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With three already under his belt, Portland native Brian Vibberts will be going for his fourth Grammy this weekend at the 54th annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles. Vibberts, a mix engineer for some of the biggest names in the music industry, was nominated in the Best Jazz Instrumental Album category for the album *Forever* by Corea, Clarke and White.

Portland Native Making Sweet Music

by Joshua Anusewicz

When Brian Vibberts was at Portland High School, his father, Brian Sr., recalls a guidance counselor asking his son what he hoped to do for a career.

His son said he wanted to get into music. “They said, ‘you won’t make it,’” Brian Sr. remembers.

A degree from Berklee, years of working with some of the greatest recording artists of the past 40 years, and three Grammy Awards later, it’s safe to say that Brian Vibberts has made it. And this Sunday, at the 54th annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, Vibberts will be going for another Grammy – a distinction that he said he “still hasn’t gotten used to.”

“It’s been a surprise every time,” Vibberts said. “I know how difficult it is just to get nominated. My main goal was always to win a Grammy, and it’s just been a dream come true.”

Those dreams began at Portland High School, where he graduated in 1986. As a member of the school band, Vibberts jumped at an opportunity to join an extended learning program at the school that allowed him to record two songs in a professional studio. It was there that he realized he was more interested in “what was going on behind the glass,” he remembered.

With his interest sparked, Vibberts attended Berklee School of Music in Boston, graduating in 1991. From there, he quickly worked his way up the ladder at some of the biggest recording studios in New York – Right Track Recording, The Hit Factory, and Sony Music Studios. Vibberts said he started out in entry level positions, doing whatever he had to break in; by the time he worked at Sony, he was a staff engineer

working with some of the biggest names in the business, all before he turned 30.

The list of artists he’s worked with is eye-popping: Mariah Carey, Elton John, Green Day, Aerosmith, Jay-Z, Paul McCartney and Dave Matthews Band. He’s also worked on hit songs like “One Sweet Day” by Mariah Carey and Boyz II Men, one of the biggest singles of all-time, and Billy Joel’s “River of Dreams,” which, coincidentally, had a music video that was filmed in Portland.

“I had nothing to do with that, I swear,” Vibberts said, laughing.

What Vibberts does with the artists is multifaceted; he works throughout all aspects of the engineering and production process of an album, but works mostly in recording and mixing the tracks. Vibberts will meet with the artist and plan out the recording studio layout to optimize the sounds of certain instruments or voices, also creating a “creative atmosphere” for the artist. He will then arrange the sounds to create a “soundscape,” drawing out the lyrics to enhance the mood and emotions of the song.

“I want the listener to listen and be touched,” Vibberts said. “If they are, I’ve done it the right way. They’ve experienced the true meaning of the song.”

Vibberts said that working so close to the artists also gives him a unique perspective of who they really are. “I see the true person, in their work place,” he added. “Almost all of them are very pleasant.”

After nine years in New York, Vibberts took
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Mapleleaf Farm Keeping Up with the Times

by Geeta Schrayter

Change is inevitable and Ned Ellis knows this. As the owner of Mapleleaf Farm in Hebron, he knows firsthand running a dairy farm means a lot more than sitting on a bucket and milking a cow.

Ellis is constantly working to keep up with technology, maintain his barns, satisfy consumer desires, ensure his cows are happy and work towards preserving the future of farming.

“It’s constant change,” he says.

In 2011, that mentality brought the installation of solar panels and the remodeling of one of the barns to improve comfort and efficiency – as well as an award recognizing the farm for “how you treat your animals and how you treat your business,” Ellis explains.

The farm was selected as the 2011 New England Green Pastures Dairy Farm award winner from Connecticut, recognition given yearly to an “outstanding dairy farm from each of the

six New England States for total management (both production and financial) of the operating farm,” according to the website for the New England Green Pastures Program.

“We try to keep up with technology,” says Ellis, mentioning they were one of the first farms to have solar panels installed to power a barn, which went online early last autumn.

“It’s amazing – even on a cloudy day it still makes electricity,” he says, explaining the panels produced just under 30 kilowatts per unit, or “just about 40 percent of our needs on the farm.”

“I think we might be the first farm in Connecticut that’s used it strictly for the barn,” he says, adding it was “just great, because it’s just a new way of looking at getting more efficient in how you run your business.”

Ellis adds the farm had already taken numerous steps to increase efficiency around the

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At Mapleleaf Farm in Hebron, owner Ned Ellis is continually altering aspects of the farm to stay ahead in a changing industry.



Changes to increase cow comfort such as providing sand beds and improved ventilation in the barns are considered paramount, since cows don't milk as well when they're uncomfortable. Additionally, changes to improve efficiency around the farm, like the use of solar panels to help power one of the barns, are considered important in keeping up with the times.

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property, including having an energy audit done and refurbishing one of the barns so it had better lighting and improved ventilation.

Additionally, the stalls were made longer so the cows wouldn't hit their heads – “when they get up, they lunge forward” – and the cows were provided with sand beds, which are considered the most comfortable.

“Cow comfort is extremely important. If the cows aren't comfortable, they don't milk as well,” says Ellis, later adding, “you can't take milk from a cow, they've got to give it to you.”

Although Mapleleaf Farm is considered on the smaller side of medium with about 450 cows – approximately 230 of which are currently being milked – the amount of milk presently given is no small number: around 14,000 gallons a day.

Ellis says efficiency initiatives had been taken all over the farm “before the government even had programs to pay for them, because it made sense [to do them].”

For example, before the milk goes into the bulk milk tank, it goes through a system where it's pumped into a plate cooler “that's got water on one side and the milk on the other,” says Ellis. Variable speed milk pumps are used to control the rate the milk flows through the cooler, and allow for it to be cooled from 101 degrees down to 70, and both tools save on energy use.

A heat reclaimer is also utilized. The milk needs to be cooled to 38 degrees, Ellis says. The reclaimer takes the dispelled heat from the milk and uses it to preheat the water in their furnace.

