

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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

Volume 41, Number 17

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

January 20, 2017



**Coats for Food Bank...** The East Hampton Stop & Shop collected coats for the East Hampton Food Bank this holiday season. Stop & Shop ended up collecting 390 jackets and more than 130 hats, 58 pairs of gloves, 60 scarves and 150 sweatshirts. All told, 1,600 pounds of clothing, shoes, blankets and more were collected. With the store's collection of 150 coats last year, over 500 people in the East Hampton community have benefited from the coat drives in the last two years. Pictured with Dan Utz of the East Hampton Stop & Shop management team is food bank volunteer Dawn Stanhope. Stanhope and her husband picked up the rest of the items donated at the East Hampton Stop & Shop collection bin.

## Ziobron Proposes Pot Legalization

by Elizabeth Regan

Now that marijuana is legal for recreational use in Massachusetts, some Connecticut lawmakers think it's high time to revisit the state's own prohibition on retail sale of the drug.

Several bills were introduced in the state legislature this month to make the drug legal – and taxable – for those 21 years old and up. One of the proposals came from state Rep. Melissa Ziobron, a Republican representing East Haddam, East Hampton and the Westchester section of Colchester.

In addition to allowing pot shops to open their doors across the state, the bill would let residents of legal age grow up to six marijuana plants, with a maximum of 12 per household.

In November, Massachusetts voters approved legalization in their state and, after a recount, it turned out Maine voters did, too. Pot shops are not expected to open in Massachusetts until mid-2018 and the timeline for Maine is even less certain.

The issue is being considered in Rhode Island and Vermont.

Ziobron said in a phone interview Tuesday that the imminent legal marijuana industry to the north means the state must start thinking about taking control of its own destiny.

"It's a matter of the fact I would much rather provide structure, regulations and legislation that would try to get to an outcome rather than put our heads in the sand and pretend it isn't happening," she said.

Ziobron emphasized a commitment to listen-

ing to the passionate viewpoints on both sides. And while she's disheartened she has lost the support of some of her constituents over the issue, she said it is her obligation to tackle controversial topics.

According to Ziobron, 60 percent of those who responded to an emailed constituent survey were in favor of legalizing marijuana for adults. The results mirror a 2015 poll from Quinnipiac University showing 63 percent of Connecticut voters support legalization.

Ziobron's bill would authorize the Department of Consumer Protection to regulate the sale of marijuana and the Department of Revenue Services to tax it. Funds would go to the general fund, budget reserve fund and "certain municipalities," according to the bill language.

While the bill specifies that cities and towns have the power to ban the industry within their borders, it directs revenue toward municipalities that allow the product in their communities.

Another bill to regulate marijuana for adults was raised by 18 House democrats, led by state Rep. Juan Candelaria of New Haven. The bill earmarks a portion of revenue for drug awareness education, including the placement of school-based drug prevention officers. Money would also go toward substance abuse treatment and studies about the impact of marijuana legalization and consumption.

The House Democrats' bill requires the road-

See Ziobron page 2

## Bobcat Attacks Three Women in Colchester

by Julianna Roche

Three women are being treated this week after a rabid bobcat jumped on one woman and scratched two others who tried to come to her assistance in a greenhouse on Tuesday, authorities said.

Local law enforcement, Connecticut State Police Troop K officers, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and Environmental Conservation (EnCon) Police responded to the incident shortly before noon, as the bobcat had left the greenhouse and started to move into a wooded area adjacent to the property, according to DEEP communications director Dennis Schain.

Authorities said the bobcat then started to become aggressive – growling and showing its teeth before moving toward law enforcement and other officers, who then shot and killed the bobcat.

It remains unclear specifically who took the shot, Schain said.

Following the attack, the bobcat's body was then transported to the state Department of Health lab for testing. On Wednesday afternoon, lab results showed the bobcat had tested positive for rabies.

The women involved in the incident were

participating in a program run inside a greenhouse by The Caring Community, a day and residential center for people with developmental disabilities, at the time of the attack, officials said.

The center is located on 84 Waterhole Rd. – just two miles from the East Hampton line. Center staff declined to comment Thursday.

Due to the proximity of the incident, East Hampton Public Schools had also issued a notice Tuesday stating "to make sure students are safe, bus drop-offs in that area will be closer to student homes."

Following the attack, the three women were taken to the Marlborough Medical Center for evaluation and treatment.

Though the women did not sustain any life-threatening injuries, Schain said he "wouldn't be surprised" if they had already started a rabies treatment in anticipation of the bobcat testing positive.

DEEP authorities said, however, it is extremely rare for bobcats to pounce upon or even be aggressive towards humans.

"Bobcats don't usually go after people," Schain said, adding "when they do, [the cause] is usually rabies."

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A bobcat, which later tested positive for rabies, attacked three women in Colchester Tuesday. Shown here in a file photo is a bobcat that was spotted in Glastonbury last year.

**Ziobron cont. from Front Page**

side testing of impaired drivers, specifying that state laws for driving under the influence kick in when “at least five nanograms of tetrahydrocannabinol per milliliter” are found in the blood supply or if the driver consumed marijuana in the previous two hours.

Ziobron said one of the key differences between her bill and the House Democrats’ bill is that the Democrats give initial access for recreational marijuana licenses to dispensaries already licensed in the state to sell medical marijuana.

“We’re trying to grow business and grow jobs, and I think it creates a monopoly that I don’t support,” Ziobron said.

Erik Williams, of Coventry, is a consultant in the burgeoning marijuana industry who serves as the national director of government and public affairs at the Colorado-based marijuana company MiNDFUL. He was part of a panel hosted by Ziobron last Friday in East Haddam to explore both sides of the issue.

Colorado and Washington were the first states to legalize the recreational use of marijuana in 2012. Five other states plus the District of Columbia have since joined their ranks.

“Connecticut right now could only dream of having an economy like Colorado,” Williams told the audience of approximately 100 people. “The bottom line is that Colorado is safe from the recession.”

According to the Marijuana Policy Group, a Denver-based business consulting firm, Colorado saw 18,005 full-time jobs created in 2015, adding \$2.39 billion to the state’s economy.

The same group said tax revenue from marijuana, which came in at \$121 million in 2015, was three times greater than tax revenue from alcohol.

But opponents of legalization, like East Haddam Youth and Family Services Director Toni McCabe, are focused on societal costs.

“Legalization will mean greater availability of this drug, and that will translate to greater and easier access for our children,” McCabe said at last week’s forum.

She pointed to residentially grown plants as well as retail edibles, like “Pot Tarts” and gummy bears, as examples of the kind of temptations that would be attractive to youth.

Some studies have shown regular marijuana use affects the adolescent brain, specifically the parts involved with memory and problem solving. A Duke University study of long-term data on 1,037 participants in New Zealand showed those who used marijuana consistently from childhood through adulthood saw, on average, an eight-point decrease in their IQ.

Williams concurred that keeping marijuana out of the hands of kids is paramount, but disagreed with McCabe about the best way to do that.

He echoed the words of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who said last year that the only way to effectively keep teens from using the drug is to establish a “controlled and regulated regime.”

The issue has powerful support from Senate President Martin Looney, a Democrat, who identified the issue as one of his legislative priorities for the year when he was the first lawmaker to introduce a marijuana legalization bill on Jan. 4.

The simple language of Looney’s bill authorizes the retail sale of marijuana and taxes it the same way Colorado does. The bill specifies revenue should go to the state’s general fund.

The issue is facing resistance in Hartford at the highest levels.

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy told reporters last month that “revenue is the wrong reason to get into this business.”

He declined to say if he would use his veto power to quash legalization legislation if it ar-

rives on his desk, but maintained he is personally opposed to the idea.

“I don’t think anyone should be prosecuted for their personal use in small amounts, but that’s very different than saying I believe the state should play a role in promoting it,” he added.

Democratic state Rep. Linda Orange, whose district covers most of Colchester, said she is “bewildered” by the idea of marijuana as a revenue booster.

She said there are a lot of pros and cons to look at before she decides how she would vote on any legislation.

Orange sits on the General Law Committee to which Ziobron’s bill has been referred.

The bills from the House Democrats and Looney have both been referred to the Judiciary Committee.

A public hearing to allow constituents, experts and government officials to weigh in on the issue must be held before a committee can approve or change a bill and send it on to the House or Senate floor.

“I’m always open to the bills when they first come out,” Orange said. “It will be interesting to hear what the constituency has to say and what people have to say at public hearing.”

Republican state Rep. Christie Carpino, who represents Cromwell and Portland, agreed the state should not rush into legalization as a way to address a budget deficit.

Carpino is a member of the Judiciary Committee.

“As a state we are already struggling with the damaging consequences of drugs in our communities,” Carpino said in a statement. “Legalizing another drug for recreational use would only jeopardize public health and safety. We need to continue tackling the nasty opioid crisis that has swept across Connecticut and not be introducing additional drugs into the recreational arena.”

On the flip side, Ziobron cited the opioid crisis as one of the key factors influencing her support for legalization.

She pointed to a research study at St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center that will look at replacing opioid prescriptions with medical marijuana.

According to news outlet *CT News Junkie*, the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection recently approved the hospital’s request to test the effectiveness of using medical marijuana instead of oxycodone to treat pain in patients with multiple rib fractures.

For state Sen. Steve Cassano, a Democrat representing the *Rivereast* town of Andover, legalizing recreational use of the drug is an issue of public safety.

