



RIVEREAST

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## Ziobron, Needleman Square Off in Senate Debate

by Elizabeth Regan

A Tuesday debate at Bacon Academy High School in Colchester revealed 33rd state senate candidates Melissa Ziobron, a Republican, and Norm Needleman, a Democrat, disagree on almost everything – except marijuana legalization.

While the candidates spent exactly two minutes in agreement that the state should be working toward the retail sale of pot, the rest of the hour-long debate included polarized viewpoints on taxes, tolls, guns, higher education funding, sanctuary cities, dark money and who's responsible for the state's fiscal mess.

The debate was hosted by the Bacon Academy Debate Club, Young Democrats and Young Republicans and moderated by seniors Dylan Rosenthal and Olivia Donahue. The candidates were given the chance to respond to a series of questions posed by students from the three clubs.

Ziobron in her opening statement described herself as a moderate Republican who is fiscally conservative and socially liberal.

That puts her in an uncomfortable position during this particularly partisan and negative political season.

"When the knives come out, I get it from both sides," she said in her opening statement.

Ziobron is finishing her third-term as the state representative for the 34th district, which covers East Hampton, East Haddam and the Westchester section of Colchester. She's vying for the seat vacated by Republican state Sen. Art Linares. A three-term legislator, Linares ran for state treasurer but lost in the primary.

Needleman, the current four-term first select-

man in Essex, positioned himself as a "businessman and problem solver." He is the founder and CEO of the Essex manufacturing company Tower Laboratories.

He ran an unsuccessful campaign against Linares in 2016.

"I'm not a politician, I'm not running as a stepping stone to higher office and I don't need a job," he said.

Ziobron, a former economic development coordinator in East Haddam, does not work outside of the House.

The campaign season in the 33rd District – which is a battleground in a state Senate evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans – has been a heated one. The State Election Enforcement Commission's (SEEC) database shows a conservative, third-party special interest group spent \$61,989 on mailers, digital ads and consulting services to fight the Democratic candidate while another third-party special interest group spent \$12,300 to fight the Republican on the Internet.

According to SEEC guidelines, such third-party special interest groups can support the success or defeat of any candidate as long as the candidates don't knowingly participate.

Needleman's campaign is self-funded. According to filings with the SEEC, his campaign has raised \$407,210 to date. He said during the



Melissa Ziobron

debate he put some of his own money into the campaign to counter the dark money he knew would be coming in from conservative interests.

Ziobron has received \$95,710 in public financing through the state Citizens' Election Program. State senate candidates are eligible for the funding when they raise \$15,300 from at least 300 individuals in their district.

According to Ziobron, one-party rule by Democrats in the General Assembly for the last eight years is sinking the state.

"What is at stake is the last chance to right the ship," she said.

She pointed to this year's bipartisan budget, crafted with the benefit of an evenly-split state Senate, as proof that more representation from Republicans is needed. She credited her party with successfully blocking numerous tax increase proposals and pushing for a constitutional spending cap as well as a "fair and balanced" formula for distributing state funds to towns for education.

"This seat – your senate seat – is crucial to maintaining this balance. And in fact, I would say it's one of the reasons I decided to sacrifice my position in the House to advocate for these things," she told the full house in the high school auditorium.

Needleman disputed the idea that the Democratic majority in the legislature has been responsible for the state's fiscal woes.

"I have to remind her that since the early 1990s, we had two Republican governors and one Independent governor – who used to be a Republican [and] who put the income tax into place – and there's a lot of blame to go around,"

he said.

Needleman described Ziobron's opposition to such issues as implementing tolls, strengthening gun control and increasing the minimum wage as illogical and an impediment to progress.

"I have to say every time an issue comes up where we should be doing something, my opponent likes to use the logic that the perfect should be the enemy of the good," he said. "We need to improve things, we need to do our best to make sure we do it correctly, but we're never going to be perfect."

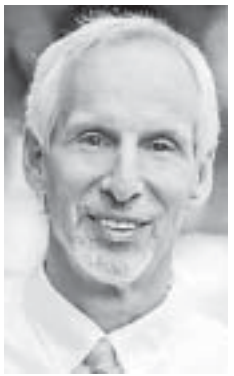
Ziobron said she aims for perfection because she's making laws.

"I'm not creating drafts," she said. "When we put it in the books, it has to be right and it has to work for the taxpayers. We have to bring confidence back to the state and that means addressing the glaring issues in front of us."

One student's prepared question asked the candidates for their thoughts on removing the state statute of limitations on most types of sexual assault, which currently expires after five years.

Needleman said he would support removing the statute of limitations. He also invoked a popular talking point in his campaign when he accused Ziobron of being one of seven repre-

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Norm Needleman

## Scarecrows Return to Colchester Green

by Allison Lazur

Cool weather swooped in last weekend, along with 28 scarecrows, to kick off the town's 19th annual Scarecrow Decorating Contest.

The contest, jointly sponsored by the Colchester Parks and Recreation Department and Colchester Business Association (CBA), encourages families, individuals, businesses, neighborhoods and schools to build a scarecrow scene on the town green.

CBA Vice-President Chuck Maynard said the goal of the festival is part fun and part advertising for the businesses involved.

"Ultimately the goal is just community involvement – to have some fun, get people out there. [The contest] is also very inexpensive marketing for the businesses and it's a fun way to do it," Maynard said.

He explained getting the scarecrows out on the green was a little delayed this year because of the rainy weather, but said now all the straw submissions should be there.

Colchester Dental Office Manager Becky Scott said the practice's display also faced some weather related issues.

A tombstone positioned behind the display once read "RIP Pearl E. White Lies Here" but the words have since been washed away by rain.

She said all scarecrows were supposed to be set up for display between Oct. 10 and Oct. 12,

but the set up time was extended by one day because of rain.

The displays will remain on the green until at least Oct. 26.

Through chuckles, Scott said the practice's theme was "dental zombies," with one zombie sporting a blue head and the other a green head – both colors used in the office.

Scott said the office regularly creates a scarecrow, but thought there may have been a year or two they missed.

"We try our best," she said.

The Facebook group Colchester is Kind also had a hay creation complete with a big, bold sign that read "Be A Good Human."

The group's founder Michelle Noehren said this is the organization's third scarecrow contest.

Noehren explained she and Colchester resident Julie Fetzter, as well as Theresa Govert – the Democratic candidate running for state representative in the state's 34th district – created the display.

"We like to pick a quote about kindness and build our scene around the quote," she said.

The quote selected this year was from primatologist Jane Goodall: "What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."

See Scarecrows page 2



A scarecrow scene for the town's 19th annual Scarecrow Decorating Contest was created by friends and family in honor of 18-year-old Taylor Howes, who died on June 22 from injuries sustained in an automobile crash.





Individuals, businesses and groups constructed straw submissions on the town green for Colchester’s 19th annual Scarecrow Decorating Contest. A scene by Colchester Eye Care (top left) had signs reading “Our patients are the apples of our eyes” and “Eye exams are not scary at Colchester Eye Care,” while the group Colchester is Kind (top right) crafted a scene around the quote “What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.” Berkshire Hathaway (bottom left) created their own take on *The Wizard of Oz* and (bottom right) “dental zombies” sporting green and blue heads were the idea of the Colchester Dental Group.

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**Scarecrows cont. from Front Page**

The words were painted in white paint on a wooden board.

“Theresa painted the sign for us and did a beautiful job,” Noehren said.

A third display was home to a pink and white sign that read “Taylor Paige Way.”

A scene featuring pumpkins, sunflowers and Winnie the Pooh was created in honor of 18-year-old Taylor Howes, who died on June 22 from injuries sustained in an automobile collision with a tree on Norwich Avenue.

The idea to create a scarecrow scene for Howes came from Dayle Coutu, resident and founder of the Facebook page “We Love You Taylor H.”

Coutu said she creates a scarecrow for the contest every year and decided to make this year’s dedicated to Howes.

By creating a scarecrow site, Coutu said a place other than the “unsafe” site of the automobile crash was available for people to place something in honor of Howes.

Coutu said she posted on the Facebook page and told those interested to “bring some memories.”

In addition to the hay-stuffed Winnie the Pooh, the site also hosts small bags of wooden hearts for the taking, Coutu said. The words “You are loved, please be safe” adorn the front, with “In memory of Taylor H” printed on the back.

Parks and Recreation Director Tiffany Quinn

said the event kicked off last Friday with a costume parade.

She said nearly 100 kids dressed as princesses, pirates, a dinosaur and Harry Potter, among others, paraded around the green.

Maynard said the costume parade, like the scarecrow contest, was made possible by community involvement. He noted Plum Tomato, Family Pizza, Stop & Shop and Dunkin’ Donuts had all made donations of food and drink for the parade.

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Prizes will be awarded for the funniest, scariest and most imaginative scarecrow displays, Maynard said.

The winners will receive \$50 from the CBA and a matching \$50 credit from the Parks and Recreation department for recreational activities.

