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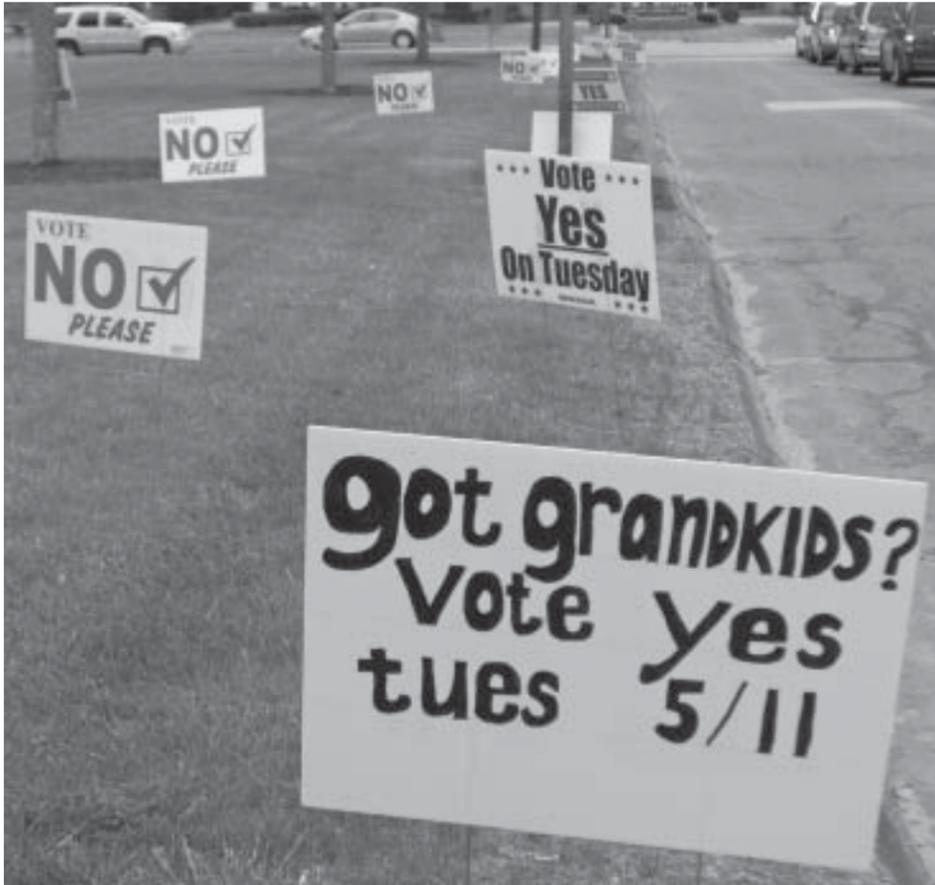
News Bulletin

Serving Amston, Andover, Cobalt, East Hampton, Hebron, Marlborough, Middle Haddam, Portland, Colchester and Salem

Volume 35, Number 7

Published by The Glastonbury Citizen

May 14, 2010



Colchester residents approved a \$47.62 million budget Tuesday, which includes a 1.42 mill increase. As this picture, taken outside Town Hall, indicates, voters were divided on the spending plan; it would end up passing by just 126 votes.

Colchester Voters Narrowly Pass Budget

by Katy Nally

A \$47.62 million 2010-11 budget – featuring a 6 percent tax increase – passed at referendum Tuesday by just 126 votes.

In Colchester, the budget vote is split, with residents voting on the town operations budget and the Board of Education (BOE) spending plan separately. The town operations budget of \$13.57 million was a closer vote at 1,243-1,185, with a margin of 58. The \$34.05 million education budget passed by 10 more votes than the town budget, tallying 1,245-1,177.

First Selectman Gregg Schuster said he was “ecstatic” Tuesday night, after the votes were tallied. “I’m glad the town put its faith in the boards of selectmen, education and finance,” he said. “Tomorrow,” he added, “we’ll get to work.”

The 2010-11 spending plan is up 2.98 percent from the 2009-10 adopted budget, and calls for a mill increase of 1.42. Several residents polled Tuesday said they voted down the budget because the tax hike was too steep.

“We can’t afford to have our taxes raised another 6 percent,” Cozanne Marsh said. “Our salaries didn’t go up 6 percent.”

Scott McEnaney agreed. “One and a half mills is too much,” he said.

But, in the end, the ‘ayes’ had it. Gary Winch said he voted ‘yes,’ in part, because “It costs too much time and money to do it over again.”

Others said they voted ‘yes’ because they

agreed with the education budget. “I have young kids and I want to invest in their education,” Jessica Eveleigh said.

Jennifer Delsesto said she approved the budget because “I don’t want anything else cut.” Delsesto, a teacher, said she would “hate” to see additional cuts made to programs for seniors and youths.

However, Marion Culhane saw things differently. She said she voted down the proposal because of the tax increase, and added, “They have no regard for seniors.”

Joyce Ashe did not agree with the town or education budget. She said she voted ‘no’ because she has no children in the school system and because “taxes just keep going up.”

Some residents said they felt town officials had worked hard to present a responsible budget. Barbara Moroch said she was not sure if voters realize how little money the town operates on. “They run on bare bones – it’s probably even worse,” she said. “It’s obvious they’re trying hard in these economic times,” Ronald Moroch added.

Shannon Cuadro approved the town and education budgets because, “I felt they had done a lot to reduce the budget already.”

The town operations budget was presented to the Board of Finance (BOF) in March at

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Hebron BOE Drops Kindergarten Expansion

by Lindsay Fetzner

Following last week’s resounding budget defeat, and then the Board of Finance’s \$48,500 cut two days later, the Hebron Board of Education Monday agreed to drop its controversial plan to expand the all-day kindergarten program.

Hebron’s proposed \$33.85 million budget for the 2010-11 fiscal year was rejected May 11 by a 1,127-639 vote. Comments by voters at the time, as well as by those who responded to an exit poll furnished by the town, indicated the school board’s all-day kindergarten (ADK) plan was a large reason why the proposal was shot down.

The Board of Finance met two days after the referendum and slashed the Board of Education’s budget proposal by \$48,500 – the amount it would have taken to move a pre-kindergarten teaching position to kindergarten and thus expand the ADK program for the next school year. (See related story on page 11.)

The school board held a special meeting Monday and voted to curtail the expansion, which would have shifted kindergarten from two all-day classes and five half-day classes to five full days and one half-day session. The overall budget now sits at \$11.84 million, which is an increase of 1.09 percent over the current year.

Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz said Tuesday the intent is to maintain two all-day classes to balance the needs of special education children and peer role models, creating a

“natural learning environment.” Those children that will be in the full-day sections as peer models will be chosen through a lottery system, comparable to the system for the preschool program. The rest of the kindergarteners will be in the half-day sessions.

Before the board made its decision, residents spoke on keeping current programs intact over extending ADK. Colleen Brennan said right now is not the time to expand at the expense of other programs. “The economy changed,” she said. “And that to me is a big key.” Another resident, Beth Breinan, said there was “not any true defining evidence” and “no valid proof needed” for ADK in light of the school’s performance and nomination for a Blue Ribbon award.

Christine Mangiafico, a supporter of ADK, said the problem was that the board needed to get out to the town what the kindergarten program entailed. “Not facts and figures,” she said. “But, actually the day to day routine of the children in ADK. I read the exit poll results and almost every person who was against ADK called it ‘taxpayer daycare.’ They don’t understand what the program itself is.”

The board engaged in a spirited discussion surrounding what options the board had in meeting the needs of the students with the reduced budget, while still trying to present a budget scenario that would pass at the polls

next week.

“[We have] been put in an impossible situation,” Board of Education (BOE) Chair Jane Dube said. “[We] have to make a very big decision in a very short time.”

Cruz said that, in looking at the needs of the all the students, there are some kids that will need a full-day session in order to be successful. “We have to look at their needs and address them,” she said Monday night. And it is also important to realize, Cruz said, that “students need role models.” Cruz said she did not want to handicap any child by “creating a learning environment that is not in their best interest,” but “we’ll do the best we can with what we have,” she said.

BOE member Mark Allaben later addressed this issue brought up by Cruz. He said that he understood there were some students that need more time in the school day to succeed, and that there is an “obligation to them.”

Fellow school board member Stephanie Raymond said she, like Mangiafico, did not think that people understood the ADK program. In response, she suggested that in the future the board “sit down and get scientific data people are saying they need.” Utilizing the assessment tests students take when they arrive and subsequently during the year, Raymond said there is an opportunity to track information and do a comparison between the ADK and half-day

program.

“ADK has become an emotional issue,” Allaben said. “Emotion is driving the vote.” Allaben and BOE member William Moorcraft posed the question: if the ADK program was not expanded, would it satisfy the voters, or would the public still vote ‘no’? Allaben later stated that he felt if the board took the action to “totally eliminate ADK” and return to all half-day sessions, the budget would pass at referendum.

BOE member Kathy Shea said, “people went into detail in the surveys and flat out said no ADK or no expansion at the cost of programs.” Shea later said the board should have had a “backup plan” for failure of the budget at referendum.

The motion made by the board to reduce the budget by \$48,500 in the kindergarten program and to keep two full-day classes to meet the needs of special education students was passed by a vote of 6-1, with Dube opposed.

Cruz also said Tuesday that the cuts that the board had voted on at its April 26 meeting (in response to a budget reduction the Board of Finance had mandated on April 22, to get the school budget down to a 1.5 percent increase) will stand. The cuts include one C&E teaching position at Gilead Hill School (\$61,500), a fourth grade teaching position (\$61,500), one

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\$13.77 million and called for a 3.18 percent increase over current year spending. The BOE budget was also presented to the finance board in March, at \$36.48 million, or 4.75 percent higher than the current year.

The BOF later voted to cut both budgets by a total of \$700,000. (The BOE budget also fell another \$1.93 million, due to the school board applying stimulus funds.) As a result, the Town Hall spending plan approved by voters Tuesday was 1.68 percent higher than the 2009-10 number, while the BOE budget is a 3.31 percent increase.

The approved town operations budget includes the elimination of four positions and the reduction of two. One highway department official, one library employee, the public health coordinator and the second resident state trooper will be cut. A Parks and Recreation Department employee will be reduced to seasonal and a library position will become part-time.

Schuster also included a wage freeze for non-union town employees and increased spending on road improvements by about \$188,000.

The town budget was also hit with a revenue shortfall. Last year the town had a combined total of about \$977,000 in revenue (excluding the fund balance) and the 2010-11 budget tallies about \$669,000 in revenue. One controversial way to offset the shortfall has been to take from the fund balance (also known as the town's savings account).

At the budget public hearing, town officials said they planned to leave the fund balance at about 5.75 percent of the town's debt. Traditionally, though, the balance is kept at between 7-10 percent.

The approved budget allows for \$300,000 to come from the fund balance, where the previous budget allotted \$220,000.

Like the town budget, on the education side, employees also took a hit. The equivalent of 11.55 full-time positions will be cut, with all four schools facing staff reductions.

Before the BOE approved its budget in March, several meetings centered on reductions made to music, enrichment and physical education.

A part-time band teacher at Bacon Academy was proposed to be cut in the BOE's budget; however, that job was reinstated at the end of February. Still, a total of 1 FTE in music (including instrumental music) will be cut from the other three schools.

Enrichment was originally slated to be cut from 2 FTE (full-time equivalent) down to 0.5, but the board voted to bring that number back

up to 1 FTE. The enrichment teacher at William J. Johnston Middle School (WJMS) will now split her time between Jack Jackter Intermediate School and the middle school.

Physical education/health will be cut by 3.4 FTE at all four schools, which means students at the elementary and intermediate level will have two periods of PE/health instead of three per week. Bacon Academy will lose 1 FTE, but the change will not impact students due to block scheduling.

Once the BOE approved its budget, the BOF asked it to make another half million in reductions. During this second round, teachers gave concessions totaling \$239,000, in the form of two furlough days. Ten athletic teams, six from Bacon: freshman boys' and girls' soccer and basketball, and boys' and girls' indoor track; and four from WJMS: junior varsity boys' and girls' soccer and basketball will be cut.

