

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam and Portland

Volume 41, Number 8

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

June 24, 2016



Fireworks in Trouble... Hundreds gathered at the Portland Exchange Club Fairgrounds last year to watch the town's annual fireworks show. But, due to lack of donations, this year's display is in danger of being canceled. See related story on page 28.

Affordable Housing 'Threats' for Elmcrest

by Elizabeth Regan

The owner of the former Elmcrest Hospital property in Portland and a potential developer last week issued what one resident called "thinly-veiled threats" about affordable housing that could be built if the town does not push forward a proposal for 238 high-end apartments and a neighborhood shopping center.

The back-and-forth occurred at a contentious, hours-long public hearing of the Planning and Zoning Commission held to get feedback on an amendment to zoning regulations that would affect the former Elmcrest campus. The language change would let the developer build more apartments than is currently allowed.

The public hearing was ultimately continued to July 14.

Fred Hassan, owner of the property, told the commission and more than 120 people in attendance that he has other options if the development, known as Brainerd Place, can't go forward as proposed by his chosen developer, Dan Bertram of the Danbury-based BRT Corporation. Bertram is working in partnership with the Rochester, N.Y.-based DiMarco Group.

"We're trying to do good," Hassan said. "If we can't do something good, we'll have to do something else."

While he didn't elaborate on those other options, Bertram did.

"[Hassan and his partners] could sell their property to an affordable housing developer for more than they could get from us," Bertram told the commissioners and more than 120 mem-

bers of the public.

But Perry Avenue resident Karen Mazza, whose street runs adjacent to the property, stood up to respond to those assertions.

"I'd like to point out we have two very thinly-veiled threats: 'If you do not push this text amendment through, we will put something you don't like on this property,'" she said. "I implore this commission: do not be bullied."

A legal opinion from town attorney Kari Olson, requested earlier this month by the commission, explained that the state's affordable housing law is often used to circumvent local zoning regulations.

Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Bruce Tyler said Tuesday that he asked Olson for a primer on the state's Affordable Housing Act after Town Planner Deanna Rhodes said Hassan was considering the affordable housing option in the event the current proposed development falls through.

The affordable housing statute, commonly known as "8-30g," makes it possible for developers to build a high number of apartments for which they might not otherwise get approval – but only if less than 10 percent of the housing

See Affordable Housing Page 2

Inside....

Elmcrest Cost, Benefit Details

Page 30

'Cooker Josie,' 12, Competes in Food Network Show

by Julianna Roche

A blissful waft of butter and vanilla hit me the moment Chuck Burkhardt opened the front door to his Marlborough home, wearing a red plaid shirt and a huge white grin that screamed 'Southern charm.' He led me into the kitchen, explaining he and his daughter, Josie were in the middle of baking a cake for a family party, which was taking place later that afternoon to celebrate her 12th birthday.

Josie was dressed in a light blue jean dress, with long, strawberry blonde hair and a cheerful face speckled in freckles. At 12 years old, she may be just a kid, but standing in her home kitchen, she radiated a sense of poise and confidence that usually only comes with age. It was no surprise though, considering the young pitmaster recently made her television debut on a cooking show, Food Network's *Kids BBQ Championship*, hosted by Camila Alves and Eddie Jackson.

While she didn't always cook barbecue, Josie said she's been drawn to cooking since before she can even remember. In fact, according to her dad, she responded only to "Cooker Josie" between the ages of 3 and 5, and she's even kept her childhood cooking "supplies."

"I've been cooking since I was in preschool," Josie said. "I even took a little cooking class at

KinderCare, where you made stuff like mini pizzas."

"It's always been something she's been attracted to, which is good," Burkhardt added. "Food is important. The people at your table are your family, and having that connection... it just means a lot to me."

Growing up, Josie and her dad would play around in the kitchen with recipes, but their favorite is a dish they still make today – "sticky chicken" as Josie has dubbed it, their own take on baked chicken with gravy.

"I don't even know what's in it," Burkhardt said. "It's one of the things my mother made growing up. My brothers and sisters, we all have our own versions of it... it's sort of messy, so it's been sticky chicken ever since."

Josie said her grandmother, who she visits often in New Orleans, has also played a big role in shaping her cooking career.

"A lot of my flavors come from New Orleans 'cause that's where my grandmother lives... like spicy, Cajun-style, and putting all these different spices together to make something really amazing," she said.

It wasn't until Josie was 9 years old, however, that she actually fell in love with the art of barbecuing. That year, she started joining her

See 'Cooker Josie' Page 2



Twelve-year-old Josie Burkhardt was one of eight competitors on the Food Network's television show *Kids BBQ Championship*. Photo by Food Network.

Affordable Housing cont. from Front Page

stock in town is “affordable.”

A unit is affordable when those residing in it don’t spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent or mortgage payments.

According to the state Department of Housing, 8.36 percent of Portland’s housing stock was considered affordable in 2015.

A developer must ensure, via deed restrictions, that at least 30 percent of the units are affordable to households bringing in 80 percent of the median income or less. In Portland, that equates to a maximum of \$56,000 per year.

The state’s affordable housing law shifts the burden to the Planning and Zoning Commission to “establish why the development should not be approved, rather than why it should,” according to Olson’s written opinion.

Olson said some developers use the affordable housing law as a “stick” to convince the commission to accept a proposed development rather than risk an affordable housing development they have little or no control over.

“Obviously, this is a valid concern to a local commission because of the import of 8-30g on existing zoning regulations,” Olson wrote. “Under 8-30g, a developer may be able to build as many units as are feasible given land size and adequate water and sewer.”

Bertram said at the meeting he would not build affordable housing on the site. But he said if the project doesn’t move forward and he ends up leaving, he is prepared to recommend an affordable housing developer to Hassan.

* * *

Hassan and Bertram hope to revive the vacant property on the corner of routes 17A and 66 by attracting young professionals and retirees to small but luxurious apartments built alongside shops, restaurants and offices. Bertram has said the proposed Brainerd Place development includes the full restoration of one historic home on the property, the exterior restoration of another and the possible relocation of a third from the center of the site to the southwest corner.

More than a dozen residents at the public hearing weighed in on the proposed text amendment to the zoning regulations, which would allow the developers to build up to 16 housing units for each 5,000 square feet of commercial space as long as they “incorporate the preservation of significant historic resources identified in the town’s Plan of Conservation and Development.” Current regulations limit development to three units for each 5,000 square feet.

Statements from the Economic Development Commission and the Historical Society, as well as comments from a handful of residents, showed support for the regulation change, based largely on the way it ties development to the preservation of the site’s key historic homes: the 1851-52 Brainerd House, the 1830 Hart-Jarvis House and the 1884 Sage House.

A majority of those who spoke were opposed to the regulation, however. A key concern revolved around the height of the two apartment buildings in Bertram’s proposal. One of the buildings would be 3.5-stories tall at its highest point, which is where the underground garage becomes exposed. The other building would be 4.5-stories tall at its highest point.

But Tyler said project specifics are irrelevant to the zoning commission at this stage of the

process. He cut off Bertram during the developer’s presentation on the application and repeatedly admonished the public for talking about things like building size and potential revenue to the town.

Instead, Tyler asked those in attendance to limit their comments to the broader issue of changing the zoning regulations.

A text amendment with the same ratio of 16 housing units for every 5,000 square feet of commercial space was brought forward by the zoning commission itself at an April public hearing. The commission withdrew its application based on a lack of information about potential impacts, and asked the Board of Selectmen to initiate a study about the potential effect of the change on the school system, police department, fire department, utilities and taxes.

