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Jack Munson, center, was the recipient of a Quilt of Valor Freedom Quilt at last weekend's Hebron Maple Festival. Presenting him with the quilt were Jane Dougherty, right, co-coordinator for Connecticut Quilts of Valor, and a surprise visitor, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal.

Maple Fest Draws From All Over

by Sloan Brewster

Folks from as far away as the Netherlands enjoyed the festivities at the 28th annual Hebron Maple Festival.

Last Saturday afternoon, as crowds rambled past the booths on the nearby Town Green and in the parking lot of the Douglas Library, people sat around a few tables in Something Simple Café, enjoying refreshments.

Among them was Ingrid Bergman of Norwich, who was visiting with her mother, Syske Keizer. Bergman is originally from the Netherlands, and Keizer still lives there. She was on the final day of a two-week visit to her daughter from the European country.

"I'm going back tomorrow," she said. "This is my last event before going back."

Similar outdoor markets with local products are common in Europe, the women said.

"In the Netherlands we call this Braderie," Keizer said.

Bergman enjoyed the crafts but said she would have liked it better if they were outside instead of "a bit hidden" in the basement of Douglas library.

The women said they were going to visit one of the local sugarhouses before calling it a day.

Meanwhile, Joseph Coton was visiting from Waterbury, with his family, to check out the festival and learn about the local ambiance.

"We're actually considering moving here so we wanted to get a better feel for the community," said Coton's wife, Karen. "We love it here. It's nice; it seems a really lovely small

town, traditional New England."

The group enjoyed festival food, including pumpkin maple syrup and pulled pork, and willingly waited in the long line at the Canterbury Kettle Corn booth to get some maple kettle corn – a wait they said was well worth it.

"There's a reason it's long," Laura Payton, who was attending the festival with the Cotons, said of the long line.

Karen Coton said she enjoyed the quilts on display by the Hebron Historical Society in the Old Town Hall.

Handmade quilts lined the walls, tables and freestanding partitions in the historic building.

Local quilter Paula Billard, who has been quilting since she married into a family of quilters, bent over a sewing machine, demonstrating the art.

"I've been quilting since my mother-in-law taught me back in 1984," she said. "I dabble in it."

Billard pieced together fabric for a Quilt of Valor Freedom Quilt.

The non-profit gives quilts to service members who have been wounded on the course of duty, said Jane Dougherty, co-coordinator for Connecticut Quilts of Valor, who was on hand to present three local veterans with the honor. To date, the organization has given out more than 182,000 quilts.

With help from a surprise visitor, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, Dougherty unfolded each

See Maple Fest page 2

'Dream Season' for RHAM Ends with Championship

by Sloan Brewster

RHAM High School girls' basketball brought home the gold last Sunday, besting Farmington High School 58-35 to win the Class L state championship.

The victory marked the first time ever a RHAM girls' basketball team has won a state championship.

"It's the first time that we ever made it to the finals and, of course, we won," RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie said. "It was a dream season for the girls."

Katie Shea, one of seven seniors on the team, said the team prepared for the game all year, practicing for two to two and a half hours every day, including Sundays.

"We work really hard all the time," she said. "We frequently review offense and defense in practice so that when we get into a game we can make calls off the bat, change things up as we go."

All the practice paid off.

"It was so great," Shea said. "All those hours that we put in, it just came down to that one game."

Kathy Shea, Katie Shea's mother, said it was clear they were going to win.

"Sunday, it was so exciting," she said. "When they first started playing I was so nervous – for

myself and for them."

Ten minutes in, however, she relaxed and enjoyed the game.

Since the beginning of their high school careers, the girls have had winning the state championship in mind, according to Keith Moyer, the team's head coach.

"The girls ever since ninth grade really had their minds set on winning the state championship," he said.

At halftime they decided what to do to bring that desire to fruition.

"The girls wanted to play man-to-man defense, which is really our bread and butter," Moyer said. "They outscored Farmington 20 to 2 in the third quarter and broke the game wide open."

The girls kept that momentum in the fourth quarter, and managed to give every girl on the team the chance to play in the game, which took place in the Mohegan Sun Arena.

"The kids can say, 'Wow, I stood on that floor at Mohegan Sun,'" Moyer said.

As the play intensified, the white-bedecked crowd – signifying the home team – including about 200 students, roared.

"They cheered like crazy for us," Moyer said.

"The crowd all wore white shirts; it was like a

See 'Dream Season' page 2



The RHAM High School girls' basketball team won the Class L state championship last Sunday. It's the first-ever championship for the team.

Maple Fest cont. from Front Page

quilt and ceremonially wrapped it round the shoulders of the recipient.

Jack Munson, who was stationed in Burma Road during World War II, was the first to receive the gift.

"It's an honor," he said. "It makes me feel proud."

Charlie Luchini, who was in The Battle of Chumonchin Chan during the Korean War, was next. He said he was surprised by the quilt.

"I love it very much," he added.

Adrien Caron, who was also a veteran of the Korean War, received his quilt proudly.

"I love the quilt and I'll treasure it forever," he said.

Mary-Ellen Gonici, Hebron Historical Society member and organizer of the quilt show, has been working with the non-profit and asked Dougherty if she would come to the festival. Not only did she agree to come but said she would like to present local veterans with quilts. Gonici got the names of the veterans from John Tuttle of the American Legion.

Outside, crowds mulled around, checking out products for sale and snacking on local fare.

Forrest Kocher, VFW member, was in the

booth shared by the VFW and the American Legion, where hamburgers, hotdogs, chili and cheese fries were available. He noticed a lull in the numbers.

"It's a little down this year compared to other years," he said. "Definitely down since last year."

However, for the Woodyacres Sugar House on Cone Road, the festival was a hit.

"It was just a real good weekend," owner Russ Schaller said in a phone call Tuesday.

Diane Nadeau, president and CEO of the Windham Region Chamber of Commerce, which organizes the festival, said she had spoken with Town Manager Andrew Tierney and they agreed the festival was a great success.

The festival drew 8,000 people over its two days, Nadeau said.

The cold weather on Sunday may have slowed numbers down a bit but overall the event was very well-attended, she said.

The tractor parade was a big success with more participation by more farms from the region and included decorated tractors and folks tossing candy to children watching from the sidelines.

With 100 total, it was the largest number of vendors ever, she said.

"The arts and crafts show was very successful," Nadeau said. "People enjoyed themselves."

Nadeau said she even bought something from one of the crafters.

