

RIVEREAST

## News Bulletin

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam and Portland

Volume 40, Number 14

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

July 31, 2015



Kelly Whitesell as Dolly Levi distracts James Hayden, as Horace Vandergelder, during last weekend's performance of *Hello, Dolly!* by AHM Summer Youth Theater. Behind them, Emily Everlith as Minnie Fay, and Ciara Kichey as Irene Malloy talk about the two men – Vandergelder's clerks – hiding from him in the hat shop.

## 'Hello, Dolly!' Proves A Grand Old Time

by Geeta Schrayter

Last weekend I spent not one but two evenings at RHAM High School enjoying this year's performance by AHM Summer Youth Theater: *Hello, Dolly!*

Ever since I learned they'd be bringing Dolly Levi to the stage I've been excited about the show. When I was younger, my family would make a trip to the local library rather regularly to rent movie versions of musicals on VHS tapes. They were usually viewed more than once during the rental period, and my sister and I loved singing along to classics such as *The Sound of Music*, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *The Pirates of Penzance* and of course, *Hello, Dolly!* – specifically the version with Barbra Streisand.

On Thursday, I arrived at the school with my husband and one of my brothers. My mother had planned to join us as well, but a last-minute obligation prevented her from coming. But not long after the play got underway, I decided I'd come back with her the following evening. The show was so good – I knew I wouldn't mind seeing it a second time.

And I didn't.

During both performances the show was captivating from the very beginning, when the orchestra struck a tune, the curtain parted, and the ensemble sang "Call on Dolly."

Dolly, played by Kelly Whitesell, made her first appearance shortly after, and Whitesell proved perfect for the role. In fact, the same

could be said about the entire cast.

But then again, I knew that would be the case. When I stopped into one of the rehearsals a couple of weeks ago, I was amazed at how the cast managed to captivate with just their acting and singing. They didn't have any costumes on, and the stage was without a set, but I still found myself immersed in the scenes they rehearsed. Obviously when I sat down for the actual play all the details were there, and the talent of the cast combined with beautiful costumes, a great set, the band and all the efforts of the production staff created a performance worthy, in my opinion, of stages beyond a high school auditorium.

Both performances were full of laughter-filled scenes, great dancing and adeptly-sung songs such as "Put on Your Sunday Clothes," "Elegance," and the title song, "Hello, Dolly!"

The play centers around Dolly's efforts to marry Horace Vandergelder, "the well-known half-a-millionaire" played by James Hayden. Along the way, Dolly succeeds in matching up a number of other couples, including Vandergelder's niece Ermengarde, played by AriaRay Brown; and his two store clerks, Cornelius Hackl, played by Andrew Hawes, and Barnaby Tucker, played by Jonathan Farrington.

Along with enjoying the show and the varying degrees of talent – some more matured, some just being honed – I also loved looking at

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## Belltown School Board Passes Reductions Package

by John Tyczkowski

Tuesday evening, the East Hampton Board of Education picked up the pieces from a \$446,000 reduction to its proposed 2015-16 fiscal year increase.

The \$28.78 million budget – which became official when the town budget was approved by voters last week – is still an increase of \$510,000 over the 2014-15 fiscal year spending package.

At the time of the first budget referendum in May, the school board's proposed budget stood at \$29.22 million. But town officials chipped away at that amount during this year's budget season following the three failed budget referendums. The Board of Education had opted to put off deciding where exactly the cuts would come from until after the budget was approved by voters.

Meeting the required reduction came first from savings in areas such as health insurance, bus fuel and an additional retirement and an additional resignation at the elementary level.

It also came from several cuts, including reductions in professional development, cuts to supplies such as copier toner, and reductions to part-time paraprofessional hours.

A notable cut to meet the amount of required reductions was from special education tuition, board member Scott Minnick said.

"There's a little bit of a risk involved. If we

have students that enter the district that require special education, we don't have much of anything to pay for that," Minnick said. "But [the reduction] did get us to the point where we didn't have to cut any teachers."

For reference, one special education student could cost the district up to \$165,000 to provide services under state law, Minnick said. He said the board could ask the Town Council for access to special education funds if need be, which board member Joanne Barmasse clarified was the board's own fund, accessed through a request to the council.

With these cuts, the district was able to retain three teachers – one each at Memorial School, Center School and the high school – who were originally slated for non-renewal of contracts due to cost considerations.

"Our focus here was trying not to cut staff members that have direct interaction with kids," interim Superintendent of Schools Mark Winzler said. "Especially teachers."

The board's finance committee, school business manager Karen Asetta and the Central Services administrative team were all involved in creating the final set of changes recommended to the board.

"It really was a group effort," board member and finance committee chair Chris Goff said. "And it allows us to keep what we have in terms

of teachers and services we offer to students."

Board member Tania Sones, however, said she wasn't happy to see the board was "merely sustaining" what the district already had in place, and wasn't in favor of reductions to paraprofessional hours.

"We're not being proactive. But I hope this encourages parents to go out and vote for the budget, for education, next year, because these cuts being made wasn't easy," she said. "But we're going to do the best we can."

The board passed its reductions package unanimously, which Board of Education Chairman Ken Barber said he was "very pleased" to see.

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While the budget reductions have been determined, there is still plenty of uncertainty for the Board of Education, following the departures of schools superintendent Diane Dugas and assistant superintendent Tim Van Tasel, and several retirements, including veteran principals Donna Turchi of Center School and Nancy Briere of the middle school.

The board last month decided to eliminate the assistant superintendent position altogether, following Van Tasel's departure. But the process of replacing Dugas continues – and took a step forward Tuesday, as the board finalized the search process for a permanent superintendent

of schools, selecting the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, to which the board belongs, as its search firm.

The search fee, \$12,500, will be paid for by savings the district will have from not hiring another assistant superintendent, Minnick said.

Savings from not having a superintendent of schools at this time – Mark Winzler is currently acting as the interim superintendent – will go either toward a new superintendent, or another interim position if necessary, Minnick said.

Under a state attorney general's ruling, after the interim superintendent has served 108 days, the district must have its permanent superintendent in place. Otherwise, it must appoint another interim for another 108 days until the position is filled.

Winzler is paid \$695 on a per-diem basis for his interim position, while receiving no benefits, and told the board Tuesday he would be able to stretch out those 108 days to give the search process extra time.

"When I work, I get paid; when I don't, I don't get paid," he said. "I can get you to Jan. 1."

Winzler, an experienced interim superintendent, also said a mid-year hire for a superintendent is "very likely," and that a Dec. 1 start date, as the budget process begins, would be a best-

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**Hello, Dolly cont. from Front Page**

the audience. Some of the songs had people moving in their seats, and it seemed like everyone had a smile on their face for the entire show – I know I did!

Another thing I enjoyed was seeing how the cast handled a few unexpected situations – which are to be expected with live theater.

For instance, during Thursday’s show Whitesell placed her purse on a counter then walked away. A moment later, the purse fell down. She turned to look and, without skipping a beat, said “Oh my!” in character, picked it up and continued on like nothing had happened.

Then, on Friday, during a scene where Vandergelder’s wallet unknowingly gets mixed up with his clerks’ at a restaurant, the wallets get tossed into the air. One of them landed half-way under a table, barely visible. When it came time for Barnaby to find the wrong wallet and pick it up, one of the waiters took note of the fact it was hard to see and pointed it out to Barnaby so he wouldn’t keep searching.

Both instances, I think, are just further testament to the actors’ skill.

As my husband shared at the end, “The play was delivered so flawlessly, I forgot that I was watching high school students!”

And my brother called it an “enjoyable experience,” that was “well-played.”

Meanwhile, my mom described the cast as “fun, talented and professional.” She commented on the “gifted vocals” of Whitesell and Ciara Hickey who played Irene Malloy, as well as the “beautiful period costumes” and “great choreography.”

All in all she said it was “a truly enjoyable evening.”

I couldn’t agree more, and such praise could be heard all around when the performance came to an end – to a standing ovation – both nights. As audience members left with smiles on their faces I heard comments such as “The kids were amazing,” “That was really good,” “The girl who played Dolly should be on Broadway,” and “They did such a good job!”

Director Mary Rose Meade felt similarly.

“I was so proud of the students,” she shared this week. “I was taken with so many of their performances and saw what I think was the absolute best performance from many actors I have worked with for many years. These are such special people.”

She added, “That cast really owned this show!”

Along with the overall quality of this year’s performance, I also found it particularly poignant since I remember the graduating seniors – like Whitesell and Hawes – from the very first play I covered for the *Rivereast*. It was *You’re A Good Man Charlie Brown*, performed by the RHAM Drama Club. Whitesell was Snoopy, Hawes played Charlie Brown, and they were both freshmen.

When the cast stood on stage, bowing and waving at the end of last weekend’s performances, I was a bit sad at the fact those I’d first seen as freshmen would now be moving on, especially since they’re so talented. And yet, at the same time, I was excited for where life will take them, for all the younger cast members would continue to bring to future performances, and everything future members would add as well. For there seems to be no shortage of talent when it comes to AHM Summer Youth Theater, a program designed “to promote positive youth development as well as to provide summer recreation.”

Summer Youth Theater is AHM Youth and Family Services’ longest running program and “gives students techniques and skills related to interpersonal communication, community building, conflict resolution and of course, singing, dancing and acting,” according to the description in the *Hello, Dolly!* program.