“Again, you try and do everything you can to be as efficient as possible – we're doing that,” says Ellis, adding, “you try to make renovations as you go – things are constantly changing.”

And it's not just structurally. Technology has allowed for changes in the way cows are bred, allowing for specific qualities such as sound udders and feet – and even the sex – to be pre-selected.

Information on the cows is now kept on computers, whereas Ellis, whose great-grandfather

purchased the original piece of land where the farm is located, remembers when it was all handwritten.

“Before, we didn't have cows' [information] on computers – we used to have all the records by hand. Now you just push a button... I don't know how we ever did it without computers,” he jokes.

Changes have also been made in the way milk is provided to consumers. In response to the belief people would like a high-quality, locally produced product, Ellis got together with five other Connecticut farms to create The Farmer's Cow.

“We felt that if we had a local product – and we produced good local produce and people knew where it came from, they would support it,” Ellis says.

He explains there is a wide range of milk on the market quality-wise. Federal standards state raw bacteria count for milk needs to be below 50,000, but to have a high quality product the number should be below 10,000. Milk from The Farmer's Cow is usually between 2 and 5,000.

Additionally, standards state somatic cell count has to be less than 750,000, but quality milk should be below 250,000 – which is what those at The Farmer's Cow aim for.

“It's like in school,” Ellis says. “You get an A+ or a D-, everybody passes, right? Same with milk.”

He goes on to say when The Farmer's Cow first got started, the majority of farmers were using the artificial growth hormone rBST, but the group “felt if we stopped doing that, people would want to buy our milk even more – so we did.”

“We felt that if we treated our cows right and let people know we treated them right” it would prove beneficial, Ellis says.

“We try to do what the consumer would want” and change accordingly, he says. “You always try to be one step ahead of everyone else... what can you do next?”

But there's one area where Ellis is working to prevent change instead of go with it – land development.

The development rights to about 400 of the



more than 600 acres constituting Mapleleaf Farm belong to the state, Ellis explains, meaning “I own the land but I can never put houses on it... I believe in that,” he says.

“I believe that God gave us this land to take care of and we've got to be good stewards of it,” he says. “The food's got to come from somewhere.”

He continues on to say that land would always be there, and it's some of the most beautiful in town.

“When people go by and say ‘we appreciate what you do and how you've kept the land,’ it's a very satisfying thing,” Ellis says. “Something you can't put a dollar on.”

While Ellis isn't sure how long he'll continue farming — “How long can I farm? I don't know... I have a passion for it” – he knows his farm is set up well for the future, and is confident the industry will prevail through the

changes that already have, and will, take place.

“There is a future for us,” he says. “We've lost a lot of farms, but the farms that are remaining are very good.”

Ellis also says collaborative work between farmers would prove beneficial in the future.

“I think working together, if there's a way to do it, that'll cut costs,” he says. “If farmers could get together to buy things that'll also help.”

Although what changes the future will bring are unknown, Ellis says he's confident his farm will be able to maintain.

“I don't know what [the industry] is going to look like in the future,” he says, adding, “I think our farm is set up well for mostly any change that'll come forward. But I'm still making changes. You've always got to. If you're not changing, you're going backwards.”

And so far, the farm appears to be doing just the opposite.

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his talents to Los Angeles, where he was able to start his own venture, Spotlight 87 Entertainment. The company, which he runs with his fellow Berklee alum Alex Houton, does productions for signed and independent artists, along with artist development.

All of this incredible work has drawn praise from some of the biggest names in the industry, and, as stated above, has earned him three Grammy Awards as mix engineer. All of the awards were earned in the Best Jazz Instrumental Album category: in 2008 for *The New Crystal Silence* by Chick Corea and Gary Burton; in 2009 for *The Five Peace Band* by Chick Corea and John McLaughlin; and in 2011, he was awarded a Latin Grammy for *Forever* by Corea, Clarke and White.

This Grammy nomination – again for Best Jazz Instrumental Album – is also for *Forever*, which includes special guests Chaka Khan, Jean Luc Ponty and Bill Connors. Vibberts said that the Grammy will be awarded as part of a “pre-tecast” held before Sunday's award show.

(The ceremony can be viewed online at grammy.com.)

Vibberts said that although he has – literally – gone Hollywood, he still holds Portland close to his heart. His parents and most of his family and friends still reside in Portland, all of whom he tries to keep in touch with over the phone or on Facebook. And his parents, expectedly, are beaming with pride over how much their son has accomplished.

“His mother and I are very proud,” Brian Sr. said. “It's just amazing to me.” He mentioned that he ran a business when Vibberts was young, and feels that taught his son at a young age to work hard, stay grounded and be humble.

“We always knew he'd make it,” Brian Sr. added. “He always had the motivation.”

And as for his son's chances on Sunday? “Very hopeful,” Brian Sr. said. “Our fingers are crossed.”

For more information on Vibberts and his work, visit brianvibberts.com.

Hebron's Holy Family Pastor Adds Columbia Church to Duties

by Geeta Schrayter

The recent yoking of two local churches means parishioners at the Church of The Holy Family in Hebron are now sharing their pastor.

And Father Michael S. Smith is up to the challenge.

Smith, who defines yoking in a letter to the parish as "the pastoral care of two parishes entrusted to one pastor," has been pastor at Holy Family for the past 12 years. Now, he will also be pastor of the nearby St. Columba Church in Columbia, following the retirement of Father Daniel Cronin.

In a letter to both parishes from Father Michael R. Cote, Bishop of Norwich, Cote expressed appreciation for Cronin's work, and confidence in Smith's abilities.

"[Cronin] has truly gone above and beyond what was expected of him and now he should be allowed some well-deserved rest and a more leisurely schedule," Cote wrote.

To provide for the needs of parishioners of the churches, Cote explained the decision was made to appoint Smith as the pastor of both, calling him "a fine priest" and saying, "I am confident both communities will continue to thrive under his very capable leadership and ministry."

As pastor of both parishes, Smith said he looks forward to sharing the gifts he's received as pastor at Holy Family and "applying the gifts of the new community."

