

RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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Bransfield Nixes Gunfire Ordinance

By Jack Lakowsky

Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield told the Board of Selectmen last week she will not proceed with a controversial gunfire ordinance plan, which was drafted after dozens of resident complaints about excessive gun use.

"There are a lot of problems with this ordinance," Bransfield told the board at its Jan. 6 meeting. "I've had many phone calls from knowledgeable people who correctly pointed out that some parts of it are inappropriate. There's still a lot of concern about noise, but this ordinance just isn't appropriate."

Although plans for this ordinance are scrapped, Bransfield and the selectmen agreed to carefully review Portland's existing noise ordinance with the town's legal team.

Portland's town charter caps permissible noise levels at 100 decibels at all times, and 80 decibels during nighttime hours – defined as 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. One hundred decibels is as loud as a motorcycle, power lawnmower, or jackhammer, according to Purdue University. Profound hearing loss can result from frequent, prolonged exposure to this noise level, the university said.

Shotgun blasts, for example, average around 170 decibels, according to Purdue.

The selectmen in a December meeting discussed measuring gunfire acoustics but decided as a first attempt to draft the ordinance, as it was a cheaper option than hiring an acoustical engineer.

Bransfield read over a dozen resident letters in opposition to a new ordinance. The common narrative was that Portland already has a noise ordinance, so anything dealing with gunfire

would be redundant and unnecessary, as well as place undue burden on law-abiding gun hobbyists.

One opposition letter was sent by the Portland Fish & Game Club, which said its own self-regulation is already stricter than the law requires.

Selectman Jim Tripp, who like Bransfield is a Democrat, said he would also rather look at existing laws and ordinances, adding that he did not agree with the nixed ordinance's written notification requirement.

"We have a fairly narrow issue," said Tripp. "Most gun owners are very careful and very well-trained."

Tripp went on to explain that the town should still try to deal with loud, round-after-round shooting. He said, on the other side, residents should not have to listen to daylong shooting sessions.

Tripp said ordinance enforcement is the most effective solution, given that neighbor-to-neighbor communications have broken down.

Fellow selectman Ralph Zampano, also a Democrat, said the board wants to make sure the community is not impacted by "irregular, abnormal noise."

"I know the argument many times is 'What I do on my property is my business'. But bullets can leave your property," said Zampano. "I understand people are mindful, but done incorrectly, bullets will go elsewhere. Accidents happen. We'll make sure everyone's rights are observed, but that works both ways, and there are rights on both sides."



Fire Prevention Poster Contest... In December, fourth- and fifth-graders at Jack Jackter Intermediate School in Colchester participated in the annual Connecticut Fire Prevention Poster Contest. This year's theme was, "Fire Prevention - Everyone/Every Day." Over 40 students participated. The submissions of grade four student Abbie Barthel (left) and grade five student Benjamin Romasanta (right) submissions were each chosen to advance at the state level.

Hebron Selectmen Say 'Not for Us' to Condemn Capitol Riot

By Sloan Brewster

Following last week's deadly riot at the U.S. Capitol, Hebron Board of Selectmen member John Collins tried to get the rest of the board to agree to a resolution stating President Donald Trump should be removed from office.

His fellow selectmen, however, did not see the matter in quite the same way.

At the Jan. 7 Board of Selectmen meeting – one day after a mob of Trump supporters, contesting the election, infiltrated the U.S. capitol in Washington, D.C. while Congress was meeting to certify the presidential election votes by the Electoral College – Collins, a Democrat, made a motion stating that the board "condemns the Trump inspired assault on the Capitol Jan. 6 and supports the immediate removal of Donald Trump, immediately through constitutional means."

In the lengthy conversation that ensued, board members stated that while they thought the actions at the capitol were unacceptable, it was not their place to approve such a motion.

"I hear your emotion; I understand your passion," Board of Selectmen Chairman Daniel Larson, a Republican, told Collins. "As far as I'm concerned, those people are the exact same

people, the exact same type of individual, that was doing the rioting, the burning, the looting of our cities" last summer.

Larson continued, "I find the action yesterday, as well as the actions of these other individuals that I just mentioned, deplorable."

Selectman Gail Richmond, a Republican, used similar language, calling the scene "deplorable" and "reprehensible."

Selectman Marc Rubera – who like Collins is a Democrat – said that, as a police officer, watching the events unfold was "sickening" to him, and openly agreed that Trump needed to go. But he joined the three Republicans on the board in saying it was not their place as Hebron selectmen to state as much.

"I would love to see Donald Trump removed, but I'm not sure that we as a board should vote for any type of action to do that," he said.

Larson, admitting to not being "a great lover of Donald Trump" said he supports and backs the Constitution, but the board should focus on the town.

Selectman Peter Kasper, a Republican, said while no one would argue that what took place was "one of the worst things you've ever seen," he questioned whether the motion was within

the board's scope.

Richmond said the board was elected to work for the residents and that she did not think the motion was in its purview.

"It's not for us to say anything about," she said.

Collins repeatedly stated that he disagreed and that the board should take a stand, saying the situation was reminiscent of Revolutionary War times and that in such instances towns often set up committees and talk about national occurrences and coordinate activities.

"We are facing what is unprecedented in 200 years of American history," he said. "If we can't stand up and ... voice our concern, who will?"

However, Collins' colleagues on the board said they felt the discussion made their thoughts on the matter clear.

Larson said that all last summer the country witnessed an assault on "on basic good, decent citizens by unruly mobs" and that there needs to be an end to the destruction "from all sides" and "constructive discussion."

"All I see is everybody wanting to flex their muscles," he said. "And if this continues, I can, honestly say, I see where this country could end up degrading into a civil war mentality, and

that's scary."

While calling last summer's riots "abhorrent," Collins rejected their comparison to "an assault on the Capitol to stop a constitutional process from happening."

He again said the board had the responsibility to speak for the people of town and support the Constitution and democracy.

When it finally came time to vote on the motion everyone on the board abstained, save Collins, who voted in favor of it.

When Collins suggested that the motion carried since his was a 'yes' vote and the others were abstentions, Larson said he changed his vote to 'no' and thus the motion does not carry.

Despite the completed vote, the discussion continued.

"We all agree that we were disgusted with the actions but we don't agree to the motion," Richmond said.

"It's absolutely not our role as elected officials," Larson reiterated.

In a phone call Tuesday, Town Manager Andrew Tierney said the board was "blindsided" by Collins' motion, which had not been added to the agenda in advance.

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

By Mike Thompson

Horrifying. Absolutely horrifying. And now people need to pay.

Last week's attack on the U.S. Capitol by armed insurrectionists was a sight I never thought I would see. The images felt like those you'd see in foreign countries – not those that you'd see here.

But, it can happen here, and it did – and now there needs to be accountability.

Five people died as a result of the actions of the domestic terrorists – including a Capitol Police officer who was literally beaten to death. In the hours and days that followed the invasion, it became clear there could've been so much more bloodshed.

There is no way to deny, in my view, that Trump is the driving force behind this. He'd been encouraging people for weeks to gather in Washington on Jan. 6 and march to the capitol. He promised it would be "wild." The morning of Jan. 6, he gave a rousing speech, firing up the crowd even more, and pledged to march with them to the capitol. (He of course did not; instead he hopped in his car and drove away.)

Trump's attorney, the despicable Rudy Giuliani (to think I once respected this man), revved up the crowd even further, calling for a "trial by combat." TRIAL BY COMBAT!!! On the freaking U.S. Capitol. Was he being literal? Doesn't matter – it's incredibly violent language to use before a crowd Giuliani, Trump, and many others (including several Republican politicians right there in the Capitol that morning) had been lying to for two months. He knew what he was doing.

There needs to be accountability. Not just for Trump and Giuliani but for the Republican senators and representatives who played a hand in this – the un-American embar-

rassments like Ted Cruz, Josh Hawley, Mo Brooks and others.

Of course, over the past week there have been many Republicans who say there needs to be "healing" and "unity," and thus any attempts at removal from office or other just punishments should be avoided. Sweep it under the rug, they say, for the good of the country.

What a crock. You "unite" by holding criminals accountable for their actions; you "heal" by not letting terrorists win.

Despite video of the insurgents literally shouting "Hang Mike Pence!", Pence himself wants Trump to escape responsibility for being the central role he played in last Wednesday's invasion. In a letter sent Tuesday night, Pence rejected calls to invoke the 25th Amendment, again touting the "unity" and "healing" crap. (And of course quoting a Bible verse; that's our Mikey, pandering to his base until the very end.)

So, that leaves it up to Congress. As I write this, I have no idea the impeachment winds will blow. The House will likely vote to impeach, but will the still-Republican-controlled Senate vote to convict? Despite somewhat encouraging comments by Mitch McConnell, I'm not sure. Too many Republicans seem to want to let Trump off the hook.

Which brings me to another point. I was hoping, against hope, that when Congress reconvened last Wednesday night, after the Capitol had been cleared of the insurgents and order restored, that the Republicans who had pledged to challenge the electoral vote would realize things had gone too far, that enough was enough. And while indeed there were some Republican senators who appeared to

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Forty Years of Service... A surprise celebration was held recently during a live-stream Sunday worship service at Marlborough Congregational Church, UCC, to recognize Alice Rowley (right), who has served as church administrator for 40 years. Recorded videos from past and present church moderators, gifts, cards and letters from the congregation, family and friends were given, along with a dedication of her office in her name. The event was organized by church moderator Jessica Rowley Trusz (left) and church pastor the Rev. Bob Faulhaber Jr. (not pictured).

Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum • Reader Forum

Wreaths Across America

To the Editor:

Thank you, so much, for working through all the challenges that 2020 presented to bring the mission to Remember, Honor and Teach, to Westchester Cemetery in Colchester! We hope you had a safe and restful holiday and a wonderful start to the New Year! We met our donations' quota to have a wreath for placed for each fallen veteran from the French and Indian War through the Vietnam War buried in this cemetery.

A special thanks to the Colchester Veterans Honor Guard for their dedication each year to make this a very special ceremony held on the third Saturday of December. We were also fortunate to have the Colchester Rotary, Interacts and Boy Scouts Troop 109 assistance.

**With gratitude,
Linda Pasternak, Roberta Avery
Wreaths Across America**

Huge Thank You

To the Editor:

A huge thank you to all of the Portland residents who have donated to the Friends of the Portland Library's 2021 Membership Campaign in the past two months. At a time when many of our other sources of income have been eliminated or severely limited by the pandemic, donations from members have become even more important. These donations allow FPL to support the Library's DVD, e-book, e-Audio-book and educational software purchases, along with the Museum Pass Program, the Summer Reading Programs and a variety of programs for all ages throughout the year.

If you missed the FPL newsletter when it was included in the Nov. 13th issue of the *Rivereast*, you can read it and catch up on all of the programs and services that FPL supports at our website friendsofportlandlibraryct.org. You can also follow us on Facebook @portlandctfriends.

Although Portland Library's building is currently closed to the public, our creative Library staff continues to offer an impressive slate of programs, many of which are supported by FPL. To learn more, see the Library article that appears each week in the *Rivereast's* Portland pages or visit their website at portlandlibraryct.org.

Thank you, Portland, for your continuing support of FPL and the Library, especially during these difficult times. Your donations help make the difference between a good library and a great library.

**Sincerely,
The Executive Board
Friends of the Portland Library**

Noise, Not Safety

To the Editor:

In last week's edition of the *Rivereast* there was an article concerning shooting in the town of Portland. Some residents have complained about shooting by one individual shooting on his own property. Another heard a gunshot near the Air Line Trail. The result is a draft ordinance that restricts the right of all property owners to shoot unless such shooting is approved by the police chief.

The complaints are about noise not safety. Hearing a gunshot is completely different than the noise one hears from being shot at.

Reg Farrington – Portland

Americans, Speak Up

To the Editor:

Last Thursday, I put forward a motion, "the Hebron Board of Selectmen condemns the Trump-incited violent assault on our nation's capital and supports the immediate removal of Donald Trump as president through constitutional means." The board rejected this motion. I was the lone 'yes' vote. One member, an avid Trump supporter, falsely equated the attempted coup with the violence in cities such as Portland and was willing to give it a pass since, in his mind, that violence had not been condemned. (It has been widely condemned including by me in these pages.)

Another member said, "What good would it be for us to pass this motion, who would care?" Well, I care and so do most people in Hebron. Other members said it wasn't the business of the Hebron Board of Selectmen to speak on issues except that which affects the town of Hebron. The overthrow of the government affects everyone, including Hebron citizens.

The FBI now expects armed groups to invade the 50 state capitols, including Hartford, on Inauguration Day. It is the responsibility of citizens in our democracy to stand up to seditious bullies and violent extremists and to stand for America. At least that's the way I think. Local governments (tinyurl.com/y2j72r65), local boards (tinyurl.com/y3cgfk5t) and organizations such as the National Association of Manufacturers (tinyurl.com/y6cezsk2) and other business leaders (tinyurl.com/y2alc3d7), uni-

Correction

In a letter to the editor in last week's *Rivereast*, Amie Meacham of Kindness with Kids was identified as a Colchester resident. She is actually an East Hampton resident. The *Rivereast* regrets the error.

Bulletin Board

I like hot dogs. I admit it. There's nothing quite like a foot-long hot dog with chili or slathered with hot pepper relish on a properly toasted roll (you've got to use the ones with the flat breaded sides to get the best results).

And yet there are people out there—yes, here in America—who find hot dogs disgusting. And rather than keep their opinions to themselves, many of these oddities enjoy greeting your avowed love of the hot dog with disdainful comments such as:

"Yeah, if you knew what they put in those things, you'd never eat one again," or "I hear they sweep up all the scraps at the slaughter house and stuff them in a casing," or "Did you know they put the whole (pig, steer, road kill possum or whatever) through a giant grinding machine, bones and skin and fur and all to make hot dogs?"

No, I didn't know that. And what's more, I don't care. I prefer to think that hot dogs are made in paradise out of heavenly manna by elfin angels and sent to us securely packaged—much like God sends us steaks packaged in plastic wrap so we don't have to ponder the uncomfortable implications of the food chain thing.

Nevertheless, the hot dog comes under serious assault from time to time by people who are intent upon destroying sacred American icons and who think because they are able to subsist on a variety of seeds and weeds and other unpalatable stuff, we should all be similarly punished. They typically broach their resistance to hot dogs as a health or safety issue or, alternatively, that it's immoral to grind up God's creatures, put the resulting mush into a casing, slather it with mustard and sell it for \$8.50 at a baseball game. I will concede that \$8.50 for a hot dog is immoral; otherwise, I remain unmoved.

A few years ago, some safety organization whose name now escapes me but is presumably a "nonprofit" operating on government grant money and staffed by folks who know what's best for the rest of us (whether we like it or not) issued a proclamation that hot dogs are a public health threat—not because they clog your arteries, but because people sometimes choke to death on them. It seems that the iconic hot dog with its cylindrical shape is "the perfect plug" for children's airways.

The solution, according to the group, is a total redesign of the hot dog, or, at the very least there should be a government mandate requiring them to carry warning labels that they are a choking hazard.

These do-gooders consider themselves activists working on behalf of mankind. I have another word for them.

Sissies

What do they prefer? A square hotdog? A hot dog served up like a lump of hash? You would think the nation's ballparks were littered with blue-faced corpses clutching the remnants of half-eaten hot dogs in their cold dead fingers.

At about the same time this "redesign the hot dog" suggestion hit the air waves, the news stations and newspapers reported that scientists were perplexed as to what prompted a killer whale (yes, friends, a *killer whale*) to...um...kill its trainer at Sea-World in Orlando, Florida. Scientists and animal activists were baffled.

This is what our world has come to: We are supposed to live in mortal fear of choking to death on a hot dog, while at the same time viewing death in the jaws of a killer whale as some kind of aberration of nature.

Helloooooo....

I have only one question here: Why do you think they call them killer whales? And when's the last time a hot dog dragged somebody into the water and drowned them? Okay, two questions.

You know what? If you're afraid of choking on a hot dog, I have a simple solution for you.

Chew.

God gave you teeth for a reason. Use them.

Jim Hallas, Publisher

News copy deadline for *The Rivereast News Bulletin* is Tuesday at noon. Please address all letters & news articles to: *Rivereast News Bulletin*, P.O. Box 373, Glastonbury, CT 06033

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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Reader Forum • Reader Forum

★ *Letters cont. from page 3***Correcting Misinformation**

To the Editor:

At the special meeting of the Portland Public Schools Board of Education on Thursday, Jan. 7, the BOE deliberated when and how to reopen our schools to the students. The collective unions listed below would like to clarify information that was inaccurate and incomplete. That evening, BOE members stated multiple times that the “teachers” had requested that school not fully reopen to students for the following week. It was clearly stated by Superintendent Charles Britton at the Jan. 5 meeting that some of members of the reopening committee that is made of individuals representing parents, custodians, administrators, teachers, administrative assistants, paraprofessionals, school nurses and the health district were not in favor of returning students to school beginning on Jan. 11.

The association representatives for the administrative assistants and the paraprofessionals also requested a one week delay during the committee meeting as was restated by Dr. Britton that evening. However, on Jan. 7, BOE member Tim Lavoy continued to state that it was only the teachers that wanted to delay school reopening and misrepresented the number of teachers that were in favor. In fact, as stated by CEA-Portland President Sue McDougall on Tuesday, an overwhelming majority of

Two Sets of Rules

To the Editor:

As we have just witnessed, the 2300 Capital Police were ill-prepared or perhaps they were encouraged to enable the protesters so the left could once again (CNN, Anderson Vanderbilt Cooper, etc.) sensationalize the events that took place. While it was mostly peaceful I was appalled by the violence which I do not support. It would be difficult to ascertain whether they were infiltrated by members of Antifa or other left-wing radical groups but it's entirely possible. Either way, those responsible should be held accountable.

I was deeply saddened to see a young Air Force female – unarmed – shot to death by security. It did not appear that she was a threat to him. Just imagine if this officer had shot and killed a Black Lives Matter protester. All hell would have broken out. Multiple days of riots, burning of federal buildings, looting and assaults would have occurred. This “Trump” rally/protest was quelled in one day and order was restored.

The second set of rules applies to the aforementioned Antifa, a large, violent, anti-government organization. They along with Blacks Lives Matter staged a seven-day protest at this same location with destruction to federal buildings, historic statues and threats of assault on the White House. Kamala Harris fanned the flames while Joe Biden was hiding in his basement. The same 2,300 cops were on duty but took seven days to restore order. Few if any were arrested. Don Lemon (CNN) never used the words mob but instead said their voices needed to be heard. Some protests (riots) are acceptable.

The left, in addition to media support, also has Big Tech, which has chosen to censor opposing viewpoints, even the president of the United States.

**More to come.
Don Denley – Andover**

Veil of Racial Equity

To the Editor:

While America's story has not always been heroic, it has been sustained by a belief that justice and equality will prevail, even during our worst moments.

The difference today, however, is several converging factors deteriorating our discourse and contributing to civil unrest. Namely, Citizens United and the enormous amounts of dark money perverting our politics. The elimination of the fairness doctrine, which opened the flood gates to conservative hate speech, and the unregulated wild west of social media, which has spoon-fed propaganda and racist paranoia to those with a limited understanding of history and government.

The reality is by 2040, the U.S. will have a minority white population. This browning of America has been the perfect ruse to deflect the economic frustrations of MAGA loyalists, who are afraid of losing their power and political status, away from the actual culprits of their dissatisfaction and into a white rage that scapegoats minorities. The MAGA rallies, like the Tea Party protests before them, have never been about constitutional infringements or personal freedoms. These groups are well aware of how white America has historically treated minorities and benefited from white privilege. Thus, they are instead terrified the tables may be turned on them.

If there was one single moment when the veil of racial equality collapsed, it was when domestic terrorists sieged the U.S. Capitol and trampled democracy. Following years of petty grievances, racial paranoia and white privilege, Trump managed to convince a coalition of white supremacists, evangelical Christians, gun-nuts and conspiracist simpletons that he was their solitary hope against a merciless government. In reality, the delusions of a madman in a red baseball cap didn't change conservative white America, they simply revealed them.

