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Administrators and alumni of Colchester's Bacon Academy celebrated Founder's Day this week at Pierpont Bacon's gravesite. Shown here from left are Bacon Academy Principal Matthew Peel, Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu, Founder's Day Chairman Dolores Sawchuk and Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein.

Giles Honored at Bacon Founder's Day

by Julianna Roche

At a gravesite shaded by a willowing maple tree behind the old Bacon Academy building, a crowd of Bacon students and administrators, Board of Education members and the Bacon Board of Trustees gathered Wednesday to celebrate the longstanding tradition of Founder's Day.

The ceremony marked the 214th year since the founding of the old Bacon Academy – Colchester's first school and one of the oldest gifts to be bestowed to the town. Each year, the town celebrates Pierpont Bacon, the man who left his estate to the town for the purpose of building a school.

Bacon died Dec. 30, 1800, leaving behind \$35,000 for the founding of what would eventually become Bacon Academy, for whom Bacon is named. In 1803, his dream of establishing an institution of learning in Colchester came true as Bacon opened its doors for the first time as a private school – and is believed to be one of the earliest private schools in the country.

"Just think about that for a minute – how many people have been impacted by Bacon Academy since then – students, teachers, administrators, community members far and wide, they've all been touched by Bacon over those years," said Board of Education Ron Goldstein during his opening remarks.

The celebration began with the retelling of Bacon's life, a reading of an excerpt from his will, and followed with speakers honoring two figures – Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu, who is retiring from his position next month, and Diana Norton Giles, former Bacon Board of Trustees chairwoman and a prominent

face in the Colchester community who passed away from lung cancer last December.

Giles, a member of Bacon's Class of 1974, left behind a legacy not to be forgotten, after leading a life filled with service and commitment to the Colchester community, Bacon Academy and to town politics. In addition to running for first selectwoman in both 2005 and 2007, she also served as chairwoman of the Zoning Board, a selectwoman, co-chairwoman of the Bacon Academy Bicentennial, a member of the Board of Assessment Appeals, and at the time of her passing, the Republican registrar of voters.

In his remarks, Goldstein added that among her many accomplishments, Giles, together with fellow Bacon alum Dolores Sawchuk – a member of the Class of 1948 – were responsible for "reviving" Founder's Day, an annual celebration he described as "so special" to the Colchester community.

Before receiving a proclamation on behalf of the Board of Trustees from Sawchuk for his 25 years serving as a former Bacon principal and as superintendent, Mathieu also spoke on Giles and the importance of celebrating the 214-year-old high school.

"Looking back the last 25 years and what makes Colchester such a special school district and place ... from an outside point of view, [it's] people like Diana, Dolores, Ron [Goldstein], and all the other alumni that I see here today that really have so much pride, respect and commitment not only to the town, but to this fine institution," he said. "So I thank you for that."

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Higher RHAM Budget Heads to Referendum

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The RHAM Board of Education this week decided to volley a spending proposal back to the voters at the end of the month – one that's actually more than \$8,000 higher than the amount shot down at referendum May 2.

The budget now totals \$28,871,587 for an increase of 2.99 percent. Coupled with a capital budget in the amount of \$289,960, that's an increase of 4.02 percent over current-year spending.

The defeated proposal, meanwhile, clocked in at \$28,863,321 for the operating budget – a 2.96 percent increase – for a total increase of 3.99 percent including capital; it fell in all three of the sending towns by a vote of 1,156-951.

Schools Superintendent Bob Siminski said the latest increase stems from filling vacancies with teachers who were more advanced, or higher on the salary schedule, than their predecessors. The new hires were a science teacher and a language arts teacher.

The RHAM budget is paid for with funds from each of the three towns – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough – and the amount each is responsible for is determined by the number of

students from each that attend the two schools.

Hebron's levy is 54.33 percent and if the budget is approved at the next referendum Wednesday, May 31, the town will be responsible for paying \$15,843,468. Marlborough meanwhile, will be responsible for 31.16 percent or \$9,086,738; and Andover's share of 14.51 percent will amount to \$4,231,341.

According to minutes from the RHAM Board of Education meeting held Monday night, board member Carole Shea expressed concern over the budget number and commented that she doesn't think it should be higher than what was previously defeated by all three towns; she said she didn't think the board worked hard enough to reduce the number.

But board member Amy D'Amaddio commented on the amount of the budget that's contractual, or made up of items that can't be changed.

Just over half the budget – or 53.6 percent – is made up of salaries, and included in that number for next year is a 2.2 percent salary increase for administrators as per their contract, and 1 percent increase plus step for certified staff

("step" is a way of determining a teacher's salary based on factors such as years of experience and education level). Negotiations for non-certified staff are also underway.

While the governor's budget proposal has yet to be approved, the school board is anticipating no state aid for special education expenses – and has planned accordingly. The money allotted for special education would double in the 2017-18 budget – rising \$907,916 from the current year to \$1,814,231. Meanwhile, the cost for special education transportation is budgeted at \$647,212 – up from \$422,437 in the current year.

The school district also has to foot the tuition bill for students from the sending towns who choose to attend magnet or vocational agricultural schools instead of RHAM; 74 students are anticipated to attend those schools during the 2017-18 school year for a projected cost of \$380,173.

Causing some controversy this year is the proposed athletic budget, which is slated to increase \$29,735 to fund additional coaches in the district; Schools Superintendent Bob

Siminski explained last week those funds would be used for a middle school cross country coach, two high school football coaches, and a full-time strength and conditioning coach for all four playing seasons. Over the past few months, several residents in the three towns have balked at the proposed athletics increase, while conversely, many have come to the defense of it.

For D'Amaddio, focusing on the athletic increase as a way to reduce the budget didn't make sense because it comprises only a small portion of the total number, and further cuts would be needed to make a larger reduction; Siminski had shared at Monday's meeting some of the potential areas that would be impacted to reduce the budget include textbooks, supplies and then personnel.

He furthered this week, "We'd have to go in and look at all the things that make up the budget and then come to some conclusions that would allow reasonable and rational cuts to allow the level of programming that we have to continue as best as possible."

See RHAM Budget page 2



The Bacon Academy Chamber Choir, shown here, performed at the 2017 Founder's Day celebration this week, held behind the old Bacon Academy building.

Founder's Day cont. from Front Page

Board of Selectmen member Denise Quinn, a member of Bacon's Class of 1973, also spoke of Giles, stating that it "was in these halls" of Bacon Academy where Giles' "seeds of love of community, state and country were sown."

"At this young age, her journey to serve began and continued for the rest of her life," she furthered. "She became active in government and the government process, and drew those around her in and motivated them to partake in this process."

In addition to believing "that everyone had something to offer," Quinn added that Giles also "had a strong belief system in herself, her family, and the world around her."

"She stayed true to those beliefs and she lived her life with honor, grace and love," Quinn continued. "Those are the lessons learned in these halls that we celebrate today by an extraordinary woman who we will miss so much."

Sawchuck agreed.

"We miss her greatly and I miss her greatly," she said, "not only as a member of the Board of Trustees, but as a very special young lady."

Sawchuck also explained that she originally knew Giles as one of her son's classmates, but came to know her very well after she became a fellow Board of Trustees member and worked closely with Sawchuck planning Bacon's 200th anniversary celebration.

"Meeting after meeting, discussion after discussion, Diana and I were always on the same page, never disagreeing, always working as a team," she said, adding that while at first Giles called her "Mrs. Sawchuck," there came a point in time where she started calling her by her first name – Dolores.

"It was then I knew we had formed a very special friendship," she continued. "Sometimes

the greatest friendships can be made inter-generational. You are never too old or too young to be a good friend. Age does not matter, true friendship does."

Sawchuck closed her remarks saying that in Giles' final phone call to Board of Trustees member Arthur Liverant, she asked him to tell Sawchuck "goodbye and that she loved me, as she found it too hard to talk to me. ... I will always remember these words."

Liverant, who graduated from Bacon in 1967, closed the ceremony with remarks about Giles' "roots" and her "numerous and endless contributions to Colchester, Bacon Academy and the Board of Trustees."

He explained that, since her ancestors had settled in Colchester nearly 300 years ago, Giles "was programmed by genealogy and self-defined responsibility to keep Colchester and Bacon Academy vibrant, thriving and growing."

"Diana had a choice: she could have turned her back and rejected her bloodline, her genealogy, and her responsibilities," Liverant continued, "or she could have accepted her roots and let them spread out, reach out, and nurture her love of Colchester to find who she was – just as this maple tree that we are under today spread its roots and branches over the graves of Pierpont and [his wife] Abigail Newton Bacon."

Following the ceremony, Liverant led the dedication of two valley forge elm saplings on the south side of the town green to Giles, and asked ceremony attendees to help water the trees, which he said would "bear seeds of success" by Giles.

He furthered, "These roots of her family, roots of love of Colchester, and roots of dedication will forever be a memory of Diana Norton Giles."

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by **Mike Thompson**

What an embarrassment.

No, I'm not talking about the recent performance of the Mets' bullpen (although that's not a bad guess). I'm talking about President Trump.

The past week or so has not been Donny's finest hour. He started by firing the director of the FBI – an almost unprecedented move – and denied it had anything to do with the FBI's continuing investigation of possible Russian connections to the Trump campaign.

Monday brought word that Trump had recently leaked classified information to the Russians – info so top-secret, it hadn't even been shared with our allies yet (and spoiler alert: Russia's not our ally). Trump on Twitter – where else? – didn't even attempt to deny it.

Tuesday brought an even bigger piece of news. According to the *New York Times* (which is real news; sorry Donny), a memo the now-ousted James Comey wrote in February alleges Trump asked Comey to drop the federal investigation into Trump's former national security advisor, Michael Flynn. As the *Times* put it, "The documentation of Mr. Trump's request is the clearest evidence that the president has tried to directly influence the Justice Department and F.B.I. investigation into links between Mr. Trump's associates and Russia."

