



RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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Do You Want to Build a Snowman?... The Town Center Project president Judith Podell, working on her SnoFolk project, which represents Hebron's past, present and future. There will be a dedication ceremony for TTCP's new SnoFolk this Sunday, Dec. 6. For more details, see page 10.

Seniors Feeling Strain Of COVID-19 Anxiety

by Jack Lakowsky

In the era of COVID-19, senior citizens and other high-risk demographics must overcome worries about the newfound risks associated with simple needs such as grocery stores trips and visits with family.

Joann Ewing, director of the East Hampton Senior Center and the town's senior services coordinator, and Lauren Incognito, director of East Hampton Social Services, both described the loneliness and anxiety some Belltown seniors face during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The greatest impact on our seniors has been the sudden lack of socialization," Ewing said last week in a Zoom conversation with the *Rivereast*. "People need to socialize, to be with other people."

Recently, Incognito conducted an online program at East Hampton Public Library, where seniors discussed pandemic-caused challenges.

"A lot of what we heard in that session was that they were lonely, which is a hard thing as an older person," said Incognito. "People said they went to the senior center to see friends for lunch, and for activities."

Most programs at the senior center – a popular spot where before the pandemic older residents gathered to see friends and enjoy group exercises and activities such as bingo – have stopped. Services at the center are appointment-only. This reduced capacity will continue for a while, Ewing said.

Ewing said fully opening the center with safety protocols would be impractical.

"For example, we looked at how many people we could have in our exercise program, which normally has about 20 people," said Ewing. "With distancing, we could've had four people in total."

The senior center has managed to keep a few activities. Ewing said about a dozen local seniors join in for weekly bingo over Zoom, as well as virtual yoga, and writing and poetry

groups.

"We actually didn't have the writers' group before [the pandemic]," said Ewing, adding this group is likely to become a fixture of senior service offerings.

Ewing and her staff arranged with a senior service network called *myseniorcenter.com*. The company helped Ewing set up a conference call-style option for seniors who lacked the technology or simply did not want to use Zoom. Seniors can safely connect with friends and family via the more familiar method of phone calls.

Ewing said the calls helped alleviate some senior's privacy concerns, who disliked the idea of a webcam peering into their home.

Overall, Ewing said, Belltown seniors quickly learned how to use Zoom and other streaming or video call services. She said families in town have been excellent and supportive, assisting their older loved ones with learning new technology.

Ewing said when the pandemic first struck, her priority was ensuring vulnerable seniors had access to food and groceries.

"We immediately started a shopping program," said Ewing. "People give us a list and a volunteer from the local CERT [Community Emergency Response Team] goes shopping for them then comes back to drop groceries off. It's totally contactless, and it's working out well."

Ewing said this service helped around 10 "very high-risk" cases.

Ewing said the center has continued working with the Community Renewal Team (CRT) to provide grab-and-go meals.

"That's been a lifeline for some folks," said Ewing. Ewing named one example of a resident expressing gratitude for the grab-and-go meals because they were afraid to go to the grocery store, as they and their spouse were both high-

See Anxiety, page 21

Beloved Restaurant Owner Remembered

by Karla Santos

Anna Valkanos Anastasiou served the Colchester community through her business Family Pizza Restaurant and Grill for almost four decades – but last week, she died unexpectedly, leaving generations of clients mourning her loss.

A Facebook post announcing Anastasiou's death was filled with comments that described her as amazing, special, wonderful, a great friend, joyful, someone who was always smiling, who made a difference and who was a friend to all.

Christos Valkanos is Anastasiou's younger brother and co-owner of Family Pizza. According to Valkanos, Anastasiou, 62, died peacefully and with her family by her side on Nov. 27 at Hartford Hospital.

The business is temporarily closed, and has been since the day of Anastasiou's death. Valkanos said closing the restaurant was a

family decision, as they need "some time to mourn."

Walk-through calling hours were held on Tuesday.

Valkanos said his sister's death was unexpected, as she was not sick and had no symptoms of illness. He would not disclose the cause of death. Instead, they want to focus on honoring who Anastasiou was to the people that surrounded her.

"She was a loving mother, a loving wife, a loving grandmother, a loving sister, a loving mother-in-law and a loving aunt," Valkanos said. "Her family was everything to her."

Anastasiou had two sons, a daughter-in-law, three grandchildren, a husband of almost 40 years, a brother and many nieces and nephews.

In 1966, when she was 7 years old, Anastasiou and her family emigrated from Greece to Canada. They moved to the United States when she was 10, and in 1977 Anastasiou graduated

from Buckley High School in Hartford.

Valkanos said his parents started the Colchester business in 1978 – and then he and Anastasiou took over in 1983.

"She loved Family Pizza, specially, our employees, our customers, our friends," Valkanos said of his sister.

He noted that she was very dedicated to the business.

"She was a mother figure to so many customers and employees that came through this restaurant over the last 37 years," Valkanos said. "Today all those people have children and grandchildren."

Anastasiou was always a happy person and she always had a smile on her face, Valkanos said.

"Whether she felt good or not, she walked into Family Pizza trying to make everyone else happy," he added.

See Restaurant Owner, page 21



Anna Valkanos Anastasiou died peacefully Nov. 27. She and her brother ran the popular Family Pizza in Colchester for more than 35 years.

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

by Mike Thompson

The Day of New London had a story this week about two calls from March and April between former Colchester resident Anthony Todt and his sister, Chrissy Caplet. Todt, you'll recall, is accused of killing his wife and three children, as well as the family dog, at their Florida home in late December of last year. Authorities then found him living with the decomposed bodies on Jan. 13, 2020.

Florida police have said they have a confession from Todt, and Todt allegedly tried to kill himself when police found the bodies in January. But Todt has pled not guilty to the murders.

In June, Todt wrote a lengthy letter to his formerly-estranged father in which he said his wife killed the children and dog before killing herself. The *Rivereast* reported on that letter over the summer. The phone calls from prison predate the letter, and don't really offer up much in the way of new information – but they do indicate attributing the murders to his wife wasn't a tactic he came up with in June.

Indeed, in the phone calls Todt seemed to blame his wife Megan for, well, everything.

According to *The Day* – which received transcripts of the phone calls in October, following a public records request, and published a report on the calls last weekend – Todt not only suggested that Megan was responsible for the deaths, he even indicated she may have tried to kill them before.

"There were multiple attempts, just so you know, multiple attempts in the last ... over a

timeframe, there's been attempts," Todt told Caplet, according to *The Day*.

Todt indicated he'd moved to Florida full-time last November to try "to handle things" – but evidently he couldn't.

"I couldn't stop this because I wasn't there," he told Caplet – which matches up with what he told his father in that June letter. He wrote then, after he had left their house to go work on their condo (but actually wound up falling asleep in his car until 4 a.m.), Megan drugged, and then stabbed and suffocated, the three children. He wrote that Megan then fatally stabbed herself after Todt returned home.

I felt at the time that it was a wild story Todt had concocted, and I still do – but after reading the *Day* story I can say at least Todt is consistent. And, in his view, consistently blameless.

According to the article, Todt suggested to his sister that Megan barred him from asking his extended family for help, kept him from telling anyone about their not-great financial situation, and even prohibited him from seeing a doctor for his health issues.

He also blamed Megan for the family moving away from Connecticut.

"I'm sorry I was forced to move away from you guys, that was all her," he told Caplet. "She had it really limited and didn't want anyone to know anything about what was going on."

Caplet repeatedly told Todt she wished

See Editor's Desk, page 4



No-Shave November... On Monday, Nov. 30, Officer Ryan Bengston met with Lily Otero of Portland as she donated \$60 to the Portland Police Department's "No Shave November" fundraiser to benefit the Connecticut Cancer Foundation. Lily held an art show for her parents and grandparents to raise money to donate this holiday season.

Bulletin Board

As Christmas approaches, I find myself contemplating my troubled relationship with Santa Claus.

You might say we got off on the wrong foot when I was still a wee lad and thought all things were possible. In my innocence, I asked Santa to bring me a palomino pony for Christmas. (Sure, laugh, but think about some of the dumb stuff you wanted for Christmas.)

Christmas morning arrived and I raced from my bed to claim my new best friend, only to find (surprise!) no pony. He wasn't under the tree or next to the tree or in the box containing a new set of long underwear or waiting patiently in the back yard. Nope, all that anticipation and what do I get? No pony.

It was at that tender age that I began to suspect that Santa might not be all he was cracked up to be.

On a subsequent Christmas, I learned that Santa apparently has some logistical limitations. This revelation came after I asked Santa for a U.S. Army tank (a real one). Concerned about that "naughty or nice" caveat, I somehow failed to inform the jolly old fellow that my most un-Christmas-like intention was to mount my new tank like some kind of pint-sized Georgie Patton and flatten the house of the kid up the street who had annoyed me for some reason I can no longer remember.

Unaware (or at least unwilling to admit) that they had a junior sociopath on their hands, my parents gently informed me that Santa could not get his sleigh into the air if it were loaded down with a tank—and even if he could, a tank would take up so much room that thousands of other children wouldn't get anything for Christmas.

Why I should care about thousands of other children experiencing a giftless Christmas eluded me, but the weight/altitude argument did make a lot of sense. So I asked for a portable flamethrower instead. Santa knocked that request down to a sweater. (Fortunately, the kid up the street and I soon resolved whatever differences we had, thereby relieving me of the ignominy of trying to thrash him into submission with a woolen sweater.)

This is not to say that Christmas has always been a personal disappointment. I recall one Christmas morning when Santa brought me a really cool Cape Canaveral space station, complete with about 20 gun-toting plastic astronauts. That was in the 1950s or early '60s when our policy toward possible space aliens was apparently based on our historical dealings with Native Americans.

Despite the really cool space station, my disenchantment with Santa grew in my adolescent years when, waking in a hormonal fever on Christmas morning, I was disappointed to find no Miss October, clad only in a welcoming smile, awaiting me by the tree. Perhaps the U.S. Postal Service neglected to deliver my urgent letter to the North Pole or (more likely) Santa misinterpreted my purely platonic interest in the lovely Miss October (who, as I recall, had generously promised to devote the rest of her life to the welfare of orphaned puppies) as just one more example of naughty adolescent lechery.

For those of you who are beginning to entertain serious doubts about the state of my divine soul and my understanding of the true spirit of the season, let me reassure you that I am no longer the mercenary little creep whose idea of a merry Christmas involved crushing somebody's house with a Sherman tank. Sometime between the palomino pony and the realization that Miss October was likely to be a perpetual no-show I began to understand that it is more rewarding to give than to receive—particularly if nobody will give you what you really want.

So, Santa, forget the palomino pony and the tank and Miss October. Those days of youthful immaturity are long gone. This year, just give me a little more hair on the top of my head and a little less sprouting out of my ears.

What, you were maybe expecting a heartfelt plea for peace on earth?

Jim Hallas, Publisher

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Tilting at Windmills

To the Editor:

Frequent *Rivereast* contributor Don Denley loves "tilting at windmills." His imagined enemies are liberals and Democratic governors, current and past. But the local socialist government "swamp" he so detests has been extraordinarily lenient with him over his multiple and ongoing health code violations at his drinking establishment. Several daily papers and NBC Connecticut News report that the health and fire departments have made multiple trips to his bar in an effort to "educate" him so that he might keep the business open. But being a slow learner Denley pushed his "Trump first" agenda too far, and his bar was closed as a last resort. Denley could have visited any number of local and regional restaurants that follow the rules to see how it is done. Wear a mask when not seated. Provide social distanced seating. Simple things that anyone can follow. But not when you are a proud, obstinate, anti-science Trumpist.

In another 'outrage' letter several weeks ago Don got all worked up about my referencing an old *Journal Inquirer* article that mentioned he and his dad had converted a strip club into the current bar he runs. My facts were solid, Don. Ironically, you also extolled your dad's integrity as a hero Marine at Iwo Jima. The irony being you voted to re-elect a bone-spur draft dodger who called men like your dad "losers" and "suckers." Look in a mirror, Don, to see the one impugning your father's memory. He put his life on the line to help defeat Nazism. And here you are a proud Republican, the party of refuge for today's neo-Nazis. Immersed in conservative propaganda, your brain twists. Logical thinking becomes magical thinking. Up becomes down. Did you abandon Fox News for Newsmax? Needed a more potent narcotic where disillusioned Trump zombies can still congregate and commiserate?

Ed Smith – Andover

Don the Con

To the Editor:

Trump's disinformation campaign is an attempt to poison the well of our democracy.

Repeated lies may come to be accepted as truth; but they are still lies.

Despite his failed coup attempt, he has raised 15 million dollars from small donors since the election. The grift continues as Don the Con continues his blatant lies. The con goes on.

Ed Gyllenhammer – Portland

Illegitimate Election

To the Editor:

Speaking with former Obama staffers on October 24, 2020, Biden stated, "We're in a situation where we have put together, I think, the most extensive and inclusive voter fraud organization in the history of American politics." A week later he told Michigan voters, "I don't need you to get me elected; I need you once I'm elected." Sounds like someone confident the fix was in and the actual voting results would be irrelevant.

This election displayed extensive levels of voting fraud never before seen. We had traditional fraud such as votes cast by dead people, out-of-state people, and ballots cast in someone else's name. But the systematically-designed fraud from voting software systems (such as Dominion) was astronomical.

Trump was establishing massive leads Election Night when simultaneously in six battleground states counting was ostensibly shut-down with election observers sent home. But the counting didn't stop as four massive ballot dumps in all of these states gave Biden the lead. Once Biden took the lead, statistical impossibilities occurred where all subsequent new ballots, in all of these states, produced identical ratios of Biden-to-Trump votes favoring Biden.

Many red flags of fraud are apparent with physical ballots. Over 400,000 ballots were cast

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Letter Writers: Due to space constraints, letter writers must limit their letters to **300 words or less**. No exceptions will be made. E-mail is preferred. Word or text documents are best. Letters submitted without a contact phone number will not be published nor will anonymous letters or letters submitted by someone other than the person who wrote it. We cannot guarantee all letters will be published.

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voting only for Biden, leaving down-ticket races blank. Pennsylvania distributed 1.8 million mail-in ballots but 2.5 million were returned. Thousands of their absentee ballots were received before postmarks indicated they were sent!

Republican observers were denied access to counting centers in Philadelphia, Milwaukee, and Detroit. Improperly-completed ballots were allowed to be "cured" by Democrats, but not Republicans. Mandated legislative statutes were illegally ignored/over-ruled through baseless executive and judicial decisions.

Free elections are the cornerstone of our republic. Those claiming this wasn't a fraudulent and illegitimate election are either Democrat-hacks or ignorant idiots, but I repeat myself.

Sam Prentice – Andover

Thoughts from an Old Fossil

To the Editor:

I read with some concern the article in the Nov. 27 issue of the *Riverast News Bulletin* (page 17) about a "Grant to Aid Resident in Climate Change Research."

Although climate change is quite important to many today, Peter Siver has taken it on as a challenge of the climate change of 80 million years ago. In the article it states Siver says it will allow him to work on things that happened 80 million years ago, and the objectives, one of them being the use of fossil remains, and how (the climate) has changed over the period of time he is studying (10-80 million years), and what is exciting is that the climate of the earth was extremely warm at this time and there was no ice anywhere. I do believe I already learned that in eighth grade.

Nowhere in the article do I see what specifically will this grant and the so-called information elicited from this grant will provide that would be beneficial to today's questions and answers regarding climate change.

I do believe this \$286,615 amount could/should have given to better causes... pandemic relief, current climate control issues, etc.

Ralph Bianco – Colchester

Thanks from Arts Center

To the Editor:

We on the board of the Marlborough Arts Center want to thank our loyal members, and the many other art lovers in the community, who support our mission to bring arts to the region. It is through membership dues that we produce art shows, musical events like "4th Fridays at the Arts Café," classes in a range of art forms taught by our master artists, and the annual student art show and music concerts in collaboration with teachers in all the surrounding schools. Although activities were curtailed this year due to the pandemic, we did host five free outdoor concerts over the summer months that were enthusiastically received. Everyone wore masks and brought a chair or blanket for seating socially distant on our beautifully landscaped lawn. The Art Park was an added benefit as a walk along the path, seeing sculptures by our artists and whimsical artworks within the tree lined space, leads to a sense of calm and appreciation of art in various forms.

Now it is time to renew memberships for 2021, or even to join for the first time. Your financial support is needed to keep our all-volunteer organization continuing our artistic mission. We hope you will join us as members. You can do so easily by downloading the membership form on our website at www.marlbrougharts.org and then pay by PayPal or simply write a check to Marlborough Arts Center, Attn: Membership Committee, 231 North Main St., Marlborough, CT 06447. Call the Arts Center telephone at 860-467-6353 with any questions. A member of the board will return your call.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the Arts Center when events can resume. Meanwhile, stay safe and well. And may the joy of the arts brighten your holidays.

**Joan C. Lester, V.P.
Board of Directors
Marlborough Arts Center**

Appalling Sign

To the Editor:

Last Wednesday morning, the day before Thanksgiving, I was appalled to see a huge sign hanging from the Park Road Bridge over Route 2 (between exits 13 and 12) going towards Glastonbury. The font was large and very clear, so it was obvious that this was a professionally-made sign. The divisive message was: "No White Guilt."

