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Several shop owners in the Village Center section of East Hampton were rankled when their businesses unexpectedly appeared in a political advertisement in last week's *Rivereast*. Some have even placed scarecrows outside their shop stressing their political neutrality – such as this sign outside Old Bank Flowers & Greenery, which reads, “I don't care if you are a Democrat or a Republican! I'm only a florist.”

GOP Ad Causes Belltown Brouhaha

by Michelle Richmond

An ad placed in the Oct 11 edition of the *Rivereast* has East Hampton's Village Center merchants in an uproar.

The half-page ad, titled: “Supporting the Village Center,” with the disclaimer “paid for and approved by the East Hampton Republican Town Committee,” shows 11 Center businesses – none of which agreed to being included.

Shop keepers – some of whom did not want to be identified – said that they never authorized being part of the ad, nor gave permission to have their store fronts photographed. Comments ranged from being “insulted” by the ad and that it was “unethical, irresponsible and malicious” and put a “black cloud” over them.

“This is my livelihood and I don't bring politics into my store,” said one business owner, who did not wish to be named. “This is a very small town and you have to be careful with what you say. What they did was definitely calculated. Someone witnessed them taking pictures without going into the businesses and asking permission. By ethics you should walk into the business and ask: ‘Would you like to be in our ad? It's a political ad.’”

All of the business owners interviewed stated that they were either “upset,” “blind-sided” or “offended” by what they considered to be a “political ploy” by the Republican Party to “take credit” for the recent success of the Village Center.

Some business owners stated that “only people affiliated with the Republican Party were featured” and they took exception to that, too.

“I've been very vocal on Facebook about this,” noted Barbli Noel, owner of Little Fish Gallery and Gift – whose store was not fea-

tured in the ad. “This was a glaring red flag saying, ‘Vote Republican.’ This was an incredibly stupid thing to do by the Republican Party.”

Acknowledging that she is a “very vocal Democrat, but not a member of any committee,” Noel said that businesses owned by known Democrats were not included in the featured photos.

“They're obviously playing politics because they omitted a Democratic member of the Board of Education as well as a Democratic candidate for the Board of Education from the photos, too.”

Noel said that she would be just as upset if the Democratic Party had placed such an ad.

“People need to know that this was not sanctioned by the Village merchants,” she said. “We show our strength as a group and we don't play politics. We need to be seen as a destination. How dare they put us in this position. The Republicans are trying to take credit for the revitalization of the Village Center, but they had nothing to do with it.”

One shopkeeper, who also declined to be named, suggested that an “aerial shot” including all of the stores might have been better for the ad than “singling out just a few shops.”

“The fact that they took individual shots and put those stores in such a predicament looks like they were supporting the Republican Party and that's what I'm upset about,” the shopkeeper said.

Other owners said that they were afraid of the impact a political statement would have on their business. In fact, a couple of them had already been affected by the political backlash.

See GOP Ad page 2

Hebron Manager Says Town Clerk's Job is Safe

by Sloan Brewster

No one is gunning for the town clerk's job, according to Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney.

In a meeting Wednesday, Tierney said some folks are concerned that a proposed charter revision that would change the town clerk position from elected to appointed was recommended as a way to put current Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz out of a job.

The proposed revision is set to be voted on as part of November's Election Day ballot.

Tierney said he has received phone calls and seen comments on Facebook saying as much and stressed that nothing could be further from the truth.

“No matter what happens, it does not affect Carla. She would be a permanent position until she decides to leave or retire,” he said. “Nobody is gunning for Carla.”

For her part, Pomproicz said she does not think that anyone is trying to put her out of work either.

The change would have no effect on

Pomproicz other than that she would become a town employee and the town clerk would not be on the ballot at the next election, Tierney said. He added that as far as he is concerned, it would be a good thing for Pomproicz, as it would come with added benefits associated with being a town employee.

“She misses some of the perks,” he said. “So that would be an area of benefit.”

As the only person who works in Town Hall but is not a town employee, there are some benefits the town clerk does not receive, Tierney said, choosing not to list what those would be.

In July, the Board of Selectmen decided to include the change in proposed charter revisions, which will be passed on to voters at referendum in November. If voters agree to the change, Pomproicz's position will be grandfathered.

Pomproicz does not see the proposed change as a positive and has made appearances at board meetings to express her dissatisfaction with it.

She has also submitted a letter to the editor for publication in next week's *Rivereast*.

In the letter, she points to electing the town clerk as a 300-year-old tradition and writes that there is no one better than a Hebron resident to entrust with town clerk duties, while pleading with voters to strike down the proposal.

“A Hebron resident is a neighbor, a taxpayer, is already invested in the community through our schools, churches, and supports our local businesses,” she writes. “I think it is a ridiculous that through Charter Revision the Board of Selectmen plans to take the choice of town clerk away from our voters.”

Similar rhetoric has appeared on Facebook, including a post by Pomproicz in which she holds up a bright yellow sign asking folks to vote no and another in which she says that she is “so upset.”

“Hebron town clerks have been elected for more than 300 years,” she wrote. “There is no good reason to change that now.”

Tierney said the Facebook posts were mak-

ing him “so frustrated,” as they do not divulge the full story.

“She put a half-truth,” he said. “It's a half-truth. She didn't give the whole story on Facebook.”

He said he thinks Pomproicz should give more information.

“If you're going to go on social media, say that this doesn't affect my employment,” he said.

Pomproicz, when told of Tierney's comments, showed the picture she posted and asked, “Is that an untruth?”

She said she hasn't seen statements about the proposal being a way to put her out of a job.

Tierney said the change was proposed because the charter was open for revisions, which only happens once every five years.

“It was on the list of things to do,” he said.

When the Charter Revision Commission initially looked into the proposal, it had mixed reviews on whether to move forward with the

See Job is Safe page 2



Another scarecrow, outside Airline Cycles, carries a sign that reads, “Not Republican. Not Democratic. Just a bike shop.”

GOP Ad cont. from Front Page

“When you’re a business owner, you have to be neutral,” said one. “Otherwise, you’re causing trouble because you’re siding with a specific party. You don’t want to do that.”

Shop owners stated that they don’t necessarily know what political affiliations their neighbors have because “it doesn’t matter to us.”

“We have a meeting every Wednesday and we’re just trying to get to know each other,” said one owner, who declined to be named. “For me, to know what political affiliation they have doesn’t matter. We just don’t care. It doesn’t matter to us. We’re just trying to get along and support each other and leave the politics out of it.”

“We’re really offended because the Village Center is on the upswing right now,” the storeowner continued. “It’s never looked better and that’s because of the business and property owners. It has nothing to do with the town. The community knows that.”

Another business owner had another take on the situation.

“If [the Republicans’] intention was to help us, it really created a lot of angst for the business owners because we don’t want to take sides politically,” the business owner said. “I’m actually shocked that they didn’t get permission from us to do that.”

The Village Center is “on the upswing now because of the business owners,” the owner said. “They’re taking credit for our hard work and riding on our coat tails. Who will want to frequent our shops if this is the chaos our town creates?”

“If town officials really support us, then they need to come here and shop,” the owner continued. “Don’t just put an ad in the paper. Come down here and walk around this beautiful area and come into our shops. They never come to any of our events. I can count on one hand what town officials come here.”

“The ad just sends the wrong message,” said Eco Coffee House owner Susan Popielaski. “I’m just a coffee house, neither Democrat or Republican. I’m just an organic fair trader of coffee trying to serve everyone.”

Brian Holdt, owner of Airline Cycles, stated

that a customer went into his shop after the ad came out and “specifically asked about it.”

