

RIVEREAST

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The Blish Park Playscape Renovation Committee and volunteers have prepared the playscape site in Marlborough for next week's big build. The renovation project will run from April 30-May 4. Photo by Jackie Lovett.

Time Has Arrived for Marlborough Playscape Renovation

by Kristina Histen

The time has come!

After years of organization and anticipation, the "build weekend" for the Blish Park Playscape renovation project is just five days away.

"It is very exciting, very stressful and very exhausting," Barbara Lazzari, Blish Park Playscape Renovation Committee General Coordinator and chairwoman of the Marlborough Parks and Recreation Commission, said. "It will be very grueling, but I'm confident when it's done we can all step back and say 'wow,' look at what the community did. We all came together and it doesn't get any better than that."

The Renovation Committee has raised almost \$90,000, which should be enough to cover cost projections and pay all the bills. But committee members are crossing their fingers, hoping for no unforeseen surprises during the build. They have hit their share of bumps along the way, especially when the specialized pressure-treated wood they need for renovations turned out to cost a lot more than expected. The wood was estimated to cost around \$2,000, but it turned out to be about \$9,000, and was only available for purchase down south. Shipping and handling prices therefore skyrocketed, because of the increased cost in diesel.

Despite this, though, Lazzari said the committee has been "extremely fortunate" because of big donations and seems to be "pretty much on track."

Committee members will continue to sell T-shirts and sweatshirts during the build and are encouraging those working on the project to wear them to represent the community, Lazzari said.

Volunteers are still badly needed, committee member Robin Anderson said, as an estimated 8,400 hours are needed to complete the project. They are aiming for a minimum of 60 people per shift which vary depending on the time and day. It is very important to know how many and when volunteers are coming, Lazzari said, because the committee needs to feed everyone and "make them as comfortable as we can to keep them there as long as we can."

"I'll be there from 7 a.m. to close every day," Lazzari said. "I have to oversee this whole project to ensure success because I've put my whole self into it."

Lazzari isn't the only person community members will be sure to see. Along with Marlborough Resident State Trooper Manny Acosta, a group of about 40 State Police recruits from the state Police Academy will be at the build next Thursday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., he said.

"It's neat we got the recruit class to come out," he said. "With about 40 healthy guys and women coming out to give a hand, that will be awesome."

Acosta, a trooper for about 21 and a half years, said the playscape is like the "small, little Six Flags of Marlborough." His own kids grew up on it and he recalls many games of tag.

Acosta, Officer Mark Packer and Officer Randy Ransom became involved in the project when it first started to come together a few years ago. Acosta suggested selling reflective 911 address signs to help police and other emergency personnel find homes after he saw neighboring towns putting them up. After discussing it with the First Selectman, the town incorporated the idea and used the profits for the playscape, he said.

When Acosta heard about State Police recruits helping out to build Windham Heights, he thought it would be encouraging for the Blish Park Playscape too.

"I think that this is just a great thing for them to do," Lazzari said. "To have that kind of manpower we will get so much stuff done with those guys. Most of them will be working in our general vicinity at some point. This whole project is just for the kids, and it's overwhelming to me that

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they are willing to do that.”

State Representative Pam Sawyer is also supporting the playscape, Lazzari said. She has already purchased a sweatshirt and is planning on helping with the build over the weekend.

“It speaks volumes that she really supports us,” Lazzari said.

The playscape has already been sanded and power washed. Right now it is being stained. High school and middle school students have been helping with the staining as community service projects and are “having a great time,” Lazzari said. She hopes that this will help them feel “some type of ownership” and therefore possibly cut down on vandalism.

East Hampton Police News

4/9 — Daniel J. Mudgett, 28, of 131 Wellsville, New Milford, was arrested for misuse of marker plates and operating under suspension, East Hampton Police said.

4/12 — Edward A. Markham Jr., 33, of 88 Main St., was arrested for breach of peace, threatening and interfering with a police officer, police said.

4/14 — Kevin J. McGonigal, 28, of 85 North Main St., was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

4/15 — Angela N. Conway, 30, of 394 Pleasant St., Willimantic, was issued a ticket for operating an unregistered motor vehicle, police said.

“We’re ready, really ready,” Lazzari said. “It’s very exciting. After two and half years, wow, it’s really happening. People are coming out and helping, and the core committee that I have worked with to get everything organized are just awesome people. They have just done above and beyond. We’re just stepping up to the plate. Let’s go, let’s get this thing done.”

To volunteer to help with the build, or to donate, visit www.blishplayscape.info. The build is from April 30 to May 4. Upon completion of the project on Sunday, a potluck dinner will be held at the pavilion by the playscape. Hope for great weather!

Marlborough Police News

4/11-Billy Reed, 22, of 1 Navsubscol Rd., Groton, was charged with operating under the influence of drugs/alcohol and reckless driving, State Police said.

4/20-William Dwelly, 63, of 59 Robin Circle, Tolland, was charged with DWI and failure to maintain established lane, State Police said.

Andover Police News

4/12-Henry Jandzinski, 47, of 26 Old Coventry Rd., was charged with unlawful discharge of firearms, State Police said.

Salem Police News

4/18-Ralph Boss, 46, of 166 Vars Ln, Bradford, RI, was charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, State Police said.

East Hampton Council Approves \$36.94 Million Budget

by Michael McCoy

The Town Council Tuesday unanimously approved a proposed 2008-09 town budget, but not without some butting of heads concerning additional funding for the senior center.

The proposed \$36.94 million spending plan features a 5.02 percent increase over the current year’s budget. It also sports a calculated mill rate of 23.81, which would be an increase of 0.51 mills, resulting in a 2.19 percent tax increase.

The first matter discussed Tuesday night concerned the senior center. Council member Susan Weintraub said she had recently spoken with senior services director Jo Ann Ewing, and proposed allocating \$15,000 for a part-time position to oversee senior center activities. Weintraub said some of the concern came from the projection that senior center membership would reach about 1,200 in 2010.

