

RIVEREAST

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In the overnight hours of Sunday night and Monday morning, current and former students set up a memorial for John Fidler at his parking space at East Hampton High School. The beloved principal died of a heart attack Sunday.

## Beloved EHHS Principal Remembered

by Elizabeth Regan

In the halls of the high school and throughout East Hampton, John Fidler was more than a principal.

The longtime educator, described as a confidant to students and staff alike, died Sunday of a heart attack at the age of 60. He was descending Mount Katahdin in Maine with his two grown sons, according to administrators.

Fidler leaves his wife, Joan, and sons Jack, 25, and Jeffrey, 23.

Adam Eurbin, a 2016 graduate of East Hampton High School, was one of the mourners who made his way to the high school parking lot in the overnight hours Sunday after learning of Fidler's death. Current and former students set up an impromptu vigil in his parking space at the front of the school, where they arranged tealights in a circle around mementos that came to include a Dunkin' Donuts coffee cup (three creams, three sugars), a graduation cap, a varsity letter, and a page from a journal.

"Rest Easy Mr. Fidler," was written in chalk.

Fidler's résumé in East Hampton schools goes back to 1990, when he was hired as a special education teacher. In 1999, he began a concurrent, five-year stint as athletic director before becoming the middle school principal in 2004. He took the title of high school principal in 2008.

Eurbin described himself as blessed to have

been in middle school and then high school at the same time Fidler was in charge of each building. Rebellious in the wake his parents' divorce and the death of his grandmother, Eurbin was a frequent visitor to the principal's office during the early part of their association.

On a sheet of lined notebook paper weighed down by a vase and a small bouquet of flowers in Fidler's parking space, Eurbin had left a letter to the man he said changed the course of his life.

"Little did you know the impact each ten minute meeting before each detention had. Little did you know that each word you said to me in your office in 2010 would make me the 2017 man I am today," Eurbin wrote.

Eurbin now attends Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The message was carried through on a sign affixed to an orange traffic cone at the center of the memorial, where someone had written in bold, shadowed ink: *The Power of Your Words*.

"You knew exactly what to say and when to say it. You spoke with purpose," the sign read.

Madison Roberts, who graduated this year, remembered how Fidler could be counted on for advice or just to talk.

"He was always there for us," she said.

High school history teacher Melissa

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## Residents Sent 'Hate Mail' for Displaying Patriotism

by Julianna Roche

A pair of Marlborough residents said they received hate mail from an anonymous sender for hanging American flags outside their homes.

Both Ashley Meyer of Millstone Drive and Ken Hjulstrom of South Main Street – each of whom display American flags outside their homes – reported receiving similar envelopes on Sunday, which contained anti-American and anti-government propaganda and fliers.

The incident first gained attention after resident Ashley Meyer posted about it on a Marlborough-related Facebook page, explaining that when she went to retrieve her family's mail that evening, she found an envelope addressed to their household with a false return address reading, "Sol Invictus, 86 N. Main St., Marlborough, CT." "Sol Invictus" is the name of an ancient Roman sun god, while 86 N. Main St. does not appear to be an actual address.

"Right away I thought it was kind of weird," she explained to the *RiverEast* this week – adding that she also noticed the stamp on the envelope was an American flag turned upside down, which is nationally recognized as a signal that the country is in distress.

Meyer furthered that the envelope contained anti-American propaganda referencing national debt, the Iraq war and drone attacks. Additionally, a flyer quoting Mark Twain saying, "Never underestimate the power of ignorant people in large numbers" and a picture of a man waving

what appears to be a towel with a handwritten message underneath reading "typical ignorant American flag waiver" were included.

"It was very weird... everything was highlighted and underlined," Meyer said, adding she felt the anonymous sender is "not even anti-Republican or anti-Democrat. They're a crazy anti-government person who clearly doesn't like America and they need to find a hobby."

Hjulstrom – who has been involved in town politics over the course of the last 20 years, and currently holds a seat on the Board of Finance and is chairman of the Republican Town Committee – reported receiving a similar envelope and content.

He explained that he occasionally receives "mailings of a political nature," but in this case, he felt the materials were "more controversial and inappropriate" than what he typically receives.

"At first I assumed I was targeted because of my involvement in town politics, but when I heard that Ashley [Meyer] received the same mailing, it led me to agree that the public display of flags may have motivated the sender," Hjulstrom said.

Meyer – whose grandfather fought in World War II – said that the 12 small American flags and two larger American flags hanging from trees on the back tree-line of her property are her family's way of paying homage to their

See 'Hate Mail' page 2



Two Marlborough residents, including Ken Hjulstrom of South Main Street, whose home is shown here, reported receiving hate mail from an anonymous sender for hanging American flags outside their homes.



Adam Eurbin, a 2016 EHHS graduate, spreads rose petals on the steps of East Hampton High School after the death of beloved principal John Fidler.

#### Principal cont. from Front Page

Reynolds joined students and staff members in front of the building early Monday afternoon as flowers and mementos accumulated on the steps.

"He's what held us together," Reynolds said through tears. "He was the glue of the high school."

High school guidance counselor Pam Malcolm reiterated Fidler's reputation as a supportive, reassuring leader.

"He was the guy, when he came in the room, you knew everything was going to be okay," Malcolm said.

Linda Chambers, a high school biology teacher, emphasized Fidler's easy rapport with the staff.

"We don't think of him as a boss. He's a friend," she said.

That held true with students, she added – every single one of them.

"No matter what their situation in life – no matter where they came from, what their background was – he was going to find something in their strengths and their abilities and make that kid feel special," she said.

Eurbin, Roberts, Reynolds, Malcolm and Chambers each described Fidler as a constant, lighthearted presence during and after school. They said he supported drama productions, sporting events, fundraisers and volunteer efforts in town and wherever East Hampton students could be found.

Counselors, including Malcolm, were available Monday at the high school to help students process their grief.

"We'll cry with them. We're here," she said. Nancy Briere, a former East Hampton Middle

School principal and recently retired director of curriculum and instruction, said she came to the district around the same time Fidler did. In that time, she watched him establish himself as a teacher, coach, leader and friend.

"He was so much more than a principal," Briere said. "He was East Hampton. He was the fiber of our community."

According to Briere, Fidler met his wife when they both worked at Elmcrest Hospital in Portland. The couple recently purchased a home in Old Saybrook after living for almost three decades in East Hampton.

Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith described Fidler as "entrenched in everything that was positive" in town. That list extended from teaching, to coaching, to running summer camps with the Parks and Recreation Department, to helping oversee years of large-scale improvements to the high school.

Smith called the renovation "essentially complete," adding that only a few punch list items and some detail work remain.

"You walk through this building and it's John Fidler's building," Smith said. "That's the hard part. So much of this reflects John's love for the kids and love of learning and the style of learning he was trying to promote."

The district will begin the process of hiring an interim principal in anticipation of the first day of school on Aug. 30.

But on Monday, staff and students stood with blotchy faces at the school entrance, a black bunting over the doors in front of them and the state flag at half-staff to their backs.

There are 27 years' worth of students and families now in mourning, Smith said.

#### 'Hate Mail' cont. from Front Page

country.

She added that she assumed the sender was motivated to send the anti-American package after seeing the display of patriotism.

"My grandfather spoke to me about walking into a concentration camp. I have memories of that which are seared into my head now. He was proud to be serving our country," Meyer explained, adding the family also has friends who have served in the military.

"These people didn't do it because they were forced; they did it because they believe in our values [as a country]," she said.

"I think we're so lucky [to live in the U.S.]," she furthered. "I'm a 37-year-old female business owner and I've never felt downtrodden here because I'm a female. I think people underestimate how lucky we are."

Meyer also explained she felt the incident was "an underlying assault on [her family's] values" and that because the flags are displayed on the back-tree line of the property, the anonymous sender would have had to "go around onto a side street to figure out [the address] of my house."

"It's a little creepy and disturbing," she said. "I have kids." Meyer added that the family plans to install security cameras as an added safety measure.

Meyer said she feels anyone who would send a mailing like that just because of an American flag on display "is obviously disturbed and disgruntled, and they need to find another way to take [out] their anger," she said.

Hjulstrom shared a similar story this week, explaining that the prominently large American flag hanging in front of his home, as well

as other patriotic flags displayed near the road by his house, represent his family's patriotism, after having a father who served in World War II and a son who is a veteran with the Army National Guard and served overseas in Iraq.

While neither Hjulstrom nor Meyer have any idea who sent the envelopes, Hjulstrom said he suspected it was someone local, adding that he personally tends "not to take things like this all that seriously, especially when the sender is not willing to make their identity known."

