

RIVEREAST

# News Bulletin

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**You Ain't So Tough...** Matilda (Allison Pietruszka of East Hampton) isn't intimidated by her headmistress, Miss Trunchbull (Kristine Pekar of East Hampton), though the rest of the students remain terrified. *Matilda: the Musical* will be presented the next two weekends by Podium Players. See story, additional photo on page 28. Photo by Jordan Werme.

## Marlborough Has a New First Selectman

by Karla Santos

Marlborough First Selectman Amy Traversa is out after one term in office, as Republican Gregory Lowrey bested her at the polls on Election Day Tuesday.

According to the secretary of state's office, Lowrey collected 1,294 votes to Traversa's 875. As Traversa was the third-highest vote-getter among all first selectman and Board of Selectmen candidates, she will still have a seat on the board, serving as the lone Democrat on the three-person board. Republican Joe Asklar, with 1,264 votes, was also elected to the board.

"I feel good," Lowrey said. "I feel grateful that so much teamwork, many hours of team work paid off with the decisive victory. I'm hopeful that the results, the strong results will bring the town together. I'm very grateful for the support in the form of time that the volunteers offered and the use of their land for signs and their chatting up their friends and family before the election, I'm super grateful for that kind of support and I look forward to the future."

Lowrey said that one of the first things he wants to do when he starts his new role is to listen and strengthen relationships.

"I think the first thing to do is a listening campaign," Lowrey said on Wednesday. "I don't know if it's going to be a matter of weeks, maybe as long as 30 days but it's important for me to kind of just get the rhythm of what issues are hot right now. My first question last night was are there contracts sitting on the desk? With the time we are running, I need to know about those time sensitive matters but I'm optimistic that the transition will be smooth."

Lowrey said that as soon as he is sworn in, he can start his new job as First Selectman. While he doesn't know exactly when he'll be

sworn in, he said that if it happens during the next few days, he can start the job by next Tuesday.

The *Rivereast* contacted Traversa multiple times for comment, but she did not respond by press time. However, she did share a message on Facebook Wednesday morning.

"For four years I have had the honor of being Marlborough's First Selectman, and am sincerely grateful for the opportunity," she wrote. "I'm proud of all that was accomplished and I will continue to support positive change in the town. Thank you to all those who stood alongside me [and] offered their friendship and support as we made some lasting changes. I offer my congratulations to Greg, Joe, and all those who were elected to office last night, and I thank all the candidates who stepped forward to run, regardless of the outcome. I will offer my help towards a smooth transition and do what I can to keep making Marlborough better. With my sincere thanks for a wonderful opportunity, Amy."

Asklar said he is "flattered" with the amount of people that voted for him, adding that he will do the "absolute best job" he can do.

"I'm happy that the town residents have spoken," Asklar said. "Someone said to me 'you are going to be our new boss' and I corrected them right away. I said 'I'm not the boss, it's the people who put us into office, who voted for me, they are the boss.' Greg Lowrey, I think is going to do a great job and I think he and I as a team will help move the town into the future and maybe get rid of some of the conflicts we've had in the past."

Asklar said he wants to help move the town into a good economic future.

See **New First Selectman 2**

## Democrats Take Control in East Hampton

by Mike Thompson

Democrats fared well at the polls in East Hampton Tuesday, taking control of both the Town Council and the Board of Finance, and retaining their majority on the Board of Education.

"The public voted and spoke, and now that we have taken on the task we have to carry on our responsibility and deliver for the people of East Hampton," re-elected Town Council member Kevin Reich said Thursday.

Reich said developing and expanding the town water system will be a top priority, and that councilors will need to work to obtain state funding for the project. He also said residents are "very interested in the educational program" in town – and added that "we cannot forget about Lake Poctopaug."

He referenced the nine-point plan to address the algae problems that have plagued the lake in recent years, and said "we're going to embark on a few of those projects very shortly."

As for why he thought residents decided to

go Democrat this year after Republicans had control of the council for the past two years, Reich said, "I think there is some unhappiness with the way things have been progressing." He added that the Democrats had a plan two years ago to improve the quality of the lake, but without council majority it was difficult to enact.

Reich also theorized the town budgets the past couple years have not gone over well with voters.

The only two candidates not to win seats on the seven-member council Tuesday were Republicans Melissa Engel and Josh Piteo. Both were seeking re-election.

Engel, who had been the council chair, expressed disappointment but also optimism with the new-look Town Council.

"They've got a good group there," she said Thursday. "Would I like to have been there? Sure. But I'm not unhappy at all with the people sitting at that table."

Engel said she was even present Wednesday

night when the new Town Council briefly met to elect new leadership. James "Pete" Brown was elected chairman, and Dean Markham was named vice chair.

While there has been chatter on social media suggesting the negative response to a recent *Rivereast* ad placed by the East Hampton Republicans contributed to their defeat Tuesday, Engel said she hopes that's not the case. The ad in question pictured the storefronts of several businesses in the Village Center, contained the words "Supporting the Village Center" at the top, followed by "Vote Republican" in the middle.

"If the ad did [contribute to the Republicans' loss], that's too bad," Engel said, adding that she stands by the advertisement. "I guess I will always hang my hat on always having done the very best. There's nothing I've done that I would be ashamed of."

Referencing the criticism on Facebook, she added, "It's amazing what a small group of

people can do to someone's political reputation without all the facts."

But Piteo conceded Thursday "it's a possibility" the advertisement had something to do with the Republicans' downfall at the polls.

Piteo, who said he had nothing to do with the ad, said he "didn't think it was awful," but added that the message "wasn't explained well," which may have led to people feeling the businesses were being unfairly politicized.

"We live in hyper-partisan times," he said. "People imagine things that aren't there."

Piteo also theorized the lack of any Chatham Party candidates this year played a part in the Democrats' victory as well. For the first time in the past several years, the third party did not nominate anyone for any seats in town, and as a result, Piteo said, "the Chathams went back to what they were, liberal Democrats. When they had no party to vote for, they voted Democrat."

See **Democrats page 2**

**New First Selectman cont. from Front Page**

“That would probably be the first thing and then bring some harmony amongst the greatest asset we have,” Asklar said. “The greatest asset that we have in this town is our employees, the people who work for us... We have to embrace them and make it work and if they don’t meet the standard, educate them, train them, to bring them up to the standard that we want.”

Ruth Kelly was the candidate that received the most votes for a Board of Education seat. She ran alongside the newly elected or re-elected candidates Michelle Thomas, Louise Concodello and Patrick Pabouet. There will also be a new board member, Judithe Kaplan, who obtained her seat as a write in candidate with eight votes for a position that was available.

“I was just thrilled that the people that were on the board, have stayed on the board because we work very well together,” Kelly said. “Once the election is over there is no party. It’s just nine people trying to work together for the best for the kids. So I was glad that what we had is intact and I’m anxious to meet the new board member.”

Ken Hjulstrom, chairman of the Republican Town Committee and member of the Board of Finance, said he was impressed with the 50%

voter turnout and with the level of community interest. Hjulstrom was re-elected for the Board of Finance. Other candidates who were either newly elected or re-elected for the Board of Finance include Dieter Zimmer, Deborah Bourbeau and Liz Gorgoglione. Michael Natri was the alternate candidate for the Board of Finance.

“I know I speak for myself and my fellow candidates on the Republican ticket when I say how much we all appreciate the trust the voters of Marlborough placed in us by supporting us at the polls,” Hjulstrom said. “We are all pledged to proving that this level of trust was not [to] be misplaced.”

Newly-elected or re-elected members of the Planning Commission include Mark Stan-kiewicz, Brett Hallden and Ashley Meyer, who will serve as the alternate member.

Newly elected or re-elected members of the Zoning Commission include Kevin Asklar, who won 100% of the votes. He ran alongside Joseph Concodello Sr. The Zoning Commission alternate is John Murray.

The seats of the Zoning Board of Appeals were won by Chris Lawson and Joseph Weber. The board’s alternate member is Michele Anne Kacy.

**Democrats cont. from Front Page**

And now with the Democrats in charge, folks may be in for a rude awakening, as Piteo said he feels taxes will “absolutely” go up.

“In good times, people like to spend, and the Democrats are more than willing to help them out,” he said.

Another re-upped Council member, Democrat Barbara Moore, said she feels her party energized voters.

