



RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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**Ahoy, Mateys!... This year, the annual Marlborough Day celebration ended with its first-ever boat parade on Lake Terramuggus, including decorated boats such as a pirate ship-themed one shown here. For a full story and another photo about Marlborough Day, see page 9.**

## Area Officials Grapple With Potential Cuts

by Elizabeth Regan

One area superintendent has accused Gov. Dannel P. Malloy of using children as “budget fodder” following the announcement of a dramatic reduction – and in some cases, elimination – of education funding from the state if lawmakers can’t agree on a budget by Oct. 1.

East Hampton Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith described it as “unforgivable” for the governor to use scare tactics that threaten the state’s youngest residents in order to get members of the Connecticut General Assembly to “come back from vacation and do their work.”

Smith didn’t spare state lawmakers from blame, however.

“There’s three-way dysfunction between the Republicans, Democrats and the governor, and that’s just inexcusable to me,” Smith said.

Malloy on Aug. 18 announced a proposal to eliminate education funding for 85 cities and towns, including Portland and Marlborough, if the budget impasse doesn’t end before September does. The towns stand to lose \$4.36 million and \$3.15 million, respectively.

Fifty-four towns would see their education cost sharing dollars reduced. Among them are Colchester, which would lose \$9.45 million, or 70 percent, of its current education aid; Hebron, which would lose \$6.19 million, or 90 percent; East Hampton, which would lose \$6.03 million, or 80 percent; and Andover, which would lose \$1.86 million, or 80 percent.

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

system. The way ECS funds are distributed has been criticized by many school districts, municipalities and, last year, in a ruling by the Connecticut Superior Court.

State Rep. Melissa Ziobron, R-34, representing East Hampton, East Haddam and the Westchester section of Colchester, said the term “three-way dysfunction” is not completely accurate.

“In fact, before the start of the regular session Republicans insisted there would be a massive budget deficit and that we would need to come together to work on a solution before it was too late. Republicans offered several plans that were rejected out of hand and just last month I offered our budget as an amendment, which was voted down. We have tried to amend the rules to allow a majority to vote to put forth a budget package and those attempts have been blocked,” she said in an email Wednesday.

Ziobron is the ranking Republican on the powerful appropriations committee.

The state House of Representatives has been called into session on Sept. 14, but Ziobron said she doesn’t know if members will vote on a budget that day since its Democratic leadership that controls which bills get taken up.

“My concern at this time is that both chambers, the Senate and House, may be looking at different budget proposals. The Senate President has yet to technically call their chamber into session,” she wrote.

Invoking the notorious summer of 1991, Ziobron noted that even lawmakers who were

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## Next Week, a ‘Whole New Fair’ Comes to Hebron

by Lauren Yandow

All 100 acres of the Hebron Lions Fairgrounds on Route 85 were buzzing this week as crews work to get the grounds ready for the 47th annual Hebron Harvest Fair. The fair kicks off Thursday, Sept. 7 and runs through Sunday, Sept. 10.

This year it’s a whole new experience – “we’ve really changed everything,” said fair superintendent Mike Tarbell.

More food vendors will line the grounds, families will have more exhibits and entertainment to experience, and more products will be available to purchase from vendors.

“There isn’t one area on the grounds that we haven’t made changes to,” Tarbell said. Over the past year, buildings have been torn down to open up space for more activities, with the intention to draw people into different areas, he added.

The big changes come in response to public comments. After last year’s fair, attendees posted mixed reactions and offered suggestions over social media, said Tarbell. He added that as a Lion and fair superintendent he’s also had in-person conversations with town residents about how the fair could improve – and specifically, add more: everything from food to entertainment.

“We really did listen,” he said. “It’s truly is a whole new fair.”

On opening day, the grounds will celebrate “Hebron Night,” where attendees can take advantage of “something special” by hopping on discounted one dollar rides and checking out local talent on stage, said Tarbell. Local acts include a magician, an illusionist, and musical talent.

By celebrating the town, the fair board is hoping to “bring back the flavor” of Hebron to the fair, Tarbell said.

When it comes to this year’s activities and entertainment, “the fairgrounds are literally full,” he said. Throughout the four days, fairgoers can get their adrenaline pumping on carnival rides, learn and play with family “edutainment,” jam to live music, pet farm animals, fill their bellies with food, and witness tractor pulls.

Those of age can sip brews and vino in the beer and wine garden.

Spectators will have the opportunity to take in a logging show from DLW Timberworks Lumberjack – an addition Tarbell said he’s “really excited” about. The show is a blend of logging history, competition and humor, according to the company’s official website, [timberworkslumberjackshow.com](http://timberworkslumberjackshow.com).

Also new this year, the Lions have made the animal exhibits “bigger for the kids and for families to enjoy,” said Tarbell. While the usual farm animals like cows, rabbits and goats will be in attendance, there will also be racing pigs and zoo animals. Those zoo animals – including monkeys and parrots – will be in the newly-expanded Two by Two Zoo. Crews inside the open zoo area are there to answer questions about the adopted animals, said Tarbell. “It’s an informative exhibit with a wide open U-shape so you can walk around,” he said.

Fairgoers working up an appetite can expect to have a “wide variety” of food options to pick from including barbecue chicken, pulled pork, and different carnival treats like cotton candy and fried dough, said Tarbell.

All four days, live music will fill the grounds with some tunes. In previous years, the fair featured a main act solely on Sunday. This year, the fair board decided to have a main act on Friday and Sunday. Playing the Lions Stage Friday night is High Valley, a Canadian country music duo known for the hit “Make You



**Next week these stalls will be filled with little piggies as a part of the Hebron Harvest Fair farm animal exhibit. The fair runs Thursday through Sunday, Sept. 7-10 at the Hebron Lions Fairgrounds, 347 Gilead St. (Route 85), Hebron.**

Mine.” On Sunday, the main act is William Michael Morgan, a country singer whose 2016 hit “I Met a Girl” made it to number two on the country airplay charts.

One thing that will remain consistent with last year’s fair are security measures, said Tarbell. State police and USA Security, a special events security company, will patrol the grounds all four days. Something people don’t realize, said Tarbell, is how expensive it is to run the fair. This year’s expenses ran over \$600,000; security alone costs more than \$100,000, he said. Ticket sales will cover the cost of the fair’s expenses; some money will be

put aside for capital improvements such as repairing buildings and paving. One of the projects completed for this year was widening the entrance and exit areas to get people on and off the fairgrounds faster. Every remaining penny is “honestly donated” to national and local organizations, said Tarbell.

“It’s a great feeling” to be able to give back and be a part of an entity that does so, Tarbell said. There isn’t one Lions Club member that gets a dime; “it’s all volunteers,” he added.

Those interested in becoming a Lions Club member will have the opportunity to speak with

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**Potential Cuts cont. from Front Page**

divided over then-Gov. Lowell P. Weicker Jr.'s controversial income tax plan were able to come to an agreement by Aug. 22.

"Shockingly, we have now passed the date in which one of the largest standoffs on a state budget was settled – after enacting the income tax – and unlike decades ago, Connecticut is governed under one-party rule," Ziobron said.

Weicker was an independent; Democrats held the majority in both the House and Senate.

State Sen. Cathy Osten, D-19, who represents the *Rivereast* towns of Hebron and Marlborough and serves as the co-chairman of the Appropriations Committee, said she's not interested in placing blame.

"I'm interested in results," she said during a phone interview Wednesday.

Osten is confident the senate will vote on a budget during the second week of September.

"From my perspective, since April I've been working to get a budget out that would provide bipartisan support," she said. "I think the people I represent want to see us work together and that's what I'm doing. I'm interested in getting a budget that's good for the people of Connecticut that's as austere as possible and provides us with the ability to work together."

She did not specify how soon the Senate Democrats' budget proposal would emerge prior to the expected vote.

A budget proposal by the House Democrats released last week would increase the state sales tax to 6.85 percent, but would soften the blow to area towns when it comes to municipal aid.

Under the House Democrats' plan, Andover's ECS funding would be reduced by 12.5 percent, Colchester's by 8.3 percent, and Hebron's by 6.7 percent.

Some towns would see a minimal increase in aid from the state: East Hampton's ECS dollars would rise by 0.1 percent, Marlborough's by 0.1 percent and Portland's by 0.9 percent.

Unlike Malloy's budget proposal, the House Democrats' plan does not ask municipalities to fund any portion of the teachers' retirement system.

Malloy's budget proposal, which was made in February and revised in May, makes municipalities responsible for a third of teachers' pension costs currently picked up by the state. For this fiscal year, that would equate to the fol-

lowing impact on each town in the *Rivereast* coverage area: Andover, \$431,456; Colchester, \$2.08 million; East Hampton, \$1.53 million; Hebron, \$1.36 million; Portland, \$966,127; and Marlborough, \$840,959.