Still, both residents said they reported the case to Marlborough Resident State Trooper Jeff Dunshee. Dunshee did not return calls for comment, but Hjulstrom and Meyer both said they were told there's nothing police can do right now.

Meanwhile, the two said the incident has only reinforced their feelings about displaying their patriotism, with Hjulstrom adding it has also strengthened the importance of "speaking [his] mind openly" on political matters.

He furthered that, based on the many supportive and sympathetic comments on Meyer's post on Facebook, he gathered that "others in our community feel the same way."

Meyer agreed, saying she was pleased to see "everyone band together" by showing support both for Meyer and Hjulstrom, but also for their country by posting photos of their own American flags outside their own homes.

"I cannot stress enough that this one person is not a reflection of our town and local area," Meyer said. "We have amazing people [here] who are patriotic... and this is just one sour apple trying to bring people down, but they won't."

## Funeral Arrangements

Calling hours for John Fidler will be held in the East Hampton High School auditorium today from 4-8 p.m.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 5, at Saint Patrick Catholic Church in East Hampton. Officials are urging mourners to park at the high school, where a premium motor coach donated by DATTCO, Inc. will transport them to Saint Patrick Church beginning at 10 a.m. The bus will continue to make runs until everyone is at the

church. The shuttle will return mourners to the high school following the Mass.

A reception in the high school cafeteria will follow.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the John Fidler Memorial Scholarship Fund. Donations may be made during calling hours or sent to East Hampton High School, John Fidler Memorial Scholarship, c/o Linda Malavasi, 15 North Maple Street, East Hampton, CT 06424.

# East Hampton Man Charged with Shooting Neighbor's Dog with BB Gun

by Elizabeth Regan

An East Hampton man has been arrested after allegedly shooting his neighbor's dog with a BB gun, according to police.

The East Hampton Police Department on July 19 charged Christopher Grant, of 23 Peach Farm Rd., with cruelty to animals, second-degree criminal mischief and illegal discharge of a firearm.

According to the arrest warrant affidavit, neighbor Brian Hanna filed a complaint after his wife, Ashley Hanna, said she saw Grant point a long gun at the couple's two-year-old labrador/terrier mix on June 19. Ashley Hanna told officers the man walked off when she asked him if he was really pointing a gun at her dog.

That same day, a veterinarian at Portland Veterinary Hospital confirmed the couple's dog, Hershey, had two BBs under the skin in his chest area. There were also several "new abrasions consistent with being shot with a BB gun," the veterinarian said in a sworn statement.

Hanna told police he had security footage of the incident that showed a man walking along the property line toward Grant's garage. But Hanna said the images did not show a clear depiction of the man or what he might be holding, according to the affidavit.

The Hannas said Hershey and their other dog, Dega, are contained in the yard by an electric Invisible Fence and do not leave their property.

The affidavit said Animal Control Officer Michael Olzacki received a separate complaint in April when the couple first found suspicious injuries on Hershey, including a scab that fell off to reveal a BB.

Grant was interviewed at his home on June 25 by Officers Michael Salafia and Sgt. Timothy Dowty, where he admitted he had pointed a

Crossman 66 Powermaster air rifle toward his neighbor's house.

In a sworn statement included in the affidavit, Grant said the Hanna's two dogs bark all the time.

"I have been shooting at the squirrels and chipmunks on their property so the dogs won't bark," Grant told officers.

Grant said he's only shot into their yard on two occasions and has "never shot at any of the dogs," according to the affidavit.

He called the dogs "very aggressive" and said they left him afraid for the safety of his family.

Grant voluntarily turned in his BB gun, police said. The gun and the three BBs inside it were collected as evidence, as was the single BB that Brian Hanna said came out of a scab on Hershey in April.

Grant was released on a \$1,500 bond following his July 19 arrest. He is scheduled for an Aug. 17 court date at Middlesex Superior Court.

State law makes it a felony to maliciously and intentionally maim, mutilate, torture, wound or kill an animal. Those convicted could face a fine of up to \$5,000 and up to five years in jail.

Illegal discharge of a firearm is a misdemeanor charge that applies to people who "intentionally, negligently or carelessly" discharge "any firearm" likely to injure or kill a person or a domestic animal. It comes with a maximum penalty of \$250 in fines and three months in jail.

"Firearm" is defined in statute as any sawed-off shotgun, machine gun, rifle, shotgun, pistol, revolver or other weapon, whether loaded or unloaded, from which a shot may be discharged.

## Portland Police News

7/24: Mark Pitruzzello, 62, of 118 Newfield St., Middletown, was charged with operating under the influence and failure to drive in proper lane, Portland Police said.

7/25: Stephen Barnes, 37, of 192 Dogwood Ln., Meriden, was charged with seven counts of illegal use of a credit card, three counts of sixth-degree larceny and four counts of fifth-degree larceny, police said.

7/27: Timothy Lavalley, 52, of 76 Penfield Hill Rd., was charged with criminal violation of a protective order, police said.

7/27: George Grillo, 49, of 346 Kelly Rd., Vernon, was charged with two counts of criminal violation of a restraining order and two counts of first-degree criminal trespass, police said.

7/27: Matthew Gut, 21, of 152 Jobs Pond Rd., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

# Streak of Car-Related Larcenies in Marlborough

by Julianna Roche

Police saw a spike in larcenies from cars – including one car stolen and abandoned a short distance down the road – last weekend, with a total of eight incidents reported between Friday, July 28 and Saturday, July 29.

According to police, at approximately 4 a.m. July 28, an unlocked car was stolen from a driveway of a residence on Cheney Road and was later recovered around 6 p.m. in Hartford badly damaged.

Police said they also received additional reports of larcenies from cars at residences on South, Flood, Ruby, Ogden Lord, Williams-burg, Sturbridge and Washington roads.

According to police, in every incident, the vehicles were left unlocked in driveways, sometimes with the keys in the ignition.

According to a news release issued July 29, police stated, "while we believe in the sanctity of one's home and the right to be safe and secure, we strongly encourage locking vehicles and taking extra security measures to protect your belongings."

Police are asking victims who have not yet reported an incident, to call Troop K at 860-465-5400 and report any observations or concerns to Resident State Trooper Jeffrey Dunshee at [Jeffrey.Dunshee@ct.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Dunshee@ct.gov).

## Life Star Responds to Crash in East Hampton

A Life Star helicopter was called to the scene of a Tuesday afternoon crash on Bear Swamp Road in East Hampton after a driver struck a utility pole and was ejected from his car.

The unidentified 49-year-old male was traveling south near 159 Bear Swamp Road at approximately 5:06 p.m. when he hit a utility pole, according to a press release from the East Hampton Police Department. He was

flown to St. Francis Hospital with serious injuries, police said.

It was a one-car crash and the driver was the only occupant of the vehicle, police said.

The man was listed in stable condition as of Wednesday, according to the press release.

The crash is under investigation. Police are asking anyone who witnessed the crash or has any information to contact them at 860-267-9922.

## East Hampton Police News

7/17: Bonnie Cook, 53, of 7 Old Coach Rd., was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle without insurance, improper muffler, unsafe tires and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, East Hampton Police said.

7/19: Christopher Scott Grant, 41, of 23 Peach Farm Rd., was taken into custody pursuant to an active warrant for his arrest. Grant was charged with cruelty to animals, illegal discharge of a firearm and second-degree criminal mischief, East Hampton Police said.

7/20: Phillip Sirois, 55, of 176 Saner Rd., Marlborough was issued a summons for misuse of marker plates, and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

7/21: Devin Reeves Fuller, 38, of 29 Middletown Ave., was arrested and charged with disobeying an officer's signal, evading responsibility, operating under the influence, possession of narcotics and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

7/23: Alan P. Clark, 62, of 17 Markham Rd., was charged with violation of a restraining order, police said.

7/24: Brian Cherry, 29, of no certain address, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

Also, from July 17-23, officers responded to 12 medical calls, three motor vehicle crashes and eight alarms, and made 22 traffic stops.

# Hebron Granted \$700K for Modernization of Stonecroft

by Lauren Yandow

The town has been awarded a \$700,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the state for the modernization of Stonecroft Village Apartments on 14 Stonecroft Drive. The public housing facility is for seniors aged 62 and older as well as disabled individuals who are over 18.

Speaking on the grant, Town Manager Andy Tierney said "I really think it's great."

"It's a big shot in the arm for Hebron" he added.

"Putting in some new roofs, making some of those apartments ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act]-accessible – it was needed."

Under the Stonecroft Village project, the 27-year-old roofs will be replaced, along with the gutters. Repairs will be made to alleviate drainage issues between some of the buildings and waste disposal fencing will be repaired – or, if needed, replaced.

