



RIVEREAST

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Lego MAITS... The FIRST Lego League Marlborough home team, "Lego MAITS," participated in the FIRST Lego League State Competition on Dec. 7. They qualified for the state competition after coming in second overall in their regional competition Nov. 23. The challenges consisted of building and programming a Lego robot, demonstrating FIRST Core Values and determining a problem and solution for a City Scape challenge. Pictured from left are, top: Alex Storrs, Maria Skorski; Bottom: Trevor Hooker, Stella Boutilier, Isabella Wiktorowicz. All attend RHAM Middle School. (MAITS is acronym made from the first letter of their first names.) Their solution was to rehabilitate an old factory into a green, environmentally-friendly living space.

Two Running for State House Seat

by Karla Santos

Two men, a Republican from Lebanon and a Democrat from Colchester, are campaigning to fill the state House of Representatives seat held by the late Linda Orange.

A special election will be held Jan. 14 to determine who will take over representing the 48th District, which covers most of Colchester and portions of Lebanon, Mansfield and Windham. The term runs through November 2020.

Orange represented the district for more than 20 years before dying of pancreatic cancer last month. Orange had previously announced her intention to resign from the seat for health reasons, but had planned to continue to fill her role from home until Feb. 1.

Colchester Republican Registrar of Voters Sheila Tortorigi stressed that only voters in districts one, two and three will be voting in the January election. Residents of the fourth voting district in town are part of the 34th District, which is represented by Republican Irene Haines.

The Colchester polling locations will be Town Hall for District One, Abundant Life Church for District Two and Bacon Academy for District Three. Classes will be in session at Bacon Academy during the special election.

One of the candidates may be a familiar name to voters. Republican Mark DeCaprio, 61, of Lebanon, unsuccessfully ran against Orange for the 48th District seat in 2018, and said he in fact was already planning to run for election in November 2020.

One of the reasons he wants to fill the seat is to work to help keep taxes as low as possible for working families, DeCaprio said.

"In the state of Connecticut, we have a lot of families that are leaving the state because we are a high tax state and I think we really need to address that," DeCaprio said. "So I'm looking for ways to keep taxes reasonable and to look for efficiencies in government."

He said he is also looking to prioritize issues and focus on needs first, rather than wants.

"Another issue I am against is any proposal that would toll our vehicles on a high way," he said.

DeCaprio said he also wants to help address issues concerning the environment and public health.

DeCaprio has a bachelor's degree in science and biology, a minor in chemistry and a master's in public health, he said. He has also served in the Navy.

DeCaprio said he worked in the state government for over 30 years including in a role as a division director in the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. He was also a State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) administrator. DeCaprio said he was also Lebanon's emergency management director but resigned over the summer. He serves on two town boards: the Zoning Board of Appeals and Board of Education.

"I look forward to the opportunity to serve our district and our town and help wherever I can," DeCaprio said.

DeCaprio will be faced by Democrat Brian Smith, 62, of Colchester. Smith said he has always had an interest in government. He said he knew Orange for a long time and thought he was "an excellent voice for the district."

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Hebron Selects New Schools Chief

by Sloan Brewster

Hebron has a new superintendent.

The Board of Education was expected to appoint last night, after press time, Thomas Baird to the position, according to a press release. He will begin the job in January.

Board of Education Chairman Heather Petit said the board was excited Baird had taken the position and that due to his passion for working with students and parents and success in student achievement prove he will excel in the role.

"We are extraordinarily pleased with the outcome of this search process. Dr. Baird proved himself to be the best fit for Hebron," she said. "His extensive experience in a variety of educational capacities, as a previous Board of Education member in Massachusetts, ten years teaching, and as an assistant superintendent, will serve the district and community well."

Baird, who lives in Glastonbury, has been assistant superintendent in Norwich since last

year. Prior to that, he was Norwich's director of curriculum, instruction and assessment from 2016 to 2018.

An educator for 18 years, Baird began his career as a math teacher in New Hampshire. From there, he moved to East Hampton, Mass., here he taught and took on his leadership roles.

In 2009, he relocated to Connecticut and became Simsbury's mathematics supervisor. Next, he took on the role of mathematics curriculum supervisor and STEM director in Windsor.

While he will be sad to leave Norwich's students and families and the "great curriculum work" and work on improving the professional development program, Baird said Hebron will be a good fit for him.

"We built some strong teams and I'm confident they'll be able to continue the work when I go," he said. "We really are hitting our stride right now so I'll be sad to leave that team."

With a background in a workshop approach to learning, which was used at his last two districts, Baird said he is looking forward to working with Hebron's Readers and Writers Workshop.

In a workshop environment, most of the instruction time is focused on strategy, he said.

"A workshop approach puts the kids at the center of their learning time," he said. "Teachers teach strategy, the students go off and work on it."

Baird said he was excited to hear that Hebron has taken on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math [STEAM], which is something Norwich is doing at two of its four magnet schools.

STEAM, according to educators, provides for an integrated approach to learning.

"I was very excited to hear about Hebron doing that too," he said.

Former Hebron Superintendent of Schools Timothy Van Tassel incorporated STEAM education into the district. It was one of the things he was known for, former education board chairman Erica Bromley said when he left at the end of the last school year.

When school opened in the fall of 2018, Van Tassel and Don Briere, director of educational services, spoke to the *Rivereast* about the district's continued focus on STEAM. In particular, students were working with 3D printers, Briere said.

The printers were purchased through a \$10,000 American Mold Manufacturing Advancement Grant to expand the STEAM program from the American Builder Association that the district received with Webco Plastics, Inc. of Middlefield, he said.

Facilities projects, including a project to re-

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State House Seat Balk cont. from Front Page

“I believe in the things that she fought for and stood for and accomplished for all of us,” Smith said.

He added that because of his experience in town boards, long term interest and connections, he thought he would be a good candidate for Orange’s seat.

“I have a strong desire to help and I wanted to follow through on that,” he said. “I’m trying to carry on the good work that Linda did for our district.”

Smith said that he is passionate and committed to public safety as Orange was.

“I am also very committed to helping our community maintain the best possible school systems that they can,” Smith said. “I believe we owe to our children who are our future. We owe to our teachers and our administrators and all the staff that really have huge responsibility for society to help raise our children and show them the way they should be, well educated and give them good citizen skills.”

Smith said he has lived in Colchester for 37 years.

“I spent my whole life on the east side of the Connecticut River,” Smith said. “I really, truly love the rural character and the charm of our small towns here. I want to help them maintain the quality of life and the character for their communities that they cherish.”

Smith said he also wants to serve the towns



Mark DeCaprio

at the state level to help them achieve their goals “so the people who live there would want to continue to live there, raise their children and families and that their families would want to stay there. There’s a quality of life in our district that has something to offer for everyone.”

Smith has a bachelor’s degree in fine arts. He said he worked 32 years within the legal profession including 13 years as a paralegal and managing paralegal in the corporate department of a law firm, now known as Day Pitney. He has also held roles at Lydall Inc. in Manchester in the corporate communications department. Smith later worked doing marketing for law firms including Robinson & Cole LLP in Hartford.

He said him and his wife have owned a house in front of the Memorial Green in Colchester and are in the process of making it a bed and breakfast.

“Linda was well-known for being a person who crossed the aisle,” Smith said. “She listened to all points of view and welcomed and sought out as many, many opinions as she could. She represented all the people in the district, not just those who voted for her and my beliefs when it comes to public service are very much aligned with hers.”



Brian Smith

New Schools Chief cont. from Front Page

build two Norwich middle schools will help Baird’s transition to Hebron, where plans are underway to replace pipes contaminated with lead at Hebron Elementary School.

“We’ve done a few facilities projects so I’ll be looking for how students will be impacted during the project and will work with them to mitigate issues the best we can,” he said. “Sometimes something routine for the contractors that doesn’t seem disruptive to them can be disruptive to the learning environment so I will work with both sides to ensure good communication.”

