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'Tis the Season... Jacob Lee of Marlborough and Rebecca Ristow of Amston attended last Saturday's Gathering on the Green in Marlborough, which included hot cocoa, a fire truck parade and Christmas tree-lighting. See story, additional photo on page 15.

New Hub Worsens Pocotopaug Woes

by Elizabeth Regan

The new town hall complex taking shape on Route 66 in East Hampton is responsible for levels of sediment-laden runoff some Lake Pocotopaug advocates say have not been seen since condominiums went up on Baker Hill in the late 1980s.

Many local officials, experts and residents have described the Lake Vista condos as the catalyst for algae blooms that have plagued the notoriously impaired lake for decades. They say water quality issues were exacerbated by a sewer system installed in the early 1980s that deprived the area of natural spring water and left the lake vulnerable to pollution from surface runoff.

Conservation-Lake Commission member Joe Carbonell said this week that brown sediment spotted last month in a large portion of the so-called "back bay" near Hawthorne Road is the worst he's seen "since Baker Hill."

Carbonell and fellow Conservation-Lake Commission member Wesley Jenks attended last Wednesday's Planning and Zoning meeting to ask for stricter zoning regulations in the lake watershed to help keep construction - and its environmental implications - in check.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency states sediment in the watershed can clog storm drains, prevent vegetation from growing in water and trigger blue green algae blooms.

At least one member of the Planning and Zoning Commission disputed comparisons to

the runoff from construction of the Lake Vista condominiums.

"This is not anywhere near the Baker Hill days," Commissioner Ray Zatorski emphasized. "It's probably going to take more decades before [Baker Hill contamination] gets filtered out of the lake, if it ever does."

Zatorski, a former chairman of the commission, has served on multiple municipal boards over the past several decades.

According to the *Hartford Courant* archives, concerned residents first mobilized in September 1987 when they noticed water in parts of the lake was turning brown and wetlands wildlife was dying.

"We did everything the town planner and town engineer asked for," the *Courant* quoted Baker Hill developer Eitan Arzi as saying in February 1988. "The problems with the lake have been going on for a long time. I've only been here six months."

Planning and Zoning Official Jeremy DeCarli this week said the Baker Hill site plan was approved in October 1986 and modified in May 1987.

A watershed report by lake expert George Knoecklein released last year stated Lake Pocotopaug experienced "unprecedented" algae blooms during the summers of 1988 and 1989.

During the Dec. 5 Planning and Zoning
See Pocotopaug Woes page 2

Resident Backlash Delays Gas Station Decision

by Allison Lazur

Backlash over the proposed Route 66 gas station continued last Thursday as approximately 35 residents packed Marlborough Town Hall for the Zoning Commission's public hearing.

The Marlborough One LLC project is listed in the Secretary of the State's business database as a venture of prominent local project developer William Wayne Rand.

The commission closed the Dec. 6 public hearing without a vote on the controversial project. State statute specifies they have 65 days to make a decision.

The gas station proposed for the 1.5 acre parcel on 37 Hebron Rd. has been criticized for months by area residents on the Forest Homes well system who fear contamination of their wells and nearby Lyman Brook.

The well system owned by Connecticut Water Company serves approximately 40 homes.

Residents came armed to continue the fight with bright purple signs featuring messages such as "A Drip Can Destroy Many Drops" and "Water is Life, Treat it Right."

Despite the gas station's approval by the

Conservation Commission on Oct. 15, approximately 15 residents spent nearly an hour pleading with the Zoning Commission to deny the proposal.

Concerns surrounded the possible contamination of the well system and Lyman Brook, which runs through the east side of the property, as well as an increase in traffic and crime that neighbors say will compromise the overall safety of the community.

Glenwood Drive resident Heidi Warner expressed concern about the nearby RHAM middle and high school bus stop located at the corner of Route 66 and Shepard Drive.

Warner said the bus often picks up students between 6:35 a.m. and 6:45 a.m. when it's still dark out and at an hour she called a "peak time for gas station fill ups for people on their way to work."

"In May 2015, a woman was killed at that exact intersection and that was in broad daylight. I spoke with RHAM [and] they are not willing to change the bus stop," she said. "I understand that Marlborough needs businesses

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Residents filled the room at the Marlborough Town Hall last Thursday to express opposition to the proposed gas station on Route 66. Messages on bright purple signs included "Keep the Water Safe & Clean" and "Water is Life, Treat it Right."

Pocotopaug Woes cont. from Front Page

Commission meeting Jenks brought attention to a recent spate of development in the same area of Route 66, including the newly-opened Dollar General, a land-clearing project by prominent local developer Wayne Rand, and the town hall complex.

“I’ve been pretty vocal, at least on our commission, that these projects were going to impact the overall quality of the lake and, sure enough, I was right,” Jenks told commission members.

Jenks described the town’s failure to prevent runoff from its own project as “a pretty poor example for the rest of the community.”

Jenks and Carbonell shared photos with the commission showing excessive sediment as seen from the bay side of Meeks Point Road and from Hawthorne Road.

“Please do what you can to make sure people don’t just come in and do whatever they want in the watershed,” Jenks, a Meeks Point Road resident, said.

DeCarli and town hub project manager Steve Motto acknowledged the sediment coming from the municipal hub site, which broke ground in early October.

They blamed a combination of fine soil types and an excessively wet season.

Describing the runoff as “heartbreaking,” Motto said he’s never seen so much rain.

“This fall has been unbelievable. The ground is saturated. The rain has nowhere else to go,” he said.

DeCarli – who serves as the town planner, zoning enforcement official and wetlands enforcement officer – estimated rainfall in November was 200-250 percent over the average for the month. He emphasized soil from the hill is so fine that the unsettled particles are able to flow through protections designed to prevent sediment from making it into the lake.

According to DeCarli, the soil is passing through “four retention ponds, three levels of silt fence, two rows of hay bales, a row of wood chips and another area that’s probably 6-8 feet wide of wood chips stacked up.”

DeCarli said the runoff from the brunt of the town hall hub property runs under Route 66 to the area of Hawthorne Road and Mark Twain Drive, where it enters the lake through a roughly 36-inch culvert.

Motto told members of the commission he’s never had any discharge off the sites he’s been developing in adjacent areas on Route 66 since 2002. “So it bothers me as much, if not more, than these folks here,” he said, nodding to Carbonell and Jenks.

“I’m a developer in town that takes a lot of pride and takes a lot of care,” Motto said. “I really do care about this stuff.”

Motto and his wife Lisa are developing the 59-acre Edgewater Hill project, which encompasses the municipal hub site and will grow to include restaurants, shops, offices, single-family homes, townhouses, condominiums and apartments over the next decade.

Motto said freezing temperatures over the winter will give crews time to stabilize the site and install additional protections by the time water is flowing again in the spring.

DeCarli later emphasized the current sediment situation in the back bay is different from contamination experienced during the Lake Vista condominium construction because erosion and sediment controls remain intact.

“I think what happened over there [at Baker Hill] was it kind of blew out. We have not had a blowout. Silt fences haven’t been knocked down. We haven’t experienced that,” he told the *Rivereast*.

Town engineers are working to figure out how to build sediment ponds big enough to retain runoff for the time it takes the extremely fine particles to settle before the water makes it into the lake, according to DeCarli.

Tighter Regulations

Zatorski during the meeting bristled at Jenks’s allegation that existing zoning regulations don’t go far enough to prevent developers from doing “whatever they want” in the watershed.

“We don’t let people just do what they want,” Zatorski said. Then he threw a thick, spiral-bound book onto the table in front of him.

“Just take a look at this. Seriously, just take a look,” he said. “That’s just for one project.”

The volume detailed storm water management measures for one 18-lot subdivision within the Edgewater Hill master plan.

Zatorski said commissioners pore over each application they receive for watershed implications and that they enacted regulations over the years that have done a lot to protect the lake.

He said about 15 percent of storm water runoff from the Stop and Shop property on the corner of Route 66 and North Main Street now runs into the lake through catch basins, compared to 85-90 percent that used to run directly into the lake before the former East Hampton Mall property turned into a supermarket in 2006.

