from librarians Janet McDonald and Gail Scranton, because the proposal "didn't cost enough."

"That is an incorrect paraphrasing of what we said," Royster said. "The reality is it would've involved spending a small portion of the bequest and wouldn't constitute a good faith effort."

A letter from the board calls McDonald and Scranton's proposal "too modest a use of too small a portion of the bequest."

The librarians' May proposal details a free-standing "Blake-Carrier Garden Annex," accessed by the library's downstairs door, facing the stream on the property, connected by a flagstone pathway. There would also be two granite benches, dedicated to each man, and landscaping around the annex.

McDonald and Scranton's annex proposal would not trigger ADA compliance, and their proposal says it was put together based upon direct input from library patrons.

It also would total only around \$50,000, according to an estimate Royster gave, which is less than one-sixth of the total bequest, and the good faith effort would not allow the majority of the moneys to go to deferred maintenance.

However, Royster stressed that was only an informal estimate.

In July, Faber filed a complaint with the state attorney general against the board over its managing of the library, and one aspect deals with property upkeep.

"There are crumbling retaining walls, broken windows in the basement, a rotting cellar door, broken light fixtures, peeling paint," she said. "And there's a major moisture problem in the cellar as well, which houses the children's section."

If action is not taken soon, Faber said, the property could be headed for demolition by neglect, at which point she would involve the State Historic Preservation Office to prevent it.

Royster said the board plans to apply for a grant to help cover those maintenance costs, in addition to allocating the remainder of the bequest left after the good-faith effort was made.

"We had hoped to wrap the deferred maintenance for the library within the whole package of the project, and then apply for a cost-sharing grant from the State Library to offset the cost," he said.

Another point of contention regarding the library situation involves a petition opposing the annex with 93 signatures, as well as a document including the email addresses of all the board members, posted on a bulletin board in the non-federally-leased portion of the Middle Haddam Post Office building.

Faber owns the building, administered through Wemp LLC, according to town assessor records.

The back portion of the building, containing the mailroom, post office boxes and a separate

bulletin board, is leased to the U.S. Postal Service.

Lois McCutcheon, who works out of the building with her husband Ron at Town & Country Realtors, said board member Anne McKinney removed the petition and the document from the board and attempted to leave the building with them.

McKinney, a lifelong Middle Haddam resident, said she apologized to McCutcheon after the incident, and returned the documents, but did not think listing the email addresses was appropriate.

"They never had permission, and it's not normal practice," she said. "There were a couple of board members that were furious; they would've given out a different email address [if they had known about the document]."

"I don't usually behave that way, but I felt it was improper," McKinney.

Also, responding to an allegation that she threatened to close down the post office, McKinney said her exact words were "if this Post Office closes, it would be due to your [the McCutcheons'] actions."

"People are annoyed that they haven't made the outside of the building ADA accessible," she said.

However, the McCutcheons went on record stating after looking into the matter, they found there was not enough space on the post office building's property to install an ADA ramp.

McKinney also said she "strongly believes" the library should be made ADA compliant through the minimally invasive means the board had outlined.

"I understand not wanting to touch the main historical section of the building, and this addition would only touch a wing that was added in the 1960s," she said. "But I think what we're proposing will let the library better do what it does now for the community."

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I watched about half an hour or 45 minutes of last Thursday's Republican presidential debate – and what a strange experience it was.

I should probably clarify that I watched the main one; there are so many candidates with their hats in the ring Fox News actually had to hold two debates, with the “second tier” candidates on at 5 p.m. No, I watched the big show, on at 9 p.m.

And I'll admit – I tuned in mostly to see what Trump would blivate about.

The guy, as always, didn't disappoint. Who knows how much longer he's going to last – Fox News seemingly wants to destroy the man, I'm guessing because they know if he gets the GOP nomination that basically guarantees a Democrat will win the White House – but while he's here, he's providing entertainment. The stuff that comes out of his mouth can be just. So. Dumb. He's arrogant. He's condescending. He's insulting. But he makes for some fine television.

The rest of the candidates on the screen, however, are a different story. I'm glad I didn't see more than I did, because every moment The Donald wasn't on screen just reminded me there's no way I can vote Republican in 2016. (Not like I'd ever vote for Trump either, but at least he's entertaining.)

They just pander so darn much. Sure, there were occasions when people would give their stances on particular issues – sad that it's notable when a candidate dares to share his or her stance on a particular issue, but such is modern-day presidential politics – but most of the time they were just pandering to the crowd (a boisterous crowd, but more on that later), telling them what they wanted to hear. Their responses would tend to be so empty; just full of a bunch of GOP buzzwords and buzzphrases.

