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Administrators were thrilled with the news that came out of Hebron Elementary School last week, as Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz revealed that students at the school excelled on the Connecticut Mastery Tests taken this past spring.

Administrators Thrilled with Hebron CMT Scores

by Sarah McCoy

Hebron's Connecticut Mastery Test results are in, and the scores have administrators and parents walking on cloud nine.

The school system saw huge gains at every grade level in reading and math while writing scores showed a slight drop-off. Still, Hebron well exceeded the average of comparable schools in the state in all three testing areas.

"I don't know if there is a word stronger than ecstatic but if there is, I'm that," Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz said last Thursday night, Oct. 25, when the scores were presented to the public and Board of Education.

The Connecticut Mastery Tests, or CMTs, are taken by students in grades three through six every March. Scores are provided to the administration during the summer and then analyzed and presented in a fall meeting.

In the third grade, students went from 76 percent achieving mastery level in reading in 2006 to 77 percent achieving mastery in 2007. In math, scores went from 77 percent achieving mastery in '06 to 84 percent this year, and writing scores dipped slightly from 82 percent in 2006 to 77 percent this year.

Fourth-grade reading scores soared, with 78 percent of students achieving mastery last year to 85 percent achieving mastery in 2007. Math scores also went up, substantially from 76 percent to 82 percent. Again, there was a slight drop-off in

writing, where scores went from 85 percent in 2006 to 83 percent this year.

The fifth grade showed gains in all three areas. In reading, scores climbed from 84 percent of students scoring at mastery level in 2006 to 85 percent this year; in math, the number climbed from 76 percent in 2006 to 83 percent this year, and in writing, the percentages went from 78 percent last year to a whopping 91 percent of students achieving goal this year.

The sixth grade students showed gains in reading, where scores went from 85 percent at mastery last year to 86 percent this year, and math, where 86 percent of students achieved mastery level this year, as opposed to 77 percent in 2006. Writing scores dipped, however, from 81 percent in 2006 to 77 percent this year.

Overall, the reading scores were 5-10 points higher than the District Reference Group C (DRG-C) average. The math scores were up seven to nine percent at all grade levels, and were 5-15 points above the average. This improvement comes one year after the district implemented a new math curriculum and new textbooks. And writing scores, while down in some grade levels compared to Hebron, still were 4-16 points higher than the DRG-C.

The DRG-C, which stands for District Reference Group C, is a way for the Connecticut Board of Education to compare like schools based on socioeconomics and population, among others. In Hebron's

group are 29 other towns including Canton, Ellington, Mansfield, Marlborough, and Tolland. At almost every grade level, Hebron's scores were closer to those of DRG-A schools. Those include Darien, New Canaan, Westport, and Wilton.

"I don't really have anything to tell you to improve on," said Chip Ward, West Hartford High School Senior Planner, and presenter at last Thursday's meeting. Ward is responsible for analyzing the scoring data and synthesizing it for the district.

One of the most astounding pieces of data presented Thursday night was the growth in Special Education test scores. Hebron did not achieve Annual Yearly Progress in 2006 for math and reading. School administration, and the state Board of Education, had been paying strict attention to ensure this wasn't going to become a trend. "Honestly, I was hoping to reach safe harbor requirements, which require a 10 percent improvement" Cruz said.

But instead, she received even better news. Hebron didn't just meet safe harbor, it exceeded the Annual Yearly Progress requirements. The school system went from 70 percent achieving proficiency levels in math in 2006 to 75 percent this year and from 57 percent meeting proficiency in reading last year to 68 percent this year. This included an incredible improvement for the current fifth-grade Special Education students. In 2006 only 10 percent of

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those students achieved proficiency in reading, compared to 64 percent in 2007.

"That kind of improvement doesn't happen by accident," Cruz said. "[Director of Special Education] Nancy Johnston and her staff individually IDed each student. They looked up individual performance records and wrote Individual Education Programs for each student. Additional effort was put into the students who were really close to proficiency. Look at the results. Everyone should be proud."

Cruz added that these same steps would be repeated yearly to prepare students for this year's test. "We found a process that works and we'll continue the same steps," she said.

If there is one area for special attention this year, it is with writing, specifically with male students. From grades 3 through 6, 91 percent of female students achieved mastery level on the writing portion of the CMT while only 76 percent of males could say the same. This is a statewide trend, but one Hebron hopes to find a

solution to. In addition to taking a practice math test, as students did last year, they will also practice the Making Reader Text Connections portion of the test this year.

"The disparity is not as big as evidenced by the CMT results, but it is still certainly an area for improvement," Director of Curriculum Michelle Puhlick said to the school board last Thursday.

Students will take this year's CMT in March. In addition to math, reading, and writing, the fifth grade students will also take a science test, a new piece to the annual test.

"As a taxpayer I am incredibly proud," Hebron resident Robin Lane said after the presentation. "I'm so thrilled to see that our tax dollars are doing what I want them to be doing."

Copies of the test results and of Thursday night's presentation are available in the Hebron Board of Education's office at 580 Gilead St.

Election Day is Next Tuesday in Marlborough

by Sarah McCoy

The candidates all seem to agree on the issues facing Marlborough in the coming four years: taxes, the impending sewer system, and the business park. Now it's time for Marlborough voters to cast their ballot for who, they think, will do the best job.

The races for First Selectman, Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education were profiled in the Oct. 19 and 26 issues of the *Rivereast*. The First Selectman contest is between Democrat Bill Black and Republican Ken Hjulstrom. After being appointed last July to the town's top post, Black is seeking his first elected term as First Selectman. He is a retired manager and technician for what is now AT&T. He said he feels his time there has helped him serve in Marlborough.

In the last 14 months Black has gotten the sewer project out to bid and purchased the remaining acreage for the business park. Additionally, the overall tax increase last year was just 2 percent. "It's easy to see this is a busy time for Marlborough," he said. "We have come a long way in the last 14 months and I'm asking or another four years to continue to help the town progress."

Black faces Republican candidate Ken Hjulstrom. Hjulstrom lost his bid for the Board of Finance in 2003 but says being First Selectman, "would be a dream come true." He is a 21-year resident of Marlborough and has 27 years of electrical engineering and project management experience.

