

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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

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**LakeFest 2020... Tonight, July 24, at 6 p.m., Marlborough-based band Seat Of Our Pants will play to Lake Terramuggus, and all who paddle, float, motor or swim up, at "LakeFest 2020." This will be the sixth year the band has hosted LakeFest, which sees the group playing from a dock at the south end of the lake.**

## Colchester Explores Diversity Commission

by Karla Santos

After a lengthy and heated discussion, the Colchester Board of Selectmen last week approved creating a committee that will explore the development a diversity and inclusion commission, with the goal of creating awareness and values emphasizing the importance of diversity.

But one Republican selectman argued there wasn't enough evidence of racism in town to justify creating such a commission.

First Selectman Mary Bylone also joined a variety of towns - including Manchester, Middletown, Windham, New Britain, West Hartford and Windsor - in signing a proclamation declaring racism to be a "public health crisis."

The selectmen voted 4-1 - with Taras Rudko opposed - to establish a committee that will develop the new diversity and inclusion commission.

Bylone, a Democrat, told the *Rivereast* she came up with the idea of establishing the commission following the brutal death of George Floyd in May. She said that incident made her realize racism was more prevalent than she thought.

Bylone said the commission is an opportunity to educate as well as to start making policies that are more inclusive. She said some of the things that could be done at the town level include having more diversity in its employees, marketing jobs targeting a wider range of the population and providing diversity training.

In addition, Bylone said the commission

should collect data about racism in town. She said the town should provide an environment where people who experience racism are willing to speak up.

During the meeting last week, Selectman Denise Turner, a Democrat, said the committee developing the new commission will also take care of establishing a charge for the commission. Turner suggested the committee contain about nine members with representation from the Boards of Selectmen and Education, Social Services Department, Youth Services Department, law enforcement, a youth, a parent, a community member and a clergy.

Bylone said they are also working on ensuring the committee has representation from the political parties.

Once the committee puts together a recommendation in front of the Board of Selectmen, they will approve or disapprove it and then they would put out a call for applicants to be a part of the commission.

Then, the selectmen will go through the application process and the appointment of members.

During the meeting, Bylone said that one of her concerns is that the process could take a while.

"We want to move it quickly, but we also want to make sure we do our due diligence to make sure we are covering all the important aspects," she said.

During the meeting, Rudko suggested for-

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## Stats Suggest Racial Discipline Disparities in Portland Schools

by Jack Lakowsky

The Portland Social Justice Coalition discovered through state statistics a stark disparity in the disciplining of white students and students of color throughout the Portland school system.

Through a survey issued to Portland residents, the coalition learned parents are highly concerned about this disparity, and with what they say is racist bullying. The survey was conducted at the beginning of the month.

April Graves, a representative of the coalition, said she has brought this issue to the attention of the Portland boards of education and selectmen. Graves said the selectmen and First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield have been helpful, responsive and supportive.

The Board of Education's response, however, has been less than satisfactory, according to Graves.

In fact, Graves said she has received no response from the board, or school administrators, whatsoever.

Graves said she and other members of the coalition want to discuss training teachers and administrators against bias and discrimination. Such training would align with recent diversity and racial equity initiatives started by Bransfield and other officials.

Superintendent of Schools Charles Britton said both his administration and the Board of Education have been entirely occupied with planning the reopening of town schools in the fall.

"I wish we weren't in a pandemic," Britton said Thursday. "If we weren't, this would be

our most important topic."

Britton said he regrets that planning for the fall has superseded the "important discussion of racial equity." He added that he is looking forward to working with the coalition and community to improve racial equity in Portland's schools.

Britton said racial disparities do exist in the district, and added that Portland is not immune to this issue, which he said can be found in most school districts across the country.

Britton said any community organizations who stand against racial inequity will find a "willing partner" in the Portland school district and the Board of Education. Britton said he believes the first step to these discussions is to learn how to have them without "tearing each other apart." To this end, he said he will work into school curricula lessons on civil discourse.

"Everyone has beliefs, some of which I may find offensive," said Britton. "But the question is 'How do we disagree without being disagreeable?'"

Board of Education Chair Sharon Peters said Thursday the school board "will be discussing all aspects of equity in the schools in the very near future, including the concerns raised by the [Portland Social Justice Coalition]."

Peters added "equity of course is also part" of the school reopening plan, which will be discussed at a special board meeting Tuesday, July 28, at 6 p.m. Visit [www.portlandctschools.org](http://www.portlandctschools.org) for the link.

The coalition, which is composed of local activism groups like the local Black Lives Matter Support Group, the Black Lives Matter Protest Group, Portland's grassroots Diversity Group, and the Chatham Kids Connection, discovered that, in Portland, 3.9% of white students were disciplined through either suspension or expulsion in the 2018-19 school year.

For Portland's minority students, this number jumps to 28.4%. Graves said racial equity issues are more prevalent in the middle school and high school than they are in lower grades.

According to edsight.gov - the state's public education tracking tool used by the coalition - nearly a fifth of Portland's students are Black/Indigenous/People of Color (BIPOC). The website also shows that 100% of Portland's education staff is white.

These statistics seem to contradict the way the Portland district is described in its edsight.gov profile, which says the school system is an "active participant" in state programs that promote diversity. The profile further states that, for the 2018-19 school year, Portland schools "designed a teacher recruitment and retention plan. A key component of this plan is [hiring] minority teachers."

Graves is founder and head of the Chatham Kids Connection, a coalition member group.

"While these numbers may take a few people aback, no parents of students of color were surprised," Graves told the *Rivereast*.

Graves said parents of biracial and students of color have been aware of these issues for

years. Graves, who is white but has biracial children and is married to a Black man, said her fifth-grade child received a homework assignment that asked students to list the "pros and cons" of slavery.

Graves detailed for example an incident in town she knows of in which a white student called a student of color a racial slur. The student of color reacted strongly and the two fought physically. The non-white student, Graves said, was arrested and sentenced to community service. She said no information is available as to consequences the white student faced.

Schools must report suspensions and expulsions of BIPOC students to the state Department of Education.

Graves said she approached the Board of Education with questions about these concerns. "I've not had any feedback from them," said Graves.

Graves said lack of transparency is a consistent issue with Portland's Board of Education.

"Parents don't feel as though they can approach this Board of Education very easily," said Graves. "The selectmen are very active in town, I see them everywhere. The Board of Ed[ucation] is not."

Graves said, although the school board has been uncooperative, many of Portland's teachers are advocating for racial justice and equity.

However, Graves said she has experienced resistance from the school district on a number of matters. A few years ago, she said, she even

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mulating a timeline for the committee – he noted the commission would need a town meeting to be approved by citizens.

Selectman Rosemary Coyle, a Democrat, clarified that the committee can't go on for more than a year.

Bylone said the hope is to have the commission ready to start meeting at the beginning of 2021.

**Rudko Wants 'Facts' Before Offering Support**

During the meeting, Rudko said he has asked the board to provide him with examples of systemic institutional racism being perpetrated by the town of Colchester and he noted he has received no response to that request.

Rudko said he wants credible data to share with the public with examples of institutional racism occurring in town.

Bylone said that while she doesn't know exactly how much racism there is in town, she knows it exists. She said she hasn't been made aware of racism within the town employees – but added that is also part of the problem, because some people who experience racism don't feel safe to come forward and disclose their concerns.

"Silence in 2020 in a town of 16,000 [people] ... silence to me says it exists," she said.

Rudko told Bylone she's making a generalization and it is not based on facts.

"I'm asking for facts that would lead me to support this initiative," Rudko said.

He added that he has lived in Colchester almost all his life and hasn't seen anything that has led him to believe the town has a crisis on its hands.

"Can anyone here tell me what [is] the percentage of our population that is racist, what percentage of our population would justify making the claim that we have a public health crisis?" Rudko asked his fellow selectmen.

Bylone answered to him saying that one person being racist is enough to call racism a problem.

"Listen, you are not going to fix one person that is a racist," he argued. "Let me ask you something: what's love? I would argue that love is an emotion. That emotion is diametrically opposed by hate – also an emotion."

