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Donna Raheb of Hebron recently released her first book entitled *The Adventures of Henrietta Ham*. The children's book offers a refreshing take on an outdoor adventure between two friends. Raheb will hold a book signing in town next month.

## Hebron Resident Completes First Book

by Sarah McCoy

For Donna Raheb, it took 17 years to write 15 pages.

The Hebron resident has just completed her first book, *The Adventures of Henrietta Ham*. Released Sept. 9, the children's book tells the story of two girls and their afternoon at a pond.

In 1990, while at Syracuse University, Raheb was given a class assignment to create a television commercial for ham. She came up with Henrietta Ham, a little girl turned into a ham.

Over the years Henrietta resurfaced in Raheb's life. She tried to write a children's story when her niece was born in 1990. She tried again when she moved to Hebron in 1996. Then, in 2001 she took a class at Manchester Community College specifically for writing children's books. Just as she was making headway, Raheb's life took an abrupt change: In late 2001, she was diagnosed with breast cancer.

But as it turns out, she believes that was exactly the motivation she needed.

You work and work and work to pay

the bills and it becomes easy to forget the other things in life you want to do," she explained. "Something, like a cancer diagnosis, reminds you that there are other things that provide enjoyment and satisfaction. For me, bringing Henrietta Ham to life was one of them."

In remission for the last year, Raheb was finally able to focus on her story.

For her, *The Adventures of Henrietta Ham* represents many of the things that she values. "It's all about clean fun," she said. "It's about stuff that I would read when I was growing up, about being outside and enjoying what's around you."

An avid outdoorsman, Raheb said she is dismayed with the culture that currently exists for children. "You just don't see them outside anymore," she said of today's kids. So Raheb wrote of a young girl who turned into a pressed ham, and her adventures outside discovering fish, birds, and more – all the things that she and her siblings would do growing up in Killingly.

The theme of Henrietta's story is "trea-

sure your youth," and it's something, Raheb said, everyone should do.

The book is for kids, certainly," she said. "But, it is also for parents to enjoy with their kids. My hope is that adults will be reminded of their childhood and children can realize how important this time in their lives is."

With her books in hand, Raheb is now looking to get it out to readers. On Nov. 16 she will be at Class Act Movies and More (the former Movie Doctor) on Route 66, next to Ted's in Hebron to talk about the book and how it came to be. The event begins at 7 p.m.

Those looking to purchase the book can do so through [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) or [bn.com](http://bn.com). More information can also be found at [www.henriettaham.com](http://www.henriettaham.com).

With one book complete, Raheb has no intention of slowing down. She said she hopes to release a book/memoir about breast cancer next year. After that, Henrietta Ham will return, in *Gone Fishing*.

"Hopefully," Raheb said with a laugh, "the next one won't take 17 years."

## Kids Put Colchester Candidates on Hot Seat

by Jim Salemi

A community center and a skateboard park can be realities in Colchester, First Selectmen candidates told a standing room-only room of youths at a forum at Town Hall Tuesday.

The forum was sponsored and arranged by the town Department of Youth Services, and was billed as a forum for teens only.

"They came up with some really good questions," Youth Services Director Valerie Geato said the day before the forum. "I combined some of the questions that were the same and took out some questions that weren't so good or ones that were obviously from a parent."

Democratic First Selectman candidate Linda Riley Hodge made mention of the questions asked during the hour-long forum in her closing statements.

"You ask tougher questions than the adults," she said.

Her opponent, Republican Diana Giles, told the kids they asked "all good questions."

Despite the younger audience, Giles' and Hodge's answers to the kid's questions were as direct as those made to adults at other organized forums.

"I don't think there'll be a lot of money in the budget next year (to expand the youth center)," Giles said in response to a question on lack of space at the youth center.

"I think we need to look for other spaces to use," she said. "Honestly, I don't think there's money in the budget for that. We need a new way. Again, it comes back to business tax revenue."

In her response, Hodge said, "There are a lot of issues at play. Yes, we need business tax revenue, but I think we need to be creative. The youth center does activities, and other groups do activities. I'd like to pull them together, find a variety of spaces. Schools are being opened up more and more. There are other places, even private places, we can use for activities."

Another question along the lines of more activities, asked by Dale Dion, was met with a similar answer.

"If you are elected First Selectman, will you build a community center and will it have a pool?" he asked.

"It's something we all want and need," Giles replied. "We need a community center and we need a senior center. The seniors feel they need a place of their own. ... I don't think we can do it next year, but down the road. ... We need to study costs."

"We need to be creative. Bringing in business won't happen overnight," Hodge said, and again pointed to her coalition-building platform. "Community means everyone. It's going to be a teen area so we need teen input. But we need to do a space needs assessment, what space is available, what grant funding is available. What is it the community wants and needs?"

Other questions relating to "things to do" for teens included future restaurants, besides "pizza places," as one girl put it, and what the candidates thought about building a skateboard park.

Hodge said, "I would bring together a forum for kids. We need to prioritize: Is a skate park more important than baseball fields?" A collective uttering of the word 'yes' came from a number of teens answering Hodge's rhetorical question.

"Can I promise to build a skate park? No. But if you think your voice doesn't make a difference, it does," she said.

Giles agreed that a park was needed by questioning whether or not the town can afford it.

"If the people demand it, the government has to work with them to implement it," she said.

Other questions asked were heard before by adults over the last budget process: What to do about "pay to play" and "pay to participate," implemented two years ago to bring the budget down, as well as middle school sports, also cut for the same reason.

"That's something the Board of Education needs to look at," Giles replied. "We need to make money available for it and it comes back to attracting business. We need to work to increase state revenue. We can work hard for business revenue and make money available for middle school sports. That's why the budgets have been going down over the last five years."

Hodge said that both pay to play and participate and middle school sports are similar in that they were cut because of budget restraints.

"It's what the taxpayers are able to pay," she said. "We do need to try and increase revenue, but I would propose that the town and school board look at where else they can partner."

She added that if elected, she would begin zero-based budgeting, where the budget is stripped of every line item and reworked from scratch.

"Just because we did things one way for so many years doesn't mean we have to keep doing things that way," she said.

## East Hampton Council Hires New Town Manager

by Michael McCoy

Four months after firing longtime Town Manager Alan Bergren, the East Hampton Town Council has hired a replacement.

The Town Council voted 6-0 Wednesday (council member Bob Berlin was not present) to hire Jim Thomas, 47, as the new town manager. He's due to start Jan. 1, 2008.

Thomas is currently the town manager in Old Orchard Beach, ME. According to the terms of his new East Hampton contract, he will make \$118,000 a year and have access to a Ford Taurus, provided by the town. The contract is for an unspecified length; Thomas will be employed at the pleasure of the council. Both he and the council are required to give 90 days notice should either choose to terminate the relationship.

"I think he will be a strong manager, providing much needed leadership," said council member Kyle Dostaler. "He has a good background in economic development."

Former Town Manager Alan Bergren was fired by the Town Council in June. In July, the council formed the Ad-Hoc Committee to Hire a New Town Manager, composed of Dostaler, Sharon Lawson, Bill Devine, Susan Weintraub, Nancy Anton, Alison Walck, and Michael Vasquezna.

According to Dostaler, recruitment firm Bennett Yarger Associates started with a pool of "at least 28 candidates," narrowed it to 11 and then added another. From those 12, the ad-hoc committee narrowed the pool to five. At that point, one candidate withdrew their name, and another name was added. Through four face-to-face interviews and one telephone interview, the committee then selected Thomas from those five.

