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Anthony and Megan Todt and their three children, Alek, Tyler and Zoe, are seen here in an undated family photo. Megan and the three children, along with the family dog, were found dead in their Florida home earlier this week. Anthony Todt confessed Wednesday to killing them all.

Colchester Man Confesses to Killing Family

by Karla Santos

On paper, they seemed like the picture-perfect family: Anthony and Megan Todt, their three children, and the adorable family pooch Breezy.

But a darkness lurked behind that sunny façade, and this week Anthony Todt – who it was revealed Wednesday has been the subject of a federal investigation for alleged insurance fraud – confessed to killing his wife and children, and the family dog, in their Florida condominium.

The bodies of Megan, 42; Alek, 13; Tyler, 11; Zoe, 4; and the family dog Breezy were discovered Monday when Osceola County sheriff's deputies were serving a federal arrest warrant on Anthony Todt. Police as of press time Thursday had yet to release a cause of death, but said they believed the killings took place near the end of December – meaning Todt had been living with the bodies for weeks.

Todt was immediately detained Monday and on Wednesday Osceola County Sheriff Russell Gibson said Todt confessed to having killed his family. No motive for the killings was given. Todt was charged with four counts of homicide and one count of animal cruelty.

But what became clear Wednesday was why there was a federal arrest warrant on Todt to begin with. That's when the 36-page warrant was unsealed, revealing Todt, a Colchester physical therapist, is accused of fraudulently billing insurance companies thousands of dollars for services not rendered.

The warrant alleges that Todt committed these fraudulent charges from 2015 until 2019 in cases involving several patients, including children.

Todt is the owner of Family Physical Therapy,

a business that has two locations in Colchester, at 7 Park Ave., Suite 4, and at 744 Middletown Rd. Both businesses were dark this week, and state records reveal his physical therapy license expired in September 2019. The license for his wife, who was also a physical therapist, was set to expire Jan. 31.

According to the warrant written by Jeffrey W. Anderson, special agent with the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, the cases involved patients who were no longer receiving physical therapy at all or whose insurance companies were billed for appointments that never happened.

In one case, according to the warrant, Medicaid was billed more than \$17,000 for physical therapy appointments in Connecticut for a child that had moved to North Carolina. In another case, Todt and Family Physical Therapy billed Medicaid for services for 16 children who allegedly had nine 15-minute sessions each in a single day.

"The total time for the services purportedly provided to the children totals is approximately 36 hours of physical therapy during that one day," the document reads.

In another case, insurance companies paid Todt and Family Physical Therapy \$20,833 for 148 Saturday appointments for 33 patients, when there were no patients scheduled on the business's books.

* * *

Todt was taken to an Osceola County jail Wednesday afternoon after been released from the hospital. Todt was at the hospital as a precautionary measure because he told police he

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Smith Tops DeCaprio for State Rep Seat

by Karla Santos

The numbers were fairly close Tuesday across the four towns that compose the 48th Assembly District, but in the end the result was clear: Colchester Democrat Brian Smith is the new state representative.

Smith will fill the seat of the late Democrat Linda Orange, the longtime state representative who passed away in November. Smith will fill out the rest of Orange's term, which runs through November 2020.

Smith received a total of 2,450 votes from the four towns, besting Republican Mark DeCaprio of Lebanon, who collected 2,237 votes. The district covers most of Colchester, and portions of Lebanon, Mansfield and Windham.

Smith topped DeCaprio by a 1,559-1,433 tally in Colchester.

In Windham, Smith collected 108 votes to DeCaprio's 25 votes. Smith also won in Mansfield, 352-137. Turnout there was 27%, or 489 of 1,789 qualified voters.

The only town DeCaprio won was Lebanon. He earned 642 votes there compared to 431 for Smith.

Smith said he feels grateful but a little overwhelmed by winning.

"I'm very grateful to the voters and excited to start working for them," Smith said.

He said that while he was hopeful he would be victorious, he tried not to have any expectations.

"I was just trying to get out there and meet as many people as I could and, you know, put it in their hands," he added.

Smith said he is hoping that he'll be able to build relationships on both sides of the aisle and "be the same kind of voice for the district that Linda was; she was a great friend of mine."

Smith said he is looking to serve on some of the committees that she was on. The deputy speaker of the House, Orange served on the Public Safety and Security Committee, the General Law Committee and the Joint Committee on Legislative Management.

"We'll have to wait and see what's available and where I have opportunities," Smith said.

Smith said many people helped his campaign be successful.

"I'm very, very thankful for all the people that worked to help my campaign succeed," Smith said. "There were many, many people who worked very, very long hours. I'm grateful to them and again I'm very grateful to the voters for putting their confidence in me."

Tuesday night, Smith and supporters had "sort of a watch party" and as results came in they became very excited, Smith said. He said they "had a nice celebration" at Fresca in Colchester.

DeCaprio on Wednesday issued a statement on Facebook thanking his supporters and voters.

"I want to thank all of my supporters here on Facebook who followed my campaign closely," DeCaprio said. "Thank you to all of the voters in the 48th District who had the confidence in me to cast your vote for me in this race. I spoke with my opponent this morning, conceded the race and I congratulated him on his win. This race was exciting and competitive and it has been quite a journey for me. I couldn't do it without all of your enthusiasm and support. Thank you."



Brian Smith



The 744 Middletown Rd. location of Anthony Todt's Family Physical Therapy business was dark this week.

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took some dosage of Benadryl and made comments of potentially harming himself.

According to Gibson, the cause of death is still to be determined. He said the investigation shows how the family died, but will not yet release that information.

Gibson said that, on Dec. 29, his office received a request by a family member of Todt to check the wellbeing of the Todt family, because she had been told that they all had the flu and she had not heard from them in two days.

"Deputies did respond to the home, checked the home and the area but they were not successful in their attempts to contact anyone inside the home and did not observe anything suspicious," Gibson said.

In addition, on Jan. 9, the sheriff's office was contacted by federal agents concerning the investigation they were conducting involving Todt.

"Deputies from that point made several attempts to make contact with Anthony and the family over this past weekend with negative results," Gibson added.

Gibson said that Jan. 9, when officers were checking on the home, they checked with neighbors and there was nothing suspicious noted by neighbors either.

In addition, the family was known to travel and it wasn't uncommon for them to be away from home.

Todt traveled frequently to his business in Colchester. Police didn't attempt to kick the home's door during the initial investigation because there were no signs of suspicious activity and they had to respect the family's privacy, Gibson said.

Gibson said that during the press conference, which occurred 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, Todt was still talking to detectives in the violent crimes unit before he was transported to the Osceola county jail.