The Republican response to all these scandals has so far been a collective yawn. Granted, after the news of the Russian leak surfaced some Republicans in Congress and the Senate reportedly seemed at least uneasy – but that's it. While Democrats have rightfully been outraged by Trump's moves, Republicans have seemed content to just let The Donald do what he wants, no matter how illegal it may seem.

Geez – and they called Bill Clinton the "Teflon President."

There have been growing cries for Trump's impeachment – and, believe me, if this were Hillary Clinton the Republicans would've impeached her weeks ago – but so far, everything's business as usual. It makes you wonder: what does Trump have to do? During the campaign he famously made the remark that he could "stand in the middle of 5th Avenue and shoot somebody and I wouldn't lose voters." Is there seemingly nothing he could do to lose Washington Republicans either?

After he was elected, but before his presidency actually started, I admit I wasn't overly excited about a hypothetical Trump impeachment – mainly because I was convinced Mike Pence would be a terrible president. There was at least a chance Trump was lying on the campaign trail (hey, what choice did I have at that point but to dream?), but years and years of Pence's horrible record in Indiana were proof that Pence was exactly what he sold the public. And I did not want that man running the country.

But jump ahead to mid-May, and it might not be that bad. Trump has revealed himself

to be exactly what he campaigned to be, which doesn't surprise me, and has also shown himself to be stunningly, dangerously incompetent at what he does. He's effectively the face of this country to the rest of the world, and he's making us look like a joke. Pence would be a terrible president, and would do awful things, but I'm at least fairly confident he wouldn't start World War III, or sell the country off to the Russians.

It's hardly an ideal choice – much, much, *much* more "the lesser of two evils" than Clinton vs. Trump ever was – but at this point, I think I'd rather have Pence.

* * *

Speaking of the presidency, one of the few good things to come out of the Trump election was that people are getting a lot more involved politically than they used to be. Developing a greater interest in politics and civics is never a bad thing.

So I was pretty pleased when I recently got a notice sent to the paper about a new group starting up in Marlborough. The nicely-named Salmon River Huddle describes itself as "a growing grassroots gathering dedicated to: protecting and preserving human and civil rights; promoting education and science; defending every individual's right to privacy; backing equitable tax reform; empowering minorities and immigrants; supporting sensible gun regulation; upholding separation of church and state; advocating for affordable healthcare for all; and more."

The group meets every other Thursday at 6 p.m. at Richmond Memorial Library, 15 School Dr. in Marlborough. The next meeting date is May 25. And while the Huddle may meet in Marlborough, it's really for anyone in the area who wants to get involved and make a difference.

* * *

Lastly, it took long enough, but spring finally appears to be here. The malaise of non-stop rain and chilly temperatures seems to be behind us – so now may be the time to join fellow hikers from the Portland-based Meshomasic Hiking Club on one of their upcoming walks.

A variety of hikes are offered year-round each week, both on weekends and mid-week. A complete listing of May and June hikes is at meshomasichikingclub.org.

The mission of the club is to seek enjoyment of the state's forest environment through the pursuit of adventure and educational activities, while simultaneously encouraging its protection and preservation through active and responsible stewardship.

Members of the club receive a newsletter that keeps them informed of upcoming hikes or programs, forest issues, facts, and suggestions on how to help protect the forest. Membership dues are \$15 annually – and you can take a hike before joining the club.

Visit the above-mentioned website or call Diane at 860-985-1861 for more information.

* * *

See you next week.

RHAM Budget cont. from Front Page

Siminski added, "When we talk about cuts I always told the board I'm not going to focus on just one area; some superintendents say 'Okay, the budget is in trouble so we're going to focus on all athletics.' If we were to make cuts they would be spread equally across all the academics, the arts – they all would feel the burden because it speaks to the total education of the student."

In the end however, the board decided not to make any reductions to the budget.

"The board considered it and felt that it was a prudent and good budget, therefore they felt

that it should go back to the community for approval."

* * *

The referendum will take place in each of the sending towns May 31. Voting occurs from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. in Hebron at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St.; in Marlborough at Elmer Thienes/Mary Hall Elementary School, 25 Community Dr.; and at the Andover Town Hall, 17 School Rd.

Further information on the proposed RHAM budget is available online at reg8.k12.ct.us under "Budget Info."

Portland Selectmen Set 32.98 Mill Rate

by Elizabeth Regan

The Board of Selectmen Wednesday approved a new mill rate with the caveat that it could change once the state budget is approved.

The mill rate is now 32.98, an increase of 0.47 mills over the current year.

A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value. Under the new mill rate, taxes paid on a home assessed at \$200,000 for the 2017-18 fiscal year would be \$6,596. That's an increase of \$94 over the current year.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said the mill rate is based on the \$33.65 million spending plan approved by voters last week, as well as an estimate of \$5.08 million in funding from the state.

She emphasized the revenue figure is only an estimate.

"We don't know – nobody knows – what the state revenues will be for this coming fiscal year," she said.

The uncertainty comes as officials at the state level wrestle with a projected deficit of more than \$2 billion in revenue for the upcoming fiscal year.

Bransfield emphasized selectmen may have

to make some difficult decisions if the final state budget is less than the town anticipated.

In that case, the town would have to make up the difference. Options include sending a supplemental tax bill, making budget cuts or using the town's fund balance.

Bransfield said taking money out of the fund balance – which can be described as a rainy day fund – is not generally recommended because it leaves "a built-in deficit going forward the next year."

She said many towns throughout the state are in similar predicaments. They are all trying to get local budgets passed and mill rates set according to rules and timelines laid out in their own charters and ordinances – despite the fact that those timelines seem hopelessly out of sync with the state budget process.

"Each town has to make their own decision," Bransfield said. "We are following local law as well as state law and we're recommending that [the mill rate] be set with the understanding that the state of Connecticut may see some changes going forward."

The Portland budget used a February budget

proposal from Gov. Dannel P. Malloy as the basis for its revenue calculations. His plan included measures to redistribute funding from a majority of towns to the poorest cities in order to address disparities in the state's education system.

But the proposal was widely panned by leaders of municipalities slated for cuts under the governor's plan.

This week, several different state budget proposals were released.

One is a revised proposal from Malloy that includes even more cuts to municipal aid. Another proposal is from the legislature's Democratic leaders in the House and Senate. House Republicans and Senate Republicans released separate proposals.

The various proposals provided a framework for negotiations that began on Wednesday between Malloy and leaders in the state legislature.

It's unknown when lawmakers will approve a budget, with some officials saying the process could drag on into late summer or even fall.

In addition to the amount of municipal aid the town will receive, another wild card is the part of Malloy's budget plan that asks Portland to come up with a \$966,127 payment to help fund public school teachers' pensions. While the state currently pays for the entirety of the Connecticut Teachers' Retirement System, Malloy's recommendation would make each municipality responsible for about one-third of the cost.

Portland officials decided not to include the expense in the 2017-18 budget because of skepticism Malloy's plan would make it through the legislature.

None of the budget proposals from Democratic and Republican leadership requires the town to foot any portion of the bill for the Teachers' Retirement System.

Bransfield on Wednesday told her fellow selectmen she wrote an email to state Rep. Christie Carpino, R-32, to object to what she described as Malloy's "unacceptable" revised budget proposal.

"It's very, very, very concerning," Bransfield said.

Meet Portland's Newest Selectman

by Elizabeth Regan

The Board of Selectmen's newest member sees volunteerism as a civic responsibility he is modeling for his children in the town he chose because it's such a great place to raise a family.

James K. Tripp has lived in Portland since 1999 with his wife, Liz. They are parents to Rebecca, 15, and Caitlyn, 13.

Tripp was appointed by a unanimous vote at Wednesday's Board of Selectmen meeting after being nominated by the Democratic Town Committee last week to fill a vacancy left by Democrat Brian Flood.

Tripp's wife and eldest daughter looked on as he was sworn in by Town Clerk Ryan Curley. Then he sat down at the end of the selectmen's table and got to work.

Tripp's volunteer trajectory began in 2001 when he joined the Brownstone Quorum, a nonprofit organization formed to preserve, promote and enhance the Portland Brownstone Quarries. He served as president for many years.

Tripp was appointed as an alternate member of the Parks and Recreation Commission in 2014 and was elected to the Board of Education in 2015.

He said he was interested in becoming a selectman because of the many important issues coming up in town these days. He cited infra-

structure concerns like upgrades to the water and sewer system and economic development opportunities such as the proposed mixed-use development of the former Elmcrest Hospital campus.

"I feel I have a voice, that I can help make decisions hopefully with a positive impact," he said.

Tripp is employed as a data network consultant with AT&T. He has a master's degree in management from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering technology from the Southeastern Massachusetts University, now known as the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

Democratic Town Committee Chairman Brian O'Connor said the committee's endorsement was based on the experience and relationships Tripp built through his local involvement.

"I just think Jim will be a great fit for the board," O'Connor said this week. "He's a hard worker, conscientious and he always puts the best interest of the town forward," O'Connor.

The Democratic Town Committee also interviewed active community volunteers Richard Basso and Ken Kupec, according to O'Connor. He said both candidates would have been excellent choices as well.

"You haven't seen the last of them as they

continue to pursue other boards and commissions around town," O'Connor said.

Each candidate gave a presentation to the full Democratic Town Committee and answered questions from members, according to O'Connor. Tripp received over 50 percent of the vote.

"The town committee unified after the vote around Jim, and I think that speaks well of his support," O'Connor said. "Even the people that supported the other candidates rallied around him, and the candidates did as well."

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield described Tripp as positive, pleasant and approachable.

"He is such a warm personality with a great deal of interest in what people would like to see in their town," she said.

The title of deputy first selectman, previously held by Flood, remains open. Bransfield said selectmen would decide who will take on that role now that the board has a full contingent of seven members.

