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Hebron resident and volunteer firefighter Bill Schappert recently received the Star of Life award from the American Ambulance Association for his work as a paramedic in Hartford. Schappert was flown to Washington D.C. for the ceremony last month, where he had the chance to meet several legislators, including Congressman Joe Courtney.

Hebron Man a 'Star of Life'

by Geeta S. Sandberg

When Hebron resident Bill Schappert was 16, he joined the Hebron Volunteer Fire Department with a group of friends. Little did he know it was a decision that would lead him to his career – and, just last month, receiving the highest recognition in his industry.

"When I started in the fire program, honestly I didn't know what I was getting into because I was 16 and very young," Schappert explained this week. "But I knew I wanted to help people and as time went on, I thought it was neat being part of the fire department. I enjoy it. It's a dynamic field and you're always educating yourself and it's a good way to give back to the community."

And through volunteering with the department – which he has now been a part of for more than 10 years – Schappert said he decided to continue helping people by becoming a paramedic.

"The Town of Hebron is kind of blessed, because there's been a huge chunk of young up-and-coming [emergency medical technicians] and firefighters that start in the volunteer fire department, and go on to do similar activities in their careers," he explained. "There are a couple police officers, several paramedics, two nurses and several firefighters."

Along with continuing as a volunteer with the fire department, Schappert became one of those paramedics, and has been working for American Medical Response in Hartford for the last nine years.

And, just recently, he was recognized for his efforts at a ceremony in Washington D.C. where he received the Star of Life award from the American Ambulance Association.

According to the-aaa.org, the Star of Life award "honors the dedication of ambulance service professionals, those remarkable individuals that stand out and represent excellence in every area of the industry."

Schappert was nominated for the award by his supervisor for his life-saving actions during a cardiac call in Hartford last year. He explained, "Amongst a slew of reasons for the nomination, they like to highlight a particular call you respond to, then overall they're looking for compassionate providers that attempt to go above and beyond."

The highlighted call Schappert responded to was a medical call where the patient was experiencing an unstable heart rhythm.

"Those things can happen to people," he said of the arrhythmia, "and we as paramedics are expected to treat these people appropriately and provide compassionate care."

Schappert shared he used the "old-school warm-up paddles" to shock the patient, and her heart ended up going back into a stable rhythm.

"A couple of months later I found her again. She had called 9-1-1 in a separate area of the city with chest pains again. She ended up being fine, but she kind of looked up at me with big eyes during the call and said, 'You're the

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No Referendum Yet for Belltown Budget

by Elizabeth Regan

The East Hampton annual town budget meeting on Monday evening ended before it began, as voters failed to approve the agenda that would have sent the Town Council's \$42.56 million 2016-17 budget to referendum.

The move sent the budget proposal back to the Board of Finance, which met just a half hour later for its regularly scheduled meeting. That's when members voted unanimously to put \$347,447 in expected state funding – money that wasn't included in the council's budget proposal due to fiscal uncertainty at the state level – back into the budget.

The finance board's adjusted budget proposal came in at \$42.79 million, after members allocated \$230,000 of the restored state funding to the general government, education and capital reserve sections of the proposed budget, leaving the rest to lessen the tax increase driven by the \$51 million high school renovation project.

The proposed budget is a \$1.74 million, or 4.25 percent, increase over current year spending.

Monday evening's unexpected series of events began when some of the roughly 30 people in attendance at the annual town budget meeting questioned the legal notice included in the meeting packet. It mistakenly referred to

the 2015-16 annual budget instead of the 2016-17 budget currently under consideration.

Nobody at the meeting could definitively say if the error in the meeting packet was also made in the statutorily-required legal notice posted in the newspaper.

Moderator Steve Greco suggested taking a vote to approve the agenda anyway.

"Let's take a vote and then, if it is posted incorrectly in the paper, the town manager would have to consult the town attorney to see if a clerical error would negate the meeting. If not, perhaps it could proceed," Greco said.

The vote to approve the agenda failed 5-7, and the meeting was over.

As the crowd dispersed, Town Manager Michael Maniscalco returned to his office and immediately produced a copy of the legal filing as printed in the newspaper. It included the correct reference to the 2016-17 annual budget.

Maniscalco said the failure to send the budget to referendum – which had been planned for May 24 – is likely to cost about \$1,000. The ballots had already been ordered at a cost of \$700, while associated legal fees account for the rest of the estimate.

The move came after a contentious Town

Council meeting last week during which Democrats James "Pete" Brown and Kevin Reich and Republican Ted Hintz Jr. said they wanted to hold off on a decision on the proposed budget until state lawmakers in Hartford passed a budget with solid municipal aid figures.

Instead, the Town Council voted 4-3 to cut the finance board's proposal by almost a million dollars and sent it to town meeting.

Three days later, the Connecticut General Assembly approved a state budget that restored \$347,447 of the \$619,000 cut to East Hampton's municipal aid proposed by Gov. Dannel P. Malloy in April.

The finance board's revised spending plan, approved Monday, allocates \$50,996 to the Parks and Recreation Department for its program coordinator position. It also put about \$64,000 into the capital reserve fund to save for expenses including road repair and maintenance, the replacement of garage doors in the public works building and trash recycling cans at the transfer station, and the reconstruction of the Seamster Park playground at Memorial School.

The finance board also restored \$115,000 of the \$312,500 the council had cut last week from the Board of Education budget. This brought

the spending proposal to \$29.08 million, a \$302,500, or 1.05 percent, increase over the current year.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith said the district should be able to avoid laying off additional teachers if the finance board's revised proposal goes through. The Board of Education's initial spending plan, approved in January, already eliminated two middle school teaching positions in language arts and science.

Smith said he hopes middle school sports and the high school volleyball and golf teams can be saved as well.

The mill rate will rise to 29.44 if the budget passes – an increase of 1.66 mills over the current year. A mill is \$1 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Under the proposed mill rate, a taxpayer with a house assessed at \$200,000 would owe \$5,888 in property taxes on the home. That's \$332 more than such a homeowner pays now, though the recently completed town-wide revaluation has changed the assessed value of homes since last year.

Both the finance board's original proposal and the Town Council's proposal had called for an increase of 1.77 mills over the current year. But several finance board members said they

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‘Star of Life’ cont. from Front Page

same paramedic I had last time!’ She was very thankful but joked, ‘Don’t shock me again – that really hurt!’” Schappert laughed.

This was the 17th annual American Ambulance Association’s Stars of Life program; it took place April 11-13 and included EMTs and paramedics from across the country.

Schappert, who shared he’s also received some smaller, local awards in the past, said, “I’m more of a humble guy, so getting this award was not really a big deal to me, and I didn’t fully realize the gravity of the situation until my girlfriend kind of smacked me on the head and said ‘You’re going to D.C.!’”

During the trip, along with getting to visit the monuments with his girlfriend and receiving his award, “I met with my particular company’s upper management, then got to meet Congressman Joe Courtney and spoke with one of the staffers for Sen. [Richard] Blumenthal, and did a quick meet-and-greet with Sen. Chris Murphy,” Schappert shared.

He added along with being honored and awarded, the program was a chance “to shed some light on the industry and give local legislators a better idea about what it is we do.”

Schappert concluded of the ceremony, “The program they have is pretty spectacular.”

Belltown Budget cont. from Front Page

felt the state’s deteriorating fiscal health and its effect on taxpayers, both now and in the future, requires officials to be as conservative as possible in crafting the local budget.

Originally, Board of Finance Republican Marc Lambert and Democrat Alan Hurst both spoke for keeping the mill rate increase at 1.77 mills and letting voters decide if they could support that kind of tax hike.

“I’ll be the first one to say we’ve got to cut more if they vote ‘no,’ but I don’t think they’re going to vote ‘no,’” Hurst said.