While he said he has no problem with the medicinal use of marijuana, he does take issue with making it available to all adults.

“I have yet to see any driving or other safety data regarding people who smoke marijuana and then go and drive a car,” Cassano said Tuesday. “I would hope we wouldn’t even consider having a conversation about legalizing the sale of marijuana until we have that type of information.”

The move to legalize recreational marijuana in the state is the latest in the continued loosening of regulations governing the drug. A 2011 state statute decriminalized possession of less than a half-ounce of marijuana – making it punishable by fines instead of jail time – while a 2015 state law reduced the penalty for possession of a half-ounce or more to a class A misdemeanor.

Marijuana became legal for medical use in the state in 2012. Last year, the legislature made it possible for children with certain debilitating conditions - including terminal illness, spinal cord injury and epilepsy – to take non-smokeable medical marijuana.

**Bobcat Attacks cont. from Front Page**

DEEP officials also noted the presence of rabies among wild animals is at typically-low levels for this time of year. However, bobcats are not a significant vector of disease and rarely contract the mid-Atlantic strain of rabies.

According to the latest information published by the Connecticut Department of Public Health, in 2015, there were 170 confirmed cases of rabies in Connecticut, with a total of six cases among the *Rivereast* towns.

Marlborough had a total of three cases, including two skunks and a raccoon, while Hebron, East Hampton and Portland each had one confirmed case of a rabid bat, raccoon and cat, respectively.

There were no confirmed cases of rabies in Colchester or Andover that year.

Ridgefield and West Hartford had the two highest numbers of confirmed cases in the state, with eight and six cases in each respectively.

DEEP officials said that various strains of rabies are always present among mammals in the wild, with the virus being carried by spe-

cies such as raccoons, skunks and bats.

According to information from the Department of Public Health, in 2015, the top three most common species confirmed to have rabies were raccoons (85 cases), skunks (44), and bats (27).

There was only a single confirmed case of a bobcat with rabies that year in Roxbury.

Authorities also caution that anyone who observes an animal exhibiting what they believe to be abnormal behavior to contact their local police department or animal control officer.

Wild animals infected with rabies may either appear to be highly agitated and drooling excessively, or can appear completely tame and fearless of humans. If a typically nocturnal animal such as a skunk or raccoon is seen active and exhibiting abnormal behavior during the day, they may also be infected with rabies.

Bobcat sightings can also be reported to the Wildlife Division at [deep.wildlife@ct.gov](mailto:deep.wildlife@ct.gov) or by calling 860-424-3011.

**Portland Police News**

1/9: Walter Emmons, 57, of 20 Evergreen Ave., was charged with possession of narcotics, possession of drug paraphernalia and violation of probation, Portland Police said.

1/11: Kevin Clark, 18, of 52 Park Place, Durham, was charged with possession of less than a half ounce of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

1/15: Jeremy Adams, 45, of 1A Riverview Dr., East Windsor, was charged with operating under suspension, police said.

1/16: Xavier Tate, 23, of 38 Pepperidge Rd., was charged with operating under suspension, operating a motor vehicle without insurance and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

1/16: Samantha Tackett, 21, of 198 Thompson Hill Rd., was charged with operating a motor vehicle without insurance, police said.

**Hebron Police News**

1/14: State Police said Matthew Stratton, 30, of East Street, Andover, was arrested and charged with evading responsibility, operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol, and failure to drive in the proper lane on a multiple lane highway.

**East Hampton Police News**

1/1: Stephen Mark Banning, 61, of 36 Skinner St., was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, East Hampton Police said. Also arrested in that same incident was Sheri Taylor, 48, also of 36 Skinner St., who was charged with assaulting a police officer and interfering/resisting arrest, police said.

1/10: After an investigation into a two-car motor vehicle accident in the area of 13 Lake Dr., Karla M. Depietro, 31, of 13F Lake Dr., was issued a summons for failure to grant right of way and operating while under suspension, police said.

**Colchester Police News**

1/14: State Police said Patrick Marcel, 32, of 542 Main St., Middletown, was arrested and charged with operating an unregistered motor vehicle, improper use of a marker/license/registration, failure to carry a license, and operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license/registration.

**Vehicle Crashes into Tree in Andover**

by Julianna Roche

An Andover resident was transported to the hospital for possible injuries on Jan. 10, after her vehicle collided with a tree off the shoulder of the road, police said.

According to police, at approximately 9:20 a.m., a Subaru Impreza 2.5i driven by Mary Catherine McBride, 19, of 186 Bear Swamp Rd. was traveling northbound on Bear Swamp

Road, when the vehicle left the roadway and struck a tree.

Police said McBride was issued a verbal warning for traveling unreasonably fast and was subsequently transported to Manchester Memorial Hospital by Andover Volunteer Fire Department.

**Two-Car Crash on Route 66, Marlborough**

by Julianna Roche

On Jan. 15, two vehicles collided on Route 66 in Marlborough, leaving one individual with possible injuries, police said.

According to police, at approximately 6:15 p.m., Mark S. Williams, 62, of 14 Hickory Hill Dr., Andover, was driving a GMC Sierra C eastbound on Route 66 in the area of Staeth Road, while John R. Meisterling, 23, of 2220 Durham Rd., Madison, was driving a Ford F250 SUP westward on Route 66.

Police said the Ford then veered left and crossed over the median, where the left side

of the vehicle struck the left center portion of a trailer attached to the GMC Sierra C.

Both drivers made no complaints of injuries, but the passenger in Meisterling’s vehicle, Taylor A. Higgins, 22, of 2215 Durham Rd., Madison, complained of back pain at the scene and was transported by Marlborough EMS to Marlborough Medical Center, police said.

According to police, Meisterling was subsequently found at fault for the collision and was issued an infraction ticket for making an unsafe turn.

# Marlborough Grand List Rises .79 Percent

by Julianna Roche

The 2016 Grand List has increased .79 percent or \$4,564,140, totaling \$581,170,690, according to the report submitted by town assessor Marie Hall.

"The economy is getting better," Hall said of this year's sizable increase, adding that "the town is working on redeveloping the center, there are stores going in... things are slowly moving forward."

The list represents the net value of assessed real estate, personal property, and motor vehicles in town, with all three categories seeing increases this year, as they also did in the 2015 Grand List.

On the list, real estate assessments increased by \$2,508,320 to \$515,736,620; motor vehicle climbed by \$1,635,120 to \$53,706,220; and personal property increased by \$480,700 to \$11,727,850.

"That's all positive," Hall said of the increases.

The top 10 assessments in the 2016 Grand List included Connecticut Light & Power (now known as Eversource Energy) at \$5,259,110; MV Green LLC/OM Village LLC/M3-5 LLC at \$4,235,280; Both LLC at \$3,216,220; Milborough Health Care Realty Co. at \$2,791,810; Mary C. Soleau at \$2,119,230; Leandra Knes at \$1,869,700; C&B Marlborough Associates, LLC at \$1,296,890; Country Barn Properties, LLC at \$1,099,420; Douglas A. and Natalie D. Thibodeau at \$833,190; and Bryan T. and Tamara M. Morytko at \$882,350.

This year, attorney Robert Elliot's Elliot Enterprises dropped off the list after Elliot's three plaza properties in the center of town were foreclosed upon in December 2015 by Chelsea Groton Bank. Elliot had failed to repay the bank \$7 million by Feb. 9, 2016, and his properties were eventually sold to developer Allan Schwartz of MV Green LLC/OM Village LLC/M3-5 LLC, which was listed second on this

year's top 10 list.

Compared to last year, this year's Grand List saw a much larger increase than in 2015, which had minimal growth with a .27 percent increase or \$1,560,685.

According to Hall, this was "largely due to all the construction in town," primarily with the New China Sea restaurant on N. Main St.

"Overall it was a good year for construction," she said, adding that one of the individual taxpayers on the list also "built a huge home that put [their taxes] in the millions."

2015 was also a revaluation year for Marlborough, meaning that all of the real estate in town is evaluated and all properties are assessed at market value. This then allows for the redistribution of the town's tax burden. Connecticut state statute cites a revaluation must be performed every five years, with the next revaluation to take place in 2020.

The Grand List is then used by the Board of

Finance to help set the mill rate for the upcoming fiscal year. The mill rate, in turn, helps determine residents' taxes; a resident can determine their taxes by multiplying the mill rate by their total assessments.

One mill is equal to \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property and under the current rate of 34.15 mills, a resident with a home assessed at \$250,000 would pay approximately \$8,537.

According to Hall, any taxpayers unhappy with their appraisal can appeal them in front of the Board of Assessment Appeals. The deadline to apply for an appeal is Feb. 20, with appeals taking place in March and all decisions expected to be made by the end of that month.

Appeal forms can be found online at [tinyurl.com/hsyg2rs](http://tinyurl.com/hsyg2rs) under "Board of Assessment Appeals Form" or in the Assessor's Office in Town Hall. Applications should then be sent to Board of Assessment Appeals, P.O. Box 29, 26 N. Main St.

# Andover Superintendent Presents Budget with No Increase

by Geeta S. Sandberg

Schools Superintendent Sally Doyen last week presented a budget proposal for the 2017-18 school year that's flat with current year spending.

The proposal clocks in at \$4,320,821, and Doyen said shared in her budget transmittal to the board she was confident "that it meets the obligations that we are currently aware of, and reflects a commitment to provide Andover students the best possible education that will serve them well for the rest of their lives."

