

RIVEREAST

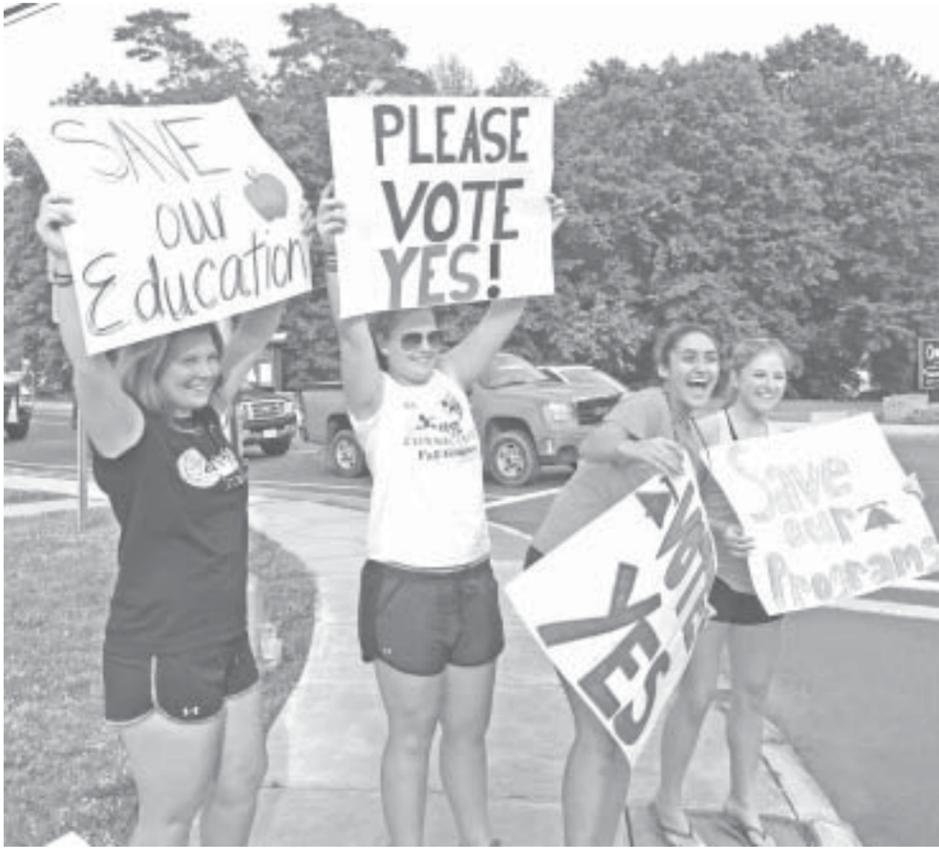
News Bulletin

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

Volume 41, Number 38

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

June 16, 2017



From left, East Hampton High School sophomore Rachel Vickery and seniors Sarah Vickery, Gyanna Russell and Lindsey Dickerson students rallied support for the education budget on the corner of Route 66 and North Main Street Tuesday afternoon. The budget referendum yielded an unexpectedly high turnout as residents approved both the education and general government side of the 2017-18 spending plan. Election officials ended up counting 500 ballots by hand after they ran out of pre-printed ballots.

Both Belltown Budgets Pass in High Turnout

by Elizabeth Regan

It all comes down to communication.

That was the sentiment Tuesday night at the East Hampton Middle School when town meeting moderator Steve Greco announced both the education and general government sides of the \$44.26 million budget proposal had passed at the town's first bifurcated referendum.

The \$30.05 million education budget passed by a vote of 1,642 to 1,172. The \$14.21 million general government budget, which includes debt and capital expenses, passed by a vote of 1,593 to 1,208.

Turnout based on the number of registered voters came in at 31.9 percent. It's the highest number of voters at any budget referendum in the past decade, according to Rivereast archives.

Nancy Oakley, a PTO member and vocal supporter of the public schools, attributed the passage of the \$30.05 million education budget to grassroots efforts that included outreach on social media as well as a physical presence at many meetings of the Board of Education, Board of Finance and Town Council.

She said the social media aspect, which included a Facebook group of concerned parents and community members formed this year, was "one tool" to raise awareness about the budget.

"We used it to sometimes express opinions, but also just to circulate documents and facts," Oakley said.

She credited Superintendent of Schools Paul

K. Smith, describing him as someone who "communicates clearly to everybody, who makes himself available to everyone."

Town Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson said communication about the uncertain and potentially damaging state budget situation was key to making sure voters knew about the property tax implications when they cast their ballots.

The council approved the finance board's spending plan with no additional cuts in May, based in large part on advocacy by education supporters. The residents had implored both the finance board and council to forward the two separate budgets without changes so voters could decide for themselves if cuts needed to be made.

But there was, and remains, one big question mark: how much municipal aid – which currently constitutes 19.6 percent of the town's total revenue – will the town end up getting from the state?

Though the Connecticut General Assembly has yet to vote on a state budget, preliminary numbers released in February by Gov. Dannel P. Malloy showed the town could be looking at a reduction of approximately \$1.6 million in education aid. The governor's plan would also slap East Hampton with a bill for roughly \$1.6 million to cover one-third of teachers' pension costs currently paid by the state.

See Belltown Budgets page 2

Andover Trooper Embroiled in Sex Scandal

by Elizabeth Regan

Andover Resident State Trooper Robert O'Connor has accepted a temporary reassignment in the wake of allegations by Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen that he is having an extramarital relationship with the mother of an Andover Elementary School student.

Connecticut State Police Sgt. Eric Haglund said Wednesday an internal affairs investigation is being conducted by the Bureau of Professional Standards.

O'Connor – who could not be reached for comment – is on patrol duty at Troop C in Tolland pending the outcome of the investigation, according to Haglund.

The *Journal Inquirer* broke the story last weekend when it reported Doyen asked state police to remove O'Connor from his role as the Andover Elementary School Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) instructor.

In a May 22 letter addressed to O'Connor, Doyen outlined the trooper's alleged behavior and her concern that it represents "conduct unbecoming" a D.A.R.E. instructor.

The document was obtained through a Free-

dom of Information request.

Doyen said O'Connor admitted during a May 9 meeting he was involved in a sexual relationship with a married woman who came to him for help, in part, with a speeding ticket.

O'Connor told administrators he found out the woman had a drug-use problem two weeks after he met her, according to the document.

Doyen said O'Connor confirmed at the May 9 meeting he is currently married.

O'Connor denied having met with the woman "inappropriately" at the school or on town property, according to Doyen's letter; he went on to explain he had met her a couple times in his office at the town hall, usually with her two-year-old daughter there.

Doyen's letter detailed a May 11 conversation with O'Connor during which he told her he always left his office door open when meeting with the woman; he also said his reputation had never been questioned and there had been no complaints from parents or students during his five years as a D.A.R.E. instructor.

Doyen concluded that she was concerned

about his fitness to instruct sixth-grade students about using responsible decision-making to resist harmful behaviors.

She said he would not have the "respect or credibility" to continue as a D.A.R.E. instructor and positive role model if his "extra-marital behavior" became known in the community.

"As my authority is limited to the Andover School District, I cannot also request that you be reassigned to another town. However, I expect that should you remain in Andover as the Resident State Trooper, that you will respond appropriately to any circumstances in which we require a police presence," she wrote.