"I bought two little bracelets that were handmade that had Easter bunnies on them for my boyfriend's kids," she said. "And they loved them too."

Something Simple Café saw its share of customers coming in to check out the establishment's take on maple treats. Among the confections, she offered maple lattes and canolis.

The maple canolis – made with ricotta cream, real maple syrup and maple extract, powdered sugar and dipped in chocolate chips – were super tasty and fresh, literally melting in your mouth.

Local musician Steve Pozzato, a teacher at RHAM High School, also made an appearance, beguiling café visitors with song and guitar music.

Sugarhouses participated in the fest.

While not technically a part of the festival, the Hurst Family Farm in Andover took advan-

tage of some extra visitors.

"We send people there, they send people here," said Shari Hurst. "It all works."

The Hursts have been farming full time since 1983 and started making maple syrup around the same time, Hurst said. While she talked, Hurst's son Tom boiled down syrup on the wood fire evaporator while visitors watched.

Up the road on the Hebron side, Ron Wenzel, owner of The Wenzel Sugarhouse, boiled water on his evaporator, and talked about the process of boiling down syrup to passersby.

During maple syrup production, Wenzel spends between six and eight hours per day in his sugarhouse, he said.

Like his fellow sugarhouse owner, Wenzel said the festival was a success with plenty of folks stopping by.

"Excellent," Wenzel said in a phone call Tuesday. "We had two huge great days."

With the festival an all-around success there was one wish for next year.

Nadeau hopes Mother Nature brings warm 50 degree temperatures on festival weekend 2019.

"And no rain," she said.

'Dream Season' cont. from Front Page

sea of white."

By the time the team's current seniors started their careers at RHAM High School, they were already no strangers to winning. Moyer noted, "They went through the middle school program undefeated as seventh- and eighth-graders," he said.

When they moved to the high school as freshmen, Moyer evaluated the team to determine the best offense and defense, and how to best use the group, he said.

"It's a very talented group," he said. "They work very, very hard and get along very well. There is no animosity."

Moyer said, however, that when the girls began their freshmen year, there was a bit of tension between the new girls and the seniors. Still, everyone got past that and RHAM went on to win 17 games that year to only seven losses. The next year was even better, as RHAM went 20-6.

But last year, in the seven seniors' junior year at the school, "the injury bug set in," Moyer said.

On the first day of practice, Lia Baloncini, who had been the leading scorer since freshman year, tore her ACL and MCL.

"That was a big loss for us for the season," Moyer said.

Anna Barry and Katie Shea also suffered high ankle sprains and missed a few games.

Sam Bodey, Jordan Synodi and Daphne Wampold filled in, but, as the season progressed, other girls had other injuries and sicknesses. Jackie Santella and Gretchen Kron were the only two who got through the season unharmed, Moyer said.

Through it all, though, RHAM had a decent season.

"We ended up winning 18 games and losing 7," Moyer said.

This year, the team stayed healthy. "We made it through without any kind of really serious injuries," Moyer said.

The girls went 19-1, with their one loss coming to Enfield High School in January. However, the Sachems had a rematch against the

team a few weeks later, and avenged the defeat, winning 60-49.

Then they headed into the postseason. In the finals of the Central Connecticut Conference (CCC) tournament, the girls lost to Hall High School, 57 to 51.

"We didn't play particularly well in that game and we lost, and the girls didn't like that," Moyer said. "They weren't used to losing. I think it might have served as a little bit of a wakeup call – hey, on any given day you can lose a ball game."

But, the 19-1 Sachems still had the Connecticut Interstate Athletic Conference (CIAC) Class L state tournament to deal with – so, after two days off, RHAM was back in action.

RHAM played Brookfield, then Meriden's Platt High School then Madison's Daniel Hand High School. The team had lost to Daniel Hand in the state quarterfinals when the senior girls were freshmen.

"They didn't forget about that and this year we played them in the state semifinals, we were ranked number one in Class L all year, Hand was two or three," Moyer said. "We beat them up pretty good in the semifinal game. The girls got even with them."

That win brought them to the state finals at the Mohegan Sun Arena.

"We've just been on a roll," Moyer said. "These girls play so hard; they play really great defense."

The girls started the game off on the right foot, putting up five straight three-pointers. The Sachems dominated throughout, outscoring Farmington 18-13 in the first quarter, 11-5 in the second and 22-2 in the third.

"We had one of our better shooting nights of the year," Moyer said.

RHAM was outscored in the fourth quarter, 15-7, but by that point it almost didn't matter, and the Sachems wound up handily winning, 58-35.

Athletic director Mark Logan said it was a solid game by two talented and well-coached teams.

"Our head coach had a great game plan that the team executed quite well," he said. "The



The RHAM girls celebrate after beating Farmington High School 58-35 at the Mohegan Sun Arena.

outstanding shooting by our point guard Jaclyn Santella [a junior] as well as the solid defense by Gretchen Kron and Lia Baroncini in combination with strong rebounding by Katie Shea and Anna Barry were keys to the win. Also the bench performances by Sam Bodey, Marissa Lee, and Jordan Synodi were significant."

Logan went on to say that the game was a reflection of the season.

"Scrappy defense, opportunistic offense and solid play and communication," he said.

The team had a lot of support, including in the morning when they were departing for the game, Moyer said. The RHAM Sports Boosters made it that much easier for RHAM students to attend the game. Each student fan coming from RHAM could get a ticket for \$5 instead of the normal \$10, with the Sports Boosters picking up the balance. The group also sponsored a fan bus to the game.

Vince Colonna, Boosters Club member and parent of Melissa Colona, the only freshman

on the team, said the Boosters had offered the team an upgrade to a coach bus but the girls said 'no' – opting instead to ride down to Uncasville in the normal school bus that had been their transportation all season.

"They're very superstitious," he said. "They wanted to stick with their usual routine."

Before the game, they had coffee and hot cocoa in the high school parking lot.

"We cheered them off as they went to the casino on the yellow bus," he said.

Because the girls chose to use the school bus, the Boosters had extra funds to help with the students' tickets.

As the girls got comfy in their seats on the bus, folks went up to the windows to wave them off, Moyer said.

"Great support from the RHAM community, the students," Moyer said. "It was really something, the energy was really high. It was super high during the game. It was just a great, great feeling."

Hebron Resident Announces State Rep Bid

by Sloan Brewster

Following an unsuccessful bid for town office two years ago, Hebron resident Tiffany Ventura Thiele has a set her sights a little higher this time around – the state House of Representatives, to be exact.