AHM Summer Youth Theater has been challenging and inspiring students to think creatively and express themselves since 1983, and I can’t wait to see what next year has in store...  
\* \* \*

In order of appearance, the cast of *Hello, Dolly!* was: Kelly Whitesell as Mrs. Dolly Gallagher Levi, Adrianna Simmons as Ernestina, Josh Zeiler as Ambrose Kemper,



**The *Hello, Dolly!* ensemble dances and sings together during a finale that had the audience clapping and singing along last weekend. The production was put on through AHM Summer Youth Theater, the longest-running program with AHM Youth and Family Services.**

James Hayden as Horace Vandergelder, AriaRay Brown as Ermengarde, Andrew Hawes as Cornelius Hackl, Jonathan Farrington as Barnaby Tucker, Emily Everlith as Minnie Fay, Ciara Hickey as Irene Malloy, Sara Phelps as Mrs. Rose, Jacob Lee as Rudolph Reisenweber, Sam Boushee as Stanley, Meghan Kulow as the first cook, Stella Maranos as the second cook, Peter Kvietkauskas as the judge, David Farrington as the policeman, Harry Malinowski as the court clerk, and Andrew Leslie as the paperhanger.

The select ensemble/waiters included Dan Busa, David Farrington, Mike Figueiredo, Kaitlyn Gonsor, Skylar Haines, Michael Kasper, Kelly Kozikowski, Andrew Leslie, Harry Malinowski, Katrina McGlynn, Sara

Phelps, Jennifer Vincenzo and Matt Ziron.

The ensemble was made up of Sam Boushee, Nora Bernaiche, Madison Baker, Madeline Brooks, Paige Burkhart, Emily Cook, Nicole Catarino, Madison Ciarrocchi, Molly Cunningham, Erica Day, David Farrington, Kaitlyn Gonsor, Anna Greenwald, Skylar Haines, Sarah Hale, Grace Heersping, Meghan Howard, Kelly Kozikowski, Meghan Kulow, Olivia Kurtz, Peter Kvietkauskas, Hannah LaBombard, Jacob Lee, Andrew Leslie, Elizabeth Lynch, Kate Malgioglio, Harry Malinowsky, Stella Maranos, Katrina McGlynn, Emma McCormack, Olivia Ortegon, Abby Perrin, Sara Phelps, Emily Quesada, Alina Torres, Lana Vilcinskis, Jennifer Vincenzo, Grace Wilson and Matt Ziron.

**Belltown cont. from Front Page**

case scenario for a permanent hire.

Board members also said they wanted to complete the search and interviews before election season if possible, to keep continuity within the process.

In addition, the board voted to invite one representative from the teacher’s union, and one representative from the administrators’ union to participate in the search process.  
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The board also appointed Briere as the interim director of curriculum and instruction until June 30, 2016, while the search for a permanent director occurs.

The position will be a part-time one, averaging three days a week.

Previously, the district had a director of curriculum and operations position, which included human resources duties. It was then transformed into an assistant schools superintendent position in the 1990s, with the addition of instructional duties.

The new director of curriculum and instruction position is simply the assistant superintendent’s job description, minus the

human resource components, Winzler said.

Barber said replacing the assistant superintendent position with the director of curriculum and instruction is a cost-savings measure and also is a way to acquiesce to those who feel the school system is too administrator-heavy.

“The position has always been a target whenever the school board’s been mentioned, that we have too many administrators,” he said.

Specifically, Winzler said the director position would handle several duties including Common Core implementation in the district, as well as Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium testing.

In the coming months, Barber said, the board would determine how to handle the human resource side, as the district employs about 250 people.

“There’s a lot going on around here with the new superintendent coming and the director of curriculum and instruction position,” he said. “We’re working on figuring this one out; we have a very big need.”



**Martin Lopez, shown here with his wife Connie, will head to Nebraska next month for his 12th trip to the National Veterans Golden Age Games.**

**12 Years of Golden Age Games**

Martin Lopez, 70, of Colchester, will return to the National Veterans Golden Age Games in Omaha, Neb., on Aug. 12. This will be his 12th year of going to the games.

Lopez will compete in shuffleboard, nine-ball, horseshoes and table tennis. To qualify for the games, people must be 55 or older, and receive care via the Department of Veterans Affairs facility. Nearly 800 veterans are expected to attend the games.

Lopez has an especially competitive spirit, after having played for the L.A. Dodgers in 1964. “I never thought I would still compete at 70,” Lopez said. “But I do and being an ex player all through my life it can be so grand to still compete.”

Lopez thanked the Colchester and East Hampton Stop and Shop, Noel’s Market and Ted’s Market for their help in gathering donations so he can attend the games.

# Colchester Author Releases Greek Children's Novel

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Suzanne Cordatos remembers when she was in fourth grade holding a cardboard-bound book and telling herself she would one day write a book and have it published.

Flash-forward to the present day, and Cordatos, a Colchester resident, has made those childhood dreams come true.

Cordatos' debut novel, a book for middle-schoolers entitled *The Lost Crown of Apollo*, was released this week by Sunpenny Publishing.

The road to published author wasn't an easy one, though. Cordatos was an English major in college, but didn't know where to start when it came to creative writing.

"I would buy blank books and not have the story to tell," Cordatos said.

However, Cordatos has two daughters, and reading to them when they were little got her creative juices flowing. Around 2006, she shared her love of writing with a neighbor, who also enjoyed it. The two became writing buddies and both joined the Connecticut Authors and Publishers Association.

"In 2006, I submitted a children's story and won first place," Cordatos said. "I won \$100 and that's when I told my husband, and that's how he found out I wanted to be a writer."

Cordatos began attending writer's workshops and conferences, having her picture books critiqued. In 2008, she sold two stories to *Highlights Magazine*, although those have yet to be published.

Cordatos' writing career didn't completely take off until a family trip to Greece inspired her. Cordatos' husband Haralambos, who is Greek and has relatives in the country, brought the family to Delos, an uninhabited island. The

island is known for its ancient history and is called the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis.

"We were walking the ruins with the headless statues and stone lions," Cordatos said. "Lizards were running everywhere. There's an ancient theater."

While exploring the island, the wheels began turning and Cordatos soon crafted the story of Elias and his family.

Initially, Cordatos' aspirations for her book were smaller. The book began as *Deserted on Delos*, a picture book based on the Greek uninhabited island. However, upon presenting the book at a conference, it was suggested to her she expand the book into a novel, following a modern Greek American family's summer boating vacation to Delos and Mykonos.

In the novel, 11-year-old Elias and his younger sister find an ancient treasure, a gold-leafed crown of Apollo. However, the two children get more adventure than they bargained for when they become stranded on Delos with nothing but headless statues, lizards, a grumpy caretaker, and some antiquity thieves. The story follows Elias as he must save the crown, known as a good luck charm, and his kidnapped sister.

"It's all tied into ancient stories," Cordatos said of the novel.

Writing a novel instead of a picture book, Cordatos said, was "overwhelming, when I had only dabbled in little cute stories."

She soon began to enjoy the novel form as she could explore the setting as a character and get more in depth with the story.

The book is "Christian-inspired," Cordatos said. Sunpenny Publishing Group is based in the United Kingdom and is a Christian publisher.

"He has nothing to count on, but prayer. Is

that enough?" Cordatos said about Elias. "Kids learn what's valuable and what's priceless such as family is valuable."

Another aspect of the book kids can learn from is the theme of not concentrating on what you don't have and others have. The book digs into what's more meaningful, Cordatos said.

The novel also offers kids a look into modern Greek culture and is set pre-economic crisis.

"I want to inspire kids to read more historical fiction," Cordatos said.

Although she would love to see the novel in museum gift shops in Greece, Cordatos said that may have to wait a bit while the economic crisis in Greece calms down.

"It's a real tragedy," Cordatos said of the crisis. "People used to spend weeks on their boats, but now that's not possible. People have sold their boats."

Luckily, Cordatos said, people are still visiting Greece, which helps bring in tourist dollars.

Cordatos already has more writing on the way. Later this year, for the holiday season, she has a picture book for children due to be published. She also hopes to release a sequel to *The Lost Crown of Apollo* in the future as well.

*The Lost Crown of Apollo* is suggested for grades three to six. It is currently ranked No. 8 on Amazon's Hot New Releases for Children's Christian Fiction list.

This Sunday, Aug. 2, Cordatos will be at Bank Square Books, 53 West Main St., Mystic, from 1 to 3 p.m. for a book-signing. Then it's off to Ohio, where Cordatos will do a book signing alongside her twin sister, Sonja Anderson of Seattle, who also recently had her debut



**Resident Suzanne Cordatos poses with her newly published book, *The Lost Crown of Apollo*. Cordatos said the first part of the title is backward to reflect that it is an ancient story within a story that parallels the contemporary one. It also stands for the main character who has flashbacks during the novel.**

novel published, a young adult book named *Sophie's Quest*, also published by Sunpenny Books.

For more information about Cordatos, visit [suzannecordatos.blogspot.com](http://suzannecordatos.blogspot.com).

## Frantzen to Run for Colchester First Selectman

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

With the Colchester Democrats caucusing this week, the race for first selectman has become clear – it will be Democrat selectman Kurt Frantzen squaring off against Republican Board of Finance member Art Shilosky.

Frantzen was one of 14 Democrats to gain endorsements at their caucus Monday night. (Shilosky was endorsed by the GOP last week.)

"I'm excited to have this opportunity to speak with my friends and neighbors in town and talk to them about where we can go with the town," Frantzen said. "It's always somewhat daunting to choose to run for elected office and in particular running for first selectman, but I was very pleased and excited and humbled by the support of the Democratic Party in backing my candidacy."

Frantzen said he is looking forward to the campaign and to having public conversations with Shilosky about the town.