She said the title typically goes to the next highest vote-getter in the previous election.

That would be Kathy Richards, who received 1,316 votes in the 2015 general election compared to Flood's 1,393 votes. The third highest vote total went to Ben Srb, with 1,200 votes.



James Tripp, the newest member of the Board of Selectmen, gets down to business at Wednesday's board meeting.

As the Belltown Budget Turns

by Elizabeth Regan

Blurry municipal aid projections from the state continue to make it difficult for the East Hampton Town Council to focus on a local spending plan.

Councilors will be meeting Monday with the boards of education and finance to talk about how to move forward in the absence of solid state budget figures that could have a multi-million dollar effect on the town's bottom line.

Councilors last month put on hold their vote on the Board of Finance's \$44.26 million proposed budget until they had a better idea how much municipal aid the town could expect from the state. The budget proposal is an increase of 3.05 percent – or \$1.3 million – over the current budget.

The move violated town ordinance requiring a budget referendum to be held by the second Monday in May.

The big question raised by councilors at last week's meeting was how long councilors could afford to put off a budget vote.

Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith told councilors he needs to start scheduling the upcoming school year by July 1, whether the budget is passed at referendum by then or not.

Councilors discussed options including a mid-June or late-June referendum. The former would require the council to vote on the proposed budget next week. The latter would give the council until the legislative session adjourns on June 7 – hopefully with some sense of what the final budget will look like – to vote on the local budget proposal.

As a result of town and state guidelines, it takes three weeks to get to a budget referendum once the council approves a budget proposal.

Council member James “Pete” Brown said he's not in favor of holding off past June for a referendum because residents “need to know” what kind of budget they'll be dealing with.

“The Board of Education needs to know,

teachers need to know, and the town needs to know,” he said.

Councilor Melissa Engel, however, maintained there are no signs state municipal aid figures will be ready in June.

“But you still won't know, will ya?” she said.

According to local officials across the *Riverast* coverage area, word in Hartford is that a state budget may not be approved by lawmakers until August or even later.

Proponents of the \$30.05 million education budget proposal – which is a 3.41 percent increase, or \$989,686, over the current budget – have been advocating for the council to send the school spending plan to referendum with no cuts so voters can decide for themselves if they can afford it.

For the first time, a bifurcated budget will give voters the chance to vote separately on the general government and education budgets.

If there's no budget in place by July 1, Smith said this week that he would have to proceed “cautiously” in planning for the upcoming school year. That means laying off four teachers and one custodian and reducing supplies by \$50,000 to \$100,000.

“In good conscience, I could not just automatically assume everything's going to be great from the state and [a \$989,686 increase] is going to pass in the first referendum,” he said.

Middle school sports could be affected too, he said Wednesday: “If we were to start the school year with a pending referendum, I would plan for [eliminating] fall sports. If the referendum results warranted, we would be at risk for all winter and spring sports.”

If additional cuts are required once the budget actually goes to referendum, Smith said four more teaching positions could be eliminated.

Sixth-grade teacher Rachel Mansfield, who also serves as the high school drama director, spoke during a public comment period to say

she was representing 15 teachers who received notices their positions were in danger of being cut.

She noted other towns, like Portland, have already passed a budget and are in the process of hiring teachers.

“I applied for a job there last week because I need to find a job and make sure I'm employed next fall,” Mansfield said.

She implored the council to put the budget forward before July 1.

Meanwhile, Gov. Dannel P. Malloy on Monday put out a revised budget proposal that's even grimmer than the original in terms of education funding. With the town already looking at a \$1.63 million reduction in education aid based on Malloy's initial budget proposal released in February, data from the *CT Mirror* shows the governor further reduced the town's education cost sharing grant by \$372,061.

Malloy is also sticking by his plan for municipalities to pick up the tab for one-third of the state Teachers' Retirement System, with one concession. The *CT Mirror* reported Malloy's revised proposal puts a \$400 million cap on the amount of money the governor is asking cities and towns to pay for teachers' pensions. Without the cap, his proposal would have amounted to \$408 million in the coming fiscal year and \$421 million in 2018-19.

A proposal from the legislature's Democratic leadership released Tuesday would cut about \$210 million in municipal aid, according to *CT Mirror*. That amount includes about \$10 million in Education Cost Sharing reductions. It would also expand gambling in the state and legalize marijuana.

Republican leadership put out two proposals: one from the House and one from the Senate. The House Republicans would maintain the education cost sharing formula used currently and would establish a \$90 million grant to make

sure no municipality loses aid compared to the current year, according to a press release. A document put out by the Senate Republicans shows a revised formula for education cost sharing and provides that any municipalities experiencing a decrease based on the formula would be flat-funded in the coming year, with the ensuing reduction phased in over 10 years.

None of the Democratic and Republican proposals requires the town to foot any portion of the bill for the Teachers' Retirement System.

Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson told her fellow councilors at their meeting last week that she welcomes the opportunity to meet with the school and finance boards in the tri-board format to get answers to looming questions.

She wondered how the finance board would decide on a mill rate if the proposed education and general government budgets pass at a referendum before the state budget is finalized: would they use the amount of revenue specified in the governor's proposal or would they assume lawmakers are going to come through with more favorable numbers?

Councilor Kevin Reich asked if there was a refund option if the mill rate is set based on a certain amount of revenue but the town ends up getting more than anticipated.

Finance Director Jeff Jylkka said Wednesday he believes the council has the discretion to issue refunds to taxpayers after a permanent mill rate is set by the finance board, but cautioned he would have to seek a legal opinion to be sure. He said he has not done so at this time.

Anderson said Tuesday that meeting with the other two boards is key to enhanced communication between members and also with the public.

“I need the help of the Board of Finance and the Board of Education so that we can together educate the public so there will be no surprises when the final mill rate gets set,” she said.

Who Will Replace East Hampton School Board Member?

by Elizabeth Regan

Who will replace Board of Education member Kenneth Barber?

The legal and philosophical implications of that question are at the center of an ongoing lawsuit between the Board of Education and the Town Council that seeks to clarify which entity has the authority to fill vacancies on the school board.

Barber resigned Monday, effective immediately. A 5-year school board member and former chairman, the Democrat told the *Riverast* he is focusing on his professional life.

“I have a thriving law practice and I need every minute of the day,” he said Tuesday.

It was under Barber's leadership in 2015 that the school board sued the town over the vacancy issue.

Barber served as chairman of the school board until last year, when he handed over the reins to Democrat Christopher Goff.

In March, an email from Board of Education attorney Zachary D. Schurin of Pullman and Comley to Goff and Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith said the council at the time was considering filing a motion to dismiss the lawsuit.

Schurin said the town would argue the case is moot since there isn't a pending vacancy. Schurin called it a “weak argument,” but said it could delay resolution to the case.

The case is set to go to trial in August.

There have been at least seven school board

vacancies since 1990, according to court documents. Until recently, all the positions were appointed by the school board itself.

A Republican majority in the brand-new Town Council bucked tradition in November 2015 with the appointment of Republican Michael Rose to the Board of Education. The opening came when Republican Josh Piteo won election to the council, thereby relinquishing his seat on the school board.

The town charter empowers the town council to fill any vacancy unless another “appointing authority” has been “designated by law.”

State law governing school boards specifies that vacancies shall be filled by the remaining members of the board “unless otherwise provided by charter or special act.”

Rose declined the position amid the controversy. The Board of Education promptly appointed Democrat Jeff Carlson, tipping the majority to the Democrats.

The next month, the East Hampton Board of Education sued the Town of East Hampton.

The Town Council spent \$11,432 in legal fees related to the issue as of March, according to the town manager's office. School business manager Karen Asetta said the Board of Education spent \$24,888.

With the new vacancy announced Monday at the school board's regular meeting, members acted on a newly revised provision in its bylaws to direct Smith to publicize the open posi-

tion and the opportunity for residents to nominate themselves.

The board revised its bylaws on Jan. 17 to expand on its process for filling vacancies. The new language says the board shall appoint a replacement within 30 days. It specifies the board “shall consider, but is not obligated to act upon, filling the vacancy with a person of the same political affiliation as the member who vacated the office.”

The bylaws direct the board to interview applicants no less than five days after public notice is given.

Smith said Tuesday applications will be accepted through May 26, with interviews scheduled the following week. Notification about the vacancy was sent out through email, social media and in today's *Riverast*, Smith said.

According to the bylaws and state statute, the council may appoint a member to serve the unexpired portion of the term if the school board doesn't do so within 30 days of the resignation.

Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said Tuesday she can't comment on how the council will proceed until, or if, the issue is brought up for discussion. She said it could be taken up at the council's regular meeting next Tuesday, May 23.

“I would imagine it would be a subject of discussion,” he said. “I don't really know how it's going to be discussed.”

Voters in last year's charter revision referendum rejected language that would have given the town council the authority to fill vacancies on boards and commissions and to require them to appoint a member of the same party as the one who left the seat.

The referendum question on the November general election ballot failed by a margin of 559 votes. The other four proposed charter revisions passed.

Councilors had maintained throughout the lawsuit that the issue should be resolved through the charter revision process, not the court system.

Council member Melissa Engel, who served as chairwoman of the Charter Revision Commission, acknowledged the charter revision referendum vote with an air of resignation.

“So the question now becomes, what's it worth to anybody in the town of East Hampton to go through a lawsuit to learn who has the right to appoint?” she said. “Quite honestly, I think our needs are such that our money would be better spent on, gee, almost anything else.”

She described it as “unfortunate” that the school board didn't take the council up on an offer to allow the board to conduct interviews and make a recommendation that the council could then vote on.

Engel said the issue is not worth “any more money than we've already spent on it.”

Maguire Confronted Over Work in Andover Treasurer's Office

by Geeta S. Sandberg

At this month's Board of Selectmen's meeting, Vice First Selectman Jeff Maguire was asked to "cease and desist" all activities in the treasurer's office.