He said he views the business park as the key to Marlborough's future and puts the sewer system as his top priority, if elected.

Running for the Board of Selectmen (BOS) this year are Democrat Joseph La Bella and Republican Riva Clark. La Bella was appointed to the BOS last July and said he hopes to continue to serve the town with the sewers, business park, and future nature trail system. Clark, a sewer district resident, said she is most interested in seeing the town address the concerns over Lake Terramuggus and charter revision.

Marlborough voters will elect either Black or Hjulstrom as the town's First Selectman. The highest two vote-getters, between the three remaining candidates, will comprise the Board of Selectmen for the next four years.

Six candidates will vie for the five openings on the local Board of Education (BOE). Voters will cast their ballots for three candidates with the top five earning a place on the BOE. Incumbents Louise Concodello and Betty O'Brien are seeking their fourth and second terms, respectively. Also up for election are Republicans Ruth Kelly, a former teacher at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School, and Poppy Sun, a PTO volunteer and mother of three. The Democratic candidates are Corinne Chappelle, a newcomer to Marlborough and mother of two, and John O'Toole, who

would like to focus on the gender gaps in achievement and professional development.

Two incumbents and two new faces will compete for the two openings on the Marlborough side of the RHAM Board of Education. Republican incumbents Al Covino, current chairman of the regional school board, and Michael Turner, also seeking his second term. Joe Farrell, a current Republican member of the local Marlborough Board of Education, earned the endorsement from the Democratic Town Committee as he seeks his first election to the RHAM school board. He is joined on the Democratic ticket by Russ West, a retired small business owner and 18-year resident of Marlborough.

All four incumbents are seeking reelection to the Board of Finance (BOF). Republican Catherine Gaudinski, the chairman of the BOF, and fellow incumbent Michael Quincy hope to continue to serve. They will run again Democratic incumbents Evelyn Godbout and Beth Petroni who are joined on the Party ticket by Amy Traversa and Daniel McMahon. The top four vote-getters will serve on the Board of Finance.

In addition to seeking a place on the Board of Selectmen, Riva Clark is also running for Board of Assessment Appeals. She is running against Democrat Judith Denberg.

Voters will elect two of four candidates to the town's Planning Commission. Republican incumbents John Larsen and Robert Gaudinski hope to retain their spots while Democrats Dorothy Nowisch and Joseph Schling hope to take their place. Wendy Nichols is running unopposed to serve as Planning Commission Alternate.

Kevin Asklar, Republican, and Walter Jones, Democrat, both currently serve as Zoning Commission Alternates. They both hope to be elected as regular commission members come Tuesday. Democrat Todd Barry is also seeking election. Two of the three candidates will be elected. Republican Nickolos Daniolos is running unopposed for Zoning Commission Alternate.

Current Zoning Board of Appeals Chairman Robert Jackson is running for reelection. Chris Lawson, a current alternate to the board, joins him on the Republican ticket. Democrat Judith Denberg is also running with the top two vote-getters being elected. George O'Brien is running for reelection as a ZBA Alternate.

In addition to these elections, three town staff positions are also up for reelection. Town Clerk Nancy Dickson, Treasurer Bob Hannon, and Tax Collector Barbara Murray are all running for reelection unopposed.

Voting will take place at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School, 25 School Dr., on Tuesday, Nov. 6, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Sample ballots are available from the Town Clerk's office at Town Hall.

Hebron Voters Head to the Polls Tuesday

by Sarah McCoy

On Tuesday, Nov. 6, Hebron residents will cast their ballots in the municipal elections that will shape seven of the town's boards and commissions.

The Board of Selectmen and local Board of Education races were profiled in the Oct. 19 and 26 issues of the *Rivereast*, respectively. On the BOS, Democratic incumbent Karen Strid seeks her second term on the Board of Selectmen. Also running is fellow Democrat Brian O'Connell and Republicans Gayle Mulligan and Jeff Watt. Of the four candidates, three will be elected to the five-member Board of Selectmen. Current members Victoria Avelis, a Republican, and William Cox, a Democrat, have opted not to seek reelection.

All four of the candidates list controlling taxes and economic development as keys to Hebron in the coming years.

Strid is a seven-year veteran of the BOS and, prior to that, she served on the Planning and Zoning Commission. If elected, she said she plans to oversee the development of a strategic plan for the town. O'Connell has served on the Parks and Recreation Commission, CIP, and the Open Space Land Acquisition Committee. He helped lead the charge for the parks project recently approved by voters.

Watt is no stranger to Hebron politics, and the controversies that have sometimes plagued the town in the past. He is the former chairman of the RHAM Board of Education and oversaw the building project and break-up of the

central office. Mulligan has served for the last two years on the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Deputy Registrar for the Republican Party. She promises careful attention to the management of the park project and a focus on education, if elected.

On the local Board of Education, five candidates will vie for four openings. Republican Mark Allaben and Democrat Jane Dube are both incumbents seeking reelection. The three remaining candidates are Democrat Stephanie Raymond and Republicans Valerie Watt and Brian O'Reilly.

Dube, the current Chairman of the BOE, seeks her second term. She is a proponent of curriculum development and promises to balance needs, wants and costs. Allaben is also seeking his second term. He said he hopes to maintain the quality education that the town currently possesses.

Raymond is seeking her first election to a political board. She has volunteered at Gilead Hill Elementary School and is also a Girl Scout leader in town. Valerie Watt is a mother of 8. She has volunteered on the Parks and Recreation Commission, through the Lion's Club, and with youth athletics in town. She said she wants to provide the best education while keeping taxes low. O'Reilly is a newcomer to Hebron; he and his wife moved to town three years ago. He said he hopes to extend his impact on the youth of Hebron. O'Reilly currently volunteers as a T-ball and soccer coach in town.

Hebron residents will have a choice between newcomers and more tenured candidates when they vote for the RHAM Board of Education. Incumbents Maryanne Leichter, Democrat, and Thomas Tremont, a Republican, are seeking reelection. They were both appointed to the school board one and two years ago, respectively.