"I look forward to having an extended public conversation with him during this campaign regarding the town of Colchester and its needs and its future and how we get from today to tomorrow," Frantzen said. "I think it will be useful for everyone to listen to it and I think the end result will be positive for Colchester."

Frantzen stressed his number one priority is economic development and fostering small- and medium-sized businesses to come to town.

"To us, and specifically to me, economic development is a vital necessity and a prior-

ity," Frantzen said. "Strong local businesses and farms are the key to our success."

Frantzen said he is excited to be working with a team of fellow Democratic candidates who will "help the community grow, thrive and prosper in the coming years."

"Kurt brings a wealth of knowledge [and] public and professional experience that will allow him to hit the ground running on day one," Don Kennedy, chairman of the Democratic Town Committee, said. "He also brings a passion for Colchester that will enable him to champion Colchester to invigorate economic development in our town and improve the lot of farmers, businesses owners and the town's people as a whole."

Also for the Board of Selectmen, the Democratic Town Committee endorsed current selectwoman Rosemary Coyle for re-election, as well as John Jones and Jim Ford. (The latter, a former selectman, is a placeholder.)

"You can't begin a conversation about service to Colchester without 'Jonesy' being in the first sentence," Kennedy said of Jones, a long-time member of the Colchester Hayward Fire Department and also a former employee of the town's Public Works department.

For the Board of Finance, John Ringo is not seeking re-election and instead was nominated for town treasurer. The Democrats did nominate John Bogush and Linda Stoddard to the finance board. (Stoddard is a placeholder,

Kennedy confirmed.)

"John has served in the past on the [Board of Assessment Appeals] and will bring that experience to the [Board of Finance]," Kennedy said.

For the Board of Education, Mary Tomasi was nominated for re-election, alongside newcomers Vince Rose and Joanne Philips. Current board member Michael Egan is not running for re-election. (Kennedy also confirmed that Philips is a placeholder.)

"Although I've really enjoyed my stint on the Board of Ed[ucation], it's time to take on some different challenges," Egan said. "It's a mix of the fact that I've been doing it for nine years and recently got a new job which is going to be more demanding of my time."

Kennedy said he is excited about the possibility of Rose joining the school board.

"Vince is a very active and involved parent in the schools and youth sports and will bring that energy to the [Board of Education]," Kennedy said.

On Egan and Ringo not running for their current boards, Kennedy said he's sad to see them go.

"But both have given many years of public service and we thank them for that," Kennedy said. But, he added of Ringo, "The [Board of Finance's] loss will be the office of the treasurer's gain."

Other nominations included Denise Turner and Andrew Cournoyer for the Board of Assessment Appeals, John Ringo for treasurer, Gayle Furman for town clerk and Michele Wyatt for tax collector. John Malsbenden is not running for re-election to the Board of Assessment Appeals.

"Cournoyer returns to the Board of Assessment Appeals, where he served in the past, and we are very happy to have him running," Kennedy said.

"All were unanimous," Kennedy said of Monday's nominations. "I'm thrilled with the slate."

He added the incumbents – Coyle, Tomasi, Furman, Wyatt and Turner – have "excelled in their offices."

"Gayle and Michele have both stepped in to critical town positions and have done outstanding jobs as town clerk and tax collector, respectively," Kennedy said. "While John Ringo isn't an incumbent, he brings many years of service and experience to the office of treasurer."

Kennedy said along with the incumbents, the DTC has multiple first time candidates that will "bring fresh ideas to the boards that hopefully they will serve on."

"In short, a great team," Kennedy said of the full slate. "Experience, passion and ready to work for Colchester."

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 3.

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### Colchester Police News

7/21: Colchester Police said they are investigating after copper was cut out of an abandoned home on Cato Corner Road. Police said the owners moved out of state and left the home unsecured. Anyone with information can contact Officer Cyril Green at 860-537-7270.

7/21: State Police said Nicholas Majek, 19, of 190 Lebanon Ave., was arrested and charged with violation of conditions of release, second-degree threatening and breach of peace.

7/22: State Police said Tara O'Neil, 28, of 28 Nelkin Rd., was arrested and charged with DUI, operating without carrying a license and operating without meeting insurance requirements.

7/25: Colchester Police said Jose Pinto, 35, of 218 Jefferson St., Hartford, was arrested and charged with failure to meet insurance requirements, disobeying an officer's signal, DUI and failure to drive in the proper lane.

### Hebron Police News

7/21: State Police said Ryan Kerley, 31, of 185 West St., was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny.

### Andover Police News

7/22: State Police said Maximillian Orosz, 20, of 25 Cedar Hill Terrace, Somers, was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct, third-degree assault and risk of injury to a child.

### Marlborough Police News

7/28: State Police said Ryan Richardson, 22, of 39 Phelps Rd., was arrested and charged with third-degree burglary and third-degree criminal mischief.

### East Hampton Police News

7/11: Yvette Marin, 38, of 80 Hanover St., Meriden, was arrested for operating under the influence, failure to drive right, operating a motor vehicle without a license, and drinking while driving, East Hampton Police said.

7/18: Craig F. Ghagon, 33, of 164 Mott Hill Rd., was issued a summons for second-degree breach of peace and first-degree criminal trespass, police said.

7/21: Drew F. Funk, 20, of 110 Sigwin Dr., was issued a summons for misuse of plates and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

# Major Marlborough Property Owner On Brink of Foreclosure

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

Five properties owned by attorney Robert Elliott – including two high-profile shopping plazas – are at risk of foreclosure, the *Rivereast* has learned.

According to court records and records on file at the town clerk's office, Elliott owes \$7,213,761.33 to the Chelsea Groton Bank after he failed to make payments on a mortgage he took out in December 2013 for \$6,960,000. The \$7.2 million Elliott currently owes includes interest.

The properties at risk of foreclosure include plazas at 3-5 East Hampton Rd. and 1, 3, 5, and 7 South Main St.; a commercial property at 32 East Hampton Rd.; and two homes on South Main Street.

"We're in the process of trying to work it out," Elliott told the *Rivereast* Wednesday. "There's absolute cooperation between myself and the bank."

Elliott originally purchased 3-5 East Hampton Rd. in January 1995 for \$825,000. The land which totals 6.28 acres has three buildings on it, including two strips of shops, Taylor'd Touch, and the once – and possibly future – Marlborough Tavern. Its current assessed value is \$2,696,800 according to town records.

The Marlborough Tavern, located at the corner of Route 66 (East Hampton Road) and North Main Street, has had a recent history of issues. After the restaurant closed in 2011, two brothers, Marc and Scott Digalbo, had planned to reopen the eatery – called the New Marlborough Tavern – in December 2013. But renovation work stalled, and the dreamed-about opening never materialized.

Scott Digalbo told the *Rivereast* last summer renovations were only 15 to 20 percent

complete – and were Elliott's responsibility.

Elliott purchased 32 East Hampton Rd. in November of 1995 for \$640,910. The plot includes 2.47 acres and has one building. Businesses located there include Village Pizza and Frank Corbo Martial Arts. Its current assessed value according to town records is \$737,800.

Town records do not list a sale price or date for the plaza at 1, 3, 5 and 7 South Main St., but the property is currently assessed at \$2,241,500 and includes 2.98 acres and four buildings. Businesses included at the plaza include Dunkin' Donuts, China Sea, Subway, Country Roads Wine and Spirits, Carson Real Estate, and Smart Computer Repair among others.

The two South Main Street homes Elliott purchased in December 2012 and March 2013, respectively. The first was purchased for \$400,000 and is currently assessed at \$192,500, while the second was purchased for \$235,000 and is currently assessed at \$174,200. Both are single-family homes.

It is not clear when Elliott stopped making payments on his mortgage to the Chelsea Groton Bank.

Foreclosure proceedings were filed with the court on June 26 in Hartford. Included in the proceedings are a number of individuals, some of which are construction groups who had allegedly not been paid and had issued liens against the properties and Elliott. The Town of Marlborough is also listed in the case, potentially due to former sewer liens issued on Elliott's properties.

Town tax collector Barbara Murray on Monday confirmed to the *Rivereast* that Elliott does not owe the town any money in the form of taxes. (The sewer assessments do not count as taxes.)



The Marlborough Tavern has been in limbo and an eyesore in the center of town since July 2014 when renovations stalled. Now the building is one of five properties owner Robert Elliott has been served foreclosure papers for.

## Marlborough Republicans Nominate 19 for November

by Kaitlyn Schroyer

The slate of candidates Marlborough Republicans put forth after their caucus Monday night includes a mix of newcomers and seasoned veterans.

Among the 19 nominated are First Selectwoman Cathi Gaudinski, who will be facing Democrat nominee Amy Traversa in the fall, and current selectman Dick Shea.

"Cathi and Dick have faced a lot of challenges during their last four years including the need to address a lot of deferred maintenance in regards to our town's bridges and culverts," said Republican Town Committee Chairman Ken Hjulstrom, "but they have given much needed attention to these long overlooked infrastructure items."

"I'm honored to be nominated," said Gaudinski, who has been first selectwoman since 2011. "I look forward to working for the residents of Marlborough."

Gaudinski said she and Shea are a good team. "We have the experience and we would like to continue working on the projects that we've started," she said. "We've laid the foundation for growth and I look forward to sharing our message with residents."

Gaudinski, Hjulstrom said, has "exhibited excellent organizational skills and has brought a high level of professionalism" to being first selectman.

"She is an asset to our community and she is looking forward to continuing to work in the best interests of Marlborough's residents and business owners," Hjulstrom said.

