

ELECTION SPECIAL

2009 Primary Elections—Republican Candidates for Putnam Valley Town Board



Esther McHenry

AGE: 68
FAMILY: My son Scott has a bookstore in Peekskill. I live with my terrier in a cottage in Putnam Valley.
PARTY: Republican
EDUCATION: BS in Art teacher education from Pratt Institute Brooklyn
CAREER: I taught art in the NY public schools for a couple of years, then worked as an insurance liability claims adjuster & supervisor until retirement a few years ago. This business experience enables me to easily understand legal issues, and to achieve an efficient organization.

What is the most important issue facing Putnam Valley and how will you address it?

Taxes are the number one concern of the PV people I meet, and how to keep our taxes under control without compromising the rural quality of Putnam Valley. School taxes are the biggest concern. We need some commercial taxables to offset school taxes. We can do better in maintaining clean lakes, and drinking water by researching practical solutions while keeping healthy standards. Non-phosphate lawn chemicals should be mandated, and there must be a way to ensure that all septic systems are functional.

How will you be a steward of the taxpayer dollar?

The majority of taxpayers recognize the need for sensible economic development in Putnam Valley to offset taxes, while keeping our country charm. Small businesses should be encouraged in commercially zoned areas. I intend to partner with neighboring towns in purchasing goods and services, eliminating duplication within areas and departments to bring down expenses. As a retiree I appreciate the daily financial struggles of my neighbors and as a taxpayer I will not tolerate waste.

To what extent are you optimistic about Putnam Valley, and to what extent are you pessimistic? Describe each.

I am very optimistic for the future of Putnam Valley. Most

of the citizens of this community are sensible and willing to work together. The danger lies in getting bogged down in non-productive quarrels between factions. This is a wonderful town of friendly people.

How have you served the town?

I have been active in Putnam Valley Arts, served on the town ethics committee, volunteered for the food pantry benefit and sunset series. I have fought for my neighbors with an article 78 to keep our improvement district pool open when the county wanted to close it due to its small size. I believe in action.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

I believe in open accessible government, where a town board member is truly the voice and will of the people she serves. I believe that all citizens' concerns should be heard, and long-term solutions planned through civilized discussion. My life experience has given me a wealth of insight to get to the heart of a problem. As a retiree I have time to devote to town issues, and my experience in business has readied me to find practical solutions.



Jacqueline Annabi

AGE: 39
FAMILY: A lifelong Putnam resident. I am married for 13 years and we have 4 children 11, 9, and twin 7-year-olds.
PARTY: Republican
EDUCATION: Graduated from Western Connecticut State University with a major in political science and a minor in business management.
CAREER: After running a very successful family owned business I married and had four children. I now work at The Law Firm of William G. Sayegh, P.C., in Carmel as an Administrative Assistant.

What is the most important issue facing Putnam Valley and how will you address it?

The main issues that have affected us all are our taxes and our lakes. As a tax payer common sense tells us the only way to lower our tax base is by opening up our town to small business that fit into our community. Our lakes are affected by the chemicals in our lawns and overflow of septic. As Councilwoman I would look into finding a way to lower our tax base as well as including county and local agencies in insuring our homeowners have their septic systems maintained and that only non-phosphate fertilizer is used.

How will you be a steward of the taxpayer dollar?

By working with those accountable for every dollar spent. It seems to us tax payers that those surrounding the budget feel the numbers are only on paper and not real money being spent. That's when common sense comes into play. As a town board member I would look into the budgets and see where we can save, including using services our County offers us to work along with our town. A wise man once said "a penny saved is a penny earned."

To what extent are you optimistic about Putnam Valley, and to what extent are you pessimistic?

I am very optimistic about Putnam Valley. There is no better place to raise a family. Every town has issues. But we have what the other towns' lack. We have citizens that care about the issues and really want to do something about it instead of sit back and complain. I am not

pessimistic about our town because our town is very proactive; we look for the cause of the problems and find a way to solve them, not just band aid them. I am proud to live here and I'll work hard to keep it a great town.

How have you served the town?

Our family has run a very successful business in Putnam County. Since living in Putnam Valley I have been involved in many local charities such as The Southern District of the MS Society, which helps coordinate our local MS Walks, and Community Cares, which helps parents with debilitating diseases like cancer or MS with their daily chores. I am also very involved with my children's sports programs, I have taught CCD at Elizabeth Ann Seton Church and I am also a proud member of the Putnam Valley Republican Committee.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

Honesty. Integrity. Common sense. It's important to stand up for what is right and listen to all sides then make an intelligent decision based on facts not opinion. I will be honest to the tax payers, I will have the integrity to say yes or no and mean it. I have the common sense to know when to do so.



