

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 43, Number 9

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

December 7, 2018



Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel... Mendel Wolvovsky, the son of Chabad Jewish Center Rabbi Yosef Wolvovsky, was the blue dreidel dancing around the giant menorah on the Colchester Town Green Monday evening, as part of Chabad's annual Hanukkah celebration in town. See story, additional photo on page 27.

Portland Schools Tagged by Vandals

by Elizabeth Regan

Portland officials said obscenities, sexual imagery and vulgar commentary on middle and high school administrators were among the graffiti left on the Portland secondary school property in the overnight hours last Friday.

The black, spray-painted messages left Portland High School Principal Kathryn Lawson feeling "embarrassed, saddened and a little broken," she told students at a Monday morning assembly. A copy of her remarks was emailed to parents the same day.

Police and school district officials are investigating the case of vandalism, according to Portland Police Capt. Ron Milardo and Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly.

O'Reilly said the sexual graffiti included drawings of penises.

O'Reilly said defaced areas included bricks and windows on the secondary school building, storage units, the baseball dugout and the water tower.

"It was a violation of our school community," the superintendent said Tuesday.

Officers were called to the school Saturday morning, according to Milardo. They photographed the graffiti before contractors were called in by the school district to remove stubborn spray paint from the bricks.

"At this point it's under investigation. We're in the process of interviewing people we believe could be involved," Milardo said. "We did develop during the investigation several good leads and hopefully in the near future we should have an outcome that's positive."

The spray-painted attacks against staff members were targeted at Lawson, Middle School Principal Scott Giegerich, Athletic Director Chris Serra and security officer Tim Casey, according to Lawson.

The three administrators, along with three members of the Student Senate, called the Monday morning assembly to address all stu-

dents in the grade seven-12 complex about what Lawson called "significant and derogatory" vandalism.

The administrators' message revolved around a continued commitment to helping students who may feel angry and disconnected while making sure all members of the student body feel safe.

There will be consequences, according to the school officials.

"This type of behavior is unwelcome, unacceptable and those responsible will be identified by the Portland Police Department and will be held accountable and punished. Make no mistake, this was a criminal act," Lawson said at the assembly.

Lawson, who said she believes the graffiti came from one or more students, described a feeling of "devastating failure." The act left her feeling torn between concern for the student or students who vandalized the school and the rest of the students who did not.

"I am conflicted because this means there are members of our student body that we haven't helped, we haven't taught and who are angry and feel removed," she said.

The "other side of the conflict" was her commitment to the entire student body.

"You deserve a school you can be proud of, a school you can feel safe in, whether it is in the bathroom, the hallway, the classroom or the fields," she said.

Serra, the athletic director and coach, spoke during the assembly to paint the situation as "an opportunity to persevere as a team, community, and the strong family that we are."

He said administrators weren't there for retribution or to single out any student, but to "construct a way to work with those who are in need and help them grow to understand the love, compassion and strength embedded in the Port-

See Portland Schools page 2

Pipeline Program Pushes Trade-Based Jobs

by Sloan Brewster

With his eyes on a trade-based job, RHAM High School senior Jacob Arseneault has signed up to be a part of the school's new Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative Program.

RHAM is just the second high school to opt into the new state program, which is a collaboration between high schools and manufacturers that offers certification courses in the basics of manufacturing, according to Principal Scott Leslie. RHAM is the first school to offer the courses during the school day.

Students in the program will learn the same thing their adult counterparts learn in courses where they receive their certifications, Leslie and RHAM career and technical education de-

partment coordinator Samantha Schadle said.

"The process here is to mirror the adult process in the [manufacturing] pipeline in the state," Schadle said. "The candidates are going through the same process as adults. They have been identified and assessed with the same assessments as adults."

The program endeavors to address manufacturers' needs and give students other options besides college, Leslie said.

The courses in the program will include metals manufacturing, training on lathes, milling machines and plasma cutters, basic machining, and training in the digital readout component for machines. The curriculum also covers ba-

sic shop math.

"They fact that they're working in metal doesn't mean they can't replace that," Schadle said. "They can go into plastics."

Manufacturing jobs are exploding and there will be 30,000 jobs to fill in the next 10 years, Schadle said. Electric Boat, in Groton, will be manufacturing new submarines, and Sikorski will be manufacturing a new Black Hawk helicopter. Both corporations will have to manufacture many parts and components as part of the larger projects.

"Should [students] successfully complete [the program] they are in a fantastic position to be offered a position at, right now, Electric Boat

and other local firms eager to get their hands on these kids as well," Leslie said.

Celia Anderson, a senior at RHAM, has aims of doing studio art, she signed up for the program because she wanted to try something different.

On Monday, Arseneault and Anderson were in the shop classroom with teacher Eric Soucie, who will teach the pipeline curriculum. Arseneault was helping Soucie fix a chop saw in the back of the room and Anderson was giving some finishing touches to a candle holder she had artistically shaped and welded out of metal.

See New Program page 2

Holiday Shopping Guide Inside



RHAM High School senior Celia Anderson takes her first lesson on a lathe. Learning how to work on a lathe is one of many lessons in the school's new Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Program. Anderson is the only female student signed up for the program.

New Program cont. from Front Page

Arseneault said he signed up for the program, because he does well in Soucie's classes.

He said he wants to work in an environment with "a lot of advancement and better opportunities to move up," such as positions the pipeline program promises will be available to students who complete it.

"It's a great opportunity for the kids and I'm completely sure most will get jobs when they complete it," Soucie said.

Besides the manufacturing basics, the program will also relay the need for reliability, showing up to work on time and working with a team, which employers said were necessary lessons, Leslie said.

"So there's also an emphasis on the soft skills," he said. "If you've demonstrated an aptitude for the skill basics, [employers] can train you but they can't hire someone they know can't be reliable or work with a team."

The program kicked-off last Friday with a meeting between school officials, teachers and counselors, local manufacturing employers, representatives from the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board, Three Rivers Community College and state Sen. Cathy Osten (D-19), Leslie and Schadtler said. The main purpose of the meeting was to bring everyone in the program together and make local manufacturers aware of it and inform them that 13 students have joined the program and will be a potential group of future employees.

"I think the employers – the representatives from each of the shops – were thrilled that there's a new source for potential employees," Leslie said. "For us I think it kind of solidified that this is the right time."

Manufacturers at the meeting were Webco Plastics of Middlefield, Alpha Q of Colchester, Marlborough Plastics, Highway Safety Corporation of Glastonbury and Pratt & Whitney.

"We had a conversation around the need in the state for manufacturing jobs and what the outlook looks like," Schadtler said. "We had a conversation around what employers are looking for in successful candidates that they would want to hire. We had a conversation around these kinds of programs coming down to the high

school because they can't fill them with adults only anymore."

The pipeline program differs from shop classes of old, Leslie said. Shop classes did not come with certifications or teach skills that were necessarily applicable to future careers.

Most were focused on an area of interest," he said. "Most students I think didn't really expect that they were going to leave the program and get a job.

Osten included funding in the last two state budgets to expand and continue the program – and introduced it to RHAM.

Norwich Free Academy is also a part of the program, Osten has said.

"This program helps students earn a living wage while achieving the American dream of owning a home, raising a family and staying here in Connecticut," Osten said, according to the press release. "Connecticut is truly on the cusp of turning around its job numbers. In the Norwich-New London area we are actually below the national unemployment average; five years ago we had one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation. Now, over the next decade, we're going to need 30,000 new workers in Connecticut."

Since the school began to set up the program, Schadtler has visited a few area manufacturing facilities, including Webco Plastics, Alpha Q and Marlborough Plastics.

"This fall they invited me to come out because they wanted me to see what it is they do and can offer to students," she said.

Alpha Q and Marlborough Plastics have recently completed expansion projects at their facilities, Schadtler said.

Nowadays the stigma attached to manufacturing is detaching and manufacturing facilities are bright clean environments based on technology driven labs, she said. The school even plans to brighten up the shop class with a coat of paint, new chairs and some new machines.

With 13 seats of the 16 available seats in the program, there are still three openings, Schadtler said.

Portland Schools cont. from Front Page

land community that we are all so proud of."

Three members of the Student Senate joined administrators to decry the graffiti attack and to emphasize the act should not overshadow the good things that happen in the schools every day.

Student Senate member and Board of Education student representative Mark Matera told school board members this week the incident was "an anomaly that won't affect the rest of the year."

Police have begun reviewing security footage from cameras on the building as part of what Milardo called an "open, active investigation."

According to a grant application submitted

this week by O'Reilly to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, the existing camera system is insufficient, outdated and "does not provide clear pictures." The school district is asking the state to fund \$22,000 of the total \$40,000 project cost.

