



RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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Conference Champs... The East Hampton High School girls basketball team captured the 2020 shoreline conference championship 32-16 against Morgan High School. The game was played in front of sold out gym at Old Saybrook High School on Feb 28. The East Hampton girls finished 19-1 during the regular season and they were the top team heading into the conference tournament. They were also ranked No. 1 in the Class S state tournament and made it to quarters finals until the tournament was canceled. Members shown here: Maggie Donohue, Meryl Curtin, Mikeala Rich, Angela Mercaldi, Jordan Murphy, Madison Yorker, Mya Field, Hannah Barrientos, Danielle Adams, Elizabeth MacDonald and Madison Cloutier. Coaches: Head Coach Shaun Russell and assistants Sam Greco, Bryan Field and Erin Jump.

Area Schools Cope With COVID-19 Closings

by Sloan Brewster, Karla Santos and Jack Lakowsky

In response to the spread of coronavirus on Sunday, Governor Ned Lamont issued an executive order for all schools in the state to close.

The closure, which was effective Tuesday, is to last through March 31.

In response districts are implementing distance learning, meaning they are giving students online lessons to do while at home.

Hebron Superintendent of Schools Thomas Baird said educators this week worked on plans to enhance the lessons and today iPads and Chromebooks would be delivered to families in need of them.

On Monday, the district sent parents a link to initial lessons.

"We plan to phase in additional digital tools for families to use at home over the next two weeks," he wrote in an email. "Principals will be in touch with families later this week with news of what to expect next week from teachers."

The learning opportunities in the link include daily activities for students.

Pre-kindergarten activities, which include guidance by an adult, range from reading and discussing a book, to starting a journal about the family's time together at home, to using fingers to form shapes and letters out of shaving

cream.

Sixth-graders, on the other hand, have more in-depth assignments. Their journals, for instance, "may include feelings, thoughts, ideas, questions, wonderings, to-do lists, or just a summary of what you did while out of school each day." They can also read for 90 minutes each day or write a story incorporating a list of vocabulary words.

"There is still much to work out and plan this week before we launch our enhancements next week, he said.

In the first week, the Hebron district served more than 70 breakfasts and lunches to students, Baird said.

In a letter Baird sent parents Tuesday, he said that meals were available to all students and their siblings under the age of 18 on Mondays and Wednesdays from 8-9 a.m. at Gilead Hill School. He added that AHM Youth and Family Services was also available to help support families in need.

RHAM Superintendent of Schools Patricia Law said Monday, in an email, that the district was still developing its plans to shift to distance learning.

Law also said that the district was providing lunch Monday through Friday at RHAM.

See Schools Cope page 2

Hebron Shuts Down for Business

by Sloan Brewster

Hebron's town manager has issued an emergency declaration, shutting the town for business.

As the spread of Corona Virus Disease 2019 [COVID-19] – a novel coronavirus – threatens the nation, local towns are shuttering town halls and ceasing town operations.

Hebron's town hall will be closed until March 27, according to the town website.

"We're closing up shop," Town Manager Andrew Tierney said Monday. "We're going to work remotely, but we're closing up departments as much as we can."

Officials made the decision last Friday amid federal and state emergency declarations by President Donald Trump and Gov. Ned Lamont and a declaration of a pandemic by the World Health Organization.

Monday, Trump issued guidelines aimed at slowing the spread of the disease, including working and schooling from home whenever possible; avoiding gatherings of more than 10 people; not eating or drinking at restaurants, bars or food courts; avoiding discretionary travel, shopping trips or social visits; and not visiting nursing homes or care facilities.

That same day, Lamont prohibited gatherings of more than 50 people; ordered restaurants, bars and private clubs to serve food and non-alcoholic beverages solely for take-out or delivery; closed off-track betting facilities; and ordered gyms, sports, fitness and recreation fa-

cilities and movie theaters to cease operations until April 30.

In Hebron, the town closed the lower portion of the transfer station, where bulky waste is collected, but left the upper trash and single stream recycling collection area open.

"We really don't want employees exchanging money back at the lower level," Tierney said, adding of the closing, "That's going to be an inconvenience; we've never done that before."

For taxes and other payments residents normally make at Town Hall, the town has installed a drop-box, and online payments can be made through the town's website, hebronct.com, Tierney said.

The Russell Mercier Senior Center is closed to the public and senior meals are suspended, Tierney said. According to the town website, the home delivery meals program will continue, with meals left at recipients' doors and volunteers having no direct interaction with recipients.

The town will continue to provide social service assistance while employing appropriate social distancing and precautions, the website states. Dial-a-Ride will suspend group social trips however will continue to provide rides to medical appointments, grocery shopping, the foodbank, and other personal needs trips.

The library is closed, and Monday Tierney said all parks and playscapes were also closed to prevent the transmission of the disease. In

an update Tuesday, he said that measure had been relaxed to allow use of trails for hiking and dog walking.

Fields remain closed for play, playscapes are not to be used and Veterans Memorial Park remains fully closed, Tierney said.

"For the most part, people are understanding," Tierney said when asked about local response.

Boards and Commissions Impacted As Well

The town has cancelled meetings of boards and commissions and is postponing budget meetings, "until we get through this," Tierney said. Monday, a Building Committee meeting was held via teleconference as, according to Tierney, Lamont loosened some Freedom of Information Act restrictions, including giving a waiver to allow meetings without a public presence.

Deadlines involving land use applications have not been slackened, however, and Tierney said the Planning & Zoning Commission would likely have to do a public meeting next month.

The plan, as of Tuesday, was to set up a room where people could go in one at a time to speak to the commission, Tierney said. A waiting and staging area would be set up outside.

Tierney said he was working with the town attorney on those details.

The town is keeping residents in the know through messages via Facebook Live, and staff

is monitoring messages and phone calls, Tierney said. Also, permit applications can be downloaded online, and there's a mailbox at town hall to leave completed applications.

As of Wednesday, the RHAM campus modification project was open to bids and Tierney said officials were working with local superintendents and state agencies relative to the Hebron Elementary School construction project to replace lead infested pipes and on the planned construction at RHAM.

Tierney said he has also reached out to the state, the Chatham Health District and state Sen. Cathy Osten (D-19) for assistance in acquiring sold-out personal protective gear for emergency management personnel, including gloves.

See Hebron Shuts Down page 2

To Our Readers:

Due to the ramifications of the COVID-19 situation, it is possible that the *Rivereast News Bulletin* will be forced to temporarily suspend publication due to sickness among our staff or the advertising concerns as a result of business closings. We hope this will not be necessary, but if it should occur, the information will be posted on our website at glicitizen.com and on our phone system.

Schools Cope cont. from Front Page

Andover Elementary School and Marlborough Elementary School for RHAM students and their siblings.

Grab-and-go lunch is available between 11 a.m. and noon on those days, she said.

Like many other parents across the state, Jessica Dapsis, owner of Something Simple Café and member of the RHAM Board of Education, has a high school-aged child at home – her son is a RHAM student. Her daughter is also back from college.

“They both have online homework and the schools are still staying engaged that way,” Dapsis said.

When they are not studying, they hang out with friends of keeping busy with projects.

Marlborough Navigating ‘The Best We Can’

In Marlborough, the focus is on enhancing subject matter while students learn from home.

“We are trying to navigate this the best we can,” Marlborough Elementary School Assistant Principal Kim Kelley said.