Once the Board of Finance approves a proposed budget – which it did earlier this month – the Town Council may make further cuts to the spending plan, move funds around, or perform a combination of the two. But council members may not increase the bottom line. So, Weintraub recommended this issue to be funded by moving \$2,500 from the Economic Development Commission budget, \$2,500 from animal control, \$5,000 from the transfer station and \$5,000 from public works.

Weintraub said the conversation with Ewing arose after she visited the senior center. “I was impressed with what was going on there,” Weintraub said. This prompted her to ask Ewing if there was anything she needed, to which Ewing responded, Weintraub said, “I could really use another part-time assistant.”

Council chairman Melissa Engel suggested that a dedicated volunteer fill this position. However, councilman Scott Minnick felt it needed to be a paid position, explaining, “That person needs to be held accountable.”

Engel later proposed the position might make a good fit as an internship for a college student interested in gerontology. She added, “It would look great on somebody’s resume.”

Most council members seemed to think this request simply came in at the eleventh hour, and therefore too late for consideration. Also, the general feeling from council members, as well as finance board members present at the meeting Tuesday, was that this budget was already so tight, it would be virtually impossible to scrape together \$15,000.

“I think we all understand the plight of the seniors,” Councilman Tom Cordeiro said. But, he added, he felt that if any department head was asked, “everyone would say they need some extra support.” He also said that allotting the money would set a precedent to all town employees that anyone who approached a Town Council member a week before their budget vote could secure some extra funds for their department.

Councilman John Tuttle said of Ewing, “This lady, she’s a saint. I’m not condemning her.” But, he continued, “I can’t support this.”

Council member Bill Devine appeared annoyed by the whole situation. At one point during the exchange, he even demanded Weintraub call him “Councilman,” after she had addressed him as “Mr. Devine.”

When Weintraub first broached the subject Tuesday of providing more funds to the senior center, she posted an excerpt of the town’s budget policy statement – an excerpt that pledged to look out for seniors – on a bulletin board behind the council members. Devine later said he was “insulted” and called Weintraub’s action “embarrassing to the council, and it’s grandstanding!”

Councilman Scott Minnick said, “\$15,000, in the scheme of things ... is not that much.” Referring to the policy excerpt Weintraub had posted, he added, “Let’s put our money where our mouth is.”

Minnick also described Ewing as “a very humble person, and she’s not the kind of person that’s in your face.”

Weintraub then made a motion to allot the money for the senior center. However, it failed, 5-2, with Minnick and Weintraub voting in favor of it.

No one took issue with any other items in the budget. Cordeiro said, “I think we’re making some tough calls here. ... I think it’s a really good budget.”

Minnick said he appreciated how fiscally conservative the proposal was, but added, “I do think it does underfund services, particularly the senior center for a measly \$15,000.”

In the end, the proposed budget passed 7-0. The spending plan will now go to a town meeting next Monday, April 28, at 7 p.m. at East Hampton High School, 15 North Maple St. A referendum on the budget is scheduled for Tuesday, May 6, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., in the high school gymnasium.

Marlborough Budget Hearing April 28

The Board of Finance will hold its Annual Public Hearing on the town’s proposed 2008-09 budget on Monday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m., in the cafeteria at Elmer Thienes/Mary Hall Elementary School, 25 School Dr.

The Board of Finance is proposing a budget of \$20.69 million, a 3.67 percent increase over current year spending. As it stands now, the mill rate would climb from 25.21 to 25.86, for an increase to taxes of 2.59 percent.

Contributing to the proposed increase is RHAM, up \$338,334 or 5.11 percent; local Board of Education, up \$252,377 or 3.67 percent; Town Debt Payment, up \$90,611 or 4.61 percent; Town Operations, up \$145,836 or 3.43 percent; Capital Non-Recurring Expenditures, down \$94,633 or 45.26 percent; and Contingency, \$40,000, unchanged over current level.

The finance board’s recommendation is \$453,691, or 2.15 percent, less than the \$21.14 million requested from the Board of Selectmen and both Boards of Education.

The Board of Selectmen sought approval to approve borrowing to purchase the following items: \$190,000 for town and public works vehicles, \$415,000 for a fire truck, \$1,570,000 for road reconstruction, \$500,000 for open space land, and \$500,000 for municipal land. The Board of Finance is recommending borrowing \$410,000 for the fire truck purchase

and \$1,530,000 for road reconstruction.

The Board of Finance also did not support all of the selectmen’s proposed Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditures totaling \$214,930. Instead, only \$114,450 is recommended as follows: \$59,500 for town hall facility/equipment maintenance which includes an additional \$15,000 for HVAC to the previously approved request of \$15,000; \$28,150 for public works equipment; add an additional \$20,000 to replace library air-conditioning unit to this year’s approved request of \$8,000; \$4,000 for refuse container repairs at transfer station; and \$2,800 for Parks & Recreation program software.

Budget details can be viewed on the town’s web site, www.marlboroughct.net; local board of education web site, www.marlborough.k12.ct.us; and RHAM’s web site, www.reg8.k12.ct.us.

Following the finance board’s budget presentation, officials will receive public feedback and will respond to questions. This is the public’s opportunity to assist the board in finalizing a budget for the Annual Town Meeting. The Board of Finance will hold a special meeting following the public hearing to set a final number for town meeting.

The town meeting is scheduled for Monday, May 12, at 7 p.m., where residents will vote on the budget.

East Hampton Committee Hopes to See Memorial by Veterans Day 2009

by Michael McCoy

Though it has been somewhat slow going, nine dedicated individuals are still working toward the installation of an East Hampton veterans’ memorial.

Five or six years ago, Ron Christopher said, Donald Markham approached him and pointed out there is no all-inclusive veterans’ memorial in town. In January 2007, Christopher reminded Markham of his comments, and said, “I think it’s due time, while we’re still here on Earth if we want to see this thing.”