Lawmakers across the board have been resistant to the idea of putting the responsibility for one-third of the Teachers' Retirement System on municipalities all at once.

**Colchester Braces for Cuts**

Colchester, which stands to lose almost \$10 million in education cost sharing funds if the legislature takes the governor's suggestion, has instituted a "hard freeze" on spending and will not be replacing ten open positions: six teachers, three paraeducators and a newly-added Information Technology technician position.

Interim Superintendent of Schools Karen Loisel Goodwin said Wednesday the high school has been hardest hit by the staffing reductions. That means larger classes and less flexibility for students to get into all the classes they were hoping for.

She said administrators don't anticipate filling the empty positions this school year, but added that the Board of Education and administration can revisit the idea if the cuts to state aid are less extensive than anticipated.

If a cut like the one Malloy has proposed ends up coming through, she said the district would have to make further reductions that would increase class sizes "dramatically."

She declined to specify how many teaching positions might be eliminated, but said former Superintendent of Schools Jeff Mathieu developed a plan that will guide the district if necessary.

Goodwin said the revenue side of the local budget, which was approved in June on the first try, assumed several state grants on the general government side of the budget would be completely eliminated.

The revenue summary in Colchester's 2017-18 budget shows the town is counting on \$423,757 less than it budgeted for last year in non-education-related municipal aid. The town estimated it would receive roughly the same amount in education aid that it got last year.

Goodwin said the budget planning process benefitted from the fact that the town and Board

of Education share a finance director. The arrangement promoted cooperation between officials who looked at municipal aid from a "community perspective" instead of regarding education and government as separate spheres, according to Goodwin.

She said she hopes a school board committee charged with exploring the consolidation of school services will help bolster the district against reduced funding in the future.

Pointing to a new program to increase enrollment by accepting students from Norwich, she said the district "has some great programs for students that may be of interest to nearby districts."

She acknowledged the effort is not a fast solution.

"We're looking long-range," she said.

**Seeking Safer Schools**

Without knowing whether the reduction in funding to East Hampton will come in closer to \$600,000 or \$6 million, Smith said the district is moving forward with careful adherence to the operating budget approved by voters at its first referendum in June.

"We're going to live within the budget our voters approved and we're going to provide a world class education because that's what our students need us to do," Smith said.

The Board of Finance planned for a reduction of \$484,000 when it crafted its budget earlier this year. While that amount wouldn't come close to mitigating the effect of the governor's proposed cuts, Smith noted it would cover the town under the House Democrats' plan.

Taking into account both education funding and all other forms of municipal aid in the House Democrats' proposal, East Hampton would receive \$346,956 less from the state than it did last year.

East Hampton Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said this week residents will probably not receive a supplemental tax bill unless the reduction in municipal aid exceeds \$3.7 million. He said the deficit in state funds can be made up by putting a freeze on hiring as well as capital spending; by dipping into special revenue accounts made up of program fees from the Parks and Recreation Department and private duty fees from the police department; and

by aggressively pursuing delinquent taxes.

In a letter to Maniscalco endorsed by the school board last week, East Hampton Board of Education Chairman Christopher Goff objected to the capital spending freeze that would affect its plan to install shatterproof security laminate on ground floor windows of all schools.

Smith said the roughly \$50,000 project has not yet been put out to bid.

During the budget planning process earlier this year, Smith asked for \$30,000, based on a three-year schedule for finishing the security upgrade. When finance board member Alannah Coshow suggested cutting that request by half, she was met with resistance from parents concerned about their children's safety in the wake of the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings.

Ultimately, the finance board agreed the upgrades were an urgent matter to be finished sooner rather than later. They added \$20,000, bringing the total allocation to \$50,000, in the hope of completing the project in two years.

Smith said this week that the town recently became eligible for a state grant to cover half the cost of the project.

Goff's letter to Maniscalco described the security laminate as a critical safety issue.

"As stewards for the protection and security of our children, the East Hampton Board of Education regrets that the governor and General Assembly have used our children and school funding as pawns in the budget struggle; however, as this project is considered one of the best ways to protect children in our schools, we are speaking out," Goff wrote.

Maniscalco said Wednesday it's important to meet the needs of the entire community.

"Nobody's happy with the situation we're in. At the end of the day, the services we provide are essential to both the children of the town and the adults of the town. And we have a responsibility to make sure we meet both of those," he said.

Maniscalco, who has a daughter who just entered the East Hampton school system, said children's safety is important to him. "So don't think I take it lightly."

## Marlborough Day Big Hit with Families

by Julianna Roche

The town's 11th annual Marlborough Day celebration, which is sponsored by the Marlborough Business Association (MBA), was met with clear skies and sunshine last Sunday, Aug. 27, bringing residents to Blish Park to enjoy a day filled with vendors, live entertainment, and food.

"I think it went really well," Parks and Recreation Department Director Ray Bull said this week. "It was a beautiful day and the turnout was really on par with what we normally have."

According to MBA president Jenny Bergeron, the day actually drew in around 1,000 attendees – which was up 200 from last year's numbers.

"I would say that [attendance] was primarily families, which is very important to us because it's one of the big reasons we have Marlborough Day – to highlight the community," she furthered.

Bergeron explained nearly 35 community organizations and businesses had booths set up this year – including both new and familiar faces, such as the Marlborough Lions Club and Richmond Memorial Library.

"I also saw more crafters than I've seen in recent years," she said, adding that another newbie to the list was the registrar of voters, who had a booth set up allowing people a chance to register to vote.

"I think they saw the benefit [of having a booth] last year," Bergeron continued, adding that "next year we want to try to filter in a little bit more for adults, but like I said we really want the families to have a good time."

Both the Cub Scout Pack 39 and the older Boy Scout Troop 39 also had booths, along with an event favorite – the monkey bridge – set up, where scouts helped children climb across. Next door, children gathered around a large table stacking up their own Legos creations.

Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* and Spider-Man were also seen strutting around the park taking photos with children, while other residents were seen lined up at the henna tattoo artist and taking snapshots with various props at the photo booth.

Next to Lake Terramuggus, some residents relaxed on swinging benches under the trees, while others sat in lawn chairs on the sand or took a dip into the water. Nearby, the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department was on site, with a water cannon, as well as an EMT truck set up for demonstrations.

Throughout the day, prizes from the Tea Cup raffle were won, which included everything from passes to the Mark Twain House to Ray-Ban sunglasses. Marlborough resident and MBA secretary Sharon Reiner won this year's grand door prize, a Jamis bike.

For live entertainment, regulars The Modern Riffs and the Marlborough Junior Ancient Fife & Drum Corps performed, and new to Marlborough Day's lineup this year was magician Chris Lengyel, as well as Kidsville Kuckoo Revue, a family singalong group led by Singasaurus and his crew.

"It looked like a lot of kids enjoyed the magician," Bull said, and added, "From everybody I talked to, people [overall] had a really good time."

Throughout the afternoon, hungry residents had their pick of either Marlborough Pizza or The Whey Station mobile food truck, serving up cheese-covered bacon tots and gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches like the "OMG" (fried mac and cheese bites, bacon and chipotle sauce) or the "Big Sal" (prosciutto, roasted red peppers and roasted garlic aioli).

And as per tradition, the Republican and Democratic town committees served up fried dough and gourmet popcorn, respectively.

As the afternoon ended, attendees were asked



**Marlborough Day returned last Sunday, Aug. 27, to feature local businesses, community organizations, food, live entertainment and more. New to the celebration this year was magician Chris Lengyel (shown here), who invited kids to participate in his interactive magic show.**

to head to the lake to take in Marlborough Day's first-ever boat parade – and while there were only a handful of registered boats this year, including a pirate ship and *Gilligan's Island*-themed boat, Bull said Parks and Rec. is confident it will be much bigger next year since registration will be announced earlier.

"It was a little bit late for this year, but we think it'd be a fun addition to end the day and

the people who did [do] it did a really good job," he said.

Bergeron agreed, adding, "We hope to have it every year and would love for people to look forward to that."

But for this year, Marlborough Day is in the books – and proved again to be a sunny, pleasant end-of-summer celebration.



The Hebron Lions Fairgrounds may be quiet now, but next week will be bustling, as the Hebron Harvest Fair makes its annual return. The booths at left will be occupied by a host of nonprofits, offering a variety of goodies. Meanwhile, at right, DLW Timberworks prepares one of the fair's new events – a Lumberjack show.