Thiele, 36, has announced her candidacy as a Democrat for the 55th General Assembly District, which covers Hebron, Bolton, Andover and Marlborough. She is running against incumbent Republican Robin Green of Marlborough.

A Rhode Island native, Thiele moved to Connecticut in 2007 after commuting to Middletown for three months while working as sports editor at the *Middletown Press*. She has lived in Connecticut since, where she has shifted from writing and reporting for local newspapers to working in communications and public relations. She has worked at Connecticut Transit, Girl Scouts of Connecticut and is currently a writer at the UConn Foundation.

Her decision to run is all about helping the people of Connecticut and the state as a whole, she said.

“So I’m running because I want to help people and I’m tired of seeing people get hurt



Thiele

and I’m also running because I want to help the state of Connecticut,” she said. “The state has given me lots of opportunities.”

In 2016, Thiele ran for a seat on Hebron’s Planning & Zoning Commission. Though she lost, she said the election opened a great deal of political opportunities for her.

“The election of 2016 for me was a personal catalyst,” she said. “It opened doors for a lot of people to enter the political arena.”

Because of that, she said, there are many new faces on the local and state front.

“So I think that you’re seeing this energized group of people stepping forward and I want to be a part of the political process,” she said.

As far as her platform is concerned, Thiele said she has two key priorities – putting the state’s fiscal house in order and fighting for values.

While she feels the state’s fiscal house needs cleaning up, Thiele said there have been positives. She mentioned that manufacturing jobs were coming to the state via Infosys, an information technology and consulting firm, planning to hire 1,000 employees in Harford.

But, this is “not to gloss over the fact that we do face challenges,” she stressed. “Transportation infrastructure is weak and our highways are some of the worst in the country.”

Upgrading the state’s transportation and infrastructure is essential as it will bring people and businesses to Connecticut, she said.

Solving the fiscal crisis is not going to be

easy, Thiele said.

“We need to make cuts without cutting into essential social services,” she said. “It’s important we protect that safety net.”

In a recent report, the Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth recommended reining in spending at the state level and moving away from regressive property tax, Thiele said.

Thiele agrees that the state should ease off regressive property taxes, she said.

“I think we need bold leadership to keep Connecticut competitive and move the state forward,” she said.

As far as tolls, which have been bandied about in recent months by state lawmakers, Thiele said she would only support them if the “lockbox” is passed.

The lockbox would guarantee that funds raised through tolls would be used exclusively on transportation.

“I think tolls are likely an inevitability,” she said. “We’re one of the only states on the east coast that don’t have tolls.”

She does not, however, support tolls on Route 2, she added – and stressed she would only support tolls if the gas tax is reduced.

“The gas tax should be lowered regardless,” she said. “It’s a burden on middle and lower income taxpayers.”

The midterm elections will be about more than the state of the state, Thiele said. They will be about values as well.

“My overall philosophy is to put the middle class first, that’s essentially what I want to do first when crafting policy,” she said. “When I think about traditional American values of inclusion and strengthening the middle class, I think that these values are worth protecting and if elected I plan to do that for the district and for the state as a whole.”

She also supports women’s rights and children’s rights.

“I firmly support the rights of women and children,” she said. “I support pay equity and paid family leave. If those bills don’t pass this executive session I will also fight for that, if elected.”

Thiele is a member of the Hebron Democratic Town Committee and a citizen at large on the Capital Improvement Plan Committee. She has been married for five years to Adam Thiele.

She holds a bachelor’s degree from Rhode Island College and a master’s degree in journalism from Northwestern University.

DTC Chairman Ted Bromley said Thiele was a great candidate.

“Obviously, we’re really excited to have someone from Hebron be willing to take on the campaign and we’re proud of her to be willing to do that,” he said.

“I really hope the surrounding towns will support her as much as we do,” he said.

For more information about Thiele’s campaign, find her on Facebook @ThieleForStateRep and on Twitter @thielefor55th.

East Hampton Woman Realizes Vision with Coffee House

by Elizabeth Regan

Susan Popielaski had a vision for ECO Coffee House, complete with detailed sketches, long before she found space for it on the corner of Main Street and Barton Hill Road.

Fixtures, furnishings and equipment piled up in the basement of her Portland home for three years in anticipation of her entrepreneurial leap, but it wasn’t until two locations fell through that she was finally able to make her move to 82 Main St.

The inspiration for the shop, which merges locally-sourced, organic espresso offerings with a gallery of art and handmade goods crafted by people with disabilities, came to her after she lost her job in the social services field in 2014.

Numerous job applications failed to yield so much as a call back.

“I thought if nobody’s going to hire me, I’m just going to do something on my own,” Popielaski said.

She opened her doors last October with all the shiny, stainless steel accoutrements necessary to serve hot, organic lattes and ice cold coffees, teas and kombucha. A case of sweet treats features gluten-free options.

“Everything I have in here, I want it to be local, where I know the person face to face,” she said.

Beans come from Trumbull, milk comes from Storrs and kombucha – which is a fermented drink touted as good for the gut – comes from Danbury.

A customized espresso machine and high-end coffee bean grinder dose out lattes that are the same every time; a six-tap kegerator keeps the cold drinks fresh and chilled.

Drinks like the bourbon vanilla latte and nitrogen-infused cold brew can be consumed on sleek stools at the counter or a cozy sitting area looking out on the Village Center.

Popielaski makes her own flavorings on site,

including organic chocolate, cinnamon and caramel. The vanilla flavor is simmered down using Grade A Madagascar bourbon vanilla beans, she said.

“I know you go to Starbucks and you get like pineapple and jalapeno flavors, but this is all I have. And people are okay with it. My whole philosophy is to keep it simple,” she said.

The amount of syrup in each drink is carefully proportioned to deliver the tried-and-true taste she stands by.

She said she balks at customers – some of whom may be expecting to find the kind of overly-sweet offerings common at other coffee houses – who come in asking to alter the formula by using less syrup.

“I have the perfect measurement. It’s not too sweet,” she said. “I’m like, either you want it or you don’t. That’s how I work.”

She said her clear-cut and uncompromising view of the world can be perceived as unsciable. One customer even affectionately suggested she wear a T-shirt identifying herself as *The Bitchy Barista*.

Popielaski said a better word would be “prickly.”

Describing herself as a “total introvert,” she said the job doesn’t come easy to her. She needs nine hours of sleep every night to recharge from the demands of each day serving the public from behind the counter.

