



RIVEREAST

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Honored for Bravery... A U.S. Marine who grew up in Colchester was recently recognized with The U.S. Department of the Interior Citizen's Award for Bravery after saving a woman and her son when a tree crushed their car. See story, additional photo on page 9.

Orange to Step Down from State Assembly

by Karla Santos

Linda Orange has represented the 48th District, which covers most of Colchester, in the state House for the past 23 years. But that service will come to an end in February, as Orange has tendered her resignation from state office.

The 69-year-old Marlborough native is currently working from home, as she tries to focus on her treatment for pancreatic cancer. She was diagnosed with the disease in the summer.

Orange said working in the 48th District has given her the ability to help make a difference in its communities and has allowed her to meet many people that have turned into friends.

The 48th District includes Colchester, Lebanon, Windham and Mansfield. The district previously covered Salem and East Haddam as well.

"I have enjoyed working with the people of the 48th District and with all of the towns that I have served over the years," Orange said in her resignation letter, which was released on Nov. 8. "Being your state representative for the past 23 years has been an honor and a joy."

"To my friends and colleagues: we have laughed a lot, we have agreed and disagreed and we have always come together to reach a compromise," she continued. "I am very proud of the work that we have done together."

Orange said this week that working in government can be better than other people may make it seem. "You are able to help people and that's what I'm all about – being able to help people," she said.

Orange said that in her 23 years of service she was able to accomplish a lot for the towns that she represented – and pointed particularly to the state's first anti-bullying bill she created

in 2006.

"And of course we've done a lot with that bill since," Orange said. "It is still a huge problem for our youth and now of course we've gone into cyber-bullying. There wasn't cyber-bullying in 2006 and now there is. There has been a lot addressed to that issue through the years."

Orange also said that part of her job was to work with the town leaders to help address individual issues.

"There has been such an array of things that I have done for the towns that I have represented, all the towns, working in conjunction with the town managers, the mayors, the first selectmen," Orange said. "I've worked with many constituents on individual issues that they've had and I'm just delighted that I was able to help them accomplish what they needed on the individual basis."

Some of the people who worked with Orange are also proud of the work she did and said they were saddened by her resignation.

House Speaker Joe Aresimowicz, D-Berlin/Southington, and House Majority Leader Matt Ritter, D-Hartford, issued a joint statement on Nov. 8 lauding Orange for her time in office.

"Linda Orange is a fierce legislator who always stands tall for her constituents," their statement says. "Linda is a champion for eastern Connecticut and has an incredible depth of knowledge, especially on public safety issues. If an issue touches police or fire, we know to check in with Linda. Everyone in Colchester and eastern Connecticut can probably relate – you know when Linda enters the room; and her famous 'Bye-bye now' as she leaves. Her voice carries and carries. But her voice also makes

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Andover Residents Balk at Consolidating with Bolton

by Sloan Brewster

The town of Bolton has proposed consolidating its school system with Andover's, and while the Andover Board of Education is exploring the concept, parents in town have made it clear they're adamantly opposed.

Speakers at a Board of Selectmen meeting last week and a Board of Education this week turned out to blast the idea of sharing any town services with Bolton. Bolton has proposed two different options – one that would combine senior and recreation services of the two towns, and also regionalize grades six and seven, and another that would totally combine the two elementary schools, which would free up the Andover Elementary School building for reuse by the town.

The Board of Education Wednesday formed a subcommittee that would look at how other districts are dealing with declining enrollment, according to Board of Education Chairman Shannon Loudon and other board members. It will have no decision-making authority but will report back to the board with the results of its

research.

The committee will include two members each from the selectmen and education boards, one from the Board of Finance, and two citizens-at-large.

"We're just exploring," Loudon said. "We're not empowered to make any kind of decision with regards to anything that is happening with shared services."

Board member Daniel Foran, who said the committee should not even look at the Bolton proposal, was the sole opponent.

"I feel like it's going to be better received and better executed if we keep it to our region," he said.

Board members repeatedly reminded him that the committee would not make decisions and was just looking at options.

"I will not support a motion to close down our school," Foran said.

"All we're doing is exploring," Steven Fuss said. "We should look at what other towns are doing."

"You've got to put it all on the table," Cynthia Murray said.

Loudon gave some background to the motion, which the Board of Selectmen had also considered a week earlier, saying that its impetus stemmed from a proposal to Town Administrator Eric Anderson by Bolton Chief Administrative Officer Joshua Steele Kelly.

In one of the options Kelly presented, he estimated consolidating the two elementary schools would save the town \$1.79 million from the current year's \$4.065 million budget. He broke it down further and said the per pupil cost for Andover would be \$13,000.

The school board Wednesday asked Schools Superintendent Sally Doyen to come back with a number for what the town currently pays in per pupil costs. Doyen did not return a request for comment by press time Thursday.

In a phone call Tuesday, Anderson said the regionalization discussion was an extension of a conversation about sharing overlapping town services, such as a community center and Pub-

lic Works equipment and labor.

"Like all small towns, we're struggling financially, all the town administrators and town managers talk to each other and it's a community discussion point," he said. "How do we save money?"

On Nov. 1, Anderson said he met with Kelly, who asked if Andover would consider regionalizing with the Bolton school district.

The other option Kelly proposed called for regionalizing grades 6 and 7 – which are already regionalized with Hebron and Marlborough – and creating a new senior and recreation center to be shared by the two towns. This option would save Andover an estimated \$511,000 per year. The option also included the towns creating a shared senior and recreation center.

Both options come with the possibility of displaced Andover teachers getting positions in Bolton.

Anderson stressed that the options were very

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you smile. Her humor and incredible commitment always come through the loudest. The Connecticut House of Representatives will miss our friend Linda Orange."

State Sen. Norm Needleman, whose district covers Colchester, also issued a statement highlighting Orange for who she was, not only as a person in public service but as a friend.

