



RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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One of the many things Red McKinney, who passed away last week at the age of 72, did for East Hampton was bring back the annual Old Home Days celebration. He is shown here in 2017, when he was named co-grand marshal of the event along with Molley Bentley.

## Remembering Red McKinney

by Jack Lakowsky

Lifelong East Hampton resident, activist, businessman and civic titan Robert "Red" McKinney died peacefully on Christmas Eve surrounded by his family in Hartford Hospital.

McKinney, 72, died following a stroke he suffered on Thanksgiving.

The East Hampton Town Council posted a statement upon McKinney's passing, reading: "Profound sadness and shock envelops the East Hampton Community upon the tragic loss of Robert 'Red' McKinney. The members of the Town Council in unison with all the citizens of our town extend their sincere condolences to his [wife and children] and the entire McKinney family on the death of their loving husband and father.

"Red has been described as an East Hampton icon. Known by many as Mr. Old Home Day where he announced the marchers and performers annually at Old Home Day festivities, as an auctioneer raising funds for so many worthwhile causes, as moderator at town meetings, supporting the many charitable works of the Rotary, and certainly in politics – a Democrat who always extended a welcoming hand to his many Republican friends, Red's effervescent personality, infectious laugh and good word to all shall be hugely missed."

Members of the East Hampton council expressed their personal thoughts on McKinney's passing.

"The town of East Hampton has lost a good friend, a true patriot, a champion of causes both great and small, and the person who has singularly done more good for this community than anyone" said James "Pete" Brown, Town Council

chairman.

"I was lucky enough to have called Red McKinney my friend for most of my life. I watched with admiration as he brought back Old Home Day, built up Rotary, successfully fundraised for any group that needed help, raised his family, welcomed his grandchildren, traveled with Anne and friends and enjoyed each and every day.

"He loved nothing more than Anne and their four children, Shannon, Taren, Kirsten and Ryan," Brown added. "Red and Anne were blessed with 10 grandchildren."

"Red always had a smile, always a handshake, always a kind word," he continued. "Seldom does one individual make such an impact on a community. Red was truly 'Mr. East Hampton.' His loss will forever change the fabric of our town. God bless him and his family."

Kevin Reich, East Hampton town councilor, said in an email; "I had the pleasure of meeting him about 50 years ago and was inspired by his enthusiasm for the community he loved and for the support he offered for those less fortunate.

"It was indeed an honor to have known him and to be able to observe how masterfully he served the Town of East Hampton," Reich wrote. "His passing is a loss for his family and the town he loved and served so well."

East Hampton Town Council member Dean Markham said that McKinney should be remembered for bringing the community together at Old Home Day and for his tireless efforts to improve the town.

"I had the pleasure and good fortune of  
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## AHM Adding Services for Young Adults

by Sloan Brewster

AHM Youth and Family Services has decided to include services for young adults into its mix.

With the organization's three-year strategic plan – which was adopted in September and presented to community leaders last month – services will no longer be exclusive to children up to age 18 and their families, said Joel Rosenberg, AHM director of fund development and former executive director.

In drafting the plan, which will roll out in the next three years based on funding, AHM reached out to community leaders, police officers, parents, students and educators, Rosenberg said. More than 100 people from within the four communities under its umbrella – Andover, Hebron, Marlborough and Columbia – participated in the focus groups and community-wide surveys.

One of the things people in the groups asked was if the organization – officially a public charity – had the ability to serve people beyond the age of 18, Rosenberg and Tressa Giordano, AHM executive director, said. In response, staff decided to expand services to young adults aged 18 to 26.

"The big change here is that in addition to serving families with children up to 18 now we're going to serve families with children – young adults – up to age 26, that's a big change," Rosenberg said. "We heard loud and clear through this strategic plan process and the board responded."

In order to support the young adults, the organization will implement Smart Recovery Program for anyone in that age group in any of the four towns and a friends and family program to support folks whose loved ones are going through recovery, Giordano said.

Smart Recovery is a national addiction recovery program supported by Wheeler Clinic, the Connecticut Departments of Children and Families and Mental Health and Addictive Services.

AHM clinicians will also be available on an outpatient basis to the 18- to 26-year-old age group.

"Whether or not they have insurance, we'll work around that," Giordano said. "We can provide them with that therapy."

The Smart Recovery model includes two dif-

ferent types of groups that meet weekly, Rosenberg explained. One is a support network for friends and family members whose children are going through recovery and the second is for the young adult themselves.

The programs are not specific to any type of substance but rather "any substance that they are finding themselves addicted to," Giordano said.

AHM also has a recovery program at RHAM High School, she said. Students referred by the school or who feel the need can attend group sessions at lunch.

AHM also has student support staff at the school.

"That's beyond just recovery," Rosenberg said.

Students coping with anxiety, depression, grief or other ongoing issues can seek out the counselors.

The three-year plan also includes more community wide activities throughout the year.

"We heard from quite a few younger families that AHM needs to do community activities," Rosenberg said. "Have fun learning to-

gether."

For example, during the Town Center Project Harvest Moon Festival, AHM offered refreshment and activities, including crafts, youth bingo and corn hole.

"It was just an opportunity for folks to come to our building, meet our staff, get to know one another," Giordano said. "It was right on the route of the trick or treating route that they had."

The next community-wide activity – Nature Day – will take place during the Maple Fest on March 21. Last year nearly 400 people participated in the event, according to Rosenberg.

"(It's about) bringing people together, having fun, having kids learn," he said. "This time it's going to be more about the environment."

Community activities are generally done in participation with other groups, Rosenberg added. Nature Day will be done in collaboration with St. Peter's Church, which owns the parcel behind AHM where there are nature trails.

The plan also incorporates wellness programs  
See AHM Services page 2

**Red McKinney cont. from Front Page**

knowing Red since childhood,” Markham said.

In 1973, Markham had the job of recruiting candidates to run for Board of Selectman. He and then-state representative William O’Neil – who went on to serve as the 84th governor of Connecticut – selected a young, ambitious McKinney. This selection set McKinney’s illustrious, impactful service to East Hampton in motion.

“What transpired not only changed Red’s life, but so enriched the community and the lives of everyone [he] touched.” Markham said. “He will be greatly missed.”

Markham added that McKinney will always be remembered for his quick wit. He recalled a story from the late 1970s wherein the Republican candidate for the Parks and Recreation Commission – back then, Parks & Rec. members were elected at town meeting – Karen Hitchcock Asetta, who currently serves as financial director of East Hampton’s Board of Education, was interviewed by the town along with McKinney’s Democratic nominee, Victor Luna Jr.

“Success in small-town politics is often related to family ties,” Markham said. “Henry Muller, who nominated Karen, asked through the moderator if it was true her Great Aunt was Ruth Beckwith Moriarty, to which Karen responded ‘yes.’ Ms. Beckwith had been a teacher, principal, state representative and Judge of Probate in East Hampton. Mr. Muller had thought that this would sway those present.

“Jumping to his feet, Red McKinney asked the moderator if he could ask a question of Mr. Luna. Red thereupon asked him if it were true that he, Victor A. Luna Jr., was the son of Victor A. Luna Sr., to which Mr. Luna replied, ‘Why yes!’ The crowd laughed and chuckled, but the tension was eased.”