To me, this statement means that the institutions of slavery, Jim Crow, disproportionate Black male incarceration, not to mention mass murder of Native Americans and presently impeding the arrival of desperate refugees to Connecticut, all do not matter. Instead of a sign saying "Happy Thanksgiving," the perpetrators want to divide the citizens when we so desperately need to come together.

I called the first selectman's office of Marlborough and then the state trooper to take it down. Please, let's put up signs of compassion, not of hate.

**Christi Moraga
Marlborough Resident and
Citizen of the World**

'Common Sense'

To the Editor:

Thomas Paine quotes (February 1776): 1) "Society is produced by our wants, and government by wickedness; the former promotes happiness by uniting our affections, the latter by restraining our vices." 2) "Men who look upon themselves born to reign, and others to obey, grow insolent; selected from the rest of mankind their minds are early poisoned by importance; and the world they act in differs so materially from the world at large, that they have but little opportunity of knowing its true interests, and when they succeed to the government are frequently the most ignorant and unfit of any throughout the dominions."

3) "I fully and conscientiously believe, that it is the will of the Almighty, that there should be diversity of religious opinions among us:

It affords a larger field for our Christian kindness. Were we all of one way of thinking, our religious dispositions would matter for probation; and on this liberal principle, I look on the various denominations, to be like children of the same family, differing only, in what is called, their Christian names." 4) "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."

5) "Every religion is good that teaches man to be good; and I know of none that instructs him to be bad." 6) "And as to you, Sir, treacherous in private friendship and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide whether you are an apostate or an impostor; whether you have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever had any."

Appropriate during our present constitutional crisis.

**Respectfully,
Victor Congdon – Portland**

In Defense of Sprouts

To the Editor:

Jim Hallas devoted his entire column last week to bashing Brussels sprouts in a manner that was as sadistic as it was uncalled for. After setting the tone for his tirade with a disgusting description of these veggies, Hallas went on to deprecate them in every which way imaginable.

For the record, Brussels sprouts resemble tiny, green cabbages, which is as they should, being in the cabbage family. Baked, broasted, broiled or sautéed, they can be prepared in a number of ways as delectable side dishes. Taking the easy way out, they can simply be steamed or boiled. Over-cooked they become soft and mushy, the way I prefer them topped with butter.

Perhaps Hallas' disdain stems from a childhood in which he was forced to eat his veggies, ya think?

**Peter Kushkowski
"Almost Heaven"
Portland**

See Letters, page 4

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Woodchip Giveaway Leads to Monetary Donation

by Sloan Brewster

When the town was looking to unload a large cache of woodchips, the Andover Sportsman's Club was happy to accept and, in a show of gratitude, ponied up a donation to the local food pantry.

The town had 550 trees along the sides of the road cut down this year, according to Town Administrator Eric Anderson. The bulk consisted of ash trees that had died from an infestation by the emerald ash borer and the rest were white oaks whose deaths were caused by gypsy moths and drought.

Taking down the dead ash trees was the main focus of the tree trimming operation as they tend to fall right after they die, whereas oak trees can take years to do so, Anderson said in a phone call Monday. "That's why we keep losing power every time it's windy, like tonight probably."

True to his prediction, there were several outages from Monday's wind storm.

A tree came down across Bear Swamp Road, taking wires with it, leaving a half mile of the road closed until the mess could be cleared, Anderson said. Route 6 was also closed for six or seven hours because one of the main transmission lines was knocked off a pole and burned for a while.

The town made a deal with Distinctive Tree Care of South Windsor to cut and chip the trees, but instead of having to truck the chippings to East Windsor, the company was allowed to leave them at the transfer station, Anderson said.

Consequently, the town was left with 300 yards or three tractor loads of wood chips to dispose of.

"We had an awful lot of woodchips," Anderson said.

Initially, the town offered the chippings to residents but takers only procured small amounts totaling about one pickup truck's worth, so, at the suggestion of Board of Selectmen member Jeff Murray, who is also a member of the sportsman's club, officials decided to give a good chunk to the club, which is about a mile and a half from the transfer station.

The club took about half the remaining chip-

pings, Anderson said. If it had not, the town would have had to pay to have them removed.

"It just worked out really well," Murray said. "The cost to get rid of [the chips] was minimal because they only had to truck them a couple miles."

The rest of the chips went to Connecticut Mulch Distributors of Enfield, which the town paid \$14,000 to chip a pile of brush that had been collecting at the transfer station for a couple of years.

"They took the woodchips as part of the arrangement," Anderson said.

In return for the chips, the club made a donation to the food pantry.

Mike Ford, who takes care of the grounds at the club, said the chips will be spread at sporting clay stations in the woods so to members don't have to trek through the mud.

Making the donation to the pantry was also Murray's idea, Ford said, adding that the club has supported the food pantry in the past.

"He suggested that a donation would be appropriate for the work that the town of Andover did to deliver the chips," Ford said. "We're glad to help out the kitchen and we're very thankful to the town for giving us the woodchips."

Joan Soucy, who runs the food pantry, which is located at Andover Congregational Church at 359 Route 6, said the club presented the \$200 check last Monday. The money will go toward meals the pantry will distribute at Christmas.

Last week, the organization handed out about 134 meal baskets for Thanksgiving and anticipates a comparable number at Christmas, Soucy said. The difference is that Foodshare of Bloomfield provides fare for the Thanksgiving giveaway, but since Christmas is religious it does not help out for that holiday.

Like all other happenings in the COVID-19 era, the meal bestowals have been transformed to fit into a contactless, socially distant world.

"This year it's going to be a drive-thru, what we call a grab-and-go style," Soucy said. "It's just like the drive-thru at Dunkin'."

The same method was used for the Thanksgiving meals.

Folks who sign up for the meal baskets will be given a timeslot for pickup on distribution



Joan Soucy, who runs the Andover Food Pantry at Andover Congregational Church, recently accepted a \$200 donation from the Andover Sportsman's Club. Jeff Murray, selectman and club member, presented her with the check.

day, when they will be given a choice of meat, the appropriate fixings and a dessert they can make themselves, such as brownie or cake mix or the ingredients to make a pie.

If the pantry gets enough in donations before then, they will also get a gift card, a measure meant to replace the clothing boutique and gifts that in past years were inside the pantry, Soucy said. People receiving the meals could look through the items and take what they needed, including gifts for family members.

"Because of the drive-thru, it's kind of difficult to do that," she said. "We thought if we had enough we would get gift cards."

The pantry is accepting monetary donations to purchase the food for the meal baskets and the gift cards and food donations, including soup, which, according to Soucy, is difficult to keep in stock in the winter. Holiday foods, such as ham, turkeys or roasts would be appreciated, and, of course the fixings, including cranberry sauce, gravy, potatoes and veggies.

Canned food and other non-perishable items can be placed in the wooden collection boxes behind church, which are emptied daily. Per-

ishables, such as meat, can be dropped off at the pantry on Mondays between 4 and 7 p.m. or Wednesdays from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Folks can also call Soucy to arrange a drop off at 860-208-3226.

Monetary donations should be made out to Andover Pantry and mailed to P.O. Box 55, Andover, CT 06232.

"Our number one priority is being able to purchase the entire meal purchase, everything," Soucy said. "So everyone has a good Christmas meal."

The meal baskets are available to folks from any town. To sign up, go to the pantry during the above hours of operation on Mondays or Wednesdays or call Soucy's cell.

To assure there is enough food for everyone who wants it, the sooner folks sign up, the better, Soucy said, adding that people should plan to get one holiday meal from one local pantry.

"We try to discourage them from going to more than one [pantry]," Soucy said. "We all coordinate. This way we can spread our food to more people who are in need instead of one person getting three [baskets]."

More Andover News on page 23

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★ Letters cont. from page 3

Thank You, President Trump

To the Editor:
I want to thank all the Republicans who stood strong and voted for President Trump. I am sure that the outcome will prove that once again our president needed to "Drain the Swamp."

I am grateful for President Trump keeping his word. Because of Operation Warp Speed we now have a vaccine for COVID-19! Thank you, President Trump, that we are now energy independent and our gas prices have been below \$2 for the majority of your term. Thank you, President Trump, that we still have freedom of religion and the parental right to raise our children with our values.

The list of accomplishments is long so I will stop with just a few!

But with all my heart I want to thank you, President Trump, for the great sacrifices that you made to make America great again!

Shirley Ellis - Colchester

Food Drive Thank You

To the Editor:
The Portland Food Bank is extremely grateful for the overwhelming response to the recent food drive in town, conducted by Shaun Manning, Kelly Mainetti and Cub Scout Pack 2. The drive netted an overwhelming response of more than 700 grocery bags filled to the brim, donated by households throughout town.

Many, many thanks to everyone involved in making this drive such an overwhelming success — including Shaun, Kelly and the Scouts, the Food Bank volunteers and many other volunteers who gave up their Sunday to receive the food and restock the much-needed items, and of course, the hundreds of generous people throughout our town who so kindly donated to the drive. Your support is greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

Ruth Maio, Director
Portland Food Bank

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Portland • Portland

Schools Chief Gives COVID-19 Update

by Jack Lakowsky

Portland Superintendent of Schools Charles Britton told the Board of Education Tuesday he learned from Chatham Health District that Portland's COVID-19 case ratio was, as of Tuesday, nearly 30/100,000 – or 30 cases per 100,000 residents – which keeps the town firmly in state's "red alert" designation.

"The numbers are not going in the right direction in the state or nation," Britton said in Tuesday evening's Zoom meeting.

All Portland students resumed remote learning this week.

Portland's ratio is below the Middlesex County average of about 39/100,000. However, local cases continue to climb, and Britton said he expects a significant jump when results from tests administered around Thanksgiving are released.

"We're still seeing higher community transmission rates, which is having an impact on our schools," said Britton.

Britton said that, in the days following the school board's special Nov. 26 meeting, one more student at Portland High School tested positive for COVID-19. Portland Middle School saw its first case since reopening. A third was found in Gildersleeve.

Britton said a symptomatic faculty member is awaiting results but is in quarantine due to assumed positivity.

"The [student] cases are community transmission, but if the staff member ends up positive, that would indicate in-school transmission," said Britton.

Based on contact tracing, two more teachers are in two-week isolation.

The switch to remote learning doubtless im-

pacts both students and parents. However, Britton said, Portland's teachers are doubly impacted if they care for children.

"Some of our teachers are impacted by childcare needs," said Britton. "Teachers have reached out, saying they're in a bit of a pickle because they have kids at home whose schools have also closed, and who are young enough to need care."

To aid district staff, Britton, school administrators and building reopening committees have begun discussions to create a system where teachers can get permission to teach from home while caring for their kids.

As of Tuesday, three paraeducators, a secretary, nine teachers, and two nurses will work for the entirety of the two week at-home period.

"Our teachers are doing an excellent job of making the best of challenging circumstances," said Britton.

Britton said remote teaching has improved greatly since March because there was more time for planning. He said there is "no shortage of wrinkles," such as last weekend's windstorm that knocked out internet for some students, but staff are adapting adeptly.

Another discussion Britton said he is set to begin with other district officials is how to enhance buildings' mitigation strategies to prevent such large scale quarantines when an inevitable case pops up in either staff or students.

Britton said his decision to close buildings to in-person learning stemmed from the inadequate number of staff left after quarantines began.

"We need to make sure contact tracing doesn't shut down an entire grade level," said Britton. "That's the work we have ahead of us."

If we can thread that needle to create conditions where tracers can do their work well and hopefully subject fewer people to isolation."

During the meeting, Britton and school board Republican Tim Lavoy discussed the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's impending announcement that quarantine periods can be shortened.

Britton said his office, the Chatham Health District, and the state Department of Public Health will coordinate on how to move forward with this new information.

On Wednesday, the CDC announced quarantines can be shortened to between seven and 10 days with a negative test.

As always, the key to an effective pandemic response is ample funding.

Stephanie Fragola, the district's business manager, shared with the board good news in this regard.

Portland originally received from the state \$100,000 in COVID-19-cost reimbursements. Fragola learned the district will soon receive another \$128,000 in aid.

"That made my weekend," said Fragola.

In a *Rivereast* interview for a similar story in East Hampton, Belltown schools' superintendent Paul Smith said the state redistributed money after multiple towns returned unused money that had been slated to hire bus monitors, who would've ensured students' compliance with safety rules.

Smith said these positions turned out to be unnecessary. Students all over the state have co-operated during their bus rides.

Fragola said Portland could have received even more; however, the state was only accepting receipts for expenses up through Dec. 31.

Parks and Rec. News & Notes

Parks and Recreation is offering the following. To register or for full program descriptions, visit portland.recdesk.com or call 860-342-6757. For more information, call 860-342-6757 or email nfoley@portlandct.org or adionne@portlandct.org.

Memo: Remember to socially distance, wear masks, and bring your own hand sanitizer while visiting town parks or facilities. Playgrounds and outdoor fitness equipment are open for use, but they are not sanitized. Refer to the signs at all of the parks and playgrounds for more information.

Adult Programs: Tai Chi with Ken Zaborowski: Virtual Tai Chi: Wednesdays through Dec. 23, 9:30-10:15 a.m., streamed through Zoom. Fee: \$7/class. Register online.

Personal Euphoria Exercise Classes: Registration is open for the next wave of virtual classes, coming in January. Register online for our Full Body Refresh, Barre, Pilates, or High Interval Training classes.

Youth Programs: Do-It-At-Home Doodlekits with Abrakadoodle: If a member of your household is interested in virtual art classes but is unable to commit to a weekly class, there are new DoodleKits. There are two separate DoodleKits for two separate age groups – Mini Doodlers for ages 3-5, and Doodlers for ages 6-12. Each kit comes with all the necessary supplies and instructions needed for five winter-themed crafts. Participants have the option of doing their crafts with Abrakadoodle over Zoom on Wednesdays at 5:15 p.m., but this is not required. Fee: \$55 for one DoodleKit (five crafts) or \$100 for two DoodleKits (10 crafts).

Virtual Happy Hoopin' With Bringthoopla: Thursdays, Jan. 14-Feb. 18, 4:15-5:15 p.m., via Zoom for ages 5-12. All participants receive a custom-designed and handmade Hoopla hoop. All hoops are weighted and sized by age and level. Fee: \$85/residents, \$95/non-residents.

Online Art Enrichment with Abrakadoodle: Wednesdays, Jan. 13-Feb. 17, via Zoom.

Holiday Book Store

The Friends of Portland Library's Holiday Book Store is open for all of December in the Second-Hand Prose Book sale area at the library, 20 Freestone Ave., during regular library hours.

The sale features a variety of used books, as well as puzzles, audio books, holiday books, cookbooks, coffee table books, CDs and DVDs. All proceeds benefit programs funded by the Friends, including the library's DVD collection, the Museum Pass program, and other children's, family and adult programs held throughout the year.

Visit www.friendsofportlandlibraryct.org or email friendsoftheportlandlibray@gmail.com for more information.

Trinity Episcopal Church News

Trinity Episcopal Church, 345 Main St., will not hold any inside Sunday services or Church School while Portland is a COVID-red zone town.

The church is continuing its 10:30 a.m. Zoom Sunday services indefinitely. Information for online services and Bible study opportunities is at trinitychurchportlandct.org.

The church is open for prayer and meditation Fridays from 2-4 p.m. Anyone inside the church must follow current COVID-19 protocols including wearing masks and social distancing.

For more information on church activities or to make an appointment with the Rev. Darryl Burke, email trinitychurchportlandct@gmail.com or call 860-342-0458.

Musical Masterpieces, for ages 3-5, meets 10-11 a.m., and Do Re Mi Music & Art, for ages 6-12, meets 4:15-5 p.m. Fee is \$70, and includes all art supplies.

Virtual Home Alone Safety Class: Monday, Dec. 21, 4:30-6:30 p.m., via Zoom, for ages 8-13. Class size is limited to 15 to allow for optimal opportunities for participation. Fee: \$50 for Portland residents, \$55 for non-residents. There is a six-participant minimum.

Coming Soon: Watch for more info on an upcoming virtual chess program and virtual American Sign Language class. Also, Parks and Rec. and the senior center are teaming up to make a special sweet treat for the families at Chatham Court to enjoy over the holidays. Watch for more details.

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300th Anniversary Commemorative Items Available

The First Congregational Church of Portland will celebrate its 300th anniversary in 2021 – and to help mark this event, two items are for sale – a new book, *The History of the First Congregational Church of Portland*, and a Woodbury pewter ornament.

Founded Oct. 25, 1721, the church history is also the early history of the town that was in-

corporated in 1841. The ornament, meanwhile, was designed by church member and resident artist Kearen Enright.

Ornaments and copies of the book will be available for sale Saturdays, Dec. 5 and 12, from 9 a.m.-noon both days, at the church, 554 Main Street. The book is \$20 and the ornament is \$12. Stop by the church and someone will be waiting for you at their fellowship hall door. You do not even have to get out of the car.

For more information, call Nancy Johnson at 860-342-4098.



Pancake Breakfasts Canceled

Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases, the Portland Volunteer Fire Department has canceled its monthly pancake breakfasts until further notice.