Rudko told Bylone that by establishing the commission, the town would be engaging in the business of controlling constituents' emotions – and said that is something he doesn't agree with.

Bylone clarified that the diversity and inclusion effort will start looking at issues caused by racism, but noted there are many other "buckets where people are given labels or are denied access or inclusion because of those labels." Those include age, gender, sexual preference, color of skin, accents and more.

Rudko told her she's making a decision on behalf of the town based in emotion.

"You're not able to provide me factual data to back up your assertion," Rudko said. "Making that assertion, what you're doing is you're calling our town racist and I take offense to that. Our town is not a racist town."

After a while of Rudko and Bylone going back and forth explaining their own views,

Coyle spoke to try to clarify what the selectmen were doing by creating this new commission.

"We are giving people an opportunity to address this issue," Coyle said. "This issue is in the forefront of our society right now. The purpose of the committee could be to educate. Education about diversity and inclusion is always beneficial to us as a society, to us as a town."

Coyle said the idea is to investigate, study, recommend and come up with a structure that might be a beneficial commission to the town of Colchester.

"I don't see it as calling our town racist," Coyle said. "I see it as bringing people together because inclusion and diversity are about bringing people together, understanding the issues, working together, making towns and communities better."

Rudko continued with his argument that the board does not have the factual data to move the initiative forward.

Turner, who is Black, then told Rudko she was insulted by what he was saying. She said her family has lived in Colchester for 80 years. She also agreed with Coyle that admitting that racism exists in town is not calling this town racist.

She explained that her life and her family's life has not always been ideal – and that a lot of that is because of the color of their skin.

"I am insulted that you sit there and can think that this is not an important issue," Turner said.

Rudko told Turner he gets that racism exists in town and everywhere but continued to wonder how much racism there is in Colchester.

Selectman Denise Mizla, a Republican, said that she knows racism exists and doesn't see the group as a threat.

"I think it is going to be a group coming up with solutions," Mizla said. "It certainly can't hurt to look at it, come outside of our white bubble and look at maybe what some other people are going through that are Brown or yellow or Black."

**Proclamation**

Bylone said that "declaring racism to be a public health crisis or emergency offers a clear path to intentionally acknowledging and addressing disparities and inequities."

She said this is the first step "in intentionally embedding health equity and policy making."

Bylone added that the declaration can lead to authorizing data and policy analysis, to prevent unintentional injustices. Furthermore, it could lead to the implementation of policies and actions to dismantle and course correct problematic systems.

During her Facebook live video on Friday, Bylone clarified that the proclamation says that racism is a public health crisis. It lists out 11 reasons in which racism impacts the health of a population, including poverty, education and access to care.

"What we are trying to say with the proclamation is that we acknowledge that racism plays a part in access to health and other pieces like education and things that help us to be healthier people," Bylone said.

**Stats cont. from Front Page**

had to file a civil rights lawsuit against the district because school staff on multiple occasions ate peanut products in an allergen-free room. Graves said her son has an airborne peanut allergy and was in the room during one of these incidents.

Graves said the coalition also wants to see a more diverse and inclusive curriculum. For example, she said, schools in general could introduce literature more literature by BIPOC authors.

"They need to teach real Black history," said Graves. "There's so much more than just slavery. They don't teach about Black rulers or

royalty, or the entire nations they've established."

Overall, Graves, said, the coalition's goals include increasing diversity among town employees and boards and diversifying school curriculum.

Graves said parents of students must also address racism and racial equity at home if racial disparities and bullying are to stop in public schools.

"Parents will always have more influence than schools," said Graves.

Questions or membership inquiries can be sent to portlandsocialjustice@gmail.com.

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

by Mike Thompson

I still see plenty of signs dotting people's yards, and protests, while generally less prolific than they were two months ago, are still taking place; I passed one setting up in my town of Manchester Tuesday evening. The Black Lives Matter movement isn't going away. This time, there may be some real, lasting change to come from it. It's still a time of much upheaval, and there's still a long way left to go – but it's tough, as you look around, not to be a little optimistic.

I wonder if Congressman John Lewis shared that same optimism in the weeks before his death. I hope he did.

Lewis, as most of you know, died last weekend at the age of 80, after a six-month battle with pancreatic cancer. A congressman for more than three decades, he led truly an incredible life. The son of sharecroppers, he became heavily involved with the Civil Rights movement in the early 1960s – according to CNN, he participated in lunch counter sit-ins, joined the Freedom Riders in challenging segregated buses and was even a keynote speaker at the historic 1963 March on Washington when he was just 23 years old.

Two years later, in 1965, Lewis was sadly brutally beaten by police as he marched – unarmed – with others on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala. Lewis sustained a fractured skull in the beating, and later admitted he thought he was going to die. Many have pushed in the past week to have that bridge renamed for Lewis. I think it would be a terrific honor – and, considering Pettus was a senior officer in the Confederate Army and later a grand dragon with the Ku Klux Klan, retiring his name probably wouldn't be a great loss.

Despite the brutal beating – or perhaps because of it – Lewis never lost his activist spirit, and eventually transferred it to politics. He was elected to the Atlanta City Council in 1981, and then to Congress six years later. In Washington, CNN said, Lewis would focus on fighting against poverty and helping younger generations by improving education and healthcare.

In its news story about his passing, CNN included a remarkable tale of forgiveness that Lewis once shared. When a young man, Lewis was beaten bloody by members of the KKK after he attempted to enter what he described as a "white waiting room."

Many, many years after that, in 2009, one of the men who had beaten Lewis came to his Capitol Hill office, along with his son. The man was in his 70s, and his son in his 40s. He told Lewis who he was and what he did, and then said, "I want to apologize. Will you accept my apology?"

Lewis not only accepted the apology, he hugged the father and son, and then the three cried together.

"It is the power in the way of peace, the way of love," CNN quoted Lewis as saying. "We must never, ever hate. The way of love

is a better way."

Words to live by.

And so are these, which Lewis offered just this past March, while visiting the Selma bridge where he was so savagely beaten some 55 years earlier:

"Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America."

Lewis has passed, but his inspiration lives on – and his cause must as well. It's too important to give up on now.

\* \* \*

Another death, this one much closer to home, that I was saddened this week to hear about was Hebron resident John Hibbard. John was chairman of the Hebron Board of Finance during my time covering the town as a reporter. He was a great chairman, and indeed a great guy. He never shied away from giving you his thoughts, which was great – and something, as a reporter, you don't always encounter.

I also just loved talking to John. He had a very comforting, grandfatherly presence. He was one of those types of people who could brighten your day with just a quick conversation.

The world needs more gentle people like that.

John will be missed, for sure.

\* \* \*

Lastly, this is pretty neat. In August, to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, there is going to be a special celebration of Rosie the Riveter, right in Hebron.

Who's Rosie? Well, if you grew up watching way too many cartoons from the 1940s like I did, you may already know, but if not: Rosie the Riveter was kind of a cultural icon of WWII, representing the many women who worked in factories and shipyards from 1942-45, replacing the men who had gone off to war. They've been credited with playing a key role in keeping the homefront going while the war raged on.

The Connecticut Corsair chapter of the American Rosie the Riveter Association is sponsoring Memorial Rose Gardens in Connecticut, one in each congressional district. And since Hebron actually has a still-standing World War II Civilian Aircraft Observation Post – located right next to Town Hall – the town was selected as the site for the Second Congressional District Rosie the Riveter Memorial Rose Garden.

Were you, or someone you know, a "Rosie," or did any kind of work on the homefront? Were you a serviceman during the war? If so, the Hebron Historic Properties Commission wants to hear from you. You needn't be a Hebron resident either; anyone from the area is welcome. If interested, give the commission a call at Hebron Town Hall, at 860-228-5971.

\* \* \*

See you next week.

# Agent Orange Monument to be Erected in Andover

by Sloan Brewster

Veterans who died as a result of Agent Orange will be commemorated by a monument in Andover.

At last week's Board of Selectmen meeting, local veteran Gerry Wright presented the idea for an Agent Orange monument to be installed at Veterans Monument Park. The board supported the notion and unanimously approved it.