Former Town Council member Melissa Engel called McKinney “a friend to all, a mentor to many, the heart and soul of Old Home Day.”

“His love for East Hampton was great,” she said. “His love for Anne, his family and his friends was even greater. For our community his loss is seismic in magnitude. Words do not adequately convey my sympathy to his family and my gratitude to them for sharing him with us. Thanks Red, for everything and God bless you.”

Engel said that she was not aware of how many lives McKinney impacted until she attended his wake and funeral. She said an inestimable number of people offered their mourning and condolences. The wake was held Sunday, Dec. 29, at East Hampton High School, to accommodate the huge volume of attendees.

The funeral took place the next day at St. Patrick Church, and “that church was totally full,” Engel said. “Tons of people shared stories of his generosity.”

Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney had a bond with McKinney as well.

“Red watched me grow,” Tierney said. “We were acquaintances for 30 years. He always had a kind word. It was a pleasure to be his friend.”

Tierney joined McKinney in many outdoor adventures during their decades-long friendship, including deer and duck hunting and deep-sea fishing.

“There was a four-hour wait at the wake,” Tierney said.

Tierney strongly suggested that the upcoming Old Home Days be dedicated to McKinney’s memory.

Red’s community involvement began as a member of the East Hampton Parks and Recreation Department in the early 1970s. At 26, he was the youngest person elected to the East Hampton Board of Selectmen, on which he

served from 1973-77.

McKinney was a member of the East Hampton Democratic Town Committee from 1974 until his passing, making him the longest tenured member.

McKinney had served as a charter member of the Old Home Days Association since 1978.

East Hampton residents may know McKinney as “Mr. Old Home Day.” He consistently volunteered for over 30 years to fundraise for and host the annual three-day town celebration. McKinney served as master of ceremonies during the annual evening festivities. As host of the Old Home Day Parade, residents would hear McKinney’s enthusiastic introductions of all parade participants. McKinney was essential in reviving the Old Home Day Celebration.

McKinney was a long-standing member of the East Hampton Rotary Club having served as president and on numerous committees. McKinney was recognized as a three-time Paul Harris Fellow, an accolade granted to individuals who have made contributions of \$1,000 or more to the rotary.

Other accolades accrued and earned by McKinney include Rotarian of the Year, Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year, and East Hampton Citizen of the Year.

In June 2019, the East Hampton Rotary established the Red McKinney scholarship in Red’s honor.

McKinney was also a Middlesex Hospital Corporator and member of the Saint Patrick Church Renovation committee. McKinney was a volunteer emcee and helped raise millions for several nonprofit organizations including the Make-A-Wish foundation of Connecticut, Gilead House, the Hospital for Special Care Manes in Motion, East Hampton Lions Club, East Hampton Rotary Club, the Friends of Lake Pocotopaug and the East Hampton Volunteer Ambulance Association.

In 2011, McKinney was named Citizen of the Year East Hampton by the Village Lions club. As he announced the award, Village Lions Club President Steven Vezina said McKinney “has been a major influence in fundraising for charitable and non-profit organizations that benefit many members of our town and surrounding Connecticut communities.”

“It’s safe to say McKinney has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars during his career as master auctioneer for many organizations,” Vezina said then.

For 50 years, McKinney was a chemist concentrating in metal working fluids. McKinney worked for the Anderson Oil Company for 17 years. He then went on to Witco Corporation until 1993. That year, he became a self-employed chemical specialist agent for Fuchs Lubricants.

A prominent businessman, McKinney and his wife Anne co-owned Hilltop Associates, a major real estate holding company. Together, the McKinneys owned more than 20 commercial real estate properties and a number of single and multi-family residences throughout Middlesex County.

McKinney and his wife met in 1970 at Wall’s Dairy in East Hampton. They married on Aug. 2, 1975, and the Board of Selectmen officially declared this day Anne and Red McKinney Day. The couple raised four children in their home in Middle Haddam.

Donations to the Red McKinney Scholarship can be made c/o East Hampton Rotary Foundation, P.O. Box 358, East Hampton, CT 06424.

McKinney’s full obituary appears this week on page 22.

**AHM Services cont. from Front Page**

into the AHM mix, Giordano said. The organization is currently working on those and will announce the programs, which will include programs for self, family and community.

“Our intention is to provide people with different experiences focusing on wellness in reducing stress,” Giordano said. “That way as they go through life whether they are youths or adults, they’ll have these to focus on.”

Programs for the self will be open to all and include creative outlets, such as journaling, guided painting and classes that have to do with physical wellbeing such as Zumba or yoga, she said. Family programs will include workshops on effective communication within the family and activities that the entire family can participate in together, such as team building, arts and crafts, hiking or music.

There will also be a reflective component to the program in which folks will be able to journal about how they feel about each activity and how it benefitted their growth.

“We also heard through the strategic planning process that there’s a great number of seniors moving to these communities,” Rosenberg

said. “There can be issues around isolation.”

AHM is responding by working “a whole series of different activities” that will include the growing senior population, he said.

AHM wants to create more relationships with the communities and connect with more people and destigmatize mental health and making people more comfortable about asking for help, Rosenberg said. AHM staff wants people to realize it is a welcoming place where people can seek out support.

“That’s the third piece to this,” he said. “We hear that people don’t know either how to reach out for help with mental health or don’t want to because of the stigma. We hope to serve as a bridge.”

Part of the strategic planning process included giving community leaders a voice “so that they could feel ownership in that plan,” Rosenberg said. “AHM’s sole existence is about helping these towns.”

The strategic planning process was supported by an \$18,000 grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, he said.

*From the Editor's Desk***Observations & Ruminations**

by Mike Thompson

Happy new year – and welcome to the dawn of a new decade.

Well, maybe.

Depends who you ask.

I’ve noticed these past few weeks there seems to be a bit of a debate as to whether Wednesday, Jan. 1, started the new decade or if it won’t be until Jan. 1, 2021.

After all, those folks point out, there was no year 0. There was a year 1, and that is when the first decade began.

This is true – but guess what, there was a year 10, a year 20, and so on and so on. You didn’t just skip from 9 to 11, or 19 to 21. Those years in between had to go someplace.

You wouldn’t call 1990 part of the ‘80s, would you? Nor would you say Ronald Reagan was elected president in the 1970s.

So, this is the start of the ‘20s. Will they be the Roaring ‘20s? Well, we probably won’t go back to silent movies, and I’m guessing prohibition is gone for good. But I wouldn’t necessarily mind the return of cloche hats, flapper dresses and the Charleston.

So happy new year, and new decade.

\* \* \*

Today marks the birthday of the man affectionately known as the Clown Prince of Denmark: Victor Borge. Born on this date in 1909, Borge died in 2000, but among people of a certain age is well-remembered. He was not only a great pianist but a great comedian as well. Here are some of his more popular quotes:

“A smile is a curve which can set a lot of things straight.”

“Santa Claus has the right idea: visit people only once a year.”

“Always remember to forget the things that made you sad, but never forget to remember the things that made you glad.”

“One afternoon, when I was four years old, my father came home, and he found me in the living room in front of a roaring fire, which made him very angry. Because we didn’t have a fireplace.”

