



RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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Local veterans led the Hebron Memorial Day Parade on Main Street bearing United States, Connecticut and POW/MIA flags on the way to Memorial Green for Monday's ceremony commemorating service men and women who gave their lives in pursuit of freedom. Seen here from left to right are VFW members Forrest Kocher and Bill Daniels in front, and Bart Bartholemew in back.

Honoring Those Who Did Not Come Home

by Sloan Brewster

The Hebron community converged in the town center Monday to honor Memorial Day with a somber ceremony marked by some unexpected events.

John Tuttle, adjutant of American Legion Post 95, said one man collapsed and a startled dog ran off in separate incidents during the ceremony at Memorial Green.

The man has since recovered, Tuttle said; the dog was located Thursday.

The ceremony's keynote speaker Tom Sousa, a former U.S. Army lieutenant colonel and current commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars 8776, told the audience "the enormous debt" Americans owe to those that have given their lives in fighting for the country's freedom "can never be repaid."

The federal POW/MIA Accounting Agency website, last updated in May, said there are 82,000 Americans still missing from WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Gulf Wars and other recent conflicts.

"The hardship and suffering they endure are something we as normal Americans could not imagine," Sousa said.

Sousa asked the people gathered around the green to offer a few moments at some point in the day to honor those men and women.

"The POW MIA flag has the words 'You are not forgotten,'" Sousa said. "We can honor their memory by being the best citizens we can be."

Ron Parkyn, senior vice commander of American Legion Post 95, listed the names of local veterans that have died since last Memorial Day.

"With honor and respect we give a final salute to the Hebron vets that have been lost since last year," he said, before naming Donald Daigle, Richard "Richy" Parker and George

Judkins.

Daigle, 87, who served in the US Air Force in the Korean War, passed away on August 10, according to his obituary.

Parker, 88, who served in the US Army in the Korean War and was a recipient of the Purple Heart, passed away on September 14, according to his obituary.

Judkins, who lived in Columbia, passed away on July 19, Parkyn said.

Parkyn also spoke of locals currently enlisted. "We are grateful to have them on the line bearing arms for our country," he said.

At the end of the ceremony, Diane Zarillo, of Amston, sang the National Anthem as the colors of the flag were restored.

John Zarillo waited on the sidelines as his wife's voice lifted with "The Star Spangled Banner."

Zarillo, who sings all over the state with various groups, said she was honored to sing at the ceremony.

The ceremony was preceded by a short parade that took about 15 minutes to wind its way from RHAM High School to Route 66 and then to Church Street.

A group with several children, making their way home, stopped to chat with the *Rivereast*.

The children excitedly shared what they loved most about the day's event.

Stella Kelly, 4, of Amston, favored the cars in the parade.

Miriah and Michael Kelly said it was good to expose children to events, such as Memorial Day observances, to teach them about the importance of family and community and of taking time to commemorate family members and others who have served.

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Belltown Budget Plan Gets a Little Leaner

by Allison Lazur

Town Council members expressed disappointment Tuesday over last week's failed budget referendum and ultimately approved a \$46.40 million spending plan to send to voters next month.

The budget represents a cut of \$305,965 from the initial spending plan shot down at the polls.

The revised budget proposal is an increase of \$953,531, or 2.1%, over current year spending. If approved, the mill rate is projected to rise to 33.27 mills – an increase of 1.06 mills, or 3.29%, over the current mill rate.

One mill is equivalent to \$1 in tax per \$1,000 of assessed property, meaning a 33.27 mill rate would result in a resident paying about \$8,317 in taxes on a home assessed at \$250,000, an increase of \$265.

The Town Council on Tuesday mulled over several options in the wake of the first failed budget referendum. They said they could either accept the cuts proposed by the Board of Finance the previous week, wait until the state

passes its budget before taking any action, or make further cuts.

The council ultimately approved the finance board's recommended \$154,780 in cuts, which called for a \$77,280 reduction in the town government budget and a \$77,500 reduction in the school budget.

The town council also approved an additional reduction from the town budget totaling \$151,185. These funds were included in the 2019-20 spending plan in the event municipalities are faced with funding a portion of teacher retirement costs under a proposal from Gov. Ned Lamont.

Teachers in Connecticut do not pay into the Social Security system. Instead, they make a mandatory contribution of 7 percent of their annual salary into the state retirement fund, according to the 2018 Connecticut Teachers' Retirement Handbook. But the state underfunded the Teachers' Retirement System for decades and is now grappling with how to keep

the spiraling costs in check.

It remains unclear if Lamont's proposal will come to fruition as part of this year's legislative session, which adjourns June 5 and may convene additional special sessions if necessary.

In a previous compromise between Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith and the finance board, the local officials decided the general government side of the budget would absorb the possible \$151,185 increase related to Lamont's proposal. In exchange, the Board of Education would reduce its proposed budget by \$323,232.