Council member Melissa Engel said she worried that the process was rushed, saying, "It was all about [the Chatham Party]... I hope it doesn't, but it may prove to be a mistake."

Noting that one candidate was presented to the council, Engel said, "My expectation was

that we would have 2 or 3 people to choose from."

Some of Engel's concern came after viewing an article that appeared in the Maine newspaper the *Portland Press Herald* Thursday morning. In it, Thomas was alleged to have been the target of a lawsuit, an intent to sue, and fired from a job in Sterling, CO, after four months.

In response, Thomas said, "I resigned after 8 months," speaking on the 2003 incident. He also called reporter Seth Harkness, who wrote the *Press Herald* story, a "tabloid journalist."

Dostaler said Thomas was "a manager who has to make tough decisions," and that "I think Mr. Thomas answered all of our concerns." He added that Thomas "has a good financial background. He has a lot of experience in administration."

Thomas has spent the last four and a half years in Old Orchard Beach. Born in Lewiston, ME, Thomas said, "I've been all around the world," due to his father's career in the military.

After graduating from a West Germany high school, Thomas received his bachelor's degree in political science from Weber State College in Ogden, UT. He then received his master's degree in public administration from Brigham Young University in Provo, UT. He has spent the last 20 years working in public administration.

He and his wife Kathy have four children, spanning from ages 13 to 26.

"I have a lot of dealing with economic development and growth, so I decided to pursue the opportunity," said Thomas.

Dostaler said in June, when Bergren was fired, that the move was done in the hopes of finding a town manager with "more experience with municipal development." His official last day was Oct. 18. Director of Public Works Bob Drewry has served as acting town manager in his absence, and will continue to until Thomas' first day on the job in January.

## Taxes on the Minds of Colchester Selectmen Candidates

by Jim Salemi

Board of Selectmen candidates are gearing up for the final stretch of their campaigns before the Nov. 6 local elections with visits and phone calls to voters. And during those meetings, candidates are hearing one central concern – taxation.

Still reeling from three failed budget referendums and appeals from senior groups and taxpayers at large to ease up on taxation while at the same time hearing appeals from local education supporters to fund programs, candidates are looking closely at spurring economic development to offset the tax burden shouldered by residents.

While it was unanimous that funding was the most important issue facing the town, views were varied on how to solve the problem. The Democratic candidates largely subscribed to Democratic First Selectman candidate Linda Riley Hodge's platform of inclusion of all "stakeholders" in certain matters, such as input from existing businesses on what kinds of additional business the town should try to attract.



Rosemary Coyle

"As a part of the Democratic team and a member of the Board of Selectman, I believe what Linda [Hodge] is saying – bring all stakeholders to the table," said Board of Selectman candidate Rosemary Coyle, running for a second term. "It goes beyond just economic development. How we develop, everyone has to buy into it."

Coyle said the Board of Selectmen will likely move forward with an elderly tax relief program, but that plan is also dependent on community support.

Democratic candidate John Malsbenden, also an incumbent on the board, said fiscal restraint and planned development should be looked at to help stabilize the mil rate.

"The idea of mixed-use zones clearly needs to be looked at. Although it would require a lot of careful thought," he said.

The "mixed-use" zones are building zones that allow all three sectors of building – residential, commercial and industrial – to be grouped together, such as main street style stores



Greg Cordova

and shop fronts with apartments above them.

Republican candidates also cited taxation, or issues directly related to it, as the predominant issue in the term to come.

Stan Soby, who is currently serving as First Selectman after former First Selectman Jenny Contois resigned almost two years ago, said part of the solution is courting new business, but more importantly, to design and install infrastructure such as sewer and water utilities that businesses find attractive.

"We need to develop a business park zone and seek state assistance about designing sewer and water to make a business park work," he said.

Candidate and incumbent Greg Cordova cited economic development and budget issues as the issues of foremost importance.

"These budgets taking three and four referenda to pass is ridiculous," he said. "I'm hop-



John Malsbenden

ing we can arrive at a solution over the next couple of years. I think we're well on our way, there are just so many things out there."

Fellow Republican candidate Gregg Schuster, the only candidate who is not an incumbent, made it unanimous.

"Without a doubt it's taxes and the budget," he said. "We can't afford to send the budget to referendum three and four times. Every time the budget is defeated, you build a base of voters who will vote 'no' no matter what."

To try and remediate that trend, Schuster said a "fresh look" at the budget is necessary.

"There are boundaries we have to play in," he said, "and you have to respect the boundaries given to you by the town (taxpayers). The days of three and five percent increases are over. I mean, this budget was down to zero and a lot of people still voted against it. That's a big, red flag. That's my number one concern."



Gregg Schuster

# No Major Issues Among Colchester School Board Candidates

by Michael McCoy

On Tuesday, Nov. 6, four Republicans and four Democrats will vie for four open seats on the nine-member Board of Education. And while there don't seem to be any especially hot or divisive issues, communication with the public and maintenance of the high school seem to be of some concern.

Running on the Republican ticket are Don Coolican, Kimberley Fontaine, Sharon Lawson and Sheila Wall. On the Democratic ticket are Daniel DiStefano, Debra Robinson, Michael Vasquez and Jill Simko. Robinson and Vasquez are seeking reelection.

Currently, the school board is made up of six Democrats and three Republicans. Three of the Democrat seats are up this year, while one Republican seat is up. Six is the maximum number of seats one party can have, so only three of the four Democrats running can actually win.

Coolican, 69, and his wife Maggie have lived in town since 1974 and have six children. He is a retired airline pilot, flying for TWA and later Nippon Cargo Airline, a Japanese outfit.

With the exception of a two-year break, Coolican served on the Board of Education from 1989-2005, including four years as chairman. During the 1970s he served on the Parks and Recreation Commission and sat on the



**Don Coolican**

Town Council from 1995-97. He also spent six years on the state Board of Education, where he chaired the committee that oversees the state's technical high schools.

"I always push real hard for academic rigor," said Coolican, who during his previous time on the board helped secure many of the high school's AP courses and revised the American History curriculum, which formerly began in 1879 and now starts in Colonial times. Coolican was also part of the effort that allowed all middle school students the opportunity to take a foreign language.

"I think we'll succeed if we focus on what the real mission is, for the kids to get the most liberal education they can," he said.

DiStefano, 41, was born and raised in East Hampton. He moved back to town in November after living in Colchester for the past 12 years. He and his wife Sharon have two children. He is currently a professional produce/

business resource specialist for Sysco Food Service of Connecticut.

DiStefano has coached boys' soccer ever since he graduated from high school. He has coached for Parks & Recreation as well as the junior high, and now East Hampton's 3-5 year olds.

During the 1990s DiStefano spent five years on the Board of Directors for the Haddam Neck Fair; altogether, he's been involved with the fair for more than 15 years.

DiStefano said communication is a major issue for him.

"I don't even know when the Board of Education meets," he chuckled. He said the school board should try conducting roundtable sessions with various town boards and commissions.

Politics apparently won't be an issue with DiStefano, as he promised that, if elected, "I'm going to work for the children, not for the party I represent."

DiStefano is the son of former Town Council member Tom DiStefano. And now, DiStefano said, "I guess I'm sort of trying to



**Daniel DiStefano**

follow in my father's footsteps."