The project also includes upgrade work in three units to bring them up to ADA compliance to benefit those with physical restrictions.

The front and rear entrance doors will be replaced and additional lighting will be added to increase resident safety. For further protection, any wooden apartment doors will be replaced with metal fire doors.

A new handicapped ramp will also be in-

stalled to allow for easier access to handicapped spaces.

Stonecroft Village consists of 25 one-bedroom units for seniors and disabled individuals who meet certain lower-income requirements. Currently, one disabled resident lives at the facility; the additional units each house a senior citizen.

Hebron Housing Authority Chairwoman Florence O'Sullivan said that, compared to other public housing units, these are on the larger side. "They're really good-size apartments. They have a full kitchen, a little dining area, a living room and a large bedroom; there is storage and of course a bathroom," she said.

O'Sullivan said the commissioners of the Hebron Housing Authority and the residents [of Stonecroft] were "absolutely delighted" to receive the news of the small cities grant award.

With funds from the grant, upgrades will be done to improve the plumbing and electrical throughout the apartment units – including the kitchen, bathrooms, toilets, vanities, flooring and cabinets.

O'Sullivan said she's "very happy to be working with the seniors to make their style of living comfortable."

"It's a wonderful small community" she

added.

The grant application included guidelines for ADA compliance and the total amount of funds the town was seeking for the project. Those funds included both the engineering costs and administration on the grant.

"The intention is the grant will cover the entire project," said Tierney.

Tierney said the project will begin once a formal notice of the award is provided from the state, something he said he expects in the coming weeks. Then the town will "go ahead and secure funding, list the scope of work to be done and go out to bid."

"By the time we go through all the bidding processes, nail down a contractor, and then sign all the agreements... I would think the project will get underway in the spring," he said.

Once the project begins, he expects it to be completed "fairly quickly."

Tierney said the grant benefits the town by getting the senior housing "up to snuff."

Hebron has a long waiting list for senior housing, he said.

When the project is complete, the town plans to seek other grants to help assist with building more public housing units for seniors and disabled individuals.

"The population of seniors in Hebron is growing and we're trying to grow with that," said Tierney.

The future addition would be in the same area as Stonecroft Village.

"We have a parcel that's already purchased for that," said Tierney. That parcel is the newly-acquired Rifkin Property – which abuts the Russell Mercier Senior Center and Stonecroft Village.

In total, Gov. Dannel P. Malloy and the state Connecticut Department of Housing (DOH) awarded \$11.5 million to 20 municipalities in Connecticut. The CDBG grant provides funds for upgrades and improvements to the state's small town infrastructure.

Those additional towns receiving the CDBG small cities grant are as follows: Beacon Falls, \$400,000; Brookfield, \$400,000; Coventry, \$800,000; Durham, \$700,000; Ellington, \$450,000; Granby, \$455,402.24; Groton, \$800,000; Lebanon, \$400,000; Monroe, \$400,000; Morris, \$400,000; New Fairfield, \$400,000; North Haven, \$800,000; Pomfret, \$688,000; Simsbury, \$750,000; Southington, \$400,000; Sprague, \$500,000; Voluntown, \$700,000; Wallingford, \$800,000; Wethersfield, \$625,000.

# Amston Race Car Driver Competes in Brazil

by Lauren Yandow

Before Christopher Robson even came into the world, he was racing.

"My mother drove a pace car at Lime Rock [Park] in Connecticut when she was pregnant with me," he said. "Now we kind of laugh and say my racing career started before I was born."

Just last weekend, Robson represented the United States in Brazil's Formula Vee 50th anniversary race on the famed Interlagos Circuit in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Reflecting on the race, Robson said "It really exceeded all expectations at every level."

Robson's career has swirled around the world of racing. Growing up as a fourth generation racer, he traveled with his family to the tracks in New York and New Hampshire to compete.

"Growing up around the sport, it was really a lifestyle not just a hobby," he said.

Robson started out racing karts and as the sport progressed his passion grew.

"Karting was the way to go when I started," he said. "Racing wasn't as easily accessible as it is today."

Now there's much more opportunity for younger people to get involved in racing, he added.

The list of Robson's racing accolades is long. He was a professional driver on an Indycar team, a vintage car racer, a racing teacher and is presently active in the Challenge Cup Series – the U.S. equivalent to Brazil's Formula Vee.

The 'Vee' in Formula Vee is actually short for Volkswagen. The race was started back in 1960 by Volkswagen dealers; and in 1963 the league was established and recognized as a class within the Sports Car Club of America.

Last Tuesday, Robson touched down for the race in Sao Paulo with his friend and business partner, Brent Thompson.

Upon arriving, the duo had little time to settle in and went straight to the race shop for Robson's racecar fitting.

"I was fitted to the special seat that was made for me and they adjusted the pedals and the gear shift and the steering wheels to make it custom for what I was doing to make me comfortable and safe" he said.

From that point on the trip was filled with all things racing.

Thursday was a time for Robson to "get down to business" by getting a feel for the car and the track during a practice run.

When you think of car racing NASCAR may come to mind but the type of racing Robson does is very different. He drives an open wheel car that unlike converted street cars is purposely

built for racing.

Brazil's Formula Vee racecars are slightly different than those in the U.S series; a key difference is the engine. The U.S. uses air-cooled engines, while Brazilian's use water-cooled ones.

According to the Formula Vee website, [www.formulavee.us](http://www.formulavee.us), "Formula Vee is a single-seat junior racing league that was governed by strict racing rules creating some of the most competitive racing of all time."

A race consists of 12 laps, for a maximum of 30 minutes. "Most of the time it's the 12 laps and they're completed in about 25 minutes," said Thompson.

The competition is relatively even amongst drivers in terms of mechanical components and capabilities, which requires drivers to heavily rely on their skills to finish the race and ultimately win.

Robson placed ninth out of a total of 13 racers during the main event on Saturday; Sunday he made it around the track twice before succumbing to mechanical issues.

"It was amazing the amount of people that showed up, which goes to prove what motor sports really means to the Brazilian people," said Thompson. He estimates 15,000 spectators attended the race.

Both Robson and Thompson said that from beginning to end the trip was nothing but "professional."

The duo credits the Brazilians, who they said welcomed them like family.

Thompson said the Brazilian people are passionate about everything they do, from eating to socializing to auto racing.

"We're looking forward to welcoming them into our family" when they come to race in the U.S., he added.

Switching gears, Robson and Thompson are working to merge their passion for cars with education by launching a drivers' education school called Accelerated Performance Coaching. The car Robson raced in the Formula Vee even donned their program's logos.

Robson holds a degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology; Thompson graduated from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. The two are co-founders and managing directors of business for their growing school. Currently, they have a strategic partnership with All American Driving School in Vernon but they hope to expand Accelerated Performance Coaching independently into Hebron, Colchester and Old Lyme.



**Christopher Robson, 52, of Amston and Brent Thompson, 56, of Old Lyme pose with the Brazilian Formula Vee racecar driven by Robson in the Formula Vee race. The race took place in Sao Paulo, Brazil on July 29 and 30.**

"First off, we're car guys," said Thompson. "But really the biggest part of this is we're passionate about trying to help those that want to get a license ... and want to really learn how to drive."

Thompson and Robson not only share a common interest in cars and molding safer drivers; they are also parents. Thompson has two daughters, Meredith and Lian, with his wife Suzanne. Robson and his wife Kerrin have a daughter named Savannah; and Robson has a second daughter, Charlotte.

Being parents, they both stress the fact that too many teens are being killed in motor vehicle crashes.

"It's just a horrific thing," Robson said, adding that the two decided they wanted to figure out how they could go beyond simply getting a teenager their license to actually teaching them how to drive.

With coaching, they hope to implement life-long driving skills rather than just the minimum requirements needed to obtain a license at the age of 16. Those skills include accident avoid-

ance, skid control and driving during the winter weather conditions.

Thompson said to think of the coaching program as an academic environment – first you graduate high school then you may want to go on to earn a higher degree.

"We really want to go beyond 'here's what you have to do to get your license'," said Thompson.

Thompson and Robson said they hope the program takes the stigma out of being too nervous to asking questions about a car when learning to drive.

"We're excited to teach people who really want to learn how to drive in all driving conditions and maybe even want to go out to the race track," he added.

The ultimate goal: "drivers have to be comfortable and they have to be happy," said Thompson.

As for Robson's car racing: he will compete in the final 2017 Challenge Cup series Sept. 15-17 at Watkins Glen International in Watkins, N.Y.