“And now, in honor of the 150th anniversary of Beethoven’s death, I would like to play ‘Clear the Saloon,’ er, ‘Clair de Lune,’ by Debussy. I don’t play Beethoven so well, but I play Debussy very badly, and Beethoven would have liked that.

“Clarinetts, like lawyers, have cases, mouthpieces, and they need a constant supply of hot air in order to function.”

“Laughter is the closest distance between two people.”

“I don’t mind growing old. I’m just not used to it.”

“Did you know that Mozart had no arms and no legs? I’ve seen statues of him on people’s pianos.”

“Humor is something that thrives between man’s aspirations and his limitations. There is more logic in humor than in anything else. Because, you see, humor is truth.”

“The conductor is a peculiar person. He turns his back on his friends in the audience, shakes a stick at his players in the orchestra, and then wonders why nobody loves him.”

“What soap is to the body, laughter is to the soul.”

“I normally don’t do requests. Unless, of course, I have been asked to do so.”

“I wish to thank my parents for making it all possible – and I wish to thank my children for making it necessary.”

# Hebron to Beef Up Blight Patrol

by Sloan Brewster

The town of Hebron is working on improving blight.

As of New Year's Eve, the Board of Selectmen was slated to – at last night's meeting which occurred after press time – add to the responsibilities of the town's wetland agent, and increase the agent's hours from 15 to 21, Town Manager Andrew Tierney said in a phone call Tuesday. The person in the position will work with the zoning enforcement officer in making sure existing regulations are followed.

The plan to expand the duties of the agent comes with the announcement by John Soderberg that he will retire this month, Tierney said. Soderberg has been in the position for 30 years and was resident state trooper for 20 years prior to that.

When he realized he would need to hire someone to fill the gap, Tierney said he decided to do something about an ongoing challenge he had been facing – blight.

"I continue as town manager to get harangued for not doing enough enforcement," he said.

In terms of blight, the new job description includes empowering the wetland agent to assist the zoning enforcement agent in bringing

property owners into compliance, the town manager said, adding that there are many blighted properties in town.

While a few property owners have cleaned up their properties, the current regulations do not allow the town to do very much if they refuse.

"There's not a lot of teeth to what we have now," Tierney said. "The people that are frustrated are saying 'Why is there not a blight ordinance?'"

The wetland agent's hours were cut from 19 to 15 several years ago, so there hasn't been anyone to do enforcement action, Tierney said. If the town wanted to put a full-fledged blight ordinance on the books, it would have to work with an attorney to write it and cover the costs of hiring someone to enforce it on a fulltime basis.

With the proposed tweaks to the wetland agent's job description, the town will "get some enforcement action" without needing to take that route.

Tierney said he regularly hears from residents who are concerned about blighted properties, including folks who say the town is not work-

ing quickly enough to solve the problem.

He said one resident in particular frequently complains about a certain property where there are old cars, an old dump truck, a pickup truck and a motorcycle. But according to Tierney, the property owner has been working to reduce the clutter, including by having an unsightly garage removed.

"He may not be in full compliance, but he's helping," Tierney said, adding that he was okay with the progress being made "as long as he's working with us."

Tierney said he and Town Planner Mike O'Leary worked on the expanded duties for the agent.

The new list of duties, which was included in the packet for last night's meeting, includes providing staff support to the Conservation Commission and the Inland Wetland Agency; working with planning and development staff on application reviews; performing inspections of construction sites; detecting wetland violations and initiating enforcement action; preparing informational materials for public on environmental matters; assisting the town with applications for the SustainableCT Program; serv-

ing as the town's representative to the Chatham Health District; and assisting the zoning enforcement officer in enforcing zoning regulations.

Dan Larson, chairman of the Board of Selectmen, said in a phone call Tuesday that he anticipates the tweaks will be approved, with the possibility that there may be some minor adjustments.

Blight has been "an area of contention" with previous building inspectors who do are busy with building inspections and working on ordinances.

"I do feel that it would definitely be a benefit to be able to have someone who would be able to pick up some of that load," Larson said.

Larson pointed to Soderberg's experience with law enforcement. He said the new person will need a background in wetlands and enforcement to understand how violations are worded and what sections of ordinances to use in writing them "otherwise they can go by the wayside because you haven't done the proper steps."

"I would like to see someone with at least some code enforcement-type background," he said. "The devil is in the details."

## East Hampton Police Remind Residents to Lock Cars

by Jack Lakowsky

The East Hampton Police Department issued a reminder on Facebook to residents that it is imperative that all cars be locked and secured.

The post reads: "[We wish] to remind all residents to please lock their car doors and secure all valuables in the vehicle in a safe place and out of view. We have attempted to notify residents of this easy safety tip on social media and other media outlets, but we are still getting complaints of unlocked vehicles being entered and items stolen. Please lock your car doors."

This issue is spread throughout suburbs surrounding Hartford.

Earlier this year, a report by the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee found that, with the exception of Waterbury, car thefts in all major Connecticut cities are declining, but that suburban areas have seen a sharp rise in these types of crimes.

Car thefts are up by close to 21 percent in the state's suburbs with populations up to 25,000. The highest concentration of car thefts has moved from the New Haven area to the

Interstate 91 and 84 corridors in the central Connecticut suburbs, Barone said.

Car theft decreased in Bridgeport, Hartford, New Britain and New Haven by more than 38 percent from 2008 to 2017, according to the report drafted by Ken Barone, project manager at the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy at Central Connecticut State University.

In the summer of 2016, three cars were stolen in East Hampton from the Mountain View Road and Waterview circle neighborhoods. All three vehicles were unlocked with keys inside.

In the committee meeting earlier this year, Glastonbury Police Chief Marshall Porter, who is on the committee, said about 55 percent of the people arrested for car theft in Glastonbury are under the age of 18. Porter said then that a small group of juveniles is committing 90 percent of the crimes.

Earlier this year, state lawmakers passed a new act aimed at curbing juvenile car thefts. Instead of putting offenders through the juvenile system, it looks to treat root causes and expands the court's ability to detain repeat offenders.

## Meet New Pastor of Zion Lutheran in Portland

by Jack Lakowsky

Zion Lutheran Church has a new pastor, temporarily anyway. The church recently welcomed new pastor the Rev. Sara Stall-Ryan.

Stall-Ryan is returning from a long sabbatical taken to focus on raising her children.

"I served in West Allis, Wis., from 2000 to 2003," Stall-Ryan said.

Stall-Ryan's husband is a Navy chaplain, a position that requires frequent relocation.

"I really got into the role of mom," Stall-Ryan said.

Stall-Ryan went on to say, when her children began school full-time, she felt compelled to rediscover her calling.

"It was the right time," Stall-Ryan said.

Stall-Ryan said she believes that, because of she and her family's travels, that she can bring fresh, new perspectives to Zion. She said that by pulling ideas from different congregations and combining them with Zion's can create a welcoming congregation that can meet current challenges and cultural changes.

"This is an exciting, loving place," Stall-Ryan said. "We need to reach out and be an even more

welcoming place."

Stall-Ryan detailed some of the differences and changes churches have seen since the last time she was a pastor. She said that churches face challenges such as declining congregants and keeping up with culture shifts leaning towards more inclusive institutions and community outreach.

