

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

Volume 44, Number 29

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

June 19, 2020



Jessica Delton of Hebron was ushered to her graduation on a trailer filled with her brothers and cousins and her aunt Carrie Czapiga. While her parents and grandparents towed them in a Jeep. During the ceremony, they waved banners and hooted and hollered to “Jess!” Czapiga held up her phone so Delton’s other grandparents, Ed and Lynn Dailey, could watch via Facetime from Bradenton, Fla.

RHAM Class of 2020 ‘Anything But Ordinary’

by Sloan Brewster

With lines of cars instead of rows of seated attendees, members of the RHAM Class of 2020 celebrated a different graduation than those before them.

The ceremony, which took place Tuesday at the Lions Fairgrounds due to road construction on the RHAM campus, was the end to a year that was also marked with change as COVID-19 led to the closure of schools in the state and an unexpected transition to home and virtual schooling.

Throughout the day, cars parked along a road inside the fairgrounds with the front of the line stopped beside a tent where a stage was set up.

In a touchless ceremony, Principal Scott Leslie would place a graduate’s diploma on a podium and then Assistant Principal Penny Bryzgel would announce the name of the graduate, who would then walk to the podium, gather up the diploma, take a gift bag and pose for photos.

Parents and family would await the graduate

at the car and then offer congratulations for a job well done.

Michelle Corliss of Hebron stood beside the family car with a bouquet of flowers while her husband Peter Corliss filmed their daughter Katelyn Corliss making the sacred walk across the stage.

After, Corliss and her parents spoke to the *RiverEast* about the experience.

While circumstances leading up to graduation were not ideal, administrators “did a really good job of adapting, so I appreciate that,” she said.

“I think the administration clearly demonstrated that they were personally invested in creating as good an experience for the students under the circumstances,” her father said.

Corliss opened her gift bag to find a class picture and gift certificates to local businesses, including Brain Freezers Frozen Dessert Café, FennAgain’s Pub & Restaurant and Hebron Car

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Optimism, Bleakness at Portland High Graduation

by Jack Lakowsky

It was a graduation ceremony like none Portland High School had ever seen, as members of the PHS Class of 2020 celebrated their sendoff in a way adapted to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Last Friday, June 12, saw high school seniors and their families waiting in their vehicles in the PHS parking lot. Socially-distanced seniors left their vehicles and were handed their diplomas one by one. Car horns replaced applause. Cheers shouted from within cars were muffled, but no less exuberant.

Students still delivered their customary speeches from a podium set up in the parking lot – and the speeches were streamed live via Youtube. A mix of bleakness and optimism tinged most of the speeches, as the students looked forward to the future but shared that the COVID-19 crisis has driven home that, in the words of one student, the future is never guaranteed.

Grant Collins, president of the PHS Class of 2020, told his classmates that graduating high school at the dawn of this decade means they must soon make consequential decisions.

“You’ll have to decide who to vote for,” Collins said. “We have to fight for our safety with compassion and honesty.”

Collins expressed how resolute his class has been throughout the turbulent years of their public school careers. He attested to the courage his class has shown when confronted with violence like that seen at the mass shootings at Sandy Hook and at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla.

“And now we face a pandemic that has killed more than 4,000 people [in this state], and the exposure of a gash that has been open for years,” Collins said, citing the anti-police brutality protests that in recent weeks have spread internationally.

“We must be truthful about our realities,” Collins said. “We must believe we can overcome this, and act with compassion.”

Collins urged his classmates to vote. “You can’t let fear entrench your position,” Collins said. “Don’t let social media be your guide, and recognize the anguish this country was built on.”

Collins said he is confident he and his classmates will overcome any upcoming obstacles. He said he and his classmates have been doing so their whole lives. Collins said he knows students who overcame bullying, addiction, and family issues.

Collins was introduced by Portland High School Principal Kathryn Lawson, who initiated the ceremony.

“Other than the five I have at home, these kids are the most important young people to me,” Lawson said of the Class of 2020. “To parents, thank you for sharing your children with us. They have demonstrated a unity beyond their years.”

Portland High School’s 2020 graduation was also the last ceremony for Superintendent of Schools Philip O’Reilly. O’Reilly will retire when this school year concludes.

“You have all proven yourselves through extraordinary times,” O’Reilly said to graduates. “You will soon venture into the many enterprises that await you outside this town.”

Salutatorian Olivia Runte told her classmates that it is now time to embark on a new journey.

“After the absolute craziness that was the second half of our senior year, it brings me joy to be here,” Runte said.

Runte said 2020 was far from how her class expected it to be. Her class, she said, was unable to experience many senior milestones, including athletic tournaments, the spring musical, prom, the school’s annual Disneyworld trip, and a traditional graduation ceremony.



Members of the Portland High School Class of 2020 stand by their cars, ready to get their diplomas

“We were robbed of experiences,” Runte said. “And it’s fine to feel sad or angry or disappointed.”

Runte said she and her classmates are no strangers to turmoil. Her age group has seen 9/11, innumerable school shootings and massacres, the existential threat of climate change, inequality, racial divides, and the worst pandemic in a century.

“That’s not even a full list,” Runte said. “We are 17 and 18 years old, and we have already experienced an absurd number of threats. And we’ve had no choice but to watch – that is about to change.”

Runte said hers is a class of future doctors, lawyers and politicians who grew up witnessing unfairness, a class of future teachers and professors who want to educate people on press-

ing social issues.

“We are a generation defined by resilience,” Runte said. “We have dealt with worse.”

Runte quoted former president Barack Obama, saying she and her class will step headlong into the rushing waters of history.

Class valedictorian Autumn Tewksbury expressed pride in seeing her class’s graduation despite such a tumultuous year. This year, Tewksbury said she learned that the future is never guaranteed.

“Stop asking if it can get worse,” Tewksbury said. “It always will.”

Tewksbury said she is confident her class will find success when they begin new chapters away from Portland.

“This class is by far the funniest,” Tewksbury

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Wash. “Yeah, wash your car,” her dad piped when she found the car wash gift card.

Corliss plans to attend American University, with a double major in journalism and political science, she said. Over the summer she hopes to find a job, spend time with friends and plan her move to college.

As graduates awaited their turn to walk the stage, Assistant Principal Chris Madder congratulated them.

“I miss you guys,” Madder said to graduate Michael Colonna as he got out of his car.

The graduation offered a great opportunity to see the kids again, Madder told the *Rivereast*.

“I wish we were all together with the kids,” he said. “I’ve known them since they were little kids. But this is the best.”

Meanwhile across from the stage teachers watched from another tent.

Christine Van Cott, special education teacher and class co-advisor, explained that teachers either signed up for a shift or for the entire day.

“Everyone worked together – administrators, teachers, parents,” she said. “Today is great, it’s interesting, you feel for the kids, especially that they can’t all be together, but in a way it’ll be more memorable.”

An all-day affair rather than the usual couple of hours on a summer evening, the ceremony actually began last Wednesday on the RHAM campus on the baseball field where graduation usually takes place. It was there that speeches were filmed to be played along with a livestreamed video of festivities at the fairgrounds.

Leslie made a few remarks before introducing the rest of the speakers. He spoke of how the graduates had experienced a pandemic rather than learning about one in the classroom and watched its challenges unfold each day, proving themselves “remarkably resilient.”

Leslie then introduced class president Sydney Farrar, who spoke about the myriad of things that made the Class of 2020 “anything but ordinary.”

Examples she brought to light included sports teams led by seniors with “unbelievable seasons.”

“I mean, our boys’ basketball team qualified for states; when was the last time they did that?” she said. “And they were not the only team to make it to states.”

Farrar spoke of the drama department’s “amazing production” of *You Can Fly* that was “written, casted and directed by a senior,” Rebecca Ristow.

She offered gratitude to RHAM staff, teachers and administrators for adapting during the pandemic and continuing to educate students and spoke of memories made and not made.

“We may not have had all our fun senior moments like senior outing or senior prom but given the situation we all still did our best to see are friends and continue to make memories,” she said. “Birthday parades became a fun idea that would have never have happened if it weren’t for COVID.”

She also gave a shout-out to the former class mascot, which was changed in May to the Raptors to remove the Native American allusion that was deemed racist.

“So cheers to the last class of RHAM Sachems; we really are unique and extremely special,” Farrar said in closing.

Speaking next was “beloved high school receptionist” Daryll Kale, who, according to Leslie, is “the first person people greet upon entering the building and the person students go to for questions and concerns.”

Kale has accepted a job in Vermont and will be leaving at the end of June, Leslie said.

“Daryll is loved throughout the community,” he said. “He is a legend amongst our students, parents and staff members.”

Kale joked about times in the office and reminisced about seeing students walk through the doors.

“Do you remember when the speakers in the office made me sound like Darth Vader?” he asked. “Luke Skywalker, please come to the office.”

He warned that life is hard and in moments can be ugly but said it is not bleak and is in fact amazing and magical.

“I have hope for the future because I have seen it. I’ve been saying hello to the future for the past four years,” he said. “Every day you walked into that building I saw the future taking shape.”

Kale closed with a phrase he said every day. “This is Daryll. How can I help?”

Valedictorian Reagan Fleher, spoke of a series of Disney movies, that she said “captures all of the uniqueness of the Class of 2020.”

“This could only be *High School Musical*,” Fleher said. “Personally, from the moment I viewed the first *High School Musical* movie as a six year old on my living room couch, I realized that the essence of the movie was exactly what I wanted my high school experience to be. People constantly singing and dancing in the hallways, everyone friends with each other, and of course Zac Efron.”

Eventually, the real world took hold, however.

“My peers and I spent what were supposed to be some of the most carefree moments of our lives on more pressing issues like a global pandemic, mass loss, climate change, and widespread political and social unrest just to name a few,” she said. “As disappointing as it is for us to celebrate our graduation separately instead of together as a class, and for me to record these thoughts instead of speaking to you in person, I actually believe that from this time of great adversity we have benefited greatly.”

The pandemic, she said, revealed her teachers’ dedication and brought her closer to her family.

“Who would have thought it would take a global pandemic to get us to eat lunch together every day, or binge a Netflix series together?” she said.

In closing, she said, she hopes her fellow graduates look back on 2020 as the year that brought them.

“We as a generation have the power to make change,” she said. “We can and will make a lasting, positive impact on the world.”

Salutatorian Jason Bove spoke about finding balance between schoolwork and making high school memories.

“Now I know this isn’t the ending to our senior year that any of us really wanted, but if anything, I think it shows how resilient a class we are,” he said. “The world threw everything at us and tried to keep us down, but yet we still managed to have a good time, and live out our senior year as best we could. I think that speaks volumes about us as a class, and this will absolutely be a trait that is going to stick with us and help us do great things in the years to come.”

Back at the fairgrounds, teachers applauded as one group of graduates filed out and the next group rolled in.