But Brown said this week the teacher pension costs don't belong in the town budget; instead, they belong in the Board of Education budget.

He said it's not certain teacher pension costs will fall to the town in the coming year, but in the event that it does, "the town and schools will have to work together to pay it," he said.

Town Council Vice Chairman Mark

Philhower questioned the legality behind placing the teacher pension costs on the towns and advocated for removing the funds from the budget.

"I'm not comfortable taxing the people ahead of time this amount of money," he said, adding that if the town plans for the teacher pension costs and ends up not having to fund it, then the \$151,185 will be put into the general fund.

"I disagree with that philosophy wholeheartedly," he said.

After East Hampton's lengthy budget season last year, which took four referendums to approve a budget, Philhower said he was against the council delaying taking action altogether.

"The problem with waiting is you're under the assumption that this [budget] is gonna fly through," he said. "What everyone seems to be ignoring is the fact that twice now at referendum the voters have told us that both budgets were too high. I'm totally willing to make cuts

See Belltown Budget page 2

Pet Missing for Several Days After Parade Scare

by Sloan Brewster

A dog named Daisy went missing during the Memorial Day Parade Monday and wasn't located for several days.

At about noon, Daisy – a three-year old German shepherd and Jack Russell Terrier mix rescued from Arkansas – managed to twist out of her harness after becoming startled by the rifle salute and loud music during the ceremony, said owner David Dickman.

When the guns went off, Dickman said he was standing with Daisy on Route 85 about one driveway up from Route 66, in a spot where in previous years the dog has not had any problems. When the band started, however, the parade took a different route than expected and the noise came too close, frightening the already startled dog.

Daisy got free, ran across the street and hid under a large 40-foot by 40-foot bush, Dickman said.

"I went to her, she had panic in her eyes, and she went into the bush," he said.

He and a companion went around to the other side of the bush to find the dog but by the time they got there she was gone.

"I haven't seen her since," Dickman said.

The family spent the rest of the day searching for her and returned the next day from sunrise to sunset with extended family and friends. They did the same thing Wednesday.

"When we weren't looking for Daisy we were making posters and pamphlets, handing them out and putting them up," Dickman said.

Local folks joined the search, which included Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz's yard on Church Street.

The owners came through her yard calling for Daisy several times and she and her husband have gone out looking for the dog as well, Pomproicz said.

"The family is distraught," she said.

Pomproicz has posted the story on Facebook and as of Tuesday had received 75 shares from folks that are concerned about the pooch.



Daisy, a three-year old German shepherd/Jack Russell Terrier from Arkansas, got loose on Route 85 at about noon Monday and ran off after becoming startled by the rifle salute during the Memorial Day Ceremony.

Dickman on Wednesday said there had been one spotting of Daisy running near the area where she went missing, Dickman said. He was told of another possible sighting further down Route 85, near the Hebron Fairgrounds, but the dog that was seen was spotted Monday during the day and Dickman is not convinced Daisy, whom he described as timid, would have crossed the busy road in the daylight. Rather, he said he thinks she is roaming further up Route 85 near Route 66 and on Kinney and Millstream Roads.

On Wednesday, Dickman said he planned to bring in the Rhode Island-based PackLeader PetTracker if Daisy wasn't found the next day. According to its website, the professional pet tracking company uses K-9s to search for missing pets.

But Thursday, as the *Rivereast* was going to press, Dickman alerted the newspaper that Daisy had been found by RHAM Middle School teacher Amy Golos.



Aaron Ouellette, RHAM High School senior, plays Taps on the trumpet at Memorial Green during the ceremony after the town's Memorial Day Parade. When Ouellette finished, from a shadowed spot on the nether side of the green, Andrew Ely, also a RHAM student, was heard playing Echo Taps.

Honoring cont. from Front Page

Joslyn Bach, 5, and her sister Loretta Bach, 3, showed off the spent shells leftover from the rifle salute that they had found lying on the ground.

Joslyn was very excited about the parade.

"I think it's great," she said, giving a happy dance. "I think it was great because my school was in it."

Meanwhile Loretta, who took a few moments to pose for pictures, said the drums were the best part of the fun.

The children's aunt, Megan Duley, who was visiting from Shelton, said the family gets together every Memorial Day "so that our memories, they never fade away."

Belltown Budget cont. from Front Page

tonight," he said.

Last week's failed referendum revealed that of the approximate 1,600 voters who participated, 825 believed the town budget was too high while 906 believed the school budget was too high.

Town Council member James "Pete" Brown said he didn't see a reason to wait on taking action based on the recent vote.

"We can argue with the turnout, but the bottom line is my favorite song: 'we live in a democracy, we live and die by the vote.' I'm unhappy, but the people spoke. With that being said, they expect us to do something with that. The Board of Finance did what they had to do in the face of the vote," Brown said.

