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Congratulations, Ann!...Longtime East Hampton volunteer Ann McLaughlin received kudos from the Town Council this week in the form of a proclamation praising her for her significant contributions to the community. McLaughlin created the Yellow Ribbon Welcome Home program to honor local service members upon their return from overseas and coordinates the town's Wreaths Across America activities. She is chairman of the local Commission on Aging and has served as a member of the local Housing Authority since 2008.

Residents Campaign To Keep Sidewalks

by Elizabeth Regan

It was standing-room-only at a public hearing in Portland last week on how to spend \$1 million set aside for the repair and replacement of sidewalks in town.

The hearing was held at the Portland Public Library as a way to gauge resident reaction to some preliminary ideas about fixing certain sidewalks within a half-mile radius of the town's schools.

A committee of residents and town staff identified portions of Spring Street, Freestone Avenue, Fairview Street, Waverly Avenue and East Main Street for repair or replacement – and in a few instances, for possible removal.

A majority of those present said they did not want any existing sidewalks removed.

The million dollars is a small portion of the \$10 million bonding package approved by voters a year ago to fund the Route 17 recreation park and to address infrastructure needs in the town center.

Selectman Ben Srb advocated earlier this year for replacing sidewalks on only one side of streets as a way to make \$1 million go further.

Sidewalk Committee co-chairman Bob Herron said members are trying to decide if they should remove a section of sidewalk on Freestone Avenue east of East Main Street on the side opposite Saint Mary Church, and possibly on another section after Cross Street. Another option would be doing nothing to those areas of sidewalk.

Replacing both sides was described as an impossibility given budgetary constraints.

"A million dollars is great – should be pretty easy to spend – but we probably need \$3 or \$4

million to do the sidewalks we really want to do," Herron said.

A review of sidewalks in a half-mile radius of the town's schools by Public Works Director Rick Kelsey in August revealed it would cost \$3.22 million to replace approximately 7.8 miles of sidewalk.

The committee was also considering removing one side of sidewalk in the area of Waverly Avenue where it dead-ends.

On East Main Street, Herron said the committee was considering adding a portion of sidewalk in front of the Trinity Church cemetery to create a smooth, safe passage on the west side of the street. That plan would involve either ignoring or removing sidewalks on the odd numbered side of the street between Spring Street and Fairview Street as well as between Waverly and Freestone, which Herron said would be more expensive to replace due to topography and the presence of older trees.

East Main Street resident Colleen Kimball said the plan affecting her street is a "horrible idea."

"It makes no sense to take our sidewalks out in front of our houses but put the sidewalks in front of the cemetery," Kimball said.

Lambros Lambrinides, who is running for first selectman, said it is illogical to address sidewalk issues on Freestone Avenue until the street is repaved to take off 4-6 inches that have accumulated through chip sealing. The extra height causes rain to run from the road onto sidewalks, which can lead to cracks.

Lambrinides described it as a "waste of money" to fix the sidewalks without fixing the

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Colchester Senior Center Plans at Standstill

by Julianna Roche

With the land purchased for a new and improved Colchester Senior Center, the town is ready for what comes next – but, according to Board of Selectmen member Rosemary Coyle, that won't be much until a state budget is set in place.

While the state Senate, according to *CT News Junkie*, voted 33-3 early Thursday morning on a \$41.34 billion, two-year budget, as of press time the spending package had yet to be approved by the state House, let alone signed off on by Gov. Dannel Malloy. As such, it remains unknown how much financial aid Colchester and other municipalities will receive from the state. That uncertainty is putting the senior center project on hold.

Coyle explained that without that "financial piece," moving ahead with establishing a new building committee to start planning the new center's design "is not really fair" to the public.

"If you set up a building committee, people expect you to hire an architect, design [the new building] and move forward," she said – but added none of that can happen until impacts of potential state budget cuts to municipal funding are known. "We have a responsibility to do it right – to present it to the town with all the pieces, so when they vote on it, they can make an informed decision."

After considering 11 other properties, the town paid \$90,000 for a 1.5-acre piece of land which sits on Lebanon Avenue directly behind Town Hall, closing on the property this spring. Coyle explained that once the state budget crisis is settled, the next step would be for town officials to discuss a financial plan and establish a building committee, which would be responsible for overseeing the architectural design of the new senior center.

The committee's finalized plans would then go to referendum, giving residents the oppor-

tunity to vote in support or against moving the project forward.

"In town there's been tremendous bipartisan support [for a new senior center] and that's how you move a project forward – by working together," Coyle said. "I think everybody's anxious to start a building committee, but we have to be prudent and have all the pieces before [doing that]."

Senior Center Director Patty Watts agreed, adding that during the Colchester Chapter of the AARP's annual Meet the Candidates forum this week, seeing plans for a new senior center come to fruition "seemed to be at the top of everyone's [all of the candidates'] platform."

The director furthered that despite those plans being at a standstill with the state budget crisis, support for the new facility still has "a lot of momentum politically and throughout the community ... which is very, very exciting."

The existing senior center, located at 95 Nor-

wich Ave., is "being used pretty much to capacity these days, which is wonderful in some aspects, but presents challenges in others," Watts said, adding that the current senior center – which is 126 years old and 5,600 square feet – has approximately 1,070 registered members to date.

She added use of the current space has been "maximized," noting that on average, the senior center hosts 150 to 200 programs each month and offers approximately 1,000 bus rides.

Watts has also explained that in the next 10 years, 40 percent of Colchester's total population will be 55 or older – and that she doesn't expect that level of senior growth to slow anytime soon.

"We're very excited of the prospect of a new, modern facility to accommodate all the growth," she said. She said the senior center has "garnered a reputation regionally of having fun and

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Sidewalks cont. from Front Page

street first. Herron said the committee’s task was to identify sidewalks that should be fixed — not roadways.

The bond money for road work and utility line repairs on Spring Street will cover most of the new sidewalk on Spring Street, roughly from High Street to the East Main Street intersection. Money from the sidewalk bond will complete the connection to Main Street, according to Herron.

This week, Herron said there has been disagreement within the committee on the idea of removing sidewalks.

“That’s why we were happy that we could schedule a public hearing so quickly to hear other voices, and especially those living nearby these potentially affected areas,” Herron said.

During the public hearing, Srb emphasized that funding is limited.

“It’s only a million dollars. We’ve had a lot of discussion about saving both sides of the street. That’s what everybody wants, but the reality is we probably can’t do all of that area,” he said.

The committee did not include Main Street, which is a state road, on its list of priority streets. Herron said there may be state funding available for some of that work.

Bransfield told those at the public hearing there’s another issue: Some selectmen believe the state is responsible for maintaining sidewalks on that road.

Brian Flood, who resigned from the Board of Selectmen earlier this year, has been most vocal that the road, perpendicular parking areas and sidewalks are the state’s responsibility.

Connecticut Department of Transportation spokesman Kevin Nursick has said the state is only responsible for the travel and shoulder portions of the road.

Bransfield said she has had discussions with state Department of Transportation personnel who have reiterated the sidewalks are the town’s responsibility.

She pointed to grant funding that allowed for the repair of sidewalks between Dunkin’ Donuts and the Arrigoni Bridge. While the project was paid for by the state, Bransfield said the town had to agree in writing to maintain the sidewalks going forward.

Bransfield this week said the town has applied for a grant program, administered by the state Department of Transportation, to make town and city centers more conducive to walking and biking. Grants range from \$75,000 to \$400,000.

Whose Responsibility is It, Anyway?

Some residents bristled at the idea that they have been footing the bill for sidewalk maintenance while others will be getting a free ride.

Local ordinance requires homeowners to keep adjoining sidewalks in good repair. When the rule is violated, the town is authorized to make repairs and charge them to the home-

owner.

Residents and officials agreed the ordinance is not enforced.

East Main Street resident Bill Kutz said he’s already replaced his sidewalk twice.

“When I bought my property 50 years ago, I was told the homeowner is responsible for the sidewalk,” he said. “Anybody who doesn’t take care of the sidewalk, the town should go fix it and send the homeowner a bill. And if people don’t pay, put a lien on the house.”

Donna Delesdernier, of Waverly Avenue, asked if she could get a deduction on her property tax to help make up for the money she’s spent maintaining her sidewalk like she’s supposed to do.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said there are other options that have been floated among selectmen. One idea might be for the town to secure a contractor to fix the sidewalks, then assess abutting homeowners for the cost. Another possibility would be for the town to fix the sidewalks as long as adjacent homeowners agree to maintain them going forward.

She emphasized the importance of updating the existing sidewalk ordinance, portions of which were established in 1934.

Liability concerns have dominated discussion on revising the ordinance. Selectmen like Srb have been adamant that maintaining sidewalks is the abutting homeowner’s responsibility.

