

RIVEREAST

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Women's March Inspires RHAM Student Project

by Sloan Brewster

When Caroline Gomez came upon the Boston Women's March while visiting the city in January with two of her friends, she was moved to action; she transformed her inspiration into a school project that she hopes will become an art installation.

On Monday, Gomez, of Marlborough flanked by her friends Caroline Meyer, of Marlborough, and Elisabeth Miano, of Andover, spent the afternoon in the art room at RHAM High School waiting for folks to stop by and have their portraits taken.

During the photoshoot, people stopped by a desk to fill out a sheet of paper designed to replicate what arrestees hold in front of themselves for mug shots.

They filled in their name, the date and their so-called "crime," which was actually a political statement or one about something important to the individual.

Gomez, who had her portrait taken earlier, had the words "Love Trumps Hate" scrolled on hers.

She was hoping folks from RHAM and the greater community would stop by to pose for the camera and get enough portraits to create an installation showing that there are many different issues to discuss with many different sides to each one.

"I wanted it to be something that was local and a community activity," she said.

To spread the word, Gomez sent emails to RHAM staff and students and Meyer posted about it on the "Marlborough CT Happenings & Community" Facebook page.

On Friday, March 15, she will hold a second photoshoot that she also hopes will be populated by folks from RHAM and beyond.

When they saw the crowd of people at the Women's March, the three high school seniors said they were struck, not just by the sheer number of people lining the Boston streets but by the diversity within the ranks.

"I think it was a moment when we realized that this is real and it matters and I think this is why this meant so much to me," Gomez said. "It's not just women, it's kids, it's grandparents, it's men, students, it's everybody ... [It was] not just college kids, [it was] women with kids, men with kids."

"Grandparents with kids," chimed in Meyer. "It was like a whole family event," Gomez said.

All the people in the crowd were there standing for different things, she added.

"Even if you don't like women and you don't want to support women, you can be at the Women's March and support a different issue," Gomez said.

Meyer said seeing the crowd made an impact on them.

"The crowd was huge," Meyer said. "I think what stuck out the most to me was how different everybody was," she said.

She said that she and Miano stand behind Gomez because she has the initiative to "really break boundaries" and will "take strides to show the world what a real powerful mind she has."

Miano, who is in the same art class as Gomez, has enjoyed witnessing the development of her friend's idea.

At the photoshoot Monday, art teacher Beverly Fisher – who, with fellow teacher Carrie Dinunzio, co-hosts the class for which Gomez is doing the project – stopped by with graphics design teacher Shelley Osowiecki. The duo posed together.



RHAM High School graphics design teacher Shelley Osowiecki and art teacher Beverly Fisher stopped by the art room at the school Monday to pose with signs for student Caroline Gomez, who took their portrait for an activism-themed art installation project she is working on.

Fisher's sign read, "Wanting to stand up and be counted for the things I believe in," while Osowiecki's said "My grandmother has told me enough of the past that I don't want us to go backwards."

According to Dinunzio, who had also dropped in to see how the photoshoot was going, students were assigned a project based on the work of Chinese artist and political activist

Ai Weiwei. Students decided exactly what shape their project would take.

The teachers chose Weiwei because of the way he inspires people to pull together information, Dinunzio said.

"His artwork is more about political activism than it is about one person creating this special vision so it was really nice to see

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Colchester Adds Paramedic Program to Budget

by Allison Lazur

A detailed presentation of a proposed paramedic program last week resulted in unanimous approval from the Colchester Board of Selectmen a day later to include the proposal in this year's upcoming town budget.

The proposed program would provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) to residents and cut down on the response time from outside paramedics currently coming from Middlesex Hospital in Marlborough or a Norwich-based commercial ambulance company. The town currently offers Basic Life Support (BLS) only.

The Feb. 20 presentation was given by Charlie Jaskiewicz to the boards of finance and selectmen, as well as a packed room of residents.

Jaskiewicz, who has taught EMT classes to the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Company, is also a registered nurse and paramedic.

"I have a passion for paramedics and I see a void and a need that can be filled with this program," he told the *RiverEast* last week. "My desire to help Colchester is because there's been

a synergy in this town with myself and the fire service since 1976."

Advanced Life Support includes life-saving measures only a paramedic can provide, such as starting an IV, having the equipment carried by a paramedic to monitor heart rhythms or the ability to handle a diabetic emergency.

The program is projected to cost \$350,000 for the first year plus a one-time expense of \$100,000 to cover equipment and supplies and includes hiring one paramedic supervisor/firefighter and one paramedic/firefighter.

The second year is projected to cost \$450,000 and includes hiring an additional paramedic/firefighter as well as six to ten per diem paramedic/firefighters to cover any gaps in coverage created by the full-time crew.

This sort of hiring structure would result in "24/7 coverage within your town," Jaskiewicz said.

But despite the hefty yearly cost, Jaskiewicz revealed an equally as hefty revenue figure.

The fire department currently brings in an

average of \$514,453.40 in yearly revenue, based on figures from the last five years, the presentation states. Much of the revenue is brought in by payments received for BLS services.

Jaskiewicz called the figures "an actual testament to what your town is accomplishing and what the service is doing."

However, if the department had been providing ALS services, an additional \$185,300 in revenue could have occurred for 2017.

This figure is based off the number of times a patient received ALS care from an outside paramedic in 2017 – 311 calls in total – combined with the 166 times an outside paramedic did not reach a patient due to unavailability, which resulted in additional time before the patient could be treated by appropriate medical professionals.

The department projects if it had been providing ALS services, it could have responded to 75 percent of those 166 calls, contributing to the additional revenue.

Fire Chief Walter Cox noted there is currently

no dedicated paramedic to the town of Colchester, and that a paramedic only responds if one is available to travel from Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center or American Ambulance in Norwich.

The average response time for a paramedic traveling from Middlesex Hospital is 11 minutes, Jaskiewicz said, and American Ambulance averages 11 minutes 45 seconds. The Colchester Fire Department, however, averages a response time of five minutes and 59 seconds, he said.

"It's nothing to deter from Middlesex [Hospital] or American [Ambulance], it's just that they have a lot more demographic to cover," Jaskiewicz said of the response time figures.

The presentation additionally revealed a possible projected cost savings for residents.

Jaskiewicz stated that currently when a resident receives ALS services, the care is reflected in two bills – a \$743 bill from the fire department and an \$835 bill for the ALS intercept, totaling \$1,578.

See Paramedic Program page 2

Student Project cont. from Front Page

Caroline connect to that idea of involving the community and working with a larger group of people,” she said.

Dinunzio said Meyer had done a great job organizing the event and reaching out to people – and she hoped the student would get a great turnout as a result.

“Caroline is definitely the first to really involve the community in this way,” she said. “You always hope that the artists that you expose your students to, that they make some sort of connection to something that they’ve done.”

The girls said that, from the response they had received on Facebook, they anticipated a decent showing at the photoshoots – although by about 3 p.m. Monday, numbers were thin.

Some women who saw the post responded with their own memories of marching in women’s marches the 1970s, ‘80s or ‘90s, saying they still had memorabilia from their participation.

“All these women still have their sashes and pins,” Meyers said. “I think that’s important. All this time and we’re still fighting for the exact same thing.”

Gomez said that while she wants to go to college for fashion, activism has always interested her, she said.

“I think it’s important to get involved in something that you believe in,” she said.

The girls took some time to talk about the meaning behind the signs they held for their pictures.

Miano’s read “People of quality don’t fear equality.” She said that while she wanted the message to be “very clear cut,” she didn’t want to pinpoint an issue but make “a broad statement of humanity in general.”

Meyer’s sign had the words “UGH, where do I even start?”

“There’s a lot of issues that are going on in our society and I think that it’s really hard for me to pinpoint one specific thing because I stand with the women, with the men, with people who are facing the injustice,” she said. “You can only stay silent for so long before you take action. ... We’re kind of done.”

“Enough is enough because it is our future,” Gomez chimed before explaining her sign – the “Love Trumps Hate” sign.

“I think a lot of the momentum behind the Women’s March is a lot of people hating on our president, which I don’t necessarily agree with. I don’t think anyone deserves to be hated on,” she said. “People in the Women’s March want to hate on President Trump and then President Trump wants to hate on the Women’s March so I think [“Love Trumps Hate”] is a statement that everyone should listen to.

Gomez said she’s not sure where she’ll put the art installation but said she wants people to see the portraits. She is considering holding a separate show or including it in Evening of the Arts, an art show and concert of student work at RHAM on May 30.

Paramedic Program cont. from Front Page

Under this new program, patients will only receive one bill for transportation and ALS services, resulting in a potential \$532 savings for those who received ALS or a total bill of \$1,046, Jaskiewicz said.

* * *

The projected timeline for the implementation of the program includes a series of upcoming informational sessions hosted by Cox to answer the community’s questions with the hope of the proposed program being passed as a part of the town budget at the June 11 referendum.

Board of Finance Chairman Rob Tarlov said the finance board will continue to discuss the proposal and work on “tweaking” the cost and revenue figures for the program during upcoming budget workshops.

