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Gina Marie's Restaurant in Hebron has set up tables in the parking lot to allow for outdoor dining, but so far the tables have sat mostly empty, as patrons remain hesitant to stop by. Businesses throughout town are reeling from being shut down for more than two months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trying to Save Local Businesses

by Sloan Brewster

Hebron business owners are reeling from being shuttered for more than two months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On March 16, Gov. Ned Lamont ordered the closure of all restaurants, bars, gyms and movie theaters, in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19. Restaurants could remain open but for takeout only.

Last week, on May 20, restaurants were allowed to begin to offer outdoor dining with certain restrictions and on June 20, they will be allowed to reopen for indoor dining, but, again, must follow restrictions, including keeping six feet between parties.

As local business owners adjust to these changes, the Hebron Board of Selectmen is planning to launch a campaign to get folks into the town's shops and restaurants.

At last Thursday's Board of Selectmen meeting, the board decided to invite the business community to a workshop scheduled for last night. The intent behind it was to generate ideas for a reopening campaign, a proposal based on suggestions from selectmen Peter Kasper and John Collins.

Kasper said he has spoken to business owners concerned they will not be able to stay afloat based on expenses tied to new restrictions and shrinking revenues brought on by those restrictions.

"If you do, the math doesn't work," he said.

"I've talked to some businesses in town who suspect they won't survive, no matter what happens, and these are businesses that had previously been very successful."

Collins echoed Kasper's concern.

"It does no good long-term for us to have empty storefronts," he said.

In a phone call Monday, Town Manager Andrew Tierney said he has heard that some local business owners are frustrated because they have not been able to get Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, which the federal government has offered to help businesses during state shutdowns.

"They're all concerned about how they're going to pay their taxes," he said.

In response, the town is offering tax abatements and delaying penalties for late payments, he said. Financially there is little more the town can offer.

"We're kind of bound by statute," he said.

At last Thursday's meeting, Collins suggested that the board should come up with a way to help drive customers to local stores and restaurants and recommended the reopening campaign. He suggested that the town could put up encouraging banners to get residents to give local businesses a boost by buying in downtown Hebron.

"So we need to do everything we can to help

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Bacon Athletes Lament Loss of Final Season

by Karla Santos

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, not only schools were closed, but all of its related sports practices and gatherings were cancelled as well - leaving dozens of Colchester high school seniors without a last chance to play high school sports.

According to Bacon Academy Athletic Director Kevin Burke, that's the story of about 55 seniors at the high school who had signed up for spring sports.

"That's a pretty big number," he said.

And close to half of them were multi-sport athletes, he added.

But the story could be worse for seniors who didn't play sports all year long - the ones that didn't play sports in the fall or winter, expecting to play in the spring.

"They missed out," Burke said.

Burke said that for those seniors, missing their last high school sports season means they also missed a lot of memories that they could've experienced otherwise.

"They never had that excitement of starting the season," Burke said. "No practices, no opening games, no bus rides, no memories... they lost it."

Burke said "it's been hard," because seniors normally look forward "to having that opening game excitement for the opening game of the season."

He said they are also losing the memories of not practicing with or seeing their team mates.

"People take that stuff for granted but there's just really no memories for all these seniors, memories of their senior year," Burke said. "I think that's probably one of the harder things, that all they are going to remember was they were stuck at home during their senior spring season instead of being with their team mates and making memories that they'll have forever."

Casey Hart, a senior at Bacon Academy, has been involved in basketball and lacrosse throughout his four years at Bacon. He played in the varsity basketball team for three years and lacrosse all four years.

He said not being able to play during his last sports season in high school was difficult.

"It's kind of tough because we were going to have a really good season this year," Hart said. "I was really excited after we ended last year. I thought we would've been even better than last year, so I was really looking forward to it."

He said one thing that he missed about playing this season was not being able to end high school sports with all his friends that he has been playing with since second grade.

Prior to high school, Hart also played soccer.

While this may be a sad ending of his high school sports experience, it will not be the end of his sports career.

Hart said he is going to Lasell University in Massachusetts where he will be playing in their

lacrosse team.

He said he hopes there is not a delay for sports in the fall, as playing in the fall would be an opportunity for him to "get used to the next level" of sports.

Hart said fall practices could better prepare him and help him adjust to a college game.

Hart plans to major in sports management. His goal is to either help high school children as an athletic director or have a role in a professional sports team, he said.

He said he likes to "see sports from a student's different perspective, and get behind the scenes looks instead of just playing them."

Hannah Holmes is another Bacon senior who has been involved in lacrosse through all of her high school years. She also played soccer during her freshman and sophomore year.

"I was pretty much playing year-round until I just decided to focus on lacrosse and do that every season," she said.

She said she focused on lacrosse because it was "always the sport I was better at" and she had "more fun" in this sport.

Holmes was hoping to have a "really good" season with the Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) division.

"Our goal was to try win our division banner this year and I think it would've been definitely possible," she said. "That definitely sucks to not get a chance to do that."

She said without playing this spring she also

lost the chance to play one last season with her teammates.

"My senior class - we've been together in youth sports forever now, so it just sucks not to have Senior Day with them." Senior Day traditionally takes place before the last game of the season, and it's where graduating seniors are honored for their time in Bacon athletics.

Holmes does not only play lacrosse at Bacon Academy but she also plays lacrosse with Lax Plus, a club team out of Springfield.

She said she played with the club team during the winter, fall and summer.

"It just sucks because basically all three of those seasons are supposed to help me get better for the spring season," Holmes said. "The spring season with Bacon was always what I looked forward to the most out of all of that."

Not playing this spring gave her a lesson, she said.

"I definitely learned to treat every game like it is your last one, because you really don't know when your last time is going to be," Holmes said.

But this won't be the end of the sports career for Holmes either.

"Luckily, I do have the next four years to play in college," Holmes said. "I'm glad that I was already committed before all this happened."

Holmes said she is planning to go to South-

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them, but also they're members of the community, and they are in serious trouble," Collins said.

Kasper agreed that it was a good time to remind people why shopping local matters, especially as buying behaviors have changed.

"Maybe now is a good time to do a campaign," he said. "Reminding or educating people about buying local versus online."

The rest of the board agreed and decided to hold the workshop to brainstorm ideas.

"I think anything that helps to show that our businesses are ready and welcoming people to come back is a plus," Daniel Larson, board chairman, said.

Director of Administrative Services Donna Lanza, who sat in for Tierney during the meeting, said Town Planner Michael O'Leary is planning to send out information to help restaurants doing outdoor dining and takeout.

Selectman Marc Rubera, who is also Hebron's police sergeant, pointed out that the town had eased up on zoning restrictions so restaurant owners could more easily transition to outdoor dining, and noted that Gina Marie's has set up tables in the parking lot but added that when he has driven by, he hasn't observed much business.

"It was kind of sad for me to drive by the past couple of days, because I never saw more than one group of people," he said.

Rubera said the slow turnout concerns him on a more personal note because his wife Jessica Dapsis is the owner of Something Simple Café, and said that restaurant has also been considering putting some tables outside in their parking lot.

"So that was kind of discouraging," he said. "I don't think people are going to be that excited about coming out and sitting in groups, but hopefully we'll get some takeout business and I'll keep you guys apprized on how it's working."

In a phone call Wednesday, Dapsis said that instead of switching to takeout, she shuttered the café in mid-March, the week Lamont issued the shutdown order.

"I kind of wanted to stop the money-bleeding before I had the fear of not being able to reopen," she said. "It just wasn't financially worth doing a takeout."

When she closed the restaurant, Dapsis furloughed all of her employees.

"And that was hard," she said.

On the plus side, she did it a week earlier than most businesses in the state, so her people didn't experience the delays in receiving unemployment compensation that many other workers did when the Department of Labor was overrun with high numbers of claims, she said.

According to a press release from Lamont's office, since March 13, the labor department has received more than 350,000 applications, nearly the same amount it typically receives over a two-year period.