As first reported in the *Journal Inquirer*, Board of Education member Whitney Covell told the *Rivereast* on Wednesday that her grandmother caught O'Connor in a sexual act with an unidentified blonde woman in the Townsend Cemetery more than two years ago.

Whitney Covell explained that Barbara Covell, who has since died, lived next door to the three-centuries-old burying ground when she saw a cruiser parked there on a warm day

in 2015. She said her grandmother, upon going out to investigate, "witnessed feet on the dashboard" and walked away.

The elderly woman then saw a woman exit the cruiser and leave the cemetery, according to Whitney Covell.

A letter from Doyen to the state police – which was dated May 16 but wasn't sent until May 22, according to the superintendent – advised the agency O'Connor "is no longer welcome" as a D.A.R.E. instructor at Andover Elementary School.

The letter was addressed to Rafael Morales, a trooper who serves as the state D.A.R.E. state coordinator, and Troop K supervising sergeant Jae Fontanella. Doyen asked them to respond in writing that O'Connor will be removed as D.A.R.E. instructor.

Doyen said Wednesday she has not received a written response. She declined further comment.

Policy and procedures for the national D.A.R.E. organization include "conduct unbecoming"

See Sex Scandal page 2

Belltown Budgets cont. from Front Page

Anderson said the council, in agreeing not to make any cuts, tried to make it very clear that taxpayers may be looking at an additional tax bill if the town needs to make up for lost revenue once the state budget is finalized.

“I needed people to be sure they understood a supplemental bill was going to come if we’re going to do it this way,” Anderson said.

The council also recommended that the finance board ignore the potential loss in state funding when setting the mill rate if the local budget passed before the state budget was approved.

As voiced by Councilor Melissa Engel last month, doing so would make one thing clear: “That next [tax] bill you’re getting, that didn’t come from us. It came from the state.”

Without any reductions in municipal aid, East Hampton’s mill rate would have increased by 1.44 mills – or 6.4 percent – over the current year.

But the finance board on Tuesday set a slightly-higher mill rate when it chose to assume a reduction of about \$484,000 in state funding compared to the current year.

The new mill rate of 31.32 is set to go into effect on July 1. A taxpayer with a home assessed at \$250,000 will pay \$7,830 in 2017-18. It’s an increase of \$470 for the year.

If the state budget comes through with a larger cut to municipal aid than the one factored in by the finance board, it will be up to the council to set a supplemental tax rate as authorized in state statute.

When Finance Director Jeff Jylkka was asked last week how the state budget could affect local taxpayers, he said the same hypothetical taxpayer with a \$250,000 home would pay an additional \$228 for every \$1 million in municipal aid cut by the state.

In addition to sending out a supplemental tax bill, the council could look at options such as using money from the fund balance (informally known as the rainy day fund) or putting a freeze on capital spending, according to Jylkka.

After the finance board met Tuesday night to set the mill rate, chairman Marc Lambert said he personally felt it is unrealistic to think the town will receive the same amount as it receives currently.

He described the finance board’s decision to

account for almost half a million dollars in reduced state funding as “a little bit of a cushion.”

If the final state budget yields even steeper reductions in municipal aid, Lambert said it will be up to the council to figure out how to make up the difference.

But at least the council will have a solid dollar figure to deal with, he said: “They’ll have the knowledge to make that decision, as opposed to us being in the dark.”

Oakley said the state budget situation is concerning, but she doesn’t think the cuts to the town’s municipal aid will be as dire as some other people believe they will be. On the other hand, she said any further cuts to the education budget would have been devastating.

“Me and a lot of people just weren’t willing to take that chance,” she said. “There are a lot of people who are willing to put their money where their mouth is too. If we get a supplemental bill, then we do.”

Oakley took to Facebook after the referendum results were announced to applaud those who came out in record numbers to support the budget.

“Grassroots campaigns only succeed when people start to reach out to those they know, bringing them into the fold and ultimately encouraging participation in the process. It’s truly all about the good old ripple effect - and all I did was toss a pebble into the water to see what would happen,” she wrote.

mith on Tuesday called the referendum “a nice win for education.”

If the education budget proposal had failed, he said six to nine teachers would have been laid off.

“I’m thankful that people saw that as a possible outcome and came in strong numbers to support what they feel is most important,” he said.

He added that his first order of business the next morning would be to call state Rep. Melissa Ziobron, R-34, to talk about the unfinished state budget and its effect on municipalities and their school systems.

“We need to keep our fingers crossed that our General Assembly is going to do the right thing,” he said.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Six votes.

That’s all it took to sink the Marlborough town budget last week. Six measly votes.

The proposed 2017-18 town budget made its third trip to voters last week, and while it came much closer to passing than in its previous two trips, it still failed.

By six votes.

Ah, but that’s what makes democracy great, you may be saying. Every vote counts.

That may be true, but we’re not taking 1,500-1,496 here. Or even 890-884. The vote in Marlborough last Wednesday night was 108-102. On a \$24.27 million town budget.

Why so low? Because, unlike all the other *Rivereast* towns – including the RHAM school district – Marlborough insists on sticking to its antiquated town budget meeting. While folks in other towns can participate in referendums, Marlborough still makes its citizens pile into the elementary school to decide on municipal spending for the coming year.

Such an approach may have been fine for Ma and Pa Ingalls and the good people of Walnut Grove, but the times they have a-changed. People have jobs, at varying hours of the day; there are commitments to their kids, can’t-be-broken engagements and simply difficulties finding babysitters. With a referendum, people have nearly the entire day to vote – from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. You can cast your ballot on the way into work; you can cast your ballot on your way home; you may even be able to cast it on your lunch break if you work in town or close by. There are a lot of options – and in the year 2017, options are needed. It’s unrealistic to expect people to be able to drop what they’re doing and show up at 7 p.m. on a weeknight at the town elementary school to vote on the budget.

As a result, you get turnout like what you

saw last week: a grand total of 210 participants, out of the town’s 4,194 registered voters. That’s supposed to give you an idea how the majority of the town feels?

I know turnout in budget referendums in the other *Rivereast* towns is typically no great shakes either; usually it’s around 15-20 percent, but even that is markedly better than the 5 percent voter turnout Marlborough got last week.

Now, I know not every town in the state has budget referendums. Bigger towns like Glastonbury, for example, have neither a referendum nor a town meeting for their budget. Rather, town officials pass it. That’s not exactly democracy in action either, but in some ways even that is better than what Marlborough does. Glastonbury doesn’t even pretend to give the public a vote on the budget (other than their Election Day vote for Town Council members, of course). Marlborough dresses up the town meeting as democracy, but in reality only a small portion of the public can even participate in it.

Every year, at either election time in the fall or during budget-voting season in the spring, I get on my soapbox and chastise people for not voting more in elections or referendums. They have a whopping *fourteen hours* to make their way to their local elementary school or town hall and cast a ballot. But it’s hard to chastise people in Marlborough when they have such a limited window to participate.

Charter revision is something of an on-again, off-again topic for Marlborough. And right now, it seems to be in “on-again” mode. Let’s hope charter revision happens, and that budget referendums are a key part of it. It’s time to move Marlborough into the 21st century – or, in this case, the latter part of the 20th.

* * *

See you next week.

Sex Scandal cont. from Front Page

coming a D.A.R.E. instructor” – both on- and off-duty – as cause for decertification or suspension.

Instructors must act “at all times in a manner which does not bring discredit to the law enforcement community, themselves, their fellow officers and the D.A.R.E. program,” the policy states.