“She very pointedly told me that if I’m in support of the ad that she wouldn’t do business with me,” he said. “I explained that none of us knew about it nor gave permission for our likeness to be included. I told her that we’re very committed to keeping our shops open and welcome to all political backgrounds and genders.”

Holdt added that “there was nothing ambiguous about the ad.”

“By aligning with one party a business owner risks alienating anyone from the other party,” he continued. “And that was just one woman who questioned me. How many other customers haven’t come in based on that and how many opportunities have been lost because of that ad?”

Town Council Chairman Melissa Engel stated that she had “no idea why anyone would be upset by the ad.”

“We’re clearly supporting the Village Center and I have absolutely no idea which business owners are Republican or Democrat. That wasn’t the point,” she said. “Our Village Center has never looked so nice and is thriving more now than in the last 30 years. I’m very happy and excited. I thought it would be a very positive thing. I have no idea why they’re upset. I thought it was a great ad and I’m surprised that anyone would speak so negatively about us.”

Town Council member Josh Piteo stated that “This was just a political ad campaign and I saw it at the same time as everyone else. I didn’t know about it beforehand.”

“The Republicans appreciate and understand the hard work and true grit of the shop owners,” he said. “Village merchants are thriving by hard work and we don’t know who any of these people are affiliated with. I can’t understand why they’re upset. It’s just a political ad and shows that Republicans are thinking about the business owners and are trying to help the Village Center in any way we can.”

Piteo added that “the Village Center is doing better than it has in years and we just want to help.”

“They’re all very hard workers and should be applauded.”

Job is Safe cont. from Front Page

changes or not, Tierney said.

Ultimately, the commission opted to recommend to selectmen not to move forward on it.

“We reviewed everything and found that it was in our best interest to leave it elected,” Scot Kauffman, chairman of the nine-member Charter Revision Commission, told selectmen in June. “We all came to the consensus to leave it untouched after reviewing the data.”

But Board of Selectmen chairman Daniel Larson asked that the commission “readdress” the town clerk’s position.

“I personally feel that the town clerk should be someone who is hired by the town,” he said. “As I said, we have a town clerk who does a great job but all of us will go the way of the dodo bird in history.”

Tierney said the board was looking forward and wanted to make sure there is always a qualified person performing the duties of the town clerk and that there is no guarantee someone qualified will run.

“This is clearly an unbiased position from the Board of Selectmen; they’re not gunning for her,” he said.

The commission returned to the board a month later with a recommendation to transition the position to an appointed one. Selectmen unanimously agreed to press forward with a referendum question on the matter.

“Read my lips: The Board of Selectmen are putting this to the voters. All we are doing is letting the voters weigh in on it,” Tierney said.



Hebron Town Clerk Carla Pomprovic publicly posted this photo to Facebook in a bid to convince people to vote ‘no’ on a proposal to transition the town clerk position from elected to appointed.

“The rationale is that they want to hire the most qualified person.”

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

An interesting brouhaha erupted on the “Let’s Talk East Hampton” Facebook page over the weekend – as many people registered their upset with an advertisement that was featured in last week’s *Rivereast*.

The ad, which was paid for by the East Hampton Republican Town Committee and appeared on the bottom half of page 31 of last week’s paper, featured pictures of the storefronts of several businesses in the Village Center. In bold lettering, accompanying the photographs, are the words “Supporting the Village Center. Vote Republican.”

The obvious message there is that the Republicans in town have supported the Village Center and, if want to keep on supporting the center, you should vote Republican in November too. While the truthfulness of that message may be up for debate, that’s not what caused the issue.

Many have argued the implied message is that all the businesses featured in the ad are Republican businesses, or support Republicans. That is simply not true, attested several of the folks whose businesses were pictured there. Indeed, it turns out the Republican Town Committee members apparently didn’t even ask permission of the business owners to snap a photo of the outside of their shop. Now, they certainly didn’t need to – just as you or I wouldn’t need permission to snap a photo or video of the outside of a store.

But should they have asked permission? In the interest of being good neighbors, I think the answer is yes. Instead the business owners were blindsided when they opened up the paper last week and saw a big ad showing their storefront alongside the words “Vote Republican.” If I was a business owner who was a Democrat or an Independent – or if I simply didn’t wish for my business to get tied in with political campaigns – you’d be sure I’d be upset.

And that’s exactly what some of the Village Center business owners are. A few have even indicated they’re going to complain to the State Elections Enforcement Commission to see if this was even legal. Now, I’m no expert, but I’m not sure I’d call the ad illegal. There are no pictures from inside the store; they’re all of storefronts – the exact same storefronts visible from the street or on Google Maps. They’re public domain, as far as I can tell.

But is it unethical? That’s a different story. I can certainly see how one can assume from looking at that ad that all the businesses pictured are pro-GOP. It’s not the first thing that popped into my mind, but I see how people

can feel that way. And to be honest, most people I show the ad to, and explain the situation, can see why the business owners would be upset. So I find it difficult to believe not a single person on the East Hampton Republican Town Committee thought this reaction was a possibility. These are divided times we live in.

Simply put, East Hampton Republicans should have known better.

While I’d love to see President Trump removed from the White House, as I find him to be vile and frankly an embarrassment to the office, I have no idea how this impeachment thing is going to go. The more Trump and his people obstruct it – and the more subpoenas they blow off – the guiltier he looks to me, but The Donald has wiggled out of these types of messes before. He’s survived things that long ago would have brought down other presidents. He is the Teflon president to end all Teflon presidents.

But one thing I do know: his kids should just shut the heck up.

Donald Trump Jr. in particular has been positively giddy over the allegations that Joe Biden’s son Hunter profited from his famous last name. Really? *Donald Trump Jr.* is going to make jokes about nepotism? The man has ridden his father’s coattails virtually his entire adult life. He’s gonna bust on someone else for capitalizing on their dad’s name?

Eric Trump hasn’t been much better, telling Fox News this week Hunter Biden has been “cashing in” on his dad being the former vice president. Really? Eric has coasted by on his dad’s last name just as much, if not more so, than his brother, and he’s really going to sit there and hurl jabs at other politicians’ kids “cashing in”???

I’m sure Donald Jr. and Eric think they’re helping their dad by going on TV or taking to Twitter and talking about how “corrupt” Hunter Biden is and how disgraceful it is that he’s used his father’s name for his own gain. But they apparently fail to notice how ridiculous they look. Oh, other people have – “I bet it’s incredibly peaceful and Zen-like to have zero self-awareness,” humorist and political commentator Andy Levy wrote in regards to Donald Jr.’s repeated attacks on Hunter Biden – but the Trump boys have remained blissfully ignorant.

They need to do their father a favor: stop helping.

See you next week.

Not All Happy with Field Upgrade Project in Marlborough

by Karla Santos

The Board of Finance has approved the transfer request of \$43,660 from the general government reserve to capital engineering for improvements to the irrigation system at Blackledge Field.

Not everyone is happy about the ultimate price tag of the project, however.

The motion to request the transfer was approved at the Oct. 1 Board of Selectmen meeting. The transfer itself was authorized by the Board of Finance during its Oct. 9 meeting. According to the minutes of the Board of Finance, the \$43,660 is for the project engineering services, to replace the electrical box and controls. Construction costs are not included in that figure.

"The irrigation system in the field itself is fine," said Town Planner Peter Hughes. "It's the electrical controls that run the pumps that are the issue in the plumbing within the concrete vault."

Hughes said the construction portion of the project could cost anywhere from \$75,000 to \$125,000.

