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Ryan St. Onge placed fourth in the men's freestyle aerials at the Winter Olympics last week. The former East Hampton resident said this week his Vancouver experience was "unbelievable."

From Belltown To Vancouver

by Claire Michalewicz

Many Connecticut residents watched Ryan St. Onge compete in the men's freestyle aerials at the Olympics last week, but what they may not have realized was that the skier has local roots.

Born in Hartford in 1983, St. Onge lived in several Connecticut towns throughout his childhood, along with his parents and older brother Chad. He and his family lived in East Hampton for two years before moving to Colorado when St. Onge was 10.

St. Onge considers Winter Park, CO, his home, since he's lived there for so long. He still feels attached to Connecticut, though, coming back here frequently to visit relatives. He remembers living near Lake Pocotopaug, and going to the lake in warm weather.

St. Onge started skiing when he was two, and he and his family would drive to Vermont to ski.

"It was something I'd always loved to do," St. Onge said of skiing.

St. Onge placed fourth in the finals last Thursday after his two jumps. He was in eighth place after his first jump, but a higher score on his second jump propelled him into first place.

But three later skiers bumped St. Onge into fourth. China's Liu Zhongqing took bronze,

St. Onge's teammate Jeret Peterson took silver, and Belarus' Aleksei Grishin took home the gold.

St. Onge's grandmother, Nancy Banks, still lives in Glastonbury. Banks said last weekend that she hadn't spoken to her grandson since the finals, but she knew he was disappointed.

"I knew the minute that he did the first jump he was cooked," Banks said, adding that she's proud of him no matter what.

Banks said she's very close to St. Onge, who sent her emails and postcards throughout the games.

"When he's good, he's very, very good," she said of her grandson's talent.

St. Onge's uncle Bob Banks, who lives in Colchester, spoke of how proud he was of his nephew.

"We're ecstatic that he was able to compete in the Olympics," Bob Banks said. He added that he was especially proud of the way St. Onge responded after being bumped off the podium.

"He took it like a man," Bob Banks said of his nephew, "with a smile and a hug for the guy who bested him."

Even though he didn't win a medal, St. Onge

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Alpert Takes on Blumenthal in Debate

by Katy Nally

The "underdog" seized the opportunity Monday night to make a splash at Monday's Senate debate held at the University of Hartford.

Colchester native Merrick Alpert, was on the offensive as he faced off against fellow Democrat Attorney General Richard Blumenthal.

The two candidates, both in the running to take U.S. Senator Chris Dodd's seat in 2012, discussed a myriad of topics ranging from health care to Cuba.

Alpert, who pegged Blumenthal as a "career politician," plugged his "underdog" status and opened by telling the audience "this is what a real-live underdog looks like." Alpert, a retired businessman, has never held public office.

Nor has he proven as popular with voters as his opponent. In a January Quinnipiac University poll, 82 percent of respondents said they would vote for Blumenthal in a primary between the two men, whereas only 4 percent said they would vote for Alpert.

Blumenthal said at Monday's debate he believes "all of us have the obligation to give back," and noted his 20-year service as attorney general with a "proven record of results."

Although both are Democrats, the two candidates mostly differed in opinion, especially in the questions regarding job creation and the war in Afghanistan.

In a question about health care, Alpert proposed to extend a Medicare service to all American citizens. He called health coverage a "moral obligation" and a "national survival" tactic.

"The responsibility as Americans is to provide health care and insurance coverage to 46 million Americans," Alpert said. He later proposed taxing "Cadillac plans" that cost upwards of \$70,000. "Things are not free," Alpert stressed.

Blumenthal said there needs to be an "overhaul" of the current health care system and suggested pooling purchases to lower the costs. He emphasized that "no one should be compelled to change" their health care plans. Blumenthal mentioned repealing exemptions from anti-trust laws for health insurance companies to enable competition.

Alpert took the health care question as an opportunity to ask why insurance rates had "skyrocketed" in the 20 years Blumenthal has been attorney general.

Blumenthal's response was that he was "straight-jacketed by a system." He agreed that "reforms are necessary" and said stronger regulations on these rate hikes should be enforced. He said the public should have more of a say in "health care matters."

When it came to job creation, Alpert outlined his \$1 trillion plan to invest in American education and infrastructure. He said he would promote vocational/technology schools and focus on building roads, bridges, ports and airports. "My view is we need to be big and bold," Alpert said.

He added that "government needs to get off the backs of business." And, taking another jab at Blumenthal, Alpert said, "Lawsuits don't

create jobs; entrepreneurs do." Later, Alpert asked Blumenthal, "How many jobs have your lawsuits created?"

Blumenthal said his lawsuits provide for "level playing fields," which helps to sustain businesses. He said as attorney general he has fought to decrease electric rates, making small business-life more affordable. "We have helped, not hurt, businesses in this state," Blumenthal stressed.

His plan for job creation included tax credits for small businesses and instituting "green job" positions. "We need to lower the cost of doing business in Connecticut," he said.

The tension bubbled when a question about the "war on terror" was asked. Although both men touted their military records, their answers were starkly different.

Blumenthal, who was in the U.S. Marines, answered first and said the "war on terror is necessary for us to fight," adding that he supported the present strategy, including the troop increase, as outlined by President Barack Obama.

Blumenthal said it was important to utilize "non-military" methods and continue to fight the war on terror in other countries besides Afghanistan, including Yemen and Somalia. He said reforming the Afghan government was a vital part of winning the war.

Alpert, who was a peacekeeper in Bosnia, could barely hold back from saying, "We need to get out of Afghanistan now." He said this

war is separate from the war on terror and called for an immediate withdrawal of troops and to leave only special agents. Alpert said the U.S. should not borrow money from China to fund a war where troops are "slaughtered" by terrorists in Pakistan. He said it's necessary to kill and capture terrorists, but said this can be accomplished through drones and special agents.

Blumenthal said he would rely on military officials about the nature of the war in Afghanistan. He maintained that this war was important, adding, "Terror continues to be a threat to our security."

To counter Blumenthal, Alpert said "we shouldn't play games," adding American would need about 640,000 troops on the ground to win. "Wouldn't you rather spend \$4 billion on America, not Afghanistan?" Alpert asked.

The two candidates were also given the chance to practice their Spanish during a question addressing relations with Cuba.

Blumenthal said, "Yo hablo Español. Voy a Cuba Libre" (which translates to "I speak Spanish. I'm going to a free Cuba") after noting that the U.S. should "move in the direction" of normalizing relations with Cuba. He said the plan would take shape once Cuba adopts a more democratic government. Blumenthal added he would seek input from local Latinos as to whether forging a relationship would be a good idea. "I hope to be part of the process maybe in a few years," Blumenthal said.

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Vancouver cont. from Front Page

has nothing but positive things to say about his Olympic experiences.

"It was unbelievable," St. Onge said two days after the closing ceremony.

Vancouver wasn't his first Olympics – he competed at Torino in 2006, placing 16th. At Torino, St. Onge explained, he was taken by surprise by the entire experience. The Vancouver Olympics were much more enjoyable for him.

"I had a completely different attitude going in," he said. "It was much easier for me to be in control." St. Onge said that he felt relaxed during these Olympics.

Part of that change was the result of being four years older and more experienced, he said, but St. Onge also credits the efforts of the Vancouver organizers with maintaining the aerobics course and keeping the entire Olympics running smoothly.

St. Onge is currently studying business fi-

nance at Westminster College in Salt Lake City, UT, but he's considering moving back east for grad school.

But right now, he added with a laugh, he just wants some time off.

"My biggest plan is to take a break," he said. He's not taking any classes this semester, and he's thinking about going to Sri Lanka to relax on the beach for a while.

St. Onge isn't sure what the future of his skiing career will be, but he has plenty of other ambitions.

"I'm shifting my focus," he said, explaining that school may hold more opportunities for him in the future. He said he'd love to work in business for a while, but ultimately he has other goals.

"I want to learn physics, and then sit on an island for a few years and think about it," St. Onge said. Eventually, he added, he wants to be a 10th-grade English teacher.



Businessman Merrick Alpert, center, debated Attorney General Richard Blumenthal Monday in the first of two Senate debates. Alpert answered questions from reporters after the debate, which held at the University of Hartford.

Alpert cont. from Front Page

Alpert balked at the attorney general's response and said it was another example of "incrementalism." He said the U.S. should "immediately" normalize its relations with Cuba and called it "abhorrent" that "we continue to block" the country. He emphasized that Cubans "like us" and they want to "get out of poverty and interact with the U.S."

