

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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Meeting Miss Connecticut... Gilead Hill School first-grader Arden Jacques hugs Hebron's own Bridget Oei, as Collins Price looks on, during Oei's visit to the school last week. Oei, who is Miss Connecticut 2019 and was also first-runner up in last month's Miss America 2019 competition, is touring schools across the state touting her theme for the year: "Women in STEM: Inspiring the Next Generation of Innovators." See story on page 23.

Rec Director Accused of Decades-Old Rape

by Allison Lazur

A Cromwell woman on Tuesday stood before the Marlborough Board of Selectmen and accused Parks and Recreation Director Ray Bull of raping her more than two decades ago.

The alleged victim, Kerry Visone, named Bull in her statement to the selectmen.

"Twenty-three years ago, I was raped at a party by Ray Bull," she said.

Bull was not present at the meeting. He did not respond to multiple calls and emails from the *Rivereast*.

Visone told selectmen that support from friends and family has been "invaluable" since she first told them about the alleged rape late last year, which she said occurred in Vernon in 1995. She filed a belated police report on the allegations in January of this year. The statute of limitations for sexual assault in Connecticut is five years.

Two of Visone's friends, Felipe Martins and Ethan Heinen, also stood up during the meeting to say they had reached out to First Selectwoman Amy Traversa this summer to let her know about Visone's allegation against Bull, who reportedly worked for the Town of Vernon at the time of the alleged incident. He started work in the Marlborough Parks and Recreation Department in 2015.

Visone said she has heard that the second-hand information from those who reached out to Traversa was met with "opposition or indifference" from the first selectwoman because it didn't come directly from Visone.

"I am here tonight to put a face to the name that you have been told about. I am Kerry and I

am the one who was raped by Ray Bull," Visone said.

Through tears, Visone said she reached out to Bull via email in December 2017 and received a response from him a few days later.

"His words displayed some ownership and much remorse, sharing that he was drunk and selfish among other things," Visone alleged. "He also shared that the fact that he hurt me was something he would have to live with the rest of his life."

In the police report filed Jan. 19, 2018 with the Vernon Police Department, Visone said she attended a house party in the summer of 1995 when she was 18 or 19 years old. She had "a few alcoholic drinks" at the party, according to the report.

The report said Visone went to one of the bedrooms in the house later in the night, closed the door behind her and laid down on the bed; minutes later, she remembers Bull entering the room. Visone in the report identified Bull, who was friends with her boyfriend at the time, as an acquaintance.

According to the report, Visone thought Bull was intoxicated. He allegedly got on top of Visone and began kissing and touching her, subsequently penetrating her with his penis, the report said. Visone referred to the incident as "one-sided" and, in her statement to police, said she "did not take an active role in the encounter."

Visone said she remembers telling Bull "this isn't right; I don't want to do this," according

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Ground Broken on New Belltown Hub

by Elizabeth Regan

Public and private spheres converged last Friday on a rain-soaked construction site in the Edgewater Hills development to break ground on a brand-new, \$18.98-million municipal hub.

The East Hampton community has been grappling with an undersized and outdated town hall and police department for the past three decades, during which time numerous studies led to little visible progress. That changed in early 2017 when the town council chose the 5.4-acre Edgewater Hills site – which is located on Route 66 about a mile east of the current facility – over seven other submissions in a competitive bidding process. The parcel was donated by developers Stephen and Lisa Motto, who are serving as the town's project managers for a 4-percent cut of the total project cost.

The developers stood alongside town officials and the project's building committee before lining up for the ceremonial groundbreaking. A crowd mostly composed of town employees looked on.

"It's not typical that you would find a situation like this, where we're able to blend a municipal and a private enterprise like Steve and I have," Lisa Motto said. "We're believers in this community, we love this community, we want to do well by this community. It's a real honor to be a part of this project."

The 33,400-square-foot, colonial revival-inspired building of brick, metal and glass will include all the offices housed in the current town hall, police department, Board of Education building and a municipal annex on Middletown Avenue. It was designed by the architecture firm Amenta Emma of Hartford.

The site is part of the Motto's evolving Edgewater Hill development, which will grow to include restaurants, shops, offices, single-family homes, townhouses, condominiums and apartments over the next decade.

Town Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel described the current town hall and police department as facilities that have been kept together with "duct tape, cement, patches, nails,

screw guns, sump pumps and employees wearing rubber boots."

Officials have decried the deteriorating foundation, persistent flooding and undrinkable water in both the town hall and adjacent police department. Some of the temporary fixes described by Engel have been used in response to flooding issues in the lower level of the current town hall and across the entire police department, which in early 2017 was overrun with brown water due to a clogged drainage system that couldn't accommodate a water treatment system installed to address unsafe drinking water. The situation was exacerbated by flooding related to a nor'easter just a month later.

"The time has finally come to put our shovels to the dirt and prepare for the building that will long be here to serve the needs of the people and neighbors of East Hampton," Engel told the crowd.

Police Chief Dennis Woessner, who was sworn in about five months ago, said he was happy to be at the groundbreaking among of-

ficers who have been advocating for a new police station for decades.

"As a new chief, I walk in and I get a brand-new building," he said. "What more can I ask for?"

He thanked former Chief Sean Cox for his role in designing the new facility.

"He was the one that made sure everything in my new police department is going to be what I need," Woessner said.

East Hampton Police Department Union President Hardie Burgin said this week that the groundbreaking has been "a long time coming."

He said the new police station solves one of the department's major obstacles: a lack of space.

"Right now we're crowded and we don't have room to do anything," he said of the existing 2,100-square-foot facility.

The new 10,000-square-foot police station will have room for functions the department currently struggles with, including evidence

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to the report. She said she believed he responded with “shh, be quiet. It’s fine,” the document said.

In the report, Visone recounted asking Bull if he was going to stay in bed with her. She said she believes Bull said “yes,” but he ended up leaving the room.

Visone did not seek medical attention afterwards, the report said.

The next day, Visone told a friend what happened with Bull, the document said. She didn’t discuss the alleged incident again until October 2017, when Visone revealed to her husband what happened at the party in 1995.

A Jan. 25, 2018, statement from the friend Visone had allegedly told about the incident corroborated Visone’s story, according to the report.

In her statement, the friend explained that while she was not personally in attendance at the party, Visone approached her the day after and said “something” happened involving unwanted sex with Bull. The friend said Visone did not go into specific details or discuss the matter further.

The report stated Visone stayed in contact with her friend over the years and, in October 2017, told her that Bull had allegedly raped and sexually assaulted her at that time.

The report said the incident will remain on file at the Vernon police department in the event that the statute of limitations changes.

At Tuesday’s meeting, Visone talked about why she waited more than two decades to make the accusation. She said she felt “ashamed,” “embarrassed” and feared nobody would believe her – but she decided to speak publicly “because it is the truth.”

Visone’s comments were preceded by her husband Jeremy Visone and their friends, Marlborough resident Felipe Martins and Amston resident Ethan Heinen, who also spoke out with concerns over the allegations. Both had learned about the allegations in recent months.

“And now that your community has heard about this secret, you should hear it from me so that no one can dismiss the truth because of the source of information,” Visone said. “More importantly, I no longer need to be burdened by the weight of this secret. I have carried this secret largely alone for far too long. The burden of this weight can now be his and not mine.”

Heinen told selectmen he contacted Traversa in the summer regarding these allegations. He said he had documents, including a Facebook message from Kerry Visone as well as the letter from her to Bull and Bull’s response, that he was prepared to submit to the selectmen.

However, Traversa cautioned Heinen on naming Bull and submitting the documents.

“I think it’s going to either be your choice to either submit the documents or not,” Traversa said. “I don’t know how to advise you. I’m not an attorney.”

Acknowledging that the information had been brought to her attention by Heinen, Traversa said she reached out to legal counsel at the time but the allegations were determined by the attorney to be “undocumented” and “unsubstantiated.”

“At the time, in talking through this with town counsel, I was told that there is absolutely nothing the town either should or would be required to do,” Traversa said.

Heinen did not submit the documents Tuesday night to the selectmen, but told them he felt it was his “moral and civic duty” to bring up the issue.

Traversa during Tuesday’s meeting said she was unaware of any police report at the time of

Heinen’s inquiry this past summer. But Heinen told the *Rivereast* Wednesday that Traversa declined his offer to provide her with a copy of the police report and emails at that time.

