



MENDHAM TOWNSHIP DEMOCRATS

Welcome to the May issue of the Mendham Township Democrats newsletter. This issue focuses on our two Township Committee candidates, as well as the upcoming Democratic primary on June 5. Let us know what you think – email any feedback to mendhamtwpdems@gmail.com.

Meet the Candidates!



Brenda Grant and Trish O'Brien are running for two open seats on the Mendham Township Committee. Our editors caught up with them to learn a bit more about them. Follow their campaign via [their website](#) or on [Facebook](#).

Brenda Grant

Q: Tell me a bit about yourself.

BRENDA: I'm a lawyer by trade, as well as a mother of three, a local business owner, and a Mendham Township resident of almost 30 years.

I'm originally from Waynesboro, MS, three hours east of New Orleans. I met my husband, Jay, who is originally from Springfield, NJ, while working in New Orleans. We spent five memorable years living it up in the Big Easy before we decided to get married and move to NJ so that Jay could learn the construction business from his father and I could start law school at Seton Hall in 1984. While in law school, I worked in the Juvenile Justice Clinic representing juveniles from Newark.

Shortly after graduation from law school, Jay and I moved to Mendham Township. Jay started Grant Homes, our custom home building and home restoration business, while I worked at Seaboard Surety Company in Bedminster, overseeing bonded construction projects across the US. Eventually, I left Seaboard to join Grant Homes full-time as a project manager and legal consultant.

I have three children—Alexis, Danielle, and Michael—all of whom have gone through Mendham Township public schools. I've been active in the Home School Association and volunteered to chair the Cultural Arts Committee while my children were in school. I have loved every minute of raising my family here in Mendham Township. In my free time, I love to barbeque with my family, walk my dog on Patriot's Path, and read John Grisham novels.

Q: What has inspired you to run this year?

BRENDA: The most important issues to me are responsible management of Mendham Township's ongoing construction and development projects, budget management, and our town's open space.

The Township has publicly struggled with its last three construction projects: The EMS building next to Town Hall (whose budget ballooned from 3.2 to 4.9 million), Pitney Farm (a \$4 million boondoggle), and the Ralston Playground, which, despite being purchased only 15 years ago, had to be demolished with no replacement plans because it was poorly maintained. My experience managing construction jobs over the past 20 years, as well as my understanding of the needs of families in Mendham Township, will serve Mendham Township well in navigating these expensive projects and other budget issues.

Trish O'Brien

Q: Tell me a bit about yourself.

TRISH: I grew up in Martinsville, NJ as the oldest of three girls, and attended both Catholic (Mt. St. Mary Academy) and public schools in Bridgewater. I graduated Boston University in 1991, where I rowed on the crew team and earned a degree in Occupational Therapy. My career focus is primarily in Pediatrics, but I spent more than two years working with geriatric patients in Atlanta, GA, before moving back to NJ and opening my own practice, Springboard Therapy in Morristown.

In 1999, I was visiting my parents for Thanksgiving and met my husband Rob on a 70-mile bike training ride. We went on our first date the next day and when I returned to Atlanta, we started a long-distance relationship. Our second date was on a 'night ride' a few weeks later. Rob crashed on a road seam and I rode right over him at 30 MPH. "The couple that crashes together, stays together," Rob said when I left the ER with a concussion and 16 stitches on my lip. We moved to Morristown and married in 2003. After our son was born in 2008, we chose to live in Mendham Township because of the great schools, the beauty, and the peacefulness of the town. We love that we can ride our bikes right into the woods from our home. So here we are, in a town that we love, 10 years, 3 kids, 1 dog, and 3 fish later!

Q: What has inspired you to run this year?

TRISH: The playground issues and watching and participating in Amalia's campaign, which made me realize how important community and staying involved really is! As Rob and I began attending Township Committee Meetings, we both found we wanted to be more involved in the town and better understand how decisions are made that affect every single person in the town. Also, my 2018 New Year's resolution was to be more social and meet new people and it turns out getting involved has made that resolution a reality already!

