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Honorary Grandmaster and Purple Heart recipient Jerry Martin, who served as a chaplain in the Vietnam War and was wounded in combat, salutes during Hebron's Memorial Day parade. Beside him is Claude Thibodeau, U.S. Marine Corps veteran.

Solemn Ceremony Marks Memorial Day

by Sloan Brewster

With crowds of onlookers lining the streets, marchers in Hebron's Memorial Day parade on Monday paid homage to those who have given the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

The procession went down Main Street from Wall Street and then turned onto Church Street and ended at Veterans Memorial Green. Residents applauded and cheered, waving flags, as firefighters gravely trekked and members of the Hebron Lions Club sat in a float, flags billowing around them. Marchers also included a large contingent from Hebron Elementary School – bright in red and white – waving pompoms and playing instruments, local Girl and Boy Scout troops, youth sport teams, uniformed veterans holding their weapons over their soldiers, the RHAM High School band and more.

As the rest of the parade rolled to a stop, Jim Bombaci of Killingworth sat on his motorcycle awaiting the ceremony taking place on the green.

A friend of Joe Fetta, commander of American Legion Post 95 in Hebron, Bombaci rode his bike in the parade and after the ceremony led the convoy of veterans back to the parade starting point at RHAM High School.

Bombaci made it clear that he was not a veteran.

"I'm here saluting the vets, and the bike is all set up to honor the vets," he said.

Fetta opened the post-parade ceremony at the green, and spoke of the day's grave intent.

"We gather today as our solemn duty to honor

those of all wars who made the ultimate sacrifice so that we may live in freedom," he said. "Our mission today is simple and profound. We are here to remember and say thank you with our deepest gratitude and respect."

The Rev. Mark Santostefano, veteran of the United States Air Force and American Legion post chaplain, began the service with a prayer.

Santostefano was followed by speaker Thomas Sousa Sr., a lieutenant colonel with the United States Army, an Iraq War veteran and commander of Hebron's Veterans of Foreign Wars post. Sousa talked about the debt citizens owe to those who have fought and perished for their freedom. A debt that, he said, can never be repaid.

"Today is one small way to show our appreciation," he said.

Sousa then spoke of soldiers that remain missing in action.

"Our prisoners of war have often been subjected to the worst conditions possible," he said. "Eighty-two thousand Americans are still missing from World War II, Vietnam, Korea and the Iraq War."

While many of the missing likely died in crashes over the ocean, tens of thousands could be returned home, Sousa said.

"At least 30,000 have been assessed as possibly recoverable," he said. "Urge the government to assist in getting them whenever possible."

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Supporters Continue 'Fight for the Underdog'

by Elizabeth Regan

About a dozen supporters of a dog named Rocky took the podium in front of the Board of Selectmen at its most recent meeting to beg officials to release the dog from death row at the Portland pound.

Some of the advocates filed into the May 16 meeting wearing black T-shirts with the tagline "We Fight for the Underdog." The shirts came from the law offices of Thompson Gould Page, the firm representing Rocky's owner, Paul Bell.

Annabelle Maruschock, 10, stood before selectmen during the public comment period to continue advocacy efforts that began with a door-to-door and social media campaign to save the 90-pound pitbull mix.

She has been urging First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield to let Rocky go home to his owner with safety measures, such as a fence, in place.

Rocky has been impounded for more than two years stemming from a Jan. 31, 2016, attack on Stephen Demarest. The bites resulted in injuries to the 68-year-old man's left ankle, inner leg and below his knee. Demarest said the dog was unattended and unleashed at the time of the attack, which occurred across the street from Rocky's residence.

Bell has said his insurance company settled

a lawsuit filed by Demarest and his wife for \$275,000.

Maruschock told selectmen that the town has never been found negligent for releasing a dog back to its owner with precautions. She based her statement on documentation of dog attack lawsuits she obtained from the town clerk's office in response to a Freedom of Information request.

She refuted the idea that liability concerns are a reason to put a dog to death.

Maruschock said the only two lawsuits produced by the town in response to her request showed both cases involved police canines.

"I'm guessing most people don't know there have been two incidents in Portland where Portland's police dogs have attacked two innocent people," Maruschock said. "One was a six-year-old child just getting off her school bus."

A 2002 police report from the Connecticut State Police stated Portland Police Department canine Cezar got loose from his handler, Officer Peter Paranzino, while the handler was doing plumbing work at a new house in East Haddam. The dog attacked 5-year-old Rachel Christiana, who was with her older brother after the two had arrived home from school.

Court documents from a 2004 lawsuit filed

See Underdog page 2



Portland pitbull Rocky has been on death row in the town pound for more than two years following a January 2016 attack on a local man. Rocky's owner continues to appeal the dog's kill order.



A salute to the nation's fallen heroes during the 2018 Memorial Day Parade.

Ceremony cont. from Front Page

Sousa then pointed to the POW MIA flag fluttering above the podium and recited the emblem it contains.

"You are not forgotten," he said, and cajoled the crowd gathered to "be the best citizens and neighbors that that we can."

The solemn ceremony included a reading of the list of veterans who have passed away since last Memorial Day.

"With honor and respect, we give a vital salute to the veterans that have passed away since Memorial Day last year," Ron Parkyn, U.S. Marine Corps sergeant, Vietnam veteran and senior vice commander of the local American Legion post, said.

Read by Parkyn, those who have passed in the last year were WWII veterans Emil Caron, Henry Jones, Warren Holbrook and Joe Zachmann; Korean War veterans Frank Nicolo and Richard Keefe; and Vietnam War veterans Thomas Kelly, Richard Leach and Richard Nelson.

Parkyn also read the names Anne Ives and Annie Kulynick, members of the American Legion Women's Auxiliary who passed since last year.

"May their souls forever rest in peace," he said in closing of that portion of the ceremony. "We must always remember that the United

States of America will only be the land of the free as long as it is the home of the brave."

Fetta read off the names of all Hebron residents who have given their lives in the fight for freedom since the Revolutionary War.

"We must never forget what these heroes have done and what their loved ones have lost," he said. "Remembering once a year is not enough. The family survivors, husbands, wives, moms, dads, brothers and sisters remember daily that freedom is not free; it was paid for in blood."

Members of the American Legion Women's Auxiliary placed wreaths at the veteran's monuments.

"These flowers may fade and wither, but the spirit of which they are a symbol will endure until the end of time," Fetta said.

Before the ceremony closed, Fetta introduced Honorary Grandmaster Jerry Martin, who served as a chaplain in the Vietnam War and was wounded in combat while giving aid to injured soldiers. Martin received the Purple Heart.

The ceremony ended with Fetta furrowing the flags back to full staff and the RHAM High School marching band playing The National Anthem under the direction of Nick Kokus.

Colchester Homicide Victim Remembered as Friend, Loyal Caretaker

by Allison Lazur

James E. Stone, 36, has now been identified as the individual who was killed just before midnight on May 18 at his residence at 95 Stanavage Road, located on the Golden Hill Paugussett Indian Reservation.

The office of the chief medical examiner revealed that the cause of death was gunshot wounds to the chest and lower extremity, ruling the incident a homicide. However, police have said the general public is not at risk.

The case – which remains under investigation by Eastern Major District Crime Squad – shocked those who live on the otherwise placid reservation.

The reservation has never experienced such an act of violence, according to tribal head leader Shoran Waupatuquay Piper.

The reservation comprises 106 acres in Colchester, according to the assessor's database.

"People come on our land and they say it's so peaceful and relaxing," she said.

Piper also explained that the only individuals permitted to live on the reservation are tribal blood members and their families. However, Stone was an exception to this rule.

Piper revealed that Stone was a lifelong friend of her nephew, Aurelius Adee Piper, who knew Stone throughout high school and college and introduced him to the reservation. Stone had

lived on the reservation on and off for years, Piper said.

He was not a member of the tribe, but Piper explained that he was like one of their own.

"We never left him and he never left us," she said.

Piper also described Stone as a person who contributed in various ways to the tribe and reservation.

"He was caretaker of the land," she said. She added that Stone helped landscape, snow plow, and complete secretary work in the office at the reservation. He also showed the children how to fish and hike and helped walk elders to their cars, she explained.

When tribe members would go away for tribal business, Piper said they trusted Stone to look after the reservation, adding, "We don't let just anyone watch the grounds."

The tribe was away in Massachusetts during the time of Stone's death and Piper said the last time she saw Stone was the day before he died.

As of press time Thursday there were no additional details disclosed by police to the public other than that the investigation is currently active and there is no threat to the public.

Anyone with information is asked to contact detectives at 860-896-3201 or text TIP711 and the information to 274637. Police have said all calls and texts will remain confidential.

