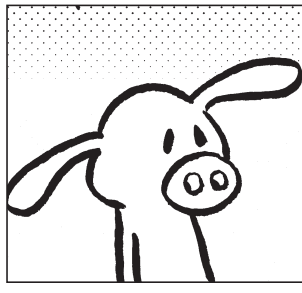


LOCAL &amp; STATE, B1

## Coming soon: N.H. presidential debates



COMICS CONTEST, C5

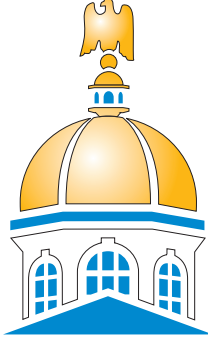
## Last chance to vote on a new strip!



SPORTS, C1

## Roberge scores 1,000th point

# CONCORD MONITOR



SATURDAY, JANUARY 13, 2007

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PRESTON GANNAWAY / Monitor staff

Carolynne St. Pierre pauses to compose herself while recording a video for her children. Her sister, Sara Matters (right), and cousin, Anna Stoessinger, comfort her. Two months ago, doctors told Carolynne she would survive for only a matter of weeks or months. Her current hospital stay has taken a heavy toll.

## 'The sea of grief is coming'

As Carolynne St. Pierre acknowledges her imminent death, she finds some release. For loved ones, sorrow grows heavier.

By **CHELSEA CONABOY**  
Monitor staff

Three days after doctors told Carolynne St. Pierre that liver cancer could take her within two weeks, she stood at the bathroom sink, carefully applying purple eye shadow. Her head was mostly hairless from months of chemotherapy.

"Rich, what hat should I wear?" she called out to her husband in the kitchen, who was running in and out, carrying in trays of food from a caterer. "Nothing really goes with this."

Although days later she would be propped on pillows on the couch, fighting off fatigue to sort

through photographs and find those that will be displayed at her funeral, this day, Dec. 16, Carolynne would host her friends and family for an early Christmas celebration at her Concord home.

Carolynne had spent the past 2½ years battling an uncommon and aggressive cancer called cholangiocarcinoma, but now her body was deteriorating quickly. Doctors told her there was little more they could do. The news burdened her with a more certain death and weighed on her family. It also gave her a new kind of courage.

She invited people into her home, overcoming self-consciousness about what cancer had done

to her body and the depression it had caused her. She returned to humor despite the grim prognosis. And though saying goodbye had long seemed daunting, she put on tape what could be her last – and most lasting – words to her three children.

"I am actually more – I don't know if I want to say accepting of the whole process, because I've never felt that way – but I'm not as unaccepting of it that I'm so upset that I don't do anything else," she said. "I definitely think, in a strange way . . . it changed our focus. It kind of changed our world."

See **ST. PIERRE – A4**

BOW

## Murder-suicide leads to lawsuit against restaurant

Chen Yang Li accused of over-serving shooter

By **MARGOT SANGER-KATZ**  
Monitor staff

The family of a Bow man who was killed in a murder-suicide in 2005 has filed a lawsuit against the estate of the shooter and the restaurant where the shooter drank on the night of the killing.

The lawsuit, filed in Merrimack County Superior Court, alleges that Joseph E. Grigas and the Chen Yang Li Restaurant in Bow both bore responsibility for the wrongful death of Elmer "Al" Rule, a state police dispatcher who was killed by three bullet wounds on Nov. 18, 2005.

According to an investigation completed by the state attorney

general's office in June, Grigas shot Rule at the foot of his own driveway before turning the gun on himself. The men knew each other through Rule's son, who was friendly with Grigas.

Earlier that evening, Grigas spent an hour and a half at the bar of Chen Yang Li. His bar tab totaled \$20.90.

"We believe that there are people who are liable, first and foremost Mr. Grigas, the shooter," said John Kacavas, who is representing Rule's wife, Karen Rule, and Al Rule's estate.

"We believe the restaurant contributed by over-serving Mr. Grigas."