Joe Stevens – Hebron

Despicable Despot

To the Editor:

I was shocked and horrified (to say the least), but not surprised, by the attack on the Capitol and Democracy by the far-right wackos who worship Donald Trump as their hero and gathered to do battle for him. The riotous insurrection was orchestrated by Trump and his sycophants, and spear-headed by Rudy Giuliani who called for “trial by combat” at the “March to Save America” rally. Well, the “America” they're claiming to save is not the one I was taught about in school.

The skirmishes came just shortly after Trump addressed thousands of his supporters, riling up the crowd with his baseless claims of election fraud.

And what did Trump do while the Capitol was being defiled by his followers, as lawmakers and staff were fearing for their lives and people were dying? Trump tweeted “stay peaceful.” A weak message purposely delivered too late.

After the mayhem calmed down, Trump called the rabble “patriots” and said he loved them.

On Thursday, after intense pressure from opponents and allies alike (some calling for his removal from office), Trump did an about-face and described the attempted coup as “a heinous attack” on the republic. Daddy scolded his children! That must've stung!

Trump agreed to an “orderly” transition on Jan. 20th, while still saying he disagrees “with the outcome of the election” and spewing his baseless claims of voter fraud: “the facts bear me out.” What facts? There are none.

Before the seditious storm some Republicans, including Mitch McConnell, abandoned the Trump ship; others jumped ship in its wake. But Trump supporters hung onto the sinking Trump raft in hopes that someday it'll be salvaged. They gave Trump their support and cheered him even after the attack, during which a Capitol police officer had his skull split open by one of the rioters. Despicable.

**Thank you,
Maureen Heidtmann – East Hampton**

Unimaginable

To the Editor:

The events of Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, were unconscionable, fomented by the sham of a president. The stochastic terrorism incited by tRump is an abomination and if you still support Trump, you are an embarrassing abomination. You have blood on your hands if you still claim to be a ReTrumpican. Anyone who somehow considers themselves a patriot, urinates in the halls of Congress, and rubs their excrement on the walls is certainly not a patriot. Multiple police were beaten, one beaten to death, by members of the so-called “Law and Order” Party. If you are still displaying Trump signs, MAGA hats, banners, and voted for Trump, you are the problem, a traitor, and side with the domestic terrorists. You should be ashamed of yourself. You probably do not have the intelligence to be embarrassed either.

I was there, a senior citizen, standing on the town green with a fellow Biden sign waver who wrote earlier about grade school children screaming “F-U” out the back windows of a passing car and flashing the single middle finger salute at us. What kind of a parent teaches their children that?

To those who equate socialism with communism please look up those two terms and understand the difference. Hopefully, you will

Editor's Desk continued from page 2

feel this way, well over 100 House Republicans still went against the electoral vote. This despite court after court, recount after recount, determining that Biden won the election.

It was incredibly disheartening. There was no wake-up call. The push to legitimize lies continued.

It's been coming out over the past few days that those Republicans who still voted against the electoral vote did so, in many cases, out of fear – and that many will wind up voting against impeachment for the same reasons. U.S. Rep. Jason Crow, a Democrat from Colorado, said Wednesday morning he's talked with some Republican colleagues who “are afraid for their lives if they vote for this impeachment.”

Indeed, *Politico* chief political correspondent Tim Alberta tweeted Wednesday that “numerous” House Republicans have received death threats over the past week. “I know for a fact several members want to impeach but fear casting that vote could get them or their families murdered.”

And look, that's chilling. Absolutely chilling. It's horrifying that things have gotten

never have to depend on Social Security in your senior years because you should be denied that income. The way Trump snatches about \$2,600 every year from my SS income for his “tax cut,” you may not have that option anyway. Yes, it is an “entitlement” I worked for over 50 years, contributed to that system, so I am entitled to it.

As the daughter of an immigrant, and immigrants, I am embarrassed for this country by the actions of this fascist President and his minions.

Tricia Heldmann – Colchester

Trail of Lights

To the Editor,

In an effort to help spread holiday cheer during such an abnormal year, Portland Parks & Recreation and Economic Development teamed up with Claire Frisbie from the Portland Historical Society to create Portland's first annual Trail of Lights! Portland residents who saw our social media posts or virtual flyers were invited to have their home or business added to a map of holiday lights and decorations. The goal was to get families out of their homes, exploring Portland, and enjoying the beautiful holiday displays created by our spirited community members!

Within the small window of time that this activity was put together, we managed to recruit 49 homes and businesses that requested to be included on our map! We added some friendly competition to the activity by creating a Straw Poll which contained all of the addresses and a display name (if provided by the decorator). All decorators were asked to have their displays lit up and available for viewing from 6-8 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, 12/18-19, 12/25-26, and 1/1-2. The Straw Poll opened on Dec. 18 and closed on Saturday, Jan. 2, at 11:59 p.m.

We would first like to thank Claire with the Portland Historical Society for her assistance and enthusiasm in the creation of the map. We also want to thank all of the home and business owners who participated and made this activity possible for the Portland community!

Congratulations to our top 3 Trail of Lights

this bad. In a lot of ways, though, this is the monster Republicans created – first by supporting Trump and then letting his rank abuse of power go unchecked for four years. Moreover, like I said earlier, haven't we been told over and over you don't let terrorists win? The people who stormed the Capitol last week, the people who are threatening families – they're terrorists. No ifs, ands or buts. They're home-grown, domestic terrorists. We don't negotiate with terrorists, and we don't give in to their demands.

That said, it's a tough spot to be in – a very tough spot. These guys have my sympathy. Still, that's even more reason why something needs to be done. We can't let the insurrectionists, and the people who fueled the insurrection, get away with it.

There is no healing without accountability. There is no unity without people being held responsible for their actions.

Then, and only then, can the country truly move forward.

See you next week.

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as we start to stand and fight back with more than just fact-based rebuttals. Impeachment, arrests, incarceration, party-switching, business and bank abandonments and much more are going to teach you a humbling lesson. You were wrong all along. You were ignorant. The smartest among you will just crawl quietly away.
Edmund Smith – Andover

The Annual Town Budget Meeting is planned for May 19, with the referendum likely to be held on May 27.
Rob Tarlov, Chairman Colchester Board of Finance

Renouncing Trump now by those who have worked for him and supported him, though welcome, is way too little and way too late. We must never forget what happened last week, and those that attempted to overturn the will and votes of their fellow citizens through violence. We must stand up to these traitors wherever and wherever they are. There is no middle ground. You are either for democracy and the rule of law or you are not.
Michael Egan – Colchester

Note: Egan is a member of the Colchester Board of Finance but said he is speaking as an individual.

Well Done, Trumpists

To the Editor:
 Well done, all you Trumpists. You have succeeded in attacking and defiling American democracy. You have embarrassed our country throughout the world. Our enemies laugh and our allies shudder. You who put the Trump signs up on your lawns and fly the Trump flags are complicit. You who still maintain the signs and flags? Pathetic! You are the enemy from within that the founders most feared. The ones who would ignore truths, create your own false realities, and then act on your misguided hatred to destroy “the last best hope on Earth.” Never again imagine yourselves as a Lincoln Republican. You are simple old-school racist xenophobes who tried to rend our country as happened once before in the Civil War. You still carry their battle flag? You are still home to the KKK and their cohorts?

You are the Christian Crusaders who attacked and looted more accomplished countries and cities. Moses advising his hoards to kill every male and every woman that had known a man – but keep the female virgins yourselves as prizes. You adorn yourselves in the American flag, in Christian symbols, in Revolutionary War banners. But these are just disguises. Like wolves in sheep’s clothing, you seditiously infiltrate and scheme for the ruination of this great country.

Thankfully, there are at least 81 million Americans that will never let you succeed. Your minority is going to be a much smaller minority

Colchester Budget News

To the Editor:
 The Colchester budget season has begun and over the next week there are two opportunities for voters to provide feedback and ask questions. The budgets are already being worked on and this is the best opportunity to weigh in near the beginning of the budget process.

The first chance is the Colchester Budget Survey. Take it this weekend, before it closes at 8 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 18. The budget survey is one of the tools that the Board of Finance uses to obtain opinion from the voters. The survey link can be found on the home page of the town website: colchesterct.gov.

The second opportunity will be next week on Wednesday, Jan. 20, at 6:30 p.m., when the Board of Finance holds a public budget forum. The Zoom link for the meeting can be found on the calendar of the town website. First Selectman Mary Bylone and Superintendent of Schools Jeffrey Burt will make brief presentations on their budget goals for both the current year and next several. Following, there will be an open forum for voters and taxpayers to ask questions and provide feedback on the presentation points as well as any other topic they would like to speak on.

For future opportunities, check the budget page of the town website for the budget calendar. In May and June there will be many opportunities during the budget workshops and the two budget public hearings to make comments and ask questions.

Stand Up for Democracy

To the Editor:
 As I am sure many of you were, I was shocked by what I saw transpire in my nation’s capital last week. This was not a protest but an attempted coup that led to the death of over five people. Going forward, after seeing a sitting president attempt an insurrection to stay in power, anyone displaying Trump flags, MAGA hats or showing similar support of this hateful movement has identified themselves as actively in support of traitors and domestic terrorists.

During this past election while campaigning for Joe Biden and other Democratic candidates for office we were called socialists, communists, pedophiles, and cursed by Trump supporters while on Colchester’s Town Green. This was the accumulation of four years of the hateful policies and constant lying by the president of this country and those that blindly supported him. Unfortunately, we all knew that this would not end well, but few could foresee it coming to this; the attempted overthrow of our government over claims of election fraud that have absolutely no basis in fact.

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In-Person Learning Returns Next Week

By Jack Lakowsky

At a special Jan. 7 meeting, the Portland Board of Education endorsed Superintendent of Schools Charles Britton's new school reopening plan. Gildersleeve, Valley View and Brownstone students will return to full in-person learning on Jan. 19.

Middle and high school students will return to a hybrid learning model on the same date. Older learners are slated to fully return to classrooms on Feb. 1, as long as the COVID-19 impact until that time is minimal.

There have been more COVID-19 cases among older students than younger ones, and older students have proven harder to cohort because their schedules vary greatly, school officials have said.

The vote to approve the new plan was unanimous.

"This two-week period will offer us the time we need to study the impact of COVID-19," Britton wrote in a Jan. 7 letter to the district.

In the meeting Britton, referencing the Jan. 6 attack at the U.S. Capitol, said Americans everywhere are on the verge of breakdown – and Portland's school community is no exception.

"Everyone wants in-person learning," Britton said. "All teachers miss kids tremendously, but if people are scared, we need to be respectful of that, and as leaders, we must be responsive."

Portland's high COVID-19 transmission

is not conducive to opening schools fully, the board agreed at its Jan. 5 meeting. As of Jan. 7, Portland's case ratio was almost 60/100,000, with 78 new cases found from just after Christmas to just after New Year's Day.

Britton said this is Portland's post-holiday COVID-19 surge.

"It's not good news, but it's not unexpected," said Britton, alluding to reports that Americans across the country ignored holiday pandemic-prevention guidelines.

Chatham Health District Director Russell Melmed spoke in the meeting, saying he believes the country and the state are in the worst days of the pandemic that has killed more than 350,000 Americans.

When schools fully reopen, Britton said COVID-19 spread in the learning community is not a question of "if," but of "when." Despite this foresight, both Britton and Melmed explained that COVID-19 transmission in schools has been low.

"You don't see a huge dip in cases when schools go remote," Melmed said. However, Melmed went on to say that because the pandemic is worsening, students and staff are doubtless at higher risk of infection.

Britton expressed optimism about vaccinations for teachers.

Melmed said that, due to the nation's mid-dling vaccine rollout, shots won't start going

into arms of the state's 800,000 teachers until February. Melmed estimated the state's teachers won't be completely vaccinated until April.

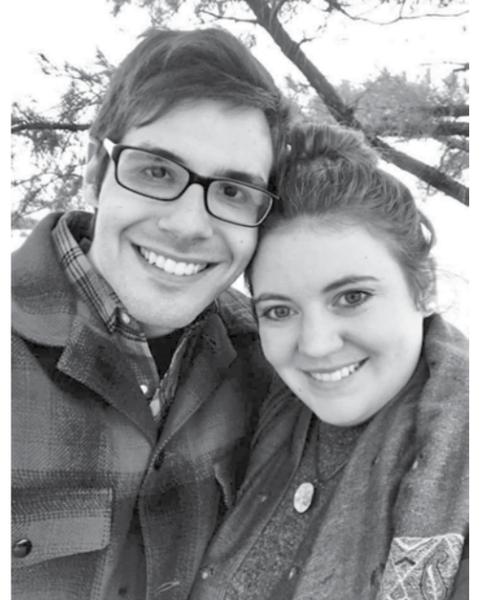
Democrat Sharon Peters, the board's chair, said the community at large is also responsible for how the district proceeds in the coming months, and people's observance to protocols will be key in allowing what most claim is their goal, to get students seated into their desks, five days a week.

"We're partners in this effort," said Peters. "Us, and the entire town."

Britton's letter reiterated Peters' point. He

wrote it's important that all parents "monitor their child's wellbeing," and said it's "critical" to keep children home if they are not feeling well. He said staff members are also directed to stay home if they are not feeling well.

"Collectively monitoring our wellbeing and taking personal responsibility by limiting exposures in the community will be [key to] remain open for in-person learning," he wrote.



Charles Weisenberger III and Kayla Pittman

Engagement Announced

Kayla M. Pittman and Charles A. Weisenberger III, both of Williamsburg, Va., have announced their engagement.

The bride-to-be is the daughter of son of Patrick D. and Janine Sterry Pittman of Morrison, Okla., and the granddaughter of John B. and Jane Sterry of Portland.

The future groom is the son of Charles A. and Robin Weisenberger II of Nazareth, Pa.

Pittman is currently a PhD student at The College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Va.

Weisenberger is currently a PhD candidate at UMass Amherst.

A June wedding is planned.

Kindergarten Registration

Valley View School in Portland has announced its kindergarten registration process for the 2021-22 school year.

Parents/guardians of children who will be 5 on or before Jan. 1, 2022, should contact Valley View at pgross@portlandct.us to indicate if they will be registering the child for kindergarten. Provide your child's full name, phone number and address.

Further information regarding kindergarten registration will then be provided.

Knights to Offer Pasta Dinner

The Freestone Council Knights of Columbus will serve a takeout pasta dinner Wednesday, Feb. 3.

Dinners can be picked up from 4-6 p.m. in the rear parking lot of St. Mary Church, located at 43 Freestone Ave. Cost is \$10 per person. Proceeds help fund the charitable works Council 7 provides.

The dinner will feature pasta, meatballs, salad and roll.

No pre-order is necessary. On the day of the meal chefs will be available at 860-342-2713 to answer questions.

The council offers take-out dinners the first Wednesday of every month.

For home delivery of dinners, call John McNickle at 860-342-1415.

Dean's List

Jacob Kostraba of Portland made the fall 2020 Dean's List at Springfield College in Springfield, Mass.

Kostraba is a health science major and has completed his Bachelor of Science degree at Springfield College. He will pursue a graduate program in nursing.

Foodshare Coming

The anti-hunger organization Foodshare will be at Portland Food Bank, 7 Waverly Ave., on Monday, Jan. 25, at 1 p.m. You do not have to be a Portland resident or show any identification.

This will be a drive-thru, with your trunk open. Enter at Portland Library on Freestone Avenue and exit by the Senior Center onto Waverly Avenue.



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Proposed School Budget Up Nearly 4%, Layoffs Possible

by Jack Lakowsky

Superintendent of Schools Charles Britton last week proposed a 2021-22 school budget of about \$22.6 million -- up almost 4%, or close to \$1 million, from current year spending.

Britton outlined the proposed spending package at a Jan. 5 meeting of the Board of Education.

The current year's budget is \$21.8 million, an increase of 2.26% from 2019-20 spending.

Britton told the board he is "very mindful" that this year's requested increase is nearly double what the town has previously approved.

"I understand if at the end of our talks we need to make cuts, and we likely will, those are hard choices we can make," said Britton. This requested increase, he said, can be used as a starting point.

At the board's subsequent Jan. 12 meeting, Britton said he doesn't think this request is unreasonable and is within the "ballpark" of what the district can realistically get for its revenue.

The board was scheduled to have another budget meeting on Thursday, but all members except Democrat Meg Scata voted to cancel this meeting, preferring instead to take the time to review the budget.

The board will continue budget talks at its Jan. 19 meeting.

Britton said the Portland school system has yet to receive its allotment of the \$774 million federal stimulus sent to help relieve Connecticut schools of burdensome COVID-19 costs. This money will affect the "major bottom line" of the budget.

As of Tuesday, Britton hadn't heard how much this will be, he said in an email to the *Rivereast*. He said he hopes to know by the end of this week.

Republican school board member Dave Murphy this week said he sees very little "fluff" in Britton's proposal. Murphy pointed out that 84% of the increase is due to contractual salary increases, as well as increases in medical insurance costs.

Despite this jump in salary costs, Britton's budget as proposed calls for cutting two full time teaching positions, likely employees from between grades K-4.

In this week's meeting, Britton said this is tentative until next year's enrollment projections come in. He said he expects many parents to keep their children home for the year due to the pandemic.

"I can't commit either way now, we need to wait until spring to look at our numbers," said Britton.

Overall, Britton said, he is planning for a return to a pandemic-free, "normal" new school year.

Maximizing health and safety for all students and personnel during the ongoing pandemic, identifying learning gaps that resulted from the spring 2020 shutdown, reviewing all systems with the goal of increasing equity, advancing social justice and fostering civil discourse, and finally, developing a multi-year plan to address current facility needs are all board of education

goals for the upcoming school year.

"I hope goal one is off the list next year, but the rest will be consistent focuses," said Britton.

To the last listed goal, Britton described the district's facility needs as "tremendous." Valley View Elementary School, for example, floods.

However, Britton's facilities budget of about \$291,000 is not an increase over the current year's and does not reflect any future plans or renovations.

"That is just what we need to maintain," said Britton.

Britton said he removed from this budget all improvement plans for Portland's three schools for younger learners, Valley View and Gilder-sleeve elementary schools, and Brownstone Intermediate School.

Britton explained that he has formed a facilities steering committee to "take a hard look" over the next 3-5 years at what those buildings' future will be.

Although he made no firm commitments, the superintendent said the new committee will ask "hard questions" including if, based on future enrollment projections, the district will need to close one of the three buildings.

In an email to the *Rivereast*, Britton explained once the committee's review and multi-year plan is complete, it will revisit the needs of the schools and reprioritize them, charting a long-term path for the district.

Britton said that earlier this school year, the district commissioned a \$30,000 report that identified a large number of facilities needs associated with aging infrastructure.

In a Tuesday phone call with the *Rivereast*, Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said the school district's infrastructure needs go back about 20 years.

When Bransfield served on the Board of Selectmen in 2001, the town voted to build a new middle school and renovate the high school.

"There's always more work to be done on infrastructure," she said.

Work on the middle and high schools took about eight years. With this finished, Bransfield and other officials turned their scopes to the lower-level schools. Bransfield explained that for some reason, subsequent work on the three schools fell through.

"Life gets in the way," Bransfield said. "We never really finished all the work for those buildings."

Under former schools superintendent Philip O'Reilly, improvements were made to Brownstone, including asbestos removal and installation of new windows. Bransfield also mentioned the solar panels slated to be installed on Brownstone.

"I don't think anyone should have their minds made up as to how to manage school infrastruc-

Dean's List

Harrison Deane of Portland made the fall 2020 Dean's List at Curry College in Milton, Mass.

Dean's List

Megan H. Kostraba of Portland, a student in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of New Haven, made the university's fall 2020 Dean's List.

Kostraba is working on a Bachelor of Arts degree in English.

Dean's List

Emily Horn of Portland made the fall 2020 Dean's List at the University of Kentucky College of Arts & Sciences.

Horn was majoring in psychology.

First Congregational Church News

First Congregational Church of Portland is a member of the United Church of Christ denomination, and is an Open and Affirming congregation. It is located at 554 Main St.

Weekly worship services are recorded in the church sanctuary and available on the church's YouTube channel (First Church of Portland, CT).