And when they weren't being pandering, they were being childish – particularly Rand Paul, who, as Trump helpfully pointed out to him, wasn't having that great of a night. Out of nowhere, out of absolutely nowhere, he brought up the famous scene of Chris Christie hugging President Obama when Obama was touring the devastation in New Jersey after Hurricane Sandy. It served zero purpose other than to say, “You hugged Obama! Nyah-nyah-nyah!”

As soon as Obama and Christie hugged in 2012, you knew – you just *knew* – somebody would be childish enough to bring it up during the 2016 presidential campaign. It was a sweet moment that had absolutely nothing to do with politics and everything to do with a state ravaged by a deadly storm. I was disgusted three years ago when the GOP flipped out about it – apparently forgetting Christie is a human being, not just a politician – and shame on Paul for politicizing it all over again.

Now, back to the crowd. I've watched many presidential debates over the years, and I've never seen an audience act like the audience acted last week. There wasn't just the standard applause – there was loud cheering and hooting, and one of the candidates was even booed. It was like Fox News had imported the studio audience from an old *Married...with Children* episode or something. It was very bizarre.

It was a very strange debate altogether – and a night that just left me unimpressed with the GOP slate. The next debate airs next month on CNN; I'm curious to see how the candidates fare that night.

* * *

It's amazing when you think about how much technology has changed in really not that long of a timeframe. I was reminded of this when I saw a list online last week detailing “things you'll only understand if you went to college in the '90s.” And yes, that includes me, having gone to college from 1997-2001. Not everything rang totally true, but enough did to make me think. Some highlights from the list:

- You got your first email address in col-

lege.

- You and your roommate shared a landline.
- You had a *Pulp Fiction* poster on your dorm room wall.

• Thursday nights were for watching *Friends* in your dorm's common room.

- You cast your first vote in an election a Clinton or a Bush was running in.

• If you had your own computer, it could very well have been a \$1,500 desktop from Gateway.

- And even then, the computers in the college computer lab were much faster.

• To choose your courses, you pored over a physical course catalog.

- And you registered for your classes by phone – or, if your school wasn't even that advanced, you registered by standing in a super-long line.

• You got a printed phone book with everyone's school numbers.

- And you could call anyone on campus just by dialing their “extension.”

• When you got your roommate assignment, you had *no idea* what they looked like – you had to actually call them or write them a letter to find out anything about them.

- No one had cell phones, so making plans was...interesting.

• But you could always leave a message on your friend's dry-erase board.

- Sometimes you'd just wander from party to party, looking for your friends.

• You found out about parties from flyers.

• You made your own webpage on your college's server – and it looked like a bad Geocities page.

- You took notes in class...in a notebook. With a pen. By hand.

• “My printer wasn't working” was a legit excuse for why you weren't handing in your paper.

- “My floppy disk got corrupted” was another actual excuse – because you kept all your work on a disk.

• But if you had a *big* project, you put it on a Zip disk.

• If you were traveling and you wanted to call home, you'd bring along a prepaid phone card.

- When you made a new friend, you went through their CD books to see if you had music in common.

• You played all your music on a mini stereo system.

• You either played Hacky Sack obsessively or you thought people who played Hacky Sack obsessively were total losers.

- It still sounds weird to you when people refer to Ecstasy as Molly.

And lastly.....and this is very true:

- You are so, so, *so* thankful that Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tinder, Snapchat, Vine, texting, sexting and everything else did not exist when you were in college.

Like I said, that is such a true statement. All of these technological breakthroughs designed to make our lives easier, but I think they'd have actually had a negative impact on the college life experience. Actual face-to-face interaction was the order of the day – and I'm glad I didn't have it any other way.

* * *

Speaking of college, I was happy to see this week my alma mater, Marist College, has been ranked No. 7 in the latest *Princeton Review* list of top colleges and universities in the country.

For the survey, *Princeton Review* asked 136,000 students at 380 top colleges to rate their schools on dozens of topics. The college profiles also rated each college in eight separate categories, including admissions selectivity, financial aid, fire safety, and green. These ratings were based on surveys of administrators at the colleges in the 2014-15 year.

And when all is said and done, Marist was ranked No. 7, out of a list of 380 colleges. Go Red Foxes!

* * *

See you next week.

East Hampton Police News

7/25: Stephen Pierson, 50, of 19 Karen Dr., Portland, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle while using a cellphone, failure to stop at a stop sign, reckless driving, risk of injury, engaging police in pursuit, passing in a no-passing zone, failure to drive right, failure to carry license, possession of narcotics, possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia, and interfering/resisting arrest, East Hampton Police said.

7/27: Marc Wolpo, 52, of 99 Propect St., Stamford was arrested and charged with DUI, police said.