"We have experienced an increased number of security incidents which required the use of our existing cameras for monitoring and investigative purposes. Due to the inferior quality of the surveillance videos and lack of service areas, we have not been able to use videos that could help us identify the perpetrators and vandals," O'Reilly wrote in the application.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I came in to the office Monday morning to a phone message left by a reader from Hebron named Mike, regarding my column last week in support of tolls. He said he agreed with me – and also pointed out an error I had made.

In the column, I wrote that the only thing that Rhode Island tolls is tractor-trailers. The caller reminded me of the bridge going to Newport, which is indeed tolled. That's something I particularly should've remembered, as I've driven on that bridge in the past. (Newport is an absolutely beautiful city.)

Thanks for the call, Mike. I'm happy to correct my mistake.

And thanks for your support too; I'm glad people agree with me that they'd be a good money-maker for the state – and one that, like I said last week, every other state bordering us also employs. For the record, I was thinking more about tolls and if I had my druthers, as they say in *Li'l Abner*, I'd prefer tolls to be like they are in the non-Newport parts of Rhode Island: tractor-trailers only. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out those are what do the most damage to our roadways. And I do think they could be limited to the Big Three interstates – 84, 91 and 95.

Yes, going this route means there wouldn't be quite as much revenue as the \$1.086 billion the DOT had projected, but, seeing the sheer number of tractor-trailers on those highways every time I drive on them, I know the tolls would still generate a nice chunk of change. And to be honest, it may be a more palatable way to get folks here on board with it.

* * *

Most years I like to fire up the Christmas tunes on my car radio the day after Thanksgiving, but this year, maybe because Thanksgiving was so early, I just wasn't really feeling the holiday songs. But, with the calendar turning and the weather cooling, I've been in the mood, and have been listening to the seasonal music more and more.

And while I of course love the standards I've been smiling and humming along with for years – Mel Torme, Frank Sinatra, The Carpenters – I do also enjoy hearing new discoveries. Some can be quite beautiful – and others, I admit, can be pretty lousy. Last week, while driving around, I heard an early contender for perhaps my most disappointing Christmas song discovery of 2018: Mariah

Carey's rendition of "O Holy Night."

Okay, so Google tells me it's not exactly new – it came from Carey's 1994 album *Merry Christmas* – but I had never heard it before so, as NBC used to say in an attempt to dress up summer reruns, it was new to me. And boy was it lousy. I think one of the reasons I was so disappointed in the song was that "O Holy Night" has long been one of very favorite Christmas songs. I've heard a ton of beautiful renditions of it over the years, from Nat "King" Cole to Josh Groban.

So to hear Carey's performance of it was quite a letdown.

Look, Mariah Carey's got an amazing voice. I think that's pretty much established fact. But one of the byproducts of this amazing voice is she has a tendency to oversing the heck out of whatever number she's performing. That's especially true on "O Holy Night" – and she really didn't need to do that here. She should've just let the song speak for itself. But instead she overdid it, finding five notes to hit where one would've been just fine.

The thing is, Carey has such a strong voice, and "O Holy Night" is so much in her wheelhouse, that a simple rendition of it would've been beautiful. But by going so over-the-top – which, as I said, she has an unfortunate tendency to do – she made it almost unlistenable.

"Almost unlistenable" is also the term I'd use to describe two other Christmas songs I've heard in the past few days: two different remakes of the insipid 1953 novelty song "I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas." Now I realize that, at age 39, I'm probably about 30 years removed from the target demographic from that song, but really: it is just so dumb. And oh so annoying. Yes, it's a novelty song, but novelty songs can still be entertaining. (Just ask Weird Al.) This one is just....not.

So I was a little aghast when I heard not one but two remakes of it within a couple days of each other. The first was a headache-inducing over-the-top mess by LeAnn Rimes that does the unthinkable: make you long for the original. The next one, by country artist Kacey Musgraves, is a little better, if only because it's a more straightforward remake of the original, and doesn't add all the loud bells and whistles Rimes did. But I still can't recommend it. It's just a dumb, dumb song.

* * *

See you next week.

Steinhauser Appointed to Portland School Board

by Elizabeth Regan

A vacancy on the Board of Education was filled Tuesday by Laurel Steinhauser, a Democrat who this year launched an unsuccessful bid for a seat in the state House of Representatives.

Steinhauser lost the race for the 32nd District House seat to incumbent Republican Christie Carpino in November's election.

But this week, she won the unanimous support of the school board when members voted to appoint her to former Democratic Chairman MaryAnne Rode's term. The term ends next November.

Rode's resignation, effective Nov. 30, was prompted by a move to Branford. Rode had served on the board for 13 years.

School board member Sharon Peters, a lawyer and a former member of the Board of Selectmen, was elected chairman by her fellow board members. Meg Scata now serves as vice chairman after a year and a half on the board.

Steinhauser was seated immediately after being sworn in by Town Clerk Ryan Curley at the beginning of Tuesday's regular meeting.

The mother of a first-grader in the Portland school system and two younger children who will be coming up through the elementary ranks, Steinhauser described the position as a "natural fit."

"I'm personally invested in making sure our school system is as strong as it can be because I have children in the public school system," she said. "I'm married to an educator; I'm the daughter of a public school teacher and the daughter-in-law of a public school teacher."

Steinhauser's husband, Chris Chenier, teaches digital art and design at Wesleyan University.

She also referenced her background in arts education.

Steinhauser graduated Wesleyan University in 2005 with a dance degree. She went on to

run after-school classes in low-income communities, direct arts programming for children with speech and behavioral disorders, operate a small business as a perinatal massage therapist and birth doula, and serve as a mentor and counselor to pregnant women and new mothers.

"I'm just committed and passionate about public education. So this feels like a great way for me to give back to the community," she said.

Steinhauser said she was approached last week by the Democratic Town Committee to see if she'd be interested in the seat. She immediately began reading up on the role in various documents available through the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education.

"I'm excited to be part of this team," she said. "It seems like an engaged and active group and I'm excited to learn from them and work with them."

Rode, a human resources professional, said this week that her move to Branford was one of several factors making this the right time for her to end more than a decade of service to the public school system.

District accomplishments during those years include two Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Awards – Brownstone Intermediate in 2011 and the middle school in 2014 – as well as renovations and improvements to several schools.

"Thirteen years, that's a long time to serve on the board," Rode said.

She attributed her personal strength as a leader to her status as both a parent of school-aged children and a board member at the same time.

"I think that it was really helpful for me as a board member to have that connection with the schools, having my kids go through them," she said.

Two years removed from her youngest child's graduation, she said she felt her value as chairman was "diminishing." It was time to bring in



Town Clerk Ryan Curley, right, swears in Laurel Steinhauser, the Board of Education's newest member, during the school board's regular meeting Tuesday. Steinhauser replaces 13-year board member and outgoing chairman MaryAnne Rode.

new perspective and ideas, according to Rode.

"I think it's important to have new perspective and new ideas brought to the board," she said.

Rode pointed to Peters' legal acumen and experience as a former selectman to illustrate the new chairman's skill set.

"I think that perspective is fantastic for a board chair in terms of the knowledge and understanding of the law," Rode said.

Peters has three years of experience on the school board and six years as a selectman. She is a private practice attorney representing children and adults in juvenile, family and criminal proceedings.

Peters said after Tuesday's meeting that she has "big shoes to fill."

"We lost a very valuable member of our board," Peters said of Rode. "She definitely will be missed."

Library Roof Project in East Hampton to Start in Spring

by Elizabeth Regan

A roughly \$312,000 East Hampton Public Library roof project will commence in the spring as library staff and supporters brace for a wet winter inside the compromised building.

Project manager Matt Brown, of town engineering firm Anchor Engineering, spoke at Monday's Library Advisory Board meeting to update concerned members about leaks caused by ice dams that have been wreaking havoc in the children's room of the library for years.

Brown said structural issues with the 1989 roof prevent airflow from circulating due to steel bracing that holds the rafters together. Insufficient space between the bracing and the roof itself allows heat from inside the building to warm the roof, resulting in the melting and re-freezing phenomenon that leads to ice dams.

The part of the roof added with the senior center portion of the building in the early 2000s does not need to be replaced, according to officials.

The Town Council in September authorized a plan, submitted by Anchor Engineering in consultation with Massachusetts-based roofing professional Tom Ewing, to build a new library roof over the existing roof.

"Anchor Engineering doesn't typically get involved in these types of projects," Brown told library board members, adding that it was the engineering firm's recommendation to bring in Ewing.