In response to declining enrollment – 213 students are anticipated next year compared to 226 in the current year – one classroom position as well as one special education position will be eliminated next year; the grade configurations will include two all-day preschool classes, two kindergarten classes, one first grade class, and two classes each for second through sixth grade.

The majority of the budget – 60 percent – is comprised of salaries, budgeted at \$2,560,451, which is a decrease from the current year of

\$51,280. The second-highest category is benefits, budgeted at \$756,435 for a decrease of \$85,768.

Doyen explained the benefits account is made up primarily of health insurance which accounts for about 20 percent of the proposed budget and "we have worked to contain by adopting a high-deductible plan for all employees."

The remaining accounts that make up the budget are: professional and contracted services, which include services for students, legal fees, facilities maintenance and the special education consultant and is budgeted at \$146,800 for an increase of \$13,700; property services, which include contracted maintenance services and is budgeted at \$198,950 for an increase of \$95,558; and other purchased services, which include items such as tuition for one special education outplacement as well as magnet school tuition, student transportation, and licenses and fees, and comes in at \$322,070 for an increase of \$4,907.

The supplies account, meanwhile, is budgeted at \$298,890, for an increase of \$7,173; and furniture, fixtures and equipment is included at \$20,000 for an increase of \$10,400. Lastly, the miscellaneous account, which includes professional dues for the Board of Education, administration and staff, funds for meetings and conferences, and student activities, is budgeted at \$17,225 for an increase of \$5,310.

Although Doyen expressed confidence in the proposed budget, she added projecting expenditures for the future means there's the potential some of the numbers could change. In addition she explained, "This budget was especially difficult to construct, given financial uncertainties at both the state and federal levels. I anticipate modifications if reductions in future funding take effect."

The state already made approximately \$18,000 in mid-year cuts to the Education Cost Sharing monies Andover was anticipated to receive, however there was no saying for sure whether the state would make additional cuts.

(An article on the mid-year reductions to ECS as well as Local Capital Improvement Program funds in *Rivercast* towns can be found elsewhere in this issue.)

Doyen added this week, "We're obviously very aware of the financial situation in the state, and in terms of any future cuts, it's an unknown. So at this point the best we can do in terms of providing the known services to students in the community is to come in as we did, with a zero percent increase, in the hope that will be adequate – which is what we anticipate."

The Board of Education will discuss the budget at their next meeting scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 9, at 7 p.m. in the library at Andover Elementary School, 35 School Rd. The board will then decide whether an additional budget meeting is necessary, or may vote to approve the spending package. The budget proposal will be presented at a public meeting at an as-yet-to-be-determined date in February, before being submitted to the Board of Finance Feb. 27.

# East Hampton Superintendent Presents \$30.15M Budget Proposal

by Elizabeth Regan

With the East Hampton school district facing skyrocketing health insurance costs and an uncertain future when it comes to state funding, Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith has recommended a spending plan \$1.09 million higher than the current budget.

Smith said \$803,927 of the recommended increase comes from health insurance alone.

The superintendent, who came to East Hampton a year ago, presented a \$30,147,971 recommended budget to the Board of Education Tuesday evening. That's 3.75 percent higher than the education budget is now.

Smith said health insurance costs are projected to increase 25 percent for the next school year – if not more. Estimates are calculated based on a 12-month running average of claims made by town and school employees.

He cautioned it's still early in the budget season and that more solid health insurance figures will emerge in the coming months.

The school district is part of the same health insurance pool as town employees. East Hampton Finance Director Jeff Jylkka reiterated that initial estimates reveal a "significant" increase.

Jylkka plans to shop the market for other options, but he doesn't yet know how much he'll be able to shave off current estimates.

"I think it's going to be a little better. How much better – 1 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent – we really won't know till we go to the market and see," he explained. "But our experience has been bad. We've had a lot of high-cost claims."

According to Smith, estimates last year at this time projected a 13 percent increase in health insurance costs. Smith budgeted for a 7 percent increase, knowing that the figure would likely be lower than estimated. Actual costs came in at a 5 percent increase, he said.

But the current, uncommonly high projection is a different situation, he said.

"Because we're trending so high, it's probably more accurate than in past years when they kind of give you a generic figure," he said.

Smith's recommendation to the school board includes cuts to several staffing positions and slashed funding for supplies, books and equipment to help mitigate the increase from contractual obligations.

His proposal gets rid of one Memorial School teacher, a math interventionist at the middle school and a paraeducator from an as-yet-undetermined school. It also reduces the middle school assistant principal from a full-year to 10-month position.

The newest round of proposed staffing reductions comes after three teaching positions were cut last year. The change resulted in fifth grade class sizes ranging from 26 to 28 students.

The teachers' contract negotiated between the East Hampton Education Association and the district specifies "reasonable efforts shall be made to maintain the class size at no more than twenty-five pupils."

Enrollment in East Hampton schools has increased about 1 percent since 2012, according to Smith, despite declining enrollment in most area towns and across the state.

If the proposed budget ends up lower than Smith is recommending, he said more grade levels may lose a teacher. That would add to the number of overcrowded classrooms in the elementary school.

The school district's budget situation is complicated by Connecticut's bleak economic picture and ballooning deficit. Smith said state funding to the school district – established by statute to make up the difference between what

a community can afford to pay and what it costs to run a school system – is currently at its lowest level since 2008.

The budget includes six new initiatives Smith is recommending to help the district "move forward." Two of them – a special education program designed to reduce expensive outplacements and a new part-time technology position – will likely be accomplished by moving current staff around instead of paying for more staff.

Smith emphasized a new math program for sixth-graders as a key priority. The \$15,000 *Go Math* platform builds on the one purchased last year for kindergarten through grade five.

Smith is also recommending the district pay \$75,000 to cover 70 percent of the salary and benefits for a new East Hampton police officer. The school resource officer would be based in one of the schools and would be available to serve and protect the wider East Hampton community during school vacations and as needed.

The position must be approved in the general government budget as well. The town would be responsible for 30 percent of the expense.

Smith's education proposal allocates \$35,000 as part of the 10-year accreditation process through the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The funds cover room and board for more than a dozen NEASC representatives who will descend on East Hampton in March 2018 to make sure the district is meeting the organization's standards.

A 2012 report by the state General Assembly's Office of Legislative Research said that while accreditation is not mandated by the federal or state government, a loss of accredi-

tation "would create difficulties for students applying to higher education institutions, since admission offices consider whether an applicant's high school is accredited when deciding which candidates to accept."

The report said local school districts pay for NEASC visits to public schools while the state picks up the tab for technical schools.

Smith's recommendations will be voted on by the Board of Education in February before the education proposal makes its way to the Board of Finance and then the Town Council.

When the proposed budget finally makes it to referendum in the spring, voters will see something they haven't seen before in town: separate questions for the education and general government sides of the budget.

The decision to allow residents to approve or reject each side of the proposal was made as part of last year's charter revision process.

Smith emphasized his commitment to making the budget process as transparent and informative as possible.

Detailed information about the district's budget situation – including Smith's presentation, an overview of the elements of the budget, and a full list of state mandates pertaining to local school districts – is available at [easthamptonps.org](http://easthamptonps.org).

In addition to being at school board meetings, PTO meetings and scheduled "coffee hours" to discuss the budget, Smith is available to meet with residents at their convenience.

"I am willing to drive to your home," he said. "I will bring this presentation to your home. I can plug into your Smart TV and give you this presentation. At least give me a chance. I'll even bring the coffee."

# State Cuts Funding to Area Towns

by Elizabeth Regan and Geeta S. Sandberg

A series of mid-year municipal aid cuts have reminded officials in *Rivereast* towns, along with municipalities across the state, that they can't count on state funding when crafting their local budgets.

In letters to legislative leaders and municipal officials that came out between the Christmas and New Year holidays, Office of Policy and Management Secretary Ben Barnes announced \$20 million in cuts to Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funds and the freezing of \$30 million in entitlements through the Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP).

The cuts amounted to roughly 1 percent of each *Rivereast* town's education cost sharing allocation, with some cut by slightly more and some by slightly less.

The Education Cost Sharing program is the state's way of helping to make up the difference between what a community can afford to pay in taxes and what it costs to run a school system.

According to news outlet *CT News Junkie*, this is the first time in six years the education cost sharing program has been reduced in the middle of the fiscal year.

The expected LoCIP funding that won't be materializing would have been put toward such projects as addressing stormwater runoff issues around Lake Pocotopaug in East Hampton and sidewalk repairs in Portland.

While some local leaders decried the arrival of the cuts in the middle of the fiscal year, others said they had prepared for the possibility – and are bracing for more.

Marlborough Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz described the loss of \$38,278 in education funding and a freeze on \$51,348 in capital project funding as “the tip of the iceberg.”

“The state is in such a financial disaster; we'd be naïve to think these are the only cuts coming,” he said.

According to Sklarz, the Marlborough Board of Finance had the “foresight and wisdom” last April to add \$80,000 to the contingency fund to help offset any state cuts.

Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney said the writing has been on the wall for some time now.

“Anybody in charge of a municipality who didn't think this was the year things were going to start getting cut – they're not living in reality,” he said.

The state is facing a projected budget deficit of about \$1.47 billion in 2018, as reported in *CT News Junkie*.

East Hampton Town Manager Michael Maniscalco, who has described state aid as “municipal heroin,” said cities and towns need to become more self-reliant.