The members of the RHAM High School Class of 2020 are:

@ Mina Abrantes, Nicholas Albino, Michael Almeida, * Christina Aniolek, * Genaro Anselmo, IV, Justin Arel, @ Alana Armfield, Thomas Atwood, Jr., Isabella Auteri, Riley Ayer, * @ Colin Babick, * Garret Babick, Alison Bakke, Alexander Banas, * @ Rylee Bane, Gage Baptiste, Harold Barnes, Caroline Barrett, * Chloe Beard, Jason Belanger, Nathan Bellhorn, Emma Bellmore, @ Isabelle Benson-Clarke, Amelia Betz, * @ Meredith Blinn, Alexander Bodey, * Joshua Boehler, Amanda Bogdan, John Bordick, ## Jason Bove, Madison Brainard, Alexander Brett, Dale Browne, * @ Stephen Buden, @ Eliza Byrne, @ Chloe Calkins, Leo Cappello, Cole Caso, * Zachary Catania, James Cavalieri, * Kristin Cavalieri, * Khalia Chapman, Stevie Ciccarello, Mark Ciraldo, Jonathan Clough, * @ Emily Cochevski, * @ Sarah Cohen, Michael Colonna, * Hailey Constantine, Logan Contos, @ Emily Cook, @ Angela Cooley, * Katelyn Corliss, John Cormier, * Samantha Crampton, Sean Cruess, Glenn Cully, Alex Czercowy, Brandon D’Amicol, * Brendan Davis, @ Meghan Davis, Vincenzo Davis, @ Elizabeth DeDominicis, @ Brooke Delis Dingley, Carson Dorsey, Jade Drost, Gracey DuBois, * Ryan Dunnirvine, @ Austin Dupré, Brenden Duprey, * @ Andrew Ely, Marcus Emanuel, * @ Tristin Emmons, * Alicia Erami, Marina Espinoza, * Joshua Fagnoli, * @ Sydney Farrar, Madilyn Feige, * @ Reagan Fleher, Cynthia Folsom, Lily Freer, Jordan Frey, * Carson Gaines, Cameron Garcia, Vin Garrity, * Leah Geiger, Joshua Gianetti, Madison Gilbert, Alexandra Gillis, Cody Godfrey, Danielle Golden, @ Kara Goldstein, Elena Goncalves, Marissa Goncalves, Rachel Goodale, Severin Ray-Van Graham, Amanda Joan Grano, Kyra Griffin, Samantha Guppy, Nicholas Hale, Marissa Hall, Julianna Hallin, Riley Halotek, Julia Hancin, Devin Hanelius, * David Hart, Brian Hartan, Benjamin Hassett, @ CharlotteHeersping, Joshua Herman, James Hitchcock, Jack Hixson, @ Meghan Holland-Tyler, Samuel Holley, Carly Hood, * @ Cameron Irizarry, Amanda Jacobson, Virginia James, Jamion Jamison, Quentin Jensen, Katelyn Jeroszko, Gabriella Johnson, @ Gracie Johnson, Tyler Jordan, Lilah Kamins, Kayle Kanaitis, Logan Kanaitis, Andrew Keene, Nicholas Kelley, Raeanne Kelly, Conor Kennedy, Jacqueline Killelea, Hannah Kingsley, Katie Kingsley, Jelina Kolb, Chloe Kostick, Faith Lackey, Joseph Lagasse, @ Jacqueline Lage, Jake Landry, Christian Larsen, Nicholas Lavenburg, Lily Lawrence, Marisa Lee, * @ Derek Leshak, Cameron Lettieri, Robert Luoma, * @ Olivia Lynch, * Lillian Lysiuk, Molly Mackay, * Olivia Maranos, Vanessa Marchant, Mary Marinelli, Olivia McAvoy, * Olivia McCavanagh, Emma McCormack, William McCormack,



Brendan Davis walks back to his car after getting his diploma at RHAM High School’s 2020 “drive-thru” Graduation at the Lions Fairgrounds on Tuesday.

Katherine McNally, Emily McShane, Shiann Meli, Jenna Mercer, EmilyMessier, *Brandon Miller, Keren Miralda, Danielle Moard, Jake Moulton, Andrew Munroe, Brandon Nastri, Ryan Nelson, JadyN Nembhard, * @ Sydney Neumuth, @ Kaitlin Nicol, @ Sarah Nilsson, * Allison Nolt, Alexis Northup, Liam Novak, * @ Abigail O’Brien, * @ Maeve O’Neil, Haley Oakes, Mikayla Oman, Victoria Orama, Alex Otero, * Aaron Ouellette, Zackery Parsadanov, * @ Joy Patel, * @ Julia Pearson, @ Amanda Pedro Andrew Perkins, Arden Perron, Maya Perrone, * Andrew Plausse, @ Alexis Popolizio, Skylar Popp, Matthew Provencher, @ Jessica Pugliese, * Mahid Qureshi, Kelly Reardon, @ Monica Redman, @ Molly Reibeling, + Owen Rheame, * @ Annabel Richard, MichaelRiehl, * Rebecca Ristow, Shannon Romeo * Wesley Roser, @ Amanda Rudder, Marybeth Rulli, Cinthia Samayoa-Martinez, * @ Katharine Santella, * Zachary Sauer, Andrew Schadtler, Nicholas

Schmeizl, Abby Schumann, Jacob Silva, * Matthew Sitnik, William Sitnik, Emily Sklodosky, Michael Sliter, Kyle Slot, * Benjamin Smith, Justin Smith, Ashley Snyder, Alexandra Soteriou, Cameron Soulagnet, Caterina Stolfi, Dakota Stone, R i l e y Sullivan, Joshua Susman, Justin Synodi, Robert Synodi, * Carina Tedeschi, Peter Torres, + Ethan Trueman, Xaden Vardanian, @ Giovanni Vecchiarino, * Michael Verret, Jr., Dylan Wagner, Kathryn Walsh-Scott, Molly Wampold, Thomas Wasil, Brittany Wharton, Nathan Wheeler, @ Adam Whitmore, Emma Wilson, Madison Wright
Valedictorian
Salutatorian
* Member of National Honor Society in good standing
@ Green cord/100 or more hours of community service
+ Enlisted in the Military

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said. Tewksbury said she believes personality and kindness to be far more important than intelligence.

“To be honest, I don’t remember any of the work at all,” Tewksbury said, explaining that her memories consist of enjoyable moments shared with other students and Portland’s teachers.

“That’s what matters in the long run,” Tewksbury said.

The members of the Portland High School Class of 2020 are: Abigail Backus+^, Christopher Bell Madeline Brunk *+^ Caden Charpentier, Lauren Choinere, Marykate Clark^, Avery Coe *^, Grant Collins+^, Thomas Currier+, Nickolis Czapiga, Dillon Daoud ^, Denasia Davis, Nicholas Dawson+^, Adrian De Leon Reyes, Harrison Deane, Gian DiGennaro^ Michael DiMauro, Stephanie DiMauro ^, Bryan Dinnis+ Joshua Doering, Olivia Doering^, Katherine Donahue^, Timothy Donoghue, Megan Doyle *^, Andrew Dumais, Indomari Ellison, Raychel Fasciani, Janelle Field, Katelynn Fillback, Julia Fitzsimons *+^, Carter Gange, Clara

Guilmette+^, Victoria Haglund, Athena Harmon Jenaia Harmon, Carlie Hasselman +^, Joshua Hurlley, Neira Kadric, Isaack Kandeke, Thomas Keaveny, Kean Keech, Benjamin Kelley, Megan Kostraba +^, Michael Krasniewski, Jordan LaBella, Kyle LaPila, Morgan Lasky, Nathan Lavoy*^, Faith Lee ^, Steven Li, Adrianna Lovett, Hunter Lyman, Anna Maselek ^, Jahsim Mathurin, Jake Mazza, Adam Meckensturm, Christopher Melluzzo, Lauren Mertel +^, Shannon Murphy +^, Hannah Prince*+^, David Przeszelski, Adam Rossignol, Olivia Runte, *+^, Amber Ryan, Brooke Ryan^, Kelly Schneider^, Jayden Schoeps, Olivia Smith^, Khadijah Stanford+, Michael Staron, Rachel Staub^, Kelly Talerico *+^, Autumn Tewksbury, *+^, Victoria Tirado, Mackenzie Toomey, Andrew Vernali, Chloe Wade-Fralick, Michael Walker, Ethan Wallengren, Jack Wright, Emersyn Wydo, Nicholas Yankowski.

*Top ten students
+ National Honor Society
^ Tri-M Music Honor Society

Top Two Bacon Students Look Back

by Karla Santos

Matthew Voiland and Ariana Spearin juggled between school, sports, clubs and work and still managed to be at the top of their 175-member graduating class, becoming Bacon Academy's Class of 2020 valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively.

Voiland, class valedictorian, is graduating with a 4.38 grade point average. He played soccer and lacrosse through all the four years in high school and has had a job since his sophomore year.

He said that becoming his class valedictorian was a goal he set for himself during his freshmen year.

"I just had that goal on the back of my mind throughout high school and then it was awesome to finally get it," Voiland said.

He said that being the class valedictorian is something he had looked forward to for a long time. He said reaching his goal has been "super fulfilling" and he is "happy" that he was able to achieve it.

But these academic goals don't stop now for Voiland – as he said he wants to follow the same steps through college to be at the top of his class again.

"I definitely want to maintain all of the academic standards that I've had and keep up my grades," Voiland said, adding that he also had high grades in middle school.

Voiland said he is going to major in nursing at the University of Connecticut. He then wants to work as a travel nurse before he goes back to school to get a master's and eventually a doctorate degree to become a nurse practitioner, he said.

Voiland said he always knew he wanted to somehow be involved in the medical field. He liked the idea of working in hospitals or clinics. But he said that originally nursing wasn't what he thought he wanted to do as he was thinking of becoming a biomedical engineer and make medicine. But then Voiland realized that being in a lab all the time wasn't what he was looking for.

He wants to be involved in the medical field because of "the idea that it was difficult, I just wanted to challenge myself and also follow my passion."

In addition, he likes that through nursing he can help people and interact with them, he said.

"That's what I feel that I would enjoy more," he added.

He said he received a scholarship from St. Joseph's Polish Society and the presidential scholarship from UConn.

As the class valedictorian Voiland has to give

a speech during the graduation ceremony – which is scheduled for July 11. He said he has not written the speech yet but has started to plan it and has some ideas of what he wants to include in it. Voiland said he wants to address the fact that the class of 2020's senior year was unexpected.

Spearin, the class salutatorian, finished up her Bacon career with a 4.35 GPA.

Spearin said she never intended to be one of the top two students in her class.

"I think that for a lot of kids it's kind of their goal to get to the top of the class, but that was never my top priority," Spearin said, but added that instead, she focused more on learning subjects that she liked and doing well for herself.

"Finding out that I was the second in the class was actually a pretty big surprise for me – but it was a pleasant surprise," she said.

Spearin said she heard that she became second in her class about a month ago and when she found out she was surprised and grateful but mostly shocked.

She said she is "grateful" and proud for her academic achievements and for the things she has achieved that don't have to do with a letter grade.

But for Spearin this achievement is not only about herself.

"I also think that it's important to recognize that even though I am named number two I think that there are so many other students that deserve just as much recognition as me," Spearin said.

Spearin said there are so many students in her class that have worked hard and she was careful about not diminishing them.

"I think that they've done a great job so I think that although I'm being recognized for this I feel as though there are so many other kids that also deserve to be recognized for their great achievements too," she added.

Spearin said she also had good grades through middle school and plans on maintaining good academic standards through college.

Like Voiland, Spearin is also going to UConn. Her plan is to major in statistics.

"I'm not completely sure if I want to go into actuarial sciences or work for insurance companies or what but I just know that I'm doing math and I like statistics so that's what I plan on focusing on," Spearin said.

She said choosing a major was difficult and she even considered going into psychology but then she realized that "math has been the one thing that I've enjoyed my whole life but I kind of never realized that I could go into math as a career," she said.

She said she realized that she wanted to have



Matthew Voiland and Ariana Spearin are the valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, of the Bacon Academy Class of 2020.

a math major about a month ago when talking to her parents about it.

Spearin said she did "a lot" of extracurricular activities. She was a part of the volleyball and tennis teams.

She was also in the diversity club, interact club, the Bacon Academy chapter of the National Honor Society and Habitat for Humanity. In addition, Spearin was the president of the Peer Advocacy League (PAL).