Last Friday, after students were let out early, teachers put together packets for students with materials to reinforce current and precious lessons, Kelley said. Students were also given activities, such writing a journal or reading a book.

In addition, students will also be able to utilize programs used in the school, such as Lexia Learning and Matific, to enhance their distance learning experience, Kelley added.

On Friday, 119 devices – Chromebooks and iPads – were loaned out for students to take home, according to Principal Dan White.

“Everybody who needed something was able to take something home with them on Friday,” White said. “It ended up being a little bit more than 26% of our student population.”

White said that students in lower grades will also complete lessons with electronic devices and said they also use devices, such as iPads, on a regular basis in classrooms.

“There are many of our online programs that they can work with from the iPad,” White said.

Teachers customized the website for the younger students’ distance learning to outline what a day in kindergarten would look like, White said.

White said that while information is changing daily, the commissioner of education and governor have waived the state requirement of 180 school days.

“Some districts are considering what to do with their April vacations, not a discussion that we’ve had yet so is kind of a day-to-day situation,” White said.

While the students are learning from home, the school is offering a grab-and-go breakfast and lunch daily between 11 a.m. and noon. The meals are distributed at the same time in the school’s community room entrance and are provided at no cost to the families.

White said the meals can be given to any-

body in the school population and anybody that’s 18 or younger in the family.

RHAM is also providing food for Marlborough children in the RHAM middle or high schools from a van in the parking lot at the Marlborough school.

Kelley said the custodial staff is doing a “phenomenal job of cleaning the building, working really hard.”

‘Supporting All of Our Students’

In Colchester, schools are following “any and all guidance” provided by the state to meet the needs of the students, according to Charles Hewes, the district’s director of teaching and learning, adding that the district is brainstorming ideas on how to approach learning with other districts.

The district has posted educational opportunities online and on the district website, colchesterct.org, is an area with information about the coronavirus and the distance-learning approach educators are taking, Hewes said.

Some teachers, leaders and coaches have designed lessons for students and are working with an administrative team and teacher-leader team to design more sustainable learning opportunities.

“We are making sure that we are responding to the individualized education plan for students,” Hewes said. “We want to make sure that this is an equitable experience for our students. A lot of districts are posting that they are going right to online learning and we want to make sure that we are supporting all of our students.”

The district is also working to train staff to ramp up the distance learning and create structure within the lessons, Hewes said.

To ensure students are able to participate in any learning opportunity that’s made available, educators are communicating with families to determine what they may need so they can access the internet on devices at home.

The district is enhancing curriculum that has already been introduced to students, and educators are working with skills that have previously been taught to provide students with new opportunities to strengthen those skills, “perhaps with different real-world content,” Hewes said.

Administrators have cautioned against introducing new concepts to students, as it may be challenging for students to access lessons and information due to resources or individual needs, Hewes said. While Colchester is guidance provided by the governor and the commissioner of education, the district is “still trying to determine what is in the best interest of students.”

There are also online lessons for children in lower grades.

“Our kindergarten kiddos have done quite a bit with skill development and there’s going to be a lot of support for skills that have already been learned,” Hewes said. “In many cases

especially in the kindergarten levels students are emerging readers. They can still practice some of those skills that the teachers have already introduced to them. The more the kids are reading, for example, the more they are going to learn naturally.”

Hewes said the focus with kindergarteners is emphasizing strategies that all readers utilize and helping children strengthen skills so when they return they will have mastered or maintained them.

“We continue to encourage all families to keep supporting their learners – our learners – to make progress during this time but also to be aware that everybody has to remain flexible, and we will as well, to make sure that we ease the impact of this situation,” Hewes added.

Colchester Public Schools Food Services is offering bagged breakfast and lunches for K-12 students at Bacon Academy in front of the auditorium doors from 9-11 a.m. Monday through Friday. Families may not enter the building. Rather, attendants will deliver meals to vehicles, lined in front of the auditorium.

East Hampton, Portland Make Adjustments

East Hampton Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith and Portland Superintendent of Schools Philip O’Reilly have regularly updated their respective districts and communities on their efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

On Monday, schools in both districts introduced families to the way students will be learning, at least through the end of March.

In a letter to the community, Smith pledged that schools will continue to educate – and feed – Belltown’s students.

In East Hampton, Monday was “pick-up” day. Schools were open so parents could gather materials, such as Chromebooks, that will allow learning to continue while students are home.

Tuesday saw the beginning of remote learning for East Hampton learners.

In an interview with the *Rivereast*, Smith said distance learning enjoyed a “nice, smooth opening.”

Teachers will teach for a minimum of six hours per day.

Although they have not yet released definitive guidelines on how districts should handle assessment testing of students, state officials have instructed schools to prioritize consistent instruction over state tests, according to Smith.

Spring sports events have not been canceled outright, indicating that, should the situation allow, a shortened game season may be permitted, Smith said. He hopes to reschedule the school musical.

If schools are reopened by the end of the year, restoration and rescheduling of senior activities, such as prom and graduation, will be prioritized, he said.

East Hampton schools will also continue to feed students in this delicate time.

According to Smith, school food service staff have already served 200 families. Food is distributed on Mondays and Wednesdays between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. at East Hampton High School.

“Students are learning in their homes, teachers are teaching from a distance, custodians are cleaning the schools ... and the central office staff continues daily operations,” said East Hampton schools in a Facebook post. “Even in this time of COVID-19, education goes on.”

Portland schools will follow the same methods to mitigate the spread of pandemic coronavirus.

According to an announcement posted by O’Reilly on the Portland schools website, portlandctschools.org, work for grades K-4 will be posted to the main page of the website, while grades 5-12 will utilize Google Classroom and other online platforms.

Portland schools will also continue to feed children within the district. Meals will be distributed between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. at Portland Secondary School on High Street. Residents will remain in their cars while staff brings them meals.

Students living in Hartford and attending school in Portland can visit the Portland schools website for distribution locations in the capital city.

Hebron Shuts Down cont. from Front Page

gowns, masks, caps and “all the stuff to make the people safe when they have to go to these calls.”

“The biggest problem we’re facing right now is we don’t have enough personal protective equipment for emergency management personnel,” he said. “We don’t have enough gear.”

On Tuesday, he said it looked like the state was also short on gear and that Fire Chief Nick Wallick was taking a new approach and searching for the merchandise on Amazon.

“The chief is actively looking to find stuff online,” Tierney said. “But it’s sparse.”

On Monday, Tierney said the closest confirmed case of COVID-19 he had heard about was at Eastern Connecticut State University, adding that the person does not live on campus and is quarantined at home.

When he saw the news Monday morning Tierney said the reality of the situation hit him.

“What set it home for me was Grand Central Station is empty, Time Square is empty, I never ever thought I’d see that,” he said. “I never saw anything like this.”

How Local Retirement Community is Responding

Tierney also said he spoke with the administration at Colebrook Village, the senior living facility on John E. Horton Boulevard.

In a phone call Tuesday, Colebrook Executive Director Kevin Horan said access to the facility has been limited to essential visitors and medical personnel, such as physical and occu-

pational therapists.

Anybody that comes through the door is required to fill out a questionnaire about where they have been and with whom they have been in contact and must have their temperature taken, Horan said.