"I've been reflecting on the fact that I'm not losing" the foundation built as Holy Family's pastor, Smith said. Rather, he said, "it's like I'm gaining another family."

Since Cronin was St. Columba's pastor for 27 years, Smith said "it could be a slow adjustment," due to the fact that he'll be new to the parish and the two of them may have different styles of ministry.

"The transition is not easy from a spiritual and emotional level," he said, "so my goal is to do my best to minister and love the people of St. Columba while again respecting who they are and where they're coming from."

While certain activities may be combined to allow both "to work collaboratively" as a result of the yoking, "each parish maintains its own organizations and activities," Smith explained in his letter.

But the yoking does bring with it a change in Mass times. A new schedule was released by Smith on Feb. 6, and he explained The Restructuring Committee, which is made up of members from both parishes, "spent countless hours in order to come up with a plan that hopefully will be acceptable, and a plan that will serve both parishes well."

Effective Feb. 25, Mass at the Church of The Holy Family will take place Saturdays at 5 p.m. and Sundays at 9:30 a.m. Mass at St. Columba will be held Sunday at 8 and 11 a.m.

"I'm planning on making myself move pretty quickly" between the parishes, said Smith, noting St. Columba is only five miles from Holy Family.

"It's not that difficult," he said. "Between the 9:30 and 11 Mass will be the most difficult for time constraints."

Recognizing the times may not suffice for everyone, Smith wrote in a Feb. 6 letter to Holy Family, "please consider this as an opportunity to experience Mass at St. Columba and meeting new people as a way to deepen one's spiritual journey."

He continued on to say the schedule is not set in stone.

"If we see that this schedule causes unnecessary hardship or frustration to either parish we will meet again and try to resolve the issue to the best of our ability," he said.



Father Michael S. Smith, pastor of Church of the Holy Family, has now added St. Columba Church in Columbia to his resumé, thanks to the recent yoking of the two churches.

One of the challenges Smith said he expected would be the flexibility of people "to make their way from one parish to the other and feel they'll be welcome and accepted."

As a pastor, Smith said being pulled in different directions and having a more intense schedule with increased responsibilities would also be challenging, but he stressed his biggest challenge was around that sense of flexibility

and "uniting the two parishes into one community without taking away the gifts of each."

"It's working together so they don't lose their separate identity," he said, adding it's about being able to "go to the other [church] and have each community appreciate the gifts of one another..."

Smith's official installation is this Saturday, Feb. 11.

Budget the Focus at BOE, Tri-Board Meetings in East Hampton

by Joshua Anusewicz

It's that time of year again.

This week, the Board of Education was presented with a 2012-13 budget proposal by Superintendent of Schools Dr. Judith Golden, requesting \$27,238,340, which is up \$1,026,338, or 3.92 percent, from the current fiscal year. Golden also presented this proposed budget during a tri-board meeting on Tuesday, which included a presentation of the town's financial summary by the town's finance director Jeff Jylkka.

At the tri-board meeting, members of the Town Council, boards of finance and education, Jylkka and Interim Town Manager John Weichsel gathered to discuss the upcoming budget deliberations and to reiterate the importance of working within the town's means during a tough economic time. This point was hammered home by council Chairwoman Sue Weintraub, who opened the meeting by discussing how the boards had to "tighten our belts and do what is financially best for the community."

"There have been positive economic indicators over the past few months," Weintraub said. "But we must proceed with caution."

Weintraub also stated that although state and national numbers show an increase in job creation, East Hampton is still slightly above the national average in unemployment at 8.5 percent. The town has also seen an increase in residents utilizing the fuel assistance program and food bank, as well, she said.

Despite the daunting task, Weintraub remained optimistic.

"I feel that by working together, we can come up with a budget that fulfills the needs of the community, but does not overtax our citizens," she said.

Board of Finance Chairman Matt Walton echoed Weintraub's thoughts. "Our job as the Board of Finance is to make sure we're meeting the town's needs at the lowest possible number," he said.

The only hard number that has been presented thus far, however, is the proposed education budget. Before Golden gave her presentation, Board of Education member Carol Lane, who is the board's financial committee chair,

explained to the other elected officials the thought process that the education board went through when reaching its preliminary number.

"Our duty is to stay true to our vision, while also staying mindful of the present economic position [of the town]," Lane said. Given that the board's vision is to prepare and inspire students to become contributing members of the global society, Lane described the board's situation as being "stuck between a rock and a hard place."

With that in mind, both Lane and Golden described the proposed education budget as being "lean." Golden said that one of the biggest priorities for the board is to "preserve the quality of the school system" by not removing staff, supplies, or technology - but probably not adding any, either.

"We're not losing any ground," Golden said of keeping programs and services as is. "But we actually are, in some ways."

Other cost-reduction strategies Golden mentioned were not increasing funding for technology and the town providing its own special education programs, which has saved the town over \$1 million over recent years.

But one major downfall for this proposed budget will be the decrease in funding and grant money from the state and federal levels, which has provided the district with additional dollars for staff and programs over the past few years. The board has also seen considerable savings from negotiated teacher salary concessions over the past few years, but that will end this year, with 62 percent of the certified teachers receiving a 3 percent increase. (In the proposed budget, certified teacher salaries make up 50 percent of the total number.)

During both Monday's school board meeting and Tuesday's tri-board meeting, Golden also addressed two concerns she had heard during last year's budget deliberations. The first point she brought up was the cost of health insurance, a process she said was currently in negotiations. Some residents felt last year, when the 2011-12 budget was voted down at referendum the first time around, that more money should be cut from education spending - the largest portion of the town's budget. Although

an additional \$100,000 was cut from the education budget before it passed during the second referendum, the school district earned considerable savings in health insurance for its employees, more than making up for the \$100,000 cut.

But Golden reiterated this week that the process is out of the board's control. "The insurance companies look at our experience with them up until June [of that fiscal year]," Golden said. "Sometimes it goes down, sometimes it goes up." What the board has to work with, she said, is an estimate that the insurance company provides months in advance of the referendum.

