

RIVEREAST

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New Hall Dedicated... At a recent dedication of the reopening of Marlborough American Legion Post 197, Bernie Hoyland, center, was honored with the American Legion Legionnaire of the Year Award for 2020. He's shown with Paul Spedaliere, left, past national vice-commander/past department state commander, and Dennis Beauregard, right, present department state commander. See story on page 6.

Belltown PZC Gives Banquet Hall Go-Ahead

by Jack Lakowsky

East Hampton's Planning and Zoning Commission approved a special permit allowing Roncalli Institute – owners of Saint Clements Castle – to construct a special assembly hall at their meeting Wednesday evening.

The assembly hall will operate as a wedding and event venue, according to officials.

The banquet hall construction is subject to approval from Chatham Health District. Final jurisdiction of the site plan rests with the Connecticut State Department of Health because the hall's sewage flows are anticipated to exceed 2,000 gallons per day, according to an email written by Chatham Health District Chief Sanitarian Steve Knauf.

Connecticut Department of Public Health environmental analyst Amanda J. Clark said that several issues need to be addressed by the Saint Clements owners before she can review or approve any construction. These include providing a more accurate site plan and including a separating distance arc for their geo wells.

Roncalli has not yet submitted a building plan to either health agency.

The statements from health officials contradict what Saint Clements board member Peter Calan told the *RiverEast* in a December interview after PZC approved a zone change on the property. Calan said, with that zone change, all issues had been addressed.

Knauf also said in his email that the commission needs to receive assurance from Roncalli that a maximum occupancy number be adhered to. Planning and Zoning Official Jeremy DeCarli said the applicant suggested a

number of 150.

"This has been going on for quite a while," said Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Ray Zatorski.

Roncalli officials and their attorney were present in the meeting, although they were not permitted to speak to the commission due to the nature of the proceedings, and vice-versa.

Evening noise level was again the main concern addressed by officials.

Roncalli has installed indoor soundproofing equipment. Last year, Roncalli officials led their neighbors on a walkthrough of the parcel to show soundproofing efforts. All outdoor music or other noise will need to be acoustic and must be stopped no later than 8 p.m., according to PZC officials.

PZC board member Angelus Tammaro expressed concern about excessive noise, citing a personal experience when he lived near a local bar.

"They were blasting music into the wee hours of the night," he said.

DeCarli said that the bar in question did not adhere to the same soundproofing engineering as the Saint Clements assembly hall. He said an extensive sound report had been conducted.

Tammaro said that sound amplification must be restricted, even if inside a soundproof building.

"We've heard the concerns of residents," Tammaro said. "I think we need to do more, I'm not convinced about the soundproofing. It doesn't take much to wake up a baby."

See Banquet Hall page 2

Colchester Bringing 'Oliver!' to Life

by Karla Santos

The streets of Victorian England will come to life locally as the Colchester Community Theatre presents *Oliver!*, a play that features the life of an orphan boy and his hardships growing up in a workhouse.

The play, a 1960 musical based on Charles Dickens' classic *Oliver Twist*, will be showcased on Feb. 14 at 7 p.m., Feb. 15 at 2 and 7 p.m. and Feb. 16 at 2 p.m.

Performances will all be held at the Bacon Academy High School Auditorium, 611 Norwich Ave.

The Colchester Community Theatre also tries to give back to the community and in addition to the show, they are running a food drive for the Colchester Food Bank. They have been running the food drive since the beginning of January and it's going to run all the way through the last performance of the show on Feb. 16.

"We would love for people who have purchased tickets or who are planning to come to see the show to bring a donation of non-perishable food items," Ozmun said.

People can now drop off items at town hall and the theatre will be accepting donations during the shows.

Wallis Johnson, director of the show and one of the founders of Colchester Community Theatre, said this is the second time the theatre has produced an *Oliver* show. The first time was "a long time ago," in the initial years of the Colchester Community Theatre.

"It's a great show about ultimately hope for a little boy," Johnson said. "It's about a little boy who is orphaned at birth, who goes through tremendous hardships growing up in a workhouse in 1850 London. He is then sold to an undertaker."

Johnson said the little boy then runs away from there and finds his way to Fagin's den where he's taught how to steal in order to bring in money for Fagin. Fagin is an older man, the leader of a group of children that go out to steal and he is the receiver of the goods.

Mike Puscas of Colchester is one of the actors in the production. He has been an actor for close to 20 years and he is playing the part of Fagin.

"Fagin is a very interesting character," Puscas said. "He's basically a thief but a lovable thief. By the end of the play you wish him the very best. You are not angry with him in anyway

because you realize he is more of a caricature."

Fagin has 20 to 30 street boys that steal for him, but he provides them with a place to stay and food.

Ultimately, the little boy meets his grandfather, Johnson said.

"At the very end of the show, his grandfather takes him home," she added. "But along the way he meets some people that really take him under their wings and care for him. There are some characters in the show who as broken as they are, they reach out to take care of this little boy in their own way."

The original London musical, with music and lyrics by Lionel Bart, ran for over 2,600 performances. It was transferred to Broadway in 1963, and turned into a motion picture in 1968, winning multiple Academy Awards, including Best Picture.

The Colchester production includes about 75 cast members including 32 children. The 30-person pit orchestra is in addition to the 75 cast members. There are also approximately 40 to 50 people behind the scenes making props for the stage, building and painting sets, and sewing costumes.

Rehearsals go on for six weeks, but the production crew has been working on the show since about November, Johnson said.

"We have people who have been with us for 20 years that commit for six weeks and give of themselves entirely," she said. "We have a ton of new people this year which is wonderful because we look at ourselves as a theater family so we love welcoming new people to our family. I would have to say my favorite part is not really one particular part on stage but the camaraderie that is happening between everyone that's working on the production."

Laura Brown, stage manager of the show said every show produced by the Colchester Community Theatre is "over the top."

But doing *Oliver* for the second time, has helped the production team realized how much they have grown. The Colchester Community Theatre has been producing plays for 22 years – and *Oliver!* was one of the first shows the theatre put on.

"Our orchestra is probably double the size as it was for our first production of *Oliver!*," Brown said.

See 'Oliver!' page 2

Banquet Hall cont. from Front Page

Tammaro went on to suggest that all music performed in the hall be acoustic.

"Who would rent a hall with no band or D.J.? Why kill a business before it gets off the ground?" said PZC member Ted Hintz Jr.

While Wednesday's meeting was not a public hearing, and thus Roncalli was not allowed to address the commission and vice versa, throughout the meeting Hintz was constantly engaging in nonverbal communication with the Roncalli representatives that sat in the row beside his seat.

Tammaro explained that killing the business is not his intent, but that the board has the option to review plans and place restrictions.

"We have to protect the residents nearby. We have to protect their property values," Tammaro said.