He noted his "esposa" (spouse) was in the audience, a Columbia native, who could teach him Spanish, so he could get a better understanding of the situation. "What are we afraid of, success? Who are we trying to play to?"

Alpert said.

The two candidates closed by stressing their strong points, Blumenthal mentioned his record and Alpert, his "vision for a better Connecticut."

Blumenthal said as attorney general he learned to achieve results and "fight for" the public.

Alpert compared himself to the New Orleans Saints, the U.S. bobsled team and President Obama, all "underdogs" like himself. He pledged, if elected, he would be the "best employee you ever had."

Hebron Resident Speaks to State Council About Town History

by Lindsay Fetzner

A celebration of Black History Month at the state capital took on a local spin last week.

The Department of Administrative Services (DAS) Diversity Council put together an event on Tuesday, Feb. 23 in light of the month-long celebration that featured a showing of the short film *Testimonies of a Quiet New England Town*. A discussion with producer Donna McCalla, also the president of the Hebron Historical Society, followed.

Testimonies of a Quiet New England Town, filmed in Hebron last year, describes the capture of two Connecticut slaves, Cesar and Lewis Peters. With the help of their Hebron neighbors, the Peters and their eight children were eventually rescued in 1787. Their rescue marked the "earliest documented abolitionist movement in New England," according to the film's website, www.quiettestimoniesthefilm.org, and was a significant historical event for the town of Hebron. The Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism (CCT) sponsored the film as part of the Strategic Initiative Grant Program. The program awarded 15 different grants encouraging projects that promote Connecticut tourism and culture, according to the DAS.

Karen Senich, executive director of CCT, said the film was supported through two grants to the Hebron Historical Society. The first was for the research and writing of the film, and later on, for the ultimate filming and completion of the film. "It is the kind of project we like to support," Senich said. "It's an excellent project and had an excellent outcome." Senich said that when CCT was able to connect DAS with McCalla regarding the event held last week, the department "was thrilled." (DAS officials would not comment for this story.)

McCalla said the theme for the event was that Black History Month is not just a date, but an ongoing process. "The learning never ends," she said.

McCalla discussed with the DAS Diversity Council what has been discovered about the town's Peters House – the 150 East St. home located next to Burnt Hill Park – since the script for the film was completed in her presentation

as well. Roughly three weeks ago, McCalla said, the Hebron assistant town clerk, Ann Hughes, discovered the death records of Cesar Peters and his second wife, Sim Peters. "We have been looking for them for years," McCalla said.

Hughes said this week she has been indexing all of the old vital records in the town hall for several months. In a book of old town meeting records, Hughes discovered an unmarked booklet containing vitals. Inside this booklet were the records of the Peters. Hughes said she assumed McCalla already knew about the vitals, but contacted McCalla anyway.

When informed the records had been unveiled, Hughes said, McCalla "was ecstatic." McCalla said that, in the last few years alone, "tons and tons of new research has been uncovered." She cited the town clerk's office as being "a wealth of information" throughout the whole process, "discovering stuff down there all the time."

From the beginning, McCalla said, the intent was to incorporate the film into learning exercises, creating something "highly valuable in classrooms and libraries." Members of the state Department of Education were among those present last week as well. McCalla said curriculum materials, posters, DVDs and postcards, among many other items, were passed out and brought back to the schools. McCalla said getting the film out with the educational materials "is a package deal."

Much of the curriculum materials is geared toward the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and emphasizes skills in subjects such as math and writing. The story of Cesar and Lewis Peters is used as a medium in all of the materials. McCalla provided an example of a math question, which asked students to calculate the distance slave traders had to travel to Norwich, the closest boat dock, in addition to the amount of time the travel would take.

Questions such as these engage children in the Peters' story while still applying skills necessary to perform well in the CMTs, McCalla said. "It happened in Hebron," McCalla said,

"but the lesson itself has much larger implications."

Senich also touched on the value and importance of the film's curriculum materials that stemmed from the project and noted that CCT was "delighted to support" it. Christopher Ambrose, a paraprofessional at Hebron Elementary School, and Gregory Farmer from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation teamed up to create the curriculum materials, McCalla said.

It is important, McCalla said, to not view the story of Cesar and Lewis in isolation. "All of these stories have repercussions." Even if it is learning about how Hebron felt about slavery in general, McCalla said the underlining messages are still important. The continual research creates a domino effect and offers much more than just the story of the Peters. "It is all part of the learning process," she said.

McCalla also discussed the next project that she has been working on over the course of the past year. Josephine Sophia White Griffing, born in Hebron in 1814, was active in the women's suffrage movement and was an anti-slavery activist. Griffing only resided in Hebron for a very short time, but is buried in town. McCalla is interested in learning more about Griffing and her role in Ohio, where she was part of the Women's Rights Association. Griffing also resided in Washington D.C., where she was very vocal in promoting awareness about former slaves and the impoverished conditions they were up against.

McCalla said she is interested in researching this part of Griffing's life and the impact of what Griffing accomplished in D.C. Although McCalla has halted her research for several months, she said she is "anxious to get back" and learn more about this "very vocal woman."

McCalla noted that many people showed interest in her project last week at the capital and raised discussions on genealogy. "It was well received and there were lots of questions," McCalla said. "It tells you people are interested."

Matthew Troy, the Hebron native who wrote and directed *Testimonies*, accompanied McCalla to the event as well. "It is always nice to have an audience," he said this week. "People enjoyed it." Troy said that approximately 50 people were in attendance for the screening and discussion that followed immediately after.

Since the film was finished, Troy said, a significant amount of research has been completed, which McCalla discussed. "It's not a perfect, complete story," Troy said, but emphasized that with each discovery, the story becomes more and more clear. This sparked discussion on an adult level, he said, but the implications the film has in the classrooms were equally as evident.

Troy also provided information on the competitive film circuit that he would like to see the film become part of. "The film festival circuit is a lot larger than people realize," he said. "There are hundreds of festivals."

Troy wants to apply to as many festivals as possible. As of press time, *Testimonies of a Quiet New England Town* has been submitted to five film festivals in the area. They include the Connecticut Film Festival, the Hoboken International Film Festival, the Maine International Film Festival, Rhode Island International Film Festival and the Nantucket Film Festival. Troy said it was important to consider smaller, local festivals as well, and he is looking into those. "The film has a very specific audience," Troy said. "And we want to cater to specific genres."

Although he will not be able to apply to the Tribeca Film Festival this year, Troy hopes to apply to between 20 and 25 festivals overall. "It will be interesting to see what happens," Troy said. "[We'll] send them out and hope for the best." McCalla agreed with Troy, voicing her interest in getting the film on the circuit too. She said she also hopes to submit to as many festivals as possible.

Reflecting on the event last week, McCalla said, "it was definitely worth it." She went on to say, "it was one of the highlights of my life."

New Hebron Town Manager to Start Next Month

by Lindsay Feltner

Town officials announced on Monday that their final candidate for the town manager position, Bonnie Therrien, will assume her new role on April 12.

Therrien, 54, draws on over 25 years of experience in local government. Currently, the Wethersfield resident is the interim director of administrative services in Simsbury, a position she has held since December. She was previously the town manager in both Berlin and Wethersfield. During the 1990s, Therrien also served as the deputy city manager for the city of Hartford. Since vacating her position in Wethersfield in 2008, she has also been involved in consulting, Therrien said.

Currently, there are three town employees that constitute the town manager position. The trio replaced the former town manager, Jared Clark, last year. Public Works Director Andy Tierney, Executive Assistant Donna Lanza and Town Planner Mike O'Leary make up the management team, with Tierney holding the title of interim town manager. (All three will retain their existing jobs when Therrien begins next month.)

Therrien said the interview process overall was "very thorough" and she was impressed with the panel the Board of Selectmen (BOS) presented to review the candidates. Therrien completed a phone interview at the end of January with board members and subsequent final interviews over the course of the past few months.

"She has very good experience as a town

manager," BOS Chairman Jeff Watt said. "She has great communication skills and an open style of management."

Lanza said she was very excited with Therrien's acceptance. "She has a lot of experience and an excellent reputation," she said. "She is definitely a good choice for Hebron." Lanza said she is looking forward to moving on to "the next phase" in town, as the management team steps down from their post and hands over the position to Therrien in early April.

Therrien said that, as a manager, she will be "there to help citizens and the elected bodies." She has a goal of working with both Hebron citizens and elected officials in determining where they want to see the town in the next 20 years. "It's up to the citizens," she said.