Also seeking election is Democratic candidate Lorraine Davey and Republican Brenda Casoni. Davey currently serves on the local Board of Education and said she is hoping to take her past experience and apply it at a new level. Casoni, who has lived in town for four years, said she would like to help out at a policy level. She said she is particularly interested in finding solutions to the vandalism problem that has targeted the district in recent years.

Two of the four candidates will be elected to the RHAM Board of Education.

There are three spots available to the five Board of Finance (BOF) candidates. Republican Mike Hazel, who took over as chairman earlier this year, seeks reelection to the BOF. He is joined on the Republican ticket by Daniel Larson, a past chief (and current volunteer) for the Hebron Volunteer Fire Department, and Terrence Piggott, a 30-year resident of town who is employed as a salesperson for Franklin Auto Sales in Franklin.

The Democratic Town Committee endorsed Debra Sapia Carlin, who has prior experience working in finance, and Donna Ferree, a cur-

rent member of the Hebron BOF. Ferree, an unaffiliated candidate, was appointed to the board earlier this year to fill the vacancy left by Matt Daly. She is a former employee of the Town of Hebron in the finance department.

Republican Lewis Hinman and Democrat Frank Zitkus seek reelection to the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC). As long as they remember to vote for themselves, the two should be all set, as there are two spots open on PZC. Democrat Bruce Raymond and Republican Robert Davis are seeking election as Planning and Zoning Commission Alternates. They are the only two candidates, and there are three openings.

There are two openings on the Zoning Board of Appeals and three candidates. Chairman Kathleen Heatherly opted not to seek reelection. Current Vice Chairman Cathleen Murphy, an 8-year veteran of the ZBA, is running for another term. Joining her is Cynthia Grinnell, Democrat, and Republican candidate Jon Lesisko.

Clara O'Brien is running unopposed to retain her position on the Board of Assessment Appeals. She also serves on the town's Water Pollution Control Authority.

At the 2005 municipal elections, only 1,864 voters turned out to cast their ballot. This was down from 2,707 voters in 2003. This year, voting will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 6, at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St. (Route 85), from 6 a.m.-8 p.m.

Opinions Split on New Town Manager in East Hampton

by Michael McCoy

Opinions on the new town manager came in this week from as far away as Colorado – and the reviews were decidedly mixed.

As was reported last week, Jim Thomas, 47, currently the town manager in Old Orchard Beach, ME, was hired Oct. 24 by the Town Council. He replaces Alan Bergren, who was fired in June. Thomas' first day is Jan. 1, 2008.

Thomas' hiring came after a search by the "Ad-Hoc Committee to Hire a New Town Manager," which was formed in July and was composed of Town Council members Bill Devine, Kyle Dostaler and Alison Walck, Board of Education member Michael Vasquenza, Zoning Board of Appeals member Sharon Lawson and residents Nancy Anton and Susan Weintraub.

According to Dostaler, recruitment firm Bennett Yarger Associates started with a pool of "at least 28 candidates," narrowed it to 11, and then added another. Anton said that from those 12, the committee narrowed the pool to four. At that point, one candidate withdrew their name, while another name was added. Through three face-to-face interviews and one telephone interview, the committee then selected Thomas from those four, Anton said.

Anton said the committee made their final decision on the evening of Saturday, Oct. 20, and presented their choice to the Town Council the next morning.

Council member Melissa Engel told the *Rivereast* last week that she worried that the process was rushed, and said one town manager candidate was presented to the Town Council and her expectation "was that we would have two or three people to choose from."

But, Anton said this week in response to Engel's statement, "That's crap. ... Our charge



was not to screen candidates; our charge was to select a new town manager."

Engel said some of her concern came after viewing an article that appeared in the *Portland Press Herald* last Thursday, Oct. 25. In the article, Thomas was said to have been the target of a lawsuit, an intent to sue, and in 2003 was fired from a town manager job in Sterling, CO, after four months.

But, Thomas has said he in fact resigned from the Sterling, CO, position after eight months on the job, and said the event came after he reduced the budget by \$2 million, leaving 12 town employees without a job.

Colorado resident Chip Steger served on the Sterling, CO, Town Council from 1991 to 2003, the last two of which he was mayor. (He vacated the mayor's position shortly after Thomas left.) He clarified this week that the Town Council in 2003 voted 4-3 to ask for Thomas' resignation.

Steger estimated that Thomas, during his time as town manager, eliminated 10 positions in Sterling including a dogcatcher, a judge, the assistant town manager, and an attorney.

"There was a lot of house staff that wasn't needed, and he saw that," he said. "I'm sure he would have gotten rid of more people if he had time."

But the personnel moves apparently weren't popular ones, as, Steger hypothesized, the council members who voted against Thomas sympathized particularly with the fired attorney.

As for his own relationship with Thomas, Steger said, "I got along with Jim well, extremely well. Some council members were jealous of that. ... He did things a little quicker than some people could handle."

Steger added Thomas "was good at numbers, he was good at public relations, he was good at a lot of things."

Steger also noted financial strides made during Thomas's tenure and, when asked if Sterling is in better economic shape as a direct result of Thomas' time as town manager, Steger

said, "There's no doubt in my mind."

"Jim did a good job," Steger said, "and there are a lot of people who would bring him back in a heartbeat."

However, Robin Dayton, a member of the Town Council in Old Orchard Beach, ME, said, Thomas "has a very aggressive style. It's pretty much his way or no way."

Thomas said last week that the intent to sue in Old Orchard Beach came after an incident this past Fourth of July, where a group of bars along a pier in the town were promoting an event called "Sin Sunday," which included, among other things, a wet T-shirt contest, a comedian known for using profanity, and something called, "F.U.B.A.R. Friday." Thomas said he shut down the event when the bars handed the promotional flier out to people on the beach.

Dayton said this week the flier Thomas was speaking of was actually a year old, did not apply to this year and that "Sin Sunday" meant nothing more than "Service Industry Sunday." She said the intent to sue "had nothing, nothing, nothing to do with that event." She said it stemmed from a dispute over additions to the pier.

According to Dayton, the owner of the pier had applied for a permit to build kiosks near a main entrance to the pier. When the Town Council rejected that decision, the contractor unloaded a large pile of bricks in front of that entrance "within an hour."

When Thomas came to inspect the scene, Dayton said, he "started screaming at the owners of the pier," and called waitresses of these establishments, "whores and prostitutes."