The East Hampton Veterans Memorial Committee has “been meeting ever since,” Christopher said. The committee includes Treasurer Bill McDonald, Secretary Pete Brown, historian John Hansen, as well as Dennis Erickson and Everett Wright, who have been overseeing the collection of names. Markham, Jack Lanzi and Dennis Wall round out the nine-person group.

Christopher made special mention of Hansen, who has compiled a book of photographs, showing what other towns’ memorials look like. Though they have not settled on a design, Christopher anticipated that it may take the three-stone approach that Portland did: World War II on one stone, Korea on another and Vietnam and the Middle East Conflicts on the last one. The committee has also been working with Spencer Funeral Home, who works closely with Rock of Ages, a granite memorial outfit from Vermont.

Erickson and Wright have assembled around 1,300 names of Belltown soldiers who have served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. They have been aided in their efforts by sifting through old copies of the *East Hampton News*, a paper that was active during that time.

The committee has already chosen the location for the memorial: adjacent from the existing memorial in front of East Hampton High School. That memorial honors casualties of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam veterans. The new memorial is set to honor all service people who were on active duty during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, or any Middle East conflict. The Town Council approved the site in January.

Christopher is a four-year veteran who was active during the Korean War, though he never went to Korea itself. He enlisted in the National Guard in 1948, and became part of the Army when the former branch was federalized

in 1950.

Christopher was instead stationed in Germany with the 43rd infantry division for a year and a half during the start of the Cold War. His service ended in 1952, and he achieved the rank of Sergeant 1st Class.

He is also a member of the American Legion, as well as Chaplain of the VFW, an organization of which he is past commander and past district commander.

So far, the committee has raised about \$4,000. This includes a \$3,000 donation by the American Legion. The rest of the money has primarily come from a couple of setback tournaments, the most recent of which was Jan. 26. Christopher said the committee’s goal is to raise between \$55,000 and \$60,000 for the project.

The committee’s next fundraiser is scheduled for May 30 at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall on North Maple Street. The details have not been completely finalized, but Christopher said the event will be a pot roast dinner, put together by Barbara Moore, who runs Chatham Caterers. Moore is donating her time, as well as all of the food and supplies.

Prospective future fundraisers include a public mass mailing, a major raffle, as well as a giant tag sale. The committee aims to hold the latter in September or October.

“We’re working very closely with Reg Farrington,” Christopher said. Farrington spearheaded a similar effort in Portland, which culminated with the installation of an elegant three-stone memorial last Memorial Day. A new circular brick walkway was just added to the memorial last month.

Christopher said he hopes to see the memorial fully installed by Veterans Day 2009.

Anyone interested in helping with the effort is welcome to attend a committee meeting, which are held the second Thursday of each month at the American Legion Post 197 on Main Street. Meetings begin at 10 a.m. Those interested in donating to the memorial effort may make checks out to 15 North Maple St., East Hampton, CT c/o VFW. Note that the check is for Dennis Erickson of the Veterans Memorial Committee.

People interested in donating items for the tag sale, which Christopher estimated will be held in the fall, can call him at 267-211 to arrange pick-up or delivery.

Hebron Holding Year-Long Birthday Celebration

by Sarah McCoy

It's 2008. Do you know how old your town is?

If you live in Hebron the answer is easy: 300.

The town kicked off its celebration of this tercentenary milestone earlier this month, and has 11 more events to follow later this year.

"We each go about Hebron in our own ways and in our own circuit," Peter Moon, chair of the town's 300th Celebration Committee explained. "This year it's about giving families the opportunity to come together to celebrate in a way that works for them."

When members of the Hebron 300th Celebration Committee sat down two years ago they hemmed and hawed with how to best honor the historic milestone. They debated on holding a one-day event, but in the end settled on a series of events that could speak to the variety of interests of Hebron residents.

Earlier this month the group sponsored a Progressive Dinner, hosted by the seven houses of worship in town. Ron Winter, a 300th Celebration Committee member, said the group hoped to draw 40 residents out for the event. Over 80 attended.

Next month the events will really be rolling. On May 17 there will be a RHAM Scholarship Dance, co-sponsored by the RHAM alumni, to benefit the school's scholarship fund. In addition to Hebron's 300th anniversary, 2008 also marks the 40th anniversary of RHAM High School.

Then, on May 23 and 24, RHAM and the Hebron Historical Society will co-sponsor a play, *Quest for Home*.

One of the biggest days of celebration for the town will be on May 26, the exact anniversary of the town's incorporation in 1708, and also Memorial Day. In honor of the holiday and with respect to the Hebron veterans, the annual Memorial Day parade will go off as usual beginning at 11 a.m. In honor of the town's tercentennial, the parade will feature a timeline

of marching militia, each dressed to represent veterans of the nine United States conflicts in the past 300 years.

Then, at 1 p.m., dignitaries and welcomed guests will speak in front of Old Town Hall as part of Proclamation Day. The event will also feature live music and free food in the town center.

Free. That's the operative word for the 300th Committee. The group worked all last year to fundraise for this year's events. That hard work is now paying off as most events will be free to residents. "We wanted this to be a celebration for everyone," committee member Ron Winter said. "In order to do that we knew he had to keep costs down."

Also free this year will be the annual picnic and fireworks display, sponsored by the Hebron Lions Club. This year's show will be the "biggest and brightest" yet, but the fireworks aren't the only way to celebrate. There will be a scavenger hunt around town, the playing of a professional vintage baseball game, and plenty of space for families to enjoy a picnic.

In recognition of the communities that comprise Hebron, the 300th Committee will host a series of "Neighborhood Days" this summer. The days will highlight the historic areas of interest in the Hope Valley area, bring families out to celebrate Gilead and celebrate who and what make Amston Amston.

"We wanted to foster a stronger sense of community," Moon said of the rationale for the Neighborhood Days. "In Hebron we see so much variety in what different sections of town offer. It's time we celebrate that."

The two final events in celebration of the tercentennial will be a Revolutionary War reenactment from Aug. 15-17 and an art exhibit celebrating the local fine and literary artists in Hebron. The exhibit, entitled "Artists Create!," will be held on Nov. 1.