Those interested can vote online until Oct. 26 at [surveymonkey.com/r/CRQL8ZQ](http://surveymonkey.com/r/CRQL8ZQ) or in person at one of the following locations: Colchester Eye Care, 163 Broadway; Colchester Parks and Recreation Office, 127 Norwich Ave; Castle, 396 Halls Hill Rd; Harrington Court, 59 Harrington Court; Colchester Dental Group, 79A Norwich Ave; Apple Rehab, 36 Broadway; Escapes Salon, 27 Lebanon Ave; Westchester Eye Care, 752 Middletown Rd.; and Dime Bank, 139 Main St.



## Senate Debate cont. from Front Page

sentatives who voted in 2016 against a bill that requires state colleges and universities to develop affirmative consent policies on their campuses. The concept raises the bar for sexual consent from “no means no” to “yes means yes.”

Ziobron said her vote on the bill was a response to a Democratic budget proposal at the time that reduced funding for rape crisis centers and shelters for domestic violence victims.

“The hypocrisy that happens at the Capitol sometimes, someone’s got to stand up and say enough is enough,” she said.

She pointed to her support of one bill to speed up the processing of rape kits by the state and another to stop victims of domestic violence from being arrested with their abusers because they fought back during an assault.

“Now we can finally focus our energy on those who are perpetrating these crimes and treat them as the criminals they are,” Ziobron said.

A question to gauge the candidates’ stance on higher education yielded diametrically-opposed policy recommendations.

On one side, Ziobron suggested working to streamline administration costs at state colleges and universities.

“The largest pensioners are the higher education folks, some of whom receive a pension over \$300,000,” she said.

On the other side, Needleman proposed two years of free post-secondary education or job training.

“This comes down to investing in our future,”

he said. “Every time a question is asked, Melissa comes up with a reason to cut. And I understand that we’re in a financial crisis, but you will never, ever cut your way to prosperity.”

The final few minutes of the debate were given over to final statements from each candidate.

Ziobron touted endorsements by the Independent Party of Connecticut and the National Federation of Independent Business, as well as awards she received during her time at the Capitol from the statewide land trust organization and the League of Conservation Voters.

“I will always treat your tax dollars carefully while giving the job the entire attention it deserves, rather than a part-time job,” she said – an apparent reference to Needleman planning to remain Essex first selectman if he wins the senate seat.

Needleman responded to Ziobron’s closing remarks before beginning his own.

“It is a part-time job, and the League of Conservation voters endorsed me,” he said.

Needleman told the audience at Bacon Academy that Ziobron’s voting record doesn’t reflect support for the Colchester community.

He cited her votes against bond projects that included funding for the William J. Johnston Middle School expansion and job training and capital improvements at the aerospace manufacturing company Alpha Q.

“In almost every area affecting your town, my positions are the opposite of those of my opponent,” he said.

## Ziobron and Needleman on the Issues

Candidates Melissa Ziobron, a Republican, and Norm Needleman, a Democrat, sparred on stage at Bacon Academy High School Tuesday evening. Here’s some of what they had to say:

### On Tolls

Ziobron: The majority [party] in the legislature didn’t pay their bills. And the majority in the legislature has actually siphoned money out of the special transportation fund to the tune of \$137 million dollars. We need to look at other solutions, and I’m not sure congestion tolling is the one.

Needleman: I’m not a big fan of tolls. I remember when Connecticut had tolls. I suspect that no matter what anybody at any debate tells you, there are going to be tolls in the state of Connecticut. I think it’s a matter of how you do it.

### On Out-Migration

Needleman: “One party in this state has done everything they can to convince people businesses are leaving the state as fast as they can. I know that’s not the case.”

Ziobron: “When I talk to folks and am at their door, the stories I hear are heartbreaking. They are looking to leave. That’s not one party making a rumor. Just talk to your friends and neighbors.”

### On Guns

Ziobron: “I am proud to stand up and support legal, law-abiding gun owners and the second amendment. The reality is I have a stack here of gun laws that are not enforced.”

Needleman: “My opponent voted against every single gun control bill that has come before the state after Newtown: taking guns out of domestic violence homes, bump stocks, all of them. I own guns. I’m not going to say I don’t. But I believe we need to have universal background checks. We need to make sure we are protecting our right to have them but at the same time the public’s right to be safe. There’s a fine balance there that we need to find. It’s not winner take all, my way or the highway.”

### On Immigration

Needleman: “I am appalled by the country’s immigration policy, or lack thereof. I’m appalled by what’s going on in Washington. I’m appalled by family separation. ... It’s heartless. It doesn’t care about people. This is a melting pot. My grandparents came to this country at the turn of the 20th century and thank God they did, because 35 or 40 years later virtually every Jew that was left in Europe died. If we don’t have a sensible immigration policy that has a heart and is compassionate, who are we as a country?”

Ziobron: “My mother came here from England legally. I have, like everybody else, many ancestors who went through that process. I believe the federal government has failed us. We are looking at dealing with those issues on the state side, but when we start talking about sanctuary cities, we’re allowing people to break the law and I don’t support that.”

### On Dark Money

Ziobron: “When it comes to the dark money, there’s absolutely no collaboration between candidates and whatever those PACs are doing. I do recognize there is a PAC involved in this race and I think a couple others, but I first read about it in the newspaper. I think we do need to do more for making sure our elections are clean, but that also means we need to limit maybe the amount we spend in them. Writing a check and funding your own campaign over \$300,000, I’m not so sure we should all be spending that kind of money running a campaign.”

Needleman: “I did put money in my own campaign because, six months ago when I decided to run, I knew there was going to be dark money coming into the state of Connecticut. ... Outside money, unidentified, with no name associated with it, shooting into the state from a super-PAC to a PAC to another PAC, that’s just wrong. But the Supreme Court, the conservative-leaning Supreme Court, approved that a few years ago. It’s a game-changer for the United States of America.”

## From the Editor’s Desk

# Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

As the days grow shorter and the weather turns cooler, the letters to the editor in the *Rivereast* grow more plentiful, and the typeface on those letters starts to shrink. Yup, Election Day is drawing ever-closer – less than three weeks away, in fact.

As such, it’s time for some friendly letter reminders.

Many of you are submitting letters on behalf of your candidates of choice, and that’s good. I encourage that, and take it as a nice sign that people are reading the paper. As I wrote last week, some of these letters have been pretty harsh – and that’s fine. I realize I may have come off last week a little preachy, and that wasn’t my intention. I don’t want to discourage any negative letters. I completely understand the temptation to want to fight back after your candidate’s been dragged through the mud. Just ask Michelle Obama how successful it is to go high when the other side goes low.

But here’s the thing: You’re running out of time to sling that mud.

Next week’s issue, the Oct. 26 one, will be the last *Rivereast* for any negative attack letters about any of the area candidates. So get it all out of your system then. The following week, Nov. 2, is the last week before Election Day, and all letters submitted then should be positive, and raising no new issues – as any candidates criticized wouldn’t have time to respond before the following Tuesday.

So, in the interest of fairness, next week is the last week in which you can go negative. Letters submitted for the Nov. 2 issue should be endorsements only. Hit just the good stuff, none of the bad. Any negative letters submitted for that week will be rejected. No exceptions will be made. It doesn’t matter who you are, how noble your cause, how justified you feel – if you want to attack someone, do it next week or don’t do it at all.

And remember the deadline: Tuesdays at noon. No exceptions will be made.

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As a Marist College alum, I always like to hear of fellow Red Foxes doing well.

That’s especially true when said Red Fox plays for a sports team I like.

The New York Jets continued their successful (for them) start to the season with a nice 42-34 victory over the Indianapolis Colts last Sunday. In the game, kicker Jason Myers had a team-record seven field goals. Seven! Three

of those kicks were for 45 yards or longer – and all told he set an NFL record with 274 yards’ worth of field goals.

Oh, and he’s a Marist grad.

Yep, Myers, as I learned during the CBS broadcast of the game, is a graduate of the beautiful Poughkeepsie, N.Y., college. He’s a member of the Class of 2013 and, according to the *Poughkeepsie Journal*, one of just two Marist grads to make it all the way to the NFL. (Hey, we’re not known for our football.)

Now, one can argue while Sunday was a great day for Myers, it wasn’t a great day for the Jets offense as a whole. It seemed that nearly every time I looked up Sunday – I was also doing some October cleaning while the game was going on – the Jets had the ball. Indeed, they wound up going into the red zone six times. But only one of those times did New York actually score a touchdown. The rest of the scoring came from Myers’s field goals. It worked out for the Jets in the end, and it certainly did for Myers, but I’m not sure how successful a recipe that is for a winning season.

Eventually, they’re gonna have to convert some touchdowns.

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Lastly, here are some great one-liners from the late, often-hilarious George Carlin:

“I’m not concerned about all hell breaking loose, but that a PART of hell will break loose. It’ll be much harder to detect.”

“The day after tomorrow is the third day of the rest of your life.”

“Ever wonder about those people who spend \$2 apiece on those little bottles of Evian water? Try spelling ‘Evian’ backward.”

“Would a fly without wings be called a walk?”

“Honesty may be the best policy, but it’s important to remember that apparently, by elimination, dishonesty is the second-best policy.”

“Swimming isn’t a sport; it’s just a way to keep from drowning.”

