



RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam and Portland

Volume 43, Number 41

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

July 26, 2019



**House Destroyed...** This is all that remains of a Hebron home after fire ripped through it last Saturday afternoon. Nobody was home at the time of the blaze – but two dogs were rescued by a brave passerby. See story on page 10.

## Lake Supporters Beg for Help

by Elizabeth Regan

The East Hampton Town Hall meeting room was filled to capacity on Tuesday as supporters of Lake Pocotopaug converged to beg members of the Town Council to do something about the notoriously impaired body of water.

Dennis Jenks, of Meeks Point Road, called the lake's condition "an embarrassment" to the town.

Sears Park Beach is currently under a swim-at-your-own-risk health advisory ordered by the Chatham Health District due to elevated cyanobacteria levels (see related story on page 15). The resulting blue-green algae bloom is made up of potentially toxic bacteria that can be harmful to the skin and liver.

"I think we're setting a record right now with the earliest that we've had the algae bloom, and probably the earliest the warning signs have been put up over Sears Park. I think it's an embarrassment to the town," Jenks said.

Sears Park is the only beach in town tested by the health district. It has been shut down for several weeks each summer over the past several years due to blue-green algae levels. The closures have typically started sometime in Au-

gust, though the blooms in 2014 and 2018 arrived later in the season – just in time to close the beach for Labor Day Weekend.

Jenks asked councilors "to start getting something done" to improve the lake. He said a plan has already been laid out in a comprehensive watershed management report from the town's lake consulting firm, Northeast Aquatic Research.

Commonly referred to as the nine-point plan, the document recommends an array of improvements that could cost as much as \$1.4 million. Broken down by cost, the plan includes 14 recommended fixes that can be undertaken as part of regular maintenance or by volunteers; 21 areas that each need up to \$10,000 in funding; and eight areas that will each cost more than \$10,000 to address.

The Conservation-Lake Commission secured a \$236,700 grant from the federal government, administered through the state environmental protection department, to install low-impact, sustainable technology for mitigating runoff on the north end of the lake. The funding is in the

See Lake Supporters page 2

## AHM to Perform 'Little Shop' – With a Twist

by Sloan Brewster

Tonight and tomorrow, AHM Summer Youth Theater is taking on the horror comedy rock musical *Little Shop of Horrors* – but with a twist.

Based on the 1982 musical, which in turn was derived from a 1960 movie, *Little Shop* tells the story of Seymour Krelborn, a nebbish flower shop clerk who one day discovers a new plant, which he names Audrey II, after his beloved coworker Audrey. Little does Seymour know, however, that this plant has plans of global domination.

With music and lyrics by Alan Menken and the late Howard Ashman, *Little Shop* has been a hit with audiences for more than 35 years, with productions mounted both off Broadway and on, as well as a 1986 movie adaptation starring Rick Moranis.

In most of those productions, the villainous Audrey II has been voiced by a man. But for the AHM production, director and choreographer Kyle Reynolds opted for a gender flip, casting RHAM High School rising senior Danielle Golden, 17, in the part.

Golden said she was willing and able to do it with a male-sounding voice – but Reynolds decided to keep the female voice.

"It could've gone either way," she said during a break at Tuesday's dress rehearsal, when the *Rivereast* got a sneak peek of the production.

As it is, she uses a deep voice to articulate the maniacal screams of "Feed me, Seymour," that emanate from the evil plant at intervals throughout the show.

Golden said it was "kind of cool" and "un-

usual" to bring a female voice to the plant.

Reynolds had a stronger word.

"The plant's about to come alive with the female voice... which is pretty ground-breaking," he leant over and whispered during the rehearsal.

Suddenly, the large plant began to move and Golden's surprisingly strong voice rang out.

"Feed Me!" she shouted. "I need some food!"

Then, Golden sang the greenery's first song, proving true an observation made earlier by Reynolds.

"This girl's voice..." he said when explaining his choice for a female Audrey II. "She has a crazy, tall rock-hard voice."

He added that Golden is a talented actress and "someone to look out for, for sure."

AHM Summer Youth Theater does yearly productions with local talent in grades seven through twelve.

Reynolds said he opted for *Little Shop* for this year's production as a change of pace from the dance-heavy productions the theater has done the past couple of summers. Last year, the theater performed *13*, a Tony award-winning musical by Jason Robert Brown, and in 2017 it put on *Seussical: The Musical*.

This time, he wanted a show with "a good story," he said.

"*Little Shop* has been deliciously devouring for the last 40 years," he said. "I thought it would be fun in this community."

Auditions were in late April and early May and on June 24 rehearsals began.

"We've put together a whole show in one month, which sometimes is unbelievable," he said.



**Seymour (played by Ryan Kaminske) is shocked when Audrey II (voiced by Danielle Golden) begins to talk in *Little Shop of Horrors*, the AHM Summer Youth Theater production taking place tonight and tomorrow at RHAM High School.**

Cast members have been putting in two to five days each week working on the show. Reynolds, on the other hand, has done little else with his time.

"For me it consumes my entire summer, but this the best way that I want to spend my summer," he said.

As Reynolds chatted with the *Rivereast*, he kept a keen eye on the stage, grabbing his radio

occasionally to communicate with the backstage crew, the sound booth or the orchestra pit.

"You've got to end earlier," he told Samantha Talmadge, conductor, at one point about creating a smoother transition from the end of a song to the opening of a scene.

At other moments, he cued dancers on their steps, went on stage and fiddled with one actor

See AHM Performs page 2

**Lake Supporters cont. from Front Page**

process of being released by the state, according to officials.

Concerns from residents came on the heels of a message from Conservation-Lake Commission Vice Chairman Joe Carbonell, who had written an email to various town officials, lake residents and the media to alert them to the deteriorating condition of the lake due to the blue-green algae bloom.

Carbonell did not attend the council meeting, though many other lake supporters did.

Lakeside resident Chuck Yenknor stood up to say homeowners along the lake pay a “premium” for living so close to the water.

“If you took my house, moved it two miles away from the lake, the taxes would be about 25% less,” he said.

The total “premium” for all lakeside properties adds about \$450,000 to the town coffers annually, he said.

“We’re not looking for that whole amount to be spent on the lake, but give us a piece,” Yenknor told the council.

But council Chairman Melissa Engel said there is already \$232,835 in the capital budget for lake water quality infrastructure projects.

“So I don’t know that I’m going to let this group take blame for not funding the project,” Engel said of the council.

Engel noted the Conservation-Lake Commission in the last budget year returned \$14,509 in unspent funds to the general fund.

She also pointed to council approval back in March for the commission to get a copper sulfate application permit from the state. The treatments cost \$7,980 for each half of the lake and are being administered by SOLitude Lake Management as part of a \$1,240 contract.

The treatments are designed to be used before blue-green algae counts reach harmful levels. Hillary Kenyon, of Northeast Aquatic Research, has said the copper kills cells in the water column so that the blue-green algae has to start repopulating all over again.

Engel noted a previous copper sulfate permit from the state, which was good for one year, expired before the Conservation-Lake Commission acted on it.

“It lapsed,” she said. “Not by the Town Council. It lapsed by not being implemented by the lake commission. Maybe they had a reason I don’t know about. I’m just saying this is round two of the permit they have in hand. And I agree, it needs to be utilized. It needs to be done now.”

Carbonell has said it was too late to treat the lake with copper sulfate by the time the first permit was received. He said this week that the second, pending permit application has not yet been approved by the state.