The town manager's contract is for one year, Watt said, with reviews occurring each year. Her salary will be \$115,000. Twelve percent of her pay will go toward her pension. Therrien will also receive a set \$200 per month for car allowance along with the health benefits. Clark, who left his post in March of last year, would have made \$108,000 if he still held his position. Lanza said this was the amount that would have been in the budget for this year. Fifteen percent of Clark's pay went toward his pension and received between \$400-500 per month for his car expenses. The three management team members currently each receive \$1,000 per pay period for their roles.

Tierney was equally pleased with Therrien's confirmation this week. He said the BOS "couldn't have picked a better person." Tierney

said Therrien has a strong knowledge of politics on the local level and described her as a well-seasoned individual.

Watt said Therrien has the understanding of a small town from her experience in Wethersfield, but also has a grasp on the need for economic development at the same time. Therrien said her time as the town manager in Berlin afforded her with considerable knowledge she can draw on for her role in Hebron. During her tenure, Berlin residents expressed interest in developing in certain areas of town, but wanted to find places that did not compromise or "interact with the town's charm," Therrien said. Therrien's wealth of experiences will be a firm foundation for the responsibilities she will take on in Hebron next month.

Therrien said she was attracted to Hebron because it is in close proximity to her own town. "She is right next door, right around the corner," Watt said. Therrien was also confident she could offer the town the qualities they were looking for in the position. "I wanted to go to a community where I could offer that," she said.

Therrien will assume her position as town manager during what is currently a difficult economic climate, and she will have to deal with the town budget upon her entrance. She described the latter as "a big challenge," but one she is nonetheless ready to take. Therrien will begin her immersion into the Hebron community by attending this week's BOS meeting at the Douglas Library, where the budget will be discussed.



Bonnie Therrien is the new Hebron Town Manager. She will begin work April 12.

One of the many factors the BOS took into consideration when picking a final candidate was the presence of a learning curve. Tierney said with Therrien, there will be no curve. "[She will] come in and hit the ground running," he said.

Bransfield Presents \$29.81 Million Budget in Portland

by Claire Michalewicz

Portland's budget for the next fiscal year calls for a 3.46 percent increase from the current year.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield unveiled the \$29.81 million budget at a press conference in her office on Tuesday afternoon.

Bransfield's budget calls for a .79, or 2.93 percent, increase in the mill rate. She anticipates that these figures will go down as the Board of Selectmen reviews the budget. The town is also waiting to see what revenues from state sources will be, Bransfield added.

"We'll have a better idea of numbers by the end of March," she said.

The budget includes the \$18.22 million budget that the Board of Education passed in January, which calls for a 2.97 increase from last year.

The Grand List saw an increase of 1.16 percent. Bransfield attributed the increase to new businesses that opened in town, as well as the efforts of the town's assessor to find businesses that hadn't previously been included on the list.

Bransfield has also allocated \$300,000 from Portland's fund balance, which she calls the town's "rainy day fund."

"It's truly a rainy day," Bransfield said of the current economic climate. She said she's using the money to try to minimize the impact on the mill rate.

Town employees will be getting a 3.25 percent wage increase, but Bransfield noted that they did not receive any increase last year. Over the two years, she explained, their raises only amounted to about 1.6 percent each year.

By forgoing a raise, Bransfield said, the employees had "contributed greatly" to the town's budget. Portland has been able to avoid layoffs or furloughs.

Bransfield said that, like last year, it was difficult to put the budget together this year, as there was no increase in state funding or in interest income. She said the town is managing to keep costs low by not adding any more programs, but there are still increases expected

increases that need to be paid.

In addition to salary increases, the town also has to cover benefits like pension contributions and healthcare. Health insurance costs increased 6.34 percent, which Bransfield said was fairly low compared to some other towns. She added that she's hoping to reduce those costs through negotiations with insurance providers.

"There are always more needs than there is money," Bransfield said. She said that she was urging the state to maintain its level of funding, and avoid introducing any unfunded mandates, which would be a burden for Portland and other towns.

Despite the financial difficulties, Bransfield recounted some of the things that the town had managed to accomplish during the past year, and its goals for the next one.

Portland has obtained federal stimulus funding to seal chips in roads, which will be done in the summer. The town will also start the grant-funded streetscape project along Main

Street this spring, putting in new sidewalks and decorative elements between the bridge and Route 66. Also on the agenda is a study of school building use and plans for a new park on the Goodrich property on Route 17.

Bransfield said she was proud of the amount that the town spends on personal safety. She also added that the town was working hard to be more energy-efficient, which would keep utility bills low.

During Tuesday's press conference, Board of Education Chairman Christopher Phelps said that the school budget should maintain the current level of service. Phelps added that the school system had lost 3.5 positions through attrition, but was also avoiding layoffs.

There will be a public hearing on the budget on Tuesday, March 9, at 7 p.m. in the Portland High School auditorium. Bransfield said she hopes the Board of Selectmen will pass the budget by April 7, in time for the May 3 town meeting and May 10 referendum.

Marlborough BOS to Present \$4.29 Million Town Operations Budget

by Katy Nally

Selectmen will present their town operations budget of approximately \$4.29 million to the Board of Finance (BOF) next Wednesday, March 10.

According to selectman Joe La Bella, the total is about a \$137,000, 3.1 percent, decrease over this year's operations budget.

Overall, the entire town budget is estimated at about \$20.8 million, or \$20,000-\$30,000 less than the 2009-10 budget.

To reduce the town operations budget, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) cut about \$50,000 by eliminating funding for the lifeguard positions at Lake Terramuggus, La Bella said.

However, there could still be lifeguards, as La Bella said fees collected from people who use the lake could pay for the positions.

Along with the lifeguards, the BOS reduced the total spent on appointed personnel, which includes health insurance and social security, by about \$46,000, according to the proposed budget that was revised on Feb. 16. The majority of this decrease is because several town employees were either laid off or saw their hours cut at the end of January.

However, the BOS funded its portion of the public works supervisor/building and grounds

position, La Bella said. The tab for this position is currently split between the BOS and the Board of Education (BOE), although the school board has yet to decide whether to fund the position in 2010-11. "Hopefully, we'll continue the dialogue with the Board of Education," La Bella said.

Also on the additions side is the amount spent on legal fees, which increased by \$20,000, or 25 percent, according to the budget proposal revised Feb. 16. La Bella said "based on the experience in the past year," counsel fees should be increased to a "more realistic estimate." He said the town could even go over the current \$80,000 allotted for the 2009-10 year.

The board also increased unemployment compensation from \$800 in the current year's spending plan to about \$29,000 – a 3,488 percent change – based on that same Feb. 16 budget proposal. Unemployment compensation, La Bella said, is lasting longer at the federal level, so the town must keep up.

La Bella said the 2010-11 budget was a good news/bad news situation because, although the town operations portion – and, indeed, the overall town budget – decreased, the RHAM portion increased and there is less money in the

undesignated fund balance to offset taxes than there has been in past years.

The overall town budget is made up of the spending plans for local and RHAM boards of education, the town operations budget, the debt, the contingency fund and capital spending.

The RHAM BOE budget is approximately \$7.19 million for Marlborough, which is an increase of 0.92 percent. The local BOE budget is about \$6.9 million and shows a decrease of 0.08 percent. The debt did not change much from the 2009-10 budget and remains at about \$2.34 million. Contingency and capital together are about \$80,000, BOF Chair Catherine Gaudinski said. The capital funds will go toward the reconstruction of the roof at Richmond Memorial Library, La Bella said.

Historically, La Bella said, Marlborough has used about \$600,000-800,000 from the undesignated fund balance to offset a rise in taxes, but this year, only about \$249,000 was proposed to be used.

Gaudinski said this amount is calculated by taking 7.5 percent of the overall town budget and subtracting it from the total amount in the undesignated fund balance.

Currently, the overall town budget is esti-

mated at about \$20.8 million, according to Gaudinski. About 7.5 percent of that is \$1.56 million, which is subtracted from the undesignated fund balance of about \$1.87 million. La Bella said because of this lack of available fund balance, there will likely be a small tax increase. "The bottom line is every year we have to decide how much to keep," La Bella said.

The undesignated fund balance is used like "the town's savings account," Gaudinski said. When the town goes to borrow money, Gaudinski said it's better to have about 7 to 10 percent to receive a lower interest rate.

The account is also used to pay bills in an emergency.

La Bella said the undesignated fund has typically seen growth from the Grand List and from new buildings in town. But because of the stagnant economy, there are few building projects going on and the Grand List only increased by about 0.42 percent. "We're all holding our breath because of the economy," La Bella said.

The BOS is set to present its budget to the BOF on Wednesday, March 10, at 7 p.m. in the Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School media center, located at 25 School Dr.