Selectwoman Julia Haverl made the motion at the May 3 meeting, explaining that when Maguire was elected he offered to help get the office in order.

"We thank you for that," she told Maguire, "but we have since been told it's illegal."

The selectmen appointed Maguire to the role of temporary treasurer at their meeting Sept. 2, 2015. At the time Maguire, who is a certified public accountant and owns his own business – Kolb Maguire – had explained "the reason why I'm asking [to be temporary treasurer] is because I need to be able to go into the different departments and sit there and get the right information. I'll straighten it all out. I would never be in this position for more than six months and anticipate it being three months."

Maguire had said the town needed to get through that year's audit, set up accounting procedures, and then hire a bookkeeper who could manage day-to-day operations.

First Selectman Bob Burbank had expressed concern with the idea when it was brought forward, saying at that meeting "the only problem that I have with it is that we have already been told that it doesn't give enough checks and balances and we're going to be written up by the auditor..."

But despite Burbank's concerns – which ended up having merit as the town was indeed cited in their 2015 audit – the board voted to appoint Maguire temporary treasurer with Burbank abstaining.

In the 2015 audit conducted by Stephen Hopkins, he cited the town for lack of compliance with state statute 9-210 which states in part that "no selectman shall hold the office of town clerk, town treasurer or collector of taxes during the same official year..."

Maguire stepped down from the position at the December 2015 selectmen's meeting after

he said he was made aware of the incompatibility of the two positions.

But the request made at this month's meeting stems from continued work Maguire has done in the treasurer's office since that time. That work, Maguire explained, has been done on a pro-bono basis, as opposed to the initial work which was not free of charge; he submitted two invoices through his company following his appointment totaling \$2,807.84 for approximately two months of work he'd been doing in the department following the departure of both the town treasurer and the bookkeeper over the summer of 2015.

Along with being pro-bono, Maguire explained he's also doing different work than he was before. At the May 3 meeting he said to Haverl, "Do you know what I do? You don't know. So I'm going to explain to you very easily what I do."

He furthered, "The only thing I have done in that office is take information [from the town's accounting software] and at my own cost used software I have to put together monthly reports."

Maguire elaborated on that in an email he sent to the town's attorney Dennis O'Brien – and forwarded to the *RiverEast* – following this month's meeting.

"I am not currently involved in the day-to-day operations of the treasurer's office and have not been since the hiring of Maureen Barber to the treasurer's position (05/2016)," he wrote. "The work that I have been doing since that time is to prepare a monthly reconciliation of Andover's bank accounts in QuickBooks from information provided by the treasurer's office. The input information used is from Andover's primary accounting software package (Phoenix). I perform this work on my own time, at no charge to the town and do not impact the daily activities of the current treasurer or the assistant to the treasurer."

Maguire shared he then provides the monthly documents to the other selectmen, which provide details "to what disbursements have been

processed by Andover and a listing of the cash balances at the end of a given month."

At previous meetings, these documents had been deemed helpful by members of the board including Haverl, who said even as she was making the motion for Maguire to "cease and desist" all activity in the office that "I appreciate what you do and I love getting those reconciliations..."

But she reiterated it was deemed illegal. Maguire said this week, however, that it was unclear as to whether his current work fell under the umbrella.

In a letter sent to Burbank by O'Brien dated Feb. 8, 2016, O'Brien mentioned Maguire's desire to continue functioning as a "financial liaison" and stated, "The Board of Selectmen is free to appoint one of their members to be 'financial liaison' to the town treasurer and deputy treasurer, but the board cannot now legally permit a selectman to continue to serve as town treasurer under that title or any other."

In his May 11 email to O'Brien, Maguire requested clarification, saying "I need a clear understanding of what pro-bono services provided might have been in violation of Connecticut State Statutes or the Andover charter."

The other members of the Board of Selectmen were copied on that email – and Haverl responded to it, with a caution to O'Brien.

After being amended to include all the selectmen, Haverl's motion – stating that "no person who serves on the Board of Selectmen can be involved in the treasurer's office and in creating financial records therein" – passed at the May 3 meeting, and she wrote in the email "it seems to me that Jeff in the subject email is asking you to defend him against a valid vote at the last BOS meeting against the majority of the board members. ... You are in a delicate position. You cannot rule against a majority vote of the board, in favor of one member."

Maguire, in answer to that email, said Haverl had misinterpreted his request. He said he had no intention of continuing to make monthly

reports but mentioned her motion that he "cease and desist" all activities in the treasurer's office and said she was "publicly accusing me of ongoing illegal activity."

"This is without the courtesy of discussing this issue with me privately prior to the BOS meeting and without requesting the first selectman obtain an opinion from the town attorney regarding my current involvement in the treasurer's office," Maguire wrote. "I am therefore requesting this opinion from the town attorney."

As of Thursday, O'Brien's response had yet to be received.

Maguire reiterated this week, "The fact is none of this should have been brought up in public; if they wanted to do it, it should have been under executive session and none of it should have been public."

But Burbank added of the action at the meeting, "I think it was a necessary motion. He's been in and out of the office. We're way behind the 8-ball in terms of not having a treasurer. There are a lot of problems in there now because we didn't make adjustments and didn't have a full-time treasurer."

He furthered, "We should have hired a treasurer immediately and we wouldn't have gotten so far behind the 8-ball. To try to do something part-time when you're not a municipal accountant, there's just too many things involved that are different than most businesses. I was also very concerned of the removal of records from the office to put on his computer. I don't think that was a safe avenue."

Maguire concluded of the situation, "I have nothing – nothing – to hide. Anybody who wants to sit there and ask one question, you'll get every ounce of information because our problem is our town has never had detailed information; we have lived with, 'Oh it's the same as last year' and that's not good enough for me. I want every bit of information; some of the other Board of Selectmen members don't want details."

Andover Voters Approve \$11.74 Million Budget

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The proposed 2017-18 budget was approved this week, when residents took to the polls and voted 138-105 in favor of the spending package, which amounts to \$11.74 million.

The budget totals \$11,736,987 and includes \$2,311,350 for the general government operating budget, as well as \$4,275,821 in local board of education spending, and \$4,276,289 for the town's portion of the RHAM Board of Education budget.

The latter portion – which is determined by the number of students from town who attend the regional middle and high school – is subject to change, as the RHAM budget failed at referendum May 2 in all three of the sending towns, including by a vote of 120-80 in Andover; the budget returns for a second vote Wednesday, May 31 – and is actually around \$8,000 higher than the number that was defeated May 2.

And while both First Selectman Bob

Burbank and Board of Finance Chairman Dan Warren were pleased the budget passed, they each mentioned the uncertainty with the RHAM budget as something to be concerned about.

"I'm glad to see it passed," Burbank stated of the town budget. "I think the Board of Finance did work hard on the budget so it has a minimal increase. Basically a good part of it is because of revaluation and we lost quite a few dollars off the grand list."

Following a revaluation of the town's property, the 2016 Andover Grand List, which represents the assessed value of all taxable property in town, decreased by 3 percent or \$8.12 million, from \$269,077,100 to \$260,897,900.

Burbank added, "Other than that we did cut back on our already thin budget so we didn't have much room for fudging if this didn't pass as far as making more cuts. It's unfortunate now we have to wait for the RHAM budget and it doesn't seem like they're being very coopera-

tive – it's actually going up instead of down, so if that [is approved] I don't know how much it will affect our mill rate."

Also speaking to the RHAM budget, Warren stated, "It's important for all Andover residents to keep in mind the RHAM referendum is upcoming on May 31 and it's really important for people to get educated on that budget and to vote."

He added some of the money included in the RHAM proposal assumes funding from the state, and "people need to know if that doesn't go through it's possible RHAM may go back to ask for a supplemental and that means the potential for a supplemental tax for residents."

Warren concluded of RHAM, "I know people have a little bit of voting fatigue but I think it's really important people get out to vote."

As the town budget currently stands, it will equate to a 1.62 percent increase – or \$184,259 – in the amount to be funded through taxes, and comes with an anticipated mill rate increase of 1.75 to 32.47 mills for real estate and personal

property (state statute caps the mill rate for motor vehicles at 32 mills).

The mill rate is used to determine a resident's taxes and with a 32.47 mill rate a resident with a home assessed at \$150,000 will owe \$4,871 in real estate taxes, compared to \$4,608 under the current mill rate of 30.72.

Regarding the town budget, Warren shared, "I think the way that this budget stands, despite the cuts that we anticipate from the state I don't think we're going to see a change in the level of service we get."

"The flipside" he added, "is I think there's more we'd obviously like to fund, and to find efficiencies, but also the boards need to be very proactive this upcoming year in engaging the community and figuring out what people's priorities are, because the situation with state funding is not going to change."

A detailed copy of the 2017-18 budget is available online at andoverconnecticut.org.

Marlborough Firefighters Push for Vehicle Replacement

by Julianna Roche

Tuesday's Board of Selectmen meeting marked the second time in two weeks that members of the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department (MVFD) filled the room begging town officials to take a second look at the 2017-18 budget and consider replacing the department's service vehicle – a 2001 Tahoe – which broke down on April 27 while two firefighters were returning from a firefighter class at Connecticut Fire Academy.

MVFD members also attended last week's Board of Finance meeting, where a letter addressed to the board from Fire Chief Kevin Asklar was read explaining the situation.

Asklar wrote that the vehicle was first purchased by the Ambulance Association approximately 10 years ago when MVFD recognized a need for the vehicle as it "serves a vital role" in the department's day-to-day operations – and since, it has helped serve a broad range of needs for the department including, "but not limited to," transporting the marine rescue boat, responding to accidents during inclement weather, transporting manpower to emergency scenes, responding with rehabilitation equipment to fires, responding to mutual aid structure fires, transporting firefighters or officers to training and meetings, traffic control for emergency scenes and town events when additional police officers are not available.