Residents’ families were asked to stay away and were complying, Horan said. On Monday, visits to the facility were down by 70%, and Tuesday they had gone down by 90%.

“The residents’ families are being great,” Horan said.

If residents are on hospice, there would be more flexibility, he said.

“Folks on hospice, obviously we would make every effort for at least one person to come in and see them,” Horan said.

Eating in the dining room has also changed and residents are only allowed two at a table, sitting across from each other, Horan said.

“We are encouraging deliveries to their apartments and we are using all paper materials,” he said.

All employees are being temperature checked and any visitors that do come in are heavily screened, Horan said.

The facility has also hired a new full-time housekeeper to sanitize and more people are working to sanitize in common areas.

While a number of entertainers have canceled, a “highly-screened” piano player has been hired to entertain residents, Horan said. The movie theater in the facility can hold up to

24 people but attendance is limited to six at a time. After a movie, the theater is sanitized and then, if others are interested in seeing the film, it will be reshowed.

“We’re trying to keep the residents as active as we can because we don’t want them to hibernate in their rooms,” Horan said. “We’re trying to keep the residents happy. I tried to do the Irish jig today to make them laugh, which they did. ... This is their home.”

Take-Out Only

COVID-19 had an effect on local restaurants and even before they were relegated Monday evening to take-out only. Jessica Dapsis, owner of Something Simple Café, said she had seen a downturn.

“Business has definitely slowed since this started,” she said. “We’ve definitely seen a downward slide.”

In response to the spread of the disease, Dapsis said staff has been cleaning more often, including hourly sanitizing of handles and knobs.

“Usually we clean those in the morning and evening,” she said.

Even before the transition to take out only, the café was using only plastic and disposable utensils and paper materials, including coffee mugs.

Self-serve milk for coffee and tea has been moved behind counter for staff to dispense, so there are fewer hands touching it, Dapsis said.

While the governor’s rules do allow delivery, on Tuesday, Dapsis said she is not doing that. The current plan is to continue with the to-go sales, though she added that the business will judge how it does.

“Might be that it’s not worth it,” she said.

State of Emergency Declared in Andover

by Sloan Brewster

Andover officials have declared a state of emergency in the town and closed Town Hall to the public until further notice.

A note on the town's Facebook page advised folks to stay tuned for updates.

As the spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 [COVID-19] – a novel coronavirus – threatens the nation, local towns are shuttering town halls and ceasing town operations.

Andover officials made the decision last Friday amid federal and state emergency declarations by President Donald Trump and Gov. Ned Lamont and a declaration of a pandemic by the World Health Organization.

Monday, Trump issued guidelines to slow the spread of the disease, including working and schooling from home whenever possible; avoiding gatherings of more than 10 people; not eating or drinking at restaurants, bars or food courts; avoiding discretionary travel, shopping trips or social visits; and not visiting nursing homes or care facilities.

That same day, Lamont prohibited gatherings of more than 50 people; ordered restaurants, bars and private clubs to serve food and non-alcoholic beverages solely for take-out or delivery; closed off-track betting facilities; and ordered gyms, sports, fitness and recreation facilities and movie theaters to cease operations until April 30.

Town Administrator Eric Anderson said the town as a whole is holding up pretty well.

Some town workers are still putting in hours at town hall but staffing in offices is reduced, he said.

"Employees are reporting however if you showed up at the town hall you would not be allowed in under emergency circumstances," Anderson said Monday.

In the meantime, the town purchased Zoom – a video conferencing and webinar tool – and officials were working on plans for electronic meetings, the town administrator said.

"It's challenging and it turns out that Zoom, at times of the day, is swamped," he said Tuesday.

On Wednesday, the Board of Selectmen had its first virtual meeting using Zoom.

One thing the town discussed during the one hour and 20 minute session was that at some point the town may implement a food delivery system for sick residents with no way of getting food.

Anderson said he is working with Ted's Market in Hebron on plans that would allow residents to place and pay for orders that the town would pick and deliver.

As of Wednesday, no requests for food had come in but the town will keep track of any such requests in the expectation of disaster relief reimbursements, Anderson said. If and when any requests are made, deliveries will be coordinated, and will "follow a logical script" and there will be controls on what people can get.

Due to the emergency, Lamont has given towns flexibility in budget deadlines and during the meeting the board pushed the town's budget process back by 30 days.

The board also extended Board of Assessment Appeals deadlines by 30 days.

Based on an agreement with People's Bank to waive certain fees to the town, the board agreed to waive fees for online tax payments made via electronic transfer or direct debit while town hall remains closed. Credit card payments, however, will still have attached fees.

"We had over \$1 million – \$1.5 million – that was paid via check last April; it's quite a bit," Vice First Selectman Adrian Mandeville said. "Please pay with debit or electronic withdrawal."

Andover parks are still open, though there are no organized activities and Anderson suggested folks who use the parks maintain proper social distancing etiquette.

The CDC defines social distancing as "remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet or 2 meters) from others when possible."

Anderson said the town is basing its responses to the situation on guidance from the Eastern Highlands Health District.

"We're just running down the checklist for the pandemic response from Eastern Highlands," he said. "We're not reinventing the wheel and pretty much every step that has been taken has been based on that."

Seniors Keeping Busy and Staying Healthy

Anderson said the town has asked local seniors to isolate themselves as much as possible.

"Call Town Hall if there's anything you need and we'll do the best that we can to see that you get it," he said.

On Monday, Cathy Palazzi, senior coordinator, said senior transportation and lunches were cancelled until further notice as were Young at Heart meetings, exercise classes, movie nights and trips.

"Friday was my last luncheon, I actually thought I was going to have to close it that day," she said.

Instead, Anderson and First Selectman Jeff Maguire attended the weekly event and gave the seniors some updates.

About two-thirds of the town's population is seniors, Palazzi said.

"We have to be really careful with our senior population," she said. "Plus they have a lot of the underlying illnesses that would make this worse."

Palazzi said she called more than 100 seniors to check in with them Monday.

"My seniors are awesome" she said. "And I'm so totally pleased that of all these people that I contacted only one person was not prepared."

She said all save that one individual had enough medication and food to keep them covered for a couple weeks or that they had family members to assist them, if the need arises.

"And I thought isn't that's wonderful that they are prepared and there was no hysteria," she said. "They're saying we'll deal with it day by day."

Local seniors are keeping busy by walking and Palazzi said she has been increasing the distance she walks daily.

"So were very, very pleased," she said. "We do not have an issue with the seniors right now."

Curbside Library Books and Other Ways to Keep Reading

Anderson said library staff was working on a plan to allow curbside pickup.

"We know it's important for people to still be able to access those resources," he said. "We're kind of taking the approach of what services can we provide to the community under these circumstances and if there something we can do safely than we're going to supply that to the public."

On Wednesday, Amy Orlomoski, library director, said she had left materials curbside twice so far – once Monday and once Tuesday. In those instances, patrons had phoned, asking for specific materials – one wanted a book and the other a DVD. She had both items and had left them inside an envelope in the doorway for the patrons to pick up.

Most library borrowers don't tend to have specific materials in mind, however, Orlomoski said.

"The nature of the library is people like to



Andover Library Director Amy Orlomoski rolled two book trucks full of free adult fictions to help folks keep reading while the library is closed to the public during the state of emergency declared over coronavirus.

look through the stuff," she said.