"It's so different now! I didn't even have a cell phone when I started," Stall-Ryan said. "We have great changes to make, and great challenges to meet."

Stall-Ryan's stay at Zion is currently slated at six months, while church officials search for a permanent pastor.

"I'm helping through a transition period," she said.

Recently, Stall-Ryan oversaw Zion's Christmas pageant and the "Festival of Lessons and Carols" at Trinity Episcopal Church.

"I was thrown in at the biggest time of year," Stall-Ryan said. "It was really joyful; there was a lot of excitement. People were curious about who I was."

## Silver Alert Issued for Missing Colchester Man

by Karla Santos

Police recently issued a silver alert for Tom Doolan, whose disappearance has impacted his family throughout the holidays.

Doolan, a 59-year-old that grew up in Colchester and had been residing in a New London sober house went missing on Dec. 6.

Doolan's daughter, Paige Knobel, said celebrating Christmas with her father was always a tradition.

"It has been a thing for us my whole life," she said. "And then on top of everything else, my son's birthday is five days before [Christmas]."

Knobel said there's no other family member he could have gone to and there's no chance he could be out of the state.

Doolan had been at the sober house for over a year, Knobel said, adding that he has been sober for 18 months after dealing with drug addiction throughout "my whole life," she said.

Knobel said Doolan had a black coat, black back pack and is either wearing blue jeans and black or tan boots.

"I've exhausted pretty much everything that I know on Facebook or my mom saying the same thing that this is completely out of his character and not who he is for him to just disappear like this," Knobel said.

Her mother Suzanne Cordova said she has known Doolan for more than 30 years and he's had his ups and downs, but the fact that he went missing without telling anyone is not who he is.

"I swear this isn't Tom," she said. "His daughter and grand babies are everything to him."

Both Knobel and Cordova have been using social media as well as other resources to help find Doolan.

"Please keep sharing and help me and my kids find him," Knobel said in a Facebook post on Christmas Day. "He wouldn't have missed his grandson's birthday. I'm trying to hold it



Tom Doolan

all together and it's hard. Merry Christmas everyone."

"I can't express enough to everyone we would not be doing this if we didn't feel an overwhelming feeling, something is very wrong," Cordova said on her Facebook page. "This is not Tom, ok. Never has been in 30 years. Please I'm begging you all to please share if not for me then for my daughter who is literally falling apart over this."

Other media outlets have reported that Doolan's family has unsuccessfully contacted jails, hospitals and rehab centers to help track him down.

Doolan is described as a white male with brown hair and blue eyes. Doolan's height is about 5'10" and he weighs about 190 pounds.

Anyone with any information regarding the location of Doolan is asked to contact the New London Police Department at 860-447-5269.

# Pair Makes Colchester Group Home Festive for the Holidays

by Karla Santos

A collaboration that started with a Facebook post turned out to give local adult males with intellectual disabilities Christmas decorations, gifts, a pizza party – and most importantly, an uplifted spirit.

This community effort was put together by Kathy Fiala and Shelley Gartenberg, who have made afghans for the group home in the past.

Fiala said the initial Facebook post informed the community that the group home was most likely not going to have a Christmas because of funds.

“It just bloomed after that,” Fiala said. “We were getting presents for the kids [adult males], we got all kinds of things and there was a donation of a front-loading washer.”

Three Christmas trees were donated. One of them was given to the girl’s group home next door. The names and addresses of the group home were not released due to privacy regulations.

“All kinds of things were given to the boys, it was just amazing,” Fiala said. “It was hugely successful. They got all kinds of clothes, jackets, shirts.”

Among other presents given to the home and its residents are included plates, mixing bowls, a Keurig, silverware and more.

Fiala and Gartenberg also prepared a stocking with presents for each of the six residents of the group home.

The residents were surprised with a party, a decorated home and presents during Christmas eve.

The surprise took place after they returned to the home after spending the day working in the community.

“They knew there was going to be something for Christmas, they just didn’t realize how very much was coming,” Fiala said. By the time they returned, “it just looked like a whole different place.”

“We got all the presents and everything was beautiful,” Fiala said. “All the trees were lit, the decorations were there. Everybody had a stocking. It was just phenomenal.”

People from another group home also stopped by for the celebration on Christmas eve.

Fiala said the group of males had a good Christmas because “they didn’t expect to have anything.”

Gartenberg said donations are still coming.

“I just had someone over the weekend drop off a duffel bag full of mens clothes and it’s just amazing,” she said. “We got DVDs for them, we got gifts, it was just great. They loved it.”

Simone Savelle, house manager of the group home, said the donations were important because the residents have a low budget for food and household supplies.

“We go to the food bank and we do everything we can to budget everything,” Savelle said. “The fact that all our community, a good amount of people were able to donate so many things like decorations, because they barely had any decorations to begin with.”

Savelle said the donations “brought the house to life.”

“Not only decoration wise, but the fact that they were able to have quality items bought, it’s just really amazes me,” Savelle said. “Even the guys walk in the house and they realize the house looks different. It’s not what it was. It’s



**A community effort led to holiday decorations and even a surprise holiday party for a local group home for adults with intellectual disabilities.**

just really warm and beautiful and for Shelly and Kathy to be able to do that and put their heart into trying to put the word out there, gather all these things, they even wrapped them and then the fact they even went to all these different places to pick up all the items it’s so sweet.”

In addition, Savelle said one of the group home residents has autism and “doesn’t know any better,” but seeing the house with the Christ-

mas decorations is “uplifting” to him.

“All he knows is he sees nicer things and he’s happy,” Savelle said. “He doesn’t get that these were donations but what he does get is that the house looks different, is brighter, is more colorful.” “It’s just beautiful to see that people who actually need it were able to get that. And the people who come in they feel it, they see the difference.”

## Holiday Drive Yields \$16K for Andover Food Bank

by Sloan Brewster

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, Andover residents raised more than \$16,000 for the Andover Food Bank and Pantry.

The grand total of donations for the cause clocked in at \$16,030, with the final \$40 coming in this past Sunday after services at Andover’s First Congregational Church, which runs the pantry.

In a Facebook post Monday morning, Joan Soucy, pantry executive director, offered “Many thanks to our great community” and shared the story of how the final donations rolled in at the coffee hour after church when she announced that the pantry was \$10 short of its \$16,000 goal.

“Within 10 seconds after announcing this shortage, two fine gentlemen immediately reached into their pockets and each pulled out a 20 bill,” Soucy wrote. “That helped us reach our goal and bring us over by \$30!”

The push for donations began after 19 local families agreed to match any donations up to \$8,000 that came in by Christmas, said Adrian Mandeville, vice first selectman, who made the initial shout out to friends and neighbors to challenge the community to pony up “dollar for dollar” for the cause.

The result was \$8,030 from residents and businesses as well as churches and food pantries in neighboring communities and \$8,000 in matching funds from the group of families.

The funds will support the pantry in the coming year, Soucy said. Since the church supplies the building and the staff are volunteers, the

pantry operates with very little overhead, save for heat and electricity.

“The remainder – every single bit – will go towards food,” she said. “We’re lucky that we’re able to operate on a very small amount and feed a lot of people because we don’t have overhead.”

