

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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**Wheel of Fortune** contestant Suzanne Larson, of Portland, won \$18,748 and a French river cruise during an October taping of the 35-year-old syndicated game show. The Secret Santa-themed episode aired Dec. 21. Photo courtesy of Sony Pictures Entertainment.

## Portland Woman Takes Spin on *Wheel*

by Elizabeth Regan

Suzanne Larson had a simple goal when she landed in California for an appearance on *Wheel of Fortune*: To win at least enough to cover the cost of her plane trip and hotel room.

"Just the experience itself is the prize," the 64-year-old Portland resident said this week. "That's a winning situation."

Larson got that and then some when she correctly deciphered word puzzles like "It's Too Early to Tell," "Elves in Santa's Workshop" and "A Remarkable River Cruise" to bring home \$18,748 in cash and a French cruise from Paris to Normandy valued at \$11,398. The show was taped on Oct. 26.

Though it was a third-grade teacher from Van Lear, Ky., who made the "Final Spin" round reserved for victors, Larson's grand total was enough to cover the trip and associated gift taxes.

"There's no out-of-pocket expense," she said.

The Dec. 21 airing of the episode put an end to months of secrecy every contestant must sign off on through a non-disclosure agreement. Leaking the outcome of the show before it aired could have resulted in forfeiture of her prizes, she said.

Even her husband of 31 years, Dave – who did not attend the taping – had no idea how Larson fared until he saw the game play out on the couple's television screen alongside about 20 other family members and friends.

"He found out like the entire world: by watching it," Larson said.

Her sister Carol Foell, of Florida, was the only one in Larson's circle who knew the outcome in advance. That's because Foell accompanied Larson for the taping and several days of Hollywood sightseeing on the other coast. They'll pair up next fall for the French river

cruise, too.

"My husband doesn't want to join me. It's not his cup of tea, and I understand that. So I invited my sister. She had to keep quiet for six weeks along with me, so she earned it," Larson said.

Larson, whose maiden name is Sciacca, grew up with three siblings in a friendly, competitive household dominated by games like *Scrabble* and *Trivial Pursuit*.

"We loved the games. We loved being challenged. We loved seeing if we could outdo each other," she said.

With the exception of the Larson's youngest sister, the Sciacca kids were all graduates of Portland High School. The family subsequently moved to Cromwell, where Larson stayed for about 35 years before returning to Portland earlier this year.

While her siblings have grown up to try out for game shows like *The Price is Right*, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* and even *The Apprentice*, Larson is the first to make it onto the screen.

She recounted responding to an online call for applicants in July; within two weeks, she received an email inviting her to a casting call at Foxwoods Resort Casino in Mashantucket. She made it through a round of 100 hopeful contestants and another round of 25 before earning a spot on the show.

According to Larson, the most surprising aspect of the experience was the size of the studio.

"Watching it on TV, it looks like this massive room – and it's not at all," she said.

The long walk that host Pat Sajak and hostess Vanna White appear to take in the beginning of the show.

See Woman Takes Spin page 2

## Area Pair Spreads Christmas Cheer Across State

by Sloan Brewster

Norm Ward of Portland and Dianne Grenier of Andover had a very busy and productive holiday season and are working on plans for 2019.

And while the same can likely be said for many in *Rivereast*-land, not everyone stays busy while touring the state as Santa and Mrs. Claus, respectively.

Ward and Grenier have been playing the seasonal roles together since 2006 – though they do not limit the fun to Christmas time.

Out-of-season appearances include the Memorial Day Parade in South Windsor and "Christmas in July" festivities with the Hartford Yard Goats at Dunkin' Donuts Park.

The pair – who Grenier describes as married but not to each other – also appeared at the 250th anniversary parade in East Windsor in September.

Ward and Grenier don't make any money on their appearances. Rather, they accept donations for, respectively, Friends of the Library organizations in Portland and Andover.

While there is no set amount expected, the duo sends out a letter ahead of appearances in which they explain they accept donations for the library friends.

Ward and Grenier did not say how much they generally raise for the organizations – as Ward said he did not want the number out there.

"I'm not doing it for a 'thank you' from the [Portland] Library," he said. "We end up being their number-one contributor for the year."

Meanwhile, the appearances bring in the second-largest amount of donations for the year for the Andover Friends of the Library.

"They have a big auction that beats us – but we are definitely a major fundraiser," Grenier said.

Grenier said the two have encountered situations in the past in which folks decline to give the donations – and in those cases, the Clauses' availability the following year may turn out to be a bit less open.

But overall, the appearances go smoothly –

and the two have been across the state, donning their holiday garb at such places as libraries, senior centers, elderly housing and nursery schools where they give children – and sometimes adults – the opportunity to sit on Santa's knee or have their pictures taken with him and/or Mrs. Claus.

Mrs. Claus reads *A Visit from St. Nicholas* – a.k.a. "Twas the Night Before Christmas" – and she and Santa talk to the children.

"It's just gibber-jabber about life in the North Pole," Grenier said.

People will simply walk up to Mrs. Claus and hand her their baby to hold for a photo, Grenier said.

They also do charity appearances, at which they don't ask for donations, such as at the Cancer Center at Middlesex Hospital and the annual holiday open house at the governor's residence.

They have been going to the governor's open house for 10 years, they said.

"It's really one of my favorites," Ward said, along with trips to the Bushnell and Dzen Tree Farm.

At the tree farm, which is in South Windsor, Santa and Mrs. Claus ride on a sleigh and visit what is growing into a Christmas village, where there are reindeer.

"They have live reindeer all year," Grenier said.

At the Bushnell, the two do Breakfast with Santa events and meet and greet patrons before shows.

"It's just fun to see kids dressed up before a performance," Ward said.

Grenier said her favorite regular appearance is at a Wolf Pack hockey game at the XL Center in Hartford – where they get to ride Zambonis.

They also do appearances on Fox 61 every year and on WILI radio with Wayne Norman.

When they are not scheduled for an appearance...

See Christmas Cheer page 2

**Woman Takes Spin cont. from Front Page**

ning of every episode as they traverse the studio is actually “a very short walk,” according to Larson.

But she said the wheel itself weighs in at 2,400 pounds, making it even more enormous than it appears.

“Being there and seeing it on TV are two different things,” she said.

Larson’s episode pitted her against the winning teacher and a “strategic sourcing” professional from Las Vegas who didn’t win much but luckily didn’t have too far to travel. The three were handled by what Larson described as an “amazing” group of contestant coordinators who keep contestants comfortable, instruct them on the importance of calling vowels, and make sure they project their voices properly and clap at waist level so the sound doesn’t overwhelm the microphones.

“They give you some encouragement, they give you something to drink,” she said. “They hold your hand so you don’t fall off the platform. They’re the whole show.”

Another source of support came from Vanna White, who first emerged in yoga pants and no makeup to get contestants excited about winning big money, Larson said.

Describing White as warm with a beautiful smile, Larson recalled the 61-year-old *Wheel of Fortune* icon coming out during commercials to interact with both the contestants and the audience.

“She’ll come out and say ‘Ask me anything you want. I’ll tell you anything,’” Larson said. That’s how she learned White doesn’t keep the dresses she wears on stage but does keep the shoes.

Larson was more reserved in her assessment of the show’s venerable host, Pat Sajak

“Pat is not as friendly as Vanna,” she said. “Certainly, he’s personable, but he doesn’t have that warmth she has. It’s more of a job for him.”

Larson, who introduced herself on the show as a retired corporate secretary and an elementary school literacy volunteer, said one of the most enjoyable aspects of life since the taping has been hearing the reaction from old Liberty Bank coworkers, fellow Portland High School graduates from the Class of 1972 and members of the wider community.