But it’s a labor of love for Popielaski, who lives in Portland with her husband, John.

“This is my baby,” she said. “My customers are my family.”

On the other side of the shop, gallery space is devoted to goods ranging from coasters made from wine corks to soaps poured in the shape of Mardi Gras king cakes. Popielaski said she loves the carnival-style holiday and the sweet treat with a trinket inside.

Popielaski noted some of the artisans have



Susan Popielaski of ECO Coffee House is serving up locally-sourced, organic coffee and treats alongside an artisan’s gallery with a focus on promoting jobs and real wages for people with disabilities.

physical disabilities like cerebral palsy, while others have disabilities such as chronic anxiety that can be hard to see.

A bright menagerie of animals parades across one wall in a display of collage art by Andrew Jeruss of Bristol. According to his biography, Jeruss is profoundly deaf, visually impaired and has serious neurological deficits – but it is his love of art, good food and exploring new places that defines him.

The gallery includes an array of paintings, photography, matted prints, and notecards created by Michelle J. Johnson. The artist is unable to walk, talk or use her left hand due to

cerebral palsy. Johnson said on her website, rightonart.com, that she “can speak volumes” through her art despite communication challenges inherent in her condition.

Popielaski said her ultimate goal is employ people with disabilities in the shop.

Her affinity for those with such challenges – seen and unseen – comes because she has always viewed herself as an underdog.

“And I felt like they were also,” she said. “I feel like there’s a stigma defining their lives. Still in this day, as soon as [employers] see there’s a little disability, they’re not going to want to hire them.”

Colchester School Board Approves \$40.55M Budget

by Elizabeth Regan

The Board of Education, reacting to the potential loss of \$2 million in funding from the state, unanimously approved a 2018-19 spending plan that's 0.21 percent lower than the current budget.

The \$40.55 million proposed budget represents a decrease of \$87,061 over current year spending.

The local education proposal has been evolving since late last year, with school administrators initially requesting a 1.02 percent increase. Superintendent of Schools Mary Conway in February dug deep enough to come up with a 0.05 percent decrease compared to the current budget, citing the importance of keeping both students and taxpayers in mind amid the threat of reduced state revenue. A series of budget workshops leading up to last week's school board meeting cut even deeper, leaving a proposed budget on the table that represented a 0.30 percent decrease over current spending.

The Board of Education, in voting on the fi-

nal proposal, made about \$36,000 in changes to come up with the 0.21 percent decrease. They reinstated one certified occupational therapy assistant position that had been eliminated in the budget planning process and added \$1,000 to the Bacon Academy publicity budget for tuition students.

The school board's budget proposal includes the addition of one full-time special education teacher at Colchester Elementary School and one full-time special education teacher at William J. Johnston Middle School. It also adds the equivalent of one 32-hours-per-week position split between a district-wide special education teacher and social worker.

To help mitigate the personnel increases, the budget proposal cuts the equivalent of roughly two full-time positions, divided between health, speech and Spanish classes at the elementary school and middle school. Conway said this week the district does not anticipate any lay-

offs based on the proposed budget, with affected teachers able to pick up work elsewhere in the district to make up for the reduced hours.

The budget proposal includes a \$337,176, or 1.34 percent, increase in salaries over current year spending due to contractual obligations.

The technology budget includes three new projectors, 30 new iPads and 24 replacement Chromebooks at the primary level, with the high school slated to receive 48 new computers for business labs and 63 Chromebooks for social studies.

The middle school will have all new technology funded through the new school building project.

The district anticipates spending less on tuition for out-of-district special education, vocational agriculture and magnet school students in the proposed budget. That shakes out to a reduction of \$264,465, or 9.53 percent.

About \$123,702 in savings is expected due

to an adjustment to the method officials use to calculate estimated health insurance costs for the year. Board of Education Chairman Brad Bernier said the new formula is part of the Board of Finance's effort to streamline the process and "smooth the ups and downs" that can result when some years have more expensive claims than others.

Bernier described the approved school board budget proposal as a way to maintain programs and services while acknowledging the prospect of steep cuts in education aid from the state.

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy in February proposed an additional cut of \$334,478 to Colchester's education funding as part of his plan to adjust the two-year state budget approved in October, which already calls for a funding reduction of \$1.77 million to the town.

It's up to state lawmakers to approve the state budget later this spring; then it's up to the governor to sign it into law.

Andover Eyeing Open Space Purchase

by Sloan Brewster

The town wants to purchase some open space around the rail trail.

There will be a special town meeting on March 29 to give townsfolk the chance to weigh in on a proposal by the Planning and Zoning Commission to spend \$30,000 from the open space fund to purchase three parcels, Eric Anderson, commission chairman, said in a phone call Monday. A fourth parcel would be donated by the landowner.

The four parcels, which total 3.7 acres, border three roads – Lake Road, Merritt Valley Road and Route 6, Anderson said.

"They surround the Hop River Rail Trail that runs through town," he said. "There are kind of three reasons we're interested in these parcels themselves."

First, there's a parking shortage on the rail trail, he said. People park on the shoulder around Lake Road, which is on private property, so the plan is to acquire that piece of land and create official parking.

Second, the commission wants to protect some important land.

"There's a really important tributary to the Hop River that runs through those parcels," he said. "So it gives us a chance to, essentially, protect that watercourse, and aquifer protection is one of the things that we're interested in generally, specifically for open space."

The third reason the commission wants to purchase the parcels is for a park.

"They contain a piece that's perfect for a small park between the rail trail on Merritt [Val-

ley] Road at Blackman's Brook and Route 6," Anderson said.

It would be a small park, just big enough for a couple picnic tables and benches.

The parcels are near a historic bridge that has been there for more than 100 years.

"One of the cool things about Merritt [Valley] Road is the stone bridge," Anderson said.

The pretty stone bridge sits above the parcels, which nestle Blackman's Brook.

The parcels are owned by Cora Merritt, who recently sold a series of larger parcels, Anderson said.

"When the Zoning Commission became aware of that, we also became aware that she was considering selling the four parcels and we approached her," he said.

The plan is for the town to purchase three of the parcels, all of which are in the industrial zone but are not developable, with the open space funds, Anderson said. Merritt would then gift the fourth parcel, which is developable, to the town. The plan would preserve the right to build on the developable lot, which could not be done if the town bought it with open space funds.

"I think you would get public opposition," Anderson said. "The town has so little commercial and industrial land, anything that removes commercial or industrial land from use would get opposed. This works around that."

