

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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East Hampton resident Kendra Dickinson is filing a complaint against the town after she said she was told to stop publicly breastfeeding her daughter Ella, 2, at Sears Park.

## Public Breastfeeding Causes Stir

by Claire Michalewicz

An East Hampton woman is filing a complaint against the town, after she said she was asked to stop breastfeeding in public at Sears Park.

Kendra Dickinson said park staff asked her to move to a more discreet area to nurse her daughter, although interfering with a mother's right to breastfeed in public is illegal under state law. Dickinson tried to file a complaint with the police about the incident, but said police officers were rude to her.

Town officials are investigating the incident, and say it appears to be a misunderstanding.

On July 20, Dickinson explained, she went to the Sears Park beach with her two daughters, Riley Briggs, 4, and Ella Briggs, 2, and a friend's two young children. When Ella became hungry and fussy, Dickinson breastfed her on the beach.

After they'd been at the park for nearly two hours, Dickinson said, a lifeguard came over and said she had some concerns about Dickinson nursing her daughter in the park, since there were young children around.

"I found it hard to believe she would be saying this to me," Dickinson said. Connecticut state law, she pointed out, says that "no person may restrict or limit the right of a mother to breastfeed her child."

She said the lifeguard explained that the director of the Parks and Recreation Camp, Heather Holbrook, was the one who had the

concerns. When she approached Holbrook, Dickinson said, Holbrook told her the park was a place for families, and there were children around who could see her. Holbrook said she was responsible for the children at the camp, Dickinson said, and she would have to answer to their parents.

Dickinson said that if children had questions about what she was doing, she or Holbrook could have used the opportunity to explaining to them that breastfeeding is natural, and that some mothers choose to feed their babies that way. Instead, Dickinson said, Holbrook told her she could go to the bathroom to nurse Ella, or cover her daughter with a towel, which she didn't want to do because it was a hot, humid day.

After speaking to Holbrook, Dickinson said she started to cry. It was difficult, she said, to have to explain what was happening to the four young children in her care. Dickinson called her husband, Chris Briggs, who came from work to meet her.

Briggs said he told Holbrook that under state law, his wife had a right to nurse their daughter on the beach. Holbrook asked to see the laws in writing, Briggs said, explaining that she wouldn't let Dickinson breastfeed on the beach unless she saw them.

Holbrook declined to comment for this story, referring questions to her supervisors at the

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## Three Charged in Credit Card Crime Spree

by Katy Nally

Three East Hampton residents – including a mother and her son – were arrested Monday after, according to police, they used stolen credit cards to make purchases in three different area towns.

Robert Saltus, 28, of 18 Middletown Ave., East Hampton, and his mother, Gail Saltus, 46, of 20 Middletown Ave., East Hampton, were arrested after stolen credit cards from a car that was broken into in Marlborough were used in Colchester, East Hampton and Portland, police said.

State Police charged Robert Saltus with third-degree burglary, theft of credit cards and sixth-degree larceny, and charged his mother with four counts of illegal possession of credit cards.

After she was apprehended in Portland, East Hampton Police also charged Gail Saltus with a multitude of offenses including: credit card theft, illegal use of credit cards, third-degree identity theft, trafficking in identity theft information, criminal impersonation, sixth-degree larceny, criminal attempt to commit sixth-degree larceny and possession of narcotics, Sergeant Garritt Kelly of the East Hampton Police said.

Frank DuFurio, 50, also of 20 Middletown Ave., who acted as the get-away driver for Gail Saltus in East Hampton, was charged with aid-

ing sixth-degree larceny, credit card theft and trafficking in identity theft, East Hampton Police said.

State Trooper Jim Tilley said Troop K could not tie DuFurio to the crime in Marlborough. Also, the younger Saltus was only charged by State Police and not East Hampton Police. His mother told East Hampton officers he only stole the credit cards, and supplied them to her.

On the afternoon of Monday, July 26, Robert and Gail Saltus chose a Pontiac G6, which was parked at Lake Terramuggus between 1-3 p.m., as their target for the alleged burglaries, Marlborough Parks and Recreation Director Mike Caporiccio said. State Police said credit cards, a GPS unit, a pocketbook and assorted items were stolen from the vehicle. Caporiccio, who was at the park a few hours after the re-



Frank DuFurio

ported burglary occurred, said the car owner came back to the parking lot to find her car door wide open.

The police were soon called, and Tilley came to Blish Park to interview the victim, he said. As he was taking her statement, Tilley said he was notified that East Hampton Police had located Gail and Robert Saltus and DuFurio.

"We were very fortunate there," Tilley said. "That doesn't happen very often."

Gail Saltus reportedly made transactions with the stolen credit cards in Colchester and Portland, Kelly said.

But, Gail Saltus' luck ran out at the East Hampton CVS, when she used the victim's driver's license as identification to purchase items, but the victim's photo did not look like her. Kelly said personnel at the CVS in East Hampton refused to make Gail Saltus' transactions and she fled the store with DuFurio who was driving, Kelly said.

Tilley said Gail Saltus had purchased gift cards and cigarettes with the stolen cards and Chase Bank became suspicious of the credit card activity and had it red-flagged. These items, Tilley said, "are very popular" to buy with stolen credit cards.

East Hampton Police later arrived at CVS, broadcasted the information about Gail and Robert Saltus and DuFurio, and Portland Po-

lice found them in Portland, near Middletown.

Tilley said the credit cards were confiscated by East Hampton Police, and the GPS unit was not recovered. However, the victim did receive her license, Tilley said.

State Police released Gail Saltus on \$2,500 bond, and Robert Saltus on a \$10,000 one. They are due in Manchester Superior Court today, Friday, Aug. 6. Tilley said both the mother and son have criminal records.

East Hampton Police said Gail Saltus posted \$50,000 bond before being arrested by State Police, and DuFurio was released on a \$2,500 bond. Both were scheduled to appear in Middletown Superior Court Tuesday, Aug. 3. Gail Saltus' next court date in Middletown is listed as Thursday, Aug. 19.



Gail Saltus



### Stir cont. from Front Page

Parks and Recreation Department.

"It's under investigation," said Parks and Recreation Director Ruth Plummer, "but I'm confident that my staff handled it appropriately."

After the incident in the park, Dickinson and Briggs spoke to a representative of La Leche League, who advised them to file a complaint with the police department. On her first attempt, Dickinson said, the police receptionist told her to call back when they were less busy. The second time she called, Dickinson said she was told an officer would come to her house to record her statement, but the officer never arrived after three hours of waiting.

This past Sunday, Dickinson went to the police department and asked to file a complaint. Dickinson said she met with Officer Hardie Burgin and Sergeant Paul Battista, who asked her to explain what happened at the park. Dickinson said they never recorded what she was saying, but just stood over her while she sat and spoke. She said Battista asked her if she was just filing the report for "damage control," so she could go back to the park. Dickinson said she told Battista she had been

back to the park several times and had nursed Ella without being approached by park staff.

Then, Dickinson said, Battista asked her what the problem was, saying Dickinson herself had said breastfeeding a 2-and-a-half-year-old in public was "really strange." But Dickinson said Battista had misinterpreted her when she told him while breastfeeding a toddler is uncommon in North America, women in other parts of the world frequently do it. Regardless of the age of her child, she said, her right to breastfeed in public was legally protected.

"She's still a baby," Dickinson said, explaining that nursing Ella was the best way to soothe her. The day before the incident at the park, Dickinson said, she visited her doctor, who encouraged her to keep breastfeeding because it was healthy for both her and Ella.

After speaking with Battista, Dickinson said she became upset and left the police station. "It was awful," she said.

"I wish I could have been there for her," Briggs added. The two have hired a lawyer, Eric Henzy, and were due to meet with Acting Lieu-

tenant Michael Green on Thursday to file an official statement. (The results of that meeting were not known as of press time.) Dickinson said they also plan to file a complaint with the state Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities.

"The police are not there to judge," Dickinson said. "I didn't do anything wrong."

Green said he thought the entire situation, from the incident at the park to Dickinson's difficulties in filing a complaint, was a case of miscommunication. He said that after Dickinson left the police station, Battista called him, concerned that he had upset her and unsure what to do next. The reason the two officers hadn't recorded what Dickinson was saying, Green explained, was that they didn't know what she wanted them to do with her complaint, since they had never handled an incident involving breastfeeding before.

"When we speak to people, it's a human interaction," Green said. "We listen to them first." Unfortunately, Green said, Dickinson had interpreted Battista's uncertainty as an unwilling-

ness to help her.

Neither he nor any of the other officers had been aware of the state's laws about breastfeeding in public, Green said. But upon reviewing the laws, he said there didn't appear to be any criminal intent on the part of the park employees or Dickinson. Green said Battista had started investigating the incident, taking statements from employees at Sears Park. Some of these employees, Green said, told Battista the initial complaints had come from other residents at the beach, who said Dickinson had left her breast exposed.

"It was just miscommunication that led to high emotions that led to a bad situation," Green said.

Dickinson said she's not an activist, but is just trying to make sure people are aware of the laws about breastfeeding so this doesn't happen to her or another mother. Her experience at the park, she said, made her feel very unwelcome.

"If I don't stand up for myself I just feel like a doormat," Dickinson explained.

## Two Colchester Democrats Vie for Probate Judge Slot

by Katy Nally

Colchester voters will have their choice between two Democratic candidates for judge of probate during the Tuesday, Aug. 10, primary.

Judge Jodi Thomas is the current judge of the Colchester-Lebanon Probate Court and running against her is attorney John McGrath, who has a law firm in Willimantic.

McGrath is the endorsed Democratic candidate.

Effective Jan. 5, 2011, Colchester will join a six-town probate district that includes Chaplin, Hampton, Lebanon, Scotland and Windham. Called the Windham-Colchester Probate District, the new area will keep two courts open, one in Colchester and one in Windham, with one judge presiding over both.

Keeping the two courts open has caused some contention between the two judges, because Thomas has claimed she is running for re-election. If elected she would also head the Windham Court.

McGrath, however, said this week that since it's an entirely new district, Thomas can't claim she is running for re-election.

Besides this distinction, there is another facet of the campaign that Thomas said McGrath is using as a "red herring."