Garden Club Sale of Holiday Planters

The Portland Garden Club will hold an outdoor sale of handcrafted holiday planters and cemetery boxes decorated with fresh greenery Saturday, Dec. 5, in the parking lot at 265 Main St. next to the Town Green. The sale will run from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m., or whenever all planters are sold.

The sale is a special fundraiser for the many community activities and educational programs sponsored by the nonprofit club, which is a member of the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut. COVID-19 distancing rules will be followed and face masks are required.

Admission is free, with all proceeds benefiting the garden club's projects. Rain date for the event is Sunday, Dec. 6. For more information, call Sue at 860-685-0593.

Free Holiday Photo Event

The Chatham Children's Connection, a local children's community organization, will host a free holiday photo event Saturday, Dec. 12, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at the town green gazebo behind the library.

Photos can be taken with or without Santa, and all social distancing guidelines will be in effect.

Anyone wishing to participate must email April Graves at agraves@chathamcc.org for a scheduled session time.

Senior Center News & Notes

The Waverly Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave., is currently closed to the public until further notice. Staff is still working, however. For more information call 860-342-6760 or email Mary Pont at mpont@portlandct.org or Carol Revicki at crevicki@portlandct.org. Hours are Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., and Friday, 8-11 a.m.

Watercolor Lessons with Bivenne Staiger:

While lessons at the center are currently on hold, seniors may take online lessons with Staiger through Yale Peabody Museum's Natural Sciences Illustration Program. Visit www.peabody.yale.edu for more information or email bivenne@yahoo.com.

Creating Virtual Connections with Gary Ware: Wednesday, Dec. 9, 1 p.m. Ware, a creative catalyst from Breakthrough Play, will offer ways to use imagination and creativity to make winter and holiday fun for the whole family. Register at aarp.cvent.com/GaryWWDec9.

Special Event Coming: The senior center and Parks and Recreation are teaming up to make a special sweet treat for the families at Chatham Court to enjoy over the holidays. Watch for more details.

Online Festival of Wreaths

The Portland Historical Society's ninth annual Festival of Wreaths is underway – and this year, due to COVID-19, it is an online sale of donated holiday decorations and wreaths, as well as historical society products.

People may view photos and written descriptions of the decorations and purchase them online for a set price. Most will list for \$20-\$35 but some may list for higher prices, depending on their size and decoration.

More than 25 wreaths – crafted by Portland residents, businesses and organizations – are offered. Photos are posted on Portland Historical Society's Facebook page and the link to the sale will be at www.PortlandHistSoc.org.

Proceeds from the sale aid the society's mission – to maintain the Ruth Callander House Museum of Portland History, to present programs for the community and to preserve Portland's history.

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Resident Ready to Release First Book

by Karla Santos

A Bacon Academy Class of 2012 graduate has written her first book and is ready to release it in April.

Andrea Shaker of Colchester is a licensed professional counselor working as a multi-dimensional family therapist at a New London agency.

Shaker said her personal experiences within school systems and those of her clients is what led her to write the book *Are We Failing Our Kids? Mental Health and Education*, which is about mental health and the United States' education system.

Shaker has an undergraduate degree from Central Connecticut State University and a master's degree from the University of New Haven.

Are We Failing Our Kids? is Shaker's first book, and while she said she was "nervous" about writing it, she was inspired to do it because she was very interested in getting across a message, she said. She added a motivating factor was that people don't always want to talk about mental health.

Shaker works with adolescents and said that while she is a mental health professional, she didn't know what kind of mental health services and education schools offered. She said that even when she was in high school, there wasn't much in the way of mental health education. She explained that school psychologists and social workers only offer their services to students that really needed them, not to the entire school population.

Another reason Shaker wanted to write the book is that she knew that it would enable her to do more research in benefit of her clients.

"I kind of wanted to get more information for myself so I could help my clients better," Shaker said.

She said part of her research included what exactly is being done in schools in benefit of the mental health of students.

"Before I started I didn't think there was very much because you don't ever really hear about it," she said. "Parents really don't hear about it either unless their kids are really struggling."

Shaker said that after she started her research, she realized that there is a lot being done but

these programs are not "well-known" or "marketed," she said.

In addition, even though there are mental health services offered in schools, they need improvement, she said.

In her book, Shaker also included feedback from interviews with people that have been through the school system and struggled with a mental illness. She said she also interviewed parents and school staff such as teachers, social workers and psychologists.

Shaker said that from those interviews she gathered such information as the participants' overall experience, what the schools did to help those individuals, what actually helped and what things could be better.

"I think right now in the school system the services are geared toward people that are really struggling," Shaker said.

She noted that for the schools to be helping those who are really struggling is "great," but at the same time, they are leaving people out who may not be struggling but should still access those services.

She said the general process of writing the book was challenging because it was her first time. However, the process was also rewarding, particularly having the interviews and hearing the feedback of people's experiences in the school system when it comes to mental health services.

"Having these conversations that not that many people have was very interesting," she said, adding that it is uncommon for people to talk about mental health within the school system.

She said she enjoyed hearing current and former students' stories about how the school system played a role in their mental health.

"I think gathering the information and having these conversations was probably the best part," she said.

She said she wrote the book through the Creator Institute at Georgetown University in which she participated in workshops about how to write a book. Through the program, she was able to work with an editor and publication company.

While the book will be released in April, Shaker is now having a pre-sale through which

people can order the book before it's released. To access the pre-sale, visit tinyurl.com/yy82soqv.

Shaker said a solution to the need for more mental health awareness in the schools could start just by having more conversations. She said having more conversations can help better the environment in the schools and lead to positive change.

Many people are afraid to have conversations about mental illness and mental health because of the stigmas around it, she said.

Shaker said her hope is that people that make school policies and curriculums can include more mental health in the school system.

Shaker said she has always liked psychology, a passion that started as she watched crime shows she said, but Bacon Academy also played a role in the career she chose.

"Bacon definitely helped with getting me into psychology," she said, adding that they had a psychology class that she took before graduating high school.

"Having that class in high school gave me an idea of what it was going to look like and what exactly psychology was and that kind of definitely solidified that I wanted to go for psychology," she said.

Lauren Grasso is a colleague of Shaker's, and said the new book is "a testament to Andrea's desire to help others."

"Andrea is someone who I admire for her passion for her work, compassion for others, and persistent drive to be a lifelong learner," Grasso said. "She is often working to understand the next problem and to find solutions with the intent to improve the experiences of others. Andrea has an enormous heart and it shows in all of her endeavors."



Andrea Shaker is a Bacon Academy graduate who wrote a book in the hope of changing the fact that many people are afraid to have conversations about mental illness and mental health because of the stigmas around it. Shaker's hope is to have school systems play a bigger role when it comes to having more conversations around mental health and offering mental health services to a wider range of students.

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Project Graduation Raffle and Wreath Sale

Bacon Academy Project Graduation is selling raffle tickets for its December Calendar fundraiser, with prizes being awarded each day – and there will be a special opportunity to buy tickets at this weekend's Wreath Sale.

Total donated items in the raffle are valued at over \$1,000 and include gift cards to local businesses, gift baskets, cash prizes, holiday items and local artisan creations. Due to the strong response to this fundraiser, some days include more than one winner, so that raffle ticket holders have more than 31 chances to win.

Raffle tickets cost \$10 and will be sold at the Project Graduation Wreath Sale, which will run Saturday, Dec. 5, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., on the Town Green. The festively-decorated fresh pine holiday wreaths cost \$30 each and can be purchased with cash, check or credit card.

Raffle tickets can also be purchased via check, mailed to P.O. Box 393, Colchester CT 06415, or through Venmo @KathyLawrence2934. If

using Venmo, email ba.projectgrad@gmail.com with ticket holder information. Purchases must include raffle ticket holder's name, address, email, phone and whether recipient is over 21 years of age. The calendar with list of available prizes can be viewed at the www.baconacademyprojectgrad.org.

The mission of Bacon Academy Project Graduation is to enhance drug- and alcohol-free awareness by providing safe events for all graduating seniors of Bacon Academy. Project Graduation's most critical event is a graduation night party.

All Project Graduation events and initiatives to benefit BA seniors are entirely paid for through the fundraising efforts and contributions of Bacon Academy parents, students, businesses and community members. No tax dollars are ever used. For more information, visit www.baconacademyprojectgrad.org.

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Coping with Pandemic Stress During Holidays

Holidays can be a stressful time for some people – particularly this year. So, all local seniors are invited to attend a virtual webinar Wednesday, Dec. 16, at 10:30 a.m., via Zoom. Sara Walker from UCFS will share some strategies for coping with any added stress the pandemic may bring. Register by calling the office at 860-537-3911.

Westchester Church News

Westchester Congregational Church, located at 98 Cemetery Rd., holds worship services in-person Sundays at 10 a.m. Services are also available on Zoom. Safety precautions are in place to protect against COVID-19; the pews are labeled for physical distancing, masks are required to be worn, hand sanitizer is available, and is no singing, although music is played. Visit westchesterconchurch.org for Zoom login information.

CYSS News and Notes

Colchester Youth and Social Services has announced the following. For more information and full program descriptions, contact CYSS at 860-537-7255 or youthservices@colchesterct.gov. Register online at www.colchesterct.gov/youth-social-services. Registration is required for every session of each program due to the current COVID-19 guidelines. **The Learning Lounge:** Mondays-Fridays, 8:30-11:30 a.m., for grades 6-8. This program

provides middle school youth space to complete their distance learning. Socially-distanced work stations and support will be provided. Limited availability. **Youth Uprise:** Wednesdays, 12:30-1:30 p.m., at the Youth Center, for grades 9-12. High school students come together and discuss unity, diversity, civic engagement and making a change.

Fire Calls

From Nov. 22-28, the Colchester Hayward Fire Department responded to 45 calls: 27 emergency medical calls, 16 fire/fire-related calls, and two motor vehicle crashes. Calls included: Fire: service call, two; structure fires, two (mutual aid to East Haddam and Hebron); outside fire, two; fire alarm, nine. Crashes: one multi-car crash (mutual aid to Salem), one car vs. deer. Medical: sick person, four; cardiac distress, four; difficulty breathing, two; lift assist, one; fall injury, three; unconscious, one; mental disorder, two; abdominal pain, two; seizure, four; injured person, one; overdose, one; stroke, one. CHFD provided mutual aid three times last week – once each to Hebron, East Haddam and Salem – and did not receive any mutual aid. CHFD also offers free CO checks, and car seat safety checks and installations by appointment only; call the department at 860-537-2512 to schedule one. Reflective address marker signs are also available to order in blue or green, vertical or horizontal; cost is \$12. Forms are available at the firehouse, 52 Old Hartford Rd., or online; go to colchesterct.gov, click on 'departments' and select 'fire department.' Note: The Department of Emergency Management conducts tests of the emergency sirens throughout town, on the first Saturday of every month between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. These are just tests.

Police News

11/19: State Police said Anthony J. Peirano, 34, of Lebanon, was arrested and charged with first-degree failure to appear. 11/23: State Police said that Juan D. Hernandez, 34, of 107 Nutmeg Circle, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree assault. 11/28: The Colchester Police Department is investigating the report of the burglary, larceny and criminal mischief of a vehicle that occurred on Nov. 28. According to police, the vehicle was at Troiano Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram on South Main Street, when it was damaged and items were taken from within.

Ahavath Achim News

Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., has announced the following classes and services for the next week: Friday night Shabbat service, 6:30 p.m. on Zoom; Saturday, Shabbat morning service, 10 a.m., on Zoom; Tuesday, Kabbalah class, 5:30 p.m. on Zoom; Tuesday, Talmud class, 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. There are daily prayer classes on Facebook Live, by Rabbi Ken Alter. There will be a book club discussion, on *Man's Search for Meaning*, Thursday, Jan. 21, at 7 p.m. For more information, call 860-537-2809. Office hours are 8 a.m.-noon Tuesday-Friday.

Wreaths Across America

This year's Wreaths Across America ceremony will take place at Westchester Cemetery Saturday, Dec. 19 – and donations are sought. At the ceremony, the 55 service members buried at the cemetery will be honored with the placement of live balsam veterans' wreaths. The ceremony will begin at noon sharp, and masks are required. The cemetery is located off Route 16. Donations are welcome. Each individual \$15 donation sponsors a wreath that will be placed on the headstone. To sponsor a wreath and stay informed about event details, visit www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org/CTWCCC. You can also send your contribution to Wreaths Across America, c/o Linda Pasternak, 636 Westchester Rd., Colchester, CT 06415. All interested in volunteering should register so they can be kept up to date on details for the day as it gets closer. Register to volunteer at www.wreathscrossamerica.org/CTWCCC.



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December 12th & 13th
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Helping the Community... Kim Talarczyk, founder of Colchester Cares, recently presented Colchester Lions President Nicole Reardon with a check to help the Lions with their holiday baskets that they distribute annually to those in need in their community at Christmas.

Free Breakfast, Lunch for Students

Thanks to a USDA grant, all students and children under the age of 18 can get free breakfast and lunch until Dec. 31. Once this free meal grant ends, students will go back to the appropriate free, reduced-price, or full-pay status.

If you have not been notified that your child qualifies for free or reduced-price meals for the 2020-21 school year, submit an application if interested. Applications are available to all Colchester Public School students in grades pre-K through 12 and can be found on the Colchester Public Schools website, www.colchesterct.org. Note: milk is included in every meal; however if a student wants to buy just a milk, the cost is

65 cents.

For those interested in grab-and-go meals, which are also free, pick-up is at William J. Johnston Middle School from 12:30-1 p.m. on in-school learning days and from 10-10:30 a.m. on distance learning days.

Note: Grab-and-go meals will not be available during the winter recess, from Dec. 24-Jan. 1. Also, grab-and-go meals will not be available on days when students do not come to school because of inclement weather.

For more information, contact Nutrition Coordinator Leanne Ranheim at 860-537-9421 ext. 381 or lrnheim@colchesterct.org.

St. Andrew Church News

St. Andrew Catholic Church holds Sunday Mass Saturdays at 4 p.m. and Sundays at 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

The church is located at 128 Norwich Ave. The only entrance is on the parking lot side; doors are propped open. To maintain social distancing, pews are sectioned off; available seating is marked. Seating is limited to 100 people per Mass. There is no admittance once Mass begins; church doors are locked at that time. Parishioners should bring and use their own hand sanitizer. Facemasks that cover both nose and mouth are required of all attending wor-

ship. Children under age of 5 are not required to wear a mask.

The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains in effect until further notice. You may wish to attend weekday Mass in lieu of attending on Sundays in order to allow those who cannot attend during the week the opportunity to attend on the weekend. Sunday Masses at 9:30 a.m. will also continue to be livestreamed.

For more information, call 860-537-2355 or visit www.standrewcolchester.org.

HOLIDAY SHOPPING GUIDE

Need to get your Christmas List to Santa?

Something Simple Cafe at 12 Main Street in Hebron has a special red mailbox for all the children to send Santa Claus their wish lists.

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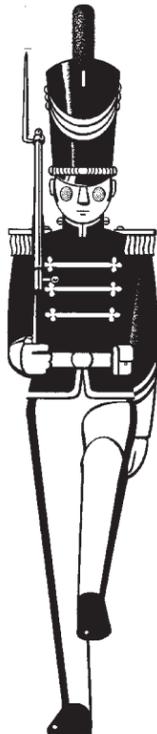
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LYME BITES

CT Lyme Riders is presenting the following great article for anyone who has a loved one, friend or family member that suffers from chronic Lyme disease, or just wants to understand more about this disease and the stress of holidays.

Facing the Holidays with Chronic Lyme

Author: Paula Jackson Jones • Orig Pub: 11/25/2017

Nothing reminds you of your illness more than when you're limited by the things that you can no longer do and the places that you can no longer go. And nothing highlights those limitations more than the holidays. Grieving the loss of holiday traditions, or feeling like you're letting your friends and family down by staying home or cutting outings short, can elicit so many difficult emotions that no one should have to deal with around the holidays.

No one ever thinks that something as tiny as a tick bite can change their life in so many ways, until it happens to them. I sit with people in person and on the phone who are struggling to understand this disease, struggling to make sense of their new normal, struggling to keep it together for their families. Struggling. It's something that chronically ill people do constantly. Everything is a struggle. Getting up in the morning, even getting through the day. Trying to plan events. Even something like going to the grocery store is taken for granted. I remember getting out and going to the store and running into people who would say things like "Oh, you look so good. You must be doing better" without realize just how much effort it took for me to pass for "good". How much energy it took just to get dressed and put on a good face and be seen in public.

While chronically ill people want to be a part of the holiday celebrations, they realize just how impacted they are by it all ~ sights, sounds, smells and overall exertion, that often exasperates their symptoms, that they feel the only choice they have is to stay home. I recall attending church services to sing carols and being overstimulated by the sounds, smells and lighting that I had to leave and go back home before a seizure was triggered. Holding a conversation was physically and mentally exhausting. Trying to focus on who was speaking to me, what they were asking and by the time I figured out my response, they were on to another topic. I often wondered what they thought, standing there in front of me ~ did I look as disconnected as I was feeling on the inside?

The holiday season is, and always has been, my favorite time of year and as I regained my health, I tried to re-engage with all my favorite holiday activities, but found that foods and over-stimulation were, and continued to be, a sensory trigger.