The irrigation system at Blackledge Field was built in 1992 and some repairs were made in the past. According to Hughes, the insulation around the pipes had been sealed with duct tape to prevent the pipes from freezing.

"It's just time to replace it," Hughes said.

Blackledge Field is located at 200 W Rd., next to Firehouse No. 2. According to Hughes, the pump of the irrigation system at Blackledge Field fills the fire tankers of the fire trucks.

"There's a well that seats right outside the pump that feeds into this underground vault and it has valves and one valve goes to the firehouse and one goes to the soccer field," Hughes said.

Part of the plan is to replace the pipes and the valves as well as putting in a new well pump, Hughes said.

"We are just going to upgrade the whole system within the control area," Hughes said. "Everything in the field stays as is."

The existing vault might not have to be replaced, which could reduce the price of the project, Hughes said.

"The existing vault is on the ground so we would have to excavate and put a new vault; that's the variable in the cost here," Hughes said.

When the crew finishes the design portion of the project is when it will be known if the vault needs replacement or not. If it doesn't need replacing, the cost of construction would be closer to the \$75,000, Hughes said.

There would also be another \$49,000 required for design, inspection and bidding, Hughes said.

The project would need two consultants including an electrical consultant and an irrigation specialist.

Even if planning continues to go smoothly, the town will not be able to start the project until March or April, Hughes said. He added that the project can't be done in the winter because the ground might be frozen and it's a "very wet area."

"We are working under a vault, we have water, we have to keep the firehouse operating so we are going to do this when it's warm weather and reduce any possibilities of any accidents," Hughes said.

Not all in town are happy with the way this process has been handled.

Board of Finance member Ken Hjulstrom

said he "failed" to vote in favor of the transfer for the improvements to Blackledge Field.

"It is not that I am opposed to doing the repairs, but rather I was concerned that we were handed the details of the request at the last minute at the Board of Finance meeting, as opposed to getting the information in advance of the meeting so we would have time to review it before voting," Hjulstrom said.

He added that this is not the first time the finance board has received information at the last minute.

"Getting handed information from Town Hall at the 11th hour is standard practice and I have repeatedly asked that information be provided to the Board of Finance in advance of meetings so that we will be better prepared to discuss issues and to be well informed prior to taking action," Hjulstrom said.

Colchester resident James Foley, a former employee of the Marlborough Public Works Department, said he maintained the irrigation system of Blackledge Field from 1996 until his employment was terminated in March of this year.

Foley claimed that the problems in the irrigation field could be corrected with less money and said the system failed to be maintained for some time. He said that when a leak occurred in the vault at Blackledge in June, "it failed to get repaired and caused damages to the electrical relays due to the excessive moisture."

However, at the Oct. 1 Board of Selectmen meeting, First Selectman Amy Traversa said Public Works did check the irrigation system over the summer and "Everything seemed to be working," she said.

"It was working very sporadically and all of a sudden it just gave out," she added.

According to Foley, in the 27 years of the irrigation system, there was one other occurrence of a leak inside the vault.

"We repaired the leak and cleaned up the water in the manhole and no further damage was done to the system," Foley said. "You can't expect to leave a system the way it was left and not have additional damage to the electrical components."

But Foley said that even with the damage the system faces now, it "should easily be repaired" with "less than \$1,000" – and suggested Traversa's re-election bid may be why that's not happening.

"Considering her term is up in November, Traversa is doing her best to avoid responsibility for the damage to the field and this is likely the reason she is making this out to be a bigger issue than it is," Foley said. "The saddest part is that the taxpayers are looking at over \$50,000 of unnecessary expenses to the irrigation system, not to mention any future issues from the lack of daily maintenance to its infrastructure."

Reached for comment Thursday, Traversa said, "I'm proud of my record for insisting that infrastructure problems actually get fixed instead of simply applying another 'Band-Aid' as a short-term solution to a much bigger problem. Whenever taxpayer funds are being used it is my responsibility to consult with professional engineers to determine the extent of any problem, to have them design a suitable long-term solution, and to have that design professionally constructed at the lowest qualified bid."

Used Ambulance Helps Teach RHAM Students

by Sloan Brewster

Known as the "RHAMbulance," a used ambulance is helping students in RHAM High School's new EMT certification course prepare for working in the real world.

After passing the course and a state exam, students will be part of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians, which is valid in 47 states, said teacher Paul Bancroft.

Students from a mix of grade levels have signed onto the course.

A rare offering in the state due to the requirements of getting licensed by both the Departments of Education and Public Health, it is offered only by "a small handful of schools," according to Bancroft.

"It's very unusual," he said. "Most high schools cannot offer this as part of their curriculum because of licensing."

Students opted in to the course for a variety of reasons, including as a lead into studying for medical careers. Some of them said they want to be first responders and 11 of the students enrolled in the two classes offered in the course, said they have already joined volunteer fire departments in the towns where they live.

The ambulance – a retired one from the Hebron Fire Department – was fitted with a new stretcher mount, new two-way radios and supplies then was painted with new lettering including "RHAM EMS Training Proudly Supported by Colebrook Village at Hebron."

It has two purposes, according to Bancroft, who is also Hebron Emergency Management director. First, it will be used by the Hebron, Andover and Marlborough Community Emergency Response Teams. The teams will use it as an operations vehicle for traffic control during emergencies and as a mobile command post for first aid during public events, such as the Hebron Harvest Festival.

Secondly, it will be a training tool for the high school EMT course.

Colebrook Village, an assisted living facility tucked behind CVS in the center of Hebron, contributed to the ambulance conversion and new stretcher.

Folks from the village feel that it is important to partner with fire departments in the surrounding towns, said Scot Kauffman, director of sales and marketing at Colebrook.

"Colebrook intends to be a resource for the community – towns – going forward and what better way than to promote fresh blood into the EMT community?" he said. "Colebrook is very

well aware that the structure, as far as our local fire departments in the surrounding towns, plays a very big part in maintaining Colebrook to be what it is."

The 21 students enrolled in the course will learn how to deal with medical emergencies, traumatic injuries, all the body parts, and about "every practical body system, injury or ailment that they might see as an EMT," Bancroft said.

"They will come out certified to treat any patient that calls 911," he said.

So far, students have learned how to load the stretcher and where all the supplies are located in the truck, Bancroft said. They will also learn how to reload it with a patient.

"We're working up to the point where they will run an entire simulation," he said. "By the time they leave here they will have gone through the entire process."

The students have also learned basic anatomy and are doing "practicals" in preparation for state exams, which according to junior Emily Balula, of Andover, include patient assessments and additional steps first responders must take when they arrive on the scene of an emergency.

The class has also gone to Windham Hospital, where students will perform clinical observation hours.

In new employee orientation at the hospital, students learned how to do bloodwork, work with pathogens and perform emergency protocols, Senior Riley Sullivan, of Hebron, said.

Dylan Custer, of Hebron, a sophomore and the youngest in the group, said the class has also been studying medical related emergencies, such as strokes, heart attacks and other respiratory problems.

Amanda Rudder, of Marlborough, a senior who wants to go to nursing school, is a volunteer firefighter in her hometown and joined EMTs on a psychiatric call in September. During the call, she followed instructions, getting items for EMTs as requested. In the ambulance, she took the patient's blood pressure and did so 15 minutes later, while en route to the hospital.

The real-life situation played out differently than simulations in the classroom, she said. Students have to do everything by the book in preparation for the exam, but during the call, EMTs, while following the same steps, were more flexible, in order to flow naturally with the situation.