“One can never know for sure what a deserted area looks like.”

“If a parsley farmer is sued, can they garnish his wages?”

“One nice thing about egotists: they don’t talk about other people.”

“May the forces of evil become confused on the way to your house.”

## Hebron Selectmen Fed Up with Town’s Water Woes

by Sloan Brewster

Water is still coming up short in town – and town officials have had enough.

In June, the state Commissioner of Public Health declared a public drinking water supply emergency in the center of Hebron, due to the well that supplies water to the area coming up short. The problem hasn’t yet been resolved by the Connecticut Water Company, Town Manager Andrew Tierney said, and residents on the well system were getting frustrated – and the shortage was effecting development.

Tierney told the Board of Selectmen at its Oct. 11 meeting he had given Connecticut Water “a push” to fix the problem. Selectmen supported this approach, with board member Brian O’Connell telling Tierney, “Push them as much as you want.”

“We need to get this fixed and put to bed,” Tierney said.

“We cannot allow this to deter economic development,” Board of Selectmen Chairman Dan Larson said. “We need the town to move forward.”

Last week, in a meeting with the *Rivereast*, Tierney said two developers – after being told by the water company that no new well hook-ups were authorized – nearly walked away from proposed projects. Tierney subsequently contacted the company to verify that new hook-ups would be allowed in the future, once the water shortage is resolved.

The company concurred and since then, one of the developers has moved his project forward and the other is in negotiations to purchase a property, Tierney said.

The well that supplies the most water to town

has been coming up short since May and in June, Commissioner of Public Health Paul Pino declared a public drinking water supply emergency in the center.

The shortage came on suddenly and unexpectedly, according to town officials, who first discussed it publicly in June. Connecticut Water has yet to determine the cause of the shortage.

In June, Tierney said Connecticut Water was bringing tankers of water in to restore the supply.

The company ultimately set up a temporary connection from a company water source at Country Manor to the center – a connection that, according to Dan Meaney, director of corporate communications for the water company, will be made permanent next week.

A ban on outdoor water usage was issued in June and, according to Meaney, is ongoing while the company continues to search for solutions.

“We’re continuing to explore alternative water sources,” he said.

The company has drilled three test wells on land near existing wells that were determined not a significant source of water, Meaney said. It has also secured access to a parcel of land off Wall Street where three more tests were done last week.

“We are in the process of having a yield test to determine the output and water quality results,” he said.

Meaney said he had not had any contact with Tierney and that he could not confirm if anyone else from the company had heard from him.



# Osten, Lounsbury Face Off at Debate

by Sloan Brewster

Incumbent state Sen. Cathy Osten (D-19) and her opponent, Republican Mark Lounsbury, disagreed on nearly every issue at a debate at Kelly Magnet Middle School in Norwich last Thursday, Oct. 11.

The 19th District includes the *Rivereast* towns of Hebron and Marlborough, as well as Columbia, Franklin, Lebanon, Ledyard, Lisbon, Montville, Norwich and Sprague. Osten is seeking her fourth term in office, having first won election in 2012.

Interestingly, this isn't the first time Lounsbury has tried to unseat Osten from public office. Last year, Lounsbury ran against her as she sought re-election as the Sprague first selectwoman, a position she's held since 2007. She topped him by a tally of 515 to 391, according to *Norwich Bulletin* archives.

That particular contest wasn't brought up during the one-hour debate, but a variety of other topics were, ranging from phasing out the state income tax and increasing the minimum wage to resolving the deficit and legalizing marijuana.

On marijuana, while the two agreed further study into its long-term effects was needed, they disagreed when it came to how the state should best approach the drug.

Osten said she does not think using the drug should be a criminal offense but changes in the law should be based on the outcomes of further study.

Lounsbury, on the other hand, said he felt "we should just leave it alone. I don't think we should get involved with it as a state."

Lounsbury, who is a retired Norwich police officer, also said, "We don't know what marijuana is going to do in the long run. ... It's a depressant, it's a stimulant and it's a hallucinogen."

Moderator Paul Choiniere – editorial director of *The Day*, which sponsored the debate – asked Lounsbury about gun control, and specifically whether he supported the state's recent ban on so-called bump stocks, a modification that allows semi-automatic weapons to fire at a faster rate.

Lounsbury talked about upholding the Second Amendment, and also stressed the problem with gun violence wasn't the guns themselves but those who wield them – saying it was a mental health issue.

Mass shooters "could've had a car or a knife," he said. "It was mental health."

Osten, meanwhile, noted that she supported the bump stock ban – it passed in the state senate 26-10 – and said she "did not feel this bill impeded on the Second Amendment at all."

She also pointed out that Lounsbury had not specifically answered the question bump stocks, and Choiniere asked him to do so.

Pressed, Lounsbury said he would not support the bump stock ban the way it was written.

When asked if she believes she shares some of the responsibility for the state's current

\$717.5 million deficit, Osten said both Republicans and Democrats were at fault.

Lounsbury's idea for fixing the problem was to tap into the state's \$1 billion rainy day fund.

Osten, who said the reserves were getting closer to \$2 billion, did not agree with his solution.

"I am not in favor of spending the rainy day fund for any reason," she said.

To a question on phasing out the income tax, Lounsbury said he felt state spending needed to be reined in, but there's more to be done before combatting the income tax.

Osten said she was not in favor of phasing out the tax – and added that Republican gubernatorial candidate Bob *Stefanowski*, who has pledged to do so, does not have a plan for getting there.

Stefanowski "has no ideas at all on how he plans on achieving getting rid of 50 percent of the state's revenue," she said. "We would lose municipal aid, we would lose education aid. ... I cannot see us jeopardizing the gains that we've made with our municipal aid programs for an idea that does not have any merit."

Lounsbury took shots at the gas and sales taxes, asking, "Why do we have all these other taxes? As things stand you've got to work all the way through April to pay your taxes."

To a question on an FBI investigation in Sprague, Osten accused Lounsbury of initiating it.

According to a report in *The Day*, FBI agents interviewed residents of a town-owned apartment and the owner of Norwich farmland where stone and granite from a former mill site were being stored. The reason for the investigation was unclear and, according to *The Day*, the FBI would neither confirm nor deny that it took place.

At the debate, Osten said she thinks either Lounsbury or someone from his campaign made a complaint to the FBI that spurred the investigation.

But Lounsbury flatly denied it, saying, "I have made no complaint to the FBI during this campaign."

Choiniere asked Osten if she had any direct evidence that Lounsbury had filed the complaint, to which she replied only that Lounsbury keeps saying he has contacts in the FBI.

There was also talk about jobs, with Osten saying she was bringing more to eastern Connecticut via legislation that will help Electric Boat.

According to the news outlet *CT News Junkie*, Osten has proposed legislation in an effort to award \$100 million in manufacturing bonds to Electric Boat for site improvements and to help with planning costs for the new Columbia Class submarine.

"I am laser-focused on the issue of jobs in the eastern portion of the state," she said.

The candidates disagreed on bringing the minimum wage to \$15. Osten, pointing out that Amazon and McDonald's were doing it at their



State Sen. Cathy Osten (D-19) and her opponent, Republican Mark Lounsbury, squared off in a debate in Norwich last week.

companies, said she was in favor of the idea.

"We shouldn't arbitrarily set minimum wage," Lounsbury said. "You tie it to the consumer pricing base, as the consumer pricing index fluctuates and changes the minimum wage does."

Choiniere also asked the candidates about the two special questions that will appear on state residents' Election Day ballots. One is about securing the Special Transportation Fund so it can be used solely for transportation purposes – the so-called "transportation lockbox."

The second question is about enacting legislation that will mandate a two-thirds majority vote of the legislature before the state can sell land.

Osten said she supported both measures.

Lounsbury said he felt the lockbox was a great idea, then quipped, "but there first has to be money in it."

On the land question, however, he said the proposed legislation should be rewritten to assure it only refers to open space.

Osten disagreed.

"It's very much dedicated toward areas that are preserved and conserved," she said. "It could be state parks, it could be farmland, it could be forests."

The candidates also didn't agree that the state should "pick up the slack," as Choiniere put it, on environmental regulations the Trump Administration has rolled back.

Osten said she felt the state should draft its own environmental policies, to fill in the gaps left by the federal government's recent roll-backs.

Lounsbury, however, said Connecticut should have nothing to do with such policies, which are "just a way to take money".

He added data on climate change was fudged.

"As far as real proof of manmade climate change, I haven't seen any," he said to Osten. "You need to show me some more proof because you haven't showed me any proof."

"I don't think [Choiniere's] question included anything on whether or not climate change is manmade," Osten retorted. She added, "Climate change is happening. ... I think that we should pay attention to our scientists."

Lounsbury replied that "climate change is inevitable and we have nothing to do with it. It's just a money-maker."

Lounsbury closed his side of the debate by reading Section 2 of the Connecticut State Constitution.

"That all political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their benefit," he read. "And that they have at all times an undeniable and indefeasible right to alter their form of government in such manner as they may think expedient."

He then posed a question to the audience.

"Does that necessarily mean that you could change the government? Possibly it does," he said. "In eastern Connecticut particularly we need to bring a little control back. Do we need to do that? I'm asking you."