The D.A.R.E. state coordinator has 30 days to review Doyen’s request and file a report with the organization’s regional director, according to the D.A.R.E. America policy.

Doyen had advised O’Connor she would be sharing the information with the Andover Board of Education at this week’s meeting in executive session or, if requested by O’Connor, in public. But a revised agenda came out Tuesday with no mention of any personnel matters.

Andover Board of Education Chairman Shannon Loudon said Thursday there were ultimately no decisions to be made at the meeting.

“It would not have been appropriate for the Board of Education to discuss any issues regarding Trooper O’Connor at Wednesday evening’s meeting, because no Board action was necessary and the Board members already were aware of the issues,” she wrote in an email.

First Selectman Bob Burbank said this week he first became aware of Doyen’s allegations when he was notified by Troop K Commanding Officer Lt. Rafael Medina a week after Doyen asked state police to remove the trooper as D.A.R.E. instructor. That’s when Medina told

him an internal affairs investigation had been started, he said.

“I had no inkling anything like that had gone on before,” Burbank said.

He said he has received no complaints about O’Connor. When asked if he knew how Doyen was made aware of the situation, he said he believed the superintendent received a complaint from a parent.

According to records from the office of the state comptroller, O’Connor was hired in 1998; his 2016 earnings based on salary and overtime were \$122,169.

Burbank said Trooper Abigail Belcher started Wednesday as the temporary Andover Resident State Trooper.

That same evening, Belcher was on hand at the Board of Education’s monthly meeting to introduce herself.

Having worked predominantly in the troop’s north patrol – which covers Bolton, Andover and Columbia – Belcher said she knows the town well in terms of layout and has developed a good working relationship with members of the fire department.

Now, her goal is to let the rest of the community know she is there to help.

“I really believe in the resident trooper program,” she told school board members. “I think it has great value and I don’t want to lose the community’s trust or faith in what we do.”

Belcher said she is not certified as a D.A.R.E. instructor but would like to take the training this summer if it is offered by state police.

Colchester Top Students Head to Dartmouth Together

by Julianna Roche

While the Bacon Academy Class of 2017's top two students – Amanda Pinson and Nicole Ouellette – will be heading to Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H., together this fall, the two seniors, who have been friends for years, plan on taking very different academic paths upon arrival.

“Right now I want to go into research science,” valedictorian Pinson explained, adding she’ll likely chose chemistry or physics as her major.

“Both of my grandparents were chemists and did research and really liked it,” she continued, citing it as one of the reasons she became interested in sciences in the first place.

Pinson also attributed her passion for science to her AP Biology teacher Christopher Juhl.

“He makes the class really challenging and you can tell he cares about all his students,” she said. “It’s definitely a college level class, but he made it so we could all handle it.”

Salutatorian Ouellette, on the other hand, said while she’s currently undecided about her major, English, a foreign language or even social studies may be in the cards.

“I’m not sure what I want to study yet, but I definitely don’t want to study science or math,” she laughed, adding that growing up, she “always wanted to be an author.”

“When I was younger, I always read in the car,” Ouellette said. “Every time someone saw me, they’d be like, ‘Oh you have a book in your hand again!’”

Ouellette added that it was Deb Bender – her French teacher – who helped grow her interest in foreign languages.

“She’s always been really encouraging,” she continued, adding that she felt “all the teachers here [at Bacon] are all really invested not only in their students, but also in their subject. ... They all love their subject so much and so that gets transferred onto the students.”

Bacon Academy Principal Matthew Peel said Pinson and Ouellette have “been good friends for a long time,” and now they’ve finished as one and two in their class and are even headed to the same Ivy League school together.

But, Peel added, “they’re studying two dif-

ferent majors, which was the joke – when they go to grad school, one of them is going to have to change their life direction.”

Peel furthered that while both girls are “clearly academically extremely strong,” they’re also “extremely hard workers,” who “are good kids, involved in a lot [and] sweet girls.”

In addition to maintaining their high marks in academics, both Pinson and Ouellette partook in numerous clubs together – such as National Honor Society, Peer Mediation, as well as both the cross country and track teams. Pinson also played flute in the band for the last two years.

To balance everything on their plates, the valedictorian explained, “there were a lot of late nights,” but she used to-do lists and taking advantage of study hall periods to manage her full schedule.

“I just had to make sure I stayed focused and had lists... I love lists!” Pinson exclaimed, drawing laughter from Ouellette – who agreed to-do lists were helpful for her too.

“I [also] tried to use sports as my time to relax because after sports, I would have to be doing homework or projects all night,” she said. “A lot of my friends did cross country and track, so I’d talk to them and use that time to let off steam after school.”

While both girls said, they will look back on high school fondly, they each expressed their excitement for the next chapter of continuing their education.

Ouellette – whose parents are Dartmouth alumni – said while off the bat, she knew it was a “really great school,” the college’s creative writing program was something she was looking forward to exploring.

“They’re also one of the best Ivys in terms of studying abroad, which I really want to do, because I love traveling,” she continued, adding that she may want to study in France or somewhere in Asia, such as China or Japan.

Pinson meanwhile, said she fell in love with the campus on her first visit two years ago.

“I loved it. It’s really beautiful, it has a great science program,” she said. “I looked at schools in cities [but] I also really liked the more rural



Nicole Ouellette, left, and Amanda Pinson are the salutatorian and valedictorian, respectively, of the Bacon Academy Class of 2017. The two longtime friends are actually headed to the same college – Dartmouth – in the fall.

environment. It’s more like family and everyone knows each other better.”

While both Pinson and Ouellette will say farewell to Bacon tonight at their graduation, each said they will bring what they’ve learned throughout the last four years to Dartmouth with them.

“We learned how to challenge ourselves,” Pinson said. “We had a lot of really great classes and really great teachers who taught me who to push myself and do my best in everything I do.”

Ouellette, meanwhile, said Bacon helped her become more comfortable opening up and speaking to people – especially those she

doesn’t know.

“In middle school I couldn’t even talk to anybody I didn’t know I was so shy,” she explained, adding that it was teachers such as Juhl and English teacher David Williams who helped draw her out of her comfort zone.

“They would make us change our seats every day in class and talk to other people,” she said. “I think I’m less shy and awkward now because [of that].”

“This school has been great with supporting all their students,” Pinson said. “I hope [teachers and staff] know that and hopefully it continues to do that in the future.”

Colchester Budgets Pass on First Go

by Julianna Roche

It took just one try for Colchester’s \$55.34 million 2017-18 budget to pass at its first referendum Tuesday – which boasted a 27.5 percent voter turnout despite sweltering temperatures in the upper 90s.

“Please Vote No!” and “Vote Yes for Education” signs lined the greenway leading up to Town Hall’s front doors as 3,026 of the town’s 10,985 registered voters casted their ballots, which totaled 1542-1469 and 1571-1449 for the town and school budgets, respectively.

Under the approved budget, the mill rate is also set at 32.37 mills – a 1.46 mill increase from last year. This means that the owner of a \$250,000 home would see their property taxes on that house go from \$7,728 to \$8,093. However, due to revaluation, the majority of homeowners would see a tax increase far less than that, with many even seeing a tax decrease, Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov has said. He noted there is a link on colchesterct.gov where people can check their own taxes; the page is listed alphabetically by street address.

One mill is equal to \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property, so residents can also determine their taxes by multiplying the mill rate by their total assessments.

