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Class in session for mom and son

Family time. For Carlos Jr. and Marketa Johnson, college classes are a family affair.

As a freshman at Philadelphia's Peirce College in fall 2012, Carlos Johnson Jr. expected to be surrounded by a variety of new and interesting classmates. But one fellow student wasn't like the others that the health care information technology student saw — his mother, Marketa Johnson. She was inspired by her 19-year-old son's success at Peirce to earn her B.A. in business administration.

"At first, I thought it was awkward and it caught me off guard," Carlos Jr. admits. "But after a while, it's not just about me succeeding — it's about her succeeding. We work as a team to get things done."

While the two have yet to be in a class together, they have shared insights on instructors and helped each other with homework. At home, Carlos Jr. has pitched in around the house to lighten Marketa's load of night courses and nine-hour workdays as a business administrator at UPenn.

"It's still a little stressful," Marketa says, "but it eases my mind to know we're making progress as a team and we'll reach our goals." Marketa chose a concentration in management to complement her career. Carlos Jr. works as a clerk in a doctor's office and intends to use his degree from Peirce to work as a chemist in a laboratory.

After more than a decade away from traditional classrooms, Marketa is surrounded by younger students, whom she jokes keep her young. There are also students older than Marketa, who is "45 and proud."

Marketa hopes her experience as a non-traditional student will help others to follow suit. "I want people to know that if someone like me can go back and do it, then anyone can do it."

She decided to pursue her college dreams now that Carlos Jr. and her daughter are teenagers: "Now it's Mommy time," she says.

quoted

"Times have changed so much. You need education to show you're going somewhere. Without it, I felt stuck, but now I have momentum."

Marketa Johnson

Carlos and his mother Marketa pose for a selfie before class. / PROVIDED
Carlos Jr. gets some schoolwork done on campus. / PROPIED
Seven seats being contested on MNSB

By LESLIE KROWCHENKO
Times Correspondent

Seven of the nine seats on the Marple Newtown School Board are up for grabs in the primary election as three recently appointed candidates are running to retain their seats after three resignations earlier this year.

In total, there are 11 candidates for the seven seats.

Republican incumbents Kathryn Chandlees, Nancy Galbraith and Jim Lanzalotto will be joined on the GOP side by Leonard Altieri, A.J. Baker and Barbara Harvey, the latter taking their seats since mid-February. The final Republican name is Matthew DeNucci, chosen for the seat presently held by John McDevitt, who has opted not to seek re-election.

Baker, Galbraith and Harvey are residents of Marple; Chandlees, DeNucci, Lanzalotto and Altieri live in Newtown Square. All but Lanzalotto have cross-filed and are endorsed by the Marple and Newtown Republican parties.

Completing the ballot on the Democratic side are Claude Falcone, Patience Lehman, Ellen Trantas and Laura Wozniak, each of whom has cross-filed and received the backing of the Marple Newtown Democratic Party. Lehman and Trantas live in Marple; Falcone and Wozniak reside in Newtown Square.

Seats on the school board are for four years and eight candidates will be running for full terms. Altieri, Galbraith and Lanzalotto are seeking two-year terms.

A 2008 graduate of Marple Newtown High School, Altieri earned a bachelor’s in political science from West Chester University. He works for the bench warrant division of the Delaware County Sheriff’s Office and while in college was named to the Board of Governors of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. Altieri is secretary of the township planning commission and second vice chairperson of the Newtown Republican Party.

“Being an alumni, having the experience of the PASSHE Board and being a sitting school board member gives me a unique outlook on our district and the work that needs to be done,” said Altieri. “The success I have had in my professional life is directly linked to the education I received while a student in our district.”

Baker, who holds an associate degree in business administration from Peirce College, is a facilities planning office IT specialist with Verizon. A 15-year township resident, he has served since 2012 as a member of the township zoning board. Baker and his wife, Julie, have three sons, the oldest of whom attends Paxon Hollow Middle School. The younger boys are enrolled at Devereux CARES, where he is a member of the PTO. Baker serves on the board’s Curriculum and Facilities and Transportation committees.