Kelsey said in January that “many” injury claims related to sidewalks have come across his desk. He said providing the insurance companies with a copy of the ordinance has protected the town from blame.

“To the best of my knowledge, I don’t believe we’ve been liable or paid for claims of that nature,” Kelsey said at the time.

Town Attorney Kari Olson, however, said in a 2015 legal opinion that state statute does not grant municipalities the authority to force abutting property owners to repair or replace sidewalks. Towns are empowered only to require residents to clear snow and ice. She said her opinion is based on several cases in the state superior court, though none of them had been appealed to a higher court at the time.

She concluded the ordinance would likely not withstand a challenge if enforced - but she said waiting for an appellate court decision would be “a reasonable position to take.”

* * *

The Sidewalk Committee will meet Nov. 14 to discuss input from the public and the Board of Selectmen, Herron said.

The committee’s goal is to reach consensus among its members, the selectmen and the public by December in order to carry out the competitive bidding process early in the new year.

Bransfield said there will be more public hearings before any final decisions are made.

Senior Center cont. from Front Page

different, innovative programs. ... We want to keep them fresh and fun, relevant, and educational to help enrich the lives of those folks 55 and up [and] we feel like a new facility will enable us to do more of that.”

Watts explained that having a larger facility would also allow for the senior center to host community-wide events – which due to lack of indoor space and parking constraints in the cur-

rent building – is difficult or nearly impossible.

“I like the idea of the public coming into the senior center and getting used to the things we have going on because every positive exposure to senior services works further to educate the public on how vital we are to the community,” she said. “I can’t wait to see what happens and we are only seeing the beginning.”

State Budget Effect on RHAM Remains Uncertain

by Lauren Yandow

A public hearing to discuss possible supplemental cuts to the RHAM budget ended before it even began.

RHAM Board of Education Chairman Danny Holtsclaw said last week that the hearing, originally scheduled for this past Monday, was cancelled after legislative leaders in Hartford reached a consensus on a state budget last Thursday.

This Thursday, *The Hartford Courant* reported that the state senate voted 33-3 in favor of a \$41 billion bipartisan state budget. As of press time Thursday, the state House of Representatives had not voted.

If passed by the House, the state budget will move to Gov. Dannel P. Malloy.

During an Oct. 17 RHAM Board of Education meeting, Superintendent of Schools Patricia Law proposed a supplemental budget plan that included eliminating ten teacher positions and cutting all middle school sports and six high school sports.

After the presentation, students, parents and faculty approached the education board with concerns over the proposed reductions. Many pleaded with the district to rethink the cuts.

The now-cancelled RHAM education board hearing was initially set up for the education board to get additional public input and have further discussion on the cuts proposed by Law, Holtsclaw said. Once the hearing was adjourned, school board members were scheduled to enter into a special meeting to address whether or not they wanted to send a supplemental budget to referendum.

Unfortunately, Holtsclaw said Tuesday, since a state budget has not been finalized and no

details have been released, “having a hearing or meeting on the budget without knowing the full breadth of the new consensus would be unproductive.”

The education board will “certainly convene when we have more clarity on the state’s budget,” he added.

Hebron Board of Finance Chairman Mal Leichter said the local finance board had nothing to do with the meeting getting cancelled.

Leichter said he believes the regional school board likely decided it was “not the right time” to discuss sending a supplemental budget to referendum, since towns currently don’t know what funds may or may not be coming from the state.

Leichter has spearheaded an effort, with the help of the school board, selectmen and town staff, to circulate a budget reduction letter to all of Hebron. Leichter has said the letter will inform residents of the town’s financial status, as well as how town officials are and will continue to fiscally manage Hebron.

Leichter said Wednesday the letter will address the fact that changes due to the state budget are “not a one year issue” but rather, “an ongoing issue.” Since the town doesn’t have any answers, he said the letter is a “look out [because] this is coming.”

How the letter will be circulated is still undecided. Leichter said this week it will depend on when the state budget is sent to Malloy’s desk and what the governor does with it.

The content of the letter will be reworked based on the most updated information from Hebron’s elected officials in Hartford, Leichter said.

East Hampton Man Charged with Pointing Gun on B-Ball Court

by Elizabeth Regan

An East Hampton man was arrested earlier this month on a host of charges after allegedly interrupting a pickup basketball game at Sears Park by pointing a handgun at the head of an 18-year-old player.

Jason Canterbury, 34, was charged with first-degree threatening, first-degree reckless endangerment and second-degree breach of peace on Oct. 11.

According to an arrest warrant affidavit signed by a Middlesex Superior Court judge on Sept. 15, the incident occurred in late June. A group of four juveniles and three 18-year-olds were involved in their weekly game of basketball when another juvenile began “an unsolicited verbal altercation” with the players, police said.

The juvenile who allegedly started the fight was under 16 years old, according to the affidavit.

The players stopped their game and asked the kid to leave, police said. But witnesses say the juvenile was back a short time later, along with a man later identified as Canterbury and another adult who arrived in a Volkswagen with loud exhaust.

Police said the victim told them Canterbury pulled the handgun from a hip holster and told the victim to “back the f—k up” while pointing it the player’s head.

The alleged victim told police the conversation lasted several minutes and that Canterbury had the gun pointed at him “the entire time,” according to the affidavit.

There were no shots fired, police said, and

the juvenile and two adults eventually got back in the Volkswagen and headed north out of the park.

Police said Canterbury came to the police department voluntarily five days later after he was identified by officers as a suspect. He told officers he was at home when he received a call from the juvenile suspect saying there was going to be a fight. That’s when Canterbury got into his 2002 Volkswagen GTI VR6 and drove to the park, according to the affidavit.

Police said Canterbury initially told them he tried to keep the peace and just wanted to get the juvenile suspect “out of there without any trouble.”

The affidavit reveals that, upon further questioning, Canterbury admitted he brandished the Glock 21 handgun “to intimidate” the victim.

Canterbury said he pulled the pistol from the holster and held it, pointed down, for the victim to see, according to police.

“...it was a stupid thing on my part. I wish I did it differently,” the affidavit quoted Canterbury as saying.

Police said a search of the statewide law enforcement database showed there were seven long guns and six hand guns legally registered in Canterbury’s name.

Canterbury posted a \$75,000 bond and was released from custody. He is next set to appear before the Middlesex Superior Court on Nov. 7, according to the state Judicial Branch website.



Bennington



Brown



Dostaler



Engel



Feegel



Hurst



Johnson



Kania



Markham



Minnick



Piteo



Philhower



Reich



Weintraub

Council Race Features 14 Candidates

by Elizabeth Regan

Fourteen town council candidates are vying for seven open seats on the East Hampton Town Council.

Residents will be asked to cast their votes for five candidates as they choose from five Democrats, four Republicans and five members of the Chatham Party.

Meet the Democrats

Matthew Bennington, 35, is a new face on the East Hampton political scene who said he brings a fresh perspective.

He said he and his wife chose to live in East Hampton because of its unique identity, good schools and reasonable cost of living.

"For years I have talked and thought about local and national government, hoping that others would represent my thoughts and views," he said. "With our son turning one this past July, it changed my perspective. I want to do what I can to help ensure he and our neighbors have opportunities like others have provided for me."

Bennington is an aeronautical engineer in the aircraft engine industry. He said he will use the technical and interpersonal skills he has developed in his career to help solve East Hampton's unique challenges.

He said he supports the enactment of the nine-point plan to address concerns about Lake Pocotopaug, the continued success of the public school system and economic development.

"I think we should help support business development in order to diversify our tax rolls and reduce the property tax burden on our citizens. One way is working to provide greater access to water resources on Route 66 and in our village center," he said.

James "Pete" Brown, 74, is an incumbent councilor. He was a 20-year member of the East Hampton Volunteer Fire Department and served on the Cemetery Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Brown, a former part-time member of the East Hampton Police Department, described himself as passionate about finding a new home for the outdated, undersized police station. A proposal combining the town hall, police department and Board of Education in a new municipal hub in the Edgewater Hill development on Route 66 will be going to voters at referendum on Election Day.

He said he volunteered to be the council liaison to both the police department and the current town facilities building committee and, if re-elected, will be committed to completing the new municipal hub project "on time and on budget."

Other priorities include expanding the public water system to include the Route 66 business corridor and the village center and implementing the 9-point plan for Lake Pocotopaug, he said.

"My biggest asset to the council is my willingness to work with other council members regardless of party affiliation," Brown said. "As a lifelong resident of East Hampton, I know the residents feel comfortable about calling or approaching me with their concerns."