Patty Villanova

AGE: 59
FAMILY: Married to Louis; 3 children and 4 grandchildren.
PARTY: Republican
EDUCATION/CAREER: I went to Catholic schools from kindergarten through high school. I took certificate courses in paralegal studies and worked as a legal assistant in litigation support. I am a fabric artist and for the past five years I've owned a business in Peekskill called Side Effects/NY.

What is the most important issue facing Putnam Valley and how will you address it?

Taxation without representation. There is no one on the Town Board who represents the people and who is willing to stand up to the special interest groups that are causing taxes to skyrocket. The size and scope of town government keeps growing and outpacing our ability to pay for it. I would address this issue by scrutinizing every expenditure, looking at every contract to determine where we can cut the budget. If I'm elected, there will be nothing "sacred" when it comes to taxes.

How will you be a steward of the taxpayer dollar?

I would provide disclosure and economic impact for all projects coming before the Board. The Fire Department is proposing to build a multi-million dollar firehouse, claiming they will be able to get over 4 million dollars in grants. For months I've asked the current town board to put this up for a referendum, only to be told there's not enough information. Meanwhile, we have detailed plans and some approvals have already been given. I would make sure all the costs are fully revealed and then let the people vote in a referendum.

To what extent are you optimistic about Putnam Valley, and to what extent are you pessimistic?

I am guardedly optimistic. The state is turning into a two class society: those who work for the government and have guaranteed salaries, pensions, and benefits; and those in the private sector who have none of these things and who pay some of the highest taxes in the

US to support those benefits most of us can only dream of. I hope the residents realize how little control they actually have over even local government and become willing to take back that control by electing people who will work for them.

How have you served the town?

I have served as an unpaid volunteer and activist. I was a founding member of SWAT (Sewage Waste Action Team), a group of residents who fought against the Westchester Sludge Plant that was supposed to be built on Route 301. I worked against construction of a new town hall, out of control school spending and a police department we couldn't afford. I helped establish the Lake Oscawana improvement district to preserve the lake and protect property values. I was active in Concerned Taxpayers of Putnam Valley and BEST - Better Education & Supportable Taxes.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

Hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new Government.

Democratic Candidate for Putnam Valley Town Board



Wendy Whetsel

AGE: 65
FAMILY: Married to Bill, son Jofre, Daughter-in-law Stacy, Grandson, Jofre Jr.
PARTY: Democrat
EDUCATION: MAT Manhattanville College, BFA Syracuse University
CAREER: Commercial Artist, President of Chelsea Direct Marketing, Inc.

What is the most important issue facing Putnam Valley and how will you address it?

It is difficult to define one most important issue. The lake communities are concerned with the health of their lakes, and what measures our town board will need to take to maintain or restore their health. I'm working on implementing an ordinance prohibiting the use of phosphates in fertilizers near water bodies. Septic remediation is another key to keeping waters clean. Protecting rural roads from becoming major highways is vital to maintaining the rural and historic character of our town. I am working with the County Legislators to insure that our County Roads will be protected.

How will you be a steward of the taxpayer dollar?

I am a fiscal conservative, working to cut costs wherever possible while our economy is struggling. The backs of the taxpayers are too burdened already. Holding the line during this recession is important. Finding new ways to generate income such as energy production will provide the town needed income. As oil pricing continues to increase I will again try to institute a town oil co-op to hold down oil costs for our residents pending town board support.

In Putnam Valley, Republicans and Democrats should vote for two candidates in their respective primaries. Christopher Lieberman and Samuel E. Davis, candidates in the Democratic primary, could not be reached after repeated attempts and so their profiles do not appear.

To what extent are you optimistic about the future of Putnam Valley, and to what extent are you pessimistic? Describe each.

I am optimistic about the future of Putnam Valley because of its rural beauty and proximity to multiple resources. Our diverse group of people talented, hard working, and highly educated—regularly participate in community affairs and bring creative solutions to community problems, and I believe that the years ahead we will remain a vibrant and diverse community. As our small businesses and residents struggle with diminished incomes and job insecurity, rethinking our approach to solving problems is mandatory, and will take time, and can be done.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

I am a strong advocate for the environment, for the health of our water supply, and for keeping Putnam Valley affordable for ALL. I am an avid supporter of identifying opportunities for viable, affordable, renewable energy that will increase the town coffers. I love the historic and rural character of our town and work hard to make sure that it stays protected. I work hard to find common ground when opinions differ, finding solutions that benefit all.

Independence Candidates for Patterson Town Board

Kevin Burns

What is the most important issue facing Patterson and how will you address it? How will you be a steward of the taxpayer dollar?