Hebron is celebrating its 300th birthday this year. To help mark the tercentennial, the town has installed new banners off lightposts in town.

In the coming months the committee also hopes to finish the installation of a stonewall commemorating the families of Hebron. As a fundraiser the group sold stones to be engraved with the names of Hebron families. The wall, which is expected to be about 100 feet long and a foot and a half high will be located along Route 66, across from Douglas Library. Appropriately enough, there will be 300 different families recognized on the wall.

The events planned to commemorate the town's tercentennial are just as varied as the individuals who make of the 300th Celebration Committee. Warren Holbrook participated in planning the town's 250th anniversary. Peter

Moon, on the other hand, only came to town in 2002 but wanted to get involved to support the town.

Somewhere in the middle of Holbrook and Moon is fellow committee member Rob Winter. Winter first came to Hebron in 1966 to visit a Marine buddy. He returned to the area after serving in the Vietnam War and built his house from the ground up in 1985.

"After that first visit I knew Hebron was the place for me," he said. "I love this town."

More information on the 300th Celebration Committee and their sponsored events can be found by following a link from the town's web site at www.hebronct.com.

Andover Finance Board Sends Budget to Public Hearing

by Sarah McCoy

"Fiscally responsible." "Better than expected." "Good."

Those were some of the words used by Board of Finance (BOF) members Wednesday night, when they unanimously agreed to send a proposed 2008-09 budget to public hearing next week.

The proposed \$10.41 million spending plan represents a 4.6 percent increase over the current year's budget. That increase includes a proposed 4.66 percent hike in spending for the RHAM Board of Education. The 2008-09 RHAM schools budget will be voted on at referendum in the three RHAM towns – Andover, Hebron and Marlborough.

Also included in the spending package is a local Board of Education budget of \$3.92 million, a 3.75 percent increase over this year. The other major drivers of Andover's budget are the usual suspects: fuel, materials and employee salaries. The town also included \$65,000 to purchase a small dump truck for town use.

At Wednesday night's Board of Finance meeting, one resident questioned the varying percentages in proposed employee salary increases, specifically a 13 percent increase to the Tax Collector salary. First Selectman Bob Burbank reported that this change was made for a number of reasons. The position itself is going from part-time to full-time. Additionally, he said, Andover was struggling to find a qualified individual at the amount previously allotted for the Tax Collector salary. The line item was increased to fall more in line with neighboring towns.

Another complaint heard on Wednesday had nothing to do with the budget, per se. One resident voiced her concern that the documents used to present the budget are full of inaccuracies. BOF Vice-Chair Cathy Desrosiers agreed. For

example, one specific line item shows an increase of \$500 from \$0 allocated in 2007-08. It was then calculated to be a -100 percent increase in spending. This left the Board of Finance members scratched their heads, but ultimately they said it was the fault of the computer software used to create the budget.

Burbank reported that there is additional money included in the 2008-09 budget to address some of the issues the town has been experiencing with the Phoenix financial software.

As it stands now the \$10.41 million budget translates to a 1.34 mill rate increase. Desrosiers calculated that this would represent a \$278 increase in taxes for an Andover house assessed at \$200,000.

BOF member Marie Burbank said of the recommended budget, "To come out with a 1.34 mill increase, I think, is pretty good. It is certainly less than I expected it to be."

Desrosiers agreed, saying, "This is a budget I'm proud of. It is fiscally responsible while trying to meet the needs of our residents."

Burbank said of the budget, "All my departments are griping about it, so it must be responsible."

The Board of Finance will hold its annual public hearing on the budget next Wednesday, April 30, at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall. Residents are asked to attend to voice any changes they would like to see in the 2008-09 budget. After the hearing the finance board will meet again to recommend a final budget to be put forth to the Town Meeting scheduled for May 13 at 7 p.m. at Andover Elementary School.

At the Town Meeting residents will have two options: they can vote the budget down or they can take the number to referendum for a formal vote. Traditionally, the budget referendum is held in late May.

Marlborough Silent Auction to Benefit National MS Society Walk Team

Canine Activist Rosie the Dog has received so many product and service donations from local artists and businesses for her multiple sclerosis walk team 100 Strong that her team Captain, Cassandra Hamilton, didn't quite know what to do with them.

"It's wonderful to receive such generous support for Rosie and the team," said Hamilton. "But I admit, I was a bit daunted as to how to use them to generate funds for the team."

Fortunately for her, Thatcher's Art Alcove owner Kathy Berlin had a dream of her own, that of hosting an art event for charity. Upon hearing of the teams dilemma, Berlin suggested MS walk team 100 Strong be their first event recipient. "I felt like peanut butter met jelly," Hamilton joked about Berlin's offer to host a silent auction.

The silent auction will take place Saturday, May 10, from 1-4 p.m., at the Marlborough businesses located at 6 Independence Dr., adjacent to Thatcher's Pharmacy in the center of town. Products, services, art and gift certificates will be waiting for bid from 1-3. There will also be hor's doeuvres. The highest bids, who will take home the prizes, will be announced during the last hour of the event.

After Berlin's offer, Hamilton said she immediately sent e-mails to artists and businesses she's admired for years requesting they join the auction. "I'm not sure what was the best part," she said. "Being able to finally send letters to people I respect, telling them how their work has positively changed my life or that they responded so quickly to donate to the silent auction." Within two days, 24 artists and businesses joined the event.

And, she said, contributors are still joining the event. The auction's list of contributors includes donations such as a weekend get-away to holistic health spa Omega Institute; a one-hour reading from nationally respected psychic Jackie Barrett from "America's Psychic Chal-

lenge;" two three-month on-line health club memberships to Hollistic Health practioner and author Gillian McKeith.