"I liked being involved with a lot of different groups," Spearin said.

She has also been working since her sophomore year.

Spearin also has to write a speech for graduation, but she said she hasn't started writing it yet.

"I am pretty nervous for what I am supposed to say," she said about the speech, adding that she wants to include the fact that her class went through a pandemic on their senior year.

Spearin received the salutatorian prize, a scholarship from the Colchester Lions Club and

a scholarship in memory of Taylor Howes, a 2017 Bacon graduate who was killed in a car crash in June 2018.

School Principal Matthew Peel said that Voiland and Spearin are academically the top students in the class, showing four years of good grades. He said that to become a valedictorian and salutatorian it's not enough just to get good grades.

He said these students also have to take the most challenging courses.

Peel said he is "very proud" of the academic achievements of Voiland and Spearin and of the fact that they are both going to college.

"But also on top of that they are both just really nice kids," Peel said. "They are really good kids, good peer role models."

Peel said that they have "positively contributed to our school climate and our community."

"It's great when you have a student so strong and talented academically but also has the personality and the ability to be just good people so we are very proud of them," Peel said.

Mill Rate Remains Flat in Colchester

by Karla Santos

On Monday the Board of Finance, at a special meeting, approved a 0.2% increase on the Board of Education budget and a zero increase for the town budget, keeping the mill rate at its current 32.84 mills.

Board of Finance member Andreas Bisbikos entertained a motion to approve the \$15.16 million town budget. The motion passed unanimously.

Michael Egan, board vice chair, entertained a motion to approve the \$41.32 million Board of Education budget, which represents a 0.2% or \$79,000 increase. Bisbikos and Andrea Migliaccio showed opposition to this budget, but the motion carried with a 4-2 vote.

"I could not perpetuate a budget increase when our citizens were denied access to the ballot box," Bisbikos told the *Rivereast*, adding that even if the finance board kept the school budget with no increase, the programs and staff levels would have remained intact.

Bisbikos said that as a teacher he takes funding in the schools "very seriously" and if he was to notice a deficiency, he would call it out.

When voting for the mill rate, all the board members voted to keep it the same. Part of the motion clarified that the board was using the fund balance to set the mill rate. Chairman Robert Tarlov abstained from voting for the mill rate.

"As an individual, if I wasn't the chairman, I would've been voting for a zero increase," Tarlov said about the Board of Education budget. "Putting my chairman's hat I have a responsibility to try to bring the two sides together and move the budget forward."

He said that as the chairman he felt that the Board of Education requests had come down significantly, from a 2.99% increase in the proposed budget to the 0.2% increase that it was voted for.

Tarlov said that if he voted as an individual, he would have been forcing a tie, "stalemating everything."

He also said that he abstained from voting for the two mill rates because he could not vote for a mill rate that was using fund balance. Although they are both the same, there are two mill rates in town – one for motor vehicles and one for real estate and personal property – and the board approved each in a separate vote.

Tarlov told the *Rivereast* that he was one of the creators and amenders of the fund balance policy in 2010 and 2012. That policy speaks against using the fund balance for mill rate relief and that's why he said that out of principle, he abstained from voting.

While the Board of Education budget increase has been reduced, the spending package still contains several proposed new items, in-

cluding a math interventionist, a substance abuse counselor, entrance security personnel – or greeters – a kindergarten teacher, funds for technology hardware, a stipend for a webmaster, an in-school suspension coordinator, an office professional, a new pre-k section, a special education teacher, paraprofessionals and a child development associate.

Some of the areas in the original budget that have gone through reductions include transfers to capital reserve. If the Board has a surplus, that money will go to Board of Education's capital reserve fund. But for this year's Board of Education budget, transfers to capital reserve were part of reductions made to the budget to keep its increase as low as it is. Other areas that have gone through reductions include some information technology-related items, general supplies, some newly-requested personnel such as a math coach, a technology integrationist, a contingency paraprofessional and a special education teacher, among other items.

At the May 28 budget hearing, the Board of Education budget was at a 0.4% increase and according to Bisbikos, the Board of Finance later took out \$86,000 from savings in the bus contracts to get the budget to an increase of 0.2%.

During the public comments section of Monday's budget vote, a number of individuals raised concerns regarding the budget. Some spoke in support of the budget without more cuts and at least one person spoke in favor of a 0% increase.

The town budget also went through an extensive process to reach a zero increase. The original proposed budget presented a 5.25% increase or \$625,709. Then the budget was adjusted and presented again on April 16 with a 2.08% increase or \$315,994. At the May 26 public hearing for the town budget, there was a 0.36% increase or \$55,062. The Board of Finance brought it to a zero increase after the public hearing.

One of the things that helped the town with making reductions was the delay of some projects. Delayed capital investments, include building and ground maintenance, pavement overlay and striping, Cragin Library's roof repairs or replacement, a boiler replacement at Cragin Library, heating, ventilation and air conditioning replacement at Cragin Library and replacement of three air handling units at town hall.

Tarlov said the tax bills will go out around July 1 with no increase in the mill rate.

In-Person Bacon Graduation Planned for Next Month in Colchester

by **Karla Santos**

Bacon Academy seniors will have the opportunity to sit together as a class one more time, but not in a classroom or at the football field; instead they will be sitting in front of the high school building, six feet apart from each other and with their families watching from a parking spot to celebrate a commencement ceremony the Bacon way.

The celebration will take place Saturday, July 11, at 9:30 a.m.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions this graduation will be different than on previous years. School Principal Matthew Peel said that graduation was put on hold for a while, waiting for state guidelines to be more flexible. But waiting this long “paid off,” Peel said.

“We are going to be able to include some pieces in our ceremony that the other schools couldn’t because they were doing theirs before July 6,” Peel said, adding that July 6 is the date in which Gov. Ned Lamont will start allowing in-person graduations.

Because of state guidelines, families will be required to stay in their cars during the ceremony. Only one car per family will be allowed.

When students go up to the stage to pick up their diplomas, their families will be able to pull up in front of the stage and take a close look at their graduate receiving the diploma.

Approximately 175 students will be graduating from Bacon Academy this year.

Peel said he is “very proud” of Bacon’s graduation plans. He said the process was “very inclusive” and it started with a committee meeting of almost 40 parents, students and administrators. Russell Melmed from the Chatham Health District was also part of it.

Peel said the school sent out two surveys through email – one for students and one for parents – to get input in terms of their top priorities for graduation. He said the committee made sure to use the student-parent voice in the design of the event.

According to Peel, in the surveys the three things that came up as top priority for parents and students were receiving diplomas in a live setting not virtually, that the families could be there to see their child get their diploma and that the seniors could somehow be sitting to-

gether as a class.

“We’re happy that we are able to make all three of those things happen with this plan,” Peel said. “They had so much taken away from them that they wanted an opportunity to be a class again.”

Peel said that the graduation plan follows the safety requirements of the Chatham Health District and the governor’s guidelines.

“I’m happy with our plan and I think is the best plan we could do for our kids and families on the given circumstances,” Peel said.

Because seniors have missed out on traditional senior year events, Peel and the Bacon Academy faculty and staff have looked for ways to compensate them for their loss.

Monday, for example, was officially the last day of school and they held a senior celebration from 1 to 4 p.m.

“Our seniors needed to get their caps and gowns, they needed to get their yearbooks, they needed to get their Project Graduation materials and then we also needed to collect back some of their school supplies,” Peel said.

He said that instead of just having a regular pick-up day where seniors would pick up their things and leave, the school teamed with Project Graduation to make the day a celebration.

Project Graduation is an outside organization of parents who have volunteered throughout the school year to help put “a great end of the year for the seniors,” Peel said.

About 30 staff members attended the event and “they just came to cheer the kids, to celebrate them,” Peel added.

Peel said that during the event people were social distancing and being appropriate.

“But teachers were happy to see the kids and the kids were happy to see the teachers,” he said.

Among the activities at the celebration, seniors’ yearbooks were being signed.

In addition, the student council provided funds to have a disc jockey at the event and project graduation provided funds for an ice cream truck to be there.

“Every senior got to pick out an ice cream from the ice cream truck on the way out,” Peel said.

Peel said he got strong feedback from the event, including students who said, “This was more fun than I thought it was going to be.”

“The festive environment was really, really positive,” Peel said. “I think they really enjoyed it and we really enjoyed it too.”

Peel said he “feels bad for the seniors” that will not have memories of their senior year spring sports, prom, a senior trip or an in-person awards night.

Ariana Spearin, Bacon Academy class salutatorian, said that not having a normal senior year has been “really painful to think about.”

Spearin said she has heard it said that the Class of 2020 went to school for 12 years “just to miss out the best three months of it.”

“It’s a big disappointment,” Spearin said. “We don’t get a normal graduation, we don’t get a prom, we don’t get that senior trip. I feel like we’ve missed out on so many traditional rites of passage but at the same time I do think like it’s totally out of our control [so] we just kind of have to go with it.”

She said that Bacon Academy has done a “really good job” of accommodating things and working with the students to make it as best as they can.

“I think that the principal has been working really hard to kind of compensate for everything that we’ve lost,” she said.

Spearin said that recently there was a virtual meeting with teachers and students where scholarships were awarded, tassels were given away, “and they recognized our accomplishments in different classes.”

“Usually that’s an in-person ceremony but it was still really nice to be able to see everyone through video call,” she said.

Spearin bought a dress and made nail and hair appointments for senior prom.

“I spent so much time looking for a prom dress, thinking about my makeup,” she said. “I enjoyed prom so much last year and I wanted to have the same feeling this year.”

That’s why Spearin said she put in a lot of time into finding a prom dress and getting ready for it, but was disappointed when she found out she had done “all of that for nothing.”

But she said that was the story of many se-

niors in her school who prepared for the prom ahead of time.

“I don’t actually know any girl on my grade that did not buy a prom dress,” Spearin said, adding that the prom was scheduled to be on May 9.

Peel said the prom hasn’t been completely canceled.

“We are holding off making the final decision about prom as late as possible,” Peel said. “We also know we are not going to extend that indefinitely. We are going to make some kind of a final decision by July 1.”

Peel said he has had staff members who have told him they don’t care if the prom happens during the summer, they will come out and help to give seniors a chance to have the event.

Spearin said she is also disappointed about not being able to say goodbye to everyone at the school.

“I’m not going to have that last class, last day experience that every other senior before the Class of 2020 got to do,” Spearin said. “I don’t get to say goodbye to any of my teachers or any of my classmates that I may not be so close to. That’s kind of a sad thing to think about, not getting to say goodbye.”

Spearin said she wasn’t looking forward to a virtual graduation and is “grateful” for the plan that Peel and the committee came up with.

Matthew Voiland, class valedictorian, said that at the beginning of the pandemic he thought school would only be closed for a few weeks. But when he noticed school was going to be closed for the rest of the year realized he wasn’t going to have a last chance to play sports, to go to the senior prom or to the senior trip to Block Island, which was supposed to be at the end of May.

Like Spearin, Voiland said he had gone shopping for the prom and had a tuxedo rental lined up.

He said that the fact they are having an in-person graduation surprised him.

“I’m looking forward to at least getting one of the major aspects of senior year,” Voiland said.

Rain dates for the graduation are: July 13 and 14.

East Hampton Police News

6/7: Kattie White, 45, of 14 Fairlawn Ave., was arrested and charged with second-degree criminal mischief and disorderly conduct, East Hampton Police said.

6/8: Evan Wojcik, 28, of 17 Overlook Rd., was arrested and charged with violating a protective order, police said.

Also, from, June 1-7, officers responded to four medical calls, three motor vehicle crashes, four alarms and one call for vandalism, and made five traffic stops, police said.