Osten spoke of things she has done to help people and businesses and spoke of a law that has helped the mother of Ledyard resident Conor Irwin, who died in 2016 at the age of 14, after suffering a traumatic head injury in a skateboarding accident. Osten put in the legislation for Conor's Law, which passed in May. It requires anyone under the age of 16 to wear a helmet while skateboarding.

"I love the state of Connecticut, I love where we live," she said. "It is a perfect place to be."

## East Hampton Police News

10/3: Michael A. Jennings, 27, of 21 Brush Hill Rd., Lyme, was issued a summons for misuse of plates, operating without a license and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, East Hampton Police said.

10/3: Dante Mastroianni, 32, of 108 Main St., was issued a summons for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, misuse of plates and operating an uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

10/5: David Benjamin, 52, of 12 Hayes Rd., was issued a summons for misuse of plates, operating under suspension and operating an unregistered and uninsured motor vehicle, police said.

10/11: Sarah Ford, 32, of 61 School St., Norwich, turned herself in pursuant to three active warrants for her arrest and was charged with three separate counts of probation violation, police said.

Also, from Oct. 1-7, officers responded to eight medical calls, six motor vehicle crashes and eight alarms, and made 27 traffic stops.

## Portland Police News

10/9: Travis Kohl, 25, of 134 Jail Hill Road, Haddam, was charged with criminal violation of restraining order and second-degree harassment, Portland Police said.

10/10: Nicole Stanhope, 24, of 135 East Robbins Ave., Newington, was charged with second-degree assault, risk of injury to a minor and disorderly conduct, police said.

## Colchester Police News

10/9: State Police said Nicole M. Brown, 43, of 201 Deerfield Terrace, was arrested and charged with failure to use seatbelt, DUI and failure to grant right of way.

## Car Reported Stolen in Hebron

State Police said a report of a stolen vehicle was received at approximately 8:40 a.m. Oct. 8.

The 2016 black Mini Cooper S with license plate AG67621 is believed to have been stolen during the overnight hours on Oct. 7 from a residential driveway.

The incident is still under investigation, police said.

## Hebron Police News

10/9: State Police said Gregory Baier, 62, of 186 Deepwood Dr., Amston, was arrested and charged with DUI.

## Portland Police: Lock Vehicles, Take Out Keys

by Elizabeth Regan

The Portland Police Department is warning residents to lock their vehicles – and take away the keys – after several cars were entered and two were stolen overnight Sunday.

"We're finding the cars that are entered are all unlocked and the vehicles that are stolen have their keys in them," Captain Ron Milardo said.

A batch of unlocked cars were entered on Penfield Hill Road, Rose Hill Road, Old Marlborough Turnpike and Bartlett Street, according to Milardo. Two of the cars, which had the keys left inside, were stolen.

Police said they received a total of five reports about unlawful entry into vehicles during the overnight hours.

"We're asking anyone that sees a suspicious vehicle or person walking on the street to give us a call," Milardo said. "If you hear any noises or dogs are barking, please call us. Let us check it out."

Milardo said the rash of driveway crime came after a period of relative calm.

"For at least 6 months, it's been quiet here," he said. "And now it looks like they're back."

The case is under investigation.

## Marlborough Police News

10/13: State Police said Brandt T. Bedard, 35, of 23 Versailles Rd., Jewett City, was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive in proper lane.



# RHAM Football Program Off to Best Start Ever

by Sloan Brewster

For the RHAM High School football program, teamwork really is making the dream work.

The Sachems are off to the best start in the program's history – and the players say the closeness of the team plays a lot into the success.

RHAM has started 5-0 and is state-ranked for the first time in the history of the program and several players are on place to lead the state in offensive and defensive categories, Ethan Brysgel, President Sports Boosters said. Junior Varsity is also undefeated at 5-0.

Head Coach Rob Rubin attributed the success to the team; team members in turn said it was all on Rubin.

"I think they're doing so well because the kids trust one another," Rubin said in a phone call Tuesday. "This year we're definitely more of a team."

Rubin also said there have been a couple changes this year, namely that senior Callum Redman, one of the top players in the state, led the team last year and was all offense. This year Redman is quarterback and inside linebacker and there's more ball distribution.

Rubin reiterated that the players all get along, which he said, translates to good games.

"They really like each other; they work out together; they hang out," he said. "There's no real animosity, they all get along."

Two players who spoke to the *Rivereast* during practice Tuesday concurred, saying the players are close.

Seamus Queen, a senior and running back, said the relationship is strong and reaches across age groups.

"From senior to freshman, we all kind of enjoy each other," he said. "It's just a really tight-knit relationship."

Having trust in one another is imperative to successful plays, he said.

"In football there's so many facets to the game, from the linebacker to the running back to the quarterback, if one person does their job wrong the whole play gets messed up," Queen said. "It's knowing everyone's going to be where they're supposed to be."

Dylan Depersia, senior, wide receiver and safety, said the team is together year-round.

"We're together for several hours every day," he said. "We're all friends, we consider each other family we eat dinner together once a week."

The team shares a meal in the school cafeteria every Thursday, which helps them bond, he said.

That relationship played out at the Sachems' last game on Oct. 6, according to Depersia. They were playing Plainville and at halftime, the team was down and the players knew they had to trust and rely on one another to raise the score. In the end, confidence and cooperation led to a 32-24 win.

"We really just bond and trust each other," he said. "We don't point fingers."

Queen and Depersia both said the player friendships were a byproduct of coaching changes since Rubin took over as head coach two years ago.

Queen credited the all-season weightlifting program that Rubin implemented.

Before the new program, weightlifting was more of a standard program with no direction, and only about 10 players tended to show up for sessions, Queen said. Under Rubin, players get more direction and workouts based on individuals' strengths and weaknesses.

Not only does that time in the gym bring the players closer together, it's had a positive effect on them physically.

"We're insanely strong," Queen said. "It's just a big difference in our strength."

According to Depersia, it's about more than just the weight lifting program.

"Since Coach Rubin got here, football has been a year-round sport," he said.

The team gets a week off for finals and a week's vacation at the holidays and works out every morning all summer. When school is in session, players have a study hall after classes end and then suit up and go outside to practice. Practice starts with drills based on position, then everyone stretches and finally they come together as a team.

The style of practice itself is much different than what some teams do, according to Rubin,



Dylan Depersia makes a run during a Sachems' football game earlier this season. RHAM is off to its best start ever, at 5-0.

explaining that it's not full contact.

It's a style of practice he's been having his teams do since he first became a head coach seven years ago at A. I. Prince Technical High School, in Hartford.

For practice players do not wear their full uniforms. Rather, they wear helmets and shoulder padding and not football pants. At Tuesday's practice they were all wearing shorts.

Padded pants aren't necessary as players don't do take downs, Rubin said.

"We're very much about preserving our bodies," he said. "We don't ever bring anybody down to the ground in practice."

That keeps players healthy for games, he said.

"To me it's just about getting our bodies right for Friday/Saturday (games) and not beating each other up because that doesn't help us," he said.

It wasn't always that way, according to Depersia. In his freshman year, the team tack-

led during practice. Players often got injured and then were out for the games. Now, instead of sitting on the bench, they are ready for the games.

There are also other reasons for the team's undefeated stance.

"Honestly, it's just change of mentality around the program," Queen said. "We're confident in ourselves and believe in ourselves at all times."

"Our record this year is a testament to our hard work," Depersia said.

While acknowledging that it's the first time the team has been undefeated, Rubin said what will really be telling will be how the team matches up at the end of the season.

"I don't look at it yet," he said. "It doesn't mean much to me now, it depends how you finish."

In the meantime, he said, the goal is to finish out every week at 1 and 0.

## Fourth Budget Referendum Approaches in East Hampton

by Elizabeth Regan

The \$14.95 million general government budget is going back to voters Tuesday after failing three times at referendum. Polls will be open at East Hampton Middle School from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

**General Government Proposed Budget:** \$14,946,208, a \$733,460 (5.16 percent) increase over the current budget. The bottom line remains the same as the proposal that failed at referendum in September, but would shift \$140,000 from the town's capital reserve fund to the Board of Education operating budget to reinstate two teaching positions. The budget includes \$10.73 million in operating expenses, an increase of 1.11 percent over the current budget; \$992,206 in capital and transfers, an increase of 21.7 percent over the current year; and \$3.23 million in debt, an increase of 15.74 percent over the current year.

**The Compromise:** The attempt to stave off another failed referendum was brokered by Town Manager Michael Maniscalco and Superintendent of Schools Paul K. Smith. Endorsed by the finance board despite opposition from the school board, the compromise would use capital funding earmarked for education to instead fund a kindergarten and high school En-

glish teaching position that were cut in the \$30.50 million schools' spending plan approved by voters in May. There will be a question on the ballot asking voters if they support the transfer of \$140,000 from the town's capital reserve fund to the Board of Education operating budget to hire two teachers.