Although an initial advocate for including teacher pension costs in the budget, Brown said he had "seen the light" and agreed the \$151,485 should be removed.

Town Council Chair Melissa Engel said if the state does put the responsibility of teacher pensions on the towns, the Board of Education and the council should sit down together to figure out where to come up with the money.

"I think that's a very fair way to handle that and I think the two boards can work together to do that," she said.

The additional reduction by the Town Council resulted in a \$15.22 million dollar proposed

general government budget, an increase of \$417,006, or 2.82%, over the current budget.

Town cuts included \$10,000 from the private road fund and \$5,000 from the Middle Haddam Library.

Board of Finance Chairman Richard Brown said if the town is facing cuts to its budgets, "why are we funding private entities?"

A savings of \$30,000 in Workman's Compensation was a result of costs coming in lower than anticipated, and a \$15,000 cut from the capital budget was for the fire department accountability system. Brown said there are plans the department will change to a different electronic system at some point in the future.

A total of \$10,000 was also cut from the capital budget for sidewalk repairs and \$7,280 for the replacement of East Hampton Public Library computers will instead be funded by the library this year from savings.

School Budget

The proposed \$31.18 million school budget is a \$536,525, or 1.75%, increase over current spending.

The figures reflect the \$77,500 cut made last week by the Board of Finance.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith said the proposed cuts would translate to the elimination of one teaching position and "several of the smaller items" that had been requested by

administrators in the proposed Board of Education budget.

While Smith would not say what specifically would be cut, he said several positions – including a new assistant cheerleading coach at the middle school and a robotics team advisor – would be looked at closely by the school board.

Smith said he felt it was "wise" for the council to eliminate the \$151,185 in teacher pension costs.

"I think it's absolutely wrong for towns to have to make up a shortfall that the state has created for themselves," Smith said, adding that the state "doesn't do us any favors by setting the budget so late."

Public Comments

The majority of people who spoke during the public comment portion of the meeting were Fern Lane residents.

Five individuals spoke about their concerns over the \$10,000 cut from the private road fund by the Board of Finance last week.

Fern Lane resident Pamela Hatfield said the condition of the road has deteriorated so drastically, the street poses a "safety concern."

"It's difficult to even walk down the road without jeopardizing a fall," she said.

Fern Land resident Lon Fishman asked the council why Fern Lane residents should be ex-

pected to continue to support the town budget if the road will not be fixed.

"There are no sidewalks, we don't have sewage, we don't have town water. There are 14 homes [and] we only have one student in the school here. \$10,000 is not just for Fern Lane, but the other private streets," he said.

Town Manager Mike Maniscalco said without the additional \$10,000, the private road fund totals about \$19,000.

He said the local fund was established approximately four years ago to repair and maintain the town's 26 private roads. That's because using state funding for private roads would put the town at risk of losing all state grants for transportation improvements throughout town.

Resident and former school board member Tania Sones said she was advocating the council approve the budget proposed by the Board of Finance, while resident Bob Kovach said road repair and other issues in town mean the town "can't keep raising the education budget."

"You just can't keep coming to the taxpayer. I don't have a tree that grows hundred dollar bills, we have to cut somewhere," he said.

The revised budget proposal will head to a town meeting on June 10 at 6 p.m. at Town Hall, followed by a referendum on June 18 from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at East Hampton Middle School.

Hebron Charter Review Commission Suggests Slight Changes

by Sloan Brewster

The Hebron Board of Selectmen will hold a public hearing on proposed revisions to the town's charter next week as part of a process that has generated very little interest from residents so far.

Charter Revision Commission Chairman Scot Kauffman told the *Rivereast* this week that none of the items the commission looked at were "hot button issues" and there was very little public participation during the review process.

He said the nine-member commission – which the Board of Selectmen appointed in August for the sole purpose of revising the charter – received a few emails and attendance was slim at two public hearings, with one member of the public at each.

At the May 2 Board of Selectmen meeting, Kauffman presented the commission's final draft with its recommended changes.

"We did our due diligence with respect to each and every item we were charged with," Kauffman told selectmen. "We're really pleased to be able to submit to you our redlined document."

The draft represents about nine months of work, during which time the commission completed "a fairly exhaustive review and revision" of the charter, Kauffman said.

The town does a charter revision every five years.

"This time we even eliminated some of the changes that were made five years ago," he said. "The changes and revisions are not taken lightly. We did in fact have a 20-minute conversation in regard to a comma because it did change the meaning, the interpretation."

Kauffman said he expects that in another five years, at the next revision, the commission will

discuss social media and "more comprehensive ways to get information to people."

The most significant changes under consideration involved changing the town clerk position from elected to appointed, looking at bifurcating the budget and eliminating advisory questions included with budget referendums, Kauffman said. The commission also looked at language, punctuation, definitions and semantics in all sections of the charter.

The two biggest considerations were the town clerk position and the budget – neither of which the commission decided to change.