"People are disappointed, as we all are," BOE Chair Ron Goldstein said Wednesday about the reductions to athletics. He said some parents are already mobilizing to start fundraising for the cut programs. "It's not a good long-term solution, but it's a good short-term one," he added. Goldstein emphasized junior varsity and varsity sports remained untouched at the high school, with the exception of indoor track.

Other reductions made to the BOE budget included cuts made to library books and stipends for teachers.

Goldstein said Wednesday he was "happy" and "appreciative" that voters had passed his budget, but added now the board is "responsible to show results," because residents have shown "they trust us."

The chairman said he was "relieved" to be able to move on from budget negotiations. "There's a lot of good stuff beyond just the numbers," Goldstein said.

He credited some of the success of this year's budget season to communication and outreach to the community.

Overall, the BOE budget presents what's "needed to maintain the services that everyone deserves," Goldstein said. "The only way to do that was with a tax increase."

Of the 9,581 registered voters in town, 2,457 people cast votes Tuesday, equating a 25.6 percent voter turnout. This was up from last year when 2,113 votes were cast, which was about a 21 percent turnout. Last year's budgets passed with a combined margin of 1,550. The town passed 1,459-666, and education passed 1,440-683.

Expansion cont. from Front Page

night custodian (\$27,928), one paraprofessional position that will not be filled after a resignation (\$19,695), supplies (\$5,328) and professional development (\$1,698). These cuts total \$177,649.

No reductions to the music and Spanish programs, or technology, will be made.

At the close of the meeting, many residents offered their support to the board for choosing not to expand ADK. "What you've done tonight is the right choice in order to get [the budget] passed at the next referendum," said Cheryl Lage. Board of Selectmen member Dan Larson also praised the board on its action.

However, some did not share those thoughts. Christina Bravi said, "When a voter can control the education of a kid that is not theirs," one "needs to stand up." Nancy Bieri said she thinks ADK "should be for all kids," and is concerned that the town is keeping up with the rest of the competition in surrounding towns.

Selectman Brian O'Connell, also in attendance, said his concern is that he does not want to see the town "go backward."

The next scheduled meeting of the BOE will be Thursday, June 10, at 7 p.m. at Gilead Hill School, 580 Gilead St.

Hebron Three-Car Crash Sends One to Hospital

A three-car accident at the intersection of routes 66 and 316 last week sent one woman to the hospital with complaints of neck pain, State Police said.

On Friday, May 7, at about 5 p.m., Andrew Benker, 48, of Hebron, failed to stop for traffic and hit the back bumper of Charles Brown's car. Brown, 38, of Columbia, then hit April Lombardo's car.

Lombardo, 38, of East Hampton, was transported by Hebron Ambulance to the Marlborough Clinic. Her condition was listed as "possible injury," State Police said.

No one else was injured, State Police said.

Susan England Resigns From Andover Board of Selectmen

by Lindsay Fetzner

On June 1, the Board of Selectmen (BOS) will lose a longtime member. Susan England, who has been on the BOS just one month shy of seven years, will step down.

"It's a bittersweet moment," England said of her departure.

"I hope that my efforts have helped keep Andover a good place to live."

First Selectman Bob Burbank said England's resignation is "very disappointing." "She was a great member and has been for years," he said.

Due to recent events that have forced her to focus more time on her family, England said she does not feel she can devote the time necessary to meet the requirements of her position, prompting her resignation announcement on May 5.

In her letter of resignation, England said she is honored to have served the citizens in town and to have worked alongside the other members of the BOS. She said she is confident that the dedication of these members will keep the town "well managed" and a "great place to live."

"I think that at this point and time, the board worked hard to restore the financial stability of the town," England said this week. "The town is a very financially viable institution." Her letter went on to say that the board has made efforts to "return transparency to town



government and continue to offer services in these difficult economic times without a significant tax increase."

One of England's fellow board members, Jay Linddy, described her as "a true professional" with "knowledge in everything." Linddy, who has been on the BOS for 11 years, said, "it is going to be a true loss."

England has also devoted countless years to another committee in town. England served on the Planning and Zoning Commission for over 20 years. She said despite her personal commitments, she hopes to fill the remainder of her term, which will expire on June 30, 2011.

Burbank said England's experience "is going to be hard to replace" and commended her for her dedication to the board, calling her "a stable force." "It's very disappointing to lose someone of Sue's caliber," he said. "We wish her the best. We are going to miss her on that board."

Linddy also praised England for fulfilling all of the duties placed in front of her as a selectwoman. "She does her homework," he said. "And was fully prepared for meetings."

A non-Republican (Democrat or Independent) candidate is being sought to fill England's vacancy, due to charter requirements that no more than three of the five BOS members be from any one party. (The three Republicans on the board are Burbank, Linddy and David Ziff.)

Those interested in the position should notify the BOS in writing and address the letter to 17 School Rd, Andover, CT, 06232. Any further questions can be directed to Town Hall at 860-742-7305.

Damages in Portland Sex Assault Suit Could Be Decided Next Week

by Claire Michalewicz

The total damages awarded to the plaintiff in a civil suit for sexual assault filed against a Portland horse trainer could be decided as soon as next week, the plaintiff's attorney said.

In the suit, Andrew Srb alleged that Robert Johnson sexually assaulted him in 1987, when he was a student at Johnson's Quarry Town Stables. He filed the suit in 2008, after the statute of limitations for a criminal case had expired.

On April 15, a six-person jury decided that Srb should be awarded \$1.27 million in compensatory damages, plus punitive damages to be decided by the presiding judge. Srb's attorney, Gerald Sack, said that the issue of punitive damages is due in court next Monday, May 17, which means the case could be wrapped up that same day.

Case law, Sack explained, specifies that punitive damages should usually equal one-third of the compensatory damages awarded. In this case, the punitive damages would be \$420,000, bringing the total awarded to Srb to \$1.69 million.

Johnson's attorney, Michael Dwyer, called the motions currently being considered "pretty benign." "There's a little bit of muscle-flexing by the plaintiff," he said.

Sack had filed for an additional \$1 million attachment of Johnson's property, in which the court seizes that amount of Johnson's property until a final verdict is reached. This offers his

client more protection until the judge reaches a final decision, Sack said. In addition, a restraining order prevents Johnson from transferring any of his property.

Dwyer said he wasn't sure how much of an effect the motions currently in court would have on the outcome of the case, but he added that Johnson did not have enough money to pay the \$1.27 million in damages that the jury had requested.

Johnson was previously convicted of fourth-degree sexual assault of a minor and injury or risk of injury or impairing morals of children in 2001, in a case brought forward by another former student. He is still on probation after serving nine months in jail for that crime, and is listed in Connecticut's sex offender registry.

Sack said he's hoping the jury awards his client as much as possible.

"I'm hoping the jury will send a message to Mr. Johnson that he can't hurt anyone else," Sack said.

If Judge Mary-Margaret Burgdorff agrees to the sum, the trial would end on Monday, Sack said, though Dwyer would have until June 1 to file any post-trial motions, such as an appeal. Dwyer said that while he had previously mentioned he would file an appeal, the decision was entirely up to Johnson. "I don't know what he intends to do," Dwyer said.

\$10.39 Million Budget Heads to Andover Voters

by Lindsay Fetzner

Next Tuesday, May 18, taxpayers will have their chance to weigh in on the town's spending plan, when its proposed \$10.39 million 2010-11 budget - which calls for a zero percent increase in the mill rate - goes to referendum.

The proposal is a .16 percent decrease from the current fiscal year, which amounts to a difference of \$16,900. This figure is representative of a \$500 addition in funds from the budget presented at the Board of Finance (BOF)'s public hearing held on April 28. The funds fall under the "admin. asst. & clerk" line item and will be directed toward the website committee, appointed at the May 5 Board of Selectmen meeting.

At the annual town meeting last Thursday, May 6, 32 residents voted in favor of the budget and six were opposed. "Most of the people at the meeting agreed that it was a very good budget, as you can see by the vote," said First Selectman Bob Burbank. He added that he hopes residents will pass the budget in light of the hard work and dedication from those who worked to stay within their budgets and, subsequently, requested no increases.

BOF member David Gostanian shared those

feelings on Tuesday, and said, "I hope the townspeople support it."

Gostanian added, "We worked really hard and tried to keep [the budget] as low as possible. It's a fair budget."

However, Gostanian said he is unsure whether the budget will pass due to the low turnout at last week's meeting. "It's hard to say," he said, but hopes that by keeping the mill rate the same, residents will be in favor of the budget.

The proposed mill rate is 27.60, identical to the current year's mill rate. One mill will represent \$277,593.66. For the 2009-10 budget, one mill was equal to \$275,961.43.

Burbank said despite the fact that revenues were down substantially (\$50,600 or 1.92 percent), the budget reflects a decrease in the town's levy for RHAM (\$146,200 or 3.53 percent) and additional \$178,200 received from a "tax sale" of back tax properties held this past fall time. "We received quite a bit of revenue from past due taxpayers," Burbank said. Revenues are estimated to be \$2.59 million for the next fiscal year.

The local school board's \$4.07 million bud-

get increased 1.91 percent, or \$76,400, over last year. Gostanian commended Superintendent of Schools Andrew Maneggia for doing "a fantastic job finding grants and alternate sources of funding" as well as keeping class sizes down.

This year will be the first year the town has added "a fairly sizeable amount" for road repair in a while, Burbank said. "We worked a very tight budget this year, but we are requesting some additional money for the roads because they are in poor condition in many cases," he said.

An additional \$40,000 was added into the budget to repair roads like Burnap Brook Road, which needs paving, he said. Burbank said it was important to repair the roads now, as it costs roughly three times more money to replace the roads than to keep them maintained.

The capital expenditures line item sits at \$246,000 and is a 71.43 percent increase, or \$102,500, over the 2009-10 budget.

BOF member Georgette Conrad said she is optimistic about the budget and thinks it will pass next week. "There is no controversy in the budget this year," she said. "We kept everything at the same level as far as the mill rate."

Residents also voted at last Thursday's meeting to give elected officials a 2 percent pay increase, which passed with 29 in favor and 13 opposed. Burbank said officials have not had a raise in three years and had to incur extra expenses due to a larger share of health costs. "It brings them even in what they lost in extra expenses," he said. Burbank said the raise has to be approved at the annual town meeting by ordinance. Other employees' contracts, including union members, are ratified by the Board of Selectmen, he said.

Burbank drew attention to the cost of having multiple referendums. "It becomes a very costly proposition," he said. Not only does the town have the extra expense of re-advertising the budget, but Burbank said there are charter requirements to do mailing notifications as well. If the budget is turned down, he said just the additional mailings themselves could cost the town close to \$500. "Hopefully, they will pass it," he said.

The referendum will take place on May 18 in the Town Hall Community Room from 6 a.m.-8 p.m.

Exit Poll Responders Target Hebron BOE

by Lindsay Fetzner

The results are in from last week's referendum exit poll, and many of the overarching themes from the comment portion point directly to the local school board.

A significant amount of comments discussed all-day kindergarten (ADK), the position of the Director of Curriculum and one of the programs the Board of Education (BOE) discussed cutting over the budget season.

There was a 75 percent overall response rate for the exit poll conducted by the Board of Selectmen (BOS). Out of the 1,766 voters, 1,317 provided responses, and out of that figure, 453 chose to leave additional feedback.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said a number of staff members and volunteers tackled the poll results after the referendum in an effort to provide feedback on the areas of the budget that residents had concerns with. Therrien said gathering and sorting the data took roughly one full day and the better part of the morning the following day.

Although Therrien said no calls have come in specific to the poll results, "people are very pleased we did it."

Therrien identified six common themes, in no particular order, while sorting through the responses. First, residents said there needed to be better communication as to why the town needs ADK. "ADK - there is no scientific data behind this program," was stated by one citizen. Similarly, another person responded by saying, "ADK is an expensive proposition with little (if any) long-term benefits." The resident went on to say that the BOE should "focus on maintaining current programs that provide measurable benefits to our children."