Something that I would ask of you all this holiday season ~ be kind and give grace to those suffering from chronic illness. Whether you understand their illness or not, understand this ~ they are doing their very best and that is all that can be asked of them. If they come, don't over quiz about what's been going on. Instead, welcome them into the group and make them feel as comfortable as you can. For one night, let them feel normal. Let them forget that they are ill. Understand that as the group chatter volume rises, that they may need to find a quiet reprieve to tamper down any rising symptoms. Don't be offended if they can't eat what you're serving. As much as we all love holiday goodies, chronic illness sometimes demands a change in diet to reduce symptoms during treatment. Maybe ask in advance what they can eat. Sugars and gluten are a no-no when putting together treats to give to them. Along with sounds, lighting can be a sensory issue for those suffering from neurological Lyme. Don't stare if your guest appears wearing sunglasses. I had someone approach me saying "What are you stoned? You must be to wear sunglasses at night" and I was so taken back and offended. Never judge what you don't understand.

Holidays are meant to be celebrated by families and friends, so I would ask that you please don't forget those who are chronically ill. They want to be a part of the celebration, but they know and understand all too well their limitations and they don't want to be a burden to their families, so they think staying home is the answer. Isolation is never the answer and causes more harm and damage mentally. Reach out in love, send cards, call before you visit but do visit. And if you bring a gift, leave out the sweets and gluten. Limit your use of perfume and keep the setting quiet. Limited the over-stimulation, keep the conversation light. Share what's going on with you and make them feel included. This will ensure a heartfelt and thankful visit and it will serve the one who is ill in ways that you may never understand.

This holiday season, remember those who are ill and not able to attend functions. Do your part, however small or grand, to make them feel remembered, missed and loved. This feeds their spirit and spirit is something that no disease can ever touch.

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Food Drive Inspires Generosity

by Karla Santos

Eric Cummings and his team at Brakes and More – an auto repair shop in Colchester – hosted a turkey drive and were able to distribute uncooked Thanksgiving meals to more than 15 families.

This is the first time Cummings has run a food drive, he said. The idea stemmed from the fact that it's been a hard year for everybody.

The turkeys and other items for the dinners were distributed last week, two days before Thanksgiving.

Cummings said he realized that this year there were probably more families than usual in need of help.

The fact that he was able to feed 15 families was above his expectations.

Cummings wrote a Facebook post asking families in need or people who knew families in need to reach out so that he could provide them with a Thanksgiving dinner. In the post, he also asked people to collaborate with food donations.

"I originally was hoping or expecting at least four or five families to come through and ask," he said.

He said some social workers reached out on behalf of the families they help.

"It's actually really heartwarming," he said about being able to do this for the community.

Cummings said one of his employees helped him distribute the meals and that various times throughout the day he mentioned how excited he felt about being able to help others.

"It's nice to give back," Cummings said.

Cummings said the Thanksgiving meals were one of the efforts he has done to try to help the local community. He said that when the pandemic began and some restaurants were going to close their doors, he paid for some people's meals.

"I know a lot of people were out of work and stuff like that," he said, adding that giving is gratifying.

"It's just nice to help out whenever you are

able to, instead of just doing whatever you want with your resources and your money, you can actually put it toward something good and help out a lot of good people," Cummings said.

He said that while he distributed food to 15 families, there was enough for 20. The remainder of the food was also given away. The dry goods were taken to the Colchester Food Bank and the turkeys were given to Cummings' customers.

He said the people who received the food were "very thankful."

Michael Reischerl was one of Cummings' employees involved in the food drive. He said he enjoyed being a part of it.

"It felt good to give back to the community that gave us so much," Reischerl said.

He said that giving back was particularly important in these times when many are facing more challenges than usual as the result of the pandemic.

Reischerl said he helped deliver the meals and was able to see firsthand how grateful families were to receive them. He said that realizing that people were in need of a helping hand with a Thanksgiving meal was not something that surprised him, especially during times of COVID-19.

"That was a good feeling to watch how we helped somebody," he said.

He said everyone on the whole Brakes and More team was somehow involved in the drive.

Reischerl said a food drive is not something he was expecting to do as part of his job, but when they stated to plan it, he was "happy to be a part of it."

Reischerl said that something that stood out to him in the process of running the food drive was realizing how much Cummings cares about the community.

"You don't see a lot of small businesses that give back as much," he said. "There's not a lot he wouldn't do to help somebody. It's a good modeled business for other businesses to follow."



The Brakes and More team – from left, shop owner Eric Cummings, Nick Fraulino, Sean Magliano, Michael Reischerl and Jason Shoemaker – collected and distributed 15 Thanksgiving meals last week to people in need.

Colchester Federated Church News

Colchester Federated Church is an Open and Affirming church located at 60 Main St. Pastor is the Rev. Lauren Lorincz.

The church remains closed to the public until further notice. The church has canceled in-person worship and Sunday School until disease rates decline in Colchester. Worship will be offered via Facebook Live at 9 a.m. Sunday mornings by a small worship team and Sunday School lessons will be shared virtually with families.

Virtual worship can also be found at www.colchesterfederatedchurch.org under the "Worship & Sermons" tab.

Restaurant Week Dec. 7-13

Colchester Restaurant Week is running Dec. 7-13, and will feature specials and promotions from participating local restaurants and food purveyors.

Check in with your local grocery store, restaurant or food truck for their featured specials or check out www.ColchesterCTBusiness.com for more details.

Offers may also be found on Facebook under "Colchester Restaurant Week."

Abundant Life Church News & Notes

Abundant Life Church, located at 85 Skinner Rd., has announced the following pieces of news. For more information, call the church at 860-537-3082 or visit AbundantL.com. Abundant Life Church is a Christ-follower church that believes in salvation through Jesus Christ.

Weekly Sunday Service: The church continues open door services on Sundays. Facial masks while roaming and social distancing guidelines are followed, including only allowing less than 50 attendees. Sunday School is now open at the church at 9:30 a.m., with the main service beginning at 10:30 a.m. Call the church if you would like to attend.

The service is also broadcast live on Facebook, beginning at 10:30 a.m., with a special children's program included. Go to www.facebook.com/groups/abundantLifeCT or look for the church on Facebook. For more information or if unable to connect, call the church at 860-537-3082.

Power of Prayer: Prayer is provided by a group of faithful members at Abundant Life. If you are in need of prayer for healing, financial issues, troubled family members, life-controlling habits, or any other need, call the church to be placed on its prayer list. You may also ask about the various days and times the prayer groups meet and come at that time.








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Parks and Rec. News & Notes

Parks and Recreation has announced the following. Registration required for all programs. For full descriptions and to register, visit colchesterrec.recdesk.com/Community/Home. More info can also be obtained by calling 860-537-7297 or emailing parksandrec@colchesterct.gov. The Parks and Rec. office is located at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

From Soup to Nuts! COVID Community Cookbook: Cookbooks are \$18, with proceeds to pay for the Colchester Fireworks. Purchase a cookbook through the Parks and Rec. website, or stop by the Parks and Rec. office to buy one.

Virtual Vendor Fair: With most holiday fairs canceled this year, Parks and Rec. said it wanted to find a way to connect local artisans with the community as well as provide a way to shop locally from home. So, a PDF book of local artisans and home businesses has been put together and can be viewed at tinyurl.com/y2mmgyqv.

For those without computer access, call 860-537-7297 for assistance.

Dot Painting with Margaret Webster: Beginners 2 – the Transformational Spiral: Tuesday, Dec. 15, 7-10 p.m., via Zoom, for ages 12 and up. Fee: \$15/Colchester residents, \$20/non-residents. Registration required. Call Parks and Rec. for more information and a list of needed supplies.

Gingerbread House Contest: Drop off your premade gingerbread house to the Parks and Rec. office by 4:30 p.m. today, Dec. 4. Gingerbread houses will be displayed throughout Town Hall until Dec. 18. All visitors to Town Hall will be able to vote for their favorite one. After Dec. 18, each house will be awarded a superlative award ribbon. The “Community Favorite” will be awarded to the house with the most community votes. For more information, call Parks and Rec.

Holiday Homecoming 2020

Due to COVID-19 and the limitations on community gatherings, the traditional Town Green tree-lighting has been canceled. However, Parks and Recreation will still celebrate the holiday season Saturday, Dec. 5 (rain date Sunday, Dec. 6), when Santa drives through the neighborhoods on his favorite fire truck.

His route will be published soon in the *Rivereast* as well as the Parks and Rec. social media pages.

After Santa makes his visit to local neighborhoods, he will stop at Bacon Academy for some photo opportunities. Families will be required to wait in their cars until it is their turn. Santa will be seated in his chair on the back of the fire truck and children will remain standing on the ground. Parents will have time to take the pictures while the children are standing in front of Santa and the fire truck. There will be no physical interaction between Santa and the kids this year.

Santa’s mailbox will be located at the Town

Hall. Parks and Rec. encourages kids to drop off their letters to Santa in the mailbox by Monday, Dec. 14. Every child will receive a response from Santa, so it is important to include the child’s name, age and return address on the letter.

Registration is not required. For more information, call 860-537-7297.

Hanukkah Party on Zoom

There will be a virtual Hanukkah celebration for Colchester Senior Center members with Rabbi Ken Alter from Congregation Ahavath Achim Friday, Dec. 11, at 1 p.m.

Alter will attend via Zoom for a special candle lighting and prayer followed by a Hanukkah story. Call 860-537-3911 for more information or to be emailed the Zoom link.

Animal Shelter Food Drive

The East Haddam nonprofit organization Presents for Paws will hold its Holiday Shelter Food Drive Saturday, Dec. 12, from 7 a.m.-2 p.m., at John Gagnon’s Pet Resort, 227 Upton Rd., to collect items for shelter pets this holiday season.

Items needed: new/unopened cat or dog food, new/unopened cat or dog treats (no raw hide, please), and cat litter. Monetary donations are also appreciated; they are tax-deductible and

100% of donations go to help shelter animals.

Presents for Paws is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization located in East Haddam that collects and distributes supplies to area shelters, rescues and municipal pounds. For more information on the shelter drive, to make a monetary donation, or to become a volunteer, visit: www.facebook.com/presentsforpaws501c or www.presentsforpaws.org.

Senior Center News & Notes

Colchester Senior Center, 95 Norwich Ave., has announced the following programs and events. Most programs are on Zoom; to learn more about join them, or for full descriptions of any program, call the center at 860-537-3911 or email csc@colchesterct.gov. The center is online at www.colchesterct.gov/senior-center. More information about senior trips can also be found online.

Monday, Dec. 7: 9 a.m., Exercise with Anne on Zoom; 10 a.m., Sittercize on Zoom; 1 p.m., Community Conversations with First Selectman.

Tuesday, Dec. 8: 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi on Zoom; 11 a.m., Adult Coloring; 1:30 p.m., conference call bingo; 7 p.m., Senior Center Building Committee Meeting on Zoom.

Wednesday, Dec. 9: 10 a.m., Making Memories class; 10:30 a.m., Holiday Ornament Craft on Zoom; 2:30 p.m., Colchester Senior Center staff meeting; 7 p.m., AARP Webinar Wednesdays: Creating Virtual Connections.

Thursday, Dec. 10: 9 a.m., Exercise with Anne on Zoom; 10 a.m., Sittercize on Zoom; 10:30 a.m., Shopping Trip to Waterford departs; 11 a.m., Senior Yoga on Zoom.

Friday, Dec. 11: 10 a.m., Virtual Movie Club: *The Man Who Invented Christmas* (rated PG); 11 a.m., Senior Yoga on Zoom; 1 p.m., Hanukkah Party with Rabbi Ken Alter on Zoom.

Upcoming Programs: Learn to Sign with Ruth: Mondays, beginning Dec. 14, 11 a.m.-noon. This introductory course requires no previous experience and will teach you the basics

of how to communicate using sign language.

Winter Wonderland Lunch to Go Pick-Up: Monday, Dec. 16, noon. Enjoy the decorations and greet senior center staff members as they hand out a boxed lunch from TVCCA of herbed roasted prime rib, garlic potatoes, squash, peppers, and carrots, a dinner roll with margarine, and assorted holiday cookies. If you cannot attend the walk-through, the center’s bus drivers will deliver your meal locally. Cost of lunch is \$8, payable as you arrive (please have a check or exact change). Registration is required by Dec. 9.

Highlighting Colchester’s History with CHS: Friday, Dec. 18, 10:30 a.m., via Zoom. The Colchester Historical Society will share a virtual tour of the Colchester History Museum, located right on Linwood Avenue. This session will be held on Zoom, with the link to join found on the Monthly Zoom Links table.

Farewell 2020 Celebration on Zoom: Thursday, Dec. 31, 10 a.m. Welcome in the New Year with goody bags, a year in review presentation, and laughs. Register by Dec. 24 to receive your “Goodbye 2020” gift bag.

Walking Group: Wednesdays, 10 a.m., weather permitting. Social distancing and masks required.

Weekly Zoom Programs: Exercise with Anne: Mondays and Thursdays, 9 a.m.; **Senior Yoga:** Thursdays and Fridays, 11 a.m.; **Sittercize:** Mondays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.; **Tai Chi:** Tuesdays, 9:45 a.m.

Schools to Remain Shuttered Through Dec. 11

by Sloan Brewster

With staffing issues still a concern, RHAM students will continue learning remotely through Friday Dec. 11.

According to Interim Superintendent of Schools Scott Leslie, students from the high and middle schools will commence with the hybrid model Monday Dec. 13.

In the hybrid model, which combines in-person and distant learning, about half of students are in school Mondays and Tuesdays and the other half are there Thursdays and Fridays. On the days they are not in school, they learn remotely. On Wednesdays, custodial staff performs a deep cleaning of the schools.

The hope is that the extension will give administrators an opportunity to find out if there are any new cases of COVID-19 since the Thanksgiving break, Leslie said.

Last week, Leslie announced the schools would transition to distance learning through the holiday after administrators and Russell Melmed, director of health at Chatham Health District, conducted contact tracing due to an increase in confirmed cases of COVID-19.

As of last Tuesday, there were 20 positive student cases at the two schools in the district.

While the surge was not caused by in-school transmissions of the virus and all the exposures

One Last Chance to Bid in Holiday Auction

AHM Youth and Family Services is getting ready to wrap up its first-ever online holiday auction. There are now 58 items listed, and bids can be placed until Sunday, Dec. 13.

The auction is featuring weekends on Cape Cod and Newport, dining gift cards, golf outings, a classic fully restored children’s bicycle, butterfly and bluebird houses, a Yeti cooler, board games, jewelry, dance and wine making lessons, a cord of wood, camping items, a drone, beautiful artwork, automotive services, professional photography session, a wooden hammock stand, gift cards to local businesses, and more.

To jump in on the bidding, go to ahmyouth.org/fundraisers-events/holiday-auction. Auction questions can be directed to Joel Rosenberg at AHM at Joelr@ahmyouth.org or 860-228-9488.

occurred outside of school, the number of quarantining teachers led to a shortage of staff at the high school, Leslie said.

As of Monday, 11 RHAM staff members were teaching from home on a long-term basis due to health and COVID-19 concerns, 12 more were quarantined and awaiting COVID-19 test results at Thanksgiving that were quarantined and waiting for test results, and this week another 10 were quarantining.

Leslie said he meets and talks with area superintendents and that staffing issues are leading to remote learning in other districts as well.

“This is really the most critical challenge we are having,” he said.

The other concern is that while RHAM has not has any confirmed COVID-19 cases caused by in-school transmission and only has one case that may have been passed on in school, in general schools are starting to see that happen.

“Up until the week of Thanksgiving, I don’t think anyone was really seeing any transmission in school but we are seeing that at schools now,” he said.

Winter Sports

RHAM has also put sports on hold until Jan 18, Leslie said.

A number of districts have shut school down

AHM Health Matters Mini-Workshops

AHM Youth and Family Services’ Health Matters program is hosting two virtual mini-workshops on Thursdays, Dec. 10 and 17, via Zoom.

On Dec. 10, Joe Pandolpho, certified acupressure detoxification specialist and certified tai chi instructor (Level 1), will lead a demonstration of five-point ear acupressure and will share the health benefits associated with this ancient practice.

On Dec. 17, professional chef Steve Rosen will make his favorite no-stress appetizers just in time for the holiday season.

Workshops are \$5 each. To learn more and to register, visit ahmyouth.org/programs-services/health-matters.

Contact Jenn Boehler, AHM Project Graduation coordinator, at 860-228-9488 ext. 12 or jenniferb@AHMYouth.org for more information.

until Jan. 14, and the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference [CIAC] recommends that if schools will be shut down due to any spike of COVID-19 during Thanksgiving and the winter holiday, it would likely affect them until Thursday Jan. 14, or 14 days after the winter holiday.

“So any likelihood doing of sports would be Jan. 19,” Leslie said.

Mitigating the Impact on Students

There’s no question that school closures and the pausing of sports has had an impact on students, Leslie said.

“We are definitely seeing an increase in students just having challenges in having an overall positive outlook, increasing in a sense of dismay,” he said.

School administrators are in discussions with staff at AHM Youth and Family Services on what they can do about the problem, Leslie said.

“It’s not like you can bring kids together,” he said. “Probably the last thing people want is another Google Meets to talk about it.”