Dapsis has taken advantage of the time the café has been closed, though, by fixing the front porch and getting the interior floor redone, she said. Now she's spray-painting tables. She plans to reopen in mid-June, once she has all the protocols in place and reorders food.

Costs associated with reopening amid restrictions will include an increase in hand sanitizer and making sure there are plenty of masks and gloves for employees, which she estimates will run between \$300 and \$400 a month.

Dapsis is also contemplating converting to an online sales system, which she said would cost about \$2,000.

"Part of it is really making sure people feel comfortable," she said.

She said she has spoken with one woman who lives alone and doesn't feel comfortable going out to eat and sitting across from people and not knowing where they have been.

"So it's still not getting what going out to eat is – that social piece," Dapsis said.

Dapsis said she applied for a PPP loan and was approved but did not accept it because the terms were not very clear. Instead, she took an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL).

The terms for the PPPs continue to change, she said and she may reapply at some point.

"I think that the hardest thing was things change on a daily basis," she said.

In a phone call Tuesday, Troy Kelsey, owner and chef at from Gina Marie's, talked about how the shutdown has impacted the restaurant, which has been a cornerstone of downtown for 25 years.

One blow was caused by the timeline of the shutdown, which began two days before St. Patrick's Day and encompassed Mother's Day.

"St. Patty's Day's a big day for us, we lost that," Kelsey said. "We lost Mother's Day, which is the number one day of the year."

Kelsey managed to recoup some of those Mother's Day losses through takeout orders, so he said it wasn't a complete loss, but the number of customers did not come close to what the restaurant typically sees that day.

"Normally we do hundreds and hundreds," he said.

While Kelsey remained open for takeout throughout the shutdown, he had to furlough 90% of his workers "just to get a handle on it," he said.

He also had food delivered to the restaurant the day the governor issued the shutdown order and had to come up with creative ways to unload perishables, opting to sell batches of potatoes, carrots and milk on Facebook.

When business went to takeout only, Kelsey, who has worked alongside his wife and daughter – Gina and Kaitlyn Kelsey – during shutdown, found the big seller was a four-dinner meal for \$25.

"That took off because people were looking for an alternative," he said. "Most restaurants started doing that because that's what people were looking for."

Still, takeout was pretty slow initially, Kelsey said. "At first people were scared," he said.

Eventually the fear subsided and folks started coming around, but business remains sluggish with sales down by 60% on average. They tally about 50% on the restaurant's best days and were about 70% on the worst, Kelsey said.

Since last Wednesday, when he put seats outside he said he hasn't seen an uptick.

Capacity is also down with outdoor tables maxing out at 11 for a total of 40 seats versus 90 seats normally inside.

"It's going to be hard to survive at 25% to 50%," Kelsey said.

To make matters worse, outdoor dining is weather-sensitive and not everyone wants to eat outside, Kelsey said. Folks who like to will always feel that way and those who don't are not going to change, he said.

"People are temperamental," Kelsey said.

He's not sure how the restaurant will measure up for the resurgence of inside dining, which is scheduled to restart on June 20, Kelsey said. That will require putting at least six feet between tables and the way building's interior is shaped, the most tables he can set up is four, for a total of about 15 diners.

"It won't work," he said.

Kelsey said he doesn't know if people will ever return to restaurants in the way they did before the shutdown. He said after two and a



While her restaurant's been closed for more than two months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Something Simple Café owner Jessica Dapsis was able to perform some updates to the building, including to the front porch shown here.

half decades in business, he has savings to fall back on, but not all business owners have that luxury.

"It's kind of devastating," he said. "If I was a brand new restaurant, you would lose everything."

Meanwhile, some nearby establishments are experiencing a bit of a boom.

"We're right next to a hardware store and every time I look at him he's packed," Kelsey said.

Hebron Ace Hardware has been experiencing a spike in business, according to general manager Brian Hoffman. People stuck at home have been doing a lot of improvements such as electrical work, plumbing, painting and landscaping, so they are coming out for supplies.

"It seems like there's not much people can do at home," he said.

In the past two months, he store has run low on – or in some cases completely out of – items including wheelbarrows, fencing material and chairs, he said. Mulch has been a hot item but the store has a decent supply. Currently, top soil and dirt are running low, he added.

Early on, the store ran out of masks but found a different supplier and has been able to keep a cache on hand.

With the state restrictions on social distancing in businesses, the store has installed a Plexiglas barrier at the register and Hoffman said customers have been keeping properly distant.

### Bacon Athletes from Front Page

ern Connecticut State University starting in the fall to major in studio art with a concentration in graphic design.

Her ideal job would involve graphic design and marketing, she said.

"I've always loved art but I always wanted a different path that wasn't just art," she added.

Burke said those involved with Bacon Athletics are making the necessary adjustments and trying to be creative.

"We were trying to plan in case we had some small part of the season and then that was taken away also," Burke said. "We all understand. We want everyone to be safe and healthy."

While the spring sports season didn't happen at all for high school seniors, Burke said he and another professor worked on putting together a video for the seniors and their par-

ents who didn't get a chance to have a Senior Day to celebrate their spring season.

For the video, Burke said they had seniors email in a photo and a short video clip of their favorite memory and their plans for next year and then all those small clips were put together into one video. The video was posted online on the Colchester Public Schools website.

The video imitated a normal Senior Day, in which seniors and their parents get together for the event. Burke said seniors are first introduced and then "they come out and they give us what their plans are for next year." The students also share what their favorite memory was from the sports they were involved in.

Burke said he wishes these students "good luck" and thanks them "for their contribution to Bacon Academy athletics."

# Portland's Carpino Announces Re-Election

by Jack Lakowsky

Last week, state Rep. Christie Carpino (R-32) announced her plans to seek a sixth term in Hartford representing Portland and Cromwell.

According to Carpino, Portland and Cromwell Republicans unanimously endorsed the representative during a virtual convention.

In a recent interview with the *Rivereast*, Carpino said her goals for Portland – providing safe neighborhoods and ample job options – have remained the same since she first assumed office in 2011.

“I want to continue what we’ve started,” Carpino said. “I want our businesses and families to grow and thrive.”

Carpino expressed how proud she feels in serving a community that has proven resilient and helpful to each other during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

“Now more than ever, we’re going to have to work together,” Carpino said. “Portland’s greatest strength has always been our sense of community.”



Christie Carpino

Carpino, along with local Portland officials like first selectwoman Susan Bransfield, has been distributing free masks to the public.

“The business of taking care of the community has not stopped because of this virus,” Carpino said. “Simply put, I’m always available. The campaign will always be second fiddle to my job.”

Carpino said her current focus is helping Portland’s businesses and nonprofit organizations navigate the turbulent times brought on by the ongoing pandemic.

Carpino said she achieved her fundraising goals in early March and will begin campaigning in earnest during the summer and fall months.

During her current term, Carpino was an outspoken opponent of the installation of tolls along Connecticut roadways. She added she is concerned over what she calls a lack of transparency in the state government.

Carpino recently filed a state Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request with Gov. Ned Lamont’s office seeking the comprehensive disclosure of information regarding the state’s \$2 million work contract with Boston Consulting Group, a firm hired to assist the state reopen after the pandemic lockdown.

Carpino last ran for re-election in November 2018, when she defeated Democratic challenger Laurel Steinhauer.

In recent years, Carpino has voted on sev-

eral controversial issues.

In 2019, Carpino voted against a bill requiring the release of police body camera video recordings – often demanded after deadly police shootings – to taxpayers. She also voted against the establishment of paid family and medical leave, requiring climate change education curriculum in Connecticut schools, authorizing voting access to parolees and against increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Carpino has voted ‘no’ on many bills looking to increase the minimum wage.