Selectmen did not act on the zoning commission’s request for a study by last week’s hearing. They had discussed a \$30,000 proposal by the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, a nonprofit economic development firm, for an analysis of the fiscal and economic impact of the proposed development, but did not bring it to a vote.

Opponents of the text amendment cited the lack of a fiscal analysis as one of the main reasons they felt the regulation revision should not be approved.

Vincent T. McManus Jr., an attorney for vocal Brainerd Place opponent Bruce Morrison, reinforced that view in a legal letter presented to the commission the day of the public hearing.

“A planning commission acts outrageously irresponsibly if they permit a development that they know that the town doesn’t have the sewer, the fire, the police, the Board of Education to accommodate,” McManus said before the hearing.

In his letter, he said the questions the commission asked in April still have not be answered and that “the very reason the [commission] withdrew its own application is equally valid today as it was then.”

Morrison identified himself as a developer and said he understands the obstacles the come with development projects.

“It’s not easy,” he said. “But I think there could be some compromise there.”

He balked at the idea of approving 240 housing units without knowing what that means for the town. If a study comes back showing the revised regulation won’t hurt town services or the taxpayers, he said, he’d be “all for” the proposal.

“I’ll stand up here and I’ll say ‘yes, let’s do this.’ But I want to see those numbers. I’m a businessman. The town of Portland is a business. We need to protect ourselves,” he said.

Before the public hearing was adjourned – but not closed – town attorney Joseph Schwartz of Murtha Cullina LLP explained the commission needed more time to research the issue and to respond to McManus’s letter.

The commission has 35 days to close the hearing once opened; members must make a decision within 65 days of closure with the opportunity for an extension of up to 65 additional days at the applicant’s request.

‘Cooker Josie’ cont. from Front Page

uncle in Medford, N.J., where she currently lives with her mom, Jennifer (she spends every other weekend in Marlborough with her dad and stepmom, Susan), to compete in barbecue competitions or “kid’s ‘cues,” as they’re called.

In these barbecue competitions, contestants compete in different categories and have as much time as they want to cook their dish, which can be anything from chicken to brisket. The only rule is they must turn in the dish by the given deadline if they want to be considered by the judges.

It was during the first annual “Kid’s ‘Cue” in Wildwood, N.J. that the Food Network noticed Josie. The network happened to be filming a pilot for another show there, and when they saw footage of her winning the barbecue competition, they asked if she would be interested in auditioning for *Kids BBQ Championship*.

Josie made the cut, along with seven other contestants between the ages of 10 and 13. During the six-episode series, which premiered on May 23, the young chefs competed in challenges like Luau Feast or Cowboy Campfire, which tested their BBQ skills and creativity on the grill. According to Josie, it was her recipes, and knowledge of spices and flavors that got her through the challenges.

“You would have your recipe in your head, because you definitely have to adapt it to the

challenge and add to it,” she said. “Like with the Hawaiian challenge, everyone was using pineapple for their coleslaw and the judges wanted us to try to put other fruits in our dish. So I grabbed a star fruit, which I thought counteracted the pineapple because it was very sweet.”

While Josie will not be competing in the sixth episode and season finale, which airs Monday, June 27, she was a strong competitor throughout the first five episodes, even winning a “Cowboy Campfire” challenge (in which she made pork chops with stewed apples and scrambled eggs), before unfortunately being eliminated. However, while the show may have come to an end for her, the cooking will not.

“I definitely think I want to keep cooking, and it might turn into a career eventually,” Josie said. “But I think I’d want to start a competition team like my uncle, because that’s a lot of fun and I’d say it’s more fun than having a restaurant because you’re more involved with it than what you’re doing at a restaurant.”

“I want to give her all the support she wants in all that she wants to do,” her father added. “If it ends up being a career, I’m all for it, and if doesn’t, it’s a hobby that takes her through college or high school, or whatever...I’m just happy and proud. I mean she made it – that’s it. Everything else is just sort of in the gravy.”

Communication Concerns Expressed at RHAM Board Meeting

by Geeta S. Sandberg

More than two dozen individuals turned out for the RHAM Board of Education meeting Monday night, and while several different issues were raised, a common concern ran through all of them: communication.

Many of those present spoke in opposition of the implementation of Standards Based Grading in seventh grade, which would change the traditional letter grading with number indicators that represent how well each student meets grade level standards: 1 for below standard, 2 for nearing expectations, 3 for meeting expectations and 4 for exceeding expectations.

In a May 26 letter from RHAM Middle School Principal Mike Seroussi and Director of Curriculum Lauren Fierman, available on the RHAM website, they wrote, "We believe it is in the best interest of all our students to have our grading and report cards be a clear statement of what students know and are able to do. Separating out homework, behavior and effort from the report of student mastery skills will allow report cards [to be] a clear reflection of student understanding."

Elementary school students in Andover and Marlborough are already on the letter grade system by the time they reach sixth grade. Hebron Elementary School recently switched to Standards Based Grading, and now uses the letters E, M, A, L for, respectively, exceeds learning standards, meets learning standards, approaching learning standards, and limited progress toward meeting a standard. At RHAM High School, the system goes back to letter grades, and there are no plans to make any changes there.

The May 26 letter wasn't the first time school administrators had talked about Standards Based Grading. Initially, their plan was to make the switch for both seventh and eighth grades next year, but in response to several parents

expressing a desire to see a more gradual implementation at a previously held meeting on the system, the decision was made to delay the eighth-grade transition and begin with seventh-grade students.

But many present June 20 felt changing the report cards in middle school at all would be detrimental.

John Pileski said in an email to the *Rivereast* that Standards Based Grading "looks like a job review, which as we all know tends to be vague, un-motivating, and encouraging of mediocrity."

He added at the meeting he didn't think the initiative had been adequately communicated to stakeholders.

"There's been a complete lack of transparency in the Standards Based Grading Initiative," he said. "A few people making decisions in a vacuum that have a 'don't ask for permission but ask for forgiveness attitude' is not how a system is supposed to work."

Hebron residents Tina Blinn and Jennifer Boehler also spoke against the proposed change and lack of communication. Blinn requested the Board of Education "review and possibly revise the district's communication policy," while Boehler asserted, "Not only has communication to parents been inadequate, but it feels to many like an intentional lack of communication exists to avoid conflict."

* * *

Along with Standards Based Grading, many present Monday spoke about the athletic director position at the school. The position is currently part-time and filled by Mark Logan, who has been with the district since 1979 as a social studies teacher, and since 2007 has also been its athletic director. Logan retired from teaching this year, but was re-signed as the athletic director. While some spoke in favor of the move and keeping with a part-time position, others

said it was time for "new blood" in the program and to make the switch to a full-time position.

And, once again, communication was mentioned as an issue, with some complaining the Board of Education had never indicated it would be re-signing Logan, nor did it ever advertise the position outside the school district.

Expressing concern with a "serious lack of communication," Hebron resident Randy Skoly told the school board, "We have very little opportunities as parents to communicate with you guys."

Further communication-related issues were cited by Marlborough First Selectwoman Amy Traversa, who said she was approached by individuals wondering why Marlborough won't allow RHAM to use the town's baseball fields. But, she said, no one from RHAM had ever expressed interest in the town letting the school use its fields.

"I can assure you it has never been mentioned to me," she said. "I received no emails, no communication whatsoever requesting it or I would have funneled it right over to Parks and Recreation."

Traversa also brought up the bomb threat found in a middle school bathroom last month – something she said she wouldn't have even known about had she not seen the news. And, she explained, when she reached out to administration about the issue she was told the responsibility fell on state police to inform her, but she said she'd confirmed with the police that wasn't the case.