Along the same lines, many residents said there should be no ADK at all, or wait until the economy improves before implementing it. One resident wrote, "As long as there is ADK (or should I say all day 'daycare') I will never vote for the BOE budget." Another said, "Children are too young for ADK...It's babysitting for working parents...I'm a teacher." These sentiments were mirrored again when one resident said, "ADK is killing the budget."

Conversely, some sparsely voiced support for the full implementation of the program. One person said they "strongly feel ADK is needed

for children's well-being - if anything is to be cut there are many, many other places to start with - especially since school systems are tied to property value." Another felt very strongly against the accusations that ADK equates to 'all-day daycare' and said, "It is not daycare and would be a step backward for the kids" if the town chose to remove it. "We should not wait until it's a mandate - who knows what would have to be cut then," they wrote.

There were several comments about keeping the Challenge & Enrichment program (C&E) at the elementary schools in place of implementing ADK. "We should not restrict current programs to expand on new ones - maintain." To expand ADK at the expense of other programs already instated in the "current difficult economy," one resident said, "is fiscally irresponsible."

The position of the Director of Curriculum also caused outcry with the public, with many feeling that the position should not have been filled after Michelle Puhlick's resignation. Some said the superintendent of schools and Gilead Hill and Hebron Elementary principals

should handle the responsibilities of the position, or as one resident recommended, that a stipend go toward a head teacher. One comment read, "The \$100,000 position should not be filled - we don't have the money or the need."

Salaries for BOE and town employees were another concern with residents, with many saying the salaries are too high. One person wrote the teachers' raises should be cut, saying, "It is too much and it is not sacred." Another called the raises "absolutely drastic."

And lastly, residents said more funds needed to be allocated for open space. The sacrifice for under funding open space, one resident said, is "disproportionate." Another agreed, and said open space should "have a very high priority in our budget." More than one resident suggested funding it at a half-mill annual appropriation.

The full results of the exit poll are available at <http://hebronct.com/finance.htm>, under the 'May 4, 2010, Referendum Exit Poll Results' link. There is also a link off of the home page, under the 'special note' option on the right hand side.

Hebron Finance Board Cuts Budget By Amount Needed for ADK

by Lindsay Fetzner

At a special meeting last Thursday, the Board of Finance (BOF) voted to reduce the \$33.85 million budget that failed at referendum by \$48,500, in many ways a response to the controversial proposal to expand the all-day kindergarten (ADK) program.

Although the BOF can only cut the bottom line of the budget, and not any specific programs, BOF chair Mike Hazel said it is "clear where the number [\$48,500] came from."

BOF member Donna Ferree said this year "it is not a numbers problem, it's an issue problem."

Ferree said, "If ADK stays in the budget, this budget will not pass." Communication was another issue, she said, because "some people out there still think the Board of Education got more" funding for their budget than other departments, which is not true.

After the board's reductions, the overall budget sent to referendum on May 18 totals \$33.806 million. The local school board's budget sits at \$11.84 million, at an increase of 1.09 percent.

Results from the exit poll conducted at last week's referendum were announced, and reit-

erated much of the town's aversion toward ADK. The question asking whether the program should be expanded during the 2010-11 fiscal year prompted 950 'no's and 330 'yes's. While discussing the poll, Hazel said the BOE's budget "overwhelmingly was deemed unacceptable," and drew attention to the "overwhelming support (975 for and 293 against) for bifurcation of the BOE budget from the town government." (There was also support for voting on the open space fund allocation separately - 827 were in favor and 421 were opposed, the poll results stated.) Hazel referred to the expansion of ADK as "the issue that is galvanized like a lightning rod in this town."

According to the poll, 779 voted the BOE budget was too high, 361 said it was acceptable and 120 felt it was too low. During public comment, Maura Baker said to use caution in cutting the BOE budget, and that "it is incorrect to say [ADK is] not a successful program." Baker went on to say that she takes "a lot of issue" with saying the program does not work. "The only legitimate thing to say is maybe it's too expensive this year," she said.

BOE member Brian O'Reilly addressed the controversy that ADK has caused in town. O'Reilly said he was "very disappointed in certain members of this community" and that the town couldn't "come together as a community" to address the issue. Rallying against the BOE, he said, has "done a disservice to the town."

Others, however, were not in favor of the expansion. "Now is not a good time," said resident Claire O'Brien. "The people have spoken." O'Brien alluded to the amount of people in town who are unemployed and asked that people "look at the whole picture" and revisit ADK again in a few years.

Resident Loretta McDonnell spoke on the lack of communication with the public from the BOE. "When you try and speak, you get no response," she said, referencing the board's policy regarding public comment at their meetings. (The board does not engage in dialogue with the public.) And when sending letters to the BOE, McDonnell then said, "We are not able to participate and be acknowledged." She

closed by saying, "The BOE is not communicating. We don't know where to go to communicate."

The results to the other questions addressing many of the concerns raised during public comment on the exit poll were as follows. In response to how residents voted on the town government budget, 531 voted 'yes' and 736 voted 'no'. Five hundred and twelve said the budget was too high, 692 felt it was acceptable and 44 said it was too low.

For the CIP budget, 845 were in favor and 413 were against. Just over 400 people felt it was too high, 744 said it was an acceptable budget, and 104 said it was too low.

Seven hundred and four voted 'yes' on the RHAM BOE budget and 569 voted 'no'. Five hundred and thirty people said the budget was too high, 631 said it was acceptable and 93 said it was too low.

The next referendum is slated for Tuesday, May 18, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at Hebron Elementary School, located at 92 Church St.

Marlborough Residents Overwhelmingly Pass Budget

by Katy Nally

Unlike last year, Marlborough residents passed the 2010-11 town budget in just one try.

And it wasn't even close.

Eighty-seven residents signed in Monday to vote for the \$20.88 million spending package, and ultimately, only one person said "nay" when it came to passing the budget.

"It was what I expected, based upon the season," Board of Finance (BOF) Chair Cathi Gaudinski said. BOF Vice Chair Evelyn Godbout agreed, adding she wasn't surprised the budget passed "because there's been so much consensus in town."

Voters approved a slight tax increase of 0.38 percent, bringing the mill rate up 0.1 mills to 26.58. Every element of the budget either stayed the same or saw a decrease, except for town debt, which jumped 7.5 percent or \$175,000, totaling \$2.51 million.

The Marlborough levy for the RHAM education budget came in at \$7.12 million, which is a decrease of 0.22 percent. The local Board of Education (BOE) totaled \$6.905 million, netting a 0.08 percent decrease, town operations was \$4.34 million with a decrease of 1.93 percent, contingency remained the same at \$20,000 and capital was cut completely from \$40,000.

Resident Jane Boston said after the meeting that the entire budget season was "anti-climac-

tic" when compared to last year's. The 2009-10 budget weighed in at \$20.84 million and it took three attempts to pass it. The budget was finally passed on June 18 of last year, when 522 residents came out, cast their votes with paper ballots and approved the spending package by a 291-231 tally.

Last year's budget revolved around an education versus tax increase battle. By the third vote, the local education budget was cut and the tax increase came in at 2.4 percent.

After Monday's meeting, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz was happy with the painless budget vote. "I think the town has really come together," he said.

"We didn't have to make the deep cuts as far as the education budget" was concerned, Boston added.

Although the budget passed easily this year, there were still hot button issues throughout the process. When lifeguards at Lake Terramuggus were proposed to be cut in March, a petition circulated and a total of 254 signatures were collected, although some signed anonymously.

At a BOF budget workshop, several residents advocated for the guards, saying the cut would mean no swimming lessons, no bathroom maintenance and no protection against vandalism.

The BOF and the Parks and Recreation Com-

mission brainstormed about alternative funding for the approximate \$44,000 that was cut. Town officials looked at parking and season passes and enlisting the help of police to help patrol the parking lot. In the end though, the BOF decided to reinstate \$37,585 back into the Parks and Rec. budget to fund the guards.

Boston, who is also a Lake Advisory Commission alternate, said the BOF "did a wonderful thing when they voted to restore most of the lifeguard funding." She called the situation a "controversial budget issue that many residents wanted resolved."

"With so many families and children enjoying Blish Park and Lake Terramuggus, it's reassuring to know that the life guards will be in place this summer," she added.

The finance board also tackled the issue of the public works supervisor/building and grounds position. In January, the position was cut from the town operations budget, but later half of it was restored. Funding for the other half was reportedly to come from the local BOE, but it was not included in that budget.

Gaudinski said the Board of Selectmen (BOS) had requested the position be reinstated, and in April the BOF put it back into the budget full-time.

During the public hearing in April, several other concerns were raised by residents, including town employee wage increases, library funds and probate court fees.

The budget passed on Monday allows for a pay increase of 1.5 percent for full-time elected and salaried employees at Town Hall. This raise affects five positions: the first selectman, the first selectman's secretary, the town planner, the tax collector and the town clerk. Contracted Town Hall employees will receive a 3.75 percent salary increase.

Funds to repair Richmond Memorial Library's roof originally saw a \$15,000 cut, but the BOF added \$10,500 back in during budget negotiations.

However, the BOF could not make any changes when it came to the probate court. The town signed a five-year lease to rent the probate court office and its third year is coming up. Because the Marlborough court will merge with East Hampton's in January 2011, the BOS attempted to get out of the lease early, but it was unsuccessful. As of now, the yearly rental payment of \$14,400 will continue until the 2012-13 budget.

The new budget will take effect July 1.

Comedic Spelling Bee Latest YPCCA Production in East Hampton

by Claire Michalewicz

"Spell indicant."

"Indicant. I-N-D-I-C-A-N-T. Indicant."

The spelling bee suddenly gets faster and faster, with participants rushing up to the microphone and nearly tripping over each other after spelling their words. Soon they're running around in a circle, shouting out incoherent letters and syllables.

It looks like a nightmare, but everyone in the room seems happy to be involved. This isn't really a spelling bee, but a rehearsal for The Young People's Center for Creative Arts' production of the *25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. The show is being performed next weekend, from May 20 to 23.

The Tony award-winning comedy, written by William Finn and Rachel Sheinkin, follows the lives of six awkward preteens competing in a spelling bee. Proceeds from the show go to the Mike and Adina Mansfield memorial scholarship, which gives \$1,000 to a graduating East Hampton student who plans to pursue a career in the arts or education.

Two months into the rehearsal process, and with the show coming up, director Chris Mansfield - Mike and Adina's son - said he's comfortable with how the show looks.

Not everything in the show can be prepared. Mansfield said he's looking forward to the part of the play when the cast brings audience members onstage to participate in the bee.

"Who knows what someone's gonna say?" he asked. "We want to protect them, but still keep the show funny," he added, explaining that it might be necessary to embarrass the audience participants to keep the show's comedic pace going.

His sister, Rachel Mansfield, who plays one

of the spelling bee moderators, said the Young People's Center for Creative Arts (YPCCA) has changed since the days when her parents ran it in the 1980s. Back then, there was only one summer show, for middle and high school students. Now, YPCCA runs a second summer program for younger students, as well as the spring fundraiser show, which they decided to open up to adults.

"My father would mainly focus on having fun," she said. Under her direction, she's shifted the focus more towards the quality of the productions. "We have a reputation for doing quality shows." But despite Rachel Mansfield's push toward better production values, participants say the program hasn't lost its family atmosphere or the fun.

"We're not all business," said Jen Friday, the show's choreographer. "We try to stay away from sense of competition and really focus on an ensemble feeling."

To avoid creating too much competition, this show is double-cast, with two different actors in each role. The show, said Friday, is really like two shows at once, with one cast performing on Thursday and Saturday and the other on Friday and Sunday.

"YPCCA's really pushed me," said Steven Kelley, the assistant stage manager on this show. "You feel like family when you're here."

Town Council member Thom Cordeiro plays one of the spelling bee participants, the stand-offish William Barféé, who spells out his words with his foot.