"This is his bailiwick. He is a roofing ex-

pert," Brown said.

The town engineering firm is paid out of the public works budget, which also funds engineering services for road projects. The town spent \$49,907 for engineering services in 2017-18 and is budgeted for \$50,000 this year.

According to Brown, repairing the old roof is not practical because it would be too "disruptive and challenging and costly." So the plan is to remove the existing dormers and build over the current roof with a big enough gap to allow airflow.

"It's a complete new roof," Brown said. "This new system is not going to rely upon the existing roof in any manner other than to support the new roofing system."

Officials also considered a metal roof or a PVC-based roof that looks like a metal roof. The options were rejected due to safety issues related to snow falling off the smooth surface in large chunks and because the look would not conform with the community center section of the building, Brown said.

The work is slated to begin in early- to mid-May and is expected to take about 60 days, according to Brown.

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said a prolonged budget process and the resulting freeze on capital spending slowed down the planning and construction timeline.

Voters at a town meeting in September authorized the town to spend \$223,000 for library

roof repairs out of last year's budget surplus. The supplemental appropriation combines with \$89,000 in previously-allocated capital funding to cover the estimated \$276,000-\$312,000 project cost.

Brown told library board members the firm was prepared to move forward with the project when the funding was released, but acknowledged winter is not the ideal time to undertake a roofing project.

"Ultimately the town manager made the decision to push it out to spring, primarily because of the additional cost associated with work this time of year," Brown said.

Maniscalco told the *Rivereast* Tuesday that Brown advised him it would "add cost" to the project to do the work during the winter months. He did not supply a specific number but said he was told the project would go "way over budget."

"Thankfully the taxpayers of East Hampton have been very generous in providing the resources to get this roof done," Maniscalco said. "At a certain point, enough is enough. Let's make this thing happen within budget."

Maniscalco also determined with Public Works Department Director Dean Michelson and some contractors that a \$5,000-\$8,000 plan to put a tarp on top of the roof would be "wasted money," Maniscalco said public works staff

would be better off raking snow off the roof as it accumulates to keep water from coming in.

Ellen Paul, Library Director, and children's librarian Michele Kaminski on Tuesday said the library roof has contributed to serious problems along the back wall in the children's section since February 2015. That's when staff closed off the entire children's section with caution tape for a short time due to water coming in through the ceiling and overhead light fixtures.

Librarians mitigated the impact on library resources by moving computers and books away from the leak and covering some shelves with tarps.

"It just kept pouring in and it didn't stop," Kaminski said.

The caution tape came out again last winter when a ceiling tile fell during regular business hours. No injuries were sustained, but the section was closed until the public works department could address the situation.

Town public works personnel replaced several ceiling tiles along a section of the back wall with tarp to "funnel water into trash cans," according to Paul.

The librarians are prepared to use the same stopgap measures this winter.

"We'll do our best to protect our materials this winter and we're excited to see progress in the spring," Paul said.

Colchester Celebration Focuses on ‘Lighting Up the Dark’

by Allison Lazur

At a time when negative national events are often highlighted in the nightly news, Colchester held onto the positive with its annual celebration of Hanukkah on the town green, highlighting the theme of “lighting up the dark,” said Rabbi Yosef Wolvovsky of the Chabad Jewish Center.

After anti-Semitic attacks at the Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh plagued the Jewish community in October, this year’s celebration on the Town Green emphasized the theme with even greater reverence.

“When we see more negative towards the Jews, it makes [this celebration] more powerful,” said the rabbi’s eldest daughter Mushka Wolvovsky. “We can show ourselves and the world that we are still going to stay strong.”

She explained that over the years “it’s been tough to stick to our beliefs,” citing the persecution of Jews during the Holocaust.

“The menorah symbolizes the light that we can still bring into the world no matter what challenges come our way,” she said.

But despite these difficulties, a smile could be seen on every one of the approximate 35 attendees that gathered Monday night – the second night of Hanukkah – to light the 9-foot-tall menorah.

Wolvovsky hyped up the crowd, requesting that “Happy Hanukkah” be repeated three times, each time growing in excitement.

“According to Jewish tradition three times means it’s permanent – it’s real!” he said.

Wolvovsky encouraged attendees to fill out raffle tickets for a chance to win Hanukkah-themed prizes, including light-up menorah and dreidel glasses, a magnet kit and a Lego set.

“We really try to add a new twist every year,” Wolvosky said. “It’s the first time the raffle prizes are Hanukkah-themed.”

His son Mendel was dressed in a blue dreidel costume as he bounced around the green with other children and even dogs in attendance.

Wolvovsky joked that it was a requirement of everyone in attendance to eat a latke, or potato pancake.

“It’s not a choice – you must have latkes,” he said. “It’s a Jewish custom to eat latkes on

Hanukkah because they’re made with oil. Since the miracle was a miracle of oil, we eat food made with oil.”

The history of the Festival of Lights dates back to about 200 B.C, where a small group of Jews were successful in defeating their Greek oppressors who tried to force them to accept Greek culture and beliefs. When they sought to light the temple’s menorah enough olive oil was uncovered to keep the menorah lit for a single day. However, miraculously, the one-day supply of oil lasted for eight days.

Wolvovsky told the crowd the role of oil is a “metaphor for the soul.”

He explained that when mixed with other liquids, oil rises to the top, yet at the same time “saturates and permeates everything.”

“Oil remains above, yet it affects everything,” he said. “That is a metaphor for the soul. The soul remains above, doesn’t get bogged down by the nitty-gritty chores of life, but on the other hand the soul affects our every thought, our every decision and our every move.”

Resident Hilery Slattery stood next to her daughter Tybal who said they attend the community celebration because it “keeps the religion alive.”

“It’s about keeping Hanukkah going and making other people aware of it,” Hilery Slattery said. “Anybody can come. [The rabbi] doesn’t care what faith or religion you are; you can just learn what Hanukkah is all about.”

The center tallest candle of the menorah, the shamash, was lit by Rabbi Ken Alter of Congregation Ahavath Achim followed by two of the eight candles lit by community members.

“The shamash rises above, stands higher than the rest of the menorah and lights the other candles,” Wolvosky said. “It’s a very important lesson for us in life that sometimes when we get the least credit, that’s when we are making the biggest difference.”

After the menorah was lit, community members stood near the menorah, their faces illuminated just enough by the candelabrum to showcase a smile.

“It’s nice to get together in a public space to celebrate Judaism with a lot of pride and joy,” Wolvovsky said.



Rabbi Ken Alter of Congregation Ahavath Achim lit the shamash, or center and tallest candle of the menorah, on the Town Green Monday night.

New Appliance Store Preaches Customer Service in Colchester

by Allison Lazur

While customers who enter the showroom of Smarter Appliance are met with sparkling new microwaves, and impressive refrigerators with touchscreens, the notable quality lies within the store’s customer service.

Co-owner Dave Koji said the store’s focus is on the customer and providing a service of value.

“It’s not just about creating great experiences; it’s about creating memorable experiences,” Koji said.

The store sits in an unassuming complex at 199 Old Hartford Rd. that most would remember as the old Sears location.

But Smarter Appliance strives to accomplish “what the big box stores don’t do well” and bring the personal experience back to consumerism, Koji said.

In a society that is often reliant on food delivery through a phone app or Internet reviews to make a purchase – both of which are devoid of all contact with another human – Smarter Appliance focuses on bringing a personal connection and a digital market together.

“We are embracing the online market and figuring out what we can do that is a mix between the in-store experience and online,” Koji said.

With hopes to expand, Koji said the store has started a “Smarter Cyber Monday” tradition where demo videos surrounding various appliances are displayed on the store’s website, all as part of the store’s mission of educating the customer.

Koji said the market is moving towards appliances that involve touchscreens on refrigerator doors or ovens that you can remotely pre-heat on your drive home for work. He speculates that in the next three to five years all appliances will be able to be connected to the

Internet. He noted that Samsung has stated they would not create a single product next year that can’t connect to the Internet.

As major appliance companies continue to place an emphasis on technology for their future creations, Smarter Appliance plans on being there to educate its customers or create a “smarter” consumer, Koji said.

“It’s an interesting transition for people,” he said. “We want people to embrace what’s happening, meaning we’re going from non-connected products to connected products, but it’s our responsibility to educate our consumers and customers on what that means.”

The “smarter” portion of the store’s name comes from the concept of what the term smarter represents when it comes to purchasing an appliance.

“All ‘smarter’ means is being educated on what you don’t know and we have the team to help you learn what you don’t know,” he said.