After a four-month selection process, Baird emerged as the board’s choice for superintendent, according to the press release. He was considered the best match to a candidate pro-



Thomas Baird

file the board developed with a focus group and input – via a survey – from more than 140 school and community stakeholders.

“The profile outlined the desire to have a superintendent who would lead the district forward with shared vision and excellent resource management skills,” the press release states.

Baird was appointed to the position after undergoing multiple interviews and visiting the district, according to the release. The board reviewed and confirmed his credentials and experiences, contacted his references and vetted him before giving him the job.

Baird earned his bachelor’s degree in pure mathematics and statistics at Keene State College. He also received a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from Keene State. In addition, he has a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in the School Principal Program from Westfield State College and a doctorate in educational leadership from Central Connecticut State University.

Observations & Ruminations

by **Mike Thompson**

Tuesday brought the not-unexpected but still-satisfying filing of articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump.

The impeachment will head to the House of Representatives floor for a vote and, if approved, then go to the Senate. Mitch McConnell has reportedly said impeachment hearings in the Senate will start shortly after Jan. 1.

I’ve been very much clear in this space over the past three years that I do not like Trump, at all. So I’m sure it’ll come as no shock to some of you that I’m in favor of the impeachment. But it’s not a simple matter of “I don’t like the guy.” His actions warrant his removal from office, in my opinion.

And it’s Trump’s actions since the “whistleblower” call was first announced that have convinced me of this.

Was there abuse of power? I think so. I can easily picture him doing exactly what he’s accused of doing on the phone with Ukraine. And no amount of protestations that it was a “perfect” call will convince me otherwise. I admit, though, that it’s not entirely black and white in this regard. I do have a tiny portion of doubt.

Where I have no doubt, though, is in the second article of impeachment – the one charging Trump with obstruction. Because he has; it’s quite clear, in my eyes. Since the day this investigation started, Trump has done absolutely nothing to cooperate with Congress. He’s directed his people to do absolutely nothing to cooperate. If he’s got nothing to hide, why can’t he or his people testify? But it goes beyond that even. He is willfully, blatantly, not cooperating with a Congressional investigation. Subpoenas have gone unanswered. You or I couldn’t choose to ignore a subpoena, certainly a Congressional one, but Rudy Giuliani can? No sir.

Trump has gleefully impeded this investigation every single step of the way. And he expects to get away with it. It’s obstruction, plain and simple. And if he’s allowed to get away with it, if he’s allowed to thumb his nose at any attempt at Congressional oversight, that sets a horrible precedent for future presidencies. The three branches of government are very clear. The Executive branch is not allowed to run roughshod over the Legislative one. The president cannot just do whatever he or she wants. The checks and balances system needs to be allowed to exist – and impeding a Congressional investigation should not and cannot be tolerated.

If this does proceed to the Senate – and I expect it will – I’m not optimistic about the Republican-controlled Senate voting to remove Trump from office. He’ll likely remain, and if anything be even more emboldened than he is now.

And while I hope this doesn’t hurt the Democrats’ chances to take the presidency in 2020, I do have to congratulate the Congressional Democrats for going this far. Even if it leads nowhere, there needs to be a record that they stood up to this man. That they attempted to do the right thing even though the odds

were stacked against them. That they tried to assert that there is a limit to what the president of the United States can get away with.

Susan Bigelow had an excellent op-ed this week on the news site *CT News Junkie*, in which she expressed these points more eloquently than I am. In it, she included a quote from the brilliant *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The words were spoken by Atticus Finch, the lawyer often cited as one of the greatest heroes in all of literature:

“Courage is not a man with a gun in his hand. It’s knowing you’re licked before you begin but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do.”

The Democrats are seeing it through. I applaud them for this.

* * *

The vote’s not happening next week like Gov. Lamont wanted, but it is happening, The *Journal Inquirer* reported Wednesday a special session is slated for next month at which the state General Assembly will vote on a transportation plan and a major state bonding bill. The transportation proposal, the *J* said, will likely include a dozen bridge tolls for just trucks.

Yes, Lamont has gone back to what he originally campaigned on, which are tolls for trucks only. It makes sense, as those big 18-wheelers obviously do the most damage to state highways. I know people are concerned starting tolls for trucks only will open the door to tolls for cars in the future, and to be honest, it probably will. But I don’t think that would be a bad thing.

Our roads and bridges by and large are in pretty lousy shape, and tolls would be a great way to provide the revenue needed to repair them. Yes, cynics burned by government in the past will no doubt say they doubt the revenue would go anywhere near the highway fund. But that thinking is based solely on decisions made in the past, by previous administrations. There’s a new administration in town; why not give them a chance?

Also, the entire state budget is in a shambles. We need revenue, period. I feel we should’ve legalized marijuana for exactly that reason. There were a whole bunch of crappy decisions made in the past that led the state to the position it’s in now. There’s no more kicking the can down the road; that’s what got us into this mess. (Dannel Malloy had his faults, I’ll admit, but you have to give the man credit for seeing kicking the can down the road was unsustainable, and tried to do something about it.) Even if the money gets redirected – and again, I wouldn’t be so sure it would – it would still be drastically-needed state revenue.

So, bring on the tolls. I’d love it if they stayed trucks-only, but if it’s determined we need to expand that to all cars, I’m willing to pay. (And I’m certain, by the way, in-state drivers will get a discount, just as they do in Massachusetts and New York.) It’s for the good of the state, in my opinion.

* * *

See you next week.

Portland Receives Sustainable CT Award

by Jack Lakowsky

The town's efforts to increase Portland's accessibility have been recognized with a "Sustainable CT" award from the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities.

Portland First Selectwoman Susan S. Bransfield was presented with the "Sustainable CT" award during CCM's recent annual meeting at Foxwoods Resort Casino in Mashantucket. This was the first award of its kind to be given to the town, according to Bransfield.

The award for Portland is the result of efforts by the Board of Selectman and local volunteers, which began in 2015. The board and a group of volunteers undertook a two-pronged effort; the sidewalk improvement program and the adoption of the Complete Streets safety and usability agenda.

"We've received a lot of good comments," Bransfield said. "Streets and sidewalks are safer. This is great for people's health, too."

In November 2016 a Bond Authorization for \$1 million to pay for at least four Replacement Sidewalk Projects was passed. The sidewalks, which are all inter-connected, were in very poor condition, with broken and cracked pavement. The bonded sidewalk work started in the fall of 2018 and is continuing. Additional sidewalk work also occurred in 2017, using State Local Capital Improvement Project money, according to documentation of Complete Streets activities.

"Technically, this wasn't a formal committee of the Board of Selectman," Bransfield said. "It was a group of people who got involved in the Air Line Trail. They said 'Let's make town more accessible and easier for walkers and bike riders.' It was really a grassroots effort that relied in a hard-working team of volunteers."

Bransfield explained that town staff and volunteers want to first focus on improving Main Street in Portland. Plans for improvement include narrowing of the street to mitigate speed and replacing sidewalks to make them more

traversable. Bransfield said plans for the future include replacing sidewalks from Middlesex Avenue to Russell Avenue. Improvements and replacements will also be made to the Gildersleeve section. Efforts will be continued along the area of the town hall.

Bransfield said the committee also wants to construct better walking routes to the several schools along Main Street.

These efforts will be partially funded by a \$200,000 "Interconnectivity Grant", a state grant that funds such improvements. Bransfield said that these funds would be used for work in the spring. She went on to say the board and Complete Streets are going to continue to strive for further grants and funding.

"Next step is to find a contractor, it's still up for bid," Bransfield said.

Bransfield explained an additional project planned for the future; a bus shelter on Main Street, which will shield bus commuters from the elements while they await their ride.

Bransfield said state officials assessed different improvements that could be made to the area.

Portland will join the other 28 percent of the state's 169 municipalities who have qualified for the Sustainable CT designation.