Zatorski said that, personally, he is confident of the soundproofing measures taken by Roncalli, but that any and all events must end by 11 p.m., with all operations ceased at midnight. He added that outside noise needs to be regulated and restricted.

Zatorski also suggested a restriction on the service of food and drinks to guests outside.

Hintz questioned this suggestion, stating that it would be unreasonably detrimental to restrict outside service because of the picturesque property that guests would want to enjoy.

Zatorski answered saying that the language would instead read that outside food and service *stations* will be restricted, but that food and beverage can be brought to outside guests by wait staff. He also said that all service stations must have sound mitigation.

DeCarli suggested placing placards requesting that guests respect Saint Clements' neighbors. The commission agreed to this, with Hintz adding that signage should not be "obnoxiously centered."

According to DeCarli, the closest residential property to Saint Clements is about 350 feet away.

DeCarli said that Roncalli would also be required to test their water for contaminants. If pollution is found, they must report to the Land Use Department and cease all operations, according to DeCarli.

DeCarli said in the meeting that Roncalli had recently violated DEEP standards, but that those proceedings have no influence on East Hampton matters.

The violation to which DeCarli referred was discovered during a DEEP field inspection.

DEEP's Land and Water Resources Division found information indicating that "a violation of law has occurred at Saint Clements," according to DEEP's notice of violation.

The violations listed included but are not limited to: unauthorized pier dimensions, floating dock connection, floating dock pilings and a floating docks lift system. DEEP also discovered a fishing pier structure that was not included in the "as-built" plan submitted to the state.

In a November PZC meeting, Calan stated that Saint Clements is making the best possible use of the property.

Saint Clements accountant Jonathan Ramsay explained the benefits that Saint Clements Castle will bring to the town in a December interview with the *Rivereast*. He said that the hall would bring jobs, tourist revenue, lodging and shopping to the area. Ramsay also listed increased revenue to the town by way of real estate taxes.

"This is a really unique property on the water," Calan said in December. "Demand is going to be very high."

Saint Clements Castle occupies land in both Portland and East Hampton, with the main castle in Portland and Great Hill Pond Brook, the boundary between the two towns.

Calan described the banquet hall as a small boutique space. It will hold a maximum of 150 people. There will be a two-story ballroom with a pitched roof and chandeliers and will overlook the river. Uses would include weddings, bar mitzvahs and birthday parties.

Calan said the new facility would increase the number of guests at Saint Clements from 40,000 to 50,000.

There are residents nearby who have, at previous public hearings, supported the zone change. Noel Dash, an East Hampton resident on North Main Street, spoke for the change, according to commission meeting minutes.

However, some residents and neighbors have also expressed distaste for the zone change. Several people who live on both Fern Road and

Oakum Dock Road spoke against the zone change at a November hearing.

"Everyone on Oakum Dock Road and those affected on Fern Lane are heartbroken at the decision considering the efforts which we all made to be heard by the Planning and Zoning Commission," said attorney William D. Grady of East Hampton in a December interview with the *Rivereast*. "Personally, I am devastated for the neighbors who will be most affected by the zone change and beyond that, I can say nothing redeeming and therefore I must leave it at that."

Grady was once the town planner for the Town of Marlborough and has years of experience in such matters. Grady is also a former chairman of the East Hampton Economic Development Commission.

Grady has been an opponent of the zone change for years.

Grady wrote a letter in response to the company's 2017 zone change request to the members of PZC. In the letter, Grady wrote of the increased traffic in his Oakum Dock Road neighborhood due to unauthorized commercial activities. He wrote that Oakum Dock Road was never meant to sustain a volume of traffic beyond that of the 13 homes that occupy the road. He wrote that Saint Clements seeks to change the character of the neighborhood by abutting a commercial zone to a residential one.

Grady also wrote that a zone change would only benefit the company, not the neighborhood. He wrote that a zone change was only sought after discovery of the operations.

Since purchasing the property, Saint Clements has been the subject of controversy.

In 2010, Saint Clements received approvals from the town to build a storage building and connect two buildings. Also in 2010, Roncalli sold two water wells to East Hampton for public use at a price of more than \$700,000. Those wells have yet to be used after more than a decade, according to DeCarli.

In July 2017, a cease-and-desist order was issued to Saint Clements by the Chatham Health district for operating an unauthorized banquet hall. The letter sent to the Roncalli Institute also stated the "site was designed for 150 attendees and marina use. This does not come close to the 296 people mentioned as fire code capacity." The Chatham letter also notes that, subsequent to the fire, illegal wastewater connections and an unauthorized plastic septic tank were discovered.

The cease-and-desist was lifted two weeks after it was issued.

The same issue of unauthorized use arose after an accidental fire 2017. This led to the town's discovery of a banquet facility being run with a bar and makeshift kitchen in what was supposed to only be used as a storage facility.

After the fire, town officials learned that Saint Clements had paved a parking lot without approval. Saint Clements lawyer, Ken Slater, told town officials that Clements has since received an Inland/Wetlands Watercourse Agency permit for the parking lot.

Officials of the town and Saint Clements have discussed what could be built on the property. PZC official Jeremy DeCarli recommended the company pursue a zone change and special permit approach.

A 2017 zone change request from Saint Clements castle was denied. A memo sent from the Office of Public Works to DeCarli read that the Public Works Department "would not support this zone change from Residential to Commercial due to the present traffic on this roadway." The memo reads that traffic would increase as result of a zone change. Large vehicles and an increased volume of small vehicles could result in unsafe road conditions, according to the memo. The memo also reads, "...past experiences with St. Clements have not resulted in compliance with [town] regulations, but more circumventing and disregarding them." Ultimately, the 2017 request was denied because of the narrow road and anticipated safety and other use issues.

The castle returned with a request for a special church permit. Churches are allowed in residential zones. The "assembly hall" had identical square footage and footprint as the banquet hall.

The church application was withdrawn in April 2018.

When town and Saint Clements officials met again, DeCarli suggested going for a zone change.



Colchester Community Theatre cast members, from left, Laura Boates (who plays the role of Mrs. Sowerberry), Oliver Markham (Oliver), Keith Cummings (Mr. Sowerberry) and Sara Jeanne Whittemore (Charlotte) were hard at work this week preparing for next weekend's presentation of the classic musical *Oliver!*

'Oliver!' cont. from Front Page

The theatre forms an orchestra depending on each particular show. It's based on how many instruments they need and on the type of production.

Brown said the challenge to producing this piece is that there are bigger pieces, more cast and a small space. One of the goals of the show was to have more children become interested in theatre, she said.

"I think our biggest thing with choosing *Oliver!* this year was just trying to get more families back in," Brown said. "I think the arts, having children come see the show, have them appreciate theatre, get them off their PlayStations and have them really focused on the arts – the music, the singing, the dancing, the sets – there's so much that can be learned from one production."