Anyone wishing to be added to the mailing lists (both electronic and postal service) of this congregation is invited to send an email to first.church.pct@sbcglobal.net, or leave a message by calling 860-342-3244. For more information, look for the church on Facebook at The First Congregational Church of Portland, or visit www.firstchurchportlandct.org.

ture," said Bransfield.

Bransfield also thanked the Board of Education for bringing these issues to the forefront of its pursuits.

One capital improvement plan Britton kept in his budget was the \$550,000 project to replace the track at Portland High School. Britton said this is the district's most critical capital need.

"It's pretty much replace or condemn at this point," said Britton.

Britton proposed a major increase of about 40% for the district's equipment budget, up \$93,000 from the current year. Most of this increase is due to the district's 1 to 1 student Chromebook initiative, which seeks to make sure all students in grades 5-12 are given a computer.

Many of the district's Chromebooks are out of warranty and have reached the end-of-life stage.

According to the superintendent's budget information, providing older students with suitable devices under warranty would cost more than \$500,000, to be paid over a course of four years -- the life cycle of a Chromebook.

Britton's proposal is attempting to move the district into a leasing program, which will spread out the cost of the 1-to-1 initiative and would also allow reassignment of current devices to younger students.

However, Britton explained, a leasing agreement is less attractive to town officials.

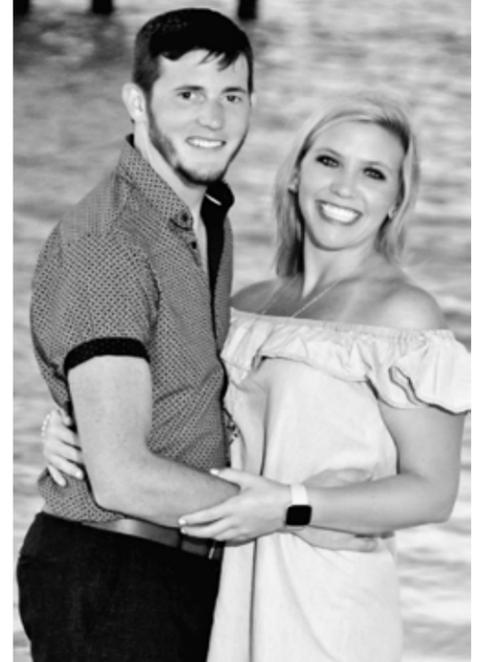
"The town's not big on leasing programs," Britton said. "Entering into one is like buying a car, it becomes a standing commitment that goes on the town's debt load. You sign that lease, and [Chromebook costs] can't be cut at all. The town would prefer to see them bought every year, but that means they can be cut every year."

Britton said new Chromebooks are often cut when school board budget requests reach town finance officials or the board of selectmen.

Eric Martin, the district's technology direc-

tor, in this week's meeting said his goal is to always have 1000 Chromebooks available to students.

"COVID has pushed us to a point where we have to have tech in the hands of every kid," Martin said.



Austin Pittman and Casey Lee

Engagement Announced

Casey L. Lee and Austin L. Pittman, both of Owasso, Okla., have announced their engagement.

The bride-to-be is the daughter of Diana Nuxoll of Effingham, Ill., Donna Stumborg of Mosinee, Wis., and Michael Jansen of Effingham, Ill.

The future groom is the son of Patrick D. and Janine Sterry Pittman of Morrison, Okla., and the grandson of John B. and Jane Sterry of Portland.

Lee holds a Bachelor of Arts & Sciences degree in legal studies and is currently employed as a legal assistant at Doerner, Saunders, Daniel & Anderson of Tulsa, Okla.

Pittman holds an A&P rating and is currently employed as an aviation maintenance technician at American Airlines in Tulsa, Okla.

The date of the wedding has yet to be determined.

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Hot Cocoa Giveaway... On Dec. 22, Portland Parks and Recreation and the Waverly Senior Center teamed up for a Holiday Hot Cocoa Giveaway at Chatham Court. Parks and Rec. Director Nate Foley is shown here handing out a jar of hot cocoa.

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.

Holiday Closing: The center will be closed Monday, Jan. 18, for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

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.

T'ai Chi with Tom Cushing: Thursdays, 10-10:30 a.m., via Zoom. Cost is \$40 per eight-week session, payable to Portland Senior Center. Call the senior center if interested.

AARP CT Webinar Wednesday: Wadsworth Atheneum Virtual Tour Series – Women Artists: Wednesday, Jan. 20, 1 p.m. Take a virtual tour of the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art. Each tour features a different docent-led theme. The theme for this week is Women Artists. Register at aarp.cvent.com/WadJan20.

Fraud Fighting Fourth Fridays: Investment Scams: Friday, Jan. 22, 10 a.m. Offered by AARP CT and the Coalition for Elder Justice in Connecticut. This month's theme is investment scams; learn the red flags and prevention methods to managing your financial future from Connecticut Department of Banking financial examiner Kelly Lent. Register at aarp.cvent.com/FFFFJan22Invest.

AARP Driver Safety Classes: In-person classes have been canceled until April 1; however, the online course is still available along with the 25% discount. The course is available at www.aarpdriversafety.org. The promotion

code is DRIVINGSKILLS.

Senior Poetry Contest: The 28th annual Gerard F. Melito, Senior Citizens Poetry Contest is now open to residents of central Connecticut age 65 or older. All poems received are published in a booklet, distributed to each participant and local libraries. To register and for full contest details, contact the Waverly Senior Center.

Stay Connected: The objective is to help disabled adults age 18 and up and older adults age 60 and up connect with medical providers, community, family and friends during COVID-19, using assistive technology (AT) to foster improved communication. All five Area Agencies on Aging will assist with the screening process to select individuals who would gain the most from technology help. Contact the Waverly Center for full details.

Musical Program: Saturday, Jan. 31, 2 p.m., via Zoom. Lynn Tracey, professional musician, will play and sing songs of a century, including genres of jazz, rock, folk, blues and more. Full details to follow!

Medical Rides: The center is offering seniors and disabled rides to the doctor on a limited basis. Fee is \$5 per person. Two weeks' notice is requested. Masks are required.

Foot Care at the Center: The fourth Tuesday of each month, in the Nurses' Room on the lower level of the center. Upon entering and leaving the building hand sanitizer must be used and a mask must be worn. Fee is \$35 cash or check. Appointments run from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; call the center to schedule one.

Cans-4-A-Cause: Bottles and cans can be dropped off at the senior center. Call the center for more information or email Jeff at myjakjeff@gmail.com.

Hair by Alexa: Men's and women's haircuts will return once a month, once the senior center is open again. To schedule an appointment, call the center or call Alexa directly at 845-590-9700.

Historical Society's Annual Meeting Goes Virtual

The Portland Historical Society will host its annual meeting for election of officers and the executive board Sunday, Jan. 31, at 4 p.m., via Zoom. All are invited to attend.

To register, email Portlandcthistory@gmail.com by noon Saturday, Jan. 30. After registering, people will be sent a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Registrants may attend the meet-

ing by connected device or by dialing in using a telephone.

After brief reports by outgoing president George Gilbert and treasurer James McCabe, Bob McDougall, director of the Ruth Callender House Museum of Portland History, will give a brief overview of the society's latest project — the former Gildersleeve Store.

St. Mary Church News

St. Mary Church, located at 45 Freestone Ave., has announced the following pieces of news:

Masses are celebrated by church pastor the Rev. John Antonelle. Weekday Masses are Monday and Tuesday at 8 a.m. and Friday at 12:10 p.m. Weekend Masses are Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 8 and 10:30 a.m. Attendance is limited and masks must be worn with pews marked for social distancing. All safety precautions are in place to protect against COVID-19.

Parishioners may also access the Sunday 10:30 a.m. livestreamed Mass and past services via the church website, www.stmaryportlandct.org.

For more information, call the church office at 860-342-2328 between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. For pastoral emergencies, Antonelle can be reached at 860-342-2328.

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.

Drive-in church parking lot services are being held at 9 a.m. Sundays. The church is also continuing its 10:30 a.m. Zoom Sunday services indefinitely. Additional information on church services or Bible study opportunities is at trinitychurchportlandct.org.

Weather permitting, a free drive-in movie 42 will be shown at the church parking lot on Saturday, Jan. 16, at 6 p.m. Rain/snow date is Saturday, Jan. 23, at 6 p.m.

The church is open for prayer and meditation Fridays from 2-4 p.m. Any group meeting at 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.

Knights to Hold Baby Shower

The Freestone Council 7 Knights of Columbus will hold its ninth annual Baby Shower the weekends of Feb. 6-7 and 13-14. A large box for donations will be located in the Gathering Place at St. Mary Church, 45 Freestone Ave.

All items donated will be shared with Portland Food Bank, as well as Birthright, an organization that new and expectant mothers with a range of support services, including no-cost pregnancy testing, prenatal health care, and maternity and baby supplies.

Suggested new items should be unwrapped, include diapers, sleepers, blankets, rattles, bibs, bath towels, wipes, lotion, outfits, shampoo, bottles, baby bath, pacifiers, comb & brush sets, socks, gift sets, stuffed animals, blanket sleepers, crib sheets, sweaters, hats, diaper bags, booties, and more.

A box for "Respect Life" cash donations will also be available, and gratefully received. Donations can also be mailed to Freestone Council, P.O. Box 7, Portland, CT 06480.

Brother Knight Charles Hermanson commented, "This activity puts action into the Knights of Columbus's support of those mothers who choose life."

For more information, call Hermanson at 860-342-6117.

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Portland Library News & Notes

Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave., has made the following announcements. Registration required unless noted. For more information and full program descriptions, visit www.portlandlibraryct.org or call 860-342-6770.

Curbside Only: Due to COVID-19 concerns and the expected post-holiday surge, Portland Library is closed until further notice, as per the Board of Selectmen. Curbside delivery is available; hours are Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.-4:45 p.m.; and Saturday, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Reserve items through the online catalog or call 860-342-6770. The outdoor book return is open 24/7, is emptied frequently, and the library continues to waive fines. If you need to print, scan and/or fax, call the library.

Hours and services are subject to change; call the library or access the web page for current hours. The library is also on Facebook and Instagram. There will be no services on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, Jan. 18. The book return drop remains open during the weekend.

Youth Programs: Winter Reading Program: For each row you complete on the Winter Reading Bingo card, the library will donate one can of cat or dog food to Portland Food Bank. The more people read and complete our kindness challenges, the more they'll help out area pets. Stop in to the library between January and February to pick up a bingo card. When you complete a row, email jrenk@portlandct.org or post a picture to the library's Facebook or Instagram pages and write whether you want to donate a can of cat food or dog food.

Preschool Science: Tuesdays, Jan. 19, Feb. 2, Feb. 16, at 10 a.m., via Zoom, for ages 3-5. Kids will explore color, chemical reactions and more. Registration is required for each week, and space is limited. Supplies can be picked up in advance; a Zoom link will be provided within 24 hours of the event.

Introducing President Pigeon: Wednesday, Jan. 20, at 7 p.m., via Zoom. Mo Willems' Pigeon won the Library's 2020 presidential election, held in November, and now it's time for

an inauguration party. Celebrate with Pigeon stories and a craft and meet some of Pigeon's new cabinet members. Registration is required for this program and space is limited. Supplies can be picked up in advance; a Zoom link will be provided within 24 hours of the event.

Cat Party: Thursday, Jan. 21, at 3:30 p.m., via Zoom, for grades K-5. Show off your own four-legged real and stuffed friends. At the end of the party, kids will make a craft; supplies can be picked up in advance of the program. Registration is required and a Zoom link will be sent within 24 hours of the event.

Online Storytime: Tuesdays, Jan. 26, Feb. 9 and Feb. 23, at 10 a.m., via Zoom. Share stories, songs and other activities. Registration is required for each week, and space is limited. A Zoom link will be provided within 24 hours of each program.

Dog Party: Thursday, Jan. 28, at 3:30 p.m., via Zoom, for grades K-5. Show off your own four-legged real and stuffed friends. At the end of the party, kids will make a craft; supplies can be picked up in advance of the program. Registration is required and a Zoom link will be sent within 24 hours of the event.

Adult Programs: Mystery Book Club Discussion: Tuesday, Jan. 19, at 1 p.m., via Zoom. *The River* by Peter Heller will be discussed.

Portland Forum: Thursday, Jan. 28, 10:30 a.m., via Zoom. The book *Tomorrow Will Be Different: Love, Loss, and the Fight for Trans Equality* by Sarah McBride will be discussed. McBride was elected to the Delaware state senate last fall, becoming the first transgender state senator in the country. Copies of the book are available at the library.

New Tool to Identify Home Energy Consumption: The Kill A Watt power meter can tell you the actual electrical consumption of small to medium electrical devices in your home. It will also help you discover the hidden or 'phantom' loads that are common when electrical devices are turned off. Library patrons are able to check out a toolkit just as they would check out a book.

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 Program: Tai Chi with Ken Zaborowski: Virtual Tai Chi: A new Wednesday class meets through Feb. 3, 9:30-10:15 a.m., via Zoom. Fee is \$7/class. A new Saturday class meets through Feb. 6, from 10-10:45 a.m. Fee is also \$7/class.

Family Virtual American Sign Language Beginner Class: Tuesdays, Jan. 26-March 2, 6-6:45 p.m., via Zoom. Learn the ASL alphabet and corresponding words including basic words and phrases such as colors, numbers, family members and more. Fee: \$70/Portland residents, \$80/non-residents.

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). Parks and Rec. will launch a new Valentine's Day-themed DoodleCraft with Abrakadoodle that will be available in February. Contact Parks and Rec. for more information.

Online Art Enrichment with Abrakadoodle: Wednesdays, Jan. 20-Feb. 24, via Zoom. 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. Register by Monday, Jan. 18.

Virtual Paint Night: Thursday, Jan. 21, 7-9 p.m., via Zoom, for families and children ages 6 and up. Fee is \$22. Create art inspired by the Gond, the tribal people of central India. Program is appropriate for all ages and can be varied to skill. Each participant will receive a canvas board and paints for the evening. Paintbrushes can be purchased for an add-on fee of \$5. If you have your own brushes, this is not required.

Virtual Skyhawks Sports: The next wave of programs begins the first week of February; registration is underway. There will be Cheerleading (ages 6-9), Soccer Skills (ages 6-9), PhysEd Fun (ages 6-9), SoccerTots (ages 3-5) and HoopsterTots (ages 3-5).

Virtual LEGO Masters: Coming soon. Participants will compete in weekly virtual LEGO challenges. Contact Parks and Rec. for more information.

Zion Lutheran Church News

Zion Lutheran Church continues to offer online worship services that are available for viewing Sundays after 9 a.m. on YouTube. Search "Zion Lutheran Church Portland CT." Pastor Sara Stall-Ryan, Music Director Allen Hill and church members have worked together to offer videos designed to be inspiring and invite participation.

Bulletins for each service are available on the church website at zionlutheranportland.org. Evening Compline services, the Christmas Eve service and the Christmas Pageant are still available for viewing on YouTube.

Zion Lutheran Church is located at 183 William St. The community is welcome to participate in all worship services and special events.

For more information, or if you are in need of pastoral assistance, call 860-342-2860, email zion.lutheran@snet.net or visit zionlutheranportland.org.

C3 Rebrands, Updates Mission

The Collaborative for Colchester's Children (C3), a community partnership whose mission is to foster and promote a collaborative system of services and supports to empower young children and families, announced the launch of its new branding with an updated vision, mission, logo and tagline.

"Over the past 10 years, we have grown into a multi-faceted collaborative that positively impacts the lives of more than 200 children and caregivers each year in our Colchester community," said Cindy Praisner, the early childhood coordinator for C3. "The new vision, mission, logo, and tagline capture our approach of supporting children through service to families and our community."

C3 said its new vision, "Colchester's children and families are thriving within a nurturing community," reflects its efforts to empower families through free programming such as play and learn groups and parent workshops. C3 added that its new tagline – "Growing Stronger Together" – reinforces its commitment to empowering families and the community through building responsive relationships, calling out the importance of collaborative partnerships, sharing of resources, and community engagement in the work. Lastly, within the updated logo is a house representing the central role of families in creating healthy outcomes for children and



The Collaborative for Colchester's Children (C3) has a new logo, as well as an updated vision, mission and tagline.

the community. The old logo is reflected in the C3 component on the face of the house, while the heart emphasizes the importance of supportive and nurturing relationships for all.

This new logo and tagline work together to communicate C3's commitment to positively impact the lives of children, families, and the Colchester community.

Honor Roll

The following Colchester students made the Norwich Tech Honor Roll for the first quarter of the 2020-21 school year:

Grade 11: High Honors: Jaron Zimmitti
Grade 12: High Honors: Benjamin Petrosky, Thomas Russell, David Wyatt.

In case of any missed names, email nthrlist@gmail.com with name, grade and level of honors. This is not affiliated with the school.

Fire Calls

From Jan. 3-9, the Colchester Hayward Fire Department responded to 49 calls: 39 emergency medical calls, nine fire/fire-related calls and two motor vehicle crashes (both single-car crashes) Calls included:

Fire: CO alarm, one; electrical fire, one; gas leak, one; fire alarm, one; odor investigation, one; chimney fire, one; structure fire (Marlborough), one; outside fire, one; service call, one.

Medical: sick person, five; cardiac distress, one; difficulty breathing, seven; lift assist, one; fall injury, five; mental disorder, four; medical alarm, two; back pain, one; cardiac arrest, three; seizure, one; abdominal pain, two; unconscious, two; stroke, one; overdose, one; injured person, one; suicide, one.

CHFD provided mutual aid three times last week – twice to Marlborough and once to Hebron. It received it twice, once from Lebanon and once from Gardner Lake.

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.

Town Focus of New Images of America Book

The Colchester Historical Society has announced the release of *Images of America: Colchester*, a new book authored by the society's Collections Chairman Emeritus, Gary Walter.

The book features nearly 200 historic images of Colchester, each with carefully-researched captions, capturing the history of the town. *Images of America: Colchester* is part of the Arcadia Publishing series celebrating the history of neighborhoods, towns and cities across America. In this book, Walter has created an overview of Colchester history from the late 19th century to the mid-1950s.

Throughout January, the Colchester Historical Society will sell *Images of America: Colchester* for \$20 at the Colchester History Museum on Saturdays and Sundays from noon-2 p.m., and Wednesdays from 5-7 p.m. Walter will hold book signings on the porch of the museum Saturday and Sundays, Jan. 16 and 23, and Sundays, Jan. 17 and 24, from noon-2 p.m. each day, weather permitting.

The Colchester History Museum is located at 24 Linwood Ave., adjacent to the library. There is free parking behind the museum and library.

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.



Holiday Toy Drive... The State Police Troop K Cadets recently assisted at the Troop K Holiday Toy Drive. The event collected over 5,500 toys and gifts and \$2,820 in assorted gift cards, cash and checks. Pictured are the flight crew from LifeStar, Santa Claus, Hebron Resident State Trooper Daniel Greenwood and Police Cadet Zachary Berard presenting a \$250 check from the Cadets to Troop K Master Sergeant Eric Peck. For more information on the Cadet program, call 860-465-5468.

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Scout Troop 72 of Colchester held a “day of adventure” and Court of Honor at JN Webster Boy Scout Camp in November. Pictured here is Thomas Smith, along with his parents, receiving his Life Scout rank.

Scouts Hold Adventure Day, Court of Honor

Scout Troop 72 of Colchester held a “day of adventure” and Court of Honor at JN Webster Boy Scout Camp in November.

The Scouts divided into small groups and worked on rank advancement requirements including proper flag raising/ folding, fire building and knife handling. They also made a hot lunch and went on a hike around the camp. The day ended with the Court of Honor overlooking the lake.

The Scouts have had to find creative ways to complete the requirements due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The troop is holding small group virtual meetings to help Scouts complete requirements; in addition, the Connecticut Council holds virtual merit badge camps. The troop is still very active with hiking, day trips with activities like archery and tomahawk throwing, working on several Eagle Scout Projects and have a campout planned for October. Check us out on our Facebook page.

Rank advancements were earned from the following Scouts: The rank of Tenderfoot earned by Anthony DePaola, Justin Palmer, Benjamin Salemi, and Jay Wikarska. The rank of Life Scout was earned by Thomas Smith.