The *Rivereast* learned Wednesday the documents were ultimately submitted to the selectmen after the meeting by Jeremy Visone.

Traversa on Wednesday declined to comment on personnel issues. She said she sought further counsel from Town Attorney Nicholas Grello after the meeting.

Traversa told the *Rivereast* that until Tuesday night, it was her understanding “there was no police report.”

Grello did not return multiple calls for comment.

Martins said Tuesday night he did not allow his two young sons to sign up for programs run by the Parks and Recreation Department this past summer after he learned about the incident.

“I have two boys here in town, [ages] 11 and 13,” he said. “This past summer they didn’t partake in any of the camps that the town does sponsor down at the lake. I didn’t feel comfortable registering them to partake in those camps because of issues that were brought up by the Facebook messages and email both from the victim and the accused.”

Martins said he also reached out to Traversa, but she said she did not remember him contacting her.

“I received messages from two people. This is the first I’m hearing from you,” she told Martins at Tuesday’s meeting.

Martins on Wednesday told the *Rivereast* he sent Traversa a Facebook message that named Bull as the alleged rapist. The message was initially from Visone, disclosing the incident to close friends and family, he explained.

Visone’s husband, Jeremy Visone, spoke after Heinen and Martins.

Jeremy Visone said he and his wife decided to bring their concerns to the selectmen directly because other citizens had not gotten a response.

“We are reluctantly here to provide you the opportunity to hear directly from the victim so your citizens’ concerns will be heard and taken seriously,” he said. “To these concerns, we are here to speak clearly and unambiguously about what happened to my wife 23 years ago at the hands of your director of Parks and Recreation.”

Jeremy Visone referred to Bull as someone who “treated women with disrespect,” adding he “would not want a rapist as an organizer of family and children’s programming.”

He concluded his statement by calling on the community to make the ultimate decision on how to move forward with such an allegation.

“What you and your entire community choose to do with this information is ultimately up to the people of this community, not us,” Jeremy Visone said. “But I will not allow my wife’s truth to be doubted because we are not around to speak it.”

Traversa concluded the meeting by reiterating she was not aware a police report had been filed when the allegations first came to light this summer.

“It’s not that I didn’t take [the allegation] seriously. I did take it seriously. I was given advice and followed that advice,” Traversa said. “I am sorry for anything you’ve gone through, but never was there a point where it was a matter of questioning the veracity of it. There was just nothing for me to substantiate.”



An array of those responsible for the new municipal hub to be constructed on Route 66 assembled last Friday to break ground on the \$18.98 million project. The 33,400-square-foot building will include town hall offices, the police department and the Board of Education.

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storage, evidence processing, interviews and the detention of males, females and juveniles.

It will also allow for on-site locker rooms and parking areas. Officers currently must drive almost two miles from their cramped police station to a rented parking area and locker room.

“It’s going to open up a lot of possibilities for us to function as a modern police department,” Burgin said.

Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith donned a hardhat and shovel at the ceremony to let the crowd know he’s excited about the new Board of Education offices and the possibilities it holds for his employees and the wider community. The school board’s space will take up 1,790 square feet of the new building.

“I hope we can view this town hall as a commons area, a welcoming structure for all, because everyone who will walk through the doors owns the building,” Smith said.

Board of Education staff will be moving from the current office at 94 Main St. in the Village Center. The 3,400-square-foot building was constructed in 1866, where it has served as a school and as a town hall. It has not yet been determined what will happen to the old building when the Board of Education moves out.

Numerous speakers at the groundbreaking ceremony thanked the building committee. The nine-member group has worked since February 2017 to help select an architect, develop conceptual designs, establish project costs, send the project to voters and facilitate its completion on time and under budget.

Vice-Chairman Jeff Foran acknowledged the committee’s hard work over many meetings since then.

“Nineteen months later, we’re breaking ground,” he said. “It’s just unbelievable. And we’re going to give the town a building that they’ll be proud of.”

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco described the future town hall, police department and Board of Education facility as a “one-stop shop.”

“This building will embody the hard work of the countless elected officials, staff, volunteers and residents who made East Hampton what it is today,” he said.

He emphasized the new space will allow staff members to provide the best service possible for the residents of East Hampton.

“This will be the people’s house,” he said.

The construction project was approved at referendum last November by 30 votes. While moderator Red McKinney initially said the 30-vote margin was close enough to force a recount, a review of state election law by town staff revealed a recount was not warranted.

Close votes in two municipal races on the same ballot did result in a recount, however. It was revealed through the process that an unspecified number of votes were counted twice due to human error. It remains unclear how the error may have affected the referendum vote.

A request by the *Rivereast* to view all the handcounted ballots a week after the recount was denied by Town Attorney Richard D. Carella, of Updike, Kelly and Spellacy. The newspaper appealed the denial to the state Freedom of Information Commission, which dismissed the case in August. A second complaint is pending.

After the ground had been broken and cannolis were being consumed next to a construction trailer, town council member Kevin Reich congratulated resident Terry Sprankle for his role in the project. Sprankle and his wife, Mary Ann, ran a political action committee to fund publicity efforts prior to the referendum. They also established a Facebook page to spread the word so residents could make an informed decision.

“He and his wife put their heart and soul into getting information out,” Reich said. “Whether they vote ‘yes’ or ‘no’ isn’t important as long as they know what they’re voting on.”

Sprankle said the 3,502 votes on the referendum question represented a good turnout. He pointed out that the most recent budget referendum attracted less than half as many voters.

“We wanted to get the facts out, because we thought the facts would carry the day,” Sprankle said. “And it did. Not by a whole heck of a lot, but it did.”

He described the existing town hall as inadequate for current needs and for the community’s envisioned growth. The new facility changes all that, according to Sprankle.

“It raises the image of the town. It tells everyone who wants to come into town that this is the future,” he said. “We’re ready for it and we’re building for it.”

Colchester Daycare Center Closes Abruptly

by Allison Lazur

The Apple Tree Learning Center, located at 336 Halls Hill Rd., closed today.

The child care center is one of three Apple Tree Learning Centers that have shuttered due to lack of funds, explained the director of the Colchester location, Jen Williams.

Williams only learned about the impending closing of the Colchester location last week.

The Apple Tree Learning Centers as well as the Wee Ones Child Care Center are owned by the estate of Kerry Hils, who passed away last year. The Wee Ones Child Care Center – located in Cromwell – also closed last week.

“I feel flabbergasted, shocked and cheated. I wish I knew it was as bad as it was,” Williams said. “We knew the center could stand to do a little better, but we didn’t know it was bad enough to close the center,” adding, she didn’t realize “bills were going unpaid.”

The Rocky Hill-based Romano Parker and Associates law firm didn’t return calls for comment.

The center received notification from the estate on Sept. 27 that the center would be closing Oct. 5. The Enfield Apple Tree location is also closing its doors today, and the Vernon center closed abruptly last week.

A letter also dated Sept. 27 was distributed to parents, as well as staff of the center, and stated “the Estate of Kerry Hils is unable to maintain the business as a viable entity or find a competent buyer to keep the business going.”

Williams said the center had about 30 children enrolled and cares for children ages infant to fifth grade.

Because parents pay a week in advance, Williams said to her knowledge no parents are owed money and the last payment was able to

fund this final week of care. Childcare is \$185 a week for children over three years of age and \$232 for children under three.

However, parents and children won’t be the only ones impacted.

A teacher at the center, Alyssa Howard, said when the teachers found out, everyone was crying.

Williams said she wants to know if outstanding invoices for supplemental Aflac insurance coverage will be paid since the money has already been taken from her paycheck and hopes she and staff are also paid out for unused vacation hours.

“When you go into childcare you know you aren’t going to make a ton of money,” Williams said. “What’s hard for us is if we aren’t going to make a ton of money, it would be nice

to receive benefits to maintain staff retentions and increase morale.”

Williams said she plans to reach out to the Romano Parker and Associates law firm to inquire about the insurance invoices and vacation hours.

Teacher Kimberly Golias said she wishes someone “would take over the business so these families who are not able to find a daycare could stay here.” Howard chimed in saying she had personally called daycares within a 10-mile radius and none were accepting children aged infant to three.

