

RIVEREAST

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Colchester native Robert Riddell, right, was among the seven victims of a tragic plane crash at Bradley International Airport last week. His wife Debra, left, remembered her husband on Facebook this week as “the best person I’ve ever known.” Photo by Tony Chamberland

Colchester Native Among Plane Crash Victims

by Karla Santos

For World War II history buff Robert Riddell, taking a ride on a vintage B-17 Flying Fortress was truly an item for the bucket list. It would be the perfect precursor to a trip to Normandy next year for his 60th birthday.

Tragically, that trip to Normandy will never come.

Riddell, a Colchester native and East Granby resident, was among the seven people who died when the World War II-era bomber crashed at Bradley International Airport last Wednesday, Oct. 2.

Riddell had showcased his excitement about the flight through a series of Facebook posts – including one photo, taken from inside the plane, which he posted mere minutes before the fatal crash.

Riddell’s wife Debra accompanied him to Bradley on that fateful day last week – and after the crash waited for crash survivors to be identified. After learning her husband was not among them, she took to Facebook and wrote, “Words cannot express how devastated I am.”

“Rob was the best person I’ve ever known,” she wrote. “He was my soul mate; I will miss him beyond words can ever express. He loved his children more than anyone could know and the new grandson was the apple of his eye. He embraced my daughter and grandchildren and loved them as his own. He was brilliant, loving, funny, reliable, compassionate and the best

man I’ve ever known. The world lost an amazing person today.”

According to the *Hartford Courant*, within minutes of the B-17’s takeoff last Wednesday, the crew radioed into air traffic control, saying the plane was experiencing engine problems. Upon attempting an emergency landing, the plane hit approach lights about 1,000 feet from the end of the runway, before crashing through a grassy area, then onto the taxiway and into an airport de-icing facility.

The plane burst into heavy flames brought on by the aviation fuel aboard, the *Courant* reported.

Riddell was a 1978 graduate of Bacon Academy, according to his obituary. He served as a volunteer for the Colchester Hayward Junior Fire Department and studied accounting at the Morse School of Business. Riddell was an employee at The Hartford Insurance Company – and would have marked his 36th anniversary with the company on Oct. 3. Riddell also would have celebrated his fourth wedding anniversary with Debra on Oct. 18. The two met in 2011 and got married in 2015.

Reached by phone this week, East Hampton resident Antoine “Tony” Chamberland, Riddell’s brother-in-law, said the tragedy was “just unreal.”

“He was probably one of the most amazing people anyone can meet,” Chamberland said.

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Colchester Scarecrows Come Back to the Green

by Karla Santos

Driving by the Colchester Green can offer a unique experience this time of the year as the 20th annual scarecrow display is up, featuring a variety of scary, funny and imaginative Halloween-themed art pieces.

People can vote for their favorites through an online survey. Jake Snyder, media coordinator for the Colchester Business Association (CBA), said that prizes are typically gift certificates to local merchants and will be awarded for the scariest, funniest and most imaginative.

Voting will be open until Oct. 25 and winners will be notified Nov. 5. Votes can be cast at surveymonkey.com/r/J5N39LD.

Carl Guild & Associates have entered the scarecrow contest for the first time.

Guild, the owner of the company, said he wanted to enter the competition to get involved with the community.

“We recently opened our Colchester office in August and what better way to celebrate and dive into truly becoming a part of the Colchester community than to enter into the Scarecrow Contest on the Green,” Guild said.

Guild said his team wanted to make their art piece a scary one so they used the theme “killer realtors.”

“It is great to see local businesses coming together to share in the festivities of the season

and putting on this fun contest for the community to enjoy,” Guild said. “We truly had fun working together with our team to create our display while also getting to connect with the other businesses for this fun contest.”

Becky Scott, of Colchester Dental Group, said the business has been participating in the scarecrow contest for “quite a few years.” Scott worked on the project with dental assistant Julie Carrier. She said they didn’t cater to any of the categories, they just wanted to put a display up.

“We just wanted to do something cute related to the dental field,” Scott said. “We felt just doing traditional pumpkins would be easy enough so we just got some pumpkins and kept coming up with more ideas and adding a little at a time as we started. We were happy with the outcome. We just like to participate so it’s really not about winning for us, it’s about being part of the Colchester community.”

Tom and Wendy Dempsey, owners of Colchester Eye Care, also entered their business into the scarecrow contest. Their scarecrow has the theme of a “sight for sore eyes.”

Wendy said she likes to put up the scarecrow because it’s a nice display to take children to.

“They love going and checking out the scarecrows,” she said. “It’s such a good thing for the community. I enjoyed doing it as a mom when my kids were little. It’s fun doing it now think-

See **Scarecrows** page 2



This happy guy from the Colchester Business Association is one of many scarecrows currently being displayed on the Town Green.



Scarecrow displays from Carl Guild & Associates, left, and Colchester Dental Group, right, are also peppering the Town Green. From now through Oct. 25, people can vote for their favorite displays, with the winners being notified Nov. 5.

Scarecrows cont. from Front Page

ing that other kids and moms are doing the same thing.”

Wendy said the business has won the contest in previous years and this year they would like to win the “funniest” category.

The Dempseys, along with their office man-

ager and Wendy’s mom, were the ones that created the scarecrow.

The United Community and Family Services (UCFS) in Colchester also created a scarecrow. Interns and staff members created the art piece, hoping to win the most imaginative category.

Ann Marie Maffuid, a marriage and family therapist and the practice manager at the UCFS Colchester office, said the scarecrow was created in part as a way to reduce the mental health stigma.