“We spend a lot of time making sure [developers] do what is best for the town. Our charge is health, safety and welfare. And we all take it very, very seriously,” Zatorski said.



East Hampton Planning and Zoning Official Jeremy DeCarli said runoff from the \$18.98 million municipal hub site on Route 66 is responsible for a large area of sediment deposited in the back bay of Lake Pocotopaug last month. This contributed photo shows the cloudy sediment in the foreground.

Jenks emphasized that tightening zoning regulations can be done “with very little money out of our pocket.”

“Those regulations are already in existence on other lakes that have recovered,” Jenks said. “So we don’t have to reinvent the wheel.”

DeCarli said after the meeting that he has already begun to explore how other towns regulate their watersheds.

Describing the existing lake-protection provision in the zoning regulations as “pretty limited in scope,” he said the Lake Pocotopaug Protection zone requires a public hearing for all development plans in the lake watershed. It also includes recommendations – not requirements – that applications include elements like environmental impact statements, vegetative swales to slow and filter runoff, porous pavement, and avoidance of steep slopes.

“There are ways to build that have less impact on the watershed,” DeCarli said. “And we could start to require some of those things. But we’re not there yet.”

Recent regulatory changes include expanding the wetland review area within the lake

watershed from 100 feet to 200 feet. That means all building projects around the lake require a wetlands permit.

Efforts in other areas of the lake include a project to install low-impact, sustainable technology to remove sediment from runoff on the north end of the lake funded through a \$236,700 grant from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The grant combines with \$248,860 in the town’s capital budget for lake water quality infrastructure projects, according to finance director Jeff Jylkka.

Jenks told Planning and Zoning Commission members during the meeting that the Conservation-Lake Commission, which was established in 2009, appreciates the funding.

“When we started, we had zero,” he said.

But he pointed to the \$52 million high school renovation project and \$19 million municipal hub project to illustrate what he sees as a disproportionate distribution of resources.

“[When] we have \$500,000 to combat a problem that is happening because of these projects, it’s not enough,” he said.

Backlash cont. from Front Page

for revenue and tax benefits but there has got to be another way that won’t risk the safety of our water and our children.”

According to NBC Connecticut, a 22-year-old woman driving eastbound on Route 66 was killed after the vehicle she was driving was struck by a van 200 feet west of Shepard Drive at approximately 4:56 p.m. on May 26, 2015.

Hickory Road resident Kathy Griswold called the proposal “a square peg in a round hole.”

Griswold cited letters from Connecticut Water Company in opposition to the project because of the “unreasonable risk” the site’s location poses to the well system.

Hickory Road resident Lou Michaud said as a fisherman he’s also worried about the contamination of Lyman Brook, which is a tributary to Blackledge River, and ultimately the Salmon River.

“I’m worried about everybody’s kids and our water, but I’m also worried about the fish,” he said. “I always believed in putting back into our environment and if we destroy the Lyman Brook, which is a tributary to all these main arteries, what are we saying?”

Hickory Road Resident Linda Desjardins said, “I am absolutely opposed. We already have two gas stations; are we trying to turn into the Berlin Turnpike? I don’t think so. We are trying to fit a big guy in a little coat,” she said.

Despite numerous safeguards outlined by project engineer Robert Baltramaitis during the public hearing – including catch basins, a secondary containment around each pump’s fill port to protect against overfilling, and double-

walled tanks and pipelines with alarm systems to indicate any sort of leak – the opponents were not satisfied.

Michaud suggested tearing down the gas station in the center of town instead of constructing a new one.

“You want to put a gas station in this town? There has been a million comments that say ‘clean up the center of town – tear the crap hole that’s in the center of town out and put a decent [gas station] there,’” he said.

After hearing residents’ concerns, the Zoning Commission spoke out in opposition of the proposal with reasons involving traffic, proximity to the well system and groundwater pollution and runoff.

Chairman Kevin Asklar said he felt the plan “pose[s] an undue risk to a large portion of the community and their community well, which sits in very close proximity to the fueling station.”

He also expressed concern about an increase in traffic with cars making special trips off of Route 2 to fuel up in Marlborough.

Vice Chairman Susan McFarland said that while the site’s design addresses a storm water pollution prevention plan and water quality issues, she felt it was her job to consider the public sentiment and address the bigger issue of increased traffic.

“[The] storm water pollution prevention plan is above and beyond, really, of what’s required, but if part of my job is to listen to the public I heard a really, really, loud, screaming no,” she said.

McFarland told commission members she came to the meeting intending to focus on the design of the system in order to assure herself and the residents it would protect their wells. But she said traffic emerged as “the bigger issue that really hasn’t been solved.”

“What everybody said here today definitely affected how I think about [this project],” she said.

Board member Eric Colantonio expressed concerns about the single entrance and exit into the gas station

“I think the traffic that already exists on [Route 66] is going to be problematic with the one in, one out [entrance and exit],” Colantonio said.

Board member Mark Merritt said he was “excited” when he first learned of the proposal, but his feelings have since changed.

He credited comments from the public, combined with the objections from the Connecticut Water Company, with his change of heart.

If he lived near the proposed gas station, he said, he would be at the same meeting “on the other side of the table.”

“I just can’t support it, and I really wanted to,” he said.

McFarland reiterated her reservations about the project based on the public’s input.

“If I’m going to vote the will of the people, I’m not in favor of it at this point,” she said.

That’s when Town Planner Peter Hughes advised McFarland that a project’s adherence to zoning regulations must be the guiding force in any commission decision.

Local zoning regulations require the commission to consider “public health, safety, welfare, convenience and the protection of property values as well as the particular protection of the immediate neighborhood in which the application is proposed.”

Decisions must be based on whether or not an application adheres to standards guiding traffic safety, stormwater drainage controls, “harmony with the characteristics of the neighborhood and surrounding area,” and other factors.

Hughes said the application should not be judged as a “popularity contest.”

“Remember, you have to vote the will of the [zoning] regulations, not the will of the people,” he said.

“Then I guess we better pull out the regs and start looking point by point,” McFarland responded.

Asklar suggested Hughes “draft a motion of denial based on traffic and concerns for groundwater pollution and run off.”

McFarland chimed in to recommend adding the proximity of the site to the well system in that motion.

The public hearing was closed, no vote was taken on the proposal and the discussion was tabled to continue at the next Zoning Commission meeting on January 3 at 7 p.m. in Town Hall.

Hughes said Monday a vote will take place at the January meeting once “a motion of denial can be drafted and sent out to the Commission so they can review it against the regulations which govern the decision process.”

Hundreds Flock to Marlborough's Town Green to Celebrate Season

by Allison Lazur

Snow may have not covered the ground but winter was definitely in the air last Saturday night when about 500 people bundled up and gathered on the Marlborough green for the town's annual holiday celebration.

And it was a merry time all around, as people welcomed Santa, ate cookies and made memories, against the backdrop of fireworks and a community Christmas tree.

The event is sponsored by a conglomerate of forces including the Marlborough Fire Department, Parks and Recreation, Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance and Knights of Columbus, said Marlborough Fire Rescue Captain Mark Merritt.

The Marlborough Fire Department created a GoFundMe campaign with a goal of \$5,000 for the ever popular fireworks that concluded the event. The campaign raised \$4,720 for the display.

Merritt said this week he thought the event went "great," but said he was "disappointed with the crowd."

"There was a snowstorm last year [but still] I think we had twice as many people, but the people that did come really enjoyed themselves," he said.

Resident Steve Pozzato said he and his family attended because it's one of the few events the town hosts.

"It's something that our town is actually involved with. We are able to get out, enjoy everybody's company and see some friends, have some popcorn and hot chocolate," he said, adding, "We don't have a lot that goes on in town so it's nice to get out here and use the green that doesn't get used much during the year."

Hot cocoa donated by Dunkin' Donuts was distributed by the Ladies Auxiliary, while the Senior Center provided cookies and the Knights

of Columbus doled out buttery popcorn.