The funds came in at a good time as donations tend to slow after the holiday season and the pantry helps folks in need throughout the year, Soucy said. The funds will prevent worries that it will run out of money in the coming year.

While it has never run out, after Thanksgiving, staff sometimes begins to fret that there won’t be enough funding to bring them through Christmas, Soucy said. At Thanksgiving the pantry gets help from Foodshare, in Bloomfield, but for Christmas the pantry is on its own.

But, “like a miracle the money comes in,” she said.

The pantry distributes Christmas meals, clothing and gifts, which come in in various ways including through Stuff-A-Cruiser and Stuff-A-Bus.

“We have it set up like a boutique, all the clothing is on hangers,” Soucy said.

Folks can come in and get food, choose coats, hats, mittens and other clothing and pick up gifts for children. Children can also find presents for their parents.

“It’s a really nice thing,” Soucy said “It gives them a sendoff at the end of the year with a good

amount of food and clothing and gifts.”

The clothing that is not distributed is bagged up and given to another church.

A neighbor of Soucy, Mandeville said he was inspired by all the voluntary hard work she puts forth for the food pantry.

“I see all of the effort that that woman has been putting in, it’s literally a fulltime job for her and her husband,” he said. “I just see the amount of effort she’s putting in, if that isn’t inspiring then what is?”

He organized a challenge two years ago, joining with four friends to make matching donations and raised \$6,000, Mandeville said. This year, they upped the ante, adding families to the ranks of matching donors and promising to match funds up to \$8,000 for a \$16,000 goal.

Mandeville said he called a long list of people to get the 19 families who made the commitment. Once donations began to roll in, the spirit of giving took over and they called and said they wanted to do it again next year.

The challenge was not just about helping others but also raising awareness that there are people in Andover who are just trying to get by, Mandeville said.

“As a community, we all want to give around the holidays but I think we forget sometimes that there’s need locally,” he said. “Being involved in the town, there are people within our community that need our help you want to start here first. It’s much easier to be dismissive when you don’t know people are there.”

Mandeville said he was particularly impressed with the donations that came in from surrounding towns and other churches and organizations, pointing out that all the area communities help each other.

While there are 130 Andover families who take advantage of the food pantry, it is not exclusively for locals and folks from nearby towns also come around, Mandeville said.

The pantry does pretty well for the community, Mandeville said, explaining that the town is unable to contribute as the organization is run by a church.

A grant the pantry received from Walmart a couple years ago helped it with infrastructure, allowing it to replace refrigerators and do some building fixes, he said.

“It couldn’t be used for food, it had to be infrastructure,” he said. “That really allowed them to get into a good position to be able to help people.”

According to the website, the pantry partners with Foodshare to provide the Mobile Foodshare twice a month on every other Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. The Mobile Foodshare brings fresh food to those that can use it. While selections vary from week to week, it almost always includes bread, fresh produce and other items.

The pantry provides food and other household items to “those who could use a hand,” the website reads.

## Obituaries

### Marlborough

#### Sara K. Lawley

Sara K. Lawley, 76, of Marlborough, passed away after battling multiple cancers since 2001, on Tuesday, Dec. 17.

Sara was born in Carbondale, Pa., to the late Dr. Herbert Donald and Vivian (Edwards) Kirkland. She grew up in Newburgh, N.Y. As a youth, she enjoyed her days spending time at the Powleton Club playing tennis and swimming with her brother. She attended school at Walnut Hill in Natick, Mass., going on to college at Middlebury in Vermont. While attending Middlebury, she met Warren Lawley. They were married and moved to Middletown in 1964 before settling in Marlborough to raise their three sons and enjoy many beautiful summers on Lake Terramugus.

Sara never stopped living in spite of all that attacked her. Her will to survive and live was truly remarkable. She was a selfless woman, who always put her children before herself even if it meant she would have to go without. From 1979 until 1991, she went to work at the Marlborough Country Barn where she eventually became the manager of the hardware store, creating her own paint colors that are still mixed. Sara then became involved in her son Jon's company, performing the accounting duties and running a "tight ship." She continued to become an integral part of Atlantic Telecom where she continued her support and knowledge to her sons. Sara was an avid gardener and would always be willing to share her ideas with those who would ask.

Sara was predeceased by her parents, Dr. H.D. Kirkland II and Vivian (Edwards) Kirkland; her stepmother, Gladys Kirkland; her sons, Eric Kirkland Lawley and Jonathan Edward Lawley.

She is survived by her son, Kirk Lawley of Colchester; grandchildren, Meredith and Jonathan Lawley of Seaside Beach, S.C.; Lucas, Chloe, Kara and Quincy Lawley and their mother Janet Lawley, all of Colchester; her brother, Dr. H.D. Kirkland III and his wife Pon of Thailand; her precious cats; and numerous friends.

She had an unrelenting will to live and will be truly missed by all.

Services will be private and at the convenience of the family.

The family would like to give special thanks to the caregivers at Hartford Health Care for their support.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the American Cancer Society in Sara's name.

The Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with arrangements. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

### East Hampton

#### Janet Marie Cook

Janet Marie (Abbey) Cook, 78, of East Hampton, passed away unexpectedly at her home Wednesday, Dec. 18. Born Jan. 15, 1941, in Middletown, she was the daughter of the late Marshall and Jennie (Alessi) Abbey.

Janet was a graduate of East Hampton High School and was a retired X-ray technician, having worked at Middlesex Hospital for 25 years. Janet was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and was very active in the East Hampton Historical Society, the Old Home Days Committee and had recently joined the East Hampton Lions Club. She was a very religious person and was a member of the Cornerstone Church in East Hampton.

Janet was a collector of everything, she loved musicals and enjoyed going to plays, but most of all she loved her family. She is survived by her son, Daniel H. Cook; three daughters, Deborah A. Stockburger, Danna L. Cook, Danielle Zoldack, all of East Hampton; two sisters, Marsha Fazzino of Portland, Arlene McArthur of East Hampton; seven grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

She was predeceased by her former husband, Arvard Cook.

A funeral service was held Monday, Dec. 23, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Friends called Monday, Dec. 23, at the funeral home, before the service. Burial will be in the spring.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the East Hampton Historical Society, 6 Bevin Blvd., East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

### East Hampton

#### Robert Leon McKinney

Robert (Red) L. McKinney, 72, of the village of Middle Haddam, East Hampton, passed away peacefully with his family by his side Tuesday, Dec. 24, due to complications following a stroke.

Born Aug. 2, 1947, in Hartford, Red was the son of the late Leon Edward and Minnie Theresa (Hickey) McKinney. A lifelong resident of East Hampton, Red attended East Hampton schools and was part of the graduating class of 1965. He went on to earn an associate's degree from Mitchell College and bachelor's degree from Central Connecticut State University.

For 50 years, Red worked as a chemical specialist with a concentration in metal working fluids. Red was employed by Anderson Oil & Chemical from 1970 to 1987 and then moved on to Witco Corporation until 1993, when he became a self-employed chemical specialist agent for Fuchs Lubricants. Along with his wife, Anne, Red was also the co-owner of HTA, LLC, a commercial and residential property acquisition and management company for 40 years.