Back here in East Hampton, Anton said this week that often someone trying to "do the right thing" is bound to "piss off a few people."

"We don't need someone like Alan Bergren, who never had a bad word said about him," he said. "I don't want a manager who doesn't have some controversy."

Dostaler last week called Thomas "a manager who has to make tough decisions," and

that "I think Mr. Thomas answered all of our concerns." He went on to say, "He has a good financial background. He has a lot of experience in administration."

Anton seemed concerned that many felt that the town was settling for what they could find in a short amount of time. But Anton said the committee's approach from the process's onset was, "Let's do this right." She said that right off the bat, "We liked his resume the best."

Devine said, "I can't judge him until I see what he does. I voted for him because, out of the candidates, I thought he was the most qualified," and continued, "I think he'll work out well." But, he said, there is no way of predicting just how things will proceed no matter how promising the prospects look. "Just look at the Yankees hiring A-Rod," he said.

As for the allegations about Thomas' past, Devine questioned their validity: "I heard about 40 different rumors. The only thing I didn't hear was that he ate children."

Devine did, however, call the hiring process "mediocre" and said that initially the committee was to give the Town Council two or three options, but along the way committee members decided to just present one option; he said he didn't know why this was the case.

As for Thomas, in a press release issued last week by the Chatham Party, Weintraub said, "he knows how to get things done and get them done right."

Anton added in a statement sent to the *Rivereast* this week, "Jim Thomas exceeded our expectations." She said the ad-hoc committee went on to say that the committee chose him for a combination of reasons, including, "places he's been," "his formal education," "the quality of his character, and his determination."

Bergren's last day in office was Oct. 18. Director of Public Works Bob Drewry has served as Acting Town Manager in his absence, and will continue to do so until Thomas' first day in January.

\$28.5 Million Water System to be Voted on Tuesday in East Hampton

by Michael McCoy

On Tuesday, East Hampton will vote on a proposed water system. While these are words many residents have longed to hear for quite some time, this is an issue that has proven controversial.

Voting on the proposed \$28.5 million water system will be done at the same time as the municipal election, next Tuesday, Nov. 6, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

The water system project gained traction in August 2006, after the state issued a consent order to the town due to contamination and insufficient water capacity.

In April, Finance Director Jeff Jylkka presented seven different water system scenarios to the Town Council; the scenarios ranged in cost from \$15 million to \$51 million. The council then solicited feedback from various boards and commissions.

Many believed the town should go with the \$51 million plan, a full build-out that would service virtually the whole town. But in July the Town Council voted 6-1 to go with a \$25.9 million proposal that would serve people throughout the village center and Route 66 thoroughfare. Shortly thereafter, that area was expanded to the Food Bag at Route 16 and Main Street, bringing the cost to \$28.5 million.

The Board of Finance voted the project forward to referendum in September, with a 4-1 vote.

In August, the Town Council authorized town engineers The Maguire Group to spend \$48,500 on a public relations firm to educate the public on the facts of the proposed project. In September, the council hired Baldwin Media Marketing for the job.

However, in early October, the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) shot down some of the material that was to be used during the informational campaign. The campaign moved forward, though, and three informational sessions were held about the proposed water system. The last session was held this past Saturday, Oct. 27, at East Hampton Public Library.

Nearly 50 people turned out for the session. Since Finance Director Jeff Jylkka was absent, the majority of the meeting was led by Vincent Susco, Public Utilities Administrator for the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA), who said the plan "represents the culmination of work started in the 1960s."

Key components to the system would include a wellfield, a water treatment facility, two water storage tanks, a high service water booster station, and about 10 feet of ductile iron water mains.

Susco said the treatment facility, which would be located behind the Cobalt Post Office, "takes an unfinished product and makes it a finished product."

Susco described the booster station as an administration facility, which would also contain a wet lab; this lab would require three to four new positions, Susco said.

Susco estimated the system would serve about 5,300 people. This figure includes 2,050 homeowners, 2,200 business and industry staff, clients, and patrons, 350 students and staff members from Center School and 700 students and staff member from Memorial School.

Susco also reported that \$1.58 million has been spent by the town so far in pursuit of this

project. However, \$900,000 of that has come from state grants.

If approved by the voters next Tuesday, the project would be funded by an estimated \$8.5 million of state and federal grants. The other \$20 million would come from loans, which the town will repay over the course of 20 years. Interest on the loans is estimated at \$7 million over that time period, meaning the town will ultimately pay \$27 million towards the project.

Of that \$27 million, \$15 million will come from the town budget, while \$12 million will be paid through "beneficial assessments."

Every property with a water main in front of it would pay a beneficial assessment, regardless of whether they choose to connect to the system, Susco said. He said a single family home could expect to pay a one-time fee of \$10,235, or \$700 a year for about 20 years. Multi-family dwellings and businesses can expect to pay more. Property taxes would also rise, and a \$175,000 home could expect a \$75-a-year tax hike, Susco said.

When asked why those not connecting would be forced to contribute, Susco said, "The entire town will benefit whether the individual connects or not."

He added, though, "There are people in town for who these numbers are going to be a hardship." To that end he said that the connection charge could be offset.

The day-to-day operations of the water system are to be paid by what Susco referred to as an "enterprise system," or user fees. Susco estimated that a family of four, consuming 6,000 gallons of water a month could expect to pay \$1.32 a day, or \$481 a year.

For those who choose to connect, the project would also call for a one-time "house lateral connection," or a hook-up to the system. Though the Baldwin materials said, "Because each homeowner's residence presents a unique set of circumstances, it is difficult to estimate the cost." But they said it could be in the neighborhood of \$1,000 to \$3,000. "We would be unfair if we didn't articulate every cost," said Susco, and added the explanation: "Installation of pipe in East Hampton is expensive...It's loaded with rock."

WPCA President Mark Barmasse also mentioned that the mill rate would be expected to increase by .4 mills.

After Susco pointed out that the only thing needed to bring the town to the full build out was about \$25 million of pipe, Barmasse said, "It's a critical first step that can be readily expanded in the future."

Reminding people that the State Health Department will eventually demand a water system one way or another, Susco said, "A water system is in our future. It is really the control of the consent order that is before us today." He added that this system "will enhance the public safety and public health of the town."

