

**RIVER EAST**

News Bulletin

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

Volume 38, Number 28

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

October 25, 2013



Some scarecrows stationed in the Colchester Town Green this week as part of the town's annual scarecrow contest this week are colossal creations. The "Sleepy Hollow" scene featuring a life size horse and headless horseman turned heads this week. It was created by employees of Phoenix Construction of Colchester.

PHS Students Commemorate Sandy Hook Victims

by Elizabeth Bowling

Portland High School students filed out of the building last Friday morning, Oct. 18, to commemorate the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

Portland's Rachel's Challenge/Friends of Rachel club – which is made up of about 20 to 30 students – hosted the ceremony and raised the funds for a memorial, which consists of an evergreen tree and stone monument.

According to the Rachel's Challenge club advisor, Stacey Clark, the endeavor was fully student-funded.

Clark, who is also a Spanish teacher at PHS, said the club fundraised for a year in the form of a "penny war," which pitted the classes against one another and raised more than \$500. The club also received some donations and managed to get a deal from a local garden center, as well as the etcher of the stone, she said.

Clark said the mission of the club is to spread kindness and positivity; she calls PHS' Rachel's Challenge members her "quiet angels."

One of those "quiet angels" is Maddie McDougall, the student coordinator of PHS' Rachel's Challenge.

McDougall explained that the club focuses on "how kindness could really make an impact on the world."

More specifically, she said Rachel's Challenge is a national organization that honors the beliefs of Rachel Joy Scott, the first victim of the 1999 shootings at Columbine High School.

McDougall brought the organization to Portland four years ago – during her freshman year – after her class saw a presentation about the club.

Since then, she said, "We've been building the club from the ground up." She added, "It was right up our alley to commemorate what happened in Newtown."

The ceremony started when Portland High School Principal Andrea Lavery welcomed the audience, made up mostly of PHS students.

"I don't think there's anyone in this audience

that's going to forget what happened at Sandy Hook on Dec. 14, 2012," Lavery said. "We're here today to honor the victims of that horrific tragedy."

Members of Rachel's Challenge read snippets of what their classmates wrote in their English classes about how the Newtown tragedy changed their lives and what positive changes they hope will come from it.

Some examples included, "We must remember not to live in fear. We cannot gripe about new security rules, either. Instead we should be grateful for the protection that we have."

Another club member read, "We cannot bring back the lives lost, but we can be grateful for all of ours by taking a second to make a difference and be kind to one another."

Another student wrote, "Every life is precious. We need to remember how blessed we are to live in this beautiful world."

Another student commented, "Mental illness isn't just something to reject or discriminate."

But rather, something to take notice of and care for."

In following along with the Rachel's Challenge mission, one student said, "Positivity should override negativity. Kindness and compassion is extremely powerful."

Along the same lines, another said, "Reach out to others who seem to be struggling. Just being a friend can be more helpful than you may think."

After the read-aloud of student responses, the entire audience participated in a moment of silence to honor the victims of Sandy Hook.

The moment of silence was followed by PHS' a capella group's emotional rendition of *Amazing Grace*.

After the 20-minute ceremony ended and the students filed back into their classrooms, McDougall took a few minutes to reflect on her hard work.

"I couldn't have asked for anything better," See PHS Students Page 2

Scarecrows Consume Colchester Green

by Melissa Roberto

With Halloween just around the corner, it's time to get imaginative, and this week in Colchester imagination was on display on the town green, in the form of a few dozen scarecrows.

The scarecrow scenes made up the 14th annual Scarecrow Decorating Contest. The contest is organized each year by the Colchester Business Association (CBA) and the Parks and Recreation Department. The contest features entries from businesses, families/individuals, youth groups and organizations.

This year's autumn display provoked fear, smiles, laughter and awe as the scenes varied in size and colors.

A few scenes this year stood tall – very tall. A larger than life tooth fairy made her way to the green. She was decked out in a pink feather boa and pink tutu decorated with white teeth. The tooth fairy held a wand while standing over a sleeping girl. This tall masterpiece was created by Colchester Dental Group and it was a favorite for Janay Bear, 6, and her brother Peter, 4, who went to the town green Monday with their dad John.

Another eye-catching scarecrow was created by Phoenix Construction of Colchester. The scene was titled "Sleepy Hollow" and featured the headless horseman sitting atop a life-size horse made out of hay. The soldier – who was fittingly missing a head – toted a carved pumpkin in hand.

"Sleepy Hollow" was crafted by the owner of the construction company, Jeremy Coutu, and assistant carpenter Thomas Caster. Coutu explained the pair's vision was to create something "big and grand that would get people's attention." And that it did. John Bear pointed

to the scene as one that caught his eye.

"People put a lot of work into these and work hard on them," Bear said of the scarecrows surrounding him. "Even just by coming up with a concept."

The horse was made out of a wood skeleton. Coutu said its body can "actually move in any position" through the use of pins, rods and screws. Coutu said it took the pair 35-40 hours to create. Caster said he hopes the size of the horse prompts contestants to "come out and try to beat it next year."

"I want it to be huge," he furthered excitedly.

Other scarecrows standing in the town green include Jack and Sally, the skeleton characters from *The Nightmare Before Christmas*; a striped bumblebee, an angel sitting within a garden, and even "Pumpkin Piper" playing a recorder for a crowd of little pumpkin people with their hands – made of sticks – raised on the ground before him.

There were also multiple athletic scarecrows within the town green this year. About four "cheercrows" from Galaxy Cheerleading are stationed in poses with even one sitting atop another's shoulders. Another two-piece scarecrow scene shows a headless basketball player jumping in the air in the effort to throw a pumpkin – or its head – into a basketball hoop. The creators, from the Colchester Homeschool Co-Op, entitled it "Slam 'Pumk' in."

Chairperson of this year's scarecrow contest, Teri Damato, said this year's contestants were "so creative."

"We have more scenes than last year," Damato added. "It's really come a long way."

See Scarecrows Page 2



Colchester's Harrington Court was represented on the green. The scene made use of a wheelchair, and showed scarecrows and a pumpkin person in friendly conversation with one another.

Scarecrows cont. from Front Page

A kickoff and costume parade occurred last Saturday, Oct. 19, on the green which invited children in the community and surrounding towns to dress up and parade around the green to music followed by pizza and snacks donated from local businesses, Damato said. The chairperson added this year's parade was made extra special thanks to the Colchester Lions, who donated 100 animal balloons to all the kids in the parade.

This year's scarecrows are in the running for first and second place in the categories of most imaginative, scariest and funniest. First place winners will receive a \$100 gift card and second place winners will receive a \$75 gift card. The gift cards can be used at any of the more than 180 member businesses of the CBA,

Damato said.

Voting for the scarecrows can be conducted online or at local businesses. To vote online, readers can go to colchesterctbusiness.com, scroll to "Upcoming Events" and click on the voting link. Voting boxes will be located at these Colchester locations: Shattered Endz Hair Salon, 75 Norwich Ave., Colchester Dental Group, 79A Norwich Ave., People's United Bank, 99 Linwood Ave. inside Stop & Shop, and at the Colchester Parks & Recreation office in Colchester Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

The last day to vote is today, Oct. 25. Damato anticipates winners to be announced Monday, Oct. 28. Winners will be posted on the CBA website and the Parks and Recreation website. Winners will also personally be contacted.



Portland High School's Rachel's Challenge club, which is dedicated to spreading kindness, hosted a memorial ceremony Oct. 18 to honor the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings. Pictured are, at left, Maddie McDougall, the club's student coordinator, and Stacey Clark, the club advisor.

PHS Students cont. from Front Page

she said about the memorial. "It's really surreal that this will be here forever."

She said she hopes the memorial will "provoke thought."

Even though McDougall is graduating from PHS this year, she said she is confident that the local Rachel's Challenge club will "continue to improve the character in this school."

McDougall is applying early decision to Skidmore College and said she "absolutely" would like to establish a Rachel's Challenge club there, if one doesn't already exist.

"I'll continue working in this way my entire

life," she furthered. "Rachel's mission is my mission."

Someday she said she'd like to be a presenter for Rachel's Challenge so that she could inspire others, much like she was inspired four years ago.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield, who attended the ceremony, said, "It's outstanding to see that our students have come together for such a great cause."

"It's just so wonderful and positive to see this promoted by the students for the other students," she added. "I'm just so proud of them."

Hebron, Glastonbury Come Together for Capital Purchases

by Geeta Schrayter

The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously at its Oct. 17 meeting to endorse an application between Hebron and Glastonbury for the state's Intertown Capital Equipment Purchasing Incentive Program.

Parks and Recreation Director Rich Calarco explained at the meeting he has worked closely with Glastonbury Parks Superintendent Greg Foran over the past year and was approached regarding the possibility of purchasing some shared equipment under the program. Calarco said the union would allow the towns to band together to purchase a Bobcat T590 Compact Track Loader with attachments for \$90,691 and a Taro Multi-Pro 1750 Sprayer for \$37,858.

The equipment would allow for improved maintenance and be used for such activities as snow removal, stump grinding, grading, landscaping and spraying. Calarco said joining with Glastonbury would also help achieve several of the Parks and Recreation Department's goals, including applying for grants, regional sharing and purchasing equipment that would make the department more efficient.

"This is the perfect opportunity for us to get equipment," Calarco said, adding it would be "a perfect marriage."

Glastonbury would be responsible for filing the paperwork for the program and, if the process moved forward, the towns would share the responsibility for maintenance and would work cooperatively to schedule and use the equipment. The equipment would be stored in Glastonbury.

Calarco said becoming involved with only one town was ideal and would help the department get their work done faster. With more

towns, he said, sometimes work needs to be delayed because the equipment isn't available.

For the program to move forward, Calarco said the plan would have to go to the Capital Improvement Program Committee for review, followed by the Board of Finance and then finally, the voters. Calarco added the town was only approving the application and if the CIP Committee didn't approve the project or the budget was rejected at next year's referendum, the town was under no obligation to fund their portion.

If approved, the program would cover 30 percent of the total cost and the remainder would be split between the two towns, for \$44,992 each.

* * *

Also at the meeting, the selectmen discussed the job description for the fire chief and revisions that would make the position part-time and paid. Fred Speno retired in August, and since that time Nick Wallick has been acting as interim chief.

Previously the role of fire chief has been a volunteer one, with the town only paying a \$1,400 annual stipend for the position.

Tierney explained the new part-time fire chief would need to be available for a minimum of 16 hours per week, in addition to emergencies or disasters. The position would come with a salary of \$22,000.

Although the preference was to fill the position with a candidate from within the department, Tierney said the opening would be available to outside the department as well.

Selectman Dan Larson, who has served as fire chief in the past, applauded the decision to

make the fire chief into a paid position. He said he didn't think it was fair to the town or to the individual who fills the position to take on the responsibility on a volunteer-type basis.

"There's too much going on during the day. Too many decisions require first-hand input," he said, adding the fire department was one of the largest budgets in town.

"We need to get someone who will be able to dedicate the proper hours to the position," he continued. "We've come to that crossroads and I feel it's very important we approve this and move forward."

Board of Selectmen Chairman Jeff Watt added it would be ideal to have a full-time chief on board "who can take care of not only the administrative piece but spend time with the volunteers too."

Selectwoman Gayle Mulligan, who is also board liaison for the fire department, said having a full-time chief had been discussed, but considering budget constraints, moving up to a part-time chief "was a good stepping stone."

Selectman Mark Stuart agreed.

"When I looked at [the description] I thought 16 hours was a little light," he said, "but we're moving in the right direction."

The revised description was approved unanimously.

* * *

The selectmen also voted at the meeting to accept John E. Horton Boulevard as a town road. Town Manager Andrew Tierney explained the CVS pharmacy currently under construction will have an exit on the road and was looking to open Nov. 1.

As such, Town Engineer Tom Fenton said there was "some urgency" to accept the road. The traffic light at the intersection of the boulevard and Route 66 can't be activated until the road has been accepted, and the CVS wouldn't be able to open and use the road without the traffic light.

Tierney added the road would be accepted without the top coat of pavement. This option, he said, was preferred since it would prevent damage to a finished road by construction vehicles during the development of lots in the Village Green.

However, the top coat would need to be placed by Horton Brothers, LLC – who own the Village Green Development – at a time directed by the Planning and Zoning Commission. In accordance with the agreement between the town and Horton Brothers, LLC, that directive won't be before at least 50 percent of the square footage shown in Phase I of the District's development is occupied or later than seven years from the road's acceptance.

In addition, if there are signs of deterioration in the interim, Horton Brothers, LLC would need to conduct the repairs before the top layer is added.

The town would be responsible for maintaining the road: providing plowing, sanding and mowing along the boulevard.

The selectmen unanimously approved the acceptance.

* * *

The next Board of Selectmen meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 7, at 7:30 p.m., at the Hebron Town Office Building.

Mix of Incumbents, Newcomers Running for Selectmen Seats

by Melissa Roberto

Six Colchester citizens are currently in the running for four slots on the Board of Selectmen, and they represent a mix of incumbents and newcomers.

Those seeking seats include two incumbents, Democrat Rosemary Coyle and Republican Stan Soby. Candidates running for the Board of Selectmen for the first time are Republican Denise Mizla and Democrat Michael Caplet as well as Colchester Independent Party (CIP) candidates Tearice Peters and Evan A. Evans.

Current selectwoman **Rosemary Coyle** has served on the policy-making board of the town since 2007. She said her decision to seek another two-year term comes from a willingness to serve the town in a volunteer capacity.

"I'm the kind of person that feels if you live in a town and can contribute to the town you can use your skills and knowledge to serve the town," she said.

Coyle furthered her life has been spent in public service. She's the former leader of a teacher's union where she dealt with public policy in education. From 1977-85, Coyle served on the Board of Education and during that time served as its vice chairwoman. Currently, Coyle is a liaison to the Commission on Aging, Open Space Committee and the Colchester Hayward Fire Department. She formerly served as chair of the Elderly Tax Relief Task Force and was involved in the building project as she served as the building committee's liaison and was liaison to the Senior Study Committee.

"A lot of my knowledge has come in senior issues," she explained. "It's one of the things I've become very interested in and I consider myself an advocate for those issues."