**The History:** While education advocates grudgingly approved the separate education budget – including the reduction of eight teaching positions – at the first referendum out of fear it would be cut further if they voted down the proposal, the voting bloc subsequently mobilized to reinstate some of the lost teaching positions. The basis of their argument rests on an unexpected allocation of \$715,415 in Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funds from the state that they believe should be applied to the education budget. The two resulting town budget proposals did not restore any of the teaching positions, and the resulting referendums failed by an increasingly large margin.

**The Questions:** The ballot this time around will be more crowded. It includes four questions:

**One:** Shall the town government annual budget for the fiscal year 2018-19, in the amount

of \$14,946,208, as recommended by the town council be approved?

**Two:** If question 1 is approved, shall the town transfer \$140,000 from the town operations capital reserve fund budget to the Board of Education operating budget to be used to hire two teachers?

**Three:** Is the General Government budget of \$14,946,208 too high, too low or just right?

**Four:** Is the Board of Education budget of \$30,499,668 too high, too low or just right?

According to Maniscalco, if the budget proposal fails, the second question is moot.

If the town budget passes and the second question fails, there would not be a transfer to fund the teaching positions.

Maniscalco on Thursday interpreted that to mean the approved budget would be running a \$140,000 surplus, which would allow the town council, finance board and the capital committee could consider reallocating those funds to cover other capital projects.

Smith, also on Thursday, said it is his interpretation that the \$140,000 will simply stay in the capital budget for education if the question fails.

**Changes Since the Failed Referendum:**

Officials on the Finance Board and Town Council in June endorsed a plan to use \$716,415 in unexpected state funding that came through with the passage of the state budget in May to pay \$117,000 in cash for teacher laptops and student mini-laptops instead of leasing them, and to use the rest of the state funding to drive down the mill rate. Then, in September, voters at a town meeting gave the go ahead for the purchase of a public works paver and plow truck, as well as the repair of the community center roof, using a majority of the town's 2017-18 budget surplus. The three items account for \$570,000 of the \$740,000 budget surplus. The plow truck and paver were originally set to be leased as part of the proposed 2018-19 town government budget, but Board of Finance members decided they wanted to pay cash instead.

**Total Impact:** Combined with the already approved \$30.50 million education budget, taxpayers are looking at a potential mill rate of 32.21 based on the latest general government budget proposal. That's an increase of 0.89 mills over the current mill rate. Property taxes for someone with a home assessed at \$250,000 would go up \$223 in the upcoming budget year if the general government budget passes.



# East Hampton Hub Ballots Destroyed, Questions Remain

by Elizabeth Regan

Lingering questions about how many people actually voted for the new \$18.98 million municipal hub will remain unanswered now that East Hampton officials have destroyed the ballots from last year's election under the direction of the Office of the Secretary of the State.

The *Rivereast* made its first request to view the documents on Nov. 20, 2017, one week after a recount revealed irregularities in at least some of the election results. The request was denied in December by town attorney Richard Carella, who has been fighting the newspaper's effort to see the documents ever since.

Republican Registrar of Voters Lori Wilcox said Tuesday the ballots were destroyed Aug. 27, the same day an advisory opinion was sent from Secretary of the State Denise W. Merrill to Carella.

The three-page advisory opinion, signed by Merrill and authored by staff attorney Theodore Bromley, stated the ballots should "not be made available for public inspection."

The right to vote privately and secretly is "of the utmost importance to the integrity of Connecticut's elections" as a way to ensure voters are not victimized by fraud or intimidation, according to the letter.

"It is the opinion of the secretary that the right to secret voting is undermined if, after voting, a voter's individual ballot is routinely subjected to public inspection and scrutiny," Bromley wrote.

According to the opinion, allowing public inspection of individual voters' private ballots "poses an unacceptable risk of invading voter privacy, intimidating voters and eroding voter confidence in our electoral system."

The documents were shredded despite the *Rivereast's* ongoing complaint with the Freedom of Information Commission alleging that the town's refusal to allow access to the ballots was a violation of the state's Sunshine Law. The state Freedom of Information Act was enacted in 1975 to preserve access to public records.

The *Rivereast* first asked Town Manager Michael Maniscalco for the opportunity to view all handcounted ballots from the 2017 municipal election after a recount revealed an unspecified number of ballots had been counted twice.

It is not clear – and now never will be – how the error affected the vote totals for the referendum question, which passed by only 30 votes.

The newspaper's subsequent complaint to the Freedom of Information Commission was dismissed in August due to a provision in state election law that requires election ballots to be sealed for 180 days after the election. Only a judge can order the ballots be unsealed, according to the statute.

The commission, in upholding hearing officer Kathleen K. Ross's decision, ruled access to paper ballots is governed by state election statutes - not by the Freedom of Information Act. Ross's decision was based on testimony presented at a Mar. 26 hearing, which took place before the 180-day retention period had expired.

The *Rivereast* argued in a post-hearing brief that state statute does not preclude access to the ballots in the time between the expiration of the 180-day impoundment period and their eventual destruction.

State law says ballots from a recount "may be" destroyed after the 180 day period.

"The emphasis in this argument is on 'may be destroyed,'" the *Rivereast* brief said. "It does not say the documents shall be destroyed."

The *Rivereast* argued state election law controls access to the ballots up to 180 days after the election, but that Freedom of Information provisions control access after 180 days.

At least one commissioner was open to the possibility.

Commissioner Jonathan Einhorn said in June that a lack of access to paper ballots "tends to keep electors in the dark." But he later determined that the commission's decision must be based on circumstances at the time of the hearing.

"I'd like the opportunity to discuss and review this matter if, in fact, there's another request made [to] the town now that the 180 days is up. And then we can see what happens," he said during the commission's Aug. 8 meeting. "Unfortunately, that's not what we have before us now. Hopefully it will be before us in the future."

The *Rivereast* filed a new Freedom of Infor-

mation request with Maniscalco that same day asking to inspect the handcounted ballots; the request was denied in a letter from Carella dated Aug. 28.

The *Rivereast* filed another complaint with the Freedom of Information Commission immediately upon receipt of the denial on Aug. 28 – which, as it turns out, was the day after the documents were destroyed.

**Matter is 'Moot'**

Carella last Friday sent a letter to Freedom of Information Commission Executive Director Colleen Murphy asking her to cancel the hearing on the *Rivereast's* second complaint, which is scheduled for Oct. 30.

Carella argued first that the case is the same as the previous one and is subject to the same determination: that the public's access to election records is governed by statutes other than the Freedom of Information Act.

Also, the documents no longer exist.

"Secondly, this case is no longer justiciable as the documents in question have been destroyed per the direction of the Connecticut Secretary of the State and in the normal course of the election cycle pursuant to state election law. As such, the documents sought no longer exist and the matter is moot," Carella wrote.

He said the case has already been shown to be outside the commission's jurisdiction "and, given the fact that the documents do not exist, conducting a hearing in which no controversy exists and for which no practicable relief could be granted is an abuse of the commission's administrative process."

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco reiterated the arguments made by the town attorney and the Office of the Secretary of the State in justifying the destruction of the ballots.

"We received a letter from the secretary of the state's office telling us to destroy them after the 180 day time period was up," Maniscalco said. "Additionally, I think it's been pretty clearly stated, even at the FOI Commission meeting, that FOI doesn't have jurisdiction over ballots."

The *Rivereast* maintains that the Freedom of Information Commission has not yet weighed

in on who has jurisdiction after the 180-day impoundment period has expired. The principle of the newspaper's complaint remains even though the physical documents from the 2017 East Hampton election have gone through the shredder.

For Maniscalco, the privacy principle prevails.

"It's about the responsibility we maintain to voters. I think it's pretty well stated in the [Office of the Secretary of the State's] letter about a voter's right to privacy and the fear of someone looking at [the ballot] or making a determination of how they voted. I think it's more about that than it is about keeping people from seeing it," Maniscalco said.

He emphasized there is a process for gaining access to paper ballots through the court system.

Resident Kyle Dostaler, a Chatham Party member and former member of the Town Council, has been following the case since the 2017 recount.

"If a member of the press or the public can no longer make a formal FOI request to access and review paper ballots without being forced to get a court order, the entire voting system in the State of Connecticut is actually *more* vulnerable to corruption, false outcomes, and, due to a lack of visibility and open transparency, a decrease in accountability," he said.

Dostaler said the town's efforts to deny access to the ballots lead him to believe the town hall referendum failed to pass.

Maniscalco, when asked how he would respond to those who wonder if refusing to disclose the anonymous ballots means the town has something to hide, said, "I think no matter what you do and in any scenario, there's always going to be a minority or a group of people who say whatever you do is wrong. That's just part of government and the way it works."

Maniscalco argued that allowing the public to view the documents could anger people who believed they were casting their votes in privacy and didn't want anyone to look at the ballots.

"It's one of those catch-22s," he said.

## Linddy Continues to Be No-Show on Andover Selectmen, School Boards

by Sloan Brewster

Two major boards in town – the Board of Education and Board of Selectmen – have been operating shorthanded for more than a year, when Jay Linddy, a member of both boards, abruptly stopped attending meetings following allegations of sexual harassment in Town Hall.

But both boards have yet to do anything official in terms of asking him to resign.