# Portland Republicans Endorse Varied Slate

by Elizabeth Regan

Members of the Republican Town Committee have endorsed a slate of candidates including a challenger to the seven-term incumbent first selectwoman Susan Bransfield.

Robert Taylor, a paralegal who will begin law school at Western New England University this month, will be part of a three-way contest with Bransfield and American Independent Party challenger Lambros Lambrinides.

Taylor said he decided to run because the party was looking for a candidate to put up against Bransfield.

Bransfield ran without a Republican challenger in 2013, 2007 and 2005, according to the Secretary of the State's database.

"I think Portland deserves to have a choice," Taylor said. "That's really why I'm running."

Taylor described himself as a lifelong Portland resident who views civic involvement as any concerned citizen's responsibility. He served as the head of the Republican Town

Committee until last month's caucus, during which Tim Lavoy took over as chairman.

"It's always been one of those things where I encourage people to get involved in what goes on in their community, what goes on at the state level," Taylor said. "It's not just about voting every year and complaining."

Taylor said one of the preeminent issues facing the town is the need to reduce the local budget.

"Every year, it's going up," he said. "Sometimes it's small amounts, but it's consistent."

This year in particular, he said, is leaving a "sour taste" in residents' mouths.

That's because the growing state deficit has resulted in budget uncertainty that could cause significant decreases in municipal aid to cities and towns across the state. It's unclear when the state budget will be finalized.

With all that in mind, Taylor said the town needs to spend less.

"If we have a surplus because we get more money from the state, great," he said.

Voters this year approved a \$33.65 million 2017-18 budget combining education and general government. Selectmen in May set a mill rate of 32.98 – an increase of 0.47 mills – based on the spending plan and an estimated \$5.08 million in funding from the state.

Taylor brought up the construction of a park on Route 17 and the development of the former Elmcrest Hospital property as two important issues that will be front and center over the coming term.

Running for a seat on the Board of Selectmen on the Republican ticket are: Lavoy, a current member of the Board of Education; Rick Sharr, a member of the Economic Development Commission; and incumbent selectmen Kitch Breen Czernicki and Michael Pelton.

Lavoy said his school board experience has given him important, practical experience in

local government that has left him well prepared for a larger role in addressing the most important issues facing the community.

"I commit that I will be a clear, consistent voice calling for both accountability and transparency," he said last week.

Lavoy, too, brought up state budget uncertainty and likely changes to state funding levels as a key concern.

"We still don't know the full depth of these changes, but once known, how we respond and adapt can impact the future of our community for years to come," he said.

Republican-endorsed Board of Education candidates are incumbent David Murphy, Eric Peterson and Angela Hammond.

The slate also includes Board of Assessment Appeals candidate Peter Castelli and Board of Zoning Appeals candidates Pat Dill and Jack Sterry.

# Bransfield to Seek Eighth Term

by Elizabeth Regan

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield is seeking her eighth term in office.

Bransfield was endorsed by the Portland Democratic Town Committee on July 24 as part of its slate of candidates for the Board of Selectmen, Board of Education, Board of Assessment Appeals and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Bransfield said last week she hopes to continue several initiatives that came before the selectmen during the current term. She cited progress on the development of the former Elmcrest Hospital property; a successful bond referendum for a recreation park on Route 17 as well as road and sidewalk improvements in town; and the expansion of the Air Line Trail.

“It’s been a very interesting two years,” she said.

Bransfield described “prudent fiscal policies” as a guiding force in her approach to leadership. She also pointed to economic development, historic preservation, and enhancements to infrastructure and recreational opportunities as key areas of focus.

The Elmcrest project incorporates all of those priorities, she said.

As described to selectmen earlier this year, the \$30 million project proposed by Danbury-based developer Dan Bertram would bring 240 apartments and 89,400 square feet of commercial space to the vacant Elmcrest Hospital property while preserving two 19th century homes and allocating land to relocate a third.

Bransfield has been an ardent advocate for revitalizing the property – as well as the Main Street and Route 66 business corridors that emanate from it – through a mixed-use development.

Selectmen earlier this year approved a tax abatement agreement that Bertram said was necessary for the project to move forward as apartments and a shopping center. A site plan is expected to be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission in the coming months.

Bransfield said the redevelopment of the vacant property will pave the way for construction jobs, permanent jobs, new housing opportunities and infrastructure improvements.

Updates to the water and sewer system remain an important issue in town, she said.

Bransfield was first elected first selectman

in 2003. Before that, she worked for the State Department of Education as an education service specialist for the Child Nutrition program. She holds a master’s degree in public administration from the University of Hartford and a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Connecticut.

She said she’s lived in town for about 36 years.

Bransfield is currently serving a one-year term as president of the Connecticut Council of Municipalities. The group offers research and training opportunities for its member cities and towns while advocating at the state level for issues that affect local taxpayers.

She is also a past president of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns.

Bransfield’s opponents for the town’s top seat are Republican Rob Taylor and American Independent Party challenger Lambros Lambrinides.

Bransfield won a decisive victory in 2015 against Republican Dan Colby and Lambrinides.

Also endorsed on the Democratic ticket for the Board of Selectmen are incumbents Ben Srb and Jim Tripp as well as current Parks and Recreation Commission Chairman Ralph Zampano and Air Line Trail Steering Committee Co-Chairman Lou Pear.

Sitting selectmen Kathy Richards and Fred Knous will not be seeking re-election.

Knous, who was appointed to fill a vacancy and ran in two subsequent municipal elections, said this week he’s invoking his “personal term limit.”

He said this year’s slate of selectmen candidates brings fresh perspective as well as experience on different boards, commissions and committees.

“They’ve been involved in the town for years in many ways and already have a handle on some of the problems, too,” he said.

He cited state budget problems and their effect on local property taxes as a key issue to deal with going forward.

The Board of Education candidates endorsed by the Democrats for four-year terms are incumbents Sharon Peters and Christopher Darby, who are joined on the ticket by Victor Rivera.

Meg Scata was endorsed to fill a vacancy for two years. Scata was appointed in June to the seat left by Jim Tripp when he was appointed to the Board of Selectmen. Scata is a retired assistant librarian at Valley View School and had served as recording secretary for the Board of Education.

The Democratic candidates for Board of Assessment Appeals are John Dillon and Thomas

Malecky.

On the Zoning Board of Appeals ticket for the Democrats, incumbent chairwoman Rose Aletta was endorsed for a one-year term to fill a vacancy and then to another five-year term starting in 2018. She is joined by incumbent Kenneth Kearns (two-year term) and Victoria Short (five-year term).

## Lambrinides to Run Again for First Selectman

by Elizabeth Regan

American Independent Party candidate Lambros Lambrinides has filed paperwork to run for first selectman once again.

Lambrinides, 71, has been a candidate in every municipal election since he created his own third party in 2011. He ran as a write-in candidate in 2009.

“I don’t think the present administration is going down the right path,” Lambrinides said this week.

He cited a lack of infrastructure improvements as a main area of weakness in town.

Lambrinides said the 2016 paving of Main Street by the state would have been an opportunity time for the Board of Selectmen to look for money in the budget to replace aging water mains in that area.

He said nothing was done; meanwhile, leaks continue.

“There is no forward-looking,” he said. “I’ve been complimented for doing forward-looking.”

He also criticized the chip seal approach to road repair, which adds layers to existing pavement. He said the surface treatment makes the roads too high and affects drainage.

With his emphasis on infrastructure, Lambrinides was critical of the way a \$10 million bond package went to referendum last year with the bulk of it reserved for a park on Route 17.

“She bundled it,” he said of Bransfield.

“This is deceiving, as far as I’m concerned. It’s not proper to do this.”

The referendum question was approved by selectmen and then passed by voters in November with \$6 million allotted for athletic fields, walking trails, a playground and splash pad on Route 17. The package included \$2.5 million for road improvements focused on Brownstone Avenue and \$1 million to fix sidewalks on streets adjacent to town schools. It also set aside \$500,000 for miscellaneous projects including repairs to roofs on the town garage and Fire Company 2 as well as police station windows.

Voters approved the bond package by 2,788 to 2,352. There were 6,233 registered voters in Portland at the time.

“This is not the way to do things in a civilized society,” he said.

According to Lambrinides, putting a park in that area will deprive nearby residents of their right to privacy.

He said only in “la-la-land” would a recreational facility solve the town’s problems.

Lambrinides has lived in town since he was two years old, except for his stint in the United States Air Force from 1964-68.

He said he retired from Pratt & Whitney and was associated with his family’s 70-year-old sign business until it closed in 1998.

“I’m an honest person,” he said. “There is no, how shall I say, discrepancies.”