"It'll be interesting to see how people are going to react to me," said Cordeiro. He explained that many people in town think he's straight-laced and uptight because they've only seen him on the Town Council, but he said he's



YPCCA will perform *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* next week. Shown here rehearsing the song "Magic Foot" are, from left, Kevin Paley, Thom Cordeiro and Jim Kane.

always liked to make people laugh.

Cordeiro said the performers have become close over the past few weeks of rehearsals. "I was just blown away by how good they are," he said of some of his castmates.

"The scholarship is a wonderful thing," he added, explaining that Mike Mansfield was one of his teachers when he was in middle school, and the scholarship was a fitting way to memorialize him and Adina.

"There is a heart to this program," said Friday. "Every camper tries to cultivate friend-

ships. We tend to get lifelong dedication." Friday herself has been involved with the program since she was in sixth grade, and has been helping run the shows for years.

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee runs May 20-23 at East Hampton High School. Tickets are \$10 and are available at Paul's and Sandy's Too and Liberty Bank, or by calling 860-267-2911. It's recommended for audiences aged 12 and up, because some of the content is "a little risqué."

Portland Voters Pass \$29.62 Million Budget

by Claire Michalewicz

Portland's \$29.62 million 2010-11 budget passed at referendum on Monday, with 426 votes for it and 313 against. The spending plan includes \$18.10 million for education and \$11.52 million on town expenditures.

The mill rate is expected to rise by .56, to 27.80 mills. This equates to a 2.08 percent tax hike.

"The Board of Education is extremely pleased that the vote passed," said BOE member Andrea Alfano immediately after the results were announced, "but now we have a little more work to do."

Alfano was referring to the \$125,000 cut to the original school budget, which the Board of Selectmen made during their budget workshops in March and April. She explained that the BOE had not yet discussed how to manage the cuts — they were waiting for the budget to pass so they knew how much of a reduction they had to manage. Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen recently approached the BOE's unions about concessions, but is still waiting for a response.

"It'll be a modest increase in our taxes, I guess," said selectman Carl Chudzik, who was

also at the library to hear the results. "I didn't want to see any increase, but we'll try harder and we'll keep trying to have a lean, mean, government that represents people's needs."

Chudzik added that it was difficult for the selectmen to gauge public opinion when so few Portland residents showed interest in the budget process. Chudzik pointed to the low turnout at the referendum, which he said was lower than that of surrounding towns, and last week's town meeting, at which only three residents asked questions. (Town Clerk Bernadette Dillon said the 12 percent turnout for Monday's vote was about average for a budget referendum, and was actually higher than the two previous years.)

Though she wasn't at the library when the votes were counted, First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said she was grateful that the budget process was over.

"I'm very pleased that the budget passed on the first referendum," Bransfield said Tuesday, adding that she was grateful to the residents who took the time to vote, whether for or against it. "We put a lot of work into it," she added.

Most of the residents leaving the polling

place Monday afternoon said they were in favor of the budget, with many saying they were concerned about the possibility of more cuts to the school system. Others said they worried there wasn't much to cut from the budget.

"I voted 'yes,'" Bill Caffery said, "only because I think they tried to hold the line as much as possible. There's no frivolous spending in this one."

Others were more skeptical about the tax increase.

"Other towns are trimming the budget," said a resident who declined to give his name. "I don't have the answers, but there's gotta be some way to trim the budget." He added that he felt Portland's taxes were disproportionately high for a small town.

"Explain to me why they need to include all these taxes," said Mike Korman. "Poor planning on your part is not an emergency on mine."

His remarks sparked a small debate in the parking lot, with fellow resident Stephanie Tatro explaining why she had supported the budget. Tatro said the town might be losing revenues from the state, and she thought it was impor-

tant to support the school system to avoid any further reductions.

Tatro added that while she didn't think the budget was perfect, she felt the selectmen and BOE had worked hard to create a budget that worked.

Bransfield said that with the budget approved, the selectmen and the town would have more time to focus on other projects. This summer, Portland will see several major construction projects, including the High Street water main, the Main Street Streetscape, and new parking lots at 270 Main St. and behind the police department. These projects, Bransfield said, are being funded by grant money, rather than the town budget.

"We're able to concentrate on putting the shovel on the ground and getting some real work done," she said.

The new budget goes into effect at the start of the 2010-2011 fiscal year on July 1. The BOS will meet to set the mill rate at a special meeting on Monday, May 17, at 7 p.m., at Town Hall, 33 East Main St.

Bus Safety Still Hot Topic for Portland BOE

by Claire Michalewicz

Bus safety at Nichols Bus Service continues to be a major concern for the Board of Education. Debbie Johnson, who operates the company with her parents, Charlie and Marie Nichols, came to a meeting last Tuesday, May 4, to answer any questions the school board may still have about safety, and to assure them that students on the buses were safe.

"We have never and we never will put a child on a bus that wasn't safe," Johnson said emphatically after the meeting. "Our first and main concern is the safety of the child."

Nichols, which serves students in Portland, East Hampton and other nearby towns, came under scrutiny in March, when a *Hartford Courant* article highlighted the poor safety records of many Connecticut bus companies. Nichols' record was the third worst in the state.

In the wake of the allegations against the bus company, Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen worked with Judith Golden, East Hampton's superintendent, to create a list of guidelines for Nichols and the Board of Education (BOE) to follow. Johnson said that while she couldn't discuss all the changes Nichols had made, the company had "upgraded its stan-

dards." Johnson said all vehicles are thoroughly inspected every 2,000 miles, which is more frequent than the Department of Motor Vehicles requires.

Johnson explained that the company had had only two minor accidents in the past two years, neither of which caused any injuries. "That's a pretty awesome record," she said. In addition, Johnson said, vehicles are repaired as soon as problems are found, before they go back on the road. While violations were found with the buses themselves, she said, there were no violations in the procedures Nichols followed in inspecting them.

BOE member Ben Srb suggested that Doyen also look at the inspection records from the other bus companies that transport Portland students, such as those who attend magnet schools outside the town, and students from Hartford who attend school in Portland. Doyen said she is currently working on obtaining their inspection records.

"I think everybody was satisfied with what we presented" at the meeting, Johnson said. "Everybody understands the process a lot better now."

Doyen agreed, saying the BOE's response to Nichols was "very positive."

"At this point, the board felt comfortable with what Nichols presented," she said. Doyen stressed that the BOE and Nichols would "keep the lines of communication open" to address any issues that arise in the future.

BOE member Andrea Alfano agreed that it was important for the BOE to stay informed about Nichols' safety records. "I don't think our kids are *not* safe," Alfano said after the meeting, "but obviously we have the responsibility to respond to the public."

The BOE tackled several other issues during the regular meeting. The board voted to continue with the Healthy Food Certification program for the third year. Under the certification, the cafeterias serve more nutritious food, and vending machines are not available during the school day. The program has also brought salad bars to the upper grades, starting at Brownstone Intermediate School. Doyen said that while some people in Portland had initially been skeptical about the program, the response

has been positive.

The BOE also accepted a donation of nearly \$700 raised by Valley View School students through the Box Tops for Education program. The money, Doyen said, would be used in Valley View's library.

A third action item, for magnet school tuition, was pulled from the agenda because the BOE realized that they did not have to vote on it — the state required the town to pay the tuition anyway.

At the meeting, Doyen brought forward a plan to put solar panels on the roof of Portland High School. She explained that the plan had been proposed over two years ago, to be partly funded by the Clean Energy Fund. The program ran out of money, but was just resuming its grant process, Doyen said. Portland will now be able to update its application for reconsideration, which Doyen said the BOE would address at its next meeting.

The BOE will next meet Tuesday, May 18, at 7 p.m., in the library at Portland High School, 95 High St.

Colchester Developer Asks to Waive Fee in Big-Box Project

by Katy Nally

Attorney Lewis Wise asked selectmen last Thursday, May 6, to waive an application fee for a big-box development to be built between Parum Road and Chestnut Hill Road, but the board took no action on his request.

Wise spoke on behalf of his client, Colchester Realty, LLC, and asked that a \$10,790 fee be waived because "this is a very unusual situation," he said. Wise cited how the developer has spent "tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees" battling one lawsuit for eight years.

The application for the 250,000-sq. ft. development was originally proposed and passed by the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) in 2002. Resident John Fedus and his family then sued the PZC, claiming the commission acted illegally by going against its own regulations. Fedus, an abutting property owner, lost the case when it went to Norwich Superior Court in 2002. He later appealed that decision in 2004, and the case was picked up by the state Supreme Court.

In 2006, the Supreme Court published its decision to reverse the Superior Court's ruling. The case went back to the Norwich Superior Court in 2007 and Fedus lost. He appealed the decision again and the Appellate Court decreed that "two of the town's zoning regulations had

not been complied with," Wise said.

The first of these regulations was what Wise called a "catch 22" situation, because it stated the applicant needed approvals from all other agencies, before it could file with the town. The second regulation allowed for substitutions of piping material, subject to the town engineer's approval.

Since these changes, the PZC approved plans for the development Feb. 17 by a vote of 4-1.

"My client has hung in there," Wise said. "They have incurred truly extraordinary costs in these eight years."

The \$10,790 includes a \$560 base fee and \$10 for each of the 1,023 parking spaces.

Wise said his "unusual request" to waive the fee was because the \$10,790 was necessitated "by appeals." In a letter to the Board of Selectmen (BOS), Wise said because the plans were already approved in 2002, and since "very minor" changes were made, "staff time to review this application was significantly less than would ordinarily have been required."

Secondly, he said Colchester Realty, LLC, has "incurred additional substantial engineering and legal expenses in connection with the recent application."

"There should be something done to reduce the impact," Wise said.

First Selectman Gregg Schuster first responded to Wise by saying, "We're happy your client is still here," then he added, "the town [too] has been there throughout the whole process." Officials said a modest estimate of what the town spent on legal fees for the project since 2002 would be \$50,000.

Selectman Stan Soby clarified that staff time was not factored into fees for the applicant. According to a memo from Town Planner Adam Turner, engineering, zoning, planning and wetlands staff spent about 400 hours reviewing the application, both times it was approved by the PZC.

Zoning staff alone accounted for 150 of those hours, about 120 more hours than the time it would take for a "normal review of an application of this magnitude," the memo states.

Turner noted the applicant did not pay engineering review fees when the proposal was first submitted in 2002 because the fees did not exist. The applicant was charged \$400 in Planning and Zoning fees, the memo said.

Soby mentioned the approximately \$11,000 fee comes out to about four and half cents per

square foot in the development.

Ultimately, the BOS made no motion on Wise's request.

Also last Thursday, the selectmen heard from Keith Kelley, president of the Dog Park Committee. Kelley said the next step in the dog park project is to install about 15,000 linear feet of fencing at a cost of about \$26,000. As of last week, Kelley said the committee had raised about \$35,000. "Every bit of the money raised is going to the fence and the driveway and everything else," he said.

Between now and the grand opening of the park, which is set for July 18, Kelley estimated the committee will take in \$4,500 in the next few months from donations and corporate matching. He said there would most likely be more money raised during the opening celebration.

"We really commend you and the committee on the job you've done," Soby said to Kelley.

Selectmen unanimously approved a bid from Fence Man & Sons of Colchester to build the dog park fence.

The next regularly scheduled BOS meeting will be Thursday, May 20, at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

Hebron Council Reviews Proposed Charter Changes

by Claire Michalewicz

The Town Council reviewed proposed changes to the town's charter at its meeting Tuesday, and recommended the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) accept them. Residents had previously discussed the issue at the public hearing held immediately before the meeting (see related story on page 15), when CRC Vice Chairwoman Julie Ciucias outlined the proposed changes to the town's charter.

The CRC was scheduled to make their final changes Thursday afternoon, after press time.

One of the larger changes to the charter is a move to four-year overlapping town council terms. Town Council members Sue Weintraub and Barbara Moore both said they were uncomfortable with the change. "This is a legislative body, and it moves quickly," Weintraub said. She said two-year terms gave voters more input into who served on the council.