Underdog cont. from Front Page

by the Christiana family stated Rachel Christiana received dog bites to the back and side of her head and lacerations to her head and body. She received many stitches and staples after being transported to Connecticut Children's Medical Center, according to court documents.

Portland Police Department Captain Ron Milardo said this week he did not recall the circumstances surrounding the attack, but confirmed Cezar continued in his role as the department's canine officer after the incident.

The second incident occurred in 2009, according to court documents. That's when resident Suzanne Fecteau said she sustained injuries after police canine Niko "knocked into" her. Fecteau's 2011 lawsuit against the town and Paranzino alleged the canine handler let the dog out of his vehicle in front of the police station when Niko ran toward Fecteau and her dog, striking Fecteau.

Both cases were withdrawn by the plaintiffs, according to the Middlesex Superior Court civil clerk's office.

Maruschock said the two dogs, who had received professional training as police K9 units, were given second chances – "but a dog like Rocky, that hasn't received any training and doesn't know better, wasn't given a second chance."

Resident Danielle Piatti brought up an incident that occurred in town last year, during which a Rottweiler escaped from a front porch and attacked a Yorkshire Terrier on a Main Street sidewalk. The small dog was killed.

The Rottweiler was quarantined for 14 days at its home because it was not up to date on its rabies vaccine.

Piatti argued that a 14-day quarantine, instead of more than two years in the animal control facility, would have given Bell time to put a fence around his yard and to train with his dog to avoid further incidents.

Resident Donna Dubay said she's been bitten twice by dogs on her property.

"The dogs were not taken away," she said. "There was no kill order for the dogs. Nor would I want there to be. It wasn't the dogs' fault. It was the owners' fault."

She said Bell has admitted he was wrong not to have a fence, but "has more than paid for" the mistake.

Bell told selectmen he is prepared to put in place any safety measures the town requires if Rocky can come home.

"I'm in this to fight for Rocky's life," he said. "I've been doing this now for two and a half years and I'm prepared to continue until we come to the end."

Bell's attorney, Thompson Page, stood up during public comment to elaborate on the liability issue raised by Maruschock and to argue what he said is a common refrain from officials in towns that have seized dogs after attacks.

Page said town officials – in cases where a dog owner appeals a kill order – often say the issue is out of their hands.

"The reality is that the town issued the order and the town can revoke the order whenever they please, no matter what stage in the legal

process they may be," he said.

He said long and drawn-out legal cases occur "only because the town continues to want the dog killed and the owner continues to not want the dog to be killed."

The town is being advised by the law firm Murtha Cullina in the ongoing legal battle surrounding Rocky.

According to an email provided to Bransfield by the firm, the case had cost the town \$7,086.14 in legal fees as of April.

Bransfield cited the ongoing lawsuit as her reason for declining to comment on whether or not the town would consider revoking the kill order.

After local Animal Control Officer Karen Perruccio issued the kill order less than two weeks after the attack on Demarest, Bell appealed to the state Department of Agriculture.

In March – just over two years after the kill order was issued – agriculture commission Chairman Steven K. Reviczky affirmed Perruccio's decision.

Reviczky cited a report by agriculture department hearing officer Bruce A. Sherman describing the attack as "unprovoked and vicious." Reviczky also noted Rocky got loose again the day after the incident with Demarest, prior to being delivered to the pound for quarantine. The hearing report said Rocky ran down the driveway and began to attack a bag being carried by a passer-by, but was successfully called back by Bell.

Superior Court Case

Page on May 11 filed an appeal of the state agriculture department's decision to the state Superior Court. He asked the court to vacate the agriculture department's final decision and to grant a temporary injunction to prevent the town from killing his client's dog.

While some objections in the eight-part legal filing are broad constitutional issues, the latter items pertain to specific aspects of Bell's case.

The lawsuit said Bell was denied the opportunity to properly prepare for the August 2016 administrative hearing before the state agriculture department because Bell was not informed prior to the hearing why, exactly, Perruccio issued the kill order. The suit also states the Department of Agriculture's hearing officer allowed the town attorney to introduce evidence outside the scope of the bite incident – including the subsequent incident involving the man with the bag – while not allowing Bell to do the same.

Page alleges the town has continued to retain the dog at the pound without giving Bell the chance to contest the seizure. It also states that "unconstitutionally vague" language in existing state statute violates Bell's property and due process rights.

The lawsuit further alleges that state statute leaves it up to animal control officers to hold dogs in pounds and issue disposal orders with no adequate "rules, policies, procedures, guidelines, practices or regulations" for doing so. It goes on to state that Perruccio lacked the qualifications to serve as an "expert" witness during the agriculture department hearing.

New Interpretation for Portland Excavation Regs

by Elizabeth Regan

The Planning and Zoning Commission last week laid the groundwork for a new interpretation of local zoning regulations for site work requiring more than a half-acre of gravel excavation or fill.

Commission members, developers, attorneys and the public have been involved in discussion about the meaning and intent of the regulations, which were brought to the forefront because of a controversial excavation operation by developer and selectman Ben Srb on the corner of Sage Hollow Road and Cornwall Street last year. He is about four years into clearing an unspecified amount of earth material from the 1.18-acre, residentially-zoned property in order to build a single-family home.

Some residents have argued that extensive excavation operations should be subject to increased local oversight through the special permit process, while Srb has said requiring a special permit just to do site work for a subdivision, house or business is unnecessarily onerous.

The issue is back in front of the Planning and Zoning Commission as the result of a pending site plan application for an 8,200-square foot retail shop and storage building on Route 66 near the Ledges. The project is slated for construction on several acres that town engineer Geoffrey Jacobson said will require "substantial" excavation.

The project was submitted by 1600 Portland Cobalt Road LLC and received by the commission in April. The site plan application came from Thomas Clausi, who is listed as a principal of the limited liability corporation.

Srb had previously been listed as a principal of the corporation as well. But a May 17 filing with the Secretary of the State of Connecticut's office, obtained through a Freedom of Information request, changed Srb's status with the corporation. Instead of being identified as a principal and agent, he is now listed solely as an agent.

Commission members at their May 24 meeting came to the consensus they would like

Clausi to file a special permit application for earth material removal, filling and excavation.

The commission is expected to formalize its interpretation in a vote at its June 7 meeting, based on discussion among members and consulting planner Terri-Ann Hahn, of LADA, P.C. Land Planners.

Jacobson, of Nathan L. Jacobson and Associates, said in a May 14 engineering review that the project will cover 5.4 acres of the 26.85-acre parcel on Route 66 and will require earth cuts up to almost 50 feet in depth.

Clausi's attorney, George Law, said his client wants to clear the site and construct the retail building in an efficient manner.

"It's a good site plan. It's a good thing for Portland. It's good retail for Route 66," Law said. "We don't want a gravel operation going on there."

He said submitting a site plan application allows the developer to excavate the front of the site and put up the retail building in the initial phase. The remaining excavation, and construction of a back storage building, could then be completed during phase two.

While the site plan as submitted asks for five years to complete excavation work, project engineer Frank Magnotta said it would only take 1-2 years to complete the first phase of excavation.

Commission members also discussed a May 17 memo from Chatham Health District sanitarian Liz Davidson stating the district feels it is "not appropriate" to approve the septic system design and well locations prior to excavation because findings could change once material is removed from the site.

Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Bruce Tyler said the commission cannot approve the application without health district approval.

He asked Clausi to consider filing a special permit application.

"My personal preference is to have this done with a special permit because of the amount of excavation and the timeline," Tyler said. "But

that, of course, is up to you."

The 1600 Portland Cobalt Road site plan application was continued to the commission's next meeting on June 7. Magnotta said he will update the site plan application with a more detailed project narrative addressing questions raised by the land use department and Chatham Health District.

It was after the applicants had left the meeting that commission members decided they would make a motion at their next meeting to require a special permit for the 1600 Portland Cobalt Road application.

Clausi did not return a call for comment this week.

Parsing the Language

An advisory memo from Hahn to the land use department said the question for the 1600 Portland Cobalt Road application, "and all new" applications, is whether a special permit application for earthwork must be filed in conjunction with a site plan or subdivision that exceeds a half acre.

According to language in the town's earth material removal, filling and excavation regulations, no excavation or fill work can be done "unless and until after an application for a Special Permit and Site Plan" has been approved by the commission.

The regulations go on to exempt earthwork associated with "any subdivision, Special Permit use and/or Site Plan approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission."

A second exemption applies to any earthwork totaling less than a half acre.

According to Hahn's memo, consultation with the town attorney indicated the past-tense construction of the word "approved" in the first exemption means it refers to "already approved" subdivisions and site plans.

"Because this site plan application has not yet been approved, it would appear that this exemption would not apply," the memo said.

Law described the argument as "a very funky interpretation" of zoning regulations when he

spoke in front of the commission last Thursday.