#### Hebron Fair cont. from Front Page

Spectators will have the opportunity to take in a logging show from DLW Timberworks Lumberjack – an addition Tarbell said he's "really excited" about. The show is a blend of logging history, competition and humor, according to the company's official website, [timberworkslumberjacksshow.com](http://timberworkslumberjacksshow.com).

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the fair board decided to have a main act on Friday and Sunday. Playing the Lions Stage Friday night is High Valley, a Canadian country music duo known for the hit "Make You Mine." On Sunday, the main act is William Michael Morgan, a country singer whose 2016 hit "I Met a Girl" made it to number two on the country airplay charts.

One thing that will remain consistent with last year's fair are security measures, said Tarbell. State police and USA Security, a special events security company, will patrol the grounds all four days. Something people don't realize, said Tarbell, is how expensive it is to run the fair. This year's expenses ran over \$600,000; security alone costs more than \$100,000, he said. Ticket sales will cover the cost of the fair's expenses; some money will be put aside for capital improvements such as repairing buildings and paving. One of the projects completed for this year was widening the entrance and exit areas to get people on and off the fairgrounds faster. Every remaining penny is "honestly donated" to national and local organizations, said Tarbell.

"It's a great feeling" to be able to give back and be a part of an entity that does so, Tarbell

said. There isn't one Lions Club member that gets a dime; "it's all volunteers," he added.

Those interested in becoming a Lions Club member will have the opportunity to speak with members during the fair at the Lions Booth. Attendees interested in learning more about how to get involved in their community can check out different nonprofit organization booths on the grounds as well. All nonprofits participating come to the fairgrounds free of charge, said Tarbell. And if you're not a Lion but simply have some free time on your hands and want to get involved as a fair volunteer, email Krystin Strumskas at [atvolunteers@hebronharvestfair.org](mailto:atvolunteers@hebronharvestfair.org).

Additional information about the Hebron Harvest Fair – including a map of the grounds and schedule of day-to-day events – can be found on the fair's website, [hebronharvestfair.org](http://hebronharvestfair.org). The site also features live-streaming video from over 30 cameras set up around the fairgrounds, so people can take a peek and see what's happening.

Looking ahead to next week, Tarbell said he's excited to see the community come together for the fair.

The Lions "appreciate the support the town has given us" over the years, he added.

The fair kicks off at the Hebron Lions Fairgrounds, 347 Gilead St. (Route 85), Hebron, on Thursday, Sept. 7, and runs through Sunday, Sept. 10. Hours are: Thursday 4-10:30 p.m.; Friday, noon-midnight; Saturday 9 a.m.-midnight; and Sunday 9 a.m.-8:30 p.m.

Now through Tuesday, Sept. 5, tickets can be purchased in advance at a discounted rate of \$10 on the fair's official website, [hebronharvestfair.org](http://hebronharvestfair.org). Family four-packs of tickets and specials on carnival rides are also available on the website. If you plan to purchase tickets at the fairgrounds: Thursday, Sept. 7, is "Hebron Night" and everyone gets in for \$6.50. Friday, Saturday and Sunday admission is \$13. On Friday, from noon-4 p.m. seniors (age 65 and up) are admitted for free. Tickets are also available for purchase at Ted's Food Center, 127 Main St., Hebron.

For on-the-go information about fair happenings, including a schedule of events, vendors and coupons, the new Hebron Harvest Fair app can be downloaded from the Apple Store and Android Store.

## Bransfield Says Show Will Go On in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield vowed this week that the Portland Fireworks will indeed light up the sky this year.

She's just not sure when.

Originally scheduled for mid-July, the display was postponed due to wet, muddy conditions at the Exchange Club Fairgrounds. There was talk about holding the fireworks as part of the annual Youth Services Department Family Day on Sept. 9, but the idea fizzled due to scheduling conflicts with the local volunteer fire department.

Now, Bransfield said she has called an emergency meeting of the Portland Fireworks Committee for next week so its ten members can settle on a date.

The committee brought in approximately \$27,000 between this year and last, according to Bransfield. The event is made possible by a \$2,500 line item in this year's town budget, private donations and fundraisers including bake sales, pie sales, a fashion show and a series of Victorian tea parties.

The show costs \$20,000 to put on. Additional funds cover expenses like public safety, advertising and the rental of portable toilets and light towers.

Bransfield said the committee was planning to cancel the event as recently as this week.

But that was before Bransfield discovered there would be significant costs incurred by leaving the pyrotechnics company in the lurch.

She said the company would not demand the full amount in the event of a cancellation, but would require "a goodly amount."

Last year, the event was cancelled because of funding problems. It was also cancelled in 2006 for flooding, in 2011 due to inclement weather and in 2014 because of a bridge repair on Route 17A.

Fireworks Committee Chairwoman Sharon Hoy said this year's original date was postponed because a wet spring and summer made it difficult to mow the grass at the fairgrounds, which in turn affects the sun's ability to pierce through the thick grass to dry the ground.

"Where the spectators would sit, that part was dry. That wouldn't have prevented us from having the fireworks," Hoy explained Thursday. "But the field was extremely muddy much later than it usually is and the parking was very limited. I didn't think it was fair to the public to come expecting to see a show and be turned away because there was no parking."

Picking a new date is a matter of the weather lining up with the availability of volunteers, according to Bransfield.

"We are very careful about safety, so any date

we pick will be with safety in mind and also the convenience of our viewers and all the people that contribute so much time energy and money to this event," Bransfield said.

Hoy said picking a date that works for everyone on her small committee as well as all the other behind-the-scenes players, such as police officers and fire officials, is more difficult than one might think.

And many potential dates bring their own logistical concerns, Hoy said. When one committee member suggested holding the fireworks during the Portland Fair, the idea was shot down because of the stress the pyrotechnics display would cause the animals and because there's not enough room for spectators with all the tents and equipment on the fields.

One suggestion to have a First Night fireworks show on New Year's Eve was met with a chilly reception, according to Hoy. "It gets so cold down there," she said of the fairgrounds. "It's cold and damp and even in October some of us wear winter coats."

But even as the details for this year's display are being settled, Bransfield is looking forward to new ways of fostering a successful and collaborative event in the future.

Officials in Cromwell share her interest in a possible combined River Festival next year that

may include fireworks, she said: "It's really something we could do better together."

The idea builds on a professed commitment by Bransfield, who serves as president of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, to use a regional approach in addressing fiscal challenges at the state and local level.

Hoy described her committee members as enthusiastic about pursuing that option in the future. She said members are already looking into what it would cost to set off the show from a barge as spectators look on from both sides of the river.

"It would be a wonderful celebration for both towns," Hoy said.

The fireworks show began in the early 1990s under the direction of retired Sgt. Mike Dapkus of the Portland Police Department, a fireworks aficionado who provided the fireworks at cost and donated his time to carry out the display. Dapkus stepped back after almost 20 years with the show in 2008.

Dapkus called for the creation of a fireworks committee before his departure to ensure the event's continuity.

Hoy said the Portland Fireworks Committee is in need of more members to plan the event and carry it out. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact her at 860-342-3474.

# East Hampton Residents Push Careful Approach to Hub Plan

by Elizabeth Regan

Almost 100 residents came out Tuesday to call for a careful, forward-thinking approach as officials touted plans for a sprawling new municipal hub on Route 66.

The plan for a 33,400-square-foot town hall complex on 5.4 acres of the Edgewater Hill mixed-use development on the eastern end of East High Street has evolved since February, after the Town Council selected a site for the proposed municipal complex, picked a project manager and appointed a building committee.

The project manager Steve Motto, with his wife Lisa, donated the town a 5.4-acre parcel within their development. They also offered to serve as the town's project managers for a 4-percent cut of the total project cost. Their proposal won out over seven other submissions in a competitive bidding process.

The complex would include all departments in the current town hall and the Middletown Avenue annex, the police department and the Board of Education offices.

The council is set to vote next Tuesday to send the roughly \$18.98 million project to referendum.

Finance Director Jeff Jylkka said the impact to the taxpayer for the project amounts to a net mill rate increase of 1.24 mills in the first year, or an average of 1.10 mills over twenty years.

That translates to a tax impact of \$220 per year for a taxpayer with a home assessed at \$200,000.

The debt would not come due until 2022.

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said at Tuesday's information session in the high school's seminar room that the project goes back 35 years.

A study by the engineering and architecture firm Friar Associates shows the current town hall was built in 1946 for Eversource, known then as Connecticut Light and Power. It was purchased by the town in 1971 and was renovated in 1975 to include 7,000 square feet.

Town hall staff, which Maniscalco said was made up of 31 full-time employees in 1976, has outgrown the building. That number is now up to 68.