Marlborough Police News

6/14: State Police said Lucas Spencer Rheume, 22, of 77 Keirstead Circle, Marlborough, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and failure to drive in proper lane.

6/14: State Police said Leona Skinner, 31, of Bozrah, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, failure to drive in proper lane, drug paraphernalia, possession of controlled substance and second-degree criminal mischief.

Colchester Police News

6/9: State Police said Anna J. Taylor, 39, of Waterford, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and failure to drive in proper lane.

6/9: State Police said Mary Anderson, 26, of 24 South Main St., East Hampton, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, driving without minimum insurance and improper turns.

6/15: State Police said Hector L. Morales, 40, of Windham, was arrested and charged with violation of probation.

Belltown Local Richard Bolles Celebrates 100 Years

by Jack Lakowsky

Richard Bolles, a member of the East Hampton community for decades, celebrated his 100th birthday last week.

Bolles was born June 15, 1920 – just a year after the 1918 Flu Pandemic ended in 1919. It saw the implementation of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which granted women the right to vote. A less lasting amendment, the 18th, began the Prohibition Era wherein alcohol was illegalized. That same year, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) was founded, and St. Joan of Arc was canonized as a saint by the Roman Catholic Church. The Treaty of Versailles also took effect, officially ending World War I.

On June 14, Bolles was honored with parade of vehicles from East Hampton High School to North Maple Street. Bolles and his six children stood on the front lawn of the local VFW and waved at the parade as it passed.

“I was a carpenter all my life,” Bolles said in an interview with the *Rivereast*. “Except while I was in the service.”

From 1944 through 1946, Bolles served in the U.S. Navy as motor machinist. He traveled



Richard Bolles

the country and was even stationed in Pearl Harbor during World War II. From there, he and a naval contingent were travelling towards Japan when atomic bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Orders were sent for his unit to return home. Bolles said he is alive today because the U.S. did not invade Japan.

Bolles went on to become an expert carpenter, according to his daughter, Cathy. She said her father retired as carpenter supervisor at Wesleyan University. Bolles used his expertise to help restore the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, she said.

“He loves working with wood,” Cathy Bolles said of her father. “He has a real reverence for it.”

Cathy Bolles said her father is one of the oldest living members of the Masons in Connecticut, having joined the organization in his 20s. He is a member of East Hampton Congregational Church.

“He’s such a wonderful guy,” she said. She attributed her father’s longevity to his daily walks and his daily habits of eating raw onion and in the morning drinking a small amount of apple cider vinegar.

“He takes no medication,” Cathy Bolles said of her father. “The doctors say he has the blood pressure of a 20-year-old.”

She said her father – despite his family’s objections – still cultivates and plants his garden. She said that, when they were a young family, she and her parents and her siblings fed themselves with their garden.



Longtime resident Richard Bolles turned 100 last week, and was honored by a parade of vehicles as he and his six children watched from the front lawn of the VFW.

East Hampton Budgets Adopted, No Mill Rate Increase

by Jack Lakowsky

The Town Council on Monday voted 6-1 to adopt the town’s 2020-21 education and municipal budgets at a total of over \$47.7 million. Republican Mark Philhower was the lone ‘no’ vote on both spending budgets. The spending package doesn’t feature a mill rate increase.

The overall budget is an increase of about \$1.4 million, or 2%, over the current year’s \$46.4 million budget.

The council adopted both the Board of Education and general government budgets. The school budget was approved at \$32.173 million, an increase of just under \$1 million over current year school spending. The general government budget was approved at \$15.6 million, an increase over the current year’s \$15.2 million.

Due to the executive orders issued in March by Gov. Ned Lamont, no public vote on the budget was held this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The council decided against increasing East Hampton’s mill rate, which will remain at 33.14.

Philhower voiced concerns about the budget process, and about the last-minute addition of a young/adult reference librarian at the East Hampton Public Library.

“At the start of the season, I thought we were headed in the right direction,” Philhower told the council. “We wanted a lean budget.”

Philhower said he expected a wage freeze for town employees. Town Manager David Cox did not take a salary increase year, a fact Philhower commended.

“I can’t say as much for the Board of Education,” Philhower said.

Philhower said the budget should have been kept lower because for the 2021-22 fiscal year the mill rate is guaranteed to increase when the town begins making payments for the new town hall.

Philhower also criticized the last-minute addition of a young adult librarian position at the library. Philhower said there was no deliberation or public comment about the addition of the librarian.

“I find it unbelievable that we can add this

last-minute extra spending,” Philhower said, before adding, “There’s always pink slips next season.”

Council Republican Tim Feegel said he wanted more time to research the costs and benefits of adding the librarian position.

“I’m not against it,” Feegel said. “The timing was just bad. It wasn’t on the table last week, and we didn’t vote on it.”

Philhower noted that, although there is no increase in the town’s mill rate, there is an increase in spending.

According to the town’s budget information, the East Hampton library’s 2020-21 budget will increase by a little over \$20,000, or 4.4%, totaling a little over \$480,000. This is lower than the budget the library itself proposed, which was about \$540,000.

Council member Derek Johnson, a Democrat, noted that the librarian discussion began during public comments in last week’s council meeting.

“The town made persuasive arguments,” said Johnson. “There is a clear need for it when compared to services that other towns provide.”

Council member Barbara Moore, also a Democrat, said last-minute line items being added to budgets has happened many times in the past.

“Coming to an agreement on a budget is always very difficult,” said Moore. “Most of the time, you don’t know until the last minute what it’s going to be.”

Moore said she regretted not being able to meet with department heads to discuss their budgets due to the pandemic and thanked them for their diligent work.

Council vice chair Dean Markham, a Democrat, said the council decided to hold its budget vote until the June 15 deadline to allow for the creation of a holistic budget. The extra time given to the council by the governor has not been wasted, Markham said in a written statement that was presented at the June 9 council meeting.

The closer it is to the end of the year, the better data is available to work the budget, according to Markham. For example, Markham

wrote, the Board of Education originally estimated a \$202,000 operating surplus. Two weeks later, that surplus was found to be \$260,000. Markham said he heard questions as to why this does not allow the Board of Education to hire an additional teacher to help reduce class sizes.

“The Board of Education has no authority to carry over surplus,” Markham wrote.

However, \$76,000 of the surplus was allotted to the Board of Education to fund another classroom teaching position.

“This is a town in transformation,” Markham said in the June 15 meeting. “A lot of new people are expecting better services for their tax dollars. It’s worthwhile.”

Markham said with so many unemployed in

town because of the pandemic’s economic impact, a new librarian could offer to help jobseekers within the community. The young adult/reference librarian position, Markham said, was one the town funded up until 2002, when it was cut.

Markham also noted to Philhower that a wage freeze is not a “dead issue” and will be discussed in the future.

“As I’ve pointed out, 2022 will be a tough year from built-in increases from contracts and the new town hall,” said Markham. “We’re cognizant of that.”

In his June 9 written statement, Markham said the budget does not accomplish everything he wanted it to, but that he is still confident it provides a good value to East Hampton.

Signs Available for New Law

It’s high school graduation season, and while there won’t be a Project Graduation party for East Hampton High School seniors this year, the East Hampton Prevention Partnership still wants to remind people to celebrate responsibly.

The members of the Partnership said they thought this would be a good time to remind family and friends that social hosting, which refers to adults who knowingly or unknowingly host underage drinking parties on their property, is illegal. It doesn’t matter who supplies the alcohol – what matters is the prop-

erty on which the crime is being committed. Social hosting is punishable by law as a Class A misdemeanor, with a maximum one-year imprisonment or up to a \$2,000 fine.

The Partnership has 50 lawn signs available, to build awareness of this law, available on a first-come, first-served basis to any community member that would like to display one. A volunteer will be at the East Hampton public library parking lot on Friday, June 19 from 5:30- 6:30 p.m. if you’d like to pick one up, or email jolsen@easthamptonct.gov with your address, and one will be delivered to you.

Top Two RHAM Students Recall Car Circles, Birthday Parades

by Sloan Brewster

Social distancing at the beach, hiking, car circles and birthday parades were all the rage for RHAM's Class of 2020 valedictorian and salutatorian.

Reagan Fleeher of Marlborough, class valedictorian, plans to attend the University of North Carolina (UNC) Chapel Hill in the fall. Initially, she will major in business, but she said she hopes to narrow it down in the future to something pertaining to sustainability to match her interest in the environment.

Jason Bove, also of Marlborough, is class salutatorian, plans to study mechanical engineering at Clemson University in southern South Carolina.

COVID-19 altered the two students' senior year but did not break their spirit.

"I'm trying to stay pretty positive about it I would say I don't think there's any point in looking down at it," Fleeher said. "I think you have to look at the positives, like car circles."

Car circles are one of the things born from the statewide shutdown and social distancing norms brought on in the attempt to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The idea, according to Fleeher, is for friends to go to a parking lot and park far apart or in a circle and sit on top of their cars and talk to each other.

"We did that a lot when we kind of missed each other," she said.

Another way she and friends stayed connected was through virtual parties. That was also big for Bove and his friends, who, he said, would hook up online on Friday nights "and just have a good time."

"Spending time with people was definitely the thing I took for granted," Bove said. "It's not only missing your friends – it's the people that you're just friends with in that one class and don't talk to them the rest of the day, you miss that."

They were also able to hook up with friend and remain socially distant on hikes and at the beach, Fleeher and Bove said.

When one of his friends had a birthday, he and other friends joined in a birthday vehicle parade honking and hollering as they drove past his house.

Fleeher and her friends gathered to decorate graduation caps together.

"We went outside so we were kind of farther

apart," she said. "We brought supplies and sat near each other and decorated them."

Fleeher said she adapted to the change in how learning was done and made it work by disciplining herself and setting aside two hours a day for calculus and statistics.

"I definitely had to be more independent and on top of things myself especially for AP (Advanced Placement) exams," she said. "I definitely am better with things like reading, writing and social studies I work a lot harder in math."

Fleeher's favorite subject is English and she reminisced about her teacher, Debbie Anger, who, she "really is passionate and makes everything we do in there different."

Bove said his favorite subject is also the one he finds most challenging – physics.

"There's something about understanding about the way the world works, it's really fascinating," he said. "Each unit looking at one more facet and how it works, and to me that's really intriguing."

While Bove and Fleeher made it work during school closures, there were things they missed and missed out on, including their senior outing and prom, which they hope may still take place over the summer.

Before COVID, Bove – a competitive rock climber – spent a lot of time at Central Rock Gym in Glastonbury. Since COVID, he has been finding ways to workout at home and doing exercises his coach gave him to keep up his endurance.

He's also been focusing on hobbies, including painting. He has also been learning new skills, including how to do a handstand, and has done a lot of running, getting down to a six minute mile.

He reminisced about fall sports and attending a finals volleyball game on homecoming night.

"Twenty or 30 of us dressed up in shirts and ties and then went to cheer them on," he said.

One thing he didn't miss was the hard work he did before Coronavirus and "the grind of classes and studying," especially in the fall.

"That was really the heart of learning for all my AP classes," he said.

Schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic was less challenging, simply because he had completed the deep push by then.

"Honestly, I really was all set there really



Jason Bove, left, and Reagan Fleeher, right, are the valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively, of the RHAM High School Class of 2020.

wasn't much I had to do," he said.

Fleeher recalled cheerleading in the fall, especially at football games and a field trip to New York City for a visit to the United Nations. "Walking around New York with friends was fun," she said.

During the shutdown and the social distancing, Fleeher said she missed Chick-fil-A runs with friends – and both students said they missed bonfires.