Carpino also voted against the prohibition of storing firearms in unlocked vehicles. In 2018, however, she voted to prohibit bump stocks, an attachment used with automatic weapons, like the AR-15, that allows rapid, but imprecise, firing. Bump stocks became infamous after the 2017 Las Vegas shooting, when a gunman named Stephen Paddock opened fire on a crowd of concertgoers, killing 58 and wounding 413, making it the deadliest mass shooting in United States history. Bump stocks have since been banned by the federal government.

In 2018, Carpino voted against a required raise for home care employees and against authorizing financial aid for undocumented students.

In 2017, she voted to prohibit gay conversion therapy, a bill that passed with overwhelming bipartisan support.

Carpino has shown a willingness to work with state Democrats. Carpino often collaborates with state Sen. Norm Needleman (D-33). During a December community forum at Portland’s Waverly Senior Center, Carpino and Needleman spoke to constituents as a team, despite their conflicting political parties.

Currently in the legislature, Carpino serves as Minority Caucus Chair for the Connecticut House of Reps. She serves on the Judiciary, Public Health and Regulation Review committees.

In 2013, Carpino was named “Legislator of the Year” by the Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs for her work against the childhood obesity epidemic. That same year, she was awarded the Legislative Award by the CT Police Chiefs Association (CPCA) for her work ensuring public safety for state residents.

Carpino serves in many civic organizations. She is a member of the Cromwell Historical Society and is the vice chair of the Cromwell Republican Town Committee. She volunteers for the Special Olympics.

Carpino graduated magna cum laude from the University of New Hampshire with a bachelor’s degree in English. She went on to earn a law degree from Northeastern University in Boston.

Carpino lives in Cromwell with her husband and their three children. She is a native of Long Island, New York.

## Many Call for Teacher Reinstatements, Budget Increase In East Hampton

By Jack Lakowsky

Many locals attending Tuesday’s Town Council meeting pushed for the council to restore the Board of Education budget to what the school board had proposed in March.

Currently, the school board’s 2020-21 budget request stands at \$32.25 million, an increase of 3.44% from current year spending, or about \$1.1 million. According to Town Manager David Cox, the council is likely to vote on the budget on June 9.

In March, the board proposed a 2020-21 budget of \$32.40 million, a 3.92% increase from current year spending. This is actually up from the \$32.35 budget, a 3.75% increase, proposed by Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith in January. The school board felt the amount Smith was seeking as insufficient, and originally requested a budget increase of 3.75%. The board believed this insufficient and, to restore teaching positions, raised the requested increase to 3.92% in March.

According to information from Smith, the added cost to taxpayers of going from the 3.75% increase to 3.92% would be negated through

retirement savings.

As a result of the economic turbulence wrought by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the board in April reduced the budget by \$150,000, which reduced the March request of four classroom teaching positions down to two. This brought the budget to an increase of 3.44%, which is what the board then sent to the Town Council.

Gov. Ned Lamont eliminated public referendums this year – a strategy to help stem the spread of coronavirus. Therefore, the Town Council will have final say in this year’s town and education budgets. Town Manager David Cox said the council is likely to vote on the budget on June 9.

Town Council vice chair Dean Markham said he has heard considerable outcry from the community requesting reinstatement of fourth- and fifth grade classroom teaching positions at Center School. Markham said the schools have a \$200,000 spending surplus because of closures and distance-learning enacted due to COVID-19. This surplus, he said, allows the

council to reevaluate the requested budget. He added the surplus will be used for one-time-only capital expenses.

Residents cited their belief in the need for reduced classroom sizes in the East Hampton district, especially for younger students.

Amy Ordonez, a Board of Education member and chair of the Library Board of Directors, thanked the council for thoughtfully considering concerns in the Belltown school system.

“Adding that fifth-grade teacher will really reduce class sizes,” Ordonez, who is parent to an East Hampton middle-schooler, told the council. Ordonez also urged the council to reinstate the school board’s March budget proposal calling for the 3.92% increase.

Robert Raines, of 60 Spice Hill Drive, said he too supports the 3.92% increase.

“East Hampton has much larger class sizes than similar districts,” Raines said.

Jerry Kelly, of 50 Haddam Neck Road, echoed Ordonez and Raines, saying he also sup-

ports the 3.92% increase. He added that the “backbone” of any town is the strength of its school system.

Thomas Macey, of Main Street in East Hampton, said it is important to ensure the teachers currently employed by the town are cared for before increasing staff numbers – especially considering the economic uncertainty already looming over upcoming budgets.

“I don’t know if you should bring more [positions] in without knowing what’ll happen next year,” Macey said.

Patience Coleman, of 52 Schoolhouse Lane, said she also supports restoring classroom teaching positions to ease learning in smaller classes, adding her voice to those calling for restoration of the March 3.92% budget request.

Colman went on to say that distance learning has shown how necessary it is for schools to have the latest learning technology. Markham said that a focus of this year’s budget will be to “restore and make whole again” technology available to East Hampton schools.

# Hebron Town Hall Remains Closed to Public

by Sloan Brewster

Town Hall in Hebron remains closed to the public.

In mid-March, local officials closed the building amid federal and state emergency declarations over COVID-19.

At last Thursday's Board of Selectmen meeting, Administrative Services Director Donna Lanza – who sat in for Town Manager Andrew Tierney – said offices would remain closed for now while staff goes over a reopening plan and individual departments determine how they will look.

"We've gone around and inventoried all the departments," she said. "So we're working on that. We're ordering materials for the floor markings and, you know, going through each department."

One of the things staff has ordered is Plexiglas shields that will be installed at public-facing desks and in certain spots in departments, she said.

When Town Hall reopens, it will start by appointment only and services, including notary services, will be limited or not offered at all, Lanza told the board. Folks will be encouraged to do as many things as possible electronically.

Board of Selectmen Chairman Daniel Larson wondered if there was a way for to offer notary services as people may not be able to get then via typical routes.

"Banks basically are not allowing people in, if someone did need to get something notarized," he said.

Lanza said there is an emergency protocol to

offer the service electronically.

"If they can't get it through another source, through their attorney, we will implement the electronic means," she said.

In a phone call Tuesday, Tierney said he had just gotten out of a virtual meeting with the Chatham Health District and there was no hurry to open Town Hall.

"We're hearing that state offices aren't opening until July 20," he said.

Before offices can open, procedures must be in place and some towns are even considering implementing self-certification programs that will assure all staff have been trained on those procedures before the doors open to the public.

"We're not going to rush until all these procedures are in place," he said.

In the meantime, permits and other online offerings are going well, he said. Dog licensing, which takes place in June, will be completed via mail.

Department heads have submitted plans for what they will do to assure their departments are safe and Tierney and his staff are currently reviewing those, he said. For now, the plan is to remain closed to the public, then, when everything is in order, there will be a soft opening.

"We're methodically getting everything done that we need to, to keep the public and employees safe," he said.

## New Roles in Town

With the economy gradually reopening, the state has mandated that towns enforce restric-

tions on local businesses.

The town must designate someone to respond to complaints or concerns, Lanza told the board.

According to May 19 state guidelines on reopening businesses, included in last week's Board of Selectmen meeting packet, the employee can order the closure of certain businesses that do not follow the rules.

The board named town wetlands agent Steve Knauf to the position, which he will do in addition to his other duties.

According to the protocol, Knauf will be working with businesses "other than hair salons, barbershops, beauty shops, nail salons, spas, tattoo or piercing establishments, restaurants, eating establishments, private clubs, or any locations licensed for on-premise consumption of alcohol."

Those businesses will fall under the purview of the Chatham Health District.

Lanza said she did not anticipate it will cost anything more for Knauf to take on the added work "unless something over and above" arises that may require additional hours – such as businesses not coming into compliance.

Selectman Marc Rubera, who is also the town's police sergeant, said Lamont's most recent order also gives police the authority to intervene if members of the public refuse to adhere to rules.

"Because you can't lay everything off on the businesses and they're trying to get people to comply and we all know that somebody's going to become defiant or not want to go along

with the program," he said.

According to Tierney, Knauf is ideal for the position as he has previous experience as a sanitarian with the Chatham Health District.