The monument will be made of black granite and will depict an orange and yellow heart with a C-123 airplane, like the ones used to spray the chemical over Vietnam, Wright said in a phone call Tuesday. Inscribed around the heart will be the words "Agent Orange, in memory of all those who died because of this chemical. Please pray for those veterans who continue to suffer because of it. Remember their sacrifice."

The front of the stone's base will have the words, "May this small plot of ground serve as a reminder for those exposed to chemical and genetic warfare for generations to come."

On the base's back, will be the words, "They served, they fought, they died and received neither their country's glory nor their country's compassion."

The monument will be a similar to one Wright saw in Texas two years ago; he told selectmen he spoke with the people who made it and they voiced support of him duplicating it.

"They said they want to see one in every state," he said. He added there is already an Agent Orange monument in Waterford.

Andover's monument will have an additional laser-etched scene on the back illustrating what is on front, Wright said. While not divulging what that scene would portray, he said he has been working with Candace LaFlauer, monument artist, from Nolan's Hamden Monument Co. and Patricia Naegeli, police sketch artist from Coventry, on the design.

"I wanted this to be one of a kind," Wright said. "I wanted this one to be the only one like it in the country. And with the laser etching on the back to tell the story, it's going to be awesome; in fact the stone is a little bit bigger than the one up in Texas."

Wright said he would import the granite for the monument from India. Though pricey, slabs from that country are solid black and, unlike

the granite that comprises the Texas monument, contain no blemishes or white streaks.

Light wavy lines often running through granite can interfere with the etching, Nolan's Hamden Monument Company wrote in an email Wright included with his presentation at the meeting.

Wright also included photographs of the spot at the park – marked off with orange cones – where he plans to have the monument installed.

"It seems to fit nicely up in that corner," he said.

Two benches, also made of black granite, will be set on angles facing the monument – one allowing visitors some contemplation while looking at the face of the stone and the other giving them the opportunity to thoughtfully gaze at the back.

There's no time projected for the start of the project as LaFlauer, the artist who will do the laser etching, is booked through January.

"She does absolutely beautiful work," Wright said.

He said he does not anticipate work to begin until next spring or early summer.

The yellow and orange for the heart are difficult colors to incise into black granite and the paint will fade and need to be touched up in about 10 years, Wright added.

The total cost of the project will be \$21,000, Wright said. He will be raising money for it through Hebron's American Legion post, of which he is a member. He wants to raise \$25,000 and said the additional \$4,000 will set aside to pay for the 10-year paint touch up.

Ron Bission, of Ron's Professional Lawn Care in Andover, has volunteered to put the base in concrete and set the monument at no cost, Wright said.

Once completed, the stone will be owned by the town, Wright said.

"So when we're all done, this is your monument," he said. "The stone will be absolutely beautiful. I think it will accent the park."

Selectmen complimented Wright on the idea.

"I think [the monument] would be a nice addition to that area," said First Selectman Jeff Maguire.

Wright also updated selectmen on the Agent Orange Exposure Fairness Act, a bill he has been working to get passed at the federal level for more than two years.



A monument remembering those who died from or have ailments caused by Agent Orange, planned for the Andover Monument Park, was inspired by this one in Ennis, Texas.

"You know I'm very passionate about the Agent Orange," he said. "I just found out today that there's a good chance that The Veterans Administration and congress is going to bring our bill to the floor by the end of the week, so we're working with about 60 senators to get that bill out and to get it passed."

On Tuesday, Wright said he heard from Sen. Richard Blumenthal's office the day before informing him the bill had not yet been presented but is expected to be in the next week or two.

Wright said he anticipates support for the fairness act from the state of Connecticut and testified about it before the Committee on Veterans Affairs, which had unanimously passed a resolution in support of the bill.

"But then [COVID-19] set in," he said.

Due to the state shutdown to halt the spread of the coronavirus, the bill has not gone to the

senate or house.

If the house and senate approve the measure, the governor will send a letter of support for the fairness act to the U.S. Congress.

Agent Orange is an herbicide or defoliant that contains the contaminant Dioxin and was sprayed over Vietnam by the U.S. military.

Wright spent two tours in Vietnam and was exposed to the toxin and has health issues because of it. In 2018 and 2019, he went on two cross country motorcycle journeys seeking signatures on petitions to get treatment and disability for veterans exposed to the contaminant, but whose ailments have been all but ignored.

Anyone interested in contributing to the monument can send donations to Gerry Wright at P.O. Box 274, Andover CT 06232. Make checks out to Legion Post 95 and in the memo put 'AO Andover Monument.'

# Plans for New Colchester Senior Center Taking Shape

by Karla Santos

Colchester's plans for a new 14,500-square foot senior center are progressing as the Senior Center Building Committee is looking to have the schematic design phase of the project completed by next month – with the hopes that the project proposal will go to referendum in November.

According to Tony Tarnowski, chairperson of the Senior Center Building Committee, the group was appointed in August of last year and started to meet in November. The committee's first task was to hire an architect and they hired Silver Petrucelli and Associates, an architecture company out of Hamden.

Tarnowski said the architects are providing the committee with a schematic design for the project for \$46,991. The committee meets with the company every two weeks to review the design work.

The new senior center would be located on Lebanon Avenue, bordering the back of Town Hall property and in between Lewis Lane and the Congregation Ahavath Achim synagogue. The land was purchased for the new center in 2017, at a cost of around \$90,000, according to

Board of Selectmen member Rosemary Coyle.

Tarnowski said the Senior Center Building Committee is in the initial stage of the design process which includes figuring out the rooms and their size.

"We are pretty close," Tarnowski said. "They've given us several options – one-story and two-story options."

He said the committee is leaning toward a design featuring a one-story building with an "adequate" parking lot. According to Tarnowski, if there is enough room on the property, the plan is to have an outdoor walking trail for seniors.

The goal is for the building to have a fitness center, a library, an arts and crafts classroom, a game room, activity rooms, a gallery a reception area, some offices for the staff, a computer area and a special "Making Memories" classroom, for seniors who have early signs of dementia.

The building will also have two multi-purpose rooms.

Tarnowski said the multi-purpose rooms can benefit not only seniors, but the general com-

munity also because they will be big enough to fit meetings of over 200 people. He noted the rooms could be used by different community groups if the seniors aren't there.

"We are designing [the multi-purpose rooms] in such a way that they won't interrupt the rooms with seniors on them," he said.

The multi-purpose rooms and kitchen would also be rented out to the community for events.

After the schematic design is ready, the committee can move on and get an estimate of what the cost to build the building would be. Then, the plan would go to a referendum where the voters would approve or disapprove it. The design of the building can be subject to change if it's not approved at referendum.

Tarnowski said the existing senior center, located at 95 Norwich Ave., is in a building that's "too small," – 5,500 square feet – and is shared with a veterans group.

He said the space the seniors have now is "totally inadequate" for their needs.

"The kitchen – they get by, but is really inadequate for the Meals-on-Wheels or the other programs that they do there, and they are lim-

ited to what they can offer," Tarnowski added.

According to Selectman Rosemary Coyle, who is the Board of Selectmen liaison to the Senior Center Building Committee, the idea of a new senior center had been explored as far back as the year 2000. She said she has been involved in the plans for a new senior center since she became a member of the Board of Selectmen in 2007.

Coyle said it is "exciting" to see the project moving along, noting, "it's been on and off the table for a lot of years."

Tarnowski said the goal is to be done with the design by the end of August, go to referendum in November and have the new building completed by the spring of 2022.

The Senior Center Building Committee has seven members and two alternates. The group meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month.

According to Patricia Watts, director of the senior center, the center serves residents that are 55 years of age and older. There are currently 1,303 seniors that are members of the center.

# Andover Online Newsletter Bidding Farewell

by Sloan Brewster

After more than a decade of showing up in local email inboxes, the weekly newsletter *Andover This 'n That* is ceasing publication.

Resident Dianne Grenier, who publishes the newsletter, made the announcement she was “going out of business” in the issue she emailed out Sunday, crediting the newly-revamped town website with the fact her outlet would no longer be needed.

