

# RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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Earlier this month, Hebron native and 2008 RHAM High School graduate Martha Price was recently named Miss Bristol. The crowning qualifies her to compete in the Miss Connecticut pageant next summer.

## Hebron Native Seeking Pageant Crown

by Sarah McCoy

A RHAM High School alumnus will compete in next year's Miss Connecticut pageant after winning the Miss Bristol competition earlier this month.

Martha Price, a Hebron native who graduated from RHAM High School in 2008, captured the Miss Bristol title on Oct. 3 and is now preparing for her shot at the Miss Connecticut crown next summer.

Price began competing in pageants about two years ago, during her senior year of high school. Looking for scholarship money, she competed in just a few competitions. While she didn't win any money, Price said she discovered something more valuable—confidence. "I finally saw the image of the woman I wanted to become," she said earlier this week.

It was with confidence and gusto that Price competed in the Miss Bristol pageant earlier this month. She won the first portion of the competition—the personal interview—and held on through the remaining four sections to win the title.

The five sections which contestants are judged on include—personal interview, talent, lifestyle and fitness, evening gown and on-stage question.

For her question at the Miss Bristol competition Price was asked how she would define a hero and who is a hero in her life. She responded

that heroes are a personal decision because they should be someone that makes you want to be a better version of yourself. In her own life, Price singled out her grant aunt, Diane Cardinal, of Farmington, as her hero because of her strong independence.

Price sang "Someone Like You" from the musical *Jekyll and Hyde* during the talent part of the show. She said last week that she's working on a new talent for the Miss Connecticut competition. She's looking to do something that combines both her passion to sing as well as her love of dance. Price has been singing and dancing since she can remember and was an active part of the musical community at RHAM High School.

Even still, it's the evening gown section that Price enjoys most. "It's usually the last part of the competition," she explained. "At that point you're done with everything and you're just excited to be at the end."

Price said, for her, the best practice was to just jump into the pageant world. She admits that it took a few competitions for her to understand the way things work, but made a commitment to herself and her platform that she'd give it her best shot.

Each pageant contestant chooses an issue they're passionate about to raise awareness. For

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## Proposed Vet Ordinance Blasted at Hearing

by Katy Nally

A "black eye" and a "black spot" were two phrases used at a public hearing Tuesday to describe how a controversial proposed ordinance has plagued the Marlborough community.

The proposed ordinance would make one severely disabled veteran in town property tax exempt, but most in attendance at the hearing objected to two aspects of the proposed law. The draft prepared by the Board of Selectmen (BOS) excludes the spouse from the exemption, should the veteran die, and it includes a sunset clause that allows the BOS to "continue, modify or repeal" the exemption every two years.

The ordinance would apply to one veteran, Willy Hodge, who, with the help of his wife Robin, has been trying to instate the exemption since May. Willy Hodge is 100 percent disabled and he received a special adaptive housing grant from the federal government so his home could become handicap accessible. Because of these two aspects, Hodge is eligible to be property tax exempt in Connecticut because of state statute 12-81 § 21(C). However, the "legislative body" of the town must decide to adopt this exemption, according to the statute.

The Hodges and their attorney, Pasquale Amodeo, claim the legislative body is the town meeting and cite section 7.1.1 of the Town Charter as backup. Because the board did not hold a

town meeting to adopt the tax exemption, the couple filed a lawsuit against the BOS on Oct. 9, claiming the board was in violation of the Town Charter. But the judge did not determine who was the legislative body of the town, said First Selectman Bill Black.

On Monday, the day before the public hearing, the BOS and the Hodges went to Hartford Superior Court. Amodeo asked for an injunction against the BOS and the judge agreed, banning the board from making any decisions on the ordinance until Dec. 1. In the meantime, the Hodges can petition for a town meeting where a resolution would adopt the tax exemption, without the exclusion of the surviving spouse and the sunset clause. The Hodges need the signatures of 200 Marlborough taxpayers.

According to the town's attorney, Jack Bradley, the Hodges acted prematurely in filing their lawsuit. In a memo accompanying a motion to dismiss, Bradley said the Hodges could have petitioned for a town meeting at any time, or they could have waited for the BOS to vote on the ordinance, then petition against it.

The selectmen were to vote on the ordinance after the public hearing on Tuesday, but because of the court ruling, they did not. At the Oct. 6 BOS meeting, Black said the purpose of the hearing was to "get input on the ordinance."

At Tuesday's hearing, resident Jean Jordan said board members have not been listening if



Veterans attended Tuesday's public hearing in Marlborough armed with American flags and passionate support for local disabled vet Willy Hodge. Pictured from left are Mike Gilbert, Roger Fenlason, Jack Armstrong, Sam Ranno, Ray Dionne and Rich Belliveau.

they need input on the ordinance, because residents and vets have been speaking against it since September. "We have said the same thing," she said. "Give Mr. Hodge and Mrs. Hodge the

exemption. No sunset clause. No exclusions."

The overwhelming majority of people at the hearing spoke against the ordinance and the

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### Vet Ordinance cont. from Front Page

BOS. Jim Cronin, who defended Black, was an exception. “Take the injunction off, let them approve it and let’s get on with it,” he said, but he did not comment on the sunset clause or the spouse exclusion. Cronin added that the “harassment” of the board is not helping the Hodges.

Cronin noted how residents have been writing letters to the editor, disrespectfully referring to Black as “King Black.” Selectman Riva Clark said she had her own bout with harassment. Clark said she received a suspicious package filled with ball bearings sent from someone called “I Gutsum Udoendt.” The sender included a cryptic note that told Clark to stand up to the other two selectmen and “get some balls.” Clark said the package was not particularly threatening, but she was surprised someone would go to such lengths, noting how the package cost over \$4 to send.

While the package was sent anonymously, there was a return address on it, of 9 Deer Run, which happens to be the home of Democratic Town Committee Chairman Shawn Fisher. (Clark is the only Republican on the three-person Board of Selectmen.)

Fisher said Thursday, “I have a lot of respect for Riva and I obviously did not send that.” He said he was “very disturbed by this” and added, “this kind of thing is just sick.”

Fisher said he felt using his address “is an attempt to intimidate me as well.” He added that he has received threatening letters about various subjects in the past, but said he stays involved in local politics because “it’s incredibly important to me that bullies don’t force good people out of the process.”

In the elementary school cafeteria, tension between the board and the audience was high, as residents and vets continually expressed their disappointment with the ordinance.

Mary Walz said this was the first time she was disgusted to be part of Marlborough. Walz, a veteran, called this ordeal a “black spot on Marlborough,” saying “This needs to end.”

“You need to vote yes for [Willy], his family and his town,” she said.

Cathy Gaudinski, also chairman of the Board of Finance, took a more calculated approach and tore apart the ordinance paragraph by para-

graph. She said there should not be a sunset clause and the exemption should extend to the surviving spouse. She said the ordinance should adopt the language of the state statute as other towns have done, including Hebron and East Hartford.

Gaudinski continued, saying the legislative body of the town is the town meeting and not the BOS. The BOS, she said, is the decision-making body only for certain duties that are outlined in the charter. She added that calling this statute and unfunded mandate does not make sense. (Black referred to the ordinance as this at the Oct. 6 meeting.)

John Larensen had similar comments and asked Black what the rationale was for excluding the spouse and the sunset clause. However, Black replied, “This is a public hearing and I think you know very well how a public hearing is conducted,” meaning he would only hear comments, not answer questions.

Gaudinski said she was “a little dismayed” that the board would not answer resident’s questions. She said she remembered other hearings where board members entertained a Q&A session.

Wally Pearson brought up another question that was left unanswered. He asked: if no one was in favor of the sunset clause or the spouse exclusion, then where did those pieces of the draft come from? He also wondered where the input was from the town when the ordinance was drafted. To this, Russ West spoke up and asked for a show of hands from people who did not want the sunset clause or the spouse exclusion and nearly all hands in the room went up.