Red found immense joy and personal reward in giving back to his community in East Hampton and beyond. Red began his community involvement as a member of East Hampton Parks and Recreation in the early 1970s. At age 26, he was the youngest member ever elected to the East Hampton Board of Selectmen and served from 1973 to 1977. A member of the East Hampton Democratic Town Committee from 1974 to present, Red served as chairman from 1980 to 1990.

Red had been a member of the East Hampton Rotary Club since 1974, the longest-tenured member, and a charter member of the Old Home Days Association since 1978. The highlight of his year was the second weekend of July, Old Home Days weekend, when he had the pleasure of celebrating the people of East Hampton and surrounding towns, whom he adored. Red was also part of the Middle Haddam Library Board, a Middlesex Hospital Corporator and member of the Saint Patrick Church Renovation committee.

Red was a volunteer emcee and live auctioneer, helping to raise millions of dollars for several non-profit organizations such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Connecticut, Gilead House, Hospital for Special Care Manes in Motion, East Hampton Lion's Club, East Hampton Rotary Club, East Hampton Friends of Lake, East Hampton Volunteer Ambulance Association, and numerous other non-profit organizations and local charities.

He will forever be remembered as a man with a microphone in his hand and the town of East Hampton in his heart.

Red has been recognized by numerous organizations for his community service, volunteerism and fundraising efforts. He is three-time recipient of the prestigious Paul Harris Fellow Award and, among other accolades, was honored as Rotarian of the Year, Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year, East Hampton Citizen of the Year, and, above all, #1 Dad and Grandpa.

Red was an avid outdoorsman, who also enjoyed golfing, traveling and spending time with family and friends. He had the opportunity to travel the world, but found no location more treasured than his beloved town of East Hampton.

Red met his wife Anne (Coughlin) in 1970 at Wall's Dairy in East Hampton. They married Aug. 2, 1975, which was officially proclaimed Anne and Red McKinney Day by the East Hampton Board of Selectmen, and together they raised four children in their home in Middle Haddam.

Red is survived by the love of his life, Anne (Coughlin) McKinney and their four children, Shannon Roy and her husband, Dan, Taren O'Connor, son-in-law, Brian O'Connor, Kirsten Penner and her husband, Kevin, and Ryan McKinney and his wife, Jessica. He leaves nine beautiful grandchildren, Colin, Elise and Sophie Roy, Nolan, Brennan and Teagan O'Connor, Owen and Lauren Penner, and Abigail McKinney, along with his tenth grandchild, due Jan. 10. In addition, he is survived by his mentor and "big brother" Paul Peszynski; sisters-in-law, Rita (Rockford) Gibbons, Denise Painter, Catherine (William) Holmes; numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and countless dear friends.

He is predeceased by his brother-in-law, Kenneth Painter, and his sweet niece, Kelly Coughlin.



Relatives and friends called at East Hampton High School, 15 N. Maple St., East Hampton, Sunday, Dec. 29. A funeral liturgy was celebrated Monday, Dec. 30, in St. Patrick Church, 47 West High St., East Hampton, followed by a burial in St. Patrick Cemetery.

In June 2019, The Red McKinney Scholarship was established in Red's honor by the East Hampton Rotary. In lieu of flowers, those who wish may send memorial donations to The Red McKinney Scholarship, c/o East Hampton Rotary Foundation, P.O. Box 358, East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

### Hatboro, Pa.

#### Gretchen Kimball Jamieson

Gretchen Kimball Jamieson, 83, of Hatboro, Pa., died Saturday, Dec. 14.

Predeceased by her husband of 61 years, Leland Shattuck Jamieson Jr., she leaves their two children, Eric and Heidi; daughter-in-law, Lynn; son-in-law, Keith; three grandchildren, Scott, Bill and Heather; a brother, Thomas M. Kimball; and two sisters, Polly Jones and Laurie K. Mottle.

Daughter of the late Barbara Playfair Kimball and the late Robert Merriman Kimball, she was educated at Northfield School for Girls and Simmons College. She spent more than 10 years working for the State of Connecticut, serving both the Department of Health and the Department of Social Services. In her retirement she enjoyed painting, knitting and her cairn terriers Weftie and Liberty.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be sent to the charity of your choice.

Condolences may be made at [ciavarellifuneralhomes.com](http://ciavarellifuneralhomes.com).

### Portland

#### Thomas E. McCabe

Thomas E. McCabe, 61, of Portland and formerly a longtime resident of Glastonbury, suddenly passed away peacefully in his sleep Wednesday, Nov. 27.

He was born in Hartford Dec. 20, 1957, to the late Rita (Gorman) McCabe and Edward Francis McCabe. He is survived by his daughter, Kerry Morgan and her wife Jessie of Taunton, Mass.; a sister, Marcia Cianciolo and her husband Vincent of West Palm Beach, Fla.; and a brother, Michael McCabe of Los Angeles, Calif. He is also survived by loving nieces and their families, as well as a treasured family of cousins.

Tom was raised in Glastonbury, where he was a graduate of Glastonbury High School and went on to attend and graduate from the University of Maine with a B.S. in business administration. Upon his graduation he returned to Glastonbury, a town he was proud to call home. Prior to his retirement, he was the owner of McCabe Painting, painting many residential and commercial buildings in Glastonbury and surrounding towns. A sports enthusiast he enjoyed playing sports and being a spectator, cheering on his Boston Red Sox and Boston Bruins or his favorite professional golfers on tour.

Tom was a man who loved life, being surrounded by friends, and entertaining others with his humor that will be missed.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Saturday, Jan. 4, at 11 a.m., in SS. Isidore and Maria Parish at St. Augustine Church, 55 Hopewell Rd., South Glastonbury. Burial will follow in St. Augustine Cemetery. Friends may call at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, prior to the Mass from 9:30-10:30 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to either Greystone Retirement Home, 44 High St., Portland, CT 06480, (860) 342-2509 or Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, 200 Vesey St., 28th Floor, New York, NY 10281 (800) 533-CURE (2873).

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

### Colchester

#### Dominick Sanzone

Dominick C. Sanzone, 63, beloved husband of Shawna (Ballou) Sanzone, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Dec. 17, at his home in Dayville. He was born in Leesburg, La., on May 12, 1956, to the late Dominick F. Sanzone and Alice (Smith) Reed.



Dom graduated from Bacon Academy 1974 and was raised on the family farm in Colchester; doing chores before school at an early age helped shape him into a strong worker with good work ethics. Dom was a jack of all trades. He worked at the U.S. Submarine Base in Groton for 33 years; he started off as a laborer and worked his way up to a production control scheduler and was looking forward to retiring.

Dom, also known as "Papa Bear," had a good sense of humor and lots of patience, making him a great teacher and enjoyable to be around. He was a car and truck enthusiast who loved metal and fabrication with a passion to build or modify anything he saw. Dom was an avid biker who loved animals, tattoos, guns, westerns, *Star Trek* and was a collector of many things.

"Papa Bear" will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

Dom is survived by his wife, Shawna Sanzone of Dayville; his mother, Alice Reed of Zellwood, Fla.; his children, Cassandra Marvin and husband Rich of Colchester, April Walden and husband Rex of East Hampton, Dominick R.T. Sanzone of Covington, Ga., and stepson Bruce Ballou and wife Carrie of Rumney, N.H.; his sister, Donna Brown and husband Rob of Colchester; grandchildren, Andrew, Ashya, Patrick, Avery, Logan, Charlize, Trista, Kiara, Nicanor and Nevaeh; great-grandchildren, Todd, Tegan and Andrew, as well as several nieces and nephews.