# Marlborough Democrats Endorse Slate of Veterans and Newcomers

by Julianna Roche

The Democratic Town Committee (DTC) has stacked its slate with both new and familiar faces for the upcoming municipal election this fall, after holding its caucus last week.

DTC Chairwoman Michelle Padilla explained this week that the committee is “thrilled” that experienced board members are “seeking to retain their positions” and are “so proud” to bring on “an enthusiastic group of newcomers” who have come forward “to be part of the change we’re seeing in Marlborough.”

Padilla furthered that the committee endorsed candidates who understand “the need to balance the strategic growth in town with retaining our rural charm,” as well as “the excellence of established programs with a fiscally responsible mindset and policies.”

“Our goal is to endorse candidates who will be responsive to the needs of the community as a whole and to support positive change,” she said.

For the local Board of Education, Padilla, along with residents Julie Revaz and unaffiliated Logan Tyler, were endorsed.

Padilla – who also serves on the Parks and

Recreation Commission – currently works as a strategic accounts program manager for Waste Management, where she is responsible for managing financial and contractual obligations for several national accounts.

She explained that her “financial background and analytical skills” would be an asset when serving on the board; she also has a grandson entering the Marlborough school system this fall.

Revaz, meanwhile, holds a master’s degree in social work from the University of Connecticut and has worked for the state’s judicial branch for over 18 years, where she has managed a large staff and overseen contracts with private agencies totaling over \$50 million.

The lifelong Connecticut resident is also very active in legislative and juvenile justice system reform efforts and has previously served on the AHM Youth Services Board of Directors. She currently serves on both the Economic Development Commission and the Charter Revision Commission.

Tyler, who has lived in Marlborough since 2008, has an education background and works

as a substitute teacher for Marlborough Elementary School (MES). She has also served as a parent representative for the Student Advisory Council for the past two years and has two daughters in the school system.

“Logan [Tyler] and her family are immersed in the community, and [she] looks forward to giving back to the town she calls home,” Padilla stated.

On the Board of Finance, Lauren Cragg, John Grasso (a placeholder) and unaffiliated Ryan Gritter have been endorsed by the Democrats.

According to Padilla, the DTC is “thrilled” that Gritter “has accepted the challenge to run to become a full member” on the board after being appointed as an alternate earlier this year to fill an unexpired term, making it his first political endeavor.

Padilla explained that Gritter – who works as an attorney in private practice for mid-sized businesses – “will help guide the Board of Finance in developing much needed fiscal policies.”

Both Cragg and Grasso, meanwhile, are recognized for having been active in the

Marlborough community for decades, with Cragg previously serving on the Board of Finance and Grasso as a current member on the Zoning Board of Appeals and the RHAM Foundation.

Padilla explained the DTC is looking forward to Cragg’s return to town politics, after taking some time off to pursue her career as an independent filmmaker and writer.

Grasso, an attorney in private practice, “has often served as a mentor to the youth in our community,” Padilla stated, adding he has also served with the Connecticut National Guard until his recent retirement.

The Democrats also endorsed Bill Lardi for the Board of Assessment Appeals; Laura Hart, Donna Koropatkin, and Matt Wilson for the Planning Commission; and Jeanne Wilson for the RHAM Board of Education.

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The Board of Selectmen members, including First Selectwoman Amy Traversa, serve four-year terms in Marlborough and will not be up for election until November 2019.

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 7.

# Family Values and Gratitude Guide Marlborough Student to Success

by Julianna Roche

Marlborough resident Tiffany Sanclemente doesn't attribute her 4.46 GPA, nor being awarded valedictorian of CREC Medical Professions and Teacher Preparation Academy's Class of 2017 to taking extra notes, staying organized or even practicing good study habits.

And while she did have to do each of those to get to where she is, she attributes her success mostly to having gratitude and giving to others – values taught to her by her family.

After being named valedictorian this June at the University of St. Joseph's, Tiffany spoke to her fellow students during their graduation, bestowing words of advice she'd received in her last 17 years from various family members, including her two biggest role models – her father, Alex, and mother, Viviana.

Natives of Colombia, Alex and Viviana moved to the United States in 1995, neither speaking much English and both in search of work. However, the couple relied on "values from their ancestors" to learn the language, obtain college educations, and eventually find jobs. Today, Viviana works as an accountant and Alex owns his own business, Smart Computer Repair, located just off South Main Street in Marlborough.

For example, Tiffany said her mother taught her "to love and respect myself before doing it for anyone else," while her father always told her "if you run with nine broken people, you will become number 10."

Both parents also always taught Tiffany and her younger sister Sabrina to follow "the BIGG strategy."

"B stands for believing in yourself because no one else will," she explained. "I stands for finding inspiration in others. The first G stands for goal setting and the second G stands for go for it."

"My uncle explained to me that we cannot change how someone thinks, and that the only thing we can control is maintaining our positivity," Tiffany added during her speech. "My

grandma taught me to always look presentable anywhere I go, even if it's to pick up a carton of milk. I must always look, as we say in Spanish, 'arregalda' – well-groomed. First impressions are important."

When the *RiverEast* met with Tiffany and her father Alex this week, both made a lasting first impression: one of generosity, kindness and drive – and one that would stay imprinted in anyone's mind should they meet the father and daughter pair.

"We are so blessed and grateful for what we have," Alex said, adding that coming to America after growing up poor and uneducated in Colombia, gave him "the hunger" to work hard for both himself and his family.

"I know education is expensive and I know Tiffany knows the sacrifices Mom and Daddy do," he said. "We work hard every day [to give] the choice for Tiffany to have a good education. That's the tool [to having success and] she's my legacy."

Tiffany – who will attend University of Connecticut this fall on a full-tuition presidential academic scholarship and plans to study medicine – agreed, explaining that growing up, she would hop on the bus before school, and her father would always tell her to "stay hungry" and "stay focused."

She also explained that every year, her family takes her and her sister to Colombia to see how the natives live – often in poverty and destitution. The trips, she explained, have taught her to always have gratitude for "the blessings" in her life, which include obtaining an education and having the educational tools and resources that many students in Colombia cannot afford.

"When kids at school have gratitude for the chairs, the tables, computers, the Smart boards, everything – they stay hungry, stay focused. Gratitude is the key [to success]," Alex added.

On several trips, Tiffany explained the family has even visited a local school to bring the students bags of school supplies from Staples.



Marlborough resident Tiffany Sanclemente received the valedictorian award for the CREC Medical Professions and Teacher Preparation Academy's Class of 2017 in June, attributing her accomplishment to the values taught to her by her family. Shown from left are younger sister Sabrina, Tiffany, mother Viviana and father Alex.

"When my parents first brought me, I was a kid, but as I started to get older, I started to understand that people here [in America] don't realize what they have," she said. "It's just incredible. [In Colombia], the students were extremely poor. They didn't even know what a lead pencil was."

For her senior capstone project, Tiffany then decided to help improve the education in lesser-developed countries and made a plan to have her entire high school donate school supplies to ship off to the Colombian school they visited. And one day, she hopes to open health clinics in third world communities to "build upon that."

"My dad says every morning if you give more and more, you're always going to have more to give," Tiffany added.

Her father explained it takes a lot of giving and a little believing to succeed.

"Anyone can do anything," he said. "The thing is to believe in yourself. Everybody is very smart, but they don't know they are because they don't believe."

Alex then turned to his daughter and asked, "What did I tell you when we drove by the cemetery?"

Tiffany replied, "That some people who died took their talents to the grave and didn't even know they had them."

"We teach good values to our kids. We teach them appreciation and gratitude, and every single day we say everything is possible. What is impossible?" Alex said. "Nothing. [Except] when you think it's impossible."

# Town Administrator Settling Into New Role in Andover

by Lauren Yandow

It's been just three weeks since Joseph Higgins, 36, officially took office as Andover's first-ever town administrator. Now, he's settling into his new role by getting to know the town and its people.

The Killingly resident said his biggest highlight thus far has been "meeting everyone, meeting town employees, meeting the citizens," he said.

So far the role is living up to his expectations. "It's been a good learning experience," he added.

As town administrator, Higgins receives an annual salary of \$85,000. His responsibilities include daily operations of the town and he's taken over all administrative duties from the first selectman.

"I manage day-to-day business, town departments and contracts," said Higgins.

As posted on the town's website, [andoverconnecticut.org](http://andoverconnecticut.org), a draft of the revised charter reads – the town administrator "shall be the chief executive officer of the Town of Andover responsible to the Board of Selectmen for the supervision, direction and administration of all Town of Andover departments, agencies and offices except the Board of Education and town agencies whose head of members are elected by popular vote."