Alan Hurst, 65, is a current member of the Board of Finance and Water Development Task Force. He is a former chairman of the Board of Education and served a term on the council from

1997-99. He has held appointed positions on the Conservation Commission, Economic Development Commission, the Arts and Culture Commission and several town facilities committees.

Hurst is a retired chief financial officer in the retail, manufacturing and nonprofit industries. He said his professional experience, as well as volunteer leadership roles with the Rotary Club of East Hampton, Middlesex Land Trust, his church and numerous other organizations, has taught him to communicate effectively and to listen to others' viewpoints.

"I like to be at the table when decisions are made, as I feel I represent a variety of interests," he said.

Hurst identified infrastructure issues, including the continued development of the public water system and the redevelopment of contaminated former industrial sites in the village center, as significant concerns facing the town. The new council will also have to deal with federal and state mandates and actions that affect the local budgeting process.

He said the municipal hub project, which he believes will be approved by voters at referendum, will be another key issue before the new council.

Dean Markham, 69, is a former state representative who served the 34th district from 1979 to 1993. The real estate agent and financial consultant is a current member of the Board of Finance and 250th Anniversary Committee.

Markham describes himself as a problem solver.

"I have track record of working affably, across party lines and with a broad range of citizens in our town," he said. "I have a solid knowledge of East Hampton's history and can provide information and guidance on what has or hasn't worked in the past."

He expressed a commitment to avoiding "foolish and wasteful spending" if elected to the council.

He said money spent by the Chatham Party-dominated council several years ago to purchase 35 acres on Terp Road would have been better spent on the Firemen's Grounds at Salmon River, which would have yielded several soccer fields.

He said the current council should not have paid for a ladder truck for the fire department with money from the mill rate stabilization fund established to moderate the impact of the high school renovation debt on taxpayers. The council's decision was made despite recommendations from the finance director and finance board to lease the truck over 10 years.

"That decision's impact to East Hampton is now coming to bear with our state's budget crisis," Markham said. "Those currently leading the council could have and should have done better to preserve our financial stability."

Kevin Michael Reich, 67, is two-term incumbent councilor and retired educator who served as assistant superintendent of schools in East Hampton.

"I chose to run for a third term because I believe the community is at a crossroads," he said. "The high school renovation project was recently completed, the police department/town hall/Board of Education facility is being pro-

posed to the voters in November and there is much to do to address water, lake and village center issues. I believe my thoughtful participation, willingness to work with all council members and experience would be an asset."

Reich said his priorities over the next term are to see the municipal hub project completed, develop a water plan that supports economic development in the village center and on Route 66, support the nine-point plan for Lake Pocotopaug and develop a comprehensive long-term capital plan to improve our aging facilities and infrastructure.

Meet the Republicans

Incumbent **Melissa H. Engel**, 61, has served a total of 14 non-consecutive years on the council. She said she is running again because "there is more to be done."

She cited the completion of the municipal hub is a priority.

"I have served with eight different councils as we struggled to find the right answer for our town hall/police department issues. This is the right answer at the right time and I am proud to present it to the voters on Nov. 7th," she said.

The water system and the need for a stronger business base as equally pressing concerns, according to Engel.

"I support partnering with a private water company to use our resources and their infrastructure to provide affordable water for the Village Center and Route 66 at little or no cost to taxpayers," she said. "Only then can we attract new businesses and bolster our existing ones. Without businesses to support our tax base homeowners pay the vast majority of our bills."

Engel, who holds a master's degree in public relations and owns Markham Meadows Campground, said her full time job is "keeping a watchful eye" on taxes.

"Because we have taken a Band-Aid approach to our infrastructure for so long we are now faced with major expenditures like the newly-renovated high school and a new municipal building. These all cost money. It becomes the job of your elected officials to be sure that money is spent wisely," she said.

Tim Feegel, 50, said deep family roots in town have fostered his passion for the town's history and its future.

Feegel has been the service and fixed operation manager at Jackson Chevrolet for more than 20 years. He sits on the national General Motors Advisory Board representing 4,100 dealerships and is a member of an advisory board for technical schools in the state. He's a past president of a statewide professional organization for service and parts managers.

"I have years of budget experience, solid communication skills as well as team building and problem-solving expertise that would be an asset to our council," he said.

He said he supports the municipal hub. He also echoed Engel's call to partner with a private water company for the development of a public water system.

"I join with others in wanting our tax dollars spent wisely where necessary, and not at all without solid demonstration of need," he said.

Incumbent **Mark Philhower**, 57, has served for six years on the town council and twenty

years on the Planning and Zoning Commission. He was a four-year member of the Conservation Commission and 10-year representative to the Midstate Regional Planning Agency, which is now known as the Lower Connecticut River Council of Governments.

He owns an HVAC contracting company.

"I am running for another term on the Town Council because in the face of economic turmoil – locally, statewide and nationally – our town needs a conservative voice. I have always been that voice and I will continue to be," he said.

Philhower identified the town's poor infrastructure as the most pressing need for the new council to address, adding that officials need to use a "sharp pencil" in planning for road repairs and updates to town facilities.

Josh Piteo, 54, is an incumbent councilor and the chairman of the 250th Anniversary Committee. He is a former member of the Board of Finance and Board of Education.

A commodities trader, Piteo has served in leadership roles with Catholic Charities of Middletown, ABC Women's Shelter in Middletown, the Rotary Club of East Hampton and the Connecticut Commission on Children.

"If I see a need in the community, I offer my assistance," he said. "I try to be helpful. I study the issues and offer suggestions; [I] give help where it's needed."

He listed his recent successes as being part of a town council that saw two consecutive local budgets passed by voters at referendum, purchased a ladder truck for the fire department, passed a teachers' contract and oversaw the transition to a new police dispatch system.

"These are matters that have helped town governance," he said. "Getting things done."

Meet the Chathams

Kyle Dostaler, 51, is a registered Democrat who served on the council under the Chatham Party banner from 2005-07 and then from 2011-13.

Dostaler is technology director, web developer and self-described "Internet guy."

He said the community's success depends on "carefully selecting projects and setting modest goals" that benefit a majority of residents.

"Last year, our debt service increased 144 percent," he said. "We need to carefully consider how we spend our taxpayer dollars to balance the costs of government and education. Any time we increase our debt means that there are fewer tax dollars available. We have to think out of the box more so than ever because we cannot depend on the state for funding."

Dostaler said his goal is to give back to the town and make a difference in how decisions are made to move the town forward.

"20th century solutions just don't apply anymore," he said.

Derek M. Johnson, 60, is an attorney and economist at the University of Connecticut. The registered Republican was the Town Council vice chairman from 2005-07 and a member from 2011-13.

He said his priorities on the council revolve around civil discussion, respect and the bridging of differences.

"We all live in the same town and it's a pretty

nice one at that,” Johnson said. “Let’s think about, and do our best to anticipate, what our economic and social world be like in 2030. It’s just around the corner.”

Johnson referred to the municipal hub project as a “solution in search of a problem.” He said the question should not simply be about the benefits of the new building, but about whether the benefits exceed the costs.

He said “many worthwhile projects” that could yield considerable benefits may be jeopardized if attention and resources are focused on new space for the town hall, police department and Board of Education.

“There are certain things that we should consider that can realize substantial net benefits,” he added. “Personally, to name just one, I think we should address basic traffic calming techniques around our lake or other streets in town. A walk around our lake should raise not lower one’s life expectancy.”

Tyler Kania, 25, is an account manager with Atlantic Data Security. He is an independent voter.

While he does not yet have experience on

boards or commissions in town, he said he served as a student senator in high school and at Central Connecticut State University, where he earned a degree in business management.

“I have a lot of energy and offer a fresh perspective on town policy and ideas to better East Hampton,” Kania said. “I’ve always had a knack for working constructively with people of all backgrounds and believe that it is important to include ideology from the younger generation when thinking about the future.”

Kania’s priorities if elected include promoting fiscal responsibility for town projects, improving educational and community offerings for youth, and enhancing economic conditions for small businesses.

Scott A. Minnick, 49, served two terms on the council, from 2005-09. He also served one term on the Board of Education from 2011-15, serving as vice chairman for the latter two years.

Minnick, a registered member of the Chatham Party, is a public middle school French teacher.

Minnick described himself as “excited and

hopeful” to be able once again to volunteer his time, energy and ideas to the council. He said his primary goals are to preserve East Hampton’s historic character and improve its environmental health, to re-examine fiscal policies and protocols to find efficiencies, and to make decisions with thoughtfulness, insight, research, professional advice, debate, and input from residents.

He said the key concerns for the new council all involve large expenditures: “Healing the lake, calming our traffic, revitalizing our village center, and either guiding our new town hall/police station or finding a smart ‘plan B’ alternative.”

