

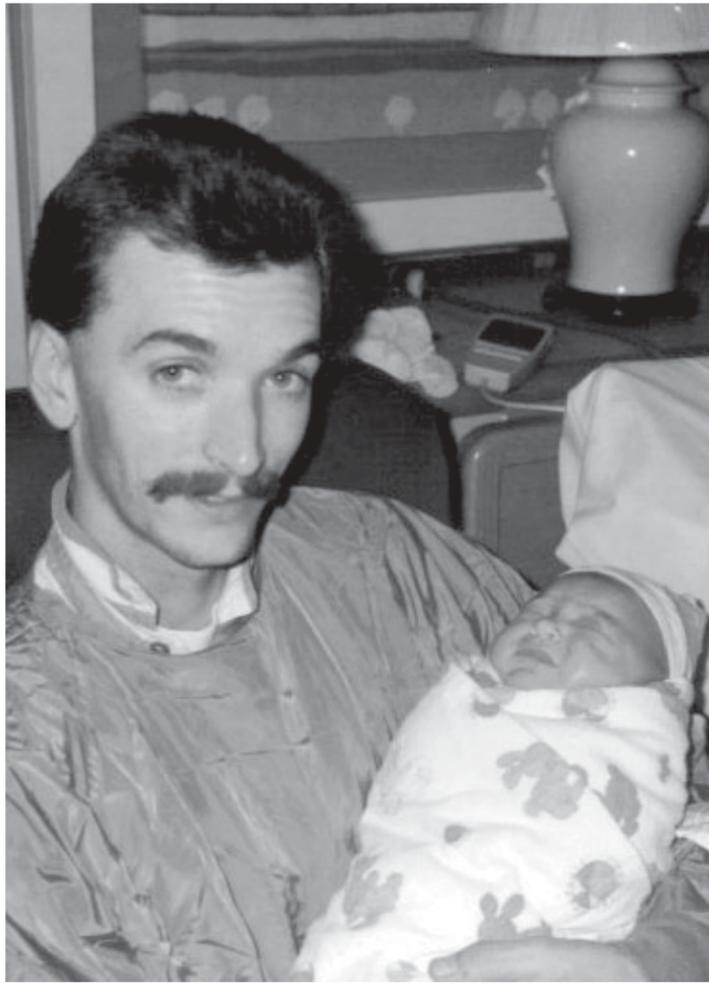
RIVEREAST News Bulletin

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Jordan Hyde of Marlborough, left, suffered third-degree burns over 45 percent of his body after a backyard explosion last week. His father Mike, shown here in a 10-year-old photo with Jordan when he was just an infant, was also severely burned in the accident.

Father and Son Critically Injured in Marlborough Explosion

by Kristina Histen

A backyard explosion at a Marlborough home has left a local father and son in critical condition at Westchester Medical Center Burn Unit in Valhalla, NY.

Mike Hyde, 44, and his 10-year-old son, Jordan, were burning brush on their property, 80 Chapman Rd., last Friday, Feb. 8, according to Tom Gardiner, cousin of the family. Mike has a shop on the property, and he had a fire going in a barrel to keep his and his son's hands warm because of the extreme cold, Tracey Meeker, sister-in-law and aunt to the victims said.

Fumes ignited from a gas can that was near the barrel, Meeker said. The two heard a crackle and turned to run, but the can exploded, covering Jordan in gas, Meeker said. He was wearing a nylon jacket, and the combination of the jacket and the gas on his clothes fueled the fire, Meeker said, making it nearly impossible to put out. Jordan and his father tried the "drop and roll" technique, and Mike threw mud and snow on his son and tried to get his pants off, as they were also on fire, but nothing seemed to be working, Meeker said.

"It was just an unbelievable ordeal," Gardiner said. "They couldn't get the fire out on Jordan. There was gas everywhere."

Finally, Mike picked up Jordan, who was still on fire, ran to a nearby pond on the property and jumped in, putting the fire out and saving his son's life, Meeker said. Mike sustained severe third-degree burns

to his face and hands. Jordan's jacket had melted onto his body, and he had third-degree burns over 45 percent of his body including his face, legs, back, stomach, and hands, Meeker said.

Brian Previti and his 10-year old son, who live at 85 Chapman Rd., heard the explosion. Five minutes after hearing it, Previti said, Mike came flying up their driveway in his pick-up truck with his body badly burnt, and said to call 911. Previti immediately called and ran down to 80 Chapman, to help Mike and Jordan. He gave 911 dispatchers his own address because he did not know the exact number of his neighbor. Previti's son stayed at 85 Chapman, to direct the rescue people to the right location, he said. His son is friends with Jordan, and eventually he also came to 80 Chapman, to talk with him and help keep him calm, Previti said.

Fire Marshal Joe Asklar was first to the scene after receiving the call around 4:21 p.m. The call came in as a backyard explosion with multiple injuries and two people seriously burned, Asklar said. There was no fire upon arrival, but there were major concerns for both the father and son, and LifeStar was requested right away, Asklar said. Jordan was flown to Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, NY, Asklar said, and Mike was taken by ambulance to Hartford Hospital. After an evaluation, he was also flown to Westchester Medical Center. It was in the

best interest to keep the father and son together, Asklar said.

"In my 28 years as a fire marshal, this is the worst burn case ever seen," Asklar said. "On behalf of all the first responders, our hearts go out to the family."

The explosion is still under investigation, Asklar said, and burnt debris from the scene is being analyzed.

On Monday, Mike went into surgery to receive skin grafts, Meeker said. He is responding well, she said, but is currently in a lot of pain. Leslie Hyde, wife and mother of the victims, has been by his bedside. Surgery was held off until Tuesday for Jordan because his blood pressure and heart rate kept dropping; his "little body was trying to shut down," Meeker said. As of Wednesday, he made it through the surgery and his blood pressure is stable, Meeker said. His grandmother has been reading him stories; the nurses told her that it calms him and he is aware that she is there, Meeker said.

"As time goes on, I'm taking things better than I originally thought I would," Taylor Hyde, 16, Mike's daughter and Jordan's sister, said. "I'm trying to stay strong for my mom and my younger sister. I'm doing the best I can."

