

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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**Donation for Playground...** The Seamster Park Playground Committee recently received a \$500 donation for the new playground from the Middlesex United Way Women's Initiative. The donation helped purchase the Bouncy Bridge in the Tot Lot. Pictured from left, Lori Lodge, president of the Women's Initiative; Jeremy Hall, East Hampton Parks and Recreation director; and Audrey Livingston, loan executive for Middlesex United Way. Photo by Cheryl Gioielli of Gioielli Designs.

## Officials Relieved By State Budget Approval

by Elizabeth Regan

The end of this year's protracted state budget battle came none too soon for local officials charged with keeping their towns running under the threat of dramatic cuts to education funding.

The \$41.3 billion, two-year budget deal signed Wednesday by Gov. Dannel P. Malloy includes a \$31.4 million cut to education cost sharing grants. A majority of towns, including those in the *Rivereast* coverage area, will see their education funding from the state reduced by roughly 5 percent this year compared to last year.

It's a far cry from the reductions local towns could have seen based on previous drafts of the budget and the governor's temporary executive order that has been funding the state since July 1.

East Hampton Town Manager Michael Maniscalco reacted to the news of the approved budget with a "halle-freaking-lujah."

He said the town's cut of approximately \$600,000 – as calculated by Finance Director Jeff Jylkka – would be mitigated by a .44 mill increase already assessed to taxpayers in anticipation of the state funding cut. Last year's budget surplus of \$318,000 and about \$200,000 in back taxes collected over the past few months made him confident enough about the town's financial situation to lift the hiring and capital spending freeze he instituted in August, he said.

Those in East Hampton had been fearing a cut of \$1.6 million in education aid based on a budget proposal from the governor in February. The same plan also would have made the town responsible for one-third of teachers' pension costs currently paid by the state, which

would have shaken out to another \$1.6 million.

The new, two-year state budget does not shift any portion of the teachers' pension costs to towns.

Hebron Town Manager Andrew Tierney said it took lawmakers "a heck of a long time" to cross party lines and become the statesmen he felt they needed to be in order to get a budget passed.

When Hebron voters approved the local budget back in May, they stood to lose \$1.28 million in education funding from the state under the governor's proposal. The budget deal signed this week came in with a total decrease of \$367,773 in municipal aid.

The current local budget was approved with the assumption the town would receive \$7.30 million in state aid. Data compiled by *The Connecticut Mirror* shows the town will receive \$6.99 million in municipal aid under the new state budget.

Tierney said the town is still under a spending and hiring freeze until the finance board meets to discuss the new state budget. He plans to request that the restriction be changed to a soft freeze that would keep spending in check but still allow town departments to function.

He expects to compensate for the state funding cuts by scaling back on spending on the general government side of things, asking the school board where they can realize savings and, if necessary, taking some money out of the undesignated fund balance.

"We'll continue to be frugal here in Hebron," he said.

Marlborough First Selectwoman Amy See State Budget page 2

## Hintz Takes One Last Stand

by Elizabeth Regan

Ted Hintz Jr. last week took his final stand as a member of the East Hampton Town Council when he accused Town Manager Michael Maniscalco of unfair treatment.

Hintz, the council vice chairman, is not running for re-election. Last week's regular meeting was the last one before the Nov. 7 changeover.

Hintz, who has been a vocal critic of the length of time it takes staff members in the building department to process permit applications, alleged that his complaints have been ignored by Maniscalco. He said concerns recently brought forward by another councilor, however, were promptly resolved.

He did not identify the other councilor.

He said the unnamed council member had complained residents and contractors are told it may take up to two weeks to process the permit when they file their applications, but that

the policy is not publicized in writing either in the department or on the town website.

"My understanding is that council member contacted you on that two-week delay and, lo and behold, that permit was issued," Hintz told Maniscalco.

Hintz said his own complaints have been brushed aside by Maniscalco, and that he has been negatively portrayed in the media.

"Yet when another council member comes to you, nothing is said and the permit is issued. I'm sorry, I do have a problem with that," he said.

Maniscalco bristled at Hintz's allegation.

"I think to draw gray lines between things and say that people received favors is inappropriate, because that never happened," Maniscalco said. "It does not happen; it never will happen."

Looking at Hintz, Maniscalco told the coun-

cilman he can "smirk and smile" as much as he wants, but there is "plenty of factual information and documents" to support the building department's efforts.

Maniscalco told Hintz he has been having conversations with building department staff and that he found the process in place to be a "sensible" one.

"If anybody took the time, did the appropriate research and investigation and corresponded with me about that, they would find it makes good sense," Maniscalco said.

Hintz maintained that the permits were brought to the top of the pile once it became known a sitting councilor had concerns.

"That does not look well," Hintz said. "Whether it is factual or not, the appearance of wrongdoing is there."

Hintz has said for the past two years that the department was struggling in the absence of

former planning, zoning and building administrator James Carey. Carey retired in May 2015 and has since died.

In April of this year, Hintz had brought to Maniscalco's attention concerns about permit delays for the Sports on 66 project. He asked the town manager to schedule a meeting in executive session to discuss the performance of Building Official Glen LeConche. Maniscalco rejected the request, citing council policy that gives the town manager primary responsibility for supervising and evaluating employees. He added that the town charter does not provide the council with oversight authority of town employees other than the town manager.

Multiple officials have said Hintz is the accountant for the owner of Sports on 66, though Hintz would neither confirm nor deny the business relationship.

See One Last Stand page 2

**State Budget cont. from Front Page**

Traversa expressed relief in the face of a total reduction of \$176,160 in municipal aid compared to last year. She said the final number is something the town can accommodate, unlike the “draconian” cuts in Malloy’s executive order.

She said the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Board of Education will talk about “trimming things back” to make up for the reduction.

She noted the town set its motor vehicle mill rate conservatively, based on the previous cap of 32 mills set by the state. The new budget, however, raised the cap to 39 mills.

But Traversa said she does not anticipate sending out a supplemental tax bill to make up the difference between 32 mills and the full 35.46 mills the town is now empowered to collect under state law.

That amounts to \$184,000 in taxes that the town will not recoup, according to Traversa.

Her biggest concern is that the crisis isn’t over yet.

“What needs to be understood is that we have a financial crisis, a multi-year financial crisis, on our hands in the State of Connecticut,” Traversa said. “We’re being given this reprieve and we need to make good use of it to get our finances to a sustainable level.”

She cited increased communication and cooperation among town and regional officials as a critical component in figuring out how to move forward with less reliance on the state. Cooperation with area towns is also important, she added.

Cooperative arrangements could include sharing resources within the town, such as a finance office that handles both municipal operations and the schools, or sharing resources between towns, such as a transfer station.

While she said the ideas are controversial, the important thing is talking about them.

“There’s some things that can be regionalized and there’s some things that can’t. We need to be able to discuss them openly and without judgment,” she said.

Traversa said she is also relieved that the new state budget does not assign any of the responsibility for the teachers’ retirement system to the towns. She said she doesn’t accept that possibility going forward, either.

“I don’t accept it as a responsibility for the town. Despite what Malloy says, it’s not our cross to bear,” she said.

Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield echoed that sentiment.

Bransfield, the president of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, said the group worked hard to make sure cities and towns would not get billed for a portion of the Teachers’ Retirement System.

“We had nothing to do with the negotiation of that pension,” Bransfield said. “I really think it should stay with the state.”

It’s an issue with massive state budget implications that needs deep study so communities aren’t left scrambling, according to Bransfield.

“There’s things that we’ve done for years and years and years, but the world has changed. I don’t think we have kept pace with how things have changed in the private sector versus the public sector,” she said.

Portland’s municipal aid cut under the new state budget is \$246,285, according to *The Connecticut Mirror*.

Bransfield said the Board of Selectmen will be examining the state budget against the revenue figures assumed in the current local budget and will identify a plan for moving forward.

“Wherever we can save money and identify where we have already saved money, we will,” Bransfield said. “We will definitely be careful

how we spend.”

Raising the motor vehicle cap under the new state budget means Portland is looking at about \$60,000 that won’t be realized because car tax bills were sent out based on 32 mills instead of the actual mill rate of 32.98 mills.

