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The annual Scarecrow Decorating Contest has returned to the Colchester Town Green. Through Sunday, 14 scarecrow scenes, such as this one from Galaxy Cheerleading, will be on display on the green. Residents can vote on the top winners.

Halloween is Back on the Colchester Green

by Bailey Seddon

The spooky and the strange are back on the town green for Colchester's 12th annual Scarecrow Decorating Contest.

The contest is co-sponsored every year by the Colchester Business Association (CBA) and the Parks and Recreation Department, which accepts entries from local businesses, adult organizations, youth organizations and families. The event started Thursday, Oct. 6 and will end Sunday, Oct. 23. Registration for the event was \$10.

Between now and Oct. 23, residents can e-mail which scarecrow they like best to info@colchetserctbusiness.com. Ballot boxes are also available at Eastern Connecticut Rehabilitation Center, Colchester Massage, Colchester Parks and Recreation, Shattered End and Skyview Realty.

First- and second-place winners will receive \$100 and \$50, respectively, which can be used toward any business that is part of the CBA. The winners will be notified next week.

This year there were 14 entries submitted, eight less than last year. This year there were five businesses, two individual, two youth and four adult scarecrows.

CBA member Brenden Healy is the scarecrow decorating contest committee chairman for the third year in a row.

"It's a great community event" and is a great way for town businesses to get their name out, Healy said.

"It's kind of a 'give back to the community' type of event," Healy continued. He said it is a great event because it gives service to the Colchester business community, while also pro-

viding a fun contest for members of the town. When asked why the number of contestants was lower this year, Healy said he was not sure but thought that some families were busier than usual this year. However, the number changes from year to year, Healy said; one year there were around 18 contestants, while another year there were more than 30 scarecrows.

Among the scarecrows were two from Jack Jackter Intermediate School, advertising Literacy Night. The scarecrows were made by the 29 third- to fifth-graders in the school's Student Senate, Assistant Principal Judy O'Meara said. This was their first time and the students were asked to come up with a problem in the school that they would like to be solved. They decided to use the school's upcoming Literacy Night to make the town aware of their cause.

Literacy Night is Tuesday, Oct. 25, from 6-8 p.m. At the event, all the children in the school will have their favorite piece of writing displayed on their lockers for their friends and family to see. There will be book swaps, games and even a local artist, Carol Glynn, to do skits with the kids. Anyone in the community is welcome, said O'Meara.

Once the JJIS students had their theme, they had to make the scarecrows. At their next meeting they decided who was going to do what, what materials they needed and what exactly the scarecrows would look like. At the next meeting the students brought in shirts and pants and started building their scarecrows.

"They loved it; they had a really good time
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RHAM Administrators Review Test Scores

by Geeta Schrayter

At a RHAM Board of Education meeting Monday, school officials reviewed the scores of this year's Connecticut Mastery Tests (CMTs) and Connecticut Academic Performance Tests (CAPTs) – and discussed ways to improve them.

Superintendent of Schools Bob Siminski discussed changes in the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in relation to the schools' scores. From last year, the percentage of students who needed to score "proficient" or higher on the CMT as required by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act increased to 89 percent for reading and 90 percent for mathematics, from 79 and 82 percent. For CAPT, reading increased to 91 percent from 81 and mathematics to 90 percent from 80.

"I'm pleased with the scores but I think we could do better," said Siminski, adding that they seem to be "pretty much in the same range" as prior years.

RHAM Middle School made the requirements set forth by NCLB with 97.6 percent of students in seventh grade and 95.8 percent in eighth grade scoring proficient or higher in mathematics. In reading, 94.8 percent of sev-

enth-graders and 94.1 percent of eighth-graders scored proficient or higher.

"We're obviously happy with the scores, but we always see room for improvements," said Middle School Principal Mike Seroussi.

He stated improvements were made in seventh-grade math and that eighth-grade math and writing have remained steady. He also said he was happy reading has hovered around 89 percent.

"[The] big thing is to try and narrow the [gender] gap," he said, adding that they continue to work on it, "but it's tough."

In seventh-grade math, 87.9 percent of males were at or above goal compared to 86.3 percent of females. Conversely, 92.4 percent of females were at or above goal in reading compared to 84.9 percent of males.

In eighth grade, 85.5 percent of females were at or above goal in math compared to 83.2 percent of males. In reading, 90.3 percent of females were at or above goal, compared to 88.8 percent of males.

At the high school, 71.9 percent of males were at or above the math goal compared to 71.3 percent of females. The gender gap in

achievement was most apparent in high school reading, where 76.7 percent of females scored at or above the reading goal, compared to just 53.1 percent of males.

In general, 94.3 percent of students were proficient in math and 92.9 percent were proficient in reading.

"By raising the bar, we can encourage our students to shoot higher" said High School Principal Scott Leslie. However, the NCLB requirements at the high school for 2011 were not met.

Siminski partially attributed this to a group of special education students whose tests were included in the score that weren't in previous years. He stated these children are capable of doing very well on the test, but sometimes emotional issues may prevent them from doing so.

"The high school didn't achieve because of the cohort of special education students who didn't perform well in math," Siminski said. "Those are some of the issues we'll be looking at."

Special Education Director Eric Protulis said one of the things to take into consideration when looking at the grades of special education students is emotional factors and how that can

impact their performance.

He stated a student may be a "bright kid," but emotional factors might get in the way.

Protulis mentioned intervention classes to supplement instruction in reading, writing and math as a way to work on this area.

Throughout the district, various initiatives are in place to improve the students' scores. At the middle school these include academic labs, Silent Sustained Reading twice a week and afterschool programs.

At the high school, support services such as advisors, the use of portfolios, academic labs and the implementation of the above mentioned intervention programs to identify students in need of support and provide them the instruction they need to improve are all utilized.

Despite this, Siminski stated he doesn't believe the school district will reach the goal set forth by NCLB in 2014 for all students to score proficient or higher.

"I don't think any district will," he added.

"In terms of NCLB, it ultimately means the district is failing and that's why so many people have chastised that facet," he said. "To label an

See Test Scores Page 2



Another of the scarecrow scenes is this one touting the Oct. 25 Literacy Night at Jack Jackter Intermediate School. The display was designed by third-, fourth- and fifth-graders at the school, who “had a really good time making it,” JJIS Assistant Principal Judy O’Meara said.

Halloween cont. from Front Page

making it,” said O’Meara. She said the Student Senate children were very proud to drive by the green and be able to show their parents the hard work they did.

While there were many “scary” scarecrows, there were also humorous ones. One of these would include one scarecrow giving another a massage, from Colchester Massage, which manager Stacey Pepper Schwartz thought up.

Colchester Massage, located at 16 Wall St., is new to town and Pepper Schwartz was excited that the CBA did this kind of event so she could get word out to the community about her business.

“I thought it was fantastic,” said Pepper Schwartz. She said that she wanted to make the business easily accessible, and the scarecrow contest was a good way to do this. She liked her scarecrow because she wanted to be fun but also to get her message across.

Colchester Massage is not a spa, but a wellness center where anyone with an “issue in your tissue,” as Pepper Schwartz said, will find the right massage.

Another interesting entry was the “Cheercrows” by Galaxy Cheerleading. This depicts cheerleading scarecrows, one sitting atop another’s shoulders. Galaxy Cheerleading is an endorsed league by the Parks and Recreation department.

Dayle Coutu has three daughters on the team and is one of the coaches for the team. She thought this would be a good way to recruit other cheerleaders and get the team’s name out. Her 4-year-old daughter, Abigail Coutu, drew a picture of what she wanted the scarecrow to look like and the family went from there. Coutu’s husband, Jeremy, and her older daughters, 15-year-old Kristen Cates and 14-year-old Tiffany Cates, all helped put the scarecrow together.

“That’s when the real fun begins,” laughed Coutu.

“It was really fun” and the family plans on doing it again next year, with more of the team

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entire district failing because we’ve got one group of students we need to focus on is not fair.”

Siminski also stated that when looking at the scores of a school as a whole, the individual student gets lost.

“And I think that’s what’s really important because it shows we care about the individual not the test results,” he said

participating and more scarecrows, said Coutu.

“It’s going to be a team-building activity for next year,” she said.

This was Galaxy Cheerleading’s first year doing the scarecrow contest and League President and Coach Kim Gross was glad they did it.

“We did it as a fun, public relations thing” to get Galaxy’s name out there, she said. When asked if she would do it again next year, Gross laughed, “Definitely...probably bigger” than this year.

Another interesting scarecrow is the “Scarezilla” done by Harrington Court, an elder care facility. This depicts a frightening scarecrow chasing the poor, scared people of the village. Nancy Michaud-Wozniacki, Lissa Peltier and Debbie Felciano all helped to make this scarecrow possible. The staff and residents of Harrington Court wanted to make a scarecrow that was not only for fun, but to make people more aware of who they are and what they do. It is definitely something they will be doing again next year, the women said.

“It’s a lot of fun,” said Peltier. Both employees and residents got to help in the making of the scarecrows. Instead of thinking of a scarecrow and then a name, the crew at Harrington Court did the job backwards. Another employee, Mark Toronto, said they should call it “Scarezilla” and from there they designed their scarecrow. They decided that their scarecrow would be a version of Godzilla with people frantically running away. The residents not only enjoyed making the scarecrows, but got to go out and look at them to later vote on which they liked best.

“We like to make sure we get out there,” said Felciano. For those who cannot get out Harrington Court also has a program called “never too late” where a computer is wheeled around from room-to-room and residents can look at the pictures on the computer and vote.

“They are very honest citizens...sometimes they don’t vote for ours,” laughed Peltier.

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Apples and pumpkin-flavored everything are all around us, leaves are falling from the sky (although oddly, they don’t seem to be changing color quite so much this year; mostly just falling) and a handful of new fall TV shows have already been canceled. Yes, it’s mid-October – which also means it’s the middle of election season.

This year is, as if you haven’t picked up on it from all the signs posted everywhere, a municipal election year. And in *Rivereastland*, there are big elections in most of our towns; there are races for first selectman in Portland, Colchester and Marlborough. Meanwhile, in East Hampton many of the incumbent members of the Town Council have opted not to run again, guaranteeing a new-look council by this time next month, although the party majority of that council – Republican, Democrat or Chatham Party – is still very much uncertain.

You might have noticed I didn’t mention Hebron in the above paragraph. (Well, I also didn’t mention Andover, but that town’s elections were in May.) That’s because in Hebron, unfortunately, nearly every person running for a seat on a board or commission is doing so uncontested; the only race whose outcome is in doubt at all is for the Zoning Board of Appeals.

I say “unfortunately” not due to the quality of the people running; rather, it’s unfortunate more people in Hebron weren’t interested in running. Residents should have a choice when they go to the polls on Election Day. Competition can be, and is, a good thing. It can lead to new ideas and new approaches to things.

Plus, people wanting to get involved in their town, to try to make it better, is always a good thing.

Not that I’m passing judgment on those who choose not to get involved in town government; I mean, it’s not like I’m involved in Manchester politics. There can be any number of reasons why people decline to seek town office: work commitments, family commitments, medical ailments, etc.

And I truly believe something else keeps people away from town politics: it’s brutal out there. It’s always been said you need to have thick skin to enter politics; these days, the skin needs to be thicker than ever. Some of the invective hurled at politicians by their constituents can be especially harsh. (Check out some of the letters in recent issues of the *Rivereast* if you don’t believe me.) The era of civil discourse seems to have passed. It’s a problem by no means confined to eastern Connecticut; just look at the things said about President Obama – the holder of the highest office in the country – by those opposed to him. It’s almost impossible for folks to disagree without resorting to petty name-calling. At times it seems there is simply no re-

spect anymore, for anybody.

Simply put, why would anyone – particularly someone serving on a *volunteer* board – want to put up with that crap? Actually, it gives you a newfound admiration for people who do.

I hope in the future more people will opt to get involved; like I said, it’s good to have competition, and choices. But in order for them to do that, I truly think people need to take things down a peg, or 10. Civility is a beautiful thing; it shouldn’t be dying.