An autopsy showed that Grigas's blood alcohol concentration was 0.282 at the time of his death, more

See **LAWSUIT – A8**

PEMBROKE

## County: Hold rapist past sentence

DeCato would be first under new law

By **ANNMARIE TIMMINS**  
Monitor staff

The Merrimack County Attorney's Office filed a petition yesterday to keep a convicted sex offender in prison beyond his release date so medical experts can determine whether he remains a violent sexual predator.

The petition arrived at the Merrimack County Superior Court yesterday afternoon, the same day William Decato, 50, was to be released after serving all of his 8-year sentence. Prison officials moved Decato from his cell in Berlin to the Concord prison yesterday and will keep him in Concord at least until the court can hold a hearing Tuesday on the county attorney's

petition.

Decato, who was convicted in 1999 of raping and attempting to rape two exotic dancers he had hired to come to his Pembroke home, is the first person to be held beyond release under the state's new sexual offender law.



DeCato

In addition, he refused to participate in a sexual offender treatment program or a substance abuse treatment while in prison, the petition said.

By filing the petition yesterday, the county attorney's office has initiated a multi-step process. A judge will decide

Tuesday, the first day the court is open after the weekend, whether there is probable cause that Decato is a sexual predator and likely to reoffend. If the judge does not find probable cause, Decato will be released.

If the judge does find probable cause, Decato will be held at least 72 hours so a team of mental health experts can assess Decato, his criminal record and his behavior in prison, including his participation in treatment programs. If the team concludes that Decato does not pose a threat, he will be released.

If they find otherwise, Decato will continue to be held, and the county attorney's office will have two days to file a second petition seeking that Decato be held for up to five years and treated for his sexual violent tendencies. (If he remains a threat at the end of

See **SEX OFFENDER – A8**

PLAINFIELD

## Tax trial comes to a halt

Defendants skip court, asking, 'What's the point?'

By **MARGOT SANGER-KATZ**  
Monitor staff

The federal tax evasion trial of Ed and Elaine Brown suffered an interruption yesterday when the couple failed to appear in U.S. District Court in Concord. Ed Brown, who described the proceedings as a "kangaroo court" in a telephone interview yesterday, said that he's been disappointed with the judge's management of the case and doesn't intend to return.

"What's the point?" he said. "You saw what happened (Thursday)."

The Browns, who live in Plainfield, are charged with conspiring to evade their income taxes, conspiring to disguise large financial transactions and disguising large financial transactions. Elaine Brown, who earned most of the couple's income, is also charged with multiple counts of tax evasion and failing to collect employment taxes from the workers at her dental practice.

Yesterday, Ed Brown said, he was "negotiating" with court officials by offering to pay the estimated \$625,000 in back taxes that IRS officials say he

See **BROWNS – A8**

## Vaillancourt: I don't have hard proof

Porn allegations derailed Buckley's chairman bid

By **SARAH LIEBOWITZ**  
Monitor staff

State Rep. Steve Vaillancourt – who has accused longtime Democratic official Raymond Buckley of possessing child pornography – said yesterday that he has no "hard and fast proof" to back up the allegations. Vaillancourt's charges recently derailed Buckley's bid to become Democratic Party chairman, a post he was all but certain to win.

"Most of the things I've said I don't have proof about," Vaillancourt said at a press conference yesterday. "I have stuff that would tend to corroborate some of the things that I've said, not hard and fast proof that would ever convict somebody."

In a letter to Gov. John Lynch last month, Vaillancourt accused Buckley of scouring the internet for child pornography, making lewd comments about a boy and hiding child pornography inside *Newsweek* and other maga-

See **VAILLANCOURT – A8**



MESSY

Snow and rain today, overcast tonight. High 41, low 22. Emily Santis, 7, of Hopkinton draws the day.

B6

|               |     |
|---------------|-----|
| Calendar      | D4  |
| Classified    | D4  |
| Comics        | C6  |
| Editorial     | B4  |
| Local & State | B1  |
| Obituaries    | B2  |
| Religion      | D1  |
| Sports        | C1  |
| Sudoku        | D4  |
| TV            | D11 |



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At a Christmas party, Carolynne makes a toast, thanking former co-workers for their friendship and support. Her family says the influx of visitors has given her a boost.



At Waters Funeral Home, Richard Jacques shows caskets to Rich. He started to make arrangements before Christmas after doctors said Carolynne might not make it to the new year.