Last year, while the \$14.39 million town budget passed on its first go, it took two referendums for the town’s education budget of \$39.71 million to pass.

This year’s education budget of \$40.64 million, which amounts to a 2.26 percent increase from last year, was met with flocks of residents attending Board of Education and Board of Finance meetings throughout the entire budget process – many of whom vocally expressed support for the spending package.

The education budget wasn’t without its detractors, though – including resident Tim Ashley, who said he while he ultimately de-

cidated to vote for the increase, he felt moving forward, the town should consider adjusting its current costs, “instead of just asking for more money from the taxpayers every year, which is pretty much what they do.”

Ashley furthered that while he was “happy the schools will have the funding they need,” he felt if officials continue to increase taxes, “we’re just going to drive more families out, which only increases the tax burden on residents even more.”

Resident Teresa Cerullo Pineau, however, who moved to town with her family three years ago, voted ‘yea’ to the education budget and stating she was “happy” with the results.

“I understand people have their concerns for their personal budgets, but costs for services go up – costs the town doesn’t have control over,” she said. “We have to keep up to maintain services.”

Pineau added she felt town officials “have worked hard” to develop a “conservative” budget.

Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov – who said he considered the passing of both budgets to be “certainly a good thing” – agreed that the spending package put forth was “very conservative.”

“I temper my enthusiasm [however] with knowing we still have the state budget hanging over us,” he added, saying that potential impacts of Gov. Dannel Malloy’s proposed cuts to state aid for education spending were “more his concern.”

If the local school budget were to be hit with drastic cuts, Tarlov said the town would likely hold a tri-board meeting with the finance board, Board of Selectmen and Board of Education “to decide on next steps.”

“I think the most likely scenario would be that we’d probably do a budget adjustment,” he furthered, adding that revised budget would then



Signs like these lined the greenway leading up to Town Hall Tuesday – and in the end, the ‘yes’ votes won out, as the town and Board of Education budgets both passed on their first go-around.

have to go back to referendum, per the town charter. “If we were to reduce the budget down, we would have to start the budget process all over again.”

Tarlov emphasized that sending out supplemental tax bills to residents was “not [the] preference” of First Selectman Art Shilosky or members of the finance board – who voted unanimously last month against doing so should the governor’s proposed cuts to funding come

to fruition.

According to Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein – who expressed how “pleased” and “grateful” he was for the education budget passing the first go-around – should those cuts happen, “we will react.”

But for now, the chairman said, “I think it’s important the community came together and voted the budgets forward on the first referendum. ... That’s a significant event for the town.”

Hard Work Pays Off for Top Two EHHS Students

by Elizabeth Regan

The East Hampton High School Class of 2017 valedictorian learned many of his most important life lessons helping out in his parents' restaurant; the salutatorian learned some of hers on the volleyball court.

Lap Hei Lam, the class's highest-ranking senior, told the *Rivereast* the importance of education became clear to him sometime in middle school when he realized how much his parents, Kai Hang and Ting Lam, were sacrificing with the goal of sending him and his sister to college.

That's when he learned his mother didn't finish middle school and his father did not complete high school.

"Education took on this whole entire meaning," he said. "I thought it would be a waste not to take advantage of it."

Now the student who would answer the phone behind the counter while trying to write an essay or figure out math problems will be attending Princeton University in New Jersey.

Salutatorian Jessica Marchant said her four years as a volleyball player gave her a sense of confidence that translated into all aspects of her life, including academics.

Believing in herself, she said, was a trait she "really, really" lacked before high school.

She credited volleyball coach John Post with helping her grow as a student athlete.

"He allowed me to see what I was capable of and pushed me past my limits," she said. "Eventually I built up confidence in myself and excelled a lot more."

Marchant is the captain of the varsity volleyball team and was named as a First Team All-Conference player in her senior year and a Second Team All-Conference player in her junior year.

ior year.

Marchant will be attending the University of Connecticut, where she will study allied health sciences. She said the broad major, with various paths to choose from, is the ideal choice for a student who is not yet sure which medical field she would like to pursue in graduate school.

Lam plans to major in chemical engineering at Princeton. He hopes to focus on sustainability, an interest that evolved in the family restaurant as he saw the amount of waste produced every day.

"Everything we have is takeout. Plastic spoons, knives, sauce packets, containers. People just throw them out," he said.

Sustainability measures he could see himself pursuing range from carbon sequestration, a way of slowing global warming, to making clean water, finding new renewable energy sources or making what already exists more efficient.

"I don't know exactly what I want to do. I'll just see what I'm good at," he said.

Both students cited sophomore- and junior-year Advanced Placement United States history with teacher Geoffrey Lucas as their favorite class, albeit their most labor-intensive one.

Marchant said the eight hours of homework per weekend helped forge study habits that made her a better student. It also broadened her understanding of the world around her.

She said the class of about 13 students "struggled" together as they learned from the past.

"And we've also learned that history repeats itself," she said.

Lam credited Lucas with teaching students how to think instead of what to think.

"As he's giving you notes, he asks you questions so you're forced to come up with your own answers before he tells you what he thinks," Lam said. "It's not like he's forcing his opinions on you; it's more like 'here's the other side.' And you decide what you want to believe in."

Marchant said life during sophomore and junior year, the key years in laying the groundwork for college acceptance, was a blur of school, volleyball, homework and sleep.

Lam described studying for four hours on weeknights and taking brief breaks to check social media.

"You have these friends who are just chilling," he recounted. "You see them hanging out [online] and you're like, 'Oh my God, why did I take this class?'"

In addition to academics, Lam was a member of the Interact Club and the Environmental Club. He served as the class treasurer from freshman through junior years.

Marchant served as the vice president of the National Honors Society and was a member of the Unified Sports Club, Yearbook Committee and Student Council. She has volunteered with the Special Olympics for the past four years.

Marchant's outlook was cheery as she described the heavy academic and volunteer workload, saying it "pays off in the end."

For Lam, the ultimate payoff came after 11 college rejections. That's when the letter from Princeton arrived in the mail.

"I started hyperventilating," he said. "You know like when you eat really spicy food and you get like an out-of-body experience? That was me."

Lam and Marchant agreed they wouldn't change their small-town high school experi-



Jessica Marchant, left, and Lap Hei Lam are the salutatorian and valedictorian, respectively, of the East Hampton High School Class of 2017.

ence, where everyone knows everyone. But they're eager to take the lessons learned in East Hampton to larger campuses as they set out on the next phase of their lives.

Now, Lam said, it's time to start the whole educational process over again – "but this time, it's real life."

Top Two PHS Students Look Back

by Elizabeth Regan

This year's top two Portland High School students are valedictorian Christopher Wiezbicki and salutatorian Nicole Ferguson.

Wiezbicki will be attending the University of Connecticut as a political science major on the path to law school.

He said he has aspirations to become a prosecutor.

"It bothers me when people say that the U.S. justice system is corrupt," he said. "At times it can be, but the system itself is designed to not be corrupt. It's the people that make it corrupt. And I just want to help bring justice to anyone I can."

He cited his Advanced Placement Government and Politics class as well as history classes throughout the years as helping to foster his interest in law.

"I've kind of seen where things have gone wrong in the legal system," he explained.

He credited his parents and teachers with helping him succeed academically.

Wiezbicki's father is a vice president at Sonalyst Studios in Waterford; his mother is a remedial reading teacher.

