

# The Amity Observer

Covering Bethany, Orange and Woodbridge

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Newspapers

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16 Pages

## Election 2009 On the ballots

### First Selectman

- James M. Zeoli (R)
- Trish Pearson (D)

### Selectman

Vote for any three

- Ralph G. Okenquist (R)
- Judy Wright Williams (R)
- Philip W. Grande Jr. (R)
- Mitchell R. Goldblatt (D)
- Kristen Cozza Powell (D)
- Joseph F. Blake (D)

### Town Clerk

- Patrick B. O'Sullivan II (D)

### Tax Collector

- Dandra D. Pierson (R)
- Regina Anastasio-Sauer (D)

### Board of Finance

Vote for any three

- Kevin M. McNabola (R)
- James A. Leahy (R)
- Joseph P. Nuzzo (R)
- P.J. Shanley (D)
- Kathleen Marie Taylor (D)
- John M. Cifarelli (D)

### Board of Education

Vote for any three

- Debra B. Marino (R)
- Jeffrey B. Cap (R)
- Scott William Massey (R)
- Susan Ann Noonan (D)
- Jeanne L. Consiglio (D)
- Amy K. Criscuolo (D)

### Planning & Zoning Commission

Vote for any two

- Oscar M. Ozzie Parente (R)
- Walter E. Beau Clark IV (R)
- Robert L. Vogt (D)
- Carole A. Annicelli (D)

### Constables

Vote for any four

- Jody Daymon (R)
- Michael Patrick Donadeo (R)
- Shonnie Smith DellaRusso (R)
- Doris F. Knight (R)
- Robert C. Shanley (D)
- Randolph D. Thomas (D)
- Santo Joseph Galatioto Jr. (D)
- Maria RoseAnn Papaluca (D)

### Amity Regional School Board

Vote for any three

- Thomas P. Hurley (R)
- Howard Schachter (R)
- Steven F. DeMaio (R)
- Diane L. Brown (D)
- Sue L. Cohen (D)
- Cynthia J. Butler (D)

(R) Republican (D) Democrat

# Orange voters to decide eight races

By Maggie Caldwell  
Staff Writer

The Chief Elected Officer of the town of Orange is just one of the seats up for grabs in next Tuesday's local elections.

Residents of the town will cast their votes for candidates running in eight contested races on Nov. 3.

Besides the face off for first select-

man between Republican incumbent James Zeoli, and Democratic challenger Trish Pearson, there are races for the boards of selectmen, finance, the local and regional school boards, the Planning & Zoning Commission, and several town officer positions.

The polls will be open between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. Voting for District 1 is at the Mary L. Tracy School Gymnasium, 650 Schoolhouse Lane,

and for District 2 is at High Plains Community Center, 525 Orange Center Road. Residents who are unsure of what district they live in may call the Registrars of Voters at 891-4715 or 891-4716 or the Town Clerk's office at town hall.

### Boards and Commissions

There are six, though technically seven, people running for five spots on the Board of Selectmen.

Whichever candidate loses in the first selectman race will have his or her votes cast with the other six people running for the Board of Selectmen.

Incumbents Ralph Okenquist (R), Mitchell Goldblatt (D) and Joe Blake (D) are all up for re-election. Philip Grande Jr. (R), who was appointed

- see **Election** on page 2A



## Scarecrow Village

Residents and friends of Emeritus at Woodbridge, an assisted living facility formerly called Brighton Gardens, created 25 unique scarecrows greeting visitors coming up the driveway. The exhibit is combined with a collection of non-perishable foods for the Connecticut Food Bank.

(Photo by Bettina Thiel)

## Letters from Vietnam resurrect brother's voice

By Bettina Thiel  
Staff writer

Barely 15 years old, Jill Hunting's life changed forever when her older brother Pete was killed in an ambush in Vietnam. The year was 1965, Lyndon B. Johnson was president, and the Cold War was at its peak.

But Pete was not a soldier. He was in Vietnam on a peace mission, working through International Peace Services (IPS), a now defunct precursor to the



Jill Hunting

Peace Corps. Though tensions ran high and killings were the order of the day, the United States' military intervention had not yet fully started.

When Hunting's mother learned of her son's death, she uttered a scream of pain. Subsequently she never talked about

the incident again, at least not to her daughters. Indeed, when years

- see **Letters** on page 16A

## Flu hits school

### 30% of students absent

By Maggie Caldwell  
Staff Writer

Flu season is here early this year, striking the student body at one Amity school just as the local health district is reporting a shortage of flu vaccines.