Hurst mentioned the 2013 high school renovation referendum – and stressed that, since then, town officials and governing bodies have worked to make sure all voters understand the town has no choice but to pay its debt for the project.

The debt for the \$52 million high school renovation project alone accounts for 1.44 mills of the 1.77 mill increase. A drop in the Grand List due to revaluation accounts for 0.41 mills of the mill rate increase.

“We have to hope we’ve educated them,” he said.

But for finance board chairwoman Allison Tokarz, it’s important to keep the budget – especially the education side, which can’t be reduced from year to year per the state’s “minimum budget requirement” – as lean as possible.

“Whatever we decide the budget is this year, it’s going to stay at least that, if not higher. We need to keep that in mind,” Tokarz said.

In deliberations that contrasted starkly with the Town Council’s budget discussion last week, finance board members listened to each other’s viewpoints and presented ideas for compromise.

But now the budget goes back to the Town Council. During a public comment period at the beginning of the finance board meeting, councilor Melissa Engel said a majority of Republican council members had met behind closed doors in a “caucus” to discuss how to allocate the restored funding from the state.

“What we were going to suggest to you was that \$100,000 go to education, \$100,000 general government, [and] the rest be used to lower the mill rate from a 1.77 to 1.64,” Engel told the finance board.

She acknowledged the situation changed, however, when voters at town meeting failed to push forward the council’s budget proposal. If the first referendum fails now, there won’t be enough time to hold a second referendum before tax bills go out on July 1, she said.

It is only after a budget is approved that the finance board can set the mill rate. If the budget is not approved before the start of the new fiscal year, the Town Council will set a temporary mill rate.

Engel has described the act of sending out tax bills before a budget has been approved by voters as taxation without representation.

That means officials have a renewed obligation to put forth a budget they believe can pass on the first try, according to Engel.

“So now I’m suggesting you make cuts,” Engel told finance board members.

Since 2010, the proposed budget has passed in one referendum on just two occasions.

In a phone interview Tuesday, Reich said he can live with the finance board’s new budget proposal.

“The disappointment I have is that the original [Town Council] budget was basically prepared behind closed doors in a caucus,” he said.

The process denied the public an opportunity to listen and respond to the council’s deliberations, according to Reich.

The term “caucus” refers to members of the same party from a particular board or commission who meet privately to discuss town business. The practice is allowed under the state Freedom of Information law.

However, the law states any action must be taken in public session.

Reich also said he didn’t know if the Town Council, acting on a decision made in caucus, had the authority to make recommendations about how the finance board should allocate additional state dollars.

“In all honesty, I’m very happy the [town meeting] vote went down like it did,” Reich said.

The next regular meeting of the Town Council will be held 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at the East Hampton Middle School library.

Observations & Ruminations

by **Mike Thompson**

The eagle-eyed of you – okay, those of you who turned to my column only to see it wasn’t there – may have figured it out already, but I was out last week. I was on vacation, visiting family in Alabama.

It was a tremendous week, featuring family and friends, delicious food, warm weather – and lots of relaxation. It’s what a vacation is all about.

I’ve touched on some of the draws of the south in this space in the past, so I won’t rehash them. Instead, I’m here to talk about first class.

As in, on airplanes.

I’ve never flown first class, but Sunday night, as I returned to Connecticut, I came the closest to it I ever had. I was quite literally on the outside looking in; my seat was the first row after first class. (Actually, my assigned seat was in the second row after first class, but a husband asked me to switch with him so he could sit next to his wife, and being the heck of a nice guy that I am – and humble too – I said ‘sure.’)

The flight was from Miami to Hartford (there are no direct flights between here and Alabama, so I always have to connect someplace; this trip had me connect through Miami, which I admit was a little weird, in that I had to fly south before flying north), so I had nearly three hours to watch how the other half – okay, perhaps the other 10 percent (first class is expensive, you know) – live.

And in first class, they live quite impressively.

Everyone knows about the extra legroom and, well, butt room; that’s no secret, seeing as how you have to walk through first to get to coach. In coach, there were three seats to a row, but in first class, there were two. So everything was nice and spacious.

But there was so much more than that. At the start of the flight, I watched as the flight attendant walked to all the seats and gave people hot washcloths for their faces. Then the serving began....and went on and on.

Those of us in coach got a serving of the soda or juice of our choice. It was poured in a cup; we couldn’t even get a whole can. Beer and wine were available, for a fee.

Meanwhile, I watched as the folks in first get repeated supplies of whatever beverage they wanted – alcoholic or non-alcoholic. And they got to keep the can.

When it came to food, the flight attendants brought the folks in first – again, repeatedly – little bowls of what I assume were nuts or a snack mix of some kind. And later on in the flight, they even got warm – yes, warm! – chocolate chip cookies.

In short, the folks up in first class were treated quite nicely. Why, even the monitors for the in-flight entertainment were a little bigger than ours in coach, I noticed.

I don’t write all of this to sound bitter; I really don’t. These are just some, well, observations. I’ve looked at ticket prices. I know how much extra people flying in first class are paying. For those prices, they *should* get some added amenities.

Besides, it’s hardly like I had a bad flight. It was a big plane – a Boeing 737, I believe. There were two rows of seats, with three seats per row, and the aisle was fairly wide. The last few times I’ve flown the planes have been on the smaller side; the one from Alabama to Miami, for example, had two rows of seats as well, but one row had two seats while the other had one. The plane was quite the “puddle-jumper,” as my grandfather used to

say.

Also, each seat had a headphone jack where you could plug in headphones and listen to some music or, as I alluded to earlier, watch the in-flight entertainment. I hadn’t been on a plane with in-flight entertainment in a while. The ride wasn’t quite long enough for a movie, so instead we were shown three sitcoms: *The Carmichael Show* (not very good), *Brooklyn Nine-Nine* (very entertaining) and *Superstore* (also entertaining).

It was also a night flight, which I love. Peering out the window and seeing the night sky with all these lit-up buildings down below was very pretty.

And most importantly, it was a very smooth, comfortable and uneventful flight. We even got into Bradley a little sooner than expected (where I was displeased to discover it was 40 degrees!). So, really, high marks all around.

But first class.....wow. That’s some nice treatment.

* * *

While catching up with the news in last week’s paper, I was sad to come across an obituary for Ken Mosher of Andover. Ken passed away May 5 from cancer, at the age of 53.

I didn’t know Ken had been sick, so his death came as quite the surprise to me. Back when I was an Andover reporter, I got to know Ken. I had a nice interview with him shortly after he joined the RHAM Board of Education; it was one of those “meet the new school board member” types of stories. It’s been more than a dozen years since the interview, so I don’t remember specific quotes, but I do remember the overall tone – and being surprised by it. When Ken joined the RHAM board in 2003, it was a contentious time for the school district. There was a lot of dissatisfaction over the budget – it took seven referendums to pass the 2002-03 budget, followed by 13 referendums to pass the 2003-04 spending package.

And in my interview with him, Ken, as I recall, was not hesitant to share that dissatisfaction. What surprised me the most was his bluntness. He was very nice, but not one to mince words. He called it like he saw it. It was a delightful interview, really; I loved his candor.

Ken went on to spend four years on the RHAM board, routinely fighting for lower budgets, but, as his obituary noted, that was far from his only contribution to politics. Ken was a staunch Libertarian, running on the party ticket for Connecticut secretary of state three times, most recently in 2010.

An aspect of Ken I didn’t know until reading it in his obituary was his love of cacti. For years he was heavily involved with the CT Cactus and Succulent Society, serving in several capacities, including as president. He even had a company, Drago Cactoid, that imported and sold cacti succulents from around the world – and, his obituary noted, “the more strange or unusual the cutting or bulb the better.”