Sue Weintraub, 64, was elected to the first of three council terms in 2007. She was council chairwoman from 2011-13, when she said she worked across party lines to form the high school building committee that cut the ribbon on the newly-renovated high school last month.

Though the Chatham Party failed to win any seats in the 2015 municipal election, she said many people have asked her to run again.

“In the last few years, many residents have described town council meetings as disgraceful, petty dramas without civility or common sense,” she said.

Weintraub, who is registered as a Democrat, said elected officials must bring back “civility, trust, honesty and open communication” to local government.

Rather than focusing on a new facility for the town hall, police department and Board of Education, Weintraub said the town needs to prioritize its facility needs.

Acknowledging the need for a police department facility, she said officials should seek “smarter, affordable solutions” for the town hall and Board of Education.

“We do not need a town hall complex with higher taxes that could drive many families, seniors and residents on fixed incomes out of their homes,” she said.

The municipal election will be held Tuesday, Nov. 7 from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the high school gymnasium.

East Hampton Fitness Center to Close Sunday

by Elizabeth Regan

Fit-Trix owner Jane Traceski will permanently close the doors of her fitness center on Sunday, after having spent the last month preparing her clients for a clean break.

It’s a different story from the kind of sudden shutdowns that are so common in the industry. “Most gyms close with a sign on the door and people disappointed or mad and out a lot of money,” she said. But in her case, she said, “all my bills are paid up, so there’s no ‘scandal.’ I never did contracts, so I don’t owe people a lot of money – and the few that I do will be taking equipment in exchange.”

But she wonders if the month-to-month business model allowing her to close without acrimony from her clients may have made it harder to compete with area fitness centers in the first place.

“Most gyms make money by locking people into a contract and hoping they don’t come. Maybe you can’t make money if you don’t do that. I don’t know,” she lamented.

Traceski, who first opened up on Route 66 10 years ago, said she was focused from the beginning on maintaining a diverse array of classes and instructors that kept members coming back each new month because they wanted to.

“My motto was ‘whatever it takes to be successful,’ so if people wanted a 5:30 a.m. class, even though I’m not a morning person, I was there,” she said. “Sometimes I’d teach five classes a day and three hours in a row when an instructor was out.”

Now, however, gyms and group class programs have become more prevalent in town – and, by her own admission, she’s not as young as she used to be. But a decade of constant exercise has kept her looking very much like she did when she started, she was quick to add.

The competition has been tough on the small operation, which used to take up the entirety of 84 East High St. She has already downsized once and is now teaching out of one studio in the back.

She can’t compete anymore, she said.

Traceski said she will continue as an instructor even though the Fit-Trix shingle will no

longer be hanging in town. She’s looking into options with parks and recreation programs in area towns and continues to network at national fitness conferences.

“I’m going to need to teach somewhere,” she said. “I’m not motivated enough on my own.”

While Traceski said she is continually inspired by her students, they said they find their own motivation in her.

Students gathered Monday morning in the studio used for both group classes and individual cardio and weight training. They echoed the idea of camaraderie and support as a crucial factor in their exercise routine.

The regular morning crew is made up of retirees, they said, while those who work during the day tend to take evening classes.

Diane Tokarz of East Hampton said she’s been coming to the fitness center for eight years. Instead of group classes, she worked with Traceski to come up with an individual exercise plan using weights.

Now, she’s recruited a neighbor to join her.

“I could technically do all these things at home,” Tokarz said, gesturing to the weights and the treadmill. “But if I was home, I’d be watching *Kathie Lee and Hoda*.”

She will be looking into options with the East Hampton Senior Center now that Fit-Trix is shutting down, she said.

Diane Nichols of East Hampton described herself as devastated by the center’s closing. She’s been availing herself of the different group class offerings since her retirement.

“I started coming here almost three years ago and Jane has been my incentive to start exercising,” Nichols said. “I come five or six times a week and it’s become a part of my life. It’s a part I will miss very much.”

East Hampton resident Marie Beal had tears in her eyes as she talked about the health benefits she’s received from taking classes with Traceski ever since the instructor arrived in town to lead classes through the Parks and Recreation Department in 2002.

A breast cancer survivor, Beal credited Traceski with helping her get back into shape after her treatment. The exercise has also in-



Fit-Trix Fitness Center will close Sunday after 10 years in East Hampton. Owner Jane Traceski (far right) fostered an atmosphere that promoted fun and friendship as much as it encouraged a healthy lifestyle, according to members like (left to right) Diane Nichols, Jackie Mickiewicz and Marie Beal.

creased her bone density amid concerns about a family history of osteoporosis.

“I don’t know what I’m going to do after here,” Beal said.

Traceski said she started the business after 25 years in the corporate world as a way to share the benefits of exercise in a social setting.

“My vision for Fit-Trix was a comfortable, non-intimidating atmosphere, like ‘a gym in your home’ where anyone could get a great workout and make new friends too,” she said. “I made it a priority for all of my staff to get to know everyone by name and something about them.”

The homey feel is complemented by a pair of 1-year-old shih tzu/poodle mixes who have free rein over the studio, letting themselves into a pen in the corner when the music starts for class and letting themselves out during the cool

down period.

Traceski said she’s proud to have accomplished her goal of bringing a comfortable fitness focus to East Hampton. She’s also grateful for being able to close with a clean slate thanks to a focus on monthly memberships instead of contracts.

It’s a tough transition, she said, especially since she doesn’t have a formal plan going forward. But she’s got time, and she has the shih-poops named Trixie and Bindi for company.

“I can throw the dogs in the car and take a road trip,” she said.

Thinking about the possibilities, she noted there’s even a motorcycle in her garage that could become road worthy if she decides to fix it.

“It’s good to be open to stuff,” she said. “Something will happen.”

Eight Vying for Six Slots on Board of Selectmen

by Elizabeth Regan

Eight candidates for the Board of Selectmen, evenly split between Democrats and Republicans, are vying for six open seats.

Buzzwords like economic development and infrastructure improvements dominate campaign conversations as an uncertain state budget situation threatens the amount of funding the town will receive over the coming years.

Meet the Democrats

Lou Pear, 69, is a retired educator. He and his wife have two children and two grandchildren.

"I feel fortunate that my children had a positive educational and community experience growing up in Portland," the 43-year resident said.

In addition to teaching for 17 years and serving as a principal for 18 years, Pear was assistant executive director at the Connecticut Association of Schools and served as its director of Unified Sports.

"Now that I am retired, I have more time to give back to my community," he said. "I feel I could put my life skills and experience to good use as a Portland community leader. I look forward to assisting in the long-range plan of conservation and economic development, while at the same time being mindful of my fiscal responsibility to Portland's residents," he said.

Pear is co-chairman of the Air Line Trail Steering Committee and a member of the Clean Energy Task Force. He has served as a Boy Scout leader and a soccer and baseball coach.

He cited economic development opportunities, such as the revitalization of the former Elmcrest Hospital property, and challenging infrastructure decisions as key issues facing the upcoming board.

Incumbent **Ben Srb**, 42, is as lifelong resident who feels it is important for all citizens to give back to the community.

"Due to my commitments I am unable to be a volunteer fireman, but I feel this is the next best way to contribute to Portland," he said.

Before being elected as a selectman in 2015, he served for seven years on the Board of Education. He was on the Zoning Board of Appeals for 12 years, many as chairman.

"A key issue to Portland and the state of Connecticut is fiscal responsibility," he said. "My years of experience in managing my own businesses have made me realize the importance of a balanced budget."

He cited the need to work on a sustainable water/sewer plan as one of the most pressing issues selectmen will have to address in the coming term.

Describing himself as a candidate who is "not afraid to stand up for what is right," Srb said he will work to ensure that people can afford to stay in the great town of Portland.

James K. Tripp, 49, is an incumbent who was appointed to replace Brian Flood earlier this year. Elected to his first term on the Board of Education in 2015, he left the position in May to take over Flood's seat.

He is a data network consultant with AT&T. Tripp said one of the key issues facing the board is development consistent with the town's Plan of Conservation and Development, most notably on the the former Elmcrest Hospital

property and the riverfront.

He said he would like to continue efforts to reclaim the riverfront on Brownstone Avenue "by removing blighted tanks using a \$750,000 grant already obtained by the town."

Tripp is serving his thirteenth year as president of the Brownstone Quorum and is the former vice chairman of the Route 17 Recreational Complex Steering Committee. He served three years on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

"I love serving the residents of Portland and look forward continuing that service to help keep Portland moving forward," he said. "I believe I have the background and experience necessary to have a positive impact on the decisions facing our community. I have a proven track record of dedicating myself to doing the required work and conducting myself in a professional, constructive, and collaborative manner in order to get the best results for Portland."