The town has also appointed a reopening committee consisting of officials and department heads and is looking for a COVID-19 long-term recovery coordinator, who will serve as a liaison between the state and the town's emergency management department. The position is another state requirement – one which state officials feel is "imperative," Tierney said.

"They'll be like a conduit to give information back from the state to the municipality and the other way around," he said of the position.

Plans are still being made for how Parks & Recreation Department programs will be implemented this summer – and if there will even be public swimming, Tierney said.

The transfer station has been a topic online, he said. Some people resisted the mandate to wear a facemask and posted statements insisting masks are not required outside, but Tierney said that does not apply to the transfer station, where people are in close contact with one another. He said the director of health from the Chatham Health District was there when people were not wearing masks and threatened to shut it down if they don't start wearing them.

"There were people that wanted to be the authority on Facebook," Tierney said. "You're wrong. It's the transfer station. ... [Chatham Health] will shut us down."

# Longtime Colchester Barber Can't Weather COVID-19 Storm

by Karla Santos

Sixty-three-year-old Cindy Prescott, owner of Colchester Barbershop, became a hair dresser at age 17 and bloomed with a longstanding career, having no idea it would come to an end through the hardships of a pandemic.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in March Gov. Ned Lamont ordered the temporary shutdown of hair salons and barbershops.

That short-term closure turned into a permanent one for Colchester Barbershop; on May 2, Prescott announced through Facebook that she will not be reopening.

"I just wanted to let you all know I will not be reopening," the Facebook post reads. "I have decided with everything that is going on I am retiring. I will be looking for someone to take over the business. I want to thank all of you for the many years we have had. Some have been with me for over 35 years. I will miss all of you very much and hope the new owner would have many more. Thank you for all. Cindy."

Prescott said her 71-year-old husband retired six years ago. She said he was scared that she would bring the virus home to him if she decided to reopen.

"Since the shop is in the house, I understand where he is coming from," she said.

She said four of her friends have had coronavirus-related deaths.

In addition, Prescott said that for years her husband has been trying to convince her of retiring.

"He finally won," she said.

Prescott said her retirement was "not planned at all," but added that she spent a month "of going back and forth" trying to decide if she wanted to close her business permanently.

"It's a hell of an ending to a career," Prescott said.

Jack Faski has been Prescott's customer for 31 years.

Faski said he became Prescott's friend over

the years – and that his haircuts were also accompanied by conversations.

Faski said that Prescott cut his two sons' hair when they were growing up. He said they still laugh about something one of his boys did when he was 2 years old and in the middle of getting a haircut. He recalled that, to try to keep the boy occupied during the haircut, he gave him a ring of keys to hold. The child wound up throwing it at one of the other barbers in the shop.

With all of the memories and Prescott's good work, Faski said he is not happy about her business being closed permanently – but said he understands why she made the decision and wishes her well, he said.

"We'll miss her," Faski said. "She's been a fixture in town for a long time. I know a lot of friends and people that go to her and most of them are her friends too. We'll still see her and keep in touch but it's just different when she's not there cutting your hair."

Prescott's Facebook post where she announces she won't be back is filled with bitter-sweet comments of customers who are happy she's retiring but sad they won't be able to get their hair cut by Prescott.

Prescott said she has seen and learned "a lot" over the years.

"I watched my clients' kids grow up, get their driver's license, graduate from high school, go on to college, get married and have their own children," Prescott said.

She said she has also seen a third generation of those clients and enjoyed all the memories they brought to her life.

"From a challenge to cut a little one's hair for the first time, to them telling me they want to leave it a little longer and mom and dad not being happy about that, to them bringing in their own children and having the same problem," she said.

Prescott said she has seen "happy times" in her customers' lives and "some of their lows" too.

"They have even seen my challenges in my own life," she added. "I even had people who would come just to talk about problems they were having or stop in just to say hi, or ask if I knew the answer to who would be [a] good plumber."

Prescott became interested in the hair industry at age 15 when she went with a friend to her high school's guidance office.

Prescott said she picked up a book on cosmetology and the guidance counselor asked if she was interested in the field and she said yes.

Prescott said she graduated in June 1974 from the Connecticut Institute of Hairdressing in East Hartford. She said she was one year ahead of her high school graduating class of 1975.

"At the time I thought it was so great to finish before them," Prescott said. "But I missed out on a lot of the activities, like prom and senior banquet."

Prescott said her first job was at Pearl's Salon and Wig Castle in Waterford.

"After a year, I was approached to work part time at The Hair Ranch in Niantic," she said. "So I would work at Pearl's during the day and The Hair Ranch at night."

She said that after Pearl's closed she went to The Hair Ranch full-time and that's where she got her barber's license.

"It was a problem from time to time where male clients would comment that I was not a man and could not cut their hair," Prescott said.

She said in 1983 The Hair Ranch was sold and she moved on to the Hair Barn in Colchester.

Prescott said working in her hometown "scared" her "a little bit" because "everyone knew everyone back then."

She ended up buying the Hair Barn in 1985.

"I had a good crew back then and everything was great," Prescott said. "I became a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and even became president for a year."

She said she was also a member of the Colchester Business Association and the Colchester Lions Club.

Then the building where the Hair Barn was located was sold and the new landlord's prices were "too high," she said.

She then moved the Hair Barn to Salem Four Corners and after a year she moved to Pennsylvania, where she worked outside of the hair industry.

A year later she said she ended up moving back to Colchester and worked at a few different shops over the next year and a half. She said for some time she played different roles as she worked cutting hair, opened a consignment shop, was a disc jockey and also delivered a weekly newspaper.

"As I got back on my feet, I slowly stopped doing the extra jobs. But kept the DJing for a few more years," Prescott said.

Prescott said she opened Colchester Barbershop at her home between 1993 and 1994. The shop was attached to the home but had its own separate area and entrance. Prescott named it to stay connected with the town, she said.

"Many of my old clients moved with me," Prescott said. "Some still called it the Hair Barn."

After the recent closure, Prescott has been looking for someone to take over the business, which is still located at her home.

"I will miss seeing my clients, my friends," Prescott said. "But as I start this new journey in my life, there will always be something that will remind me of one of them. I would like to say thank you for all the memories."

# Colchester Residents Want New Firefighters and EMTs Funded

by Karla Santos

On Tuesday, citizens of Colchester raised their voices at a budget public hearing in which 16 residents spoke mainly about one topic – retaining funding for the firefighter/EMT positions.

The Board of Finance has been making cuts to the budget, aiming for a zero percent increase. During the meeting, residents spoke in support of keeping the firefighter positions in the budget, even if it compromises other things. Others said they want to keep the budget as presented, highlighting that they want no more cuts.

First Selectman Mary Bylone presented the budget as it currently stands.

The proposed \$15.21 million town budget currently presents a .36% increase or \$55,062 over last year's budget. The original budget request started with a 5.25% or \$625,709 increase. It was adjusted and presented again on April 16 with a 2.08% or \$315,994 increase.

The budget includes \$114,391 to fund two additional firefighter/EMTs. But the fire department's portion of the budget was changed since the April 16 budget presentation, in which there was a total increase of \$108,870. In contrast, the budget Bylone presented Tuesday had an increase of only \$95,952 for the fire department. Bylone called the nearly \$13,000 difference "an offsetting decrease in paid ambulance incentive."

Sean Shoemaker, a resident that spoke at the hearing, said he has lived in Colchester for 31 years, has over 40 years in the fire service. He is currently the town's fire marshal and emergency management director.

Shoemaker said the town needs the two additional positions in the fire department and presented some information to support his argument.

"When I became fire marshal 40 years ago, I started the process of conducting a community risk assessment," Shoemaker said. "The target was to concentrate in fire prevention and other public safety initiatives."

According to the information he provided

from the town's assessment, a big portion of the population in town is over the age of 60 and this population often needs assistance from the emergency services. He said that in the year 2000, 92% of the town's population was over 60 years of age. He said the U.S. census estimates that in 2019, the over 65-year-old population was 13.5%.