Education is not the only goal of the five-person staff. Koji said the staff believes “The sale isn’t when the product is rung out. The sale doesn’t count until it’s in the customer’s home and they’re happy, and I think that’s a different mindset.”

Furthermore, Koji disclosed that all purchasing, delivery and installation is handled by the store.

“The person selling you an item in the store is then showing you how to use it in your home,” he said.

Smarter Appliance offers free local delivery and haul-away, price matching and a five-year warranty which covers all parts and service. Koji said if a customer does not utilize their warranty after five years, they can mail in a rebate to receive half of whatever they paid on the warranty at the time of purchase.



The staff at Smarter Appliance located at 199 Old Hartford Rd. brings a personal touch back to purchasing appliances in a society saturated with online buying. Pictured are staff members, from left, Travis Christie, Jason Ashe and Stephen Kromer.

Koji emphasized that he “doesn’t want this to be a museum” where customers can’t touch or experience products with recognizable names such as Whirlpool, Dacor and GE.

“We want people to come in here and experience these things.” For example if you have a

quilt you aren’t sure will fit in a dryer, “bring your quilts,” he said. “We want you to experience the real world applications.”

Smarter Appliance is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sundays 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Festival Kicks Off Holiday Season in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

The weather outside was not frightful for the Hebron Holiday Fest; in fact, a lovely day was the backdrop for Santa's visit, the tree lighting and the rest of the seasonal cheer that took place last Saturday, Dec. 1, at the Douglas Library and Old Town Hall.

As Santa and Mrs. Claus rolled into the parking lot on a sleigh led by a local firetruck, children crowded round, excitedly awaiting the chance to sit on Santa's lap and tell him what they wanted under the tree this year.

Daniel Bronzi, 9, had a unique request. He said he wanted plastic handcuffs with keys to use on his little sisters "because they're always being super annoying."

Claire Bush, 8, of Hebron said she wanted a Moj Moj Claw Machine Playset – a toy that replicates claw machines seen at fairs. Her little sister, Sophie Bush, 5, said she wanted a Kitty Zoom Watch, an interactive smartwatch on which kids can play games. Will DeCesare said he didn't tell Santa what he wanted at the fest because he already did that. He did share his wish with the *Rivereast*, however, and said he was hoping to get a train set.

The children were accompanied by their parents and a group of neighbors hung out enjoying the merriment.

Amy Bush, Claire and Sophie's mom, said she attended the fest "because we live in Hebron."

"Being a part of the community shouldn't be hard; it should be simple," Bush said.

Will's mother, Amy DeCesare, said her family is new to town.

"I moved to Hebron in August and these ladies are my neighbors," she said, motioning to the Bushes and other women nearby. "Honestly it feels like a Christmas movie; the sense of community, my kids have already made lifelong friends and coming here for the tree lighting was the highlight of their day."

Everyone had different answers for their favorite part of the day. Claire said she most enjoyed the craft fair in Marlborough, which the family went to before coming to the fest in Hebron. Some kids said they enjoyed the model

train set rolling around in Old Town Hall while others favored the magic show at the library or decorating cookies.

Gabriel, 7, and Elena Accomazzo, 5, both of Hebron, said everything about the fest was "Awesome!"

"The model trains, I thought they were pretty cool, decorating cookies and watching the magic show – Oohoo! That was so cool," Gabriel said.

Elena chimed in saying she too "loved" the magic show, especially since she did a magic trick with magician Todd Migliacci.

"I only helped out," she clarified. "I just put a red nose on my back."

The nose multiplied and grew bigger and bigger, she added. "It was awesome!"

"My favorite part was when he put wrapping paper in his mouth and then he pulled it out and it kept coming out," Elena said.

Gabriel quite enjoyed when Migliacci tossed a scrambled Rubik's Cube in the air and it came down unscrambled.

Evelyn Bronzi, 5, was excited to share her experience in the magic show.

"I got to help the magician and I did a real magic trick," she said.

Dena Accomazzo, Gabriel and Elena's mother, said she brought them to the fest to have fun and see their friends.

"The best part for me so far was the giggling that the kids did with the magic, really simple, the silliness," she said. "He kept dropping a ball and the kids would giggle with glee, with pure glee."

While some folks hung out outside, visiting with Santa, listening to carolers from the RHAM High School chorus singing holiday tunes or awaiting the lighting of the tree, others were keeping warm in Old Town Hall checking out wares, admiring gingerbread houses and watching as a Mohegan-Pequot Model Railroad rolled past two tiny villages.

Stu Dom of Ledyard – a member of the Mohegan-Pequot Model Railroad Club of New London – created one of the modular villages, which he said was "a replica of a typical town, possibly in Pennsylvania."



Local children pose together for a photo after the tree lighting at the annual Hebron Holiday Fest. Santa and Mrs. Claus stopped by to share in the merriment and the RHAM chorus sang Christmas carols. There were also activities in the library and vendors at the Old Town Hall, where a Mohegan-Pequot Model Railroad was on display.

Describing himself as "the ultimate nit-picker," Dom said he develops a plan for what he wants his modules to look like before building them.

The village he displayed during the Holiday Fest consisted of three different 4-foot by 30-inch modules portraying scenes where tiny cars were parked or "driving past" homes and businesses. A three-story brick building overlooked the whirring railroad.

"My inspiration is that I like to build things that are on angles," Dom said of the layout of the buildings.

Dom said he enjoyed model trains in the 1950s when he was a child, and returned to the passion when he was in his 40s. He said he is rewarded by the people's reactions to the scenes.

"Looking at their expressions is the fun part," he said. "Building it and having someone look at it is just fun, I like to build so I like designing and building these trains."

Mary Ann Foote, Hebron Historical Society historian, said she hopes the railroad will be a regular part of the annual festivities.

This year's fest had "fairly good" attendance with visitor numbers "sporadic" based on what activities were happening outside and at the library.

Town Manager Andy Tierney said it was nice to have a lot of activities in one spot – the library, Old Town Hall and the green where the tree and caroling took place are side by side on Main Street and share a parking lot.

"It's all about the kids," he said.

Hebron Nurse Practitioner Touts Medicinal Pot

by Sloan Brewster

A local nurse practitioner is hoping to start a community-wide conversation on medical marijuana.

Nancy Nurge is holding a presentation on the use of medical marijuana at the Douglas Library next Wednesday, Dec. 12. It is meant as a launch for a series of presentations that Nurge hopes will evolve into discussions with participants.

According to Vox.com, Connecticut is among 32 states that have legalized medical marijuana. It has also been decriminalized here.

There are 10 states that legalized its recreational use, Nurge said.

Since early last month, Nurge has been seeing patients out of her home office in Amston.

Nurge, who is authorized to determine if patients meet the criteria for medical marijuana, works with them to manage their pain with the substance. The patients who come to her have been referred by their physician, which is a criterion they must meet before she will see them.

The patients are folks whose pain is not being managed by their doctor and who would like to experience the idea of medical marijuana, she said. They have one of the 21 diagnoses that qualify for medical marijuana coverage in the state.

Many people who see Nurge fear taking opioids because of their addictive qualities, she said.

"I deal with a lot of elderly people . . . [who] are living in pain and are afraid to take opioids," she said. "My number one goal with most of my patients is to get them to have a good night's sleep."

After Nurge meets patients and registers them with the state to get a medical marijuana card, she tells them they are eligible. From there they have to go online or to a dispensary to get the card.

"Everyone with a medical marijuana card can have up to 2.5 ounces per month," she said.

Using marijuana comes with a very individual approach, Nurge said. Patients have personalized plans and use various strengths of marijuana with varying degrees of tetrahydrocannabinol, which is more commonly known as THC and, according to Livescience.com, is the chemical responsible for most of

marijuana's psychological effects.

Marijuana can be taken in a variety of ways.

It can be imbibed through vaping or smoking or via a tincture placed under the tongue, Nurge said. There is even a balm that can be rubbed into the skin.

Every individual's tolerance for THC differs.

"There's no cookie cutter here," she said. "Someone who's been smoking it illegally for years will have a totally different tolerance."

Labs are able to test with "incredible accuracy" the amount of THC in any plant, she said.

The idea is to start with a low dose of medical marijuana, according to Nurge.

"Too much will not produce the effect that you want," she said. "Less with medical marijuana is more. It's not like opioids – you don't have to keep upping the dosage."

Labs are able to test with "incredible accuracy" the amount of THC in any plant, she said.

Nurge also talks to patients about the different diagnoses that qualify for marijuana's use.