"As sheriff of Osceola County, it brings me sadness to report such a tragedy and we grieve along with the victims' family and friends along with the community for this tragic loss of innocent lives," Gibson said. "Myself I cannot

understand what would cause a person to commit such evil and horrendous acts."

And while the reason remains unclear as of press time, it appears financial problems had been plaguing the family recently.

According to Florida court records, the family received an eviction notice on Dec. 22 from their home in Celebration.

The Complaint for Residential Tenant Eviction and Breach of Lease Agreement said the Todts failed to pay the monthly rent in the amount of \$4,921, which was due on Dec. 1, 2019.

Other records indicate that the family also owned another property in Florida.

In addition, the arrest warrant unsealed Wednesday showed that Todt was in the process of being evicted from his business' 744 Middletown Rd. location. According to the warrant, Todt was \$6,000 behind in rent at that location.

At the local level, the Colchester community is also making efforts to help those affected by the tragedy.

"All of us at Colchester Public Schools are deeply saddened by the news out of Celebration, Florida regarding the Colchester family," Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Burt said in a statement on Tuesday. "As a community, we are committed to coming together to support students who may be emotionally impacted by this news. All of our crisis teams met early this morning and counselors are available in every school. If you have concern for your student, please contact the school for support."

Colchester First Selectman Mary Bylone also issued a statement Monday in regards to the case.

"I can tell you the community is devastated by the reports from Florida and we are working to help them through this difficult time," Bylone wrote on Facebook. "Our focus is around health and healing. We stand together as a strong community of caring individuals focused on compassion and support."

Reporter Sloan Brewster contributed to this story.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

First off, my heart goes out to the friends and extended family of former Colchester resident Megan Todt and her three young children. As has been all over the news – including the cover of this week's *Rivereast* – the bodies of Megan and the children were discovered in their Florida home Monday.

Wednesday, it was revealed Megan's husband and the children's father, Anthony Todt, confessed to killing the four, along with the family dog.

As I write this Wednesday evening, there are still more questions than answers – such as what Anthony's motive was and even how the four were killed. It's been well-reported this week Anthony was having money problems. But there has to be more to it than that.

Or maybe there's not. One of the few things that seem clear at this point is something must've snapped within Anthony to make him do such a heinous thing. And not only did he kill them, but police believe he did so in late December – meaning he was living with the dead bodies for two weeks, maybe even longer. It just baffles the mind.

I know more details will emerge in coming days – but the main thing is this is an absolute tragedy. Four lives have been lost – including those of three young children who had their whole lives in front of them. Whatever the reason, it can't change the horror of what has happened.

* * *

A matter of far, far less significance is what's going on right now in the world of baseball – but it sure is fascinating. As many of you know, the Houston Astros were found to have cheated their way to their championship in 2017. Through an elaborate combination of cell phone cameras and banging on trash cans, the Astros created a sign-stealing system that allowed batters to know what pitches were coming up. They employed the system throughout the regular season and all the way through the playoffs and World Series.

Sign stealing has long been part of the game. But there had never, ever been anything quite so blatant before. Nor had it been so definitively linked to a World Series-winning team. It's not overstating things to say this cheapens Houston's entire championship. It's tough to strip them of the championship altogether, as it frankly opens up a big can of worms; I mean, how many of those winning Steroid Era teams of the '90s and '00s were aided by folks who were juiced up at the plate

and on the mound?

So no, you can't strip the Astros of their championship. Nor can MLB do anything to punish the players; apparently, it granted the players immunity if they would fess up to what happened. Once granted immunity, the players sang like canaries, and indicated they were incredibly guilty – but hey, there was immunity, so what could you do?

So, MLB decided to suspend the Astros' manager and general manager for the entire 2020 season – in addition to fining the team \$5 million and making them forfeit their top two draft picks in both 2020 and 2021.

After the decision came down, Houston ownership made the somewhat surprising decision to fire the manager and GM altogether. The very next day, the Red Sox did the same with their own manager, Alex Cora; not only was Cora a ringleader of the 2017 sign-stealing when he was an Astros coach, MLB is also investigating the 2018 Red Sox for similar cheating that allegedly went down there.

The fallout from this might not be over. As of Wednesday night, the Mets are undecided as to what to do with Carlos Beltran, whom they recently hired to manage the team. Beltran was a player on the 2017 Astros, and was found through the investigation to also be one of the chief ringleaders of the cheating.

And who knows if these players can ever be trusted again? It's understood that they're cheaters – and fans and baseball writers in particular have a history of not looking too kindly to cheaters. Again, I reference the Steroid Era. Guys like Marc McGuire, Sammy Sosa, Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens were beloved by fans in the '90s and early '00s – and destined for the Hall of Fame. Now? They're basically pariahs – and don't stand a chance of seeing Cooperstown unless they buy a ticket.

And then there are those teams who have probably been getting away with something similar to what the Astros and Red Sox did. I wouldn't be surprised if there were many teams doing things like this. How will these teams be affected? Will every win, from here on out, be looked on with a suspect eye?

I hope not. Baseball has withstood scandals before – and this is definitely one of the game's all-time scandals. I'm hoping the game can bounce back. But, make no doubt about it, this is an ugly situation.

* * *

See you next week.

East Hampton Superintendent Requests 3.75% Budget Increase

by Jack Lakowsky

East Hampton Schools Superintendent Paul Smith on Monday proposed a budget increase of 3.75% for the 2020-21 year to the Board of Education and community members.

According to documentation supplied by Smith, the total requested increase is \$1,169,107.

The document given by Smith reads that, due to two consecutive years of a less than 2% increase, requesting a lower percentage would be impossible. The document also reads that this year's budget increase is meant to cover, within reason, most contractual obligations and fixed costs, as required by the Town Council's Budget Policy.

The document reads that current contractual obligations total \$1,344,290.

"We need 3.75 [percent]," Smith said at the meeting. "This is not me being optimistic. There is nothing left to cut."

Smith's figure is presented under fixed costs. Including fixed costs would have actually required an increase of 4.31%, a figure Smith managed to avoid requesting with strategic realignment of positions, transfer of staff and a reprioritization of accounts throughout the budget.

In a follow-up interview held after the meeting, Smith stressed the importance of working to reassign and refill the 8 teaching positions that have been lost over the course of the past two years.

Smith named two positions he thinks should be focused on this year – a grade four classroom section and a world language teacher for sixth graders.

He said that he would work to help prevent any budget increases that would result from these additional positions through shifting of staff and tracking anticipated retirements.

Smith said that adding these positions would be of great benefit to students. He explained the benefits of smaller class sizes, especially for young learners.