"To take the position that the exemption only applies to site plans that have already been approved means that we will never be able again to approve a site plan and have excavation on the property," Law said. "We will first have to have a mining or gravel removal operation there."

Hahn said updating the regulations to include definitions for terms like "quarry," "sand and gravel operations" or "typical earthwork" would help clarify the issue.

To address what could become a glut of special permit applications based on the new interpretation, Hahn added that the commission may consider increasing the amount of excavation that triggers special permit oversight or adding a provision to clarify how much material must be moved or removed before the need for a special permit kicks in.

Dairy Queen Agrees to Special Permit

Similar issues were discussed as part of the site plan application for a new Dairy Queen on Route 66, which was presented at the same meeting. That's when project engineer James Cassidy, of Hallisey, Pearson & Cassidy Engineering Associates, agreed to submit a special permit application for fill work associated with the project.

Michael J. and Rosemary Cassetta plan to build the 3,655-square foot Dairy Queen building across Route 17 on the same side of Route 66 as the current location, according to land use documents. The total parcel is 13.5 acres. The site plan includes filling and grading of a parking lot, driveways, building and storm drainage system.

Cassidy said he would prepare the special permit application and continue to address outstanding issues.

A public hearing will be held June 21.

The special permit application was filed with the land use department this Tuesday, according to Majorowski.

Portland Celebrates Memorial Day

by Elizabeth Regan

Portland residents honored fallen service members at its annual Memorial Day parade and ceremony under gray skies and rain that fell like tears.

As the parade set off Sunday afternoon a mile and a half down the road, Ret. Massachusetts State Police Sgt. Dan Clark again paid homage in song to those who have served and those who have died.

Known as the Singing Trooper, Clark has been at the Portland Memorial Day parade and ceremony for the past three years.

Against the backdrop of a reviewing stand on the grounds of Brownstone Intermediate School, Clark recognized each of the five full-time branches of the military, plus the U.S. Merchant Marine, in a medley of service songs. When each branch's signature song came up, he asked everyone who had served to raise their hands so he could salute them.

Clark honored those buried at the national cemetery when he launched into the plaintive sound of the country ballad "Arlington." His steps were clipped and precise along the center of the street before he turned sharply on his heel.

Clark has appeared at several thousand federal, state, local, and military events, according to a biography on his website. Among them have been numerous funerals for fallen troopers, firefighters and military members.

The annual parade is hosted by American Legion Ormont Post 69 and has been organized for the past 25 years by resident Sarah Sterry-Rutter.

When the parade reached the reviewing stand, Clark faded into the background and the sharp report of a 21-gun salute from members of the American Legion honor guard filled the air. The gunfire, in turn, was replaced by the stark tones of trumpets playing Taps.

A long line of parade participants followed. They were led by honorary parade marshal Frank L. Sanborn, a veteran of the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. He flew 30 missions from England to Germany in B-29 bombers.

The new magnetic decal attached to the vehicle carrying the parade marshal was purchased thanks to 9-year-old Theresa Hunter. The Gildersleeve student asked friends and fam-



Portland held its annual Memorial Day parade and ceremony Sunday. The parade featured such sights as, at left, the American Legion Ormont Post 69 honor guard performing the 21-gun salute and, at right, Ret. Massachusetts State Police Sgt. Dan Clark, known as the Singing Trooper. Clark brought his patriotic performance to Portland for the third year in a row as he remembered fallen service members and saluted veterans.

ily to donate money for her birthday instead of giving gifts, resulting in a \$105 donation that she directed to the Portland Veterans Affairs Commission.

Also in attendance was Connecticut's Kid Governor, Megan Kasperowski. The fifth-grade student at Brownstone Intermediate School ran on a platform of cancer awareness to beat out six juvenile gubernatorial candidates for the position. The Kid Governor program is sponsored by the Connecticut Public Affairs Network.

Antique vehicles mingled with groups including local and state officials, Portland Fire Department, the Knights of Columbus, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the town Unified Sports program, Little League players, youth football players and young martial artists. The Shriners, in festive costumes on tiny cars, and the Port-

land Cellar Savers' antique fire trucks were two returning favorites.

Musical acts included the Portland High School marching band and the middle school band. Portland resident Karen R. Johansmeyer and her brother, Harold Jr., represented the fife and drum corps.

The end of the parade marked the beginning of a solemn ceremony in the auditorium of Brownstone Intermediate School. U.S. Army Lt. Col. Tom DeRing led the ceremony.

The Rev. Philip Bjornberg of Trinity Church provided the event's invocation.

"Life is the ultimate gift to cherish, and not a problem to solve," he said. "It is with utmost gratitude I'm honored to invoke the eternal life giving spirit in the name of the ones who have given it all for me and for you."

Clark followed up his Main Street perfor-



mance on the BIS stage in front of six bright panels representing each branch of the military and the Merchant Marines.

The notes of Johnny Cash's "Ragged Old Flag" filled the old, wood-accented room before Clark began the spoken-word tribute to patriotism spawned during the Watergate era.

"She's been getting threadbare and she's wearing thin, but she's in good shape for the shape she's in," he intoned.

As U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Steve Opuszynski and U.S. Navy Petty Officer Skip Petras placed the memorial wreath in a place of honor on the stage, Clark honored their two branches of service with the Navy hymn "Eternal Father, Strong to Save."

A moment of silence was observed for the 24 Portland veterans who died since last year's Memorial Day ceremony.



Colchester loves a parade – which was evident Sunday when folks lined the streets for the town’s annual Memorial Day Parade. At left is the 34 LaFrance antique fire engine, one of the original fire trucks of Colchester and is currently housed in the Hayward Fire Museum. At right, Monica Egan and Ron Goldstein (shown facing the camera) are seen on the float of the Colchester Community Theatre. The theatre was awarded special recognition for “most patriotic float” at the ceremony immediately following the parade.



Colchester Memorial Day Parade Remembers World War I

by Allison Lazur

Gloomy skies during Sunday’s Memorial Day parade threatened attendees with the prospect of rain. However, the ominous warning from Mother Nature didn’t stop residents from lining the streets to show their support for veterans and active service men and women.

“The 100th Anniversary of World War I” was this year’s focus, and several facets of the town showed up to march through the misting rain.

The Bacon Academy Marching Band kicked off the parade leading other town constituents down Norwich Avenue and then on Main Street towards the Green.

First Selectman Art Shilosky was seen strolling down the street, umbrella in hand, accompanied by selectmen Rosemary Coyle, Denise Mizla and Jim Ford.

Members of the Middletown Police Benefit Association Pipes and Drums, Colchester Republicans and Democrats, Colchester Business Association and the town fire department were among those who made an appearance at the event.

Some organizations received special recognition at the conclusion of the parade.

Boy Scout Troop 109 was named “best marching unit.” Giving Gardens received recognition for “most original themed float” while the Colchester community theatre took the title of “most patriotic float.”

The parade concluded on the green followed by a ceremony led by announcer Charles Savitsky.

At the beginning of the ceremony, St. Andrew’s Choir sang the Star Spangled Banner and the majority of those in attendance felt inspired enough by the choir’s performance to join in.

The highlight of the program however, was guest speaker Robert Garabedian, a veteran who was a P-47 Thunderbolt Pilot during World War II.

His speech was filled with excitement, and the valor he must have portrayed during the war was evident throughout.

“Over and over again, forces from without and from within have sought to tear our nation down or dissolve it,” Garabedian said. “And over and over again patriots have responded with their goods, with their time and with their

very lives; we have persevered.”

Garabedian highlighted the history of Memorial Day, explaining that the holiday was originally called Decoration Day in 1868 to honor those who had served in the Civil War.

However, after the United States became involved in other conflicts, the day was expanded to “decorating the graves of those that had fought in all our wars,” Garabedian said.

He went on to articulate that the odds were not in the United States’ favor during WWI and at the beginning Germany had 100 divisions in comparison to the United States’ three.

“What did we have?” Garabedian said. “We had a population of 100 million people, more coal and iron production than all Europe combined, we had limitless fields of healthy grain, more railroad track laid than all of Europe. We had spunky people we had willing people ready to train – ready to serve, so we enlisted.”

He added that by November 1918 the United States had expanded its troops from 145,000 in May of that year to over two million – “all fresh, undefeated [and] spirited,” he exclaimed.

While Garabedian’s speech beamed with notes of positivity and victory, he did not forget to acknowledge those lost during WWI.

“We had to pay a price,” he said. “Over 230,000 suffered grievous wounds and over 50,000 of us will stay over there.”

A reading of those who died during the Civil War, WWI, WWII, the Vietnam War and Iraq War took place near the conclusion of the program with the well-known Taps – a bugle call heard at military funerals and flag ceremonies throughout the United States – closing out the entire day.

