



RIVEREAST

News Bulletin

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

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Lego Team Wins Award... Jack Jackter Intermediate School's Megawhats Lego team, under the leadership of Renee Anderson, competed at the Lego state finals in December. The team's design won the Robot Design Award. The award goes to the team that uses outstanding programming principles along with solid engineering practices. Students had to design a robot that was mechanically sound, durable, efficient, and highly capable of performing challenging missions. Pictured are, front row, Maggie Parekh, Charlotte Bunting, Ryan Lombardo and Sophie Hustus; back row, Cayden Steele, Ben Buyniski and Eric Deacon. Missing from the photo: Delilah Koonankeil and Taylor Hardy.

Prague Remembered For Passion, Dedication

by Sloan Brewster

"She was always there." That was just one of the many ways local and state officials remembered the late Edith Prague this week, following her death last Thursday, Dec. 16, at the age of 96.

Prague was a longtime state legislator, first elected to the state House in 1982 and then serving, from 1994-2013, as senator for the 19th District, which, at the time, included Andover and Hebron. (Andover has since been switched to a different district.)

According to a June 2012 story in the Rivereast, Prague, after suffering a minor stroke, opted not to run for another term. At the time, she said her decision was based on recommendations by her doctor, the behest of her family and because she had seen the fallout from serious strokes in others, including her husband and mother who died as the result of strokes.

Fellow Democrat Cathy Osten was elected in 2012 to fill Prague's Senate seat, and has been there ever since. She said this week Prague was dedicated to the state and her work.

"I've always said Edith was a state treasure, and I think that when we lost her we lost someone that cared passionately about the state and her work," Osten said. "If her family had let her, she would've have stayed in the senate and died there."

Well-liked and well-respected, Prague, who was also twice commissioner of the state Department of Aging, was known for her zeal in the fight for seniors.

"She always said to me that you have to be that loud voice for people who don't have any voice," Osten said. "That was always my guiding force."

Osten said she and Prague had worked together on several issues, both while Prague was still in office and after Osten replaced her. In addition to working on senior matters across the state, Prague worked with her on labor, mental health and sexual harassment issues relative to the Department of Corrections.

"[Prague] was passionate about seniors and prevailing wage," Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney said. Former Andover First Selectman Robert Burbank said any time seniors experienced need, Prague "was always there."

Burbank offered posthumous appreciation to Prague from "both myself and our seniors who benefitted through all the work she did for us."

He recounted a story of Prague coming through with "a blessing to the town" that allowed it to continue offering ride services to seniors after the state had decided to discontinue the service early in his first term, when, he said, the town was not in a great place financially.

The state offered the town vans "at an extremely high price" it could not afford, Burbank said. "Edith Prague went to bat for us, and she

See Prague Remembered, page 2

Better Watch Out, Better Not Cry....

It's Christmas Eve, which means just one more sleep for the kiddies before they get to find out just how many of their yuletide wishes have been answered by Santa Claus.

As they have in the past, members of Ambassador Girl Scout Troop 67813 of Marlborough let us sneak a peek at the letters to Santa they've been collecting over the past few weeks. We thought we'd share some of our favorites here. Don't worry, after we transcribed them here - cute little kid typos and all - all the letters were sent on their merry way up to the North Pole, and Santa has let us know he received them - and will try to fill as many Christmas dreams as possible.

This year, the big guy also sent along a note he wants us to pass on to you all:

"I would like to thank my honorary elves who help me answer and deliver so many letters. In Marlborough and East Hampton I want to thank

the postmaster Cinda and the entire post office teams. I also want to give a big thank you to my honorary elves from Ambassador Girl Scout Troop 67813 who will be 'retiring' after many years of service as they graduate from high school this spring: Caroline Boardman, Morgan Lavalley, Audrey LeMasurier, Grace Nieszczewski, Amy Nilsson, Sammy Sullivan, and Sydney Wiemer and parent elves Yolanda LeMasurier, Jessica Nieszczewski, Heidi Nilsson, and Kim Sullivan. Merry Christmas to all..."

And so, without further ado, here are some of the letters to Santa from Christmas 2021:

Dear Santa, I hope you have a wonderful Christmas. I know the elves are working hard, but I have some small requests.

See Santa Letters, page 2



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2021 Holiday Shopping Guide Inside - pages 18 & 19

Cover Story • Cover Story

★ *Santa Letters cont. from page 1*

Wish List
 Hover board
 drawing notebook (like the one at the antique store)
 fit bit
 calendar
 Indoor swing
 bouncy house
 tv in bedroom
 phone (laptop or ipad, either of those things)
 flying broom (real please)
 trip to amarican girl doll store in New York
 books (lots and lots of books)
Love, Adelyn

Hello Santa,
 Hope that you are well and that your family has maintained stable income throughout the pandemic. Here is what I would like for Christmas assuming that I am on the nice list though I missed some school so I may not be.
 overwatch for xbox one
 Minecraft dungeons for the computer
 oculus VR
 apple juice
 dream journal
 fidget spinner
 slap bracelets
 marbles
Yours truly, Tate

Dear Santa, Zuri and Jingles,
 Hello hope you are doing well. I would like your approval to have Zuri and Jingles come early. I was thinking of the day after Thanksgiving if not then like the 28th of November and maybe with a baby. Whenever the elfs hide they always look like a couple and I think they are going to get 'meried'.
 Thank you.
Love, Annabella

Dear Santa,
 Hi. It's my Payton, I'm 19 months old. I love to watch cocomelon, play with my seven dwarfs, Elmo and monkey. Mom and I read books all day.
 Santa, the best gift would be a new kidney for my mom.
 She has Type 1 diabetes and currently on dialysis at home. Mama is also on kidney transplant list, looking for someone special to help.
 Santa I love my Mama. Can you help us?
 Thank you Santa
Love, Payton

Dear Santa,
 we found your license in Stop & Shop and i am sending it back ot you. I want a hover board for Christmas.
From, Cooper

Dere Santa,
 I would like a hover board. I would also like a pile of cushions and pillose and sum hess trucks. I would like sum robot parts. I would like a transformer dragon and a sciens kit. I would like a hovering robot to.
Love, Quinn

Dear Santa,
 I love you. I can't wait to see the elves and reindeer. Do you have lots of snow at the North Pole? I want a Christmas Santa doll please. We are going to leave the reindeer some carrots. Do you have a Christmas tree at your house?
Love, Marianne

Dear Santa,
 Thank you so much for everything you have ever gotten me. I know how much time you and your elves spend every year. It means a lot to me. This year I have been good. Sometimes I even help my mom with chores when she doesn't ask me to. This year for Christmas I would like a American girl doll closet, Dork Diaries books, Pika-chu Pokemon stuffed animal, clothes for my stuffed animals, candy land game, American Girl Doll school set, Play stroller for my toys. Santa don't stress about all the presents. It's ok if I don't get some of them. Thank you Santa.
Love, Adriana

Hey Santa,
 i'm writing a list of things i want for crismas. If it's poseble i want:
 Nerf guns, cap guns, popits, figits, and other things I like.
 But the hardest present for crismas you have ever had from me is probably to see Grandpa. Not my moms grandpa, Nicholas dad's grandpa. And that is all I want for crismas.
Nick



★ *Prague Remembered cont. from page 1*

talked to DOT [Department of Transportation] and all the powers that be and we ended up getting those vans at a nominal cost.”
 Prague is also remembered for successfully garnering grants for the towns, Tierney and Burbank said.
 In Hebron, Tierney said, she helped get funding for the restoration of the historic Peters House at Burnt Hill Park.
 Beyond her concern for those without a voice, Prague is remembered for her staunch views.
 “You knew where you stood with Edith Prague, that’s for sure,” Tierney said. “She was very forthcoming with her opinions; you knew where she was coming from.”

Sawyer said Prague “She could be very controversial, she could be abrasive, but she was passionate.”
 Sawyer recalled Prague’s “lead foot” and times they were both driving on Route 364 on their way to Hartford. In the middle lane, Sawyer would see a car “go flying past” her and recognize it as Prague. When they arrived at the Capitol and hopped on the same elevator, they would “share a chuckle.”
 Sawyer said Prague “had her moments,” though, and could be controversial and recalled a quarrel over organized labor with a mushroom farm and Prague.

He recalled a conversation with Prague about the 2007 home invasion in Cheshire and the subsequent homicides of Jennifer Hawke-Petit and her two daughters, Michela Petit, 11 and Hayley Petit, 17. Joshua Komisarjevsky and Steven Hayes are serving life prison sentences for the killings.
 “She was very boisterous about what should happen to those two gents,” Tierney said.
 (Prague famously once said Komisarjevsky should be hung from a tree “by his penis.”)
 A hard worker, Prague made herself known and “wouldn’t take a second seat to anybody,” Tierney said.

“There was a big fight, that she took down the mushroom farm because she tried to organize the labor,” Sawyer said.
 Sawyer said Prague stood up for seniors and fought for Mothers Against Driving Drunk and was a “wiz at knowing Medicare law.”
 In her 2012 meeting with the *Rivereast*, Prague, who lived in Columbia, said she had fond memories of Hebron and Andover.
 “I really enjoyed Hebron,” she said, adding “I enjoy the people in Andover. I always went to the senior center for their functions. I visit every senior center in the district after the session is over and bring them a copy of all the legislation that’s passed and affected them.”

“Edith was a proud person and she just was very active. I don’t know how she kept the pace she did for so long,” Tierney said “She was tough; you had to be back in her day.”

Gazing into the distance, she recalled some of what she considered her greatest accomplishments, including pressing for and getting stronger drunk driving laws and the ignition interlock device.

During Prague’s time in the state Senate, Republican Pam Sawyer of Bolton served in the state House, representing the 55th District, which includes Andover and Hebron. So the two interacted quite often, and Sawyer this week they had a good relationship.

At the time, Prague said Mothers Against Drunk Driving had been advocating for the mechanism, which measures blood alcohol level. Currently it is installed on the starter of a car after a driver fails or refuses a chemical alcohol test, is convicted of operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs, vehicular manslaughter or vehicular assault. If the driver’s blood alcohol level is more than .08, the car won’t start.
 Prague also spoke of helping with assisted living services, congregated housing for the elderly, working to get school-based health centers in place, getting paid sick days passed – and implementing a standard wage for the janitors and cleaners who clean state buildings.

“She jokingly called me her favorite Republican,” Sawyer said.
 Sawyer said she and Prague would often go to Board of Finance meetings in Hebron or Andover together.
 “[Prague] would paint a rosy picture and I would lay out the difficulties of the budget,” she said.

Prague also discussed the session she had just completed, in which she worked to pass a bill that would give childcare workers and personal care attendants the right to organize and join a union.
 “And they were so happy with the legislation they waited for us outside the chamber to clap for us and thank us for giving them a chance to have a better life,” she recalled. “That’s the job of the legislature – to make life better for people in this state.”

On the way to their cars, they would talk about other things going on in town and in their lives.

She said the success was the type of thing that made the work worthwhile.
 Services paying tribute to Prague were held Sunday, Dec. 19 at Temple B’nai Israel in Wilimantic. Burial followed at Temple B’nai Israel Cemetery.

Combine and get in on the surprise.

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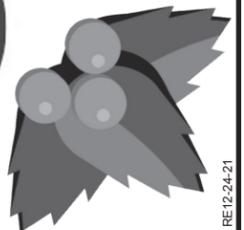
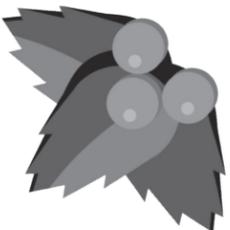
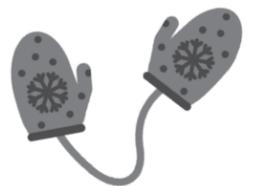
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From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

First off, some quick news you all could probably use.

In past years, the offices for the *Rivereast* have closed the week after Christmas, and no paper was published that week. However, this year we're doing things a little differently. We'll be open that week, and a paper is indeed coming out for next Friday, Dec. 31.

Our normal deadlines still apply – noon Tuesday for all submitted copy (i.e., letters, event listings, press releases, etc.) and 10 a.m. Wednesday for all paid advertisements.

I was sad to learn of the passing of Edith Prague. As a reporter, I had many an occasion to speak with Edith, and she was just a delight. She was rarely if ever at a loss for words – and that, as any journalist can tell you, is a very welcome attribute. But more importantly, she was a very hard worker for her towns. She was very passionate about the causes she believed in, and that passion often paid dividends for everyone in the 19th Senatorial District.

She'll definitely be missed.

Veteran readers of my column know three of the things I love the most are Christmas, inspirational quotes – and lists. So imagine my joy when, earlier this week, I found a list in *Town and Country Magazine* of "The Most Inspirational Christmas Quotes of All Time." There were some absolutely wonderful quotes listed – many of which I'd never heard before – so I thought I'd share some:

"Christmas isn't a season. It's a feeling." – Edna Ferber

"My idea of Christmas, whether old-fashioned or modern, is very simple: loving others. Come to think of it, why do we have to wait for Christmas to do that?" – Bob Hope

"Christmas is a piece of one's home that one carries in one's heart." – Freya Stark

"Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a

state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas." – Calvin Coolidge

"The smells of Christmas are the smells of childhood." – Richard Paul Evans

"The thing about Christmas is that it almost doesn't matter what mood you're in, or what kind of year you've had – it's a fresh start." – Kelly Clarkson

"I love the excitement, the childlike spirit of innocence, and just about everything that goes along with Christmas." – Hillary Scott

"Our hearts grow tender with childhood memories and love of kindred, and we are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmastime." – Laura Ingalls Wilder

"It's true, Christmas can feel like a lot of work, particularly for mothers. But when you look back on all the Christmases in your life, you'll find you've created family traditions and lasting memories. Those memories, good and bad, are really what help to keep a family together over the long haul." – Caroline Kennedy

"The way you spend Christmas is far more important than how much." – Henry David Thoreau

"We count down the days just to experience it nearly exactly as we always have. It is so comfortable, familiar, and perfectly nostalgic that, frankly, we have no desire to improve upon it at all." – Joanna Gaines

"Christmas is doing a little something extra for someone." – Charles M. Schulz

"Christmas is a day of meaning and traditions, a special day spent in the warm circle of family and friends." – Margaret Thatcher

"The joy of brightening other lives becomes for us the magic of the holidays." – W. C. Jones

"Christmas magic is silent. You don't hear it; you feel it. You know it. You believe it." –

Editor's Desk continued on page 5



Donation to Food Bank... Colchester Youth Basketball (CYB) held a food drive at all home games the weekend of Dec. 11, to benefit Colchester Food Bank. About 40 pounds of food was collected. CYB President Jeff Koonankeil is shown here at the food bank, with the donations collected.

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

Am I Missing Something?

To the Editor:

This article is not about anti-vaccination, or the government, or trying to start an argument with another reader. This is about facts. When you get a COVID-19 vaccine, you are given paperwork to read detailing information about the vaccine, precautions, ingredients, etc., etc. That paperwork also says, and I'm not making this up, this is directly from the inserts that are also posted on the CDC website - for example: "Comirnaty (Pfizer)...may not protect everyone". "The vaccine has been shown to prevent COVID-19...after two doses..." "The duration of protection against COVID-19 is currently unknown." All three vaccines have this statement in their inserts, and two of them are still experimental.

So this is me talking now... if the duration is 'unknown,' isn't it obvious that the vaccinated, and asymptomatic people, meaning people without symptoms and walking around without masks, are still spreading it? I get that it may reduce the symptoms if you contract COVID-19, but the vaccine doesn't stop the spread if you're asymptomatic. Am I missing something? Are

we supposed to test for COVID-19 every day for the rest of our lives? Just asking the question.

P.S. Have a wonderful holiday.

Pat Schmidt – East Hampton

Clarification

In the story entitled "Belltown BOE to Vet Book Selection Process," which appeared on the cover of last week's *Rivereast*, it was indicated school board members Christina Tammaro-Dzagan and Michael Buck were in agreement with board chair Jim Radavich about having a "library/literacy presentation" to learn more about the book-selection process at the schools. However, both Buck and Tammaro-Dzagan told the *Rivereast* this week they were in favor of learning more about the process, but not necessarily that it be done by a library or literary specialist.

Also, in that same story, Buck was quoted as saying the board must be "reactive." He actually said the board must be "proactive."

Bulletin Board

"You know," I said to my wife the other day, "it occurs to me that I have not received many Christmas cards this year."

"I don't know why you care," she replied. "You don't even like Christmas. I can't even take you to the mall because you make up vulgar lyrics to the Christmas theme music and pick fights with the mall Santa."

"Mall Santas are creepy," I returned. "Anybody who can spend hours pretending to enjoy conversation with an endless procession of greedy little children cannot be normal. Dollars to donuts says half of those mall Santas are closet alcoholics."

"That's no reason to threaten to drop kick the mall elf."

"He told me Santa was going to put coal in my stocking."

"You were making fun of his shoes."

"They had bells on the toes, for crying out loud."

"He's an elf, for crying out loud."

"Oh sure. And reindeer can really fly."

"You're hopeless."

"Nevertheless," I continued, "none of that explains why I didn't get hardly any cards this year. Just because I don't like Christmas doesn't mean people wouldn't send me a card."

"Whatever."

"Maybe it's a subtle reflection of the economy and the general pessimism about the future."

"Maybe people just don't like you."

I pondered this possibility briefly. "Naw. That can't be it."

"It seems a likely explanation to me."

"Naw. What's not to like? Besides, there's too much jolly hypocrisy around this time of year—people feel guilty about petty vindictiveness. They'll send you a card even if they don't like you because it makes them feel morally superior."

"You are seriously warped."

"I just think it's odd that I got cards from my insurance agent and my bank and from some guy who wants me to invest in a stock plan, but only a couple of cards from plain old people."

"Boy, a card from your insurance agent. That must make you feel warm all over."

"Hey, if there's anybody out there who truly wants to see me enjoy a healthy year, it's my insurance agent. His best wishes are beyond question."

"Maybe you're not getting cards, because people have finally realized that you never bother to send anyone a card yourself," she suggested. "Perhaps your own thoughtlessness is finally catching up with you."

"The reason I don't send any cards out is because you won't let me. Let's not forget about how you killed my card selection back a few years ago."

"Sending out a picture of yourself standing over a dead deer wearing a Santa hat is not in keeping with the spirit of the season. Neither was the inscription 'Season's greetings from the late Blitzen.'"