“The time has come to say good bye. I am delighted to tell you the Andover Website Committee has announced the arrival of the new Andover website,” she wrote. “I have published the *Andover This 'n That* because there was no good way for Andover residents to get Andover information easily ... now you can, and my job is done.”

Since last year, when the Board of Selectmen decided to create a new website to replace the old one that many residents had long complained was outdated and difficult to navigate, Grenier has voiced eagerness for the time she would be able to sunset her publication, which she creates voluntarily.

A one-woman show, the weekly information source distributed by email is the sole work of Grenier. About 15 or 20 years ago, Grenier started putting out information to townsfolk via another online newsletter called *The Town Crier*, after the town’s first attempt at a website was shut down.

The same basic format as *This 'n That*, the crier was sent by email to local inboxes.

Then, the town launched a second website and Grenier decided people would be able to glean the information from there.

“That didn’t end up being the case; there was still some missing stuff,” she said.

Her solution to getting that missing “stuff” out there was the inspiration behind *This 'n That*.

Grenier said her publication, which is distributed to a 650-person list, is generally about 30 pages and includes current news and up and coming events. She works on it throughout the week and sends it out Sunday morning.

A regular attendee at local board and com-

mission meetings since 1986, Grenier puts blurbs about what took place in the meetings in her publication and puts out occasional special editions with such information as referendum results. She also includes announcements about events and happenings from the library, Town Hall, local organizations and anyone from town who sends them to her.

She declines requests to publish announcements from people and places outside town, with rare exceptions, such as announcements for the Hebron Harvest Fair and Maple Fest, which, she said, are attended by Andover residents, many who have booths at the fair.

A subscriber to three local newspapers and a weekly recipient of the *Rivereast*, Grenier uses those outlets to gather the news tidbits she includes in her publication. She doesn’t rewrite the stories or do any reporting, though; instead, she scans them and puts them in her newsletter, giving credit to whoever did the work.

She also makes a point of not adding any commentary.

“The hardest part about doing the *This 'n That* is keeping my personal opinions out. I just put everything out there and don’t comment on it,” Grenier said. “Here are the facts and you decide what you think about it. I try to put everything I can find that’s Andover related in there.”

In the body of the email Grenier sends with the newsletter, she writes that it includes “Andover related information” and adds that it should “be considered ‘Oh so unofficial.’” She goes on to invite her readers to check out the latest editions of local papers, the town website or the Andover Grapevine, a Facebook page she administers to get more local news.

While looking forward to her next activity, Grenier voiced pride in how well-received *This 'n That* has been and said it took the number-one slot in a town-side survey a couple of years ago.

“One [question] was where do you get your local news from, and sorry, by far the number one answer was *This 'n That*, followed by the *Rivereast*,” she told this reporter with a laugh. “I’m sorry. I beat you by a longshot.”

Grenier said one appeal for her outlet is the



Resident Dianne Grenier is retiring her weekly online newsletter, *Andover This 'n That*, after more than a decade. She said the revamped website has rendered her online newsletter unnecessary.

fact that it just arrives with no effort from the recipient.

“People like to have it delivered,” she said. “They don’t have to go anywhere, they’re being spoon fed.”

Still, she’s glad to see the era of *This 'n That* come to an end and said residents should be getting news from the town website, which should have everything people need or want to know, not “from some crazy lady that lives on the lake.”

Grenier encourages folks to give the website a try and to sign up for alerts, four of which are offered on the site. She also wants people to remember to send announcements to town for publication on the site.

Grenier said she will send out two more issues of *This 'n That*. This coming Sunday’s will be “a very abbreviated” edition with her farewell letter and some local groups looking for

volunteers and the week after she will bid her final adieu.

Grenier said she enjoys volunteering and wants more people to get involved with the town and local organizations.

“I started this with the hope, and I’m not sure that I really achieved this, the hope that if people knew what was going in in town they would step up and volunteer,” she said. “Lots of groups in town are starving for volunteers.”

Officials have, over the years, often called out to Grenier during board and commission meetings to ask her to include this or that in her newsletter, requests with which she has happily complied. In a phone call Tuesday, Town Administrator Eric Anderson said *This 'n That* has been a great community asset.

“We all thank Dianne for having put it out there for so many years,” he said. “I’ll miss reading it every Sunday.”

## The Passing of an Old Friend in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

At last Thursday’s meeting, Hebron’s Board of Selectmen took a moment to recall an old friend and local open space advocate.

On Sunday, July 20, John Hibbard passed away at the age of 84. A resident of town since 1966, Hibbard’s local claims to fame included serving on the boards of selectmen and finance – including stints as chairs of each – and also his passionate environmental advocacy.

Before beginning the meeting, selectmen gave a moment of silence in Hibbard’s honor and spoke of some of his accomplishments for the town, including being one of the first public officials to rally residents to purchase and preserve parcels of land with tax dollars.

“He was a person that set the bar high, he was an example of what a volunteer and a gentleman in the town of Hebron should be,” said Town Manager Andrew Tierney.

Hibbard, according to Tierney, was instrumental in securing the purchase of Grayville Park, the town’s first open space buy, which Selectman John Collins pointed out was not a popular concept 40 years ago.

“Other towns actually don’t have [open space] for a lot of reasons but so we’re lucky to have it,” Collins said. “He’s one of the people that persuaded the taxpayers to come out and actually, you know, put it, put some money aside. Not an easy argument.”

According to Hibbard’s obituary, he was “a passionate advocate and steward of the Connecticut landscape.” He was executive director of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association,

and served on state task forces for farmland preservation and dairy industry preservation, and was involved in creating Connecticut’s Forest Practices Act, as well as Environment/2000, a Connecticut environmental plan.

Hibbard’s obituary appears in this week’s *Rivereast*, on page 26.

### Possible Funding for Wall Street Sidewalk

In other town news, the board gave Tierney the go-ahead to apply for a grant under the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP).

The latest STEAP round was announced earlier this month with an Aug. 14 deadline to get in applications, Tierney told the board. With an unusually quick turnaround time, he recommended applying for funds for a project already in the works – a sidewalk on Wall Street – and said if the funding is approved the town could redirect funds already pointed toward the project to something else.

“We had a couple projects that were in the budget,” Tierney said.

Possibilities he and Town Planner Michael O’Leary had considered included constructing a bridge over the brook between Pendleton Drive and the Douglas Library. The town has been planning to put the bridge in as a safety measure for residents who walk to the library but the project has not yet been funded.

Ultimately, he recommended the sidewalk, which he said is shovel ready and a good option for the competitive grant.

“You have to put a project that’s really nails,” he said. “We can move forward that it’s a shovel-ready (project).”

The town has been planning the sidewalk, which will stretch from RHAM High School to Ridge Road, as part of the traffic reconfiguration project at the school and Tierney said it would be installed in the fall.

The \$128,205 maximum grant award comes with a required municipal match, Tierney said.

### Possible Funding to Restore a Historic Barn

The selectmen also authorized Tierney to apply for \$50,000 under the Connecticut Vibrant Communities Initiative. The funding would be used for a restoration plan for a barn on Church Street that could possibly become a hub for artists and house a local arts commission.

The barn is part of Toomey’s Crossing – a mixed-use development in the town center – by developer Roderic “Mac” McCarrison, of McCarrison D.W. Fish Real Estate.

The idea is to for the town to work with local nonprofit organization The Town Center Project and a local arts commission to come up with a plan for the barn.

The town does not currently have an arts commission, but the deadline for the grant is in a month, so the application has to be in before any such commission is created, Tierney said.

The funding would help increase arts and culture in the town center, which Tierney said

was a goal of The Town Center Project.

“It’s giving the nonprofits an avenue to try to work towards that, so, it would be the town assisting the Center Project to try to move forward on one of their visions,” he said. “It’s also an economic development driver and a cultural, boost for your municipality.”

Selectman Gail Richmond said she supports the idea of an arts commission.

“I think the barn is an ideal place for us to get a structure for an arts commission, and this grant seems to be a good gateway for us to start getting it done,” she said.

