

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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Team Hot AIR... In the annual 5K at last month's Glastonbury Apple Harvest Festival, Glastonbury business American Integrity Restoration sponsored Team Hot AIR, which ran in memory of Hebron resident Glen Dalton, who passed away from cancer on Oct. 5. The team featured 399 runners, out of just about 1,100 total race entries – and won both the “Largest Team” and “Fastest Team” awards. Pictured here are race director Michael Keenan, Glen's widow Kelly Dalton, and Hebron resident Steve Weir, owner of American Integrity Restoration.

Election Day Mistakes in Portland, Belltown

by Elizabeth Regan

Mistakes by local election officials in East Hampton and Portland resulted in skewed Election Day results that disproportionately benefited Republicans – a situation that came to light only after several close races forced recounts in both towns.

The winners remained the same after both recounts, even though the number of votes they received had changed.

The error occurred when all the ballots with write-in candidates on them were inadvertently counted twice, according to East Hampton and Portland election officials.

Each Portland Republican candidate for the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education received about 10 extra votes on Election Day because of the double-counted ballots.

Votes for Portland Democrats either stayed the same or changed by one vote when Election Day numbers were compared to the recount tallies.

Portland head moderator Susanne Anderson-Woronoff said a review of the ballots revealed that most of the people who wrote in a candidate's name happened to vote for Republicans in the other races.

“It just so happened, in this election, that the majority [of the affected ballots] were Republican votes,” she said.

In East Hampton, each Republican pulled in about 20 extra votes on Election Day due to

the same error. Democrats and members of the Chatham Party received a smaller number of extra votes, ranging from three to 15.

The error was corrected through the recount process in Portland on Nov. 10 and in East Hampton on Nov. 13, when all the write-in ballots were handcounted. The difference on Election Day was that the write-in ballots were run through the tabulator first and then handcounted, resulting in the same votes being tallied twice.

East Hampton Republican Tim Feegel's initially-reported 12-vote lead over Democrat Alan Hurst was whittled down to only two votes based on the recount. An eight-vote disparity between Zoning Board of Appeals winner Charles Nichols, a Democrat, and Republican Margaret Jacobson turned into a 13-vote win for Nichols.

Portland Democrat Ben Srb's initially-reported 19-vote lead over Republican Timothy Lavoy grew to a 30-vote lead after the recount. Republican David Murphy's original seven-vote lead over Republican Angela Hammond changed to a six-vote lead.

Anderson-Woronoff said the ballots of voters who chose to write in the name of a candidate were spit out into a separate bin of the tabulator so election officials could handcount the write-in vote.

See Mistakes page 2

Sewer Squabble Continues in Marlborough

by Julianna Roche

In the months following a major sewer blockage at Marlborough Elementary School (MES) – which cost approximately \$41,000 in contracted services, eight days, and hours of overtime for public works employees to fix – the school and town have been at odds deciding on whose shoulders the financial responsibility should fall.

At its Oct. 26 meeting, however, the Board of Education proposed that the school would foot up to approximately \$30,000 toward the bill for outsourced services, but would not pay for any town employee overtime.

Board of Education Chairwoman Ruth Kelly explained this week that she believed there is still “some concern by some board members because we really don't know what's causing the [blockage] issue... [but] we're moving on now because we have to get going on next year's budget.”

On Aug. 27, the town's public works department had originally discovered the blockage in the sewer system, which connects the elementary school to the library, senior center, and five residential properties along School Drive, determining the cause to be buckets worth of what appeared to be floor stripper and wax, paint, cleaning rags stuck in the pump propeller, and other materials that had been discharged into the school's sewer.

In September, Town Planner Peter Hughes explained the blockage resulted in five broken check valves and two burnt-out sewer pumps.

He also said that this was not the first time the town has had to jet the sewer lines due to blockage caused by materials dumped into the sewer at the school – which when dumped, “harden to the circumference” of the sewer pipes, slowly building up overtime.

According to First Selectwoman Amy Traversa, as of this week, an insurance claim has been filed regarding the incident; however, she said Hughes has received “tentative word back” from the claims adjuster “saying that typically only hazardous material inadvertently dumped in [the sewer] is covered,” leading her to believe “the bulk” of the cost “will not be covered.”

She furthered that because the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) is a separate entity of the town, if nothing is covered by insurance, essentially “either the 393 people in the sewer district pick up the cost and split it among themselves” through user fees “or the entire town pays for it and splits it between the 2,300 households” in town.

If property owners in the sewer district were to foot the bill, it would cost approximately \$80 per home.

“It's not right,” Traversa said.

While awaiting a determination from the insurance company, MES Principal Dan White said the school has been working closely with Hughes, instilled regular maintenance on its two pump chambers and has ceased using the wax stripping product.

“Everything's been fine [and] there have been no issues at all,” he said. “We're waiting to see if there's a possibility of collecting anything in terms of insurance.”

According to both White and Kelly, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz – who could not be reached for comment by press time – is also looking into the possibility of hiring an outside engineer to look at and potentially manage the sewer system.

Sklarz has noted previously that further investigation needs to be done as to whether the waxing and floor stripper products used by the school are actually the cause of the sewer blockages – noting that the same products have been used for the last 10 years, before the problems even started.

Kelly also expressed doubts regarding the cause of the blockages this week, adding however, that “hopefully” the “little fixes” the school has been making will “resolve the problem.”

If it turns out the wax stripper “is not the root of the problem, then we don't want to have to

continually be paying huge bills,” Kelly said. “So we need to figure out what [the cause] is.”

The town is “claiming it's the wax, but they're also talking about grit and sand and gravel,” Kelly added. “So I don't know how that's going to be resolved because the kids have to go outside and play and they have to wear shoes.”

Kelly furthered that she “can't imagine” that “kids would be dragging in enough stuff from outside to clog the sewer pipes.”