Hjulstrom is also one of the candidates on the slate, as he's seeking another term on the Board of Finance. He said that, if re-elected to a second term, he looks forward to working with the education board and selectmen to "keep costs under control and to make sure that Marlborough remains an affordable place to live

and to conduct business." He added it's especially challenging, due to the increasing portion of the RHAM budget Marlborough is responsible for.

Also nominated for the Board of Finance is Doug Knowlton, who, like Hjulstrom, is seeking re-election.

As far as the whole slate of candidates nominated, Hjulstrom said he is "extremely proud" of the slate.

"The majority of our candidates are experienced incumbents who wish to continue to work for Marlborough," Hjulstrom said about all of the candidates. "We also have a few new faces who have stepped forward in service to our community."

For the local Board of Education, current chairwoman Ruth Kelly was nominated for re-election, along with current board secretary Louise Concodello. One new face was nominated to run for the Board of Education, Patrick Pabouet. He takes the place of Robert Clarke, who is not running for re-election.

For the RHAM Board of Education, current member Carole Shea will be seeking her first full term; she joined the board after Dieter Zimmer resigned last November. Sue Rapelye, a member of the local Board of Education, was also nominated to run for the RHAM board. Rapelye's term on the local board runs until 2017, so if she is not elected to RHAM, she will continue to serve on the local board.

For the Planning Commission, the RTC nominated Eric Kelly and Mark Stankiewicz along with Laurence Pryor as an alternate. Stankiewicz is currently an alternate and is running for a full position while Eric Kelly and Pryor are new faces. Eric Kelly is currently on the Zoning Board of Appeals with a term running until 2017. If he is not elected to the Planning Commission, he would remain on the ZBA.



The Republican Town Committee caucused Monday night and nominated a full slate of candidates for the November election. Included are, top row from left, Kevin Asklar, Ken Hjulstrom, Robert Jackson, Alan Miller, Dick Shea and Patrick Pabouet; bottom row from left, Nancy Dickson, Carole Shea, Barbara Murray, Cathi Gaudinski and Louise Concodello. Not pictured are Ruth Kelly, Doug Knowlton, Sue Rapelye, Eric Kelly, Mark Stankiewicz, Eric Colantonio and Laurence Pryor.

The RTC nominated current Zoning Commission Chairman Kevin Asklar for another term, along with Eric Colantonio for re-election as an alternate. For the Zoning Board of Appeals, the RTC nominated current member Robert Jackson for re-election and Alan Miller. Miller was previously a Democrat who is now running as a Republican.

Other nominations include Nancy Dickson for another term as town clerk, Michael O'Neil

for re-election as treasurer (O'Neil is a Democrat that the RTC has previously endorsed), and Barbara Murray for re-election as tax collector.

Hjulstrom confirmed there are no placeholders on the Republican slate and all nominations were unanimous. The RTC voted for the entire slate in one vote.

Election Day is Nov. 3.

# New Officers for Andover Town Boards

by Geeta Schrayter

The officer positions on the three major boards in town – the boards of selectmen, finance and education – have undergone a change following the May municipal elections, with new officers being elected to each one.

On the Board of Selectmen, the vice first selectman, a position previously filled by Jay Linddy, went to newcomer David Maguire. He was elected to the position by a 4-0 vote at a selectmen meeting earlier this month; First Selectman Bob Burbank abstained from the vote.

Speaking on his appointment, Maguire, who has lived in town for 15 years and works as a certified public accountant, said he was “honored” to be named vice first selectman.

“Hopefully what we can do is make some positive changes,” he stated. “I’m hopeful that what we can do is look toward the various town departments and hopefully make them more efficient.” Maguire added he was already “working in the finance department to try to understand where we can be more efficient and I’m working with [Burbank] to get that done.”

He added, “We’re going to work very closely with the Board of Finance” and concluded, “I’m just hoping that what we can do in town is not be partisan – and work for the best interest of Andover.”

Over on the Board of Finance, newly-elected member Dan Warren was named chairman, a

position held by Georgette Conrad for the past four years.

Warren said this week of being named finance board chair, “I’m excited and looking forward to serving the town in this capacity.”

He continued, “Since I was elected to the board I thought that in the capacity of chairman I could push some of the issues about Capital Improvement Planning, infrastructure and general financial planning” in town.

Warren was born in raised in Andover and moved back last year after spending some time in New York City. He works for an engineering company, and has a background that includes project management, budgeting, and project execution.

In conjunction with the Board of Selectmen, Warren said one of the focuses of the finance board would be “evaluating pretty much all of the administrative offices in the Town Hall and also putting together a true investment plan for the town, identifying our strengths and weaknesses, where we need to make adjustments, and where we can find cost savings.”

He said he wanted to eliminate waste in current spending and focus on improving communication as well as collaboration between all the boards and commissions.

“I feel there’s been a disconnect,” he stated. “I want to get everybody on the same page.”

Lastly, Christina Tamburro was elected to remain chairwoman of the Board of Education, a position she was elected to in March following the Linddy’s resignation from the board the month prior. Although Linddy then decided to run for a spot back on the board in May – and was reelected – he opted not to return to the leadership role, and instead nominated Tamburro for the position.

Tamburro didn’t return calls in time to comment for this story, but when she was first elected to the position in March she’d said “I think I have a legacy of strong history with the way the board had been stewarded by Jay for so many years.”

She said the school had terrific leadership, and added, “As long as my services are needed I’m willing to offer them and I think it’s my civic responsibility to do that as best I can.”

\* \* \*

Linddy and Conrad shared their thoughts on the change in officers this week.

Linddy mentioned he had “other stuff going on” along with being on the boards, so he liked having more time. He also said he liked that he could be more vocal now that he wasn’t chairman. In addition, he said, “I have the experience, but it’s time for new people to take over.”

“I think it’s good to have new parents coming on the Board of Education,” he furthered.

## Portland Republican Slate Announced for Fall

by John Tyczkowski

Portland’s Republican Town Committee has released its list of candidates for the upcoming November municipal elections – a slate that includes newcomer Dan Colby for first selectman.

Colby will face incumbent Susan Bransfield, whom the Democrats endorsed last week. Colby grew up in Portland, and still has family in town. After nearly 20 years of both service in the U.S. Army and of living in South Carolina, he returned to Portland last year.

And he calls that “outsider’s view” a strength. “I have different ideas and different points of view other than what’s been going on in town,” he said. “I want to reform the budgetary process, lower taxes, lower regulations on businesses and reduce the burden of government.”

Colby also said he’ll do his homework on the issues in Portland leading up to the election, and talk with First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, who he has not met yet.

“When I make decisions I try to gather all the information and make a decision properly,” he said. “I am home and I want to stay here. I want to make the town a better place. The only

thing I can promise is that I will do my best, and will work to the best of my ability.”

Colby said he also doesn’t consider himself a politician – which he thinks will resonate with voters.

“I tend to be an honest person and a blunt person,” he said. “I’m just as fed up as everyone else with politics as usual, and I don’t feel my duty to my town and country is finished, so I’ve chosen to run.”

Running for the selectboard will be current member Carl Chudzik, as well as Michael Pelton and Rob Taylor, both currently on the Board of Education. Taylor is also the current RTC chair.

Pelton, who runs Inner Circle Family Martial Arts, said he’s found the Board of Education to be “an amazing experience,” but now wants to branch out and see how the selectmen operate.

“I’m very interested in seeing how the money is spent, and what the processes are in governing the town. I want to contribute what I can, and I bring fresh eyes,” he said. “I want to get a

sense for how the town runs, to better understand Portland so I can better give back to the town.”

Also, Pelton said cooperation is something he wants to sustain on the selectboard.

“We’ve accomplished a lot on the school board, and I’d like to see if I could help bring our high level of cooperation to the selectmen as well,” he said.

In addition, Pelton said he wanted to make room for new faces running for the Board of Education, which on the Republican side include Gisela Rice and Timothy Lavoie.

Rice, who began Portland Unified Sports this spring for special needs children, said she was “extremely excited” to run for the school board.

“I’m very involved with the schools already, and I want to be a voice for the younger kids at Valley View and Gildersleeve [schools] and their parents,” she said. “We really have amazing schools in Portland.”

Rice has two children, including one with special needs.

“It’s who I am, an advocate for children, I

“They’re going to bring new stuff with them and that’s good. I’d just ask them to do their homework; we’re all working for one reason: for our children and the staff and taxpayers.”

Linddy said it was the same with the Board of Selectmen. With Maguire being a certified public accountant, Linddy said “he brings something that we never had before to help the town, and that’s good too. So everybody brings ideas and everything and everybody just has to work together.”

Conrad meanwhile, said she was “delighted” with the change.

“I wish him luck,” she said of Warren. “It’s a lot to take on. Plus he’s also on CIP. He’s a young man with a new baby, he’s very nice, very smart and I wish him luck because it’s not an easy job. But I am so happy to have my life back.”

And in the end, she said, “There’s going to be quite a few changes in town.”

She mentioned the new officers “have their own way of doing things and that’s fine. Some things are good, some things may not be so good, but there’s new young blood in town – which is good.”

Conrad concluded, “I told some of my friends, ‘Hold on, it’s going to be a bumpy ride.’”

feel a need to be involved and give back to the community,” she said. “And this would be a great opportunity for me to advocate, especially with the special education perspective.”

Ryan Curley, current selectman, will be running for town clerk – a position he called “the unofficial front door of Portland.”

“Between my time with the selectmen and my background in accounting, I think I’ll be a strong candidate,” he said. “I’ve enjoyed my time of the board greatly and I’m looking to serve the town in a more full time position.”