In addition, producing *Oliver!* a second time is special to Brown personally because she can look back and realize her advancement in theatre.

"*Oliver!* was my first one that I stage managed with our theatre group and so to bring it

back to life with different sets and different actors is kind of a little heartfelt sentiment," she said.

In addition, she said the Colchester Community Theatre has grown not only in the size of the cast but in the quality of the production including "the expertise of sets, customs, music direction as well as the direction of the choreographer and the director itself."

"I would also say that we are more selective in who we choose to portray each character based on how they sing and a little bit more in character development with matching up pairs," she added.

Online ticket sales for *Oliver!* (credit card only) are available via colchestercommunitytheatre.com. In-person ticket sales (cash and check only) are at Plotkin's Jewelry, 119 S. Main St., Colchester, and Photo Connection, 199 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Also, tickets will be available at the door on performance days subject to availability. Advance ticket purchase is recommended. All ticket sales are final.

Learn About Colchester Community Theatre

by Karla Santos

Diane Ozmun is the president of the Board of Directors of the Colchester Community Theatre, which is in its 22nd year. The non-profit theatre started after Wallis Johnson and several other individuals had just finished a show at St. Andrew Church. According to Ozmun, the group was standing out on the steps near the entrance of the church saying, "We really love this, we really should have a community theater in our town."

The group reached out to the town for support and became sponsored by the Colchester Parks and Recreation Department.

At that time the town asked the theatre to conduct a summer workshop for children.

"We hold and have been doing that over the past 21 years," Ozmun said.

The annual project is a two-week children's workshop that is held Monday through Friday and then they put on a musical following the workshop.

"It's a really quick turnaround but they just love it," Ozmun said. "We have anywhere between 85 and 100 kids participate. It's very well attended from not only Colchester but other surrounding towns."

Ozmun said that over the past 22 years the Colchester Community Theatre has been strongly supported by the Colchester community in general and by the businesses in that community.

"The mission is to be able to provide quality entertainment that is affordable for fami-

lies in our community to be a part of and to attend," Ozmun said.

Ozmun also told the *Rivereast* about the growth of the theatre regardless of the fact that it is mainly supported by volunteer work.

"It has really grown in terms of the level of the show that we are able to do over the years," she said. "We've just grown in terms of just raising the bar."

She said the group continuously evaluates the ways in which they can continue to present "the best quality show that you can get in community theatre."

"People have compared us to shows they've seen on Broadway," Ozmun said. "It's truly an honor that those theaters and those places are in the same sentence with us that people would think of us in that way."

She said that success is thanks to the level of commitment of the people that put on the work. The theatre has 125 to 150 people involved in any given show. There are a few paid positions, but the rest is volunteer work.

"What's so beautiful about that is people bring their gift," Ozmun said. "They bring their talent," be it making props or constructing sets or simply collecting tickets.

Colchester Community Theatre is a non-profit sponsored by the town of Colchester. The town also provides them with the ability to use local facilities. Most shows and rehearsals are held at Bacon Academy.

Portland Selectmen Approve Funds for Library Project

by Jack Lakowsky

The Portland Board of Selectmen unanimously approved an additional \$115,600 in funds to be used in the town library's renovation project in their Wednesday meeting.

The Portland Library Board of Directors approved the added funds in their Jan. 29 meeting, according to a board resolution.

The money will be drawn from the Library Endowment Fund, an account used by the library that is funded by donations and fundraisers.

The increase raises the amount drawn from the fund to \$250,000. The State of Connecticut Library Building Grant will provide \$108,452 in additional funding, according to the resolution, making for a total sum authorization not to exceed \$358,452.

The board approved usage of the endowment fund in November to match the state grant.

According to minutes from the January meeting, the added funding was approved to cover costs that came in higher than original estimates.

"Estimates are estimates," said Library Director Janet Nocek, library director in an interview preceding the Portland Board of Select-

men's discussion on the matter on Wednesday.

"There are no local taxes involved," Nocek said.

Nocek explained that improving the library's connectivity and accessibility are two major goals of the renovation project.

"[The library] was built before the tech revolution we find ourselves in," Nocek said.

Nocek said new charging ports need to be installed. She explained that wires cross through walkways, potentially creating a tripping hazard and an obstacle for patrons who need a wheelchair. Nocek said the library needs to increase its availability of electronic resources, like e-books, in order to meet the demand of patrons. She explained that the library's tech services are not adequately funded, as is the case for many libraries.

"We get boisterous little ones, teenagers and elderly people," Nocek said. She explained that, because of the diverse demands of its patrons, the library should offer services that suit different age groups and serve their wide array of needs.

"We need to provide different formats, but

prices on new technology can be high," Nocek said.

Nocek listed several other renovations to be funded for the renovation project in a letter to the Portland Board of Selectmen.

The interior public spaces at the library's entryway will be improved for energy efficiency, ambience and connectivity. Accommodations will be included for people with physical or mental disabilities.

New carpet will be installed in public areas. This will improve sound absorption.

"There are some little things that make a big difference," Nocek said. "Like color-coding the carpet to differentiate between the adult and the kid section."

Nocek's letter reads that the project will provide more accommodating seating for older adults and seniors, and for people with joint issues. Additionally, in order to comply with International Federation of Library and Associations and Institutions (IFLA) standards for accommodation of physically disabled people, tables of adjustable height will be installed.

The letter also lists an updated service desk

and improved lighting of that area. This will also enhance lighting in the adult browsing area. Nocek wrote that this new lighting will also be more energy efficient.

Another effort to improve the library's energy efficiency will be the installation of greener automatic doors.

The letter also reads that the renovation will allow for the arrangement of two new quiet areas for studying and reading.

Finally, the letter lists the need for better, newer furnishings.

"I've been here 18 years," Nocek said. "Most of the chairs were here when I started. A few have been replaced, but others are about to turn 30 years old."

Nocek explained that the aging furniture is uncomfortable from years of use, adding that many of dip down, making it more difficult for seniors to get in and out of them.

Nocek said she decided which improvements to submit based on her own observations and from suggestions made by library staff and the public.

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Needleman to Seek Re-Election

State Sen. Norm Needleman (D-33) announced this week he'll seek another term in office this fall.

First elected to his seat in 2018, Needleman represents the towns of Colchester, Chester, Clinton, Essex, Deep River, East Haddam, East Hampton, Haddam, Old Saybrook, Westbrook, Lyme and Portland.

"It is an honor to be able to represent the 33rd Senatorial District, and I'm excited to continue serving my constituents," said Needleman. "My time in the General Assembly has been an incredible experience, and I truly enjoy fighting for my district to ensure we build a stronger future for them and all the citizens of Connecticut. I humbly ask my constituents for the op-

portunity to do so for another term."