"We're talking about a size of about 18 to 22 students," Smith said. "With anything larger, we're not giving teachers time to accommodate for different learning speeds."

Smith added that small classes allow for teachers to gain close knowledge of each student's emotional and academic needs.

"I don't want to cheat our early learners,"

Smith said. "To them, everything is new. Higher-impact learning is achieved for them through smaller class sizes."

Smith said that middle and high school learning is more dependent on available tools and programs. However, he added that funds for updated equipment should not be directed exclusively into the middle and high schools. Smith believes that familiarizing young learners with fundamental concepts at an elementary level through the use of math manipulatives and differentiated materials better prepares them for more challenging and specialized classes and electives.

Fostering more science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) opportunities is a priority for the 2020-21 year, particularly in robotics.

"Robotics is no longer just something to do after school," Smith said in the Monday meeting. "This is a serious engineering field."

Smith was candid about his view on the state of STEM in the schools.

"I am embarrassed about the exposure our engineering students receive," he said.

Smith explained that the high school's current robotic equipment – the Edison V 2.0 – is not appropriate to facilitate higher-level learning relevant to a dynamic field. He said that both the high school and elementary students use the same robots. He added that the current model is largely rudimentary.

Smith's proposal requests a new robot model – the VEX EDR V5s. The proposal reads that this equipment meets standards for the high school level. The proposal states that this equipment is required of competing robotics teams.

Updated robotics equipment would further the listed goal of progress in East Hampton's STEM learning. Another step listed in the proposal was the creation of competitive robotics teams in both the middle school and the high school. This will expose students to advanced robotics programming and coding, according to the proposal.

At the elementary school level, mathematics were emphasized to further enhance the STEM learning of East Hampton's students. Improvements listed include supplemental funding for math workshops at Center School to allow for additional learning tools and fur-

ther support for struggling students at Memorial School.

The second priority proposed by Smith is a commitment to improved instruction in world language.

"We're at a disadvantage for language [learning]," Smith said in the board meeting.

In the high school, Smith proposed the inclusion of an online world language program, emphasizing the instruction of Mandarin/Chinese language and culture.

"There'll be other options, like German or French or Arabic," Smith said.

Currently, according to the proposal, East Hampton students are not exposed to a world language until the seventh grade-the grade 6 language teaching position was eliminated in 2018. Smith said he would like this position restored.

Smith's proposal cites a *New York Times* article detailing the enhancement of the brain's executive function—a command system directing planning, problem solving and other demanding cognitions-through bilingualism

Student support was another priority listed in Smith's proposal. Smith presented a district-wide, no-cost plan to train the school districts staff and teachers in youth mental health first aid. Employees would participate in an 8-hour education program introducing them to the unique risk factors and red flags of mental health problems in adolescents and young adults.

According to research from the Pew Research Center that was shared by Smith at the meeting, 70 percent of teens believe stress and mental health issues are a major problem, more so than bullying, drug addiction and poverty.

As of early 2020, 25 teachers and staff have been trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid. The wearing of a yellow lanyard instead of the school's normal blue color indicates training-completion. Smith said this strategy makes it easy for students to identify teachers who are better equipped to handle any complex emotional, social or academic issues causing hardship or stress.

"We want to create a culture where kids can discuss anything," Smith said.

At the meeting, Smith and the board commended East Hampton School's employees for

attending this program, which is unpaid and only offered on Saturdays.

The superintendent's proposal included a graph depicting the money savings secured by the school system by offering an in-district special education program rather than outsourcing such services to other areas.

According to the proposal, development of in-district programs over the past several years has saved the community more than \$3 million.

Smith provided for reference statistics on East Hampton's per-pupil expenditures. According to the documentation, \$16,204 was spent per student in the 2018-19 year. This figure is below the state average of \$16,988.

Smith and the East Hampton schools are currently surveying residents, students and teachers on how the school can better prepare Belltown students to succeed in an ever-changing job market and work culture.

Smith's proposal reads that planning education for the year 2030 has already begun. It also reads that, in 2030, a divide will split education into students who are prepared to meet the demands of new careers, new tech and new opportunities-and those who are not.

In the meeting, Board chair Chris Goff read a resignation letter from now-former BOE member Laurie Caldwell. Caldwell was in the second of the normal 4-year term, according to Goff. The board must now seek members to serve through the remainder of Caldwell's term, which ends in November 2021.

If the Board of Education does not find a candidate within 30 days, the town council will take over the process.

Smith said in the follow-up meeting that the ideal candidate would have a wide variety of perspectives to offer.

"As a Board of Education member, your main responsibility is to develop policy to improve the experience of our students," Smith said.

* * *

In the meeting Monday, Smith updated the community on the high-school drinking water remediation. He said that, after two years of state testing, copper levels in the water have depleted and that water bubblers will soon be in use again. He said the school would go through its supply of bottled water.

East Hampton Council Talks Host of Issues

by Jack Lakowsky

The sale of the town hall, added jobs, lake aeration and a library survey were all discussed in a town council meeting Tuesday evening.

The council authorized the sale of the current town hall at 20 East High St. to James Calciano for \$316,000.00. Both the town Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Finance recommended approval of the sale.

According to Town Manager David Cox, work on the new building will be completed in the beginning of March. A public hearing on the matter will begin at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 27 in the current town hall meeting room.

Cox discussed the addition of two positions to the town's employment roster; a facilities foreman in the office of public works and a program specialist for the Parks and Recreation Department.

The program specialist would, according to the position's description supplied by Cox, would develop and conduct Parks and Recreation community programs.

According to Cox, this position's wage would be funded through the money accrued from fees paid by residents to participate in town programs. Should the position not yield these returns, it would be eliminated.

According to a memo written by Public Works Director Matthew Walsh, the Facilities Foreman position is necessary to allow public works to provide better service to the town. The foreman would assist in building maintenance and would review and advise building maintenance projects and the crew performing the work.

Walsh wrote that this position would have no impact on this year's budget. Funds are already in place to cover the position. Walsh also wrote he intends to keep the position budget neutral.

Cox presented a request to solicit proposals for the Lake Pocotopaug Quality Improvement Project.

According to the proposal provided by Cox, the town desires to improve water quality in Lake Pocotopaug through means including flow aeration and destratification.

The town must receive the proposal no later than 4 p.m. Feb. 13 so that work can be completed before peak lake-usage season.

Dean Markham, council member, commented on this timeframe, calling it aggressive. Cox said the timeframe is based off an estimation given to him by a potential proposer. The

town manager added that funding of this project has yet to be determined. Markham suggested looking into town surplus to expedite the process.