"I thought it was quite festive."

"Yeah, if you're a serial killer."

"Well, just don't buy me anything stupid like a tie for Christmas this year. I want something I can really use."

"How about a coal stove?"

"Very funny."

Jim Hallas

Rivereast Hours of Operation

The offices of the *Rivereast News Bulletin* and *Glastonbury Citizen*, located at 87 Nutmeg Lane, Glastonbury, are open Monday through Wednesday, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., and Thursday from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. The *Rivereast* can be reached any time via email at bulletin@glcitizen.com.

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

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Keep Main Street Residential

To the Editor:
An agenda item at the Jan. 5th Planning and Zoning meeting is the rezoning of the Food Bag at the corner of Main Street and Route 16. Atlantis Marketing has resubmitted their application to change the zoning from residential to commercial in order to build a much larger gas station and a drive-thru. This proposed change in zoning is in direct opposition to the Plan of Conservation and Development which the Planning and Zoning Commission developed to preserve the small town character of East Hampton, and to prevent spot zoning. The PZC denied this zone change six months ago. Let's make sure it is denied again.

Please join me in voicing your opposition to the zone change by:

Singing the online petition, www.ipetitions.com/petition/no-main-street-zone-change.

Writing letters to the PZC, sent via email to Jeremy DeCarli at jdecarli@easthamptonct.gov.

Attending the Jan. 5, 7 p.m. PZC meeting either in person at the Town Hall or via zoom at us02web.zoom.us/j/86814013959.

Thank you for protecting our town from spot zoning,

Heidi Bothamley – East Hampton

COVID-19

To the Editor:
Both the vaccinated and unvaccinated can spread the virus.

Both Serena Williams and I can play tennis.
Annie Steinbrecher – Marlborough

Wreaths Across America

Dear Donors and Participants:
We once again have had a successful year at Westchester Cemetery Association's Wreaths Across America. Thank you, so much, for working through all the challenges that 2021 presented to bring the mission to Remember, Honor and Teach, to Westchester Cemetery in Colchester! We hope you have 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. It was heartwarming to have so many citizens join us.

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 Boy Scout Troop 109's assistance.

Gratefully,
Roberta Avery and Linda Pasternak
Wreaths Across America

Malicious

To the Editor:
In the latest meeting of the Town Council, there was a brief discussion about the funds the town will receive in the recent opioid settlement suit. After the town manager announced the settlement due East Hampton at around \$180,000 in damages, I questioned him as to the cost of the opioid crisis in town. I was referring to a dollar amount in that particular question.

He stated the town has lost lives to it and did not have a dollar figure off the top of his head.

In the *Rivereast News Bulletin* article about the matter, Jack Lakowsky stated, "However, Walck was more interested in the financial than the human toll." That is a false statement.

He implied that I was a heartless, non-compassionate, ruthless human being who only cares about the financial versus the human impact of the crisis. That is farthest from the truth, Mr. Lakowsky.

I realized that the sensitivity of the matter would be better discussed in the private of an office and will query David Cox on the facts and demographics behind the "human toll" once he has had the time to compile those figures together.

By having the facts pertaining to those affected by opioid addiction, the town can tailor programs to those in need which is how the monies are supposed to be spent.

This style of reporting is precisely why the media is so mistrusted. This particular reporter, who has covered East Hampton, is malicious and should be held accountable for his misstatements and bias by those who "edit" his articles.

Sincerely,
Alison Walck – East Hampton

Note: Walck is a member of the East Hampton Town Council.

Anti-American?

To the Editor:
Could Dominic Secondo provide what the "ulterior, "anti-American" agenda of *The Fearless Flights of Hazel Ling Yee* is? His statement inspired me to research the book to see what it's about. I found the author of the news story, Jack Lakowsky, provided a good review of the book. I learned that while there is some writing it is also a picture book. One website I looked at even provided a few questions for parents to use to talk with their child about the book.

Board member Mike Buck said "he had read it. Stating his interpretation as being "fact," said it is "anti-American," though he did not cite [my insertion here: 1. more likely could not because he actually hasn't read the book and 2. saying you've read it and your interpretation of it as fact sounds like the adult equivalent of the dog ate my homework] a specific 'anti-American'

passage."

It's been some time since I've read *Fahrenheit 451*. Written in 1953 by Ray Bradbury, it shows a future American society where books are outlawed and burned by "firemen." Is this the direction we're headed? Books get memorized because people are afraid of them and want them banned or burned? Banning books seems to be in the news every once in a while, burning not so much, although at a recent meeting in Spotsylvania County in the Virginia burning books did come up.

I guess my question for these two "adults" is, what is it about a child's picture book are you afraid of? Seriously, for ages 4-8, and you're afraid? Maybe you're afraid because the central character is of a different skin tone?

Respectfully Submitted,
Eric Manning – Andover

Blowback

To the Editor:
In *Hebron Views Magazine*, The Hebron Public Building Committee wrote a piece on the Public Works facility slated for our watershed. The article stated once the land is clear for development, public "sessions will be conducted in order to talk with all community members, listen to questions and suggestions, and consider recommendations and suggest changes to the project."

If the HPBC and BOS would like residents' input, simply visit Town Hall. Request letters and transcripts from the Dec. 14, 2004, or July 26, 2016, P&Z meetings. The March 7, 2019, Town Meeting also showcased excellent speakers. 2021 summer and fall's BOS meetings brought to light concerns many Hebron residents share. Unfortunately, these residents were called the "F" word and some became disenfranchised by our BOS. Residents have written Letters to the Editor. Read here what the public has to say.

Listen to your public. Listen to our land. Listen to the experts. It appears zoning was changed to fit your needs, but not the needs of our watershed. Watersheds are more important now than ever. They are a natural phenomenon

that protect many natural resources, including water.

Perhaps this quote, from Jim Cordier, for the Hebron Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commission. 2021, will shed some light on public concerns:

"We have chosen to reside in Hebron because of its natural beauty and its small-town rural community character. How we treat our land and our resources affects the well-being of ourselves and our neighbors. Natural resources preservation, conservation and a strong stewardship ethic should, as stated in the Connecticut Inland Wetlands statute, "forever guarantee to the people of the state, the safety of such natural resources for their benefit and enjoyment and for the benefit and enjoyment of generations yet unborn." – *Hebron Views Magazine*
Jean Tulimieri – Amston

Strange Response

To the Editor:
We thought Taras Rudko's lawsuit against the Town of Colchester contending election fraud, cheating and dead people voting could not get any stranger. Now we see how first selectman, Andreas Bisbikos, who campaigned with Taras and hired his wife as his assistant, is responding. Did Andreas request the town's respected law firm, Shipman and Goodwin, represent and defend the town and those named in the suit from these frivolous claims? No, he did not. Did he call a special meeting of the Board of Selectmen to discuss this situation, since the town charter gives the BOS sole responsibility to approve contracts? No, he did not.

What our first selectman did was violate the charter to sign a contract and pay a \$5,000 retainer to an attorney that has been previously been disbarred and had numerous disciplinary actions against him for mishandling client funds and conflict of interest. Bisbikos circumvented the town charter to hire and pay an unqualified, ethically challenged attorney to represent the town in a case that Andreas himself may have a conflicting interest.

When asked to explain how and why he
See Letters, page 6

Editor's Desk continued from page 4

Kevin Alan Milne
"It's Christmas Eve. It's the one night of the year when we all act a little nicer, we smile a little easier, we cheer a little more. For a couple of hours out of the whole year, we are the people that we always hoped we would be." – Frank Cross

"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving." – Mother Theresa

"We should learn the true Christmas lesson of gentle, thoughtful kindness to those we love and to all we meet in life's busy ways." – J. R. Miller

"The best of all gifts around any Christmas tree: the presence of a happy family all wrapped up in each other." – Burton Hills

"I don't think Christmas is necessarily about things. It's about being good to one another." – Carrie Fisher

"Mankind is a great, an immense family. ... This is proved by what we feel in our hearts at Christmas." Pope John XXIII

"Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful." – Norman Vincent Peale

"What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the

past, courage for the present, hope for the future." – Agnes M. Pahro

"Gifts of time and love are surely the basic ingredients of a truly merry Christmas." – Peg Bracken

"Christmas is like candy; it slowly melts in your mouth sweetening every taste bud, making you wish it could last forever." – Richelle E. Goodrich

"Christmas is a necessity. There has to be at least one day of the year to remind us that we're here for something else besides ourselves." – Eric Severeid

"He who has not Christmas in his heart will never find it under a tree." – Roy L. Smith

And lastly, this gem, from one of my favorites: "One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas Day. Don't clean it up too quickly." – Andy Rooney

It's so very, very true.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays from all of us at the *Rivereast News Bulletin*.

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★ Letters cont. from page 5

choose this lawyer at the Dec. 16th BOS meeting, he contended he did not need to explain himself to the board, but he knows this lawyer "will do a good job." When asked how he found this lawyer at that same meeting he indicated, "I have connections." Andreas, that is what we are afraid of! My concern is that this lawyer was chosen not to represent the interests of the town and those named in the suit, but the potentially conflicting interests of our first selectman, which is probably why he is not using the town attorney, a firm that has worked with Colchester for years.

Michael Egan – Colchester

Disinformation vs. Misinformation

To the Editor:

Misinformation is false information not spread deliberately and not promoting malice towards any person, group or country. Disinformation is the planting of false information to deliberately obscure the truth, using rumors, rhetorical questions, and outright lies. Ad-hominem attacks are common, rather than true discourse.

Among recent letters there are several instances of false information. One letter-writer implies that vaccines will hurt the "tiny warriors" of the body's natural defenses. Another writer claims "overwhelming evidence that masking, etc., does not work" and that a "Fauci-led pandemic" is at fault, and that a "cure-all" was sold to the public. A third writer rants against progressives, echoing all the wit of Tucker Carlson and Sean Hannity of Fox News.

The first writer may be spreading misinformation. The other writers are surely spreading disinformation.

Be aware to the deliberate lies that are being put forth by politicians who claim that

Jan. 6 was a "peaceful demonstration." Be aware, and beware the wolves in sheep's clothing who deliberately mislead.

Ed Gyllanhammer – Portland

We're in Trouble

To the Editor:

Ominous signs that American democracy is on the ropes and another civil war is in the works keep appearing daily. Recently, three retired generals wrote a Washington Post op-ed warning that our U.S. military is ripe for participating in another insurrection. One of them, Brig. General Steven Anderson, a lifelong

conservative Republican (but no longer), mentioned many alarming facts, including the 124 military leaders from 'Flag Officers 4 America' who signed an open letter supporting the Trump propaganda that the 2020 election was stolen. On another front, if the same metrics that the CIA uses to predict future civil wars around the globe were applied to the United States, we would be next in line.

Trump's supporters, having once attempted a coup, with few participants experiencing significant consequences – are now further emboldened as they watch conservative politicians around the country put in place the means to overturn future election results that Republicans don't agree with. They already own more than 60 House seats more than what they would have by successfully gerrymandering districts. Lumping Democratic voters into one district so that Republicans can win multiple district seats is a species of voter fraud.

Likely the 2022 election will again put federal decision-making into the hands of a minority Republican representation. States like Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, California and others will have to do what the Dakotas, Wyoming, Idaho, Mississippi and Alabamas tell us to do. This is a conservative dream – the Supreme Court owned, the Congress looking to go their way, their gun-toting members eager for battle, the military heavily leaning their way as it did pre-Civil War in Lincoln's day – we are in trouble indeed. The only tool I see available is a serious discussion of the Democratic states peacefully seceding.

Edmund Smith – Andover

Fascinating Book

To the Editor:

I'm a longtime Portland resident that loves to read and learn from others. Recently, I ordered Robert F. Kennedy's book, *The Real Anthony Fauci: Bill Gates, Big Pharma, and the Global War on Democracy and Public Health*.

Most of us would agree that since 9/11, the most consequential modern event has been the ongoing pandemic. This book was written by RFK Jr., a Democratic attorney, in consultation with some of the world's most accomplished scientists and doctors. It is a "counter-narrative" that seeks to explain how this worldwide pandemic was deliberately "mismanaged." The book is structured almost like a college thesis with statements that are closely documented by footnotes at the end of chapters, so you can fact-check the claims made.

I won't summarize the findings, but most people will be shocked by the abundant evidence provided that we have been systematically misled for massive corporate profits and political control. I do not want to engage in heated arguments in *Rivereast* -- I sympathize with the raw feelings among my fellow citizens. Please read this very important, fascinating book and make up your own mind about its claims.

I have called local libraries, including our excellent Portland library, suggesting that they purchase this book so our communities can be better informed. Last week, the book was very high on the Amazon bestseller list and Glastonbury's Barnes and Noble said they were out of copies, so it is in demand. I hope that many read this book and perhaps set up study groups to discuss its contents, and question our political representatives that have been part of the mismanagement; some deliberately, some, mostly out of ignorance. Our best hope of emerging from this dark forest of misinformation is to openly discuss and evaluate what is going on so we can preserve lives and our Bill of Rights.

Scot Timmis – Portland

Festive Celebration

To the Editor:

The 2021 Hebron Holiday Celebration was an enjoyable event, as usual, due to the help of Hebron's community volunteers. Our thanks go out to all individuals involved in the planning and assisting with Saturday, Dec. 4, festivities.

The season began with the return of the Snow-Folk, sponsored and decorated last year by The Town Center Project (TTCP), and spread along both sides of the historic end of Hebron Green. The town tree, located in front of Old Town Hall, is ablaze with lights every evening. It was again donated by Baldi Tree Farm in Colchester, and then decorated through "Christmas Décor" by Picture Perfect Landscaping of Hebron.

The afternoon began with the exhibit of the Mohegan-Pequot Model Railroad Club in the Hebron Historical Society's Old Town Hall. The trains, tracks and landscapes excited visitors of all ages. In the Douglas Library's community room were found materials and the library's Teen Group ready to help in making adorable sock snowmen and all-natural pinecone mice.

The library parking lot held games, music and hot chocolate enjoyed by all. The Scouts of Troop 1028 decorated and organized games, as well as serving the hot chocolate. Andrey Stolyarov provided a wonderful backdrop with his piano playing of seasonal music. The RHAM Carolers captured the group through

their much-enjoyed musical numbers and spirit, and then led the sing-along for all.

The Hebron Volunteer Fire Department arrived with its entourage, the decorated firetruck followed by Santa, Mrs. Claus, the sleigh and much excitement. The afternoon grew to a close with the countdown and lighting of the tree by Parks & Recreation, who were also responsible for all of the seasonal lighting in Hebron Center.

Many thanks to the volunteers and holiday greetings to all,

Hebron Holiday Celebration Committee

Hebron's Hidden Facts

To the Editor:

In the recent edition of *Hebron Views*, the Public Building Committee offered a review of the push to build a Public Works facility that is as telling for what is said as for what is left out. First, they refer to the location with the unfortunate euphemism, the "Horton Property." More accurately, the location is 17 Kinney Road, a historic residential neighborhood that sits on a watershed surrounded by sensitive wetlands.

The PBC then states that an area has been chosen "that avoids ALL wetlands..." The site itself might avoid wetlands, but groundwater contamination and the access road will likely have a grave impact. The 2006 plan for the extension of John Horton Boulevard included the disturbance of 6,600 square feet of wetlands. These wetlands are a tributary of Raymond Brook, a Class A watercourse and the main contributor to the Raymond Brook Marsh and the Aquifer Protection Zone. And this impact on wetlands does not account for the contributing uplands. The PBC's choice to ignore the land's function as a watershed is a choice to ignore reality.

In addition, this is one of the most historic areas in Hebron. The PBC wants to defer to the State Historical Preservation Office. Usually SHPO is called to protect towns from invasive developers, not from the town leaders themselves. The land features 300-year-old hedgerow farmland that is still actively being farmed. The area was originally occupied in 1704 by Hebron's first settler, William Shipman. The land has remained in cultivation since then and is a living artifact. In the early 19th century, the farmland was owned by Henry Peters, the son of Cesar Peters, the most important African-American resident of Hebron. Placing a massive industrial complex in the middle of these fields is an insult to our environment, neighborhoods, history and future.

Sincerely,

Kevin J. Tulimieri – Amston

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Bisbikos Slammed After Attorney Hire

by Diane Church

Colchester First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos has come under fire for hiring a lawyer without seeking board approval first – an apparent violation of the town charter.

The hiring came up at the Dec. 16 Board of Selectmen meeting, which was held online due to concerns about the recent surge in COVID-19 cases. A contract with attorney Luis Medina including a \$5,000 retainer fee and a billing fee of \$450 an hour was included in the board's information packet.

Bisbikos hired Medina, in lieu of the usual town attorneys Shipman & Goodwin, to represent election moderator Betty Wagner, former Republican registrar of voters Sheila Tortorigi and Town Clerk Gayle Furman in a lawsuit brought by former selectman Taras Rudko regarding the Nov. 2 election and Nov. 10 recount. Selectmen Rosemary Coyle and Jason LaChapelle, who Rudko named as "interested parties," are also being represented in the case by Medina.

Coyle was present for last week's meeting, but LaChapelle was absent due to a family matter.

At last week's meeting, Coyle pointed out that, according to the town charter, Bisbikos does not have the right to spend the money or enter into a legal contract without discussing it with the board.

"The Board of Selectmen has to vote on any issue where the town is a party," Coyle said to Bisbikos. "You can't make these decisions on your own."

Selectman Denise Turner asked if the contract was even valid, since the board never voted on it.

Bisbikos replied the issue was "time-sensitive."

"Everyone told me to get an attorney right away," he said.

Coyle also took issue with the hiring of Medina in general, noting that he had previously been disbarred and stating he has "a bad reputation."

According to the State of Connecticut Ju-

dicial Branch Attorney website, the Statewide Grievance Committee has in the past found Medina guilty of violating deed restrictions; failing to comply with rules regarding notices for depositions; admitting he had no legal authority to support court actions; using means that had no substantial purpose other than to harass, delay or burden a third person; engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice; and knowingly disobeying an obligation under the rules of a tribunal. His history also includes being found in contempt of court for violating a court order, according to the website.

Medina was suspended by the state in February 2008, disbarred in April 2009, reinstated in August 2012 and reprimanded by the state in 2016.

"I really don't feel this is the right person to represent the Town of Colchester in any kind of suit," Coyle said. "I am not in favor of this."