"Not only was I in a position where I couldn't answer questions or sound like I was even remotely in the loop, the bigger problem was neither town [Marlborough or Andover; Hebron had been told about the threat, as the schools

are located in the town] would have been in any position to offer any kind of assistance had it been anything other than a juvenile prank," she said. "That's a huge concern. ... We're not just providing tax dollars. If you want a partnership, you need to be a partner."

* * *

Following public comment, board members addressed two of the issues residents had brought up. First, they voted unanimously to delay the implementation of Standards Based Grading.

"I can't say we've done the best possible job" surrounding the initiative and related communication, said board chairman Danny Holtsclaw. "I motion that the board direct administration to delay the implementation until it's properly communicated and presented to the board."

The school board also voted to have the athletic director position – and whether or not to move it from part-time to full-time – analyzed by the athletics and extra-curricular activities subcommittee.

Speaking this week to the communication issues brought up at the meeting, schools superintendent Bob Siminski said, "I think when you look at communication, it can take a number of forms and we've used the ones that are available to us right now. We've used the Alert Now messages, we've used the website, we've tried to conduct community conversations – and the attendance at those has been disappointing."

He added, "We've put announcements on the website, for example the whole parent handbook for Standards Based Assessments and grading was on the website. So we're using the classical tools that are available to us."

Siminski concluded, "I think we're going to continue to try to improve" and said "we've got to get parents to read what we send to them."

Pair Sentenced for Brutal East Hampton 2014 Assault

by Elizabeth Regan

Almost two years after East Hampton horse farm owner Lisa Rader was brutally attacked in her bed by an unknown assailant, two men have been sentenced for their involvement in the crime.

One of them is Matthew Frick, Rader's son-in-law; the other is James McMahon, the dishwasher at a now-defunct sports bar whom Frick paid \$600 to carry out the hit.

Frick, 29, of Portland, pleaded guilty in May to accessory to first-degree assault and conspiracy to commit first-degree burglary as part of a plea deal.

The deal for McMahon, 49, of Southington, consisted of guilty pleas for first-degree assault and conspiracy to commit first-degree burglary. His deal was entered in April.

Both men were sentenced last week to 15 years in prison for the first count and 10 years for the second count, plus three years of probation. The sentences will be served consecutively. They will be eligible for parole after 13 years.

Rader said Wednesday that the Sept. 16, 2014 assault left her with broken bones, 45 staples in her head and stitches all over her body. She also had a small brain bleed, which rectified itself.

An affidavit for the warrant for Frick's arrest said he told police the next day that Rader was a "crazy, evil person" who has made his life, and that of his wife, Amy, "a living hell."

Amy Frick is Rader's daughter. According to court documents, Amy Frick said she hadn't spoken to her mother in about 16 months at the time of the assault.

Matthew Frick said in the affidavit that the couple moved their horse business from Rader's farm, White Birch Farm, to a Portland site on Sand Hill Road.

Matthew Frick said he and his wife had made reports to the Portland Police Department complaining about slander, stalking and cyberbullying, all by Rader, according to the affidavit.

The affidavit described a search of the bedroom where the attack occurred, during which detectives found three items they believe were used by the assailant: a cast-iron fire poker with a broken tip found in a pool of blood; a dented and bloody cast iron kettle; and a heavy metal pot cover with blood on it.

McMahon said in his arrest warrant affidavit that he used his fists when he assaulted Rader because he did not want to kill her – but when she grabbed a fireplace poker to fight back, he blacked out and could not recall what followed.

Rader has said she doesn't remember calling 911 or being transported to St. Francis Medical Center, where she underwent surgery for her injuries and remained for nearly a month before spending 90 days in a nursing home.

It wasn't until May of the following year that Frick was arrested; McMahon was arrested the month after that. While Frick posted a \$250,000 bond the day after his arrest, McMahon has remained in jail since June 5, 2015 on a \$1 million bond.

Rader expressed satisfaction with the length of time Frick and McMahon will be behind bars now that they've been sentenced.

"Considering I didn't die, it was a pretty good sentence," she said. "If I had died, it would've been altogether different."

Rader said there is "a strong possibility" of a civil lawsuit.

She cited lingering health effects and medical bills she continues to add to a notebook of appointments, treatments and surgeries.

Connecticut State Police Det. Robert Given said Wednesday the case is officially closed. "However, if any additional information were to come to light, we'd absolutely reopen it," he said.

Amy Frick declined to comment on the sentencing.

According to police, McMahon had been employed as a dishwasher for seven months at the Plainville sports bar Frick had purchased in late August 2014 and owned until its closure in late September 2014.

It was there that McMahon overheard Frick complaining about his mother-in-law, with witnesses saying Frick frequently talked about wanting to "bash [Rader's] head in," according to the affidavit.

In an interview with detectives after his arrest, Frick said McMahon had approached him one day at work and said "If there is something I can help you with that is not work-related, talk to me."

Frick said he hired McMahon for \$600 to kill Rader, and that he had visited McMahon at his residence two days after the assault occurred, according to the affidavit.

In an earlier statement Frick gave on March

4, 2015 after a voluntary polygraph examination, Frick said his wife had no knowledge of and was not involved in hiring McMahon, to whom Frick referred at the time as an unknown male.

Amy Frick had also agreed to take a polygraph test, the affidavit said, but "did not qualify for participation without a medical release."

In his own statement provided in June before his arrest, McMahon said he asked for a full payment of \$1,000 for the hit, which Frick agreed to. McMahon also stated he intended to "rip off" Frick and not complete the hit.

But McMahon told police Frick contacted him daily after providing the initial \$600 payment, asking when "he was going to kill" Rader, according to the affidavit. McMahon also said that Frick had stated he told his wife he planned to have Rader killed.

McMahon said Frick provided him with a map of the farm showing the best path of entry to where Rader stayed and told him to arrive after the 11 p.m. news, the affidavit stated, when Frick thought she would be sleeping.

About two days after the assault, McMahon said Frick approached him and expressed frustration and anger that McMahon did not kill Rader. McMahon told police he did not return to work after that incident, the affidavit said.

Rader said seeing the convicted men "cuffed and stuffed" was a relief and that she's glad it's over.

"It was one of those stranger than true things," she said. "If anyone told me this story, I wouldn't believe them."

Impact of Elmcrest Project on Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

More details about the costs and benefits of building 238 apartments and a neighborhood shopping center on the old Elmcrest Hospital property are beginning to emerge.

A vocal majority of those at the June 16 public hearing of the Planning and Zoning Commission said they wanted information about the effect of so many housing units on the school system, police department, fire department, public utilities, and taxes. (A story about that hearing is on the cover of this week's *Rivereast*.)

Donald Poland, a planning consultant and senior vice president of Goman + York of East Hartford, submitted a two-page memo to the zoning commission prior to last week's public hearing. He told commissioners that increasing the ratio of housing units to commercial space in a mixed-use development is a way to achieve the preservation of the historic homes on the site and to make the development more profitable.

The new ratio, which would allow for the construction of 16 residential units for every 5,000 square feet of commercial space, is part of an application for a mixed-use zoning regulation change proposed by Dan Bertram of BRT Corporation. He's the developer behind plans to revive the former hospital site that's been vacant for over ten years.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said the town has contracted Poland's planning services as a response to the imminent departure of Town Planner Deanna Rhodes, who will leave at the end of the month to become Norwich's city planner. Bransfield said Poland will advise the town on larger planning projects, including the text amendment application currently before the zoning commission.