7/29: Kyle K. Kelly, 29, of 22 Walnut Ave., was issued a summons for driving while sus-

pending and failure to obey a stop sign, police said.

7/31: Frederick Everett III, 32, of 36 Namonee Tr., was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny, police said.

8/3: Robert Peter Authelet, 43, of 305 No. Sterling Rd., Sterling, was arrested and charged with fourth-degree larceny, police said.

8/5: Daniel R. Mosor, 30, of 80 Silver Spring Dr., Higganum, was charged with engaging or holding himself as a new home construction contractor without current certification of registration, police said.

8/5: Sara Fazekas, 19, of 16 Hawthorne Rd., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, police said.

Portland Police News

8/8: Randy Chase, 51, of 23 Ashford Rd., Plainville, was arrested and charged with DWI, Portland Police said.

Marlborough Police News

8/10: State Police said Kenneth Armes, 22, of 329 Miller Rd., South Windsor, was arrested and charged with DUI, failure to maintain lane and driving too slowly.

Hebron Police News

8/8: State Police said Nicole Appell, 19, of 75 Lynn St., Colchester, was arrested and charged with third-degree strangulation and breach of peace.

Obituaries

Colchester

Holly E. Bishel

Holly E. Bishel, 51, died unexpectedly Tuesday, Aug. 4. She was born in Middletown Dec. 6, 1963, daughter of Arthur and Elizabeth (Roberts) Bishel.

Holly loved nature; she was an herbalist who embraced a holistic life style. As a licensed massage therapist she was able to enhance others health and well-being.

Holly is survived by her father Arthur Bishel of Morriston, Fla.; brothers, Scott Bishel and wife Lynn of Middletown, Keith Bishel and wife Lisa of Colchester, Lloyd Bishel and his girlfriend Andy of Colchester; her sister Lori Murray and husband Steve of Colchester; several nieces and nephews; and her loving cat, Spanx.

She was predeceased by her mother, Elizabeth, and her son, Philip J. Coulombe, with whom now she is reunited.

Visitation will be held from 5-7 p.m. today, Aug. 14, followed by a service at 7 p.m. at the Belmont Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester. A private burial will be held at the Westchester Congregational Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Colchester Food Bank, 127 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415.

Colchester

Lorraine Therese Brunner

Lorraine Therese Brunner, 89, of Colchester, formerly of Bushkill, Pa., and Massapequa, L.I., N.Y., widow of the late Aloysius J. Brunner, passed away peacefully Monday, Aug. 10, surrounded by her loving family.

Born July 10, 1926 in Brooklyn, N.Y., she was the daughter of the late George and Adelaide (Bohlander) Heath.

On Jan. 31, 1948, she wed her beloved husband of 55 years at SS. Joachim and Anne Church in Queens Village, N.Y.; he predeceased her Feb. 27, 2003.

Mrs. Brunner had worked as a secretary for many years before her retirement at Pinelawn Memorial Park on Long Island, NY.

A woman of great faith, she was a daily communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester and St. John Church in East Stroudsburg, Pa., prior. Believing in being a helpful hand, Lorraine dedicated herself to volunteer work with St. Vincent DePaul and the Colchester Senior Center.

She is survived by a daughter, Anne Brunner of Seminole, Fla.; two sons and their spouses, Gregory and Rona of Auburndale, Fla., and David and Catherine of Colchester; seven grandchildren, Rachel, Christopher, Donna, Regina, Michelle, Tina and Jacqueline; four great grandchildren, Aaron, Sophia, Halaney and Brooke; as well as numerous extended family members and friends.

The family will receive guests from 5-7 p.m. today, Aug. 14, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy for the repose of Lorraine's soul will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Graveside services will be observed at 11 a.m. Monday, Aug. 17, at Prospect Cemetery, 501 Prospect St., East Stroudsburg, Pa.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Andrew Church.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Amston

Mildred Kalama

Mildred (Davis) Kalama, 78, of Amston, widow of the late Richard Kaukahi Kalama Jr., passed away peacefully Monday, Aug. 10, surrounded by her loving family. Born Nov. 6, 1936, in Windsor, she was the daughter of the late Raymond and Mildred (Blackburne) Davis.

On July 31, 1965, she wed her "pen-pal" Richard, who was serving with the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. Together, they shared 40 years of marriage before he predeceased her on Sept. 2, 2005. They loved their home and the tight-knit community of Amston Lake. She had a passion for wildlife, but her greatest joy was found in caring for all children.

She leaves three children, Kevin Kalama of Amston, Luana and husband Andrew Stanulonis of Amston and Leilani and husband Marcos Zipitria of Landing, N.J.; a foster child, Julio Acosta of East Hartford; five grandchildren, Kawika Carden of Oahu, Hawaii, Maile Melvin of Amston, and Steven, Felicia and Douglas Melvin, all of Landing, N.J.; two great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family members and friends.