With about 20 percent of the town's revenue coming from the state, Maniscalco pointed to

the need for East Hampton to aggressively pursue back taxes and other revenue opportunities. Otherwise, all residents will be looking at a local property tax increase or a reduction in services.

East Hampton is losing \$74,637 in education funding; the freeze on capital project funding comes in at \$88,368. The change in both ECS and LoCIP funding is reflected in the capital improvement budget, where it affects line items for improvements to Lake Pocotopaug and high school track resurfacing, Maniscalco said.

In Hebron and Andover, ECS funds were cut by \$53,580 and \$18,046, respectively. Officials in both towns said they were keenly aware of the uncertainty at the state level, and were doing their best to plan accordingly.

Andover Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen explained the Board of Education would be able to absorb this year's cuts through an anticipated surplus in the health insurance account. However, she added, “If there are further cuts that take place this year then obviously we will work with the town to cover the necessities.”

But Board of Finance Chairman Dan Warren said the cuts wouldn't have an impact for Andover, as the finance board budgeted less in ECS revenue than the state had initially approved for 2016-17.

“We did not budget for the amount of ECS revenue that was included in the state's budget because when we put our budget to town meeting and referendum it wasn't finalized yet,” he explained. “And the numbers being floated at the state at the time were lower than what was finally approved, so even with the cuts to ECS we're expecting to receive about \$40,000 more in ECS revenue than we budgeted for.”

Going forward, Warren noted the numbers are “up in the air” since the state is still working on the budget, but he added once the governor's proposal is known – it's expected in February – “that'll be our starting point” in working on the 2017-18 budget.

Hebron Superintendent of Schools Tim Van Tassel said discussion about how the cut will be handled has not yet occurred with the town. However, he explained, “It's always impactful when you plan your budget and have a revenue number you're expecting, then midway through the year after the budget is already set, to find out that money is not going to be coming in.”

Education Cost Sharing funds don't go directly to the school, but are received by the town as revenue and are used to offset the cost of public education.

“On the town side, you look at everything through expenditures and revenue, so any loss of revenue has its impact and it's a matter of ‘how are you going to make up for it?’” Van Tassel said. “At this point, we're very hopeful

Hebron won't see any further reductions for ECS for the current school year, and we are concerned as to what next year will bring.”

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The Local Capital Improvement Program reimburses cities and towns for eligible capital improvement projects such as road and bridge construction or public building projects. It also credits every town, whether they apply for funding or not, with an annual entitlement for capital projects.

Office of Policy and Management spokesman Chris McClure said the legislature added the annual credit in 2004, when it specified \$30 million should be spread out so every town got something. But lawmakers never increased the program's \$825 million bond authorization to fund the mandate.

The program has managed to function since then because the amount of requested reimbursements from municipalities never maxed out, meaning there was \$30 million left over in the LoCIP pot to spread out among municipalities.

But “this year, for the first time, we received \$825 million worth of reimbursement requests,” McClure explained.

McClure said towns that have already been approved for reimbursement will be receiving their money. It's the annual, across-the-board entitlements that have been frozen.

Tierney said Hebron “didn't fare too badly” compared to some other municipalities, and reiterated the cuts didn't necessarily come as a surprise.

Warren said a reduction of \$28,323 in state funding for capital projects wouldn't affect Andover much, as the only LoCIP project currently being undertaken – replacing windows at the town library – has already been approved for reimbursement by the state.

According to Marlborough Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom, uncertainty about state funding is an ongoing problem. He said the board struggled last year with “constantly-changing numbers” regarding how much the town would be receiving.

“[That] was bad enough to deal with at that time, but it is unconscionable for the state to change their numbers in the middle of the fiscal year,” he said.

Hjulstrom added he believed the state “used smoke and mirrors” when assembling their budget and “is now penalizing the municipalities for their irresponsibility.”

State Rep. Melissa Ziobron, R-34, has been working to address those kinds of concerns through legislation that would lend predictability, transparency and timeliness to the state budget process.

Ziobron has signed onto a bill that would require the state General Assembly to pass its budget earlier in the year so cities and towns

know how much municipal aid to expect when creating their own budgets.

“It's very frustrating not to know what you're going to be getting back from your taxpayers,” she told members of the East Hampton Town Council last week. “Because it's not state money. It's your taxpayer money coming back to the community.”

For Tierney and Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, solving the problem is a matter of enhanced cooperation between localities and the state.

“There's a huge hole they've got to fill at the state and here in Hebron, Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen members realize that,” Tierney said. “We're not looking to point any fingers; [the state's deficit] is something that happened over time, and we're going to have to work together – town and cities along with the state – to get us out of this mess.”

Bransfield, who serves as the president of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, said she's hopeful town officials can work with legislators and state agencies to come up with a solution to the state's budget problems.

She said that while the town's \$63,429 LoCIP credit would have gone toward sidewalk repairs, the town has \$1 million from a voter-approved local bonding package to fix the most dangerous and rutted sidewalks. Leaders will also continue to seek grant funding for the project.

Describing LoCIP funding as a way to encourage local, long-term infrastructure improvements by making it easier for municipalities to create and carry out a capital plan, Bransfield said it's counter-productive to freeze the funds mid-year.

“It really stalls the process,” she said. “When you do a mid-year change to what has been a planned process, you really interrupt service. I look forward to the day when we don't do that anymore.”

State Sen. Art Linares, a Republican from the 33rd district representing the *Rivereast* towns of Colchester, East Hampton and Portland, said Wednesday that restoring ECS and LoCIP funding “is absolutely a priority, and something we as a caucus are going to be working on over the next few months.”

He put out a press release in the wake of last month's announcement calling on Gov. Dannel P. Malloy to restore the education funding.

“Families and businesses need predictability in order to have confidence in their future in Connecticut. Our towns and school districts also need predictability. Sadly, that is not what they have gotten from the state,” he said.

Malloy used part of his State of the State address earlier this month to talk about the need for a new way to calculate state aid for education.

*Reporter Julianna Roche contributed to this story.*

# ‘New’ Historic School for Colored Children to be Built in Colchester

by Julianna Roche

For much of the past two decades, the School for Colored Children, a key component of Colchester’s history, has been represented in a small shed, located on South Main Street next to the Colchester Federated Church.

But work is underway on a much more accurate replica of the historical schoolhouse, which was originally built in 1803.

According to philanthropist and local historian Arthur Liverant, in the early 1800s, Bacon Academy’s bylaws stated “persons of color” could be provided with an education, albeit in a separate building.

The one-room school, which is also part of the Connecticut Freedom Trail, was the first school in the state to educate African-Americans. It operated independently for about 30 years before eventually integrating its students with those at Bacon.

At the time, Colchester may have been considered one of the most forward thinking towns in the state, as having a schoolhouse of that sort was almost unheard of.

According to Liverant, it may arguably even be the first school in the country that offered education to black children – and he noted it may have even been used to educate Native Americans as well.

In 1831, a schoolteacher named Prudence Crandall opened her own private school in Canterbury. Two years later, she was met with controversy and backlash after she started offering African-American girls an education at her school – which is also widely regarded to be the first integrated classroom in the U.S.

“We do believe the school predates the one in Canterbury,” he continued, adding that for years, black children came to Colchester from all over the country to get an education.

“Many of these students came because Colchester was very well known as an educational center because of Bacon Academy,” Liverant explained, adding the two schools “went hand-in-hand.”

In 1998, to show appreciation for the school’s historical value, the town collaborated with the Colchester Historic District Commission to create an exhibit that marked the location of the

school, which was originally stationed between the town’s first firehouse and a former auto dealership.

A lawn shed donated by Carefree Sheds of Colchester was used to represent the building and Bacon Academy students even added furniture to the interior.

After nearly two decades, however, the building was in poor condition and in severe need of repair, Liverant said, which ultimately led to the town’s decision to replace the school with a more permanent structure that better reflected its historical importance.

“I felt that it didn’t really represent what the schoolhouse would have looked like,” Liverant said, adding the shed felt like more of a “placeholder” than anything.

To support the town’s decision, he and his wife Gigi offered to give the new building to the town as a gift from themselves and his sisters Linda Liverant-Barger and Abby Liverant-Gerrity, along with their husbands Donald Barger and Richard Gerrity.

“I always felt there should be a proper reproduction built there,” Liverant added.

In mid-October, the Historic District Commission granted Liverant an application and certificate of appropriateness to replace the shed with a new replication of the school, and by November, the town had moved the old building and cleared the site to prepare for construction.

Liverant hired Bill Treiss (his long-time friend and owner of Lost Art Joinery in Lebanon) to design and construct the new schoolhouse, as he specializes in the restoration and replication of 18th and 19th century buildings.

“Bill is a remarkable craftsman,” Liverant said, adding “he does everything by hand” and is “very sympathetic to the architectural manner as to how buildings were built at that time.”

Treiss meanwhile called working on the project “a great privilege.”

According to Treiss, Liverant suggested using the Gull School House in Hebron as a prototype for the new building since it was built in 1790, around the same time period the Colchester schoolhouse was used.

Then to be as historically accurate as pos-



Construction of the ‘new’ School for Colored Children building is expected to be completed in mid-March and will be donated to the town as a gift from members of the Liverant family.

sible, Treiss said he gathered native pine and oak from local lumber mills to use as the foundation and wall framing of the building.

“Arthur and his sister are donating the funds for this, so we have to walk the fine line of being authentic and being cost effective,” he explained.