The town had to supply copies of the Complete Streets Policy and evidence that the adopted policy was distributed to appropriate and relevant municipal departments. CCM also required the town to provide "documentation related to the meetings of workshops, such as a promotional flyer, an agenda, minutes, presentations, sign-in sheet or photographs.

In this case, the committee had to submit a detailed map of the inter-connected streets that would be included in the project.

This was done with the cooperation of Mary Dickerson, Portland's economic development coordinator. Dickerson took a galley of before-and-after photographs of the aging, cracked sidewalks slated for improvements. Kevin



The town is the recent recipient of a "Sustainable CT" award from the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. Town officials received the award last week. From left are Portland Development Planner Mary Dickerson, Selectman Jim Tripp, and First Selectman Susan Bransfield.

Armstrong, the town's technology coordinator, who provided an aerial map of the target area.

Sustainable CT is a voluntary certification program to recognize thriving and resilient Connecticut Municipalities, according to the CCM website.

"Sustainable CT" was established to "provide municipalities with a menu of coordinated, voluntary actions, to continually become more

sustainable; to provide resources and tools to assist municipalities in implementing sustainability actions and advancing their programs for the benefit of all residents; and to certify and recognize municipalities for their ongoing sustainability achievements."

Participation in the program is voluntary and free of charge.

Hefty Increase Pitched in East Hampton for School Technology Spending

by Jack Lakowsky

A hefty increase in spending is needed to keep the schools technologically up to date in the 2020-21 school year.

That's what East Hampton Public Schools Technology Director Richard Fielding told the Board of Education at its meeting Monday. Fielding presented a slideshow detailing a budget request to update technology. The request to the Capital Committee totaled \$571,771 for the 2020-21 school year – a sharp uptick from the current year. Fielding explained that the extra money needed to replace much of the school system's technological infrastructure is the result of cuts made by Town Council before the current year budget was approved.

Fielding noted that, for 2019-20, he had initially requested \$311,000. The Capital Committee approved \$300,600. However, the Town Council cut \$239,000 of that amount. He said that, had the council not done so, his request for 2020-21 would have been less than \$300,000.

The council cut left the district with just a fraction of what Fielding had initially requested to update the system's aging technology. He told the board one loss that resulted from the cut was the updating of the school system's iBoss Content Filter/Reporter. This software monitors

student activity on school computers and alerts officials to inappropriate use, or red flag searches indicating mental or emotional issues.

This isn't the first time technology funding has been slashed, Fielding noted. He said that for 2018-19, he'd requested \$122,500, but only \$67,000 was funded.

"This isn't 'just fine' to kick down the road," said Fielding. "The impact has been universal."

Fielding explained that many teachers in both Center and Memorial schools are using end-of-life computers. Their manufacturers and developers will no longer support these outdated machines.

"When you replace a floor, or a roof, you can divide the costs up over several years," Fielding said. He went on to say that this is not an option for technology, as it must be updated every four or five years.

Fielding continued to explain that a 1-to-1 student-computer ratio is now a standard and must be accomplished to maintain a current curriculum.

Fielding listed results of cuts to the tech budget.

In the 2018-19 budget year, the middle school teacher laptop development and 1-to-1 program for grades 6-9 were both delayed. Funds had to

be restored through the operating budget.

Also as a result of the cuts, Fielding said, student desktop computers needed to be removed from K-5 classrooms as there wasn't the funding to upgrade them; K-5 teachers don't have laptops whereas those in grades 6-12 do; and teachers have had to spend time readjusting curriculums to suit older, slower technology.

Adding to the issue's complexity, Memorial School's entire tech infrastructure will need an overhaul by June 2021. To stay efficient, according to Fielding, this must be brought to the council as soon as possible.

Fielding explained just how imperative it is that teachers have access to laptops. According to him, teachers using laptops is a standard educational practice.

Next to present was Donald Harwood, facilities director of East Hampton public schools. Harwood presented an itemized list of projects needed to update the infrastructure and appearance of East Hampton's schools.

"We're standing in the result of what happens when you push these things off," Harwood said, referring to the costly migration out of the high school's old building into its newly reno-

vated one.

Harwood said that, as a steward for the school, he attempted to pace these improvements and replacements over the next five years. The budget remains largely consistent, totaling between \$200,000 and \$220,000, save for one year: 2023, when East Hampton Middle School will need a roof replacement.

"That roof was done in 1991," said Harwood. Roof replacement will total \$1,700,000, with partial state reimbursement possible, according to the document supplied by Harwood.

More immediate repair needs that affect the entire East Hampton school district include: asbestos abatement, testing and monitoring, interior finishes, and school safety and security.

The Center, Memorial and East Hampton Middle schools will need to replace their carpet with more sustainable tiling.

"Carpet was in vogue in the '90s," Harwood said. "It's old, it's tired. Improvements send a message."

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith said he plans to present the overall proposed 2020-21 budget to the school board next month.

East Hampton PZC Approves Zone Change for St. Clements

by Jack Lakowsky

The Planning and Zoning Commission last week approved an application by Saint Clements Castle to change its property from residential to commercial use, according to Planning and Zoning official Jeremy DeCarli.

However, the commission still hasn't officially decided on the status of the special permit to build a banquet hall at 49 Oakum Dock.

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

According to Saint Clements Castle accountant Jonathan Ramsay, the commission has a month to approve construction of the banquet hall. He said he's confident the hall will be approved.

The month gives commissioners "time to write up restrictions, things like that," Ramsay said.

According to DeCarli, the special permit will be decided on at the commission's Jan. 8 meeting.

PZC Vice Chairman Ray Zatorski said that, before the banquet hall is approved, town employees must analyze all factors regarding the site plan. He explained the decision will be consistent with state regulations, town ordinances and the town's Plan of Conservation and Development.

"The issue needs clarification," Zatorski said. "It's an extremely difficult decision."

According to minutes of the November PZC meeting, attorney Melissa S. Harris, who represented St. Clements at the meeting, stated that the property has always been used as commercial and that the zone change request will have no impact on the neighborhood and that it complies with the Plan of Conservation and Development. In regards to the special permit, she stated that the concerns were addressed and that since an assembly hall has already existed there for three years – legally or not – there will be no negative impact on the character of the area and that they want to improve what exists and to do it correctly.

Harris said that this is not a popularity contest and asked the board to consider the November submission of information and not what has been done in the past. The attorney went

on to say the zone change and special permit will be of distinct benefit to the town.

In response to the attorney, Zatorski stated for the record that these decisions are never popularity contests. He asked for considerations of future use.

Prior to the approval, Ramsay and Saint Clements board member Peter Calan addressed the concerns of neighbors and residents.

"Evening noise level was the main concern," Calan said.

Calan led St. Clements neighbors on a site walkthrough of the parcel last month. A sound engineer explained noise mitigation methods. Soundproofing plans included automated doors, insulation and increased thickness of walls.

"The materials used will mitigate sound," Ramsay said. "The goal is to have everyone happy, and we're doing everything possible to get there."

"With the zone aligned, any issues are addressed," Calan said. "The town really liked our report."

In the November meeting, Calan stated that Saint Clements is making the best possible use of the property.

Ramsay recently explained the benefits that Saint Clements Castle will bring to the town. He said that the hall would bring jobs, tourist revenue, lodging and shopping to the area. Ramsay also listed increased revenue to the town by way of real estate taxes.

Calan affirmed the benefits listed by Ramsay. "This is a really unique property on the water," Calan said. "Demand is going to be very high."

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 two towns.

Calan described the banquet hall as a small boutique space. It will hold a maximum of 150 people. There will be a two-story ballroom with a pitched roof and chandeliers and will overlook the river. Uses include weddings, bar mitzvahs and birthday parties.

Calan said the new facility would increase the number of guests at Saint Clements from 40,000 to 50,000.