“I think it’s a great way for the community to do something fun, to come together,” said Maffuid. “It’s a great way for local businesses to be featured in sort of a fun way that’s not soliciting people in anyway.”



Robert and Debra Riddell, on their honeymoon in 2015. Debra wrote on Facebook shortly after the crash that she will miss her husband “beyond words can ever express.” Photo by Tony Chamberland

Plane Crash Victims cont. from Front Page

Chamberland described Riddell as someone who was “always laughing,” “intelligent,” “compassionate,” and “always seemed happy,” Chamberland said.

Chamberland also said that Riddell was the type of person to “put others’ needs before himself.”

“He would not hesitate to help someone if they were in need,” Chamberland added.

Chamberland said that when he got to know Riddle, he knew “he was a perfect fit for my sister,” he said.

Chamberland also recalled Riddell’s lifelong interest in World War II history. He said Riddell even owned a vintage WWII-era Jeep, which he had picked up as a teenager and lovingly restored.

“When he gave me a ride in his Jeep for the 1st time I felt almost like a kid,” Chamberland said. “Those were fun times which I will cherish for the rest of my life.”

Chamberland said that Riddell’s son will drive the Jeep to the funeral and display it there.

Because of Riddell’s interest in WWII, he

went to Pearl Harbor as part of his honeymoon. Riddell also had plans to go to Normandy, France next year, Chamberland said.

Chamberland also told the *Rivereast* that his brother-in-law was a very dedicated person.

“I know when Rob would put his mind to do something he would do it with 110% effort, even if he never did it before,” Chamberland said. “He would methodically research it until he was absolutely certain he could do it right the first time. I absolutely admired the man.”

Chamberland said his family is thankful for the support they have received from communities across the globe.

“Never put off something you were supposed to do today with someone you love or care about until tomorrow,” Chamberland said. “Always stick to your plans, because tomorrow is not promised to any of us so we must cherish every moment we have with the ones that we love.”

There will be a visitation hour today, Oct. 11, from 5:30-6:30 p.m., at The Lodge Community Chapel, 130 Deerfield Rd., Windsor. A memorial service will follow, at 6:30 p.m.

Riddell’s full obituary appears on page 33.

Hebron Recognized Again for Financial Achievement

by Sloan Brewster

For 15 years running, the town has been recognized for excellence in financial achievement.

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada [GFOA] awarded the town for its comprehensive annual financial report [CAFR] with its Certificate of Achievement, Town Manager Andrew Tierney said last week.

“Its excellence in accounting practices and that’s huge for a municipality,” Tierney said, adding that many towns and cities do not do so well.

According to a letter from Michele Mark Levine, director of the Technical Services Center for the GFOA, to Finance Director Elaine Griffin, the certificate is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting and “its attainment represents a significant accomplishment.”

“Congratulations for having satisfied the high standards of the program,” the letter goes on to state. “We hope that your example will encourage others in their effort to achieve and maintain an appropriate standard of excellence in financial reporting.”

The town continued receipt of the award is due to auditors finding “nil or minimal” issues

because the town has appropriate financial policies in place and are adhering to government principals, Tierney said.

“That’s pretty impressive when they’re dealing with taxpayer funds,” he said.

Tierney credited Griffin with the continuing success. Griffin, in turn, credited her staff and a constant flow of communication from department heads.

“There’s a whole process to it, so everybody has to be on the same page and make sure we’re managing taxpayer dollars,” she said.

The process is pretty much the same year to year, Griffin said in a phone call Tuesday, adding that there are some tweaks, based on new standards incorporated each year by the government accounting standard board.

To qualify for the award, the town has to continuously adhere to those requirements, she said.

“It’s what they interpret as trying to simplify the report, so someone without an accounting background can understand it,” she said.

The award is the result of a positive audit of the year’s financial records, Griffin said. The 2018 fiscal year-end audit was completed in December. The 2019 fiscal year-end audit is in

progress.

In addition to financial statements, Griffin and her staff compile the demographics of the town, including population numbers, the median age and salary of town employees and residents, how many fire and police calls there were in a given year, how many parks there are in town and the number of town employees.

“It’s an extensive section in the audit,” Griffin said. “It then ties to how we’re managing taxpayer dollars and the effects to the residents, because it’s their tax dollars.”

In addition, the town must disclose the value of all town infrastructure, which, according to Griffin, is just under \$55 million. That includes all town property, fixed assets and buildings, such as the library, town offices, fire departments, schools, roads, sewer systems, natural gas pipelines, parking lots and plow and dump trucks.

“It’s more than just what the annual operating budget is,” Griffin said. “It’s not just numbers. It’s a lot of work to compile.”

The process, which starts in mid-to-late June, includes a look at the town’s general financial ledger as well, and it must be properly main-

tained and all posts done correctly, Griffin said.

While department heads maintain their own budgets and are responsible for staying within the bottom lines, everything flows through the finance department, she said. The town has a stringent policy on purchases that everyone must follow with department heads authorized to approve purchases under \$3,000 and required to get three quotes for anything over that amount.

Anything \$25,000 or more must go to bid, she said.

The finance department, in turn, takes care of expenses that affect everyone in Town Hall, such as paying heating, electric and phone bills, she said.

The department works closely with the tax collector and assessor to assure that all revenue is accurately posted and that the numbers balance with the bank statements.

Auditors look closely at every detail.

“They test everything as simple as a \$35 payment as well as a \$300,000 payment,” Griffin said. “It’s managing all of our records and making sure that we are accountable for everything that we do with taxpayer dollars.”

Hebron Town Budget Could See Sharp Increase

by Sloan Brewster

The town of Hebron’s 2020-21 budget could rise nearly \$1 million.