According to Shoemaker, statistics from the National Fire Protection Association show that people over the age of 65 have twice the risk of dying in a fire and the older people get, the bigger the chance they have of dying in a fire.

"In addition, data from the CDC shows that injuries from falls is the leading cause of unintentional death in people over 65 and that over 30% of those over 65 will suffer a fall once a year," Shoemaker said.

Shoemaker also said that there are currently 100 apartments being built in North Woods, a retirement community on Lebanon Avenue and there is also a new 37-home neighborhood being built on Windham Avenue.

"The population in Colchester does not seem to be trending down," Shoemaker said. "This information clearly shows that the stress of Fire and EMS system in Colchester is increasing and will continue to do so moving forward."

Shoemaker also spoke about how the fire department is "working incredibly hard" to keep the town Insurance Services Office [ISO] rating where it is now because "it helps businesses pay low insurance rates."

"One of my concerns is that based on a number of factors, including man power, the next ISO evaluation will not be as favorable and that our ISO numbers will be higher, making Colchester less attractive to commercial taxpayers, increasing the burden on individual home owners like myself," Shoemaker said.

Shoemaker said he supports the budget as presented.

"Now is not the time to move Colchester backwards," Shoemaker said. "While additional new fire department personnel will not solve all the problems, it will help protect

Colchester's most at risk population, which is increasing."

Brian Smith, who said has lived in Colchester for nearly 38 years, also spoke at the meeting and expressed why he supports funding the additional positions for the fire department.

"One of the constants that have been obvious to us in all the years that we've lived in town has been the fine services that have been provided by the fire department and the volunteers that work for all of us as well as our police force," Smith said.

He said he is a "big believer" in supporting first responders and also in "listening" to them.

"We should listen to the experts and in this case that means the professionals in our fire service who know better than any of us what they need," Smith said.

In addition, Smith said he lives in the "heart of the town" so he hears the ambulance and sees them go by "almost every time they get a call."

"I do believe that we should support them and help them fill the needs that they identify when they come up," Smith said.

He said he is a "strong supporter" of the budget as presented and believes "that the proposed use of the general fund balance is responsible" and will leave the town with a "healthy balance" for emergencies.

Deanna Bouchard said she thinks there's a little bit of a false scenario.

"I don't think that I heard anyone in any meeting saying that they don't support our first responders and they don't support the firefighter – EMT positions," she said "I think what it comes down to is there's a question of how to fund those positions."

She presented a compromise that could keep the budget at a zero% increase and retain the two positions. Specifically, she recommended eliminating a \$50,809 position in the youth and social service's budget that, she said, has been vacant since February.

She said there are also "a few thousand dol-

lars" in the Animal Control Office funding for the Colchester dog pound which "Mary has stated we are not going to be utilizing."

Bouchard said that with the compromise she presented, all Board of Finance members may be satisfied.

"There needs to be a compromise between the six of you," she said. "I think that you guys can get to where you need to be, that we can meet the needs of the town and we can fund those two positions."

At the same time, she said the compromise allows finance board members to be responsive to the needs of the citizens who elected them.

During her presentation, Bylone said there are some items that were originally included in the budget, but now will be funded from other sources, including \$35,000 for a replacement truck for code enforcement and \$45,000 for a replacement truck for fire chief; both of which will be funded from a vehicle reserve account.

The \$20,000 replacement of an oil tank at the senior center will be funded by the building reserve. Road improvements for \$50,000 will be funded by Town Aid Road (TAR) grants. Repairs to the youth and social services building totaling \$3,100, and a shampooer for Cragin Library for \$3,775, will be funded from the equipment reserve; and a \$3,000 copier for the senior center will be funded by the senior center program fund.

According to Bylone, \$43,750 in delayed capital investments, including building and ground maintenance, payment overlay and striping, Cragin Library's roof repairs, a new boiler for the library, heating system replacement at the library and the replacement of three air handling units at Town Hall, will be put on hold for this year.

Bylone also spoke about items that are "needed" but not budgeted for, including \$2 million for fire trucks and apparatus and \$200,000 for the recreation fields' refurbishment and irrigation.

# Colchester Republican Endorsed for State Rep Bid

by Karla Santos

Julie Shilosky, wife of the town's former first selectman, has been endorsed to run for the 48th Assembly District seat.



Julie Shilosky

On May 19, in a virtual convention, the Colchester Republican Town Committee unanimously nominated Shilosky, 73, to represent the party in the November race, she said. The seat is currently held by Democrat Brian Smith, who has occupied it since January.

Smith's term will end in November.

The 48th District covers most of Colchester as well as parts of Lebanon, Mansfield and Windham. The seat was held by the late Democrat Linda Orange, a longtime state representative who passed away in November.

A resident of Colchester for 46 years, Shilosky is the wife of former First Selectman Art Shilosky.

Early this year she was approached by the Republican Town Committee to consider running for the seat, she said. After being asked on two occasions, she accepted.

While she has not previously been involved in politics, Shilosky said she is hoping to run a successful campaign.

"I have not been in the political arena other than helping with my husband's campaign," she said. "We set up to run this campaign for the 48th District and hopefully we'll be successful."

Shilosky said one of the reasons she wanted to run was to help lead the road to equal party representation.

"It became clear to me that the Republicans were not well represented as far as the number of seats that they were holding," she said. "After the last election a lot of the Democratic seats had been taken and I believe that it should be

more equal than it is right now."

Shilosky said that this campaign is a learning curve but she has a wide range of experiences and skills that could help her succeed in the role of state representative.

Shilosky has been a Colchester Lion for 33 years. Through the Lions, she became district governor, a role that allowed her to go out and visit a variety of counties and towns, she said. That same role allowed her to gain experience in public speaking.

"I'm rather comfortable doing that," Shilosky said. "Being at that high-level commitment, I had to take care of the 2,000 Lions that I oversaw."

The towns in the 48th District are included in the Lions Club district Shilosky represented, along with 52 other towns, she said.

"I'm fairly familiar with those towns," she said. "I obviously want to get more familiar with them and talk about their issues."

Some of the towns have common issues she wants to tackle, including school safety and the challenges faced with virtual learning, she said.

"In my estimate, I think that we have jumped ahead probably 10 years in our capability to do things virtually," Shilosky said.

She said that the fact that children are learning from home "is not necessarily a bad thing" but it "puts a high strain on the parents and people that aren't accustomed to doing schooling and making sure that the kids get their school work done."

Shilosky is getting familiar with the seat she's running for and has read the bills that were passed last year and the ones that are still pending, she said. Her goal is to be prepared to carry on that work for the towns in the district.

In addition to tackling issues that affect children, Shilosky said she wants to help fight for more benefits for small business owners.

"We kind of all have a similar background in that we are very rural and that we are supported mainly in these four towns by the small business owners, not the big industries," she said, adding that more can be done for small business owners.

Shilosky said that she also has been a small

business owner for 18 years and has experienced first-hand some of the same issues the local small businesses face.

One example of those struggles she said was the recent Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security [CARES] Act, which offered paycheck protection to business owners to reduce the impact of the coronavirus.

"With the COVID-19, with the stimulus they put out, I actually didn't qualify for that because I don't have employees," she said.

Some other small business owners may have experienced the same thing but it doesn't mean they didn't need the stimulus, she said.

"The center of Colchester is all small business owned," Shilosky said. "In that aspect we want to keep it that way. Mansfield is the same, Lebanon is the same, the only one that has any kind of industry is Willimantic but their streets are still lined with small businesses."

Shilosky said she has owned a lot of businesses along the way, including a floral shop and a horse business.

She has also worked in the corporate world where she ran a direct sell company within another company for 14 years, she said. She retired from the corporate industry 10 years ago.

In addition, Shilosky is a licensed massage therapist and has owned a 2,000-square foot wellness center for 18 years. She is also an instructor at the Cortiva Institute in Cromwell, formerly called the Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy.