Curley cited his immersion in many town affairs, from water and sewers to sidewalks, his fiscal responsibility focus and his close work with Democrat selectmen as assets.

“And as with my time on the Board of Selectmen, my focus will be on efficiency, transparency and accountability,” he said.

Rounding out the slate are Kevin Anderson for Zoning Board of Appeals, and both Peter Castelli and Ashley Varricchio for Board of Assessment Appeals.

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 3.

## Final Portland Elmcrest Campus Plan Details Released

by John Tyczkowski

This week, the Town of Portland, with funding and support from the Connecticut Vibrant Communities Initiative, released its report on how to proceed with the Elmcrest Campus’ development.

The report is the final component of a Vibrant Communities Initiative study from the Connecticut Trust for Historical Preservation, funded by a \$50,000 competitive grant awarded to the town last fall.

The goal of the report is to create a viable alternative to Portland TownPlace, a residential and commercial development approved in 2009 but stalled during the recession.

The current report details how to develop the Elmcrest Campus, and how to integrate the surrounding areas, such as downtown Main Street, into that effort.

Specifically, the goals of the study were to find a way to maintain the existing historical structures through adaptive reuse, to add economic value to the downtown district, to allow the town and residents an active role in planning and to create an action plan to identify funding types and sources for the redevelopment.

To aid with the study, the town enlisted The Cecil Group, a Boston-based planning and urban design firm; Bartram & Cochran, a Hartford-based real estate economist firm; and Tighe & Bond, a Middletown-based environmental and transportation engineering firm.

In addition, three public meetings held this spring and summer contributed elements to the

112-page report.

Main points of the report include a large number of residential units, more than 200, as well as space for small retail stores, such as a CVS, with possible space for specialty stores, such as a Trader Joe’s.

In addition, a town green, which residents pushed for continually over the three planning sessions, was cited as an important consideration, as well as preservation of three historic properties on the site: the Brainerd House, the Sage House and the Hart-Jarvis House.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said she thinks what she called “a very community-driven report” is “excellent.”

“It shows what’s good for Elmcrest and Portland based on community input and marketing analysis combined, and it’s very comprehensive,” she said. “I think the authors did an outstanding job, and I want to thank the steering committee and the hundreds of people who came out to the public sessions.”

In addition to providing a breakdown of the possible development of the property, which includes a mix of housing units and retail space, the report also provides information about where shoppers are likely to drive from, and more.

“It’s a very comprehensive report, and a fabulous blueprint across all aspects of Elmcrest to move forward with as we encourage the developer to complete the work,” Bransfield said. “It even provides an action plan for funding sources and financing to complete the project.”

Copies of the report are available for reading at town hall, the library and online at [portlandct.org](http://portlandct.org), and Bransfield said she encouraged residents to read it.

“It combines the marketing realities of the site with what the public has said they wanted from their input at the three public sessions,” she said. “It’s going to give us a strategy for how we move forward now.”

Not everyone was so happy with the report, however. Elwin Guild, head of the Elmcrest Campus Advisory Committee (ECAC), a local grassroots organization, and a member of the VCI Steering Committee involved in the report’s creation, said he had some concerns.

“The shift to more than 200 residential units, up from 80 or so in the original plan, is a definite positive change,” he said. “However, there is no indication that the owner/developer plans to reuse the three National Historic Register buildings on site. They mention only one in the report, the Brainerd House, for potential reuse.”

“I’m concerned over the lack of evidence of stabilization of the buildings the report clearly points out are critically important for successful development,” he said.

Guild also said he was concerned the report did not integrate a repeated recommendation from the ECAC regarding an alternate traffic calming measure, and as such did not urge the state Department of Transportation to follow up on the use of pedestrian-friendly roundabouts as part of a Complete Streets initiative

in town, supported by the state.

The report cites possible alterations to the section of Main Street between the Arrigoni Bridge and Marlborough Street, such as the creation of a right-turn lane and entrance, as a possible traffic management measure.

However, it does not discuss alternate options that could include a roundabout and/or rerouting of Route 66 around Marlborough Street, as per ECAC proposals.

Specifically, Guild said the alternate proposal would be to reroute Route 66 through a section of the old Air Line Railroad. Then, a roundabout, placed at Airline Avenue, High Street and Marlborough Street would create a bypass to the new Route 66, allowing Marlborough Street to become a town street.

“This new, reduced-speed street would allow the Elmcrest development, as well as neighboring historic district buildings located opposite, such as the Octagon Houses, to become a shopping destination rather than another high speed highway plaza location,” he said.

Guild did say he was grateful for the level of input residents were able to offer during the planning process, and how seriously it was taken.

“Town officials, led by Susan Bransfield, have demonstrated their respect for the input of Portland citizens throughout the planning process,” he said. “And the ECAC has been treated as a valued planning partner and will continue to offer support as planning continues.”

# Hebron Republicans Endorse Slate of Candidates

by Geeta Schrayter

It's hard to think about November when summer is in full swing, but that's exactly what the Hebron Republican Town Committee did Monday night, when the committee endorsed a slate of candidates for the November 3 municipal elections.

Speaking on the endorsed candidates this week, Republican Town Committee Chairwoman Catherine Marx said, "Gail Richmond and Clara O'Brien are on the top of the ticket as endorsed candidates for the Board of Selectmen."

Marx said Richmond, who joined the board in January after then-selectwoman Gayle Mulligan was elected to the state legislature, "has a vast professional and academic background in business and education that enabled her to contribute to the board from day one."

This week, Richmond said she was running for a full term because she'd found her time on the board "very interesting, very challenging – and I love challenges."

She added, "I've learned a great deal and now that I've learned all this in the past six months I want to continue learning and put all this knowledge to work."

Richmond furthered, "I keep myself informed. I work hard, and I want to meet the interests of the townspeople. Once you're on the board I don't think your particular party label comes into play. You're there to serve the people – and I really mean that."

O'Brien, meanwhile, works as a registered nurse and currently serves as chair of both the Water Pollution Control Authority and the Board of Assessment Appeals. O'Brien has lived in Amston for 21 years with her husband, and said one of the reasons she decided to run for the board was that she had more time now that her three children are heading to college.

In addition, she said "I've been looking for a different board to serve on, since I've been on the WPCA for 12 years. I decided working with the selectmen would be a position I was interested in."

O'Brien added, "There are a lot of issues that the selectmen will be taking a look at along with the other board members. I have a lot of experience working with the town over the last 19 years ... and would be willing to listen to peoples' concerns. It's not my agenda – it's what people want me to do as selectman."

Marx said O'Brien has "served Hebron for over two decades on other boards and commissions. She is a true public servant that has professional experience in management and budgeting. Couple her professionalism with her passion for public service, Clara will serve our community well."

Also endorsed Monday was David Veschi for the Board of Finance. Veschi has lived in town about 20 years and works for UnitedHealth Group. Like O'Brien, Veschi said he decided to pursue a position on a town board since his three children were now older, affording him more time.

"I don't have a particular agenda," Veschi shared. "Being with the Board of Finance, it's certainly not a policy-making board; it's just trying to adhere to the budget and using taxpayer money as efficiently as we possibly can."

Veschi added, "I think I'm a pretty level-headed person and on the finance board I think that's what they'd be looking for; someone not looking to see a personal agenda, just looking after the taxpayers and their funds."

Along with the above, two candidates were endorsed for the Hebron Board of Education – Kathy Williams and Kevin Williams – along with Patrick Pellerin and Ryan Cordier as placeholders.

Kathy Williams has lived in town since 1966. She's currently retired, but worked at the Savings Bank of Manchester for 31 years as both a loan officer and in the information technology department.

She shared this week a big reason behind her decision to run for the Board of Education had to do with improving communication.

"I really think the biggest thing is communication and getting people to understand what the responsibilities of the board is and how it interacts with other agencies," she said, also mentioning the budget as important, saying "that's the one that everybody is most vocal about."

Williams added, "People need to know as much as they can and I make an honest attempt to read all sides of everything and not just go to one side or the other; I think you have to look at the entire picture and make an informed decision."

Williams' son Kevin is also running for a place on the school board. He currently serves on the RHAM Board of Education but shared this week he'd realized there were more people interested in running for the RHAM board than there are open positions, which isn't currently the case with the Hebron board. In addition, Williams said shifting to the Hebron Board of Education "gives me the opportunity to rebalance my life so I am in the best position to serve with dedication, energy and resolve in everything I am committing to."

Williams works as the director of customer excellence with American Express and has lived in Hebron off and on throughout his life for a total of 42 years.

Speaking on why he should be elected, Williams said, "I have a track record [voters] can make their choice based upon. I've sought to maintain integrity to doing what is right, even

when it may not be the popular choice."

He added, "I've already shown that I am willing to put in the time and effort to not only serve a board, but to actively serve in a leadership role, having served as vice chair of the RHAM board for the last two years. And the bottom line is, while I will have to vote one way or another on many issues, I will always listen to those who want to be heard."

Regarding the Board of Education placeholders, Marx said this week, "This gives the Republicans the opportunity to continue to talk with residents whom are interested in serving. We take the process of endorsement very seriously and make sure that a perspective candidate understands the duties of the board he/she will be elected to serve."

Along with Pellerin and Cordier, Marx is a placeholder for the RHAM Board of Education. In addition, current RHAM board member Tom Tremont was endorsed for another term Tuesday. Tremont is a graduate of Bulkeley High School and has a background in sales and management from working at Cummins Diesel Engine Co. in Columbus, Ind., for 45 years.