Fontaine, 39, and her husband Stuart Fontaine II have four children. She has lived in East Hampton for three years and is currently manager of the grants program for the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority.

She has attended East Hampton Bible Church since 2000. There, she and her husband are leaders of Alien Youth, the church youth group. She is also currently organizing the effort to bring a skate park to town. To this end, she also organized the Youth Jam in the late summer.

Fontaine is a graduate of the Parent Leadership Training Institute. The program operates through the Connecticut Commission on children, and Fontaine works to secure funding for it. Last year, Fontaine was given their Alumni of the Year Award.

Fontaine volunteers and provides research for the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. She also helped pass a bill that allows state and municipal police officers to issue a restraining order at the scene of a crime. She said victims would previously be given a courtesy call about a half an hour prior to the perpetrator's release from jail, but, she said, this offered "no legal protection between the arrest and the next day the court is open."

Fontaine is also a member of the Coalition for Children as well as Connecticut Parent Power, a lobbying organization for parents. "When you think of it, everyone else has a lobbyist," Fontaine explained.

Fontaine is also co-founder of Epoch Arts and she and her husband also train guide dogs for Fidelco. And a year ago, Fontaine wrote a pro-bono grant for Peaceful Hill Tree Farm, which won them a \$49,000 grant enabling them to build a new structure, which should increase sales and provide a home to agricultural education programs on site.



**Kimberley Fontaine**

Lawson has one child and a husband, Leroy. She has lived in town since 1965.

Lawson has been a member of the Republican Town Committee for many years and is a past president of the American Saddlehorse Association of Connecticut, of which she is still an active member. In fact,

Lawson has been showing horses since 1983.

Since 1981, Lawson has had her own private practice; she is a licensed psychotherapist, professional counselor, and drug and alcohol



**Sharon Lawson**

## Marlborough Holding a Point of Dispensing Drill

by Sarah McCoy

Marlborough will hold its own Point of Dispensing drill Saturday, Nov. 3, instead of participating in the Chatham District five-town drill taking place that same day in Portland.

Mark Merritt, drill coordinator and EMS captain, opted out of the larger scale drill because of reservations he has about the quality of the Chatham drill.

"We didn't want to push people through and call it a drill," Merritt explained of his reasons to pull out of the drill. "We wanted to do it the right way. When every participating town has a good core group of volunteers then we'll do the main point drill. Until then, it's a better use of our volunteers' time to drill within Marlborough."

Merritt is still looking for volunteers for the Nov. 3 drill. Those interested in assisting in the drill itself can call 295-9692 for more information. Additional volunteers are also needed to act as victims for the drill. People interested in helping should show up, ideally, at the Marlborough Commuter Lot at exit 12 off of

Route 2 or at St. John Fischer Church at either 9 or 10 a.m.

Shuttles will be provided to practice transporting "victims" to the Marlborough Elementary School for care. If neither of the two locations is convenient, volunteer victims can drive directly to MES between 9:00-11:30am. One hour is needed to go through the entire drill.

The first 100 participants over the age of 18 will receive a free flu shot paid for by the Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance Association.

The Point of Dispensing Drill is held for the town's emergency volunteers to prepare for mass inoculations or medication dispensing.

Thad King, Director of Health for the Chatham Health District, said Chatham's large-scale drill is still occurring. As of press time, he said he hadn't received any formal withdrawal from the drill by Marlborough and had no further comment on the issue.

The Chatham Health District is comprised of Portland, East Hampton, East Haddam, Marlborough, and Hebron.

## East Hampton Resident Arrested After Allegedly Yelling at Chatham Headquarters

by Michael McCoy

Christopher Burt, 50, of 21 Day Point Rd., was arrested Oct. 7 and charged with breach of peace after allegedly yelling "death to the Chatham Party" while driving past the party's Main Street headquarters, East Hampton police report.

East Hampton Police Chief Matthew Reimondo reported that on Oct. 7, around 2 p.m., Burt was allegedly "driving by the headquarters of the Chatham Party and yelled some inappropriate things."

Those working at the headquarters at the time reported the incident. According to Reimondo, the witnesses said Burt yelled "something to the effect of 'death to the Chatham Party.'"

Reimondo continued, "There was an allegation that this type of thing was ongoing," though he said that no other instance had been specifically attributed to Burt.

Officer Kevin Wilcox investigated the case, later arresting and issuing a summons to Burt. However, Burt was not taken into custody. Instead, he appeared at GA9 Court in Middletown on Oct. 16.

After being heard by Judge Barbara Jongbloed, the court clerk's office reported that the case was nolle, and said "the charges were dropped."

Burt said this week, "The Chatham Party's bogus charges against me were dropped last week as they were deemed not a crime by Superior Court."

counselor. She currently practices in East Hampton.

Lawson was also a facilitator for the Chatham Roundtables and is a member of the Ad-Hoc Committee To Hire a New Town Manager.

Since 2001, Lawson has served on the Zoning Board of Appeals. "That's a very well-gelled group," she said. "It appears to be non-partisan."

Lawson added that "the word I would like to use to describe what I would bring to the board is 'creativity.'" She explained that she wished to "open the doors [of the schools] to the public," meaning that she wants to get the community involved more with the schools. Lawson said guest speakers could be used to help accomplish this.

"I would like to see a more vigorous search for creative financing," she said, adding that asset management is one of the areas that could benefit from this.

"A large portion of our budget is spent on special education and special needs kids," said Lawson, who said she was quite happy with the recent addition of three new school psychologists. "This addresses issues before the kids get to crisis level."



**Debra Robinson**

Robinson and her husband Brian have two children. She has lived in town for 15 years. She is a homemaker, but, she laughed, "my family calls me a professional volunteer."

Robinson is president of the high school PTO, and also volunteers for sports boosters and project graduation. She attends the Congregational Church of East Hampton, where she serves on the church council. She also volunteers for the East Hampton food bank.

Since 2003, Robinson has been a member of the Board of Education, and serves as chair of the district wellness committee, which was formed in 2005 to comply with state mandates concerning school nutrition.

"I think it's very important that the district has a strategic five-year plan," Robinson said. Concerning the New England Association of Schools and Colleges' recent comments concerning facilities, she said, "I think that there is work to be done to comply with all their recommendations."

Robinson also said, "I wish to continue to work on student learning and student improvement."

Simko, 36, has lived in town since 1977 and



**Jill Simko**

Simko was part of the Chatham Roundtables effort in 2004 and 2005. "That was a really worthwhile experience; it really gave people a voice," said Simko, who said she would like to try something similar with the Board of Education.

Simko added that "as an educator, I realize the challenges and differences of No Child Left Behind. Providing a quality education will be huge for the next few years."

Simko stressed "open communication" and "listening to people" as two of her values, adding that they are things she feels "have not happened for the past few years."

She does, however, seem to hold the present Board of Education in high regard, emphasizing cooperative efforts with the Board of Finance. "As time has gone on," she said, "the Board of Education has provided the Board of Finance with a better budget."

Vasquenza, 49, and his wife Mary Lou have two sons, and have lived in town for 21 years.