There are residents nearby who support the zone change. Noel Dash, an East Hampton resi-

dent on North Main Street, spoke for the change, according to commission meeting minutes.

Some residents and neighbors have expressed distaste for the zone change. Several people who live on both Fern Road and Oakum Dock road spoke against the zone change in the November meeting.

"Everyone on Oakum Dock Road and those affected on Fern Lane are heartbroken at the decision considering the efforts which we all made to be heard by the Planning and Zoning Commission," said attorney William D. Grady of East Hampton. "Personally, I am devastated for the neighbors who will be most affected by the zone change and beyond that, I can say nothing redeeming and therefore I must leave it at that."

Grady was once the town planner for the Town of Marlborough and has years of experience in such matters. Grady is also a former chairman of the East Hampton Economic Development Commission.

Grady has been an opponent of the zone change for years.

Grady wrote a letter in response to the company's 2017 zone change request to the members of the PZC commission. In the letter, Grady wrote of the increased traffic in his Oakum Dock Road neighborhood due to unauthorized commercial activities. He wrote that Oakum Dock Road was never meant to sustain a volume of traffic beyond that of the 13 homes that occupy the road. He wrote that Saint Clements seeks to change the character of the neighborhood by abutting a commercial zone to a residential one.

Grady also wrote that a zone change would only benefit the company, not the neighborhood. He wrote that a zone change was only sought-after discovery of the operations.

Since purchasing the Oakum Dock property in 2001, Clements has been the subject of some controversy.

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

In July 2017, a cease-and-desist was issued to Saint Clements by the Chatham Health District for operating an unauthorized banquet hall. The letter sent to the Roncalli Institute also

stated the "site was designed for 150 attendees and marina use. This does not come close to the 296 people mentioned as fire code capacity." The Chatham letter also notes that, subsequent to an accidental 2017 fire, illegal wastewater connections and an unauthorized plastic septic tank were discovered.

The cease-and-desist was lifted two weeks after it was issued.

The same issue of unauthorized use arose after the 2017 fire. This led to the town's discovery of a banquet facility being run with a bar and makeshift kitchen in what was supposed to only be used as a storage facility.

After the fire, town officials learned that Saint Clements had paved a parking lot without approval. Saint Clements' lawyer, Ken Slater, told town officials that Clements has since received an Inland/Wetlands Watercourse Agency permit for the parking lot.

Officials of the town and Saint Clements have discussed what could be built on the property. DeCarli recommended the company pursue a zone change and special permit approach.

A 2017 zone change request from Saint Clements Castle was denied. A memo sent from the Office of Public Works to DeCarli read that the Public Works Department "would not support this zone change from Residential to Commercial due to the present traffic on this roadway." The memo reads that traffic would increase as result of a zone change. Large vehicles and an increased volume of small vehicles could result in unsafe road conditions, according to the memo. The memo also states that "past experiences with St. Clements have not resulted in compliance with [town] regulations, but more circumventing and disregarding them." Ultimately, the 2017 request was denied because of the narrow road and anticipated safety and other use issues.

The castle returned with a request for a special church permit. Churches are allowed in residential zones. The "assembly hall" had identical square footage and footprint as the banquet hall.

The church application was withdrawn in April 2018.

When town and Saint Clements officials met again, DeCarli suggested again going for a zone change.

New Groomer Opens Its Doors in East Hampton

by Jack Lakowsky

Main Street has a new hometown dog groomer.

Kim Anderson opened Tiny Paws Dog Grooming last month.

"I want to meet all my neighbors," Anderson said. "This is a new, playful space."

Anderson explained that she wanted her friends and neighbors to have a better option than "big-box" pet groomers.

"I just love the idea of 'mom and pop' shops," Anderson said. "With a small business, you get private time and perfection of production. I think we're a little overwhelmed with franchises."

Anderson said she is "big on small dogs", as they are her specialty, but also enjoys servicing larger breeds.

Anderson has years of experience in the grooming industry.

"I'm a seasoned groomer," she said. "I have 30 years of experience."

Anderson graduated from the New York School of Dog Grooming and continued on to practice in Florida before coming to Connecticut. She operated in Manchester for a while, and then moved to Main Street in East Hampton.

"I just saw this adorable, empty space in a great plaza, and it really jumped out at me," Anderson said. "I love being right here with all these cozy shops."

Anderson explained that customers could enjoy nearby shops and cafés while they wait for their pet to be cleaned.

During these years, Anderson learned the value of natural, organic shampoos. Anderson also offers oatmeal rinses; as well as walk-in nail trims.

"I only use natural products, I only use the best products," she said.

Some of Anderson's happy customers posted reviews to the groomer's Facebook page.

"As a new business it is clean and adorably decorated," one reviewer, Joni Peterson, posted. "The owner, Kim, was really sweet and loving toward my dog and easy to work with. The grooming work was well done. My dog is very happy."

Damon Mauro II of East Hampton wrote that Tiny Paws is "the best place to bring your best friend."

Anderson consistently updates the Tiny Paws Facebook page with endearing before-and-after photos of her work.

Anderson also posts helpful information, like



Kim Anderson opened a new dog groomer in town – with a particular focus on small dogs. Pictured are before and after photos of her work on a cockapoo named Marley.



how to tell if a dog's fur is matted or not.

"This place is quiet, personal and intimate," Anderson said.

Anderson said she is very excited to start business in a town with such supportive, kind neighbors.

Tiny Paws is located at 82 Main St. Hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday from 7:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.; and Sunday from 10 a.m.-6:30 p.m. For more information, call 860-267-7297.

Colchester Creates New HR Position

by Karla Santos

The town of Colchester has a new employment opportunity as a tri-board meeting on Dec. 4 approved the request to hire a person to fill the role of Director of Human Resources, a position that will be shared between the town and the Board of Education.

During last Thursday's Board of Selectmen meeting, First Selectman Mary Bylone said that the previous night, the boards of selectmen, finance and education had met and approved the new position, which will pay a salary ranging between \$80,000 and \$100,000.

"That position was posted today and optimistically we would hope to get somebody shortly after the beginning of the year," Bylone said during the selectmen's meeting. "It's a position that's desperately needed in the town for both, the protection of the town, to make sure we are doing the right thing for the employees but also as an advocate for our employees."

Both the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education had approved the job description during previous meetings.

The joint position has been posted on the Board of Education and town website, Bylone said. The position has also been posted in other "appropriate online application programs as well as professional associations," she added.

According to the job description, the selected individual will oversee the implementation of human resources programs, manage activities involved in recruitment and testing and assist in budget preparation, among other duties.

This person will also help with contract negotiations, administering the benefit package and being an advocate for employees, Bylone said.

"A person with the expertise in the field of Human Resources will work to ensure the rights of employees are upheld and also that the staff managing the employees are educated on topics pertinent to managing people," she added.

The town will be responsible for funding 30% of the position. Bylone said that the town portion of the funds is coming from unspent legal fees. The Board of Education will fund the remaining 70% of the position.

Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Burt said the Board of Education is funding most of the cost of the position primarily because of the number of employees.

"We have over 400 employees and the town has just over 100," Burt said. "There's also a lot more complications with certifications associated with administrators and teachers."

Bylone said that while the position itself is new, its previous responsibilities were shared by a number of people. Burt said the school system had a human resources coordinator previously, but only served the school board.

"Those duties were divided up on the town side," Burt said. "There wasn't really a single person who was primarily responsible for that so this provides more capacity for the town and the board."

The reason the town and Board of Education are looking into sharing a human resources person is that "neither [individually] requires a full-time person, but together, we do," Bylone said.

In addition, Burt said the town and the board "do an excellent job of collaboration."

"Our finance office is shared so this would be just another piece of that where we would have a position that's shared because we both have needs but we also then split the cost of that to make it something that we can fit within our budgets," Burt said.

Burt said he is grateful for the town boards that supported this effort and hopes the position provides the human resources guidance the town is lacking.