Fire Marshal, Water Main, Discussed at Portland BOS Meeting

by Claire Michalewicz

Extra funding for the town's fire marshals and the creation of a committee to study school facilities were among the many items the Board of Selectmen (BOS) tackled at their meeting on Wednesday evening.

The board also approved the scaled-back High Street water main project, and appointed a new member to the Water and Sewer Commission.

The town's fire marshals came to the meeting to request more money for their department. Some selectmen were initially reluctant, but agreed to give them extra money because it was in the interest of public safety.

"The taxpayers expect us to live within that budget," selectman Mark Finkelstein said. "But that said, I think what you do is extremely important."

Finkelstein recommended giving the fire marshal \$2,000 from a contingency fund, and reevaluating the situation in a few months.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said \$2,000 was a very small sum in relation to the town's other expenses. However, she added, going over budget was a "serious concern."

"We will continue to monitor these expenses very closely," Bransfield said to the fire marshal.

The BOS also agreed to have a town meeting about the changes to the capital plan involving the municipal parking lot next to the former Portland Country Market. The changes will not cost any more taxpayer dollars, Bransfield said, but the board is required to hold a town meeting before making them.

The town meeting will be held at the library on Wednesday, March 17, at 6:30 p.m., before the budget workshop.

The parking lot improvements are a joint project by the town and the lot's two other co-owners. The town portion of the costs will be funded by local Capital Improvement Program funding from the state, Bransfield explained.

The selectmen voted to create a study committee to investigate space needs in Portland schools. Board of Education (BOE) Chairman Christopher Phelps presented the resolution that would create the committee.

The committee will study the adequacy of space in all of the town's schools, except the high school, and prepare a report about the schools' current and future needs in their buildings.

The committee is seeking three community members to join, including one parent of a school-aged child and one member of the busi-

ness community. The BOS will appoint these three members to work alongside members of the boards of education and selectmen on the study committee.

Phelps said the committee would start meeting before April 30 and would aim to finish its project by the end of August. Bransfield pointed out that the schedule was rather ambitious, and Phelps replied that the committee would take more time if they need it.

The board also approved the revised plans for replacing the High Street water main. The original plans called for the main to be replaced all the way up to the water tanks at the top of the hill. Because of difficulties with funding and unexpectedly high bids, the new main will only go up to the intersection with Spring Street.

The only hint of the tension from the previous meeting – when there was a heated discussion among the selectmen about the Ethics Commission – came when the board moved to appoint a new member to the town's Water and Sewer Commission. Commission Chairman Richard Cote recommended appointing Tom Nash to the commission to fill a position that has been vacant for several months.

The board voted to appoint Nash, but selectwoman Sharon Peters abstained from

voting. Peters explained that while she did not want to hamper the progress of the Water and Sewer Commission, she was refraining from making any appointments until the town's Ethics Commission offered their opinion on the ethics of appointing town officials.

The five Democratic selectmen have filed a request for an advisory opinion from the Ethics Commission regarding the commission's opinion that they had acted unethically. The violation, according to the Ethics Commission, was the board's decision to hire two attorneys who had previously donated money to the Democratic Town Committee.

"We've asked specific questions," Sharon Peters said about the request after the meeting. She pointed out that there are clauses in the Ethics Ordinance that directly contradict the commission's opinion.

Peters said she worried that the Ethics Commission's opinion could damage her reputation as a lawyer, but Finkelstein said that the board had not officially been found to be unethical, since they hadn't passed the motion.

Finkelstein added that he hopes the commission will clarify their decision at the board's next meeting on March 17.

Marlborough School Board Adopts \$6.9 Million Budget

by Katy Nally

The Board of Education (BOE) approved a \$6.9 million budget and the academic calendar for the upcoming school year at a meeting last Thursday, Feb. 25.

The \$6.9 million is a 0.08 percent decrease from the 2009-10 budget. However, that figure was \$5,067 less at the beginning of the meeting, before board members added back in two line items.

As part of its first budget revision from Jan. 14, the BOE had decided to eliminate one day from the school calendar, but at last Thursday's meeting, that day was added back in at a cost of \$3,374. According to Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz, the number of days must stay at 183 because of a contract with teachers at Elmer Thienes- Mary Hall Elementary School.

The second addition was for AHM costs. The original fee was set by the BOE at \$13,829, but after some discussion that was increased to \$15,522, which is the same amount for all four elementary schools AHM Youth Services serves (Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall, Andover Elementary and Hebron Elementary and Gilead Hill in Hebron).

The BOE budget that passed last year did not include AHM fees. However, this figure does not really represent an increase in spending for AHM, as the organization asked for the same \$15,522 for the 2009-10 budget, AHM

Executive Director Joel Rosenberg said.

Reinstating this line item was not unanimously approved; board member John O'Toole voted nay.

This budget also includes eliminating the receptionist in the school office along with one paraprofessional, cutting one custodian down to 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE), reducing department line items, issuing a one-year moratorium on library books and opting out of organizations like the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education and the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents.

BOE chair Betty O'Brien said the decision to leave these two associations would be revised next year.

The school will also lose one fifth-grade teacher through attrition and sixth-grade class size will increase from 18 to 23 students.

Besides the AHM fees and the 183rd school day, other additions the BOE approved included a \$2,000 scenario writing stipend, an increase in auditing fees for \$1,200 and a \$20,000 place holder for sewer fees.

Overall the board cut about \$263,000 and added in about \$28,000, which is an approximate net decrease of \$235,000. The original 2010-11 budget started at \$7.14 million, which was about a 3.32 percent increase from the previous year.

The 2009-10 budget of \$6.91 million showed

about a 3.06 percent decrease over the previous year's budget, equating a total of \$218,016 in reductions.

Once the BOE approved the budget last Thursday, board members discussed the academic calendar. For the 2010-11 school year, students will begin classes on Monday, Aug. 30 and finish on June 15, if there are no snow days, which are added to the end of the year. Labor Day falls on Monday, Sept. 6, so the second week of school would be four days long.

The current school year began on Wednesday, Aug. 26, and Labor Day fell on the third week, so students had a three-day, then a five-day, then a four-day week.

Board member O'Toole said easing into the school year was important for students, especially the younger ones. However, because next year's calendar goes from a five-day to a four-day and back to a five-day week, the adjustment time was cut short. "If you look at what these young students are going through, this is a nice way to warm them up," O'Toole said.

The ideal way to start the school year would be a three-, four- then five-day week situation, O'Toole added. "It takes some time to build that up, the stamina," he said.

But O'Brien said the upcoming calendar was

"the best it's ever been." Sklarz said it was well coordinated with the other students and other schools' professional days. "In the end we came to a nice agreement," he said.

In comparison with Hebron and Andover, both Marlborough and Andover have 183 school days, while Hebron has 180. Students in Marlborough and Andover go to school on Election Day and get out one day later than students in Hebron. Also, there is one extra day off in April for Hebron students.

Sklarz said he and the other superintendents discussed the upcoming calendar and Marlborough's BOE was the last to approve it. Board member Mimi LaPoint voted against the calendar and said Monday she wished the BOE had been consulted when the school year was mapped out.

LaPoint also agreed with O'Toole's ideas, adding the elementary school historically started on the Wednesday before Labor Day, creating the three-, four- and five-day week plan. "It's a good way to ease children into school," she said.

With the budget approved by the BOE, it will make its way to the Board of Finance. The spending plan will be presented to the finance board later this month, but a specific date was not set as of press time.

East Hampton Residents Speak About Proposed Charter Changes

by Claire Michalewicz

Some East Hampton residents are worried about a proposed change to the town charter that they say could take away their ability to vote on the budget.

The town's Charter Revision Commission (CRC) held a public hearing Monday, March 1, inviting residents to voice their questions and concerns about the proposed changes. Among the changes to the charter is a proposition that after two failed budget referendums, the Town Council will adopt the budget. Many residents said that the changes would be undemocratic.

"It's extra important that we as citizens get to vote as many times as necessary," said resident Laurie Wasilewski. She added that aside from voting for town council members, the budget referendum was the only time residents had a say in East Hampton's government.

Resident Roy Goff agreed. "You're pretty much taking away the taxpayers' right to vote," he said. "It's one way to keep close track of what happens in town."

Fellow resident Patience Anderson said she had spoken with a resident of Portland, where the Board of Selectmen could pass the budget after two failed referendums. Anderson said the measure had reduced voter turnout and enthusiasm in Portland.

The commission welcomed the comments from residents.

"We want input so people feel they're part of the process," CRC Chairwoman Terry Concannon explained. The town charter, she said, defines the formal organization of the town. Every so often the town updates the charter.