In her last six years as a selectwoman, Coyle said she's tried "very hard" to research issues by reading all of the materials provided to her and delving into them by asking questions. She furthered her decision making is based on making the "best decision for the town."

"It's always about putting the town first," she said of her responsibility as a selectman. "When you represent the people you have to look at issues in a very global perspective."

Coyle spent 37 years as an elementary school teacher. She said her duties as a teacher equipped her with the skill of thinking about others' needs. She said this includes listening to others – a skill that's helped her as a selectman.

Coyle briefly mentioned the town's current dilemma of assessing and possibly fixing the needs of the senior center and William J. Johnston Middle School as well as the youth center, that recently were part of the building project proposal that failed. She said she believes the issues "are still there" and is thankful tri-board meetings have been scheduled to analyze those.

During her time as a selectwoman, Coyle said she's proud to see the community becoming more aware of Colchester's farming community. She hopes to see that continue and maintained. Another one of her goals for the future, if elected, is to contribute to strengthening communication. She said she feels the board needs to "plan better" on how to handle issues that come before it. Coyle has lived in Colchester since 1972 with her husband Steve. They have one daughter.

Another incumbent, **Stan Soby**, has served on the board since 2006 and is looking to continue his time on board. He took over the first selectman's seat from January to November 2007, and is a former member and chair of such commissions as Conservation Commission, Board of Education, Ethics Commission, Waste Management and Streetlights Study Committee.

Soby served on the board of directors for the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits for 11 years and currently serves on several other committees at the state level. He spoke this week of why he wishes to serve another two years as

selectman.

"I still believe I have something to offer back to the town," he said. "The town has been very good to my family. I still have an interest in the kinds of things we've been working on."

Things Soby said he'd like to continue striving toward are seeing economic development growth as well as seeing through the update of the town's zoning regulations and Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). Soby has a bachelor's degree in special education from Southern Connecticut State University and a master's degree in special education from Central Connecticut State University. He's currently employed by the Connecticut Institute for the Blind, commonly known as Oak Hill. He's held a variety of positions there over a 35-year period starting as a classroom teacher to a current administrator responsible for community programs and services.

If elected, Soby said his goal would be to have a plan in place for the middle school, as well as supporting the needs of a senior center and community center.

"We need to explore all of the options at this point," he said.

Additionally, as a selectman, Soby said he feels it's important to listen to people. His skills include "synthesizing information," as well as human resources skills. He's lived in town with his wife since 1978 and has three children.

While **Denise Mizla** is running for a seat on the selectmen board for the first time, she's not new to the town's political scene. Mizla served on the Zoning Board of Appeals from 2001-08, she said, and then became a deputy registrar of voters for four years before becoming a registrar of voters, a position she's held for the last four years. On the Republican Town Committee, Mizla formerly served as its secretary and treasurer.

Mizla said she's always been "very active" in the town's happenings and recently decided she wanted to get even more involved.

"I just felt I would want to take it to the next level because the job of the Board of Selectmen is to make policies for the town," she said of her decision. "I want to be a part of that decision-making process and policy-making process."

Mizla holds a bachelor's degree of science in business from the University of Hartford's Barney School of Business. She's also a former medic of the U.S. Air Force. She's served as the accountant of a manufacturing company ran by her husband since 1988.

Mizla said her forte is "looking at numbers." If elected to serve on the board of selectmen, Mizla said her effort would be to be "a voice of the people that elected me."

Mizla said she feels there's been a "big improvement" in transparency of local government in recent years due to additional meetings, especially throughout the annual budget development process. However, she said she's aware "there's always more you can do." If elected to the board, Mizla said one of her goals would be to try to engage more people in the process and to attract more members of the public to meetings.

Additionally, Mizla has lived in Colchester all of her life, and said she feels her knowledge of the town's history could serve her well as a selectman.

"Knowing what's come before you can help make you learn how to proceed forward," she explained.

Mizla resides in town with her husband Joseph of 33 years and has a son Alan and daughter Erin.

Democrat **Mike Caplet** is another candidate running for the Board of Selectmen for the first time – but his experience doesn't stray too far from Town Hall.

Caplet's interest in running for a seat on the board comes from a willingness to improve "communication and connections between the citizens and local government," he said. Due to his "diverse professional experience" Caplet said he feels he is equipped with a "unique perspective."

Caplet holds a bachelor's degree in history from Connecticut College. He said he began his professional career as a long-term substitute teacher at a high school, with the intention of becoming a history teacher. However, Caplet

then received a certification from the Connecticut Police Academy and worked as a police officer. Following that he became a senior project manager in construction before working as an east coast regional director at a national move and chain management consultancy.

His diverse experience continued as he served as executive assistant within the first selectman's office starting in 2007 until the end of 2009. Caplet also worked for Gov. Dannel Malloy's campaign and worked within the governor's office as deputy director of intergovernmental affairs, where he was responsible for connecting information between federal, state and local government. Currently, Caplet works as a regional planner for the Connecticut division of the Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

Of his desire to serve as a selectman, the Democratic candidate said he's "driven by civic responsibility." He's served on the Ethics Commission in Colchester and filled a vacancy on the Board of Finance from 2010-2012.

"Overall, town policy issues are my area of interest and I believe I would probably be most effective in that area because I have a very broad background in my professional experiences," he said.

If elected, Caplet said one of his goals would be to "make the government as responsive and helpful for the citizens as possible."

He furthered, "When it comes down to it, the purpose of the government is to ultimately serve its citizens so I'm hoping that if a citizen ever feels like that's not being delivered I might be able to contribute to the conversation on how we can fix it and how we can improve."

Of initiatives he'd like to see in the future, Caplet said he has "no grand list." Instead, he said looking at past studies and practices is often an important aspect of decision-making that gets left behind.

"Sometimes it's as simple as sitting down with the town's history," he said of making decisions for the town.

Though efforts being conducted that Caplet said he'd like to see continue is road repair and capital improvement plans. Caplet has lived in Colchester with his wife Jen for eight years. They have a 15-month old daughter.

Evan A. Evans is another newcomer running for a spot on the board of selectmen. He's been serving the U.S. military for 26 years. Evans said his decision to run comes from concerns he has stemming from the current actions of the selectmen.

"What I've been seeing from the first selectman and some of the other selectmen is that some aren't taking responsibility for their actions," said Evans. "The Board of Selectmen are the leaders in the government here in Colchester and the members need to take responsibility for what's required." Evans furthered doing so would be one of his goals if elected.

Another goal, Evans said, is to come up with solutions to fix the needs of the respective buildings included in the building project proposal. However, he said it's not necessarily an elected official who has all the answers, which he said is why he's interested in soliciting suggestions and opinions from the greater Colchester community.

"I'm willing to bet there's someone in Colchester who has the idea that's the best so-



Mike Caplet

lution," he said. "It's not necessarily one of the people running."

Evans formerly served on the business development task force. He said his skills as an enlisted officer in the U.S. Army and his current status of major in the National Guard have given him the skills of "dealing with various opinions." Additionally, he's served overseas multiple times, he said, meaning he's familiar with coming to an agreement and working out differences through discussion.

Evans furthered he feels a plan for Colchester's future – particularly a 20-year plan – should be created.

"We should be planning out 20 years from now," he explained. "This is to keep our vision of what Colchester is going to look like in 20 years."

Evans has lived in town since 2004. He's currently a full-time loan officer for a mortgage lender and a major of the Connecticut Army National Guard. Evans added he also runs a real estate investment company. He lives with his wife Elizabeth and has a 12-year-old son and an 11-week-old daughter. He admitted he's "not much of a politician" but believes as a member of the national guard he'd like to offer a "different perspective" while also representing veterans and military personnel in local government.

Tearice Peters is another CIP candidate looking to run for a seat on the board of selectmen. Peters is currently president of Colchester Concerned Citizens, Inc., which she said is a "grassroots non-profit corporation formed to assist and support residents of Colchester to help them live in a safe, healthy and prosperous area." Peters formerly served as vice chairwoman of the Charter Review and Revision Commission and was on the Board of Assessment Appeals from 2006-09. She has a bachelor's degree in marketing and an associate degree of applied science in advertising/biology.

Peters also has 17 years of experience as the chief operations officer for a real estate and investment firm out of Florida. There, she said, she was in charge of operations and oversight. She also provided assistance to out of state Florida property owners on "a myriad of issues."

For Peters, the decision to run for a selectman seat was due to encouragement "by residents who want a fiscally responsible, caring person who will listen to them and be a true voice to the people." She said she believes in an "open, transparent government that is inclusive and respectful of all residents to participate in no matter their stance or political affiliation..."

Peters furthered she is "all about fostering a better business climate in town." She feels making current businesses in town happy would attract additional businesses. Peters said she feels the town is facing "irresponsible tax increases passed onto voters repeatedly without any discussions." She mentioned "staggering" increases in the mill rate and taxes over the last four years are the results of "current elected officials who are once again seeking re-election."

"The incumbents are at fault and are to blame for the largest tax increases in the past 20 years and the impacts associated with these increases on businesses and families," Peters furthered.

The selectman candidate added she feels the town is deserving of a "selectman who will end politics as usual and put the interest of the people above party politics."

Peters has lived in town for over 16 years with her husband Don and son Grant, 14.



Rosemary Coyle



Stan Soby



Tearice Peters

Hodge, Ford Challenging Schuster for Seat

by Melissa Roberto

Gregg Schuster is facing two opponents in his bid for another term as first selectman – and neither is a stranger to Colchester politics.

The current first selectman, Republican Gregg Schuster, is being challenged by Democrat Jim Ford, a current member of the Board of Selectmen, and former first selectwoman Linda Hodge, a member of the new Colchester Independent Party.

Schuster is seeking his third straight term, having first been elected in 2009. Prior to that, Schuster served on the Zoning Board of Appeals as well as the Colchester Business Development Task Force. Schuster was born and raised in Colchester and ventured back to town to raise a family of his own after obtaining a bachelor's degree in business management from Lehigh University and an MBA from the University of Connecticut. Schuster is also a certified project management professional. He lives with his wife Faith, daughter Leah, 4, and son Brett, 2.

Schuster's choice to run for a third term, he said, is to "continue a lot of the successes we've had." Specifically, Schuster said the successes that have been highlights for him throughout the last four years include economic development growth, such as the new Tractor Supply, which he said contributed to a "new era" of development in Colchester's south end. Schuster furthered he's "excited" new businesses are continuing to come to Colchester, and he specifically mentioned Sweet Frog and Dollar General coming soon.

Additionally, the extension of sewer and water in town, as well as coming "in under the budget every single year" are successes Schuster is proud of. Under his candidacy, the town has received the "Distinguished Budget Presentation Award" by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada for two consecutive years. The award is given "only to those towns, cities, counties or governmental entities" that meet requirements of "transparency, detail explanation and comprehensiveness" during budget development, according to a press release issued by Schuster earlier this month.

Schuster also was recently appointed to the Municipal Tax Authority Sub-Committee of the M.O.R.E. commission. The M.O.R.E. Commission was formed in 2010 and is made up of state representatives, state senators, first selectmen, mayors and other officials.

In terms of what he feels he brings to the first selectman seat, Schuster said "business management skills" are probably his "most effective" tool. He said he's looked at outsourcing operations and combining town departments when necessary.

"We're much more streamlined than we were four years ago," he said.

Looking ahead to a two-year term, Schuster said if elected he'd like to tackle the issue of the William J. John-ston Middle School/Senior Center/Community Center building proposal that was soundly rejected earlier this month at referendum. His ideas include renovating the middle school, constructing a stand-alone senior center and perhaps opening a YMCA in Colchester that he feels would be a "wonderful facility" that could address community space needs and bring a pool to Colchester.

The selectman added he'd like to see through the town's update to its zoning regulations. He also mentioned his goals of improving Colchester's infrastructure and bringing natural gas to town to "lower energy costs."

Though Schuster admitted with a laugh the town "pretty much knows me by now," this week he stressed his "strong roots" within the town are another reason why he's interested in serving another two years.

"I've been honored to serve as first selectman," he said. "I have a great love for this community. I can't say enough good things about the staff here at Town Hall and all the community members and organization members who make up this fantastic community."

Current selectman Jim Ford is looking to take his role one notch higher. Ford has been on the Board of Selectman for the last four years. Prior to that, he served as a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission for a total of 12 years, serving as chairman for 10 of those years. This week, Ford indicated he began eyeing the central role in Colchester about one year ago, when he "began to see that we're facing problems." His decision to run came from recognizing his work experience would be "very valuable" to solving the town's needs, he said.

Ford has a bachelor's and master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Connecticut. For the last 45 years, Ford has worked in the engineering industry. He's a registered professional engineer in seven states and has worked in municipal, state and private practice throughout his career. Currently, he's a senior associate with Beta Group Inc. in Hartford. His responsibilities for that role are to manage projects, which he feels is a particular skill that relates to the duties of first selectman.

"I'm managing people, time, projects and



Gregg Schuster

communicating," he said of his current role. "That's what you have to do as first selectman and that's the business that I do. I think I have a good handle on how to make a governmental process work."

Ford has several goals for Colchester that he would hope to bring to fruition if elected. One, he said, is to "take a good look" at economic development. To do so, Ford said it's important to understand "who" Colchester can attract and "what type" of businesses the town wants. Another one of Ford's goals is to stabilize taxes, which he explained is "one of the most important things we need to do."

In terms of bringing change, Ford said that, if elected, Colchester's image would be important to him. He would focus on improving maintenance in the areas adjacent to Colchester's business section, and making the town an "inviting" place.

Looking back on four years as a selectman, Ford is "very proud" of the sense of community Colchester has.

"I think it's a great town," he said. "It really is. When people come here and they live here they get to know very quickly just what a friendly community it is. That should start from Town Hall and build out."

Another highlight for Ford has been the creation of the board of selectmen's Operations Subcommittee, which he proposed to the board this past summer. The subcommittee is made up of himself and selectman Stan Soby, as well as two members from the Board of Finance and two members from the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees. The subcommittee has been in the process of looking at solutions to the needs of buildings in town owned by the Trustees, like the senior center and Old Bacon Academy. Ford said the subcommittee's report should be presented to the selectmen at the end of the month.