Dom was predeceased by his father, Dominick F. Sanzone, and his stepfather, Stanley Reed.

A celebration of Dom's life was held Saturday, Dec. 28, at Belmont Funeral Home, 144 S. Main St., Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Dominick's memory may be made to the American Cancer Society or the American Diabetes Association.

Visit [belmontfh.com](http://belmontfh.com) to offer condolences to the family.

### Marlborough

#### Anne Bodey Travaglini

Anne (English) Bodey Travaglini, 84, of Marlborough, wife of the late Warren G. Bodey and the late Thomas Travaglini, died at home Monday, Dec. 23. She was born Feb. 14, 1935, in Winsted, daughter of the late Angelo and Anna (Guilmet) English.



She raised her family in East Hartford and Marlborough, remarried, then moved to Colebrook and later Hernando, Fla. She returned to Marlborough in 2011 to be near her family, after the passing of her second husband.

Prior to her retirement she was an interior designer/decorator and owned Essentially Yours in Marlborough. She spent time as a realtor and taught fashion merchandising and designing. Anne graduated from Hartford College for Women with a degree in Fashion Merchandising and Design. She was a member of the Marlborough Community Arts, was a founding member of St. John Fisher Church, was a former 4H leader and active in the PTO when her children were young.

Anne is survived by her three children, Philip Bodey and daughter-in-law Jayne Cluett of Southington, Ellen Bodey-Kocher and her husband Etienne of Switzerland, Justin Bodey and his wife Nadia of Marlborough, seven grandchildren; Justin Bodey, Adrienne Kocher, Devon Bodey, Julien Kocher, Joel Kocher, Samantha and Alex Bodey, and sister-in-law Sandra Adams of Winsted in addition to many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by two brothers and a sister Francis and Gaeton English, Marie Reichold and very special niece Elizabeth English, nephews Michael and Robert English.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Tuesday, Dec. 31, at St. John Fisher Church, 30 Jones Hollow Rd., Marlborough. Burial followed in Marlboro Cemetery. Friends called at Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, on Monday, Dec. 30.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to St. John Fisher Church, 30 Jones Hollow Rd., Marlborough, CT. 06447.

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

East Hampton

Dr. Joseph Edmund Hickey

Dr. Joseph Edmund Hickey of East Hampton passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his family Thursday, Dec. 26. Born in Boston, Mass., Nov. 15, 1935, he was the son of the late Joseph and Alice (White) Hickey of Boston. He enjoyed and loved his wonderful family of two sisters and three brothers. He has lived in Connecticut since marrying in 1964.



Dr. Hickey graduated from Boston English High School, Saint John's Seminary, Brighton, Mass., and St. Anselm College in Manchester, N.H. He received his Master's Degree from Central Connecticut State University and his doctorate (Ed.D) in Education from Boston University, completing his doctoral dissertation under the direction of the late Dr. Lawrence Kohlberg at the Lab of Human Development at Harvard University. As a teaching and research fellow at Harvard as Research Director, and eight years as director of the "Just Community Project," at the Niantic Women's Prison and published a book entitled "Toward a Just Correctional System" the subject of which highlighted how educational opportunity for a certain segment of the prison population had the potential to turn lives around.

Throughout his consulting career he published numerous journal articles and papers. Through a collaborative effort between the State of Connecticut and Harvard University he was director of the "Just Community Project" at the Niantic Women's Prison and published a book entitled "Toward a Just Correctional System" the subject of which highlighted how educational opportunity for a certain segment of the prison population had the potential to turn lives around.

His writing also focused on creating an economic structure within the prison system which would successfully prepare an inmate for release and help to relieve a state's financial burden in running an institution. After spending 12 years at Harvard as Research Director, and eight years as director of the "Just Community Project," Dr. Hickey concentrated his efforts in the classroom at the University of New Haven as an associate professor and department chairman where he taught many members of Connecticut's law enforcement community.

Dr. Hickey spent 15 years serving on the Board of Trustees of Cheshire Academy in Cheshire. He served as chairman of the board in his final years at the academy. He also served in the United States Navy.

Joe was an avid reader with a special interest in history especially military history, theology, philosophy, Ireland, and wooden boat building. To that end, he completed a wooden boat building course in Mystic. For many years, you would find him sailing his wooden Comet sailboat on Lake Pocotopaug in East Hampton.

He was always eager for lively conversation on those subjects of interest to him, especially Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire where his lively family had a summer home. Joe held dear to the memories of the wonderful summers he and his five siblings spent boating, swimming, water skiing and sailing. He loved music and one could often hear him singing as he worked in his yard on Meeks Point Road. He often would remark when asked why he was singing he'd respond, "I am a very happy man."

Joe was a man of deep faith and love of his family. He leaves behind his wife and best friend of sixty years, Amy (Danaher) Hickey; son Joseph III and his wife, Marielle and their children Shannon, Brennan and Seamus; his daughter Amy Cady and children Colum and Claire; and his son Lt. Col. Cornelius Hickey, USMC, and his wife Anne and children Cornelius (CJ), Aidan and Margaret.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held today, Jan. 3, at 11 a.m., at St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. A reception will be held in the Parish Center following the Mass. Burial will be private in Sacred Heart Cemetery in Meriden.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Middlesex Hospice c/o Department of Philanthropy, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457 or to St. Patrick Church, 47 West High St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

Colchester

Conchita Oppelt

Conchita "Connie" Oppelt, 84, of Colchester, passed away peacefully at Harrington Court Sunday, Dec. 29. Born in Philadelphia, Pa., on April 29, 1935, she was one of seven children born to the late Auerlio and Viola (Fredericks) Cortez. Growing up with such a large family taught Connie the importance of strength and resilience, values she would hold on to throughout her lifetime.



On March 21, 1966, at the age of 30, Connie married the great love of her life, the late Thomas "Tommy" Edward Oppelt. Over the years they were blessed with four children, five grandchildren, and five (soon to be six) great-grandchildren. The couple enjoyed over 47 years of marriage until Tommy's passing in 2013.

Connie lived a vibrant life: she loved music, dancing, cooking and sweets of any kind; she also enjoyed playing setback, but her infectious smile and laugh always gave her hand away. Although she never graduated high school, Connie instilled the importance of education in her children and grandchildren and consistently showed them the importance of her core values, strength and resilience. In early 2019, that strength and resilience were shown once again as Connie rallied to recover from illness and "graduated" from hospice care.

Connie is survived by her children, Doreen Oppelt, David Oppelt, Sandra Carrier and her husband William of Colchester, and Thomas Oppelt Jr.; her grandchildren, Rebecca Hooper and her husband Tim, David Oppelt Jr., Jason Carrier and his partner Denise, Todd Carrier, and William Carrier and his partner Talia; and her great-grandchildren, Laurel, Amber, Isabella, Desan, Leyla, and baby Scarlet, who will be arriving in 2020. Connie also leaves behind numerous extended family members and friends.