“I’m happy I was able to be on one of my favorite shows,” said Larson. “I did well and I’m proud of how I did. Proud and excited and certainly blessed.”



**Norm Ward, of Portland and Diane Grenier, of Andover, play Santa and Mrs. Claus all year long. Here they are at Dzen Tree Farm in South Windsor, where a reindeer gave Mrs. Claus a kiss. There are reindeer year round at the farm.**

**Christmas Cheer cont. from Front Page**

ance, they often pop into ice cream and flower shops, grocery stores and restaurants. They’ve even been spotted in the *Rivereast* offices.

Initially, Ward was a solo act. Grenier recalled that in 2004, she asked him if he would like a Mrs. Claus but he said no. The next year, she asked again and he still declined the offer. He agreed the following year, when she persisted, insisting “Yes you do need a Mrs. Santa,” Ward remembered.

When Ward was solo he made a few appearances at the Cancer Center at Middlesex Hospital, where he went because someone in his family had received treatment there.

Back then he had a single \$50 suit from a drug store, he said. Now he has three good suits.

As founding members of the Connecticut Society of Santas, Grenier and Ward attend conventions where they hear talks on a variety of subjects, such as legal advice, ways to take care of your beard and how to be “the best Santa you can be,” Ward said.

Ward recalled one time when he had to use some of those skills. A mother had asked him to scold her child and ask her why she was being so bad.

He didn’t grant the request. “I said, ‘I hear you’re doing better,’” he said. “We’re supposed to spread the joy.”

He said the woman wasn’t pleased but the little girl perked up with a big smile.

During an appearance in West Hartford a couple years back, a little girl sat on Santa’s knee and told him she didn’t believe in him.

“You don’t exist,” the girl told Ward. In response he pinched his arm and said he

felt like he existed but the child was not convinced.

“She said, ‘Santa, I’m Jewish, we don’t believe in you,’” Ward said. “I said, ‘It’s okay; we all worship differently.’”

Santa then told her he had something for her and opened his sack and pulled out a “Happy Hanukkah” candle.

“She said, ‘Santa, you can’t give away Jewish presents,’” Ward said.

Santa reiterated his earlier statement that everyone worships differently and sent the child off with some wisdom.

“We need to love and appreciate, keep that spirit in our heart,” he said he advised her. “So we try to spread joy and love.”

While many children want toys – and this past Christmas season seemed particularly interested in slime – there are always those who ask for things for others, Ward said. One touching request came from a little girl.

“All she wanted was peace for her mom,” Ward said. He remembered the girl saying, “My mother works so much; I don’t want her to work anymore.”

Another little girl said she had everything she wanted and would rather have peace for the world, he said.

Ward added, “This year there were more requests for peace and love in the world.”

Not so from everyone, however. Grenier said one little boy told her he wanted a gallon of Elmer’s glue.

For what?, she queried. Ah, to make slime, of course.

## Hebron Selectmen Approve \$221K for Ambulance

by Sloan Brewster

The Board of Selectmen has awarded a \$221,243 bid for a new ambulance.

At its Dec. 21 meeting, the board awarded the bid to the single responder to a request for proposals to build the new truck.

Eastford Fire and Rescue, of Eastford, was given the award, Town Manager Andrew Tierney said. Though the town had mailed and emailed the requests to a number of companies and spoke to several consultants, Eastford was the sole company to make a bid.

In an effort to make the process open, Tierney said his office looked at the specifications and loosened up the language to broaden the appeal.

“We even did a follow-up with the people who didn’t bid,” Tierney said, adding they said they were too busy. Tierney said many of the companies the town had contacted construct fire apparatuses as well as ambulances, whereas Eastford solely does ambulances.

The ambulance will be paid for from the town’s Capital Improvement Plan budget and was funded over the past three years.

At the meeting, Fire Chief Nick Wallick said the bid was within budget.

In a phone call Wednesday, Wallick said the fire department tries to replace ambulances every 12 to 15 years, due to wear and tear. The one being replaced was purchased in 2002.

“So it’s overdue for a replacement but still in service,” he said.

In determining the specifications and what things to change in the new truck, the department went to Emergency Management Services trade shows, talked to vendors who perform inspections on ambulances and reached out to

nearby towns, Wallick said.

“We just asked about the specifications, the size of the unit, the cabin, the chassis,” he said.

The one Hebron got will be similar to the one the town of Colchester recently purchased, though will be made by a different manufacturer, Wallick said.

Upgrades it will have include four-wheel drive, “as a safety consideration” Wallick said.

“During storms we have to be extra careful without [four-wheel drive], not that we could drive like cowboys with it,” he said. “It adds an element of safety going to and from calls.”

The truck will also have a backup camera and technological upgrades now required by the state.

“It’s not dramatically different from the one we have now except for the four-wheel drive, that’s new,” Wallick said.

In 2018, the Hebron Fire Department responded to 944 total calls for fires and medical emergencies.

\* \* \*

In other town news, Public Works foreman William Standish is retiring after 25 years, Tierney said. His last day will be Friday.

Standish worked under Tierney when he headed the Public Works Department.

“He’s been here longer than I,” Tierney said. “I’ve been here 23 years and he’s worked for me all those years. ... He’s dedicated, honest and always available. [An] all-around good employee, he’s going to be missed.”

Tierney said he hopes Standish will attend the Jan. 17 Board of Selectmen meeting so the board can thank him and honor him for his service.

# East Hampton Dancer Grateful to Be Alive After Crash

by Elizabeth Regan

An East Hampton dancer and aerial acrobat is fighting to get back on her feet after a Dec. 26 rollover car crash on I-91 in Middletown.

Sarah Barney, 19, said her 2003 Jeep Liberty flipped over several times after she lost control near exit 20 south when the unidentified driver of a silver truck allegedly ran her off the road. She was taken by a LifeStar helicopter to Hartford Hospital, where she has been undergoing surgeries to flush bacteria from her wounds before surgeons can insert metal rods, plates and screws into her broken legs. She is also recovering from a lumbar spine fracture.

Barney began dancing when she was 4 years old. She was 11 when a trip to a Renaissance fair piqued her interest in the circus. The 2017 East Hampton High School graduate was employed as a dance teacher at The Studio in East Hampton at the time of the crash.

She said Monday from her hospital bed in the general medicine unit that she'd been on her way to visit a fellow circus performer when the crash occurred.

Barney recalled seeing the silver truck begin to merge into her lane on the interstate shortly before 11 a.m. the day after Christmas.

"He was just getting closer and closer and I was beeping at him and it was a commotion of me trying not to get hit," she said. "We both kept moving left and left and left and left and eventually I hit the rumble strips."

A state police report said Barney rolled several times after she cut to the left to avoid being hit by the truck, which at least one witness stated had merged into Barney's lane. The most extensive damage was to the unoccupied front passenger side of the vehicle, according to the report.

The young acrobat said she lost consciousness after the first flip.

"I remember waking up to a man holding my hand and telling me everything was going to be okay. I had to stay still, but I had to stay awake," she said.

That's when she saw the bone from her right leg sticking out of her skin.

The man holding her hand was a former firefighter who called 911 and came across the highway to help, according to Barney.

Barney's mother, Judy Costen, said the same man called her from Barney's phone to let her know LifeStar would be taking her daughter to the trauma unit at Hartford Hospital.

"That was the throw-up moment," Costen



**Sarah Barney, a 19-year-old dancer and aerial acrobat from East Hampton, broke two legs and fractured her spine in a Dec. 26 crash on I-91 in Middletown. She is recovering at Hartford Hospital with her parents (mother Judy Costen seen here) by her side. At right, Barney is shown performing an aerial silks routine in Air Temple Arts' 2016 production of *Reverie in Black and White*. Right photo submitted by the family.**

said.