Colleges looking for student athletes are also trying to be creative by allowing kids to see campuses through video and to make and send videos of themselves training and conditioning, Leslie said. He admitted it wasn’t “the perfect replacement” and that there may be students who thought athletics was the way to college who are forced to take a different route.

In the meantime, officials are making sure

Community Conversation on Superintendent Search

In coming weeks, the RHAM Board of Education will host two virtual evening opportunities for community members to share their insight on the hiring of the next superintendent of schools.

On Tuesdays, Dec. 15 and Jan. 5, Joseph Erardi, the search consultant working with the RHAM school board, will lead one-hour video meetings dedicated to gathering community input for the superintendent’s hiring committee.

The Dec. 15 meeting will start at 7 p.m. People can log into it at meet.google.com/esnhgzx-adj. To join by phone instead, dial 424-732-8479 and enter this PIN: 784 503 478#

For more information on the community conversation, call Erardi at 571-480-0313.

Time Will Tell

Next year things may be different.

“The hope obviously is that we’re back to normal next year approaching normal,” Leslie said.

If schools reopen, though, he said, there will be new challenges, including filling any gaps that may have unwittingly occurred in remote learning models despite educator’s staunch efforts to avoid them, and transitioning students back into the school environment.

“There will be middle and high school students that never have experienced a middle or high school situation,” he said. “Opening the doors is not going to solve it all.”

Marlborough • Marlborough

'Fulfilled' Schools Superintendent Ready to Move On

by Karla Santos

After a 52-year education career, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz said he felt emotional yet fulfilled as he announced his June 2021 retirement this week.

June 30 will be Sklarz's last day as a superintendent in Marlborough, a district he was worked in for the past 11 years.

On Tuesday, Sklarz sent out a letter to parents announcing his retirement and told the *Rivereast* on Wednesday that making the announcement was "emotional" to him.

But Sklarz said he spent 52 years in education and reached a point where he realized it was time to move on.

"I feel very fulfilled, but we still have a lot of work to do," he said noting that even as there is pandemic going on, the school needs to continue to focus on teaching, learning and keeping students safe.

Sklarz said his journey as an educator took him on many different paths and through very large school districts.

But when he started his journey in Marlborough, he again felt like he did at the beginning of his career, when he got to see children every day. Most superintendents don't get to be in the same building as students, especially in larger school districts.

"In Marlborough, I really came back to my roots," he said. "I get to go to read to children and every day I'm reminded about why I do what I do and why I got into this to begin with."

He said Marlborough is a special place because it has "creative teachers," "dedicated professionals" and an "incredible Board of Education."

"Every ingredient is like a textbook, almost a fairy tale; the perfect education for young children," he said.

Sklarz said he sees that dedication in the people he gets to work with because even in the

middle of a pandemic they haven't questioned the need for students to continue to be educated and to continue to attend classes in person.

"We are all on the same mission, the same page, and it has been a joy to see some of this success," which he said he sees in the faces of parents, teachers and students. He said he wouldn't have been able to see that success if he was in a separate building away from students, something that makes it "remarkable" for him to end his career in Marlborough.

In addition, he said there's something special about being in a one-school district where "everybody is family."

Sklarz's career as superintendent has seen five-year stints in both California and South Carolina, as well as 14 years in West Hartford. He has been superintendent in Marlborough, a part-time role, for 11 years.

"It's just been a joy for the last 11 years," he said.

Sklarz recalled that when he was in high school, he felt there wasn't enough of a connection between teachers and students.

He said he then embarked on a mission to change education and make it better for children.

He earned a doctorate degree from Columbia University and after that he made it a goal to work in school districts and leave each one in a better position than he found it.

"I feel like I made a difference in the lives of children and families," he said. "Fifty-two years later, I'm finishing up with the same passion. That's a pretty darn good feeling."

He said that his goal of changing education didn't seem complicated but then he realized it was more complicated than he thought. He said he then worked on doing more research, became more credentialed and earned more experience that helped him achieve his goal.

He said he still believes to this day that re-

lationships between teachers and students are significantly important.

"That's the amazing thing about Marlborough; the relationship every teacher has with kids is extraordinary," he said.

He said he has never seen another district where every teacher and support staff is as passionate as they are in Marlborough.

In addition, Sklarz praised First Selectman Greg Lowrey for being a "true friend" of the school.

"I think that's the last piece but it's an important piece," he said. "People shouldn't underestimate that."

He said it is important to have a first selectman and a Board of Selectmen that are friends of the school and care about the school.

"As I leave, I feel that all the pieces are in place," Sklarz said.

Ruth Kelly, vice chair of the Board of Education, said she is sad to see Sklarz go, calling him "a great asset to the town and to the school."

She said the district was "lucky" when they got him 11 years ago.

"He's been an excellent leader," Kelly said. "We are so fortunate that he stayed through this year to get us through the pandemic and see us through all of the issues that had to be resolved so that we could get the kids back to school full-time."

She said having children learning full-time in person is what's best for them.

Kelly said the Board of Education will start the hiring process for a new superintendent in January, and in the meantime, board members will attend a workshop on how to proceed in filling a superintendent position.

"We are looking for somebody that's got experience, somebody that will fit in with our community, and somebody that's going to take a half-time position," she said.

Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School



Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz

Principal Dan White said working with Sklarz has been a "terrific experience."

White said he, Sklarz, and the school's assistant principal Kim Kelley have worked as a team for seven years. They meet at least once a week to plan and guide the direction of the school.

He said he would like to see a new superintendent with Sklarz's "experience, his knowledge base, someone who understands the small school atmosphere, a one-school district."

Sklarz, White said, "will be very difficult to replace."

Meanwhile, Sklarz said he doesn't have any big plans for his retirement, but said he has written some children's books that he is looking forward to publish when the time comes.

Historical Society News

Marlborough Historical Society has announced the following pieces of news:

Architectural Surveys: The society is conducting architectural surveys of the historic structures throughout the town. This will update the 1998 survey conducted by David Ransom. For more information, email mhs@marlboroughhistory.org.

2021 Calendars: Calendars are available for purchase either online at www.marlboroughhistory.org or at 17 School Drive. Cost is \$18.

Reflections Into Marlborough's History: Marlborough's complete 296-page history book is once again available for purchase. Cost is

\$50. More information is at www.marlborough-history.org.

Census Records: All census records from the 1800s are being digitized for easy research and referencing. As each decade is complete, they will become available online and hard copy.

Donations: Marlborough Historical Society is a nonprofit organization. To make a tax-deductible donation to aid in its historic preservation efforts, visit www.marlboroughhistory.org or mail to Marlborough Historical Society, P.O. Box 351, Marlborough, CT 06447.

Parks and Rec Programs

Parks & Recreation has announced the following. For full descriptions or to register, visit marlboroughct.recdesk.com and click on "programs," stop by the office at Town Hall, 26 N. Main St., or call 860-295-6203.

Youth Programs: Horseback Riding Lessons: For ages 5 and up. Lessons are private and are an hour; days and times are flexible. Fee: four lessons for \$175/residents, \$180/non-residents.

Kids Sewing - Monthly Sewing Project 101: Friday, Dec. 11, 4:30-6:30 p.m. Fleece Ear Band. Class is held virtually. Fee \$63/residents, \$68/non-residents.

Kids Sewing - T-Shirt Memory Quilt:

Saturday, Dec. 12, 10-11:30 a.m. Fee: \$43/residents, \$48/non-residents. All classes held virtually.

Adult Programs: Zumba: Thursdays through Dec. 10, 7-8 p.m., at Fire Station No. 2. Fee is \$10 per week to drop in.

Barre/Pilates - Mondays: Dec. 7-28, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Class instruction is virtual. Fee is \$50, or \$15 per week to drop in.

Barre/Pilates - Wednesdays: Through Dec. 30, 6-7 p.m. Class instruction is virtual. Fee is \$15 per week to drop in.

Yoga - Mondays: Dec. 7-28, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Class instruction is virtual. Fee: \$50/residents, \$55/non-residents, or \$15 per week to drop in.

Yoga - Tuesdays: Through Dec. 29, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Class instruction is virtual. Fee is \$15 per week to drop in.

Driveway Reflective Number Signs: Cost is \$35 each. Order forms are online and at Town Hall.



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Congregational Church News

The Sunday worship service at the Marlborough Congregational Church is livestreamed every Sunday at 10 a.m. through the church website, mcc.marlbongchurch.org, and follows the usual order of Sunday worship.

Weekly participants include church pastor the Rev. Bob Faulhaber, Carolyn Brodinski, organist Dave Mulligan, and other musicians and participants from the church and community. All are invited to the weekly Zoom Coffee Hour that follows worship. A Message for the Children is given on select Sundays by Christian Education/Junior Youth Director Gwen Lawson.

The Second Sunday of Advent will be celebrated Dec. 6 at 10 a.m., with Faulhaber leading worship. All are welcome and invited to a virtual Holy Communion. Faulhaber will give

a blessing and serve Communion where worshippers, watching the livestream at home, can participate by providing their own elements of bread and beverage. A brief ceremony of lighting the Advent wreath candles with words of joy, hope, love and peace will take place during the worship service during each Sunday in Advent.

Sunday services are recorded and available for viewing on the church website later that same day. All previous worship services can be viewed through the webpage.

Phone messages are checked at Faulhaber's direct line at 860-295-0432 and at the church office at 860-295-9050.

Second Blessings Thrift Shop is planning to reopen in April, but is selling on eBay. New items are listed each week at bit.ly/MCCebay.

Lions Collect Items for Food Bank

The Marlborough Lions will collect personal hygiene items for Marlborough Food Bank on Saturday, Dec. 5, from 10 a.m.-noon, in the parking lot of Town Hall, 26 N. Main St.

Desired items include feminine hygiene products, toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, poofs, deodorant, adult diapers and baby diapers.

The Marlborough Lions hold various fundraising events throughout the year with the proceeds being used to fund various charities on

both local and international levels, which address issues related to vision. The Lions have also supported local charities in the past including the Marlborough Food and Fuel Banks. The Lions also collect eyeglasses, which can be dropped off in a collection box at Liberty Bank in Marlborough.

For more information on the collection or for more information about joining the Marlborough Lions Club, call Lions President Megan Lloyd at 413-687-5537.

Police News

11/20: State Police said that on Nov. 20 officers responded to the report of a one-vehicle crash that left a passenger with a "suspected serious injury." According to police, the call was received around 1:14 a.m. The crash was between a black, 2007 Lincoln MKZ and a rock wall on the right shoulder of Route 2. Police said that when the driver was traveling west on Route 2, he lost control of the vehicle, which veered to the right of the roadway and hit the rock wall. The driver and passenger were taken to Hartford Hospital by Marlborough Fire Rescue for their injuries. The driver had a "suspected minor injury" and the passenger a "suspected serious injury." The vehicle was towed from the scene.

11/22: State Police said that Thomas Hoyt Saltonstall, 48, of 51 Hebron Rd., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, interfering with an emergency call, third-degree assault and third-degree strangulation.

Marlborough Coat Drive

All are asked to donate clean gently-used or new coats and hats/scarves/mittens this holiday season.

The Marlborough Big Y is accepting coats in its donation box inside the store, to benefit Marlborough Food Bank. The Marlborough Democratic Town Committee is also accepting coats outside of the Marlborough Country Barn on North Main Street and outside of the old Dunkin' Donuts on South Main Street starting today, Dec. 4.

Marlborough Food Bank is also hosting a virtual toy drive this year; look for the food bank on Facebook for more details.

Charter Revision Public Hearing

The Charter Revision Commission (CRC) will hold a virtual public hearing Tuesday, Dec. 8, at 7 p.m., via Zoom, to discuss the commission's recommendations on charter changes.

All Marlborough residents are encouraged to attend and provide feedback. Information on how to join the virtual public hearing is provided in the meeting agenda, posted at www.marlbroughct.net. Those who cannot attend the virtual public hearing are welcome to submit feedback or questions by email to firstoffice@marlbroughct.net. Note: In the subject line type "CRC Public Hearing Comments."

All CRC meetings are recorded, and meeting minutes are posted on-line on the town website.

The Marlborough Charter Revision Commission was established in late January for the purpose of examining the number of Board of Selectmen and the form of town government structure in addition to identifying other needed updates to the town's charter for recommendation. After a review of the charter and other documents, gathering input from residents and conducting interviews, the CRC said it would like to share its progress to date with town residents and obtain feedback.

Community Garden Recap

The St. John Fisher Community Garden finished its 2020 garden season recently; it donated over 420 pounds of fresh produce to Marlborough Food Bank over the growing season.

Anyone is welcome to volunteer at the garden from May to October. No gardening experience is necessary.

Christmas Tree Sales

The East Glastonbury Fish and Game Club will sell Christmas trees Saturdays and Sundays only, from now until Dec. 20, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. each day. The club is located on Planeta Road in Marlborough, just off West Road.

All trees are \$30. Cut your own or ask for assistance. There will be members present to help you cut and load your tree. For more information, visit www.egfg.org.

Send Those Letters to Santa

A special box for all mail addressed to Santa Claus at the North Pole is located at the Marlborough Post Office. All boys and girls from Marlborough are invited to deposit their letters to Santa into this mailbox.

The postmaster reminds everyone to be sure to include a return name and address on the envelope or in the letter to Santa, as the big guy plans to answer each and every one of his letters – with the help of his special elves from Ambassador Girl Scout Troop 67813 and the local post office.

All letters should be deposited by the close of business on Monday, Dec. 14.

'Virtual Giving Tree' for Food Bank

Marlborough Food Bank is looking to help local families and seniors who are currently struggling financially this holiday season, via a "Virtual Giving Tree."

Due to COVID-19 concerns, the lobby of Marlborough's Liberty Bank will be closed through the holidays. In lieu of the Liberty Bank Giving Tree, a "Virtual Giving Tree" has been established. If interested in making a donation, email Marlborough Food Bank at MBFXMAS@gmail.com. The food bank will help to match you with the wishes of a senior or family. The food bank said gift cards for local grocery stores, restaurants, Walmart, Target, etc., as well as gas cards, are always welcome.

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Freezers for Food Bank... Recently, East Hampton Food Bank put out a request to the public for freezers, and the Rotary Club was one of the organizations to offer support. Two freezers were delivered and will allow the Food Bank to buy in bulk and accept larger donations. The East Hampton Rotary Club is accepting grant requests to assist local organizations. Email to pjoslyn@sbcglobal.net for a grant application or more information.

Congregational Church News

The Congregational Church of East Hampton, UCC, located at 59 Main St., is holding in-person services in the church sanctuary Sundays at 10 a.m. Masks must be worn and social distancing practiced. People may also access the livestream service and past services via the church website, www.cc-eh.org.

Church School classes for pre-kindergarten through eighth grade are held during worship.

Teen Youth Group is normally held the fourth Friday of each month from 6:30-7:30 p.m., for students in grades 6-12; however, the December meeting will be one week earlier, on Dec. 18, due to the Christmas holiday.

The season of Advent is underway, with the lighting of candles on the Advent wreath each week until Christmas.

Pageant Sunday, Dec. 20, will be a special

service presented by the youth.

On Christmas Eve at 7 p.m., there will be a service of lessons, music and candle-lighting, followed by caroling on the church lawn. Due to COVID-19, there will be a maximum of 70 people allowed to attend; contact the church office by noon Thursday, Dec. 24, to register to attend. People may also access the livestream service via the church website. Those who prefer not to attend the service in person, are still welcome to come for caroling on the church lawn immediately following the service, at 8 p.m.

For more information, visit the church website or call 860-267-4959 during office hours, Tuesday-Friday from 8 a.m.-noon. In case of pastoral emergencies, the Rev. Jim Latimer can be reached at 610-568-2480.

Haddam Neck Covenant Church News

Haddam Neck Covenant Church, 17 Haddam Neck Rd., invites all to Sunday worship at 9 a.m. online at www.facebook.com/Haddam-Neck-Covenant-Church or in person with masks, social distancing and safety protocols. Pastor is the Rev. Tom Cowger.

Message Series: The message series is on Jesus' love for people and how living in that love can provide peace.

Advent. Each Sunday in Advent, the church's Puppet Ministry will feature one of the barnyard friends in Farmer M's barn to help Pastor Tom explain the meaning of Advent.

Bible Study: Cowger holds a Zoom study

entitled "God's Peace and Prayers" every other Thursday from 7-8:30 p.m. The foundation of the study is the book *Armchair Mystic: How Contemplative Prayer Can Bring You Closer to God*.

Operation Christmas Child: The church thanked all who supported the mission outreach Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan Purse. The church was able to send 50 shoeboxes of gifts to children around the world who live in difficult circumstances.

Call the church office at 860-267-2336 for more information. Office hours are 12:30-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Christ Episcopal Church News

Christ Episcopal Church, 66 Middle Haddam Rd. (mailing address: P.O. Box 81), Middle Haddam, conducts Morning Prayer Sunday at 10 a.m., with church school at 11 a.m. Both will be available on Zoom.

Special Advent services will be conducted at 6 p.m. Wednesdays, Dec. 9, 16 and 23, via Zoom.

The Rev. Ann Perrott is Priest-in-Charge, the Rev. Joanne Neel-Richard handles Children's Ministry, and Martha Alimi is the music director.