Artists include: Brian Andres (creator of "StoryPeople"), shamanic artist Balam Soto and author and visionary artist Alex Grey. National potter Chris London, leads the local support followed by watercolor artist Mary Horrigan and potter Michele Sinkez of Blissmeadow Arts. Other amazing contributions include: a cut and blow dry from Headworks Salon and Day Spa, two yoga classes from Sacred Rivers Yoga, a massage by Lori Brown, a private drawing or watercolor lesson from Kathy Berlin, and jewelry by Stone Age, Dynamite Dangles and Lynn Warner. BJ's, Stop & Shop and the Marlborough Barn are offering gift certificates. Everyone who bids will receive a free organic dog or cat food sample and coupon, courtesy of pet supply company Castor & Pollux.

In fact, the auction got so big after Berlin initially broached the subject to Hamilton, Lilly's Frame and Art offered its space to the show as well.

Attendees will help 100 Strong raise funds for multiple sclerosis research. 100 Strong is the brainchild of Hamilton, a Marlborough resident, who was diagnosed in 2006 with multiple sclerosis. She established 100 Strong with the hope of reaching 100 people and businesses committed to raise a minimum of \$100 each. A grassroots effort, she figured, would raise awareness of the disease as well as bring her one step closer to a cure.

To learn more about 100 Strong, or donate to the team, visit www.nationalmssociety.org/goto/100Strong. To view Rosie's videos go to www.youtube.com/user/CassandraMadeIt. And to reach Thatcher's Art Alcove, call 295-1252.

Colchester Public Hearing Held on Budget

by Kristina Histen

The \$47.63 million proposed 2008-09 budget was presented by the Superintendent of Schools and the First Selectman at the first of two public hearings on Monday.

If adopted, the budget would represent a zero increase in mill rate.

Education accounts for 72 percent of the proposed 2008-09 budget; debt takes up 8.3 percent; and general government at 6.7 percent. The remaining is due to public safety, public works, civic and cultural, human services and transfers.

Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle said the Board of Education's (BOE) proposed \$34.29 million 2008-09 budget was "fiscally responsible to the community and educationally responsive to the learning needs of the students." The 2.98 percent increase over current year's spending is the fourth lowest in the state out of 76 reporting, she said. Despite this, in most subjects at Bacon Academy, students are above state averages in performance.

"We're making progress," Loiselle said. "We're not where we need to be yet, but we're making progress."

First Selectman Linda Hodge said the town budget proposal of \$13.33 million, which includes debt service and capital, addressed the "real needs" and "what is good for the town." The proposed town budget is \$297,393 less than what was adopted in 2007-2008, mainly be-

cause of a decrease in debt services.

"These are tough times for Colchester," Hodge said.

Although the small audience mostly consisted of members from various boards and commissions, one resident did decide to comment on Monday.

"I'm voting for this budget," Steve Schuster, a 63-year resident, said. "But it needs to be tweaked a little bit."

He emphasized the fire department's critical need for a new fire truck and ambulance, believing they should be restored under capital improvements. Board of Finance Chair Bruce Hayn responded that they are hoping to purchase the vehicles later this year by payment bonding.

For the first time in 10 years, the town will vote for the proposed BOE budget and the proposed Board of Selectman budget separately, Hayn said.

A second public hearing was held Wednesday, April 23, also at Town Hall. A town meeting on the proposed budget will be held Tuesday, May 6, at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall and the proposed referendum will be held on May 13 subject to town meeting approval.

For more information about the town and BOE budgets, visit the websites www.colchesterct.gov and www.colchesterct.org.

Marlborough School Board Revises Budget

by Kristina Histen

The Board of Education (BOE) last week revised its proposed 2008-09 budget, following a cut made earlier this month by the Board of Finance (BOF).

The revised \$7.12 million spending plan represents a \$252,376, or 3.67 percent, increase over the current year's budget.

Earlier this month, the BOE budget was cut by \$122,028 by the Board of Finance (BOF). To achieve this amount, school board members last week followed recommendations made by Superintendent of Schools Sal Menzo and administration to reduce insurance, a .5 FTE Library Media Paraprofessional, the weekend custodian budget, reallocate a Reading Paraprofessional position to include a finance clerk and delay the painting of the school building.

Everyone affected by reductions has been spoken to and will "land on their feet," BOE Chair Maria Grove said.

The BOE was still be able to keep in the proposed budget a new math/science specialist, a new kindergarten teacher and a new kindergarten paraprofessional by cutting them all to half time positions, Grove said. The kindergarten teacher is needed for an unexpected increase in students. Board members were "very pleased" to see the math/science specialist still on the table, even at reduced position, she said.

"Even though we're working on a sustained services budget, we're offering slightly more services because Menzo is so creative and our staff has been so willing to take up other responsibilities," Grove said.

School board members understand this is a difficult budget time for the town, Grove said, but although the board is not there yet, there will come a point when a sustained services budget "won't cut it."

"It is very frustrating that we always have to cut something out and can't include a new initiative," she said, but, "our budget is very strong and very creative and shows we're running very close to even."

Grove is hoping in the future board members can work collaboratively with the BOF for number recommendations early, both in order to avoid having to make cuts this late in the process and to clearly understand the financial and economic climate of the community.

"We are all in this together," she said. "We all need to start talking earlier about expectations and climate so we know what to expect come budget time."

A public hearing on the proposed budget will be held Monday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m., at the Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall School Cafeteria, 25 School Dr.

Colchester Police News

4/10-Jonathan Solsky, 23, of 13 Deepwood Dr., Lebanon, was charged with speeding, DUI, failure to obey the signal of an officer and exhaust pipe req., State Police said.

4/10-Heather Pelletier, 59, of 165 Norwich Rd., Salem, was charged with operating under the influence of drugs/alcohol, State Police said.

4/10-Barbara Savitski, 68, of 82 River Rd., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

4/12-Jeremy Coelho, 20, of 385 Cabin Rd., was charged with possession of narcotics, possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

4/13-Joshua Casey, 31, of Fruitwood Dr., Norwich, was charged with failure to drive right and DUI, State Police said.