According to a pamphlet Nurge distributes, the 21 diagnoses are: cancer, HIV, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, epilepsy, cachexia, wasting syndrome, Crohn's disease, post-traumatic stress disorder, psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, ulcerative colitis, complex regional pain syndrome, hospice, seizure disorder, fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, post-herpetic neuralgia, intractable headache syndromes and neuropathic facial pain.

She also talks to patients about what is in marijuana and educates them on how to use it.

"There are actually over 300 compounds in marijuana and we don't even know what they all do," she said. "They are synergistic; they work together."

She also helps people work through some untruths.

"The challenge I find is that there's a lot of myths," she said. "That was based on the propaganda in the early 1930s about how bad it was."

Prior to the 1930s, when marijuana was first made illegal, it was a commonly-used non-pharmaceutical treatment, she said. When its use was banned the message that was spread was that it was an addictive schedule 1 drug – meaning it was a drug with no pharmaceutical value



Nurse practitioner Nancy Nurge is a big believer in the benefits of medicinal marijuana – and is holding a presentation on the subject next week at Douglas Library.

and was very addictive.

"Cocaine, heroin – it's lumped with those," she said – but added it shouldn't be.

"The stigma of it for people who really smoke it [is] they're now going out and driving recklessly, [but] the only thing you might have is a spike in Twinkies," she said. "The people who smoke it usually are mellow."

Since announcing the library presentation, Nurge said people have been emailing her with questions about using medical marijuana for a variety of issues, including glaucoma and arthritic pain.

Marijuana can help relieve pain by reducing inflammation, Nurge said, but she cautions that it is not a cure.

"It all gets back to diet, exercise, stress," she said. "There's no medical marijuana that's going to fix a bad diet. . . . It's not a miracle drug; it won't make you change your diet."

Nurge invited people to come to the presentation at the library, 22 Main St., on Wednesday, Dec. 12, from 6:30-8 p.m. She has much more information to share about medical marijuana and wants people to become comfortable talking about it.

"We have to have a conversation talking honestly about it," she said.

For more information about medical marijuana, contact Nurge at 860-530-1170 or nancynurgenp@gmail.com.

New Book Urges Exploring All of State

by Elizabeth Regan

Local editor and author Martin Podskoch has released a new travel guide encouraging readers to explore each of the state's 169 cities and towns.

Podskoch, 74, of East Hampton, describes his book *Connecticut 169 Club* as a passport and guide to the unique history and geography of the state's municipalities. It is his ninth book.

"It's a guide because it's written by local people," Podskoch said; it's a passport because readers must make a personal connection in each municipality.

The 366-page hardcover volume includes two pages about each town's history and notable places that are written by current or former residents. A section for notes at the end of each entry is the passport part of the book, asking readers to record their impressions and leaving space at the bottom right hand corner of the page for a passport stamp or signature.

"Otherwise, people would be driving through and, in one day, they could visit 20-30 towns. But this way they've got to get to know the people," he said.

State Historian Walter W. Woodward said in the book's foreword that Connecticut's "fiercely independent" towns – which revel in home rule and eschew county governance – define the state's character and history.

"You owe it to yourself and your family to see them all. Because in Connecticut, the sum of the parts truly is greater than the whole," Woodward wrote.

Podskoch was a reading teacher for 28 years in Delhi, New York before retiring in 2001 and ultimately settling in East Hampton to be closer to his children and their growing families.

The guide to the Nutmeg State includes 183 contributors, with some entries penned by multiple people and a few writers covering multiple towns. The unpaid writers were each given one free copy of the book, Podskoch said.

He secured the extensive list of contributors by networking with existing contacts and by

making calls to town halls, historical societies and other groups in each town. No stranger to the process, Podskoch in 2014 published *Adirondack 102 Club* as a guide to the 6-million-acre mountain region in the upper corner of New York.

"I've had a variety of different people who wrote about their towns because they know it better than I do. They know the history. They know the interesting places," he said.

He counted town managers, administrative assistants, town clerks, librarians, authors and "just residents" among his varied list of contributors.

The list also included Podskoch's granddaughter, Kira Roloff, an eighth-grade student at East Hampton Middle School. He said he sat down with her one Sunday afternoon around Christmas last year to ask her if she'd like to help him write about East Hampton.

"In three hours, we read through the history, she suggested places of interest, and we had it done," he said.

Kira's sister, Lydia, 11, took two photos included in the book: One of Gillette Castle State Park in East Haddam and one of the Hadlyme Country Market.

Marlborough Senior Center Director Violet Schwarzmann wrote the entry about the small, Hartford County town that was incorporated in 1803 with land taken from Glastonbury, Hebron and Colchester.

Schwarzmann credited then-Town Clerk Nancy Dickson with putting Podskoch in touch with her.

"She told him I'm one of those history buffs. That's all it took," Schwarzmann said.

Each contributor was given a 500-600-word limit, according to Podskoch. A lot of the writers – Schwarzmann included – had trouble keeping their word counts within the prescribed limits.

"I ended up with thousands of words," Schwarzmann said. "I sent him what I had and he got it right down to the nitty-gritty. And I

think he got everything in."

Schwarzmann, like Podskoch, espouses a you've-got-to-see-it-to-believe-it sort of philosophy about history and local culture. She recounted taking school children to the basement on tours of the Marlborough Tavern, where the students would crawl through what she said had been part of the Underground Railroad. Schwarzmann also once hired two horses and a hay wagon to show her six daughters what it was like to travel between East Glastonbury and Marlborough for church in the era before Marlborough earned its own preacher and meeting house.

Podskoch's self-published travel guide was produced under the Podskoch Press banner, joining titles that delve into the history and geography of the Adirondack Mountains in New York as well as the Great Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps in both New York and Connecticut.

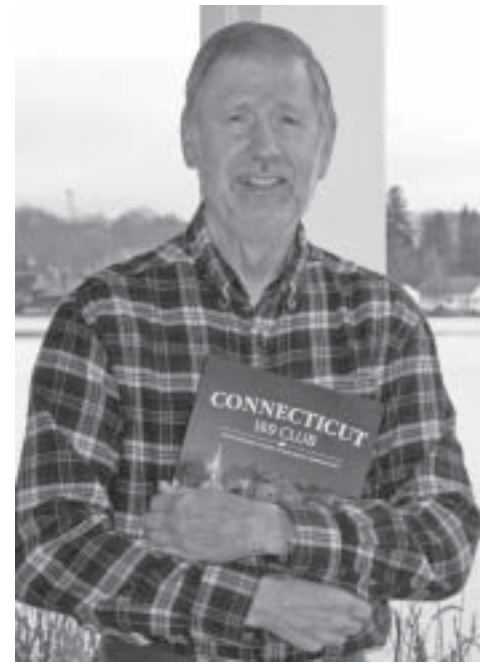
The idea for his latest travel guide had its genesis when Podskoch read an archived article about a man in Vermont who first encouraged people to visit all of the state's 251 towns back in 1954. The article inspired Podskoch to publish his guide to the Adirondacks and, now, to the entire state of Connecticut.

Connecticut 169 Club took about a year and a half to complete, Podskoch said. After securing contributors, he worked with an editor to finalize the text and a graphic designer to lay out the pages. The final package went to an Illinois-based printer and then to a book distributor in Utica, N.Y.

The distributor gets the books at a 55-percent discount and then ships them out to sellers throughout the United States, according to Podskoch.

"Bookstores just like to deal with a distributor," he said. "They don't like all these small, self-publishing people because there are just too many."

Podskoch will be promoting the book



Martin Podskoch

through talks at libraries, historical societies and other groups all over Connecticut.

The interactive element of the travel guide carries through with Podskoch's plan for a yearly dinner to celebrate those who have visited every city and town in Connecticut. The first batch of elite travelers will be honored next fall with the Leatherman Award. The patch is named after a "legendary vagabond" who is said to have walked repeated, 365-mile circuits through Connecticut and adjacent sections of New York from the mid-to-late 1800s.

Anyone who gets a stamp or signature from all 169 municipalities can send Podskoch a check-off list to earn the Leatherman Award.

For more information, or to order a copy of any of Podskoch's books, visit martinpodskoch.com.

RHAM Survey Says E-Cigarettes on the Rise

by Sloan Brewster

A survey of RHAM middle and high school students shows electronic cigarette use among teens is increasing – and that has AHM Youth and Family Services concerned.

Every two years, AHM goes into the school to survey students for drug and alcohol usage and gambling, AHM Executive Director Michele Hamilton said in a phone call Tuesday. The most recent survey was done last March and April.

The data was analyzed by East of the River Action for Substance Abuse Elimination. Hamilton, along with Bonnie Smith, a consultant that works on programming for AHM, presented the results at the Nov. 19 RHAM Board of Education meeting.