Taps, however, was not played on bugles, but instead on trumpets, by Bacon Academy band students Connor Groene and Abby Levine.

“We’ve laid the wreaths, we’ve placed the flags; we’ve planted the flowers. What more can we do?” Garabedian said. “You can look at those who today proudly wear our uniforms and those oldsters proudly wearing their hats of prior service – you can look them all right in the eye and say with all the sincerity in your heart, ‘thank you for serving.’”

Colchester Resident and History Buff Publishes Novel

by Allison Lazur

Tucked away in Colchester with his wife Terry and German Shepherd Cayenne is Brien Brown, a retired Bacon Academy social studies department head, geography teacher, Enfield administrator – and now, novelist.

Brown, who retired in 2012, wasted no time getting to work on publishing his first historical novel.

“I literally began writing the day after I retired,” he said.

But what led Brown to this literary accomplishment was a combination of his extensive history background and the discovery of author James Fenimore Cooper’s series, *The Leatherstocking Tales*.

Brown explained that during a vacation to Florida, he read a book about Americans who had moved to France by author David McCullough.

“One of the Americans who had moved to France during that time was James Fenimore Cooper,” Brown said. “So I went to a local, used bookstore and I bought a bunch of copies of James Fenimore Cooper’s books. I read them – I was fascinated by them.”

The protagonist in *The Leatherstocking Tales* is Nathaniel “Natty” Bumppo – a character that helped Brown come to an interesting conclusion.

He said the name ‘Bumppo’ sounded French

to him. “I didn’t know he was French,” he added. “But the more I thought about it, the more I realized I knew the answers.”

Those who write historical fiction spend hours and hours on research, said Brown, but “they are researching stuff that I know.” He added through chuckles that his experience teaching geography “comes in handy when writing historical fiction because I know what things actually look like.”

While the history aspect came easily for Brown, the writing took a bit more time to grasp, as the only published works under Brown’s belt were geography-related articles in magazines and professional journals.

“It took me six years [to complete the novel] from start to finish because I wasn’t an English teacher and I made an awful lot of mistakes,” Brown said. “But I gradually learned how to craft it – I took some courses and joined some writing groups [such as the Historical Novel Society] and little by little I polished the craft.”

Brown’s novel, *The Fourth Son*, is classified as historical fiction and tells the story of Jean-Marc, a French nobleman in the late 17th century. After Jean-Marc’s father dies and he realizes he was left out of the will, Jean-Marc heads to America to earn his fortune. Brown explains that Jean-Marc ends up stranded on the coast of Maine, sold into servi-

tude and bought by a Boston brewer. Jean-Marc eventually falls in love with another servant – who turns out to be the female lead in the story – and the two embark into a life of adventure and chaos.

The Fourth Son is projected to be just one of at least three books that will be written in order to tell the whole story, said Brown.

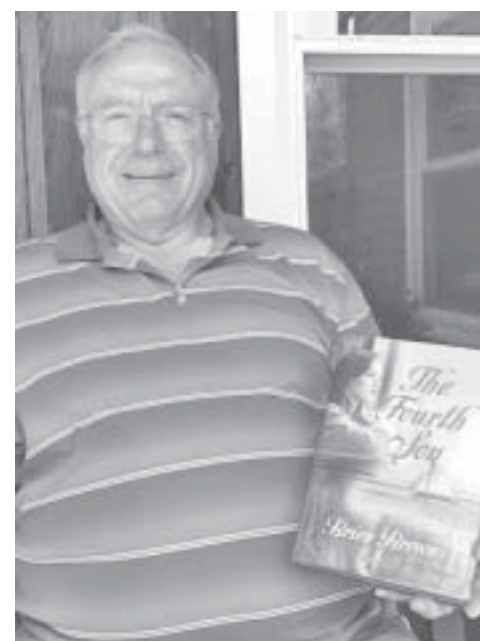
He revealed that he is already halfway done with the sequel, and hopes to complete it by the end of the year.

In addition to his 346-page book endeavor, Brown also has actively run an online history blog for the past few years, which focuses on “the history you didn’t learn in school,” he said. Brown added that the blog, dubbed “Brien’s Cool History Blog,” has covered topics such as the history of pastrami, ice cream and baseball. It can be found at brienbrown.net.

Although Brown worked with the publishing company BookLocker and a professional editor to produce his novel, he calls his wife Terry his “first critic.”

Terry – who was also present when the *Rivereast* met with Brown – disclosed that all four of their granddaughters are currently in the process of reading *The Fourth Son*, with one nearly finished.

Brown’s novel can be found at amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com or booklocker.com.



Colchester resident Brien Brown is pictured at his home with his first published novel in hand, *The Fourth Son*.

Marlborough's Fawn Brook Bridge Construction Expected to Begin in 2020

by Allison Lazur

A public forum was held Tuesday night by town planner Peter Hughes and town engineer Howard Pfrommer discussing the anticipated inconveniences that residents will experience when the Fawn Brook Bridge is closed for seven months in 2020.

"This is going to disrupt your lives," Hughes said at the start of the presentation.

He estimated 125 people will be impacted by the upcoming construction project, with those located near the south end of the bridge feeling the brunt of the project.

The bridge, which was constructed in 1920 and reconstructed in 1986, has been on the radar for repair by the Department of Transportation (DOT) since 2013 when the issues with the bridge were discovered.

Work is expected to begin in the spring of 2020, with a projected completion date that fall. Residents will be rerouted through parts of Colchester and Hebron on a seven mile detour, according to a slide show presented by Pfrommer.

Mail delivery, emergency vehicles, police and school buses all have the potential to be impacted by the construction.

Hughes told residents Colchester and Hebron have already agreed to offer mutual aid in emergency services during that time.

The new bridge will be longer and wider than the existing structure. The proposal includes a clear span increase from 24 feet to 50 feet and a curb to curb increase of 23 feet 6 inches to 28 feet, Pfrommer said.

He added that the steel bridge railing on the proposed bridge will satisfy federal crash regulations and will connect directly to the existing guardrail.

The bridge rail that currently exists is too short, he noted.

Pfrommer pointed out that there are also several areas of deterioration on the bridge including a hole in the downstream abutment, as well as exposure of a concrete curb that should be covered by steel – that has since rotted away.

DOT Project Manager Priti Bhardwaj explained that currently the bridge holds a condition rating of five.

Bhardwaj clarified that a rating of nine on the condition scale is considered excellent where zero is labeled as "imminent failure."

"We are in pretty bad shape," Bhardwaj said, adding that she doesn't believe the substructure could handle construction to one half of the bridge at a time because of its already weakened state.

The total cost of the bridge project is \$2.2 million – \$1.76 million from federal funds and \$440,000 funded by Marlborough.

Hughes explained that Marlborough's portion of the project has already been appropriated through tax dollars from the last three years.

Of the 60 residents who attended the public forum, everyone that spoke expressed their displeasure with the undertaking.

Resident Todd Barry explained that police have incorrectly arrived at his Paper Mill Road home on several occasions when they were supposed to be on Paper Mill Road in Hebron. Barry was concerned the confusion would worsen once construction begins.

"I understand that [we have mutual aid] but mutual aid can't find us regularly," Barry said.

Hughes assured Barry that there would be extensive communication between mutual aid, the police, the post office and school buses to ensure the best possible outcome, prior to the start of construction.

Resident Cathy Barry also pushed for answers and wanted to know the rationale behind closing the entire bridge.

"I think a study needs to be done to see how much more time it will take to do it just one lane at a time – is that possible?" she said.

Several other residents supported the idea of isolating the closure to no more than one lane at any given time.

However, Bhardwaj explained that if that was a possibility, it would increase the overall time length of the project.