Robin Hodge also weighed in. She said it was never her intention that this matter end up in court. “From day one, I’ve said let the town decide,” she said. She later received a standing ovation from the audience for her efforts in getting the statute adopted.

Hebron resident Ron Winter closed out the comments. Winter said there has been no “adverse financial difficulty” in Hebron since the same statute was adopted 10 years ago. “This is not a financial issue, it’s a moral issue,” he said. “This town is getting a black eye,” he said, looking at Black and realizing the unintended pun.

### Pageant cont. from Front Page

Price, her platform is the Ronald McDonald House Charities, a nonprofit organization that aims to provide health care to children regardless of their ability to pay.

Now that she’s won the Miss Bristol competition, Price has already qualified for the Miss Connecticut pageant and won’t be competing again this year. Instead she’ll be making many appearances in Bristol and pitching in with various community service projects. She’s already judged a pumpkin-carving contest, kicked off a Special Olympics bowling event and volunteered at a park to promote jungle gym safety.

Price was born and raised in Hebron and now

attends Wagner College in Staten Island, NY. She is an arts administration major and plans to double-minor in French and journalism. The Miss Bristol pageant is an open competition meaning all women, even those living outside of the Bristol city lines, may enter the pageant.

For her win in Bristol, Price received a \$1,000 scholarship and a \$50 savings bond for winning the interview portion of the competition.

About 20 women will compete in the Miss Connecticut pageant to be held on June 26, 2010, at the Garde Arts Center in New London. The winner of this competition will qualify to compete in the Miss America pageant.

## Belldown Votes Next Week

by Michael McCoy

East Hampton politics is a tough game, and there’s no time nastier than the crunch between Old Home Days and Election Day in years with a municipal race. It will all come to a head this Tuesday.

Voters should report to the East Hampton High School gymnasium between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3, for their chance to weigh in on the candidates, and only the candidates. (There are no referendum questions this year.)

Unfortunately, those who haven’t yet registered to vote are too late. The only exceptions are people who just became town residents, U.S. citizens, or turned 18 on Oct. 27 or later. Those people can still register at Town Hall, 20 East High St., through Monday, Nov. 2, when there will be a special session.

The most high-profile race concerns the Town Council, which currently has a three-way party split – three Republicans, two Democrats and two Chatham Party members. All but one candidate is seeking reelection. Voters can cast ballots for five candidates, although seven will get elected.

The council race was profiled in last week’s *Rivereast*. The Republicans running are current councilmen Thom Cordeiro, Bill Devine and current Town Council Chair Melissa Engel. Rounding out the Republican slate of council candidates are Ted Hintz Jr. and Judy Isele, both currently Board of Finance members.

On the Democratic slate, Christopher Goff, and John Tuttle will run once again this year. Also running are Nancy Ninesling, Jill Simko and Barbara Moore, who is also the chairman of the Democratic Town Committee, as well as a Board of Finance member.

On the Chatham Party ticket, Sue Weintraub

is the sole Town Council incumbent, though fellow candidates Kyle Dostaler and Derek Johnson are past councilmen. The other two Town Council candidates on the Chatham Party slate are John Jordon and Scott Sanicki.

For the first time, the Chatham Party is running candidates for boards outside of the Town Council. One of these is the Board of Education (BOE). The school board race was profiled in the Oct. 16 *Rivereast*. On this board, taxpayers can vote for five people, and five will also get elected. The Chatham Party candidates are Scott Minnick (currently a member of the Town Council), and Molly-Kate Hall. BOE incumbent members Joanne Barmasse, Glenn Gemma and Mark Larai are running on the Democratic ticket, along with Chris Hetrick, a former chairman of the Portland BOE, and Rich Leone. The Republican slate consists of Carol Lane, Karen Lee, Sal Nucifora, Josh Piteo and Gina Ritchie.

On the Board of Finance (BOF) – where residents can vote for four people, and four people will get elected – the Democrats are offering up four newcomers: Tim Csere, David May, Tom O’Brien and Mathew Walton. The Chatham Party is running Mary Ann Dostaler and Dean Maurice, while the Republicans are running the only BOF incumbent, Henry Thorpe, as well as Patience Anderson and Maria Peplau.

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) actually feature two separate races. Republican Don Martin, Democrat Charles Gotta and Chatham Party candidate Bob Hart are seeking a term on the ZBA that runs from 2009-14. Of the three, residents vote for one, and one will get elected. Republican Vinnie Jacobson – the only ZBA incumbent running again – will face

Democrat Jim Vick and Chatham Party member Everett “Dick” Breece for a term that runs from 2010-15. Also in this race, residents vote for one person, and one gets elected.

There is also a race for ZBA alternate. Democrat Brian Spack is the lone incumbent in this race, and he is joined by fellow Democrats Robert Hines and Tom Keegan. On the Republican ticket are David Balthazar (who is also the Republican Town Committee chairman) and Lori Wilcox. The Chatham Party is running Irene Curtis. In this race, voters can select three people, and three will get elected.

For the Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA), three incumbents are seeking re-election. They are Republicans George Coshow and Barbara Suprono, and Democrat Kevin Flannery. Flannery is joined by fellow Democrat John Wright. Voters can only choose two people, although three will get elected.

Democrat Andrew Tierney is running unopposed for re-election to the Midstate Regional Planning Agency.

All three party heads briefly reflected this week on the campaign season, which in all cases included door-to-door stops.

According to Moore, the Democrats’ campaign has included appearances on the public access cable show *Get Real*, as well as visits to Shaw’s, mailings, and “lots of ads in the *Rivereast*.”

In the door-to-door effort, Moore said it was the little things “that you never would have thought about,” such as how roads are plowed, that seemed to be on people’s minds. She said this gave her a new perspective as politicians’ usual focus is on “big picture” issues.

Moore was unwilling to get too comfortable this late in the game though. “It’s gonna be

close,” she predicted. But she also offered, “I’m confident we’ve done a good job.”

The East Hampton Democrats’ website is [www.easthampton.dems.info](http://www.easthampton.dems.info).

Dostaler said the political season is “going quite well for” the Chatham Party candidates. Dostaler called their contact with voters largely “conversational,” and added, “it’s great to go out and talk to people.”

Dostaler said of next Tuesday’s election, “really, this is a referendum on the town,” and said whoever is elected to Town Council “represents everyone in town, not just the parties, not just the insiders.”

“It’s not about what *we* want,” Dostaler added. “It’s about what the voters want.” More information on the Chatham Party is available at [www.chathamparty.org](http://www.chathamparty.org).

Balthazar has now contributed to three municipal and two state races, and still said, “You learn new things.” He said he wasn’t only surprised by residents, but with the enthusiasm of his slate as well. “I think we have a very energetic bunch of candidates,” he said. Balthazar also admitted to telling the Republican candidates, “If you’re not enjoying this, you shouldn’t be doing it.”

Balthazar said he attended a campaign school at Republican State Central in New Britain last month. At the school, he said, he was told “let [your friends and relatives] do your campaigning for you,” as, he figured, their spreading the word just compounds exponentially. However, he said they also taught him, “What really pays off is face to face.”

As far as predictions for Tuesday, Balthazar said he recently conferred with veterans Devine and Engel on this. But, he simply sighed, “We don’t know.”

# Not Many Contests in Next Week's Elections in Marlborough

by Katy Nally

Marlborough's elections might not be as heated as past years, because, for seven of the 11 boards and commissions, there are either enough open seats for all the candidates to win, or there are no candidates at all.

The position for alternates on the Planning Commission has no candidates, but this is because the commission can appoint members, said Town Clerk Nancy Dickson. All candidates running for the Board of Education (BOE), Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA), Planning Commission, RHAM BOE, Alternates for Zoning Commission and Alternates for Zoning Board of Appeals will win seats, due to the small number of candidates in the running.