Bisbikos refused to explain to the selectmen his reasoning for choosing Medina, but said he had "done his due diligence" and that Medina "would get the job done." He also stressed Medina's fee is far less than that of other attorneys.

"Our town attorney said he would charge \$20,000 to \$30,000," Bisbikos said. "I'm not putting the town through a legal situation that's going to cost us an arm and a leg when there are other alternatives out there."

Bisbikos said he'd talked with other attorneys who said this case could wind up costing \$70,000 to \$80,000.

Coyle said, "Everything cannot be a monetary decision. We have to have ethical attorneys representing the Town of Colchester, and I don't feel this person is ethical."

Medina did not return a call for contact for the story.

Bisbikos said Medina and Rudko's attorney, Edward Bona, have been having conversations and the matter may be resolved soon, before going to court.

"Let's give it some time," he said to his fellow selectmen. "If this is not resolved by our next meeting on Jan. 6, I will say that I'm done

with him."

Coyle told Bisbikos she agreed to "compromise with you on that." She again admonished him, though, for hiring the lawyer without calling an emergency meeting of the selectmen to discuss the matter. "You cannot go it alone," she said.

Rudko lost his reelection bid last month. Two Republican newcomers, LaChapelle and Debbie Bates, won, which, due to minority representation laws, ousted Rudko. But Rudko demanded a recount because the difference in votes between him and LaChapelle was less than half of one percent of total votes cast.

The recount was held Nov. 10 and only widened the gap between LaChapelle and Rudko, from 22 votes to 40.

2022 Resolution Run 5K

Colchester Youth and Social Services' 2022 Resolution Run 5K will kick off at 10 a.m. on New Year's Day, at Colchester Town Hall. This event welcomes families and participants of all ages to come run, walk or crawl their way to the finish line.

Medals will be awarded in the following age categories for men and women: 12 and under, 13-19, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69 and 70+.

Early-bird registration through Dec. 31 is \$20; same-day registration is \$25. All proceeds benefit the CYSS scholarship fund and Youth Center improvements. Registration is at www.raceroster.com.

For more information on any CYSS program, call 860-537-7255 or email youthservices@colchesterct.gov.

Free C3 Monthly Workshops

The Collaborative for Colchester's Children (C3) is offering free monthly workshops on the Conscious Discipline model, in person and virtually.

There is a different topic each month to help parents and caregivers transform everyday discipline issues into teachable moments, equipping children with the social-emotional and communication skills needed to manage themselves, resolve conflict and develop healthy behavior.

Registration is required. For more information, visit ColchesterC3.org.

Ladies Guild 2022 Trips

Saint Andrew's Ladies Guild is planning several trips for the group and has opened the reservations to the community. Trips for 2022 are:

May 11-13: See Sight and Sounds Theatre's new show, *David*. Trip includes transportation, two nights' hotel, two breakfasts, two dinners, sightseeing and admissions per itinerary, including a ride on the Strasburg Railroad and visiting an actual Amish home. Cost is \$585/person double.

Aug. 14-15: See and hear the Boston Pops on Old Cape Cod, cruise Hyannis Harbor and visit the JFK Museum. Cost is \$409/person double, and includes transportation, hotel, one breakfast, one dinner, sightseeing and admissions.

Sept. 3-18: Trans-Atlantic Cruise, visiting Copenhagen, Norway, Iceland, Greenland. Price starts at \$2,999, and includes air transportation to Copenhagen. Travelers must follow the protocols set-in-place by the travel company.

For more information, call Barbara Gozzo at 860-537-0179 or Cathy Russi at 860-887-9621.

Abundant Life Church News & Notes

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

Sunday Services: Sunday School is at 9:30 a.m. and the main service is at 10:30 a.m. There is also Children's Church available for ages 4-11. All are welcome. The main service is also broadcast live each week on Facebook. Visit www.facebook.com/groups/abundantlifeCT or look for the church on Facebook. For more information, call the church.

Power of Prayer: If in need of prayer, call the church to be placed on the prayer list. You may also ask about the various days and times the prayer groups meet and come at that time.

Rudko's lawsuit claims that, even though he demanded the recount, he was not given advance notice of the time and place as required by state statutes.

The lawsuit claims that at least seven people who voted in the election are deceased. Rudko also alleges that the PCMA card in one or more tabulators switched positions 1 and 3 on the ballot, although he did not explain how he knew that. He also claims "evidence relating to discrepancies" was intentionally damaged.

Rudko is asking for another recount, both by hand and electronically. He also wants the registrar, moderator and town clerk to immediately secure all ballot, tabulators and cards or turn them over to the secretary of state to prevent further tampering or spoilation. He also wants to be reimbursed for legal costs and fees.

Parks and Recreation News

Colchester Parks and Recreation has announced the following. For more information or full program descriptions, and to register, call 860-537-7297 or visit www.colchesterct.gov/recreation-department.

2021 Holiday Ornaments: Ornaments are \$6 each and can be purchased at Town Hall Monday-Friday, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Pickleball: Wednesdays, Jan. 5-March 30, from 7-9 p.m. each week, at the Jack Jackter Intermediate School gym. One court will be reserved for beginners to learn the sport from 7-8 p.m. with the help of more advanced players. The remaining courts will be open for use by intermediate to advanced players. Depending on the number of people registered and their skill level, this could change from week to week. The program is open to anyone ages 16 and older. There is a minimum of 10 players required and a maximum of 40. Cost is \$99 for residents and \$104 for non-residents. Register online.

Westchester Church News

Westchester Congregational Church, 98 Cemetery Rd., holds worship Sundays at 10 a.m. Masks are not required for those who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. The services are also available on Zoom; visit westchestercongregationchurch.org for login information.

Christmas Eve Service: Tonight, Dec. 24, at 6 p.m., the church will hold its traditional candlelight Christmas Eve service.

The church has a small white wooden Blessings Box in its lower parking lot, with non-perishable food items and other items. All are welcome to give or take a few items.

For more information, email westcongregationchurch@gmail.com, visit the church website, or look for the church on Facebook.

Ahavath Achim News

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

Friday night service, 7 p.m., Zoom; Shabbat morning hybrid service, 10 a.m.; Tuesday, Talmud class, 6:30 p.m., and Kabbalah class, 8 p.m. on Zoom.

There are daily Facebook Live classes on Ken Alter Facebook on the meaning of mitzvot (commandments).

Coming soon: Conversational Hebrew.

For more information, call 860-537-2809. Office hours are 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday; 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Tuesday; 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday; and 9 a.m.-noon Friday.

Vacancy on School Board

The Colchester Board of Education is seeking to fill the vacancy left by a departing board member.

Pursuant to Town Charter requirements, this position must be filled by a Colchester resident who is a member of the Democratic Party. The term of this appointment will expire in November 2023.

Anyone interested in applying for this appointment is asked to submit a board and commission application no later than Jan. 7 to: First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos, 127 Norwich Ave., Suite 201, Colchester, CT 06415.

Applicants must be available for interviews on the evening of Jan. 11 or Jan. 18.

For more information, either about the selection process or about membership on the board, contact Bisbikos at 860-537-7220 or selectman@colchesterct.gov.

Students Help Clean Up Town

Twelve Bacon Academy students recently met on the Town Green and spread out around the center of town, to clean up garbage as part of the students' Learn Green initiative.

The students ended up cleaning for about two hours and completely filled a total of 11 large trash bags with litter. Now, using data from the cleanups entered through our website Learn Green, students Grace Gorreck and Ryan Moores will work to provide resources for people looking to maximize the sustainability of their habits. They have recorded that 10% of the trash cleaned up fell under the category of Personal Protective Equipment,

such as masks, while approximately 30% was composed of plastic wrappers.

By mapping out the trends of litter throughout Colchester and other towns, the students spread awareness about which products are impacting communities the most, while also offering multi-use alternatives and habitual changes that are more sustainable.

The students said they'll be hosting many student-based community cleanups in the future, and hope to get other school districts involved in protecting the earth. The website is www.learngreen.org, and the group is also on Twitter and Instagram @learngreen365.

Fire Calls

From Dec. 12-18, the Colchester Hayward Fire Department responded to 52 calls: 46 were emergency medical calls, five were fire/fire-related calls, and one motor vehicle crash (a one-car crash). Calls included:

Fire: fire alarm, two; service call, one; structure fire, one; vehicle fire, one.

Medical: sick person, eight; fall injury, nine; cardiac distress, six; difficulty breathing, three; lift assist, five; mental disorder, four; back pain, one; abdominal pain, three; seizure, one; injured person, one; assault, one; bleeding, one; unconscious, one; choking, one; allergic reaction, one.

CHFD provided mutual aid four times last week: twice to East Haddam and once each to Marlborough and Bozrah. It received mutual

aid twice last week, from Gardner Lake Fire Department.

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.

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 office is open Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The office can be reached at 860-537-5189 or cfc06415@gmail.com.

Worship services are Sundays at 9 a.m.; masks required. For those wishing to worship from home, the service will be broadcast via Facebook Live each Sunday at 9 a.m. Worship videos are at www.colchesterfederatedchurch.org under the Worship & Sermons tab. Updated information is also on the church's Facebook page.

Christmas Eve Services: Dec. 24. 5 p.m.,

Family Service; 9 p.m., Lessons & Carols.

Sunday School: Sunday School is held during worship from September through June. Children in grades pre-K through 8 are welcome. The nursery is located just off the sanctuary. Visit the church website to register youth for Sunday School.

Twelve-Step Meetings: AA meets in the church library Monday-Wednesday and Friday at noon and Thursday at 10 a.m., and at 7:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. On Saturdays at 9:30 a.m., Al-Anon meets in the Jerusalem Room and AA meets in the Stage Room.

Boy Scout Troop 72: Meetings are held in the Stage Room every Monday at 7 p.m.

New Fire Chief Looking to Solicit Volunteers

by Diane Church

Incoming fire chief Steven Hoffmann said he hopes to increase volunteer involvement at Colchester's fire department and help young adults learn more about firefighting as a career.

The Board of Selectman unanimously chose Hoffmann, who currently lives in Oxford, as the new chief at a special meeting Dec. 6 and finalized his contract at its regular meeting Dec. 16. Hoffmann is scheduled to take over as chief on Jan. 3 with an annual salary of \$100,000. He replaces former Chief Walter Cox, who resigned early in 2020.

Sean Shoemaker has been serving as interim chief.

"I'm looking forward to working in Colchester," the 39-year-old Hoffmann said. "I like its New England feel."

Hoffmann grew up in Shelton and said he learned about firefighting from his grandfather, who was chief of the Middlefield Fire Department. When he was 16 years old, he became more interested in firefighting, so he went to his local fire station to fill out an application for junior firefighter and was accepted.

"I talked to people and was always trying

to better myself," he said. "I practically lived at the firehouse when I wasn't in school. I was soaking up knowledge like a sponge. It really prepared me."

After being certified as a firefighter, Hoffmann worked his way up in Shelton and eventually was hired as a firefighter at the Sikorsky Fire Department. He moved to Oxford and joined their fire department. His most recent job was at the Farmington Division of Fire Rescue Service.

"That was mostly administrative," he said. "It gave me insight and experience with budgets and dealing with personnel."

Hoffmann, his wife and two kids will be moving from Oxford to Colchester, but he will be first. The couple has a four-year-old son and a six-year-old daughter. Hoffmann describes them as "extreme extroverts" and added, "Making friends is not a problem for them."

Still, he said he wants them to finish up the school year before they move.

Hoffmann hopes his children will have the same opportunity to be firefighters as he did.

"It's a very rewarding type of job," he said.

"You get to help the community and positively affect lives. You make connections and be part of the community. And at conventions you can meet firefighters from all over the country and the world and learn how they fight fires."

The one problem that Hoffmann said he sees in the Colchester Fire Department and hears about from all over the country is a lack of volunteers.

"It's a national problem," he said.

He said reaching out to the young people might be a way to solve it.

His two goals, which he said are getting more volunteers and getting teens to explore firefight-

ing as a career, are intertwined.

"I'd like to start some firefighting classes at the high school," he said. "The kids could see what the fire department does here and elsewhere. They could make connections and develop relationships if they want to pursue firefighting as a career. There are many opportunities to get kids involved."

First Selectman Andreas Bisbikos said he feels that Hoffmann is the one for the job.

"His resume is fantastic," Bisbikos said. "He has a lot of experience. The interview was great. I think he will be here for the long haul. He will be positive face for the community."

Upcoming Senior Center Trips

The Colchester Senior Center is planning the following trips for 2022. Reservations should be made in person at the senior center, 95 Norwich Ave. Trips are available to senior center members and an adult guest, and are on a first-come, first-served basis; space is limited. Call the senior center at 860-537-3911 for more information.

Chicken Restaurant, Casino: Thursday, March 24, departing at 10:15 a.m. This is a trip to Wright's Chicken Farm in Rhode Island for lunch, followed by a stop at Twin River Casino. Cost is \$92/person.

Trip to See Jesus Christ Superstar: Sunday, April 3, at the Thomaston Opera House. There will be a pre-show lunch at the Black Rock Tavern and a reserved orchestra seat for the show. Cost is \$107/person, payable by cash or check.

New York Botanical Gardens: Wednesday, April 20. The day will start in Little Italy, featuring lunch at Ann & Tony's Restaurant (choose from Chicken Marsala, Veal Parmigiana or Eggplant Parmigiana, with salad, dessert and coffee or tea), then a trip to the gardens, to explore over 50 collections that are located throughout the 250 acres. Bus will depart at 7 a.m. and return at 8:30 p.m. Cost is \$129/person.

New York City Day Trip: Monday, May 9. Bus departs at 7 a.m. Start your day at the 9/11 Museum, which serves as the country's

principal institution concerned with the events of Sept. 11, 2001. You will have time to view both the museum and the twin reflecting pools. Spend some time in the afternoon at Chelsea Market for lunch on your own. Ascend to the top of the World Trade Center. Return in Colchester will be approximately 9:15 p.m. Cost is \$130/person, payable by cash or check.

Foster's Downeast Clambake: Wednesday, May 25. Bus departs at 8 a.m. for Foster's, located in York, Maine. The menu will consist of award-winning clam chowder, steamed clams and mussels, Maine lobster, sweet corn on the cob, red bliss potatoes, rolls and butter, and Foster's own blueberry crumb cake. Alternative meal choices are barbecue chicken and a vegetarian option. There will be a stop at Portsmouth, N.H., on the way home for some shopping. Return to Colchester at 7 p.m. Cost is \$119/person, payable by cash or check.

Atlantic City: June 7-9. Stay two nights at Resorts Casino Hotel, located on the northern end of the Boardwalk, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. Enjoy the resort's newest addition: Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville. This tropical-themed casino section now offers a 5 O'clock Somewhere Bar, Landshark Bar & Grill, and Coffee Shop. The trip includes a \$25 slot credit and two \$20 meal credits. Cost is \$325/person double occupancy, payable by cash or check only.



Wreaths Across America... There was once again a successful Wreaths Across America ceremony this year at Westchester Cemetery. Wreaths were placed for each fallen veteran, from the French and Indian War through the Vietnam War, buried in this cemetery. The Colchester Veterans Honor Guard took part in the ceremony. Photo by R. Avery.

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.

We wish the community a Happy & Safe Holiday Season and are so thankful for our warm welcome into the Community!

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Students Help Garden Club Decorate Planters... Annually, members of the Colchester Garden Club (CGC) volunteer to decorate the 14 planters throughout downtown for the holidays – and this year one of the CGC members decided to make it a community effort. The Deacon family coordinated with their sons’ teachers at Jack Jackter Intermediate School and Colchester Elementary School to make the ornaments to decorate the flagpole planter in front of Cragin Memorial Library. The family even involved the children’s library where the staff arranged for a special story time and ornament making activity to add to the outdoor display. All the ornaments on the treetops were made by Jessica Taylor’s fifth grade class, Melissa Elliott’s second grade class, along with some of the families’ friends. This year, the evergreens for the town planters were again donated by Evergreen Acres Tree Farm and Nursery on Windham Avenue, and Norway Spruce boughs from a CGC member for the evergreen sprays on the Colchester Historic District signs and embellishing the artificial wreaths on the downtown street signs. All are invited to stop by Cragin Memorial Library and see up close all the ornaments the children made. There are also decorated planters on Linwood Avenue, Lebanon Avenue, Cragin Memorial Library and Colchester Town Hall. If interested in joining or donating to CGC, email colchestergardenclub@yahoo.com.



CYSS News and Notes

Colchester Youth and Social Services has announced the following. For full program descriptions or more information, contact CYSS at 860-537-7255 or youthservices@colchesterct.gov. Register for programs online at www.colchesterct.gov/youth-social-services.

Youth Action Council: Thursdays, 2:15-4 p.m., for grades 7-12. As a member of the council, students will have the opportunity to engage with town leaders, travel to regional conferenc-

es, create activities for teens, and more. Register online.

Half Day Hooray: For children in grades K-5. On professional development-shortened days, Half Day Hooray takes place right at the child’s school and includes STEAM-related performances, hands-on activities, take-home crafts and more. Each session is \$10. Register online. Schedule is: Jan. 14: Winter Wonderland; Feb. 18: Funky February; March 24: March Madness; May 27: Last Blast.

Youth Center Activities – Drop-In: 2-4 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, for grades 6-8. During Drop-In, kids can have a snack, read/do homework, play pool, air hockey, video games or basketball, work on crafts, and more. Students will receive instructions for online registration at their first visit; they must be registered online to attend again.

After School Adventures: Tuesdays, 2-4 p.m., through the end of the school year. Grades 6-8 are invited to the Youth Center after school for fun activities and even some trips.

Christian Life Chapel News

Christian Life Chapel, located at 392 S. Main St., holds worship in-person at 10 a.m. Sundays. Follow the church on Facebook for the livestream.

For more information, call Pastor Don Rivers – the church’s bi-vocational pastor, who also serves as president for “Racing with Jesus Inc.” – at 860-398-9119 or visit christianlifechapel.org.

Senior Center News & Notes

Colchester Senior Center, 95 Norwich Ave., has announced the following. For full descriptions, call 860-537-3911, email csc@colchesterct.gov, or visit www.colchesterct.gov/senior-center. Items marked with a (Z) are held via Zoom.

Monday, Dec. 27: 9 a.m., Making Memories, Exercise with Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, Stitch & Fix with Maria, by appointment; 11 a.m., Learn to Sign; 12:30 p.m., Mahjongg; 1 p.m., Bridge; 1 p.m., Paper Quilling Workshop.