In terms of the recent referendum, Ford said he understands the building project "failed decisively." He said his goal is to have a "serious communications effort" with the public. He admitted it will take time to digest just what aspects of the project the voters were concerned with. He added just renovating the school could cost as much "if not more" than the former building project proposed. He said he recognizes the needs at the middle school don't consist of just a "small renovation."

In regards to determining what the next steps are to assess and fix the needs of the middle school, senior center and youth center, Ford said "obviously that has to be a priority for the town."

Ford has lived in Colchester with his wife Barbara since 1995. He's a grandfather of six. When envisioning taking on the first selectman role, Ford said it goes "beyond politics."

"I'm not a politician," he said. "This is a town I really have an interest in. I really want to serve."

Linda Hodge is another candidate familiar to Colchester and its citizens. She served as first selectman from 2007-09 – a role she said she "really enjoyed."

However, she also learned there was room to improve, she said, and so for the last six years Hodge has worked towards strengthening skills needed for the job. Since 2009, Hodge obtained two master's degrees – one in survey research and another in public administration – simultaneously from the University of Connecticut. Hodge is also currently working toward a pro-



Jim Ford

fessional certification in human resources at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Of her recent degrees and experience, Hodge said she feels "more skilled and more knowledgeable" for the selectman's seat. She said she's chosen to run again for the seat because "I really do love the town." Hodge grew up in Colchester and then raised a family of her own in town. She and her husband Bob have three children.

If elected, Hodge said she'd make changes in the way decisions are made. She explained she feels decisions have been made "in a vacuum" in recent years. With her degrees, Hodge said she has "a lot of skills around being able to analyze and develop long term plans using data – not just what's handy at the moment."

Prior to her term as first selectwoman, Hodge served on the Board of Education for five years. She was also a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission for two years, following her term as first selectwoman. Additionally, Hodge has served on the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) for 25 years, and served as its president for two of those years. She defines herself as an education advocate. Along with the national PTA, Hodge is a national trainer for community engagement and parent involvement in education.

If elected to fill the selectman's seat, Hodge said she has "several" goals. One includes "restoring some fiscal responsibility." She said tax increases over the last four years have been "huge."

"I really want to see us do some true long-term planning for facilities and vehicles," she furthered.

Additionally, Hodge said she would hope to "increase community engagement at all levels." When recalling her former stint as first selectman, Hodge said she opened her office monthly on Saturdays to meet with the public among other outreach goals. If elected, she said she's interested in doing that again.

Also, "transparency in government" would be another one of Hodge's focuses. In terms of economic development growth, Hodge explained she has a "different take" than the current method of bringing businesses to town.

"In order to get more businesses in town you need to make the current businesses happy," she explained.

Hodge added she'd also hope to solve issues at the senior center. She said she would like to provide a stand-alone center as a future initiative.

"I think it's time we treat our seniors with respect and give them a suitable place for them to meet and do their activities," she said.

Conclusively, Hodge views the first selectman role as a "leadership position."

"The first selectman has to be visible and accessible," she said. "That's very important to me. You can't be a leader and make decisions in a vacuum."

The candidate added she'd like to also "take responsibility for decisions" – an aspect of government she feels current administration in Colchester does not do. Hodge also spearheaded the creation of this year's Colchester Independent Party. She explained the CIP candidates are "running as a team."

* * *

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5.

Two Contenders Running for First Selectperson

by Elizabeth Bowling

While the Republicans aren't running anyone against her this year, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield is facing competition in her bid for a sixth straight term: American Independent Party candidate Lambros Lambrinides.

Bransfield, who has lived in Portland for 32 years, has served as first selectwoman since 2003.

"I enjoy local government and I enjoy dealing with the daily challenges to our town," the 58-year-old Democrat said. "I'm looking forward to working on the many projects we have underway in our town."

One "big project" that Bransfield said is ongoing is the Riverfront Project, for which the town has received many grants.

Those grants have gone toward improving Brownstone Avenue, installing and improving parking on Middlesex Avenue for the Riverfront Park as well as the Brownstone Quarries, connecting Brownstone to Middlesex Avenue, installing electricity, connecting Main Street to Riverfront Park, and improving sidewalks on Middlesex Avenue, Bransfield said.

Regarding the Riverfront Park, Bransfield said, "We're still looking at another grant to bring water and sewer to the park to bring in bathrooms."

The same grant – which Bransfield said the town will apply for this year – would bring improvements to the performance stage. Ultimately, with the grant, the town would increase usability and comfort in the park, she said.

Bransfield also touted the success of this year's summer concerts in Riverfront Park since the completion of the pavilion one year ago. She added that the park complements Brownstone Discovery Park across the street, with which the town has a contract.

Another important project for Bransfield is the installation of natural gas lines.

"We're coordinating installation of new natural gas lines throughout the town – specifically to town-owned buildings – because natural gas is substantially cheaper than oil right now," she

explained.

Thus far, natural gas lines are in at the senior center, the police department, the library, all of the schools, Town Hall, firehouse one and firehouse two.

She said she'd like to work with the community to see if the town can provide natural gas lines to other residencies or small businesses, for example.

According to Bransfield, the lines were installed for no cost to the town and are already being used in all of the schools and town hall. Other buildings will start using it this 2014 heating season.

She said the town can anticipate savings in heating costs.

"We know this season our costs will be less," she said.

Also regarding finances, Bransfield said Portland re-affirmed its bond rating this year – it got an AA3 bond rating – so the town re-issued bonds at a lower interest rate for the high school project. The total savings to the town is about \$900,000, according to Bransfield.

"That helps us budgetarily going forward," she said.

In addition to installing natural gas lines, the town is installing a fiber optic line, which, Bransfield said, "will improve our internet capacity for the schools as well as for the library and the town government."

According to Bransfield, the fiber optic installation is a cooperative project between the boards of education and selectmen, and should be completed by winter. She added that the project is "in-house."

"We are keeping great schools as a priority for us," she added.

Another priority, she said, is "making sure that we have good, outstanding public safety."



Bransfield

She furthered that public safety is "a very important function of local government."

Bransfield said she's also proud of the town-coordinated Solarize CT initiative, in which 40 residents got reasonably priced solar panels installed on their homes last year.

"We're always looking into green initiatives as we move forward," she furthered.

Other initiatives – not necessarily green – include "a number of economic development projects that were approved or need to be approved," Bransfield said.

For example, Portland expects a CVS pharmacy and additional gas stations and businesses to enter town. Also, many existing businesses are seeking improvements.

"There's a lot of things going on in our town and I look forward to working with the [businesses'] owners and the town's personnel in completing these projects."

In a concluding remark, Bransfield said, "I'm very eager to continue the work that I'm doing and hope that I'm successful Nov. 5."

Lambrinides ran for first selectman in 2009 as a write-in candidate, as well as in 2011 under the American Independent Party. This year he is running under the American Independent Party again.

Lambrinides has lived in Portland for 66 years – since he was 2 years old – with the exception of the four years he was in the Air Force. He is a retired electronics technician for Pratt and Whitney, plus he worked for his family's business – Middlesex Signs, which operated for 70 years – by building and installing signs, he said.

Lambrinides said he isn't pleased with Bransfield, who he said is "like a cheerleader who tells you how great things are."

"The only thing Mrs. Bransfield thinks is important is how Main Street looks," he furthered.

He said he ran for the position of first selectman four years ago, two years ago, and this year because "I didn't feel that she's running the

town properly."

For example, Lambrinides noted the roads, the water and sewer systems, tree trimming, and commercial banking.

"The roads are not being redone properly," he said regarding chip sealing, adding, "There's no plan."

Lambrinides said he would rather see roads resurfaced because "a lot of them are cracking" and a lot of water runs off on sidewalks.

"You're not going to do this overnight," he said about resurfacing town roads. "But nobody's taken the bull by the horns and started that."

He added that, if elected, he'd like to fix some leaks in the water system and upgrade the sewer system to some extent.

Lambrinides also said that in the past, the town did not trim trees as much as it should have and two years ago, he personally experienced a 68-hour power outage after a storm because of the lack of tree-trimming. However he admitted that "now there's more tree-trimming."

Another issue of concern for Lambrinides is the town's lack of a commercial bank, because "you should have a commercial bank in town for industry," he said.

Lambrinides said the town's only "big bank" – Bank of America – closed its doors last year and if elected, he'd like to get bring in another commercial bank.

"Voting for me is a better choice than going along with the crowd – the Democratic machine," Lambrinides concluded.



Lambrinides

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5. Voting will take place from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Portland Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave.

* * *

Meet the Board of Selectmen Candidates

by Elizabeth Bowling

Every selectman's term is up on the Portland Board of Selectmen and all six are running for re-election. They will be joined by one newcomer who is throwing his hat into the ring, too.

Each Democrat on the Democrat-controlled Board of Selectmen is running for re-election. They are: Kathy Richards, Frederick Knous, Mark Finkelstein and Brian Flood.

Kathy Richards



Kathy Richards

has lived in Portland for 46 years and has served on the Board of Selectmen for 10. She also has three years of experience on the Board of Education. Additionally, Richards is Portland's Democratic Town Committee chairwoman and a Portland High School alumna.

The decade-long member of the board is seeking re-election for continuity purposes.

"I'd like to continue to work with [incumbent First Selectwoman and fellow Democrat] Sue Bransfield and the current Board of Selectmen – we work well together," she said. "We work for the voters, not for any political party."

Richards said that if re-elected she would be particularly interested in bringing new businesses to town by making Portland a "friendly community that businesses would like to be part of."

Frederick Knous has lived in Portland for 32 years. He works as a consultant for David Evans and Associates Inc. in Hartford and has three years of experience on the Board of Selectmen. Prior to his time as a selectman, he was the chairman of the Economic Development Commission.

Knous said he's "well-aware of the programs that impact the town."

He said his background is in both the public and private sector and his job requires that he represent various businesses.

Regarding why he's running for re-election, he said, "I enjoy the process and I think I have a lot to contribute."

He added, "The current board, under [Bransfield], I think is dynamic."

He went on to call the current board a model "of how government should be." He added, "Our local government does what government is supposed to."

If re-elected, Knous said one of his priorities would be "making sure taxes are affordable. We

have to live within a budget."

Another one of Knous' priorities is the town's education system, which, he said, "provides a very good experience for the students and that has to continue."

He added that recruiting new businesses would be "crucial" and suggested a few improvements to make business recruitment possible, as well as help existing businesses.

Knous said the town's tree committee, which is a subcommittee of the Board of Selectmen, is working to improve the town's appearance and thus improving property value, which may attract businesses.

"The board should be discussing and meeting with other boards to explore ways that we can make things run more smoothly, ways that we can assist businesses."

One of the "other boards" he suggested working with was Planning and Zoning to implement better signage for businesses, as well as low pressure sewage lines off Route 66.

He also said working with other commissions, like Parks and Recreation, would offer more opportunities for passive recreational options in town. For example, he said, the town should look into providing parking to areas that would offer kayaking and canoeing opportunities.

Knous said that if elected, he'd like to put out a survey in an effort to get more input from residents.

Mark Finkelstein has lived in Portland his entire life – 67 years – and served on the Board of Selectmen for the past 11 of those years.

Finkelstein, a nursing home administrator for Hugh's Health and Rehabilitation Inc. in West Hartford, also used to be chairman of the Board of Finance.

He said volunteering on the Board of Selectmen is very important to him because that's the way he was raised. He said that, for his family, being involved and giving back is "in our DNA."

"One of my goals when I first got on the board was to try to mitigate the contentiousness that existed between the two parties," he said.

According to Finkelstein, the board met his initial goal.

"At this time we have a board that works very well together for the betterment of the town," he said. "There's very little politics involved."

He added that there is a "mutual respect" amongst the Board of Selectmen members.

If elected, Finkelstein said he would take particular interest in economic development, maintaining infrastructure, maintaining an excellent school system, keeping the community

safe, and operating the town as efficiently as possible in terms of finances, meaning he'd seek to keep taxes as low as possible.

Finkelstein praised the town for its department managers and staff, as well as its "excellent police and fire departments."

Finkelstein also praised Bransfield.

"I'm very proud to be running on her team," he said. "She's been an exemplary first selectperson."

Brian Flood is running for his fifth consecutive term on the Board of Selectmen.

Flood has lived in Portland for most of his 46 years. He and his brother own Flood Law Firm in Middle-town.

Flood said he's running for re-election "to serve the public." If elected, he said his major focus would be the town's water issue.

"I think we need to do quite a bit of research and investigate that," he said.

He also said he'd like to continue working with Bransfield.

"We want to follow Susan's leadership. She's turning this town around and making it a nicer place to live," he said.

Two incumbent Republicans – Ryan Curley and Carl Chudzik – are running for seats on the Board of Selectmen, along with one newcomer to town politics – Robert Taylor.

Ryan Curley, 26, is a lifelong resident of Portland and has two years of experience on the Board of Selectmen. He is also an accountant for Laz Park-ing.

Curley said he's running for re-election because "there's still a lot that I want to accomplish in the town."

For example, if re-elected he said he'd like to work on business infrastructure – specifically, he'd look for ways to fix the water system in town, which currently runs on a deficit.

Curley, who is a member of the board's Water and Sewer subcommittee, stressed the importance of getting a new water infrastructure on Route 66 to "draw new businesses."

He added, "A lot of these places won't come if you don't have the water to support them."

Curley said he'd also like to see the park proposal for Route 17 go through, as well as bathroom installments in Riverfront Park.

Carl Chudzik is a real estate broker and the owner of Chudzik Realty – a family business in Rocky Hill that he's owned since 1988.

The Portland resident of nearly 30 years has

served on the Board of Selectmen for the past six years.

Despite serving three terms already, Chudzik said he is seeking more time on the board to ensure that more gets accomplished.

"I think there's a lot of work that still has to be done," he said. "It just takes a while to get everything done."

Chudzik said he supports the progress of parks in town and would like to see park development to fruition.

Regarding park development, he said, "When I started [on the Board of Selectmen], that was the sort of thing I wanted to see done. I want to be a part of it and continue what we're doing."

Another priority for Chudzik, if re-elected, would be to bring in new businesses by developing and working on infrastructure with regards to water and sewer.

Overall, Chudzik's main concern is the quality of life for the people that live in Portland, as well as the generations to come.