East Hampton Public Library Director Ellen Paul discussed the dissemination of a survey soliciting public comment on how the library can further serve the community. The survey was devised by the Library Advisory Board and will be conducted by the library.

Paul said that, upon taking her current position, a survey was conducted to improve library services.

"We've picked all the low-hanging fruit," Paul told the council. "We learned a lot from community conversations."

Paul said that, since conducting the first survey, library check-out rates have increased by 40%. She added that the new survey would address more long-term issues.

Paul said this survey contains a different set of questions and is intended to guide the library in its goals for the next three-year period. She added that this would be of no cost to the town, being funded entirely by donations and funds raised from the Friends of East Hampton Li-

brary.

Council member Barbara Moore commented that, given the first survey's success, a follow-up effort makes perfect sense. Both Moore and council member Derek Johnson said they would be happy to help the library in this endeavor.

The council approved the distribution of the survey.

Cox and the council also discussed a parcel of unused land at 3 Walnut Avenue. During the discussion, Chairman Pete Brown suggested converting the unused land into a parking lot.

"I'm happy that our downtown is as busy as it is, but the biggest complaint is the lack of parking," Brown said.

Cox agreed this could be a potential use for the land and that he would review town-zoning ordinances to determine how best to proceed.

Finally, Cox mentioned the success of the police department's drug and medication take-back program. According to Cox's report, a total of 354 pounds of medications were disposed of by the public and then properly destroyed. Cox added that, given the effort's success, a larger disposal receptacle would be available at the new town hall facility when it opens.

Andover Selectmen Want School Board to Cut Proposed Budget

by Sloan Brewster

Andover's Board of Selectmen wants the Board of Education to make some significant cuts to its proposed 2020-21 school budget.

At Monday's meeting, selectmen unanimously agreed to request that the school board cut \$400,000 from the proposal.

Last Wednesday, Superintendent Sally Doyen made a push for a \$4.39 million budget for 2020-21, an 8% or \$326,000 increase over the current year's \$4.07 million spending plan.

Doyen said drivers for the increase include a board decision to add two new classes next year at Andover Elementary School, bringing the total from 14 to 16.

At several board meetings in past months parents have raised concerns about overcrowded classrooms in second and fifth grade, often bursting into tears while describing students having difficulty hearing and a lack of help for the classroom teacher Lisa Hopkins. In response, the board added two new paraprofessionals to offer a helpful hand for the remainder of this year and added the new classes to next year's roster.

First Selectman Jeff Maguire claimed the Andover school district is not subject to Municipal Budget Requirements (MBR), a state law governing how much a district must spend

on education.

At one point Maguire tried to silence Adrian Mandeville, vice first selectman, telling him not to "go there" when Mandeville said "we were lied to" about MBR.

Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen has repeatedly told the boards of selectmen and finance that she could not make any more cuts to the education budget because of MBR restrictions, Mandeville said.

Mandeville has argued that Andover has seen a 50% reduction in student enrollment but only a 12% decrease in its budget.

In a phone call Tuesday, Mandeville doubled down on his accusations.

"We were lied to," he said. "She managed, with subterfuge and to flat out lie, to say we were at MBR or had no room and did not want to risk it."

When asked if it was possible Doyen did not know the town was not restricted by MBR, he pointed out that "she has multiple doctorate degrees."

"If you don't know the answer, then simply say 'I'm not sure,'" he said. Saying the town was subject to MBR "was an unfair answer, it was not in the best interest of those kids and in the end it was incorrect."

In a phone call Wednesday, Doyen gave an explanation.

The fact that Andover is exempt from MBR is a new development, she said. Based on a new statute, MBR does not apply to districts where students perform at a certain level on state tests.

The district has been subject to MBR in years past, she said, and called the fact that it's not a recent development.

"It's a very recent change when they said, 'Okay if your kids are doing that well anyway, we don't have to monitor what you spend,'" she said. "We follow the rules."

In addition, Andover's MBR is calculated with RHAM's, "which make the calculations complicated," Doyen said.

In a letter to superintendents dated Feb. 2, 2018, found on the state's website, Kathy Demsey, chief financial officer for the department of education informed districts of adjustments made to MBR in a special session the previous June.

"Districts in the top 10 percent of school districts based on the accountability index are exempt from the MBR," is one of the adjustments listed in the letter.

Even if MBR was a constraint, the district could slash spending by up to \$622,646,

Maguire said during Monday's meeting, and started brainstorming with the rest of the board.

"What is the number we want to ask the Board of Education to shoot for?" he asked.

Mandeville said that, based on the board's budget, a more than \$600,000 cut was too much to ask.

"I don't think realistically they could cut \$600,000 and have a good education," he said.

Board member Jeffrey Murray suggested knocking \$2,000 off the district's \$22,240 per pupil costs, which, based on a presentation Town Administrator Eric Anderson gave at the last education board meeting, is about 40% higher than surrounding towns. Murray did some math, calculating that cutting \$2,000 per student comes to about \$400,000.

Board members unanimously agreed to request a \$400,000 cut.

The education board is already aware of the request and will be discussing possible cutbacks at its next meeting, Doyen said.

"I will come to the meeting with some ideas and suggestions of things that we might consider reducing," she said. "That's really the start of the process."

The board will also work on the school budget at a special meeting on Feb. 5, she said.

Proposed Portland School Budget Up \$1.03M

by Jack Lakowsky

The Portland superintendent's budget proposal presented an increase of more than 4 percent to the proposed 2020-21 budget on Jan. 7.

The total proposed budget was \$22,204,376, up \$1.03 million from the current year's \$21,176,970.

According to meeting minutes, lengthy discussion between the board and Director of Student Services Dawn Davis was held over budget line items including a Therapeutic Day Program for grades K-6 in the special education department.

According to documents supplied at the meeting, additional teaching, clinical and support staff will be needed to support this program to assist young learners grapple with and overcome social and emotional disabilities.

In total, the special education department's budget would increase by just under \$143,000 if the current proposal were to be approved and passed as-is.

In an interview after the BOE budget proposal meeting, Davis explained the program.

Davis said that a similar program is in existence at Wheeler School.

"We need something for younger learners," she said. "It's a program for kids with significant issues. We'd rather keep them in town, in

a familiar environment. We want to keep our little ones here."

Davis added that the town would see significant money savings. She said that outplacing students to programs costs the town about \$100,000 per student. Establishing a program within Portland's elementary schools would sharply reduce this expense, according to Davis.

Overall, per pupil spending would increase \$5 per student over the current year, according to the proposal.