“Everybody is packed,” Golias said.

In the letter to parents and staff, parents are encouraged to call 211 as a childcare resource, or visit 211ct.org.



Residents were advised to shelter in place after an Osterman propane truck crash Monday morning caused the closing of West Road until around 10:30 that night.

Propane Truck Rolls Over in Colchester

by Allison Lazur

Shortly after 9 a.m. Monday, an Osterman propane tank rolled over on its driver’s side after the driver drove off the shoulder, losing control of the vehicle, said Fire Chief Walt Cox.

The crash, in the area of 359 West Rd., caused two leaks from two small, ruptured pipelines underneath the tank, Cox said.

Cox said the leaks were plugged by technicians from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and Salem Fire Department with the assistance of Osterman Propane representatives.

The driver of the vehicle was able to “self-extricate” and was transported to Marlborough Clinic by Lyme Ambulance with minor injuries, Cox said.

A 330-foot perimeter was established and residents were advised to shelter in place, Cox

said.

The residential propane truck was just beginning delivery so was filled, Cox explained. The truck can hold approximately 3,000 gallons of propane.

Cox said a continuous flow of water was pumped to the area of the crash “to contain propane flow and direction in the air” until the leaks could be remedied.

The Colchester and Salem fire departments were the first on scene with mutual aid from the towns of Marlborough, Lyme, Bozrah, East Haddam, East Hampton, Gardner Lake and Yantic, Cox said.

The road did not reopen until 10:29 p.m. The cause of the crash is still under investigation, according to State Police.

Spontaneous Combustion Causes Fire in Marlborough

by Allison Lazur

A garage fire on Sept. 23 appears to be the result of spontaneous combustion caused from rags soaked in a linseed oil based wood finish, Fire Marshal Joe Asklar said.

A garage at 26 Mayflower Rd. was the site of the fire at approximately 1:30 p.m., Asklar said.

Rags left in the garage were the culprit of spontaneous combustion.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) website explains that spontaneous combustion occurs when “a material increases in temperature without drawing heat from its surroundings. If the material reaches its ignition temperature, spontaneous ignition or combustion occurs.” Materials that are prone to spontaneous combustion include oily rags, hay, and other agricultural products, the website states.

“There are certain wood finishes that have a linseed oil base and when linseed is left in

rags, they can spontaneously catch fire,” Asklar said.

The NFPA website explains that spontaneous combustion can be prevented by making sure rags that have absorbed oils such as linseed oil or turpentine be kept in well-covered metal cans and thoroughly dried before storing.

The owner of the residence, along with the assistance of Marlborough Fire Captain Jason Bevans, was able to remove the burning debris and put out the fire before the fire department arrived, Asklar said.

Although mutual aid was initially requested from the surrounding towns, Asklar said the request was canceled immediately once the fire was out.

The garage sustained smoke and fire damage, and there was light smoke damage to the residence. Asklar said there were no injuries.

Oei Pays Visit to Hebron School to Inspire Girls

by Sloan Brewster

Hebron elementary schools have a new favorite princess in the form of Bridget Oei, Miss Connecticut and first runner-up in the 2019 Miss America competition.

Last Thursday Oei, a Hebron resident, visited Gilead Hill and Hebron Elementary schools and talked to students about exploring Science, Technology, Engineering and Math [STEM]. During her year as Miss Connecticut, Oei, a University of Connecticut environmental chemistry graduate with plans to go to med school, will be spreading the word on “Women in STEM: Inspiring the Next Generation of Innovators.” She plans to tour schools and talk to young women about it; the schools in her hometown were her first stop.

Oei began the day with first-graders and teacher Kim Waldron in the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math [STEAM] Lab where they performed experiments with salt and ice and had a group discussion about the results.

Students chimed in about how fast the ice melted when exposed to the salt and commented on other impacts from the exposure.

While taking a group picture with Oei, students flocked around her and one little girl told everyone how she felt about the visitor.

“She’s my favorite princess,” she said.

While Oei was waiting for her next session she talked briefly with the *Rivereast* about how the day was going and expressed how much she enjoyed spending time with the children and spreading her message.

“It’s so amazing at this age, they’re so engaged,” she said.

Oei spoke with groups of students about the importance of science and her particular interest in the field, which she told them began when she was in sixth grade while doing experiments and making up inventions in her garage.

One invention she described took place at the beach, where she made a floatation and added magnets that created energy from waves. As a

child, Oei said she was particularly interested in coming up with ways to make energy.

“One of the problems that I saw was that we need energy,” she said, explaining her thought process as she looked at the ocean and thought about the fast-moving waves. “They have so much energy when they move; how can we use that?”

Oei’s face lit as she spoke of the work she did as a child, saying how her invention with energy and waves has had a long-term impact on her.

“That’s why I got super excited with science,” she said. “I’ve fallen in love with chemistry and I’m going to be a doctor.”

She shared more current stories as well, showing the children how the science continues to follow her.

“I live and breathe science,” she said.

Oei gave an anecdote about a recent trip to New Jersey and drying her hair before an appearance. The hair drier got too hot and when she placed it on the table it melted the tablecloth.

“I said, ‘That’s not going to work,’ so I made a heat pad so I could put my hair drier on the table and not ruin my tablecloth,” she told the assembled children.

She also told the children about the value of working together with friends.

“Collective science, that’s when it’s really fun because it’s teamwork and that’s when you solve problems and it can be really fun,” she said.

Science is not limited to working in a white coat in a lab, she said – adding that, while she’s done that, she got as much out of doing science in the garage.

“You can do science now,” she said excitedly.

One student asked Oei if she liked science when she started doing it and she admitted that while the field comes with challenges, it was love at first sight.

“I think I liked science right away, but it’s



Gilead Hill School first grader Skylar Scott reaches up to touch Bridget Oei’s Miss Connecticut crown. Oei visited schools in her hometown last Thursday and talked about her love of science and plans to be a doctor in the hope of inspiring young women to take up science.

hard sometimes,” she said.

She described the difficulty she has encountered looking for solutions. “But that happens,” she said, adding that obstacles offer an opportunity for collaboration.

In science, there is always something new to learn, Oei told the children.

“I’m going to spend the rest of my life asking questions and coming up with solutions,”

she said. “I’m constantly learning, which is super fun.”

On Wednesday, Superintendent of Schools Tim Van Tassel said students were still talking about Oei’s visit.

“It was really a very special day and I’m certain that there are memories that will last a lifetime,” he said. “It was inspirational; I know that our students felt the same.”



Residents want to make the Hop River Trail more user-friendly, according to the results of a recent town-wide survey. Pictured at left is a covered bridge on the trail, running over Route 316, while at right is another bridge, near Lake Road.



Andover Residents Want to Improve Hop River Trail

by Sloan Brewster

A big takeaway from The Long Term Planning Committee’s recent town-wide survey is residents want to make the Hop River Trail more user-friendly, according to the committee’s chairman, Eric Anderson.

Among the 200 folks who filled out the survey, 73 percent said they use the rail trail, according to a report on survey responses. Of those trail users 55 percent use it for walking, 44 percent bike on it, 31 percent use it to walk their dogs, 25 percent hike there, 9 percent run it, 1 percent use it for horseback riding and 3 percent for an activity other than those listed.

“[One] thing that was surprising to me was the fraction of the people that said they use the rail trail,” Anderson said in a call Tuesday. “We as a town have to start thinking about owning it.”

By “owning it” Anderson said he was speaking figuratively, referring to the need for the town to take responsibility for the trail and better serve the population that uses it.

“There’s a few places where we can do better,” he said. “There’s a lot of little things that would really contribute to making the trail more user-friendly.”

Currently the town does some trail maintenance, including mowing it once a year and sending a crew to remove downed trees when it is asked to do so by the state, Anderson said.

The town could also improve parking, fix

safety and drainage issues and improve crossings at Shoddy Mill and Wales roads, he said.

“The town could work on [issues] over time and make the trail safer,” he said.

The primary trailhead is accessed at the Museum of Andover History, at the corner of routes 6 and 316, with the plan for three trailheads eventually, Anderson said. The other two would be at Center Street and the corner of Lake Street and Merritt Valley Road, where there is already an unofficial parking lot.

The Center Street project has been approved by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, but final approvals from the state are forthcoming, Anderson said. The lot at Lake Street and Merritt Valley can be expanded once that project is completed.