Several town hall departments have since moved to privately-owned annex space on Middletown Avenue that Finance Director Jeff Jylkka said has cost the town almost a million dollars since the first rent check was signed.

In the police department, officers must travel about two miles away to a rented locker room and parking area at 205 East High St.

Police Chief Sean Cox said officers spend about 550 hours annually just to transport cruis-

ers and equipment to and from the off-site facility.

Officials have decried the deteriorating foundation, persistent flooding and undrinkable water in both the town hall and adjacent police department. Short-term remedies were applied to the site's well after state-ordered repairs revealed continued deterioration of the piping and mechanical equipment, according to Maniscalco.

In January, the police department operated out of a mobile unit borrowed from the Connecticut State Police for about two days while damage from both internal drain problems and weather-related flooding was repaired.

Maniscalco said the town spent \$91,000 in repairs to the town hall and police department last year.

Potential discrimination lawsuits are also a concern, according to multiple officials.

"If you're handicapped, you'd better be ready to walk down some stairs because we are not handicapped accessible in this location," Maniscalco said.

Cox described his force as "an all-white, male police department," adding he is hindered from bringing a woman onto the force because there are no separate changing facilities.

"It doesn't mean we can't hire females," he said. "What it does tell you is we can't attract females."

Town Facilities Building Committee Chairman Glenn Gollenberg said his committee, which began its work in February, understands "how bad the situation is" in the town hall and police department.

"To say it's a lawsuit waiting to happen is not an exaggeration," Gollenberg said.

## Other Sites Considered

A document compiled by the town manager's office outlines 15 properties that were considered for use as a new municipal hub and were ultimately rejected by town officials over the past several years.

Some of the properties are identified on the town's inventory of potentially-contaminated sites, updated in 2015 by the environmental engineering firm Fuss and O'Neill. Recognized brownfield sites that were reviewed include the former Gong Bell manufacturing site at 101 Main St., the former Clark and Watrous Company at 1 Watrous St., and the former Summit Thread building at the former Ghezzi Motors at 13 Watrous St.

Six properties on the list were ruled out, at least in part, due to concerns about potential

flooding. Officials cited Pocotopaug Creek's meandering presence as the reason that 1 Watrous St., 13 Summit St., 21 Skinner St. and 11 Skinner St. were eliminated from consideration.

Maniscalco told the audience at Tuesday's meeting that the biggest challenge associated with putting the town hall complex in the Village Center is that most of the area sits in a flood zone.

"You're talking about putting one of the critical municipal superstructures in a flood zone. All you have to do is put on the news today and look at what's happening in Texas and you can tell that's not a good idea," he said, referring to the devastating flooding from Hurricane and Tropical Storm Harvey.

He noted state statute requires the town clerk's vault, which holds important and historical town documents, to be kept in a reasonably dry place.

A review of the statute shows it requires towns to adhere to regulations adopted by the state Public Records Administrator. Those documents specify the town clerk's vault "shall be located in a normally dry place, preferably accessible to the section of the building where the records are used."

Maniscalco also referred to a separate policy document from the Office of the Public Records Administrator governing "public records storage facilities" that requires the facilities to be located 5 feet above and 100 feet away from any 100-year flood plain area or be protected by an appropriate flood wall.

However, the document applies to facilities "located away from the agency's primary office or place of business."

According to the Office of the Public Records Administrator, the agency does not say that a town clerk's vault cannot be located in a flood plain; instead, it evaluates each situation on a case-by-case basis.

## Residents' Questions Answered

Chief among the concerns of those who spoke during the question and answer portion of the informational session was that the project be done the right way, the first time.

According to a conceptual rendering, the proposed two-story, roman brick town hall is separated into two sections by a transparent vestibule. It is flanked on one side by a police department and on the other by a community room. The colonial revival-inspired facade is dominated by brick, metal and glass.

A solar array will double as the canopy for a

parking area for police cruisers.

Architect Tony Amenta, of the Hartford-based firm Amenta Emma, said the design of the building and the parking layout is based on five years of anticipated growth, but said there is room toward the rear of the site to expand beyond that.

Resident Dorene Nablo worried that the building and parking areas, which Amenta said would take up between 50 and 60 percent of the site, were too large to allow for expansion.

Building, Planning and Zoning Official Jeremy DeCarli said zoning regulations specify a maximum lot coverage of 60 percent for the parcel.

Nablo suggested the town consider acquiring at least two more acres.

Others suggested a one-story design with the possibility of upward expansion, though Gollenberg said that's not usually the cheapest way to go due to the initial cost of designing for a future addition combined with the likelihood that codes will change over the years and render the initial setup ineffective.

One-and-a-half-story community spaces on either side of the building were also a concern to some members of the public.

Resident Ken Larson said there's already sufficient meeting space in school buildings around town, including the one in which they were gathered for the informational session.

The focus should instead be on "having all the space dedicated to what a town hall is supposed to be," he said.

Town Council member Melissa Engel spoke from the audience to talk about the financial benefits that could come from the sale of the current town hall if the proposed hub is approved and built.

In 2014, the town received a \$1 million offer from what was then Connecticut Light & Power (now Eversource) to buy the town hall property.

"It doesn't make good fiscal sense to take that money and put it in our general fund, which is already very healthy," she said. Instead, she suggested putting that money directly toward other documented and long-standing needs.

She suggested the money could be used to help make Lake Pocotopaug healthy again or to rescue the Middle Haddam School from demolition.

"There's things that million dollars could be spent for that people in this community might be very excited about without raising taxes," she said.

# Charter Revision Public Hearing Set for Next Week in Marlborough

by Julianna Roche

Residents will have an opportunity to weigh in on the Charter Review Commission's recommended changes to the town charter next week during a public hearing at the Board of Selectmen meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 5, at 7 p.m.

The process of revising the town charter – something that hasn't been done in over 30 years – finally gained momentum once the Board of Selectmen appointed nine Marlborough residents to make up a commission in June.

Since then, the commission – which is made up of three Democrats, three Republicans and three unaffiliated/independent members – has been charged with reviewing three central questions regarding the charter including voting on the town budget by an all-day referendum rather than a town meeting, instituting automatic charter revision with prescribed intervals of at least every 10 years, at which time it would be revisited, and increasing the Board of Selectmen from three to five members (currently seated on the board are Evelyn Godbout, Dick Shea

and First Selectwoman Amy Traversa).

According to Traversa, all changes must be 1. and submitted to the Secretary of State's office by Sept. 22 in order to be listed on the November ballot.

Once the commission submits its recommendations, the first selectwoman explained it will be dissolved and following the November election, she's "publicly committed" to forming a second charter review commission to review the charter more in depth – likely in early 2018.

(According to state statute, once a charter review commission is formed, it can work for no less than 90 days and no more than 18 months.)

"Is this a compressed timeframe? Yes – which is why we're looking at [only] three questions," Traversa said, adding that if the charges were not submitted by deadline, the town "will go through another one of these budget seasons" voting by town meeting.

If the charges are ultimately approved, then next year's town's budget will be voted on at referendum rather than at town meeting, which

will be held on the same day as the RHAM referendum.

According to commission member Julie Revaz, the change from town meeting to referendum would have the "biggest" impact to residents, as it would allow for a greater number of people to "have a say" in "how to spend town money."

Presently, the town votes on the budget by town meeting – which is typically held at 7 p.m. in early May, allowing only a small window of time for residents to vote.

"In my own vote, I'm definitely in favor of having a referendum and I don't want to speak for the commission, but I think that's a pretty consistently held value," Revaz said. "Public voice is critical to the prosperity and quality of life in town [and] it's very difficult for just a few people to bring the town to its full potential and a much easier path if there's greater representation" among voters.

She furthered that setting a periodic review of the charter in place – which if passed, would

prescribe the Board of Selectmen to establish a charter revision commission to review the town charter at least once every 10 years – is "just doing good due diligence."

In regards to the third charge – increasing the number of selectmen members from three to five – the charter review commission's memorandum states that it recommends further discussion on the issue "be deferred" and presented to the second commission, as the current time restraints don't allow for a complete analysis of the charge.

"What I think is important for the public to know is that the issue is more complicated than first impressions might suggest," Revaz said "There's a lot to consider... and we weren't really comfortable to jump to making any changes without taking time to fully explore it."

\* \* \*

The public hearing is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 5, at the Board of Selectmen meeting at Town Hall.

# Educator Honored After 48 Years in Colchester Schools

by Julianna Roche

Frank Aloia has done it all. From a former Bacon Academy geometry teacher and baseball and girls' basketball coach to director of technology for the Colchester Public Schools System, the longtime educator is finally saying goodbye to the district that has won over his heart for nearly half a century.