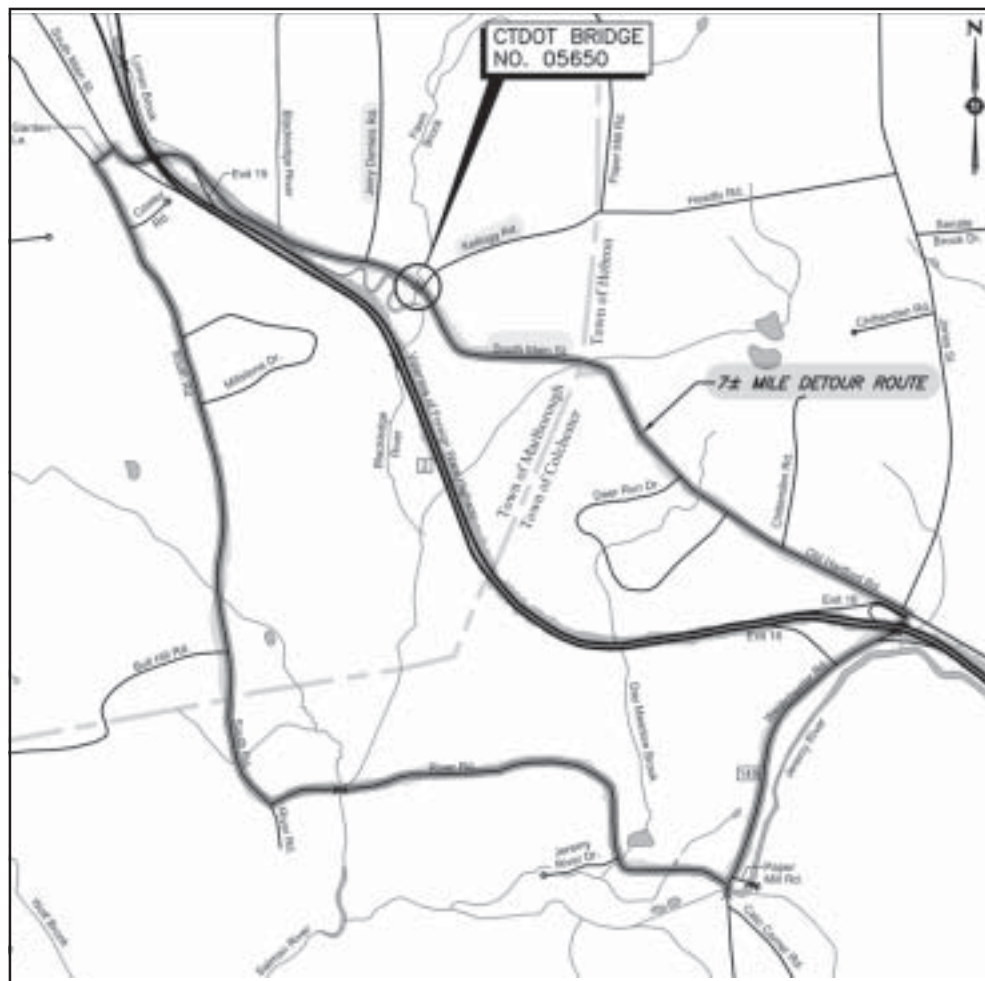
"You get in and get out as quickly as you can," she said.

While most of the concerns involved strictly residential issues, residents Erik Young and Richard Zacher explained that their businesses would suffer during the construction period.

Zacher pointed out that his business involves moving timber from his residence on Paper Mill Road to his business on Jerry Daniels Road.

"Seven miles on a tractor, in the winter is not going to work. I'm going to lose income," he said.

Young, who said he owns a business in town, explained that he travels down South Main Street "sometimes up to six times a day" and pushed for a feasibility study to see if keeping



The above map indicates the projected detour route once construction on the Fawn Brook Bridge commences. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2020 and will take approximately seven months to complete. During that time, South Main Street will be closed to through traffic at the intersection of South Main Street with Kellogg Road and Jerry Daniels Road.

a lane of the bridge open during construction would be possible.

Resident Sharon Reiner said "I am really concerned by neighbors on Kellogg and Paper Mill being cut off effectively from Marlborough."

She went on to add that she would like to see "a little more thought" put into how emergency services will specifically hand the detour.

"I want to hear exactly what would happen if you pick a [house] number on Paper Mill

Road and call 911," Reiner said.

First Selectman Amy Traversa – who was also in attendance of the forum as an audience member – offered her remarks.

"We are going to have the answers to all your questions," she said.

In regard to the overall bridge project, Traversa stated "It's not something we chose to do – it's something we don't have an option but to do."

Vehicle Collides with Multiple Mailboxes in Hebron

State Police said an unknown vehicle collided with multiple mailboxes and a town street sign last Thursday.

At approximately 4:23 p.m., the unknown vehicle was traveling south on Hillcrest Drive, approximately 200 feet South of Lake Road. In an attempt to negotiate a curve, the vehicle

traveled off the right side of the road and collided with multiple mailboxes, as well as a town of Hebron street sign, police said.

The driver evaded the scene and anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact Trooper Kowalczyk 1293 at 860-465-5400 ext. 4052.

Motorcycle Collides with Vehicle, Leaves One with Minor Injuries in Marlborough

State Police said a collision last Thursday left one motorcyclist with minor injuries.

At approximately 12:28 p.m., a Subaru Forester driven by Pamela M. Feldman, 66, of 33 School Rd., Bolton, was traveling west on Route 66, waiting to turn left onto Mill Landing when a Harley Davidson, driven by Kevin E. Ringrose, 26, of 19 N. Main St., Marlborough, passed two vehicles on the left and sub-

sequently struck the Subaru on the front driver's side.

Police said Ringrose who was not wearing a helmet, sustained minor injuries and was transported to Hartford Hospital by the Hebron Fire Department.

Ringrose was found at fault for improper passing and issued an infraction, police said.

Andover Spending Plan Goes Back to Voters a Little Leaner

by Sloan Brewster

Voters on Tuesday agreed to send an \$11.18 million budget request to referendum.

The vote will be held Tuesday, June 12, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the community room in Town Hall.

After the budget failed at its first referendum on May 22, the Board of Finance tweaked the numbers yet again, bringing them down to \$558,129, or 9.75 percent, below the current year's budget. The numbers represent a mill rate increase of 4.5 percent, bringing the mill rate to 33.95, or 1.45 mills, above the current year.

In the most recent annual town meeting – the third this budget season – 49 people said yes to the budget request and 18 said no.

Before the vote, Warren presented the numbers and explained the two changes the finance board made after the referendum failed.

The first cut – \$40,000 from the education board's budget – reflects changes in staffing that are going to take place "no matter what," he said. There have been two retirements and the

plan is to fill the spaces with part time staff.

The finance board came up with the \$40,000 reduction in consultation with Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen, Warren said in a phone call last week. Doyen informed the board about the retirements, which took place after the education board adopted its budget.

The education board's initial \$4.19 million budget proposal reflected an \$80,000, or 1.89 percent, reduction from the current year's \$4.27 million budget.

The finance board also took the Long Hill Ball Field track improvements out of the operating budget and is instead proposing to take the \$20,000 from the non-recurring capital improvement account, a reserve fund, Warren said.

The fixes will prevent the track from washing onto the field and damaging field, Warren said.

In response to a question from the audience about what is in the Capital Improvement Plan budget, Warren highlighted the five line items

that comprise the \$50,000 total capital budget.

A storage shed for the fire department accounts for \$10,000 of the capital budget. Another \$10,000 is for the next revaluation, \$5,000 is set aside for the next Plan of Conservation and Development, \$10,000 is for a new roof on the old town hall and \$15,000 is for repairs to the gym at Andover Elementary School.

When someone from the audience stood up and asked what was wrong with the gym, Doyen took the mic to explain that while some bleachers have already been replaced, there are more to go. The backboards, which have been repaired in the meantime, also need to be replaced for safety reasons.

"All the backboards are from the original construction," she said. "We had breakage in both the backboard stations."

Leigh Ann Hutchinson asked why the account for the treasurer had jumped by about \$29,000 since last year to nearly \$98,000.

First Selectman Robert Burbank answered

that one.

The town has been without a treasurer for some time and the books are not up to state standards, he said. The plan is to replace the part-time position with a full timer.

"We're basically starting at zero," he said. "What we're trying to do is get our accounting system in order to follow state standards."

Through the course of the budget season, several budget proposals have been rejected and then changed per resident requests. A proposal by the finance board to cut funding for the resident state trooper was subsequently reinstated, while a plan to spend \$100,000 for concession and bathroom improvements at Long Hill was scrapped.

In response to public outcry about losing the trooper, the board put \$187,000 in funding back into the budget to cover the position. Voters themselves cut the funding for the concession and bathroom improvements at the town meeting on May 17.

Andover Native to Talk About FBI Book

by Sloan Brewster

Andover native David Howard's book, *Chasing Phil: The Adventures of Two Undercover Agents with the World's Most Charming Con Man*, is headed to the big screen – and Howard is returning to his hometown next week to talk about it.

The movie is currently in development at Warner Bros., slated to star Robert Downey Jr.

Team Downey, the production company based at Warner Brothers that was founded by Robert Downey Jr. and his wife Susan Downey, optioned the book for a movie in 2015, before it was even written and was still just a proposal, Howard said in a phone call to the *RiverEast* this week. The book was published in October 2017.

Downey will produce the flick with his wife and star as con artist Phil Kitzer, who died in 2001. While he doesn't know when filming will start, Howard said, the screenplay was finished and the financing has been secured.

Howard, who is a journalist, was a reporter with the *Register Citizen* in Torrington and the *Republican-American* in Waterbury. He has also written for the *New York Times*. He left daily news in the mid-1990s and currently writes for magazines; he's written for *Men's Journal*, *Outside*, *Bicycling*, *Travel + Leisure*, and more. He has lived in Emmaus, Pa., for the past 14 years.