Parks and Recreation Director Jeremy Hall, who advises the lake commission, said the permit application was submitted to the state the first week in May.

Carbonell told the *Rivereast* he’d been under the impression the \$14,509 that was returned to the general fund was going to “carry forward” into the next budget year.

“This way, if there’s something coming up, we would have funds for it,” he said.

Engel during the meeting didn’t mince words in her summation of the situation.

“I’m not sure of the effectiveness of the lake commission,” she said. “And that’s something this group has an obligation to look into. And we will.”

Councilor Pete Brown reiterated concerns voiced by Engel previously in the meeting when she said emails and posts on social media about the lake advisory were stoking fears among residents. She specifically called out Carbonell, the Conservation-Lake Commission vice chairman.

Brown, lamenting that Carbonell was not in attendance to hear the discussion, took a shot at those who he said were using social media “as a bully pulpit to squeeze more dollars, when there’s no more dollars to be had.”

He said the lake is one of many interests competing for funding amid tough fiscal realities at the local level.

“This council as well as other councils wants a healthy lake. We strive for a healthy lake. I don’t know how else to say it. But we also have concerns for other parts of the town,” he said.

Engel announced at the meeting that member Kevin Reich will serve as the council’s liaison to the commission going forward.

Conservation-Lake Commission Chairman Peter Zawisza on Thursday stood by the commission’s effectiveness.

He said the commission has “made big headway” in the last five years. He pointed to the creation of the nine-point plan at the commission’s behest and the resulting grant to start implementing the suggested improvements.

Zawisza said the commission has been more effective since lake and conservation oversight was merged into the Conservation-Lake Commission. The Lake Commission had previously been its own entity.

But he emphasized the Conservation-Lake Commission is advisory only.

“Everything has to go through the council,” he said.

He said the commission is planning to use the capital funding to supplement the \$236,700 grant – but the grant funding has not yet been released.

“We feel like we’re close to getting to the point where we can spend the money,” he said.

A plan for roughly \$65,000 in improvements is in place and will begin once the grant money comes through; the next phases of the improvements are already being developed.

A July 18 email from Hall, the parks and recreation director, said a grant contract is being written at the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and will be sent to interim town manager Jeff Jylkka for approval. Then it needs to be signed by the DEEP commissioner.

Zawisza said the Conservation-Lake Commission is moving forward.

“Anybody who worked in government understands everything moves slowly. Really, this may seem like we’re speeding along to some people, and to some people it looks like we’re plodding along at a snail’s pace,” he said.

**AHM Performs cont. from Front Page**

or another’s mic or told someone in the sound booth to turn up the volume.

“Basically [I’m] just making sure everything runs smoothly, so many things at once, lights, steps, plant, music, fly drops,” he said. “Putting everything together at the same time and making sure that they’re doing justice to the story I think is the most important part.”

Jen Golden, Danielle Golden’s mother, is assistant producer and has been helping coordinate the plants. *Little Shop* is the third show she has done with Reynolds. She said his productions are intensive and challenging so the kids learn a lot, including production elements such as lighting and sound transitions in addition to the choreography and singing.

“Kyle’s totally fantastic as far as a director goes; he really, really motivates the kids,” she said. “I think from my perspective that these are some of the best shows that have been put on in this area. It has a remarkable amount to do with Kyle and the production team.”

Michelle Colvin – mother of Analise Colvin, who plays Audrey – is costumer for the production. A crafter and sewer, she said she made the costumes for the supporting good and bad plants – roles that were added as a way to make sure everyone in the 40-person cast had something to do.

“Mostly everything that I create comes without a pattern,” she said. “Here we’ve kind of been winging it too. If we need something we kind of make it happen.”

Creating the “bad plants” has been the toughest thing to do, Colvin said, explaining that to

give the actors mobility to move around and dance, the costumes needed to be shorter while still having texture.

Colvin noted that she did not make the various Audrey II plants, as those were rented.

Chloe Weathers, 14, who plays a customer named Patricia and is a backup singer and in the ensemble, said she has been performing since she was six.

She said her biggest challenge in this show so far has been making sure she knows what’s happening when.

But for Reynolds, challenges include the difficult music.

“The harmonies are very specific and everybody knows these songs, so it has to be perfect,” he said.

Another challenge was fitting 40 kids into a nine-person show, which he did by not just creating the good and bad plants but also by adding a couple of extra Divas – the girls who narrate the story and “pop up here and there” throughout the show.

Working with the puppetry for the Audrey II plants has been “really fun,” Reynolds said.

It was also a challenge, as he had to assure that the person working the puppet always moves the puppet’s mouth in time with Golden’s singing.

\* \* \*

*Little Shop of Horrors* will be performed tonight, July 26, and Saturday, July 27, at 7 p.m. both nights, at the RHAM High School auditorium, 85 Wall St., Hebron. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children/seniors.

# Threat to School Sports Fails to Materialize in Portland

by Elizabeth Regan

The Portland Board of Education has rejected calls to implement a pay-to-play program for middle and high school athletics.

The school board at its July 10 meeting also decided not to follow through with the threat to cut all middle school sports – which is what spurred talks about pay-to-play in the first place – when it found budget savings elsewhere in the budget.

Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly said this week the newfound savings comes from reduced health insurance costs.

Middle school sports is “going forward as budgeted,” O'Reilly said.

The middle school sports program for the upcoming year costs \$60,180, according to budget documents. The talked-about elimination of the program was one part of the school board's response to a total cut of \$217,000 ordered by selectmen after the 2019-20 budget proposal failed at its first referendum in May.

Pay-to-play at the middle and high school could have yielded up to \$56,300, according to district data.

According to the July 10 meeting minutes, members said it was too late to roll out a new pay-to-play plan before the start of the school year; it would also “put a burden on a select group of parents.”

Figures from district business manager Stephanie Fragola showed that charging ath-

letes \$75 per sport with a cap of \$300 per family at both the middle and high schools would yield \$42,225 in revenue. Charging \$100 per sport with a \$400 cap would yield \$56,300 in revenue.

Portland athletic director Chris Serra wrote a July 9 letter to the school board expressing concern that forcing athletes to pay would “do more harm than good.”

He cited concerns that budget constraints at the local and state level are already creating an undue burden on residents; that the cost would cause some athletes not to participate; that the framework doesn't apply equally to other extracurricular activities like the school musical; and that the fee “will not come close to covering the gap in the current fiscal budget.”

The \$34.58 million town budget passed on May 29 with no further reductions, but officials have continued to grapple with where to find the \$217,000 in savings that was ordered after the proposal failed at referendum the first time.

Amid those tight fiscal constraints, the school board last month voted to add a kindergarten teacher to prevent unmanageable class sizes in the unexpectedly large incoming class. To mitigate the expense, they decided at a special meeting this month to proceed with a plan to shrink fifth grade by one teacher since it is expected to be one of the smallest grades in the district

this year.

Fifth grade students will have about 23 students in science and social studies classes, according to the July 10 school board meeting minutes. Math and reading specialists will each teach an 80-minute class to keep class sizes down in those subjects.

The move has been criticized at school board meetings by some staff members and the parents of incoming fifth-grade students.

Salary and benefits for a fifth grade teacher would have cost about \$75,000, according to meeting minutes.

## New Revenue Source

The school board made the decision not to add the fifth grade teaching position despite approving a tentative lease agreement that will bring a publicly unspecified amount of new revenue to the district.

The school board on July 10 authorized Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly to enter into a one-year agreement with Oak Hill School, which will be leasing a classroom at Brownstone Intermediate School. The program serves elementary-aged students with intellectual, behavioral or multiple disabilities.