“We ran a feisty campaign,” she said. People “realize we want to work hard. They voted for us because of that, I think.”

## Outcry Continues Over Demolition of East Hampton House

by Sloan Brewster

Public outcry continues to mount over the demolition of East Hampton’s mid-1700s Joel West House for a parking lot, but owner Ed Jackowitz insists he has done nothing wrong.

The home, which was located at 35 West Point Rd., beside American Distilling & Manufacturing Co, was razed last week. After it was torn down, residents and members of the Historical Society cried foul, suggesting they could have saved it – possibly by dismantling and moving it.

This week, Jackowitz, the owner and CEO of American Distilling, said he would have considered that only if it would not have affected operations at the distillery. He also expressed surprise over the reaction to tearing down the house, which he has owned for 20 years.

“Nobody said one word to me about that house in 20 years,” he said. “And you could hardly see it from Route 66.”

According to historical records, the home was built in the mid-1700s, and “was one of the oldest and most historic homes in the town.” American Distilling was the site of the first iron foundry in East Hampton, started in 1742 by Abijah Hall. “This foundry was the precursor to all of the bell factories in town, making it the future settlement of the town. Abijah Hall Jr. built the historic house on the adjacent property, then sold it to Deacon Joel West.”

The West home had a distinctive flared roof, and stood as a landmark, showcasing late 1700s architecture, according to the records. It also had a secret room, used as a station in the Underground Railroad.

Allison Murphy Tokarz, whose family owned and lived in the house from 1975 to 2000, said the room was located behind a hidden panel.

Not so, according to Jackowitz. “We didn’t find any secret hiding places in this house and quite frankly this house was a complete disaster – much worse than I thought,” he said.

When they moved, tenants who lived in the

house told Jackowitz they could no longer afford to heat it, Jackowitz said. He blamed the high costs on having to run sump pumps to keep the basement dry and warm fans to prevent pipes from freezing.

Tokarz said when they sold the house to Jackowitz, it “was not dilapidated at all.”

She described the six-foot fireplace with a beehive oven, two-foot wide chestnut wood paneling in the living room and the unique and “beautiful flared roof and hand-hewn beams.”

She also said that Jackowitz promised her parents he would never destroy the house.

Jackowitz said he did not remember the conversation and that even if he said it, times have since changed.

“That’s 20 years ago,” he said. “Times change and I have no recollection of that at all.”

According to Sandy Doran, president of the Chatham Historical Society, there are several historic houses in town and while they haven’t officially been listed as such, the Society is going to make sure that such a “tragedy” never happens again.

This week, the *Rivereast* received an onslaught of emails and letters to the editor about the demolition of the house. There has also been clamor on Facebook about the destruction.

Chatham Historical Society member Margaret Faber – who serves on the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council – forwarded the *Rivereast* several email chains, including between her and a Department of Transportation representative. In the email chain, Mary Baier, principal engineer of the DOT Office of Construction, stated that the bridge replacement project that Jackowitz has cited as a reason for his plans to put additional parking where the house stood was delayed and will not start until next summer.

“This anticipated impact to the [American Distilling parking] lot is currently scheduled around late July to early August,” Baier wrote.

Be that as it may, Jackowitz said in a phone

call Tuesday, utility relocation that has to be completed in advance of construction has already begun. The utility work will also have an impact on traffic coming and going to the distillery.

He repeatedly invited the paper to come out and take pictures of stakes that he said were in the ground and “the real proof of the pudding” that the project was underway.

“The project has started,” he said. “They are going to be cutting Route 66. I would say it could start any day now.”

DOT spokesman Kevin Nursick said the project, which will replace abutments on the bridge over Pocotopaug Creek, will take place next summer but confirmed that utility work had begun.

Built in 1913, the bridge is made of steel railroad tracks imbedded in a concrete slab, Nursick said. “Back then it was whatever [materials] we had, but it worked and it worked well.”

The masonry abutments – or the foundation of the bridge – are in poor condition and need to be replaced, he added.

“It’s not a safety issue, it needs to be replaced,” Nursick clarified.

The plan is to condense construction into a two-week period “instead of having [a] long term headache inducing traffic closures,” he said. To achieve the accelerated schedule, the DOT will bring in pre-fab material, rather than making them at the site.

When the bridge is under construction the business will lose 16 parking spaces, Jackowitz said, adding that it already lacks adequate parking with visitors often forced to park on West Point Road or sometimes across the street at Classic Auto.

Parking in front of the building will be moved to accommodate 35 trailers coming and going throughout the day as well as tankers, he said.

“Obviously closing the bridge down and with 35 trailers getting in and out of the front of this

building, it’s going to be a nightmare,” he said.

While two driveways to the plant will be moved to accommodate construction of the bridge, Nursick said he did not think the utility work would impact traffic to the business.

“The utility work they are doing now is outside his business hours,” he said.

Jackowitz disagreed. “When they start cutting across Route 66, they’re definitely going to impact our traffic,” he said.

Another concern Faber raised in the emails was that the garage is still there, despite the demolition of the house, which she said was a zoning violation.

Jackowitz said the garage is currently being used for storage but he plans to take it down.

Town Planning and Zoning Official Jeremy DeCarli said there was no violation.

“They have 180 days to complete demolition,” he said. “As long as it gets demo-ed in the 180 days, we won’t have a compliance issue.”

DeCarli, who said that Jackowitz has also told him he wants to demolish the garage, said he had applied for a zoning change from residential to commercial for the lot where the garage is and that the application would be decided by the Planning & Zoning Commission at a meeting Wednesday.

“If the zoning is changed they won’t have to [take it down], but they want it down,” he said.

Jackowitz asserts that “people just don’t understand the facts” and said anyone who understood the situation would also have taken down the house.

“If any one of those people were sitting in my chair, they couldn’t have made any other decision,” he said. “If people would ever care to come and sit down and address me like a gentleman, they would understand what we had to do. If anybody sat in my seat, they would’ve understood that there wasn’t one thing that could’ve been done differently.”

# Bransfield Wins Ninth Term as Portland First Selectman

by Mike Thompson

While other *Rivereast* towns saw Town Hall shake-ups this week, Portland voters Tuesday decided to largely stick with the status quo, as First Selectman Susan Bransfield easily won a ninth term in office – and all five of the selectmen seeking re-election were also successful.

Bransfield, a Democrat, collected 1,821 votes Tuesday, according to the secretary of the state's office. That's more than double the 719 won by third-party candidate Shawn Manning. Another third-party candidate, Lambros Lambrinides, was third with 171 votes.

"I'm very pleased by the results," Bransfield said Wednesday. "I think it was a strong statement by the voters."

Bransfield said she believes voters like the "projects initiated by the town" – such as the Brainerd Place mixed-use development and the burgeoning Riverfront Park – and feel the town is headed in the right direction.

"I've had a lot of people come up to me and say they were happy," Bransfield said.

She pointed to the victories of all five incumbent Board of Selectmen as further evidence residents are satisfied.

Indeed, Democrats Ralph Zampano, James Tripp and Louis Pear all won re-election, as did Republicans Michael Pelton and Edward "Rick" Sharr.

The seventh seat on the selectmen board appears, at press time, to belong to Republican Michael "Julio" Hernandez, who had just a nine-vote lead over Democrat Andrea Alfano

when the ballots were counted Tuesday. Town Clerk Ryan Curley said Wednesday the vote is close enough to trigger a recount, which will be held Tuesday, Nov. 12.

The winner of the recount would replace Ben Srb on the board; Srb was the only member of the board to not seek re-election. Regardless of who wins, though, the seven-person board will remain Democrat-controlled.

Over at the Board of Education, incumbents Laurel Steinhauser and Margaret "Meg" Scata, both Democrats, won, as did Democrat Lauren Christensen. The three Republicans on the ballot lost, including current board member Timothy Lavoy.

Christensen said Wednesday she was "obviously very excited" by the victory, though she admitted she wasn't surprised.

"I was pretty optimistic going in," she said, "because I worked very hard and I knew I was a great candidate."

Christensen said one of the first things she wants to help accomplish is finding a new superintendent of schools.

"I feel there's not a whole lot that can get done until we choose a leader for the schools," she said.