"We are hoping to build our capacity to look for efficiencies and build up our town management strategies and provide some guidance in an area that we currently don't have any leadership in," Burt said.

When the *Rivereast* asked Bylone if the town could face any legal issues by not having a human resources professional, she said "there is always the risk, even with an HR professional."

"However, having an HR professional should lessen the risk and also lessen the need to use outside counsel for many things like we do at the present time," Bylone said.

Is Lead an Issue at Gilead Hill in Hebron?

by Sloan Brewster

While the lead laced pipes are being replaced at Hebron Elementary School, some local parents and one official believe action should also be taken at Gilead Hill School.

Despite the fact that most town officials – save one – insist the levels of the toxin in pipes at Gilead are not a concern, parents are demanding that the water be shut off at the school.

Some have even said the pipes there should also be replaced, but Malcolm Leichter – member of the Board of Finance and also chairman of the Hebron Elementary School Drinking Water Remediation Building Committee – has said the levels of lead in the water at Gilead are legal and therefore there would not be a grant to help pay for replacing the pipes.

Approximately 54% of the cost of replacing the pipes at Hebron Elementary will be reimbursed through a grant from the state Department of Administrative Services [DAS].

Selectman John Collins said that while levels of lead in the pipes at Gilead are legal, they should be reduced nonetheless. He has recommended flushing the pipes to assure the toxin is cleared out.

At last week's Board of Selectmen meeting, he read a letter from Interim Schools Superintendent Lynne Pierson, in which she stated that the school has started flushing but that the lead levels are in compliance with Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] standards.

Collins, who is a scientist with a background in environmental chemistry in iron metals, such as lead, said it was a neurotoxin and levels should be zero. He said that a year ago, the EPA released a finding in which it stated that no amount of lead is safe.

"The threshold standard is not a health-based standard," he said. "It doesn't protect children."

Collins also said he wants stronger participation between the boards of selectmen and education, and said that to get 10 years of information on lead levels at Gilead "to use as a baseline," he had to do a Freedom of Information Act [FOIA] Request.

"I had to act go and get [the Board of Education] legally compelled to get the data," he said. "I'm a citizen, never mind I'm a selectman and I'm involved in this process. Are you kidding me?"

In a phone call Tuesday, Pierson said the data had been collected and was held by Phoenix Environmental Laboratories Inc. of Manchester and that the board provided Collins with all the information within the timeframe of the FOIA request.

"Since we don't collect that data, those aren't our original records. That becomes an FOI request, which is no big deal," she said. "I'm very used to people submitting requests under FOI. Frankly, it protects both parties."

An FOIA request also makes it easier to gather the information as it specifies exactly what is required, she added.

Parents who spoke or read letters for the record at Board of Selectmen meeting concurred with Collins that the lead is a problem, some saying the water at the school should not be used for eating or drinking.

Daniel Larson, chairman of the Board of Selectmen said samples taken from the sinks in the cooking area came back with no lead.

Resident Nicole Matthews, who has a child at Gilead Hill, said she had not been informed there was lead in the water at the school.

Resident Nicole Collins requested that a letter be sent to parents informing them that there is lead in the water and said pressure should be put on the district to reduce the levels of the contaminant.

"My children are lucky not to have gone to Gilead Hill," she said. "There should not be one more date that families do not know that there is lead in that water."

Town Manager Andrew Tierney, while acknowledging that "0% is the goal," said the education board had done nothing wrong.

Larson said Pierson was working to lower levels of the contaminant despite the fact that it is below actionable levels and added that se-

lectmen "have no control over the schools." He also pointed out that the newly elected education board has not yet discussed the lead issue.

"It sounds like they are being proactive," he said. "We cannot force ourselves onto them. I don't think that would be proper."

If selectmen do nothing, parents will take the information to social media and the news, Nicole Collins said.

"No lead is good lead," she said. "We have not heard anything that it is safe. We've heard that it is not illegal but we have not heard that it is safe."

According to a letter that Pierson sent to parents last Friday, in samples taken from five random locations at the school in 2017, there was between .0010 and .0099 parts of lead per million parts water.

Water samples taken at the entry point of the system in 2013, 2015 and 2018 indicated "no detectable levels of lead," the letter reads.

Because the drinking water at the school does not have "a significant amount of lead," the school is on a plan to test every three years, Pierson said.

The letter was a response to misinformation floating around on social media, Pierson said in a phone call Tuesday.

"We've struggled to get the real info out there," she said.

Pierson said the first time John Collins asked about lead at Gilead, she suggested the board hire consultants to assess the drinking water. In October, after reviewing resumes, the board selected and hired TRC Companies, Inc., of Windsor.

The consultants' first step was to review existing data, which Pierson said they did, concluding "the water was not unsafe based on current standards."

Next, consultants will take multiple samples and do further testing, Pierson said. They will use Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] "best practices – the highest standards that you can apply to this kind of assessment" and make

the results available to the public.

"So, we didn't just ask them to use the current regulations but to go above and beyond," she said, adding that she hopes the consultants will also be able to predict what the lead levels will be in the future.

Pierson and Tierney have also met with the state Department of Public Health [DPH] and Russell Melmed, director of health at Chatham Health District, she said. From that conversation, they decided to begin flushing at the school, meaning taps will be run daily between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m.

"That is what's called a risk reduction effort," she said.

Pierson also said she has been in touch with the education board's attorney, Shipman and Goodwin, LLP, of Hartford, and wants to set the record straight about why. She is keeping attorneys in the loop because it is a situation that could involve future liability.

"There seems to be this misperception that the board's attorneys are involved, that it's an effort on the board's part to be secretive," she said.

Pierson said that while she typically drinks coffee, she has drunk water at the school.

"It is a school with young children, nobody on the board, nor do I, do not keep the health of our students or our staff at the top of our heads," she said.

In phone call last Tuesday, Tierney said concerned parents should have a conversation with DPH.

"The Board of Education is following the letter of the law," he said. "[Parents] want us to meet thresholds that aren't even in place."

On Tuesday, Pierson said last night's Board of Education meeting would include a discussion about putting students at Gilead on bottled water.

But some parents think it's too little too late. "I don't feel like it's being done proactively," Matthews said. "I feel it's being done reactively."

Town to Pay Up to \$900K to Replace Lead Pipes in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

The town will pay Nutmeg Companies a maximum of \$907,600 to replace lead-laced pipes at Hebron Elementary School.

The Board of Selectmen last week unanimously approved a motion to go with the Norwich based company, which, according to Malcolm Leichter – chairman of the Hebron Elementary School Drinking Water Remediation Building Committee and a Board of Finance member – was the lowest bidder.

In May, voters agreed to spend up to \$1.22 million to replace the pipes.

Despite going with all copper, Nutmeg's estimate is more than \$100,000 less than the early estimate.

In May, when Silver & Petrucelli engineers Ken Eldridge and Scott Michelac gave the initial numbers, they recommended that while the numbers assumed copper piping, the town should go with PEX – or plastic piping – to save money.

"[Nutmeg is] going with copper even though we had thought we were going to save more with PEX," Leichter told the board. "I guess our assumption was incorrect."

The bid from Nutmeg was one of three proposals the committee received and reviewed, Leichter said. The others were from Central Mechanical Services, of Cromwell and Sarazin General Contractors, of North Windham.

Before the board voted, Selectman Marc Rubera asked if the committee had looked into Nutmeg's credentials and at other things besides how much the company was charging for the project.

"Is price the sole criterion?" he asked.

Leichter said the company's references had been checked and that the company has a good reputation.

"We are required by law to take the lowest responsible bid," he said. "This happened to be the lowest bid but also they happened to have a good reputation."

The board unanimously passed the motion to go with Nutmeg with no discussion.

The town will dip into the unassigned fund balance, or rainy day fund, for the \$907,600, approximately 54% of which would be reimbursed through a grant from the CT Department of Administrative Services [DAS].