Barney's father, Kenneth Barney, joined his ex-wife in their daughter's hospital room Monday. He said he works in Kentucky but was able to secure a two- to three-week placement at Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation in Shelton to be near his daughter.

Costen took to Facebook the evening of the accident to seek out additional witnesses to the crash who may have more information about the identity of the silver truck's driver.

Barney said some witnesses reported a license plate number to state police, "but they couldn't track it down to anyone."

State police on Wednesday said the investigation is ongoing.

Barney's future as a dancer and acrobat didn't really cross her mind in the immediate aftermath of the crash, she said.

"I was just thinking I was grateful I was alive," she said. "I was just happy I was awake and I could see things."

Looking back on the severity of the crash, she was also relieved she didn't get a traumatic head injury.

"It is amazing that I didn't even get a concussion," she said.

Now, her biggest goal is to get back to teaching lyrical, acrobatic, ballet, tap and hip-hop classes to young dance students at The Studio in East Hampton.

"I really just want to be there for them," she said. "I love to see the kids get excited about things."

Barney brings studio experience gained through more than a decade of instruction at Doreen's Dance Center in Colchester, two years of training at the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts and one year as an intern with the Sonia Plumb Dance Company of Hartford.

The "bendy" dancer's aerial training has taken her from an 18-foot rig on her front lawn to 25-foot high ceilings at acrobatic studios in New Haven, East Hampton and Mystic as she



spent about five years mastering graceful contortions using aerial silks, hoops and slings. She had lead roles in two different productions of the circus troupe Circularity.

When it comes to the aerial arts, Barney said she's most interested in getting back up on the trapeze bar she discovered just last year.

Barney described swinging from the trapeze bar without a harness as an unparalleled feeling.

"I might want to get into that again," she said. "Maybe try it just once and see how the metal feels through the air."

Any witnesses who may have seen the silver truck are asked to contact Trooper Michael Falana at 860-534-1000.

A crowdsourcing website has been set up by Costen to defray accident-related expenses. It can be accessed by searching "Sarah Wants to Dance Again" on [gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com). Facebook users can follow her progress at [facebook.com/sarahstrong2019](http://facebook.com/sarahstrong2019).

# Marlborough Officials Weigh In On Charter Revision

by Allison Lazur

The process of revising the town's charter is moving forward as hired consultant Mark Pellegrini continues to meet with department heads and board chairmen to gather feedback on what should be changed or kept the same in the charter.

Pellegrini was unanimously approved by the Board of Selectmen on Oct. 16 to guide the charter revision process. He told the *Rivereast* Wednesday he has already met with a number of individuals including the tax assessor, town planner, town clerk and Board of Finance chair, among others. He also met with each of the three selectmen individually.

Board of Education members discussed possible charter changes at their Dec. 20 meeting.

Chairman Ruth Kelly said she and Superintendent David Sklarz would meet with Pellegrini to discuss potential changes to the charter, but first wanted to get "guidance" from the rest of the board, adding "I would never go and make statements for the [entire] board."

Secretary Louise Concodello pointed out at the meeting that only a small section of the town's charter is dedicated to the Board of Education.

The single paragraph of the current town charter directly pertaining to the school board outlines the required number of board members, term limits and election guidelines for board candidates.

Kelly said one thing a charter commission can do is recommend changes to the way residents and taxpayers vote on the annual budget.

In the process known as budget bifurcation, local education and general government expenditures may be divided into separate questions on the ballot at the annual budget referendum.

"I know there are some towns where the vote on the school budget is separate from the vote on the town budget," she said. "I know that's a possibility too, but I don't know what the pros and cons are."

Colchester and East Hampton vote on town and school budgets as separate questions at a

referendum.

Marlborough currently votes on the three spending plans – the town budget, the local education budget and the town's share of the RHAM budget – as one question. The total RHAM budget is voted on as a separate question.

The board also discussed revisions to other sections of the charter that could significantly impact the Board of Education – including the possibility of eliminating the Board of Finance. The idea was first brought up by First Selectman Amy Traversa in November.

At that time, Traversa told the *Rivereast* that the finance board does not deal with the budget "day in and day out," like she does. She said the finance board's role needs to be better defined if it continues to exist.

Traversa cited Portland as an example of a town with no Board of Finance.

Portland operates with a finance director and a seven member Board of Selectmen.

School board member Sue Rapelye expressed concern about eliminating the finance board, while fellow member Betty O'Brien said she didn't think such a proposal would ever be approved by residents.

According to state statute, any changes in the charter would have to be voted on by residents at referendum.

"I never worry about things that seem unbelievable," O'Brien said.

Rapelye responded to her: "In your head you're saying this will never pass, but what if it did?"

Kelly also said she couldn't "imagine anyone in town" voting in favor of eliminating the finance board.

State Statute states a charter commission, if established, would be required to hold at least two public hearings on proposed amendments – one before the commission begins to draft its revisions and another before it submits the draft to selectmen.

The selectmen would also be required to hold

at least one separate public hearing.

School board members requested Pellegrini, in addition to meeting with Kelly and Sklarz, meet with the rest of the school board as well.

Kelly said Monday that Pellegrini is amenable to meeting with the Board of Education, but no date has been set.

Pellegrini served as the director of Economic Development and Planning for the town of Manchester until 2016. He is currently a private consultant who will be paid \$70 an hour to assist in the charter revision process.

There is \$20,000 in the current budget for charter revision.

Pellegrini said he plans to have the initial work and research done by the end of the month or beginning of February.

His goal will be to draft a resolution to be approved by the Board of Selectmen that would appoint a Charter Revision Commission and specifically state which potential changes the commission would be looking at.

"Once the charter commission is appointed, they *have* to look at what's in the resolution, but they *can* look at anything," Pellegrini said.

He said the commission must report back to selectmen, but emphasized the appointed commission is a "separate entity" from the elected leaders.

## Board of Finance Comments

Pellegrini has already received comments from Board of Finance Chairman Doug Knowlton, who met with the consultant on Dec. 17.

Prior to the meeting, Knowlton encouraged the rest of the finance board at its meeting on Dec. 12 to send him their comments regarding revision of the town charter. However, he stressed the board examine the portion of the charter that specifically pertains to the Board of Finance – Article 6, Finance and Taxation.

"I recognize that many people, myself included, may have personal opinions – those personal opinions I think should be left out of the Board of Finance and my meeting with

Mark Pellegrini. Focus on things that are important to the Board of Finance and the provisions of the charter that affect what we do," Knowlton said.

He also advised his fellow board members read state statutes.

Knowlton told the *Rivereast* Monday his comments to Pellegrini included "very specific areas where language could be cleaned up in regards to numbers and timelines in accordance with what's provided in Connecticut General Statutes."

He cited increasing the dollar amounts of transfer limits for the Board of Selectmen and timeline of events leading up to the town referendum in an effort to "modernize things to reflect how we get things done today."

Knowlton said he thought the timing of the town's inaugural machine vote referendum last year, including the required public hearings and when the budget information appeared in the newspaper, tied the town to a "tight schedule."

"We ought to loosen that [timeline] up, he said, adding, "to me those are common sense cleanup things."

Knowlton said no discussion between him and Pellegrini took place surrounding the elimination of the finance board.

The last steps towards charter revision occurred in June 2017, resulting in the switch to an all-day budget referendum. Residents and taxpayers had previously voted on each annual budget at a town meeting.

At that time, the Board of Selectmen appointed nine residents, including three Democrats, three Republicans and three independent/unaffiliated members to a Charter Revision Commission.

According to state statute, once a Charter Revision Commission is formed, it can work for no less than 90 days and no more than 18 months. The commission is later dissolved after submitting a final report of proposed changes to the Board of Selectmen.