"I'm really amazed at the number of races that are uncontested," said Ken Hjulstrom, chairman of the Republican Town Committee (RTC). There are 18 Republicans and 12 Democrats in the running for Marlborough elections. However, Democratic Town Committee Chairman Shawn Fisher said this turnout is typical for Marlborough. He said boards other than the BOE, the Board of Finance (BOF) and the Board of Selectmen (BOS) tend to have non-partisan elections and are not seen as competitive.

Information about the BOF and BOE races was reported by the *Rivereast* last week and in the Oct. 16 issue, respectively.

Hjulstrom and fellow Republican David Morganson are running for seats on the BAA. There are two seats available and no opposition. Hjulstrom and Morganson are both newcomers to the BAA.

The website [www.marlgop.com](http://www.marlgop.com) provided information and statements from the Republican candidates. Hjulstrom moved to Marlborough in 1986 and served on the BOE for five years. "As an experienced real estate agent, I feel that I have the knowledge and access to resources necessary to enable me to accurately evaluate the value of properties,"

Hjulstrom said on the website. Hjulstrom is also a justice of the peace. Running with Hjulstrom is Morganson, a gym teacher who has a bachelor's degree in business.

Running for the Planning Commission are Republicans Jim Fox and Wendy Nichols and Democrat Denis Soucy. Fox and Soucy are incumbents and Wendy was elected as an alternate in 2007. All three will win seats.

Fox was elected to the Planning Commission in 2001 and re-elected in 2005. "The greater good of the town and its residents will always be my focus," Fox said on the website. "My record over the past eight years speaks to my claim. I will continue to strive for more than the status quo."

Joining Fox on the ticket is Nichols, who works as a veterinary technician. "I would like to become a full member to continue to guide Marlborough's development in such a way as to stay true to her roots and still have responsible growth," Nichols said on the website.

The Democrat running against Fox and Nichols is Soucy – the current chairman of the Planning Commission. Fisher said Soucy has been on the commission for a number of years and is widely respected in town.

There are six candidates running for seats on the Zoning Commission, with only three available seats. The six are Republicans Susan McFarland, Scott Miller and Jeffrey Tracey and Democrats Frederic Lee Klein, Lisa Hawes and Ned Hickey. The only incumbent is Miller who was elected in 2005 and currently serves as the commission's chairman.

McFarland commented on the zoning regulations on the website, saying, "I will work cooperatively with other members of the Commission to ensure the town's zoning regulations are appropriate and our decisions are consistent with those regulations and in the best interest of our residents and taxpayers."

Running with McFarland is Miller, who has been chairman of the Zoning Commission since 2007. Miller said if re-elected, he wants to retain his position of chairman. "As chairman, I hope to continue the Zoning Commission's trend toward strict adherence to our regulations, while also fostering a 'big picture' perspective of what new regulations should look like," he said on the website.

Lastly, Tracey is running with Miller and McFarland. He said some of the challenges facing Marlborough are "establishing the business park" and "securing the integrity of the lake." Tracey said on the website that if elected he would "facilitate responsible residential and commercial growth in our town while maintaining the small town culture we enjoy."

As for Klein, Fisher called him a "great guy" and said he is highly capable. Fisher said he is excited at the caliber of Klein's expertise. Klein is an attorney in Hartford and he said working on the Zoning Commission would allow him to utilize his job skills. He also said he could help with the development of Marlborough.

Running with Klein is Hawes, someone Fisher said is able to work "across the aisle." He said this is a good trait for a board member because the goal is to not be able to tell who belongs to which party. Hawes said serving on the Zoning Commission would be her chance to give back to Marlborough. "This town has been really great to me and now that I have more free time, I want to give back," she said.

Finally, Hickey is also running with the Democrats. Hickey has served on the BOF for 10 years and was chairman for six. He works as an attorney in Simsbury. "Because of my position on the BOF, I'm intimately familiar with Marlborough's finances," he said. "I think I have a pretty good perspective when it comes to Marlborough moving forward through zoning."

Republican David Fisher is the only candidate running for an alternate position on the Zoning Commission.

Running for the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) are five candidates, Republicans Alan Donze and Dick Proch and Democrats John Grasso, Nicholas Yeager Higgins and Alan Miller. There are only three seats available.

Donze was appointed to the ZBA in 2007. He said on the Republican website, "If we change anything, it should be to have a better balance of businesses along with our residential properties."

Proch is running with Donze and was on the Zoning Commission for four years. Hjulstrom called Proch "very down-to-earth" and he said he would keep things simple if elected. He said Proch would look at things from a practical standpoint. Like Hjulstrom, Proch is also a justice of the peace.

Running against Donze and Proch is Grasso, who was elected to the ZBA in 2005. Fisher said Grasso would be an asset to the ZBA because of his experience. He added that Grasso is "one of the most respected people in town."

As for Higgins, Fisher said he is an example of a younger resident wanting to get involved with local politics. He said Higgins is in his early 20s and that he is excited to serve Marlborough.

Lastly, Miller is also a candidate for the ZBA and currently serves as an alternate on the board. Fisher said Miller is an attorney in town and has a "longtime" service record for local politics. He said Miller has simply dedicated his life to public service.

John Valentine is running unopposed for an alternate position on the ZBA.

Townwide elections will be held Tuesday, Nov. 3, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School, 25 School Dr.

## Final Numbers Discussed for Marlborough Sewer Project

by Katy Nally

As construction of the sewer project comes to a close, final budget numbers were discussed at last Thursday's Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) meeting.

Jim O'Brien from Weston & Sampson Engineering presented an updated budget sheet and told board members the "numbers get more accurate as there's not much work that needs to be done." He said even after all the work is completed, the budget will still "end up in the black by \$25,000."

Despite this good news, the board discussed some unforeseen costs in the project due to broken plastic gaskets. According to O'Brien, a small plastic ring that was installed on many of the pumps broke because of a design flaw. He said of the 160 grinder pumps that were installed, 110 have been checked for leaks and 82 have passed inspection.

F&J Construction installed the pumps and Environment One manufactured them. Town Planner Peter Hughes said the town is withholding \$119,000 from Environment One because of the faulty gaskets. O'Brien said the manufacturing company agreed to test and repair the pumps and has created two crews to accomplish this. Three pumps per day can be fixed, he said.

The board also reviewed several changes made to the sewer regulations. Hughes said the payment schedule was revised. Now, residents will receive a bill in January and will have six months to pay. WPCA members agreed to adopt the new regulations at the Nov. 4 meeting.

The board agreed to schedule a public hearing to discuss operation and maintenance charges sometime in early December.

Hughes also mentioned that residents would receive a notice to hookup to the sewer

in November. He said, after this notification, users have six months to hookup or they could face fines. Residents will have to pay for this hookup, Hughes said, because a contractor must build a pipe from the house to the pump. The cost will vary between \$1,000 and \$3,000 depending on how much piping is needed, Hughes said.

Hughes said three residents have come to him saying they could not afford the connection costs. Hughes said these three connections will be funded through a small cities loan provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture that was given to Marlborough in 1999. He said there is \$15,000 left in the fund for these individuals.

Hughes added that the town could apply for another small cities loan if 15-20 people were unable to pay the connection fees. The loan, he said, is interest free and funds any weather or health related costs that impact homes.

Resident Stacey Francoline discussed her issue with the regulations. She told the chairman of the WPCA, Jack Murray, she did not want an easement placed on her property and instead, she and Hughes agreed on a "right to entry." Hughes said since the town owns the pumps, it must have the legal right to enter a resident's property.

After public comments the board approved five contracts. Members agreed to pay a total of \$231,614.42 with more than half going to F&J Incorporated.

Board members agreed to hold a special meeting on Nov. 4 to discuss regulations, the operation and management agreement and budget. The next regularly scheduled WPCA meeting is Nov. 19 at the elementary school choral room.