Asklar explained that while it was determined the vehicle could function (though possibly unreliably) with a new transmission he estimated would cost approximately \$2,600 to \$3,400, it has actually been slated on past budgets to be replaced since 2012, but has continually been removed from the one budget to another.

As of this week, the transmission has been replaced and cost \$2,400 – which First Selectwoman Amy Traversa called a temporary, "Band-Aid solution" last week.

At Tuesday's selectmen meeting, Fire Marshal Joe Asklar – Kevin's father – requested

that a motion be made to add a discussion about the vehicle to the meeting agenda.

"This is the lowest relationship between the Board of Selectmen and the fire department in the last 30 years," he said. "I don't know what's going on [but] whatever conflicts are happening. ... This has to stop."

Traversa entertained the motion, but stated she felt the request to include the item on the agenda last-minute was "discourteous" and felt like "an ambush"; the motion was then denied as it did not reach the two-thirds vote required, with Traversa and fellow Democrat Evelyn Godbout opposing.

Republican Selectman Dick Shea, however, asked Traversa and Godbout to reconsider, as there was a reason an "additions to the agenda" item is always included on Board of Selectmen meeting agendas.

"It's put there for a reason, so we get the opportunity to cover things that might come up at the last-minute for various reasons not on the original agenda," he said. "[If we] look around and see all the firemen that are here, I think it's kind of a shame they took time off to make a case for something they think they need."

"I'd be happy to put it on the agenda for the next meeting," Traversa said.

However, comments from other MVFD members continued – including one from Fire Commissioner Doug Thibodeau, who read a letter signed by himself addressed to the selectmen questioning why the Tahoe was repaired. He said the fire department has asked selectmen, previous administrations included, and the Board of Finance to put money aside for a new rescue truck since 2012, "yet nothing seems to be done."

However, Traversa said Thibodeau's letter came as "a surprise" because "we've had this discussion in my office and we said we needed a short-term solution... [we said] as soon as it gets repaired, we said we'd set up another meet-

ing."

Traversa noted Thursday that the other Fire Commissioner Mike Schadle has not yet signed the letter.

Board of Finance alternate Midge Denno also spoke during public comments stating that it was her "assumption" the finance board also would have talked about what to do with the vehicle when the MVFD presented their case at last week's meeting.

"[Then] it came out that the vehicle was already on a lift, being repaired for a transmission with 240,000 miles on it," she said. "I would never do that to my personal vehicle and I cannot understand why we'd want to do that with a town vehicle used for emergency situations."

Thibodeau furthered that a new rescue truck would be scheduled to be replaced in four years at a total approximate cost of \$65,000.

"The Fire Commissioners want to make it clear that when we said we did not feel the vehicle was worth fixing, it was our intent to have the 2001 Tahoe replaced," he wrote, adding, "Why has the fire department been asked to seek other alternative funding for new equipment, whereas the public works and the police do not have the same request?"

Thibodeau's letter was reference to the town's replacement of a police cruiser last year and the \$38,000 set aside for public works vehicle maintenance in the 2017-18 town operations budget. This year's budget also includes \$33,500 set aside each year for the next four years to help lease and replace a new \$150,000 Volvo loader for the Public Works Department. The current loader, Traversa has explained, is nearly 20 years old and in desperate need of replacement.

"I'm mind-boggled why we're still requested by the Board of Selectmen to go out and buy used vehicles," Asklar agreed, adding that the fire department has received two "hand-me-

down" vehicles from the Public Works department in the past.

Traversa, however, emphasized that the decision not to include a new service vehicle for the fire department in this year's budget "hasn't been just a Board of Selectmen decision" and it "wasn't just a first selectman decision."

Traversa furthered that there is "a member of the Board of Finance [Chairman Doug Knowlton] on the fire department, but you don't have any reserves."

"I'm not throwing you under the bus, but you've had opportunity for conversation," she told Knowlton, who was also present at the meeting, "There are eight budget workshops [and] multiple budget workshops with the Board of Finance."

However, Knowlton pointed out that during the budget workshop sessions, the service vehicle had not yet broken down, so "it wasn't a crisis yet."

While Traversa acknowledged that was the case, she said Thursday she has encouraged the fire department to apply for grants to help fund items such as a new service vehicle and that in this budget season, it would "not be fiscally responsible to the town of Marlborough" to "spend [more] taxpayer dollars before taking advantage of other monies available."

"I have provided the clerical and administrative assistance [to them] in applying for those grants," she added.

Fire department members however, stood their ground.

"We got 42 members that really work really hard. ... You have to acknowledge these members, you have to acknowledge our needs, you have to acknowledge the hard work," Joe Asklar pleaded to the board. "Please do it. Make a better effort to work with the fire department."

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is Tuesday, June 6, at 7 p.m. in Town Hall.

Marlborough Selectmen Dissolve Architectural Review Board

by Julianna Roche

The Board of Selectmen voted 2-1 this week – with selectman Dick Shea the sole opposing vote – to dissolve the Architectural Review Board (ARB), which was established two years ago to assist with the planning and design of architectural development in town to ensure its appearance was consistent with Marlborough's town center plan.

The new China Sea building was the first and only of its endeavors – but a successful one, according to Shea, who argued that the town "gained a lot of input" from the board when designing the building. For example, he said the owners had originally suggested a bright canary yellow for the building color, but the board suggested a more toned-down soft yellow color to match the style of other buildings in town.

"They also suggested the color changes in the façade and stone to complement the town green," he said. "I would have never thought about that in a thousand years. It's something that would have been missed."

Shea furthered that having "an extra set of eyeballs" of board members with experience in design would be "well worth taking advantage of" and getting rid of the board altogether was "shortsighted [and] not in the town's best interest."

While First Selectwoman Amy Traversa agreed that the "value" of the board and its "input" was appreciated, she said that the board was put together in 2015 and met on three occasions that year "for less than an hour each time" and "hasn't met since."

She furthered that the town has a total of 87 members on boards and commissions and

spending time "trying to fill those positions" when someone resigns, takes another job, or moves away is already difficult.

"We have more commissions than we can possibly fill," she continued, adding that she felt "strongly" the board's role "can be incorporated into existing boards" such as the Zoning Commission, Planning Commission, Board of Assessment Appeals and the Conservation Commission.

For developers to get their designs approved, she continued, "There are no fewer than four boards that developers need to go through and there is room on those boards to accommodate any member of the ARB."

However, during the public comments portion of the meeting, several residents spoke in support of keeping the ARB. This included former ARB member Carole Shea – Dick Shea's wife – who said "the members [of the board] were appointed based on building and design experience," including Shea, who has worked for 25 years as a professional designer and space planner.

Carole Shea also added that the ARB was created to help "save money on [potential] redesign or changes," and that ARB members "should have the opportunity to engage in dialogue" before the formal dissolution of the board.

"In closing, many surrounding towns have either ARBs or designer review boards... [and] those are in some of the more desirable towns in the state," she said, including the adjacent towns of East Hampton and Glastonbury.

Zoning Commission Chairman Kevin Asklar also spoke – stressing he was speaking as an

individual – and stated he was "a little surprised" by the selectmen's decision to dissolve the board.

He said the ARB "was very helpful with the design and the architect of the new China Sea building" and added that the zoning commission spent most of its time looking at zoning regulations, while the ARB was able to look at other aspects to help the building "fit well into our town plan."

Asklar furthered that with the town's current plans to bring in Big Y and other potential development, "now, out of all times, it's the most important time to have this board."

Also Tuesday, the Board of Selectmen discussed appointing a Charter Review Commission (CRC) to begin the process of reviewing and revising the town charter – something that hasn't been done since 1985.

In late March, two residents – Louise Concodello and Richard Denno – had organized a petition urging selectmen to get the ball rolling on appointing a CRC.

Charter revision "is a difficult process [and] pretty convoluted, especially during an especially difficult budget season," Traversa said, adding, however, that it was "very, very obvious there need to be some clarifications."

"We really need to take a look at it," she furthered, adding that she hopes "to provide an all-day referendum for the budget vote" rather than a town meeting – where residents currently only have a small window to cast a ballot, leaving many unable to attend, let alone vote on the yearly budget.

In addition to the all-day referendum, other

requests originally included in the petition are for the selectmen to establish a CRC with no less than seven members, to institute automatic charter revision with prescribed intervals at which time it would be revisited, and to increase the Board of Selectmen from three to five members.

The first selectwoman furthered that the board has 30 days to appoint anywhere from five to 15 members and is also charged with giving the CRC a list of expectations which "need to be broad enough to give them the latitude to determine what needs to be changed, but specific enough that we have the ability to guide the discussion on what those ground rules will be."

Traversa said at the meeting that the town has already reached out to an attorney to serve as an outside consultant during the "long and complicated process" of charter revision.

"I think [charter revision] is critical. We've said that certainly during campaigning and have said it repeatedly throughout the year," she said.

Launching a CRC now is "not the timing I would have preferred," the first selectwoman added by phone Thursday. "But it became absolutely clear during this budget season what a hindrance it is to have an outdated charter."

Dick Shea agreed, adding that he felt everyone was "on the same page," and "the biggest issue" would be finding enough citizens to "step forward" to volunteer to be on the CRC.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will take place Tuesday, June 6, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.

Marlborough Residents to Vote Again on Budget

by Julianna Roche

After the proposed 2017-18 spending package failed to pass last week, residents will have a second opportunity to vote on a revisited budget on Wednesday, May 24 – this time with a slightly lower increase of 3.37 percent over current year spending versus 3.57 percent.

The town's original budget proposal of \$24,584,816 – which amounted to a 6.96 percent tax increase – was voted down by residents by a 139-45 margin at the May 8 annual budget town meeting.