Poland also reported that concerns about the impact of a large number of apartments on the school system are unfounded.

"Unfortunately, such concerns are often based on past experiences and demographics trends that are no longer true," he wrote, citing average household sizes that have been declining since the 1970s.

According to Poland, the number of schoolchildren in town currently translates to 0.31 children per housing unit. A majority of the children – 81.5 percent – live in freestanding, single-family homes.

Poland anticipated the proposed amendment would result in a lower number of children per apartment.

He pointed to a study by Rutgers University's Center Urban Policy Research showing one-bedroom rental units generate an average of 0.04 schoolchildren per unit, while two-bedroom units generate 0.27 school-aged children per unit.

Poland described the potential impact on the Portland school system as "minimal, at best." Planning and Zoning Chairman Bruce Tyler did not allow discussion on the memo at the public hearing. In a phone interview Tuesday, he said the zoning commission is concerned only with health, safety and property values.

He indicated analysis of a development's effect on the school system does not fit into the commission's charge.

"I've been a commissioner for 13 years and we had never allowed fiscal viability to be a part of our discussions. And I didn't think it was appropriate this time either," he said.

But at an April public hearing on a similar proposal to change zoning regulations to allow more housing units, Tyler specifically requested such information from the Board of Selectmen.

"We want information on the impact of this change to schools, police department, fire department, utility system and taxes," Tyler said at the time.

He said this week he made the request "in case [the information] was already available."

The selectmen did not provide the requested information by last week's public hearing. However, Bransfield said selectmen will meet this Monday, June 27, to vote on whether or not to authorize Poland to conduct a more thorough review.

Bransfield said Poland would analyze the fiscal impact of three scenarios: maintaining the

status quo; approving the text amendment; or allowing a residential-only option that includes affordable housing.

The special meeting was originally scheduled for Thursday evening, but was postponed because a meeting notice was not posted online at least 24 hours in advance, as required by the state's Freedom of Information law.

When Tyler was asked if the commission would consider a fiscal impact review by Poland in its deliberations on the current text amendment application, he was noncommittal.

"As a planning consultant, certainly we would consider anything he wishes to present. Whether it's part of our decision-making, I don't know," he said.

Also at the June 16 hearing, Tyler prevented potential developer Dan Bertram from disclosing estimates about how much money the town can expect to receive from his proposed development. Tyler said the estimates are project-specific instead of relating to the broader application for changes to the zoning regulations.

* * *

After last week's hearing, Bertram and property owner Hassan spoke with reporters about potential revenue to the town if their project goes through.

Bertram estimated the town would receive \$2.75 million in revenue from the Brainerd Place development over a nine-year construction and tax abatement period. The figure assumes two years of construction and a seven-year tax break during which no taxes are collected on the new construction.

The town currently receives \$94,000 a year in property tax from the vacant site. The town would continue to receive that money during the construction and abatement period, combined with building and permit fees, motor vehicle property taxes, water and sewer fees, and taxes on commercial property within the new businesses in the shopping center.

Annual revenue after nine years would be \$1.24 million, according to Bertram. The de-

veloper said that's equivalent to almost 5 percent of the revenue necessary to balance the town's budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Property owner Fred Hassan expressed frustration with the resistance the proposed zoning regulation revision has received at public meetings over the past few months.

"Tell me who else in town is providing 5 percent of the town revenue that they're giving this kind of headache to," Hassan said.

Hassan and Bertram were both members of the steering committee involved in the preparation of a market analysis and concept plans for the Elmcrest property through a Vibrant Communities Initiative (VCI) grant through the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation.

The study was carried out by the Cecil Group, a community planning firm, in consultation with members of the municipal, business and volunteer community as well as through multiple focus groups of residents.

The VCI study recommended a mix of residential and business construction laid out in a quaint style around the site's three historic buildings. It also specified the town should explore zoning changes, including an increase in residential units, as a way to support the community's shared vision for the property.

Hassan and Bertram have repeatedly emphasized that their proposal is a direct result of the study's findings.

According to Hassan, whose ties to Elmcrest Hospital go back 45 years, the proposed development is also a continuation of Elmcrest Hospital's tradition of community involvement.

"When Elmcrest was in full operation, they fully supported the community: they donated to the fire department, donated to the police department, donated to the food bank. They opened up their community rooms to town meetings, created countless jobs," Hassan said. "We're trying to come in and do something, continue representing the doctors. They would have liked to see that same concept followed through."

Middlesex Hospital to Charge Marlborough for Paramedic Services

by Julianna Roche

For the last 40 years or so, Middlesex Hospital has provided paramedic services to Marlborough residents at no cost. That will no longer be the case beginning July 1, when the hospital's new cost-share agreement with the town takes effect.

The cost-share agreement states that to offset the current costs for paramedic services, Marlborough will pay \$1 per capita in the first year, with the cost increasing each year by \$1, resulting in the town paying \$5 per capita in the fifth year. According to First Selectwoman Amy Traversa, the town has made a one-year commitment to the paid service, but can opt out of it at the end of the year if Marlborough officials find it doesn't meet the town needs.

"This is the impact of the state budget that Marlborough residents don't see," said Traversa. "They [the legislature] keep patting themselves on the back that they haven't raised taxes, but they have, because somebody has to fund these necessary services."

Currently, when Middlesex Hospital charges Medicare, Medicaid or private insurers for a paramedic response, the hospital is reimbursed at a lower rate than the state-approved rate,

which has left them to cover the costs not reimbursed.

Because the hospital-based paramedic service is considered an intercept program rather than a transport program (since they do not transport their own patients), much of the reimbursement is withheld. This, paired with the \$21 million budget cut the hospital is faced with for the upcoming fiscal year, has left them unable to continue providing free paramedic services.

"A couple of years ago, they [Middlesex] were paying nothing in state taxes," Traversa said. "The last year in particular though has hit them so hard, they're no longer willing to afford being able to pay for it out of pocket."

The hospital's paramedic program, which started in 1987, has three paramedic units, located in Westbrook, Middletown and Marlborough, and covers a total of 19 towns. The paramedics are on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and provide a high-level of care, including responding to advanced life support (ALS) calls.

According to Mark Merritt, head of the Roy B. Pettingill Ambulance Association, paramed-

ics are unique in that they can provide on-scene care that mirrors the level of care a patient would get in an emergency room.

"With the paramedic services, it's like bringing the emergency room to you," he said. "Paramedic programs aren't designed to make money. They're more designed to bring the hospital services to you, with the hopes that it'll then bring in more business to the hospital."

According to Merritt, the town of Marlborough has agreed to and will be responsible for paying \$4,500 this year in order to continue receiving the services. Merritt said that while paying for the paramedics is unfortunate, the town at least wanted to try it for the first year and see where it goes, as it's a necessary public service.

"Public safety is of utmost importance and this has been something that the town has come to rely on," said Traversa. "Now, we need to make sure that our citizens are being taken care of in the best possible way."

Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom agreed. "The Middlesex paramedic service is

an integral part of Marlborough's public safety services in conjunction with our EMT volunteers," he said. "In spite of the new charges for the service, and proposed future increases to those costs, I supported the continuation of our participation with the health and safety of our residents being my top concern."

According to Traversa, the town of Marlborough has also negotiated a five-year contract with dispatch center, Tolland County Mutual Aid Fire Service, Inc., who provides dispatch services to 17 towns encompassing 24 emergency service organizations within Tolland, Windham Hartford counties.