# School Memorial Would Honor Young Colchester Flu Victim

by Allison Lazur

Goldfish, a portrait and a Lego board are just a few of the ideas resident Melanie Hathaway and Colchester Elementary School Principal Judy O'Meara are proposing for a school memorial that would honor a local 6-year-old who died from the flu last year.

DeMarcus S. White died Feb. 21, 2018. He was a kindergartener at CES.

Hathaway, whose daughter was also in kindergarten at the time, said she visited CES about a week after his death to discover teachers and staff handling the situation "beautifully," by staying strong for the kids.

"At some point I thought it would be nice to focus on some of the things that made people happy about DeMarcus," she said.

Hathaway said she approached O'Meara in May with the idea to establish a memorial in the school's library that combined "what was unique about DeMarcus with what the school needed" while making sure to do something the family would approve of.

O'Meara said she was "grateful" for Hathaway's gesture and "felt it was a great idea for everyone as a way to keep DeMarcus in our memories."

She said, however, this was not the first act taken towards remembering White.

Shortly after his death, White's kindergarten class purchased a birdbath for the play-

ground with a plaque that reads "In Loving Memory of DeMarcus S. White. Forever in our hearts."

Each student in the class filled the birdbath with a cup of water, O'Meara said.

She described White as a "sweetheart" who "always had the biggest smile, was very loving and kind to the other kids [and] excited every day to learn."

While what the memorial will exactly entail depends on how much money is raised, Hathaway said the library-based tribute will utilize the talents of local artists while also providing resources for the school's library.

Ideas for the memorial include a portrait painted by a Bacon graduate, a Lego board on the wall of the library and a goldfish-themed bookshelf to house non-fiction books, O'Meara said.

"My goal is nothing more than to remember this little boy and all the joy he brought to people in a positive way despite the circumstances," Hathaway said, adding she hopes the memorial is "utilized for years to come."

White's mother Michelle Henderson told the *Rivereast* Wednesday she was "overwhelmed with emotion" by the idea of the memorial.

She said her "only hopes are that DeMarcus' laughter and energy are never forgotten, and that all who look upon his memorial are inspired to be strong, kind leaders."

Henderson shared that her son was born as a micro-preemie, weighing just 1 pound and 6.9 ounces.

"He came in this world fighting and he fought until the day he died," she said.

Henderson described White as someone with an "infinite" heart whose "friendship knew no bounds."

She said White loved playing the video game *Minecraft* and building. He also "took joy in giving compliments and hugs."

"He brightened everyone's days with just a smile," she said.

Hathaway said 100 percent of the funds raised will go to the memorial's creation as well as any associated library resources. Every donation will also be matched by an anonymous individual donor.

The fund has currently raised about \$1,000 and Hathaway said she hopes to raise \$3,000.

She said her goal for completion of the memorial is spring 2019 at which time she plans to also have a dedication.

Anyone interested in donating can do so by the end of February by visiting [rememberdemarcus.org](http://rememberdemarcus.org) or by mailing a check to DeMarcus Stanley White Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 555, Colchester, CT 06415

Hathaway can also be contacted with any questions or for more information about the fund at [rememberdemarcus@gmail.com](mailto:rememberdemarcus@gmail.com).



**A fund for DeMarcus S. White has been established to create a library-based memorial at Colchester Elementary School to remember six-year-old White who died in February from complications from the flu.**

## OpenGov Rollout Coming to Colchester

by Allison Lazur

The town's OpenGov financial transparency software should be up and running by the end of the month, Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov said this week.

Discussions over the software have taken place since 2016, with First Selectman Art Shilosky threatening at one point to pull the \$15,100 in the town budget set aside for the software – leading to subsequent backlash from the Board of Finance.

In April 2018, the Board of Selectmen unanimously voted to sign a three-year contract with OpenGov, with the option to terminate the contract in the event a budget is not passed with funds for the software, First Selectman Art Shilosky said.

Tarlov said Wednesday the cost for the first year of the contract is higher in comparison to the following two years because of initial setup and operation fees. Year one cost the town approximately \$15,000 and each subsequent year will cost about \$12,000.

Tarlov said he had expected the software to be running within 90-120 days after the contract was signed, but this was not to be. Delays involving successfully syncing data to the website and establishing safeguards for privacy protected information are items that have halted the rollout of the software, he said.

"OpenGov took responsibility of not being proactive enough," he said, adding he hopes "due to delays there might be some sort of [future] remediation [from OpenGov]."

"It's been a very long process; we expected to be on long before this," Tarlov added. "At this point I think we are right on the cusp of going live with it."

According to its website, OpenGov not only provides citizens with easy access to the town's financial data and records, but also helps town officials "save hundreds of hours" processing information requests, while still complying with transparency mandates.

Interested residents will be able to look at as

much or as little detail as they wish involving items such as the town's budget.

"I think it will present a much easier format to be able to view the current budgets and compare to past budgets," Tarlov said. "I think most of us do not like to look at a 360-page document."

OpenGov clients will be able to see a general overview of the budget or select the option of a more detailed breakdown of each section.

"We want people to be able to say 'okay let me see an overview' but also be able to see all the numbers in the budget book for those who want it," he said.

The software will also prove beneficial to the Board of Finance, Tarlov said, allowing the board to compare monthly financial reports to what was budgeted.

"The Board of Finance will have 24/7 access, instead of waiting for paper reports from the finance office," he said.

OpenGov will also provide a level of con-

sistency for reports filed by department heads that will enter their activity into OpenGov via a spreadsheet.

"We will be able to go to a single source consistency of numbers and a consistency of format," Tarlov said, adding every year could bring a different format for various reports if a new person is filing the report.

The software is expected to also decrease the number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received by the town, Tarlov said.

A citizen can submit an FOI request to obtain public information, a right that is protected under the Freedom of Information Act.

"We are certainly hoping the information is easily accessible for the public so there won't be a need for as many FOI requests; the same information that they would request at town hall is now easily accessible online."

The OpenGov software is expected to be available for public access at the end of the month via a link on the town's website.

# Andover Community Brings Holiday Spirit to Displaced Family

by Sloan Brewster

A house fire in Andover days before Christmas left a dog dead and several residents displaced, but the spirit of giving helped bring holiday joy to the family.

Shannan Baiocchetti, whose house at 165 Lake Road burned down on Dec. 21, wants to express her appreciation to the community for its generosity. After the fire, residents from Andover and surrounding towns donated truckloads of items to replace things they lost in the fire. Donations included clothing for the three adults and one infant who lived in the house, cribs, a microwave oven, a crock pot, dishes, housewares and more than \$4,000 raised through a GoFundMe page started by a relative.

"I can't explain how grateful I am," Baiocchetti said in a phone call this week.

According to Fire Chief Ron Mike, the fire started at about 9:30 a.m. All the people in the house got out safely, as did one of their two dogs. The other dog died in the fire.

Mike said one firefighter received a minor burn and, per protocol, was brought to Windham Hospital.

The fire began in the basement, according to Mike. He said the basement was fully involved when crews arrived on the scene, with flames extending onto the first floor. It took 30 minutes to get the fire under control.

Mike said the house would probably be a total loss due to heat and smoke damage. As of Monday, the cause of the fire was still under investigation.

"I actually talked to the fire marshal two days ago and he does not have a cause of the fire (yet)," Mike said, adding that the damage was so extensive that the fire marshal was still investigating.

Mutual aid came from Columbia, Hebron, Bolton, North Coventry, Coventry and Willimantic, according to Mike.

Baiocchetti said her father bought the house in the 1960s or 70s when he was in his 20s. She grew up in the home and was residing there

at the time of the fire with her daughter, Kayla Viel, Viel's boyfriend, Jaime Burgos, and their infant son, Jaime Burgos.