The second half of the session was composed of a question and answer period. Resident Linda Ursin said the estimate of 5,300 individuals being served could mislead people into thinking that 5,300 residents would be served. "When you issue figures like this, people doubt the validity of the whole program," she said.

Residents can view a copy of the proposal in the Town Clerk's and WPCA offices at Town Hall, 20 East High St.

Eight Candidates Seeking Election to School Board

by Sarah McCoy

In both Hebron and Marlborough, two incumbents will have to stave off competition from two new candidates to maintain their position on the RHAM Board of Education.

In Hebron, Republican Thomas Tremont and Democrat Maryanne Leichter seek reelection, while Democrat Lorraine Davey and Republican Brenda Casoni hope to oust the incumbents. In Marlborough, current RHAM Board Chairman Republicans Al Covino and Michael Turner, both Republicans, are running again. They face off against Joe Farrell, who is unaffiliated but running on the Democratic ticket, and Russ West, a Democrat.

In June 2006 Leichter was appointed to the RHAM school board. After 15 months on the job she is back for more. "It is an interesting group of people and the Board of Education offers another opportunity to stay involved with the school community," she said.



Maryanne Leichter

Leichter has worked for 27 and a half years as a teacher and, for the last six and a half, as the Special Services Director in Lebanon. That experience, working with families and students, she feels, has given her a background understanding of the issues that arise in schools. Leichter and her husband, Mal, have lived in town for 33 years. They raised two children who both graduated from RHAM.

"It's time to give back," she said. "I've lived in this community a long time and I want to make sure that someone else's child receives the same quality education that mine did."



Lorraine Davey

Along with Leichter, Davey is also supported by the Democratic Party. While this is her first time seeking election to the RHAM board, she is not new to the school board scene. Davey currently serves, as she has for the past four years, as vice chairman of the Hebron Board of Education.

"I have loved my time focusing on early development and the challenges that arise in elementary school," she said. "Now I'd love to take what I've learned to the other side and tackle the issues facing teenagers." Some of the areas Davey said she'd like to focus on are online-threats to students, college preparation, and identify solutions to vandalism.

Davey has lived in Hebron for 20 years. She has one child who is now in seventh grade. "He is my incentive to help," Davey explained. "It is nice to have a person behind you, supporting you, and reminding you that you're doing this for the right reasons." If elected, Davey would bring 20 years of experience working with budgets as a government banker.

On the Republican ticket, incumbent Tremont is seeking his first full term on the RHAM school board. He has been appointed to the board twice, for a total of five years served. Tremont was unable to be reached at press time, but his biography on the Hebron Republican Town Committee's website



Thomas Tremont

states that he is a 28-year resident of Hebron. In that time he has served on the Hebron Parks and Recreation Commission and as a mentor with the AHM Lantern Program.

On the Republican Town Committee (RTC) website, Tremont writes, "As a current member of the RHAM board, I tackle, every day, the issue of balancing our needs of providing the best education for the students with a fair budget for the taxpayers." He states on the site that he believes RHAM has done a good job these last few years and would like to see an improvement in education at a reasonable cost.

Having lived in Hebron for four years, Casoni said she believes she is now ready to take a more active role in the town. "I've gotten acclimated to where things are now and how

things operate," she said. "Now, I'd like to give back."

Since arriving in town, Casoni has been giving back in other ways, specifically with Hebron youth athletics. Now, with one child at RHAM Middle School and one at the high school, she wants to help out at a policy level. If elected, Casoni said she'd like to focus on alleviating vandalism. "I'd like to see more options for kids so they wouldn't want to vandalize," she said.

Casoni has been a family childcare provider and owner of a preschool program. She now works as a paralegal.



Brenda Casoni

Hebron residents will elect two out of the four candidates to serve on the RHAM Board of Education. Election Day is November 6 with voting taking place at Hebron Elementary School from 6 a.m.-8 p.m.

In Marlborough voters face a similar situation, as two incumbents hope to retain their seats as they run against two new candidates.

Covino is seeking his second term on the RHAM board. He is an eight-year Marlborough resident. Prior to that he and his wife lived in Griswold, where Covino served on the Griswold Board of Education. He has been employed by United Technologies for the past 30 years.

Covino said he is seeking reelection to focus on two items of unfinished business. First, while the RHAM High School construction project is now complete, the district is in the midst of completing the flooring. Having received a financial settlement, the school board and RHAM administration are now in discussions with an architect to develop a new solution to the peeling flooring. Covino said he hopes the work can be completed by next August.



Al Covino

Additionally, a complete overhaul of the district's curricula is of major importance to Covino, he said. "When we sought NEASC accreditation a couple years ago we were hit pretty hard," he said. "Now, with a new superintendent, our focus is updating the curriculum to bring our quality of education up to date."

Covino is joined on the Republican ticket by fellow incumbent Turner, who is also seeking his second term. "When I started out, running for the RHAM board was an unpopular thing to run for," Turner said. "With tough budget years and the building project smoothed out, the focus can return to education."

Turner also said one of his primary areas of focus is the schools' curriculum. He'd also like to see the board continue a careful balance of what they'd like to do versus the budgetary considerations.

Turner has two children, including one at RHAM Middle School. "They were my initial motivation," he said of his daughters. "I wanted to try and keep a quality level of education while working to contain costs." Turner works as an engineer at Millstone in Waterford.



Michael Turner

On the Democratic side, Joe Farrell is hoping to jump boards as he also jumps parties. For the past eight years he has served on the Marlborough Board of Education as a Republican. Earlier this year Farrell sought the RHAM BOE nomination from his party but was denied in favor of the two incumbents. Not one to lose hope, Farrell then attended a Democratic Town Committee meeting and earned their endorsement. Farrell is running as an unaffiliated candidate backed by the Marlborough Democratic Party.

The desire to change boards, Farrell said, is multi-faceted. With his son now in seventh grade, he said he'd like to maintain an active part in his child's education. Additionally, having seen the quality of work given to his 13-year-old son, Farrell said he wants to see some

changes made.