Beginning July 1, they will start providing Marlborough with all of their 911 services. They'll also become responsible for dispatching and coordinating all medical, rescue, or fire emergency services.

"We are anxiously awaiting July 1 when we can start providing services to the town of Marlborough," said executive director Tyler Millix. "We are so pleased to work with them, everyone from the Board of Selectmen all the way to the fire department."

Plans for Carter Hill Bed-and-Breakfast Approved

by Julianna Roche

Mitch Lichatz has been thinking about opening a bed-and-breakfast for years, so when the Zoning Commission recently approved his and his wife Hazel's plans for one earlier this month, he was ecstatic.

"Dad has been talking about it forever," said Erica, his 26-year-old daughter, who also lives and works on the property. "I remember years ago he used to look over at the other property and be like, 'How cool would it be if we could have a farm and raise animals, and have a bed-and-breakfast and an ice cream place?'"

The Lichatz family, who restored the Carter Hill Filling Station last August, also own the Carter Hill house on 86 East Hampton Rd., which is in the process of being renovated into The Farm at Carter Hill B&B. According to Mitch and Hazel, the B&B will have three bedrooms, a sitting room, and a kitchen serving breakfast.

In addition to the B&B, at the June 2 meeting, the zoning commission also approved the Lichatz's plans for a greenhouse, fruit and vegetable garden, outdoor eatery, and country store, all of which will play a huge role in the B&B experience.

For example, Erica and her boyfriend Conor Walsh, who also lives and works at Carter Hill, have been working diligently on a one acre vegetable garden, which is already home to a variety of tomatoes, different types of squash, beans, kale, corn, mushrooms, sunflowers, even their own herbs. The food produced at the farm will be used to cook within the B&B kitchen and also sold in the country store.

"It's really interesting. We were recently looking at a big map of what it was like in the 1930s and '60s, and there used to be so much agriculture land here in the town," said Erica. "Now, there are hardly any farms left here, so we want to bring that back and show people what it's like to actually work with the land and be sustainable, and know where their food

comes from."

"It's a small town," added Hazel. "I love the country; people are all friendly here. And we mainly stayed because we saw an option to change something, and to see something different come into Marlborough and bring the old town back."

Hazel said she hopes The Farm at Carter Hill will not only bring something new to Marlborough with the B&B, but it will also help the community get back in touch with its roots, similar to what the Carter Hill Filling Station did. Last summer, Mitch purchased the vacant, crumbling, lime green former gas station next door, at 78 East Hampton Rd., and he and Hazel restored it to resemble how it looked in its former 1930s glory. The spot has now become something of a tourist attraction.

According to the family, just as they did during the restoration of the filling station, members of the community have once again been donating all kinds of antique relics from their own lives, which are already being used to decorate the B&B interior and the country store.

"The younger generation is all about 'how much can this get me, what is this worth,' but the older generation is all about appreciating history – that's why they give away things, they know it's going to be well taken care of," Walsh said. The Carter Hill property may be under renovation, but the family said they hope it will also show appreciation for Marlborough's town history.

While there is not yet a set timeline for the B&B opening, on Saturday July 2, The Farm at Carter Hill will open its country store and outdoor eatery to the public, which will be serving 12 different flavors of homemade ice cream. In the next phase of the renovation, the family expects to have a greenhouse, a hop yard, and additional garden space.

According to Erica, once the greenhouse is built, the farm will be able to provide produce locally for 11 months out of the year, and will



Mitch and Hazel Lichatz recently gained approval for a bed-and-breakfast at the Carter Hill house on 86 East Hampton Rd.

hopefully bring the town together with hands-on programs, like a community-supported agriculture (CSA).

"We are also going to have a CSA – so all the produce that we have here through the gardens, we're not only going to be using and selling through the farm store, but we're also going to have a program where people in the community can join in and have their share of the agriculture," said Erica.

The B&B property will also have walking paths, giving visitors the chance to tour the old barn and see the farm animals – which currently include goats, turkeys, ducks and sheep. An outdoor movie screen will also be added, serv-

ing as a "drive-in" movie theater for the public. The Lichatzes plan on having free movie nights every Saturday night.

"We really love the community and getting involved in it," Erica said. "So we're excited to be able to offer the free movie nights for them, and see people come and share their stories, reminisce about old times, have good food..."

"And great spirits," Hazel added.

The Farm at Carter Hill will open its outdoor eatery to the public on Saturday, July 2. To get more updates on the progress of the B&B and upcoming events, visit The Farm at Carter Hill on Facebook.

September Vote Slated for Colchester Senior Center Purchase

by Julianna Roche

After a Q&A session at the senior center Wednesday, it's clear that town officials are beyond ready to move forward with the purchase of the current Colchester Senior Center on 95 Norwich Ave., with tentative plans to go before voters at referendum mid-September.

The building is currently owned by the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees, and was initially the Bacon Academy Arts and Sciences building when Bacon Academy itself was located at 84 Main St. When the current Bacon Academy opened its doors at 611 Norwich Ave. in 1964, arts and sciences moved there. Since the 1980s however, the 95 Norwich Ave. building has been the town's senior center.

However, while the town currently rents the building for \$16,000 each year, the trustees have said they can no longer afford the building and need to raise funds to restore and update the old Bacon Academy. That, paired with the fact that the town's elderly population is growing drastically (in the next 10 years, 40 percent of Colchester's total population will be ages 55 and up), has led to a consensus among town officials and residents that the purchase of the building is an absolute necessary step to even-

tually building a new senior center.

The purchase "helps trustees move forward with their hopes to really secure the original Bacon Academy building," says Senior Center Negotiating Committee and Board of Selectmen member Stan Soby.

According to town officials, the \$275,000 purchase of the senior center will allow seniors to continue receiving services uninterrupted while a new senior center is being built. (Plans for a new senior center, though, are not set in stone; town officials are currently scouting locations.)

"We see this as a transitional space," said Senior Center Negotiating Committee and Board of Selectmen member Rosemary Coyle. "Whenever you go into a building program, it takes about three to five years, so during that period of time, we don't want to disrupt senior services. We want it to be a smooth transition."

During the meeting, town officials were adamant about making it clear to Colchester residents that the purchase of the senior center would absolutely not raise taxes because the purchase would not be made with new taxpayer dollars. Instead, it would come from the

undesignated fund balance, which is a reserve of funds budgeted but not expended during previous fiscal years. Fund balance policy allows for one-time capital purchases like the purchase of the senior center, after a favorable referendum vote by Colchester citizens.

"This whole process will have absolutely no effect on taxes," said Soby. "The boards are unanimously in support of the new senior center."

"This is the most cohesive I've seen the boards and everyone working together for one goal," agreed Coyle. "The time is right for citizens, but the time is also right financially for us."

During the meeting, town officials encouraged seniors to spread the news on what they learned at the Q&A session to other Colchester residents to raise awareness about the building purchase and the center's importance for the senior community.

"I don't know if many people know how important this building is to us," said Dave O'Brien, a senior center member. "I bet 90 percent of people who have never been in this

building have absolutely no idea how helpful it is."

"The people in this room can make a difference. ... There's enough people in the senior membership of this center to pass this itself," said First Selectman Art Shilosky. "We want this for the seniors... I'm totally dedicated to getting this done. We will do it 'til it gets done."

Senior Center Negotiating Committee and Board of Finance member Andreas Bisbikos agreed with Shilosky. "To me, this is a moral imperative to this community that we have this senior center in town," Bisbikos said. "This is phase one, but ultimately our goal is a new senior center."