If passed at referendum, the program is projected to be fully implemented by June 2020.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Gov. Ned Lamont released his budget proposal last week, and while there’s a lot of good there, what’s been getting the most ink – and understandably so – has been the possibility of tolls and the possibility of a slew of items being taxed that have never been taxed before.

I’ve written about tolls before; I think it’s an approach at least worth exploring. Taxing the tractor-trailers and other big-box trucks makes a lot of sense, as those are the vehicles that cause the most damage to our roads. As much as I’d love if just that option were implemented, I admit it’s looking increasingly likely passenger cars might be tolled as well. But even if they are, I don’t think it will be the end of the world.

First of all, according to *CT News Junkie*, the toll proposal has been scaled back from what the Department of Transportation originally looked at, and would now only affect interstates 84, 91 and 95, as well as Route 15. Furthermore, there would be a discount for Connecticut drivers – and from what I’ve seen in other states, the discount for in-state drivers can be substantial.

We’re surrounded by states that have tolls; more states in the country have tolls than do not. And many of the state’s roads and particularly bridges are in bad shape. The gas tax isn’t getting it done anymore. I think tolls might not be a bad idea.

As for the new taxes, I’ll be completely honest: some of them stink. A lot. Yes, the sales tax has not been expanded to groceries – not that I ever really thought it would be. A friend of mine felt all along, and I agree with him, the grocery tax was never serious; rather, it was brought up so as to make other, less-impactful taxes seem easier to swallow.

But while I’m very glad groceries and prescription drugs won’t be taxed, it’s terrible that over-the-counter drugs were included on the list. OTC drugs can be, and often are, just as important as prescriptions. In fact, there are times when your insurance company will refuse to cover a prescription if an OTC version of it exists. People need medication for their health – to tax it seems incredibly unfair. The healthcare system is bad enough as it is; don’t add to the problem by taxing drugs, even over-the-counter ones.

On a related note: just as healthcare costs for humans have skyrocketed, they have for our animals as well. And to that end, taxing veterinary services should also be out of the question.

But, if we’re being totally honest, there are things on Lamont’s proposed list of newly-taxed items that should be on there; some of them you wonder why they were never taxed to begin with.

Chief among them: Winter boat storage. Seriously. People currently aren’t taxed on storing their boats for the winter. How did that get passed? If you can afford to own a boat, you can afford to pay taxes on storing it for the winter.

Lamont’s list also calls for the sales tax on boats to increase from 2.99 percent to 6.35. It should’ve been that already. Again: If you can buy a boat, you can afford to pay taxes on it at the same rate as everyone else.

The same reasoning applies to taxes on boarding your horse. I have nothing at all against horses; I think they’re beautiful animals and I know they can be incredibly thera-

peutic for people. But they’re not exactly an animal of the poor. Everything involved with having a horse is expensive. So if you’re paying all that – including paying to board it – why not pay taxes on boarding it?

And while it’s not as egregious a tax exemption, the fact people don’t have to pay taxes on going to the beauty salon doesn’t seem right. Don’t get me wrong: I go to a salon myself, and I know it’s a terrific experience. But it’s a luxury; I freely admit that.

Still, while Lamont’s list does indeed have several things that, frankly, are overdue to be taxed, there are an awful lot – like the aforementioned over-the-counter drugs – that taxing would just seem like cruel and unusual punishment. I hope the list is pared down a good deal before the budget is finally passed – and I expect it will be. This is just a first draft of the budget, after all. State lawmakers will spend a lot of time looking at it and making changes and I’m hopeful they’ll come out with a final budget that does a good job of providing for the state without pinching the middle class too much on items like medication and vet bills that we really don’t need to be pinched on.

Some of the more progressive Democrats at the Capitol have, I’ve read, complained Lamont didn’t do enough when it comes to income tax – that a lot of these proposed tax expansions could be alleviated if he’d look more at increasing the taxes on the wealthiest in the state. I do agree with this. I’d rather see the wealthiest pay more – and there are an awful lot of very wealthy people, mostly down in the Gold Coast area – than taxing people to, say, go to the laundromat.

* * *

A lot was made in the news last week that Lamont’s budget left state aid to cities and towns mostly untouched. And it’s true that no towns are seeing the drastic hits that Malloy had proposed in the past, the fact is, under Lamont’s plan, most of the *Rivereast* towns would see losses in state aid. According to the *Hartford Courant*, Andover would see its aid from the state fall from \$2,414,726 in the current fiscal year to \$2,199,047 in the next fiscal year to \$1,994,080 in 2020-21.

Hebron would go from the \$6,827,849 it’s receiving this year to \$6,185,191 next year and \$5,615,268 in 2020-21. Marlborough would fall from \$3,333,952 to \$3,256,589 in 2019-20 to \$3,139,705 in 2020-21. East Hampton would drop from \$4,035,051 to \$4,006,055 next year to \$3,944,968 in 2020-21.

Colchester, meanwhile, would see a loss of more than \$2 million in aid from the state over the course of the next two years – going from the current \$13,451,018 to \$12,352,636 next year to \$11,396,805 in 2020-21.

Interestingly, however, Lamont’s budget calls for Portland’s allotment of state aid to actually increase a bit, going from the current \$4,810,598 to \$4,872,703 next year to \$4,951,513 in 2020-21.

So, yes, the aid the towns would be losing pales in comparison to some of the lost aid that’s been threatened in the past. But, as town officials will tell you, every little bit of state aid helps. That’s lost money that will need to be made up someplace.

* * *

See you next week.

Portland First Selectman Hopeful Pushes Small Government

by Elizabeth Regan

A lifelong Portland resident has announced his intention to run for Portland first selectman under the newly-created Back to Basics banner.

Shaun Manning, 53, is a proponent of small government whose outlook was shaped while studying business at Northwood University in Michigan. He described the institution as one founded on the concepts of free enterprise and capitalism.

"I chose the party name Back to Basics because I feel, if you go back to the way this country was founded, that you need to tax for very little. The three things you really need to tax for are your education, your infrastructure and your public safety," he said during an interview this week.

Manning said focusing on those three needs will increase property values.

"And slowly, over time, the grand list will increase and then we will be able to afford things we want without having to take a loan out," he said.

He said good roads are a basic and visible sign of a well-functioning government.

"We can make it a place that – whether you're coming from Glastonbury, Middletown, East Hampton, and [whether] you're going Penfield

Hill Road or Main Street – it looks like a town you'd want to live in," he said.

The Back to Basics Party was recognized as a third party late last year by the Connecticut Secretary of the State after Manning collected 25 signatures from qualified voters in town. He is in the process of petitioning the state to be added to November's election ballot. He needs to collect signatures from 24 voters – or 1 percent of the number who voted for first selectman two years ago.

Manning, the son of the late Thomas and Eileen Manning, is a partner in the family-run Manning Home Builders. He is married with a step-daughter and grandchild.

While he has been influenced by Libertarian principles, he said he decided to create his own party on the local level because it's easier for him to convey his message that way – rather than trying to explain to everyone what a Libertarian is. Starting something new also exemplifies that his platform is not about a particular party, but about what he believes the town needs.

For Manning, a focus on infrastructure involves taking care of roads that have been "neglected for 20 years by just chip-sealing them." It also involves upgrading the water and sewer system instead of repairing sections as they fail,

he said.

Manning's focus on education means funding buildings, educators and supplies. His public safety commitment means outfitting the police department with the latest technology and making sure the volunteer fire department has modern fire apparatus to protect people and property in town.

He said current selectmen are concerned more about parks than basic necessities, citing the creation of Portland's portion of the multi-town Air Line Trail and the new recreational complex being built on Route 17.

Voters in 2016 approved a bonding package with \$6 million allotted for athletic fields, walking trails, a playground and splash pad on Route 17. The package included \$2.5 million for road improvements focused on Brownstone Avenue and \$1 million to fix sidewalks on streets adjacent to town schools. It also set aside \$500,000 for miscellaneous projects including repairs to roofs on the town garage and Fire Company 2 as well as police station windows.

"You go to a [selectmen's] meeting and they spend close to an hour talking about the Air Line Trail, talking about the park. Nowhere does it come up anything we need to run a town," Manning said.



Shaun Manning

Portland Officials Debate Need for Town Planner

by Elizabeth Regan

Concerns about the adequacy of the town's current planning and zoning framework are being raised by some and discounted by others as officials embark on this year's budget planning process.

One of those calling for a full-time town planner is Rose Aletta, the Zoning Board of Appeals chairman who has been fighting the town on a private zoning matter unrelated to her official capacity.

Aletta, in a Feb. 15 letter to the editor in the *Riverast*, alleged that the lack of an "experienced department head" in the land use department leaves staff with "no oversight, support and little guidance."

The letter called on town officials to include a new town planner in its upcoming budget.

The town has not had a full-time planner since the departure of Deanna Rhodes, who received certification from the American Institute of Certified Planners in 2014 after having worked for a decade in the department. She left in 2016 to become the Norwich city planner.