McGrath won the Democratic endorsement when the majority of delegates from Democratic town committees supported his candidacy. McGrath unanimously took Windham and Chaplin and Hampton was split, at a total of 16 supporters, whereas Thomas unanimously took Colchester and Lebanon and Hampton was split, at 13 votes in total.

Although Thomas did not receive the Democratic endorsement, she says, before the Democratic Convention on May 11, Republican town committees came to her and asked if she would be their endorsed candidate.

She accepted, and so Thomas is on the November ballot on the Republican line, running unopposed, and if she wins the primary, she'll also be on the Democrat line.

Thomas said she is, and always has been, a

Democrat, but accepted the Republicans' endorsement because "I felt like it was a validation of the job I've been doing."

Thomas called the situation a "non-issue," saying it's "a very common thing" in probate elections for judges to be "cross-endorsed."

Still, McGrath called the situation "an interesting angle to this [campaign]."

Besides their campaign differences, both candidates have experience as attorneys, however McGrath has never been a judge. But, he said this week, "the experience that really makes a judge able to make hard decisions, and analyze hard cases, really comes from the work you've done as a lawyer."

McGrath has worked as a lawyer for 25 years and now owns his own practice, McGrath & McGrath in Willimantic, with his wife, Barbara McGrath. The couple and their three children reside in Windham.

If elected, McGrath said his wife would keep the practice open, but he would not work there because of the time constraints of being a judge.

During his time as an attorney, McGrath said he's had "exposure to a lot of people," so "I think I know the communities very well." He said there are three areas to the probate system, guardianship and elderly and estate matters, adding, "I've worked in all those areas for many years."

He called his experience in working with families "a great strength I bring." According to his Facebook page, McGrath has 10 years of "active work in the juvenile court system where he represented children, parents and grandparents" in custodial cases. He has also dealt with wills, trusts, estates and housing matters.

McGrath also worked as conservator for those who are unable to care for themselves.

"I really explain to people, and push the fact that, my hands-on experience is what I bring to the job," he said this week.

McGrath's years of experience with clients dealing with probate-type issues would "make



Jodi Thomas



John McGrath

me a judge who can address the cases that come before me," he said.

Thomas, on the other hand, was elected to her position as judge of probate in November 2006. Working as a probate judge, Thomas said, "comes down to two really key things: the ability to resolve matters, including some very difficult ones, and to mediate things."

Thomas cited her "proven track record," as evidence of a job well done in the Colchester-Lebanon Probate Court. She said she hears a "couple hundred cases" per year and her decisions have "never been appealed and they've never been grieved."

"That doesn't happen too often and it's validation of the job I've been doing," she said.

Before she was elected judge of probate in Colchester, Thomas worked as a law clerk at Bridgeport Superior Court, then as a litigator

in Hartford in two different firms. She also worked as an attorney for Chubb's Specialty in Simsbury.

Working as a probate judge, Thomas says she's found a job that "fits my personality to a tee." A probate judge, Thomas said, needs to be "tough yet compassionate" and "intelligent and down-to-earth." She said she exhibits these qualities in the courtroom.

Since 2006, Thomas said the best part of her work has been helping children and the elderly, but added she enjoys all aspects of the position.

Her favorite part, she said, is "helping people have the best possible experience, during the worst possible time. It makes me feel fulfilled."

Colchester voters can cast their ballots for either McGrath or Thomas Tuesday, Aug. 10, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at Town Hall.

# Hebron Bifurcation Committee May Move Forward

by **Lindsay Fetzner**

The Hebron budget might get bifurcated after all.

After a difficult budget season and three attempts at the polls, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) voted in June to form a committee to study bifurcating the vote on the annual town spending plan.

Two residents, Democrat Harvey Desruisseaux and unaffiliated voter David Morrison immediately expressed interest in being on the committee, but they withdrew their names at the July 15 meeting of the Board of Selectmen. This left the future of the committee somewhat up in the air.

However, Town Manager Bonnie Therrien confirmed Wednesday that several residents had expressed interest in the committee, and this could mean it will move forward. The residents include: Loreta McDonnell, Marie Egbert, J. Peter Carlin, Donna McCalla, Thomas Tremont, Lorraine Davey, Kathleen Williams, Carla Pomproicz and Judith Podell. (The latter two might not be appointed; when the selectmen first established the committee, they said it would be consisted of citizens-at-large; Podell is a member of the town's Planning and Zoning Commission, and Pomproicz is the town clerk.)

At the July 15 BOS meeting, Desruisseaux told the board he was "a proponent of bifurcation" but was "willing to approach it with an open mind" during a speech on why he was interested in serving on the committee. He said his interest in the topic was "primarily because of what we've experienced when we've had budgets."

This year's budget was passed on the third try, after failing at two referendums.

However, BOS member Brian O'Connell said at the meeting he wanted members of the committee to look at the bifurcation issue objectively. This sparked a discussion on having an opinion on the matter. Shortly thereafter, Desruisseaux withdrew his name from the committee, followed by Morrison, due to their opinions on bifurcation.

"It is our responsibility to find people who will objectively do the research and report back to the Board of Selectmen," O'Connell said Tuesday. "This committee is really important because it's proposing a major change to the way the town would do its budgeting and on how budgets get approved."

He went on to say he "cares dearly about Harvey and David both," adding that both have "come right out and said to me they want bifurcation."

O'Connell later added, "There have been, throughout the past budget season, people that are advocating negatively against one board. This year it was the Board of Education."

"This study committee [shouldn't be] used to alienate one budget versus another...and that's another concern," he said.

Desruisseaux said Tuesday that he would have gone into the committee "with an open mind," despite his "respective bias." In addition to stating that he was in favor of bifurcation, he added, "The public is in favor of bifurcation."

"I believe in volunteering with the community," Desruisseaux said. "Not too many step

up to the plate to volunteer anymore."

Morrison, a proponent of bifurcation as well, told the selectmen at their July 15 meeting that even though people have opinions, they are "still looking out for the better good of the community."

"An opinion," Morrison added. "That's America."

Desruisseaux and Morrison were both members of the 2009 Charter Revision Commission (CRC), which was disbanded after putting forward a list of suggested changes to the selectmen – a list that included forming a study committee to explore bifurcation. On Monday, Morrison said as part of the CRC, he felt he had "started something and should finish it."

However, he said, "I couldn't honestly serve on anything that someone thought I wasn't going to do my very best."

When the Bifurcation Study Committee (BSC) was formed, the selectmen decided it should be made up of five citizens-at-large. The committee was due to report its findings to the BOS no later than its Oct. 7 meeting.

The BSC was to look at various forms of government and which would be the best fit for the town. Additionally, the committee would look at how other towns administer the budget voting process and whether Hebron should have a definite end to the process. Researching other municipalities that have chosen bifurcation and their experiences was also an area the committee would address.

Williams said this week that finding a volunteer to serve without a pre-formed opinion would be a hard task.

"If they're looking for a totally unbiased group, then you have to go out of town," she said. "I don't think anybody in town could honestly say that they are unbiased. Everybody's going to have an opinion."

However, that is not to say, Williams said, that opinions don't change over time based on research.

As a retired, 44-year resident, Williams said the committee was something she was interested in and research, something she enjoys. Researching why other towns have chosen bifurcation, how it has worked for the town and whether there have been fewer or more re-votes, Williams said, were things she was interested in looking at in more depth.

"We here in Hebron have seen what happens without the bifurcation," she said. "What would it do if we went through with the bifurcation? Would it mean more re-votes or fewer re-votes? I don't know."

Williams also addressed the issue of the committee performing much of their work over the summer months. The information the committee would need is not all available online, she said, and a lot of the people they would need to get in contact with could potentially be on vacation over the next month or so.

Despite these hurdles the committee could run into, Desruisseaux said, "My attitude and my take on the summertime - town government doesn't stop. When you commit to something, you give it your all."

The next meeting of the BOS is slated for Aug. 19 and the Bifurcation Study Committee will be an agenda item, Therrien said.

## Marlborough Man Flown by LifeStar to Hospital After Crash

by **Katy Nally**

A local man was flown via LifeStar to Hartford Hospital last Saturday for treatment of head and leg injuries after colliding with a car on Finley Hill Road, State Police said.

The accident occurred at approximately 7:12 a.m. July 31, at the intersection of Finely Hill Road and Hunters Ridge, State Police said. Elizabeth Freitas, 41, of Marlborough, was traveling northbound on Finely Hill Road in a 2005 Acura with Ermelinda Freitas, 80, who is also of Marlborough. Freitas turned left to enter Hunter Ridge, "intending to turn in the opposite direction," State Police said,

and was struck in the left rear passenger door by a motorcycle that was behind her.

Walter Kelly, 43, of Marlborough, slammed into Freitas' car, causing front-end damage to his 1995 Honda motorcycle. Kelly was transported to a LifeStar helicopter via Marlborough ambulance. State Police said his injuries did not appear to be life-threatening and also said Kelly was wearing a helmet.

On Tuesday, hospital staff said Kelly was no longer listed.

The case is under investigation, State Police said.

## Cromwell Man Arrested After High-Speed Chase in Hebron

by **Lindsay Fetzner**

A Cromwell man was arrested after allegedly engaging in a high-speed chase involving several troopers and police cruisers, State Police said.

On Friday, July 30, at approximately 8:45 p.m., Donald Loree, 28, of 57 South St., Cromwell, was stopped on Route 66 in the area of Grist Mill Road in Hebron, after he was observed speeding, State Police said. After pulling over to the right, Loree fled in his vehicle, according to police.

Traveling at "a high rate of speed" on Route 66, State Police said, Loree engaged in a pur-

suit with the trooper, continuing down Route 66 through Marlborough.

Loree was eventually stopped "with numerous police cruisers and no incident," State Police said. He was charged with operating a motor vehicle when license is suspended, reckless driving, disobeying the signal of an officer in the first offense, disobeying the signal of an officer/eluding, DUI, improper passing and failure to drive in the proper lane, State Police said.

Loree was released on a \$1,500 bond, State Police said. He is due in court Aug. 16.

## Five Colchester Residents Involved in Teen Assault

by **Katy Nally**

Five Colchester residents were arrested after allegedly assaulting a 19-year-old female at her residence and vandalizing her property, Colchester Police said.