4/14-Taylor Suroviak, 18, of 188 Old Hebron Rd., and a youth offender were both charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

4/14-Thomas Serenson, 61, of 13 Myrtle Rd., East Hampton, was charged with disorderly conduct, threatening and interfering with an officer, State Police said.

4/15-Melaine Russell, 43, of 79 Lakeview Dr., turned herself in to State Police on the

charge of second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

4/16-Joshua Stomberg, 27, of 44 Balaban Rd., turned himself in to State Police on the charge of evading, State Police said.

4/17-Thomas Bailey, 18, was charged with interfering with a police officer and possession of marijuana, State Police said.

4/17-Danielle West, 21, of 264 Jones Hollow Rd., Marlborough, was charged with breach of peace and possession of paraphernalia, State Police said.

4/18-David Tyson, 55, of 30 Kent St., was charged with operating under the influence of drugs/alcohol and speeding on highway, State Police said.

4/18-Patrick James Burdo, 19, of 115 Chestnut Dr., was charged with possession of marijuana, State Police said.

4/21-Stephen Ferrante, 20, of 276 Scott Hill Rd., Lebanon, was charged with third-degree burglary, third-degree criminal mischief and sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

4/22-Brian Edward Duhamel, 18, of 59 Dara Dr., was charged with threatening and second-degree harassment, State Police said.



Zach Ricard, 4, took advantage of the opportunity to sit inside the D.A.R.E. Police Car at "The Big T" on Tuesday. More than 300 people attended the event.

Hundreds Take In Town Hall Expo

by Kristina Histen

The warm spring weather on Tuesday wasn't the only reason why Colchester residents were outside.

The Town Hall and the Senior Center hosted the fourth annual Town Hall Expo, or "The Big T." More than 300 people attended, First Selectman Department Clerk Pam Scheibelein said.

This year was a bit different than in the past, First Selectman Linda Hodge said. By using the Town Hall and the Senior Center for "The Big T," organizers were able to help people get more familiar with the two buildings and spread everyone out so it wasn't so crowded in one area, she said.

But, inside the Town Hall it was still packed, with 14 different display booths hosted by departments like the First Selectman, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Zoning, the Tax Assessor and the Board of Education. The meeting room at Town Hall buzzed with excitement as patrons wandered from table to table with the opportunity to ask questions and make comments to each department. People asked "real varied kinds of questions," on topics ranging from the budget to the little league fields, Hodge said. But the number one question from kids was if she liked her job as the First Selectman.

The Police Department was especially a big hit, because candy and brightly colored helmets were being handed out. Alex Ricard, 6, said this was his favorite part of the event, because he was given a blue helmet.

Senior center volunteers MaryAnn Standish, Evelyn Schutz and Anna Lindsey gave out maps of the Town Hall Expo with a trail guide. If residents visited at least 15 different tables and had their map initialed by the department, they

had a chance to dunk Parks and Recreation Director Jay Cohen in the dunk tank.

Attendees were encouraged to vote for the best Town Department Table, and the Parks and Rec. dunk tank booth took first place. It was followed closely by the Police Department, while Public Works and the Health Department tied for third, Hodge said.

As people walked the Town Hall Expo trail outside, they were greeted by the dunk tank, games, face painting and Touch-a-Truck. Young and old, most with brightly-painted faces, could sit inside a police cruiser, pretend to ride a bucket loader, check out the inside of an ambulance or hear the sound of a fire truck siren very close up. Children were fascinated by the various vehicles used around town and ran from one to another throughout the lawn while quickly posing for pictures taken by their parents.

The line was pretty long at the dunk tank, mostly filled with kids, who anxiously waited for their shot to soak their Parks and Rec. director. Luckily for Cohen, the sun was shining, because he was dunked quite a few times.

On the other side of the trail, inside the senior center, community members could again ask questions and make comments to members of the fire department, library and Senior and/or Youth Services. Also, rumor had it, a delicious bowl of chicken noodle soup was waiting for people when they arrived.

"All in all, it was a good day," Hodge said. "We handed out a lot of information and our town staff got to talk to our residents. The purpose was for residents to see what people do in their town and the turnout was really good."

Salem Man Arrested on Drug Charges After Car Accident

by Kristina Histen

A three-car accident on Monday turned into a drug bust after heroin was found in a Salem man's vehicle, State Police said.

At about 12:24 p.m., police said, Aaron Rekas, 21, of 128 Buckley Rd., Salem, was traveling behind two cars eastbound on Route 16 near Gillette Street. When the two cars stopped for traffic, Rekas rear-ended the ve-

hicle in front of him, thus sending it crashing into the other, police said. No injuries were reported.

When police charged Rekas with following too close, they found 20 bags of heroin in his car, police said.

Rekas was arraigned in Superior Court in Norwich on Tuesday and released on a \$500 bond, police said.

Obituaries

Andover

Fern Davidson Memorial Service

There will be a Memorial Service Saturday, May 10, at 1 p.m. at the family graveyard for Fern P. Davidson.

Friends and family are invited.

East Hampton

Dorothy M. Peterman

Dorothy M. (Coe) Peterman, 92, of East Hampton, widow of William Peterman Jr., died Tuesday, April 22, at Manchester Memorial Hospital. Born Sept. 24, 1915, in Middletown, she was a daughter of the late John F. and Hazel (Markham) Coe. Dorothy was a loving homemaker for her husband and children.

She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, William III and Jean Peterman of East Hampton; one daughter and son-in-law, Nancy and Buddy Fatscher, also of East Hampton; two sisters, Marion Roberts of Farmington and Helen Condon of East Hampton; seven grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Dorothy was predeceased by her daughter, Claire Parisi.

Her funeral was held Thursday, April 24, at Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial will be at the convenience of the family. There are no calling hours. Friends may leave an online condolence at www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Portland

Melinda D. McGurl

Melinda D. McGurl, 50, of Portland, died Sunday, April 20, at Middlesex Hospital. She was born in Hagerstown, MD, the daughter of Vivian Hansen of Cromwell and the late James Weibel, Jr. Besides her mother, she leaves her fiancé Robert G. Sutton of Portland, a daughter and her husband Stacey and Matt Burgess of Cromwell, two granddaughters, Emma and Abigail Burgess, a sister and brother-in-law Cindy and Mike Starzyk of Smithsburg, MD, and a niece and nephew.