In June, Vasquenza left his position as Chief Information Officer for the City of Hartford, where he had worked for 26 years. He has since started an independent consulting firm for govern-

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**Michael Vasquenza**

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Vasquenza is president of the East Hampton Athletic Hall of Fame, which he co-founded 3 years ago. From 2000-05, he served on the Board of Directors for East Hampton Little League. He has also coached CYL basketball for four years. He is a member of the East Hampton Rotary and has sat on the Board of Education since 2003, where he is vice chairman.

"I've just always been involved in my community," Vasquenza said. "The easy thing to do is sit on the sidelines and criticize."

Noting the recent hiring of Superintendent of Schools Judith Golden, he said, "She is a really curriculum and student performance based superintendent."

Speaking on the 40+-year-old high school, he admitted, "Something has to be done to bring that facility up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. ... It's an older facility that's in need of some upgrades."

"I think if it's a good idea, whether a Republican, Democrat, or Chatham Party person comes up with it, let's do it," said Vasquenza.

Wall, 71, has lived in town since 1960. She is widowed, but she and her husband have four sons. Wall



**Sheila Wall**

has spent much of her life as a homemaker, and has also worked at My Father's House, a retreat center in Moodus, as well as Wall's Dairy Farm in town.

"I have always been in the background of politics," said Wall. She added, "I think my greatest reason for running is I have always been a critic of the Board of Education, and I'd like to get on the board to see if my criticism was justified."

One of those criticisms, Walls said, is that "The Board of Education budget is always so much higher than the rest of the budget."

Wall added that the "most important thing, I think, is the special education children. I think there is a need, and I don't question the need, but question how much of a need. I just wonder if some of these children we're outsourcing could be helped right here in our own system."

Wall has four grandchildren in the school system, and did offer some praise for the East Hampton schools. "We're doing very well," she said. "However, I wonder if we could do better."

# Five Candidates, Four Open Seats in Hebron BOE Race

by Sarah McCoy

Hebron residents must decide between five candidates for the four open seats on the local Board of Education on Election Day next month.

Incumbents Mark Allaben, a Republican, and Jane Dube, a Democrat, are seeking reelection, while Valerie Watt, Brian O'Reilly, both Republicans, and Stephanie Raymond, a Democrat, are seeking their first terms.

Democrats have a 5-2 majority on the seven-member school board.



**Mark Allaben**

Allaben has served for the last four years on the Board of Education (BOE), the last two as chairman. He said he is seeking reelection to continue the success of the last few years.

"When I first joined there were lots of outstanding issues," he recalled. "Since then we've set up our own

administration, hired a new superintendent, and now I feel like we are turning a corner. We're seeing test scores rise and a re-focus on education."

While he doesn't have any children in the district, Allaben said he has always been a proponent of public education. "If we're going to have a society that progresses, then we need education to get our children off to a good start," he said. Allaben added that he views education,

the economy, and the environment as the three most important aspects of society and that, at the local level, he feels he can have the largest impact on education.

He has lived in town for seven years and said he considers his time on the BOE a success.

"There is an awful big common ground between Republicans and Democrats and I think the current board has done a good job finding it," Allaben said. "We're on the right track. We just have to keep helping it along."

O'Reilly is seeking his first political appointment in Hebron. He and his family moved to Hebron three years ago and almost immediately O'Reilly became active with children in the community as a T-ball, and now soccer coach. He'd like to see his impact on the Hebron youth extend as a member of the school board.

"My wife and I looked for many years for a place to live and we felt that Hebron was the best place to raise a family," he said. "Now here, I'd like to help the town improve on what it already has."

O'Reilly said he is a proponent of full-day kindergarten, and would like to see the district maintain conservative class sizes. However, the father of two and business owner knows what it means to spend wisely.



**Brian O'Reilly**

"I own a business. I know that you can't keep dipping into your pockets," he said. "We need to operate on a tight budget and that is something I feel I can help with considering my experience working within and developing budgets."

Watt is a woman who certainly knows a thing or two about children having raised eight of her own including a set of triplets. Watt is a former alternate on the Parks and Recreation Commission, former officer of the Hebron Lions, and is active with youth athletics in the town.

She said she is seeking election to the Board of Education to give back to the community she loves and address some of her concerns with the district's educational system. She said her main focus is to provide the best education while keeping taxes low.

"In a lot of ways I think this town has gotten through rough phases," she said. "I don't see any monumental changes on the horizon but I would like to be a part of helping the educational system in Hebron."

Watt said she is particularly concerned about the district's hiring practices. "Enrollment is down yet we're still hiring teachers. I'm just trying to figure out what's going on," she said.

Dube is seeking her second term on the Board of Education. She is a former member of the PTA. Initially Dube began her tenure with an interest in her daughter's education. Four years later, she is hoping for more, even though her daughter has since graduated. "I've really enjoyed my time on



**Valerie Watt**



**Jane Dube**

the board and, more importantly, I feel we've made some great strides," she said.

Dube said the immediate concern for the district has to be budgetary. "It's a challenge every year to balance needs, wants, and costs," she said. Another concern for her is ensuring that every student, no matter the teacher, receives the same level of education. Dube said she would like to see a more streamlined approach to professional development with an emphasis on curriculum development.

"We've had the new math curriculum in place for just over a year now," she said. "Based on mastery test scores, it seems that things are working."

Raymond is seeking election to her first political board. She is a mother of two and a practicing attorney for Hartford Financial Services. Raymond was unable to be reached at the time of publication but her biography on the Democratic Town Committee's website states that she has volunteered at Gilead Hill Elementary School for the last several years and attends PTA meetings. She is also a Girl Scout leader in town and graduated from UConn with a degree in political science.

Of the five candidates, four will be elected to serve on the local Board of Education for the next four years. Election Day is November 6 from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at Hebron Elementary School.



**Stephanie Raymond**

# Majority Up for Grabs on Hebron Board of Selectmen

by Sarah McCoy

Next month's election could be a big one for the Board of Selectmen, as the majority status of the five-member board is up for grabs.

Currently, the Democrats hold a 3-2 majority on the board, but with three seats up for reelection, either party could take charge. Chairman Karen Strid is seeking re-election to the board, and Brian O'Connell is joining her on the Democratic ticket. The Republican candidates are Gayle Mulligan and Jeff Watt.

Strid has served on the Board of Selectmen (BOS) for the past seven years, and as chairman for the last two. Prior to that, she served on the Planning and Zoning Commission for six years.

"I wouldn't be doing this if I didn't like it," Strid said of her decision to run again. "I feel that I still have a lot to offer and can bring some experience to the board."

Strid said she is proud of her accomplishments since joining the BOS, namely the school projects, construction of a new firehouse, and, most recently, approval of the parks project. However, she said she feels these coming years are shaping up to be just as exciting in Hebron.

"There is a lot going on that needs attention. I'd like to continue our work on a strategic plan to give the town better direction," Strid said. "We shouldn't have any surprises, no one should be saying, 'we need this now. We need that now.'"

Additionally, with the approval of the park, Strid is eager to get construction off the ground

at the lowest possible cost to the town. "Yes, the project is \$4.5 million now but we've hired a professional grant writer to work with the sports organizations in town to search for, and apply for, grants to defray the overall cost," she said. "The project is one that can bring the whole community together and, at the end, I think we will be able to stand back and be proud of the work that went in to making the park happen."

Strid's other focus is the Village Green District. Having completed the roadway into the property, the town is poised to see commercial growth in the Hebron center. "This is a key component to alleviating some of the tax burden from residents," she said.