Amber and Deborah Blandina, 21 and 46 respectively, both of 23 West Ridge Dr., along with Edward, Wendy and Edward Jr. Branciforte, 21, 47 and 49 respectively, all of 12 Old Amston Rd., were arrested after allegedly storming into the victim's apartment and breaking her belongings.

The five reportedly broke down the apartment door on Main Street, then after assault-

ing the victim, left the residence to wait for police to arrive on the scene, Colchester Police said.

Edward Branciforte Jr. was charged with third-degree burglary, disorderly conduct and second-degree unlawful restraint; Edward Branciforte was charged with third-degree burglary, second-degree criminal mischief, disorderly conduct and third-degree assault; and Wendy Branciforte was charged with criminal trespass and disorderly conduct.

Amber and Deborah Blandina were both charged with third-degree burglary and disorderly conduct.

## Teen Arrested After High-Speed Chase in Colchester

by **Katy Nally**

A 17-year-old male was arrested Saturday, July 31, after reportedly engaging in a high-speed chase with a state trooper at about 12:57 a.m., State Police said.

The teen's vehicle was observed "doing a burnout" in the area of Broadway and Route 16. Trooper Mark Gendron attempted to stop the vehicle and the operator refused, State Police said. The teen continued driving, at times erratically, State Police said, heading south onto South Main Street, then onto Route 85

southbound, at speeds up to 80 miles per hour.

The teen, who was not identified due to his age, stopped at the intersection of Route 85 and Lake Hayward Road and was arrested without further incident, State Police said.

The 17-year-old was charged with drinking while driving, reckless driving, failure to obey the signal of an officer, unsafe movement and violating an 11 p.m. curfew for 16- or 17-year-old drivers, State Police said.

## New Interim Assistant Principal Hired in East Hampton

by **Claire Michalewicz**

The Board of Education (BOE) has chosen an interim assistant principal for the high school, to replace Dr. Anthony Gasper.

In a five-minute Board of Education meeting on Monday afternoon, the BOE voted to accept Gasper's resignation, and appoint Donald Gates as his replacement.

Gasper has accepted a position as assistant superintendent in the Ansonia school district.

Many East Hampton students are already familiar with Gates – he served as interim assistant principal at East Hampton Middle School for the past two years, after spending

more than 30 years as a principal in Portland. At a BOE meeting in May, Golden presented Gates (who at that point said he was retiring) with a "Good Apple Award," in recognition of his two years with East Hampton.

Golden said having Gates at the high school would make the transition to a new school easier for the upcoming ninth graders.

"He already knows the ninth- and 10th-grade students," Golden said. "Isn't that wonderful?"

Golden said the school district would start the search for a permanent assistant principal in the spring, when the candidate pool would be larger.

## Two Taken to Hospital After Andover Crash

by **Lindsay Fetzner**

Two people were transported to the hospital after a three-car crash last Wednesday, July 28, at the intersection of Route 6 and Shoddy Mill Road, State Police said.

Andover EMS transported Carol Griffith, 53, of West Hartford, to Manchester Memorial Hospital as a precautionary measure and David Bates, 39, of Storrs, to Hartford Hospital for "non-life threatening injuries," State Police said. Wayne Saunderson, 57, of Willimantic, was also involved in the crash, which occurred around 10:05 p.m., State Police said, but did not sustain any injuries.

Griffith was traveling westbound on Route 6 in a 2010 Kia Soul, when Bates struck the front left side of her car, State Police said. Bates was traveling eastbound in a Saturn LS and swerved into the westbound lane, State Police said. The impact caused Bates' car to turn facing north in the westbound lane. Saunderson, who was traveling westbound behind Griffith in a 2003 Toyota Camry, then broadsided Bates, according to State Police.

Griffith's car sustained heavy front-left-end damage. Both Saunderson's and Bates' vehicles were totaled. Saunderson's vehicle also sustained heavy fire damage.



# Andover Residents to Vote Tuesday in Probate Judge Race

by Lindsay Fetzner

Next Tuesday, Aug. 10, three Democrats will face off in the primary for probate judge of the greater Manchester probate district- Judge Elaine Camposeo, Paul Rubin and Michael Darby.

The elected probate judge will serve Manchester, Andover, Bolton and Columbia.

In Andover, Democrats can vote from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. in the community room of the Town Office Building.

Camposeo is the current probate judge for the Andover probate district, serving the towns of Andover, Bolton and Columbia. She also has her own law firm in Manchester. Her opponents, Rubin and Darby, practice law in Manchester as well. Darby is the endorsed Democratic candidate.

Camposeo began practicing law in 1989 in Manchester and formed her own practice, the Law Office of Attorney Elaine Camposeo, 16 years ago. The law firm is located on Center Street.

What sets the Bolton resident apart from her other two contenders is her experience as a judge, she said. "I'm the only one who has been a judge and I've been doing that for 20 years," she said, noting that she has been elected to office five consecutive times, each four-year terms, since November 1990. "That really sets me apart from them."

Camposeo also said she has the backing of people who know the quality of her work as a probate judge. She said she has received phone calls from clients both past and present expressing their happiness in her running for probate judge, but are saddened by the thought of her closing the firm.

"You really, really touch a lot of lives," she said, adding that these calls from clients are an affirmation for all she has done in her career.

"I have a tremendous sense of service to the community and I have such passion for the work I do," she said. "It's a tremendous, rewarding position which really has a direct and immediate impact on individuals involved in the court."

If elected probate judge, Camposeo said she has pledged to become a full-time one, and to close her law office. With the new, larger probate district, Camposeo said she "no longer believes the probate court is a part-time endeavor."

"The citizens and constituents of the newly-created Manchester Probate Court deserve someone who has experience and who will willingly work the court full-time so that the needs of the community will be met in a quick and efficient and professional manner," Camposeo said.

The regionalization of the courts, Camposeo said, will result in a difference of about seven miles from where the court is now located in Bolton. "I think the actual location will be just fine," she said. It will be a bit further for some residents in the district, she said, but not significantly farther from where they are already used to driving to.

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Born and raised in Manchester, Paul Rubin has been a lawyer for about 20 years. He still calls Manchester home and in 1996, he opened his law firm, the Law Offices of Paul L. Rubin, in town as well.

"I have a lot of experience in courts," he said.



Elaine Camposeo

"You name the court, I've been in it."

Rubin said he has experienced court almost his entire career, and draws on significant experience in dealing with juveniles. He estimated that one-third of the Manchester Probate Court cases involves children - determination of parental rights, transfers of guardianship, adoption, emancipation and other matters involving the youths.

This area of the court, Rubin said, has been part of his work as a lawyer since the late 1990s. "I have a lot of experience, which my opponents don't, in handling these kinds of cases," he said. "This is the kind of specialized experience which sets me apart."

One of the reasons for Rubin's decision to run for probate judge, he said, dates back to the adoption of his daughter Ashley. Rubin and his wife Susan have been foster parents for the past eight years, and he estimated that over 50 children have been in and out of their home. Ashley was supposed to be a one-day placement, Rubin said, but when the Department of Children and Families didn't find an alternative residence for Ashley, the family kept her at their home.

Ashley came to the Rubin's home at the age of 9, and when she was 12, the family decided to adopt her. The adoption brought Rubin to the probate court; he said was one of his first interactions with the court. Ashley is now 17.

"I was impressed by the difference you can make as a local judge," he said, adding that the adoption of his daughter has changed his family's life dramatically.

Coupled with the retirement of the present Manchester Probate Judge John Cooney at the end of this year, Rubin said he thought the position would "be a great way to serve the community."

Rubin said if he was elected, he would scale down his law office "significantly, so there would be no conflict" with his presence in court.

The new probate court district will serve approximately 70,000 people, and the biggest challenge, Rubin said, will be accessibility for everyone within the district. The current Andover district, which Camposeo is currently



Michael Darby

the judge of, serves about 15,000 people. Improving the customer service capacity of the court, he said, would be one way of facing this challenge.

Rubin said he would set aside at least one day per month in each of the towns in the district for people who are not able to travel to Manchester. Be it answering questions or filing papers, Rubin said a staff person would be on hand in a public location to assist the residents.

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For over 28 years, former Manchester town attorney Michael Darby has practiced law. Darby joined the Phelon, FitzGerald and Wood law firm on Main Street in Manchester after graduating from law school, and has been there ever since.

In 1991, Darby became the town attorney, and remained in this role until 2007, while still maintaining his practice.

Over the years, Darby said, the practice has gravitated toward serving the legal needs of the elderly, focusing on matters such as estate planning, wills, trusts and helping people qualify for Medicaid. These legal matters have brought him in front of a lot of probate courts, Darby said.

Darby is also one of the founding directors and officers of the Connecticut Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, which, he said, is "one of the things I am very proud of."

When Cooney indicated to Darby that he was retiring, Darby said he became interested in the position, as he has appeared in front of dozens of probate courts and probate court judges in his line of work.

"I have a good handle on what a good probate judge should do for the public and I thought I could do it," he said, in explaining why he chose to run. "It deals nicely with the kind of work I've been doing for years."

Darby said what sets him apart from his opponents is the fact that he has been practicing law for a longer period of time than Camposeo and Rubin. Darby also drew attention to his



Paul Rubin

administrative experience having managed the town attorney's office for 16 years while still maintaining the practice.

But, the main thing that sets Darby apart, he said, is his elder law practice and experience.

"I have a good handle on the legal needs and requirements of the kind of people that appear in the probate court," Darby said.

If Darby were elected as probate judge, he said, "the probate court will be my number one priority."

"I will give it as much time as it takes," he said. "If that ends up being full-time, I will give it my full-time attention."

With the reconfiguration of the courts, Darby said one challenge will be making sure people on the opposite end of the district, geographically, get good service. "That is very important to me," he said. Darby said he would certainly explore the possibility of having office hours either formally or informally in Andover or Columbia to give people at least the chance to come in and ask questions.

"I'm anxious to deal with all the types of things that appear in front of the probate court," Darby said.

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The merging of the probate districts across the state will become effective Jan. 5, 2011. However, Camposeo said this week that the probate court administration office informed her that shortly after the November general election, Camposeo's district will move into Manchester and start operating from the Manchester Probate Court office on Center Street.

This decision, she said, shows that "my court has been responsive to the merger," by completing all of the necessary items that had to be addressed before the physical merger occurred.