"After 48 years, there honestly wasn't one day where I drove down from East Hampton or wherever I was living without a smile on my face, I enjoyed it so much," he said. "Honestly, [Colchester] is a humongous part of my heart and my body. I ended my career saying it will always be a part of me."

While Aloia said that his goal was always to hit the 50-year mark of working in the district, he explained his position of director of technology – which he has held since 2008 – was "unfortunately" eliminated as the school system begins "going in a new direction" with its Innovation Nation initiative.

According to a letter written from interim Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle Goodwin, the director of technology position was eliminated effective June 30.

In the letter, the superintendent writes that the district had "determined resources needed to be reallocated to provide leadership for integrating technology into classroom instruction," which ultimately led to the elimination of Aloia's position and the creation of a new position – director of education technology and instructional innovation.

"It's too bad it had to end this way ... but I didn't quit. I didn't retire. I didn't resign," he said, adding that despite falling just two years short of his goal, he doesn't plan "to dwell on what happened," but rather "on what [he] did for the district."

Last Saturday, Aug. 26, proof of just how much the educator has impacted those who stepped foot in the Colchester school system was evident, when nearly 100 people – including faculty, staff members, former students, friends and family – joined Aloia at St. Joseph's Polish Club to celebrate his career.

Sitting at a picnic table outside Harry's Place in Colchester this week while speaking with the *Rivereast*, Aloia appeared humbly speechless when reflecting on "the outpouring of people who showed up on Saturday" – many of whom were former students or co-workers who traveled across the country just to see him.

Aloia explained that included five women from New Hampshire he met in 2008 while at-

tending a PowerSchool University conference in St. Louis, Mo. He had attended the conference alone and while waiting for the van to take him to his hotel, he noticed a small group of people who also appeared to be waiting.

"I don't know anybody ... so I go up there and find out they're waiting for the same van and since 2008, every single year, we'd contact each other and meet [at the conference]. We sometimes flew together. They were like my New Hampshire family," he said.

At the party, Aloia said he was standing by the club's door when it opened and he saw the five-member New Hampshire group there.

"Because I didn't go to PowerSchool this year, they said 'Nope, we had to come down for Frank; we have to have our Frank time,'" he said. "For them to come down like that ... I didn't expect them to show up. I had tears in my eyes."

Much of the crowd at Aloia's party was also made up of former students and co-workers, with over 200 more writing their thank yous and farewells on the educator's Facebook post he shared on July 1 announcing he was leaving the district.

"Great memories both in class and on the court," wrote former student Marie Kuper. "I don't think I would have made it through high school if it hadn't been in a large part because of you. Truly I'm the one who is blessed."

Former student Jennifer Dauphinais shared similar sentiments, writing, "I wouldn't have survived honors geometry and computer programming without you."

"More than a teacher and advisor to our class of '81, a friendship that has lasted a lifetime," wrote former student Ronnie Zahacefski. "Your dedication is, was, and always will be unparalleled. There are few people who have the ability to impact so many, you Frank Aloia are one of those few."

Other comments with the likes of "best teacher I ever had," "a huge part of me growing up," "I will always remember you" and "you will surely be missed by all who ever got to know you," also flooded the post.

Even Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein shared kind words on Aloia this week, as he had him as a math and computer science teacher.

"He was an extraordinary teacher with a remarkable record of service to Colchester schools," he said. "He was popular. He was funny. He was a wonderful teacher throughout."



After working in the Colchester school district for nearly half a decade, Frank Aloia celebrated his years of service last weekend with former co-workers, students, family and friends. Shown here from left are former students from the class of 1987 including Darci Sosa, Michelle Jones Ladegard, Tammy Garrett Donovan, Aloia, and former students Donna Lunde Splendore and Joe Dicey.

Aloia said he will always remember Sept. 3, 1969, as the day he stepped foot into room 203 at the Old Bacon Academy to teach his first-ever class, eighth grade math.

"I'd never taught before," he said, adding that while he graduated from University of Connecticut, his background was not in education. "Back then, they were handing out what was called a temporary emergency permit because they needed teachers."

Aloia said he remembers thinking "I can do this," after teaching his first class.

"Being in a classroom was like being on a stage... I always did things different so they didn't know what to expect," he laughed, adding that included things like drawing parallel lines or angles on cinderblocks on the walls, or clearing the desks and drawing an octagon in the center of the room to measure its angles.

The educator was also known for writing positive comments and putting stickers on students' tests.

"In elementary school, kids love stickers," Aloia recalled. "The first time I did that, the kids were like 'This is awesome,' so I went out to the store and got as many stickers as I could."

"Even if a kid got a 60, I'd write 'good effort!'" he continued. "When you saw the faces of the kids, you knew you were doing something right."

Aloia's most recent coworkers – data specialist Roger Jessee and senior network engineer Randy Sperry – both said his enthusiasm also carried into the workplace.

"He's the best boss I ever had," Jessee said. "It's not even close ... the group dynamic that we had, I don't think I'd ever get that back, like we'd come out to lunch, we hang out with our families. [Working with Frank] is the best experience I've ever had."

Sperry agreed. "It's great to work with him," he said. "He always made us feel a part of the family."

Aloia explained "family" was how he will continue to view everyone he crossed paths with during his time within the school district.

"It was like a family – the faculty, the staff, teachers, they were fantastic people to work with," he said, adding "I was blessed to teach for 28 years, blessed to get the director of technology job. I look back on it and I wouldn't change a thing."

## Andover School Board OKs Increase for Non-Union Staff

by Lauren Yandow

The Board of Education held an executive session at the end of last week's board meeting – and, following the session, approved salary increases for two members of the elementary school's front office.

The special board meeting was held Aug. 23. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Sally Doyen said Wednesday that during the executive session the board approved one-year salary increases at 3 percent for two non-union staff members. Doyen's administrative assistant, Diane Kane, will make \$25.75 per hour for the 2017-18 year; she previously made \$25 per hour. Certified Business Manager Laura Edwards' salary will

increase from \$66,666 to \$68,666 for the 2017-18 year.

When the board negotiated previous contracts last year the non-union positions were included, said Doyen. While comparing the new increase for certified staff at 3.2 percent, which went into effect this year, the board decided on a one-year 3 percent increase for Kane and Edwards, she added.

The next regular Board of Education meeting is Wednesday, Sept. 13, at 7 p.m., in the library at Andover Elementary School, 35 School Rd.

## Hebron Board of Finance Implements Spending Freeze

by Lauren Yandow

On Thursday, Aug. 24, the Board of Finance implemented a spending freeze in response to a possible reduction in education funding from the state announced by Gov. Dannel Malloy back on Aug. 18.

The reductions will go into effect if state lawmakers can't agree on a budget by October 1.

According to a memo, sent this week by Town Manager Andy Tierney to town staff and officials, the freeze is due to the governor's disclosure of a "possible reduction of state revenues to the Town of Hebron."

According to Finance Director Elaine Griffin, Hebron received \$6,875,123 in ECS funds for the 2016-17 year. That amount will be reduced by \$6,187,611 in 2017-18 if the governor's plan is implemented, which would leave the town with \$687,512 in education aid.

Town officials "were not expecting that much of a loss in revenues, so we've implemented the freeze for non-essential spending," said Tierney. That means all capital improvement projects – that aren't already underway – will be put on hold until a state budget is passed, he added.

Back in May, the town voted to pass a \$38.62 million 2017-18 local budget.

Residents will immediately see that some budgeted items, such as several paving projects, have been "put on hold," said Board of Finance Chairman Malcolm Leichter.

To try and make up for a potential \$6 million loss, "we're looking at some serious cuts," said Tierney.

Some people think it's "too little too late," but the town has been working to stay "somewhat frugal all along," he added.

Tierney said the reduction in education funding affects both the schools and the general government.

By putting a spending freeze in place, Tierney said town officials are "trying to let residents know that in the worst case scenario we're not looking to raise the mill rate or put it on the back of the taxpayers." Instead, officials would look to "reduce services within the schools and the town."

When it comes to possible town employee cuts, Tierney said he doesn't like to make people "panic," but a hiring freeze has been implemented, so there will be "no new hires and no filling of any positions."

Town officials are already anticipating next year's budget, said Tierney. With all the unknowns, Tierney said he hopes the amount of funding Hebron will get is finalized soon so when town officials do look at the next budget they're basing it on "factual numbers instead of guesses."

Tierney said he doesn't want state legislators to perceive the municipalities as "whiners" but that municipalities do "need to be accountable and need to know" what funds will be provided from the state in order to "do their job."