The proposed revision would also introduce four-year staggered terms for elected Town Council members. At present, council members are elected for two years.

Former council member, and current BOE member, Don Coolican supported the changes, saying that it took him nearly two years to get used to being on the council. By this point, his term was nearly over.

But some residents worried four-year terms would be too long. Mary Ann Dostaler, another resident, wants the terms to remain at two years, pointing out that council members would be reelected if voters like the work they do.

Dostaler also asked the commission why they were going through the process of revising the charter in only a few months, when the state allows them to take 18.

Town Council Chairwoman and CRC member Melissa Engel explained that the commission didn't feel that they needed the full year and a half to revise the charter. She said that commission members were hoping to put it on the November ballot this year to save money,

but if it took longer than expected, the vote would be scheduled for another time.

Residents also suggested imposing term limits on elected officials. Anderson suggested limiting council members to two four-year terms, but allowing members to run for reelection after a two-year break.

The commission also wants to clarify language about filling vacancies in elected offices. At present, there is no clear policy for replacing town officials. The revision would specify that offices be filled by a member of the same party.

Dostaler pointed out that state statute requires that a vacancy be filled by a member of the same party as the previous office holder. Despite the state statute, however, Engel said, it would be best to clarify the rules in the Town Charter. When a position is vacant, she said, the debates over who should fill it can get "ugly."

The CRC is also considering requiring that the Public Works director, the chief of police and the emergency management director live in town or within a specified radius of the town.

CRC and Town Council member John Tuttle questioned whether the change was necessary, considering that people are closely linked by technology. Coolican also worried that the rule would severely limit the pool of candidates for

these jobs.

Some residents worried that the language in the charter wasn't always clear. Goff pointed out that language in the proposed changes was not all clear, especially a sentence about combining the zoning and town plan commissions into the planning and zoning commission.

Engel said she didn't know why that language was in the revision, either. She said it would be removed since it did not apply to the town.

Resident Fran Klein wants the charter revised to make it easier to read.

"The language has to be clear, clean and understandable," she said. Klein suggested adding footnotes for the sections with complicated legal language.

A second public hearing on the revision will be held April 20.

Between now and then, the commission is holding a series of workshops to continue reviewing the charter. All of the workshops are open to the public, and the commission has decided to allow public comment at some of them for residents who are unable to attend the hearings.

The schedule of hearings and the proposed revisions are available on the town's website, www.easthamptonct.org.

Andover BOS Deal With Website, Probate Court

by Lindsay Fetzner

Forming a committee to develop an official town website sparked discussion at Wednesday night's Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting, where board members agreed it would be a welcomed addition for the town.

Resident Dianne Grenier announced that as of March 3, there were 12 residents interested in forming a website committee. BOS Chairman Bob Burbank said the town had an official website in the past, which was run on a regular basis by a committee, but in 2009 ran into difficulties when it came to posting their minutes within the required time frame of seven days. Burbank said that, at the time, it was impractical for a town as small as Andover because the boards had to comply with this rule, no matter their size or purpose. The committee was later disbanded and the existing website became unofficial as a result.

"We have a situation now that we really need a website that is manned on a regular basis for informational purposes for the residents of Andover," Burbank said. BOS member Susan England agreed with Burbank and said she "has missed the website" and appreciates Grenier's work to try and get it back up and running. "I would be happy to entertain a group starting up that would look into ways we could make it work," England said.

England suggested that the necessary steps to move forward with the committee be taken and an exploratory committee be set up that would eventually report back to the selectmen with their thoughts. "Certainly this website won't be up and running in a couple months," selectwoman Elaine Buchardt said.

Buchardt volunteered to be the BOS liaison for the committee and hopes to take the next steps during April. "We need to get in touch with the people," Burbank said. "We need to ask them if they are interested in an informal

meeting to discuss the various ideas and then pursue all of the ramifications."

Burbank said he is not worried about the cost for the website. "We can make an appropriation at any time when we find out exactly what we need for money," he said. Grenier later said during the second portion of public comment that she does not foresee a considerable amount of money to be necessary to get the website back up and running as an official site.

Grenier's letter to the selectmen, dated Feb. 23, requested that the line item for the committee from the 2008-09 budget be left in place. The line item called for \$400. According to the correspondence, Grenier said, "In the past the website committee has spent very little, but they should have funds available in case unforeseen expenditures come up."

* * *

The BOS also made a resolution Wednesday that established the name and location of the regional probate court. Judge Elaine Camposeo was present to address the board with any questions or concerns they had regarding the probate court merge, which becomes effective on Jan. 5, 2011. With the retirement of Judge Kevin Connors, Camposeo served as the acting judge for the Hebron Probate Court, until Judge Peter Alter assumed the acting judge responsibility on Jan. 1 of this year. The probate district court, located at 66 Center St., Manchester, will be named the Greater Manchester District Probate Court. The merger will consolidate the Manchester Probate Court and the Andover Probate Court districts. The new court will serve the towns of Manchester, Bolton, Andover and Columbia. Burbank informed the board that the budget will remain about the same, with no additional costs for the court at this point.

Camposeo said that, from a geographic per-

spective, Manchester made the most sense for the location of the probate court. She thanked the board for their continued cooperation over the past 20 years. "The town has been terrific to work with," she said. Camposeo also assured the board that costs would be kept very minimal.

"I hope it will be seamless and the individuals in the community needing probate services will not see any differences in the services they receive from the probate court," Camposeo said. Lindy was appreciative of the hard work that has been done to make the merger a smooth process and said they have "done a great job."

Also Wednesday, the board addressed requests from the public library for appropriations to install an alarm system. Presently, three bids have been received and the board is waiting on the final one to come in. Burbank said it "makes sense to see what the last bid is" given that it is a local bidder and the company could potentially charge less than the other three companies. England voiced her concern for the installation of a panic button in the library in the event of an emergency, given that the library is on Route 6 and sees a lot of traffic. "It is important to give our approval to get moving on this," she said.

The highest bid came in from the J.C.L. Protective Systems, LLC in Andover. They listed a charge of \$1,826 to install a combination fire/burglar alarm, replace two manual pull stations, two strobe horns, two smoke detectors on the first floor and one smoke detector in the basement.

The second bid for \$1,800 came from E-Tech Systems LLC in Bolton. The company would install a fire/burglar alarm in addition to two smoke detectors on the main floor ceiling, install new fire alarm wire, a smoke detector in

the lower floor ceiling, a panic button at the main desk, as well as two new door contacts and motion detectors.

The final bid that has come in for \$830, from Aspinwall Electric in Andover, called for the replacement of the fire alarm panel and installing two new smoke detectors, one on the main floor and the other in the basement.

The selectmen also discussed the Charter Review Committee and announced the BOS will hold special meetings March 22, 25 and 31 to conduct interviews of the interested candidates. It was noted that each candidate will be able to choose to interview in an open, public session or in an executive session. No action will be taken from any of the interviews at the three special meetings, Lindy said.

The BOS also proclaimed the week of March 7-13 as Girl Scout Week. There was a full house at the meeting, standing room only, filled with scouts from several troops in town, accompanied by their parents and respective troop leaders. "I am well aware of the importance of the Girl Scouts and the development that takes place in the troops," Burbank said shortly after his announcement, which elicited great applause from the public.

Lindy also announced that Monday night's Board of Education budget workshop meeting at Andover Town Hall was well-attended. "I thanked all of the town people for showing up," he said, and noted that a significant amount of people came from Marlborough and Hebron. Lindy urged everyone to go through the RHAM budget and to contact the Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski if they had any further questions, so "when they go to the polling booth, they will know to vote yes or no."

Marlborough School Officials Seeking Input in Principal Search

by Katy Nally

School officials have begun their search for a new Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall Elementary School principal and are asking for input from parents, teachers and residents.

Principal Loraine Giannini, who has presided over the school for the past decade, will retire after the school year ends in June.

A survey went out yesterday to parents and teachers, and is available to all online, that allows the community to not only specify what qualities are desirable in a principal, but also encourages people to "take stock" of the future of the school, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz said.

"We can get some consensus of where they see the school going," Sklarz said.

The survey is available on the elementary school's website, www.marlborough.k12.ct.us. Hard copies will also be at town hall and the senior center.

Sklarz said it's his hope to retain the "school culture" that has made Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall unique and recognized statewide. Last year, the school won both the Connecticut Elementary School of the Year and the School Climate awards, Sklarz said.

The survey asks questions regarding whether the school is a "safe and orderly environment for learning," and if it has "a positive impact on the community as a whole."