“I want to do everything I possibly can to make sure that all the children in our school district receive the finest education that is available,” said Baker.

The current president of the board, Chandlees is seeking her second term. A labor and employment attorney, she and her husband, Brandon, have three children. Chandlees believes public schools should provide the tools for children to flourish, not through unmitigated spending but through reasoned, fiscally-responsible decisions. Stressing the importance of considering all viewpoints, she recently formed a parent advisory committee to allow parents and administration to better communicate and collaborate regarding students’ future program needs.

“Our public schools must provide children with the tools necessary to flourish in an ever-changing world,” said Chandlees. “I am committed to ensuring that our schools focus on student achievement, while still ensuring that our budget is managed responsibly, and continue to welcome the input of the entire community in achieving this critical goal.”

DeNucci, a graduate of Widener School of Law, is a Delaware County Assistant District Attorney and member of the trial team division and also owns and operates a general civil legal practice. He is a 16-year township resident and serves as chairperson of the township zoning board and solicitor of the Newtown Republican Party and is a former coach for the Marple Newtown Soccer Association. DeNucci and his wife, Kristin, have two pre-school age children.

“I understand the correlation between quality of education and property value, as well as the correlation between services provided to our students and the costs to residents of the district,” said DeNucci. “By working togeth-
er towards a shared vision we can achieve greater things and satisfy all constituents.”

Elected in 2001, Galbraith will be running for her fourth term. She is currently vice president of the board, chairperson of the Curriculum, Instruction and Technology committee and district representative to the Delaware County Intermediate Unit board. Galbraith listed the highlights of her last term as the high school and new administration buildings, technology plan, new math program and moving to the common core and more strenuous testing. Her three children are graduates of district schools.

“I will continue to do what I have done for the last 11 years — attempt to be fiscally responsible while fulfilling my responsibility to work with (Dr.) Merle (Horowitz) and her administrative team to provide our students with the best education possible in safe, attractive buildings,” said Galbraith. “Students always come first!”

Harvey is a contract compliance administrator in the Delaware County Controller’s office. She has served since 2005 as a member of the township zoning board and is currently the chairperson. Harvey is not new the workings of the district, as she was a member of the Strategic Planning Committee created in 1996. She and her husband, Bill, have lived in the township for 26 years and their son and daughter are MNHS alumni. Harvey serves on the board’s Budget and Finance and Human Resources committees.

“I am committed to maintaining our music, arts, our other ‘specials’ and athletic programs,” said Harvey. “I support our superintendent, the teachers and welcome parent feedback to help improve all district programs and activities, while conserva-

ively managing the district’s budget.”

Lanzalotto was appointed to the board last year after serving as a member of the Community Budget Committee. A 14-year township resident, he is the founder and CEO of Scanlon.Louis, a boutique strategy firm. Lanzalotto and his wife, Rose Ann Scanlon, have three children who attend district schools.

“With hard work and ingenuity we can develop one of the best school systems in the area. To get there, we need to balance the needs of students, families, teachers and the overall community,” said Lanzalotto. “That path begins with the development of a sound operating strategy and continues with a consistent execution plan that holds all members of our school community accountable for our mutual success.”

Falcone, an English teacher at South Philadelphia High School, has also served as an audio-visual technician, photographer and television studio operations instructor. The skills are ones he noted would assist in offering ideas for improving education and supporting teachers and providing additional avenues for communication to residents. Falcone and his family have lived in the township for 19 years and his daughter is a freshman at Marple Newtown High School.

“I am dedicated to music, art and sports programs at all levels of education within the district,” said Falcone. “Marple Newtown is a school district that must continue to excel and even get better despite state cut backs and an increasing demand on high stakes testing.”

A native of Cameroon, Lehrman came to the United States in 1997. She is program director of Project SHINE (Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders), created by the Temple University Intergenerational Center to promote immigrant integration through English language acquisition, citizenship and workforce preparation, health literacy and civic participation.