Linddy's seats on both boards have been empty since last year when he was fired from his jobs as animal control officer and transfer station attendant and removed from his office in Town Hall after being accused of sexual harassment. After the incident, Linddy continued to regularly attend meetings of the Recreation Commission, of which he is also a member, but has not been at one since about April, according to Town Clerk Carol Lee, who is also on the commission.

Last August, Linddy allegedly brought an explicitly-adorned apron to his office in Town Hall and showed it to his coworkers, according to complaints submitted to Town Administrator Joseph Higgins and a lawsuit filed by former tax collector Donna Doyker.

In April, Linddy told the *Rivereast* he was planning to retire and would likely resign from the boards and commission in July, but as of press time had not done so. Linddy did not return calls for comment for this story.

As has been the case all year, Linddy was absent from the Oct. 3 Board of Selectmen meeting and from the Oct. 10 Board of Education meeting.

"[We've had] absolutely no word of any type at all," First Selectman Robert Burbank said in a phone call on Oct. 2.

On Wednesday, he said the situation was the same – and that there was no sign Linddy had any plans to let go of his seat on the board.

"If he was going to be forthcoming with a resignation I think he would have done it," Burbank said.

Board of Education Chairwoman Shannon Loudon also said she had not heard from Linddy.

Linddy's terms on both boards run through June 30, 2019.

Burbank and Jeff Maguire, vice first selectman, each said Linddy's continued absence has been inconvenient for the normally five-member board, and has often led to tie votes on motions, causing them to fail.

"It's been extremely different not having the fifth member of the board here," Maguire said. "We've had very difficult decisions being made regarding union contracts that aren't being done correctly."

Still, Burbank and Maguire reiterated that the board has no authority to force Linddy out.

When asked if the board would request a resignation from him, however, they had different answers.

"At this point I think it's kind of a waste of time, to be honest with you," Burbank said. "We could write him a letter asking him to resign, but I don't think he'd do it."

Maguire, while fairly certain Linddy would ignore any such document, said he would draft one and bring it to the next meeting.

Trying to get rid of Linddy would be in the best interests of the town, he said.

"I will present a letter to the selectmen at the next meeting for the board to sign to try to get Jay to resign from the board and get that behind us," he said.

In April, Linddy said he was not attending Board of Selectmen meetings because it is an ongoing legal matter. He said he would go to an education board meeting if asked, but stays away to prevent "disruption."

"It'd be fruitless for me to go because it would be a disruption because all the members on there I don't get along with," Linddy said. "It doesn't make the board look good and it's not healthy for the town."

## EHHS Assistant Principal Resigns Mysteriously

by Elizabeth Regan

East Hampton High School Assistant Principal Michael Dalton resigned Oct. 15, and is technically on extended leave through June 30, as dictated by the terms of a separation agreement with the East Hampton Board of Education.

It is unclear what spurred the separation.

Superintendent of Schools Paul Smith said the reason for Dalton's departure is "personal."

"I realize there are a lot of rumors, but all I can really share is he is on extended leave," Smith said this week.

Smith said he is "following up on tips and sorting through rumors" as part of his investigation into the situation.

Copies of the separation agreement and resignation letter were obtained through a Freedom of Information request.

The Oct. 10 agreement specifies Dalton will be paid his full salary, including benefits, through June 30, pending the submission of a resignation letter within five days. Smith said the extended leave period is covered by Dalton's accumulated sick time and vacation time. Dalton's salary in the current budget is \$138,312.

The agreement prohibits Dalton from working in the East Hampton school system ever again.

Dalton was hired as assistant principal in

2011. His resignation letter, dated Oct. 15, described East Hampton as the finest community he has ever known.

"In the moment, things can seem confusing and regrettable, but in the long run my departure will truly be: Just another day in Belltown!" he wrote.

Dalton said he has been given an opportunity in the private sector he will pursue immediately.

"I want to thank the entire East Hampton community for the joy of serving this town these past seven years," he wrote. "I thank the parents for trusting me with charge of their children; I really did try to make a difference."

High school social studies teacher Matt Warner will replace Dalton on Oct. 22, according to Smith. He said Warner has the necessary certifications to become an administrator in the state.

While Warner will assume the full responsibilities of the assistant principal during the school year, it will be a 10-month position instead of a full-year position. The district is still working out how much Warner will be paid.

"He'll be paid a little bit more [than he is now], but it won't be the negotiated assistant principal salary. But it will be fair to him," Smith said.

A long-term substitute teacher will take over Warner's social studies classes.



# Former City Cops Turn Marlborough Constables

by Allison Lazur

Officers Christopher Lundberg and Victor Otero are the new part-time Marlborough constables.

The officers bring the small department to one full-time constable and two part-time constables. They join long-time constable Jay Kehoe, who was promoted to full-time director of public safety in March.

The three positions combine for a \$157,400 salary line item in the current public safety budget.

Over cake and coffee at a welcome reception Tuesday night, Otero and Lundberg fielded questions from residents regarding coverage schedule and the experience each would bring to the town.

Otero, who retires today from the Hartford Police Department after 20 years, will dive back into policing Monday in Marlborough.

"I did twenty years in a larger urban environment and I think I bring a lot of experience as far as that's concerned," Otero said Tuesday.

Otero, who reached the level of detective while with the Hartford Police Department, was an investigator in cases involving child abuse, human trafficking, missing persons and sexual assaults.

In addition to two decades of experience, Otero has received a number of awards including the Hartford Police Department's Chief's Medal of Valor, Distinguished Service Award and the Hartford Police Department Unit Citation and Courage of Connecticut Law Enforcement Award.

He said he is most looking forward to meeting new people and the brand new experience being a constable in Marlborough will bring.

Otero, whose son is an athlete at RHAM High School, said he comes through Marlborough often and once he saw the town had an opening, he "went for it."

"I had a very varied career and I think I can bring community policing to the town and just

20 years of good experience," Otero said.

Away from work Otero said he likes to spend time with his family and son.

"I like to support him – he plays football and wrestles – at his events so that takes up a lot of my time," Otero said.

Lundberg brings nine years of experience as a police officer with the Middletown and Canton police departments.

"I started my career in a small town and I enjoyed small town policing and I thought Marlborough would be a good fit," he said.

Lundberg officially began work Monday. He has been training in West Hartford to maintain the certifications required of all police officers. The training is 60 hours and has to be completed every three years, according to Kehoe.

Kehoe explained the training Lundberg is currently taking includes "critical subjects and subjects that are seeing legislative change," including topics such as practical police exercises, law updates, legal updates to search and seizure and handling juveniles.

"These are all state-mandated areas that we have to get training in," Kehoe said.

Kehoe told the *Rivereast* he is certified to teach in thirteen areas, while Otero is certified to teach in five instructional areas. Lundberg will complete a portion of his training "in house" in Marlborough after finishing up in West Hartford this week.

Lundberg was already looking forward to getting involved when he spoke with the *Rivereast* Tuesday evening.

"I think this town needs someone who really is going to get to know the community," he said.

Outside of policing, Lundberg also works as a financial advisor and likes to run 40 miles a week, he said.

While both officers already have police experience, Otero and Lundberg will be working under the direction of Kehoe and Resident State Trooper Jeff Dunshee to learn the town's pro-



Constable Jay Kehoe (left) has been joined by two new part-time constables, Christopher Lundberg and Victor Otero (right).

cedures.

"The beautiful part is I don't have to train them to be police officers; they already know how to do that," Kehoe said, adding both officers will have to become "used to our procedures, our records, our general orders and how we operate things in conjunction with the state police."

Kehoe said ultimately two more officers means more coverage in all aspects of the community.

"I'm just happy to have more coverage for the town of Marlborough," he said, adding, the

additional officers means "higher visibility, better coverage, better motor vehicle enforcements, and better crime prevention."

For safety reasons Kehoe said he would not disclose what the schedule of the new officers would be.

Traversa concluded the meeting with her excitement for the two new officers and the increased coverage they will bring.

"They are training right now and we are not going to ever discuss scheduling, but when you don't expect a cop, you really should expect to see one."

## Marlborough Selectmen 'Convince' Denniss to Fill Vacant Seat

by Allison Lazur

Cliff Denniss has been appointed to the Board of Selectmen.

At a selectmen's meeting Tuesday night, First Selectman Amy Traversa and Selectman Evelyn Godbout welcomed Denniss to the board to fill the Republican seat vacated last month by Dick Shea.

Traversa said when she learned last year that Shea might be vacating his seat, "only one name ever came to my mind" when mulling over who should be appointed by the selectmen.

"It's my privilege to make a motion to appoint to the position of selectman the only person I ever considered," she said.

Denniss told the *Rivereast* this week that he served on the Board of Finance for 10 years before deciding not to run for reelection last November.

"When Mr. Shea announced his resignation, town residents asked me to consider joining the board and after a lot of thought – a lot of thought – I decided to do it," Denniss said.

Traversa said Tuesday she was looking for a candidate who had already shown a strong commitment to the town, someone whom she "occasionally disagreed with, yet whose opinions are really valued."

"I looked for someone who would persuade the board to consider a new perspective, who

would make a sound argument, who had strong convictions and who would be willing to collaborate or compromise whenever possible," she said, adding, "I wanted someone who would vote their conscience and then be willing to move onto the next issue."