When a state budget is passed, if the state aid for Hebron is close to the town's budget, "we'll back off on the freeze," said Leichter.

But, he added, "Whether we back off or don't back off, we still need town employees to be very conservative in what they buy because next year could potentially be worse."

Going forward, Tierney said as town manager he's going to "monitor all departments and their spending and keep a close ear to the legislature in Hartford."

The next House session for the state legislature is scheduled for Sept. 14. With that date in mind, Tierney said, "hopefully we get a budget."

# Colchester Drum Teacher Honored by Students

by Julianna Roche

Growing up, it was tradition for Hank Schaeffer's family to meet at his grandmother's house for Sunday dinner every weekend – where the locally-based drum teacher explained he had his “first exposure” to playing drums.

“My uncle Henry was in the house and he had just come back from the Army,” Schaeffer, a Colchester resident, said. “He was going to the Julius Hartt School of Music in Hartford and had spent some time at the Boston Conservatory ... but he played the drums.”

Though watching his uncle play fascinated him, Schaeffer explained from the time he was in second grade until he was about 13 years old, however, his mother “desperately” wanted him to play the piano.

“But I liked rhythm and found out from very early on, I was blessed with what they call a tin ear... it means you can't hear pitch,” he said. “So every piano lesson I had, every time I sat at the bench at a recital was an absolute struggle for me. I couldn't hear it [and] I didn't like it.”

Schaeffer explained it was seeing the “conflict” between the two instruments that ultimately led him to follow his heart and pick up a pair of drumsticks.

From that point on, he played percussion in Norwich Free Academy's local band, as well as a drum and bugle corps, and in various bands with his friends, including a group called The Rainbows.

In college, Schaeffer continued playing in a 275-piece marching band and while he originally went to school in Texas to study agriculture, fate had other plans for him.

“I remember it was a Sunday afternoon at 1 o'clock and somebody was walking up the hallway on my [residence hall] wing yelling ‘Does anybody know Hank Schaeffer?’,” he said. “So I opened the door and there were two guys there who said they heard I play drums.”

While playing with their band, Schaeffer said he was also approached by another band member of a western/Texas swing band called The Roadside Playboys, who invited him to play with the group.

“I wind up playing at what can only be described as ‘a bucket of blood,’ a Texas dancing fighting club, and I played there for five nights a week and one matinee,” he furthered, adding

it was there he “got to know a whole bunch of great musicians.”

Upon graduating college, however, Schaeffer decided it was time to hang up the drumsticks and focus on his career – but he explained while living in Dallas, he remembered going out to eat with his wife's family and going to use the restroom. When he returned, the band playing inside the restaurant was calling him up to the bandstand.

“My mother-in-law had gone up there and convinced them that I really needed to play so I said ‘okay,’” he explained.

Schaeffer didn't put down the drumsticks again.

In the early '70s, the drum teacher had returned to his home state of Connecticut, where his friends who owned a music store asked him to fill in for one of their drum teachers who had left to start his own business.

“They asked if I could do this for a couple weeks until they found somebody, but they never found anybody,” Schaeffer laughed. “That's when this [teaching] all started. As I got along in my daytime jobs, I was still teaching drums and it came to a point where I was able to retire and I just turned up the teaching.”

Since then, Schaeffer has typically seen up to 35 students in a week's time; however, right now he said he has about 16 students, which is “where [he] wants to be.”

Over the years, Schaeffer – who teaches lessons at a small studio in Franklin and at Tracy's Tunes in Colchester – explained he's also often sent many of his students to join The Modern Riffs, a jazz/rock/blues band comprised of a mixture of high school students and two adult mentors, Bruce Phelps and Kim DuBois.

“I get close to my kids,” Schaeffer said. “It's special for me because kids come to me and wind up playing with me for years ... and some of these kiddos aren't kiddos anymore.”

Included in that mix are former students and Modern Riffs members Molly Sayles and Jake Ouellette.

Ouellette, who has taken drum lessons from Schaeffer for the last 11 years, said that the teacher “has done a lot for a lot of people” and “that expands beyond the musical side of it.”

“He showed me there are more sides to being a musician, like how to work with other



On Saturday, Aug. 19, local drum teacher Hank Schaeffer was honored by former students, pictured here, for his dedication to teaching. Shown from left are students Molly Sayles, Connor McCaffrey, Schaeffer, The Modern Riffs leaders Bruce Phelps and Kim DuBois, and students Jake Ouellette and Ethan Puetzer.

people, dedication, how to respect other musicians, but still be a leader,” he furthered.

Sayles, who played with Schaeffer for three years, agreed, calling him “a very giving and humble person who would go above and beyond what a private lesson teacher would do.”

On Saturday, Aug. 19, to thank Schaeffer for his years of teaching, Ouellette, along with his family, other former students – including Sayles, Connor McCaffrey, Ethan Puetzer – and Phelps and DuBois, decided to plan a surprise party in his honor.

“Jake and his parents invited me to come over for dinner, and Jake met me at the door, walked me into the room and [suddenly] out of the kitchen door comes Molly, then Connor, then Ethan ... all of my drum students that wound up playing with me over the last nine years,” Schaeffer said recalling the day and holding

back tears.

“I very much treasure the art of drumming and the next thing is I like working with the kids,” he furthered. “It's just nice to see where you can help them ‘turn on a light’ and when that happens, I just step back and watch.”

And while many of his students have moved onto other chapters in their lives, Schaeffer said he has one “pearl of wisdom” he likes to offer them.

“I've looked at kids involved in sports and involved in music, and I think you can do both,” he said. “But something I tell my kids is when you play music, nobody comes to you and says ‘you can't do this anymore because you're too old.’ If you play sports, that might happen to you, but that doesn't happen with music. You decide when you stop [and] I plan to do this ‘til they pat me in the face with a shovel.’”

# Electric Tractor to Compete at the Hebron Harvest Fair

by Lauren Yandow

Keaton McGill, 16, of Bolton, first started lawn and garden tractor pulling about four years ago. It all started while looking for a hobby to participate in with his brother, Gavin, 14, and their father, Kevin. The trio joined the Middlesex County Tractor Pullers (MCTP) and it's been “fun ever since,” said Kevin.

The main goal of tractor pulling is to “pull a weighted sled the furthest distance possible along a given straight course,” according to the MCTP website – [mctp.net](http://mctp.net). The website also states a puller relies solely on power, training and instinct to get the most out of his or her tractor.

Last year, Keaton started building what he said is the first ever electric tractor in New England.

The idea came from a challenge brought on by an MCTP member, who dared the McGill family to build an electric tractor, since Kevin is an electrician.

Keaton took the challenge and began working on the tractor last November.

“I like learning from what I'm doing so by piecing it together myself I learn more,” Keaton said.

By starting with what's called a “lawn stock,” or basic garden tractor, Keaton began building the electric tractor by first taking it apart. He removed the 14-horsepower gas motor, extended the frame, extended the hood and then added a total of six car batteries to the frame. Next, he purchased an electric Golden Motor online. When the motor arrived he installed it into the tractor by hooking it up to the six batteries while completing any wiring. In addition, Keaton installed larger pulleys, and bolted on bigger tires and weights. Adding weights “give it more traction,” said Keaton.

After spending roughly 20 hours per week over the course of six months, he completed the electric tractor this past April.

Currently in his junior year at Bolton High School, Keaton has decided to submit the elec-

tric tractor as his senior demo project – a project each student needs to complete in order to graduate. The demo project “has to help your community,” he said. The electric tractor “helps the environment by not using gases,” he added.

With that in mind, he's named the electric tractor “Going Green,” he said.

The finished product weighs roughly 1,050 pounds and pulls a sled weighing 4,400 pounds. While other tractors run on gas, the electric tractor runs solely on battery power.

“I charge the batteries before every pull,” said Keaton. With all six 12-volt batteries, the tractor hits speeds of up to 12 miles per hour, said Kevin.

On the electric tractor, there's a controller for revolutions per minute [RPM], said Keaton. “I plug my computer into the controller and I can set the RPMs to whatever I want them to be,” he added.

When it comes to competing, Keaton said “all classes have a set RPM, which helps keep competition even.”

When Keaton and Gavin first started tractor pulling, Kevin said he just went to the competitions to support his boys.

“Then I got addicted to it and bought a tractor” too, he said.

As a part of the MCTP, Keaton will compete with his electric tractor at the Hebron Harvest Fair next Saturday. Gavin and Kevin will compete with their own gas-powered tractors.

While the McGills have competed at the Hebron Harvest Fair before, tractor pulling wasn't offered last year. Kevin said “it'll be good to come back to the fair this year.”