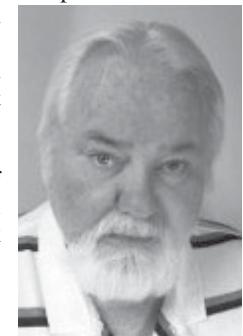
"I'm excited for the future for the town of Portland," he said. "This is a beautiful community."

Robert Taylor, 26, is a newcomer to town politics but has resided in Portland his entire life. He is a Walgreens store manager in West Hartford.

Taylor said he is seeking a seat on the Board of Selectmen because "I want to do my part to help out the community and I think I can make a significant impact on the town."

Taylor said that, if elected, one of his priorities would be "revitalizing the town" by bringing in more businesses, and more people to support those businesses.

He said he'd also like to see continued improvements to Main Street – for example, more parking options because "parking is always an issue," he said.



Carl Chudzik



Robert Taylor

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5. Voting will take place from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Portland Senior Center, 7 Waverly Ave.

Meet the RHAM Board Candidates

by Geeta Schrayer

Four Hebron candidates are seeking to fill three available seats on the RHAM Board of Education next month; the two Marlborough candidates are uncontested incumbents.

In Hebron, **Kevin Williams**, who started on the board last October after the resignation of Brenda Milhomme, is looking to retain his seat for a full term.

Williams, a Republican, grew up in town and was a 1983 RHAM graduate. He currently resides in Hebron with his wife and has two daughters in college who also graduated from RHAM, and two more daughters currently in RHAM Middle School.

In addition to currently serving on the RHAM board, Williams is an active member of Gilead Congregational Church.

Williams said this week the initial year he's spent on the board has mostly been a learning experience. During that time he said he began to get "a working understanding of the board, how it operates, and what things are and are not in the scope of the board."

"I feel like I've just now started to gain traction in terms of what I can impact," he said. "We've started some good things I think need to be continued and need some furthering hands."

Williams added the main area of focus for the board should be the communication process. The district has made some jumps over the past year, he explained, with the launch of a new district website, the use of PowerSchool which lets an individual look at different aspects of a student's school career and enhancing the school's AlertNow system.

"The focus moving forward and the drive if I serve is a greater two-way communication process with the community and the district," Williams furthered. "We push information out, now we need to get information in."

Williams said during his time on the board he felt he'd been able to demonstrate his willingness to listen and consider the opinions of a wide variety of people.

"I'm willing to make sure there's a fair and open dialogue and exchange of thoughts," he said. "I certainly don't claim to have all the answers – no one does – so the more input [there is] the more ideas and ways to solve issues faced by the district there will be."

Republicans Val Dalton and Rich Jacobson and Democrat Joe O'Connor are newcomers looking for seats.

Dalton has lived in town for 14 years with her husband and five children – two of whom are RHAM High School students.

She has worked as a pediatric nurse, was president of the Hebron baseball league for seven years, and is currently president of TriCounty Baseball – experiences she said would be helpful as part of the board.

Through her involvement with baseball, "You really have to work a lot with the schools especially with the older kids using RHAM fields," she said. "So I have a lot of experience working with the board, the superintendent and the maintenance department."

Dalton went on to say she was "very interested" in the fields, calling them the current "hot button."

Over the summer, the athletic fields and grounds at the school became a topic of much discussion after a group of parents expressed concern over their condition and said they were poorly maintained and unsafe for students.

According to some of the individuals involved, including candidate O'Connor, the board didn't respond with solutions quick enough and made it difficult for the group – dubbed the RHAM Field Improvement Committee – to form a volunteer clean-up day. The board however, said the delays were due to union issues.

Eventually, the group contacted state officials about the issue and state senators Steve Cassano and Cathy Osten and state Rep. Pam Sawyer toured the fields in July, which helped propel

the field clean-up day – which took place in August.

"I have lived and breathed the field situation for years," Dalton explained, saying she wanted them to remain a priority.

"I realize there are other things we're dealing with but I want the fields taken better care of," she furthered.

Since her children are now older, Dalton said she felt now was the perfect time to get involved with the board. She said she considered education "most important" and society needs to focus more on educating students.

Dalton said it was important students graduate RHAM with the tools they'll need to face an economy that isn't the greatest.

"It's not easy," she stated. "It was a lot easier when I went through [school]."

She added there needed to be more of a connection between the constituents in town and the school.

"People need to get out and go to those meetings and find out what's going on," she said. "I think there needs to be accountability and transparency."

Dalton said she wanted people to know she was a person who likes to listen and hear everyone's point of view. She said she wasn't the type to "bowl over everybody and do what I want do to."

"I will do what is best for the towns – not me, not my party, but what is best for the towns," she stated.

Jacobson has been a Hebron resident for seven years with his wife and three kids – two who are still in the RHAM system.

Jacobson has a degree in computer engineering and said he has been heavily involved with youth in town through various sports – such as baseball and soccer – and Boy Scouts. He said he's attended many board meetings lately and was involved with the RHAM clean-up day.

Like Dalton, Jacobson said part of the reason he was looking to become a part of the board was the fields. Over the summer, he explained, he was exposed to the board through the planning of the clean-up day. He said the process was very difficult.

"We saw a lot of issues on the board where there seems to be very poor communication and poor paying attention to some of the financial aspects," he said, adding he thought there was a lack of oversight regarding what's going on in the schools, particularly in the facilities area.

Jacobson said some of the biggest issues the schools currently face are "definitely" school maintenance – "or a lack thereof" – as well as finances and changes in technology and education.

If elected to the board, Jacobson said some of the changes he'd like to see would be increased communication with the voters and getting more information out via the internet to help them understand the budget.

"There definitely needs to be a maintenance plan in place for both short-term and long-term," he furthered. "We definitely need to get the business manager hired so that we have someone watching over the finances at the school."

Jacobson said the other thing the board should be looking at is "the future, and where education is going."

"It's time for the board to start asking some tough questions," Jacobson concluded. "Right now they have the reputation of sort of a rubber stamp board. More questions need to be asked. I'm definitely not afraid. I'm known to ask a lot of questions like I've been doing over the last few months."

Like Jacobson and Dalton, **O'Connor** also mentioned the fields as a driving force behind his decision to run. O'Connor has lived in town with his wife and three children for 10 years. Two of his kids attend RHAM Middle School while one is at the high school.

O'Connor works as the director of aviation for a corporate flight department in Massachusetts and has been a professional pilot for close to 30 years. Although O'Connor hasn't held public office to date, he said he was running for the RHAM board because he felt it was time for a change in leadership and a new direction for the board.

"I believe that it is the primary responsibility of the Board of Education to work with the

community and listen to its concerns, especially when those concerns are focused on the safety of our children" O'Connor said, referring in part to the aforementioned situation with the athletic fields at the school.

O'Connor said as a result of the lack of maintenance on the fields and grounds, parents and community members "became entrenched in a negative dialogue" with the school board and superintendent. O'Connor furthered this led to contacting various state legislators to get the desired results.

Results which "we should have gotten from the RHAM [board] and the superintendent if they were listening to the community's concerns in the first place," he stated.

In addition, O'Connor said he wanted to join the board because of the lack of communication and respect he felt the current board displayed toward one another. O'Connor said there seemed to be some personal agendas and if he were elected "that will not happen."

Although O'Connor mentioned the board does a good job providing "a solid education" to students and preparing them for college with Advanced Placement courses, he said there were many areas that need to be addressed. Like Jacobson, O'Connor mentioned filling the business manager position as vital. Without one, he said taxpayers aren't being provided the level of transparency and accountability they should be.

If elected, O'Connor said he planned to focus on the Common Core Curriculum, teacher evaluations and ensuring the district's \$73 million investment – the schools – is properly maintained. At the same time, he wanted senior citizens in the community to know he understood what it was like to live on a fixed income since his own parents are dealing with the same issues, and he knows no one wants their taxes to keep increasing.

O'Connor said he'll never make a decision without having all the information first, will take full responsibility for his actions, represent the community with integrity "and strive to reach consensus on difficult issues."

Over in Marlborough, Democrat Manny Catarino and Republican Judy Benson-Clarke are current members looking to return to the board for another term. Both members filled vacancies from resigning members. Catarino joined the board in February, while Benson-Clarke became a board member last September.

Catarino has lived in town for over 15 years. He resides with his wife and two daughters, one who attends RHAM Middle School, the other who attends Marlborough Elementary School.

Catarino said his background working for financial firms for over 20 years helps him address the fiscal and policy issues facing the board.

Since he's been on the board for less than a year, he added he wanted the opportunity to continue serving.

"I am at the point where I feel comfortable with the processes the board must follow as well as having a good working rapport with fellow board members and the administration," he said. "As a concerned parent, I want to be involved in the decision making as it relates to budgetary items to ensure the quality of the education



Williams

and our students' safety is not adversely affected."

Catarino added safety and the budget were the two biggest issues facing the school. He said trying to implement new state mandates, provide adequate security and maintain a high-quality education while keeping budget increases to a minimum was a "difficult challenge."

In addition, he said improving communication between parents and the schools is an area many people have expressed interest in.

"At the end of the day," Catarino concluded, "it is about being an advocate for our children and community to ensure we can provide the best possible education within the confines of our spending limits."

Benson-Clarke has also lived in Marlborough with her husband for 15 years. The couple has two daughters, and Benson-Clarke said she and her husband "believe deeply in local public schools."

Her husband Bob is on the Marlborough Board of Education and Benson-Clarke said they both have a love of learning and a respect for education. In addition to her involvement on the board, Benson-Clarke explained she and her husband are active in their daughters' educations and supplement what they learn in school with various activities, such as a home school team with Future Problem Solvers that made it to the state competition this year, participation in the 2013 Invention Convention as well as the use of a computer-based world language program.



Benson-Clarke

Benson-Clarke said her hardest, most rewarding and important job is being a mother, but professionally she said she was blessed to be in the field of education. She has a master's degree in teaching, a sixth-year degree in administration, a doctoral degree in special needs and exceptionality and her superintendent's endorsement.

She said one of the issues currently facing schools is the number of mandates that need to be met.

"I worry that our schools will be so busy implementing all of the old and new mandates that they will miss important work such as fostering creativity and innovation in our children," she stated. "It is a huge concern of mine and it is one of the reasons that my husband and I work so hard to supplement our daughters' educations."

Benson-Clarke went on to say she was also worried magnet schools were drawing money away from local public schools, meaning they have to do more with less.

"It is not a sustainable formula," she said. "I worry that our hard-working teachers and administrators will have more tasks given to them than are humanly possible to meet."

Benson-Clarke explained she wanted to continue on the board because she had been impressed with the school, staff, board and entire RHAM community. She added her goal for the next four years would be to listen more and work collaboratively to help ensure the students are emotionally and intellectually ready for the future workforce.

"Education is too important for politics and we need to work together to face the incredible challenges that face us," she said.

* * *

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5, and voting runs from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. In Hebron, voting takes place at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St. In Marlborough, voting takes place at Marlborough Elementary School, 25 School Dr.

No Contest in School Board Race

by Geeta Schrayer

Election Day is little more than a week away, which means the makeup of the local Board of Education will soon change. But with three uncontested Democrats vying for the seats of three Republicans who aren't seeking re-election, there's no need to wonder who's replacing whom.

When current chair Kathy Shea and members Will Moorcroft and Tina Blinn leave in November, their seats will be filled by Ramon Bieri, Carol Connolly and Erica Bromley.

Bieri has lived in town with his wife and two daughters since 2008. Currently, one of his daughters is in Hebron Elementary School, while the other attends RHAM Middle School.

Bieri is owner of AgeWell Health LLC, which provides rehabilitation and medical services and presently serves as secretary for the Hebron Democratic Town Committee. He has served two terms as board chair with the University City Education Foundation and as board member with the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Kinesiotherapy Association. He has also been a volunteer soccer coach in town.

Bieri said this week he was interested in serving on the board because of how important he considers education.

"I believe strongly that education is the foundation for a strong society," he said. For Bieri, one of the biggest issues the schools face is the budget. He said it was important to maintain



Ramon Bieri

strong relations with the community and the schools and an understanding about the budget and what it takes to maintain a top quality school.

Bieri added Hebron had some of the lowest spending per student in the state yet "we provide an excellent, top quality education here."

Since November will mark the start of his first term, Bieri said he hopes to learn citizens' concerns and what they want for the school system. In addition, he wants to help teachers and administrators continue to provide the best education they can at current costs.

"I bring to the board open-mindedness and dedication and a strong belief in our educational system," he said.

Bromley, who works as the director of youth services in Manchester and has previously directed youth services in Windsor Locks, said she'll bring a "unique perspective" to the board, including her knowledge of both municipal government and the education system and how they can work together.

Bromley has lived in Hebron for 10 years with her husband and their son. In addition to her job, she serves as vice president of the Connecticut Youth Services Association and is a member of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance Steering Committee. She has also served on the RHAM Youth Lacrosse Association and is involved with AHM Youth Services.

Speaking on why she was running for the



Erica Bromley

board, Bromley said she had a strong desire to continue to strengthen Hebron's school system and, like Bieri, improve communication between the community and the schools.

"I want the community to fully understand and support our school system and hope we can use new approaches and new ideas to get that support," she stated.

Bromley said strengthening communication was what she considered one of the bigger issues. In addition, she considers it important for the schools to be accountable by showing how they're successful and how they're helping students succeed – not just through test scores.

"I am also a huge supporter of looking at the 'whole child' and believe that all aspects of child development – educational, social and emotional – should be addressed consistently and equally," she said.

Bromley said she wants the board to work together toward common goals, be transparent, support the teachers and show the community the different ways the schools are succeeding. She added she's spent her life working with kids and giving back to the community and feels strongly about using creative methods to help foster student growth.

"I see the need to cultivate all aspects of the child," she said. "It is critical to include these components and infuse them into our schools."

Along with her "unique perspective," Bromley said she'll bring the passion and desire needed for growth along with creativity "through experience and a fresh outlook."

Connolly could not be reached for comment on this story, but in her biography from the Democratic Town Committee website she is described as "committed to serving the Hebron community."

She works as an in-house attorney at Pratt & Whitney and has previously been assistant attorney general for the District of Columbia, an adjunct lecturer at the Catholic University of America and Columbus School of Law, a public defender in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and a special assistant to the press department in the White House.