While an application for appointment to boards, commissions or committees is available at the town hall and online, Traversa said it is not necessary for interested residents to fill out the form in order to apply.

Denniss said he did not fill out the form.

"I was asked. I never applied," Denniss said. Traversa said the application forms were a "convenience" requested by Shea in the past so selectmen could learn about candidates' background prior to voting on an appointment.

Per town charter and state statute, the remaining selectmen must appoint a replacement from the same political party.

"From the moment I knew that Dick would not be completing his term, both Evelyn and I knew that Cliff would be the ideal person to fill the seat if we could convince him to accept," Traversa said. "He and I have sparred on many occasions over the years, but always cordially and respectfully. Although I carefully reviewed the Republican voter list twenty times, at no point did I seriously consider any other person

for the role."

Republican Town Committee Chairman and finance board member Ken Hjulstrom submitted an application dated Sept. 26 to the town clerk.

Godbout said this week she "personally" did not see any applications for the position.

In an email to the *Rivereast* Wednesday, Hjulstrom said he "was not surprised by the appointment of Cliff Denniss to replace Dick Shea," adding, "I was aware that Cliff had an existing friendly relationship with the first selectman and that he was a likely choice."

Hjulstrom did note that he would like to see more communication between Traversa and the Democrat and Republican town committees, clarifying that the "results of appointments typically come as a surprise."

"Certainly I am disappointed for not being selected, but I realize that Amy chose someone who will likely be more in line with her position on issues," Hjulstrom said.

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Denniss said he thinks the two biggest issues the town is facing are social media and the uncertainty in municipal aid from the state.

"I don't care to see the bashing and bullying on various boards and commissions and attacks on individual members [on social media]," he

said.

He explained that he feels it's already difficult enough to get residents to serve on boards and commissions without the possibility of being "chastised on social media" for a decision they might make.

Traversa echoed Denniss' concerns with the state budget when she said she wanted the Board of Selectmen seat to be filled with someone who "understands the budget process and would be willing to jump right into the fray."

"With a new two-year budget cycle coming up from the state and all the cuts that will likely be made by the state and the new governor – whoever he might be – this is especially important this year at this time."

Traversa and Godbout wasted no time getting Denniss started. He was sworn in by Town Clerk Lauren Griffin, enabling him to serve for the first time in his new selectman seat Tuesday night.

Denniss, who served with Godbout while on the finance board, said he has "a lot of respect" for both her and Traversa.

"I have a lot of respect for both Evelyn and Amy and I don't expect them to always agree with me, but I do have a lot of respect for them," he said.



# Obituaries

## Colchester

### Arlene Mohrlein

Arlene (Gandolf) Mohrlein, 78, of Colchester, widow of the late John G. Mohrlein, Sr.; mother of Arlene "Tootsie" (Jacqueline Rowell), John Jr. (Theresa), Cheryl (Paul) and Wayne; grandmother of Jennifer (Eno), Dana, John, III (Phillip) and Taylor; great grandmother of Adriana; sister of Roger (Lyn), Hillary (Andras) and Craig (Steven); sister-in-law of Helen (Bob) Russo and Anna (and the late John) Dill, as well as aunt and cousin to many and "second mother" to many devoted farmhands that became like family, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2018 surrounded by her loving family.

Born May 28, 1940 in New York City, she was raised in Flushing, L.I., N.Y.; she was the daughter of the late Albert and Louisa (Hofsaes) Gandolf.

She was a 1958 graduate of Our Lady of Mercy Academy in Syosset, L.I., N.Y. While on her class trip in Washington, D.C. in 1956, she met her future husband, John, at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial, as he was on his senior class trip from Bacon Academy in Colchester. Over the next two years, she would leave the city to weekend with him and his family on the modest farm on Route 16. At six feet tall, she was "fashion forward" with looks that paralleled (and perhaps exceeded) those of Elizabeth Taylor; she modeled for Barbazon in New York City for a time.

Their relationship blossomed and the two were married at her parish church, St. Luke's in Whitestone, Queens, on Dec. 20, 1958. They settled in Colchester and shortly thereafter together assumed the family farm, making it in to a successful dairy operation for the next 25-plus years. In early years, both she and John were volunteers with the Colchester-Hayward Volunteer Fire Company.

After selling the milk herd in late 1985, through farm connections, she was welcomed in to the "family" at the Colchester Veterinary Hospital – swiftly climbing her way to a supervisory position – as well as being the iconic voice affectionately known as "R" at the practice on the phone for the next 26 years.

After tragically suffering a stroke in late 2010, her true colors, strength and conviction perhaps rang through the strongest as she valiantly rehabilitated at Mount Sinai Hospital in Hartford to ultimately "refill" her seat at CVH before a well-earned retirement later that next year. After retiring, she was active with the Colchester Senior Center and continued her wonderful phone skills, played Pokeno and contributed to their holiday fundraisers.

Besides her incredible dedication to both work and family, over the years she cultivated and tended to beautiful gardens on the farm and studied to be a proficient cake decorator, crafter and painter in her spare time. Additionally, she simply reveled in her visits to her mecca, otherwise known as the Christmas Tree Shop. Arlene was a truly beautiful lady, both inside and out, cherished by both family and friends alike.

Services were observed last week with visitation on Sunday (Oct. 14) and a chapel service on Monday (Oct. 15) at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. She was laid to rest next to her husband in the family plot at the New St. Andrew Cemetery, opposite the family farm.

The family would like to extend their most sincere gratitude to the numerous doctors, nurses, therapists and auxiliary staff at both Mt. Sinai Rehabilitation Hospital in Hartford and Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. Only with their loving care, concern and talents (alongside family and friends), was her life in later years able to be as fruitful and independent as they were, especially over the past year and her final hospitalization.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the Colchester-Hayward Volunteer Fire Company Auxiliary, 18-54 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, CT 06415.

To share a condolence with the family, visit [auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com](http://auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com).



## East Hampton

### Margaret Daly

Margaret Quinn Dennehy Daly quietly and peacefully passed Saturday, Oct. 13, with her loving family by her side. Born Nov. 25, 1920, in Springfield, Mass., to the late Edward J. and Nettie (Scoville) Quinn, Peg was the youngest of four children.

Peg was a graduate of the University of North Carolina in Greensboro where she earned a degree in languages. She was fluent in English, French, Spanish and Latin. It was her ability to speak Spanish which led her to her longtime career as a social worker for the State of Connecticut, where she worked until 1985.

Peg was married twice. Her first marriage was to the late Timothy Edward Dennehy (Ted); together they had a son, William John Dennehy. After Ted's untimely passing, Billy and Peg became quite a team and she put all her effort into raising a wonderful, well-rounded boy. They fell in love with baseball together, sharing a passion for the Red Sox and owned season tickets to the Philadelphia Phillies spring-training games. Bill had the joy of escorting her to her last game in March. Peg was blessed by her parents to be given a farm on Flanders Road, which was known as Home Acres.

By proximity, the Daly family took she and Billy under their wing, helping a young single woman work and care for an adventurous young boy. It was through this friendship that Peg met the man she would spend the rest of her life loving. He was a simple, hard-working farmer named Martin James (Bub) Daly They married in June of 1955 and set about living a peaceful life on Flanders Road. Together they had two children, Michael James Daly and Patricia Anne Bridget Daly Banning, and raised William together.

Once her children had grown, Peg was able to move to her beloved condominium in Clearwater, Fla., where she led an active fun filled life. She was well-known in her complex as the woman who rode a two wheeled bike until she was 97, swam daily, made desserts for every occasion and had extravagant holiday parties for her Florida friends. Peg loved all her friends in Red Hats and the Lunch Bunch. She found a second family in Mary and Joann Dunn and Maryann Sheehey, her "girls" from Boston.

Peg was fiercely independent and determined to never be a burden to anyone so she lived independently until April 1 of this year when she finally came back to Connecticut to bless her daughter with a love and joy that will forever be unmatched.

Besides her parents and her husband of 46 years, Peg was also predeceased by her three siblings, Stanley, Dr. Pearle E Bradley and William. Peg is survived by her three children William (Cyndee) Dennehy of Martha's Vineyard Ma, Michael (Gretchen) Daly of Knox, Maine, and Patricia Daly Banning of East Hampton.

She was predeceased by her son-in-law, Richard (Dick) Banning.

In addition to her children, she is also survived by perhaps her greatest pride, her eight grandchildren: Tracy Shapiro, Patrick (Michelle) Dennehy, Marshall (Rebecca) Daly, Caitlin (Jordan) Albright, Kevin (Elizabeth) Daly, Kelsey Banning, Margaret (Tommy Garside) Daly, and Kathleen (Jeffrey Scarfo) Banning. Second only to those grandchildren are the 15 great-grandchildren she adored, Collin, Gregory, Madeline, Dylan and Jacob Shapiro, Sean Martin and Kaeley Dennehy, Mason, Lincoln and Shirley Daly, Ryan and Beckett Daly, Nicodemo Scarfo, and two more due this winter.

At this time there are no calling hours; burial will follow at a later date.