The committee, which was formed in January, is charged with finding ways to take action on goals and recommendations in the town’s Plan of Conservation and Development [POCD].

The survey, which was included with tax bills sent out in July, answers the questions “What do you think?” and “What do you want?” and was a means to gauge residents’ priorities, Anderson said.

“The first thing we wanted to really do was make sure that whatever decisions we made or considered [or] came up with were supported by the town,” he said.

There were exactly 200 responses to the survey, representing 6.25 percent of the town’s approximately 3,200 residents. The average age of respondents was 10 years older than the town’s 45-year-old average adult, the report said. Copies of the survey were at Town Hall and Andover Public Library.

The report goes on to say that based on the age of respondents and the fact that only 11 percent of them were below the median age, it is not a true representation of the town.

Based on the survey results, the trail is the biggest source of recreation for residents, second only to the library, which 65 percent of residents use.

The survey also drew light on concerns residents have with how information is disseminated by the town, Anderson said.

“There was a clear dissatisfaction with communication from the town in terms of getting information to residents,” he said.

According to the report, only 49 percent of respondents said they believe information from town government is adequately communicated.

Survey respondents also indicated they felt restoring the Museum of Andover History was an important thing to respondents. The exterior of the building needs a new front door and siding, Anderson said, as well as a new lower roof – and it was the roof that caused some con-

sternation at Wednesday’s Board of Selectmen meeting.

A Request for Proposals [RFP] has been issued for the roof replacement project, but selectmen Wednesday rejected the bids and decided to reissue the RFP. The lowest bid, which was \$21,360, more than doubled the town’s \$10,000 approved budget for the project. Other bids exceeded that amount by much more, and Cathleen Desrosiers, selectman, called them “preposterous” – singling out a \$140,000 bid in particular.

“I say we go back to RFP,” she said. “I mean, this is just a fishing expedition to see if the town would do this for \$140,000. This is crazy. I mean, it’s crazy.”

The committee meets once a month. Before coming up with a plan of action, members will need to process the information they have gleaned so far, Anderson said. In addition to the survey, the committee has been looking into town demographics trends, including populations of elementary school children and senior citizens to determine what pressures the town will face in the future as people migrate away from rural areas and move to cities.

“We may be facing a population decrease,” Anderson said.

Look for a story on the 17-page report on demographics in next week’s *Rivereast*.

Lead Continues to Frustrate Hebron School Officials

by Sloan Brewster

Once again, water taken from Hebron Elementary School showed an unsafe amount of lead – but a week later a second sample taken from the same sink has come back clear.

Out of 20 samples that were taken this month, one came back with lead levels exceeding the state Department of Public Health's acceptable levels, Superintendent of Schools Timothy Van Tassel said in a phone call Wednesday.

"We interpreted this to be an anomaly so we went back and cleaned the aerator filter in the sink," he said. "We didn't understand why this particular room was showing levels that exceeded the action level."

Since the water came from a sink that is regularly drawn from for other testing, Van Tassel said the district already knew that the lead levels should be low there.

"We know the water is flowing there," he said.

After rinsing out and cleaning the filter, the district took another water sample and tested

it.

"I just found out that that actual site was below the action level," Van Tassel said. "We don't know if [DPH is] going to accept the additional sampling but we are forwarding it to them."

The water contractor is going to reach out to DPH and notify it that the district believes the failed test was caused by build-up in the aerator, he said.

The district tested clear in June and Van Tassel had anticipated another round of clear tests this month.

Lead was first discovered in the school's water in November of 2016.

The Board of Education is currently bound by an Administrative Agreement with the DPH that details how the district will address the lead issue – namely by regular testing – until there are two clear testing periods, the superintendent said. The agreement was a follow up to an administrative order from which the district was released in May.

"If the DPH accepts [the second sample], there is a likelihood that we would no longer be on the administrative agreement," Van Tassel said.

The lead is not coming from the source but from lead solder used in older piping, which is evidenced by lead levels in different areas of the school, the superintendent said.

At the end of the last school year, when treating water with a corrosion inhibitor, proved less effective than anticipated, the district initiated a flushing protocol to assure that water is constantly running at strong enough rates that lead levels don't increase.

Samples taken in June 2017 were clear but the next round of tests in September of that same year failed to meet DPH standards, Van Tassel said. The theory was that lack of use left stagnant water in the pipes over the summer and caused the lead to leach into the liquid. The hope was that making sure water ran through the pipes as opposed to sitting there during the

summer months would prevent another round of failed tests this month.

In light of the continued issues, Van Tassel said he will discuss the prospect of getting quotes for replacing pipes in areas that are known to have lead at next Wednesday's Board of Education meeting.

"This began in November 2016, so we're almost two years into this," he said.

The lead is still present but the district is mitigating it by flushing the water, he explained.

"It's removing as much of it as it can but it's not necessarily taking out all the lead," he said.

Talks of replacing the pipes are "very preliminary," Van Tassel said, but in the meantime he plans to explore if the project would be eligible for grants or state bonding.

"I think it's being productive to actually go forward and do our due diligence by getting an estimate to replace [the pipes] just in the areas where there is lead," he said.

Andover Selectmen Ban Use of Old Firehouse

by Sloan Brewster

The Old Firehouse will no longer be the site for Andover Senior Center activities – or, indeed, any town function, after the Board of Selectmen Wednesday banned the use of the building.

The move was due to recent air quality tests confirming what folks around town have said they've known for decades: the building is infested with mold.

Town Administrator Joseph Higgins said the results of the tests, which were performed by Green Home Solutions of West Hartford, had come in earlier in the day.

According to a memo from David Bloom of Green Home Solutions, not all molds are necessarily airborne and samples are a short "snapshot in time" and can vary based on air currents and other factors.

In the report, Bloom wrote he felt "some remedial action needs to be taken." Deputy First Selectman Jeff Maguire read that part of the report aloud at Wednesday's meeting – and added, "That's genius, that's just genius."

Selectwoman Cathleen Desrosiers asked if he wanted them to say "You told us so."

Maguire last month told the selectmen he didn't feel it was necessary for the town to spend \$440 to perform mold testing on the building, as he felt it was pretty evident already. Nevertheless, the other selectmen agreed to the testing.

"There is no reason to do a mold test in that

building," he insisted at the time. "What are we going to spend \$400 on when every person in this town that has been in that building knows there's a problem? ... You've got mold."

The mold has been present for 80 years, speakers at last month's selectmen's meeting said, and when the Fire Department still housed the building it made various attempts to mitigate it – to no avail.

During a *Rivereast* tour of the building in August, the upstairs portion had a harsh mildew/mold-like odor. Down in the garage/basement area the smell was much stronger and along the wall and on the ceiling the large patches of mold could be clearly seen.

Maguire made the motion to ban the building's use; Julia Haverl, selectman, seconded the motion – and added that she feels the building needs to be taken down.

The motion passed 3-1, with First Selectman Robert Burbank the only dissenter. (Selectman Jay Lindy was absent from the meeting.) Burbank said the town should remediate the mold in the building.

"I'm not asking you to tear it down," Maguire said. "I'm just saying we shouldn't let any other organization use the space."

"Absolutely, I agree with that," Desrosiers said.

Cathy Palazzi, senior coordinator, said the Young at Heart group holds three meetings a month there. Selectmen, Higgins and Palazzi

will work out how to use Town Hall for those meetings.

Buses and vans parked at the Old Firehouse will remain there for the time being, parked outside and may be moved into the garage if there is an ice storm, selectmen said.

Selectmen also authorized Higgins to look into what needs to be done to mitigate the building.

* * *

On a related note, selectmen approved a proposal authorizing Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen to have an architect look into what needs to be done to the third- and fourth-grade wing at Andover Elementary School to move the seniors there.

Last month, the Board of Education approved a motion giving Doyen the go ahead to look into what needs to be done to the wing of the school to get the seniors in there.

The idea for the move came from the Long Term Planning Committee's town-wide survey, Eric Anderson, chairman of the committee, said in a phone call Tuesday. A number of residents included the suggestion in the suggestions portion at the end of the survey, which was "an enormous help" to the town.

Around the time, the results to the survey brought light upon the idea, Doyen and the Board of Education realized they would soon have a wing open, he said.