According to Bransfield, the total reduction in state aid is close to the amount of the budget surplus typically returned at the end of each fiscal year.

She also expressed optimism that a focus on economic development could bolster the town’s bottom line. She pointed to the \$30 million mixed-use Brainerd Place project on the site of the former Elmcrest Hospital property, which is currently before the Planning and Zoning Commission as a site plan. The proposal would bring the town \$238,274 in permit fees during its first phase.

In Colchester, residents are facing a roughly half a million dollar cut compared to last year.

Colchester First Selectman Art Shilosky said the general government side of the budget assumed no state funding at all. Rather, he said, it’s the education cost sharing reduction that will affect the town.

While he is still examining the new state budget and scheduling meetings with town and school officials, he is confident the town is prepared to deal with the shortfall.

“We’re okay now financially. We’ve made a lot of good moves in the past four or five years,” he said.

But the problem of reduced funding from the state isn’t going away, he added.

“We’ve got another cut next year and who knows what’s going to happen after that,” Shilosky said. “We’re going to have to tighten our belt and be careful what we spend.”

According to Colchester Board of Education Chairman Ron Goldstein, the school district instituted a hard budget and hiring freeze back when the governor announced a temporary executive order that would have cut Colchester’s education funding by \$2.28 million.

He said the district has about 10 unfilled positions, which has resulted in cuts to course offerings in the family consumer science, world language and science departments. Eighteen unfunded club advisor stipends mean students have seen a reduction in extracurricular offerings.

Now that the approved state budget gives the district real numbers to deal with, Goldstein said the school board will meet to discuss how to deal with a reduction he described as significant but “far less catastrophic” than officials had feared.

The uncertainty was one of the hardest parts to deal with over the last few months, according to Goldstein.

“Obviously the dollars have a tremendous impact, but also with just general nervousness and folks not knowing what may be coming down the road,” he said.

He credited teachers with not letting the precarious budget situation diminish their enthusiasm or support for the students in any way.

In Andover, the town will receive \$106,546 less in municipal aid than it did last year.

But Andover Board of Education Chairman Shannon Loudon said her board already incorporated lower revenue estimates into the approved school budget and planned its spending accordingly.

“While cuts are never good news, given what we understood might have been significant cuts to our ECS grant funding, the relatively minor cuts in the recently enacted state budget are manageable,” she said.

She said she does not anticipate any additional cuts.

**One Last Stand cont. from Front Page**

In documents released as part of the town manager evaluation process, a May 2015 email from Maniscalco to then-council Chairwoman Barbara Moore detailed Hintz’s displeasure with the amount of time it took the building department to process a resident’s demolition permit.

According to Maniscalco, Hintz shouted during a phone call that it was “bull\*\*\*\*” it would take so long and that it was “bull\*\*\*\*” the town manager couldn’t find the money to bring in extra help to address the permit backlog.

Maniscalco told Moore he put Hintz on speakerphone once the call started to degrade so there would be a witness.

“I am very concerned by Councilman Hintz’s desire to attempt to harass and bully me. I would never allow an employee of the town to be talked to the way he has spoken to me,” Maniscalco wrote to Moore.

Council members, including Chairwoman Patience Anderson and Melissa Engel, have stated on the record this year that they have witnessed concerning displays of anger from Hintz.

Hintz was heard using obscenities during a shouting match with council member James “Pete” Brown in the middle school hallway following a council meeting in April that included discussion on a tax abatement agreement for Sports on 66.

**The Two-Week Turnaround**

While the identity of the councilor with concerns about the two-week turnaround time was not revealed during last week’s meeting, Kevin Reich this week said he was the one who approached Maniscalco.

“My goal was to seek clarification on what the process is,” Reich said. “If it takes two weeks, that’s fine, but you sort of need to know that in advance so there isn’t a surprise.”

Reich is a member of the Edgemere Condominium Association, which was seeking a building permit for a new roof on a portion of the complex.

“The good news is they were able to get us the permit in a timely fashion and they were able to attend to the other permits that were ahead of us,” Reich said. “We don’t expect anything special; it would just be nice to know what the rules are.”

Maniscalco told councilors during last week’s meeting that office technicians in the building department inform all visitors about the turnaround time when they file their applications.

“It is not within their discretion to tell somebody different,” Maniscalco said.

He said it’s up to Building Official Glen LeConche to review the application to see “if it needs more information or if it can be approved the next day.”

Maniscalco said there are other roof replace-

ment permits that have been finalized the day they were received.

Hintz asked Maniscalco for a list of all roof replacement applications for the past six months in order to evaluate the timeliness of the approvals.

Maniscalco said he would provide that information to the council. The information was still being compiled in the building department as of this week, according to Maniscalco.

Council member Mark Philhower reiterated the need for a formal policy outlining the process and how permits should be prioritized.

“The thing is, there’s a new department down there,” he said.

LeConche and Planning and Zoning Official Jeremy DeCarli both started in January 2016.

“When you have a new staff, they might think they’re doing something a certain way that is efficient when there are other ways to handle it that would probably speed things up and save them a lot of headaches – and everyone else,” Philhower added.

LeConche will make a presentation to the new council about how the department operates, according to the town manager.

“I think it’s important we all understand how it’s working and if there are ways we can improve it,” Maniscalco said.

LeConche on Thursday morning told the *Rivereast* that the two-week turnaround is a standard but generic timeframe given by office technicians because they are not in the position to judge if it’s a simple, complete application or if it will take longer to review.

“We try to manage expectations,” he said.

He said applications are typically handled in the order they’re received unless they are emergency situations.

He said it’s not uncommon for Maniscalco to come down to the building department with concerns about specific applications brought forward by residents or council members.

“When I become aware of things like that, I’m going to look at them,” LeConche said. If an application is straightforward and all the information is provided, he will approve it.

The Edgemere Condominium approval was granted the same day Maniscalco approached him, according to LeConche.

He said he also approved another residential application the next day when he saw the contractor, who had a roof leak that constituted an emergency repair, at the counter of the building department.

LeConche said it’s his practice to do his job as it is supposed to be done and to earn everyone’s respect with each new day.

“Sometimes it’s frustrating, and you’re challenged by people who have other intents,” he added.

# Hub Plan Going to East Hampton Voters

by Elizabeth Regan

East Hampton voters at the polls on Election Day will be greeted with an \$18.98 million question: Should the town build a new town hall, police station, board of education and community room on Route 66?

About 150 people turned out Monday for a town meeting held in accordance with the town charter. The taxpayers voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting to the Nov. 7 referendum in the East Hampton High School gymnasium.

The purpose of the meeting was "to consider" a two-page resolution outlining the financial details of the building project, according to a memo from town attorney Richard D. Carella of Updike, Kelly and Spellacy. He said considering the issue meant talking about it, not voting on it.

But the group was largely silent, despite several attempts by moderator Robert "Red" McKinney to drum up discussion.

Though the meeting lasted just over 20 minutes, a majority of it was spent listening to Council Chairwoman Patience Anderson read five pages of legal notices.

Finance Board Chairman Marc Lambert was one of the few residents to speak.

"My only comment is very simple: It's about time," he said.

The finance board voted in August to approve the project by a vote of 4-2, with Republicans Janine Jiantonio and Alannah Coshov voting against the motion. Less than a month later, town councilors voted 5-1 to approve a resolution and set dates for the town meeting and referendum. The lone nay vote came from Republican Ted Hintz Jr.

Resident Bill DiNunzio spoke in support of the project. While acknowledging it's a costly endeavor, he invoked the adage *if not now,*

*when?*

"It's only going to get more expensive in the future."

A document prepared by the town to provide an overview of the project stated \$113,000 was spent on repairs and maintenance for the town hall, police department and Board of Education building in fiscal year 2017. The town also spends \$52,000 per year on rented office space for the social services and parks and recreation departments and \$12,600 for an off-site police parking area.

The same document said completing the \$18.98 million hub would cost a taxpayer with a home assessed at \$200,000 roughly \$220 per year, based on average annual grand list growth of 0.50 percent.

The debt would not come due until 2022.

Resident Pat Rux stood up for those on fixed incomes who are fearful of how such a large project could affect their livelihood.