And speaking of playing nice, next week, the Oct. 28 issue, is the last week for people to send in letters to the editor attacking other candidates or raising new issues. This is because the following week, the Nov. 4 edition, will be the last chance for candidates to defend themselves before Election Day. Political letters submitted for the Nov. 4 issue should be endorsements only, or positive in nature.

Okay, so I didn’t exactly get the World Series matchup I was hoping for. Instead of Rangers-Brewers, it’s Rangers-Cardinals. But in some ways, this scenario is better. I would’ve pulled for the Brewers, as they’ve never won a championship before, are a charismatic bunch, and let’s face it, I’m a National League fan.

But it would’ve been tough to root against Texas. They’re a pretty fun bunch of guys themselves, and their star player, Josh Hamilton, is a great story of triumph over adversity. A former number one draft pick, Hamilton’s career was derailed by injuries and then severe drug problems, which led to baseball banning him indefinitely. But he cleaned up his act, was eventually reinstated, and is now one of the game’s star players. His is truly an inspirational story.

Plus, the Rangers are owned by a group led by Nolan Ryan, a Hall of Famer and former member of the 1969 Miracle Mets. How can you not like that?

The Rangers – who, like the Brewers, have never won a world championship – are a classy bunch too; for their first playoff game this year, they let the son of Shannon Stone – the fan who died in July after falling while attempting to catch a ball thrown to him in the stands – throw out the ceremonial first pitch.

The Cardinals, meanwhile.....they’re just the Cardinals. They’re going to their third World Series in the past six years. They already won one in 2006. And yes, I’m still a little bitter about the Mets losing to the Cardinals in the NLCS that year. (For baseball fans, old grudges can die hard.)

So, let’s go Rangers.

See you next week.

Portland School Board Approves Fixes at Valley View Modulars

by Joshua Anusewicz

At Tuesday’s Board of Education meeting, the board appropriated funds “not to exceed \$20,000” for upgrades and repairs to the roofs on the modular classrooms at Valley View School. According to Chairman Christopher Phelps, the funding will come from the board’s operating budget.

The plan for the repairs comes after the School Facilities Study Committee submitted a report that the school district should remain at status quo in regards to their facilities. However, members of the Board of Education and the Board of Selectmen both agreed that repairs were needed at some of the schools, particularly the modulars at Valley View.

In August, Bengston reported that the modulars were “structurally sound,” but said water was collecting on the roof and dripping down the sides of the structure. When the water drips, it slips into small cracks around the windows and air conditioning units, Bengston said.

The modulars at Valley View, which houses students from kindergarten to second grade, were erected in 1988. At the time, the modulars were expected to have a lifespan of five years,

but are still in use.

In August, Bengston estimated the project at \$40,000, but that would have included upgrades of the carpet and tile in modulars. Bengston said at this week’s meeting that any upgrades to the flooring have been put off for the time being, as they are not as big a priority as the roof.

Bengston said he has begun seeking bids for the project, but has not secured a contractor as of yet. He said that an early estimate for the project was put at \$18,750, but Bengston said he believes he “can get it done for less than that.”

The plan for the modulars, he said, will be a stronger gutter on the roof of the modulars that will eliminate a “slight dip” where water is collecting. He said that the gutters will be built directly into the roof and the water will be rerouted off of the building. He said there are also plans to reseal the windows and air conditioning units.

As of now, there is no timeframe set for this project, but Phelps said the plan is to “get the project done before the winter.”

“We have no other option,” Phelps said.

No Competition for Hebron's Board of Education

by Geeta Schrayter

Hebron's municipal elections are two weeks away, and this year, the Board of Education candidates won't experience much noise; they're all guaranteed seats, as there is no opposition.

Donna McCalla, chairwoman of the Hebron Republican Town Committee, cited the economy as a potential reason for this.

"People are working more," she said. "It's hard to commit to anything outside of work and family."

Democratic Town Committee Chairman Bill Rudis agreed, saying the commissions can be very time-consuming.

"Families are engaged not only in their employment but the pursuit of their children's career paths," he said. He added that there are "all kinds of things that consume their time."

McCalla also noted that residents seem to be pleased with the job current board members are doing.

And while Republican candidates Amy Lynch-Gracias and Dominic Marino have never held a position on the town boards, McCalla considers them highly-qualified and feels the experience they'll bring will be beneficial.

She mentioned Marino has been a teacher for over 20 years and holds some of the highest certifications in the state of Connecticut, while Lynch-Gracias brings new perspectives from growing up in Arizona. Both candidates were also described as being active at town meetings and having a passion for getting involved.

"Amy and Dom are going to bring sensibility to the job," said McCalla.

Lynch-Gracias, 54, has been a Hebron resident for over five years. She went to school in Arizona where she attended a private kindergarten and a regional high school similar to RHAM. She took classes at Glendale Community College, Grand Canyon University and the University of Maryland where she received an associate's degree and has junior standing. Prior to graduating, Lynch-Gracias married her husband, who was a member of the armed forces, and ended up traveling with him.

On her qualifications for the board, Lynch-Gracias stated, "I wouldn't say that I'm necessarily more qualified than anyone else but I'm willing to stand up and say 'I'm not sure how the process works but I want to learn more about it and I want to be a part of the decision making.'"

Lynch-Gracias' education was an influence in her decision to run for the Board of Education. In fifth grade, it was discovered she had



Lynch-Gracias

dyslexia. Due to this, she was "treated like a special child," which kept other children from playing with her out of concern they'd "catch" what she had. In high school, her parents were told she'd probably drop out, but Lynch-Gracias ended up graduating in the top 21 percent of her class.

"Ultimately, my education was something I was very proud of and something I worked very hard at," she said. "I certainly hope the education system is not the way it was . . ." she stated, adding that conversations with some students made her think it wasn't all that different.

As a member of the board, Lynch-Gracias is looking to find answers.

"Although the Hebron Board of Ed has been working very hard to make sure there is equity in education, it would seem we're falling behind," she said, adding that it's not something she can fix alone.

"The community needs to stand up," she said. "The question is 'what changes need to be made?' I don't believe throwing money at every problem solves the problem."

In regards to goals, Lynch-Gracias said she doesn't necessarily have any in mind because she's coming in as a new person. "I haven't run for political office since I ran for eighth-grade class president," she laughed, but added that she's looking for a way to get involved.

"It's not necessarily my ultimate goal to jump into the Board of Education and change things up for them, but I think change is always a good thing," Lynch-Gracias said. She added she'd like to see more responsibility in the spending and ensure residents are aware of what's going on.

"These children are a consumer of the product that the town is providing . . ." she said. "If we're not providing them the education to prepare them to get a job, go into the military or go on to college, then we've failed in our ultimate goal of education, and making them active members of the society."

The other Republican candidate, Dominic Marino, 54, has been a Hebron resident for nine years. He moved to town in 2002 with his wife, a Hebron native who was returning to her family farm. Marino has four children and this year, he quipped that he can boast, "I have a child in each of the schools: Gilead Hill, Hebron Elementary, RHAM Middle, and RHAM High."

Marino received an Intermediate Administrator and Supervisor Certificate from the State of Connecticut Department of Education. He has a Master's of Fine Arts from Purchase Col-



Marino

lege, State University of New York, and a Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Science in music education from Western Connecticut State University. Marino has also studied Connecticut Education Law, and is currently a music teacher for Manchester Public Schools.

"I have years of experience in the field of education," he said. "I have taught in private schools, colleges and public schools for over 25 years."

Marino and his wife volunteer at Hebron's schools and with Hebron Youth Baseball, Parks and Recreation and the Hebron PTA. They've organized benefit concerts and participated in such community events as the Hebron Maple Fest.

Marino stated he's running for the Hebron Board of Education because he feels there needs to be more checks and balances between the administration and the Board of Education.

"I feel that there is a need for transparency," he said, adding that residents should know the facts.

He hopes to add "community-minded common sense" and stated he's not afraid to ask the hard questions and, in issues of finance, "will spend the community money as if I was spending my own."

He feels some of the biggest issues to work on are the aforementioned need for transparency, the budget and administrative issues such as administrative costs.

"Right now, our administrative offices are top-heavy," he stated, adding "a combining of positions, much like Marlborough has done" as a possible solution. (In 1998, the Marlborough Board of Education combined the positions of assistant principal and special education director. More recently, in 2009, the school board opted to go from having a full-time schools superintendent to having a part-time one.)

Marino is interested in holding true to "the old traditions of the town while moving forward."

As a board member, he stated he's looking to tackle "priorities in the budget that clearly benefit the students and maintain the heritage of the town." Marino added, "I also agree that progress is necessary, but it should be utilized with common sense."

Marino added that he emphasizes "small-town values with common-sense growth."

Rudis said Democratic candidates Stephanie Raymond and Maryanne Leichter are both professionals dedicated to quality education.



Raymond

Rudis stated that Raymond, an incumbent seeking re-election, believes a quality education is essential when children are younger, because "the level of schooling they're receiving is the gateway for future education." Raymond did not return calls to comment for this story.

As for Leichter, Rudis said she has advanced degrees in education and is dedicated to the quality of education not only in Hebron, but "throughout the state and beyond."

"She is a firm believer that if you are able to capture the mind and imagination of a child early on . . . that will [yield] very positive results" later.

Leichter, 59, has been a Hebron resident for close to 40 years. Both of her children attended Hebron schools from kindergarten through graduation.

With over 37 years of experience working in education, Leichter has taught special needs children in kindergarten through grade 12 for over 27 years, was an administrator for more than nine and served on the RHAM Board of Education for over four.

Leichter stated she's running for the Hebron Board of Education because she'd like to give back to her community.

"I think there has always been quality education in this town for the students and I would like to see this continue," she said.

Leichter said one of the biggest issues schools face is figuring out how to maintain quality education in tough economic times.

"Without any money coming from the state or the federal government to support new mandates," she said, "it falls on the school and the towns to see how this can be accomplished."

Leichter added that while this is a difficult balancing act, it's one she's already been involved with on the RHAM Board of Education. Leichter said she hopes to work with other board members to keep finances in balance while simultaneously doing the best they can for the students.

"I have worked with the members of both political parties in the past," Leichter said, "and I see this happening moving forward."

Ultimately, Leichter stated, "I want to accomplish the goals that the Board of Education has created to improve the academic achievement of the students."

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



Leichter

Waste Contract Will Save Hebron Thousands

by Geeta Schrayter

When Hebron's waste contract with Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA) ends in December 2012, a new contract will begin – and it is expected this new deal will save the town a substantial amount of money.

The switch to Willimantic Waste Paper Company, Inc., will allow all of Hebron's waste and recyclables to be brought to Willimantic as opposed to Hartford. The town's bulky waste is already disposed there.

Public Works Director Andrew Tierney considers the new contract a "win-win," stating the town will not only save on the cost of waste disposal, but will receive rebates for recycling and have less wear and tear on the trucks due to the company's closer proximity.

"It's a lot easier going to Willimantic than it was to Hartford," Tierney said, adding that Willimantic Waste Paper is "family-owned and

operated and very friendly to deal with."

Two other companies – CRRA and Hartford-based Murphy Road Recycling – were also up for the contract and were recommended by the Central Connecticut Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA). CCSWA is a group formed by the Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) in 2010 to research different options for waste and recycling disposal for member towns.

CCSWA requested qualifications from potential companies and received eight responses, two of which were approved: CRRA and Murphy Road.

During the process, Town Manager Bonnie Therrien and Tierney went to Willimantic Waste Paper to see if it would be interested as well. Although Willimantic Waste Paper expressed interest to CCSWA, it wasn't chosen as one of the final vendors. But after sending in a pro-

posal and presenting to the Board of Selectmen along with representatives from the other two companies, it was decided Willimantic Waste Paper was the best option.

"Based on prices that came in as well as gasoline and mileage . . . it was decided Willimantic was the best route" said Therrien.