"Before it was fun to kind of get together at someone's house and hang out or have a big fire pit with 20 people huddled together," Bove said.

As far as next year goes, they are both ready for the changes ahead.

Fleeher said school at UNC will be starting

early – in August – and then will not open between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

In a suite with eight girls, she has already hooked up with her roommate on Facebook and through Facetime and they are designing their dorm in different shades of blue, including the school color, Carolina blue.

Bove is looking forward to experiencing southern culture and is excited about the warm weather.

They will both miss their families and friends; and Fleeher said she will miss her dogs too.

"I think definitely just my friends Marlborough is really a small town," Bove said. "These have been the same people that I've known my whole life so it's going to be hard to leave them and find other people."

The Members of the RHAM High School Class of 2020 are:

@ Mina Abrantes, Nicholas Albino, Michael Almeida, * Christina Aniolek, * Genaro Anselmo, IV, Justin Arel, @ Alana Armfield, Thomas Atwood, Jr., Isabella Auteri, Riley Ayer, * @ Colin Babick, * Garret Babick, Alison Bakke, Alexander Banas, * @ Rylee Bane, Gage Baptiste, Harold Barnes, Caroline Barrett, * Chloe Beard, Jason Belanger, Nathan Bellhorn, Emma Bellmore, @ Isabelle Benson-Clarke, Amelia Betz, * @ Meredith Blinn, Alexander Bodey, * Joshua Boehler, Amanda Bogdan, John Bordick, ## * Jason Bove, Madison Brainard, Alexander Brett, Dale Browne, * @ Stephen Buden, @ Eliza Byrne, @ Chloe Calkins, Leo Cappello, Cole Caso, * Zachary Catania, James Cavaliere, * Kristin Cavaliere, * Khalia Chapman, Stevie Ciccarello, Mark Ciraldo, Jonathan Clough, * @ Emily Cochefski, * @ Sarah Cohen, Michael Colonna, * Hailey Constantine, Logan Contos, @ Emily Cook, @ Angela Cooley, * Katelyn Corliss, John Cormier, * Samantha Crampton, Sean Cruess, Glenn Cully, Alex Czercowy, Brandon D'Amicol, * Brendan Davis, @ Meghan Davis, Vincenzo Davis, @ Elizabeth DeDominicis, @ Brooke Delis Dingley, Carson Dorsey, Jade Drost, Gracey DuBois, * Ryan Dunnirvine, @ Austin Dupré, Brenden Duprey, * @ Andrew Ely, Marcus Emanuel, * @ Tristin Emmons, * Alicia Erami, Marina Espinoza, * Joshua Fargnoli, * @ Sydney Farrar, Madilyn Feige, * * @ Reagan Fleeher, Cynthia Folsom, Lily Freer, Jordan Frey, * Carson Gaines, Cameron Garcia, Vin Garrity, * Leah Geiger, Joshua Gianetti, Madison Gilbert, Alexandra Gillis, Cody Godfrey, Danielle Golden, @ Kara Goldstein, Elena Goncalves, Marissa Goncalves, Rachel Goodale, Severin Ray-Van Graham, Amanda Joan Grano, Kyra Griffin, Samantha Guppy, Nicholas Hale, Marissa Hall, Julianna Hallin, Riley Halotek, Julia Hancin, Devin Hanelius, * David Hart, Brian Hartan, Benjamin Hassett, @ Charlotte Heersping, Joshua Herman, James Hitchcock, Jack Hixson, @ Meghan Holland-Tyler, Samuel Holley, Carly Hood, * @ Cameron Irizarry, Amanda Jacobson, Virginia James, Jamion Jamison, Quentin Jensen, Katelyn Jeroszko, Gabriella Johnson, @ Gracie Johnson, Tyler Jordan, Lilah Kamins, Kayle Kanaitis, Logan Kanaitis, Andrew Keene, Nicholas Kelley, Raeanne Kelly, Conor Kennedy, Jacqueline Killelea, Hannah Kingsley, Katie Kingsley, Jelina Kolb, Chloe

Kostick, Faith Lackey, Joseph Lagasse, @ Jacqueline Lage, Jake Landry, Christian Larsen, Nicholas Lavenburg, Lily Lawrence, Marisa Lee, * @ Derek Leshak, Cameron Lettieri, Robert Luoma, * @ Olivia Lynch, * Lillian Lysiuk, Molly Mackay, * Olivia Maranos, Vanessa Marchant, Mary Marinelli, Olivia McAvoy, * Olivia McCavanagh, Emma McCormack, William McCormack, Katherine McNally, Emily McShane, Shiann Meli, Jenna Mercer, Emily Messier, * Brandon Miller, Keren Miralda, Danielle Moard, Jake Moulton, * Andrew Munroe, Brandon Nastro, Ryan Nelson, Jady Nembhard, * @ Sydney Neumuth, @ Kaitlin Nicol, @ Sarah Nilsson, * Allison Nolt, Alexis Northup, Liam Novak, * @ Abigail O'Brien, * @ Maeve O'Neil, Haley Oakes, Mikayla Oman, Victoria Orama, Alex Otero, * Aaron Ouellette, Zackery Parsadanov, * @ Joy Patel, * @ Julia Pearson, @ Amanda Pedro Andrew Perkins, Arden Perron, Maya Perrone, * Andrew Plausse, @ Alexis Popolizio, Skylar Popp, Matthew Provencher, @ Jessica Pugliese, * Mahid Qureshi, Kelly Reardon, @ Monica Redman, @ Molly Reibel, + Owen Rheume, * @ Annabel Richard, Michael Riehl, * Rebecca Ristow, Shannon Romeo, * Wesley Roser, @ Amanda Rudder, Marybeth Rulli, Cinthia Samayoa-Martinez, * @ Katharine Santella, * Zachary Sauer, Andrew Schadtler, Nicholas Schmeizl, Abby Schumann, Jacob Silva, * Matthew Sitnik, William Sitnik, Emily Sklodosky, Michael Sliter, Kyle Slot, * Benjamin Smith, Justin Smith, Ashley Snyder, Alexandra Soteriou, Cameron Soulagnet, Caterina Stolfi, Dakota Stone, R i l e y Sullivan, Joshua Susman, Justin Synodi, Robert Synodi, * Carina Tedeschi, Peter Torres, + Ethan Trueman, Xaden Vardanian, @ Giovanni Vecchiarino, * Michael Verret, Jr., Dylan Wagner, Kathryn Walsh-Scott, Molly Wampold, Thomas Wasil, Brittany Wharton, Nathan Wheeler, @ Adam Whitmore, Emma Wilson, Madison Wright

Valedictorian
Salutatorian
* Member of National Honor Society in good standing
@ Green cord/100 or more hours of community service
+ Enlisted in the Military

'Heartening' Turnout at Black Lives Matter Protest in Hebron

By Sloan Brewster

Approximately 100 people took to the town center last Saturday during a peaceful protest in support of Black Lives Matter.

Protestors lined all four corners of the intersection of Routes 66 and 85, signs aloft, voices raised as Tiffany Thiele, protest organizer and chairman of the Democratic town committee, shouted into a megaphone.

The protest was held in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and in unity with peaceful protests popping up throughout the country since the brutal slaying of George Floyd.

Floyd, an African American, died after Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin allegedly held a knee on his neck for more than eight minutes after arresting him for allegedly passing a counterfeit \$20 bill. Chauvin has since been charged with second-degree murder.

Protestors honored Floyd during the two-hour protest, his name appearing on signs and repeated by demonstrators.

"Say his name!" Thiele intoned.

"George Floyd!" the crowd shouted back.

Protestors also gave homage to Breonna Taylor, 26, of Louisville, Ky., who was killed on March 13 during a narcotics raid on her home.

"Say her name!" Thiele bellowed.

"Breonna Taylor!" they roared.

"What do we want?" Thiele asked.

"Justice!"

"When do we want it?"

"Now!"

At one point, Thiele asked everyone in the crowd to take a knee "to reflect and honor lives lost to racism and police brutality." As cars continued to whoosh by, the protestors went down on one knee, remaining in position for a moment.

At about 10:45 a.m. there were approximately 80 protestors lining the corners of the intersection and, according to Thiele and attendee John Collins, who is also a member of the Board of Selectmen, about 100 people had made appearances since the 10 a.m. start.

On the turnout, Thiele said it was better than she had expected and Collins pointed to the number of young people, saying it was "just heartening."

"But really, I think it speaks to the heart of Hebron," Thiele said. "My heart is full. I'm very happy to see all these people here in a peaceful protest."

Most cars passing through the intersection honked and whooped in unison with the cause; however, one driver was less sympathetic.

"Hey, how about all lives matter?" he yelled as he drove past protestors.

In response protestors booed him.

"I think that misses the point of what we're trying to say," Thiele told the *Rivereast*. "All lives won't matter until black lives matter."

Folks clustered together in small groups of friends or family within the larger crowd.

Xander Williams, a 2019 graduate of RHAM High School and currently a student at Southern New Hampshire University stood in front of the Church of Hope. Beside him were Katie Malgioglio, a 2018 RHAM graduate and University of Connecticut student, and her mother, Erin Malgioglio of Hebron.

Taking a moment from protesting, the three spoke to the *Rivereast*.

"Being out here right now is important. It's important to use your voice for those who are oppressed and even if this will spark one conversation in one home it'll be worth it," Williams said. "It's not a political issue. It's a basic human rights issue. People need to have their voices heard."

Katie Malgioglio said she had attended protests every day since they started taking place and has been to Manchester and Glastonbury for the cause. She said that, as a "predominantly white" community, Hebron was an important town to add to the mix. She said people need to "unlearn" what they've been taught and stop putting others down and spoke to the importance of standing up for marginalized populations.

"It's time to embrace the differences and also the similarities," she said.

Malgioglio said she had a conversation with someone on a different side of the argument.

"I actually talked to a person who said all lives matter and I said black lives matter and she told me to grow up," she said. "All lives can't matter until black lives matter. Black lives are being killed every day. Blue lives matter – that's racist. If you can say blue lives matter and you can't say black lives matter then you have a problem."

When asked why she was there, Erin Malgioglio, held up her sign, which stated "All mothers were summoned when George Floyd called out for his Momma," and said she felt "very passionate about the cause."

In the video showing the last moments of his life, Floyd called for his mother as he passed away under the weight of the knee on his neck.

While admitting she was nervous to come, Erin Malgioglio said she wanted to be there not only in support of the cause but because her daughter "is super passionate" and she wanted to support her as well.

Heather Petit of Hebron, who is also the chairman of the Hebron Board of Education, was with her mother, Rita Savage of Hebron. They likened participation in the Black Lives Matter cause to a house on fire.

"If we have a street of houses and one is on fire, that is the one that is the one we have to help," Petit said. "[Racism has] been going on long enough and 2020 is the time for true change."



Kathy and Phil Loiselle of Hebron stand with their daughter Kaelyn, 9, at Saturday's Black Lives Matter protest in Hebron. Kaelyn, according to her mother, is already an activist.

Collins, 61, said "the sin" of racism was not "American," but said it has been a problem in this country his entire life – and that seeing the protestors stand together was encouraging.

"I think finally we all have our moment of truth that things have got to change," he said. "They're shouldn't be two sets of laws, one if you are white and one if you are black. We can't just be against racism, we have to be anti-racism."

Many of the protestors were families with children in tow. Parents said they wanted to make their children aware of what was happening in the country and show them how to participate and help.

Kathy and Phil Loiselle of Hebron had their daughters Harper, 7, and Kaelyn, 9, with them. Kaelyn, according to her mother, is already an activist.