Baiocchetti was at work when the fire struck, but the others were in the house. After getting out safely with one of the dogs, neighbor Kayla Reed let them crash at her place. Then a family friend gave them use of an apartment.

Baiocchetti said she hopes to rebuild.

Reed, who works at Over AndOver, "is absolutely phenomenal," Baiocchetti said. Aside from letting them stay at her place, she organized donation drives for the family.

Wendy Kopp, owner of Over AndOver on 415 Route 6, said Reed asked if the store could be a drop off location for donations.

"We do things like this pretty often, we're very in touch with community and we like to be kind of a communal space," Kopp said. "I was like 'absolutely.'"

On the day of the fire, which fell on a Friday, Kopp posted a list of needs for the family, including clothing, diapers, formula, housewares, electronics, dog food and a dog leash, she said. By the next day, the backroom was full. It filled again Sunday.

"It's been an outpouring," she said. "People were just bringing everything and anything. It was just really, really nice."

Kopp said one day, she received a phone call from an Andover resident who was at Walmart and asked what else the family needed. She told them they needed a microwave and crockpot. He bought the items and they were delivered that night.

Donations were also accepted by Andover Town Clerk Carol Lee, the Andover food Pantry, the Colchester state police barracks and Andover Resident State Trooper Darrell Tetreault.

People were even coming from out of town, Lee and Kopp said.

Tetreault called the response overwhelming.

"My pickup truck was full of clothes, cribs, socks, pants, infant diapers, so it's been very nice," Tetreault said.



The house at 165 Lake Road was heavily damaged by fire on Dec. 21. Residents of Andover and surrounding towns have donated truckloads of items to the family that lived there with a month-old infant.

He said organizers are now only accepting cash or gift cards to bring to the family.

Baiocchetti had a long list of people to thank, including all the folks who made donations, everyone at Over AndOver and the other drop off locations, the Colchester is Kind group, the Bolton veterinarian who did not charge to cremate the dog who died and all the first responders who worked to put out the fire.

"The outpouring is just... I don't even know how to explain it," Baiocchetti said. "When there's a crisis people come together and it's really nice to hear and be a part of it."

With more things than she needs, Baiocchetti said she was "paying it forward" and has been donating some of the extra baby clothes to a family in need that's having a baby.

Baiocchetti was also grateful to Georgina's Weddings & Banquets of Bolton, who brought the family hot food left over from a catering event on Christmas Eve.

"She brought a full dinner for the four of us," she said.

Christmas Eve was the family's first night together after the fire, she said, adding that her son was also at the borrowed apartment for the holiday.

"We kind of made the place kind of Christmassy," she said.

Anyone interested in donating to the family can drop cash or gift cards off at Over AndOver or make a donation through Go Fund Me at <https://www.gofundme.com/pb76x-rebuilding>.

## East Hampton Police News

12/23: Emmanuel Morrell, 32, of 50 Parker Ave., Meriden, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

12/24: Kimberly Crumb, 43, of 38 Tarragon Dr., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

Also, from Dec. 17-23, officers responded to 17 medical calls, nine motor vehicle crashes and five alarms, and made 13 traffic stops, police said.

## Colchester Police News

12/17: Colchester Police said Denise M. Sergiacomi, 60, of 51 Meyer Rd., Apt. A, was arrested and charged with failure to carry registration/insurance card, DUI and failure to obey stop sign.

12/27: Colchester Police said Dustin R. Cote, 27, of 50 Hope Valley Rd., Amston, was arrested and charged with DUI, failure to drive right and operating a motor vehicle with a handheld telephone/electronic device/texting.

## Hebron Police News

12/27: A 16-year-old male was arrested and charged with evading responsibility of injury/property damage and interfering with officer/resisting arrest.

### Marlborough Deposit Box Short

State Police said managerial employees at the Dunkin' Donuts on East Hampton Road reported missing funds from the store's deposit box.

At approximately 12:26 a.m., on Dec. 24, police received a report that the deposit box was missing funds discovered during an audit.

According to police, no forced entry into the deposit box or building was reported. Police did not disclose the amount of funds missing.

This case is currently under investigation, police said.

## Vehicle Collides with Utility Pole in Hebron

State Police said an improper turn is to blame for a collision with a utility pole, leaving the driver with possible injuries.

At approximately 6:45 p.m. on Dec. 24, police said a Hyundai Kona SEL driven by Donald E. Cruess, 69, of 26 Mill Landing Rd., was traveling east on Route 66 near the intersection with Chestnut Hill Road when the vehicle traveled off the right shoulder of the road.

The Hyundai then subsequently struck a

Frontier pole and continued traveling off the road, into a ditch and flipping over onto its roof, police said.

Cruess complained of pain and was transported to the Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center by the Hebron Fire Department.

Police said the pole was cracked at the base and Cruess was issued an infraction for improper turn.

## Hebron Woman Transported by Life Star

State Police said a vehicle crossed the centerline on Route 66 leaving one woman with suspected serious injuries.

At approximately 5:22 p.m. on Dec. 28, Kirsten Schenck, 51, of Hebron, was driving a Volvo S60 eastbound on Route 66 when the vehicle crossed the centerline while trying to negotiate a right curve.

The Volvo subsequently traveled into the westbound lane and collided with a tree located off the roadway, police said.

Schenck sustained a leg injury and was transported to the Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center by Hebron Ambulance and then to Hartford Hospital by Life Star, police said.

# Obituaries

## Colchester

### Mathew Arthur Orange

Mathew Arthur Orange, 41, of Colchester, passed away Friday, Dec. 21, at Backus Hospital in Norwich after a long and courageous battle with pancreatic cancer, and gave life a run for its money. He was surrounded by numerous family and friends throughout his last day and evening. He was born in Farmington July 30, 1977, a son of Dennis and Linda (Smith) Orange Sr.



Matt was a graduate of Bacon Academy with the Class of 1996. He worked as a butcher in the meat department of Pat's Market in Marlborough. Matt was a unique individual who loved connecting and conversing with people which is why he loved working in sales. He also enjoyed tag sale shopping to sell vintage items on eBay. Matt was a fan of football, but his true enjoyment was found when he was fishing. He loved life and his wonderful sense of humor was responsible for countless smiles from people who had the pleasure of knowing him. Most importantly, his greatest pride and joy came from the love of his life, his daughter, Dezarae Ann Orange.

He will also be sadly missed, but always remembered with love by his beloved parents, Dennis and Linda Orange of Colchester; siblings, Patrick Orange of Colchester, Dennis Orange Jr., of Westerly, R.I., Denise and Darleen O'Neal, both of Arkansas; his uncles Brian (Lin) Smith and George (Phyllis) Smith; his aunt, Genevieve Lescoe; and many cousins, numerous extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by his grandparents, Arthur and Ann Smith of Marlborough and William and Rose Orange of Willimantic; his uncles, Bruce Smith and Henry Coriaty; and his aunt Rosemarie Hart.

The Orange family would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to the Hartford Hospital Home Health Care and the Backus Hospital Staff, and Dr. Clement and the UConn oncology group for their compassionate care of Matt during his illness. A great deal of thanks and appreciation is also extended to the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Co. for all the times they transported Matt for emergency care.

Calling hours were Sunday, Dec. 30, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A memorial service and celebration of his life followed immediately at the funeral home. Burial will be private in the Marlboro Center Cemetery.

Donations in Matt's memory may be made to the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Co., 52, Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415.

For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com)

## Portland

### Marion Ogorzalek

Marion Esther (Fountain) Ogorzalek, 96, of Portland, beloved wife for 33 years of the late John E. Ogorzalek, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 25, at Apple Rehab, Cromwell. Born in Middletown, she was the daughter of the late Harold and Mary (Willet) Fountain.