There will be extensive medical and living expenses, and it is expected that there will be a very long hospital stay. Their family expenses will go on. Meeker started a

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bank trust account for the Hyde family to help support the ongoing burdening costs.

Donations to the family can be made to: The Jordan Hyde Family Fund, c/o Bank of America, attn: Tracey Walker Meeker, PO Box 1317, Fort Worth, TX 76101.

Donations in Connecticut can also be made at any local Bank of America in the name of The Jordan Hyde Family Fund. The local Bank of America in Marlborough is at 17 East Hampton Rd. When people go to donate, Meeker said, they should note the fund is a business account and was opened in Texas. Walk-in donations can also be made, and Meeker can be contacted toll free at 1-877-944-2944.

"Each day is a gift, and we are holding the hand of God who continues to wrap his arms around us all, and helps us hold onto the hope," Meeker said. "Thanks to everyone, the com-

munity of friends and family and prayers, of which are helping us persevere. It is hard to see our loved ones in so much pain."

The staff at Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School is also doing what it can to address the needs of the family. When the school found out about the incident, all staff members and parents of the students in Jordan's class were notified, Superintendent of Schools Sal Menzo said. On Monday, a crisis team of social workers and psychologists was at the school, so students are aware that there are people to talk to, Menzo said.

"The best thing to do right now is to support the students at school and try to make them feel comfortable, and then try to figure out how we can help out the family in the best way possible," Menzo said. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family."

RHAM Schools Chief Proposes \$23.86 Million Budget

by Sarah McCoy

Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski kicked off budget season Monday night by presenting a proposed \$23.86 million 2008-09 budget to members of the RHAM Board of Education.

The proposed spending plan represents an increase of \$1.35 million, or 5.99 percent, over current year spending. The RHAM middle and high schools serve students in Andover, Hebron and Marlborough.

"This budget is a reaction to the enrollment increases we are seeing at both schools," Siminski said. "It's a reaction to the price of energy. And, it addresses the increasing cost of health insurance."

Of the \$1.35 million proposed hike, \$1.15 million comes from increases in salaries and employee benefits. The salary increase represents a contractual 3 percent raise for all current professional staff and additional staffing for English, math, science, social studies, and health/physical education at the high school. The additional staffing requests are in response to the 50 additional students expected to begin at RHAM High School next fall.

The positions requested are .4 positions, meaning they would be handled, most likely, by two teachers in the afore mentioned departments each teaching six classes as opposed to the standard five. These additional positions will cost the district \$140,437.

"With an increase in students there really needs to be an increase in teaching hours," Siminski explained. "I felt these .4 positions were the most appropriate given the needs of the students and the financial constraints of the towns."

Not only is the regional school district expecting an overall increase in enrollment, but the number of students receiving special education services is also expected to rise. At the middle school this number is only projected to increase by four, but 18 additional special education students are expected to begin at the high school.

As a result of these projections, Siminski is requesting additional staffing to increase the number of co-taught classes, as well as additional service hours to meet the educational needs of each student. Siminski has proposed a \$116,619 increase to the special education portion of the budget to provide for these increased

needs.

The other major drivers of the 2008-09 RHAM budget include: \$60,826 for technology expenditures, including an updating of the high school's wireless Internet system; \$27,300 for fuel; and \$27,300 for athletics. The increase in athletic spending isn't for any new sports at RHAM but, rather, to increase the staffing for the current teams.

"We're seeing more and more kids wanting to play sports, which is great," Siminski said. "However, it gets to the point where 70 students and only three coaches isn't safe or productive."

Siminski is proposing to provide additional coaching support for football, indoor track, cross-country, fall cheerleading, outdoor track, strength and conditioning and gymnastics.

Last fall representatives from the RHAM Lacrosse club team requested that the Board of Education consider adding lacrosse to the sports menu available at RHAM High School. The school board later heard from RHAM Athletic Director Mark Logan who reported that, in order to meet the guidelines for Title IX, if RHAM were to offer boys' lacrosse they would also have to add a girls' sport. This in itself didn't trouble the board; however, Logan said the school just didn't have the space to accommodate two new teams. As a result, lacrosse was not included in the proposed budget.

One of the major line items in the proposed budget is a \$200,000 bond for the school construction project, completed in 2004. "It's interesting to see that without the bond we are at a 5.2 percent increase, the same increase that the voters approved last year," Siminski said.

At last Monday's meeting the Board of Education began their information gathering process through presentations from both Siminski and RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie. They will hear from Middle School Principal Linda Crossman and Director of Special Education Brian Morin at their coming meeting on February 28 at 6:30 in the Music Room of RHAM High School. Then, beginning in March, board members will begin deliberations on any adjustments they wish to make to the proposed budget.

A public hearing on the budget will be held April 7, followed by a tri-town referendum May 6.

Middle School Brings Offbeat Wonderland to Portland

by Michael McCoy

Those who tire of New England winters can escape down the rabbit hole this weekend, as Portland Middle School will present a production of "Alice in Wonderland."

Kimberly West, who last year directed the school's production of *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, is the play's director. A 1999 graduate from Emory University's Theatre Studies program, West is originally from Atlanta, and has worked with the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta as well as Hartford Stage.

Evelyn Eddy, mother of a cast member, is serving as the play's technical director. Under her direction, Portland High School student Mike DiMauro is overseeing the lighting. The list of parent volunteers includes Kearen Enright on sets, Marion Imbruglio on costumes, Johnna Cote on props, Chris Colfer handling tickets, Renee Paley designing t-shirts and Alison Harris as a general coordinator and cats and crew study hall administrator.

"Without the parents," West said, "it's just wouldn't be what it is."

Seventh-grader Josh Leary is the stage manager, and is aided by four assistant stage managers. "I've been really impressed with the kids who have volunteered," Eddy said. Ninth-grader Haley Schmidt is also volunteering, serving as West's right hand woman in her role as assistant to the director.

Auditions for the play were held in December, and kids have been rehearsing three days a week since the beginning of January, with rehearsals increasing to daily for this, the final week before the performance.