I admit it had been a while since I’d last spoken with Ken. But I remember him well, and fondly. He could be a controversial figure at times – particularly when it came to his thoughts on the RHAM budget – but, like I said, I always loved his candor. And more importantly, he always struck me as a very nice guy.

He’ll be missed.

* * *

See you next week.

Andover Voters Pass \$12.23 Million Budget

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Ballots were cast Tuesday for the proposed 2016-17 town budget of \$12.23 million. And when the votes were tallied, the majority of the 10.5 percent of the town's registered voters who took to the polls were in favor of the spending package.

The budget, which clocks in at \$12,233,162 for an increase of 12.86 percent, was approved 157-60.

Included in that number is \$4,320,821 for the Andover Elementary School budget, an amount that's flat with current year spending; \$4,160,150 for Andover's portion of the RHAM schools budget, for an increase of 2.9 percent; and \$2,226,941 for the operating budget as well as over \$800,000 for capital expenditures, and monies earmarked for different projects.

"I'm very pleased," Board of Finance Chairman Dan Warren said. With the budget approved, he added, "In my discussion with some of the [Board of Selectmen], getting our hands around the public works/facilities manager position will be of the utmost importance, as well as working towards getting a more comprehensive road improvement program in place – and both of those kind of go hand-in-hand."

The Public Works Department budget totals \$289,787 for an overall increase of \$41,687, \$35,000 of which is included to hire a part-time Public Works/Facilities Manager.

In addition, Warren said the budget's passing also "ensures the school roof rehabilitation

and Times Farm Road bridge rehabilitation projects will be started this fiscal year, and those are two highly critical projects."

Included in the budget is \$400,000 earmarked for the bridge's rehabilitation, as well as \$308,000 for the replacement of portions of the Andover Elementary School roof.

Schools Superintendent Sally Doyen shared Wednesday, "I'm heading up to the state tomorrow. The budget passed, I got the necessary documents this morning from the town clerk, so we're on schedule to get the state's approval [for the roof project]. Then the next step will be to go out to bid for a roofing contractor."

She added the budget's approval "was one of the areas we were waiting on in order to pursue that" and completing the project over the summer, which will see six sections of the school roof replaced, "is still our goal."

Speaking to the budget's approval overall, Doyen furthered, "We are thrilled. We're going to be able now to plan specifically for next year and get things going this spring before school ends. So we will be ready for the start of school which will come before we know it. We are very pleased."

Also glad the budget passed – although he admitted he would have crafted the budget a bit differently – was First Selectman Bob Burbank.

"I'm glad to see the budget passed. That's always good," he shared this week. But, he added, "A lot of stuff came up to approval by the Board of Finance and some of that stuff I wasn't exactly enthused about."

Burbank explained he didn't like the idea of putting aside money for long-term projects "and locking up money that perhaps we may need in a year or two, to maintain a zero tax rate increase."

For example, included in the approved budget is \$300,000 earmarked as seed money for a public works building project and a new community center.

"To put money aside for a project that may not happen for five or 10 years, and to lock that up, I don't think is a good idea," he stated.

In addition, although the budget comes with a large increase, the mill rate is expected to stay the same at 30.72 mills, through the use of recent surpluses and a portion of the town's general fund balance, which contained more than \$2.5 million at the end of the 2015 fiscal year.

Burbank continued, "I know that the Board of Finance thought that the fund balance was excessive, but we've been extremely conservative over the years and trying to help build it up because we know what happened prior to my administration when the monies were used for projects and all of a sudden we found ourselves in almost a million dollar deficit. I tend to go

other way and say, 'Let's fill up the fund balance.'"

He concluded, "It's a new Board of Finance with a new way of running things – I just don't agree with it 100 percent."

Responding to those concerns this week, Warren said, "We have huge glaring critical infrastructure needs that had to be tackled this year, and we've set aside some of that general fund money but we are still well protected against any other future uncertainty."

He added, "I would suggest anyone who questions what the Board of Finance decided to do to take a look at some of the other towns in the state of Connecticut and see what kind of fund balance they carry forward. The reality is the fund balance represents money collected from taxpayers for specific projects – money that wasn't needed for the projects and has just been sitting in bank accounts at a low interest rate."

And handling some of the town's infrastructure needs, he explained, is a much better use of those funds.

Warren concluded of the budget, "I'm just happy that it was approved and I just want to express my gratitude to all members of the Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen that have worked hard on it. I'm looking forward to implementing the budget and looking to next year."



The Andover Food Pantry, which has popped up each week in the basement of the Andover Congregational Church since its inception in 2009, finally has a permanent home. The pantry recently moved into the church's conference house, which was offered up for use by the non-profit organization if it was able to complete the necessary renovations. Thanks to volunteer efforts, donations and a \$20,000 award the pantry received, those renovations were able to take place, and the pantry opened for the first time in its new location on Monday.

Andover Pantry Gets a Home 'with \$20,000 and a Banana Bread'

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The Andover Food Pantry now has a permanent place to call home – and as Food Pantry Director Joan Soucy shared this week, it was made possible "with \$20,000 and a banana bread."

When the pantry first got underway as a church mission in 2009, it was a small endeavor located in the basement of the Andover Congregational Church that aided three families. But in the years since, that number has grown to more than 300; the temporary space in the church grew tighter, and the work that went into setting up the pantry and then breaking it down multiple times each week increased.

The solution was for the pantry to find a permanent place to call home, and that's exactly what became possible when the offer was made to let the pantry use the conference house located behind the church.

But as a nearly 200-year-old building, the structure was in need of a number of renovations. And, since the pantry relies solely on food and money donations from the community, renovating an entire building was a task that seemed near impossible.

Then, in 2014, Soucy learned about a contest sponsored by Walmart; food pantries from across the country could enter, and the 75 pantries that received the most votes on Facebook

during a 10-day period in December would each receive \$20,000 to renovate their food pantry.

As a small town, Soucy said people told her the win was unlikely.

"Everybody said 'Are you crazy? What's your chance in the whole United States your little old Andover is going to get it?'"

But get it they did; the town came in 70th, and Soucy received a check for \$20,000 in January 2015.

"We were really, really pleasantly surprised," Soucy stated. "It really would have taken about \$60,000 to get the building to what it is now, but we got lots of donations of wood and paint and you name it."

Over the course of the next year and a half, a number of renovations were made to the building including raising the foundation, fixing and adding new flooring, putting insulation in the ceiling and walls, bringing the electricity up to code, installing a heating and air conditioning system, painting and building handicapped-accessible ramps.

Most of the renovations were done by volunteers, including Soucy's husband Gil, as well as resident Bob Baxall, and Charlene Atkins who provided the landscaping around the building.

Meanwhile, Michaud Flooring in Columbia donated and delivered the flooring, and lumber was donated by Willard Lumber in Willimantic.

"We had to stop [with the renovations] because of winter and all that business, but finally we got it all done," Soucy shared. "And we got it done with \$20,000 and a banana bread!"

Soucy explained when the \$20,000 ran out, there was still some painting to be done.

"I went to Sherwin Williams in Willimantic and said 'Can I get some paint?' I figured I could get a little from one place, a little from another – but they said they'd donate it all!"

And so, Soucy laughed, "I said, 'How could I ever repay you?' and the manager said, 'You owe me a banana bread!' So I always say the renovations took \$20,000 and a banana bread."

Soucy added if money had allowed it, there were a couple of other things that would have been done, including the installation of gutters and a covered porch to shelter individuals who are waiting for the pantry to open – particularly in the winter.

"But the money's just ended so that's as far as we got. If we had some donations or fundraisers we would build something like that. I'm hoping for some sort of covering before winter sets in... We have this big dream that

maybe some nice person will come over and say 'we'll build you a covered porch right over the whole thing in return for having our name on it.'"