She was also predeceased by a sister, Marilyn Davis; a stepdaughter, Marroan Carden; and a foster brother, Charlie Calver.

Friends may call starting at 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, before a chapel service at noon. Burial will follow in the New Hebron Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Middlesex Hospital Hospice, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457 or the Connecticut Audubon Society, 1361 Main St., Glastonbury, CT 06033.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Courant

Amston

Carolyn Elizabeth Smith

Carolyn Elizabeth Smith, "Carri," 49, of Manchester, formerly of Amston, passed away unexpectedly Monday, Aug. 10, at home. Born Nov. 7, 1965 in Lawrence, Mass., she was the daughter of Judith (Townsend) Sargent of Lebanon and the late Charles R. Smith, Sr., as well as stepdaughter of the late Chet Sargent.

Carri worked as a commercial credit specialist for Bank of America. In her spare time, she was an avid reader and loved to play darts and ride motorcycles.

In addition to her mother, she leaves her long-time companion, Howard Saulnier of Manchester; three brothers and their wives, Charles Jr. and Lisa of Amston, Robert and Wendy of Plainfield and Tim and Cindy of Clinton; and numerous nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Graveside services will be observed at 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, directly at the New Lebanon Cemetery, Waterman Road, Lebanon. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Four Paws Rescue of Connecticut, 25 Lochbourne Dr., Clinton 06413.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Courant

Colchester

Edward Charles Nyack III

Edward Charles Nyack, III, 72, of Lisbon, formerly of Colchester, died peacefully Saturday, Aug. 8. Edward was born Dec. 16, 1942, and is the son of Caroline and Edward Nyack Jr.

Edward was in the Air Force, was a tool and die maker, had a successful career as tractor trailer driver and was a long-time resident of Colchester. Ed enjoyed helping friends, loved playing his accordion and liked country and polka music.

He is survived by his two daughters, Kristine Nyack, and Suesen and Paul Hickey; his two sons, Calvin Nyack, and David and Jocelyn Nyack; seven grandchildren; one great-grandson; his twin sisters, Janet and Richard Gordon, and Janice and Henry Kowalewski; his brother, Theodore Nyack and his fiancé Pat Grandi; as well as many nieces and nephews.

The funeral will be Saturday, Aug. 15, at 11 a.m., at St. John's Lutheran Church, 295 Arch St., New Britain.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Center for Hospice Care Southeastern Connecticut.

Courant

Portland

Rita Barrett

Rita (Callahan) Barrett, 93, of Portland, formerly of Cromwell, wife of the late Donald P. Barrett, passed away Tuesday, Aug. 4, at Portland Care & Rehabilitation. Born Jan. 26, 1922, she was the daughter of the late John and Helen (Walsh) Callahan.

Rita lived in Cromwell since 1954, was a teller at Citizens Bank for over 20 years and was a member of the Seniors Club of Cromwell.

Rita is survived by her daughter, Judith E. Snyder and her husband Raymond of Portland; two grandsons, Matthew E. Snyder and his wife, Megan of Seymour and Jeffrey R. Snyder and his girlfriend Geena of Middletown; and her great-grandson, Matthew Snyder Jr.

Along with her husband and parents, she was predeceased by her sister and brother-in-law, Irene and William Flynn.

A private graveside service will be held at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Rita's memory may be made to Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Road, Newington, CT 06111.

To share memories or Send condolences to the family, visit doolittlefuneralservice.com.

Courant

Colchester

Adelaide A. Couto

Adelaide A. (Bettencourt) Couto, 95 of Hartford, peacefully passed away Saturday, Aug. 8, 2015 at Harrington Court, Genesis Healthcare, Colchester. Adelaide was born April 26, 1920, in Santa Maria, Azores, Portugal, one of 10 children to the late Victorino and Maria (Figueidero) Bettencourt.

She was predeceased by her husband Josue, a daughter and son.

She resided in Portugal prior to immigrating to the United States in the 1960s, with her husband and son, where they resided in Hartford. Prior to her retirement she was a devoted employee for many years at Travelers Insurance Company. Adelaide will be fondly remembered by her extended family of many nieces and nephews in the US and Portugal.

In addition to her parents, Adelaide was predeceased by her nine siblings.

Friends and relatives may pay their respects Saturday, Aug. 15, from 9:15-9:45 a.m., in Our Lady of Fatima Church, 50 Kane St., Fatima Square, Hartford, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at 10 a.m. in the church. Interment will be at a later date in Mount St. Benedict Cemetery, Bloomfield.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Our Lady of Fatima Church.

To extend online condolences, share a memory and/or light a memorial candle, visit farleysullivan.com.