Ralph Zampano, 55, has been on the Parks and Recreation Commission for twelve years, serving as chairman for nine of them.

Employed as a senior technical project manager, he has also coached youth sports.

"The task to build a town park began 12 years ago and I remain committed to it. This experience exposed me to processes in town government that I found intriguing and made me realize that I can make a difference," he said.

Zampano pointed to continued educational excellence amid declining state funding and infrastructure improvement as key priorities.

"At the same time, development of the Route 17 Town Park and Elmcrest needs to move swiftly as they are vital to the town's growth and future. We must keep these projects moving forward," he said. "The road ahead will be bumpy but it is the most exciting time in Portland in my 23 years as a resident."

Meet the Republicans

Kitch Breen Czernicki, 69, is running for reelection. She was appointed to take the seat held by the late Carl Chudzick, who died in March 2016.

Czernicki was a member of the Wethersfield Town Council from 1997-05, serving as mayor from 2001-03. She moved to Portland in 2006.

Czernicki said she sees another term as an opportunity to build the tax base through "meaningful" development.

"I'm prepared to work with other members to protect Portland from the fiscal irresponsibility of our governor," she said.

She cited water and sewer needs as continued priorities, as well as the completion of the Route 17 recreation park. She pointed to the prevalence of opioid use and the potential for long-term problems as a particular concern.

Czernicki, now an aquatics instructor with the Middlesex YMCA, is retired from the Middlesex Hospital system. She was the operations manager for nine primary care offices.

Tim Lavoy, 58, has served one term on the Board of Education, where he said he gained a solid understanding about how the town's government functions.

Lavoy retired from the state Department of Developmental Services after a 36 year career providing and managing services for adults and children with intellectual disabilities.



Czernicki



Lavoy



Pear



Pelton



Srb



Tripp



Zampano



Sharr

He said he will be a "clear, consistent voice calling for both accountability and transparency in town government."

Lavoy said one of the key concerns for the coming term revolves around the uncertain state budget situation and the likelihood that municipal aid from the state will continue to decline in the coming years as the state grapples with projected deficits.

"We still don't know the full depth of these reductions, but once known, how we respond and adapt will impact the future of our community for years to come," he said. "The only town plan proposed thus far [was] to send out supplemental tax bills, without regard for the heavy burden this will place on our taxpayers."

He cited the development of the Route 17 recreation park and the Air Line Trail, continued economic development, sustainable budgets, appropriate water and sewer rates, and the repair of sidewalks and roads as other issues facing the new board.

"I'm prepared to take on a larger role, and running for a seat on the Board of Selectmen brings the potential for me to contribute to my community in a greater way, helping to shape a positive future for the community," he said.

Incumbent **Michael Pelton**, 55, has served a total of two terms as a selectman and two terms on the school board.

He owns the Portland-based Inner Circle Family Martial Arts and Inner Circle Nutrition Business Consulting. He has lived in Portland since 2000, where his three children attend school.

"People want to live in a town that is family-friendly, business-friendly and has great schools, and I think the next few years will see us improve in all three," he said. "The Elmcrest property and other development in town will improve our tax base and make us more business-friendly if we do it right. The Route 17 Park and other infrastructure needs will keep

more family in town for the recreational needs as well as bringing new people into town."

Describing himself as a strong supporter of both projects, he said he'd like to continue his work with the rest of the selectmen to continue to improve the town.

Rick Sharr, 66, is retired from his role as CEO and principal owner of Tri-Town Foods. He currently serves on the Economic Development Commission.

"Working with that commission has been personally rewarding and resulted in several people from both political parties asking me if I would consider running for BOS," he said. "After much consideration I decided to give it a try."

He said is particularly concerned about the impact of the state budget on Portland, the successful development of the Brainerd Place project at the former Elmcrest Hospital site, the continued redevelopment of the riverfront, overall economic development and infrastructure improvements.

"My goal is to improve our tax base while still maintaining our small town character," he said.

Sharr has lived in town for 44 years.

Sharr is a current member of the Greater Hartford Board of Realtors and managing partner of the CVS plaza in Colchester. He is a member and past board member of the Connecticut Food Association Hall of Fame and the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, as well as a charter member and past board member of the Colchester Business Association. He is also a member of the Portland Exchange Club Board of Directors. He is a former Boy Scout, Eagle Scout and troop leader.

The municipal election will be held Tuesday, Nov. 7, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Portland Middle School, 93 High St.

Candidates Contend For Open Finance Board Seats

by Julianna Roche

Three candidates, including one incumbent, will vie for two open seats as full members on Marlborough's Board of Finance this November – with the state budget crisis still looming over contenders' heads as the biggest challenge to face the new board in the upcoming year.

The Republicans

Incumbent **Susan Leser**, who has lived in town for 30 years, is a certified teacher in the state of Connecticut and has served on the Board of Finance for 12 years.

For Leser, her primary goal if re-elected to the board is to help “bear responsibility for the fiscal well-being of our town.”

“As we all know, the governor’s proposed budget has weakened the financial stability of Marlborough, and all but a select few municipalities in the state,” she furthered, adding she felt the town needs officials who are “experienced and knowledgeable to guide Marlborough through this crisis.”

Leser also said that if re-elected she wants to “ensure that the needs of all residents are represented when setting a budget, and subsequently the mill rate.”

“Taxes have been rising significantly, which is problematic for many residents [and] it is crucial to balance the needs of all sectors of Marlborough, while keeping tax increases to a minimum,” she added, noting that it is “critical” for the town to “develop the commercial tax base” to help “provide relief for residents” since Marlborough’s tax base is predominantly residential.

“The biggest challenge facing the Board of Finance is dealing with the budget crisis at the state level,” Leser continued. “The state still does not have a budget, which trickles down to the municipalities in the form of state aid, especially for education.”

The incumbent furthered that Gov. Dannel Malloy also continues to push for municipalities “to bear the burden of the teacher’s pen-

sion fund,” and if that comes to pass, Marlborough would face “drastic budget cuts and huge tax increases.”

“We need to continue to make thoughtful, strategic progress in commercial development within the town,” Leser explained, adding that she felt her education, which includes graduate degrees in finance and education, as well as professional experience in government banking make her a “uniquely qualified” candidate.

“Marlborough was always a community of people who cared about one another,” she said. “We desperately need to rekindle that sense of community.”

Not a complete newcomer to the Board of Finance, **Midge Denno** has served as an alternate for the board over the last four years, in addition to three years on the Planning Commission and several years on the Commission of Aging.

Denno said she wants to become a full board member because she believes her familiarity with the board and 33 years’ experience working as an auditor would be an asset in dealing with the state budget crisis and keeping the negative impacts to taxpayers low.

“I like serving the townspeople,” she continued, adding that she is prepared for the “commitment” of maintaining a “balancing act” between the school and town budgets, and “what we can afford at this point.”

If elected, Denno said, like Leser, she foresees dealing with the impacts of potential state budget cuts to municipal funding as one of the major hurdles for the finance board.

“The biggest challenge facing the Marlborough Board of Finance is detaining the actual revenue being received from the state,” she said. “The board has worked hard determining the expenses for the budget, [but] Marlborough needs to be affordable for its families.”

The Democrat

A newcomer to town politics and retired



Leser



Denno



Bourbeau

teacher, **Debbie Bourbeau** has resided in Marlborough for 42 years and taught for 35.

An Independent running on the Democratic ticket, Bourbeau – who also served on the Library Board for six years, including three years as president – said she is running for the Board of Finance because she believes she can “be of service” holding a master’s degree in mathematics and having managed the financials in her household for years.

Bourbeau explained she has also been “very involved” in town, attending many meetings and budget hearings, and “always having questions, or thoughts, or ideas.”

“I think [the current finance board] an excellent group of people to work with listening [to each other] and being respectful, and really hashing things out together,” she said. “And I have some ideas and thoughts I would like to share with the group.”

As for the biggest challenge facing the board, Bourbeau agreed it boiled down to dealing with

impacts of potential state cuts to municipal funding.

“The state budget is a mess,” Bourbeau said. “The town is at a point where we don’t know what to expect and every board and commission in this town has to realize we’re facing a terrible challenge.”

Bourbeau furthered that if the governor’s budget passes, Marlborough will face over \$3 million in cuts to Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding – and will have no choice but to “be very creative” as “a small town with not much of a tax base except for individual property owners” in “finding out a way to come up with over \$3 million.”

“Everyone has to cooperate and be willing to compromise and do their part to continue on as a town,” she furthered. “I’m hoping I can be of help with that.”

Voting for the 2017 election will be held Tuesday, Nov. 7.