Currently, there is \$5.067 million in the fund, which represents 13.86% of the town's budget, Finance Director Elaine Griffin said.

In May, when the project was first put before voters, there was \$6.34 million in the fund, which represented 17.59% of the town's budget.

"Many projects have since been funded through the unassigned fund balance," Griffin said.

Silver & Petrucelli was paid through the fund to design the lead remediation project, she said. It also paid for new accounting software for the town and Board of Education, and the purchase of St. Peter's Field.

The source of the lead, which was first discovered in November of 2016, is believed to be solder used in piping in the wing of the school that was built in 1963, former schools superintendent Timothy Van Tassel has said. There was no lead problem in pipes in the wings added in 1988 and 2000, when the solder was no longer used.

While solder no longer contains lead, it will

not be used in the project, Leichter said.

The plan also involves putting in a new steel soffit, getting two new hot water heaters and new drinking fountains.

When lead was detected, the Board of Education was put on an Administrative Order with the Department of Public Health [DPH]. Officials gave the department monthly reports regarding an injector system installed to treat the water with zinc orthophosphate, a corrosion inhibitor, and monitored the water by taking regular samples.

Ultimately, DPH removed the board from the order and shifted it to an agreement to continue monitoring the water. When the lead continued to be detected, the district combined the corrosion inhibitor with a flushing protocol.

In November of last year, Van Tassel and the education board reported to selectmen that measures the district had taken to mitigate lead had not proven successful and it may be time to consider replacing the affected pipes.

The project is slated for an August 2020 completion, Leichter said.

Marlborough Bridge Projects Coming Next Spring

by Karla Santos

The spring of 2020 will bring two major construction projects to Marlborough as the Board of Selectmen has authorized the execution of the contracts for the replacement of the Jones Hollow Road Bridge over the Blackledge River and the South Main Street Bridge over the Fawn Brook.

Both of these construction projects are scheduled to start in the early spring and are scheduled to end by Nov. 1, 2020.

According to Town Planner Peter Hughes, each project has a 208-day construction period and if the contractor fails to deliver on time there will be a penalty fee of \$1,500 a day of liquidated damages paid to the town.

The cost of the two projects together is \$2.8 million. Hughes said the state Department of Transportation will fund 80% of the cost through the Federal Local Bridge Program, with the remaining 20% funded by the town.

The Federal Local Bridge Program funds the replacement and repairs of structurally deficient bridges, Hughes said.

The Jones Hollow Road Bridge over the Blackledge River will have a construction cost of \$1,512,240.50. The bridge will also have a construction inspection cost of \$352,400.

The South Main Street Bridge over Fawn Brook will have a construction cost of \$1,333,921.30. This bridge will also have a construction inspection cost of \$254,250.

When the Board of Selectmen was discussing these projects during its Dec. 3 meeting, Selectman Joe Asklar expressed concern for the duration of the project because of road closures.

Hughes said that the duration of the project could not be shortened and Selectman Amy Traversa used the example of building a house, saying it normally takes more than six months to be built.

"Not with traffic, not with concrete-curing times, not with ordering rebar," Traversa said. "And then sometimes the wrong rebar is delivered and has to go back. I think what you are going to find is that the perception of the residents is very different from the realities of construction."

One of the reasons for the duration of the project is that the length of both bridges will be increased by double, Hughes said. The height above the watercourse of the bridges is expected to remain the same.

The Jones Hollow Road Bridge was originally built in 1929 and repaired in 1986, Hughes said. The South Main Street Bridge was originally built in 1928 and replaced in 1986 also.

"Both bridges have serious corrosion of the bridge substructure and bridge abutments," Hughes said. "The abutments on both bridges have cracks and areas where the structural steel

components of the bridge are exposed."

Bridges that are 20 feet or longer are inspected by the state Department of Transportation every two years.

Hughes said the town will be holding a project information meeting for each of these bridge projects in late January or early February. He added that the town will also mail out notices to all the impacted property owners.

According to the minutes of the Board of Selectmen meeting of Dec. 3, these two bridge projects were bid in the fall and the previous Board of Selectmen authorized then-First Selectman Amy Traversa to execute the contracts. However, the documents did not arrive until after the November election, so the current Board of Selectmen needed to authorize current First Selectman Greg Lowrey to execute the contracts.

Andover School Board to Study Declining Student Population

by Sloan Brewster

The Andover Board of Education has appointed members to a committee that will look into how other districts are dealing with decreasing student population.

At Wednesday's meeting the board made the appointments, increasing the number of at large members and representatives from the education board from two to four in order to include all the folks who voiced interest in being on the committee. There will also be two members from the Board of Selectmen and one member from the Board of Finance.

Members from the education board will be Shannon Loudon, board chairman, Gerald Crème, Daniel Foran and Steven Fuss. At large members will be Caitlin McIntosh Greenhouse, Danny Holtsclaw, Katie Marino and Neil Weathers. Selectmen on the committee will be Adrian Mandeville and Paula King. Marc Brinker, finance board chairman, will be the representative from that board.

During discussion about the appointments, Crème asked for clarification about what the committee would be responsible for doing, voicing concern that it would look into the possibility of closing down Andover Elementary School and consolidating the students with a neighboring district.

Loudon said the committee would find out how area districts are dealing with decreasing population and look into possibly sharing some

educational services.

"Everyone around here is dealing with decreasing population," she said.

"So it's not closing down a school," Crème reiterated. "It's a fact-finding mission on how other towns are dealing with it."

Loudon concurred.

Schools Superintendent Sally Doyen asked if the board wanted to hire a facilitator to work with the committee but Loudon said that was something the board could do.

Last month, the board decided to create the committee after learning that the town of Bolton had approached Town Administrator Eric Anderson with a proposal to regionalize the districts and charge Andover \$13,000 per student.

"That presents a \$1.8 million saving," Loudon said last month.

According to a presentation Anderson gave at last night's meeting, last year Andover paid \$23,213 per elementary school student.

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

According to a document the Bolton administrator presented to Anderson, that Anderson said was merely a talking point, option 1 – regionalizing grades 6 and 7 with Bolton – would save Andover an estimated \$511,000 per year.

The option also included the towns creating a shared senior and recreation center.

Option 2 – regionalizing all elementary school grades – would save Andover an estimated \$1.8 million per year.

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

Anderson reiterated that the document merely "sets out the possibilities."

"We're both saying is this is even workable," he 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."

In his presentation Wednesday, Anderson said that, compared to Andover's 2018-19 \$23,213 per pupil cost, Hebron paid \$16,800 and Marlborough paid \$16,578.

He also discussed lower costs in eastern Connecticut towns with similar populations to Andover, including Sprague and Voluntown but Foran said those towns had different demographics, lower test scores and poorer ratings for their education systems.

"I really feel we should not model ourselves after them," he said.

Mandeville, who was also in attendance, brought up the need for the town to focus spending on improving roads and bridges and said

the new Board of Selectmen just found out some bridges in town were in need of repair and had been "swept under the rug" by the previous board.

"Your budget has not gone down relative to your student numbers," Mandeville said. "You had a 50% reduction in students and a 12% increase in budget."

He blamed the district's class size policy for part of the problem.

At recent education board meetings parents have raised concern that classes at Andover Elementary were overcrowded with 23 students and last month the board decided to hire two paraprofessionals to help out in grades 2 and 5, where the number of students is the highest in the school.

Wednesday, Doyen brought up the idea of changing the class size policy, with 21 students becoming the trigger number for splitting the class or bringing in support for the teacher.

The board will continue the discussion next month.

Foran asked if the town was doing anything to bring in new businesses to increase tax revenue in town and Anderson said the Planning & Zoning Commission had recently created a mixed-use district along the Route 6 corridor but so far no developers had expressed interest in building there.

Marlborough Selectman’s Wife Arrested on Multiple Charges

by Karla Santos

The wife of Selectman Joseph Asklar is facing multiple charges after an incident that happened in October.