Merritt agreed to the proposal and the commission, in turn, agreed to put up a plaque to honor the Merritt family, which has been in town for more than 100 years, he said.



The town is looking to buy four parcels that total 3.7 acres. The potential purchase will go to town meeting March 29.

"They're definitely one of the historic families of Andover," Anderson said.

Last Wednesday, Anderson attended a special meeting of the Board of Selectmen to present the proposal to the board.

While open space funds fall under planning and zoning jurisdiction and the decision to appropriate the money is ultimately up to taxpayers, selectmen were supportive of the proposal, First Selectman Bob Burbank said.

"The consensus, I think the board was for

the acquisition," he said. "To me personally, it seems like a good move because it's a nice location."

The purchase would enhance town property and access to the rail trail, Burbank said.

In addition, it gives the town a chance for a future development opportunity if the property owner deeds the fourth property to the town.

The town meeting will take place Thursday, March 29, at 7 p.m. in the Town Office Building Community Room.

Two Portland High School Students Arrested After Alleged Threat

by Elizabeth Regan

Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly informed the school community Wednesday morning that two Portland High School students had been arrested the previous night by Portland police after an investigation into an alleged threat.

O'Reilly wrote in his 7:30 a.m. email that the students, who are juveniles and did not have their identities released, were each charged with breach of peace.

O'Reilly informed parents the students were accused of sending text messages – which he later explained were part of an online *Dungeons & Dragons* game – that caused “alarm and worry” about school safety.

“While the police have determined that there is no reason to believe that the texts pose a threat to our schools, they acted out of a preponderance of caution,” he said.

The Portland Police Department issued a three-sentence press release late Tuesday afternoon to announce the charges and to assure the public there “is no credible cause for further concern.” They said there will be an increased police presence at Portland schools “out of an abundance of caution.”

In Connecticut, records pertaining to juvenile court cases are not public information.

Captain Ron Milardo said after the press release was issued that the text message did not target a particular individual or school.

“It was just a broad statement that was made,” he said.

The call to alert police about the concerning text message was made at 7:15 p.m., according to police department.

Milardo said two juveniles were arrested for their part in the alleged incident and were referred to the juvenile court in Middletown as soon as police concluded their investigation.

Milardo at the time said he did not know what time the arrest was made.

On Thursday, Officer Paul Liseo would say only that the arrest was made “that night.” He said the police report detailing the incident did

not include the exact time of the arrest. It is typical in the department not to specify the time of an arrest if it is made the same day the incident was reported, according to Liseo.

O'Reilly said Thursday morning that he was informed of the arrest at 10 p.m. Tuesday.

The original text message was sent to a student who then “sent it off to a group of kids,” according to Milardo.

“You have to take this stuff serious, but we believe after doing an investigation that there was no threat to anyone,” he said.

O'Reilly put it this way: “Unfortunately, we are experiencing a climate of abundant alarm and concern for our schools and our children must understand that any threat will be reported to and investigated by our local authorities.”

According to O'Reilly, the district will be disciplining the students in accordance with Board of Education policy for a “significant interruption to our school.”

School policy dictates students may be disciplined for behavior that takes place off school grounds if it is “seriously disruptive of the educational process.”

Milardo said it is the department’s practice to have an officer assigned to the opening and closing of each school anyway, but that “when something like this happens, it’s nice to make sure the officers are outside being seen.”

O'Reilly described the police presence, which he acknowledged is standard practice, as a way to make people feel safe.

“The police presence is not because we’re concerned about any threat; the police presence is to put everybody on the inside, and our parents on the outside, at ease,” he said.

Public Relations Challenge

According to O'Reilly, a subsequent online posting on an unspecified social media platform began circulating around 1 p.m. on Wednesday – before the police issued their press release – alleging that the district was hiding threats of a school shooting.

He said the post was shared extensively among students, but did not know if it originated from a student or an adult.

He described the post as “completely erroneous.”

“It said we were hiding threats; we weren’t hiding threats at all. It referenced a school shooting; this wasn’t a school shooting matter, never was,” O'Reilly said.

O'Reilly said he immediately convened a meeting with Officer Paul Liseo, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield and administrators from the high school and middle school to discuss the social media allegation.

“We were able to track down some of the children who reposted it and then we were able to verify it was not based on any factual information,” he said.

O'Reilly said the message was posted by someone “that didn’t really know what was going on” and who was making “untrue” statements.

“Then we realized we had a public relations challenge, and we wanted to put out the real information and how we were responding,” he said.

That’s when he sent a second email, which went out to the school community and town officials at 4:10 p.m. The police press release was distributed shortly after that.

“We all believe that there is no credible threat here and people are irresponsibly posting information that is NOT factual,” O'Reilly wrote in the email.

He emphasized that Tuesday night’s arrests represented “NO credible threat” to students or schools.

The district is making plans for the Portland Police Department to meet with students next week to discuss the risks of posting “irresponsible material” and “threatening comments” online, according to O'Reilly.

“Finally, let me urge you to think carefully about your own online postings on Facebook

and other social media outlets,” he concluded in his letter to parents. “I believe that we must be better models for our children and demonstrate responsible digital citizenship and common decency.”

Community Concern

Concerns about the way the district communicated the arrests were evident on Facebook pages like “Portland CT, Community,” a group devoted to discussions about local issues.

Some parents complained they should have been informed before their children got on the bus for the day. They also said more information should have been provided.

O'Reilly said he did not send an email on the evening of the arrest because he would not immediately have been able to address all the concerns that were sure to spread over social media.

“Then it’s festering all night long,” he said. “[So] I made the decision not to send it out till the morning time.”

He said he also wanted to include high school and middle school administrators in the process so they could work as a team to determine “what was important to say.”

When asked if the message could have been sent before any students set out for school, he acknowledged it could have. But he emphasized he wanted to vet the message with his administrators, “who were going to be hitting the ground running.”

He said he values feedback from parents who expressed their concerns about the timing of the notification, as well as those who contacted him to thank him for his handling of the situation.

O'Reilly added he planned to meet Thursday with administrators and Bransfield to talk about how protocols and communication can be improved going forward.

“This is a new challenge for school leaders, and I want people to know we are being transparent in Portland,” he said.

Portland High Set to Say *Hello, Dolly*

by Elizabeth Regan

One of the musical theater world’s most enduring shows can be seen this weekend on Broadway – or in the auditorium of Portland High School.