The new total of \$24,535,827 – which would include a 6.66 percent tax increase – resulted from an updated assessment to the cost of Blish Park sewer upgrades, which engineers initially estimated to be \$64,475. The cost now stands at \$15,789 – with the \$48,686 reduction being the only change made to the overall budget by the Board of Finance since it was last voted on.

Included in the spending package is \$4,940,050 for the town operations budget – an increase of 3.69 percent – and \$7,326,938 for the local Board of Education budget – an

increase of 1.44 percent – as well as \$100,000 in a town contingency fund.

The town operations budget includes \$844,686 set aside for capital non-recurring expenditures which include some larger items such as \$164,000 for road improvements; \$160,000 for culverts on North Main Street; \$115,000 for culverts on Finley Hill; \$75,000 for public works vehicles; and \$50,000 to restore the library parking lot.

The local Board of Education, meanwhile, has \$82,265 in its capital expenditure fund, which includes \$54,000 to repave and line the parking lot by the elementary school's community room entrance; \$10,000 for a boiler replacement; \$10,000 for a roof replacement; and \$8,265 for air conditioning unit replacements, as well as new air conditioning motors and transformers for three rooms in the school.

According to an April budget presentation by the finance board, the town gets one more chance to pass a budget before July 1 if it fails at the May 24 town meeting. If the new fiscal

year begins without an approved budget in place, the Board of Selectmen will be charged with setting the mill rate based on the latest finance board presentation.

First Selectwoman Amy Traversa, who spoke on the budget at Tuesday's Board of Selectmen meeting, said "it's getting less and less sure" that the town would have "any indication" from the state regarding how much will be slashed from town funding. She furthered that during a Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) meeting this week, attendees were very laughingly talking about how [the state] doesn't expect anything until before October."

"It's the reality we're facing now," she added. Under Gov. Dannel Malloy's latest budget proposal, Marlborough stands to lose \$2,223,519 in state funding, bringing its total for 2017-18 to approximately \$1.29 million compared to nearly \$3.52 million in current funding.

The first selectwoman furthered that if

Malloy's proposal passes, cuts to both the town operations and local board of education budgets would have to be made.

"If we have to make cuts, we will make the cuts," she said, adding, however, "it will be painful."

Traversa also emphasized that she and other town officials feel cuts would also have to be made across the board – including to the RHAM Board of Education's proposed \$28.87 million. Of that amount, Marlborough is responsible for 31.16 percent – which would translate to \$9.86 million. The RHAM budget will go to a second referendum later this month.

"We can't [reduce the town budget] without RHAM's participation and publicly encouraging people to vote [the budget down]," she said.

Townspice can vote on the budget at the next town meeting, which will take place Wednesday, May 24, at 7 p.m. in the Marlborough Elementary School cafeteria.

Hebron School Board Acknowledged for Veteran Support

by Geeta S. Sandberg

The Hebron Board of Education last week was presented with an award for its support of veteran employees – and it's not the first time such recognition has been received.

Thomas Pandolfi, vice chairman of the Department of Defense's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve organization, presented the board with ESGR's Above and Beyond Award. He also happened to pay the board a visit in January, when he presented members with the organization's Patriot Award.

The latter 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," according to esgr.mil, and was given in recognition of the board's support of teacher and Army Reserve Major Dan Pape during his continued deployment.

In January, Pandolfi had commended the board for its actions, and shared with the *Rivercast* that the Patriot Award was one of several ESGR offers. In a bit of foreshadowing, he also said the board was likely to qualify for the Above and Beyond Award.

His prediction came true, and Pandolfi presented the board with the award at its meeting last Thursday, May 11.

"It's a pleasure coming here again today," he shared. "The Patriot Award that was given to you in the past came from a service member – your employee. This one comes from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve – we designate who we want to give the Above and Beyond Award to, and it goes to employers who go above and beyond what's required by The Uniformed Services Employment and Reem-

ployment Rights Act. We chose you."

Pandolfi added he also serves as ombudsman for service members, which means if there's a conflict between the service member and their employer "we intercede on his or her behalf and usually we have a resolution to the case – most of the time; I've never had a resolution with the four Boards of Education that I've dealt with in Connecticut and that's sad. That's really sad."

And so, he furthered, "Coming here and giving you this award – I really commend you for going above and beyond, and that's what you do. It means a lot."

After Pandolfi, another presentation occurred last week related to the armed services.

Fifth grade teacher James Jones, it was shared, was chosen to sit on a state-level committee to address a new statewide program.

Schools Superintendent Tim Van Tassel described the program as "a new initiative that the state, in working with the Department of Veterans Affairs, looked at as an opportunity to recognize school districts for the great things that they do to recognize our armed services personnel."

Known as the Red, White and Blue Schools designation program, Jones explained it provides the opportunity to "recognize schools that do a really great job with veterans programs throughout the year, and the reward is to provide students with opportunities to learn about veteran contributions, and to collaborate with local veterans' organizations."

Jones explained districts will have to meet certain criteria in order to be recognized, including: incorporating the effective and inno-

vative teaching of veterans' contributions, interdisciplinary connections, speakers/materials from veterans' groups, student-led community celebrations, and a potential impact beyond the classroom.

He elaborated on what some of that criteria might look like, explaining the teaching of veterans' contributions could mean examining veterans' issues in various eras, discussing war and peacetime experiences, the role of non-combat veterans and veterans' organizations.

Regarding interdisciplinary connections, Jones furthered, "We looked at all these areas as a committee to see how we can put [this subject] across the curriculum, and that allows everyone an opportunity to excel in this program."

Examples would be: in English/Language Arts, looking at personal records of veterans' experiences; in math, analyzing the statistics of war and peacetime events; in science/technology, looking at how scientific innovations evolved from military needs; in geography, mapping the military in war and peacetime; and in art, learning about the art and music of military engagements.

Jones concluded of the program, "What we need from Hebron and all the school districts is a partnership – share the details of the program."

And, he said, learn more by visiting the program's website, which can be accessed through the State Department of Education at sde.ct.gov, or by going to <http://tinyurl.com/lap53o7>.

Also at last week's meeting, the school board accepted "with extreme regret" the resignation of Director of Educational Services Patricia

Buell, who has been with the district since the position was created at the start of the 2015-16 school year.

In her letter of resignation, Buell shared she was leaving to take over as superintendent of schools in Brooklyn, Conn. – where she once lived and her parents and sister currently reside.

"Family has always been very important to me and for many years I have aspired to become the superintendent in Brooklyn," she said. "The previous superintendent served in that capacity for 34 years, so while the timing might not have been right, I felt I needed to apply for the position when it was vacated. Having the opportunity to work close to my parents gives me peace of mind to be able to be nearby."

Buell added of her time in Hebron, "I have learned so much and find that there is so much to celebrate. I am confident that Hebron Public Schools will continue to serve as a source of pride for the community."

Buell's resignation is effective June 30, and the first round of interviews for an individual to fill that position have already taken place.

Van Tassel said at the meeting, "We were very fortunate this year. We ended up with an excellent candidate pool."

He added he'd like to hold the second round of interviews within the next week to keep from losing any of what he considers "very, very desirable candidates."

The next regular Hebron Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 8, at 7 p.m. in the Gilead Hill School music room, 580 Gilead St.

Colchester Finance Board Makes \$301,000 in Budget Cuts

by Julianna Roche

At its meeting Wednesday night to discuss the budget to be presented to the public next week, the Board of Finance voted to reduce the proposed education budget by \$250,000 and the town budget by \$51,180.

Despite uncertainty at the state level, the board also voted unanimously to forgo sending out supplemental tax bills to residents should Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's most recently proposed cuts to municipal funding come to fruition.

As of the governor's newest budget proposal released Monday, Colchester stands to lose approximately \$4.67 million of state funding for the upcoming fiscal year, a drop from \$14.29 million in current funding to \$9.63 million for 2018.

In waiving sending out supplemental tax bills the board has the ability to revisit the budget even if it passes at referendum June 13 should Malloy's proposal pass, requiring massive cuts to the town or education budgets.

On Tuesday, May 23, the finance board will present both the town and education budgets to the public as they currently stand – however, between then and the referendum, those numbers could change again.

After several motions with suggested reductions to the education budget failed Wednes-

day, the board finally voted 4-2 to reduce the \$40.89 million budget by \$250,000, with board members Andreas Bisbikos and Stefani Lowe as the two 'nay' votes – both of whom felt larger reductions of \$600,000 and \$1 million, respectively, were more realistic.

At its meeting two weeks ago, the finance board requested that the Board of Education present what a \$400,000 reduction could do to its proposed budget – which stood at a 2.05 percent increase over current year spending.

Included in that list were cutting all athletic programs from William J. Johnston Middle School, and a range of sports from Bacon Academy – including freshmen basketball, freshmen soccer, indoor track, tennis, golf and non-sport specific athletic supplies – as well as one school bus, several staff eliminations and reductions, and \$24,465 worth of certified salaries for substitutes used when classes go on field trips.

While the finance board does not have the authority to determine specifically what cuts the education board should make, it can provide the school board with a total reduction number.

The board also voted unanimously Wednesday to reduce the originally proposed town bud-

get of \$14.76 million by \$51,180.

"The numbers that we've come up with – even if it passes at referendum – will be null and void and we'll have to redo [the budget]" if the governor's proposal passes, Bisbikos explained Thursday. "If the governor hits us with anything, we will have to go back and reevaluate the numbers."

However, according to finance board chairman Rob Tarlov, if the referendum fails and the town still doesn't know what cuts will have to be made to the town budgets because of the state, it would have to continue operating on the current year's budget which he said would be "very difficult."

During the citizens' comments portion of the meeting, there were residents in attendance both in support of and against the proposed cuts to the education budget.

Resident Ashley Laparre was among them, and said she was "in support of the budget as is."

"I just know our future is in our schools and in our children," she said. "I have a very hard time understanding why you [the board] wouldn't put the budget through fully funded

if you keep hearing support for it."