Also endorsed by the Democratic Town Committee is O'Connell, a 13-year veteran to Hebron politics. He has served on the Parks and Recreation Commission since 1994. In addition, he has been a member of the CIP Committee since 1999 and the Open Space Land Acquisition Committee since 2001.

This past summer O'Connell decided that he wanted a new challenge and tossed his name in the ring for the Board of Selectmen. "I know the town. I know the budget system and I love volunteering," he said. "I think I can help Hebron."

But O'Connell doesn't have any quick fixes for the town. "Everyone says taxes are the issue in Hebron. No kidding. They're an issue in every town. The question is how are you going

to help the situation," he said. The strategic plan and economic development are two areas that, in O'Connell's opinion, can help the town manage their resources.

With a background as a financial advisor, O'Connell said he feels he has both the financial know-how and personal attributes to assist the town in the coming years. "For my job I listen to concerns, about retirement, school, etc.," he said. "It doesn't take long to determine what has to be done and come to an agreement on the next steps. This ability, I feel, could serve me well on the Board of Selectmen."

Facing off against Strid and O'Connell are Republican candidates Gayle Mulligan and Jeff Watt.

Mulligan moved to Hebron 13 years ago and has been volunteering in town for the last 10. She served as a member of the PTA and for the Hebron Soccer Association, she is currently the organization's executive director. For the past two years Mulligan has served on the Zoning Board of Appeals and as the Deputy of Registrars for the Republicans.

Between her experience of maintaining the Hebron Soccer Association's budget and her background in financial marketing, Mulligan said she feels that she has the skills needed to help her town. "I am hard-working and open-minded," she said. "I don't have a set agenda. I plan on being here a long time. I'm raising my children here. And, I want to see the town thrive."

To make that happen, Mulligan suggested a careful eye on the management of the park construction, a focus on quality education, all while keeping tax increases to a minimum. She said she sees economic development as a necessity for Hebron as well as open communication between board members and residents.

Jeff Watt, the former chairman of the RHAM Board of Education, is also vying for one of the three openings on the Hebron Board of Selectmen. Watt served as chair on the RHAM board during the time of the central office break-up and school building project. He was also an active member of the Hebron Lions Club for eight years, and was president of the organization in 2004.

For the last couple of years Watt has taken a break from politics, instead focusing on his family of eight children, including a set of triplets.

Watt was unavailable for comment at press time, but on the Republican Town Committee website, he says that he is "running for the Board of Selectmen because I want to take an active leadership role in recommending incentives that will bring in commercial business that complements our community." Watt also mentions beginning a discussion on a possible property tax cap to protect residents from further debt.

He said on the site he hopes to bring with him to the Board of Selectmen his experience as the Senior Vice President of Reinsurance at Hartford Steam Boiler, Inspection and Insurance Company where he currently leads his staff of 55.

Of the four candidates, the three highest vote-getters will earn a place on the Board of Selectmen. Voting for the 2007 municipal elections will take place from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 6, at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St.



**Karen Strid**



**Brian O'Connell**



**Gayle Mulligan**



**Jeff Watt**

# New Faces and Familiar Ones Featured in Marlborough School Board Race

by Sarah McCoy

The race for the local Board of Education features a mix of incumbents and newcomers.

Six candidates are vying for five openings on the nine-member school board.

The Republican candidates are Louise Concodello, Ruth Kelly and Poppy Sun. Running on the Democratic ticket are Corinne Chappelle, Betty O'Brien, and John O'Toole.

Concodello is seeking her fourth term on the board. "It's in me to volunteer and this is something that I've always enjoyed," she said.

Education isn't the only thing she enjoys, though. In addition to her time on the Board of Education, Concodello also serves as the co-chairman of the Parks and Recreation Committee and Nature Trails and Sidewalk Commission.

Concodello is a 30-year resident of Marlborough and for the last 24 years she has also run an at-home daycare provider business. "I think it is important for children to love school and to never stop learning," she said. "From my standpoint, the board is running very well and our focus is on improving everything that we do have to ensure our children are lifetime learners."

Kelly is a new name to Marlborough politics but, certainly, not a new name to the

Marlborough school system. Ruth Kelly taught at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School for 25 years. Now retired, she is looking to stay involved.

"It is a natural step for me," she said. "Public education has been a part of my life since I was six years old. Hopefully the Board of Ed[ucation] will provide me another opportunity to advocate for students."

Kelly said she didn't have any particular focus for the next four years, if elected. "The building renovations are complete," she said. "We have a stable administration. I would like to serve in whatever capacity is needed to create the best school system for a cost Marlborough residents can afford."

Sun, a 10-year resident of the town and mother of three, is the third Republican candidate. For Sun, the decision to run for the Board of Education came after her eldest graduated last year from the Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy in



Ruth Kelly



Poppy Sun

East Hartford. "I was very much involved with CIBA and now, with my son at college, I wanted to concentrate on my younger kids," she said.

Already a member of the Marlborough PTO, Sun said she is committed to children and education. Originally from Prague, Czech Republic, Sun earned her Masters of Fine Arts and began teaching dance for six years. She went on to earn her PhD from the Sorbonne in Paris. Now, having made a home in Marlborough, Sun also volunteers her time on the Junior Women's Club.

For Chappelle, the decision to run for the Board of Education grew out of a conversation with a friend. "I was complaining to a friend about my dissatisfaction with the educational services my family received in Virginia," she said. "I told my friend that people needed to do more and she responded saying, 'Why don't you do more?' She was absolutely right."

Before that moment, Chappelle said she had never considered running for an elected position. Now she said she wants to help the educational system in this country, beginning with Marlborough. Among her chief concerns are advocating for those with special needs and opening the dialogue for full-day kindergarten options. "I'm not saying that we are lacking anything," Chappelle said. "But, I do think there is always room for improvement."



Corinne Chappelle



John O'Toole

O'Brien (whom the *Riverast* did not receive a photo of as of press time) is seeking her second term on the Marlborough Board of Education. In addition to her past four years on the board, she also serves on the Nature Trails and Sidewalk Commission and as Secretary for the Marlborough Arts Center. She has lived in town for the past 32 years. "The current board is a great board and with a few people getting off I felt it was important for me to run again for continuity," she said.

Before retiring, O'Brien worked as a school psychologist at the K-12 level. Areas of focus for her are preparing students for their transition to the middle school and the enrichment program at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School. O'Brien has two grandchildren at RHAM and another one about to begin elementary school.

"Certainly my interest is in my grandchildren," she said. "But it is more than that. It's all children."

O'Toole has lived in Marlborough for the past 6 years. While a newcomer to the political realm, O'Toole has volunteered for the Cub Scouts and youth athletic organizations in town. With two boys now at the elementary school, he said he'd like to begin serving on a new level.

"My father taught for 50 years and me and my six siblings all received a good public education that helped us all realize our potential," he said. "Now I'd like to contribute to our children's future."

O'Toole said he has a number of focuses for the district in terms of education. He'd like to address the ongoing gender gaps in achievement as well as professional development that would assist teachers in teaching level learning as opposed to for a specific test.

"Children at every level should be challenged," O'Toole said. "I'd like to see the school differentiate the needs of the students to help each one grow."

Eligible voters in Marlborough will have a chance to cast their ballots from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 6, in the community room at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School, 25 School Dr.

## Andover Police News

10/21 - Mark Powers, 53, of 140 Long Hill Rd., was arrested for assault, interfering with police, disorderly conduct and risk of injury to a minor, according to reports.