According to police, Carol Asklar, 71, of Marlborough, turned herself in on Nov. 27, after learning of an arrest warrant that was initially issued for the charges of disorderly conduct, third-degree criminal mischief, interfering with an emergency phone call and third-degree criminal trespass.

Police said the incident occurred the afternoon of Oct. 31. According to an arrest warrant, Asklar went inside the home of the victim with a sign under her arm. Asklar was allegedly yelling at the man, “How dare you do that to my family? You can’t say those things about my family,” the warrant states. Police said the alleged victim told them he thought Asklar was referring to a sign he had taped to the rear of his truck saying “A vote for Joe Asklar is a vote for a barrel of snakes.”

Police said the victim and the accused had been arguing about monetary compensation from work that the victim had performed to Asklar’s building eight years ago.

The alleged victim told police that, as Asklar was continuing to yell at him, he called 911, but Asklar took the phone away and threw it, saying “we don’t need those a—holes coming here.” The victim then told Asklar that she was trespassing and wasn’t welcome.

The alleged victim also told police the sign Asklar had was ripped off of his truck, and that he told Asklar if she left with the sign that it would be considered stealing. The warrant says that Asklar then threw the sign. Police responded to the scene due to the interrupted 911 call, but by that time Asklar had driven away, the warrant states.

According to police, about a half an hour later, Asklar was located at her family’s busi-

ness, where she gave police her statement. In her statement she confessed to have ripped off the sign from the victim’s truck since her husband was running for the Board of Selectmen at the time. The warrant states that Asklar told police the victim was defaming her husband’s character.

According to the arrest warrant, Asklar said that when she arrived at the victim’s home, they both walked into the back door of the home, because it was raining. Asklar said the victim locked the door and put his back to it. She told police she then asked the victim why he was acting this way, and he allegedly said it was because of money Joe Asklar owed him. Asklar told police that she has done real estate work for the victim for more than two decades and the victim had never prohibited her from their property.

Asklar admitted to throwing the sign but not the phone, the warrant states.

The *Rivereast* reached out to Joe Asklar on Thursday for comments in regards to the incident.

“It was an incident between two very old friends, and one of them happens to be my wife,” Asklar said. He added that the description of the events in the arrest warrant “is not exactly accurate,” and said that because the case is currently in the court system “the truth will finally come out.”

Asklar’s attorney, John Swanson, said the case is “unfortunate” because Asklar and her family are respected in the community and they are “outstanding citizens.”

“I don’t believe she will be found guilty,” Swanson said. “A number of the allegations made are false. It’s an unfortunate incident that obviously involves politics.”

Swanson said he can’t comment on any specific details because it is a pending case.

East Hampton Police News

11/19: Michaela Rubino, 19, of 66 Hull Ave., Higganum, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, failure to drive right, speeding and possession of drug paraphernalia, East Hampton Police said.

11/26: Joshua Gibbons, 21, of 10 Starr Place, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

12/2: Nicholas Stec, 30, of 42 Old Farm Rd.,

Meriden, was issued a summons for failure to drive right, operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license and failure to carry minimum insurance, police said.

Also, from Nov. 18-Dec. 1, officers responded to 17 medical calls, 11 motor vehicle accidents and 19 alarms, and made 35 traffic stops, police said.

Obituaries

Colchester

Eleanor Josephine Morrissette

Eleanor Josephine Morrissette, 92, of Voluntown, formerly of Colchester, passed away peacefully at the Bridebrook Rehabilitation Center and Nursing Home in Niantic Thursday, Dec. 5.

Born March 15, 1927 in Norwich, Eleanor was one of seven children born to the late Sabrina Marie and Teofil Thomas Korenkiewicz, of Mohegan Park Road, Norwich. Eleanor attended Norwich Free Academy and was a majorette in the Drum Corps. After graduating NFA in 1945, she attended the Backus School of Nursing, graduating as a registered nurse in 1948.

As a young woman, Eleanor met and fell in love with a young soldier, John Morrissette; the couple were married at St. Joseph's Church in Norwich in 1950, after John returned from serving in the U.S. Marine Corps in the Pacific during World War II. Eleanor and John made their home and raised their family in East Hartford. Eleanor was a nurse at Hartford Hospital for 37 years, while John worked at Pratt & Whitney. In 1990, Eleanor and John moved to Voluntown to enjoy their retirement. The couple spent over 61 years together, until John predeceased her in 2011.

Eleanor was a very devoted wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother; she most loved her husband and her family. She was the nurse on call for all of her extended family and friends throughout her life and was the one person everyone called on during a crisis. Eleanor was a force of nature who always worked to help everyone. She loved writing letters, sending cards, and watching the UConn women's basketball team win national championships.

Eleanor is survived by her children, Chris Brooks and her husband, Gene Brooks, of Virginia Beach, Va.; Paul Morrissette and his wife Karen Woodis Morrissette of Colchester, and Lynn Szkoda and her husband, Edward Szkoda of East Hampton; seven grandchildren, Keri and Dan Barcus of Pittstown, N.J., Keith and Jess Morrissette of Glastonbury, Mike and Sarah Brooks of Chesapeake, Va., Tyler and Kalie Morrissette of Old Lyme, Thomas and Kim Morrissette of Groton, Blake Szkoda of Columbus, Ohio, and Allyse Szkoda of East Hampton; 11 great-grandchildren, Kaylee Pierce of Newberry, Fla., Ashley, Ben, John, and Logan Barcus of Pittstown, N.J., Luke, Beth and Matthew Morrissette of Glastonbury, Grace and Isla Morrissette of Old Lyme, and Sawyer Brooks of Chesapeake, Va.; many nieces and nephews; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her beloved husband and both of her parents, Eleanor was predeceased by her eldest son, John Jack Morrissette Jr., of East Hampton; all of her siblings and their spouses, Stanley and Lee Korenkiewicz of Detroit, Mich., Raymond and Yola Korenkiewicz of Montville, Jean and Frido Urbanti, of Franklin, Loretta and Dick Custer of Franklin, Julian "Whitey" and Pat Korenkiewicz of Norwich, and Charles and Joan Korenkiewicz of Montville; and her granddaughter, Shawn Marie Brooks, of Williston, Fla.

Calling hours will be held on Monday, Dec. 9, from 9:30-10:30 a.m., at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Andrew Church at 11 a.m. Burial will follow in Pachaug Cemetery in Griswold.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Bridebrook Rehabilitation Center, attention: Recreation Department, 23 Liberty Way, Niantic, CT 06357.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthy-funeralhome.com.



East Hampton

Wallace Richard Hall

Wallace "Wally" Richard Hall Jr., 62, of Windsor, Maine, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Dec. 4, at Maine Medical Center. He was born March 15, 1957, to Wallace and Kathleen Hall.

Wally was one of 12 children. He attended East Hampton High School and went on to serve in the United States Marine Corps. In 1980, Wally moved from Connecticut to Windsor, Maine, with his father and siblings to manage Lipman Poultry Farms. He met the love of his life, Gail, in 1981 and they married in 1985. He had his daughter Danielle in 1987, which he often shared as one of the proudest moments in his life. He was a family man who loved being a husband, a father and most recently a proud grandfather to his "buddy" Nash.

He worked 25 years as a machine operator at Maine Poly and later as a transportation aid for the Department of Transportation. Wally was known as a hard-working man who enjoyed working with his hands. You would often find him making well-houses, mowing his lawn, cutting and stacking wood or just tinkering on something. If he wasn't tinkering on something he was riding his motorcycle with his wife, father, daughter and friends, often riding to his favorite spot, Pemaquid Point. He loved spending time with "the girls," his beloved dogs Sheba and Kenzy. He enjoyed and appreciated the simple things that life had to offer.

Wally was an honest, kind, loyal, strong and loving man. He was the first to offer help but never expected it in return. He made friends wherever he went. Strangers became friends and friends became family. He had no quit – it was all grit. He loved big and deep. His love had no boundaries, no expectations and was always expressed genuinely. The world was a better place with him in it.