"I noticed that the EMTs were a lot more direct," Rudder said. "You're, like, sensitive to



A refurbished ambulance is being used as a teaching tool for students in RHAM High School's new EMT certification course. The ambulance conversion was funded by Colebrook Village. From left are Colebrook Village director of sales and marketing Scot Kauffman, students Dylan Custer, Rachel Goodale, Emily Balula, Alli Wazer, Emma Bellmore, Riley Sullivan and Amanda Rudder, and RHAM EMT course teacher Paul Bancroft.

the situation, but you're not putting your emotion into it that much."

Balula said volunteers in Andover and Hebron fire departments can't go on calls until they get their gear, which they won't get until they complete bloodborne pathogen and hazmat orientation.

Balula sees the course as preparation toward her goal of becoming an emergency room nurse. Work in the ER is ever changing and brings on adrenaline rushes, she said.

Balula was not the only adrenaline junky in the group; several other chimed in to say they were looking forward to the rushes.

"That's part of the appeal," Bancroft said. "There's an element of that, the unpredictability of that, the excitement to have an immediate effect on someone or someone's situation."

Senior Jessica Delton, of Hebron said she's planning to pursue a career in medicine. She wants to be a paramedic in college and complete some of her clinical hours on the job.

Alli Wazer, of Andover, is a junior and joined the Andover Fire Department. She took the class because "it goes hand in hand" with being a volunteer fire fighter and she will be able to

apply what she learns.

Rachel Goodale, of Marlborough, is a senior with plans to enter law enforcement or nursing, she said. Being an EMT would benefit either career.

If she ends up a police officer and is the first on a scene involving medical distress, she will be able to rely on her training to intervene until EMTs arrive, she said. If she finds herself in nursing school, she will be able to apply her work as an EMT toward clinical experience.

Custer said the class will be a stepping stone toward his goal of becoming a firefighter and paramedic.

An EMT for 34 years, Bancroft also teaches film production and music at RHAM and said he has always wanted to teach an EMT course. Last year, when the administration was reassigning teaching positions, he pitched the idea and was given the greenlight.

"All volunteer services, nationwide, are experiencing a shortage of volunteers and it's been getting worse over the last few years," he said. "The departments are eager to get more help and are excited about getting these young people involved."

Women’s Recovery House Plan Moves Ahead in Portland

by Michelle Richmond

Portland resident Corey Anne Armstrong’s plan to open her home at 422 Main St as “Building Hope,” a home for women’s substance abuse recovery, is moving ahead and set to open on Nov. 1.

An informational session held last week at Trinity Episcopal Church hosted by Armstrong and Rev. Philip Bjornberg welcomed about 25 residents who came armed with politely framed questions.

Her plan has prompted a flurry of letters of complaint to Zoning Enforcement Officer Dan Bourret recently; however, none of the residents at the informational meeting expressed any objection to the plan.

Bjornberg, who operates Follow Me Home, a sober house for men in Portland, said that he had prayed for a similar facility to open for women in town.

“God dropped this in my lap,” he stated. “This will be a home for people who have gone through treatment and are trying to get back on their feet. They need a place to live after treatment and this will help them improve their lives.”

According to the Building Hope application, it will be an “abode of an intentional recover family; a collective body of members doing their own cooking and living together upon the premises functioning as a single housekeeping unit.”

Armstrong stated that the center will follow the pattern of Oxford House concept, “self-run, self-supported recovery homes,” which were established in 1975 in Silver Spring, Md.

“Following 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.”

On hand at the meeting was Jerald Cole, executive director of Oxford House of Connecticut.

“These houses are democratically run,” he said. “People who stay with us are residents, not tenants. This is not a landlord-tenant relationship.”

The Oxford House charter has three basic requirements, Cole explained. “It must be democratically self-run; it must be financially self-supported and it must expel any resident who returns to using drugs or alcohol.”

“Oxford Houses tend to improve the neighborhood,” Cole added. “We don’t do these recovery houses for money. We do them for recovery.”

While Building Hope will follow the Oxford model, it won’t be an actual “Oxford House,” at least not for now, according to Armstrong.

“At some point we will explore that option. But for now, it won’t be an Oxford House. One of the reasons for that is that they don’t allow pets,” Armstrong explained, “and I have cats and chickens and we want to keep them.”

“This is a resource for people in recovery, but we don’t allow animals,” Cole added. “It’s not that we’re phobic about pets. These are state regulations.”

Following a Q&A format, residents inquired about a variety of concerns ranging from what kind of people would be staying there, would some of them be coming out of prison, would visitors be allowed and if so, what rules would be in place for those visitors? Residents also

wanted to know what the cost would be for people living there and how it would be financially run.

“Since I live near the house, I’d just have some concerns,” said one resident. “I don’t object to it. I just want to know what to expect.”

Another resident raised the same question, adding that she has small children and wanted to be sure that they would be “safe.”

Armstrong stated that currently, she has four bedrooms and will eventually be able to accommodate 12 residents in either single or double occupancy rooms.

“Some people want to have a roommate – especially when they’re in recovery,” she said. “I want a place that women will love living in.”

Cost will be \$140 a week per person for a double room, \$165 for a single. Armstrong said that, after her mortgage and other expenses, she would not be “making any money off of it.”

“Any surplus money will go right back into the house.”

“You don’t do recovery houses for money,” Cole stated. “You do it for recovery and to help people.”

Armstrong handed out the membership application form, covenant and set of 27 very comprehensive house rules for the audience to peruse.

Several people who are currently residents of sober houses – including Follow Me Home – related to the group how the program had changed their lives.

“Staying at a recovery-sober house was a blessing and changed my life,” said one member. “I know that there’s a stigma attached to it, but we’re individuals. I got hooked on pain meds and got sidetracked but it doesn’t mean that I’m

a bad person.”

“When someone opens the door and says that you can get back to where you were, it means the world to you,” said another. “Corey Anne is a great person. This isn’t about the money and while there’s no guarantee that there won’t be hiccups, if you give it a chance the outcome will be beautiful.”

“It’s a chance for us to do the right thing,” said another sober house resident. “We’ve all been down at some point and thank God they gave me a second chance. When someone said, ‘come in,’ it changed my life.”

A resident of Follow Me Home, perhaps summed it up best: “This was a blessing and an opportunity for me to change my life. I was addicted to drugs and alcohol and it ruined my life. We’re like brothers. I don’t know where I’d be without them. These houses change people’s lives.”

“Our rules are the scaffolding,” said Bjornberg. “They create a community that cares about the needs of other people.”

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield stated that “there have been a number of inquiries and complaints” about Armstrong’s plan.

“I’ve given approval for the town attorney Kari Olson to review the complaints and also any written information that the owner has provided as well as any other information. After she reviews it, we’ll know if there have been further inquiries or information that we need to obtain.”

As of this week Zoning Enforcement Officer Dan Bourret stated that he doesn’t have any updates about Armstrong’s plan but he said that he was “looking into it.”

Lamont Visits Portland Officials

by Michelle Richmond

Gov. Ned Lamont paid a visit to Portland recently, spending some 45 minutes hearing from town officials on a range of projects. He was welcomed by First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield and State Sen. Norm Needleman.

Also, on hand were selectmen Jim Tripp and Ralph Zampano, Town Clerk Ryan Curley, Economic Development Coordination Mary Dickerson, Youth Service Administrator Mary Pont, school district Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology Charles Britton and Librarian Janet Nocek.

The visit was part of Lamont’s ongoing mission to meet city and town officials throughout the state. Bransfield stated that this was the first visit from the state’s governor since then-Gov. Dannel Malloy visited in 2015, delivering a \$230,000 grant for the town.

Lamont’s “No such luck this time,” comment drew raucous laughter from town officials.