Furthermore, Camposeo said the earlier move allows the probate system to get a head start in combining the courts.

"It's quite a physical undertaking," she added.

Cooney and Camposeo will share the responsibilities for each of their courts in the Manchester Probate Court, she said.

# Hebron DTC Adopts Oil Spill Resolution

by Lindsay Fetzner

More than three months have passed since the April oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, and members of the Hebron Democratic Town Committee (DTC) have adopted a resolution calling for several responses to the disaster.

DTC member Gil Salk said the idea for a resolution was first brought up about three months ago. After committee members drafted different resolutions, this month the committee compiled the final draft.

Salk said the resolution makes statements about the problem the country has been faced with, along with proposed solutions to the oil spill.

"Mostly, we just feel that it's something that requires a proactive response," he said.

The resolution, which was unanimously adopted, points out personal, financial and environmental losses.

It highlights the potential that the oil spill has to "destroy the foundation of the food chain"

in the area of the spill and beyond as well as this loss of food that could lead to the destruction of marine, bird and mammal species.

The DTC classified the oil spill as "a national issue" and one that reflects upon not only the dangers of a dependence on fossil fuels, but potential hazards to future generations.

This dependency, the resolution states, "leaves us vulnerable to repeated damaging oil spills." And furthermore, it has and will continue to cause "irreparable damage to the welfare of our nation in the near future, and to the lives of our children and their children."

The work of several people, DTC member Mal Leichter said the resolution is "another way to bring to the forefront the issues and the regulations that do or do not exist."

Moreover, Leichter said the resolution could be a way to improve upon the regulations so a catastrophe as monumental as this one "can't happen again, or the chance of it happening is

minimized."

Targeted to the president, as well as state senators and representatives, the resolution calls for six different responses.

The DTC, in the resolution, petitions officials across the state and country to respond to the oil spill as "an ongoing threat to the security and well-being of our nation," to "assume more stringent oversight" of the oil collection in the Gulf waters and to require BP to "make all efforts to control and stop the loss of oil from the blowout well."

The resolution also mentions taking the necessary steps to make sure that BP and other responsible parties be held responsible for "all damages, remediation, income loss, and other costs" caused by the man-made disaster.

Providing federal funding and other methods to put the development of alternative energy sources on a "priority basis" was also ad-

dressed in the resolution. Costs for the development of alternative energy and infrastructure to support its use, the resolution states, would be offset by the creation of jobs and lower energy costs. The resolution says this development should be prioritized "as if it were a war-time necessity."

The last request from the DTC is for officials to enforce and require regulation of "all drilling, storage and transmission infrastructure" in an effort to safeguard against future incidents of this caliber.

Salk said he hopes other town committees will pass similar resolutions. He added that he is also hopeful that state officials will move forward with the resolution, using it as an outline for legislation regarding the oil spill.

The resolution is available online at [hebrondems.com/pages/events.php?id=220](http://hebrondems.com/pages/events.php?id=220).



# Gearing Up For Annual East Hampton Boat Parade

by Claire Michalewicz

A fleet of elaborately, fancifully decorated boats will take over Lake Pocotopaug next Saturday, and parade organizers are looking for more vessels to join in the fun – and a chance at prizes.

Organized by the Friends of Lake Pocotopaug (FLP), the sixth annual boat parade is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 14. This year, the parade is dedicated to the memory of former FLP president Dennis Griswold, or “Captain Grizzly.” Griswold, the husband of one of the parade organizers, Gladys Yeager, died in 2008.

The idea for the first parade five years ago came from a winter boat parade in Mystic, which Yeager and Griswold visited together. When they saw how many people came out to see the parade, despite the freezing weather, Yeager and Griswold decided to try something similar in East Hampton.

As of Tuesday, FLP Vice Chairwoman Nikki O’Neill said, nearly 20 boats had entered the parade, but she was still hoping for more. She collects the registration forms and organizes the information for the eight judges, but she’s sworn to secrecy about the boats’ themes until the parade starts.

Options for decorating boats are totally open – the organizers have discussed instituting a theme for the boats, but said they don’t want to limit people’s creativity. The decorated boats, Yeager, O’Neill and FLP Chairman Steve Diemer all said, are impressive and sometimes even unrecognizable when they’re decked out in elaborate decorations.

“People are really shocked when they see them,” O’Neill said. Diemer said it’s sometimes difficult to persuade people to enter the parade, because they’re sometimes intimidated by the quality of the other boats. He and the other organizers are encouraging people to sign up anyway, put their best into decorating their boats, and enjoy what they said will be a fun day for all involved.

“It’s an event for everybody,” Yeager said, explaining that the event would be family-friendly, with a special category for children’s boats.

“We can all cooperate and make something really good together,” said O’Neill, explaining that the boat parade really showed how the community could come together. Organizing the event, O’Neill said, took the efforts of FLP members, volunteers from the community, and

many local businesses, especially Angelico’s Lakehouse, which is hosting part of the event.

After the boats finish their trip around the lake, participants and spectators will gather at Angelico’s, where Red McKinney will announce the winners and distribute prizes, including a first prize of \$500. Festivities will continue until the 6 p.m. raffle drawing. Raffle tickets are \$20, and will be available until 5:58 p.m., O’Neill explained.

This year, raffle prizes include a scooter a deep sea fishing trip, a boat cruise on the lake with dinner at Angelico’s, baskets of wine and liquor, and gift certificates for a week’s worth of dinners at restaurants throughout East Hampton.

“And then we’ll all collapse, and hopefully we’ll make some money,” O’Neill joked. All the profits from the event, she said, would go back to FLP, to be used to help protect the lake.

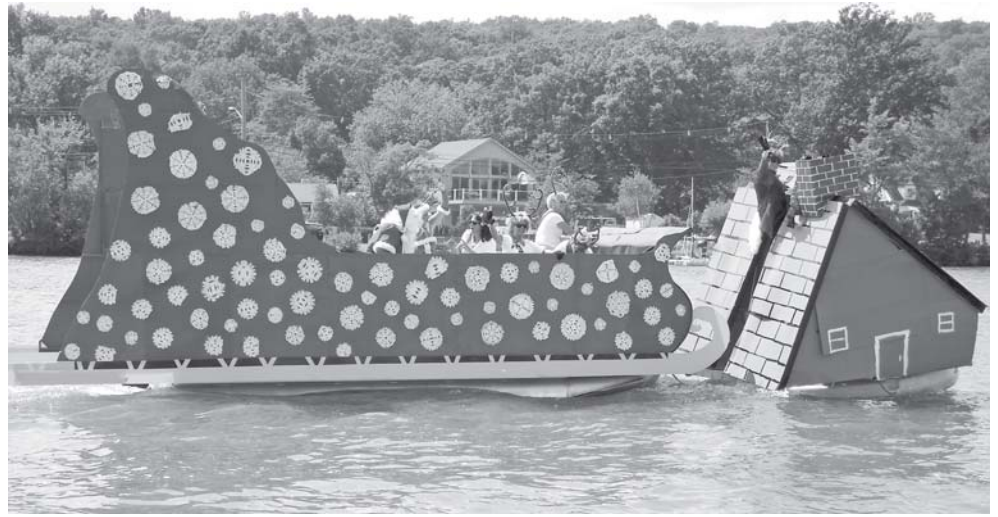
FLP has been raising money for the lake since it was founded in 2004, Diemer explained. Most recently, the group raised \$1,000 to be used for a new police boat, and donated 10 new buoys to the Parks and Recreation Department to mark hazardous areas in the lake. Other projects include donated \$20,000 for the lake aeration system to mix the water, which would reduce phosphorous levels and expand the fish habitat. On average, Diemer said, they raise between \$15,000 and \$30,000 for the lake each year.

Diemer said the lake was one of the main things that drew him to East Hampton, and he wanted to keep it healthy so local residents could continue to enjoy it. Diemer served as treasurer of the group for several years, taking over as chairman after Griswold’s death. FLP has about 25 members, but Diemer said he has a longer list of people interested in joining or who sometimes volunteer. Membership is limited because he wants to keep the group at a manageable size, but he said he’s happy to accept volunteers for big events.

The day of the parade, Sears Park will be open to everyone, with or without a parking sticker. Extra parking will also be available at the high school, with free shuttle service to the park provided by Nichols Bus Service.

The parade kicks off at 2 p.m. on Saturday, with festivities at Angelico’s following afterward.

In case of inclement weather, the parade will be held the next day, Aug. 15. Spectators con-



Imaginatively decorated boats will congregate on Lake Pocotopaug next Saturday, Aug. 14, as part of the sixth annual boat parade, organized by the Friend of Lake Pocotopaug. Above are participants’ boats from last year’s event.

due to state law.

Visit [www.FLP.org](http://www.FLP.org) or call 860-267-1764. Yeager said that while the official deadline will be Aug. 7, FLP was willing to accept boat registrations up until the day of the parade.

cerned about weather can call West Shore Marina at 860-267-1764 after 5 p.m. next Friday, Aug. 13, to hear a message about the status of the parade. Even if the parade is postponed, the raffle drawing will still be held on Saturday,

## Marlborough Building Official Appointed, Former One Amends Lawsuit

by Katy Nally

A search committee announced at a special Board of Selectmen meeting last Friday, July 30, it had unanimously selected Earl Dean for the position of town building official.

The town’s former building official, Patrick Looney, was one of four applicants who was interviewed for the part-time position, but he was not selected by the committee. Looney was first appointed in 1994 and his final day at Town Hall was last Friday, July 30.

He has since amended his lawsuit against the town and First Selectman Bill Black, claiming his termination was retaliation for an act of free speech.

The three-member search committee consisted of selectmen Joe La Bella and Riva Clark, as well as Fire Marshal Joe Asklar.

La Bella said this week, the committee thought Dean was “eminently qualified” for the position.

“We’re really thrilled to have attracted such a high-quality candidate,” La Bella said.

Dean taught Connecticut’s building code to other building officials for nine years, and retired from the state in 2009. According to the Department of Public Safety website, Dean taught post-high school electricity classes for the last 22 years.

In addition to being a licensed building official, Dean is also a licensed electrical contractor and electrical inspector. He is certified as a Master Code Professional with the International Code Council.