Resident Mike Hayes agreed, saying "we're beating a dead horse here... we've heard from more people this year than you ever have, since sitting on the board."

He added, "Every single one of them except for a few want to support the budget proposed by the Board of Ed. Put the first budget through; if it gets denied, lower it... But at least give us the chance to get this through."

Resident Jim Kelly shared however, that he felt the suggested cuts were too low and a "budget of this size with what's going on in Hartford" was "really disappointing."

"You need to be responsible for everybody in town... I don't think this has been one of your finer moments for the budget" he furthered, adding "I hope the air conditioning works well in here because I think we'll be back here in warm weather."

Resident Deanna Bouchard agreed with Kelly, saying she too felt it was "disappointing the board ended on a \$250,000 cut... I think you're making a mistake."

The public hearing will take place Tuesday, May 23 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall.

Obituaries

East Hampton

John Russell King

John (Jack) Russell King passed away unexpectedly of a broken heart Saturday, May 13, at the age of 70.

Jack, a lifelong resident of East Hampton, was predeceased by his loving wife of 47 years, Maureen "Mo" King; his father, Kenneth; his mother, Virginia (Sage); and his stepmother, Alice.

Jack is survived by his three sons, Matthew and his wife Sheileen of West Hartford; Joshua and his wife Dena of Middletown, R.I., and U.S. Navy Commander Zachary and his wife Tiffany stationed in Yokosuka, Japan; four cherished grandchildren; Lily, Delaney, John and Patrick; his sister, Virginia "Binni" Galgano and her husband Peter; and sister, Jean Thetreault and her husband Gil.

Jack was a devoted husband and father who always worked hard to provide for his family and was always there when someone needed him. He loved to teach and coach, an avid woodworker you could say he was a "Jack of all trades." He started his teaching career at Hartford Public High School, moved on to Xavier High School in Middletown and eventually retired from the New Haven school system.

In addition to teaching, Coach King, or "Kinger" as he was known, was a well-respected coach of many different sports. Whether it was Little League, CYO at St. Patrick's, high school sports at Xavier, Mercy and Hamden Hall Preparatory School you could always find him on a field or court. In addition to teaching and coaching, Jack could always be found during the summer months at his favorite place in East Hampton, Sears Park. Jack's happiest moments were spending time with his best friend and high school sweetheart and now they are together again.

The Kings would like to thank the many friends and family that have been there for Jack and Maureen. Your love, support and compassion has been wonderful and will never be forgotten.

A funeral service was held Thursday, May 18, at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Calling hours were held at Spencer Funeral Home Wednesday, May 17. Burial was private at the request of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Godspeed Opera House (goodspeed.org) in East Haddam or to Hartford HealthCare at Home (hartfordhealthcare.org).

Online condolences may be made at spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Diane Hajdun

Diane Hajdun, 64, of Colchester, died Sunday, May 14, following a very long and courageous battle with cancer. She was born in Stafford Springs Jan. 29, 1953, to the late Steve and Rita (Stewart) Bensey. Diane graduated from Plainfield High School in 1970; she was united in marriage to Peter L. Hajdun Oct 3, 1974.

Diane was a loving wife, mother and sister who loved to cook and bake for her family, friends and school events; her recipes are cherished by her family. Diane worked as a Paraprofessional in Colchester.

Diane is survived by her loving husband of 43 years, Peter L. Hajdun; her son Peter Hajdun; and daughter Jennifer Timmons and husband Mark all of Colchester; her sister and brother-in-law Darlene and Stanley "Stan the Man" Hajdun; and mother-in-law Joanna Hajdun, all from Florida; her niece Shanna Blair and husband Bryce; and nephew Ben Hajdun.

In addition to her parents, Diane was predeceased by her granddaughter Harper Elizabeth Timmons.

Visitation with the family will be held from 5-7 p.m. Saturday, May 20, at Belmont Funeral Home, 144 S. Main St., Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Diane's memory may be made to St. Jude Children's Hospital.

Visit belmontfh.com to leave condolences.



Colchester

Theodore S. Bennett

Theodore S. Bennett, "Ted," passed away Thursday, May 11, after a long illness, at the age of 65. Born July 10, 1951, in Norwich, he was the son of the late Clarence and Myrtle (VanCedarfield) Bennett. He grew up in Lebanon and attended Lyman Memorial High School with the Class of 1969.

For over 20 years, he worked as a supervisor for Tri-Town Precision Plastics in Deep River. In his spare time, Ted was a motorcycle enthusiast, enjoyed racing and traveling but most importantly his greatest joy was found in his family, especially his grandchildren.

He leaves his loving wife of nearly 32 years, Cynthia "Cindy" (Dickinson) Bennett; their daughter, Michelle "Mickey" Bennett and her longtime companion Robert Schmelzer of Lebanon; his stepson, Gregory and wife Christina Stevens of Moodus; five grandchildren, Jacob and Summer Schmelzer and Brandon, Michael and Savannah Stevens; two sisters, Eleanor Stevens of West Virginia and Christine "Sis" Cruz and her husband Naasson of Manchester; two brothers, Kenneth Bennett and his wife Evelyn of Colchester and Wayne Bennett and his wife Sandra of West Virginia; his father-in-law, Richard Dickinson of Portland; and numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a son, Joseph Brian, and his mother-in-law, Joan Dickinson.

A memorial service celebrating his life was observed Thursday, May 18, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The family received guests prior to the service. Burial followed in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland.

The family would like to extend their deepest gratitude to the staff at Apple Rehab in Colchester for the exemplary care and concern for Ted and his family during his convalescence. In recognition, those who wish make memorial donations to the Apple Rehab Recreation Fund, 36 Broadway, Colchester 06415 or to Middlesex Hospital, Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457 (or online at middlesexhospital.org/donate-now).

For online condolences, please visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Andrea Carol Funk

Andrea Carol (Watrous) Funk of Colchester was born May 31, 1965, in Myrtle Beach, S.C. On Mother's Day, May 14, Andrea went home to the Lord after a brave and graceful battle with breast cancer.

Let it be known our Andy is victorious as the power of positivity always prevails. She lived her life without restraint, driven by love and kindness, embracing and sharing raw emotion as a gift from her heart and soul.

Andrea carried out her calling as a special education preschool teacher with joy, intelligence, and a natural ability to guide those who need it most of all. Her truest love was her family and friends, giving herself to us wholly and fantastically. Left to find Andy in the warmth of the sunshine, the dancing twinkle of the ocean, the unstoppable laughter of a child, or the quiet intimate calm of a cherished book are the following loved ones: her beloved Lloyd Bishel; her children and grandson, Chelsea (and fiancé, Chris), Troy, and Austin Funk; her parents, Margaret and Palmer; her brother, sister-in-law, nephew and niece, Neal, Chrissy, Liam, and Claire; many cherished friends and numerous extended family throughout the world.

The family will receive guests from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, May 27, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A Celebration of her Life will follow at Harkness Memorial State Park, 275 Great Neck Rd., Waterford from 3 pm on.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Autism Speaks, 1 East 33rd St., 4th Fl., New York, NY 10016 (autismspeaks.org).

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Colchester

Wallace Joseph Burtis

Wallace Joseph Burtis, 89, of Colchester, formerly of Moodus/East Haddam, passed away Thursday, May 11, at Middlesex Hospital Hospice, Middletown. Born Sept. 13, 1927, in Mt. Vernon, N.Y., he was the son of the late Herman LeRoy "Roy" and Katherine (Aspenleiter) Burtis, and brother of the late LeRoy Albert "Buddy" Burtis.

In January 1945, at the age of 17, Wallace enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving proudly during World War II aboard both the U.S.S. O'Hare and Watts before his honorable discharge at the rank of Seaman First Class in July 1946.

On Oct. 9, 1948, he married his high school sweetheart, Jane W. Northrop, in Mt. Vernon, N.Y. Jane and Wally raised their family in Mt. Vernon and Yorktown, N.Y., before retiring in Moodus in 1984. Together they shared 63 years of marriage before she predeceased him Aug. 2, 2012.

Wallace had worked as a firefighter/chief's aide for the Mt. Vernon Fire Department from 1950 to 1984 before retiring to Moodus in 1984. Wally and Jane together became active members of the community. He was a member of the East Haddam Lions, Baron-Smith-Golec American Legion Post 156 and St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. He also worked at Moodus Lumber, St. Bridget's and Sunrise Resort.

Wally was a devoted and loving husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather. He is survived by three children and their spouses, Robert (Bev) of New Jersey, William (June) of Colchester, Elizabeth (Robert Rohle) of New York; grandchildren, Amanda (Brian Sovyrda), Daniel (Marie), Michael (Casey), Nicholas (Anthony), Jessica (Amrit Misra) Christopher (Katelynn), Kevin, Bryan, Nicolas; and his great granddaughter, Grace.

Friends may call 1-3 p.m. Sunday, May 21, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, followed by a memorial service with military honors at 3 p.m. Wally will be laid to rest with Jane at a private service at the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to Christian Life Chapel, P.O. Box 91, Colchester, CT 06415, or the charity of your choice.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Hebron

Frances Claire Karvelis

Frances Claire (McEntarfer) Karvelis, 80, of Hebron, widow of the late William Karvelis Jr., passed away Thursday, May 11, at home. Born June 2, 1936, in Corry, Pa., she was the daughter of the late Owen and Ida (Sutter) McEntarfer.

Mrs. Karvelis had worked as a dental assistant for Hebron Dental for many years before her retirement. She had been a longtime communicant and choir member of the Church of the Holy Family in Hebron.

She is survived by her children, Christine and husband Aubrey Stedford of Pawcatuck (with whom she most recently had made her home), Bryan and wife Michelle Weisbrod of Voluntown, Kristopher and wife, Tammy Karvelis of Massachusetts, Shawn and wife, Dina Karvelis of Marlborough, Bridget Karvelis of Groton and also Michael Miller of Massachusetts and Lisa Grabisch of Stamford; 14 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; and two sisters, Alice Pierce of Florida and Elinor Sturges of New York.