O'Reilly said this week he has not yet signed the agreement but plans to do so “very shortly.” He would not disclose the dollar amount of the contract.

A majority of school board members were hesitant to earmark the lease proceeds in the face of what they expect to be a financially difficult budget year that includes unanticipated expenses in special education and extended medical leave, according to O'Reilly.

Dissenting voice Laurel Steinhauer made a last-ditch motion to implement a pay-to-play program and to earmark the Oak Hill lease proceeds to fund an additional fifth grade teacher, but the motion failed 2-5.

O'Reilly said he could not find any more savings in the budget to fund the position.

“If the board was to reinstate the fifth grade position, we would have to find where that money would be, and right now I advised the board there's nothing I can identify,” he said.

The school board during previous budget deliberations had already agreed to cut middle school softball and the assistant wrestling coach due to low enrollment.

Other reductions previously approved by the school board included dropping fifth grade from the 1-to-1 Chromebook that provides a dedicated tablet computer for each student in grades 5-12; leaving a full-time technology department position unfilled; requiring students to pay for Advanced Placement testing; and reducing the textbook and supplies line item in every department's budget by 10%.

# Hebron Home Ravaged by Fire, But Dogs Saved

by Sloan Brewster

A Hebron family that lost everything after their house was swallowed by flames last weekend is grateful to the superheroes that rescued their two dogs.

The call that the house at 351 Old Slocum Rd. was up in flames came into the Hebron Fire Department at about 3:17 p.m. Saturday, said Fire Chief Nick Wallick. It took about 45 minutes and seven departments to knock down the fire.

Wallick said he could not say if the house was a total loss, as that is a decision the insurance company will make. Instead, he said, it had sustained significant damage.

Fire Departments from Marlborough, Columbia, Colchester, Glastonbury, Willimantic and Bolton assisted in the operation, Wallick said. There were no people in the house at the time of the fire but two dogs inside were rescued by a passerby.

With temperatures in the mid-90s, firefighters, who were on scene until 7:30 p.m. Saturday, worked in 15- to 20-minute rotations, cooling off and getting hydrated in a rehab area between shifts.

“When you have heat and humidity like we had on Saturday, you are sweating instantly,” he said.

Coreen and Jamie Rogers and their daughter Devon, who live about one mile from the house, were on their way to Lake Pocotopaug in East Hampton when they saw a thick cloud of black smoke rising in the sky, Coreen Rogers said in a phone call with the *Rivereast* Tuesday, during which she repeatedly became choked up.

“Just even talking about it I want to cry,” she said.

They looked around to determine where the smoke originated but couldn't find it, she said. After turning their car around, they finally spotted flames through the woods and realized a house was on fire. They found the house – with the garage already “up in smoke,” Coreen Rogers said – on a rear lot at the end of a long driveway and called 911 to report the fire.

While awaiting the fire department, the Rogers frantically ran around the house scream-

ing and calling to find out if anyone was inside, Correen Rogers said. That's when they heard the dogs.

Without hesitation, Jamie Rogers ripped the screen off a window and jumped in the burning house, his wife said.

“I'm a dog lover and anyone who knows me knows I love my dogs, and that was kind of the motivation,” he said. “[I] saw them barking inside; no one seemed to be around.”

Homeowner Leigh Burnham-Brown, who also spoke to the *Rivereast* Tuesday, said the Rogers told her that Indy, her 7-year-old mixed breed, jumped out the window but Maddy, her 10-year old Shiba Inu, played a little cat-and-mouse first.

“She made [Jamie] chase her around to get her,” she said.

Before getting out of the burning house, Jamie Rogers made sure there was nobody else inside, Burnham-Brown said.

Once they got the dogs, it did not take long for intense flames to engulf the rest of the house, Coreen Rogers said.

“If it had been, I'm telling you, even minutes later, we would not have been able to get near that house,” she said. “It went up so fast, so fast.”

With no neighbors home, the Rogers went to the mailbox and read Burnham-Brown's name on an envelope. Devon Rogers then Googled the name, locating a cell number and Coreen Rogers called Burnham-Brown, telling her house was on fire but her dogs were safe in Rogers' air-conditioned car.

Burnham-Brown said she was about 10 minutes away at a family reunion and immediately grabbed her purse and headed home, calling her husband on the way.

“My dogs are my four-legged children; I don't go anywhere without them,” she said. “I'm just so amazed at the caring [the Rogers] showed for someone they didn't even know. To go into a burning house, I couldn't stop hugging them.”

Burnham-Brown said she and her family, who moved into the home last September, stayed with family for a few days and are now



Fire engulfed this 351 Old Slocum Rd. home last weekend, leading firefighters from several towns to battle the blaze on one of the hottest days of the year. Photo courtesy Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department.

in a hotel in Manchester while working out details with their insurance company for long-term plans.

As she said the Rogers were “absolutely special people” that will always hold a special place in her heart, Burnham-Brown began to cry.

“They are superheroes. People don't do that; it gives me chills just thinking that somebody in this world did that for me and my family,” she said. “I am completely indebted to them for the rest of my life.”

The MOMS Club of Hebron, Andover, Columbia and Lebanon and Ted's IGA are holding a collection to help the family with immediate needs. Since the family is living in a hotel, Michelle Nicholson, the organizer of the

collection, said donating gift cards for such things as food, toiletries and clothing would be the best way to help.

Ideas include gift cards from Ted's Supermarket, CVS Pharmacy, Kohl's, Target and Wal-Mart as well as from restaurants in Manchester as the family will be eating out very often in the foreseeable future, Nicholson said.

“They're going to need [the donations],” she said. “It takes so long for insurance to kick in. I've gone through it with a friend. It's going to be months before insurance kicks in so they're going to need it.”

All items and donations can be dropped off at Ted's at 127 Main St. (Route 66), Hebron, through 11 a.m. Sunday, July 28.

# Hebron Democrats, Republicans Determine November Slates

by Sloan Brewster

Hebron's Democratic and Republican town committees are getting ready for November elections by endorsing their slates of candidates.

Last Wednesday, Hebron Democrats unanimously endorsed its slate for the 2019 municipal elections.

"Our slate features a group of diverse and experienced individuals who love Hebron and are ready on day one to serve this wonderful community," said Tiffany Thiele, chairwoman of the committee.

According to a press release, leading the top of the slate is selectman candidate Marc Rubera.

After retiring as a lieutenant from the Hartford Police Department, where he served 24 years, Rubera became Hebron's police sergeant, a position he has held for the past 14 years, the press release states. He served as the president and executive director of the Hartford Police Athletic League, and was one of the founders and first chairman of the Violence Intervention Project for Children.

Democrats also endorsed Thiele, who unsuccessfully ran last year for state representative of the 55th District, for the Board of Selectmen. The national media relations manager for Connecticut College, Thiele was recently elected to serve on the college's Staff Council, according to the press release. She has spent her communications career advocating for

women and girls' leadership, education, public transportation and sustainability as a business model.

She is currently a member of the Hebron's Capital Improvement Plan Committee.

Thiele is also a former journalist and previously served as secretary and vice president of the Connecticut Sportswriters' Alliance, the press release states. She is a graduate of Rhode Island College and Northeastern University.

The Democrats also endorsed current Board of Finance member Janet Fodaski to run for a four-year term.

For the Hebron Board of Education, Democrats endorsed Nicole Matthews, Joseph Zuzel, Maryanne Leichter, and Nicole Lotko.