## Marlborough Police News

Elizabeth L. Boyce, 48, of 21 Roberts Rd., was arrested on a warrant for DWI and following too closely, according to police.

## Portland Police News

10/12 - Wayne Boulier, 27, of 25B Church St., was charged with sixth-degree larceny and escape from custody, Portland Police say.

10/17 - A 13-year-old male was referred to juvenile court on charges of first-degree criminal trespass and third-degree criminal mischief, police say.

10/18 - David Cunningham, 44, of 255 Rock Landing Rd., Haddam Neck, was charged with sixth-degree larceny, police say.

10/18 - Courtney Paul, 26, of 3 Valli Dr., East Hampton, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia, police say.

10/19 - Michael Cannata, 62, of 218 Main St., was charged with failure to respond to infraction, police say.

## Colchester Police News

10/7 - A Middletown man lost his left leg after it was severed below the knee when the motorcycle he was riding went off the road and hit a utility pole, according to police.

Police say Jeffery C. Bilodeau, 42, of Middletown was riding his motorcycle on Route 149 near the East Haddam town line when he failed to negotiate a curve. He went off the opposite side of the road, according to reports.

Bilodeau was flown by LifeStar helicopter to Hartford Hospital, police say.

10/7 - Pedro Martinez, 55, of Hartford, was arrested for DWI and failure to stay in his lane, according to police.

10/10 - Gary A. Berthiaume, 56, of Springfield, MA, was arrested for DWI, failure to carry minimum insurance and failure to stay in his lane, according to police.

10/11 - Thomas Lemay, 20, of 51 Pleasant St., was arrested for burglary and criminal mischief, according to police.

10/14 - Stephanie Maturano, 26, of 19 Hammond Court, was arrested for assault and disorderly conduct, according to police.

10/15 - Mattio Ingenito, 26, who police say they have no certain address for, was arrested for assault and breach of peace, police say.

10/22 - Police are investigating numerous incidences of vandalism after reports of car tires being punctured in the Jack Jackter Intermediate School and Colchester Elementary School parking lots, according to police.

## Marlborough Police News

10/12 - Police report they are investigating the theft of a package at a roadside mailbox on Edstrom Road. Police say the theft occurred on Sept. 26 between 4 and 6:30 p.m.

10/13 - Jonathan Devino, 27, of Enfield, was arrested for DWI and erratic driving, according to police.

10/16 - Police report they are investigating the theft of copper pipes from a vacant home on Portland Road.

10/17 - Police report they are investigating a robbery that took place at the Dunkin Donuts in the center of town.

According to police, a white male entered the store shortly before closing last Wednesday and handed the clerk a slip of paper with the word "Robbery" written on it. The clerk cooperated and opened the cash register, police say. After taking the cash, he exited through a rear door, police report.

Police describe the suspect as approximately 5'9" and 230 pounds. He was last seen wearing a shirt with the New York Yankees logo on the front and the name Sheffield and the number 11 on the back. He was also wearing a blue New York Giants baseball cap.

# Spending, Communication Concerns for BOE Candidates

by Michael McCoy

This year's Board of Education race features four candidates running for three spots, while another candidate is running unopposed.

Christopher Phelps and MaryAnn Rode are running on the Democratic ticket, while Christopher Bongo and Brenna Kosicki and Mark Bucheri are the Republicans.

Of the candidates, all but Kosicki are currently on the board. Bucheri is running unopposed. One of two Republicans on the seven-member, Democrat-controlled board, Bucheri was appointed in 2006 to fill out a term that began in 2005.

Bongo, 46, and his wife Karen have two children. He has lived in Portland and is sales manager for Connecticut Distributors Inc., a liquor and wine wholesaler. He coaches Little League as well as CYL basketball. From 2004-07, he was safety director for Portland Little League



**Christopher Bongo**

Bongo has been on the Board of Education since 2000; he also served on the school board's building committee which began in 2001 and oversaw the renovations to the middle school and high school that were finished in 2005. He is also the chairman of the policy and chairman of the operations committees.

Bongo is proud of the work the school board has accomplished concerning safety, which includes buzzers on every door. He also applauds the improvement to communications, which includes EMS' use of the communication tower at the high school.

He also showed confidence in Schools Superintendent Sally Doyen, praising her zero-tolerance drug and alcohol policy.

Bongo also seemed encouraged by the BOE's use of the Gildersleeve Fund to get Project Lead the Way started. The program, which began during the 2006-07 school year, normally costs \$80,000 to start up, said Bongo. However, thanks to wise decisions made during the building of the schools, only \$19,000 was needed, \$7,000 of which came from the Gildersleeve Fund.

He also mentioned his pleasure over the solar panels that will be installed on Valley View.

"I do have a strong commitment to the youth of this town," Bongo said. "Guys in the middle, we can go get a second job if we need to. My son can't; my grandmother can't."

Bucheri, 60, has lived in town for 23 years. He is married to Rosemarie and has two children, and from 1985 to 2000, he was Cubmaster for Pack 15 in Portland. Bucheri is semi-retired and currently works as a paraplanner for McCabe and Associates, a Portland franchise of Ameriprise. Prior to that, Bucheri spent 32 years in the insurance industry, including 27 years at Aetna.

Bucheri has been involved in local politics since the 1970s. From 1978-80 he served on the Vernon Board of Selectmen as they made the switch to a town council.

He also served on the Capital Committee while Ed Kalinowski was First Selectman. Then, during the late '90s, Bucheri spent two

years on the Economic Development Commission.

Serving on the Board of Education since the summer of 2006, Bucheri also showed confidence in Doyen. "The Superintendent is on a very strong track, and I'd like to see that continue," he said. "She is involved with all levels of the school system. She knows what's going on all the time. ... She doesn't just sit at her office on East Main Street. I think that's refreshing."

Looking forward, Bucheri said he wants to see that the Brownstone Intermediate School roof addressed. "I think the time has come that this needs to be taken care of," he said.

Kosicki, 36, and her husband Brian have two children. She works as a school administrator for the Capital Region Education Council.

Kosicki said she'd "like to see more accountability for spending."

Also, she said, "we have a lot of students who are outplaced special education-wise," she said. She said she hopes to "work to keep kids in schools, instead of outplacing them."

Kosicki added that she'd "also like to propose if we could consider full-day kindergarten."

Like the other school board candidates, Kosicki expressed confidence in the current superintendent. "Dr. Doyen has a really good reputation, and I look forward to working with her," she said. "We have the same vision."

Phelps, 39, has lived in Portland for 13 years. He and his wife Hilary have two children.

Phelps is currently Program Director for Environment Connecticut, an environmental advocate.

After serving on the Economic Development



**Mark Bucheri**

Commission for two years, Phelps joined the Board of Education in 2003.

"It's been incredibly fun being on the Board [of Education]," Phelps said. "You learn that you didn't really know all that much about what it really means."

Saying that municipal finance has been a hot topic ever since he came onto the school board, Phelps applauded the efforts of the current board and administration. "From the moment the budget is proposed down to the moment that it's approved, it becomes tighter and more affordable," he said. "We've been learning and relearning how to get the most bang for our buck."

Phelps recalled that he opposed the schools superintendent's proposed budget during his first year on the budget due to "a double-digit spending increase." However, he applauded all the budgets prepared by Doyen, which, Phelps says, have all been 4 percent increases or smaller.