Merit badges were earned from the following Scouts: Tim Anderson – Family Life. Nicholas Paggioli – Communications. Benjamin Petrosky – Family Life. Brendan Reas – Astronomy, Aviation, Citizenship in the Nation, Communications, First Aid. Kevin Reas – Citizenship in the Nation, Cycling, Mammal Study. Thomas Russell – Citizenship in the Community, Communications. Thomas Smith – Cooking, Personal Management. Chase Vendrillo – Bird Study, Citizenship in the Nation, Chess, Law. David Wyatt – Communications, Personal Fitness.

Cragin Virtual Book Club

The Cragin Memorial Library Virtual Book Club will meet Monday, Jan. 25, at 6 p.m., via Zoom. This month, the club will read J. Ryan Stradal’s book *The Lager Queen of Minnesota*. Copies are available for checkout at the adult circulation desk at the library, 8 Linwood Ave.

Registration is required for this free program; to do so, visit tinyurl.com/y2azrcor

For more information, call the library at 860-537-5752.

Ahavath Achim News

Congregation Ahavath Achim, 84 Lebanon Ave., has announced the following schedule:

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.

Earning their Totin’ Chip are Scouts Justin Palmer and Jay Wikarska. By earning this the Scout is able to build fires, use an ax and saw, carry and use a pocket knife.

The 50-Miler Award was earned by Nicholas Paggioli, Benjamin Petrosky, Brendan Reas, and Thomas Smith. Leaders can also earn the award, and it was received by Scout Leader Ben Smith, Assistant Scout Leader Mike Paggioli, and Troop Committee Chairman Al Lendre. For this special award, the Scout – or leader – had to cover over a trail (or a canoe or boat route) of not less than 50 consecutive miles and take a minimum of five consecutive days to complete the trip—all without the aid of motors. During the trip, each participant must spend at least 10 hours working on a conservation project such as trail maintenance.

The Hutchins Award was also earned by Thomas Smith. This is given to the Scout who worked the most community service hours for the year.

Troop 72 said it hopes to begin meeting again soon at the Colchester Federated Church on Mondays at 7 p.m.; it normally meets there from September-June each year. Children age 11-17 are welcome.

Contact Ben Smith at scoutmaster@troop72ct.org with any questions.

Do You Want to Build a Snowman?

The Colchester-based food delivery service Fud invites children to participate in Fud’s Snowman Creation Challenge.

Children are invited to create a “snowman” any way you see fit – actual snow, tissue paper, cotton balls, etc. Submit photos of your child’s creation anytime between Jan. 17 and Jan. 22 to support@fuddelivery.com.

Each participant will be entered to win a make-your-own-pizza kit from Plum Tomato in Colchester.

Resident Graduates

Kyle Whewell of Colchester recently graduated from Central Connecticut State University with a degree in actuarial science.

Whewell graduated from Bacon Academy in 2015.

Tax Deferment Program

The Board of Selectmen recently voted to defer taxes with application and offer the low interest rate program.

Gov. Ned Lamont through an executive order is allowing municipalities to provide temporary tax relief options for their community in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The tax deferment program covers any tax, water and sewer bill that was due Jan. 1. The program is designed to provide a three-month deferment period for the payment of taxes, without interest.

To defer your taxes, you must complete the OPM M-COVID19 form and submit it no later than Feb. 1 to the tax collector’s office. PDF fillable forms can be found at www.colchesterct.gov/tax-collector. Forms submitted after Feb. 1 will not be eligible.

For more information, call Tax Collector Michele Wyatt at 860-537-7210.



Decking the Grounds... Bacon Academy National Honor Society members (from left) Sarah Grant, Shannon Hickey, Victoria Violette, Jamie Greene, Kellen Paparella, Delaney Lima, Abby Burke, Ashley Clark and Grace Palmer decorated Harrington Court grounds on Dec. 8 to share some holiday spirit with the residents.

Smith Sworn In to Second Term

State Rep. Brian Smith (D-48) was recently sworn in to his second term – his first full term, as he was initially elected to the House in January 2020, following the death of longtime state Rep. Linda Orange.



The 48th House District covers most of Colchester and portions of Lebanon, Mansfield and Windham.

“I look forward to advocating on behalf of my constituents as well as residents across the state,” Smith said. “Government should work for the people, especially during these unprecedented times, and I am honored to be able to continue serving this district.”

Smith said he is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Connecticut residents and cre-

ating a more equitable place to live, learn, and work.

Smith said his priorities in the new legislative session include rebuilding the state economy from the coronavirus pandemic, reducing the cost of health care, expanding PTSD coverage for emergency medical personnel, and securing vital funding to support the 48th House District’s schools, public services and programs.

He will serve as a member of the Higher Education & Employment Advancement Committee, Planning & Development Committee, and Transportation Committee.

Smith has previously served on the Colchester Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, Economic Development Commission, and Charter Adoption Commission. He also founded the Actor’s Attic Theatre Company, Inc., a non-profit theater that operated in Hartford from 1983-89.

Program Offers Tips on Organizing

Cragin Memorial Library will offer the virtual program “Reduce Your Stress: Get Organized!” Thursday, Jan. 28, at 6 p.m. Professional organizer Sandra Wheeler will share key organizing tips to help people in their home or office.

The program is free and sponsored by Friends of Cragin Memorial Library. To register, visit tinyurl.com/jcqwqszaq.

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Wreaths Across America... The local Wreaths Across America committee received enough donations to hold its annual ceremony at Westchester Cemetery last month. The committee was able to place a wreath for each fallen veteran from the French and Indian War through the Vietnam War buried in the cemetery. Photo by Paula Felt.

More Colchester News on page 14

Colchester • Colchester

Holiday Stockings Brighten Holidays for Seniors

By Karla Santos

Although the pandemic has brought more struggles than usual to people with economic difficulties, there are some organizations that worked to bring the community a bit of cheer during the holiday season – the Colchester Senior Center being one.

Patty Watts, director of the Colchester Senior Center, and her staff, ran the Holiday Stocking Project, which delivered holiday stockings to more than 70 seniors during Christmas week.

Watts explained that the seniors that received the gifts were residents of Colchester, age 60 or older, who had a demonstrated economic need.

Each of the seniors received a festive stocking with a \$25 gift card for individuals or a \$50 card for couples, Watts said. In addition, the stocking had a notepad and a pen, a puzzle book, facial tissues, hand sanitizer, candy canes, chocolate and more.

Watts said she was inspired to make the project a reality because for more than 30 years until this year, the Colchester Senior Center has partnered with Jack Jackter Intermediate School to run the Holiday Box Project. With the project, each classroom adopted a senior in need. The senior center, in turn, provided the students with the seniors' names and a wish list, which, the students granted through gifts they donated.

Watts said that through the project, usually 25 to 27 seniors are helped.

But this year, with the challenges of the pandemic, the senior center didn't think the project was a safe option, which is why staff decided to go with something a little different, Watts said.

"With the Holiday Box Project, the students and their parents shopped for different items and the classroom teacher helped put that together, but a lot of people touched the boxes and the items," she said, adding that there was a risk of exposure to COVID-19 if too many people worked on the project.

The goal of the stocking project was to help the same number of seniors as the Holiday Box

Project has on previous years, about 25.

Senior center staff created a flyer and distributed it to the community, including the schools, to inform of the need for funds for the project.

"The idea was to fill a holiday stocking full of useful gifts, including a grocery gift card," Watts said.

Ultimately, enough funds were raised to serve 70 seniors.

Watts said the project had a "really great outcome." She said she was initially hoping for \$1,000, which would have helped fill stockings for 25 people. The team raised \$3,070.

She said raising that amount "was really exciting."

"The senior center staff went shopping and assembled all of the holiday stockings using safe protocols and then we hand delivered them to the recipients," Watts said.

She said she has heard back from some of the recipients and they told her they were grateful for the gifts, which made their holiday season cheerful.

Watts, on the other hand, said she is thankful for all the citizens who supported the project, which could not have been possible without their donations.

Rob Gustafson, director of the Colchester Housing Authority – which serves low-income and disabled seniors – helped distribute the stockings.

He said the gifts "brought smiles to a lot of people."

In addition, Gustafson said the project was "awesome" and added that he and his son have helped deliver holiday project gifts for decades.

In an interview with the *RiverEast* this week, Gustafson said that on behalf of all of the residents who were helped, he wanted to extend a big "thank you" to those who ran the project and made donations.

He said he is also thankful for all the groups who donated to the seniors in town throughout the holidays, including the Colchester Lions Club and the Colchester Rotary Club.



Rob Gustafson, director of Colchester Housing Authority, receives stockings for senior residents of Dublin and Ponemah villages from Patty Watts, director of Colchester Senior Center.

January Children's Programs at Library

The following programs are offered for children this month at Cragin Memorial Library. While the library is currently open, it is not hosting any in-person programming. Most of these programs will be conducted online. For more information, call the children's department at 860-537-7201.

The library has a list of available craft bags at the Children's Circulation Desk; supplies are limited and are on a first-come, first-served basis. The library is located at 8 Linwood Ave.

Baby Activity Videos: Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. on Facebook and YouTube. There will be

book suggestions, baby bounces and more. Often, activity bags will be available to accompany the videos.

Sharing Stories: Mondays at 10:30 a.m. on Facebook and YouTube. There will be stories, songs and more. A craft will be showcased, and bags will be available for pick-up.

Exploring the Alphabet: Fridays at 10:30 a.m. on Facebook and YouTube. Each week, explore a new letter of the alphabet, sing songs, practice writing and share books. A craft bag will accompany each video, bags can be picked up on Monday the same week as the video.

Other January Programs: 3D Snowpeople Craft: Wednesday, Jan. 27. Grab a craft bag and create this winter project.

National Puzzle Day: Wednesday, Jan. 29, all day and for all ages. Grab a puzzle to take home and complete. Puzzles will vary between mazes, word searches and crosswords.

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Schools Chief Predicts ‘Very, Very Difficult’ Budget

By Karla Santos

The planning process has barely begun for Colchester schools' 2021-22 budget, but Superintendent of Schools Jeff Burt already has concerns, telling the Board of Education Tuesday to prepare for a “very, very difficult year.”

Burt said he's already projecting a 1.5% increase – and that's before doing anything else to the budget. “It's going to be much, much significantly higher than that just to roll forward with the status quo,” he warned the board.

Burt said one of his biggest concerns is the district's maintenance budget, as in the past two years he has been forced to remove money from capital improvement to help balance the budgets.

He said the district has had “large ticket items” that have depended on reserves and while the district had healthy reserves three years ago, that's not the case now.

One of the significant items the district will need money for is the replacement of the oil tank at Bacon Academy. To get the new tank, the district will need to put \$100,000 into the capital improvement plan account this year and next year.

The removal of the existing tank must start on

July 1, 2022, Burt said.

“And that is a rough estimate at \$200,000 because it's a buried 20,000-gallon oil tank that's been in the ground for 30 years,” he added.

The tank is located near the front entrance of the school. He said he is hoping that the \$200,000 will cover the cost because the district has not budgeted for it.

“We haven't planned for that,” Burt said. “We don't have the money for that.”

He said the \$200,000 doesn't include additional funds that will be necessary to remediate the site.

“That's just one item out of all the items in our district that we have not budgeted for and we need to start budgeting,” Burt said.

Burt also mentioned that the district will have a “very large” wireless replacement program in a couple years, for which the district has not “adequately” saved.

Trying to go to below or close to a zero increase would have a significant impact, he said, adding that his “greatest concern” is the long term impact it would have on students and their capacity to make up for the loss of learning they have faced during the pandemic.

He said he was also concerned about the dis-

trict's ability to meet infrastructure needs.

As the 2021-22 budget season progresses, school administrators are putting their proposed budgets into the system, Burt said, and the finance department is working to add in all the elements requested. Burt said that salaries can already be noted as a “big piece” of next year's budget.

“This is going to be a very, very difficult year,” Burt said.

Over the past two years, the district has found creative ways to reduce increases without having a significant impact on students, he said. Last year, the budget showed a nearly zero increase and the year before it went up by about one and a half percent.

He said one of the most significant reductions in the last budget was in the capital improvement plan. While typically capital projects approximate \$150,000, that budget went down to zero.

In addition, the district's technology plan is a 10-year plan that “it's supposed to be well funded in the \$350,000 range and we reduced that down significantly,” Burt said.

Some other items that were going to be in the upcoming budget cycle were purchased last school year because students were out of school for four months due to the pandemic, which, Burt said, led to some savings.

“But again, we are not closed this year so we don't have those savings and we can't pre-purchase things again next year,” he said.

He added that those items add up to approximately \$600,000.

“To give you a perspective, that's a 1.5% increase before we even begin the process – before we even put pen to paper,” he said. “We are not even close to a zero.”

Burt said he realizes these are difficult times; however, he doesn't want the budget to affect students because some of them are “struggling right now.”

Burt said the students that are learning from

home and those in the hybrid model are suffering more than those who are learning in-person full time.

He said the district has more than 200 voluntary at-home learners and 60 students who left the district for home-schooling and potentially may return.

“We don't know what we are facing in September, hopefully when we come back full-time,” Burt said. “We have a pretty good guess that a lot of our students didn't gain the necessary skills and knowledge this year, starting last March actually.”

He said that for the upcoming budget it will be “very difficult” for the district to try to balance the budget by reducing staff.

“As you may recall, 80% of our budget is personnel, salaries and benefits,” Burt said. “So that is the biggest portion of our budget.”

Board of Education member Joanne Rose suggested that the board take steps to ensure it communicates with the public about the budget process this year.

Although the budget is not finalized, the board will present the process, in its current iteration, along with some goals, to the Board of Finance next week, Burt said.

New Website

Tuesday's meeting wasn't all bad news.

Members of the Board of Education recognized the district's new website, which went live at the start of the month. Board members expressed satisfaction with the new site and thanked the committee that worked to create it.

Charles Hewes, director of teaching and learning, explained that a committee – made up of parents, teachers, staff and administrators – was formed before the pandemic to look at the district's website. The group met a few times, provided a survey for input and formulated guidance that web content manager, Rob Meany, used to create the new site.

To explore the new-look website, visit colchesterct.org.

Parks and Rec. News & Notes

Parks and Recreation has announced the following. For more information, call 860-537-7297 or email parksandrec@colchesterct.gov. More information, including weather-related cancellations, is also at www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department. The Parks and Rec. office is located at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave. To visit in person, call to make an appointment.

Registration is required for all programs. For full program descriptions and to register, visit colchesterctrec.recdesk.com/Community/Home. Forms and payment can also be left in the Town Hall drop box. If paying by check, place any forms and payment in an envelope with “Colchester Recreation” written on the envelope. To mail in your registration, fill out the registration form and mail it and a check to: Colchester Recreation, 127 Norwich Ave., Colchester, CT 06415. Make checks payable to “Town of Colchester.”

Upcoming Events: Snow People in the Park: Keep an eye on the Parks and Rec. Facebook page, as during one of the upcoming snowy days Parks and Rec. will hold a “pop-up” program at the park. Parks and Rec. will hand out bags with everything needed to make snow people in the park. This is a free program.

Spring 2021 Virtual Vendor Fair in the Works: Together with vendors, Parks and Rec. is planning a new spring book. For the spring,

the book will be expanded to include local farms, gardeners, and businesses. Applications will be accepted mid-January through the end of February and the book will be published mid-March. Each vendor will have four pages to display their items for sale. Vendors should include information on how to make a purchase, pick up and pay for the items, and should also follow all COVID-19 guidelines listed on the state website.

Free Family Game Nights: Fridays through Jan. 29. Register online and then stop in the recreation office to pick out your game. Just return the game the following week so it can be disinfected for a new family to enjoy the following week.

Junior LEGO Masters: Wednesdays, Jan. 20-Feb. 24, 5:15-6:15 p.m., via Zoom, for ages 7-10. Cost: \$120/residents, \$125/nonresidents; add \$25 if purchasing a two-pound bag of LEGOs. Program requires a minimum of 8, maximum of 20.

Gentle Yoga: For ages 45 and up. All levels of fitness or yoga experience are welcome. Meets Mondays, Feb. 1-March 3 (no class Feb. 15), 4:45-5:45 p.m. Class meets via Facebook Live; the private link will be mailed to you after you register. Cost: \$35/residents, \$40/nonresidents.

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Manchester OBGYN Associates Welcomes Dr. Lydia Lormand



Lydia Lormand, DO, FACOG, is a board-certified physician specializing in obstetrics and gynecology. She completed her ObGyn residency at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Massachusetts, after earning her Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from New York College of Osteopathic Medicine, and her

Bachelor of Science degree from Binghamton University. As a resident, she received the Practicing the Art of Medicine Award, which is given to the chief resident who displays a strong ability to integrate the foundation of evidence-based medicine with clinical intuition, empathy, and compassion.

As a women's healthcare provider, Dr. Lormand's mission is to provide comprehensive healthcare to women through puberty, the reproductive years and menopause, and to make women feel comfortable and try to take away the fear and anxiety that can associated with ObGyn care. In her spare time, Dr. Lormand enjoys reading murder mysteries, traveling, scuba diving, playing volleyball and spinning.

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WJJMS Project Comes In Under Budget

By Karla Santos

The books are officially closed on the William J. Johnston Middle School building project – and when all was said and done, it cost nearly \$5 million less than budget.

Originally estimated to cost \$48.9 million, the project was completed at \$4.8 million under budget, according to WJJMS Principal Chris Bennett.

“It’s really unheard of for public projects to come in under budget,” he said.

Bennett said there were various reasons the project was under budget, including “so much fiscal responsibility” and “great bidding.” Bennett explained that when the project was being planned, construction companies were eager to get projects, which helped with acquiring a low bid.

In addition, while the school was undergoing construction, two state statutes were written, which helped save some money, he said.

The project is being paid for with a combination of state grants, state reimbursement and tax payer money, Bennett said. Had it run \$48.9 million, the state was slated to reimburse \$28 million, with the estimated cost to the town \$20.9 million.

According to Rosemary Coyle, who served as the Board of Selectmen liaison to the school’s building committee, the town wanted to reconstruct the middle school because it was in disrepair.

She noted that the building needed major work. Windows, for example, were falling out and the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system didn’t work properly.

“It was just really the school had gone passed its use as an educational facility,” Coyle said.

She explained that the project building committee was active for about seven years.

The plan was originally to build a senior center, community center and a school on the same campus, but that failed at a referendum in 2011. The town scaled down the project, focusing on just the school aspect; this passed with voters in 2015. Construction began in summer 2016.

Coyle said the renovated and expanded middle school was designed based on an educational model offering pod team instruction for the different grade levels. With this model, students are assigned to a particular pod and move around within other classrooms for their academics.

“The building is really state of the art,” Coyle

said, of the finished product. “As a former educator, it would’ve been just a joy to teach in such a facility.”

She said the school offers all the tools needed for students to reach their goals.

“It was exciting for me to be the liaison to this building committee,” she said.

In an interview with the *Rivereast* this week, she praised the building committee not only for helping the project come in under budget, but for all of its talent, as it was made up of members with experience in engineering, construction and teaching.

“I watched them debate every penny, every dime,” Coyle said. “They were so attentive to the details not only of the construction piece but the academic piece. I think that’s why it was a successful project.”

Although students have been in the new building since the 2018-19 school year, the committee was still active until last month, while final details were completed and the project was closed out.

Bennett explained that the project was 95% finished in the summer of 2018, allowing students to enter the new space for classes for the 2018-19 school year. Bennett noted that there were three parts to the project – the middle school, the gyms and pupil services.

He said one of the two gyms was finished later in the year.

Before the school was renovated, the property was composed of two connected buildings – the middle school on one side and Bacon Academy on the other. Bacon moved to its current home in 1993.

Once the high school students cleared out of the older building, the school that was then called Colchester Intermediate School – now known as Jack Jacker Intermediate School – moved in. Portable classrooms were added behind the two buildings and then around 2006, when Colchester Intermediate School moved into a new home, WJJMS took over the whole facility.

Bennett said that during the renovation, some of the portable classrooms were demolished, and students moved to the portion of the property that previously housed the high school, also relying on the remaining portables. They were there for two years while the middle school was being demolished and re-built. Next to the building, there was a wing, a small portion of

the former Bacon Academy, that was preserved and renovated. The rest was demolished.