Colchester, Hebron, Columbia, Lebanon, East Hampton and Marlborough all had a presence in the fire truck parade that delivered Santa Claus.

Even a handcrafted sleigh by the Hebron Fire Department was donated to be used during the event.

Familiar tunes such as "Jingle Bell Rock" and "Blue Christmas" blared from a speaker while children of all ages played in hay scattered across the green as though it was freshly fallen snow.

The Christmas tree – the center of it all – was decorated by It's So Ranunculus Flower Shoppe and donned oversized red and white ribbons, spherical ornaments and gold snowflakes.

The lights for the tree were donated by Streamline Electric, LLC.

Resident Torrey Trzcienski, who said she recently moved back to the house she grew up in, was no stranger to Marlborough Christmas celebrations.

"It's fun to see the town come together for the holidays," she said. "I remember as a kid doing the big carol sing in the Marlborough Barn so it's nice to see that they are bringing back the community and getting people together for the holidays."

Marlborough Elementary School Principal Dan White and Assistant Principal Kim Kelley braved the cold to sprinkle holiday cheer by assisting the Marlborough PTO in handing out cookies and Ladies Auxiliary donated candy canes.

Selectman Cliff Denniss was full of cheer, despite being fully bundled up like most on the green.

"It's cold," he said with a smile, but added, "I think it's great people come out to celebrate and enjoy the festivities."



Fire trucks from Marlborough, Colchester, Hebron, Columbia, Lebanon and East Hampton all decorated in Christmas lights participated in last Saturday's Gathering on the Green in a parade on North Main Street.

Marlborough resident Jacob Lee and friend Rebecca Ristow of Amston were all smiles as they chatted near the Christmas tree.

Lee said he grew up in Marlborough and has lived out of state in the past, but always winds up returning to town.

"I really love it here," he said. "Coming out [to the Gathering on the Green] is really special because I like to go to as many events that

Marlborough hosts as possible and I just have a lot of pride in the town."

Both Lee and Ristow said their favorite part is reconnecting with friends on the green.

"I'm really glad we came out because I've seen a lot of people that I know," Ristow said. "Everyone is one big family and everyone is here and happy – it's like a break from everyday life."

Career Switch Leads to Portland Daycare Center

by Elizabeth Regan

Diana Gentile made the switch from corporate casual to daycare denim when she opened Little Bear's Adventure Center just over two months ago.

The career – and wardrobe – change was three years in the making. It began when her son, who was 3 years old at the time, was struggling with sensory-processing issues at a large daycare center while she commuted to Hartford for her job in the insurance industry.

"I'd pick him up and he didn't have a good day. And they weren't equipped to really help him," she said.

Gentile of Amston knew then that she wanted to run her own daycare center.

"In January, I decided this is going to be my year," she said.

Describing it as "a crazy story about fate," she recounted how an employee at Liberty Bank in Marlborough told her in April that the owner of Children's Lighthouse Childcare and Learning Center in Portland might be a good person to talk to.

"The bank knew I was looking to buy; they knew she was thinking about selling at some point. And they just got us in touch with each other," Gentile said.

On Oct. 1, the two-building campus on 1255 Portland Cobalt Rd. opened its doors as Little Bear's Adventure Center. The name was in-

spired by her now 6-year-old son, whom she has affectionately referred to as "Little Bear" ever since he was born.

Her sister, Illena, serves as her assistant director. Her staff of 18 teachers serve 40 children currently.

"Even though it's a center, I want people to feel like it's a family-run place. We wanted to keep it homey-feeling," Gentile said.

The transition from the boardroom to board books has been a good one for Gentile.

"The conversations are very different. The problems you're solving are very different," she said. "We get to know the kids and we get to know their behaviors, what they like and what they don't like. So that's fun. It's different every day."

She feels like she's making a difference in the community, too.

"When you're on a project saving a company a lot of money or you're on a project with 50 other people, that sense of accomplishment can kind of get lost," she said.

The center has already collected three hefty boxes of food for the Portland Food Bank and will be participating in a toy drive this month through the Portland Police Department.

"We do give back to the community," she said. "It's something that's important to me, to get the families involved."

Gentile described a daycare program focused on structure and continuity between the different age levels. Monthly program themes unify the curriculum with activities and projects tailored to each group. December's theme is winter, with children working on art with "reindeer toes and mistletoe and mittens" and singing songs along those same lines.

A heavy focus on sensory activities, inspired by her son's difficulties, takes the form of tabletop and water-based activities that allow children to sort, match, make pretend apple pies with oatmeal or dig through leaves to find fake bugs with a magnifying glass.

"Kids can really explore, get their fingers wet and work on their fine motor skills," she said.

Daily movement activities could include parachute games, ribbons, yoga and dance to keep the kids active even if it's too cold to play outside.

Children from six weeks to 3 years old are housed in the front building and one room of the back building; the preschool and before- and after-school programs are housed in the back.

Gentile is focused on delivering a preschool program parents can trust as an alternative to the public school system.

"We are mirroring that and are working really hard to make the families comfortable that the kids are learning – not only learning, but

having a really great time," she said.

A partnership with Ellington Public Schools has enabled her to observe its preschool program and to bring those techniques back to the center.

"I don't have all the answers and I'm not an expert in everything, so I network and partner with the people who are," she said.

Gentile is in the process of hiring a certified head teacher for the preschool program who will come on board in January. She is also looking for a camp director to help build a summer camp program divided into week-long sessions so parents can pick and choose which ones they'd like their children to attend.

"I want the center to continue to be a place where parents are proud to bring their kids, where they feel their kids are happy, they're having a lot of fun, they're learning with their friends and we are getting them ready for kindergarten," she said.

Little Bear's Adventure Center on 1255 Portland Cobalt Rd. can be reached at 860-933-2738 or LittlebearsAC@outlook.com. The center will host an open house in January featuring a discussion by a financial planner about how to save for college. The date will be announced on the Little Bear's Adventure Center Facebook page.

East Hampton School Board, Teachers' Union Agree on New Contract

by Elizabeth Regan

The East Hampton Board of Education and the teachers' union have agreed to a three-year contract that delivers raises but also adds another rung to the salary ladder so it takes educators longer to reach the highest-paying step.

The contract includes a year-one freeze of the salary schedule to prevent any teachers from rising to a higher-paying bracket in 2019.

The agreement was reached in arbitration after the school board and East Hampton Education Association representatives were unable to come to a negotiated settlement within the timeframe specified by the state, according to Board of Education Chairman Christopher Goff.

He said arbitration kicked in because time ran out for the two parties to finalize the details – not because they weren't willing to compromise.

The school board and teachers' union reached a stipulated agreement on Nov. 15. It was accepted by the arbitration panel and awarded on Dec. 6. The Town Council unanimously approved the contract at Tuesday's regular meeting.

East Hampton Education Association President Steve Archibald did not respond to an

emailed request for comment by press time.

The agreement was lauded by councilors as "very good" and "very fair."

"It's a very good contract, which I've not always said in the past. But I do think so this year," Chairman Melissa Engel said.

The council in 2016 forced the administrators' contract into arbitration after complaining the school board didn't do enough to negotiate reasonable raises. Arbitrators disagreed, finding the salary increases in line with comparable school districts as well as with other town employees in East Hampton.

Goff told councilors the newly-approved contract is the second-lowest settlement among the 40 districts that have already approved contracts for teachers. Contracts in about 15 school districts remain unsettled, he said.

The new teachers' contract includes a 1.75 percent general wage increase the first two years and 1.9 percent in year three.

The extended teachers' salary schedule, which builds in automatic pay raises for teachers based on experience and graduate degrees, maxes out at step 11 based on the new contract. The step system is separate from general wage increases.

With the step system factored in, the contract represents a 1.75 pay increase for teachers in year one, 2.74 percent in year two and 2.90 in year three.

A teacher with a bachelor's degree on the lowest step of the salary schedule makes \$50,719 this year, based on the contract. A teacher with a master's degree on the top step of the schedule makes \$93,059.