“I think we've done everything that [the town has] asked,” she said. “The only outstanding thing the board did not agree to pay is the bill for the [employee] overtime.”

Early Deadline Next Week

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the *Rivereast* will publish a day early next week. That means all submitted copy – news releases, listings, letters to the editor, etc. – **must** be submitted no later than **noon Monday, Nov. 20**. No exceptions will be made.

Happy Thanksgiving from all of us at the *Rivereast*.

Mistakes cont. from Front Page

What the election officials did not know on the night of the election was that all the other bubbles filled out on each affected ballot had already been counted by the tabulator.

Poll workers “were really only supposed to look at the write-ins and tally those,” according to Anderson-Woronoff.

Since there were 15 ballots with write-in candidates in Portland, that amounts to 15 residents whose votes counted twice on Election Day.

East Hampton Democrat Deputy Registrar of Voters Terry Latimer said the same Election Day mistake was made in Belltown.

Latimer could not be sure of the specific number of write-in ballots since the sheets are on lockdown following the election. She said she thought there were about 22 of them.

Secretary of the State spokesman and election lawyer Gabe Rosenberg said state-provided election trainings and manuals are “really clear” on how to handle write-in ballots.

He said the chief of the Secretary of the State’s election division has seen the same mistake made “only a handful of times” in the past eight years across more than 700 polling places.

Lead officials on the East Hampton election team were head moderator Steve Maynard, Democrat Registrar of Voters Stephanie Lee, Republican Registrar of Voters Lori Wilcox, Republican Deputy Registrar of Voters Patty Burnham and Latimer.

Latimer, who has been deputy registrar since January, said the group has not been working together long.

“We’ve got all new people doing the election,” she said.

It was Maynard’s first run as head moderator, while Lee took her post this January and Wilcox in 2015.

Latimer said the team will be meeting next week to discuss the election.

Anderson-Woronoff’s team has more experience, but she said they are not very familiar with write-in ballots.

Anderson-Woronoff has been head moderator on and off for five years, while Republican Registrar of Voters Pauline Neumann has been in her role since 2000 and Democrat Registrar of Voters Athena Neville has been there since 2012.

“There’s so much to look at and know, it’s hard to retain it all at once,” Anderson-Woronoff said. “It really takes a lot of hands-on experience.”

She emphasized the issue has been a deep concern for Portland election officials since they discovered the discrepancy in the numbers through the recount and began trying to figure out what caused it.

“We all take this very seriously, and we take an oath,” Anderson-Woronoff said.

Question of Intent

Anderson-Woronoff identified two additional issues that may have contributed to the discrepancy between the initial results and the recount.

She said one ballot, which got jammed in the machine on Election Day and was not counted, ended up being tallied in the recount.

Then there were the 32 ballots that were handcounted during the recount. Ballots are handcounted when recanvass officials – who must look at every single ballot from Election Day – find indistinct or confusing markings that they think might not be picked up by the tabulator.

In some cases, election officials must determine the “voter intent” of those handcounted votes.

Town Clerk Ryan Curley described one instance in which a voter circled the entire row of Democrats, but put a large ‘X’ through Board of Selectmen candidate Ben Srb’s name. Curley said election officials decided the voter had in-

Recount Results in East Hampton and Portland

East Hampton Town Council

Tim Feegel (R)
Original vote total: 1,315
Total after recount: 1,295

Alan Hurst (D)
Original vote total: 1,303
Total after recount: 1,293

East Hampton Zoning Board of Appeals, 5-year term starting in 2017

Charles Nichols (D)
Original vote total: 1,583
Total after recount: 1,567

Margaret Jacobson (R)
Original vote total: 1,575
Total after recount: 1,554

Portland Board of Selectmen

Ben Srb (D)
Original vote total: 996
Total after recount: 997

Tim Lavoy (R)
Original vote total: 977
Total after recount: 967

Portland Board of Education

David Murphy
Original vote total: 1,208
Total after recount: 1,198

Angela Hammond
Original vote total: 1,201
Total after recount: 1,192

tended to vote for Srb even though the name was crossed out.

Srb was allowed to stand directly over election officials as they made their determination, according to Curley.

The recanvass procedure manual from the office of the Secretary of the State specifies candidates and their representatives are allowed to observe the conduct of the proceedings and make notes but “should not be allowed to be so close to the recanvass officials as to disrupt their activities.” It’s up to the moderator to decide what distance is acceptable, the manual said.

Srb could not be reached for comment.

Anderson-Woronoff said Wednesday she feels confident in the recount numbers now that election officials have reconciled the apparent discrepancy in Election Day votes.

“The good news is the winners did not change,” she said. “But we do owe the public and the candidates an explanation for the difference, and now we’ve found it.” She said an employee from New Hampshire-based LHS Associates, the company that provides and services tabulating machines across New England, will be coming to test the machines for accuracy later this month.

The machines are maintained through an annual visit by LHS, according to election officials. The town’s three voting machines were serviced earlier this year.

Registrar Lori Wilcox said East Hampton’s machines were not serviced this year.

“That’s a follow-up item for us because I’ve been here about four and a half years and they’ve always been very proactive with contacting us and scheduling and getting it all done,” Wilcox said. “Maybe it just slipped through the cracks this time. We’ll be calling them to have our annual maintenance done.”

The machines were provided through a state grant about 10 years ago. Rosenberg said this week that University of Connecticut computer science and engineering professor Alexander Shvartsman, leader of the Voting Technology Research Center, maintains that the tabulator machines used in Connecticut will last as long as there are still parts being made for them.

Curley said this week the Office of Secretary of the State is satisfied with Portland’s recount process and results.

But Curley expressed concern about the broader implications of the issue, adding that mistakes could have happened and gone undetected in towns that didn’t have recounts.

He wondered if training given to registrars and moderators adequately explains the process for handling write-in ballots.

Rosenberg said registrars are trained by the state to instruct moderators how to run an election. Each moderator must complete a four-hour class with a passing grade, he said.