Overall, turnout in Portland was 2,903 voters, or 46% of those registered, Town Clerk Ryan Curley said. That's up from the 38% that turned out for the last municipal election in 2017.

"There was a lot more campaigning this year than in years past," Curley said when asked to explain the increase in voter participation. "I would attribute it to more active candidates. ... I would say there was more energy this year."

Not everyone was thrilled with the turnout, though. Lambrinides said it still meant more than half of the voters stayed home Tuesday – and that, as a veteran, this distresses him.

"These people just don't do any due diligence at all," he said of the voters.

As for Bransfield – whom Lambrinides has been quite critical of – collecting more than six times the number of votes he did, he said it's a sign that "people really don't pay attention to their town."

Lambrinides has unsuccessfully run for first selectman in the last several elections – and he didn't rule out another bid in 2021.

"We'll see," he said. "I'm not saying 'no;' I'm not saying 'yes.' As long as my health is okay, I'll consider it."

Manning, who ran for first selectman on the newly-formed Back to Basics ticket, said he wasn't surprised by Tuesday's outcome.

"We all knew it was a long shot," he said, adding, "I'm pretty happy with the numbers I got, considering I had no endorsements from any other parties."

Manning said he and six others started the Back to Basics party in January, so this election was very much a learning experience. And

he plans on taking what he's learned, building on it, and running again for first selectman in 2021.

"This was from day one a long-term party; this wasn't a one-and-done," he said. "I think what we did is we were able to bring up a choice that I don't think [the voters have] had in a while."

Manning said his campaign ran into a Democratic "machine."

"We still have a strong Democratic party in town," he said. "The numbers of their Democratic committee have been there for years; Susan's been there for years. They have more resources than we have."

Still, Manning seemed heartened by the experience.

"I think we did real well for starting out," he said, adding that the goal now for himself and the party's other organizers is to "learn from it, and just keep going forward."

In other races Tuesday, John Dillon, Thomas Malecky and Peter Castelli won seats on the Zoning Board of Appeals; Republican Richard Basso bested Democrat Kenneth Kearns for a Zoning Board of Appeals five-year term beginning this year; and Democrat Joan Giesemann topped Republican Robert Casati to win a Zoning Board of Appeals five-year term that begins in 2020.

Curley, who ran unopposed, won another term as town clerk.

## Matilda Comes to East Hampton This Weekend

by Karla Santos

The adventures of a precocious 5-year-old girl who discovers she has telekinetic powers will light up the East Hampton High School stage the next two weekends as Podium Players presents *Matilda: The Musical*.

Based on the hit London and Broadway musicals, which in turn were adapted from the 1988 children's book by Roald Dahl, the play features a cast and crew from all over the area.

The play will run Fridays, Nov. 8 and 15, and Saturdays, Nov. 9 and 16, at 7:30 p.m. each night, at EHS, 15 N. Maple St. There will also be matinee shows at 2 p.m. Saturdays, Nov. 9 and 16, and Sundays, Nov. 10 and 17.

The show is produced by Jordan Werme of East Hampton, choreographed by Amanda Nelson of Colchester, and musically directed by Jackie-Harris Stone of Farmington.

Werme, who serves as president of *Podium Players*, is also part of the cast. He performs the role of the escapologist. He noted that while the book was also turned into a 1996 movie, the musical version actually has very little in common with it.

"I just recently saw the movie for the first time and I was surprised by how different they are," Werme said – with the biggest difference, of course, being the lack of songs. Critics have also said the movie strayed from the book, while the musical, which won seven Olivier awards in 2012 and five Tony awards a year later, is seen as more faithful to the Dahl classic.

The show is about the 5-year-old girl in the book, Matilda, who is poorly treated by her parents.

"Her parents just didn't want her, didn't know what to do with her and didn't really understand her," Werme said. "They are very superficial people and Matilda ends up being this really, bright, intelligent girl who enjoys, reading, stories and they just don't know how to relate to her."

Later in the story, when Matilda discovers she has telekinetic powers, she's able to do some

tricks with her mind.

"The play follows her from the time she's born until she enters school and overcomes a really unpleasant headmistress of the school who is really mean to all the students," Werme said. "Trunchbull is the head mistress' name. Trunchbull is played by Kristine Pekar. Matilda has one teacher that encourages her and supports her and Matilda and her teacher Miss Honey form a bond and they kind of work together to navigate Matilda's life."

The cast of the play includes community members of all ages, Werme said.

"It is a perfect show for that kind of thing," he added. "We have cast members ranging from 7-years-old up until adults and everything in between. We have lots of experienced performers, lots of very accomplished singers and actors, but we also have people that are doing this for the first time and everybody gets to learn from each other and meet new community members."

According to Werme, the cast includes about 45 people from East Hampton, Colchester, Portland and surrounding areas.

"We also have people from as far as New Haven," Werme added. "A show like *Matilda* draws a lot of interest from people all over the place."

This is the first time Werme has produced a full-scale musical, he said.

"It has been a creative challenge and it's giving me a new perspective on what actually goes on behind the scenes in order to bring a show like that, to any musical, but specially a show like this which is really technically complicated," Werme said. "All the different elements that go into it and being able to bring everything together so that it shows up on stage in a way that is engaging, interesting and something that the audience can really follow and really get invested in the journey that triggers."

Werme said his favorite part about community theater is the community part of it where there may be neighbors acting together and



Residents of East Hampton, Portland, Colchester and other towns are working together as the cast of *Matilda: The Musical*, presented by Podium Players Community Theater of East Hampton. The show will have eight performances, all being held at East Hampton High School. Pictured in rehearsals this week are Kate Werme, Jenna Gagne, Keith Cummings (who played Mr. Wormwood), Maryn Yost, and Amanda Nelson. Photo courtesy of Michelle France.

people the community wouldn't know had such talents.

"You have people that you see every day but you don't really think about that maybe they can sing, maybe they can act, maybe they can dance and you are going to see a community theater show and you see your neighbors and professional people, plumbers, doctors, lawyers and coaches and all kinds of people getting up on stage and working together and showing their talent and their dedication," Werme said. "That's my favorite part, just seeing those people come together to work on a project like this is really wonderful."

Allison Pietruszka, 13, is the main character of the show, Matilda.

Pietruszka said she has been acting in plays

since age five and she enjoys this particular show.

"It's really fun, it has got awesome special effects and the songs are challenging but they are really fun," she said.

Pietruszka also said that one of the most challenging parts of *Matilda* are the monologues.

"I have several monologues so memorizing them was a little difficult," she said.

And while she faces challenges, her reward is when it's all done and ready to go.

"I love seeing it all come together," she said.

Tickets for *Matilda: The Musical* are available at podiumplayers.org, EventBrite.com, or at the door. General admission tickets are \$18, seniors and children 17 and under are \$15.

# Bylone Tops Shilosky for Colchester First Selectman

by Karla Santos

Colchester, meet your new first selectman: Mary Bylone.

Bylone, a Democrat, won the First Selectman race with 53.51% of the votes. She was running on the ballot with First Selectman Art Shilosky, a Republican who received 46.49% of the votes.

The *Rivereast* reached out to Bylone for post-election reaction but she did not respond by press time. Tuesday night, the Facebook page “Mary for Colchester,” posted words of victory along with photos of a celebration.

“Tonight, you did it,” the post reads. “We won this race because voters like you stood up and voted to move Colchester forward. Thank you to everyone who voted and supported this campaign. You have made all the difference, and I cannot thank you enough.”

The *Rivereast* also reached out to Shilosky for comment but he also did not provide an answer by press time.

The Board of Selectmen race was won by Denise Turner, Rosemary Coyle, Denise Mizla and Taras Rudko. Rudko ran as a Republican and as an Independent. The votes he received

from both parties are what led him to the board.

The Board of Finance seats were taken by Michael Hayes, Michael Egan and Nilda Negron.

The Board of Education also has some new or re-elected members. Sue Hickey, Jessica Morozowich and Mary Tomassi are the candidates that will be serving.

The seats for the Board of Assessment Appeals were taken over by Andrew Cournoyer, Christos Stravoravdis and Jeffrey Brainard.

Rosemary Coyle received the most amount of votes for the Board of Selectmen seat. She said she is always honored to be re-elected.

“I enjoy being in public service,” Coyle said. “I work hard for the town and I’m looking forward to seeing the senior center completed.”