"I certainly hope with all this spending that this council will consider freezing taxes on us seniors. Because we take a step back every year, not ahead," she said.

Despite the lack of vocal naysayers at the town meeting, two popular Facebook pages have included much discussion about the pros and cons of the project.

Some opponents have said they would rather see the municipal complex in the Village Center. Others have said the town should be focusing on the police department alone, not the town hall or Board of Education offices. Others have called it too extravagant, referring to it as the Taj Ma-town-hall.

Many have expressed concern about the state budget situation and the prospect of declining municipal aid over the coming years.

Residents were issued a slight reprieve this week when Gov. Dannel P. Malloy signed the state's two-year budget after a protracted budget battle. East Hampton will lose about \$649,487 in municipal aid compared to last year, according to Finance Director Jeff Jylkka. That's far less than the town stood to lose in numerous budget drafts that have circulated around the state capitol this year.

Town Manager Michael Maniscalco said this week the reduction in state funding will be largely offset by a .44 mill increase that was included in the current budget to plan for the anticipated reduction in state funding. Last year's budget surplus of \$318,000 and about \$200,000 in back taxes collected over the past few months will make up for the rest of the state funding reduction, Maniscalco said.

The plan for a 33,400-square-foot town hall complex on 5.4 acres of the Edgewater Hill mixed-use development, on the eastern end of East High Street has evolved since February after the Town Council selected a site for the proposed municipal complex, picked a project manager and appointed a building committee.

Owner's project manager Steve Motto, with his wife, Lisa, donated the town a 5.4-acre parcel within their development. They also offered to serve as the town's project managers for a 4 percent cut of the total project cost. Their proposal won out over seven other submissions in a competitive bidding process.

The complex would include all departments in the current town hall and the Middletown Avenue annex, the police department and the Board of Education offices.

A study by the engineering and architecture firm Friar Associates shows the current town hall was built in 1946 for Eversource, known

then as Connecticut Light and Power. It was purchased by the town in 1971 and was renovated in 1975.

Officials have decried the deteriorating foundation, persistent flooding and undrinkable water in both the town hall and adjacent police department. Short-term remedies were applied to the site's well after state-ordered repairs revealed continued deterioration of the piping and mechanical equipment, according to Maniscalco.

In January, the police department operated out of a mobile unit borrowed from the Connecticut State Police for about two days while damage from both internal drain problems and weather-related flooding was repaired.

The station does not have a prisoner transport area or holding cells for women and juveniles. It does not have locker room facilities for female officers.

The explanatory document prepared by the town said the Board of Education building on 94 Main Street, which was built in 1866, does not meet current standards for accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Officials said including the school board offices in the new hub would be less expensive than retrofitting the existing building to make it accessible to all.

Potential discrimination lawsuits are a concern, according to multiple officials.

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*The referendum vote will be held as part of the municipal election on Tuesday, Nov. 7 from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the East Hampton High School gymnasium. Those who pay taxes in town but are not residents will be given a separate ballot with the referendum question only, according to the office of the registrar of voters.*

## Leaking Propane Tank Leads to Portland Home Evacuations

by Elizabeth Regan

A leaking propane tank caused by a downed tree forced the evacuation of seven homes in the area of Bartlett and High streets Monday morning, according to Portland Fire Chief Robert Shea.

There were no injuries, he said.

Emergency responders had already been handling calls related to Sunday night's severe storm for most of the overnight hours when the 4:52 a.m. call came in warning of a propane odor, Shea said. The Portland Fire Department was on scene within three minutes.

Firefighters looking for the source of the heavy concentration of propane quickly found it in one of two 60-gallon propane tanks that had been damaged by a large, fallen tree in the yard of 58 Bartlett St., according to Shea.

While officials couldn't tell when the leak first occurred, Shea said they detected "pretty good meter readings" of gas in the air. That's when they evacuated seven homes in the area.

"The residents were very cooperative, though very startled when we were banging on their door," Shea said.

With neighbors safely secured, he said firefighters began to dissipate the vapors using fog patterns. That meant using water droplets, instead of a full-on water stream, to break up the vapor as it escapes from the tank, making it less dense so it can be pushed up and away instead of down toward low-lying areas.

"We did that for hours because we could not gain entry to the tank; we tried many times," he

said. "Finally we had luck shutting one off, which was really good."

Local responders were able to shut off power inside the home using the fuse box while they waited for the energy company, Shea explained.

Meanwhile, Shea said mutual aid responders from Middletown Fire Department went to Gildersleeve School to check propane levels. While the presence of gas was detected in the field, there was none in the school.

It took an hour and a half for representatives from the propane company responsible for the tanks to arrive from remote parts of the state, Shea said.

The gas was ultimately shut off at 8:25 a.m., according to Shea; residents returned to their homes at 8:30 a.m.

Eversource Energy was called at 5:05 a.m. because officials wanted to shut off power to the area, according to Shea. Representatives from the company did not arrive until 7 a.m. to shut off power to the house.

"Usually you get a supervisor within 25 minutes," Shea said.

He said Middletown Fire Department was called initially because of limited manpower due to some trucks that were delayed by road blockages near Glastonbury.

Six years ago, a propane leak led to an explosion at a home in town that seriously injured Lt. Todd Ghent. The incident occurred at 194-196 Summer St. after a backhoe hit the valve of an underground propane tank.



Firefighters use fog patterns to dissipate vapors from a propane leak in a tank that was damaged by a fallen tree during Monday morning's severe storm.

# Both Parties Ready for Election Day in Marlborough

by Julianna Roche

Marlborough residents will head to the polls next week to show support for their chosen candidates – which include 34 residents from various parties contending for 26 open seats across the different boards and commissions in town.

Voters will also have the opportunity to vote on two ballot questions regarding charter revision this year – which include amending the town meeting on the annual town budget to an all-day referendum with machine voting from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., and allowing for automatic charter review intervals every 10 years. A full story on charter revision appears elsewhere in this issue of the *Rivereast*.

\* \* \*

For the Board of Finance, three candidates, including newcomer Democrat Deborah Bourbeau, and Republicans Midge Denno and incumbent Susan Leser are vying for the two vacant seats. The three were profiled in last week's *Rivereast*; here is a quick summary.

Leser has been a resident in Marlborough for the past 30 years and served 12 on the Board of Finance – which she said will be an advantage to the board if reelected, in addition to her years of experience working in government banking.

“We need town officials who are experienced and knowledgeable to guide Marlborough,” she said, adding she will “ensure that the needs of all residents are represented” while setting the budget, as well as the mill rate.

Denno meanwhile, has served as an alternate on the Board of Finance for the last four years, and spent three years on the Planning Commission and eight on the Commission of Aging in years past.

“The money crunch is going to be the largest issue, because decisions will have to be made whether that's [sending out] additional taxes or making cuts,” she said last week.

Denno has 33 years' experience working as an auditor in specialty niche markets – such as schools, libraries and municipalities – for the St. Paul Fire & Marine Insurance Co., which she said will help in making necessary decision to “keeping taxes affordable” and providing “excellent” education and town services to residents.

Bourbeau, running as an independent on the Democratic ticket may be a newcomer to town politics; however, she has lived in Marlborough for 42 years and taught at Marlborough Elementary School for 35. She also served on the Richmond Memorial Library Association for six years, including four as president.

On deciding to run, she explained she has “always been very involved in town going to town meetings [and] budget hearings,” where she has consistently “asked questions or [shared] thoughts or ideas” with various boards.

Bourbeau said if elected, she plans to work with board members to develop “creative” solutions for problems surrounding the municipal budget and “maintaining the town the way it is, if not better.”

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For the local Board of Education, two incumbents on the Republican side and three Democrats round out the ballot, with each of the five candidates hoping to fill one of the three open seats. As with the Board of Finance, these candidates were profiled in the Oct. 20 issue of the *Rivereast*.

On the Republican side, incumbents Sue Rapelye and Wes Skorski – who is running unaffiliated – are seeking re-election, with both agreeing their experience will be an invaluable asset to the board.

Skorski, who has served on the board for the last four years, spent three of those years as vice chairman, in addition to serving on the Policy Subcommittee and the Public Outreach

Subcommittee.