But other council members supported the change. "You really get comfortable, you get to know things, and then the end of the term comes up so quickly," said council member Thom Cordeiro. Town Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel, a CRC member, added that she liked the overlapping terms, since there would be continuity from one session to another.

Weintraub also opposed the decision not to include a residency requirement for the town manager. "We have a community that the town manager needs to be a part of," she said. "What if they don't want to live here?"

Engel and Town Council Vice Chairman John Tuttle, who is also a CRC member, replied that the commission had considered many potential emergencies that could happen, and that there were no problems from having the town manager outside the town. Tuttle also pointed out that the requirement could damage recruitment, especially if a potential new town manager already lived nearby.

The council also revisited the concerns that resident Mary Ann Dostaler had raised earlier in the evening, during the public hearing. Dostaler had said some voters had been turned away from the budget referendum because they were not U.S. citizens, and that state statute allows individual towns to decide whether to allow non-citizens who own property in town to vote on budgets. Engel dismissed Dostaler's concerns, explaining that she did not want to

address the issue.

Because there were so many individual changes to the charter, the Town Council debated whether residents should vote on each one separately, or on the entire change as one ballot item. Weintraub supported having 12 separate ballot items, while most other council members said there should be just one. Cordeiro decided to withhold judgment, because he said he saw the merits of both methods. Engel said she was also undecided on how residents should vote, and said the commission would consider their concerns when they finalize the charter changes on Thursday afternoon.

Also Tuesday, the council discussed forming an Arts and Culture Commission, a motion that Cordeiro brought forward. "It's something close to my heart," said Cordeiro, explaining that he and his family have been involved in many theater productions over the years. "It's about elevating arts and culture within the community."

Cordeiro said arts groups sometimes had issues finding space to rehearse and perform, and he'd like the commission to address this problem, and to make them more visible within the community. He said he would like to form a subcommittee that would look into forming the commission.

Engel explained that a previous attempt to form an Arts and Culture Commission had failed in 2005, largely because the group had not researched what their budget would be. Engel asked Cordeiro to make a list of people who were interested in joining the subcommittee, and to draw up a preliminary budget for the commission, so the council could continue discussing the commission at their next meeting.

The council also briefly reviewed the Plan of Conservation and Development Implementation Table, which lists future projects in the town. They agreed to discuss it in more detail at their next meeting on May 25.

Another issue was the Social Media Policy, which covers the town's use of social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. Town Manager Jeffery O'Keefe recommended that the town adopt the policy for use by all departments, in case some town departments wanted to join social networks. (At present, the

town's Facebook page, which Cordeiro oversees, has over 1,200 followers.) The council agreed to talk about the policy with more department heads, and revisit the issue at their next meeting.

In his town manager's report, O'Keefe announced that the town would lose its Town Hall annex at the end of October. The town had recently looked into renewing its lease with Connecticut Light and Power, which owns the space, but CL&P said it wanted the land back. About 20 different groups use the space in the annex, including the town's food bank.

"We've got alternatives," O'Keefe said, explaining that he was already looking into finding space for the town departments in the annex. The new probate court was also supposed to be housed in the annex, and O'Keefe said he was discussing the problem with the towns of Portland, Marlborough and East Haddam, which make up the new probate court district.

O'Keefe also told the town council that the improvements to the Royal Oaks water system were almost complete. The pump system had been experiencing problems for weeks, pumping dirty water into many of the houses in the area.

In addition, O'Keefe said, East Hampton had recently been ranked first among towns that were seeking loans from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, which provides low-interest loans to towns to improve their water systems. O'Keefe said East Hampton expected to receive about \$3.3 million, less than the \$5.2 million they had requested, but that the fund had committed to continue funding "if the town keeps moving forward."

Two new projects would also soon be underway in the town, O'Keefe said. The town had accepted bids from CAS Construction to improve Lowell Road, and from Salafia Electric to install a new sound system in the high school auditorium.

O'Keefe also announced that the construction of the bandstand at Angelico's Lakehouse was nearly complete.

"This isn't good news," said Weintraub, saying that the bandstand was making the noise problem worse. "This is a harassment of the neighbors. Their rights are being violated."

Weintraub then explained that one of the walls near the bandstand had been built on top of a mound of earth, which she suspected was a way to avoid zoning regulations that would have prohibited a higher wall. "I have real issues with this and what's going on there," she said. The council agreed to bring Building, Planning and Zoning director Jim Carey to the next meeting to discuss the issue further.

Weintraub's remarks echoed what Julie Ciucias had said earlier in the meeting, during public comments. Ciucias had said that the noise from the Angelico's was louder in the surrounding neighborhood than it was near the lake, and that the structures being built to deal with the noise were not helping.

Residents spoke out about a variety of other issues as well.

"There's an elephant in the room," said Laurie Wasilewski, saying that the town had not shared adequate information about the town council executive session on April 30. The executive session concerned harassment allegations against a town employee, and Wasilewski said that rumors were spreading around East Hampton about the content of the executive session, and that the town council and town manager should be more forthcoming with information to clear up any misinformation that residents may have heard.

Scott Minnick said that he had recently applied to serve on a town board, but that the town had mishandled his application. He accused the town of withdrawing his application without telling him, before being selected for an interview. "I expected not to be chosen," Minnick said, "but I'm disappointed in how I was treated."

In other business, Donna Kirk, speaking on behalf of her son Neal, requested contributions for a race that Neal will be running on May 23. The Run To Home Base 9K raises money for veterans with combat stress disorders or traumatic brain injuries. Anyone who wants more information can contact Neal at fmos@comcast.net, and can donate at www.runtohomebase.org.

The next town council meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 25, at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 20 East High St.

Colchester Lions Give \$11,000 to Local Groups

by Katy Nally

Thirty-two organizations were presented with a total of \$11,000 at the Colchester Lions Club annual night of giving Wednesday night. The donations will assist groups like the Troop K Explorers, Colchester Youth Basketball and cub scouts.

Lions Club President Maggie Nolan-Thibault said this year's economical situation presented some challenges when it came to fundraising, but her motto for the season was "to do more with less."

Nolan-Thibault said organizations were asked to submit requests for donations from the Lions, and from there, the group selected several recipients. All the money from fundraisers the Lions manage during the year "go into the community charity fund," Nolan-Thibault said.

At Wednesday's meeting, Leos Shawn Knowles and Casey Seymour presented a total of \$2,000 to 15 charities. First Selectman Gregg Schuster was on hand to collect for the Colchester Food Bank and Colchester Fuel Bank.

Nolan-Thibault then presented the remaining \$9,000 to both Colchester and regional organizations.

"I really want to thank you very, very much," Senior Center Director Patti White said. Her donation will go toward furniture for a gazebo that was purchased last year. White said it's her goal to get "seniors out and active," and that "this will really go a long way toward making that happen."

Colchester Youth Services will also benefit from the Lions' donation. Lyn Marra, a youth services program coordinator, said the organization takes kids to Lake Compounce during the summer, and "your donation will allow some of the children who can't pay for a ticket, to go on scholarship."

For the second year in a row, the Colchester Learning Foundation (CLF) accepted a check from the Lions. "Though your generous donation, we were able to award our most recent mini grants," Monica Swyden-Bolles, founder of the foundation, said. In March, five school personnel were presented with grants funded up to \$500. According to the CLF website, the grants awarded will assist with projects that are not funded by the budget and enhance the curriculum.

Officer Rob Suchecki of the Colchester Police Department happily accepted his check for the DARE program. Nolan-Thibault said the Colchester Lions almost exclusively fund the program, which teaches students alcohol and drug prevention. "Without this donation, the program just would not happen and I certainly appreciate it," Suchecki said. Workbooks and other supplies will be purchased with the donation, he said.

Cragin Memorial Library was another local recipient. Library Director Kate Byroade said the money would be used to expand the large print section, which helps people with reduced vision.

Historically, the Lions Club raises money and donates to organizations that help the visually-impaired. In the 1920s, Helen Keller asked the group to become crusaders for the blind, and the Lions soon embarked on this quest.

During Wednesday's event, the Leos' beneficiaries included the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation and Connecticut Radio Information Service, which provides a radio reading service.

However, the Lions' reach stretches farther than just Colchester, and its charity helps more than just those who are visually-impaired.

Angela George accepted her donation for Bethesda Community, Inc., which is a women's shelter based out of Norwich. "I'm very happy



The Colchester Lions and Leos donated \$11,000 to local and regional agencies Wednesday at the club's annual night of giving. Pictured above are representatives from the 32 benefiting organizations and club members.

to receive this on behalf of the women at the two housing sights," George said. The Lions' donation will fund computer courses for the women, giving them job skills and training, she said.

The Lions also donated to the Haitian Health Foundation, which was started by Norwich resident Jeremiah Lowney and provides health services for children and families in Haiti.

With the \$11,000 given away Wednesday night, Nolan-Thibault said the Colchester Lions have donated over \$20,000 in the past few months.

"We do what we can," Nolan-Thibault said modestly.

For more information about the Colchester Lions Club, visit www.colchesterlions.org.

Selling Water Bottles Yields Success for Bacon Students

by Katy Nally

After one school year of running a business they created, several Bacon Academy students are liquidating assets lock, stock and bottle, and enjoying a 500 percent return on their investment in their company – Bacon Bottle Co.

The 10 members of the company sold 200 25-ounce stainless steel water bottles in about two months, at a price of \$10 each. They then sold 32 more after that for half price.

In total, the group saw a net profit of about \$1,345 and accumulated over \$2,700 in income. The one-year business was so successful, the students were able to donate \$250 to the business department, Bacon Bottle Co. president Natalia Svirshchevsky said.

“It was really nice that we had that opportunity to donate,” Natalia said.

“We wouldn’t have any of this without Bacon,” vice president of finance Jordan Brown noted.

Bacon Bottle Co. is a Junior Achievement Company Program. The 10 students met daily during the first half of the year in their entrepreneurial and economics class to decide on a product, perform market field research, create a logo and mission statement then market and sell bottles. Natalia and Jordan then continued the business during the second half of the year as part of an independent study.

The pair is now poised to send out checks to shareholders. “Once you see it go through the process it’s like ‘whoa, that’s so cool,’” Jordan said. “My favorite part was watching it all follow through.”

Each member of the company was allowed to purchase up to five shares of stock in the Bacon Bottle Co. at \$2 apiece. A total of 109 shares of stock were sold to Colchester residents and Bacon Academy students and staff. Because the steel water bottles went flying off the shelves (more like out of lockers), shareholders will see a 500 percent return on their investment and receive about \$10 for each share.

“We were even more surprised [than investors],” Natalia said about the huge return rate.

Natalia and Jordan both invested the maximum in their company and bought \$10 worth of stock. “Once you start investing your own money in it, it really becomes your own,” she said.

Natalia will receive over \$50 when the company liquidates, and Jordan will see the same return plus a sales incentive of \$55 for selling the most bottles. “I’m pretty set on this,” Jordan said, grinning.

Bacon Academy teacher Louise Wessling, who oversaw the company along with a business consultant, said the Bacon Bottle Co. saw the greatest return on investment in the seven years the high school has offered the program.

“Lucky number seven,” Natalia remarked.

The group began the year by pitching products to each other at daily meetings, Louise said. Because the entrepreneurial and economics class was during a lunch period the 10 students were able to carry out market field research in the cafeteria. They canvassed about 1,000 people, Jordan said, and asked them to choose between three potential logos on three products: a water bottle, shorts or a carabiner.

The Bacon Academy population, including faculty, settled on navy blue water bottles with a fighting bobcat logo.

Next the group sold Bacon Bottle Co. stock to raise capital. They were fortunate to also have some of last year’s product ready to sell. Together with the stock and profits from leftover backpacks, the students raised \$273.

From there, the group was able to place a bulk order of 200 bottles. “They did all the negotiating,” Louise noted.

Meanwhile, each student was applying for a job within Bacon Bottle Co. and interviewing with Louise. Like other corporations, there were finance, human resources, marketing and advertising departments. All employees were on payroll and received \$1.50 per hour worked outside of school.