At the end of last school year, Doyen reported to the board enrollment has been declining for about two years. According to the numbers she presented, by the 2020-21 school year, there will be 175 students and 13 to 14 classes, compared with 202 students and 15 classes in 2017-18.

As the numbers of students continue to go down and classrooms empty, Doyen said she was looking at ways to make use of them.

"I think we've all kind of come to the resolution that that's a great idea," Anderson said. "It's a doable low-cost way to provide a better service."

The move to the school will only be temporary, however, as Palazzi has her sights on ultimately moving to a new community center.

The idea for a new senior/community center was supported by 73 percent of survey takers, Anderson told selectmen last month. For now, however, there's room enough in the school and plenty of time before enrollment spikes and the classrooms are needed again, he said Tuesday.

"I think what we're looking at right now is the space in the school is big enough to hold more than just a senior center," he said.

Anderson said he anticipates the move to the school will take place next fall and any changes that need to be made to the wing to make the move possible will take place over the summer break.

East Hampton Police News

9/24: Richard Aguilera, 51, of 50 Mott Ln., Moodus, was issued a summons for speeding, East Hampton Police said.

9/24: Tyler Fennelly, 22, of 9 Meadow St., Terryville, was issued a summons for traveling unreasonably fast and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

9/26: Terence Joyce, 55, of 1 Pine Brook Rd., was arrested and charged with DUI, passing in a no-passing zone, following too close and operating a motor vehicle without a license, police said.

9/29: Frank Clegg, 43, of 40 Ferry St., Middletown, was arrested and charged with violating a restraining order, police said.

9/29: Megan Ghagan, 34, of 164 Mott Hill Rd., was arrested and charged with DUI and

failure to drive right, police said.

9/30: Todd Bower Jr., 29, of 230 Old West High St., was arrested and charged with second-degree threatening and first-degree harassment, police said.

9/30: Stacey Mathers, 36, of 43 Burnham St., Terryville, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right, police said.

10/1: Paul Distefano, 55, of 64 West High St., was issued a summons for misuse of marker plate, failure to drive right and operating an uninsured and unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

From Sept. 24-30, officers responded to 15 medical calls, five motor vehicle crashes and 10 alarms, and made 20 traffic stops.

East Hampton Police News

9/18: Kang Hae Lee, 44, of 64 Main St., was arrested and charged with second-degree criminal mischief, East Hampton Police said.

9/22: Ross Plyley, 20, of 66 Wopowog Rd., was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

9/25: Samantha L. Ocelik, 31, of 17 Summit St., was arrested and charged with second-degree harassment and violation of a restraining order, police said.

From Sept. 17-23, police responded to 12 medical calls, three motor vehicle crashes and eight alarms, and made 22 traffic stops, police said.

Portland Police News

9/24: Richard Stanhope, 55, of 9 Brainard Dr., was charged with third-degree assault, strangulation, risk of injury to minor and disorderly conduct, Portland Police said.

9/25: Agapito Rodriguez, 53, of 55 Airline Ave., was charged with third-degree assault, police said.

9/30: Sean Walker, of 164 Trolley Crossing Lane, Middletown, was charged with criminal violation of protective order, police said.

Andover Police News

9/26: State Police said Roger Weber, 46, of 20 Canterbury Ln., Plainville, was arrested and charged with drug paraphernalia and possession of a controlled substance greater than a half of an ounce, State Police said.

Colchester Police News

State Police said David A. Rios, 47, of 3 East Main St., Waterbury was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive in proper lane.

Colchester Motorcycle Crash

State Police said a motorcycle collided with a curb, leaving one man with minor injuries.

On Sept. 27, at approximately 4:23 p.m. a Harley-Davidson driven by Dennis W. Kessler, 48, of 36 Colburn Dr., was traveling on Colburn Drive when he struck the curb on

the right side, subsequently losing control of the motorcycle.

Police said Kessler was transported with minor injuries to Marlborough Clinic by the Colchester Fire Department.

Silver Alert Issued in Colchester, Later Canceled

State Police issued a silver alert on Sept. 28 for 14-year-old Adam Anderson, which was canceled after he was found Monday night.

According to police, another silver alert for Anderson was issued earlier in the month, on

Sept. 7, but was also canceled.

Police said further details, including where Anderson was found and how the alerts were resolved, could not be provided because he is a juvenile.

East Hampton Budget Heads to Referendum – with Additional Questions

by Elizabeth Regan

The Town Council on Tuesday approved its fourth spending plan of the protracted budget season in a 4-3 vote Tuesday.

The \$14.95 million proposed general government budget remains the same as the one that was rejected in the third referendum last month by a vote of 1,085 to 613. The difference this time around is that there will be a question on the ballot asking voters if they support the transfer of \$140,000 from the town's capital reserve fund to the Board of Education operating budget to hire two teachers.

The town spending plan – including debt, capital and general government operations – will go to a town meeting on Oct. 15 on its way to an Oct. 23 all-day referendum vote.

Council members voting in support of the proposed budget were Republicans Melissa Engel, Tim Feegel and Josh Piteo, as well as Democrat Pete Brown. Democrats Kevin Reich and Dean Markham were joined by Republican Mark Philhower in voting against the spending plan.

Those in favor credited Town Manager Michael Maniscalco and Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith with working out a compromise to bring back some of the teaching positions that were lost when the \$30.50 million education budget passed at the first referendum in May.

While education advocates grudgingly approved the separate education budget – which included the reduction of eight teaching positions – in the spring out of fear it would be cut further if they voted down the proposal, the voting bloc has since mobilized to reinstate some of the lost teaching positions. The basis of their argument rests on an unexpected allocation of \$715,415 in Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funds from the state that they believe should be applied to the education budget.

Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel indicated the compromise acknowledges those concerns while taking into account the viewpoint of residents who want tax increases to be minimal or nonexistent.

Taxes associated with the council's town

budget proposal would represent a 0.89 mill increase over the current mill rate. Property taxes for someone with a home assessed at \$250,000 would go up \$223 in the upcoming budget year if the general government budget passes.

"Would I like our tax rate to be a little lower? I would," Engel said. "But we at this table, and I think everybody at the finance [board] table, listened to the vote outcomes of the last three referendums and I'm very, very hopeful that this solves that problem," she said.

The three councilors opposed to the compromise had two different sets of reasons: The Democrats said it doesn't add enough money to the Board of Education budget, while the Republican said he believes the town budget should be cut further.

Democrat Dean Markham advocated for additional funds for student tablet computers, known as Chromebooks. Parents and students have complained at public meetings that the sixth grade class has been without the devices since the beginning of the school year due to the unapproved capital spending budget.

"The grand compromise does nothing other than compromise our children's future," Markham said. "We replace people around this table more often than we replace Chromebooks and computers for kids in school."

The district Chromebook program funds tablets for students in sixth grade that stay with them each school day for three years. Tablets given to ninth grade students remain with them during the school day for four years. At the end of grades eight and 12, devices are used for parts or sent to the elementary school to be placed on portable carts that can be accessed by teachers as needed.

Smith confirmed at the council meeting what he told members of the Board of Finance last week: That the remaining \$27,500 in the proposed capital budget for Chromebooks, combined with about \$13,000 from other education technology line items in the capital budget, would be enough to cover new Chromebooks

for the sixth grade class. Ninth grade students, who Smith said are using roughly 5-year-old tablets at this point, will have to wait until next year for updated technology.

Board of Education members have expressed concern that failing to fully fund the Chromebook program this year means they will have to pay for three sets of Chromebooks next year instead of two.

Engel said she was heartened to hear that even without full funding for the tablets, "nobody is going without a Chromebook."

The motion to transfer \$140,000 from the capital reserve fund to the Board of Education budget to fund two teachers was approved 6-1, with Philhower as the lone nay vote.

Councilors also approved the addition of two advisory questions on the referendum ballot. One will ask if voters think the general government budget is "too high, too low or just right," while the other will apply the same question to the education budget.

The addition of questions with three possible answers means all ballots will have to be hand-counted, according to Engel.

Maniscalco told councilors he believed voting machines cannot be programmed to read questions with more than two possible answers.

According to a spokesman for the Office of the Secretary of State, it is possible to program voting machines to read questions with more than two answers. He said the town would have to reach out to LHS Associates, the company charged with administering voting machines in the state, to update the memory card.