The Moderator’s Handbook for Elections and Primaries specifies in bold, all-capital letters that only the write-in vote on the ballot is handcounted and that the other votes were previously counted by the tabulator.

“I’m not sure it could be any clearer,” Rosenberg said. “This is one of those rare cases where a state government manual says exactly what it means.”

In East Hampton, new council chairwoman Melissa Engel said after the first council meeting following the election that registrars have full authority to conduct elections and ensure the correct process is followed.

“Here’s the thing: It’s out of our jurisdiction,” Engel said. “It’s totally up to our registrars. We need to have them speak to us about it.”

No Recount After All for RHAM Race

by Mike Thompson

There was no recount after all in the race for the Hebron contingent of the RHAM Board of Education.

At the polls last Tuesday, Republican Bruce Olmstead lost the third and final available seat on the regional school board to Democrat Joseph E. O’Connor by a mere 17 votes. Both incumbents on the board, Olmstead collected 903 votes to O’Connor’s 920.

The difference was close enough for a recount, as the *RiverEast* reported last week, but by Monday Olmstead had decided not to go through with it.

Olmstead said he talked the matter over with election officials and was told “they’ve never had an issue” with the tabulator machines giving the wrong number. Holding a recount would’ve cost hundreds of dollars, he was told,

and said “it just seemed like a lot of money” particularly if the results would say the same.

Jack Richmond, the Republican registrar of voters, agreed the recount “wouldn’t really have changed anything.” He said the tabulation machines are “well-tested,” and was confident in their accuracy.

Olmstead opting out of the recount made it official that the Hebron Republicans were swept away from the RHAM school board on Election Day. Joining O’Connor on the RHAM board will be newcomers Kathleen Goodwin and Robert Schadtler, both Democrats.

Still, Republican Town Committee Chairwoman Catherine Marx said she felt Olmstead made the right choice in choosing not to push for the recount.

“I don’t believe the recanvassing would’ve changed the election results,” she said. “Voter

turnout during municipal elections is low, so to lose by 18 votes is difficult, but I believe Bruce did the right thing.”

For O’Connor, the news was something of a bittersweet victory. While he’s happy to stay on, he said he’s going to miss Olmstead and Hebron Republican Richard Jacobson, another board incumbent who lost on Election Day.

“Bruce and I are good friends, and Rich and I are good friends,” O’Connor said. “We’re a really good team together, so I’m disappointed. They’re good guys.”

O’Connor added, “I can honestly tell you there’s some board members there I wouldn’t have that relationship with, because I don’t, because they drank the Kool-Aid.”

O’Connor said he, Olmstead and Jacobson “were a pain in the ass” to former schools superintendent Robert Siminski, “because we

challenged him.”

O’Connor noted last week’s elections are bringing new faces to the board from Hebron as well as Marlborough – Andover held its elections in May – and said he’s hopeful they’re up to the task.

With a new schools superintendent as well as a variety of issues, such as a large budget deficit due to special education outplacements, “the learning curve is very steep,” O’Connor said.

“For the new people coming in, you’ve got a lot to learn, and you’ve got a lot to learn very quickly,” he said. “It’s like drinking water from a firehose.”

The RHAM Board of Education will next meet Monday, Nov. 20, at 6:30 p.m., in the chorus room at RHAM High School, 85 Wall St.

New, Improved StoryWalk is Open in Colchester

by Katherine Kosiba

Just imagine: parents with young children arrive at an open space park with two ponds and meadows, forest and designated trails. Once out of the car they head to one of the designated trails. The children are looking around eagerly, moving a little faster than their parents. The mother calls ahead and says “OK, stop there, please”; the children quickly comply. The parents reach them and the mother says, “Here we are! Look, the story this month is *Time to Sleep* and it was written by a woman named Denise Fleming. We are going to read about creatures in a natural area like this who are all getting ready for winter!” and off they walked on the StoryWalk trail.

It is hoped this scene will become commonplace at Colchester’s newly-installed StoryWalk, an Eagle Scout project of Jack Boyden, Boy Scout Troop 72. After 18 months of researching, visiting other Connecticut StoryWalks, planning, fundraising and doing the actual installation with his troop and volunteers, the permanent StoryWalk was opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Veterans Day including a Boy Scout Flag ceremony, speakers and outdoor activities for families afterwards.

Jack had originally designed the new stations to be built out of sturdy wood and plexiglass, which would have been a big improvement over the temporary stations of laminated cardboard and book pages, staple gunned to tomato stakes constructed with each new book set out. The day before his project presentation to the StoryWalk committee, he searched the Internet one more time for another possible solution to deliver the most durable stations. He found manufactured stations at StoryWalk Solutions of Barking Dog Interpretive Design, Inc., a woman-owned company in Wisconsin.

The Colchester StoryWalk Committee could barely contain their excitement at Jack’s presentation and these stations, but wondered whether the necessary funds could be raised to afford the “powder-coated aluminum Picture Book Frames with two pieces of polycarbon-

ate sheet with powder coated aluminum posts” instead of wood ones, and all of the other materials needed for the project. Jack had discussed this with his mother, Jackie Boyden, and together they decided it was the appropriate course to ensure the new StoryWalk would last for years to come with the easy access to change the many stories that would be provided to Colchester’s children. With the project approved by the Storywalk Committee, the town of Colchester, all the necessary Boy Scout entities, and with the support of his troop and his mother, Jack began the project.

Through fundraising of carwashes, offering the purchase of a single station as memorial or recognition to groups and individuals at the full unit cost, making presentations to many community groups, mailing an abundance of letters and publicizing the project at every opportunity, Jack incredibly raised over \$10,000. The StoryWalk was built in a new location at the Ruby and Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands along the side and back of the fields along the tree line. Boy Scouts, their leaders and volunteers labored in phased work sessions putting in cemented posts (with the use of a donated auger and tractor from D.H Marvin and Son Inc.), digging holes for the donor memorial stones, then returning to put on the stations’ tops. Granite donor stones were engraved and installed by Dominick and Sons LLC. Additional work was done by volunteer Bill Morsey to finish around the 20 station donor stones. A member of the StoryWalk Committee set out the new book, which includes Action Captions she created that are designed to engage children after reading each page of the story either physically, mentally or creatively to experience nature.