Still, for those who want something specific, they can call the library and leave a message or send an email to request that certain books or DVDs be checked out to them. If the items are available, library staff will package them and put them outside the back door for pickup Tuesdays between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. and Wednesdays between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.

In the meantime, the library's children's director, Cathy Campen, has been posting Storytime videos on Facebook and Orlomoski said one of the town's selectmen had said some selectmen were willing to do the same thing.

"We are also trying to post interesting content on our Facebook page," Orlomoski said. "We are also planning to hold at least two book discussion sessions using Facebook Video Messenger."

Orlomoski has also made it possible for readers to keep reading by wheeling two book trucks full of adult fiction to the parking lot and leaving them for the taking.

"They've been weeded out of the library," she said. "Instead of trying to sell them at a book sale we're just going to give them away."

Orlomoski said Andover's library was the only one in the area with staff on hand during the crisis and that most other towns are simply closing their libraries and sending workers home.

"People are just leaning back and trying to take the advice of the CDC and health officials and just laying low as much as they can," she said.

The book drop is closed and the library is asking patrons to hold checked out items they currently have until further notice, Orlomoski said.

To access the library's Facebook page visit

www.facebook.com/AndoverPublicLibrary.CT.

The library has also started a second library Facebook page for sharing virtual content, called "Andover CT Public Library Too."

The library also has a subscription to OverDrive, and library card holders can access eBooks and audiobooks via the "Libby" app, which is a free download, Orlomoski said. Anyone with questions on how to use Libby or who would like to request materials for curbside pickup can email or call the library at 860-742-7428 or andoverctpubliclibrary@gmail.com.

Closing the Bar

COVID-19 has had an effect on local restaurants and Monday, Johnny Koly, owner of Andover Pizza, prepared to go to take-out only and close the bar until April 30 as mandated by Lamont.

Koly said he had already seen a downturn in business, including in pizza orders.

"We've been a little slower than we used to be," he said

Employees are taking pains to keep the restaurant clean, using plenty of sanitizer and wearing gloves when taking cash from customers, Koly said.

The majority of customers – 80 percent – do take-out normally, Koly said. He does not offer a delivery service, he said.

"Nothing I can do," he said about the changes based on COVID-19. "We're just going to make sure everybody stays safe and I think it was a good idea that they need to close the bars and restaurants."

A Final Word from the Town Administrator

Before hanging up with the *Riverest* Monday, Anderson offered some sage advice for residents, "Don't panic," he said. "We'll all get through this together."

State of Emergency Declared in Colchester

by Karla Santos

Colchester First Selectman Mary Bylone declared a state of emergency in the town on Monday and has been giving updates twice a day in terms of what the town and the state are experiencing regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19).

"I have reached out to many of the businesses in town to see if there is anything we can do to work with them or if they have questions related to the governor's directives," Bylone said. "We are all working together to keep everyone as safe as possible."

Bylone said the senior center is closed but the meals that would have been served in the building are being delivered to the seniors.

"We are providing transportation for seniors to go to doctor's appointments, grocery shopping and the pharmacy," Bylone added.

In addition, she said town meetings were canceled for this week.

"We are exploring using virtual meeting software and hope to be able to hold meetings that way, for as long as the Town Hall is closed," Bylone said.

Town Hall staff are working; they are handling certain requests on an individual basis. The complete listing of the services by department is listed on the website, Bylone said.

Earlier this week Bylone told the *Rivereast* the Food Bank was very low on supplies and suggested residents to donate for the cause.

On Wednesday, Bylone said she was thankful for the people who have contributed to her call for help to the Food Bank. She said they are not accepting food at the moment but encourage gift card or monetary donations.

Bylone has been offering the community an update on virus-related information through Facebook Live each day at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Wednesday night, Bylone announced that there are 96 confirmed cases in the state of Connecticut and that the state has had its first death recorded related to the COVID-19. She also said that Middlesex County has had its first confirmed case of the virus.

Bylone told residents that it is important to continue with the precautions that have been given such as hand washing and keeping social

distance.

The staff at town hall continue to offer services, sometimes outside if needed. Bylone said there were two marriage licenses issued on Wednesday.

"That's proof that life does go on regardless of what's happening around us," Bylone said during her Facebook Live update. "Although it seemed like a moment maybe to celebrate, it is amongst a very sober environment that we are working in here."

Bylone said Town Hall has received questions and concerns from residents, and she said the team is doing the best to provide those residents with information. She added that the town's website and Facebook page are being updated.

"We'll be posting some closings that we know of that are not necessarily required, but there are some businesses that are deciding to curtail activities, their hours or services or close all together," Bylone said.

Bylone announced that the Colchester Police Department will has not been doing fin-

gerprinting because the inkpad that's used through the process can't be decontaminated.

"We have supplies coming in to protect our staff specially our first responders," Bylone said. "Those supplies are limited so we are being very cautious about how many are used. But we do have requests in to be able to get some supplies as they become available throughout the state and are being distributed."

Bylone said that questions can be directed to Town Hall staff by email or phone calls.

"I can't say enough about our staff here, how hard they are working to make sure that we can keep our community safe," Bylone said. "I have concerns for them that I think that they are making a lot of sacrifices and I certainly want them to take care of themselves. We are doing everything we possibly can to help our community."

The Colchester School District is offering two meals daily to students in town. Details are offered on the district's website, colchesterct.org.

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Area Restaurants Affected by COVID-19

by Karla Santos

The coronavirus (COVID-19) has affected many businesses directly and indirectly but small restaurants that live on a day-to-day basis said having to close is devastating.

In Colchester, Nicholas Schumacher, owner of Diane's Restaurant, said his business has temporarily completely shut down after on Monday, Gov. Ned Lamont joined the governors of New York and New Jersey, ordering the closures of all restaurants, bars and gyms on Monday. Restaurants were allowed to offer take-out options, however.

Schumacher, whose business is in Colchester, said he thinks "everybody is feeling the effect right now," particularly small businesses.

"At the moment we are currently closed," he said. "We are not going to be open for take-out. It's kind of devastating because we live day to day."

Schumacher said he employs about 11 people, all who are also being affected by the shutdown.

"We don't have the jobs where we can work from home," he said. "I have a lot of people

under me as employees. They feel the same way; I mean, everybody has bills to pay."

He said if it's possible, the government should help those businesses who are struggling.

He said it's helpful that the president has already pushed back the taxes for when they are due but he said he wished more things could be done. Schumacher also said he acknowledges the economy is going through tough times, which doesn't make it easier for governments to help.

Sadler's Ordinary in Marlborough is offering to-go options from 11 a.m.-7 p.m.

"We don't do a lot of business after seven anyways so we figured seven is good," Chef Will Malkasian, said.

He said the restaurant also has an online menu now, at eatatsadlers.com.

"People can actually go into our website, order online and pay by credit card that way so we don't have to do any hand-by-hand transfers," Malkasian said.

He said because the restaurant is only offering to-go options, employees are being affected "big time."

He said Sadler's is only using about half of

the employees it uses during normal operations.

Village Green Pizza in Marlborough is also offering to-go options.

Manager Amy Wayland said the restaurant normally doesn't deliver food, but plans on doing it now that people can't dine in.

"We've looked into some third-party things but we are still working out the logistics of that," Wayland told the *Rivereast* on Monday.