Maniscalco said Thursday he is looking into the issue.

On the Education Side

The Board of Education last week decried the compromise forged by their superintendent, with all members except for Republican Marc Lambert voting to recommend that finance board and town council members consider a proposal made several months ago by Finance Director Jeff Jylkka. Back then, the plan would have used \$250,000 of last year's budget sur-

plus to pay for classroom interior door locks and student tablets so those capital funds could be used to hire three teachers. But most of the budget surplus has since been earmarked for two public works vehicles and library roof repairs in a vote approved by taxpayers at a town meeting last month.

Smith this week stood by his compromise when he told the *Rivereast* he would "strongly encourage" parents to vote yes on the budget proposal and the transfer of funds from the capital reserve fund to the education budget.

While he said he appreciates the passion of school supporters who want at least three teaching positions restored and capital funding to remain intact, he said "it's time" to approve the town budget.

Sixth grade students will receive their Chromebooks after Thanksgiving and the restored teaching positions will likely be filled in December or January if the budget is approved this month, according to Smith.

"It has gone on long enough to the detriment of the kids," he said.

Board of Education Chairman Christopher Goff said this week that members of the Board of Education are "mixed" on their feelings about the council's proposed budget.

"We see the benefits of this and what it does, but at the same time we look at what is being lost from capital, mainly the technology area. That's been a big concern of pretty much all of us on the board. We support this ongoing technology program we started many years ago and now that puts us behind," Goff said.

He reiterated that holding off on purchasing Chromebooks now means they will have to purchase more next year to catch up.

Goff noted the school board is set this month to begin work on the 2019-20 education budget. He plans to invite members of the town council, the finance board and the wider community to the school board's Oct. 22 meeting to discuss lessons learned throughout this extended budget season and how to proceed in crafting next year's proposal.

SHADE BOX – SIDEBAR TO BUDGET STORY

Fourth Budget Referendum Ballot

The ballot for the fourth budget referendum will include more questions than the past three ballots now that it has been approved to reflect the new compromise and the addition of two advisory questions. Based on draft wording approved Tuesday, the ballot is tentatively slated to look like this:

Question 1: Shall the town government annual budget for the fiscal year 2018-19, in the amount of \$14,946,208, as recommended by the town council be approved?

Question 2: If question 1 is approved, shall the town transfer \$140,000 from the town operations capital reserve fund budget to the Board of Education operating budget to be used to hire two teachers?

Question 3: Is the General Government budget of \$14,946,208 too high, too low or just right?

Question 4: Is the Board of Education budget of \$30,499,668 too high, too low or just right?

Algae Test Results Baffle East Hampton Officials

by Elizabeth Regan

Local and regional officials are still trying to understand why there appears to be a big discrepancy between Lake Pocotopaug blue-green algae testing results obtained from the company used by the Chatham Health District and the company used by George Knoecklein, the town's lake consultant.

State health department data shows low amounts of exposure to an algae bloom can cause allergic-type reactions, skin irritation or nausea and diarrhea in humans and animals. The agency cautions that swallowing relatively large amounts of tainted water can cause liver damage and nervous system effects.

After the accuracy of the health district's results was called into question earlier this summer, Knoecklein and the Chatham Health District agreed to run concurrent tests at the Sears Park beach on Aug. 7 to check the validity of the health district results. It turned out the results from the laboratory used by Knoecklein were much higher than the results from the laboratory used by the health district: 401,161 blue-green algae cells per milliliter compared to 55,000 blue-green algae cells per milliliter.

Both samples were gathered the same day, at the same place and by the same health department sanitarian.

The state-recommended threshold for closing the public beaches is triggered when health department officials visually determine blue-green algae is present "in high numbers" or when water testing results come in higher than 100,000 blue-green algae cells per milliliter, according to guidance published jointly by the state Department of Public Health and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

The state guidelines were instituted in 2012 after a high-profile algae bloom in Bolton. But the recommended response plan is advisory only, as the state public health department does not have relevant regulations for lakes and ponds.

The Sears Park beach was ultimately closed on Aug. 31, when results from Northeast Laboratories exceeded the recommended threshold.

The health district's director, Don Mitchell, has said he uses Connecticut-based Northeast Laboratories because it's the only one in the

state that tests for blue-green algae. It allows sanitarians to hand-deliver samples to the laboratory right away to get the most expedient results, according to Mitchell.

Northeast Laboratories Director Alan Johnson told the *RiverEast* earlier this month he is confident in the laboratory's ability to examine these type of samples.

Certified Lake Manager Hillary Kenyon, who works with Knoecklein, said she trusts the results from GreenWater Laboratories of Palatka, Fla. She described the laboratory professionals as experts in the field.

According to Kenyon, Knoecklein also does his own in-house cyanobacteria testing.

"George's 'in-house' cyanobacteria cell counts have always been very close to the Florida Greenwater Labs results when we split samples. We are competent in identifying and counting phytoplankton 'in-house', but having a third party expert such as GreenWater do the cell counts is a way of making sure that our results remain accurate," Kenyon wrote in an email this week.

The level of blue-green algae in Lake Pocotopaug remained high through this week, she said.

Mitchell last month said he is scheduling a mid- to late-October meeting with representatives from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Department of Public Health (DPH) to explore the issue.

"We're trying to get a handle on things," Mitchell said. "We're kind of beyond the swim season, so the main thing is to have a clear plan for next year."

DPH spokeswoman Maura Downes said this week that her agency has not heard from Mitchell or any East Hampton officials since the agency's environmental health section discussed the testing discrepancy in general terms with Mitchell several weeks ago.

"It hasn't been presented to us as a problem," she said.

Mitchell has been on vacation and is set to return Monday, according to the health district.

"If they do contact us to set up a meeting, we will of course sit down and meet with them and go over the test results and see what advice we can give them. But we can't comment on any

of that until it happens," Downes said.

Chuck Lee, of the DEEP Watershed Management Program, did not return calls for comment.

Mitchell said he is also reaching out to the New England Interstate Water Pollution Commission. The nonprofit organization assists the New England states with water management and protection issues and advocacy, according to its website. The group compiled a 2015 list of 11 laboratories across the country that test for blue-green algae.

Both GreenWater Laboratories and Northeast Laboratories were on the list.

Jasper Hobbs, an environmental analyst with the nonprofit organization, said the laboratories on the list were compiled based on input from the Harmful Algal Bloom Workgroup, which consists of representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, state public health and water resource management programs, academic institutions, and public interest groups. It is simply a list of laboratories that provide blue-green algae testing, according to Hobbs.

"On that list, we do have a disclaimer saying we're not endorsing any of these," he said.

Describing the discrepancy in the two sets of results as "strange," he said he would urge caution when it comes to swimming in the lake when the levels of cyanobacteria are high.

"Always go with the higher number, just to be safe," he said.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and state agencies provide guidance on blue-green algae blooms, but they do not regulate the potentially toxic formations when it comes to swimming.

Hobbs noted certain forms of blue-green algae can be fatal for pets – which was one of the early indicators of the danger of the blooms.

"Certain types of cyanotoxins are harmful to pets, and back before people really started looking into this and understanding these algal blooms could become toxic, pets ended up dying because they were swimming in the water," he said.

Brian Toal, a supervising epidemiologist with the Department of Public Health's environmental health section, said this week there are a lot

of variables when it comes to assessing the risk of blue-green algae to the public.

He said ingesting "large amounts" of water with high blue-green algae levels can lead to more serious health effects, but cautioned "it's hard to say what 'large amounts' corresponds to in terms of cups of water."

He said "at least a few mouthfuls" would be necessary to cause symptoms.

Other variables include where the water is ingested, because toxic blue-green algae could be present in much higher levels along the shore where the scum washes up.

"An animal lapping the water up right at the edge of a pond they may be drinking something that's way higher than 400,000 cells per milliliter," Toal said.

Further complicating the situation is that some species of cyanobacteria are toxic while others are not, according to Toal.

"Even the species we know that produce toxins, they don't produce toxins all the time," he said. "So you can have 400,000 cells per milliliter and drink that water and not have any effects because they are not producing toxins at that moment."