Students will stage their own revival of *Hello, Dolly* as they bring to life the story of Dolly Gallagher Levi, a meddlesome matchmaker who sets up multiple marriages on her way to landing “half-a-millionaire” Horace Vandergelder.

Senior Emily Bradshaw stars in the title role, which has been fleshed out on stage and screen by Carol Channing, Ethel Merman, Molly Picon, Mary Martin, Barbra Streisand, Bette Midler and Bernadette Peters.

Bradshaw said she finds inspiration in all of them.

“I try to watch a lot of different versions and I kind of pick traits from each one and compile them into my own version of Dolly,” she said.

Bradshaw also builds on experience as Mrs. Banks in *Mary Poppins*, Audrey in *Little Shop of Horrors*, Ruth in *Pirates of Penzance* and an opera-singing wardrobe in *Beauty and the Beast*.

The Portland High School drama club incorporates a cast of 42, a pit orchestra of 34 and a crew of 13 to pull off the large-scale production with towering sets.

A depleted stage crew has been working with set designers Randy Guilmette and John Guilmette. Juniors Gracie Berthiaume, Kaitlyn Tran and Regan Woiwitz said a small group of student volunteers is rebuilding after a large contingent of the crew graduated two years ago.

The three girls had no construction experience until they began working on *Hello, Dolly*.

“It was our first time doing it because we were the only student volunteers there,” Tran said.

While describing the lower headcount as an obstacle to overcome when dealing with heavy, expansive sets, Tran was optimistic.

“We can manage,” she said.

Berthiaume described the set as a crucial aspect of *Hello, Dolly*, adding that it is a good feeling to be a part of it.

Tran said her own talents are better showcased behind the scenes than on stage.

“I like to be involved in the musical, but I’m not that great of an actor or singer in general,” she said. “I feel like I belong backstage doing all the work that people can’t really see but has an effect.”

Bradshaw was enthusiastic in her support of, and respect for, the students working on the stage crew, lights and sound.

“This is not a one-man show. This is not all about the actors. We have these amazing sets and the tech people spend so much of their time here. We just appreciate them so much,” she said.

Hello, Dolly producer and Portland Middle School band director Sarah Ketterer, along with directors Sam Tucker and Kristin Novak, chose to mount the production because it is a popular show with a large cast that could accommodate all the students interested in taking part.

One of those students is new to the high school drama club, but no stranger to the local theater scene.

Junior Cole Darby plays Horace Vandergelder, the object of Dolly’s personal matchmaking scheme. Darby has acted in Oddfellows Playhouse Youth Theater productions in Middletown since he was in fifth grade. It wasn’t until he took his first high school chorus class last year, however, that he got the idea to try out for a musical.

“I thought I might as well combine singing and acting, try something new,” he said. “So that’s what I did.”

Darby performed last summer in the Young People’s Center for the Creative Arts performance of *Beauty and the Beast*.

He said one of the biggest differences between dramatic plays and musical theater is that musicals are usually more focused on entertainment value than social commentary.



Senior Emily Bradshaw (left) will take the stage as the title character in this weekend’s Portland High School Drama Club production of *Hello, Dolly*. A meddlesome matchmaker, Dolly forges relationships among couples including the whiny, high-strung Ermengarde, portrayed by sophomore Avery Coe (right), and the struggling artist Ambrose.

It turns out the relative newcomer to the high school drama club scene prefers musicals.

“I love being entertained,” he said.

Showtimes for *Hello, Dolly* are tonight, March 23, at 7 p.m., and Saturday, March 24,

at 1 and 7 p.m. All performances are at Portland High School, 95 High St. Tickets will be sold at the door, and are \$10 for adults, \$8 for students/seniors and \$6 for children under 12.



John Vincent, of Colchester, and Kevin Murray, of Old Lyme, have brought the iconic Axelrod Tire banner back to Portland. The shop opened for business today.

Familiar Name Returns with Axelrod Tire in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

A fixture in Portland since 1971, the Axelrod Tire name is once again emblazoned on the well-known showroom and six-bay garage on Route 66.

The late Jack Axelrod grew the business into one of the largest tire dealers in New England before the chain was sold and the store closed in 2012.

Now, owner Kevin Murray of Old Lyme and master technician John Vincent of Colchester are harking back to the old days with Axelrod Tire and Service, which opens today at 1611 Portland Cobalt Rd.

The site had been empty since the departure of Pro Tech Automotive last spring.

Portland Economic Development consultant Mary Dickerson said the Axelrod family still owns the building.

“I think it’s nice that [Murray and Vincent] are reusing the name that has such a long history in Portland,” Dickerson said.

In addition to carrying all major tire brands,

the shop does mounting and balancing, alignments, oil changes, diagnostics, tune ups, and brakes and exhaust service.

Murray told the *Rivereast* this week that he has 30 years of experience as a manager and owner in the automotive industry, while Vincent is an ASE-certified master technician who has 30 years of experience as well.

Fair pricing and accurate quotes will ensure no customers are surprised when their bills come through, according to Murray.

“Honesty and integrity is the biggest thing,” he said.

Vincent, from behind the counter, reiterated the idea that affordable and competitive pricing is the driving force behind the new tire shop. Then he acknowledged “it’s going to be a short article, huh?”

Murray shrugged good-naturedly.

“Blunt and to the point,” he said. “That’s how we run the business, too.”

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

First off, congratulations are in order for the RHAM High School girls’ basketball team!

The girls won the Class L state championship Sunday, handily beating Farmington by a score of 58-35. It’s the first time ever a RHAM girls’ basketball team has won a state championship. Very exciting! And, if I may break into some mid-90s slang for a moment: you go, girls!

* * *

Color me sad about the closing of Toys R Us. Oh, I haven’t been inside one more than a couple of times a year for probably a decade or two, but the store was a big part of my childhood. I remember going with my family to the Toys R Us in West Hartford. It was always a special occasion – as shopping trips with the family tended to be back then. (This was before the Buckland Mall, and all its surrounding stores, opened in Manchester, so shopping trips were very much a weekend, family affair.)

What I remember most fondly is, after you crossed through the outside door, walking down a long rainbow-lined hallway until you entered the store itself. A different treasure awaited every time you walked down that path. To be honest, I don’t recall which specific toys I purchased (with the help of Mom and Dad, of course) at that Toys R Us – but I’ll never forget that rainbow walk.