“We’d like to tell you a little bit about our town,” said Bransfield. “We’re so proud of it.

“We have a stable community. Strong and steady seems to work.”

Bransfield and other town officials went on to give an overview of Portland and some recent achievements. Leading the list was the acquisition of the 5.2-acre Brownstone parcel.

“We have some economic development going on that we feel is really going to help everyone, not just Portland,” Bransfield said.

“We voted in September to buy some land along the Connecticut River and utilize some

of the grant money from the State of Connecticut to clean it up,” Bransfield said.

She noted that both Middletown and Cromwell also have plans to clean up their riverfronts.

Bransfield explained that the quarries were flooded in the mid-1930s and that Portland had been left with a 90-foot hole, which the town bought and later leased to the Hayes brothers who then converted it into Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park.

“We bought the quarry in 1999 and we developed the riverfront into a park. And now with our recent purchase it means we have a plan, and we’re sticking to it,” Bransfield stated.

Using a series of drone photographs supplied by Tripp, Bransfield pointed out both the riverfront land and the nearby Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park, which attracts some 80,000 visitors annually.

Lamont was encouraged to visit the park but to forgo using the zip-line or do any rock-climbing, a suggestion he rejected, noting, “Life is not a spectator sport.”

Bransfield also gave an overview of the plan to transform the former 14.7-acre Elmcrest property into Brainerd Place.

“We’re going to combine a bit of history with this,” she added. “We’re making plans to move three historic homes as part of this and have them refurbished.”

Giving an overview of the Brainerd Place,

Dickerson described the \$40-\$60 million project as a “sort of lynch-pin to a new economy” adding that it has the potential to become a key force in the “circle of life” in Portland.

Lamont proclaimed the plan “gorgeous” and asked if the area would be aimed at seniors or families.

“We have a lot of senior citizens and we recognize that,” Dickerson noted. “There are a lot of seniors who want to get out of the day-to-day maintenance of a home and who can move into Brainerd Place. We’ll have everything from studios to one- and two-bedroom apartments and covered parking and they will have every amenity they want and they can stay in Portland.”

The town is also hoping to draw millennials who may decide to put down deeper roots and stay in town.

“We want to target young professional adults, too. Hopefully, they’re going to like being here and will eventually want to buy houses instead,” said Dickerson.

Noting that the town did not have to raise taxes this year, Bransfield said that she was “pleased with that.”

“I will say that the fact that you passed the budget on time is why we were able to do that,” she told Lamont. “You kept to your word on funding and you didn’t renege on that. Because of that, we were able to have some stability as

we budgeted. We encourage our legislators and our governor to keep to that.”

“Getting that budget done on time is my priority No. 1,” Lamont stated.

Areas of concern included the cost of operating the sewer and water systems and finding new water sources.

Tripp stated that with the current contract with the Metropolitan District Commission to provide the town with 146 million gallons of water a year, they are looking for an alternate source.

“We’re working on producing our own water sources,” Tripp said. “If we do, we could end up paying a third of the cost of what we pay MDC.”

“We need to curtail that cost and we’re working hard to find new water sources,” added Bransfield.

“We want to try to find a viable way to share a good water system with our sister town of East Hampton but that could cost upwards of \$80 million,” said Bransfield. “It becomes a challenge to see that one community’s needs are met, as well as the other community.”

Before leaving, Lamont congratulated everyone.

“You have a lot of pride in your town and you obviously have a sense of direction,” he stated. “I love how your town is re-inventing itself like this, while providing quality education. It’s great.”

Colorful Brochure Highlights Colchester Farms

by Karla Santos

Individuals from the Colchester Garden Club, the Colchester Land Trust and the Colchester Historical Society among other local organizations recently partnered to create a brochure that would serve as a guide to local farms and farm stands in Colchester.

The brochure is one of Colchester's efforts to create awareness for land and farm conservation. The individuals who created the brochure said it was done in support of Colchester's farmers, agriculturally sourced businesses and the local heritage. The brochure was released by the end of the summer and it includes information about 18 farms or agriculturally based businesses in Colchester. The team that created the brochure identified over 30 farms or agriculturally based businesses in town through research.

Katherine Kosiba, one of the volunteers of the project and a member of the Colchester Garden Club, said that some of the farmers identified through the process had chosen not to be in the brochure for one reason or another. Kosiba, however, said it is expected that other farmers will ask to be included in the brochure at some point.

The colorful brochure includes images of farmland, animals and vegetables grown in Colchester. Some of the images used in the brochure were also taken from the "Colchester's Roots and Agriculture Then and Now" art exhibit which is currently being displayed at the Colchester History Museum.

Julianna Cameron, of Colchester was the graphic designer of the brochure.

"I went out into the fields," Cameron said. "I set up some shots because I sort of had a visual of what I wanted from local farm stands, so I think that makes it nice."

The brochure's content includes products the farms sell, services they provide and their address and contact information.

"The critical part was getting the farms on the list and then providing some context for agriculture in Colchester as well as some information we thought was important for people to know," Kosiba said.

The brochure is available at town hall, the senior center, the library, the history museum and at various farms and farm stands in town.

The brochure can also be accessed online on the Colchester Land Trust website, located at colchesterlandtrust.org. The Land Trust web page also has the list of farms in a mobile-friendly format.

"The Land Trust volunteered to be the host for this website going forward because we know that there will be farms that go out of business or they decide that they don't want to be listed in the future version of the brochure or new people coming in and wanting to be in it and so this whole land trust website is intended to be dynamic," Leslie Curtis, member of the Colchester Land Trust said.

The Land Trust also purchased tri-fold brochure holders to give to the different locations in town along with the brochure.

The brochure includes a small-paper insert with a link to the brochure in a PDF file to enable easy access to downloading and printing it.

Some of the efforts that led to the creation of the brochure were the "Right to Farm" signs and the "Colchester's Roots and Agriculture Then and Now" art exhibit.

Producing the "Right to Farm" signs was a project that was approved and completed by the board of the Colchester Land Trust in August. Forty-five signs were produced. They read "Colchester a right to farm community" and were placed on private properties, farms, businesses, non-profit organizations and town and state roads.

"The Land Trust funded the production of the signs and they also paid for the poles that the Colchester Public Works Department used to install them," Curtis said.

The purpose of the signs is to "call the attention to the fact that Colchester is an agricultural community," Kosiba said.

"It has been historically and it continues today and there's actually more people starting either a farming or agricultural business in the recent past," Kosiba said.

She added that the second purpose for the signs is the "Right to Farm" ordinance, a state law that protects farmers from lawsuits complaining about farm smells, flies and other farm related things.

"The state put in the legislation and then different towns adopted the same ordinance at the local level to further help the farmers," Kosiba said.

One of the panels of the brochure informs the community about the "Right to Farm" and it includes a link to the ordinance for more information about it.

The other effort that led to the creation of the brochure was the "Colchester's Roots and Agriculture Then and Now" art exhibit, which is being displayed at the Colchester History Museum.

The exhibit is based on the history of farming. It includes old photographs of the farms and the people that farmed in Colchester. It also includes tools that were used for farming as well as maps of where farms were located.

Liverant said the art has been on exhibit since April and the display will be open for a couple of years. The exhibit was produced by volunteers of the Historical Society.

As part of the process of creating the exhibit, Liverant had to contact some farmers and interview them.

"What I heard over and over was that it'd be nice if people knew we were here," Liverant said.