Teachers, who pay 18 percent of health insurance premiums in the first year, will pay 19 percent by year three. Their share of dental premiums will rise from 12 percent to 15 percent over the span of the contract.

According to a summary by town attorney Zachary D. Schurin, of Pullman & Comley, the net cost to the town in the first year represents an increase of 1.7 percent when both salary increases and insurance savings are factored in. It's a 2.6 percent increase in the second year and 2.7 percent in the third.

Goff said concerns about teachers' salaries expressed earlier this year by the Board of Finance during the budget planning process were in the back of everyone's mind during negotiations.

"Knowing we were on the low end of the steps but the high end of the pay scale, we somehow had to balance that all out," Goff said.

The Board of Education's team was made up of Goff, Schurin, Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith, business manager Karen Asetta and several school board members. Finance board member Bridget McLennan represented the town as an observer based on a provision in state statute.

According to the state General Assembly's Office of Legislative Research, a finance board member is allowed to confer with the Board of Education prior to the start of negotiations, be present at negotiating sessions, and provide any information the Board of Education requests.

"Bridget was great," Goff said. "I wanted to hear her thoughts. I tried to make her part of the whole process."

Town Council member Josh Piteo lauded the school board for its cooperative approach and for recognizing the ever-increasing burden of contractual obligations on taxpayers amid declining levels of education aid from the state.

"This is a very fair contract," he said. "You did a good job putting it all together."

East Hampton Council Convinced to Stay with Health District

by Elizabeth Regan

Chatham Health District Board of Health Chairman Andrew Tierney was successful this week in assuring East Hampton Town Council members the town is well-served by the regional public health authority.

Tierney was on hand at Tuesday's council meeting to respond to concerns voiced by Republican Mark Philhower, who last month suggested the town ditch Chatham Health in favor of a return to the independent health department framework in effect prior to 2002.

Chatham Health District serves the *Riverast* towns of East Hampton, Colchester, Hebron, Marlborough and Portland, as well as East Haddam. The district is one of 20 regional health departments across the state.

Tierney, who is Hebron's town manager, is one of nine members on the volunteer Board of Health. It consists of representatives from each town in the district, most of whom are high ranking town employees or elected officials.

Philhower, an HVAC contractor and longtime public official, said at the time he's been hearing complaints from residents over the past six years related to rude service by health district staff, failure to return calls and delayed service in septic system permitting and restaurant inspections.

Tierney was bolstered by two residents who spoke during the public comment portion of the meeting in support of the health district.

Glenn Gustine, owner of Nelson's Family Campground in East Hampton and Wolf's Den Family Campground in East Haddam, described the district's sanitarians as "professional and courteous and helpful."

He also gave credit to the health district's director, Don Mitchell, for help with the installation of four "relatively gigantic" septic systems.

"It was so big the [Department of Energy and Environmental Protection] had to regulate it," Gustine said. "It would've been easy for the Chatham Health department to say 'that's the DEEP's problem' and do the minimum amount. Instead, Mr. Mitchell dove in and was extremely helpful to us not only getting the project successfully completed, but doing it in a timely manner."

In a Dec. 6 memo to members of the council, Tierney emphasized the district provides a wide range of services and expertise the town would not be able to afford on its own. He counted a local health director, registered sanitarians, a public health nurse, and a health educator among the professionals currently working in the health district.

East Hampton pays \$142,852 to the health district in the current budget. According to Town Manager Michael Maniscalco, it would cost at least \$388,000 for the town to operate its own health department.

"Most people don't understand that in addition to food service inspections and septic inspections, the staff does food service and septic plan reviews, soil testing for new and repaired septic systems, bathing water sampling, day care inspections, complaint investigations, well siting, lead inspections and case follow-up, housing code inspections, hoarding complaints and a variety of interactions with local social services and senior services," Tierney

wrote.

Tierney told councilors on Tuesday that the district has hired a sixth sanitarian who will start work this month, ensuring one dedicated staff member for each town. The district in the past has been plagued by difficulties hiring and retaining sanitarians, according to health district officials. Reasons cited range from a lack of professionals entering the workforce with a background in environmental services to the district's inability to compete with larger, higher paying health departments.

Tierney said the district is committed to providing "dependable" hours during which a sanitarian will be available in each town to receive and review permit applications in a timely manner. He said the district will also be providing more educational and training programs based on topics of interest in each town.

Philhower's call to explore an independent health department came despite promises of improved service from the health district through a reorganization already underway. Health district officials have said the planned change will bring in a new director within the next few months and will leave the current director, Don Mitchell, to do testing and inspections in the field until his planned retirement in fall 2019.

Mitchell, 63, is fully eligible for retirement Oct. 1, 2019.

Tierney in his memo assured councilors the decision for Mitchell to step down was "not made for reasons other than his pending retirement."

"Stepping down now will allow him to pro-

vide support for a new director and lend his years of field experience to helping the field staff," Tierney said.

Both Tierney and Mitchell emphasized the health district belongs to the towns it serves.

"We really are part of this community. And that's a two way street. So whenever somebody has a question or a problem, please pick up the phone and call us," Mitchell said.

Town Council member Dean Markham was satisfied that the town benefits from its association with the health district.

"It doesn't behoove the town to even consider going to a single-town [health department]," Markham said, pointing to the increased expense for reduced services.

According to state statute, a city or town with its own health department must have at least 50,000 residents to be considered for a state program that reimburses public health agencies for a portion of their expenses.

Even Philhower came around, saying he feels "a little more comfortable things are moving in the right direction."

He thanked Tierney for the presentation and the promises.

"If you assure me of something, you've always been a man of your word, and I'll take you for your word," Philhower said.

Council Chairman Melissa Engel described the discussion as a "useful exercise" despite the decision to stick with the status quo.

"You can't just rubber-stamp things one year to the next," she said. "I think there's always value in taking a look in-house to see how things are working."

Hebron Woman Loses All Her Christmas Presents in Home Break-In

by Sloan Brewster

A Hebron woman said a man broke into her home in broad daylight last week and brazenly stole every single Christmas present she had bought – including some intended for a needy family in New London.

On Thursday, Dec. 6, Maria McKeon received video security footage from her Nest – an in-home security system – of a thief going into her Senate Brook Drive house and taking all the Christmas presents she had and all her jewelry.

McKeon, who is a lawyer, was in court and – as required – had her phone off when text message alerts from the Nest started to roll in. As soon as she turned the phone on as she was driving from the courthouse, she discovered them and saw a man walking out of her house with packages. She immediately called 911 and reported the crime.

“He was so brazen about it – he didn’t care at all, he didn’t even rush; he just went through the house taking everything he wanted,” McKeon said in a phone call Wednesday. “He took six trips in and out of my house.”

With each trip, he carried away more packages.

McKeon said she doesn’t know how the man got into her house but that in the surveillance footage he can be heard ringing the doorbell, banging on the door and shaking the lock.

“I don’t know if he jimmied the lock,” she said.

In the footage, which McKeon forwarded to the *Rivereast*, the man opens the kitchen door and casually enters.

McKeon described the culprit as having a ponytail, red goatee and wearing surgical gloves and, in some shots, a hood. She also noted that he appeared to be wearing an earpiece, which she wondered if he used to communicate with someone on the outside. The man spent 10 minutes going in and out of her house stealing, according to the timeline on the video, McKeon said.

“He got there at 12:50 in the afternoon and was out by 1,” she said.

In the hallway opposite the door a stack of

packages can be seen.

Many of those boxes contained Christmas gifts for a New London family, McKeon said.

“My sons and daughter and I have sort of adopted a family,” she said.

McKeon was doing free legal services for the family, which includes a mother and three children aged 10, 5 and 3 years and a newborn baby.

“I didn’t realize how poor they were and how bad it was,” she said. “They can’t even get food and diapers.”