She lives in Hebron with her husband and two sons, is a member of Church of the Holy Family and vice president of the Hebron Education Foundation.

In her online biography, Connolly said she believes in the three Ts: trust, teamwork and transparency. She said she pledges to promote a world-class education for students, work with the administration to ensure the schools are safe, promote early childhood education, support teachers and paraprofessionals and invest in new technology through grant funding.

When the above candidates step into their roles as board members, there will still be one remaining vacancy on the board due to the resignation of republican Dominic Marino last month. Those interested in filling the position were asked to submit letters of interest to Town Manager Andrew Tierney at Town Hall, 15 Gilead St., by today, Oct. 25.

* * *

Voting takes place Tuesday, Nov. 5, at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church Street, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m.

Quiet Election for Selectmen

by Geeta Schrayer

When voters head to the polls Nov. 5, they'll have the option to vote for two members of the Board of Selectmen. What they won't have to do however, is make a choice between anyone because the race is uncontested. This means the return of incumbents Dan Larson, a Republican, and Mark Stuart, a Democrat.

Larson has lived in town since 1978 and has been involved in various capacities since shortly after his arrival. He's served on the Board of Finance, remains involved with the fire department as the deputy fire marshal, and has been the burning official and fish and game constable. He has also been president of the Amston Lake Tax District and has owned his own electrical business for over 30 years.

As a result of his experiences, Larson said "I have a very good flavor of Hebron and what Hebron is and what Hebron stands for."

Larson will be starting his second term as a selectman, and said he plans to use his experiences along with "common sense and logic" in all decisions and will "try to weigh out the pros and cons."

For Larson, continuing on with the board has a lot to do with what he considers his obligation to be involved in the community.

"I understand people do have lives outside the community," he said, "but at the same time, it's important to be a part of our community. That's one of the reasons I've always tried to stay active [in town]. I just always felt it was a responsibility."



Dan Larson

As Larson digs into his second term, he said one of the biggest issues the town will face going forward is "the never ending effects on our budget by the state."

He said in many instances the town's hands are tied due to unfunded mandates and fewer grant offerings.

"The state is giving us less on virtually every front it seems," Larson said, "so what we're having to do is try to do more with less in a never-ending battle."

Although he said he'd like to see some changes on the national and state level, Larson said he thought things in town were going "as well as can be expected with these economic times."

"Hebron is a very solid community and we're very fortunate," he said. "Hebron is still a great place to move to [and] raise our families."

Along with Larson, returning for another term will be Stuart, who has been a resident for 28 years. In addition to two prior terms with the selectmen, Stuart has also served on the Board of Finance.

He said this week he's spent that time "helping to oversee the town's management and the

direction of the town."

"I think we've done well in the last few years" he said, even though "the economy has been tough."

Stuart explained some of the issues the town faces include the reliance on money from property taxes, especially since sources from the state are decreasing and promises made to towns for funding don't always come to fruition.

"The legislature makes a commitment but then puts the money in the general fund which gives them the ability to do whatever they want with it," Stuart said. "So we see at the state level a growing level of expenditures, and the return to some of the smaller towns is limited."

In addition, Stuart explained the town's educational cost sharing (ECS) dollars are decreasing.

"Somebody could look at the raw dollar number and say 'no, no we got a little more,' but once you make that adjustment [for inflation] – no we haven't. And our costs continue to go up," he said, adding programs are cut or not expanded in response.

Moving forward, Stuart said he thought there would be a continued focus on economic development in town. Although there were some setbacks, such as the town's geography, which often sends residents to neighboring Glastonbury and Colchester to shop, he said he was optimistic about certain opportunities like the Village Green.

"I'm optimistic that the developer is going

to be able to have movement over the next four years in that property," he said.

Stuart also stated he'd like to see the town's investment in the Capital Improvement Plan program expand because there are ancient facilities in town that need to be kept up-to-date and roads that needed more maintaining.

"We do a really good job on the money we have but we have not increased CIP in the last few years," he said.

Stuart added the current board makeup works "fairly well" together, and even if a member disagrees on an issue, once a vote is made the board moves on united.

"There's no animosity," he said. "Once the vote is made we move on together. There's a lot of experience at the table, so I believe the town is going to continue to be in good hands with this Board of Selectmen."

And with the seats of Stuart and Larson guaranteed, the town will remain in those hands for at least the next two years.

Voting will take place Tuesday, Nov. 5, at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St., from 6 a.m.-8 p.m.



Mark Stuart

15 Candidates for 7 Town Council Seats

by Elizabeth Bowling

East Hampton Town Council candidates are offering voters plenty of options in this year's municipal elections. All seven Town Council seats are available and 15 candidates are seeking election – five are Democrats, five are Republicans and five are members of the Chatham Party.

For the Democrats, two incumbent Town Council members are up for re-election: Barbara Moore and George Pfaffenbach.

Barbara Moore is the chairwoman of the Democratic Town Committee, a past-president of the East Hampton Rotary Club, a past-chairwoman of the Board of Finance, and the owner of Chatham Caterers in town.

Moore, who has lived in East Hampton for 43 years, has four years of experience on the Town Council and is seeking another term for a number of reasons.

"I find that being on [the Town Council] has been a big part of my life and has certainly enriched my life," she said. "I've made a lot of decisions that have been very difficult over the years."

She noted that those decisions are not "snap decisions." Rather, she said, she puts a lot of thought into them.

"I'm a person that likes to think things through," she added.

If re-elected, she said local businesses would be one of her priorities.

"I'd like to expand the economic goals of our town. Our small businesses could use a boost," she said. "I would like to concentrate on EDC [the Economic Development Commission] – that commission is now in a place where they can start helping larger businesses."

As for smaller businesses, she said there should be better documentation so that people know these businesses exist and can support them.

Another priority for Moore would be the school system, she said.

"I have always, always supported the school system," Moore said. "I think that our school system is great and that it's moving forward."

But regarding getting technology in schools for five years from now, she said, "We need to put a long-term plan in place."

George Pfaffenbach is a former member of the Board of Finance, a former secretary of the Rotary Club, and currently works as a realtor for Berkshire Hathaway Home Services.

Pfaffenbach has lived in East Hampton since 1978 and served on the Town Council for the past two years. He said he's running for re-election because there is more to do.

"I think there's a lot of things that need to be done in town. I'm a big proponent of the municipal water system," he said. "I think the need is apparent."

Regarding issues like the water system and improvements to the police department and fire department, he said, "You can't keep putting stuff off. We have to make these infrastructure improvements. To do nothing puts us backwards."

He added that he's not sure if residents are "truly aware of the condition of our police department and fire department."

Another specific issue Pfaffenbach said he's concerned about is the general well being of Lake Pocotopaug.

Finally, Pfaffenbach said "continuity" is important to the town. "I think it's time that the town come together and go back to two parties," he said.

The remaining three Democratic candidates are Tom O'Brien, Philip Visintainer and Kevin Reich.

Tom O'Brien has lived in East Hampton for nine years and is the owner of Blue Heron Travel in town.

He has been a member of the Board of Finance for almost four years; he's the treasurer of the Democratic Town Committee; and he serves on the Middlesex Chamber of Com-

merce, as well as the Board of Directors of State Police Credit Union.

"Being on the Board of Finance, I learned a lot about the workings of how the town operates," he said.

But now he's seeking to change gears from the Board of Finance to the Town Council – an elected board that he feels he is well suited for because of his background in public safety (he worked for 35 years with the state police and 25 years with the state Department of Public Safety).

O'Brien listed public safety, the fire department and the lack of water as his major concerns because "all these things put together would bring economic development," he said.

He also said, "A big issue is the quality of life."

Philip Visintainer, now retired, has lived in East Hampton for nearly his entire 64 years of life. He was a member of the East Hampton volunteer fire department for 53 years and served as an officer for 35 – for 20 of which he served as chief. He was also the fire marshal, a paid position for 22 years.

He also served as East Hampton's Zoning Enforcement Officer and is still active in his church, Haddam Neck Congregational Church.

Before Visintainer's career at the fire department, he worked his way up the ladder at J.C. Barton Company over the course of 26 years – at first he was a tool and die maker, then he became foreman and then plant manager.

Visintainer has been retired since 2011 and he's now ready to run for an elected position for the first time.

He said he's running "to try to contribute to the community. I wanted to see if I can make a difference in the operations of town."

He added that he's seeking "more harmonious actions" on the board.

"I'm very interested in the commercial growth of our town and doing what we can to attract and support that endeavor," he said.

Another major concern for Visintainer would be the town's water system – an issue that he said would require "clear-headed thinking."

He added, "It's not going to get any less expensive if we delay it."

Kevin Reich bought a home in East Hampton in 1990, moved in the following year, and has lived in town ever since. He is currently the part-time operations manager of East Hampton schools but will retire Oct. 31.

Reich began his 10-year teaching career at East Hampton schools in 1972. After that, he worked in the town's superintendent's office for 30 years. In the course of those 30 years, he served as assistant superintendent, acting superintendent, director of administrative services and curriculum, and Board of Education business manager.

Reich never ran for public office until now; he said he's running this year because "the town of East Hampton has been very good to me and now that I'm [retiring] I'll have more time on my hands."

He said his "working knowledge" and "working relationships" within the town, as well as his ability to work cooperatively regardless of party affiliation, would be assets if elected.

"My goal is simply to do what's good for the community," he said.

Based on what residents told him during his door-to-door campaigning, that includes long-term planning, an extended water system, more businesses in town and a focus on education, he said.

He said if elected he would work on "putting together a strategic five-year plan," bringing in more businesses, giving children "the very best education possible," and "working

cooperatively with the Board of Finance and the Board of Education."

In a concluding remark, he said, "We need to begin planning for the future."

On the Republican side, the Town Council currently has one Republican member and he is seeking re-election.

Incumbent **Ted Hintz Jr.** is the president-elect of East Hampton's Rotary Club, a former chairman of the Board of Finance, and a member of CERT (Community Emergency Response Team).

The certified financial planner and certified public accountant has lived in East Hampton for 43 years and has served on the Town Council for one term thus far.

Regarding why he's running for re-election, he said, "I think I have been the voice of the people. I think I have been a reasoning voice. I like serving the citizens of East Hampton and would like to continue serving the citizens of East Hampton."

Hintz said that if re-elected, he like to see a vision statement put into place, as well as a strategic and financial plan.

"Our town desperately needs a plan or a vision statement," he said. "No plan is ever complete without some kind of end goal."

The first step to creating the vision, would be "to get townspeople together to find out what they want East Hampton to look like," he said. One way he said this could be done is through community meetings.

Regarding his specific priorities, Hintz said, "I can't say one thing is more important than another," because he doesn't know what the community prioritizes.

The four Republican candidates seeking their first election to the Town Council are Patience Anderson, Mark Philhower, Ray Zatorski and Jarod Bushey.

Patience Anderson is currently a four-year member of the Board of Finance, a VFW Ladies Auxiliary Officer and a member of the Color Guard.

Anderson has lived in East Hampton for about eight years, and said she decided to run for Town Council because "I think we've done a lot of great work on the Board of Finance but I'm ready for another great challenge. I have a passion for working for our community and trying to make some things better."

If elected, she said, "I hope to bring some of my enthusiasm to the table and bring some of my ability to work with other people."

Anderson said her priority would be to create a long-term vision for the town based on what residents want. A long-term plan would mean less "knee-jerk reactions" from town leaders, she said, specifically on the Town Council. Rather, decisions would be made based on "a bigger plan."

"I think that there's a need to connect with the residents better. I want to work on the things that are important to them because that's, in fact, the whole purpose of public service," she said. "We need to have more open communications with our townspeople."

That communication could be as simple as getting the town website in better shape, Anderson suggested. She also said she'd like to see more open forums.

"Part of being a leader is educating the public how to navigate through a process to get your voice heard," she said.

Anderson said she'd also like Town Council meetings to be taped so townspeople can know what happened without having to attend.

Anderson concluded that she wants to see East Hampton grow, while keeping a "small-town feel" and keeping the town "an affordable place to live."

Mark Philhower is the chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission; he has served on the commission for over 20 years and has been chairman for more than 10 non-consecutive years. He served one term on the Town Council in 1999 but didn't seek re-election until now, because during that two-year term, he said, "we spent more money than any-

one before us."

But he said he thinks this go-around would be different because "[the Republicans] have a very conservative group and experienced group."

The 53-year-old said he's nearly a lifelong resident of East Hampton. He's a self-employed mechanical contractor. He owns Tech Unlimited, a 30-year heating and air conditioning business based out of East Hampton.

He said he's running for a seat on the council because he's not pleased with the way the Chatham Party ran the council over the past two years.

"I did not like the way the town was getting torn apart by the present council," he said. "They have this nasty habit of taking good people off the Planning and Zoning Commission and other commissions."

He also had noted his displeasure with the use of the school district's automatic phone system to remind only certain members of the community to vote for the high school renovation project.

If elected, Philhower said his priority would be to maintain the budget. He said he would also like to review the roads and make sure the public works director has a plan to maintain and upgrade roads as needed, "rather than letting them fall by the wayside."

He also said he would "go through some of the departments and make sure we're running as efficiently as we should be."

Ray Zatorski is the former chairman and now the vice-chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission. He also served on Board of Finance for about a year and the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency for about a decade. He has lived in East Hampton for 26 years.

Regarding why he's running for a seat on the Town Council, Zatorski said, "I'd like fiscal responsibility and I would like not just cooperation, but consensus."

He explained that he'd like to see consensus among members of the Town Council, as well as between the Town Council and other boards and commissions.

He added, "As soon as something is done in Town Council, it affects a lot of other people."

Zatorski also said that if elected he'd like to see two long-term plans.

He explained that the first long-term plan would address issues that would come up within the next five to 10 years, like the high school renovation project – which will require planning for snow removal and infrastructure, like school buses going in and out.

The other plan, he said, would look beyond a 10-year scope. Some items to consider for this plan would be roads, power, gas lines, maintenance trucks, fire equipment, buildings like town hall, and water issues.

"I would like to have a shared vision of where East Hampton should be going," he said. "We really need to decide what we want to do and where we want to go."

Once the town can prioritize its interests, he said, the next step would be to go over the budget.