"I obviously wish the companies were more cognizant of public service," she added on Wednesday.

Another point of contention last year was the administrators, both within the district office and the schools. There are currently 10 administrators in the district, a number that some residents feel is too high for a school district of East Hampton's size. (These administrators include Golden, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Kevin Reich, Director of Special Services and Pupil Personnel Laurie Gonzalez, four principals and three assistant principals.)

But Golden defended the number of administrators by comparing them with the number of students. For example, at Memorial School, Golden said that the two administrators are in charge of over 600 students, as well as overseeing faculty and staff. She added that for the past 10 years, the number of administrators has remained the same in the district, which now educates 1,958 students and has 318 employees.

Golden also provided a list of the amount of work the administrative support staff performs during the year, calling them "essential" for the betterment of the district.

This discussion drew the support of the school board on Monday night, including member Don Coolican, who told Golden she was "preaching to the choir."

At Tuesday's tri-board meeting, Jylkka also took the opportunity to provide the members of the different boards with a financial sum-

mary of the 2010-11 fiscal year. He announced that the town's fund balance was up \$267,247, or 6.5 percent, from the previous fiscal year. He added that since 2003, the town's general fund balance has increased by over \$2.8 million dollars.

For revenues, Jylkka said the town fell short by \$23,401 of its expected number. He said the primary reason was due to "lower than expected investment income, licenses, permits and fees." He also added that the tax collection rate for that year was 97.9 percent, which was lower than the 98.2 percent the town had budgeted for.

For expenditures, Jylkka said the town ended up with a positive variance of \$290,648, \$137,802 from the town operations budget and \$152,846 from the Board of Education.

The best news for the town came from its debt service, which Jylkka said decreased by \$1.44 million, or 16.3 percent, during the fiscal year. Jylkka said there are only 27 towns in the state that pay less debt per capita than East Hampton, and that the level of debt for the town hasn't been this low since the early 80s.

Jylkka also gave a preview of the numbers for the 2011-12 fiscal year. He stated that revenues are currently short by about \$100,000, but that expenditures were up by \$100,000. He said that he expects the estimated revenue to be reached, however.

Jylkka added that he does not expect an increase in state grant funds, which accounted for about 22 percent of revenues last year. But, he also said that the town's grand list is expected to go up considerably, adding almost \$400,000 in additional revenue.

At the end of the tri-board meeting, Weichsel announced that he was in the beginning stages of completing the town operations budget. He said each of the town's department heads had submitted a request to him and that he would be meeting with each of them soon to review the numbers.

Weichsel said he will present the proposed budget to the Board of Finance at a budget workshop on Saturday, March 10.

Youth Football Kicks Off in East Hampton

by Joshua Anusewicz

When East Hampton High School joined Vinal Technical High School in Middletown to form a co-op football team last year, it piqued an interest in the community about the possibility of forming a youth football program in town.

So when Frank D'Anna presented the idea to the town's residents, that is exactly what he focused on: creating a future for those who want to play football in East Hampton.

D'Anna is now president of the East Hampton Youth Football and Cheerleading Association, which will kick off its inaugural season this fall. The program will include boys and girls ages 7-14, and will play its home games at East Hampton Middle School.

The team, which will be called the Hawks, is a spin-off from its neighboring squad, the Portland Panthers. D'Anna said that prior to this year, children interested in playing football or cheerleading had to play for the Portland program. But over the past few years, D'Anna said many parents felt there were enough East Hampton children involved to form its own program.

"We wanted to give the kids the pride of playing for their own town," D'Anna said, adding that it makes travel easier for some of the parents.

But with a new high school program formed, D'Anna said it "sparked" a bigger interest in creating a "feeder program." D'Anna said that

in his case, his 10-year-old son expects to play high school football and this "could only help." D'Anna said that there are already plans to utilize a similar playbook as the high school team, known as the BellHawks, to help transition the youth players into the high school program.

BellHawks coach Joe Ceferatti "was ecstatic," D'Anna said of when he broke the news.

Some in Portland haven't been as ecstatic, however, concerned that their program might suffer from the lack of players. In a letter to the editor in a recent *Rivereast*, for example, Portland resident Jane Tozer, a grandmother of current and former players on the Portland squad, expressed concerns that "parental pettiness" caused the split, and added that "a lot of young people will suffer" if the teams cannot attain the number of players needed to meet competition requirements.

D'Anna said he has spoken with members of the Panthers and said there is currently "no problem between the two programs."

"We're not looking to hurt them," D'Anna said. "We just want to improve our high school program." He said the departure of East Hampton players shouldn't hurt the Portland program; if needed, D'Anna added, the Hawks would happily take Panthers players, however.

The football program will offer four divisions: A (ages 13-14), B (ages 11-12), C (ages 9-10) and Mighty Mites (ages 7-8), all of which will have maximum weight limits. The

cheerleading program will be broken up into the same divisions (with no weight restrictions, of course). Each player will be supplied with all of the equipment and uniforms necessary, except for an athletic supporter and cleats.

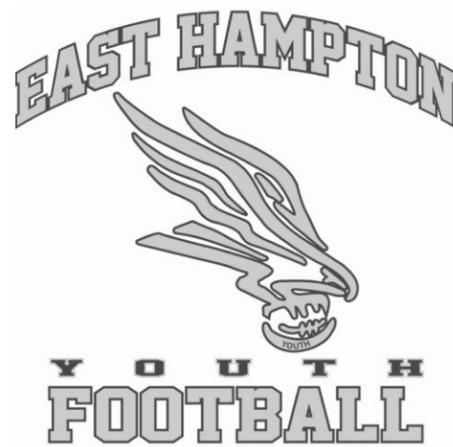
The team will compete in the Connecticut Youth Football League (CTYFL), which will include nearby programs like Glastonbury, Haddam/Killingworth and East Hartford. D'Anna said that the cheerleaders will also perform in competitions during the season.