“As a board, I'm proud of what we have accomplished and that we operate as a team where every decision is critically and thoroughly evaluated and deliberated,” he said, adding that he hopes he is re-elected to “continue the work we've done,” by addressing issues such as “taxpayer concerns” and “declining enrollment.”

Rapelye, who has served on both the local school board and the RHAM Board of Education for two years, said she remains “100 percent committed” to her role and to guaranteeing “our children receive the best education possible.”

The incumbent furthered that if reelected, she'd like to work with the community to ensure that education remains “current” for children.

“The education of our children should not only consist of the core subjects, but programs and subjects that create diversity in thought so that our children become well-rounded and prepared for life,” Rapelye said.

The Democratic ticket consists of three candidates, including two newcomers to town politics – Michelle Padilla and Logan Tyler – and Julie Revaz. (Padilla and Tyler could not be reached for comment.)

Revaz served on the most recent Charter Revision Commission, as well as a member of the Economic Development Commission since June of this year.

She explained that her time working as a social worker for the Connecticut Judicial Branch for nearly 20 years has given her “direct service experience,” particularly as a therapist to children, adolescents and their families, and will be valuable to the school board if she is elected.

“I wanted to live in Marlborough for more than a decade,” Revaz said, adding she bought a house in town two years ago. “I plan to be here for a very long time, and wish to serve the

Board of Education to help ensure that Marlborough remains a place of peace and prosperity for residents today and in the future.”

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Also present on the ballot next week are two candidates running for two seats on the Board of Finance as alternates, including Republicans Bob Cindric and Liz Gorgoglione.

Three candidates are vying for two seats of the Board of Assessment Appeals: Democrat William Lardi and Republicans David Morganson and John Varney.

For the Planning Commission four contenders are running for three spots, including Democrats Laura Hart and Chris French, and Republicans Larry Pryor and Brendon Montstream, with Democrat Matt Wilson running unopposed as an alternate.

On the Zoning Commission, six candidates are contending for three seats: Democrats Judith Denberg, Donna L.B. Koropatkin, and Wade DeCesare and Republicans Eric Colantonio, Mark Merritt and Susan McFarland, with Republican David W. Fisher running unopposed as an alternate.

Five contenders are running for three open positions on the Zoning Board of Appeals: Democrats John Grasso, Linda Estabrook, and Matt Wilson, and Republicans Corinne Machowski and Eric Kelly. Republican Joseph M. Weber is running unopposed as an alternate.

Lastly, for the Marlborough contingent of the RHAM Board of Education, three candidates are vying for two open spots, including Democrat Jean Wilson and Republicans Larry Pryor and Judy Benson-Clarke.

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Election Day is next Tuesday, Nov. 7 from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Voting will take place in the community room at Marlborough Elementary School at 25 School Dr.

# Marlborough Budget Referendums Coming Soon?

by Julianna Roche

While every other *Rivereast* town votes on its annual budget by an all-day referendum, for the last 32 years, Marlborough residents – those who can make it – have gathered at 7 p.m. to vote by town meeting, an outdated process that First Selectwoman Amy Traversa said may finally be put to bed if enough residents vote in favor of changing the budget vote to an all-day referendum next Tuesday, Nov. 7 at the polls.

“This is a really big deal,” Traversa said this week. “We currently have a one-hour meeting [to vote on the budget], where people who have children, or the elderly who don't want to come out at night, or those traveling or on vacation, may not make it [and] that's unfortunate.”

With an all-day referendum, she added, “people can vote at their convenience,” including by absentee ballot, which residents are currently unable to do.

“All those people who were disenfranchised will now be able to vote and participate,” Traversa said. “Anytime you get more votes, you get a better budget. That's what's really

important.”

This year, a whopping 269 voters showed up to vote on the town's 2017-18 annual budget, which is just 6.33 percent of Marlborough's total registered voters.

The move to an all-day referendum, Traversa said, would allow for more voters to partake in the voting process.

In addition to moving to an all-day budget vote, residents will also vote next week on a second charge which asks that the town charter be amended to provide for an automatic review intervals every 10 years.

“We need to establish a commission to at least review it that often. There may be no changes necessary and that's perfectly fine, but consider this scheduled maintenance,” Traversa said. “It really does need to happen [and] a lot of changes still need to be made to the charter.”

Among those changes for example, she said, are reviewing portions that are inconsistent with current state statute, or making clarifications to items such as the role of the Board of Fi-

nance and the separation between the town and school's responsibilities.

“The charter has never been updated or changed,” Traversa furthered. “Not only does it not account for changes in society such as more women working or people traveling for work, it doesn't take into account changes in technology.”

The process of revising the town charter, something that hasn't been done in over 30 years, had originally gained momentum in June once the Board of Selectmen appointed nine Marlborough residents, including three Democrats, three Republicans and three independent/unaffiliated members to a Charter Revision Commission (CRC). It was then charged with reviewing four central questions regarding the charter – each of which had also been outlined in a petition started by residents Louise Concodello and Richard Denno in March, which urged selectmen to get the ball rolling on the charter revision process.

The charges originally reviewed by the CRC

included voting on the town budget by an all-day referendum rather than a town meeting, instituting automatic charter revision with prescribed intervals of at least 10 years at which time it would be revisited, allowing each recommendation of the revised charter to be voted on independently of other recommendations, and increasing the Board of Selectmen from three to five members (currently seated on the board are Evelyn Godbout, Dick Shea, and Traversa).

Traversa explained that while, due to time constraints, only two of those charges would be on this year's ballot, she's “publicly stated a couple times” that following the election – likely in early 2018 – a second commission will be formed following the election to do a more in-depth review of the charter.

“A lot of people don't even know this is going to be on the ballot,” she said. “The honest truth is that to a lot of people it's not important until something goes wrong ... [but] we need to plan for the future.”

# Twenty-Five Candidates Contend for 14 Seats in Colchester

by Julianna Roche

When Colchester residents head to the polls next week, they'll be voting not only to elect a first selectman and various board members, but also on six questions regarding proposed changes to the town charter – such as amending terms of office to four years, eliminating the treasurer position, and changing the town clerk and tax collector positions from elected to appointed.

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

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As for the first selectman race, incumbent Republican Art Shilosky had been running unopposed until last week, when Colchester Independent Party (CIP) member James McNair announced he would be running as a write-in candidate to give voters a choice. (For write-in candidate votes to count, voters must both write McNair's full name legibly in the space provided on the ballot and fill in the voter bubble.)

McNair has been an active member in town politics since 2001, holding positions on the Board of Finance, Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC), and the Board of Education, while Shilosky has served four years on the Board of Finance, 27 on the Zoning Board of Appeals, and two on the Board of Assessment Appeals.

Details on the race were featured in an article in last week's *Rivereast*, along with the

Board of Selectmen candidates, of which there are five people running for three positions.

Incumbent Republicans Stan Soby and Denise Mizla, along with incumbent Democrat Rosemary Coyle, Democrat James Ford, and CIP member David Gesiak are all hoping to land a seat on the board.

Soby, who began his career in public service to Colchester in 1980, has served on a variety of boards and commissions, including being appointed as interim first selectman twice – once in 2007 following Jenny Contois' resignation and again after Gregg Schuster's resignation in 2014.

Mizla and Coyle have served as selectmen for four and 10 years each, respectively, and both have noted that seeing the construction of a new senior center through is one of their priorities if reelected, as well as maintaining town services and the school system.

Ford, who moved to Colchester in 1996, has served on the PZC for 11 years, Board of Selectmen for four and Economic Development Commission (EDC) since 2014. He explained that if elected, dealing with "the financial crisis" and expanding the town's "commercial development base to stabilize taxes" would be two of his goals.

Newcomer Gesiak works as a local contractor and served on the PZC from 2013 until this past July, when the Board of Selectmen unanimously voted to remove him from the commission for allegedly encouraging and abetting the evasion of rightful property taxes. (Gesiak denies encouraging people to evade their taxes.)

He said he viewed "restoring public trust"

in the Board of Selectmen would be his main priority if elected.