She said she is happy she will be able to work with Bylone to help move Colchester forward. She also said this is the first time in 10 years the town has had a Democrat as first selectman.

“I think it’s an exciting time for us as a democratic team,” she said. “I believe in working in a bipartisan matter and that’s how we get things

done in Colchester. We work together and it’s all about Colchester and it’s all about the decisions that we make that are in the best interest of the town, that’s why I run, that’s why I’m there and I’m delighted to have the trust of the citizens of Colchester and be re-elected.”

Michael Egan, the top vote-getter among Board of Finance candidates, said the team of Democrats feels very good about the election results.

“What we are looking to do is we want to serve,” Egan said. “And to serve, we want to walk together, we want to basically work across party boards, we want to work with the other parties, we want to come to the solutions and what we want to find are solutions that are the best for the town of Colchester.”

Egan said the seniors have waited enough so he wants to be able to advocate for the senior center construction to move forward.

“We do have the land, we have the committees in place, they have their charge, they are moving forward making sure the project moves forward deliberately,” Egan said. “The seniors in town have waited long enough to have a re-

ally high-quality facility. The programs that are being provided to our elderly population in town are great, it’s just the fact that they should have a high-quality facility that really helps accomplish all the things that the commission on aging and the senior center are trying to do.”

Brenden M. Healy, chairman of the Republican Town Committee and also the outgoing town treasurer, said he was disappointed but not surprised about the election results. He was sharply critical of current Republican leadership, which in July declined to endorse Healy and outgoing selectman Stan Soby for re-election to their respective seats.

“Colchester Republicans have been winning for the past 10 years. However, we changed strategies and lost. Our new experts should be sued for political malpractice,” he said.

“I believe we lost the election back in the summer when we had a contested caucus,” Healy continued. “That’s when Stan and I were ousted from the ballot. It was clear at that time that there was a division in the party and some folks wanted to go in a different direction.”

## Colchester Residents Ok Tax Plan for Fuel Cell

by Karla Santos

Residents last week approved a 20-year tax stabilization agreement that will advance a major fuel cell project in town.

The vote was on an agreement with Bloom Clean Energy Company, LLC for the payment of the personal property taxes of a \$35 million fuel cell the company is planning to build in town.

First Selectman Art Shilosky said Monday the agreement was “unanimously passed.”

“If it didn’t pass, I was going to take the temperature of everybody in that room,” he quipped.

The plan is to build the fuel cell at 160 Old Amston Rd., a 13-acre parcel owned by Eversource. Bloom Energy will lease the land for 20 years.

According to a memo from Town Assessor John Chaponis to Shilosky, Chaponis explained the 10-megawatt fuel cell is expected to bring to town a total of \$9,110,707 in personal property taxes.

“Bloom is requesting that the town take the estimated \$9,110,707 that they would pay over the 20 years and stabilize that amount into 20 equal annual tax bills of \$455,535.36,” the memo said.

Residents who attended the town meeting,

which according to Shilosky were about 35 people, presented some questions about the project but they were unrelated to the tax stabilization agreement.

“They fully understood that,” Shilosky said.

Chaponis answered most of the questions at the meeting, Shilosky added.

The energy generated by the fuel cell is not intended for any particular property owner and will be sold back to Eversource for use on the grid.

Shilosky said Bloom Energy might be organizing a seminar forum between Thanksgiving and Christmas. And while there is no set date yet, the event would be open to the public and will include some time for questions and answers.

According to Shilosky, the next step is for Bloom Energy to go in front of a regulatory board.

“They are in the process of doing that right now and once that’s done the next step for them is to get permits and start working,” Shilosky said. “They are very eager to do so. I think this is a win-win for the town and it’s going to help us stabilize our taxes also because it’s a 20-

year-plan and I think is better than what’s normally done for our taxes because this is personal property [taxes], this is not a building so it’s a little bit different.”

Shilosky said that while there are many options in terms of what to do with the revenue once the town starts to receive it, he was already thinking of his own proposal.

“My personal idea is that I’m going to recommend tax stabilization for the town of Colchester and purchasing some well-needed fire apparatus equipment – fire trucks, fire ladders, fire pumpers,” Shilosky said. “Our equipment is getting old and it needs to be replaced. That would be my recommendation to the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance.”

Whether that proposal will be taken up by Shilosky’s successor remains to be seen. Shilosky was voted out of office Tuesday – a day after he spoke with the *Rivereast* for this story – and replaced by Mary Bylone.

Selectman Denise Mizla said the meeting “was very successful.”

She also said one of the things she likes about the project is that “it’s helping with bringing natural gas to Colchester.”

That part of the project is already being worked on, Mizla said. She said natural gas lines are already being installed on Route 324.

Like Shilosky, Mizla has her own idea as to where she would like to see the revenue of the project.

She said she would suggest this revenue to go to the town’s general fund.

“I’d prefer it just to go to the general fund and then it could actually reduce taxes for people,” Mizla – who was re-elected Tuesday – said. “That can be used to lower the mill rate. I think it could be used just to reduce the mill rate or at least keep it low or stable.”

The idea is to help stabilize the mill rate and keep the taxes low, she said.

“Keeping taxes low is a big want from the community so I think this will go well towards doing that and of course there’s always emergencies that crop up so it’s always good to have that, the fund, the general fund,” she added.

Mizla also said that when budget season approaches there might be more discussions about where that money may end up. She said she doesn’t know when the first payment would be but believes it may happen in 2020 or 2021.

## Hebron Voters Approve Field Purchase from St. Peter’s

by Sloan Brewster

Hebron voters have approved the \$130,000 purchase of St. Peter’s Field from St. Peter’s Episcopal Church.

Approximately 60 people at a recent town meeting unanimously voted in favor of the purchase of the eight-acre parcel containing the field and a 58-space parking lot utilized by Hebron Elementary School.

On Monday, Town Manager Andrew Tierney celebrated the victory.

“It’s huge to me,” he said. “This is something we’ve been trying to accomplish since back when I came to Hebron in ’96.”

The Rev. Ron Kolanowski current pastor at St. Peter’s, said there are other ventures the charge would like to be a part of as the center of town is developed.

“It’s a huge success that benefits both the town and the church and we hope that this is the first of other collaborative efforts,” he said.

Previous attempts to purchase the property – in 2013 and 1996 – were knocked down by the parish.

Initial negotiations several years before the 2013 attempt also fell through.

According to Kolanowski, the town has

leased the field since 1941.

Tierney said he was concerned the purchase was doomed for yet another fail and that the town would be forced to build a field and put in additional parking for the school, which he estimated would run more than a half a million dollars.

“If this didn’t happen they were starting to look for more money for the ballfield,” he said.

In July 2013, then-pastor the Rev. Everett Perine informed Tierney that after “extensive meetings” with the leadership of the Diocese of Connecticut and the church’s vestry, “we have come to the conclusion that selling the ‘ballfield property’ at this time and for the monetary figure submitted by the town of Hebron is not in the best interest of our parish.”

At the time, the town had offered the church the March 2013 appraised market value of \$132,000 for the parcel.

Friday, in a chain of emails between town officials and Kolanowski, pastor at St. Peter’s, the successful passage of the purchase was lauded.

“Thank you Father Ron for your lead on this,” Tierney wrote. “The Town of Hebron is very

thankful to the St. Peter’s parish for the sale of the ballfield property. It is truly a great day in the town of Hebron.”

Richard Calarco, director of Parks and Recreation, echoed the sentiment and thanked Kolanowski.

In another email, Kolanowski informed the parish “with great joy” that residents had agreed to buy the parcel, saying it was “truly a day to celebrate.”

“This is the third time the parish has been in conversation with the town about selling the land to the town,” he wrote. “Third time must be the charm.”

The pastor said that in looking back he saw the previous decisions not to sell the land as wise for a variety of reasons, including that the church now has replaced the funds in a protected endowment.

With the endowment, the church will be able to spend the interest, but not the principal and will also have a safe spot to squirrel away legacy gifts, Kolanowski said.

“It gives us an anchor, a place to put other gifts,” he said. “We want it to be a long-term investment in the parish.”

The land, which also contains the rectory, or pastor’s residence, was given to the church in the 1800s for the use of its pastors, he said.