"I'm deeply saddened that Rep. Orange is resigning from the legislature as a result of her illness," Needleman said. "She's a friend, a mentor and someone who I deeply respect as a legislator and as a human being. She worked tirelessly for the residents of her district and the state and will be sorely missed."

Orange said this week she is thankful for the people who were responsible for her becoming a democrat as she used to be an unaffiliated voter.

In addition, she is thankful for the challenges and rewards of the work she did across the district. She said her district has progressives and conservatives and she has represented all of them.

"I want to thank my family for allowing me to do this work, they've been very good supporters," Orange said. "The people that I've met along this long path, I just want to say that without them, without the people of the 48th District it wouldn't have been possible. I love public service and the amount of people that have turned into friends in this district. I can't thank the citizens enough for their support of me. I still need their prayers to get through this portion of my journey of life."



Linda Orange

Residents Balk cont. from Front Page

much just talking points, and that the document prepared by Kelly merely "sets out the possibilities."

"We're both saying 'Is this even workable?'" Anderson said. "The intent is just to look at everything we do and saying what should we spend money on and how should we maximize our dollars."

The education board passed the motion to appoint the committee with six in favor, zero opposed and Foran abstaining.

* * *

At last week's Board of Selectmen meeting, which erupted with opposition to the regionalization idea, the board also made a motion to appoint a committee to explore shared services, including but not limited to education.

Selectman Jeff Murray challenged the motion, saying that per the Town Charter, it was an overreach of the Board of Selectmen's power.

"This is not the purview of this board," Murray said.

Murray moved to tweak the motion, excluding educational services with the plan to send a memo to the Board of Education asking it to explore regionalization. Selectman Scott Person seconded the motion.

Vice First Selectman Adrian Mandeville said the committee would be on a fact-finding mission with the intent of involving more residents than were involved when the school board proposed converting the third and fourth grade wing at Andover Elementary School into a senior center.

"I wasn't really happy with the way the three-four wing went down; I felt there wasn't enough community involvement," he said. "We need to push for community involvement."

Mandeville stressed that the education board would make any decisions about schools. He said he did not understand how appointing a committee was "dictating or steering."

"Even going this route, the Board of Ed is still the last stop for anything that has to do with them," he said. "We're not overstepping if you always come back to the community body that has the last say."

Murray was unconvinced.

"This is not our job, Adrian," he said.

Foran, who was in attendance at the meeting, chimed in, asking why public comment had been skipped. He suggested scheduling a joint meeting between the boards of selectmen and

education.

Selectmen said they wanted folks to have all the facts.

First Selectman Jeff Maguire said public comment would take place after selectmen held their discussion "so you could hear us."

"This discussion is just to understand and bring forth information," he said. "All it is, is we're trying to ferret out information to see what might be involved and what might not be involved."

The tweaked motion carried 3-2, with Mandeville and Paula King opposed.

After selectmen finished their discussion and voted, members of the public were invited to speak. Several speakers said they were opposed to Bolton's proposal.

"I, for one, did not move to Andover to combine my education with Columbia or Bolton," resident Joel Landry said. "Why are we even exploring these options in the first place?"

Cathy Desrosiers, who is also a former selectmen, said she did not support the idea of moving students to any town other than Hebron as the two towns already share the RHAM district for middle and high school and the town is also part of the AHM Youth and Family Services community.

"I want the kids in this town to have the same opportunities that my kids had," she said.

Foran asked what progress has been made to bring more business to town.

"I'm not saying that I want to build up the town, just bring some industry or something to offset taxes," he said. "What is being done to bring business to town, to bring in some more revenue?"

Board of Education member Gerard Crème thanked selectmen "for putting the responsibility of the Board of Ed back in the hands of the Board of Ed," to which the audience gave him a round of applause.

"We're functioning as one town and we should be united,"

The town should be exploring money saving options, Mandeville said at both meetings. However, he said the plan Bolton put forth "would not work," because it involves Andover committing to regionalizing other services, including senior services, and because there is no guarantee that at some point Bolton's enrollment would not spike and the slots open to Andover would no longer be available.

Business Owners Present Scooter to Colchester Resident

by Karla Santos

Several small business owners of Colchester joined together Monday for a cause: to present a new mobility scooter to a longtime Colchester resident.

But Donald Washington, who most people in Colchester know as “Abraham,” the guy that walks around the town green and shops at Noel’s, is not an ordinary resident.

Abraham, 76, is a Vietnam War veteran, a researcher of African American history in Connecticut and someone who offered his time during the construction of Colchester’s town hall.

He said he prefers to be called Abraham because “I’m a spiritual person.”

Eduardo Lex, owner of Lex Landscaping, was one of the small business owners that gathered as good Samaritans.

“I noticed driving by here that Abraham had a hard time walking—really difficult,” Lex said.

Lex added that he has had conversations in the past with other local small business owners about Abraham, which is how the idea of giving him a mobility scooter came up. Lex said he searched online and found a “brand new scooter” that used to belong to a woman that passed away.

“I got a great deal on it and decided to have the small businesses give us a hand and chip in,” Lex said. “Nobody said ‘no.’”

Lex said Abraham is normally seen walking around the town green and shopping in the area.

“He shops at Noel’s, it takes him a long time to get over there,” Lex said.

Lex said the idea was to give back to help somebody out.

But not only did the business owners notice that Abraham had trouble walking, but they also noticed that Abraham lives in the second floor of a home that has no handicapped accessibility, a problem he said they will try to look into.

“Everybody knows him,” Lex said. “He’s a nice little man.”

Lisa Prentiss, whose husband owns Hayward Construction, was also on board presenting the mobility scooter to Abraham.

“Abraham has been in Colchester for many

years,” Prentiss said.

She added that at some point Abraham lived close to where she lived and both her husband and herself gave him rides on occasion.