Treiss said he expects the construction to be complete sometime in mid-March at which point, the Historic District Commission will fill the schoolhouse with artifacts and other materials that may have been found in the building in the 1800s.

“We will be furnishing it as properly as we can,” Liverant said, adding he estimates there might have been 30 to 40 students attending school there.

“There will be desks, a cast-iron stove... we’re trying to find properly-aged books and chalkboards,” he continued. “We’re trying to replicate the building as much as we possibly can.”

Once the school is fully furnished, the Colchester Historic District will set hours for the school and open its doors to the public.

The Colchester Historical Society is also planning to have an exhibit set up about the school’s history, including how it was formed and run. The exhibit, which will be featured in the Colchester History Museum, is expected to open in April 2018.

“Our intent is to bring to life the wonderful story that Colchester was a very progressive town in their thinking,” Liverant said.

## Lebanon Avenue Property Proposed for New Colchester Senior Center

by Julianna Roche

Plans for building a new senior center are finally coming to fruition, as the Senior Center Subcommittee prepared to present a site recommendation to the Board of Selectmen at its meeting this week.

The meeting was scheduled for Thursday night, after press time.

According to Rosemary Coyle, senior center subcommittee and Board of Selectmen member, the property sits in the town center on Lebanon Avenue – to be specific, Map 22/Lot 49, behind Town Hall and adjacent to Congregation Ahavath Achim – and would cost the town \$89,500 (before closing costs) to acquire. She said this money which would be appropriated from the town’s unassigned fund balance, and thus “it would not raise taxes.”

The Senior Center Subcommittee “is the third committee since I’ve been on the [Board of Selectmen], since 2007, that has worked to propose to build a new senior center,” she said, adding that she feels settling on a location for a new senior center is “finally within grasp.”

“We’re moving to that point and hopefully the town will support us in this,” Coyle said, adding the subcommittee already obtained

unanimous approval from the Board of Finance at its Jan. 4 meeting.

If the subcommittee’s recommendation garners support from the Board of Selectmen this week, the potential purchase of the property will then move to a town meeting.

Last September, the town closed on its purchase of the current senior center on 95 Norwich Ave. from its previous owner, the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees, by using \$283,240, which was also appropriated from the undesignated fund balance.

The current senior center has since been used as a temporary location for seniors and veterans until the new center is built.

After securing that building, Coyle said the senior center subcommittee began developing a list of criteria to be considered in selecting a site for the new senior center, which included everything from needing sewer and water to having good topography and plenty of green space.

“We were trying to be very practical, but we also want people to know we did our due diligence,” she said.

For example, the subcommittee “didn’t want to have to deal with environmental issues” and was looking for a property with a minimum of one to 1½ acres.

“12,000 square feet would be the minimum [size of the building],” she continued, adding that with the ever-growing senior population, another criterion for the new site is that it has room for potential expansion.

Parking availability and traffic flow were other considerations.

The subcommittee then enlisted the help of the Planning Department, specifically town planner Randy Benson, town engineer Sal Tassone, and public works director Jim Paggioli.

According to Coyle, the Planning Department brought forth 12 separate properties for the subcommittee to look at and analyze, which they were able to narrow down to four potential sites.

However, two of those were ultimately eliminated, according to Coyle, “because of inadequate frontage, grading, abatement and [no] sewers.”

“We [also] didn’t want to have to take down a structure,” she noted.

Of the two remaining sites, the town already owns one (which sits directly adjacent to Town Hall); however, Coyle said the property only amounts to about one acre of land, which may not leave room for building expansion in the future.

“The problem we saw with that is that the [new senior center building] would consume the entire property and parking would have to overflow into the existing Town Hall property,” she added.

Therefore, it was the piece of property on Lebanon Avenue that ultimately fit the bill, filling all of the subcommittee’s criteria.

“When you build another town building, it also gives the town access to another facility to do so many things,” Coyle said, adding for example, groups could host functions or meetings there or seniors could rent out the space.

“We think it’s the best site within the center of town,” she continued. “It meets the needs of the building, seniors and the people of Colchester.”

# Hebron Grand List Falls 4.1 Percent Following Revaluation

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The 2016 Grand List for 2016 has decreased by nearly \$31 million, according to reports just released by Assessor Deb Gernhardt which were expected to be presented at the Board of Selectmen meeting scheduled for Thursday after press time.

The decrease of \$30,937,720 or 4.1 percent brings the Grand List total to \$755,158,200 and can be mostly attributed to the recently-completely revaluation, which is the equalization of real estate in town based on current market values.

Gernhardt explained in a narrative sent to Town Manager Andrew Tierney, that unlike the motor vehicle and personal property portion of the Grand List – both of which actually saw increases – that are assessed each year at current market values, the real estate portion is equalized or revalued every five years.

The values used to determine assessments, she furthered, are derived from data tables developed from sales that took place over the previous 18 months. The sales utilized are those where a buyer and a seller agree on a price “and there are no factors of distress such as foreclosure, bankruptcy or family involvement.”

These tables are applied to all properties in town, which generates the “Fair Market Values,” and taxes are based on the assessment at 70 percent of that FMV.

Gernhardt went on to explain along with the changes in market values, a revaluation usu-

ally reveals a trend.

“During this revaluation the biggest trend in residential properties we saw was the desire for the purchase of newer homes. This resulted in a decline in value of most properties with older dwellings lacking in updates and improvements,” she stated. “Another area of decline since the last revaluation was that of unimproved vacant land.”

Gernhardt also explained that exemptions played a part in the total decrease, as the gross decrease before exemptions was 3.94 percent, but the net decrease after exemptions was the 4.1 percent. An increase in real estate exemptions, she said, can be contributed to the recently approved increase to the local option for low income elderly veterans and an increase in the values of exempt farm buildings.

The real estate portion of the Grand List decreased by \$32,210,110, or 4.58 percent, to \$664,665,560. Meanwhile, personal property increased \$394,640 or 2.57 percent to \$15,721,650, and motor vehicles increased \$877,750, or 1.19 percent, to \$75,780,990.

The personal property increase is mostly due to new purchase of equipment and a few new businesses coming to town including Crossfit Breakdown at 612 Church St. and medical offices at 117 Main St., while the increase in motor vehicles is mostly due to new vehicle purchases.

The top taxpayer for 2016 remained Con-

necticut Light and Power Co. (now Eversource Energy) at \$8,220,850. This is followed by Hebron Lincoln LLC at \$2,450,000, which pushed Village Shoppes LLC down to the third spot at \$1,835,070. Rounding out the list of the top 10 taxpayers are: Hebron Country Manor LLR at \$1,807,060; The Connecticut Water Company at \$1,657,920; Blackledge Country Club Inc. at \$1,548,550; Hebron Properties LLC at \$1,512,170; 41-61 Main St. LLC at \$1,308,340; Honda Lease Trust at \$925,750; and Edward and Renee J. Ellis at \$911,460.

Speaking of the decrease in real estate, and the results of the revaluation, Tierney said, “The bottom line is, revaluation is a decrease in the Grand List of assessed property of \$32,210,110 or 4.85 percent. So we did a quick calculation of what that is in real dollars using the current mill rate and that’s a loss of revenue of \$1,102,620.”

He continued, “I’ve been given directive by the Board of Selectmen to come in with a zero percent tax increase. With that loss of revenue I already know that the mill rate is going to go up, so I’ve got some work to do.”

However, Tierney said, “on the bright side of things, that 4.85 percent is not down as much as five years ago when we did revaluation.”

At that time, revaluation resulted in a grand list decrease of \$99,588,090 or 12.96 percent.

Tierney also said from what he was hearing, a decrease is the trend in towns going through

revaluation.

“I don’t think we’re an exception I think we’re somewhat following a trend in similar towns. But we’re going to tighten our belts and CIP and the department heads are going to work with us and we’re going to try to purchase only what we need and not want this year,” Tierney concluded. “Hopefully the people in the town will understand we’re doing the best we can... we’re doing things to try to be more marketable and sustainable and not just rely on residential tax base.”

The Grand List is used by the Board of Finance to help set the mill rate for the upcoming fiscal year, and the mill rate is then used to determine residents’ taxes. A resident can determine their taxes by multiplying the mill rate by their total assessments. One mill is equal to \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property, and under the current rate of 35.64 mills, a resident with a home assessed at \$250,000 would pay \$8,910 in taxes. However, as Tierney alluded to, the mill rate for the upcoming fiscal year has not yet been set – and is likely to rise.

Individuals who are unhappy with their appraisal can appeal them in front of the Board of Assessment Appeals. Appeal forms can be found at [hebronct.com](http://hebronct.com), under Assessor’s Office and then “Board of Assessment Appeals.” Applications must be submitted to the Assessor’s Office by Tuesday, Feb. 21.

## Hebron School Board Adopts \$11.74M Budget

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The local Board of Education last week voted to approve a budget proposal for 2017-18 that clocks in at \$11,743,132 – a 0.13 percent decrease from current year spending.

The approved amount is \$129,842 less than what schools superintendent Tim Van Tassel originally proposed in December, and comes on the heels of comments made by board members at the end of their Jan. 5 meeting that efforts should be made to reduce the budget to bring it as close to flat with current year spending as possible.

And, after all was said and done, it was actually a budget with a decrease that will be forwarded to the town. The spending package was trimmed to below zero in part due to the removal of several items initially included in the budget after the board voted to approve a number of line item transfers to pay for them in the current year.