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For the Board of Education, five candidates are looking to fill four open seats, including incumbent Republican Mitchell Koziol, who has served two terms on the school board, and newcomers Republican Christopher McGlynn, and Democrats Mary Bylone, Amy Cahill Domeika, and Nilda Negron. Profiles of the candidates were also featured in a previous *Rivereast* issue.

Koziol said that if re-elected, finding a new superintendent, navigating the effects of the state budget, and ensuring "technology and innovation" is made a priority in the school system would be important.

McGlynn, 33, said that his background working as a project and relationship manager with a focus in finance, as well as having multiple children in the school system, would allow him the "immediate perspective" if elected to the board.

Bylone, Cahill Domeika and Negron agreed that finding a permanent superintendent made the top of the list for challenges facing the board – in addition to balancing the school's budget.

Cahill Domeika, who grew up in Colchester before moving away for college and returned in 2005 with her husband and son, said she would be looking for a candidate "who is in it for the long haul" to offer "continuity" and "stability" to parents and students.

Bylone, who served on the Conservation Commission for two years, said her experience working as a healthcare executive "positions"

her to transfer skills such as "sound fiscal management" and "running complex organizations" to the school board if elected.

Negron meanwhile, explained her experience working as an attorney handling juvenile and probate matters will help her "advocate for the collective rights, interests, and well-being of the students" in Colchester.

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The Election Day ballot also features six running for three spots on the Board of Finance: Democrats Michael Hayes and Michael Egan (for the two-year vacancy), Republican incumbents Andrea Migliaccio and Roberta Lepore, and CIP members Deanna Bouchard and Tearice Peters (for the two-year vacancy).

In the Board of Assessment Appeals race, there are also five people running, but only two vacancies: Democrats Denise Turner and Andrew Cournoyer, Republican David Anderson and CIP members Kerri Gesiak and Joyce Maine.

Lastly, Democrat John Ringo is running for re-election as town treasurer against Republican Brenden Healy.

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Election Day is next Tuesday, Nov. 7. Polling locations in Colchester are separated by district. District 1 can vote at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.; Districts 2 and 4 can vote at Abundant Life of the Assemblies of God Church, 85 Skinner Rd., and District 3 can vote at Bacon Academy, 611 Norwich Ave. Voting takes place from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

To see what district you are in, go to [tinyurl.com/y7ujz92z](http://tinyurl.com/y7ujz92z).

## Colchester Synagogue to Host Juried Artisan and Craft Show

by Julianna Roche

Over 30 regional artisans and crafters will pack into Congregation Ahavath Achim this Sunday, for the synagogue's first Juried Artisan and Craft Show – where everything from wood turned bowls and fused glass products to handcrafted jewelry and homemade jams, pickles, and spices will be sold to the public.

The event's co-founder, Arlene Snyder, said the show came about as "a unique way" to help raise funds for the congregation. She explained that she and another congregation member, Dina Zuckerman, approached Rabbi Ken Alter about the idea in August and have been planning for the Nov. 3 event – which will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., with free admission – ever since.

"Usually it requires a lot more to time [to plan an event like this], but we've been pretty lucky," Snyder said, adding that she feels the show will be "very interesting" as each artisan and crafter was "hand-picked" for their unique and high quality products.

Alter agreed.

"It's nice because we've never had anything like this at the synagogue," Alter said. "We were looking to have some unique programs this year so when Arlene suggested it, we were thrilled we could offer such a wonderful thing."

The show will feature a broad range of talent, including handcrafted jewelry artists such as Kerri Lee, owner of Lake View Creations, who said she became involved with making jewelry to distract herself when her husband fell ill this year.

"I've always been creative, but I never found anything that fit," she explained, adding that most of her professional experience is in retail management and customer service. "This came along at the right time. ... It's exciting just letting [your] creativity come out and I love doing it."

Lee sells everything from bracelets, necklaces, and earrings to bookmarks and keychains, and her prices range from \$6 to \$28 for various items.

"I keep it affordable, but I make classy, good-quality stuff," she said, adding that her jewelry is also nickel, cadmium and lead-free.

Other artists, such as Karen Fox – who, over a year ago, partnered with Catherine Hough of SiS Designs which sells unique, spiritually inspired or nautical themed jewelry, cutting boards, wrapped knives, and more – said she and Hough's "off-the-cuff" products are also kept affordable ranging between \$15 and \$30.

Fox, who previously worked making custom guitars for Ovation Instruments in New Hartford, added that their items are unique and made from whatever materials "speak" to them.

"We're coming to a time in our lives where we are realizing we are not being fed by corporate America or the traditional careers that we're used to and we're starting to follow our hearts," she said. "Catherine and I do these types of fairs and different farmers markets just to get out in the community and talk to other people doing the same thing, and bounce ideas off each other."

Fox added that "everybody is so unique in their own way," that there's "no threat" being among a group of three or four other jewelers, because "there's enough abundance for everybody."

For self-taught wood-turner Kenneth Guarneri of My Turn, who turns various one-of-a-kind bowls and products, uniqueness is what drives his craft.

"I don't make duplicates. It takes the fun out of it for me ... I make what I want, when I want," he said. He added, however, that he does use serial numbers and photos to keep record of each of his pieces (he's closing in on his 1,000th right now), so, for example, if someone wants a set of four salad bowls, they can check the bowl's serial number and Guarneri can make a set similar.

Guarneri said that, since many customers consider his crafts to be pieces of artwork to showcase in their home, rather than use, items can range anywhere from \$25 to \$600, depending on the size and how long it took to make.

In addition to wood-turners and jewelry artists, Snyder explained the event will also feature Sharon Gatzke of Now and Then selling oilcloth accessories, Sue Russo of Pillowcases by Sue, offering designer pillowcases, Heather



**This Sunday, Nov. 3, Congregation Ahavath Achim will host its first Juried Artisan and Craft Show, featuring over 30 regional crafters and artisans, such as wood-turner Kenneth Guarneri, shown here with a handmade bowl.**

Abel of Purring Pottery with wheel thrown dinnerware, and Raymond Medeiros Jr. of Raymond Medeiros Wood selling hand-carved wood spoons and other culinary items, music by harpist/guitarist Stephen Bennett, and more.

Snyder said she and Zuckerman have "done the groundwork, but it's [the artists'] show," Snyder said. "They're what's going to make this successful."

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The Juried Artisan and Craft Show fundraiser

will be held at Congregation Ahavath Achim Synagogue at 84 Lebanon Ave. on Sunday, Nov. 5, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. A bake sale and light lunch will be available for purchase. The show is indoors and handicapped accessible. Parking and admission to the show are free. Not all vendors accept credit card, so be sure to bring cash/check. An ATM is located nearby at Citizens Bank on 111 Norwich Ave.

For more information, call Snyder at 860-989-0985 or Zuckerman at 860-886-3736.

# Hebron Fire Police Division Captain Retires

by Lauren Yandow

After 38 years with the town's fire department, Patie Griffin, 72, is retiring.

"It's hard for me to leave because I have such mixed emotions," said Griffin, who has served as Fire Police Division Captain for the last six years.

The close-knit community of Hebron has the "best people you ever want to work with," she said.

Griffin and her late husband, Jerry, moved to town 40 years ago. She began serving as the town's assistant dog warden, which she said was a "very rewarding" job. From there, she went on to work at RHAM High School for over 20 years as an in-school suspension monitor. Other than working for the fire department, Griffin said working with the kids at RHAM was her favorite job.

In 1979, Griffin joined the fire department as a firefighter emergency medical technician. She was just the second woman ever to join the Hebron Fire Department. Twenty years later, she began serving on the Fire Police Division as a lieutenant, before working her way up to captain six years ago.

Through her many years with the department, Griffin said she's held multiple roles in the community. She served as an engineer at Company One, a medical response technician, and a Fire School mentor. Griffin is a member of the Willimantic Tri-County Fire Police Association and for the last 38 years has attended the State Firemen's Convention.

"Everything I did, I enjoyed doing it," she said.

In 2010 and 2012, Griffin was honored as Fire Police Division Member of the Year. Griffin is a certified fire truck driver, pump operator and ambulance driver.

When Jerry retired from his job with the United States Postal Service, he joined his wife

at the fire department, as an engineer.