Prentiss said that one day Abraham mentioned to her that he was interested in a mobility scooter and then she spoke to Lex about it.

Lex said that after the donations were given by the business owners for the scooter, there was a \$250 left that they used to purchase a Noel’s gift certificate for Abraham.

Prentiss said that contributing to this cause felt “great.”

“He’s a super nice guy,” she added.

“We want to see a smile on his face,” Lex said.

Al Uliasz, a home improvement contractor in Colchester also helped contribute to the purchase of the scooter and was on board during the presentation.

Before presenting the scooter to Abraham, which was a surprise, Lex said a few words to the group.

“We the small businesses of Colchester are here to speak in a single voice,” Lex said. “We are here about our community. Abraham is a longtime resident of Colchester who is kind and well loved by the community. That’s why we are all here, to give back to someone who needs our help. Abraham has difficulty getting around, but not anymore because of all of us. We are here to improve your quality of life, my brother. I want to thank all the small business people that are here, who have donated to this event possible. Thank you to all of you and your businesses.”

When Abraham found out what his gift was, he smiled and showed excitement.

“It’s nice when people remember you like you remember them,” he said. “It’s a wonderful feeling. I wish I could express it better.”

According to Lex, the businesses that contributed to acquire the scooter include: Noel’s IGA Supermarket, Gano’s Power Equipment, Mark’s United Auto Parts, Quality Consignment, Gung Ho Chinese Restaurant, Toyo Hibachi & Asian Fusion, Hayward Construction, Lex Landscaping, Uliasz Home Improvement,



Several small business owners of Colchester joined together Monday for a cause: to present a new mobility scooter to longtime resident Donald Washington (center), more commonly known as “Abraham.”

Family Pizza Restaurant & Grill of Colchester and Broadway Wine & Spirits.

Abraham was born in Illinois. He said he had been in Colchester for 39 years before he moved to Mexico 10 years ago. He returned to Colchester in July of this year.

Abraham said he has no children and was never married.

He said that at some point during his time in the military, he was stationed in Germany.

After his time in the military, Abraham went back to work for a while, he said. Then he went to college to become educated in psychology and social services. He later majored in hotel and restaurant management. For some time, he

worked at Lincoln Lake Lodge, also known as Davis Resort, near Linwood Cemetery.

Abraham said he helped build the Colchester town hall and one of the schools. He said one of the things he did was to help direct traffic on the construction site of the town hall.

Abraham researched Colchester, performed some work related to the Colchester Colored School and lectured to promote African American history in Connecticut. He said he spent a lot of time in the library.

Abraham’s research was used in the young adult novel *Pemba’s Song: A Ghost Story*, by Marilyn Nelson and Tonya Hegamin. The book can be purchased on Amazon.

Bylone Gives Two Colchester Town Hall Staffers Walking Papers

by Karla Santos

Just three days after being elected first selectman, Mary Bylone already began shaking up Town Hall – sending termination notices to Tricia Dean, who serves as the executive assistant to the first selectman, and Sylvia Miller, a department clerk at the first selectman’s office.

The dismissals are effective next Monday, Nov. 18, the same day Bylone will be sworn in.

Bylone said she will be bringing in her own executive assistant. As far as the department clerk’s position, Bylone said she will examine if it is even needed in the first place. Miller worked there on a part-time basis, for four hours per day.

Bylone stressed it’s not uncommon for politicians to bring in their own staff when they first start a job. Dean, however, said she worked in her role for six years and with three different first selectmen.

“The Republicans have been in charge for quite a while,” Bylone said. “They’ve made a decision not to turn over. Art [Shilosky] took the person that had been there under Gregg [Schuster] and so, yes, I’m bringing in my own person.”

But Bylone said she wanted to make it clear that the reason she’s bringing in someone else to work with her has nothing to do with political parties.

“This is not about Democrat and Republican,” Bylone said. “This is not about men and women. This is about: when you are going to be in a position like [I am], you want to have a

person that you can work with, that you know will feel confident to challenge you, will work with you, will share the same values but is able to speak frankly.”

Bylone said the role was a “big responsibility,” and admitted, “I have no evidence that says [Dean] hasn’t done a great job there, to be frank.”

But, Bylone added, the two of them simply don’t have a relationship.

“I don’t have a relationship with her to know whether she’s this person or not for me,” Bylone said. “My job is to represent the people who put me in office and actually to represent the whole town, but it’s not about party. ... It’s not about that at all.”

According to connvoters.com, Dean is a registered Republican.

Bylone said that prior to sending the termination notice, she spoke with Shilosky, who spoke highly of Dean and suggested Bylone not to terminate her. That same day, Bylone also asked Shilosky for permission to speak with the town attorney to ensure her plan was lawful.

“The town attorney gave me advice,” Bylone said. “I followed the advice. I’ve read the current Colchester personnel policies, I am acting within those policies.”

Then, Bylone asked Shilosky if he could inform the two employees about the termination of their employment.

“Art refused,” Bylone said. “I think that would’ve been the nice thing to do, to be hon-

est with you. But he said he had no intention to do that and he wasn’t even working on Friday.”

Bylone said that left her with no choice but to send in the termination notice. However, she said, Shilosky did show up to work on Friday and told the employees of their dismissal before Bylone’s letter had arrived.

Bylone said her intention was to tell those employees of their termination on Thursday, when she originally spoke with Shilosky.

“My thing was, let me let them know as soon as possible and so I could’ve just left the letters for them just as a written notice, the official written notice,” Bylone said.

Shilosky declined to comment for this story. Bylone said that so far these two are the only positions she plans on implementing changes to.

“I think we have a really great Town Hall structure,” Bylone said. “I think there’s a lot of really terrific people there. Colchester is a really terrific place. It’s not like it’s a broken thing that needs somebody to come in and pick up the pieces. Colchester is not like that. Colchester is terrific. I’m very excited to have the opportunity to really just get things moving a little bit faster and to really get to our full capacity. We have a wonderful town. I’m very proud to have Colchester be my home.”