The amount – discussed at a joint budget meeting between the Boards of Finance, Selectmen and Education on Wednesday – reflects the combined total of state Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) reductions and the first payment for bonding for proposed new sewers and road improvements.

The ECS reduction, which Board of Finance member Malcolm Leichter estimated to be about \$440,000, will not be calculated into an equivalent mill rate hike, Leichter said. Rather, it will be offset by approximately \$440,000 in unanticipated ECS funding in the current year’s budget.

A new formula to calculate ECS funding, passed by the state legislature in 2017, will adjust how much towns get based on current school enrollment numbers, he said. The town had been receiving funding based on 2005 enrollment.

“Hebron, in 2005, was at 1,440 kids; now we have 650, so obviously we were getting way

too much money,” Leichter said.

The legislators’ plan was to reduce allocations to towns getting too much over 10 years until the funding matches enrollment, Leichter said. But last year, Gov. Ned Lamont proposed making the change over five years.

The town, in turn, budgeted for the five-year amount. Then, legislators nixed the governor’s proposal, so now the town will be getting \$440,000 more than it anticipated, Leichter said.

“We actually funded for a reduction of almost \$900,000,” he said. “The mill rate is not going to be affected by the \$440,000 because of the surplus.”

The sewer and road payment, on the other hand, will translate to taxpayers, if they are approved by voters, Leichter said.

In August, selectmen approved a \$7.6 million bonding proposal for new sewers, which will go before voters at a special meeting on Oct. 24 and then to referendum on Election Day in November.

Built beginning in 1989, the sewer system

has a 40-year lifespan and has been showing the signs of age since 2015, Kevin Kelly, director of public works, said.

“We’ve been experiencing expensive repairs and we had a concern for the conditions of the stations and whether there was inflow of infiltration into the system,” he said.

In addition to the question on the sewer upgrades, the November ballot will include a referendum question on \$2.4 million in road and parking lot improvements, Leichter said.

The first-year payment on the bonds will be \$490,000, he said. That translates to approximately two-thirds of a mill, which is \$790,000.

Other items that could impact the budget include tree cutting, according to Board of Selectman Chairman Dan Larson, who, during the meeting, said there were many dead trees throughout town, including on private property, that are within reach of power lines.

Board members discussed ways of keeping costs down, including by finding efficiencies and regionalizing services, including education,

which Selectman John Collins said the town should look into.

“If we don’t, it’s going to be pushed on us,” he said.

Collins recommended creating a task force to look at the possibility of regionalization, but Larson pointed out that that was the education board’s purview.

Board of Education Chairman Heather Petit said the district shares services with other districts, including busing and food services.

Larson pointed out that in recent years the budget has been “basically flat” and said he would not like that to change.

“I’d rather not have much in the way of added expense to taxpayers,” he said. “We’re solid and prudent over the last number of years. I think it’s wise to stay with that, in my opinion.”

The joint meeting will be held again in November after the election, in order to give new members a chance to weigh in on the discussion. It is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 21, at 7 p.m.

Class Size Discussion Yields Tears from Andover Parents

by Sloan Brewster

The Andover Board of Education has tabled a discussion on class size policy after parents converged on Wednesday’s meeting pleading that the fifth-grade class at Andover Elementary School be split in two.

Parent after parent – mostly mothers, several of whom were in tears – in the standing room only meeting said their children should not be subjected to a 23-student classroom, which they said was how many students were in the single fifth-grade class.

They cited concentration issues, overcrowding, students having difficulty hearing and a lack of help for the classroom teacher Lisa Hopkins as part of the problem. Meanwhile, they lauded Hopkins for a job well done.

“This is a great school. It’s sad to see what’s happening; my child is miserable. He doesn’t want to come to school,” Kristin Solloway said. “It’s too cramped in the room. It’s hard to concentrate.”

Solloway and other parents said other schools had part time help in classrooms.

“We don’t have that here,” she said.

Amid the concerns over the crowded classroom, parents pointed to the proposal to convert the third- and fourth-grade wing at the school into a senior center, saying they need those rooms.

“We can’t have a shared space,” Solloway said. “We don’t have a classroom.”

Solloway recommended moving the art room to the wing.

She was not alone. Other parents chimed in on the issue, saying putting seniors in the wing would reduce the student’s safety and security.

Last October, selectmen closed the old firehouse on Center Street, which had been used as a senior center and for meeting space for the town, when air quality tests confirmed what folks around town have said they have known for decades – it is infested with mold.

The school board offered the wing as potential space for the seniors due to declining enrollment and plans to empty it out.

Erin Boris said she had concerns about the decision to empty the wing, which was done before the school year began and called the idea to put the senior center there “ludicrous.”

Jessica Rickert said “random people” would have access to the school grounds.

“The people driving the seniors, who’s vetting them? Who’s walking around campus?” she said. “It just terrifies me that anyone can drive around the campus and drop their senior off and look, a 3-year-old... and gone.”

Board of Selectmen vice chairman Adrian Mandeville also attended the meeting, inform-

ing the board that selectmen, at last week’s meeting had decided not to move forward on the plan to move the senior center to the wing.

Later in the meeting, when the board opened discussion on the matter, Mandeville chimed in to clarify that selectmen had not simply tabled the matter, as education board chairman Shannon Loudon thought, but that they were not moving on it at all.

“You don’t have extra space right now so I don’t understand how you can move forward on this,” he said. “We had a meeting with [Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen] and Sally basically explained that you don’t have any extra classrooms besides that wing.”

The board did not discuss the matter further and decided to table talks on the class size policy until next month.