Phelps is also proud of the effort that brought Project Lead the Way, a program that begins in seventh grade, as well as the addition of AP courses, and the improvement of test scores.

Also, Phelps said, the charge of preparing Portland's students for college does not begin at the high school, but rather at Valley View. He aims to give an "education that enables kids to achieve the things they dream of."



**Brenna Kosicki**



**Christopher Phelps**

He said he's also been pleased with the manner that the school board has kept the students in the forefront. "The board operates with politics left outside the room," he said. "Politics has nothing to do with it."

Looking forward, he seeks to "strengthen the relationship between the town hall and the schools."

Rode, 41, and her husband Ken have two children. She has been an East Hampton resident since 1999 and is currently Director Human Resources for UNAPEN in Wallingford.

Rode was president of the Valley View PTO from 2002-06. Rode then began working with the Gildersleeve PTO, where she has been vice president since earlier this year.

She is also involved with St. Mary's Church, where she teaches CCD, works with the children and youth, and is a Eucharistic Minister. Since 2006, she has been a member of the Board of Education.

"My own message is that, based on all of my community work, the biggest need is communication," said Rode. "People need to get messages in a timely manner."

Rode said everyone deserves to be kept apprised of the state of education in town. "Not everyone has the luxury of being actively involved in the schools," she said.



**Mary Ann Rode**

# Obituaries

## East Hampton

### Phyllis Kowalsky

Phyllis (Detweiler) Kowalsky, 90, of East Hartford, formerly of Glastonbury, died Monday, Oct. 22, in Hartford Hospital.

Born in Hartford on June 30, 1917 she was the daughter of the late Clarence E. Detweiler and Nettie (Johnson-Detweiler) VanGasbeck. She lived in Glastonbury for many years prior to moving to East Hartford. Phyllis leaves a son, Edward E. Kowalsky and his wife Sandra of East Hampton; two daughters, Marilyn L. Player and Lorraine E. Watts both of East Hartford, her brother Clyde VanGasbeck and his wife Anna-May of South Windsor , five grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. In addition to her parents Phyllis was predeceased by her brother Wilbur VanGasbeck.

Funeral services will be held Friday, Oct. 25, at 11 a.m. in the Farley-Sullivan Funeral Home, 50 Naubuc Ave., Glastonbury. Burial will follow at Green Cemetery, Hubbard Street, Glastonbury. Friends and relatives may call on the family today (Thursday, Oct. 25) from 7-9 p.m., at the funeral home.

## Portland

### Bernard D. Primmer

Bernard D. Primmer, 84, of Susan Circle, Portland, died Friday, Oct. 19, in his home, surrounded by his loving family. He was the beloved husband of 59 years of Elaine Sauro Primmer, who called him “Her gift from God”. Born in East Providence, RI, Feb. 20, 1923, a son of the late Bernard S. and Anna O’Connell Primmer, he was a Portland resident for many years. He had been employed by Chevron Asphalt for 42 years until his retirement in 1982 and also had been employed as a part-time deliveryman for Bunces. Following his retirement, he was employed by the Portland Country Market.

He was a veteran of World War II having served his country in the U.S. Navy aboard the USS Acree (DE167). Mr. Primmer was an avid Yankees fan who loved his Navy reunions at Virginia Beach which he would attend with his entire family. He was a parishioner of the Church of Saint Mary where he served as a collector. He enjoyed his yard, enjoyed gardening, and was known as “Mr. Craftsman” possessing every Craftsman tool available. He and Elaine were avid dancers but his favorite hobby was her cooking. He was a loving husband, a devoted father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. He was compassionate, humble, and very giving of himself trying to care for people even during his final illness.

Besides his beloved wife Elaine, he is survived by his daughters, Jeanne Levesque and her husband Dennis of East Hartford, Patricia Lovato and her husband Brian of Cedarbrook, NJ, and Bonnie Primmer and her companion William Weir of East Hampton; his son Daniel Primmer and his wife Shanelle of Higganum; his grandchildren Christine Clement, Jason Levesque, Scott Clement, Timothy Lovato, Kevin Lovato, Ashley Primmer, Mallory Lovato, and Ashley Lovato; his great-grandchildren Austin Stevens, Kaiden Lovato, Nathaniel Lovato, Avery Lovato, and Connor Lovato; his sister Bernice Garrity; his brother George Primmer, both of East Providence, RI, and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his step-mother Ethel O’Donnell Primmer, his sisters Doris Calcagno and Margaret Primmer, and his brothers Richard Primmer and John Primmer. The family would like to thank the UCONN Health Center and Middlesex Hospital for the loving compassionate care they provided to Mr. Primmer and his family.

Relatives and friends attended a Mass of Christian Burial Wednesday in the Church of Saint Mary. Interment will follow in St. Mary Cemetery. There are no calling hours. Arrangements are under the direction of the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. In lieu of flowers, gifts in his memory may be sent to the Church of Saint Mary, 51 Freestone Avenue, Portland, CT 06480.

## Colchester

### Helen Reneson

Helen (Orinski) Reneson, 99, of Bull Hill Rd., Colchester, wife of the late Chester L. Reneson, died Saturday, Oct. 20, at Liberty Specialty Care Center, Colchester. She was born in Cromwell, the daughter of the late Frank and Mary (Jersulemski) Orinski. She was employed with various convalescent homes as a LPN and retired from the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation. Helen and her husband owned and operated Reneson’s Game Bird Farm in Middletown and later in Colchester for 40 years. She is survived by her two sons, Peter R. Reneson of Colchester and Chester W. Reneson of Lyme; and a grandson, Aaron Reneson. She was predeceased by a brother, Raymond Orinski. Funeral services are private and burial will be at the convenience of the family in Calvary Cemetery, Middletown. There are no calling hours. Memorial contributions may be made to a charity of the donor’s choice. Biega Funeral Home has care of the arrangements.

## Marlborough

### Ruth Marguerite LaChapelle

Ruth Marguerite (Bennett) LaChapelle died Sunday, Oct. 14, at the age of 95. She formerly lived on Phoenix St. in Vernon, where, in 1940, she and her husband, Clarence, built the home in which they raised their family. They moved to Becket, MA in the late 1970s where Clarence died in 1985. Ruth remained there until 2004 when, due to declining health, she moved to Marlborough, to live with her son, Ted, and his family. She later died at the home of her daughter, Margaret, in Roxbury. Ruth spent her life as a nurturer. Her mother died when Ruth was only 12 and she had to leave school to help raise her younger sisters. Later, Ruth worked hard to raise and support her family of 13 children and four foster children. She carried this trend with her into the Berkshires, where she was always there to help all of the “old people” of her community, usually individuals at least a decade her junior.

She also cared for the many small dogs that were her constant companions through her latter years, all of whom she outlived except her last friend, Little Bit, whom she loved dearly. Ruth was an endearingly tenacious, independent and fearless woman. She loved the outdoors and walked and hiked well into her eighties. The only thing that even approached the importance of family to Ruth was her unwavering faith and devotion to the Catholic religion. She was an avid churchgoer and always had rosary beads close at hand. Her inspiring presence will be greatly missed by many, including her children, Mary Bendoraitis-Mazzochi, Clarence Jr., Eileen Fuller, Judy Fuller, Theodore, Gerard, Margaret Yonika, Frederick, Joseph, Gregory, Dennis, and David. She is also survived by her sister, Rita Marra; 46 grandchildren; 78 great-grandchildren; 10 great-great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews. She is predeceased by her parents, John and Mary (Briggs) Bennett, her husband, Clarence, her son, John, her sister, Marion Carter, a grandchild and two great-grandchildren. She was buried at St. Thomas Cemetery in Huntington, MA with her husband. There was a Memorial Mass Thursday, Oct. 25, at St. John Fisher Church in Marlborough.