Marion lived in Portland most of her life and was a member of Saint Mary Church in Portland. She graduated Middletown High School Class of 1940 and worked at Pratt & Whitney Aircraft manufacturing during World War II and later went into real estate for 15 years. She enjoyed shopping, dining out and cooking for family and friends. Family was the center of Marion's heart.

Marion is survived by two sons, John A. Ogorzalek of Dummerston, Vt., and Richard R. Ogorzalek and his wife Susan of Portland; two daughters, Rosemary Kivlin and her husband Michael of East Hampton and Christine Wilson and her husband Thomas of Portland; nine grandchildren, Philip, Nicholas (Jeanette), Christopher, and Cole Ogorzalek, Rebecca, Stephen, and Shannon Kivlin, and Kaitlin and Kevin Wilson; and two great-grandchildren, Gabriella House and Brayden Ogorzalek.

Marion was predeceased by her dog, Mariah, whom she loved so much.

Funeral services were private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Marion's memory may be made to Saint Mary Church, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480 or to the Portland Food Bank, 7 Waverly Ave, Portland, CT 06480.

To share memories or send condolences to the family, visit [doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://doolittlefuneralservice.com).

## Hebron

### James Michael Fromme

James Michael Fromme, 58, of Hebron, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 25. He was born Nov. 11, 1960, to parents Thomas and Mary, and grew up in Clinton.

He met his wife Pam in Grand Junction, Colo., before moving back to Connecticut and getting married. They lived in Burlington, Andover and finally in Hebron where they raised their four children and were active in the community. He battled cancer for many years with amazing strength and dignity.

Jim graduated from college and over the course of his career earned a bachelor's degree in English and a Master of Science degree in remedial reading, both from CCSU, and earned his Sixth Year in educational leadership. He was the assistant principal for curriculum and instruction at Manchester High School and was the director of Bentley Academy. He was also a reading consultant, teacher and mentor to new teachers. He was an adjunct professor at the Alternative Route to Certification program for the state of Connecticut and taught in the East Hartford school district at the beginning of his career.

Jim played soccer all his life. His father was a soccer coach and PE teacher at the Morgan School in Clinton. While soccer was his love and passion, he also played other sports throughout his younger years including basketball and baseball. Jim began his coaching career at Lewis S. Mills coaching high school boys' baseball. He proceeded to coach soccer at Plainville HS, East Hartford High School, RHAM High School and Manchester High School. He often mentioned he had the pleasure of coaching all three of his boys during his tenure at RHAM. Jim also coached his four children in Hebron youth soccer, baseball and basketball, Andover youth soccer and Rhino-United indoor soccer at Oakwood, as well as various youth and high school summer leagues. He was a member of the board of Hebron Youth Soccer and was instrumental in getting Andover Youth Soccer established.

When not coaching you could have found him fishing for largemouth bass, debating the finer points of not putting spices on food, making lists of errands to do, spending time with his family, or out in the woods on a walk with his dog. He was a staunch Republican, camper, and swimmer. He loved kayaking, the beach and UConn soccer. He was very proud of his Hole-in-One at Blackledge Country Club! He was a devoted father who loved his children more than anything. He was a good man, and spread that goodness into everyone around him. He will be sorely missed.

Jim was predeceased by his father, Thomas Fromme. He is survived by his mother, Mary Fromme; his wife, Pam; his children, Jerod and his wife Kristen, Kyle, Abby, and Brandon; siblings, Geoff and his wife Candi, Christine Fahey and her husband Kevin, Ellen Kehoe and her husband John, Joe and his wife Cindy, Mary Bodenseik and her husband Paul. He is also survived by many beloved nieces, nephews and cousins.

A memorial service was held Sunday, Dec. 30, at 1 p.m., at RHAM High School, 85 Wall St., Hebron. Donations can be made to Dana Farber Cancer Institute: Head and Neck Floor, 450 Brookline Ave., Boston, MA 02215.

To sign the online memorial guestbook, visit [manchesterfh.com](http://manchesterfh.com).

## Marlborough

### Barbara Anne Basal

Barbara Anne Basal, 77, of Marlborough, passed away peacefully New Year's Day (Jan. 1) at Marlborough Health & Rehab. Born June 27, 1941 in Cromwell, she was the daughter of the late Donald and Barbara (Hajek) Hoyt.

She took great pride in her home and yard and was the devoted mother of four children, whom she leaves behind: Sherry and Jason Genga of Marlborough, Laurie Soucier of East Haddam, Brenda Basal of Columbia and James Basal of Andover; as well as a doting grandmother to six. In her spare time, Barbara enjoyed crocheting, gardening and walking outdoors.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place Memphis, TN 38105 ([stjude.org](http://stjude.org)).

For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Colchester

### Anna Maria Percak

Longtime Colchester resident Anna Maria Percak, 92, widow of the late Stefan Percak, passed away Saturday, Dec. 22, at Middlesex Hospital. Born July 10, 1926, she was a daughter of the late Wasil and Maria (Bolak) Robak.

Anna came to Connecticut in 1946 via Ellis Island. The United States was a fresh start after enduring many hardships growing up in Poland, where Anna was forced to work in a concentration camp during the war. Anna and her family were due to be executed but were given a reprieve when the United States military flew overhead. Anna and Stefan purchased an egg farm in Colchester and at its height they had over 20,000 chickens to take care of.

Always a hard worker, following Stefan's death in 1970, Anna would walk to work as a seamstress at Levine & Levine until she got her driver's license. Working as a housekeeper at Frank Davis Resort and Chestelm Health, Anna was friends with everyone.

Anna (Anna Banana), was known for her honesty and kindness, she had a heart of gold, was always helpful and carrying to others. She had the ability to tell people what was on her mind in an inoffensive manner and always with great affection. We will forever miss her infectious smile and laughter.

A special thank you to Heather Soucy who took care of Anna for the last five years of her life. With Heather's loving care, Anna was able to live and enjoy the last years of her life.

Anna will be forever loved and remembered by her daughter, Mary Percak-Dennett and husband Scott Dennett of Wasilla, Alaska; her son, Taras A. Percak of Colchester (and his former wife, Sandra Percak); her four grandchildren, Heather Soucy (Douglas Bennett-Shinkovich), Anthony Percak, Elizabeth Percak-Dennett (Thomas Woodard) and George Percak-Dennett (Kendra Cobb); and her sister, Karoline, of Poland.

The Divine Liturgy will be celebrated 10:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 5, directly at St. Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, 178 Linwood Ave. (Route 16), Colchester. Details about a Celebration of her Life will be announced in early July 2019.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of arrangements.

## Colchester

### Robert Sheridan Mooney

Robert Sheridan Mooney, 98, of Colchester, widower of the late Mildred (Sperone) Mooney, passed away Wednesday, Jan. 2, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Dec. 9, 1920, in Hackensack, N.J., he was the son of the late Francis and Mary (Cahill) Mooney.

Mr. Mooney served proudly with the Army Air Corps 513th Airborne Signal Company during World War II.

Before retiring to Colchester from New Jersey in 1990, Bob had worked as a realtor for many years. Bob loved having thoughtful conversations with many. He showed his creative side through his beautiful original paintings.

He leaves his son and daughter-in-law, Gregg and Mary Ellen Mooney of Marlborough (with whom he most recently made his home); three grandchildren, Andrew Mooney, Rebecca Solsky (and her husband, Jon) and Caroline Mooney; and many friends and acquaintances.

The family will receive guests starting at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 5, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, before an 11 a.m. Chapel Service. Burial with military honors will follow in the New St. Andrew Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to Middlesex Hospice & Palliative Care, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

## Marlborough

### Doris Louise Cragnotti

Doris Louise (Wegener) Cragnotti, 94, widow of Alexander Cragnotti, of Montauk, Marlborough and Glastonbury, departed this life Sunday, Dec. 30, at the Hearth in Glastonbury.