For more information or if in need of pastoral assistance, call the church at 860-267-0287 or visit www.christchurchmiddlehaddam.com.

Puppet Ministry at Church

During this Advent season, each Sunday at Haddam Neck Covenant Church, the Puppet Ministry will feature Farmer M's Barn with Digger the Dog and one of his barnyard friends.



This Sunday, Dec. 6, at 9 a.m., "Peace" the Lamb will help church pastor the Rev. Tom Cowger and Digger the Dog, explain the meaning of the second week of Advent. "Peace" the Lamb will share how to find peace when it feels like there is none.

The church is located at 17 Haddam Neck Rd. in East Hampton, and the service will be both in person and online on Facebook Live at www.facebook.com/Haddam-Neck-Covenant-Church.

If worshipping in person, call the church office at 860-267-2336 any afternoon Monday-Friday to reserve your space. Facemasks are required and safe distancing is practiced. Your temperature will be taken at the door, and hand sanitizer is available.

Library Friends Virtual Auction

The Friends of East Hampton Public Library group will hold a virtual auction to raise funds for library programming and more.

Visit www.Facebook.com/Friendsofthe-East-HamptonPublicLibrary through Dec. 12 to view a photo album of all items up for auction and bidding guidelines. Select items will be on display at the library at 105 Main St.

Email all bids to EHPLFriendsAuction@gmail.com.

Send Those Letters to Santa

A special box for all mail addressed to Santa Claus at the North Pole is located at the East Hampton Post Office lobby. All boys and girls from East Hampton are invited to deposit their letters to Santa into this mailbox.

The postmaster reminds everyone to be sure to include a return name and address on the envelope or in the letter to Santa, as the big guy plans to answer each and every one of his letters – with the help of his special elves from Ambassador Girl Scout Troop 67813 and the local post office.

All letters should be deposited by the close of business on Monday, Dec. 14.

Christmas Masses at St. Patrick

This year, reservations are required for all interested in attending the celebration of Mass Christmas Eve and Christmas morning at St. Patrick Church, as the church is adhering to strict reduced capacity and social distancing and mask requirements.

There will be vigil Mass at 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Christmas Eve, and Holy Mass at 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Christmas morning. Once capacity for all Masses has been reached, additional Masses may be added to accommodate extra participants.

Call the parish office at 860-267-6644 to reserve a spot.

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Talk of Hunting on Town Land Delayed to '21

by Jack Lakowsky

The Town Council last week tabled until 2021 discussion of whether to allow hunting on town lands -- reasoning that this year's game season will end before any policy could be applied.

Currently, East Hampton has no ordinance that regulates hunting in town, according to Town Manager David Cox. The only applicable language is from 2003, when the town attorney at the time said residents could not hunt on town land, but no ordinance was passed to make this official.

The decision to table came at the Town Council's Nov. 24 meeting. The council began the discussion at its Nov. 10 meeting, after a resident asked Cox if hunting waterfowl on White Birch Road and Wopowog Road was permissible.

At that meeting, the council broadened discussion to include other town properties.

"If the council desires to allow hunting, it would be appropriate to adopt an ordinance to that effect so that clear rules and authority would be in place and an enforcement tool would exist," Cox said in his written report.

"The most compelling piece of all this is that no ordinance exists in the first place," Cox said at the Nov. 24 meeting.

Cox said the inquiring resident has already hunted these lands for years, asking for the town's stance seemingly on impulse. Cox said no there has been no evidence of irresponsible or intrusive hunting on town property.

Town staff selected a few more parcels for the council to consider, including a 10-acre wooded area on Middle Haddam Road and another 35 acres on Hog Hill Road.

Cox explained to the council that staff essentially "looked at areas where you can stand in the center [of the parcel] and still be within [state] hunting regulations." Staff selected areas of at least five acres with no structures.

"Some [of the parcels] are obviously more desirable than others," said Cox.

Food Drive

The local Edward Jones branch is running a food drive to benefit the East Hampton Food Bank.

People are invited to drop off donations at the office, 204 E. High St. Suite 2, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The drive runs through Dec. 15.

Edward Jones provides financial services in the U.S. and, through its affiliate, in Canada. Visit edwardjones.com for more information.

Police News

11/21: William Durant, 27, of 5B Barton Hill Rd., was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and failure to drive right, East Hampton Police said.

Also, from Nov. 16-22, officers responded to three medical calls, eight alarms and four motor vehicle crashes, and made 12 traffic stops, police said.

The largest town parcels in question, nearly 200 acres on Hog Hill Road and Old Middletown Avenue, were discussed as possible hunting areas in the council's Nov. 10 meeting.

Cox said the state allows hunting on much of the land it owns, including its parcels in northwestern Belltown. However, exclusions are in place for smaller properties and preserves. Cox said staff analysis of state hunting lands found a 500-foot buffer zone between the public land and private property.

Cox said for reference, he reached out to the Middlesex Land Trust, who said they do not allow hunting on their properties. However, the trust is set to begin in 2021 discussion of easing this policy, Cox said.

At the Nov. 10 meeting, the council asked Cox to determine if the town's Parks and Recreation Department plans to use any of the town lands in question. Cox said the department has plans for just one, a seven-acre parcel on Bear Swamp Road near the town transfer station. Parks and Rec has held tentative discussion of building a dog park there, according to Cox.

Another area in question is Loos Pond on White Birch Road. At the Nov. 24 meeting, Town Council Democrat Barbara Moore said Loos Pond residents can "step outside and look down on [the pond]," saying the distance between these houses and possible hunting areas needs to be measured to determine whether hunting there would be appropriate.

Council member Mark Philhower, a Republican, pointed out that hunting is already allowed on private property that abuts Loos Pond.

Philhower agreed with Cox that the council is unlikely to consider allowing use of long-range and higher-caliber rifles for hunting bigger game like deer.

Philhower also said not to overstate the amount of use the properties will see should the council allow hunting on town land.

"You're gonna get two or three people a year, really, just the occasional waterfowler" said Philhower. "They won't be stocked properties."

Philhower said hunting regulations are strictly enforced in Connecticut, and violators can face "stiff fines" or loss of licensure.

Council Republican Tim Feegel emphasized the need for clear communication to the public. He said should the council take a piecemeal approach and allow hunting on some parcels and not on others, some might misunderstand and think an allowance would apply universally.

Cox said after the topic is discussed further residents will be invited to a public hearing, so the town has "a structured opportunity to hear public opinion."

Three residents wrote letters of opposition against the ordinance.

East Hampton resident Lynn Brown, who lives near William Drive and Hog Hill Road, expressed concern about gunfire noise.

"Besides the annoyance from this noise, it is especially disturbing during early morning hours, when people are sleeping," wrote Brown.

Dean Maurice, who lives in the areas of Hog Hill and Chestnut Hill roads, penned a letter suggesting the town interpret the 2003 statement as an ordinance to enforce.

"Myself and my children have used these areas for passive recreation [for years]," Maurice wrote.

Maurice said his concern is for public safety. He said firing guns in his area is dangerous, with potential firearm impact to traffic on Hog Hill Road, Chestnut Hill Road, Terp Road, and Route 16, adding that the Airline Trail abuts ar-

eas in question.

Belltown resident Lee Ann Judy in a third letter to the council opposed the proposal, saying families should be able to "enjoy safe access to the natural beauty and characteristics of the town's lands without the possibility of being shot or otherwise traumatized."

Locally, East Hampton's lack of language regulating hunting isn't unique. East Hampton's neighbor Portland does not have a specific ordinance, according to Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield.

Bransfield said the most of the town's hunting activity is near Wangunk Meadows, which abuts the Meshomasic State Forest, where hunting is allowed. Portland, East Hampton, Marlborough and Glastonbury border the state forestland.

Village Center 'Shop Local' Holiday Raffle

East Hampton Public Library and the Economic Development Commission have announced the third annual East Hampton Village Center 'Shop Local' Holiday Raffle.

Make a purchase at any participating Village Center store by Dec. 22 and receive a raffle ticket. Return the ticket to the library, 105 Main St., for a chance to win a gift basket stuffed with local items and gift cards. The drawing will be held on Dec. 23.

The merchants participating in the raffle include: Air Line Cycles, Center Package, Dexter's Tunes, Tales and Ales, ECO Coffee, Little Fish Gallery & Gift, Old Bank Flowers & Greenery, Red Door Boutique, Studio 13 and Willow.

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B E E R	Coors Light & Miller Lite 12 oz., 30-pack cans \$23 ⁹⁹	Busch & Light 12 oz., 30-pack cans \$16 ⁴⁹	
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East Hampton • East Hampton

Holidays for the Horses!

In lieu of its holiday open house, which it had to cancel this year, CT Draft Horse Rescue is holding a draft-size raffle basket fundraiser, to benefit the horses of the East Hampton-based rescue.

Tickets are \$5 for five tickets or \$10 for 12 tickets. Tickets will be available to purchase (in-person only) from 8-11:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 5; Sunday, Dec 6; Saturday, Dec. 12; and Sunday, Dec 13, all at the Drafty Donuts trailer on Route 66 in the Edgewater Hill complex next to the Educational Playcare.

The basket drawing will be held Sunday,

Dec. 13, at noon.

Basket themes include 'Self Care,' 'Christmas Eve at Home,' 'Bird Lovers,' 'Bird Watchers,' 'Game Night,' 'By the Light of the Silvery Moon,' 'An Old-Fashioned Christmas,' 'Candyland,' 'CDHR Swag,' 'Let it Snow,' 'My Best Friend,' 'Holiday Baker' and 'Holiday Spirits.'

All baskets were created and donated by the CDHR volunteers and 100% of the proceeds goes directly to support the horses of the rescue. For more information, visit www.ctdraftrescue.org or www.facebook.com/ctdraftrescue.

East Hampton Library News & Notes

East Hampton Public Library, 105 Main St., has made the following announcements. For more information, call 860-267-6621 or visit easthamptonpubliclibrary.org or facebook.com/EastHamptonLibrary.

Library Hours: The library is open Monday-Wednesday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; and Thursday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. All patrons age 2 and up are required to wear masks that cover their nose and mouth in the library and observe social distancing. If unable or unwilling to wear a mask, call the library to schedule a curbside delivery.

Take-and-Makes: Each month, the library debuts three take-and-make activity kits: one for teens, one for school-age children and one

for the littlest learners. Reserve kits on the website and pick up in person or curbside. Registration begins the first of the month, and pickup begins the second Tuesday of the month.

Waiving Fines and Fees: The library will waive all fines and fees for the foreseeable future.

E-Books and E-Audiobooks: The library currently offers two different eBook and eAudio platforms. Visit the eLibrary tab on the website for more info.

E-Book Library Cards: Don't have a library card and you're an East Hampton resident? Sign up on the website for an eBook library card to access all of the library's online resources.



And the Winner Is... The winning tickets in the East Hampton Lions Club Scholarship Fund raffle were drawn Sunday, Nov. 28, at the Lions Pavilion in Sears Park. District Governor Frank Rowe (left) pulled the winning ticket for the \$2,020 grand prize, and it went to local resident Bob Miner. Raffle Chairman Tom Denman is to the right. All proceeds from the raffle go to college scholarships; contact any Lions member for details.

Senior Center News & Notes

East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., continues to be closed, although staff is available via phone (860-267-4426) and email (seniorcenter@easthamptonct.gov) through normal business hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. For the latest information, visit www.easthamptonct.gov/east-hampton-senior-center.

Online Program Registration: Register for programs online at MyActiveCenter.com. You will need your key-swipe tag number that you scan when you visit the center, as well as the phone number and email you used when originally registering at the senior center. Once registered for MyActiveCenter, you'll only need your email and password to get back in. Call the senior center for assistance.

Overly Stressed? Struggling? East Hampton Social Services, in collaboration with the senior center, is offering group therapy sessions via Zoom Wednesdays from 2-3 p.m. To sign up, contact the senior center at 860-267-4426 or

register online. Individual therapy is also available by appointment through East Hampton Social Services at 860-267-9982.

Virtual Lunch Bunch: Every other Monday at 12:30 p.m. for an hour, via Zoom. Next date is Dec. 14. Register online, or contact the senior center for an invitation.

Creative Crafts: Wednesday, Dec. 9, 1-2 p.m., via Zoom. Learn to make a watercolor holiday card, ready to give. Spots are limited and supply bags with everything you will need, will be available for pick up at the senior center. Register online at MyActiveCenter.com.

Drive-Thru Food Drive

Santa is helping the Rotary Club of East Hampton and the East Hampton High School Interact Club to sponsor a Drive-Thru Food Drive Saturday, Dec. 5 (rain date is Dec. 6), from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., at EHHS, 15 N. Maple St.

Food donations support the East Hampton Food Bank and monetary donations support the Fuel Bank. Each child will receive a gift from Santa and each family that donates will be entered to win a Nintendo Switch.

Kids can bring their letters to Santa and drop them off in Santa's special mailbox so he can take them back to the North Pole. Be sure to include a return name and address on your envelope so Santa can answer your letter.

Helping Hands

Helping Hands, a ministry of Cornerstone Bible Church, is open the first and third Saturdays of each month. The ministry offers free gently-used clothing, household items, books, linens and more to community members in need.

Due to COVID-19, all must sign up for a time slot and wear a mask when entering. To register for a time slot, call 860-918-0784 or email jholm225@sbcglobal.net, on the Sunday before the open Saturday.

Helping Hands will accept donations only on the first and third Saturday of each month.

Residents Sought to Serve

The town continues to look for volunteers to serve on various boards, commissions and agencies.

Currently with vacancies are: Arts & Culture Commission, Brownfields Redevelopment Agency, Clean Energy Task Force, Conservation-Lake Commission, Design Review Board, Ethics Commission, Housing Authority, Inland Wetlands Watercourses Agency, Library Advisory Board, and Middle Haddam Historic District Commission.

Applications are available in the town manager's office at 1 Community Drive or at www.easthamptonct.gov.



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Cover Story • Cover Story

★ **Restaurant Owner cont. from page 1**

In addition to being dedicated to the restaurant, Anastasiou was also a community person, her brother said, as he explained that she was often doing such things as donating to food banks and helping the churches and the schools.

“As a family, this is what we did here at Family Pizza with her,” he said.

Valkanos said she was also very active and loved her church, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox in Norwich.

Valkanos said he often bore witness to his sister’s generosity. He noted that at times, there were people that would go into the restaurant without money and Anastasiou would feed them anyway.

Valkanos was asked what his sister’s motivation was to always being such a kind and happy person and he said, “It’s just who she was.”

Valkanos said that all of Anastasiou’s immediate family members live in Colchester, a town “she loved.” He noted that the family still has relatives in Greece.

Outside of her work life, Anastasiou liked to travel, Valkanos said. He explained that she loved to take rides with her husband and go on day trips.

“She loved having people at her home,” he said. “Her home would be full of people for lunches, for dinners, for get-togethers, all the time. She would host holiday get-togethers, spontaneous parties, but in all those parties, her family was there.”

Valkanos said that losing Anastasiou – his only sibling – was “very hard.” He explained that they lost their mother in 2004 and then their father in 2006.

“We were just the two of us,” he said. “And now I feel like I’m an orphan.”

“The time we spent together having breakfast, lunches, dinners, holidays, any occasions, happy occasions, sad occasions, I would never trade that for anything in the world,” he said. “That is priceless to me as her brother.”

Colchester resident Andreas Bisbikos said he knew Anastasiou and her family since he was a little boy.

“Anna was loved not only by her family and friends, but by the entire community,” Bisbikos said. “She was a positive person, who always offered words of encouragement. Through her business, she made numerous donations to various local causes. Anyone who was fortunate enough to know her knew she had a big heart. She will be dearly missed.”

Valkanos said he is thankful the community understood he had to temporarily close the business.

“That’s one thing about our community – they understand that family comes first and that we will be there for them soon,” Valkanos said. “Hopefully in her memory we will be here for as long as we can.”

Valkanos said he is looking to reopen the business on Monday Dec. 7. There will be more



Missing You

details on the Family Pizza Facebook Page.

Donations in Anna’s memory may be made to benefit St. Jude’s Children Hospital, at www.stjude.org. For online condolences, please visit www.auroramccarthfuneralhome.com.



Cover Story • Cover Story

★ **Anxiety cont. from page 1**

risk.

The town also hosted a drive-thru luncheon on Oct. 1, and the Democratic Town Committee hosted another dinner, both of which served between 60 and 80 people. A third pandemic-friendly event was held at St. Patrick Church on West High Street.

“Food was the enticement, but we wanted people to get out and safely interact with others,” said Ewing.

Ewing said town staff also helped seniors connect with Instacart, a grocery delivery service.

Ewing also helped seniors who prefer pen and paper. Seniors were able to submit their information to Ewing’s staff, who would then connect residents for a pen pal program.

Importance of Mental Health

Incognito reiterated the importance of connectivity in maintaining mental health and wellness, especially for high-risk people unable to see friends and family on a regular basis, and who out of caution choose to self-isolate.

Although this reduces the physical risks of contracting COVID-19, it can be psychologically grueling.

Incognito described one case where a town clinician’s client didn’t mention a specific mental health challenge but was feeling depressed and anxious due to loneliness. The clinician, Incognito said, did not think it necessary to diagnose the individual with a particular condition, but decided to keep seeing them because the client simply needed face-to-face interaction.