Needleman serves as Senate Chair of the Energy and Technology Committee, Vice Chair of the Planning and Development Committee, and is a member of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding, Transportation, and Commerce committees.

"I am excited for Connecticut because of terrific leaders in our state like Norm Needleman," said Colchester First Selectman Mary Bylone, also a Democrat. "Norm has already proven his commitment to the people with his attention to finding long term solutions for energy and working with municipal leaders. He will have my full support again in 2020."

No News on Superintendent

by Jack Lakowsky

Portland Board of Education Chairwoman Sharon Peters said that an announcement would be made "soon" updating the public on the status of the search for a new superintendent.

Current Superintendent of Schools Philip O'Reilly will retire at the end of this school year.

The board is screening applicants to lead Portland's school district.

An Interview with Portland's Local Novelist

by Jack Lakowsky

Award-winning poet, novelist and Portland resident Katherine Spada Basto has announced the publication of her second book, *Vestal Virgin: Chosen for Rome*.

Set in the Roman Empire during the infamous reign of Nero, known for his debauchery and the persecution of Christians – the historical fiction novel explores the experiences of an unwilling Vestal Virgin – an ancient Roman priestess – over a 30-year period.

The book covers authentic events like the great fire of Rome and the downfall of Nero while featuring Spada Basto's original characters and plot elements.

Spada Basto has been reading and writing since childhood, according to her website.

A native of Hartford, Spada Basto's love of history was inspired during her career as a teacher in Connecticut's capital city. She taught in Hartford schools for 30 years, teaching English, social studies and special education. Upon retiring, Spada Basto was able to turn her focus to honing her craft.

"I decided that historical fiction was the best way to present my material," Spada Basto said in a recent interview. "I keep to the facts and events, but I make the characters original."

Spada Basto said her characters speak truth to power.

"I like to have characters stand up to dangerous authority," she said. "They stand up and speak their minds, they're courageous. You see



Katherine Basto

this type of thing all throughout history."

Spada Basto said that, when she is sketching characters, she is always asking herself what they want. She said she incorporates coming-of-age elements into her work – a technique also used by one of her influences, Charles Dickens.

Spada Basto's style focuses on character development. She said that she does not typically outline her fiction, and instead prefers to listen to the characters and plot as they develop.

"I never have it all together when I start," she said. "Of course, with historical fiction, you need a timeline, so that helps keep me on track, and sometimes I'll name a chapter before I start it, but I'm stronger with listening."

Spada Basto said her most recent book was written in this organic style.

"With this second novel, I really just ran with the ball," she said.

Spada Basto was inspired to write her first, award-winning novel *Days to the Gallows: A Novel of the Hartford Witch Panic*, after researching the Hartford Witch Panic of 1662 and the Hartford Circus Fire – of which Spada Basto's mother is a survivor.

"This is a huge part of Connecticut history that's sort of been buried," she said. "I couldn't believe it! The town I grew up in had its own witch trials before Salem."

Spada Basto said she is currently researching for another historical fiction novel. She will return to Connecticut with this third book. She said it will feature more of the state's historical persecution of witches – this time in Wethersfield.

"There's so much untapped history in Wethersfield," she said.

Spada Basto said she spends months researching for a book before she works towards

its plot. She will pour through history, especially biographies, which she said goes back to her love of character.

Spada Basto described herself as a morning writer.

"I'll get up, make some coffee, and then work for a few hours. Usually I'll start with some free writing, just to get the words down," she said. "Then maybe an hour or so of work in the afternoon. Meditate for about 45 minutes in the evening, just to let go of all the chatter. It makes way for a lot of insights and intuition."

Spada Basto said that, when she sits down to write, she does not have a specific goal for word count.

"I'm pretty fluid with that," he said. "When I'm really on a roll, I can hit 2,000 easily. Some days, though, I find myself struggling to get to 500. Either way, I'm always trying to hone my craft."

Spada Basto believes that, whether it's historical fiction or nonfiction, a book must be entertaining to the reader.

"I don't care how beautiful your writing is, story is more important," she said "This is another part of honing the craft of storytelling. People want to be entertained and relate to the characters in stories."

Spada Basto said that the greatest piece of writing advice she received was to let the critic rest at the beginning.

"Years ago, the [inner] judge would say, 'You're wrong,'" she said. She believes that silencing this inner critic is essential to writing a first draft and not becoming stifled.

"Don't compare yourself to others," she added. "Find your voice. Like when you look at a painting, you can say 'That's a Picasso!' Read the great masters, but also find your own style. You have to write what you know and

write your truth. To have that freedom of expression is just wonderful. And don't take anything too personally. Critique is helpful."

Spada Basto said that *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte is a novel that "tells me what I can improve."

She said that, even in the historical fiction genre, it's important to keep up with reading trends.

"You have to balance truth with current times to make it accessible," she said.

Spada Basto joins New England's impressive pantheon of writers including Louisa May Alcott, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Emily Dickinson, Shirley Jackson, Stephen King, John Updike, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau and Cormac McCarthy.

Spada Basto cites the region's great literacy with its history.

"The Puritans were a very learned people," she said. "They were great writers. They had to be – there was no other form of communication besides speaking. We were the first colonies. There's so much history that's been buried. Something's in the soil here, it's rugged, it's real. We have four different seasons and the weather is different every day, so there's a lot of change. Personally, I'm so inspired by the landscape here. All that makes for a real brew for creative storytelling."

Spada Basto's *Days to the Gallows* was awarded best Young Adult novel by the Independent Publishers of New England and was the winner in the Hollywood Book Festival's Wild Card category.

Both of Spada Basto's books are available on Amazon, the Barnes & Noble website and at select bookstores. Her website is katherinespadabasto.com.

Selectmen Approve Funds to Explore Marlborough Library Renovation

by Karla Santos

The Board of Selectmen Tuesday featured the discussion and approval of a budget transfer request of \$12,500 for the services of an architect that would help explore a possible future renovation of Richmond Memorial Library.

The motion was carried to transfer the \$12,500 from the general government fund to the capital budget.

Town Planner Peter Hughes was on board at the meeting and explained that the architect would help in exploring an opportunity of what could be done mainly in the second floor of the library, where there is approximately 36,000 square feet of space. Only 600 square feet of that space is currently used as a meeting room.

Hughes said the architect would help with preliminary work such as to determine what the cost of the project would be, the time frame and the rough estimate of construction.

Hughes said that while the town will not be doing anything with that space anytime soon, they wanted to get started with preliminary work to find out what would be needed – and what a potential price tag would be.

If the town decides to move forward with a renovation project, it could include building a handicapped ramp, constructing an elevator, adding restrooms, finishing the floors and the ceiling.

Once renovated, the second floor of the li-

brary would be used as a meeting space.

Selectman Amy Traversa said she is in favor of the project because there is no more space in town hall.