Once jobs were set, the Bacon Bottle Co. decided on a mission statement and slogan, and then began marketing to students and faculty. The group came up with “Bottle that H₂O and Go,” and pledged 100 percent customer satisfaction with their product.

The marketing and advertising department put together a 30-second commercial, wrote and published press releases and set up a Facebook page to get the word out.

By mid-November the students started selling, and didn’t stop until all 200 bottles were snatched up. By Christmas break the bottles were almost sold out, Louise said. “We got into this groove where we just started selling and selling,” Jordan said. “There was this boom period.”

Bacon Bottle Co. also offered selling incentives for its three highest top-sellers.

Throughout the selling frenzy, the students struck bottle gold when they had 32 water bottles that didn’t pass quality control, and later sold them for half price. The group took the products with defective pictures/logos back to the distributor and received 32 new bottles for free. Both Natalia and Jordan recognized they were lucky to have 32 bottles that were essentially all profit.

In total, the company earned \$2,704 in gross sales. The students spent about \$1,000 on materials (where each bottle cost a little under \$5),



The Bacon Bottle Co., which was run and organized by 10 Bacon Academy students, sold 232 water bottles this year and shareholders saw a 500 percent return on investment. Pictured above are the juniors and seniors who made the company possible.

they spent \$136 on wages and about \$80 on miscellaneous charges, netting a total of \$1,267 in expenses.

Like other businesses, Bacon Bottle Co. was not safe from taxes. About \$90, a 6 percent charge, was taken from the company’s profits and given back to the Junior Achievement program. After their donation to the business department, the students were left with just about \$1,100 to split between 109 shares of stock.

Based on their experiences managing Bacon Bottle Co., both Natalia and Jordan said they definitely planned on pursuing a lifetime in business. “My goal is to have some sort of business of my own,” Natalia said. “It hooked her,” Louise said about Natalia’s role in the program.

Natalia said she will attend the University of Connecticut in the fall and is aiming for a degree in international business. Natalia, a Junior Achievement veteran, said at first she was unsure what to major in at college. But, after two years of participating in the Bacon Academy program, Natalia said business will definitely be in her future.

Jordan too has entrepreneurial goals but, as car fanatic, his include owning a car dealership. “I would love to own my own business,” he said.

Jordan plans on spending one year after graduation at a Bible school, then, he said, he’s looking at New York University and Liberty University for degrees in finance.

The pair said they learned valuable skills like communication, teamwork and leadership. But, Louise said, “you learn not only leadership roles but subordinate roles too.” This was something that took advertising manager Christian Peterson a while to get used to.

At first, Christian said, he wasn’t wild about the idea of a fellow student giving him work, but he came around when the company started turning a profit. “Once you see the money it really does make you keep going – it’s definitely rewarding,” he said.

Both Natalia and Jordan said running a company was intense work but ultimately gratifying. “You really have to nail yourself down and just go,” Jordan said.

Because the group’s company was such a success, Louise said she already has about 20 students registered for next year’s class. Of course, it might be tough to claim lucky number eight next year, with the bar set so high by the Bacon Bottle Co.

Proposed Charter Changes Go Before Public in East Hampton

by Claire Michalewicz

Residents got a chance to weigh in on proposed changes to the town charter at a public hearing Tuesday.

The Town Council later reviewed the changes and recommended that the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) finalize them, which they were scheduled to do Thursday afternoon, after press time (see related story on page 16). The changes would then head to the voters at the November elections.

CRC Vice Chairwoman Julie Ciucias, filling in for commission chairwoman Terry Concannon, presented the changes Tuesday night.

Ciucias explained that the charter, which the town adopted in 1973, had not been updated since 1987. The Town Council formed the CRC earlier this year, and the commission had been meeting weekly since February.

One of the largest changes to the charter was a move to four-year overlapping terms for Town Council members, rather than the current system of two-year terms. The change would start in 2011, with four candidates elected for a four-year term and three for a two-year term. Starting with the 2013 elections, all candidates would be elected for four years. The changes also introduce open voting, in which voters can vote for as many candidates as there are positions.

CRC members had considered instituting a residency requirement for the town manager, but decided against it because they felt technology could keep the town manager connected even when they weren’t physically present. Ciucias explained that after talking to department heads living outside the town, the commission decided that forcing the town manager

to move could affect their family life, and also restrict the pool of qualified candidates.

Another change is a \$12,500 threshold for public easements. Under the threshold, the Town Council could approve the easement instead of sending it to a town meeting, thus keeping projects running more efficiently. The changes also put similar limits on additional appropriations that boards or commissions may request if they run out of funds. Under the new guidelines, amounts under \$12,500 require Town Council approval. Amounts under \$25,000 require council approval and the approval of either the Board of Finance or a town meeting if the BOF disagrees and larger amounts require approval of all three.

The changes to the charter also clarify the procedure for a replacing a vacancy in an elected office. The political party of the person who left the position will choose a successor. If the person was unaffiliated, the Town Council will choose a replacement.

The commission had also rejected a previous suggestion, which would have allowed the Town Council to adopt the budget after it failed at two referendums. Many residents had protested the change, and Ciucias said the commission agreed with them.

“Certainly, there was significant public sentiment regarding this item that could not be ignored,” Ciucias said.

Other changes include a switch to gender-neutral language throughout the charter, and a requirement that the Town Council annually review the town manager’s performance. The updated charter also requires that the town officially review the charter every 10 years, even if it ultimately decides not to update it.

“This process was delightful as far as I was concerned,” Ciucias continued. She said she was proud that the commission had done its work efficiently, and she was satisfied with the different issues in the charter that the commission had addressed.

About five residents attended the hearing, and not all of them seemed happy with the proposed changes. Laurie Wasilewski said that other towns had had more success changing their charters when residents were able to vote on each item individually.

“While it might be more tedious,” Wasilewski said, “I think it might be the more fair way to change the way we run our government.”

Mary Ann Dostaler asked the commission why they had finished the revision process so quickly, when they legally had two years to make the changes. “This commission seemed to be rushed,” she said, and the issues they dealt with “cherry-picked.”

Notable parts of the charter that the commission could have looked at, Dostaler said, included residency requirements for elected officials. (Currently, there is no requirement that elected officials live in East Hampton, though joining a political party in the town does require residency.)

Dostaler also said the explanation of who is eligible to vote was not entirely clear. She said she worked at the polls at last week’s budget referendum, and she saw some residents who had voted in previous years turned away because while they owned property in East Hampton, they were not U.S. citizens.

“I don’t think we rushed it,” said commis-

sion member and Town Council Vice Chairman John Tuttle. “There was no reason to drag our feet.”

Former Town Council member Scott Minnick objected to the move to four-year terms for elected officials.

“You know and I know what the real reason is,” Minnick told the Town Council, which hosted the hearing. “You want to make the Town Council less accountable to the public.” He said the Town Council was trying to prevent another third-party majority, which happened after the 2005 election, when the Chatham Party won a majority.

Kyle Dostaler contended that the commission had been illegally formed, which invalidated any conclusions they had reached. According to state statute, Dostaler said, no more than one-third of the members of the commission could be Town Council members, but the commission included two council members out of the five total. In letting the commission be formed, Kyle Dostaler alleged, Town Manager Jeffery O’Keefe and Jean D’Aquila, the town attorney, had both acted unethically, which Dostaler said was “troubling.”

(O’Keefe addressed Kyle Dostaler’s complaints later, during the regular council meeting. “Kyle’s math is wrong,” he said, explaining that one-third of five people would be 1.67 people, and the legal interpretation of that number is to round it to two.)

The full list of changes is available on the town’s website at www.easthamptonct.org. If the voters approve the changes, the new charter will go into effect in November.



Friends of Lake Pocotopaug (FLP) recently donated \$1,000 to the Police Department, to help with the purchase of a new boat. Pictured from left are FLP Chairman Steve Diemer, Police Chief Matt Reimondo and Sergeant Tim Dowty.

Police Receive Money for New Boat

by Claire Michalewicz

The East Hampton Police Department is getting some help buying a new police boat from a local conservation group. On Tuesday evening, the Friends of Lake Pocotopaug (FLP) presented Police Chief Matt Reimondo with a \$1,000 check for the new boat.

FLP Chairman Steve Diemer said the new boat was important for the safety of both boaters and the lake. He explained that while the state Department of Environmental Protection sometimes patrols the lake, a stronger police presence would help better enforce the lake's regulations.

Reimondo said that while the police already have a boat, it's over 26 years old. They're hoping to upgrade to something more versatile.

"We need something that's a multi-purpose platform," Reimondo said. The boat will be used by the police, fire department and emergency medical technicians to respond to emergencies on the lake.

Like the current police boat, the new boat would patrol Lake Pocotopaug on the weekends and on holidays. Reimondo said police will make patrols to make sure boaters are obeying laws, and to be on hand in case of an

emergency.

"It's important to have that enforcement aspect," Reimondo said. "A lot of those rules are in place to preserve the health of the lake."

So far, Reimondo explained, the police department has received about \$13,000 for the new boat through fundraising. The police are still researching which kind of boat to buy, so they don't know what the total cost would be. But the donations from FLP and the community have been a huge help, said Reimondo.

"This community has always been one that has stepped up and helped out with a good cause," Reimondo said. The lake, he added, was an important centerpiece of the town and he was glad residents were working to protect it.

Diemer said that his group raised the money through their fundraisers, the largest of which was a raffle held every August. EHFLP raises up to \$30,000 each year, all of which goes toward protecting the lake. Their next major project, Diemer added, would be the proposed aeration system that would help eliminate algae bloom – EHFLP has promised the town up to \$20,000 to go toward the system.

Portland Police News

5/3: Robin Thomas, 44, of 1503 Portland Cobalt Rd., was charged with criminal violation of restraining order and first-degree criminal trespass, Portland Police said.

5/3: Maria Cortes, 32, of 230 Treadwell St., Hamden, was charged with credit card theft, identity theft, forgery and credit card fraud, police said.

5/4: Shawn Vare, 26, of 9 Freedom Way, was charged with evading responsibility and operating too fast for conditions, police said.

5/8: Paul Mangiafico, 44, of 14 Stagecoach Run, Cobalt, was charged with reckless operation, police said.

5/9: Keith Anderson, 35, of 12 Foley Rd., was charged with operating under the influence and failure to drive right, police said.

Hebron Police News

5/6: Ryan Clark, 18, of 311 Route 6, Andover, was charged with speeding and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

5/6: A youthful offender was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana, State Police said.

5/6: Juvenile was charged with possession of less than four ounces of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

5/6: David Whitehill, 54, of 198 East Hampton Rd., was charged with reckless driving and DUI, State Police said.

5/6: State Police responded to a "large party" on Jerry Daniels Road. Nineteen infractions for possession of alcohol by a minor were issued, State Police said.

Salem Police News

5/10: Jason Hall, 41, of 5 Stonewall Rd., was charged with criminal violation of a protective order, third-degree criminal mischief and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

4/24: John Sabo, 23, of 355 Randall Rd., Lebanon, was arrested for speeding and failure to carry vehicle registration, East Hampton Police said.

4/29: Timothy Minor, 42, of 1 Days Point Rd., and Meagan Deveran, 35, of 85 North Main St., were involved in a two-vehicle hit-and-run accident on North Main Street, police said. Minor was arrested for driving under the influence and evading responsibility, police added.

4/30: Keith Godreau, 38, of 15 Drayla Dr., Bristol, and Patrick McMahan, 49, of 222 Main St., Middletown, were involved in a two-vehicle accident on Colchester Avenue, police said. Godreau was arrested for operating a motor

vehicle without insurance and failure to drive right, police added.

5/1: Robert Howard, 40, of 406 Lake Vista Dr., was arrested for failure to drive right, driving under the influence, and failure to carry a motor vehicle operator license, police said.

5/1: Adam Wachter, 39, of 297 Marlborough Rd., Glastonbury, was arrested for failure to drive right and driving under the influence, police said.

5/1: A 17-year-old male juvenile was arrested for reckless driving, police said.