Sklarz said it was important to survey three types of people: those who have, had and never had children in the elementary school. The questionnaire will "assess what the broader school family sees as the needs of the school and the leadership qualities necessary to nurture those needs," Sklarz wrote in his March newsletter.

In terms of qualities in a principal, Sklarz predicted most people would want someone who "loves children," is "well-educated," and, maybe as a sign of the times, has a financial background. Sklarz said some residents might prefer a principal who is involved in ferreting

out grants and managing school funds. "I think we'll get a response of fiscal responsibility," he said.

Teachers who have already spoke with Sklarz asked for a principal who "values" and "appreciates" the school and is somebody "who knows what we have here," Sklarz said.

The principal who is selected will act as a model for students, set the tone of the school and teach respect and responsibility, Sklarz said.

Sklarz has experience with this questionnaire, which is provided by survey.monkey.com, and has seen it work in the West Hartford schools (where he used to serve as superintendent). He said three schools were searching for new principals and the survey was one way to narrow down the qualities necessary for each environment. In the end, Sklarz said, none of the schools were competing for the same principal, because "every school has a personality."

Sklarz was confident the same would be true for Elmer Thienes-Mary Hall. "You can't make somebody love the school unless it really fits them," he said.

Residents will have about 10 days to complete the survey, though a due date was not established as of press time. Once the responses are in, Sklarz said a committee of parents, teachers and Board of Education members will compile a profile of the new principal. From there interview questions will be crafted and resumes will be compared. After a few applicants are chosen, there will be a "site-day" to see the prospective principal in action at their current workplace, Sklarz said.

Sklarz said the committee would stay firm on the qualities laid out by the survey. "We'll stay true to it until we find someone who meets those requirements," he said.

Already, as of Wednesday, Sklarz said 30 people have applied for the position.

The superintendent plans to make a decision by the end of March.

PHS Graduation on the Move?

by Claire Michalewicz

Some Portland High School (PHS) seniors are taking their graduation into their own hands, asking the Board of Education to hold the ceremony at the school instead of the Town Hall.

Officers from the Class of 2010 presented their idea to the Board of Education (BOE) at its meeting on Tuesday, March 2.

Keenan Kelley, president of the Class of 2010, submitted a letter to the board requesting that the graduation ceremony be moved from the green behind town hall to the school soccer field.

This year's graduating class is the first class to spend all six years at the new high school and middle school building.

"It would be fitting to finish our six years here," Kelley said, saying that the school has a sentimental value for students that the town hall doesn't have.

Fellow student Josh Tammaro said he had researched the costs of moving the ceremony, including transporting rented chairs and paying janitors. Tammaro said there would be no change in expenses.

Another PHS senior, Grace McCarthy, explained that the high school had much better parking than the Town Hall, with 323 spaces rather than 47. The high school soccer field, McCarthy said, was also more easily accessible for disabled people.

Kelley added that if it rained, the ceremony could be held in the auditorium. The school could set up a video feed to the cafeteria for guests who couldn't fit in the auditorium.

BOE Chairman Christopher Phelps said it was obvious that the students had put a lot of research into the issue, and the board was happy to go along with what the students want.

"It's your graduation, not mine," he said. The school board will vote on the issue at their next meeting on March 16, but Phelps told the students he sees no reason the ceremony couldn't be moved.

* * *

Also on Tuesday's agenda were several educational grants. The board voted unanimously to apply for a Liberty Bank Foundation Grant, which would buy \$2,000 worth of guided reading books at different grade levels. Board members also unanimously approved a Gildersleeve Grant for the high school Greenhouse Club to

take a field trip to the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens.

Another proposed Gildersleeve Grant created debate, and the board decided to postpone the vote to their next meeting. The \$25,000 grant would buy Kindle e-readers for third and fourth graders at Gildersleeve School.

Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen explained that e-readers have many useful features for beginning readers, like a built-in dictionary.

BOE member MaryAnne Rode proposed delaying the purchase until the fall, when they would be used. Rode explained that the warranties would start as soon as they were purchased, and it would be wise to wait until the Kindles were being used. She added that she has "mixed feelings" about e-readers, and worries that they can't replace the experience of reading an actual book.

Phelps also questioned the purchase, saying that he was uncomfortable with the idea unless the e-readers were made available to all students.

The board dedicated much of their meeting to editing their proposal for a School Facilities Study Committee, which they would bring to the Board of Selectmen meeting the following evening (see related story on page 19). The committee will review the use of space in the town's schools and make recommendations for more efficient use.

The board also discussed the town budget that First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield had presented earlier that day. The school board will make a special presentation about their budget at a Board of Selectmen budget workshop Wednesday, March 24, at 7 p.m. at the Portland Library.

Before the meeting adjourned, Phelps mentioned that he had attended the state hearing about putting seat belts on school buses. He spoke at the hearing as a private citizen and not as a representative of the Board of Education.

Phelps said that he supports seat belts on school buses, but knows that money would be a problem. At the hearing, he urged state lawmakers not to introduce any unfunded mandates to install seat belts, as Portland and many other school districts would have trouble covering the costs.

Marlborough Grand List Grows Less Than 1 Percent

by Katy Nally

Marlborough's 2009 Grand List rose 0.42 percent over last year's, bringing in a total of \$2.596 million more than the 2008 list.

The total 2009 net Grand List came out to \$624.65 million. Both real estate and motor vehicle assessments saw an increase that netted about \$3.55 million, while personal property went down by about \$955,000.

Although the increase was small, Tax Assessor Marie Hall said she was grateful for it. "With what I've seen so far, I'm happy mine grew," she said.

Marlborough's small increase is about average when compared to towns across the state, Hall said. Some places like Manchester, Chester and Middlefield actually saw a decrease.

Hall attributed most of the 2009 increase to the four new houses that were built this year and several home editions such as pools, garages and decks. Besides these home improvements, Hall said she has not come across many building permits for larger projects like barns.

She said the decrease in personal property was most likely because many in-home businesses have closed. Hall mentioned businesses as well as residents are also having trouble receiving loans, because banks have tightened their lending policies. "It's the economy – people can't afford to do anything," Hall said.

If residents are unhappy with the assessments of their property, they can attend a Board of Assessment Appeals meeting on Saturday, March 13 from 9 a.m. to noon, Thursdays, March 18 and 25, from 7-9 p.m., at Town Hall.

With the Grand List in, the Board of Finance (BOF) will use the figure to set the mill rate.

The current mill rate is at 26.48. (A mill is \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value.) The mill rate is calculated when the portion of the town budget that will need to be paid for by taxes is divided by the Grand List, then multiplied by 1,000.

Although an overall town budget hasn't been proposed, selectman Joe La Bella and BOF chair Catherine Gaudinski estimated it would come in at about \$20.8 million. Gaudinski said this increase equates to about a half a mill rise. This means, as the numbers stand now, there would likely be a small tax increase of about 1.85 percent, Gaudinski said.

The top 10 real estate taxpayers are: Both LLC at \$3.49 million, Marlborough Health Care Realty Co. at \$3.13 million, Elliott Enterprises LLC at \$2.8 million, Country Barn Properties LLC at \$1.985 million, Robert H. and Mary C. Soleau at \$1.93 million, Robert Elliott at \$1.67 million, C&B Marlborough Associates LLC at \$1.64 million, 369 North Main Street LLC at \$1.185 million, Edward F. and Nancy S. Bader at \$904,000 and Douglas and Nathalie D. Thibodeau at \$900,000.

The top 10 personal property taxpayers are: Connecticut Light & Power at \$3.49 million, Marlborough Health Care at \$254,000, Youghiogheny Communications Northeast LLC at \$246,000, Shared Imaging INC at \$243,000, Intelligent Motion Systems INC at \$179,000, De Lage Landen Operational at \$164,000, Imshaug Knut at \$147,000, Dunkin' Donuts at \$144,000, Daniel J. Soucier at \$127,000 and Liberty Bank at \$121,000.

Colchester Police News

2/23: Thomas Cassell, 21, of 157 West Rd., Salem, was charged with third-degree assault and breach of peace, State Police said.

2/24: Natasha Morales, 22, of 319C Jeffrey Rd., Windham, was charged with risk of injury to a minor, State Police said.

2/25: Christopher Stratton, 20, of 706 East St., Andover, was charged with failure to wear a safety belt, making an improper turn and DUI, State Police said.

2/26: Ryan Stocking, 30, of 33 Hubbard Rd., Haddam, was charged with third-degree burglary, first- and second-degree larceny and sec-

ond-degree criminal mischief, State Police said.