Fairgoers will have the opportunity to learn more about the MCTP, tractor pulling and can even sit on a tractor, he added.

For those who are interested in getting involved, Keaton said “anybody can pull.”

“Just buy a tractor and set it up depending on class specifications and then build your way up,” he added.



Keaton McGill, 16, of Bolton will compete in his electric tractor on Saturday, Sept. 9 at 10 a.m. at the Hebron Harvest Fair. The fair takes place on the Hebron Lions Fairgrounds, 347 Gilead St., Hebron.

*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

“What a crowd! What a turnout!”

These were remarks Donald Trump made from a firehouse in Corpus Christi, Texas, as he paid a visit to the flood-ravaged state to address the damage.

The flooding in that part of Texas has been a natural disaster – nothing like what the National Weather Service has ever seen – and has caused insane amounts of devastation. Forget weeks or months; it’s going to take *years* for the region to recover.

So what does our president do on his trip to the battered area? He treats it as if it were a campaign rally, and boasts about how many people came out to see him.

This is on top of his Twitter account over the weekend, where on Saturday he *immediately* followed up a sensible tweet of “I will be going to Texas as soon as that trip can be made without causing disruption. The focus must be life and safety” with this: “I will also be going to a wonderful state, Missouri, that I won by a lot in ’16.

So much for the focus being life and safety.

Heck, this on top of Trump’s comments on Monday, when he admitted he timed last Friday’s terrible pardon of former Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio to coincide with the news coverage of Hurricane Harvey.

“I assumed the ratings would be far higher than they would be normally – the hurricane was just starting,” Trump said at a news conference.

He never misses a chance to stroke his own ego, never misses a chance to make something political, never misses a chance to behave like a 12-year-old boy.

The man is a joke – an embarrassment – and his presidency is an affront to this great country. It’s shameful.

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Speaking of shameful: I was more than a little appalled Monday to read about two creeps who broke into a pair of occupied homes in Tolland and stole, of all things, the top of someone’s wedding cake.

According to the *Hartford Courant*, Zachary Jurewicz, 24, of Vernon, and Eric Rawson, 26, of Manchester, forced their way into a home Sunday morning. The house was occupied at the time by the homeowner and his juvenile daughter. Jurewicz and Rawson stole a bunch of

items – including a baseball bat, which they then used to hit items on the property.

The two fled and broke into another occupied home around the corner. According to the *Courant*, the homeowner told police she was in her bedroom when she heard two male voices. She left the bedroom and saw the two men, and, after a verbal exchange, the men left – but not before taking a purse, alcohol, a laptop computer – and the top piece of a wedding cake, which had been in the woman’s freezer.

That’s right: wedding cake. You can’t even pawn that. Heck, it was frozen so you couldn’t even eat it right away. Why steal it? It just seems like such a sleazy thing to do.

Thankfully, while Jurewicz and Rawson ran into the woods, officers were able to catch them. They were each charged with home invasion, first-degree burglary, second-degree burglary, risk of injury to a minor, fifth-degree larceny, disorderly conduct, criminal mischief, breach of peace and two counts of sixth-degree larceny.

The story in the *Courant* didn’t make it clear if the woman got the piece of her wedding cake back – but I certainly hope she did.

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George Clooney on his new role of being a father to twins at the age of 56: “I just have to clean the barf off of my tux. It used to be my barf but now it’s the twins’ barf. So it all works out.”

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Lastly, it may seem hard to believe but next Monday is Labor Day: the unofficial end of summer. Indeed, I’ve already spotted pumpkin goodies at Dunkin’ Donuts and Halloween treats at the grocery store, and there’s even been a slight autumnal chill in the air at night this past week.

Labor Day also means that the *Rivereast* will be closed next Monday. Don’t bother calling us; there will be no one here to pick up. However, our deadline will remain unchanged. It’s still going to be Tuesday at noon – meaning all editorial copy, such as weekly listings, press releases and letters to the editor, *must* be submitted by that time. No exceptions will be made.

## East Hampton Police News

8/9: Scott Felch, 29, of 106 Lake Vista Dr., East Hampton was issued a summons for second-degree breach of peace and simple trespass, police said.

8/10: Dean W. Molinari, 30, of 128 Broadway St., Colchester, was issued a summons for evading responsibility after police say he left the scene of a one-car crash on Route 16 in the area of Route 196. The vehicle was running, in drive, and in the middle of the east bound travel lane of Route 16, according to police.

8/17: Steven Oliver, 30, of 177 Redstone Hill was arrested and charged with two separate

counts of second-degree failure to appear.

8/23: Korey Carl Bellamy, 30, of 16 Howe St., Meriden was taken into custody pursuant to an active warrant for his arrest and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

Russell Collin, 57, of 124 Mott Hill Rd., East Hampton was arrested for third-degree threatening, third-degree criminal mischief and disorderly conduct.

Also, from Aug. 14-20, officers responded to 11 medical calls, seven motor vehicle accidents, six alarms, and made nine traffic stops.

## Colchester Police News

8/21: State Police said Timothy N. McDorman, 39, of 26 Fox Hill Dr., Vernon, was arrested and charged with speeding, failure to drive in the proper lane of a multiple-lane highway, cell phone use while operating a motor vehicle in motion, distracted driving, operating a motor vehicle without a license, criminal impersonation, and interfering with an officer: non-assaultive.

8/21: State Police said Bryan Musicus, 37, of 2 Mills Ave., Milford, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

8/22: Colchester Police said Daniel A. Kuster, 57, of 761 Middletown Rd., was arrested and charged with operating an unregistered motor vehicle, failing to meet minimum insurance coverage, operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol, and operating a motor vehicle without a license.

8/23: State Police said Brittany Rondeau, 30, of 18 High Meadow Rd., Marlborough, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

## Marlborough Police News

8/21: State Police said Neil Johnson, 33, of 13 Caffyn Dr., was arrested and charged with fifth-degree larceny.

8/25: State Police said Nicholas Lebel, 22, of 9 Carriage Ln., was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol and failure to drive in the proper lane of a multiple lane highway.

## Portland Police News

8/20: Heather Myjak, 35, of 33 North Main St., East Hampton, was arrested and charged with following too close and operating under suspension, Portland Police said.

## Obituaries

### Marlborough

#### Dorothy Caisse

Dorothy (Lemonde) Caisse, 95, of Glastonbury, formerly of Marlborough, wife of the late Robert E. Caisse, Sr., died Wednesday, Aug. 23, at Middlesex Hospital.

Born Jan. 26, 1922 in Fairhaven, Mass., she was the daughter of the late Leon and Mary Lemonde. She lived in Marlborough for many years, moving to Glastonbury four years ago.

She was predeceased by five brothers and is survived by a son and daughter-in-law Robert E., Jr. and Diane Caisse of Glastonbury, a daughter and son-in-law Carole and Larry White of Levant, Maine; grandchildren Eric Caisse and his wife Tracy, Erika and Kai Anderson; and great grandchildren Karis Nicole and Emmy Bes.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Monday, Aug. 28 at St. Augustine Church, 55 Hopewell Rd., South Glastonbury. There were no calling hours.

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



### Marlborough

#### Jacqueline Onderdonk

Jacqueline Onderdonk, a longtime resident of Glastonbury, Conn., and Ft. Myers, Fla., passed away August 18, 2017 in Marlborough. She was born July 25, 1926 in Alamosa, Colo., daughter of Cornelius and Yvonne Sanders.

She is predeceased by her husband, Arthur Bruce Onderdonk. She is survived by eight children: Patricia Littell (John) of Guilford, CT; Jacqueline Joan Marth (Luther) of Ft. Myers, Fla.; Andrew Onderdonk (Juliet) of Westwood, Mass.; Sara Heyler (David Macquade) of Queensland, Australia; Susan Bolin (Keith) of Mead, Colo.; Evelyn Jaffee (Steve) of Edina, Minn.; David Onderdonk (Sandra) of Colchester and Diane Fernandez (Luis) of Lebanon. Jackie was the grandmother of eighteen grandchildren, predeceased by Anders Hansen and Jacquie Bolin. She is also survived by sixteen great-grandchildren.

Jackie was one of several mothers who established the Buckingham Cooperative Nursery School in East Glastonbury. She was active in the St. Augustine Ladies Guild, volunteered at High Hopes therapeutic riding program and taught swimming to many Glastonbury children.

While living in her Florida community, she became an avid golfer and was very proud of her feted three holes in one. She also used her considerable artistic talents to create many handcrafted items throughout her lifetime.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. Donations may be made to Food Share, 450 Woodland Avenue, Bloomfield, CT 06002.

Guilford Funeral Home, 115 Church St, Guilford, is in charge of arrangements.