"I teach several classes from science to hands on there," Shilosky said.

Among other roles, Shilosky is the Republican deputy registrar of voters in Colchester and she said that on June 5 she will be elected as president of the Board of Directors of Low Vision Center of Eastern Connecticut.

Shilosky's campaign is supported by her husband Art, who, she said, encouraged her to accept the candidacy.

"He's behind it and he will be a big help," she said.

Shilosky was one of the oldest in a family of 11 children and that family structure has helped her with her leadership style and has given her

an ability to listen and take care of people, she said. She added that it has also led her to having the character of a hardworking woman.

When she was asked if she wanted to continue some of Linda Orange's work in the district, she said yes.

"Linda Orange was a dear friend of ours," she added. "I knew her back when Art sat on some boards, years and years ago when we first came to the town."

Selectman Denise Mizla said she's "happy" Shilosky is running to serve the district.

"I'm very happy because she has great leadership skills," Mizla said. "She has what it takes to run a good campaign because she knows so many people. She has a good amount of networking with people in Colchester and Lebanon."

Mizla said Shilosky has a different leadership style than her husband – but said she also shares some of his characteristics.

"I think she'll come across to people different than Art definitely in a good way," Mizla said. "But she is very down to earth like Art; friendly, approachable, she is someone you can talk to."

Mizla said Shilosky is familiar with the process of campaigning because she was a "big part of Art's campaign."

However, this campaign might be different because with the social distancing restrictions, knocking on doors is going to be challenging, Mizla said.

"It's going to be a challenge trying to get the word out for her," she added.

Mizla said Shilosky has "very good name recognition in Colchester" which might help her campaign.

Brenden Healy, treasurer of the Colchester Republican Town Committee said he "fully" supports Shilosky to represent the 48th district "up in Hartford."

"Julie has an extensive history volunteering with the Lions Club and other organizations and she's been a small business owner for many years," Healy said. "Julie has first-hand knowledge of the struggles we go through and wants to go to Hartford to advocate for us."

# Andover Finance Board Approves \$12.54M Budget

by Sloan Brewster

The Andover Board of Finance Wednesday approved a \$12.54 million budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year.

With an executive order by Gov. Ned Lamont prohibiting budget referendums in light of the shutdown due to COVID-19, the finance board voted on the budget during a virtual meeting.

The budget includes \$9.41 million to be raised in local taxes, a \$255,039 or 2.8% increase over the current year. The final mill rate is 35.61 mills, a .62 mill increase over the current 34.99 mills, Town Manager Eric Anderson said in a call Thursday.

Local officials blamed the increase on a larger number of Andover kids enrolling at RHAM next year, bringing the town's levy for the regional school district up.

Like the town, the governor's executive order required the RHAM Board of Education to adopt its budget sans a referendum.

"Overall it is about a .6 mill tax increase," Anderson said of the municipal and local education sides of budget. "The town portion was cut fairly dramatically and the school budget was also cut [and] had some fairly big cuts."

Anderson pointed out that RHAM "actually produced a level budget" but said with the influx of local students, the town has to pay nearly 7% more.

For the RHAM Board of Education, the budget calls for \$5.23 million, a \$337,188 or 6.89% increase over the current year. For Andover Elementary School, the budget calls for \$3.90 million, a \$162,600 or 4% reduction from the current year.

The budget calls for an estimated \$2.27 million in state revenues and allocates spending

\$415,000 from the fund balance.

"We had money in savings," said Adrian Mandeville, vice first selectman. "Over the last 10 years every time we had money at the end of the year we rolled it back into the reserve fund."

Mandeville said if those funds had been "spent correctly" over that 10-year period, the town would be better off.

"We'd be in a better position," he said. "Roads would be in better shape."

With the reserve funds, the budget funds projects to rebuild bridges, fix culverts, complete some tree work and "one-time expenses that we know are not going to be recurring," Mandeville said.

Recurring expenses, such as payroll, will be covered by increases in the tax line.

The numbers have changed since March when the Board of Selectmen forwarded a \$13.70 million proposal, a \$1.34 million or 10.85% over the current year to the finance board and since Schools Superintendent Sally Doyen's original \$4.39 million request.

"It's changed quite radically since then," Anderson said.

The Board of Selectmen was able to cut the town and local school budget, Mandeville said.

The initial town budget proposal called for more road work, but it was clear that the numbers should be reduced based on the state-wide COVID-19 shutdown, Anderson said, adding the seniors have especially been hit hard and make up one-third of the town's population.

"All of us are feeling the effects of this pandemic," Anderson said.

*From the Editor's Desk*

## Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

I was out taking a walk the other day when I saw jogger approach. As I usually do if I'm outside and I spot someone coming, I put on my mask. As the guy jogs past me, he says, "You don't have to wear the mask outside, man."

Uh-huh. Ah.....no, that's not really how it works.

I don't get why some seem to be bothered by the masks; I really don't. The CDC has recommended for more than two months now that we wear masks in public – especially if we're going to be within six feet of someone. I always put one on when I go to the store. I put one on if I go to get takeout. As I just shared, I put one on if I'm walking and there are others about. I know the mask isn't there to protect me; that's been clear from the start. It's there to protect others.

So many people who have COVID-19 are asymptomatic – meaning you could have it and not know it, so it's important to just take precautions when out. You don't know the medical history of those whom you're going to encounter.

On the letters to the editor pages last week you had people debating the need for masks. But there should be no debate; the science is clear. Heck, it's been clear for decades. Why else would doctors wear masks during surgery?

I admit, it doesn't help when you have the president of the United States declining to wear one. At the very same press conference where he announced the CDC is recommending people wear masks, President Trump said "Now, I'm not going to wear one."

And in the two months that have passed since that press conference, he's stuck to his guns. I have yet to see a photo of him wearing a mask – not even when everyone else around him has a mask on. Not when he's shaking someone's hand (which, by the way, you're not supposed to do at the moment), not when he's standing shoulder to shoulder with people at a podium (which, by the way, you're also not supposed to do at the moment).

For whatever reason, Trump refuses to do it – and seems to look down upon those who do. This past Tuesday, during a press conference, he criticized a reporter for not taking off his mask when asking a question, saying the reporter wanted to be "politically correct." On Monday, he retweeted an earlier tweet from a Fox News anchor that was making fun of Joe Biden for wearing a mask.

And Trump's not alone. Who can forget Vice President Pence visiting the Mayo Clinic last month and meeting with COVID survivors and medical personnel while not wearing a mask. Pence said he wanted to be able to look people in the eye. I'm not exactly sure how a mask prevents that, but whatever.

I mean, if the president and vice president don't follow the recommendations of their own CDC and wear masks, I can't be too shocked when citizens don't. But it's just very disappointing.

It's just basic human decency. Nobody's trampling on anybody's rights here. If you're going to be in public, show compassion for your neighbor and wear a mask.

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See you next week.

## East Hampton Police News

5/4: Edward Dessureault, 56, of 7 N. Maple St., was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, failure to drive right, illegal possession of a firearm while under the influence and interfering and resisting an officer, East Hampton Police said.

5/5: After an investigation into an evading motor vehicle crash, Sharon Martucci, 72, of 9 Ellis Rd., was issued a summons for evading responsibility, police said.

5/12: Blaire Ocelik, 38, of 85 N. Main St., turned herself in pursuant to four active warrants and was charged with four separate counts of second-degree failure to appear, police said.

5/16: Heath Galvin, 30, of 54 Midwood Farm Rd., was arrested and charged with third-degree criminal mischief and disorderly conduct.

5/17: After an investigation into an evading motor vehicle vs. parked car crash that occurred in the East Hampton High School parking lot on Feb. 27, Camille Running, 18, of 9 Falls Circle, Colchester was issued a summons for evading responsibility, police said.

Also, from May 11-17, officers responded to nine medical calls, two motor vehicle crashes, eight alarms and two hazardous conditions, and made 16 traffic stops, police said.