The most important issue facing Patterson is planning for our future. We are facing dire economic conditions, however, planning for the future of our town and investment in our town's infrastructure can't stop due to an economic downturn. Our town board has a short-sighted approach towards planning for the future. They believe in an economic downturn you don't spend any money. To the contrary, you must continue to invest in the town's future, it is just critically important that the investments are wise investments of our tax dollars and ones that will pay dividends to the town in the future.

How do you intend to balance the interests of open space advocates with the fundamental rights of individual property owners?

People come to Patterson because they are attracted to the rural, warm, safe, and friendly atmosphere that the town portrays. It is a town where people want to raise their families. Nonetheless, without local businesses, the tax burden will be borne solely by the residential taxpayer which is untenable. The answer is that the town must have a planned and sensible business development plan. The town must update their master plan and identify appropriate business development zones within the town that mesh with the many residential developments that have sprung up in our town over the last 10 years.

To what extent are you optimistic about the future of Patterson, and to what extent are you pessimistic? Describe each.

I am pessimistic that our town will have a bright future without dramatic changes in the composition of our current town board. I am optimistic to the extent that the more people I talk to, the more I sense there is a shared feeling of discontent amongst people in the town, and that the voters are ready to make a change. Political leaders should not be elected to the board solely based on party affiliation, but rather on what they bring to the table in terms of leadership skills

AGE: 45

FAMILY: Married to my wife Carol (20 years). My wife Carol is an R.N. and is one of the school nurses at George Fischer Middle School. We have 4 children together. Collin (18) is attending Eastern Connecticut State University as a freshman this year. Ryan (15) is entering into his sophomore year at Carmel High School. Joe (13) is entering the 8th grade at George Fischer Middle School, and Hannah (11) is entering the 6th grade at George Fischer Middle School. We live with my parents who are lifelong Democrats-Madeline and Paul Burns.

PARTY: Endorsed by the Democratic and Independence Party
EDUCATION: B.S. Manager Economics Carnegie Mellon University- Pittsburgh, PA; B.A. Philosophy- Carnegie Mellon University; J.D. Law- Pace University School of Law
CAREER: For 12 years I worked with Progressive Insurance in their claims organization. I worked as a claims branch manager managing the Monterey, California office and the Queens, New York claims office. I obtained my law degree and went to work as a defense attorney for Progressive Insurance. I was promoted to an attorney team manager position managing the Bronx North Litigation Team. Thereafter, I left Progressive and went into private practice. I am presently working with the law firm of Goldberg-Segalla, LLP as a trial attorney.

and vision. Please join me on the road to change.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

I will work to restore a sense of honesty, integrity, transparency and vision to the town board. We need to update our master plan, review of current zoning, and set priorities for the future investment in our town's infrastructure and services. We are facing a crisis as to what to do with our town's justice court due to the lack of vision of our board and the waste of \$900,000 of our tax dollars in planning to build a new town justice court over the last 3 years, only to vote to abandon the plan at the last minute.



Patricia Ploeger

AGE: 66
PARTY: Democratic, Independence
EDUCATION: Marymount, Tarrytown & SUNY New Paltz, BS Ed. Graduate - Columbia Univ. Teachers College
CAREER: Since 1987 - Executive Director of the Hudson Valley Mechanical Contractors Association - Legislative advocate, labor negotiator, and community relations professional.

What is the most important issue facing Patterson and how will you address it?

Patterson's most pressing issue is a lack of long range planning. The town's master plan is over ten years old. The Town Board has to take the initiative to update the plan, decide how to best implement that, and then proactively commit to realizing it.

How will you be a steward of the taxpayer dollar?

Town government has to learn to live within its means by eliminating waste, cutting back on perks, and making hard decisions today to avoid greater pain in the future. I would insist on a reduction of council members' salaries and the elimination of the \$3,000 perk each one receives for not taking medical benefits.

How do you intend to balance the interests of open space advocates with the fundamental rights of individual property owners?

Property owners should have the right to develop their properties within the town's zoning guide-

lines. The master plan should address the needs of today's community while planning for the generations which follow.

To what extent are you optimistic about the future of Patterson and to what extent are you pessimistic? Describe each.

If Patterson voters are willing to take a chance on a new kind of leadership, I see our town becoming the kind of place that we want to come home to at the end of the day, the kind of place where we're happy to raise our children, and where we want and can afford to retire. If they are not willing to take a chance, we will end up with downtown that everyone avoids, a scarred landscape and terminally ill neighborhoods.

KEY PRINCIPLES:

Government that serves the people, that heeds the wishes of the people, and always does right by the people.

In Patterson, Ginny Nacerino is the presumptive Republican nominee for Town Board. The COURIER will print profiles of all remaining candidates for office before the general election.

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