The school is still made up of different buildings. Part of the former Bacon Academy hosts one of two gyms on the property and the office for pupil services.

Tom Tyler, chairman of the building committee said the project was a lot of work, but the results are incredible.

“I think it’s probably the single most successful large construction project that the town of Colchester has ever taken and executed,” Tyler said.

He explained that committee members oversaw and coordinated all aspects of the planning and construction process. But three main entities were also engaged in the project, including an architect from Tecton Architects, who designed the project, project management services from Arcadis Engineering Company and O&G Industries, which served as the construction company.

Tyler praised the committee members for all of their years of work to make the project a reality and that it came on time and under budget. He said while the project committee worked for

about seven years, there were members who also served on the planning committee and worked for nearly ten years planning for the school and senior center that failed at referendum.

“We had a tremendous group of volunteers who spent thousands of hours in hundreds of meetings since 2011 to deliver this project,” Tyler said.

During the course of the project, the town went through three first selectmen, four superintendents, three directors of facilities and two chairs of the Board of Education, he said. Despite the turnover and new faces, the core group “worked together doggedly to deliver and stay dedicated to this project.”

Tyler said the school offers what the students need to be successful and said committee members continue to see the fruits of their long hours of planning. He said the transition to learning from home due to the pandemic was easier for children who attend the school as devices and technology were already in place to meet those needs.

To learn more about William J. Johnston Middle School, visit wjj.colchesterct.org.

Town to Launch Initiative to Help Stop COVID-19 Spread

The Town of Colchester, under the direction of the First Selectman Mary Bylone, is launching an initiative to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative, developed by nurses and Viven Health, a nationally-recognized education technology creator, will offer the public a free online health education program that teaches people how to avoid getting infections.

“As a nurse and a resident of our town, I recognize the tremendous impact this virus has had on our community,” Bylone said. “We have lost community members and many of us have lost personal friends and family members to the disease. I have worked to bring up to date and factual information to our community and recognize the role ongoing education plays in the prevention of infectious diseases like COVID-19. It is exciting to be part of the launch of this public education program, designed by nurses to help flatten the COVID-19 curve.”

Dr. Tom Ahrens, founder of Viven Health,

originally developed the public health program to help individuals learn how to stop infections, especially sepsis, a condition that kills over 25,000 people every year.

“Some of the sickest people you see in a hospital’s Intensive Care Unit are there because of an infection,” Ahrens said. “Our program helps protect the public by teaching people how to prevent infections. Some simple tweaks in a person’s hygiene habits have the power to make an enormous difference. This is extra important during the pandemic.”

Colchester residents will be able to access this free and informative program through our website at ColchesterCT.gov, on the town Facebook page and through links provided in weekly emails.

To access the program visit Stopbadgerms.com. It provides scenarios designed to teach a person how to act responsibly while learning basic protocols for practicing healthier behavior.

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Turkey Thanks... Colchester Rotary Club recently offered thanks to all that purchased turkey legs to support Thanksgiving baskets for Colchester families in need. The paper turkey legs adorned the windows and walls at Liberty Bank, Noel's Market and Westchester Market in recent months. Additional donations were made by Colchester Cares, local businesses, and personal checks from individuals. Liberty Bank donated 25 cents for every dollar and also awarded Colchester Rotary two additional contributions to fund Thanksgiving baskets. Colchester Rotary will partner with Colchester Youth and Social Services to reach those in need this Thanksgiving season.



Historical Society Calendars in Limited Supply

There is a limited supply of Colchester Historical Society 2021 calendars still for sale. The pictorial calendar features rare vintage images of Colchester.

On the calendar cover, there is a photograph of Main Street looking south, flanked by the town green and Merchants' Row. Highlighted in the calendar are images of Colchester that will be soon featured in an upcoming Arcadia Publications' *Images of America* book of Colchester.

The limited-edition 2021 Colchester Historical Society pictorial calendar sells for \$12. This year, for \$20, the historical society will also include a copy of *Historical Landmarks: A Historical Tour of Colchester*. This book features 50 historic sites throughout Colchester, many walking distance from the center of town.

Calendars can be purchased at Nathan Liver-

ant and Son Antiques, located at 168 S. Main St., and Copies Plus....more, located at 31 Halls Hill Rd. Calendars can also be purchased at the Colchester History Museum on Saturdays and Sundays, noon-2 p.m., or Wednesdays, 5-7 p.m. Look for the "Calendars for Sale Today" sign in front of the museum, which is located at 24 Linwood Ave.

Calendars and copies of the *Historical Landmarks* book can also be mailed for an additional \$3 to cover shipping. Calendar with shipping is \$15, and the calendar and book with shipping are \$23. Contact the Colchester Historical Society at mail@colchesterhistory.org or 860-537-4230 to purchase. Proceeds support the society's mission of educating the community as to the history of Colchester.

President's List

Colchester residents Olivia Berard and Zachary Berard each made the fall 2020 President's List at Bob Jones University in Greenville, S.C.

Olivia Berard is a freshman nursing major, and Zachary Berard is a junior criminal justice major.

To qualify for the President's List, students must earn a 3.75 or higher grade point average for the semester.

Dean's List

Colchester residents Christina Heckathorn, Ian Lilly, Michelle McComiskey, Maria Nieves, Jeremiah Palmisano, Ashlee Ringuette, Natalia Setschinsky, Ashley Varjenski, Aileen Williams and Meghan Young all made the summer 2020 President's List at Goodwin College in East Hartford.



New Assistant... The Collaborative for Colchester's Children (C3) recently welcomed Laurie Buyniski as assistant to the coordinator. Buyniski has corporate and volunteer experience, and is also the mother of four children. "C3 has supported my family over the past nine years, through the offerings of programs, parent education classes and community resources," she said. "As a volunteer, I've had the opportunity to contribute while learning about the goals and strategies of the organization and our Colchester community. I'm looking forward to taking my involvement to the next level as a member of the C3 team!" Buyniski replaces Dawn LePage, who served C3 for over 10 years and had recently taken a full-time job with the Colchester Public Schools. Buyniski, far right, is shown here with, from left, husband Alex Buyniski and children Benjamin, Brayden, Hannah and Kayla.

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 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 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,

Virtual Author Talk

All are invited Monday, Feb. 1, at 6 p.m., via Zoom, to chat with local author Gary Walter, who will talk about his new book *Images of America: Colchester*.

To register for this event, go to tinyurl.com/yy2vtjf3. This author talk is cosponsored by Cragin Memorial Library and Colchester Historical Society.

This program is free. For more information, call the library at 860-537-5752.

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.

Drive-Thru Polish Dinner

St. Joseph Polish Club will have a Drive-Thru Polish dinner to benefit the Madonna Place Friday, Feb. 12, from 5-6:30 p.m.

Dinner includes pierogis, galumpkis, kielbasa, and rye bread with butter. Tickets are \$15 and only sold at the club, 395 South Main Street. Advanced ticket sales only.

Tickets cannot be purchased online or emailed.

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, Jan. 18: Center closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Tuesday, Jan. 19: 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi on Zoom; 10:30 a.m., Book Club on Zoom; 11 a.m., Adult Coloring; 1:30 p.m., conference call bingo.

Wednesday, Jan. 20: 10 a.m., Making Memories on Zoom; noon, Fresh New Start – Grab and Go Lunch; no AARP Webinar today.

Thursday, Jan. 21: 9 a.m., Exercise with Anne on Zoom; 10 a.m., Sittercize on Zoom; 11 a.m., Senior Yoga on Zoom; 1:30 p.m., Boggle on Zoom.

Friday, Jan. 22: 10:30 a.m., 8 Steps to Organizing Success on Zoom; 11 a.m., Senior Yoga on Zoom; 11 a.m., Reopening our Senior Center Q&A with Patty on Zoom.

Upcoming Programs: Snowman Decorating Contest: All are invited to create a one-of-a-kind snowman. Mini Styrofoam snowmen will be provided for people to decorate however they like. There will be winners for Funniest, Most Unique, and Most Beautiful. Participants have until Feb. 26 to complete their snowman and submit a picture for judging. Call the office to set up a time to pick up your snowman starter kit for \$3.

Book Club Discussion on Zoom: Tuesday, Jan. 19, 10:30 a.m. Born a Crime by Trevor Noah will be discussed. Copies are held on reserve at Cragin Memorial Library. Everyone is welcome. Please come having read the book and prepared for a lively discussion.

Boggle on Zoom: Thursday, Jan. 21, 1:30 p.m. The goal of Boggle is to score points by finding words in the random letters in the

grid. All you'll need to join the fun is a pen or pencil and a piece of paper. Look for the link in the Monthly Zoom Links table.

Reopening Our Senior Center Q&A: Friday, Jan. 22, 1 p.m. Senior Center Director Patty Watts will discuss reopening plans. Bring questions and concerns.

In the Know: Tuesday, Jan. 26, 12:30 p.m., via Zoom. Watts will discuss current happenings at the senior center. Learn about the new senior center project, plans for reopening and more.

Coffee Talk with Ruth: Wednesday, Jan. 27, 9:30 a.m., via Zoom. Discuss current events, local happenings, and what's new in the lives of our members.

Community Conversation with the First Selectman: Friday, Jan. 29 10:30 a.m., via Zoom. First Selectman Mary Bylone will discuss COVID-19 in Colchester, announce town-wide events, and more. Bring your questions.

International Cooking Demo on Zoom: Morocco: Friday, Jan. 29, 1:30 p.m., via Zoom. Follow along at home or simply watch a demonstration on how to prepare Moroccan Harira Stew, a dish featuring chickpeas. Call or email the senior center for a recipe and shopping list.

Colchester Senior of the Month: Each month, beginning in February, the senior center will give one or two of its members the spotlight to tell more about themselves. If interested in being the February Senior of the Month, call Ruth at the senior center.

Upcoming Programs: Learn to Sign with Ruth: Mondays, 11 a.m.-noon. This course teaches the basics of how to communicate with sign language. No prior experience necessary.

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.

East Hampton • East Hampton

Youth and Family Services Awarded \$625K Grant

By Jack Lakowsky

East Hampton Youth and Family Services last week received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention a Drug Free Communities (DFC) Support Program Grant, a competitive grant totaling \$625,000.

The federal funds will be granted over the next five years in \$125,000 installments.

Youth and Family Services (YFS) will use the money to continue its work reducing substance abuse among local youth, according to East Hampton Prevention Coordinator James Olsen.

In a Monday interview with the *Rivereast*, Olsen said money from this grant will be focused on combatting underage alcohol consumption and nicotine use, whether with cigarettes or vapes.

Underage cannabis smoking and prescription

pill abuse are also topics Olsen addresses with local youth and families.

Olsen coordinates a local coalition of town officials, including from the police department school district, and social services, as well as local parents, to lead Belltown's prevention effort. The coalition hosts seminars and talks at local schools, educating kids about risky behavior.

"A lot of our campaigning is peer-led," said Olsen. "Using students gets the message across effectively."

Olsen described the coalition's efforts as "more realistic and friendly" than hardline, "finger-wagging" campaigns like DARE or the "Just Say No" initiative.

"We're about education and providing them the opportunity to form their own opinions. No scare tactics and no sob stories," said Olsen.

"For example, we don't teach that weed is a 'gateway drug.' We ask why it may have gotten that name, or we explain what smoking [weed] can do to a 13-year-old brain."

The DFC grant will help the town continue this outreach work.

"This town does a great job of providing resource for kids," said Olsen, going on to name East Hampton's bustling arts and theatre scene, afterschool activities, and events held by private businesses as resources that help prevent or mitigate underage drinking or substance use.

"The coalition will come together and try to find out what other entities exist to help the town," said Olsen.

To apply for the grant and communicate Belltown's needs, Olsen and his department developed a "snapshot" of East Hampton, with factors like parent and student demographics, police activity, youth service availability, school surveys, local media reports, and overall resource capacity.

The DFC grant is the second of two monetary victories for East Hampton. In 2016, the town was awarded its first major drug and alcohol prevention grant—money that allowed the town to hire Olsen in the first place.

"For many years, [YFS] functioned with about a \$3,000 budget," Olsen said. "Certainly not enough to hire anyone."

Olsen is the first, and only, prevention coordinator in town history. The 2016 award, a state

grant called the Partnership for Success grant, was the first-ever major drug and alcohol abuse prevention grant awarded to the town.

"The grant was to prove ourselves, to get our feet off the ground," Olsen said. "The goal in the last four years has been to get in a position where we're competitive [for large grant funds]."

Normally, Olsen will coordinate events at local schools, work that has been disrupted severely by the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic, for example, Olsen organized a "bedroom walk through" where parents learned about ways to discover substances concealed in misleading containers, like stash jars disguised as soda cans.

"It's been really tough since we can't go into schools, and I don't really want to subject kids to yet another Zoom call," Olsen said. "We want to communicate our message without it being overwhelming."

As a result of this disruption, Olsen said the coalition will rededicate, refocus, and get its "ducks in a row." The coalition had a "grey area" of inactivity, wherein funds from the first grant ran dry and money from this new one had yet to be deposited.

"Nothing is on the horizon quite yet, but we're ready to get going again," he said.

Grant Applications Due in April

The East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission welcomes grant applications from East Hampton organizations and individuals with programs and/or projects designed to enrich residents' lives through the arts. Deadline to apply is April 1.

There are two \$500 grants available. Grants will be awarded to East Hampton individuals or organizations the commission determines will have the most potential impact of arts and/or culture on the town. Incomplete forms will be denied; applicants can resubmit.

Criteria for awarding grants: The artistic and organizational quality of the organization and/or project and its likelihood of continuing viability or success, and the organization's or

project's accessibility and service to the East Hampton community.

Grant recipients must credit the East Hampton Arts and Culture Commission on all press releases, posters, print advertising and programs.

An interview may be requested of the candidate prior to awarding the grant. A progress update will be required six months after the award date, with a final report required one year after the award date.

Visit www.artsforeasthamptonct.org for applications; mail them to Town Manager's Office, Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424, or email to arts@easthamptonct.org.

Haddam Neck

Covenant Church News

Haddam Neck Covenant Church, located at 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.

Puppet Ministry: Each Sunday the Church's Puppet Ministry features Digger the Dog from Farmer M's Red Barn to help Cowger explain the meaning of the message topic.

Bible Study: Cowger hosts 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*.

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, will not hold regular Sunday services until further notice. Services will be conducted each Sunday at 10 a.m., with Church School at 11 a.m. Both services are available on Zoom.

The Rev. Ann Perrott is Priest-in-Charge, the Rev. Joanne Neel-Richard oversees 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.

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.

Virtual Lunch Bunch: Every other Monday at 12:30 p.m. for an hour, via Zoom. Next date is Jan. 25. Register online, or contact the senior center for an invitation.

Weekly Virtual Events: Register online via MyActiveCenter.com. Schedule: Bingo: Tuesdays at 1 p.m.; Writing Our Lives to Open Our Hearts: Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Call the

center for more info.

Seated Yoga via Zoom: Wednesdays at 10 a.m. through March 10. Fee is \$20 for the session. Mail payment to East Hampton Senior Center; make check payable to the Town of East Hampton.

Snowflake Series: Thursdays, Jan. 28, Feb. 4 and Feb. 11, at 1 p.m., via Zoom. Meet others for a half hour of fun and friendship. There will be ice breakers, brain teasers, laughter and storytelling. Sign up via MAC.

Tai Chi with Tom Series: Session began Jan. 7 and runs Thursdays, 10-10:30 a.m., through Feb. 25. Cost is \$40. Register online.

Volunteer Shopping: The center has a program where a volunteer will shop for you. If interested or for more information, including how to arrange payment, call 860-267-4426 or email [jewling@easthampton.gov](mailto:jewing@easthampton.gov).

Pen Pals: The center will match you with a pal who you can write to, back and forth. It may be a senior center friend or someone from the community. The center will supply all you need to participate. Call the center to sign up or for more information.

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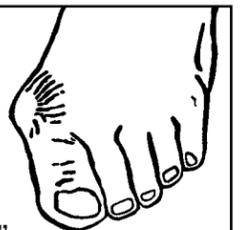
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Man That Keeps on Giving... East Hampton Lion Dave Shulman – former Humanitarian of the Year for the entire Lions district and recipient of Lions Clubs International Foundation’s highest form of recognition, the Melvin Jones Fellowship – and his company, Suburban Stationers, recently received a thank you plaque for their help with the Farm to Family Food Program. The East Hampton Lions and East Hampton Food Bank recently teamed up to distribute boxes of food to those in need that were provided by USDA in conjunction with the State of CT Division of Emergency Management. There were several food drives with well over 1,000 families receiving food boxes. There was much lifting and carrying, and Shulman provided equipment and labor to get this done. Lions District Governor Frank Rowe presented Shulman with his plaque.

Honor Society Inductee

East Hampton resident Emily Sailsbury was recently inducted into Alpha Eta, the national honor society for the allied health professions, during a virtual ceremony at Quinnipiac University. Salisbury is majoring in occupational therapy.

Dean’s List

Clara Gustine of East Hampton made the fall 2020 Dean’s List at Roger Williams University in Rhode Island. Gustine is double majoring in criminal justice and psychology.

Congregational Church News

Due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Connecticut, The Congregational Church of East Hampton, UCC, is once again holding all services via Zoom. Current and past services can be accessed at www.cc-eh.org. All are welcome. The Teen Youth Group will not meet in January but will resume its monthly meeting Friday, Feb. 26, from 6:30-7:30 p.m. Students in grades 6-12 are welcome. 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.

Capstone Grant Program

The East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission (EHACC) is accepting applications from East Hampton High School juniors and seniors for a \$200 grant to support an annual East Hampton High School capstone project. The grant will help support one student’s proposed capstone project, a multifaceted assignment that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students. Capstone projects may take a wide variety of forms including a long-term investigative project that culminates in a final product, presentation, or performance. Applicants for the EHACC Capstone Grant will be invited to present his/her Capstone Project idea to commission members during an agreed upon commission meeting. Deadline to apply is Feb. 1. Applications are available at www.artsforeasthamptonct.org and can be submitted to arts@easthamptonct.org or can be mailed/dropped off at the Town Manager’s office at East Hampton Town Hall, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424.

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.

Stories and Songs: Wednesdays at 10 a.m. via Zoom, for ages 1-5. No registration required.

Family Bedtime Stories: Mondays at 6:30 p.m., via Zoom, for ages 3-8. This program combines stories, songs and literacy activities. Siblings, pajamas, and stuffed animal friends welcome. No registration required; just drop in. However, you can register online to receive weekly reminders for storytime.

Take and Make: Tuesday, Jan. 19. Each month, the library debuts three take and make activity kits – one for teens, one for school-aged children and one for “littlest learners.” Reserve your kit online on the library website and pick it up in person or curbside. This month’s theme for grades six and up is Emo Socks. Teens will get all the materials needed to make their own sock puppet. There will also be other STEM activities and ideas related to puppetry and emotions. Kits are available starting at 12:15 p.m. Jan. 19. Registration is required.

For grades 2-5, the kit is a Science Explorers Project Bag. Kids will learn about the science of flight. Just add tape and scissors; everything else is included. Registration required, and pickup is on Jan. 19.

Virtual Afterschool Programs: Footprints, Fribrarys, and Fundays: The library offers fun and educational after school programming

for children in grades 2-5 on Fridays during the school year, and Monday Fundays for middle school students on select Mondays. Programming takes place at 4 p.m., and all programs are over Zoom. Registration required. The schedule is: Footprints, for grades 2-3, Jan. 29 and Feb. 29; Fribrary, for grades 4-5, Jan. 22, Feb. 5 and Feb. 26; Monday Fundays, for grades 6-8, Jan. 25, Feb. 8 and Feb. 22.

Mindful Movements: Thursdays, 10 a.m., via Zoom, for ages 3-8. This is an early literacy program for child and caregiver that combines singing, dancing, and whole body movement. Siblings welcome. For weekly reminders and recordings, register online.

Teen Advisory Tuesday: Next meeting Tuesday, Jan. 26, 3 p.m., via Zoom. For grades 8-12. In this online program, students will come together to plan and create events and programs they want, and provide input to expand the library’s YA/Teen collection. The Teen Advisory Board requires a monthly commitment and participation; upon registration, teens will receive an application and agreement to be completed prior to the first meeting. Registration and applications are being taken now.