To share a memory or leave a message of condolence for the family, visit [GuilfordFuneralHome.com](http://GuilfordFuneralHome.com).

### Colchester

#### Christine Gyome

Christine Gyome, 93, of Colchester, widow of the late Paul Gyome, passed away peacefully Sunday, Aug. 27. Born Dec. 3, 1923, in Andover, she was the daughter of the late Stephen and Anna Sadlon.

Mrs. Gyome loved to be surrounded by family and friends. She had a special affinity for children and thoroughly enjoyed her years as head cook for the Colchester Public Schools system. Christine was a lifelong member of the Colchester Farmers Club, an avid New York Yankees fan and was an amazing cook.

She leaves her daughter, Patricia (Tom) Bucko of Colchester; two sons, Robert Gyome of Colchester and Peter (Kathy) Gyome of Hebron; three granddaughters, Tiffany, Stacey and Tori; her brother, Emil Sadlon of Columbia; and many extended family.

In addition to her husband of nearly 50 years and parents, she was predeceased by three brothers, Stephen, John and Charles Sadlon.

The family received guests Thursday, Aug. 31, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, before a chapel service that morning. She was laid to rest privately with her husband in Linwood Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Colchester Parks and Recreation, 127 Norwich Ave., Colchester, for programs that benefit children.

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



### East Hampton

#### Judith Handel

Judith (Tapar) Handel, 75, of East Hampton, beloved wife of the late Frederick C. Handel Jr., died peacefully Friday, Aug. 25, at Hartford Hospital. Born in Hartford Nov. 26, 1941, Judith was the daughter of the late Stanley G. and Nicolett (Flamio) Tapar.

Judith grew up in Hartford, raised her family in Glastonbury alongside her husband and eventually moved to East Hampton in 2006. Judith graduated from Hall High School in West Hartford in 1960 and spent most of her life doing what she loved most, caring for young children. She owned her own home daycare for many years, was employed by Today's Child for eight years and was recently retired from the Glastonbury Board of Ed. Food Service Dept.

Judy was a faithful member of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in East Hampton where she made many beloved friends and was active member in the Prayer Shawl Ministry, Women's Bible Study and Vacation Bible School. Judy loved crocheting and spending time with her friends and family. She was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother. She had a special gift for helping others in need whenever and wherever she was and had a genuine concern for all who the Lord allowed to cross her path.

Judy is survived by her sister, Eva O'Connell and her husband James of Colchester, and predeceased by her sister Beverly Tapar. A loving, caring mother and grandmother, Judith is survived by her children, Frederick C. Handel III of East Hampton, Ava (Handel) May and her husband Herbert of Tolland, and Raymond F. Handel and his wife Stephanie of Collinsville. God our Father had blessed Judy with eight beautiful grandchildren who loved her so very much, Ryan, Joshua, Alyssa and Sean May; Alexa (Handel) Smith and her husband Steve and Rylie, Jackson and Skylar Handel. She also leaves behind seven nephews and three nieces.

The family received relatives and friends Thursday, Aug. 28, at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. A Christian Memorial Service celebrating her life will be held today, Sept. 1, at 11 a.m., in Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1 E. High St. (Route 66) in East Hampton. Interment will follow in the columbarium in Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery, 17 Wickham Rd., Glastonbury.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Judith may be made to New Horizons Shelter, 635 Main St., Middletown.

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



### Colchester

#### Harold Thomas Logan

Harold Thomas "Hal" Logan, 69, formerly of Colchester, passed away Monday, Aug. 21. The son of Harold D. and Lillian (Tillbrook) Logan, he was born March 23, 1948 in Middletown.

Hal grew up in Cromwell, and was a graduate of Cromwell High School Class of 1966. After graduation, he spent several years in banking before entering the retail business, first with the W. T. Grant Company, and then as the manager of Ben Franklin in East Hampton. Always a gentleman and a hard worker, in his free time Hal loved nothing more than spending time with his children exploring New England, at the beach, or merely enjoying a cup of coffee in the sunshine.

Hal's immediate family consists of his daughter, Stephanie, and her husband Albert Trombley of Norwich, and his son, Kevin, and his companion Melanie Swartz of Plainfield, whom he shares with his former wife, Marie (Randazzo) Logan of Middletown - they survive him. His grandsons, Joey, Logan, and Conner Trombley; his brother Douglas A. Logan and his wife Sheryl of Cromwell; his brother David J. Logan and his wife Mary Jo of Glastonbury; and several nieces and nephews survive him as well.

Besides his parents, Hal was predeceased by a sister, Sandra Louise Logan.

A graveside service celebrating Hal's life will be observed at 11 a.m. today, Sept. 1, directly at the Linwood Cemetery, located at the corner of Linwood Cemetery and Middletown Road (Route 16), Colchester. There are no calling hours.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).



### East Hampton

#### Shirley Dill

Anna "Shirley" Dill Brown of East Hampton, formerly of East Haddam, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Aug. 29, at the Chestelm HCC in Moodus, at the age of 91. Shirley was born April 28, 1926, in West Haven, the daughter of the late George and Anna (Spouse) Montgomery.

She was the widow of the late Gustaf E. Dill Sr., with whom she bore five children and shared 52 years of marriage before he predeceased her April 28, 1998. Shirley later wed the late Ellsworth "Brownie" Brown and they enjoyed their retirements together for nearly 13 years before he passed Oct. 8, 2014.

In addition to raising her five children, she worked outside of the home as well, selling Stanley Home Products since 1963 and had also worked at the family business known as Dill Brothers Farm in East Haddam.

Mrs. Dill Brown was an active community member and volunteer in many ways. She was a 7th degree Golden Sheaf Member of the Grange, having served in nearly every post including Past Master. Shirley was a member of the East Haddam VFD Ladies Auxiliary, as well as Bethlehem Lutheran Church in East Hampton since 1966.

Survivors include three children, Carol Kedalo of Auburn, Wash., Rudolph and wife, Shirley Dill of Moodus and Lois and Joe Judkins of East Hampton; her daughter-in-law, Brenda Dill of Middletown; eight grandchildren; and several great grandchildren, extended family members and friends.

In addition to her parents and spouses, she was predeceased by two children, Gustaf Dill, Jr. and Linda Dill; as well as her eight siblings.

Family and friends may call 5-7 p.m. Sept. 8, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. She will be laid to rest privately in Waterhole Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, P.O. Box 31, East Hampton, CT 06424 or the American Lyme Disease Foundation, P.O. Box 466, Lyme, CT 06371 ([aldf.com](http://aldf.com)).

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



### Hebron

#### Theresa McKinley

Terry's motto was family first. She was her family's savior when needs arose and the glue that kept them together. Nephew Wally was taken in as a third son and niece Lisa had her own room always open for visits and fit for a queen. She loved traveling to Florida and Ireland with best friend and husband, Pat and weekends in Asbury Park, N.J., with sisters, Joanne and Denise.

A promise to be a stay-at-home mom lured Terry away from South Jersey to Connecticut. But she couldn't stay home and took a job with the local school. Actually, truth be told, the position gave the family health care benefits, but Terry fell in love with the job and the kids with her. She was known as the hat lady: she wore a different hat each day for their amusement.

Sundays she got dinner started early then settled down to watch football. Even though they lived in Patriots country she remained loyal to the Eagles except if Joe Montana was playing.

Terry ran the stock room at Metrologic Instruments in Bellmawr, N.J., and did such a fantastic job that Patrick became more than impressed. Soon he asked her out and they have been together for 30 years. They were blessed with sons Steven Miller and Joseph McKinley. Survivors include a brother, Wally Dobbins; sisters, Joanne and Denise Dobbins; and nieces and nephews, Lisa Klidzia, Stephanie Ortholf, Brianna and Justin Ortholf, Wally Dobbins, Megan Dobbins, Patti Dobbins; and dog companions, Guinness, Cassidy, and Riley.

Family celebrated 57 loving years at Daley Life Celebration Studio, Swedesboro, N.J.

Donations to Simon Foundation, 120 Rescue Lane, Bloomfield, CT 06002 will be appreciated.

### Marlborough

#### Kathryn Barbara Shepherd

Kathryn Barbara Shepherd, 83, of Marlborough, widow of the late attorney Henry Shepherd, died peacefully at her home Wednesday, Aug. 30.

Born June 25, 1934, in New Britain, to German immigrants, Eberherd Jack Weller and Emma Rose (Kaster) Weller, Barbara had lived in Marlborough since 1977. She had worked as a paralegal for her husband's law firm for many years and had served as a Justice of the Peace.

Funeral services will be private. The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., has care of arrangements.