The most significant increase between major budget categories was in the buildings and equipment section, which is proposed to have a more than 26% increase. In the proposal, this hike is attributed to the impending end-of-life cycle of the system's Chromebooks. This means the computers must be replaced in order to keep Portland's curriculum current. The cost of replacing the Chromebooks nearly doubles their budget category, rising to \$26,900 from the adopted 2019-20 budget of \$13,850.00, according to the superintendent's proposal.

O'Reilly told the meeting the town budget referendum is slated for May 4. He expressed hope that the community will be more involved in this year's process, according to meeting minutes.

New Law Aims to Aid Police Interactions in East Hampton

by Jack Lakowsky

The East Hampton Police Department announced on its Facebook page Wednesday that the state's new "Blue Envelope" has gone into effect.

The law is an effort to enhance and improve communication between a police officer and a driver with autism spectrum disorder, according to the post.

The post also reads that, in the event of roadside interaction between a person with autism spectrum disorder and a police officer, the driver can hand the blue envelope over to the officer along with their driver's license and motor-vehicle registration.

The envelope will have instruction and tips on how the officer can effectively communicate with the driver, and vice-versa.

The East Hampton Police Department will have these envelopes available during their normal business hours. The envelopes are also available at Department of Motor Vehicle locations.

The language on the envelope informs the officer that the holder's medical condition may impair their communication and may cause difficulty in understanding directions. It also reads that the driver may experience agitation if touched or approached too closely. It reads that behaving in such a way is not refusal to cooperate. The card contains a section for emergency contact information for the officer to use.

According to the DMV website, possession of the card will not affect any car insurance policies.

New Brewery Coming to Portland?

by Jack Lakowsky

David Peichert and his associates have planned an ambitious opening for Portland's first hometown brewery.

Peichert said he wants Concentric Brewing to be open by December of this year.

"It's an aggressive plan," Peichert said. "At this point, it's a matter of details. We're committed to a 2020 opening and we'll be full steam ahead."

Peichert explained that, although he and the other Concentric principals still have many legislative procedures to undergo, members of town government have been supportive.

"The town economic development commission has been really great," Peichert said. "Everybody has been really helpful. We're thrilled to have a place in Portland."

Peichert said that the town has offered a

"tremendous" amount of good feedback. He said that both he and the town are thrilled to have their first ever brewery.

In 2018, Concentric identified a Berlin location. This deal fell through, however. Peichert said they extended their search east, until finding property in Portland.

"It's a convenient location in the center of the state," Peichert said. "The owners [of the parcel] have been great to work with."

Peichert added that beer will be brewed on site and sourced from local suppliers.

One supplier named by Peichert was Thrall Family Malt, a malt farm based in Windsor.

According to the Connecticut Brewers Guild, Concentric will join more than 100 other breweries operating in the state.

Putting the Hebron Back in Maple Fest

by Sloan Brewster

In 2020, the Hebron Maple Festival may be returning to its roots.

In a phone call Monday, Town Manager Andrew Tierney said the town and Windham Chamber of Commerce, which organizes the annual festival, will be reaching out to local entities to spike up local involvement in the fest.

“Last year we had a very successful Maple Fest, but some of the comments afterward were that it seemed to be more commercialized and that it didn’t seem to be as much of a Hebron event,” Tierney said.

The festival kick-off meeting last Thursday was heavily attended by the chamber, town hall staff, the Chatham Health District, Historical Properties, Parks & Recreation, an interfaith group, the library and Russ Schaller and Ron Wenzel from the two sugarhouses that regularly participate in the event. In that meeting, Tierney said the town and chamber informed folks of the intent to make the event more local.

“We’re going to start reaching out to everybody in town that used to participate,” he said. “We’re going to try to reach out to some of these civic organizations and nonprofits to make it more of a Hebron Maple Fest.”

Ron Wenzel, owner of The Wenzel Sugar House, said it was a good idea to bring in more local folks. While he understands the cost of running the festival – as he ran it with a committee for years before the town and chamber took over – and recognizes that the chamber raises the money to keep it afloat by involving non-local vendors, the more local involvement the better, he said.

Back in the day when he ran it, the entire fest was local, he said.

“It’s not supposed to be the festival in Hebron; it’s supposed to be the Hebron festival,” he said. “You couldn’t set up a booth in town unless you were a local business, non-profit, you name it.”

The festival was started as a fundraiser for the library by Seldon Wells.

Wells wanted to replicate a festival he went to in Vermont, Wenzel said. The affair has

changed since then.

Wenzel and other locals organized and ran the fest for 25 years, growing it from participation by four sugarhouses to seven. Churches, schools and other local organizations joined the fun and a committee was formed to oversee the event.

The fun took place across town, with stops at the various sugarhouses, churches and other spots. The rules were simple.

Eventually, the organizers decided it was time to step aside and five years ago, the chamber stepped up.

Diane Nadeau, Windham Chamber president & CEO, said with a \$15,000 budget to run the festival, it is not feasible for it to be entirely local but the concept behind it is to promote the town and local businesses and organizations.

The approach the chamber is taking to increase local involvement is to spread the word about how “hugely successful” last year’s event was for individual vendors, she said.

“All the vendors were so happy about the money they raised,” she said. “We’re trying to get that message across for local vendors who are looking for fundraising opportunities.”

Chamber and town staff are “talking to as many people as possible” and telling them the happy news that setting up a booth at the fest would be a great way to pull in some extra cash.

Nadeau recalled last year’s festival when one mother was selling items to raise the money she needed so her two children could take a trip out of the country. To the woman’s surprise, by the end of the festival, she nearly had enough to send them both.

Another happy outcome was when a couple girls were selling cupcakes to raise money for charity and raked in \$2,500.

“They ran out of cupcakes and their mom had to go make more,” Nadeau said. “Selling cupcakes for \$3, you have to sell a lot.”

Non-selling vendors, such as the Democratic and Republican town committees, were also pleased by the number of people who stopped by their booths, she said.

Nadeau wants school groups, such as Parent



Ron Wenzel demonstrates his maple syrup evaporator to visitors at Wenzel’s Sugarhouse during the 2019 Maple Fest.

Teacher Associations, Honor Societies and Sports Boosters, to get involved but said she gets why it can be challenging to get volunteers to man booths for the two-day event that takes place in March when there may still be snow on the ground.

“The biggest hurdle is that it’s a two-day event,” she said. “The groups need enough people there to cover the booths and it’s in the cold.”

New Superintendent of Schools Thomas Baird said he has spoken to Tierney and is brainstorming with principals at Hebron Elementary and Gilead Hill Schools about how students can get involved in the event.