Adjacent to the start of the StoryWalk, the town left a large unmowed circle of grass as they turned the mowers around all summer. Approval was given for the Colchester Garden Club to put in a small garden that would also hold a signpost for the StoryWalk and another nearby trail. With word coming an engraved granite bench was being donated by a local monument company who had coordinated the



Jack Boyden of Troop 72 cuts the ribbon for his Eagle Scout project – new stations at the Colchester StoryWalk.

donor stones and the garden was the best location, garden club volunteers cleared the area, making the garden “photo op-ready,” and will plant the full garden next spring.

With the speeches complete, and the ceremonial ribbon cut, Jack Boyden concluded the ceremony with a thank you to his mother, Jackie. “Mom, I never could have done this project without your help every step of the way,” he said. “You prodded and encouraged me, and did so much of the leg work. You oversaw and double-checked everything, you smoothed the rough patches for me and gave me a kick in the pants whenever I needed it. You got me going and held me up. You had my back all of the way. Words can never express how grateful I am for all that you did for me. I love you,

Mom!!!”

The Colchester StoryWalk is a community project started by members of Cragin Memorial Library, the Collaborative of Colchester’s Children, Colchester Garden Club, Colchester Land Trust, and Community Wildlife Habitat of Colchester. The StoryWalk is open and will be a place where children and families can enjoy the outdoors together, being physically active and building literacy.

The Colchester StoryWalk is located at Ruby and Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands, 96 McDonald Rd. For a park/trail map, visit tinyurl.com/gv23okn.

Kosiba is president of the Colchester Garden Club and a member of the Colchester StoryWalk Committee.

Vote Recount Shows No Change in Marlborough Election Winners

by Julianna Roche

Vote recanvasses for the Board of Education, Board of Finance and Planning Commission had no effect on the winning candidates of last week’s Election Day, with five of the individual recounts being off by only one vote each.

On the school board, Republican incumbents Sue Rapelye and Wes Skorski – who ran unaffiliated on the Republican ticket – were reelected last week with 796 and 766 votes respectively, with the recount dropping Skorski’s total to 765.

A tight margin of 10 votes between winning Democrat Michelle Padilla’s 619 votes and 609 for losing Democrat Julie Revaz, sparked the recount – which resulted in one less vote for Padilla and one more for Democrat Logan Tyler, whose total of 641 also secured her one of the four vacant seats on the board.

While Revaz said she “was prepared for the possibility” of not winning a seat, she said this week that the loss “was still disappointing.”

“I guess when you want something and work for it, it’s natural to feel let down when it doesn’t work out,” she said. “At the very same time, I’m grateful for the support I did receive. This was my first shot at running for elected office, and I understand that it will take time to get my message across, and to earn the confidence of voters.”

However, after serving on the most recent Charter Review Commission (CRC), Revaz

said she hopes to serve again once the second CRC is established early next year and imagines running again for the Board of Education “when possible.”

A recount for the Board of Finance showed no change in numbers, with Republican incumbents Susan Leser and Midge Denno, a former alternate, as the winners of the two open seats, garnering 866 and 713 votes, respectively, on both Election Day and in the recount. Democrat Deborah Bourbeau lost out with 694 votes both times.

On the Planning Commission, a recount was called based on the nine-point margin between winning contender Republican Larry Pryor, who garnered 692 votes and Democrat Chris French, who acquired 683 votes on Election Day.

“I was heartened by the quiet competence displayed by the participants in the recount,” Pryor said Thursday. “If town government would run in the same manner, we would all benefit.”

The vote recanvass dropped French’s total to 682 and increased Democrat Laura Hart’s total from 756 to 757 votes, landing her one of the three vacant seats on the commission. Republican Brendon Montstream secured 930 votes both on Election Day and during the recount.

Marlborough Pizza Closed After Kitchen Fire

by Julianna Roche

Doors to Marlborough Pizza will stay closed until it receives approval from both a building inspector and Chatham Health District, after a small kitchen fire took hold of the local establishment early last Friday morning while employees prepared for breakfast service.

Marlborough Pizza owner Nick Topintzis said Thursday he expects the restaurant, located on 7 Independence Dr., to reopen next week, and that “there wasn’t much damage” to the kitchen area.

MVFD Fire Chief Kevin Asklar said there were two customers and three employees inside at the time of the fire, but everyone exited safely.

According to Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department (MVFD) Fire Marshal Joe Asklar, fire officials received a call at approximately 6:43 a.m. Friday, Nov. 10, while they were still on scene for a car accident which had occurred just two hours earlier on Route 66, resulting in an Andover man seriously injured

after being ejected from his vehicle.

“We were pretty lucky we were already out,” Joe Asklar said. “We had a very quick response time because we were just a mile down the road and were on scene by 6:46 a.m.”

Kevin Asklar explained that “about a dozen” firefighters, along with mutual aid provided by East Hampton “had the fire under control” within 10 to 15 minutes.

Kevin Asklar said the fire broke out when one of the restaurant employees accidentally “knocked over some cooking utensils,” which subsequently fell onto the liquefied petroleum (LP) gas line, dumping raw gas into the building.

“And up it [the fire] went,” he said, adding that the restaurant’s sprinkler system “did exactly what it was supposed to do” once it detected smoke and “went off automatically.”

No injuries among both firefighters and employees were reported.

“The occupants were very lucky,” Asklar said.

Colchester Police News

11/6: Colchester Police said Richard Challinor, 27, of 976 Norwich New London Tpke., Uncasville, was arrested and charged with first-degree failure to appear.