"They set the bar high, from start to finish," he said. "They have eased up in recent years, but in elementary years, it was 'go home, do your homework, study.'"

Ferguson will be attending the University of Notre Dame University in Indiana. Her ambitions show the influence of her father, who is an electrical engineer, and her mother, who teaches preschool.

Ferguson said she is considering a career in biomedical engineering or as a doctor.

"I'm interested in pediatrics because I'd really love to work with kids," she said.

Ferguson described herself as a motivated

student who was the type of kid who would ask for educational workbooks for Christmas. Her industriousness was encouraged by her parents.

"If I got a 98, they'd ask where the two points went," she said.

Wiezbicki said his biggest strengths are in the areas of English and social studies.

"I like that there's really not one answer; you can go in any direction you want as long as you have good support," he explained.

Ferguson, on the other hand, is more geared toward math and science.

"I like how you have everything you need and you just need to think about it in a certain way," she said.

When it comes to extracurricular activities, Ferguson was a member of the National Honor Society, Key Club, Diversity Club and Greenhouse Club.

She also volunteered with the elementary school Unified Sports program, which focuses on integrating children with special needs and their peers in a sports setting.

While Ferguson didn't play any high school sports, she said she enjoys running, hiking and playing tennis. She's also looking forward to cheering on the Notre Dame football team.

Wiezbicki was a member of the National Honors Society, A Capella choir, and has appeared in three musical productions with the high school drama club. He also works as a pharmacist technician at Bordonaro's Pharmacy in town.

He said his diligent study habits extend to those afterschool endeavors.

"With the musical, I've always worked hard to make sure I know my lines, the choreography, the songs. With my job, I never like to slack off; I always want to be doing something," he



Christopher Wiezbicki, left, and Nicole Ferguson are the valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, of the Portland High School Class of 2017.

said.

Both students said they will miss the small Portland High School community when they head off to college.

Wiezbicki pointed to the fact that students can walk down the hallway and identify every

single person they see, which is not something they're likely to encounter pretty much anywhere else.

"Portland is a nice little community that I'll always cherish," Wiezbicki said.

Marlborough Board Sends \$24.11 Million Budget to Referendum

by Julianna Roche

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again.

And then try one more time after that, apparently.

Marlborough residents will be called to vote a fourth time on a proposed 2017-18 budget, this time a \$24.11 million spending package – a 1.57 percent increase over the current year – at a town meeting Monday, June 26.

The latest budget proposal was finalized Wednesday night, after the Board of Finance voted 5-1 – with Ken Hjulstrom as the sole opposing vote – to cut the local Board of Education budget by \$40,000.

The previous proposed spending package of \$24.27 million had been defeated in a tight 108-102 tally last week, causing finance board members to engage in a lengthy back-and-forth debate Wednesday night to come up with a passable budget, with suggestions from board members of cuts ranging anywhere from \$175,000 to nothing at all.

In addition to the \$40,000 cut to education, board members also voted unanimously to cap the motor vehicle mill rate at 32 mills – which is in accordance with state law – as well as adjust the estimate for the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department's fire utility vehicle, which is under the town operations budget, from

\$53,000 to \$45,000.

The RHAM Board of Education's unanimous vote earlier this week to cut \$355,410 from its budget also lowered Marlborough's portion to total approximately \$8.89 million, helping to bring the total budget down.

The newest proposal also calls for a 3.85 percent tax increase and features a mill rate of 35.51 mills, an increase of 1.36 mills from the current 34.15, meaning that the average homeowner with property valued at \$250,000 would pay \$8,878 in taxes on it – up from the current \$8,537.

While the education budget cut was ultimately met with some disappointment and disapproval from residents during the public comments portion of the meeting, board members emphasized during their discussion that it was important for the public to recognize that \$40,000 had already been from the town operations budget at a previous meeting.

"We already cut town ops by \$40,000," Board of Finance Vice Chairman Cliff Denniss said, who also noted this year's town operations budget was one of the lowest he's seen. "I personally don't feel we should go into town ops and say 'cut \$2,000 of tax collector office supplies.' If there is an item in there that is too

high, I would let selectmen determine that. Let them move the money around."

Selectwoman Evelyn Godbout spoke during public comments – stressing she was speaking as an individual – and argued that perhaps the town operations budget should be spared and cuts should be focused more on the education side.

"I think the two education budgets [RHAM and local] are the two biggest budgets ... I don't think the two education budgets have been cut to the severity the town operations has," she said. "I think we need take a look at this."

Board of Finance member Sue Leser stood in agreement.

"I'd like to say in ordinary times, this [budget] is very reasonable, but I think the people have spoken," she said. "I'm concerned what you have happening is parents pitting themselves against the rest of the taxpayers, people who don't have children in schools, which is a very dangerous position to be in. ... We need to look at the interests of everybody."

When discussing cuts, one of Leser's suggestions was to "decrease the overall budget and just divide it proportionately," which she said she thought was "just fair."

However, some board members appeared

reluctant to do that, including Board of Finance Chairman Doug Knowlton who stated that he felt both the town operations and education budgets presented were what "is needed to keep services going both educationally and [in] town operations."

Ultimately, board members opted to go with the school budget cut. The lone 'nay' came from Hjulstrom, who said the board should have looked at other areas to cut, as he felt reducing school spending would not go over well with voters.

"We might as well be ready for a 'no' vote if we cut the schools significantly," he said.

During the public comments portion at the end of the meeting, Board of Education Chairwoman Ruth Kelly thanked the board for ultimately settling on a lower-end cut to the education budget.

"To cut \$125,000 would have meant [cutting] a teacher," she said. "\$40,000 is going to hurt, but we'll find it some place."

The next town meeting scheduled to vote on the budget will be held Monday, June 26, at 7 p.m. in Marlborough Elementary School's cafeteria. Check in begins at 6:30 p.m.

Revised Big Y Plans Look to Protect Marlborough Wetlands

by Julianna Roche

Following a public hearing earlier this month to discuss plans for bringing a Big Y supermarket into the town center – which drew enough residents to pack Marlborough Elementary School's community room full – the Conservation Commission will next decide whether the proposed location for the grocery store could negatively impact the five acres of wetlands surrounding parts of the building.

If the commission approves the site plan during its meeting June 19 – which includes added measures of protecting the wetlands, including fixing the stone wall along South Main Street, moving that entranceway further from Route 66, and adding a retaining wall that extends along both sides of the store's entranceway – the next step would be for the Zoning Commission to "finalize plans" to move the project forward, according to Chairman Kevin Asklar.

But, he said, if the Conservation Commission denies the building application, plans for bringing the Big Y to town will be "dead in the water."

According to meeting minutes from the June

1 public hearing, the majority of residents in attendance expressed overwhelming support for the supermarket – with over 20 residents speaking in favor of it during public comments, and just one expressing sentiments against the proposal. In addition, over 50 letters in support of the project were submitted, with just one resident writing a letter in disfavor.

"We're happy that we got that type of turnout, for that many people to come out," Asklar said of the public hearing, adding that the site plan for the Big Y is available to the public at Town Hall.

During the public hearing, developer Allan Schwartz of Schwartz Realty, led a presentation of his plans – which detail the 55,000-square foot Big Y supermarket and pharmacy set to be built into the 3-5 East Hampton Rd. plaza, which he owns.