Tuesday, Dec. 28: 9 a.m., Making Memories; 9:45 a.m., Tai Chi; 10 a.m., AARP Managing Finances and Avoiding Fraud (Z); 12:30 p.m., Pinochle, In the Know; 1:30 p.m., Bingo.

Wednesday, Dec. 29: 9 a.m., Walking Group meet-up at the Air Line Trail in Amston; 9 a.m., Making Memories Program; 10 a.m., Adult Coloring, Sit & Be Fit; 1:30 p.m., Line Dancing.

Thursday, Dec. 30: 9 a.m., Exercise with Anne; 10 a.m., Sittercize, New Year Brunch & Bash; no Wii Bowling or yoga today; senior center closing at noon today.

Friday, Dec. 31: Senior center closed for New Year’s holiday.

Upcoming Programs: Zentangle Workshop: Fridays, Jan. 7-28, 10 a.m. Instructor Jamilah Zearth will lead this four-week workshop. Cost is \$25 and includes materials. Registration is limited.

Historical Society 2022 Calendars

The Colchester Historical Society’s 2022 calendar theme is “The Way We Were,” and features images of people working and playing in Colchester from 1890 to 1958.

The limited-edition 2022 Colchester Historical Society calendar sells for \$12. This year, for \$20, the society will 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. For an additional \$20, people can also add the illustrated history of Colchester, *Images of America: Colchester*, written by Colchester Historical Society Collections Chairman Gary Walter.

Calendars can be purchased at Nathan Livrant and Son Antiques at 168 South Main St.

(Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.); Copies Plus More at 31 Halls Hill Rd. (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.); and at the Colchester History Museum on Sundays, noon-2 p.m., through Jan. 29 (or until sold out). Look for the “Calendars for Sale Today” sign in front of the museum.

The calendar, *Historical Landmarks* book, and/or *Images of America: Colchester* book can also be mailed to you for an additional shipping fee. Contact the Colchester Historical Society at mail@colchesterhistory.org or 860 537-4230 to purchase your calendar.

Calendar sales provide funds for the Colchester Historical Society to carry on ITS mission of educating the community to the history of Colchester.

Ukrainian Catholic Church News

All are invited to worship each week at St. Mary Ukrainian Catholic Church, 178 Linwood Ave. The church offers Eastern Rite Divine services. Church doors are open for Divine Liturgy on Saturdays at 4 p.m. and Sundays at 9 a.m.; the Sunday service is bilingual.

For more information, call the church at 860-537-2069.

Fire Department to Benefit from Program

The Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department has been selected by local Stop & Shop store leadership as the benefiting nonprofit in the Stop & Shop Community Bag for the month of January 2022.

In the program, for every purchase of a \$2.50 reusable Community Bag at the Colchester Stop & Shop, 99 Linwood Ave., a \$1 donation will be sent to CHVFD.

We wish you a Happy Holiday & New Year!

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Paul Harris Fellow... Former Rotary Club of Colchester president Terry Congdon, right, recently presented Deb Martin, left, with a “Paul Harris Fellow” award in appreciation of her dedication to Rotary and the Colchester community.

All-State Spotlight: Kiera Stewart

by Josh Howard

Bacon Academy’s volleyball player Kiera Stewart was named to the Class M All-State first team by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association (CHSCA).

Stewart, a sophomore setter, was shocked when she received the news.

“I didn’t even know what All-State was or ECC All-Star, so it was really surprising to get those accomplishments,” said Stewart, who was also named All-Eastern Connecticut Conference (ECC) after guiding the Bobcats to a conference crown. “It’s a very big honor. When coach called me to tell me that I made it I was surprised and didn’t know what to say, but inside I was super excited.”

Head coach Scott Dumond called Stewart the team’s “heartbeat on the floor,” adding, “She not only inspires through her play but also through her words. She’s an unassuming young lady that cares about her teammates above herself and does all she can to make them better. She is the first non-senior captain I have ever chosen for this team for next season. I am proud to coach her.”

Stewart started playing volleyball in the seventh grade, joining her older sister, Cameron Stewart, who played for the high school before graduating in 2020. The sisters were following in the footsteps of their father, Dave Stewart, who was a former player and coach.

She found the sport enjoyable and became an instant floor general, settling quickly into her setter role.

“When I play I am not thinking about anything else, I just try and enjoy the game,” said Stewart. “I’m not a super extrovert person in daily life but when it comes to the sport I find it easy to talk to people and we can relate because we’re all playing the same sport. I think I just built up confidence over the years by playing with different players on different teams.”

Her freshmen season at Bacon was modified due to the COVID-19 restriction and Stewart was unsure how the team would fare this fall.

Following an up and down start, the team peaked late in the season and went on an eight-game winning streak.

The winning streak included wins over Plainville and New London to win the Division II ECC tournament. In the win over New



Bacon Academy sophomore Kiera Stewart was named to All-State in volleyball.

London, who was ranked No. 1 in the tournament, Stewart was named the Most Valuable Player.

“Against New London it was a very energetic atmosphere,” recalled Stewart, whose confidence grew as the team started winning. “As we got closer it was reflected on the court because we were more energetic and started communicating more. Everyone was treated equal and that’s why we had the success that we had. The seniors definitely supported me, they were very supportive.”

Following the win over New London, the team won a pair of state tournament games over Luralton and Prince before falling to Mercy in the Class M quarterfinals.

Overall, the Bobcats won 18 of 24 games and Stewart averaged a team-high 23 assists per game.

Stewart, who enjoys baking in her downtime, said she will play club volleyball in the offseason to work on getting stronger in all areas of her game.

Resident Honored

Nicholas Long of Boyden Real Estate in Colchester has been distinguished by *Broker Agent Advisor* as one of the best in the ‘2021 Seven Star’ category based on achievement, potential, leadership, ethics, community value, experience, capability, and trust.

“Nicholas Long of Boyden Real Estate exemplifies the type of professional we designed this award for,” said Chad Golladay, executive publisher of *Broker Agent Advisor*. “A true credit to their company, profession, and community both inside and outside of their real estate practice; one with whom the honor is truly ours in being able to share this award.”

Long may be found in *Broker Agent Advisor*’s national online directory of award recipients at brokeragentadvisor.com/brag-directory.

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School Leaders ‘Appalled’ by TikTok Threats

by Jack Lakowsky

State and local leaders have called on TikTok to overhaul its practices after a challenge on the video-sharing social media app encouraging a nationwide rash of school shootings led to threats and mass absenteeism.

Schools across the state increased police presences on Dec. 17, when the challenge said the acts of violence were to happen.

In Connecticut, none of the threats came to fruition.

Some schools closed for the day, including Norwich. Wolcott schools closed early to investigate threats.

In East Hampton and Portland, schools received no threats, according to the superintendents of both districts. Still, both East Hampton Superintendent Paul Smith and Portland Superintendent Charles Britton had strong words for TikTok, as well as the other major social media companies.

Both districts increased police presences in buildings.

“It’s completely irresponsible for these companies to allow this stuff on their platforms without immediate removal,” Smith told the *Rivereast* Monday. “It’s unforgivable and very disappointing, and they always say it isn’t their fault.”

Britton also lambasted what he described as

social media giants’ tendency to self-absolve.

Britton said in his message to school parents about this incident, he said he’s “outraged about this.”

“Not just TikTok, but Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, any platform allowing content that creates fear and division in schools is unacceptable. [We must] call on these billion-dollar companies to take reasonable steps to stop allowing their platforms to spread fear,” Britton told the *Rivereast*.

Both superintendents reported high numbers of absent students on Dec. 17.

Smith said in East Hampton, there were 20% more absentees than normal last Friday.

“We sent a clear message to parents that if anyone posts anything related to this TikTok nonsense or anything of any semblance to this anywhere, we would get the police right away,” said Smith, adding threats to school can lead to suspension or expulsion.

“We’re not going to allow school to be interrupted,” said Smith. “We’ll investigate any threat, anything that causes disruption.”

Smith said social media companies must improve their practices, must better monitor and regulate their content.

“You can’t post a video to Facebook or YouTube without approval,” said Smith. “Where are

the filters for posts about school violence?”

Britton said TikTok and other platforms need to remove the option of anonymous posting, saying if someone wants to make a threatening post, then “we want to know who you are.”

“If [companies won’t change], then it’s time to call on our elected leaders to explore regulation to rein it in. It can’t keep going on like this,” said Britton.

“With all we’ve learned about the dangers of social media to social and emotional wellbeing, the people at these companies in Silicon Valley must start prioritizing mental health,” Britton continued.

Britton said Portland students are taught about good online citizenship. Recently, Brownstone Intermediate School held a talk with parents about reasonable steps parents can take to monitor their kids’ online behavior.

The superintendents’ denouncement of TikTok joins a chorus of leaders statewide.

Last Friday, Connecticut Attorney General

William Tong told Hearst Connecticut Media that his office has been in “close contact” with TikTok over the last several weeks.

“We’re pushing them very hard,” Tong said. “They’re on top of this situation.”

Tong told reporters social media threats start on one platform, then snowball onto others.

According to *CT Insider*, TikTok said it’s cooperating with authorities.

WPVI-TV Action News of Philadelphia reports the shooting challenge began as a dare to ditch school. Earlier this year, a TikTok challenge stoked students to destroy school property.

“It is undeniable that TikTok and other social media platforms have been used to spread dangerous and reckless content encouraging self-harm, vandalism and abuse,” Tong said in a statement on Friday.

“I have spoken to TikTok leaders on multiple occasions about my concerns and while they have assured me that they have robust systems in place to police their content, I have made clear that whatever they have been doing is just not enough,” Tong said.

Winter Classes at Epoch Arts

There will be a variety of artistic classes offered this winter at Epoch Arts, for students in preschool-12th grade in an eight-week session.

There will be classes in ceramics, improv comedy, art, shadow puppetry, original theater productions and more. Classes begin Jan. 4 and are held at 27 Skinner St.

To register and see full class descriptions, visit www.epocharts.org.

EHACC Accepting Capstone Grant Applications

The East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission is accepting applications from East Hampton High School seniors for two \$250 grants to support an annual East Hampton High School capstone project.

The grant will help support two 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 grant will be invited to present their capstone project idea to commission members at an agreed-upon commission meeting. Deadline to apply is Feb. 1.

Applications are available at www.arts-foreasthamptonct.org and can be submitted to arts@easthamptonct.org, or can be mailed/dropped off at the town manager’s office at the East Hampton Town Hall, 1 Community Drive.

Senior Center News & Notes

East Hampton Senior Center, 105 Main St., is open. All participants should pre-register for programs prior to the event, online at myactivecenter.com or by calling 860-267-4426 or emailing seniorcenter@easthamptonct.gov. Senior center hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Masks are required for all, regardless of vaccination status. Visit the senior center online at www.easthamptonct.gov/east-hampton-senior-center.

Lunches: Served at the center to ages 60 and up on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Call the center to reserve a meal or sign up online. Reservations for the next day’s meal are due by 11 a.m. the day before. Masks are required; however, once you have your meal and are seated you can take off your mask. Meals are free, though a \$3 donation is requested.

Weekly Activities: Registration is required for all of the following; to do so, contact the center. **Quilting Group:** Mondays, 9 a.m. **Mexican Train Dominoes:** Mondays, 9:30 a.m. **Bible Study:** Tuesdays, 1 p.m. **Bingo:** Tuesdays, 1-2 p.m., in person and via Zoom. **Setback:** Thursdays 1:15-3:15 p.m. **Game Day:** Fridays, 10 a.m.-noon – space will be available and open to Mahjongg, cribbage, Mexican Train and

setback players. Registration required. **Textile Group:** Fridays at 1:30 p.m.

Writing Our Lives to Open Our Hearts: Thursdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m., or every other Wednesday (next date Jan. 5), at 9:30 a.m. Meet outside, weather permitting. In case of inclement weather, it will be inside, with masks recommended. Register online.

Movie Theater at the Senior Center: Monday, Dec. 27, 1 p.m. The holiday romantic comedy *Love Actually* will be shown. Pre-registration required.

Lunch and a Movie Discussion: Tuesday, Dec. 28, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., in person or via Zoom. Bring your own lunch. Discussed this month will be *Love Actually*. Pre-registration required.

Volunteer Shopping: The center has a program where a volunteer will shop for you. Call in your list to 860-267-4426 or email it to Jewling@easthampton.gov. The shopper will call you before the drop-off to let you know the cost of the groceries. You can write out a check for the amount, payable to the Town of East Hampton. The volunteer will drop off the groceries at your door and pick up the check in a pre-arranged designated spot.

Shrimp Scampi Dinner

The Missions Committee of The Second Congregational Church of Middle Haddam at 52 Middle Haddam Rd. is serving dinners to go on Thursday, Dec. 30, from 4-5 p.m., by reservation.

Dinners consist of extra jumbo shrimp scampi over linguini with lemon parsley sauce, roasted vegetables and chocolate gingerbread cake. The dinners serve four people, and cost is \$30.

Call Kathy at 860-510-8102 to place a reservation.

The church is handicapped-accessible, and a portion of the proceeds are donated to the East Hampton Fuel and Food Bank.

Congregational Church News & Notes

The Congregational Church of East Hampton, UCC, located at 59 Main St., holds in-person services every Sunday at 10 a.m. For the fully vaccinated, mask-wearing is not mandatory; those not fully vaccinated should continue to wear masks and practice social distancing. All are encouraged to wear a mask when indoors at the church. All services can be accessed via Zoom by going to the website at cc-eh.org.

The church **Christmas Eve service** of stories, hymns and lights will be held at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary.

Nursery care is available during Sunday services for children under 3 years old.

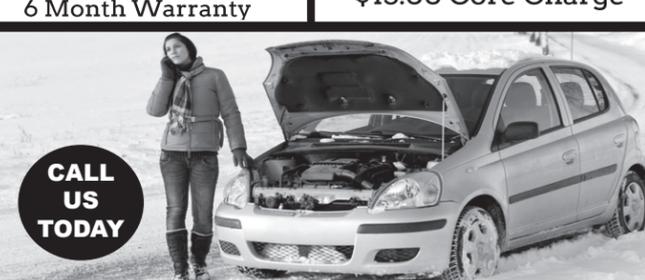
For more information about CCEH and its activities, visit cc-eh.org or call the church office at 860-267-4959 during office hours, Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-noon. In case of pastoral emergencies, Rev. Jim Latimer can be reached at 610-568-2480.



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East Hampton VFW Post 5095 wreath-bearers laid Wreaths Across America wreaths at the East Hampton Book of Names Memorial at a ceremony last Saturday, Dec. 18.

Wreaths Across America Recap

East Hampton's Wreath Across America ceremony took place at the Book of Names Memorial, located across the street from the East Hampton VFW Post 5095 at 20 North Maple St., last Saturday, Dec. 18. Both the post's color guard and the auxiliary to the post participated in a ceremony to honor East Hampton's veterans who served in all wars and are now deceased.

In addition, a wreath was laid in honor of East Hampton resident William A. O'Neill who served as the 84th governor of Connecticut from 1980-91. He served as a combat tail gunner, flying 12 combat missions on B-29 aircraft with the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War from 1950 to 1953. O'Neill passed in 2007. This year saw the addition of a ninth wreath, to represent the United States Space Force.

Also this year, the Post's Auxiliary decided to extend the honors to eight soldiers who were recently laid to rest at the State Veterans' Cemetery in Middletown. These soldiers had been forgotten as no family or friend came forward to claim their ashes for burial.

In a ceremony of the laying of the wreaths, veterans Victor Herbert Anderson, Orville K. Davis, Stephen Yoder, Joseph P. Galipeau, Lawrence W. Jordan, Bernard Joseph Lafleur, George Dalton Parker, and Lawrence Earl Tefft were memorialized in front of the Post's AH1G Cobra Gun Ship helicopter on North Maple Street. Their names were spoken aloud.

This year, more than 2,700 participating locations took part in National Wreaths Across America Day, with over 2.2 million wreaths

being laid. This was East Hampton's 14th year to conduct the Wreath Across America's ceremony.

Wreaths Across America is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded to continue and expand the annual wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery begun by Maine businessman Morrill Worcester in 1992. The organization's mission – Remember, Honor, Teach – is carried out in part each year by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in December at Arlington, as well as at thousands of veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states and beyond.

In East Hampton, in addition to the 17 wreaths that were laid during the ceremony, the VFW Auxiliary and Post also placed wreaths at various soldiers' gravesites in all 12 cemeteries in town. The public sponsored these additional wreaths by donating \$15 per wreath to help provide as many wreaths as possible.

One can sponsor a wreath for 2022 by sending a donation to the VFW Post 5095, 20 North Maple Street, East Hampton, CT 06424, c/o Linda Wallace, WAA East Hampton Leader. Checks should be made out to "VFW Auxiliary," with "WAA" on the memo line. Send name, address, phone, email, and the number of sponsored wreaths. Wreaths are \$15 each. Donations are also being accepted for the Veterans WAA Fund to help defray the costs of the auxiliary's monthly bingo at the Rocky Hill Veterans Hospital sponsored by the Post 5095 Auxiliary and for educational materials.

CERT Classes Coming in January

East Hampton residents looking for an opportunity to support the town's first responders as well as their fellow citizens are invited to apply for membership in the Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT).

CERT members are trained to provide local, immediate support to emergency responders during a disaster. They perform duties such as shelter support, crowd control, and assistance in evacuations. They also help year-round with preparedness outreach, drills, and fire safety education. There are roles on CERT for all skills, ages, and fitness levels.

A new class is being offered by the East Haddam CERT, and East Hampton residents are invited to participate. Four virtual classes will be offered Thursday evenings in January, and one in-person, all-day class will be held at Fire

Company 1 in East Haddam Saturday, Jan. 29. Deadline for registration is Dec. 30.

Topics covered include disaster preparedness, fire safety, first aid and medical operations, and search and rescue methods. Volunteers must attend all classes or make special arrangements with the instructor.

Following training, members are provided with all needed supplies including safety vests, identifying clothing, hard hats, safety gloves, etc. Members meet once a month for additional training and activity updates.