Chasing Phil, Howard's second book, is a nonfiction account of the FBI's mid-1970s undercover operation to take down Kitzer.

Kitzer was a high-finance con artist who opened phony banks all over the world, Howard said. The banks existed on paper but there was no money. Kitzer would print securities, such as cashier's checks and certificates of deposit.

"[They were] things that looked like they were worth a lot of money but were absolutely valueless," Howard said.

Kitzer used the fake documents to swindle people out of millions of dollars. His victims included high-profile players such as Elvis Presley's father and Jimmy Keoloha, former lieutenant governor of Hawaii.

"He was playing this game at the highest level and he was a very entertaining character, he was one of these guys who could just talk you into a spell," Howard said. "His oratory gifts were kind of unique."

While Kitzer was the mastermind, he had a contingent of people around the world who played bit parts in the schemes.

"They would play appraisers, lawyers, bankers," Howard said. "It was this elaborate plot to fool people into giving them money."

The book grew out of Howard's first book, *Lost Rights*, which came out in 2010. *Lost Rights*, which is also nonfiction, is about an original copy of the Bill of Rights that had been

missing since the Civil War and ended up in the procession of antiques dealer Wayne Pratt, of Woodbury, Howard said. In 2003, Pratt was trying to sell the document, until the sale was halted by the FBI

In researching the book, Howard was connected with FBI agents and ultimately introduced to Jim Wedick and Jack Brennan, who were on the sting that led to Kitzer's arrest.

"Yes, I was there," Wedick said in a phone call to the *RiverEast* Wednesday. "I mean it was pretty interesting."

Wedick, who became an agent in 1973 and retired in 2004, was investigating bank robbers in Gary, Ind., at the time the operation was conceived, and said he didn't want the case.

"If you read the book you'll see it wasn't something I wanted to do," he said. "I wasn't interested in organized crime, white collar crime, [or] undercover work."

Brennan, who worked in the same office as Wedick, thought it would be an interesting case.

The more Wedick thought about it, the more he realized that, in the back of his mind, he actually had a hankering for undercover work, so he agreed.

"I thought it would be one case, get in, do a short undercover op, it would be something I could put on a résumé," Wedick said.

It didn't turn out that way, however.

Wedick and Brennan spent eight months undercover with Kitzer, who thought they were "prodigies ... young and upcoming con men... fresh faces" learning the business from a pro, Howard said.

"They had something to offer because [Kitzer] was looking for someone to front the banks so he could fade into the background," Howard said, explaining that Kitzer was becoming recognizable. "They had all these crazy adventures with him – traveling to Hawaii, the Bahamas and Japan and Germany – and after a certain amount of time the FBI decided it was time to shut the thing down."

In the months they spent with the dynamic Kitzer, the agents grew close with him, Howard and Wedick said. Confronting him and telling him who they really were was difficult.

"It's a very kind of moving scene," Howard said.

The book is about the relationship between the three men, according to Wedick.

"It's not just an undercover operation, and we did this guy dirty," he said. "It's that relationship [that] the book is about. It's not a cops and robbers story, it's about this relationship between us and a bad guy that we ended taking on and all of our lives changed."

After Kitzer was arrested, he agreed to be a witness.

"He could have had life in prison, instead he plead guilty, became a government witness and



Andover native David Howard, who currently lives in Pennsylvania, will return to his hometown next week to talk about his book *Chasing Phil* – which is being turned into a movie starring Robert Downey Jr.

was very, very effective," Howard said. "Everybody else got convicted."

Kitzer was sentenced to 10 years, but got out in about three years for cooperation, Howard said.

When Kitzer got out of prison, he started working with the FBI. Initially, he gave talks to different FBI offices about financial fraud. Eventually, he started working with Wedick and Brennan to snuff out drug rings.

"Years later, in 1985, he and I are working undercover again and that's how the book ends," Wedick said.

Kitzer's story is about renewal and, according to Wedick, resembles Downey's story. Downey enjoyed much success in his earlier acting years, then experienced a period of substance abuse before bouncing back – and is now one of Hollywood's A-list actors.

Downey "was traveling high and then kind of crashed a little bit, then resurrected himself," Wedick said. "Kitzer, he got 10 years, comes back resurrects himself."

Howard, who began research in 2014, said he interviewed Wedick and Brennan and read through between 5,000 and 6,000 pages of court transcripts.

"I spent hours on the phone with him for about six months," Wedick said.

During one of those calls, Wedick asked Howard if he was ever going to get to writing. Howard wrote up a proposal and Crown Publishing was interested.

Wedick said he has read the book a number of times and helped Howard fact-check.

"I think he got my character right, I think he got Jack's character right and I think he got

Kitzer [right]," Wedick said.

The book was published by Crown and released in hardcover in October 2017. The softcover version will come out on Aug. 7.

According to Scott Berg, who reviewed it for the *Washington Post*, the book has depth.

"Underneath all the boozy good humor of the book's action, something profound lingers – about the ease with which Kitzer can treat all the world as one great mark and the way Wedick and Brennan can pretend to see it in the same fashion," Berg wrote. "In fact, the book's biggest achievement is that its honest people – Wedick and Brennan – are made as human as their quarry, in many ways more so: more uncertain, more prone to error, so easily impressed by the world of financial chicanery and easy bonhomie through which Kitzer guides them."

Tim Norton, who reviewed it for the *Providence Journal*, said the book was a page-turner.

"Howard's research is rock solid but his ability to spin a yarn, truthful though it is, will keep you flipping the pages for hours at a time," Norton wrote. "Kitzer's appeal is enough to make the Junior G Men feel conflicted about finally springing their trap, but the fruits of the agents' work are rich enough to convince the bureau to commit to covert investigations as part of the FBI toolkit going forward."

Howard will give his talk at the Andover Public Library – where he said he spent a lot of time as a kid – on Tuesday, June 5, from 7 to 8 p.m.

He will tell the story of the book and give a slideshow with artifacts including bank papers.

Both his books will be on sale and Howard will be on hand to sign them.

East Hampton Police News

5/14: Patrick McGuigan, 47, of 26 Walnut Ave., was issued a summons for operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, East Hampton Police said.

5/17: Ryan Hubeny, 30, of 21 Birchwood Dr., was arrested and charged with DUI, failure to drive right and traveling unreasonably fast, police said.

5/21: Brandon Yon, 25, of 98 Middletown Ave., was taken in to custody pursuant to two separate warrants, each for first-degree failure to appear, police said.

From May 14-20, officers responded to 15 medical calls, four motor vehicle crashes and 10 alarms, and made 10 traffic stops.

Hebron Police News

5/23: State Police said Christopher Peters, 22, of 168 Boston Tpke., Apt. D, Bolton, was arrested and charged with third-degree burglary, possession of burglar tools and third-degree criminal mischief from a burglary incident dating back to February.

5/26: State Police said Clinton M. Leblanc, 46, of 27 Wildwood Dr., Columbia, was arrested and charged with DUI.

Marlborough Police News

5/22: State Police said Bernard L. Wagner, 41, of 37 Senate Brook Dr., Hebron, was arrested and charged with operating a vehicle with a suspended license, reckless driving over 85 mph, disobeying signal of an officer and failure to drive in proper lane.

Andover Police News

5/22: State Police said Timothy R. Whitehead, 28, of 8 Kingsley Dr., was arrested and charged with DUI and operating a vehicle with a suspended license.

Car Goes Airborne in Marlborough

State Police said last Friday, May 25, a man lost control of his vehicle, resulting in possible injuries.

At approximately 5:41 a.m. a Subaru Impreza, driven by Benjamin G. Dowding, 29, of 72 Chaffee Rd., Stafford Springs, was traveling eastbound in the left lane of Route 2, west of exit 12.

Dowding lost control of his vehicle and the Subaru veered to the left of the roadway, striking the curb and becoming airborne. The vehicle subsequently traveled up the embankment, hit the ground, did a half roll and came to a final stop in the grassy area of the center median.

Police said Dowding had possible injuries and was transported to Marlborough Clinic by Marlborough EMS.

Building Tools Stolen in Colchester

Colchester Police said a building contractor had the locks cut on his tool trailer and several thousand dollars' worth of tools stolen last Thursday.

According to police, the incident took place during the overnight hours between May 23 and May 24.

The trailer was located on the building lot in a development off of Route 16 and Highland Farms Drive.

Police said approximately \$10,000 worth of building tools was stolen and the case is currently under investigation.

Colchester Police News

5/23: State Police said Andrew M. Pariseau, 27, of 80 Bausola Rd., Andover, was arrested and charged with DUI and improper turns.

5/24: Colchester Police said Tim P. Sabo, 62, of 18 Hillcrest Dr., Amston, was arrested and charged with DUI and improper turns/failure to properly stop.