McCarrison told the *Rivereast* that he hopes the barn can be transformed into an art center.

The selectmen had a lengthy discussion about the barn before coming to a consensus to apply for the grant, which board chair Dan Larson said made sense and was something Judith Podell, The Town Center Project president and chairman, supports.

“I do know that Judy was very passionate about trying to do something with that barn and some sort of arts and culture diversity type project would be a benefit,” he said.

In a phone call Wednesday, Podell said while it is still just a suggestion and that she is likely not the only one with ideas for the barn, it would be a nice spot for an arts center.

“I think it would be a wonderful thing to have and a focal point for art that happens in the community,” she said. “That would be a nice thing to have.”

# Questions Remain on School Reopening Plan in East Hampton

by Jack Lakowsky

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith last week updated both Town Council and families about how Belltown schools will manage the difficult task of reopening to students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“There’s a new change every week,” Smith last Friday told parents in the East Hampton High School auditorium during a socially distanced and livestreamed information session.

Smith, school administrators and the East Hampton Board of Education are planning for a full reopening of Belltown schools, with students attending classes in person, albeit with new pandemic prevention methods such as mask-wearing requirements, social distancing, and the installation of plastic shields between desks in classrooms. Gov. Ned Lamont has also said he wants a full reopening of Connecticut schools.

East Hampton’s school reopening plan lists three different models. Full, in-person learning, which assumes the current low in Connecticut’s COVID-19 transmissions will continue. Smith said if East Hampton sees a mild spike in cases, schools will switch to a hybrid model, which will see a mix of in-person and distanced learning. Lastly, if local COVID-19 rates spike severely, schools will return to the distance learning models used during the latter third of the last school year.

“Safety is our number one priority,” said Smith. “We’re taking these plans very seriously. But we don’t have the option to just say ‘Okay, let’s just start with hybrid learning.’”

According to Chatham Health District Director Russell Melmed, neither the state Department of Public Health (DPH) nor the CDC have told regional and municipal health departments what specific numbers of cases would cause schools to switch between different learning models.

“I wouldn’t know how to apply those numbers,” said Melmed. “[DPH] and the CDC need to come forward with those thresholds.”

Melmed said much mystery still surrounds the pandemic, and that even health officials have much to learn about it.

Smith said it is everyone’s responsibility to help keep schools open and safe. He said cooperation of parents will be essential to a successful reopening. As part of its reopening plan, East Hampton schools ask that parents every morning check their child for any COVID-19 symptoms. Students feeling sick must stay home.

Smith also recommended that parents drop their children off at school rather than take the school bus. Details on how exactly such a high number of drop-offs will be organized are still to come, said Smith. The state recommended seating just one student per row on school buses. Due to the small size of the local bus fleet, Smith said this wouldn’t be possible in East Hampton, adding that masks will need to be worn on busses.

The state recently announced a three-day reduction in the required number of school days, from 180 to 177. The school year will begin after Labor Day. Smith said this extra time will be used to help train staff in COVID-19 prevention.

Smith said the state plan also calls for distancing student desks. At schools like Memorial School, Smith said this presents a problem because classrooms use long tables where sit multiple students, rather than individual desks. This is another issue to be tackled by Memorial School’s building reopening committee. Smith has assigned reopening committees to each of Belltown’s school buildings.

East Hampton schools has purchased a supply of facemasks. Smith said the wearing of facemasks by students and staff is “nonnegotiable.” He said any student who refuses to wear a mask will be sent home. Students will be allowed periodic “mask breaks” throughout the day. Teachers can bring students outside, or to areas where appropriate distancing is possible. Smith recommended that parents help their students adapt to mask wearing by having them wear masks for one or two hours a day at home. This, he said, will make the wearing masks less jarring to students, especially younger learners.

As another safeguard against COVID-19 spread, the schools bought a large supply of plastic shields, gloves, and hand sanitizer.

On Tuesday, July 14, Smith in a Town Council meeting told councilors he estimates the cost of buying prevention supplies, and retrofitting the infrastructure of school buildings, will be at least \$150,000. Smith added that the state Department of Education is asking schools to track all expenses related to preparing against the pandemic. Exact details are to be discussed, he said, but he anticipates compensations from state and federal agencies.

“A lot of this depends on other people making decisions for us,” Smith said to the council.

Smith said East Hampton schools will also change their start-of-school narrative to students.

“Normally, we push for perfect attendance in September,” Smith told parents. “This year, we’re just encouraging healthy attendance.”

Smith said every classroom, and entrances and exits, will be equipped with sanitation stations. Teachers will also review proper handwashing techniques with students every morning.

A cornerstone of both East Hampton and the state’s school reopening plans will be organizing students into “cohorts,” consistent groups of students who remain together throughout each day. This minimizes possible spread and, if a case is discovered, eases the difficult process of contact tracing.

Smith said high school students will not be organized into cohorts. This would be next to

impossible because high school student schedules are almost collegiate, in that students select many of their own courses, like opting for Advanced Placement [AP] classes or electives, according to Smith.

Lunches for students in grades K-5, Smith told parents, will be delivered to their classrooms. Students at the middle school and high school will have grab-and-go lunch. In the upper grades, lunch waves will be reduced from about 150 students per wave to about 75. The high school’s construction, with a large gym and outdoor spaces, will allow students to distance during lunch. Developmentally, middle and high school students will be more conscious of safety rules, Smith said.

East Hampton Schools Director of Curriculum Mary Clark also addressed families at last Friday’s session. Clark serves on the districtwide school reopening committee.

“This is, unfortunately, a largely reactive process,” said Clark.

Clark said she’s heard concerns from parents about large class sizes in the younger grades. One request she received was for the instatement of a new third grade teacher at Memorial School. She said this would not be possible.

Clark said school officials are considering a deferment of early enrollment as another prevention tactic.

“We need more time to finalize plans tailored to each school building,” said Clark. “We need more information. We may very well come into problems we haven’t solved before.”

Clark said that, no matter what challenges and obstacles arise, East Hampton families can expect total transparency from the schools. Clark said, as a parent to two young learners herself, she understands and respects any apprehension or concerns families may have about returning to in-person learning. She said she and school officials have observed responses of schools from across the world.

“This is unprecedented,” said Clark. “We’re anticipating that a drastic change could happen at any time. We must be flexible to be responsive.”

Clark listed gradual steps that will help reintroduce school students to “normal” school life. Schools will first focus on helping students – and staff – readjust to routines. Then, Clark said, students and staff will share their individual experiences of the pandemic. Clark said the third step will be balancing school curriculum to accommodate for inconsistencies and learning loss that may have occurred during distance learning and summer break.

Superintendent Smith said questions still remain as to whether or not parents will be supplied with school materials should schools have to close due to a COVID-19 spike.

Whether or not schools will host clubs is still in question, Smith said. Athletics, Smith said,

will likely be judged on a case-by-case basis. Contact sports, such as football, will be less likely to run that track, in which athletes can be distanced.

Smith said access to actual school buildings will be limited to students, staff and administrators. Therefore, he said, parents will be unable to take in-person tours of school buildings to judge COVID-prevention retrofitting for themselves. He said one option could be to post to social media video tours of the newly outfitted schools.

Access to playscapes and recess time are still in discussion, said Smith.

“We took a more aggressive approach than other towns,” said Smith to parents. “But honestly, if we were in a situation like Florida, we wouldn’t be in this auditorium because I wouldn’t know what to do.”

Smith said that under no circumstances will public schools be used as coronavirus testing sites.

**Chatham Health Director Weighs In**  
Chatham Health Director Melmed said the world is still in the “infancy” of understanding COVID-19.

“We’re still learning about the SARS outbreak in 2003,” said Melmed. “The problem with local health is we don’t have the [resources] to make it someone’s only job to study and understand the rapidly evolving evidence.”

Melmed said public trust stems from public health department’s basing all decisions and policies on sound science. Such science, he said, is not yet available for this virus.

“Right now, [the area] has very few cases,” said Melmed. “But risk isn’t zero.”