“I am passionate about the role of education in leveling the playing field for all our children and the responsibility we have as citizens to make sure that each child gets a quality education,” said Lehrman. “Our children are our assets and we must protect our assets, for this
is our only hope for a better future and a prosperous and more competitive America."

Trantas, an 18-year township resident, works in development and alumni relations at Bryn Mawr College. She has two children attending Russell Elementary School and is a familiar face in the audience at school board meetings, as she has served as the school’s PTO representative. Trantas and her family are active at St. Luke Greek Orthodox Church. She noted she would focus on developing a strategic plan to strengthen academic and extracurricular programs that would enhance student achievement.

"I am proud of our students and teachers and want Marple Newtown schools to provide the highest quality education," said Trantas. "I believe a strong public school system is the best asset we have to improve the value of our neighborhood."

A certified teacher, Wozniak has nearly 20 years experience as an officer manager. She is the mother of five children, two of whom are MNHS grads, one a junior at the high school and one who will begin Culbertson Elementary School in the fall, and feels the opportunities afforded them by the district have played an important role in their success. Wozniak, a 20-year township resident, has served as a member of the Culbertson PTO.

"To me there is nothing more important, or as rewarding, than having a positive impact on a child’s life," said Wozniak. "It will be my priority to help establish goals that are focused on educating the whole child, increasing academic performance and building strong communication between staff and community."
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The College offers open houses and campus tours throughout the year. For more information about Community College of Philadelphia, visit cep.edu.

| FRENCH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL | EDUCATION WITH A WORLD VIEW |

The French International School, located in Bala Cynwyd, offers a strong academic curriculum in French and English, preschool through eighth grade. Now in its 21st year, it attracts equal numbers of French, American and international families. There are more than 300 students enrolled representing 50 nationalities. Graduates attend top public and private high schools in the Philadelphia area and their equivalents abroad. To reserve space at our next information session, please call 610-667-1284.

| GWENDOLYN BYE DANCE CENTER |

Gwendolyn Bye Dance Center offers Summer Programs for children and adults in all levels including, ballet, modern, jazz, tap, African and musical theater. Sign up now for two- to six-week Summer Camp or Ballet & Dance Focus and Workshops. With a second location at the Annenberg Center for Performing Arts, the school has adult dance with Kip Martin of Symmetry Dance Wellness, flamenco with Anna Rubio, tap with Robert Burden, and Zumba with Vaughnda Hilton.

Gwendolyn Bye Dance Center, 3611 Lancaster Ave. Register at 215-222-7633 or gwyedance.org.

| LIVING ARTS DANCE & FITNESS STUDIO |

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Living Arts Dance & Fitness Studios’ mission is to provide affordable performing arts, martial arts and fitness programs for all. Living Arts offers a number of dance classes and programs for students of all ages, specializing in adult dance and fitness classes, youth dance classes, wedding dance lessons, martial arts, summer camps and much more. Living Arts is different from most dance studios because its classes are primarily for those with little or no experience, and the studio is private and comfortable. Adults are able to receive the lessons they have always wanted without feeling intimidated by a professional dance environment. Adult dance classes are geared for fitness and to burn calories with a wide variety of popular lessons like Belly Dance, Zumba, Hip-Hop, BUT1 Yoga and Pole Fitness. Children are encouraged to explore and are introduced to the arts in fun, creative ways while still learning classical dance styles, such as ballet, jazz, tap, tumbling and hip-hop. Living Arts hosts professional studio classes in facilities throughout Philadelphia; its headquarters are conveniently located in Northern Liberties with free parking and child-watch services available. For more details on this affordable one-stop shop for your whole family, visit livingartsdance.com.

THE SOCIETY HILL DANCE ACADEMY

The Society Hill Dance Academy, Philadelphia’s premier ballroom dance studio, has educated students on the art of social dance for more than 10 years. Specializing in ballroom, wedding instruction and Latin dance, the SHDA staff can turn any novice into a ballroom dancer in no time.

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The Society Hill Dance Academy is located at 409 S. Second St. To book your first private lesson, call 215-574-3574.

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Get complete details and register today by calling 215-204-7521 or by visiting alumni.temple.edu/alumnieweekend.
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