Rhodes was replaced by a full-time land use administrator, Ashley Majorowski, in October 2016. The town at that time also hired Mary Dickerson as the part-time land use/economic development coordinator. Majorowski currently works 30 hours per week while Dickerson works up to 26 hours per week, according to First Selectman Susan Bransfield.

Aletta, a property owner on Marlborough Street, has been critical of building and zoning approvals going back to January 2017 that have allowed renovations of an adjacent lot without public notice. She has questioned the approval of a renovation at 100 Marlborough St. based on issues involving the multifamily use of the building, the size of the renovation, parking and drainage.

The applicant for the project is 100, LLC, which the secretary of the state's business database identifies as a venture of Donald Snyder Jr. He owns Snyder Civil Engineering in town.

The town also employs Dan Bourret as zoning enforcement officer through the Lower River Valley Council of Governments for 10 hours per week. Bourret has recused himself from the 100 Marlborough St. application because he is Snyder's cousin.

Aletta alleged the lack of a full-time planner leaves staff "to make decisions under pressure from applicants with social or economic status when issuing permits and writing regulations."

Aletta did not return a call for comment.

Land use staff has maintained the project was approved in accordance with zoning regulations. Town attorney Kari Olson, of Murtha Cullina, emphasized the statutorily mandated appeal period for zoning decisions has expired, which she said leaves it in Aletta's hands to

seek "whatever legal remedies she deems appropriate" in the court system.

Economic Development Commission Chairman Elwin Guild this week told the *Riverast* he has concerns about a lack of experienced department oversight, but for different reasons. He described Aletta's personal concerns about a neighboring property as a symptom of a bigger problem.

He said a full-time planner – not necessarily a certified one right away – would help provide cohesion in a department that merges functions related to planning, zoning, building, wetlands and fire safety. A planner would also benefit volunteer commissions governing planning and zoning, zoning appeals, inland wetlands, and conservation.

Guild alleged members of the Planning and Zoning Commission do not have the support they need to make informed decisions. He said some cases require a deep understanding of local regulations and state statute. Commission members also need staff support to help them stand up to intimidating applicants, according to Guild.

"The inability of these people serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission to deal with the applications and the intricacies of those issues is embarrassing," Guild said. "They have no support. No guidance. No direction. No protection."

Planning and Zoning Chairman Bruce Tyler said this week he would support a full-time planner, but disagrees with the contention that his commission lacks guidance or support.

"In my opinion, the Planning and Zoning Commission and its staff does not respond to political, social or economic groups, but relies on the facts of the application and the comments of our experts, such as the town engineer, the fire marshal, and so forth," Tyler said.

Still, he said a town planner would "speed up the process" for resolving planning and zoning issues.

"I believe we're a little understaffed; that's another reason why a town planner would be terrific," he said.

In addition to Majorowski, Dickerson and Bourret, the department includes an administrative assistant and a full-time building official. The town's fire marshal's office and a sanitarian from the regional Chatham Health District also address land use issues.

Bringing in Consultants

Bransfield said at last week's Board of Selectmen meeting she has heard concerns about the lack of a town planner and has given the issue a lot of thought. She asked selectmen to consider seeking bid proposals from planning organizations or firms who could provide planning services on an as-needed basis.

Bransfield pointed to large-scale, long-term projects that will be before the land use department in the near future. Examples include the Brainerd Place mixed-use development on the site of the former Elmcrest Hospital property, changes to the town's water system, traffic improvements spurred by a regional planning study, and continuing economic growth along the Route 66 business corridor.

She said she does not believe there's a need for a full-time planner, but added, "However, there are times we need some assistance in terms of oversight and perhaps some insight as to how the regulations can be looked at."

Bransfield this week told the *Riverast* the request for bid proposals would be designed to secure a planning firm or organization with multiple staff members in different areas of expertise so the town could call on the most appropriate planner for any given project.

The town has already used consultant Terri-Ann Hahn, of LADA Land Planners, for aspects of the Brainerd Place development as well as a site plan for a business at 1600 Portland Cobalt Road.

Selectman Ben Srb at last week's meeting said he does not see a need for consultants when the town has a land use administrator. He said Majorowski is more qualified than a consultant who may not be familiar with Portland.

"Ashley's in the town. Ashley knows the regulations. Ashley knows most of the properties. I don't think there's a magic wand here to fix any problem. I'm not sure a problem even exists. At the end of the day, rules and regulations are in place," he said.

Srb has identified himself as the developer for the 1600 Portland Cobalt Road project that Hahn worked on last year. That's when the consultant wrote an advisory memo that argued the project needed a special permit due to the amount of excavation work required.

Srb's contention in that case and in a separate situation involving a property on the corner of Sage Hollow Road and Cornwall Street has been that regulations governing excavation don't apply if one is simply removing earth material to accommodate a new house or a business.

A subsequent opinion from town attorney Kari Olson, of Murtha Cullina, agreed the project should be subject to a special permit. The Planning and Zoning Commission rejected the opinion when they approved the excavation of approximately 200,000 cubic yards of material with a site plan only.

The land use department is currently in the process of drafting revisions to tighten the town's excavation regulations.

Srb during the selectmen's discussion last week cautioned them that situations big enough

to merit a consultant are "few and far between."

"The rules are pretty clear, unless you don't want them to be [and] you want to create something else," he said.

Srb also noted Hahn is not a certified planner.

Certification involves an exam and requires a certain amount of professional planning experience, according to the American Institute of Certified Planners. A person with a higher level of college education needs fewer years of planning experience to qualify to take the exam.

Bransfield said this week both Majorowski and Dickerson are interested in becoming certified planners.

Dickerson, in a Feb. 25 memo to the selectmen, responded to Aletta's published concerns to outline the department's structure and process for evaluating applications.

She also emphasized she has managed "most of the 'planning' tasks formerly assigned to the town planner."

Dickerson said she has assisted in the implementation of the 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development; collected data to help identify needs in the community; met with potential developers, state officials, and the public regarding land use and potential development; attended local, state, and regional conferences and training programs; and sought grant funding for infrastructure, transportation, and community development improvements.

Majorowski this week told the *Riverast* that she works closely with Dickerson.

"She has experience with planning-related things and we all work together to make everything function," Majorowski said. "I don't think we've had anything that's gone terribly wrong. We consult a planner if we need to, but I don't think the department is lacking by not having an official town planner."

Majorowski reiterated that she and Dickerson are both interested in becoming certified as town planners once they've accrued the required experience.

Majorowski noted she has passed her exams to become a Certified Zoning Enforcement Technician certification through the Connecticut Association of Zoning Enforcement Officials.

Selectmen will be considering the staffing situation as part of the budget planning process, which begins in earnest with the release of Bransfield's recommended budget this week. The document was scheduled to be released after press time Thursday.

The budget proposal will be presented to the public Wednesday, March 13, by Bransfield and Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly. Selectmen will hear from the various town departments at workshops during March before deliberating on the spending plan April 2-3.

Douglas Library Has New Space for Teens in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

There's a new place for teens at Douglas Library.

The initiative to create the "Teen Zone," as it is called, was started by former library director Amanda Brouwer. Director Kevin Sullivan, who took over the position in November, finished arranging the space in early January, he said. The space was designed to be welcoming to teens, while at the same time not overwhelming to adults.

"It's a nice space to sit around, do homework, talk to friends, wait for a ride," he said.

Setting up the teen space – which is located on the second floor, past the main desk and underneath the windows – was part of last year's strategic plan and a means to expand the library's attraction, he said.

Teens make up 15 percent of the town's population and many of them use the library, stopping by after school while awaiting rides, to do homework or just to hang out and chat with friends.

The new teen space has been a long time coming. In January 2018, Brouwer spoke to the *Rivereast* about the library's strategic plan, which at that time had been recently completed. She said it took a group of library board members, staff members, members of Friends of the Library and the general public 16 months to complete the plan. They determined creating a dedicated teen space was the library's biggest need for the library, Brouwer said.

"We have a whole space for children but we don't have a dedicated space for teens where they can be teens," she said at the time.

Teens, including those from the Teen Advisory Board, were part of the planning for the space, Brouwer said.

Before Sullivan came on board, Brouwer – with funding from the Friends of the Douglas Library – bought furnishings for the space, including comfortable chairs and a café-style table, and carpeting.

"There's no pressure to purchase anything,"

Sullivan said.

Over the past couple of months he and staff disassembled and reassembled shelves and put the space together.

The space also has a charging area for phones and other electronics, as well as an Xbox One with four controls and an audio system that broadcasts sound to headsets so it won't disturb other patrons.

"Kids have been finding [the space] more and more; I see people in it every day, which is very exciting," Sullivan said. "I love seeing kids in it and using it the way it was meant to be used."

On Monday, when the *Rivereast* was visiting the space, the sole teen was Skylar Popp. The RHAM junior is a member of the school's Journalism Club and, ironically, was also there to write a story on the space for *RHAMbler* – a new student-run magazine.