Relative to the town clerk, the commission asked for input from the town manager and town clerk.

"And we asked for some research, which was provided to us," Kauffman said. "We reviewed everything and found that it was in our best interest to leave it elected."

Some of the research included looking into 160 towns that went in one direction or the other with the position, he said, adding that a lot of small towns in Connecticut are currently reviewing the position and looking to change it.

"We all came to the consensus to leave it untouched after reviewing the data," he said.

Town Manager Andrew Tierney said in a phone call Wednesday that the reason he wanted the commission to consider the switch was because while the town currently has a good town clerk, "everybody retires."

"I look down the road," he said.

Town clerks need certification and it's possible someone who does not have the necessary education could be elected into the position and would be required to get the certification, which could take up to three years, Tierney said.

"It was a question that they vetted and the town clerk gave her recommendation," he said.

On Tuesday, Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz said keeping the position elected was the right decision.

"My opinion was to leave it the way it is as an elected position," she said. "It's one of the last full time positions that remains elected and I think that historically the electors of this town have done a pretty good job of selecting their town clerk. It gives voice to the community."

The commission also opted to leave the budget as it is and did not go for bifurcation, or breaking it in two, with the town and Board of Education expenses separate documents. Currently, the two spending plans are combined in a single budget proposal that is voted on as one question at referendum.

"We left that one alone as well," Kauffman said. "There was data that towns had more difficulty with bifurcated budgets."

Tierney said the last charter revision had thoroughly investigated the question of bifurcation and the town voted against it but that the current commission gave it another quick look.

The commission also decided to eliminate the requirement for advisory questions on the ballot when the proposed budget goes to referendum. The charter provision was initially added to help clarify why voters were repeatedly shooting down the RHAM budget, according to Kauffman.

According to the charter, the ballot must include advisory questions asking if voters think the town, Board of Education and RHAM budgets are too high or too low.

"They put these advisory questions out there and they're binary," he said. "It was the attempt to get the answers from the constituency about

why things were being voted down."

Some voters at the May 8 budget referendum spoke to the *Rivereast* about the three advisory questions. Most who commented said they liked being able to answer questions at that level as it is good feedback to give the town, especially when they vote against a budget because it is too low. Officials tend to assume no votes are a response to overly high budgets, they said.

Resident Christopher Smith said he would have liked an additional option to check off with the advisory questions.

"There should have been a third choice," Smith said.

Kauffman said in researching the questions' efficiency, "a vast majority of opinions" were that they were more confusing than helpful and that since about a year after they were added, town officials had begun to consider eliminating them – so the commission opted to do away with them.

Adding a third option would have led to a fourth "and then more," he said.

"I think it was just easier to clarify in this regard, just to strike them," he said. "You just open up a can of worms."

Tierney reiterated it didn't take long for officials to realize the questions needed to be cut.

"They're too confusing because they ask if they're too high or too low and there's not a third question," he said.

The public hearing on the recommended charter revisions will take place Thursday, June 6 at 7 p.m. in the community room in Town Hall. After hearing from the public, the Board of Selectmen can decide the changes need further tweaking or can simply send them to referendum in November.

Portland Budget Sails Through on Second Try

by Sloan Brewster

By an overwhelming margin, Portland's \$34.58 million budget passed at referendum Wednesday.

Of the 1,262 voters who cast ballots in the referendum, 988, or 83%, voted in favor of the spending plan and 243 voted against it.

Officials who had awaited the numbers reveled in the victory and talked about going out to celebrate.

It was the second referendum for the 2019-2020 budget proposal – with more than \$471,000 cut after the original \$35.05 million spending plan failed at referendum on May 13 – and the first failed budget referendum in town in more than a decade.

In response to the failure, selectmen cut \$254,255 from the general government spending plan and \$217,000 from the proposed education budget and then implored residents to make their ways to the polls, blaming the negative vote at least in part on low turnout.

Only 599 voters out of 6,134 eligible voters showed up at the polls or submitted absentee ballots that go 'round, according to First Selectman Susan Bransfield.

Residents appeared to hear the cry. Turnout Wednesday hit 20.45% of the 6,170 total registered voters, the highest voting turnout in 14

years, according to Town Clerk Ryan Curley.

So many people showed up, in fact, that they ran out of ballots, Bransfield said. The registrars of voters realized they were not going to have enough when they cracked into the last packet of 110 ballots, so they ran out and photocopied a bunch.

The regular ballots were counted on a voting machine and the 31 ballots cast on photocopied paper were hand counted, Bransfield said.

Bransfield said she was "overwhelmed" by the participation numbers.

"I'm very pleased that so many people turned out to vote and that the overwhelming majority of voters said yes," she said. "It means we have a budget that many agreed to."

James Tripp, Board of Selectmen member, said the percentage of turnout was "astounding."

"It's great to see so many people come out to vote for the referendum, great to see it pass," he said.