La Bella noted Dean was awarded the Clifton Clark Award this year by the Connecticut Building Officials Association. The award recognizes officials who make contributions to building safety through code enforcement and education.

La Bella said Dean’s appointment was effective Aug. 1 and he would probably start at

Town Hall within a few weeks.

Both Dean and Looney were among the seven applicants for the 20-hour per week position.

However, contending with other applicants for the appointed position was new for Looney, whose past terms were renewed by selectmen without advertising the position, since his hire in 1994, he said last month.

“He had been appointed in the past without an interview panel,” Looney’s attorney Jacques Parenteau said this week. “The only thing that’s different is he protested when they attempted to squash his speech.”

In light of last week’s events, Looney amended his lawsuit, claiming his termination was retaliatory for him expressing his free speech and for a grievance he filed in October 2009. Also, the suit alleges Looney’s term was not set to expire July 31, instead, it claims his end-date is set for November 2011.

Before the suit was amended, Looney claimed Black acted in retaliation when he cut his hours from 36 to 20 per week this January.

La Bella said Thursday the town would not be able to comment on Looney’s lawsuit because it is pending litigation.

According to the lawsuit, which was filed June 11, Looney filed the 2009 grievance, saying his First Amendment right of free speech was violated when he was asked not to “engage in discussions of substantive matters outside his job duties.” Looney’s intent to sue, filed April 9, claims he allegedly “provided information” to a citizen about the “potentially unlawful exercise of jurisdiction” by the health department over outdoor wood burning furnaces that are regulated by the Department of Environmental Protection.

Marlborough’s town counsel, Andrew Houlding, said in May Looney’s grievance

never reached the arbitration level.

According to the intent to sue, Looney wrote to Black protesting the free speech limitations placed on him. In December, Parenteau asked for Looney’s restrictions to be dropped, but, the intent to sue claims, counsel for Marlborough refused and “threatened discipline, up to and including discharge.”

Then, on Jan. 4, Looney’s former union, Local 1303-433 Council 4 AFSCME, was told Looney’s hours would be cut as “part of a cost saving reduction plan,” according to the intent to sue. Along with Looney, the tax clerk and the tax assessor had their hours reduced and the coordinator of planning and development was eliminated. When his hours were cut, Looney became ineligible for medical benefits and was no longer part of the union, the intent to sue states.

The town said its decision was due to a “sharp reduction in building activity,” citing the number of building permits requested had dropped by about 50 percent, the intent to sue states.

The 2010-11 budget, which was approved by town voters May 10, projects \$70,000 in expected revenue from building permits for this year. This was the same amount allotted in 2009-10. The year before that, the actual revenue from 2008-09 for building permits came to \$57,438.

But, before the increase from 2008-09 to 2009-10, building permit revenue decreased each fiscal year from 2004-05 by an average of about 20.98 percent. Over a six-year period, from 2004-05 to 2009-10, the town took in the most money from building permits in 2004-05, at about \$148,462.

Once Looney began working 20 hours per week, the lawsuit claims he suffered “unwar-

ranted and extreme stress” from performing his job duties in a condensed amount of time and from the “demands of the public.” Because of the accumulated stress, the suit says Looney had to take a 30-day medical leave of absence.

The suit seeks a monetary award that has not yet been calculated, Parenteau said, but it would cover compensatory and punitive damages. The compensatory damages stem from “lost wages, lost employment benefits, emotional distress, loss of enjoyment of life and harm to reputation.” The punitive damages cite Connecticut General Statute 37-3a, which allows for recoverable debt from hospital services.

Although he left Town Hall last week, Looney’s suit alleges his end date should be in November 2011.

Looney was appointed as building inspector in August 1994. In November 1995, he was reappointed for a four-year term, to coincide with elections. Then he was reappointed again in November 1999 for a four-year term.

However, when Looney was reappointed in February 2004, the suit claims the town’s first selectman “inappropriately attempted to shorten the term” by setting it from February 2004 to July 31, 2006. Parenteau said the town might have missed reappointing Looney in November 2003 and picked up the reappointment that following February.

In August 2006 Looney was reappointed for another four-year term.

Because of the three-year term from 2003-06, Looney alleges his current four-year term is set to expire in November 2011.

However, since the town claims his term ended July 31, Looney did not return to work at Town Hall this week. Parenteau said his client has begun looking for work.



# Focus of State Representative Race in Portland Shifts to Signs

by Claire Michalewicz

Two Republican candidates will square off in a primary next Tuesday to see who will run for state representative in the fall, and in the days leading up to the vote, the focus of the campaign has shifted to missing signs.

The two candidates for the 32nd District, which includes Portland, Cromwell and part of Middletown, are Carl Chudzik of Portland and Christie Carpino of Cromwell.

The winner will go on to face Democrat Jim O'Rourke in November. O'Rourke has held the seat for 20 years.

Chudzik said his campaign had been going well, until last week, when he noticed that most of his campaign signs were taken down in Portland. Some of Carpino's were taken down as well, along with those of candidates in the judge of probate primary. Chudzik discovered that a political consultant for Carpino, Nicole Cline, had filed a complaint about signs to the state Department of Transportation (DOT).

Carpino said that while she knew some of her signs had been removed, she hadn't known that Cline had placed the complaint. In addition, Carpino said, she recently noticed many signs – hers and Chudzik's – had gone missing in Cromwell.

Chudzik said that last Thursday, July 29, all of his signs along Routes 17 and 66 in Portland disappeared, even the ones which he said had been placed well back from the roads, on private property.

Chudzik asked the DOT who had filed the complaint about the signs, and a DOT employee provided him with the e-mail complaint from Cline. In the e-mail, which was made available to the *RiverEast*, Cline said she saw signs in Portland along Routes 17 and 66, and pointed out that campaign signs should not be placed along state routes.

"Specifically, they are blue signs," she wrote. (Chudzik's signs are blue.) Cline said these signs were distracting because they were close to the main roads, and "they seem to be a hazard."

But when reached by phone, Cline said she hadn't singled out Chudzik's signs, and said she had noticed other signs, including Carpino's and those of the two Democratic probate judge candidates, Steve Kinsella and Ken Barber, removed from state roads as well.

"You gotta play by the rules," Cline said. These rules, she said, prohibited putting political signs along state roads.

Moreover, Cline said, in June she "politely declined" to work with Chudzik's campaign. Chudzik said he approached Cline about doing graphics for him, but Cline told him she was probably working on Carpino's campaign.

Kinsella said he had 26 signs taken down in Portland, including some which he said he knows were on private property, since the right of way along Route 66 only extends a few feet into residents' yards. He said he noticed that two Barber signs had been confiscated as well, though Barber himself said he was unaware of any missing signage.

Chudzik and Kinsella both contacted the DOT about their missing signs, and they said they learned the DOT garage in Marlborough handled the removal of the signs. However, the

supervisor at the garage did not return a call for comment.

Portland Planning and Land Use Administrator Deanna Rhodes said Portland does not have any zoning regulations concerning campaign signs, though signs have to conform to state laws concerning signs on the right-of-way of a state road.

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Aside from the missing signs, Carpino, the party-endorsed candidate, said her campaign has been going well. Carpino is a lawyer who represents clients in their insurance claims with MetLife, and serves as vice chairman of both Cromwell's Republican Town Committee and its Zoning Board of Appeals. In addition, Carpino does pro bono work for expelled students throughout the state, trying to work out compromises between the students and the schools.

Carpino is running on a list of principles she calls her "common-sense commitment." The main reason she's running, she said, is to bring fiscal responsibility to the state government, and her principles reflect that. They include a promise to spend no more money than the state can afford, and changing or getting rid of government programs that aren't working.

"The private sector does things a lot more efficiently," Carpino said.

Carpino has been in Connecticut for a decade, moving here after she finished law school, and has been living in Cromwell since 2003. "This is my home, this is my community, this is where I'm raising my family," she said. That family includes her 2-year-old daughter Eva and 14-year-old stepson Deryk, with her husband Joe Artioli.

Carpino said she'd been considering running for office for a while, but wanted to wait until the timing was right, now that Eva is a little older.

Connecticut, she said, has a lot of potential for businesses, but is not currently a welcoming business environment. If elected, her primary goal is to bring more businesses to the state. To do that, she said, an important step is to reduce utility taxes, and to consolidate state agencies so business owners have an easier time navigating them. Having more businesses, she said, would put more money into the local economy, and ease the tax burden on individuals.

Carpino said she's been consulting with Republicans at the state level to discuss their ideas. She pointed out that the Democrats have had a supermajority in the house for four years, and she's hoping to help change that. Carpino said that while she's just one person, she's a vocal one.

What the legislature needs, Carpino said, is new members with new ideas. In addition, she said, she would bring energy and a willingness to try new things.

"Somebody needs to step up to the plate and make tough decisions," she said. "I'm willing to make a tough decision if it's the right decision."

Another promise she's made in her campaign, she said, was to be accessible and accountable. To that effect, she said, she's been busy attending events and going door-to-door



Christie Carpino



Carl Chudzik

in her district to meet residents and hear about their concerns.

She said people she's spoken with say they're happy to see one of their peers running for office, rather than a career politician. Carpino said she's been overwhelmed and grateful for the support she's received from residents in her district.

Carpino said she's hoping to get through next week's primary, and then go on to face her next hurdle, the general election against O'Rourke. If she wins on Tuesday, she said, she's hoping her party will unite behind her.

But for that to happen, she'll have to get past Chudzik, who said he's also optimistic about next Tuesday.

Chudzik, a Portland selectman who owns a real estate business in Rocky Hill, said his campaign has been going well, aside from his troubles with campaign signs. People he's met in all three towns in the district have been supportive of him, he said.

Chudzik has said that his main inspiration for running was his 10-year-old daughter Addie, who's been spending her summer helping with his campaign. Chudzik said he's concerned about the difficult economic times and the debt that's being passed on to citizens and he wants Addie to grow up to have the same opportunities for success that he had.

If elected, he said, his main priorities will be to cut government spending, lower taxes and get the state government to be more productive and fiscally responsible. Handling taxpayers' money, he said, should be seen as an honor, but he said many current politicians don't see it that way.

The thing that sets him apart from other candidates, Chudzik has said, is his decades of experience in business – in addition to his realty office, Chudzik has worked as a teacher, café owner, and seafood exporter. In all these endeavors, he said, he's been his own boss, so he knows how to manage money.