Tremont did not return calls in time to comment for this story, but said during the last election 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.

Speaking on the candidate slate so far, Marx said, "The caucus drew no surprises and the list of candidates only grew stronger from prior Republican meetings."

She added, "We have a strong mix of incumbents, prior candidates and newcomers."

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The November municipal elections take place Tuesday, Nov. 3, from 6 a.m.-8p.m.

## Hebron Democrats Fail to Caucus

by Geeta Schrayter

The Hebron Democratic Town Committee failed to caucus this week after the committee didn't provide adequate notice for the event.

The caucus was scheduled for Tuesday evening but Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz shared Thursday, "At this point they didn't do what they needed to do with my office as far as providing me with a list of certified endorsed candidates" by the 4 p.m. deadline Wednesday.

Committee Vice Chairman Ted Bromley explained why Thursday saying, "The notice of the caucus was not filed in a timely manner so we didn't have the ability to have the caucus."

Bromley said he didn't know why that didn't happen. "All I know is that it didn't appear in any one of the newspapers by July 22, so it was obviously filed late."

There was a legal notice of the caucus in last week's *Riverast*, but that issue was published July 24 – and therefore the notice for the caucus was inadequate. According to the secretary of state, a legal notice for a political town committee notice must be published at

least five full days prior to the caucus.

Committee Chairman Bill Rudis and Committee Secretary Ramon Bieri didn't return calls this week in time to elaborate on what happened, but without a caucus, the committee wasn't able to submit the certified list of endorsed candidates to the town clerk's office by the deadline.

And so, in order to prepare for the November elections, the candidates will now have to fill out a Primary Petition Form.

Democratic Registrar of Voters Beth Fitzgerald explained this week, "The process is they have to get letters from the candidates to say that they want to be in whatever position. Then they have to bring those letters to me and I will give them [the Primary Petition Form] that they fill out, and then they have to get signatures from [5 percent] of the democratic voters in town."

With 1,932 Democrats in town, around 96 signatures will be required.

The completed form needs to be submitted to the town clerk's office by 4 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 12, which means, whatever the reason for the failed notice, the committee now has some work to be done.

## Portland Democrats Announce Fall Slate

by John Tyczkowski

Portland's Democratic Town Committee has released its list of candidates for the upcoming November municipal elections.

"The Democratic Town Committee, by unanimous vote, endorsed the following slate for the November 2015 election," Kathy Richards, DTC chair, said. "We're thrilled to present this slate to the Portland voters for the upcoming election."

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, as previewed in an earlier issue of the *Riverast*, will be running for a seventh term this year.

Brian Flood, Fred Knous and Richards, who is current Deputy First Selectwoman, will also return to run again for the selectmen board.

New to the mix is Ben Srb, currently elected to the Board of Education. Srb, a former chair

of the Zoning Board of Appeals, has been on the school board for one term so far.

For the Board of Education, current chairwoman MaryAnne Rode will be running again, and newcomer Jim Tripp will join her.

Tripp is a former president of the Brownstone Quorum and a current alternate on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Kayleigh Kinsella, who previously served as judge of probate for Portland and Marlborough from 2007-11, will be running for town clerk.

Rounding out the slate is John H. Dillon and Thomas L. Malecky for the Board of Assessment Appeals, and Michael Lastrina for the Zoning Board of Appeals.

This year's election takes place Tuesday, Nov. 3, at the Waverly Center.

## East Hampton Democratic Candidates Announced for November

by John Tyczkowski

The East Hampton Democratic Town Committee held its caucus this week, and many of the endorsed candidates have familiar names.

On the Town Council side, all current Democratic members including council and DTC chair Barbara Moore, vice chair Kevin Reich, George Pfaffenbach and Phillip Visintainer, will be running for re-election.

Added to that list is Pete Brown, a former town councilor and police officer.

In addition, current Board of Education Chairman Ken Barber will be seeking re-election, as will Joanne Barmasse, who was appointed in place of former board member Bill Marshall, whose term expires this year.

Raymond Krupa, and Deborah Battist, who is currently a member of the Middle Haddam Public Library Board of Directors, join the list of school board candidates.

Krupa is a 25-year resident of East Hampton. He was named an East Hampton Village Lions Person of the Year in 2006 and has been a Rotarian for years.

He's also served on the Board of Education for two terms in the 1990s, and on the Middle Haddam Historic District Commission and the Middle Haddam Public Library Board of Directors.

"I have a very long history of community service in East Hampton, a very extensive track record," he said. "I've also been named a friend of education for my work on the board, and as a community member."

In addition, several years ago Krupa, who used to be a high school teacher in town, worked with five others to help build the current Chatham Historical Society building.

"I have the experience in town and in the

community as a volunteer. I've been active on a lot fronts, my record around town speaks for itself," he said. "I'm proud to be a part of East Hampton."

He added, "I think I'd be a good fit."

Krupa also said he "wants to continue the progress the teachers and administrators have started."

"They've led the schools to very good academic heights. I feel I can contribute," he stated.

Specifically, Krupa said he wants to help the schools and Board of Education communicate better with the residents.

"The school budget needs to be communicated better, for example," Krupa said. "Overall our schools need to be more active in telling people what they do, and need to toot their own horn a bit more."

He furthered, "A lot of people in town are

not fully aware of the progress the schools have made; for example our high school graduates can go anywhere and compete very well," he said.

Ted Turner, current Board of Finance chair, will also be seeking re-election. Linda May, who had previously run for the Board of Assessment Appeals in 2013, and Adam Dawidowicz, a member of the town's Clean Energy Task Force, will also be running for seats on the finance board.

Additionally, Matthew Walton, a former chair of the Board of Finance and a former member of the Fire Commission, and the current vice present of the Old Home Day Association, and David May, will be running for slots on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

This year's election takes place Tuesday, Nov. 3.

# Belltown Republicans Announce Fall Candidates

by John Tyczkowski

The East Hampton Republican Town Committee has announced its slate for the upcoming fall municipal elections, with many familiar faces.

Candidates for the Town Council include Patience Anderson, Ted Hintz Jr. and Mark Philhower, who are already serving on the council.

Also present on this year's Republican Town Council slate are Josh Piteo, currently serving on the Board of Education, and Melissa Engel, who served on the Town Council in various capacities from 1999 to 2011, including several times as council chair.

Piteo, who has been serving on the school board for two terms, previously ran for Town Council, and was host of the public access talk show *Get Real*, said he wants to shakeup the council's leadership.

"We've got a lot of issues in this town, and the current town council majority isn't providing the leadership in the way the town likes. There's got to be some major changes," he said. "We had three failed budgets and people aren't happy. The one that passed isn't what the majority wanted."

Piteo said he wanted to help create budgets which could pass on the first try, and provide better ways for residents and the town government to plan what needs to be done for the future.

Piteo said action is a key part of his plan for the Town Council, as he called current leadership "too timid and afraid of voters."

"They can't make decisions," he said. "They've got a lot of facilities issues but haven't proposed anything but study group after study group."

He furthered, "The study groups give their results, and they give no action. They have a

study to study what the other study group did."

Piteo said his major goal is to serve the town by giving the public multiple options for the problems the town faces.

"I think in order to make things better, we need new voices, and I'd like to be one of those on the Town Council," he said. "For example, Kevin Reich worked in the school system for years, but was never on the Board of Education. I have been, so I can let the council know what Board of Education deliberations are like, especially around budget season."

Engel, meanwhile, said she wanted to return to the Town Council after her four-year break because "so many exciting things are happening in town now," chief among them being infrastructure updates to the town hall, police station and Center School.

"We began looking at all the options when I was on the council in 2008, but it fell by the wayside," she said. "Now it's being resurrected, and I'm very interested in having a hand in its direction and helping it get going."

A chief concern of Engel is affordability. "Serious changes need to happen with our town hall and police station in particular. I want to move the town forward, but without breaking the bank," she said, adding, "We need to be able to do it in a manner that doesn't hit us so hard that people can't afford to live in town."

Engel also said she wants to revive the town charter revision process, which she supported and worked to begin prior to the Chatham Party sweep in the 2011 election.

"One of my main goals was to separate the budget into two parts like Colchester does. We need to be more specific about our budget," she said, explaining that could "narrow down residents' concerns about spending."

Consequently, "It's more efficient and it'll save money on referendums," she said, since



From left are Republican Town Council nominees Melissa Engel, Mark Philhower, Patience Anderson, Ted Hintz, Jr. and Josh Piteo. Philhower, Anderson and Hintz are the current Republicans on the Town Council. Engel is a past council member and chair, and Piteo serves on the Board of Education.

fewer concerns would mean the budget is more likely to pass without multiple referendums.

Finally, Engel said a goal of hers on the Town Council would be better education on the schools budget.

"I'm not interested in taking away from students, teachers or programming, but I am interested in dissolving waste," she said. "The Town Council needs to demonstrate a better understanding of the Board of Education budget."

As for the Board of Finance, the Republicans are putting forth Allison Tokarz, Janine

Jiantonio and Steve Ritchie as their candidates.

For the Board of Education, candidates included Alannah Coshow, who previously served as the town's Republican Registrar of Voters; George Coshow, who had previously served as the vice chair of the Economic Development Commission, as a member of Board of Education and who had been an alternate on the Middle Haddam Historic District Commission; Mike Rose; and Erika Bonaccorso.

This year's election takes place Tuesday, Nov. 3.

# Middle Haddam Library Annex Future Uncertain

by John Tyczkowski

The Middle Haddam Public Library is at the center of a debate over a proposed expansion that began in 2011.