## Colchester

### Patricia Lietgeb

Patricia (Shaw) Lietgeb, 59, of Colchester, passed away Sunday, Oct. 21, at home. She was born May 18, 1948 in Middletown. She is the daughter of Arthur and Mary (Randolph) Shaw. Patricia is preceded in death by, son, Julius Monroe, twin sons, John Albert and Albert John Lietgeb III, parents, brothers, Arthur, Walter, Harold, Charles, William and George Shaw. Patricia is survived by loving husband of 33 years, Albert “Bud” Lietgeb and daughters, Kim Olson and her husband, Jim of Deep River, Louise Cozino and her husband, Bill of Old Saybrook, Alberta Vile and her husband, William Jr. of Chester, Amy Krulikowski and her husband, Ernie of Salem and nine grandchildren. Patricia is also survived by brother, Robert Shaw of Old Saybrook and close niece, Luanne Fields of Deep River. Family and friends attended the graveside service at Fountain Hill Cemetery in Deep River on Thursday, with the Rev. Tim Haut. Swan Funeral Home in Old Saybrook will be handling the services. Donation may be made to Middlesex Hospice, c/o, Middlesex Hospital, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457 in memory of Patricia Lietgeb.

## Colchester

### Alice B. Strange

Alice B. Strange, 69, of Colchester, companion of 41 years to the late Bert Greene, died Sunday, Oct. 21, in East Hampton. She was born Nov. 2, 1937 in Newfane, VT, and had lived in Colchester the past 18 years. She is survived by seven children and their spouses, Cathy and Paul Cannon, Richard and Judy Strange, Ann and Budge Sullivan, Theresa and Don Earp, Dede Strange, Kim and Jeremy Dix, Danny Gervais; 16 grandchildren, Robby, Otis, Shannon, Amanda, Sarah, Myra, Ashley, Tiffany, Natasha, Christy, Juanita, Donny, Dylan, Travis, Missy and Kaitlyn; four great-grandchildren with two on the way; two sisters, Ruth Guyette and Grace Moffitt, a special friend, Jerry Dezolt, many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by siblings, Stewart Carey, Marian Hodgdon, Layton Carey, Lillian Garfield, Myron Carey, Vern Carey, Earline Nesbitt and Merton Carey and a great-grandson.

Her family will receive friends at the Potter Funeral Home, 456 Jackson St., Rte. 195, Willimantic on Saturday, October 27, from 1-2 p.m. with a memorial service beginning at 2 p.m. Burial will be private at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society, 106 Rte. 32, Franklin Commons, Franklin, CT 06254. Visit [www.potterfuneralhome.com](http://www.potterfuneralhome.com) for online memorial guestbook.

## Portland

### R. Scott Oakliff

R. Scott Oakliff, 53, husband of Lin Marie Lastrina Oakliff, of Hale Road, Portland, died Monday, Oct. 22, at Yale-New Haven Hospital. Born in Hartford, March 25, 1954, a son of Robert W. and Dorothy Wells Oakliff of Portland, he was a lifelong Portland resident. He had been employed by the Town of Portland for the past 19 years. He had joined the Portland Fire Department in 1974 and has been an active member holding the position of Lieutenant for 8 years. He developed and coordinated the Portland Dive Rescue Team since its establishment in 1989.

Besides his wife and parents, he is survived by his daughter Kristina Oakliff; his son Justin Oakliff, both of Portland; his sister Debi DeFrancesco and her husband Mark of Portland; his brother Robert N. Oakliff and his wife Paula of Portland; his half-sister Nicole Lastrina, his step-brother Jim Octavec and wife Jennifer; his parents in-law, Mr. and Mrs. James Oktavec and Mr. and Mrs. Joe Lastrina, Sr. his sisters-in-law Annette Aitken and Lori Branciforte and her husband Bob; his brothers-in-law Joseph Lastrina, Jr., Michael Lastrina, and Angelo Lastrina and his wife Eileen; his godson Joey Aitken; and several nieces and nephews. His family received relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, on Thursday. Funeral services were to be held Friday at 10:15 a.m. from the Portland Memorial and at 11 a.m. in the Church of Saint Mary for a Mass of Christian Burial. Interment will follow in St. Mary Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that gifts in Scott’s memory be sent to the Portland Fire Department Company #2 , 594 Main St., Portland, CT 06480 or to the Portland Dive Rescue Team c/o the Portland Fire Department. For online expressions of sympathy, visit [www.portlandmemorialfh.com](http://www.portlandmemorialfh.com).

## Colchester

### Ellen Rotman

Ellen Rotman, 82, of Shailor Hill Road, beloved wife of Henry Rotman, passed away peacefully Sunday afternoon, Oct. 21, at home, surrounded by her loving family. Born April 18, 1925 in New Britain, she was a daughter of the late Joseph and Eva (Kalinowski) Czapla. In 1952, Ellen became one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. As a woman of strong faith, she found great joy as she dedicated her life to sharing the hopes and promises found in the Holy Scriptures. Ellen was a volunteer minister for 55 years, including the past 20 years with the Colchester Congregation. In her spare time, Ellen enjoyed traveling and tending to her flower gardens at home. She will be remembered for her energy, zest for life and devotion to her God, Jehovah and her family.

In addition to her loving husband of nearly 49 years, she is survived by her children, John K. Boone and his wife, Kathy of Hudson, FL, Louise Ellen Johnson of Narragansett, RI, Esther Ellen and husband, Jay B. Cirillo of Colchester; five grandchildren, Mark Crispell, Rebekah Ellen McAllister, Paul Daniel Johnson, Elizabeth Ellen Johnson and Jennifer Ellen Johnson and numerous extended family members and friends. In addition to her parents, she was predeceased by her son, Timothy K. Rotman.

Graveside Services will be observed 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 27, directly at the Ponemah Cemetery, River Road, Colchester. A Memorial Service will follow at 2 p.m. at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses, 297 Westchester Rd. (Rte. 149), Colchester. Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

## Colchester

### William M. Melnick

William M. Melnick, 80, of Colchester and formerly of Lebanon, passed away Sunday, Oct. 21, at the Haven Health Care Center in Jewett City. Born Jan. 29, 1927, in Garfield, NJ, he was a son of the late Andrew and Mary (Kizek) Melnick. Mr. Melnick was employed by the Lebanon Highway Dept. for many years before his retirement.

Survivors include four children, William R. Melnick and his wife, Rebecca of Old Lyme, Maryann Melnick of Enfield, Rosemarie Melnick of Waterford and Susan Ann Melnick of Franklin; two grandsons, William, Jr. and Jonathan; his sister, Jennie Brewster of Lebanon; his brother, George Melnick of Eastford; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Friends called Friday morning at 10 a.m. at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester before the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy at 11 a.m. at St. Francis of Assisi Church, West Town St., Lebanon with Fr. Brian J. Converse, officiating. Interment followed in the New Lebanon Cemetery.