That need expressed by the farmers gave her the idea of creating the brochure to inform



A group of people from the Colchester Garden Club, the Colchester Land Trust and the Colchester Historical Society among other local organizations recently partnered to create a brochure that would serve as a guide to local farms and farm stands in Colchester. Pictured from left are, top row, Julianna Cameron, graphic designer of the brochure, and Leslie Curtis, member of the Colchester Land Trust; bottom row are Katherine Kosiba of the Colchester Garden Club and Gigi Liverant of the Colchester Historical Society. Catherine Shea, Rosemary Longo-Nutt, Mary Bylone and Carol Cole also contributed to the creation of the brochure, which supports the farming community in Colchester.

people about the farming community in Colchester.

The brochure was forwarded to various offices of the State of Connecticut, State legislators and the State's Environmental Committee.

"We are thrilled that our public officials not only have been very excited about the prospect of this coming out to support our farmers socially and economically, but that they also want to promote this from a state perspective not only directly to Colchester but possibly also with other communities to do similar things," Kosiba said.

Curtis said that Colchester is the first town in the state to have the "Right to Farm" sign.

"The dream of mine personally would be to have the whole area here in eastern Connecticut adopt this kind of legislation and brand

themselves so that the region can become known as a 'Right to Farm' region," Curtis added.

In support of the farming community, Colchester also hosts a Farmer's Market in town Green from June to October.

"You have to value these people to try to keep them here because it's hard for farmers and whatever we can do to make it easier for farmers to support them, I think is important," Cameron said.

The Colchester History Museum is located at 24 Linwood Ave., and it is open on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. or by appointment. For appointments, to learn more about the museum or for more information about Colchester's farm and land conservation efforts, please call 860-537-4230.

Real Estate Agency Opens Second Location in Colchester

by **Karla Santos**

In 2006, Carl Guild started his career as a real estate agent. But, after being in the business for 12 years, in 2018 Guild decided it was time to move on and created his own real estate agency: Carl Guild & Associates.

The business was established in East Hampton in February 2018, and this past August a second location was opened, at 41 W. High St.

Carl Guild & Associates' Colchester office will host a grand opening event Sunday, Oct. 27, from noon-4 p.m.

Guild said that the reason he opened a second office in Colchester is that the town has what he was looking for "in terms of community and potential for expansion."

"Colchester is a very involved town and we like to be an involved brokerage," Guild said. "We understand that the community and the people within the community are our customers. We do a lot of extracurricular things because we want to be a part of the community."

As part of the business' efforts to be a part of the community, it hosted a photo contest to select the photos that would hang in the new office. The photos in the contest were required to be of sights in Colchester.

The winners of the contest won a \$25 gift card to Colchester community businesses. They were also invited to the grand opening, where they will be able to sign their photos.

"We had 19 winners, 19 photos; they are all blown up and they are all gorgeous," Guild said.

As part of the effort, the business is also participating in Colchester's annual scarecrow contest and is involved in a variety of charities, Guild said.

Carl Guild & Associates offers a variety of services including helping people buy and sell homes. The team at Carl Guild & Associates also works with investors for either flipping or investing. Listing commercial properties and

land for sell is also among the services offered by the business.

Brian Przybylowski said Guild was his agent for purchasing a home, adding that he had a "very good experience."

"He was never pressing to making a quick decision but always was able to shed a lot of his knowledge in the real estate business to help me and my wife make a decision on a house," Przybylowski said. "Whenever we were stuck he would never persuade us one way or another but kind of would outline the benefits and was good in that respect."

According to Guild, the business is considered a medium to large brokerage because it has approximately 50 agents between the two offices.

"The difference is that we really focus on simplifying the process and our agents are trained to really be professionals," Guild said.

Guild said some of the things that differentiates his business from other real estate agencies is the customized service and its advanced technological features.

"We can do things a lot more custom and we are kind of more technologically advanced in terms of social media advertising and a lot of things that the traditional brokerages just aren't thinking about, which is why I've had the success I've had," Guild said.

In addition, Carl Guild & Associates uses a model that's "kind of a hybrid," Guild said.

"A lot of the newer models are cloud based brokerages like ESP but I find an office to be very important to be a part of the community and also I think it lends itself credibility and it's also great for our clients," he added.

The agents at Carl Guild & Associates have access to the system at all times.

"We have all the modern amenities, internet and printing and everything they need so it's



Carl Guild & Associates has a new Colchester office – and there will be a grand opening event Sunday, Oct. 27, from noon-4 p.m. Pictured with Guild (far right) are, from left, real estate agents Catherine McNarry, Gita Burzycki and Sandra Lendstrom.

kind of the hybrid where they have the resources and the support they need but at the same time a lot of our technology is online," Guild said.

Cieara Yanaros said she has been an agent with Carl Guild & Associates since August 2018.

"I made the absolute best decision joining Carl's brokerage," Yanaros said. "There are so many opportunities to learn new aspects of the Real Estate Industry and the team is incredibly

supportive, it is truly a family.

Yanaros said that what she enjoys the most about working at Carl Guild & Associates is the community outreach.

"There is always something going on giving you the opportunity to get involved for a greater cause and really get to be a true part of your community," she added.

To learn more about the business, call 860-474-3500.

Man Arrested for Fraud, Identity Theft in Andover

by **Sloan Brewster**

An Andover man has been arrested on fraud and identity theft charges.

According to the state of Connecticut Judicial Branch website, Joseph Sudik, 29, of Andover, was arrested on Oct. 2 by South Windsor Police and charged with three counts of first degree forgery and one count of first degree identity theft.

He was released on a \$150,000 bond and is next scheduled to appear in court next Thursday, October 24.

According to an arrest warrant obtained at Manchester Superior Court, the charges stem from Sudik's purchase of SW Moving at 1640 John Fitch Blvd., South Windsor, from the business owner and Sudik's former co-worker, Steven Weaver.

On June 3, according to the warrant, Weaver agreed to sell the business to Sudik for \$750,000, with a clause in the contract stating the sale would be terminated if Weaver did not receive the money by June 7. When the seventh came and went and the money was not deposited in his account, Weaver said Sudik tried to prove he had the money in a more than \$6 million trust account, sending multiple documents to prove his case.

"After Sudik continually failed to provide any sort of payment, Weaver believed that the documents were forged," the warrant states.

Weaver, on Aug. 1, gave police a sworn statement stating he had not been paid. In addition, he stated that he had received documents Sudik claimed were from Chelsea Groton Bank, People's United Bank and Brown Paindiris & Scott, meant to deceive him into believing he would be paid for the business.

The bank statements, according to the warrant, were sent via text messages and the cop-

ies police acquired were print outs of the texts.

The state trooper that interviewed Weaver saw a photograph of a bank statement that, according to the warrant, indicated Sudik had a \$6.034 million family trust account at Chelsea Groton Bank that would pay for the business.

The trooper contacted the bank and spoke with facilities manager Donna Thompson, who gave a sworn statement that the document was false, according to the warrant. She identified several characteristics in the document proving it was a fake.

First, the title of the bank on the document was Chelsea Groton Savings Bank and the bank does not use the word 'savings' in its title, Thompson told the trooper. Second, the address was incorrect. Third, the account number does not match the bank's numbering system. Fourth, the bank does not have the type of account referred to in the document.

Lastly, Thompson told the trooper that the bank official named in the document, Joan Eagen, is not a branch manager as indicated by the document but rather a customer solution's associate and that her name is misspelled in the document and should be Egen.

Weaver also showed the trooper a document from Brown Pandiris & Scott authorizing the \$768,217 payment for the business, according to the warrant. Amanda Brown at the law firm subsequently told the trooper that it was a fake and had not been issued by the firm.

A document from People's United Bank allegedly authorizing the transfer of funds was also proven a fake.