Dean said she’s thankful for the people she worked with and added that she has received a lot of support from the community in the recent days.

“I’ve worked with some of the smartest, compassionate and dedicated people in Town Hall as well as elected officials,” Dean said. “Their goal and my goal was just the betterment for the town and they’ve helped me navigate a political field with class and dignity, not for personal gain but just to get the job done. The recent outpouring of support from co-workers and elected officials and actually the community has been immense and I really couldn’t ask for a better send off than that.”

Miller told the *Rivereast* she has served in Town Hall for more than 10 years, on a part-time basis. She said that while she felt “most people would think it’s a possibility” that an incoming first selectman would want to bring in his or her own people, she also thought that, given the length of time in town and the depth of their knowledge of the office, she and Dean would have been given the opportunity to continue serving.

Still, she said, “I certainly am not grief-stricken” by her departure.

“I think if that’s your first act as selectman, I think that’s a bad start,” she said.

Republican Town Committee Chairman Brendan Healy also this week expressed dismay over the terminations.

“Firing someone because of their potential personal, political beliefs is, by definition, an act of bigotry,” Healy said in an email. “While I wish Bylone success in her two-year term, I hope she makes better decisions going forward.”

Colchester Native Honored for Yosemite Rescue

by Karla Santos

A U.S. Marine who grew up in Colchester was recently recognized with The U.S. Department of the Interior Citizen's Award for Bravery after saving a woman and her son when a tree crushed their car.

Rory Farrell, 35, was on vacation in September 2017 at Yosemite National Park in California when he saved the woman and her 4-year-old child.

According to an article written by the Marines, the tree that fell on the car the victims were in was 33 inches in circumference and 110 feet high.

Lisa Emmer, Farrell's mother, said her son was nominated for the award by Kevin Killian, Chief Ranger at Yosemite National Park.

Farrell is currently on an eight-month deployment on the U.S.S. Boxer, which is why his mother and his three sisters traveled to Washington D.C. to attend the ceremony and accept the award on behalf of Farrell on Sept. 12.

According to Megin Farrell, one of Farrell's sisters, he is a Special Operations Independent Duty Corpsman (SOIDC) and a Special Amphibious Reconnaissance Corpsman (SARC). Megin said that Farrell is also a Special Forces medic, which helped him take action when the accident happened.

Megin said that receiving the award on behalf of her brother was "incredibly emotional," and her family wished he was at the ceremony.

"We were very honored that he asked us to get the award from him," Megin said. "To be amongst the other people and the other recipients and to hear those stories as well was absolutely remarkable because he was certainly amongst quite a few heroes that received awards that day."

Most of the award recipients were department

of interior employees. Farrell received the civilian award for bravery.

"We were crying," Megin said. "When we walked up there and they were talking about him and they were telling the story and showing the pictures. It was incredibly emotional for many reasons."

But receiving the award was bittersweet for Farrell and his family.

"The one thing that continuously goes through our heads is something that turned out to be a remarkable day for Rory was a very tragic day for the family," Megin said. "While he saved their lives, it was still nonetheless something very traumatic for them."

Megin said that she understands her brother "knows in his heart what a terrible day it was for that family."

"I know he feels odd being recognized for it and for him it's like well, I think anybody would've done this," she added.

In the rescue, Farrell had to resuscitate both the mother and the child. Megin said the boy had his jaw locked and he had to manipulate it to get it open. In addition, Farrell had to use his body to push the roof of the car up so that he could get the little boy out.

"The training that Rory has received in the military put him in the position," Megin said. "He was just honestly at the right place at the right time."

Farrell and his sisters grew up in Colchester. His mother still lives in Colchester.

"Rory graduated from Bacon Academy in 2003, entered the Navy in April of 2004," Emmer said. "He is dedicated to serving his country and his military accomplishments and training [are] outstanding. I could not be prouder of my son and his sisters who all graduated from Bacon Academy."



Rory Farrell, 35, was recently honored by the U.S. Department of the Interior for his heroic actions saving a woman and son and her at Yosemite National Park in 2017. Farrell is currently on active duty, so his family accepted the commendation on his behalf. Pictured with Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt are, from left, Farrell's sisters Candace Farrell, Megin Farrell, and Alexandra McGrath.

Monument Honoring Hebron Resident Moved to RHAM

by Sloan Brewster

Last week, a monument honoring a Hebron resident who was killed in the Vietnam War was moved from Veterans Memorial Park to the front of RHAM High School.

Shortly before he left for Vietnam, a Marine named James Batson saw a large boulder and pointed it out to a friend of his, Frank Celio, according to John Tuttle, adjutant of American Legion Post 95.

"It would make a great monument someday," Tuttle said Batson told Celio.

Little did Batson know that his name would one day grace the stone.

Batson was killed on March 28, 1967 "in a horrific battle," Tuttle said.

Years later, Celio – a local firefighter and owner of the general store that was located where Something Simple Café is now located – approached Batson's half-brother about transforming the stone into a monument to Batson.

"And then the project evolved," Tuttle said.

Once the stone was completed, it was placed on the athletic field at RHAM, where Batson graduated, Tuttle said. Later, it was moved to Veterans Memorial Park but the spot where the monument was located was difficult to see and many people didn't even realize it was there.

"It was isolated in a dark corner of the park," Tuttle said on the cool rainy Monday when the monument was moved to RHAM.

"It was between two trees with overgrown holly bushes around it," Tom Atwood Jr., Eagle Scout candidate, chimed.

Dissatisfied with the position of the stone, Hebron veterans worked with RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie to find a better place for it, Tuttle said. They also solicited Atwood's assistance; he selected moving the monument as his Eagle Scout project.

Bringing the monument to the school was a way to honor and remember beloved social studies teacher Larry Fagen, who passed away in February of 2015, Leslie said.