For the RHAM Board of Education, Chair Amy D'Amaddio was endorsed for another four-year term, the press release states. Joining her as a candidate will be school counselor Jessica Dapsis.

"All of these candidates have years of experience in education, counseling, and business management, which will be incredible assets to both boards," Thiele said.

In addition, the Democrats endorsed Frank Zitkus and David Rose for the Planning and Zoning Commission; Bryan Smith for Board of Assessment Appeals; Lillian Rhodes and Adam Thiele for Zoning Board of Appeals; and

Bryan Smith for Zoning Board of Appeals Alternate.

It is unknown if any of these names are placeholders for potential candidates – meaning they're there to fill out the slate but don't actually plan on running – as Thiele refused to supply that information.

\* \* \*

On Tuesday, Republicans endorsed current Board of Selectmen vice chairman Gail Richmond to run for reelection on that board, said committee chairman Catherine Marx. Running with her will be Peter Kasper.

Kasper is currently on the Board of Finance and is looking to make the move to the selectmen's board, the press release states.

Current Board of Finance Chairman Dave Veschi is seeking re-election, Marx said. Republicans could only nominate one candidate for the Board of Finance due to town charter rules on majority and minority representation.

Republicans endorsed Gerry Garfield to run for the Planning and Zoning Commission, according to the press release. For the Hebron Board of Education, Republicans endorsed Keith Petit, Amanda Veneziano, Allyson Schmeizl and Joe Margaitis, while they endorsed Vince Colonna for the RHAM Board of Education.

"Keith, Amanda, Allyson and Joe are a group of energetic parents committed to our community," Marx said.

Republicans endorsed Mark Falade for the Board of Assessment Appeals, June Danaher for Zoning Board of Appeals and Steve Weir for Zoning Board of Appeals Alternate, according to the press release. Falade and Danaher are seeking re-election, while Weir is running for the first time.

Kathy Shea, former chairman of the local Board of Education, is listed as a placeholder on the Board of Assessment Appeals.

The caucus met with nearly a full house Tuesday, according to Marx.

"A wonderfully experienced group of public servants were nominated," she said. "The Team has unique mixture experience and new candidates."

Marx said the slate of Republican candidates is "motivated to make Hebron a better place to live, work and raise a family."

"I couldn't be happier for our community; small towns like Hebron rely on volunteers at every level," she said. "We are stewards of the past and for the future. Our community will be well-served by these individuals."

\* \* \*

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5.

## East Hampton Lake Algae Bloom Arrives Early

by Elizabeth Regan

Sears Park is under a swim-at-your-own-risk advisory now that Lake Pocotopaug's annual blue-green algae bloom has made an early appearance, prompting fear among residents and finger-pointing from town officials.

The regional Chatham Health District on Friday put out the advisory after test results from Northeast Laboratories in Berlin came back at elevated levels.

Blue-green algae blooms are unsightly and potentially toxic masses made up of bacteria that can multiply fast in hot and bright conditions where certain nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorous, are concentrated.

The state-recommended threshold for closing the public beaches is greater than 100,000 blue-green algae cells per milliliter, according to guidance published by the state.

But while the samples tested by the Berlin-based company came in at 78,000 cells per milliliter, a sample run concurrently by the town's lake consultant showed 113,605 cells per milliliter – a level that exceeds the state's recommended threshold for beach closure.

Northeast Aquatic Research, which has no connection to Northeast Laboratories, has been monitoring the lake for the town since 2014 and has studied scientific data collected over the past three decades. The firm began running concurrent, "split sample" tests last year after it became evident there was a discrepancy in the two sets of numbers being reported.

Northeast Laboratories Director Alan Johnson said last fall that he is confident in the laboratory's ability to examine blue-green algae samples.

The issue has revealed a rift between the Conservation-Lake Commission and the Town Council that was on full display at Tuesday's council meeting (see a related story on cover). That's when council Chairman Melissa Engel alleged that emails and Facebook posts by lake commission Vice Chairman Joe Carbonell and others are stoking unfounded fears about the dangers of swimming in the lake.

"If they're correct, then somebody ought to be coming out of that lake right now with a rash. [Public health officials] have not seen

that," she said.

Carbonell, who was not at Tuesday's council meeting, had sent a general email directed to various town officials, the media, and members of various lake associations. The email described lake conditions as "not good" and said official efforts to alert residents to the dangers were not sufficient.

"I say this: If your pets or children come down with rashes or infections, please notify Chatham Health," he wrote.

Engel at the council meeting said there are several signs from the health district and the town that have been put up at Sears Park to let visitors know about the current advisory. She said interim town manager Jeff Jylkka is also looking into a color-coded flag system "that can be seen by a lot of people on the lake" to make them aware of the blue-green algae threat level at any given time.

Chatham Health District Director Russell Melmed told the *Rivereast* his agency has not yet heard any reports about health problems caused by the lake.

Low amounts of exposure to a blue-green algae bloom can cause allergic-type reactions, skin irritation or nausea and diarrhea in humans and animals, according to the Department of Public Health. The state public health department cautions that swallowing relatively large amounts of tainted water can cause liver damage and nervous system effects.

Melmed said the health district decided before the start of the blue-green algae season to continue using Northeast Laboratories for testing services despite lingering questions about the discrepancies in results.

"You want to remain consistent, because the public gets used to seeing those results and what the lake looks like relative to those results," he said.

The tests are conducted every Tuesday, with results typically coming in on Friday.

There have been no reports of ill human effects that would compel the health district to determine one lab is more accurate than the other, according to Melmed.

He cautioned that not all blue-green algae blooms are toxic. But the testing from both



Signs like this have been posted in multiple locations at Sears Park now that the Chatham Health District has issued another swim-at-your-own-risk advisory due to elevated levels of potentially toxic blue-green algae in the notoriously impaired lake.

companies reveals the number of cells – not whether they're harmful or not.

"So you could have a count of 300,000 [cells per milliliter], but if it's not producing toxins, it's not going to do any harm," he said.

He said testing for the toxins, including those known as microcystins, is more expensive than the cell counts currently paid for by the town.

"It's not been in the budget to do the microcystin testing," Melmed said.

Local officials have said each cell count and identification test by Northeast Laboratories costs between \$75-\$100, depending on whether it needs to be expedited.

Melmed said a quote from Northeast Laboratories' for microcystin testing came in at \$90 for a 7- to 10-day turnaround, or \$180 for a 2-

day turnaround. Same-day testing is \$270.

Melmed noted certain types of testing methods are difficult to interpret, which may lead to erroneous conclusions and the need for follow-up testing through different methods.

"So you can imagine going down the proverbial rabbit hole with testing for multiple toxins using multiple methods, racking up substantial bills with uncertain value," Melmed said in an email.

Parks and Recreation Director Jeremy Hall told the *Rivereast* he has not gotten any complaints of rashes or other health conditions that may have been caused by swimming in the lake so far this year. He confirmed he has heard such complaints in the past.

# New Principal Hired for East Hampton High School

by Elizabeth Regan

In a whirlwind hiring process, the East Hampton Board of Education has appointed a replacement for outgoing principal Frank Rizzuto.

Rizzuto is leaving to take the helm at South Windsor High School.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith said the board posted the job opening on July 3, the day after the South Windsor school board announced it was hiring Rizzuto. Just two weeks later, East Hampton school officials chose Canton High School assistant principal Eric Verner for the position.

Rizzuto will return to South Windsor High School as principal next month. That's where he ascended from teacher to associate principal over the course of almost two decades before coming to East Hampton in January 2017.