For more information about CERT, or to register for the upcoming training, contact Rich Klotzbier, emergency management director, at 860-267-0088 or firemarshal@easthamptonct.gov, or Karen Olson at 860-301-6486 or kayo4321@hotmail.com. Leave a message with your contact information.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church News

Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church holds live in-person services Sundays at 10:15 a.m. All are welcome. Enter via the front door and ushers will assist you. There is also a livestream link will be at the church's Facebook page, at www.facebook.com/BethlehemEH.

Christmas Eve Service: Friday, Dec. 24, 4 p.m. All are welcome to celebrate the birth of Christ in worship and song. Masks and social distancing required.

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. Pastor is the Rev. Tom Cowger. Refreshments are served after the service.

Christmas Eve Service: The family candlelight Christmas Eve service is at 5 p.m.

Puppet Ministry: Each Sunday, the church's Puppet Ministry features Digger the Dog and friends from Farmer M's Red Barn to help Cowger explain the message topic.

Bible Study: The Zoom Bible Study meets every other Thursday from 7-8:15 p.m. The next study will be Dec. 30. This is an interactive study of compassion as seen in Jesus.

Office Info: The office can be reached at 860-267-2336; hours are Monday-Friday, 12:30-4:30 p.m. The church website is at www.hncovenantchurch.org.

Honor Society Member

Brittany Kearney of East Hampton, a doctoral student at Quinnipiac University, has been recognized as a member of the Physical Therapy Pro Bono National Honor Society.

The society recognizes outstanding physical therapy students who provide pro bono service as a part of their education.

Christmas Tree Pick-Up

Boy Scout Troop 8 will offer a Christmas tree pick-up, for East Hampton, Middle Haddam and Cobalt residents only, on Saturday, Jan. 8. Suggested donation is \$10 per tree.

Reserve a pick-up at www.troop8.net. Register online and place the tree at the end of your driveway by 7 a.m. Jan. 8. If you are using either check or cash for your donation, place in envelope and tape to your front door. Checks should be made out to Boy Scout Troop 8.

If for some reason you cannot register on the website, you can register by emailing a message with your name, street address and phone number to trees@troop8.net.

No wreaths or garland, please. Trees will be recycled into mulch.



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Historical Society Open House

The Chatham Historical Society will have its monthly Open House Sunday, Jan. 2, from 2-4 p.m.

Both museum buildings and the 1840 one-room schoolhouse at 6 Bevin Blvd. will be open to the public.

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service

Haddam Neck Congregational Church will hold a candlelight Christmas Eve Service with traditional carols and Bible readings at 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 24, in the church sanctuary, 401 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck. All are welcome.

For more information, visit www.haddam-neckcongregationalchurch.org.

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East Hampton • East Hampton

Local's Collection Redefines 'Bellringer'

by Jack Lakowsky

When the *Rivereast* asked him, Richard McKinney couldn't name a favorite from among his collection of between 2,000 and 2,500 bells.

"There are so many, and I'm so proud of each one," said McKinney. "They're all over my living room and dining room. They're just so pretty."

McKinney said his treasures sit on several separate multi-shelfed, 8-foot-tall racks.

McKinney began collecting about a decade ago. He said the collection started with a few bells he got from his old job at the Bevin Brothers Manufacturing Company, otherwise known as Bevin Bells. There, McKinney assembled bells, a cell in the organism that gave East Hampton its nickname, Belltown.

Bevin Bells is in operation to this day, extant for about 200 years. Many famous bells were born in the old factory, including the one used to signify an angel getting its wings in *It's a Wonderful Life*, as well as the cowbell Will Ferrell played in the famous *Saturday Night Live* "More Cowbell" sketch.

At Bevin, McKinney assembled sleigh bells, liberty bells, cowbells and more.

McKinney's collection was also affordable. Most of them he bought at tag sales, many of them between .50 cents and a dollar. He said for some, he traveled between 40 and 50 miles, cruising for prizes in the spring and summer.



A single photo couldn't possibly capture Richard McKinney's impressive collection of more than 2,000 bells, gathered over the past decade. McKinney has traveled to tag sales throughout the state to accumulate his bells.

McKinney, a self-described "old-timer" who has lived 82 of his 83 years in East Hampton, said he's retired from his hobby, and that now he can sit back and enjoy the accumulation of a decade of collecting.

Middle School Volleyball Registration

East Hampton Middle School student/athletes in grades 7 or 8 who are interested in playing for the boys or girls volleyball teams can register on the website FamilyID.com.

Athletes must have a physical within a 13-month period in order to participate. Girls

volleyball will be offered to the first 60 girls who register. Deadline registration is on Monday, Jan. 24.

For more information, contact EHMS athletic director Michael Mercaldi at 860-463-6837.

Police News

12/1: Daniel Winslow, 46, of Moodus, was issued a summons for operating a motor vehicle under suspension, misuse of marker plates, operating a motor vehicle without insurance and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, East Hampton Police said.

12/4: Edwin Rodriguez, 38, of West Hartford, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, failure to drive right, failure to carry minimum insurance, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and misuse of marker plates, police said.

12/4: Richard Benoit, 57, of Moodus, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence and drinking while driving, police said.

12/5: Marc Mokrzycki, 43, of 6 East Hayes Rd., was issued a summons for operating with a suspended registration and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

12/7: Jamie Thorpe, 47, of 105 Daniel St., was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct and first-degree criminal mischief, police said.

12/7: After an investigation into a Nov. 12 single-car rollover crash on West High Street, wherein the operator left the scene, Harry Neumann, 35, of Middletown was issued a summons for misuse of plates, evading responsibility and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

12/8: Meshell Strickland, 31, of 1160 South Main St., was issued a summons for speeding, police said.

12/8: Randall Dumond, 34, of 29 1/2 N. Main St., was issued a summons for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, operating a motor vehicle with an expired license and operating

a motor vehicle without insurance, police said.

12/8: Lucha Wood, 26, of Glastonbury, was issued a summons for failing to renew registration and operating a motor vehicle without insurance, police said.

12/9: Molly Rothchild, 29, of 23 Main St., was arrested and charged with third-degree burglary, police said.

12/9: Jamie Thorpe, 47, of 105 Daniel St., was arrested and charged with criminal violation of conditions of release, police said.

12/10: Following a two-car crash on West High Street, Katherine Measimer, 48, of 17 Whittier Rd., was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, police said.

12/11: After an investigation into a one-car crash on Chestnut Hill Road, wherein the operator left the scene, Edward Clark, 52, of 30 N. Main St., was issued a summons for traveling too fast for conditions and evading responsibility, police said.

12/11: Jose Montanez, 49, of 50 Old West High St., was arrested and charged with second-degree breach of peace, second-degree threatening and second-degree reckless endangerment, police said.

12/15: Elvin Torres, 44, of Hartford, was arrested and charged with two counts of sixth-degree larceny, police said.

12/18: Nidia Gonzalez-Lopez, 35, of 48 Long Hill Rd., Middle Haddam, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny, police said.

Also, from Dec. 6-19, officers responded to eight motor vehicle crashes, 36 medical calls and 11 alarms, and made 37 traffic stops, police said.

EHACC Accepting Grant Applications

The East Hampton Arts & Culture Commission is accepting grant applications from East Hampton organizations and individuals with programs and/or projects designed to enrich the lives of town residents through the arts. Deadline to apply is April 1, to arts@easthamptonct.org.

There are two \$500 grants available to be awarded to individuals or organizations residing in East Hampton. The commission reserves the right to award a grant to an individual or organization it 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. An update of your progress will be required six months post-award date and a final report will be required one year post award date.

Applications are available at www.artsforeasthamptonct.org.

Parks and Rec. Selling Hockey Tix

Parks and Recreation is selling tickets to the Saturday, Feb. 26, Hartford Wolfpack game at the XL Center. Face-off is at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$18 each. To purchase, call 860-267-7300 or visit easthamptonrec.com.

CT Draft Horse Rescue Capital Campaign

CT Draft Horse Rescue (CDHR) is asking folks to join the effort to 'Raise the Barn' at its East Hampton farm, Autumn Ridge.

A 10,080-sq. ft. barn has been donated and funds are needed to bring the barn to Autumn Ridge and begin construction. The barn plans include: 42 stalls modified to a floor plan to suit farm needs, a medical stall, a vet/farrier treatment area, a feed room, meeting/classroom area, wash stalls, and bathrooms.

The Kaman Family Foundation has pledged \$100,000 when CDHR reaches the challenge amount of \$100,000 between now and the end of February.

Currently, the CDHR has taken in all of the horses it can safely accommodate; however, more horses are in need of care and are currently on a waiting list. Donations toward this Capital Campaign will help CDHR build a versatile barn. To donate, go to www.ctdraftrescue.org/raisethebarn.

CDHR is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located in East Hampton that is dedicated to saving the lives of draft horses that were bound for slaughter, in addition to victims of starvation, neglect or abuse.

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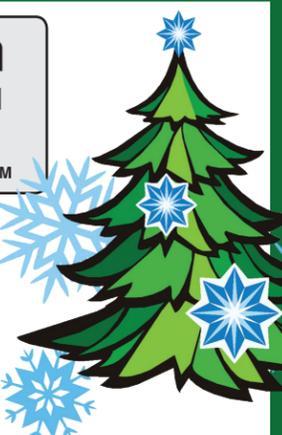



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Marlborough • Marlborough

New Assessor Opts for a Simpler Life

by Diane Church

After years of working in bustling towns in the New York City area, Marlborough's new assessor, Simon Wake, a certified assessor, decided to seek a simpler life in a smaller town.

He applied for the Marlborough position, and, after being interviewed and vetted by local officials and an assessor in a neighboring town, he was hired.

Wake started in the role in early November, working one day a week using vacation time from his previous job in Norwalk.

He became full-time on Nov. 29.

"It's more relaxed when you get further away from the city," he said. "People are nicer. And the employees here are absolutely brilliant to work with."

Wake, who is 51 years old, spent most of his assessor career in Fairfield County and did some work in Westchester County, N.Y., including wealthy towns such as Greenwich, Conn. and Scarsdale, N.Y.

Wake said, due to its proximity to the city, he saw a hurried attitude among many residents of the area.

"Everyone was in a rush," he said.

But Marlborough offered a chance to slow down and relax. It was more like the rural area in Scotland, where he grew up.

Wake was born in Scotland in 1970. As a young man, he joined the British Army and got to see foreign countries. After that he took some photography classes. He got a job as photographer on a cruise ship and got to see more of the world.

"The ship is like a floating village," he said. "When we stopped at a port and our work was done, we could get off the ship or sleep. I didn't sleep. I got to see Hong Kong, Thailand, Norway, Iceland and India." He said the key to visiting other countries is to "fit in and don't be an ugly tourist."

"I've been to 137 countries and the United States is the best," Wake said. "It's the most egalitarian and fair."

But he might not have moved here if he hadn't fallen in love.

"My then-girlfriend came to visit me at the family farm," he said. "I wanted us to stay there, but after her hand froze to the car door, she said she wouldn't live there. So we came here."

They married and, in 2001, went to Russia to adopt a Siberian boy.

"He's very much my son," Wake said. "He uses Scottish slang with an American accent."

The marriage eventually ended. Wake got interested in real estate and took the classes and exams to be a certified level 1 assessor. He said he has taken all the necessary classes and is planning to take the exam to be a level 2 assessor soon.

"I like real estate," he said. "It's a puzzle, kind of like approaching a Rubik's Cube. You can have two homes that seem very similar but have very different prices. So you investigate. One night he near a golf course and the other next to a highway. Those things affect property values. That's the fun thing about it."

Wake lives in Ansonia and, for now, commutes. The 32-mile drive takes about 50 minutes. But commuting to his former job in Norwalk, which was 37 miles away, took an hour and 45 minutes, thanks to Fairfield County's heavy traffic.

"I'm sure you've heard, I-95 is like a parking lot," he said.

Eventually, he said, he would like to move to Marlborough in a house large enough for him and his son, his girlfriend and her kids.

"I'm happy now that I'm actually moving," he said. "I'd like to get a place close enough to Town Hall that I can walk or ride my bike to work."

Marlborough needed help in hiring an assessor, so First Selectman Greg Lowrey asked John Chaponis, who serves as assessor in Colchester and Andover, and Hebron Assessor Debra Gernhardt for some help.

"I did a presentation to the Board of Selectmen meeting about the process and called Wake a few times to talk about the job," Chaponis said. "It didn't take a lot of time. I was just helping a neighboring town, which is what we all do."

"Simon will be an asset to Marlborough," Chaponis added. "He has 26 years of experience and is very qualified!"

Senior Center News and Notes

Marlborough Senior Center, 17 School Dr., is open for activities. Call 860-295-6209 for the center's hours and more information. The senior center has announced the following:

Transportation: Transportation to the senior center, shopping, medical and non-medical appointments will be offered each day from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., with a 36-hour advance reservation. Masks are required as well as appropriate distancing. **Assistance** is offered each day from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The **Food Bank** is located at 3 Willhenger Drive (860-295-6008) and is open every Tuesday from 10 a.m.-noon and 3:30-5:30 p.m. It is open to qualified residents in need of food. Transportation for seniors and/or physically challenged individuals is available; call the senior center if needed.

Merry Christmas and Happy & Healthy New Year to all my wonderful customers, family & friends!



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New Year's Eve at Arts Center

There will be a New Year's Eve gathering at Marlborough Arts Center, 231 N. Main St., on Friday, Dec. 31, from 6-9 p.m., weather permitting. Bring your own snack and drink.

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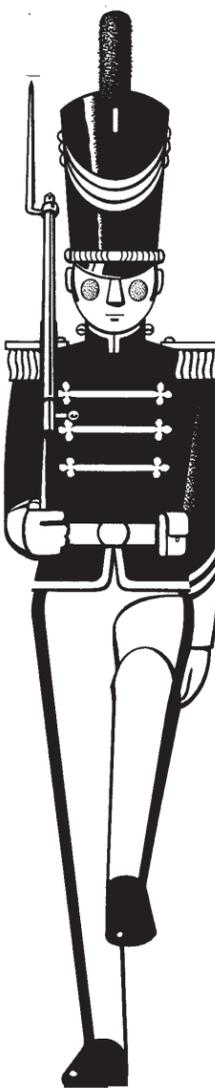
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Congregational Church News & Notes

Sunday in-person worship at the Congregational Church of Marlborough, United Church of Christ, 35 South Main St., is at 10 a.m. Churchgoers are asked to wear a mask. The worship service is also livestreamed at mcc.marlconchurch.org for those unable to attend in person.

Christmas Eve: Candlelight service with Holy Communion will be in person in the sanctuary at 9 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 26: Celebration will be a traditional Moravian Love Feast at 10 a.m. which has been celebrated almost every year at MCC since 2003. This service will include traditional Christmas carols, familiar Christmas scriptures, and the serving of hot cocoa and cookies with time set aside during the service to visit and greet other parishioners.

Sunday School is in-person for children ages 3 to grade 8 and all children are welcome to attend.

Faith Formation Study Group: Meets

Thursdays, upstairs in the lounge, at 10:30 a.m. All are welcome.

Mission Support in December will go to the York Correctional Resettlement Program. Donations to missions or for any other giving may be sent to the church at P.O. Box 57, Marlborough, CT 06447 or placed in an offering box on a Sunday.

AA: Meets downstairs in the Great Hall Wednesdays with two meetings, noon and 7:30 p.m.

Second Blessings Thrift Shop: The shop has closed for restocking and will reopen Friday, Feb. 4, with new spring and holiday merchandise. The shop continues to sell through eBay at bit.ly/MCCEbay.

General Info: Worship services and programs are open to all. The church is an Open and Affirming faith community. For more information about the church or its programs, call the church office at 860-295-9050 or Faulhaber's direct line at 860-295-0432.

St. John Fisher Church News & Notes

St. John Fisher Roman Catholic Church is located at 30 Jones Hollow Rd. Pastor is the Rev. Thomas J. Sas, John McKaig is deacon emeritus and the pastoral assistant is Holly Bangham. The church office can be reached at 860-295-0001; hours are Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. People are asked to call before heading over or connect via the phone or email at stjohnfisher30@yahoo.com.

COVID-19 Protocol: For the fully vaccinated, masks are optional. For the unvaccinated, masks are required. Call the office for more information.

Weekend Masses: 4 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday. All are welcome.

Weekday Mass: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament: Sundays, 4-4:45 p.m.

Community Outreach and Service: Food drives are held the second full weekend of each month for Marlborough Food Bank; you may also bring food or household donations directly to the Marlborough Food Bank Monday and Tuesday mornings. Sandwich-making and collection continues on the last Thursday of the month for St. Vincent de Paul in Middletown.

Seasonal outreach to include the Community Garden to benefit the Marlborough Food Bank and various giving programs to support area organizations continue. Other scheduled service opportunities can be found on the church website, www.stjfcchurch.org.

Other Programs and Offerings: For more information on such programs as faith formation for children, youth and adults, youth group, RCIA or Knights of Columbus, call the office, visit the church website, or look for the church on Facebook (Saint John Fisher Roman Catholic Church).

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.

Youth Programs: Acrylic Landscape Painting: For grades 2 and 3. At Marlborough Elementary School Wednesdays, Jan. 5-26, 3:30-5 p.m. All materials provided. Students are encouraged to bring a snack. Fee: \$90/residents, \$95/non-residents.

Tiny Twirlers Dance Class: For ages 2-3 with caregiver. At Dance Dynamics in Hebron Thursdays, Jan. 6-March 17, 5:15-5:45 p.m., or Saturdays, Jan. 8-March 19, 9-9:30 a.m. Fee: \$130.

Dazzling Dancers 2: For ages 5-7. At Dance Dynamics in Hebron Saturdays, Jan. 8-March 5, 9:45-10:45 a.m. This is a tap/ballet combo class. Fee: \$153.

Netto Indoor Soccer: For grades 5-6. Games will begin week of Jan. 10. Games will be played after school Mondays and Wednesdays at Marlborough Elementary School. Fee is \$75 and participants will receive a T-shirt.

Kids/Family Sew - Fleece Dog/Cat Bed: For all ages. Monday, Jan. 10, 5:30-7 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Participants must have their own machine. All supplies are included. Fee: \$38/residents, \$43/non-residents.

Kids/Family Sew - Fleece PJs: For all ages. Monday, Jan. 17, 5:30-7 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Participants must have their own machine. All supplies are included. Fee: \$43/residents, \$48/non-residents.

LEGO - Pokemon Engineering: For grades K-2. Tuesdays, Jan. 18-Feb. 22, 3:15-4:45 p.m., at MES. Fee: \$120/residents, \$125/non-residents.