For her piece, Popp was planning to ask Sullivan about what games the space would have and the gaming systems and if users will be able to bring their own games.

All in all, Popp said she liked the space.

"It's nice to have a little section [for teens]," she said.

Every day more things are added, such as two more sets of new headphones that came in the past couple weeks and the Library Friends donated more funds to download additional Xbox games.

"They've really supported [the space]," Sullivan said of the Friends.

Next Wednesday, March 6, there will be a kick-off of the space from 3:30-4:30 p.m., with pizza. Teens will also be able to work on a craft in which they will decorate book ends for the space.

Going forward, the library will offer teen programs every Wednesday. The first Wednesday of the month will be "Games," with teens encouraged to play board or video games.

The second Wednesday of the month, the program will be entitled "Adulting." Sullivan said "life skills that are missed in school" – such



Douglas Library Director Kevin Sullivan poses at the café style table in the new Teen Zone at the library. The space, which was completed in January, is designed to be welcoming to teens and expand the library's attraction.

as changing tires or balancing checkbooks – will be taught, Sullivan said. The first program will be on knitting.

The third Wednesday the programs will be "Technology," with programs focused on such things as new ways to use cell phones, building circuits, using 3D printers and the software that goes with them.

The fourth week's theme will be "Environment" and will be about ways to be green, such

as reusing materials. Programs will also be built around the community garden at the library.

The first letters of the four programs form the acronym "GATE," Sullivan said.

"We kind of like that because it's memorable and it gets to the philosophy that we have in the space here," he said. "Their use of the space will act as a gateway so that they can become lifelong learners and information literate in their adulthood."

Hebron Town Meeting Next Week on 89-Acre Purchase

by Sloan Brewster

At a special meeting next Thursday, residents will decide if the town should spend \$600,000 to purchase 89 acres that town officials hope would house a new Public Works complex.

The acreage is located on John E. Horton Blvd., tucked behind the Colebrook Village senior living facility, in the Village Green District.

The funds for the purchase would be split, with \$440,000 coming from the unassigned fund balance and \$160,000 from the Open Space Land Acquisition fund, Town Planner Mike O'Leary said at a public hearing last Thursday on the proposal.

The property was appraised at \$630,000 and the town has an agreement with the seller to purchase it for \$600,000, O'Leary said.

"That's a 5 percent discount," he said.

Town officials said the property is an ideal location to build an approximate \$9 million Public Works facility and other municipal buildings, including a firehouse to replace the aging Company 1 Fire Station on Main Street.

"That building has probably reached the end of its useful life," O'Leary said of the firehouse. "At some point it will need to be rebuilt. Should it be rebuilt on a one-acre lot right on Main Street?"

Moving the firehouse to the new location would free up the Main Street parcel for business, O'Leary said.

Deputy Fire Chief Dan Huppe said he supported the potential move, not least of all because the department has run out of room.

"The best of this is we are still centralized," Huppe said. "Being in close proximity to Colebrook [Village] is a great plan for us."

The senior housing facility taps into the department for about 12 emergency calls per month, he said.

O'Leary described the John E. Horton Boulevard property as "an interior piece buffered from surrounding uses." In addition to housing public works and a firehouse, there would be space for a larger town green, where local activities could be held.

"Maybe that's where the Maple Fest ends up," he said.

The property would be useful for generations to come, O'Leary said, and has plenty of room for other buildings, such as senior housing and a community center. There could even be a pool there one day.

"We can dream," he said. "What if this was a future town complex?"

The most pressing need for the property, according to Director of Public Works Kevin Kelly, is for a new town garage.

He spoke of problems with the current facility, which is located on Old Colchester Road. Kelly said currently employee parking is located partially on another property. He also said the Public Works office is so cramped that, when two people are in it, it's difficult for them to make phone calls at the same time with any privacy.

There also isn't an adequate break room and no place for employees to sleep during overnight stays if winter storms warrant them doing so, Kelly said.

"The guys sleep over the steering wheel of their truck," he said.

During a tour of the existing facility in September, Kelly showed the *Rivereast* some of its inadequacies.

The 10x12-foot area used for a break room and kitchenette has a small table and chairs, a stove, refrigerator and a desk and is shared by 14 employees, plus part-timers. In addition, it serves as the foreman's office.

For additional room for breaks, the department has put a few two-seat tables upstairs in the parts room.

With the shelves full in the parts room and boxes piled on the floor, there is little room for storage, and the women's restroom and downstairs hallway have become makeshift storage areas holding file cabinets and other items.

The bigger concern, however, is the heated garage where trucks and equipment that can't be left outside in the winter are stored, Kelly said.

"The vehicles are worth a lot of money so we want to take care of them," he said.

According to a feasibility study completed in 2012, the 50x100-foot building has four bays that are two vehicles deep. Three of them are open to one another and the fourth is closed by a partition and serves as the mechanics bay.

In the winter, nine vehicles are squeezed into the three open bays, Kelly said, showing a picture of trucks and snowplows sitting nose to nose in the constricted space.

"If I'm going to get to this truck," he said in September, pointing to one on the far end, "I've got to climb over all the plows."

There is also no wash bay, which, Kelly said at the public hearing, is required by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Employees rinse salt off vehicles outside, Kelly said.

In addition, plow racks outside, which serve as shelter for some of the vehicles, are coming to the end of their useful life, Kelly said. And, with the need to store a couple thousand tons of salt, the salt shed, which only holds 600 to 800 tons, is also not big enough.

Kelly and O'Leary spoke of the original plan

to knock down the current facility and build a new one on the same premises.

That will not work, they said. The department shares the site with the recycling center and transfer station. Not only would the two areas have to be reconfigured and abutting property purchased to make room for a larger Public Works facility, there are also elevation issues that would have to be tackled.

The transfer station sits below the Public Works facility, at the foot of a short hill.

The town has also looked at a number of other parcels, Kelly said, but none of them were sufficient.

Selectmen voiced support for the purchase, pointing out additional benefits they saw, such as that the property can be tied into local trails, including the Air Line Trail.

"This parcel, which is very cost-effective, is a great, great purchase," selectman John Collins said. "I'm 100 percent behind it."

"This piece of property from a business standpoint, it's a good value, it's centralized," selectman Brian O'Connell said. "This, long term, in my humble opinion is a very big win for Hebron. ... I'm 100 percent behind this one."

Resident Greg Shortell, asked about the impact the facility would have on Kinney Road, said "I'm concerned about the increased truck traffic."

Resident Judith Podell, however, said she supported the purchase and that the town green on the property would be a great spot for local activities.

The town meeting is Thursday, March 7, at 7 p.m., in the community room at Douglas Library, 22 Main St.

Details Released in Sexual Assault of Child in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

Court documents have revealed more information about the alleged assault of a 10-year old girl by a former foster parent at an East Hampton campground last year.

David A. Boulanger, 65, was arrested Feb. 15 by East Hampton Police and charged with first-degree sexual assault, illegal sexual contact with a minor and first-degree possession of child pornography.

One search warrant affidavit includes information gathered from a medical report that identifies Boulanger as the victim's former foster father.

Connecticut Department of Children and Families spokesman Gary Kleeblatt said last week that Boulanger lost his foster care license in 2018 "as a result of these highly-disturbing events." A follow-up request for more specific information about the length of Boulanger's time as a foster parent was not answered by press time.

The series of search warrant affidavits alleges



Boulanger

the assault occurred on June 22 of last year at Nelson's Family Campground. The victim reported the assault to her current foster mother, according to the medical report cited in one affidavit.

The affidavits state Boulanger assaulted the victim inside his trailer more than once over a span of several hours.

The victim later told a social worker at the Yale-New Haven Hospital Child Sexual Abuse Clinic that she was on a bed in the trailer when Boulanger touched her intimate areas, penetrated her vagina with his fingers and forced her to touch his private parts under his pants, according to an affidavit.

The victim told the social worker that Boulanger's wife was outside the camper while Boulanger assaulted her, the court document said.

The affidavits stated Boulanger and his wife drove the victim home following the assault after she complained of homesickness.

The unsealed search-and-seizure warrant affidavits were filed last year with the Middlesex Superior Court to obtain a judge's permission to search Boulanger's East Hampton trailer and his Southington home for electronics and digital storage devices, as well as to obtain DNA samples through a cheek swab. The affidavits were written by East Hampton police officers

Hardie Burgin and David Gionfriddo.

The affidavits state the assault was reported the day it occurred to the East Hartford Police Department, who alerted East Hampton police. The victim was brought to Connecticut Children's Medical Center for evaluation and examination.

Boulanger "adamantly denied" the victim's allegations but admitted he was alone with the victim while his wife was in the shower, the affidavit said.

Boulanger's wife told East Hampton police over the phone that she believed her husband was innocent, according to the affidavit. Police stated the woman made an appointment to give a statement but then canceled it on the advice of her attorney.