Schwartz, a well-known developer in the area, is most recognized for his work in Glastonbury with developments such as Eric Town Square, a large Hebron Avenue plaza that has, among other tenants, Plan B Burger Bar; a

plaza at 2450 Main St. that includes a Moe's and Panera Bread; and a newer plaza at 41 Hebron Ave., which includes businesses such as Ben & Jerry's and Noodles and Co.

According to public hearing minutes, Schwartz's son Evan, also of Schwartz Realty, explained that bringing the Big Y to town will also give Marlborough the chance to reap a handful of economic benefits – including expected added revenue of approximately \$310,000 annually and the creation of 275 part-time and full-time jobs.

The project's civil engineer Richard Mihok, who resides in Marlborough, detailed how the supermarket would reside in the 11.2-acre property; however, the back stretch along School Drive will be retained as open space – with "no disturbance" to the area.

He added that the revised site plan potentially impacts only five acres of wetland, as opposed to seven acres in the original plan.

According to public hearing minutes, Edward Pepin of Pepin Associates, an architect for Big

Y, explained that the supermarket will have an entrance way with an "air door" to serve as an "outdoor market," as well as entrances located on either side of the checkout area.

He furthered that any loading or truck activity would take place in the rear of the building, which will also house a fully-enclosed compact area for trash and waste.

The 24-foot, 8-inch tall building will have a pitched roof, Pepin added, as well as stone and stucco buffering built along Route 66, and landscaping, such as planting large maple trees.

"They're [the developers] ready to go," said Town Planner Peter Hughes said this week. "They want to be in the ground by September."

The special Conservation Commission meeting will be held Monday, June 19 at 7 p.m. in the Marlborough Elementary School library/media center. The special Zoning Commission meeting would then take place Thursday, June 29, at 7 p.m. in the elementary school's community room.

RHAM School Board Cuts Budget by \$355K

by Julianna Roche

The RHAM Board of Education unanimously approved a \$355,410 cut to the proposed 2017-18 budget Monday, bringing its total to \$28,524,232 – a number which will be voted on at a third referendum set for June 22.

Following a second failed referendum for the proposed budget in all three of the district's towns just over two weeks ago, the RHAM Board of Education has convened on three separate occasions to discuss potential cuts and options for crafting a passable budget.

The previous spending package of \$28.87 million was voted down 1,309-912, with 153 more 'nay' votes and 39 fewer 'yea' votes than the May 2 referendum, when the board proposed a slightly lower budget, which was defeated by a 1,156-951 tally.

If the budget is defeated a third time at referendum next week, Schools Superintendent Bob Siminski explained during the June 6 budget workshop that the current budget of

\$28,033,859 will automatically be appropriated for next year.

He furthered that from the information he's received, the state will likely not pass its own budget until September. But, he said, if the cuts are as steep as Gov. Dannel Malloy has proposed, "the district would be very drastically changed."

With Monday's budget cut, the proposed 2017-18 spending package sits at a 1.75 percent increase, or \$490,873 more than the current year. Including the approved capital improvement spending package of \$289,960, the total 2017-18 RHAM budget would increase by \$780,833 or 2.78 percent.

To bring the budget down, Siminski said this week "the board worked very hard on the budget," and while there were "many questions [and] many opinions expressed" over the last several budget workshops, the board was ultimately

able to "come to a conclusion" together.

Included in the \$355,410 reduction were such items as: \$44,524 in updated health insurance enrollment; \$52,008 in adjustments to retiring staff and unemployment adjustments; \$35,098 in diesel fuel; and \$10,000 in electricity costs. Additionally, Siminski explained a new special education program would be put in place which will offset \$25,000 in revenue, and the school resource officer position was reduced from 12 months to 10.5 months to save on costs.

An additional full-time athletic director had been proposed for the 2017-18 school year, but that was dropped – saving the school district \$50,752. (The district's current part-time athletic director will remain.) Also dropped were two proposed football coaches, and the new strength and conditioning coach position was reduced to three seasons from four, saving \$23,827.

Siminski said some of the feedback the board has received since the Monday cut indicated that "everyone was pleased to bring it [the increase] down under 2 percent."

"We're excited about it," he added.

Under the current proposed budget, Andover's portion would stand at \$4.13 million or 14.51 percent of the cost, Hebron's at \$15.4 million or 54 percent, and Marlborough residents at \$8.89 million or 31.16 percent.

The school board will hear public comments at a district meeting Wednesday, June 21, at 6:30 p.m. in the RHAM High School chorus room, before it officially sends the budget to referendum the following day.

Polls will be open for voters Thursday, June 22, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the Andover Town Office Building, Hebron Elementary School and Marlborough Elementary School.

Obituaries

Cobalt

William Hall Robert III

William Hall Robert III died peacefully at his home in Georgetown, Texas, on Sunday, June 11, at the age of 78, after a long battle with leukemia. He was born July 7, 1938, in Port Jefferson, N.Y., the first-born son of William Hall Robert Jr. and Thelma Chase Robert.

He was raised in Cobalt and graduated from East Hampton High School in 1956. Billy was an excellent athlete, lettering in basketball, baseball, soccer and track and was known throughout the area for his 1957 Chevy that could not be beat. He married the love of his life of nearly 58 years, Doris, on June 27, 1959. They had three children and lived in East Hampton until 1972.

Bill worked for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft for 42 years and never took a sick day. With his work, he and his family lived in East Hampton, Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., San Antonio, Texas, and overseas in the Netherlands for 12 years. With his job he traveled all over the world, including Europe, Scandinavia, Israel, Korea and Japan. During all of their travels they never missed spending their summers at their lake house in Embden, Maine, where they retired to in 1999. Bill loved water skiing, pulling his grandchildren around the lake in the tube and hiking the beautiful trails in the area. Eventually they became "snowbirds," buying a small house in Georgetown, Texas, to escape the winters and be closer to family in Texas.

Bill was known for his honesty, integrity, work ethic and good nature. He was fearless and funny. He was an avid sports fan and enjoyed cheering on the Redskins, the UConn Lady Huskies basketball, watching car racing and the Tour de France, among many other sports, especially those that his grandchildren were competing in.

Bill is survived by his wife Doris and his children, Scott William Robert and wife Zenaida of Fairfax Station, Va., Steven Wade Robert and wife Rose Mary of San Antonio, Texas, and Susan Robert Whitehead and husband Sidney of Lumberton, Texas; as well as his younger brother, Lawrence "Butch" Robert and wife Linda of Marlborough; and his seven grandchildren, Christopher "Chase" May, Maggi Robert, Shelby Whitehead, Zena Robert, Anya Robert, Justin Whitehead and William Robert.

A gravesite service will be held Sunday, July 2, at 11 a.m., at Union Hill Cemetery in Middle Haddam.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Shriners Hospitals for Children at www.shrinershospitalsforchildren.org/en/Donate.

Portland

Lois C. Copeland

Lois C. Copeland of Kennebunk, Maine, formerly of Portland, passed away peacefully on the morning of Tuesday, June 6, in York, Maine. Lois was surrounded by her loving husband and sons.

The daughter of Lois and Irving Chappell, she was born in 1950 in Maine, moving in her youth with the family to Connecticut, and eventually settling in Portland. She graduated from Portland High School and attended Southern Connecticut State College, leaving school to raise her family. Lois worked with the children of Portland for nearly 25 years as a substitute teacher and para-professional at Valley View School. She often talked about how gratified she was to have been part of so many children's progress.

