



OLYMPICS OPEN

Snowboarding's popularity growing locally; Torino games begin tonight. C1, C2

POLICE PRESENCE

Colchester plans for its own department are still 'preliminary.' C1



Colchester police officer 1st class Tim Edwards, left, and officer Jeff Simkulak

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Griswold selectmen fire secretary

Andrea Charron served the town for 10 years

By JULIE A. VARUGHESE
Norwich Bulletin

GRISWOLD — The Board of Selectmen fired the first selectman's secretary Thursday.

The unanimous vote came after 90 minutes of deliberation behind closed doors at Town Hall. The secretary, Andrea Charron, had been placed on administrative leave Jan. 19.

The decision was emotional for the three-member board. First Selectman Anne Hatfield left Town Hall immediately after the vote and could not be reached for comment. Selectmen Paul Brycki and Bill Stetson declined comment, but both men were teary-eyed. They have known Charron for most of their lives. She was Brycki's secretary for the 10 years he was first selectman. He lost the seat to Hatfield in November. The decision also gave

Hatfield permission to hire her own secretary. Problems at Town Hall developed after a Jan. 3 fire destroyed the former Town Hall and Hatfield discovered the insurance on the vacant building had lapsed. Hatfield accused Charron of deleting computer files, in-

cluding an aerial photo of the old Town Hall, and copying internal e-mails to her attorney, Richard Pascal. But Charron said she wanted Hatfield to divulge any information that would exonerate Brycki, Stetson and Finance Director Bill Donovan in connection with

the insurance lapse, which occurred Oct. 1, when Brycki was first selectman. Donovan's job includes dealing with the insurance companies to renew and extend policies. He has blamed Webster Insurance for not

See GRISWOLD, A2

Group OKs zoning change

North Stonington Studios to submit building plan

By ADAM BOWLES
Norwich Bulletin

NORTH STONINGTON — The Planning and Zoning Commission voted 3-2 late Thursday night to accept an amendment that would allow a movie studio and family entertainment complex to be built adjacent to Inter-

Opportunities for local entrepreneurs



'There's a lot of talented people in the community without a lot of money.'

Ana Lazu, director of Latinos Unidos Siempre

HOW IT WORKS

- Residents of 63 towns in the state can qualify for the loan.
- Eastern Connecticut towns include Canterbury, Colchester, Griswold, Killingly, Lisbon, Norwich, Plainfield, Putnam, Sprague, Sterling, Thompson and Voluntown.
- Those who do not live in those towns can qualify if their household income is less than \$74,500.
- There are three types of loans: Micro-loans less than \$50,000, standard loans from \$50,000 to \$250,000 and grow-your-business loans that do not have set parameters.
- Those interested can meet with a loan officer to discuss the loans and fill out an application.
- Those who might qualify for a regular bank loan would not qualify for these loans.
- Interest rates will be slightly higher than bank loans because the CEDF doesn't want to compete with the banks, which give the primary funding for the program.



'They need security and a good, strong prime minister.'

Jeremiah Lowmyer Jr., Norwich orthodontist and president of the Haitian Health Foundation

City residents feel impact of Haiti elections

Country needs unity, says native

By DOROTHY SCHNEIDER
Norwich Bulletin

NORWICH — After witnessing the Haitian elections firsthand this week, Norwich orthodontist Jeremiah Lowmyer Jr. said the sight was



Griswold: Secretary fired

FROM A1

sending him notice the policy was lapsing.

In a Jan. 12 letter to Hatfield, Charron said she was trying to protect their reputations, calling them "three honorable men." She described them as "men who I can't stand by and watch be destroyed."

Charron and Pascal were at Thursday's meeting, but declined to comment.

Helmi Robillard of Pachaug thought Charron deserved to be fired.

"If I had someone in my employment that was working that hard against me, then I would have to terminate them," she said. "They're not a part of the team, especially at a town; you've got to work in a team. You can't go off and say, 'I've got to protect this (person).'"

Philip Anthony, vice-chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, said he didn't know Charron, but thought Hatfield gave Charron plenty of opportunity to get along with her.