"It was always his, kind of, dream to con-

struct a monument to Vietnam veterans somewhere on campus," Leslie said. "We had thought we would probably do it in front of the building between the flag poles."

About four years ago, Tuttle, who participates in RHAM's annual Veterans Day celebration shared with Leslie his frustration about the lack of visibility for Batson's monument, the principal said. Leslie then suggested moving it to the front of the school.

At the end of the last school year, Leslie said he and Tuttle discussed the move more seriously, brainstorming about getting it done.

"Let's do this," Leslie said he told Tuttle.

From there, they engaged Hebron officials in the conversation, including Town Manager Andrew Tierney and Director of Public Works Kevin Kelly, Leslie said. They set a date earlier this fall, gathered volunteers and dug out the monument, only to discover it was attached to a large block of cement buried in the ground.

It didn't seem possible to move the stone, so the principal said he started talking about having a new monument made for the school.

Tuttle called his friend Brad Rowe, a monument maker from Litchfield, to see if he could make the new one. During that conversation, Rowe told him that, most likely, Batson's monument was not actually adhered to the cement and could probably be moved after all.

A new date was set to see if the move was doable. Rowe traveled from Litchfield to join the volunteer crew – including Public Works Department employees working in their free time – to move the stone. At his instruction, they rocked it back and forth until it loosened from the concrete and, using a pay loader borrowed from the Public Works Department, moved it across the street to the school.

Once the stone was in place, Rowe instructed Atwood that to assure the stone settles into the ground, he should saturate the dirt around it with water, wait for it to dry and do it again.

Atwood will also beautify the area around the stone, by adding stone dust, a pattern of



A monument honoring a former Hebron resident killed in the Vietnam War was recently moved to the front of RHAM High School.

crisscrossed bluestones, and replacing potted plants in the spot with permanent plantings.

Atwood said he wanted to help move the stone as it not only gave him an Eagle Scout project but also because he has an interest in history and a love for helping the town.

He and Leslie approached the Class of 2019, which made a donation toward the project from the class discretionary fund.

Having the monument at the school will keep students connected to the community and veterans, Leslie said.

"I guess what really strikes me the most is for years and years and years we've been able to do programs to support and honor our veter-

ans and now to have a program at RHAM that further connects our community and local vets, I think it's priceless," Leslie said. "It helps to communicate RHAM's place in the heart of our veterans."

Kristen Small, RHAM special education teacher, who was Fagen's co-teacher, said she was pleased that because of the monument, students will remember who he was.

"I love it; it makes me happy," she said. "I just love that we continue to carry on his legacy."

The monument will be dedicated on Dec. 7 at 10:30 a.m. at the stone. The rain date is Dec. 14.

No Decision Yet on St. Clements Banquet Hall in East Hampton

by Sloan Brewster

The Planning and Zoning Commission's public hearing for a special permit by Saint Clements Castle to build a banquet hall on a property currently zoned residential has been closed – though no decision has been made on the proposal.

Concurrent with the special permit is an application to change the zone to commercial. The banquet hall would be at 49 Oakum Dock.

"If the zone change is approved, the commission can issue the permit," Planning and Zoning official Jeremy DeCarli said. "If it's not approved, they can't."

Both applications are under the name Roncalli Institute, which encompasses Saint Clements Castle as well as numerous commercial entities, nonprofit organizations and trusts.

The commission will likely make its decisions at its Dec. 4 meeting, barring no requests for an extension by the applicant, DeCarli said, adding that he did not foresee such a request being made save if there's missing information or a missing approval from the Chatham Health District.

Saint Clements Castle occupies land in both Portland and East Hampton, with the main castle in Portland and Great Hill Pond Brook the boundary between the towns.

In 2001, Saint Clements purchased the Oakum Dock property – then a defunct marina with a grandfathered use in the residential zone.

In 2010, East Hampton paid Roncalli Institute chairman Edward Doherty – who at the time was operating as Saint Clements Marina LLC – \$673,000 for an easement for two wells on the property and to drill two more wells.

The town also paid to remove several buildings within the sanitary radius and to remediate contaminated soil.

In 2010, Saint Clements received approvals to build a storage building and connect two buildings.

A fire in 2017 resulted in the town's discovery that Saint Clements was running a banquet facility with a bar and a makeshift kitchen in the so-called storage facility, DeCarli said.

"It kind of all came to light," he said. "We issued a violation letter."

It was not, however, the first time Saint Clements was caught running the hall.

"They had kind of been caught in the past," DeCarli said. A 2011 cease-and-desist for operating a banquet hall was lifted two weeks after it was issued.

After the fire, the town also learned that Saint Clements had paved a parking lot without permission and that one of the buildings was within the restricted well area.

DeCarli then met with Saint Clements' lawyer, Ken Slater, who, according to the town official, admitted the banquet hall operation and got an Inland/Wetlands Watercourse Agency permit for the parking lot.

After that, the commission went back and forth with Saint Clements officials on what could be built on the property, DeCarli said. Ultimately, he recommended they take the zone change and special permit approach.

A 2017 zone change request from Saint Clements Castle was denied, DeCarli said. The castle then came back with a request for a special permit for a church, which is allowed in a

residential zone.

Called the Chapel of the Angels, the church had the identical square footage and footprint of what in the current application is called an "assembly hall."

The application for the church was withdrawn in April 2018.

Next, castle officials returned with an application for a marina footprint, in the same footprint.

"That would've just been an administrative approval," DeCarli said. "I sent them a letter asking them to define what is a marina clubhouse. I didn't hear back."

When he again met with folks from Saint Clements, he suggested they go for the zone change.

If the zone change is approved, the new building will be moved from the town's restricted area where the wells are, DeCarli said. There will also be vegetative buffers between the building and restricted area.