He was predeceased by his parents, Wallace and Kathleen Hall; sisters, Laura Oliger and Sharon Hall.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 34 years, Gail; his daughter, Danielle Sherwood and her husband Eric; his most recent pride and joy, grandson Nash; brothers and sisters, Tim, Mark, Lenny, Mike, Colleen, Carol, Charlene, Doreen and Vicky; many brothers- and sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews, and very special friends.

A very special and heartfelt thank you to his heart donor and family, the staff at Maine Medical Center including the Cardiac Heart Failure/Transplant Team, his R7 nurses and his special lady Joan. You all were his angels on earth.

A celebration of life will be held on Sunday, Dec. 15, at noon, at the American Legion Post 179, 78 Legion Memorial Drive, South China, Maine. A private burial will be held in the spring.

Please consider registering to be an organ donor – donatelife.net.



Colchester

Patricia Zizzamia

Patricia (Dunn) Zizzamia of Colchester passed away Saturday, Dec. 7.

Her beloved husband leaves this message, "I lost my best friend after 33 years. Patty was the most sincere and giving person, always a friendly smile and willing to help others. She will be missed by all. Being married to her was the best thing in my life. I love you Patty D. Forever yours, Pete."

A celebration of Patty's life will be held on Saturday, Dec. 14, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Family and friends may visit from 11 a.m.-noon and a memorial service will follow at noon. Burial will be private.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthy-funeralhome.com.



East Hampton

Eleanor Marie Wood

Eleanor Marie (Murray) Wood, 90, of East Hampton, widow of the late Glenn M. Wood, died peacefully Wednesday, Dec. 4, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Dec. 23, 1928, in New York City, she was the daughter of the late George and Helen (Huber) Murray. Eleanor married her husband Glenn in 1951 and they moved to East Hampton in 1956.

Eleanor earned a degree in medical technology from City College in New York, and had worked as a phlebotomist and a lab technician on the East Coast during the Korean War. Eleanor became the Judge of Probate in the town of East Hampton from 1974 until 1994. She was an active member of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church of East Hampton, a board member of CAC council and was instrumental in developing the community mental health care system in the state of Connecticut, and was awarded a key to the city of Middletown by the mayor. In addition, she was a chairperson for the EHHS addition and renovation.

Eleanor was a world traveler and she loved elder hostel trips with her husband Glenn in the '80s. She enjoyed cycling in Europe and locally, gardening, tennis, canoeing, kayaking, pottery and opera. She was a key member of the Wesleyan Potters for over 20 years and was an usher at both the Hartford Stage and the Bushnell theatres.

Eleanor is survived by her three sons, Dan Wood of San Diego, Tom Wood of East Hampton, Roger Wood of Cambridge, Mass., and her two beloved grandchildren, Caroline and Ryan.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, today, Dec. 13, from 7-9 p.m. A funeral service will be held Saturday, Dec. 14, at 11 a.m., in the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in East Hampton. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1 East High St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencer-funeralhomeinc.com.



East Hampton

Frank W. Squier

Frank W. Squier, 89, of East Hampton, widower of the late Elsie Squier, passed away peacefully Monday, Dec. 9, at Water's Edge in Middletown. Born June 23, 1930, in Marlborough, he was the son of the late Walter C. and Laura E. (Burke) Squier.

Frank was an active member of the East Hampton Congregational Church, where he served as a deacon for many years. He was a member of the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, and was active in 4-H in the '60s when his children were young.

Frank had worked many jobs in his career, including A&P in Manchester, head of maintenance for Rest Haven Convalescent Home, and he retired from Bevin Brothers Bell Factory, as well as doing lawn care and snow removal.

He is survived by his three sons, Frank Squier Jr. (Ellen) of Portland, Walter Squier (Nancy) of East Hampton, Wallace Squier (Cathy) of Manchester; four daughters, Christine Culbert of East Hampton, Susan Squier of Middletown, Dale Ann Squier of Maine, Jennifer Squier Lane (Scott) of Middletown; 14 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandsons.

He was predeceased by his brother, John Squier; a sister, Charlotte Wright; a son-in-law; two grandchildren; and a great-grandson. A funeral service will be held today, Dec. 13, at 11 a.m., in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Friends may call at the funeral home from 10 a.m. until the time of the service. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to East Hampton Congregational Church, P.O. Box 237, East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit spencer-funeralhomeinc.com.

Marlborough

Michael H. Francis

Michael H. Francis, 66, a longtime resident of Marlborough, passed away suddenly Sunday, Nov. 24. Mike was born in Albany, N.Y., to the late Martin and Nancy Francis. He grew up in and attended school in Poughkeepsie.

Mike had a long career in the retail electronics industry but was most proud of his many years working with his brother Bob, beginning with Bob's 2-Way Radio in Lubbock, Texas, and later leading to Cordless Data Transfer, Inc. in Marlborough, founded in the early 1990s by his brother Bob Francis.

Besides the unbreakable love and bond Mike had for his family, he was a lifelong New York Yankees fan, with New York Giants second.

Michael is survived by his loving wife Teresa; brother Paul and his wife Deborah of Fairlawn, N.J.; William Francis and his wife Theresa of Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; and his sister Mary Linge, also of Poughkeepsie, N.Y. In addition, he leaves his sister-in-law, Lisa Francis of Goodyear, Ariz.; widow of his late brother, Robert Francis, and their sons, Geno of Denver, Colo., and Tim of Marlborough; Aunt Lois of California and Uncle Russ of Massachusetts; loving mother-in-law Martina in California; stepdaughter Sarah and family; brothers-in-law James, Mark and Patrick. He also had several extended family members on the east and west coasts.

The first of two memorial services was held in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., for his New York clan.

A second memorial service for his Connecticut friends and family will be held on Friday, Dec. 20, at 6 p.m., at St. John Fisher Church, 30 Jones Hollow Rd., Marlborough.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made the Food Bank of Marlborough, c/o Marlborough Town Hall, 26 North Main St., P.O. Box 29, Marlborough, CT 06447.



Colchester

Irma Josephine Trusz

Irma Josephine Trusz, 89, of Colchester, who was blessed with 48 years of devotion and love with her late husband, Stanley J. Trusz, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Dec. 10, at Apple Rehab in Colchester. Born July 29, 1930 in Queens, New York City, she was a daughter of the late Richard and Genevieve Exner.

For 16 years, Irma worked in the human resources department at the *Hartford Courant* newspaper. Upon her retirement in 1995, a former *Northeast Magazine* editor stated, "She is, or has been, the perfect person in the perfect place." She was a devout woman who was a communicant of St. Andrew Church. Irma opened her heart and home to many family and friends, including five foster children that she loved and cared for wholeheartedly. In her free time, Irma was an avid reader, and she would always go out of her way to make sure that every holiday was a special event for her family, whom she loved dearly.

She will be forever remembered and loved by her children, Michael (Sondra) Trusz of Glastonbury, Nancy (Terry) Trusz-Varraso of Florida, GERALYN (Gerald) Beiriger of Texas, Andrew Trusz of South Carolina and Peter (Jessica) Trusz of Colchester; nine grandchildren Jennifer (Alex) Ivers, Julie, Ricky, Matthew, Kristin, Jonathan, Joshua, Jason and Jamie (Jess); two great-grandchildren; sisters, Anna Kudlacik, the late Doris McAnany, and Margaret Dwyer.

"A light heart lives long." Calling hours will be held on Monday, Dec. 16, from 9:30-10:30 a.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home. The funeral liturgy will take place at 11 a.m., at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave, Colchester. Burial will take place at 1 p.m. in the State Veterans Cemetery, 317 Bow Ln., Middletown.

The family requests that donations in her memory be made to Beacon Hospice at amedisys.com.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthy-funeralhome.com.