The family received guests Tuesday, May 16, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, before a chapel service that morning. Burial followed in the New Hebron Cemetery.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Carol Tacke

Carol Tacke, 79, of Portland, passed away peacefully Saturday, May 13, after a long and courageous battle with cancer. She was born Dec. 10, 1937, in Flushing, N.Y., to George and Edna (Young) Schlottmann. Prior to moving to Portland in 2006, she was a longtime resident of Commack, N.Y., as well as shorter residencies in other areas of New York, Michigan, Kansas and California.

She was an avid Girl Scout in her youthful days. Carol was a 1955 graduate of Northport High School (New York) where she participated in sports, band and glee club; was a member of the National Honor Society and vice president of her senior class. She attended Bethany College in West Virginia after high school but received her degree (BS Nursing) from Molloy College of Nursing, Rockville Centre, N.Y., in 1975. She was subsequently employed as a registered nurse at the VAMC, Northport, N.Y., primarily in the ICU. She was an advocate and active participant in continuing education seminars, always interested in expanding the scope of her knowledge.

She was a great wife and mother who enjoyed traveling, camping, skiing, square dancing, playing bridge and mahjong, the Brooklyn Dodgers and UConn women's basketball, but who especially enjoyed her children's and grandchildren's participation in school and athletic events.

Carol is survived by her husband of 58 plus years, Walter W.; a son, W. William Tacke of Middletown; and a daughter, Donna S. Cote and her husband, Chris, their children, Danielle, Courtney and Bryce, all of Portland; a daughter-in-law, Tamyra R. Tacke, her children Drew and Ainsley, all of Oxford, Miss. She was predeceased by two sons, Scott C. Tacke and Todd R. Tacke, her parents and sister, Joane Failey.

Funeral arrangements are being handled by the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, Portland, and the Brueggemann Funeral Home, East Northport, N.Y. The funeral service will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, East Northport, N.Y., followed by a burial service at Genola Rural Cemetery, East Northport, N.Y. A memorial service will be held at Zion Lutheran Church, Portland, in the near future.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to the Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center Fund at Hartford Hospital, 79 Retreat Ave., Hartford, CT 06106 or a cancer charity of the donor's choice would be appreciated. The family is deeply grateful for the care and concern rendered by the staff of Middlesex Hospice and Palliative Care.

Portland

Howard Leonard Memorial Service

On Sunday, June 4, there will be a remembrance of life for family and friends of Howard "Bud" Leonard, of Portland, who passed away Wednesday, March 8, in Florida.

The remembrance will be held from noon-3 p.m. at the Portland Riverfront Park, which is located at the end of Middlesex Avenue in Portland. Let's share some memories!



Marlborough

Lillian L. Jordan

Lillian L. Jordan, 84, of Sabattus, Maine, formerly of Marlborough, passed away Tuesday, May 16, at Marshwood Nursing Center in Lewiston, Maine, after a long struggle with Alzheimer's disease.

She was born Feb. 1, 1933, in Oxford, Maine, a daughter of Arthur Pollard and Florence Canwell Pollard. She was one of 12 children, and attended Oxford schools.

Lillian devoted her time taking care of her six children and babysitting for other children. She later spent several years as a cook at Head Start in Colchester, and many years as an assistant cook at Arbor Acres in Glastonbury.

Her real love was camping, fishing and traveling in our motorhome to Tennessee, Branson, Mo., Arizona, and many other places.

She was loved by her family and many friends. Lillian is survived by her husband of 64 years, Romeo Jordan of Sabattus, Maine; two sisters, Cenis Turcotte of Auburn, Maine, and Florence Crowell of China, Maine; six children, Sandra Rankl of Manchester, Brenda Bragshaw and husband Bill of East Hartford, Linda Billiel of Colchester, David Jordan and wife Jean of East Hampton, Kathy Caldwell of Buckfield, Maine, Gary Jordan and his companion Michelle Mathies of Norway, Maine; 12 grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren.

Lillian was predeceased by her parents, four sisters and five brothers.

The family would like to extend a very special thanks to all the staff at Marshwood Center Genesis Healthcare for the services they provided to Lillian for four years.

A graveside service and interment will be held at a later date, at the convenience of the family at the Greenwood Cemetery in Greene, Maine.

Arrangements and cremation services were provided by Funeral Alternatives, 25 Tampa St., Lewiston, Maine.



Hebron

Josephine Fenton

Josephine Fenton, 102, of Hebron, beloved wife of the late Michael F. Fenton passed away Friday, May 12. Josephine was born May 4, 1915, in Shutesbury, Mass., daughter of Joseph and Marie Aloisi.

She resided in Hartford and was employed for 27 years at Heublein Distributors before retiring, moving to Hebron in 1964.

Josephine is survived by a son, Daniel M. Fenton of Hebron; a daughter, Maureen Fenton of Newington; several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

A private graveside service will be in Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery, Bloomfield. There are no calling hours.

Memorial contributions may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

Watkins Funeral Home Manchester is in care of arrangements. To leave a message of condolence, visit holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

Two-Car Crash on Halls Hill Road in Colchester

by Julianna Roche

Police said a minor car crash near Jack Jackter Intermediate School (JJIS) left one Trumbull resident injured on May 10.

According to police, at approximately 8:37 a.m., Benjamin Gonzales, 37, of 361 Linwood Cemetery Rd., was driving a Honda Odyssey eastbound on Halls Hill Road near its intersection with Norwich Avenue, when it struck the rear end of a Cadillac SRX driven by Candace Williams, 27, of 53 Rocky Hill Rd.,

Trumbull.

Police said Williams was stopped for traffic ahead, preparing to make a turn in the JJIS parking lot, at the time of the crash. She was subsequently transported by Colchester Hayward Fire Department to Middlesex Hospital in Marlborough for neck pain, police said.

Gonzales was issued a written warning for following too closely, police said.

Portland Garage Fire Displaces Five

by Elizabeth Regan

A Friday morning Penfield Hill Road fire left a Portland family of five displaced after a blaze in a car engine compartment led to fire damage in the garage and smoke damage in the house.

Firefighters arrived within four-and-a-half minutes of the 2:55 a.m. call and quickly knocked down the blaze with one fire tanker truck, according to Portland Fire Chief Robert Shea.

Shea said a father and daughter were evaluated for smoke inhalation at Middlesex Hospital and were released. The family dog they rescued was unscathed.

The attached garage sat right below the mas-

ter bedroom, Shea said.

"We got there quick. That's the thing," Shea said. "We knocked it down before it extended up through the floors."

Shea described fire damage to the doors and another car, but said the garage remains intact. Smoke damage inside the home is being assessed before the family returns.

Mutual aid came from Middletown, Glastonbury and East Hampton. Two tankers from East Hampton were on scene but were ultimately not needed, Shea said.

Shea said smoke detectors helped alert the family. He pointed to the situation as an example of the effectiveness of fire alarms, especially when people are sleeping.

Three Charged in December East Hampton Mill Fire

Three teens were arrested Wednesday in connection with a December fire at a vacant mill.

The blaze occurred Dec. 18 at 13 Summit St. East Hampton Fire Chief Greg Voelker said at the time the fire started on the third floor and burned through the floor into the second story.

No injuries were reported, and firefighters brought the blaze under control in half an hour, Voelker said.

Voelker added there were no energy sources in the building, such as gas or electrical, so the fire had to be started by a person.

And after an investigation by East Hamp-

ton Police Officer Michael Salafia and the Connecticut State Police Fire and Explosion Investigation Unit, three juveniles were arrested Wednesday and charged with starting the blaze.

Evidence recovered at the scene led police to the suspects, according to East Hampton Police Chief Sean Cox.

Two 14-year-olds and a 13-year-old were each charged with third-degree arson, conspiracy to commit third-degree arson and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

The three juveniles, whose names were withheld because of their ages, are scheduled to appear in court later this month.

Colchester Police News

5/8: State Police said Courtney Perkins, 21, of 14 S. Beechwood Rd., Niantic was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

5/9: Colchester Police said Jason W. Carrier, 30, of 27 Coco Dr. was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny.

5/11: Colchester Police said Joseph T. Saunders, 71, of 8 Raven Rd., was arrested and charged with causing a public disturbance.

5/11: State Police said Gabriel E. Vigil, 26, of 42 Woods Dr., Norwichtown, was arrested

and charged with failure to respond to an infraction.

5/13: State Police said Juan Nieves, 32, of 330 Jeffrey Rd., Apt. A, Windham, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear, first-degree failure to appear, and fourth-degree larceny.

5/13: Colchester Police said Rebecca C. Jones, 21, of 17 Nemczuk Dr., Norwich was arrested and charged with narcotics kept only in an original container, possession of drug paraphernalia, and illegal possession of a narcotic.

East Hampton Police News

5/1: Nathaniel J. Hardesty, 21, of 130 Newfield St., Middletown, was issued a summons for driving under suspension and possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, East Hampton Police said.

5/3: David Dudley, 50, of 124 Hickory Dr., Groton, was arrested and charged with operating an unregistered motor vehicle, emissions violation and operating under suspension, police said.

Also, from May 1-7, officers responded to 13 medical calls, three motor vehicle crashes and seven alarms, and made 20 traffic stops.

Portland Police News

5/8: Brian Smith, 33, of 25 Fernwood Rd., East Hampton, was charged with operating under the influence, Portland Police said.

Marlborough Police News

5/11: State Police said Hecyaell Hernandez, 19, of 135 Wood Glen Dr. Apt. 5, Waterbury, was arrested and charged with interfering with an officer: simple assault, assault of a public safety/emergency personnel, breach of peace, and disorderly conduct.