“It just keeps hurting even more.”

Brian Thone, 12



Brian stands outside the bathroom while Carolynne cleans up after a bout of nausea. “I just see so much wear and tear on the family unit,” said Carolynne’s sister Sara.

#### ST. PIERRE (Continued from A1)

Family members said it was heartening to watch Carolynne’s fear fade. But as the reality of her prognosis sunk in, what peace they had unraveled.

#### Diagnosis, then a wedding

Carolynne, 44, was diagnosed with cholangiocarcinoma in April 2004. Days later, she and Rich married. Their son, Elijah, was 1½ years old at the time. Melissa and Brian Thone, children from her first marriage, were 9 and 11.

In the two years that followed, Carolynne would endure a long and painful recovery from surgery that removed a third of her liver; three cancer-free months cut short by the discovery of a new tumor; and hospital stays due to complications. She left a job she loved as a nurse in the nursery of Concord Hospital’s Family Place. She received multiple gloomy prognoses and outlasted each one.

Starting in early 2005, she made long and tiring trips to New York to see Dr. Howard Bruckner, a trailblazer in chemotherapy. Drained by powerful drugs, Carolynne spent many afternoons alone on the couch, watching TV or reading. She turned away visitors.

She set goals for herself from month to month: When she saw Brian off to middle school and Melissa to high school last fall, her next long-term objective was to help Elijah enter kindergarten this fall.

Last March, the St. Pierres invited the *Monitor* to follow them. Rich, who lost his mother when he was 7 years old and can’t remember her, looked for ways to build a record of Carolynne for Elijah and the older kids, over whom he has guardianship.

A profile of the family published in October documented Carolynne’s fight for more time with her kids. The story ended with her and Rich bound for treatment in New York.

When Carolynne arrived there, blood tests showed her liver was not processing well enough to handle the heavy toxins she had been receiving. She took a lower dose.

She hasn’t received treatment since. Bouts of fever and signs of low liver function have prevented it. Ammonia that would have been caught by her

liver began collecting in her blood, causing confusion. She forgot names and needed help sorting her pills each day. Her feet and lower legs swelled from fluid retention until she couldn’t fit into any of her shoes. She shuffled instead of walked. She slept more and more. Rich watched her carefully; doctors warned that she could slip into a coma.

In November, doctors told Carolynne she had months or even weeks to live.

Carolynne didn’t cry. She barely reacted, even as she talked with Melissa and Brian about the prognosis.

“I just feel so flat,” she said later. “I feel like now I don’t know anything because they said ‘weeks.’”

At a Dec. 13 appointment, an oncologist said she was “semi-comatose.” Again, the doctor said she

had weeks to live, but this time just one or two.

That day, Rich took Carolynne to see the cemetery plot he had recently purchased for the family. He set up an appointment with a minister and visited a funeral home. Her mom, two sisters and cousin made plans to drive up from New Jersey and New York. Rich asked Carolynne’s older sister, Sara Matters, to write an obituary.

The next night, Carolynne got up to go to the bathroom, blacked out and fell into the tub. She was not seriously hurt. But she was scared, and so was Rich.

“The sea of grief is coming,” he said.

On the morning of Dec. 15, Carolynne sat on the couch with her mom, Kathryn Seigle. Her head lolled back against the cushions and she slipped

often from mid-sentence to sleep. At one point she asked her mom to crush up a box of gingersnaps she’d been snacking on.

“They’re going to be my crust,” she said, and went on to give detailed instructions of how to make an apple pie.

Later, Kathryn would learn to take Carolynne’s confusion in stride. At first, though, her face wrinkled into a pained expression. Her chin dropped to her chest and her gray hair fell around her face, almost hiding a quivering chin, as she rubbed her daughter’s leg or squeezed her hand.

The confusion came and went intermittently. When it was gone, Carolynne showed more of herself than she had in months. She woke up from a nap on the couch that afternoon to see her mother, younger sister, niece and friend Ellie Duhaime seated around her and making party plans.

Duhaime asked her who should be on the guest list. Carolynne joked that no one would come.