But, Soucy concluded, "Our dream really has come true with just being able to fix up the building."

A grand opening celebration and dedication took place last Saturday, May 14 and the pantry officially opened Monday. The pantry was dedicated to the memory of Manchester resident Len Parracino, a member of the Andover Sportsmen's Club who held six fundraisers and food drives for the pantry before his 2014 passing, and left a legacy through the request that all memorial donations in his name be made to the food pantry.

Individuals who would like to make a contribution can drop off non-perishable food items in the wooden donation box located behind the church. Checks can be made payable to "Andover Congregational Church" earmarked "Food Pantry Donation" in the memo and mailed to P.O. Box 55, Andover, CT 06232.

For more information about the Andover Food Pantry contact Soucy at joansoucy2114@yahoo.com.

AHM Welcomes New Substance Abuse Counselor

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Continuing its efforts to address substance abuse in the community, AHM Youth and Family Services recently welcomed a member to its team, Glastonbury resident Laura Zeppieri, who is filling the newly created position of part-time substance abuse counselor.

Zeppieri has worked in the field of substance abuse, addictions and recovery for the past 20 years. She received her master's degree in substance abuse counseling from Pace University, and is also certified in grief counseling and is a licensed drug and alcohol counselor.

Along with her new role at AHM, Zeppieri has also worked part-time for the Rushford Center, which is part of Hartford Healthcare, as a clinician in the adult outpatient services in Glastonbury for the past seven years. There, she also works with adolescents in the program, as needed.

"I've always worked in substance abuse and addictions and recovery which is really my passion," Zeppieri shared earlier this month.

"Like a lot of other people, I grew up with addictions and alcohol in my family," she said, "so I grew up, not thinking I wanted to be a counselor, but I always liked working with people."

And so, when she stumbled upon the master's program at Pace, "It just clicked like, 'This is what I have to do.'"

"And I followed that path," she furthered.

"For me, it's always been about creating a dialog and diminishing the stigma surrounding addiction; getting people more comfortable talking about addiction, and getting families to heal and recover. I think it's possible because I've seen it with my own eyes. I believe in it."

Zeppieri's work with AHM got underway April 26. She's filling a position that didn't exist at the bureau before and said "the idea of this position is exciting."

Her focus at AHM will be working with adolescents in the community and Joel Rosenberg, director of fundraising at AHM, explained her role will emerge as time goes on and "week by week as families start to come for services."

"Bringing Laura in to this agency has been a dream – a goal – for years now," Rosenberg, formerly the longtime executive director of AHM, explained. "It was not only the right time in terms of where the organization is at in terms of growth and age, but also in terms of where society is today, facing the opioid crisis. It's just a reality. It's a frightening time."

Having Zeppieri, he added, "is a beginning for us. A very exciting beginning."

One of the short-term goals for Zeppieri, Rosenberg continued, "is to make sure that if there are young people struggling with addiction right now that parents receive that service bridge, and start networking to receive the services that they need."

Educating the community will also be an

important part of the position, as will be providing support services not only for individuals who are just coming forward with concerns around addictions, but are already in recovery and need that ongoing support.

Speaking to the position's long-term goals, Rosenberg said, "The ultimate goal is to help young people that have experienced addiction maintain recovery; it's ongoing."

Zeppieri added, "There's no cure but recovery is being mindful – being present in every moment. It's not only knowing healthy coping strategies, but utilizing them in different situations. There's a saying, it's 'Prevention works, treatment is effective, and people recover.'"

And Zeppieri is now a part of the community to help make that happen.

AHM Executive Director Michelle Hamilton shared in a release on Zeppieri's arrival, "We feel incredibly fortunate to be bringing Laura to help teens and families in our communities struggling with substance abuse issues. Laura is a passionate advocate for the voices of recovery."

Zeppieri concluded, "I'm really excited to be at AHM and work with staff and with the schools, and the community. Everyone has been welcome and warm and open to ideas. I'd like to work as part of the team because I'm a team player and just really collaborate to figure out what the needs are and go from there. I'm just excited about starting from the ground up and



Laura Zeppieri

building what we need."

For more information about AHM programs and services visit ahmyouth.org or call 860-228-9488.

Colchester School Board Cuts \$190K from Budget

by Mike Thompson

Tasked by the Board of Finance to cut \$176,000 from its budget, the Board of Education Tuesday did that – and a little more.

Following last week's defeat at referendum of the proposed \$39.90 million 2016-17 school budget, the Board of Finance met last Thursday and reached a consensus that the school board needed to trim its proposed budget by \$176,000.

The next day, Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu met with other school administrators and devised a way to actually trim \$190,299 – with the bulk of it coming via a restructuring plan that will impact the town's middle schoolers, starting this fall.

The \$190,299 cut brought the budget to \$39.71 million, which is actually a .23 percent decrease from current year spending. It was officially presented Wednesday night to the finance board, which signed off on the idea. The Board of Selectmen met immediately afterward and set a town meeting date of Wednesday, May 25, with a referendum to follow Thursday, June 2.

What Mathieu proposed Tuesday – and what the Board of Education unanimously approved – was eliminating the current double block of English per day at William J. Johnston Middle School. Instead, students will only have one block of English per day.

The changes at WJMS result in the elimination of three certified English teaching positions, as well as three paraprofessionals (two full-time and one part-time). While the paraprofessionals are losing their jobs, Mathieu

pointed out the certified teachers aren't going anywhere. Rather, they're simply being transitioned to other open teaching positions in the school district. (Although, as a result of moving around the English teachers, one English teacher at Bacon Academy will be cut, due to seniority issues.)

In addition to the staffing implications, the change means less English instruction for middle schoolers each day, but more instruction in other subjects. That's because the school will shift from an eight-period day to a seven-period one. The overall length of the day will stay the same; rather, each class will increase from its current 44-minute length to 51 minutes. This would lead to, Mathieu noted, an additional 24-25 hours of instruction in those other subjects per year.

Mathieu noted this reformatting of the school day wasn't an entirely new concept to school board members. Indeed, the plan was to introduce this restructuring for the start of the 2017-18 school year, coinciding with the opening of the renovated William J. Johnston Middle School.

"[The way] it was going to work out, when we opened the new school we would've opened with a new schedule," Mathieu said, "but we just don't have that luxury [of waiting], given the budget constraints."

Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein admitted the restructuring was going to happen anyway – but said moving the process up a year was still "difficult to digest."

Still, Goldstein said, "It was what we needed

to do. We're being responsive to the enrollment decline and we're being responsive to the defeat of the first budget."

He said implementing the restructuring for the 2017-18 school year was itself being responsive to the enrollment decline, as that year's incoming sixth-grade class – the current fourth-graders – is projected to be 165, as opposed to the nearly 200 expected to enter the WJMS sixth-grade class this fall. That 165 number, he said, would have warranted the trimming of the teaching positions.

"We're doing it now because, this is where we're at budget-wise," Goldstein said.

Goldstein said there were "no other suggestions or discussion" at Tuesday's meeting of areas in the budget to cut. "This was the option presented to us," he said.

That option also included, in relation to the middle school restructuring, the addition of a part-time physical education teacher, to help keep class sizes manageable, WJMS assistant principal Carla Kennedy explained. The current teachers' contract gives teachers two non-teaching periods per day. So that means, in the fall, they'll be teaching five of the seven periods. But, since the stark enrollment decline predicted for 2017-18 hasn't hit yet, that means spreading out students over five classes instead of six. That would result in larger class sizes than the teachers' contract currently allows – which is 30 – so an extra section of physical education is being added to keep class sizes within the contract limits.