## Police Investigating Marlborough Business Burglaries

by Katy Nally

State Police are investigating burglaries at four businesses, according to Marlborough Resident State Trooper Mark Packer.

According to Packer, all four have been burglarized since Oct. 19.

On Tuesday, Oct. 20, at 2:48 a.m., the Dunkin' Donuts located at 5 South Main St. reported a burglary. Entry was gained through a smashed window and a cash register was taken, police said.

The Marlborough Moose Club, located at 303 South Main St., also reported an attempted burglary on the same day at 9:04 a.m. According to police reports, the lock on the storage area was pried open and there was damage to the front window of the facility.

The next day, on Wednesday, Oct. 21, Intelligent Motion Systems located at 370 North Main St., reported a burglary at 4:30 a.m. The rear door of the business was pried open, police said.

Five days later, on Monday, Oct. 26, Stone Insurance Agency, located at 344 North Main St., reported an attempted burglary at 8:38 a.m. Again, the rear door was pried open as well as an interior door. However, nothing has been reported missing.

According to Packer, "several attempted

business burglaries occurred on Oct. 19, between 11 p.m. and midnight." There is an active investigation of these burglaries and anyone with more information is asked to contact Packer's office at 295-9098.

Packer said he and other troopers are doing everything they can and have compiled a list of possible suspects.

Packer said he doesn't think the business burglaries are connected, because each crime was committed differently. He said they were random and most likely occurred to obtain drug money. He added that these types of burglaries have not only occurred in Marlborough, but in Hebron and other neighboring towns too.

Not only have there been business burglaries, Packer said several residences have been burglarized since September, including 155 South Main St., where a television was stolen. Again he said these crimes could be fueled by drugs. He mentioned since the value of gold is at a record high, thieves could steal it, pawn it and in turn, buy drugs.

Packer said he and other troopers have held neighborhood meetings to advise residents about these recent crimes, telling people to stay vigilant.

# Colchester Candidates Discuss Issues at Senior Center

by Katy Nally

Fourteen candidates attended a meet-and-greet Tuesday at the senior center, exactly one week before the big day – Election Day.

Seniors in the audience asked several questions including whether the first selectmen candidates would support constructing a standalone senior center versus a community center.

Democrat first selectman candidate Glenn Morron said he would definitely support a standalone senior center and even went one step further, saying he disagreed with the center's budget, which uses less than 1 percent to fund programs. "I don't think these facilities are adequate for our seniors," he said. But, Morron said, "It's ultimately up to the people of Colchester to make that decision" regarding a standalone structure versus a community center.

Morron's opponent, Republican Gregg Schuster, did not say which structure he would support, because he said a decision should be made after a study group finishes researching the needs of seniors in Colchester. He said "it's important for seniors to have their own space," and that it would be necessary to determine how a standalone structure could be funded.

The candidates also answered a question from selectman John Maslbenden, who moderated the discussion. He asked how they would prepare for the upcoming budget, noting the most difficult year to deal with a budget is the "year after hitting bottom."

Morron agreed with Malsbenden, saying the end of 2009 and the next year would be difficult because Colchester would start with less revenue than last year. He said since the town received a one-time stimulus loan and because of teachers' concessions, the town would be short \$600,000 when it prepares the budget for the 2010-11 fiscal year. Morron said members of Town Hall would have to work together to create a responsible budget. He mentioned that boards and commissions would need to pool resources and said he wouldn't promise not rais-



**Glenn Morron, left, and Gregg Schuster, who are running for first selectman, were joined by several other candidates in a forum at the senior center earlier this week.**

ing taxes.

Schuster said there were some areas in the town budget that could be reviewed, citing the \$40,000 spent on phone lines in town hall. "This is an area where I want to ask questions," he said. He also mentioned "long-term fixes" and reiterated his plan of hiring a part-time economic development coordinator. This town employee would attract businesses to Colchester, thereby increasing the town's revenue and tax base.

Other candidates rang in on this question. Republican Rob Tarlov, a Board of Finance (BOF) candidate, likened Colchester to a family and said this year was time to "tighten our belts." He mentioned possible solutions to increase efficiency and save money, giving the

example of leasing solar panels.

Malsbenden noted that nearly two-thirds of Colchester's budget is spent on education and asked Board of Education (BOE) candidates what their thoughts were on the upcoming budget battle. Democrat Don Kennedy, who is running for re-election to the BOE, highlighted steps the board has taken to reduce costs. He mentioned how energy-saving devices have been installed in the schools that shut off computers when they are not in use. He also mentioned "e-deliver," which uses the web to post flyers rather than using paper.

Kennedy's running mate, Monica Swyden-Bolles said she has always searched for available grants and federal funds. Republican Ron

Goldstein, also running for BOE, said he agreed with the Democrats, but added that one issue needs work – communication. He said communication between the public and boards, as well as between other boards, could be improved.

Lastly, the candidates commented on why Colchester has a reputation of being "anti-business" and how this could be fixed.

Schuster gave an example of a local auto repair shop that wanted to expand and said the owner had to visit two boards on three separate occasions and fill out an application each time, coupled with fees. He said because of these hurdles within the zoning regulations, builders have a difficult time trying to develop in Colchester.

"I desperately want to rewrite those zoning regulations," he said.

Morron said, "I echo Gregg's ideas about streamlining," and making development easier. He said one application should include all the permits and forms, so businesses don't have to routinely visit boards.

The candidates were available after the forum to answer more questions from the audience. The panel consisted of Morron, Schuster, Republican selectmen Stan Soby and Greg Cordova (who are both running for re-election), Democrat candidate for Board of Selectmen James Ford, BOE candidates Kennedy, Swyden-Bolles and Goldstein, Democrat Mary Tomasi (who is running for an alternate position on the BOE), BOF candidates Tarlov and Pompei and Democrat Terese Peters, who is running for re-election to the Board of Assessment Appeals.

Elections for all candidates will be held Tuesday, Nov. 2. There are three voting locations, which will be open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Residents in District One can vote at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave., those in District Two can vote at the Assembly of God, 85 Skinner Rd., and those in District Three can vote at Bacon Academy, 611 Norwich Ave.

## Colchester Elections are Just Days Away

by Katy Nally

When voters head to the polls next Tuesday, they'll see a ballot that features 20 candidates, running for 15 seats.

Democrat Glenn Morron is facing Republican Gregg Schuster for the position of first selectman. This race was profiled in last week's *Rivereast*.

Three candidates are running for the Board of Finance (BOF). There are two seats available, as Michael Ryan and Ron Crabb are not seeking re-election.

Republicans running are Robert Tarlov and Cathy Pompei, while the Democrat seeking a BOF seat is Joseph Wagner.

Tarlov has lived in Colchester for 24 years and has been the chairman of the town's Sewer and Water Commission for 18.

"He's a great financial planner and he's someone who understands the value of an investment now for future purchases," said Schuster, who is also chairman of the Republican Town Committee. "He knows the infrastructure of the town."

Tarlov said he would miss working for the Sewer and Water Commission, but that he's "excited about the possibilities" of working for the BOF.

Tarlov's running-mate, Pompei, has lived in

town for 12 years. She is vice-president of the Colchester Business Association and chairman of the Economic Development Commission. Schuster said the Republicans were fortunate to have a banker running for the BOF. "Cathy has tremendous credentials," he said.

Pompei is the branch manager at Rockville Bank and has a degree in accounting, Schuster said. "She's been on the forefront of figuring out how we're going to get businesses to town," he said. "She's very in tune with local businesses and the community."

Running against the Republicans is Wagner, who works as a customer service manager at Pratt & Whitney. According to Democratic Town Committee (DTC) Chairman John Malsbenden, Wagner has "extensive experience in finance." Malsbenden called him "top notch" and said he has "the best interests of Colchester at heart."

There are four people running for the Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA), with three seats available. They are Republicans David Anderson and Gary Harris, and Democrats Terese Peter and Nancy Riella.