5/2: Sheri Taylor, 41, of 24 Hilltop Rd., was arrested for disorderly conduct, interfering with a police officer and larceny, police said.

Colchester Police News

5/6: Lim Min Hwan, 41, of 14415 41st Ave., Apt. 410, Flushing, NY, was charged with failure to drive in proper lane and DUI, State Police said.

5/6: Steven Korten, 18, of 139 Lebanon Ave., No. 6, was charged with second-degree criminal mischief and breach of peace, State Police said.

5/6: Michael Veseskis, 20, of 162 Falls Rd., Moodus, was charged with second-degree criminal mischief and breach of peace, State Police said.

5/6: Jason Larocco, 29, of 88 Mill Hill Rd., was charged with failure to carry license, failure to drive right and DUI, State Police said.

5/7: William Bawza, 50, of 164 Mt. Pleasant St., Meriden, was charged with failure to renew registration, failure to carry registration, operation of a motor vehicle when license is suspended, DUI and failure to drive in proper lane, State Police said.

5/9: Joseph Gamache, 37, of 191 Stanavage Rd., turned himself in for third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

5/9: Sean Anderson, 23, of 12 Ferry Rd., Hadlyme, turned himself in for three counts of failure to appear, State Police said.

5/11: Andrea Hamilton, 48, of 80 Nelkin Rd., was charged with evading, failure to drive right and DUI, State Police said.

New Lawyer Offers Realty Expertise and More

by Katy Nally

Tim Kearney is a jack of all trades when it comes to law, but his Colchester practice specializes mostly in real estate matters.

"I've actually probably done just about everything," Kearney said.

The attorney opened his office in the Skyview Realty building on Hayward Avenue in December of last year.

Kearney has been practicing law since 1985, after graduating from the University of Bridgeport. He passed the bar exam in 1984 and started his own practice in Waterbury soon after. "For the bulk of 13 years I was solo," Kearney said.

Around the same time, Kearney also began a title search company, which examined property records to verify ownership and look up liens and judgments, among other things.

In 1998 Kearney began to focus only on the title company, but by 2008, because the real estate market had gotten "pretty soft," Kearney decided to move back to practicing law.

Kearney and his wife Laura still own a title service company in East Hampton, but Kearney is once again flying solo as an attorney, only this time in Colchester. He said the transition of picking up law again has been smooth and "just like riding a bike."

Since his switch, Kearney said he has attended seminars on the new banking regulations that were instituted in January. He said laws change slowly like medicine, so the "learning curve" was not too sharp.

At his Colchester office, Kearney handles issues like boundary disputes, landlord-tenant disagreements, foreclosures, leases, refinances, evictions and some workman's compensation matters. "I do a little bit of everything," he said.

But Kearney also welcomes clients with other issues. Because of his extensive local experience, he claims "if I cannot help them, I'll find someone who can."

He has also represented area condominium and beach associations like Princess Pocotopaug Association in East Hampton and Yantic Landing in Norwich. Kearney also works with commercial contractors.

Since operating the title service company in East Hampton, Kearney said the move to Colchester was "natural." He said many of his clients are small business people who populate the surrounding communities.

But no matter who the client is, Kearney said it's his job is to "make the process a little smoother" for the parties involved. He said he does two things when clients come into his of-

fice: make sure they're comfortable with the plan of action, and make sure they trust him.

Kearney said a good lawyer "by their nature is a facilitator," and it's a quality he has practiced throughout his years as an attorney, he said. "I view things as a business situation, I'm very practical," he said. "I try to be the person who takes the emotion out of the situation."

As a resident of East Hampton and now a Colchester business owner, Kearney said he thrives in the small town, close-knit communities. Often times Kearney's clients later become his friends, he said. "Most people want to know the guy on the other side of the desk really cares about them," he said, adding this is certainly possible in a community like Colchester. "I love Colchester," he said, smiling.

After working with a client on one matter like a will, Kearney said often times he will see that person again for a totally unrelated issue. "It builds and it builds and it builds," he said about his relationships with clients.

But even if a client is a newbie, Kearney said "I give them every courtesy as if they've met me before."

Kearney's office is located at 35 Hayward Ave. For more information call him at 860-531-3250.



Attorney Tim Kearney opened his law office in December of 2009 in the Skyview Realty Building on Hayward Avenue. He specializes in real estate law, but also handles other matters.

Obituaries

Colchester

O'Neil Bouchard

O'Neil Bouchard, 76, of Colchester, beloved husband of Lena (Deschenes) Bouchard, passed away Wednesday, May 5, at the Yale-New Haven Hospital. Born July 22, 1933, in Baker Brook, NB, Canada, he was a son of the late Alphe and Alphaena (Chasse) Bouchard.

Early on, Mr. Bouchard worked for 10 years for the Canadian Railroad as a track layer. After moving to Connecticut, he worked for Cellu Tissue Corp. in East Hartford for 32 years before retiring as supervisor in 1996. Mr. Bouchard was a communicant of St. Andrew Church in Colchester and was a member of the Knights of Columbus.

In addition to his loving wife of 53 years, he is survived by three children, Mario and Nancy Bouchard of Michigan, Michael and Krystyna Bouchard of Bristol and Liza and Keith Anderson of Rocky Hill; a son-in-law, Richard Squires of Colchester; nine grandchildren, Dawn Utz, Brendon Reed, Kim, Dayna, Kamil, Eric and Anna Bouchard and Emily and Jared Anderson; three great-grandchildren, Zachary Utz, Caleb Reed and Keegan Utz, four sisters, Therese Blanchette, Pierrette Collins and Rina Bouchard, all of Edmunston, NB, Canada, and Nicole Corriveau of Claire, NB, Canada; five brothers, Bertrand and Rheal, both of Bristol, Jean Louis of Colchester, NY, Gerald of Bake Brook, NB, Canada, and Reno of Edmunston, NB, Canada; and numerous extended family members and friends.

He was predeceased by his daughter, Micheline Squires, on March 29.

The memorial liturgy was celebrated Monday, May 10, at St. Andrew Church, 128 Norwich Ave., Colchester. Burial followed in the New St. Andrew Cemetery. There were no calling hours.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Colchester-Hayward Vol. Fire Co., 18-54 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Beverly Ann Davis

Beverly Ann Davis, 76, of Colchester, beloved wife of Robert, died Thursday, May 6, surrounded by her loving family. Born May 1, 1934, in New London, she was the daughter of the late Wallace and Elsie (Sorrell) Maynard.

Mrs. Davis was a longtime member of the American Legion Post 197 Auxiliary in Marlborough, and had served as vice president, treasurer and secretary. Bev enjoyed volunteering at, visiting with and crocheting numerous blankets for the patients at Harrington Court GHC Center in Colchester over the years. She will be most lovingly remembered for her warm smile, happy demeanor and beautiful silver hair.

In addition to her loving husband of 47 years, she is survived by four children, Raymond Shafer and his wife, Debra of Scotland, Debra Oscar of Willimantic, Susan Raczewski of Colchester and Robert Davis, Jr. of Riverside, CA; 11 grandchildren; her brother, Everett Maynard, Sr. of East Hampton; and numerous great grandchildren, extended family members and friends.

She was predeceased by two daughters, Katherine Davis and Patricia Jacoby; and a grandson, Andrew Shafer.

Friends called Monday, May 10, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. The funeral service was observed Tuesday, May 11, at the funeral home with the Rev. Dr. Cal Lord, officiating. Interment followed in the Linwood Cemetery, Colchester.

Donations in her memory may be made to Middlesex Hospital Hospice, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Mary LePard Bloomquist

Mary LePard Bloomquist, wife of the late Milton Bloomquist, formerly of Elizabeth Road, Portland, passed away Monday, May 10, at the Cobalt Lodge.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete and will be announced by the Portland Memorial Funeral Home 231 Main St., Portland.

Hebron

Cynthia J. Bass

Cynthia J. Bass of Hebron passed away peacefully at home Tuesday, May 4, with family at her side. She was born June 22, 1959, to Katherine Connelly and the late John Connelly.

Cynthia grew up in Bethlehem and graduated from Nonnewaug High School in Woodbury, CT. She then attended Naugatuck Community College and continued her education at the Bridgeport Hospital School of Nursing. She became a registered nurse in 1980 and went on to work at Bristol Hospital from 1982-1991. Her family moved to Hebron in 1991 and Cynthia worked at Windham Community Hospital from 1992 until 2009. She was a loving mother and a compassionate nurse who will be truly missed by all her family and friends.

She is survived by her loving husband of 20 years, Robert Bass II, and her three children, Robert, Deborah, and Patrick as well as her mother Katherine Connelly and four siblings: Joanne Connelly, Jeanne Infante, David Connelly and Jack Connelly.

At Cynthia's request there are no funeral services or calling hour. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Take a Swing at Cancer, Inc. Information can be found at www.takeaswing.org.

Colchester

Stephen Stroich

Stephen "Butch" Stroich, 93, of Colchester, widower of the late Kathy (Bertelsen) Stroich, passed away Friday morning, May 7, at the Middlesex Hospital Hospice in Middletown. Born Jan. 30, 1917 in Taylorton, Saskatchewan, Canada, he was a son of the late Stephan and Anna (Puhach) Stroich.

In 1940, he moved to Colchester and enlisted in the Army Air Corps in September of 1942, proudly serving during World War II until his honorable discharge in March of 1946 at the rank of sergeant.

On July 9, 1951, he and Kathy were married in Colchester and they shared nearly 51 years of marriage before she predeceased him on June 22, 2002. Mr. Stroich was a professional driver for the former Schuster's Express in Colchester and was a member of Teamsters Local 493. He was a member of the Adler-Boluck Post 6990 VFW in Colchester. He enjoyed various hobbies including leather working and working with stained glass. He and his wife were both life members of the National Rifle Association.

He leaves his sister, Olga Stroich of Hartford, his special grandniece, Heidi Palmes and her husband, Duane, of Colchester; two nephews, Paul M. Stroich, Jr. and wife, Georgia of Tuscon, AZ, and Paul W. Stroich and wife, Donna of Clinton, NY; and numerous other extended family members and friends including his special canine friend, Suzy.

In addition to his wife, he was predeceased by four brothers, two sisters and his special canine friend, Cody.

Graveside services will be observed at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 15, at the Linwood Cemetery, Colchester. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association, 279 New Britain Ave., Suite 5, Kensington 06037. In addition, the family would like to express their thanks to those at Harrington Court GHC Center in Colchester, Companions and Homemakers and Middlesex Hospice.

Care of arrangements has been entrusted to the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester. For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.



Amston

Iva June Watkins

Iva June (Whitney) Watkins, 90, of Manchester, formerly of Amston, the beloved wife of R. Bruce Watkins, passed away Sunday, May 9, at Fox Hill Nursing Home in Rockville. She was born Nov. 11, 1919, to Ernest and Elizabeth Whitney in Melrose, FL, where she was raised with her four sisters and brother.

She graduated from Melrose High School in 1938, where she played basketball. Each summer she traveled with her family to Camp Bethel in Haddam, where she had many happy times with family and friends, and where she also met the love of her life. She was baptized in the Connecticut River at Camp Bethel when she was 16. She attended business school in Orlando, FL, and then did secretarial work at the Univ. of Florida before moving to New Haven.

On July 18, 1943, she married Bruce, and just five weeks later he left to serve in the U.S. Marines during World War II. She returned to New Haven to work in the personnel department of the Winchester Repeating Arms Company, and to wait and pray for his safe return. It was two long years before they had "the reunion of a lifetime" and then settled in Manchester, where they raised their four children and attended South United Methodist Church. They passed on their love of Camp Bethel and their faith in God to their children. June and Bruce later lived in Amston for over 20 years and attended the Gilead Congregational Church, then moved back to Manchester in 2003.

June loved her family and enjoyed cooking for them. She was especially known for her wonderful rhubarb pies and succotash. She enjoyed many summers at the Cape, visits to her family in Florida and a special trip to Europe.