When police contacted Sudik, he refused to speak, telling them his lawyer advised him against doing so, according to the document.



Paul Bell has visited Rocky every day since he was “incarcerated.” After three years, the pooch has found a new home, and will soon be moving to East Hampton.

Rocky’s Tale Has a Happy Ending in Portland

by Michelle Richmond

Portland’s famous black and white, 90-pound American Staffordshire Terrier Rocky has finally found a home and will be moving to East Hampton within the next couple of days.

The dog – owned by Portland resident Paul Bell – was impounded following a 2016 attack on Old Marlborough Road resident Stephen Demarest and has been in the custody of the Portland Dog Pound ever since, awaiting his fate.

According to legal documents, Demarest sustained wounds to his left ankle, inner leg and upper thigh and was transported to Middlesex Hospital for treatment. He subsequently received a \$275,000 settlement in a civil case against Bell for the “victim’s physical injuries” and his wife’s “mental pain and suffering.”

A decision to have the dog euthanized was appealed by Bell and after years of drawn-out legal entanglement between the town, Bell and attorneys on both sides, Rocky’s fate has finally been resolved.

According to an agreement signed by First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield and Bell this week, Rocky is being adopted and will be relocating to East Hampton “in the next few days.”

The agreement stipulates that a “suitable home for Rocky has been found outside the boundaries of the Town of Portland” and that the new owner has been “properly vetted by the Town Animal Control Officer.”

Under the agreement, Rocky is not allowed to return to Portland – under any circumstances – and Bell and the new owners agree to “abide by appropriate releases absolving the town of any responsibility or liability for Rocky’s placement or future conduct.”

In addition, Bell’s failure to abide by the conditions of Rocky’s release “shall entitle the Town of Portland to immediate injunctive relief, including but not limited to, immediate mandatory injunctive relief that Rocky be removed from the Town or impounded.”

At press time, Bell stated that Rocky was scheduled to be picked up by the adopter on either Wednesday or Thursday.

“It’s finally nice to get all this nonsense out of the way,” he said. “Rocky never deserved to be locked up for so long. I am very relieved, yet it’s bittersweet.”

Bell has visited Rocky every day since he was impounded, added that he was also “torn.”

“It’s kind of bittersweet,” he stated. “He’s getting out but he’s not coming back to me. I’ll be checking on him to make sure that he’s okay and that he blends in with the family. I’ll get him through this transition and he needs me to be there for him in the beginning. But once he settles in, it’s better that I don’t see him in the end. I’ve been with him for quite some time.”

“I wish the new owner all the best,” said Bransfield. “Hopefully this case has been concluded and everyone is happy.”

East Hampton

Patricia G. Bush

Patricia G. Bush, 72, of East Hampton, widow of the late Howard Bush, died Saturday Oct. 12, at Middlesex Hospital Hospice. Born May 5, 1947 in Haverill, Mass., she was the daughter of the late Harry G. and Virginia M. (Gionfriddo) Agnew.



Pat moved to East Hampton in 1979 and was a pediatric nurse having worked at Hartford Hospital and then at Marlborough Pediatric Associates before her retirement. Pat had also worked as a nanny for several years after the passing of her husband. Pat enjoyed going out to dinner with friends, traveling and going to the beach.

She is survived by her daughter, Stephanie Bush of Sandy Hook; her brother and his wife, Thomas and Karen Agnew of Summerville, S.C.; her two beloved grandchildren, Brandon Johnson and Amanda Johnson; her nephew, Christen Agnew; her niece, Tiffany Agnew Goodwin; and her foster daughter, Denise Babineau of Summerville, S.C. Pat is also survived by her loving companion, John Allison of East Hampton, and many close friends that she loved as family.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Oct. 19, at 10 a.m., in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Friends may call at the funeral home Saturday morning from 9 a.m. until the service begins at 10 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Sandy Peszynski Breast Cancer Fund at spbcf.com or to Middlesex Hospital Hospice Unit c/o Middlesex Hospital Department of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457, or middlesexhealth.org/donate.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Obituaries

Colchester

Russell Bilodeau

Russell Bilodeau, 89, of Colchester, husband of Susan Woodard Bilodeau, passed away surrounded by his loving family. Russ was born in Meriden, Dec. 2, 1929, to Lionel D. Bilodeau and Mary Rose Houde Bilodeau.

Russ led a nomadic life. After leaving Meriden, he lived in Gardner and Athol, Mass., moved to Bristol, followed by New Britain, Manhattan, Kan., Honolulu and Wiawha, Hawaii, back to Connecticut in Bristol, East Hartford, Manchester, East Haddam and now Colchester.

Russ loved to go camping and fishing on weekends with his six children and some neighbors. He never did much fishing because he was there to untangle lines. The children caught enough fish so the Friday meals on many occasions consisted of fried fish, which everyone enjoyed. Russ was also involved with Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Indian Guides, PTA, and Little League. After the children got older, Russ and his wife started traveling, growing and planting flowers, walking together, as well as playing tennis and golf together. They spent their winters in Vero Beach, Fla., for the last 25 years, just having fun with many friends.

Russ was a 1947 graduate of Bristol High School and graduated from Central Connecticut (TCC) in 1954 as a math major and taught seventh and eighth grade in East Granby. His career was interrupted by service for two years in the Army on an island called Oahu with his wife and two children. When he returned to civilian life, he was hired by Pratt & Whitney Aircraft and studied Engineering courses at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. After graduation, he was assigned to the test and development of jet engines and worked in many different phases in support and development for almost 36 years.

He was a man of strong convictions and integrity which he instilled in his children. He will always be remembered for his generosity, reaching out to help neighbors, especially children in need.

He is survived by his loving wife Susan; his children and their spouses, Russell (Michelle) Bilodeau of Manchester, Gary (Jennifer) Bilodeau of Granby, Greg (Kathy) Bilodeau of East Windsor, Kathleen (John) Terrill of Windham, Mark (Karen) Bilodeau of East Haddam, and Douglas (Nicole) Bilodeau of Tigard, Ore.; his brother, Carroll Bilodeau of Bristol; his 15 grandchildren, Ashley, Kyle, Troy, Renee, Amy, Robert, Kimberly, Nicholas, Alexander, Chelsea, Cody, Mitch, Kali, Allison, Madison, Jessie and Anna; six great-grandchildren, Mackenzie Rose, Sara, Nathan, Avery, Audrey, Laura; and numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by a grandson, Jake Bilodeau, and two brothers, Dorsey and Ken.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Oct. 19, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, beginning at 10 a.m. with visitation, followed by a celebration of the funeral Mass at 10:30 a.m. Full military honors will be observed at the church after Mass. Burial will be private in the Veterans Cemetery in Middletown at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in Russell's name to the Gary Sinise Foundation, P.O. Box 368, Woodland Hills, CA 91365.

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



East Hampton

William David Flannery

William David Flannery, also known as Bill, Billy, Papa, Uncle Billy, and Silly Billy, was a proud, lifelong resident of East Hampton.

Billy met the love of his life, Nancy, when he was 27 and they shared 33 years together as husband and wife. Through that journey, they had three precious children: Ross, Cody and Madigan. He was the happiest when cheering his children on during the numerous softball seasons, on the field through the 3D archery matches, from the sidelines during football games, and en route to motocross on the bus he specifically outfitted just for his boys. Together, they created a beautiful life, one full of love and laughter. Billy was a sports-playing, animal-hunting, grandchild-loving expert.

Billy's loving mother, Mary Barber Flannery, brothers Peter and Timmy, and sisters Karen and Kathy remember him in his youth snow-skiing the trails in the winter, barefoot water skiing on the lake in the summer, and fishing year-round. Billy and his father, James Peter Flannery, spent many days out on the ocean in the big boat. It is with his father that Billy's love for fishing flourished.