Along with Therrien and Tierney, Finance Director Lisa Hancock prepared analyses of the companies and compared the costs and savings associated with each one.

"We looked at the transportation costs, the costs of gasoline, the cost of man hours . . ." said Hancock. "We looked at the overall convenience of being able to take everything to one spot. We also looked at the guaranteed rate rebate."

Willimantic Waste Paper guaranteed it would pay \$15 for every ton of recycling materials the

town disposes of in their facilities. Currently, Hebron disposes of about 500 tons of recycling annually.

The five-year contract also provides fixed rates, whereas CRRA did not, and Murphy Road still needs to acquire certain permits for municipal solid waste (MSW) disposal, Tierney noted. In the first year, Hebron will be charged \$60 per ton of MSW, increasing to \$66.20 in year five.

Hancock said the town is currently paying \$151,167 for the disposal of about 1,800 tons of MSW per year, not including travel. She said travel would probably add another \$33,000.

With Willimantic Waste Paper, "we're looking at \$115,244 taking into account travel," said Hancock. "We used a rough number . . . about \$50,000 would be saved."

Eight Candidates Prepare for Finance Board Race in East Hampton

by Joshua Anusewicz

With the global economy in constant flux, people, particularly at a local level, are recognizing the importance of having strong, trustworthy individuals in charge of their finances. In East Hampton, eight candidates believe they can be those individuals, as they seek to fill one of the three open spots on the Board of Finance.

This year's candidates will include: Chatham Party members Mary Ann Dostaler, Scott Sanicki and Dave Monighetti; Democrats Laura Taylor Borg, Tom O'Brien and Ted Turner; and Republicans Maria Peplau and Don Martin.

While O'Brien and Peplau are incumbents, the other six candidates will be looking to fill the spot vacated by George Pfaffenbach, who is running for Town Council this year. Also, if current Board of Finance member Patience Anderson is elected to the Town Council, another spot will be available.

O'Brien has only lived in East Hampton for six years, but has packed a lot into those years. Aside from serving on the finance board, O'Brien is a member of the Village Lions Club and represents the town on the Central Region Tourism Board. He is a retired member of the state Department of Public Safety, and now operates his own business, Blue Heron Travel.

O'Brien said he chose to run again because he believes the board has "made good headway" and he wants to continue on that work. He said that since he began serving, the board has been able to "keep taxes low," and has secured a bonding package to help improve the town's roads "without damaging the taxpayers."

As his biggest concern, O'Brien said it's continually monitoring the economy to lessen its effect on residents. "People can't afford as much nowadays, so we need to be careful spending," O'Brien said.

Dostaler, the former chairwoman of the Eco-



Dostaler

logic Development Commission (EDC) and a member of the Brownfield Redevelopment Agency, will be running for the board for the first time. Dostaler has also owned her own marketing company for the past 14 years.

One of the biggest priorities for the board, Dostaler said, should be putting an end to "wasteful spending" and getting more value for the town's tax revenue. Dostaler said that she is an advocate for "honest accounting," which she said can be done by putting forth a more transparent budget and supporting inter-board cooperation.

Dostaler also said the finance board will face a challenge because of the "atmosphere of distrust" that she believes the town government has created. She said "better collaboration" could be the "positive force" that helps the town move forward from that distrust.

Another newcomer, but no stranger to the town, is Borg. After retiring as senior vice president of Webster Bank last year, Borg moved back to East Hampton, where she was born and raised.

After retiring, Borg said she found herself in a "good position" to get involved with the town. She said she is "very discouraged" by the town being in a negative light over the past year and hopes that she can be "part of the force that turns it around."

To do that, she hopes to create a better business climate for the town. Borg served on the Board of Finance in Chester for five years, and said the town was able to improve the town's businesses, particularly in their downtown area.

"We don't have much of a business tax base right now," Borg said. "The tax burden is falling on the residents. Right now, we can't lower residential taxes." She said that by broadening the tax base and having better "expense control" will help create more tax revenue for the town.

Martin, a former finance board member,



Monighetti

could not be reached for comment due to a personal matter, said Republican Town Committee Chairman George Coshow. Martin has also served on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

According to Coshow, Martin is a retired insurance executive who now runs a small consulting firm. He said that Martin's view toward finances is generally conservative, with focus on "low taxes and a less-intrusive government."

Sanicki also could not be reached for comment. According to the Chatham Party, Sanicki has lived in East Hampton for nine years and has worked for Pratt and Whitney for over 10 years, holding various engineering positions.

Sanicki stated on the Chatham Party website that he is running for the finance board because he believes the town and its residents "respectively utilize our shared resources to better [the] town." He said that this could be done by the Board of Finance working actively with the Town Council to work towards long- and short-term goals for the finances of the town.

Turner is another longtime resident of the town, having lived in East Hampton for over 65 years. Turner said he enjoys working within the community, which has been shown in over 20 years of working with the Old Home Days Association (three as its president). As a veteran, he has also been a member of the VFW Post 5095 for over 30 years.

For the past several months, Turner said he has been attending finance boards meetings to "keep up with the issues" that the board is discussing. He said that one of his biggest priorities will be "diversifying the tax base" to include more commercial property to keep taxes low. Turner said that to do this, he understands that tougher issues, like a town water system and improved infrastructure, will have to be



O'Brien

discussed.

"I'm not a big spender," admitted Turner. "But sometimes you have to spend money to avoid paying more in the long run. Nobody wants to pay more in taxes, and what we can do for residents is control that the best we can."

Monighetti has lived in East Hampton for 25 years, and is actively involved in the operations and finances of two companies, Wyrepak Industries and BCY Inc. Monighetti is also a Vietnam veteran.

The biggest priority for the board, Monighetti said, will be developing "long-term plans for continued financial growth" in the town. He also said that he supports the Chatham Party's stance to find a "full-time, ethical town manager" and expects to have more transparency and cooperation in the relationship between the Town Manager and the board.

Monighetti, who lives on Lake Pocotopaug, said he hopes to continue the efforts to keep the lake clean, which he said many residents he has spoken with have pushed for.

Peplau has lived in East Hampton for over 30 years, and has had two children go through the school system. Peplau has worn several hats during her professional career in information technology, including computer programmer, systems analyst and project manager for several corporations.

Now retired, Peplau operates a small culinary business and is also a part-time florist.

Jane Traceski, who was on the ballot as a Republican, has been removed; according to Coshow, Traceski was acting as a "placeholder" so the RTC could meet the state-mandated number of candidates to enter the race.

Voting will take place Tuesday, Nov. 8, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.



Peplau



Sanicki



Borg



Turner



Martin

Three Familiar Faces to Fill Portland School Board Seats

by Joshua Anusewicz

Three candidates to fill three available seats probably wouldn't be a considered a political "race." But the lack of an aggressive campaign has not kept the Board of Education candidates from focusing on issues that they will face during their term.

The candidates include two incumbents – Democrats MaryAnne Rode and Christopher Phelps, who is also chairman. The third candidate is Republican Brenna Kosicki, who served on the board for a year to fill a vacancy in 2009. Kosicki will be replacing Christopher Bongo, who will step down from the board after elections.

Rode, who has served on the school board for almost six years, said that she decided to run again because of how "rewarding" the experience has been. Rode was appointed to the board to fill a vacancy in 2006, but before that was actively involved with the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and organizations at her local church. She has children within the school system, and said that she wanted to continue "participating and staying involved in town education."

Her biggest priority during her term, Rode said, will be to "keep finding creative ways to fund programs in all of the schools, despite the current economy and the lack of state funding." Rode said this has been one of the biggest chal-



Rode

lenges for the school district; Portland schools received state grants two years ago, but Rode said that the grants "will end soon."

"We will have to find extra money," Rode admitted. "We have to meet certain state requirements, and it's hard with such a small school system. To meet the requirements usually takes time and people working, and it's time consuming. We have to continue to stay on top of that."

Rode said she is proud of the work the board has done during her tenure, which includes adding more Advanced Placement classes, starting leadership programs and improving technology, among other accomplishments. She also said that the district has been able to maintain staffing and not had to cut programs by maintaining "a reasonable budget," despite the tough economic times.

When she has spoken with residents, Rode said she has tried to discuss the importance of education and how it "contributes to the value of the town." She said that most Portland residents, even those without students in the school system, see the "value of a good education" and support the work the board does.

"When we look at the budget, we don't want to cut anything," Rode said. "But if we present a budget the town doesn't support, we have to go back to the drawing board. Fortunately,



Phelps

we've gotten their support."

And support from each other, as well. One of the factors that brought her back, she admitted, was how well the board "sets aside differences and works together."

Rode has had a lot of opportunity to work with Phelps, who will be the longest-serving member with Bongo's departure. Phelps was first elected in 2003, and said he has "enjoyed serving the community" ever since.

Phelps said he first got involved because of his two children, who were in elementary school at the time. "It's a big part of why we all get involved," Phelps said about his children. "And it gives us an opportunity to give back to our community."

But Phelps said he realized that serving on the board presents plenty of challenges, the biggest of which he said is "maintaining quality programs." The challenge, however, is facing the "reality of today's economy," which means the board has to be creative with how it handles its budget.

"We have to do more with less," Phelps said. And the board has been able to do just that; during his tenure, Phelps said, the district has seen "dramatic" improvement in standardized test scores and has made "incredible progress" in strengthening the core curriculum through



Kosicki

all grades.

Currently, the board is working on implementing new core standards, which the state will put into effect in a few years. The new standards will make many changes to the state testing, which will compound the need to have students at certain levels to perform well on the tests. "And we need to do it with not much additional revenue [from the state]," Phelps added.

As for concerns he's heard from residents, Phelps said the focus hasn't changed much in his eight years of service; the people of Portland want the "best education and preparation as possible, but want to control costs at the same time." Phelps said the board has done a "good job" of controlling costs in the past, including presenting a zero percent budget increase last year.

"We haven't had to resort to layoffs, or program cuts or larger class sizes," Phelps said. "That's been important." He added that maintaining the quality of schools is important to the town, adding that "schools represent a huge part of our small community."

Rounding out the Board of Education candidates is Brenna Kosicki, who could not be reached for comment. According to a 2009 article in the *Riverast*, Kosicki has roughly 20 years of experience in education, working as the Director of Special Education in Hebron and Director of Pupil Personnel and Instructional Support at Hartford Public Schools. She has two children in the school district.

Voting will take place Tuesday, Nov. 8, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at the senior center, 7 Waverly Ave.

Construction Set to Begin in East Hampton on New Church Facility

by Joshua Anusewicz

In January 2009, East Hampton Bible Church changed its name and location to better suit its vision – to be closer and more involved in the community. Now, nearly three years later, Hope Church is taking its next step toward becoming a center for the entire town, announcing last week that construction will soon begin on a new facility.

The facility will be located on East High Street (Route 66) near the Marlborough town line; since Hope Church moved out of its former location, 22 Midwood Farm Rd., the church has held its services at the East Hampton High School auditorium.

Pastor Roger Martin said Monday the new location will follow the church's desire to meet the needs of the community, and he believes the features of the new facility will mirror this vision.

"We want something that will be an investment for the community, not just Hope Church," said Martin. "The church always keeps its focus outward. It's not always about us; it's about blessing other people."

Martin said the plans for the church, which will be roughly 12,000 square feet, will include a 300-seat auditorium for services, classrooms, a gymnasium and recreational fields, all of which he hopes will be used by other town organizations.

On Sunday, Oct. 16, parishioners gathered at the new church site for what Martin called "dedication and prayer." Martin said the church has been "looking forward to this for three or four years," and that the members are now able to see the plans for their church come to fruition.

"Sunday was a pretty big moment," Martin said.

The past three years have been a "rollercoaster" for Hope Church, Martin said, as the search for a suitable location has been a difficult one. The church decided to move from Midwood Farm Road on 2009, Martin said, be-

cause the location did not suit the church's vision as a community center. Since that decision was made, the church has searched tirelessly for a new location that was more easily accessible for residents.