Questions about vaping, or use of e-cigarettes, are new to the survey and have only been included in the past two – yet the results indicate the practice is on the uptake, Hamilton said.

"Vaping has become very prolific – an epidemic – not only in our district but across the country," she said.

In 2016, the last time the survey was completed, about four percent of seventh- and eighth-graders reported using e-cigarettes. This time, more than six percent said they have vaped.

In 2016 about 14 percent of ninth- to 12th-graders said they vaped and in 2018, the number was up to 22 percent.

Alcohol and marijuana usage are also of some concern, Hamilton said.

According to an AHM PowerPoint presentation, usage of those substances is relatively flat compared to the increase in vaping.

The survey, which is funded through a Drug-Free Communities Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration went out to 1,423 students in grades

seven to 12, according to the presentation. Parents were given the opportunity to have their child opt out through a passive consent form – meaning consent is assumed unless the parent fills out the form.

After some surveys were removed because too many questions were left blank or there were discrepancies in the responses, a total of 1,360 remained, according to the presentation.

A number of students who answered the survey indicated they "perceived" e-cigarettes easy to obtain. About 73 percent of high school students said that and among seventh- and eighth-graders, 39 percent had the same perception.

Hamilton said AHM had no data on where the kids get e-cigarettes or if they really are easy to get, only that the survey indicated a perception of ease of access.

"We will look into [where they get e-cigarettes] in the future," she said. "As we learn more about the culture around it we will be able to frame questions around it."

Kids also indicated a perception that e-cigs were not harmful, Hamilton and Smith, who spoke to the *Rivereast* Wednesday, said. They said much the same thing about marijuana.

"They identified marijuana as being the least-perceived harmful drug of all substances at the high school level," Smith said. "Even lower than gambling."

"The kids don't understand the ramifications" of e-cigarettes, AHM Project Coordinator Brendan Grimm said. "They think, 'It's just vaping.'"

Despite that perception, Hamilton said e-cigarettes are harmful and contain harmful chemicals.

One e-juice pod, which a kid could run through in a day, is worth a whole pack of cigarettes, she said.

"It's very similar to a pack of cigarettes," she said. "We don't know what the pod [a kid is using] has in it but they all have nicotine, that's what we're concerned with it changes the brain."

According to the Centers for Disease Control, e-cigarette aerosol that users breathe and exhale can contain nicotine, ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs, flavoring such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease, volatile organic compounds, cancer-causing chemicals, heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead.

"It is difficult for consumers to know what e-cigarette products contain," according to the CDC's website. "For example, some e-cigarettes marketed as containing zero percent nicotine have been found to contain nicotine."

AHM has been working on a plan of action to decrease e-cigarette usage, Hamilton said.

"This data does drive what we're doing in the schools and community," she said.

Grimm goes into the schools and works with students, including with Regional Activities Leading Local Youth (RALLY), a group of RHAM students committed to raising awareness on the important issues of substance abuse within the communities.

RALLY, which meets once a month and has increased in size in the past couple years, is a peer model where rather than adults telling kids what to do, other kids try to guide their peers away from substances, Grimm said.

RALLY comes up with its own ideas, slogans and marketing.

"They use the positives that most students aren't into drinking are not using marijuana or e-cigs," Grimm said.

The next event RALLY will hold will involve

bubbles. Dubbed "Blow Bubbles not Clouds," the event will take place at RHAM during the high school day with AHM staff and bubble machines on hand to help convey the message.

Having students pass on the message that they don't approve of the use of e-cigarettes may help cut use, according to Grimm.

"Perception of friends' disapproval is an important part of whether or not [kids] chose to engage in certain behaviors," he said. "If they think their friends are okay with it, they're more apt to do it."

In addition to helping RALLY get the message across, AHM has given out pamphlets on e-cigarettes, including to Principal Scott Leslie, who can use them to educate students that are caught with e-cigarettes.

Last year AHM did a program for parents called "Hidden in Plain Sight" to help them identify e-cigarettes.

"If you look at a Juul, which is the most popular e-cig among teens, it looks like a USB drive," Hamilton said. "Teachers might not know it's a vape, parents may not know."

AHM is also working on spreading a message about alcohol, Hamilton said.

Signs have been popping up around town to remind parents not to let their kids drink in the home. There is one in front of Something Simple Café.

Called "The Parent who Hosts Loses the Most" campaign, its message is that there is a liability question when it comes to parents allowing kids to drink," Hamilton said.

"We are doing that because there's a direct link with parents who do not have rules on drinking in the home to kids who do drink," she said. "We really want parents to talk about what their rules are what their expectations are."

Locals Decry Proposed Decrease in State 911 Funding

by Allison Lazur

The state Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection is proposing a rewrite of the regulations surrounding 911 funding that some local officials worry will negatively affect the state's seven regional emergency dispatch centers.

Two of the regional dispatch centers affected by the proposal include *Rivereast* towns: Quinebaug Valley Emergency Communications (QV) serves Colchester, while Tolland Exchange (TN) serves Marlborough, Hebron and Andover.

Colchester Fire Chief Walter Cox and Douglas Knowlton, who serves as Marlborough's municipal representative for TN, were among those who submitted written comments against the proposed changes at a public hearing last week.

The regulation proposed by the Division of Statewide Emergency Telecommunications (DSET) sets forth several changes, including an altered formula to determine the amount of funding regional dispatch centers would receive. The current formula is based on a regional dispatch area's population and number of municipalities served, while the proposed formula would be based on population and number of calls answered.

The new formula would result in less funding to regional dispatch centers such as TN and QV, said Cox.

The proposed formula applies to regional dispatch centers that serve at least three municipalities, according to the draft language. The proposal would not affect towns such as East Hampton, which is partnered with Glastonbury for dispatch services, and Portland, which collaborates with Middletown.

Local officials cautioned the proposal is still early in the complicated process of creating and changing state regulations.

The Secretary of the State's database shows QV President Jeffrey Otto submitted detailed written comment to be included as part of the record at the public hearing.

Otto noted it's been the legislature's goal since 1996 to consolidate the 106 dispatch centers in the state through a subsidy program based on population served, the number of emergency services dispatched and the number of municipalities served.

A consolidation of the dispatch centers would "reduce costs and complexity to both the municipalities and the state's government," he stated.

Connecticut has the largest number of dispatch centers per capita of any state, according to Otto.

He said 5.6 million residents of Harris County, Texas, are served by a single dispatch center.

In 2017, the U.S Census Bureau reported

Connecticut's population at approximately 3.59 million.

Cox told the *Rivereast* Wednesday the state's proposal would not encourage cities and towns to consolidate.

"What we are trying to do is create a fair and equitable solution that would address all the dispatch centers and promote regionalization," he said.

Cox also said the new proposal would cut funding for necessary capital upgrades.

"If QV funding is lessened, that means that the cost burden would be passed on to the people that it serves," he said.

If the proposal were to pass, towns of regional dispatch centers may be required to pay additional money to cover the cut state subsidies.

Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Spokesman Scott Devico said Wednesday he sees regionalization and funding as separate issues.

"The department is always promoting regionalization," he said.

In Marlborough, Knowlton said that while the specifics still need to be ironed out, the proposal would likely not be a significant cost to the town. His concerns surround "the principle of it all," he added.

"[DSET] is doing this without bringing the people that run the regional centers to the table and asking them to collaborate," he said, reiterating that the proposed changes are not moving in the direction of consolidation of dispatch centers.

He suggested state funds should be determined based on population and coverage area, instead of the proposed formula which is based on population and number of 911 calls answered.

Knowlton said the state's diverse topography should be taken into account since it is more costly to construct radio towers in areas with hills and valleys.

He also said population and the number of 911 calls are easy to measure, but those figures don't really "account for the nature of the calls and the activity."

Knowlton emphasized the proposal is still in its early stages.

"[DSET] is required to go back and reply to every one of the comments that were made [at the public hearing]," he said. "With all the negative comments, it's unlikely it will move forward at this time."

Otto said the state can revise or withdraw the proposed regulation. Approved proposals must be sent to the state legislature's Regulatory Review Committee.

Devico said the state is "thoroughly reviewing each of the submissions and the concerns of everyone involved."

Colchester Storage Container Burglarized

Colchester Police said a construction storage container was burglarized last week.

Between the afternoon of Nov. 29 and morning of Nov. 30, several items including hardware tools, nail guns and saws were stolen from a storage container located at a construction site on Westchester Road. The items stolen totaled \$2,750, police said.

According to police, this case is currently under investigation.