“There’s a lot more discussion that needs to happen from us,” Board member Steven Fuss said.

* * *

Some parents at the meeting also raised concerns about bullying at the school.

Rebecca Lascko said a student had slapped her daughter. She accused school officials of not believing the girl and not adequately punishing the child who did it, saying the lunch-

time time-out consequence was not sufficient.

She also said another student tried to kiss her daughter and she was not pleased with the school’s response about that.

“Of course, if she stayed in the seat rather than leaning in the aisle, this wouldn’t have happened,” Lascko said she was told.

Another parent echoed Lascko’s concerns, saying that consequences are not equivalent to the actions of bullies and that the administration is “unsupportive” of parents who complain their children are bullied.

“I get nowhere and feel attacked,” she said.

Principal John Briody said no parent had submitted a bullying complaint, which should be in writing and include dates and times of incidents. He said the administration would investigate any complaint submitted.

Briody added that said if parents do not agree with what the administration finds in its investigations, they can appeal the matter to the state.

Lascko said she had discussed her situation with the administration several times and had never been told to file a complaint in writing.

“At what point am I allowed to pull my child out of school because she doesn’t feel safe?” she said. “If somebody can provide me with my next step, I really want to know that.”

Shilosky Faces Bylone in Colchester Debate

by Karla Santos

Land conservation, economic development, vaping and opioids were among the topics discussed at the first selectman's debate which was held on Monday at Bacon Academy.

First Selectman Art Shilosky, who is running for his third term as a Republican, squared off against Mary Bylone, a Democrat who has served on the Board of Education since 2017.

The debate was hosted by the Bacon Academy Young Democrats, Colchester Young Republicans and the Bacon Academy Debate Club.

The debate included 14 questions that were prepared in advance and asked by the students during the debate. For each question, a candidate had 90 seconds to answer and the opponent had two minutes to respond. Then the candidate who initially took the question had 30 seconds for a final response. Each candidate was offered 90 seconds for opening and closing remarks.

Students asked the first selectman candidates their thoughts on vaping and opioid use – and what their plan is to help reduce them in Colchester.

Shilosky said vaping should be banned. "We have too many incidents, too many deaths," he said. "Vaping has just come out to be a very serious, serious problem."

According to the Centers for Disease Control, as of Oct. 1, 1,080 lung injury cases associated with using e-cigarette, or vaping, products have been reported from 48 states and 1 U.S. territory – and 18 deaths have been confirmed in 15 states.

When it comes to opioid abuse, Shilosky also said the town needs to appropriate funds for programs to address it – as there are "too many" struggling with it.

"If you help one child or one person get off the drugs or not take drugs, we've done our job," he said. "But one is not enough. We have too many."

Bylone, who is a nurse and has over 30 years of experience in the health care industry, said she has cared for patients that have had overdoses. She said the town needs more services related to mental health and access to social services. Bylone said she acknowledges that society needs opioids but said the epidemic comes from the misuse of these drugs.

"Opioids are necessary," Bylone said. "I don't know about you but if you've had a total knee replacement I don't think you want Tylenol. So the thing is these drugs that are being used in

some ways fit into our society. They are just being misused. This is a much bigger problem than just having access to these meds or vaping."

Bylone said the issue needs to be studied further to find out why people are turning to opioids and vaping and added that "this is not a Colchester problem by itself" but part of a "national epidemic."

Another question asked by the students was what the candidates' plans were to foster economic development in Colchester.

While Bylone focused her answer on hiring an economic development specialist, Shilosky said the community needs to be more engaged in terms of supporting the businesses in town.

"It's important that the community support the businesses in town and I know they don't," Shilosky said. "We can all work together. We can support the town, we can support the people that are doing business in town and then we can talk it up and say okay what can we do to build a store that we don't have, a store that we need?"

Bylone said economic development is "key" to a lot of the challenges that Colchester faces. She said she wants to be able to market what the town has to offer to both town's people and individuals and businesses from out of town.

In addition, the students wanted to hear what the candidates' plan to rehab and expand the existing homes and store fronts of the town.

Shilosky answered by saying that one of the problems in Colchester is "we are small."

"We have approached ShopRite, Aldi, a number of chains, restaurants," Shilosky said. "The first thing they do is they go out and they do a marketing analysis to find out whether if they spend \$2 million to put a store up, whether they are going to get a return on their investment. That's where our problem lies right now."

Bylone, on the other hand said she didn't want to focus on what she couldn't do but on what could be done.

"As first selectman I'm not going to throw my hands up in the air and say what we can't do," Bylone said. "I'm going to say I hear the people who say they need more selections, more options here in town. As first selectman my plan for that would be to identify with the economic development commission what are the opportunities for businesses, where are those empty spaces and where are some opportunities for growth?"

The students also wanted to know the candi-



Mary Bylone, left, squared off against incumbent First Selectman Art Shilosky in a debate Monday at Bacon Academy. It was a civil affair, though – and the two were all smiles afterward.

dates' thoughts on land conservation, which Shilosky said was "very important for this town."

"We want to grow but we don't want to lose the rural atmosphere that we have now," Shilosky said.

Bylone took the time to praise the work the town has already done to preserve the land.

"There's so much that we could do and it doesn't have to be about raising taxes and finding money," Bylone said. "The Colchester Land Trust has done phenomenal work at preserving land. Look at our right to farm that we have here. We have a lot of local farms that are preserving their heritage, some of these farms have been in their families for quite a long time."

Both Bylone and Shilosky agreed that the residents need to be actively involved in the town for its success.

"I believe that the town offers many, many opportunities for anybody that wants to get involved," Shilosky said. "I think the key is get

the people involved."