Peter Callen, secretary of Saint Clements Castle and formerly its president, described the banquet hall as "a small more boutique space" compared with Prince Edward Hall at the main castle.

The "smaller, more intimate" East Hampton space will hold a maximum of 150 people, he said. Events will have between 100 to 110 guests compared with the 300 that attend gatherings at Prince Edward Hall.

The "beautiful building" will have a two-story ballroom with a pitched roof and chandeliers and will look out over the river, Callen said. It will be used for a variety of celebra-

tions including weddings, bar mitzvahs and birthday parties.

"It's adds a very different experience being at the waterfront versus down at the castle," he said. "It's going to be a high-demand place."

Callen said the new facility will increase the number of guests at Saint Clements from about 40,000 per year to 50,000 and that Saint Clements wants to start a dialogue on how to keep them in the area, taking advantage of local eateries, breweries and wineries.

"We're an expensive place to get married and the people that are coming here, they have money to spend. We can leverage that into East Hampton, into Portland. That's really the economic driver for the towns," he said. "They're here. It's not 'build it and they will come;' they're here."

After a site walkthrough of the parcel in question last month, Saint Clements invited neighbors and concerned residents for refreshments, a tour of the facility and a conversation on how they can all work together, Callen said.

With a sound engineer, they walked through ways noise will be mitigated, he said.

Soundproofing plans include automated doors, insulation and added thickness in the walls, DeCarli said.

"There's all kinds of sound mitigation measures that they've put together," he said.

Callen said that, after that tour, the concerned residents "walked away less opposed."

The sound "is a legitimate concern; the important thing is that we're talking to each other and listening to each other," he said. "Honestly it should've been done a long time ago."

Historic Mural Graces Andover Library

by Sloan Brewster

A mural denoting local history has been installed at the back of the Andover Public Library.

The project, which was completed last week, began a year ago last summer when Library Board of Directors member Dianne Grenier happened upon "a huge mural" on the back of a building overlooking the Air Line Trail in Hebron.

"I went there and saw that and said this is what Andover needs on the back of our library wall," she said.

The mural is dedicated to former first selectman and library board member Jean Gasper, who passed away in 2015 and had long spoken of having a mural put on the library.

Sara Walling, of Hebron, who was on the team of five artists who created the mural over the rail trail, did the one in Andover, completing some finishing touches last Monday.

The 40-foot wall portrays a sampling of Andover's historic, people, places and events, including an image of General Jean-Baptiste-Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau as he marched with his troops through town to aid George Washington in the Revolutionary War; the old town hall; First Congregational Church; a hiker strolling along the covered bridge; the train depot; Monument Park; the old creamery, which was located where Monument Park is now located and was known for its award winning butter; and a bald eagle flying over Andover Lake at sunset.

The steam train, which, according to Grenier, "was a big deal" with 50 trains rolling through town per day in the 1920s and 30s, is also depicted and seems to be rushing toward onlookers as it rolls along the tracks on one of its many routes, such as bringing local students to Willimantic High School.

Walling, who started working on the painting in mid-May, said the project stalled a few times due to the elements.

The initial plan was for her to start the work in April, but "it rained and rained and rained," Grenier said. Then when the recently paved parking lot was emanating fumes in the sweltering summer heat, she was forced to take time off until it cooled down. This fall, more rain interfered.

"It was all very weather-dependent," Grenier said.

The biggest challenge for the artist was having the art there from start to finish for anyone to see and "being very transparent about my process," Walling said. Normally, she works in a studio and does not reveal paintings until they are complete.

Sitting on the ground and working close to the straight wall without being able to angle it in one direction or another as she would while painting on a canvas was also a hurdle, forcing her to contort in awkward positions to get images the way she wanted, she said. Yellow jackets flying around her, one in particular that she said seemed to be on a mission to get her, were another issue.

Working with acrylic paints was also different for Walling, who said she tends to work in oils. In her studio, she generally does still life, setting up fruit or vases with flowers and painting what she sees.

Walling became involved with the Hebron mural after she decided to devote more of her time to her art and try to make a run at earning a living with it. She happened to meet folks in Hebron who were looking for artists to work on the mural.

"I was literally just in the right place at the right time," she said.

She credits her husband for taking on more work to support the family while she embraces her art, Walling said.

The Board of Directors spearheaded the mural project, finding funds without tapping into taxpayer dollars, Grenier said. A big chunk of the cost came from the Myron Parker



Artist Sara Walling, of Hebron, paints some finishing touches on a mural on the back of the Andover Public Library. Walling worked on the historic painting from mid-May right up until last week.

Yeomans/Edward Myron Yeomans Family Fund that was established by Alice Yeomans-Moe, who passed in 2000 and left the funds to the library to use for historical purposes. The fund is managed by the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

The board also reached out to some residents and local businesses for donations.

"The Gasper family was very generous," Grenier said.

Grenier would not share the cost of the project, adding that the final tally has not been calculated as there are still a few things left to be done before the project is concluded.

The board also worked with Walling on the design, meeting with her, discussing the history that would grace the mural and going through sketches with her, Grenier said.

The project also involved replacing rusted basement doors, mounting security cameras to deter vandalism, taking out and boxing in basement windows that did not provide light, having a mason prepare the wall for the painting by filling in cracks and smoothing it out.

The wall also had to be power washed and primed before Walling could start painting.

The last steps of the project will include covering the mural in three coats of sealer to protect it from weather, bringing in gooseneck lights to shine on the painting and adding curbing to stop cars from driving into the building and damaging the finished product, Grenier said.

"Ah, I think it's a thing of beauty for all to enjoy for a long time," she said. "Everybody I talk to thinks this is a thing of beauty."

No Change After Portland Election Recount

by Mike Thompson

The numbers changed ever so slightly, but the outcome remained the same Tuesday, when a recount of last week's Board of Selectmen election confirmed Michael "Julio" Hernandez is the newest selectman.