"What we need in Hartford is somebody who gets the things done," he said. Rather than fight-

ing between parties, he said, politicians should focus on cooperating with each other so more people will benefit. Their emphasis, he said, should be on common goals and causes.

"If there is no deal, we're gonna suffer," Chudzik said. "I don't care about fighting. I want to make it right."

Chudzik's other main focuses are environmental issues and an increase in volunteerism. He wants Connecticut to be less dependent on the oil industry, and he said improving transit systems and bringing more clean energy to the state would help.

Volunteerism, Chudzik said, will be especially important, explaining that people should focus their efforts on helping people in their communities. "We have to give back to our country," he said. "That's what America's about."

The constituents he's met so far in his campaign, Chudzik said, have been supportive, and Chudzik said he's ready to stand up for them.

"I do have the people's support," he said, "I'm not the endorsed candidate, but I have the people's support."

Part of the reason he wasn't endorsed, Chudzik said, was that he filed his election paperwork later than Carpino because he was busy focusing on his role as a Portland selectman, working on this year's budget.

Despite his difficulties with his campaign, Chudzik said, he's optimistic about the upcoming primary. He urged people to get out and vote next week, regardless of who they choose.

"Vote on the issues," Chudzik said, "Not on the stories."

Carpino said she was also optimistic as she looked toward Tuesday.

"It's been busy, but I'm excited," she said. "I'm hoping to get through that milestone."

Voting takes place Tuesday, Aug. 10, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Portland Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave. (The town recently decided to move the polling place from its longtime location at the library.)

# Portland Fire Department Sees Improved Rating

by Claire Michalewicz

The Portland Volunteer Fire Department has shown improvements in the past decade, Fire Chief Bob Shea explained during a Board of Selectmen's meeting Wednesday.

Shea presented the department's year-end fiscal report, focusing on ways the fire department had recently improved.

"We did pretty well this year," said Shea, explaining that Portland had recently been re-rated by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), which ranks fire departments for insurance purposes. Depending on a resident's insurance company, Shea said, a better-ranked local fire department could mean lower insurance costs. ISO last rated Portland 10 years ago, Shea said.

"We've seen big changes in a 10-year span," Shea said. Portland is split into two different classifications, he explained, with one for the downtown area, where there is a centralized water system, and the more rural parts of town, where there are no fire hydrants and where residents rely on well water. Fire departments are rated on a scale of one to 10, with one meaning the department can provide the best possible coverage.

In the more densely-populated part of town, Shea explained, Portland's rating had increased from ISO group 5 to 4, and in the rural part, it

had gone from 9 to 8b. 8b, Shea said, was a new classification specially created for recognize a "superior level of protection with a lack of water supply."

Shea said the department had a "great response time" of three to three-and-a-half minutes, though the department also lost some points because their dispatch system sometimes goes down when the power goes out. Other areas where Portland lost points, he said, were training and personnel, which he said are difficult areas for volunteer departments. Because the firefighters all have other jobs and obligations, he said, it was difficult to provide ISO's recommended 20 hours a month of training, instead averaging about 12-15 hours.

"We've put an awful lot of work into it," Shea said, explaining that he was pleased with Portland's improved ratings.

In the other major agenda item at Wednesday's meeting, two representatives from Siemens, Andy Merola and Jerry Drummond, presented the selectmen with an outline of an energy efficiency program their company had arranged with the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. Other towns in the state, they explained, had signed contracts with them, and had seen improvements in their energy efficiency.

If Portland signed a contract with Siemens, the company would perform a comprehensive energy audit and work to make the municipal buildings more efficient. Under the plan, Portland would continue to budget the same amount of money for energy costs, but would gradually see savings as they used less energy. These savings would be used to pay for the cost of the program.

Siemens, Drummond explained, would make its money from installing appliances and other products in the town buildings.

"You've done a really good job with what you have," Drummond said, explaining that Portland's high school and middle school was already energy efficient, and pointing out recent energy improvements at the town library.

Bransfield explained that the selectmen would discuss the idea at their next meeting, since the other selectmen had not had much time to review it.

The Board of Selectmen also voted to accept an offer from New England Asphalt Services and Owens Corning to repave the driveway and build a new student drop-off area at Gildersleeve School. The drop-off would reduce traffic in the area directly in front of the school by allowing parents to drop off children and turn around without going into the bus area

where the buses unload. The project, explained Director of Buildings and Grounds Paul Bengston, was already planned and budgeted, but the two companies had come forward with an offer to do the work with an experimental technique, finishing the pavement with a layer of chip seal. The companies would film the project and come back to test the strength, Bengston said, all at a discount to the town.

The project would use \$15,000 the town had budgeted in the capital expense plan, along with \$5,500 from the Board of Education budget. The two companies performing the work would contribute another \$11,000, and Tilcon of Portland would provide some of the materials, Bransfield said.

In other business at the meeting, the Board of Selectmen decided to put off the selection of members – two regular members and two alternates – for the School Facilities Study Committee. In addition to these four members, the committee also includes two selectmen, John Anderson and Sharon Peters, and two school board members, Andrea Alfano and Christopher Bongo. Bransfield said the selectmen should be appointing the other members at their next meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 18, at 7:30 p.m., at Portland Library, 20 Freestone Ave.

# Portland Residents Speak to Siting Council About Power Plant

by Claire Michalewicz

Portland politicians and residents spoke out about the Kleen Energy Plant at a hearing of the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC) in New Britain on Tuesday.

The hearing was held to consider allowing construction at the Middletown power plant to continue until next year, since the project suffered delays when an explosion rocked the plant in February, killing six people and causing property damage in surrounding neighborhoods.

Some Portland residents want to make sure important safety measures are in place before the plant can continue. The Town of Portland is a party in the hearing, because of its proximity and the fact that several houses were damaged in the blast.

Kleen Energy is seeking to extend its Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need. The plant's current certificate is valid until November, but Kleen Energy Systems is seeking to extend the permit until June 2011, due to construction delays caused by the explosion.

Representing Portland at the hearing were First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, state Representative Jim O'Rourke and state Senator Eileen Daily, along with several concerned residents from the neighborhood around Wellwyn

Drive, directly across the river from the plant.

In her testimony to the CSC, Bransfield asked that the permit only be extended if certain conditions are met. These conditions include a request for financial compensation to the families of the blast victims, as well as compensation to residents of Middletown and Portland whose properties were damaged.

Bransfield also asked the CSC to wait to extend the certificate until they had received the report of the Thomas Commission, the second investigation into the explosion. This panel is charged with reviewing the findings of the Nevas Commission, the first investigation into the accident, and proposing changes in laws or regulations. It was possible, Bransfield said, that the Thomas Commission might propose important changes to safety regulations, and the CSC should wait for their final report.

"For the Council to take any action before both reports are issued would be ill advised, given the grave severity of the February 7, 2010 explosion," Bransfield said in her statement.

All the findings of both investigations, Bransfield said, should be attached to the renewed certificate. In addition, she requested that Kleen Energy send representatives to inspect buildings around the plant before and after po-

tentially dangerous activities, to check for any damage that a blast might cause. She also asked that the company send written notification to these residents in advance of any hazardous activities, and to set up a hotline that residents could call with any of their concerns.

"Public safety is paramount to everything else," Bransfield concluded in her statement. "I implore you to take the necessary time to ensure the safety of the public."

Resident Dan Dziob also filed written testimony in the hearing, explaining that he felt the owners of the power plant had not thoroughly studied the potential impact of the plant on the surrounding area before building.

"It seems like the residents of Wellwyn Drive were never fully considered in this decision," Dziob wrote. "After all, we are just Portland residents; 'just the little people.'" Dziob said he understood that it was hard to balance the state's energy needs with those of the residents near the plant, but demanded that the certificate not be renewed until residents' concerns were addressed and their homes and lives were "made whole."

The CSC will accept testimony and evidence for 30 days after the hearing, so Bransfield said it would likely be a month or two before the

CSC makes its decision.

In another development, some Portland homeowners are suing Kleen Energy for damages they say they suffered from the explosion. On Wednesday, a group of homeowners that said they sustained property damage in the explosion filed a civil lawsuit against O&G Industries, Kleen Energy Systems and 10 other companies affiliated with the power plant, according to published reports.

Thirteen Portland households are among the plaintiffs, along with residents of Bow Lane in Middletown. The suit alleges that houses in the area around the plant have suffered a decrease in property values, due to physical damage from the explosion and the risk of any future damage. The decrease, the suit alleges, is caused by the proximity to the plant and not by the current housing market, published reports say. In addition, the suit says the residents have suffered emotional distress from the blast, and are being forced to pay higher insurance premiums, according to published reports.

Also, according to published reports, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration was due to release a report on its investigation into the February explosion on Thursday, after press time.

# Marlborough WPCA Discusses Referendum, Sewers

by Katy Nally

At its meeting last Thursday, July 29, the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) agreed on a referendum question that asks voters to approve \$1.95 million to finish sewer construction around Lake Terramuggus.

Pending approval of the Board of Selectmen (BOS), the WPCA set a tentative schedule for a public information meeting about the referendum.

Town Planner Peter Hughes also gave an update on the sewer construction.

If the BOS approves the question for the \$1.95 million project at its Aug. 10 meeting, the WPCA said a public information meeting would be held sometime during the last week in August. The referendum vote would occur Election Day, Nov. 2.

Hughes noted it is entirely up to selectmen to decide if the referendum question is approved, adding, "[Even] if they move it forward, it doesn't mean they're endorsing it."

The \$1.95 million project would include constructing sewers on Lake Road, Coleman Lane and Old Cider Mill Lane, as well as extending sewers to the rest of North Main Street. The

total estimate includes two years worth of budgeted inflations and 5 percent contingency.

The WPCA had also considered a greater expansion project that included extending sewers across Route 2 and the Jones Hollow bridge, as well as creating a force main to North Main Street from the Marlborough Commons. However, WPCA members voted Tuesday, July 20, to not include these plans in this year's referendum question.

The total \$1.95 million would use \$487,500 from the Clean Water Grant, and town would take out a loan with a 2 percent interest rate to be paid back over 20 years, to cover the remainder.