“My next plan was going to talk to the chairs of the Education Foundation and the PTA,” he said. “We’re at the brainstorming phase.”

Nadeau wants people in the community to understand that the festival is for them and is not a profitable event for the chamber. The mission of the event is to promote the town of Hebron, help small local businesses and non-

profits and for visitors to see the services offered by the quaint town.

“The maple fest has the agricultural aspect with the sugarhouses but really it’s to promote the town of Hebron as a place to live, work and play,” she said.

Russ Schaller, owner of Woody Acres Sugar House, who was also part of past organization efforts, said he too was in favor of localizing the event and that it should be all about all things maple but added that the chamber is “doing the best they can.”

“I’m all for it I mean we used to have more local people in it but then it just got expensive, the cops and everything else and they had to raise money in other ways. That’s why they got to out of town vendors,” he said. “People don’t like seeing windows for sale and roofing material.”

The 2020 Hebron Maple Festival will take place Saturday and Sunday, March 21 and 22. The free event is held rain, snow or shine, and runs from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. each day.

RHAM Diploma Program Helps People’s Lives

by Sloan Brewster

Carissa Ferris wanted to make a better future for her daughter.

That’s why the Marlborough resident enrolled in Eastern Connecticut State University’s National External Diploma Program [NEDP] in partnership with RHAM High School.

Originally from the Philippines, Ferris has been in the U.S. many times since childhood and emigrated here on a fulltime basis about 10 years ago. In the Philippines, she attended an international school, going as far as 11th grade.

In 2015, she decided she wanted to get a high school diploma in order to take the next step and further her studies in the hope that she will expand possibilities for her 11-year-old daughter Zoe Ferris.

“I’m a single mom so that in itself is a motivator for me to pursue something that would be better, not just for my future, but for my daughter’s,” she said.

Ferris graduated over the summer and has since begun studying to become a medical assistant.

“I’m pursuing a career in healthcare, it seems like the jobs are more in demand,” she said. “I’m excited. I’m really excited for the future, what it has in store for Zoe and myself. We’re looking forward to getting our own place and I’m also hoping that when it’s her turn to go to college that I could help her out, that I could support her because I don’t want her to be buried in debt. It’s mostly about her and her future.”

Jessica Dapsis, of Hebron, a school counselor at Eastern, works with all the high school diploma programs at the university and is lead assessor for NECD.

Eastern offers three routes for adults aged 17 or older who are no longer in high school and want to get their diplomas, Dapsis said.

There’s a General Education Development Program [GED], a Credit Diploma Program [CDP] and NEDP.

Through the GED program, students prepare for a state exam to demonstrate they have comparable skills to a student that graduated high school.

Through the CDP program, they transfer the

credits they received from high school and then take classes to fill in the gaps.

Through NEDP, they complete an online curriculum.

Kristin Hempel, associate director of adult and community programs at Eastern, said the three programs work well together, each one serving students with different situations.

Many students in the GED program are already highly skilled, she said. “They can come in, take the test and move on.”

CPD, on the other hand is suited to students who like taking small classes, enjoy working through a variety of assessments – such as quizzes, tests, class projects and presentations – and are closer to graduation.

“You earn a grade,” Hempel said. “You have to come in and participate with your classmates.”

NEDP caters to folks with odd schedules who can’t show up for classes at a specific time each week. The self-paced program also fits people who have already been out in the world, have skillsets and can navigate different situations.

“One of the things I love [about NEDP], it’s not something that you’re taking tests to pass or fail to earn credit or pass exams. It takes away barriers of transportation. For some of them who might have anxiety to be in public, it takes that away” Dapsis said. “They fit it in when it’s convenient for their lives.”

The flexible program allowed Ferris her to work and care for Zoe.

“It was a program that fit me perfectly as a single mom,” she said.

Once or twice a month, she met with an advisor who went over the work she had completed.

Ferris also attended a lab offered at RHAM in partnership with Eastern.

“We run a program there two times a week for the students to get additional educational support, access the computers, work independently [and] ask questions,” Dapsis said.

The program also allows students to work with a tutor at the lab.

“It was a great tutorial for me when I wasn’t sure what I was doing,” Ferris said. “Somebody was there to help when there was a lesson or class I wasn’t sure about.”



Carissa Ferris, front, of Marlborough, finished a high school diploma program at Eastern Connecticut State University – in partnership with RHAM High School – and is on her way to becoming a medical assistant. Jessica Dapsis, back, of Hebron, is lead assessor for the program.

In the program, students learn a list of competencies and skills in subjects including civics, history, math, science and English.

Lessons are taken from everyday life, according to Ferris.

“How to, let’s say if you want to buy something in the store that’s 30% off, how do you calculate that quickly without having to use the calculator?” she said.

The science unit involved climate change and how carbon dioxide affects global warming she said.

Her favorite subject was English, she said. “I kind of like to write a little bit, but I did like the science and the history [too].”

The average student graduates from the program in between six months and one year but it’s done at the student’s pace, Dapsis said.

“I didn’t really pressure myself,” Ferris said, adding that it took her four years to complete.

She graduated in June. “Zoe went to the graduation,” she said. “She’s excited; she’s proud of her mom.”

Field Maintenance Dominates Colchester Budget Forum

by Karla Santos

The first public budget discussion of the upcoming budget season took place Wednesday at Town Hall and while three topics were talked about, there was one in particular that took most of the meeting's time – field maintenance.

Members of the boards of finance and education attended the meeting, but the room was filled up by coaches and parents that were at the meeting to discuss the issue of field maintenance and how it affects the people who use them.

One of the recommendations by members of the public was for the town to hire someone to maintain the town fields. Issues like a lack of painting, grass cutting and unevenness of the field grounds were issues of concern to meeting attendees, but the safety of these fields is what they were mainly worried about.

Some attendees compared the fields in Colchester to fields in other surrounding towns, which maintain their fields more frequently, making it easier for children to play sports.

One meeting attendee, who is also a coach, said he moved to Colchester because of its sports and recreation opportunities but said he is disappointed by the lack of maintenance of

the fields.

It was clarified at the meeting that there is a fund for the fields but it is meant to be used for upgrades not maintenance.

First Selectman Mary Bylone, who also attended the meeting, spoke and suggested attendees that if they feel strong about this issue, they must help the community understand its importance.

“It's not that anything that you are asking for is unreasonable, but it's that we need to put it together in a way that could be supported,” Bylone said. “If you feel strongly about these things you have to talk to the other people in the community. We are just one part of the process. It needs to pass in referendum and that is certainly a lot of the conversation we have when we are putting together the budgets.”