She said there's a possibility they'll use their staff for the deliveries to continue to offer them an employment opportunity.

In addition, Wayland said the owner said he is "doing everything he can to make sure his employees are taken care of as best as possible as well as the business."

The restaurant will be operating until 8 p.m. to follow the order given by the government.

"I'm not sure whether people understand that they still can get take out or they are frightened by coming in," she said

Wayland added that the restaurant is taking every measure necessary including bleaching surfaces and washing hands in between.

"We are a small business," Wayland said. "All of us have been here for years. We are like a family."

Health Emergency Declared in Marlborough

by **Karla Santos**

The town of Marlborough declared a health emergency on Sunday and the Board of Selectmen held its first teleconference meeting on Tuesday.

First Selectman Greg Lowrey said that, when declaring an emergency, his focus was on providing safe access to town services while maintaining appropriate distance; food services provided by the school and senior center; and teleconferences.

He said he also wanted to explore teleconference opportunities that would meet the executive orders the governor put out to help manage the pandemic. Lowrey said one of those orders requires that a recording or a transcript must be posted on the webpage of the town within seven days of a conference call.

Lowrey told the *Rivereast* he will offer the teleconference option to the town boards, but board chairs will decide how to proceed, he said.

Lowrey said that while teleconferencing can be useful, it also presents some inconveniences.

“There are some challenges [in] moving to a full teleconference format,” Lowrey said. “These challenges include audio quality, etiquette of muting audio when not speaking, brevity, efficient sequence of roundtable discussion, distribution of visuals ahead of the meeting and publication of a recording or transcript.”

He said he plans to include teleconference instructions in the agendas as appropriate.

Prior to the meeting on Tuesday, a dialing number and access code was made available so that members of the public could take part in the meeting.

During the meeting, Lowrey announced some modifications to how the town is operating as the result of the coronavirus (COVID-19). He said they modified how they accept in person business in town hall. These changes have to do with maintaining distance to prevent the spread of the disease. Town hall visitors are now being asked to ring a bell or call an office before entering. In addition, residents are encouraged to take advantage of the town hall services that can be done through a phone call or online.

“It’s important for people to be aware that we are going to be asking for that kind of distance and it’s not because we are being rude,” Lowrey said. “In some cases we are going to ask people to set documents down and take a step back and then we’ll take a look at what they have maybe with gloves on.”

Marlborough Senior Center is open, but only to provide meals to-go and other items on an as-needed basis. People who need to contact the senior center should call 860-295-6209.

In addition, the transfer station is not accepting debris and other items where there would have to be a payment and a receipt, Lowrey said.

Selectmen Joe Asklar asked when the transfer station policy will change. Lowrey said they could go over some options. One of the options he suggested was having a “hybrid” method where residents would pay in a way that doesn’t require close contact with members of public works and vice versa.

“As far as timing I think is open-ended,” Lowrey said.

Asklar proposed to revisit the policy every

two weeks during the board meeting to see if it can be altered.

Lowrey said it’s something that could be updated more often than every two weeks if needed.

Selectman Amy Traversa suggested that information and updates be posted on the town’s website regardless of whether it is posted on Facebook or not. She said information needs to get out and she has received several calls from people asking her for information or updates. She said information assisting businesses could also be shared and gave the example of businesses that have closed completely and others that are offering only to go options.

She said that in the absence of information, “you get nothing but rumors.”

Lowrey said he has concerns with that, one being that “local businesses in these times have the opportunity to communicate with their customers at least as efficiently as government.”

On Monday, Lowrey told the *Rivereast* that the town was still trying to figure out a remote access solution for meetings.

Lowrey said that things like a charter revision occur during the summer when people are on vacation and they were working on putting together a file share product through software called SharePoint, enabling boards to distribute any materials relevant to matters on the agenda.

“We are pretty far along in sharing the documents,” Lowrey said.

But he said he had not noticed a requirement on one of the governor’s executive orders.

“One of the things that we noticed in that executive order is what I believe is a new requirement that we haven’t figured out how to satisfy,” Lowrey said.

Lowrey said that having to post a recording or a transcript of the call is new.

“I don’t know if minutes would suffice because is easy enough to do a teleconference,” Lowrey said. “But to have a recording is another matter. It could be that we get clarification from the state but I don’t think it was the state’s intention to add burdens.”

Whether town meetings are held in person or not is up to the chair of the boards and commissions, Lowrey said.

Marlborough Elementary School and the RHAM middle and high schools, like all other schools in the state, are closed, but they are offering grab-and-go food options for families that are interested. This is taking place in the parking lot, community room entrance area of the school.

RHAM is distributing from a bus that they are using to get the food to Marlborough Elementary from RHAM. They are also distributing in Andover and at RHAM for students that live in Hebron. Pick-up is for breakfast and lunch and takes place each day from 11 a.m.-noon.

Lowrey said that one of the executive orders set by the governor to help manage town businesses during the pandemic adds a 30-day extension option for budgets. He noted the extension is for not only municipal budgets but regional board of education budgets as well.

Portland First Selectwoman Proposes 2.76% Increase to Town Budget

by **Jack Lakowsky**

This week Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield proposed a \$35.6 million town budget, an increase of 2.76% or \$983,000 over the current year’s spending plan.

According to Bransfield, who presented the budget to the Board of Selectmen Tuesday, the budget is divided into two major categories: general government and board of education. On the town side, Bransfield proposing spending \$13.8 million – a 2.71% increase over the current year.

Bransfield also proposed a .85 increase in the town’s mill rate, for a total of 34.66 mills.

On the education side, Bransfield proposes spending \$21.9 million, a 2.80% increase, which is about \$352,000 lower than the education board’s latest proposal.

On March 10, the Board of Education lowered its original proposed increase of 4.46% to 3.83% for a \$22.8 million total, according to Superintendent of Schools Philip O’Reilly, who spoke of the school district’s budget priorities at the meeting. This represents a decrease of about \$133,000 from the BOE’s \$22.20 million original proposal in January.

O’Reilly and Board of Education Chairwoman Sharon Peters presented several categories of budget priorities.

O’Reilly presented the restoration of a fifth grade certified teaching position and the introduction of a therapeutic day program for grades kindergarten through six, which will help schools meet the needs of students with special social, behavioral and emotional needs.

According to O’Reilly, this program would allow Portland to keep students currently outplaced to out-of-town programs within the district for a potential savings of approximately \$300,000.

O’Reilly said technology infrastructure will be another major budget priority. He said wifi networks at both Brownstone Intermediate

School and Gildersleeve Elementary are expiring and will need replacement by May 1.

O’Reilly presented a myriad of capital improvement requests that are not funded in the ‘20-’21 budget, including track replacement at the high school, sidewalk repairs at Gildersleeve, parking lot resurfacing and roof repairs at Brownstone Elementary.

The selectmen read many letters from Portland residents expressing support for the proposed budget increase.

One writer was Heidi Abbot of Fairview Street, who wrote that she is 100% in favor of the 3.83% increase and that any cuts to this would be unacceptable to her.

Rachel Anderson of Rustic Terrace wrote that Portland’s teachers and staff have shown compassion and leadership during this period of schools closing statewide to mitigate the spread of coronavirus. She wrote staff have been helpful in helping families adjust to the new distance learning. Anderson added that her son has made much progress from extra support from school staff.