“It was common practice in all the churches to give the pastor a house and a ‘glebe’ – a piece of farmland that the pastor and the family would use to generate income and food for themselves,” he explained. “So originally it was a piece of land for clergy to build a house and farm the land.”

The rectory is the white house set back from Church Street on a three-acre parcel the church is retaining.

Kolanowski, who owns a house in Storrs, does not use the church provided home. Instead, the church has welcomed a family displaced by Hurricane Maria in 2017 to live there. In return, the father serves as the church’s sexton – or parish janitor.

Funding for the field will be split between the Open Space and Land Acquisition Fund and the General Fund, with \$65,000 coming from each account, Tierney said. The town currently pays \$850 a year for the lease.

“This is a win, win,” Tierney said. “This is huge for the town of Hebron.”

# Gina Marie's Turns 25 in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

Just as Cheers had Norm Peterson, Gina Marie's has Kathy Williams.

Williams, a Hebron resident and member of the Board of Education, goes to the Main Street eatery five times a week. She has been a regular at Gina Marie's for 25 years and she and her husband Fran Williams, who passed away in 2009, were regulars through four different owners at the location.

In 2013, when a bar was added to the restaurant – an idea her husband had long supported – she was quick to show her excitement for its completion.

"I was the first one to sit back there and I've kind of sat there since," she said. "Cheers had Norm, Gina Marie's has me. My friends know where to find me."

Last month Gina Marie's Family Restaurant celebrated its 25th anniversary, owners Troy and Gina Kelsey said last week. They first opened the doors on Columbus Day 1994, about a year after the college sweethearts married.

Kelsey, who received a degree in food service management from Manchester Community College, refers to himself as the chef and jack of all trades and said he has always had a passion for the food side of the restaurant business.

Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, the restaurant offers Italian dishes.

The menu has changed several times over the past 25 years and there are always daily specials to keep things fresh, the Kelsey's said. They make many of their own ingredients including fresh pasta, soups and sausage. They also prepare hand-cut steaks, grind their own beef for burgers and make their own bread, including cinnamon swirl and whole wheat.

When they choose an item for a special, they are careful to build a plate around it, pairing it with appropriate matches, Troy Kelsey said.

Sometimes specials are so well-received that they land on the permanent menu, he said. Such as Chicken Ivette, which, according to the

menu, is chicken breast dipped in egg and sautéed with bacon, spinach and Swiss cheese, served over roasted garlic mashed potatoes and finished with an apple cider and butter sauce.

"It's just really good," he said. "That's just a quirky item that was on the menu as a special and people went crazy for it."

Troy Kelsey said his favorite item to prepare is prime rib with a Jack Daniel pineapple teriyaki glaze.

"It takes hours to cook down," he said.

Gina Kelsey enjoys Veal Alla Sunnosta, which, according to the menu, is tender strips of veal sautéed with sun-dried tomatoes, artichoke hearts, garlic, fresh spinach, red pepper flakes, white wine and gorgonzola cheese, tossed with Capellini pasta.

She also likes Chicken Alla Marie, which was "made in her honor," according to her husband.

According to the menu, the dish contains chicken tenderloins sautéed with fresh tomatoes, artichoke hearts, garlic, butter, white wine, olive oil and Romano cheese, served over pasta.

Williams, whose family often joins her for meals at the restaurant, said the food is delicious. She "pretty much sticks to the same" menu items and said restaurant staff knows what to serve her before she even sits down, especially on Tuesdays when she sticks to something light in preparation for her Wednesday weigh-ins.

"The kitchen staff knows what I'm going to get," she said. "They'll prepare it, the kitchen staff will even deliver it to me."

Over the past decade and a half, the restaurant has been expanded, including the bar and the inclusion of a patio and outdoor dining, the Kelseys said. The front entrance was revamped, handicap access incorporated and more parking was added.

The next upgrade will be to the bathrooms.

"That's probably our max renovation because I think we've reached the max amount of our footprint of our property," Troy Kelsey said.

Main Street itself has also changed with new



Gina and Troy Kelsey pose at the entrance to Gina Marie's. The Main Street Hebron eatery celebrated its 25th anniversary last month. Photo by Sloan Brewster

traffic lights, sidewalks, street lighting and trees, he said.

The restaurant was also included in a 2010 \$487,000 Small Town Economic Assistance Town grant the town received to improve facades, Troy Kelsey said.

The Kelseys said that over the years, their two children – Nicholas and Kaitlyn Kelsey – have worked at the restaurant on occasion, including last Monday, when the *Rivereast* stopped in and Nicholas was working behind the bar. Kaitlyn, who attends Roger Williams University works there when she comes home.

Gina Marie's does a lot of fundraising, in-

cluding a dinner every year for AHM Family Resource Center that, over the past nine years, has raised \$40,000 for the agency.

Williams likened the staff to an extended family and said when her husband died they not only catered the after funeral dinner, but took special care of her, bringing her dinner each night.

"There are a few places in Hebron where you know that you're going to walk in and not just walk out, you're going to see everyone you know" Williams said, including Gina Marie's on the list.

## Hebron Town Clerk to Remain Elected Position

by Sloan Brewster

Referendum results are in and the town clerk will remain an elected post while other changes will be made to the town charter. At the same time, voters approved \$7.6 million in sewer upgrades and \$2.4 million in fixes to some local roads and parking lots.

Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz, who voiced strong opposition to the proposal to change the town clerk position from elected to appointed, said she was pleased.

The question failed with 1,583 nays and 602 yeas.

"Of course I am very pleased with the results but not for myself, but because it's the right thing for our town to keep the town clerk elected," she said. "Our Hebron town clerk ancestors are very happy; for more than 300 years they have been elected."

Town Manager Andrew Tierney said that while the Board of Selectmen had put forward the notion of transitioning the town clerk to an appointed position, there are "no hard feelings."

"The Board of Selectmen in place wanted the people to weigh in on it," he said. "They just wanted to put it to the voters."

Tierney said "it was loud and clear" that voters want to keep it the way it is.

In July, the Board of Selectmen decided to include the change in proposed charter revisions

to be passed on to voters at the referendum. Had voters agreed to it, Pomproicz's position would have been grandfathered.

When the Charter Revision Commission initially looked into the proposal, it had mixed reviews on whether to move forward with the changes or not, Tierney said.

The commission initially recommended that selectmen not move forward on transitioning the position, but Daniel Larson, Board of Selectmen chairman, asked it to "readdress" the recommendation.

"I personally feel that the town clerk should be someone who is hired by the town," he said. "As I said, we have a town clerk who does a great job but all of us will go the way of the dodo bird in history."

The commission returned to the board a month later with a recommendation to transition the position to an appointed one. Selectmen unanimously agreed to press forward with the referendum question on the matter.

The question of whether or not the town should adopt the remaining charter revisions, which include the elimination of advisory questions included with budget referendums, passed 1,330 to 689.

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On the results of the referendum questions on the sewer upgrade project and road and parking lot improvements, Tierney said he was "ecstatic."

The sewer question passed 1,241 to 860 and the road improvement question passed 1,557 to 580.

"I'm very happy with the results," he said. "That's going to let us move forward at a very low interest rate on some bonding."

Designs for the Phase 1 of the sewer project should be completed by late fall, Kevin Kelly, director of Public Works, said. Bidding will take place over winter and construction should start next spring.

Kelly estimated the project will take between 14 and 16 months to complete.

Phase 2 should begin in 2027.

While Tierney said the list of roads to be repaired with the \$2.4 million is yet to be determined, he said there will be some parking lot repairs done, including at schools and

The lot at the Russell Mercier Senior Center will also be repaired, Diane Griffin, Finance Director said.

A referendum question on reducing the number of alternates to the Planning & Zoning Commission from three to two passed 1,400 to 722.

# GOP Cleans Up in Hebron

by Sloan Brewster

It was a Republican sweep in Hebron on Election Day.

In the race for seats on the Board of Selectmen, two out of three winners are Republicans and all four Board of Education winners are Republicans.

Board of Selectmen winners are incumbent Gail Richmond, 79, and Peter Kasper, 55, Republicans and Marc Rubera, 65, Democrat. Board of Education winners were Amanda Veneziano, 35, Keith Petit, 41, Allyson Schmeizl, 44, and Joe Margaitis, 40.