The other topics that were discussed at the forum were the 57 Fest and land preservation.

Board of Finance Chairman Robert Tarlov said the town holds a budget forum annually “relatively at the beginning of the budget season to give the tax payers and voters an opportunity to express concerns or desires regarding

the budget before the Board of Education completes theirs.”

Tarlov said the Board of Education is already working on its budget and will finish it in February. Tarlov said the first selectman normally finishes with the town budget towards the end of March.

Events like Wednesday's forum serve as an opportunity for the citizens to give the boards feedback “on issues that they either think we should be funding, shouldn't be funding or should be doing differently,” Tarlov added.

According to Tarlov, the town normally holds the forum and two public hearings throughout the budget preparation season.

“The budget forum is something that we voluntarily put in the process, but the two public hearings are required by charter,” Tarlov said.

This year the Board of Finance presented a list of possible topics for people to talk about during the forum, but attendees mainly focused on three of them.

A budget survey is also conducted for the boards to get feedback from the public. This year's survey will be open on Friday and it will

be available for about two weeks.

The Board of Finance has a role in the budget season.

“In terms of the Board of Education, the Board of Finance approves the bottom line on the budget before it goes to town meeting and then ultimately to referendum,” Tarlov said.

He said that when the budget for the Board of Education gets to the Board of Finance, the finance board suggests reducing it by a certain amount, if needed.

“We do not have any say in terms of where they reduce it,” Tarlov said. “Certainly, in the dialogue during the workshops, we express concerns in terms of areas when we say cut a certain amount, why we are saying that but our authority is to basically set the bottom line before it goes to the voter.”

On the town budget, the Board of Finance can make changes at a department level, ultimately to arrive at a number that they feel comfortable with, Tarlov said.

“Some years we don't change either budget; some years we may change one and not the other,” he added.

East Hampton Police News

12/26: Nicholas Fishlein, 33, of Brooklyn, Conn., was issued a summons for operating while under suspension, East Hampton Police said.

12/31: Michael Birner, 55, of 26 N. Main St., East Hampton, was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

Also, from Dec. 30-Jan. 5, officers responded to 14 medical calls, three motor vehicle crashes and nine alarms, and made 17 traffic stops.

Portland Police News

1/7: Shantika Henderson, 23, of Middletown, was charged with operating a motor vehicle under suspension, Portland Police said.

1/7: Tanisha Morris, 26, of Manchester, was charged with insufficient insurance, police said.

1/10: Renata Cook, 42, of Durham, was charged with operating under the influence and failure to drive in proper lane, police said

Obituaries

Hebron

Christina L. Lataille

Christina L. (Tinney) Lataille, 44, of Lebanon, formerly of Hebron, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Jan. 7, at Hartford Hospital, surrounded by family and friends.

Christina was born in Middletown on March 23, 1975. She graduated from RHAM High School, class of 1994.

Christina was an active member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, as a Flotilla Commander, Connecticut River Gateway Flotilla, New London Division, 014-25-02. She was also an active member of the Chaplin Fin, Fur and Feather.

Christina worked as a File Maintenance Clerk for Stop & Shop for 25 years, where she met many wonderful friends.

Christina is survived by her husband, Thomas, of Lebanon, their daughter, Emily Raynsford, of Brooklyn, her husband Denton, grandchildren Gabriel and Izabella.

She is also survived by her parents, Leland and Shirley Tinney of Hebron; her brother, Jeffrey Tinney and his wife Shonagh of East Hampton, her sister Robin Manning and her husband Christopher of Hebron.

She is also survived by many aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews.

The funeral services were held at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 15, at the Potter funeral Home, Willimantic. Visitation was held before the services.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 22478, Oklahoma City, OK 73123.

Colchester

Joseph Bernard

Joseph "Frank" Bernard, passed peacefully Friday, Jan. 10, surrounded by family. Born Dec. 21, 1938, in Hartford, he was the son of Wilfred and Yvonne Bernard.

He was greeted at the gates by his beloved dog Harley; his parents; his siblings – Leo, Jeanette, Richard and Lillian; his in-laws – Helen and Butch Bolduc; and many other loved ones and friends.

Frank is survived by his wife of 56 years, Virginia "Jenny" (Bolduc) Bernard. They were longtime residents of Colchester, where they raised their three daughters, Kathleen Sciremammano, Corinne Seagrave and Janine Mosdale, before retiring in Florida. Frank also leaves behind his beloved grandchildren – Asia, Sierra, Sadie, Calleigh, Hunter and Logan and several great-grandchildren.

He will be greatly missed by his sons-in-law, John Sciremammano, Charles "Chip" Seagrave and Phil Mosdale, as well as countless family and friends. He is also survived by two daughters from a previous marriage, Nancy and Denise, and their families.

Frank was a business owner with an amazing work ethic. He owned a scale company and loved working on projects. He served in the Army and loved his country. He and Jenny loved their trips up north to visit everyone. He enjoyed traveling and seeing new places. He also loved animals and nature.

Frank had a great sense of humor and was a generous person. Anyone who knew him, knows he had a big heart and would always go out of his way to help someone. He has definitely earned his wings.

A graveside service and reception is being planned for May, in Connecticut. As plans are finalized, they will be shared with family and friends.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Frank's honor to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.



Andover

Gerald J. Lindley

Gerald J. Lindley, 83, of Andover, husband of Pierrette (Hamel) Lindley, died Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at Manchester Hospital. He was born in Central Falls, RI, the son of the late John and Catherine (Pollitt) Lindley.

Gerald Lindley lived a long, hard, and scrambled life. At the age of 5, he spent a year in the hospital to overcome a ruptured appendix and learning to walk a second time. He was one of the few remaining people to experience anesthesia from ether. As a student of Holy Trinity school and St. Raphael's Academy he worked after school and weekends to help support his family.

Despite this heavy load he still found time to run cross country, win a medal in a state tournament, serve in the National Guard and attend school dances with his future wife, where they danced the night away. After high school he joined the Army and helped guard the Panama Canal. With one year remaining in his stint he married his true love, Pierrette Hamel. He was very proud the marriage continued for the rest of his life.

After leaving the Army, he eventually found his life's work starting as an apprentice sprinkler fitter for the Grinnell Co., along the way overcoming a heart attack to become a credentialed and in-demand fitter. He then became a district superintendent for the troubled Connecticut office of the Automatic Sprinkler Co., where he was heavily involved in turning around that office. Because of his success, the troubled Puerto Rico office was added to his district that he also turned around. With this success, Fire Protection Industries hired him to open a new office in Connecticut. In a few years this culminated in winning a contract for the Millstone 3 power plant. It was now time to join two other colleagues to start their own sprinkler company FLM, Inc. Over time he bought out his partners and became sole owner. Three of his employees were his own sons. He derived much satisfaction in securing their economic well-being.