Anderson is an incumbent, who was elected in 2003 and is currently the BAA chairman. He has also served on the Parks and Recreation

Commission for 23 years. Schuster said Anderson is "someone everyone [in town] seems to know and respect very much." He said Anderson, as chairman of the BAA, has "made sure everyone received a fair hearing."

Harris retired in 1987 from the U.S. Navy where he worked as a command master in chief. He has lived in Colchester for over 30 years and ran for first selectman in 2003, but lost to Jenny Contois. Schuster called Harris a "stand-up guy" and said he "is involved in all different things" in Colchester. "When he talks to you, you get the unvarnished truth," he added.

Running against Anderson and Wagner is Peters, who was elected to the BAA in 2007. She serves on the Charter Revision Commission and is president of Colchester Concerned Citizens, Inc. Malsbenden said Peters is "very knowledgeable about appeals" because of her "years of experience" on the board.

Riella was also elected to the BAA in 2007. She moved to Colchester in 1987 and served on the Water and Sewer Commission until she left town in 2000. She moved back in 2006 and owns an accounting/taxation firm in town. When asked about Riella, though, Malsbenden replied, "no comment."

Several weeks ago, on Oct. 7, Riella an-

nounced her endorsement of Schuster. Since then, her profile was removed from the DTC website and her name has been blacked out on Democratic political signs around town.

In addition to Morron and Schuster, the four unopposed candidates for the Board of Selectmen – Stan Soby, Greg Cordova, Rosemary Coyle and James Ford – were also profiled in last week's *Rivereast*. Information about the Board of Education candidates – Republicans Betsy Ciccone, Ron Goldstein, Mitch Koziol and Democrats Don Kennedy and Monica Swyden-Bolles – was chronicled in the Oct. 16 issue.

Information about the Republican candidates is available at [www.schuster2009.com](http://www.schuster2009.com). The Democrats' information is available at [www.colchesterdemocrats.org](http://www.colchesterdemocrats.org), listed information about the candidates.

Elections for all candidates will be held Tuesday, Nov. 2. There are three voting locations, which will be open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Residents in District One can vote at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave., those in District Two can vote at the Assembly of God, 85 Skinner Rd., and those in District Three can vote at Bacon Academy, 611 Norwich Ave.

# Portland Voters Flock to Polls Next Week

by Michael McCoy

The bad news is most voters don't tend to turn out for municipal elections. The good news, then, is those who come out won't have to deal with a line stretching back to the senior center.

Election Day is this Tuesday, Nov. 3. In Portland, that means getting to the public library between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. Those not registered to vote have missed their chance, unless they have turned 18, moved to town, or become a U.S. citizen since Oct. 26. In that case, would-be voters can register in the Town Clerk's office from 9 a.m. to noon on Monday, Nov. 2.

The ballot headliner is the first selectman race, which was profiled in last week's *Rivereast*. Democrat Susan Bransfield is running again, and is facing competition for the first time since her initial election in 2003: Republican Sandra Downes and independent Lambros Lambrinides, who is running as a write-in candidate.

The Board of Selectmen race, also profiled last week, features eight candidates running for six slots (residents can vote for four people). All four Democrat selectmen are seeking re-election: Mark Finkelstein, Brian Flood, Sharon Peters and Kathleen Richards. On the Republican ticket, incumbents John H. Anderson and Carl Chudzik are seeking re-election, and they're joined by Thomas Nash and Matthew Rice.

The Board of Education race was profiled in the Oct. 16 *Rivereast*. It features seven candidates; residents vote for four, and four will get elected. All three Democrats running are incumbents: Andrea Alfano, Rosemary Murphy-Woitowitz and Ben Srb. The Republicans are running one incumbent, Brenna Kosicki, and three challengers: Joseph Dinegar, Jennifer Godwin and Christopher Orcutt.

The Republicans are putting up two newcomers for the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA): Jack Sterry and Richard Varricchio. However, in the case of Sterry, the term "newcomer" may not apply as he's racked up decades of experience in town government. These two will face Democratic candidates Richard Basso and Gloria Gdovin, both incumbents. The ZBA race is actually two elections: Varricchio and Basso are running for the 2009-14 term, while Sterry and Gdovin are seeking the 2010-15 term. In both races, voters will select one candidate, and one will be elected.

For the Board of Assessment Appeals, residents vote for two people, and three will get elected. The two Democrats running are both incumbents: Richard P. Murphy and David O'Brien. The Republicans are running incumbent Peter Castelli, who is joined by Marabeth Gildersleeve.

In addition to being a selectman, Richards is

also the Democratic Town Committee (DTC) chair. She called the Democrats' campaign "low-key" and "grass-roots."

"My goal was not to spend a lot of money," Richards said, figuring, "Nobody has a lot to spend right now." To this effect, she said the Democrats managed to recycle their signs from two years ago, changing the names where necessary.

Richards said campaigning efforts included going door-to-door and attending events like the Portland Fair, as well as DTC mailings. Since municipal elections never line up with major national races, Richards said, "It's tough to get people out to vote." She also said the Democrats planned to make a last-minute batch of calls on Election Day.

As far as her outlook for Tuesday, Richards said, "You can't assume anything," but said of DTC's lead candidate, "I think Susan has a great record." She also expressed gratitude for the recent endorsement from the police union.

Richards also said the Democrats offer rides to the polling place on Election Day for those who would have trouble getting there. She said the party started this last year and, "We got quite a few calls." Those looking for a ride can call 817-0453 or 982-7624.

Republican Town Committee (RTC) Chair Cindy Varricchio said she thinks the Republi-

cans have "run an excellent campaign," and continued, "I think we've been up front with citizens. We've had a great dialogue the entire campaign."

In addition to going to door-to-door and phone banking, the Republicans distributed a survey in the *Rivereast*, soliciting citizens for their opinions. Varricchio said she was quite pleased with the 10 percent response. She also noted the "Ask Sandy" columns they've placed in the *Rivereast* throughout the campaign.

"We think we have a better alternative," Varricchio said of her slate, singling out ticket leader Downes, and crediting her with "a fresh perspective, new energy, new ideas."

She also said that during Downes' door-to-door visits "people are coming out of their houses to greet her," which, Varricchio said, was something she'd never seen before.

It's no secret that the Republicans are the perennial underdogs in Portland. But Varricchio sounded far from defeatist, saying, "You always go in to the election hoping for the best." She even chuckled when saying, "Being a Republican in Connecticut, I have to be an optimist."

Varricchio said she's always made her phone number public for anyone who needs a ride to the polling place. It is 342-0184.

More information on the Republicans is available at [portlandctgop.blogspot.com](http://portlandctgop.blogspot.com).

## Hebron BOF Responds to Ousted Finance Director's Allegations

by Sarah McCoy

Responding to allegations made by the town's former finance director, Board of Finance (BOF) members expressed confidence in recent actions taken by town officials.

The week before he was fired, Jim Day sent a letter to members of the boards of selectmen and finance accusing both elected and appointed officials of acting improperly. Allegations included asking Day to spy on a resident to determine if he was in violation of building codes, attempts to cover up overspending on projects, the members of the management team taking extra pay prior to their appointment and not bidding projects in an ethical and appropriate manner.

Last week, the management team of Andy Tierney, Mike O'Leary and Donna Lanza responded to Day's concerns. Their responses to the financial allegations were discussed by the BOF last Thursday, Oct. 22, and board members deemed the responses largely satisfactory. With the exception of a few items for follow-up dialogue, BOF Chair Mike Hazel said he felt that no investigation was needed into the actions taken by town officials.

"We didn't find anything that was not in compliance with the town charter and the purchasing policy as it exists," Hazel said earlier this week.

The town's purchasing policies will be one area that Hazel said the BOF will review in the coming weeks. He said that the document hasn't

been reviewed since 2002 and board members want to ensure that the town is handling this aspect of municipal finances in the best way possible.