## Colchester Police News

5/23: State Police said Carlos Figueroa, 51, of Rocky Hill, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and failure to drive in proper lane.

5/23: State Police said Joseph M. Boucher, 29, of Salem, was arrested and charged with violation of probation.

5/24: State Police said Ryan Laplante, 25, of Massachusetts, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and possession of less than a half ounce of cannabis.

## Andover Police News

5/25: State Police said Jacqueline Rose Veins, 30, of East Hartford, was arrested and charged with failure to keep narcotics in original container, drug paraphernalia, possession of narcotics, fourth-degree criminal mischief and disorderly conduct.

## Obituaries

### East Hampton

#### Ruth Harris

Ruth Francis Wardwell Harris, 81, of East Hampton, entered into eternal peaceful rest Friday, May 1, at Middlesex Hospital. Ruth was born in Castine, Maine, Oct. 8, 1938, and grew up in Penobscot, Maine. She graduated from George Stevens Academy High School in 1956.



She was employed as a computer key punch operator at St. Regis Paper Company in Bucksport, Maine and Adleys Trucking Company in New Haven. She worked for the town of Madison in the town clerk's office and held the position of town clerk for Madison from 1984 to 2004, where she meticulously tracked public records with her lovely handwriting and attention to detail.

In 1959, she met the love of her life, Lee M. Harris, a young handsome cadet at the Maine Maritime Academy. They were married in 1961 in Penobscot, Maine. They settled in Morris Cove in New Haven, where they purchased their first home and started their family. In 1970, they moved to Madison, where they raised their children. They were involved in the Daniel Hand Parents Football Club, attended numerous New England Patriots games (with legendary tailgate parties), attended many productions at the Goodspeed Opera House and spent time with family in Maine. In 2005, they moved to East Hampton, to be closer to their grandchildren, following the passing of their son.

Ruth was extremely creative. She was an accomplished cake maker, seamstress, and counted cross-stitcher. She adored flowers and gardening and was an excellent cook, creating many delicious family and holiday meals. In her later years, she became interested in genealogy, tracking the roots of the Wardwell and Harris families, and became a proficient scrapbooker, creatively recording family memories. She was a member of Eastern Star, Rising Sun Order #107, the Connecticut Town Clerks Association, and Trinity Episcopal Church.

Ruth was predeceased by her parents, Elliott Wardwell and Ellen Gross Wardwell; brothers, Dana Wardwell and John Wardwell; sister, Lois Wardwell; and son, Christopher M. Harris. She is survived by her husband, Lee M. Harris of East Hampton; daughter, Vicki Harris Schumann of Preston; daughter-in-law, Carla Myers Harris of South Glastonbury; four grandchildren, Jessica Schumann Ragozzine and her husband Kenneth Ragozzine, Joshua Schumann and his fiancée Chasetty Caez, Brandon Harris and Lydia Harris; great-granddaughters, Isabella and Rosalee Ragozzine; numerous nieces and nephews; as well as her beloved bichon frise, Madison (Maddie).

Due to present social distancing, a graveside and memorial service will be held at a later date.

Memorial contributions can be made in her name to the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd, Newington, CT 06111.

The Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, is in charge of arrangements.

### Hebron

#### Diane Rita Nichols

Diane Rita Nichols, 81, of Hebron, formerly of Colchester (Westchester), passed away Wednesday, May 20, at the Marlborough Health and Rehabilitation Center, where she had been residing.

Diane was born Aug. 12, 1938, in New York, N.Y., a daughter of the late Adelard and Gabrielle (Rousseau) Chicoine. She married her beloved husband Lawrence in 1956. The couple shared 42 years of marriage before he predeceased her in 1999.

Diane was a communicant of the Church of the Holy Family in Hebron. She was also a member of the Sweet Adelines Chorus, Sound of New England Chapter; singing was her passion. Diane will be remembered fondly by her family as a fantastic baker and cook, best known for her baked beans and cheese balls, an avid reader who loved cats, angels and, most importantly, her family.

She will be sadly missed but always remembered with love by her daughter, Michelle and her husband Michael Montanile of Hebron; her son, Christopher Nichols of East Hartford; grandchildren, Timothy Loosemore and his wife Sabrina, Troy Loosemore; great-granddaughter, Olessa Mercer and her mother, Heather Mercer; and many extended family members and friends.

In addition to her husband and parents, Diane was predeceased by all of her siblings, Lorraine Craft, June Worski, Deloris Parker, and Robert Chicoine; and her daughter-in-law, Carol Prucha.

A graveside funeral service was held Tuesday, May 26, in the New Hebron Cemetery, Wall Street, Hebron.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Church of the Holy Family, 185 Church St. Amston, CT 06231.

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



### Hebron

#### Robert King

Robert E. King of Hebron, the kindest man and husband, passed away peacefully Saturday, May 16. He was born Nov. 7, 1944, to the late Minnie and Edward King of East Hartford. He was predeceased by his loving, wife Patricia King.

Bob graduated from East Hartford High School, class of 1964, then went on to graduate Ward School of Electronics. He worked at Pratt & Whitney for 35 years as a machine electrician. After retirement, he and Pat and their two dogs traveled in their motor home across country to all the national parks. They also enjoyed spending time in Narragansett, R.I., at Fisherman's Memorial Park.

Bob is survived by his English Setter Holly; nieces and nephews, Carol, Frank, Lisa, Kim, Mark, Tina, Carl, Del and Debbie; and many great nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his sister Barbara Hersh and niece Tamara Beth of Kansas.

There were no calling hours. Burial was at the Gilead Cemetery, Hebron.

John F. Tierney Funeral Home has care of arrangements and for condolences online, please visit [www.tierneyfuneralhome.com](http://www.tierneyfuneralhome.com).

### Colchester

#### Donald Alfred Demar

Donald Alfred Demar, 90, of Colchester, formerly of South Glastonbury, passed away Thursday, May 21, at Middlesex Hospital, after a long and courageous struggle with lung disease. Born March 15, 1930, in Hartford, he was a son of the late Alfred and Anna (Moore) Demar.



Donald was a proud veteran, having served with the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. He married his beloved wife, Roseann Fontana, on Oct. 8, 1955. The couple shared 62 years of marriage before she predeceased him Oct. 16, 2017.

Donald retired several years ago after having built and operated the very successful Portland Supermarket and Tritown Plaza Westchester, where he made countless friendships with customers. Donald was a devout Catholic. He was a communicant of St. Augustine Church in Glastonbury and most recently St. Andrew Church in Colchester. Donald was also a member of the Knights of Columbus and he was a longtime benefactor and supporter of the Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell. He will be remembered fondly as a hardworking man who was devoted to his family, God and country.

He is survived by his sons, Peter (Jo-Ann) Demar and Patrick (Kathleen) Demar; sister, Norma Demar Keeny; brother, William Demar; nephew, David Keeny; grandchildren, Ryan, Danielle, Dominique, Matthew, James, Brandon; and his great-grandchildren Liam and Adeline.

In addition to his parents and wife, he was predeceased by a son Paul Demar.

Walk-through calling hours were held Wednesday, May 27, with masks and social distancing, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A funeral Mass was celebrated for the repose of his soul Thursday, May 28, at St. Andrew Church, Norwich Avenue, Colchester. Burial followed in St. Augustine Cemetery in Glastonbury with military honors.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Dept. 52 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415.

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

### Colchester

#### Julienne Voisine

Julienne "Julie" Voisine of Colchester was guided to heaven by an army of guardian angels Friday, May 15, 2020, with her two devoted, loving daughters by her side, after a brief, bitter and brave battle with lung cancer.



She was joyfully reunited with her mother Marguerite and father Edmund Grandmaison; her three big brothers, Robert, Gille and John-Paul; her sweet sister Margot; brother-in-law Denis Bisson; her three beautiful nieces, Susie, LouLou and Josee; all the cats she rescued in her lifetime; and her beloved dogs, Coco and Tasha.

