

# Local Teen's Bountiful Gem of a Cause

## Transforms Loss of a Loved One to a Positive

BY CHRISTINE CHAGARIS

Greenwich resident Amanda Hascoe makes an impression upon meeting her. Make that a pretty impressive impression.

Poised, affable and articulate, the 16½-year-old Greenwich Academy junior took the loss of a beloved family member and turned it into something that would have a positive effect.

This past October, Hascoe's grandfather, Greenwich resident Norman Hascoe, a prominent businessman, died of prostate cancer. Amanda, who designs jewelry in her spare time between her studies and other activities, dedicated her jewelry showcase on Dec. 9 to her grandfather's memory.

She donated all of the proceeds from the show – \$14,825 – to benefit prostate cancer research at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, where Norman had been treated. Her efforts were met with accolades.

"We are most grateful for Amanda's generous donation," said Dr. Howard I. Scher, chief of genitourinary oncology service at Memorial Sloan-Kettering. "Her grandfather would be so proud to see that she is continuing the Hascoe family's tradition of giving in such a creative way. She is a role model who shows all of us how we can help in the fight against cancer."

Hascoe's can-do attitude is an obvious source of pride to her dad, Lloyd Hascoe, who is Norman's son. "She really has my dad's 'get up and go' spirit," he said.

The benefit was held at her grandmother's Greenwich home, as had her two previous shows. "We had actually decided to do the benefit before my grandfather died," she explained.

Hascoe, who honed her jewelry-making skills and learned the business end from working in a jewelry store, put painstaking effort into the show's planning. "I needed a sponsor for the show, as I wanted all of the



Contributed photo

**Amanda Hascoe has been designing and creating jewelry for several years, and when her grandfather, Norman Hascoe, died from prostate cancer, she decided to donate profits from a jewelry showcase to the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.**

proceeds from it to go to the hospital for research," she said.

The back story to her show's subsequent involvement with Greenwich's Betteridge Jewelers is touching: One month before her grandfather passed away, he went into the store and bought something for her grandmother. She wrote Betteridge a long letter,

"telling them what I had in mind," she said.

Betteridge was only happy to lend a hand.

"They sent me to one of their suppliers of precious and semi-precious stones in New York City, SPB Gems," she said. "This was such a great help, as it allowed all of the proceeds to go directly to cancer research."

Randy Lapointe, Betteridge's CEO, has

nothing but praise for Hascoe and her effort. "Her cause was so compelling, so we helped sponsor the show, but she supplied all of the talent and the labor."

"On a personal note," he added, "I am so proud that someone so young had the vision and tenaciousness to undergo such a project."

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## BackCountry Shooting Death Ruled Homicide

A 49-year-old black male found Monday on Sterling Road was the victim of multiple gunshot wounds to the chest as determined by an autopsy done by the state's Medical Examiner's Office. The death has been ruled a homicide.

The deceased was identified as George A. McPherson, 49, a native of Jamaica, who lived in the Bronx, N.Y.

The body was discovered on the BackCountry private road by a local resident at approximately 11:25 a.m. when the Greenwich Police Department Communication Center received the call.

"Based on the initial investigation," said Police Chief David C. Ridberg, "the victim appears to have been specifically targeted. This was not a random act of violence."

The crime scene was secured and the area was checked for witnesses and suspects. No suspects have been identified at this point. The GPD's Criminal Investigations Division is working with the State's Attorney in Stamford.

To maintain the integrity of the investigation, limited information will be disseminated to the public in a timely manner as it becomes available, police said.

Greenwich Police request that anyone who travels on Riversville Road to and from New York State during the mid-morning hours of the week to contact the Criminal Investigations Division at 622-8054. All calls to the department will be kept confidential.

—Anne W. Semmes

## Byrne Re-Elected RTM Moderator

BY ANNE W. SEMMES

It was an historic Representative Town Meeting (RTM) on Monday night, so marked by the re-election of Moderator Tom Byrne, who begins his 12th year.

"This is our 38th session and our 75th anniversary will be in October," said Byrne.

To mark the occasion, Byrne looked to how Congress had celebrated its 38th session, but was disappointed to learn "it was the time of the most intense conflict and loss of life in this country's history – the Civil War."

Byrne's efforts as moderator were praised by his nominee, Roger Lourie, of District 7, who said Byrne has "given pride to this organization. He has run these meetings with grace and professionalism."

Joan Caldwell, the erstwhile moderator pro tempore and chair of District 10, was returned for her 28th year of service to the

RTM after a brief challenge by Christina Edwards, a District 8 member who lost her bid in a 43 to 159 vote.

"I really do love the job," said Caldwell, "I'm nuts."

"I like watching this body work and seeing the results of what they do from start to finish," she said. "I like feeling that this is a democracy working as our founding fathers intended it to work."

What followed was a parade of district and committee leaders introducing themselves, one of whom brought chuckles throughout the audience. "I'm Christopher von Keyserling, for some of you who don't know me." Von Keyserling, the new head of the influential Appointments Committee, is familiar across town for his often confrontational interest in town government.

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# Hascoe's Gem of a Cause

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Hascoe certainly delivered the goods, as she made over 200 creations for the show, attended by a mix of her contemporaries, family and friends.

"I sold almost all of the pieces, and even put in some special orders," she mused.

The show gained attention via word-of-mouth, and Hascoe said that some attendees went above and beyond the call and gave additional donations. Her line of jewelry,

named The Amanda Leigh Collection, runs the gamut and includes unique multi-strand necklaces and bracelets adorned with materials ranging from rose quartz, freshwater pearls, gold pearls and 14-karat gold to sterling silver.

Hascoe has been designing jewelry for about three years. "I started in eighth grade with one of my friends," she recalled. "It was a fun thing at first. Then my grandmother saw the jewelry and would have her friends over to see it. It just

evolved from there."

So what's next for this talented and busy young lady on the jewelry front? She said that she may soon start an internship at a jewelry company owned by a friend of her mom's in New York City. She is also eager to learn more about the business end of the industry. However, she does plan to keep creating pieces in her spare time, and has her own take on what works for her designs.

"Some people like planning out



Contributed photo

Amanda Hascoe presents a check of nearly \$15,000 to Dr. Howard I. Sher, chief of genitourinary oncology service at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York.

their designs before they actually make them," she said. "I'm different. I kind of 'wing it,' so to speak, after I get my materials. I think it's more creative that way."

She doesn't sell her designs at retail yet. "I like to keep it personal, to talk to the people who buy

them," she said.

Will there be more benefits in the future?

"I think so, definitely," she responded. "It may be for a different cause, but I am really considering it. Maybe something annually."

## Nickerson to Retire

After 22 years as a member of the Connecticut General Assembly, Sen. William H. Nickerson, R-36, has announced that he will be retiring from elected office effective January 2009.

"There is a time to run for office, a time to serve in office and a time to move on," Nickerson said Wednesday in a letter to constituents announcing his retirement. "I have decided that that time has come for me."

"It has been a great honor to have served you dur-

ing my four years in the House and 18 years in the Senate. I have worked with four governors, cast 11,000 votes and driven about a quarter of a million miles on my commute to Hartford. I have enjoyed every minute of it - well, most minutes anyway!"

Nickerson goes on to thank his constituents in Greenwich, Stamford and New Canaan for entrusting him with the responsibility of representing them.

"In my 34 years of public life, I have not encountered a more respected, dedicated and competent public servant/politician than Bill Nickerson," said U.S. Rep. Christopher Shays, R-4.

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