2/26: Jesse Tarr, 19, of 163 Lake Rd., Andover, was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, State Police said.

2/27: Danielle Raymond, 30, of 159 Park Ave., was charged with DUI, State Police said.

2/27: Amanda Whiton, 28, of 22 Lake Blvd., East Hampton, was charged with DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

2/28: Thomas Soboleski, 19, and Kenneth Soboleski, 45, both of 19R Miller Rd., were each charged with disorderly conduct and threatening, State Police said.

Hebron Police News

2/25: James O'Connell, 35, of 24 Lawrence Dr., Lebanon, turned himself in on charges of disorderly conduct and two counts of third-degree assault, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

2/12 — A 16-year-old male juvenile pursuant to a court-ordered warrant was arrested for failure to respond to an infraction, East Hampton Police said.

2/21 — Sebastian Wlazniak, 19, of 154 Charter Rd., Wethersfield, was arrested for third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, police said.

2/22 — Patricia Przywana, 52, of 14 Palmer Rd., Portland, and Alberto Pando Exiquiel, 43, of 14 Stillman St., Danbury, were involved in a two-vehicle accident on Rt. 66, two-tenths of a mile west of North Maple Street, police said. Przywana was issued a ticket for failure to drive right and Exiquiel was issued a ticket for operating without a license, police added.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

The sun is staying out a little bit longer these days, the temperature is inching upwards, however slowly, and, oh yes, the calendar has turned to March. But one of the surest signs we will soon put the harsh cold of winter happened this past Tuesday: the boys of summer took to the field.

Sure, pitchers and catchers reported a couple of weeks ago. It wasn't until this week, though, that spring training games started up, down in Florida. And what better way to kick off the exhibition schedule than with a Mets game.

It was a typical early-spring training game: the lineup was stuffed with players you've never heard of and future Major Leaguers who are likely to play most, if not all, of the coming season in the minors.

But still, baseball was back. And the Mets won, doubling up Atlanta by a score of 4-2.

Obviously, I hope it's the start of many Mets wins to come over the next several months. Will it be? Ya gotta believe and all that – and yes, I always do – but I'm not entirely convinced. It looks like there may be a fair amount of keeping-your-fingers-crossed this season.

It's no secret the Mets were ravaged by injuries last season. The team was a little quieter on the free agent and trade markets this off-season than you really expected them to be, and as a result many of the players from the DL-plagued 2009 are back again. I don't view that as much of a problem for the starting lineup – their big free-agent acquisition, Jason Bay, should help absorb some of the damage if both Beltran *and* Reyes go down to injury again this season (which I feel is doubtful; yes, Beltran's starting the season on the DL, recovering from surgery, but reports have him back by May, and I'm cautiously optimistic – as it is for their rotation.

The team is basically rolling the dice that three of their big four starters – ace Johan Santana, John Maine and Oliver Perez – don't spend large swaths of time on the DL this season like they did last year. (And I'm sure they're hoping their other big starter, Mike Pelfrey, pitches better this year.) The fifth starter position isn't set in stone, but is likely to be a three-man race between Jonathan Niese – who was on the DL for a big chunk of last year – Fernando Nieve – ditto – and Nelson Figueroa. All three are imports from last season.

Given the varying states of recovery their starters are in, it is surprising the team didn't pick up a proven starter in the off-season; not even a big name so much as an innings-eater, someone whose durability they could rely on. Perhaps the Mets really are in financial trouble. (While the team publicly maintains that everything is ginger-peachy, ownership is rumored to have lost hundreds of millions of dollars in the Bernie Madoff Ponzi scheme.)

Whatever the reason, though, the Mets find themselves at the beginning of March with a roster of players that's very similar to the 2009 edition. Like I said, I don't think it will be as much of a problem for the hitters – in addition to having Bay here, you have to believe David Wright will have a nice bounce-back season from his power-lacking 2009; that first baseman Daniel Murphy will continue to improve; and that a full season of Jeff Franceour in right field will pay dividends – as it will the pitchers. It's much, much too soon to give up hope, of course, but I'd feel more confident if there were a new starting pitcher down in Port St. Lucie, wearing the blue and orange.

But still, I won't let my anxiousness over the coming year distract me from this very good news: baseball is back.

* * *

It's budget season once again, and a phrase often heard this time of year is some variation of "don't be penny wise and pound foolish." Meaning, basically, don't let your desire to save a few immediate bucks divert your attention from (or worse, have an adverse affect on) the bigger, costlier picture. (I was amused by an alternative explanation I found at the British website phrases.org.uk: "Saving a little money only to lose a great deal more due to their own stupidity.") And I got to thinking lately – where did that saying come from? A quick navigation of the Internet yielded the answer, as it so often does when I get bitten by the etymology bug.

As one might guess from the use of the word "pound," the phrase has its origins across the pond, over in England. Seventeenth-century England, to be exact. Webster's actually traces it all the way back to 1607. While a penny is worth one 100th of a pound now (as it is a dollar), back in those days it was worth one 240th of a pound. So saving a few pennies at the expense of a pound seems like it would have been rather foolhardy indeed.

Actually, the earliest use of the term I could find online – and I would surmise this is the same use Webster's found, due to the date the book was published – is from the 1607 work *The Historie of Foure-footed Beastes* by Edward Topsell. But the way Topsell used it, it was kind of like the phrase had already entered the lexicon. In the book, Topsell wrote, "If by covetousnesse or negligence, one withdraw from them their ordinary foode, he shall be penny wise, and pound foolish."

Uh...yeah. So the way words are spelled, and sentences are structured, has come a long way since then. But "penny wise and pound foolish" is still going strong. And I can guarantee you that at some point over the next couple of months that phrase will be used again, either at a budget meeting or in a letter to the editor. 'Tis the season.

* * *

See you next week.

Obituaries

Colchester

Wayne T. Farrington

Wayne T. Farrington, 50, of Colchester, died Saturday, Feb. 27, at his home after battling malignant melanoma the past seven months.

He is survived by his loving wife and best friend, Susan (Stanton) Farrington; his loving children, Cristina Farrington of Colchester, Derek Farrington and his wife Megan of Norwich, Regina Farrington and her partner Paul Giudice of Colchester, and his stepchildren, Michael Stanton and Alexa Stanton, both of Colchester; a brother, Walter Farrington and his wife Pat and nephew Walter Farrington of New Hampshire; mother-in-law Ruth Cangello of Shrewsbury, MA; brother and sister-in-law Peter and Karen Cangello of Worcester, MA; aunts, uncles and cousins. Wayne also left his two very best friends and "ski amigos," David Stollman and Rick Sharr.

He was born in Braintree, MA, son of the late Marilyn and Walter Farrington, remained in Massachusetts attending Bentley College with a bachelor's degree in accounting and furthered his education at the University of Hartford, receiving a Master's in Business Administration.

For the last 32 years, Wayne has been a dedicated employee at Pratt & Whitney (East Hartford) working as an analyst in the pricing department. Wayne also continued his mother's legacy, in keeping her Herbalife business flourishing.

Wayne loved life. Whether he was on the tennis courts, or enjoying his intense love for sailing, riding his mountain bike, or his yearly fishing trips with family and friends, he gave it his all. He completed a 100-mile bike ride for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society in 2008... one of his proudest accomplishments in honor of his mom who had passed away the prior year to cancer. His yearly trips with his "ski amigos" out west to Utah, Colorado and Wyoming were some of his fondest memories.

Without a doubt, Wayne felt "freest" on his 2007 Harley Softail, his passion was truly to ride and take in all the beauty, and he took advantage of that whenever he could. His last trip with his wife to the White Mountains he noted "it just doesn't get much better than this!"

Wayne attended St. Andrew's Church in Colchester, and found much comfort in weekly sermons.

Calling hours were Wednesday, March 3, at Belmont Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester. A funeral Mass was held Thursday, March 4, in St. Andrew's Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester.

Memorial donations to WTF One Last Ride to Benefit Cancer Families, c/o Rockville Bank, Linwood Avenue, Colchester, CT 06415.



Marlborough

Jewell Esther Smith Carter

Jewell (Julie) Esther Smith Carter of Marlborough died Friday, Feb. 26, at Crestfield Rehabilitation Center in Manchester, where she had received warm, loving, and hopeful care for the last several months.

Born in Hartford on Sept. 24, 1923, Julie graduated from Simsbury High School, earned degrees from the University of Connecticut, New Britain Teacher's College (now CCSU), and the University of Hartford. She was an educator, guidance counselor, and administrator in several school systems throughout the state.