For the RHAM Board of Education, there was an even split in Hebron, with Republican Vin Colonna, 49, and Democrat Jessica Dapsis, 48, both newcomers, taking the victory. In Marlborough, both winners – incumbents Sue Rapelye, 45, and Scott Fleehler, 48, – are Republicans.

Richmond, said with the increasing aging population combined with declining enrollment in schools, she would continue to strive for a balance between supporting schools and making sure seniors receive the services they need.

“I spent the last four years working very hard for the community that I love and live in,” she said. “I campaigned hard and it shows because

I was the number one vote getter.”

Richmond received 1,434 votes.

Richmond added that Kasper “should be a good addition to the board.”

Kasper gave credit for the Republican sweep to Republican Town Committee Chairman Catherine Marx, who, he said, supported candidates and made sure they worked together as a team.

Once he takes his seat on the board, Kasper said he will work on budget issues and looking ahead to long term planning.

“Going forward, the biggest challenge for towns like Hebron is the cuts in municipal aid from the state level,” he said.

Kasper said he appreciated all the candidates who ran.

“It’s exciting that we have an opportunity to bring some new faces to the town,” he said.

Rubera could not be reached before this story went to press but Democrat Town Committee Chair Tiffany Thiele, 38, who lost a bid for a seat on the Board of Selectmen said it was a “highly competitive” race and while “obviously, we’re a little disappointed” she said was “delighted with the large turnout” at the polls.

“I think that the town is going to be in good

hands going forward,” Thiele said. “We were definitely surprised simply because we knocked on a lot of doors and got positive responses.”

Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz said with 2,320 people casting ballots, there were more voters than usual for a municipal election. In 2017 there were 2,000 voters.

Veneziano said she plans to focus maintaining high achievement rates in the good schools in town, keeping up high test scores for local students and raising the bar.

“We did a huge sweep,” she said of Republicans. “I truly believe it was our vision, our message, I truly believe that our message came across.”

Petit joins his wife, current board chairman Heather Petit, a Democrat, on the board.

“This win, especially the Republican sweep and getting the highest vote count for Hebron Board of Education, means a lot to me,” he said.

Petit took in 1,597 votes.

He said he wants to ensure students have all the tools they need for long-term success.

“I want them to look back on their experiences in elementary school as the place where their eyes were opened to what they could achieve; a place that set them on a track to do

great things in the world,” he said.

Petit said he will also be fiscally responsible, avoid wasting money and will scrutinize budget to make sure Hebron is getting its money’s worth.

Margaitis said he was excited at the polls watching all the traffic.

He plans to keep his eyes on the water issue at Hebron Elementary School and will focus on hiring a new superintendent.

Schmeizl attributed the success of Republicans to working together as a team and said she was looking forward to working with her teammates.

Incumbent Democrat Maryanne Leichter, 67, who was on the board for eight years and on the RHAM board for four years before that, lost her seat but said she had no hard feelings.

“The people have spoken, they want a new direction and I think it’s wonderful,” she said. “It’s been a really good time serving the community for as long as I have.”

Now that some of her time has freed up, she said she would do some volunteering with AHM Youth and Family Services and care for and aunt and her granddaughter.

# Andover Voters Approve IT Upgrade

by Sloan Brewster

An Andover Town Hall IT infrastructure upgrade was approved at Tuesday’s referendum, by a 277-74 tally.

“It was a blow out,” said Adrian Mandeville, vice first selectman.

“Turnout was much better than expected,” and voters overwhelmingly supported the upgrades, First Selectman Jeff Maguire said.

Passing the upgrade to referendum was included with two other topics voted on and discussed at a special town meeting last month. The other subjects were transitioning local tax collection to twice a year and putting a new roof on the Public Works building for \$80,000.

With about 70 people in attendance, the proposal to switch to semi-annual tax collection from the current quarterly system failed with 47 nays and 27 yeas.

The proposal for the new roof passed with 64 yeas and one nay.

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The \$40,000 for the IT upgrade will be taken from the general fund, said Town Administrator Eric Anderson.

The upgrade will cover a range of issues from updating the server and getting new software for computers to changing to fiber optics from cable modems, which will increase internet speed, and transitioning to a voice over internet phone system, the town administrator said.

The idea for the fixes was the result of a com-

prehensive system evaluation completed by the town of South Windsor, which does IT services for Andover and a number of other municipalities, including Coventry and Tolland, Anderson said.

Originally the plan was to stagger the repairs, he said. Officials realized, however, that doing it that way would mean certain things would be done and paid for twice.

“It was actually cheaper to the town if we do it all in one shot,” he said. “It makes more sense to do it comprehensively and do it all at once than parceling it out over a few years.”

Prior to the vote, Mandeville voiced strong support for the upgrades, saying they were necessary in part to correct issues with the phone lines, which, he said, “work intermittently.”

“If any resident had called the Town Hall and got a busy signal, this is the start to fixing the problem,” Mandeville said. “It also brings us into the 21st century.”

The upgrades will also allow for an automated backup system in Town Hall, Mandeville said.

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The majority of discussion at last month’s town meeting surrounded the proposal to change to twice per year tax collection, Anderson, Mandeville and First Selectman Jeff Maguire said.

“That was the thing that was certainly the

most contentious issue,” Anderson said.

The majority of folks opposed to the switch were senior citizens who expressed a feeling that it would be more difficult on a fixed income to handle two large bills per year rather than four smaller bills, the officials said.

Quite a few of them stood up and voiced their opposition, they said.

Maguire said he “totally understands” why they voted it down.

“It’s something that the members of the Board of Selectmen have discussed trying to make a way for it to work for seniors,” he said.

Mandeville said if the idea ever comes up again the board will reach out to seniors to determine how to make the change in a manner with which they will be happy.

The rationale for the proposal was that the town needs to consider combining and regionalizing services with other towns, Anderson said.

“The majority of the towns are on twice-a-year schedule,” Anderson said. “We’d probably have to be on the same schedule to use someone else’s services.”

The town is in talks with Hebron, for example, about sharing some services with that town’s Public Works Department, such as tree-trimming and road-sweeping, he said.

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## East Hampton Police News

9/22: Jeffrey Green, 44, of 3 East Hayes Rd., was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, failure to drive right, interfering with an officer and second-degree criminal mischief, East Hampton Police said.

10/15: Kerri Devine, 32, of 4 Summit St., was arrested and charged with operating under the influence, operating under suspension, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of a controlled substance, police said.

10/19: After an investigation into a two-car motor vehicle accident on Route 16 in the area of Flatbrook Road, Jennifer Carter, 38, of 5 Prout St., Portland, was arrested and charged

with driving under the influence, failure to grant the right of way, possession of less than half an ounce of marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and driving with an expired license, police said.

10/25: Sean Anderson, 32, of 354 Chestnut Hill Rd., Colchester, was issued a summons for improper use of registration plate, insufficient insurance and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

Also, from Oct. 14-27, officers responded to 31 medical calls, eight motor vehicle crashes and 12 alarms, and made 33 traffic stops, police said.

## Obituaries

### Hebron

#### Michael Connolly

Michael (Miko) Connolly, 80, of Hebron, formerly of East Hartford and Ft. Myers, Fla., passed away Saturday, Nov. 2. Miko was born in Milltown, Co. Galway, Ireland to his parents, Martin and Nora (Comer) Connolly. He was the fifth of seven children—five boys and two girls. Life was hard and money was scarce but they always had food from their farm and plenty of love of family.



At a very young age, Miko had to grow up fast, taking over the household duties including caring for his baby brother when his mother was hospitalized. Adventure and travel was his desire and so at 15 years of age he headed to England to work. He continued these back-and-forth trips across the Irish Sea for many years. At last he took the biggest trip across the Atlantic. He landed in Boston Jan. 6, 1966. He headed to Hartford and found work in two days. He brought with him a strong work ethic along with the belief that education was the key to a better life.

A year and a half later, on Nov. 11, 1967, he married his "Irish Colleen" Kathleen Naughton. Together they shared their lives for 52 years. Miko started his own business in 1967, Connolly Landscaping, which he ran for many years until retiring. He worked hard to make a better life for his family. He fulfilled his goal of giving his children a good education and seeing how well they have done.