The burglar also took McKeon’s jewelry box with all her jewelry inside. In the surveillance video from her bedroom, he can be seen trying to open the locked box and then giving up and grabbing the box in its entirety. McKeon said she believes if he had managed to get it open he wouldn’t have taken everything inside. Rather he would have stolen the valuable pieces and left behind the less-pricey pieces, many of which had sentimental value, so she now wishes she had left the box unsecured.

“He took the whole jewelry box,” McKeon said. “Now I’m mad that I locked it.”

Jessica Dapsis, owner of Something Simple Café, reached out to McKeon and asked if she could hold a fundraiser for her, McKeon said. She said a fundraiser was fine but to direct any gift cards or other donations to the family whose presents were taken.

“It’s absolutely horrible they took everything from me, but at the end of the day this family is more in need,” McKeon said.

Dapsis was fine with that. McKeon recalled Dapsis telling her, “We’re not going to let this Grinch take Christmas.”

Dapsis decided to do the fundraiser after she heard from one of McKeon’s neighbors asking if there was anything she could do, she said in a phone call Wednesday.

“I’m totally grateful,” McKeon said, reiterating that she wanted all donations to go to the New London family.

On Wednesday, Dapsis posted on Facebook that anyone who brings a donation of any kind for the family to the Main Street café will receive a free hot cocoa or a ticket to get one at any time.



Hebron resident Maria McKeon said a man broke into her home last week and stole all of her Christmas presents. She’s hoping surveillance footage, including the photo seen here, will lead to the man’s arrest.

“We’ve gotten a beautiful response so far,” she said.

Since sending an email to her neighbors telling them of the burglary and showing the photo of the alleged thief, McKeon has received tips suggesting that the man is local and may be violent.

“I wanted to get the word out,” she said.

McKeon said she has reported all this to state police and was on her way to meet with them Wednesday. Police did not return the *Rivereast*’s calls for comment.

She said she has lived in her home for 28 years and has never been robbed or heard of

anyone in the area have such a thing happen.

Since the burglary, McKeon has tightened security around her house as best as she could, including borrowing her daughter’s dog.

“I brought the dog home from Ohio, a good watchdog” she said. “I lock everything. I lock myself in the house. Every door is locked, triple locked.”

Having her house broken into was “unsettling,” McKeon said.

“You just don’t think of anyone hauling off all your stuff,” she said. “You don’t know what to make of all this.”

Town Center Water Ban Lifted in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

As of today, the water ban in the town center has been lifted.

Town Manager Andrew Tierney said Wednesday that the Connecticut Water Company had found a solution to the water shortage that came on suddenly and unexpectedly in May when the well that supplies the most water to town started coming up short. In June, Commissioner of Public Health Paul Pino declared a public drinking water supply emergency in the center.

Also in June, Connecticut Water placed a ban on outdoor water usage in the center of town.

Since then, the water company has searched for the reason the well came up short and for a new water source. While officials could not explain the sudden shortage, they were successful in the hunt for more water.

Dan Meaney, director of corporate communications for the water company, said last month that the company had drilled three test wells on land near existing wells that were determined not to be a significant source of water. It also secured access to a parcel of land off Wall Street where three more tests were done.

One of the test wells on Wall Street has proven to deliver enough water that the water company is going to purchase the land, Tierney said.

“One well is providing something that will help the system,” he said.

Connecticut Water Company Vice President of Service Delivery Craig Patla, in a Thursday phone call to the *Rivereast*, reiterated what Tierney said.

The new water source is relatively close to the company’s existing system so the hook up should be quick, he said. Once the company finalizes the purchase, it will “get in the pursuit of even more water, if we can,” said Patla, who also briefed the Board of Selectmen on the matter last week.

In the meantime, the new well will increase supply by between 11 and 15 gallons per minute.

“It may not sound like much,” he said. “But it’s really liquid gold out there.”

In addition, the company has completed a permanent hook-up from the company’s water source at Country Manor on Wall Street to the center of town, Tierney said.

“That’s going to bring them back up where they need to be and that’s why the ban is going to be lifted,” he said.

Patla confirmed the connection to Country Manor was now permanent and that the water ban is over.

“As of [today] we are letting the emergency order expire,” he said.

Water supplies have been a limit to development in the Route 66 corridor, which has been a concern of town officials, Patla said. The company is in talks with the town on purchasing a piece of town-owned property that may be water-rich and could allay some of those concerns.

“Hopefully we’ll find a real gusher out there,” he said.

Tierney said town officials were relieved more water was found and that the ban has been lifted.

“There’s always water woes, that’s for sure,” he added.

Info Session Slated on Andover School Wing Repurposing

by Sloan Brewster

The boards of selectmen and education want to hear from the public on how best to utilize the third- and fourth-grade wing of Andover Elementary School as a community center.

On Wednesday the Board of Education voted unanimously – save for board member Jay Linddy, who was again absent from the meeting – to hold a public information session on Thursday, Jan. 17, at 7 p.m.

The vote followed the Board of Selectmen last week agreeing to schedule the session. The board voted 3-0 in favor of the measure; First Selectman Robert Burbank was absent from the meeting and Linddy, who is also a member of the Board of Selectmen, again didn't attend.

Last week, at their meeting, selectmen made the same agreement.

The only detail left to hash out is where the meeting will be held. Selectmen had scheduled it in the community room at Town Hall while Shannon Loudon, school board chair, recommended that Schools Superintendent Sally Doyen request the meeting be held in the school gym, which fits more people.

The idea for the meeting is to “really look at and get the public's input,” Loudon said. “[To]

tell the public where we are [with the project] as well as to get input as far as what they would see happening in the space. As of now we don't have any input from the community.”

There also is not yet a known cost for the project – although Doyen indicated Wednesday it would be paid for by the town, not by the school board.

Loudon also suggested that tours of the wing be scheduled for some time in the future.

The education board also tentatively set a joint meeting with selectmen on Jan. 9. The meeting will not be finalized until it is approved by selectmen, who also discussed the possibility of a joint meeting last week, but did not schedule it.

Doyen and Loudon attended last week's selectmen meeting to discuss the plans to transform the wing of the school and transform into a community center.

While the plans started out as making the wing of the school a place for seniors to go in light of the closure of the Old Firehouse on Center Street, the town is planning to make it into more of a community center, Town Administrator Joseph Higgins said this week.

“We're not calling it a senior center; we're calling it a community center,” Higgins said in a phone call Wednesday. “It will be used for seniors but there will be some [other] activities there too.”

Loudon told the education board much the same thing, saying the “nomenclature” should be appropriate and it was a “community center.”

In October, selectmen banned the use of the Old Firehouse after air quality tests confirmed what folks around town have said they have known for decades – it is infested with mold.

The education board offered the wing, which is largely vacant due to declining enrollment, and selectmen gave Doyen the go-ahead to move forward with getting architectural drawings for repurposing it.

Last month, five architects came out and did walkthroughs of the wing, Doyen said at the education board meeting. Of those, two responded to a Request for Proposals.

“What the board is going to have to do is decide which one of those two firms we want to go with,” she said. “The Board of Education will select the architect [and] the Board of Se-

lectmen will hire it.”

Doyen told the school board the agreement specifies this will be a town project that the education board would simply be allowing it to be done at the school. Doyen also told the board that attorneys for the two boards were finalizing the agreement.

The board also discussed the need for a private meeting in executive session between selectmen and school board members to discuss certain aspects of the project, which Doyen said would be possible as it was a contract negotiation.

Board of Education member Michael Russo said he also wants the contract to “clearly identify” what happens if the school needs the wing again.

“If we do take it back, who bears the cost of that?” he said.

Loudon pointed out that there would not be many changes to the wing, so a re-conversion would be relatively simple.

Doyen said Thursday she would likely meet with Higgins next week to firmly establish a meeting location.

Christmas Tree, Ornaments Taken from Hebron Cemetery

by Allison Lazur

A Christmas tree and, more importantly, its ornaments have gone missing from New Hebron Cemetery and the owners are asking for its return.