Jarod Bushey is a mechanical engineer at Sikorsky Aircraft, where he worked for nine years. He moved to East Hampton about a year ago and thinks having a seat on the Town Council would offer him an "opportunity to guide and shape the town."

"Since [my wife and I are] settling down here in East Hampton I want to be involved in shaping it," Bushey said of his first time running for public office. "I'm getting more and more involved the longer that I'm here and I hope to give back as much as I can."

Bushey said his priority, if elected, would be to "create a united, common vision" for the town.



Philhower



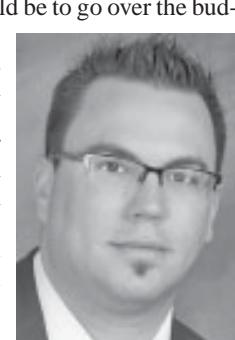
Hintz



Anderson



Zatorski



Bushey

"As a general theme, my goal is to help to create a vision for where we want the town to go," he said, noting that the current majority on the council – the Chatham Party – has imposed its own agenda. But Bushey said residents "deserve to have better representation."

"I'm committed to working with the council, whatever the makeup turns out to be after the election... regardless of affiliation," he said. "I'm willing to work across party lines."

Each of the four incumbent Chatham Party members on the seven-person, Chatham Party-controlled Town Council is running for re-election.

Chairwoman of the Town Council **Sue Weintraub** has lived in East Hampton since 1989 and is running for her fourth consecutive term on the council. She also has experience on the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Streetscape Committee.

Since 1982, she has been the owner of Weintraub & Company, a marketing agency.

In looking back on the past two years, Weintraub saw many accomplishments via the Town Council including the hire of the new town manager, new police chief, new superintendent, new public works director, and the high school renovation project.

She said, "In this administration, we've made so much progress and we're at a very critical crossroads. This election is going to determine if we keep going forward or if we're going to go back to the way things were."

Referencing the Chatham Party's majority role on the Town Council, she added, "We need to continue to build on the leadership that we've provided and the stability and to continue the priorities of this current administration."

If re-elected, Weintraub said she would focus on the fire and police departments because "if we can't provide public safety for everyone in our community, we failed."

Additional work that still needs to be done, she said, involves bringing natural gas to town, bringing water to the village center, reviewing the transfer station, and continuing to improve roads, sidewalks and bridges.

She also noted that the Town Council will need to appoint members to the newly-established Agricultural Commission and Public Safety Facilities Committee.

Weintraub said that during her door-to-door campaigning, residents reaffirmed for her that "we still need to work on reducing government spending where we can."

But she said the current Town Council is already looking into it; at the council's direction, the town manager has hired a consultant to conduct an organizational evaluation of all town departments and staffing to "make sure we are as lean as we can be" while still providing the staffing necessary for the town, Weintraub said.

She added, "We need to always look at our infrastructure and facilities to see where we can consolidate and make inroads for the future."

Weintraub stressed that, if re-elected, she would "strive to always improve the quality of life for every resident in town."

Kyle Dostaler is the chairman of the Chatham Party and has served on the Town Council from 2005 to 2007, and again from 2011 to 2013. He is running for his second consecutive term, but third term total.

Dostaler has lived in East Hampton since 1998 and is the chief technologist and interactive web director for MAD Communications.

Generally, Dostaler said, "I want to see compromise and progress continue for the town. I want to see that at the Town Council level."

But more specifically, Dostaler said, "Going forward, we need to address our public safety facilities and infrastructure needs for water, natural gas and our roads. We also have to work on improving our technology infrastructure to increase services and decrease cost to the taxpayer."

He added, "We need to continue to support the town manager and police chief however we can."

Regarding improvements to technology, Dostaler said that installing fiber optics is "already in motion" and so is the installation of a solar array at Memorial Elementary School.

Additionally, he said he'd like to bring natural gas into town because currently there are no natural gas options.

Dostaler also said, "We need to continue with our staff audit and ensure that that is completed."

Glenn Suprono has been an East Hampton resident for 32 years and is running for his second term on the Town Council, on which he is currently the vice-chairman. He is also the general manager at Devine Hydraulics Inc.

Asked why he's running for re-election, Suprono said, "We're not done."

If re-elected Suprono said he'd like to see the police department in "a better facility." He suggested budgeting in "some expansion or maybe the acquisition of a new building."

"It needs to be done," he said, noting that it would need to start with, for example, the assembly of a building committee.

Essentially, Suprono said his priority would be "to make things better for the town. We want to continue to progress forward," which has been the town's direction for the past two years, according to Suprono.

He said the Chatham Party does not play "dirty politics," and he hopes the townspeople see that.

He added, "Some of the sitting [Republican and Democrat] councilors are more antagonistic than we ever want to be."

Incumbent Derek Johnson is seeking his third term on the council. The East Hampton resident since 2004 has been an economics professor at the University of Connecticut for over 10 years.

Reflecting on his time on the Town Council, he said, "I think that this last term there've been some significant milestones that we've accomplished."

Specifically, he noted the hiring of the new town manager and the approval of the high school renovation project.

He said his time thus far has been "rewarding" and is a reflection of what can happen with strong leadership and stability.

According to Johnson, issues that "we need to tackle" in the upcoming term are "sources of water with respect to the village center," as well as ensuring "appropriate stewardship for making sure that the financing of the high school renovation project is done within the wishes of the town."

The fifth Chatham Party candidate is **Angela Sarahina**. She lived in East Hampton "off and on" her entire life – 50 years. She said she volunteers and helps people whenever she can; for example, she helps people prepare for storms. She is also a member of the CERT team and the Haddam Neck Fair Association.

This year she is running for a seat on the Town Council for a second time, after she was not elected in 2011.

"I believe I have a lot to offer the town," she said. "The last two years the Chatham Party has moved the town forward a lot and done some really wonderful things and I would like to help them move forward."

Specifically, Sarahina said she'd like to see the police department and fire department in better facilities. Additionally, she likes to see the Agricultural Commission "get up and running" because "this should be a Right to Farm town," she said.

If elected, Sarahina said she would "make decisions that are right for the community and not just a few."

* * *

Elections are Tuesday, Nov. 5, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at East Hampton High School.



Suprono



Weintraub



Johnson



Sarahina

East Hampton Town Council Moves Ahead with CHS Water

by Elizabeth Bowling

Though it wasn't on the agenda of Tuesday's Town Council meeting, the matter of the development of 13 Summit St. was brought up by two residents during public comment.

Essentially, the proposed plan by East Hampton resident Haim Zahavi – who was not at Tuesday's meeting – is to develop a condominium complex at 13 Summit St.

Zahavi's plan has been in the works for about two years; his request for access to the village center water system was submitted this summer but still hasn't gotten the go-ahead.

According to discussions from previous Town Council meetings, the town operates the village center water system, and that system currently has 7,000 gallons of excess water. Zahavi is seeking 6,625 gallons of water for his development, which would feature 29 condominium units and an office space.

Cindy Ruth, the chairwoman of the Economic Development Committee, spoke in support of the proposed development.

"Mr. Zahavi is extremely upset," she said. "He feels as if the town doesn't really want this project."

Speaking to the council members, Ruth said, "I realize that you guys are afraid of giving up the last of the water but...we do need to partner with [Zahavi] on water."

She added, referring to Zahavi, "He's been paying for the attorneys; he's been paying for the architect; he's been paying all along. We need to do something to work with him."

She said Zahavi might be the town's last chance to bring the village center to its full potential.

"The key to revitalizing the village center is getting people down there and creating a neighborhood and that means having people live down there and that's what he's going to do," she said. "If we chase him away, our chances of getting another [developer] to come in with their own money to do something like this – I don't know."

Ruth added that if Zahavi walks away from the property, he would be leaving the town with "a blighted property on our hands."

Ruth, on a grander scale, concluded, "We need to solve the water problem. We need to bring more water to the village center."

Also during public comment, East Hampton resident Ted Turner said the Economic Development Committee is "obviously" behind Zahavi.

Turner called 13 Summit St. "a very, very important project for the town." He added, "I just hope there's some progress there."

Town Manager Mike Maniscalco responded, "Negotiations are ongoing."

* * *

Also at Tuesday's meeting – the last before the Nov. 5 elections – the council moved ahead with the Chatham Historical Society's water project.

At the Board of Finance's recommendation, the Town Council moved forward with the

transfer of \$60,000 from the capital fund to cover the cost of installing the water system at the Chatham Historical Society.

The council voted unanimously Tuesday to move the matter forward to a town meeting, which will be held Monday, Nov. 18, at 6:30 p.m. in the East Hampton High School auditorium.

* * *

The council also received a presentation on the fire department's needs assessment – a five-month assessment performed by JLN Associates.

John Nickerson, a JLN Associates representative, informed the council that the fire department is dealing with a number of "soft issues."

These "soft issues" are "underlying issues that threaten the stability of the fire department," he explained to the council.

One concern is internal-stability, Nickerson said. In the past 15 years, the fire department has had seven fire chiefs. The consultant recommended that officer positions – like chief, assistant chief and deputy chief – require training to ensure "a strong three-person team at the top," as well as unity, consistency and qualified leaders.

He also recommended that the fire department establish a long-term budgetary plan, which should include some sort of rehabilitation or rebuilding of the fire department facilities.

According to Nickerson, another issue is

"division along company lines" – he was referencing the division among company one, company two and station three.

He pointed out that the department as a whole has "trust issues" that may be combated by "a good strategic plan." A strategic plan would, for example, take into account and try to extend the life expectancy of equipment, the presenter said.

Town Council member Kyle Dostaler called the needs assessment presentation "quite sobering."

Council member Ted Hintz told Nickerson, "You touched on a lot of things that have been going on for years."

* * *

Also at Tuesday's meeting, the town manager provided the council with an update on the town's "organizational evaluation."

According to Sue Weintraub, chairwoman of the Town Council, one purpose of the evaluation is to find ways to reduce government spending.

Thus far, Maniscalco said, the town staff has met with the consultant and about half of the staff has filled out a questionnaire provided by the consultant. According to Maniscalco, the evaluation should be completed by December.

* * *

The next regularly scheduled East Hampton Town Council meeting is Tuesday, Nov. 12, at 6:30 p.m. at the East Hampton High School library.

Good Turnout for MBA Candidates Event

by Melissa Roberto

A "Meet the Candidates Forum" hosted by the Marlborough Business Association was held last week at the Marlborough Arts Center, giving Marlborough candidates running for positions on local boards and commissions an opportunity to introduce themselves and share their stances before the public.

Of the 28 candidates running, 14 attended. These included RHAM Board of Education Republican candidate Judy Benson-Clarke; all five candidates seeking a seat on the local Board of Education – Republicans Carole Shea and Susan Rapelye and Democrats Mimi LaPoint and Theresa Brysgel and Independent Wes Skorski, who is running on the Democratic ticket; three Board of Finance candidates – Republicans Cliff Denniss and Susan Leser and Independent Dave Farrington, who is running on the Democratic ticket; Republican Brendon Montstream, running for a seat on the Planning Commission; Democrat Joe La Bella, running for the Zoning Commission; Republican Joe Weber, a candidate for an alternate seat on the Zoning Board of Appeals; Republican Mark Stankiewicz, who is seeking an alternate position on the Planning Commission; and Democrat Matthew Wilson, who is seeking a spot on the Board of Assessment Appeals.

The forum is held each year before elections for candidates running for office, MBA executive Jessica Olander said. Olander was pleased with this year's turnout, saying it was the largest turnout of candidates the MBA has had for an election forum. Each candidate was given two minutes for introductory remarks and then a question and answer period followed where questions submitted to the MBA were pitched, as well as questions from the crowd in attendance. MBA President Enza Dandeneau served as the forum's moderator.

The evening was filled with both laughs and communicated concerns by the candidates. Two opinions that seemed to be consistent from a majority of candidates were the support of bringing a world language program to MES as well as a concern regarding a lack of common courtesy on current boards.

The first question pitched towards the Marlborough Board of Education contenders asked their ideas to better prepare Marlborough's children for the future. A majority of the five candidates – all three Democratic candidates – advocated bringing a world language and multicultural program to Marlborough Elementary School (MES). Republicans Rapelye and Shea had similar feelings. The two explained they're waiting to hear the administration's report on the world language/multicultural program feasibility study, which was anticipated to occur at Thursday's Board of Education meeting held after press time.

Additionally, Christi Moraga, a citizen seated in the crowd, put local school board candidate Susan Rapelye on the spot. She questioned Rapelye's positions on a world language program and a challenge and enrichment program at MES, as well as how she feels communication between board members and the public should be conducted.

"I'm fairly new to the town," Rapelye explained, stating she moved to Marlborough in August 2012. "I'm hearing a lot of things about the world language program. Before I say this or that I'd love to see the study and see what was conducted. I'm a firm believer if we're going to do something let's do it right. Having it done wrong just to say we have a program is not something I'm a believer in."

Rapelye also spoke to the member-to-citizen communication. She said she hopes there could be some change to allow members to speak back to citizens' comments though she's aware the method that exists on the Board of Education occurs on other boards as well.

One resident from the public introduced himself as a CPA from Glastonbury who lives close to Marlborough. He pumped up the crowd by asking where attendees shop for groceries, to which attendees rattled off several other towns at once. Of the current grocery store proposal, the CPA excitedly said, "We need it. We need it now!"

Though the gentleman did not field a question to the candidates, Zoning Commission candidate Joe La Bella responded. He said he hasn't made up his mind on the grocery store just yet. However, he said he is seeking additional answers including the size of the proposal, what the costs would be to Marlborough and what the net tax effect is in the neighboring town of East Hampton, which has a Stop and Shop. The CPA quickly responded to La Bella's statement.

"Aren't you all residents of Marlborough?" he shouted. "Who cares about East Hampton's tax effect?"

Questions also targeted Board of Finance members. They were asked what aspect of the board they'd like to see change. Current member Denniss said the only aspect he'd like to see change is for the finance board members to "get along a little better and show respect." Finance candidates Farrington and Leser had similar thoughts though Farrington's approach was targeted to the local school board.

"Shame is on the Board of Education," said Farrington. "It's not everybody. It's a culture thing. There's a lack of respect, a lack of common courtesy ... There's too much big politics and ideology involved. I don't think it's that complicated of a situation. Crunch the numbers, make it fair for everybody and away we go."