Book Club: Tuesday, Jan. 19, at 6:30 p.m., or Thursday, Jan. 21, at 2 p.m. – both online via Zoom. *The Great Alone* will be discussed. Copies available for check out at the circulation desk. Register online for the Zoom link.

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.



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New Tavern in Town... The Economic Development Commission has announced a new eatery for East Hampton, the Belltown Tavern. Property owner Francis D’Mello, also owner of Lake Shore Package Store, and Chef Thomas Chmielecki decided to bring a restaurant back to the site, former home of the popular Governor’s Tavern. Belltown Tavern is located at 26 E. High St. and can be reached at 860-467-6932 or online at www.belltowntavern.com.



Epoch Arts is offering an eight-week in-person series of classes next month, in a variety of art forms. Pictured here at a previous class is Harper Ordonez.

Winter Classes to Start at Epoch Arts

Epoch Arts is offering an eight-week in-person series of classes next month, in a variety of art forms – and the nonprofit arts-for-youth organization will also offer a new art expression in the form of a youth-led Epoch magazine.

Thanks to a grant from the East Hampton Rotary Club, Epoch invites youth to either be part of the creation and editing team or to share their art and written word, photography and more. Classes will begin Feb. 1 and full registration and class descriptions are online at epocharts.recdesk.com/Community/Program.

Organizers said they are watching COVID numbers and will have protocols in place for safety. If numbers are still rising at the time of

classes, Epoch said it will re-evaluate and push the start to a later date.

Epoch Arts is located at 27 Skinner St. For more information, visit www.epocharts.org.

Resident Earns Top Scholarship at Xavier

Samuel Marsh of East Hampton has earned a 100% tuition scholarship to attend Xavier High School in Middletown, as the top scorer on the school’s entrance exam.

Marsh received the Brother Robert, C.F.X., Honors Scholarship, which is named after the school’s first principal.

Marsh, who is home-schooled, is among 16 students who earned scholarships for their scores on the entrance exam.

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.

Dean’s List

Daniel Bendzinski of East Hampton made the fall 2020 Dean’s List at Bob Jones University in Greenville, S.C.

Bendzinski is a junior ministry and leadership major.

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New Eagle Scout... Philip Wentworth received his Eagle Scout Award from East Hampton Troop 8 this month. For his Eagle project, Wentworth created a small outdoor stage for the elementary children at Memorial School East Hampton. Wentworth is a 2020 graduate of East Hampton High School and is currently enrolled in I.E.C. Electrical School, studying to become an electrician.

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Richmond Library News & Notes

The Richmond Memorial Library building, located at 15 School Drive, remains closed, but there are many services still being offered. For more information, call the library at 860-295-6210 or visit richmondlibrary.info.

Library2Go Curbside Pickup: Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Window Browsing: While the library building remains closed to the public, the library is now offering window browsing for adults. Stop by and peek through the windows on the adult side of the building. If you see something you like, call the library during curbside hours and staff will check it out and run it outside for you. If you are visiting during hours when staff is not

available, you can place a hold online.

Book Drop: The book drop is open. Items are quarantined for three days (72 hours) before being checked in. Overdue fines are not accruing at this time.

Curbside Printing: Email a JPEG, DOC, or PDF to richmondprograms@gmail.com and staff will print it for you. Standard printing charges still apply; the first two pages are free, then 25 cents per black and white page and 50 cents per color page. Exact change must be put in a sealed envelope with your name on it and left in the library book drop. Staff will contact you when the item is available for pick-up. Allow up to one full business day.

Parks and Rec Programs

Marlborough Parks and 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. Parks and Rec. advises people not to wait until the last minute to register, as the program may be canceled if minimum registration is not fulfilled by a certain date. Also, all in-person classes are subject to change to virtual programs based on state regulations.

Youth Programs: Fashion Sketching 101: Wednesdays, Jan. 20 and 27, 3:15-4:15 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center, for grades 2-8. All materials included. Fee: \$53/residents, \$57/non-residents.

Tiny Twirlers Dance Class: For ages 2-3 with a caregiver. Saturdays, Jan. 23-April 3, 8:20-8:50 a.m., or Mondays, Jan. 25-April 5, 5:30-6 p.m., at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee: \$130.

Kids Quilting 101: Tuesdays, Feb. 2-23, 3:15-4:30 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center, for grades 4-8. A supply list and homework will be given prior to the first class. Fee: \$63/residents, \$68/non-residents.

Mad Science: Tuesdays, Feb. 2-March 23, 3:20-4:20 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center,

for grades K-6. Fee: \$150/residents, \$155/non-residents.

Artventureswithkids: Thursdays, Feb. 4-March 25, 4:15-5:15 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center, for grades K-4. Fee: \$132/residents, \$138/non-residents.

Kids Private Virtual Sewing: Days, nights and weekends are available. Fee is \$48 for a 90-minute session.

Adult Programs: Private Virtual Sewing: Days, nights and weekends are available. Fee is \$48 for a 90-minute session.

Barre/Pilates: Mondays through Jan. 25, 5:30-6:15 p.m. Class instruction is virtual. Fee is \$15 per week to drop in.

Monday Yoga: Mondays through Jan. 25, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Class instruction is virtual. Fee is \$15 per week to drop in.

Tuesday Yoga: Tuesdays through Jan. 26, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Class instruction is virtual. Fee is \$15 per week to drop in.

Barre/Pilates: Wednesdays through Jan. 27, 6-6:45 p.m. Class instruction is virtual. Fee is \$15 per week to drop in.

Zumba: Thursdays through Feb. 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at Fire Station No. 2, or choose virtual instruction. Fee is \$10 per week to drop in.

Historical Society News

Marlborough Historical Society has announced the following pieces of news:

Architectural Surveys: The society is continuing to conduct architectural surveys of the historic structures throughout the town. For more information, email mhs@marlborough-history.org or write to the society at MHS, P.O. Box 351, Marlborough, CT 06447.

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.marlboroughhistory.org.

Lost in History: The historical society is looking for any photographs of South School. The school was located close to where the exit 15 offramp is now. It was standing in the 1930s but abandoned. People are asked to contact the society if they have any photographs that may depict this school.

Donations and Proceeds: 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. All proceeds from sales of calendars and the *Reflections* book go to support the society.

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.marlconchurch.org, and follows the usual order of Sunday worship.

Weekly participants include church pastor the Rev. Bob Faulhaber, Carolyn Brodgerski, organist Dave Mulligan, and other musicians and participants from the church and community. A Message for the Children by Christian Education/Junior Youth Director Gwen Lawson is given immediately following the worship service.

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.

Mission-giving for January will go to the Marlborough Food Bank. If donating, make

your check payable to MCC, note "first quarter missions," and mail to the church at P.O. Box 57, Marlborough, CT 06447.

The church's 274th annual Financial Meeting will take place Sunday, Jan. 24. Voting on the 2021 budget and financial and statistical reports will be done via email or phone by Jan. 22. To receive a report, contact the church office at office@marlconchurch.org or 860-295-9050.

All students in grades 5-7 are invited to Junior Youth Group. Next meeting is Thursday, Jan. 28, for board and card games and outside play at the church. Facemasks are required. For more information, contact Gwen Lawson at gwendolynn78@yahoo.com.

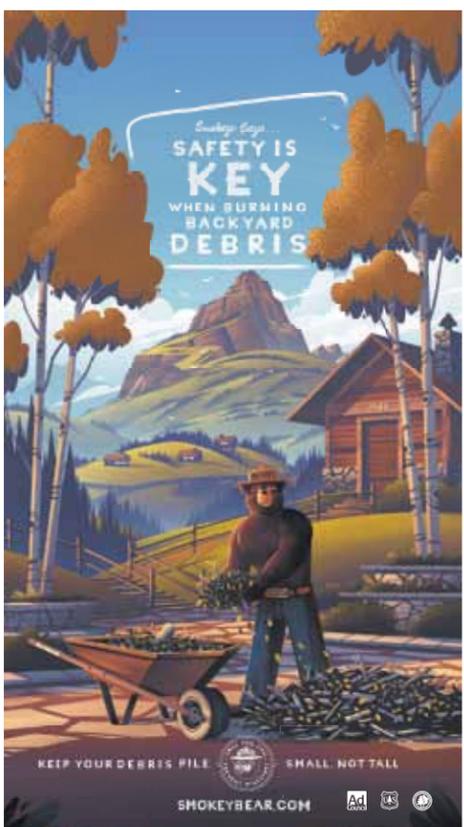
Amazon Smile donates .5% of purchases back to the church when you sign in using smile.amazon.com/ch/06-1038392.

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.

Holiday Closings
The offices of Marlborough Town Hall, Senior Center and Public Works Department will be closed Monday, Jan. 18.

Dean's List
Daniel Michalski of Marlborough made the fall 2020 Dean's List at Castleton University in Castleton, Vt.

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St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Church is located at 30 Jones Hollow Rd. The Rev. Thomas J. Sas is pastor, John McKaig is deacon and the pastoral assistant is Holly Bangham. The church office can be reached at 860-295-0001 or. For more information, visit www.stjfisher.org, or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church) or Twitter (@StJohnFisher_CT).

Weekend Masses: 4 p.m. Saturday and 9:30 a.m. Sunday. Wearing of masks required. A maximum of 44 parishioners is able to attend each Mass; pre-registration required (on the church website via a live link available Thursday mornings). Contact the parish office with questions.

Weekday Mass: Tuesday and Thursday at 8:30 a.m. Appropriate spatial distancing and use of masks are required and disinfectants will be provided.

Online Mass: Each weekend's Mass is also available on the parish website, starting at 4 p.m. Saturdays.

Church Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Face-to-face office visits are limited due to COVID-19 regulations. Call before heading over or connect via the phone.

Youth Faith Formation Programs: There are currently virtual classes and continued outreach; grades 1-8 should contact Faith Formation Coordinator Theresa Brysgel at 860-830-2194 or tbrysgel@stjfisher.org, and Confirmation Grades 9-10 should contact Confirmation Director Jen O'Neill at oneill.jen@comcast.net.

Youth Group and Youth Leadership "Teen

Emmaus": High school students continue virtual meetings and connections. Contact O'Neill or information.

Adult Faith Formation: Contact O'Neill for information on program offerings and virtual opportunities.

RCIA and Adult Confirmation Programs: For more information, contact RCIA Coordinator James Castellani at jcast@stjfisher.org or 860-295-9904.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Sundays, 4-4:45 p.m. Appropriate spatial distancing and use of masks are required and disinfectants will be provided.

Knights of Columbus: All practicing Catholic men are invited to contact Michael Schadtler at 860-295-9701 for information about joining this international charitable and service fraternity.

Community Outreach and Service: Bring food or household donations directly to Marlborough Food Bank Monday and Tuesday mornings; sandwich-making and collection continues on the last Thursday of the month for St. Vincent DePaul in Middletown; and the Community Garden to benefit the Marlborough Food Bank is underway. Other service opportunities are scheduled monthly; see the church website for more details.

Someone in Need: If you or someone you know is in need, whether it be someone to talk to, someone to pray with, or anything else that you think the church could help with, reach out to Sas at 860-295-0067 or McKaig at 860-918-4084. You can also email McKaig at dcn.john@cox.net.



Members of CHEC and teens from the RHAM/AHM Youth Group RALLY recently partnered with Hebron Wine and Spirits to do a Sticker Shock Campaign. From left are AHM Prevention Coordinator Brendan Grimm, RALLY members Ellie Kalisher, Taryn Simon and Marissa Colonna, RHAM High School junior Evan Dapsis, and CHEC member Jessica Dapsis.

Sticker Shock Campaign

Members of AHM Youth and Family Services' Coalition for a Healthy Empowered Community (CHEC) and teens from the RHAM/AHM Youth Group RALLY recently partnered with Hebron Wine and Spirits to do a Sticker Shock Campaign.

The campaign is meant to remind customers during the holiday season that providing alcohol to minors is a crime. Hebron Wine and Spirits Manager Chantelle stated "This is just a way for us to give back to the community in a simple way...and it can keep kids safe."

According to AHM, much of the alcohol used by teens is obtained through older, legally-aged friends. Teens and CHEC members spent a couple hours putting stickers on almost all alcohol products in the store, particularly the products which are more likely to be consumed by underage drinkers. These could include drinks

such as: fruity liquors, hard iced teas, beer, alcoholic ice pops, and others. Five youth participated, with two CHEC members.

AHM Prevention Coordinator Brendan Grimm said, "It is important to continually send the message to parents that underage drinking is a risky behavior, so decreasing access to alcohol for teens is a huge step in seeing a decrease in use."

This campaign coincides with a related campaign, called the Social Host Campaign, for which signs are up outside at RHAM, at the intersection of routes 85 and 66, and on the green in Marlborough. This campaign informs parents that allowing an underage drinking party is illegal, and can have serious legal consequences, among others.

For more information on CHEC, call Grimm at AHM at 860-228-9488.

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State Reps. Irene Haines and Robin Green (in the photo at left) and Christie Carpino (in the photo at right) were all sworn in last week to their new legislative terms.

Local Legislators Take Office

Gathered outside under a partly-cloudy sky near the north steps of the State Capitol building, across from Hartford's Bushnell Park, state Reps Christie Carpino (R-32), Robin Green (R-55) and Irene Haines (R-34) joined their colleagues last week and took the oath of office to serve Connecticut for the 2021-22 legislative session.

Carpino represents Portland and Cromwell in the state House of Representatives; Green represents Andover, Hebron, Marlborough and Bolton; and Haines represents East Haddam and most of East Hampton.

"This Opening Day was unlike any other and although our methods of communicating may be different, the people's business must continue," Carpino said. "We need to focus on helping the people of Connecticut recover and move forward. I am humbled that the people of Cromwell and Portland have given me the opportunity to serve as their voice at the Capitol, and look forward to the hard work ahead of us."

First elected in 2016, Green was recently appointed by House Republican Leader Vincent Candelora (R-86) to serve as Ranking Member of the Public Safety and Security Committee,

which oversees all matters relating to the state police, fire marshals, and emergency services.

"Our emergency services personnel and volunteers have been heroes in providing critical services to Connecticut residents during the pandemic, major weather events, and the 9-1-1 calls they receive daily," Green said. "I'm in awe at their resilience serving in these troubled times, and I want to make sure they have a seat at the table for the 2021 legislative session."

"It's an honor to serve the people of East Haddam, East Hampton and Colchester for another two years," Haines said. "There are many challenges ahead of us as we navigate the pandemic and recovery. The people of Connecticut are counting on us to work together and find solutions." Haines, first elected in 2018 will serve as House Republican Ranking Member on the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

The outdoor ceremony was deemed necessary due to ongoing concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the ability for members and staff to socially distance in the House Chamber. Following the swearing-in, legislators moved inside to their individual legislative of-

ices to participate in online meetings and votes regarding the formal rules of the session and to handle other duties. As a member of caucus leadership, Carpino was allowed to participate in the Chamber with other select legislators.

This session, when the General Assembly meets it will be, by most appearances, in a virtual setting. This means that committee hearings, floor votes, town halls, and office hours will be mostly conducted through Zoom, with lawmakers observing social distancing.

Last week's ceremony kicked off the start of the legislature's regular session, which started Jan. 6 and runs through June 9. The "long session" is used to establish a state budget and introduce bills of a general nature.



Radon Test Kits Available

January is Radon Awareness Month, and the Chatham Health District has acquired a limited number of radon test kits from the Connecticut State Health Department. Kits are available to the public while supplies last.

One test kit is available per residence for those living within the district, which covers Colchester, East Hampton, East Haddam, Hebron, Marlborough and Portland. Once the test is complete, you will need to mail the kit in for analysis, at no charge to you. The results will be sent to you and will not be public information.

People are asked to only take a test kit if they are committed to following the directions and mailing it out. If interested in a test kit, call 860-365-0884.

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Obituaries

East Hampton

Sven Göran Ramklint

Sven Göran Ramklint, beloved husband of Newell Taft Friedman, died of complications from COVID-19 on Wednesday, Dec. 30. The owner of All About Blinds on Main St. in East Hampton, Sven was 83 and had just celebrated 50 years in the interior design business.



Born June 23, 1937, in Lund, Sweden, where family and friends knew him as "Göran," he was the youngest child of Valter and Elna Ramklint. His father was a pastry chef and Sven developed a taste for customer service (and sweets) at Ramklint's, the family's esteemed pastry shop. After earning an engineering degree and working in advertising, Sven's taste for the American lifestyle drew him to Chicago in 1963. He landed on July 4 and was welcomed to the city by one of his contacts as a "Viking adventurer." True to this label, in 1966 Sven spent three months navigating an International Harvester Scout off-road vehicle from Chicago to South America and back with his first wife Ulla-Britta, a Swedish journalist. He began a graduate business degree but switched to art school to study interior design. By 1968 Sven had worked his way into a VP position for a company operating a window treatment business. He purchased part of that business in 1970 and opened additional stores around Chicago, as well as in San Francisco, Calif., and Phoenix, Ariz.

Sven was in one of his shops when Newell and her two boys walked in. She was hired as a store manager, and as Sven said, "the rest is history." Sven married Newell in a ceremony at the Chapel of Love in Las Vegas, Nev., in 1986. His stepsons and in-laws toasted the couple as they departed in a pink limousine.

Sven and Newell went into business together, opening a shop called Design for Living in Evanston, Ill., and establishing The Water's Edge, their beloved bed & breakfast on the shores of Lake Como, Wisc. Sven's talent for carpentry and the couple's flair for interior design transformed the property into a beautiful refuge. During prohibition, the historic inn was a haven for bootlegging and gambling. Sven never tired of regaling guests with tales of the notorious Chicago gangsters of the 1920s. The Water's Edge was a magnet for extended family who appreciated their good-natured hospitality during family reunions. "Sven's ready smile and the twinkle in his eyes radiated his warmth, humor, curiosity and attentiveness," reflects his niece Laura.

In 2001, after the arrival of their first grandchild, Sophia, on the East Coast. Sven and Newell sold the inn and moved east to Connecticut, where Newell grew up. They put down new roots in East Hampton and opened their business, All About Blinds, where together they focused on selling and installing customized window treatments. Sven enjoyed attending Long Wharf Theater with Newell and made frequent trips to New York City to delight in watching Sophia perform on horseback, on stage, on athletic fields, or in the living room. He enjoyed a good historical book, a cup of black coffee, classical music, opera, and was always ready to pick up a power tool to make an adjustment. Sven's stepson Andrew notes "he loved anything with a motor in it, especially if it had wheels or could fly, or both."

His nephew, Jim, describes Sven as "unfailingly nice, engaging, strong and gentle at the same time, and a devoted companion to Aunt

Newell." Sven's devotion to Newell was unparalleled even as her health flagged and she entered long-term care at Chestelm. Sven took great pleasure in holding his wife's hand as they shared her favorite movies and showtunes. In recent years, Sven poured his energy and time into his business. After shutting down for the pandemic, he re-opened in June and, with the help of his good friend Jean Maheu, built back the business. By December, he told a local reporter that he had just completed the best third quarter he'd ever had and saw no reason to slow down.

Sven is survived by his wife Newell, his brother Lars Ramklint and his sister Ulla Raaschou. He will be greatly missed by all who loved him: in the U.S. his stepson Daniel Friedman (his wife Gail); his granddaughter Sophia Friedman (her mother Donna); his stepson Andrew Friedman (his partner Claudia and stepdaughter Elisa); his sister- and brother-in-law Marianne and Donald Marcus, nieces Laura and Sue, nephew Jim, and their children; and in Sweden his sister-in-law Goldy Ramklint; nieces Mia, Ola, Charlotta, and nephews Henrik, Anders, Petter, and their children.

Due to the pandemic, a memorial will be held at a future date. The family would appreciate hearing remembrances at www.spencerfuneral-homeinc.com/listings

In lieu of flowers, you may make a donation in Sven Ramklint's honor to the East Hampton Public Library, 105 Main St., East Hampton, CT 06424

Amston

Nicole Katherine Whidtfeldt

Nicole Katherine Whidtfeldt, 21, of Amston, passed away unexpectedly Tuesday, Dec. 29. Born Friday, March 5, 1999, in Hartford, Nicole is the daughter of Deborah Brede of Amston.