So far, Higgins said he's learning to focus on "expending [his] energy and efforts wisely," considering Andover is a small town without department heads – and thus a lot of responsibilities rest on his shoulders.

This is Higgins' first gig as a town administrator, and he said residents as well as town staff have "been supportive" which has been a "big help" while acclimating to his new role.

He said he's already started working on some projects.

One of those projects is working to secure continuity for information technology (IT) in town hall. "We need to get a more secure system that's dependable," Higgins said.

Another task has been looking at town roads to pinpoint where improvements need to be made.

Looking ahead, Higgins said he understands the tough fiscal climate but hopes to secure a few grants for the town. He's also working to start a conversation with Andover Elementary School about potentially sharing resources, since the town office is in such close proximity. Some of those resources, he said, may include sharing IT staff and janitorial services.

As town administrator, Higgins said he holds an open-door policy and invites townspeople to come introduce themselves and voice any comments or concerns. "I like to be approachable for both employees and the citizens," he said.

It's that desire to connect to the community that pushed Higgins to start a new career endeavor to begin with.

Higgins holds a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering and a Master's of Public Administration from the University of Connecticut.

For more than 15 years, he worked for the State of Connecticut – most recently as a project manager.

Higgins said the decision to make a career change came from a desire to work on a local community level because he's always enjoyed working with the public.

Higgins said he looked at positions in other towns and even other states but Andover felt like "the best fit." What sealed his decision was interviewing in the town and seeing all it has to offer.

Board of Selectmen member Jay Linddy said



Joseph Higgins is settling into his new role as Andover's first-ever town administrator.

he believes Higgins is "adjusting well" to his new position.

But, Linddy added, "I expected that."

Higgins has worked for the state for many years where he ran some major projects – "he's very good at what he does," Linddy said.

When asked about the future of Andover,

Higgins said "there's a lot of potential."

"Of course we're a small town and our budgets are limited so we can't do some of the same things that big towns do, but I think we can make wise decisions and do well for ourselves," he added.

# Obituaries

## East Hampton

### Gerald Ernest Cloutier Jr.

Gerald Ernest Cloutier Jr., 73, of East Hampton, died Saturday, July 29, at Hartford Hospital. Born March 7, 1944, in Worcester, Mass., he was the son of the late Gerald and Bertha (Landry) Cloutier.

Gerald was retired from The Hartford Insurance Co. after more than 30 years of service, where he had worked as a personal lines claims analyst. Cloutier moved to East Hampton in 1978. He was active in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts Troop 57 in East Hampton and was a former member of the Board of Review for Eagle Scouts. A longtime member of the NRA, he enjoyed target shooting. He was a member of the Westbrook Elks Club and he also enjoyed playing set back and shooting pool.

He is survived by his former wife Theresa A. (Jalbert) of East Hampton; his sons Gerald E. Cloutier III and his wife Kathleen of Marlborough, Paul A. Cloutier of East Hampton; former daughter-in-law Jennifer Kelley; and his two beloved grandchildren Kristiana and Evan.

Friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., Thursday, Aug. 3. Funeral services will be private at Notre Dame Cemetery in Worcester, Mass.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department, 5 Barton Hill Rd., East Hampton, CT 06424.

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

## East Hampton

### John Harold Fidler II

John Harold Fidler II, 60, of Old Saybrook, died suddenly Sunday, July 30, while hiking Mt. Katahdin in Maine with his family. Born Feb. 18, 1957, in Hartford, he was the son of John and Nellie Fidler.

Raised in South Windsor, John graduated from South Windsor High School in 1975 as an All-CVC basketball player and National Honor Society student. He held a bachelor's, master's, and 6th Year in Education from the University of Connecticut.

At the time of his death, John was still serving as principal at East Hampton High School in East Hampton. He was a beloved member of the East Hampton Public Schools community, working as a special education teacher, athletic director, coach, assistant principal, and principal in his 27-year tenure. In his spare time, he was often found mountain biking, hiking and camping. He had a love for Martha's Vineyard, Mass., spending many summers with his family on the island. He was a founding member of the UConn Ultimate Frisbee Team, a club sport that is still running strong nearly 40 years later. His love of music was obvious as a Grateful Dead and jazz aficionado.

Aside from his parents, John is survived by his wife Joan (Fontanella) Fidler, his sons Jack and Jeffrey Fidler, his three sisters and their spouses – Nancy and Eduardo Meza, Tracy and Skip Olander, and Gretchen and Herman Fuller, several cousins, nieces, and nephews, as well as his Boston Terriers Zoe and Joe.

Public calling hours will be held today, Aug. 4, from 4-8 p.m., at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St., East Hampton. A funeral Mass will be celebrated on Saturday, Aug. 5, at 11 a.m., directly at St. Patrick's Church in East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the John Fidler Memorial Scholarship Fund. Donations can be sent to East Hampton High School, John Fidler Memorial Scholarship, c/o Linda Malavasi, 15 North Maple St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

Spencer Funeral Home has been entrusted with the arrangements. To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).



## Colchester

### Darlene Sweet

Darlene (McGillicuddy) Sweet, 63, of Colchester, passed away at home Saturday, July 29. Born Aug. 14, 1953 in Houlton, Maine, she was the daughter of the late Herbert and Dorothy (Lloyd) McGillicuddy.

Darlene had worked as a certified nurses aide for area convalescent homes for many years before her retirement. She leaves many beloved nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends, as she was predeceased by her fiancé, Allan Hersey, in addition to her parents and four siblings, Margaret Wood and Edward, Gerald and Patricia McGillicuddy.

Graveside services will be observed at 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 5, directly at the New Lebanon Cemetery, Waterman Road, Lebanon. There are no calling hours. However, the family will receive guests following the burial at the Beaudoin residence, 44 Gregory Rd., Lebanon.

As Darlene was an avid animal lover, memorial donations may be made to the CT Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd., Newington, CT 06111 ([cthumane.org](http://cthumane.org)).

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

## Andover

### Joan Castelli

Joan (Moss-Vernon) Castelli, 86, of Manchester, formerly of Guilford, Andover and Windsor, beloved wife of the late Louis Castelli, passed away peacefully Thursday, July 27, at Manchester Manor. She was born June 8, 1931, in New York City, daughter of the late Philip and Irene (Bradford) Moss-Vernon.

Joan was raised in Great Britain and came to the United States in the early 1950s. She kept her beautiful accent and British charm until the very end. Joan was employed in her early years at Gilbert Lane Employment Agency and later opened and operated her own employment agency, J.M.V. Associates. An accomplished equestrian in her youth in Great Britain, she taught riding in South Glastonbury for many years. Joan remained passionate about horses throughout her life.

She is survived by her son, Dino Castelli and his wife, Patti, of Windsor; her two daughters, Gina Boyle and her husband, Marc, of Loveland, Colo., and Joanne Castelli and her partner, Rick Bonyun, of Andover; her four loving grandchildren, Melanie Gorski and her husband, Bob, Shannon Scharffbillig and her husband, Nick, James Boyle, and Cameron Lewis; and her cherished great-grandchildren, Emma, Benjamin, and James Gorski. Joan also leaves her sister, Betty Webster of Toronto, Canada; and her brother, Peter Moss-Vernon and his wife, Hazel, of Wales, United Kingdom; and several nieces and nephews.

The family would like to thank the nurses and aides of the East Wing at Manchester Manor for the love and comfort they gave our mom, particularly in her final days.

Private burial will be at the convenience of the family in East Cemetery, Manchester.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Connecticut Chapter, 659 Tower Ave, 1st Floor, Hartford, CT 06112-1269.

Holmes Funeral Home, Manchester, has care of the arrangements. For online condolences, visit [holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com](http://holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com).

## Courant Colchester

### David H. Rood

David H. Rood, 77, of Colchester, formerly of Baltic, died Tuesday afternoon, July 25, at Harrington Court. He was born in Norwich Jan. 16, 1940, the son of the late Clayton H. and Helen (Avery) Rood Jr.

David worked for 32 years for the Sprague Water and Sewer Authority, retiring in 2006 as superintendent. He was married to Barbara (Schmidt) Rood, who died July 11, 2012.

David is survived by one son, James H. Rood of St. Petersburg, Fla., and one daughter, Tammy Rood of Torrington.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated today, Aug. 4, at 1 p.m., at St. Mary's Church in Baltic. Burial of cremains will follow at St. Mary's Cemetery in Baltic. There are no calling hours.

Guillot Funeral Home of Taftville is in charge of arrangements.