Martin said that one of the biggest issues for the church was the lack of suitable property in the town, but did say that the challenge of "raising funds" also loomed large. A number of times, he said, the church found locations that they thought were "promising," but then would have issues that couldn't be overcome. When the church found the location on Route 66, Martin said that they were preparing "for the other shoe to drop."

Fortunately, this time, Martin can sense that what they've envisioned "is finally happening," and the church couldn't be happier.

"This is the real deal," Martin said with a smile. "Enthusiasm is pretty high right now."

When asked if the church ever considered leaving East Hampton – it has members from various surrounding towns – Martin said the church's "identity has been in East Hampton since square one."

"We could have existed elsewhere," he added, "but we wanted to stay here. We were really happy to find something." The church has existed in the town since 1973, starting as Haddam Neck Church, and has been in the town ever since. Martin said the church "explored" the possibility of moving to another town, but that nothing serious ever came of it.

Martin said that in the time since the church made plans to find another location, the town has given a lot of support, which Martin said has "meant a great deal." He was particularly thankful of the staff at the high school, which has accommodated the church for Sunday services, and the town's planning and zoning and inland-wetlands commissions for their help in the project.

Last week, crews had begun clearing trees on the property, and Martin said he expects to



Members of Hope Church in East Hampton gathered Sunday to get a look at the location for their new facility on Route 66. The property was secured last month after a three-year search.

have the metal "shell" of the building erected before winter. He said there is currently no set date for the completion of the project. He added that the church continues to raise money for the project through fundraisers.

An interesting wrinkle in the church's fundraising is that the church plans to pass some of the generated money along to another worthwhile cause. Martin said that 5 percent of all the funds that are raised by the church will go to help construct a high school in Jido, Ethiopia, where the church has set up a partnership. Martin said Jido has never had a high school, but has hundreds of children "that truly want to go to college or university." The church has been partnered with the town for a

year and a half and has made two trips to the town.

Martin noted the coincidence that both the church and Jido are going through similar processes, both with the goal of making their communities better. "We are pretty proud [of the partnership]," Martin said.

For now, the church will continue its services at the high school, but is resting easier with the knowledge that their dream of building a community center is coming true. And, true to their name, the church will continue to do one thing – hope.

For more information on the church, visit cthope.com. Hope Church is a non-denominational, Bible-based Christian church.

No Competition for RHAM Board

by Geeta Schrayter

Election Day will bring little change to the RHAM Board of Education, as three of the four people running are incumbents. All four are guaranteed seats, as there is no opposition.

One of the incumbents, Republican Tom Tremont, 69, has lived in Hebron for 32 years.



Turner

He has been a member of the regional school board for the past seven years.

"Some people say I am nuts," Tremont said on his run for re-election. "It is a thankless job with no pay, but I love it."

He added that he feels it's his duty as a resident.

"I believe that it is the responsibility of all citizens to give up their time and talent to the community," he said.

Tremont is a graduate of Bulkeley High School in Hartford and has a background in sales and management from working at Cummins Diesel Engine Co. in Columbus, IN for 45 years.

He said he believes having common sense, a willingness to speak out, present your opinions, be yourself and "take any heat if necessary" are all qualities of a successful candidate.

Tremont stated his management background qualifies him for the position as board member. He feels it's the responsibility of a Board of Education to ensure well-qualified individuals are in place to run the school "so our students receive the best education that we, as a town, can provide with what resources we have."

Tremont noted the superintendent of schools and principals are individuals the Board of Education was responsible for hiring, who are in turn expected to hire well-qualified teachers and other school officials.

"Thus, it is management," he said. "Making sure the people you hire do a good job at what they were hired to do. If we, as a board, do not manage the people we hire correctly, then we have failed."

This ties into what Tremont considers a significant issue in any school: providing a positive atmosphere for students to learn and opportunities to achieve their goals.

He stated he also thinks it important that tax money is spent more on students' education and

less on "trying to keep the administration happy."

"Many in the education system say 'the student comes first,'" he said. "But actions speak louder than words."

The other Hebron resident, Democrat Amy D'Amaddio, 41, will be replacing Maryanne Leichter, who is moving to the Hebron Board of Education. A 14-year resident of town, D'Amaddio and her husband have three children, aged 11, 10 and 8, who all attend Hebron Elementary School.

D'Amaddio received a Bachelor of Science degree in human development and family relations from the University of Connecticut and has been employed as a juvenile probation officer for 16 years. She's currently working with court-involved and detained children as the statewide Coordinator of Educational Services.

For the past 10 years, D'Amaddio has been working on designing and implementing initiatives to improve educational opportunities for children all across the state.

"I would like the opportunity to share this perspective with the RHAM Board of Education, administrators, teachers, parents and community members," she said.

D'Amaddio added that she's also invested in working with the Board of Education because her children will soon be students at RHAM. She said she wants to continue to foster a school culture that provides students a "safe, supportive, engaging and enriching environment" that will prepare them for life after graduation.

School climate, specifically bullying, was mentioned by D'Amaddio as a significant issue for the Board of Education. "There is much work to be done nationally, statewide and in each and every town in the state of Connecticut to understand the realities of bullying in our schools and communities," she said, adding she believes it's the responsibility of the community to remain "vigilant and proactive."

D'Amaddio said she wants to work with the RHAM Board of Education to create a positive school climate and a safe environment for all students.

Another issue D'Amaddio mentioned was the RHAM dropout rate. She noted the 2008 graduation rate at RHAM was 92.4 percent, and



Zimmer

she said that while that figure may not seem low, "if it were your child who was a part of the over 7 percent who dropped out of the RHAM Class of 2008, it would probably be an unacceptable statistic."

She stated she'd like to bring new ideas to the table, work with other members of the board to identify reasons for dropping out and "come up with a plan to make it possible that every student graduates from RHAM High School with their class, on time."

It's solutions to these issues through the development and implementation of plans, in collaboration with other board members, that D'Amaddio hopes to achieve.

The Marlborough candidates running, Michael Turner and Dieter Zimmer, are both seeking re-election to the regional school board. Marlborough Republican Town Committee Chairman Ken Hjulstrom is pleased the two are returning.

"They are very experienced and valuable individuals," he said, adding "their membership on the board is a great asset . . ."

Turner, 52, has been a Marlborough resident for 20 years. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Connecticut and is currently an engineer at Millstone Power Station in Waterford.

Education has always been important to Turner, who has two children attending RHAM High School in grades 10 and 12.

A member of the RHAM Board of Education since 2003, Turner feels "things have been running well" and is looking to keep that going in the upcoming years.

"We have a board that's good to work with . . . we've been able to kind of maintain the quality of education with the tight economy," he said.

Aside from the economy, Turner cited increases in enrollment and test scores as issues to focus on.

"We keep working on ways to improve some of our CAPT [Connecticut Academic Performance Test] scores," he said.

Ways to possibly achieve this included convincing the students to do well, and potentially



Tremont

making them a graduation requirement.

Enrollment is an important factor in regards to educational quality, Turner said. He said he wants to see that all of the students have the same opportunities, adding that this becomes more difficult with larger class sizes.

Essentially, Turner said, "A lot of it is a willingness to look into the issues and kind of work together with the board to come to a solution."

And Turner said he's willing to take on the challenges.

"Overall, it's been a nice eight years," he said. "I'd like to go for four more."

Incumbent Zimmer, 69, a Democrat, has been a Marlborough resident for 32 years and is endorsed by both parties.

"Everybody loves him, everybody votes for him – he does a great job," said Democratic Town Committee Chairman Richard Banbury.

Prior to retiring, he was a mechanical engineer for about 45 years. He has a German Engineering degree which is equivalent to a master's degree in mechanical engineering.

In regards to the qualifications an individual should have as a member of the board, Zimmer said, "there is no such thing."

"I believe everyone who is an American resident and a member of these three towns is eligible to be voted in," he said.

Zimmer stated he's a positive addition to the board, "because I think I make a difference . . . I have no axe to grind and I believe I can make very neutral decisions."

Moving forward, Zimmer stated the biggest issue is monetary.

"The biggest issue which we have is the money, right? So coming up with a budget that fits our pocketbooks and gives the best education which we can offer," said Zimmer.

Zimmer added he'd like to see quality education provided to all the students – not only the high achievers.

"Each individual [has] different needs," he said.

Zimmer stressed the importance of working together and thinking "regional-wise not town-wise."

"[Board members] should promote and support the students from all three towns and not the individual towns," he said, adding, "Think RHAM, and not Marlborough or Andover."

Voting takes place Tuesday, Nov. 8, at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St., for Hebron candidates and Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School, 25 School Dr., for Marlborough candidates.

Candidates Preparing for Run at East Hampton School Board

by Joshua Anusewicz

A good amount of changeover is expected on the local Board of Education this year, where 11 candidates will battle it out for just four available spots. And if you speak with the candidates, most will agree that one important decision will be looming over the board for the next few years – the accreditation of East Hampton High School.

The accreditation is currently halfway through a 10-year process, which reviews the high school's curriculum and facilities. During the process, the board was informed that there are several areas that need to be improved, particularly the science labs, to meet the accreditation. No concrete plans have been made to meet the accreditation, although the board was presented with a renovation plan for the high school that would cost the town millions of dollars. Some of the candidates expressed their concern over a lack of communication with the Town Council as the main reason for no progress being made.

The board will certainly face more issues over the next few years, some known and some unknown. But all of the candidates feel they are the best person suited to tackle those challenges head on.

The 11 candidates for Board of Education include Democrats Carol Williams, Denise Russo, Ken Barber and Teri Schlosser; Republicans Donald Coolican, Sheila Wall and Karen Hintz Lee; and Chatham Party members Joelyn Leon, Bill Marshall, Scott Minnick and Elizabeth Whitty. As stated before, there are four spots available; this number will become five if current Board of Education member Josh Piteo is elected to the Town Council.

Many of the candidates, while serving the town in other capacities, have not served on the Board of Education before. But not Coolican, an 18-year veteran of the board.

Coolican said he is proud of "the progress [the board has] made" during his tenure, and decided to run again because he believes that there are "still things that [the board] can do to keep improving" the school system. He believes that pushing for more "academic rigor" in the curriculum, like the Advanced Placement classes he pushed hard for while serving on the board, will help the district achieve that goal.

When asked about the high school accreditation, Coolican said that, at this point, the board "hasn't received a [renovation] plan that isn't really, really expensive."

"I don't think it's something the residents of East Hampton would vote for," Coolican said. He added that the board has "a tough year ahead" with their budget process; for the past two years, the district's teachers have taken what Coolican called "very favorable concessions" and are due for considerable salary increases next year.

Wall, who is currently finishing her first term on the board, also expressed her concern with

the school's accreditation and the Town Council's lack of response.

"The board has come through with plans [for meeting the accreditation] and it doesn't go anywhere with the council," Wall said, calling the science labs "outdated."

Like Coolican, Wall said that, over the next year, teacher salaries will be the board's "biggest issue." She also stated that there are "other issues [she] continued to be concerned about" for the board, including the district's bus contract, which was recently put out to bid after continued lobbying.

Other than Coolican and Wall, the remaining candidates are fresh faces to the school board. One of these is Leon, an administrative assistant to the regional director for the United Auto Workers. Leon has two children in the East Hampton school system, and said she "realized that now would be the best time to give back to my community," after being "involved with my children's education for many years."

Leon also stated the high school accreditation will be one of her biggest concerns, adding that there is still time for the board to work out a cost-effective plan with "five years to bring the building up to par."

"We need to make sure we get this done," she said. "I plan to do everything I can to work with the Board of Education and the other boards to do it. We need to continue to support our students and give them the best education that will prepare them for the rest of their lives."

Leon said that during her campaigning, she has heard from residents that are concerned with the lack of cooperation between all of the boards and commissions in town. "People want to see the in-fighting stop," she said.

Another candidate who hopes to improve communication between not just other boards, but between residents as well, is Williams, who said she has been attending Board of Education meetings for many years and she is prepared to "join the hardworking group that's there." She has been an elementary school teacher in South Windsor for 16 years, and is also the past president of the Kids of Chatham Organization (KOCO) in East Hampton, but is new to the town's political scene.