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



## East Hampton

### Michael John Metro Jr.

Michael John Metro Jr., 80, of East Hampton, died peacefully Saturday, Oct. 6, after a battle with cancer.

He was the son of the late Michael John Metro, Sr., and Elsie (Hoerner) Metro.

He was predeceased by his sister, Jacqueline Fantasia. He is survived by many nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews.

He was born in Torrington April 27, 1938. He also lived in Bristol for many years.

He was a proud veteran of the United States Navy. He enjoyed football, especially the Miami Dolphins, and was a big fan of Elvis. He enjoyed classic cars and kept them in impeccable condition. He had fun at the casino with his friend Charlie and enjoyed the company of his many nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews. He will be missed by all.

He spent his final days at Bridebrook Rehabilitation Center in Niantic, and his family would like to say a very sincere thank you to the wonderful staff there.

A private burial will be held at the family's convenience.



## Portland

### Jeffrey D. Kelsey

Jeffrey D. Kelsey, 59, of Portland, died unexpectedly late in the morning of Tuesday, Oct. 9. Jeffrey was born Nov. 25, 1958, and adopted by his father Donald Kelsey and mother Irene Zurcher Kelsey, who both predeceased him.

He is survived by his daughter, MacKenzie Kelsey; his son Jordan Kelsey and his longtime girlfriend Brittany Julbe; his brother and sister-in-law, Richard and Terry Kelsey; his nephews Zachary, Daniel and his wife, Alycia Kelsey; and his ex-wife Andrea Backus whom he still had a loving relationship with.

He grew up in Portland and spent his adulthood there as well. He began working at his father's automotive garage, Kelsey's Garage, as a teenager and took over the business of which he ran for many years. Along with running a local business he was a dedicated member of the Portland Volunteer Fire Department for many years. He greatly enjoyed being a member of and leading the PVFD Drill Team. He also took much joy from hunting, hiking, and spending time with family and friends.

Many people also knew Jeff as the trumpet player. He was a naturally-gifted musician and loved sharing his talent with his daughter, MacKenzie. Jeff unselfishly dedicated the last 42 years of his life playing military Taps every Memorial Day for the Town of Portland, as well as at any veteran's funeral whom he heard required a bugler, and his daughter intends to carry on this tradition.

As if that weren't enough, Jeff also filled many homes with Christmas spirit by providing beautiful, homegrown Christmas trees and handmade wreaths from Kelsey's Tree Farm and Bald Hill Tree Farm for more than 30 years. Most recently, he enjoyed driving tractor-trailer trucks for New England Asphalt and training new CDL drivers as well at Affordable CDL. He also trained his son, Jordan, to drive tractor-trailer trucks.

Jeff was a dedicated, wild, passionate, sarcastic, hardworking and loyal individual who would give the shirt off his back to help anyone who needed it.

The family and close friends will be having a private graveside service Saturday, Nov. 3, and they ask that you please join them for a public celebration of his life on Nov. 3, at 3 p.m., at the Portland Volunteer Fire Department Company No. 2 Picnic Grounds, located at 84 Indian Hill Ave., Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The American Legion Post No. 69 in his honor.

## Marlborough

### Agatha Olson

Agatha (Kathy) Olson of Glastonbury passed away peacefully Thursday, Sept. 27, at the age of 96. She was born in Bristol to Gottfried and Amelia (Fengler) Fritz.

Kathy and her previously deceased and beloved husband, Edward Olson, were longtime residents of Marlborough and St. Augustine, Fla.

She leaves behind her cherished family: sons David and wife Elaine of Enfield, Donald and wife Ellen of Glastonbury, Olson grandsons Michael and wife Mary, Eric, and Adam and granddaughter Kathryn and husband Ross Katkowski as well as two great-granddaughters, Nora and Haley Katkowski.

She spent countless hours playing cards and games, on nature walks and teaching the art of skipping stones to her grandchildren. Though small in stature she was powerful in nature and had a great sense of humor, especially when teasing with her sons.

Kathy was born with a musical soul. Without reading a note of music, she had the amazing ability to play any song or melody with heart and proficiency. Her talented hands also produced truly beautiful handcrafted clothing and knitted and crocheted creations. She was an instructor and salesperson at Lee's Yarn Shop in Middletown. She adored summers of boating on the Connecticut River, Long Island Sound and islands in their boat, the Kathy O. She loved the sun and her golden tans were unmatched. She will be missed and we wish her smooth sailing under sunny skies.

Arrangements are by Rose Hill Cemetery. A private service will be held. For online guest book please visit [www.rosehillfuneralhomes.com](http://www.rosehillfuneralhomes.com).

## Colchester

### Roger W. Ames

Roger W. Ames, "Papa," 85, of Colchester, widower of the late Marilyn (Calhoun) Ames, went home Thursday, Sept. 27. He was born May 7, 1933, in Glastonbury, where he resided in his earlier years and was very active in a variety of sports which was a passion that stayed with him his entire life.

He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War. He lived in East Hampton for a number of years, and owned/operated a TV repair business as well as bartended at a tavern owned by the late Gov. O'Neil, where Roger had an opportunity to befriend many of the patrons. He also lived in Sarasota, Fla., where he enjoyed semi-retirement on the golf course.

Besides his late wife, Roger was predeceased by his stepson, Frank Zoldak of East Hampton.

Roger had two sons from a previous marriage, Gary Ames of East Hartford and Roger Ames of West Rutland, Vt. He also had a daughter with Marilyn, Melissa Elmore of North Port, Fla. He also leaves stepdaughters Barbara Zoldak and Pam Benoit of Colchester; stepson Brian Zoldak of East Hampton; and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren who affectionately knew him as "Papa."

The family wishes to thank the entire staff at Apple Rehab of Colchester for the care and friendship they gave him throughout his stay.

A graveside service will be held at the convenience of the family.



## More Obituaries on Following Page



## Obituaries continued

### East Hampton

#### Warren W. Breece Sr.

Warren W. Breece Sr., 77, of Pinellas Park, Fla. (formerly East Hampton) died Wednesday, Oct. 16, at Middlesex Hospital surrounded by his loving family. Warren was the husband of the late Mirdza (Mitzi) Breece.

Born April 8, 1941, to the late Everett and Helen Breece, Warren was the class president of the East Hampton graduating class of 1959. After high school, he went on to join the U.S. Air Force and became a commander of the American Legion Post 156 in East Haddam. Warren joined the Connecticut State Police (Troop K) and retired as a senior revenue enforcement agent of the Special Investigations Unit as well as the executive director of the Eastern Seaboard Interstate Cigarette Tax Enforcement Group.

Warren is survived by his son, Warren W. Breece Jr., and daughter-in-law Jaclyn (Kuskey) Breece of Portland, who took care of him over the last couple years; his much-adored grandchildren, Olivia, Taylor and Matthew Breece of Portland; brother Everett Breece and his wife May of Middle Haddam; sister-in-law Velta Holt of Vernon; brother-in-law Juris Knislis and his wife Patricia, of Wethersfield; brother-in-law John Smith and his wife Marilyn of Sweden, Maine; his family dogs, Lacey and Sadie, whom he spent many of his days with; as well as several cousins, nieces and nephews.

Along with his wife of 52 years, Warren was predeceased by his sister, Linda Breece Smith, and brother-in-law, Alton Holt.

The Breece family would like to extend their thanks to Warren's caretaker, Brandy Lisle, and the staff of Middlesex Hospital Hospice for being so great to him during his last moments.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., Sunday, Oct. 21, from 5-7 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, consider donating to the Middlesex Hospital Hospice Unit c/o Middlesex Hospital Department of Philanthropy 55 Crescent St. Middletown, CT 06457.

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



### Colchester

#### Emiko Mary Willett

Emiko Mary Willett, 82, of Colchester, passed away Wednesday, Oct. 10, after a courageous 10-year battle with cancer. Born in Kyushu, Japan, on March 18, 1936, she was a daughter of the late Sadao and Suwako Nagata.

She will be remembered by her loved ones for her positive outlook on life, never complaining, and showering one and all with her warm and wonderful sense of humor.

Emiko is survived by her husband, Richard Willett; her children and their spouses, Richard and his wife Jan Gaudette of Glastonbury, Mary and her husband Mark Dube of Windsor; nine grandchildren, Tara Bruno, Porsche Gold, Trevor Gaudette, Nika Terrill, Rachel Scully, Natalie Gaudette, Molly Parker, Emily Parker and Ethan Gaudette (whom she raised and was very proud of); eight great-grandchildren, Luca and Rocco Bruno, Cooper, Logan, Hunter and Miles Gold, Emiko Demers, Brooklyn Gaudette; all of whom she adored and spoiled with homemade cookies. She also leaves numerous extended family members and friends.

Emiko was predeceased by her daughter, Renee Gaudette, several years ago.

Calling hours will be held today, Oct. 19, from 5-6:30 p.m., at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, followed by a memorial service at the funeral home at 6:30 p.m. Burial will be private in Linwood Cemetery.

Donations in her memory may be made to the American Cancer Society ([www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)) or the American Heart Association ([www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)).

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