Lois is survived by her husband Chauncey; son Scott and daughter-in-law Kristin of Trumbull; son Grant and daughter-in-law Meghan of Guilford; grandchildren Emma, Aidan, Ella and Adam; brother Wayne Chappell and sister-in-law Barbara of Durham; and brother Scott Chappell and sister-in-law Deborah of Meriden.

A sharp, passionate and creative person, Lois was very generous with her time and talents – contributing to numerous family endeavors, school programs and community organizations. While she enjoyed music, gardening, writing, floral arranging and beach walking, her family was always her key focus. Lois was so proud of her children and her grandchildren, and cherished time spent with them.

A memorial service and reception will be held Saturday, June 24, at 2 p.m., at First Congregational Church, 554 Main Street, Portland.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

Colchester

Florence Mae Dunn

Florence "Flo" Mae (Grabowski) Dunn, born May 7, 1920, in East Port Chester-Greenwich, died Wednesday, June 7, at Harrington Court, Colchester.

Florence was predeceased by her parents, Velma (Wolosz) and William Grabowski; her husband of 51 years, Louis Dunn, and eight siblings. She is survived by her daughter, Lois Jean Guidi of Woonsocket, R.I.; two grandsons, Kevin E. Guidi and wife Erina of Franklin, Mass., and Jason J. Guidi and wife Nicole of Goshen, N.Y.; four great-grandchildren Tyler, Katelyn, Ashton and Brooklyn.

Besides being a wife and mother, Flo worked at her husband's gas/service station, the Wash Plus Laundromat and babysat for local families, including the Einhorn and Schusters.

For many years, Flo went to the Middletown YMCA and the East Hampton Senior Center, which she considered her "second home." At the center she enjoyed playing cards, making teddy bears for cancer patients and being with her many friends.

Flo leaves some special people behind, Donna Prosser, Pat and Rowland Rux, Joan Toomey, Joanne Ewing and all her friends at Chatham Acres where she lived before her move to Harrington Court.

Now I would like to add my thoughts: My name is Judy and over the many years that I have known Flo and helped her, we became the best of friends and she became part of the Porter family, joining us for many holiday celebrations. Flo and I had a sister bond and considered ourselves as twin sisters. I would say she was the "older one," she would say she was the "first born." I am going to miss her very much, but know she is happy being with Lou and her family.

I would like to thank the staff at Harrington Court for their kindness and caring for Flo for the past two and a half years, I know at times she could be a handful, but you did an excellent job. I would also like to thank the staff and volunteers from Hospice who made sure she was comfortable during her last few months. I appreciate all of you so much.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Florence at St. Andrew Church Saturday, June 10, and was buried at Linwood Cemetery.

Belmont Funeral Home was in charge of her arrangements.

Colchester

Charles Edgar Lower

Charles Edgar Lower, 89, passed away peacefully with his beloved wife Jackie by his side at St. Francis Hospital in Hartford Sunday, May 28. Charles was born in Lebanon, N.H. He was the son of the late Bert and Marion (Gracie) Lower.

He was a proud veteran, having served in the U.S. Army during World War Two. He married Jacqueline Dunbar on June 15, 1957. Together they made their home and raised their family in Colchester. Charles retired after a 40-year career with Pratt & Whitney Aircraft as an inspector. He was both a freemason and a Shriner. In earlier years, he was an avid hunter, fisherman and he loved to ski and take family vacations.

Charles and Jackie wintered in Lakeland Florida for 18 years, where Charles enjoyed golfing and bowling. Most importantly, he will be remembered as a devoted and loving family man who found great enjoyment with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He will be sadly missed but always remembered by his beloved wife Jackie; a son, Thomas Lower and his companion, Lori Maloney of Wethersfield; a daughter, Tammie and husband Dave Clark of Springfield, Mass.; six grandchildren, Ami Cooper, Chad Cooper, Danielle Sorcinelli, Corey Clark and his wife Amy, Britta Lower and Kali Lower; as well as seven great-grandchildren.

He was predeceased by two siblings, Donald Lower and Phyllis Lucia.

Visitation and a memorial service were held Thursday, June 16, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department, 52 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415.

Colchester

Peter John O'Meara

Peter John O'Meara, 79, of Colchester, widower of the late Barbara Ann (Johnson) O'Meara, passed away peacefully Tuesday, June 13. Born May 6, 1938, in Torrington, he was the son of the late William Paul and Edith Elizabeth (McElhone) O'Meara.

Mr. O'Meara served proudly as a submariner with the Navy aboard the U.S.S. Spikefish during the late 1950s. For over 35 years, he had worked as a procurement specialist for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft before his retirement.

Peter enjoyed spending time outdoors, be it hiking, birdwatching, gardening or driving his tractor. He was also an avid animal lover and had many four-legged companions that he cherished over the years.

Most importantly, he was a devoted family man and will be greatly missed.

He leaves four daughters, Jodie LaRosa and her husband Christopher of Colchester, Michelle Cech of Colchester, Patrice Taurisano and her husband Tony, and Kathleen O'Meara of upstate New York; six grandchildren, Jack, Matthew, Sam and Will LaRosa, Jennifer Taylor and T.J. Taurisano; a brother, Thomas O'Meara and his wife Dorothy of Colchester; two sisters, Elizabeth Wiley of Seattle, Wash., and Jere Hollister and her husband Bob of Bridgewater; and numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to his beloved wife of 38 years, who predeceased him Dec. 20, 2010, and his parents, he was predeceased by his half siblings, Patricia and Brian O'Meara.

The family will receive guests starting at 11 a.m. Saturday, June 17, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, before a chapel service at 1 p.m. at the funeral home. Committal with full military honors will follow in the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, P.O. Box 96011, Washington, D.C. 20090-6011 (alz.org).

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

William Joseph Baretta Jr.

William Joseph Baretta Jr., 75, of East Berlin, passed away peacefully Thursday, June 8.

Bill was born Dec. 26, 1941, in New Britain, the eldest son of the late William Baretta, Sr. and Lenore (Cistaire) Baretta. He graduated from Berlin High School in 1959 and was inducted into the BHS Athletic Hall of Fame in 2011.

Bill, along with his father and wife, started and ran several businesses, including Bill's Market in Portland and Baretta Provision in East Berlin. He loved his work and served his customers selflessly. Most customers knew they had only to stop by the house at night or on a weekend, and he would run down and open the shop to get them what they needed. All of the energy he directed toward his work was always to support and provide for his family. Bill loved being outdoors and enjoyed farming, boating with his wife, snowmobiling with his son, and hosting holidays and enormous family cookouts. Beneath his gruff exterior was a heart of gold.

Bill leaves his loving wife, Carol (Hanna) Baretta of East Berlin; his daughter, Lori, and her husband Tom Wright of Portland; his son, Danny and his wife Marlene Baretta of Kensington; and his son-in-law, Eric Bjorklund of Southington. He also leaves seven grandchildren, for whom he would move Heaven and Earth: Lauren, Nate and Luke Baretta, Lindsey and Ryan Bjorklund, and Jack and Katy Wright.

He was predeceased by his daughter, Jodi, and his brother, Danny.

Relatives and friends called at Erickson-Hansen Funeral Home, 411 South Main St., New Britain, Wednesday, June 14. Funeral services were held Thursday, June 15, at Bethany Covenant Church, Route 372 in East Berlin, with burial following in Wilcox Cemetery in East Berlin.

Please share a memory of Bill with the family in the online guestbook at ericksonhansen.com.