"I think it starts by creating opportunities for people to come forward," Bylone said. "Not just to be president but to feel that your voice matters."

When the students asked the candidates if there were any issues that were not discussed that night that they felt were important to the town, Shilosky said he didn't have an answer – but quipped, "I know Mary does."

Indeed, she did.

"Mary's answer comes from the fact that I've been listening," Bylone said. "What you've told me is you are concerned about safety. You are concerned about police coverage, the paramedic coverage. You're concerned about the ability to have safe playing fields and enough of them for our children. You've told me you are concerned about the senior center and whether it's really going to happen or not."

Shilosky and Bylone will be competing for the first selectman seat on the Nov. 5 elections.

Portland Resident's Housing Plan Causes Concern with Neighbors

by Michelle Richmond

Portland resident Corey Anne Armstrong's proposed housing plan at her residence located at 422 Main St. has some area residents in an uproar.

According to her website: buildinghope.net, Armstrong is hoping to open "Building Hope," a "home for sober living," a concept, which is drawing a lot of criticism – and concern from her neighbors.

While Armstrong had originally registered her residence "Painted Lady -1," as an Air B&B, investigation by Zoning Enforcement Officer Dan Bourret revealed that she has been operating it as such "without a zoning permit."

Bourret issued her a citation on Oct. 4, stating that "the use of this house as a bed and breakfast without zoning approval is violation of Portland Zoning Regulation Section 1.6."

She was advised to "cease operating the bed and breakfast and obtain the 'proper permits.'"

Armstrong responded via email that Building Hope – Women's Recovery "is for a family or individual who have experienced a range of challenges affecting their ability to flourish in a community. Her email states that these challenges may range from "recovering from sub-

stance use disorders, post-incarceration transition, or combat veteran re-entry issues, to a history of trauma, abuse and homelessness."

Armstrong, a single mother with eight children said that she plans to move to Haddam – for personal reasons – and that she is currently living between two residences.

"I love my home and I don't want to give it up," she said. "I want to be able to keep it so that my kids can have it someday."

She claimed that while she had originally applied for the Air B&B permit and paid the fee, when she went to renew the permit, she was told by town officials that it had never actually gone through.

"A while back Air B&B offered a home improvement loan, which I took them up on," she said. "According to the terms, half of every booking has to go back to them until that loan has been paid off. I was under the impression that I had to maintain the listing until I paid off the loan," which is why it's still up.

"It appears that there's still an Air B&B being operated, even though the owner had come in and pulled that permit," said First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield. "We've gotten

many, many complaints from residents about her proposed plan. It's something we're looking into."

Armstrong stated that she plans to model "woman-only" Building Hope after the "Oxford House" concept, a "self-run," self-supported recovery homes, which were established in 1975 in Silver Spring, Md.

"Under the Oxford House plan, residents would pay weekly into a pot into an account we will open for the house," she said. "They would manage the house and pay all of the bills from that, although technically I'd still be paying the mortgage, taxes etc. so I guess you could say that'd I'd be semi-managing it as I'll still be writing the checks."

Armstrong stated that she "may have someone living on site."

"I have someone in mind who would be like a superintendent, fixing things, etc. It won't be like a typical sober house with a house mother keeping tabs on things."

She is hoping to work in conjunction with Trinity Church minister the Rev. Philip Bjornberg's Follow Me Home sober house for men.

"I reached out to Pastor Phil and told him about my idea," she said. "He said that he had been praying to have a sister home for women. It looks like things are falling into place. We're hoping to model it after his house across the street and we'll have the same board of directors."

Armstrong stated that while her plan is "going seamlessly" from the B&B to Building Hope. Plans are to open the sober house on Nov. 2.

"I think there was some mis-communication," she said. "It was never my intention to mislead anyone. I think I've been open all along."

Bourret said that he is "still trying to square all the facts and talk to the necessary people."

"I'm not sure if this falls under a zoning matter or not," he stated. "I'm gathering information to see how to proceed with this and trying to drill down and get all the facts. I'm probably going to have some questions for her."

An informational session on Building Hope took place last night, Oct. 10, after press time, at Trinity Episcopal Church. Look for a story on it in next week's *Rivereast*.



Isabelle Mayer turned 103 years young this week, and was appropriately feted with a party at Marlborough Health & Rehabilitation Center.

Woman Celebrates 103 with Friends and Family in Marlborough

by Karla Santos

Wednesday was a rainy day, but at Marlborough Health & Rehabilitation Center the sun shined for a resident who celebrated her 103rd birthday with friends and generations of her family.

Isabelle Mayer was born on Oct. 9, 1916. She enjoyed birthday presents and lunch on Wednesday, while surrounded by five out of six of her siblings who are still living and many other family and friends.

Mayer was born and raised in South Glastonbury. She was born in a family of 16 children where she was one of 13 girls.

Mayer was 19 years old when she got married for the first time. She had three children, two of whom are still living.

She said she was happy to turn 103 and gives “all the credit to God,” she said.

She was part of her first husband’s journey opening four churches in Connecticut and two in Maine, she said.

Mayer and Joe Wagner were married for 48 years. Then he passed away and she was a widow for seven years. She was later introduced to another “Christian man,” she said. That man was Walter Mayer, who had the opportunity of preaching with Billy Graham, she said.

She lived for two years in Brazil with her son, where she celebrated her 100th birthday. She said she then came to live at Marlborough Health & Rehabilitation Center after she heard someone speak highly of it.

“I’m very happy here,” Mayer said.

Mayer shares a room with one of her sisters that celebrated life with her at Marlborough Health & Rehabilitation Center.