Rizzuto was selected as part of a months-long search following the sudden death of beloved principal John Fidler the previous July. Former director of curriculum and instruction Nancy Briere served as the interim principal.

This time around, Smith said he was eager to hire a permanent replacement before the start of the school year in order to streamline the process.

"The school has made some nice strides, and it's difficult to start the school year with an interim in place," he said, adding that the summertime is also when the most candidates are actively looking for work.

Rizzuto told the *Rivereast* this week that he enjoyed his time in East Hampton "a great deal."

"But South Windsor is the district of my professional roots where I served as a teacher, coach, and associate principal for 17 years. In many ways, I feel like I am returning to my professional home," Rizzuto said.

His last day is July 31. Verner will start work in East Hampton on August 12.

East Hampton High School's new principal was selected out of a field of 28 applicants, according to Smith.

A first round of interviews yielded three finalists, Smith said. They were then interviewed by a panel of five administrators, 14 teachers and two parents. The panel selected Verner to move onto a final interview with the school board, which voted unanimously to appoint him to the position on July 17.

Verner spent six years in the role of assistant principal at Canton High School. Smith said the high school in the small town northwest of Hartford is similar in population to East Hampton High School.

"It's a nice transition for him and it's a nice transition for us," Smith said.

The two worked together when Smith was the head of the Bolton school district, he said. That's when Verner served briefly as the interim Bolton High School principal while its principal was ill.

Verner told the *Rivereast* this week he's excited to be joining "a great team and great town."

"I just finished my 22nd year in education," Verner said. "I've always had a passion for helping other people learn. I felt like I never wanted to do anything but work in education. I loved every second of being a teacher."

He said he got on the administrative track back in Bolton after a retiring department head "saw some leadership abilities" in him and encouraged him to apply for her position. He received his certificate in educational leadership from Central Connecticut State University in 2012.

The role gave him the opportunity to look at education through a "different lens," which he said he enjoyed as much as being in the classroom.

But he never stopped thinking of himself as a teacher.

"Teaching is the most rewarding profession I think there is," he said.

Verner noted he's worked in small schools for the majority of his career. Now, he's looking forward to taking over at another small school in a community that supports education.



Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith, right, welcomed newly-appointed East Hampton High School Principal Eric Verner at a special meeting of the Board of Education last week. Verner currently serves as assistant principal at Canton High School. He will start in East Hampton on Aug. 12.

"The beauty of working in a small school is that you get to do a lot of things," he said, citing oversight of day-to-day operations and long-term planning that puts him in contact with all facets of the school community.

"I take pride in the fact that in Canton, I know every kid in my school, I know every teacher in my school, I know every adult in my school," he said.

Verner earned a bachelor's degree in history

and secondary education from Providence College in Rhode Island and a master's degree in history from Salem State College in Massachusetts. He got his start at Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School in Haverhill, Mass., as a social studies teacher.

A meet-and-greet with Verner will be held Thursday, Aug. 22, from 9-11:30 a.m. at the high school cafeteria.

# Officials Investigate Fire at Tiki Bar in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

State and local officials are investigating a fire that broke out at the popular tiki bar outside Angelico's Lake House.

There was nobody at the restaurant when the fire was called in at 2:44 on Wednesday morning, according to Fire Chief Greg Voelker. The flames burned the outdoor stage backdrop, some fencing and a portion of the tiki bar itself. The fire did not extend into the restaurant.

Fire Marshal Rich Klotzbier said Wednesday that investigators are "still digging" to uncover the cause of the fire.

Klotzbier said he could not divulge if arson was being investigated.

He said he called in the Office of the State Fire Marshal to assist in the investigation due to "the extent of the damage and so forth."

Voelker said it took crews about 20 minutes to put out the flames. They also evacuated homes close to the fire.

He said the restaurant sustained some exterior damage from the heat.

Owner Paul Angelico did not respond to multiple calls for comment.

An employee inside Angelico's, which was open Wednesday night, said the restaurant would not be making a statement.

The business is for sale. It was listed four days before the fire by Jen Swerdlick of Fine and Company, according to the real estate listing.

The 1.21-acre site and business assets are selling for \$1.6 million. It's being marketed as a possible bed and breakfast, watersport rental company, restaurant, banquet facility, or residential home with rental possibilities.

The East Hampton Police Department on

Wednesday afternoon posted a message on its Facebook page asking for footage from any residents in the area of the restaurant who had a surveillance camera pointed in the general direction of the business.

Police Chief Dennis Woessner told the *Rivereast* there is no criminal investigation being conducted.

"We are just trying to see if anyone had any video of the start of the fire and just trying to see if anyone saw anything," he said.

Klotzbier, when pressed about why he called in the state fire marshals to assist, said the investigators bring expertise the town doesn't have.

"I'm not an electrical expert; they are an electrical expert," he said.

East Hampton Building Official Glen LeConche on Thursday said the town cleared the restaurant to open its doors around 5 p.m. on the day of the fire. The outdoor tiki area remains closed.

He said he met with Angelico's electrician that afternoon to ensure all electrical elements were "properly disconnected" from the main building. Temporary fencing was also installed at the patio's two exterior exits.

LeConche said he did not find code violations but did see some outdoor electrical issues that needed to be corrected before giving the go-ahead to open the interior part of the restaurant.

He called the issues "nothing major," describing them as the kind of things that can develop over time.

The patio area opened in May 2006, according to the land use department.



A fire at the popular tiki bar at Angelico's Lake House is under investigation. The flames damaged the outdoor stage backdrop, some fencing and one side of the tiki bar itself.

LeConche said opening the patio area again would ultimately require a rebuilding plan to secure a new permit. How long it takes to get a permit in town is largely dependent on the completeness of the information provided by the applicant, according to LeConche.

But he added the process would move quickly once all the necessary information was provided.

"Something like that, we're really sensitive to. We'd put it right to the front of the pile," he said.

# YPCCA Heads *Into the Woods* This Weekend in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

The 84 members of the East Hampton-based Young People's Center for Creative Arts summer camp will be going *Into the Woods* for this year's musical performance.

The production runs through Sunday at East Hampton High School.

The youth theater group is in its 37th year, according to director Rachel Mansfield. She said the cast, which is older and more experienced than it's been in recent years, is "up for the challenge" when it comes to the musically demanding and darkly comic show.

The Tony award-winning musical by James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim revisits several well-known fairy tales – Little Red Riding Hood, Cinderella, Jack and the Beanstalk and Rapunzel – to find out what happens beyond 'happily ever after.'

Counselor Shaina Dunn, a 2018 graduate of East Hampton High School, described the music as "incredible."

"When they put it together, it's like a wall of sound. And it's so awesome. My favorite thing when I watch a production is getting that chill that runs down my spine," Dunn said.

Dunn will be entering her sophomore year at Dean College in Franklin, Mass. in the fall. The musical theater major said college courses in acting and tech production have helped her develop her own workshops that she teaches to campers.

She said one of the key messages she wants to get across to students is that every character is important to the story. The idea was reinforced in this year's show with the addition of named ensemble characters not typically included in the production, such as Rumpelstiltskin and Peter Pan.

"There's a lot of old fairy tale characters that we have made ensemble members, instead of making everyone a random villager," Dunn said. "That was really nice, that each kid could have their own character and have their own story behind what they're doing."

East Hampton High School rising senior Grace Michalowski said the show is primarily sung, with very few scenes that rely on spoken dialogue only. The number of songs brings with it many opportunities for movement on the stage, according to Michalowski.