There was to be a funeral service today, Friday, April 25, at 10 a.m. at Rose Hill Funeral Home, 580 Elm St., Rocky Hill. Burial will be in Rose Hill Memorial Park, Rocky Hill. Calling hours were Thursday, April 24, at the funeral home.

Hebron

Michael Labas

Michael Labas, 88, of Hebron, passed away on Wednesday, April 16, at Windham Hospital. He was born Oct. 17, 1919, in New Britain, son of the late John and Mary Kapnicki Labas. He was a veteran of World War II serving in the U.S. Army. Michael was a carpenter and belonged to the Carpenters Union. Surviving a son, Mark and daughter-in-law, Judith Labas; a daughter, Amelia and son-in-law, William Hulk all of Hebron; a brother, Nickolas; four grandchildren; two great grandchildren; several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by two brothers and two sisters. Belmont Funeral Home of Colchester in charge of private arrangements. There are no calling hours.

Marlborough

Dillon P. Wilson

Dillon P. Wilson (a.k.a. Dillbob Wilson Pants), 2-year-old son of Colin A. and Beverly (Caouette) Wilson of Marlborough, died Friday, April 18, at Boston Children's Hospital. He was born Sept. 29, 2005. Besides his parents he is survived by two sisters, Grace Wilson and Emma Wilson; his grandmothers, Patricia Wilson of Marlborough, Joan Caouette of Tolland; his uncles and aunts, Grant Wilson of Glastonbury, Leigh Baio of Colchester, Denise and Dave Abrams of Apalachin, NY, Sheri and Don Wilson of Chaplain, Ann Marie and Wade Raymond of Windsor; his cousins, Roger, Alaina, Alyssa, Cassandra, Kailee, Christopher, Skyler, and many great aunts, uncles and second cousins. He was predeceased by his grandfathers Roger Caouette and Joseph Roberge.

The family would like to thank the 8th floor staff at CCMC, especially Kara, Candy, Milly, Frank, Matt and Freida, the PICU staff Mary Ann and Dr. Thor Thorson, and Dr. Gillan and the oncologist at CCMC, and the staff at Boston Children's Hospital 6th West. A Mass of Christian Burial was held Tuesday, April 22, at 11 a.m., in St. John Fisher Church, Marlborough. Burial followed in Marlboro Cemetery. Friends called at the Mulryan Funeral Home, 725 Hebron Ave., Glastonbury, on Monday, April 21.

In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to the CT. Children's Medical Center, 12 Charter Oak Place, Hartford, CT. 06106 or to the National Children Cancer Society, One South Memorial Dr., Suite 800, St. Louis, MO. 63102 or to the National Marrow Donor Program, 3001 Broadway St., NE, Suite 100, Minneapolis, MN 55413.

Portland

Agatha Cappello

Agatha Cappello, 70, wife of Vincent J. "Cubby" Cappello of Main Street, Portland, died Monday, April 21, at the Middlesex Health Care Center. She was born June 10, 1937 in Middletown, daughter of Ruth (Cochran) D'Aquila and the late Salvatore D'Aquila. She was a graduate of the University of Vermont and a member of the Alpha Beta Kappa Teachers Association. She taught at Moody School for 12 years.

Besides her husband and mother she is survived by a son Vincent Cappello of Middletown; two brothers, Salvatore D'Aquila of Ivoryton and Thomas D'Aquila of Middletown; three grandchildren, Samantha, Vincent and Ashley, and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral Services were to be held today, Friday, April 25, at 11 a.m., at the D'Angelo Funeral Home 22 South Main St., Middletown. Burial will be in the State Veteran's Cemetery, Middletown. Relatives and friends were to call at the funeral home this morning from 9-11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to Middlesex Health Care Center, 100 Randolph Rd., Middletown, CT 06457.

Portland

Bernice Byington Darna

Bernice M. Byington Darna, 88, of Jobs Pond Road, Portland, died Monday, April 21, at the Weiss Hospice Unit of Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by her loving family. She was the wife of the late Maurice Darna. Born in East Hartford Jan. 31, 1920, the daughter of the late Frank and Elsie Sellow Byington, she was a Portland resident for many years.

She had been employed as a Case Aid Worker for the Portland school system until her retirement several years ago. She was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church, in Portland, and was active in the Women's Guild, the Women of Trinity and the Altar Guild. She also had been an assistant Girl Scout leader.

Mrs. Darna is survived by her daughter, Gail McDowell and her husband Dr. Bud McDowell of Durham; her sons, Robert Darna and his wife Sandra of Portland, Ronald Darna and his wife Debra of Boynton Beach, FL, and Richard Darna and his wife Roseanne of Portland; her 12 grandchildren, her five great-grandchildren, her grand-dog Boo and several nieces and nephews.

Her family will receive relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, today, Friday, April 25, from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Funeral services will be held Saturday, April 26, at 10 a.m. in Trinity Episcopal Church, 345 Main St., Portland. The Rev. Steven Ling, Priest-in-Charge, will officiate. Interment will follow in Trinity Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that gifts in her memory be sent to the Weiss Hospice Unit of Middlesex Hospital, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

Colchester

Arthur Olin Kristoff Sr.

Arthur Olin Kristoff, Sr., 86, of Lakeview Drive, Colchester, beloved husband of Cecile "Sue" Kristoff, passed away Saturday, April 19, at the Middlesex Hospital. Born Nov. 10, 1921, in Hartford, he was a son of the late Frank and Wilma (Gerich) Kristoff. A proud Army veteran, he served during World War II and was a Life Member and Past Commander of Baron-Smith-Golec American Legion Post 156 in Moodus. Mr. Kristoff was an operator of the East Haddam Swingbridge for many years before his retirement. Art was an avid fisherman and was also a past member of the Wooster Lodge No. 10 A.F. & A.M. in Colchester before his illness.