Hernandez, a Republican, edged Democrat Andrea Alfano by a mere 10 votes. He replaces Ben Srb, the lone member of the Board of Selectmen who did not seek re-election.

Hernandez topped Alfano by nine votes in last week's election. This scant margin triggered a recount, which Town Clerk Ryan Curley said lasted about four hours on Tues-

day.

In the end, Alfano picked up one extra vote while Hernandez picked up two, increasing his margin of victory to a still-small 10 votes.

Still, a win's a win, and it means Hernandez joins Republicans Michael Pelton and Edward "Rick" Sharr on the board, along with Democrats Ralph Zampano, James Tripp and Louis Pear.

With First Selectman Susan Bransfield being a Democrat, the board has a 4-3 Democratic majority.

Portland Police News

11/5: Ryan Robley, 34, of 5 Cox Rd., was charged with improper use of marker plate, Portland Police said.

11/5: Emily Necco, 24, of 77 Tremont St., New Britain, was charged with second-degree larceny, police said.

11/6: Sean Anderson, 32, of 354 Chestnut Hill Rd., Colchester, was charged with misuse of plates, insufficient insurance, police said.

11/9: Charles Stack, 28, of 171 College St., Middletown, was charged with third-degree larceny, police said.

Colchester Police News

10/31: State Police said Jason David Urban, 40, of 283 Westchester Rd., was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

11/2: State Police said Joseph Boka, 69, of 350 Jurach Rd., Colchester, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny.

11/7: State Police said Kevin Lamar Savage, 26, of Bridgeport, was arrested and charged with possession of controlled substance.

11/9: State Police said David Johnson, 65, of Lebanon, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and failure to drive in the proper lane.

Hebron Police News

11/2: State Police said Madison Clark, 20, of Manchester, was arrested and charged with criminal attempt/sixth degree larceny, criminal attempt/ third degree robbery, second degree breach of peace and third-degree assault.

11/3: State Police said Bryan Hoffman, 18, of 224 Hope Valley Rd., Hebron, was arrested and charged with violation of a protective order.

Marlborough Police News

11/9: State Police said Jason Guida, 44, of Cromwell, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny and second-degree robbery.

Obituaries

Colchester

Theresa Mary Stackowski

Theresa Mary Stackowski, 87, of Colchester, passed away Saturday, Nov. 9, at Hartford Hospital. Born in South Canaan, Pa., on Nov. 21, 1931, she was the daughter of the late Ettore and Louisa Fantani.

As a young woman Theresa met and fell in love with the man who would become her husband, John Stackowski. The couple was married May 1, 1954, and quickly started their family. In 1963 they moved to Colchester, spending over 65 years together before John's passing on June 29, 2019.

Above all, Theresa was a dedicated wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother who loved to be involved with her family's care. An artistic spirit, she enjoyed being creative in many different ways including crafting, beading, and decorating cakes for her beloved family and friends. She was a member of the ladies guild at Saint Andrew Church, and was also very involved with both the American Legion and the V.F.W. of Colchester.

Theresa will be loved forever and missed always by her daughter, Tina Marie Stackowski of East Hampton; her son, John Stackowski and his wife Patsy of Manchester; grandsons, Justin, Jared, and Andrew Messervy; great-granddaughters, Avah and Abby Messervy; and numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to both of her parents and her beloved husband, Theresa was predeceased by her sisters, Fernanda Casal and Frances Matthews, as well as her beloved pug, Pugsley.

Services will be held Saturday, Nov. 16, at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, beginning with calling hours from 10-11 a.m., with a funeral service at 11 a.m. Burial in New Saint Andrew Cemetery, Colchester, followed by a reception and celebration of Theresa's life at Saint Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, 178 Linwood Ave., Colchester.

Donations in her memory may be made to the American Heart Association at heart.org/donate.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Lewis W. Chamberlain

Lewis W. Chamberlain died Friday, Nov. 8, at Middlesex Memorial Hospital, after a brief illness. Born in Meriden Oct. 18, 1946, he was the son of the late Lynn and Leilabelle Stevens Chamberlain.

He resided in East Hampton and was a graduate of the University of Connecticut. Mr. Chamberlain was employed by UPS. Lewis was a veteran of the Vietnam War, having served with the Air Force.

He is survived by his daughter, Beverly Chamberlain Cyranowicz and her husband Brian and a son, Pavlo Galenko; three grandchildren, Alexander Reel, Kaitlyn Cyranowicz and Braydyn Cyranowicz; three great-grandchildren, Parker, Shalyn and Dakota; and his brother Steven Chamberlain and his wife Judith. He is also survived a niece, Charlotte Chamberlain, and nephews Michael and Randy Chamberlain.

Family and friends called at the John J. Ferry & Sons Funeral Home, 88 East Main St., Meriden, CT 06450 on Thursday, Nov. 14. Burial, with military honors, will be today, Nov. 15, at 11 a.m., at Walnut Grove Cemetery, 817 Old Colony Rd., Meriden, CT 06450.

For online condolences, visit jferryfh.com.



Marlborough

Donald McElwain

Donald "Ace" Neville McElwain, 95, of Marlborough, passed away peacefully at Middlesex Hospital Friday, Nov. 1. Born July 7, 1924, in Holyoke, Mass., to Jewel Kiley and John Hazen McElwain, he attended Holyoke High School, graduated from Harvard College, Class of '46, with a BA in English and was a member of the Delphic Club. He served as a Navy ensign during World War II on an LST in the Pacific.

Don lived for many years in West Hartford; his career included advertising sales for NBC TV 30, automotive sales, fire suppression systems sales, and teaching fire forensics investigation. Don continued to expand his career by becoming a paralegal for a Hartford law firm and also working at the office of adult probation on Barry Square. Don made many good friends along the way.