11/10: State Police said James J. Ambrose, 37, of 64 Richard Rd., Vernon, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

Marlborough Police News

11/7: State Police said James Murphy, 62, of 6 Kneeland Rd., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct.

Hebron Police News

10/30: The Hebron Resident State Trooper’s Office said they are investigating a larceny from a residence on Old Hartford Road, which occurred sometime between 7 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 29 and 9 a.m. on Monday, Oct. 30. Police said the victim reported that multiple building materials and several tools were allegedly taken. Anyone with more information is asked to contact Trooper Daniel Greenwood at 860-465-5400.

11/9: State Police said Jason Goss, 42, of 122 Slocum Rd., was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol and making an improper turn.

Owner of Portland Marijuana Facility Charged with Pocketing Pot

by Elizabeth Regan

One of the owners of Connecticut Pharmaceutical Solutions in Portland was arrested on drug charges last month after the state Department of Consumer Protection alerted local police that the man had allegedly pocketed marijuana and left the building with it.

A month and a half after the arrest, Portland police issued a press release announcing Andrew Bozzuto, 54, of Northford, had come to the station voluntarily on Oct. 2 in response to a warrant. Bozzuto was charged with illegal drug “manufacture, sale, prescription or dispensing” and illegal possession of less than a half-ounce of marijuana.

The court file is sealed, according to the state Judicial Branch. Bozzuto is next scheduled to appear in court on Dec. 5.

Connecticut Pharmaceutical Solutions is one of four production facilities licensed through the state’s medical marijuana program.

Department of Consumer Protection spokeswoman Lora Rae Anderson said this week that the agency received an anonymous complaint on June 29.

Portland police were contacted by the agency the next day, according to the press release. That’s when they learned Bozzuto had taken marijuana from various bins in the facility’s “cure room” and proceeded to wrap the drug in

what appeared to be a paper towel that he then placed in his pocket, police said.

Bozzuto left the building a short time later and was backing out of the parking area in his vehicle when there was a “brief hand-to-hand exchange” with another employee, according to police. Officers said the employee came back into the facility and secured the marijuana he received from Bozzuto in his locker.

The marijuana was moved to the facility’s quarantine room and Consumer Protection was notified, police said.

Anderson said Bozzuto’s employee license is under suspension.

“He is not allowed on the premises; he does not have access to the premises. But the business does continue to remain open,” she said.

The case is still under investigation, according to Anderson. Only when it is closed will she be able to talk about the agency’s findings and any improvements the business may or may not be asked to make to avoid this kind of situation in the future, she said.

Anderson said the case was investigated by pharmacists in the consumer protection agency’s drug enforcement division in concert with the Portland Police Department and the Office of the Chief State’s Attorney.

There have been no other complaints or dis-

ciplinary action related to drug “diversion” from the state’s medical marijuana production facilities, according to Anderson.

“We are confident in our hope that this is an isolated incident and that the program remains secure and safe for the state of Connecticut and for our patients,” she said.

Connecticut Pharmaceutical Solutions legal counsel Raymond Hassett said in a statement the company is fully cooperating with the Department of Consumer Protection and law enforcement.

“The company has stringent and comprehensive policies and procedures assuring compliance with all laws regarding production and delivery of CPS products,” Hassett said. “We are confident that at the conclusion of the investigation, matters will be resolved favorably for all parties. CPS maintains the integrity of its respected product and its commitment to the benefit of medical marijuana patients.”

A lawsuit against Bozzuto and co-owner Thomas Schultz was lodged in November 2015 by the company’s third managing member, Ed Jackowitz.

Jackowitz, who is well known as the CEO of East Hampton-based American Distilling, alleged Bozzuto and Schultz improperly forced a September 2015 vote among the company’s

eight members on a proposal to lease a 107,000-sq.-ft. building on 264 Freestone Ave. The lease was approved by a supermajority of members.

The Freestone Avenue building was purchased the next month by Bozzuto and his brothers for about \$1.2 million, according to court filings.

Legal documents show Jackowitz instead wanted to purchase the Lower Main Street building it had been renting. The building was owned at the time by prominent local developer Wayne Rand, according to town records.

Rand and another voting member abstained from the vote because they had a financial interest in the company’s Main Street facility, court documents said. Jackowitz claimed that Bozzuto, however, refused to recuse himself even though he had an alleged financial interest in the other property and “was not dealing fairly with CPS.”

The state Judicial Branch website shows no activity regarding the lawsuit since August 2016.

Both buildings have since been purchased by Connecticut Pharmaceutical Solutions. The Main Street building was purchased for \$612,000 in April 2016 and the Freestone Avenue building was purchased for \$1.51 million in December 2016.



A former Murphy Road residence is left in utter devastation following a house fire last Thursday, Nov. 9.

Portland Blaze Destroys Historic Home

by Julianna Roche

A Portland house on the former Murphy property at 18 Murphy Rd. was decimated last Thursday morning after a devastating blaze took hold of the home and left it completely gutted.

According to Fire Chief Robert Shea, no one was home at the time and there were no injuries among firefighters in the Nov. 9 fire.

“The owner had been working on [the home] for some time [and] was getting ready to move in,” Shea said, adding that she had made many improvements to the building and had already moved a lot of her personal possessions into the house.

Shea said officials had received a call from a neighbor who woke up and saw the fire out the window at approximately 5:10 a.m. Firefighters were on scene within six minutes.

Despite the quick response time, the fire chief said the blaze was so bad that firefighters were “chasing pockets of fire throughout the day” and didn’t have the scene completely cleared until 5:30 p.m.

The exact cause of the fire is still being investigated. However, Shea explained that an oil tank in the garage, which fed heating oil into the furnace of the basement of the home, had a leak which discharged oil to feed the flames

and ultimately spread the fire throughout the home.