Court documents stated a digital forensic report of Boulanger's cell phone conducted after the assault by the Connecticut Center for Digital Investigations in Manchester revealed five photos of the victim, four of which were taken the day of the assault. The report also said Boulanger's search history showed visits to hundreds of pornographic websites, with "many" depicting child pornography. Phrases Boulanger used to access pornographic web pages through Google.com included words like "twink," "nubile," "young boy," "Asian Sheboys" and "nudist tweens," the documents

said.

Boulanger first appeared in the Middletown courthouse Feb. 26. His legal counsel, the Bridgeport-based defense attorney Robert Berke, told the *Rivereast* the next day it's too soon for him to speak about his client's case.

"It was his first presentment. I just got the report. It's really premature to make a comment about the case without having a chance to evaluate it closely," Berke said.

Boulanger is free on a \$250,000 bond, according to the state Judicial Branch website. He has not entered a plea. He is next scheduled to appear in Middletown on March 26.

In a separate case, Boulanger was also arrested in October 2018 by the Southington Police Department and charged with two counts of first-degree sexual assault, one count of fourth-degree sexual assault and three counts of illegal sexual contact with a minor. The state Judicial Branch website shows the incidents occurred in June 2015 and August 2016.

The Southington case is now in the pre-trial phase at New Britain Superior Court. Boulanger is next scheduled to appear there on March 19.

East Hampton Police Chief Dennis Woessner stressed last week victims in the two cases are different – and that the only connection is the alleged perpetrator.

Andover Voters Approve New Payloader, Plow Truck

by Sloan Brewster

The Public Works Department is getting some new equipment.

At a special town meeting Wednesday, voters approved the purchase of a \$141,875 Volvo payloader and a \$99,405 Peterbilt plow truck.

They town will pay for the equipment using the fund balance.

Digging into the fund balance is a way to keep the state from reducing aid to the town, such as cutting the Educational Cost Sharing grant, Board of Finance member Adrian Mandeville said.

"[Last year] the state was targeting municipalities that had high fund balances," he said. "We need to have enough money that we have good bonding and not so much money that we look flush."

Currently the town's \$2.4 million fund balance is 16 percent of its budget, he said. Knocking it down by buying the equipment and making some additional purchases, which will be incorporated in the budget, will bring it to about 10 percent.

Since January the town has been renting the payloader, which is used to load trucks with sand and road salt and move large amounts of snow, Town Administrator Joseph Higgins said. The three-month lease comes with an option to buy and, after trading in the town's 1992 John Deere payloader for \$5,767, will cost \$136,108.

As part of the agreement to purchase the piece, the town will be reimbursed for the lease, Higgins said. With those funds, the town will owe about \$122,000.

"It's a good deal for the town and a critical piece of equipment that the town needs," he said.

He added that he would have liked to get the piece of equipment last year, but the opportunity wasn't there.

The old payloader is unsafe and rotted out, Mandeville said.

"This will give us one dedicated loader for loading trucks and if we get a lot of snow this is what we'll use to move it around," he said.

The Public Works Department has asked for the payloader for three years, Mandeville said. The finance board turned down the requests due to lack of information about it and because, at \$170,000, the one the department wanted "was too expensive," he said. In addition, it was too big for the garage.

Voters agreed to the purchase with 42 yeas and one nay.

The plow truck will replace a 1996 truck that, according to Higgins, "is well past its useful life." With a three-person crew, the Public Works Department breaks up the 30-mile route through town between the three of them.

"They need three dependable plow trucks," Higgins said.

The town chose not to add the purchase to the 2019-20 budget as it takes nine months to build and needs to be ordered now to have in time for next winter.

After considering a few options the Public Works Department, Capital Improvement Planning Committee, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance chose the Peterbilt, which, according to Higgins, "is one of the better trucks made."

Mandeville, who is also on the Capital Improvement Planning Committee, said the committee reached out to the state and learned the municipalities had reported the Peterbilt was the more reliable choice. In addition, the 1996 plow, which the town will be keeping for a backup, is also a Peterbilt.

Voters approved the purchase 40-3.

Portland shade box

New York Woman Charged with Sexual Assault

by Elizabeth Regan

A 19-year-old New York woman has been arrested on charges of second-degree sexual assault and impairing the injuries of a minor in a case that allegedly came to light on social media.

Alexis Combs, of Highland, N.Y., was arrested Feb. 22 by Portland police and held on a \$7,500 bond. She remains in custody at York Correctional Institution in Niantic, according to the state Department of Correction website. York is the only institution in the state for female offenders.

An arrest warrant affidavit said the case was brought to the attention of local authorities in August of last year when Combs' probation officer in New York provided photos allegedly posted on the social media platform Instagram of Combs and a 14-year-old girl from Portland. The couple was "lying in bed with their tongues touching" and using what appeared to be marijuana, according to the affidavit. The probation officer told Portland police she had also seen images of the couple on the social media platform SnapChat that showed them "half naked" and kissing.

Combs identifies as a male, the affidavit said.

Combs allegedly posted on Instagram with user names like "suckmywholestrap" and "tranny.panties," according to the affidavit.

Combs and the victim told officers in separate interviews that they had sex multiple times last year, according to the affidavit. The victim said they had sex using a pink silicone suction cup dildo.

The victim told officers she met Combs on Instagram in July 2018, the affidavit stated. The victim said she knew Combs was 18 years

old at the time and Combs knew she was 14 years old. When the victim invited Combs to her home, they lied to the victim's mother and said Combs was 14 so the guest would be allowed to sleep over.

Combs was arrested July 18 of last year in New York in a separate case and charged with third-degree sexual abuse and acting in a manner likely to be injurious to a child less than 17 years old, the affidavit said. She was released without having to post a bond.

The allegations of inappropriate social media posts lodged by Combs' New York probation officer were forwarded to Portland police Aug. 17 by the state Department of Children and Families, according to the affidavit.

The mother of the Portland victim told officers in September she had been contacted by a DCF investigator more than a month prior and had been debating bringing the case to the police herself, the affidavit said. The woman told police she was not aware of a sexual relationship between Combs and her daughter.

According to the affidavit, the victim's mother thought the girls were just having sleepovers. When she eventually found out Combs wanted to be referred to as a male, she said she told the guest to sleep on the couch downstairs instead of in her daughter's bedroom.

Combs told police the victim's mother knew she was 18 years old and that she was having sex with the victim, the affidavit said.

Combs is next scheduled to appear at the Middletown courthouse on March 29. She has not yet filed a plea.

Colchester Schools Chief Proposes 2.51 Percent Budget Increase

by Allison Lazur

After being hired by the district just 12 months ago, Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Burt presented his first Colchester school budget Tuesday night to a packed room of residents, teachers, administrators and Board of Education members.

The proposed 2019-20 spending package comes in at \$41.57 million, an increase of \$1.02 million or 2.51 percent.

Throughout his budget presentation, Burt stressed the need for long-term planning, revealing a proposal with new curriculum, technology, staff reductions and capital improvements.

"If we don't have a focus, if we don't have a vision, if we don't have a long-range goal of where we want to take our district, then really we are just budgeting for the now rather than for the long term," he said.

Burt's major budget requests included \$130,000 for curriculum implementation, which he said Tuesday night doesn't necessarily go toward the writing of the curriculum, but rather the resources needed.

"We've been very flat in curriculum; we've been at actually zero in curriculum the past few years," he said.

Technology saw a \$175,036 increase over current year spending, bringing the total line item to \$274,842.

The increase will introduce to the high school a framework, known in educational parlance as "one-to-one technology," that provides a dedicated laptop for each student to use during the school day. The one-to-one program has already been implemented at the middle school and will be maintained through the proposed funding increase.

The technology increase will also bring new technology to the elementary and intermediate school, though not at a one-to-one ratio.

"We've had technology lines in the past, but there was no long-range sustainable plan," Burt said. He added that without planning for the future, the current "technology will be defunct"

within five to ten years and in turn the district will "struggle to replace it."

"This is that attempt to make sure we continue what we have, but replace it as necessary," he said.

Burt cited a proposal for a new K-12 science curriculum which would require "hands-on materials" as means of instruction rather than standard textbooks.

A new program for developmentally disabled 18-21 year olds was also in the proposal with a request of \$57,501. The figure includes one full-time teacher and the program's supplies. Burt clarified that the request for funds is actually \$7,000, as the remaining \$50,501 is offset by transferring the current speech pathologist at Colchester Elementary to cover the program rather than hiring a new teacher.

Burt said the program would cater to those who have completed the district's K-12 program by offering job shadow opportunities and teaching life skills.

The equivalent of 4.6 full-time staff reductions is included in Burt's proposal. The plan would eliminate one teaching position at the alternative education program located at the old Bacon Academy and one middle school reading teacher. It would also reduce the hours for a social studies and physical education teacher at the high school, as well as a special education teacher, social studies teacher and social worker in the school resilience program at Jack Jackter Elementary School. The shifted speech pathologist position to cover the 18-21 program is also included in these proposed reductions.

Burt said the eliminated positions do not necessarily mean teachers will be laid off, as teachers can be transferred around the district and any cuts will be finalized later in the budget process.