"It doesn't seem that the middle school administration is as effective as what we have in Marlborough," he said. "I'd like to focus on an update and modernization to the RHAM curriculum and a partnership approach taken by the middle and high schools." Something, Farrell feels, doesn't exist now.

In 1999 Farrell sought election to the Marlborough school board because, he said, he saw a fractured board getting in the way of his child's education. Now, he feels like its déjà vu all over again.

"I don't see a concerted effort for students to learn the same things to be identically prepared for high school," he said. "There needs to be a common focus and a shared vision and it has to come from the top."

Farrell has worked for the last 15 years as a lawyer in Marlborough.

West, an 18-year resident of Marlborough



Joe Farrell

and Lake Advisory Commission member, said he is hoping to give back in a new way now that he is retired. "Quality education is essential to a town, a community, and the entire country," he said. "I'm keenly interested in education and I'd like to help the board grow within our means."

West and his wife, Linda, ran their own business for 10 years, an inn in Westerly, RI. Along the way they raised three children. That occupational and life experience, West feels, can serve the district well on the Board of Education. He said he's concerned with Connecticut Mastery Test scores as well as finding a balance between budgetary concerns and the needs of the students.

Marlborough residents will elect two of the four candidates on Election Day, Nov. 6. Polls will be open from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at Elmer Thienes- Mary Hall Elementary School.



Russ West

RHAM Civics Students Take Election-Themed Survey

by Sarah McCoy

They may not be old enough yet to vote, but RHAM High School seniors got a chance to talk about the subject anyway, thanks to a recent civics class survey.

High school teachers Sally Milius and Danielle Mooney recently assigned their class a survey to give to all the senior students. The survey asked students questions like: Do you think it is important to vote? Do you think your vote counts? And, do you feel you have the power to make a difference in your community?

Out of 240 students, 188 participated. Overall, the civics class survey showed optimism in raising the national voting turnout above 50 percent, which is a typical Presidential election turnout now. One hundred and thirty students said they felt they had the power to make a difference in their community. One student wrote, "If one person influences many, effects will happen."

Also, 118 students said they felt their vote counts. The survey also revealed skepticism in the current administration, as 100 of the 188 students polled said they didn't trust the government. "It's all about money and power," one student wrote. Also, 90 students said they don't feel responsible for the leaders in society and the decisions they make.

To conduct the survey, the 18 students in Milius' and Mooney's civics class distributed

their questions at a senior class meeting in September. They then went through each one of the surveys, tallying votes and writing down their peers' comments. The surveys were completed anonymously.

"It was interesting," student Derek Martin said of the assignment. "It let me see the views of my classmates. [The survey] showed some people care and others don't at all."

For Allison Casale, the results did more than provide information. "Some comments made me realize that every vote does count and that one vote can be the one that makes the election what it is," she said.

The results of the survey inspired Shawna Parente. She said, "Doing the whole project and seeing everyone's opinion showed me that most people want to help their community. One of the easiest ways we can do that is by voting."

Civics is a graduation requirement at RHAM High School. Students can take it either their junior or senior year. For Milius and Mooney, this is the first time they conducted a survey like this but both said they hope to do it again.

"It is fun for the class to get first hand knowledge and to compile the views in one statement," Milius said. "This class is all about teaching the rights and responsibilities of citizens and most students come to realize they overlap quite a bit."

Portland Adopts New Zoning Regulations

by Michael McCoy

After three public hearings and the better part of two years, the Portland Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) has adopted a new set of zoning regulations.

With the help of outside firm Planimetrics, as well as Planning and Land Use Administrator Deanna Rhodes, the PZC composed a new set of regulations that went to a public hearing that spanned one evening in September and two in October.

And after that Oct. 18 hearing, PZC member Bob Spencer read a four-page motion to accept the proposed zoning regulations with 18 changes. That motion passed 5-0.

One of the more discussed zoning changes involved keeping animals. Previously, farm animals were only permitted on a farm, which was and is defined as five acres or more. However, now residents may own farm animals on a property of three acres or more. (Pigs and swine are only allowed on a farm, and the number of horses is capped at three, except for commercial stables.)

Residents may also keep 15 caged or cooped or five free-range small animals per half-acre of land. However, that number is not to exceed 50, unless one owns five acres of land; in that case they can own as many small animals as they want. (Residents also cannot own a rooster

unless they own at least three acres.) Also, cages or coops may not be placed within 10 feet from rear or side property lines.

After complaints from the public, including members of St. Mary's Church, PZC members decided not to rezone the south side of Freestone Avenue from Residential to General Business. They also decided against rezoning the east side of Perry Avenue and the west side of Pickering Street. Only the west side of Perry Avenue has been rezoned to General Business.

Several other changes concern density of development. This has been done to maintain the rural nature of the R25 and RR residential zones, and particularly prevent encroachment of the state forest.

The PZC has also created something called the "net buildable area." (This concept applies to all residential zones.) The net buildable area is a parcel's total acreage minus any wetlands, specific flood hazards, flood plains, and slopes exceeding 25 percent. For a property to be split, its net buildable area must be at least 25,000-sq. ft. if it is served by town water or sewer, and one acre of it is not.

In an effort to limit the number of houses in the R25 and RR zones, those two zones have been imposed with a density factor, which ap-

plies when subdividing a property into five or more lots. In these cases, the net buildable area is multiplied by .73. The density factor would mean, for example, that a developer would be able to create no more than 58 lots on a parcel that contains 80 net buildable acres. (That number gets rounded up to 59 lots if the developer is attempting a conservation subdivision, which arranges houses in a sort of cluster, yielding more open space.)

In the Forest Neighborhood Overlay Zone, which takes up a large chunk of the RR zone, the density factor is reduced to .62. However, the PZC could grant a developer a special permit, increasing the density factor by 15 percent. This means the R25 and RR density factor would be upped to .84, while the Forest Overlay would increase to .71. This is contingent on the lots including no "unusual configuration" and that the additional density can be accommodated without encroaching on any of the items that decrease the net buildable area.

The regulations also establish a Town Village District, which is one property deep on either side of Main Street, spanning from the Arrigoni Bridge to the post office. According to the regulations, "The provisions of this zone are intended to preserve and enhance the character of the Town Center Village District by

encouraging the preservation of sites and buildings of unique historical and architectural value and assuring that new structures and uses will be in keeping with the established character of the area."