Because the isolated property was located down a steep driveway, Shea said another difficulty fire officials faced was that there was “no municipal water source in the area” – requiring a Level II response from area fire departments to send in their tankers to help feed water to the fire.

Units from East Hampton, Westfield, Glastonbury, Marlborough, Haddam Neck and East Haddam were dispatched to the scene to provide mutual aid.

“For these types of fires, you just can’t work without mutual aid,” Shea said. “The mutual aid in Middlesex County – I can’t say anything more but that it’s fantastic. There’s never a question. They’re always there and we try to reciprocate that.”

This week, Shea also cautioned residents to “mark their property well with the house number that’s outside the driveway [and] to make sure the entrances, if they are long and in the country, have clear access,” as secluded homes can often pose difficulties for firefighters to reach in the event of a fire, especially if the home has a long, private driveway.

Car Found, No Arrest Yet in Portland Fatal Crash

by Elizabeth Regan

Portland police are in possession of a car allegedly involved in a fatal hit-and-run crash on the Arrigoni Bridge on Nov. 4.

The crash took the life of Daquan Moore, 22, of Middletown. He was driving a scooter toward Portland when he was struck from behind by what investigators believe was a light colored Audi, police said.

A white 2001 Audi A4 was turned into police last week, according to a press release. Police said they know who owns the car, but have not been able to identify the driver or any passengers.

Portland Police Department Captain Ron Milardo said the owner of the Audi has a lawyer and “is not cooperating.”

The Audi was processed by detectives from the Connecticut State Police Eastern District Major Crimes Unit, according to Milardo.

“We’re getting closer and closer,” he said.

Police believe two vehicles were racing each other over the bridge toward Portland around 11 p.m. when Moore was hit, the press release said.

The two vehicles left the scene without stopping, turned around in Portland and went back over the bridge into Middletown.

Moore was taken to Middlesex Memorial Hospital and was pronounced dead a short time later, police said.

Police believe each car was driven by a male and each had a female passenger. The second vehicle is still being sought.

The Middletown Police Department Traffic Division reconstruction team is aiding in the investigation, police said.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Portland Police Department at 860-342-6780 or Middletown Police Department at 860-347-2541.

East Hampton Police News

10/28: Michelle A. Brahen, 25, of 85 N. Main St., was arrested and charged with failure to drive right and driving under the influence, East Hampton Police said.

11/4: Cindy D. Bonta, 48, of 54 Water View Circle, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, police said.

11/5: Kelly J. Barrett, 50, of 152 E. High St., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, interfering with an officer and violation of a protective order, police said.

Also, from Oct. 30-Nov. 5, officers responded to 11 medical calls, eight motor vehicle crashes and 11 alarms, and made 38 traffic stops.

Portland Police News

10/27: John Foster, 30, of 1503 Portland Cobalt Rd., was charged with second-degree breach of peace, Portland Police said.

10/27: Michael Ellis, 52, of 94 Airline Ave., was charged with second-degree threatening, and second-degree breach of peace, police said.

10/31: Myles Byrnes, 20, of 41 Lake Blvd., East Hampton, was charged with sixth-degree larceny, possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, police said.

11/7: Salvatore Fazzino, 21, of 41 Boston Rd., Middletown, was charged with sixth-degree larceny and illegal use of a credit card, police said.

Man Ejected From Vehicle on Route 66 in Marlborough

by Julianna Roche

An Andover man was hospitalized with serious injuries after being ejected from his vehicle early last Friday morning, police said.

According to police, at approximately 4:24 a.m. on Nov. 10, Andrew Nolette, 19, of 760 East St., was driving his Nissan Altima S heading eastbound on Route 66 just three-tenths of a mile west of Marlborough when he lost control of his car.

Police said the Nissan then left the right side of the eastbound lane and struck a tele-

phone pole, before spinning around and coming to a final stop off the right side of the westbound lane. During the collision, Nolette was ejected from his vehicle and subsequently transported by Marlborough Fire Department to Hartford Hospital for suspected serious injuries.

The case is still under investigation and anyone with any information is asked to contact Troop K at 860-465-5400.

Obituaries

Colchester

Victor Battista Carli

Victor Battista Carli, 87, born Oct. 7, 1930, son of Giovanni "John" and Carmella (Filippelli) Carli, entered into eternal sleep Friday, Nov. 10, at home, with his family at his side.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Victor moved with his family to a large farm in Hebron, where he lived for many years, and later moved to another farm in Colchester. He finally relocated to his home in Salem.

He excelled in high school, graduating as valedictorian with high honors from Bacon Academy and later attended the University of Hartford where he earned an associate's degree in civil engineering. He started working for General Dynamics, Electric Boat Division in 1954 in the Weights Section of Naval Architecture. He was encouraged to attend engineering school evenings to obtain a bachelor's degree, which he did while working full-time for Electric Boat and while continuing work on his family's farm. He graduated from the University of Hartford at the top of his class with full honors, summa cum laude. He moved into the Naval Architecture Hydrostatics and Hydrodynamics group where he spent the remainder of his 43-year tenure with the company. During this time, he attended the University of Connecticut and earned a master's degree in mechanical engineering, again with honors.

Victor had a keen mind and innate curiosity, designing and building many devices in his spare time at home, but likely his proudest achievement was his design work on the Seawolf Attack submarine. He'd fondly say that he was there when the first nuclear boat, the Nautilus, was built and launched and, later, had an integral part in the design of the greatest boat his company ever built, the Seawolf. He had a long career that he was most proud of. He retired as director of hydrodynamics.

Victor departs his wife of 62 years, Bessie "Dollie" Dominique Carli; his daughter, Dr. Linda Loreen Carli, her husband, Michael Dorsey; his only grandson, Alexander Lawrence Carli Dorsey; his son, Rance Victor Carli and his wife, Athanasia "Nancy" Margaret Carli; three brothers, Richard, Eugene and David Carli, and their families. He also leaves his brother-in-law, JP Dominique and his companion Ann Cotton of Myrtle Beach, S.C., both of whom he was very fond.