Williams said that "better communication" will be an integral part of renovating the high school. "I know that putting forth a plan for the high school is going to be a challenge, but we need it to at least be addressed by the Town Council," she said.

Williams added that most residents "aren't even aware" of some of the issues at the high school, and hopes to improve communication with people in town who aren't necessarily involved with the schools.

When asked how she felt about the upcoming election, Williams said she was "excited" for the opportunity to run, and hopes that she gets the chance to "work with the superintendent [Dr. Judith Golden] to create a vision for

the next five to 10 years."

Another newcomer, but a name most residents will recognize, is Marshall, who spent over 35 years in the education field. "You name it, I've done it," said Marshall, who has been a teacher, special education coordinator and principal, among others. He said his reason for running is his four grandchildren, who he wants "to have a great school experience."

Marshall said he was never politically active until last year, when he became involved with the group Take Back Our Town (TBOT) during Police Chief Matthew Reimondo's removal. He said that the town's vote to reinstate Reimondo "convinced me that residents can make a difference." He said his experience in education and public service will contribute "something unique" if he is elected.

Marshall listed the high school accreditation as his biggest concern, as well, stating that "nothing concrete has been done to solve the problem." He also said he understands that creating a plan that the town can afford makes it a "tricky balance."

"We need to be able to afford the plan," Marshall said, "but we still need to give our students a 21st century education." He added that the education budget will always be a priority, and the board will need to find "creative ways to save money."

Russo made the choice to run for the school board after years of "being involved in education" with her own children. She has served for four years on the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and said that she has seen "so many things that could be changed or that I would like to be involved in."

As a parent, Russo said one of her biggest concerns was bullying, which has been a hot-button topic at every level of government. She believes the school district should install a strict "no-tolerance policy" that she believes would not only help for enforcement, but prevention.

"If they have a punishment looming over their head, they may be less likely to bully," Russo said. "As a parent, I know that most parents have bullying on their minds, whether it's their children or other children."

Russo also listed the high school as a priority for the board, but said she realizes that there are "money concerns" that loom over the project. She said that if a resident were to walk through the school, "they would understand" the condition it is in. "We need our kids to continue learning at an acceptable level," Russo added.

Lifelong East Hampton resident Minnick, a former member of the Town Council, said he decided to run for the board to maintain the "quality of programming and curriculum" for the children of the town.

Minnick, a father of two students, said he is familiar with school budgets, curriculum and union issues from working for 14 years as a middle school French teacher in Glastonbury. He added that his career and civic involvement

gives him a "balanced perspective" that would be an asset to the board in its discussions on important issues.

Minnick also mentioned the "stalled" high school renovation as one of his biggest priorities, a project he hopes to be a catalyst for. "[The project] will be inclusionary and fiscally responsible for our residents and educationally foresighted and useful for our students," Minnick said of his hopes for the renovation.

Barber, who could not be reached for comment, is a well-known member of the community, currently serving as the president of the Rotary Club and a member of the Anchor Lodge. He is a practicing local attorney at Barber & Staron in East Hampton, who also has two children in the school system.

Democratic Town Committee (DTC) Chairwoman Barbara Moore referred to Barber as being "very thrifty," which she believes is an attribute that would serve him well on the board during budget deliberations.

Lee could not be reached for comment, but Republican Town Committee (RTC) Chairman George Coshow said that Lee is "born and raised" in East Hampton, and has two young children that will be entering the school system in the coming years. Coshow noted that Lee's brother, Ted Hintz Jr., is running for Town Council as a Republican, as well.

Schlosser also could not be reached for comment, but a brief history of Schlosser's career was presented by the DTC. Schlosser has lived in East Hampton for over 50 years, and has two children. She has taught math in Colchester since 1999, is the past president of the East Hampton Village Lions Club and the financial secretary of the Congregational Church of East Hampton.

Moore described Schlosser as a "reasonable thinker" that does not "jump to make decisions without giving it a lot of thought."

Rounding out the slate of candidates is Whitty, who works with the University of Connecticut Foundation for the UConn School of Dental Medicine. She said that her work supporting education gives her a first-hand look at what successful students need to develop.

"Being effective at this work, I know I can participate in a fruitful way for our students, our schools and our town," Whitty said. She added that the students' "preparedness" will be critical for them and the town.

Whitty also noted the importance of math and science within the curriculum, particularly the issue of the science labs at the high school. She said that it's not only important to the school's accreditation, but for students to have the best education in those subjects to "compete for further education and for future jobs." She added that she is "fiscally conservative" toward spending.

A Republican, Jim Swindal, was originally listed as a candidate for the Board of Education, but is no longer on the ballot, was acting as a "placeholder," according to Coshow. The reason for Swindal being listed on the ballot was so the RTC could meet the state-mandated requirements for number of candidates.

Voting will take place Tuesday, Nov. 8, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.



Williams



Schlosser



Lee



Minnick



Russo



Coolican



Leon



Whitty



Barber



Wall



Marshall

Six Candidates for Five School Board Seats in Marlborough

by Bailey Seddon

There are five available seats on the Board of Education and six candidates running for the Board of Education this year: Louise Concodello, Ruth Kelly, Don Clarke, Corinne B. Chappelle, Betty O'Brien and Glen Peterson. The biggest topic that seemed to be on every candidate's mind was how to maintain and add good school programs while in difficult economic times.



Concodello

Betty O'Brien, 68, has lived in Marlborough for 35 years. Before she was on the Board of Education she had worked in the public school system for 25 years as a school psychologist. She is now retired but has been on the school board for the past eight years, and for the past two has been chairwoman.

Before joining the Board of Education O'Brien was on the Nature Trails and Sidewalks Commission, where she is still an alternate.

O'Brien said she felt her broad knowledge of the needs in the system make her a good candidate for the board.

"The background that I have makes me a viable candidate," said O'Brien. O'Brien went on to say that the Board of Education is very apolitical, something that she feels leads to it making good decisions. She counted among these moving from a full-time superintendent of schools to a part-time one.

This was "a very good decision," O'Brien said, due to the state of the economy. She continued that the economy is the hardest thing the town is facing and the board has a responsibility to spend money wisely. O'Brien said that while the board wants to do what is most economically feasible, she also wants to make sure students do not miss out on anything.

"Making sure that we continue to meet the needs of kids," is very important, said O'Brien.

O'Brien is hoping residents will come out and vote for the incumbent candidates.

"We have a very good board," she said.

Democrat Corinne Chappelle is one of those fellow incumbents, having served on the board since 2007. Chappelle, 42, had previously been an attorney for Executive Risk Insurance (which is now Chubb Specialty Insurance), but is now a stay-at-home mom; she has one child, and another is due in March.

Chappelle first decided to run for the board because her oldest son was getting close to enrolling in school and is hearing-impaired. She had a lot of ideas about what the school system should do to make sure her son was getting the best education he could, despite his hearing impairment. This is when a friend told her she should be on the Board of Education.

"I just had very strong feelings about education," and that's why she decided to run, said Chappelle. She said she has never regretted her decision.

"It's been a great experience" giving back to a town that "I truly love," said Chappelle. "It has been an honor to be entrusted with children's lives...and future."

Something Chappelle would like to see in the future is making sure class sizes stay small, this way students get more one-on-one with their teachers and the help they need.

"I would like to keep the class size down," she said. Chappelle said she would not get rid of something very important in order to keep class size small but will do her best to keep this goal.

"Kids are going to do better in a smaller class" overall, she said.

Louise Concodello, 60, is another incumbent. Concodello and her husband built their home in Marlborough 34 years ago and have two grown sons that still live in the area. She has been active in political activities in town since 1990, and has been on the Marlborough Board of Education for the past 16 years. Initially a Democrat, Concodello has been a Republican for the past eight of these years. She said she feels party affiliation is "secondary" to how a member is dedicated to the board and works with other members.

In addition to serving on the Board of Education, Concodello has been on the Parks and Recreation Commission for the past 15 years (and is currently its vice chair), a member of the Nature Trails and Sidewalk Commission for the past six years and is a five-year member of the Lake Advisory Commission.

Concodello was also a member of the Bicentennial Committee from 1999-2003, and was vice president of the Marlborough Youth Athletic League from 1990-1995.

In addition to all her town service, Concodello has been a licensed home daycare provider for 28 years, which she loves.

"I truly love my job," she said.

Concodello is running for her fifth term because she wants to share her "knowledge and experience" with other board members. She said she also wants to make sure that education in Marlborough is always exceptional.

"There are nine members on the Board of Education and each and every one's opinion is important to continue making our school the very best it can be," she said.

Concodello said she realizes how challenging the upcoming school year will be because of there is no more stimulus money coming in but says the board will do its best to handle this and make sure education does not suffer.

"The board, working with our superintendent, principal, vice principal and staff will meet the challenge by balancing our budget to meet the needs of our students with fiscal accountability to the taxpayers," she said.



Kelly

Fellow Republican Ruth Kelly, 69, is also seeking re-election to the school board. She has lived in town for 44 years, and is a retired second- and third-grade teacher. Of the 30 years she was a teacher, 25 were at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School. Kelly has been on the board for four years, the last two of which were as vice chairwoman. In the past year, Kelly has served on the budget committee and personnel committee. She had also previously served on the policy committee.

Kelly is running for the Board of Education again because she feels that the board has done a good job in the past four years. Like O'Brien, Kelly said she felt the board worked very well together, no matter which party each person was on.

"All the board members work collaboratively," she said. "I think that is what the townspeople want," for the board to be working together for the good of the town, not for a specific political party.

Kelly also has a personal interest in the running of the school system, as a former teacher and the mother of three adult children that went through the school system. She also has two grandchildren currently in school, and two younger grandchildren who will be in the future.

Kelly said she feels that the economy is the biggest issue facing the town right now. Due to reduced federal funding, she said, some things will have to be cut.

This is going to be one of the things "the board has to tackle," said Kelly. "It's not going to be an easy decision," she added, but said she feels that the board has done a very good job of running a good academic program.

Among the would-be newcomers to the board is Republican Bob Clarke, 53. A 16-year resident of Marlborough, Clarke has not served on any boards in town, but spent 18 years as an engineer for United Technologies in Cheshire, and said he feels his experience can be valuable.

Clarke said he would like to be on the board because he is concerned that kids are going to grow up in a business environment that is different than what other generations have grown into. He feels kids are not going to be prepared for the global economy and the economic issues the country faces because school systems in Connecticut have fallen behind in math and science.

"We are essentially doing nothing to catch up," said Clarke. "I think our kids are not being prepared." This is why Clarke said he has gone to 80 percent of the Board of Education meetings and spoken with members about looking at options outside Connecticut to help improve student math and science skills.



Clarke

While he realizes that this is something that could take many years, Clarke said if he were elected he would be committed to getting a curriculum that would work best for the school system. This would include setting goals, looking at curriculum and making a plan to move the curriculum in the right direction.

"Curriculum development is hard work," he said, nevertheless it is something he hopes to see change in the years to come. Clarke is also interested in being on the board because he has two daughters in the school system, one in fourth grade and one in sixth.

Also seeking a seat on the school board is Democrat Glenn Peterson, 51. Peterson, who has lived in town since 2003, has been an elementary school principal for the past 15 years, first in Massachusetts and currently for East Hartford-Glastonbury Elementary Magnet School in East Hartford. Before becoming a principal, he was a teacher at the elementary school level. Before working in education, Peterson was a managing partner at an insurance agency in the Seattle area.

Peterson said he has always been interested in politics. He said he was asked by members of the Democratic Town Committee to run for the Board of Education and thought it would be something he would like to do.

"I was honored and thought I have the skills and experience to make a productive contribution to the board," he said.

Peterson said the most pressing issues facing the board and the school are related to the budget because of the economy the town, and the rest of the country, faces.

"It's critically important for us to maintain the high quality of teaching and high student achievement in the most frugal way possible."