5/25: State Police said Justin Damicol, 21, of 70 Rte. 87, Andover, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

5/27: Colchester Police said Tanner M. Parker, 18, of 7 School Rd. Apt. 2, was arrested and charged with violating a restraining order.

5/27: State Police said Michael Green, 31, of 374 Leonard Rd., Stafford Springs, was arrested and charged with criminal impersonation, second-degree forgery and resisting arrest.

Green was also arrested the day before in East Haddam for operating a vehicle with a suspended license, speeding greater than 60 mph, DUI and failure to drive right.

During the East Haddam arrest, Green presented himself as another person and signed legal documents in the other person's name, police said.

Obituaries

Hebron

Anna D. Pate

Anna D. (Hallenbeck) Pate, 93, wife of George R. Pate, passed away peacefully Wednesday, May 23, at Marlborough Health Care Center. She was born Aug. 30, 1924, in Longmeadow, Mass., the daughter of the late Olive (Chapman) and Joseph Hallenbeck.

Anna lost her mother at an early age, and grew up in Glastonbury, raised by her grandparents in the family home now known as the Welles-Chapman Tavern. She met her husband during World War II on a blind date at Crescent Beach while he was stationed at the Groton Sub Base, and they were married in 1946. Their first home was in Manchester; then they resided in Windham for many years before moving to Hebron in 2001.

Anna enjoyed antiquing and decorating her home with her finds. She had an encyclopedic knowledge of antiques and collectibles, grew beautiful gardens, and was a wonderful cook. A special joy to her was time spent with family, especially her four grandchildren, watching them grow and celebrating their accomplishments. Anna was a member of Gilead Congregational Church.

In addition to her husband of 71 years, Anna is survived by her son, John Pate and his wife Fearn; her daughter, Laurie Larsen and her husband Donald; her grandchildren, Megan Poske and her husband Charles, John Pate and his wife, Nathalie, Lindsay Larsen and Melissa Larsen. She was predeceased by an infant daughter, Melinda.

A memorial service to celebrate Anna's life will be held today, June 1, at 10 a.m., at Gilead Congregational Church, 672 Gilead St., Hebron. Family will receive friends following the service, and all are invited to stay for a light lunch hosted by the Gilead Church Women's Fellowship.

Those wishing to make a donation in her memory may do so to the Gilead Congregational Church Memorial Fund, 672 Gilead St., Hebron, CT 06248.

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

Colchester

Carole Ann Schweitzer

Carole Ann Schweitzer, 74, of Colchester, formerly of Ledyard, passed away at home Thursday, May 24. She was a daughter of the late Joseph and Mildred (Dellisant) Mitchell. Born Jan. 2, 1944, in Allentown, Pa., she grew up in Bethlehem, where she attended school.

Carole met and married her beloved husband David J. Schweitzer Sr. in 1969. The couple moved to Connecticut where they made their home and raised their family in the town of Ledyard. He predeceased her Sept. 1, 1997.

Carole had an in-home daycare for many years and later worked at a children's consignment store in Montville. In recent years, Carole made her home with her son David and his children in Colchester. She was a talented crafter, especially with crocheting and wreath making. Most importantly, she will be remembered as a caring, open and friendly person to everyone she met, fiercely devoted to her family, and lovingly adoring to all her grandchildren.

She will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by her children and their spouses, David Schweitzer and his wife Kate Biddle, Stacey and her husband Dr. James Clay of Dallas Ore.; two brothers, Joseph Mitchell of Effort, Pa., Robert Mitchell of Corvallis, Ore.; a sister, Sue Kish of Philomath, Ore.; four grandchildren, Italy, Mathias, Emilia and Max; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her husband and parents, she was predeceased by a sister, Gloria Feist.

Calling hours were held Wednesday, May 30, at the Connell Funeral Home, 245 East Broad St., Bethlehem, Pa. The funeral assembled at the funeral home Thursday, May 31, with a Mass of Christian Burial following in the Notre Dame Church in Bethlehem. Burial is in the Sacred Heart Church Cemetery, 210 E. Northampton St., Bath, Pa., where she will be laid to rest with her beloved husband, David.

Donations in her memory may be made to the church.

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

Marlborough

Dennis Bennett

Dennis Bennett, 75, a longtime resident of Marlborough, passed away suddenly Thursday, May 10, at his home in Jackman, Maine.

Dennis leaves behind his beloved and devoted wife Carol, his son Danny and his wife Jenny of Colchester. He was the proud grandfather of three outstanding grandsons: Deron Bennett of Manhattan, N.Y., Jack Bennett of Colchester, and Zack Hill, also of Colchester.

Dennis grew up in Jackman, Maine. He attended local schools and graduated from high school there, where he played basketball and baseball. Dennis was the son of the late Raymond Bennett and Dorothy Gilman Bennett.

Dennis and Carol raised their son in Marlborough, but retired and moved back to Jackman, Maine, over 20 years ago.

Dennis truly enjoyed the outdoors, hunting and fishing or just riding along old logging roads. He possessed a wealth of knowledge about backwoods ponds, mountains, streams, old growth forests and cedar swamps. He loved his Red Sox, Celtics and New York Giants and was a big prize-fighting fan. He could share tales of the old west and the stories behind many old country songs. All that knew him will miss his dry sense of humor and compassion for others.

Dennis adored his hometown of Jackman, Maine; its natural beauty and the people who made it their home. Above all, he loved his family, and just being with them was his favorite pastime.

In Jackman, he leaves behind his brother-in-law, Adrian Thibodeau; sisters-in-law, Dot Harmon; and Terry Crawford and her husband Laney. He was a loving brother and predeceased by his sister, Joyce Thibodeau, his brothers, Raymond Bennett Jr. and Mark Bennett, all of Jackman.

Brothers-in-law James Harmon of Jackman and Donald Feliciano of Orange also predeceased him.

He also leaves behind sisters Rebecca DeMario and her husband Joseph of Rhode Island and Debra Dytko and her husband Paul of Salem, as well as brother-in-law Michael Feliciano and his wife Lisa of New London. Dennis was a caring uncle to many nieces and nephews who reside in Connecticut, Rhode Island and Maine.

Dennis will return to the family camp along the banks of the Penobscot River. If you are so lucky to be on that mighty river, know that his spirit will be with you.

At his request, there will be no services. However, family and friends may make a donation to the Jackman Historical Society and Museum in his name at P.O. Box 875, Jackman, ME 04945.

From courat

Portland

Charlotte Whitmore

Charlotte Theodora Whitmore, 99, of Wellwyn Drive, Portland, died Monday, May 28, at the Portland Care and Rehab Center. She was born July 31, 1918, in East Hartford and was the daughter of the late Theodore and Tekla (Hagstrom) Isaacson.

Charlotte had been a resident of Portland most of her life and was a very active member of her community. She was a member of the First Congregational Church in Portland as well as their Woman's Club, a member of the VFW Auxiliary Post 5095 of East Hampton, the American Legion Post 64 of East Hampton and the Lutheran Church Quilting Club of Portland, a volunteer leader for the sick at Middlesex Hospital, and a member of the Portland High School Band Booster Club. Charlotte attended the Pratt Art Institute in New York City. She also obtained her Senior Life Saving Certificate at the age of 55 as well as receiving her GED at the age of 54. Charlotte was a prolific writer and artist, a seamstress for a dance company, and was an avid Red Sox fan for 91 years.

Charlotte is survived by her loving family: a son, Larry (Earle) and daughter-in-law Busadee Whitmore of Portland; two daughters, Nancy Charlotte Cramer of South Lyme and Shirley Hannan of Kissimmee, Fla.; eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, as well as several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by two sons-in-law: Robert Jonathan Cramer, and Joseph Michael Hannan Sr.

The funeral will be held today, June 1, at 10 a.m., in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Pastor Jane Hawken will be officiating services. Burial will be in the family plot in the Swedish Cemetery, Portland. Friends called at the funeral home Thursday evening, May 31.

From courat

Cobalt

Ethel L. Harrison

Ethel L. McLain Harrison, 79, of Vernon, formerly of Cobalt, beloved wife of the late William J. Harrison Sr., passed away peacefully Saturday, May 19, after a brief but courageous battle with lung cancer.

Ethel was born June 22, 1938, in Hartford, the daughter of late Albert G. and Dorothy L. Colvin McLain. Her mother passed away when Ethel was only seven months old. She and her father then lived with his sister Catherine and her husband, Michael Kowalchik, in Elmwood. Catherine and Michael would have two children, Carol (1940) and Michael Jr. (1942), who were considered siblings. In 1949, the family moved to Cobalt. Ethel graduated from East Hampton High School in 1956 and later from the University of Connecticut in 1960. She was employed as a social worker for the State of Connecticut from 1960 to 1966.