Other reductions include a paraprofessional at Colchester Elementary School and a paraprofessional at Jack Jackter Intermediate School, as well as an office professional also at Jack Jackter.

The reductions total a savings of \$261,272.

Further savings were achieved through magnet and Vocational Agriculture tuition reductions of \$42,468 by keeping more students "in-house" and an increase in students returning to the district, Burt said.

Other budget drivers included a number of "non-discretionary" items such as utilities and employee benefits.

The \$1.42 million utilities budget – which includes electricity and heating oil – saw an increase of \$152,918, or 12 percent. Employee benefits saw a \$561,108, or 8.7 percent, increase equating to a total \$6.97 million.

The \$160,000 capital budget proposal includes \$43,750 for the two year resurfacing of the Bacon Academy track, as well as \$36,750 for floor finishing and window blind replacement also at Bacon Academy.

Burt told the *Rivereast* this week the bulk of the capital funds are dedicated to Bacon Academy because it is the oldest school building.

The majority of those who spoke out during public comments expressed concerns about the structure of Burt's presentation, which failed to include the administrators' budgetary requests as compared to what was presented.

School Board member Mary Bylone asked Burt why he decided not to include the initial requests from administrators as has been the standard in previous years.

Bylone said former superintendent Mary Conway used to present requests from individual school administrators so school board members could compare them against what the superintendent actually brought forward.

"That's not here this time; is that because everyone was in agreement, singing 'kumbaya?'" Bylone asked.

Burt said the decision to omit those figures stemmed from wanting to present the budget to the school board as "a team."

"We are a coherent unit..." he said, adding, "When we come forward, we come forward as a team because this is our budget being presented to you."

He continued by stating he thought present-

ing what was requested by administrators and then the superintendent's presentation "pitted the administrators against the superintendent" last budget season.

Bylone said while she does not disagree, the board made the decision to add items back into the spending package during the last budget season "based on what the principals had asked for and felt they needed."

School Board Chairman Bradley Bernier said he saw another perspective.

Bernier said last year's approach created an "unfairness" between administrators who were "more aggressive about looking for what they need" and others who may have been "holding back."

Bacon Academy math teacher Meaghan Kehogreen and resident Monica Egan both agreed with Bylone.

Egan said as an elected board, it is the school board's "job to know what was requested, what's needed and what the administrators are looking at as their needs, compare that to what the superintendent is presenting, and then make a decision as what's best for our students."

Kehogreen expressed concerns over the proposed 18-21 special education program since the district's students already attend a similar program at Mitchell College in New London.

"The program at Mitchell is absolutely amazing because [students] are living on campus, able to take regular college classes while being supported and having special classes where they learn how to adapt to college," she said. "I don't know that it's possible that we can build a program to compete with that and if that's in the best interest of the students."

Bernier emphasized that the budget is in the early process and encouraged residents to attend the upcoming budget workshop on March 7 at 9 a.m. at WJMS.

"There's gonna be some difficult decisions to be made, but hopefully we make those decisions fully informed and that's what we are looking to go forward with," he said.

Portland Police News

2/19: John Ferrara, 48, of 200 Main St., was charged with violation of protection order and disorderly conduct, Portland Police said.

2/21: Guillermo Ramirez, 34, of 383 Bellevue St., Hartford, was charged with third-degree larceny, operating under suspension, operating unregistered motor vehicle and traveling unreasonably fast, police said.

2/22: Alexis Combs, 19, of 14 Lily Lake Rd., Highland, N.Y., was charged with second-degree sexual assault and risk of injury to a minor, police said.

East Hampton Police News

2/14: Kathleen Leahy, 27, and Jose Montanez, 46, both of 230 Old West High St., were each arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, East Hampton Police said.

2/14: Elizabeth Siler, 25, of 95 Main St., was arrested and charged with risk of injury and second-degree reckless endangerment, police said.

2/17: Thomas Grzybowski, 34, of 215 Highmeadow Ln., Middletown, was arrested and charged with DUI, failure to drive right and speeding – 75 mph in a 45 mph zone, police said.

Also, from Feb. 11-17, officers responded to 10 medical calls, four motor vehicle crashes and four alarms, and made 28 traffic stops, police said.

Colchester Vehicle Break-in

Colchester Police said a vehicle break-in Sunday, Feb. 17 left a window smashed, but nothing stolen.

At approximately 9:42 a.m. on Feb. 17, police received report that a vehicle had been broken into.

The break-in is believed to have happened between 3 p.m. on Feb. 16 and 9 a.m. on Feb. 17, police said.

The passenger side glass window was smashed and items were moved around within the vehicle, but nothing of value was taken. Police said a flathead screwdriver was located inside the vehicle and is believed to be the tool used to break the window.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact the Colchester Police at 860-537-7270.

Car Collides with Utility Pole in Marlborough

State Police said traveling too fast on a slushy road left a driver and passenger with possible injuries.

At approximately 6:26 a.m. on Feb. 21, a BMW 525xi driven by Jose M. Cardona, 41, of 480 Main St., Willimantic, was traveling westbound on Route 66 when he lost control of his vehicle due to excessive speed on a slushy roadway, police said.

The BMW exited the roadway off the left shoulder and subsequently struck a utility pole.

Cardona and his passenger Jomar J. Ortiz, 23, of 42 Normandy Ave., Willimantic, sustained minor injuries and both were transported to Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical Center by the Marlborough Fire Department.

Colchester Selectman Resigns

by Allison Lazur

James Ford's last day as a Colchester selectman was yesterday.

After serving on the Board of Selectmen for the past six years, Ford has resigned due to medical reasons. His term runs until this November.

Ford said this week he has enjoyed being on the Board of Selectmen, as well as being a witness to the town's growth since he moved to Colchester in 1997.

"To actually see the community develop over the years has been very impressive," he said. "That's one of the things I've enjoyed to help guide."

Ford has also been involved in various aspects of the town's government, including the Economic Development Commission and serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission for 11 years.

While the town has seen major growth, Ford



Ford

also acknowledged the challenges that come with such development.

He said the town's operational costs put a "demand on taxes and the tax rate," which he described as a "real important issue" for residents.

"The demands that are being placed on the town because of its growing size are pretty substantial," Ford said this week.

He said he hopes whoever fills the vacant spot understands the importance of the position.

Not only does the Board of Selectmen monitor various town programs, but he said board members also "support" the first selectman, who he called "the leader."

In accordance with town charter, Ford's seat must be filled within 60 days, and the vacancy must be filled by someone of the same political party as Ford, who is a Democrat.

First Selectman Art Shilosky said this week he has not received any applications from interested candidates, but said whoever the new selectman is, he or she is "going to have some big shoes to fill."

"[Ford] is outstanding," Shilosky said. "He is a dedicated member to the board."

Colchester Police News

2/18: State Police said Ian W. Robinson, 25, of 12 Beebe Rd., East Haddam, was arrested and charged with traveling unreasonably fast, reckless driving, DUI and failure to drive in proper lane.

2/20: State Police said Glenn H. Paladino, 47, of 460 Burritt St., Apt. A3, New Britain, was arrested and charged with DUI.

2/22: State Police said Donald Layman, 54, of 446 Old Colchester Rd., Salem, was arrested and charged with violation of probation.

Road Rage Incident in Colchester

Colchester Police are asking for the public's help in locating a man involved in a road rage incident on Feb. 20.

At approximately 2:19 p.m. a man reported he had been involved in a road rage incident on Stanavage Road which turned physical.

The victim told police the unknown male offender charged at him holding a black mallet or hammer and that he was able to successfully disarm the offender, but that a fight ensued.

Police said the offender eventually returned

to his vehicle with the hammer and fled the scene.

The victim sustained minor injuries to his hands and left eye. He described the offender to police as an approximate 25-year-old white male with shoulder length brown hair and multiple facial piercings, driving a dark-colored Toyota Tacoma.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact Colchester Police at 860-537-7270.

Marlborough Police News

2/20: State Police said Joshua Gibbons, 21, of 10 Starr Pl., East Hampton, was arrested and charged with interfering with officer/resisting and disorderly conduct after he was reported as walking down the center of Route 66 in Marlborough.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Stefania Coates

Stefania "Steffie" (Otfinoski) Coates, 96, of Middletown, formerly of East Hampton, widow of the late Thomas E. Coates, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Feb. 20. Born April 10, 1922, in Middlefield, she was one of the nine children of the late Thaddeus and Aniela (Jagoda) Otfinoski.



In addition to raising her six children, Steffie had worked as an assembler at Pratt & Whitney for many years before her retirement. Steffie was an independent woman with a keen wit who loved visits with her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews and would often make them watch *Mother Angelica* or *Golden Girls* reruns with her.

Despite dropping out of school at an early age to help support her family, Steffie was an amazingly intelligent woman who enjoyed arguing about current events and politics, especially to give her thoughts about the current presidential administration.