Also at the celebration was Frances Brown, who met Mayer through church.

“She’s just great to be around,” Brown said. “It’s great to see somebody that old.”

Jerry Zabiski, a niece of Mayer was also at the birthday party with her husband and Mayer’s grandson Jeff Sonnichsen.

While they have many memories with Mayer, Sonnichsen said she “made great chocolate chip cookies.”

He added that she is always happy, likes to talk and cares about everybody.

Allison Schmauder, director of admissions and marketing at Marlborough Health & Rehabilitation Center told the *Rivereast* in an email that Mayer “requires very little assistance, she walks around, dresses sharp and goes out shopping with her friends.”

Search for Portland School Superintendent Begins

by Michelle Richmond

About a dozen residents, as well as Board of Education members and First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, attended the first of two “Your Voice Matters” sessions at Portland High School Tuesday night to kick off the search for the town’s next school superintendent.

Current Superintendent of Schools Philip O’Reilly, who has held this position since 2014, is planning to retire after the current school year.

Search consultant Dr. Joseph V. Erardi Jr., who is working with the school board, facilitated the meeting at the Portland High School library and encouraged parents to share their insight on hiring the next superintendent.

Erardi was the superintendent of schools for Newtown from 2014 to 2017. During his tenure, he was recognized as Connecticut’s 2017 Superintendent of the Year, the Connecticut PTA 2016 Superintendent of the Year, and Central Connecticut State University 2017 Administrator of the Year, and chosen as an American Association School Administrator executive officer representing superintendents across the country.

The search for a new superintendent will be going nationwide and advertisements for the position are slated to run from Dec. 2, 2019 until Jan. 3, 2020. The first round of interviews

will be held the weeks of Jan. 13 and 20. The second round will take place the week of Jan. 27, with the new superintendent being appointed the week of Feb. 3.

Erardi said that he expected to have anywhere from 25-30 candidates for the position.

“My role will be to share the candidates with the school board, but the BOE will have the final say,” he said.

When asked what parents were hoping for and what their concerns were when it came to the next superintendent and school issues, responses ranged from wanting to keep class sizes down, having parents’ voices heard, and having a superintendent with a “hands-on” attitude. They also said Portland is a “tight-knit community” and that involvement in the community is important.

Parents agreed that they wanted “communication to be visible,” and wanted the kids to know who the superintendent is.”

“Every superintendent we’ve had in the past has been a hard worker, and as a community, we expect that,” said Bransfield. “Whoever we get in the future has to be very involved.”

The next informational meeting is set for Thursday, Nov. 14, at 7 p.m., at the PHS library. Parents are encouraged to attend.

East Hampton Police News

9/30: Terence Joyce, 51, of 108 Mott Hill Rd., was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear and interfering with an officer, East Hampton Police said.

Also, police said, from Sept. 23-29, officers responded to 14 medical calls, five motor vehicle crashes and 12 alarms, and made 19 traffic stops.

Portland Farm Brewery and Brew Pub Regulations Changed

by Michelle Richmond

A Planning and Zoning Commission public hearing recently on whether or not Portland would be allowed to have farm breweries to sell beer, host tastings and hold events in certain residential and business zones, resulted in new regulations to go into effect as of Oct. 14.

The proposed change was prompted by a request from the Economic Development Commission in 2018 for the town to consider updating their regulations to allow for the burgeoning craft beer market.

A farm brewery is defined as a farm of at least five acres that manufactures and sells beer. According to previous regulations, a parcel had to be officially recognized as a “farm” by the tax assessor in order to qualify.

Residents had been concerned about the impact of having such breweries in residential areas and the resulting increase in traffic.

Zoning Enforcement Officer Dan Bourret said that it was important to protect residential areas by requiring a special permit for any farm brewery.

“We needed to put something on the books in order to do this,” he stated. “Farm breweries are all the rage and we came up with wording that somewhat mirrored the wine farm language we have for that. We tried to be consistent.”

Bourret said that one of the concerns expressed by several residents was having farm breweries along residential “back roads” and their exact locations will have to be addressed in the future.

“We don’t want people going to drinking establishments and then drink and drive home on these roads,” he noted. “If they border on

[routes] 17, 17A or 66, which are major roads, this would alleviate people’s concerns about driving home on back roads.”

Land Use Administrator Ashley Majorowski explained that the exact location of the farm breweries will be addressed in the future.

“After Oct. 14 if someone applies for a farm brewery permit, as long as they meet the five-acre minimum and the PA 490 [farm tax status], they can open anywhere,” she said. “Because of concerns addressed at the public hearing, this may change and will have to be addressed at another public hearing in the future.”

The PZC also changed the regulations concerning brew pubs in Portland, allowing them to operate in industrial and commercial zones, effective Oct. 14.

A brew pub is defined as a restaurant that sells beverages brewed on the premises. These would be allowed to open only in the town’s business and industrial zones.

Planning and Economic Development Coordinator Mary Dickerson stated that the town has not yet received applications for brew pubs.

“When we first put forward the text amendment, we had interest from a couple of people, but we’ve gotten nothing yet as far as applications,” she said.

“Previously, brew pubs and taverns weren’t allowed but now they are,” Dickerson said. “They’re just going to have to be in business or industrial zones.”

“We didn’t want to hold up the approval on these regulations,” Bourret added. “So, we passed the regulation and we may have to tweak them in the future.”

Obituaries

Colchester

Edward Thomas Caffegan

Edward Thomas Caffegan, 82, of Colchester, passed away peacefully Thursday, Oct. 3, at Hartford Hospital. He was the beloved husband of Barbara (L'Heureux) Caffegan. Ed was born in Hartford March 13, 1937, the son of Edward and Rose Caffegan, and later had a close relationship with his stepfather, Sylvio Aube.