Monica Burr said Thursday she placed a four-foot pre-cut Christmas tree complete with a handmade log base on the gravesite of her son Kyle Harris on Dec. 8.

But by Dec. 11 the tree had disappeared. Burr said this is the 16th year she has placed a Christmas tree at the site – and the first time it's been stolen.

When she realized the tree was missing, Burr said she “nearly collapsed,” adding, “there is absolutely no evidence of it being there whatsoever.”

While Burr and her family would like the return of the tree, she said the ornaments, some of which are two decades old, are the items of true value.

The ornaments are angels of varying sizes and materials, a number of which were given to Burr shortly after her son's death.

Harris, 20, died Nov. 5, 2002, from injuries sustained in a motor vehicle crash. For Christmas that year, Burr said she requested angel ornaments.

“That Christmas the only thing I asked for were angels,” she said. “So some of those decorations are at least 16 years old and others are at least 20 years old, given to me by family and friends.”

Burr also said a portion of those ornaments were given to her son when he was a baby.

Each angel was carefully adhered to the Christmas tree with a twist tie to ensure the ornament would be secured, she said.

Another tree in the same row as Harris' gravesite was still standing, which led Burr to believe the tree was not removed during a routine cemetery cleanup.

Sexton Jim Celio said Thursday that although there are rules and regulations that might prohibit certain plantings and adornments, “we did not remove the tree.”

Celio said he is familiar with the gravesite and Burr and her family and said he “bend[s] the rules out of compassion” in certain situations to allow for such adornments within reason.

While permanent plantings are prohibited at the cemetery, other decorations are permitted per the discretion of the sexton, the New Hebron Cemetery Rules and Regulations state.

Celio also said the last cleanup was a few



A Christmas tree and its ornaments placed on the grave site of Kyle Harris at New Hebron Cemetery are missing and Monica Burr and her family are asking for its return.

weeks ago, before the Christmas tree was placed at the site.

He disclosed he has “never had anybody call me and tell me something was stolen, but in this day and age somebody could have stolen it.”

Burr told the *Rivereast* Thursday she has plans to file a police report, but just wants the ornaments returned with a promise of “no questions asked.”

“[The ornaments] are so valuable to our family, she said. “Keep the tree, keep the lights; I don't care. I just want the person who took it to show the love and return the ornaments.”

Gun Wielding at McDonalds in Colchester

State Police said a man was arrested last week after he allegedly pointed a gun at fellow patrons at McDonald's patrons was later arrested.

At approximately 11:21 p.m. on Dec. 10, state and local police responded to reports of a man pointing a gun at people inside the McDonald's restaurant located at 375 South Main St.

An investigation of the incident resulted in the arrest of Jason Hubbard, 44, of 39 Cherry

Tree Lane, at his residence shortly after the incident.

Hubbard was arrested and charged with carrying a firearm under the influence of drugs/alcohol, second-degree criminal mischief, second-degree breach of peace, negligent storage of firearm, first-degree threatening and first-degree reckless endangerment.

According to court records, Hubbard is next due in court on Dec. 17.

East Hampton Police News

12/4: Scott Evan Jackson, 26, of 242 East High St., was arrested and charged with third-degree burglary and second-degree criminal mischief, East Hampton Police said. Police said the charges stemmed from a Dec. 30, 2015 burglary.

Also, from Nov. 26-Dec. 2, officers responded to 13 medical calls, two motor vehicle accidents and six alarms, and made 11 traffic stops, police said.

Colchester Police News

12/5: Colchester Police said David S. Jones, 51, of 243 Green Manor Ter., Windsor Locks, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under suspension, DUI, failure to drive right and drinking while driving.

12/6: Colchester Police said William McGuire, 57, of 39 Colchester Commons, was arrested and charged with DUI.

Tools Stolen in Colchester

State Police said tools were stolen from a motor vehicle parked at a residential address on Standish Road.

At approximately 2:55 p.m. on Dec. 8, police received reports of stolen tools and damage to a motor vehicle's rear and passenger side door locks, police said.

Anyone with information regarding this incident should contact Trooper Chester Fowler at Troop K at 860-465-5400, ext. 4001.

Marlborough Police News

12/4: State Police said Patrick Reynolds, 26, of 211 S. Main St., was arrested and charged with third-degree criminal mischief, disorderly conduct and second-degree threatening.

Speeding Results in Minor Injuries in Colchester

State Police said improper turns and violating the posted traffic signs are to blame for minor injuries to one man.

At approximately 4:25 a.m. on Dec. 9, a Honda Accord driven by Elliott Milan, 30, of 6 Old Orchard Rd., Bloomfield, was speeding westbound on Route 2 near Exit 2, according to police.

The Honda exited off the right shoulder sub-

sequently jumping the curb and striking several trees until coming to a final rest about 75 feet into the tree line, police said.

Milan was transported to Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center with minor injuries and issued an infraction for improper turn and violating the posted state traffic commission sign.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Rev. John Roderick Rinell Sr.

The Rev. Rod Rinell Sr. died peacefully Wednesday, Dec. 5, with his wife Pat and their children at his side singing hymns, at Portland Care and Rehab Center, after suffering a major stroke on Nov. 1. He was born May 12, 1928, in Jamestown, N.Y., the son of the late Carl A. Rinell and Veronica A. Rinell.



He was predeceased by his younger brother, Kermit Rinell, and his younger sister, Beverly R. Aument. He was graduated from Frewsburg (N.Y.) High School and from Houghton College (N.Y.) and Wesley Theological Seminary in Westminster, Md. He later attended Augustana Seminary in Rock Island, Ill., and the Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia, Pa.

He was ordained in 1954 in the Augustana Lutheran Church which later became part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. He married his wife, Pat, in 1954 and accepted a call to Maria Lutheran Church in Dagus Mines, Pa., that same year. He served as pastor of Hope Lutheran Church in Palatka, Fla., and later was called to Bethlehem Lutheran Church in East Hampton, where he served as pastor for 28 years.

He is survived by his wife, Janice (Pat), and their children, Rod Jr. and Sherry Rinell of Wallingford, Janice and John Melland of Fargo, N.D., Timothy and Holly Rinell of East Hampton, and Stephen and Diane Rinell of Bryan, Ohio; and by their grandchildren, Lindsay and Jeremy Scott, Melissa and Josh Knickerbocker, Rebecca and Brian Mischak, Chloe Rinell, John-Krist and Jen Melland, Elizabeth and Chad Cantone, Eric and Tonya Melland, Kate and Anthony Novotny, Bethany and Aaron Niderno, Dan and Katelyn Rinell, Randy Rinell, Blake Rinell, Scott and Brittany Rinell; and by 22 great-grandchildren.

He was active in East Hampton politics and served as chairman of the Board of Finance and also served on the Board of Selectmen. He was active in the East Hampton Art Association and served as its president for a term. He had many hobbies and interests, the main one being building his own retirement home on Mott Hill! He built several canoes, was a potter, a gardener (growing much of the food they consumed!), a violinist, an artist, a sculptor, a hunter, a fisherman and he enjoyed cooking and baking. He also enjoyed hiking and canoeing in the Adirondack Mountains of New York.

Calling hours were at Spencer Funeral Home in East Hampton Sunday, Dec. 9. A memorial service was held at Bethlehem Lutheran Church Monday, Dec. 10.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Organ Repair Fund.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Hebron

Cory Michael Francks

On Sunday, Dec. 9, at 1:41 a.m., Cory Francks (The Man, The Myth, The Superhero), lost his final battle for life at Hartford Hospital. Born Feb. 8, 1995, he was 23 years old. A son and a brother to all who knew him, Cory is survived by his parents, Sue and Bob; siblings, Tim, Ethan and Sarah; grandmother, Shirley Miller, 90-plus aunts, uncles, cousins; and his four-legged friends Dolly, Miss Kitty, Sleepy Pete, and Leif Carrotson.



After graduating RHAM High School in 2013, Cory helped co-found the family landscaping business LawnTecs SR. During his time with the company, Cory spread his familiarity to people all over Marlborough, Hebron and the surrounding areas. Working beside family and friends for over six long years, the company ran strong, and will continue to do so in honor of Cory's hopes and dreams.