This production of *Alice* will be fairly non-traditional. "It's slightly absurdist," West said of the already-trippy story. The adaptation the middle school will perform was originally constructed by theatre collective the Manhattan Project in 1972 and performed by a six-member cast. This weekend's performance has a cast of 18 and a crew of nine.

West said she did cut out some material that was not appropriate for middle-schoolers. "We took this children's piece that was turned into an adult piece and turned it back over to the realm of youth. ... We're taking the basic storyline and adding our own ingredients."

These idiosyncrasies include a character on stilts, one riding a unicycle, a giant mushroom made of umbrellas and a rendition of Queen's "Killer Queen."

West added that took a play that was originally performed with six cast members and found spots for 18. "As a director, I have to worry about the performance," West said, while commenting on the duality of her role. "As an educator, I have to worry about the experience."

Other detours into the surreal include a scene where every female on stage is playing the Red Queen. Also, during the course of the play, no less than three different girls play Alice, reminiscent of the approach used to portray Bob Dylan in the recent film *I'm Not There*.

In a final twist of Wonderland-esque topsyturvy, the dialogue in the final scene is the exact reverse of the dialogue in the opening scene.

Caroline Enright, Aly Krauth Aimee Gondak are the three girls who play Alice. Other key roles include Chris Cote as the Mad Hatter, Adam Harris as the March Hare, Rebekah Anderson as the Red Queen and Kevin Paley as the White Knight.

West stressed the play is indeed an ensemble piece. "Everybody pretty much has their moment, honestly and literally," she said.

"We've been very lucky to get a grant from the Gildersleeve Fund," West said. She said that, with the \$75,000 grant, along with the revenues from last year's show, the performance costs were almost taken care of.

West also works with Brownstone Intermediate School. Last year she directed their performance of Lois Burdett's *A Midsummer Night's Dream (For Kids)*, and, on May 15 and 16, the school will perform a similar rendering of *Macbeth* under her direction. Next month, she will direct *Treasure Island* at the Oddfellows Playhouse in Middletown. She also still works with the Hartford Stage, Hartford Children's Theatre, and the talent development center Performing Arts Programs.

Alice in Wonderland will be presented in the auditorium at Portland Middle School, 93 High St., tonight at 7:30 p.m. and tomorrow, Feb. 16, at 3 p.m. Tickets cost \$5 and are available at the door or by calling 790-1145.

Hebron Charter Revision Commission Formed

by Sarah McCoy

The Board of Selectmen last week voted to form a Charter Revision Commission.

The group, which will consist of nine members, will be responsible for recommending changes to the town's governing document.

The decision to form a Charter Revision Commission comes from the charter itself, which instructs the town to go through this process every five years. The last time a revision was completed was 2003. It is a year-long process that requires Commission members to look at where the charter is silent, unclear, or outdated in terms of how the town operates.

At last Thursday's meeting, the Board of Selectmen voted to make the Charter Revision Commission a nine-member entity consisting of one member from the BOS, one member from the Board of Finance, a representative from the town staff, and six members of the public at-large. The town staff representative is slated to be Donna Lanza Smith, Executive Director to the Town Manager. Initially Town Clerk Carla Pomproicz expressed interest in being a member, but due to time constraints, her role will be more advisory in nature.

At press time Town Manager Jared Clark reported that eight individuals had applied for the six positions available to residents on the commission. This includes an application from former Board of Selectmen chair Karen Strid. The town continues to accept applications. Those interested can fill out a Talent Bank application available on the town's web site, www.hebronct.com, or send their resume to

Clark at the Town Office Building, 15 Gilead St., Hebron, CT 06248.

Clark will not be a voting member of the Charter Revision Commission; however, he will be involved in an advisory capacity. "I don't think it is appropriate for the town manager to be on the commission," he said. "I believe the group should be made up of long-term residents and be citizen-controlled."

Clark said there are approximately 20 areas that the Charter Revision Commission will focus on, most of these requiring typographical or minor clarification changes. According to Clark, the most significant issue the Commission will consider will be around how the town handles transfers. Currently line item transfers can only be made during the last three months of a fiscal year. Clark is recommending that this restriction be eliminated.

"The current operations procedure has us operating some accounts in the red until the end of the year," he said. "A change in this procedure, in my opinion, would be significant in the town's efficiency but not in how the town handles its finances."

At its next meeting, the Board of Selectmen will conduct brief interviews with those interested in being named to the Charter Revision Commission. The board is then expected to take action at that meeting, to officially name the members of the commission.

This meeting will be held Feb. 21 at 7:30 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Town Office Building.

Murder Suspect Caught in Portland Apartment

A local woman was arrested Sunday after police say they found a man suspected of killing two people in Cromwell hiding in her Chatham Court apartment.

Lisa Srams, 33, of 2 Chatham Ct., was charged with interfering with police, first-degree hindering prosecution, possession of narcotics, possession with intent to sell, possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of drugs in a public housing complex, Portland Police report.

Police say that, on the afternoon of Feb. 10, they received information from Cromwell Police that Antonio Inglis, 19, of 63 East Main St., Middletown, was hiding at Srams' apartment. Inglis was charged by Cromwell Police with two counts of murder, one count of felony murder, illegal possession of a firearm without a permit and first-degree assault. The charges stemmed from a shooting early Sunday at Cocktails on the Green in Cromwell.

Portland Police Officer Gary Jarzabek, accompanied by two Cromwell officers, went to Srams' apartment, police say. Police say Srams invited the officers inside and was questioned, police report. Srams stated "several times," police say, that she did not know the suspect, and she denied he was in her apartment.

The officers left but continued to monitor the complex, police say, and 15 minutes later they received information from a confidential informant saying that Inglis was indeed at the apartment.

Police returned – this time with the assistance of Middletown Police – and were allowed back into the living room area of the apartment, where Srams was again questioned regarding Inglis' whereabouts, police say. Police say Srams then told officers the suspect was inside, and began calling for him. Inglis was found and taken into custody "without incident," according to police.

A police search of Srams' apartment turned up 10.6 grams of crack cocaine, as well as a loaded handgun, police report, adding that Cromwell Police took possession of the gun and are checking to see if it's connected with last weekend's murder.