With the budget passed, Bransfield said the Board of Selectmen were set to meet the following evening – after press time – to proceed with running the town.

Bransfield said she had heard from many voters after the first referendum. Some said they

hadn't voted because of the assumption the budget would pass.

Others said they didn't want a tax increase, according to Bransfield.

The newly approved spending package does not raise the mill rate.

"I do believe that the taxpayers do deserve a break," she said.

While the total budget proposal represents a 1.59% increase over the current budget – with a 0.30% increase in general government and a 2.4% uptick in education – Bransfield said the town is set to bring in more revenue in the coming year than it receives currently. That means the mill rate doesn't have to go up because increased revenue will offset increased spending.

While the Board of Selectmen slashed \$217,000 from the education budget, it's up to the Board of Education to decide where to make the specific cuts.

One idea already on the table to help reduce the schools' operating budget is the possible elimination of all middle school sports. The program currently serves 207 students at a cost of \$60,180, according to data provided by the school board.

Bransfield said she has heard from residents concerned by the possibility and she plans to

talk to the Board of Education to ask them not to eliminate sports.

Board of Education Vice Chairman Meg Scata said Superintendent of Schools Phillip O'Reilly had produced a list of potential cuts, but emphasized it was "a preliminary list." The board will meet on June 4 to further discuss the cuts.

"We're thrilled that it passed, we're not thrilled with the prospect now of making the cuts," Scata said. "Because of what happens at the schools, our interest is with students, academics, sports – all the things that make school a good thing for students."

Scata, dubbing herself "Queen of Fun," was wearing a pink-gemmed tiara that she was awarded for making the highest "guesstimate" early Wednesday about how many people would vote.

"I ball parked it at 1,150," she said. By coming out in support of the budget, she said parents "have spoken."

Ken Kearns, the sole citizen-at-large who stuck around until the bitter end Wednesday, said he felt it was important to vote on the budget because of the school children.

"It's about the kids and it's only about the kids," he said.

East Hampton Police News

5/7: A 15 year old juvenile from East Hampton was issued a summons for third-degree criminal mischief and intimidation based on bigotry/bias, East Hampton Police said.

5/18: After an investigation into an ATV accident on Route 16 near the area of S. Main Street, Anthony Siena, 32, of 69 Hurd Park Rd., was arrested for DUI, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating an ATV on the highway, police said.

Also, from May 13-19, officers responded to 13 medical calls, two motor vehicle accidents, seven alarms, and made 27 traffic stops, police said.

Portland Police News

5/10: Dillon Haines, 30, of 766 Tobacco St., Lebanon, was arrested and charged with possession of narcotics and possession of drug paraphernalia, Portland Police said.

5/15: Donna Downing, 64, of 5 Adorno Dr., was arrested and charged with DUI, police said.

5/18: Debra Deakin, 42, with a last known address of 82 Ridge St., Manchester, was arrested and charged with second-degree breach of peace and misuse of 911, police said.

Hebron Police News

5/26: Roger C. Krasusky, 48, of 13 Hillcrest Dr., was arrested and charged with risk of injury to a child, third-degree assault and third-degree strangulation/suffocation, state police said.

Marlborough Police News

5/21: Valentin Negron, 39, of 101 Mill Rd., East Hartford, was arrested and charged with reckless driving and DUI, state police said.



The Colchester Memorial Day Parade, which honored the solemn holiday as well as the 100th anniversary of the American Legion, brought the community together Sunday. Colchester American Legion Post 54 members rode along Main Street during Sunday's Memorial Day Parade as event goers dressed in red, white and blue cheered them on. The Bacon Academy Marching Band made its way down the parade route as one of the many groups that came out to remember those who died in service to the United States.



Memorial Day Parade Honors American Legion Centennial

by Allison Lazur

Children, adults and dogs flocked to Norwich Avenue and Main Street for Sunday's Memorial Day parade.

Dressed in red, white and blue, residents filled the downtown area to show their support for those who died in service to the United States, as well as for veterans and active service men and women.

This year's focus at a ceremony at the Veteran's Memorial immediately following the parade was "Honoring the 100th Year Anniversary of the American Legion."

Vintage cars and a truck with signs reading "Thank you Veterans," cruised down the street, while the Bacon Academy Marching Band marched in straight lines and in step with one another.

First Selectman Art Shilosky sported a red hat while fellow selectman Denise Turner waved to the crowd alongside smiling selectman Stan Soby.

Members of the Colchester Fire Department, Cub Scout Pack 109 and the Middletown Police Benefit Association Pipes and Drums were among the many groups who made an appearance Sunday.

The parade concluded with the ceremony led by announcer Charles Savitsky.

At the beginning of the ceremony, St. Andrew's Choir sang the Star Spangled Banner while Rabbi Ken Alter of Congregation

Ahavath Achim said a prayer that included a poem commemorating America.