She leaves five children (as she was predeceased by a daughter, Ann Marie Balisano), Margaret Stroili and her husband Frank of Old Saybrook, Maureen Coolidge and her husband John of Newburyport, Mass., Stephen Coates and Holly Marrero of Hebron, John Coates and his wife Karen of Bonita Springs, Fla., and Thomas Coates and his wife Ester of Middletown; 13 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

The funeral liturgy was celebrated Saturday, Feb. 23, at the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St. (Route 85), Hebron. She was laid to rest privately with her late husband in St. Patrick Cemetery, East Hampton. There were no calling hours.

The family would like to thank the wonderful caregivers at Luther Ridge and Aaron Manor for their kindness and compassion.

Donations in her memory can be made to the Hartford Archdiocesan Office of Radio and Television (ortv.org).

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Rosemary Sadosky

Rosemary Sadosky, "Rose," 64, of Colchester, died quietly in her home Monday, Feb. 25, with her loving family by her side. She was born in Queens, N.Y., on Jan. 12, 1955, a daughter of the late Thomas Butts and Irene Brouillard.



She grew up in Sterling and graduated from Plainfield High School.

Rose had 30 years' experience in aerospace quality control. Her latest position of quality systems manager was at the Alloy Specialties Inc. in Manchester. Rose loved being a mother, she enjoyed going to the beach, gaming, shopping, and she had a talent for home decorating.

She leaves behind her beloved husband Richard; two sons, Michael and Danny Spaulding, both of Connecticut; three stepchildren, Daniel and wife Rebecca Sadosky of Raleigh, N.C., Laura Sadosky of Manchester and Raelynn McMurtrey of Nevada; two brothers, Bobby and wife Sue Butts and Joe and wife Barbara Butts, all of Colorado; grandchildren, Justin and Jayden Spaulding, Gabrielle and Carrington Sadosky and Jaeden Mathis; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by two siblings, Thomas Butts and Georgette Nash.

Calling hours will be held Saturday, March 9, from 2-4 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial will be private.

Donations, in lieu of flowers, may be made to American Breast Cancer Foundation (abcf.org).

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

George Robert Gotowala

George Gotowala, 89, of Hebron, beloved husband of Diane "Toce" Gotowala for 60 years, died Saturday, Feb. 16. He was born Oct. 27, 1929, in New Britain, to the late Stanley and Irene Gotowala.



George attended New Britain schools til the age of 16. He then moved to Newington where he lived with his aunt and uncle, Cookie and Art Charbonneau, and graduated from Newington High School.

After graduation, George enlisted in the Navy and proudly served aboard the USS Putnam 757 Destroyer from 1948-49. He then transferred to the Seabees and was based out of Little Creek, Va., till 1952.

After leaving the service, George met and married Diane in 1955, where they resided on Main Street in Newington until George retired, and then moved to Hebron, where they currently reside. George started his career building custom homes, where he built their home and many other Newington homes. George later worked for many large construction firms in Connecticut before retiring from Standard Builders.

In his off time, George loved playing baseball on a local team at Churchill Park, Newington. George loved animals and enjoyed raising canaries and spending time with his family. His most favorite pet was Molly, a Bishon Frise, which we are not sure who spoiled who more.

He is survived by his wife Diane "Toce" Gotowala and a daughter, Kandy Mae (Gotowala) Caccio and her husband Mark Caccio; a son, Michael Grant Gotowala; and their deceased son, Gary Thomas Gotowala and his wife Jane (Guyette) Gotowala. George leaves behind five grandchildren, Kyle Caccio, Brett and Andrew Gotowala, and Cameron and Emily Gotowala. He also leaves behind his brother, Gerald Gotowala, and his sister Arlene (Gotowala) Andrews.

A wake/viewing for George will be held at Belmont Funeral Home at 144 S. Main St., Colchester, on Friday, March 8, from 10 a.m.-noon, followed by services provided by St. Andrew Church and a military honor ceremony from noon-12:15 p.m. Immediately following the services, all are invited to a gathering of friends and family at the St. Joseph Polish Society, Inc., at 395 South Main St., Colchester.

There will be a private burial service with immediate family members only at a later date.

Memorial donations can be made to Connecticut Humane Society Rescue Center, 701 Russel Rd., Newington, CT (cthumane.org).

Online condolences can be made at belmontfh.com.

Portland

Albert P. Jacobucci

Albert P. Jacobucci, 83, of Portland, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 6. He was born Aug. 8, 1935, in Hartford, to Pasquale and Helen (Brudz) Jacobucci.



Albert "Jake" was predeceased by his loving wife of 59 years, Elizabeth "Bette" (Brink) Jacobucci, and their beloved daughter, Dana (Jacobucci) Sweet, and his brother, Johnny Jacobucci.

Jake is survived by his children, Vincent Jacobucci of Delray Beach, Fla., Lynn Muscatello of Woodstock, Lori Haglund and her husband Steve of Portland, Chuck Jacobucci and his wife Mindy of Portland; his brothers, Carl and Thomas Jacobucci, both of Pawleys Island, S.C., numerous grandchildren, nieces, nephews and great grandchildren.

Jake and Bette lived in Portland with their five children. Jake served four years in the Marines, followed by 32 years in the Connecticut Army National Guard until he retired as Chief Warrant Officer 4. Jake was a strong, proud and good man. He and his wife Bette settled in Delray Beach, Fla., where they enjoyed many wonderful years together doing it "Their Way."

A memorial service for Jake and Bette will take place Monday, March 4, at 10 a.m., at St. Mary Church in Portland.

Colchester

Pierre A. Laliberte

On Thursday, Feb. 21, Pierre A. Laliberte of Colchester, entered into eternal rest with family by his side. He was born in Sherbrooke, PQ, Canada on June 11, 1944. Pierre is survived by his loving wife whom he adored for 50 years, Anne Hoff-Laliberte.



Along with his wife, he is survived by two loving and eternally grateful sons, Alan Laliberte of Marlborough and his wife Terry, and Gary Laliberte of East Haddam and his wife Michelle. "Papa Pete," as he is affectionately called, is also grandfather to Julian, Katherine, Geoffrey, Devin and Aidan and in October became great-grandfather to Violet. Pierre also leaves behind his brothers, Michel Laliberte of Southampton, Mass., John Laliberte and his wife Donna of Ellington; sisters, Francoise Baker of Manchester, Renee Laliberte of Florida and Jeanne Lucia and her husband Joseph of Willington; brothers-in-law, Andre Levesque of East Hartford, Douglas Preston of Victory, Vt., and Beatrice Landry of Hebron. He was predeceased by a brother, Maurice Laliberte; sisters, Nicole Levesque, Ginette Preston, Helene Laliberte; and sister-in-law Judy Laliberte, along with nephew Bill White.

He also leaves many nieces and nephews: Andre Levesque of Amston, Eunice Baker White of Coventry, Danielle Baker and James Millar of California, Mark Laliberte of Southampton, Mass., Justin Campbell of Vermont, Tawnya Zahaba and her husband Brian of Berlin, Jennifer Swierbutowicz and her husband Adam of Newington, Kevin Laliberte and his wife Cassie of Ellington, Melissa Christman and her husband Zachary of Texas, Jason Lucia and his wife Sarah of Willimantic, Monika Palmer and her husband Shawn also of Willimantic, Jeremie Preston and Corinne McGrath of Colorado, and Isaiah Preston of Vermont; his sister-in-law in Norway, Sissel Hoff Fearnley and husband, Thomas; and his four Norwegian nephews, Espen Fartum, Erik Fartum, Nils Thomas Fearnley and Anstein Fearnley.

Pierre's family, of which he was the oldest of 10 children, immigrated to the U.S. in 1962 when he was just 18 years old. At first, he worked to help the family get by, but in February 1965 he enlisted in the United States Air Force to serve his newly-adopted country. Pierre was assigned to the USAF Red Horse Squadron and was eventually sent to Vietnam to build airfields as a heavy equipment operator.

After serving his country and being honorably discharged from the USAF, he met the love of his life at a party in Boston, Mass. They were married shortly thereafter, which was the beginning of their 50-year love affair. Soon after, Pierre moved his young family to Connecticut where for the next 40+ years he worked as a heavy equipment operator and construction superintendent, leaving his mark on residential, commercial and municipal projects all over Connecticut. In 1985, Pierre again showed his love of country by making his adopted country his own by becoming a naturalized citizen.

Pierre retired from construction in 2012 and devoted his full time to being "Pops" to his sons, "Papa Pete" to his grandkids and just "Pete" to the countless people who loved him. Every Sunday morning after church was an open-door brunch of eggs, fried potatoes, bacon and English muffins, where he could be seen cooking in one of his favorite aprons.

Thank you to "The Girls" at the Marlborough Health and Rehab Center - they were wonderful.

He will be sadly, sadly missed! Love ya, Pops!!

The family received guests Sunday, Feb. 24, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral liturgy was celebrated Monday, Feb. 25, directly at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial with military honors followed in the State Veterans Cemetery, Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the charity of one's choice.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Amston

Helen M. Brewer

Helen M. "Tootie" Brewer, 97, of Amston, formerly of Johnstown and Portage, Pa., passed away Friday, Feb. 15, in Connecticut. She was born March 24, 1921, in Portage. Helen was the daughter of Thomas and Clara (Klein) Madigan.