Colchester

Robert M. Tarnowski

Robert M. Tarnowski, "Bob", 77, of Salem, formerly of Colchester, passed away peacefully Monday, June 12, with his family by his side. Born Oct. 8, 1939, in New London, he was the son of the late Henry and Mary (Ruszala) Tarnowski.

Bob married his beloved, Marie Ann Skut, on Oct. 14, 1961. He was a professional truck driver for Teamsters Local 493, and later worked for Wal-Mart in Norwich, retiring several years ago.

Bob was a lifelong farmer. He loved his garden, crabbing in Groton and Old Saybrook, playing solitaire and feeding the birds outside his home. Bob was an avid fan of all sports, but especially UConn Huskies girls' basketball and NASCAR. Most importantly, he will be remembered by his family as a devoted and loving husband, father, grandfather, and friend.

In addition to his wife of 55 years, Marie, Bob leaves two daughters, Louise Plack of Oakdale and Linda Tarnowski and husband Patrick Baxter of Oakdale; two grandchildren, Samantha Barbaro and husband Steven of Guilford and Allie Plack of Manchester, N.H.; two brothers, Albert and Frank Tarnowski; and numerous extended family and friends.

Honoring his request, the family will hold funeral services privately.

Because he always had a dog companion, donations in his memory may be made to the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111.

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

Marlborough

Katherine Louise Eastman

Katherine Louise Eastman, 67, formerly of Marlborough, died peacefully at the McCarthy Care Center in Sandwich, Mass., on Friday, June 9. Katherine was the youngest daughter of Ruth and Frederick Langenheim of West Falmouth, Mass. Born in Boston, she moved to the Cape when one month old and became enthusiastically devoted to summer days at Chapoquoit Beach.

Katherine graduated from Lawrence High School Class of 1968 and also attended Yorktown High School in Arlington, Va. She wed Philip Eastman in 1972 and made her home in Marlborough until returning to Falmouth, Mass., year-round in 2011.

Katherine was a stay-at-home mother, devoted to her children and husband. She never missed coming to Falmouth during the summer and thoroughly enjoyed beach days at Trunk River or Sippewissett Beach. Katherine was also an avid reader, home gardener, and delighted in antiquing trips with her sisters. Katherine was a member of VFW Post 5095 Auxiliary in East Hampton.

Katherine is survived by her husband, Philip Eastman of Falmouth, Mass.; her son, Brian Eastman of Marlborough; and her daughter, Jessica A. Morales and husband Brandon Morales of Wethersfield, and her new grandson, Memphis Scott Morales, born June 10. Katherine, the youngest of five siblings, left behind three sisters and a brother: Dr. Anne Yentsch of Tybee Island, Ga.; Martha Jane Mitchell of Bainbridge Island, Wash.; Dr. Ellen N. Lawson of Longmont, Colo.; and Frederick David Langenheim II of Falmouth, Mass.; as well as nephews Timothy Yentsch and Joshua Medley, three nieces, Alea Henle, Janet and Margaret Mitchell, along with extended Eastman relatives, and her family's pet Yorkie, Missy.

A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, July 8, at St. Barnabas Church, 91 W. Main St., Falmouth, Mass.

Memorial donations should be sent to McCarthy Care Center, 75 Service Rd., East Sandwich, MA 02537 and labeled "for the garden."

For online guestbook and obituary, visit ccgfuneralhome.com.



Obituaries continued

Colchester

Evan David Bertrand

Evan David Bertrand's soul found peace the evening of Wednesday, June 7, at the age of 29.

Evan was a passionate and talented golfer who loved the Red Sox, Patriots, Bob Marley, 311, VWs and his father's dog, Jazz. Evan had a kind and generous spirit, and the biggest heart. You could always count on him for an infectious smile, contagious laughter, or a winning beer pong partner. He was also a talented drummer and loved to play table tennis with his father, go to dinner at Ichiban with his mother, or cook up a meal with his sisters. He was a graduate of Lincoln Institute, where he studied HVAC.

Memories of him are held tightly in the hearts of his parents, Jill and David Bertrand, his sisters, Victoria and Vanessa Bertrand, and the many friends and family his green eyes and lightness touched along his journey. He joins many angels, including Ryan Nagel, George Bertrand, and Gail Olson.

The family received guests Thursday, June 15, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A time of reflection celebrating his life was also observed that night at the funeral home.

The family suggests that in lieu of flowers donations be made to the Shatterproof Organization in memory of Evan Bertrand at shatterproof.org. One love.



Colchester Police News

6/3: Colchester Police said they received a report of a package theft containing a lighting fixture from the front porch of a residence on Old Hebron Road. According to the victim, the theft occurred June 2 and the case remains under investigation.

6/4: State Police said Jonathan S. Antoine, 44, of 94 Branford St., Hartford was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

6/5: State Police said at approximately 1:11 p.m., they received a report of a theft of steak

and lobster amounting to \$57.35, which occurred on May 31 from the Stop and Shop on Linwood Avenue.

6/6: State Police said Alexander J. Sogliero, 33, of 70 Windham Ave., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and threatening.

6/7: Colchester Police said Christopher Allen, 32, of 12 Balaban Rd., Apt. 211, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear and failure to respond to a payable violation.

Motorcycle Crash on Route 2 in Colchester

by Julianna Roche

A Norwich man was left with minor injuries following a single-vehicle crash involving his motorcycle June 2.

According to police, at approximately 6:35 p.m., Brian Lee Marquez, 46, of 11 Harland Rd., Norwich, was driving his Kawasaki LE650A traveling eastbound on Route 2 near the intersection of Exit 19 when traffic began to slow in front of him. Police said he attempted to slow down, but was forced to lay the motorcycle on its left side to avoid colliding with the vehicle in front of him.

Marquez was transported by Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Company to Backus Hospital in Norwich for minor injuries and was issued a verbal warning for following too closely, police said.

Portland Police News

6/6: Frank Stange, 39, of 64 Milton Dr., Meriden, was charged with operating under the influence and failure to drive in proper lane, Portland Police said.

6/12: Matthew Gut, 21, of 152252 Washington St., New Britain, was charged with criminal attempt to commit third-degree burglary, third-degree criminal mischief and weapons in a motor vehicle, police said.

Car Strikes, Kills Bear on Route 2

A car struck and killed a bear on Route 2 – reportedly in the Marlborough area – early Thursday morning, state police said.

According to the *Hartford Courant*, the incident occurred in Marlborough at around 2 a.m.

State police said no one was injured, but the bear was deceased. No further details were available as of press time Thursday.

East Hampton Police News

5/28: Justin M. Dunnells, 30, of 9 Coughlin Rd., was issued a summons for defective windshield, operating an unregistered motor vehicle, misuse of plates, operating an uninsured motor vehicle and operating under suspension, East Hampton Police said.

6/3: Tasha Denise O'Neil, 29, of 578 High St., No. 1, Middletown, was arrested and charged with failure to obey a traffic signal, driving under the influence and operating while suspended, police said.

Also, from May 29-June 4, officers responded to 24 medical calls, three motor vehicle accidents and three alarms, and made 12 traffic stops, police said.

Marlborough Police News

6/10: State Police said they received a report of a commercial burglary from the Marlborough Wine and Spirits Store on East Hampton Rd. at approximately 4:45 a.m., with the theft occurring sometime in the early morning hours. Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact Trooper Olson at Troop K, 860-465-4500.