"But, based on what I've heard, and what I've seen in documentation, it would've been nearly impossible for (Charron) to work in good faith in the selectwoman's office," he said. "Your working environment has to be, at the very

least, congenial and productive, and it was neither with Ms. Charron. One of the hardest things for an employer to do is to fire an employee. Usually a good employer will give every possible option before a firing has to occur."

Jim Coutu, a member of the Inland Wetlands Commission, said Charron is one of the nicest people he ever met.

"I love Andrea. But bottom line is, you don't want to do your job, too bad; then leave or retire or get out."

Hatfield, with help from the town attorney and the insurance company, has been investigating how the insurance could have lapsed without anyone's knowledge.

She had said previously she was unable to investigate the incident with the personnel problems in Town Hall.

The original \$2.1 million policy on the old Town Hall was not renewed in June, because Webster no longer wanted to insure a vacant building. The town got a one-time three-month extension policy that ran out Oct. 1.

Reach Julie A. Varughese at 425-4217 or jvarughese@norwichbulletin.com

'I'm not going to put something on the table unless we can pay for it.'

Gov. Rell

Rell: Tax relief plan

FROM A1

taxes are less than \$350 also lose.

Municipal leaders also have questioned the plan, concerned that the state will not live up to the full reimbursement promised in the future. Rell said moving the slot money directly into the reimbursement fund before guarantees future funding.

AT A GLANCE

■ **State Rep. Steve Mikutel**, D-Griswold, said state Democrats are proposing spending from \$4 billion to \$4.5 billion for transportation in all parts of the state, including money for widening Interstate 95, improvements to routes 2, 2A and 32 and the completion of

Initial count:

By **MICHAEL NORTON**
The Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — Rene Preval took a strong lead Thursday in Haiti's presidential election, with most of the first votes counted going to the former president who is seen as a champion of the poor.

Preval, the former protege of deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, won 61.5 percent of 282,327 votes counted, Haiti's electoral council said. It refused to say what percentage of the total votes cast these figures represented. According to the United Nations, a majority of Haiti's 3.5 million eligible voters cast ballots.

The council said of the next two highest vote getters, Leslie Manigat had 13.4 percent and Charles Henri Baker had 6.1 percent.

There was no immediate reaction from the candidates, and the streets of Port-au-Prince were quiet after the results were announced.

Vote counting was to resume on Friday, but election authorities said it might be Saturday until enough ballots are counted to draw conclusions about the race.

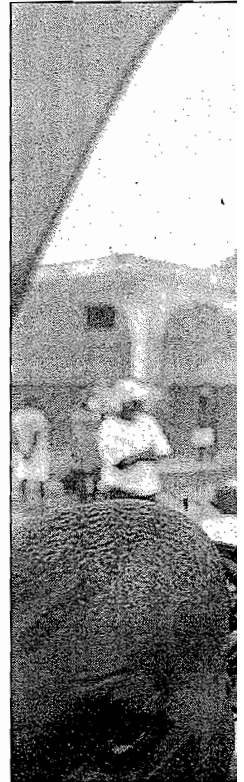
Manigat, however, said early returns tallied by his party members showed Preval might win a majority of votes that would give him outright victory.

If the winning candidate lacks a majority of votes, he and the second-place finisher would go against each other in a March runoff.

"There is a tiny chance that we will have a second round, but I fear Preval has made a clean sweep of the votes," Manigat said.

Standing on the porch of his family home in Marmelade, a rural northern town, Preval said he was marking time and catching up on sleep until official results are out. Election authorities said that might not be until late Friday or Saturday.

"My work is over," Preval told The Associated Press. "I'm waiting. It's boring."



People beg for money, been forced by poorism here Rene Pre

heavily armed gangs ha capital. Amid the insect bly plants are closing, losses of thousands of nations are hesitant to money because of a le, ernment corruption.

First tenure

Preval's own tennent from 1996-2001 w stellar. His efforts at a form failed because lar ants who received land on the small amount th en. He clashed with p over the legitimacy of tors who won conteste Human rights advocat him of interfering in system and of politici lice force.

But poor Haitians that Preval tried to