Incognito urged any residents struggling with mental wellness or loneliness to contact her department. Many people are not aware the town offers therapy services, she explained. Incognito’s department issues a monthly newsletter, and in its recent printing let the community know of by-appointment services.

“In general, people have been wonderful and creative,” said Incognito. “We’re all trying to connect these dots in different ways. We’re finding a struggle to be that even though we’re reaching out and connecting with people, we’re still faced with distancing requirements.”

Incognito praised Ewing, as well as both senior and social service staff, for their efforts against both COVID-19 and the unsung cabin fever epidemic.

Despite all their tremendous and successful efforts, both Ewing and Incognito agreed they simply lack the resources to meet every need presented to them.

“Outreach is an area we’re lacking in,” said Ewing, explaining she wants to do more to determine the specific needs of individual East Hampton seniors. “There are people in need that we don’t know about.”

Ewing said that ideally, she and Incognito’s departments would be able to establish small, intimate cohorts to help seniors through loneliness and anxiety. Groups, which could even be on a one-to-one ratio, could meet at or near one of the member’s home environment.

“People in need or having difficulties with isolation could have a conversation with another

senior, someone who can empathize with their struggle,” said Ewing. “But of course, there’s a certain level of trust that goes along with that. Our seniors are also a very proud group, and it’s not always easy to ask for help.”

Another challenge the two department leaders face is the pandemic’s unknowable duration. Ewing explained this makes any planning for future senior operations extremely difficult.

Building Positive Momentum

Stacy Giguere, Ph.D, a psychology professor at Manchester Community College in Manchester, detailed in a Tuesday interview with the *Rivereast* free, non-intrusive methods to occupy and distract the harried brain, all from the comfort and safety of home.

Giguere focused on activities available to those even in total or near-total lockdown.

“Of course, people can connect through technology, but that’s obvious, and may not hold appeal for everyone,” Giguere said on the phone call.

A first step, Giguere said, is identifying triggers of both anxiety and joy.

“Sometimes, we tune out from ourselves, and won’t even notice our reactions,” said Giguere.

Although each individual has unique needs, Giguere said excessive news consumption is a common example of an anxiety-inducing habit.

“You don’t have to stop; it’s important to be informed, but set limits,” said Giguere.

Bad habits can sometimes be obvious, such as excess alcohol consumption, which Giguere advises against, as alcohol can worsen depression and disrupt sleeping patterns, and proper sleep is also key to mental wellness.

Decent exercise and a healthy diet are also key to mental health, Giguere said.

Other anxiety triggers aren’t so clear.

“Even if you’re home doing nothing, you can go through dark routes in the mind,” said Giguere. “Bad thoughts affect your mind and body. They drain energy and we experience more pain when thinking those thoughts.” Negative thinking can be worsened by loneliness and isolation, she said.

Giguere said human brains as a survival technique evolved to focus on negatives and stressors. The complex human brain developed at a time when people were, more or less, a menu item.

“The challenge is to start shifting away from those triggers,” said Giguere.

A bit of cognitive discipline can help to un-

burden anxious minds, Giguere explained. Reliving positive experiences can divert the mind down lighter paths. This is not a practice in simple memory, but an attempt to fully re-experience a joyful moment or event.

First, make a list of positive memories. It can be as long as possible, and should be written in an unfettered, nonjudgmental way. Giguere said to consider one’s whole lifespan.

“After a while, see if you notice a pattern,” said Giguere. “Do a lot of the memories take place outside? Involve helping others, being creative? For some, it may be obvious, but others might need to dig a little deeper. Energy shifts, and you’ll start to see these glimmers of hope.”

Deep thinking is key to building positive momentum, Giguere explained. Oftentimes, people are not present for our own joy, and, due to the dark-leaning configuration of the human brain, can forget activities that brought happiness.

“Maybe you used to take care of plants and that brought you happiness, but for whatever reason you fell out of the habit,” said Giguere.

When making those lists, if new memories are slow to come, start expanding on experiences already written. Describe sensory experiences, the weather that day, what the family ate for dinner, or anything else. Giguere said not to edit as you go, but to write freely, and to relive. “Inhabit the memory,” said Giguere.

Savoring Enjoyment

Giguere also advised savoring enjoyment. Too often people try to change the negative to provide a sense of control, she said. Savoring enjoyment, even if just for a few extra seconds, will “leave less room for negative thoughts.”

“It can be anything – your favorite type of jam, anything. The key is to be nonjudgmental of yourself,” said Giguere.

When negative thoughts are especially distracting, Giguere advised starting an “angst jar.” Write down bad feelings and unenjoyable memories, then stuff the paper into the jar. Physical manifestation is cathartic and eases the quieting of bad thoughts, she said.

Daily rituals, creative expression, and taking a quiet moment to meditate are more ways to ease anxiety and distract from negative think-

ing.

“Adding just one new daily ritual can bring joy and positivity to one’s life,” said Giguere. “Even if it’s just 10 minutes per day. For example, before bed, briefly meditate or move your body to shed anxiety. Start small. Small changes have a big impact.”

Giguere said adopting new and healthy habits gives people a sense of agency. They are not just passively riding out the pandemic but using the time advantageously.

“It could be as simple as looking out your window to the same spot in your yard every day and writing down what changes from day to day,” she said. “Writing sensory experiences shifts us out of rumination and fosters a positive memory bank.”

Arts, crafts, and other creative activities are great ways to reduce pandemic fatigue, said Giguere. Personally, Giguere writes poetry and crafts photo collages.

“Drawing, collaging, doodling, and coloring can all be very soothing,” she said. “Reliving childhood joys brings great happiness.”

Giguere said crafting is a versatile and inexpensive activity.

“Make a collage out of junk mail if you want,” she said.

Singing and dancing to music is another catharsis, she said.

Giguere explained that existing habits, rituals, and interests can be developed and deepened, such as learning how to cook a new dish.

“Learning new things is very important in keeping the brain active,” said Giguere.

Although a vaccine and cooperation with safety protocols are key to combating the COVID-19 pandemic, imagination can aid the fight against the loneliness pandemic.

Giguere said humans are wired to be social, to touch and communicate with one another. She said the lonely brain can be soothed by simply hugging oneself. This will release oxytocin – the cuddle hormone.

“Doing something positive in a judgment-free way, even for just 15 minutes per day, can make a giant difference,” she said. “You’ll notice a difference in yourself, in your relationships. You’ll find yourself in a better space as that positive momentum builds.”



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Obituaries

East Hampton

Jeannette Dixon

Jeannette (Jan) Nicole Dixon, 47, of East Hampton, died Friday, Nov. 20, surrounded by family, after an extended fight with cancer for which she displayed strength, dignity and unparalleled courage.

Though she valiantly fought for eight long years, multiple myeloma never controlled her life. She continued to cherish her friends and family, bringing positivity to an otherwise dark disease. She was a kind-hearted woman who was loved by many. A woman whose smile and presence brought happiness to everyone around her.

Jan was born March 21, 1973 in Silver Spring, Md., the beloved daughter of William J. VonFeldt and Regina S. (Joliet) VonFeldt. She graduated from Damascus High School in 1991 and went on to earn an associate's degree in early education from Montgomery College in Germantown, Md. She worked many years as a paraprofessional, specializing in the education of children with special needs.

Through all the waning moments and hardships Jan endured, she always fought for change. While it was her who needed extra help, she never put herself first; the needs of others were always placed above her own. As a military wife she lived throughout the United States and abroad, making friends wherever she went. She faced every day with a smile and laugh for which she will be fondly remembered.

Jan enjoyed reading books, watching movies and spending time with family. She was a social woman who loved cracking jokes and being silly, the type of personality that caused others to miss her as soon as she left their sight. Her loving nature and selflessness left a mark on all those who had the pleasure of knowing her.

Jan is survived by her loving husband of 26 years, Andrew E. Dixon. Andrew and Jeannette have four children: Ashlei N. Dixon (Eric Nelson, fiancé) and Whitney L. Dixon of Woodstock, Ga.; Conner J. Dixon and Tyler D. Dixon of East Hampton. Jeannette is also survived by her two sisters, Nanette S. VonFeldt (Vlad Olteanu) and Kristy L. Wilson (Daniel E. Wilson), as well as a host of extended family and friends who will cherish her memory.

Due to COVID-19, a memorial service for Jan will be held in summer 2021 to celebrate her life, reflect on fond memories and cherish her everlasting laughter.

Should friends desire, memorial contributions can be made in Jan's name to the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation, themmr.org, or P.O. Box 414238, Boston, MA 02241-4238.

For online condolences, visit www.abbeycremation.com/post/jeannette-dixon-1973-2020.

East Hampton

Thomas Edward Marston Sr.

Thomas Edward Marston Sr., 73, of East Hampton, passed away Tuesday, Nov. 24, unexpectedly with his loving family at his side at Middlesex Hospital in Middletown, after a courageous battle with cancer. The world has lost a great man and heaven has gained a warrior. Born Nov. 18, 1947, to the late Elmer and Thelma (Sutter) Marston in Waterville, Maine, he was a resident of East Hampton for over 52 years.

Tom was known first and foremost as a family man and the forever love of his wife of 51



years, Elaine. His other true joys in life were his grandchildren, Michael Spitzmacher Jr., Samantha Marston and Kayla Spitzmacher. If he was not out cruising in his 1960 Chevy Impala with Elaine by his side at a car show, he would be running around to pick up Michael or Kayla to spend time with them. They truly brought joy to him and he brought so much into their lives that will never be forgotten by them.

Tom worked in construction over 45 years and was proud to be a union construction worker "building America." Anyone who met Tom would remember him for his wonderful characteristics, a great husband, father, grandfather, an honorable man, a great friend, a good person to all. Thomas was a proud Vietnam veteran who loved his country. Tom will forever be remembered for his good nature, booming voice and wonderful sense of humor.

In addition to his wife, Elaine, Tom is survived by his son, Thomas Edward Marston Jr., his wife Sylvie of East Hampton, and his daughter, Angel M. Spitzmacher and her husband Michael Spitzmacher Sr. of East Hampton.

Tom also has many siblings: Dawn Marston (deceased), Donna Treble, Dixie Davis (deceased), Mike Marston (deceased), George Marston (deceased), Dana Marston, Candace Amburg, Rev. Dean Marston, Sr. (deceased) and Dale Marston Sr., all in the Fairfield, Maine area. He is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Tom will forever be loved and remembered by his family, friends and all who knew him.

There was a walk-through wake Tuesday, Dec. 1, at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. A graveside service with military honors was held Wednesday, Dec. 2, at the Old Young Street Cemetery.

To leave online condolences, please visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Suzanne McGee

On Nov. 20, Suzanne Marie Larson McGee of Middletown passed into eternal life peacefully at Yale New Haven Hospital with family by her side. 'Suzie' was 83 years old, the fifth of seven children born to the late Carl and Elizabeth Larson of Portland Sept. 30, 1937. She was a graduate of Portland High School and employed by Aetna Insurance Company for many years.

Married in 1958 to Jerome (Jerry, Mick) F. McGee, Suzie will be forever remembered for the special unending love she had for her family. Her amazing strength and positive attitude guided her always, finding beauty and joy everywhere she went. Suzie looked at life through rose-colored glasses. A wonderful cook and gardener, Suzie also had a love for the ocean, spending many happy years at the seashores in Old Saybrook, Leetes Island, Guilford, and Wilber-by-the-Sea (Daytona), Fla.

Suzie is survived by her husband of 62 years, Jerome F. McGee of Middletown; her five children and their spouses, Jody (Jeff) Schultz of Middletown, Jeffrey (Renee) McGee of Manahawkin, N.J., Jay (Leslie) McGee of Clearwater, Fla., Jonathan (Audra) McGee of Ivoryton, Jennifer (Bryan) Jay of Barrington, R.I. Survivors also include her 18 grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, four siblings and many in-laws, nieces, nephews and cousins. All of these she loved and touched deeply.

Memorial gatherings will be held this summer in Connecticut and Florida for all family and friends to celebrate Suzie's wonderful life.

Thank you to the palliative care unit at Yale



New Haven Hospital.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to: Yale New Haven Hospital,

www.givetoynhh.org/ways-to-give/honor-allowed-one; Save the Sound, www.savethesound.org/donate; St. Jude Children's Research, P.O. Box 50, Memphis, TN, 38105.

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

Colchester

Anna Anastasiou

Anna Anastasiou, 62, of Colchester, passed away peacefully on Friday, Nov. 27, with her beloved family by her side. She was born Nov. 14, 1958, in Xrisavgi, Kozani, Greece, the daughter of the late Dimitrios and Kasiani Valkanos.

Anna emigrated from Greece to Canada with her family at the age of seven. By the age of ten, her family had once again emigrated to Manchester, N.H., and finally to Hartford, where she attended school, graduating from Buckley High in 1977.

In 1980, while vacationing in Greece, Anna met the love of her life, Konstantinos. Within weeks they were engaged and soon after married on Aug. 16, 1981. They were the epitome of love at first sight. In 1982, the couple made their home in Colchester where they raised their family and built a thriving and successful restaurant. Since 1978, Family Pizza has been a staple in the community, where so many were greeted and welcomed by Anna.

Anna will always be remembered for her enormous heart, her love of life and most importantly her love for her family. She was a devoted and loving wife, mother and grandmother. To say she was the matriarch of the family would be an understatement. Anna left behind a legacy of love and family that will live on forever.

Anna will be sadly missed by her husband of almost 40 years, Konstantinos; her sons, Dimitri, Fotis and his wife Jocelyn; her beloved grandchildren, Lukas, Adrianna, and Konstantinos; a brother, Christos and his wife, Maria Valkanos and their children Dimitri and Yanni; and numerous extended family members and friends, both here and in Greece.

Walk-through calling hours were held Tuesday, Dec. 1, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral Mass and burial were held privately.

Donations in Anna's memory may be made to benefit St. Jude's Children Hospital, www.stjude.org.

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

Portland

Regina Ortisi

Regina (Zawisza) Ortisi, 84, of Portland, wife of Sebastian J. Ortisi Jr., passed away Friday, Nov. 27, at Middlesex Hospital. She was born Dec. 21, 1935, in Middletown, the daughter of the late Joseph and Mary Ann (Grzych) Zawisza. She worked for the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch, in both the Superior and Juvenile court divisions.

Throughout her 63 years of marriage, she instilled her love of cooking, gardening and all things creative into her four children. Her practical ways and steady work ethic allowed her family to thrive and enjoy the fruits of her labor in the form of beautiful gardens, daily home-cooked meals, big Sunday dinners, traditional holiday baking, hand-sewn, knitted or crocheted treasures, a warm and comforting home, and much more. She supported her children in their love of creative and athletic interests, and became the best Italian cook around, even with her being 100% Polish.

After retirement, Regi enjoyed spending free time with special friends down the beach & later playing cards with the Golden Girls. Her granddaughter and great-grandchildren brought a light to her eye and her last stories were fun memories of Adam Jr. and Luke.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her son, Sebastian John Ortisi III and his husband Victor Cella of Southfield, Mass., her son, Richard Ortisi of Gulfport, Fla., her daughter, Janice Heffernan and her husband Tim of Portland, and her daughter, Karen Lutkus and her husband Greg of Colchester; her granddaughter, LaurieAnn (Caffery) Hansen and her hus-



band Adam and great-grandsons, Adam Jr. and Luke, of Branford; her brother, Joseph "Jimmy" Zawisza and wife Josephine of Middletown; her sister, Patricia McGowan of Sterling, Va.; sisters-in-law, Ida Zawisza of Middletown, Marita Zawisza of Columbus, Ohio, and Christine Zawisza of Middletown (formerly Higginum); and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by brothers, Frank, Stanley, Casimir and Walter Zawisza, John and Henry Zawisza; sisters, Anna Kendrek, Catherine Kurek, and Agnes Gadzinski.

Regina's family would like to extend sincerest thanks to the doctors, nurses, PCTs, and respiratory therapists, including those in the Comfort Care unit at Middlesex Hospital for their kind and compassionate care, especially during her last weeks.

The graveside burial was held Thursday, Dec. 3, at St. Sebastian's Cemetery, Middlefield. There were no calling hours.

Those who wish to may send memorial donations to the Comfort Care Unit of Middlesex Health or to the charity of their choice in Regina's memory.

To share memories or express condolences online, please visit www.biegafuneralhome.com.

Portland

Marie Theresa Kopet

Marie Theresa Kopet of Cocoa Beach, Fla., formerly of Portland, passed away Tuesday, Nov. 24, after a long debilitating illness. The youngest daughter of the late Carrie Cristini and Henry Heidegger, Marie was born June 24, 1933, in Brooklyn, N.Y. Two sisters, Dorothy Jones and Carolyn McDermott, predeceased her.

The loving wife of Francis (Frank) J. Kopet for 64 years, Marie nurtured and loved her children with full-time dedication. Christopher (deceased) (Donna), Jean Maltese (John), Theresa Errichetti (David), Matthew (Sandra) and Carol Stotz (Gregory), and her 11 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren were ever present in her daily thoughts and prayers. She loved her dog, Mitzi.