"One of the coolest songs is called 'Your Fault,' and it's everyone yelling at each other. They're crossing and crossing back and in your face and out of your face, and it makes the stage really cool," she said.

East Hampton High School rising junior Brendan Owen plays Rapunzel's prince. The character decides in Act Two that he's actually interested in Snow White.

He said his sister, Brynn, who earned a degree in musical theater from Ryder University

in New Jersey and is now pursuing a theater career in New York City, has performed two times in *Into the Woods*.

"I've seen it twice. I love it. It's one of my favorite shows. The music is so fun; the dancing is awesome. There's always a funny part," he said.

Members of the cast come from numerous towns from East Hampton to West Hartford, according to Mansfield. The group also includes a contingent of students from Deep River who are participating in the summer camp for the first time.

Valley Regional High School junior Lukas Kauffman, of Deep River, said he found out about the summer camp through a friend who's been involved in two previous productions.

"I thought it looked like a really fun program," he said.

His friends Noa Kleinberg and Mia Stack, both sophomores from Deep River, agreed that the camp's format – which combines morning workshops with afternoon show rehearsals – keeps things interesting all day long.

"There's always something to do," Stack said.

Wide-ranging workshop topics include filmmaking, stop-motion animation and stage combat.

The trio said the musical is "coming to-

gether" despite the challenging score.

"Sondheim, his songs and lyrics are not very easy for everyone," Kleinberg said. "So to have 84 people singing those lyrics at the same time can be a challenge."

Mansfield acknowledged the show is much more difficult than last year's production of *Footloose*. She said the talented cast has "definitely risen to the occasion."

She described the students as a "very kind" group.

"They're wonderful. We compliment them every day because they're just so supportive of each other," she said.

It's a group that's taken to heart the show's message, according to Mansfield.

"You have to have a kindness and a caring and an empathy for people around you, because you never know what somebody else is going through," she said. "And just because your wishes are granted, doesn't mean life is going to be perfect."

\* \* \*

*Into the Woods*, which began its four-day run at East Hampton High School on Thursday, will continue Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for children and seniors. They can be ordered online at [ypcca.org](http://ypcca.org) and will also be available at the door.

## Marlborough Democrats, Republicans Prepare Candidate Slates

by Sloan Brewster

Marlborough's Democratic and Republican town committees are getting ready for November elections by endorsing their respective slates of candidates.

On Tuesday, Republicans officially endorsed a slate of candidates for the 2019 municipal election, said Town Committee Chairman Ken Hjulstrom.

"I was impressed by the large turnout at our Republican Caucus on Monday," he said. "Eighty-six voters turned out, which demonstrates a high level of enthusiasm for our candidates"

They endorsed Greg Lowrey to run for first selectman, Hjulstrom said.

With Lowrey, Republicans endorsed Joe Asklar to run for selectman, according to the sheet of endorsed candidates Hjulstrom provided the *Rivereast*.

Hjulstrom said he trusts that Lowrey and Asklar will work cooperatively with the various boards and commissions, "especially in regards to the local Board of Education," which, he said, has been lacking in the last four years under the current Democrat-controlled Board of Selectmen.

"And while Greg and Joe might be newcomers to Marlborough's political scene, they both have a long history of selfless dedication and service to our community," Hjulstrom said.

There was also one challenged position at

the caucus, Hjulstrom said. Cliff Denniss, currently a member of the Board of Selectmen, put in a challenge to seek a nomination for re-election, but the caucus voted 72 for Asklar and 14 for Denniss.

"So Joe Asklar won the selectman candidate position on the ballot," Hjulstrom said.

Republicans also endorsed Hjulstrom, a current member of the Board of Finance to run for another term on the board, along with Liz Gorgoglione, who is also currently seated on the board.

For the Planning Commission, they endorsed Mark Stankiewicz and Brett Hallden, according to the sheet. For Planning Alternates, they endorsed Sue Rapelye and Carl Carlson, both of whom are placeholders, according to Hjulstrom, meaning they were endorsed but the expectation is their names will be replaced by other candidates before the election.

For the Zoning Commission, they endorsed Kevin Asklar.

For Zoning Board of Appeals, they endorsed Joe Weber and Chris Lawson. For Zoning Board of Appeals, they endorsed Michele Kacy and for Zoning Alternate, Jack Murray is the endorsed candidate, but, according to Hjulstrom, is also a placeholder.

For Marlborough Board of Education, Republicans endorsed Ruth Kelly, Louise Concodello and Patrick Pabouet.

For RHAM Board of Education, they endorsed current members Sue Rapelye and Scott Fleehar, according to the sheet.

For treasurer, they endorsed Mike O'Neil; for tax collector, they endorsed Barbara Murray; and for town clerk, they endorsed Lauren Griffin.

"A lot of the candidates are incumbents they have already proven themselves," Hjulstrom said. "They're very knowledgeable and they have the experience that comes with being an incumbent."

\* \* \*

On Tuesday, Marlborough Democrats endorsed their slate of candidates.

First Selectman Amy Traversa is seeking re-election, with selectman Evelyn Godbout also seeking another term.

During her four-year run as first selectman, Traversa said she has "delivered on every promise I made" and has "never worked harder" in her life. She added that she has had the help of a "great team of people" and is grateful for the accomplishments. She pointed to \$20 million in private development that she said has taken place in the town center since she took office.

Another accomplishment she pointed to was that \$1.3 million was put back in the undesignated "rainy day" fund under her leadership.

Traversa also said long-overdue road, bridge,

paving and facilities projects have been fixed while significantly lowering the town's debt burden.

"I am honored to be endorsed for re-election as Marlborough's First Selectman," Traversa said. "Despite all that's been accomplished already, there is still more to do, and we're already moving in the right direction."

Godbout echoed Traversa's sentiments.

"Under Amy's and my leadership, the town of Marlborough has made a complete turnaround in the last four years," she said. "We look forward to continuing to attract new development and improving the character of the town."

According to the press release, additional Democratic endorsements include Deborah Bourbeau, unaffiliated, for Board of Finance; Michelle Thomas for Board of Education; Nancy Visco for RHAM Board of Education; Michael O'Neil for treasurer; Lisa Butterfield for tax collector; and Republican Lauren Griffin for town clerk. It was unknown at press time whether any of the above names are placeholders.

"The [Democratic Town Committee] works to engage the people of Marlborough in actions that promote a well-managed, vibrant and caring community," Dianne Greco, chair of the committee, said.

# 'Inspirations by Robin' Bids Farewell in Marlborough

by Sloan Brewster

On Tuesday, Robin Ransom, who opened Inspirations by Robin in 1995, shared memories with clients and not a few tears ahead of plans to shutter the business forever tomorrow.

Closing is bittersweet, she said Tuesday, talking to the *Rivereast* while working on a couple hairdos.

Ransom, who grew up in town, has been cutting hair locally for 42 years. A graduate of RHAM High School, she decided to go into hairdressing after getting her hair done for the senior prom and found her hairdresser unwilling to pay attention to what she wanted.

"She had her own idea," Ransom said of her hairdresser. "I don't do that with my clients. I want them to feel comfortable, feel happy with their hair."

Ransom said she loves the community and that the people have always been very supportive, adding, "And, I love my clientele."

Over the years, she said she has mostly worked alone, with clients coming back for years and years. Mothers have brought their children in while they had their hair done and the kids happily sat in front of the television to watch Disney movies and pass the time.

Years later, those same children took places in her chair.