Iva June is survived by her children and their spouses, R. Lee Watkins and his wife Mary, Sue (Watkins) Donnelly and her husband Michael, Ralph Bruce Watkins, and David E. Watkins and his wife Nancy. She is also survived by her grandchildren, Jason, Adam, Lauren, Hannah, Benjamin, and Rachel; her great-granddaughter, McKenzie; her sister, Ernestine Kyman; and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her sisters, Catherine, Marian, and Dorothy; and her brother Andrew.

Calling hours will be held at the Watkins Funeral Home, 142 East Center St., Manchester, today, Friday, May 14, beginning at 6 p.m., followed by a memorial service at 7:30 p.m. led by Rev. Denise Esslinger of the Gilead Congregational Church. A private burial will be held at the convenience of the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Camp Bethel Association (c/o Robin Noble-Zolin, 253 W. 72nd St., Apt. 1201, New York, NY 10023).

For directions to the funeral home or to sign the online guestbook, go to www.holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

East Hampton

Melissa E. Emerson

Melissa E. Emerson, 85, of East Hampton, beloved wife of Donald Emerson died Saturday, May 8, at her home. Born March 19, 1925, in Hebron, she was the daughter of the late Benjamin and Dora (Scranton) Jones Sr. She had worked as a machine operator at the Brownell Co. in East Haddam for many years. She was a member of the Red Hat Society in East Hampton.

Besides her husband she is survived by her two sons, Gary Mund and his wife Deborah of Marlborough, Randall Mund and his wife Kathy of Hebron; three brothers, Kenneth Jones of Portland, Benjamin Jones Jr. of East Hampton, Robert Jones of Colchester; two sisters Ruth Flemke of East Hampton, Margaret Blake of East Haddam; four grandchildren Kimberly, Kristie, Matthew, Darcy; four great-grandchildren Kelly, Tyler, Shannon and Skyla.

She was predeceased by a brother, Sidney and two sisters, Edith and Betty.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, May 11, in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, with Rev. Robert Faulhaber of the Marlborough Congregational Church officiating. Burial will follow in Lakeview Cemetery. Friends called at the funeral home on Tuesday morning before the service.

To leave online condolences, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Marlborough

Lija Inese Briga

Lija Inese Briga, 22, of Marlborough, passed away unexpectedly at home on Sunday morning, May 9. Born in Ravenna, OH, on Sept. 27, 1987, she was the daughter of Janis Inesis and Mary Ellen (Ethington) Briga of Marlborough.

Lija was a 2005 graduate of RHAM High School in Hebron. She was completing the requirements for her bachelor's degree in Business from Eastern Connecticut State University. Having completed the curriculum requirements, she was scheduled to graduate at the end of this semester. Lija held an avid love of wildlife, nature and music.

In addition to her parents, she is survived by a brother, Andris Janis Briga of Marlborough; her maternal grandmother, Norma Ethington of Toledo, OH; her paternal grandmother, Irene Briga of East Haddam; and many extended family members and friends.

Friends called Thursday, May 13, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. People are invited to gather at the funeral home 10:30 a.m. today, Friday, May 14, before an 11 a.m. memorial service conducted by her godfather, Pastor Rob Rebensal.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory may be made to the animal charity of one's choice.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Colchester

Constance Bergeron

Constance Rucci (DeRoma) Bergeron, beloved wife of Roger Bergeron of Colchester, passed away Saturday, Jan. 9. Connie was born in Sepino, Italy, daughter of John and Angela Maria Vallera Rucci. She was a resident of East Hartford for many years.

Prior to her retirement, she was employed by G. Fox and Company and subsequently by Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. She was an excellent seamstress and cook and known for her quick wit. She loved baking cookies and sweets for her family, friends and neighbors. Connie also always enjoyed a friendly game of cards.

Survivors include her husband of 32 years, Roger Bergeron, her son Nicholas DeRoma and his wife, Sandra DeRoma, her daughter Rosemary Karp and her husband, Daniel Karp, her granddaughters Laura Moore and Debra LaBelle and four great grandchildren.

A memorial service for extended family and friends will be held Saturday, May 15. Visitation hours will be from 9-11 a.m. at the Belmont-Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester. Interment of her ashes will immediately follow at the Mount Saint Benedict Cemetery, 1 Cottage Grove Rd., Bloomfield. Thereafter, a reception will be held for family and friends at a nearby restaurant.

Colchester

Catherine Korostek

Catherine "Kittie" Korostek, 89, wife of the late Joseph Korostek of Colchester, passed away Monday, May 10, in New London. She was born on January 16, 1921 in Columbia, daughter of Nicholas and Lena Wilke Klemark.

Kittie loved gardening and bowling, and most of her life she worked as a seamstress. She was a member of the Colchester Hayward Fire Department women's auxiliary and a very active member of St. Mark Ukrainian Church.

She leaves her son, Joseph M. and wife Jo Ann Korostek of Thompson; her special friend, Annie Neilson; and several nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by four brothers, Stephen, Michael, Fred and John Klemark; and was also predeceased by four sisters, Anna Poplaski, Mary Zimmerman, Sophia and Helen Klemark.

A Service of Divine Liturgy was held Thursday, May 13, at St. Mary's Ukrainian Church on Linwood Avenue, Colchester. Burial followed in Old St. Mary's Cemetery. Visitation was Wednesday, May 12, with a Panahyda prayer service at the Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester.

Donations may be made to her church or to the Colchester Hayward Fire Department in her memory.

Colchester

Betty Berman

Betty Berman, 93, wife of the late Jack Berman, formerly of Colchester, passed away Tuesday, May 11, in Evanston, IL. She was born Nov. 21, 1916, in Montreal, Canada, daughter of Abraham and Rose Kladosky Chervin.

She is survived by her son, Carl Berman; two daughters, Laurie Lonicki and Audrey Johnson; a brother, Alex Chervin; and two grandchildren.

Funeral service will be held Monday, May 17, at 11 a.m., at the Congregation of Ahavath Achim Synagogue in Colchester. Burial to follow in Ahavath Achim Cemetery.

Belmont/Sabrowski Funeral Home, 144 South Main St., Colchester, is in care of arrangements.

Portland

Mary LePard Bloomquist

Mary LePard Bloomquist, wife of the late Milton Bloomquist, formerly of Elizabeth Road, Portland, passed away peacefully in her sleep Monday, May 10, at the Cobalt Lodge. She was 98 years old. Born Oct. 16, 1911, in New York City, she had been a resident of the Cobalt Lodge for the past seven years.

She was a member of the Zion Lutheran Church for over 70 years and had been an active member of the Ladies Guild where she enjoyed making quilts. She was a former member of the local chapter of AARP and a member of the Portland Senior Center. She was a caregiver, not only to her family, but to her many friends. She loved to play cards and entertain her many friends on Saturday evenings.

She leaves three children, Charles Bloomquist of Portland, Ruth Ann Chong of Honolulu, HI, and Sue Ellen Horii and her husband Paul of Sammamish, WA. She was predeceased by her daughter, Mary Jane Bloomquist Helveston.

She also is survived by her 10 grandchildren, William Bloomquist, Karen Bloomquist, Douglas Bloomquist, Robert “Skip” Wagner, Kimberly Fisberg, Jackie Gotta, Gidget Matulis, Sunway Chong, Tara Horii, Brent Horii; 12 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

The family would like to thank the staff and administration at Cobalt Lodge for their loving care and devotion to our mother and grandmother, also to the staff at the Hospice Unit of Middlesex Hospital.

Funeral services will be held Saturday, May 15, at 11 a.m., in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. The Rev. Maureen Hawksley will officiate. Burial will follow in the family plot in the Swedish Cemetery. Family and friends may call at the funeral home Saturday from 10-11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Recreation Department of Cobalt Lodge, Route 151, Cobalt, CT 06414 or to the Hospice Unit at Middlesex Hospital, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

For directions, or to leave an expression of sympathy, visit www.portlandmemorialfh.net.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

There's nothing quite like spring in New England. There's never a predictable, steady climb of temperatures; they can rise and fall at the drop of the hat. And temps did a whole lot of the latter during the past week.

The cold weather was ushered in last Saturday – and it was ushered in with a ton of wind. I was at Citi Field Saturday for a game between the Mets and Giants, and it was just incredibly windy. Throughout the game, various napkins and plastic bags would come pouring onto the field from the upper decks. Not thrown down by angry fans, mind you (angry baseball fans tend to throw worse things than napkins), but simply hurled down by the wind.

Walking around in between innings and after the game was no picnic either, with wind constantly blowing dirt in your face, and you sometimes having to hold onto your baseball cap for dear life, lest it be, quite literally, gone with the wind. All in all, it was the windiest weather I've ever encountered in all my years of going to Shea Stadium and now Citi Field.

But while it was windy, at least it wasn't cold. By the time I got back to Connecticut that night, though, there was a decided chill in the air, one that didn't seem to go away on Sunday. (The wind opted to stick around too, unfortunately.)

The cool weather stayed in place for the work week too. While skies were sunny Monday and Tuesday, temperatures were pretty much stuck in the upper 50s and very low 60s, and at night it was down into the 30s. And since I'm writing this Tuesday, I don't know for sure, but the weather forecasters were calling for Wednesday to be rainy and just plain chilly, with *high* temperatures hovering around 45.

I got to thinking about it, and isn't it funny the difference a couple of months make? In mid-March, I think if it was sunny out and in the upper 50s/low 60s, most of us would be ecstatic. (We wouldn't be ecstatic about mid-40s and all-day rain, though; December, January and February are the only months of the year when weather like that *doesn't* suck, and that's only because you're thankful it isn't snow.) In the middle of May, though, we want something more. No one's asking for 90s, or even the 80s quite yet. I'd be happy with, for this time of year, low 70s or so.

Hopefully after this week I won't have to hear the words “and the forecast high is 45” for a long time.

* * *

The match-up involved two teams that aren't exactly hometown ones – the Oakland Athletics and the Tampa Bay Rays – so I'll forgive you if you haven't heard by now. But last Sunday, Oakland pitcher Dallas Braden

pitched a perfect game, becoming just the 19th pitcher in baseball history – and that's a long time, folks – to throw a perfect game. (No-hitters are more common, and they're amazing feats too; but to last an entire nine innings allowing zero hits and issuing zero walks....well, that's just very rare.)

Unless you're a relocated West Coast-er, chances are you don't know too much about the A's. But you may have heard the name Dallas Braden before. Braden's the guy who mouthed off at Yankees star Alex Rodriguez a few weeks back for running across the pitcher's mound in the middle of an inning. Supposedly there's an unwritten rule (one that I'd never heard before, and I'm a pretty big baseball fan, as longtime readers may have surmised by now) that you don't do that in a game. Braden took offense, and started yelling at A-Rod.

The feud continued after the game, with each player complaining about the other's actions. The two didn't confront each other personally, of course; as is the case with most of these sports feuds, A-Rod hurled rejoinders about Braden to reporters, who eagerly ate them up. Braden did likewise. (I've always loved the role of baseball reporters in these situations; instantly, these grown men and women are reduced to middle school students, basically running back and forth between locker rooms going, “Ooooooh, did you hear what Alex said about you?”)

A-Rod eventually grew weary of the media's goading him on, and said he was done talking about it, not wanting to extend what he said was Braden's 15 minutes of fame. Of course, by going out and throwing a perfect game, Braden's ensured his fame lasts a lot longer than 15 minutes. True, not every one of the 18 other pitchers who've tossed perfection are Hall of Famers (i.e., Dennis Martinez and Kenny Rogers), but think about it: Major League Baseball has been around for well over 100 years, and there have been only 19 perfect games thrown. It's truly one of the rarest of accomplishments.

Oh, and one more thing: Braden's grandmother, of all people, got in the last word in the whole A-Rod/Braden mess. Peggy Lindsay was at the game to see her grandson (having raised Braden since he was in high school, after his mother died after suffering from melanoma) and was interviewed by the media afterward. She was quoted by a *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter as saying, “Stick it, A-Rod!”

Spoken like a proud – if slightly feisty – grandmother.

* * *

See you next week.