Usually won over by his quick wit and endless humor, everybody that met Cory became swift and lifelong friends. His commentary on life was like a constant stream of punchlines that never needed a set up.

A celebration of his life will be held at Easter Seals Camp Hemlocks at 1 p.m. Saturday Dec. 15. All are welcome.

We love you forever and more, Cap. Fly high.

Colchester

Nena Schlitter

Nena (Teliak) Schlitter, 96, of Colchester, formerly of Hebron, widow of the late Dr. Russell Schlitter, MD, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Dec. 5, at Harrington Court in Colchester. Born Nov. 14, 1922, in Chicago, Ill., she was the daughter of the late Michael and Helen (Boris) Teliak and sister of the late Olga (Teliak) Fisher of Akron, OH.



Nena loved literature, poetry, song and orchestral music, especially Andre Rieu and Strauss waltzes. She loved to sing and dance, and music was always in her heart and soul. She filled everyone's life with the sound of music, through her warmth, generosity, joy and love of the songs of birds, violins, dance and musicals. Having lost most of her vision in the last year of her life, but retaining perfect hearing and pitch, she hummed the "Wings of Song" on her flight to heaven.

Love of family and friends was the essence of Nena's life. She was both best friend and 'kindred spirits' to her daughter and granddaughters. Nena and Russell were leaders in the community in Morton Grove, Ill., where they raised their children. She made deep friendships when they lived in their later years in Tallahassee, Fla., and then Hebron. In Hebron, she was very active and well-known in the Mill Landing community, Russell Mercier Senior Center, Ted's IGA and the Hairline. Her final two years were spent comfortably and lovingly at Harrington Court in Colchester. She was happy and treated with great warmth, care and affection there. We are forever thankful to the nurses, aids and staff who took such wonderful care of her.

Nena was a devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Love and care for her family and friends defined her life. In her later years, she was very proud of and devoted to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

She leaves her three children (and their spouses), Nancy S. and Edward F. Bader of Colchester, James and Betty Schlitter of Bradenton, Fla., and Thomas and Carolyn Schlitter of Maui, Hawaii; and four grandchildren, Suzanne Salemi of Colchester, Christine Peach (and her husband, Collin) of Marlborough, Gregory Bader of Norwich, and Kevin Bader of New London. She also leaves the lights of her life, her four great-grandchildren, Samuel and Benjamin Salemi of Colchester and Nicolas and Finnley Peach of Marlborough.

The family will hold a private memorial service.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her name and memory may be made to CPTV, 1049 Asylum Ave., Hartford, CT 06105 (cptv.org).

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

East Hampton

William J. Ley Sr.

William (Bill) J. Ley Sr., 76, of East Hampton, died at home Thursday, Dec. 6. Bill was born in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., on Jan. 19, 1942. He was the husband of Mary (Ocelik) Ley for 37 years.



Bill was the son of Gertrude Ley and the late Ruskin Ley, who worked at Pratt & Whitney, before moving his family to Middletown when Bill was sixteen; he then graduated at Woodrow Wilson High School. After school, he married the late Barbara Waterhouse who he had three children with.

Bill had his own business in Cromwell for about four years; he also worked for Pratt & Whitney for several years then moved on to car sales for over 15 years. Additionally, he sold insurance before becoming a mortgage broker for 10 years before retiring. Bill loved telling jokes and making people laugh; he enjoyed playing setback, cars and watching NASCAR.

Bill was predeceased by his father, Ruskin Ley; sister, Judy (Ley) Pessina; and brother, John Ley.

Besides his wife and mother, Bill leaves behind his sister, Jane (Ley) Lear and her husband, Richard of Pennsylvania; son William J. Ley Jr. and partner Mary Beaudoin of Lebanon and their children, Michelle (Ley) Reardon and husband, William, Nicole Ley, Benjamin Beaudoin and Victoria Beaudoin; son, Robert S. Ley of Westchester, CT and his children, Jeremy Hyde, Jennifer (Hyde) Druskovich and husband, Michael; Kelsey Ley and partner, Angel Lopez; a daughter, Lori (Ley) Olsen and husband Jeff of East Haddam and her daughter, Sara Dombroski and partner, Michael Foley; three stepchildren, Tammy (Carlson) Angeli and husband Michael of Portland and their two children, Michael Angeli and wife, Robyn, Chelsey (Angeli) Dash and husband, Greg; Wendy (Carlson) Givens of Glastonbury and two sons, Joseph Scovill and wife, Sarah, Brandon Scovill; Jamie (Carlson) Grimshaw and husband, John and her daughter, Joslyn (Smith) Meeker and husband, Shayne. Along with 10 great-grandchildren, Luke and George Hyde, Keva Druskovich, Ernesto and Emmet Lopez, Jackson, Caleb and Wyatt Foley, Mackenzie Scovill, Michael Angeli; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Immense gratitude to family and friends who have stood by us through everything. A celebration of life will be held at the convenience of the family.

Those who wish may make a memorial contribution to the Hartford Hospital Hospice or the American Cancer Society. Special thanks to hospice nurses and Laurie Berger, the nurse aide that took wonderful care of Bill during this time.

Gilead

William Jewett Warner II

William Jewett Warner II, a native of the Gilead section of Hebron, died Oct. 25, the result of a motor vehicle accident in Florida.



He leaves behind his wife, Amy; a son and daughter-in-law, William J. Warner III and Shauna (Leary) of Bradenton, Fla.; a daughter and son-in-law, Sheri and Brian Palmer of Andover; and grandchildren, Audra Warner of Bradenton, Fla., and Joel, Dylan, Carli and Cameron Palmer of Andover.

He was predeceased by his sisters, Noreen Warner Moberg and Lois Warner Roberts.

Bill was born Dec. 18, 1947, the son of the late William H. Warner and Doris (Chapman) Warner. He attended Hebron Elementary School and RHAM High School, both in Hebron. He was active in sports at RHAM, graduating in 1966. Drafted in 1967 into the U.S. Army, he served as a sergeant in the infantry in Vietnam with B Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, from 1968-69, where he contracted malaria. He was wounded in action (WIA) on May 31, 1969, during an ambush, receiving multiple wounds resulting in his sustaining shrapnel that remained with him for the rest of his life. For his actions that day, Bill was awarded the Bronze Star with V for Valor and the Purple Heart, among other awards.

Bill was a lifetime member of both the AmVets and the DAV (Disabled American Veterans), a member of the NRA, and a member of the Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association. Returning to civilian life at his job with the U.S. Postal Service in Glastonbury, he remained there for 28 years until diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In 1986, adept in carpentry, he built a house in Gilead for himself and his family. A devoted husband, father, and grandfather, Bill loved hunting, shooting, motorcycles, and four-wheeling. He had a strong sense of humor, delighting his family and friends with his crazy antics.

Because of his neuropathy, due to his contact with Agent Orange, Bill and his family had to leave New England's harsh weather. They relocated to Lakewood Ranch, Fla. in 2004. The birth this year of his granddaughter, Audra, revitalized him, giving him a renewed sense of purpose. Bill was unable to travel long distances in recent years, as a result of COPD and cancer.

A memorial service was held for Bill at the Sarasota National Cemetery in Sarasota, Fla., where he is buried.

Obituaries continued

Portland

David C. Richardson

David Charles Richardson of Portland and Eastham, Mass., adored father and proud grandfather, devoted and loving husband and brother, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly Wednesday, Nov. 26. David and his wife Robin Lea (Yalenezian) Richardson had just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this past summer.



David worked as a chemist specializing in rubber products. He retired as technical director of Airex Rubber Products in Portland, where he worked for over 30 years. He loved his job and the people he worked with and returned to work part-time after retirement.

He was very active in professional organizations, including the American Chemical Society. Dave served as president of the Connecticut Rubber Division for multiple terms. He was an active member of the First Congregational Church of Portland for over 35 years, serving on many committees. He was an avid reader and expressed his commitment to community and literacy by serving on the Portland Library Board of Directors for many years. Dave loved to watch and discuss sports, especially UConn basketball and the New England Patriots.