"I mean, customers have come in and they would put a blanket in and have a picnic," Ransom said. "I have this one little girl, if they go to the bank she has to come in and give me a hug; if they go to Big Y, she has to come in."

"My kids used to come in here. Tim was

three," chimed in Lisa Francis.

A client of Ransom's for more than 30 years, Francis, who now lives in Arizona, was back in Connecticut for a wedding this week and dropped by to visit Ransom.

Ransom said she also did Francis' mother's hair.

"I do generations," she said.

While the two women reminisced, Ransom worked on Erin Sodhi's hair. The Marlborough resident has been having her hair done by Ransom for eight years. On Tuesday, she was getting a cut and highlight.

"I have just always felt welcomed in here and she just always does a great job," Sodhi said.

She said she did not know where she would go to get her hair done in Ransom's absence.

After Sodhi's hair was finished, Brendan Cyr hopped into the chair. The 18-year old recalled coming to the salon as a child and watching videos. When his dad told him Ransom was closing the doors of the salon, he decided to come get his hair cut one last time.

"My grandma likes me to get my haircut at her friend's house, but I told my dad that I wanted Robin to give me my last haircut before I start college," he said.

"There you go handsome," Ransom said when she completed his cut.

When she took his payment, tears were in her eyes.

According to Francis, Ransom knows everyone and is "the heart of the town."

"Without Robin, there wouldn't be a heart,"

she said.

Ransom said she has heard as much from other clients and that one said there would be "a hole in the heart of Marlborough" when the salon closed.

She recalled her wedding day on October 10, 2010 at 10 a.m. When the horse-drawn carriage showed up to get her, driver John Allegra, of Allegra Farm in East Haddam, told her to hurry because there was going to be a parade.

Ransom, who was marrying then-Marlborough Police Officer Randy Ransom, insisted he was wrong.

"My husband's the only cop in town," she told him. "I would know if there was a parade."

Nevertheless, Allegra insisted that she hustle.

When the carriage reached Park Road, Ransom realized she was the parade, and her clients had lined the road to see her pass.

"Everybody talked to everybody; they had groups. Little groups were running up to me with flowers," she said. "I was like, 'Oh my God, this is probably how Princess Diana felt.'"

Ransom said she is retiring and will spend time with her husband, who retired a few years ago.

"It's time to spend time together, to go for the next chapter," she said. "[I'll] travel, just enjoy my home because I worked between 60 and 80 hours a week so I'm never really in my home. We love our home and, like people say, life is too short."

Ransom will have a closing reception 11 a.m.-5 p.m. on Saturday.



**Robin Ransom, owner of Inspirations by Robin, which is closing tomorrow, hugs Lisa Francis, who was a client of hers for more than 30 years.**

## East Hampton Police News

7/15: Derik Waterman, 37, of 206 Wooster St., New Haven was arrested and charged with two counts of possession of a controlled substance (methamphetamine and narcotics), possession with intent to sell, failure to keep drugs in original container, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, East Hampton Police said.

Also, from July 8-14, officers responded to nine medical calls, six motor vehicle accidents and seven alarms, police said, and made 29 traffic stops.

## Hebron Police News

7/17: Anthony Joseph Robinson, 23, of 16 Boston Hill Rd., Andover, was arrested and charged with DUI and unsafe backing, police said.

7/21: Kimberly Lynn Kolar, 46, of 44 Country Ln., was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive in the proper lane, police said.

## Andover Man Arrested Twice in One Week

by Elizabeth Regan

An Andover man was arrested by state troopers from the Colchester barracks twice in less than a week.

Anthony Joseph Robinson, 23, of 16 Boston Hill Rd., was first arrested July 17 and charged with DUI and unsafe backing. Police said Robinson was experiencing car problems on Wall Street in Hebron when he backed off the road. He subsequently failed a field sobriety test.

Robinson was arrested again on July 21 and charged with evading responsibility and turning without signaling after he allegedly left

the scene of a single-vehicle crash, according to police.

Police said they responded to a report of a car accident on Shoddy Mill Road, where they found a 2007 Honda Civic had struck a mailbox and then went into the woods. The driver headed south on foot.

No injuries were reported at the scene, police said.

A canvas of the woods didn't yield any results, police said; Robinson was ultimately arrested about an hour later at his house.

## Driver Crashes, Flees Scene in Colchester

by Elizabeth Regan

An unknown driver left behind a passenger after fleeing a July 21 crash on Route 2 in Colchester, according to state police.

The 2017 Buick Encore was heading west at about 8:27 a.m. in the vicinity of exit 17 when the left side of the car struck about 50 feet of guardrail, according to the accident report. The car was inoperable.

There were no apparent injuries, police said.

Police said passenger Nikolis Logan Mckinney, 26, of North Franklin, told them the driver left the scene. Mckinney was not able to name the driver of the car.

The accident report said the car was owned by Carmella Roberts, of Groton. Roberts also did not know the identity of the driver, according to police.

The driver of the car was found at fault for the crash, police said.

## Obituaries

### Manchester

#### Martha Anna Rezman

Martha Anna Rezman, wife of the late Robert Rezman, went home to Jesus on Tuesday, July 16.

Martha was born in Germany on September 19, 1932. Sadly, both of her parents died in 1943 and she and her older brother, Heinze, and older sister, Irmgard, went to live with their aunt until they were old enough to live on their own. At age 13, Martha went to live with a family and worked on their farm.

She met Robert and, when they were still engaged, they moved to America with his family in December of 1956 and were married in February of 1957. They settled in Manchester, where Robert had relatives.

Martha had been a member of the Church of the Assumption in Manchester for four decades. She worked at Manchester Memorial Hospital for many, many years. She was a longtime member of the Hartford Saengerbund in Newington and was a member of the choir there. Her time growing up on a farm had developed in her a love of the land and, most of the time, she could be found working in her large vegetable garden and several flower gardens. But her greatest love was being a mom to her five children: Bob, Monica, Aggie (husband Stan), Irene (partner Todd), and Angie (husband Glenn); her six grandchildren: Jillian, Dominique, Sam, Vinny, Simon and Phoebe; and her newest love: one-year-old great-grandson, Barrett. To them she is "Oma."

Martha was loved by all, but especially her family, for her kindness, gentleness, generosity and rare combination of strength and humility. She taught by example and lived a life that exemplified the life of her Lord, Jesus. There are no words to express how much she will be missed.

Family and friends called Monday, July 22, at the John F. Tierney Funeral Home, 219 West Center Street, Manchester. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated that day at Church of the Assumption, 27 Adams St., South Manchester, followed by burial in St. James Cemetery.

For online condolences, visit [tierneyfuneralhome.com](http://tierneyfuneralhome.com).

### East Hampton

#### Charles A. Lyman

Charles Albert Lyman, 88, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Beverly (Nichols) Lyman of 60 years, passed away Saturday, July 20, surrounded by his family, at Wadsworth Glen. Born in Middletown, he was the son of the late Howard R. Lyman and Rachel (Brock) Lyman.

Charles was a graduate of Woodrow Wilson High School. He served two years in the United States Army from 1952-1954 in the medical field and then graduated from UConn in 1958. Charles worked for Aetna Life and Casualty for 39 years.