D'Anna said that on Friday, Jan. 27, the program held its open house to unveil its uniforms and present the program to the community. He expected a good turnout, but was blown away when over 150 residents showed up. He said he expects at least 80 players to join the program, which he said will most likely fill the 14-player requirement for each team.

"The kids were all lined up, ready to get their uniforms," D'Anna said of the open house. "And the parents were just as excited. Most of them told me, 'It's about time.'"

To this point, D'Anna said the program has been run by the contributions of parents, residents and local businesses who have pledged to sponsor the team. He said that fundraisers will also be held to support the team, with the first being a pasta dinner on Saturday, Feb. 25, at the VFW Post Home.

D'Anna said that for those who are still interested in registering for the program, early



The new East Hampton Hawks youth football team is about to take flight. The inaugural season will bow this fall, playing home games at East Hampton Middle School.

registration goes through May 1. Registration forms and more information are available at the program's website, ehyouthfootball.org. Those who are interested in volunteering, coaching, donating or sponsoring can also visit the website, or contact D'Anna at ehyouthfootball@yahoo.com.



Maddox Howland, 6, of East Hampton, recently chaired a drive that collected books and pajamas – and money for more books and pajamas – for less fortunate children in the area.

East Hampton Kid Donates for Pajama Cause

Local 6-year-old Maddox Howland recently donated a slew of books, pajamas, and money to buy more books and pajamas, to two locations in Middletown – all to help children less fortunate.

The donations were made through the Pajama Program, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to provide new pajamas and new books to children in need across the nation and the world.

According to Maddox's mom, Traci, the idea for the donation started last fall, when she agreed to allow Jean Van Bourgondien, a graduate student at St. Joseph College, come and observe Maddox for five hours on two separate days. Van Bourgondien wants to become a special education teacher and Maddox is on the autism spectrum (PDD). The first day was just watching and interacting with Maddox and his brother Zackary, 4, doing various Sunday afternoon activities. Van Bourgondien told Traci she needed to set up an activity for the following Sunday.

Traci said her house is full of positive reinforcement charts for adaptive skills and daily routines – and "also happens to have more toys than the toy store." Traci said she explained to Van Bourgondien how she tries to encourage other charitable causes and involve Maddox and Zackary in them to help teach empathy for others and to help them realize "not everyone is as fortunate as they are." She also mentioned to Van Bourgondien how often times empathy

needs to be a learned skill for many – particularly for certain diagnoses on the autism spectrum.

Van Bourgondien then set out to find the perfect charitable fit for Maddox, Traci said, and the following Sunday she, Maddox and Zackary decorated a box for the Pajama Program and directed the family to the Pajama Program website, pajamaprogram.org.

Maddox was the chairman of the pajama/book drive. ("I wanted this to be 'his thing,'" Traci said.) Zackary helped sort the pajamas and books that Maddox gathered. My School Learning Center in East Hampton immediately climbed aboard to help one of its own kids, Traci said. Maddox also asked teachers at Memorial Elementary School if they wanted to participate in the program and 11 classroom teachers sent home a flyer with their students about Maddox's involvement in the Pajama Program.

Maddox collected the pajamas and books from some of the classrooms and also was able to put out a change jar at the school's book fair, held during the parent/teacher conferences. He collected \$17.14 from the jar, and an additional \$53 in check donations. In total he collected 41 new pajamas, 95 books, and the money raised will be used to buy pajamas and books for other Connecticut receiving locations.

Maddox and Traci delivered the pajamas and books on behalf of the Pajama Program to two locations in Middletown before Christmas.

East Hampton Man Arrested for Purse Snatching

by Joshua Anusewicz

Last Friday, Feb. 3, East Hampton Police arrested a local man who confessed to stealing the purse of an elderly woman at the Stop & Shop on West High Street.

John Paul "JP" Fournier, 23, of 45 Forest St., was arrested and charged with sixth-degree larceny and disorderly conduct for the incident, which took place on Jan. 15. According to Sgt. Garritt Kelly, Fournier was in custody on unrelated charges at the time of the arrest.

Kelly said the incident took place at around 1 p.m. on Jan. 15 in the Stop & Shop parking lot, where an 86-year-old woman was parked in a handicapped parking space. While she was loading her groceries, Kelly said Fournier stole the purse.

While Fournier was fleeing, Kelly said the woman was able to read the first three digits of the vehicle's license plate. Kelly said that the digits were sent out to police departments in the surrounding areas, and soon received a match from a similar incident that occurred in Glastonbury the next day, Jan. 16.

Kelly said that the Glastonbury incident was almost identical – an elderly woman had her purse stolen by Fournier in the parking lot of a Stop & Shop. Kelly said that the Stop & Shop in Glastonbury had surveillance footage that clearly showed the license plate of

Fournier's vehicle.

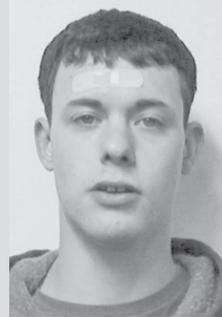
"We worked together and got it done," Kelly said of the combined effort of the East Hampton and Glastonbury police departments.

According to Kelly, the purse of the East Hampton woman contained only \$40-50 and various personal items, which Kelly said were dumped on the side of Route 66 in Marlborough. This included eye-glasses, credit cards and a driver's license, he said.

Kelly called this theft an "isolated incident" and that no other thefts have been reported recently in the area of Stop & Shop.

Fournier was arraigned at Middletown Superior Court and was held on \$25,000 bond. According to the state's judicial website, Fournier is no stranger to theft-related crimes; he currently has six pending charges that involve larceny or burglary, all occurring since September 2011.

Fournier is scheduled to appear in court on Thursday, March 1, at 10 a.m. at Middletown Superior Court.



John Paul Fournier

Police Chase Stretches from Marlborough to Norwich

by Katelyn Kelleher

A Hebron man attempted to stab at police after a chase down Route 2 from Marlborough to Norwich last Thursday, Feb. 2, State Police said.

State troopers pursued Mario Braga, 45, of 232 West Main St., after observing him driving a pick-up truck erratically on Route 2 East near exit 13 in Marlborough. State Police also received several 911 calls alerting them of the driver.