Unlike the rest of the B-3 zone, convalescent homes and hospitals, earth removal operations, and drive-throughs are not permitted in the Village District.

"I want to say what a great job the Planning and Zoning Commission did in including some of the public comments that were made," said First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield. "They did a super job." She added the new zoning regulations were in the spirit of the new Plan of Conservation and Development, which was adopted in March of 2006.

According to Bransfield, the last time the zoning regulations were overhauled was 1972. Despite some "tweaks and minor adjustments," Bransfield said, they had not been revisited since that time, which resulted in the need for a complete revision. Bransfield said hoped that the zoning regulations will receive a full review every decade, which could prevent the type of overhaul the PZC just completed.

The new regulations take effect on Nov. 9, at which time they will be available in the Town Clerk's and Town Planner's offices.

East Hampton Voters Head Back to the Polls Next Tuesday

by Michael McCoy

After two years of discord, and amid debate over the water system and the recent hiring of a new town manager, East Hampton voters will return to the polls next Tuesday, Nov. 6.

The Town Council, Board of Finance Board of Education races were profiled in the Oct. 19 and 26 issues of the *Rivereast*. In the Town Council race, 14 candidates will fight for seven slots: Republicans Ted Hintz, Jr., Bill Devine, Tom Cordeiro and Melissa Engel; Democrats Terry Concannon, John Tuttle, Christopher Goff, Matthew Walton and Alan Hurst; and Chatham Party candidates Sue Weintraub, Patience Anderson, Kyle Dostaler, Alison Walck and Scott Minnick. Devine, Engel, Dostaler, Walck, and Minnick are incumbents.

On the Board of Finance, three spots, currently held by two Democrats and a Republican, are open this year, with six candidates competing. Democrats Dan Olson, Barbara Moore, and George Pfaffenbach will square off against Judith Isele, Eric Peterson, and Sal Nucifora. Isele is an incumbent.

There are four spots up for election to

the Board of Education this year, with eight candidates. This year's Republicans are Kimberley Fontaine, Sharon Lawson, Don Coolican, and Sheila Wall. Their Democratic opponents are Daniel DiStefano, Debra Robinson, Michael Vasquenza, and Jill Simko. Robinson and Vasquenza are incumbents.

There are also two slots on the ballot for the Zoning Board of Appeals, and while both will be decided next Tuesday, only one will take effect this year. Democrat Brendan Flannery's spot is up, and he will run against Republican Darin Hurne for a five-year term. Democrat Charles Nichols is running against Republican Linda Dart, but since Nichols' term doesn't end until after the November 2008 elections, the winner of that contest wouldn't be seated until next year.

Finally, Democrat Andy Tierney is up for reelection on the Midstate Regional Planning Agency. Maria Peplau is his Republican opponent.

Voting will run from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St.

Portland Police News

10/20 — Linda M. Eckola, 54, of 21 Hilltop Rd., East Hampton, was charged with DUI, Portland Police say.

Obituaries

Moodus

Anne (Wigren) Scroggin

Ann (Wigren) Scroggin, 41, of Moodus, formerly of Valparaiso, Indiana, passed away unexpectedly Friday, Oct. 19, in her home.

She was born August 31, 1966 in Winnepeg, Canada. Anne is survived by her children Benjamin, Jessica and James Scroggin, all at home; her parents, Dale and Marilyn (Olson) Wigren of Valparaiso; her sister, Lynn Ross of Valparaiso; her brother, Cory Wigren of Westville; and her niece and nephew, Teresa and Bobby Ross of Valparaiso.

She was a 1985 Washington Township High School graduate.

Funeral services were Thursday, Oct. 25, at the Bartholomew Funeral Home in Valparaiso, Indiana. Fr. Kevin McCarthy officiated. Burial was in Chesterton Cemetery. To send condolences to the family on-line, please visit www.bartholomewnewhrd.com

Colchester

Philippe W. Maurice

Philippe W. Maurice, 50, of 800 Downey Needles, CA and formerly of Baltic, beloved son of Donald and Margaret Maurice, was called home on Oct. 21. He was born in Tachikawa, Japan on Jan. 23, 1957, the son of Donald and Margaret (Hines) Maurice of Colchester. Philippe was employed as a truck driver. He will be remembered for his warmth, compassion and his sense of humor.

Besides his mother and father he is survived by one son, Dalton J. Maurice;; one brother, Peter Maurice; three sisters, Renelda Simmons, Kathryn Christensen and Margaret Lettieri, and numerous nieces and nephews. He is also survived by his former wives, Nancy Condon and Meglyn Cotugno.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated Saturday, Nov. 3, at 11 a.m. at the Church of the Holy Family, Rt. 85, Hebron. Burial will be private. There are no calling hours. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Dalton J. Maurice Education Fund, c/o Baude & Rolfe CPA's, 35 Huntington St., New London, CT 06320 or to Boy Scout Troop 19, c/o Harry Segerstrom, 1 Hanover-Versailles Rd., Baltic, CT 06330. Guillot Funeral Home, 75 So. B. St., Taftville, is in charge of arrangement.

Colchester

Stephen Godfrey Ekern

Stephen Godfrey Ekern died Thursday, Oct. 25, of complications from diabetes at his home in Colchester. He was 44. Mr. Ekern was born May 10, 1963, in Tarrytown, NY, the son of Anita E. Ekern and the late George P. Ekern of Darien. He grew up in Darien and graduated from Darien High School in 1981, where he was a member of the baseball team and the 1979 State Championship football team. He also played trumpet in the orchestra and band. He attended Colgate University and later received a law degree from the Univ. of Connecticut School of Law. Mr. Ekern specialized in employment and insurance law and spent his career working for law firms and insurance companies in Hartford. He had his own law practice in Colchester at the time of his death. Mr. Ekern was a devoted husband and father and an enthusiastic supporter of his son's athletics.