Savitsky introduced this year's guest speaker, retired Connecticut National Guard Brig. Gen. William Shea.

He provided interested crowd members with Shea's background, listing an impressive resume of credentials which included serving as Commander of the 1109th Aviation Classification Repair Activity Depot (AVCRAD) and Chief of Staff for the Connecticut Army National Guard and as State Army Aviation Officer.

Shea, who retired in 2012, is a native of Mystic and resides in Middletown, Savitsky said.

Shea approached the podium and provided onlookers with the history of Memorial Day.

"Originally known as Decoration Day, it originated in the years following the Civil War and became an official federal holiday in 1971," he said.

On May 5, 1868, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization of Northern civil war veterans called for a nationwide day of remembrance. The date of Decoration Day was chosen because it was not the anniversary of any particular battle, Shea said.

In 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which established Memorial

Day as the last Monday in May and declared Memorial Day a federal holiday, he said.

In the spirit of Colchester's chosen focus – the 100th anniversary of the American Legion – Shea went on to outline the role of the organization from its beginnings.

The American Legion is organized by departments representing each of the states and territories and individual local posts throughout the United States as well as overseas, he said.

Founded in 1919 after World War I, the morale of the troops still deployed as part of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) was declining. At the suggestion of Lt. Col. Teddy Roosevelt Jr. and a national guardsman, George White, a need was identified for a veteran's organization, Shea said.

Members of the AEF first met in Paris in Feb. 1919 and "developed a provisional organization that represented the deployed service members, but also those who had taken up the cause back home," Shea said.

The American Legion's first caucus was held in March 1919 and was attended by over 2,000 officers and enlisted men. Paris also became the location of the first American Legion, with posts becoming established in the United States shortly thereafter, Shea said.

He cited a slew of achievements by the

American Legion over the last hundred years, which included increasing the level of compensation for wounded and disabled service members and devising and supporting the G.I. Bill of Rights – an act that provides benefits to World War II veterans – which Shea said is considered the "single greatest achievement of the American Legion."

He also revealed over 50% of today's Major League Baseball players started in American Legion Baseball.

The American Legion was also the largest single contributor to the fund to build the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, Shea said.

The ceremony concluded on a somber note with a reading of Colchester residents who died during the Civil War, WWI, WWII, the Vietnam War and Iraq War, ending with the bugle call Taps – commonly heard at military funerals and flags ceremonies throughout the United States.

Taps, however, was not played on bugles, but instead on trumpets, by Bacon Academy Band students Abby Levine and Annie Hagman.

"From the minutemen who won our independence here in Connecticut to today's warriors turning back aggression all around the world, the line of Americans willing to risk their lives for this land and the ideals and people they love is long and never ending," Shea said.

Colchester Police News

5/19: Brandon L. Blain, 36, of 203 Scott Hill Rd., Lebanon, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive in proper lane, state police said.

5/20: Aaron Bethea, 48, of 31 Rood Ave., Windsor, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under suspension, DUI and failure to drive in proper lane, state police said.

5/22: Jayvhen D. Hunter, 20, of 44 Brook St., New Britain, was arrested and charged with

second-degree failure to appear, state police said.

5/23: David L. Friedman, 51, of 24 Carvalho Dr., was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right, Colchester Police said.

5/25: Raymond S. Smith, 58, of 11 Falls Circle, was arrested and charged with DUI, state police said.

5/25: Ruaan B. Viljoen, 33, of 48 Knick Lane, Apt. B, was arrested and charged with DUI, state police said.

Fatal Motorcycle Collision with Guiderail in Marlborough

A 60-year-old Colchester man died from injuries sustained in a motorcycle crash Monday after colliding with a metal guiderail.

State police said the motorcycle driven by Yvan Soucy, 60, of 755 Middletown Rd., Colchester, was traveling eastbound on Route 2 near exit 12 at approximately 4:10 p.m. when the vehicle traveled off the roadway.

Police said the motorcycle exited the right travel lane for undetermined reasons as it was negotiating a slight left curve, subsequently

striking a metal beam guiderail on the right shoulder of Route 2.

Soucy was ejected from the vehicle and died as a result of injuries sustained during the collision, police said.

Several witnesses who saw the collision left the scene before police arrived, according to police. Anyone who may have witnessed the collision is asked to contact Trooper Lukasz Kowalczyk at 860-465-5400.



On Tuesday morning, Bacon Academy seniors led by Principal Matthew Peel participated in the school's first Graduate Walk, where soon-to-be graduates celebrated the end of 13 years in the district. In their graduation gowns, seniors walked through the halls of Colchester Elementary School, Jack Jackter Intermediate School, William J. Johnson Middle School and Bacon Academy. Graduation is scheduled for Thursday, June 13.

Obituaries

Portland

Carol Ann Marin Tate

Carol Ann Marin Tate, 59, of Portland, passed away peacefully on May 22 at Hartford Hospital.