Also in the plan Mathieu presented Tuesday

was the reduction of a .4 FTE science position at Bacon, a .4 FTE world language position at Bacon, and a .1 FTE world language position at WJMS.

Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov noted Wednesday the \$176,000 figure his board reached a consensus on last week wasn't just some arbitrary figure. He pointed out that, following last Tuesday's budget referendum, the state budget was finally approved – and it resulted in a loss of \$349,000 in state funding to the Board of Education from what it received for the current year.

So, to bring the mill rate on the school side to no increase, Tarlov said a \$176,000 cut was warranted. The town's overall mill rate increase under that scenario would be .16 – and Tarlov noted the \$190,000 in cuts actually trimmed that increase a little more, so that, if the school budget is approved at the June 2 referendum, the overall mill rate increase will be .15.

For a house valued at \$243,000, Tarlov said, this translates to an extra \$25.50 per year in taxes. He added that if that hypothetical homeowner also has two cars assessed at a total of \$20,000, that will bring that person's overall increase in taxes to \$28.50.

The question remains: Will this cut to the school budget be enough to satisfy voters?

"I hope," Tarlov said. "But after seven years [on the Board of Finance], and multiple referendums in most of them, it's hard to know."

The town meeting on the school budget will take place Tuesday, May 25, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

Hebron School Board Reduces Kindergarten Sections

by Geeta S. Sandberg

In response to the April cut of \$38,500 the Board of Finance made to the education budget, the Board of Education voted last week to reduce the number of kindergarten sections offered next year.

The motion to make the reduction came after schools superintendent Tim Van Tassel recommended the move, citing current kindergarten enrollment figures for the upcoming year.

"We've been closely monitoring registration," he explained. "At this point in time, which is getting to a point where we have a pretty good picture of what's going to happen in the fall, there are 66 students registered."

If the school stayed with five teachers next year, that would mean classes with around 12-13 students. On the other hand, moving to four sections would mean two classes with 16 students and two with 17 students, which Van Tassel said was still "very reasonable."

Van Tassel explained the kindergarten team was included in the conversation surrounding the possibility "and is in support of this." He added his recommendation would also result in some extra funds beyond the \$38,500 that could be used to support the School Readiness preschool program if the state were to make cuts to that program's grant.

"Once we commit in that lottery [for slots in the program], if we were to lose funding, I don't think we could say in good conscience to parents that we're going to get rid of that program just because in June or July we don't have funding and we need to close," Van Tassel explained. "I think what this does – not as a long-term answer, just for this year – is it gives us some funding to offset any reduction. ... So that's my

recommendation."

Not everyone, however, was in support of the idea. Board member Carol Connolly suggested the funds come from other areas in the budget, recommending \$19,250 be reduced from the salary for the finance director, with another \$19,250 to come from the legal fees account.

Connolly mentioned the importance of class size, stating, "Data shows smaller sizes do have a direct benefit to the children."

She added it was possible more families could move into the district over the summer and raise those class sizes, but at the same time, some families "might be discouraged [from moving to town] when they see 16-17 students, because that is higher than Glastonbury and other jurisdictions."

But to board member Kevin Williams, it was important to work with known factors, not "what ifs" – such as whether people may move to town – and to trust the input from staff.

"The administration worked with the teaching team. If there was a specific concern raised by the team about what this might do to them or how it might impact their teaching I might be swayed," he said. "I tend to lean toward the side of the people who are in that classroom every day in terms of that level of direction."

Williams added, "We can't make decisions based on 'what ifs,' we have to make decisions based on what's in front of us. We will respond as any board has in these types of situations – when it happens."

Ultimately, the motion to make the reduction passed 6-1 with Connolly against.

* * *

Also last week the board increased tuition rates for the district's preschool program, following the lead of the School Readiness Council, which raised tuition for its preschool program in town to \$600 per month or \$6,000 per year for families who surpass the state median income level, up from \$350. (Families that fall below that level pay tuition based on a sliding scale determined by the state.)

Patricia Buell, the district's director of educational services, explained part of the reason for the increase was to bring the amount in line with the grant funds currently received by the state for each child, which is also \$6,000.

"So if we were to lose funding for three or five children [in the School Readiness program] and we are collecting that full \$6,000, it helps make the program viable" Buell stated, adding, "That leads us to right now."

Van Tassel explained each year that the Board of Education looks at increasing the cost of the district's preschool program, which currently stands at \$350 per month, as the cost of programming and services goes up. This time around, in light of the decision made by the School Readiness Council, he recommended "an incremental increase."

While he felt jumping from \$350 to \$600 was too much, "I do think it would be reasonable to go to \$450-500," Van Tassel said. "I think \$500 is still reasonable, to be honest with you, when you look at preschool and what childcare costs – I think some places charge a week for that."

Following Van Tassel's suggestion, board member Geoffrey Davis made a motion to increase the preschool tuition to \$475. He

amended that number to \$500, however, after board member Maryanne Leichter said even with that increase, the program was still "a bargain."

"My youngest kid is 31 and back in the Dark Ages, when he was 3-4, I paid \$400 per month for a school-type daycare," she said. "This is a bargain."

But to Connolly, \$500 was too much. She was in favor of a smaller increase, to \$400 per month, as well as potentially increasing the number of preschool sections to service some of the families currently on a waiting list.

"The School Readiness Program is to make sure everyone has access to a quality preschool program," he said. "But we can't have one program on one side of the hall that's \$6,000 and another that's a lot less, because parents would say 'sign me up for that one because it's less.'"

Board chair Erica Bromley responded to Connolly, saying the board had mentioned coming back to talk about changing the rates if the School Readiness Council were to do the same thing if the state didn't cut grant funding. In addition, she said the board could add discussion on the possibility of adding another section after the lottery had been completed.

"We could come back and make a change if we need to," she stated.

The motion to raise the tuition passed 6-1 with Connolly against.

* * *

The next Hebron Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 9, at 7 p.m. in the Gilead Hill School music room, 580 Gilead St.

Town, Local Business Construct New Bus Shelter in Hebron

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The town just got a bit more beautiful, thanks to the efforts of the Hebron Public Works Department and Country Carpenters, who worked together to bring a new bus shelter to the commuter lot at the intersection of Loveland Road and Wellswood Road near the Columbia town line.

"This was one of my pet projects," Town Manager Andrew Tierney shared this week. "I have several long-standing projects I wanted to see completed and so we [the town] approached Country Carpenters" about helping with the construction of a new shelter to replace an old one that was already in place.

"They were very open to the suggestion and they stepped up to the plate," Tierney continued. "Public Works tore down the old one, a masonry block was placed down to lift up the base of the structure so it wouldn't rot, and the new structure was installed."

He added, "It's beautiful. It's in the historic salt box style with a cupola and the gesture from Country Carpenters to assist the town and beau-

tify the town is great; the camaraderie between them and our Public Works crew was wonderful."

Country Carpenters' operations manager, Fred Brehant, added Wednesday, "We enjoy giving back to the community and when we were asked about the project we thought it was a good opportunity to put something nice in town that would enhance the look as you get into Hebron."

Brehant explained the company's garden shed design was customized to fit the spot at the commuter lot, and eastern white pine was used in the construction.

"Chris Dube, one of the heads of our site teams, went up there and worked with the gentleman that the town provided. Country Carpenters donated his time for him to be able to work with them," Brehant said.

He concluded, "We think it looks beautiful. The town did a great job staining it and we're very happy to have that sitting there as you enter Hebron and think it gives a good flavor of a nice colonial town."



There's a new bus shelter at the commuter parking lot on Route 66, the product of efforts by town staff and the donation of time and materials by Country Carpenters.