Q: What local issues are most important to you?

TRISH: Finding new ways to build more community in our town, from welcoming new home-owners and helping parents navigate the preschool/school/community/library/sport options available to making sure our oldest residents have an opportunity be a part of the community in meaningful ways. We need government that is more open and inclusive.

I am concerned about the lack of access and under-utilization of all the open space our town has acquired over the last 20 years. Of course, I also want to see the playground completed!

Mendham Township deserves people on its Township Committee that will use tax dollars well and carefully manage all projects. This will apply to building a consensus before moving forward, investigating the sharing of services, designing facilities that meet Mendham's needs, bringing down the Township's debt load from past missteps, and ultimately to lowering taxes.

Q: Anything else you want voters to know about you?

TRISH: I am an enthusiastic and devoted Mendham Township resident who will be here for the long haul with my family. We love living in our peaceful haven and with my practice of 12 years in Morristown, we have planted our roots solidly. We want to be involved in all parts of the town from our schools to the stewardship of our open space and trails, to the details of making sure our town is running as smoothly as possible while providing the services we want, need, and expect.

Why is voting in the primary important to the Grant/O'Brien campaign?

By Michael Merritt, Grant-O'Brien Campaign Manager

Brenda and Trish are running unopposed, so you may think that turn-out on June 5 is unimportant.

NOT AT ALL!!!

We will need a broad coalition of voters from across our community if we are going to win on November 6. If local Democrats aren't supporting their local candidates, why should unaffiliated voters bother, much less open-minded Republicans? A strong turn out on June 5 sends a signal that we are enthusiastic and want to **help Brenda Grant and Trish O'Brien Move Mendham Forward**. (Plus there are up-ticket contested positions...so please EDUCATE YOURSELF and VOTE JUNE 5!)

Other notable primary races:

NJ 11th Congressional District

It's a crowded field vying for the Congressional seat representing New Jersey's 11th Congressional district (which includes Mendham Township and Borough). Sitting Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen, who has represented the district since he was first elected in 1994, announced earlier this year that he would not seek reelection. The five Democrats seeking the chance to be on the ballot in November are:

- Mitchell Cobert of Morristown,
- Tamara Harris of West Orange,
- Alison Heslin of Morristown,
- Mikie Sherril of Montclair, and
- Mark Washburne of Mendham.

Morris County Freeholder

Four Democrats are running for Morris County Freeholder. There are three open freeholder seats, so be sure to vote in the primary on June 5! Seeking the Democratic nomination are:

- Vanessa Brown of Mendham Township,
- Richard Corcoran of Boonton,
- Mary Dougherty of Morristown, and
- Rupande Mehta of Denville.

Morris County Clerk

Shalini "Shala" Gagliardi of Chatham is running as an uncontested Democrat in the June primary, but will face the incumbent Republican clerk in the November election.

Upcoming Mendham Democratic events:

- **Grant/O'Brien Meet and Greet**
5/24, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., 31 Washington Valley Road, Mendham Township
(please use "Morristown" for GPS)
Come meet the candidates! RSVP to info@grantobrien4mendham.org or (973) 568-7979. Invite your friends and neighbors to join us!
- **Primary Day!**
6/5, 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.
VOTE! We need to have a strong showing.
- **Women Make Progress Mixer**
6/19, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m., Location TBA
Mix and mingle with the progressive women making a difference in our communities. Let's celebrate our women entrepreneurs, volunteers, philanthropists, and women running for office in our county and municipality. Wine, soft drinks, and light snacks available. For more info contact mendhamtwpdems@gmail.com

Other local events of note:

- **Patriots 5K Race and Kiddie Fun Run**
6/16, 9 a.m., Brookside Community Club
Run, walk, or cheer! [Sign up today](#) to support this fantastic community event that supports local charities, scholarships, and events.
- **Morris County Democratic Committee Summer BBQ**
8/4, noon, Montville
Bocci, food, and family fun for all! More details to come.