Van Tassel explained they were all items that could be utilized immediately. These were: tables for the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) room, a floor cleaner, new carpeting in the 1988 wing of Hebron Elementary School, the replacement of a speaker/sound system at Gilead Hill School, and the purchase of science textbooks to move the district forward with Next Generation Science Standards students will be tested on start-

ing in 2018-19.

The decision was also made to switch the computer-automated assessment the district uses to one that’s less expensive, “at the recommendation of the intervention team” Van Tassel explained.

The cost of the above items totals approximately \$77,000.

“The board had asked how close we could get to zero – and we’ve been able to actually get slightly below that,” Van Tassel said.

He added this week those transfers were possible because of some projected surplus funds. These surplus funds, he explained, are the result of changes to salaries and benefits – an area that’s estimated in each budget cycle with the information that’s known at the time, but can change throughout the year if, for example, a teacher gets another degree, teachers who they expect will return to the district do not and the new hire is at a lower salary rate, or employees change their benefits when open-enrollment comes around in April or May.

“There’s an awful lot of misunderstanding as it relates to [a budget surplus] and we spend an awful lot of time trying to clarify,” Van Tassel stated. “It’s very difficult when you budget for the current year to know what the total cost of salaries and benefits are going to be, and those are the two areas that we draw down from –

that’s where the projected surplus becomes an actual surplus.”

Similar action was also taken last year to offset some budget requests including the purchase of choral rises, a dishwasher for Gilead Hill School and textbooks.

Van Tassel explained those surplus funds were also the result of changes to salaries and benefits.

“I think the impressions were that we budgeted wrong and were sending the wrong number to town,” he furthered. “This board is very careful and concerned with the financial stability of the community. They wouldn’t – and I wouldn’t – move forward a budget that wasn’t actuality. It’s a reality [at the time] but there are things that change.”

Not every school board member was happy adopting a budget that sported a decrease from the current year. Carol Connolly was the lone board member to vote against the \$11.74 million spending package.

Connolly explained, “I think there are a few things that should be in there that could be considered necessities that came out to make people happy. So next year I’d like to see the board have courage” and propose a budget with an increase.

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Also at last week’s meeting, the board voted

to approve the project plan presented by Van Tassel earlier this month which will keep third-graders at Hebron Elementary School while discontinuing the use of the portables that currently house fifth-grade students.

The plan will result in a reorganization of classroom and other academic spaces at the school to make room for the fifth-graders. In total, 17 moves will be required, and the estimated cost is \$13,951. Van Tassel explained when he presented the proposal some additional costs may be incurred, but in total he didn’t anticipate the cost going beyond \$15,000.

This amount is actually less than what was included in the budget he presented last month; Van Tassel explained he’d used \$30,000 as a placeholder in case the board decided to proceed with the plan.

The plan was approved by a vote of 5-1 with Connolly against. Connolly explained at the meeting she felt it would be more advisable to wait a year before implementing the plan.

“I just think it would be best to wait a year until the schools are more balanced [in terms of enrollment],” she said. “I just think it’s in the best interest of the district.”

The moves will begin in early June, with everything in place for the start of the 2017-18 school year.

# Hebron Board of Education Receives Patriot Award

by Geeta S. Sandberg

At its meeting last week, the Board of Education was presented with an award in recognition of its support of teacher and Army Reserve Major Dan Pape during his continued deployment.

The Patriot Award, according to the website [esgr.mil](http://esgr.mil), is awarded through the Department of Defense's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve organization and reflects "the efforts made to support citizen warriors through a wide-range of measures including flexible schedules, time off prior to and after deployment, caring for families, and granting leaves of absence if needed."

The award was presented to the board by ESGR vice Chairman Thomas Pandolfi, who further explained, "The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 (USERRA) sets forth responsibilities that employers have to ensure that our men and women who serve to protect our country are taken care of while on leave and upon their return."

Pape, who teaches fourth grade at Hebron Elementary School, is currently on a 15-month deployment with the Army Reserves, and is stationed at Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee, Mass.

The Board of Education was nominated for the award by Pape, who said last week the board provided "outstanding support."

"Not only am I a teacher here, I live here in town and my three kids go to the schools as well, so I'm tied to the town in many different ways and many different facets," he said. "But it's incredible to me what the Board of Education has done for me without me asking – and didn't even dream existed."

Pape furthered, "It's extremely helpful for me to be away from home and know that my job here is terrific and I'm not going to lose a beat when I come back to work. ... I appreciate everything the town has done for me, and the Board of Education and especially [schools superintendent Tim Van Tassel] – he's been instrumental in keeping me connected back to our school."

Van Tassel explained this week just what it was the board did for Pape, which went beyond what's mandated by USERRA. Teachers, he shared, currently contribute to a Teacher's Retirement Board (TRB) and deductions are taken out of their salary to cover their retirement contribution for that year. Individuals in the military, he explained, have the option to "buy back" those retirement years during which they were on active duty instead of working and paying into the TRB, "but they have to pay for them" and purchase what's referred to as "Purchasable Service Credit."

But rather than have Pape do that, the Board of Education agreed to cover his TRB contributions for the year while he was on active duty.

"So what he would be expected to pay if he were serving as a teacher, that contribution to cover the cost of retirement – the Board of Education covered that percentage."

Pandolfi said of the board's actions, "I have to say this is exceptional for a Board of Education to do this."

The ESGR also handles conflicts between employers and military personnel and Pandolfi shared, "I just finished a case with another Board of Education and superintendent of schools from a larger city and they were totally against the military... I commend you all for doing what you're doing."



The Hebron Board of Education last week was presented with the Patriot Award for its support of teacher and Army Reserve Major Dan Pape during his deployment. Shown from left are Board of Education member Kevin Williams, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Program vice Chairman Thomas Pandolfi, Board of Education Chairwoman Erica Bromley, Superintendent of Schools Tim Van Tassel, Pape, and board members Kathy Williams, Geoff Davis and Maryanne Leichter.

The Patriot Award is one of several offered by ESGR, and Pandolfi added this week the board was likely to also qualify for their "Above and Beyond" award.

Board of Education Chairwoman Erica Bromley also spoke to the award this week, sharing the board was "thrilled" to receive it.

"The board will continue to support its teachers and staff however we can, and this was just one example of our support. Military service is both an honor and a sacrifice and supporting our military staff in this way is one more way we can thank them for their service," she said. "We were happy to work with Mr. Pape during

his deployment and will be happy to have him back this summer!"

Van Tassel, meanwhile, said the board was "humbled and tremendously honored to be receiving this award."

He furthered, "The Hebron Board of Education recognizes the significance of our role in looking out for the men and women on active duty as well as their families. We take great pride in the Patriot Award we received, as it speaks to the genuine care and concern our Board of Education has for our servicemen and women and our staff as a whole."

# Portland Selectmen Eye Killing 'Worthless' Sidewalk Law

by Elizabeth Regan

The Board of Selectmen, in a prime example of the kind of "repeal and replace" discussion that happens at the local level, is talking about getting rid of the town's sidewalk ordinance.

Discussion by selectmen followed a public hearing on rescinding the local law, which puts the responsibility for sidewalk repair and maintenance on homeowners.

There has not been any language drafted to put in its place.

Sidewalks have deteriorated into a safety concern because of what selectman Fred Knous has described as the board's failure to enforce the rules for many years.

Knous called the ordinance "absolutely worthless," adding that it is not just unenforced but actually unenforceable, due to legality issues surrounding the law.

Several residents who spoke at the public hearing agreed on the condition of the sidewalks – the terms "terrible," "really sad," and "pretty lousy" were all thrown around – though there was disagreement about who should pay to fix them.

One line of thought was that the sidewalks are there for the public good, leaving the town with the ultimate responsibility to repair and maintain them.

Resident Kathy Herron, a member of the grassroots Complete Streets organization de-

voted to making streets and sidewalks safe for everyone, said the crumbling sidewalks are a "black mark" on the town.

"I think the sidewalks are public spaces," she said. "Any of us can walk on any sidewalk in town; therefore, I believe they're part of our public infrastructure and therefore the town should be responsible for the repair and maintenance, not for the snow shoveling."

Others, like selectman Ben Srb and Long-Range Capital Committee Chairman Michael Agogliati, said the responsibility for upkeep should remain with homeowners.

According to Srb, those who bought houses with sidewalks knew what they were getting into.

"I just purchased one of them on Main Street," Srb said. "I now have sidewalks. I'm going to have to fix them. But I knew that when I bought the place."

Agogliati estimated it could cost upwards of \$5 million for Portland to repair all the sidewalk problems in town.

A review of sidewalks in a half-mile radius of the town's schools by Rick Kelsey in August revealed it would cost \$3.22 million to replace approximately 7.8 miles of sidewalk.

Voters at a November referendum approved a \$10 million bonding package that included \$1 million to fix the most dangerous sidewalks

near schools.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said one thing is certain: sidewalks in town need to get repaired.

"This board has made a commitment, and this community has made a commitment, to improving the sidewalks. It's a matter of how we do it," she said.

Another option might be a cost-sharing arrangement that would leave it up to the town to repair the sidewalks and then to the homeowner to maintain them, she said.

But Kelsey cautioned the town takes on liability if it repairs the sidewalks, which he cited as a significant issue based on the "many" injury claims that have already come across his desk.

"When claims come in, I provide the insurance carriers or the attorney with a copy of your ordinance, which places the liability and the responsibility for maintenance on the homeowner adjoining that sidewalk," Kelsey said. "To the best of my knowledge, I don't believe we've been liable or paid for claims of that nature."