While the tentative referendum date isn't until Sept. 13, committee members said they would spend the summer months to continue educating and raising awareness about the purchase of the senior center.

"We just want to wait until everyone is back from summer vacations because it's not fair to do it [the referendum] while not everyone is here," said Rosemary Coyle. "That's just not the way we do things in Colchester."

Big Y Coming to Marlborough

by Julianna Roche

News broke Wednesday of a much-anticipated development coming to town – a grocery store.

First Selectwoman Amy Traversa announced on Facebook that a Big Y World Class Market will open in town in the fall of 2018.

The supermarket and pharmacy will be located at 1 Independence Drive and Route 66. It will be a 55,000-square foot store, housed within a proposed 100,000-square foot retail center; the other 45,000 square feet would be for additional retail space.

Once it opens, this would be the 65th Big Y market, with locations already scattered throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts. And it would also be Marlborough's first grocery store of any kind since Pat's Market closed in 2012.

"Marlborough is thrilled to have been selected by Big Y World Class Market as the site for their new grocery store and pharmacy,"

Traversa said. "This development is exactly the kind that Marlborough hoped for, and I believe it will somehow snowball into further development of properties in town."

The supermarket, developed and marketed by Marlborough Development Partners LLC, a division of New England Retail Properties, Inc. in Wethersfield, represents an investment of over \$10 million by Big Y into the local community.

"We are excited to announce this addition to our Connecticut community of stores," said Charles D'Amour, Big Y's president and COO. "We look forward to bringing Big Y's world class service, quality and selection closer to shoppers in Marlborough and surrounding communities."

The project itself will also provide a variety of opportunities both for local contractors during the construction process, as well as more than 130 full and part-time positions once the store itself opens.

Portland Fireworks Show in Doubt

by Elizabeth Regan

The Portland Fireworks are fizzling.

Two members of the fireworks committee told the Board of Selectmen last week the annual pyrotechnic display, scheduled for July 30, is in danger of being canceled due to lack of funds.

Fireworks Committee Chairwoman Sharon Hoy lamented that the financial uncertainty comes during what is supposed to be the most celebratory of years: the 175th anniversary of the town's incorporation.

Committee member Jill Deane said the group of about 15 volunteers has only managed to bring in \$10,000 of the \$30,000 goal. The committee spends about \$20,000 on the fireworks and pyrotechnician, while \$10,000 goes toward expenses for the large-scale event that brings in thousands of people annually.

"This year the money just isn't coming in," Deane said Wednesday. "There's no rhyme or reason; it's just not coming in."

She said she needs to make a decision about whether or not to cancel the Portland Fireworks in "a week or so."

The committee has never missed a year because of funding problems, according to Deane.

There have been lapses for other reasons, however. The event was canceled in 2006 for flooding, 2011 due to inclement weather, and 2014 because of a bridge repair on Route 17A.

The show began in the early 1990s under

the direction of retired Sgt. Mike Dapkus of the Portland Police Department, a fireworks aficionado who provided the fireworks at cost and donated his time to carry out the display. Dapkus stepped back after almost 20 years with the show in 2008.

Dapkus called for the creation of a fireworks committee before his departure, to ensure the event's continuity.

Deane said the committee relies on donations from residents, local businesses and even out-of-towners who want to support the colorful, extravagant tradition.

Deane said it would be ideal to bring in one or more local businesses to serve as an event sponsor with a large donation.

Selectmen did not authorize any funds last week but said they will consider the request at their July meeting. But they did suggest the idea of collaborating with the 175th Anniversary Committee to perhaps piggyback on the parade scheduled for September.

175th Anniversary Committee Chairwoman, Mary Flood, said she would welcome conversation on the topic at the committee's meeting scheduled for yesterday night after press time.

While she said she hasn't been approached by anyone on the Fireworks Committee about the idea, she said it can be added to the agenda as new business.

"We can certainly discuss it," Flood said.

Five Injured in Andover Route 6 Crash

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Five were injured – and LifeStar was called – following a head on collision on Route 6 last Friday, June 17.

According to State Police, the crash occurred just before 7 p.m. June 17 near the intersection of Bailey Road.

The driver of one car, Lan Zhang, 44, of Mansfield was transported to Manchester Hospital with minor injuries. Meanwhile, the passenger in her car, Jiayu Wang, 23, of Mansfield was transported to Hartford Hospital via LifeStar with serious injuries.

Also taken to Hartford Hospital with seri-

ous injuries was Madison Flores, 13, of Willimantic, a passenger in the second vehicle. The driver, Brittney Flores, 19, of Willimantic, as well as another passenger, Sage Graves, 16, of Mansfield, were taken to the hospital for minor injuries.

As of Wednesday, Wang remained in the hospital.

The crash is currently under investigation and state police ask anyone with information to contact Trooper Kaila Michonski at 860-465-4064.

East Hampton Police News

6/6: Ryan P. Omara, 31, of 180 Sheepskin Hollow, East Haddam, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, misuse of marker plate, operating a motor vehicle without a license and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

6/10: Rosalind M. Vecchitto, 69, of 163 Champion Hill Rd., was issued a summons for shoplifting (sixth-degree larceny), police said.

6/12: Michelle L. Marshall, 33, of 90 East Plymouth Rd., Terryville, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and improper right turn, police said.

6/13: Alan Alexander Paris-Quezada, 26, of 157 Colchester Ave., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

Colchester Police News

6/18: Colchester Police said Richard McCormick, 38, of 112 Midland Dr., was charged with interfering with an officer, disorderly conduct and threatening.

Andover Police News

6/15: A juvenile was charged with assault and breach of peace following an incident on Boston Hill Road, State Police said.

Hebron Police News

6/19: State Police said a 17-year old juvenile was charged with operating under the influence of drugs/alcohol, failure to drive right, possession of drug paraphernalia with intent to use, possession of less than half an ounce of cannabis and first-degree forgery.

Four-Car Crash on Route 66 Marlborough

A four-car crash on Route 66 sent two to the hospital Monday morning, June 13, State Police said.

The crash occurred just before 8 a.m., near Blackledge Road. Police said a Ford Explorer driven by David Theodore Thurz, 36, of South Glastonbury, and a Honda Pilot EX driven by Jerome Isaacs, 46, of Wethersfield, were stopped for a school bus, while Marshall M. Stockburger, 44, of East Hampton, was traveling behind them in a GMC Sierra K.

Police said Stockburger's vehicle struck Thurz's from behind, pushing the Ford Explorer into Isaacs' vehicle. Stockburger then traveled into the oncoming lane of traffic, striking a Chevrolet Cavalier driven by Brittney A. Morey, 27, of Columbia, which was traveling westbound on Route 66.

Both Isaacs and Morey were transported to Marlborough Medical Center with minor injuries, police said.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Russell Pekari

Russell Pekari, 54, died suddenly but peacefully early Tuesday, June 7.

Born in 1961, Russell attended East Hampton schools, having graduated in 1980. He was an exceptional athlete, excelling in baseball, basketball and soccer. He relocated to North Carolina, where he owned and operated a landscaping business, until severe health issues occurred.

Russ loved his faith, spending time at the ocean, his boat and fishing at the Outer Banks.

He is survived by his mother Phyllis; his sister and brother-in-law, Sheila and Steven Mongiat of Waterboro, Maine; his two cherished nephews, Corey and Andrew, also of Waterboro, Maine.

He was predeceased by his father, Robert.

A very special thanks to his co-worker and good friend Luis and Luis' family for their support and care they showed him. It is greatly appreciated.

He will be missed by his many friends.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time, but, honoring Russell's wishes, will be held in North Carolina.