“Carolynne, how much longer?” she said mockingly, draping her hand dramatically over her forehead. “It’s been two and a half years!”

The next day, the house filled with dozens of people: nurses, doctors, former patients, the kids’ teachers and friends. Carolynne snuck off from time to time to the bathroom to get sick and returned to smile and laugh, listening to news from her co-workers and making jokes about her hair loss.

She toasted the crowd, thanking everyone for coming, and shared the recent news from the doctors.

“Doctors are never wrong, as we know,” she said, and the nurses laughed the hardest. “We’re going to play on the side that they are wrong, and keep on going.”

Sara and Carolynne’s younger sister, Laura Cummins, said it was a joy to watch their sister.

“She was funny and very much herself,” Sara said. “I was totally impressed with her strength and her ability to connect with every person who came through that house.”

But Sara said that the month’s news was difficult to hear, partly because it pushed her to accept that her sister’s longevity was limited. And, she



Rich helps to fix a transdermal patch used to help control Carolynne’s pain.



During a hospital visit, Elijah touches Carolynne's swollen feet where Melissa had painted her toenails. Fluid buildup was one factor that forced Carolynne to stop chemotherapy.

said, she worries about Rich and the children. "I just see so much wear and tear on the family unit that it makes me intensely sad," she said.

Late that night, after most of the guests were gone and the family had opened presents, Melissa sat on the couch quietly trying to get her new clock radio to work. Brian counted his gifts.

As she had been throughout her mom's illness, Melissa, who is now 14, remained steady. She found support in her friends and stayed focused on school-work and gymnastics. Although she said it wasn't until just before the party that she fully realized that her mom was dying, Rich said she seemed to acknowledge the fact more than her brother did.

Brian, 12, had been getting into trouble at school. He and Rich argued more and more at home. Brian said he gets angry that his mom is sick and sometimes takes it out on other people.

"It's kind of like being in football, and you drop the ball and everyone goes for it and a bunch of people just keep piling on top of you and it just keeps hurting even more," he said.

That night, though, Brian said loudly, for Elijah's sake, "Thank you, Santa," then flung his arms around Rich's neck, his feet splayed out behind him - a hug from a little boy, not a troubled pre-teen.

"Yeah," Rich said quietly. "Just work with me, alright? Just work with me. I need a partner."

Later, when the kids were occupied with their gifts and the room filled with chatter, Rich quietly watched Carolynne as she turned her head away, wiping away a few tears.

"Today was the perfect day," he said to her, when it was all over. "When I go, I'll probably have, like, four guys and a dog. You've got the whole world out here, and they all love you."

#### Memories on film

The next morning, Carolynne and Sara inched closer together on the daybed in the guest room, trying to fit into the frame of the video camera Rich set up a few feet away.

Carolynne had been talking for months about making videos for the kids, but she was reluctant to do anything that felt like saying goodbye. Now she struggled through both confusion and emotion to answer her sister's questions. She'd lose her focus and ask her to repeat the question. She stopped the recording once to choke back tears.

Slowly she got through the story of her first marriage and divorce, telling Melissa and Brian that they were the best thing that came out of those years. She explained her life as a single mom, meeting Rich and her diagnosis. She told the kids they could ask their dad more about it.

"Your real dad in my heart is Rich, because he's the one that helped Mom raise you guys," she said to the camera. "And he's always been a rock for Mom."

In the days that followed, Carolynne's condition worsened, although she said repeatedly that she felt better than ever: She'd been more than two months without chemotherapy. Doctors had long told her that the cancer would move quickly if she went two to four months without effective treatment.

Her feet were so swollen now that her skin was taut and shiny. Nausea, pain and fatigue increased.

Duhaime and other visitors came daily. Her sisters traveled home and back again. Rich often carried Carolynne up and down the stairs. He ordered equipment to help with the days when she would be able to move even less and stashed it in the basement when it arrived. Carolynne didn't want to see it.

Some things were still too hard to acknowledge.

Carolynne cried when she talked about the pain of knowing she won't be there for her children. She wouldn't get to see Melissa grow up and have her own family. She wouldn't see Brian through

the difficult times he's having. She wouldn't be there for Elijah. As they sat together at the kitchen table on the morning of Christmas Eve, Rich told her that her long fight would mean a lot to them.