He grew up in Hartford, and became an All-State High School football player at Bulkeley High School and in 2015 was inducted into the Bulkeley High School Athletic Hall of Fame. He was awarded an athletic scholarship to Michigan State University and was a member of the Michigan State football team from 1955-56. Ed was senior traffic engineer with the Connecticut Department of Transportation from 1958 until his retirement in 1992. He was manager and president of the East Hartford Little League for several years.

Ed was an avid gardener, focusing on growing beautiful roses and was a member of the Connecticut Rose Society for many years. He and Barbara enjoyed biking, hiking, and cross-country skiing. As members of the West Highland White Terrier Society of Connecticut, they enjoyed the club's many activities with their dog Duffy.

Besides his wife Barbara, of 62 years, Ed is survived by his three children, Lori George and her husband John, of Grain Valley, Mo., Deborah Brown and her husband Shannon of East Hartford, and Steven Caffegan of East Hartford; seven grandchildren, Leah Brown Wilkins and her husband Garrett, Madison Brown, Arianna Brown, Eddie George, Allison George, Jennifer George and Steven Caffegan. He also leaves behind his sister, Linda Dineen; his sister-in-law, Cynthia Laviola and her husband Miguel; several nieces and nephews; and many dear friends.

Ed was predeceased by his sister Patricia Schweighoffer and her husband Michael, and his brother-in-law Tom Dineen.

Ed's love for his wife, children, grandchildren, family and friends was without measure. He treasured them all of his life and words cannot express how much he will be missed.

Calling hours were Wednesday, Oct. 9, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester. A funeral Mass was held Thursday, Oct. 10, at St. Andrew Catholic Church in Colchester. Burial followed at Cedar Hills Cemetery in Hartford.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Rose Society at rose.org.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

William Frederick Wolf

William Frederick Wolf (Bill), born Jan. 15, 1958, passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, Sept. 11, at age 61, from complications with heart surgery in Huntsville Hospital, Huntsville, Ala. Bill was the son of Jack and Dorothy Wolf and the third of eight children.



Bill is survived by his mother, Dorothy Wolf; sisters, Susan Anderson (Gary), Cathy O' Hearn (Marvin), Sharon Wolf and Heidi Bystrek (Edward); brothers, Thomas Wolf, Robert Wolf and Rick Wolf (Dori); along with 16 nieces and nephews and 12 great-nieces and nephews.

Bill will be missed by his extended southern family and friends – especially BJ Brown, Cravens and Ace Gibbs, Kathy Tribbles and all at River Pine Farm, Huntsville, Ala.

Bill was a 1976 graduate of East Hampton High School, East Hampton, and then began his lifelong career and true calling as a horseman. Bill taught horsemanship to students of all ages in Tennessee and Alabama for close to 40 years. As a member of the Alabama Hunter Jumper Association, Bill was involved with clinics and horse show judging.

A memorial service was held Saturday, Oct. 5, for Bill's friends and professional family at Brownland Farm, Franklin, Tenn. A memorial service for family and friends in Connecticut will take place at St Patrick Church, East Hampton, Saturday, Oct. 26, beginning at 10 a.m., with a Mass at 11 a.m.

Bill was an advocate for all animals and nature. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the organization of the giver's choice or to: Huntsville Animal Shelter, 4950 Triana Blvd SW, Huntsville, AL 35805.

East Hampton

Barbara Voelker

Barbara "Bobbie" Voelker 87, passed away peacefully Friday, Oct. 4. Born in 1931, she was the daughter of Harold Sr. and Marion Betty (Beach) Clark of East Haven.



After graduating East Haven High School, Barbara went on to study Pharmacy at the University of Connecticut. In 1953, she married the love of her life, Hunt, and moved to East Hampton. Together for 66 years they raised their two sons. She originally worked at Hitchcock's Pharmacy as East Hampton's first female pharmacist, then at Sage-Allen Pharmacy in Hartford, before retiring from Thatcher's Pharmacy.

She loved to cook and enjoyed many handcrafts, including pottery, basketry and weaving. Most summer days you would find her tending her gardens of both flowers and vegetables that she loved.

Barbara is predeceased by her parents, and her brother Harold Clark Jr. She is survived by her sister Marion of East Haven, and her brother Cliff (Pam) of Milford and sister Judy (Craig) Peterson of Middletown.

She leaves her two sons, Martin (Pat) Voelker and Gregory (Christine) Voelker, both of East Hampton; four grandchildren, James, Megan and Cody Voelker, and Mara Owens, all of who will miss her dearly.

Barbara was a longtime member of the Haddam Neck Covenant Church where today, Oct. 11, at 11 a.m., a memorial service will be held to celebrate her life and accomplishments, a reception will follow at the Church, friends and family are welcome.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to either the Haddam Neck Covenant Church, 17 Haddam Neck Rd., East Hampton, CT 06424 or the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department, 3 Barton Hill, East Hampton, CT 06424.

Gilead

Philip Searle Farnsworth II

Philip Searle Farnsworth II, 80, of Gilead, died peacefully surrounded by his children Wednesday, Sept. 25. He was born Feb. 14, 1939 to the late Philip Searle and Dorothy (Monarque) Farnsworth.