Melmed said the unspoken understanding in reopening schools-or businesses or government offices- is the acceptance of some community transmission. Melmed exemplified the COVID-18 situation in Israel. At first, Israel’s case numbers were low, and remained low during the county’s shutdown, according to Melmed. However, after Israel reopened its economy and schools, case numbers rose drastically. Melmed said anecdotal evidence like this is all public health officials have to go on right now.

“Is economic security worth one case? Five? Ten?” said Melmed. “I don’t know the answer to that.”

Questions remain as to the scientific basis of reopening schools and the economy, Melmed said. There is even some doubt as to testing for the virus. The FDA, citing the emergency, approved improperly-trialed test kits, he said. Also, reports of false positive tests in Connecticut emerged last week. Melmed said this is especially problematic because this means COVID-negative people were quarantined with positive COVID sufferers.

“The expectation may be that we know more than we do,” said Melmed.

# Belltown Native Publishes First Children's Book

by Jack Lakowsky

Author and East Hampton native Meaghan Axel said she writes books to empower readers of all ages by helping them develop vocabulary to describe their feelings and affirm themselves through anxiety and self-doubt.

She communicates this message in her first published work, *The Power in Me: An Empowering Guide to Using Your Breath to Focus Your Thoughts* from Belle Isle Books. To express appreciation to her hometown, Axel last week allowed Belltown locals free access to the book's Kindle edition.

Axel graduated from East Hampton High School in 1999. She now lives in Salisbury, Md.

"East Hampton taught me how to appreciate nature," said Axel in an interview with the *Rivereast*. "And honestly, there wasn't always much to do, so I learned a lot of patience living there. You really learn how to listen to your thoughts."

Axel said she also wants to convey a message that making mindful choices in the language we use to describe ourselves and others is of great importance. She will expand on this topic in her upcoming book, *The Power in Words*, a companion to her first work, slated to be self-published in the fall.

A third book, Axel's first attempt at humor, should be released between winter 2020 and

spring 2021, she said.

After graduating East Hampton High School, Axel attended Central Connecticut State University where she majored in English. She then earned her master's degree in education from the University of New Haven. She currently works as a school librarian.

Axel said her position allows her to read books to young children. This way, she can gauge what young readers are interested in.

"Kids are more engaged when things are funny," said Axel.

Axel said her writing schedule is irregular and largely based around family and work obligations.

"My writing day happens when it can," said Axel. "Usually in the early morning before my daughter wakes up. At naptime, as soon as she's asleep, I'm running downstairs to try and get something done."

Axel said she is constantly jotting down story ideas on her phone. Sometimes, she said, a good idea will strike her in the middle of a shower, and she'll have to run out and jot it down before the inspiration escapes.

In addition to children's fiction, Axel also writes a blog for mothers, women, and caretakers in general.

Like most school professionals nationwide, Axel was laid off from work at the onset of the

pandemic. A benefit to this, she said, was the opening up of more writing time.

"I'm definitely more creative when I'm a full-time at home mom," said Axel. "Being creative is a way to survive, to talk about victories and challenges. I felt this was an opportunity for me work on and explore some more things."

Axel said that at some point she'd like to explore writing nonfiction, as well as middle-grade and young adult fiction.

Axel lists children's author and illustrator Nancy Tillman, whose popular picture books use animals to depict the love parents have for their children, as a major influence on her work.

"Her messages and her illustrations are always so beautiful," Axel said of Tillman.

Axel also named children's fiction authors Susan Verde and Peter H. Reynolds as inspirations. Axel also named writer Vashti Harrison, a writer and filmmaker whose works are rooted in Caribbean heritage and folklore, as an artist she admires.

In Connecticut, Axel said she misses Plan B Burger Bar in Glastonbury. She also said Connecticut has superior sushi.

*The Power of Me* can be bought in paperback, hardcover, and e-book through Amazon, Walmart, Barnes & Noble, Target, and other major retailers. Visit Axel at [www.meaghanaxel.com](http://www.meaghanaxel.com).



Author Meaghan Axel has a new children's book, *The Power of Me*.

## New School Board Member Appointed in Marlborough

by Karla Santos

After more than a month with a Board of Education vacancy, the Board of Selectmen Tuesday night voted unanimously to appoint one of the applicants, Priya Fitzgerald, a Democrat.

Selectmen Joe Asklar said he reviewed all of the applications received for the vacancy and thought they were "excellent." He then made a motion to select Fitzgerald to fill the vacancy.

First Selectman Greg Lowrey, before voting, said he was impressed with all of the applications; and Selectman Amy Traversa also said she was glad to see so many people find interest in running for the Board of Education. Traversa noted she was familiar with three of the applicants.

The five candidates that applied for the role were Aileen Vrooman, Sara McLaughlin, Kerri Barella, Stephanie Billiel and Fitzgerald. The position became vacant following Democrat Michelle Padilla's move out of state last month.

Fitzgerald is a fourth-grade teacher with Glastonbury Public Schools, but has 19 years of teaching experience in grades one through five.

Asklar said that when talking to people about

Fitzgerald, he was told she was intelligent in making decisions based on facts.

Lowrey said that one application was received prior to the vacancy and one during June. The remaining three applications were received in July. He noted that applications are kept under consideration for a year and that he does not require a certain number of applicants before appointing someone.

Lowrey acknowledged that all of the candidates were good but agreed with Asklar in that Fitzgerald was a strong one for the position.

The selectmen unanimously passed the motion, appointing Fitzgerald as the new Board of Education member.

Ruth Kelly, chairperson of the Board of Education, told the *Rivereast* Padilla was present at the last board meeting which was in June.

"We were sad because she was a very good board member," Kelly said of Padilla's departure. "She was thoughtful, regularly attended and gave good input," Kelly said.

Kelly noted that she wasn't worried when the vacancy occurred because the board has had vacancies in the past and she knew they would

eventually have someone fill the vacant position.

"There was no concern as far as the position not being filled," Kelly said, adding that the vacancy has not impacted the operation of the board.

Kelly said the first meeting Padilla would've missed normally would've been in August because the board doesn't normally meet in July. "We saw no hurry in June to go ahead and fill that vacancy," Kelly said.

However plans changed, due to COVID-19. The school board met last night – after press time – to review a school reopening plan for the fall.

### The Process of Filling a Vacancy

Lowrey said that the process he uses to fill vacancies is to gather applications, confer with town commission or board chair and members, the public and the Board of Selectmen.

He said he focuses on three features in each candidate – knowledge, including credentials and experience; availability to engage and attend meetings; and demonstrated ability to develop a rapport.

As of Thursday last week Lowrey said he was still reviewing applications including one that arrived that same week.

Kelly said that the Board of Selectmen might consult with the Board of Education in the process of filling a vacancy, but the selectmen get to make the final decision.

According to Lowrey, per the town charter, vacancies are replaced with members from the same political party or with an unaffiliated voter. Padilla and Fitzgerald are both democrats.

Lowrey said he regularly proposes appointments and finds that "methodical vetting brings more information to the process."

The town has two other vacancies – an alternate and a member, both of which are Republican vacancies – on the Planning Commission, and an alternate vacancy on the Board of Finance, which is to be filled by a Republican or an unaffiliated.

Applications to be a part of a board or commission can be found on the home page of the town's website, [www.marlboroughct.net](http://www.marlboroughct.net). Applications can be filled out and sent to the first selectman's office, 26 N. Main St., for review.

# New Andover Schools Superintendent Chosen

by Sloan Brewster

Andover has a new schools superintendent.

On Monday afternoon, at a special meeting, the Board of Education unanimously appointed Valerie Bruneau as its new superintendent of schools, board chair Shannon Loudon in a text message Tuesday.



**Valerie Bruneau**

The board is awaiting confirmation of Bruneau's certification from Commissioner of Education Miguel Cardona, a step Loudon said was a technicality as the district already has a copy of the certification.

Bruneau's three-year contract comes with a \$70,000 annual salary, said Laura Webb, financial operations for the district. The position is part-time. Andover Elementary School is the only school in the district.