LEGO - Pokemon Master Engineering: For

grades 3-6. Thursdays, Jan. 20-Feb. 24, 3:15-4:45 p.m., at MES. Fee: \$120/residents, \$125/non-residents.

Artventureswithkids: For grades K-4. Thursdays, Jan. 20-Feb. 24, 5:45-6:45 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Fee: \$132/residents, \$138/non-residents.

Mad Science: For grades K-6. Mondays, Jan. 24-March 21, 3:15-4:15 p.m., at MES. Fee: \$150/residents, \$155/non-residents.

Adult Programs: Barre/Pilates: Mondays, Jan. 3-31, 5-5:45 p.m. Fee: \$75, or a \$15 per week to drop in. Class instruction is virtual or in person.

Yoga Mondays: Jan. 3-31, 6-7 p.m. Fee is \$75 or \$15 per week to drop in. Class instruction is virtual or in person.

Yoga Tuesdays: Jan. 4-25, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Fee is \$60 or \$15 per week to drop in. Class instruction is virtual or in person.

Pilates/Barre: Wednesdays, Jan. 5-26, 5-5:45 p.m. Fee is \$60 or \$15 per week to drop in. Class instruction is virtual or in person.

Adult Tap: For ages 18 and up. Thursdays, Jan. 6-March 17, 7:15-8 p.m., at Dance Dynamics in Hebron. Fee: \$170.

Zumba: Thursdays, Jan. 6-Feb. 10, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at MES. Fee is \$50/resident, \$55/non-resident, or a \$10 per week drop-in fee.

Women's Self Defense: For ages 16 and up. Saturday, Jan. 8, 10-11 a.m., at Hwang's Martial Arts. Taught by fourth degree black belt Michael Hwang. Fee: \$70/resident, \$75/non-resident.

Adult Sew 101 - Learn Your Machine: For ages 16 and up. Monday, Jan. 24, 5:30-7 p.m., at Marlborough Senior Center. Participants must have their own machine. Fee: \$38/residents, \$43/non-residents.

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Budding Painters Draw Inspiration from Teacher's Art

by Diane Church

Lydia Merritt is one of Marlborough Elementary School art teacher Denise Ketterer's most enthusiastic fans.

Merritt, a fourth grader at the school, said she enjoys viewing photos of her teacher's artwork on the wall of a little hallway off the art room.

"We like to look at her pictures," the student said on a recent Wednesday afternoon at the school. "It gives us inspiration for our own."

Merritt is one of seven students in grades four to six who gather weekly after school to learn landscape painting. The students choose a landscape photo, either their own or one that Ketterer provides, and work on the painting for a month, picking up techniques from their teacher along the way. Techniques are taught to the entire group, then students work on their paintings individually. If they have questions or want additional advice, they bring their painting up to Ketterer's desk to get her input. She instructs them on color choices and blending, brush techniques, such as feathering, and how to apply shading so that it looks like natural shadows.

They use the same sturdy paper plate every week as their palette so they remember which colors they used.

Fourth grader Delaney Melquist was pleased with a new technique she applied to her painting.

"It has shading. I'm happy with it," she said,

adding, "I like this class because we get to choose what we paint."

These youngsters are not here to churn out landscape paintings in half an hour, as the late Bob Ross of the PBS show "The Joy of Painting" used to do. In the show, Ross made it look easy to paint a landscape worthy of hanging on the living room wall, but, as the students in this class are learning, art takes time and skill.

"My painting looks pretty, but it was a bit challenging," fourth grader Paris VanMeter said. "I like the sky and the trees."

"I like my pine trees," said sixth-grader Tyler Kern. "And I've never painted a waterfall before."

Ketterer is an artist and used to sell her paintings. Thirty-four years ago she began teaching art and started the afterschool program a decade ago. Students go to the art class immediately after school and parents pick them up afterward.

A few years ago Ketterer decided the students deserved some recognition, so she started a student art show. Parents flocked to the school to see the artwork.

"Every student had at least one piece in the show," she said. "I put up a thousand pieces for the one night show, and then had to take them down again the next day for class."

Last year it became a virtual art show, which was much easier.

After painting time is done, the students



Marlborough Elementary School fourth-grader Paris VanMeter works on a painting. She is one of seven students who gather weekly after school to learn landscape painting from teacher Denise Ketterer.

clean off their brushes and place them on Ketterer's desk. If a brush is not completely clean, Ketterer calls the student back and has them

clean it again.

"I think the arts are so important for kids," she said. "Especially now."

Richmond Library News & Notes

Richmond Memorial Library, located at 15 School Drive, has reopened its building to the public, but curbside pickup is still being offered. For more information and full program descriptions – and to inquire about available curbside printing services – call the library at 860-295-6210 or visit richmondlibrary.info.

Building and Curbside Hours: Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.-

p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Meet Polly the Penguin: Polly the Penguin is new to Marlborough and has been visiting the library. She gets a little curious at night when staff go home and goes exploring, oftentimes getting lost. From now through February, kids are invited to help find Polly. Each Monday she will move to a new location. If you find her, you'll earn a prize.

Portland • Portland

First Congregational Church News

First Congregational Church of Portland, located at 554 Main St., is open for in-person worship and church school Sundays at 10 a.m. Masks are required.

The Sunday worship service is livestreamed on the church's YouTube channel, First Church of Portland CT, and a recording is also available for those who wish to worship at a later time.

The Christmas Eve Services of Lessons and Carols on Dec. 24 will be held at 4 and 10 p.m. The Wild Notes, comprised of musicians Kasha Breaux, John Kalinowski and Mickey Koth, will play Celtic Christmas music at each service, including a 10-minute Prelude at 3:50 p.m. and 9:50 p.m. The choir will sing during the 10 p.m. service. The Christmas Eve offering will go to Portland Fuel Bank. These services will be livestreamed and available on the church's YouTube channel.

On Sunday, Dec. 26, a service will not be held at the church, as the congregation is participating in the 9:30 a.m. Ecumenical Service of Lessons and Carols at Trinity Episcopal Church

in Portland.

On Sunday, Jan. 2, the 10 a.m. service will be held in the church and Epiphany will be celebrated.

First Church Nursery School has openings in its preschool program. The 3-year-old program runs Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9-11:30 a.m. and the 4-year-old program runs Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9-11:30 a.m. Contact Amy Jahnke at 860-342-1111 or 1stchurchnurseryschool@gmail.com for more information.

First Congregational Church of Portland is a member of the United Church of Christ, and is an open and affirming congregation, welcoming everyone.

To join church mailing lists (both email and regular mail), email first.church.pct@sbcglobal.net or call 860-342-3244. For more info, look for the church on Facebook at The First Congregational Church of Portland, or visit www.firstchurchportlandct.org.

Zion Lutheran Church News

Zion Lutheran Church, located at 183 William St., invites all to worship. Sara Stall-Ryan is pastor.

Sunday worship services with Holy Communion are held in-person at 9 a.m. The church continues to follow CDC recommendations with masks required. For those who prefer virtual services, a recording of the service is posted on YouTube by 9 a.m. the following Monday morning.

Sunday School classes are held the first and third Sundays of each month, from 10:15-11 a.m., in person or, if circumstances necessitate, online via email. To register your child, call Sylvia LeShane, Sunday School director, at 860-342-0658.

Adult Bible Study will continue on the sec-

ond and fourth Sundays in January and February. The focus of this study will be season one of the series *The Chosen*, using the book *What Does It Mean to Be Chosen?*

Christmas Services: The Christmas Eve service will be offered at 5 p.m. on Dec. 24. Zion will participate in the ecumenical Lessons and Carols service offered at Trinity Episcopal Church, 9:30 a.m., on Dec. 26. There will be no service at Zion that day.

The community is welcome to participate in all worship services and special events. For more information about any church activities, or if in need of pastoral assistance, call 860-342-2860, email zion.lutheran@snet.net or visit zionlutheranportland.org.

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by George M. Mantikas, DMD

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Cavity-causing bacteria and the damage that results can be controlled by dealing with bacterial plaque activity every day. It takes the combined effort of conscientious daily brushing and flossing, smart eating, and regular professional visits to promote total oral health as well as complete body health. If it's been too long since you treated your teeth and gums to professional care, now would be a good time to call us for an appointment.

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PHS Senior Saves, Sinks and Snaps Shots

by Josh Howard

Hannah Brunk is taking full advantage of her senior year at Portland High School.

When she's not blocking shots in soccer or draining shots in basketball and golf, she's capturing the perfect shot for her budding photography hobby.

Currently, Brunk is starring on the PHS girls basketball team, debuting with a 21-point, seven-rebound performance as the Highlanders defeated Old Saybrook 43-35 on Dec. 14.

The productive Portlander is coming off a fruitful fall in which she protected the net for the girls soccer team that advanced to the Shoreline Champion and she doubled as the official photographer for the Cromwell/Portland football team that won a state championship for the first time since the schools merged on the gridiron.

It turns out that saving a shot in soccer and snapping the perfect shot on the sidelines have similarities.

"I get adrenaline with both, but when I make a save I am automatically proud of myself and when I take a picture I think of [the players'] reactions first and I hope they like it," Brunk said.

Sports and photography are just a few of the many hats that Brunk wears at PHS. She serves as the President of National Honor Society, President of Class Act, Treasurer of the senior class, Secretary for Key Club, and is part of the school's a cappella group.

Her attraction to athletics started with cheer and dance in grade school before she shifted her priorities to basketball and soccer. She describes herself as "very competitive", which stems from being in an athletic and ambitious household.

Her older sister, Maddie Brunk, made headlines on the basketball courts and softball fields at Portland High before graduating in 2020. Her twin brother, Owen Brunk, is a two-time All-State player on the state champion football team.

Capturing photos during her twin's final high school football season boosted Brunk's photography venture. She originally started taking free photos for friends as part of her capstone project and then began preserving memories for the football team. The team used the photos on social media and Brunk posted the shots to her official Instagram account @hbrunkphotography.

"My friend had a camera and I would borrow it. I used it so much that I knew I had to buy myself one because I was using hers way too often," said Brunk, who purchased a Nikon camera in the summer. "I made my Instagram and more people started reaching out to me. Then people in school that I had never really talked to reached out to me when word got out that I wasn't charging anything."

She then received her first photo shoot request from outside the community when a student from Haddam-Killingworth reached out, promoting Brunk to describe herself as "a kid on Christmas."

Owen, who is a minute older, then asked his slightly younger sibling to take photos during the games.

"I did one game to test it out and I loved it," said Brunk, who received positive feedback from the football community. "Parents would come up and thank me. I was doing it for other people, but I also loved doing it for myself. The fact that I was able to do that for others sealed the deal for me. It was awesome."

She found it difficult at times to watch her brother's football games, especially the championship game, through a lens. However, she got satisfaction from knowing she was capturing small moments that will last forever.

The relationship between the twins is both competitive and encouraging.

"I think it pushes us because we are so competitive. It's helped me tremendously," said Brunk. "He pushes me, he wants me to do my best and academically I am very involved with the school and he sees that and wants to get more involved. I think we complement each other very well."

Brunk's vibrant personality allows her to adapt to any situation. In soccer, she started as a field player before realizing she was a natural in goal.

"I am a very vocal person and being the goalie I was like the quarterback," stated Brunk. "I felt it better suited me because I was able to communicate with everyone."

She created her own picturesque moment during the Shoreline tournament when she, with the help of a stout defense, blanked previously undefeated Cromwell (1-0) to advance to the Shoreline championship game.

"We have been rivals with Cromwell forever and when you walk into those games you want



Portland High senior Hannah Brunk is a three-sport athlete and promising photographer.

to win," recalled Brunk, who outdueled Cromwell's All-State goalie Lily Kenney. "[Lily] is just amazing and going into that game I knew I had to step it up and be the best that I can be."

Brunk hopes to create even more memorable moments on the basketball courts this winter before teeing off one last time for the reigning Division IV state champion Highlanders golf team in the spring. Brunk said she uses the golf as a way to unwind after hectic fall and winter seasons.

The multitalented Brunk hasn't made any college plans yet, but is leaning towards schools in the south to major in business or marketing, and possibly a minor in photography. Her parents, Earl and Alissa, have always encouraged their kids to explore all the option available to them.

"My dad has always said he wanted us to experience a whole new life after high school. We

want to experience something else because we know we can come back," said Brunk.

No matter where she ends up, Brunk will be taking advantage of every moment and capturing those moments on her camera.

"I never thought I would have taken as good of quality pictures as I did and when I do it's a great feeling," stated Brunk.

Police News

12/13: Wayne Neumann, 49, of 61 Prospect St., was charged with violation of a protective order, Portland Police said.

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St. Mary Church News

St. Mary Roman Catholic Church is located at 45 Freestone Ave. The church office can be reached at 860-342-2328. Office hours are 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday-Friday. For more information, visit www.stmaryportlandct.org. Pastor is the Rev. John Antonelle. Masks are strongly recommended.

Christmas Mass: Dec. 24, Christmas Eve, 4 p.m. pageant (livestreamed) and 7 and 10 p.m. The choir's Christmas concert will be at 9:30 p.m., before the 10 p.m. Mass.

Dec. 25, Christmas Day, 9 and 11 a.m.; Dec. 26, The Holy Family, 8 and 10:30 a.m.; Dec. 31, New Year's Eve, 6 p.m.; Jan. 1, New Year's Day, 10 a.m.

Weekend Mass: 5 p.m. Saturday and 8 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Sunday. The 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass is livestreamed each week; visit the parish website for more information.

Weekday Mass: Monday and Tuesday at 8 a.m., and Friday at 12:10 p.m.

Confession: Saturday at 4-4:45 p.m., or call Antonelle for an appointment.

Other Programs: For information on faith formation programs, baptisms, blessings of marriages, Knights of Columbus, the St. Mary Ladies Guild and more, call the church office.

Little League Registration Open

Registration is open for Portland Little League's spring 2022 season and winter clinics. PLL offers baseball and softball programs for players ages 5-14.

Visit www.portlandlitttleleague.com to register. Registration for the winter clinics end Feb. 12, and for the spring season ends March 1.



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Holiday Book Store

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

The sale features a variety of used books and a large selection of puzzles, children's board books, holiday books, coffee table books, games, CDs and DVDs. Many items are like new.

All proceeds benefit programs funded by the Friends, including the Library's DVD collection, Museum Pass Program and a variety of children's, family and adult programs held throughout the year.

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Curley Looks to Coming Year and Beyond

by Jack Lakowsky

Portland's new First Selectman, Republican Ryan Curley, said so far, he's bought just one new item for his office - a white board where he outlines goals, both for campaign promises and longstanding town projects.

"It's been going well," Curley said of his new job Tuesday.

Portland elected Curley in the November election. The Republican succeeded 20-year Democratic First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, who did not run for reelection.

Curley was previously Portland's town clerk and served on the Board of Selectmen when he was 24. Curley's opponents in the election remarked on what they called his inexperience. In his mid-30s, Curley's involvement in town government goes back well over a decade.

"I've been trying to work to get everything I ran on into place," Curley told the *Rivereast*.

High-up on Curley's to-do list is filling his old position as town clerk. The position has been vacant since Nov. 16, when he took office.

His former assistant is acting as interim town clerk, and is performing the job well, Curley said. There've been no disruptions to the clerk's office, Curley added.

"She did have some excellent training," Curley quipped.

Curley continued to say the town is getting applications for the role, and interviews will be conducted soon.

He said he plans to have a candidate at the Jan. 19 Board of Selectmen meeting. If the candidate gets a thumbs-up, they'll start the job the very next day.

With 2022 on the horizon, Curley's white board is etched with goals for the coming year.

Curley ran on a pledge to modernize Portland's government, improving the tech of its services.

The first selectman said his goal is to have the town accepting credit card payments before the end of 2022. He said he's spoken with the town's finance administrator and is firm that he's "going to make that happen."

Curley named fixing an out-of-service bridge at the town reservoir as another goal for 2022.

"[The bridge] was something brought to my attention during the election," he said. "It's something I would've wanted to have fixed by now, but it'll definitely be done within the year."

Yet another entrée on Curley's plate is the 2022-'23 municipal budget. He said his predecessor produced wise budgets, and that he'd like to continue this momentum.

"I think this budget season is going to be interesting, especially with the revaluation," Curley said. "I'm hopeful that once we start looking at requests from the departments, everything will be reasonable and prudent."

Curley, in an interview during campaign season, said during his previous tenure on the select board, he took a more hardline approach, but that now he takes a more holistic view, not resisting something just because of an expensive price tag.

Curley said sometimes, not investing in the present can cause higher expenses in the future. A balance between keeping expenses as low as possible and investments is key, he said.

"What's on my mind constantly is how to do the most with the least amount of capital," Curley said.

A fiscal year budget is precisely where a town can name and outline its goals, as well as the price of those goals. Major projects often take far longer than a single fiscal year, but each budget can be a step toward completion.

"I wish I could say the track at the high school will be replaced right away," Curley said, adding that it is a long-term need that will take time.

Water, both its delivery infrastructure and price, are Portland's perennial banes. Over the past few years, the Metropolitan District Commission, the town's provider, has spiked prices many-fold.

The town's water and sewer subcommittee, led by Curley's election opponent Jim Tripp, decided the town's best option to alleviate the price burden is for the town to seek its own wells.

This effort is still in early stages. Curley said the town is currently seeking to contract a consultant who will help locate wells. In the coming months, the town is going to narrow choices down to two or three possibilities, get prices, and proceed from there.

Portland's water infrastructure is aging and in need of a facelift.

In a recent select board meeting, public works director Bob Shea requested \$1 million from the town's allotment of American Rescue Plan stimulus money.

"Our water and sewer system is old," Shea told the board. "It keeps failing and needs work."

The town still has some asbestos pipes, Shea said.

This chunk of money would only go far enough to fund a few projects, one of which being a \$600,000 replacement of pipes on Russell Avenue.

The selectmen set a public hearing about this matter for its Jan. 5 meeting.

A major project at a more advanced stage is the remediation of three inert brownfields on Brownstone Avenue. Two of the parcels have been used for parking by the Brownstone Discovery Park.

The third, 248 Brownstone, is a bit more

troublesome, and needs to be paved over due to its contamination. At the start of the month, the select board approved a contract with an environmental firm that will clean up the parcel and eventually getting it back on the tax rolls.

The price of that work is about \$855,000. Funds are derived from a pair of grants the town received this year and last.