"Jerry and Patie were a good team," said Hebron Fire Department Fire Chief Nick Wallick. The pair knew what to do every time in order to efficiently get a job done, Wallick added.

Griffin has always brought the attribute of "doing the right thing" to the fire department, said Wallick. She also brings the awareness of discipline to the job, he added. The second a firefighter jumps out of the truck, they know what to do, he said because as a member of the fire department, one must be "self-supervised."

Griffin is "always contributing [and] dedicated to the community," he said.

Indeed, that community dedication seems to run in the family. Like his mother and step-father, Griffin's son, Kris Kolaczko, is a firefighter, emergency medical responder and driver for the Colchester Fire Department.

As a member of the Hebron Fire Department, Griffin chaired the town's 50th Anniversary Committee and helped run the fire department's Ladies Night, which was a 'thank you' celebration for the wives of firefighters. She also has given back to her community by participating in Christmas parties at RHAM High School and the town's annual Thanksgiving turkey dinner for seniors.

Griffin is the "center of the party," and involved in everything in town, said Donna Hartan, the fire department secretary. "She is just a sweetheart; she'll do anything for anyone [because] that's Patie," Hartan said.

"I find that if you're nice to people, they're nice to you," said Griffin, who is known to regularly carry around biscuits for dogs she meets while on the job and sweet treats for kids in town during the holidays.

Griffin also gives back to the community outside of the fire house. In fact, she said paying it forward is her "favorite" thing to do. Griffin



**Fire Police Division Captain Patie Griffin, of Amston, is set to retire after 38 years with the Hebron Fire Department. Here, she stands in front of the department's service truck, which is dedicated to the memory of her late husband, Jerry.**

fin said when she is out doing errands she regularly will pay the bill for the customer behind her in line. Her favorite place to do so, she said, is at the dollar store. "It's so rewarding when you can help people," she said.

Come next week, Griffin will be heading for retirement on a plane to Florida with her cat, Spartacus, in tow. "I'm going to miss every-

body because I have a lot of fun in town [and] everybody knows me," she said.

A final word she'd like to stress is the importance of getting involved in one's community by giving back and volunteering time.

"I did it for 38 years," she said. "What can you do? Beat my time."

## Storm Winds Fan Flames in Hebron House Fire

by Lauren Yandow

As wind gusts and heavy rain blasted through town on Sunday evening, a vacant single-family home at 85 North St. became engulfed in flames at the height of the storm, according to a news release from Deputy Chief Dan Huppe of Hebron Fire Rescue.

A passerby noticed the blaze and reported it – but, Huppe said, the home was "gone" before firefighters even arrived.

According to the news release, Hebron firefighters were dispatched to the scene at 9:54 p.m. Upon arrival four minutes later, firefighters were faced with "heavy fire conditions" throughout the second floor and attic space and a live electrical line was lying across the driveway, which blocked initial attempts at approaching the fire.

"The scene was difficult to say the least," Huppe said Wednesday. In such a severe fire, he said, 50-mph winds "[are] not your friend." Sunday night, the high winds paired with torrential rain made the firefighters move more slowly and deliberately, he added.

While on the scene, in an attempt to minimize potential injuries, a decision was made to only attack the flames from the outside, said Huppe.

The decision apparently worked, as no

firefighters were injured battling the blaze.

With no fire hydrants in the area, water tankers from nearby towns rushed to the scene to provide mutual aid, the news release stated. Firefighters from Andover, Bolton, Glastonbury, Manchester and Marlborough responded to the property to help.

A total of 30 firefighters worked "aggressively" for about an hour to gain control of the fire and successfully extinguished the flames at 10:40 p.m., the release said.

Huppe said the cause of the blaze "appears to be electrical in nature," but noted the town fire marshal had not released his final findings.

According to the news release, the single family home had been unoccupied for more than five years, and was vacant at the time of the fire. Records indicate the home was built in the early 1800s and was of balloon-type construction, which the news release said led to "rapid flame spread in the wall spaces" when combined with the high storm winds.

The home is a "total loss," Huppe said Wednesday. Going forward, the town building official will determine a time frame for closing up the property, he said, and the building will eventually be knocked down.

## Election Day is Next Tuesday in Hebron

by Lauren Yandow

As Hebron residents head to the polls next Tuesday, they won't just be voting for new selectmen and school board members; they'll have the option to vote for new representatives on other town boards and commissions too.

Both Republican Town Committee Chairwoman Catherine Marx and Democratic Town Committee Chairman Ted Bromley are in full support of each of their slates.

"Our [Republican] incumbents and newcomers alike have remarkable abilities and talents to share," said Marx.

She said the slate brings passion as a team of "civic-minded individuals working for the greater good," said Marx. This election season, the Republican candidates have brought forth ideas and campaigned to serve their community, she added.

Meanwhile, Bromley said the entire Democratic slate is "comprised of great candidates." He said each is "highly-qualified" and has "a vision to move Hebron in a positive direction for the future." The Democratic candidates are all willing to work with any person – regardless of party affiliation – to ensure town residents receive the "highest level of service," he added.

Four candidates are seeking one of three available seats on the Board of Finance: incumbent Republican **Peter Kasper**, Republican **Diane Del Rossom**, incumbent Demo-

crat **Malcolm Leichter**, and Democrat **Janet Fodaski**.

As for the Board of Assessment Appeals, three candidates are vying for two open seats: incumbent Republican **Philip LaBianco**, Democrat **Peter Byram**, and incumbent Democrat **Theodore Bromley**.

Vying for three available seats on the Planning and Zoning Commission are five candidates: incumbent Republicans **Natalie Wood** and **Devon Garner**, Democrats **Tiffany Thiele** and **Daniel Grady**, and **Jeffrey Cormier**, who is cross endorsed.

Current Town Clerk **Carla A. Pomproicz**, a Democrat, is cross-endorsed and running unopposed.

Two newcomers are running for the Planning and Zoning Commission Alternate. On the Republican ballot is **Joseph Colletti**; on the Democratic ballot is **Cindy Kelly**.

As for the Zoning Board of Appeals, four candidates are vying for three open seats: incumbent Republican **Michael McCormack**, Republican **Martin Halloran**, incumbent Democrat **Anthony Novek**, and Democrat **William Malitsky**.

Running unopposed for the sole open seat as Zoning Board of Appeals Alternate is Republican **Jim Petrozza**.

The November municipal elections take place Tuesday, Nov. 7.

# Obituaries

## Portland

### John Farrell

John "Jack" Farrell of Portland, and previously of Great Kills, Staten Island, N.Y., passed away peacefully at his home Monday, Oct. 30.

Jack had an amazing life of service to others. He lovingly raised six children with his best friend and wife of 62 years Jean, who predeceased him. He was a New York City police officer who rose to the rank of Detective First Grade before he retired. He always had compassion for those he served "on the job." He would often regale family, friends, neighbors and absolute strangers with stories from his police work.

Jack adored his three older siblings (Alice, Frank and Geri), all of whom predeceased him. He was always young at heart, singing songs and joking up until literally his last breath.

He started life as a Brooklyn Dodgers fan, while working at Ebbets Field as an usher. (He helped Mrs. Robinson find a seat in a segregated Ebbets Field on her first visit to the stadium.) However, he became a diehard Boston Red Sox fan after he moved to Connecticut. He loved his annual visits to Fenway with his grandchildren.

He would often remind those around him that he "had a good run." He did. He will be greatly missed.

His son John predeceased him, and he leaves behind his daughter Jeanne and her husband Richard Sandrib of Litchfield; his son Kevin of Orangeburg, N.Y.; his daughter MaryLou of Colorado; his son Stephen and his wife Michelle of New Jersey; and his son Michael and his wife Christine of Glastonbury; and his 16 grandchildren, Nicole, Lauren, Nicholas, Christina, Sean, April, Peter, Brian, Eric, Megan, Meghan Jean, Caitlin, Ashley, Connor, Matthew and Kaylee.

Services will be Friday, Nov. 10, at 10:30 a.m., at St. Mary's Church in Portland.