He was predeceased by two sisters, Gloria Sypher and Josephine Carli Schools, and one brother, Peter Carli.

Victor was gifted as a kidney transplant recipient and, as such, wished for and encouraged any donations to be made to the National Kidney Foundation, 1463 Highland Ave., Cheshire, CT 06410. Email: nkfcf@kidney.org. Phone: 203-439-7912; toll-free: 800-441-1280.

Calling hours were held Sunday, Nov. 12, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, and again Monday, Nov. 13, followed by the celebration of the funeral liturgy that morning at St. Andrew Church, Colchester. Burial was in the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Amston

Warren A. Holbrook

Warren A. Holbrook, 91, of Amston, died at home on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, with his family by his side. Born in Lynn, Mass., on Sept. 10, 1926, he was a son of the late Willard and Deborah (Fitch) Holbrook.

Warren was the youngest of nine siblings. He and his brothers were proud to serve in the U.S. Military. While his older brothers all joined the Army, Warren chose the U.S. Navy instead. He would spend 10 years serving his country, including active duty as a Seaman First Class in the U.S. Navy in World War II and the Naval Reserve during the Korean War.

Following the war, Warren moved to Amston in 1947, building a house on North Pond Road. He married Lucille Maclure July 21, 1962. They reared four children, enjoying 44 years together until her death in 2006.

Shortly after arriving in town, Warren joined St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Hebron Center. He served as custodian of the church's building and grounds, and also served on The Vestry, the church's governing board. Warren loved to sing, and was a member of St. Peter's choir. He was leader of a young boys' organization within St. Peter's Church called The Order of Sir Galahad, a non-denominational group. The group met regularly in a school gym, and they enjoyed camping, and swimming at a nearby YMCA.

Over the years, Warren participated in many door-to-door fund campaigns, collecting needed donations for both cancer and heart research. When Little League Baseball was first organized in town, Warren enthusiastically helped the fledgling group as its manager.

In 1951, Warren joined Hebron's American Legion Post 95, and was active there in the Legion's many paper drives and food drives. He held many offices until his passing, serving in many capacities, including Commander. For many years, Warren organized the order of march at the town's annual Memorial Day parade, and saw to it that all veterans' graves were properly marked with crosses. When the Hebron VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) post was formed in 1979, Warren became a founding member. Later, he would serve as its commander as well.

He worked at the Amston Post office for many years, and was its postmaster some of the time. He later went on to work for Brandrex for over 25 years in a variety of capacities. He retired several years ago. For 22 years, he and Lucille served as volunteers for the Russell Mercier Senior Center, to include Meals-on-Wheels, serving seniors and shut-ins. He also was a volunteer member of the town's Commission on Aging since 2005.

With his love of singing, Warren was a founding member of the Sunshine Singers, formed at the senior center in 2007. They travelled to other towns, performing at many regional events throughout the years.

Most importantly, in addition to all he did for his community and country, Warren's family will remember him with love, for he was also a hardworking and devoted family man.

Warren was predeceased by his wife Lucille, his parents, and all of his siblings. He leaves behind his sons Arthur (Linda) Holbrook of Staffordville, Dennis Holbrook of Conway, N.H., and Mark Holbrook of Amston; his daughter Loretta (Thomas) Randazzo of Amston; grandchildren Jacob (Amanda) Randazzo, Shannon Randazzo, Benjamin Randazzo, all of Amston, Samuel, and Emily Barone; and a great-grandchild, Gabriel Randazzo, and numerous extended family and friends.

Calling hours were held Thursday, Nov. 16, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, and will also be held today, Nov. 17, at 10 a.m., followed by a funeral home chapel service at 10:30 a.m. Burial will be in the New Hebron Cemetery, with full military honors.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Warren's memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, cancer.org.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Colchester

Robert Pease Warren Jr.

Robert Pease Warren, Jr., of Colchester, formerly of East Haddam, passed away Monday, Nov. 13, at the age of 77. Born April 22, 1940, in Ludlow, Mass., he was the son of the late Robert and Mary R. (Milne) Warren Sr.

While earning his bachelor's degree in English literature at St. Michael's College, he was active in the ROTC and joined the U.S. Air Force after his graduation in 1962.

Following his honorable discharge in 1965, Bob began his career in education as an English teacher at Nathan Hale-Ray High School in East Haddam. Mr. Warren went on to teach in Glastonbury and then Weaver High in Hartford. After earning his master's degree in education from the University of Hartford, he came to the Colchester Public School system in 1974 as principal of the former Central Middle School. Two years later, he became principal of Bacon Academy, serving for 22 years – the longest tenure since the school's founding in 1803. He was a driving force in the building of the "newest" Bacon Academy, which opened in 1993. The academic wing of the school was dedicated to him in recognition for his contributions to the school.

Countless students, colleagues, friends and family will forever remember and cherish the indelible "larger-than-life" mark that Bob left upon their lives and hearts.

He leaves two children, Ruth St. Pierre (and her husband, Stephen) of Groton, Mass., and Daniel Warren of Deep River; two grandchildren, Mason and Luke St. Pierre; his former wife, Sue Ellen (Ranica) Warren of Deep River; and numerous extended family.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his brother, James, late of Walpole, Mass.

A memorial celebrating his life will be observed at 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 18, directly in the Dr. Franklin S. Gross Auditorium at Bacon Academy, 611 Norwich Ave., Colchester, followed by a reception in the cafeteria. Those who wish may bring a dish to share. He will be laid to rest privately with military honors at the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Bacon Academy Scholarship Fund, Inc., P.O. Box 213, Colchester, CT 06415.

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

Colchester

Athena Christine Grey

Athena Christine Grey, 14-year-old daughter of Christopher and Denise (Wetmore) Grey, passed away Sunday, Nov. 12, at Boston Children's Hospital, after a lifelong struggle with cystic fibrosis.