Nicole was a 2017 graduate from RHAM High School, of Hebron, and also a 2017 graduate from The Greater Hartford Academy of the Fine Arts, of Hartford. Nicole attended Manchester Community College.

Nicole was an avid artist who had a love for poetry and music. Nicole was loving, warm, compassionate, and the most generous soul, who had much love for her family and close friends. Her infectious smile, her sense of humor, and her sassy personality will deeply be missed by all who had the pleasure of having Nicole in their lives. Nicole will be remembered, loved, and cherished forever.

Nicole leaves behind her mother and stepfather, Conrad and Deborah Brede of Amston; her twin sisters, Madison and Leah Brede of Amston; her maternal grandmother, Patricia "Nana" Schulte of Colchester; her cousin, Thomas Herzog of California; her father, Troy Whidtfeldt of Enfield; her brother, Wyatt Spinney of Massachusetts; her paternal grandmother, Rebecca Shaw of Enfield; and many other extended family and friends.

Nicole was predeceased by her maternal grandfather, Francis "Papa" Schulte Jr., and her paternal grandfather, George Whidtfeldt Jr.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorial donations be made in Nicole's name to AHM Youth and Family Services, 25 Pendleton Drive, Hebron, CT 06248. <https://ahmyouth.org>

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, please visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Hebron

Judith Squires Roushon

Judith Squires Roushon, 82, a resident of Hebron, died Monday, Dec. 28. On that date, the sands of time ran out on a very caring, wonderful and beautiful person.

Judy was born May 4, 1938, in New Britain, to Esther Mary (Wind) Squires and Milton Squires. She grew up in New Britain and attended New Britain High School. She spent a year at the Yale School of Nursing before transferring to the University of Connecticut where she met the love of her life, Louis H. Roushon Jr. They married and had two very beloved children, Lori Ann Roushon, who lives in Lakewood, Colo., and works for AT&T in Denver, Colo., and Thomas Edward Roushon, who tragically died at age 21.

Judy dropped out of college to raise their two children while her husband Lou worked full-time and went to law school nights. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Judy returned to UConn, completed her B.A. degree with a major in sociology, and then went on to obtain a master's degree in sociology in 1984. She was the first person in her family to go to college.

After college, Judy interned at Catholic Family Services in New Britain. She eventually earned her position as a licensed clinical social worker. She then went to work for Hartford Hospital as a psychotherapist in its outpatient clinic. When Hartford Hospital and the Institute Of Living merged, Judy moved with her unit to the outpatient unit of the Institute Of Living. Additionally, Judy had a private therapy practice on Prospect Street in Harford. Judy loved doing therapy. When asked what other work she would like to do, she said that therapy was the only work she wanted to do. But Judy's most intense love was for her family and for her many, many friends whom she made wherever she went.

Judy, Lou and their children lived on Ridge Road in Wethersfield for 37 happy years. Judy became a devoted and skilled gardener there. But in addition to gardening, Judy was a voracious reader of great literature and contemporary novels, *The New York Times*, *Harper's*, *Atlantic*, *The New Yorker*, *National Geographic*, etc. She also loved classical music, events at the Bushnell, The Hartford Symphony, plays at the Hartford Stage, and musicals at the Goodspeed Opera House. The family loved vacationing on the Cape.

Unfortunately, Lou died in 1997. In 1999, Judy married Bruce Kalom of Hebron, who had worked with her husband Lou in the late 1960s at the Aetna Life and Casualty Company before they both left there and went back into private practice. They maintained a friendship over the ensuing 30 years. Judy and Bruce have enjoyed 21 wonderful years together, in the Hopevale section of Hebron, a paradise if ever there was one.

Judy was predeceased by her parents; her stepfather, John Masonis; her stepfather, Anthony Masonis; her son, Tom; and her sister, Denise Masonis Bennett.

Judy is survived by her beloved daughter, Lori; her beloved brother, Brian Masonis of New Britain; her second soulmate, husband, Bruce Kalom; her sister Denise's son, Randy Masonis and Denise's daughter, Sandy; her beloved stepdaughters, Rebecca Cronin of South Windham; Lia Kalom and her husband Daniel Ling of Wilmington, N.C.; Jessica Mairs and her husband Robb Mairs of Wilmington, N.C.; her stepson, Bennett Ayres of Virginia Beach, Va.; and her granddaughters and grandsons, Alexandra Cronin, Rhian Cronin, Annika Ling, Per Ling, Ian Mairs, Emily Mc Comas, Mia Ayres, Colin Ayres; great-grandchildren; and many wonderful friends.

Funeral arrangements have been made through Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester. Online condolences may be made through their service. Burial and a memorial service for family and friends will be made at an unknown later date when COVID-19 is under control.

In lieu of flowers, if you wish, donations may be made to Hebron Interfaith Human Services food bank at 20 Pendleton Drive, Hebron, CT 06248 or the Hebron Lions' Charities, Inc. at P.O. Box 52, Hebron, CT 06248.

Very special thanks go to the incredible and incomparable Ama Dankwaa Appiah, CNA, Elder Care Associates and Consultants of Manchester, CT, Marlborough Health and Rehabilitation Center and Constellation Hospice of Norwalk, CT.



Portland

David Ian Gidman

David Ian Gidman, 51, of Portland, passed away Friday, Jan. 8. David was born in Manchester April 4, 1969, to Johnnie Mooney (Roger) and Timothy Gidman (Sandra), and graduated from Cromwell High School.

David had a kind heart, an infectious smile and a wry sense of humor. He loved the outdoors, especially fishing, a love instilled in him by his father and his grampy. He also loved cooking, books, playing his guitar, music – especially the blues, and all things related to bicycling. David was an excellent bike mechanic and had been employed by a number of bike shops in Connecticut and New Hampshire. He also loved mountain biking and had the scars to prove it!

David was predeceased by his grandparents John and Ann Orłowski of Vernon and Justin and Marguerite Gidman of Manchester. He will be forever loved and missed by his parents and stepparents; his son Lucas of South Berwick, Maine; his brother Benjamin Gidman of Broad Brook; his sister Kristen Gidman May (Ryan) of Bremerton, Wash.; his stepbrothers Christopher Gidman and Timothy Justin Gidman, both of Castle Rock, Colo.; Hilary Schumacher of South Berwick, Maine; and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins. David will also be missed by his special friend Lisa Randazzo with whom he shared a home.

David's family would like to give a special thanks to Lisa, who loved David and cared for him during his illness.

A private memorial service will be held at a later date to be determined.

Donations in David's memory may be made to the Friends of the Portland Library, 20 Free-stone Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

Colchester

Howard C. London

Howard C. London, 61, of Colchester, passed away suddenly Thursday, Dec. 17. Born April 4, 1959, in Baltimore, Md., he was the youngest son of the late Hyman and Sadie (Safronsky) London.

Howard married his beloved wife Tracy Wallace in 1982; the couple moved around quite a bit before eventually making their home in Colchester, where they raised their family. A man of great faith, Howard was raised in an Orthodox Jewish home before converting and becoming a faithful communicant of St. Andrew Church, where he cherished being a part of this loving community, including ACTS and Knights of Columbus.

Howard was an avid sports fan, following the Red Sox, Patriots, and any team his kids played for. He coached many youth baseball and basketball teams in Colchester over the years, touching the lives of countless kids. Howard traveled the world with his work, building an illustrious resume in the pet industry for nearly 40 years. He persevered through many health issues throughout the years but always kept a fantastic sense of humor and a positive outlook, making light of even the most difficult situations.

Howard will be sadly missed but remembered with eternal love by his wife of 38 years, Tracy; two sons, Andrew London of Los Angeles, Calif., and Connor London of Colchester; a daughter, Teresa London of New Britain; two brothers, Mark London of Florida and Darryl London of Baltimore, Md.; his loving Wallace family and many friends all over the world; his loyal four-legged companion, Brownie.

A funeral Mass was held Monday, Dec. 21, at St. Andrew Church in Colchester. Burial followed at New St. Andrew Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the National Kidney Foundation or St. Andrew Church.

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

See Obits, page 25



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Obituaries continued

Portland

Andrew E. Sebula

On Saturday, Jan. 9, Andrew E. Sebula of Portland passed from this world to a better place.

Andy was born in Vernon April 8, 1945, to Andrew Sebula and Margaret (Rowe) Sebula. He attended Rockville High School and graduated from the University of Connecticut with his Bachelor's Degree in Pharmacy. Upon graduation, he became employed by Middlesex Hospital, where he worked for over 40 years. He mentored many younger pharmacists who grew their careers at Middlesex. He was a beloved member of the medical staff always sharing stories or words of wisdom. Andy was also known for his unique sense of style whether it was his bow ties or bright red corduroy pants.

Andy was a lover of nature, taking several spiritual vision quests in the Southwest. Because of his spirituality, upon his retirement he became an ordained interfaith minister through One Spirit Learning Alliance in New York City. Other places of significant spiritual meaning were Rowe Camp & Conference Center in Rowe, Mass., and the Unitarian Universalists Society: East, where he was a member of the Small Ministry and Dream groups.

Andy is survived by his beloved wife, Christina (Tina) Veronesi; daughters, Kathleen Poulin and Stephanie Poulin; and his cherished grandsons, Connor McAllister and Adrien Gorny. He is also survived by his sister, Linda Clark, her husband Roger and their children Jared and Elizabeth; his sister, Donna Nezmek, her husband Tom and their daughter Sarah. Andy is remembered by his special family member, Matthew Gorny. He will be dearly missed by Roscoe and Mama Cat.

The family plans on a private burial on April 8, his birthday and wedding anniversary. A celebration of life will be held in the summer months.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests contributions go to Rowe Camp and Conference Center.

Bubba will always be remembered as a man whose words of wisdom, selflessness and sense of humor brought light to all who knew and loved him.

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

Colchester

Richard Albert Arsenault

Richard Albert Arsenault, 78, of Colchester, passed away Wednesday, Jan. 6, at Apple Rehab. Born Nov. 20, 1942 in Bath, Maine, he was the son of the late Joseph and Louise (Gallagher) Arsenault.



He graduated in the Class of 1961 from Morse High School in Bath, where he was active in multiple sports, including baseball, cross country and the rifle team. Richard worked at the Bath Iron Works briefly before he and his first wife, Marilyn, moved to the Portland area. He attended Gorham State College, earning his bachelor's degree, after which they moved to Colchester where Richard taught industrial arts at Bacon Academy from 1969 to the late 1970s. While teaching at Bacon Academy, he continued his education and earned his master's degree from Central Connecticut State University in 1974. His later careers included employment at Pratt & Whitney and then Home Depot, from which he retired in 2004.

For several years he volunteered as Scoutmaster for Troop 13 and was a member of Quaker Hill Rod & Gun Club. Over the years, Richard earned several distinguished marksmanship awards in his favorite hobby of target shooting, achieving a perfect score of 100 on a few occasions.

Richard's knowledge of construction and his unlimited creativity enabled him to design and construct his lovely log cabin in 1989, along with various other woodworking projects. He thoroughly enjoyed his retirement in his log cabin in the woods. He and his second wife, Rachel, spent time traveling and relaxing for the remainder of his healthy years.

He will be fondly remembered for always bringing light and humor to everyone he met, friends and strangers alike. With childlike spirit and a heart of gold, he spread cheer as though it was his mission. His family will always remember him as a loving, caring person who immensely enjoyed having fun with his grandchildren. They particularly enjoyed his juggling

skills and endearing jokes.

Richard will be deeply missed by all of his family, including his children, Richard J. Arsenault of Colchester, Michele Valley of East Hampton, and his beloved grandchildren Nalae Valley, Griffin Valley and Alexandra Valley-Woodhall, all of whom brought him great joy. He is also survived by his first wife Marilyn St. Onge, mother of his children; his second wife, Rachel Taylor, and her children Stacy Lea and Keri Lea. In addition, he leaves his nephews, Richard Arsenault, Robert Arsenault and Timothy Arsenault along with their respective families, and his sister-in-law Patricia Arsenault.

He was predeceased by his brother Robert Arsenault and his stepson Michael Lea.

Our family would like to express our gratitude to the wonderful staff at The Atrium at Rocky Hill and Apple Rehab of Colchester. As he progressed through the stages of dementia, they provided loving care and support during his last few difficult years.

A memorial service will be held at a later date when COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to a food bank of the donor's choice.

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

Cobalt

Jeanne Hammick

Jeanne Mary Ann Maskaitis Hammick, 92, of Cobalt, formerly of East Hartford, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 16. Jeanne was the daughter of the late Wanda and Zigmund Maskaitis.



Jeanne was born in Bristol May 16, 1928. She graduated from Lewis High School in Southington in 1946 and then went on to earn her bachelor's degree in nursing. She began her career at Bristol Hospital but spent most of her time working at Hartford Hospital. Nursing was her passion and she enjoyed sharing her experiences as a nurse with anyone she spoke with.

Jeanne resided in East Hartford with her husband and daughter for much of her life. Jeanne loved cooking her favorite Polish dishes and sharing them with family. She was skilled at knitting, crocheting and sewing, and she won several blue ribbons for cake decorating.

Along with her parents, she was predeceased by her husband, Robert Hammick.

Jeanne is survived by her daughter, Amanda Urbanski of Windsor, to whom she totally dedicated her love and life to. Amanda and Jean have an unbreakable bond what will live on forever. Amanda knows that God has a new Christmas angel in heaven.

In addition, Jeanne is survived by many nieces, nephews and cousins. She shared a special bond with Judy and Harold Thompson of Colchester and their family. She, along with Amanda, enjoyed many holidays and trips with them since moving to Cobalt. Her presence will be greatly missed.

Jeanne will always be remembered for her bright, beautiful smile and her love of laughter. We thank God for giving us Jeanne and for the difference she made in our lives.

We want to sincerely thank her conservator of many years, Brian F. Cunningham, Esq., who always had her best interests at heart. We will be forever grateful to the administrators and staff of Cobalt Health Care & Rehabilitation for the excellent care and love they gave to Jeanne.

Graveside services were held Tuesday, Dec. 22, at St. Mary's Cemetery, 930 Burnside Ave., East Hartford. (Grave 4, Lot DD2, Section R2).

Brooklawn Funeral Home, Rocky Hill, was in charge of arrangements.

Condolences can be addressed to: Amanda Urbanski, 40 Andrew Lane, Windsor, CT 06095.

Portland

Drusilla V. Harder

Drusilla (Dru) [Voight] Harder, 85, died peacefully at Portland Care and Rehab Thursday, Dec. 3, where she was recuperating from a recent surgery.

Dru was born in New Haven, daughter of the late Howard and Laura (Gilroy) Voight, and grew up in Milford, where she attended local schools. She graduated from Columbia University and obtained a master's degree from SCSU where she also did additional graduate work to qualify for her school psychology license. She was employed by the Connecticut Juvenile Court and the Meriden Board of Education.

Dru was predeceased by her husband, Larry, to whom she was married for 54 years. They shared their home in Portland with numerous rescued pets. They were among the original founders of Protectors of Animals/POA and maintained support for humane and environmental causes throughout their lifetimes. They fostered and

re-homed many dogs during their marriage and adopted 11 dogs as well as two cats.

Subsequent to retirement, Dru and her husband traveled extensively throughout Europe, Canada, and the U.S. – Dru always being sure to take language classes of the countries they'd be visiting. They were also patrons and supporters of the performing arts. Dru loved opera and attended plays both locally and in New York City. Gardening was another passion of Dru's; gladiolas, dahlias, and daisies were carefully cultivated from year to year often making the trek from field to basement and back again. During her retirement, Dru entertained her family and friends with cheerfulness, humor, and conversation about current events, culture, and animals.

She leaves behind her sister-in-law, Sandra Bertaccini and niece, Sophia Voight.

All services were private. Those wishing to memorialize her may contribute to Protectors of Animals: 144 Main Street, East Hartford, CT 06118, or similar animal rescue.

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Andover • Andover

Trump Signs Agent Orange Act Pushed by Resident

by Sloan Brewster

An amended version of the Agent Orange Fairness Act has been signed by President Donald Trump.

Andover resident Gerry Wright, a Vietnam War veteran who has been working for several years to get the bill passed, said it was consolidated into H.R. 7105, a bigger bill, which passed the House and Senate unanimously around Christmastime.

The president signed it on Jan. 6 at about 4 p.m., Wright said.

In July 2019, Rep. Joe Courtney, whose district includes Andover, introduced the Agent Orange Exposure Fairness Act to Congress. In its original form, the bill aimed to remove a one-year manifestation period required for Vietnam veterans to receive treatment for certain ailments associated with Agent Orange, an herbicide or defoliant that contains the contaminant Dioxin and was sprayed over Vietnam by the U.S. military.

In August of 2019, Sen. Richard Blumenthal introduced the bill to the senate.

In the end, however, it did not get enough support and did not pass, so when the new Congress was sworn in in January 2020, Courtney and Blumenthal reintroduced it, Wright said.

That year, the bill still did not get the support it required, a subject of intense frustration for Wright.

"They want scientific evidence," he said.

He said he had sent "literally dozens" of documents with scientific evidence to Blumenthal's office and to many other senators.

In the end, supporters of the bill made a concession to splice a portion of it into H.R. 7105, which, Wright said had been floating around for a year and lawmakers were waiting for things to add to it.

In its latest incarnation, the Agent Orange Fairness Act will be sent to the Government Accountability Office, which will review it and determine how much it will cost based on the expected numbers of claims for care and benefits. The accountability office will then pass it on to Veterans Affairs with its recommendation.

Veterans Affairs will then respond yes or no to the bill and send it back to determine if the manifestation period should be repealed.

The bill also adds three additional illnesses – bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinsonism – to the Blue Water Navy Bill, which passed last January.

The Blue Water bill extends treatment to U.S. Navy veterans with Dioxin-connected ailments previously denied care because they were not on the ground in Vietnam, Courtney has said. Agent Orange was transported on U.S. Navy ships and Navy veterans were exposed and have resulting health issues, including heart, respiratory and skin conditions.

"While this is not the exact bill we wanted passed, there is a great opportunity with this report to analyze the claims challenges and provide recommendations on our Agent Orange claims," Wright wrote in an email to fellow Vietnam veterans and supporters of the bill.

Had the concessions not been made, the bill would've died on the Senate floor, Wright said in a phone call Tuesday.

"So it was a concession to do it this way," he said.

Wright said Courtney's office in DC is planning to reintroduce the entire bill again this year.

Many Vietnam veterans, including Wright, ended up with health issues and diseases connected to Agent Orange. In order to receive treatment or to be put on partial disability for three ailments, which include skin problems causing lesions, rashes or blistering and nerve disorders, the Veterans Health Administration requires that veterans registered their exposure within one year of separation from the war, Wright said.

Wright, who sprayed the contaminant, did not register his exposure within a year, and said he did not learn he was required to do so until eight years after his tours ended.

Wright's endeavor is to remove those end dates.

Agent Orange Monument

Wright said he is still accepting donations for an Agent Orange monument to be installed at Veterans Monument Park in Andover in the spring. The monument, along with the benches and base, are at Nolan's Hamden Monument Company, awaiting sketch artist Candace LaFlauer's addition of an etched scene on the back.

Wright said he thinks she will be doing that next week.

"It's so detailed I don't know how she's going to do this," he said.

Wright is keeping mum on what the scene will depict and said it will be revealed when the monument is installed.

He said he expects a large crowd at the event, assuming such a thing will be allowed in the coming months. He has scheduled speakers and musicians, who will entertain with music from the Vietnam era.

"It's starting to all come together," Wright said.

Since additions have been made to the monument since its inception last year, the goal for donations has increased to \$30,000.

Contributions can be sent to American Legion Post 95, AO Monument, P.O. Box 95, Hebron, CT 06248, Attention: Gerry Wright.

Voters Accept Land Gifts

by Sloan Brewster

Residents – in a drive-thru vote – agreed to accept some land that has been offered to the town.

Last Saturday, residents participated in a hybrid town meeting, in which the discussion of land parcels that were being offered as gifts was held virtually and the vote to accept or reject the offers was done in a drive-thru format.