## East Hampton

### Helen (Cozzi) Hayes

Helen (Cozzi) Hayes, 93, of Middletown, wife of the late Clarence S. Hayes, died Wednesday, July 26, at her home, surrounded by her family. She was born in East Hampton, the daughter of the late Achille and Mary (Kavanaugh) Cozzi of Hog Hill Road.

She is survived by her son, Barry Hayes, of Spartanburg, S.C.; daughter, Lynette Branday and her husband Tom, of Middletown, with whom she resided; sister, Catherine Konefal; and sister-in-law, Luella Miller. She is also survived by her six grandchildren, Chad Hayes, and his wife Heidi of Monument, Colo., Sean Hayes and his wife Sarah of Glastonbury, Amanda (Hayes) Seawright and her husband Stephen of Anderson, S.C., Meagan (Branday) Susi and her husband Peter of Middletown, Kyle Branday and his wife Alyssa of Middletown, and Scott Hayes, of Summerville, S.C.; and twelve great-grandchildren, Alani, Ellyannah, Myles and Reid Hayes, Alex and Dylan Seawright, Kevin, Aiden and Jillian Susi, Keegan Branday, and Hayden and Kaymon Smit; and several nieces and nephews, all of whom held a special place in her heart.

She was predeceased by her brother, John Cozzi, and her sister, Rita Becker.

The funeral liturgy was held Monday, July 31, at St. Pius X Church, 310 Westfield St., Middletown. Burial was in Pine Grove Cemetery, Middletown. Friends called at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown on Sunday, July 30.

In lieu of flowers, we believe that Helen would prefer if we each took a moment to do a random act of kindness, just as she did throughout her life. Or donations may be made in Helen's name to Middlesex Hospital Department of Philanthropy c/o Hospice, 28 Crescent Street, Middletown, CT 06457.

The family wishes to express their sincerest gratitude to all of the caregivers who assisted them in caring for Helen.

To share memories or express condolences online, visit [biegafuneralhome.com](http://biegafuneralhome.com).

## Portland

### Marion Schmidl

Marion (Ingraham) Schmidl, 89, of Portland, wife of 53 years to the late Frederick O. Schmidl, died peacefully Monday, July 31. Born in East Hampton Dec. 4, 1927, she was the daughter of the late Harold and Annie (Strickland) Ingraham.

She married Fred May 4, 1946, in Westchester. They spent their early years of their marriage in East Hampton and then moved to Portland in the mid-1950s.

Marion will be remembered for her love of family, kindness and generosity. She always put the needs of others first. She enjoyed embroidering and leaves many beautiful pieces to be handed down to future generations. She loved to shop and could do so for hours; especially at the Christmas Tree Shoppes and Walmart.

Marion leaves her loving daughter, Annie, with whom she shared a special relationship, and her husband, David Brede, of Cromwell; two grandsons, David Jr. and his wife Emily of Middletown, and Michael and his wife Whitney of Anchorage, Alaska. She loved her grandchildren very much and they brought much joy to her life. Marion is survived by a sister, Janette Shelton of Middletown. She leaves many nieces and nephews which include Patty Gaffney and Walter Westcott, both of whom could always make her laugh.

She was predeceased by two sisters, Marjorie Ous and Annie Ingraham, as well as two brothers, Norman Ingraham and Harold Ingraham.

The family would like to thank the staff at Apple Rehab in Middletown for the care she received during the last four years.

Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 5, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will follow in the Swedish Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends may call at the funeral home today, Aug. 4, from 5-7 p.m.

Those who wish may make donations in Marion's memory to the Alzheimer's Association of Connecticut, The Breast Cancer Society of Connecticut, or the charity of their choice.

## Cobalt

### Helen Maculaitis Medley

Helen Maculaitis Medley 101, of Cobalt, formerly of West Haven and New Haven, beloved wife of the late Peter Medley, passed away Monday, July 10, in the Cobalt Lodge Healthcare & Rehab Center.

She was the loving mother of Sheila (Phillip) Hitchcock of Guilford, Audrey Toole of Port St. Lucie, Fla., and Judith Reilly of Petaluma, Calif.; grandmother of Edward Toole Jr., Peggy Toole Berger, Brian Toole, and Jennifer and Amanda Hitchcock; great-grandmother of Michael and Christopher Ciacchero, Patrick and Kayla Toole and Eleanor Hitchcock. She is also survived by three step-grandchildren.

She was sister of the late Anthony, Joseph and Alexander Maculaitis, and was also predeceased by sons-in-law Edward Toole and James Reilly.

Helen was born in New Haven Nov. 9, 1915, daughter of the late Anthony and Beatrice Maculaitis. Prior to her retirement, Helen was an accounting clerk for Armstrong Rubber. She was a 4th degree member of the Knights of Lithuania C-50 at the former St. Casimirs Church and also active in many charitable organizations.

Relatives and friends attended a graveside service Monday, July 31, in St. Lawrence Cemetery in West Haven, Section N Lot 2-251, St. Domenic Ave. There were no calling hours.

Arrangements are in care of the Porto Funeral Home, 234 Foxon Rd., East Haven. Sign Helen's guestbook online at [portofuneralhomes.net](http://portofuneralhomes.net).

## Colchester

### Lester Levine

Lester Levine of Sunrise, Fla., passed away peacefully Thursday, July 27. Born June 27, 1924, to the late Aaron and Mamie Levine, he was raised in Colchester, under the wing of his older sisters who predeceased him, Sally and Betty.

After serving honorably as a company clerk in World War II in the Army Air Corps, Lester pursued his education thanks to the GI Bill, graduating from the University of Hartford in 1961. He settled in East Hartford, raising his daughters with his first wife, Marcia (Brownstein) and worked at Pratt & Whitney for 32 years.

After Marcia's passing he was lucky to find love again, and enjoyed nearly 36 years of marriage, travel and Florida sunshine with his wife Selma (Grossman). He lived to see his Boston Red Sox win 3 World Series.

He leaves his beloved wife Selma; his loving daughters and their husbands, Joan and David Gorski of West Hartford and Barb and Dan Landrigan of Wethersfield; and his beloved grandsons, Matthew and Kevin Landrigan; as well as his loving stepson, Roy Trachtenberg; and devoted caregiver, Marie Allen.

Dad had a good life and we are grateful he is at peace.

A funeral service was held Sunday, July 30. Donations in Lester's memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association of Connecticut.

Arrangements are with Star of David Memorial Gardens in North Lauderdale, Fla.



## Obituaries continued

### Portland

#### Daniel LaChapelle

Daniel LaChapelle, 30, of Portland, passed away unexpectedly and way too soon Wednesday, July 26. Dan was born in Hartford and was a graduate of Vinal Technical High School in Middletown. He was a crew foreman for Asplundh Tree Services.

Dan loved fishing with his brother Brian, the beach, camping, and more than anything he loved family time and seeing everyone happy.

He is survived by his father, Robert LaChapelle and wife Diane; his mother, Teri Morrell Hayes; his brother, Brian LaChapelle; his sisters, Teri Harris and Maya Baker; his love, Emily DeMaio and their precious daughter, Ella, and sweet son, Dominic.

His loving spirit and life was celebrated at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Wednesday, Aug. 2, with a service immediately following. Burial will be at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in memory of Dan to Shatterproof, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending the devastation that addiction causes families: [shatterproof.org/memorial/daniel-lachapelle](http://shatterproof.org/memorial/daniel-lachapelle).



### Colchester

#### Jared Thayer Wibberley

Jared Thayer Wibberley, 73, of Willimantic, passed away Saturday, March 18, at Hartford Hospital. Born Feb. 17, 1944, in Westerly, R.I., he was the son of Mary Thayer Wibberley of Colchester and the late M. Randolph Wibberley.

He was a 1970 graduate of Franklin and Marshall College in Lancaster, Pa., with a BA in geology. He also studied at Columbia University Lamont Geological Observatory, Connecticut College and Wesleyan University.

Mr. Wibberley worked for years as principal environmental planner at The Maguire Group in New Britain, and then for the Town of Canterbury as zoning enforcement official.

Jared was a lifelong and dedicated scientist, taking part in oceanographic and environmental missions to the Azores and Puerto Rico. He was an avid gardener, voracious reader, and purveyor of scientific and historic facts.

In addition to his mother, Jared is survived by his siblings, Ann Rhineland and husband David of Gloucester, Mass., Jeffery R. Wibberley of Lancaster, Pa., Molly Greenzaid and husband Judah of Bethesda, Md.; his niece, Sarah Rhineland Castelloni and family of Kauai, Hawaii; and many cousins.

Though Jared struggled at times, he remained a charming, witty and intelligent presence throughout his life and is missed by his loving family.