Charles was a member of the St. Alban's Lodge of Guilford for 54 years. Also, he was a lifelong member of Pine Street Gospel Chapel in Middletown. Charles was an avid fisherman, hunter, reader and collector of decoys. He enjoyed spending time with his family and was a proud father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Along with his wife, Charles is survived by three daughters, Lauralee Hall and her husband, Gary, Melody Philhower and her husband, Mark, and Allison Anderson and her husband, Michael, all of East Hampton; seven grandchildren, Jennifer Hall Dupre (David), Gary Hall, Steven Hall (Erin), Mark Philhower II (Andrea), Michael Philhower, Melissa Anderson (Geoff) and Makenzie Anderson; and eight great-grandchildren, Brylee, Brayden, Matthew, Sophia, Samuel, Jamison, Colton and Scarlett.

Besides his parents, Charles was predeceased by his brother, Howard Lyman, and a sister, Harriet June Lyman.

There will be no calling hours and a private burial will be held at the convenience of the family. To share memories or send condolences to the family, visit [doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://doolittlefuneralservice.com).



### East Hampton

#### Joanne Hill Morariu

Joanne Hill Morariu, 62, of East Hampton, passed away Wednesday, July 10, at Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by her family whom she loved so much. Joanne was born in Meriden but grew up in Portland.

She enjoyed caring for children and family, cooking, camping, and quilting. Joanne received her degree in graphic design from Tuxis Community College and worked for several printing companies during her career. Joanne met her husband, Thomas, in 1975 and they married in 1984. Her greatest creations are her two daughters Laura and Megan. To stay home and care for them Joanne became a licensed day care provider and started Joanne's Day Care, where for several years she cared for children in town.

Joanne's illness was discovered in 2003 and caused her to rely on her family for care. Throughout her many years of treatment at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, Joanne bravely endured with a positive outlook, drawing from others the love she so freely gave in her life. She was incredibly strong and remained her sweet self throughout her life.

Joanne is survived by her husband Thomas Morariu of East Hampton; daughters Laura Crowell and her husband Robert Crowell of Portland and Megan Morariu of Moodus; mother, Ada Hill of Middletown; and brothers Charles Hill and family of Washington, Thomas Hill and family of Virginia, David Hill and wife of Hawaii.

Joanne is predeceased by her father Earl Hill and sister Susan Hill.

The family would like to thank the doctors and nurses of Middlesex Hospital, Hartford Hospital, and Columbian Presbyterian Hospital.

Donations can be made to The Brain Aneurysm Foundation in honor of Joanne.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, Aug. 17, at 11 a.m., at East Hampton Congregational Church, 59 Main St., East Hampton.



### Hebron

#### Lynn Ann Breglio

Lynn Ann Breglio, 65, of Hebron, passed away surrounded by family Friday, July 12. Lynn was born Dec. 29, 1953, in Biddeford, Maine, to Raymond Corbeil Sr. and Lillian (Strickland) Corbeil.

She is survived by her beloved husband of 41 years, Peter Michael Breglio, and their children, Amy Lynn Breglio and husband Dave Yang of Brooklyn, N.Y.; Andrew Michael Breglio and wife Kimberly Frances Breglio of Durham, N.C.; and Matthew Daniel Breglio of New York, N.Y.; and her grandson, Thomas Owen Breglio, who was the light of her life. She is also survived by her mother, Lillian Corbeil of South Windsor, and her brother, Raymond Corbeil Jr. of Stafford Springs.

Visitation hours and a memorial service will be held from noon-2:30 p.m. Sunday, July 28, at Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester.



### From the Editor's Desk

## Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

As you may have seen in last week's *Rivereast*, the annual Marlborough Day is taking this year off. It's slated to return next June – with the event's new organizers promising a bigger and better Marlborough Day.

Forgive me for being skeptical.

Look, I know Marlborough Day isn't exactly a generations-long tradition. But this annual celebration of all things Marlborough, held the last weekend in August, is charming. There are always lots of local businesses, politicians and organizations on hand – with tons of activities for the kiddies. It's not exactly the Hebron Harvest Fair, but it traditionally draws a good crowd and provides a nice reason for folks to get together perhaps one last time before the school year starts.

The event has traditionally been put on by the Marlborough Business Association. But the MBA is no more; you may recall that earlier this year it was absorbed by the CT River Valley Chamber of Commerce – so the Chamber took over the planning of Marlborough Day.

Initially, things looked like they would continue very much the same as far as Marlborough Day was concerned. But the Chamber recently decided to put the event on hold until next June, in the hopes that it could pull in more vendors, more food trucks, and more bands. The Chamber wants to expand the event, make it bigger.

Which is all well and good. I just hope they don't ruin it.

I covered Glastonbury for three years in the mid-2000s, and one of the annual crown jewels of the town was the Apple Festival. The CT River Valley Chamber of Commerce, known in those days as simply the Glastonbury Chamber of Commerce, ran the festival, and I was a witness as the event grew more and more commercial each year. The first year I covered the festival also happened to be the first year the Chamber charged admission to the event, which sparked some complaints.

Longtime Glastonburians would lament to me about what the festival used to be, before the Chamber took it over. The founders of the festival, the Federated Woman's Club, took the change particularly hard. Each year, members of the club would express to me their sadness that what started as a quaint one-day festival celebrating the agrarian roots of Glastonbury had become this big, sprawling weekend event with vendors galore, non-stop live bands, rides, and more.

In the years since I've stopped covering Glastonbury, the event has grown even further, expanding from two days to three, and even adding a beer garden. Sure, the event has been a success – in 2017, it drew a record 23,000 attendees, according to the *Hartford Courant* – but at what cost? From talking to

people you get the sense the current incarnation of the festival bears only the slightest of resemblances to how it looked at its mid-1970s origins. And that's a shame.

I'd hate to see the same fate befall Marlborough Day. Change can be a good thing, and there's always room for improvement, so I'm not shooting down this plan right out of the gate. But, in its quest to bring us a new and improved Marlborough Day, I hope the Chamber doesn't forget what gave it its charm in the first place.

\* \* \*

Sloan Brewster has a preview in this week's paper of the latest AHM Summer Youth Theater production, which is being performed at RHAM High School tonight and tomorrow night. This year, AHM is putting on one of my favorite musicals – the '80s hit *Little Shop of Horrors*.

Based on the 1960 movie of the same name, the musical made its Off-Broadway debut in 1982, and was later adapted into a movie in 1986. It was through the movie that I fell in love with *Little Shop*, which features delightful, toe-tapping songs by Alan Menken and the late Howard Ashman – the team that would go on to provide the music and lyrics to the Disney favorites *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin* from 1989-92.

I own the soundtrack albums of both the 1982 production and the 1986 movie. I have the movie on Blu-Ray (which features the original ending, which was infamously scrapped in favor of a new, happier one before the film was released). So, needless to say, I know the songs pretty well.

Therefore, I was pretty surprised when Sloan told me the part of the evil talking plant Audrey II is going to be voiced by Danielle Golden in the AHM production. I'm not opposed to outside-the-box casting, but I just couldn't imagine the plant being voiced by anything but a tough-sounding guy. AHM traditionally has put on some pretty top-notch productions, though, so I remained optimistic it would work.

And boy does it work. Sloan attended a rehearsal of the musical earlier this week, and sent me video of Danielle singing a number from the musical, in character as Audrey II. Danielle did a terrific job, as you can see in the video of the performance, which is currently up on the *Rivereast's* Facebook page.

So I have no doubt that those who go to see *Little Shop* tonight or tomorrow will be entertained – and perhaps enlightened as well. I admit that, as someone who fancies himself somewhat of a progressive, I'm a little embarrassed that I didn't think a female could do the Audrey II role justice. I'm happy to report I was wrong.

\* \* \*

See you next week.