Leser said she feels "a couple" finance board members have been "extremely rude to other members." She recalled shouting and members



Fourteen candidates for next month's elections attended a "Meet the Candidates" forum hosted by the Marlborough Business Association last Thursday, Oct. 17. Photo by Janie Boston.

having conversations amongst themselves while the board is trying to conduct business. Though she said she feels the board has made "tremendous progress in streamlining the budget," she feels members should be more respectful.

A similar question asked from the audience went to all 14 candidates. They were asked how to hold people accountable for disrespectful behavior in which candidates pitched a few ideas. For Benson-Clarke, the answer was taking part in board workshops ran by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE). Several others, like Matt Wilson, suggested removing people from the meetings.

"If you're going to be on one of these boards I think you need to have the patience and the time to listen to everybody," said Wilson. "Maybe people who attend these meetings and the public who attend these meetings need to exercise the democratic process and remove those people who are not cooperative. I know that's probably asking a lot but that's probably the only solution."

Farrington's approach, which was repeated by others as well, believed the responsibility of handling disrespectful board members was up to the chair.

"I think the board chair becomes more important at this point because they are to be responsible and not partisan," he said. "They need to oversee the entire board and make sure every person is given a say."

Mark Stankiewicz said he felt the answer was "very, very simple."

"You have to look at the focus and the objective of the commission," he said. "You have

to leave the frustration at the door."

Dick Shea, a member of the Board of Selectmen but attending the forum as a resident, also targeted a question to the school board candidates. He recalled a majority of candidates advocating a world language program. Without one currently in the school day, he asked how they feel time could be made in the school day to provide it.

Brysgel suggested integrating it into the school day rather than dedicating one time slot for it. LaPoint pointed out the former Spanish program existed at the school so she felt a combination of both integration in the curriculum as well as the time that was used for the Spanish program could make it possible. Skorski recalled a survey question regarding the program about possibly extending the school day. He said he'd support that. Rapelye said integration within the school day seemed like a "great idea" that way students – especially little ones – wouldn't have to be taken out of the classroom. She also suggested an online study method. Shea, as previously stated, said she didn't want to come to a conclusion until she saw the administration report. She also referred to the cut of the former Spanish program that met two days a week at a total of 60 minutes per week.

"It was not the effective program," she said. "That was the opinion of a majority of parents in a survey at that time... When the board voted it down we said we were committed to bringing back a better program and we are in the process of doing that."

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5.

Meet the Board of Finance Contenders

by Melissa Roberto

Come Nov. 5, four of the six candidates in pursuit of serving on the Board of Finance will become members in some capacity.

A total of four Marlborough citizens are seeking to fill two full member slots for a four-year term, and two alternate positions are seeking two alternate seats. With that said, Republican candidates Scott Fleehser and Midge L. Denno who are interested in the two alternate positions will not necessarily be competing to win, but for Democrats David L. Farrington and Torin Lee-Lewis, and Republicans and incumbents Susan M. Leser and Cliff M. Denniss, a race will be had.

Incumbent **Cliff Denniss** has served on the finance board for a total of six years, two as an alternate and four as a full member. Denniss' entrance onto the finance board was not planned, he explained.

Instead, he started to get involved after he simply attended a town meeting about taxes. It was shortly thereafter he started to become a regular member of the public at finance board meetings.

"I used to attend the Board of Finance meetings as a member of the public for a year if not longer," he said. "And sadly to say many times the only member of the public."

That was shortly after he moved to Marlborough 10 years ago with his wife Dorothy. In July, Denniss admitted he wasn't planning to run this November, until he started getting requests from a number of people in town asking him to reconsider.

"And here I am," said Denniss.

Denniss said he's proud that the finance board has been able to hold taxes down in recent years "while still providing funds for good education for the kids, maintaining the parks, athletic fields and roads and so forth."

Denniss was an insurance administrator at Aetna for 34 years. When it comes to what skills he can bring to the finance board he puts simply, his "experience" on the board. The seasoned member admitted volunteering on the board is "challenging" at times, but he said he enjoys giving back to the community of Marlborough.

"I enjoy trying to keep this community affordable and trying to get it so people can move in town," he said.

Incumbent **Susan Leser** has served on the finance board for a total of eight years, two years as an alternate and six as a regular member. When it comes to her decision to run for another term, Leser said it's because she's "concerned about the financial stability of the town especially given the prolonged economic recession."

Looking back at the finance board over the years she's served, Leser said she feels the board has made progress.

"The three boards – the boards of finance, selectmen and education – have been working together very nicely and we've been able to accomplish a lot," Leser said. "I kind of want to keep that momentum going. I don't want to see taxes go up because there are so many people who just can't afford for taxes to go up."

If re-elected, Leser said her primary concern would be to "keep tax increases to a minimum while still providing an excellent school system."



Denniss



Farrington



Susan Leser



Lee-Lewis

Leser has a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of Connecticut and an MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. She also has a six-year degree in education from Eastern Connecticut State University. Leser has been a teacher for the last 10 years. She currently teaches fifth grade in Tolland. Prior to her role as a teacher, she worked as a financial analyst for a total of 10 years at Northeast Utilities and an analyst for the former Connecticut Bank and Trust.

If elected to serve another two years on the board, Leser said her goals would be to manage expenses "so that tax increases are negligible." Though she noted last tax season there was a small decrease, Leser admitted she doesn't see that happening again, but added "whatever tax increases there are I want them to be really small."

Newcomer **Dave Farrington**, an Independent running on the Democratic ticket, said his initial thought was to run for the Board of Education. However, with his wife holding a teaching position at the local elementary school, he said he "saw a need" on the finance board and felt compelled to run. Of his decision to run for a seat on the finance board, Farrington said he'd like to contribute to change – what he said both the local school and finance boards need.

"Realistically it's more of a culture thing than anything else," Farrington said of the need for change on the boards. "I just feel some board [of education and finance] members have arguments. There's a general lack of civility that exists. It doesn't have to be that way."

If elected, Farrington said his focus would be to bring more transparency and input. As a current physician's assistant in orthopedics, Farrington said he's a "very patient" person and often listens to complaints "without batting an eye."

"Making decisions is something I'm not incapable of doing," he furthered. "I think I can do that in such a way you don't have to offend somebody to make a decision against them. That's what's been missing. I think I bring that type of thing to the table."

Farrington has worked at Norwich Orthopedic Group for about 14 years. He is also a former information systems specialist of the U.S. Air Force.

In town, Farrington has coached youth baseball and basketball for eight years. He currently lives with his wife Pamela and they have four children.

If elected to the finance board, Farrington said he's mostly interested in bringing "transparency and civility." He added he's "absolutely" ready to delve into the annual budget.

Resident and local business owner **Torin Lee-Lewis** has decided to run for a seat on the finance board for the first time. She's lived in town for a few years and said recently she started hearing "a lot of things that people were disgruntled about" regarding the finance board but wasn't exactly sure what citizens were referring to. Lee-Lewis furthered she decided to run with the goal of "seeking transparency." Though transparency isn't something she feels only the finance board should have, she said she'd like to see it "in all places of government." Her candidacy also began after

noticing the town has become "very partisan."

"I'm interested in our town developing and growing," said Lee-Lewis. "Getting involved is always the way."

Lee-Lewis currently owns and is a life coach at Oneida Holistic Health Center. The center provides holistic health services to the community. Additionally, Lee-Lewis has experience as both a volunteer and paid staff member for statewide and national campaigns including campaigns in Colorado, California, Michigan and Washington. She's also a former communications consultant of multiple Fortune 500 companies and for eight years ran her own consulting firm that she said was successful.

If elected, Lee-Lewis feels she has skills that will come in handy on the finance board.

"When you run successful businesses you obviously have experience with finances and budgeting – that's the no-brainer part of my experience," Lee-Lewis explained. "But also as a consultant you learn how to work with people who are quite different than you and help people come to resolve conflicts. I think that skill of improving how people interact with each other and communicate is just as important as a finance background."

Lee-Lewis furthered she feels the way to a successful finance board is "for people to trust each other and come to a compromise so then we can do what's best for the town."

She said she feels Marlborough is a "great place" to live and that the community has "unlimited potential if we work together."

Alternate candidate **Midge Denno** is running for a seat on the finance board for the first time – though she's no stranger to Marlborough citizens. Denno has served on the Commission on Aging since its inception under former first selectman Bill Black,

she explained. Additionally, she was elected to the Planning Commission in 2011. Of her experience on both boards, Denno highlighted the Commission on Aging's progress in proposing a tax relief plan for the elderly which was passed. She also noted the planning commission has raised money for the fuel and food bank and has seen the introduction of the grocery store proposal.

Denno has a background in finance, which she said has equipped her with skills relatable to the finance board. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree and certification to teach from Westfield State University, as associate's degree in premium auditing and the designation of a Certified Professional Insurance Woman. Denno worked for 33 years in auditing. Additionally, she was the past president of the Insurance Auditors Association of Connecticut for two terms. The alternate candidate highlighted what she feels is required of a finance member.

"Budgeting for the necessary expenses of the town requires a balance between wants and expectations and what is best for the town of Marlborough," she said.

Denno also commented on the recent behavioral issues of the Board of Finance meetings, which were talked about at last week's Meet the Candidates forum. (A story on the forum appears elsewhere in this issue.)

"I feel that rules of decorum should be discussed and adopted by the board of finance," Denno stated.

Denno said her goals on the finance board consist of listening "respectfully to the ideas presented and to work in a professional manner with the members of the board." She has resided in Marlborough with her husband Richard since 1978.

Scott Fleehser is seeking re-election to his alternate position on the finance board. He was recently appointed to fill a vacancy during the summer months and is looking to continue his goals on the board, which includes "fiscal responsibility."



Fleehser

"I think that's already in place and I would like to leverage that," said Fleehser. The alternate said he is also interested in looking at ways to expand the tax base. Fleehser formerly served in the U.S. military for 20 years in about 15 various roles. His decision to serve the finance board is mainly to continue serving others.

"Public service and volunteering is a natural part of my everyday life," he explained. "Once I departed the military I wanted to transfer my skills toward making Marlborough a better place and a great place to live for everyone."

Fleehser moved to town in the last few years with his wife and two children. He has a bachelor's degree with a concentration in aviation management from Florida Institute of Technology and a master's degree in international relations from Boston University. He's currently a new small business owner running a consultant firm.

Of his skills, Fleehser said he has "more than two decades" of management experience including budgeting logistics and budget planning in both domestic and international settings. He said he feels he brings a "fresh eye" to the political scene, which he sees as an advantage.

"It's great to bring a fresh set of eyes and a new perspective of the same problems the town faces year to year," he said.

Fleehser furthered his choice to seek the next term was not due to any personal agenda. Instead, he said his reasoning is "plain and simple."

"I have no interest in settling personal issues," said Fleehser. "I'll be interested in focusing more on issues coming to the board and that have to do with the growth of the town. I want to better the town as a whole for my family and other folks in Marlborough."

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 5. Voting will take place from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at Marlborough Elementary School.

Colchester Public Meeting Held on POCD

by Melissa Roberto

A public meeting was held Wednesday night at Town Hall for citizens to weigh in on how Colchester should plan for its future through the update of the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

Back in July, the Board of Selectmen unanimously agreed to enter into a contract with a Simsbury-based consulting firm, Planimetrics, to assist in updating Colchester's POCD. A representative from that firm, Glenn Chalder, led Wednesday night's discussion for an audience of nearly 20 citizens including members from the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Chalder explained the town is currently in the process of updating its POCD. The last plan was updated in 2001, and the process for that plan began in 1998. Statutory requirements allow the town's Planning and Zoning Commission to adopt a plan, he said. Chalder said a POCD is "a long-term vision for the community in terms of policies and strategies of community and what it can do to guide growth in the town."

Wednesday's discussion focused on what audience members believed to be the right policies and strategies for Colchester's future. The conversation focused on the current challenges the town faces in bringing additional businesses to town and how important audience members felt Colchester's character and authenticity in its historical district is.

Chalder pointed out Colchester is quite accessible to the communities surrounding it.

"We're close to a lot of things," he said. "It really offers the best of a lot of different things in terms of geography, location, highway access, etc."

Others in the room called Colchester "a bedroom community," and explained a majority of

citizens travel out of town to purchase basic necessities – like socks – among other things like groceries.

Resident and chair of the Agriculture Commission Chris Bourque explained why he believes people shop out of town.

"You consider a majority of people work down in New London or up in the Hartford area and pass by all of the big stores on the way home," Bourque explained.

One woman in the room brought up the Facebook group "The Housewives of Colchester," made up of women in Colchester who discuss where to shop and what businesses they'd like to see in town. She mentioned the "expensive" prices of the local Stop and Shop in town, due to a lack of nearby competition.

"They don't even realize how much they're losing because people aren't doing the majority of their shopping there," the woman said of the local grocery store. "Some of the conversation [in the Facebook group] is about wanting diversity in retail."

Chalder concluded it seems Colchester citizens feel they're "almost forced" to go elsewhere to obtain basic needs, goods and services.

"We're not going to be self-sufficient until we figure out how to address this situation," Chalder said to the crowd.

One resident suggested a few ideas, like bringing an outlet shopping area to town similar to the Clinton outlets. He also suggested turning the movie theater area that's been "neglected forever" into a mini shopping area.

"There's no reason why we can't put an outlet here and be the middleman," he explained. "I think there are certain ways and things we can attract that will keep the community as

peaceful and beautiful as we all want it to be but also bring in that economic revenue that we desperately need to seek."

Conversation then shifted to how citizens view Colchester's historical district, which was communicated to begin on Main Street near Family Pizza down to the Colchester Veterans Memorial Town Green near Noel's supermarket.

Chalder asked the crowd what Colchester citizens value higher – "character versus authenticity." He explained the Colchester community "has got a lot of historic importance in it." Board of Selectmen member Rosemary Coyle, seated in the crowd, explained there are three bodies in Colchester who have an impact on the town's historical buildings. These were the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees who own historical buildings in town like Old Bacon Academy, the Historical Society and the Historic District Commission.

"Each one of those impacts what happens to a [historical] piece of property," Coyle pointed out.

Citizens discussed the limitations of property owners who own buildings in the historical district. Another resident said he felt character was more important. He said owners should be able to maintain their buildings with modern materials that still look historic.