Leonard Blake, a former resident in town and a long-time patron of the library, died five years ago and left in his will \$335,301 to the library.

Though Blake had moved to Florida when he retired, he owned a property in Middle Haddam. He had also been a past member of the Board of Directors.

To accept that money, the library would have to create an annex to the building according to Blake's will. The language of the will specifies "a glass-enclosed porch area overlooking the wildlife area surrounding the library."

James Royster, chair of the library's board of directors, and a former chair of the Middle Haddam Historic District Commission, said the board did take the historic nature of the library into account when drawing up plans for the annex.

"We did not even attempt to have a glassed-in porch area. Instead, we included as much traditional glass as we could to fulfill Mr. Blake's request as best we could, in a design fitting the library's historical features," he said. "We're constrained by the nature of the Middle Haddam Historic District."

As a legal condition of accepting the bequest money, the library must make a good faith attempt to fulfill its stipulations reasonably and fairly, he said.

"You have some latitude to interpret the instructions in a way that's compatible with the historic district and the library," he said. "But

you don't have the ability to disregard the terms, and you can't make a token response."

The current plans for the annex were submitted to the Middle Haddam Historic District Commission and approved in April, after being approved by the State Historic Preservation Office in November of 2014.

The state got involved with the plans, Royster said, because of a state grant the library received in 2010 to make improvements to the library and its electrical system.

"Ordinarily we don't have to seek approval from the state," he said. "But the state agency receives certain rights over the property as a condition of accepting the grant – for any changes inside or outside the structure."

The state's say over the property expires this year.

Royster said the board put forth a first annex plan to the public in 2012. After being rejected by patrons, the board worked on a second draft.

"We were searching for over a year for an alternate plan that would be visually appealing and which would comply with the conditions of the will," he said.

However, earlier in the summer, a petition posted in the Middle Haddam Post Office, with the goal of keeping the library as it currently is gathered 92 signatures.

The petition states, "We, the patrons and supporters of the Middle Haddam Public Library, want the library to maintain, not expand, the library building."

"I don't know how many people who signed this petition understand the ramifications of what this statement means," Royster said. "If

we complied with the petition, we'd have to disregard the specific terms of Mr. Blake's will. It would be a breach of our fiduciary responsibilities as a library."

The Middle Haddam Public Library is a private non-profit entity dedicated to the maintenance and management of the library. It is not a town department, but it does receive town funds to help with operating expenses, and the board of directors prefers to seek input from its patrons on major projects, Royster said.

Additionally, Royster said a major reason the board wants to accept the money and build the annex is because such an action could aid in helping the library meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance guidelines, which the State Library said, in 2006, the MHPL should comply with.

However, the library is not legally required to be strictly ADA compliant, Royster said.

"The ADA law is very lengthy and complex, and there are certain circumstances under which historic properties do not have to comply with the letter of the law," he said. "For example, if doing so would materially destroy or detract from historical features of the building. But, we want to make the building more inaccessible."

However, the library, as a public building, must still comply with the spirit of the law, and ADA measures are allowed to be more relaxed to fit the historical features of the building. The annex seemed like the perfect "opportunity to apply with that direction while at the same time reasonable and fairly honoring the stipulations therein," Royster said.

Also, as an added incentive, Royster said

ADA compliance would also increase the library's chances of receiving a state grant for to offset the cost of the annex, which would require more money than in Blake's will.

"The library board made a decision as a matter of choice that we want to make the library handicapped accessible, whether or not it is required by the law or not," he said. "This is a way to blend two goals together in a way we could afford."

Currently, there is a "very tiny" bathroom located in the library's basement accessible only by stairs, and the library is only accessible from the outside by steps.

"We don't want to have to deliver books curbside to patrons," Royster said. "This is a public space, and we want everyone to be able to come into the library."

The plan the library is considering now includes a graded sidewalk with a rise of less than 1:20 around the annex, surrounded by a terrace, leading into the main library, designed by architect Brian Davis of Glastonbury.

"He had done a similar plan for the congregational church [in Glastonbury], which provided handicapped-accessibility without the railings and other intrusive ADA requirements," Royster said. "However, we haven't necessarily settled on what we want to do yet."

"Ultimately though, we want to make the place handicapped-accessible," Royster said. "Going forward, this is the right thing to do."

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Another story on the Middle Haddam Public Library issue will appear in next week's *Rivereast*.

# Obituaries

## Portland

### Joseph P. Murphy

Joseph P. Murphy, 72, of Portland, passed away Saturday, July 25, at Middlesex Hospital. He was the son of the late William P. and Rosemary (Coen) Murphy. Born Aug. 26, 1942, in Middletown, he grew up in Portland.

He leaves his brothers, Richard P. Murphy (Patricia) of Portland, John F. Murphy (Julie) of West Palm Beach, Fla., and Thomas M. Murphy (Karen) of Southlake, Texas; a sister, Mary K. Murphy (Sherry) of Fulton, N.Y.; nieces and nephews, Rosemary, Shaun, Eli, Cain, Justin and Jordon; and several cousins.

He was predeceased by a brother, William P. Murphy.

Funeral services were held Thursday, July 30, with a Mass at the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial was in St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Relatives and friends called Thursday morning, before the Mass, at the church.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Portland Food Bank or to the Portland Senior Center, both at 7 Waverly Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit [portlandmemorialfh.net](http://portlandmemorialfh.net).

## Portland

### Louis S. Tuccitto

Louis S. Tuccitto, 95, husband of Mary (Bilyak) Tuccitto, died Friday, July 24, at the Connecticut Baptist Home. Born in Portland Aug. 2, 1919, he was the son of the late Sebastiano and Angelina (Sienna) Tuccitto.

Mr. Tuccitto was employed by Fafnir Bearing Co. and was a veteran of World War II, having served with the U.S. Army. He was a parishioner of St. Mary Church and a member of the American Legion, the Eagles and the St. Mary Men's Club.

Besides his wife, Mary, of 70 years, he is survived by two daughters, Gayle Tuccitto and Cynthia Tuccitto and her husband, Carl Nagy; a grandson, Todd M. Perry and his wife, Colleen; two great-grandchildren, Alec M. Perry and Luke E. Perry; and many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by six brothers, Salvatore, Joseph, Francis, Peter J., John, and William; and five sisters, Elizabeth, Cecila, Anna, Mary, and Josephine.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, July 29, from the John J. Ferry & Sons Funeral Home, 88 E. Main St., Meriden, to St. Mary Church for a Mass of Christian Burial. Burial with military honors was in Sacred Heart Cemetery. Family and friends called at the funeral home Wednesday morning, prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, contributions in his memory may be made to the Connecticut Baptist Home, 292 Thorpe Ave., Meriden, CT 06450; or to the American Cancer Society, New England Division, 38 Richard Ave., Norwalk, CT 06854.

The Tuccitto family would like to express their gratitude to the staff of the Connecticut Baptist Home and the Franciscan Hospice Care for the love and compassionate care given to Louis and his wife, Mary.

For online condolences, visit [jferryfh.com](http://jferryfh.com).

## Portland

### Valeree Mae LeBlanc

Valeree Mae (Webster) LeBlanc, 95, of Portland, passed away peacefully Friday, July 24, at Autumn Lake Health Care.

Valeree had an incredible sense of humor. She had the ability to cheer people with her wonderful songs – all who knew her would eventually sing with her. She will be greatly missed.

Valerie is predeceased by her husband, Roland LeBlanc, and her first husband, Harry Amara. She is survived by her daughter, Angela Massaro, and her husband William of Newington, and her sons Gary Amara of Madison and Kevin LeBlanc of Iowa; five grandchildren, Debbie Biella, Masey Kaplan, Wendy Ganci, Paul Amara and Gary (Geep) Amara; 10 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren.

Family and friends visited the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield Thursday, July 30. A celebration of Valeree's life was held Thursday evening. The burial will be private and held at the convenience of the family.

To share a memory of Valeree with her family, visit [desopo.com](http://desopo.com).

## East Hampton

### Conrad Kronholm Jr.

Conrad John Kronholm Jr. was born March 31, 1929, followed by his brother Marshall on Oct. 4, 1931, quite a responsibility for their parents, a young couple who would soon be experiencing the Great Depression.

In his own words: "We lived in a two-family house in New Britain, Connecticut until the company my father worked for went out of business. We moved in with my maiden great aunt on my mother's side, Annie Daly, who lived on a farm in East Hampton. She was a wonderful woman to take us on. We had plenty of food and wood for the furnace. There was no running water inside the house, but there was a pump outside the kitchen door. Uncle Mike Daly had a dairy farm just up the road, so we had milk, cheese, butter and the best homemade ice cream. We were lucky to have family.

"Things got better in the '40s and we moved to West Hartford. My parents decided I needed to go away to school due to poor grades at the local high school. The Salisbury School, its headmaster, George Langdon, and my parents changed my life. I went on to graduate from Brown University and the University of Connecticut School of Law after being honorably discharged from the United States Marine Corps. I graduated from law school but failed the bar exam on my first try so went into the insurance business. Passing the bar helped my pride but I decided to stay in the insurance business. I was happy there.