He enjoyed spending summers at his home in Eastham. Dave especially loved Cape Cod sunsets at low tide. He relished spending time there with family and friends.

Dave approached life with patience and humor. He was the rock of his family. His subtle wit and quick smile will be missed by family and friends.

Along with his wife, Dave is survived by his son, Mark A. Richardson of Valesta, Ga.; a daughter, Laura A. Westphal and her husband Fred of Madison; two grandchildren, Christian and Andrew Westphal, who were the light of his life; two brothers, Stewart Richardson of Londonderry, N.H., and Leo Richardson of Greensboro, N.C., and many nieces and nephews.

Dave was predeceased by his sister, Margaret "Peggy" Walsh.

Funeral services will be held on Monday, Dec. 17, at 11 a.m., at the First Congregational Church of Portland. Family and friends may call Monday morning from 10 to 11 a.m. at the church.

In lieu of flowers, donations in David's memory may be made to First Congregational Church of Portland Memorial Fund, 554 Main St., Portland, CT 06480 or Portland Public Library, 20 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

To share memories or send condolences to the family, visit doolittlefuneralservice.com.

Colchester

Louis "Skip" Leone

Louis "Skip" Leone, 86, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Thursday, Dec. 6, with his loving wife Lorraine by his side. Born Feb. 11, 1932, in Hartford, he was the son of the late Carmine and Theresa (Armentano) Leone.



Skip served proudly with the U.S. Air Force from 1951 to 1955 during the Korean War. He was stationed in Okinawa for two years as a B-29 mechanic and went on to be crew chief in 1954 in Bangor, Maine.

Mr. Leone was the second generation co-owner/operator of City Auto Parts Inc. of Hartford along with his brother, Anthony for many years and was also a realtor. He was a Charter Member of the B.P.O. Elks Post 2308 in Rocky Hill/Wethersfield and was a member of the Donald A. Bigelow Post 54 American Legion in Colchester. Skip was a longtime communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester and had served on the parish council, handling administrative affairs for many years.

His greatest joy was found in his family, and in addition to his beloved wife of nearly 50 years, he leaves eight children (and their spouses), Elaine (Thomas) Canfield, Tracy Roy, James Gabree, Mark Leone, Linda (Dennis) Roberts, Todd Leone, Raymond Gabree and Thomas (Jennifer) Leone; 13 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family and friends.

He was predeceased by his two siblings, Nancy Malloy and Anthony Leone.

The family received guests Monday, Dec. 10, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, before the celebration of the funeral liturgy at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, that morning. Burial will military honors followed in the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the church.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

A riddle made the rounds on the Internet earlier this week, and I have to admit, it stumped me. Let's see how you fare, dear reader:

It's 7 a.m. You are asleep and there is a sudden knock on the door. Behind the door are your parents, who came to have breakfast. In your fridge: bread, milk (pasteurized!), juice, and a jar of jam. What will you open first?

The answer comes at the end of this column.

I don't know how this managed to stay under my radar for the past 10 years, but for whatever reason I just learned about it over the weekend, and was pretty revolted by it.

The New York Yankees kicked a fan out of their stadium in 2008 for trying to go to the bathroom during the singing of "God Bless America."

The New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) sued the Yankees as well as the New York Police Department on behalf of Bradford Campeau-Laurion, a Queens resident who had been ejected from Yankee Stadium by police officers during the Aug. 26, 2008, game against the Red Sox.

According to a statement issued by the NYCLU, Campeau-Laurion had been watching the game with a friend and decided to use the bathroom during the seventh-inning stretch. However, the stadium had begun playing "God Bless America," so an NYPD officer blocked Campeau-Laurion, indicating he couldn't leave his seat during the song.

Campeau-Laurion explained that he needed to use the restroom, the NYCLU said, and attempted to walk past the officer — who then grabbed him by the arm. A second officer assisted in restraining the fan, and the two forcibly removed him from the stadium, according to the NYCLU. The officers refused to ease their grip on Campeau-Laurion, even though, the NYCLU attested, he did not resist the officers.

The NYCLU — quite rightly, in my opinion — sued the Yankees and the NYPD, alleging that Campeau-Laurion was a victim of religious and political discrimination. In July 2009, a federal judge approved a settlement in which the Yankees agreed to not restrict movement during "God Bless America." The City of New York was also ordered to pay Campeau-Laurion \$10,000.

In the statement, NYCLU Executive Director Donna Lieberman called the ruling "a victory for the freedom of expression" — and I couldn't agree more.

Look, I like "God Bless America," and I don't really have a problem with it being played during the seventh-inning stretch at baseball games. (It's just a brief snippet of the song anyway.) But no one should be forced to stand for it if they don't want to — and certainly, no one should be forbidden from going to the bathroom during it.

It's particularly ironic that during a song celebrating America — land of the free — officers restricted this man from moving.

Forced patriotism is not patriotism.

Speaking of sports, it's been interesting in football to watch the Washington Redskins these past few weeks. After losing both their starting quarterback and backup quarterback to injury, Washington went with my old friend Mark "Butt Fumble" Sanchez to start last weekend's game against the Giants. Making his first start since the 2015 regular season, Sanchez struggled mightily — and was ultimately replaced by backup Josh Johnson, who had signed with the team last week and, be-

fore Sunday, hadn't even attempted a pass since 2011.

The Redskins have announced they'll start Johnson this weekend against Jacksonville.

Now, Washington still has a slim chance of making the playoffs, so this weekend's game certainly means something. Johnson had an okay two quarters on Sunday but, again, before that game he hadn't played since 2011. As Washington goes from has-been quarterback to has-been quarterback, you can't help but think about a certain pretty decent quarterback who's been looking for a job all season.

Yup: Colin Kaepernick.

Kaepernick hasn't played since the 2016 season with San Francisco, as a result of his kneeling during the National Anthem before football games. The kneeling, done in protest of incidents of police brutality, soon spread to other players around the league, and proved to be incredibly divisive. Folks, it seemed, either loved the protests or hated them — with many who fell in the latter category swearing off football for good and lighting their NFL merchandise on fire. Even the president felt the need to get involved.

Kaepernick, as the poster boy for the protests, soon became persona non grata in the NFL and, despite having a decent 2016 for a lousy San Francisco team, hasn't been employed since then. He's alleged collusion by the owners in the league, and has even filed a grievance, feeling he's being punished for his social activism. And while that certainly may be the case, what I feel is more likely is that teams just don't want to deal with the headache that would likely accompany signing Kaepernick. The media would have a field day, fans would be enraged all over again, and the president would probably start tweeting about it again too.

But you know what? If the playoffs are on the line, I've got three little words of advice for the Washington Redskins front office: Deal with it.

The fact is Kaepernick is a good player. He led the 49ers to two straight appearances in the NFC championship game in 2012 and 2013, and even made it to the Super Bowl one of those years.

Does that success feel like it happened a long time ago? Let me repeat: before Sunday, Josh Johnson hadn't attempted a pass since 2011.

And speaking of Johnson, the stats prove that Kaepernick's simply a better player than he is. He has a higher passer rating, and more yards per attempt, than Johnson, or Sanchez for that matter.

He's also proven with San Francisco he can handle the crunch of the playoff hunt.

Washington brass apparently did discuss bringing on Kaepernick before signing Johnson, but ultimately decided against it. The team maintains it did so for "strictly football" reasons, but like I said, given who the Redskins did go with, it's tough to wonder if there's more behind it.

And if it is punishment for social activism, or indeed just reluctance to deal with the media sideshow that would unfortunately accompany signing Kaepernick, Washington needs to get over it. The playoffs are — barely — within grasp, and the man who is perhaps the team's best hope is ready, willing and able to help them; he just needs to be given a chance.

Lastly, here's the answer to the riddle I opened this column with. What will you open first? Your eyes.

See you next week.