Srams was released on a \$25,000 bond, police say, but was arrested again on Monday, Feb. 11, this time by the state probation department, and charged with violation of parole. She was taken to York Correctional Institute, police say.

Srams is due in Middletown Superior Court Feb. 19, police report.

Five Arrested in Connection with 2006 East Hampton Burglary

Five people have been arrested in connection with a commercial burglary that occurred in the summer of 2006, East Hampton Police report.

Johnny Figueroa, 22, of 75 Oak St., second floor, Manchester; Luiz "Brooklyn" Alvarez, 38, who police say is currently incarcerated at the state Department of Corrections; Peter Davila, 23, of 18 Woodland St., Manchester; Kimberly Szpiruk, 22, of 75 Oak St., second floor, Manchester; and Cynthia Campbell, 25, of 49 Wyman St., second floor, Waterbury were all charged with third-degree burglary, second-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit third-degree burglary and conspiracy to commit second-degree larceny, police say.

Figueroa and Davila were also charged, police say, with theft of credit cards and illegal receipt of goods from use of credit cards.

Police say the arrests were made throughout January, but they had not publicly connected all five to this case until recently.

The charges stem from a detailed investigation, police say, into a conspiracy to burglarize the Lyon & Billard Lumber Company on Skinner Street.

The burglary was initially reported in August 2006, police say. It was discovered, police report, that the office and hardware store

of the lumber yard had been forcibly entered at night and thousands of dollars worth of equipment had been stolen.

Company credit cards were also found to be stolen, police say, and hundreds of dollars of unauthorized purchases were made. Initially, police say, several possible leads were investigated by East Hampton police, but none of them yielded any helpful information.

Police say they later received a tip that an anonymous caller had reported some knowledge of the burglary to New Britain Police, and provided them with information regarding potential suspects.

Police say East Hampton Officer Jason Wishart investigated the information and was able to recover many of the stolen items at pawn shops in New Britain and Waterbury. Several suspects were also identified, police say, and Wishart conducted "numerous" interviews with the suspects and other witnesses.

Police eventually determined five people, none of whom live in East Hampton, conspired in the burglary. Police report that Figueroa has family ties to East Hampton and was therefore familiar with the area.

Bonds for Alvarez and Figueroa were each set at \$50,000, while bonds for Davila, Szpiruk and Campbell were set at \$10,000.

Fire Leaves Andover Family Homeless

by Sarah McCoy

A late Monday morning fire has left one Andover family homeless.

The blaze broke out just before 11 a.m. Monday, Feb. 11. Firefighters from Andover were on the scene at 7 West St. Extension in six minutes from receiving the call but the fire proved to be too fast moving for emergency personnel to do anything but try to contain it.

Mutual aid from Hebron, Bolton, Columbia and North Coventry assisted Andover in fighting the fire that took 40 minutes to extinguish.

The house was home to a couple and their teenage son, Andover Fire Marshal John Roache reported. None were injured during the fire. Roache couldn't provide the names of the home's residents.

The cause of the blaze is thought to be a result of an electrical shortage. On Sunday the residence lost power when a tree fell in their front yard, knocking down service wires. Fire officials suspect that this triggered a surge that went undetected because of the immediate

power outage. The fire broke out shortly after the power returned to the home a little after 10 a.m. on Monday morning.

"We suspect that the house may have taken a unique electrical surge," Roache said. "We have it down to an area in the house where we suspect the fire broke out, but we haven't pinpointed the specific appliance that failed."

The high winds present on Monday and the concealed spaces within the house made this fire a difficult one for firefighters to battle. "It spread quickly," Roache said. "Unfortunately there wasn't more we could have done."

The Andover building department has since condemned the house. The American Red Cross is assisting the family, who don't have relatives in the area.

There is an ongoing investigation continuing on the property as officials attempt to pinpoint the exact source of the fire. Those with any questions or additional information are asked to call Roache at 982-1208.

The King & I Comes to Colchester This Weekend

by Kristina Histen

Residents can expect "one of the best performances" from the Colchester Community Theatre this weekend when the troupe mounts a production of the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic *The King & I*.

That's the promise, anyway, of the play's director and musical staging choreographer Erin Sousa-Stanley, who also said she expects the play to draw a big crowd.

The King & I, the 10th musical produced by Colchester Community Theatre (CCT), will be performed Feb. 15, 16 and 17 in the auditorium at Bacon Academy, 611 Norwich Ave. CCT is sponsored by the Colchester Parks and Recreation department.

The King and I, with music by Richard Rodgers and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, is based on the book *Anna and The King of Siam* by Margaret Landon. The plot tells the story of Anna, an English governess who tries to help an Eastern king to come to terms with the modern world. The king, however, is unable to resist the forces of ancient customs. The conflict between Eastern and Western cultures inspired this well-loved musical, which has been revived professionally many times and, in 1956, was turned into a movie starring Deborah Kerr and Yul Brynner.

The cast has been rehearsing for about a month and a half, three times a week. This past week, though, has been "tech week," and every night the cast has been in the auditorium until about 10 or 11 p.m., working really hard, Sousa-Stanley said. The company had a bit of a setback this past Tuesday because they had to cancel due to the snow, and it is a critical time before the performance. But they did their best to prepare for it by staying later Monday, Sousa-Stanley said. Fortunately, she added, this is a wonderful cast and production crew.

Because of the time of year, it has been tough to rehearse, due to sicknesses and inclement weather, Sousa-Stanley said. Since it's a community theatre, people have lives outside the theatre and other commitments, and when someone is not there, Sousa-Stanley said, it

makes a big difference to the whole cast. There are no small parts, she said; every "single body on that stage matters."

The mission of this year's performance is to provide quality family entertainment at a reasonable price for Colchester residents and surrounding communities, Sousa-Stanley said, and with whole families involved in the production it is quite achievable. Because everyone knows each other, there has been great energy and enthusiasm, she said. People of all ages have been participating, from as young as four to people in their late 40s. There are about 24 children participating, not including teenagers, and therefore they expanded the original casting number so everyone could have an opportunity to be on stage, Sousa-Stanley said.