Vehicle Goes Into Ditch, Hits Culvert in Colchester

A Taftville man was injured when his pickup went into a ditch and struck a culvert, Colchester Police said.

On Nov. 26, at approximately 12:20 p.m., a Dodge Dakota driven by Jason Robichaud, 37, of 98 Hunters Ave., Taftville, was traveling on Middletown Road near the intersection with Skinner Road when the Dodge traveled off the road into a ditch, police said.

Marlborough Police News

11/30: State police said Ryan A. Woods, 19, of 88 North Main St., Granby, was arrested and charged with speeding, DUI and possession of alcohol by a minor.

Portland Police News

12/2: Michael Alfredson, 34, of 12 Morningview Dr. Cromwell, was charged with second-degree threatening and second-degree breach of peace, Portland Police said.

Valero Gas Station Burglary in Colchester

The Valero gas station located at 399 Old Hartford Rd. was broken into early yesterday morning, State Police said.

At approximately 5:14 a.m., the owner of the gas station opened up the store to discover the front doors were smashed, police said. Specifics on what was stolen were not available as of press time Thursday morning.

The case is currently an open investigation, police said.

East Hampton Police News

11/22: A 15-year-old juvenile of East Hampton was arrested and charged with using a motor vehicle without permission and driving without a license, East Hampton Police said.

11/26: Anthony P. Distefano, 22, of 6 Seminole Trl., turned himself in pursuant to an outstanding warrant for his arrest and was charged with violation of a restraining order, police said.

Also, from Nov. 19-25, officers responded to 12 medical calls, six motor vehicle crashes and nine alarms, and made 10 traffic stops, police said.

Andover Gas Station Burglarized

State Police said they are looking for information regarding the burglary of a Shell gas station.

At approximately 4:30 a.m. Nov. 30, police discovered the front door was smashed of the gas station building located at 380 Route 6 after receiving a call from the alarm company.

Police said a number of cartons of cigarettes and cigars were stolen.

The suspects are currently unknown and anyone with information regarding this incident should contact Troop K at 860-465-5400.

Colchester Police News

12/1: State Police said Deivis Franciso Perez, 33, of 256 Boretz Rd., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, interfering with an emergency call, third-degree assault and third-degree strangulation/suffocation.

Andover Police News

11/29: State Police said Dustin J. Amore, 28, of 182 Route 66, was arrested and charged with speeding, DUI and possession of less than a half an ounce of cannabis.



Police Seek Colchester Shoplifter

The Colchester Police are asking for the public's help in identifying a woman who is believed to have been involved in a shoplifting incident.

Over Thanksgiving weekend, a blonde female was identified as having been involved in a shoplifting incident that occurred at Quality Consignments on South Main Street.

Anyone with any information is asked to contact Officer Kowalsky of the Colchester Police at 860-537-7270.

Obituaries

Marlborough

Georgie Shuler Aronstamm

Georgie Shuler Aronstamm, 97, of Marlborough, formerly of Southbury, passed away Friday, Nov. 23, at Marlborough Health Care Center. Born April 6, 1921, in Providence, S.C., she was one of five children of the late B. Grady and Bessie (Felkel) Shuler. She grew up in the rural town of Bowman, S.C., during the Depression and graduated in 1942 from the University of South Carolina with a BA degree in journalism.

Upon graduation, she enlisted in the women's U.S. Naval Reserves, known as the WAVES, and served as an ensign communications specialist, stationed in Charleston, S.C., from 1943-44. While there, she met her husband, Albert J. Aronstamm, who was stationed at Ft. Jackson, S.C., with the U.S. Army. The couple married June 30, 1943, in her family's home in Bowman, officiated by her uncle Homer Shuler, a Methodist minister.

Georgie moved to New York City to live with Al's parents, where their first son, George, was born while awaiting Al's return from the European Theater of World War II in 1945. The couple lived in NYC, welcoming a second son, Grady, then moved to Albertson, Long Island, N.Y., in 1950, where they raised their family. After her career in the business office of the New York Telephone Co., they retired to Southbury in 1973, where Georgie was active with the Southbury Garden Club and the Methodist Church. She compassionately cared for Al at home for five years before he died in 1986 from Alzheimer's.

Georgie then lived independently in her condo in Heritage Village, Southbury, until the age of 93, and was very active in the condo HOA. Always fond of attending shows, concerts and museums in NYC, she also loved gardening, cooking and traveled extensively throughout the U.S., Europe, Asia, Australia and the South Pacific. Georgie was a special southern lady, strongly independent, gracious and generous. Most importantly, she will be remembered for the love, devotion and pride she had in her family.

She will be sadly missed but always treasured by her two sons, George and wife Laurel Aronstamm of Colchester and Grady and wife Judith Aronstamm of Saratoga Springs, N.Y.; four granddaughters, Beth (David) Young of Fairfax, Va., Amy (Christopher) Scruton of Mission Viejo, Calif., Jill (John) Smith of Bedford, N.H., and Emily (Achim) Bergmann of Saratoga Springs, N.Y.; six great-grandchildren, Katie Young, Alex Smith, Meghan Scruton, Ian Scruton, Berlin Bergmann and Everest Bergmann; her brother, Dr. Archibald Shuler of Clarksville, Tenn.; and many extended family members and friends.

She was predeceased by her siblings, Quintilla Ripley of Charleston, S.C., Dr. Woodfin Shuler of Seaford, Del., and Franklin Shuler of Santee, S.C.

Burial with military honors will be private, at the convenience of the family in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown. Donations in her memory may be made to Disabled American Veterans (dava.org).

The family would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the nurses, aides and staff at the Marlborough Health Care Center for their kindness and compassionate care.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of arrangements. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Regina M. Michalak

Regina M. Michalak, formerly of Colchester, died Monday, December 3, 2018 in Winchester, Mass., at the age of 96 years. She was born in Colchester Aug. 15, 1922, to the late Stanley and Nellie (Traylor) Rybitski.

Regina lived in Colchester most of her life before relocating to Massachusetts to be closer to her son about 16 years ago. She graduated from Bacon Academy and worked as an administrative assistant for the State of Connecticut for 20 years. Regina was married to Edward J. Michalak; he predeceased her in 1972.

Regina is survived by her son Stan Michalak and his wife Jill of Winchester, Mass., and her grandsons Wesley and Bentley.

An 11 a.m. graveside service will be held Saturday, Dec. 8, at St. Joseph Cemetery in Colchester; there are no calling hours.

Belmont Funeral Home in Colchester has been entrusted with these arrangements. Visit belmontfh.com to leave condolences.

Colchester

Abraham Netkin

Abraham Netkin passed away peacefully Friday, Nov. 30, surrounded by his family. He was predeceased by his wife of 70 years, Fela Netkin, who passed away three years ago.

Born Feb. 4, 1922, in Warsaw, Poland, to Inda Deborah Fishman and Moishe Netkin, Abe survived the Holocaust before moving to the U.S. with Fela in 1949.

Abe and Fela were longtime residents of Lebanon and Colchester, where Abe founded and ran a successful upholstery business. He loved creating one-of-a-kind pieces of furniture and serving his community. Abe was a regular at Family Pizza in Colchester, enjoyed ice skating at Bolton Ice Palace and Colchester Lions Park, and told jokes to anyone who would listen (in any of the six languages that he spoke fluently). Abe retired to Margate, Florida where he enjoyed meeting new people and hosting his children and grandchildren whenever they could visit. Indeed, Abe's proudest role was as "Papa."

Abe is survived by his daughter, Diana; son, Steve (and wife, Darlene); granddaughters, Jennifer (and husband, Josh), Nicole (and husband, Daniel); and great-grandson, Jonah Abraham.

Services were held at Star of David Memorial Chapel in North Lauderdale on Tuesday, Dec. 4, and he was interred at the Garden of Israel.

Donations can be made to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Portland

Judith A. Hernandez

Judith A. Hernandez, 72, of Portland, beloved wife of 54 years to Buddy Hernandez, died Saturday, Dec. 1, at her residence. She was born March 8, 1946, in Middletown, daughter of the late Nicholas and Vera (Bagadinski) Giuliano.

Judith had lived most of her life in Portland, and was a member of St. Mary Church, Portland. Judith had been a school bus driver for the Nichols School Bus Company for 36 years driving Bus 8. She enjoyed watching the New York Yankees and NASCAR, and also loved playing setback and traveling to the casino. She was also a member of the Duketts Singing Group.

She is survived by her loving family: a son, Michael Hernandez of Portland; a brother, Sebastian Giuliano of Middletown; and a granddaughter Addison Hernandez.