Many Saturdays were spent cutting firewood and later drinking beer and playing cards with his buddy Harold Madore and their wives. As business conditions changed he decided it was time to close the company. He continued to work in the sprinkler industry until the age of 68 when he decided to retire. But he could not sit still and became the sextant at St. Columba's church where he became heavily involved in its renovation.

After leaving the Army, he became an avid golfer first with his father, brothers and uncle, then in the Jerry's Café league and later as a longtime member of the Willimantic Golf Club. He will be remembered for being quick to lend a helping hand and his sometimes wicked humor. Even when his body was failing, his mind was sharp and clear and he continued to make jokes about his plight. He helped make this world a better place.

He is survived by his true love Pierrette; his three sons, Gerald, Dennis and wife Carol and Steven; his grandchildren, Derrick and wife Arianna, Scott and wife Maggie, Jordan, Taylor and Ryan; his great-grandchild, Eleanore; his brothers, John and Joseph; and his sister, Carolyn.

Gerald's family received relatives and friends Friday, Jan. 10, at Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St., Willimantic, and on Saturday, Jan. 11, at the funeral home. His funeral Mass was held St. Columba Church, intersection of routes 66 and 87, Columbia. Burial will be held at a later date in the Townsend Cemetery, Andover.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to your favorite charity.

For an online memorial guestbook, visit potterfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Emily Bartosiak

Emily (Shumbo) Bartosiak, 60, of Portland, passed away peacefully with her family by her side on Friday, Jan. 10, after a courageous battle with FTD-ALS (Frontotemporal Degeneration with ALS). Born Oct. 31, 1959, in Portland, Emily was the beloved daughter of Kathryn "Kay" (Mayer) Shumbo of Moodus and the late Stephen Shumbo.

A lifelong resident of Moodus and then Portland, Emily was a graduate of Nathan Hale-Ray High School Class of 1977. For 25 years Emily worked as a medical transcriptionist at Elcrest Hospital, later St. Francis Care Behavioral Health. Her joys in life included many years of dance, playing cards, gardening, trips to the beach or the casino, and spending time with her family, but her greatest joy in life was being a mom to her two loving daughters.

She will always be remembered as a generous, kindhearted and selfless woman with unconditional love for her family and friends. The world was a brighter place with her smile, which was constantly on her face regardless of the obstacles she faced in life, including FTD. She was taken from this earth far too soon and will be greatly missed by all those who knew and loved her.

Emily's family would like to thank the incredible teams at Columbia University Irving Medical Center Neurological Institute, The Hospital for Special Care Neuromuscular Team, and Middlesex Hospital CCU for their care during her illness. In addition, a special thank you to her at-home caregivers Tammy, Elizabeth and Julie for their time, dedication, care and compassion.

In addition to her mother, Emily is survived by her two daughters, Elizabeth (Betsy) Bartosiak and her fiancé Jack Hennessey of New York, N.Y., and Leanne Bartosiak of Seymour; brother, Michael Shumbo and his wife Tracy of East Hampton; sister, Melissa DiSisto and her husband Greg of Orlando, Fla.; as well as many nieces, aunts, cousins and friends. She also leaves behind her dear friend and ex-husband, Ted Bartosiak of Newington.

Relatives and friends called at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown, Thursday, Jan. 16. A funeral liturgy will be celebrated today, Jan. 17, at 10 a.m., at Church of St. Mary, Freestone Ave., Portland, CT, followed by burial at Burr Cemetery, Higganum.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Emily's memory towards FTD awareness and research at The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration (theaftd.org) or the Columbia University Taub Institute for Research on Alzheimer's Disease and the Aging Brain (columbianeuroresearch.org).

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



Hebron

David Roland Nelson

David Roland Nelson, 50, of Hebron, passed away at home Tuesday, Jan. 15. Born in Manchester Nov. 13, 1969, he was the son of Lorraine (Bricault) Nelson and the late Richard Nelson.

David had attended Porter & Chester Institute and worked as a carpenter. He loved music and even played the drums in a band with his brother when they were young adults. David also enjoyed fishing, woodworking, and was an avid Patriots fan.

David will be forever loved and missed by his mother, Lorraine Nelson of Hebron; his brother, Brian Nelson and his wife Sharon of Colchester; his sister, Mea Kline and her husband Neal of East Haddam; his nephews, Christopher Delmastro Jr., Darren Nelson, Myles Kline and Aaron Kline; his niece, Alyssa Nelson; his honorary brother, Matthew Monaco; and numerous extended family and friends.

He was predeceased by his father, Richard Nelson, and his sister, Julie Nelson.

Calling hours will be held today, Jan. 17, from 3-5 p.m., followed by a celebration of life and sharing of memories at 5 p.m., at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial will be private.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation (msfocus.org/donate).

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

Richard McMullin Jr.

Richard George Carl McMullin Jr., 76, of Hebron, passed away Wednesday, Jan. 8.

Richard (Dick / "Butch") was born April 5, 1943, in Manchester, to Richard McMullin Sr and Edna (Scott) McMullin. He graduated from Manchester High School in 1961 and attended the Porter School for Engineering Design. On Jan. 18, 1964, he married his high school sweetheart, Linda (Smith) McMullin.

Richard was self-employed for much of his career as a systems analyst with RGM Associates, Inc. Richard enjoyed traveling with his family, cooking (and good food), watching UConn basketball, and loved the Yankees.

Richard is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Linda (Smith) McMullin; along with three children: Richard and April McMullin of Henrietta, N.Y., Whitney (McMullin) and Bob Coons of North Granby, and Nathaniel and Jessica McMullin, of Wethersfield; along with his brother Edward McMullin and his wife Tho, of Anchorage, Alaska. He loved his nine grandchildren; Caleb McMullin, Morgan Shook, Madison Shook, Miranda Shook, Mallory McMullin, Elliot McMullin, Hunter McMullin, Logan Coons, and Zoey McMullin; along with many nieces and nephews. He also loved his dog Leona.

Richard is preceded in death by his parents, Richard and Edna McMullin, and his sisters, Nora (McMullin) Bruce, Patty (McMullin) Aguliar, Edith (McMullin) Metcalf, and Louise (McMullin) Towner.

Services will be held privately for Richard McMullin.

Please celebrate Richard's life by donating to Protectors of Animals or Hartford County 4-H Camp (donate.hc4h.org), in his name. These two organizations are important to his family.