"I'm really pleased and very fortunate to have a wonderful cast and production crew," Sousa-Stanley said. "I've worked with Colchester before and have seen several productions and I think this is going to be one of the best. The cast is really wonderful, there are in really good shape, very prepared, and taking things really seriously. They are bringing their hearts out on stage and the audience should really be able to pick up on that."

The show will run a little under three hours, Sousa-Stanley said. They haven't cut anything out of the original musical; Sousa-Stanley is pretty proud of this and, she said, the cast has done a good job keeping up the pace.

"Everyone will be really impressed this year," she said.

Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for seniors and children 12 and under, and can be purchased in advance at Wild Geese Gift Shop, Plotkin's Jewelry, Tracy's Tunes, Colchester Parks & Recreation Department in the Town Hall or online at <http://www.colchesterct.net/parkrec.html>.

Tickets will be available at the door, but audience members are encouraged to purchase in advance because the CCT performances tend to sell out. In case of inclement weather, call 537-7297 for updates.

East Hampton School Board Passes Budget

by Michael McCoy

The Board of Education Monday passed a lower 2008-09 budget than the one Superintendent of Schools Judith Golden presented to them two weeks earlier – and board members did it without eliminating a thing from the proposed spending plan.

On Jan. 27, Dr. Golden walked the Board of Education through her proposed budget, which came in at \$25.1 million, a 6.65 percent increase over current year spending. Over the course of the next two weeks, Golden and the finance committee were able to get lower insurance figures, as well as alter the lease structure for furniture and computer equipment. All told, \$88,330 was shaved off the bottom line, bringing the budget to \$25.02 million, a 6.27 percent increase over current year spending.

About \$220,203 of the \$1.5 million increase comes from added staff positions. This includes half-time secretarial and chemistry teacher positions at the high school, a half-time special education position at Memorial School, and library media specialist position at the middle school.

The budget also calls for a six-year technology-purchasing plan, which will cost \$50,228 for the 2008-09 fiscal year. This will

bring 200 new desktop and 61 laptop computers to the high school, as well as two rolling lab carts. Board chair Michael Vasquezna, who was especially excited about this project, referred to the initiative as a "comprehensive technology program."

Prior to the vote board member Sheila Wall suggested she would like to make cuts to the budget, saying, "I think we need to stand still." Alan Hurst promptly responded, "I would suggest that we can't afford for our children to stand still."

The board voted 5-1-1 in favor of the budget. Don Coolican cast the 'no' vote, while Wall abstained.

When asked if he felt the budget was sound, Vasquezna replied, "Absolutely. The administration has done a good job providing programs and services for all of our students."

Over the past month, the Board of Education has participated in two tri-board meetings with the Board of Finance and Town Council. The finance board will soon begin putting together the town budget. Though an agenda has not been posted yet, they will meet next Tuesday, Feb. 19, at 7 p.m., in the Community Center Annex, 105 Main St.

Could Columbia Be Joining AHM Family?

by Sarah McCoy

AHM C?

The Town of Columbia will hold a Town Meeting next month to decide whether or not to join the AHM Youth and Family Service Bureau in Hebron. AHM, which currently serves Andover, Hebron, and Marlborough, would then become a four-town nonprofit organization with a mission of assisting with positive family and youth development.

For as long as AHM Executive Director Joel Rosenberg can remember there has always been some talk of another town joining the bureau. Never before, though, has it gotten this close to happening.

"It's been an amazing journey," Rosenberg said of the past year.

It was then that a group of Columbia citizens approached the Columbia Board of Selectmen urging their town to begin providing youth and family services. The BOS responded by forming a sub-committee to study the need in Columbia and what possible options existed.

Columbia selectman Dick Szegda, who has over 35 years of experience working for the state Department of Children and Families (DCF), headed up the efforts. The group pored over juvenile and DCF records and determined Columbia did indeed have a need for youth inter-

vention and prevention services. The focus, then, turned to what to do about it.

"We began looking at the options for meeting this need," Szegda said. "We could join with other towns who have a similar need to form an organization. We could join an existing group. Or, we could start our own group. From a cost perspective it didn't look like a very effective option to start our own. Plus, it would take years to start up."

Last fall Columbia approached Rosenberg about partnering with AHM. In January the AHM Board of Directors voted to extend an invitation to their neighbors to the east.

"Regardless of the outcome, it is a real honor to be considered by another town," Rosenberg said. "Since the very beginning we have been extremely impressed with the way Columbia has approached the issue and how they recognize the human value in services that AHM provides."

At their Feb. 5 meeting the Columbia Board of Selectmen voted to take the question of whether or not to join AHM Youth and Family Services to Town Meeting where residents will vote on the issue. The selectmen's vote passed by the slimmest of margins, 3-2, with the naysayers doing so because of the costs asso-

ciated with such a move.

Rosenberg and the AHM staff examined each program the organization offers to determine the costs of adding an additional town. Some programs, such as the adult Bereavement Support Group, could handle additional members without additional costs. However, most programs, like the Family Resource Center and individual counseling, would require AHM to provide additional service hours. Rosenberg estimates these costs to be around \$125,000.

However, Columbia's population is just smaller than Marlborough's; therefore Rosenberg's goal was to have the two towns contributing similar amounts. The plan is for Columbia to contribute \$80,000 for the first year of service with the balance being covered through grants, fundraisers, and additional revenue sources. For this \$80,000 expenditure, Columbia will receive a return of \$807,000 worth of services, as that is AHM's proposed budget for the 2008-09 year.

The one piece of the AHM puzzle that Columbia would not buy into is the separate contract that AHM has with the towns of Andover, Hebron, and Marlborough to provide social work support in their school systems. Because

Columbia does not have a high school of their own, this piece isn't applicable to them. (Columbia students can choose to go to Lyman Memorial High School in Lebanon or Windham High School.)

"I think people understand the cost," Szegda said. "But, more importantly, they understand how this partnership could fulfill a real need in town. I have a sense that our voters will approve it."

As far as any possible name changes go, Rosenberg is recommending to the Board of Directors that, should Columbia voters approve the addition, that AHM remain AHM Youth and Family Services serving the towns of Andover, Columbia, Hebron, and Marlborough.