The loan, at \$1,462,500, would incur \$386,100 in interest over 20 years, totaling \$1,848,600, which the town would pay back in yearly installments of \$92,430. The yearly payment is broken into three, almost-equal, portions. Fifty-four EDUs (equivalent dwelling units) in the proposed area to be constructed will contribute \$603 per unit per year as a benefit assessment. An EDU is any building that produces about the same discharge as a single-

family home, the regulations state. Homes with more than three bedrooms have an additional 0.25 EDU per bedroom.

WPCA Chair Jack Murray said benefit assessments from the 54 EDUs in the area to be constructed, will total \$32,562 per year, which is 35.2 percent of the yearly loan payment.

The town will pick up 30 percent of the yearly payment, at \$27,729, which, Hughes said, would be paid back through taxes. In addition to this 30-percent contribution, the town will also cover another 34.8 percent of the yearly payment, at \$32,139, which will be funded through new hookup fees to the sewer area.

Murray explained anyone who hooks up to the sewers in an area that is not within the original design, will be charged a \$4,000 connection charge. This will finance the additional town contribution, Murray said.

Once decisions on the referendum question were finalized, Hughes updated the WPCA on the sewer project progress. Hughes said he met with engineering firm Weston and Sampson, and the company's team leader for the

Marlborough project, Jim O'Brien, last week to discuss a "lack of communication" between Weston and Sampson and the town.

On several occasions, Hughes said, Weston and Sampson took a few weeks to respond to the town's requests and, consequently, Phase I of the project won't be closed out financially until sometime in early September.

Currently, the town is "ship-shape" to close out its loan that funds the project, Hughes said, but without signed bills and consent from Weston and Sampson, the town will continue to pay \$545 per day in interest on the loan.

Also, Hughes said he sent a list of 20 addresses to be checked by the contractor, to make sure the electrical conduit was buried at least 18 inches underground. Hughes said a few conduits were found to be less than 18 inches deep, and he wanted have the 20 sites double-checked.

The next regularly-scheduled WPCA meeting will be Thursday, Aug. 12. Before that, the WPCA will come before the BOS to present the referendum question at its Tuesday, Aug. 10 meeting, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall.



## Marlborough Police News

7/29: At approximately 10 a.m. an unidentified black male who drove an older, dark-colored pickup truck knocked on the door of a residence on Finely Hill Road and entered after no one answered, State Police said. He later left after taking a single dollar bill from a wallet on a table, State Police said. Anyone with more information is asked to call Trooper First Class Craig Fox at 860-537-7500, and cite case No. 100406517.

## Hebron Police News

7/30: At approximately 12:57 a.m., the window of a vehicle parked on Wellswood Road was smashed and \$5,300 in cash was taken from the glove box, State Police said.

## Portland Police News

7/19: Erik Brunsgaard, 22, of 24 Tarragon Dr., East Hampton, was charged with reckless driving, Portland Police said.

7/20: Zachary Ellis, 18, of 9 Perry Ave., was charged with third-degree assault, police said.

7/21: Said Orczadeh, 23, of 148 Spring St., Middletown, was charged with misuse of marker plates and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

## East Hampton Police News

7/23: Sarah A. Falcon, 26, of 7 Rutledge St., Waterbury, was arrested for larceny, East Hampton Police said.

7/25: Michael T. Hall, 29, of 48 Old West High St., was arrested for violating a protective order and disorderly conduct, police said.

## Colchester Police News

7/23: Jeffery Porter, 44, of 52 Mill Hill Rd., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, Colchester Police said.

7/26: Glenn Edward Terwilliger, 36, of 324 West Main St., Norwich, was charged with DUI, Colchester Police said.

7/27: Jonathan Ballard, 42, of 690 Middletown Rd., turned himself in for failure to appear, Colchester Police said.

7/28: Devon Blair, 25, of 41 Urban St., Hartford, was charged with operating a motor vehicle when license is suspended and speeding, State Police said.

7/28: After a "minor altercation" at Ridgewood Drive at approximately 6:42 p.m., a 16-year-old man and a 17-year-old man were arrested, Colchester Police said. The 16-year-old was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, and the 17-year-old was charged with third-degree criminal mischief and disorderly conduct.

7/29: Christopher Brown, 24, of 66A Hartford Ave., Enfield, was charged with operating a motor vehicle when license is suspended and speeding, State Police said.

7/29: Daniel DeBella, 31, of 112 Clark Ln., was charged with second-degree harassment, State Police said.

## Obituaries

### East Hampton

#### Herbert Francis Smith

Herbert Francis Smith, 79, of Middletown, and formerly of Wilsonville, OR and East Hampton, died Wednesday, July 21, at the Village at South Farms in Middletown. Born March 16, 1931, in Middletown, and an East Hampton native, he was the son of Gladys K. (Leonard) Smith and the late Eaton E. Smith.

He was a graduate of East Hampton High School, Class of 1949. He was a good athlete, playing baseball and soccer and was the captain of his baseball team. Herb had a career in the U.S. Air Force, achieving the rank of chief master sergeant. He proudly served his country during the Korean Conflict (1951-1953) and during the Vietnam War. He was humble but proud of his military service and his rapid attainment of chief master sergeant (the highest non-commissioned officer rank). Herb was a lifetime member of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Herb lived for many years in Wilsonville, OR and was a volunteer at the Wilsonville Senior Center. He was an avid baseball fan and, early on, he rooted for the Boston Red Sox but changed his allegiance to the New York Yankees. He was a dog lover and was always grateful for the loving companionship of his dogs Butch and Marley. Herb was a great fan of country music and listened endlessly to Waylon, Willie and the Boys, but George Jones was his favorite.

Herb's family wishes to thank and express their deep appreciation to Herb's caregiver Sandy Murphy and the staff of the Village at South Farms. Herb was always very thankful for the love, understanding and assistance given to him by his brother Warren and his wife Margaret as well as by Ralph and Margaret Odegard and their daughters, Erica Dodson and Erin Odegard.

He is survived by his mother, Gladys L. Smith of East Hampton; brothers, Warren E. Smith and his wife Margaret of Sherwood, OR, and Leonard C.G. (Geoff) Smith and his wife Erika of Naples FL and Simsbury; nephews, Oliver G. Smith and his wife Heidi of Bangkok, Thailand and Gregory G. Smith and his wife Theresa of Mableton, GA; also two great-nieces and a great-nephew.

He loved to spend time with and immensely enjoyed Audrey, Tia and Tegen.

A graveside service with military honors was held Saturday, July 31 in the family plot in Lakeview Cemetery in East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the Fowler-Dix Post No. 5095 VFW, North Maple Street, East Hampton, CT 06424 or to the American Legion Post No. 64, 55 Main St., East Hampton, CT 06424.

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

The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, has care of arrangements.

### Colchester

#### Robert F. Gregory

Attorney Robert F. Gregory, 80, husband of Beverly Fuhrmann Gregory of Lebanon, passed away on Friday, July 30, in Colchester.

He was born September 8, 1929 in Colchester, son of Augustus and Elsie Zenowitz Gregory. He was a graduate of Bacon Academy, Class of 1947 and UConn Class of 1951.

After serving in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict, he entered the University of Connecticut School of Law and graduated in 1958 receiving the Bachelor of Law degree. He was a member of the Connecticut Bar Association and the New London County Bar Association. He was very active in politics, served two terms in the Connecticut House of Representatives in the 60s and served on the Board of Tax Assessors for the town of Colchester. Bob had an active law practice in Colchester known as Gregory & St. Clair from 1960 until retirement in 1998. Retirement allowed him to pursue his hobbies of fly fishing and photography. He and his wife were avid travelers and managed to visit many sights on six continents. They were married on February 14, 1981.

In addition to his wife Beverly, he leaves a son, Gregory Trabant; daughter, Kathryn Gregory; three grandsons, a niece and a nephew.

He was predeceased by a brother, Paul, and a sister, Katherine Reiter.

Funeral service will be held today, Friday, Aug. 6, at 10:30 a.m. at the Christ Episcopal Church, 78 Washington St., Norwich. Interment with full military honors will follow in Linwood Cemetery, Colchester. Visitation was held Thursday, Aug. 5, at the Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, 279 New Britain Rd., Kensington, CT 06037.

### East Hampton

#### Maria Durkin

On Monday, Aug. 2, we lost our dear wife, mother and friend. Maria Assunta Louisa (Bordonaro) Durkin, 78, of East Hampton, beloved wife of John M. "Jack" Durkin, passed away peacefully with her loving husband at her side. Born Nov. 26, 1931, in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Joseph and Ninetta (Amenta) Bordonaro.

Marie graduated with honors from Buckley High School in Hartford and attended Hillyer College majoring in business before attending the University of Connecticut School of Public Service where she studied Tax Collection Practices and Procedures. She later taught certification classes for the Connecticut State Tax Collectors Association at both UConn and other locations throughout the state.

She had lived in East Hampton since 1954 and was a communicant of St. Patrick Church and a member of the St. Patrick Women's Guild. She was a member of the Florence Griswold Museum in Old Lyme, former member of the Board of Directors of the East Hampton Library, a long-time member of the East Hampton Democratic Town Committee and a member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Tax Collectors Association. Marie served the town of East Hampton as their "beloved tax collector" for more than 35 years.

Besides her husband John of 58 years, she is survived by her son Brian Durkin and his wife Debra of Portland; four daughters, Linda Legassie and her husband Norman of Old Lyme, Debra Durkin of Fort Kent, ME, Elizabeth Jacobson and her husband James of East Hampton and Martha Lawton and her husband Kevin of East Hampton; a sister, Pauline Pricone and her husband Thomas of Leisville, CO, and her beloved grandchildren, Shawna, Chelsea, Colton, Joseph, Melissa, Caleigh, Jessica, Jacob and Benjamin.

Marie liked to travel having visited Italy, Ireland, Switzerland, Monaco, Bermuda and other places. Her favorite vacation spot was her parents' beach house in Old Lyme.

Her family thanks the staff at Portland Care & Rehabilitation, Homemakers & Companions, and Cobalt Lodge Health & Rehabilitation Center for their conscientious, compassionate care as well as their kindness and friendship toward their mother. They send a special thank you to the many friends who cheered her on with their shower of cards and visits.