“We’ve had this conversation over a number of years, what to do about space,” Traversa said. “There is no more space at town hall. We’ve got people shoved into closets. We’ve got our director of public safety services shoved into a closet, we’ve got Parks and Recreation shoved into a closed-in entryway. There is no more room. I’ve been up in the space up above the library. It is a vastly underutilized space. I think is the short-term solution to a community center.”

Traversa added that “it absolutely makes sense” to do the project and added that she would “entrust” that Hughes “would wisely spend the \$12,500” bringing in everybody that needs to have an opinion to move the project forward.

The \$12,500 transfer needs approval from the Board of Finance before it can be finalized; the finance board will next meet next Wednesday.

The library was originally built in 1987. In 2011 there was a design in place for the expansion of the library building. The cost of that original project was \$963,000 and the town applied for a grant of \$750,000, but did not get it, Hughes said.

Time to Slow Down on East Street in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

Drivers traversing along East Street, whether on a Sunday drive, for their workday commute or on an errand run, best ease up on the gas pedal.

As of Tuesday, the speed limit on the local roadway is 40 mph, a five-mile-per-hour reduction from the previously posted 45 mph.

A flashing LED sign in front of Burnt Hill Park notifies travelers of the change.

Police will give drivers a few days to adjust to the change, then will offer friendly reminders for folks to slow down before handing out tickets, Resident State Trooper Daniel Greenwood said.

For the past four years, Scott Wiley, who lives on East Street, has been the driving force in an effort to have the speed limit lowered for fear someone would get hurt by a speeding car.

After retiring five years ago, Wiley started walking more frequently. Like many of his neighbors, he and his wife would take their dog on the half-mile trek to Burnt Hill Park on foot.

“One day I had to jump onto the side of the road and pull the dog up because someone came along the road a little faster than normal,” he said.

After that, in spite of the short distance, they started packing the dog in the car and driving to the park.

Wiley, subsequently, called and emailed Town Manager Andrew Tierney, reached out to state Rep. Robin Green and contacted Greenwood to do something about what he perceived as excessive speeds on the road.

“There are bicycles, dogs and walkers on the street, along with more children,” Greenwood wrote in an email to Tierney last April. “The road is still in disrepair and the speed limit needs to be reduced. I have not seen a police presence on the road and there should be zero tolerance for speeding. Today I was passed just before the park entrance by someone going at an excessive rate. What kind of tragedy is it going to take to get this resolved!!!”

Prior to the summer of 2004, the speed limit on East Street was 35 mph. That year, the state Department of Transportation’s Office of the State Traffic Administration [OSTA] – through a federal grant – performed a rational speed

study on East Street and Route 316, Tierney said.

“The state, in its infinite wisdom, did this study and changed the speed limit from 35 to 45 mph because it was more of a rational speed,” he said.

A rational speed study uses speed sticks and radar to determine the speed the majority of drivers go on a road, according to Greenwood. Based on the study, the speed limit was raised to 45 mph.

“They take 85% of what the motoring public is traveling at,” he said.

The theory is that if the posted speed limit matches what 85% of drivers are already doing, people will abide it, Greenwood said. If, on the other hand, the posted limit is far less than what the majority go, drivers will not follow the law.

“You don’t set speed limits in an effort to try to artificially reduce the speed of the motoring public, it can make for a less safe scenario,” DOT spokesman Kevin Nursick said. “The public will drive at a speed that feels reasonably safe for the geometry of the roadway.”

Wiley does not concur and said if the same theory was used on state highways, the speed limit on those would be 95 mph.

“That’s just the most absurd thing that I ever heard in my life,” he said.

The higher speed limit was supposed to be paralleled with increased enforcement and more tickets being issued to speeders, Tierney said.

“It was meant to have a zero tolerance on the road,” Wiley said.

For about six months, there was increased enforcement but after that, due to a shortage in troopers, the spike in enforcement was withdrawn, Tierney said.

Since the speed limit was raised, there have been more houses built and the park was put in, changing the demographics of the road, Wiley said.

Greenwood echoed Wiley’s comments that there are many pedestrians on the road.

Touted as an experiment, according to a Hartford Courant article written in May 2004, state officials claimed the town could have the higher speed rescinded if it wasn’t working.

But despite attempts to get the limit reduced



This LED sign in front of Burnt Hill Park is meant to inform drivers of a five mile per hour reduction in the speed limit, bringing it to 40 mph.

to the pre-study level, the state has not agreed, Tierney said, explaining that this was not the first time the town requested a reduction in the limit. Even now, after the state did agree to go to 40 mph, Tierney said it was a compromise and that the town had requested bringing it back down to 35.

“We’re considering it a small victory,” he said.

OSTA has jurisdiction on changing posted speed limits, Nursick said.

In September, after the town requested a speed limit reduction, OSTA performed a traffic investigation and 40 mph was determined more appropriate for the road, according to the report, which Nursick sent the *Rivereast*. The study was based on “roadway geometry and

characteristics, trial runs, ball bank testing, crash experience, and engineering judgment.”

“You look at shoulders of the road, how wide the road is, houses on the road all that stuff is put into it,” Greenwood said.

The speed limit was also changed on the stretch of East Street in Andover.

Wiley said he wishes the speed limit was reduced more but that he is pleased it went down.

“I do think it’s not enough,” he said. “It could be okay if there’s enough enforcement on the road.”

The big lesson for him was learning what it takes to make change happen, Wiley said.

“If something is important enough, you can go through the proper channels and make change,” he said.

East Hampton Schools Introduce ‘Veguary’ to Help Kids Taste the Rainbow

by Jack Lakowsky

East Hampton/East Haddam Public Schools Nutrition Services Director Jennifer Bove believes that everyone should eat more rainbows.

Bove has furthered her healthful goal of spreading the word about the benefits of eating a more plant-based diet by spearheading the “Veguary” program with the help of administrative officials.

Bove said that, for the month of February, East Hampton school lunch menus will feature increased availability of fruits and vegetables. Bove and her team will conduct taste tests in each school throughout the month and will announce a new plant fact in each school’s morning announcements. This is the first of any such program for East Hampton’s schools.

“Most kids don’t eat enough vegetables,” Bove said, citing a CDC study that revealed 60% of children don’t eat enough fruit, and 93% don’t eat enough vegetables.

“The trick is to make it fun and cool to eat the healthy stuff,” Bove said. “You have to find something [the students] care about, like how we let them know that vegetables help prevent acne.”

Bove said she was inspired to bring “Veguary” and green eating to Belltown’s students- and school staff- after attending a conference at Yale University. There, Bove learned that 80% of Yale’s menu features plant-based dishes.

Bove said that, after the Yale conference, the schools drafted a plant-based menu along with the Connecticut Humane Society. She said that the Humane Society has a forward initiative to increase the amount of plant-based foods in people’s diets to help reduce the amount of industrial meat harvesting.