He was a longtime communicant of Our Lady of Peace Church/Blessed Sacrament Church in East Hartford and Church of the Resurrection in Ft. Myers, Fla., and the Church of the Holy Family in Hebron. He was a lifelong member of the Irish American Home Society in Glastonbury. He cherished his time in Ft. Myers, Fla., during the winter and missed his many friends and golfing buddies terribly after his stroke.

Golf was a big hobby in his life. Every year when he returned from Florida after winter, he started right back golfing with his friends at the East Hartford Golf Club. His family and friends will always remember him as an outgoing man with a big smile, full of Irish wit and grit. He gave all he could to his family.

Miko leaves behind his loving wife, Kathleen, his treasured children, Michael Jr. and his wife Toulia of Glastonbury, Joanne and her husband Joseph O'Connor of Hebron, Kathleen and her husband Joseph Carnelli of Colchester, and Sean and his wife Carol of Hebron. His greatest joy came from his 12 grandchildren who he enjoyed teasing, playing tricks on and giving them advice. They are: Anna, Teddie and Michael III Connolly; Caleigh, Ryan and Dylan O'Connor; Isabella, Cecelia, Olivia, and Julia Carnelli; Sean and Brendan Connolly.

Miko leaves behind his dear brothers and sister in Ireland: Pdraig Connolly and his wife Evelyn of Castlebar, Co. Mayo, Ireland, Theresa Farrelly and her husband Paddy of Kells, Co. Meath, Ireland and Brendan Connolly and his wife Marie of Ballincollig, Cork, Ireland, and his sister-in-law Kitty Connolly of Limerick, Ireland. He also leaves behind his brother-in-law and sister-in-law, James and Sharon Naughton of North Kingstown, R.I. He leaves many nieces, nephews, cousins, here and in Ireland. Miko also leaves behind many friends near and far, including his special Friday morning coffee club.

Miko was predeceased by his parents; his brother, Thomas Connolly and wife, Josephine Connolly of Limerick, Ireland; his brother, Joseph Connolly of Limerick, Ireland; his sister, Mary McDermott and husband, PJ McDermott of Rosses Point, Co. Sligo, Ireland.

There were no calling hours. A Mass of Christian Burial in remembrance of Miko was celebrated Tuesday, Nov. 5, at Our Lady of Peace Church, 370 May Rd., East Hartford. Interment followed the Mass in Holy Cross Cemetery (Section 2), 1318 Hebron Ave. Glastonbury.

To extend online condolences and/or share a memory, visit [farleysullivan.com](http://farleysullivan.com).

"Maybe someday I'll go back again to Ireland. If it's only at the closing of my day. Just to sit and watch the moon rise over Claddagh. And see the sun go down on Galway Bay."

### East Hampton

#### Faith Francis

Faith Francis (also known as Tracee L. Casserino) was a beautiful soul, and an amazing mother and friend. She spent so much of her life giving to others, giving her time, her care, and trying to make sure that people had what they needed.

She honored all walks of life, and did her best to encourage spiritual and personal growth in everyone whose lives she touched. She loved music, crafting, and even got into anime and steampunk stuff with her daughter. She loved her animals, and her Baby.

She passed in her home peacefully and with her family Friday, Oct. 25, leaving behind her husband, Joseph Francis, their only daughter, Cosette Francis, and her mother-in-law, Viola. She is also survived by her sister, Diane Casserino Ferrigno Beggs (Moodus); stepbrothers Clinton Webb, Jr. (Norfolk) and Jon Webb (Newington) and many cousins, nieces and nephews and beloved friends.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Ellen Ray Casserino Webb; father, Louis Casserino; stepfather, Clinton L. Webb; biological mother, Joan Mudge; sister, Patricia A. Casserino Sidell; and brother, Louis S. Casserino.

Faith grew up in East Hampton, Lunenburg, and Moodus and lived in many other places. She worked at Frank Davis Resort in Moodus, a leather and jewelry shop, and many other jobs, before becoming a stay-at-home mom and then a spiritual counselor, teacher and healer for so many.

As she would say: "I still have questions."

There will be a gathering to remember her life Saturday, Nov. 9, at 1 p.m., at the Oak Grove Community Center at 48 William F. Palmer Rd. in Moodus.

If you would like to donate to a cause in her memory, [seeingeye.org](http://seeingeye.org) supports training and placing seeing-eye dogs.

To offer condolences or get in contact with the family, you can message [library.fox@aol.com](mailto:library.fox@aol.com).

### East Hampton

#### Charles E. Lavigne

Charles "Buddy" E. Lavigne, 78, passed away Friday, Nov. 1, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Nov. 24, 1940, to the late Dennis and Louise (Flemke) Lavigne, Buddy was a lifelong resident of East Hampton.

He served our country in the Army during the Vietnam War, attaining the rank of E-4. He was a machinist at the J.C. Barton Co. in East Hampton for many years, was a skilled Ferrier, a motor cross racer, an avid hunter, carpenter, could fix nearly anything and he was even a real-life cowboy.

Buddy is survived by his daughter, MaryLynn Meyer of Fayetteville, Ga., and her husband Alan and his granddaughter, Alyssa Alley; his son, Joshua Burger of Middletown and grandsons Dylan and Luke Burger; James Baird of Claremont, N.H., whom he loved as a son; Buddy's sisters, Leanna Lavigne, Alice Langlois, and brother Dennis Lavigne; and many nieces and nephews. He is also survived by his stepdaughters, Pamela and her husband Mark Gamache, Sandra and her husband Lou Campbell, Shelly and her husband Joe Brockett, Donna and her husband Dan Patterson, and his stepson Jeffrey Bromley; also his step-grandchildren, Chad, Stacey, Nick, Luke, Tyler, Allison, Evan, Vanessa, Adrian, Lauren and Adam.

Buddy is predeceased by the love of his life Dolores "Dolly" Bromley, with whom he spent 30 beautiful years together; his sisters, Theresa Macarthur, Jacqueline Chester, Mary Barber, Margaret Braun and Kathleen Lavigne; brothers, Albert Lavigne, Arthur Lavigne and James Lavigne.

Graveside services were Wednesday, Nov. 6, at Marlboro Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks to make a donation to the New Haven Veterans Hospital at [connecticut.va.gov](http://connecticut.va.gov).

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



### Marlborough

#### Donald McElwain

Donald "Ace" Neville McElwain, 95, of Marlborough, passed away at Middlesex Hospital Friday, Nov. 1. Born in Holyoke, Mass., to Jewel Kiley and John Hazen McElwain, he attended Holyoke High School, graduated from Harvard College, Class of '46, with a BA in English and was a member of the Delphic Club.

He served as a Navy ensign during World War II on an LST in the Pacific. He lived for many years in West Hartford, volunteered at the Hartford Public Library with Literacy Volunteers and after a career in advertising moved to Northampton, Mass., to work at the Forbes Library, then to South Hadley, Mass., to work at the Mt. Holyoke Library, finally retiring to Marlborough in 2002.

He remained a passionate, wide-ranging reader throughout his life and was known as a great raconteur, for his irreverent sense of humor and deeply-held political opinions.

Predeceased by his wife Sarah Hurst Jackson and his son Mark Jackson, he will be greatly missed by his family: Jennifer and Mark Boudreau of Marlborough, Mary and Peter DiPietro of West Sacramento, Calif., Sarah McElwain of New York City, five grandchildren, Rosalee Boudreau, Mark Boudreau Jr., Lillie Lavado, John Lavado, Travis Gervais; and four great-grandchildren, Mariam, Serafina, Jason and Jasmine.

A private memorial service will be held by family and friends.



### Marlborough

#### Scott Thomas Richards

Scott Thomas Richards, 56, of Marlborough, passed away peacefully at home Sunday, Oct. 27, surrounded by family.

He was born Oct. 26, 1963 to John and Darlene Richards of Marlborough. He was a 1982 graduate of RHAM High School in Hebron and attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Scott was self-employed as an internet web-design consultant, (STR Web Designs).

A lifelong resident of Marlborough, Scott enjoyed anything mathematics, puzzles, computers, fishing, Red Sox/Patriots fan, and, of course, his time spent with friends.

Scott is survived by his mother, Darlene Richards, and brother, Shawn Richards, both of Marlborough, and was predeceased by his father John Richards.