She is preceded in death by her parents; her husband, James Brewer; and her siblings, Gerald Madigan, Mary VonLunen and Mildred Blair.

She is survived by her loving daughter Diane, wife of Richard Randall of Amston; her grandchildren, Megan, wife of Alex Thieme of Upton, Mass., and Danielle, wife of Haskell Gray of Marlborough; and great-grandchildren, Aiden, Sam, Lily and Ava Thieme, and Emerson (Emmie) Gray.

Helen is also survived by her sister, Velma "Mim" Madigan of Portage; and loving caregiver and friend Irena Suszek of Colchester; and numerous nieces and nephews. She was a retired employee of the former Portage National Bank with over 38 years of service.

Helen's strong faith and love of family were the pillars of her life. She was a devout Catholic and a former member of St. Joseph Catholic Church, Portage, Pa., where she was a member of the church choir, and a later member of St. Clements Catholic Church, Johnstown, Pa., where she sang in the funeral choir and was a volunteer at numerous church functions. Helen was also a former volunteer at Conemaugh Memorial Hospital with over 20 years of services.

Helen was a dedicated mother and loving Nana. She loved spending time with her family and friends. She was a spitfire with a cheeky sense of humor and a generous heart. Her beauty was both inside and out. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Friends and family were received Thursday, Feb. 21, at the Matthew R. Decort Funeral Home & Cremation Services Inc. of Portage, Pa. A Mass of Christian Burial was held Friday, Feb. 22, at Holy Family Catholic Church in Portage, Pa., with the Rev. Thomas Stabile, celebrant.

Helen's family would like to thank the staff at Harrington Court, Colchester, Ct., for the dedicated care and respect shown to Helen and to the residents for their loving friendships.

Donations may be made in Helen's name to the Portage Volunteer Fire Company, Portage, PA 15946, or Carmelite Community of the Word, 394 Bem Rd., Gallitzin, PA 16641

Marlborough

Natalie Dana

Natalie Dana of Marlborough died quietly in her home Sunday, Feb. 24, with her family by her side. She was born and raised in Forestville, and attended local schools.



She leaves behind to mourn her loss her husband Bruce. He was to her faithful, loving, and kind. Her two daughters, Meredith and

Amanda, were her joy and her delight, as were her three grandchildren Micah, Greta, and Claudia, whom she loved dearly. She sadly leaves her brother, sisters, cousins, and numerous nieces and nephews, all of whom enriched her life and provided the strands to weave a rich and textured life.

Natalie enjoyed her work as a social worker for the past four decades. She entered the profession because she thought she could right the social injustices she saw. Her path led her to the plight of children in foster care and she spent her entire professional career working with children. She firmly believed that one person could make a difference and lived each day with that resolve. Her quiet and gentle nature, her compassion and sensitivity guided her in her work and in her life. "The fruit of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever." Isa 32:17.

Calling hours were held at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, Wednesday, Feb. 27. Funeral arrangements were conducted at The Worship Center, 99 Marjorie Circle, Hebron, Thursday, Feb. 28.

In lieu of flowers or donations, Natalie wishes that you celebrate life and practice one random act of kindness.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Obituaries continued

Colchester

Judith Green Memorial Service

A memorial service for Judith (Putnam) Green, 88, of Manchester, formerly of Colchester, will be observed at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 2, directly at Faith Tabernacle Church, 110 Utopia Rd., Manchester.

Graveside services will be observed at 2 p.m. Saturday, March 2, at the Westchester Center Cemetery, corner of Route 16 and Cemetery Road in Colchester.

Green passed away Tuesday, Feb. 5.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Judy's memory to the Wounded Warrior Project, P.O. Box 758517, Topeka, KS 66675-8517 or Wreaths Across America, P.O. Box 249, Columbia Falls, ME 04623.

Care of arrangements was entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

William Charles Landry

William Charles Landry, born March 1, 1953, beloved son of Art and Ida Landry, went with God Sunday, Feb. 17. He was a loving son to his parents, who predeceased him along with his young son William Charles Landry II.

Bill lived in East Hampton most of his life, retiring to Florida three years ago. He was a member of the Chancellors and the American Legion. He was a talented carpenter, helping many along the way, and a very loyal friend. He loved fishing and hunting and was a competitive pool and horse-shoes player. He loved a good game of cribbage and set back but mostly just loved to laugh and be with friends and family.

He will be missed by his daughter, Nichole R. Landry of Newington, William Shane Landry of Newtown and Travis Brahen of Portland; his granddaughters, Araya Landry, Diana Landry and Charlize Landry; his brother, Arthur J. Landry of Fort Pierce, Fla., whom he lived with; sisters Lauralei and husband Edward Clapp of Middletown, Karen and husband Roy Fitzsimmons of Fort Pierce, Fla., and Denise K. Landry of Middletown; along with many cousins, nieces and nephews who will all miss him dearly.

May he be at peace with those who have passed already.

There will be a delayed gravesite service at the Union Hill Cemetery in Middle Haddam at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, June 8, with a celebration of life gathering to be held at the American Legion Hall, 128 East Hampton Rd., Marlborough, CT 06447.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Joyce Keeney Evans

Joyce Keeney Evans of Colchester passed away Friday, Feb. 15, from complications of multiple systemic atrophy (MSA). She was predeceased by her parents, Jeanne Fallon and Wesley Keeney.

Joyce was born in Manchester Sept. 3, 1949, and lived in Glastonbury and Hebron until she met her husband of 52 years, Vaughn Evans, and moved to Colchester in 1968.

She leaves behind her devoted husband, Vaughn Evans; daughters, Kimberly (Kenneth) Young and Karyn Evans; grandchildren, Jady, Alexa and Marcus; siblings, Susan (Bud) Voisine, whom she talked to every day, Everett Keeney, Janet (Steven) Dwyer, Amy Fallon Brown, Sandy (Paul) Purdy, David (Judy) Keeney; as well as countless extended family including Mary, Barry, Greg, Jean, Marion, Kenneth, Olivia, and Anita.

Joyce dedicated her life to caring for children, most notably Jason and Linnea. Joyce loved the Beatles, especially John Lennon, pets, tag sales, collections of antiques and bears, and trips to NYC, music and dancing. She looked forward to her Tuesday visits with her best friend Mary Evans, who was there for her til the end.

Joyce will be remembered for her fondness for taking pictures and spending time with family and her belief that all people should be treated equally.

Thank you to Jan and Emily of Hospice and all the staff at Companions and Homemakers.

Please send donations to "no-kill" animal shelters in lieu of flowers.

Amston

Mary Catherine Wagner

Mary Catherine Wagner, 49, of Amston, beloved wife of Edward, passed away Saturday, Feb. 9, at Hartford Hospital. Born Aug. 7, 1969, in Angleton, Texas, she was the daughter of James and Judy (Parsons) Williams.



Mary had worked as a medical software trainer and at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford most recently. In her spare time, she enjoyed all outdoor activities including snowmobiling, motorcycle riding, hiking, fishing and all watersports.

She will be forever loved and missed by her loving husband, Edward; her sons, Ridge Brooks of Houston, Texas, and Joshua Vandewater and Dylan and Shane Wagner, all of Amston; daughter, Logan Brooks of Northboro, Mass.; her brother, Thomas Williams, his wife, Heather and their son, TJ; as well as many other extended family and friends.

The family will receive guests 4-6 p.m. today, March 1, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Middle Haddam

Muriel Swanson

Muriel Swanson was born March 27, 1930, and passed away Wednesday, Feb. 13, at her home in Middle Haddam. She will forever be loved and missed.

Muriel taught elementary school in Newington for many years and teaching was her passion, as was being an avid fan of UConn women's basketball. She also enjoyed painting landscapes, gardening and traveling.

Muriel was predeceased by her husband, Charles, and her son, Vaughn.

Muriel is survived by her son Paul, daughter Tina, granddaughter Heather, great-granddaughter Zoe, and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at the Second Congregational Church, 52 Middle Haddam Rd., Middle Haddam, on Saturday, March 9, at 11 a.m., and a burial service will follow.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam or the Middle Haddam Library, located at 2 Knowles Rd. in Middle Haddam.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Xenia Bujnowski

Xenia Bujnowski of Colchester passed away Saturday, Feb. 23. Born April 20, 1943, the daughter of Michael and Frances Varnish, she was predeceased by her husband Kenneth Bujnowski who she married on April 12, 1969.

A graduate of Bacon Academy, she attended several local colleges. She was employed by Pratt Whitney, Travelers, Millstone and most recently at Stop & Shop until her retirement. She enjoyed skiing, boating and traveling.

Besides her husband, she was predeceased by a sister Patricia (Robert) Mardin. She is survived by a brother, Alan Varnish (Carol) of Colchester; a sister, Carol Stanski (Rick) of Pickerington, Ohio; and numerous nieces and nephews.

There will be no calling hours.

Donations may be made to any cat shelter.