Colchester

Samuel John Johnston

Samuel John Johnston, of East Hartford, a longtime resident of Colchester, died at home Monday, June 13, at the age of 67. He was born in Hartford Jan. 7, 1949, the son of Robert and Josephine (Gladkowski) Johnston Sr., late of Colchester.

Sam grew up in Colchester, attending the former Central School, graduating from Bacon Academy with the Class of 1967. He went on to earn his Bachelor of Science degree in business from the University of Connecticut in 1974. Sam worked as an auditor for the State of Connecticut for nearly 30 years before his retirement. He greatly enjoyed travel vacations and intense political discussions with his friends. Sam was known for his big heart and will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

He is survived by his brother and sister-in-law, Robert and Eunice Johnston of Glastonbury; his niece, Heather Kidwell and her husband, Peter of Southington; his nephew, Robert Johnston III and his wife Tammi of Glastonbury; and two grand-nephews, Ian and Daniel Kidwell.

The family will receive guests from 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, June 28, at Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A Time of Remembrance will be observed at 7:30 p.m. during the visitation. Burial will be private in the Old St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester.

Donations in his memory may be made to Masonicare Hospice c/o The Masonic Charity Foundation of Connecticut, P.O. Box 70, Wallingford, CT 06492.



Colchester

Philip J. Guarnaccia

Philip J. Guarnaccia, 77, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Wednesday, June 15. He leaves to mourn his passing three daughters, Kim Dalton of Grafton, N.Y., Donna Roberts (and her husband, Danny) of Colchester and Gail Davenport (and her husband, Rick) of St. Petersburg, Fla.; six grandchildren, Philip, Krystan (and her husband, Mike), Caitlin, Emmett, Carly and Jenna; two great-grandchildren, Gavin and Tommy; his faithful companion, Buddy; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Born April 9, 1939, in Hartford, he was one of the four children of the late Louis and Frances (Fontanetta) Guarnaccia. A lifelong resident of Colchester, Phil was a 1957 graduate of Hartford Technical School. On July 30, 1959, he wed the former Virginia R. Sherman and they shared 55 years of marriage before she predeceased him on Feb. 25, 2015.

Philip was a member of Teamsters Local 493 for 36 years before his retirement in 1993. He had served as secretary/treasurer of the Local as well as president of Joint Council 64.

In his spare time, Philly was an avid pigeon flyer, traveling far and wide, making countless friends along the way.

At their request, he and Ginny were laid to rest together privately in the Linwood Cemetery, Colchester, on Saturday, June 18. Those who wish may make a donation to the Colchester Food Bank (127 Norwich Ave., Ste. 205, Colchester, CT 06415) as an expression of sympathy.

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



Andover

Ruth Taylor Phelps

Mrs. Ruth Taylor Phelps of Andover passed away peacefully Thursday, June 16, surrounded by her loving husband John, her six children and family members.

Ruth was born to her parents Walter and Isabel Taylor June 27, 1921, in Newport News, Virginia and raised in Willimantic. She attended Windham High School and Willimantic State Teachers College, which is now Eastern Connecticut State University (ECSU).

She married John Phelps in 1941 and resided 75 years with him in Andover. Ruth returned to ECSU for her Master of Education degree after her sixth child entered elementary school and spent 19 years introducing kindergartners to the joy of learning at Andover Elementary School. In retirement, she greatly enjoyed conversations with former students and co-workers.

Ruth was an accomplished pianist, who won a piano competition at age 16. She later taught piano from her home, accompanied local musicians and rehearsed with members of the Hartford Symphony. The many evenings she spent practicing at home created strong memories for all of her children. In addition to the piano, her interests included traveling the U.S. and abroad, visiting family members, summer vacations on Cape Cod, gardening and reading. She was also active with the Andover Public Library, including chairing its Board of Trustees.

She was predeceased by her parents and both of her sisters: Marilyn Taylor Hevern and Jean Taylor Fittabile. Ruth is survived by her husband John and their six children: Sandra Czuchry and her husband Andrew of Gray, Tenn.; Roger Phelps and his wife Cheri of Tucson, Ariz.; Charlotte Wright and her husband Jonathan of Concord, Mass.; David Phelps and his wife Sara of Merrimack, N.H.; Jonathan Phelps and his wife Genina of Easton, Mass.; and Deborah Pettinelli and her husband Darryl of Scituate, Mass. She is also survived by 15 grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Calling hours were held Tuesday, June 21, at Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson Street (Rte. 195) Willimantic. A funeral service took place Wednesday, June 22, at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 30 Church St., Hebron, followed by a committal service.

Memorial gifts may be given, in memory of Ruth, to the Andover Friends of the Library, 355 Route 6, P.O. Box 117, Andover, CT 06232-0117.

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



East Hampton

Robert Joseph Seiferman

Robert Joseph Seiferman, 89, passed away peacefully in his sleep Saturday, June 18, in East Hampton. Rob was born in Middletown March 19, 1927, to Charles J. and Marie (Barrow) Seiferman.

Rob married Ruth Cawte on New Year's Eve, 1949; they were married 55 years until Ruth's passing in 2005. Rob's Catholic faith was central to his life. He rarely, if ever, missed Sunday Mass. Together, Rob and Ruth raised four daughters, sacrificing much to send them to Catholic elementary and high school. It was important to them and made them proud to see all four daughters earn college degrees.

Rob and his older brother Joe grew up and worked on the family property, Riverdale Farm & Cottages, in Portland in their younger years. The cottage part of the business evolved into Riverdale Motel, which Rob and Joe owned and operated, along with their wives, into their 80s, when they retired and sold the business. Farming was in Rob's blood. When the girls were young, he grew strawberries and vegetables each summer to sell to the local fruit stands and also raised five or six calves a year for extra income.

In addition to these family businesses, Rob worked part-time for the US Post Office until he began his career at Portland Boat Works. Until his retirement in 1989, he enjoyed combining his love of boating with working with his many co-workers and customers at PBW.

Rob had a lifelong love of the Connecticut River. Ever a boater, he was a longstanding member of the Middletown Power Squadron and a boat owner until his death. Happiness was taking a boat ride downriver and stopping for an ice cream along the way.

When it came to ill or infirm family members or friends, Rob set an example of constant loving care. For many years he oversaw the care of his aunt; he was dedicated to caring for Ruth when she became ill; and at the time of his death was one of the main caretakers of his brother Joe. Rob was past commander of Middletown Power Squadron, member Emeritus of the US Power Squadron Governing Board; director of the Connecticut River Valley & Shoreline Visitors Council; and a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Hotel/Motel Association.

Rob was predeceased by his parents, his wife Ruth, his grandson Philip Brochu and sister-in-law Regina Seiferman.

Surviving him are his brother, C. Joseph Seiferman; daughters, Janet (Andre) Brochu, Karen (Michael) Fortin, Elaine (Danny) Bryant, and Diane (Peter) Traygis; six grandchildren; four great-granddaughters; many nieces and nephews; sister-in-law Hazel Bahre; and his loving companion Liz Johansmeyer.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Tuesday, June 21. A funeral liturgy was celebrated Wednesday, June 22, in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial will be in the family plot in St. John Cemetery in Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Rob's memory to the Salvation Army, 217 Washington St., Hartford, CT 06106 or to Franciscan Home Care and Hospice, 267 Finch Ave., Meriden, CT 06451.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Chester Kellogg Hale Sr.

Chester Kellogg Hale Sr., 94, of Rockland, Maine, formerly of Portland, passed away peacefully Wednesday, April 13, at St. Andrews Nursing Home in Boothbay Harbor.