According to Bove, reducing the impact of industrial agriculture is one of the major benefits of switching to a more plant-based diet. According to documentation given by Bove, some of the benefits of downsizing the immense volume of factory farming in the U.S. are as follows; lessening greenhouse gasses emitted from meat production (livestock are believed to be responsible for 14% of all emissions from human activity); slowing deforestation and lowering demand for cropland and; allowing for more humane treatment of farm animals. Animals housed on an industrial farm must often endure filthy, crowded conditions.

The planet’s most precious resource, water, is also conserved when more plant-based diets are adhered to. Producing just ¼ pound of beef uses enough water to fill bathtubs. A single gallon of cow’s milk requires 1,000 gallons water. A farm of 2,500 dairy cows produces the same level of waste as a city of about 40,000 people, according to Bove.

“We’re not anti-meat, not at all,” Bove said.

Bove expressed that, as a nutritionist, she is aware of the dietary need for meat, but that the sheer quantity of meat consumption must be reduced to help preserve resources.

Bove said that student awareness of the impact our diet has on the planet has grown quickly.

“Just a couple years ago, no one really talked about food like this,” Bove said.

Bove went on to say that more students now than ever have adopted a vegetarian diet as a means of conservation.

“Overall, this community is pretty educated, so in general people have a better awareness of this,” Bove said. “Kids, though, are definitely leading the charge. It’s an area where adults aren’t usually as up to date as their kids.”

Bove explained that, along with reducing the overall carbon footprint of meat agriculture and encouraging more humane treatment of livestock, her most prominent concern was student health and the benefits that come with eating more plants.

According to the information supplied by Bove, students learned that weight control and higher quality and quantity of sleep are just some benefits of adding to fruit and veggie intake. The health of the human microbiome – the name for the ecosystem of microorganisms that lives in our guts – which aids digestion and

supports the immune system, is also improved with a more herbivorous diet.

“We push for rainbows on their plates,” Bove said, describing how the school encourages students to eat a varied, colorful diet of fruits, vegetables, grains and protein. “If you eat something purple, like an eggplant, then it’s full of phytonutrients and can fight cancer.”

A plant produces phytonutrients to keep itself healthy.

Bove and her staff encourage students to eat rainbows year-round by providing seasonal vegetables and a salad bar.

“We’re always trying to increase our vegetable options,” Bove said.

Bove added, for future “Veguaries” she would like to involve teachers by incorporating into their curriculum lessons about the benefits of eating greener, thereby creating a holistic-and lasting- learning experience for East Hampton’s students.

Bove’s efforts have received national recognition. On Facebook, East Hampton Schools announced that Bove and EHHS cafeteria staff Dawn Dummond-Strong and Mary Marsiglio were awarded the USDA National Gold Medal Award for serving creative dishes for students, like savory street tacos and fiesta corn salad.

Bove will be honored at the upcoming Legislative Action Conference in Washington, D.C.

Not All Police Have Keys to Colchester Schools

by Karla Santos

When Susan Demma was reading meeting minutes on the town's website, she learned not all police officers have keys to the schools – and she became concerned.

In the Jan. 27 Police Commission meeting minutes, it says that one of the commissioners asked what the status of getting keys to all town schools was.

According to the minutes, Sgt. Michael Rondinone, resident trooper sergeant for Colchester, said he has some keys but doesn't have all of the keys yet.

"He has four sets of keys but needs twelve so all of his officers will have their own set," the meeting minutes state. "He has had to make some of the keys himself."

Rondinone declined to comment for this story.

The fire department is also in the same situation. Walter Cox, fire chief, told the *Rivereast* his department also has no keys to the schools.

Cox added that if the fire department had to handle an emergency situation at one of the schools they would have to force entry or wait for a key holder to show up.

When he was asked if he believed that his department should have keys, he responded "absolutely."

Demma, of Colchester, has a niece in the school system. Demma said when she found out about the key situation, she became concerned, not only about her niece but about all the children and teachers.

"I don't want another Newtown situation here in Colchester," Demma said. "Why aren't we getting these keys to the police department and to the fire department?"

Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Burt said that while he is relatively new to the district, the key issue is not new. He said the issue was brought to his attention last month and he put together about four sets of keys and provided them to the police department.

"The issue is that for each building it's more than just one key," Burt said.

Each school has a series of keys because they have different entrances.

Burt said the schools also have a resource officer specifically dedicated to the schools.

"She does have access to the schools," he said of the officer.

In addition, Burt said they are moving forward with a security plan that will allow every emergency responder to have a badge that will give them access to all of the schools.

"We thought that this was a good temporary measure to put in place, to just do a few set of keys until we get that badge swipe system in place which is part of our security grant that we were awarded about a year ago," Burt said.

He said he is hoping to implement the new system within the next few months.

"This was not something that was ever brought up to the school system before, over the past couple of decades as far as I know," Burt said. "So when we were told that, we did

respond to it as best as we could in the light of the fact that we will be going to this system where every firefighter, police officer or fire truck or ambulance etcetera will have the swipe access that we can control and we can monitor and see who has access to our buildings, etc."

Burt said he feels they are moving in right direction with that and said he feels that this is an appropriate response at this time.

Meanwhile, Demma said the new security system may be taking too long. She said a change needs to happen "immediately."

"What happens if they don't get these badges for a month or two?" she said. "What if a Newtown situation happens tomorrow in this town?"

Demma said that in addition to this being a safety issue, it can also affect students and teachers in other ways.

"We have children and faculty that become traumatized," she said. "I read this article in the *Washington Post* that said last year at school time across the United States four million children were in a lockdown situation and were traumatized. We don't need that."

Demma said that while the town works on implementing the new security system, all police officers and firefighters must be given keys with access to all the schools.

"They need to give them the keys," Demma said. "Give them the keys to avoid some kind of catastrophe in this town. We've been very lucky and blessed in this town that nothing has

happened. They keep saying we are working on it but God forbid something happens tomorrow."

Andrea Migliaccio, a member of the Board of Finance and a liaison to the Board of Education, said a conversation regarding the keys needs to happen between police and the superintendent of schools.

"Our schools take security as top priority as the cops do," she said. "But they need to have that conversation about the key distribution."

Migliaccio said that while police officers don't have enough keys to the schools, she believes the schools are safe.

"I'm confident that our schools are safe and I'm confident in our police department," Migliaccio said. "I don't have a safety concern; I think our schools are very safe."

Mary Tomasi, chairwoman of the Board of Education, told the *Rivereast* she had no comment and said she doesn't recall knowing that not all officers had keys to the schools.

Jim Stavola, member of the police commission said the topic was open for discussion during the commission's last meeting "because the resident state trooper has apparently complained that he's not getting the keys."

Stavola said the best solution to that issue would be to "get the keys."