Police attempted to stop Braga by depositing stop sticks. Braga drove over the sticks and continued on – albeit with two damaged tires, police said.

State troopers and Norwich Police eventually boxed Braga in near exit 27 in Norwich, whereupon he continued to attempt to drive away, spinning the tires. Braga then pulled out a knife and "tried to stab at" the troopers as

they pulled him out of the truck, police said. Braga was taken into custody after a struggle ensued, police added.

Police determined Braga had been driving under the influence and was in possession of narcotics.

Braga's charges include DUI, reckless driving, first-degree reckless endangerment, second-degree breach of peace, possession of weapons in a motor vehicle, possession of narcotics, two counts of attempting to commit assault to public safety/EMT/health personnel, resisting or interfering with an officer, failure to drive in the proper lane, striking a traffic officer with a motor vehicle and running from police.

Braga's bond was set at \$200,000 and he was due to appear in court on Feb. 3 in Norwich.

Andover Selectmen Continue Work on Budget

by Geeta Schrayter

Andover's selectmen continued to work on their budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year at a special meeting on Feb. 6, approving numbers First Selectman Bob Burbank called "extra conservative."

Overall, the largest increases mentioned were due to rising fuel costs and increases in health insurance.

There are "additional demands from the state for revenues from the town," said Burbank on Tuesday. "One of the problems that we have with the health insurance is the fact that the federal government has put additional requirements on the health insurance companies," he said, adding the "additional things they have to do under Obamacare" are being passed on to the public to offset costs.

Health insurance increased from \$128,520 to \$141,696, a rise Board of Finance Chairwoman Georgette Conrad called "quite a jump." Retirement benefits increased from \$41,070 to \$47,810.

Decreases in other employee benefit areas helped compensate for some of the insurance increase, but the decreases aren't set in stone, as they're dependent upon the extension of the payroll tax cuts. Right now, Conrad explained, the cuts are only good until March 1.

As of now, Social Security is listed as decreasing from \$43,068 to \$34,368, and Medicare drops \$2,067 to \$8,034. Unemployment also dropped slightly, down \$792 from \$12,432, bringing the total cost of employee benefits to \$259,846 – a difference over last year of \$9,718.

But "if they don't pass [the tax cuts] for the year," those line items will increase, Conrad

said.

Burbank said Tuesday fuel was another area with increases that couldn't be helped.

"You have to heat the buildings and you have to drive the vehicles and the buses," he said. "These are things that we have no control over."

Conrad said Wednesday the fire department had presented their budget at a meeting the night before, with a 20 percent increase over the prior year.

The fire department "burns 4,500 gallons a year in fuel, and so they had to factor in \$3.50 a gallon," she said.

Last year, Burbank said fuel prices had been locked in around \$2.

Another major increase was factored in for the purchase of replacement gear.

"Whoever has [protective] gear older than 10 years cannot go into a burning building," said Conrad, adding the department had previously gone to the Capital Improvement Plan fund to replace their gear.

But she said the board decided "it should be a part of their budget."

The fire department's budget increased from \$85,639.76 to \$114,897.89.

At Monday's meeting, the board examined line items for areas such as the assessor's office, elections, registrar's office and senior transportation. An addition of \$400 over last year was made to the assessor's office, bringing the total to \$68,549.13. Elections increased to \$18,500 from \$17,800, and the registrar's office saw an increase of \$96.18.

Senior transportation remained close to the

previous year at \$9,203. A decrease of \$1,400 in fuel funding for Dial-A-Ride and the removal of funding for the Dial-A-Ride mobile phone offset the 2 percent salary increase for drivers and dispatch of \$1,503.

Salary increases of 2 percent were made in various departments throughout town, and had been discussed at previous budget workshops. The first selectman's salary increased \$918 to \$46,818. The salaries of the other selectmen increased \$82 to \$4,162 each, and the board clerk went from \$900 to \$1,400.

The treasurer's salary increased \$314.43 to \$16,035.69, wages for the clerk at the building department increased \$545.50, and wages at the transfer station went up \$471 to \$23,995.

No final numbers are available yet, as budgets from RHAM, Andover Elementary School and a few remaining departments have yet to be received. And even when they are, as Burbank asserted, it "isn't actually finalized until you go through all the public hearings... even in the referendum vote, certain things can be lowered," he said.

But Conrad was already able to say "it's not going to be an easy budget year."

She explained the mill rate is going to increase from the current year's rate of 27.6, considering the Grand List went down from \$280 million to \$260 million.

"That's an automatic 2.5 percent increase in the mill rate without even including that budget – that's just maintaining expenses we have to fund," she said.

She went on to say the state is providing less

support, which will further increase the amount the town has to bring in.

Departments in town are "trying as hard as they can to keep expenses down," she said, but echoed Burbank's earlier sentiments when she added, "there are some things that we have no control over."

There hasn't been a mill rate increase in the past four years, "which probably didn't help us any," said Conrad.

"We might have been able to deflect some of this by raising it a little bit, but we wanted to make sure people weren't paying too much in taxes," she said. "That's still our goal."

"It's kind of bleak," she added. "We kind of knew assessments would go down," but the hope was new houses being built would counteract some of the decrease.

"A \$20 million drop in the grand list is a big bite," Conrad said.

But just how much of an increase there will be in the budget, as well as the mill rate and the amount of taxes residents will have to pay, has yet to be determined, as the process still has a way to go before its completion. The RHAM budget isn't expected to be ready until the end of the month, and Burbank explained there are still town budgets that need to go before the Board of Finance, after which a public hearing has to be held. Then, the budget will return to the Board of Finance to be finalized as well as a town meeting where the selectmen will vote to send it to referendum.

Burbank said the process isn't likely to be finalized until the middle of March.

Andover School Board Reduces Kindergarten Sessions

by Geeta Schrayter

Due to an expected drop in enrollment, the Andover Board of Education decided Wednesday to reduce the number of kindergarten sessions for the 2012-13 school year.