"[We're] raising anti-racist children, not just focusing on color blindness," Kathy Loiselle said. "Just knowing that black people have different struggles and bring awareness of that and knowing how to use your white privilege for good."

Kaelyn said she didn't want her friends to face racism.

Hebron resident Olivia Wright, 10, stood with a couple other youngsters.

"I'm here because there are some people who aren't very nice to black people. I'm here to support people who are too scared to come out," she said. "We need to speak up for back people

when they can't speak up for themselves."

Her mom, Stephanie Wright, said she felt it was important to bring Olivia and her sister Audrey Wright, 9, because they don't live in a diverse community and to show them how to be "upstanders."

Siobhan DeGray of Hebron brought daughters Sammie, 10, and Angie, 8 so they could experience and be a part of demonstrations.

"I think it's really important for them to experience what's going on in the world right now," she said.

State Sen. Cathy Osten, (D-19), whose 10-town district includes Hebron, also attended the rally. It was one of 8 she had on her schedule for the weekend, six of which she had already been to.

Osten spoke to the *Rivereast* about the disparity that people of color face and included Native Americans, Hispanics and Asians in the groups that deal with inequality.

Connecticut lawmakers, she said, are planning to expand a 2019 bill that established a task force to study police transparency and accountability.

"As you can see people are very much on board with making change," she said, indicating the people gathered in protest. "I think it's the young people that are going to lead the way."

Thiele said she is planning to host an in-depth virtual forum that will go about "a socio-economic system that disenfranchises black people."

Portland Officials Cancel Summer Camp, Riverfront Concert Series

by Jack Lakowsky

Officials from the Portland Parks and Recreation Department and the Brownstone Quorum decided that to help prevent the further spread of COVID-19, summer activities needed to be canceled.

"We've been struggling with this a lot since the pandemic started," said Parks and Rec. Director Nate Foley. "We've been racking our brains to figure out the best way to offer a program."

Foley said both the town's Summer Camp Quest Program and its Riverfront Park Concert Series have been canceled.

Foley said after much deliberation with his department, the Brownstone Quorum and other officials and organizers decided running a full-time summer camp was too risky.

"I can't confidently say we'd be able to apply all the state guidelines," Foley said, explaining that the demands required by COVID-19 prevention guidelines outweighed the department's resources. He added that it simply wouldn't be safe for campers, families, or staff. Even if camp opened, Foley said, there is no guarantee it would stay open. Should any cases of coronavirus be discovered among kids or staff, the entire program would need to be shut down.

"With that, we'd have to refund all payments back to parents," Foley said. If the camp opened

and was shut down, he said, staff who expected summertime employment would be cut and forced to find new work midseason.

"Those were big deterrents," Foley said.

Foley said the safety guidelines passed down by the state and the CDC were demanding and even sometimes impractical. All staff and attendants would need to be screened with a temperature check and checked for COVID-19 symptoms. Anyone with a temperature over 100 or with any other symptoms would need to leave.

"Every child, all staff, every day," Foley said. "Our staff do a great job, but constant enforcement would take its toll." Foley explained a sanitation and hand washing schedule would need to be drummed up and adhered to, with limited staff having to ensure dozens of children follow strict procedures.

"Things will get missed," Foley said. "Then the recovery would be that much more extensive."

Staff would also need to wear face masks throughout the day. Foley said this would make physical activities – a staple for any summer camp – difficult and restrained.

Foley said he hopes to collaborate with his staff, the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Brownstone Quorum to offer in-person classes on a limited, part-time basis. Foley ex-

plained the possibility of offering activities with minimal staff who would work with groups of 10 children or fewer on a three-hour basis. Further details and pricing would need to be figured out, said Foley. Foley added that activities on a part time basis would help offset some of the revenue lost by not hosting full-time camp.

Even part-time camps and activities would need to be shut down if any COVID-19 cases are detected, according to Foley. However, he explained, the refund process for a canceled part time session would be far less strenuous than one for a full-time session.

"I really hope the community understands how we came to this decision," Foley said. "We hope they're ready to return when we're back to some kind of norm."

Foley said he and his department will "hit the ground running" next year.

"I really want to give the community back what they should have had this year," said Foley. Even if there is a resurgence of the pandemic virus, he explained, then the town would be able to make proactive prevention steps, rather than reactive ones.

"We would have more than adequate time for planning," said Foley.

Town officials have also canceled Portland's popular Riverfront Park Concert Series. This year would have been the event's ninth, accord-

ing to Foley.

"Sadly, Phase 3 guidelines limit public gatherings to 100 people," said Foley. Foley said Portland's concerts have seen as many as 500 guests.

"We decided concerts were not a safe option," said Foley. Foley explained that all activities at the series would have to be adapted to maintain social distancing requirements. Groups couldn't be larger than 10 people. Siblings – both staff and guests – would need to be grouped together, as would all members of a shared household.

Foley said it wasn't easy to notify performers, acts and sponsors of the cancellation, but that the safety of the town's residents is paramount.

The Parks and Rec department is trying to introduce innovative ways to help offer summer fun to residents.

"Anything we offer, we have to be comfortable and confident that it's as safe as possible," said Foley. Foley said he will discuss reintegrating limited in-person classes with the town Board of Selectmen. Now, however, nothing in-person can be offered, and ever-changing regulations make planning difficult. Foley explained that he hopes to come up with ideas of how to introduce programs using town parks.



Local Navy veteran Bill Willinsky was recently honored for his service with a Quilt of Valor. From left are state Rep. Christie Carpino (R-32), quilt guild members Dee Leann, Pam Nordstrom, Elaine Cote, Willinsky, and First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield.

Portland Vet Honored with Quilt of Valor

by Jack Lakowsky

Local Navy veteran Bill Willinsky was honored June 16 for his service with a Quilt of Valor presented by the Greater Middletown Quilt Guild, a local chapter of the national Quilt of Valor Foundation.

From 1960-64, Willinsky served onboard the Skipjack, a nuclear submarine. He was a torpedo operator. Willinsky was stationed at the naval base in Groton, and at Key West, Fla. He also served in the Atlantic fleet, and with them traveled to Scotland and Iceland. During the Cold War, he passed through the Panama Canal on a patrol to Kamron Bay in Vietnam.

Willinsky said he was inspired to join the Navy after seeing the film *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*.

Currently, Willinsky serves as chairman of the local Veterans Commission. He is a longstanding member of the American Legion. He helps coordinate the replacement of American flags on local vet's graves. He makes care packages for soldiers deployed around the world. He welcomes returning soldiers.

Elaine Cote, chairman of the Greater

Middletown Quilt Guild, said the community nominated Willinsky for the award.

"He's still giving time to our country," Cote said in an interview with the *RiverEast*. "That's how we selected him."

According to Cote, the quilts are crafted with three layers. Each layer communicates one-part of the quilt's three-pronged symbolism. The multi-colored top layer represents the communities and individuals served by the military. The second represents warmth, hope, comfort, peace and healing. The third is the strength of the recipient and the support of their family, their community, and their country.

"The quilt of valor is our way of saying, 'Your sacrifice will never be forgotten, and thank you from the bottom of our hearts,'" Cote said.

According to the Quilts of Valor Foundation website, more than 250,000 quilts have been given to veterans nationwide.

According to Cote, the local Quilts of Valor chapter has about 60 members. They have also made protective facemask coverings and seat belt covers for breast cancer patients.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

By Mike Thompson

Abolish the police? No. They serve a valuable purpose. But reform the heck out of them? Overhaul them, even? Oh yes.

Advocates of criminal justice reform have a bit of a PR problem with the phrase "defund the police." It doesn't literally mean to eliminate them altogether – yet too many on the other side (and I suspect they know better) are acting as if it means precisely that. What it really means though is to take some of the large amounts of money states and municipalities put into their police departments and reapply them to other areas, such as public housing, mental health, and social work – areas that frankly police shouldn't be tasked with having to deal with in the first place.

Police are law enforcement. They're not there to solve all of society's ills. Former Dallas police chief David Brown said in a 2016 interview, "Every societal failure, we put it off for the cops to solve. That's too much to ask. Policing was never meant to solve all those problems."

In a recent op-ed for *The New York Times*, Philip V. McHarris, a doctoral candidate focusing on race, housing and policing, and Thenjiwe McHarris, a strategist with the Movement for Black Lives, wrote that municipalities can change policies or statutes "so police officers never respond to certain kinds of emergencies, including ones that involve substance abuse, domestic violence, homelessness or mental health. Instead, health care workers or emergency response teams would handle these incidents. So if someone calls 911 to report a drug overdose, health care teams rush to the scene; the police wouldn't get involved. If a person calls 911 to complain about people who are homeless, rapid response social workers would provide them with housing support and other resources. Conflict interrupters and restorative justice teams could mediate situations where no one's safety is being threatened."

It all sounds like a great idea to me. Shift the public money to where it needs to go. As Police Chief Brown said, cops aren't meant to do all that.

Another way to help overhaul the police? Let's stop outfitting town police departments as if they're going to war in the Middle East. You look at the military-grade weaponry and vehicles many police departments have and you can't help but wonder – is that really necessary? *The Hartford Courant* recently reported five police departments in the state have acquired mine-resistant vehicles, the same things initially produced to protect against IED attacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. We really need those in places like Bristol and Madison? I had no idea a mine field surrounded Lake Compounce.

And this isn't just on the local and state level. The federal government encourages it – funneling surplus military equipment such as armored vehicles, grenade launchers, weaponized aircraft, high-caliber firearms and more to various municipalities. So yes, in this case towns and states aren't paying for it; the federal government is supplying it. But you have to wonder: why? No matter the intentions, all it really does is solidify even more the impression that police view us, the public, as the enemy – and it frankly gives the bad cops way too much power.

And make no mistake, there are bad cops. That's perhaps the most vital part of any police overhaul. Am I saying they're all bad? Absolutely not. I personally know enough police that I know that's not the case. But there's a real culture problem here. And it's an incredibly gross, troubling culture program.

Look at the recent incident in Buffalo, N.Y., where 75-year-old Martin Gugino was shoved to the ground by police so hard that he fractured his skull and was literally bleeding before the police officers' eyes. Not only didn't they stop to help, but when two officers involved were rightly arrested and charged with assault, 60 members of the police department's emergency response team resigned from the unit in protest. Not of what happened to Gugino, but rather in protest of the two officers being arrested. Police then gathered outside the courthouse where the two were arraigned to offer loud applause of en-

couragement.

Applauding the police officers charged with leaving a 75-year-old man with a brain injury? Gross. Yes, I know the "blue line" is a very strong one, and the brotherhood is very real, but good grief. The sight of the cheering officers made me sick.

Also gross? In Philadelphia earlier this month, more than 100 officers gathered and applauded in support Philadelphia Police Staff Inspector Joseph Bologna Jr. as he turned himself in on various charges, including aggravated assault, stemming from viral videos that depicted him beating a Temple University student and antagonizing other protesters during demonstrations, according to *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

In both the Buffalo and Philadelphia cases, the assaults were bad enough – but then for other officers to stand and cheer? It's just pretty revolting.

Also revolting, and incredibly disappointing, was an email NYPD Lt. Robert Cattani sent to his colleagues after he took a knee to show solidarity with protestors during a May 31 rally following the death of George Floyd. In the email, which was obtained by NBC New York, Cattani told his fellow officers that, after kneeling, "The cop in me wants to kick my own ass."

He wrote that the kneeling "goes against every principle and value that I stand for." Even more concerning, he wrote that by kneeling he took his reputation as a good cop and "threw it all in the garbage."