Toal said Department of Public Health guidelines emphasize visual surveillance as the initial method of identifying an algae bloom. The department's regulations suggest a public beach should be closed when a sanitarian visually determines cyanobacteria is present using factors like the color of the water and the size of the affected area.

Toal described laboratory testing as a "backup."

According to the the guidelines, laboratory testing "is a reasonable alternative if confirmation cannot be obtained via a visual assessment."

Toal said residents who see something that looks like blue-green algae should call the Chatham Health District so a sanitarian can come out to investigate.

State guidelines advise people to avoid discolored water that looks like spilled paint, has surface film or includes green globs floating beneath the surface. Those who come into contact with an algae bloom should rinse off exposed skin with clean water.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Stanley R. Stasiak

Stanley R. Stasiak, 71, of East Hampton, died Friday, Sept. 21, at home, surrounded by his family and friends. He was born March 31, 1947, in Ingolstadt, Germany, the son of Stanislaw and Aniela Stasiak.

Stan grew up in Youngstown, Ohio, where he graduated from Cardinal Mooney High School in 1965. He went on to receive his Bachelor of Science Degree from Youngstown State University where he majored in Business Management in 1979.

In June of 1968 Stan joined the United States Army where he served with distinction in the 82nd Airborne in Vietnam. Stan was awarded multiple decorations and honors, including an Air Medal and a Bronze Star. He was honorably discharged in June of 1974.

Following his military service, he returned to the Youngstown area. He worked for Harshaw Chemical Co. as a supervisor in the optical cutting/polishing department in Solon, Ohio. In 1987, the family moved to Connecticut where Stan worked for 18 years as superintendent of production for Argo Technology in Berlin and five years as shipping supervisor for Regal Supply in Hartford. He retired in 2012.

In recent years, he and Joan traveled regularly to their timeshares in Bartlett, N.H., and Rockport, Maine. With their daughter Brie, they made many pilgrimages to Disney World, including Brie and Josh's Disney wedding in 2007. One of Stan's favorite pleasures was long drives with the top down in his Pontiac Solstice.

Stan developed a strong interest in watching the birds in their backyard, particularly the hummingbirds. He dotted their backyard with birdfeeders of all sorts and of course was then driven crazy by the invading squirrels. Over many years, Stan and Joan hosted prides of rescued cats. Though all were favorites, Stan's particular pal was Leroy.

Stan could often be found with his granddaughter Aoife on their living room floor where he taught Aoife basic engineering and construction skills, designing and redesigning Lincoln Log structures, Lego castles and marble runs. When they would break for lunch, Stan also introduced her to a wide variety of Polish cuisine.

Stan is survived by his wife, the former Joan Ely, whom he married Aug. 11, 1984; his daughters Gabrielle Pont and her husband Joshua of East Hampton, and Rosalind Highfield and her husband Mike of Canfield, Ohio and Lisa Libb of Boardman, Ohio; his granddaughters, Sherry Rosan and her husband Kevin of Hilliard, Ohio, and the light of his life Aoife Pont of East Hampton; his brother, Joseph Stasiak and his wife Sandy of Canfield, Ohio; sister, Mary Ann Owens and her husband Keith of Siloam Springs, Ark.; and brother-in-law Rick Ely of Florence, Mass. He also leaves several nieces and a nephew.

The family would like to extend their sincere thanks to the staff of the Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center and the Hartford Healthcare Hospice.

A celebration of life service will be held Saturday, Oct. 6, at 10 p.m., at 55 Laurel Ridge, East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully requests memorial contributions be made to Forgotten Felines of Connecticut, P.O. Box 734, Clinton CT 06413.



Hebron

Diane Cienewicz Rochette

Diane Nina (Cienewicz) Rochette, 73, of Hebron, died suddenly in her winter home in Dunnellon, Fla., Sunday, Sept. 23.

She leaves behind her husband, Chester Rochette Jr.; her daughters, Lisa Rochette Schultz and Christine Cautivar; her five grandchildren, Steven, Shanda, Kaitlyn, James, and Megan; many brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law and dozens of nieces and nephews.

She is preceded in death by her son, Keith Rochette, in 2016.

Diane was born in East Berlin Dec. 9, 1944, and graduated from Berlin High School. She was a member of Christ Lutheran Church in Hebron and Peace Lutheran Church in Dunnellon, Fla.

Diane loved to dance, read, cook, bake, do puzzles, garden, ride roller coasters, travel, laugh, socialize, spend time with, and take care of, her large extended family, and take her dog, Rocky, on long walks. She was the life of every party she attended, whether she knew people there or not. She greeted everyone with open arms and was always offering to lend a hand to others. She left her mark on the hearts of everyone she met. The world will be a bit more empty without her love, light, and laughter.

A memorial prayer service will be held at Christ Lutheran Church, 330 Church St., Hebron, on Sunday, Oct. 7, at 7 p.m., led by the Rev. Dr. Phil Booe, pastor. A funeral will be held in Florida later in the year.



East Hampton

Paul Strickland

Paul Strickland, 73, of East Hampton, passed away at Cobalt Lodge surrounded by his loved ones.

He is predeceased by his wife Glenda and their son Matt. He is survived by his daughter, Tonya Hall of East Hampton and her children Michael, Nick, Kathleen, Nathan, and Stacy Hall; his son, Paul Strickland of Middletown and his children P.J., Jeremy, Linnea and Benjamin; his son, Kevin Strickland and his wife and their children Marcus and Nicole of Fairbanks, Alaska. He is also survived by his sister Nancy of Middletown and brother Ray of Maine; lastly, his great-grandchildren Michael Jr., Wyatt, Linnea and Jaxon; and many friends and nieces and nephews.

Paul had a love of computers but if he wasn't inside building computers he would be outside working on cars or just sitting in his front porch enjoying the weather. He would always know what to say or do to make somebody smile no matter how bad their day was going. Anybody that knew him called him "Dad," because he would treat everybody with respect. He would have given the shirt off his back to anybody in need no matter what the situation was. He will truly be missed by everybody that knew him.

The family would like to thank the workers at Cobalt Lodge for everything they've done for Paul.

We love you! Rest Easy to the world's greatest father, grandfather, uncle and friend. 1945 to 2018.



Hebron

Theodore Buford James Weir

Theodore Buford James Weir, "Ted," of Colebrook Village, Hebron, formerly of Lockport, N.Y., widower of the late Dorothy (Jacobs) Weir, passed away peacefully Sunday morning, Sept. 23, after a courageous battle with bone cancer, at the age of 91.

Born July 1, 1927, in Chicago, Ill., he was the son of the late James and Catherine (Frost) Weir. Growing up in Niagara Falls, N.Y., he was a graduate of Lasalle High School and went on to earn his Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from SUNY in Buffalo.

A proud Army veteran, Mr. Weir served with the 2nd Division 12th Field Artillery Battalion during the Korean War. For 30 years, he was employed by Harrison Radiator of General Motors as an industrial engineer before his retirement in 1983. Ted was a longtime member of the Lockport Town and Country Club and had been an assistant scoutmaster for Troop 8 in Cambria, N.Y., from 1976 to 1988. In his spare time, he enjoyed golfing, bird watching, college football, military history and spending time at his summer cabin in Northern Ontario.

He leaves his son and daughter-in-law, James and Dana Weir of Hebron and two grandchildren, Alex and Katie Weir. In addition to his beloved wife of 59 years, who passed away Nov. 30, 2013, and his parents, he was predeceased by two brothers, Calvin and Robert Weir.

Locally, the family received guests Saturday, Sept. 29, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Services and burial were observed in Lockport, N.Y.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to BSA Troop 8, 4631 Cambria Wilson Rd., Cambria NY 14094-9738 or to the National Parks Foundation (nationalparks.org).

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Irene D. Sevigny

Irene D. (DuMouchel) Sevigny, 87, of East Hampton, formerly of West Hartford, widow of the late Normand Sevigny, went home Tuesday, Oct. 2, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Feb. 22, 1931, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Albert J. and Marie Ann (Cote) DuMouchel.

Irene was retired from Royal Typewriter of Hartford where she had worked as a secretary. Irene had been a member of the Lafayette Drill Team and a member of the Bell Tones at the East Hampton Senior Center. She loved quilting and was active in the quilting guilds in West Hartford and East Hampton, and she also enjoyed knitting.