Doris was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., the daughter of Henry and Katherine (Tietjan) Wegener. During her 13th year she lived with her family in Breddorf, Germany and became fluent in German. She grew up in Queens and moved to Massapequa when she married.

Doris was devoted to her husband of 65 years whom she met at a USO dance after World War II. Together, Doris and Al created a loving home and enjoyed camping and numerous trips across the United States with their daughters and grandsons.

Doris was a homemaker par excellence. She sewed draperies and dresses, painted and reupholstered furniture, enjoyed crocheting, and was an excellent cook. She served her family Italian and German dishes, loved to bake, and with her husband enjoyed entertaining family and friends. She was always interested in learning new things and took adult education courses in Italian, oil painting, haircutting, and upholstery. She enjoyed ice skating, reading, crocheting, and traveling.

Doris loved the ocean and in retirement realized a lifelong dream of building a home in Montauk, N.Y., where they resided for over 30 years. During retirement, she and Al visited Germany and Italy to see their parents' native countries. Doris loved Christmas and showered her family with love, gifts, and food during the Christmas season. Musical theater was another love, and she enjoyed attending the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam.

Doris is survived by her daughters and sons-in-law, Katherine Cragnotti and Warren Thime, Doreen Cragnotti and Greg Severance; five grandchildren, Jason and Adam Thime, Korrina, Morgana and Chanda Cragnotti; and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to her husband, Doris was predeceased by her sisters, Madeline Wegener and Evelyn Lindberg, and her brother, Richard Wegener.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Jan. 5, at noon at the Congregational Church of Marlborough, 35 South Main St., Marlborough. Burial will be in Montauk, N.Y., at the convenience of the family.

The family would like to thank the staff of Keepsake Village at the Hearth, and Vitas Hospice for the loving care they provided Doris.

## East Hampton

### Newton John Loos

Newton John Loos, 71, of Deep River, formerly of East Hampton, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Dec. 26, surrounded by family and friends.

Newton leaves behind his son, Steve Newton Loos and wife Donna Loos; granddaughter, Elora J. Loos; grandson, Alex Steven Loos; brothers, George and Donald Loos of East Hampton; stepdaughter, Heather Fowler, and grandchildren, Avery and Jenna. He also leaves behind many nieces, nephews, and friends.

An honorable veteran of the Marine Corps, Vietnam, Newt is remembered as a loving and compassionate man with the patience of a saint. His family fondly remembers him as a jack of all trades yet master of none. He brightened the smiles of everyone around him. His work ethic and perseverance was always admired. He was also an avid motorcyclist and enjoyed rides on his Harley Davidson.

Calling hours will be held at Spencer Funeral Home, located at 112 Main St., East Hampton, Saturday, Jan. 19, from noon-2 p.m., following a private burial at White Birch Cemetery for close friends and family members on a separate date.



Portland

**Kerry Hunt Heidenis**

*Kerry Hunt Heidenis – March 25, 1944 to Nov. 24, 2018*

Kerry Hunt Heidenis had a rich deep baritone/bass laugh, and an elegant speaking voice to go with it. Born to Stanley and Mary (Hunt) Heidenis of Cromwell, he joined a brother, Kent.

Kerry went to Cromwell schools, graduating in 1962. During his school years, he worked at Pierson's Nursery, as did many other Cromwell residents. He recalled fondly hearing the old men at Pierson's entertaining all listeners with their stories and antics.

Upon high school graduation, Kerry took a bus trip across the United States, served in the Army Reserves, and later enrolled at Manchester Community College. After a year, he gained entry to Central Connecticut State College, graduating in 1971. In 1970, he married Bernice Jones and they settled in Wallingford. The Heidenises had two sons, Brent in 1972, and Dean in 1976.

Kerry worked for various companies before settling on the insurance business. He established an independent insurance company in 1982, and, a year later, began a similar business in Meriden using Nationwide Insurance. He ran this program until 1996.

Over the years, Kerry had coped with the stresses of life by drinking, not unlike much of the rest of America. But by 1996, this problem got so intense that he entered Lebanon Pines' six-month program. He emerged from the program in early 1997, working first for Bee Automotive in Middletown, then later as a resident assistant at the Rushford Center in Middletown.

Kerry and Bernie had divorced in 1992. While working as an assistant for Bee Automotive, Kerry met Doris Sherrow, a fellow divorcee from Portland, and the two became a couple in early 1997. Kerry began to pursue a Master's Degree in Counseling, serving as an intern at Rushford Center in Middletown and at Lebanon Pines' program. He eventually became a counselor at Lebanon Pines, then later at Catholic Family Services in New Britain. In 2006, he joined the staff at Connecticut Valley Hospital in Middletown, retiring in 2011 after having served many clients.

Kerry got a lot of pleasure from playing golf in the last 20 years. In fact, in a list of subjects to be written about, which he "never got around to," he wrote "Golf and sobriety-more similarity than what meets the eye." Another of Kerry's interests was barbershop singing - he had a strong, elegant bass singing voice. He appeared in many barbershop shows during this period. He also developed a love of, and a fury for, kayaking - testing his mettle on the various and sundry rivers in the area. Shortly before his death, he had not one, not two, but five kayaks at his house.

This past year, medical situations descended on Kerry, ending with pulmonary fibrosis, the disease that had taken his Uncle Glen Hunt a decade before. He died around 10:15 p.m. on Nov. 24, 2018.

Kerry is survived by his wife, Doris Sherrow Heidenis, and his sons and their families - Brent and Leigh Heidenis and their children Brooke and Braden, and Dean Heidenis and his sons Gabe and Jude. He also leaves his stepchildren, Sam Sherrow and Athena Wang of Denver, Colo., Sarah Sherrow of Somerville, Mass., and Esther Sherrow and Rich Wilson, and their children, Oscar, Maxine and Elroy Wilson, of Paris, France. Also surviving him is his brother and sister-in-law Kent and Barbara Heidenis, niece Sarah Heidenis, and nephew Chad Heidenis and his wife Ana, and grand-niece Winter Heidenis.

Kerry - "Poppy" to his grandchildren - will be fondly remembered by a host of friends and relatives. He kept the family gatherings lively with humor and insight. And his cat Missy misses him - intensely.

The funeral was held Thursday, Nov. 29, and burial was in Center Cemetery, Portland.

Memorial donations may be made to the Dravet Syndrome Foundation Inc., P.O. Box 3026, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034.

Portland

**Marilyn Lord**

Marilyn (Erickson) Lord, 86, of Portland, passed away peacefully at her daughters' home in Vermont surrounded by her loving family and her cat, Snowball. She was born in Hartford March 5, 1932, the only child of Sixten V. and Gertrude M. (Anderson) Erickson and moved to Cromwell when she was young.



Marilyn met the love of her life, Daniel Lord, when he was the family paperboy. They were married June 14, 1952, and had 62 wonderful years together. Marilyn worked for the Hartford Insurance Company prior to raising their family in Portland in the home her husband Dan built in 1955. She worked at Greystone Retirement Home for 18 years as a cook and aide and retired at the age of 70.

Marilyn was a longtime member of the First Congregational Church in Portland. She enjoyed taking many road trips with the family in their truck camper, knitting and crocheting blankets, sweaters, and doilies, listening to country music with Dan, and visiting her children and grandchildren.