April Graves of Freestone Avenue, who also serves on the Brownfield Redevelopment Focus Group, wrote a letter supporting the first selectwoman’s proposed budget. Graves wrote that concerns over cuts to the BOE’s budget have been exacerbated by speculation on social media.

Graves wrote that numerous municipal departments have budget priorities equally as imperative as those named by O’Reilly and the board of ed, including the replacement of a fire tanker that has been used since 1985, repair of police vehicles and maintenance of the town’s water/sewer infrastructure.

Bransfield explained that letters to her office and the selectmen will be filed and read at meetings throughout the budget process.

As of press time, workshops discussing the

first selectwoman’s proposed budget will be held on March 18, 24 and 25, with deliberations slated for March 31 and April 1. The board of selectmen budget must be approved by April 8.

Bransfield said her proposed budget has never gone to public referendum exactly as she presented it, explaining that adjustments are made based on public comment and new information.

However, Bransfield added that, during this time of national crisis due to the spread of coronavirus, dates may change to accommodate for state instruction and/or public safety.

“We’re in uncharted territory,” Bransfield said in the meeting. “Be vigilant.”

Grand List Growth, Taxes Presented at BOS Meeting

During the selectmen meeting, Bransfield presented a total of about \$840 million for Portland’s current grand list, an increase of about \$10.8 million over the previous list, or 1.3%.

The grand list is a valuation of all taxable property within a town. A town’s grand list plays a major role in determining budgets and taxes for the upcoming fiscal year.

According to data from the Portland assessor’s office, the following is a list, in descending order, of Portland’s top ten taxpayers and the amounts they paid to the town: Connecticut Light & Power (Eversource), \$26.3 million; St. Clements Foundation, Inc, \$3.9 million; Jarvis Airfoil, Inc, \$2.72 million; Woodgreen Portland Limited Partnership, \$2.71

million; Buckeye Cattle Company, \$2.6 million; Perry Portland Associates, \$2.5 million; Oakwood Sports Center of Glastonbury, \$1.7 million; Connecticut Natural Gas Co., \$1.65 million; Carrol Properties III, \$1.62 million and; Portland Care and Rehabilitation, \$1.61 million.

The largest tax revenues flowed to the town in the real estate and motor vehicle categories, totalling \$703 million and \$77 million, respectively, according to information provided by Portland’s assessor’s office.

“This has been one of our better years,” Bransfield said in the meeting.

Bransfield’s proposal to bring the mill rate to 34.66 mills is based on each mill being valued at \$839,526, an increase of about \$10,000 from the 2019-2020 fiscal year. She said the additional taxes would raise the town’s revenue by \$713,597.

Bransfield said in the meeting she believes these increases to be prudent.

Temporary Format for Selectmen Meetings

In response to the ubiquitous coronavirus crisis and national emergency, attendance to board of selectmen meetings will be restricted to members of the board and other officials. The public can still listen to and view selectmen meetings via Zoom, an online remote conference service. Visit the town’s website and follow the Zoom link. Residents can comment and participate using the app.

Local Businesses Navigate Difficult Times

by Jack Lakowsky

The economic slowdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has already impacted local businesses. However, the establishments of Portland and East Hampton have proven adaptable and remain dedicated to serving their customers.

As Gov. Ned Lamont issues executive orders restricting people from dining inside restaurants, some local eateries are taking advantage of the state’s allowing take-out and delivery options.

At Melili’s Caffe in Portland – recent recipients of the town’s Outstanding Small Business Community Award – owner Seby Milardo said he and his staff will be offering takeout, delivery and curbside service at their Main Street location.

“Whatever has to be done, we’re going to do it,” Milardo said. “We’ll do anything we can do to help.”

Milardo said he has an employee dedicated exclusively to cleaning and sanitizing the restaurant as an extra precaution.

“We’re paying even more attention to cleaning,” Milardo said. “That’s what needs to hap-

pen to keep people safe.”

Po Fong, owner of Po’s Rice & Spice in East Hampton, is offering a special deal to residents aged 65 and older.

Po’s will offer free dinner combos and delivery to senior East Hampton residents within eight miles of the restaurant. Fong’s mother is also a senior in East Hampton.

“I’ll try to keep this going as long as the crisis lasts,” Fong said.

Fong said she wanted to give back to East Hampton.

“I’m not doing that much,” Fong said. “I just think we all need to do our share to help.”

Fong said this method has allowed her to move service staff into roles as delivery drivers, thus retaining jobs.

“It makes me feel good,” Fong said. “At least I’m doing something.”

According to the restaurant’s Facebook page, people should call between 4-6 p.m. and restaurant staff will take care of the rest. Fong said she feels very fortunate that she is still able to do business in a suddenly unstable economy.

There are more than 8,500 eating and drinking establishments across the state and the restaurant industry employs more than 160,000 people, according to the Connecticut Restaurant Association.

On Monday, all food service establishments were ordered by the state to stop dine-in services by 8 p.m. All will be closed until further notice.

Bob Petzold, co-owner of Petzold’s Marine Center, canceled the boat supplier’s annual open house and boat show. This is the first cancellation in the event’s history, Petzold said.

“It won’t be rescheduled this year,” Petzold said. “It would be too late in the season.”

Petzold said the boat show has run regardless of blizzards or snowstorms.

Despite the challenges brought by this crisis, Petzold and his staff will still offer service to consumers. Petzold explained that salespeople will be able to record video walkthroughs detailing boats. The video can then be emailed to customers.

“This will be really helpful,” Petzold said.

“A lot of our clients aren’t local.”

For supplies and goods, Petzold is offering to customers the option of remotely placing an order through phone call, email or text. Products could then be brought to a customer’s vehicle.

Petzold remains optimistic in a difficult time for businesses not just in Portland and East Hampton, but throughout the world.

“Once the dust has settled, boat sales will jump,” Petzold said, adding that families will spend quality time together during this period of school closures and many people working from home.

Petzold explained that, after the 9-11 attacks, people came together and bonded and felt a heightened sense of connectedness despite having witnessed a violent, traumatic tragedy.

Last week, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced it will offer small businesses low-interest economic injury disaster loans of up to \$2 million, SBA said in a statement. Loans can be used to help with fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills.

Lake Aeration Project Proposal Approved in East Hampton

by Jack Lakowsky

The East Hampton Town Council awarded a work contract allowing a contractor to move forward with the Lake Pocotopaug Aeration Project, an effort to improve lake oxygen levels and reduce blue-green algae growth.

The council unanimously voted to award the two-year, \$321,900 work contract to EverBlue Lake Solutions, a Michigan-based lake remediation and renewal firm, according to town manager David Cox.

In his report presented to the council at a March 10 meeting, Cox wrote that initial project expenses will be funded with \$250,000 of surplus from fiscal year 2019 and \$30,000 of the proceeds from the sale of the town hall. The remaining \$41,900, the town manager wrote, will be expended using funds added to the town’s 2020-21 “Water Quality Infrastructure Improvement” account.

The anticipated first-year cost to the town will be \$173,725, with the second projected as \$148,175.

Cox said the project will be finished in May.

In early February, the town solicited proposals for introduction of oxygen into the lake’s deeper levels to inhibit the development of phosphorus which, at excessive levels, facilitates eutrophication, or a reduction of dissolved oxygen in water bodies caused by an increase of mineral and organic nutrients. Explosive algal blooms are a sign of eutrophication.