Chalder pointed out the town "can stop someone from improvement" on a historical building "but can't stop someone from just letting it go" and neglecting it.

"A result is buildings can and will and do deteriorate over time," Chalder furthered. "We can lose historical resources because they're not maintained so finding that balance just enough

to keep people improving but keeping them from doing bad things might be a good strategy for us."

The discussion of maintaining Colchester's character versus authenticity, Chalder said, "was a good discussion."

Bourque suggested incentives might help property owners to preserve farms, or open space, instead of "being punitive or enforcing" something on them.

By the end of the meeting, Chalder said he would take these issues of balancing Colchester's needs into consideration during the development of the plan. He finalized his analysis by tossing up one final question to the crowd: "If you were king or queen for a day what would you want to happen?"

Bourque said he'd enjoy seeing "another exit and entrance ramp" on the north end of town. Another citizen said he'd like to see "vast development" on the south end of town due to the recent extension of the town's sewer and water.

Chalder concluded he'd research what businesses look for in town demographics when deciding where to open. Along with that, he said he'd make conclusions of how businesses view Colchester. After the meeting, Chalder said Planimetrics' next step would be to "start putting down on paper" what has come out of the two public meetings he's held in town. He anticipated another meeting to take place in late spring 2014 where Planimetrics can walk the town's citizens through its findings.

In the mean time, Chalder suggested citizens in towns who'd like to weigh in on the process should go through Town Hall. He said those inquiries, ideas or suggestions could be forwarded to him.

Meet East Hampton BOE Candidate Kelly McLaughlin

by Elizabeth Bowling

Note: Due to an editorial oversight, Kelly McLaughlin was omitted from last week's story profiling the Board of Education candidates. His part of the story appears below.

Chatham Party member Kelly McLaughlin is running for a seat on the Board of Education.

McLaughlin has lived in East Hampton almost his entire life – almost 37 years. He works for a national insurance company to develop new products; thus far he has received two patents for his innovations.

McLaughlin said he and his wife, Shasta, decided to homeschool their three children – ages 10, 5 and 4 – after enrolling their oldest child in East Hampton kindergarten and discovering that the youngster was "too advanced for the curriculum."

The McLaughlins determined that homeschool would offer the "best opportunities" for their children, he said.

Having to "learn all of this the hard way" is what got him interested in running for the Board of Education. He said that his 10-year-old, who is already doing high school-level work, is "exceptional but not unique."

McLaughlin, who has a doctorate in law, laughed that some of his son's schoolwork is "a challenge for me."

Homeschooling "enables students to move at their own pace," McLaughlin said. "Self-paced learning for every child is the paradigm that will exist in five years or 10 years."

If elected to the Board of Education, McLaughlin said he would support self-paced learning because "it's truly a global competition for employment."

"I'm a very big fan of the idea of a world class education," he said. "I'm really interested in having the school district... start to become more innovative."

McLaughlin said he would like to see East Hampton schools offer more in terms of foreign languages, math, science and technology. He affirmed that he would promote programs that are "based on Common Core state standards."

In a summarizing statement posted on the Chatham Party website, McLaughlin said, "Educational excellence is not a problem that money can solve. I firmly believe in strategic reform and reinvention of our academic school programs. What we need are new ideas and the aspiration to have the best schools in the state. By adopting best-in-class educational innovation, we can create individualized programs that prepare students for their brightest future at no additional cost to taxpayers."

Elections are Tuesday, Nov. 5, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. at East Hampton High School.



McLaughlin

Colchester Police News

10/13: State Police said Edward J. McMahon, 18, of 28 Gillettes Ln., was charged with restricted turn and DUI.

10/14: State Police said Steven Texidor, 22, of 57 Keefe St., Waterbury, was charged with operating a motor vehicle under a suspended license, speeding, illegal sale of a controlled substance and narcotics kept only in original container.

10/15: State Police said Joseph Pinto, 23, of 100 Route 87, Columbia, was charged with DUI, traveling unreasonably fast and failure to drive right.

10/16: State Police said Sean Carey, 20, of 43 Broadway, Apt. 1, was charged with possession of a controlled substance and violation of probation.

10/17: State Police said John F. Rucker Jr., 45, of 31 Creek Row, East Haddam, was charged with two counts of issuing a bad check.

Hebron Police News

10/17: State Police said Daniel Pensak, 18, of 41 Reidy Hill Rd., Amston, was charged with disorderly conduct and interfering with a 911 call.

East Hampton Police News

10/7: East Hampton Police reported initiating a motor vehicle stop after witnessing a vehicle cross over the yellow line into the oncoming lane and back on Route 196. While speaking with the operator of the vehicle, drug paraphernalia was observed by the officer on the floor of the vehicle, police said. A motor vehicle search was conducted, police said, and "numerous items of contraband" were discovered. As a result the driver, Chelsea Klein, 22, of 1165 Saybrook Rd., Haddam, was arrested and charged with possession of narcotics with intent to sell, possession of controlled substances with intent to sell, possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

10/11: Police reported coming across a vehicle parked along the roadway of Summit Street at its intersection with Flanders Road. The operator was asleep in the vehicle and the vehicle was still running. Officers awakened the driver and had him perform standard field sobriety tests which he ultimately failed, police said. Sean Anderson, 23, of 17 Colchester Ave., was arrested for DUI.

10/12: Ronald A. Way, 45, of 100 Young St., was pulled over by police for driving erratically, police said. Way was then asked to perform standard field sobriety tests and failed, police said, and he was arrested and charged with DUI and failure to drive right.

Obituaries

Colchester

Francis M. Kurowski

Francis (Frank) M. Kurowski, 27, of Colchester, son of Karen Sehl Kurowski, and the late Francis J. Kurowski, went home to our Lord on Oct. 13, 2013.

Frank was a kind and loving spirit, who had a way with animals, was always ready to lend a helping hand, and could fix almost anything. He loved the outdoors, the beach at Charlestown, R.I., racing dirt bikes, and was a talented hockey player and musician. He was also a ham radio operator – call sign KB1FYE is now transmitting from a higher level. He will be dearly missed by all those who knew and loved him.

He is survived by his mother, Karen Sehl Kurowski, stepfather Alan J. Sibley, and several uncles and cousins.

In lieu of flowers, please do a random act of kindness for someone, or donate to a charity.

A Mass will be held at St. Bridget Kildare, Moodus, at 11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 26. Relatives and friends are invited to call at 10:30 a.m. at St. Bridget Church, prior to the service. Internment will be at St. Bridget Kildare Cemetery, Moodus.

Belmont Sabrowski Funeral Home of Colchester is in care of arrangements.

Colchester

Marilyn Jane Lane

Marilyn Jane (Klimas) Lane, 49, of Miami, Fla., and formerly of Colchester and Killingly, passed away Tuesday, Aug. 8.

Born July 25, 1964, in Putnam, she was a daughter of the late August and Marilyn (Wilkinson) Klimas. She attended Killingly High School and went on to work for United Parcel Service.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester is assisting the family with private arrangements.

Colchester

Marian Panek

Marian “Dana” Panek, 58, of Colchester, passed away at home Monday, Oct. 14. Born in Poland Aug. 3, 1955, he was a son of the late Andrew and Jean (Szypula) Panek.

He married his beloved wife, Eva Sikora in 1979. She predeceased him on March 18, 2012.

Marian worked as a welder for Eagle Manufacturing in Colchester. He was a communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester and formerly of St. Cyril & Methodius Church in Hartford. Marian was an enthusiastic sports fan, especially soccer. He also enjoyed cooking traditional Polish meals, listening to rock music and attending concerts.

He will be sadly missed but always remembered by his family. He is survived by two sons, Paul Panek and his wife, Rebekkah Ziel of Mayfield, N.Y., and Adam Panek of Colchester; two brothers, Jon Panek of Newington and Mitch Panek of Poland; a sister, Mary Wis of Cromwell, and many extended family and friends.

A graveside memorial service will be celebrated for both Marian and his beloved wife, Eva, on Tuesday, Oct. 29, at 4 p.m., at the Linwood Cemetery, Linwood Cemetery Road, Colchester.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with arrangements. To share online condolences, visit auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Stasia F. Cylkowski

Stasia F. Cylkowski, 90, of East Hampton, wife of the late Alexander Pulaski, passed away Thursday, Oct. 17, at Middlesex Hospital. She was the daughter of the late Stanley and Agnes Pisarz.

Born Aug. 1, 1923, in Meriden, she has lived in East Hampton for the last 40 years. She worked as a secretary for Talcott Machine for 20 years until her retirement. She was a member of St. Patrick’s Church in East Hampton and the Ladies Guild of the Church, a member of the East Hampton Art Association, the East Hampton Historical Society, the East Hampton Garden Club, the Polish Falcons Nest 870 and she was also a member of the Belltown Bebbies.

She leaves two sons and daughters-in-law, Bryan and Brenda Pulaski of East Hampton and Gregory and Renata Pulaski of Middletown; two brothers, Ted Pisarz of New Britain and Henry Pisarz of Reading, Mass.; three sisters, Grace Thompson of New Britain, Irene Jarzabek of Wallingford and Teresa Gustyla of Meriden; four grandchildren, Travis Pulaski, Kelly Ellis, James and Alisa Pulaski; and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial Mass will be held Friday, Nov. 1, at 10 a.m., at St. Patrick’s Church 47 West High St., East Hampton.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Patrick’s Church 47 West High St. East Hampton, CT 06424.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

Colchester

Elna A. Phelps

Elna A. (Bayle) Phelps, 98, of Colchester and Haddam Neck, widow of Herbert Phelps, died Tuesday, Oct. 22, in Harrington Court in Colchester. Born Aug. 6, 1915, in Clarkstown, N.Y., she was the daughter of the late Schuyler G. and Anna (Holstein) Bayle.

Elna was an avid reader and also did the daily crossword puzzle. She enjoyed participating in recreational games offered at Harrington Court, especially bingo and keno. Elna spent many hours making baby sets and blankets for anyone who requested them. During her stay at Harrington Court she made many, many friends.

She is survived by her daughter Anne Royce and her husband Alfred Jr.; son John and his wife Joann; daughter Susan Hayes and her husband William; son-in-law Wayne Denman and his wife Janice; grandchildren Terry-Lynn Muller and husband Henry, Debra Zdeb and husband Gary, Alfred Royce III, Matthew Hayes and wife Erin, Cathy (Denman) Domin, David Phelps and wife Cathy, Wendy (Phelps) Dolph; great-grandchildren Jamie, Daniel, Darcy, Stacy, Joshua, John, Joshua, Samantha, April and Keith; great-great grandchildren Bailey and Tucker; also several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her husband, Herbert V. Phelps, and her daughter, Janet Denman.

To honor her wishes there will be no calling hours or service.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the Resident Council Fund at Harrington Court, 59 Harrington Court, Colchester, CT 06415 or Mansfield Public Library, 54 Warrenville Rd., Mansfield Center, CT 06250.

To leave online condolences, visit spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Marlborough

Richard J. Cavar

Richard J. Cavar, 81, of Highland Street, Moosup, died Friday, Oct. 18, at Marlborough Health Care Center. He was a beloved husband, father and grandfather.

In his prime, Richard was a real estate broker, landlord, member of the American Legion and the Chamber of Commerce.

Richard J. Cavar was predeceased by his second wife Janice Cavar and is survived by two sons, a daughter and a grandson; Richard C. Cavar of New London; Eric and Brenda Cavar of Colchester; a daughter, Cynthia Cavar of Glastonbury; and a grandson, Stephen Cavar of Colchester.

The funeral Mass will be Sunday, Nov. 9, at 10 a.m., at St. Edward Church, High Street, Stafford Springs. The burial will be at a later date at St. Edward’s Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to the National Alzheimer’s Association.

Portland

Debra Ann (Gattinella) Kurys

Debra Ann (Gattinella) Kurys, 51, of Portland, beloved wife of Stanislaw Kurys for 30 years, passed away peacefully at home surrounded by her family Wednesday, Oct. 16. Born in Hartford May 19, 1962, she was the loving daughter of Sebastian and Angela (Miele) Gattinella of Wethersfield.

Debra graduated from Wethersfield High School in 1980 and began a career at The Hartford Financial Services group shortly after. She had a successful, distinguished career there for over 30 years and worked her way up to assistant vice president of reinsurance operations. She was respected by her colleagues, admired by her staff, and was a mentor to many. Along with her career, she went back to school at night to CCSU where she earned her bachelors degree in accounting and graduated magna cum laude.

In addition to her husband and parents, she will be dearly missed by her cherished son, Michael S. Kurys of Portland; her brother, Salvatore Gattinella of Windsor; her sister, Alana DiMarco of Wethersfield; her nieces and nephew, Alexa and Allison Gattinella and Dina and Dominic DiMarco. She was adored by her in-laws, Jan and Czeslawa Kurys of Newington, as well as many aunts and uncles, Ron and Marilyn Gattinella, Mary Lou and Rudy Baran, Patty and Jerry Knislis, Paul Miele, Wadystaw and Krystyna Kuryz, Krystyna and Zobzichu Partyku, Janina Majczak, Krystyna Sagum, Janina and Stanislaw Chudzik and Anna Bak. She had many loving cousins, extended family, friends and co-workers who will also miss her dearly.

Deb loved many things, but she lived for the loves of her life, her husband Stan (whom she began dating at 16 years old) and her son Michael. She always put others before herself and it was a priority to her that everyone was taken care of and loved, even when she became ill. Whether boating, traveling, golfing, reading, watching the sunsets at their condo in Florida, snowmobiling on the trails of Vermont or hanging out with family and friends at the lake in New Hampshire, they were always together as a couple and a family.

Her family and friends will remember her attention to detail and perfection, her devotion to her family, her heart and her generosity. The impact she made on her family, friends and everyone’s lives she touched will remain in their hearts forever.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Monday, Oct. 21, at the Church of the Incarnation, 544 Prospect St., Wethersfield. Burial followed at Sacred Heart cemetery in New Britain. The family will receive relatives and friends Sunday, Oct. 20, at the D’Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Debra’s memory to Wethersfield Dollars for Scholars, P.O. Box 290338, Wethersfield, CT 06129-0338.

For online expressions of sympathy to the family, visit desopo.com.