She was predeceased by a son, Chris Hernandez, and a brother, Edward (Edju) Bagadinski.

The funeral will be held Saturday, Dec. 8, at 9:30 a.m. from the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial in St. Mary's Church, Portland. Burial will be in the family plot in St. Mary's Cemetery, Portland. Friends may call at the funeral home tonight, Dec. 7, from 5-7 p.m.

East Hampton

Michael Stein

Michael Stein, 75, of East Hampton, passed away Friday, Nov. 30. Michael was born Feb. 14, 1943, in New York, N.Y. He was preceded in death by his parents David and Pearl Bernard.

He is survived by his daughters, Jessica Poulin and Tara Noel; his granddaughters, Rachelle Poulin and Morgan Poulin; and his great-grandchildren, RaeAnna White, Iris Ames, and Kaoas Ames. He also leaves behind many close friends loved by him like family.

Michael was a social man who was often seen at fife and drum musters, music events, and family gatherings always with his camera and taking photos. Michael was a Vietnam-era Army veteran and a member of the American Legion Post 197. He was co-director of Marlborough Jr. Fife and Drum for many years. Michael lived his life to the fullest and was a loving and kind man.

Per Michael's normal schedule, the celebration of his life will be (late) on Saturday, Feb. 16, 2019, from 1-3 p.m., at the American Legion Post 197, 128 East Hampton Rd, Marlborough, CT 06447. All are welcome. Burial will be private at a future date.

Memorial donations in the memory of Michael may be made to Marlborough Jr. Fife and Drum, P.O. Box 25, Marlborough, CT 06447.

Hebron

Shirley Anne Bromley

Shirley Anne (Reynolds) Bromley, formerly of Hebron, passed away Sunday, Dec. 2, at Douglas Manor in Windham, where she had resided since July 2015. She was born to the late Lewis and Lena (Juskoviak) Reynolds on Aug. 12, 1921, in Charlton, Mass.

Shirley graduated from Charlton High School in 1938. While in high school, she was one of two girls on the boys' track team – her specialties were high jump and baseball throw – and during her senior year, she was captain and high scorer on the girls' basketball team. She also played on the girls' softball team. She was a class officer, a member of the National Honor Society, assistant business manager of the school newspaper, and was cast in two plays performed by the Drama Club. She was a commencement speaker; her topic was "The Men Who Framed the Constitution." This speech led her to receive a signed copy of the biography of President Harding accompanied by a letter from its author Joe Mitchell Chapple.

Shirley began her employment at the American Optical Company in Southbridge, Mass. At the AO, she played on the company's women's basketball team and was high scorer for the team. She married William Bromley on March 20, 1945, in Thompson.

Shortly after marrying Mr. Bromley, they moved to Hebron where he had obtained a position as farm manager. Shirley had a tremendous work ethic and worked alongside her husband and sons. They raised five children, who also worked on the farm. The family remained in town for many years. Shirley retired from the Mansfield Training School then worked at S&S Worldwide in Colchester. She had also worked at the American Thread Company and Electro-Motive Manufacturing Company.

Mr. Bromley predeceased her in 2004 after almost 59 years of marriage. Upon William's passing, Shirley moved to Manchester and then briefly to Conway, S.C., to live with her eldest son. She returned to Connecticut four years ago.

She leaves to mourn her passing her children, David (Toni) of Conway, S.C.; Ronald (Norma) of West Burke, Vt.; Linda Waitkus of Hebron; and daughter-in-law, Linda Bromley of Colchester. She also leaves her grandchildren, William and Tyler, both of Colchester; Theodore (Erika) of Hebron, Jessica (Kurt) Surdam of Andover, Stephanie Chavez (DJ) of California, Nina (Justin) Likes of South Carolina; Meaghan (Rudy) Dellafiore of Florida and Brendan and Garrett Waitkus, both of Hebron; great-grandchildren, Ava and Ethan Byers of Andover, Nicholas Bromley of Hebron, Robert and Madison Dellafiore of Florida and Liam Chavez of California.

Shirley was predeceased by two sons, William (1963) and Kenneth (1994); sisters, Helen and Gertrude; and brothers, Emerson and Warren.

Her surviving siblings are Barbara Zajac, Marion Reynolds and Myron Reynolds, all of Charlton, Mass. She also leaves brother-in-law, Lawrence Gleason of Danielson and sisters-in-law Barbara Reynolds of West Brookfield, Mass., and Barbara Adamuska of Quinebaug; and many nieces, nephews and their families.

Shirley loved all animals and for many years her husband possessed teams of fine draft horses and quarter horses. Her interests were knitting, crocheting, word and crossword puzzles and listening to country western music. She was an avid Red Sox and Patriots fan and loved watching college and NBA basketball games.

We love you, Mom, and we will miss you every day. We are grateful for having had you as our mother. You taught us to be independent, hard-working, and to do things the right way and to the best of our ability. We know that you are watching us from above, at peace, and reconnecting with your husband, sons, brothers and sisters who have gone before you!

The family wishes to thank the staff at Douglas Manor for their genuine caring and compassionate care for Shirley during her stay there, especially Vanessa, Yvette, Brenda, Lynn and Claire.

For those who wish, you may send flowers, or consider making a donation to Horizons, Inc. P.O. Box 323, South Windham, CT 06266-0323 and specify Campaign for Campers.

Funeral services will be held at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, Friday, Dec. 14, with visitation starting at 11 a.m., followed by a chapel service at noon. Burial will follow in Gilead Cemetery, Hebron.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Marlborough

Shirley Mead MacLachlan

Shirley Mead MacLachlan, 90, of Marlborough, widow of the late Lloyd MacLachlan, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 4, at home. Born Feb. 20, 1928, in New York City, she was the daughter of the late Lyman and Marguerite Palmer Mead, and was raised by her aunt Lucile Palmer. She attended Stamford High and Danbury Teachers' College with a degree in elementary education and taught in Wethersfield Public Schools.

In 1955, Lloyd and Shirley built a home and moved to Marlborough. She returned to teaching in 1969, teaching kindergarten at Elmer Thienes in Marlborough until her retirement. Shirley was active in Marlborough Congregational Church, and considered it her second home. She served on Deacons, Dorcas, Choir, Youth Group, Care Team and many building committees. She was proud to be recognized as Deacon Emeritus after over 50 years of membership.

She enjoyed fellowship at church, the Samaritan's Purse Project (she filled thousands of Christmas boxes for children!), knitting, ironing, UConn basketball, and her beloved Yankees.

Shirley is survived by her five sons: Brian (Evin), Bruce (Sissy), Brad (JoAnn), Blair (Gayle), Barry (Jill); 12 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

She was predeceased by her husband, her brother (Bob), and her aunt.

A memorial service for Shirley will be held Saturday, Dec. 8, at 11 a.m., in Marlborough Congregational Church, 35 S. Main St., Marlborough. Burial will be private at Marlboro Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Marlborough Congregational Church or Middlesex Hospice, 28 Crescent St. Middletown, CT 06457.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Dianne Quimby

Dianne (Johnstone) Quimby of Portland passed away Thursday, Nov. 29, from complications of COPD. Dianne made her home with her sister, Patricia Jones.

Dianne will be greatly missed by her devoted niece, Melissa Leet and her family, her six siblings and her many caring friends in the Portland area. Our deepest thanks to the amazing staff at The Hospital for Special Care in New Britain.

A celebration of Dianne's life was held Wednesday, Dec. 5, in the Grandview Farm Barn in Portland.

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

East Hampton

Bonnie Elaine Cook

Bonnie Elaine Cook, 55, of East Hampton, formerly of Marlborough, wife of Daniel "Danny" Cook, died peacefully at her home Thursday, Nov. 29. Born in Hartford, Bonnie had lived in East Hampton and Marlborough for the past 30 years.

Besides her husband, she is survived by her daughter, Sara Nichols of East Hampton; her son, Kyle Nichols of Middletown; stepson, Eric Cook of Middletown; stepdaughter, Sarah Cook of Hebron; a brother, Steve Griffin; and grandchildren Vinnie, Aubrey and Annabelle.

Bonnie was devoted to her children and family. She enjoyed her tag sales and her cats.

A memorial service will be held Monday, Dec. 10, at 11 a.m., in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Cobalt

Lester Groat

Lester Groat of Cobalt passed away Saturday morning, Dec. 1, after a long battle with cancer. Lester was a wonderful husband and a great father. He was an inspiration and role model to all those who knew him. He will be greatly missed.

Lester always hoped that others would benefit from the knowledge gained through his battle with cancer. If you would like to make a donation, St Jude's Children's Research Hospital would be his choice.