According to the town manager’s report,

EverBlue will use 55 diffusers dispersed throughout the lake served to destratify it. Research from the University of New South Wales in Australia states that destratification is a process helping to create consistent temperature and dissolved oxygen levels throughout bodies of freshwater.

The research also states that destratifiers can also cause unwanted changes in physical, chemical and biological processes in the water.

EverBlue has also proposed use of BioBlast Bacteria Treatment, a product of beneficial microbes which, according to the company’s website, is a more natural process. Use of the BioBlast is contingent upon approval from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

According to EverBlue’s Bid, a total five-year cost of BioBlast use is \$247,000. Cox recommended a five-year lease between the town and EverBlue.

According to EverBlue’s proposal to the town, the design of a lake-bottom aeration system and biological treatment for Lake Pocotopaug is based on several reviews and reports from local officials on the lake’s health and water quality, including the 2018 Chatham Health District Algae Reports and a review of the Lake Pocotopaug Nine Elements Watershed Based Plan (The Nine Point Plan).

East Hampton Police News

3/4: David Geuser, 68, of 26 Brewer Rd., was charged with second-degree threatening and second-degree breach of peace, East Hampton Police said.

3/4: Cynthia Arnold, 50, of 103 Sandhill Rd., Portland was issued a Summons for operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

3/4: A 16-year-old juvenile of East Hampton was issued a summons for possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana/THC.

3/5: Albert Vieira, 68, of 1 Laurel Ridge, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, failure to drive right, operating without a license and possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, police said.

3/6: Michael Lacy, 27, of 50 Old Middletown Ave., was charged with driving under the influence, failure to drive right, possession of a controlled substance, possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell and carrying a firearm while under the influence.

3/6: Nidia Lopez, 33, of 48 Long Hill Rd., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

3/8: Evan Wojcik 28, of 17 Overlook Rd., was arrested and charged with second-degree harassment, police said.

Also, from March 2-8, officers responded to 13 medical calls, two motor vehicle crashes and three alarms, and made 47 traffic stops.

Colchester Police News

3/11: State Police said Carl Adams, 30, of 212 Boretz Rd., Colchester, was arrested and charged with violation of probation.

3/13: State Police said Jean C. Moya-Perez, 25, of Chaplin was arrested and charged with second degree failure to appear.

Man Pulled from Burning Car in Marlborough

Marlborough Fire had to pull a man out of a vehicle after it crashed and burst into flames Monday evening.

Stephen J. Jacinto, 54, of 22 Brewer Ra., East Hampton, was the driver of a Toyota Rav4 that on Monday was traveling westbound on Portland Road when it crashed into the mailbox and a utility pole shortly before 9 p.m. March 16. Police said the vehicle continued traveling westbound until it struck a tree on

the north side of Portland Road.

According to the Accident Information Summary, the vehicle was on fire when police arrived to the scene. Marlborough Fire pulled Jacinto out of the vehicle. Jacinto was transported to Hartford Hospital via Marlborough EMS, with suspected serious injuries.

There were no other occupants in the vehicle, which was towed from the scene.

Police: Niantic Man Tried Using Brother’s Identity in Colchester

A Niantic man was arrested March 13 after, state police said, he shoplifted from Stop & Shop and then, when stopped by officers, attempted to pass himself off as his brother.

Sean Michael Lynch, 33, of Niantic, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny, criminal impersonation and interfering with officer, police said. Police said Lynch walked out of the Colchester Stop & Shop with eight 12-packs of Red Bull without

paying.

The store’s Loss Prevention department notified Colchester Police. Lynch got into an Uber, which was later stopped by police. Police said Lynch attempted to use his brother’s name and date of birth as his own identity. Police added Lynch had a warrant out for his arrest on a failure to appear charge.

Lynch is due to appear in court on April 20.

Obituaries

Colchester

Gail Wesley Martin Jr.

Gail Wesley Martin Jr., 71, of Colchester passed away at home Tuesday, Feb. 25. Born April 20, 1948, in Four States, W. Va., he was the son of the late Gail and Betty (Morris) Martin. In 1971 he married the love of his life Mary Lou Nagy. Gail proudly served our nation by enlisting in the United States Army and serving overseas in Vietnam. When he returned home from serving our country he worked at Pratt & Whitney as a process planner for 23 years.



In addition to his wife Mary Lou, Gail is survived by his children Erik Martin and wife Jessica of Wallingford, Shawn Martin and wife Carolyne from Killingly; siblings Betty Garrett and husband Jim from Four States, W. Va., Linda Morgan and husband Tom from Charleston, W. Va., and Jack Martin and wife Darlene from Mannington, W. Va.; as well as grandchildren Alexis, Shaylyn, Tyler, and Peyton, beloved cousins, nieces and nephews, and hundreds of young men he so enjoyed coaching, umpiring and watching on the ball field.

A private celebration will be held by the family at a later date at Gail's request.

East Hampton

Helene Allen Funeral Postponed

Due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the family of Helene "Vicki" Allen, formerly of East Hampton, has decided to postpone the wake and funeral for Allen until a future date to be determined.

Allen died Tuesday, March 3, at the age of 86. Her obituary was in last week's *Rivereast*.

Spencer Funeral Home is handling the arrangements. For more information, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Leo Strong

Leo "Jr." Strong, a lifelong resident of Lake Pocotopaug, East Hampton, died Saturday, March 7, at age 93.

Leo had a passion for boats. His career as a ship's carpenter at Portland Boat Works and as a ship's captain spanned decades. Leo's family operated Strong's Pavilion, a popular East Hampton resort, from the 1800s through the 1950s. In his retirement, Leo enjoyed making beautiful wooden ChrisCraft model boats. But he was happiest at the helm on the water.

Leo is survived by his wife, Marie Strong; step-daughter, Rae (Jim) Studholme; grandchildren, Brendon and Claire Studholme; and best friend, Ed Bednarek.

Portland

David J. Hadden

David J. Hadden, 58, lifelong resident of Portland, passed away Monday, March 9.

David was born May 10, 1961. He graduated from Portland High School. He was a master sergeant in the Connecticut Air National Guard and was awarded an honorable discharge after 25 years of service to his country. He traveled the world in his role as an airman in the national guard serving in the continental United States, Saudi Arabia, Pearl Harbor, Greece, and the UK to name a few. He had a fantastic map in his pole barn that displayed all of the places he visited around the world. He was deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Southern Watch (Kuwait) and Operation Diamondback with the United States Border Patrol. He was proud of his service to his country and never missed an opportunity to thank a fellow serviceman or veteran for their service when he encountered them in public. He was a master marksman.

David worked for the last 20+ years at the Air National Guard Base in East Granby. He had the privilege during his tenure there to fuel Air Force One. He was also employed at Sargis and Associates of Rocky Hill, Easter Refractory Company of Longmeadow, Mass., and Henkels and McCoy of Portland. During his career, David was a lifelong learner who earned numerous certifications for detailed specialty work in his various fields of expertise.

Davie was the quintessential Jack of all Trades. He had an immense curiosity and a keen intellect for antique cars, motors and homespun engineering. He was the original MacGyver who could build a smoker out of scrap metal, start a maple syrup business from the trees on his land, or build a car from the wheels up. He could fix anything! Dave loved his 1956 Buick and the books of J.R.R. Tolkien. He also loved to fish. He went on several saltwater fishing trips and was the host to many opening day fishing season events at his home by Reservoir Brook.