"I think there has to be a probation period where Columbia can consider whether it's the right fit for them," Rosenberg said of his recommendation. "I believe it would be best to take it slow and concentrate on maximizing services to Columbia and put any name changes off until the future."

Rosenberg was adamant that if the Columbia votes to join AHM, the town would be full partners beginning on July 1, the start of the fiscal year.

EDC Chair Resigns, Criticizes East Hampton Town Council

by Michael McCoy

Saying the Town Council has "chosen to politicize" her commission, Economic Development Commission chair Mary Ann Dostaler resigned at Tuesday's Town Council meeting.

The move came after the Town Council voted to ask a firm that had been consulting with the Economic Development Commission (EDC) to begin reporting to the council as well.

Last July, the town hired economic development consulting firm Connected to Connecticut. For \$30,000 a year, the group – specifically President Craig Stevenson and Senior Economic Developer Chris Edge – would counsel the EDC in its decisions. They've been working with EDC since July.

However, during Tuesday's Town Council meeting, the council voted 4-1 to ask the firm to report to the council, as well as the EDC. Council members also voted that any special action on measures taken by Connected to Connecticut be cleared with the council first.

Council chair Melissa Engel said she felt this should have actually been the case all along. "It was my understanding that they should be dually reporting," said Engel.

While Engel didn't say that either the EDC or the consulting firm had done anything wrong, she said, "[Stevenson] and his company are accountable to the town of East Hampton." She added that for the council to consider renewing the relationship during the upcoming budget cycle, she wanted to see first-hand how the \$30,000 was being spent.

Councilman Thomas Cordeiro echoed Engel's sentiments, saying, "I don't think there's any concern with what the EDC's currently doing. ... It doesn't change what the EDC's accomplished or what they can accomplish."

Speaking about the activities of all the various boards and commissions, Engel declared, "Everything we're doing in the town is so inextricably linked right now."

But council member Susan Weintraub disagreed, saying Dostaler "seems to be very thorough in her reports of what's going on. I find this [requiring the consulting firm to report to the Town Council as well] to be an encumbrance when we're already getting the feedback." Indeed, Dostaler attends and gives an EDC update at virtually every single Town Council meeting.

EDC member Cindy Rooth told the council that asking for Stevenson to attend council meetings on even a monthly basis will cost money. "Whatever time they spend coming here to these meetings is charges counting against us," Rooth said, figuring that the EDC could do as much for free.

But Engel stood her ground, saying, "There isn't a board in East Hampton that has autonomy with the taxpayers' money."

In the end, the motion passed 4-1, with only Weintraub voting against it.

Later in the meeting, Dostaler, as is the norm, rose to speak on behalf of the EDC. However, it was immediately clear that hers would not be a typical report. Commenting quite passionately on the council's decision, she said, "I absolutely disagree. ... I see it as the Town Council assuming responsibility beyond their scope."

Dostaler then read from a prepared statement, outlining her history with the EDC. She related that she was appointed to the EDC in August 2004, and elected vice chairman the following January. In January 2007, she was elected chair, and has served in this role ever since.

"Over the past four years," Dostaler said, "I have willingly and enthusiastically donated my time and talents as a professional marketing consultant to further the EDC mission to 'successfully attract new business, retain established business, and improve the quality of life of East Hampton residents, visitors, and tourists.'"

She continued, "I greatly respect and admire all of the individuals that I have served with on the Commission, particularly Julie Ciucias, whose work ethic, dedication, integrity, and friendship served as an example that I have tried to follow."

Dostaler said she has "attended numerous full-day workshops and seminars on economic development, planning, Brownsfield revitalization, community building, and municipal partnerships in an effort to bring new ideas, new thinking, and new opportunities to East Hampton. Cumulatively, I have donated more than 1,000 hours of time to EDC, which, as a professional consultant, has an in-kind value of more than \$150,000 to our community."

Dostaler offered a long list of the EDC's efforts and accomplishments through the past four years, including the commission's support of

the Brownsfield Committee in their application and implementation of almost a million dollars in federal money to revitalize the Village Center. She also said the EDC had sought and won the town's first Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) grant, in the amount of \$500,000. This will fund the upcoming streetscape project, which includes major sidewalk improvements and is slated to begin later this year.

Dostaler said the commission has "worked collaboratively with the Finance Director to understand the budget process and advocate for greater resources to support economic development. Because of our initiative, EDC is the only volunteer board in East Hampton to be invited to provide a budget presentation to the Board of Finance."

But, addressing the Town Council action concerning the consultant, Dostaler said EDC "will no longer have any direct influence over our consultant's activities. This makes no sense other than being purely politically motivated."

Dostaler added that she felt the council's actions "are directed singularly at me as I am a member of the Chatham Party. ... In 2005, efforts were initiated to remove me from the commission, which might have been successful if not for the support of Julie Ciucias and other fellow commissioners."

"Interestingly," Dostaler continued, "after I was appointed to the EDC by the town manager, the Town Council at that time acted to amend the EDC ordinance to require that future appointments be made by the council and not the town manager. In this way, the council can ensure that no other unknown people can slip through. However, what the Town Council failed to realize and continues to ignore is the fact that the state enabling statute, 7-136, requires that members be appointed by the chief executive authority of the municipality. The EDC ordinance as amended violates state statute."

Dostaler said it is "unfortunate that this Town Council has chosen to politicize the EDC. ... As a commission, we have been cohesive, proactive, effective, and non-political."

Dostaler said she "cannot support or condone the Town Council's action to amend the contract with Connected to Connecticut. Therefore, I hereby tender my resignation as Chairman of

the East Hampton Economic Development Commission effective immediately."

This action on the part of Dostaler clearly left resident Jim Curtis beleaguered. Immediately after Dostaler had completed issuing her statement, he and his wife Irene stood up in the front row. As they were leaving, he audibly muttered, "I've had enough of this [expletive]."

Engel said Wednesday that Dostaler "is one of the hardest working volunteers East Hampton has had in recent years." But, she added, "I'm saddened by her inability and unwillingness to work more closely with the council."

"Mary Ann did a lot of good work," Engel continued, "but I think she fell short of realizing that we don't need to just sustain existing business, but attract new businesses as well."