Julie was born May 29, 1944, in Biencourt, a small community in Quebec City, Canada. In the late 1960s, she boldly immigrated to the USA without knowing the English language. She started working at Stanadyne in the 1970s, and remained there for over 30 years until her retirement. She was a proud member of Al-Anon and an avid supporter of Protectors of Animals; and volunteered her time to the Community Kitchen at St. Andrew Church in Colchester.

She frequently traveled to Canada to visit her French family. Just before retiring, she traveled to various places in the world with her good friend Gary. She loved writing in her journals, feeding the birds, bunnies and squirrels in her backyard, going to church, red roses, musicals and spending quality time with family and friends. A few years after retirement, she re-entered the workforce once again and took on not one but two part-time jobs. She became a caretaker for the elderly and a cashier at Westchester Market. She recognized and appreciated the importance of one's hard work, good health, family and friends, and one's personal relationship with God. She carried inside her body a huge compassionate heart and an immeasurable spiritual soul.

In addition, Julie was a loyal, loving and generous working single mother of two, a sweet mother-in-law, a fun, proud grandmother of six, an adoring great-grandmother of two, the youngest sister of seven siblings, an amazing aunt to numerous nieces and nephews, a faithful friend to many, and a guardian to all God's creatures, no matter how small or large. But most of all, she was a child of God.

Her legacy, lessons and love will live on through her beautiful daughters, Chantal Cavaliere of Colchester and Sandra Nepomuceno of Manchester; her sons-in-law, Paul and Ernest; her grandchildren, Michael and wife Sabrina, Matthew, Nicholas, Miette-Blue, Max and Gabriel; her great-grandchildren, Anthony and Bradley; her eldest sister, whom she thought of like a mother to her, Suzanne and her husband Florian Castonguay; her sister, Therese Bisson; her three sisters-in-law, Ghislaine, Gisele and Nicole Grandmaison; her brother-in-law, Gille and wife Louise Voisine; all her "favorite" nieces and nephews; her caring friends and any stranger she touched with her generous spirit.

In lieu of flowers the family asks for acts of kindness to someone or animal in your life who are in need of support emotionally, economically or spiritually, in honor of her life. A life sweetly, sincerely, independently and strongly lived.

The family would like to thank all the heroes at William W. Backus Hospital who provided comfort and care in her most trying time.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic circumstances, services and the celebration of her life will be set at a future date.

## Obituaries continued

### East Hampton

#### William J. Nichols

William J. Nichols, 84, of East Hampton, passed away Thursday, April 9. Born in Portland, he was the son of the late William H. Nichols and Florence (Wylie) Nichols.

Bill was a graduate of East Hampton High School, Class of 1953. He worked as a mason until retirement. He was an avid hunter, fisherman, and reader. He enjoyed hiking and often collected arrowheads on his travels. He liked going to car shows and in his younger years, he won numerous drag racing trophies driving his '57 Chevy.

He is survived by his sister, Beverly (Nichols) Lyman, and his three nieces, Laurie Hall and her husband, Gary, Melody Philhower and her husband, Mark, and Allison Anderson and her husband, Michael, all of East Hampton; and seven great nieces and nephews, Jennifer (Hall) Dupre, Gary Hall, Steven Hall, Mark Philhower II, Michael Philhower, Melissa Anderson and Makenzie Anderson.

There will be no calling hours and a graveside service will be held at the convenience of the family.

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

### East Hampton

#### William C. Mager

Bill passed away peacefully at Middlesex Hospital Friday, April 3. He was born April 9, 1938 in Cleveland, Ohio.

He leaves behind his wife and best friend, Ginny; his daughter, Debbie Anton; his son, Bill Mager Jr., his daughter-in-law Sarah Wheeler Mager, and grandchildren Charley, Matt, Steph, Sabrina and Trevor; his sisters, Joanie Moore and Bev Hines along with their husbands Mike and Jerry; several cousins; and many, many friends. He loved them all very much and his greatest joy was time spent with them whether in person or on the phone.

Bill grew up in Ohio leaving there to serve in the Navy. He then moved to Connecticut and worked for P&WA for many years until his retirement. He was predeceased by his first wife, Anne.

He was a wonderful man with a big heart a generous soul, and lots of mischief. His family is grateful for every minute they had with him and he will be dearly missed by all who loved him.

In these troubled times there will not be a funeral.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory can be made to: Smilow Cancer Hospital at YNHH, Office of Development, P.O. Box 1849, New Haven, CT 06508

Please share your memories of Bill with his family on his tribute wall at Spencer Funeral Home: <https://www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com/obituary/William-Mager>



### Colchester

#### Lillian Griffin Brown

Lillian Griffin Brown, 91, of Colchester, passed away peacefully at home Thursday, May 14. Born Feb. 14, 1929, in Hebron, she was the daughter of the late William and Ellen (Olin) Griffin.

In 1947, Lillian graduated from Windham High School in Willimantic. She married the late Arthur H. Brown in 1949 and settled in Colchester, raising their four children.

Besides her beloved husband of 49 years, Arthur, Lillian was predeceased by her siblings, William, Irvin, Marion, Donald, Kenneth, Stanley, Evelyn and Robert.

Lillian will be forever loved and remembered by her children Kathleen (Thomas) Fabian of Andover, Deborah (Richard) Lauzier of Manchester, Allen Brown of Colchester and Cynthia (Kevin) Firmin of Frederick, Md.; her five grandchildren, Michael, Susan, Michelle, Brian and Rachel; and her three great-grandchildren Natalie, Aubrey and Emily. She is also remembered by her sister, Beverly; brother, Howard; and many nieces and nephews.

Lillian's hobbies were sewing, knitting, crocheting and needlepoint. She also enjoyed baking and reading novels. She was a lifetime member of the Colchester Federated Church, where she served on numerous committees and taught Sunday school. After raising her children she worked for a number of years as a bank teller.

Due to COVID-19, burial will be private with a memorial service to be announced at a later date.

In lieu of flowers the family asks that donations be made in Lillian's memory to the Colchester Federated Church, 60 Main Street, Colchester, CT 06415.

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



### Portland

#### Patricia Holland

Patricia "Patty" Holland, 72, of Portland, beloved wife of John B. Holland, died Saturday, May 9, at Middlesex Hospital. She was born in Middletown, the daughter of the late Joseph and Genevieve "Jenny" (Masselli) Klember. Patricia was a lifelong resident of



Portland and worked as a school nurse aid for the Portland School System and a caregiver for the Visiting Nurses Association.

Besides her husband, her high school sweetheart, John, Patty is survived by her son John J. Holland and his wife Sharron of Middletown; daughter Michelle Linares and her husband Paul of East Haddam; sister Barbara Landman of Northford; six grandchildren whom she adored, Brian, Kayla, Jacob, Brendan, John, and Brooke, and niece Julie (Landman) Rafferty and her husband Rob and their children. An avid animal lover, she is survived by her beloved dog Riley.

She was predeceased by her sister, Donna Klember and niece, Jeannie Landman.

Patty was an enthusiastic lover of nature and spent countless days camping at her property in the Berkshires and travelling on family vacations to the mountains and lakes of northern New England during the summers. She used to love relaxing at the beach at Pleasant View, R.I., with her mother and sisters. She looked forward to nothing more than sleepovers with her grandchildren and spoiling them beyond belief. Recently, she and her grandson could be found frequenting the casinos of Connecticut and just a few years ago they ventured out to Las Vegas and the Grand Canyon. When she was able to squeeze free time into her busy days, she had a love for cooking, gardening, and reading. Her ability to connect with others and bring laughter wherever she went was legendary.

Due to COVID-19, funeral services and burial are private. A public memorial service will be held at a later date for family and friends who wish to attend. Those who wish may send memorial donations to St. Mary Church, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

To share memories or express condolences online, please visit [www.biegafuneralhome.com](http://www.biegafuneralhome.com).