Colchester Residents to Vote on Charter Revisions

by Julianna Roche

In less than two weeks, Colchester residents will have the opportunity to vote on six ballot questions regarding possible changes to the town’s charter – which include setting four-year terms across various boards and commissions, eliminating the treasurer position and changing the tax collector and town clerk positions from elected to appointed.

According to Charter Revision Commission (CRC) Chairman Greg LePage, the seven-member commission has “been working very hard over the last two years thoroughly reviewing” and “addressing any inefficiencies” in the current charter.

The charter – which serves as the town’s foundational document – outlines the roles and responsibilities of elected and appointed officials, and provides the framework for how the municipal government should operate. While state statute requires towns to revisit their charters at least once every 10 years, towns have the option to review it every year.

In 2014, a Charter Review Commission was established and initially met for about a year, discussing possible recommendations until last April when it expanded from five to seven members and became the current CRC. Since that time, LePage said, the commission has gone through the charter even more in depth and discussed potential changes or revisions, which voters can have their say on Tuesday, Nov. 7 at the polls.

The first question asks if the charter can be amended to “make grammatical, technical and other changes and clarifications,” such as “detailing succession provisions” when it comes to open positions on different boards or commissions, or clarifying that it is the Board of Finance who is responsible for setting the mill rate.

“The mill rate is such an important thing and nowhere in the charter does it say that [the fi-

nance board sets it],” LePage explained. He added the changes included in the first question are “pretty straightforward,” but “necessary” for efficiency and clarification purposes.

The second ballot question seeks to amend the terms of office for the first selectman, Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and Board of Assessment Appeals to a consistent number of four years. Currently, elected positions can range between two, four and six-year term lengths.

LePage said for positions with two-year terms, “by the time you’re comfortable with the job,” the term is coming to an end and conversely, it’s difficult to find members to fill seats on boards such as the Board of Finance, which has six-year terms.

The third question regarding charter revision, he explained, deals with changes to the annual budget meeting and updating the approval of financial matters.

“It felt really necessary to update some of the percentages to current dollars,” LePage continued, adding for example, that many of the “dollar threshold amounts” in the charter are outdated as they are 10 years old.

Changes included would be to lower the thresholds to reconvene for an annual budget meeting, close loopholes on borrowing to ensure that all borrowing agreements above the threshold go to a town meeting, add an emergency contingency for public safety, require that the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance approve transfers between adopted town department budgets, and require a town meeting for any appropriations above 2 percent of a department’s budget.

For example, if the public works department had a \$1 million dollar budget, an appropriation would have to equal more than \$20,000 in order to require a town meeting for it to be

made.

The fourth ballot question seeks to eliminate the treasurer position – which according to LePage, a former treasurer himself, would save the town approximately \$4,500. The CRC chairman also explained that the commission felt the treasurer’s functions were “redundant” of those done by the town’s chief financial officer (CFO).

“I don’t want to minimize the position,” LePage said. The CRC “just felt like it was an area that could maybe be consolidated.”

Current treasurer John Ringo could not be reached for comment.

Ballot questions five and six, respectively, seek to change the town’s tax collector and town clerk positions from elected to appointed – moves that LePage said were “really up for a lot of debate” even among commission members about “what direction to go in.”

“We had varying degrees even within the commission on how strongly they felt,” he added, noting that as separate questions, voters have the option to vote differently on each position if they choose.

Currently, both are elected positions, with each elected to a four-year term. LePage furthered that there are no qualifications to run for office other than being a Colchester resident. Furthermore, if the candidate does not have the qualifications, the town must fund the certification process for employees that may end up not being re-elected.

Both the town’s current tax collector Michele Wyatt and town clerk Gayle Furman – expressed serious concerns this week with the potential changes, explaining that if the positions were appointed rather than elected, it would take power away from the people and put it in the hands of the Board of Selectmen, a “partisan board.”

“The other main point I believe is that the positions being appointed would take away from the democratic process and the citizen’s right to choose,” Furman said. “I’m a strong believer that the people should be able to choose their officials because we do run by state statute.”

Furman, who has lived in Colchester for 29 years and was elected to the position nearly three years ago, said she felt the town clerk should also be someone “the people can trust,” as “they are in charge of all records of the town or people, [including] birth, death, marriage, historical and all other personal records.”

Wyatt furthered that while changing the positions from elected to appointed would allow for there to be greater number of qualified candidates for the job (as the town would no longer be limited to electing a Colchester resident), “people who don’t live in town” may “not be as invested in their community.”

“They won’t know their citizens,” she continued. “They’ll just be there to do their job and won’t go over and above [what they’re expected to do].”

If voters do decide both positions should become appointed, both Furman and Wyatt will finish out their four-year term before the change takes place.

“We just want to make sure people are informed and take the time to come out and vote [on the proposed charter revisions],” LePage said, adding that residents can view the full text of the proposed changes by visiting the town’s website at www.colchesterct.gov or stopping by the town clerk’s office at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

Voting on the proposed changes to the town charter will take place on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 7.

McNair Joins First Selectman Race

by Julianna Roche

Up until this week, **Art Shilosky**, a Republican elected first selectman in 2015, was running unopposed for re-election.

This Wednesday however, Colchester Independent Party (CIP) candidate **James McNair** announced on social media via the "Keeping It All in Colchester" Facebook page, that he would be running as a write-in candidate on the ballot.

"My announcing is a response to many people coming to me saying that they felt disenfranchised," McNair said Thursday, adding that several residents voiced their "frustration" at "feeling like they didn't have a choice" with their vote.

"The Democrats cross-endorsed Art [Shilosky] and not only did they offer [to do that], but the Republicans accepted it," he continued. "This is really not about party labels anymore... it's not a matter of me winning or losing, even though if I do win, I think I'm amply qualified to do the job... it's about philosophy."

Since 2001, McNair has been an active member in town politics, with stints on the Board of Finance, Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Education.

Shilosky – who could not be reached for comment – has spent the last 30 years working in local government, serving on the Board of Assessment Appeals for two years, the Zoning Board of Appeals for 27 years, and the Board of Finance for four years. He is also an active member of the Lions Club.

The Republicans

Running for the Board of Selectmen on the Republican ticket are incumbents Denise Mizla and Stan Soby.

Denise Mizla, an accountant and United States Air Force veteran, has served on the Board of Selectmen since 2013, in addition to the Zoning Board of Appeals for seven years, as Deputy Registrar of Voters for four years, and as Registrar of Voters for four years.

Mizla explained if reelected, she can put her past experience serving as a selectman to use, and continue to "make sure town services are supported and continue to serve us well."

She furthered that she looks forward to seeing the completion of the William J. Johnston Middle School construction and moving forward with building the new senior center; however, she recognizes the position will not come without obstacles.

"I see some of our biggest challenges as keeping town services at the level we currently support, while striking a balance between investing in town services and capital projects," Mizla said, adding that also means "keeping in mind all these shared costs to the community."

Stan Soby, 65, has publicly served Colchester since 1980 on a variety of boards and commissions, acting as both members and chairs of the Conservation Commission, Board

of Education, the Ethics Commission and Board of Selectmen since 2006. He also was appointed to serve as first selectman upon the resignation of Gregg Schuster from May to November of 2015.

Soby explained that in addition to the financial challenges posed by the current lack of a state budget, if reelected, he feels the board needs to focus on economic development and ensuring a wide variety of residential and housing options for "people [as they] move through various phases of life."

"A vibrant business service and retail community are vital to our future," he said, adding that the board thus far, has been able to "balance both local independently-owned businesses and those known regionally and nationally," and he hopes to continue to do so.

Soby also added that he is looking forward to seeing the completion of a new senior center – as he believes it "will be critical" to have a "larger, more suitable" building for townspeople as the senior population continues to grow.

"We also need to look for even more opportunities to bring people together, in ways that they find meaningful to participate in community life," he said. "I look forward to having another opportunity to work collegially with other selectmen and boards to discern the path ahead for Colchester and bring us to our desired goals."

The Democrats

Incumbent **Rosemary Coyle**, 70, is a retired teacher and past president of the Connecticut Education Association who has served on the Board of Selectmen for 10 years and the Board of Education for eight.

For Coyle, if re-elected, her biggest goals are "to maintain the quality and excellence of our public school system" and "addressing senior issues" – which includes putting "a financial plan in place that allows us to move forward" with the construction of building a new senior center.

"I believe our community works best when we support each other," she said. "I'll continue to be a voice for the need to make sound financial decisions that support the needs of many constituency groups from parents to seniors to public safety [and] first responders to open space to our agrarian partners."

Coyle added that as the state "continues to pass the burden down" to towns to "pay for more items," she foresees the board's biggest challenge will be devising a way to "provide services and the quality of life we want for all Colchester citizens with the limited resources our community receives."