From courant

## Andover

### Brenda A. Somerset

Brenda A. (Tedford) Somerset, 77, of Andover, beloved wife of 49 years and best friend of the late William "Bill" Somerset, passed away Thursday, Oct. 26, with her family at her side.

She was born June 10, 1940, in West Hartford, daughter of the late Walter and Ethel (Scott) Tedford. Brenda spent her childhood years in Manchester, Vernon and North Haven. She was a 1958 graduate of North Haven High School and earned her Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education and a Master of Science degree as a reading consultant from Central Connecticut State University. Brenda was a member of Kappa Delta Pi National Honor Society. She began her teaching career in 1962 as a kindergarten teacher at Lake Street School in Vernon and served as a reading consultant at Northeast School for over 20 years. Brenda was the elementary reading specialist for the Vernon Public School district until retiring in 2001. Following her retirement, she continued to be an educational consultant part time in Vernon and Andover.

Brenda was active with the National Federation of the Blind, serving as secretary, for the East of the River Chapter and she was a longtime dedicated member and a teacher of lessons at the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-Day Saints in Manchester. Brenda enjoyed watercolor painting and pen and ink sketching. She especially enjoyed creating thumbprint pictures for her colleagues at their time of retirement. Brenda was an avid UConn women's basketball fan, she relished every second of every game and she cheered enthusiastically at all of her grandchildren's sporting events.

Brenda is a loving and devoted mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Her family, friends, her church family, and colleagues were very important to her. She loved to spend time with all of them and she will be deeply missed.

Brenda is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Todd and Sandy Somerset of Jackman, Maine; her daughter, Jamie Lindley of Andover; a stepdaughter, Carolyn Wilkens and her husband John of Florida; her seven wonderful and special grandchildren whom she deeply loved, Ashley and Christopher Somerset, Taylor and Ryan Lindley, Jason and Leigh DeFreitas, and Kara Wilkens; and two great-grandsons, David and JJ DeFreitas. She also leaves her two sisters, Joan Tedford of Manchester and Jean Brooks of Arizona. Brenda will also be missed by her two loyal canine companions, Willow and Onyx.

At Brenda's request, there will be no services or calling hours.

Memorial contributions may be made to the National Federation of the Blind, East of the River Chapter, c/o Marie Beaulier, 41 Applegate Lane, East Hartford, CT 06118, or to the charity of the donor's choice.

To leave an online condolence, visit [holmeswatkins.com](http://holmeswatkins.com).



From courant

## Portland

### Catherine Zampini

Catherine (Lastrina) Zampini, loving and beloved mother, Grammy and sister, peacefully passed away at Cobalt Lodge Tuesday, Oct. 31. She was born in Portland, CT, the daughter of the late Sebastian "Mike" and Margaret Capsalis Lastrina.

Catherine graduated from Portland High School and attended the Morse School of Business. She worked many different jobs to help support her family, as a bank teller at Riverside Trust and Hartford National Bank, as well as a children's assistant librarian at the Buck Library and secretary at Middletown Family Practice and Daniels Oil. In later years, she volunteered her time at the Welles-Turner Memorial Library in Glastonbury and the Portland Public Library.

Catherine was a devout Catholic and communicant of the Church of St. Mary in Portland. There she was a member of the Ladies' Guild, Our Ladies of Lourdes Mothers' Circle and Church Choir. She was also a member of AARP, the Glastonbury Senior Center and the Friends of the Portland and Welles-Turner libraries. She was an avid sports fan and although she enjoyed watching the New York Yankees and UConn men's and women's basketball teams, her favorite teams to watch were those her grandson, Max, played on.

In earlier days, Catherine enjoyed taking trips with her husband John, her daughter Linda, her sister and brother-in-law Marie and Joe Bordonaro, and their boys Joey and David and her parents. Later, she enjoyed trips to the casino with John, Joe and Marie, and trips with John anywhere, especially for ice cream. She also enjoyed reading, knitting, making puzzles, going to Max's baseball and basketball games, his piano recitals and school events, as well as bus trips with the senior center, Church of St. Mary and AARP.

Catherine is survived by her daughter, Linda Tomaiuolo, her husband Marc and her grandson Max, who always made her face light up and who gave her great comfort at the end of her life. She will continue to watch his games, listen to him play the piano and celebrate his achievements from the V.I.P. section with his other grandparents. Catherine also leaves her sister, Marie Bordonaro of Portland and many nieces, nephews and cousins whom she loved dearly and was always happy to see. In addition, she leaves her many, many friends from the Church of St. Mary and community as well.

Catherine was predeceased by her husband and love of her life John; her mother and father-in-law, Frank and Ann Zampini; her brother-in-law, Joseph Bordonaro Sr.; and her brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Frank Jr. and Louise Zampini.

Catherine's family would like to thank the very caring staff at the Cobalt Lodge Health Care and Rehabilitation Center in Cobalt. Catherine was a kind woman who will be greatly missed and fondly remembered by all.

Funeral services were held from the Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown, Thursday, Nov. 2, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial that morning at the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland. Burial was in the St. Mary Cemetery, Portland. Friends and family called Wednesday, Nov. 1, at Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown.

In lieu of flowers, it would be Catherine's wish for donations to be made to the Choir of the Church of St. Mary, 51 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480 or the Smith Elementary School Library, 142 Rutherford St., New Britain, CT 06051.

To share memories or send condolences to the family, visit [doolittlefuneralservice.com](http://doolittlefuneralservice.com).



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## East Hampton

### Erwin E. Dill

Erwin E. Dill, 92, died Wednesday, Oct. 25, at Lawrence + Memorial Hospital, after a brief illness. He was born in East Hampton, on March 23, 1925, to the late Emil and Olga (Fritz) Dill.

Erv proudly served in the U.S. Army during World War II; he worked as a heavy equipment operator for Machnik Bros. of Old Lyme for many years. Erv was an avid outdoorsman, he loved hunting, fishing, gardening and building birdhouses. He was also a Boston Red Sox and UConn women's basketball fan, but truly a farmer at heart.

Erv leaves his loving wife of 67 years, Jean (O'Conner) Dill of Lyme; his brother and sister-in-law, Fred and Barbara Dill of East Haddam; also his son and daughter-in-law, Roger and Betsy Dill of Lyme; his daughter and daughter-in-law, Karen and Kim Leach of Fitchburg, Mass.; also two granddaughters, Jennifer Dill of Lyme and Kathryn Murdock of Fitchburg, Mass.; a great-grandson, Ethan Kelly of Fitchburg, Mass.; along with many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by two sons, David B. Dill and Robert T. Dill; four brothers, William, Gustave, Herman and John; and his sisters, Helen Savitsky and Adeline Dill.

There will be calling hours from 4 to 6 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 5, at Fulton Theroux Funeral Home, 13 Beckwith Ln., Old Lyme, with a brief service immediately following.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Lyme Ambulance, P.O. Box 911, Hadlyme, CT 06439.

## Portland

### Elizabeth Patricia Schultz

Elizabeth (Betty) Patricia Schultz, 89, of Ft. Myers, Fla., formerly of Portland, passed away peacefully, surrounded by her loving family, Thursday, Oct. 5, in Florida. Born in Pittsburgh, Pa., on Aug. 25, 1928. She was predeceased by her mother, Francis Hawk Lykens Gallagher and Matthew Gallagher.

Betty was also predeceased by her beloved husband of 56 years, Arthur R. Schultz. She was a graduate of Portland High School. Betty enjoyed spending time with family and friends. She was an avid golfer and enjoyed playing cards.

She is survived by her three children and their spouses, Linnae and Timothy Gould, David and Kelley Schultz, and Brian and Suzanne Schultz; her grandchildren, Michael and Yayee Gomola, Dana Schultz and Connor Schultz; her step-grandchildren, Rosemary Gould, Jeffrey Gould and Laura Gould; sister-in-law Shirley Schultz; nephew Robert Schultz and niece Piper Tobler.

Funeral services will be held Monday, Nov. 6, at 11 a.m., in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will be in the Swedish Cemetery, Portland. Friends may call at the funeral home Monday morning from 9:30 a.m. until the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers, gifts in Betty's memory may be sent to Hope Hospice House, 9470 Health Park Circle, Ft. Myers, FL 33908 or Portland Fire Department, Portland.