Marie was active in the St. Jerrod's Mother's Circle of St. Mary's Church in Portland; a member of the Portland Quilting Group; leader of a Girl Scout Brownie troop; and den mother of Cub Scouts in Portland. In 2014, Marie authored and published a history of the Kopet and Heidegger families. It was wonderfully entitled *Family Matters*. She was editor and publisher of the Club Chalet newsletter, *The Chatter*.

She was born in New York, raised in Glen Ridge, N.J., and, upon marriage, Marie resided in Belleville and Denville, N.J.; Portland and Black Point, Conn.; Ellijay, Ga.; and St. Petersburg, Fla. Her last residence was Cocoa Beach, Fla.

At first a hesitant adventurer, Marie became an ardent traveler with a desire to see the world and taste its delicacies. Visits to most states, many trips to Europe, and the Far East never satisfied her desire to see more.

Marie's prize-winning quilts ranged from crib-sized, made for all of her grandchildren, and large bed quilts including wall hangings. These will be treasured for many generations.

A funeral Mass and interment in the Memorial Garden of Church of Our Saviour, Cocoa Beach, Fla., were held Thursday, Dec. 3.

Hebron

John Edward Foote

John Edward Foote, 74, passed away Saturday, Nov. 28, following a long illness.

John was born June 11, 1946 to Edward A. and Marion (Odell) Foote, and lived most of his life on Footehills Farm, in the Gilead section of Hebron, where many hours of his youth were spent caring for calves, milking cows, haying in the summer, picking stones from the areas being developed as hay fields, and helping to construct the many ponds on the farm. His engineering talents were recognized at a young age.

Following his 1964 graduation from RHAM, as a member of the National Honor Society, John continued his education at Beloit College (Wisconsin). He then returned to Hebron and enlisted in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. Completion of his training in microwave and radar



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Obituaries continued

repair at Fort Monmouth led to John being stationed in Germany for several years during the Vietnam War.

After his Army service, John returned to Footehills, where he worked until being offered a lifetime opportunity at Pratt & Whitney. At Pratt, he was selected to join the elite apprenticeship program in "Experimental Tool and Die." He designed a fiber optics tool that was used for inspecting jet engines. John was honored by being named the Outstanding Apprentice of 1983 in the Connecticut Metalworking Trades Apprenticeship Competition. The award was granted for his problem-solving expertise in Tool and Die, as was evidenced by all who knew him.

Even though it was very difficult towards the end, John did enjoy his life. He loved the great outdoors during all seasons and any weather. His photography, garden, adopted four-legged friends (to whom he was devoted), enjoyment of hiking, skiing and snowmobiling, and farm work were all enhanced by Mother Nature. He enjoyed time spent with friends from all walks of life, and helping them however he could.

In addition to his parents, John was predeceased by his sisters, Deborah Jane Foote and Elizabeth Hutchinson Foote. He is survived by his brother, Edward A. Foote Jr. of Hebron, and sister, MaryAnn Foote of Hillsdale, N.Y., and Hebron. John leaves behind many nieces, nephews, cousins and others with whom he shared lots of good times that have now become special memories.

In lieu of flowers, for those who wish to donate in John's memory, Protectors of Animals, 144 Main Street, Unit O, East Hartford, CT 06118 or some similar organization would be appreciated.

A celebration of John's life will be held in the spring.

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

Regional • Regional • Regional

Tri-County American Legion Baseball

The Tri-County American Legion baseball program has opened registration for those interested in participating in tryouts for its summer 2021 teams.

Serious players who will be between the ages of 13-19 next year – and who have a parent residing in Andover, Colchester, East Haddam, East Hampton, Hebron, Lebanon and Marlborough – are eligible.

Specific dates for the winter workouts and tryouts are still being finalized based on current health protocols, but the deadline to register is Dec. 15.

Connecticut has approved a 13U division for 2021, which means the program can have 19U, 17U, 15U and 13U options for competitive area players this summer, depending on interest.

Interested players can pre-register at www.tcleague.com or contact GM Len Lampugnale at Lampugnale@comcast.net or at 860-295-0437 to receive more information.

Colchester

Mary J. Cummins

Mary J. Cummins died peacefully Sunday, Nov. 22. She was born in Ostro, Lubelski, Poland July 7, 1922, to the late John and Antonina (Niedbalska) Jurach.

Mary's family emigrated to the U.S. when she was 7 and she spent her childhood on the family farm in Colchester. After graduating from Bacon Academy, she earned her teaching degree from Willimantic State Teaching College, now known as Eastern Connecticut State University.

In 1949, she was united in marriage to Patrick Cummins. She had a long teaching career in the New Britain school system, specializing in ESL (English as a Second Language). After retiring in 1986, Mary and Pat moved to North Myrtle Beach, S.C., where their favorite pastime was taking long walks on the beach. Mary was a devout Catholic and was actively involved in each parish in which she was a member; she was an avid reader and tennis enthusiast and loved volunteering in her community.

She moved back to Connecticut in 2012, where she resided at Crescent Point, Niantic, until 2016 and then Bayview Health Care, Waterford, until her death. Our family is thankful for the care and comfort provided by the staff at both facilities, especially during the last nine months when family visits were limited.

Mary loved spending time with her family who will miss her deeply. Mary is survived by her daughter, Cheryl Chiaputti and husband Kevin Callahan of Niantic; her son, Jim Cummings and wife Elizabeth of Monroe; grandchildren, Paige Cummings and husband Pepijn Dekker, Brenna Chiaputti and husband Charlie Ahles, Mike Chiaputti, Erin Chiaputti and husband Matt Yoder, Aidan Cummings, Kayla Cummings, Katelyn Callahan and husband Tori Morman and Sarah Callahan; as well as eight beloved great-grandchildren.

In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her husband, Patrick Cummins; daughters, Kathleen and Patricia Cummings; son-in-law, John "Chip" Chiaputti; her sisters, Jane Drazkiewicz and Blanche Bass; and her brother, Louis Jurach.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Tuesday, Dec. 1, at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave. Colchester; burial immediately followed at Old St. Andrew Cemetery. There were no calling hours.

Donations in Mary's memory may be made to Bayview Health Care's Taking Care of Our Own Fund, 301 Rope Ferry Rd., Waterford, CT 06385 or Shoreline Soup Kitchens and Food Pantries - East Lyme Pantry, 400 Main St., Niantic, CT 06357.

Belmont Funeral Home LLC has been entrusted with these arrangements; condolences may be left at www.belmontfh.com.



Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover • Andover

★ *Andover News cont. from page 4*

Christmas Fair

Andover Congregational Church will hold its Christmas Fair Saturday, Dec. 5, from 9 a.m.-2 p.m., at the church, 359 Route 6.

There will be basket raffles, handmade ornaments and crafts, a bake sale, Grandma's Attic, and local vendors. Lunch will be available for purchase.

CDC guidelines will be followed and masks are required.

Collection for Food Pantry

The Andover Volunteer Fire Department will collect holiday meal items – such as turkeys, hams, stuffing, vegetables, fruit, nuts, juice and more – for the Andover Food Pantry on Saturday, Dec. 12, from 10 a.m.-noon.

Donations may be brought to the firehouse at 11 School Rd. Gift cards and monetary donations are also welcome.

Final Days of Quilt Fundraiser

The Andover Friends of the Library homemade quilt raffle is in its final fundraising days. The drawing will be held Saturday, Dec. 12, at noon, by a special guest of the library. Tickets are \$2 each or 3 for \$5. Donated by an Andover community quilter, the quilt measures 60" x 78."

Tickets may be purchased in any of the following ways:

Call the library at 860-742-7428 to reserve tickets and coordinate mailing payment. There will be curbside pickup only during the library's hours: Monday and Wednesday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday, noon-7 p.m.; and Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Masks and social distancing required. Call 860-742-7428 to arrange. The library is located at 355 Route 6.

There is also curbside service only at the Town Clerk's Office, 17 School Rd. Ring the

doorbell during business hours: Monday 8:15 a.m.-7 p.m., and Tuesday-Thursday, 8:15 a.m.-4 p.m. Call 860-742-7305 to arrange.

Tickets can also be ordered by emailing the Library Friends at andoverfol@gmail.com. Include your name, phone number and number of tickets you wish to purchase and you will be contacted to arrange payment.

If tickets are reserved by email or phone, payment can be made curbside in person at the library, cash or check payable to Andover Friends of the Library, or by mail to P. O. Box 117, Andover, CT 06232. Indicate "Quilt Raffle" on the envelope. You will then be contacted with your ticket numbers.

You need not be present to win. All proceeds benefit Andover Public Library. Andover Friends of the Library is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Senior Citizen News & Notes

The following news items have been announced for Andover seniors.

Insurance for 2021: The Medicare Open Enrollment Period is underway and runs through Dec. 7. Your insurance policy for 2021 will renew unless you make changes. This year, brokers cannot come to the center due to COVID-19, but you may call Mark Hand at his office at 860-942-7076 for additional assistance. He will work with you to offer a policy that fits your needs.

Medicals: If you have appointments and would like senior transportation to take you, call senior coordinator Cathy Palazzi at 860-916-6122 to reserve a ride. All seniors welcome and any ADA individual or veterans who need rides are welcome. Masks must be worn in the van and if you have a caregiver that person may come with you. Temperatures will be taken by

the driver.

Shopping: The bus will pick you up at your home and take you shopping to Manchester on Tuesdays at 7 a.m. Masks must be worn and temperatures will be taken by driver before clients can access the bus. Call Palazzi for a ride.

Foodshare/Food Pantry: Municipal Agent Roberta Dougherty calls seniors on Fridays to see if they would like Foodshare or the food pantry delivered. All deliveries will be made by senior transportation drivers. Food will be placed outside the senior's door.

No Other Activities: No other senior activities will start until further notice. That includes: movies, exercise programs, drumming classes, and Young at Heart meetings. No trips will be available until there is approval from Town Administrator Eric Anderson and the Board of Selectmen.

First Congregational Church News

The First Congregational Church, UCC, of Andover, 359 Route 6, invites all ages to worship Sundays at 10 a.m.

The church has reopened and meets in the sanctuary. Enter through the Narthex. Masks and social distancing are required. If you don't have a mask, a mask will be given to you. The service also streams live on the church's Facebook page (First Congregational Church, Andover, CT).

For more information, call the church office at 860-742-7696 or pastor the Rev. Rose Nilson at 860-336-6114. Nilson's hours are by appointment. The church website is andover-ctchurch.org.

[ctchurch.org](http://andover-ctchurch.org).

The church has a weekly Bible Study on Tuesdays at 11 a.m. both via Zoom and in person at the church (observing CDC guidelines regarding social distancing and masks). If interested in attending via Zoom, call the church and leave a message and Nilson will send you the meeting link.

The Food Pantry is Mondays from 5-7 p.m. Bring your own bags. CDC guidelines will be observed and masks are required. The Foodshare van comes to the church every other Wednesday from 9-9:30 a.m. and will next be there Dec. 9.

Dems Seek to Fill Seats

The Andover Democratic Town Committee has announced openings on several town boards. If interested, email DTC Chair Catherine Magaldi-Lewis at andoverdemsct@gmail.com. Boards include:

Zoning Board of Appeals: When a property owner seeks a variance from town zoning regulations, the property owner presents an application to the ZBA. The board then reviews the property owner's appeal and determines if an exception to the town's regulations is warranted. The ZBA meets the third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. – and only when an application presented to the board. The ZBA has five members who each serve for four years. The DTC said it is also seeking an alternate for the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Planning and Zoning Commission: The PZC creates laws regulating how land is used in town, reviews all municipal land purchases and sales and major civic improvements, and determines compliance with zoning regulations and subdivision regulations. The commission meets the third Monday of each month. The PZC has five members who each serve for four years. The DTC said it is also seeking an alternate for the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Andover Board of Education: The two key functions of the Board of Education are to work with and supervise the superintendent of

schools, and create a budget for Andover Elementary School. In addition, the school board negotiates contracts and agreements with school staff and administration, represents the school's interest to the town, and conducts searches for administrators for the elementary school. This board is separate from the RHAM Board of Education, on which Andover currently has two members. The Board of Education meets a minimum of once each month on the second Wednesday evening. It has seven members who each serve four-year terms.

Board of Finance: This board reviews the budget estimates with the leaders of all town offices and agencies, except the schools, whose budgets are produced by the Andover and RHAM boards of education. Upon completion of the review the BOF prepares a final budget incorporating any recommended changes. The budget is presented at the annual town meeting where a vote is held to determine whether to send the budget to referendum. The Board of Finance usually meets once a month, but during budget season can meet two to three times a month. The board has seven members who each serve four-year terms.

Justice of the Peace: Also, there are four open Justice of the Peace positions, which each serve for four years.

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www.Ready.gov/kids

and talk to your family today.



LEGALS

TOWN OF COLCHESTER LEGAL NOTICE

The Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a virtual public hearing on December 15, 2020, at 7:00 P.M. to hear and consider the following petition:

Jay R. Einhorn - Bulkeley Hill Road – Appeal of Enforcement Order (2020-03) – To appeal the decision of the Zoning Enforcement Order regarding the conduct of an unpermitted commercial activity on Bulkeley Hill Road (Map 03-11, Lot 043), Rural Use District.

At this hearing interested persons may be heard and written communications received. A copy of this petition is in the Planning and Zoning Department, Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue, and may be inspected during regular business hours (8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday).

Zoning Board of Appeals
Laurie Robinson, Chair

2TB 12/4, 12/11

Legal Notice Marlborough Charter Revision Commission Public Hearing

A virtual (Zoom) Public Hearing with Marlborough's Charter Revision Commission (CRC) is scheduled for December 8, 2020 at 7 PM to discuss the Commissions' recommendations on charter changes.

All Marlborough residents are encouraged to attend and provide feedback.

To Join the Zoom Meeting Public Hearing with Video and Voice capability:
https://zoom.us/j/94457542242?pwd=Lzk5Y3hUeFV2SWcxVGZlV0pyemc2Zz09
Meeting ID: 944 5754 2242
Passcode: 2FfsfQ

Phone into meeting (no video): 1-646-558-8656
Meeting ID: 944 5754 2242
Passcode: 575453
Note: Phone into meeting has its own passcode

Bob Ragusa- Charter Revision Chair

2TB 11/27, 12/4

Town of Andover Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission Legal Notice - Public Hearing

The Town of Andover Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission (IWWC) opened a Public Hearing on Monday, November 2nd, 2020 at 7:00PM, and will continue it on Monday, December 7th, 2020, to hear testimony and comments on the following application(s):

IWWC20-27: Ruby Puerto and Nahin Puerto, 129 Hebron Road (Andover, CT), application to erect a concrete/stone wall fence, install an inground pool with associated 15' x 12' utility shed, install a septic system, and construct a 26' x 32' 2-car garage with accessory 1-bedroom apartment within an upland review area.

Directions to participate in the Zoom Meeting will be provided on the IWWC regular meeting agenda for Monday, December 7th, 2020, and can be found here:
https://www.andoverconnecticut.org/calendar

Comments, questions or concerns may be presented at the public hearing or submitted in writing to the Andover Building Office, 17 School Road, Andover, Connecticut 24 hours prior to the meeting. Should any individual(s) need access to a public computer please contact the Building Office at (860)742-4036 twenty-four hours prior to the meeting.

1TB 12/4

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON NOTICE OF SPECIAL TOWN MEETING MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2020

A special town meeting of the electors and citizens qualified to vote in town meetings of the Town of East Hampton, Connecticut, will be held at the East Hampton Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, Connecticut, and via Zoom meetings, Meeting ID: 846 9277 4188 on Monday, December 14, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. for the following purposes:

1. To consider and act upon a resolution to modify the scope of the \$51,695,000 appropriation approved at referendum held June 4, 2013 for costs in connection with renovations, improvements and additions to East Hampton High School to include the following work: (a) replacement of the entire tennis court surface, (b) replacement of the entire synthetic track surface surrounding the soccer field, (c) correction of water/drainage issues on a portion of the soccer field, (d) correction of sub-surface water, drainage, grading issues and irrigation and grass/sod replacement of the baseball outfield, and (e) such other work and improvements as are related thereto; and to authorize the Town Council to establish a building committee to determine the scope and particulars of and implement such work, and exercise such powers as shall be provided by the Town Council.

Dated at East Hampton, Connecticut, this 24th day of November 2020.

PER ORDER OF THE EAST HAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL

- James Brown, Council Chairman
- Dean Markham, Council Vice Chairman
- Tim Feegel, Council Member
- Derek Johnson, Council Member
- Barbara Moore, Council Member
- Mark Philhower, Council Member
- Kevin Reich, Council Member
- Kelly Bilodeau, Town Clerk

1TB 12/4

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Faith Farina
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Fred Ferguson
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Matthew Gworek
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Jim Harrington
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Amy Howard
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Jeff King
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Sandra Lindstrom
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Mike Mallon
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Catherine McNarry
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Lynn Minnick
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Brian Mitchard
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Bill Nelson
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Christopher Passera
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Filipe Pereira
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Caitlin Reilly
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Preston Roth
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Barbara Royea
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Koreen Ryan
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Kristina Segura
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Jamie Smigel
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Candice Smith
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Tania Sones
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Stacy Soracchi
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Michael Varni
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3TB 11/27, 12/4, 12/11



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