Hired Monday, Bruneau began working Tuesday, with "a lot to get done" and took a few moments from her day Wednesday to speak to the *Rivereast*, after wrapping up a meeting on Zoom.

"Very glad to be here," she said.

Hailing from West Haven, Bruneau has been an educator for 24 years and said she spent most of that time working in West Haven, including as vice principal of Harry M. Bailey Middle School, which has "upwards of 1,000 students."

She also "did a stint" as principal of Torrington Middle School.

According to an article published in the Associated Press on July 16 of last year, Bruneau was fired from that job and subsequently filed a federal lawsuit claiming the firing was a retaliatory act. She was granted \$140,000 as part of a settlement deal.

In the 2018 suit, according to the AP story, Bruneau claimed she was dismissed from her job in 2017 because she had advocated for the needs of special education students.

Bruneau's suit also sought reinstatement of her employment, and she said Wednesday that she loved the district and would have been

happy to return had she not already been in another position.

"Advocating for the students is always my number one priority and that is how I wound up, within a week, as the director of special education for Litchfield with the Connecticut Junior Republic," she said.

Bruneau spent two years as special education director at the private Litchfield School – an outplacement facility for special education students.

"What I loved was I had students from 30 towns," she said.

After that, she was a special education consultant for Norwalk Public Schools.

Currently working on completing her doctorate degree at the University of Bridgeport – which she hopes to complete by next year – Bruneau said she was interested in the Andover position for a variety of reasons, including that now-former superintendent Sally Doyen was a professor at Southern Connecticut State University when she received her superintendent's certification 10 years ago.

"I was impressed with" Doyen, Bruneau said. "Andover's a great community, small town, and that attracted me as well, a small-town family atmosphere."

One of Bruneau's first tasks is working with the Andover Elementary School Reopening Committee to plan for the opening of school in the fall after it was closed and students transitioned to distance learning in March in response to COVID-19, she said. She said she has spoken with area superintendents and is working with the RHAM, Hebron and Marlborough districts to assure a safe reopening.

The district's reopening plan is due to the state next Friday and will then be shared with parents and families, Bruneau said.

She said she is looking forward to meeting the families.

"So far I am very impressed with the dedication of the staff," she said.

Andover Elementary School Principal John Briody had only positive comments about his two days working with Bruneau.

"I'm enjoying getting to know her and we already have a good working relationship," he said.

## East Hampton Police News

6/5: John Ucci, 61, of 193 Marlborough St., Portland turned himself in pursuant to a warrant and was charged with second-degree breach of Peace, third-degree assault, second-degree threatening and evading responsibility, East Hampton Police said.

7/1: John Banning, 57, of 223 West High St., was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license, police said.

7/2: Colin McBriarty, 30, of Berlin, was taken into custody pursuant to a warrant and charged with operating a motor vehicle while under sus-

pension, disobeying an officer's signal, interfering/resisting arrest and second-degree reckless endangerment, police said.

7/11: Stefanie Donahue, 42, of Manchester, was charged with third-degree assault, first-degree criminal trespass, and disorderly conduct, police said.

Also, from June 29-July 12, officers responded to 12 medical calls, 11 alarms, two motor vehicle thefts, eight thefts – six of which were from unlocked motor vehicles – and made 45 traffic stops, police said.

## Portland Police News

7/10: Devonte White, 27, of 174 Marlborough St., Portland, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny, Portland Police said.

## Colchester Police News

7/16: State Police said Danielle Elise Humphreys, 22, of 95 Senate Brook Drive, Amston, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and following too closely.

7/17: State Police said Mark P Forsyth, 52, of Windham, was arrested and charged with second-degree failure to appear.

## Obituaries

### Colchester

#### Helen Glemboski Long

Helen Glemboski Long, 94, of Rogers, Ark., passed peacefully away Sunday, July 19, at Circle of Life Hospice in Bentonville, Ark. She was born July 7, 1926, in Colchester, to Joseph Glemboski and Katherine Pasternak Glemboski.



While she was born and raised in Connecticut, she lived most of her life in the South and adapted to Southern climate, culture and foods, but she never lost her Northern accent or love for her family, hometown and New England culture.

She is survived by six children, Steven Long (Lea) of Rogers, Ark., Mary Holmes (Ted) of Yuba City, Calif., Rose Woods (Gene) of Rogers, Ark., Jim Long of Claremore, Okla., George Long (Barbara) of Rogers, Ark., Alice Heikens (Norm) of Franklin, Ind.; one brother, Thomas Glemboski of Colchester; 11 grandchildren (Lorenzo Woods, Tim Holmes, John Holmes, Jonathan Woods, Stephanie Long, David Long, Jessica Long, Ethan Heikens, Matthew Long, James Long and John Long); and 11 great grandchildren. In addition, she is survived by her beloved Glemboski family, Long/Oliver family (known to them as Pee Wee), and friends who are like family.

She was predeceased by brothers Frank Glemboski, Leo Glemboski, and Ed Glemboski.

There will not be a visitation or public funeral service due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Her remains will be buried in St. Joseph Cemetery in Colchester when it is safe for the family to travel and gather.

Memorials may be made in memory of Helen Glemboski Long to the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees, P.O. Box 67, Colchester, CT 06415, or to a charity of choice.

Arrangements are by Epting Funeral Home in Bentonville, Ark. Condolences can be made at [www.eptingfuneralhome.webs.com](http://www.eptingfuneralhome.webs.com).

### Colchester

#### Frank Emerson Mabey

Frank Emerson Mabey, 78, of Colchester, passed away peacefully at home Thursday, July 16. Born Aug. 19, 1941, in Portsmouth, N.H., he was a son of the late Frank and Ruth (McClellan) Mabey.



Frank married his high school sweetheart, Dawn Sarni, on March 24, 1958. The couple shared 57 years of marriage, building a wonderful legacy of love and family together.

Frank was a quiet man who loved spending time at Hampton Beach in New Hampshire. His greatest joy was spending time with his family camping. Dawn predeceased Frank Aug. 1, 2015; he has missed her every day since. Frank retired in 1990 after a career with Pratt and Whitney as a machinist.

He will be remembered most fondly as a wonderful dad who was lovingly spoiled by his seven daughters whom he leaves to mourn his loss: Rebecca and Danny Post of Colchester, Donna-Marie and Jay Lankford of Colchester, Deborah and Mike Ferrier of Torrington, Fran and Ted Miraldes of Colchester, Lisa Depka-Mabey of North Carolina, Heather and Shaun Parmelee of Colchester, Melody and David Kunold of Texas; a brother, Richard and Pat Mabey of York, Maine; a sister-in-law, Genevieve Mabey of California; 22 grandchildren, Ashley and Jared, Stephen and Megan, Elaina and Derek, Amber and Preston, Nikita and Paul, John, Josh and Mary, Jeremy, William, Katrina and Jacob, Frank, Ted Jr. and Katie, Sarah, Ciara, Kyle, Zach and Taylor, Shaun Jr. and Christina, Tyler and Megan, Ryan and Dexter, David Jr., Connor, Trinity; 17 great-grandchildren, Alyssa, Lacey, Leila, Aaliyah, Noah, Josiah, Angelina, Jason, Jorja, Michael, Molly, Aiden, Rilee, Madelyn, Peyton; and numerous extended family and friends.

In addition to both of his parents and his beloved wife, Dawn, Frank was predeceased by a grandson, Travis Depka; a great-grandson, Alex Lankford; his siblings, James Mabey and Barbara Mabey; as well as his loyal, beloved dog, Scooter.

Calling hours, including a time of remembrance and memory-sharing, were held Thursday, July 23, at Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial followed in New St. Andrew Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to Middlesex Health Hospice, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

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

### Colchester

#### Drew Allen Danko

Drew Allen Danko, 35, of Colchester, passed away at home Sunday, July 19. Born in Norwich Feb. 2, 1985, he was the youngest son of Phillip N. and Cynthia L. (Borkiewicz) Danko, with whom he resided. He was a caregiver and best friend to his father who he loved so much; he was also a pillar of strength and support to his mother.