In 1964, Ethel married the love of her life, William J. Harrison. They lived in East Hartford until moving to Vernon in November 1966. In that same year, she became a stay-at-home mother, going on to raise six children. Ethel was an avid fan of the New York Yankees, New England Patriots and UConn Huskies. She enjoyed watching and playing with her grandchildren. In particular, she loved watching them play baseball and soccer, and she attended all of their school concerts and shows.

Ethel enjoyed reading books and her weekly visits to Rockville Public Library. She loved playing "Words with Friends," gardening, baking, and cooking. Ethel was a member of the First Congregational Church of Vernon since 1970.

Besides her parents and husband, she was predeceased by her sister, Carol K. Johnson. Ethel leaves behind her six children, William Jr. and wife Carol of New Jersey, Mark of North Carolina, Scott and wife Jill, of South Windsor, Todd and wife, Lisbeth, of Vernon, Jeffrey and wife, Jessie, of New Hampshire, and Megan and husband, Dru Brock, of California. She also leaves seven grandchildren, Emily, Tristan, Rielly, Liam, McKenzie, Sarah and Lilian. She also leaves her brother, Michael and wife Connie, in Florida. She also leaves many cousins, nieces, and nephews. Her family will always cherish the memories of family birthdays and holiday gatherings.

Calling hours were Thursday, May 24, and a memorial celebration followed immediately after at 7 p.m. at the Ladd-Turkington & Carmon Funeral Home, 551 Talcottville Road (Route 83), Vernon. Family and friends gathered following the celebration at 19 Blue Ridge Drive, Vernon.

Donations in her memory can be made to the Rockville Public Library.

For online condolences and guest book, visit carmonfuneralhome.com.

Courant

Portland

Olga Culver

Olga (von Grotten) Culver, 97, of Middletown, wife of the late Robert Harris Culver, passed away Tuesday, May 22, at Portland Care and Rehab in Portland. Born in Berlin, Germany, Nov. 3, 1920, she was the daughter of the late Baron Paul and Baroness Alexandra (Bibikov) von Grotten.

Olga lived most of her life in the Boston area, moving to Old Lyme and then Middletown in 2008. She was a loving and beloved mother and grandmother. A longtime member of the College Club in Boston, she had a great interest in architecture and antiques and loved to waltz. She was also an accomplished seamstress.

She is survived by two daughters, Alexandra Adelstein and her husband Richard of Middletown, Louise Culver and her husband, Jeffrey Hurwitz of Merion Station, Pa.; a sister-in-law, Dorothy Benson of Alpharetta, Ga.; a cousin, Marie Voirin of France; three grandchildren, Rachel Adelstein, Katharine Adelstein and her husband Tyler Fleming, and Nathaniel Hurwitz.

Besides her husband and parents, she is predeceased by a grandson, Ethan Hurwitz.

Funeral services and interment are private and at the convenience of the family. There will be no calling hours and in lieu of flowers, donations in Olga's memory may be made to Alzheimer's Association Connecticut Chapter, 200 Executive Boulevard, Southington, CT 06489-1058 or Middlesex Hospice and Palliative Care, c/o Development Office, 28 Crescent Street, Middletown, CT 06457.

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

East Hampton

David Vetrano

David Vetrano, 55, of Middletown, formerly of East Hampton, entered into eternal rest Sunday, Dec. 10, 2017, at the Middlesex Hospital following a brief illness. David was born June 5, 1962 at St. Frances Hospital in Hartford to John F. Vetrano and the late Maureen Broderick Vetrano.

He was a graduate of East Hampton High School, and lived in town until 1996.

He is dearly missed and loved by his father, John and step-mother Madelyn Vetrano of New Port Richey, Fla.; two children, daughter Vanessa Vetrano and son Daniel Vetrano of Middletown; and his former wife Kathryn Vetrano of Middletown.

Friends and family are invited to attend a memorial service celebrating his life Saturday, June 2, from 1-4 p.m., at the Mason Lodge, 991 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury. The memorial will also be celebrating the life of his late uncle, Roch Audet of Simsbury. Burial will be held at a later date.



From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Two months ago, I wrote about the ABC reboot of *Roseanne*, and said I hoped people would judge it based on the quality of the show and not the political leanings of star Roseanne Barr.

Whether viewers did that or not is anyone's guess, but one thing's sure: they tuned in. Nielsen ratings continued to be gigantic, and it ended the season as the number-one rated show on television. Not surprisingly, the show was renewed for a 13-episode second season, ABC built its Tuesday night around the series, and all seemed right with the world.

But then *Roseanne*, the actress, went too far.

In the wee small hours of Tuesday morning this week, Barr tweeted out a racist joke attacking Valerie Jarrett, who was senior advisor to President Obama throughout his presidency. Jarrett, who is black, is what would happen if the "muslim brotherhood & planet of the apes had a baby," Barr wrote.

Barr has written many, many dumb things on her Twitter in recent years. She's attacked survivors of school shootings. She's peddled absurd, disproven right-wing conspiracy theories. I could go on. But this time around, Barr stooped straight to racism – particularly cruel racism at that. Saying black people look like apes is looked down upon, to put it mildly.

Though Barr later said it was a stupid joke and deleted the tweet, the damage had been done. Screenshots existed, spread like wildfire throughout the Internet, and reaction from many throughout the news and entertainment industries was quick – and, not surprisingly, very harsh.

In the early afternoon, ABC made the shocking announcement that it was canceling *Roseanne* altogether.

It was morally the right thing to do. Barr could try to spin it all she wanted, but the tweet was racist, and repercussions were already being felt. Crew members were quitting the show, ABC boycotts were being proposed, and as Tuesday progressed you just had the feeling things were going to pick up even more steam.

But I am shocked ABC canceled the show. As I said, it was the highest-rated series on television. The network was making many, many millions of dollars off of it. Had it been lower-rated, barely a renewal anyway, I think it would've been a goner. But this was a massive hit. I'm genuinely surprised ABC threw away all that potential advertising money – even if they were, like I said, making what was morally the right move in deciding it didn't want to be in business with Roseanne Barr any longer.

I'm a little surprised ABC didn't consider simply replacing Barr on the show and continuing it without her – a *Roseanne's Family*, if you will. But maybe they felt it was too late for that; that Barr was too intertwined with the public's perception of the show to separate the two.

And just like that, an early-morning tweet brought down what had been the most successful TV comedy in several years. Episodes of the new series were quickly removed from abc.com as well as Hulu. Even the original '90s *Roseanne* series didn't escape unscathed.

The various cable outlets that had been re-running the show announced they were dropping it.

Still, while I do feel badly for the other cast members and crew members on that show, ABC sent a pretty strong, and pretty great, message here – that racism is abhorrent and won't be tolerated.

* * *

I came across an interesting notice the other day. Aspen Dental is offering a day of free dental care for veterans across the country.

On Saturday, June 9, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., dentists at more than 300 Aspen Dental practices in 31 states will offer a day of free dental care to thousands of veterans.

While there are no Aspen Dental offices in the *Rivereast* towns, there are several in the state – including a practice in Glastonbury. Local veterans can sign up by calling 1-844-277-3646 to schedule an appointment in advance. Appointments are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

* * *

Lastly, congratulations are in order for *Rivereast* reporter/assistant editor Elizabeth Regan. Last week, the Connecticut Society of Professional Journalists announced the winners of its 2017 Excellence in Journalism awards – and, as was the case last year, Elizabeth collected a few.

Under the "Continuing Coverage" category, Elizabeth won second place in the Hyperlocal division for her ongoing coverage of the fire at St. Clements Castle. She also took second place in the Hyperlocal division of the "Investigative" category, for her story "Complaints Arise Over Selectman's Sand Pit," which appeared in the April 28, 2017 *Rivereast*.

Elizabeth also won two first-place awards – and for those who win first place, the judges' written comments are published explaining their choice. In the "In-Depth" category, in the Hyperlocal division, she won first place for her Jan. 27, 2017 cover story "'Embarassing' Conditions Frustrate Belltown Police." The judges wrote the article contained "excellent visual details and explanations of the problem and the political dynamics into finding a solution."

Elizabeth's other top winner came when she took first place in the "Government" category, in the Hyperlocal division, for her Dec. 15, 2017 cover story "How Many Voted for Belltown Hub?" For this one, the judges wrote, "Elizabeth Regan asked the right questions when a recount revealed mistakes in the original vote tally, and refused to take no for an answer when she requested important records. She demonstrated excellent reporting and follow-through."

High praise – and very much deserved. Week in and week out, Elizabeth does a fantastic job. I'm very fortunate to have her on staff – just as Portland and East Hampton residents are very fortunate to have her covering their towns.

Congratulations on the well-earned recognition, Elizabeth!

* * *

See you next week.