I mean, really? Is that how you view it, Lieutenant? That's just sad, and worrisome. The kneeling is an incredibly peaceful way to protest occasions of police brutality against people of color. By kneeling, Cattani was signaling he recognizes the brutality and that it isn't right.

But it turns out it was all for show? He can't admit there is police brutality? He can't admit that it's wrong? In that email, Cattani wrote, "We all know that the a—hole in Minneapolis was wrong, yet we don't concede for other officers' mistakes." But.....why don't you? The infamous "a few bad apples" cliché is well-known at this point. But if that's the case, why don't the good apples say anything? If you see something you know is wrong, you speak up; you don't allow it to let it happen.

The whole thing just adds to the "us vs. them" appearance police too often seem to give.

So yes, there's an entire culture that needs to be changed.

Nor does it help when they shoot to kill far, far too often. Just over the weekend there was the case in Atlanta where the drunken man who wrestled away an officer's Taser was shot and killed while he was running away. Had he stolen the officer's weapon? Yes. But A) it was a Taser and B) he was running away from them, not toward them. A public safety threat drunk and wielding a Taser? Definitely. But you shoot him in the leg to stop him – not twice in the freaking back to kill him. That's one of my main problems – officers seem taught to shoot to kill, not shoot to injure. And there are too many tragic times where the person killed was unarmed. In fact, just two months ago in my town of Manchester 27-year-old Juan Soto was shot and killed by police during a standoff at his mother's home. His family has said Soto was unarmed when he was killed.

One unarmed person being killed by police is too many. And there have been a heck of a lot more than just one.

To sum it up: We're very overdue for an entire examination of police in this country. The culture is toxic. The behavior is, often literally, toxic. There needs to be a massive, massive overhaul. Like I said, I'm not in favor of abolishing the police altogether. They can and do serve a very useful purpose; laws do need to be enforced, and crime unfortunately will always happen. But there needs to be a big reform of the way police go about their jobs.

Changes need to be made. We can't go on like this.

* * *

See you next week.

Obituaries

Portland

Marie Elizabeth Rowe

Marie Elizabeth (Walsh) Rowe, 82, of Portland, beloved wife of DeWitt (Mickey) Rowe, passed away Thursday, May 21, at Middlesex Hospital.

Marie was born in Middletown, daughter of the late Edward and Perina (Agogliati) Walsh. She moved to Portland as a young girl, and as a teenager she met her husband and high school sweetheart Mickey. She spent the remainder of her life in Portland being an active member of the community. Prior to her retirement, Marie was employed with the State of Connecticut Department of Health, Vital Statistics Department. After her retirement at the State of Connecticut she started her second career at Elmcrest Hospital in Portland, as a unit secretary.

Marie was an active communicant of St. Mary Church in Portland for over 70 years. She was a member of the Bereavement Committee, the Ladies Altar Guild, the Lady of Lourdes Mother's Circle and The Century Club. She enjoyed traveling with her husband and family to various destinations over the years. One of her favorites was Hampton Beach, New Hampshire. Marie always loved going to New York to visit her family as well.

Anyone who met Marie knew what a kind heart and beautiful soul she had and would offer to help anyone who was in need. She was known as Nana by her adoring granddaughter and was often referred to as such by all of Kate-Lyn's friends.

Besides her husband of 64 years, Marie is survived by a loving daughter, Mary Kaye Dadario and her husband Michael of East Hampton, and a beloved granddaughter, Kate-Lyn Dadario and her fiancé Thomas Sheehan of East Hampton.

Marie held a large presence in both her daughter's and granddaughter's lives. They will miss their all girl adventures, shopping sprees, and daily phone calls the most. To both her husband and girls she was their light and support system; a driving force to live every day with purpose and cherish the moments with the ones around them.

Along with her immediate family Marie is survived by her loving extended family, dearest goddaughter Colleen Brede, and many cherished friends.

Funeral services will be held at a later date. Those who wish may make memorial contributions in her name to St. Mary Church, 51 Free-stone Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

Andover

Florence F. Coulombe

Florence F. Coulombe, 92, of Andover, passed away peacefully Thursday, June 11. She was born in Jersey City, N.J., Dec. 15, 1927 to loving parents Nunzio and Carmela (Costanzo) Rottino. A graduate of Weaver High School Class of 1945, she went on to work as payroll and insurance administrator for Partitions Inc. for 32 years.

She was married for 63 years to the love of her life, Robert Coulombe, and together they shared many hobbies such as snowmobiling, camping, and traveling. She was a charter and still active member of N.A.W.I.C. Hartford Chapter 165 for 51 years where she served as president from 1976-77. She was a member of Andover Congregational Church since 1953 and was also involved with Andover Young at Heart Seniors.

Besides her husband and parents, she was predeceased by her brother, Anthony Rottino and his wife Edith.

She is survived by her two sisters, Frances Cafro and Gloria Bouchard and her husband Andy; her brother, Daniel Rottino and his wife Kathleen; several godchildren, nieces, nephews, and many dear friends and relatives.

Due to the complication of COVID-19, the family will have a celebration of life along with burial at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family encourages donations in Florence's memory to Andover Congregational Church, PO Box 55, Andover, CT 06232 or Andover Fire Department, 11 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232.



Colchester

Arthur J. Charbonnier

Arthur J. Charbonnier, 86, passed away Tuesday, April 28, at the home he built in Colchester, with his beloved family by his side. He was born Aug. 8, 1933 in a farmhouse on Old Mill Road in Middletown. He was the son of the late Henry and Margaret (Ruimerman) Charbonnier.

Arthur attended grammar school in Cromwell and graduated from Middletown High School, class of 1951, where he played baseball during his high school years. He was especially proud that nine days after turning 18 years old, he entered the United States Air Force and served during the Korean War. He served honorably for four years. He was awarded the Korean Service Medal and various other ribbons and was honorably discharged in 1955.

He married his beloved wife Dorothy Rau and the couple moved to Colchester in 1964 where they made their home and raised their family of six children. They shared 51 years of marriage before Dorothy predeceased him.

Arthur was a self-employed contractor and took over a concrete business in 1979. In the mid-1980s, his son Arthur (Buddy), took over the business so he could pursue other job opportunities. He was a clerk of the works for the following: Chaplin Elementary School, Colchester Town Hall, Franklin Elementary School, Town of Portland for the conversion of Central School to Town Hall and conversion of Town Hall to the Police Station. He was the construction superintendent of the Walmart in West Boylston, Mass., Pomfret Elderly Housing and Marlborough Elderly Housing.

Arthur was an avid St. Louis Cardinals fan since 1946 and during his time in the Air Force, he was stationed in California and played baseball for the Boron Mules, a.k.a. 20 Mule Borax Team. He also coached Colchester Little League and American Legion 54 during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Over the years, Arthur remained active in Veteran Affairs. He was commander of the Colchester American Legion Post 54 for 18 years. During the 1970s, he served for three years as chairman of the Colchester Memorial Day Parade and ceremonies. He was one of the original members of the Colchester Antique Veterans and served as their deputy commander for eight years. Arthur served on the committee which organized the 275th Celebration of the Anniversary of Colchester. On written order from the State Adjunct General, Arthur was appointed to the State Guard Reserve for Military Funeral Honors Duty for eight years. He was the local representative for the State of Connecticut Soldiers, Sailors and Marine Fund for over 25 years, helping many veterans and their families in times of need. He will be remembered as a hardworking man who was devoted to his family, his friends and his country.

He will be sadly missed but remembered with love by his children and their spouses, Deborah Kreder, Lori (Alfred) Wlodarczyk, Susan (Jason) Ledbetter, Christine (Jeffrey) Durkee, Buddy (Debbie) Charbonnier, Lawrence (Dawn) Charbonnier; grandchildren, Michelle Kreder, David Charbonnier, Adam Charbonnier, Keith Charbonnier, Christopher Charbonnier, Kevin Charbonnier, Pamela Maziarz, Richard Wlodarczyk, Richard Cooper, Zachary Cooper, Justin Durkee, Chelsea Charbonnier, Morgan Charbonnier; numerous great grandchildren, extended family members and friends.

In addition to his beloved wife and parents, he was predeceased by his grandson, Jeffrey Paul Durkee Jr.; his son-in-law, Billy Kreder; and his loyal companion, Fonzi 2.

Walk-through calling hours will be held Saturday, June 20, from 10 a.m.-noon, with masks and social distancing, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, followed by burial in the Linwood Cemetery with military honors.

Donations in his memory may be made to the American Legion Post 54, 95 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with care of arrangements. For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Marlborough

Mary C. Vaughan

After a short illness, Mary C. Vaughan, 93, of Crestview, Fla., passed away Sunday, April 19.

She was born the eldest of three children to Pasquale Caccia and Giuliva Izzi Caccia on May 19, 1926 in Providence, R.I. She spent her early life living in Providence with her mother, father and two brothers, Anthony and Joseph. She attended school in Providence and graduated from Hope High School in 1944.

She continued her education at Bryant University and received her bachelor's degree in Secretarial Science. After graduating she went to work in the personnel department at The Institute of Living in Hartford. There she met her husband, Zane O. Vaughan, when he worked as an orderly at the institute on summer break from the University of Florida.

After marrying in 1949 they set up a household on Congress Street and then in the Aircraft Trailer Park in East Hartford. She had her only child, David Hunter Vaughan, and soon moved with her family to Marlborough.

While in Marlborough, she raised her son, taught Sunday School, and worked as a substitute teacher. Soon, she became office manager at the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, and later combined her organizational skills with the knowledge she gained from CF&P to advance the causes of the Marlborough Conservation Commission, The League of Women Voters, and other community groups.

After her retirement she moved with her husband to Crestview, Fla., in 1989 and became a member of The First United Methodist Church of Crestview. She was an active participant in its Adult Sunday School, Adult Bible Study groups, and in the Women's Club, often organizing outings and contributing her time and efforts towards its affairs.

She moved to Mansfield Center in July 2019, to be close to her son and his family.

Those who knew her remember her as an expert bridge player, an avid reader, a stickler for grammatically-correct speech, and having a shrewd understanding of banking and finance.

She is survived by her son, David; daughter-in-law, Barbara; two grandchildren, David Wayne Vaughan and Elizabeth Maria Vaughan; as well as several nieces and nephews.

There will be no calling hours. Funeral arrangements are to be determined.

Marlborough

Albert H. Hartenstein Jr.

Albert H. Hartenstein Jr., 92, of Glastonbury, husband of the late Barbara (Ames) Hartenstein, died Thursday, June 11, at Davis Place, in Danielson. Born Dec. 18, 1927 in Rockville, son of the late Albert H. Sr. and Mary (Bosely) Hartenstein, he was a longtime resident of Glastonbury.

Al was a U.S. Army veteran and enjoyed sharing many stories of his time served in the Philippines. Music was a big part of his life. As a teenager he sang in the church choir, was a member of the Rockville High School Glee Club, and participated in the CT All-State Chorus. Al formed a band playing both the piano and saxophone. He sang in the Nayaug male chorus for many years, and the Buckingham Church choir where he was a member for over 60 years, as well as playing the piano and singing for the family. Throughout the years he found great joy in attending his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren's school concerts and plays. For 35 years Al and Barbara loved vacationing in Maine at Swan Lake with family.

Al is survived by his two daughters, Karen Hartenstein and Janet Cox; five grandchildren, Christine Faile, Jennifer Ledwith, Matthew LaBombard, Lisa Loki, Eric Collins; five great-grandchildren, Hannah, Gabriella, Nathaniel, Eli, Jack; and several nieces and nephews.

Besides his wife, he was predeceased by a brother and a sister.

Graveside service will be private.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, 10 Columbus Blvd., Hartford, CT 06106 or to Buckingham Congregational Church, 16 Cricket Lane, Glastonbury, CT 06033.