David, like his father and grandfathers before him, was a lifelong member of the Masons. He belonged to the Warren Lodge No. 51 of Portland. For many years he marched in Portland's Memorial Day Parade with the honor guard or could be seen driving the 1931 Chevy that originally belonged to his grandfather Herb Hadden.

Davie is survived by his mother, Prudence (Bell) Hadden of Portland; his sister, Lindy Silano and brother-in-law Mike of Portland and Canton; his brother Robert Hadden of Cocoa Beach, Fla.; his brother Daniel Hadden and wife Cindy of East Hartford; as well as numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

David is preceded in death by his father, Thomas J. Hadden of Portland; his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry C. Bell and Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Hadden, also of Portland.

The family of David J. Hadden would like to express our thanks and gratitude for the wonderful care and help given by lifelong friend Mark Coman.

Dave will be remembered by friends and family for his wit, humor, intellect and artistic abilities.

A celebration of David's life will be held Sunday, May 10, at Quarry Ridge Golf Course in Portland, provided that the golf course is allowed to open given the current state of affairs.



Marlborough

Amy L. Watts

Amy L. (Robitaille) Watts, 44, passed away at home Tuesday, March 17, after a long illness. Born in Marlborough, she was the beloved wife of James Watts, and resided in Barrington, R.I., with their two children, Cameron and Chase.



Amy loved the color white, which was befitting as she would brighten any room with her beautiful smile and love of life. Amy's happiest moments were spent in the presence of her family, with her dog, Elle, and feeling the sun on her face at any beach she could find near or far. She had an easygoing style that radiated kindness, warmth, and beauty from the inside out. Boating with her husband, watching her son Cam catching waves while surfing and her son Chase scoring goals in hockey, also brought her great joy.

In addition to her husband and boys, Amy leaves behind her mother, Virginia (Springs) Robitaille of Bristol, R.I.; her late father, Eddie Robitaille of Marlborough; her brother, Joseph Robitaille of Marlborough, and his two children, Jayson and Lillian; her father-in-law, Walter "Ray" Watts of Chepachet, R.I.; her late mother-in-law, Martha Ann (Barlow) Watts of Chepachet, R.I.; her brother-in-law, Michael Watts; his wife, Laurie Watts, and their three children Nathan, Ryan, and Kaleigh Watts of Chepachet, R.I.; and a host of adoring aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Services will be private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the RISPCA, 186 Amaral St., Riverside, RI 02915 or to the Barrington Dog Park, P.O. Box 15401, Riverside, RI 02915.

Marlborough

Leon E. Naud

We are heartbroken at the loss of our husband, father and grandfather Leon E. Naud. He leaves to grieve his wife Linda (Ponchak) of 59 years of marriage. His parents were Emma Bishop of Marlborough and Joseph Naud of Long Island, N.Y.

He is also survived by three sons, Lee, James and Stephen of East Hampton; daughter Andrea Migliaccio of Colchester; grandchildren, Jordan Naud, Tyler Migliaccio, Michael (Joey) Migliaccio, Leah Migliaccio, Alyssa-Rose Naud; and a great-granddaughter, Maleah Naud.

He was predeceased by a grandson, Michael Naud, and brother, Joseph Naud.

Leon also leaves two sisters, Janet McManus of Vernon, Tina Sprague of Chaplin; a brother, Alex (Buddy) Bishop of Cromwell; special family members Rita and Rick McGary of Marlborough and Florida, Robert and Marilyn Ponchak of Maine and Florida.

Leon grew up in Marlborough where he hunted, fished, played sports, swam in the Terramuggus and enjoyed fixing cars. Leon worked and retired from Pratt & Whitney.

There are no services at this time. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family in Marlboro Cemetery.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I'm not going to sugarcoat it – these are bleak times, friends.

I still believe, as I wrote last week, that at the end of the day we'll get through this coronavirus pandemic, that we'll come out the other end as strong – hopefully even stronger – than before.

But first, we have to get through some pretty tough moments.

Everything's been unfolding so quickly it's hard to even imagine what will have happened by the time you pick up the paper and read this on Friday. I'm writing this column Tuesday night, and just in the previous few days we've seen colleges move their classes online, schools close for at least two weeks (and all evidence points to it being much longer), a recommended cap on public gatherings – first 100, then 50, now just 10 – the closing of all dine-in restaurants and bars, and even the cancellation of Mass.

Tuesday brought word that UConn will not have in-person classes for the rest of the semester – and that May graduation ceremonies have been canceled. I expect other colleges and universities will follow suit.

It has just been incredible, absolutely incredible, to watch all this unfold. It's tough to believe it's real life; it feels so surreal. But it's very real – and I feel very justified.

I know there are plenty of people out there who feel this is a panic, everybody is overreacting and all of the cancelations and closings and everything is overkill. But I don't think that's true. I see what's gone on in other countries, and I think the U.S. is absolutely taking the right steps here. Yes, we could have and should have taken it seriously sooner than we did, and we certainly should've used the tests that were offered to us (and other countries across the world, including South Korea, accepted) back in January, but we can't turn back time. As much as we should've done things differently, we have to face the reality as it sits right now.

A proactive approach is the best way to handle this; it's the best way to prevent an outbreak – or in this case, prevent one from getting worse. Last Wednesday, March 11, there were three confirmed cases in Connecticut. By Tuesday afternoon, that number had swelled to 68 – and who knows where it might be by the time you read this.

By ceasing many activities, by encouraging people to be inside as much as they can (even NBC Connecticut meteorologist Ryan Hanrahan has taken to doing the weather from his house), we can stop the

spread of this virus from getting worse. Mandated quarantines – I like that better than lockdowns, though it's the same thing – have been employed in Italy and France, and early evidence shows that they're working.

We still have a long, long way to go before we're out of the woods, but we may get there – and I believe these methods are key in us getting there.

I do admit to being worried for small businesses – particularly the restaurants. The profit margin there is so slim to begin with, and now that they've all moved to take-out only, several have closed their doors – and those that remain open can probably expect to lose about 50 percent of their business, or even more, from what I've heard.

The economy is in freefall right now. I've seen estimates unemployment might hit as high as 20 percent. The president has said we “may” be headed for a recession. I'd replace that “may” with “almost certainly” – and “recession” with “depression.” It's going to be a long, long time before we financially recover; heck, before the world financially recovers.

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When you go through the paper this week, you'll certainly notice far fewer event notices than you usually see. That's because nearly everything has been canceled – certainly everything occurring over the next two or three weeks. We've done our best to remove everything that we know for a fact is no longer happening, and to remove listings for, say, churches and other places that we know are closed, but some things might have slipped through. If you do intend on visiting one of the places listed in the notices on the upcoming pages, I advise you to call or email the contact information listed to verify the event is still taking place or that the building is indeed still open

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These are dark times – which means we all have to rise to the challenge. Now is the time for us to all band together, to be united, to show each other some more patience and some more compassion than perhaps we normally do. Everybody is anxious. Nobody knows for sure what's going to happen. Like I said earlier, I do believe we'll get through this – but it's going to be a very bumpy ride. It's important to make sure that not only is your own seat buckled, but your neighbor's is as well.

We're all in this together.