On the other side of the argument, a 2015 legal opinion from town attorney Kari Olson of Murtha Cullina indicated the town doesn't have the right to put the burden of sidewalk repair on property owners.

Olson said state statute does not grant municipalities the authority to force owners of abutting properties to repair or replace sidewalks. Towns are empowered only to require residents to clear snow and ice. She said her opinion is based on several cases in the state superior court, though none of them had been appealed to a higher court at the time.

She concluded the ordinance would likely not withstand a challenge if enforced – but she said waiting for an appellate court decision would be "a reasonable position to take."

Bransfield said she is awaiting a memo from the town's bond counsel, Bruce Chudwick of Shipman and Goodwin, with more information on specific case law addressing sidewalks.

In the meantime, most residents and selectmen agreed the town should look at ordinances in other communities to find a fair and enforceable solution that works in Portland.

Selectman Michael Pelton said he tended to agree the ordinance is not enforceable as it is. But he drew a parallel between the sidewalk issue and the controversial repeal of the Affordable Care Act at the federal level when he said the town needs an alternative plan.

"We should probably have something solid and definitive before we repeal anything," he said.

# Obituaries

## Colchester

### Jason Robert Ebbeling

Jason Robert Ebbeling, 43, of Colchester, passed away during the night of Tuesday, Jan. 10, at his home. He was born in Whitinsville, Mass., on March 11, 1973.

Jason attended The Ohio State until he reached his goal of attaining a degree in law. He went on to do graduate work in student affairs and higher education at University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Jason was very proud of his career. He worked in higher education, inspiring students in Wisconsin, California, Oregon, New Hampshire and in Connecticut at Mitchell College, serving as VP and dean of student affairs. Most recently, Jason worked for the State of Connecticut, Board of Regents as the director for student success. He loved his work with the students he served.

Jason married his beloved wife, Gina Miller, on July 19, 2009. Soon after their daughter Jordan was born, the couple moved to Colchester where they made their home. When it came to personal, professional and athletics, Jason was a man of strong conviction and determination. After a period of time in his life when he struggled with physical ailments, he fought back with determination to become strong and healthy by running. He became so proficient that he qualified and then ran the Boston Marathon in 2016 and was headed to Tokyo for another marathon in February 2017.

Of all his accomplishments, most importantly, he will be remembered by his family as a devoted and adoring husband and father. He will be sadly missed but always remembered by his beloved wife, Gina, his sweet daughter, Jordan Helen; father and stepmother, Robert and Karen Ebbeling of Dalton, Mass.; mother and stepfather, Paula and Robert Canavan of Bradenton, Fla.; a sister, Jill and husband Joseph Babka of St. Louis, Mo.; in-laws, Hal and Rita Miller of Colchester; and numerous extended family and friends.

A celebration of his life and time of visitation were held Monday, Jan. 16, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A time for reflection and remembrance followed. Burial was private.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Martin Richard Foundation at [teammr8.org](http://teammr8.org).

For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Andover

### Edward John Nagy

Edward John Nagy, 83, of Andover, passed away peacefully Thursday, Jan. 5, at Hebrew Home & Hospital. He is predeceased by his beloved wife, Blanche Nagy. Ed was born Sept. 21, 1933, in New Haven, to the late Julius Nagy and Clara Massey.

He is survived by his children, Gary (Debbe) Nagy of Owings, Md., Karen Nagy of Windsor, Tricia (Andrew) Leary of Pawcatuck, and Laurie (Shane) Drum of Vernon; his stepchildren, Pamela Morano of Colchester and Peter (Kristen) Bruno of Enfield; his grandchildren, Jason (Lauren), Jennifer, Travis, and Logan; his step-grandsons, Anthony and Daniel; his three great-grandchildren; his brother, James Nagy of Wallingford; also, his four nephews and extended family members.

He is predeceased by his son, Kevin Nagy.

He graduated from Lyman Hall High School in Wallingford. He went to RPI in Troy, N.Y., and to WNEC. He served in the California and Connecticut Army National Guard. He was a fireman at Hayden Station in Windsor, serving as a captain in 1962. He made a 40+-year career as an engineer at Kaman Aerospace in Bloomfield. He later drove buses for the Nichols Bus Co. of East Hampton.

His favorites were fishing, sailing, snowmobiling, riding dirt bikes, hunting, going to fairs to watch the oxen pulls, traveling to Florida, and country music. He loved going to the "country" with his brother Jimmy to work and enjoy the family property, where his mother was born, in Roxbury. He served on committees in Andover.

Family and friends are welcome to attend his burial that will be held in Roxbury Saturday, April 22. Affordable Cremation of Connecticut is in charge of his arrangements.

## East Hampton

### Armand Roy

Armand Roy, 82, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Julia (Chasse) Roy, died Friday, Jan. 13, at Water's Edge in Middletown. Born June 13, 1934, in Green River, New Brunswick, Canada, he was the son of the late Joseph and Helen (Cyr) Roy.

Armand had worked most of his life as a roofing and siding contractor. He was a communicant of St. Patrick Church in East Hampton and was a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus Belltown Council at St. Patrick Church.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his four sons, James Roy and Louise of East Hampton, Steven Roy of Florida, Edward Roy and Denise of East Hampton, William Roy and Carol of Middletown; a sister, Lillian Landry of Canada; seven grandchildren; and six great-granddaughters.

He was predeceased by his 16 other siblings. A funeral liturgy was celebrated Wednesday, Jan. 18, at 11 a.m., in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial will follow in St. Patrick Cemetery. Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Tuesday, Jan. 17.

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

## Hebron

### David G. Luetjen

David G. Luetjen, 80, of Hebron, loving husband for 47 years and inseparable love of Doris (Verilli) Luetjen, died peacefully Wednesday, Jan. 11, at Manchester Memorial Hospital. He was born Sept. 20, 1936, in Hartford, son of the late James and Lena (Patton) Luetjen.

David was a veteran of the U.S. Army, and he had been employed for over 20 years as comptroller for the Brand Rex Company. He was an avid and lifelong fisherman. He was the proud captain of his fishing vessel, The 4 Ds, which he moored at Walkers Dock in North Stonington. David later became a commercial fisherman and was old school using the Hook & Line method. He attended St. Peter's Church in Hebron.

In addition to his wife Doris, he is survived by his two daughters, Doreen Hussey of Andover and Dawn Gulizio and her husband Jim of Colchester; six grandchildren, Justin Hussey, Danielle (Hussey) Ledoux and her husband Luke, Cassandra Brodeur, Colton Brodeur and his wife Danielle, Lexis Gulizio and Vincent Gulizio; and three great-grandchildren, Luke Ledoux Jr. and P.J. and Cameron Brodeur. David also leaves his sister, Mary Ellen Casparino of Port Charlotte, Fla.; several nieces, nephews and their families; his longtime best friend and fishing partner, Frankie Gentile, along with many other good friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his brother, James F. Luetjen.

Calling hours were at Watkins Funeral Home, 142 East Center St., Manchester, Tuesday, Jan. 17.

Memorial contributions may be made to Special Wishes at [specialwishes.org](http://specialwishes.org).

To leave an online condolence, visit [holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com](http://holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com).



## Andover

### Bette J. MacDonald

Bette J. MacDonald March 26, 1934-Jan. 14, 2017

Bette was born in a small farmhouse on her grandfather's farm in Stanstead, Quebec, Canada. Her parents, Martha Moran and Edison LeBaron, soon moved to Northern Vermont. She then moved with her mother and two brothers to her grandparents' house in Columbia. Bette finished eighth grade in a one-room schoolhouse in Columbia and started 9th grade at Windham High School in Willimantic where she met Gordon MacDonald, a student from Andover. They became fast friends and upon graduation in 1952, Bette went to work at Beneficial Finance in Willimantic to help support her mother and younger brothers.

Bette and Gordon, high school sweethearts, married in 1955 and moved to Brooklyn, N.Y. Bette worked as a secretary at Domino Sugar Laboratories while Gordon completed his BFA degree at Pratt Institute. In 1958, they moved with their first daughter to a cottage on Andover Lake.

Bette and Gordon were both active in community organizations, such as The Rural Music Committee, Andover Historical Society and Community Club. Through the Social Action Committee of the Andover Congregational Church, Bette was instrumental in establishing the Hop River Homes elderly housing complex in Andover. She was later to become the administrator for Juniper Hill Village and Glen Ridge in Storrs for 18 years.

They raised four girls on Andover Lake, and in 1986 moved to a lovely 1890 Victorian home in Willimantic. Moving to the city only gave them more choices of worthwhile organizations in which to participate and Bette became president of the Windham Regional Arts Council among many other volunteer activities. Over the years, Bette and Gordon had the opportunity to travel to Europe, Russia, Kenya, Alaska and the Caribbean. It was those experiences that continued to shape their social outlook. Bette had a strong passion and understanding for different cultures, however, no place meant more to her than the farm in Quebec where she was born. She found no greater joy in life than to share this special place with her relatives and friends.

Bette was always a loving mother, wife and good friend to all who knew her. During a daughter's battle with cancer, she stayed with her for weeks. Bette also cared for her own mother in the last months of her life after many years of close friendship. Her exceptional love was evident in her children and grandchildren who tended to her every need as her condition became progressively worse.