He was predeceased by his parents, C. Harry and Dorothy Douglas Hale; brother, Douglas Hale; daughter, Lucinda Hale; and step-daughter, Marilyn O'Connor.

He is survived by his wife of 32 years, Muriel Plimpton Hale; his three children, Deborah Barrett, Chester K. (Sharon) Hale Jr., and Jeffrey (Diane Miner) Hale; his 4 stepdaughters, Susan (Michael Shook) Plimpton, Sherry (Gerard) Blouin, Caroline Barre Plimpton, Jayne P. (Glenn J.) Dwyer; brother, Nathan Hale; sisters, Dorothy Simpson and Ann Hale, 15 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

Chet was born Sept. 7, 1921, in Portland, where he grew up living and working on the family's shade tobacco farms. He went to Portland High School before going to Suffield Academy, where he graduated in 1940. He attended Middlebury College, Vt., where he met his first wife, Miriam Fleming.

He served three years in the U.S. Army, two of which he spent overseas in France and Germany during World War II. He was a part of the 894th Anti-aircraft Artillery Division and a Colonel's Driver.

After his honorable discharge in January 1946, Chet returned to Connecticut, where he served 11 years as a farm superintendent for Consolidated Cigar Corp. In 1957, the family moved to Rome, Pa., where they operated a dairy farm for the next 25 years. While operating the dairy farm, he served on a number of agricultural boards and agencies. It was during this time he earned his pilot's license and enjoyed flying his Piper Cub and Cherokee 270.

In April of 1984, Chet married Muriel Plimpton. During retirement, he and Muriel enjoyed traveling while also spending winters in Fort Myers, Fla., and summers in Owls Head, Maine. He enjoyed painting, golf, playing cards, and spending time with friends. Chet had a love for life and people.

A memorial service and celebration of Chet's life were held at Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 15 Wesley Lane, off Route 17, Rockland, Maine, on Thursday, May 19. The Rev. Linda Campbell-Marshall officiated.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Aldersgate UMC, 15 Wesley Lane, Rockland, ME 04841, or Alzheimer's Association, Maine Chapter, 383 U.S. Route One, Scarborough, ME 04074.

Funeral arrangements are under the direction of Burpee, Carpenter & Hutchins of Rockland, Maine.



From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I noticed that last week's incredibly tragic incident at Disney World in Florida – where a 2-year-old, wading in about a foot of water in a lagoon, was dragged under by an alligator, and ultimately drowned – brought the ever-dreaded Perfect Parents out of the woodwork.

You know the Perfect Parents: the same types of people who were oh so quick to take to social media and lambast the parents – including the father, who wasn't even there – of the 3-year-old who fell into the gorilla cage at the Cincinnati Zoo in May.

The Perfect Parents returned in full force last week – to which I have to ask: have you no compassion?

It was bad enough after the Cincinnati Zoo incident – but at least the 3-year-old was relatively unharmed. Young Lane Graves *died*. His family was enjoying an outdoor movie night on the beach at the Grand Floridian resort when the unspeakable happened. The Nebraskan family's vacation turned into a horrific nightmare. Even before his body was found, there was the simple fact his parents had seem him *dragged away by an alligator*.

And still, people on Twitter were quick to judge.

“Toddlers shouldn't be at Disney. All that money and they won't remember or appreciate it. So angry this morning” read one tweet.

“How are kids ending up in gorilla enclosures and gator's mouths when I couldn't even go to the bathroom alone” read another.

And then there was this (where the writer is evidently a parenting expert and not a grammar expert): “A gorilla being a gorilla, an alligator being an alligator.. Parent's not being parents.”

Obviously, not everyone on Twitter was like that. There was plenty of compassion to be seen too – many people expressing their grief and heartbreak – but really, even one tweet attacking the parents in a situation like this is one too many. Their child just died. Unless you've lost a child, you have no idea what they're going through – so keep your mouth shut.

The parent-shaming done last week, like the parent-shaming done in Cincinnati last month, underscores an obvious problem with social media users: too often, people think what they post will have no repercussions at all. But here's the thing: it's all public information. Those tweets I quoted took less than a minute to find; what's to stop relatives of poor Lane Graves from finding them – or worse, Lane's parents themselves?

General rule of decorum: If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't say it about them online. It would take a certain kind of unfeeling slime to go up to this boy's parents, stand in front of them on *the day their son died*, and say, “What were you possibly thinking? How could you do that? You are bad, bad parents!” Heck, let me be humanistic for a moment: I'll even say that would probably never happen. Yet, you have people online doing basically the same thing.

Words hurt. You shouldn't have to see the face of your victim to realize this.

* * *

I woke up Tuesday morning to the news that all four of the gun control bills – two of which were actually introduced by Republican senators – died on the Senate floor. I wasn't surprised so much as disappointed – utterly, utterly disappointed.

The Senate started by rejecting a Republican proposal to update the background check system for gun purchases; the update would've required states to add more information on mental health records to a national database, and would've added a provision to

alert law enforcement agencies when an individual who was on a government terror watch list in the last five years buys a gun. That failed 53-47, mostly along party lines.

A second proposal requiring background checks for those buying guns at gun shows and online – a proposal introduced by Connecticut's own Chris Murphy, who famously filibustered for nearly 15 hours on the Senate floor last week to push for new gun control restrictions – also failed, by a 56-44 tally.

A third proposal – again introduced by a Republican senator – would've delayed gun sales to individuals included on a government terror watch list, and allow a judge to permanently block a purchase if the court determined probable cause that the individual is involved in terrorist activity. This one also failed, 53-47, in a mostly party-line vote.

Also failing by a 53-47 tally was a proposal, this one introduced by a Democrat, that would've simply barred all gun sales to people on the terror watch list.

All four of these were common-sense gun control proposals. Nobody would have their guns taken away – and heck, the only people expressly prohibited from buying new guns would be those who are on a terror watch list; in other words, folks you probably wouldn't want buying a gun anyway.

The proposals made sense, weren't extreme in the least, and I think the vast majority of Americans would've welcomed at least one of them. But still, the Senate shot them down. Like I said, not surprising. Just incredibly disappointing.

* * *

One of the many things I've criticized Donald Trump for in this space is his personal attacks on his enemies. It's not the idea of the attacks I'm against – it's how stupid they are. Calling people losers or making fun of them for sweating too much may be high comedy to the 12-year-old bully who's stealing your lunch money, but I expect more from a presidential candidate.

I recently came across a list of insults by well-known figures throughout history – and *these* were some well-crafted insults. Here are some highlights:

“I didn't attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it” – Mark Twain

“He uses statistics as a drunken man uses a lamp post; for support rather than illumination” – Andrew Lang

“He has Van Gogh's ear for music” – Billy Wilder

“[Hemingway] has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary” – William Faulkner

“He has all of the virtues I dislike, and none of the vices I admire” – Winston Churchill

“In order to avoid being called a flirt, she always yielded easily” – Charles, Count Talleyrand

“I could never learn to like her, except on a raft at sea with no other provisions in sight” – Mark Twain again (the man was brilliant)

“He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends” – Oscar Wilde

“I've learned about his illness. Let's hope it's nothing trivial” – Irvin S. Cobb

“He has delusions of adequacy” – Walter Kerr

“There's nothing wrong with you that reincarnation won't cure” – Jack E. Leonard

“[Nixon] inherited some good instincts from his Quaker forbearers, but by diligent hard work, he overcame them” – James Reston

* * *

See you next week.