East Hampton Police Searching for Accused Identity Thief

by Elizabeth Regan

East Hampton police are asking for the public's help in finding a local woman with a long criminal history who's been accused of stealing mail from area mailboxes and using other people's personal information for her own gain.

Convicted felon Gail F. Saltus, 52, of 20 Middletown Ave., failed to show up for arraignment Monday at Bristol Superior Court and Wednesday at the New Haven Superior Court on charges related to a months-long crime spree involving identity theft and forgery, according to the state judicial branch.

A warrant for Saltus' arrest was issued by the Bristol court. In New Haven, the criminal clerk's office said a warning letter was sent and a new court date was scheduled for June 3.

Saltus' rap sheet goes back 20 years and includes more than 30 arrests, according to police.

East Hampton Police Chief Sean Cox said anyone with information on Saltus' whereabouts is encouraged to contact the department by calling the anonymous tip line at 860-267-9066.

A search of the Connecticut Judicial Branch online database revealed more than 60 pending charges against Saltus for incidents reported in Cromwell, East Hampton, East Haven, Meriden, Middletown, Portland and Southington.

Of the charges, 23 are felony counts of second-degree forgery, second-degree identity theft and third-degree identity theft. Misdemeanors include criminal impersonation, issuing a bad

check, fifth- and sixth-degree larceny, and breach of peace.

In the Southington case being handled at the Bristol courthouse, police said Saltus is accused of pocketing \$975 after she deposited five checks at TD Bank using someone else's identity and bank account information. The deposits were made over a two-day period in early March.

According to an arrest warrant affidavit from the Cromwell Police Department, Saltus used personal information belonging to an elderly Cromwell woman to cash five checks totaling \$1,413.31 at the drive-through of the Liberty Bank in Portland. A sixth transaction was thwarted when a teller asked Saltus for identification, which led Saltus to drive away.

Saltus told Cromwell officers she was on a high dosage of Oxycontin during the three-week period last September and could not remember passing the checks, the affidavit said.

She did, however, admit to using the elderly woman's personal information, which the affidavit said was found in a check mailed to Saltus' neighbor as a gift.

"[Saltus] stated the check had accidentally been put into her mail box by the mailman," the affidavit said. "Instead of returning the mail to the person it was addressed to...Saltus took it, opened it and collected the personal information [of the elderly woman] from the check which was enclosed in the envelope."

Saltus told officers she needed the money to survive because her status as a felon had left her jobless and unable to support herself, ac-

ording to the affidavit.

An arrest warrant affidavit from the East Hampton Police Department accuses Saltus of using credit card information from two local women to pay for a hotel room in Meriden last November.

"In October I went into mail boxes in East Hampton and took mail. The mail I took had personal information from other people," Saltus said in a sworn statement to East Hampton police.

The affidavit said a credit card stolen from one local woman's mailbox was rejected when the hotel tried to put it through. A second attempt with another local woman's credit card was successful, and a charge of \$741.02 was applied. An additional \$577.03 was charged to the stolen card when Saltus extended her stay, according to the affidavit.

"I didn't do this for drugs, I did it for shelter and to survive," she said in her sworn statement.

Saltus' charges in Middletown stem from \$320 in fraudulent checks – one for \$145 and one for \$175 – passed at Liberty Bank's Washington Street branch in late November.

According to the arrest warrant affidavit from the Middletown Police Department, a Middletown woman whose identity was allegedly used to obtain the funds told officers a \$36 electric company payment and a \$115.87 cable payment were taken from her mailbox on Nov. 23.

A bank employee said someone attempted to cash a \$36 check on Dec. 1 but was denied, the affidavit said. The employee also produced a photo of a check in the amount of \$115.87



Gail Saltus

that had been used to withdraw funds from the Middletown woman's account. The check was originally made out to the cable company but had "Gail Frances Saltus" written over it. A security professional with the bank told officers the check had been cashed at a TD Bank location.

Police in East Hampton, Cromwell and Middletown cited an extensive criminal history that includes convictions on multiple charges of criminal impersonation, forgery, larceny, credit card theft, credit card fraud, identity theft, drug possession, failure to appear and probation violation.

Hintz Car Tax Proposal Shot Down in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

An effort by Town Council Republican Ted Hintz Jr. to split motor vehicle tax payments for the town's biggest taxpayers into two installments was thwarted by fellow council members last week, who called the proposal "self-serving" and a "conflict."

The resolution Hintz hoped to pass – which ended up going nowhere – would have authorized the tax collector to split motor vehicle tax payments into two installments for those who owe \$1,000 or more, effective July 1.

The change would affect 55 out of more than 14,000 motor vehicle tax bills that are sent out, Tax Collector Nancy Hasselman told members of the council at their meeting last Tuesday, May 10.

An RV owned by Hintz comes in at number seven on the list of the highest car tax bills in town. He paid \$1,603.46 in 2014 on the vehicle, according to a spreadsheet compiled by Hasselman.

Democratic councilor James "Pete" Brown pointed to Hintz's spot on that list when he said he had a problem with the proposal based on whom it was coming from.

"Isn't that a little conflict? We're going to

vote on something that benefits on you," Brown asked.

"That benefits 55 people in town," Hintz said. "But [54] of the other people are not going to vote on this," Brown replied.

The combined total paid by those with tax bills of \$1,000 or higher in 2014 was \$68,638.59. Most of those vehicles were owned by Eversource Energy or the DATTCO bus company, while the rest were high-end cars or campers.

Hintz pointed out real estate and personal property tax payments over \$100 are already split into two payments in East Hampton. He also cited Middletown and Marlborough as area towns that have applied the semi-annual schedule to car tax payments.

Middletown splits motor vehicle taxes over \$100 into two equal payments, according to the city's website.

Hintz said Marlborough has raised the threshold for split car tax payments from \$500 to \$800.

Hasselman told councilors discussion with other towns and tax collection professionals indicate splitting the tax bill for motor vehicles

is not a common practice in the state.

She indicated that collecting a second payment adds a layer of complexity to the process of bringing in revenue to the town.

"It would be a problem," she said. "Midstream, people leave. They move out of state. They move out of town. It's tough enough trying to catch up with them, but splitting it in two..."

Hintz reiterated that it seems to work for real estate and personal property tax bills.

"If we can split the property tax for a hundred dollars, why not give the benefit of the doubt to 55 people that are paying an exorbitant amount on their car tax bill," he asked.

According to Brown, the loss of six months of interest is one reason not to do it. But Hintz brushed that aside by saying the town would only be losing interest on \$30,000, which is half of the total amount paid by those with tax bills of \$1,000 or more.

Republican council member Mark Phillhower wondered aloud if the proposed change could be a draw for those who might otherwise be inclined to register their vehicles in states with

more favorable tax policies.

Councilor Melissa Engel, a Republican, didn't think simply splitting one bill into two installments would have much of an effect on town revenue.

"My thought would be they're going out of town and registering because, for some reason, it's been made easy for them to do that. I don't think splitting their bill in half is going to bring their car back," she said.

"You're right, it is very easy for me to go register it in another state, as many people do in town," Hintz said.

"I don't know that having them pay it twice is the answer," Engel replied. "They'd rather pay less, or none, which is why they register them in other states."

Chairwoman Patience Anderson said she was inclined to go with Hasselman's recommendation not to pass the resolution based on the tax collector's years of experience and the fact that she's the one who would be administering the change.

"And I'm sorry, I do think it's a bit self-serving, Mr. Hintz," Anderson added.

Portland Selectmen Approve 32.51 Mill Rate

by Elizabeth Regan

The Board of Selectmen Wednesday approved a lower than anticipated mill rate resulting from changes to the state budget made in special session late last week.

The approved mill rate is 32.51, an increase of 0.17 mills over the current year.