She was a very loving and special mother and wife. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Marilyn was predeceased by her husband Dan. She is survived by her six children, Susan and husband Patrick Perry of Niantic, Cynthia and husband Ronald Miller of Lewisburg, W.Va., Diane and husband Mark McBride of Derby, Vt., Linda and husband David Rooney of Connecticut, Daniel Jr. and wife Elizabeth Lord of Madison, and Robert and wife Amy Lord of North Reading, Mass. She also leaves 16 grandchildren, Erin and Jeffrey Perry, Creighton Miller, Dr. Hilary Miller Handley, Berkely Miller, Jennifer McBride Christen, Tyler, Ben and Sarah McBride, Kiersten, Danielle, Emily and Trevor Rooney, Alison Lord, Kiera and Jason Lord; great-grandsons, Emerson and Watson Miller; sisters-in law, Marion Giroux and Olive Bials; and cousins Barbara MacCready and Lois Anderson.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, Jan. 2, at Cromwell Funeral Home, Cromwell. Interment followed in the Swedish Cemetery in Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Marilyn's memory may be made to First Congregational Church of Portland, 554 Main St., Portland, CT 06480.

Messages of condolence may be sent to the family at [doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://doolittlefuneralservice.com).

Portland

**Richard Stuart Randall Jr.**

Richard Stuart Randall Jr., from Portland, returned to his heavenly home on Dec. 11, dying peacefully in his sleep, at the age of 76. As a beloved husband, father, and grandfather, "Rich" was an avid sports fan. He enjoyed the outdoors: hunting, fishing and golf. His hobby was fixing classic cars.



He is survived by his wife, Donna, his son, Msgr. Kevin Randall, his son Wade and Kim, his wife, and their son, Nathan. He is also survived by his daughter, Susan, and Antonio Parremo and their son, Jeho. He is survived by his sister Barbara, and her husband, Sal, and a brother, Bob, and his wife Linda, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Rich was preceded in death by a sister, Judy. Friends called at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Friday, Dec. 28. A Mass of Christian Burial was held Saturday, Dec. 29, in St. Mary Church, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, followed by a reception at the church. A veteran of the U.S. Navy, Rich was laid to rest with military honors at the State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown on Monday, Dec. 31.

East Hampton

**Stanley T. House**

Stanley T. House, 86, of East Hampton, formerly of Middle Haddam, beloved husband of Heidi House, died Friday, Dec. 28, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Feb. 15, 1932, in Middletown, he was the son of the late Theodore and Ida (Jones) House.



Stanley was a graduate of East Hampton High School and UConn with a degree in forestry. Upon graduation he served in the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant in South Korea for 16 months. While on an R & R trip to Japan he met his wife, Heideko "Heidi" Saito. Once Stanley had completed his tour and was separated from the Army he returned to Japan to marry Heidi.

Stan was employed by the State of Connecticut as the state forester where he worked until his retirement. Stan was a lifelong member of the Second Congregational Church in Middle Haddam where he served as a deacon and trustee. Stan was an active member of the Masonic Lodge having joined the fraternity in 1955, where he was initiated on April 11, passed to the degree of Fellowcraft on May 9, and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on May 23, 1955.

Stan served as Master of Anchor Lodge 112 in 1976 and 1981; he also served as Anchor's treasurer and secretary. He has served as secretary of Anchor Lodge's Fellow Craft Club, and on the Temple Board of Anchor Lodge. He served the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge as district deputy from 1985-86. He is a member of Washington Burning Bush Chapter No. 6 in Deep River, where he served as Most Excellent High Priest and secretary, a member of the Columbia Council No. 9 Royal and Select Masters, serving three times as its Thrice Illustrious Master, a member of the Cyrene Commandery No. 8 Knights Templar and a member of the Sphinx Temple A.A.O.N.M.S. He is also a member of the Connecticut York Rite College No. 17, Swords of Bunker Hill and Past District Deputies Assoc.

Besides his wife Heidi he is survived by his sons, Edward House and William House, both of East Hampton, and two grandchildren, Eric Horan and Jessica Heisman. He was predeceased by his sister, Shirley Sibley.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Wednesday Jan. 2. A funeral service was held Thursday, Jan. 3, directly in the Second Congregational Church in Middle Haddam, followed by burial in Union Hill Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to the Second Congregational Church, 52 Middle Haddam Rd., Middle Haddam, CT 06456.

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

East Hampton

**Franklin C. Hull Sr.**

It is with our deepest sorrow to announce the passing of Franklin C. Hull Sr. He was born Sept. 25, 1940, in New London, and passed Monday, Dec. 24, at Middlesex Memorial Hospital in Middletown, surrounded by friends and family.



He is predeceased by his son, Richard A. Hull, his mother, Edna Hull (Fafalla), and his father, William Hull. He is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Barbara J. Hull (Latham), as well as their children, Donna and John Sforza, Diana Hull and Glenn Northrop, Franklin C. Hull II and Tammy Hull, Frederick and Ines Hull, and Denise Hull.

He was a loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, with 18 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. He was an avid hunter, fisherman, loved the outdoors, and enjoyed racing and playing cards. He will be dearly missed.

A memorial service will be held for Franklin at the VFW on North Maple Street in East Hampton Saturday, Saturday, Jan. 5, at 2 p.m.

Spencer Funeral Home has care of arrangements.

East Hampton

**Derek McGregor**

Derek McGregor passed away Tuesday, Dec. 25, surrounded by his family.



He retired from E.I.S after 37 years. He was born in Scotland in 1937 and was an East Hampton resident for over 50 years, and was proud when he became an American citizen. He was an avid Yankees fan, followed by NASCAR and Formula One racing, loved to cook and to garden and spending time with his family, his pets and friends.

He was predeceased by his daughter, Kim Umba and his mother, Mina Wood.

He leaves behind his beloved wife Audrey of 62 years; his sister Eunice; daughter Susan Willmore; and his son Craig McGregor; his granddaughters, Amanda Umba, Kelly Puida and Samantha Willmore; grandsons, Richard Umba, Robert Willmore and Craig McGregor Jr.; and eight great-grandchildren.

There will be no wake and the funeral will be private.

Spencer Funeral Home has care of arrangements.

Colchester

**Norman Alfred Gustafson**

Norman Alfred Gustafson, 82, of Columbia, passed away Thursday evening, Dec. 20, at the Hospital of Central Connecticut in New Britain. He was born in Middletown Jan. 19, 1936, a son of the late Alfred and Isabel Gustafson.



Norm married his beloved wife, Flora Marvin in 1957 at the Colchester Federated Church. The couple made their home in Colchester, where they raised their family. Norm was a co-owner and founder of Carefree Small Buildings in Colchester from 1979 to present. He was a Life Member and former chief (from 1969-83) of the Colchester-Hayward Volunteer Fire Department. He will be remembered fondly for the countless hours of volunteer work, helping people in his community and leadership within the fire department.

Most importantly, he was a hardworking family man who will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by his beloved wife of 61 years, Flora; his children, N. Reed and his wife Ellen Gustafson of Colchester, Donna and her husband Ken Tardif of Bozrah, Tracy Stelmach and her fiancé, Mark Fergione of Coventry and Todd and his wife Susan Gustafson of Columbia; grandchildren, Matthew and Courtney Gustafson, Paul Tardif, Britta, Kersten and Jonathan Stelmach; a great-granddaughter, Leighton Tardif; siblings, Robert (Louise) Gustafson, Nancy (Albert) Cummings and Betty Gustafson, all of East Haddam, Linda Morgan of Columbia, Marilyn Gustafson (Bernie Begun) of East Hampton and Joyce Terrio of Colchester; as well as numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a sister, Lue Markham.

The family received guests Friday, Dec. 28, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral assembled Saturday, Dec. 29, at the Colchester-Hayward Firehouse, 52 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial with department honors followed in Linwood Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Colchester-Hayward VFC, 18-54 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415 or to the Alzheimer's Association ([alz.org](http://alz.org)).

For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).