Drew was a lifelong resident of Colchester, graduating from Bacon Academy with the class of 2003. He loved to work on cars, weld and fix all kinds of engines. He had a wonderful knowledge to take something that was inoperable and do whatever it took to make it run again. Drew enjoyed woodworking and wood-burning. He possessed a very special bond with any animal he encountered and especially loved all five of the family dogs, especially Jasmine. He will be remembered as a good friend to anyone in need and a great friend to those he had close friendships with.

Drew loved his family beyond measure. In addition to his parents, he leaves behind his brother and best friend, Phillip Danko Jr. of Johnstown, Pa.; his sister, Dawn Danko and her husband, Lee Phillips of Narragansett, R.I.; a half-sister, Windy of Connecticut; and many extended family members and friends.

Calling hours will be held Monday, July 27, from 4-6 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester.

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

### Marlborough

#### Kimberly Ruth Adams

Kimberly Ruth Adams, 58, of Marlborough, passed away peacefully at home Friday, July 17. Kimberly was born March 22, 1962, to William and Carolyn Gage in Melrose, Mass.



In 1987, Kimberly wed her beloved husband, Lawrence E. Adams, going on to have two children, Benjamin Adams and Samantha Adams.

Kimberly was immensely proud of her family, and leaves behind nothing but beautiful memories. As her health declined, she wanted nothing more than to spend time in her garden and with her three grandchildren, Alexis Thibeault (5), Griffin Adams (4) and Forrest Adams (2).

She is survived by her loving husband, Lawrence Adams; her son, Benjamin Adams; daughter, Samantha Adams; daughter-in-law, Holly Adams; her grandchildren; parents, William and Carolyn Gage; sister, Pamela Forrest; and two brothers, William Gage and Daniel Gage; as well as many brothers- and sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews and friends.

Services will be private for the family.

### Colchester

#### Catherine Sandelin Brown

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of our loving and devoted mother, Catherine Sandelin Brown, 77, of Colchester, Saturday, July 11.



Cathy was born to late Hugo and Beatrice (Sedgley) Sandelin of Brunswick, Maine, on July 8, 1943. She grew up as the middle child between her two brothers, Rik and Keith, on the Sandelin/Two Echo Farm where she loved her dogs and her cow, Fashion. She graduated from Brunswick High School in 1961, where she was active in many drama productions. She followed in her mother's footsteps and graduated from the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing in 1964. Cathy spent most of her nursing career at W.W. Backus Hospital in Norwich, CT as a surgical nurse until her retirement.

Cathy married the late F. Terry Brown of Noank June 10, 1967, in Brunswick, Maine. Together they had two daughters who survive her, Caryn and her husband Richard Baseler of Colchester, and Jennifer and her husband Matthew Moore of Christiana, Pa. Her greatest joy was her grandchildren, Emily Baseler of Willemstad, Curacao, Sarah Baseler Davis and her husband George of Marysville, Wash., and Matthew and Faith Moore of Christiana, Pa.

Cathy was immensely proud of her family and leaves behind her love and beautiful memories. She also had a love of reading and bird watching. Her children and grandchildren will think of her often when we see her favorite birds, cardinals and chickadees. She is also survived by her brother, Rik Sandelin of Brunswick, Maine, Hugo Keith Sandelin of Richmond, Maine, and many beloved nieces and nephews.

A celebration of her life will take place at a later date when we are able to gather together. Burial will be private and at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in her memory to support the Alzheimer's Association ([www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)).

### Portland

#### James A. Post

James A. Post, 90, passed away peacefully at his home in Cromwell Monday, July 20. He was born in Portland to the late LeRoy and Eva (Boardman) Post Sept. 7, 1929.



James was a veteran of the Korean War, serving in the Army as a radio/radar repairman.

When he returned back to the states he entered the research and development field, first for Raymond Engineering in Middletown and then for United Technologies Research Center in East Hartford where he worked until retirement.

During the great times in his life he enjoyed model airplanes, traveling in his motor home, telescope building and target shooting but his passion was two-way radio communications, K1-NQJ was his call sign. He was a lifelong member of the Middlesex Amateur Radio Society and a 65-year member of the Warren Lodge #51 A.F. & A.M. in Portland.

He leaves his wife, of over 65 years, Joan (Ellsworth) Post of Cromwell; his son, Keith Post and wife Susan of Colchester and his daughter, Deborah Brennan and David O'Neil of Charlestown, Rhode Island; grandson, Steven Post and wife Stephanie; and two great-granddaughters, Josslyn and Jillian Post.

He was predeceased by his brother, Clifford Post and wife, Mildred Post of Portland.

A graveside service will be held today, July 24, at 11 a.m., in Center Cemetery, 55 Fairway Drive, Portland where full military honors will be accorded.

In lieu of flowers donations in James' memory may be made to Middlesex Hospice Palliative Care, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

Cromwell Funeral Home has care of the arrangements. To share memories or send condolences to the family, visit [www.doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://www.doolittlefuneralservice.com).

### Hebron

#### John E. Hibbard

John E. Hibbard, 84, of Hebron, beloved husband of the late Bernice S. Hibbard, passed away Sunday, July 12, at Marlborough Health & Rehabilitation Center, after a life well-lived. Born in Woodstock March 27, 1936, he was the devoted son of the late John E. and Sigrid (Nyholm) Hibbard.

John had a lifetime love for the outdoors. A 1958 graduate of UConn, with a degree in silviculture, John became known as a passionate advocate and steward of the Connecticut landscape. After his compulsory military service and several years working in Florida for the USDA, John became executive director (secretary) of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, where he lobbied the state legislature for passage of the Landowner Liability Law, served on state task forces for farmland preservation and dairy industry preservation, and was involved in creating Connecticut's Forest Practices act, as well as Connecticut's Environment 2000 plan. For his lifetime of service, John was presented with an Environmental Merit Award of Lifetime Achievement by the EPA, and recognized with proclamations by both the Town of Hebron and State of Connecticut.

Upon moving to Hebron in 1966, John expanded his life of public service, becoming active in Hebron politics, serving on a number of boards and committees including stints as town moderator, as a member of the Charter Commission, and as chair of both the boards of selectmen and finance.

In his private life, John was devoted to his family in Woodstock. He spent many weekends of his adult life doing chores like chopping wood and maintaining Christmas trees fields for his father and his father's siblings. When Bernice became ill with MS, for 16 years he turned his focus to her care. He loved to riding his tractor and tending to his vegetable garden, sharing its bounty far and wide. John was a good man, a man of quiet faith who would help anyone in need.

John will be forever loved and remembered by his daughter, Beth Hibbard of Vernon and his friend and neighbor, Ron Fitch of Hebron.

In addition to Bernice, John was predeceased his sister Ann Redman, his uncle, Raymond Hibbard, and his aunts, Mary and F. Veronica Hibbard.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Connecticut Forest & Park Association ([www.ctwoodlands.org/donate](http://www.ctwoodlands.org/donate)) or Gilead Congregational Church, 672 Gilead St., Hebron, CT 06248.

To leave online condolences, please visit the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home website at [www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).

### East Hampton

#### Elsie J. Erlandson

Elsie J. Erlandson, 83, of East Hampton, beloved wife of Richard Erlandson Sr. died peacefully Tuesday, July 14, at her home. Born July 23, 1936, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Algot and Ellen (Costello) Hanson.



Elsie had worked at Travelers and then Pratt & Whitney before her retirement. Elsie was a longtime volunteer for Meals on Wheels. Elsie enjoyed photography and loved taking pictures.

Besides her husband, she is survived by her son, Richard Erlandson Jr. of East Hampton; her two grandchildren, Elizabeth Erlandson and partner Jeremy Jarvis, Benjamin Erlandson and wife Michelle; and her three great-grandchildren, Isabella, Zachary and Sophia.

She was predeceased by her daughter, Carol Erlandson.

Funeral arrangements will be private with burial in the family plot in Lakeview Cemetery.

The family would like to deeply thank Maria and Bonnie and a special thanks to Faye, for all the loving care they gave to Elsie during her illness.

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