A total of 76 students at Amity Middle School — Bethany Campus — were absent on Monday, most out with flu-like symptoms. Another 17 others were sent home sick, prompting school Principal Richard Dellinger to send out an alert to parents on the listserve.

On Tuesday, the number of absentees rose to 125 at the school,

or 30% of the student population, according to School Supt. John Brady.

This year is expected to be a particularly bad flu season as the H1N1 virus, or swine flu, is hitting at the same time or earlier than the seasonal flu. The preventative vaccinations for one strain are not effective against the other, health officials say. Nasal spray and shots for H1N1 were recently made available though only for the most at risk groups. Those first vaccines have already run out.

Pregnant women, caretakers of

- see **Flu** on page 16A



## Halloween horses Hundreds come out for festive frolic

BETHANY — Last Sunday afternoon nearly 400 people came out to Locket's Meadow Farm in Bethany for their annual Halloween party featuring some festively dressed horses.

This year the event was organized to raise funds for the newly-named therapeutic riding program, Locket's Angels. A dozen horses, all of them previously rescued from slaughter and reha-

bilited on the farm, were dressed in elaborate costumes and gave pony rides to several hundred children. Families also took tours of the property and visited with the many other farm animals including Ozzie Osboar the pig, Norman the steer and Pyramus the sheep.

Kathleen Schurman, who owns the farm with her husband, David Melina, said the event is one of the most

eagerly anticipated of the year.

"Our riding students start making our horses' costumes weeks in advance," Schurman said, "And the kids who come beg to ride Ernie the giant bumble bee or Beatrice the witch. All the children are in costume as well, so it makes for some really beautiful pictures."

Guests were encouraged to wander the grounds and pay a visit to dozens of other rescues living on the property. In the past few

Maggie O'Donnell dressed pony Suzie on the QT as a princess for the Locket's Meadow Halloween party. (Submitted photo)

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1000 Bridgeport Avenue • Shelton, CT 06484  
amityobserver@hersam.com  
Terri Miles, Editor: 203-402-2311  
Bill Blossom, Sports: 203-402-2314

## On The Web

### AmityObserver.com

#### THIS WEEK ONLINE

See "Election 2009" for candidate stories and columns

#### VISIT THE SITE TO:

- Comment on stories
- Sign up for breaking news
- Send in your own photos or videos



Sports  
Amity-Shelton boys soccer.  
Page 10A

## Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday

Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour this Sunday at 2 a.m.



## Horses –

Continued from page one

years Locket's Meadow has expanded its animal rescue operation. Previously the farm just brought in horses from the PMU industry — animals that are a by-product of the hormone replacement industry, destined for slaughter in foreign meat markets. Now the farm is home to other animals saved from life-and-death situations, including pigs, cows, goats and sheep. These animals are also rehabilitated and trained to participate in recreational therapy programs with special needs children and adults.

The next fundraising event for Locket's Angels will be on Nov. 21 at Dunn's Pub in Hamden, from 5 to 8:30 p.m. Keltic Kick is the featured band, and the \$5 admission fees will be donated to the program. There will also be



**Sir John Falstaff dressed in his Hawaiian garb, led off the pony rides escorted by his large entourage.**  
(Submitted photo)

food, beverages and raffles.

For more information on the event, or to read more

about Locket's Meadow and its special inhabitants, visit [locketsmeadowfarm.com](http://locketsmeadowfarm.com).

## Flu –

Continued from page one

infants, children ages 2-4, health care workers and people with suppressed immune systems comprise the highest risk groups, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School children and young adults, ages 5 to 24, are also especially vulnerable.

The school district is working with the Quinipiac Valley Health District to arrange a clinic to provide the H1N1 vaccine to students when more doses become available.

Brady said the district already received more than 1,000 permission slips from parents allowing their children to receive the shot.

"The next step is to work with the health district to

arrange for the timing of the clinic," Brady said. "When we set this process in motion, the health district was expecting it would have more of the vaccine by now, and so were we. Everything is of a time-critical nature with how the flu is hitting... We're eager to get started."

Of the schools in the district, only the middle school in Bethany was reporting abnormal numbers of absences, Brady said. With those high numbers, teachers were reminded that they should scale back on assignments.

Teachers recently received training to be able to post homework assignments and class activities on their teacher Web sites or through using the software program Moodle, with the hope that students who are ill will not fall too far behind in their class work.