Times change, and shopping habits change, and now you can buy so much online. But those tactile experiences – in this case, the joy of walking through aisles and aisles of toys to pick out what you want – are an awful lot to sacrifice in the name of convenience. There’s something to be said for the experience of going shopping – especially as a family. It’s a special time; a time for talking, laughing, sharing, bonding. You don’t get quite the same experience by clicking “send to shopping cart” on Amazon.

I think our family is closer for having shared those experiences like the special weekend trip to Toys R Us. And so I’ll miss Geoffrey the giraffe, that classic jingle, the bright aisles filled with the latest and greatest. Not so much because of what it is now –

but because of the place it holds in my memories.

I’ll always be a Toys R Us kid.

* * *

Does anyone else think that the louder Trump protests this whole Russia investigation is a “WITCH HUNT!” – as he often describes it on Twitter – the more likely it is that there’s actually something to it?

If there’s nothing to the investigation – as he repeatedly claims – then Trump should just stop talking about it, stop attacking the people doing the investigating, and just sit back and let the whole thing play out. But instead he whines – day after day, often multiple times a day – that there’s nothing to be found.

I believe it was Billy Shakespeare who once said something about doth protesting too much. Methinks maybe you doth, Donald; methinks maybe you doth.

* * *

For years I’ve been a big fan of old-time radio. I’ve amassed various collections of shows on cassette tape, CD and MP3, and enjoy listening to them from time to time. One of the programs I most frequently revisit are those starring Jack Benny. I’ve always enjoyed his humor. So, to wrap things up, here are some words of wisdom from the man born Benjamin Kubelsky:

“I don’t deserve this award, but I have arthritis and I don’t deserve that either.”

“Give me golf clubs, fresh air and a beautiful partner, and you can keep the clubs and the fresh air.”

“A rich man is one who isn’t afraid to ask the salesperson to show him something cheaper.”

“My wife Mary and I have been married for 47 years and not once have we had an argument serious enough to consider divorce; murder, yes, but divorce, never.”

“Hors D’oeuvre: A ham sandwich cut into 40 pieces.”

And lastly: “Age is strictly a case of mind over matter. If you don’t mind, it doesn’t matter.”

* * *

See you next week.

East Hampton Man Charged with Assault in Dispute Over Dogs

by Elizabeth Regan

Police said an East Hampton man was arrested last week and charged with second-degree assault and disorderly conduct after allegedly driving his truck into his brother’s neighbor three times as part of an ongoing dispute involving barking dogs.

William Hanna, 37, of 49 Middle Haddam Rd. was arrested Mar. 11 and released on a \$5,000 bond.

Police said the call came in around 9:15 a.m., when Jennifer Grant reported her husband, Chris Grant, had been the victim of assault with a motor vehicle at their Peach Farm Road home.

Grant was taken to Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center by ambulance after giving a sworn statement to police, according to a report. Interim Chief Thomas Davoren said he did not know the extent of Grant’s injuries.

Grant told responding Officer Mark Pekar he had just gotten back from a run when Hanna pulled into his driveway in a truck and a verbal confrontation ensued, police said. When Grant went to walk away, Hanna revved his engine and bumped him with the truck. According to police, Grant said Hanna backed up and bumped into Grant two more times. Grant said he flew over the hood and rolled off – after grabbing onto the windshield wiper in an attempt to brace himself – on the third attempt.

Officer Jason Wishart was responding to the call when he pulled over Hanna based on the truck description given by Jennifer Grant, the report said.

Hanna told Wishart he was at his brother Brian Hanna’s Peach Farm Road address to

let his dogs out when the animals saw Grant and began barking, according to the report. Hanna said his brother has had constant problems with Grant related to an ongoing dispute involving the dogs.

Grant pled no contest in September of last year to using a BB gun to shoot a dog belonging to Brian Hanna. Grant was sentenced to one year probation for illegal discharge of a firearm and two years’ probation for second-degree criminal mischief.

Brian Hanna filed the complaint against Grant last June after his wife, Ashley Hanna, said she saw Grant point a long gun at the couple’s two-year-old labrador/terrier mix. Brian and Ashley Hanna subsequently found suspicious injuries on one of their dogs, including a scab that fell off to reveal a BB.

The March 11 report said Hanna told police he entered Grant’s driveway in his truck to discuss the dogs. Hanna said he got out of the vehicle to say the dogs only bark when Grant is around, which resulted in Grant telling him to get off the property.

Hanna said he got back into his truck and had started backing up when Grant came at him and jumped on his hood, according to the report. Hanna told police he put the truck in drive and went forward in order to get Grant off the hood, which is when Grant slid to the ground and ripped the windshield wiper off the truck.

The report said Wishart, after consulting with Pekar about Grant’s side of the story, placed Hanna under arrest about an hour after the incident.

Hanna was released on a \$5,000 bond pending a hearing at Middletown Superior Court. His next court date is April 17.

East Hampton Police News

3/6: After an investigation into reports of a crash involving an evading motor vehicle on Spice Hill Dr., Catherine Roy, 57, of 28 Spice Hill Dr., was arrested and charged with drinking while driving, evading responsibility and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

3/11: William Hanna, 37, of 49 Middle Haddam Rd., was arrested and charged with second-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

Also, from March 5-11, officers responded to “numerous” hazardous conditions, 19 medical calls, seven motor vehicle crashes and 13 alarms, and made 14 traffic stops, police said.

Portland Police News

3/12: Daniel Ward, 42, whose last known address was 1503 Portland Cobalt Rd., was charged with second-degree strangulation and disorderly conduct, Portland Police said.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Justin Taylor Goodreau

Justin Taylor Goodreau, 29, of East Hampton, died Monday, March 19, at his home. Born Feb. 16, 1989, in Middletown, he was the son of Brion and Deborah (Merrick) Goodreau.



Justin was a 2008 graduate of Vinal Technical High School and had worked as an auto body mechanic, most recently for Corvette Connection. Justin was very active in the Salvation Army in Springfield, Mass. To know Justin was to know what true, authentic and full-hearted love looked like. His love of his sisters, his brothers, his mom, his dad, family and friends was so large; it most likely could move mountains. Justin had a rare thing in this life – a heart big enough and true enough to love all those in his life to the fullest extent.

Many of Justin's best memories come from a place that he felt was heaven on earth and that would be at Stony Fork Creek Campground in Pennsylvania where he spent the summer with his family, four-wheeling, swimming, biking, hiking to waterfalls, and sitting by the campfire as the fire blazed. Truth be told, the only thing that could make such a scene better for Justin would be if there were plentiful amounts of automobiles in need of restoration or repair that he could tend to and figure out without a second thought. His knack with cars came naturally. Ever since his childhood, he was fascinated with all things to do with automotive and took that passion to a career he adored working in auto body at Corvette Connection.