As for Dostaler's allegations that the council changed the appointment process, Engel said that that was a state decision. "The Town Council never changed that... absolutely never."

Reaffirming her stance on the decision, Engel said, "We have so many branches going off in different directions, and if there's no clearinghouse in charge of all that, then nothing gets done properly."

Engel added that Connected to Connecticut was scheduled to report to the town council at their next meeting on Feb. 26.

EDC vice chair Jack Hesen will now become chairman of the commission until January, unless he calls for a special election. When asked for his immediate response to Dostaler's resignation, he said, "I can't say I'm surprised," as he was aware of her feelings on this most recent matter.

"I'm rather disappointed by the Town Council's response to her resignation," said Hesen, who felt that they might have offered, "I appreciate what you've done," instead of moving on to the next item rather matter-of-factly.

"She did an outstanding job," Hesen said, and called Dostaler a "leader."

"You don't always agree with a leader," he said, "but that doesn't diminish their effectiveness."

Hesen added that the town "was blessed with her talent." But, he promised the commission will move forward. "In the meantime, we'll continue," he said.

Action Delayed on Pending Colchester Business Park Applications

by Kristina Histen

At the Zoning and Planning Commission meeting last week, action on the two remaining applications related to the newly-approved Business Park was tabled until the commission's next meeting.

Both applications were officially withdrawn at the Feb. 6 meeting and the topics were moved to the "planning issues and discussion" section of the commission's agenda. (The previous four applications related to the Business Park were passed at commission's Jan. 16 meeting.)

The application for a text amendment addition to the Colchester zoning regulations to allow multi-family residential use by special exception as part of a business commercial development was withdrawn in order to gain more information and develop specifics.

Town Planner Adam Turner presented a memo to the commission that identified various comments and issues raised during past public hearings and discussions regarding the mixed-use proposal. He urged members to express their concerns so he can continue to research and modify the text until a consensus can be met in the future.

A main issue, Turner said, is to clarify that mixed-use is to develop affordable housing that it is different from multi-family housing and certain standards need to be decided on. Mixed-use is needed to provide some density for developers, having a better chance of it getting developed, he said.

"The intent is to protect the rural character, not just add more people into town," Zoning and Planning Commission (ZPC) member Stacey Brown said.

Other concerns include the fiscal impact;

competition to the downtown; parking ratios; addressing open space; and making sure one part of the development does not go forward without the other.

"We don't need to reinvent the wheel here," Turner said. "We can look to see how others did it."

Chairman James Ford recommended getting feedback from other commissions, and seeing how other towns with successful mixed-use developments have done it. Turner will continue to research other locations and regulations.

The topic will remain on the agenda, but in the planning issues and discussions section – a relatively low-profile portion of the agenda, where items are discussed but not acted on – until a complete amendment is written that covers all issues raised by the commission.

Also withdrawn, and the topic moved to the planning issues and discussion portion, was the application for change in zoning to a business park zone at Chestnut Hill and Parum roads.

"There are still issues involving protecting the residents in the area," Turner said.

It seems the commission is still having difficulty providing access for a landowner on the parcel. One suggestion includes possibly extending the proposed zone to a larger area, encompassing more of Chestnut Hill Road.

"We're thinking about how best to ensure that all parcels have access," Turner said. "We have to cap everything and come up with the best plan. It's a process. We're going to look at each issue carefully."

The next ZPC meeting is Wednesday, Feb. 20, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

Hebron Police News

2/8-Michael Flynn, 43, of 18 Jude Ln., Mansfield, was charged with breach of peace, vehicle driven with intent to harass or intimidate and injury or risk of injury/impair the morals of a child, State Police said.

2/10-Amanda Staub, 20, whose address was not provided, was charged with disorderly conduct, second-degree threatening, and two accounts of interfering with a police officer, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

2/1 — Stacy Rivera, 27, of 38 Wangonk Tr., was arrested for operating under suspension, misuse of marker plate, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating without insurance, East Hampton Police report.

2/1 — Jason Bernard, 28, of 68 Childs Rd., was arrested for misuse of plates and operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police report.

2/2 — Nicholas Peters, 22, of 202 Bull Hill Rd., Colchester, was issued a ticket for operating a motor vehicle without a valid license, police report.

2/3 — A 17-year-old male juvenile was issued a ticket for traveling fast, police report.

2/3 — John E. Hollis, of 27 Bodwell Rd., East Hartford, was arrested for operating under the influence of alcohol and misuse of plates, police report.

2/4 — Justin H. Derr, 22, of 3 Edgerton St., was arrested for third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police report.

2/4 — Tasha M. Saltus, 23, of 24 Middletown

Colchester Police News

1/31-Marcia Deforest, 46, of 77 Stanavage Rd., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

1/31-Byllye Hayes, 22, of 39 Windham Ave., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

2/2-Robert Rutchick, 33, of 77 Hillcrest Dr., Middletown, was charged with violation of probation, State Police said.

2/5-Scott Ruddy, 38, of 193 McCall Rd., Lebanon, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

2/5-Lynn Noyes, 54, of 43 Dutton Rd., was charged with DWI, State Police said.

2/6-Christopher Perkins, 26, of 213 Rising Trail Dr., Middletown, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

2/6-Nicholas White, 18, of 320 Church St., Amston, was charged with third-degree crimi-

nal mischief, State Police said.

2/6-Ashley Culver, 19, of 72 Boston Post Rd., Windham, turned herself in to State Police on charges of falsely report incident and false statement, State Police said.

2/7-State Police reported they are investigating a burglary into a residence on Lakeview Dr.

2/9-Michele Savalle, 37, of 24 Crouch Rd., Amston, turned herself in to State Police on a charge of second-degree failure to appear.

2/9-Anibal-Lopez Plaza, 30, of 136 Brookfield St., Hartford, was charged with reckless drive and operating under suspension, State Police said.

2/10-Francesco Adorno Jr., 20, of 24 Connecticut Ave., New Britain, was charged with breach of peace and third-degree assault, State Police said.

Obituaries

Marlborough

John Phelps Jr.