Peterson said he also feels that the upcoming changes to the state core standards are another issue that the board will have to work on. He said 44 states, including Connecticut, have signed on to these new standards, which are much more thorough. He also noted CMTs will be replaced by a new, national test in 2014.

"A major challenge will be to prepare our teachers and curriculum for the new standards so our students can maintain their high level of achievement," Peterson said.

Elections will be held Tuesday, Nov. 8, at the Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School, 25 School Dr., from 6 a.m.-8 p.m.



Chappelle



Peterson

School Drive Gets Expanded Sidewalks in Marlborough

by Bailey Seddon

Marlborough expanded its sidewalks on School Drive this week as part of a "last link" from the library to South Main Street, said First Selectman Bill Black.

The extension of the sidewalk was expected to be completed today, said Public Works supervisor Dean Hunniford. The sidewalk construction is a 1,400-foot extension and will go along School Drive then cross over to the library, connecting to the existing sidewalk on South Main Street. Because of the construction, School Drive was closed this week from 6 a.m.-5 p.m. Anyone needing to go down School Road was instead sent through the Route 66 entrance, said Hunniford.

Even though the project is estimated to be done by today there will likely be alternating traffic on School Drive by next week because of work still being done on an existing stone wall. The radius on the end of the stone wall had to be changed so it could fit with the existing sidewalks, said Hunniford.

"The project is going along well," he said.

The town was able to add this extension because of a \$150,000 Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant. Black said

the town received the STEAP grant at the end of August and the contract was awarded to Colonna Construction for work to be done mid-November. The work is ahead of schedule, said Black.

"The contractor has been moving right along," he said.

"It was part of an overall plan" so that sidewalks will reach the center of town in the village district, Black said. This way people can go from the library to the center of town, and vice versa, all on sidewalks. Black said this will give "walkability in the village district." Black said he is also hoping that in the future, sidewalks can be built to connect to Blish Park.

"That's been explored and looked at," Black said. Town Planner Peter Hughes said these are all connections the community wants. The town did a survey in 2005 asking the community's needs and desires for the planning process of the town. Those who took the survey said the number one thing they would be willing to pay for would be to fix the roads in town. The second aspect of the town residents would be willing to pay for would be the extension of the sidewalks and trails.

Black said residents expressed a desire for

walking and trails, and the board listened, Black said.

To help get the town its desired trails extension, Hughes said the town applied for a Greenway Grant. This grant is for \$96,000 to help the town finish the Blackledge greenway river trail. The project will cost \$120,000 of which the town will pay 20 percent, or \$24,000, with the grant covering the other 80 percent, said Hughes. The already 3,000-foot trail will be extended 7,000 feet, which will bring the trail down to the business park. Hughes said he will find out if the town was awarded the grant sometime in February.

"We dove on our tails to get that [grant] through," Black said.

Black said these extensions are consistent not only with what residents want but with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's 2007 Blackledge River Greenway project.

According to the DEEP website, "The Blackledge River is a major tributary to the Salmon River, which is in turn a Special Focus Area for fisheries. The Greenway contains significant community assets, including cultural, historical and natural resources that contribute

to the character of the community and the State."

Hughes said the next phase of the town's sidewalk extension will be down East Hampton Road from the 7-Eleven, down to the village green plaza. This extension will take place within the next month using \$250,000 in STEAP grant money the town was awarded.

Black said he is hoping another step will be to obtain a grant for another phase of the sidewalk project. This phase would connect the Marlborough Barn to the center of town (along the post office side) to Independence Drive where the strip mall is.

Another STEAP grant the town has applied for, said Hughes, is one for \$500,000 to extend sidewalks down North Main Street to Pettengill Road. Hughes said the town will find out if the grant was awarded the last Friday of the month. Governor Dannel P. Malloy will meet with the State Bond Commission, as he does every month, and decides who gets the grant, Hughes said. In the past, said Hughes, the board has asked for \$500,000 for this grant and was awarded \$250,000.

"You don't always get what you ask for, but you take what you get," said Hughes.

WPCA to Seek Grant Money for Marlborough Residents

by Bailey Seddon

The members of the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) have decided against forced connections, and are instead going to apply for a grant to get money for residents who need it to connect.

This past summer, 11 properties were sent letters about their failure to connect. At the time, Town Planner Peter Hughes said of those 11 properties, only one replied, and three of the letters were returned unopened. Hughes had said those three properties would be served notices to make sure those residents understood the seriousness of the situation. Hughes had also said the WPCA could get a court order to go onto the properties and connect them, saying that the regulations gave the WPCA the right to give notice to the properties and then connect them and put a lien on their homes.

But at a meeting last Thursday, Oct. 13, WPCA members revealed a new solution that might make the connection process easier for everyone. Instead of a forced connection, which some of the residents cannot afford, the WPCA is looking into a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, also known as the Small Cities Program. CDBG benefits people with moderate to low income in Connecticut towns with a population of less than 50,000 people. According to city-data.com, as of July 2009, Marlborough's population was 6,359.

WPCA Chairman Jack Murray said the town had gotten money from grants previously but

the money ran out before everyone got a portion of it. With the CDBG, residents who need it will have the money to connect. Murray said the WPCA is planning on writing a letter to the first selectman so the Board of Selectmen can vote on whether or not the town can apply for the grant program. Murray said the WPCA is planning on asking for \$25,000.

However, he said, the WPCA is going to wait until after the November elections since all three current members of the Board of Selectmen are not running for re-election, and there are no meetings left for the current board to vote on anything.

"It just would not seem prudent," Murray said. Once the new administration comes in, the WPCA will send the letter to the new first selectman, he said.

* * *

Another discussion of interest was related to sewer connections, but in a different way. Resident Dennis DeBonnee was at the meeting to talk about damage that was done to his property when the construction company F&J came in to connect his sewer in April of 2008.

According to Murray, in order to get DeBonnee's outflow from the septic system, blasting and excavation had to be done in his front, side and backyard. DeBonnee said F&J also dug a trench eight feet deep and eight feet wide and removed part of a stone wall and a walkway. All this construction left 10 huge boulders that had previously been deep under-

ground, in his yard. DeBonnee told the company they could leave the boulders if they spread them around, but the company just left them in a pile in his yard.

"That's just not to my liking," DeBonnee said.

After all this work was done DeBonnee said F & J did not restore his property to how it had originally looked. He said his yard is three levels, each divided by a stonewall, two of which no longer exist thanks to the company.

"They have never been replaced," DeBonnee said. "I had a lawn before," and now he does not, he said.

DeBonnee also said the walkway around the side to the back of his house was destroyed. F&J came in and tried to patch it up but did a "horrendous job," said DeBonnee. The walkway is already breaking up and cracking, he said.

Hughes said F&J told him that they went out to look at DeBonnee's property and there was nothing more they were going to do, as they deemed that the property looked as it had before. DeBonnee said he has talked to other construction companies and they estimated that it would cost \$23,000-\$31,000 to get his property back to what it used to look like. The board asked DeBonnee if he had pictures of what his property looked like before to which he replied no, but said that F & J came out before the work was done and took at least 100 pictures.

"He [the photographer] was pretty extensive on that," said DeBonnee. "They might not admit it" but the company has their own pictures, he

said.

DeBonnee said the town also had drawings of what his property used to look like, which the board said they would try to find. DeBonnee said he has been dealing with this problem for four years, two of which he has been discussing with Hughes and the board.

"As I told Jack, I shouldn't have to but I am willing to put some of my own money into this," DeBonnee said at the meeting.

"Everybody is between a rock and a hard place," said Murray. If pictures can be found then the board has a good chance of getting F&J to fix the property, but if not it will be hard for the board to get the company to do any more work, said Murray.

"It puts everybody in a very difficult position," he said. Murray was quick to say that DeBonnee has been very patient with the whole process.

DeBonnee said he has not gotten a response from the WPCA on what will be done, they have so far told him to get pictures of what his property looked like before. DeBonnee said he has tried to call F&J for the pictures they took but they will not call him back.

"They don't answer my calls," he said. DeBonnee said Hughes has also tried to call and the company will not call him back either.

"I'll work with you as much as I can," DeBonnee told the board. "I'm just trying to get the work done."

Everybody Wins in Colchester School Board Race

by Bailey Seddon

There are four vacancies on the Board of Education this year – which is convenient, as there are only four running. The four candidates, all incumbents, are Mary Tomasi, Mike Egan, Brad Bernier and John Reever, and they all said this week they'd like to continue providing the best education possible while being fiscally responsible.



Tomasi

Mike Egan is a Democrat who has lived in Colchester since 1994 and has been on the Board of Education for almost five of those years. When Egan first interviewed to be on the board, he said he was surprised to find that it was one of the toughest interviews he ever had; he said this showed how thorough and dedicated the board was.

Egan said the board was full of people who "put the kids in this town and the school system in this town in front of party involvements," he said. Egan went on to say how well the board works, calling Ron Goldstein a great board chair and that Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle was "one of the finest superintendents I have ever met."

In addition to his time on the board, Egan also has work experience. The 48-year-old is a structural engineer who has worked for the company AECOM for the past 11 years out of Rocky Hill. Before working for AECOM, Egan had worked for the state Department of Transportation for 14 years. As someone who has worked in the public and private sectors, between both these jobs, Egan feels he has a good view of both sides.

"I'm not just strictly coming from one side versus another," he said. Before serving on the Board of Education Egan was on the Jack Jackter Intermediate School building commit-

tee from 1999-2007, and was even elected chairman of the committee in 2000. Egan had good interaction with administration at the school during the building process and came to realize that being on the board would be another great way to serve his town.

Egan said he wanted "to make a difference," to do what he could to make Colchester a better community.

Besides his committee experience, Egan also has an interest in being on the board because of his three sons who are in seventh, ninth and eleventh grade. Egan said he would also like to remain on the board to serve his town. This would include staying on to see the renovation of William J. Johnston Middle School to include a senior and youth center.

"That is the very definition of what we are professionally doing as a town," he said. Egan felt that this kind of integration makes it easier for some of the programs in the town to be utilized.

John Reever has only been on the Board of Education for three months but the 46-year-old has lived in Colchester since 1995. Besides currently serving on the board, Reever has been an executive recruiter with RJS Associates for almost 21 years. Reever said he wanted to join the board back in July to learn and see if it was something he would enjoy doing. Since then, he said he has been nothing but satisfied with being a member.

"I've been fascinated," Reever said.

Reever said being a member of the board is a challenge, but one he is up for. The board is "required to do more with less," said Reever, thanks to a bad economy, something he feels they have done a good job at. He said it is a



Egan

priority of the board to continue to provide high standards and resources. However, no matter how well a school is doing, there is always room to improve, Reever said.

One of these areas of improvement, Reever said, could be in the Connecticut Mastery Tests (CMT), and specifically some of the areas the school system did not score as well on as in the past. These areas, he said, would include lower scores in math and reading. Reever went on to say that the overall CMT scores were good, but he would like to see them be even better.

Another area that the board needs to be conscience of is the budget, he said.

"I'm sure there will be lively discussion on a lot of items in the budget," Reever said. He went on to say that he wants to be on the board so it can put forth a realistic budget with the best recommendations possible. Reever is confident of this happening as he feels the board runs well. "I think we are lucky to have a lot of these folks" on the board, said Reever. "I'm excited about trying this for another two years."

Bernier has lived in Colchester since 1992. He is a 44-year-old fireman in East Hartford and owner of Bernier Construction in Colchester. Bernier joined the board as an unaffiliated voter in July 2010 to fill a vacancy. Now a Republican, Bernier said he wants to stay on the board to continue the great work members do.

"I've had a great time" and the board has done a lot of good work, Bernier said, "to continue to provide an excellent education while being fiscally responsible."

Bernier said the board has faced a lot of fiscal challenges and still have a lot they need to



Bernier

accomplish for the schools. He said funds are always tight, as is the case in every town, but members do the best that they can with the funds they have. With two daughters, one 15 and one 10, who are both in the school system, Bernier said he would like to stay on the board to make sure the money keeps being spent wisely for the schools and town.