Irene is survived by her son, Ray Sevigny of Shelton; two daughters, Sharon Kjellquist of Sint Maarten in the Netherlands, Ruth Anderson of West Hartford; six grandchildren, Nicole, Jonathan, Lauren, Bryan, Michael, Serena; two great-grandchildren, Gabriel and Carter; and several nieces and nephews.

Besides her parents and husband Normand she was predeceased by her many brothers and sisters. Irene's family would like to thank the doctors and staff of both Middlesex Hospital and their Hospice Unit for the wonderful and compassionate care they provided.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Saturday Oct. 6, from 8:30-10 a.m. A funeral liturgy will be celebrated Saturday at 10:30 a.m. in St. Patrick Church, 47 West High St., East Hampton. Burial will follow in Mt. St. Benedict Cemetery on Cottage Grove Road in Bloomfield.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to the East Hampton Senior Center, 100 Main St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



East Hampton

Arthur E. Jacobson Jr.

Arthur E. Jacobson Jr., 91, passed away peacefully, surrounded family and dear friends, Thursday, Sept. 27, at The Middlesex Hospice Unit in Middletown.

He was born on the corner of Tartia Road and Colchester Avenue in East Hampton, the son of Arthur Jacobson Sr. and Helen DuHamel Jacobson. He was a lifetime resident of East Hampton, first on Tartia Road and eventually moving to his current residence on Flatbrook Road.

He married his high school sweetheart, Cora Moon, on October 4, 1947. They spent a lifetime together until her untimely passing in January 2002. Together they raised seven children and he is survived by Cynthia Pond of Colchester, Patricia Sloan of East Hampton, Arthur E. Jacobson III of Marlborough, Martin Jacobson and Susan Havrilla of Naples, Fla., James and Elizabeth Jacobson of East Hampton, Betsy and Stephen Wall of Colchester; along with his loving sister Marjorie Jerin and brother and wife, Vincent and Sam Jacobson.

Besides his wife Cora, he is predeceased by his son Steve Jacobson earlier this year; his parents; and his siblings Claire VanVerdegheem, John Jacobson and Nancy Caffin.

Art attended high school locally and joined the U.S. Army during World War II. He traveled to the Philippines by ship where he served as a staff sergeant until the end of the war. He returned to East Hampton and Cora where he worked various jobs including carpentry, before settling into a 35-year career with the U.S. Postal Service in town. Always a hard worker, he worked his way up from rural mail carrier to assistant postmaster, although he always said walking the mail route was the best years in that long career.

As the years passed, the most important thing to him was his 13 grandchildren: Karen, Michael, Keith, Amy, Emily, Adam, Chelsea, Colton, James, Sarah, Ashley, Caleigh and Nick; and his nine great-grandchildren: Kyle, Travis, Ethan, Nora, Cora, Natalie, Charlotte, Brooklyn and Emerson.

Art's lifetime interest included hunting and fishing in Northern New England with friends and locally in Salmon River and Flat Brook areas. He was a lifetime member of the Belltown Sportsman's Club and American Legion in East Hampton. He also was a Mason. He enjoyed raising animals and in particular, Golden Retrievers. He enjoyed family camping with his wife Cora. He liked watching the Red Sox and even more watching his grandchildren playing sports.

Over the years, he enjoyed the company and companionship of his longtime friend Harriett. They traveled to Florida and Northern New England several times along with their local restaurant and flower show trips.

He grew up on his family farm in East Hampton. He loved working the land and continued that tradition his entire life. He was blessed to have many longtime friends that he cared deeply about throughout his life.

The Jacobson family would like to express their sincere gratitude to the staff of Chestelm Health and Rehabilitation Center in East Haddam and the Weiss Hospice Unit at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown for their care services and support during a difficult time. Special thanks to his in-home caregiver and friend Trevor Wily.

Friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Wednesday, Oct. 3. A funeral service was held Thursday, Oct. 4, in the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in East Hampton, followed by burial in Lake View Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Road, Newington, CT 06111.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

More Obituaries on Following Page

Colchester

Carol Sklarsky

Carol (Mahan) Sklarsky, 87, of Lake Hayward, widow of the late Nicholas Sklarsky, died Saturday, Sept. 29. Born Oct. 27, 1930, in Maine and raised in Norwich, she was the daughter of the late Thomas Mahan and Agnes (Sullivan) Mahan Gibbons. Following in her father's footsteps, Mrs. Sklarsky was an educator for many years, first for the Montville and later the Lebanon school systems.



She was a communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester. Carol leaves her brother, Thomas Mahan of Brevard, N.C., and several nieces and nephews. In addition to her husband and parents, she was predeceased by her sister, Ardie Sturges.

The funeral liturgy will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. today, Oct. 5, at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial will follow in St. Joseph Cemetery, Norwich. There are no calling hours. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the church.

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

Colchester

Jean Randolph Barnes

Jean Randolph Barnes, 96, of Colchester, widow of the late Charles H. Barnes, passed away peacefully Monday morning, Oct. 1, at Chestelm HCC in Moodus. Born Aug. 15, 1922 in Portland, ME, she was the daughter of the late H. Neeley and Vera (Higgins) Smith.



She leaves two sons, Stephen and wife Carolyn of Colchester and Timothy of Old Saybrook; three grandchildren, Kelsey, David and wife, Pamela and Chad and wife, Elizabeth; her brother, Clayton Smith of Yarmouth, Maine; and numerous extended family.

In addition to her husband and parents, she was predeceased by her daughter, Nancy; and two sisters, Virginia Knight and Barbara Pride.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, Donor Services, P.O. Box 98018, Washington, DC 20090-8018 (lls.org) or to the American Cancer Society, 825 Brook St., I-91 Tech Ctr, Rocky Hill, CT 06067 (cancer.org).

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

Hebron

Robert F. Davis

Robert F. Davis, 79, of Hebron, beloved husband of the late Virginia Chodorowski Davis, died Thursday, Sept. 27. He was born in Worcester, Mass., son of the late Raymond and Irene (Humrighouse) Davis. He had lived in Hartford for 35 years before moving to Hebron.



Prior to his retirement, Bob worked for Philip Morris Co. for many years. He was a longtime member and governor of the Hartford Moose Lodge. He was active in McGinley Craft Little League and Boy Scouts Troop 105.

Bob is survived by his daughter, Mary-Beth Colletti and her husband James of Hebron; his son, Robert Davis Jr., and his wife Bonnie of Andover; his four grandchildren, Joseph and Dylan Colletti and Austin and Meghan Davis; his brother, Richard Davis and his wife Rose of Holden, Mass.; and many good friends.

He was predeceased by his wife Ginny and his sister Patricia Peterson.

The funeral will be at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 6, at the Dillon-Baxter Funeral Home, 1276 Berlin Tpke., Wethersfield. Burial will follow in Cedar Hill Cemetery, Hartford. Friends may call today, Oct. 5, from 4-8 p.m., at the funeral home. Contributions in his memory may be made to the Moose Charities, 155 SN International Drive, Moose Heart, IL 60539.

Visit dillonbaxter.com to share a memory with the family.

Marlborough

Theodore J. Czuj

Theodore J. "Ted" Czuj, of Marlborough, devoted son and brother, passed away peacefully at Hartford Hospital Tuesday, Oct. 2 (The Day of the Holy Guardian Angels), at the age of 60. A lifelong resident of Connecticut, he was born in Yonkers, N.Y., to his loving and caring parents, Theodore and Rosemarie Czuj who have predeceased him.

Ted leaves behind his sister, Christine Czuj, and brother, Peter Czuj, both of Marlborough. A graduate of Central Connecticut State College, New Britain, he taught in various Middletown schools, most recently at Our Lady of Czestochowa Church School. "To teach is to touch a life forever." Ted was dedicated to and enjoyed his students.

Ted enjoyed nature and being outdoors, biking and hiking. He also adored animals, especially his two cats, Bella and Jimmy. Ted was a passionate reader and spent many hours at various libraries. He will be greatly missed by his family and many friends.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held Monday, Oct. 8, at 10 a.m., in St. John Fisher Church, 30 Jones Hollow Rd. Marlborough, with the Rev. Thomas Sas as celebrant. There will be no calling hours and burial will be private.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers any expression of gratitude or sympathy be made to the school, library, or charity of one's choice.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.