Mr. Ekern is survived by his son, Robert George Ekern; his wife Sarah; as well as his mother, Anita Ekern of Darien; brother and sister-in-law, Nigel and Kimberley Ekern of Darien; and his sister, Adrienne Ekern of New York City. A funeral service was planned for Monday, Oct. 29, at the Noroton Presbyterian Chapel, 2011 Post Rd., Darien. Burial will follow at Spring Grove Cemetery, Darien. Memorial donations are asked to be made to a trust for his son's education — The Robert G. Ekern Education Trust, c/o Greg Lang, Esq., 26 Maple Avenue North, Westport, CT 06880.

Hebron

Robert W. "Bobby" Zapert

Robert W. "Bobby" Zapert, of Glastonbury, passed away Wednesday, Oct. 24, after a long and incredibly courageous battle with cancer. The tenacity with which he fought this disease is the way he lived his life, to the fullest. Born on Dec. 13, 1949, he was a graduate of RHAM High School and went on to major in business at Central Connecticut State University. He dedicated many years as Construction Superintendent for First Hartford Realty Corp. Throughout his life, Bobby shared his many passions with friends and family. He was an avid sports fan, in particular a Red Sox enthusiast, who loved fishing, golfing, and being involved in any activity that presented itself as a challenge.

A brilliant-minded individual with an uncanny mathematical ability, an adventurer and a risk taker, he viewed any obstacle in his life as an opportunity to surmount it and would go to the extreme to do so, thereby serving as an inspiration to those who had the privilege of knowing him. Indeed, every day was an adventure with Bobby. His considerate, generous nature will be most missed by his many friends, family members, and acquaintances as Bobby was always ready to step forward and help anyone in need of his assistance, be it with advice, his expertise, his time, or his wisdom. In addition, Bobby's great love of children touched all who knew him as he was truly a "Pied Piper" whom children would immediately embrace.

He is the son of the late Nancy Zapert of Niantic, the late Walter Zapert of Glastonbury and step-mother Lois Zapert of Lutz, FL. He will always be remembered by those he leaves behind, including Patricia and Alexandra Foley, of West Hartford and by his son of whom he was immensely proud, Jesse Grano Zapert, of Columbia, an officer in the U.S. Navy and presently stationed in San Diego; his two sisters, Sharon Dufresne of South Lyme, and Nancy Roser and her husband, Walter, of Manchester; nieces and nephews, Donna Perez, Michael Roser, Allison Roser, and great-nephew Ricky Perez.

He will also be truly missed by his life-long best friends Thomas and Deborah Ursin and their daughter McKenzie of East Hartford. To celebrate his courage and love of life, calling hours were ill be at Glastonbury Funeral Home, 450 New London Tpke., Glastonbury. A Funeral Mass was held Monday, Oct. 29, at 10 a.m. in St. Francis of Assisi Church, 673 Ellington Rd., South Windsor with a burial to follow in Holy Cross Cemetery, Glastonbury. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the American Red Cross, 209 Farmington Ave., Farmington, CT 06032. The family asks you consider being a blood donor at your local blood bank. For online condolences and tributes please visit www.mem.com.

Portland

Jean Ann Drewry Acerboni

Jean Ann Drewry Acerboni, 76, of Main Street, Portland, died Friday, Oct. 26, at St. Francis Hospital. She was the wife of the late Leo Acerboni. Born in Middletown, Oct. 21, 1931, a daughter of the late George and Annabelle Russell Drewry, she was a Portland resident for many years.

She is survived by her daughter, Catherine Acerboni; her sister, Bunny LaPadula and her husband Pat; her brother, Robert Drewry and his wife MaryLou, and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her son John Acerboni. Her family received relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Tuesday, when the Rev. John F. Ashe officiated a concluding memorial service. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that gifts in her memory be sent to the Portland Fire Department, Company No. 1, EMT's, 1 Middlesex Ave., Portland, CT 06480.

Colchester

David Eugene Ivers

David Eugene Ivers, 81, of Colchester and formerly of West Hartford, passed away Friday, Oct. 26, at home. Born Sept. 27, 1926 in Pierre, SD, he was the son of the late Clarence and Vincent (Munson) Ivers. He proudly served with the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. Mr. Ivers had been a project engineer for nuclear power plants around the country, as well as at Cape Canaveral.

Survivors include his former wife, Gwennlian (Morgan) Ivers of Rocky Hill; two daughters, Kendell Karyn Whiteford of Nantucket, MA, and Vanessa Jane Ivers of New Britain; two sons, Garreth "Gary" Ivers of New Britain, and Roy and wife Laurie Ivers of Colchester, with whom he made his home; five grandchildren, Thomas, Dennis, Benjamin, Abergavenny and Morgan; his sister, Carol Carson of Ontario, CA; and numerous extended family members and friends. There are no calling hours and services will be private. In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, 106 Franklin Commons, Rt. 32, Franklin, CT 06254-1800. Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

Colchester

Ercel W. Rath

Ercel W. "Erk" Rath, 89, a lifelong Glastonbury resident, passed away Monday, Oct. 29, at Harrington Court in Colchester. Born in Hartford on Nov. 15, 1917, she was the daughter of the late Howard and Jessie (Keefe) Walker.

She graduated Glastonbury High School in 1935 and Wheaton College in 1939. Upon graduation she worked at Travelers Insurance, and was later the bookkeeper for her husband "Chick" and his partner, owners of The Country Corner in Glastonbury. Erk was a Rotary Ann, a long time member of Glastonbury Hills Country Club, an avid golfer and bridge player. Her greatest pleasure was enjoying social engagements with family and friends and having a "good time."

She leaves her son and his wife, Howard and Melissa Rath of Hebron; two granddaughters, Kelsey and Corey Rath, whom she was very proud of; and also her dear relatives, the Keefes, from Maine and Virginia. She was predeceased by her husband, Edward "Chick" Rath and their son, John, and years later, by a special friend, Joe Witkowski.

Her family wishes to thank her devoted bridge friends, her special caregiver Comfort Britwum as well as the nurses and aides at Harrington Court.

A memorial service was to be held at the funeral home at 11 a.m. Friday Nov. 2, with Rev. David Taylor officiating. A luncheon celebrating Ercel's life will follow.

Burial will be private. In lieu of flowers, Memorial contributions may be made in Ercel's name to the Glastonbury Rotary Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 67, Glastonbury, CT 06033. For on-line condolences and tributes please visit www.mem.com.