She is survived by her husband, Jody Tate, of Portland, and her four daughters: Stephanie Roberts and her husband, Ian Dunbar, of Boston, Mass., Chelsey Valeri and her husband, John Valeri, Hannah Tate, and Nicole Tate of Portland. She is also survived by her sister, Cathy Marin Cote and her husband, Steven Cote, of Farmington; two nephews, Richard Berube and Dylan Cote; and one granddaughter, Evelyn Dunbar. She is predeceased by her parents, Joseph Marin and Evelyn Stross, and her brother, Richard Marin.

Born in Biddeford, Maine, on May 27, 1959, Carol spent much of her life in Portland, graduating from Portland High School in 1977. Carol worked for several decades as an administrator for Firestone Auto Care in Cromwell and returned to complete her bachelor's degree in her fifties. She graduated this spring with her master's in social work from the University of Connecticut.

Carol always enjoyed giving her time to others and volunteered previously at St. Mary's Church as captain of the Knights of Columbus Ladies Auxiliary, where she was organizing charitable events. At St. Pius, Carol was president of the Rosary Altar Society, which entailed organizing clothing drives and many other events for the church. She was a prison minister at York Correctional Institute in Niantic, where she also led the church choir twice a month.

Carol enjoyed knitting, crocheting, quilting, gardening, relaxing on the beach, dancing with her husband, and cooking for a crowd, especially Cajun cuisine. Carol loved spending time with her family and celebrating the accomplishments of her daughters, and always looked forward to the next visit with her granddaughter, who was the light of her life.

Calling hours were held Thursday, May 30 at the Portland Memorial Funeral Home in Portland. A Catholic mass in Carol's honor will be held today, May 31, at 10 a.m. at St. Mary's Church, 51 Freestone Avenue, Portland. Burial at St. Mary's Cemetery will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in memoriam to a college savings fund for her granddaughter through Fidelity Investments at go.fidelity.com/4ztb7.

Colchester

Normand John Surprenant

Normand John Surprenant, 73, of East Haddam and formerly of Colchester, passed away on May 22, 2019 at Middlesex Hospital after a long illness. Normand was born in Hartford on November 13, 1945, the son of Barbara (Halisey) Surprenant of East Haddam and the late Normand H. Surprenant.

Norm was the former owner and operator of the United Auto Parts Store in Colchester for over 18 years. He sold the business and became a professional ski instructor, teaching skiing at Stratton Mountain in Vermont and, during the summer months, at St. Arnaud in New Zealand. Norm loved being outdoors; he enjoyed hunting, playing tennis and skiing. He will be remembered for his wit, humor and generous spirit.

He is survived by his girlfriend, Kerensa Clark of New Zealand; his mother, Barbara, of East Haddam; two daughters, Michelle and husband Michael Dibuo of Colchester, and Mignette Bogue of Brooklyn; a sister, Kathleen Surprenant and husband Michael Cipriano of Melbourne Beach, Fla.; two grandchildren, Scott McDonnell and Zachary Bogue, and two great-grandchildren, Connor and Colton McDonnell; close family friend, Rock Eaton of Colchester; and numerous extended family and friends. He was predeceased by a sister, Janet Kearney.

The family would like to gratefully acknowledge and express their appreciation for the love and care shown to Norm by his nephew, Trevor Kearney, and life-long friends Jay Cunningham, Mark and Cate Henderson.

Calling hours and a celebration of life were held Thursday, May 30 at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester.

Donations in his memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, cancer.org. For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Muriel Elizabeth Lord

Muriel Elizabeth Lord, 89, of East Hampton, widow of the late Harold B. Lord Jr., died peacefully on Monday May 27 at Middlesex Hospital.

Born August 16, 1929 in Hebron, she was the daughter of the late Raymond and Nellie (Scranton) Jones. She had worked as the kitchen manager at Arbor Acres in Glastonbury until her retirement. Muriel was a 60-plus-year member of the East Hampton Congregational Church, a member of the Treadway-Cavanaugh Post #64 American Legion Woman's Auxiliary, and an active member of the Belltown Seniors. Muriel enjoyed traveling, crocheting and other crafts. She had helped to make hundreds of Teddy Bears for the Hole in the Wall Gang Camp and the Ambulance Association.

Muriel is survived by her two daughters, Lynda Tinney of East Hampton and Michelle Lord of Willow Springs, N.C.; a sister, Arline Fuller of Colchester; three grandchildren: Jennifer Tinney Ulm, Lisa Bettencourt and Allen McCormick Jr.; four great-grandchildren: Tye, James, and Olivia Bettencourt, and Abigail Ulm; and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her brother Raymond Jones, sisters Laura Mund and Gertrude McKinney, and son-in-law James Tinney.