Brainerd Place, the former Elmcrest property, is another long-languished development project. Curley said demolition has begun and is expecting substantial updates early in 2022.

"Progress there means a lot to people," he said.

Yet another item on Curley's agenda is getting the Portland Agricultural Fair back on its feet. Multiple issues, including location, caused the fair to cancel this year.

Curley said he was surprised at the huge range of the role of chief executive. For example, he was somewhat perplexed when someone asked where to bring donations of frozen turkeys for Thanksgiving. He said rather than redirect, he'll often find the answer for people himself.

"Every day, any time the phone rings it's something different," he said. "I'm learning a lot of different things. I came in with a high level of understanding of the town, and now I can really dive deeper into the different departments, get more of an understanding of their needs."

Though in the role for less than two months, Curley said his favorite part so far was when he attended the town's Christmas tree lighting at Brownstone school.

"It was my first event as first selectman," he said. "It's such a great event. Town events have



Ryan Curley

been so tough to have with COVID. I think we have such a special community in Portland, and I want to make sure we can offer reasons to safely get together. We have a lot to celebrate."

PSC Winter Soccer Experience

Portland Soccer Club announces a 2022 Winter Soccer Experience for Recreational and Travel Division players. The program will run for nine weeks (Jan. 15-March 13), and is open for registration. Visit clubs.blue-sombbrero.com/portlandsoccerclub to sign up. Registration deadline is Friday, Jan. 7.

Cost for Recreational players is \$40 for the program, and cost for Travel players is \$50. Recreational players (birth years 2013-2016) will play futsal, an electric indoor soccer program geared toward player development through increased scoring and touches on a heavier ball. Registered players will attend one-hour sessions on Saturdays at Gildersleeve School between noon and 3 p.m.

Travel players (birth years 2008-2013) will

participate in a program involving futsal and indoor soccer. Futsal will take place Saturdays between 3 and 5 p.m. at Gildersleeve School, and the indoor soccer sessions will be on Sundays between 4 and 6 p.m., at the Oakwood Soccer Facility in Glastonbury. For Travel players, some weeks will involve only Futsal, some weeks will involve only Oakwood, and some weeks may involve both options.

PSC's Winter Soccer Experience will be run by PSC's volunteer coaches for Recreational and Travel players. Specific details for the weekly plans, including which one-hour time slots will be devoted to which age groups within the Recreational and Travel divisions, will be determined once registration numbers are complete.

Senior Center News & Notes

The Waverly Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave., is open Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., and Friday, 8 a.m.-noon. For more information or to register, call 860-342-6760.

New Year's Eve Early Celebration: Monday, Dec. 27, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Have a free light lunch and then listen to music by Jim Harkins to ring in the New Year a tad bit early. Seating is limited. Call the center to register.

Live Music Returns: Jam Session: Enjoy live music for free on Tuesdays, Jan. 4 and 11, beginning at 7 p.m.

Third Thursdays: Every third Thursday of the month will be an "open" performance for any artist who would like to play a tune, share poetry or a dance routine. There will be a Thankful Light Dinner option for \$5. If you choose not to eat, the music fee is \$2 to listen to the artists. Pre-registration is appreciated.

Corn Hole: Mondays beginning Jan. 3, 2:15 p.m.

Beginner Exercise Tap Class: There will be a free trial class - sitting or standing - Tuesday, Jan. 4, at 1:30 p.m. After the free class, you can sign up for two more January classes at \$5 per class.

Qi Gong with Lisa: Wednesdays, 1-2 p.m. The four-week session is \$40. There must be seven students to run this class.

Tai Chi with Lisa: Tuesdays in January, 6-7 p.m. Fee is \$40 for the four-week session. Minimum of seven students needed. Masks and social distancing required.

Watercolor with Bivenne: New six-week session begins Tuesday, Jan. 11. Email bivenne@yahoo.com for full details.

Teacup Bingo: Monday, Jan. 10, 1 p.m. Registration requested.

Zoom Tai Chi with Tom Cushing: A new 8-week session begins Tuesday, Jan. 4, from 10:30-11 a.m. Registrations now being accepted. Fee is \$40, payable to Portland Senior

Center.

Elder Justice Hotline: Attorney General William Tong and state Rep. Christie Carpino will discuss the hotline Wednesday, Jan. 5, at noon. Pre-register by calling the center.

Thursday Lunches: Jan. 13 and 27, 12:15 p.m. Enjoy soup and sandwiches from Melilli Caffè. Pre-register and pay (\$5) by the Tuesday before.

Van Trip: Wednesday, Jan. 12, departing at 11:30 a.m. for Joey Garlic's for lunch. Transportation fee is \$5. If you need to be picked up at home, contact the center in advance.

Weekly Schedule: Mondays: Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; Bingo, 1-3 p.m.; **Tuesdays:** Bears on a Journey, 9:30-11 a.m. - making fleece teddy bears for cancer patients; Watercolor Lessons: 9:30 a.m.-noon - email bivenne@yahoo.com to register; Coupons for Troops, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. - cutting coupons for local military families; Stretch & Flex: 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. - seated exercise using small hand weights; setback, 1-3 p.m.; **Wednesdays:** Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.; SyncoCize Exercise, 10:15-11 a.m.; line and ballroom dance lessons, 10:30 a.m.; Social Duplicate Bridge, 12:30-4 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month; Setback, 1 p.m.; **Thursdays:** Line & Ballroom Dance, 10 a.m.; Knit & Stitch, 10 a.m.; Mahjongg, 12:30-4 p.m.; Scrabble, 1-4 p.m.; **Fridays:** Light Aerobics, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Medical Rides: The center provides seniors and disabled with rides to the doctor. Cost is \$5/person round trip. Two-week notice requested. Masks required.

Cans-4-A-Cause: Drop off washed cans and bottles in a bin in the rear parking lot of the center. For details or to volunteer, email Jeff Myjak at myjakjeff@gmail.com.

Wii Bowling: Check the monthly calendar for specific days and time.

Portland Preschool Screening

Connecticut public schools are responsible for identifying children who are eligible to receive special education services. Valley View School will conduct a preschool screening Friday, Jan. 28, for children ages 3-4. The screening is designed to answer any questions or concerns about a child's development as well as identifying children who may be eligible for the preschool selection process.

During the screening your child will meet with members from our preschool team and participate in a variety of activities. These activities assess different developmental areas including cognition, communication, fine and

gross motor skills and social interaction. During this time, the parent/caregiver will meet with another member of the team to discuss their child's adaptive and personal social skills.

Following the screening you will receive a letter stating your child's results. In order for your child to attend Valley View's preschool program they must participate in the screening process. Peer role models are determined on a year-to-year basis.

For more information and to schedule an appointment, call Valley View School at 860-342-3131.

Methodist Church News

Portland United Methodist Church, located at 381 Main St., holds in-person worship Sundays at 9 a.m. All are invited. Masks required for those not fully vaccinated.

Resident Graduates

George Clements Jr. of Portland recently earned a Master of Science in Organizational Management degree from Chadron State College in Chadron, Neb.

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Parks and Rec. News & Notes

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

Tai Chi for Long Life: With Ken Zaborowski, at the Buck-Foreman Community Center. Wednesdays through Jan. 19, 9:30-10:15 a.m., or Saturdays through Feb. 5 (no class Dec. 25 or Jan. 1), 10:30-11:15 a.m. Fee is \$7 per week to drop in. Contact Parks and Rec. if interested in drop-in registration. Both classes may transition to virtual classes using Zoom if the weather gets too cold.

Kids Blast: Parks and Rec. is taking applications for this afterschool program for Portland kids in grades K-6. The program is based at Brownstone Intermediate School. Applications are at portland.recdesk.com. For more, call Andy Dionne at 860-342-6757.

Art Enrichment Programs with Abrakadoodle: Doodle Art Studio: Thursdays, Jan. 20-Feb. 24, at Buck-Foreman Community Center. Mini & Twoosy Doodlers (Ages 2-5): 10:30-11:15 a.m.; Doodlers (Ages 5-14), 4:15-5:15 p.m. Experience art from the top of the head to the tips of the toes.

DoodleKits: Order some DoodleKits from the Parks and Rec. website. Bring the gift of art to a creative child. Orders will be accepted until 8:30 a.m. Dec. 20, and a pre-Christmas delivery is guaranteed.

Recreation Basketball: Grades K-2 Instructional Basketball: Saturdays, Jan. 8-Feb. 12, at Gildersleeve School. Fee: \$40. Times: kindergarten, 8-8:45 a.m.; first grade, 9-9:45 a.m.; second-grade boys, 10-10:45 a.m.; second-grade girls, 11-11:45 a.m. Masks must be worn indoors by all individuals at all times, regardless of vaccination status.

Fundamental Basketball: Grade 1 meets Mondays, Jan. 3-Feb. 28, from 5-7 p.m., at Valley View School, and Grade 2 meets Mondays and Thursdays, Jan. 3-March 3; from 6-7 p.m. at Brownstone Intermediate School on Mondays, and from 5-7 p.m. at Valley View School

on Thursdays. Fee: \$30. Masks must be worn indoors by all individuals at all times, regardless of vaccination status.

Adult Drop-In Volleyball: Wednesdays at Gildersleeve School, 565 Main St. Competitive Play is 5-6:30 p.m., and Non-Competitive Play is 6:30-8 p.m. Participants may enter the building through the side doors nearest to the gym; a sign should be posted. Create an account at portland.recdesk.com to receive program information via email blast. Note: All participants are required to wear masks during play.

Adult Drop-In Basketball: 30+ Men's Drop-In Basketball takes place from 7:30-9 p.m. Tuesdays at Portland Middle School. Women's Drop-In Basketball takes place from 7:30-9 p.m. Mondays, also at PMS. Masks must be worn indoors by all individuals at all times, regardless of vaccination status. All participants will fill out a drop-in waiver before participating.

Holiday Trail of Lights: All participants will be illuminating their holiday lights and displays on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings during December. Follow the trail of lights, enjoy some decorations, and vote on for your favorite display. The Trail of Lights map will be available on RecDesk and Facebook as soon as it is completed.

GGLeagues: Esports in Portland is back for the winter season. There will be *Madden*, *Mario Kart 8*, *Fortnite*, *Rocket League* and *Super Smash Brothers* leagues for three different age groups. Compete against other gamers in Connecticut for a chance to be crowned state champion and win a champion shirt and medal! Check the Parks and Rec. website for instructions on how to register.

Personal Euphoria: Registration is underway. There will be Pilates, barre, core strength, meditation, and tighten & tone classes. There will also be a Lunch and Learn Workshop Series as well.

Inner Circle: Check back soon for information about the youth martial art programs with Inner Circle.

Portland Library News & Notes

Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave., is open, with no appointments needed. Wireless is available. Registration required for the following programs unless noted. Masks required for those over the age of 2. For more info and full program descriptions, visit www.portlandlibraryct.org or call 860-342-6770. The library is also on Facebook and Instagram.

Hours: Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Curbside Delivery of requested items continues; call the library, or reserve items online and you will receive a notice or call when your materials are available.

Holiday Closings: The library is closed Friday, Dec. 24, and Saturday, Dec. 25. The library will also close Thursday, Dec. 30, at 1 p.m., and remain closed Friday, Dec. 31, and Saturday, Jan. 1.

Read & Recycle: Saturday, Jan. 15, 10 a.m.-noon. The Friends of the Portland Library group is collecting gently used books, DVDs, CDs, puzzles and games. Sales of these items benefit library services.

Youth Program: Alien Invasion! Winter Reading 2022: Visit the library in January and February and, each time you check out materials (up to once per day), your alien will advance to another planet. Visit all eight planets and win a prize. Also on your visit, grab a square to color and help unlock scenes of alien adventures at the library. Local artist Pamela Hanks has created a number of mystery alien

scenes for the library bulletin boards. Color a square each time you visit the library and get one step closer to completing a picture.

Adult Programs: Book Clubs: First Thursday Night Book Club: Jan. 6, 6 p.m. *Imagine Me Gone* by Adam Haslett will be discussed. **T.A.B. (Talk About Books):** Tuesday, Jan. 4, 1 p.m.; note the date change. *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway will be discussed. Books are available at the library and through Hoopla at www.hoopladigital.com. **Mystery Lovers Book Club:** Tuesday, Jan. 18, 1 p.m. *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman will be discussed. Books are available at the library.

Tech Talk: Friday, Jan. 14, 10 a.m. Kevin Armstrong will offer help with new devices, and discuss Zoom. Program is offered in collaboration with the senior center.

Portland Forum: Next meeting: Thursday, Jan. 27. Watch for more information.

Decoding the Mysteries of Cats: Tuesday, Feb. 1, 6:30 p.m., via Zoom. Stephen Quandt, recently the feline behavior coordinator for the Animal Care Centers of NYC, presents this program that explains cat behavior from the perspective of evolutionary and adaptive forces that help shape their lives. Registration requested.

Knifty Knitters: Saturdays 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. This is a weekly knitting circle where people gather to knit while sharing ideas and tips. All are welcome – including beginners.

Trinity Episcopal Church News

Trinity Episcopal Church, located at 345 Main St., invites the community to celebrate each week. Worship is at 9:30 a.m. Sunday School is held during the service.

Children ages 4-12, baptized and unbaptized, are welcome to attend Church School. Lessons and activities are aimed at encouraging the children to think outside of themselves and about the community at large.

This Sunday, Dec. 26, at 9:30 a.m., there will be an ecumenical service of lessons and carols. All are welcome.

Masks are required for all, vaccinated and unvaccinated, while inside the church. More information is at trinitychurchportlandct.org.

The church is open for prayer and meditation on Fridays from 2-4 p.m.

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

Grace and Mercy Church News

Grace and Mercy Family Ministries Church, 13 Waverly Ave., has announced a modified Sunday worship service schedule. Through August, the Sunday morning worship service will begin at 10 a.m.

Knights Collecting Coats

The Freestone Council 7 Knights of Columbus is once again collecting new winter coats for kids, as well as used adult coats to be donated to the Portland Food Bank.

For Coats for Kids, Mark Creighton, Grand Knight of local Council 7, announced the council will match dollar for dollar, up to \$500, cash contributions made to the program.

The contribution of funds is made possible from the proceeds of the recently-held Knights of Columbus Car Show. A special monetary donation box will be set up in the Day Chapel/Cry Room at the Church of Saint Mary for the "Coats for Kids" Fund Drive. Donations for New Coats for Kids can also be sent to K of C Council 7, Box 7, Portland, CT 06480

Also, the Knights are sponsoring their Adult Used Coat Collection, to benefit Portland Food Bank. Winter coats, hats, gloves and scarves for adults are requested. Donations can be placed in a large receptacle in the Chapel/Cry Room at the Church of Saint Mary, 45 Freestone Ave.

Calendar Sale to Benefit YFS

Calendars featuring photos of Connecticut River eagles are currently on sale, to benefit Portland Youth and Family Services.

Michael Beck, a local photography enthusiast, has created a wall calendar of his favorite eagle photos. The photos were shot around Portland and area sites where eagles are commonly found. Each month displays a picture of these birds who call the Connecticut River their home. The wall calendar is 8x12. There is limited availability, with additional printing based on demand.

The calendars are available for sale at Sarah's on Main, True Value- Portland Home and Hardware, Owen's Emporium and Savvy Swap. Each calendar sale will benefit YFS programs.

Purchases of three or more calendars can be directed to Michael Beck at 29beck@gmail.com.

Donor Recognition Tree at Library

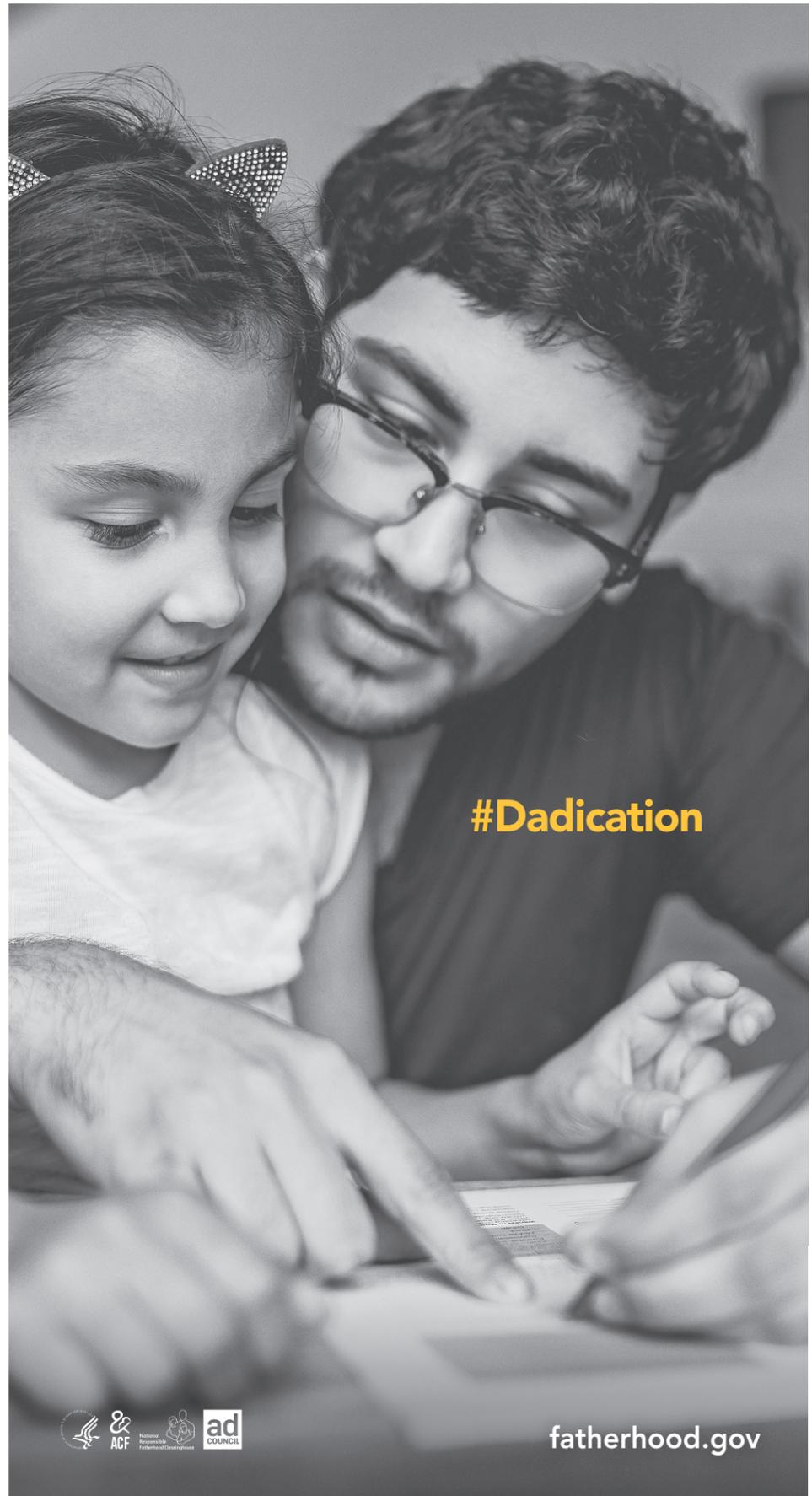
Visitors to Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave., will notice a new addition. The Portland Library Board of Directors has funded the installation of a Donor Recognition Tree on a wall near the copy machine.