"The police commission really has no power to enforce anybody to do that because it falls under the operational status of the state trooper," Stavola said.

Colchester Police News

1/13: State Police said Benjamin Gonzalez, 39, of 147 Prospect St., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct.

1/16: State Police said Francisco DeJesus, 40, of Willimantic, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

1/22: State Police said a tool storage trailer was burglarized on Lebanon Avenue sometime between Jan. 21 and Jan. 22. Various power tools were stolen.

1/24: State Police said Evan Bromley, 26, of 184 South Main St., was arrested and charged with permitting minor to possess alcohol.

1/27: State Police said Raffie Walker, 33, of Willimantic, was arrested and charged with first-degree failure to appear.

1/28: State Police said Nicholas Vespa, 18, of 669 Norwich Ave., was arrested and charged with possession of controlled substance and risk of injury to a child.

Marlborough Police News

1/18: State Police said Shawn Manafort, 37, of Newington, was arrested and charged with operating a vehicle without insurance, speeding, driving under the influence and failure to drive in the proper lane.

Hebron Police News

1/14: State Police said Richard Jensen, 39, of 162 Wall St., C4, was arrested and charged with risk of injury to a child, disorderly conduct, second-degree strangulation, second-degree unlawful restraint.

Andover Police News

2/2: State Police said Justin Talaga, 20, of 140 Hebron Rd., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct.

2/2: State Police said Michael Talaga, 47, of 140 Hebron Rd., was arrested and charged with risk of injury to a child, disorderly conduct, third-degree assault, second-degree strangulation.

East Hampton Police News

1/24: Todd Krasnitski, 44, of 30 Abbey Rd., was arrested and charged with failure to drive right, failure to obey a stop sign and driving under the influence, East Hampton Police said.

Also, from Jan. 20-26, officers responded to six medical calls, four motor vehicle crashes and eight alarms, and made 17 traffic stops, police said.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Absolutely shameful.

The Senate Republicans have been letting me down for years, but no more so than they did last Friday, when they truly took the coward's way out and voted against having any witnesses in the impeachment trial of President Trump.

The move made it all but certain they would acquit Trump the following week – and indeed, they did just that on Wednesday. To be honest, I expected an acquittal. I've seen the contortions these Republicans get themselves into to find ways to justify defending that man. But no witnesses? Really?

Look, if you feel Trump is innocent, allow witnesses to be called – they'll only help your cause, right? Republicans not calling witnesses means they feel the chances of testimony going against their boy outweigh the chances of testimony going in favor of him.

Simply put, to block witnesses from testifying indicates you know he's probably guilty and you just don't care. And that is just repugnant. You're in the Senate, you're representing this country. Show some backbone. Show some self-respect. Show you respect your constituency. It's not just Republicans you're representing in Washington. Polls indicated time and time again the majority of American voters wanted witnesses. The Republicans in the Senate did not do their job. They failed, majorly.

Like I said, it's just absolutely shameful.

* * *

And then there was the madness Monday involving the Democratic caucus in Iowa. As I write this Tuesday night, it's still not clear how all the votes went. In fact, not even two-thirds of the precincts were in. It's ridiculous.

The whole caucus concept is stupid anyway, and woefully outdated. What's interesting though is what seemed to do in Iowa this time around was a new app that was being employed to let people vote. And you know what? Enough's enough.

I say this in all seriousness – I think I'm done with electronic voting. We saw how it failed us in 2016. Just about everyone, except for Trump, agrees the Russians hacked our voting. We've also all seen clips of touchscreens failing, tabulators not working correctly, and so on.

So I think it's time to take a step backwards – at least in terms of technology. When I came of age as a voter, I used the old lever machines. They worked fine and, being mechanical, couldn't be hacked. I know there's next to no chance that we'll go back to mechanical voting, but I think it's something voting officials should strongly consider. Our democracy, our country, is too important to leave it open to

computer failure or foreign interference.

And while I'm on the subject of voting – and I realize this has even slimmer of a chance of happening – how about, instead of caucuses and some primaries on one date and some more on another date, we have just one day for a nationwide primary. Almost like a pre-election election. One day, all the candidates on the ballot, and whoever collects the most votes – bang, there's your Democratic or Republican nominee, and it's on to the convention.

I realize it may not be a perfect plan, and it may have its flaws; a friend of mine said, when I told her of my thought, that if there were one primary for everyone, then a lot more of the competition for donors and endorsements would happen behind the scenes – and the money threshold you would need to hit to be considered a viable candidate would be a lot higher.

That may very well be true. But something needs to change. Way, way too much attention is placed every year on Iowa and New Hampshire – two states that, by the way, are not just tiny but also overwhelmingly white. Not exactly a great representation of the rest of the country there.

Really, though, I'd be okay with things staying the way they are as long as we went back to mechanical voting. I can't stress this enough: I think electronic voting has proven itself to be not just unreliable but also dangerous. It's time to end the experiment.

* * *

Did you know today, Feb. 7, is National Wear Red Day?

Go Red for Women is the American Heart Association's global initiative to end heart disease and stroke in women. Launched in 2001, "GO RED" quickly expanded into a worldwide movement.

So I encourage all of you to, if you're not already, don some red today or tonight!

* * *

In closing, a big rest in peace to beloved author Mary Higgins Clark. One of the all-time greats of the mystery genre, she passed away last Friday at the age of 92. Having worked in the local public library when I was a teenager, shelving books, I was of course familiar with her; she was an incredibly prolific writer.

But I didn't know this about her until reading her obituary Saturday morning. She didn't publish her first novel until she was 48 – and yet she still went on to become Mary Higgins freakin' Clark. That's pretty inspirational.

Never give up on your dreams.

* * *

See you next week.

Obituaries

Colchester

Christine Konstancja Farrick

Christine Konstancja Farrick, 66, of Colchester passed away peacefully Thursday, Jan. 23. Always a night owl, "Chrissy" left us at 2:34 a.m., surrounded by her family.

She will be forever loved and missed by her soulmate and husband of 33 years, Richard Farrick, and her daughter and best friend, Gabriella Farrick. Chrissy had a big extended family that she loved immensely. We'll get to them in a little bit, but first, we want to tell you about the amazing woman she was.

Chrissy was born across the pond in Croyden, England on May 26, 1953, before crossing the Atlantic and coming to the United States in 1956 with her parents, the late Alojzy Suchomski and Ada Wrightson. While she never had a British accent from her short time in the U.K., she definitely took after her mother, inheriting the traditional "stiff upper lip" and ability to make the perfect cup of tea.

To say that she was intelligent may be the greatest understatement of the last century. She was like a walking (and very cute) computer, filled with endless knowledge and curiosity. If there is a *Jeopardy!* in heaven, she will be the Ken Jennings of the spirit world. She achieved her master's degree in Business Administration from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and ended up running her own successful embroidery business, "Personally Yours."