A funeral service will be held at East Hampton Congregational Church today, May 31, at 11 a.m. Burial will follow at Lake View Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the East Hampton Congregational Church P.O. Box 237 East Hampton, CT 06424. To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Elena Maria Carles

Elena Maria Carles died May 17 in Portland at the age of 71. She was a remarkable person.

Elena had a Ph.D. in clinical psychology and spent most of her career working in the Connecticut mental health system at Fairfield Hills Hospital and Connecticut Valley Hospital. She was an artist who made gorgeous quilts, painted beautiful watercolors, wrote in calligraphy and played the piano, which she did by ear. She was a joyful member of the Middlesex Hospital Vocal Chords.

Her family included her brothers Jack and Tom and their children and grandchildren, Linda and Alice Carles, and her Shih Tzu dogs, Norton and Trixie. Their pictures were all around her in her house.

She spent the happiest years of her life living in Portland, where she made many friends. These and the close friends made as far back as college loved her dearly. She believed that God would take care of her in the end and we hope that she will be eternally happy in the afterlife that she envisioned.

There will be a memorial service for her at the Portland Congregational Church on June 22 at 11 a.m., with interment in its memorial garden following.

Colchester

Norma E. G. Norris

Mrs. Norma E. G. Norris, born January 3, 1931 in Bronxville, N.Y., passed away at Windham Memorial Hospital on May 27 surrounded by her family.

Mrs. Norris was a former teacher at Bacon Academy in Colchester, where she and her family resided for many years.

She was predeceased by her husband Walter W. Norris III. She leaves behind her son Walter W. Norris IV and his wife, Deborah; daughter Rica and her husband, Roger Ringwalt; and her granddaughter, Melissa.

Services will be private for immediate family only.

East Hampton

David Bruce Pessoni

David Bruce Pessoni, 68, of Palm Bay, Fla. and formerly of East Hampton, lost his courageous battle with ALS on May 20.

He is survived by his wife of nearly 39 years, Debbie, his stepdaughter Sharon McGuigan (George), his brothers Daniel (Linda), Douglas (Audrey), his sister Day Kovacs (Andy) and his four grandchildren, George, Shawn, Benjamin, and Allison McGuigan. David was predeceased by his parents Edward and Florence Pessoni.

David was a Christmas Eve baby born in 1950. He grew up in East Hampton and graduated from East Hampton High School in 1968. He joined the U.S. Navy and was offered a chance to attend UDT Seal Training, which he did and became a UDT Seal Team graduate class of 54. He served 2 tours in Vietnam, first with UDT 13 and second with Seal Team 2. David left the Navy when his term was up and returned to Connecticut. He missed the military so he joined the Army National Guard. In 1980 he was hired into the AGR (Active Guard Reserve) retiring at the age of 49 with a total of 23 years of active duty. He wasn't finished working and applied for a job with the Connecticut Department of Correction and worked as a prison guard for 13 years. Once he retired he and Debbie moved to Florida. During his working years he attended college part-time and received his associates degree in political science from Middlesex Community College in 1992.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Friday, June 21 from 9:30-11 a.m. A funeral service will be held at 11 a.m., followed by burial with Military Honors in Lake View Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers please consider a donation to ALS Association Florida Chapter, Inc., 3242 Parkside Center Circle, Tampa, Fla. 33619. These donations go to the patients to help with wheelchairs or home modifications by quarterly grant awards. The money is thin, so every grant applied for is not awarded. Of note, during the "Ice Bucket Challenge," every grant was awarded. This group is sponsor of Support Group Dave, which Debbie attended.

David's family would like to thank Health First Hospice for their excellent care during Dave's final days.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Marlborough

Lawrence J. White

Lawrence "Larry" J. White, formerly of Marlborough, 77, passed away on May 28 with his loving wife by his side at a Bangor, Maine hospital. He was born on June 15, 1941 in Presque Isle, Maine, the son of David and Ilene (Hill) White.

Larry served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. After serving, he married his sweetheart, Carole Caisse, on April 15, 1966 and was married for 53 years. Larry spent 18 years working at Colt Patent Firearms in Hartford. He also spent 14 years in Florida as a process server, a job that he loved.

In addition to his parents, Larry was predeceased by his brothers, Kenneth and Glenn, and his sister, Beverly. He is survived by his loving wife; brother, Dana White, Sr.; brother-in-law, Robert Caisse and his wife, Diane; and many nieces, nephews, and friends that he loved dearly.

Relatives and friends are invited to attend a memorial reception from 6-8 p.m. on Monday, June 3 at the Family Reception Center of Brookings-Smith, 163 Center Street, Bangor, Maine, where stories and remembrances will be shared at 7 p.m.

Those who wish to remember Larry in a special way may make donations in his memory to the Wounded Warrior Project, 370 7th Avenue, Suite 1802, New York, N.Y. 10001 or at woundedwarriorproject.org/donate. Condolences to the family may be expressed at BrookingsSmith.com.