In response to Day's claim that the management team was paid prior to taking on their additional roles in town, Tierney, Lanza and O'Leary wrote that their additional pay began at the end of March – when the BOS appointed the team. However, even though he was no longer handling the duties of the town manager, Jared Clark remained on the payroll at that time, thanks to his accumulated vacation time.

In response to another of Day's allegations, the management team also wrote that the Hebron public works department had satisfied the town's bid process in the case of the storm drain cleanings. Tierney reported that as a member town of the Capital Regional Council of Government (CROG), Hebron receives competitive bids on the annual cleaning. When he was approached with a lower quality offer through another source, Tierney accepted the bid knowing that the price would save over \$5,000.

In a separate letter to the Board of Selectmen (BOS), Financial Administrator Elaine Griffin responded to Day's claims of trying to hide a \$61,000 overrun in the construction of a new roadway in the Village Green district. Griffin,

who was appointed town treasurer the night Day was fired, stated that the oversight "should not have occurred," and happened at the same time that the town's previous finance director, Mike Hillsberg, was leaving Hebron. She said she never instructed Day to cover up the budget shortfall through an auditor's adjustment entry, as Day claimed, but stated that this was the sort of the thing that the auditors would catch in their report on the town.

The town auditors have recently completed their work on the town's 2008-09 budget, and their report should be released in the near future.

Griffin also highlighted that, for the last five years, Hebron has been awarded the highest financial achievement given by the Comprehensive Annual Finance Reporting Agency. "This could not have been accomplished," Griffin wrote, "if the town staff were suppressing information."

While BOF members seemed in unanimity that the actions taken by town officials were neither unethical nor illegal, there will be ongoing dialogue as to the process in which the town handles its finances.

BOF member Mal Leichter said some responses he received to questions left something to be desired. "When asked why the town does something a certain way, [the Board of Finance] was told 'Because we've always done it that

way,'" Leichter said earlier this week. "I think we just need to have a better understanding of the process."

In their response to Day's letter, the management team stated that the former finance director's claims were either false, exaggerated or the result of miscommunications. "It was a letter full of half-truths," Tierney said earlier this week. "They were twisted accusations – not factual."

At the Oct. 15 BOS meeting – the meeting at which the board voted to discharge Day – board chair Jeff Watt responded to the accusation that he had requested Day spy on resident Anthony Novak to determine if he and his wife were in violation of living at a home without a code of occupancy permit. Watt stated that while he told Day that one of Novak's neighbors was willing to let the finance director look over the fence, he never requested that Day actually do it.

The BOF responded to the financial accusations raised by Day. Next week, at their Nov. 5 meeting, the BOS will respond to the human resources allegations.

Tierney said he doesn't anticipate any further discussions on matter included in the letter after that night. "We're clearly working, and have always worked, in the best interest of the residents of Hebron," he said earlier this week.

# Hebron Family Band Reunites for Halloween Show

by Sarah McCoy

It was going to have to be something special to bring Hebron resident Chuck Corso out of retirement. The longtime guitarist stopped playing professionally in 2004 after a lifetime of shows.

Something special has come along.

Corso will take the stage again tomorrow, Saturday, Oct. 31, at the annual Halloween Party at Manchester's Hungry Tiger Café. Joining him will be keyboardist Eric Kuhn, lead vocalist Doug Remsen and Corso's two sons, Justin and Christopher.

It was the opportunity to play with his sons that brought Corso out of retirement and back to Snooterbunk. The band originally formed in 1997 and soon the Corso-led act was playing virtually every weekend. In its prime, the band was playing regularly at the Hungry Tiger and Butter Ball's Greenleaf Tavern in Hebron. Most months, Snooterbunk was playing about five gigs – a number that quickly wore down the band members.

"With full-time jobs and families, everyone was just tired," Corso explained.

From 1972 until he took a job with the U.S. Postal Service in 1984, Corso made a living through music. He would play six nights a week at disco clubs across the state. "The glitter shoes and flared pants, he was something to see back then," Corso's wife, Rae, said.

The Corsos welcomed their first son, Christopher, in 1974, and another, Justin, in 1978. The boys grew up "inundated" with music, Corso said, and by elementary school they were playing instruments. Justin started with the saxophone and, at age 13, switched to the bass. Christopher started playing the drums in elementary school and continues to play.

In 1994, when Justin was just 16, the three Corsos played their first professional gig at The Bullpen Sports Bar in Newington. Over the years, Snooterbunk solidified its style and attracted quite a following. Audiences spanned the same generations that the band members did. "People ages 18 to 50 or 60 came out to see us," Christopher Corso said earlier this week.

Like the band's fans, the music Snooterbunk plays also spans about 40 years. The band covers tunes from James Brown, AC/DC and newer artists such as John Mayer and Daughtry. Regardless of the song, Corso said, the band always tries to perform each song as faithfully as possible.

In the last four years, Corso has come to miss performing. So, when Hungry Tiger owner Don Denley approached him in July about getting the band back together, Corso couldn't resist. "To have the opportunity to play with my sons is really special," he said.

"There aren't a lot of Van Halens out there," Christopher Corso added.

Remsen, who is originally from Columbia and now lives in Newington, is also an original member of the band. Even though Kuhn, who lives in Middletown, is a newcomer, Corso said he is "working out well."

Just as their father passed down his love of music, Justin and Christopher are doing the same with the newest Corsos. Christopher's 8-year old daughter Sierra is already a talented singer, and Justin's 2-year old son Dominic loves the sounds too.

The band will go on at 10 p.m. Halloween night at the the Hungry Tiger, located at 150 Charter Oak St., Manchester. There will be no charge for individuals who come in costume



Hebron resident Chuck Corso, center, is returning to the stage after a four-year hiatus to play with his sons, Justin, to his left, and Christopher, to his right. Also playing with Snooterbunk is Doug Remsen, far left, and Eric Kuhn, far right. The band will play tomorrow, Oct. 31, at The Hungry Tiger Cafe in Manchester at 10 p.m.

and prizes will be awarded to the best dressed.

Snooterbunk has started a page on [Facebook.com](http://Facebook.com) (under "Snooterbunk Gigs") to promote its upcoming shows and to reconnect with fans from their previous shows. The band is expecting a lot of familiar faces when it plays at the Hungry Tiger on Halloween but hopes to attract some new fans as well. The band will

play at Hungry Tiger again in December, and is in talks to start playing again at Butterball.

This "last hurrah" of the band, as Corso calls it, is a way for him and his sons to do what they love while having fun. "It's an opportunity we had to take," Corso said. "We'll see how far it goes."

## Election Day is Next Week in Hebron

by Sarah McCoy

In just a few short days, Hebron residents will file into the Hebron Elementary School gymnasium to cast their votes in the 2009 municipal election. Positions on the town's highest boards are up for grabs and both parties are doing last-minute campaigning to ensure their candidates are seated on the various boards and commissions.

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) race was profiled in last week's *Rivereast*. Republican Dan Larson faces off against Democrats Mark Stuart and Peter Moon. Stuart is a current incumbent on the BOS while Larson serves on the Board of Finance (BOF). Two of the three candidates will earn a spot on the board. If both Moon and Stuart are elected, there would be a shift from a Republican to Democrat-majority BOS. If Larson is elected, the split would remain 3-2 towards the Republican Party.

Republicans Tom Sousa and Phil LoBianco are running against democrats Karen Strid and Malcolm Leichter for three positions on the Board of Finance (BOF); this race was also profiled in last week's *Rivereast*. Leichter and LoBianco are current incumbents on the BOF while Strid is the former chair of the Board of Selectmen. Sousa, a retired military veteran, is seeking his first elected position in Hebron.

The local Board of Education (BOE) race was profiled in the Oct. 16 *Rivereast*. Republican Kathy Shea is seeking re-election, and is joined on the ticket by Tina Blinn and Will Moorcroft. Moorcroft is currently a member of the BOS. The Democrats are running Brett Monroe. Voters will elect three of the four candidates to the BOE.