Chrissy loved to be courtside for every UConn women's basketball game. Much to the chagrin of her Syracuse Orange family, Chrissy was a steadfast and devoted Husky fan, and never failed to remind them of such, especially when the Huskies would beat the Orange. When she wasn't watching basketball, Christine would likely be doing Sudoku and/or crossword puzzles at an alarming speed, maybe even doing both at the same time. She used to even say that she liked to "wind down" at night by doing a puzzle because it helped her relax. We loved her sense of humor; she and her sister Maria used to laugh until they cried even just reading the phone book or listening to silly ringtones.

Christine loved all things Disney, and organized an unforgettable family trip down to MGM for the Millennium New Year. She also loved to golf, garden, read, and take a walk on the wild side at the Mohegan Sun Casino. If you ever had the pleasure of meeting her, you probably noticed that her nails were always done to perfection.

Above all, her greatest joy was family time. Whether that be a date night with Rick, a mother-daughter day with Gab, or a family get-together with her siblings and extended family.

She lives on through Rick and Gabriella, her future son-in-law Timothy Hippe, her "grand-puppy" Brady, and the rest of her family. She was the eldest of four siblings, Maria (Phil) Goodson of Saratoga Springs, N.Y., Richard (Pamela) Suchomski of Syracuse, N.Y., Roman Suchomski of Hastings, N.Y.; Sherri Corbett and Patti; nieces, Alex Goodson, Misha Suchomski, Ashley Barzee, Nikki (Jade) Peterson; nephews, Mark Waldron, Zac Suchomski, Maksymillian, Bruce Peters, mother-in-law, Norma Farrick; sister-in-law, Dr. Roberta (Lou) Cesarek; and countless other extended family members and friends.

If anything can be taken away from the loss of our beloved Christine, it is that we must try to truly live in each moment. Love fiercely, forgive gracefully, and appreciate those closest to you. Life is precious and so very short. While we all wish we could have had more time with her, we find comfort in knowing she is resting peacefully.

Calling hours will be held Friday, Feb. 21, from 4-7 p.m. On Saturday, Feb. 22, there will be a calling hour from 10-11 a.m., followed by a funeral service at 11 a.m. Both services will take place at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., in Colchester. Burial will follow in New St. Andrew Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the American Cancer Society (cancer.org/donate) or the Humane Society (cthumane.org/donate); Chrissy loved animals so much.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Colchester

Matthew Scott Turkington

Matthew Scott Turkington, 42, of Manchester/Colchester, passed away at home surrounded by loving family Monday, Feb. 3, after courageously battling ALS for four years.

Born Dec. 14, 1977, in Manchester, Matthew and Kelly have two children, Cole (12) and Layla (9) Turkington.

He was the son of Michael and Cathy Turkington. Matthew was the brother to Christopher Turkington, wife Connie Turkington, children Tori, Michael, Hunter & Hope of Manchester/Higganum. In May of 2007 he married Kelly (Marsden) Turkington, daughter of Michael & Deborah Marsden of East Haddam and Sandy & Larry Silva of Lisbon, sister Aimee Vetter, children Phoebe and Zane, and stepsister Kaylie & Jay.

Born and raised in Manchester, he attended Manchester High School, playing soccer and graduated in 1996. He also attended SUNY Plattsburgh/Clinton College where he was also on the soccer team. Matt's love of cooking lead him to be a manager at Tapa's on Ann in Hartford. He was also a food specialist at Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC) in Hartford. At the time of diagnosis, he was employed at Whole Foods in Glastonbury.

Matt loved all sports on land and on water. He was an avid fan, along with his friend Robert Medhurst, of the Toronto Maple Leaf Hockey team. One of his wishes was to attend a game in Toronto. His wish came true thanks to the ALS Family Charitable Foundation. One of the best days of his life – we are forever grateful. We are also grateful to our friends Tim and Cheryl Hoops who managed to get Matt a signed jersey as a surprise Christmas gift. He was beyond speechless! He was also a fan of the Miami Dolphins, the New York Yankees and was an avid World Cup Soccer fan. He also loved skiing, fishing, and laying on the beach.

Matt was a trivia whiz! We spent many fun hours answering trivia questions and watching *Jeopardy!*. I swear he could pull answers from the air for the most difficult and ridiculous questions. Matt loved music. He played in many local bands – 1800, with his brother Chris, Jive Miguel, and Base Camp.

He will especially be missed by his beautiful soulmate and wife Kelly who has been his angel and his rock through this very long and heart-breaking journey, and his dear children Cole and Layla who were the light of his life. Plus, his faithful dog Sebastian and "that damn cat" Lollipop. He leaves behind many more family and friends – too numerous to mention. Special thanks to Julie, Heidi, Christie and Dan, Rob, Andy, Keri & John, and Brie. We would also like to thank those who have supported Matt, Kelly and family on this journey. Please know you are much loved and appreciated.

Calling hours will be held Sunday, Feb. 9, from 2-5 p.m., at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A reception and celebration of Matt's life will be held afterwards at the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Cole and Layla Education Fund, which has been set up to benefit Cole and Layla's education. Checks can be mailed to 315 Main Street, Middletown, CT 06457 or go to any Liberty Bank branch.

For online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



East Hampton

Roy G. Hallberg Jr.

Roy G. Hallberg Jr., 90, of East Hampton died Sunday, Feb. 2, at his home. Born Dec. 12, 1929, in Middletown, he was the son of the late Roy G. and Lila M. (Bidwell) Hallberg.

Roy was retired from the State of Connecticut D.O.T. where he worked as an engineer for over 33 years. Roy was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and was a member of the Second Congregational Church in Middle Haddam. He was the past commissioner of the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department, past member of Company 2 Fire Department, member of the Belltown Antique Car Club, a Member of the Anchor Lodge 112 Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, a member of the Royal Arch Masons, a life member of the Odd Fellows, a member of the Eastern Star, past President and Director of The Haddam Neck Fair Association and a Director of Union Hill Cemetery. Roy was also honored as East Hampton Citizen of the Year.

Roy is survived by his two sons, Gordon Hallberg and wife Maureen of East Hampton, Karl Hallberg and wife Martha of Va., a daughter Jacqueline Burdick and husband Tom of East Hampton, a sister Elizabeth Haines and husband Richard of Middletown, five grandchildren Heather Walton, Jason Burdick, Jamie McGuire, Christopher Hallberg, Brittany Hallberg, and a great grandson Kyle Walton.

A funeral service will be held Saturday, Feb. 8, at 11 a.m., in the 2nd Congregational Church in Middle Haddam, with burial to follow in Union Hill Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the East Hampton Vol. Fire Dept., 5 Barton Hill Rd., East Hampton, CT 06424 or to the Masonic Charity Foundation of CT, P.O. Box 70, Wallingford, CT 06492.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.