The reduction from three sessions to two comes after a decision in January to wait and see if there was an increase in the number of children registered, prior to making a call on class reduction.

At the time, 19 students had been registered for the upcoming year, compared to 35 who are currently in kindergarten. At the meeting, Superintendent of Schools Andrew Maneggia shared that number had increased to 21, meaning there would be seven students in each class if the number of sessions were to remain as is.

"In all consciousness, as a superintendent, I don't think – I know I can't – recommend classes of seven students in each class," he said. "If we were in the perfect world we would do

something like this, but in the economic climate we're in and the situation we're facing – I think you as the board have to think long and hard about that."

He went on to say the board had the final decision "but as superintendent, I can't recommend three sections."

Even with the reduction, Maneggia added, if there were "late kindergarten registrations, we would still have plenty of room to absorb them."

Board members agreed with his position. "I think all the research I did would say we're very fortunate with the class sizes that we have now, and [we] always have been – it wouldn't help us to go to seven, seven and seven. It would only help the students to keep it at 10 or 11," said Board of Education Chairman Jay Linddy.

"I agree with you," member Christina Tamburro said later. "I think there's a point where we sort of drop below critical mass."

"Our number one priority is the students," Linddy added. "I think by going to two we are looking out for their best interests."

The motion to have two kindergarten classes instead of three for the upcoming year based on the projected enrollment passed unanimously, and will bring the proposed budget down approximately \$50,578.

The change reduces the board adopted budget from \$4,230,885 to \$4,180,307. The adjusted budget now comes in at a \$99,392 increase, or 2.44 percent, over the current year's budget of \$4,080,915. The modified spending proposal is down from a 3.67 percent increase adopted in January.

The revised budget went before the Board of Finance on Feb. 9. A public information session on the proposal will be held Thursday, Feb. 16, at 6:30 p.m. in the Andover Elementary School library.

Also at the meeting, the school adopted the calendar for the 2012-13 school year. The calendar has the first day of school set for Monday, Aug. 27, and the last day on Tuesday, June 11. February recess is scheduled for the 18th and 19th, as opposed to the entire week.

The number of school cancellations accepted before make-up days are taken from April vacation increased from seven to eight over the current calendar. If more than eight are incurred by March 1, the days will be taken from April vacation beginning April 15.

"I think it's a great calendar, I really do," said Linddy.

The calendar was adopted unanimously.

The next Board of Education meeting will be held Wednesday, March 14, at 7 p.m. in the Andover Elementary School library.

Marlborough Selectmen Support AHM Budget

by Katelyn Kelleher

Residents and selectmen alike sung the praises of Andover, Hebron, Marlborough (AHM) Youth and Family Services, as the organization's yearly proposed budget was up for approval at Tuesday's meeting of the Board of Selectmen.

The board also declined a request from a resident to continue trapping on town land and approved a variance permit fee waiver for Marlborough Arts Center's parking lot expansion.

The board unanimously voted in favor of accepting the AHM budget and commended the organization's efforts to expand grants and private contributions. Residents asserted the importance of keeping its services in the community. The organization, which supports the social and emotional well-being of children and teens, has worked with youth in Andover, Hebron and Marlborough since 1983.

AHM Board of Directors member Erich Aust said the organization has developed a sound and proven budget for the year. "I'm proud to be associated with AHM for years and impressed with its ability to bring a broad range of services to the community," he said.

The \$83,891 budget, an \$890 increase from last year, was a number selectman Michael Gut

said he was comfortable with. "I was also impressed that Joel [Rosenberg, AHM Executive Director] was willing to sit down and go through the budget with me, line by line, he said."

First Selectwoman Catherine Gaudinski said she thought AHM has been financially responsible.

"I wish I could say all my budgets were only up 1 percent," she said.

Selectman Richard Shea said the organization offers a range of resources Marlborough couldn't afford on its own. "In a town our size, we either couldn't do or would do a poor job with these services," he said.

Former AHM board member Sid Fothergill-Nilsen attested to the benefit the organization provides Marlborough.

"Personally I know the impact on our community is priceless," he said.

Lake Advisory Commission member Craig Williams read a letter to the selectmen written by Christine and H. Scott Miller, thanking the organization for its impact in their lives and urging the selectmen to approve the budget.

"Marlborough has no alternative to the services

offered by AHM," the letter read.

Also at the meeting the board voted unanimously against resident Charles Burke's request to continue trapping, an item held over from the Jan. 17 meeting. At the previous meeting, the board sought more information on the traps' design and methods before making a decision.

Burke places the traps near the edge or at the bottom of the water in rivers. Gaudinski pointed out that the trap itself does not kill the animal.

"The animal trapped would drown and then Mr. Burke tags them and takes them to a state licensed taxidermist," she said.

Resident Steven Oborski submitted a letter to the board opposing trapping on town-owned land.

Shea said he opposed granting Burke the right to trap on town land unless it relates to a public health issue.

Gaudinski said the town has used Burke's trapping as a service in the past. "I know the town has used him when it's had some problems with beavers," she said.

The board unanimously passed a request

More Money Sought for Andover Fuel Fund

by Geeta Schrayter

The mild winter experienced thus far has kept the need for oil assistance in Andover relatively low. But the season isn't over, and with state cutbacks resulting in a higher reliance on town money, there's a need for donations to the town's fuel fund.

"It's an issue in town this year," said Municipal Agent for the Elderly Cathy Palazzi, who explained the price of oil was high, and in the past "we never had a huge budget for oil because first of all, there's never been the need."

Additionally, state cutbacks to numerous agencies mean the expectation is now there for "the town to jump in" and make up the difference, said Palazzi.

"That's great, except the town didn't have it in the budget this year, because they didn't know it was happening," she said, adding "our problem this year, the way I see it, is right now we don't have a great fund [for oil assistance]."

And the number of individuals who qualify for fuel assistance has increased along with the rate of unemployment, she said. Currently, 22 known Andover residents qualify should they need it, meaning they are low income, and are utilizing the ACCESS Agency, Inc., a nonprofit community action agency that works with the low-income population to provide various resources such as food, housing and heating assistance, the agency's website explained.