"I have been happily married for many years to my wife Kathleen, whom I love dearly. I am survived by my oldest and best friend, my brother, Marshall Kronholm and his wife Chris. I've been blessed by my daughter Bailey McGee and her late husband Barry, and my sons Eric and Justin and Justin's wife Candace. My son John left me a long time ago. So sad. I love my grandchildren, John Lucey, Simone and Lucian Kronholm, Hanna, Colin and Marina Kronholm, and Charlotte and Esme Kronholm. My wife's three children, Gretchen Glick and her husband Lt. Col. J.C. Glick, Ret., Eric Norden and his wife Jennifer, and Elizabeth Mishurda and her husband Neil, have all been great to me and I love them and their children, Casey, Corbett and Stephen Glick, Nathaniel Norden, and Luca, Max and Bode Mishurda. I also love my godchildren, John Kennelly and Andrew Campbell.

"Good bye to my loving wife, children, grandchildren, stepchildren and step-grandchildren – to all my family and my friends. I would list you all but I would certainly forget some, and that would be a terrible mistake. As a Rabbi once said at a funeral service that I attended: 'What we all want is to be remembered fondly.' Truer words were never spoken. I hope you all do."

Connie was an avid philanthropist, entrepreneur, art collector, epicurean, and armchair politician. A true Nutmegger, he loved his home with Kathy and his beloved Bouvier Lola in Old Lyme near the Lieutenant River, and spoke fondly and frequently of his years spent with family in Hartford and West Hartford, at the beach in GLP, and on the farm in East Haddam. Quick with a story and never hesitant to impart sage advice, Connie was a force to be reckoned with in the best of ways – wise, well-regarded and well-loved.

Connie died peacefully at home with his family Friday, July 24, from lung cancer. The doctors and nurses at Yale and his family did all they could to help him get better and recover. It was not meant to be. He will be remembered with the greatest of fondness as a loving husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend.

Connie's family would like to express their sincerest gratitude for the care given by Hospice Care of Middlesex and Help With a Heart. Donations in his memory may be made to the children's wing at Smilow Cancer Hospital at Yale or Shriners Children's Hospital.

As Connie always said, it was one thing to get cancer at 85, but a true tragedy to face this battle at a young age.

Calling hours were Thursday, July 30, at Saint Ann's Episcopal Church, 82 Shore Rd., Old Lyme, in the Griswold room. A funeral service will be held today, July 31, in St. Ann's Episcopal Church, at 11 a.m.

Visit [fultontherouxoldlyme.com](http://fultontherouxoldlyme.com) for photos, tributes, directions and more service information.

## Haddam Neck

### Peter R. Yara

Peter R. Yara, 62, of Haddam Neck, passed away peacefully Wednesday, July 22, at Middlesex Hospital. Peter was born in Hartford Aug. 23, 1952, to the late Frank and Frances Yara. He grew up in Meriden, and was a graduate of Orville H. Platt High School where he established lifelong friendships.

He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Dolores (Kogut) Yara; his daughter, Jessica Gordon and her husband Scott of Haddam Neck; his daughter, Kimberly Cirillo and her husband Kevin of Simsbury; his grandchildren, Madeline and Jacob Gordon; and his sister, Christine (Yara) Tine of Meriden.

Peter was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and friend. He was the rock and foundation to a strong and loving family that will miss him immensely. Peter was self-employed for over 30 years. Peter started his furniture restoration business, Custom Wood, in his early twenties where he created beautiful furniture pieces for his customers. Peter's passion for wood restoration will live on through the beautiful heirloom pieces he gifted to his family and friends throughout the years.

Peter and Dolores had the opportunity to enjoy many years of travel together, which included trips to Europe, Alaska, the Caribbean, and most recently Hawaii. Peter was an avid fisherman relishing the countless fishing trips with family, friends and his fishing buddy, John. He cherished the tractor rides he had at his property in Haddam Neck with his grandchildren, instilling his appreciation and love for nature.

Peter had a great love for classic rock and attended numerous concerts during his life. Peter also had a great affection for animals and will be reunited with his loyal Collie, Sable. Peter was a New York Yankees and Giants fan and treasured those quiet nights routing for his favorite sports teams. Peter was a great cook and his family adored the evenings he would grill something special for the entire crew.

Peter's family would like to thank the staff at Middlesex Hospital Hospice Unit and the Smilow Cancer Hospital, Floor 12 for all their compassion and care given to Peter and his family during his last days. His funeral will be a private.

Memorial contributions in memory of Peter may be made to the Cholangiocarcinoma Foundation, 5526 West 13400 South, #510, Salt Lake City, UT 84096 or online at [cholangiocarcinoma.org](http://cholangiocarcinoma.org).

Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the Stempfen Funeral Home, 450 Broad St., Meriden. To send an online expression of sympathy, visit [stempfenfuneralhome.com](http://stempfenfuneralhome.com).

## East Hampton

### Margaret Prestash

Margaret Prestash, 91, of East Hampton, formerly of New Britain, widow of Anthony Prestash, passed away peacefully Sunday, July 26. Born March 7, 1924, in Meriden, she was the daughter of the late Paul and Mary Stevens.

Margaret is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Anthony S. and Teri L. Prestash of East Hampton; her sister, MaryAnn Novicelli of Meriden; and two grandsons, Curtis and Justin Prestash.

Friends may call at The Ahern Funeral Home, 111 Main St., Rt. 4, Unionville, today, July 31, from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Mary's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, 54 Winter St., New Britain, CT 06053.

To send online condolences to the family, visit [ahernfuneralhome.com](http://ahernfuneralhome.com).

*From the Editor's Desk*

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Geeta Schrayter's cover story in last week's *Rivereast* about the "plethora of problems" with the RHAM middle and high school buildings was quite interesting – and a little saddening too.

I was the Hebron reporter for the *Rivereast* when the new RHAM complex opened. I was also there for the final days of the old buildings, so I knew what the new schools were replacing. Those were old buildings, and you could certainly argue they had served their purpose.

Anyway, I covered the construction project, took a tour of the in-the-works schools, and was there when the new buildings were finally unveiled. And they were eye-popping. Everything was so shiny. The hallways were so spacious, the classrooms so welcoming. It reminded me more of a college academic building than a high school. And the auditorium – wow; you couldn't say enough about it. Just beautiful. It's proven to be a fantastic venue over the years for everything ranging from school musicals to symphony concerts.

The building did have its problems – almost as soon as it opened. I remember one of the final RHAM issues I covered as a reporter before moving over to the *Glastonbury Citizen* in 2004 involved moisture causing the floor to bubble up in the cafeteria, which eventually led to a very expensive repair.

But for the most part, the school looked fantastic, and I expected it would continue that way for quite some time. That's why I was surprised, and a little appalled, to read in Geeta's story about some of the issues at the schools – things like cracking and crumbling concrete, pieces missing from wooden benches, caulking around the school's foundation that was shown to be lifting, moldy rooms, faulty windows, roof drains with birds' nests in them – even some poison ivy thrown in for good measure.

The whole thing is a shame; it really is. And while some of it may be chalked up to shoddy construction work – in some cases, work done as recently as last year, such as the gross (and unlevel!) stairs that were shown on the cover of last week's paper – I also feel not enough money has been spent over the years on maintaining the buildings. There have been several times over the years money that had been designated for various repairs was taken out of the RHAM budget during the annual budget-crafting process each spring, all to get the overall increase down to a more palatable number. And, yeah, it worked – RHAM budgets often pass these days on their first trips to referendum – but at what cost?

It doesn't matter how new something is – be it a car or be it a building. If you don't maintain it, do the repair work that's needed when it's needed, it can get old real fast.

Last week, a colleague at the *Citizen* was reading Geeta's story and was incredulous when he read about the school board not having a long-term capital plan for the schools. "How could they not have a capital plan?" he wondered. And I agree; the absence of such a

plan is pretty amazing.

I'm sure repairs will get done. Among the officials who attended last week's walkthrough of the deteriorating buildings was state Sen. Cathy Osten, who vowed to work with the school district on receiving state funds for some of the repair work. There are "many, many grants available," Osten said.

I have no doubt Cathy will deliver. But I hope that, once things are repaired, the Board of Education will do a better job of staying on top of the matter – and actually funding maintenance work when it comes due.

This was a \$70 million building project, one that yielded two absolutely gorgeous schools. The schools deserve better – and so do Andover, Hebron and Marlborough taxpayers, who, let's not forget, are still paying off these buildings.

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In lighter news, a few weeks back you may recall my piece about the disgusting pile of snow in Boston, which finally had melted. I was amazed the snow had lasted as long as it did.

Well, perhaps I should've kept my amazement in check – because Tuesday I learned the poor folks in Buffalo, N.Y., are *still* dealing with the white stuff.

Well, not quite white. It actually looks more like an Oreo Blizzard from Dairy Queen.

According to the Associated Press, two piles remain in one abandoned lot where trucks dumped snow after a freak storm last November deposited up to seven feet of it in the city – and officials simply had no place to put it all.

When they were at their peak, the snow mounds towered over light poles in the lot. But now, there is one pile about the size of two school buses end to end, while the other a bit smaller. "Grayish white ice peeks through," AP reporter Carolyn Thompson wrote, "but both resemble earthen berms, because the snow is covered with a thick layer of dirt and even grass."

The surrounding land is swampy, Thompson wrote, offering proof the snow is slowly melting. But why, when August is mere hours away, is there still snow on the ground?

The article quotes New York state climatologist Mark Wysocki, who said the dirt cover is insulating the snow, drawing out the time it is taking for the warmth of the sun to reach it. The ground is heating from below and, as a result, Wysocki said, "you've got snow in the middle and heat from above and heat from below, and it's slowly eating away at the snow."

Wysocki said how long the snow lasts depends on how thick the covering layer is.

"It could," he warned, "be there when the next snow falls."

Hopefully, that first snowfall of the season is a long, long way away – not just for Buffalo but for all of us.

See you next week.