Three candidates will also be elected to the RHAM Board of Education, which was also profiled in the Oct. 16 *Rivereast*. Republican Debra Dee and Democrat T.J. Morelli-Wolfe are seeking re-election while Republicans Laura Steiner and Brenda Casoni and Democrat Lorraine Davey are hoping for their first term on the RHAM school board.

Republican Natalie Wood and Democrat Judith Podell are each seeking another term on the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC). They are facing Terrence Piggott, a

Republican who currently serves as an alternate to the commission, and Democrat Donald Masters. Three of the four candidates will be elected to the PZC.

Peter Harrington, a Republican, is the sole candidate for PZC alternate.

With three candidates and three vacancies, there will likely be little surprise as to who earns a spot on the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). Republican Jardo Opocensky and Democrat Diane Christensen are incumbents on the board seeking another term. The third candidate is Republican Henry Sawicki, who currently serves as an alternate to the board.

Republican Nicole Thorspecken is running unopposed for a position as an alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

Democrat Carla Pomproicz is the sole candidate for Town Clerk. She has recently celebrated her 10th anniversary in the position.

Republican Valerie Watt and Democrat Jeffrey Schwarz are running for two vacancies on the Board of Assessment Appeals (BAA). Schwarz was appointed to the board in 2008 and is running for his first full term on the BAA.

In addition to voting on candidates for public office, voters will also be asked whether or not to approve the amendments to the Hebron Town Charter, as recommended by the BOS in August. According to the charter, revision of the document must occur every five years. Most of the changes put forth are grammatical in nature. Other changes include an increase from \$2,000 to a \$10,000 maximum amount for intradepartmental transfers before the transfer needs to be reviewed by the BOS and shrinking the number of board members on some of the town's minor boards – like the Commission on Aging and Water Pollution Control Authority – to assist in these boards being able to find quorum for meetings.

A full list of the proposed changes is available at the Town Manager's Office at Town Hall, 15 Gilead St..

Voting will take place in the gymnasium at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St., on Tuesday, Nov. 3, from 6 a.m.- 8 p.m.

## Students from Spain Visit RHAM

by Bev Moquin

We were fortunate enough to have a Spanish student staying at our home for two weeks during October. It was an incredible learning experience for our whole family and one of the highlights of my daughter's high school years at RHAM High School.

Eighteen students and two teachers from Instituto Luis de Gongora in Cordoba, Spain, visited RHAM High School as part of an exchange program arranged by RHAM Spanish teachers Amy Nocton and Mary Rametta. The students stayed in Marlborough, Hebron and Andover at the homes of 11th- and 12th-grade students from RHAM.

The Spanish students went to classes at RHAM with their host siblings and participated in field trips to Mystic Seaport, the Pequot Museum, the Boston Museum of Science and Quincy Market and others. In the evenings and weekends, RHAM families showed the Spanish students what life is like for American teenagers. We focused on autumn activities in New England, like apple picking and Pumpkintown. We took them to the mall, the Connecticut shore, and showed them the lakes and forests in our beautiful towns. They became part of our families. This experience opened our eyes to the larger world outside of Connecticut and the United States.

The visit culminated in a potluck Halloween

party at RHAM where all the students dressed in costume and the Spaniards had a pumpkin carving contest (a tradition not celebrated in Spain). A slide show of pictures was presented which showed all of the many activities, trips and parties planned by RHAM host families to make sure the Spanish students enjoyed their trips to the United States. It was touching to see the bonds that were formed between the two sets of teenagers.

The second part of the experience will happen in April when the RHAM students go to Cordoba, Spain, for two weeks to experience the culture of Spain.

The RHAM students who participated in the exchange were Sean Burns, Alyson Danielczuk, Jason Driscoll, Stephanie Eldridge, Libby Fiumara, Kelsey Goode, Ali Gostanian, Taylor Hartman, Krista Hespeler, Courtney Hill, Jessica Huhn, Rachel Mathiau, Kelly Moquin, Andrew O'Loughlin, Nate Shortell, Ali Thompson and Sophie Zimmerman.

Thank you to RHAM teachers Amy Nocton and Mary Rametta and to RHAM administration for organizing this unforgettable multi-cultural experience.

*Bev Moquin is a Marlborough resident, and mother of one of the students who participated in the program.*

*From the Editor's Desk*

## Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Come next Tuesday night, it'll all be over. The months of campaigning – some that stretched back to July, and the caucuses; some that stretched even further – will yield results, as candidates in five of the six Riverast towns (sorry, Andover; you have your election fun in the spring) will find out if they won or lost.

Typically, turnout in these municipal elections falls far short of that of a presidential contest. While I understand presidential races are higher-profile, what the officials in your hometown do or do not do, regarding issues like taxes, building projects, etc., can actually have more of an immediate impact on you than what's done down in Washington. So it's important for everyone to get out and vote.

And I wish everybody running in these elections the best of luck. It takes more than just a desire to serve your community and a commitment to give up hours upon hours of your free time to run for public office; it takes considerable guts too. Not everybody is going to like what you're doing. Some people are going to hate it, in fact, and won't hesitate to criticize you – sometimes viciously so. If you don't believe me, just check out the letters to the editor in the Riverast. To be able to stand up and act on what you believe to be right and withstand all the figurative mud thrown at you by your constituents – it takes courage. Not everybody's cut out for it.

So, no matter how you decide to cast your ballot, I hope you all carve some time out of your busy schedules next Tuesday, Nov. 3, and vote. Vote your conscience. Vote for what you feel is best for your town. And if you see the politicians campaigning outside your polling place, give them a nod or a friendly "hello," even if you're not going to be voting for them. They've had a stressful, hectic last few months, and they deserve kudos for having even gotten this far.

\* \* \*

Well, I've made a decision on this World Series. I gave it some serious thought last weekend, and I can't just not follow the World Series. I'm too much of a baseball fan to not watch at least a little of it. However, I'm not one of those guys who can watch the game "just for the love of the game." It's a grand game, 'tis true, but I need to be pull-

ing for someone. So, after much pondering, I'm rooting for the Phillies.

Up until a few years ago, the Phillies were more of a nuisance in the National League East than anything else. The Mets' chief rival was the Atlanta Braves. Heck, for a large stretch in the mid-to-late-'90s, they weren't even very good, finishing below .500 for six straight seasons (1995-2000). So, while I and other Mets fans have definitely developed a hatred of them in recent seasons, it's not a very long-standing hatred. Whereas our dislike of the Yankees.... that goes back a ways. It's almost like a part of our beings.

Another point in the Phillies' favor: They had to achieve their success while actually working with a budget. Philadelphia's 2009 payroll is up there, at \$113 million; but it's dwarfed by the Yankees' \$201 million payroll, which was by far the highest in the game in 2009. It'd be interesting to see how the Yankees might have fared this season if they hadn't thrown all that money last winter at C.C. Sabathia, A.J. Burnett and Mark Teixeira. They spend money like it means nothing to them, and have done so for years. (And before anyone says anything, yes, I'm well aware that money doesn't guarantee success; look at this year's Mets, who had the second-highest payroll. But a high payroll sure can make things easier.)

Also, I gotta admit: It helps that the Phillies are a National League team. I just like the NL better. (The designated hitter rule needs to be abolished.)

All that being said, it's not like I'm very emotionally invested in this World Series. I'm not rooting for the Phillies to win as much as I'm rooting for the Yankees to lose. If Philadelphia does indeed pull it off – and that would be something of an upset if they do, despite them being the defending world champions – it's not like I'll be particularly thrilled. But a Mets fan pulling for the Yankees.....I just can't do it.

\* \* \*

Don't forget to change your clocks back an hour before heading to bed Saturday night! And remember: You may gain an extra hour of sleep this weekend, but it comes with a price: The days of darkness at 4 p.m. are just around the corner....