Bernier said the board tries to "get the best use out of our tax dollars." He said the money the board does spend gets spent as best as possible. One example of this would be when the board changed the computer servers in the schools, which saved a lot in energy costs. There had previously been 20 servers, but that got reduced to three with the new servers, which could multi-task, saving the schools money.

Bernier also said the school saved money in air conditioning costs, because the previous 20 servers had needed to be in an air conditioned room and had emitted a good amount of heat when they worked. Since there are now only three, the new systems need a lot less air conditioning.

It is decisions like this that make Bernier want to stay on the board to help "accomplish all the goals that they [the board] deem priorities," while still trying to be fiscally responsible.

Mary Tomasi, who is currently the secretary on the board, could not be reached for comment on this story.

Elections are Tuesday, Nov. 8, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Colchester has three voting districts; depending on where they live, residents can cast ballots at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.; Bacon Academy, 611 Norwich Ave.; or the Assembly of God Church, 85 Skinner Rd.



Reever

Anti-Bullying Discussed at Colchester BOE Meeting

by Bailey Seddon

An anti-bullying presentation was the main theme of the Tuesday, Oct. 11, Board of Education meeting.

The Anti-Bullying Task Force was created last November after a string of suicides committed by students around the country, caused by bullying, led community members to provide preventative steps toward ending bullying in their school system. The task force consisted of students, teachers, community members and administrators. In March of this year, the task force – now the Anti-Bullying Initiative Committee – sent out a survey, which 1,998 people completed, 1,144 of which were students. The purpose of the survey was to find out exactly how often and what kinds of bullying kids were facing.

At the Oct. 11 meeting, Diane Hettrick, chairperson of the community-based Anti-Bullying Initiative Committee, presented statistics to the board from a survey they had taken from Colchester students. Bacon Academy student and committee member Luke Lamarre was there to help give student insight to the presentation.

“Luke was a huge part of the committee to get that student perspective,” said Bacon Academy Principal Jeffrey Mathieu. Lamarre started by saying that what teachers witness of bullying and what students witness are very different.

“Students are actually one-on-one seeing it,” whereas the teachers are hearing it, said Lamarre. Lamarre also talked about what parents think of bullying in the school system. In the survey, this question was asked: “has your child ever been a target of bullying?” Forty-one percent of parents reported their children had been bullied, 51.4 percent said that their

child had never been bullied and 7.7 percent said they did not know.

Parents and students differed in the survey when it came to bullying that takes place in after-school activities. Students reported being bullied much more at after-school events than in school, while most parents did not think their kids would be bullied in such places as sporting events and dances.

Lamarre also talked about the new school initiative, “Spread the word to end the word.” This is a concept that the school system thought of to try to stop such words as the “R” word – retarded. Lamarre said members of the committee are trying to get the school climate to change.

Bacon Academy Assistant Principal Linda Iacobellis agreed. “What our focus is, is enhancing the school climate,” she said.

The board also discussed how kids are bullied online and that many parents may not be aware of it. Board members also said that many children might be too scared to say anything for fear that their computers or phones may be taken away.

“The parents don’t know that side of things,” said board member John Reeve. Reeve said he felt that parents could monitor their children’s Facebook accounts more, possibly by becoming “Facebook friends” and then checking up on what they are doing. Reeve said that some parents would be astonished by what they might see on their child’s account.

Hettrick next talked about what age group tends to have the highest instances of bullying.

“From the chart you can see that bullying peaks in middle school,” Hettrick said. Before middle school it was shown that there was relatively low bullying, and in high school bullying tapers off a little. It was thought, by the

board and Hettrick, that the increase of bullying in middle school may be due to the fact that it is the time in their lives when puberty sets in and kids start to care more about what their peers think of them.

While the first half of the presentation was statistics from parents and children, the second half was statistics from teachers. This data showed that most of the bullying in school, from the teachers point of view, was taking place in hallways most, cafeterias second and classrooms lastly. It was believed that the hallways and cafeterias, more so than the classrooms, were a good place for bullying because there was less teacher supervision than a classroom.

“Those are unstructured areas where kids have a lot of social interactions,” said Iacobellis. She also stated that while teachers noted bullying most in the hallways, students noticed bullying even more on the bus than in the hallways.

“It’s the ride home from school,” not field trips and athletic events where kids get bullied, said Iacobellis. She also said students reported what type of bullying they witnessed going on in their schools. First was verbal at 80.4 percent, social at 51.3 percent, physical at 37 percent and cyber at 34.3 percent

William J. Johnston Middle School Principal Christopher Bennett stood up next to discuss the positive effect of peer mediation at his school. Students who decide they want to be a peer mediator are trained to help their fellow students. This way, said Bennett, a dispute can be worked out before it gets to the point of having to be brought to administrators, making the process easier for the kids involved. Bennett also said the school has a “hallway” where students can come and submit anonymous forms

to report incidents of bullying; this way they are not as scared or embarrassed. There have also been whole school assemblies dedicated to anti-bullying, said Bennett.

This brought up the subject of “by-standard” training. Hettrick talked about the students who witness bullying but do not report it. Hettrick is hoping these people can become “up-standards” and will speak out against the bullying. This is a big issue in the school system as the survey showed that 33 percent of students said they did not report bullying, even though 84.3 percent of students said they knew how to report it.

Chairman of the Board, Ron Goldstein, brought up the possibility of bringing in someone who graduated from the Colchester school system that could come back and talk with students about their experience of bullying.

“Are there programs or individuals that have left the district that have a personal story?” Goldstein asked. Members of the board were not sure but felt that this was something they would like to look into. Goldstein said that this might take down some of the issue of bullying being a “hidden problem” because people often do not want to report it or talk about it.

Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle discussed a “community conversation” that will be open to the public. The conversation is set to take place on March 1, from 6:30-8 p.m., and members of the Anti-Bullying Committee will be discussing many of the issues brought up at the Oct. 11 meeting.

* * *

The next Board of Education meeting will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 15, at 7 p.m. in the chorus room at Bacon Academy.

Schuster, McNair Square Off in Colchester Debate

by Bailey Seddon

First Selectman Gregg Schuster faced off against challenger James McNair III in a debate Monday night.

Norwich Bulletin editor Ray Hackett was debate moderator, with each candidate having 90 seconds to answer a question and 30 seconds for a rebuttal, and two minutes for opening and closing statements.

For his opening statement, candidate James McNair started by thanking the audience and the 60-plus people who he said signed the petition getting him on to the ballot.

“It’s time to stop 9 percent tax increases over the years,” McNair said. He also called for an end to “four-minute town meetings,” a reference to an April town meeting in which residents voted to send a \$50.501 million budget to referendum.

Schuster also thanked the audience, before diving into the issues.

“It’s been a tough two years” but Colchester has not been different than any other town, said Schuster. He went on to say that there were hard choices in Town Hall, saying the town hall is “a very complex operation.”

The first question asked by Hackett was about the part-time economic development coordinator the town hired, and how her hiring did not seem to pan out how Schuster originally said it would.

Schuster replied that it took a while to get through the budget and the position was not even approved until the last budget. Another delay, said Schuster, is that the position pays \$20,000 and not a lot of people were willing to take the job for so little. Nevertheless, the woman that was hired, Candace Barnes, has made a huge impact on the town, said Schuster. “She has had great success,” he said.

McNair said that while he felt Barnes has done a good job, she did not meet the educational and job experience requirements that the position had sought.

“I think that, that position does not have the right person there,” McNair said.

Schuster replied that no one with those requirements could be found who would accept the salary Colchester was offering, so they hired the best person they could. He said he was also struggling with what McNair said because McNair said Barnes should be replaced, but also said he thought she was doing a good job.

Hackett next asked why each candidate was running and specifically asked why McNair was not running as a Democrat, as he is a Democrat, and the party’s endorsed candidate, John Bogush, withdrew from the election in September.

McNair answered that 60 people in town felt

he represented a voice of the people in town that were unaffiliated, and he felt that it was right of him to run for them.

Schuster responded that he was running not just because of 60 people but “because I have a passion and vision of what Colchester should be.” He also said he wants to finish things that he started in his term.

Bacon Academy student Audrey Morgan also got to ask a question of the candidates. She asked what each of the men would do to help get people back to Colchester once they have graduated from college.

Schuster replied that the town has to expand infrastructure to create jobs. This means getting more companies and businesses to give citizens these job opportunities.

McNair said he would do his best to keep taxes down and to bring in employment opportunities so that the younger generation will stay in town.

The next question asked was about staffing in the police department, and whether the candidates thought it was enough.

McNair said he felt there might be opportunities for better patrolling, saying he “would like to see more cruisers out in different areas.”

Schuster said in order to have more patrolling, more officers would have to be hired, which would cost the town money.

“We are limited as a community,” he said.

Hackett next asked if the men felt there was a drug problem in town and what steps could be taken to try to reduce it.

Schuster said he would like to work with the Board of Education and police to help lower the problem.

“We are going to have to do this collaboratively,” said Schuster.

McNair replied that the problem with drugs starts in the home. It is up to the parents, he said, to pay attention and realize that their kids could be doing drugs, not assume it is not your child. He said this meant talking with your kids and being involved in their lives.

Hackett next said that it is critical for a community to keep investing in itself. He asked how each man would try to accomplish this without raising taxes.

“I will put a 4 percent cap on Town Hall spending” when times get tough, McNair said. He said a first selectman has to be “aggressive.” He also questioned the recent hiring of a human resource consultant, saying that no other first selectman has needed this and that it will cost the town money.

Schuster said it is very important to invest in the community; that a first selectman has to say no to certain things and yes to certain things.



On Monday, First Selectman Gregg Schuster and challenger James McNair III participated in a debate at Bacon Academy. McNair is running as a petitioning candidate, attempting to unseat Schuster, who has held the position for one term.

Schuster said that legal spending has actually been “way down” over the years and that most money spent in town is spent on people and the town needs an HR consultant to make sure there is level of quality in town employees.

The next question posed was how each man sees Colchester in two years.

“I would hope that after my two years, voter participation would look much higher,” McNair said. McNair said he would also hope to see labor costs under control, as they account for 66 percent of the budget. He would also like to see long-term moderation on taxes and more development of businesses.

Schuster said he would like to see the renovations at William J. Johnston Middle School finished as this is a major project. Schuster said it is important for this to be finished so the senior and youth centers can be combined, saving the town money when the sites of the old centers are closed. Schuster said he would also hope to see more volunteers at the fire department to have an even better level of service.

“I think what they do over there is unbelievable,” said Schuster.

The last question Hackett posed was based on their experiences, what is one skill that each man possesses that sets them apart.

Schuster said he felt he had made great strides in the police commission and felt that in order to make strides, a first selectman had to realize that things take time.

“This is not a business, it is a government,”

Schuster said, giving McNair a jab after the other candidate had mentioned being a businessman several times throughout the meeting.

McNair responded that in his 56 years he has learned a lot.

“Leadership means being the first one in and first one out,” he said. He said a first selectman has to reach out and fight for Colchester. He said he felt that the current board had too many motions that are unanimously approved.

Schuster responded, saying that McNair used a lot of “catchy phrases,” but that he does a lot around town every day working with the people of the town.

Lastly it was time for each candidate to give his closing statements.

Schuster said that he agrees with some of what McNair said but felt that McNair did not have any specific proposals, just a lot of numbers and words to back him up, but did not actually say what he wants to do in Colchester, said Schuster. Schuster said he had specific plans “to put forth a vision,” and is why he wants to continue to be first selectman.

McNair said he does not have all the answers but he made a good living as a consultant and feels he has the skills to be a good first selectman. He said he will make sure the community gets all the information because voters’ coming out to the poles is very important for the town.

“I’m out there talking door-to-door and people are listening,” McNair said.

Andover Selectmen Send Back Proposed Charter Changes

by Geeta Schrayter

After much discussion at a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Charter Review Commission (CRC) on Oct. 19, the Board of Selectmen voted to send Andover's Town Charter back to the CRC for revision.