The display acknowledges community members who have made donations to the Portland Library Endowment Fund, an invested fund which provides for high-priority projects outside of the town's support. The tree has a sculpted cast bronze trunk and sports engraved leaves in four different colors – green, bronze, silver and gold – denoting different levels of donation.

The community is invited to stop by the library and view the tree. Questions about making a donation should be directed to Nocek at 860-342-6770.

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Hebron • Hebron

Reval Leads to ‘Sticker Shock’

by Sloan Brewster

Revaluation in Hebron has left some folks with “sticker shock.”

Assessor Debra Gernhardt said the 2021 property revaluation is the final stages and she doesn’t yet have overall numbers to share.

Revaluation is done every five years as mandated by the state, she said.

While Town Manager Andrew Tierney said he had not personally received any complaints about new assessments generated in the revaluation, he said he had seen posts on Facebook about it.

Tierney attributed the posts with “the initial sticker shock” experienced when folks opened the letter from the town assessor.

Shortly after folks began receiving their assessment notices Gernhardt “was getting a lot of calls,” which, she said, was not uncommon. People were asking why their assessment had gone up when they hadn’t made any improvements.

She said she explained the increases were based on the current market, which has gone up, “because of COVID.”

To determine the value of a home, assessors rely on state guidelines, Gernhardt said.

They look at “useable sales” or sales that were not bankruptcies, foreclosures or in-family

transfers, and develop a table with details such as the home’s style and number of fireplaces and apply the data from the property card of the sold homes to comparable unsold properties, making sure they meet specific state requirements and are within range of the sold properties.

When assessors have determined that sold homes meet all the guidelines and fall within a specified ratio limit, they verify that unsold homes fall within a certain range of that limit and calculate assessments based on that, Gernhardt said.

In a memo on the town’s website reporting the status of the reval, Gernhardt said overall assessment increases were a bit lower than the actual increases in market sales.

“We have tried to be a bit conservative,” she wrote.

The real estate market has been on the upswing statewide, Gernhardt said.

“Especially in the last year, the values have really gone up like crazy in the market,” she said.

Individual increases depend on the style of the house, Gernhardt said.

“Raised ranches, ranches, capes – those were the ones that went up,” she said. “We saw that in the sales. Log cabins, contemporaries, were not

going up as much.”

Waterfront homes are also on the rise, a fact that Gernhardt said is reflected in the town where she owns a waterfront home.

“People are buying those as a retreat,” she said. “So apparently places like that went up.”

In her personal situation, her family set up a schedule to use the waterfront property to get away from it all and not be isolated.

The town has given out a lot of permits for new swimming pools and other improvements, so some of the increases were based on those upgrades, Gernhardt said.

“[The homeowners] weren’t being assessed for those improvements last year,” she said.

Residents with concerns about their assessments have been having informal meetings with eQuality Valuation Services of Waterbury, the company the town hired to do the reval, Gernhardt said. If they are still not satisfied, they can file an appeal.

Gernhardt said once she finalizes her report and sends it to the state, the reval will be implemented into the Grand List. She said she hopes to review the report this this week or next and

finalize it toward the end January.

Gernhardt is still working on the motor vehicle and personal property portions of the Grand List.

She said she was seeing increases in the values of motor vehicles.

The grand list must be to be completed by Jan. 31. If it is not, Gernhardt can file for an extension, which she said she’s hoping not to do.

“I prefer to try and get it done before the original filing date,” she said.

She said the mill rate is based on the town’s budget and would likely go down with the increases in the grand list.

In the online memo, Gernhardt entreated property owners not to calculate their next tax bill based on the new assessments and pointed out that the mill rate will not be set until the Board of Finance finalizes the budget and it passes at referendum, which typically takes place in mid to late Spring.

“Once everything is finalized, it is a possibility that some may not pay any more in taxes and some may even pay less; this all depends on a ratio between the increase in the assessment and the mill rate for each property,” she wrote. “A revaluation is equalizing the Grand List resulting in a shift of the tax burden for properties that have a greater rate of appreciation than [sic] others.”

Gernhardt said the next reval will take place five years from now.

“These tables are set every five years so what’s going to happen in the next five years depends on the market,” Gernhardt said. “The market’s been absolutely crazy.”

Church of Hope News & Notes

Hebron Church of Hope, 1 Main St., holds worship Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Church of Hope is a biblically-driven Christ-centered church.

Worship is in person and via livestream on the church website. For more information, and the guidelines for in-person worship, visit www.hebronchurchofhope.org.

The church office is closed until further notice. Pastor Jordan Brown can meet by appointment; use the church website to set up a time.

For more information about Hebron Church of Hope, visit the website or look for the church on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter.

East Catholic Honor Roll

The following local residents made the East Catholic High School honor roll for the first marking period of the 2021-22 school year:

Hebron: Honors with Distinction: Matiws Rumley and Trent Sargent, Class of 2022; William Bergquist, ‘24. First Honors: Nathan Grzybowski and Ryan Turco, ‘22; Torrance Acabchuk, ‘23. First Honors: Zuriel Sarosh, ‘24.

Amston: Honors with Distinction: Jackson Woods, ‘24.

Douglas Library News & Notes

Douglas Library, located at 22 Main St., has announced the following. For more info and full program descriptions, and to register, call the library at 860-228-9312 or visit www.douglaslibrary.org.

Holiday Closings: The library will be closed Friday, Dec. 24, and Monday, Dec. 27, for the Christmas holiday.

Children’s Department: In-person storytime for ages birth-5 is on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10 a.m. in the Children’s Floor Storytime Room. Pre-registration is required as class size is reduced to 10 children with their caregiver at each class.

Knit-Wits: This knitting circle meets Mondays, 6-7:30 p.m. Crochet and needle pointers are welcome as well as all skill levels. No registration required, bring your project or your questions.

Poetry Corner: To have work considered for the Poetry Corner in the library’s monthly newsletter, submit it to info@douglaslibrary.org with the subject line ‘Poetry Submission.’ All ages and skill levels are encouraged to participate. Poems should be original works written by individuals living in Hebron or Amston, and not copyrighted.

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Obituaries

Andover

Louise Palmer Walton

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Louise Palmer Walton of Andover.

Louise was born and raised in Andover and lived there for her entire 83 years. She leaves behind her beloved husband of 67 years, Richard Walton. She also leaves her five children, John Walton (Cathy) of Maine, Joseph Walton (Janie) of Florida, Lucy Walton Durocher (Leo) of Storrs, Louise "Twig" Walton O'Brien (Chris) of Andover, and Leigh Walton Valliere (Mark) of Lebanon. She was the proud grandmother of 11 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. She also leaves her soulmate, best friend and twin sister, Lucille Palmer Munsell of Coventry; a sister, Alice Palmer Selbert of Ohio; sister-in-law, Beverly Smith of Rockville and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her parents, Clarence and Lois Smith Palmer; her brothers, Leon, Earl and Warren Palmer; and her sisters, Avis Palmer and Audrey Palmer.

Louise was the greatest wife, mother, grandmother and sister that anyone could ask for. She loved her crafts and cribbage. She will be greatly missed by all of those who were fortunate enough to have known her.

Services will be private.

We ask that donations in her memory be made to the Andover Volunteer Fire Department, 11 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232 or the Norton Children's Fund Commission, 17 School Rd., Andover, CT 06232.

For online condolences, please visit: www.pietrasfuneralhome.com.



tion Association, president of the Connecticut Bankers Reward Association and president of the Connecticut Chapter of the International Association of Financial Crimes Investigators (IAFCI). He also served on the board of directors of the IAFCI and the training committee. He was the recipient of numerous awards recognizing his dedication and service, including the 2013 IAFCI Member of the Year and the Connecticut Chapter's 2018 Founder's Award. He was voted life membership in the IAFCI and has been a member since 1989.

In retirement, Tom's passion for learning led him to becoming a substitute teacher at Portland secondary schools, where he enjoyed being with the students and faculty.

There was a graveside ceremony with military honors at the State Veterans Cemetery, 317 Bow Lane, Middletown, on Tuesday, Dec. 21.

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

East Hampton

William John MacDonald

William John MacDonald, son of the late Peter MacDonald and Matilda (Tillie) Anderson MacDonald, both formerly of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, died Wednesday, Dec. 15, at Portland Care and Rehab in Portland.

Bill was born in Jamaica Plain near Boston, Mass. After World War II, the family moved to Mayberry Village of East Hartford, where Bill (nicknamed "Beans") graduated from East Hartford High School in 1949. He then enlisted in the Army and served in the Korean War where he was promoted to sergeant. Upon discharge, Bill was hired by Hamilton Standard Credit Union in Windsor Locks where, on his first day of work, met the love of his life, Mary Agnes Corsair of East Hartford.

Bill and Mary married in 1954 and set up housekeeping in East Hartford, moving to East Hampton in 1966. Bill and Mary raised their three children at "the farm" on old Route 66. Bill was a salesman for South Windsor Construction, then sales manager for Hartford Cement Company, and in 1973, began work for the banking department of the State of Connecticut. He retired as deputy chief bank examiner in 1993. He was very active in the East Hampton Democratic Town Committee, acted as police commissioner and served on the Building and Zoning Committee for many years, he worked the polls and became a Republican later in life. He was a 50-year member of the Knights of Columbus and a parishioner and former deacon of St. Patrick Catholic Church in East Hampton.

Bill and Mary traveled together across our beautiful country, visiting relatives along the way in Nova Scotia and across the U.S. Bill was known as a cut-up, class clown, tough opponent, stubborn Scot and an opinionated and blunt speaker. He was meticulous in his work. He could tell a joke, he had a lovely singing voice, adored his pets and he adored his wife and children.

Bill is preceded in death by his wife Mary and his brother Peter C. MacDonald, and is survived by a daughter Catherine (Rhon) Keinigs of Radford, Va.; David (Joann) MacDonald of East Hampton and Douglas (Karen) MacDonald of East Hampton, plus five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

The family would like to extend special thanks to Karen Turney for her loving care of Mary and Bill during their lengthy illnesses; to Diane Anelli, who was always available to fix



Mom's hair and give Dad his haircuts and was always a super friend; and to Patty Kissinger who walked Peanut the dog, and who brought goodies for Bill to enjoy. We'd like to thank Bonnie Oliveri and the many friends and neighbors of Laurel Ridge, who were unfailingly kind to Bill and Mary.

Funeral services will be held at a later date to be announced.

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

Portland

Steven Michael Basiel

Steven Michael Basiel, 73, left his earthly body and entered eternity Thursday, Nov. 18. He was a beloved son, brother, father, uncle and friend.

He was preceded in death by fiancée, Linda Pace; his mother and father, Josephine and William Basile; his brothers, William and Kenneth Basiel; and his sister-in-law, Debra Basiel.

He is survived by his beloved son, Adam and former wife Lori Basiel; his brother, Ronald Basiel; sister-in-law, Jacqueline Basiel; his friend, Janet Johnson; nieces, Marianne (Dean) Myers, Christina (Coley) Jackson, Abigail Kabash, Rebecca Basiel; great nieces Samantha Myers, Aiden Jackson and Sophia Plourde; great nephews Paul Myers and Blaise Jackson; close friends, Vinny Auriemo, Ken Caruso, Noreen Pace; and many other friends.

He served his country honorably in the Vietnam War and survived the Tet Offensive. He lived each day with gratitude and was an exceptional friend to all. He loved and was loved. He will be missed.

Gifts in his name may be made to the Fisher House Connecticut.

Colchester

Joseph Jonathan Joaquin

Joseph Jonathan Joaquin passed away peacefully on Friday, Dec. 17. He was born Jan. 7, 1944, and was a lifelong resident of Colchester. He was the son of Manuel Joaquin and Bridget Roscoe. He was predeceased by his brother, Richard.

He is survived by his loving sister Dorothy "Dottie" Marvin and nephews. He leaves his wife Joanne, whom he was married to for 50 years; a daughter, Jennifer; and two granddaughters, Brooke and Cadence, whom he loved and adored.

Joseph graduated from Bacon Academy. He enlisted in the Navy serving on the USS Altair during the Vietnam era. Joseph attended Eastern Connecticut State College and began his successful 35-year teaching career in Marlborough. He was a well-respected teacher at the Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School. Joseph enjoyed many wonderful experiences

with principal Walter Machowski and his caring, dedicated colleagues.

Joseph was a member of the Lions Club and the Colchester Fish and Game Club. He enjoyed hunting and fishing. He had many exciting adventures with his friends. Joseph appreciated the kindness of his neighbors especially, Frank Tarnowski and Karl Stula.

The services will be privately held.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Colchester Ambulance Services, 52 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415.

Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home in Colchester is in charge of arrangements.

East Hampton

George F. Parent

George F. Parent, 79, of East Hampton, beloved husband of the late Janet K. Parent, passed away surrounded by his loving family on Friday, Dec. 17, at Hartford Hospital. Born April 3, 1942, in Collinsville, he was the son of the late Joseph and Pansy (Thomas) Parent.



George proudly served his country in the U.S. Air Force as a senior airman. He retired from Pratt & Whitney where he was an inspector at both the East Hartford and Middletown facilities. George was also a member of the Knights of Columbus. He loved fishing and going to the races at both Waterford Speedbowl and Stafford Motor Speedway where he had many friends and acquaintances. George always had a smile on his face and enjoyed meeting new people. He was a very kind and genuine man who brought out the best in people.

Family meant everything to George. He is survived by his son Todd Parent and wife Julie of Preston; his daughters, Julie Lefemine and husband Patrick of Union, Katherine Measimer and husband Kenneth of East Hampton; seven grandchildren, Samantha, Ashley, Jessica, Patrick Jr., Matthew, Abigail, Corbin; and his three great-grandchildren, Harper, Mason and Syris. He was looking forward to having another great-granddaughter in April. He also leaves his beloved goddaughter, Leah McCarthy of Massachusetts; his godson, Brady McCarthy; and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his five siblings.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Tuesday, Dec. 28, from 5-7 p.m. A funeral liturgy will be celebrated Wednesday, Dec. 29, at 11 a.m., in St. Patrick Church, with burial to follow in St. Patrick Cemetery.

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

Portland

Thomas R. Nash

Thomas R. Nash (Tom) of Portland died Tuesday, Dec. 14, at Middlesex Hospital. Tom was born Jan. 5, 1945, in Putnam, and spent his childhood in Danielson.

He attended Killingly schools and Ellis Technical school prior to deployment to Vicenza, Italy where he served with the 5th Battalion 30th Artillery. He was honorably discharged there as a Specialist 5 E-5 in June 1966.

Tom leaves behind his wife, Gloria; two stepsons, David Wallengren (Cheryl) of Portland and their children Ethan and Sydney, and also Jason Wallengren (Kimberly) of New Preston and their children Bellamy and Leiden. He leaves two grandsons, Tiziano and Leonardo Silvestrelli and son-in-law of Arezzo, Italy, and his niece, Ashley O'Shea of Lalouret-Laffiteau, France.

Tom was predeceased by his parents, Albert and Irene Nash; a sister, Beverly A. O'Shea; and a daughter, AnnaMaria Nash.

Tom earned his associate's degree from Manchester Community College and a bachelor's degree from Eastern Connecticut State University.

Tom began his professional career with the Hartford Police Department, where he served in various capacities for nearly nine years. He then became employed as vice president and director of security for the former Society for Savings Bank in Hartford for 17 years, with subsequent employment with First Security Services Corporation, Citi Bank, CyberSource, People's United Bank, Naugatuck Savings Bank and American Eagle Credit Union, retiring in 2012.

Over the course of his career, Tom served as president of the Connecticut Loss Preven-

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**Town of Colchester
LEGAL NOTICE**

In accordance with the requirements of The Colchester Town Charter, Section C-403 C, a copy of the ordinance changes listed below is on file in the Town Clerk's office at 127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, CT. This ordinance will take effect 31 days after this publication.

Open Space Preservation Fund
Section 92-1: Purpose.
Section 92-2: Sources of funding, investments, and limitation on fund use.
Section 92-3: Expenditures from the fund.
Section 92-4: Process for approval of Town acquisitions and Town contributions for open space purposes.
Section 92-5: Required contract between Town and preservation entity.

Respectfully Submitted,
 Gayle Furman, CCTC
 Town Clerk

1TB 12/24

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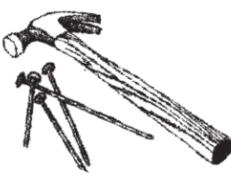
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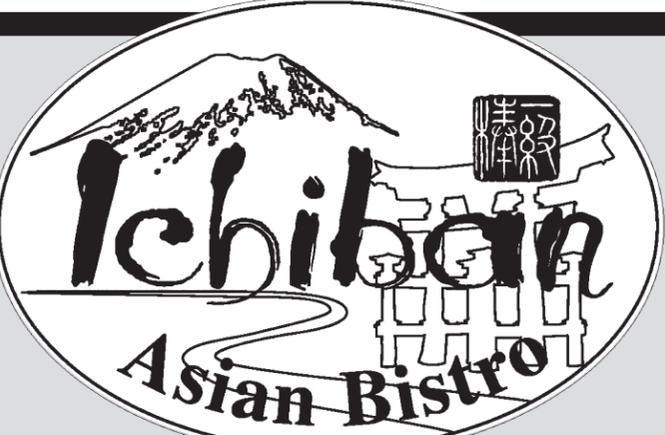

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