The burial will be private at the request of the family. They would like to extend their deepest gratitude for the thoughts and condolences from his friends, family and acquaintances.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Food Bank of Marlborough, The Richmond Memorial Library or The Roy B. Pettengill Ambulance Association.

### Colchester

#### Kevin Kelly

Kevin Kelly, 53, of Colchester, passed away Wednesday, Oct. 30, after a short yet courageous battle with pancreatic cancer. Born in Bridgeport Aug. 25, 1966, he was the son of the late Robert and Joyce (Taylor) Kelly.

After graduating high school, Kevin enlisted with the United States Army, serving for several years. He married the love of his life, Teresa Sue Kelly, on Aug. 27, 1987, and the couple made their home and raised their family in Colchester.

Kevin was known as a simple man who enjoyed fishing, hunting, and spending time with his family as well as his beloved dogs. He was employed by Firgelewski Trucking and was a member of the Somerset St. James Lodge #34 in Norwich as well as the Sachem chapter #57 of the Order of the Eastern Star.

Kevin will be forever loved and missed by his wife, Sue; daughters, Jennifer Lynn (Paul) Nadeau and Shannon Rose (Richard) Duchesneau; granddaughter, Sophie; father-in-law, Royce Huggins; and many extended family members and friends. He was predeceased by both of his parents as well as his mother-in-law.

Calling hours will be held Saturday, Nov. 9, from 1-3 p.m., ending with full military honors at the Aurora McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. Burial will be private.

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

### East Hampton

#### Vincent S. Greco

Vincent S. Greco, 84, of East Hampton, beloved husband of Avril (Tanner) Greco, died peacefully at his home, surrounded by his loving family, on Tuesday morning, Nov. 5. Born June 17, 1935 in Middletown, he was the son of the late Vincenzo and Rose (Salafia) Greco.

Vincent was a proud USAF veteran of the Korean War, serving as an airborne radio operator in North Africa and Germany; he attained the rank of SSGT. Once he returned home, he began his career as a painter and decorator and was a member of the IUPAT Union of Painters. Vincent married his beloved wife Avril on Aug. 17, 1957. Vincent's greatest joy was his children and grandchildren. He loved his time coaching in the East Hampton Little League in his earlier years.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his three sons, Vincent Greco and wife Theresa of East Hampton, Steven Greco and wife Carol of East Hampton, William Greco and wife Lillian of Cromwell; his daughter Melissa Greco of East Hampton; a brother, Sebastian Greco of Massachusetts; sisters, Lucy Cichon of Nevada, Mary Way of Arizona; grandchildren, Tiffany, Samantha, Vincent, Lauren, Caroline, William, Sarah, Kate, Zachary and James; two great-granddaughters, Bailey and Riley; also many nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his two brothers, Rosario and Johnny Greco, and his three sisters, Lee Tabor, Rose Marino and Josephine Tabor.

Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, Tuesday, Nov. 12, from 6-8 p.m. Funeral services will be held Wednesday, Nov. 13, at 10:30 a.m., in the Second Congregational Church in Middle Haddam, followed by burial in Connecticut State Veterans Cemetery on Bow Lane in Middletown.

Vincent's family would like to acknowledge the wonderful care he received by staff at Newington Veterans Hospital and the West Haven Veterans Hospital. They also extend their thanks to the staff of Middlesex Hospital Hospice who enabled him to fight his cancer with dignity and caring. Vincent will be sorely missed by all.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Wreaths Across America c/o [wreathsacrossamerica.org](http://wreathsacrossamerica.org).

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

### East Hampton

#### John Dominick Perrotti

John Dominick Perrotti, of Northford, passed away suddenly Friday, Nov. 1. He was born in New Haven July 16, 1967, son of Eileen (Perrotti) Condron and the late Dominick Perrotti.

John is survived by his sister, Mimi Perrotti of East Hampton and brother Frank Perrotti of North Haven; aunts, Maureen Delahunt of Cheshire and Catherine Condron of Hamden; and his uncle John Condron of Monroe. He was predeceased by his uncles, James Condron and Frank, Michael, Charles, Anthony and Salvatore Perrotti; his aunts, Anna Caccavale, Rose Mastromarino, Susan Torcellini, Raffaella Troiano, Concetta Gargano and Mary D'Eugenio.

John was self-employed for many years and most recently employed as a produce clerk for Stop & Shop, which he enjoyed tremendously. He was extremely good-natured with a heart of gold and would do anything for those he loved or even just for a total stranger in need. John will be dearly missed by all who knew him.

Condolences may be forwarded to 36 Daly Rd., East Hampton, CT 06424.

## Obituaries continued

Marlborough

### Ruth S. Prentice

Ruth S. Prentice of Marlborough, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Oct. 30, in the comfort of her home, with family by her side, at 95 years of age.



She was the beloved wife of her late husband Bill for 60+ years, the much-loved mother to Karen and her husband George, Diane and Bonnie, and the cherished grandmother to Nicole and her husband Robert, Jason, Dan, Katie and her fiancé Steve.

Ruth was a longstanding member of St. John Fisher Church. Early on she was a catechism teacher and in 2006 she received the fifth annual Saint Joseph Archdiocesan Medal of Appreciation. In the '60s she started a 4-H club and for 10 years she was a dedicated Hartford County 4-H Club Leader helping young people to see their strengths and how they could make a difference. Ruth's kindness and special spirit will be missed.

Funeral services will be private at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, you can make a donation to Protectors of Animals at [poainc.org](http://poainc.org) in memory of Ruth and her beloved Alfie and Grover.

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

*From the Editor's Desk*

## Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Allow me to start things off on a serious note – and a very apologetic one.

Due to a massive, massive editing error, two election preview stories in last week's *Rivereast* had huge gaffes. In Colchester, the Republican and Democratic candidates for the Board of Selectmen were flipped – the Republicans were identified as Democrats and the Democrats were identified as Republicans.

Meanwhile, in Portland, the Democrats running for Board of Selectmen were identified as Republicans, and no one was identified as a Democrat.

It was a big, big blunder, and one that I feel just awful about. As an editor, a mistake of this magnitude is just mortifying. I sincerely, sincerely apologize to everyone affected by the errors in Colchester and Portland.

\* \* \*

A Hebron resident this week passed along the following news area veterans may want to take note of. It seems the state recently enacted an additional \$500 exemption for disabled veterans. You need to take a copy of your disability letter from the VA to your town assessor, who will then advise you of your total exemption. Each town differs in terms of the amount.

\* \* \*

Last week, a kind East Hampton resident stopped by with a real piece of East Hampton history for me to look at: Pages of a World War II-era edition of *East Hampton News*. The installment featured a front page, banner headline reading "United States Defeats Germany." Lots of interesting war stories were contained in the newspaper – and an item of particular interest was a heavy, emotional letter from a soldier.

A little internet sleuthing by yours truly yielded the fact that the poem you're about to read was first published in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* in early 1945, and was written by Lt. Dean Chatlain while recovering from wounds in an Army hospital in Algeria. Chatlain had been a tank commander, and when his tank was destroyed he crawled to a

nearby fox hole and had to amputate his own foot with a knife. Convinced he was going to die, he wrote this poem.

Fortunately, Chatlain was rescued after about two hours. His words from that harrowing period remained, though, and are pretty powerful at that. Titled "What Did You Do Today?" the poem is addressed to folks on the home front – and, as the American Legion puts it, "reflects his somewhat pessimistic thoughts about support from Americans back home." The poem gave me a lot to think about, and I hope it does you too:

"What did you do today, my friend,  
from morn until night?

How many times did you complain  
the rationing is too tight?

When are you going to start to do all those  
things you say?

A soldier would like to know, my friend,  
What did you do today?

"We met the enemy today  
and took a town by storm.  
Happy reading it will make,  
for you tomorrow morn.

You'll read with satisfaction  
the brief communique.

We fought but are you fighting?  
What did you do today?

"My gunner died in my arms today,  
I feel his warm blood yet.

Your neighbor's dying boy gave out  
A scream I can't forget.

On my right a tank was hit,  
A flash and then a fire.

The smell of burning flesh  
Still rises from the pyre.

What did you do today, my friend  
To help us with this task?

Did you work harder, and longer, for less?  
Or is that too much to ask?

What right have I to ask you this  
You will probably say

But maybe now you'll understand  
You see, I died today.

\* \* \*

See you next week.