Don enjoyed summer vacations at Groton Long Point. He helped a family friend build a cabin in Lanesville, Mass., where he and his family were always welcome guests. He enjoyed card games and backgammon, taught his children to play and happily accepted defeat as their skills improved. Don developed his creativity by learning how to sketch and paint with watercolors. His handmade greeting cards, cartoons and lovely paintings delighted the family and will be treasured heirlooms.

While in Connecticut, Don volunteered at the Hartford Public Library with Literacy Volunteers and was proud to have taught reading to men he respected for their accomplishments. Don moved to Northampton, Mass., to work at the Forbes Library, then to South Hadley, Mass., to work at the Mt. Holyoke Library, finally retiring to Marlborough in 2002.

Don was a lifelong dedicated Red Sox fan. He remained a passionate, wide-ranging reader throughout his life and was known as a great raconteur and for his irreverent sense of humor and deeply held political opinions.

Pre-deceased by his wife Sarah Hurst Jackson and his son Mark Jackson, he will be greatly missed by his family: Jennifer and Mark Boudreau of Marlborough, with whom he made his home, Mary and Peter DiPietro of West Sacramento, Calif., Sarah McElwain of New York City; five grandchildren, Rosalee Boudreau, Mark Boudreau Jr., Lillie Lavado, John Lavado, Travis Gervais; and four great-grandchildren, Mariam, Serafina, Jason and Jasmine.

Special thanks go to Jen and Mark for their kind spirits and their commitment to provide Dad comfort and dignity in his golden years.

A private memorial service will be held by family and friends. Please contact the family directly for details.



Portland

Joseph S. Masselli

Joseph "Joe" S. Masselli, 84, of Portland, beloved husband of Ann M. (Galiette) Masselli, died suddenly Saturday, Nov. 9, at Middlesex Hospital. He was born in Middletown, the son of the late John and Rose (Pattavina) Masselli. Joe served with the U.S. Navy and prior to his retirement, was the owner of Masselli & Sons Plumbing and Heating in Portland.

In addition to his wife Ann, he is survived by his daughters, Rose Masselli Morse of Middletown, and Maria Wilcox of Wethersfield; his sons, John J. Masselli and his husband Archie Pistilides of Lubbock, Texas, and Michael S. Masselli and his wife Cathy of Portland; brother, Emanuel Masselli of Portland; brother-in law, George Oczkowski of Newington; eight grandchildren Nicholas, Joshua and Anthony Morse, Alexa and Jocelyn Wilcox, and Jennifer, Gina and Brian Masselli; and several nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his daughter, Maureen J. Zory; a sister, Marie Oczkowski; and a son-in-law, Richard P. Morse.

Joe was known around the town as the "Singing Plumber" because he sang where ever he went. He was a member of St. Mary's Church Choir for years under the direction of his wife Ann Masselli until 2002. He was also a member of the Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords and played and sang many funny characters in the musical shows presented by SMC Stage Company directed by his daughter, Rose Masselli Morse. He was known as the "King Crabber" for his prowess as the Old Man in the sea, catching many a crab for the family's crab sauce feasts down at the shore.

Joe was a member of the Knights of Columbus as well and being a member of the Lions Club. And he often referred to himself and "humble and loveable" to his children and "Papa" to his grandkids. He loved to tell a joke to his friends at the diner, or at their poker nights, that would curl most people's toes but all in all he just loved to make people laugh. His laughter and smile would light up a room. In the 80+ years that he was alive he never owned an actual wrap-around tie; it was a clip-on for this guy. His explanation, "Why would anybody wear a noose around their neck on purpose?"

His funeral liturgy was Thursday, Nov. 14, at St. Mary Church, Freestone Avenue, Portland. Burial was private. Friends called at Beiga Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, on Wednesday, Nov. 13.

In lieu of flowers, those who wish may send memorial donations to Portland Fire Department, PO Box 71, Portland, CT 06480 or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, P.O. Box 1000 Dept 142, Memphis, TN 38101.

To share memories or express condolences online, visit biegafuneralhome.com.



East Hampton

Ronald Christopher

Ronald Christopher, 91, of East Hampton, widower of the late Jane (Selden) Christopher, died Veterans Day, Monday, Nov. 11, at Chestelm Health Care in Moodus. Born Sept. 13, 1928, in Middletown, he was the son of the late Christopher C. and Esther (Johnson) Christopher.

Ron was a graduate of East Hampton High School and proudly served his country in the Army during the Korean War receiving the rank staff sergeant. Ron was retired from SNET, where he had worked his way from lineman to a Level 1 manager. Ron was a member and past president of the East Hampton VFW Post #5095 and was the state photographer for the VFW, a member of the American Legion Post #64 in East Hampton, a member and past president of the East Hampton Lions Club where he received the prestigious Melvin Jones Award.

Ron helped build the Pavilion in Sears Park and the gazebo in front of the 1st Congregational Church in East Hampton and was instrumental in building the East Hampton War Memorial in front of the High School and he also built his own airplane which he piloted by himself. Ron was an avid skier and enjoyed skiing in the Alps. He also loved Germany and everything about it, especially the beer.

Ron leaves to mourn his passing his son, Gary R. Christopher and his wife Beverly of East Haddam; two daughters, Lorrie Bell of North Carolina, Linda DeFrancesco of Cromwell; three grandchildren, Kevin Christopher and wife Rachel, Justin Christopher and wife Meg, Sarah Wentworth and husband Todd; three great-grandchildren, Krystal, Joseph, Payton; and a special friend Ellen Cramp.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, today, Nov. 15, from 6-8 p.m. A memorial service will be held Saturday, Nov. 16, at 11 a.m., in the funeral home, with the Rev. Thomas Kennedy officiating. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family in the CT State Veterans Cemetery.

The family would like to thank the staff of Chestelm for the wonderful care they provided during Ron's stay there.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Fowler-Dix-Park Post #5095 VFW, 20 North Maple St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