Jim Ford, 71, is a licensed professional engineer serving as traffic engineer for the city of Hartford, and has served on the Planning and Zoning Commission for 11 years, Board of Selectmen for four years, and has served on the Economic Development Commission since



Shilosky



McNair



Coyle



Soby



Mizla



Ford



Gesiak

2014, with the past two and a half years as chairman.

Ford explained he felt running for the board a second time would allow him "to continue to be involved in Colchester" and offer "years of experience in government and infrastructure for the benefit of the town."

As a traffic engineer, he furthered that he has learned "every decision must be based on data and process" – a lesson applicable if elected to the Board of Selectmen.

"This experience, [and] learning to do more with less, will support me in evaluating issues brought before the Board of Selectmen," he said. "As in my job, those decisions will be in the best interest of the residents of Colchester."

Ford said he expects the two major challenges the board faces are "navigating the financial crisis at the state level" and reorganizing the town tax structure.

"Our tax structure in Colchester continues to place a burden on residential taxes," he explained. "We need to expand our commercial development base to stabilize taxes and continue to provide services our town enjoys."

Ford explained by doing so, the town will be "in a better position" to do so, as well as "provide additional revenue for the programs we need."

The CIP Member

CIP member **David Gesiak**, 46, a local contractor who owns David Gesiak, LLC, served on the Planning and Zoning Commission from 2013 until July of this year, when the Board of

Selectmen unanimously voted to remove him from the commission for allegedly encouraging and abetting the evasion of rightful property taxes.

As a result, Gesiak filed a lawsuit, which became his second pending suit against the town; the first made late this spring under his claim that his personal property had been improperly taxed in 2016. He is expected in court for that first lawsuit filed on Oct. 31.

Gesiak said views "restoring public trust" in the Board of Selectmen as both inspiration for him to run for election, as well as the biggest challenge the board faces.

"I'm hearing from many that the Board of Selectmen has lost touch with all voters," he said. "They seem to just focus and listen to those wanting to pass all budgets. I understand the needs of all citizens of Colchester. As a businessman, I know to look at all sides of an issue to come to a reasonable and fair decision."

"The time has come for change," Gesiak said. "Many incumbents have been in office too long. They see themselves as representing the town rather than the people."

He furthered that while the town charter "makes it clear" the first selectmen "shall be responsible to the townspeople," and the Board of Selectmen for "the administration of town government," he feels the present board does not hold the current first selectman "accountable."

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 7.

East Hampton Police News

10/9: Karen A. Hartley, 59, of 68 Childs Rd., was issued a summons for operating an unregistered motor vehicle and misuse of plates, East Hampton Police said.

Also, from Oct. 9-15, officers responded to 17 medical calls, three motor vehicle crashes and seven alarms, and made 41 traffic stops, police said.

Portland Police News

10/19: George Grillo, 49, of 9 Spencer Court, East Hartford, was charged with criminal violation of restraining order, Portland Police said.

10/19: William Goodnight, 33, of 6 Traverse Square, Middletown, was charged with evading responsibility, police said.

10/22: David Thomas, 21, of 54 Gospel Ln., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, police said.

Marlborough Police News

10/19: State Police said Tyechea L. Hunden, 41, of 4 P.O. Box 114, Middletown, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol, failure to drive in the proper lane of a multiple lane highway, and second-degree reckless endangerment.

10/19: State Police said Krystal R. Bruce, 29, of 32 Louis Ln., Colchester, was arrested and charged with reckless driving, evading re-

sponsibility, operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol, failure to drive in the proper lane of a multiple lane highway, obstructing an intersection and failure to obey a control signal.

10/20: State Police said Jonathan B. Bansemmer, 27, of 87 Oconnell Rd., Colchester, was arrested and charged with reckless driving over 85 mph and operating a motor vehicle under the influence of drugs/alcohol.

Cars Broken Into in Colchester

Several vehicles were broken into in town last weekend, Colchester Police said.

Police said that at approximately 3:30 a.m., they received a report of several vehicles broken into on Bulkeley Hill Road, Falls Circle, Beech Place, and Davidson Road. Police said approximately six unlocked vehicles were entered, with one vehicle's window broken, and

several items taken.

Police said a homeowner in the area captured video of a suspect attempting to gain entry to her vehicle in the driveway and, are also asking residents living in the area who have video surveillance to review the footage to obtain an image of the suspect's face and contact Troop K at 860-465-5400.

Colchester Police News

10/16: State Police said James E. Ross, 40, of 158 Kelsey St., New Britain, was arrested and charged with operating a motor vehicle with a suspended license/registration and speeding over 70 m.p.h.

10/17: State Police said Byron Anderson, 21, of 145 Cannon Dr., Fayetteville, Ga., was ar-

rested and charged with interfering with an officer: simple assault and assaulting public safety/emergency personnel.

10/20: Colchester Police said Bruce Steiniger, 30, of 61 Sprint St., Willimantic, was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Timothy John Reilly

Timothy John Reilly, "TJ," the beloved son of John P. and Patricia D. Reilly, passed away unexpectedly Thursday, Oct. 19, at home.

Tim was born Aug. 5, 1977, in Flushing, N.Y. He, his brother and parents moved to East Hampton in 1984, where Tim continued his elementary education in East Hampton. He graduated from East Hampton High School in 1995 and was a member of the National Honor Society. He continued his education at Boston University and graduated in 1999 with degree in history. He then attended the University of Connecticut School of Law and graduated in 2002, passing the bar on his first try.

Tim was never enamored by his law education and instead did various jobs, settling into mechanical work at RM Bradley Management, which he enjoyed deeply. He loved working with his hands, doing wood projects, making handmade knives and almost any project he decided to pursue. He loved music and always had his earbuds in. He was an avid hiker and loved the outdoors, going on many camping trips with his family. He was a Boy Scout all the way, and attained the rank of Eagle Scout in Troop 8, East Hampton. Tim tended his garden every summer with TLC. He enjoyed reading just about anything but was very fond of history and if asked a question you would surely get a very detailed answer.

Besides his parents, Tim is survived by his paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Reilly of Port Washington, N.Y.; his brother Sean and his wife Shari and his very special niece Anya of Norwalk; and many aunts and uncles and cousins in New York, New Jersey, Long Island and Florida.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., on Monday, Oct. 23, and again Tuesday morning, Oct. 24. A funeral service was held in the funeral home on Tuesday. Burial was private, at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Tim's name to The American Heart Association.

Spencer Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements. To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Colchester

Estelle G. Rothstein

Estelle G. Rothstein of Colchester, formerly of South Windsor, born Dec. 16, 1932, passed Wednesday, Oct. 11. Originally from Baltic, she graduated from Norwich Free Academy before getting her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in design in 1954 at Syracuse University.

Estelle then moved to New York City to start her career as a designer for Alexander Smith and Bigelow Carpets, creating original rug and wall hanging patterns. These patterns found audience in prestigious offices and buildings, as well as curated art shows. Her most recognizable work followed with a long career at Corning Glassware in Corning, N.Y., where Estelle created iconic dishware patterns that have graced the dinner tables of most American homes.

She was a creative force in more than domestic items, as her love for art also translated into a prolific body of elegant drawings, jewelry design, and the collecting and selling of unique antiques. Estelle followed in her mother's footsteps as an artist and inspired several generations of fellow artists within the family. Her creative eye and intellect never resting, even after retiring she was a lover of crossword puzzles and games that exercised the mind.

Estelle was predeceased by her parents, Anne and Saul Rothstein of Baltic. She is survived by her sisters Phyllis Huggett of North Caldwell, N.J., and Roberta Rothstein of Norwich, as well as her nieces and nephews: Cynthia Moran, Kathleen Brandon, Katherine Karcz, and Gregory Karcz, along with their families.

Her family would like to thank Patty Albrecht for her gentle hospice care. Estelle will forever be remembered for her intelligence, creativity, confident opinions and willpower.

In her absence remains the memory of a profoundly strong, wildly creative and undeniably generous woman.

Care of private arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Portland

June Ann Townsend

June Ann (Fairbanks) Townsend, 85, formerly of Portland, died Saturday, Oct. 21, at Apple Rehabilitation of Middletown. She was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., on June 11, 1932 and was the only daughter of the late Orvis J. and Anna (Lavery) Fairbanks.

June graduated from Brooklyn High School in Brooklyn, N.Y., at the age of 18, and then married the love of her life, Clarence Aubrey Townsend (deceased 1989). Aubrey was her rock and they both successfully raised three sons in Middletown, Wethersfield and eventually moving to Portland in 1966, where she lived until 2009. She then moved to Luther Ridge Nursing Facility, located in Middletown, and very much enjoyed living there on her own, until June 2016.