A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Under the new mill rate, if a house is assessed at \$200,000, taxes paid on it for the 2015-16 fiscal year would be \$6,502. That's an increase of \$34 over the current year's tax payment for that home.

When voters came out to last week's referendum to pass the \$32.49 million 2016-17 budget on the first try, all indications pointed to a mill rate of 32.66. That would have been an increase of 0.32 mills over the current year. But changes to the amount of municipal aid received by the town as well as the way in which the state administers its property relief program drove down the expected increase.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said the mill rate reflects \$4.72 million in revenue from the state. That amount represents a decrease of approximately \$150,000 in funding

compared to the current year, but selectmen last month adjusted their revenue estimates and expenditures to account for an expected decrease of \$200,000. The addition of that \$50,000 difference to the revenue side is one factor in driving down the mill rate.

Another factor is a change to the law passed by the legislature last year that capped car taxes at 32 mills and allocated half a percent of the state's sales tax to help make up for the loss in cities and towns with higher mill rates.

That law would have required Portland to use two mill rates: one for motor vehicles at 32 mills and another for all other property at the rate approved by selectmen.

But the state budget and the policy changes to back it up changed the motor vehicle cap from 32 mills to 37 mills. That means the state no longer requires Portland to apply a lower mill rate to motor vehicles.

The rise in anticipated revenue from motor vehicles is the other main reason the mill rate is lower than officials thought it would be when they presented the proposed budget to voters.

East Hampton Police News

5/3: Dennis P. Donovan, 52, of 6 Pine Tr., was issued a summons for misuse of plates and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, East Hampton Police said.

5/9: Robert Clark Strickland, 38, of 10 Starr Place, was taken into custody pursuant to an active warrant for his arrest. Strickland was charged with using a motor vehicle without permission, police said.

Obituaries

Colchester

Martha Hughes Paty

Martha Hughes Paty, 92, of Colchester, peacefully passed away in her sleep Thursday, May 12.

Martha was predeceased by her beloved husband, John; her sisters, Evelyn Giordano and Vivian Chapman; and her brothers, Olin, Gordon and Burton Russell.

She is survived by her three children, John, his wife Donna and their two children, Jennifer Valva and husband Chris; John Paty and wife Abbie; Susan Paty and beloved companion Molly the Boston terrier; Carol Price, her husband William and their children Kathryn and John. She is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Services were held Monday, May 16, at the Colchester Federated Church, located at 60 Main St. on the Green, with a reception in the Fellowship Hall immediately after. There were no calling hours and burial was private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to American Cancer Society and Colchester Senior Center.

For more information, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

David Harrison Frink

David Harrison Frink, son of the late Frances (Glowacki) Hanson and stepson of the late Melvin Hanson, passed away Thursday, May 12, at the age of 61. David was born July 22, 1954, in West Hartford, and attended public schools there.

He is survived by his wife of 30 years, Terri (LaRose) Frink; his adored daughters, Taylor Lynn and Kylie Lauren; his adopted son, Riberto Archo; his uncle, Joe Glowacki; and cousins, Joe, Jr., Chris, Doug and Sheri Glowacki and their families.

David had no siblings, but a brotherhood of close friends who will miss his smile and great storytelling. David had a passion for golf and would never miss an outing with his uncle and golf buddies.

Terri and the girls would like to thank his longtime friends Rob and Pat Whelan for their continued love and support, and Frank Panazza for his care and loyalty especially during David's illness. Many thanks for the outstanding care shown to David at the Smilow Cancer Center at St. Francis Hospital.

The family received guests Sunday, May 15, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy was celebrated Monday, May 16, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Following the repass, graveside services were observed Monday afternoon at Fairview Cemetery, Pleasant Street, West Hartford.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Bacon Academy Golf Program, Attn: Nancy Van Zander, 611 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Portland

Frances E. Schoell

Frances E. Schoell, 80, of Portland, wife of the late Kenneth E. Schoell Jr., passed away peacefully with family by her bedside Saturday, May 14, at Connecticut Hospice in Branford. She was the daughter of the late Laurence and Gwendolyn (Fish) Hall.

Born Sept. 27, 1935, in Bangor, Maine, she lived in Portland for most of her life.

Fran was a paraprofessional at Portland Middle School for over 30 years. She was a member of the First Congregational Church, Portland River Valley Garden Club, The Connecticut Horticulture Society, Portland Senior Center, Bears on a Journey, Connecticut Emergency Response Team, Portland Fair Committee, Clean Energy, Portland Youth Service Board, Portland Food Bank volunteer, Portland VNA, a longtime supporter of Wesleyan Potters in Middletown, and Heart of the Valley Quilt Guild. She was the recipient of the Spirit of Portland Award, along with many other recognitions for her volunteerism.

She loved reading, gardening, flower arranging, theatre, traveling, bird watching, sewing, painting, jewelry making, pottery making, watching sports; especially the Patriots, the Boston Red Sox, Nascar, and the UConn Huskies, volunteering, helping others, and spending time with her family, friends, her two cats "Chubs and Bumpy" and her adopted companion dog "Bonnie."

Her philosophy in life was to give back to her local community. She believed by doing so it made the town she lived in a better place.

She leaves her sons, Mark Schoell of West Hartford, and Kirk Schoell and wife, Rozanne of East Haddam; her daughter, Cheryl Tuttle and husband, Art of Portland; her daughter-in-law, Sonya Schoell of Portland; her grandchildren, Alexandra and Brendan Schoell of Portland; Mary Schoell of Narragansett, R.I.; Elizabeth Schoell of Willimantic; Chrystal Goodson and husband Justin of Marlborough; and Jessica Siavrakas, and her husband Michael; a great-grandson, Michael Gus Siavrakas of Meriden; her sister, Catherine "Katie" Palazzi of Andover; a brother Lawrence Hall of Somers; a brother-in-law, Louis Schoell and wife, Marge of Colchester; a sister-in-law, Marilyn Collins of East Hampton, and many nieces and nephews. She also leaves behind many close friends who were a large part of her everyday life and are considered family.

A celebration of life will be held today, May 20, at 10 a.m., at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, with a reception to follow. Burial will be in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. Relatives and friends called Thursday, May 19, at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to "Bears on a Journey," c/o the Portland Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave., Portland, CT 06480 or Connecticut Hospice, 100 Double Beach Rd., Branford, CT 06405.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.



Portland

Geraldine Z. Jacobson

Geraldine Z. Jacobson, 70 of Florida, formerly of Portland, passed away Sunday, Oct. 11, 2015. She was the daughter of the late Harold and Frances Zabiski.

Born Aug. 16, 1945, in Middletown, she grew up and lived in Portland for 62 years. She worked as an administrative assistant to the engineering department at Middlesex Hospital for many years until her retirement and was an accomplished master gardener.

She leaves her son, Robert Jacobson Jr. of Portland; her daughter, Jessica Jacobson and fiancé, Jose Arrastia of Portland; her beloved granddaughters, Paige and Kayla Lewis and their significant others, Benton Kopowski and John McDonald; along with her great-grandson, William Brayden McDonald. She has many nieces and nephews whose lives she has touched in many ways; Susan Collich, Colleen Fitzpatrick, Michele Jordan and Justin Lockhart, you held such a special place in her heart.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, May 21, at 10 a.m., at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will be in the Swedish Cemetery, Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Heart Association, 1 Union St., Suite 301, Robbinsville, NJ 08691-4183 or to Middlesex Hospital Hospice, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

Andover

Constance H. Bain

Constance H. Bain, 72, of Andover, passed away Thursday, May 5, after a hard-fought battle with cancer.