The commission, which was formed by the selectmen, has been revising the Charter for the past 16 months. It has been a subject of controversy since it was forwarded to the board on Aug. 30. Various members of the CRC stated that although the charter they submitted had been approved by the commission, it wasn't the copy they had worked on, nor was it the copy they had wanted to see forwarded.

CRC member Catherine Magaldi-Lewis stated that she was very frustrated.

"We put [the charter] together," she said, "then an hour before we were going to present it at a public meeting [town attorney Dennis O'Brien] faxed a copy of his own."

Magaldi-Lewis said a copy of the charter had been sent to him at the end of July and the beginning of August to review for legalities.

"He wrote me back, saying, 'well, it was easier for me to look at the original one and

update it,'" she said, adding "but that's not what we asked him to do."

Along with revising sections within the charter, the commission had "updated" it by rewriting it in simplified terms. In the version the attorney faxed over, the language was reverted to that of the original charter.

Magaldi-Lewis provided the *Rivereast* with several e-mails between her and O'Brien. In them, O'Brien wrote, "I originally intended to incorporate my suggestions into the draft written by the Charter Revision Commission (CRC), but after I started trying to do that I determined that for me to work with the current language of the charter would be much better and easier for me."

To this, Magaldi-Lewis asked, "How is this acceptable, that he do what he want because it's easier for him?"

O'Brien declined to comment for this story, but First Selectman Bob Burbank stated O'Brien worked with the original charter instead of the one written by the CRC because they sent it to him as a PDF file.

"I think he did a very good job in modifying

the charter with the recommendations that were brought forth by the Charter Commission," Burbank said. "After they reviewed his, they agreed, otherwise they wouldn't have moved forward."

Selectwoman Elaine Buchardt stated that although the charter was in fact approved and sent to the board by the CRC, there was "too much talk in the background," about what had happened to move forward.

Even though certain members of the CRC were frustrated with the alteration of the wording, Buchardt said it's the facts that concern the Board of Selectmen.

"We just want to make sure, once again, that the revisions [the CRC] meant to make are in there."

A public hearing was held on Oct. 6 to receive input on the charter followed by discussion and action by the Board of Selectmen. It was here, after listening to the concerns of CRC members and Andover residents that the selectmen moved to hold a special meeting on Oct. 19. Prior to that, they were to examine the minutes from past CRC meetings to determine what

had happened.

After various discussion between board members at Wednesday's meeting, and discovering there were a few recommendations from the CRC that did not make it into O'Brien's copy, a motion was made to send the charter back to the CRC for changes.

"This is a very important document that needs special attention" said selectwoman Julie A. Haverl.

Now that the charter has been sent back to the CRC, the commission has 30 days to incorporate the recommendations made by the Board of Selectmen and send it back.

CRC member Carol Lee said she was pleased with the outcome. "I think it was a good decision so now the CRC can go over the recommendations that the Board of Selectmen are sending to us and make these corrections," she said.

After the CRC re-submits the proposed charter changes, they will be reviewed once more by the selectmen and, if approved, sent to the public, where they will be voted on in a special election.

Andover School Officials Express AYP Frustrations

by Geeta Schrayter

At the Board of Education meeting on Oct 12, Andover Elementary School's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) was discussed.

Students in grades three to six scored high enough on the Connecticut Mastery Tests for the school to achieve AYP as determined by No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

As a whole, 96.4 percent of the school scored at or above "proficient" in Mathematics. The requirement is 91 percent. In reading, the school attained 90.5 percent with a requirement of 89 percent.

But as the state's requirement increases, it will become continually harder for Andover – and schools throughout the nation – to meet the standards set by NCLB.

"We all agree we're on the road to where we want to be," Board of Education Chairman Jay Lindy said this week. "But the road's getting

tougher."

In the 2011 annual Adequate Yearly Progress reports released by the state Department of Education, it was stated that more schools and districts – about 57 percent – are failing to meet those standards. However, it was added that the difference is "due in part to the increase in the federal requirement for NCLB for 2011."

When the NCLB Act was passed in 2001, schools started to be measured by AYP based on students' performance on state assessments like the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT). A main goal set forth by NCLB is to have all of the students in the country test "proficient" or higher by 2014.

To ensure this happens, the minimum requirement to achieve AYP is continually increased, until it reaches 100 percent in three years. Since

last year, the math requirement increased 11 percent and reading increased 10 percent.

David Griffin, principal at Andover Elementary, considers the goal a tremendous one.

"I think while we want to say that's where we should be – it's a little extreme," he said this week. Griffin added that Andover's students and teachers are doing their best, and as the requirement continues to increase, so will the effort they put in.

"I think that we just work a little bit harder," he said, adding that the bar is always up. "I have faith that we're going to keep on marching through."

Superintendent of Schools Andrew Manegia stated that while there's no concern at present because the school did well on its performance, and has always met with AYP in the past, there is worry for the future.

"Our concern is [meeting] the expectation in 2014, that 100 percent score proficient or higher."

But in order to help ensure the school does – or comes as close as possible – Manegia said they'll continue to work with students on their scores. After the CMTs, the scores are examined and areas that need improvement are determined. Focus is then given to those parts to ensure students "get up to speed in those particular areas."

"Hopefully they'll learn those skills and then next time those questions are asked, they'll be able to respond," Manegia said.

In the end, Lindy stated it's vital that the town remains "on top of things" educationally to make certain Andover continues to meet NCLB requirements.

One Accident Leads to Another in Colchester

by Bailey Seddon

There were two accidents within a half hour of each other on Route 2 last Friday, Oct. 14, said Deputy Chief Don Lee of the Colchester Hayward Fire Department.

The first crash occurred at 11:06 a.m., at the merge of routes 2 and 11 in Colchester. On the rainy Friday morning, the taxi driver lost control of the vehicle and crashed. Due to the accident, the vehicle suffered a gas leak, which had to be cleaned up, and the passenger was transported to Marlborough Medical Center for neck and back pain.

The second accident occurred at 11:35 a.m.

The previous accident had caused lane closures on the median of both highways and a tractor-trailer came upon the scene, Lee said. Lee said the driver was traveling too fast and not paying attention. He said the driver had to negotiate at the last minute and went through the guard rails, causing his truck to leak diesel fuel, which too had to be cleaned up.

"People need to slow down," said Lee. "They don't pay attention." Lee went on to say that if people drove more cautiously through accident and work areas, these kinds of situations could be avoided.

Marlborough Police News

10/14: Malcolm O. Privott, 22, of 5 Whitman Pl., Cromwell, was charged with speeding, DUI and third-degree assault, State Police said.

10/15: Ryan S. Turko, 28, of 6 Juniper Dr., Coventry, was charged with DUI and improper parking, State Police said.

Man Hit Crossing Street in Colchester

A man was taken to Hartford Hospital after being hit while crossing the street Thursday, Oct. 13, State Police said.

Raymond Chylinski, 59, was taken to the hospital with "incapacitating" injuries, police said. He was hit while walking north across Main St. Chylinski was hit by a 2000 E320 Mercedes owned by Jerome J. Bednar, 64, of 13 Village Ct., who was traveling west on Main Street.

Police are investigating the accident.

A hospital spokeswoman said Wednesday that Chylinski was in critical condition.

East Hampton Police News

10/9: Pamela Cole, 38, of 36 Skinner St., was arrested for disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, East Hampton Police said.

Colchester Police News

10/15: Rebecca H. Buder, 30, of 41 Sycamore St., Windsor was charged with speeding over 70 miles per hour and violation of a protective order, State Police said.

10/15: Matheau Willette, 21, of 25 Victoria Dr., was charged with third-degree assault, disorderly conduct and strangulation, State Police said.

10/15: Joshua Towne, 19, and Nicole Klusek, 20, both of 67 Park Ave., were each charged with third-degree assault and breach of peace, State Police said.

10/16: Peter Psanis, 47, of 196 Dara Dr., was charged with speeding and DUI, State Police said.

10/17: Peter Kevorkian Jr., 26, of 44 Brainard Rd., was charged with third-degree larceny, State Police said.

Hebron Police News

10/11: Police are investigating a residential burglary on Forest View Lane. Several items were stolen from the home between the morning of Friday, Oct. 7, and the afternoon of Tuesday, Oct. 11. Anyone with information is asked to call Resident State Trooper Daniel Greenwood at 860-537-7555 ext. 4022.

10/13: Taylor L. Frink, 18, of 4 Esther Ln. was charged with failure to drive right and DUI, State Police said.

10/15: Police are investigating several items that were reporting missing from an unsecured garage on Prentice Hill Rd.

10/17: Police are investigating a residential break-in on West Main Street, between 4:20 p.m. and 5:20 p.m. Anyone with information is asked to contact Resident State Trooper Daniel Greenwood at 860-537-7555 ext. 4022.

Obituaries

Marlborough

Patricia Lynn Thibodeau

Patricia Lynn (Labelle) Thibodeau, 54, passed away peacefully Tuesday, Oct. 18, at Hartford Hospital, after a long courageous battle with breast cancer. Her final days were spent surrounded by family and friends. She was born Dec. 13, 1956, in Hartford to Arthur and MaryJane Labelle.

Patty's life would seem too short to many but those who were touched by her understood that the quality of existence far exceeds the quantity of time in which one lives. Patty lived for the last 28 years as a resident of Marlborough. She worked as an insurance auditor for Diversified Group Brokerage Corp. She spent much of her time and energy caring for her family. Pat enjoyed spending time with her friends, gardening, reading and most of all spoiling her grandchildren.

Patricia is survived by her husband of 35 years, Keith Thibodeau of Marlborough; two daughters, Mandie Thibodeau of Andover and Nicole Farrelly of Marlborough; a son-in-law, Ryan Farrelly; and four grandchildren, Austin, Andrew, Lilyana and Tyler.

Calling hours will be held at Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, today, Oct. 21, between the hours of 5-8 p.m. A memorial service will be held in Pat's honor at Marlborough Congregational Church, 35 South Main St., Marlborough, Saturday, Oct. 22, at 11 a.m.

For online condolences, visit mulryanfh.com.

Colchester

Monica Everett

Monica Zawisza Everett, 82, wife of the late William N. Everett Jr. of Colchester, passed away Saturday, Oct. 15, at Middlesex Hospital. She was born Dec. 4, 1928, in Middletown, daughter of John and Mary Resnick Zawisza.

Monica was a seamstress and her last employment was with the former John Myers clothing in Norwich. She was very active with affairs at St. Joseph Club of Colchester.

Surviving are two sons, William N. Everett III and Joseph and his wife Robin Everett; two daughters, Lisa Everett and Fay and her husband Rick Terrio Jr.; two sisters, Stella Ploszaj and Wanda Mrowka; six grandchildren, Tanya Voisine, Tina Georgens, Barry Spence, Erik Terrio and Scott Terrio and eight great grandchildren, numerous nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her five brothers, Frank, Walter, August, Raymond and Chester Zawisza, and two sisters Genieve Drenga and Tillie Zeleznicky.

The funeral service was held Thursday, Oct. 20, from the Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Andrew Catholic Church on Norwich Avenue, Colchester. Burial followed in St. Joseph Cemetery. Visitation was held Wednesday, Oct. 19, at the funeral home.

Colchester

Phyllis Duncan

Phyllis (Bond) Duncan, 79, formerly of North Reading, MA, passed away peacefully after a long illness Friday, Oct. 7. Born in Woodbury, NJ, on Nov. 12, 1931, she was a daughter of the late George R. and Edna (Summerill) Bond.

She married Walter Duncan on Nov. 24, 1956. Phyllis worked as a bacteriologist in the medical field throughout her career.

Friends attended calling hours Tuesday, Oct. 11, at Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A memorial service followed in the funeral home chapel. Burial will be held privately in Springfield Cemetery, MA.

Donations in her memory may be made to benefit research for Lou Gehrig's Disease at alsa.org.