June worked as a nurses' aide in the early 1950s at Buckley Pavilion Methodist Hospital (New York, N.Y.) prior to relocating to Connecticut. June later became a homemaker, raising three boys, and taking excellent care of Aubrey. As her boys grew older, June worked for the Portland Public Schools as a teacher's assistant during the early to mid-1970s. She very much enjoyed working with the students and was well liked and fondly remembered by many students in later years. She leaves a legacy of endless practical phrases/clichés, some unique to her, and could quite possibly fill a book. One of her favorites was, "Don't put off till tomorrow what you can get done today." June will be remembered and missed as a loving mother, grandmother, aunt, friend, and coworker by those that knew her best.

She is survived by three sons/daughters-in-law, Thomas and Lisa Townsend of Middletown, Brian and Vickie Townsend of Columbia, S.C., and Steven and Lynne Townsend of Portland. She also leaves seven grandchildren, Michael, Devon, Britt, Trevor, Haley, Brooke, and Colby and very special brother/sisters-in-law Harry and Maxine Kit of Canton, Ohio and Bernice (Bunny) Martin of Round Rock, Texas. She also leaves a very special friend, Sandie Campbell of Flagler Beach, Fla.

Memorial contributions can be made to the charity of one's choice. Thanks for all the kind and helpful support received by the professional caretakers at Apple Rehab in Middletown. There are no calling hours and burial will be private.

East Hampton

Stephen Marc Smith

Stephen Marc Smith, 64, of East Hampton, died Saturday, Oct. 21, at his home, surrounded by his loving family. Stephen was born March 10, 1953, to the late Jack and Shirley Smith.

He was a graduate of Pulaski High School and Colgate University. He was employed for many years in the family hardware business Lehrer's Hardware and Electric Company in New Britain. Stephen was a diehard football fan and a voracious reader. He also enjoyed the beach in Old Saybrook.

Stephen is survived by his loving wife and son Benay and Matthew, his brother and sister-in-law, Stewart and Lisa Smith and niece Jessica of Pound Ridge, N.Y.; and his mother-in-law Edith Prague of Columbia. Stephen also leaves his sisters-in-law Joanne Doyle of Columbia and Shelley Prague of Enfield. Stephen leaves many friends and relatives, but especially dear to his heart were his cousins Howard and Ken Kunin of South Portland, Maine, whose visits always put a smile on his face.

Stephen is also survived by his beloved caregiver Grace Olewicz, who cared for Stephen for eight years and who was a gift to this family. Stephen's family would like to extend their sincere appreciation to Dr. Tim Buckley for his kind and compassionate care of Stephen. The family would also like to thank the Middlesex Hospital Hospice team for their care and support during the last few weeks of Stephen's life.

Graveside services were held Wednesday, Oct. 25, at the Beth Alom Cemetery, 48 Allen St., New Britain.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the East Hampton Public Library. Arrangements are entrusted to the Weinstein Mortuary, Hartford.

For more information, directions, or to sign the guestbook for Stephen Smith, visit online at weinsteinmortuary.com/funeralscfm.



Marlborough

Robert Z. Denisiewicz

Robert Z. (Bob) Denisiewicz, 63, of Glastonbury, formerly of Marlborough, beloved son of the late Stanley and Stella (Cholodowska) Denisiewicz, passed away peacefully Saturday, Oct. 21, with family by his side. He fought lung cancer for two years with determination, courage, and dignity.

He was born in Hartford Feb. 16, 1954 and raised in Hartford and Newington. Many happy years were also spent in Marlborough. Bob was a humble, gentle soul and kind man who treated all people with consideration and respect. He had a good heart that loved people and animals, a generous spirit, a quick wit, and was loved by everyone who knew him. Bob will be sorely missed by all.

He is survived by his sister, Ursula Kiernan of Glastonbury; his nephews, Patrick Kiernan and his wife Erin and their children Jamison and Emmett of Marlborough, and Michael Kiernan and his wife Chelsea and their children Devin and Kaitlin of Wellesley, Mass.; as well as many cousins, an aunt and friends, especially Stan Denisiewicz, his number one cousin and best friend.

Robert's family wishes to express a heartfelt thank you to all the caring staff that helped Robert on this journey, The Masonicare Palliative and Hospice team and the B wing at Salmon Brook. A mass of Christian burial will be held at St. Paul Church, Glastonbury with internment at Mount St. Benedict cemetery.

At his family's request, the funeral is private. In lieu of flowers, donations in Robert's name may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

Mulryan Funeral Home is assisting with arrangements. For online condolences, visit mulryanfh.com.

East Hampton

Gloria D. VanBlaricom

Gloria D. (Barbour) VanBlaricom, 85, of East Hampton, widow of Albert "Gene" VanBlaricom, died Saturday, Oct. 21, at Connecticut Hospice in Branford. Born Oct. 11, 1932, in Middletown, she was the daughter of the late Alice Barbour.

Gloria was a lifelong resident of East Hampton and was a family person who enjoyed taking care of her sons and her grandchildren. She is survived by her sons Gene VanBlaricom and his wife Cathy of Westbrook; Timmy VanBlaricom of East Hampton; brothers Roger McKinney and his wife Nancy of Maine, Richard McKinney of East Hampton; sister Beverly Mays and her husband Lewis of Middletown; grandchildren Timmy VanBlaricom Jr. and his wife Leah, Travis and Todd VanBlaricom; great-grandchildren Hailey, Damon, Taylor and Cali; nephews Brian, Jeff, Scott and niece Sheila. She also leaves her best friends Shirley and Mike Mager and family, and Florence Stevens.

She was predeceased by her loving husband of 58 years, Gene, in 2011.

Friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Thursday, Oct. 26. A funeral service was held that morning in the funeral home, followed by burial in Lake View Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Middlesex Hospital Hospice Unit, c/o Middlesex Hospital Department of Philanthropy, 55 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Frank Zoldak

Frank Zoldak, 52, of East Hampton, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, Wednesday, Oct. 18. He was born in Middletown May 28, 1965, to the late Frank Zoldak and the late Marilyn Ames. He was the beloved husband of 30 years to Janice Zoldak.

Frank was a master carpenter and enjoyed the outdoors. He enjoyed boating and spending time in his yard. He had a great love of animals, especially his two German Shepherds, Brody and Hallie.

He leaves behind sister Barbara Zoldak of Colchester, sister Pam Benoit (Scott) of Colchester, brother Brian Zoldak (Danielle) of East Hampton, and sister Melissa Elmore (Andrew) of Northport, Fla.; as well as many nieces and nephews that he cherished. He will be greatly missed by all.

Services are private and if you would like, you can make a donation to an animal rescue of your choice to honor his memory.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.



Portland

Stanley Traskos Jr.

Stanley "Sonny" Joseph Traskos Jr., 74, of Portland, died suddenly Monday, Oct. 16, at Hartford Hospital. Born in Middletown April 7, 1943, he was the son of the late Stanley J. Traskos, Sr. and Stella (Bielot) Traskos.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Lorraine (Bochinski), of 48 years; his daughters, Stephanie Carlson and her husband, Wayne, of Middletown and Sheryl Traskos, of West Palm Beach, Fla.; his four grandchildren, Benjamin, Nicholas, Melissa and Jacob Carlson of Middletown; his three sisters, Elizabeth Lisitano of Portland, Shirley Traskos of Keene, N.H., and Carol Murtha of Middletown; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Sonny attended St. Mary's School in Portland and Portland High School, where he was a star basketball player. He served in the United States Army and earned the Sharpshooter Badge (Rifle). He was employed for 44 years at a local packaging company, working in various roles that ranged from factory worker to senior customer service representative. In 2009, he was inducted into the Portland Sports Hall of Fame for his high school basketball years. He was a member of the St. Francis Society in Portland where he loved to spend time playing cards with his friends.

Sonny also enjoyed fishing, clamming, crabbing, gardening, playing basketball, spending time with his grandchildren and going to the casino with his wife. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

The funeral was held Saturday, Oct. 21, from the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial that morning in St. Pius X Church. Burial will be at a later date in the State Veteran's Cemetery. Friends called at the funeral home Friday evening, Oct. 20.

Colchester

Leon Levine Celebration of Life

Friends and family are invited to join in a celebration of Leon Levine's life Sunday, Oct. 29, at 1 p.m., at Illiano's Restaurant, 119 South Main St., Colchester.

Those interested are welcome to join the family at the unveiling of his memorial at the Congregation Ahavath Achim Cemetery on Taintor Hill Road at 12:30 p.m., immediately preceding lunch.

Levine passed away Feb. 12 at the age of 84.