Bette will be missed by her husband, her two brothers and their wives, her four children, nine grandchildren, three great grandchildren, six nieces, three nephews, and scores of friends.

Her resting place will be in the Andover Townsend Cemetery beside a large diamond-shaped black granite family stone.

The family was at The First Congregational Church of Andover for visiting hours Thursday, Jan. 19, and a memorial service will be held there today, Jan. 20, at 2 p.m.

Donations can be made in her honor to the Class of 1952 Scholarship Fund by sending checks made out to "Windham High School Bank" with a memo of "Class of 1952 Scholarship Fund" and mailing it to 355 High St. Willimantic, CT 06226.



## Colchester

### Martha G. Pearl

Martha G. Pearl of Colchester, formerly of Lebanon, died Saturday, Jan. 14, at the age of 82. She was born in Lebanon Nov. 17, 1934, one of 11 children born to the late George J. and Ruth (Fargo) Miller Sr.

Martha graduated from Lyman Memorial and was employed as a secretary at Electric Boat for 32 years before retiring. Martha was a member of the Goshen Congregational Church, she enjoyed singing and loved her family especially her grandchildren; they meant the world to her.

Martha is survived by her son, Christian Pearl and his wife Gail of Lebanon; her daughter, Sharon Fox and her fiancé David Shaw of Columbia; her sister, Peggy Turner of Colchester; grandchildren, Kyle Fox and his wife Roberta of New Hampshire, Christina Demao and her fiancé Chris Gamache of Columbia; great-grandchildren, Dakota Demao, Vivian Gamache and Haiden Fox; as well as many nieces and nephews.

In addition to her parents George and Ruth, she was predeceased by her son Kevin Pearl and nine siblings.

Calling hours were held Wednesday, Jan. 18, at Belmont Funeral Home, 144 S. Main St., Colchester. Family and friends met at the Goshen Hill Congregational Church, 157 Church Rd., Lebanon, on Thursday, Jan. 19, for a service; burial immediately followed at Johnson's Bozrah Rural Cemetery.

Visit [belmontfh.com](http://belmontfh.com) to leave condolences for the family.

## Colchester

### Virginia Roach

Virginia "Ginger" Mary Corsten Roach of Southington, formerly of Lewiston, N.Y., died peacefully at Connecticut Hospice at Branford on Tuesday, Jan. 17, at the age of 90.

She was born in 1926 in Milwaukee, Wis. She was the beloved wife of John David Roach who predeceased her in 1985 after 35 years of marriage.

She is survived by two sisters, MaryAnn Costantino of Lewiston, N.Y., and Barbara Westrud of Columbus, Ohio. She is also survived by her children, Jeannine Pettinico and her husband Nick of Wolcott; Terry Roach-Walkowski of Hamburg, N.Y.; Jamie Roach-Decker and her husband Mark of Colchester; and Dennis Roach and his wife Laurie of Albuquerque, N.M. Virginia has nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

She graduated from Saint Mary's School of Nursing in Niagara Falls with her RN degree and devoted her life to helping others in numerous settings such as St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston, Kimberly Clark as a plant nurse, and the American Red Cross in Buffalo.

She believed in keeping fit and active and, until the age of 85, taught aerobics classes through the Silver Sneakers, walked at the mall every day and took country line dance lessons. She was an avid shopper and taught all her children how to find the best bargains. She enjoyed traveling, touring Europe and taking the Delta Queen cruise down the Mississippi.

Funeral services on Saturday, Jan. 21, in Lewiston, N.Y., will be private.

Donations may be made to the American Red Cross or The Connecticut Hospice, Inc. in Branford.





*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Well, it's Jan. 20 – Inauguration Day.

I won't again get into the myriad ways why Donald Trump was a horrible choice that, somehow, 62,979,879 people made on Election Day (which, by the way, is about 2.9 million less than the total that voted for Clinton – but I won't get into that again either). The election is over, this is the outcome that we got, and.....well, we're stuck with it.

I can only hope from here on out. Hope that Trump proves me wrong. Hope that he surprises me, and doesn't do whatever nonsense the Republicans want him to. Hope that he backs down from some of the crazy rhetoric he employed during the campaign. Hope that he stops tweeting about *Saturday Night Live*. (On a related note, hope that he develops a thicker skin.) Hope that he can embrace the diversity that makes America the land of opportunity that it is – and that he realizes that to truly “make America great again” involves moving us forward, not backward.

Hope that he doesn't get us all killed.

To quote that '80s Ronald Reagan commercial, it's a new day in America. It may not be the day many of us wanted, but it's a new day nonetheless. No sense in wringing my hands over what might have been. It's time to hope – there's that word again! – for the best.

\* \* \*

Inauguration Day is on a Friday this year. What's not different, though, is it comes on Jan. 20. And that got me to thinking: how long has Inauguration Day been Jan. 20?

The answer: Not as long as you might think.

Given that we've been having presidents since 1789, and holding elections in November since 1792, it may surprise you – it did me – to learn that Inauguration Day has only been on Jan. 20 since 1937. The very first inauguration took place April 30, 1789, and from 1793 until 1933, Inauguration Day was March 4. That's a solid four months (give or take a couple days) from Election Day; imagine having to read about the “Trump transition” for literally twice as long as you did this year. Ugh.

But saving the news-reading public from yet more transition stories wasn't the thinking behind changing the date. No, the 20th Amendment – which set swearing-in dates of Jan. 3 for members of Congress and Jan. 20 for the president – was ratified because four months was simply too long for a “lame duck” administration to be in office. Twice in history the country had been bitten by the four-month waiting period for a new presidency to begin.

In 1860, the country was teetering on Civil War anyway, and then Abraham Lincoln was elected. Following that election, southern states organized and, according to [history.com](http://history.com), no fewer than eight of them had seceded from the union by the time Lincoln took office the following March. Lincoln hadn't been sworn in yet, so his hands were tied, and the outgoing president, James Buchanan, opted to simply leave the whole matter up to his successor – despite the fact that the successor was still months away from taking office. So, almost literally, Washington fiddled while the country burned.

Flash forward about 70 years. With the country in the throes of the Great Depression, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president in November 1932, with plans of a New Deal that would turn things around. Only thing is, he had to wait four long months before he could implement anything; in the meantime, as [history.com](http://history.com) put it, “uncertainty further roiled financial markets.”

While I would've loved to delay this Trump presidency as long as possible, moving the inauguration date to January is a good idea. The reasons behind the March date were practical in the late 1700s (for example, [history.com](http://history.com) noted that the four-month gap

was needed “in part because of the time it took to count and report votes and to travel to the nation's capital”), but simply didn't pose much of a hindrance by the 1930s. And the nation had already seen the pitfalls of waiting for so long. So moving it made sense. Yeah, you run the risk of some lousy weather as a result (the 1985 inauguration was actually moved indoors, because it was simply too cold to conduct it outside), but the benefits outweigh the drawbacks.

One more piece of Inauguration Day trivia: In the years Jan. 20 falls on a Sunday, the president is sworn in privately, and then the next day, sworn in again publicly, amid all the normal inauguration pomp and circumstance. The last time that happened was, well, the last time we swore in a president: when Obama began his second term in 2013.

\* \* \*

It's January for another 10 days or so, so it's still Radon Awareness Month. Radon is a naturally-occurring radioactive gas that, according to the EPA, is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers. The agency estimates radon is responsible for 21,000 deaths from lung cancer each year.

You can't see radon gas, or smell it. But it can seep into your home. The EPA states that radon “comes from the natural decay of uranium that is found in nearly all soils. It typically moves up through the ground to the air above and into your home through cracks and other holes in the foundation.”

The agency adds that any home can have a radon problem – new or old, well-sealed or drafty, whether it has a basement or not. So it's probably a good idea to have your home tested – and fortunately, the Chatham Health District is here to help.

The district – which is the public health provider for Colchester, Hebron, Marlborough, Portland and East Hampton – can provide a free radon test kit to check your house for dangerous levels of radon gas. The district will even set it up for you.

Call 860-365-0884 to request a free kit and arrange to have it set up for you. Once set, leave it alone for three days and either mail it in or arrange for Chatham Health staff to come pick it up.

\* \* \*

The Super Bowl is around the corner, and while it's too soon yet to know who the two teams are that will be playing in it, it's safe to say much, much food will be consumed that day. In fact, according to *Good Housekeeping*, Super Bowl Sunday is America's second-biggest eating day of the year, right after Thanksgiving. We consume 1.3 billion chicken wings that day alone – and 11.2 million pounds of potato chips.

As is the case every year, Fowler-Dix-Park VFW Post 5095 in East Hampton is available to help you stuff your face that day.

The VFW and its Auxiliary are looking to raise funds for the Joe Barber Memorial Scholarship Fund, through the sale of 16-inch grinders for Super Bowl Sunday, which is Feb. 5 this year.

Select turkey, ham, roast beef or tuna, with your choice of American or Provolone cheese. Grinders also include lettuce, tomato, and your choice of condiments.

Grinders are \$10 each, and must be ordered no later than Tuesday, Jan. 31. They can be picked up at the VFW Post Home, located at 20 North Maple St., East Hampton, between noon and 3 p.m. Feb. 5. If you live in East Hampton, you can also get free delivery that day, between noon and 4 p.m.

Order forms are available at the Post Home, as well as at American Legion Post 197, which is located at 128 East Hampton Rd. (Route 66) in Marlborough. You can also place an order by calling 860-267-8837.

\* \* \*

See you next week.