Although this is a very difficult time for the family, they have found comfort in knowing that Connie and Tommy have finally been reunited. During her stay at Harrington Court, her roommate recalled many nights where Connie would meet with her husband in her dreams. They would have long conversations and sing together and she remembered the past and all of the words to their favorite songs, "Take Me Out to the Ballgame," "Downtown Strutters' Ball," and "I Don't Know Why I Loved You Like I Do."

Connie's family would like to extend their gratitude to the staff of Harrington Court for the excellent care they have provided over the years; their devotion and love for Connie was shown in the quality of life she was able to have while residing there. The family would also like to thank Beacon Hospice for their commitment and compassion during such a difficult time.

Connie's life will continue to be celebrated every day by those who loved her. Therefore, in accordance with her wishes and in lieu of a formal funeral service, the family requests that memorial donations in her name be made to the Alzheimer's Foundation of America or to Our Companions Animal Rescue & Sanctuary.

The Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of arrangements. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

East Hampton

Sandra Durgan

Sandra (Tourtelotte) "Rustie" Durgan, 81, of East Hampton and Marlborough, widow of Carlton Earl Durgan, passed away peacefully at Marlborough Health Care Friday, Dec. 27.



Born Oct. 19, 1938, in Hartford, she was raised in Southington, on the Stakey Farm by her loving foster parents Lydia and Fred Stakey. Sandra raised her family in East Hampton on Cone Rd. for 20 years, and then on Gadpouch Road in Cobalt for 35 years. Sandra was a resident of Marlborough Health Care for the past six years. Sandra attended East Hampton High School where she met her beloved husband of 54 years and was married in 1956.

Sandra was a lifetime member of the Girl Scouts and spent many years as a Brownie and Girl Scout leader participating in summer camps at the Fireman's Grounds at Salmon River and holding summer meetings for the girls at her home. She was part of the committee that helped create what is now known as the Daisy Scouts and was a summer host for International Exchange Girl Scouts. She was also a cheerleading coach at Vinal Tech in Middletown for many years.

Sandra enjoyed bird watching, house plants, flowers, cats, NASCAR, country music, and UConn women's basketball. Above all, she especially enjoyed her children and family. She passed down her love of sewing, embroidery, knitting, and crafting to her children, scouts and friends. Sandra was a most beloved mother, wife and best friend who always had a smile for everyone.

She is survived by her two daughters, Dianne G. Durgan, Debra F. Wilmes and husband Michael; her sister, Francina "Tiny" I. Emilia; four grandchildren, Craig S. Sobolewski and wife Sarah York, Jaelyn N. Sobolewski, Jennifer L. Sobolewski, and Alicia M. Wilmes and fiancé Andrew Fleisher; her foster brothers, Kenneth "Buddy" Stakey, William Stakey, and several nieces and nephews and grandnieces and grandnephews.

Besides her loving husband Carlton and her foster parents, Sandra was predeceased by her daughter, Darlene L. Durgan; brothers, Francis S. Tourtelotte, George T. Downer, Donald O. Tourtelotte; and her sister, Geraldine V. Eskedal.

Funeral services were held Thursday, Jan. 2, at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial was at Union Hill Cemetery in Middle Haddam.

We would like to thank the staff at Marlborough Healthcare for their caring and support.

For those who wish to make a donation in her memory, please support the American Diabetes Association at [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org) or the Alzheimer's Association at [alz.org](http://alz.org).

To leave online condolences, visit [spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

Colchester

Wayne Allen Ross

Wayne Allen Ross, 51, of Colchester, passed away at home Friday, Dec. 20. Born in Norwich Nov. 9, 1968, he was a son of the late Harold Lester and Gloria Mae (Shaw) Ross.



He leaves a sister, Phyllis and her husband Bob Taylor; a brother, Robert Ross and his wife Rose Sack and their grandson, Chase Brown; a sister-in-law, Linda Ross; nieces, Kim and husband Justin Hunt, Samantha and husband Sean Poulin and their daughter, Piper; a nephew, Mike Taylor and wife Christina; his close friend, "Mama" Judy Kudrak; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by his wife, Jessica Ross and a brother, Harold Ross Jr.

Wayne was working for S&S Worldwide in Colchester. He was an avid fan of the Miami Dolphins and NASCAR racing. He loved Goofy and will be remembered as a fun-loving guy.

A memorial service was held Saturday, Dec. 28, at the First Congregational Church of Norwich, 81 East Town St., Norwich.

Donations in his memory may be made to benefit his nieces and nephews, c/o Robert Ross, 27 Meyer Rd., Colchester, CT 06415.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of arrangements. For online condolences, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

East Hampton

James T. Geis

James T. (Jim) Geis, 79, died peacefully at home in East Hampton Monday, Dec. 23. He was born May 2, 1940, in Queens, N.Y., to the late James and Mary (Cermak) Geis.



Jim leaves his wife of 57 years, Kathy, three daughters and their spouses, Kelly and Bruce Froehlich, Kristin and Sean Childs and Kathleen and Vincent Callahan. He is also survived by two sisters, Marianne Lowe and Geraldine and her husband Joseph Sciarrino; a sister-in-law, Linda Poit; nine grandchildren and a great-grandchild; also several nieces and nephews.

He graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering and a master's degree in business administration. He was employed by United Technologies for 30 years. He was a volunteer fireman in Glastonbury for many years. Jim enjoyed playing and viewing many sports including golf, baseball and softball. He continued to play softball into his early 70s. He was a devoted New York Yankees fan. Jim also enjoyed spending time with his family and many special dear friends. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus since April 1, 1969. When the Knights re-chartered the local Council 6190 in East Hampton, he was the first Worthy Financial Secretary.

The family would like to thank the staff at Middlesex Hospital Hospice Care, Middletown, and Masonic Care, Wallingford, for their kindness and gentle care. A Mass of Christian

Burial will be celebrated Saturday, Jan. 11, at St. Patrick Church, 47 West High Street, East Hampton, at 11 a.m.

There will be no calling hours, with the burial private at the convenience of the family.

Colchester

Mary Ann Standish

Mary Ann Standish, 79, of Colchester, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 31, at Gaylord Hospital after a courageous and valiant battle with lung disease. Born Aug. 8, 1940, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late James and Sophia (Bury) Shea.



Mary Ann leaves to mourn her loss three children, Howard and James Standish, both of Colchester, Sarah and her husband Michael Beebe of Old Saybrook; a brother, Frank Shea and his wife June of Moodus; three grandchildren, Alexa, Devyn and Aubrey; a great-grandchild, Avianna; her companion of 15 years, Donald Davidson; and many extended family members and friends. In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by a granddaughter, Olivia Beebe.

Mary Ann retired several years ago after having worked for many years as a typist for the *Regional Shopper* and also in food services at Bacon Academy and McDonald's in Colchester. Mary Ann was a talented crafter and she enjoyed volunteering at the Colchester Senior Center, making hats for cancer patients. She also loved playing bingo at the Senior Center and was usually found holding the winning bingo cards. She will be remembered by her children as a loving and devoted mother who enjoyed singing and dancing and watching the birds in her own backyard.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday, Jan. 4, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, beginning at 10:30 a.m. with a call hour, followed by the funeral service at 11:30 a.m. at the funeral home. Burial will be private at a later date.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Colchester Senior Center, 95 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415.

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