Once Justin grew a trust in you, which didn't take long with his big heart, he was fully invested in that relationship. His heart was contagious and to those of us left without that huge love, we feel an unimaginable absence. Whether it was the simplest conversation about Justin's favorite shows, *Walking Dead* and *Supernatural*, or if it was a sincere conversation about who you are and what you need – Justin was the go-to person, the best person to call and talk with.

Justin would be the first to say he knew exactly how to be a wise ass, crack jokes and be a lovable pain in the ass – but he loved to be just that because he knew his family loved him as unconditionally as he loved them. Even from a young age, smuggling Eminem records and Ludacris mix tapes into his room, it was the thrill of the forbidden journey – getting into trouble with his siblings that made Justin love instigating; he loved the closeness of anything.

At every campfire in the backyard of his family home with friends and family, Justin was there, fully embracing all the people that came into his life and showing immense pride in every single member of his family. In fact, Justin looked at the people in his life with such pride and love that he could never understand how anyone couldn't see how amazing they were and his family looked at him the same exact way – they saw and see the best in each other.

There are few genuine, good-hearted people that grace this earth and suffice it to say that Justin Goodreau was one of them – the best of the best when it comes to being a son, a brother and a friend. We know Justin will be waiting for us at the campfire in the setting of his favorite campground, working on some sweet cars until we meet again and guiding us from above.

Besides his parents he is survived by his paternal grandparents Rex and Phyllis Goodreau of Florida; two brothers, Zacharie Goodreau of West Hartford, Eric Goodreau and his children Alex and Eric Jr. of Missouri; two sisters, Cacie Goodreau of Meriden and Taylor Goodreau of East Hampton; many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. He also leaves his best friend, Cody Battistoni of Massachusetts.

Justin was predeceased by his maternal grandparents, Richard and Betty Merrick.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, today, March 23, from 5-8 p.m. A funeral service will be held at 8 p.m. in the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Salvation Army, 285 Liberty St., Springfield, MA 01104.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Andover

Bert A. Bowen III

Bert A. "Bing" Bowen III, 72, of Andover, husband of Carol (Bayer) Bowen, passed away peacefully on Sunday, March 18. Bing was born in Dearborn, Mich., July 4, 1945, to the late Bert A. Bowen Jr. and Leona (Neary) Bowen.

He was raised in Michigan, attended local schools and was a graduate of Northville High School, Class of 1964. After graduation, Bing attended Wayne State University in Detroit and Lawrence Technological Institute in Southfield, Mich., where he furthered his education in architecture. While still living in Michigan, he was a member of the Wolverine Retriever Club, having spent his youth raising Labrador Retrievers and enjoying black Labrador Retrievers field trials in the Proud Lake Recreation area.

Bing then moved to Connecticut in 1981. He worked as a self-employed software engineer for many years. Bing had many hobbies and enjoyments in his life, but most of all he was a member and past president of the Connecticut Family Campers and RVer's, a founding member of the Hop River Amateur Radio Club, a member of the Community Emergency Response Team and the Cub Scouts in Andover. He was an avid camper, sailor and fisherman and quite the outdoorsman. Bing is a member of Concordia Lutheran Church, Manchester.

In addition to his wife Carol, Bing leaves behind his son, Martin A. Bowen of Andover, and his daughter, Wendy L. Donagher and her husband Thomas E. Donagher Jr. of Manchester; his three grandchildren, Dana L. Donagher of Manchester, Thomas E. Donagher III of Manchester and Taia Lynn Bowen of Andover; and his sister, Marilyn L. Bowen of Shepherd, Mich. Bing leaves behind many nieces and nephews who loved him dearly.

Bing was predeceased by his parents Bert and Leona.

Calling hours for Bert will be held Saturday, March 24, from 10-11 a.m., at Concordia Lutheran Church, 40 Pitkin St., Manchester, followed by a funeral service beginning at 11 a.m. A reception will immediately follow in Kaiser Hall at Concordia. Burial will be at the convenience of his family.

Memorial donations in Bing's name may be made to Concordia Lutheran Church or the American Lung Association of Connecticut, 45 Ash St., East Hartford, CT 06108.

Holmes-Watkins Funeral Home, Manchester, is in care of the arrangements. To leave an online condolence, visit holmeswatkins.com.

Portland

Phyllis Bordonaro

Phyllis Bordonaro (King), 74, of Portland, passed away Saturday, March 17, 2018. She was a loving preschool teacher with the Head Start program. She is the daughter of the late Joseph and Mary Bordonaro of Cromwell and widow of Richard E. King. She was loving companion to Roberto Serrano of Cromwell.

She leaves behind her daughters Laura King and Donna Kowalski; eight grandchildren, Richard, Kristyn, Kimberly, Kelsey, Kevin, Joshua, Rebecca and Kailoni; six great-grandchildren. She also leaves her seven siblings, Carmella, Lucille, Josephine, Santo, Linda, Marie and Deborah; many aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews.

She is predeceased by two children, Katherine Horton and Patricia Smith.

The funeral will be held today, March 23, at 9 a.m., from the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main Street, Portland, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial in St. John's Church, Cromwell, at 10 a.m. Burial will be at a later date in the family plot in Trinity Cemetery, Portland. Friends called at the funeral home Thursday evening, March 22.

Colchester

Allan Thomas Perry

Allan Thomas Perry, 65, of East Hartford, formerly of Colchester. Son of the late Ernest V. Perry Sr. and Josephine Latti Perry, he was born in Utica, N.Y., born July 22, 1952.

He grew up in Hartford and graduated from Bulkeley High School in 1970. He attended Central Connecticut State College graduating in 1975 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science. He served in the U.S. Army from 1978 to 1982 as a linguist stationed in Germany and fluent in four languages. He worked for the State of Connecticut in the Department of Social Services for 24 years until his retirement in 2016. He enjoyed travel, ultimately traveling to all six continents, wine with an affinity for German and American Rieslings, and Harry Potter in all its forms.

He is survived by his son Thomas Perry and daughter-in-law Mary of Vermont. Other family members include his brother Ernest V. Perry, Jr. (wife, Rita and daughter, Eleanor). The family requests privacy during this time.

In lieu of flowers, make donations to The Daphne Zepos Teaching Award by visiting dzta.org/give-to-dzta or another charitable organization in his memory.

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