She was born Dec. 14, 2002, in Farmington. Athena was tutored by the Colchester school system. She will be remembered by those who knew her for her artist talent, wonderful sense of humor, fierce strength of character and determination over her battle with lung disease.

She will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by her parents, Chris and Denise; brothers Mason Grey, Kyle Hoyt; sister, Tori Grey, all of Colchester; paternal grandparents, Ted and Carolyn (Congdon) Grey of Colchester; maternal grandparents, Steven and Nancy Mislick of Temecula, Calif.; and numerous extended family and friends.

Calling hours will be held from 3-6 p.m. Monday, Nov. 20, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral service will be observed at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 21, directly at the Congregational Church of Salem (located at 244 Hartford Rd. – Route 85). Burial will follow in the Salem Green Cemetery.

Donations in her memory may be made to memorialize Athena with a monument – kindly send donations c/o Christopher Grey, 52 Ivy Ct., Apt. D, Colchester, CT 06415.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

For a crash course in how important it is to vote, one need look no further than nearby Bolton this week.

On Election Day, the race for the fifth and final seat on the Bolton Board of Selectmen – which would determine which party had majority of the board for the next two years – ended in a tie. A recount was done Monday – but that also ended in a tie.

So what was the next step? A flip of the coin.

I'm not joking. As per the town charter, in case of a tie, the town could either hold another special election to resolve the matter, or hold a simple coin flip. According to NBC Connecticut, the cost of a special election would have been \$2,500, and neither candidate – Democrat Kim Miller and Republican Michael Eremita – wanted the town to have to spend that money. So, they agreed to the coin flip.

The rules of the flip? Miller, Eremita and an election monitor all flipped their coins, and whoever matched the moderator won. Eremita's coin came up tails, matching the moderator's – making the final board seat his, and ensuring the board would be under Republican control for at least the next two years.

Ever wonder if your vote really counts? Well, this just proves it really, really does. If just one more Miller supporter had shown up at the polls, or just one Eremita fan opt to stay home, we'd be looking at a Democrat-run board instead of a Republican-run one.

Every vote counts. It's not a cliché; it's true. Please, everyone reading this: next time an election or referendum rolls around, vote. You never know when yours will be the deciding ballot cast.

* * *

Speaking of elections: the special U.S. Senate election in Alabama is weeks away – and I certainly hope that when all is said and done Republican Roy Moore is nowhere near the winner's circle.

Moore, as I'm sure many of you have heard, was accused recently by five different women of sexual misconduct. The women were as young as 14 when the alleged misconduct occurred – as Moore, it turns out, evidently had a thing for dating teenagers even when he was in his 30s.

While keeping fairly tight-lipped as to whether he, in his 30s, dated teenage girls, Moore has vehemently denied any sexual misconduct with them – calling the “attacks” against him the work of the “Obama-Clinton Machine's liberal media lapdogs.” (Oh, did I mention Moore was conservative? Yeah, just a bit.)

Still, several Republicans – including Paul Ryan and Mitch McConnell – have said they believed the women, and called on Moore to withdraw from the race. I highly doubt Moore will do any such thing; at least, not by his own volition.

Lost in all this is the fact that Moore was a pretty horrible candidate to begin with, long before the sexual misconduct allegations surfaced.

The noted homophobe was twice removed as Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court after violating federal law. The first came in 2003, when he defied a federal court order to remove a monument of the Ten Commandments from the grounds of the state

courthouse. The second came in 2015, when, after the U.S. Supreme Court decreed gay marriage as legal, Moore refused to recognize the decision. He told probate judges in Alabama to continue banning same-sex marriages.

That move didn't go over too well, and Moore was removed from office. Again. For going against the federal government. Again.

Call me crazy, but I don't think someone who twice lost his job for violating federal orders should be landing a job with the federal government.

And did I mention he's a homophobe? Oh, is he ever. Moore – in court decisions where he's justified ripping children away from a parent just because the parent has come out as gay – has written that homosexuality as an “inherent evil against which children must be protected.”

He's also said homosexual conduct should be illegal.

“Homosexual behavior is crime against nature,” *Time* quotes Moore as saying – adding that he called it “an act so heinous that it defies one's ability to describe it.”

Moore has also said same-sex marriage could lead to child abuse – and also to adult-child marriage.

In short, the guy has been bad news for a long time. These sexual misconduct allegations should be just the icing on the cake. But, no, they sadly might not be.

I have family in Alabama, and while they're solidly anti-Moore, they tell me that the general sense of people down there is that Moore is a good guy suffering a raw deal, and that he still deserves to be voted in. The Republican chairman of one of the counties in Alabama has actually gone on record as saying that even if the allegations against Moore are true, he'd still vote for him, as he just can't vote for Moore's Democratic opponent, Doug Jones.

Have we become that partisan as a society? That we'd knowingly put a sex offender in the U.S. Senate because, hey, at least he's not a Democrat?

That's perhaps the most nauseating thing about this whole Moore mess. He detests homosexuals, is a repeated violator of federal law, and now it comes out that, at the very least, he had a thing for teenagers when he was in his 30s – and despite all of this, he could still win.

If Moore prevails in next month's special election, it will be a dark day – not just for Alabama, but for the United States as a whole.

* * *

Lastly, I hear that over in Portland, on Route 17, as you come down the hill toward Jarvis Airfoil on the Four Corners, there is a mattress and a box spring just sitting there on the ground – and they've been there for weeks. I'm told you can't miss it – and that it's a pretty embarrassing eyesore.

Just recently I railed against disgusting littering on the banks of the Jeremy River in Colchester – everything from mattresses to diapers were found there. So yes, it's shameful somebody decided to dump their bedding material on the side of the road. But really, it's been weeks. Somebody from the town should go and remove it. It's probably not the “Come on Over!” to Portland town officials want.