For online condolences, visit www.mulryanfh.com.



Portland

Dr. Nathan S. Hale

Dr. Nathan S. Hale of Lakeland, Fla., emeritus professor of animal science at the University of Connecticut, died peacefully at his home Thursday, June 11. He was 96 years of age.

Dr. Hale was a professor of animal science at the UConn College of Agriculture and Natural Resources from 1954 to 1985. He previously worked as a professor, from 1946 to 1954, at the University of Massachusetts. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of Connecticut and his master's and doctorate degrees from the University of Minnesota.

Born in Portland, the son of C. Harry and Dorothy Hale, his lineage directly traces back 11 generations to his ancestors who settled in Connecticut and Massachusetts in the 1630s. Nathan spent his formative years on the family crop and livestock farm. It was at an early age that he developed an appreciation for animals and their proper management and care, which he later instilled in hundreds of students that enrolled in the courses that he taught. In addition to his teaching and research he served as advisor to many of the animal science students. Dr. Hale always enjoyed the satisfaction of watching the progress of his students and all their subsequent successes, which were later achieved in their chosen fields.

At UConn he headed the animal husbandry section of the animal science department where he taught livestock management courses, as well as genetics and breeding for farm animal improvement. He further served his students by coaching several of the department's intercollegiate judging teams, conducting livestock extension and short course programs, and serving as a judge of livestock at major northeastern agricultural fairs. Several of his judging teams attained a high national ranking.

Dr. Hale's service and dedication to his field was recognized and honored with many awards. For example, in 1985, his excellence in teaching, research, and public service was commended with the prestigious designation of "Fellow" in the American Society of Animal Science, the highest honor the society can bestow on its members. He was also recognized with Alumni Awards from the UConn Block and Bridle Club and the UConn Agriculture and Natural Resources Alumni Association which presented him with the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1999. Additionally, he held offices as president of the Northeast Section of the American Society of Animal Science and as director, and then president, of the Continental Dorset Sheep Association.

Dr. Hale was active when his children were young as a leader with 4-H and Boy Scouts. After retirement from UConn, Dr. Hale continued his service in the community. He was a board member for Juniper Hill Village and then was president of the Glen Ridge Cooperative Retirement units. He was a deacon at the Storrs Congregational Church and served on many church committees. In addition to being a 40-year member of that church, he later became an associate member of the First United Methodist Church of Lakeland, Fla.

Nate was ever a source of great pride and joy for his children and grandchildren. He is survived by a daughter, Mary L. Hale of Pineville, N.C.; and two sons, Jonathan Hale and his wife Kathy of South Windsor, and Dr. Daniel Hale and his wife Linda of College Station, Texas; a daughter-in-law, Ann Hale of Spring Lake, N.J.; 11 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; and two sisters, Dorothy Simpson of S. Yarmouth, Mass., and Ann Hale of Portland.

Nate was predeceased by his wife of 65 years, Ann; his son, Nathan Jr.; and his brothers, Chet and Douglas.

There will be a private burial later this month at the Storrs Cemetery, next to his beloved Ann.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts can be made to the Nathan Hale Award in Animal Science at the University of Connecticut. This award was established by Dr. Hale to provide scholarship support for full-time UConn students enrolled in the university's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Please make checks payable to: The UConn Foundation, Inc./Nathan Hale Award in Animal Science #31082, and forward to the following address: University of Connecticut, 2390 Alumni Drive, Unit 3206, Storrs, CT 06269.



Colchester

Nancy Jean Dooley

Nancy Jean Dooley, 67, of Colchester, passed away peacefully at home with her beloved family by her side Friday, June 12, following a courageous and valiant four and a half-year battle with leukemia.



Born in Ysleta, Texas, on July 5, 1952, she was a daughter of the late Wilfred and Christine (Cummings) Piette.

Nancy and her three siblings grew up in Colchester and attended Bacon Academy.

Nancy attended Three Rivers Community College in Norwich, where she earned her associate's degree. She worked as a purchaser for Nova Electronics in Colchester and also worked for GBR Corporation in Chester for many years. She worked for Whelen Engineering until retiring in 2016.

On June 3, 1972, at Colchester Federated Church, Nancy married her first love, Daniel Collins; together they started a family and brought Justin and Patience into the world. Sadly, she lost Danny to a short battle with cancer in 1987.

Nancy found love again with John Dooley, whom she also married at Colchester Federated Church on Sept. 22, 1990. With John they started a second phase of their family and brought Siobhan and Patrick into the fold.

Nancy had many hobbies. She was a lifelong crafter and in her earlier years took an interest in the art of quilting, creating beautifully intricate framed arrangements for wedding invitations and wedding photos. She was a member of the Quilling Guild and showcased her expertise and talent at numerous statewide craft fairs.

In recent years she fell in love again with crocheting, which she began doing in high school. She lovingly crocheted full blankets first for each of her four treasured grandchildren. Then, as time and treatments with her illness allowed, she crocheted a blanket for each of her children, her husband John, and finally in her last week completed the final stitches for Patrick's girlfriend Alyssa with whom she had come to love as part of the family.

Nancy enjoyed nature and took great pride in her meticulously cared for gardens. She along with other close friends at the Federated Church formed a church Garden Club and toured many gardens, flower shows, organized a yearly Plant Sale from the group's surplus perennials and donations from their own gardens and they enjoyed many outings with her close group which always included lunch somewhere.

With her husband John, Nancy took up hiking and together they summited all 48 peaks of the White Mountains of New Hampshire over 4,000 feet and she became a member of the 4,000 Foot Club. She was extremely proud of that and even started planning to reach her goal of hiking the Appalachian Trail before being diagnosed with her illness in 2016. Together with John, they traveled the east coast, visiting national parks and historic sites and where possible hiking short sections of the AT, thus at least fulfilling a part of her goal.

When John started running, Nancy, finding an opportunity to spend more time together with him, also took up running. They ran many miles over the early 2000s training and entering many 5ks and half marathons, quite often placing in her age group.

Nancy was a native of Colchester, growing up in the Colchester Federated Church. She fondly remembered singing in the choir as a youngster. As an adult Nancy spent several years teaching Sunday school, mentoring young women in Discipleship Group (Confirmation) and even co-leading a retreat with two other mentors while the pastor was ill. Nancy was also very honored and proud to be asked to lead the Women's Fellowship for several years and was named Woman of the Year in 2007.

Nancy's greatest joy in life though was her family. Many cookouts in the backyard happened over the years and all involved her favorite backyard game, croquet. A fierce competitor, no one was allowed to use the black ball except for Nancy...as eldest she claimed the rights! The family enjoyed numerous camping vacations including many summer vacations at Hammonasset State Park, the Eastham/Wellfleet area in Cape Cod, and any beach camping on the east coast, her favorite destination being Key West, Fla.

Nancy was an avid dog lover and she had grown up with several Boxers in her Piette family household. Later on after Siobhan inherited a family pug, Betty, from Nancy's sister Cindy, Nancy became intent on adopting a bulldog and rescued little Buster whom she absolutely loved. She and John rescued Sadie from New Jersey and have had her in their life for the last 6 years.

In addition to her husband and closest friend of over 29 years, Nancy will be forever loved and missed by her beloved children, Justin Collins, Patience Collins and her love Kenny, Siobhan Dooley and her love Ashley and Patrick Dooley and his love Alyssa; her cherished grandchildren, Ethan Collins, Hannah Collins, Isabella Wisnieski and Landon Wisnieski; her sister, Cindy and husband Scott Michaelson as well as their children, Adam and wife Rueby, Christopher and Bruce Michaelson; her nephew, Glen Piette and his wife Samantha; and numerous extended family members and friends.

In addition to both of her parents, Nancy was predeceased by her brothers, Bruce and Glen Piette.

Calling hours will be held Saturday, June 20, from 4-7 p.m., at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A graveside service of committal will be held at Linwood Cemetery in Colchester on Monday, June 22, at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Colchester Federated Church.

For online condolences, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

James F. Byrnes Jr.

James F. Byrnes Jr. of Colchester passed away peacefully at home with his family by his side Thursday, June 11 following a valiant and courageous battle with glioblastoma multiforme. He was 73 years old.



Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Aug. 9, 1946, James was the only son of the late James & Frances (Verdonik) Byrnes.

He attended Xaverian High School. As a young man, he met and fell in love with Eileen Fuller; the couple married in Brooklyn Sept. 27, 1969.

James attended the prestigious Cooper Union in New York City, earning a bachelor's degree in civil engineering. This was followed by a long and prestigious career with the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Initially hired as an engineering intern in 1968, he moved up through the ranks over the years, holding numerous managerial positions including director and bureau chief, and eventually serving as commissioner between 2002 and 2004. After retiring from the state, he worked for various engineering consulting firms, making a career of over 40 years as a transportation engineer. In the words of former Department of Transportation Commissioner Emil H. Frankel, he was "truly a transportation 'Renaissance Man.'"

Other accolades he holds include a master's degree from the University of Connecticut, as well as participation in Harvard University's Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government. He also spent several years serving on the Wetlands Commission in his hometown of Colchester.

Jim, as he was known by those close to him, loved boating, cruising, and travelling around the world with his family and friends. He and Eileen would often spend the winter months at the family condo in West Palm Beach, Fla.

James will be forever loved and always missed by his wife of over 50 years, Eileen of Colchester; his son, Timothy Byrnes of Manhattan, N.Y.; his daughter, Kathleen and her husband Brian Publicover of Billerica, Mass.; as well as numerous extended family members and friends. He is also survived by an eagerly-anticipated grandson who will be arriving later this year.

The family would like to personally thank Dr. Ahmad Dahar, Dr. Andrew Salner, Donna Avanecean, and the nurses at Hartford Healthcare for their dedication to James during his illness.

Due to COVID-19, a memorial service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to the Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center <https://giving.hartfordhospital.org/donate>.

The Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with arrangements. For online condolences, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

Andrew J. Kron Jr.

Andrew J. Kron Jr., 77, of Quaker Hill, formerly of Bristol, passed away unexpectedly Tuesday, June 9. He fought a brave fight for many years and after an amazing night with the immediate family, he went home and fell asleep with his heart full and peacefully passed.



He was the beloved husband of his high school sweetheart Mary Ann (Ziegler) Kron. He was born on July 20, 1942 and raised in New Britain. He was the son of Andrew J. Kron and Mary Lostocco Kron.

He graduated from New Britain High School where he played football and baseball and attended Morehead State College in Kentucky. For many years he worked in the automobile business in various management positions as well as owner and later in the food service business.

Family was everything to him. He was the #1 fan of his children and grandchildren while they were partaking in their various sporting events, cheer competitions, dance recitals, and everything under the sun. He will be remembered most for singing Happy Birthday on the answering machine for everyone's special day where he always ended it with "toot, toot."

Besides his wife of 55 years he leaves behind his children, Ken (Caroline) of Hebron, Kristine (Rodney) Matteri of California, Jennifer Spreng of Mystic and Paul of Martha's Vineyard; his five grandchildren, who were the joys of his life, Jordan Matteri, Hanna, Gretchen, and Drew Kron, and Ashley Spreng. He also leaves his sister, Paula (Tim) Ingala, her children Allen (Jill) Gagnon and Amy (Donna Lebel) Gagnon; sister-in-law, Raylene Connelly, her children Christian, Regan (Scott) Lowe, Erin (Ryan) Williamson and Matthew; and brother-in-law, Raymond Ziegler, his children Kate (Anderson) Page, Sara and many nieces, nephews, aunts, and cousins.

Due to the pandemic, the services will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the American Diabetes Association.