Billy's eldest son, Ross, and his wife Valerie, blessed the family with three grandbabies: Elizabeth, Stanley, and William. Together, Billy and Nancy, travelled to Maine as much as they could, towing the boat filled with fishing rods, lures and wacky-worms, in order to spend time on the lake making memories.

Billy worked for the State of Connecticut DEEP for 42 years and retired happily in 2017. Billy was also the proud owner of Timberland Tree Removal Experts LLC, starting that company 44 years ago. Billy was always busy as he constantly had somewhere to go and someone to help. Billy was always there when you needed him and he would move mountains, or piles of brush, to support you.

Billy traveled the world hunting exotic animals and prided himself on his food plots. His dedication to the farm and his love for fishing was one of the many passions he passed along to his grandbabies, his great-nieces and his great-nephews. Through these experiences, he made life-long friends and an ever-lasting impression on those around him. He dedicated his life to his work and to the people he loved.

A funeral liturgy was celebrated Monday, Oct. 14, in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial will be at the convenience of the family in the family plot in St. Patrick Cemetery.

As much as Billy would want you to go and spend money at Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's because, as their best customer, he would be worried that they may go bankrupt, in lieu of flowers, please send donations to CT DEEP: No Child Left Inside with check made out to Treasurer, State of Connecticut c/o BOR NCLI Business Office, CT DEEP, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106.

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



Portland

Otto E. Wagner

Otto E. "Buddy" Wagner, husband of the late Cliffeen (Moon) Wagner, left this earth with grace and dignity Saturday, Oct. 12. Otto was born Dec. 21, 1927, to the late Mary E. Wagner-Smith and Otto B. Wagner in Waterbury.

Otto went to work after an eighth-grade education to help support his family. Otto later served honorably in the United States Army. Otto met and married the love of his life Cliffeen and raised four children in the Waterbury/Wolcott area. He was a very hard-working man, holding down two to three jobs most of his life to support his children.

He leaves to mourn his loss three sons, Douglas Wagner and his wife Iris of Wolcott and Florida, Thomas Wagner of Portland, and Glenn Wagner of Southington; his devoted daughter-in-law, Alison Wagner of Portland; his brother, William Smith and his wife Arlene of Florida and Burlington; four grandsons; one great-granddaughter; and several nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his daughter Lisa; his sisters and brother-in-law, Mary and Peter Pape, and Margaret Galardi.

The family would like to thank the outstanding and dedicated employees on the first floor of Portland Care and Rehab for their excellent care and friendship to both Otto and his family.

Family and friends called Tuesday evening, Oct. 15, at Woodtick Memorial, 420 Woodtick Rd., and on Wednesday morning, Oct. 16. A funeral home service was held that morning. Burial followed in Edgewood Cemetery.

Visit [woodtickmemorial.com](http://www.woodtickmemorial.com) to leave notes of comfort to Otto's family.

Portland

John F. Conklin

John F. Conklin, 98, died peacefully Thursday, July 4, in Phoenix, Ariz., with family by his side. Born Nov. 13, 1920, in New Haven, John was the oldest son of Roland H. and Mary E. (Ahmuty) Conklin. John lived most of his life in Portland, before he and his late wife Victoria (Kubeck) moved to Sun City, Ariz., in 1984.

John proudly served his country during World War II as a staff sergeant in the U.S. Army Air Force. After his time in the service, he graduated from the University of Connecticut with a degree in history. John retired from Shaw Belting Co. in Middletown as a longtime abrasive sales representative. Retirement didn't slow him down as he continued his love of playing Racquet Ball, climbing the White Tank Mountains, panning for gold, selling clocks and other items at the Brass Armadillo, and well into his 90s, was a regular at Glendale Community College Fitness Center. He also found time to pursue his love of clocks and clock repair, listening to and acquiring jazz records, educating himself on antiques of all kinds and Sunday coffee with friends before heading to the auction.

John was a man known for his insatiable curiosity, love and respect for his family, fondness for his hometown and his smiling Irish eyes. Once John made a friend, they remained his friend for life. He will be missed.

John is survived by his daughter Victoria and son-in-law Mark Brown of Amston, and grandson Kelit Brown of Jersey City, N.J. He also leaves behind his brother, William Conklin of Wethersfield; sister-in-law, Antonia Conklin of Westminster, Md.; cousin Charlotte Anderson of Delmar, N.Y., and one niece and four nephews along with their families. He also leaves his good friends Michael Donovan of Tucson, Ariz., Penny Lee and Joe Hewitt of Sun City, Ariz., and Sandi Nelsen, also of Sun City.

John was predeceased by his wife Victoria, brother Roland (Junnie) Conklin Jr., and sister Betty and brother-in-law Mark Young.

The family wishes to thank Emil and Larisa Mercea for the kindness shown to John while in their care.

Graveside services will be held Saturday, Nov. 2, at St. Mary Cemetery in Portland. A private gathering will follow.



Hebron

Christine Ann McKenzie

Christine Ann (Misovich) McKenzie, 60, of Hebron, beloved wife of Stephen McKenzie, passed away peacefully Sunday, Oct. 13, surrounded by her loving family. Chris was born Oct. 29, 1958, in Manchester, daughter of the late Michael and Ella Misovich.

She met and married the love of her life of 34 years Stephen. Together they raised two wonderful children Keith and Kimberly. Chris was devoted and instrumental in raising her precious grandson Alex for his first five years of life.

Chris was a whiz with numbers, working in the accounting field including Advest Inc. and recently at Natchaug Hospital. She was generous of heart, brilliant of mind, caring by nature and loved by many. She enjoyed being creative in beadwork, jewelry making and mosaics. Chris enjoyed camping, playing bingo, tag sailing, dancing to music and cooking and entertaining were her pleasures. She was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, sister, aunt and godmother.

In addition to her beloved Stephen, Chris is survived by son Keith McKenzie and wife Jacquelyn and their son Gavin, daughter Kimberly Clifford and husband John and their son Alex; her step grandchildren, Lexi and Johnny; three sisters, Sheila Wheeler and her husband Brian, Marlene Couch and her husband Russell and Allison Munroe and her husband William; her three nephews, Scott Wheeler and his wife LeeAnn, Michael Wheeler and Eric Wheeler; her niece and goddaughter, Salena Couch and her fiancé Scott Doubleday; and her niece Pamela Bill and her husband Jeremy.

Chris also leaves her brother-in-law Rodney McKenzie and his wife Peggy and their daughter Hillary LaMalfa and her husband John and their children McKenzie and Sam, many other aunts, uncles, cousins and a cherished circle of close friends.

Chris was predeceased by her in-laws, Velma and George McKenzie and her brother-in-law Daniel McKenzie and his wife Maureen.

Chris's family would like to extend a special thank you to staff at Marlborough Health & Rehabilitation Center for the love and attention they bestowed on her and also Masonic Hospice for hospice and end-of-life support to Chris and her family.

All are welcome to join the family for calling hours at Holmes-Watkins Funeral Home, 400 Main St., in Manchester on Sunday, Oct. 20, from 3-6 pm. A celebration of her life will be Monday, Oct. 21, at 10 a.m., at the First Congregational Church 359 Route 6, Andover CT 06232. Burial will follow in East Cemetery in Manchester.

Memorial donations may be made to First Congregational Church, 359 Route 6, Andover, CT 06232.

To leave an online condolence, visit [holmeswatkins.com](http://www.holmeswatkins.com).