John N. Phelps Jr., 71, of Caffyn Drive, Marlborough, and formerly of Colchester, died Monday, Feb. 4, at his home. Born in Middletown on July 15, 1936, he was the son of the late John and Bernice (Kaye) Phelps. John had served his country in the U.S. Army and was retired from Pratt & Whitney Aircraft.

He leaves two sisters, Elsie Jean Daniels of Oakdale, and Linda Ulm of East Hampton.

Funeral services with Military Honors were held on Monday, Feb. 11, in the Connecticut State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown. The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, has care of the arrangements.

Andover

Shirley H. Stolzenbach

Shirley H. Stolzenbach, 78, of Andover, formerly of Wethersfield, wife of Richard G. Stolzenbach, died Wednesday, Feb. 6. Born in Rochester, NY she was the daughter of the late Howard and Dorothy (Frankland) Hitchcock. Prior to her retirement she was employed as a paraprofessional in the Hartford school system for over 20 years. In her early career, she was employed at Aetna Life and Casualty. She was a member of First Congregational Church in Andover, the Andover Senior Citizens, the Newington Ski Club and the Thursday Lunch Club.

Besides her husband she is survived by two daughters and a son-in-law, Ann and James Cilfone of Willington and Lynn Stolzenbach of Hopedale, Ma., a sister, Marjorie Grisevich of Gilford, N.H., two grandchildren; Miranda and Joshua Cilfone and her loyal and faithful dog, Buddy. Funeral services were Tuesday, Feb. 12, at First Congregational Church, 359 Route 6, Andover, with the Rev. Lee A. Ireland officiating. Burial followed in Townsend Cemetery, Andover. The family received relatives and friends Monday at the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the either Andover Church Music Fund, 359 Route 6, Andover 06232 or the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Rd. Newington 06111. For directions and on-line expressions of sympathy, visit www.desopo.com.

Andover

Anna J. Bart

Anna J. Bart, 94, of Andover, beloved wife of the late George B. Bart, died Friday, Feb. 8, at Fox Hill Nursing Center, Rockville. Born July 3, 1913, in Hartford, daughter of the late Martin and Anna (Punzius) Butvilas. Shortly after birth her family moved to Lithuania and she returned to the United States in 1927 at the age of 14. She settled in Hartford until 1952 and then moved to Vernon, where she lived for the next 52 years. In 2004 she moved to Andover to live with her daughter. Anna was employed by Arrow-Hart-Hegeman before retiring.

She is survived by five daughters, Diana Tracy and her husband, Peter of Andover; Ann Dalbec and her husband, Ron of Sarasota, FL; Elaine Barber of Grant Pass, OR; Georgiana Chambers of Azalea, OR; Kathleen Marco of Buena Park, CA; 11 grandchildren, George, Steven, Kirsten, Ian, Jason, Michael, Theresa, Christopher, Erik, Melinda, Audra; 11 great-grandchildren; two sisters, both living in Lithuania; cousins, Anthony and Kay Mesulis and John Bagdon, all of Wethersfield; and many nieces, nephews and dear friends. Special thanks to the staff at Fox Hill Nursing Center for the care provided to Anna. Funeral services will be private and at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Sacred Heart Church, 550 Hartford Turnpike, Vernon, CT 06066. Ladd-Turkington & Carmon Funeral Home has care of arrangements. To leave on-line condolences visit www.carmonfuneralhome.com.

Marlborough Police News

2/5-Shane Schmil, 45, of Marlborough, was charged with violation of protective order, State Police said.

2/5-Christopher D. Saccante, 37, of 29 Papermill Rd., Hebron, was charged with criminal impersonation, interfering with an officer, operation of motor vehicle when registration or license is refused/suspended/revoked, insur-

Portland

Charles L. Mifflin Sr.

Charles L. "Buddy" Mifflin Sr., 67, of Portland, husband of Lorene (Wilkerson) Mifflin, passed away Monday, Feb. 11, at Middlesex Hospital. Born in Brooklyn, NY, he was the son of the late Charles and Eleanor Mifflin. Charles was a lifetime resident of Portland, served on the town zoning board, was a Portland Town Constable for 20 years, a member of the Portland VFW Post 6121, and served in the US Marine Corp. He worked for Standard Knapp for 25 years and for Standyne for 10 years, was an avid sports fan who enjoyed watching the Red Sox and loved playing golf.

Besides his wife, he is survived by one son, Charles L. Mifflin Jr. of Portland; one daughter, Rochelle M. Hoggard of Middletown; a stepson, Donald Cahill of Portland; a sister, Delores Holley of Southington; two stepsisters, Deborah James of Hartford and Barbara Miller of Middletown; and four grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held at the Zion First Baptist Church, 16 James A. Moses Ave., Middletown, on Saturday, Feb. 16, at 10 a.m. and interment will be in the State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown. Friends may call at the Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown tonight, Feb. 15, from 6-8 p.m. Messages of condolences may be sent to the family at www.doolittlefuneralservice.com.

East Hampton

Lillian Stankiewicz

Lillian (Coutu) Stankiewicz, 94, formerly of East Hampton, beloved wife of the late Walter Stankiewicz, passed away Saturday, Feb. 9, at Middlesex Hospital. Lillian was born in Canada on Aug. 20, 1913. She leaves behind her loving son William Stankiewicz and daughter Jayne Diehl, seven grandchildren, eight great grandchildren, and many nieces, nephews and friends. She was an avid fan of Red Sox Baseball and UConn Basketball. She had a great sense of humor, loved life and her family. The family would like to thank the staff at both High View Health Care and Hospice of Middlesex for the great care they provided Lillian.

A Funeral Liturgy will be celebrated on Saturday, Feb. 16, at 11 a.m. in St. Patrick Church East Hampton. Burial will be at the convenience of the family in St. Mary's Cemetery in Norwich. Friends may call at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton on Saturday from 9:45 - 10:45 a.m. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to High View Health Care Recreation Fund 600 Highland Ave. Middletown, CT 06457.

ance coverage fails minimum requirements, failure to renew registration, and failure to drive at a reasonable distance, State Police said.

2/6-Robert Kempesta, 47, of 40 Chapman Rd., was charged with second-degree harassment/intimidation, criminal violation of restraining order/threatening, and disorderly conduct, State Police said.