In addition to his loving wife of 58 years, he is survived by five children, Mary Ann Perdion of Newington, Diana Kristoff of Fairmont, WV, Arthur Kristoff, Jr. of Newington and Lynn Harmon and Debra Sypher, both of Colchester; several grandchildren and great grandchildren; a sister, Leona Young; four brothers, Bernard of New York, Larry of Minnesota and Richard and Frank, both of Coventry; and numerous extended family members and friends.

Friends called Tuesday, April 22, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Road, Colchester. A Chapel Service with Military Honors will be observed at 7 p.m. Donations in his memory may be made to the Colchester-Hayward VFD, 18-54 Old Hartford Road, Colchester 06415.

Colchester

James M. Cunningham

James M. Cunningham, 69, of Pickereel Lake Road, Colchester, beloved husband of Maria, went home to the Lord on Wednesday, April 16, at the Middlesex Hospital. Born Jan. 21, 1939 in Marlborough, MA, he was a son of the late James Joseph and Mary (Boswell) Cunningham. He studied at Suffolk University in Boston, earning his Bachelor's Degree in Business. A proud Air Force veteran, he served during the Vietnam and Cold War period as a Missileer. During his service, he would meet his loving wife of nearly 44 years, Maria C. Vasquez, whom he wed on May 2, 1964, in Minot, ND.

Mr. Cunningham was a Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter for many years, serving as Director of Underwriting for The Hartford for 32 years before his retirement in 1997. Following his retirement, he went on to consult for the TransAmerican Insurance Group in Dallas, TX. Jim was an active communicant of St. Andrew Parish in Colchester. For many years, Jim was very involved with Cub and Scouting with Troop 13 and had served as a Leader and Committee member. He served as the First President of the Parish Council and was a member of the Francis Cardinal Spellman Council 6107 Knights of Columbus.

Mr. Cunningham had also served on the Colchester Commission on Aging and was a member of the Association of Air Force Missileers. Jim was also an expert marksman and an avid Austin-Healey enthusiast. Most importantly, he was a devoted husband and father who will be greatly missed.

In addition to his loving wife, he is survived by his three sons, James Michael and wife, Ching Ho of Santa Clara, CA, Patrick Joseph and his girlfriend, Kate Nash of Albuquerque, NM, and Joseph Christopher of Norwich; his sister and brother-in-law, Elaine and Clinton Lanier of Tyler, TX; his brother-in-law, Roy Grant of Barhamsville, VA; and numerous extended family members and friends. He was predeceased by two sisters, Katherine Grant and Margaret "Peggy" Cunningham.

Friends called Sunday, April 20, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral assembled Monday starting at the funeral home before the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester, with Fr. Michael Giannitelli, officiating. Committal with full military honors will follow in the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the American Cancer Society, 106 Franklin Commons, Rte. 32, Franklin 06254-1800.

Colchester

Konrad John Trosko

Konrad John Trosko, cherished expected son of Marcin and Elizabeth (Horba) Trosko of Colchester, passed away Friday, April 18.

A Mass of the Angels was celebrated Wednesday, April 23, at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. There are no calling hours.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

Colchester

Stephen Francis Smith Sr.

Stephen Francis Smith Sr., 66, of Colchester, beloved husband of Patricia (Phenix) Smith, went home to the Lord on Monday, April 21, after a courageous battle with Lou Gehrig's Disease. Born Oct. 7, 1941 in Hartford, he was a son of the late Frank and Marie (Donovan) Smith. He was a 1959 graduate of Newington High and went on to earn his Bachelors of Arts degree from the University of Hartford. From 1964 to 1970, he proudly served with the Army National Guard during the Vietnam War.

Steve was a graphic designer and advertising consultant for many years; working for AETNA for 25 years and then for Pfizer for seven years. He had also taught for seven years at Manchester Community College and was a substitute teacher at Bacon Academy in Colchester until his illness.

Steve was an active member of the Colchester community, having volunteered for many years with the Colchester-Hayward VFD and serving on the Economic Development Commission. A man of deep faith, he was an active communicant and longtime choir member at St. Andrew Parish in Colchester. Steve also was a 25 year retreatant with the men from St. Andrew at Holy Family Monastery in West Hartford.

In his spare time, he was an avid mountain climber and fan of the Boston Red Sox. Most importantly, his greatest joy was found in his family, to whom he was a devoted husband, father and grandfather – may he rest in peace and may his memory be a blessing to all.

In addition to his loving wife of nearly 40 years he is survived by 12 children (and their spouses), Karen (Stephen) Petty of Moodus, Stephen (Allison Anderson) Smith, Jr. of Norwich, Scott (Carrie) Smith of Norwich, Kristen (Warren) Pollard of New Britain, Kathleen (Robert) Yanez of Manchester, Shannon (Kelly) Smith of Wauregan, Kelley (Mark) Grzymajlo of Wethersfield, Kerry (John) Filloramo of Colchester and Sean, Kaitlin, Shane and Samuel Smith, all of Colchester; 17 grandchildren, Alyssa and Cole Petty; Henley, Owen, Sophia, Jesse, Abby, Anna, Jacob, Angelina and Jameson Smith; Chelsea, Caylin and Jerel Pollard; and John, Jillian and Kiley Filloramo; his sister and brother-in-law, Susan and Ken Saucier of Newington; and numerous extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by a daughter, Kimberley.

Friends may call from 4 to 8 p.m. today, Friday, April 25, at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. The funeral will gather Saturday morning starting at 11:30 a.m. at the church before the celebration of the Funeral Liturgy at noon with Fr. Michael C. Giannitelli as Principal Celebrant and Fr. Michael S. Smith as Homilist. Committal with full military honors will follow at the New St. Andrew Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Stephen F. Smith Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o Liberty Bank, 219 So. Main St., Colchester 06415 or to the ALS Association, 4 Oxford Rd. Unit D1, Milford 06460

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester.