A resident of Marlborough since 1980, Julie was active in the Marlborough Congregational Church where she served as the Christian Education Chair and on the Dorcas Society. She was supportive of Gilead Community Services and local arts and garden associations. She kept an extensive organic garden and she never met a reusable dog or cat she didn't like. Julie lived to see her beloved Red Sox win two World Series and the Lady Huskies thrilled her no end.

In addition to her friends and members of the Marlborough Congregational Church she leaves behind a daughter, Linda Carter Calabrese and her husband Tom of Tolland; a son, George C. Carter and his wife Denise of Middlefield; two brothers, Stephen and Edward Smith; and five grandchildren, Michael, Mark and Audra Makuch, Matthew Caniglia and Andrew Carter, as well as three great-grandchildren, Hannah, Carter and Charlotte.

Julie was predeceased by a brother, Sterling Viets.

A memorial service will be held in Marlborough Congregational Church at 11 a.m. on Saturday, March 6, with a reception to follow. There are no calling hours.

Amston

Leo James Marquis Sr.

Leo James "Herman" Marquis Sr., 86, of Amston, passed away peacefully Feb. 20. He has now joined his beloved and recently deceased wife of 63 years, Marie "Blanche" Marquis.

Leo was born in Van Buren, ME, and raised in Daigle, ME, the eldest son of Edwin and Marie (Violette) Marquis. In his adult life, he moved to Connecticut and eventually settled his family in Amston, CT. At the age of 14, he attended a seminary near Quebec City where he continued his education and obtained a college degree. His commitment to his religion inspired him to be active in his church.

He was the choir director at St. Anne's in Hartford. He was also appointed the local commander of the Catholic War Veterans in 1947. Concurrent with that title, he was also the county commander and the state vice commander. Leo served this country during World War II. He supported his family through management positions in the oil business and through employment at Pratt and Whitney as a foreman.

Leo leaves four children and their spouses, Leo Jr. and Pat, Claude and Melanie, Paulette, and Charlene and Tom O'Brien. He leaves his grandson, Ryan, and his favorite dog, Pal.

He has joined four predeceased brothers. Three surviving siblings include Sister Therese Marquis, Maynard Marquis and Gabrielle Finnegan.

Please join in celebrating Leo's life at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 46 No. Eagleville Rd., in Storrs, at 11 a.m. on March 6. Memorial contributions are suggested for St. Thomas Aquinas Church, 46 No. Eagleville Rd., Storrs, CT 06268, the American Lung Association, National Processing Center, POB 7000, Albert Lea, MN 56007, or Mansfield Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, Recreation Dept., 100 Warren Circle, Storrs, CT 06268.

The Potter Funeral Home, Willimantic assisted with arrangements. Visit www.potterfuneralhome.com for online memorial guest book.

Marlborough

Joanne Gomez

Joanne (Fillo) Gomez, 45, of Marlborough, passed away peacefully Monday, March 1. She was the wife of Matthew Gomez.

Joanne, the daughter of Steve and Evelyn (Machado) Fillo, grew up in Riverside, RI. She was a graduate of the University of New Hampshire. Joanne was happiest when surrounded by her family.

Besides her husband and parents, she is survived by her children, Caroline and Gregory Gomez; a sister, Betsy Fitzpatrick; two brothers, Stephen and Daniel Fillo; and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

She was the sister of the late Ellen Fillo.

Visitation was Thursday, March 4, from 4-8 p.m., in the A. A. Mariani & Son Funeral Home, 200 Hawkins St., Providence, RI. Funeral was today, Friday, March 5, at 8:45 a.m., with a Mass of Christian Burial following at 10 a.m. in St. Brendan's Church, 60 Turner Ave., East Providence, RI. Burial in Gate of Heaven Cemetery, East Providence, RI.

www.marianiandson.com

Portland

Walter Joseph Bogoslofski

Walter "Walt" Joseph Bogoslofski, 70, of Portland, husband of Claudia (Charles) Bogoslofski for 42 years, passed away Saturday, Feb. 27, at Middlesex Hospital. Born in Hartford, he was the son of the late Walter Joseph and Nellie Helen (Oksys) Bogoslofski.

After graduating from Granby High School in 1957, Walt joined the U. S. Army where he served four years. Returning home from the Army, he joined the Roofers Union Local No. 9, where he worked and traveled much of the East Coast and eventually made Florida his second home.

Walt spent much of his later years in Florida fishing the gulf coast and enjoying family and friends. He always made time to come back to Connecticut where most of his family lives, and family is what Walt enjoyed most.

Besides his wife, he is survived by two stepsons, Ernest Haney and his wife, Karen of Hudson, FL and Richard E. LeClaire of Portland; two stepdaughters, Linda Daniels and her husband, Craig of Portland and Theresa Smith and her husband, Brian of Middletown; a stepson-in-law, Joseph Campos of Portland; two brothers, John Bogoslofski and Richard Bogoslofski, both of Granby; a sister, Patricia Gidvilas of Windsor Locks; eleven grandchildren; six great grandchildren; several nieces and nephews and close friends, Bing and Janice, Roy and Norma and many other friends he made in his travels.

Besides his parents, he was predeceased by his stepdaughter, Darlene Campos.

Services will be private and at the convenience of the family. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Walt's memory to the American Heart Association, 5 Brookside Dr., Wallingford, CT 06492.

Messages of condolence may be sent to the family at www.doolittlefuneralservice.com. The Doolittle Funeral Home, 14 Old Church St., Middletown, is handling the arrangements.

Portland

Bernard Conroy

Bernard "Bernie" Conroy, 77, of Denver, NC, passed away Thursday, Feb. 25, peacefully at his home.

Born May 27, 1932, in Middletown, he grew up in Portland. He was the son of the late Joseph and Stephanie Conroy. He raised his family in Coventry until 1980, when he moved to Denver, NC, to pursue his love of bird dogs and horses.

He is survived by his loving wife of 56 years, Irene Conroy; children, Brian Conroy and wife, Barbara, of South Windsor; Dennis Conroy of Denver; Karen Conroy of Denver; Lynn Morra and husband, Richard, of Bolton; grandchildren, Holly Conroy; Chelsie Conroy; Amber and Cody Morra; and a host of family and loving friends.

Services were held Monday, March 1, at The Holy Spirit Catholic Church, located at in Denver, NC.

In lieu of flowers, contributions should be made to Hospice of www.donatehospice.org.

Visit www.burkemortuary.com to register your condolences.

Portland

Sean Richard Mooney

Sean Richard Mooney, 59, of Portland, formerly of Windsor, passed away Feb. 26, at his home.

Born in Hartford, son of the late John and Leah (Cole) Mooney, he grew up in Windsor and graduated from Windsor High School. Sean was the manager of the Bloomfield Bicycle Shop for many years.

He leaves a son, Owen Mooney of Portland; three sisters, Kathleen Mooney-Cezus of Bloomfield, Christine Green of Wakefield, MA and Gael Mooney of Windsor; a brother, Charles C. Mooney of Florida; and seven nieces and nephews.

A memorial Mass was held Wednesday, March 3, at St. Gabriel's Church, 379 Broad St., Windsor. Burial followed at St. Joseph Cemetery, Poquonock.

Carmon Windsor Funeral Home has care of arrangements. For online condolences, visit www.carmonfuneralhome.com.

East Hampton

Genevieve Mikullitz

Genevieve Irene (Paganelli) Mikullitz, 90, of East Hampton and previously of Wethersfield, beloved wife of the late Frank J. Mikullitz Sr., passed away Monday, March 1, at home.

She was born in West Hartford, the daughter of the late Louis and Louise (Maschi) Paganelli. She graduated from Hall High and had been employed by Royal Typewriter for many years. She retired from Northeast Utilities where she worked as a key puncher. She was a loving mother, grandmother and sister. She will be missed dearly.

She leaves behind her son and daughter-in-law, Frank J. Mikullitz, Jr. and his wife, Anne, of East Hampton; three sisters, Ethel Jary of Southington, Lillian Maxtutis of Hebron, and Joanne Bilosz of Dracut, MA; her grandchildren, John and wife, Kelly, Mark and wife, Carrie, and Kathleen; two great-grandchildren, Cadence and Madeline.

She was predeceased by two brothers, Frank and Louis Paganelli, and a sister, Julie Manochi.

Family and friends called from 9:15-10:15 a.m. today, Friday, March 5, at the Rose Hill Funeral Home, 580 Elm St., Rocky Hill. A Mass of Christian Burial followed at 11 a.m. in Corpus Christi Church, Wethersfield. Burial will be in Rose Hill Memorial Park in Rocky Hill.

Those wishing may make donations to the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 1004, Meriden, CT 06450.