\* \* \*

See you next week.

## Obituaries

*Portland*

### Phyllis Jean Pavel

Phyllis Jean (Bailey) Pavel, 83, of Portland, formerly of South Glastonbury, died Friday, Oct. 23, at Portland Care and Rehabilitation. Born June 17, 1927, in Meriden, she was the daughter of the late Irving W. and Jeannie (Parker) Bailey. Phyllis had live din Glastonbury until 1969 when she moved to Portland. She had worked for more than 20 years as a Teachers Aide at the Gilder-sleeve School in Portland.

She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Christina and Morris York of Stafford Springs, and her two grandchildren, Jessica and Robert.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Thursday evening, Oct. 29. Burial will take place today, Friday, Oct. 30, at 10 a.m. in the Old Church Cemetery on Main Street in Glastonbury.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to International Fund for Animal Welfare.

To leave online condolences, visit [www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com).

*Marlborough*

### Gregory H. Watts

Gregory H. Watts, 58, of Glastonbury, formerly of Marlborough, beloved husband of Joan (Westland) Watts, entered eternal peace Saturday, Oct. 24, at Middlesex Hospital. Gregory was born in Portland, ME, Aug. 4, 1951, son to the late Howard L. and Merita (Fisher) Watts of Tarrytown, NY.

He was a longtime resident of Marlborough prior to moving to Glastonbury 20 years ago. He was a director of corporate tax for MetLife, retiring in November 2007, and previously with Citigroup and the Travelers Insurance Companies. Greg spent the majority of his childhood growing up in Montreal. He was a graduate of Acadia University and received his MBA from the University of Hartford. Greg was a member of the Elks Club, and the Irish American Home Society both in Glastonbury. He was a lover of sports, most especially an avid fan of the Red Sox and NY Giants. Greg had a quick wit, was a sage advisor and most of all was a dear friend to many.

Along with his wife Joan, Greg will be fondly remembered and sorely missed by his loving family; two sons, Ryan Watts of Marlborough, and Scott Watts of Cary, NC; a stepson, Paul Stryker of New Britain; a stepdaughter, Karin Farnsworth and her husband Kevin of Huntersville, NC; two precious grandsons, James & Joshua Farnsworth of Huntersville, NC.

Funeral procession from the Farley-Sullivan Funeral Home, 50 Naubuc Ave., Glastonbury, was Wednesday, Oct. 28, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial celebrating Gregory's life in St. Dunstan Church, 1345 Manchester Rd., Glastonbury. Interment was in Holy Cross Cemetery, corner of Hebron Avenue and Wickham Road, Glastonbury. Gregory's family received relatives and friends at the funeral home Tuesday, Oct. 27.

The family requests in lieu of flowers memorial donations be made in Gregory's name to either the Middlesex Hospital Hospice and Palliative Care Unit, Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent Street, Middletown, CT 06457 or the American Cancer Society, 825 Brook Street, I-91 Tech Center, Rocky Hill, CT 06067.

For online expressions of sympathy or more information, visit [farleysullivan.com](http://farleysullivan.com).

*Portland*

### Harry W. Curtis Jr.

Harry W. Curtis Jr., 59, of Portland, formerly of Middletown, entered into eternal rest Wednesday, Oct. 21, after a long and courageous battle with cancer.

He is predeceased by his father, Harry W. Curtis Sr., and mother, Mary F. Curtis (Pirkebner) and a brother, Wayne B. Curtis.

He is survived by three daughters, Tammy Baron, Diana Curtis and Mary Rivers, all of Middletown; five grandchildren, three sisters, Dawn Seaha of Glastonbury, Sheila Granger and husband Robert of Portland, Cynthia Bess and husband John of Middletown; several nieces, nephews and cousins, his ex-wife, Darlene Curtis and a special friend, Teresa McGovern, both of Middletown.

Harry enjoyed fishing and watching the New York Giants football team. Services will be private.

Donations can be made in lieu of flowers to Middlesex Hospital Hospice and Palliative Care.

*Portland*

### Dwight E. Coolong

Dwight E. Coolong, 45, of Poplar Bluff, MO, formerly of Portland, died Wednesday, Oct. 21, due to complications of emphysema. Born Oct. 4, 1964, in Portland, ME, before moving to Portland at the age of 6. He was the son of John and Helen Coolong of Conowingo, MD. He was a graduate of Portland High School in 1984.

Besides his parents Dwight is survived by two brothers and two sisters and their families: Michael Coolong and his wife Karen of Enfield and his children, James Johnson, Dawn Prucia, Sabrina Coolong, Nicole Coolong, Ricky Coolong and his wife Debra of Conowingo, MD, and their children, Christopher Coolong, Kelly Hall, Linda Coolong Hilton and her husband David of Portland and their son John Paul, and Jeanna Coolong and her daughter Brittany Berg. He is also survived by his sister-in-law Lynn Coolong of East Hampton, as well as many aunts and uncles and several great nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his grandparents Allen and Anna Dennison, Paul and Charlotte Coolong and his nephew Ricky Coolong Jr.

Private funeral services were held in Poplar Bluff on Friday, Oct. 24.

## Colchester Police News

10/21: Michelle McLain, 28, of 38 Mallard Cove, East Hampton, was charged with DUI and failure to have lights lit, State Police said.

10/21: Kenneth Nickse, 45, 108 Falls Rd., East Haddam, was charged with evading arrest, failure to renew registration, driving an uninsured vehicle, driving with unsafe tires, operating a vehicle when license is suspended, speeding and failure to appear in court, State Police said.

10/22: Harvey Leonard, 22, of 91 Clark Gates Rd., East Haddam, was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

10/23: Paul Jacobson, 34, of 243 Westchester

Rd., was charged with evading arrest and failure to grant right of way, State Police said.

10/23: Meghan Gaouette, 23, of 14 Main St., Apt 6, was charged with DUI and making an improper turn, State Police said.

10/24: Sean Spatafora, 26, of Rambling Brook Lane Apt. 5B, Glastonbury, was charged with DUI, Reckless driving and failure to notify a change in address on registration, State Police said.

10/25: Jonathan Fox, 41, of 110 Westchester Rd., was charged with third-degree assault, disorderly conduct and risk of injury, State Police said.

## East Hampton Police News

10/5 — Robert A. Maheu, 19, of 127 Falls Rd., Moodus, was issued a ticket for passing a standing school bus, East Hampton Police said.

10/15 — Daniel M. Slaski, 21, of 28 Prospect St., Portland, was involved in a one-vehicle accident on Wopowog Road, four-tenths of a mile east of Young Street, police said. Slaski was issued a ticket for abandoning a motor vehicle, police added.

10/15 — Bruce M. Dana, 64, of 34 Kellogg Rd., Marlborough, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and failure to drive right, police said.

10/20 — Stacy D. Rivera, 29, of 38 Wangonk Tr., was arrested pursuant to a court-ordered

warrant for operating under suspension and second-degree failure to appear, police said.

10/20 — Kathleen F. Cavanaugh, 54, of 210 Hog Hill Rd., was issued a ticket for operating a motor vehicle while using a cell phone, police said.

10/20 — Norman P. Therrian, 31, of 81 Stonycrest Dr., Middletown, was arrested pursuant to a warrant for second-degree harassment, police said.

10/22 — Francis Dipace, 22, of 28 Tartia Rd., was issued a ticket for traveling fast, police said.

10/22 — Henry Morehouse, 43, of 64 Main St., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for mis-application of property, police said.

## Portland Police News

10/24 — Ami Overton, 38, of 798 Glastonbury Tpke., was charged with DUI, Portland Police said.

10/25 — Kelly Davis, 33, of 315 Main St., was charged with sixth-degree larceny, risk of injury to a minor and second-degree failure to appear, police said.

10/26 — Arland Hersey, 42, of 1503 Portland-Cobalt Rd., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.