Phil spent his childhood in Glastonbury. He is survived by his son, Philip Searle Farnsworth III of Gilead; his daughters, Pamela Farnsworth Jones of Hertfordshire, England, Julie Ann Farnsworth of Willimantic, and Kristine Marie Farnsworth of Lebanon. He also leaves his beloved sister, Mrs. Donna Indomenico of South Windsor; his grandchildren, Dean, Madisyn and Peyton; a great-granddaughter, Allura; and nieces and nephews.

Phil was a graduate of Glastonbury High School Class of 1957. Phil worked as a carpenter in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Jersey. He was a member of the New England Regional Carpenters Union Local Union No. 43. Phil will be greatly missed by his friends at Colchester Fish and Game Club of which he was a member and equally missed by his friends and colleagues at Blackledge Country Club where he was employed. Phil had a strong presence in his community and was often the "go-to" man for help and support. He was a lifelong lover of dogs, a Frank Sinatra enthusiast and a sportsman.

Phil's infectious smile could light up a room. He will be dearly missed but never forgotten.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Oct. 19, at 11 a.m., at Gilead Congregational Church, 672 Gilead St., Gilead. A graveside service will take place at a later date.

Colchester

Robert G. Riddell

Robert G. Riddell, 59, of East Granby, beloved husband of Debra A. (Chamberland) Riddell, passed away tragically Wednesday, Oct. 2, at Bradley International Airport. Born in Middletown April 2, 1960, son of the late Robert James and Joann Mae (Boson) Riddell, he was raised in Colchester and was a graduate of Bacon Academy, Class of 1978.



While growing up in Colchester, Rob served as a volunteer with the Colchester Hayward Junior Fire Department from 1975-78. After high school, Robert continued his education at the Morse School of Business, where he studied accounting and graduated in 1983. Rob started his career at The Hartford Insurance Company and would have celebrated 36 years with the company on Oct. 3. Throughout his career he worked in several departments and most recently had served as a senior business analyst for reinsurance IT.

A World War II history buff, he was 17 years old when he and his father purchased and began restoration of a 1942 Ford GPW Jeep. He spent many years restoring the Jeep and attending car shows. Over the last several decades, Rob provided rides to World War II veterans in his Jeep for Simsbury, Tariffville and Granby parades. He was a member of the Connecticut Military Vehicles Collectors, serving as secretary in 2005, and the Valley Collector Car Club serving as treasurer from 2007-10.

He enjoyed working with his hands and there wasn't anything he couldn't do or fix. He was a walking encyclopedia of knowledge. He was known for his quick wit, warm smile, calm nature, intelligence, bear hugs, selflessness, love of life, and love for his family. He was always there for his family, co-workers, and friends, and he was an excellent listener and always offered sound advice.

Music was a large part of his life. He enjoyed attending concerts, the most recent, Aerosmith Deuces are Wild. His love of music was passed down to his son Bryan who enjoyed attending concerts with his father. He shared a love of Disney with his daughter Rebecca and was looking forward to experiencing the thrill of attending Walt Disney World in April for his grandson Zachary's second birthday. The birth of his first grandchild, Zachary Robert, gave him so much joy. The project he was most recently working on was restoring a vintage Jeep pedal-push car for Zachary, to be a mirror image of Pop Pop's 1942 GPW. Rob's greatest regret would be that Zack will never know his grandfather.

Rob and Deb met as soulmates in 2011 and married in 2015 and were about to celebrate their fourth wedding anniversary on Oct. 18. They built a marriage that was filled with love, respect and happiness – that they both knew would last forever. Two people couldn't be any more compatible. They were best friends and what they called an "effective team." They enjoyed working on home projects together and camping in their travel trailer. They looked forward to their retirement in North Carolina, where they purchased 10 acres at the foothills of the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains. He warmly welcomed his stepdaughter Jessica and step-grandchildren, Alyssa and Sophia, all of whom will miss him tremendously.

Rob loved spending good quality time with his brothers Gary and Jim, especially going to the Yard Goats games during the summer. Rob's English Springer Spaniels, Molly and Brooke, will miss him terribly; he loved the dogs as much as they loved him.

Rob's bucket list wasn't long but very near and dear to his heart. He had the opportunity to experience the total solar eclipse in 2017 – something that profoundly touched his soul. In 2015, Rob and Deb spent part of their honeymoon paying their respects at Pearl Harbor – another profoundly moving experience. A trip to Normandy, the biggest on his bucket list, was planned for his 60th birthday next year. Unfortunately, a ride on the B-17 Nine O Nine Flying Fortress was the last item he was able to check off his list. His family plans to complete the trip to Normandy in his memory in 2020.

He was a wonderful father, husband, brother, son, grandfather, friend, co-worker, and overall human being. Anyone who met him immediately liked him.

Besides his loving wife Debra, he leaves a daughter, Rebecca L. Lantzman and her husband Adam of Riverview, Fla.; a son, Bryan W. Riddell of Temecula, Calif.; his former spouse and the mother of his children, Melissa Riddell of Simsbury; a grandson, Zachary Robert Lantzman; two brothers, Gary Riddell of Colchester and James Riddell and his wife Sharon of Lebanon; a niece, Regina Riddell of Lebanon; a stepdaughter, Jessica Darling of Fairfield; and two step-granddaughters, Alyssa Mirizzi and Sophia Fazio, both of Fairfield.

His family will receive friends today, Oct. 11, from 5:30-6:30 p.m., followed by a memorial service at 6:30 p.m., at The Lodge Community Chapel, 130 Deerfield Rd., Windsor.

Memorial donations may be made to the Colchester Federated Church, 60 South Main St., Colchester, CT 06415.

Carmon Windsor Funeral Home has care of the arrangements. For online condolences, please visit carmonfuneralhome.com.

You will be in our hearts forever. We all love you and you will be missed by many.