Teachers and parents have also been asked to try to downplay student speculation on possible school-wide closing. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the state Department of Health, and the Quinipiac Valley Department of Health all recommend that the goal is for schools to remain open.

Parents of students showing flu-like symptoms such as a bad cough, a fever of 100 degrees or higher or a sore throat, are asked to keep their children home.

"That is a direct recommendation from the health district," Brady said.

The primary means the district is using to keep parents informed is the list-serve. Parents may sign up to receive alerts at the Web site [amityregion5.org](http://amityregion5.org).

## Letters –

Continued from page one

later Jill asked her for his letters, her mother claimed they had been destroyed in a basement flood.

Hunting and her two sisters had to deal with their own questions. It wasn't until 40 years later that they found his letters stashed away in her mother's house, and reading them resurrected Pete's voice.

Hunting wrote a book about the experience, "Finding Pete — Rediscovering the Brother I Lost in Vietnam," published by Wesleyan University Press and released this month.

Hunting will be in Woodbridge at the First Church Congregational on Meetinghouse Lane Sunday, Nov. 8, from 2-4 p.m. to present her book and historical footage from that time.

Hunting's mother, Mary Russell Hunting, came from an old Woodbridge family, and her father from New Haven. Pete and his sister Carole, only 18 months apart, had strong connections to Woodbridge, where they spent their early childhood on the family farm. Pete is buried in East Side Cemetery, as are his parents, uncle and grandparents. A nature trail off Newton Road is dedicated to his name.

Hunting ended up in California, where she lives now, a writer and editor in the food and wine industry.

She said when those letters fell into her hands in 2004,

she had already decided to find out about Pete's life and death. Once she started inquiries, other people came forward who had letters from her brother. In all, she collected 175 letters.

"It was as if Pete had come back to life," she said — "energetic, funny, smart and insightful. It was the same brother I remembered."

Pete was a student at Wesleyan University when IPS recruited young people for development aid in Vietnam. Hunting said her brother expected to be teaching English, but conditions often called for workers, builders and engineers, and he ended up digging wells or repairing wind mills instead. Before too long he was promoted to supervisor of their operation in Vietnam.

He loved his work there. "The peasants are fine folks," Hunting quotes from a period news article he was interviewed for. "The food is good; a little rice, plenty of fish and fruit, and delicious vegetables of all kinds that haven't even a name in English. You feel fine. There is not much sanitation, but the people are healthy because they eat right."

Safety is all right, he thought, especially when compared to chances of getting killed in an automobile accident on an American highway.

Some of his letters speak of political developments in Indochina at the time. "They were chronicling the beginning of the Vietnam War from

eye level," Hunting said.

He was killed on Nov. 12, 1965, days before the first major ground battle of the war. The death of an American aid worker made the headlines.

Hunting structured her book by alternating Pete's story with chapters about her own story. She said she contacted and befriended her brother's friends. "I found so many people who never forgot him," she said.

As for herself, "It was a work of reconciliation," she said. "It brought my brother closer." The book became a bridge, not just from the past to the present, but into the future as well.

Hunting initiated a sister city relationship between Sonoma, where she now lives, and Phan Rang where Pete worked before his death.

In addition, she supported the endeavor to create a memorial dedicated to civilians killed in war. The sculpture will be placed in front of the new Institute of Peace in Washington.

Hunting's story will be included in a documentary by Greg Stern about letters from Vietnam. She met Stern when he traveled to Woodbridge to obtain footage of the church where Pete's memorial service was held, and the trail where Pete played as a boy.

What the whole experience has left her with is a sense of awe at life's vagaries.

"Now I can hardly wait what not to expect," she said.

## Garden clubs present famous potter

The garden clubs of Orange and Woodbridge will be holding a joint meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 10 featuring renowned potter Guy Wolff. Wolff has been creating traditional hand thrown pottery since 1971. The meeting will be held at 11:45 at the First Church of Christ Parish House, 5 Meetinghouse Lane, Woodbridge. The rain-

date is Nov. 11.

Wolff is an expert on 18th and 19th century clay flower pots and will demonstrate the art of making simple pots based on designs from the Colonial era. His work has been featured on Oprah, in Martha Stewart Living, and the Martha Stewart Show.

A light lunch will immediately follow Wolff's presen-

tation. There is a \$5 fee for non-Garden Club members. There will also be a selection of his pots available for purchase.

More information about the Garden Club of Orange may be found at the Web site [orangect.gov/gardenclub.html](http://orangect.gov/gardenclub.html) or call membership Chairperson Teresa Evangeliste at 795-3195.

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