Of the 64 voters the 'yes' votes overwhelmingly took the win, with 62 in favor of accepting the land while two opposed, Town Administrator Eric Anderson said.

The gifts include a few parcels.

Two parcels – totaling 8.54 acres – are off Boston Hill and Shoddy Mill roads and belong to the Northern Connecticut Land Trust. The other is owned by Thomas Talbot and consists of 7.84 acres.

At a Monday's Board of Selectmen meeting, resident Cathy Palazzi said the town did an excellent job running the innovative voting event.

"It went smoothly," she said. "I would love to see more meetings held this way."

The parcels tie in with other land owned by the town.

They are either contiguous with each other or with 21.36 acres of existing town owned property that contains some wetlands, according to Anderson, who also said the properties don't have any real value as they are landlocked and not developable.

"It's just basically open space, a lot of wetlands," he said. "It contains a bunch of wetlands that the town is interested in preserving."

According to Conservation Commission Chairman Mike Palazzi, the Talbot property, which is a little bit further away from the town-owned land, "crosses some nice streams" and is "a beautiful piece of property."

Both landowners are donating the properties to the town and Talbot said he would pay any transfer fees associated with the donation, Palazzi said.

The town will still have to pay for title searches, which selectman Adrian Mandeville said generally cost approximately \$125 per

property.

Longtime Town Employee Mourned

At Monday's meeting, Anderson took a moment to remember longtime Public Works Foreman Edwin Kasacek, who had died a few days earlier, just five weeks after his retirement in November.

According to his obituary, Kasacek, a resident of Lebanon, passed after a brief illness on Jan. 7 at age 66. His death was not related to COVID-19.

Kasacek worked for the town for 33 years, the last 13 of which as public works foreman, Anderson said.

"He was a very hardworking, very loyal, generous guy," he said.

In a post on the town's Facebook page, Kasacek is remembered as an avid hunter and fisherman.

"We are thankful for his years of volunteerism in town as well," the post reads. "He left behind a lot of friends in this town and will be missed."

Merritt Valley Parcel

Board members also discussed a 34-acre parcel on Merritt Valley Road that sits behind Andover Elementary School, abuts existing town owned land and borders the Hop River Rail Trail.

Monday, Selectman Scott Person said a potential buyer had dug test pits on the property.

The board stated disappointment in missing the opportunity to purchase the land, which selectmen said would have been a great spot for senior housing.

In September, Anderson said the town was "a little bit interested" in the property, which is known as the Klock property, but he said the \$139,000 asking price was more than the town was willing to pay.

The town approached the sellers and asked if they would donate any of the land but they declined, Person told the board.

Without a donation, the town had put the idea on hold, Anderson said in September.

At this week's meeting, Person said while

other had officials thought it was only worth about \$100,000, he did not concur.

"How much more of an ideal piece of property can you get than that?" he said.

Some board members said they could not recall the property having come before them.

Mandeville said he was "baffled by this"

"I wish I would have known about this back in February or March," selectman Jeff Murray said.

Murray said he had never heard anything

First Congregational Church News

The First Congregational Church, UCC, of Andover, 359 Route 6, invites all ages to worship Sundays at 10 a.m. Enter through the Narthex. Masks and social distancing are required. If you don't have a mask, a mask will be given to you. Sunday School for children is provided.

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.

The church has a weekly Bible Study on Tuesdays at 11 a.m. both via Zoom and in person at the church (observing CDC guide-

lines 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 Jan. 20.

Bingo and Baskets: Friday, Jan. 15, beginning at 5:30 p.m. There is a limited space of 25. RSVP early by calling 860-742-7696. Admission is \$10, and includes dinner, soup, roll, drink and dessert.

Library Scales Back Access

Due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases, Andover Public Library has scaled back library building access.

Operating hours remain the same (Monday and Wednesday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Tuesday and Thursday, noon-7 p.m.; and Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.), but patrons who want to come inside the library to browse, check out materials or use the internet should call 860-742-7428 when they arrive at the library. Building access is currently limited to one patron/family at a time.

Curbside service remains available.

For more information, visit the library at www.andoverconnecticut.org/library or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/AndoverPublicLibrary.CT.

Holiday Closing

Andover Public Library will be closed Monday, Jan. 18, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

The library will reopen Tuesday, Jan. 19, at noon, for one person/family at a time. Curbside service will also resume that day. The library is located at 355 Route 6.

For more information, call the library at 860-742-7428.

Dean's List

Andover resident Maggie Veronesi made the fall 2020 Dean's List at the University of New England.

Dean's List

Liam O'Brien of Andover made the fall 2020 Dean's List at Curry College in Milton, Mass.

Dean's List

Andover resident Michael Jacewicz made the fall 2020 Dean's List at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Jacewicz is majoring in health sciences, with a concentration in public health.

Dean's List

Olivia K. McCavanagh of Andover, a student in the Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences at the University of New Haven, made the university's fall 2020 Dean's List.

McCavanagh is working on a Bachelor of Science degree in forensic science.

Andover Preschool Screening

The Andover Board of Education, through the Andover Elementary School Early Learning Center, will hold a screening Friday, March 5, for children that reside in Andover and are 3 or 4 years old.

The screening will be held differently this school year due to the ongoing pandemic. School staff will send home an age-appropriate questionnaire for parents to fill out about their children. The questions are in the areas of speech, language, cognitive, and motor development. Parents will then receive information which will assist in fostering their child's growth, if needed.

If interested in having your child screened, contact the director of special education at 860-742-7339 or at maioranoh@andoverelementaryct.org to request an ASQ-3 questionnaire.

There will be another screening Friday, May 14.

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*Hartford Magazine • Connecticut Magazine

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General Dentistry;
ADA, CSDA, HDS, ITI,
DDS – Georgetown UDS

Andover • And



Gingerbread House Winners... Andover Public Library has announced the winners of its first-ever Gingerbread House Decorating Contest. The contest began Dec. 7, with participants sending in photos of their completed projects. Eleven families took part and two winners were chosen. The popular vote winner was House #8, decorated by Lily and Madilyn McDonald (shown at right). The Library Board also voted separately, and its choice was House #4, decorated by Anne and Catherine Crème (shown at left). Each winning team received a \$25 gift card from Barnes & Noble in Storrs Center and a \$15 gift certificate from Andover Pizza.

★ *Condemn cont. from page 1*

Procedurally, Tierney said, a selectman should ask his or her fellow selectmen if they want to entertain a topic that is not on the agenda – and that Collins should not have gone directly to making a motion and asking for a vote.

“It put the other board members on the spot,” Tierney said. “If somebody wants to bring something up, the whole board gets to decide.”

Tierney also said Collins’ assertion that the motion had carried because everyone abstained was incorrect and that, per the Town Charter, a motion only carries with a majority of ‘yes’ votes.

He also stated that Larson should not have changed his vote after the fact like he did.

“I think we all agreed what happened was tragic,” Tierney said. “The board just didn’t feel that that was their place.”

.....

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Senior Citizen News & Notes

The following news items have been announced for Andover seniors.

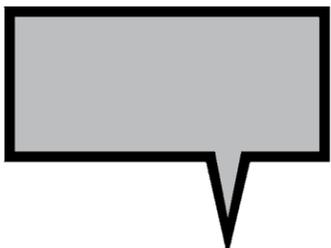
Medicals: If you have appointments and would like senior transportation to take you, call senior coordinator Cathy Palazzi at 860-916-6122 to reserve a ride. All seniors welcome and any ADA individual or veterans who need rides are welcome. Masks must be worn in the van and if you have a caregiver that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

fore 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.



Reach out to a friend about their mental health.

Find more ways to help at SeizeTheAwkward.org



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LEGALS

LEGAL NOTICE

Global 17 LLC
244 Middletown Ave.
East Hampton, CT
860.267.6639

Will sell or otherwise dispose of such personal property on Saturday 1/23/21 at 8:00 AM
 Property previously owned by:
 C Nosal

2TB 1/15, 1/22

LEGAL NOTICE

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON

Notice is hereby given that the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency will hold a meeting at 6:30 p.m. on January 27, 2021 to consider the following:

- IW-20-036: Connecticut Contractors Group, LLC., Daniel Street, Subdivision. Map 13/Block 51/Lot 1

Jeffrey M. Foran, Chairman

2TB 1/15, 1/22

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Legal Notice

Notice hereby given that on Sunday, January 31, 2021 at 10am, GoldiLocks Self Storage 359 Lebanon Avenue, Colchester CT 06415 (860 537 9700) will sell by public auction or otherwise dispose of the personal property stored by:
 Unit 159 Hub Ford
 Unit 436 A.J.Faraci

2TB 1/15, 1/22



NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING CHATHAM HEALTH DISTRICT Towns of Colchester, East Haddam, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough and Portland

The Chatham Health District Board of Health will hold a Special Meeting/Public Hearing on January 26, 2021 at 2 p.m. via Zoom, Meeting ID: 880 9285 4870, Passcode: 706599. The purpose of this Special Meeting is for the consideration of adopting the Proposed Chatham Health District 2021-2022 Budget.

At this hearing, interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be received.

The Proposed Chatham Health District 2021-2022 Budget is available for public review at <http://www.chathamhealth.org> and in any of the District Offices.

Russell Melmed
 Director of Health

2TB 1/15, 1/22

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON LEGAL NOTICE Notice of Action

The East Hampton Planning and Zoning Commission held a regular meeting on January 6, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom to consider the following:

Application PZC-20-025: Z Incorporated / Cobalt Health Care, 29 Middle Haddam Rd., for a Special Permit and Site Plan Modification for a 2698 sq. ft. addition. Map 01C/Block 9/Lot 7. Approved with conditions
 Proposed Text Amendment to Sections 2.2, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 8.4 to allow Veterinary Clinics in the R-2, R-3 and R-4 Zones. Approved as modified

Ray Zatorski, Chairman

Note* any question re: Applications and Maps are on file in the Land Use Office 860-267-7450.

1TB 1/15

TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given, in accordance with §7-394 of the Connecticut State Statutes, that the audit of the financial statements of the Town of East Hampton for the year ending June 30, 2020 has been filed with the Town Clerk on January 7, 2021 and is available for public inspection in the Town Clerk's Office, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, Connecticut.

Attest: Kelly Bilodeau, CMC, CCTC
 Town Clerk

Dated this 7th day of January 2021 at East Hampton, Connecticut

1TB 1/15

TOWN OF PORTLAND PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Portland Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom to consider the following:

PZC Application #20-02: 179 Ames Hollow Road. Request for a 3 lot subdivision. Application of Michael Roy. Property of M&R Custom Homes LLC.

At this hearing interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be received. A copy of this application is available for review on the Town of Portland Website: www.portlandct.org

Dated at Portland, CT. this 5th day of January 2021
 Robert Ellsworth, Chairman

2TB 1/8, 1/15

TOWN OF ANDOVER ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS Legal Notice

The Andover Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a virtual Public Hearing on Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 7:00 P.M. – Website Platform (Zoom) on the following application: #ZBA-21-01 - Application of William Phillips & Donna Phillips (Applicant/Property Owner), 57 Hendee Road, aka Assessor's Map 28, Block 3, Lot12. Applicant is seeking relief from Section 10.5, and in accordance with Section 4.1.2a, of the Andover Zoning Regulations to allow for the deposition of fill and the construction of a two single-family residence in the Flood Prone District.

Interested parties may present any questions or concerns at the time of the hearing by participating in the virtual hearing by following the instructions below or by submitting written comment electronically to zoning@andoverct.org. Please direct questions to the Zoning Agent at (860)742-4036 Ext. 3 or submit comments 24 hours prior to the date/time of the hearing.

Join Zoom Meeting

Join by Computer:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88169921941>
 Join by Phone:
 +1 646 558 8656
 Meeting ID: 881 6992 1941
 Passcode: 777038

James Hallisey
 Zoning Agent

2TB 1/8, 1/15

TOWN OF ANDOVER PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2021 7:00 P.M. VIRTUAL MEETING

ZOOM INSTRUCTIONS:

Join by Computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87314078371>
Join by Phone: +1 646 558 8656
Meeting ID: 873 1407 8371
Passcode: 757585

The Town of Andover Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a virtual Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m., Monday, January 25, 2021 to solicit public comment on the following:

Application of the Andover Planning and Zoning Commission to amend Section 2.1 and 2.2 to establish new overlay districts in the Andover Lake area and add Sections 7.6, 7.7 and 7.8 so as to establish criteria for mitigating the potentially detrimental effects of construction in the defined areas. This includes the adoption of map depicting four separate overlay zones. The intent of this amendment is to mitigate the detrimental effects of storm water runoff into Andover Lake, thereby preserving its water quality.

Comments may be presented at the Public Hearing or may be submitted in writing to the Andover Building Office. Details of the above-mentioned application can be found in the Building Department at the Andover Town Office Building, 17 School Road, Andover.

Jim Hallisy
 Zoning Agent

2TB 1/8, 1/15

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF EAST HAMPTON ATTENTION ALL TAXPAYERS

Notice is hereby given to the Town of East Hampton Taxpayers that the second installment of taxes for real estate, personal property, and supplemental motor vehicles levied on the Grand List of October 1, 2019 are due and payable on January 1, 2021. The last day on which to pay without penalty is February 1, 2021. The tax is based on a mill rate of 33.14 mills which equates to \$33.14 in taxes per \$1,000 of net assessed value. The supplemental motor vehicle tax bills will be mailed on December 10, 2020.

The Town of East Hampton adopted Executive Order No. 9R, the "Lower Interest Rate Program" which will provide a three-month window during which taxpayers will pay a reduced interest rate should their tax bill that is due on January 1, 2021 become delinquent. Payments received February 2, 2021 and later, including payments postmarked February 2, and later, are considered past due and will be subject to an interest penalty of .25% per month instead of the regular 1.5% per month. There will not be a \$2 minimum interest charge during this period. Payments legibly postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service on or before February 1, 2021 are considered on time regardless of when they are received by the Collector of Revenue.

This plan will remain in effect through March 31, 2021. On April 1, 2021 the interest rate will revert back to 1.5% per month or a fraction thereof, 18 % per annum, from the due date of the tax, as required by Connecticut General State Statutes 12-130 and 146. The minimum interest charge is \$2 on each tax bill. A returned check fee is \$20.

As owners of property, taxpayers are responsible to see that taxes are paid when due. Failure to have sent or received a bill does not exempt the taxpayer from payment of all taxes, interest charges and collection costs, as per Conn. Gen. Stat. 12-130 and 12-146. Interest is charged on all late payments. There are no exceptions.

Please make checks payable to Town of East Hampton. Payments may be mailed to Collector of Revenue, 1 Community Drive, East Hampton, CT 06424. Pay online by visiting our website at www.easthamptonct.gov The Town is waiving the 50 cent fee associated with checking and savings account payments. Hours of collection are: Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, Tuesday 8:00 am – 6:30 pm and Friday 8:00 am – 12:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Kristy L. Merrifield, CCMC
 Collector of Revenue

3TB 1/8, 1/15, 1/22



Please Support Your Local Businesses!



They need us more than ever
 in these uncertain times!

Thank you to all those on
 the front lines and behind
 the scenes keeping us going!



Pet of the Week



Stormy, 1.5 yrs old, is most comfortable in a quiet, peaceful environment. She welcomes a gentle hand to stroke her head and ears; you may even find her pushing into your hand for more petting. Within minutes, she's likely to roll onto her side, inviting you to rub her soft belly fur, purring her appreciation for your respectful touch. It's easy to picture this sweetheart napping on your desk while you work or curled up on a cushion near you in the evening as you read or watch a movie.

This is **Dean Martin**! He is a 2 year old Dachshund/Chihuahua mix. He is a fun, high energy boy who loves to run, run, run! He has also proved that he can be an affectionate little guy who loves pets and praise. Dean will need a family committed to his continued socialization and who will provide him with opportunities for lots of positive experiences out in the world! Dean's new home should have a playful, confident dog or two to help show him the ropes and to help drain his energy – he LOVES to play with other dogs.



For more information on adopting **CATS** or **DOGS**, call **860-569-0722**
VOLUNTEERS & FOSTER HOMES NEEDED - For information call: **860-569-0722**

Protectors of Animals, Inc. A non-profit, all volunteer animal rescue organization, rescuing abandoned, abused and impounded cats and dogs.
 144 Main St., Unit O, E. Hartford, CT 06118 **Check us out on our website - www.poinc.org**

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GLASTONBURY CENTER - 2 Bdrm \$1,390 Inc. Heat / Hot water. Excellent condition. Large 2 bdrm, Lvg room, 1 bath. Quartz, stainless and tiled kitchen. Hardwood floors throughout. Private parking lot; laundry in building; large storage area. Heat and hot water included. Perfect for someone looking for an immaculate apartment. \$1,390/mo. 860-798-7403.

KREIGER LANE - Available Nov. 1, 1800 SF office - warehouse. Bathroom and overhead doors. 860-633-5469

RENTALS

PORTLAND 1ST FLOOR EFFICIENCY APT., refrig, stove, no smoking/no pets, security, credit check. PARKING \$600./month plus utilities & heat. Tel. 860-916-7482

Glastonbury Center - 2 Bdrm \$1,290 Inc. Heat / Hot water. Excellent condition. Large 2 bdrm; Lvg room; 1 bath; large kitchen, hardwood floors throughout. Private parking lot; laundry in building; large storage area. Heat and hot water included. Perfect for someone looking for an immaculate apartment. \$1,290/mo. 860-798-7403.

EAST HAMPTON REAR ENTRANCE OFFICE SUITE FOR LEASE. Approx. 700 sq ft with 3 rooms. Located at 11 West High St. (Rt. 66). \$625/mo. includes utilities. Safe alternative to home office. Available immediately. Call (860) 267-1040.

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Fred Ferguson
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CASHIER POSITION AVAILABLE at a gas station in Glastonbury. FT or PT. Will train. Please call 860-617-4349



East Hampton Public Schools is seeking Substitute Teachers.

Applicants must be over 18 years old with a High School Diploma or equivalent and have experience with school-age children. The position reports to the principal or designee at the location to which they are assigned and is responsible for providing instruction and managing the learning environment. The per diem rate is \$105.

Please apply on-line at <http://www.applitrack.com/east-hampton/onlineapp/>. For further information contact Mary Clark, mclark@easthamptonct.org.

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3TB 12/18, 1/8, 1/15

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A Town of Marlborough Employment Application or resume must be submitted along with a copy of diplomas and documentation showing Connecticut Municipal Assessor's Certification. Contact the Town Clerk's office at 860-295-6206 for an application. Completed applications are to be submitted to the:

Town Clerk
P.O. Box 29
26 North Main Street
Marlborough, CT 06447

We consider applicants for all positions without regard to race, creed, religion, gender, national origin, age, disability, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected status.

4TB 12/18, 1/8, 1/15, 1/22

POSITION AVAILABLE Director of Operations Department of Public Works Town of Colchester

2TB 1/15, 1/22

The Town of Colchester is seeking a full-time Director of Operations for the Public Works Department. The selected individual will be directly responsible for scheduling, supervision of and participate in snow and ice control activities; supervise in all phases of maintenance and improvements on Town roads and facilities during normal operating hours and overtime as necessary, in order to address natural or man-made emergencies. Prepare procedures, policies and training programs for highway, fleet, transfer station and grounds maintenance employees. Handle all matters concerning highway, fleet maintenance, and transfer station employees including, but not limited to, directing work, scheduling, evaluations and disciplinary action. On call for emergencies regarding Town of Colchester public highways, parks, and buildings and other infrastructure. Tree Warden Certification is preferred.

The selected individual must possess a valid Connecticut Class A operator's license, have passed CDL testing, and possess supervisory skills. Not less than four (4) years supervisory employment in the construction and maintenance field or an allied field is required. The selected individual will report to the Director of Public Works and administratively to the First Selectman. Salary: Negotiable based upon background and experience within range defined by the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Reference is made to the job description of the position for more detailed information at www.colchesterct.gov. Closing Date - Qualified individuals shall submit a completed Town of Colchester application with a resume and required documentation to the First Selectman's office, 127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415 by Thursday, January 28, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. Applications available online at : www.colchesterct.gov. The Town of Colchester is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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