A funeral liturgy will be celebrated today, Friday, Aug. 6, at 11 a.m. in St. Patrick Church in East Hampton. Burial will follow in the family plot in St. Patrick Cemetery. Friends called at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Thursday evening.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to AstraZeneca Hope Lodge of Boston at [chris.thomas@cancer.org](mailto:chris.thomas@cancer.org), or Smile Train at [SmileTrain.org](http://SmileTrain.org).

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

### Colchester

#### William Churchill

William Churchill, 103, husband of the late Eleanor Yeager Churchill, formerly of Colchester, passed away Thursday, July 29, in Florida. He was born on August 16, 1906 in Scranton, PA.

He was a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps during WWII. He worked for many years for Pratt & Whitney Corp. and Electric Boat Division.

Surviving are his children, Nancy Palmer, Richard, Douglas, Harry and Warren Churchill, as well as numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He was predeceased by four sons, Ralph, Lamont, Harold and Robert Churchill.

Funeral services are private. A burial with full military honors will be held at Linwood Cemetery. There are no calling hours.

Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home of Colchester has care of arrangements.

### Colchester

#### Patricia Frances Mardin

Patricia Frances Mardin, 64, beloved wife of Robert, of Colchester, passed away suddenly Saturday afternoon, July 31, at the Marlborough Emergency Medical Center. Born March 17, 1946, in Norwich, she was a daughter of Frances (Popowich) Varnish of Colchester and the late Michael J. Varnish.

Patricia was married to Robert R. Mardin on June 26, 1965, at St. Andrew Church in Colchester. He survives her.

Patricia worked for many years and in several capacities, most recently as an order filler for S&S Worldwide in Colchester.

She was an avid fan of the UConn Women's Husky Basketball team, the Boston Red Sox and she held an avid love of animals. Most importantly, she will be remembered by her family as being a devoted and loving wife, mother and doting grandmother.

In addition to her loving husband and mother, survivors include four children and their spouses, Dierdre Mardin of Colchester, Dawn and Christopher Delgaizo of Colchester, Michelle and Stanley Nowak of Mansfield, Michael Mardin of Norwich; three siblings and their spouses, Xenia and Kenneth Bujnowski of Colchester, Alan and Carol Varnish of Colchester, Carol and Norman Stanski of Pickerington, OH; six grandchildren, Kala, Ryan, Haleigh, Tyler, Sabrina and Jozlyn.

Funeral services will be private. Donations in her memory may be made to the Humane Society, 169 Old Colchester Rd., Quaker Hill, CT 06375.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with arrangements. For online condolences, visit [www.auroramccarthyfunerallhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfunerallhome.com).

### Colchester

#### Patricia Hebb

Patricia (Knick) Hebb, 63, of Decatur, MI, and formerly of Colchester, passed away Friday, July 30, at her home, after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. Born in Norwich on July 18, 1947, she was the daughter of the late Michael and Lydia Knick.

Patricia was raised in Colchester, where she attended Bacon Academy. After high school, she married Garrett Hebb. The couple moved to Florida where they lived for several years, and finally retired to Michigan.

In addition to her husband of 43 years, survivors include a daughter, Heidi M. Palmes and her husband Duane of Colchester; a son, Adam and his wife Terri Hebb of Tampa, FL; a brother, William Knick; a grandson, Alex and numerous extended family members.

Funeral services were held privately. For online condolences, visit [www.auroramccarthyfunerallhome.com](http://www.auroramccarthyfunerallhome.com).

### Portland

#### Louis Castelli

Louis Castelli, 87, passed away peacefully Tuesday morning, Aug. 3, in his home. He was born in Portland on Aug. 22, 1922, a son of the late Allesandro and Celesta (Cassola) Castelli.

He is survived by his wife, Rose (Preli) Castelli and her family: Steven, Carol, Jessica, and Jeremy Castelli, Andrea and Reginald Farrington, Mark, Kim and Stacy Castelli, and Thomas Castelli, all of Portland; and several nephews and their families.

He was predeceased by three brothers: George, John, and Andrew Castelli.

He was a lifelong resident of Portland and a graduate of Portland High School in 1940. He was a veteran of the United States Army having served in European Theatre during World War II. He retired from Mohawk Manufacturing of Middletown. He was a parishioner of St. Mary's Church in Portland.

Calling hours are today, Aug. 6, from 5-8 p.m., at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, Portland. The funeral will be held Saturday, Aug. 7, at 11 a.m., at St. Mary's Church, Portland.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Portland Volunteer Fire Department, P.O. Box 71, Portland, CT 06480.





*From the Editor's Desk*

## Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

I finally did it; I grabbed a meal at Sonic. On the way back home from a very depressing Mets loss, I stopped by the newly-opened Wallingford outlet. I'd heard all about the long lines, but I figured that, at 8 p.m. on a Sunday evening, it shouldn't be that bad.

I was wrong. It was a lengthy line, at least half an hour long. As I sat in the car, and looked from side to side – there were four lanes of cars, each several vehicles deep – I thought to myself about the power of advertising. Here in Connecticut, we've been seeing Sonic commercials for years, on cable channels like ESPN and TBS. However, up until last month, Connecticut had never seen a Sonic franchise, rendering the commercials something of a giant tease for us Nutmeggers.

So when the Sonic finally opened last month, residents who'd been seeing all those commercials had a chance to see what it was all about. I knew there'd be a lot of people intrigued. Just *how many* were intrigued took me by surprise.

Like I said, it was the power of advertising. The ads brought people – likely from across the state – down to Wallingford and convinced them to stay in their car and wait however long it took (although to be fair, once you were there you were kinda stuck) so they could try all those tasty-looking items they'd been seeing on TV.

The huge lines really drove home the point that, no matter how much television (and media as a whole) has changed over the years, the value of a well-done advertisement cannot be overstated.

The quality of Sonic's food, however, can.

I gotta admit, I was kinda disappointed. I got a bacon cheeseburger on Texas toast, cheese-covered tater tots and a sweet tea. The toast, while toasted, was still rather limp and surprisingly unflavorful. The burger was rather "meh" – just an average fast food-style burger patty. The bacon was alright, although it was a little overshadowed by the presence of too much lettuce and tomato.

The tots were good; crispy and salty, just how I like them. I admit, I love tater tots. They take me back to my childhood; not only were they staples of my public school hot lunches, but they also made frequent appearances on the Thompson family dinner table. Even today, I'd take crispy, flavorful tater tots over fries, generally speaking. The cheese on the tots was nothing to write home about. It was just a couple slices of yellow American cheese melted on top. The taste and texture of the melted cheese almost made me think Sonic had microwaved the tots, but if that had been done, the spuds' crispiness would've likely been zapped as well.

The sweet tea was excellent. Perhaps a little too much ice, but the perfect balance of tea and sugar.

Ultimately, while the meal itself was somewhat underwhelming, I'm glad I finally experienced Sonic after all these years. I'll probably go back, if only to try some of their other menu items, but I think I'll wait until October, when the Manchester location is rumored to open.

\* \* \*

Novelist Anne Rice (of *Interview With a Vampire* fame) was briefly in the news last week, when she announced via Facebook she was leaving Christianity, though she would still be a follower of Christ. The articles I read about it didn't state what division of Christianity she was when she announced she was quitting, but they did say she was a former Roman Catholic. And I have to say, I understand how one could be disenchanted with Catholicism. I was raised Catholic, went to Catholic high school, and still go to Mass (nearly) every Sunday. But lately, the Vatican hasn't been making it easy to stay a Catholic.

Their most recent action that caused me to seriously think about things came a few weeks

ago, when the Vatican revised its rules on how to deal with sex abuse cases involving priests. Toughening the punishments in those cases is certainly not a bad thing at all; however, where the Vatican lost me was when, in those same rules, it listed attempted ordination of women as a "grave crime," one to be handled in the same way as sex abuse involving minors or the mentally disabled.

Just what can happen if someone dares to ordain a woman? Well, the woman would automatically be excommunicated, as would the priest who attempted to ordain her. The Vatican made that much clear in a document it issued in 2007. And now, according to the new rules issued last month, the priest can also be defrocked – which is permanent, whereas an excommunication can be lifted if the person apologizes for what they did. (Personally, I think the idea of having to apologize for attempting to ordain a woman is crap, but at least before priests had the option, if they really wanted to, of apologizing and getting back in the church. Now, not so much. They're gone for good.)

Since issuing these new rules, the Vatican has not surprisingly come under fire from women's groups, as well as more liberal Catholics. And the Vatican has said it did not include the part about ordaining women in the new document with the sex abuse rules was an attempt to somehow equate the two; it acknowledged sex abuse was worse. However, according to the Vatican, ordaining women is still a grave canonical crime. Monsignor Charles Scicluna, who is also the Vatican's sex crimes prosecutor, has been quoted as saying attempted ordination of women is a "wound," and "an attempt against the Catholic faith on the sacrament of (holy) orders."

Why, in the year 2010, the Catholic Church still has such a backwards view of women is beyond me.

The whole "women can't be priests" thing seems to be born out of the idea that Jesus' 12 apostles were all men. Well, guess what? That was 2,000 years ago. Of course they'd have been all men. Women back then had a much different place in society than they do now. To paraphrase the Rock of WWE fame, women knew their role, and they shut their mouth. And that attitude persisted for hundreds and hundreds of years. Heck, it hasn't even been 100 years since women were given the right to vote in this country.

But times change, and you have to believe that, if Jesus were alive and roaming the earth today, with the current rules of society, of course he'd have women apostles. If you look at the Bible, you can see that Jesus always displayed a respectful attitude toward women. After all, the phrase "let he who is without sin cast the first stone" came from an attempt by Jesus to block the disgustingly common practice of stoning women who'd committed adultery.

Not only would ordaining women be a handy acknowledgment of what century we live in, but it would also do something to address the ever-growing priest shortage. There are so many women out there who are devout Catholics, and I have no doubt a bunch of them would eagerly sign on the dotted line if they were given the chance to become priests. But, in a world where parishes are combining simply because there aren't enough priests anymore to around, the Catholic Church is stubbornly clinging to its statement that only single men can be priests. And to be honest, it's kind of tough to sit there in church and pray for more people to decide to enter the priesthood (as the priest instructs us to do every now and then) when such an easy solution is right under everyone's noses. The Vatican just won't allow it.

\* \* \*

See you next week.