A memorial service is being planned and will be announced at a later date.

## Shaky State Budget Leads Andover Selectmen to Proceed with Caution

by Lauren Yandow

With the 2017-18 state budget still up in the air, the Andover Board of Selectmen is proceeding with caution when it comes to finalizing funded projects.

At Wednesday's Board of Selectmen meeting the board decided not to move forward with bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements in the Lake District – not quite yet, anyway.

Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Eric Anderson asked the board for final authorization of the project at the meeting. Funding for the improvements – which would cost between \$2,000 and \$5,000 – is already in the planning and zoning budget, but is not specifically designated for that purpose, and won't be until the selectmen sign off on the project.

However, the board chose to table the project for now over state budget concerns – specifically, the selectmen don't know how much money the town could lose in state funding once a budget is finally passed.

"Our hands are tied until we find out what happens," First Selectman Bob Burbank said.

If approved, the project will create sharrows – or shared lane markings – and signage on the roads in the Lake District to make drivers aware of bicyclists and pedestrians in the area.

The goal of the sharrows, Anderson said, is

to create public awareness as well as aid in reducing traffic speeds.

Anderson said the Planning and Zoning Commission has been pushing for the sharrows for roughly three years, and added that while he understands the fiscal climate of the state is rocky, the commission still believes the sharrows would benefit town residents.

Ultimately he said, "It benefits the town by making it safer for both bicycling and walking in the Lake District."

The cost of the project is dependent on the type of paint used – water-based paint would cost less but doesn't last as long; epoxy paint comes at a higher cost and lasts longer.

While the motion ultimately didn't pass, selectwomen Julia Haverl and Cathleen Desrosiers both voted in favor of moving the project forward.

Desrosiers said the selectmen had already heard the proposal and "everything sound[ed] good," but then they don't approve the project because they're worried about a cut from the state that hasn't even happened yet.

"I'm disappointed," she added.

\* \* \*

Wednesday's Board of Selectmen meeting was also the first for the new town administra-

tor, Joseph Higgins.

During the meeting, Higgins suggested starting a conversation with Andover Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen about sharing services.

As the school and the town office building are literally next door to one another, Higgins said he plans to propose sharing information technology (IT) services as well as janitorial, maintenance and finance director services. Conversations will start in the coming weeks as Higgins said he's "still investigating" different options and evaluating potential cost benefits.

The board unanimously approved that Higgins engage the school for their recommendations on sharing services.

Also at the meeting, the board agreed to let Higgins hire an administrative assistant. Higgins suggested bringing in an intern through UConn's Internship and Professional Practice (IPP) Program.

At the meeting, it was decided Higgins can work with the UConn program to hire an administrative assistant intern. Through the pro-

gram an intern – who has to be a graduate student – would work 15 hours per week over 39 weeks; the town would pay UConn a total of \$15,750. Hiring an administrative assistant intern would not increase the town's budget – as there was already money set aside in the budget for an assistant for Burbank when he was serving in the town administrator role as first selectman.

Higgins said while other towns participate in the program this will be a first for Andover.

The town did have a specific candidate in mind for the position; but as of Thursday the individual chose to accept a position in another town.

At the meeting, a few new faces were appointed to town commissions. Catherine Palazzi was appointed to the Commission of Aging; Deb Thompson and Cheryl Mayhem were both appointed to the Norton Commission; and Meghan Lally was appointed to the Inland Wetland and Watercourse Commission.

The next Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 6, at 7 p.m., in the Town Office Community Room, 17 School Rd.

*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

It was tragic, just tragic, news about the sudden passing of East Hampton High School Principal John Fidler.

As editor, I didn't have much occasion to deal with him over the years, but my reporters did – and there was never an ill word about him. And as you can sense from Elizabeth Regan's story on the cover of this week's paper, he was truly beloved by seemingly the entire town.

That love is also evident in a pair of letters to the editor in this week's paper, in several postings on the "Let's Talk East Hampton" Facebook page, and even in a phone call I got this week from the Friends of Lake Pocotopaug. The Friends were going to hold the annual Captain Grizzly Showboat Parade this Saturday, Aug. 5, but moved it to the next day, Sunday, Aug. 6, so that people could attend Mr. Fidler's funeral. That may seem like a small thing, but it just underscores his importance to so many in town.

He will be missed by very many. My thoughts are with his family and all that knew him.

\* \* \*

I was quite pleased last week to see the bid to repeal Obamacare fail, in a squeaker of a vote. Does the Affordable Care Act need work? Absolutely; I don't think anyone would deny it. But repealing it with no replacement bill on the books just seemed pointlessly cruel. Even the so-called "skinny repeal" would've led to skyrocketing premiums, analysts predicted, and the Congressional Budget Office said it would lead to 15 million people losing health insurance.

So I was delighted the vote failed, and that people – including people that are dear to me – will be able to keep their insurance, at least for the time being. President Trump (I really hate writing those words) continues to flip-flop between telling people we should just let Obamacare fail on its own and threatening to pull billions in government payments to insurers in order to force the collapse. So we're hardly out of the woods.

But, for a little while anyway, it's good news.

\* \* \*

If, like me, you love seeing live music, you may be in for a treat this weekend in Middletown. Portland resident "JCherry" and her husband Tim Sparks are putting on the annual three-day Middletown Music Festival – and it sounds like a blast.

The sixth annual festival will run Friday, Aug. 4-Sunday, Aug. 6, at Middlesex Community College. The event will feature 26 bands – including several from the area: from Marlborough, The Terry Rand Band; from Portland, The Michael Cleary Band and the CherrySparks Sloe Berry Band; and, from East Hampton, the bands gigglejuice, Dropping Quarters, A Filthy Fiasco, and Randomizer.

While admission is free, those who wish can make a suggested \$10 donation and enter to win a free T-shirt or CD.

The festival opens tonight at 5 p.m., with music from L.A.M.F, Terry Rand Band, In-

ner Worlds, Randomizer and DapperascaL. The show continues Saturday on two stages: on the Cedar Grove stage beginning at noon will be Dropping Quarters, Arlene Wow, 610 Supertanker, Randy Moses, Someone You Can Xray, and HannaH's Field. Beginning at 3 p.m. on the Pavilion stage will be Parallax, A Filthy Fiasco, CherrySparks Sloe Berry Jamm and Off The Done. Sunday on the Pavilion stage, beginning at 11 a.m., will feature Waberi Jordon, Kristen Larson, Murderous Chanteuse and Scarlett, Amity. Sunday on the Cedar Grove stage, starting at 11:30 a.m., will be Jay Roberts, Screaming Eagle Band, gigglejuice, Balkun Brothers, and The Michael Cleary Band.

There will also be a vendor village, full of locally-crafted items from Neri Handcrafted Jewelry, KBM Creations, Ridge Runner Soaps Company LLC, Sleeping Giant Hemp Company LLC, JCherry's Prime My Body CBD Oil and more.

There will also be a pair of authors on hand to meet festivalgoers. Beth Caruso, author of *One of Windsor, The Untold Story of America's First Witch Hanging*, and Katherine Spada Basto, author of *Days to the Gallows*, will discuss Connecticut's witch history. The festival will also feature sound healing and a drum circle.

Of course, what's a festival without food? Area eateries X Marks the Spot, Perk On Main and more will sell goodies, and there will also be a craft beer-tasting Saturday afternoon.

The whole thing sounds like a lot of fun – and definitely worth traversing the Arrigoni. For more information on the festival, visit [jcherryrepresents.com](http://jcherryrepresents.com).

\* \* \*

Lastly, some interesting news floated across my email inbox this week about open space in the southeastern part of the state.

The Dutka family of Griswold has donated seven waterfront lots on Pachaug Pond in Griswold to the Avalonia Land Conservancy (ALC). In addition, the family has agreed to sell a 61.5-acre parcel near Pachaug State Forest to the conservancy. Add in another two parcels being donated and it's 68 acres altogether being given to ALC – and the conservancy is understandably quite happy about this.

According to ALC, the land features pine forests, wetlands and native shrubs full of wildlife. Pachaug Pond is the largest public lake east of the Connecticut River and its shoreline is becoming increasingly developed, ALC said. A variety of fish abound in the pond, including largemouth, smallmouth and calico bass, yellow perch and northern pike. This makes for excellent fishing, AKC said.

In addition to passive recreation, the plan is to eventually provide a public launching point for kayaks and canoes. Paddlers can visit Avalonia's Scola Preserve on Barton Island, less than 1,000 feet away and only accessible by water.

For more information about ALC, visit [avalonialandconservancy.org](http://avalonialandconservancy.org).

\* \* \*

See you next week.