Courant

## Colchester

### Eric Arundel

Eric Arundel, 58, passed away Saturday, Oct. 14, after a brief illness.

Eric lived most of his life in Colchester and New London and was an Army veteran. He took care of his mother until she passed away. Eric was funny, smart and had a smile for everyone.

Eric is survived by his siblings, David Arundel of Ashburn, Va. and Susan Hartmann of Gales Ferry; and several nieces and nephews.

He will be laid to rest with his mother, Selma Arundel, in the Colchester Linwood Cemetery. A memorial service will be announced at a later date.

Donations may be made to the American Cancer Society in lieu of flowers.

## Middle Haddam

### Ruth C. Steffman

Ruth C. Steffman, 91, of Middle Haddam, wife of the late John A. Steffman, died Friday, Oct. 27, surrounded by her family. Born Aug. 1, 1926, she was the daughter of the late James and Catherine Capsalis. Ruth had been a resident of Middle Haddam most of her life.

Ruth is survived by her loving family and two sons, William and Elizabeth Steffman of East Hampton and James and Leslie Steffman of Portland. Ruth enjoyed being a grandmother to eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Ruth is also remembered by several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held today, Nov. 3, at 1 p.m., in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Burial will be in the family plot in Pine Grove Cemetery, Middletown. Friends may call at the funeral home today from 11:30 a.m. until the time of the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Connecticut Children's Medical Center, 282 Washington St, Hartford, CT 06106.



*From the Editor's Desk*

## Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Election Day is next Tuesday, Nov. 7, which means it's time for my annual "for crying out loud, take time to vote" rant.

Next week's election may not seem particularly sexy. We (painfully) decided the presidency last year, so that won't be on the ballot. It's also not time to vote on the governor, Congresspeople, or even offices like the state House or the state Senate. In fact, I've yet to see one election ad on TV – and I'm guessing you haven't either.

But that doesn't mean the vote is unimportant. Don't let our bulky letters to the editor section this week fool you; municipal elections get relatively little attention, and in turn typically little turnout. It's considered an average year in most towns if they get even 30 percent voter turnout; a lot of towns settle for 20 or 25. Compare that with the years the presidency or the governorship is on the line, when you see rates in excess of 70 or even 80 percent.

It's not fair to the folks who run for local office, it's embarrassing – and it shows a general lack of understanding of how government works.

Of course what the president or Congress or the governor does or does not do affects your life; but what's done at the town level affects your life as well – and typically much more immediately. The people you elect to your Town Council or Board of Finance or Board of Education – those are the people who shape your town's services, and projects, and schools that mold your children's minds.

Want municipal garbage pick-up? Want some new materials at the library? Want your taxes to go down? Want that road full of potholes to finally get repaved, or a new streetlight added at the end of that dangerous cul-de-sac? Want to see more commercial development in town? Want to see less of it? Heck, want to send your kids to a new state-of-the-art high school instead of that dilapidated one from the 1960s that you went to?

Town officials are the key to all of that. The decisions your elected town officials make have a direct impact on your life, both right away and in the years to come.

Which is why there needs to be a heck of a lot more than one of every four registered voters casting a ballot on Election Day. I'd love to see turnout at the level you see in presi-

dential elections. The polls are open for a whopping 14 hours – from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. Is that still not a wide enough window? Absentee ballots are still available. Not registered to vote? These days, it's easier than ever – you can even register to vote on Election Day itself, and still cast a ballot.

Municipal elections matter. A lot. So for crying out loud, take time to vote.

\* \* \*

Hopefully after next Tuesday one annual rant you won't have to hear anymore is this chestnut I typically dust off every May: "Why in the world does Marlborough decide its budget at a town meeting?"

Unlike all the other *Rivereast* towns, when spring rolls around and it's time to decide on a town budget for the following year, Marlborough residents gather at 7 o'clock on a Monday night to vote 'yes' or 'no.' The other towns treat the budget vote with the importance it deserves – they hold referendums, stretching from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., where taxpayers can show up and cast a ballot, just like on Election Day. It's a much better system than Marlborough's antiquated town meeting. When the 2017-18 budget passed this past June, 269 people showed up to vote. And that was actually the best budget vote turnout in nearly a decade.

To put things in perspective, 269 is 6.33 percent of the town's 4,249 registered voters. Do you really want not even 10 percent of the public deciding what the town budget will be?

Fortunately, one of the questions on the ballot next Tuesday would, if voters say 'yes,' change the budget-vote process from the current town meeting to a full-day budget referendum. It's one of a couple different charter questions Marlborough voters will be faced with next week. I freely admit Marlborough needs a full-scale, thorough charter revision, and I certainly hope First Selectwoman Amy Traversa abides by her past pledges to start the full revision process after the first of the year – but next week's proposed charter change is a very good start.

It's time to make the Marlborough budget vote available to all. It's time to send that budget to referendum.

\* \* \*

See you next week.

## East Hampton Police News

10/17: At approximately 12:18 a.m., officers were dispatched to a motor vehicle accident near the area of 79 Wopowog Rd., in which a motor vehicle drove off the road, hit a guardrail and then fled the scene, East Hampton Police said. After an investigation, Cody Jeffers, 29, of 6 Mott Hill Rd., was arrested and charged with evading responsibility, police said.

10/19: Blair Binge, 64, of 17 Emerson Rd., was arrested and charged with failure to obey a stop sign and driving under the influence, po-

lice said.

10/20: Lisa Harvey, 49, of 70 Ferry St., Middletown, was arrested and charged with violation of a protective order, police said.

10/22: Ari Jan Slossberg, 54, of 72 Abbey Rd., was arrested and charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

Also, from Oct. 16-22, officers responded to 16 medical calls, two motor vehicle crashes and seven alarms, and made 28 traffic stops.

## Colchester Police News

10/25: Colchester Police said that at approximately 9:32 p.m. they received a report of a theft from a residence on Mill Hill Road. Police said the victim reported someone entered her house and took miscellaneous items. There were no signs of forced entry and the house was not rummaged through, according to police. The case remains under investigation.

10/26: Colchester Police said Heather Norris, 21, of 43 Cherry Tree Ln., was arrested and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and illegal possession of a narcotic.

10/27: State Police said Charles B. Scott, 35, of 147 Chestnut Hill Rd., was arrested and charged with first-degree failure to appear.

## Theft from Hebron Construction Site

State Police are investigating an alleged theft from a construction site in town last week.

According to police, the alleged break-in and theft from a construction site on John Horton Boulevard occurred sometime between 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 26 and 6:30 a.m. Friday, Oct. 27.

Police said entry to the site was made through a cut fence and several locks were cut off storage lockers, with several rolls of 14 GA Romex wire stolen.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Hebron Resident State Trooper Officer Daniel Greenwood at 860-465-5400.

## Vehicle Rollover Leaves Two Injured in Marlborough

by Julianna Roche

A single-vehicle crash on Route 2 left both a driver and passenger with possible injuries on Monday, Oct. 23, police said.

According to police, at approximately 3:18 p.m., Sharmaine C. Holland, 40, of 22 Curry Ln., East Hampton, was driving her Mercedes Benz 4MATIC on Route 2 heading westbound, when about three-tenths of a mile west of Exit 13, the vehicle went off the left shoulder of the road and struck an embankment with its left side.

Police said the vehicle then rolled over onto its roof and continued rolling onto its passenger side before coming to a stop and leaving both Holland and a passenger – Marina Y. Reyes-Colon, 41, of 1243 Ella T. Grasso Blvd., Apt. B, New Haven – with possible injuries.

Both Holland and Reyes-Colon were transported by Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department to Marlborough Clinic, police said, and Holland was issued an infraction for failure to drive in the proper lane.

## Portland Police News

10/23: James Millet, 54, of 57 A.P. Gates Rd., East Haddam, was charged with evading responsibility, improper use of marker plate, operating under suspension, insufficient insurance, operating unregistered motor vehicle and following too close, Portland Police said.

10/24: Wayne Neumann, 45, of 19 Commerce St., was charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

10/26: Angela Chadsey, 23, of 59 Warner Ave., Middletown, was charged with fifth-degree larceny, police said.