She was predeceased by her loving husband, Fillmore Bain and their beloved cat, Tiggee, and is survived by her two sons, Tim and Mick; her daughters-in-law Kristin and Kristin (yes, two Kristins); her five grandchildren, Justin, Kayla, Maddie, Aidan and Josh; her brother, Gerald; and by her dear and loving friend, Boyd Tuttle.

Connie raised her family in Hebron, and was an English teacher at both the high school and college levels for many years. She had many passions and talents that included: sheep, duck, pig and turkey farmer; cub scout leader; teacher; mentor; entrepreneur; rattle package queen; gingerbread lady; and fairy godmother. Connie was completely devoted to her family. When not spending time with, or bargain-shopping for something special for her grandchildren Connie could be found digging in the garden or laughing with friends.

Known by her grand-children and those closest to her as Bamma, she was an amazing mother, grandmother and friend. Her energy, imagination, playfulness and kind heart will be dearly missed.

A celebration of Connie's life will be held Saturday, May 28, at 2:30 p.m. at the Trinitarian Congregational Church, 54 Walden St., Concord, MA. All of her friends, relatives and people she held dear are welcome and invited to attend.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to either of these two charities:

- Little Free Library, which is dedicated to promoting literacy and the love of reading by building free book exchanges worldwide. (littlefreelibrary.org)

- St Jude's Children's Hospital. (stjude.org)

To sign the online memorial book, visit potterfuneralhome.com.



Portland

Catherine Anderson Mullen

Catherine Anderson Mullen, 65, of Portland, passed away Thursday, May 12, after a brief hospital stay, surrounded by her loving family.

Cathy was born April 29, 1951, the eldest daughter of Lucille Goodrich Anderson and the late Charles (Bud) Anderson. She spent her childhood on the family farm along the Connecticut River. In time, Cathy earned a scholarship to attend Sarah Lawrence College. After graduation, she traveled extensively, spending several years in Paris and Costa Rica. Upon returning to Connecticut, she established a 30-year professional career with Aetna Insurance where she was currently employed.

Cathy was known for her instinctive ability to love and nurture all animals. During her lifetime, she cared for dogs, cats, sheep, pigs, horses, cows, miniature donkeys, birds and a monkey. She was an accomplished cook and welcomed many into her home for a good meal and warm company, whether at her house overlooking the river or while spending time in Old Saybrook and Vermont.

First and foremost, Cathy was a loving mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, niece and aunt. She is survived by her four children, Kristen Luce of Waltham, Mass.; Charles Luce and his wife Erin of Revere, Mass.; Michael Mullen of Branford; Joe Mullen of Portland; and her two grandchildren, Charlie and Rosemary. She is also survived by her mother, Lucille; her two sisters, Nancy Anderson and Carol Castelli; and her three brothers, John, Jeffery and Danny Anderson; as well as her aunt and uncle, Margaret and Richard Kirsche.

She was predeceased by her father, Bud, her brother Charlie and Aunt Louise.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to: The Protectors of Animals, 144 Main St., Unit O, East Hartford, CT 06118 (poainc.org); or Zion Lutheran Church Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 202, Portland, CT 06480.

To leave an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

Marlborough

Bruce Rich

The world lost a really great guy when Bruce Rich, 62, of Marlborough took the next step in the journey of life Sunday, May 15, at Middlesex Hospital. Born April 28, 1954, in Bridgeport, he was the son of the late Peter and Dorothy (Wright) Rich.

Bruce was the beloved husband of Christine (Buehrle) Rich and he was the former owner of Ergonomic Products.

Besides his wife Christine, he is survived by his Aunt Katherine Wright of Murrells Inlet, S.C.; his two sisters-in-law and their husbands, Nancy and Ted Mao of Sherman, Janet and Frank Amendola of Sharon; three nieces, Elizabeth Andrews of New York, N.Y., Susan Mao of Brooklyn, N.Y., Bethany Garofala of Lutz, Fla.; a nephew, Peter Amendola of Tampa, Fla.; numerous cousins and many friends, including "The Pit Crew".

A memorial gathering will be held Saturday, May 28, from 1:30-3:30 p.m., in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Connecticut Fly Fishing Assoc. Education Fund, in memory of Bruce Rich, c/o Chuck Koteen, 98 Newport Ave., West Hartford, CT 06107, or to Habitat for Humanity of Eastern Connecticut, in memory of Bruce Rich 377 Broad St. New London, CT 06320 (or habitatect.org).

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Bruce was a caring and thoughtful man of the highest integrity who truly believed that he had a responsibility while he was here on earth to make the world a better place. His passions were fly fishing and kayaking and he devoted much time and energy to various organizations to help preserve and protect our oceans, rivers and lakes for future generations. He hoped his work would create a ripple in the world that will flow forward.

"There is a road, no simple highway. Between the dawn and dark of night.

And if you go, no one may follow. That path is for your steps alone.

Ripple in still water. When there is not pebble tossed. Nor wind to blow." (Grateful Dead)



Obituaries continued

East Hampton

Doris B. Carpenter

Doris May (Brechtbuhler) Carpenter, 91, formerly of East Hampton, went home to her husband of 52 years, Darwin R. "Carp" Carpenter Sr., Monday, the 16th of May. Carp predeceased Doris by 19 years and a day never passed that she did not miss him. They will spend eternity in each other's loving embrace.



Doris was born in Waterbury to Rose Mary Chasse and Charles Armand Brechtbuhler on June 29, 1924. She was predeceased by her sister, Diane; her brother, Armand "King" Charles; her father, Charles; and her mother, Rose.

She attended the Waterbury schools and graduated from Crosby High School, where she met Carp. Following graduation, she attended Post College and waited for Carp to return to her from World War II. They married Aug. 20, 1945, and built their life together, enjoying the pleasures of raising six successful children and watching 13 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren grow.

Doris worked as an administrative assistant in the family CPA firm. She also worked for Beasley Real Estate in West Hartford. She taught Sunday school at the First Church of Christ Congregational in West Hartford for nearly two decades. She was a volunteer at the Hartford Hospital Auxiliary Store for many years. Doris is a past president of the Suburban Women's Club and the Connecticut Federation of Women's Clubs. Every summer for several years, she ran a one-week camp on West Hill Lake for underprivileged girls. Mrs. C. cared for many as if they were her own, because there was always room for more in both her heart and her home.

Doris and Carp relocated their family to Melbourne, Fla., in 1982, where they enjoyed retirement and all the benefits of Florida living. Doris continued her goodwill volunteering tirelessly at the Daily Bread and the Cross Roads Community Church. She visited with her family, whom she loved very much, as often as possible. Since 2013, Doris was at home with her beloved daughter Holly, her son-in-law Peter, her two grand-children Peter and Amanda, and the "light-in-her-life," Ajalynn Rose.

Doris leaves behind her daughter, Dorislee Carpenter and her partner Pittman; son, Darwin R. "Corky" Carpenter Jr.; daughter, Betsey C. Farmer and her husband Douglas; daughter, Deborah C. Caufield and her husband Francis; daughter, Daphne C. Schaub and her husband Robert; daughter, Holly C. Perone and her husband Peter. She also leaves her grandchildren, Darwin III (Lara) and Kyle (Karen) Carpenter; Morgan (Emily), Malcolm (Carey), Gordon (Kate), and Douglas Farmer; Sarah (Gijon) and Colin Caufield; Charles, Cayla, and Thomas Schaub; and Peter (Sarah) and Amanda Perone. Doris also leaves her great-grandchildren, Alexander, William, and Jamie Carpenter; Avery, Caleb, Micah, and Miriam Farmer; Jonas Caufield-Polite, and Ajalynn Perone. She will watch them thrive, as well as countless others who loved and cared for her as she had for them.

Doris will be greatly missed and her memory may be best served by keeping her close to your heart and remembering her mantra and favorite proverb, "But for the grace of God."

Services will be private.