"But there's a limit to it," she said, wiping tears from her eyes. "And that's when stuff will hit the fan, and when EJ calls for me, I won't be here."

Christmas day was spent with Rich's family and New Year's Eve was a quiet night at home. Between the two holidays, Carolynne sorted through photographs, picking out a few that she liked of herself. Rich would have them blown up for the funeral service and later would keep them around the house.

"This is what I used to look like," she said. With hands so thin that her wedding ring hangs loose on its finger, she pulled out a photograph of herself, smiling behind the rim of a wine glass, her hair long and blond.

#### New troubles

After New Year's, the St. Pierres were

glad to have outlived yet another doctor's prediction but anxious about taking another trip to New York. They'd scheduled a Jan. 4 appointment with Bruckner, famed for his never-give-up approach.

The fluid in Carolynne's legs had diminished slightly and her blood work looked okay. Bruckner told them they could try a new chemotherapy regimen. But when Carolynne arrived at the hospital to get treatment, an infection in her salivary gland had worsened, causing the left side of her neck to swell. Chemotherapy compromises the immune system. She couldn't get treatment while she was already fighting something off.

The St. Pierres returned to Concord, and Carolynne was admitted on Jan. 5 to Concord Hospital to receive antibiotics by IV. She has been there ever since, one floor up from the nursery where she cared for hundreds of babies. Rich stops in with Elijah each morning and evening. Melissa and Brian visit when they can.

Rich scrambles to squeeze in work on his geospatial surveying business wher-

ever possible. In New York, they took a car service from the hospital to Kathryn's apartment. Rich asked the driver to pull over, dashed into a nearby Starbucks and downloaded documents to his laptop so he could work from the car.

He is now managing two mortgages on the house, and the insurance company hasn't yet said whether it will cover a couple of chemotherapy treatments considered experimental. Family members worry that he could break down from the stress of caring for the kids, Carolynne and the family's finances.

The night Carolynne was admitted, Rich and his brother had a miscommunication. No one came to pick Melissa up from a gymnastics meet. So friends dropped her off at the hospital.

"It's really difficult to have to deal with the parent taking care of the other parent instead of the parent taking care of the kid," Melissa said later. "I understand the circumstances, but it's just hard."

Now that her mother is in the hospital and not home, Melissa said, sometimes it feels like she's already gone.

Rich said it's difficult to put Elijah to sleep at night in his bed, which sits next to his parents', and not see Carolynne there.

"It's all kind of eerie," he said. "I want to get her home. I don't want to wake up and get a call from the hospital. . . . I don't expect that, but it's unsettling right now."

Last month he started having pain in his lower back. Blood tests showed elevated levels on some of the same markers doctors watch on Carolynne's test, including bilirubin, which monitors liver function. He's hoping it's a relatively easy fix, such as a gall bladder issue.

On Thursday afternoon, he hung up the phone at home. Brian had called. He forgot his trumpet and needed Rich to bring it to school for him. He had a concert that night. Rich was in the middle of work and had been trying to figure out how to get to the concert and see Carolynne that night.

For the first time, he said, he had the sensation that he was a drowning man.

Carolynne's hospital stay, her longest in more than a year, has taken its toll.

She is weaker and thinner, and she needs assistance to get out of bed. Pain in her right shoulder, has gotten worse. Nurses have to give her regular massages on the swollen gland that leave her wincing in pain.

The swelling has gone down but not completely, and Carolynne can't go home until it does.

One evening this week, Elijah sat propped next to Carolynne in her hospital bed, resting his head on her shoulder, watching cartoons and eating pizza. Rich bribed him with candy to sit quietly. He told Carolynne he picked up the paperwork for Elijah's kindergarten class. A wide and toothy smile spread across her face.

"Really?" she said. Depending on how she feels, she said, she'd like to help fill it out.

"It's all kind of eerie.  
I want to get her home."

*Rich St. Pierre*



Rich takes a moment to rest beside Carolynne at Concord Hospital. She was admitted last week because of an infection.

Story by Chelsea Conaboy Photos by Preston Gannaway