ACCESS, which is one of the agencies experiencing funding cutbacks, provides one-time fuel assistance to those who qualify. After ACCESS is utilized, individuals can come to the town for help. Those in need can contact Social Services Director Kara Sakelarakis, who then looks into available options.

"I see what kind of state aid they have and if they've utilized ACCESS," said Sakelarakis, "That's kind of a requirement. You have to go through ACCESS first and once you've exhausted those funds" you can receive assis-

tance from the town, she said.

Sakelarakis also mentioned a fuel fund at the First Congregational Church in town had been opened up for the town to use.

"They do have a more sizable fund than we have in town," said Sakelarakis, "so [individuals who need fuel assistance] kind of go through me and we can utilize that. That's what we're trying to do this year to make up for the increased need and increased cost."

In the future, the hope was that money would be allocated for fuel. In the Social Services budget for the 2012-13 fiscal year submitted by Sakelarakis, a new line item "fuel fund" was added for discussion at \$1,500. The amount "is not a lot," said Sakelarakis, "but we need to start somewhere. The state is going to rely more on the towns."

However, at the Andover Board of Selectmen's meeting on Feb. 1, the selectmen discussed the item and decided money should continue to come from fundraising and donations.

"Right now we have utilized that program through donations and fundraisers exclusively," said First Selectman Bob Burbank. He added if the fund were to be depleted, Social Services could come back to the selectmen and have money allocated, "if need be."

And immediately, both Palazzi and Sakelarakis recognize donations would be a big help.

"We've been pretty fortunate" with the weather this year, said Sakelarakis. "We'll go through the church and things [after the town's money for fuel is gone], but we're hoping that people will donate and we'll have some more."

"That's what we're looking for," added Palazzi.

Donations can be made out to the Town of Andover, with "fuel assistance," specified on the memo.

Individuals in need of assistance should call Sakelarakis at 860-798-6583.

Freezin' for a Reason Raises Funds for Colchester Fuel Bank

by Katelyn Kelleher

The unusually mild weather agreed with volunteers enduring a weekend of winter camping for the Freezin' for a Reason fundraiser, benefiting the Colchester Fuel Bank.

Colchester Business Association President Fred Brown, Police Sergeant Rob Suchecki, Colchester Hayward Fire Department Chief Walter Cox and selectman Stan Soby, along with four Boy Scouts from Troop 109, spent Friday and Saturday night in tents on the town green for the third annual event.

Cox, Soby and Suchecki, as well as the Boy Scouts, participated in the event for the first time.

Soby faced no wind or snow his first time participating in the event, although overnight lows dipped below the freezing mark. "The temperature alone was enough to remind us how cold it can be," he said.

Brown, who participated in the event in 2011 and 2010 with First Selectman Gregg Schuster and then-CBA President Jack Faski, "was telling us how much snow and ice there was last year," Suchecki said. "This year we got off lucky with the mild weather."

The team collected just under \$5,200 by the time they packed up their tents on Sunday, shy of their \$8,500 goal and the \$6,500 collected last year. However, collections at Colchester's Rockville Bank branch and Town Hall have not yet been accounted for, as donations are still being accepted.

Suchecki said even though the team did not

meet the original donation goal, the event was still worthwhile. "I believe from what Fred said it was less than what we expected," he said. "But the economy is so tough anything we've raised certainly made a difference."

"It will be put to good use," Soby said. He said a recipient of assistance from the fuel bank stopped by the event along with many other appreciative supporters.

Cox said the ultimate goal for the event was to raise year-round awareness for the cause and keep the donations coming in even after the fundraiser has ended. "You don't have to be living in a cardboard box or destitute to use the program," he said.

Although several Boy Scouts stopped by during the day to help at the event, four spent the night. Soby said he considered it beneficial not only for recipients from the fuel bank but for the scouts as well.

"It was a great event for them to learn about the need," Soby said. "They are potential leaders for this town."

Cox said the scouts aided in getting the word out to the public and would like to get more people involved in future events. "People just saw tents with fires going on the green and didn't really know what it was for," he said.

Soby, Cox and Suchecki all said they intend to participate in next year's Freezin' for a Reason fundraiser, and they hope the scouts do as well.

"If Fred will have me, I'm there," Soby cracked.

Colchester Residents Speak Out Against Extra Trooper

by Katelyn Kelleher

Residents present at Thursday's budget forum meeting voiced their opposition to the possibility of adding another resident trooper for local overnight coverage.

Attendees at the forum also spoke about the town's sidewalk fund, and advocated open space land acquisition as well.

First Selectman Gregg Schuster, Board of Education Vice Chairman Donald Kennedy and Board of Finance Chairman Robert Tarlov addressed the questions and concerns of approximately 20 residents at the 7 p.m. meeting at Cragin Memorial Library.

Schuster said the level of activity and population increases in Colchester warrants an additional officer at a cost of \$85-90,000 per year. The addition would bring Colchester a step closer to having 24-hour local police coverage.

Schuster said no specific incidents spurred the plan, but mentioned there have been acts of vandalism and arson recently in town.

Schuster explained the town has first- and second-shift town officers, but there is only one overnight state trooper, who covers several towns, leaving a vacancy in the night shift. While Colchester is never left completely with-

out police coverage, lacking a local third-shift trooper creates the risk that the nearest police could be several towns away when an incident occurs.

Schuster said it would actually require the addition of two officers to provide complete 24-hour coverage, as one officer could not work seven days per week. "One trooper would be just to get us started," he said.

A local trooper could also combat impaired driving. "One trooper alone makes 50 DUI arrests in one year," Schuster said. "So how many are we missing?"

Resident Chris Bourque suggested better utilizing the current troopers. "I see town officers set more speed traps on state roads than town roads," he said.

Schuster replied that the town officers "are more of a subset" of state police, and the two agencies work collaboratively rather than independently.

Andy George said he does not want additional funding for a local trooper to detract from the educational system, mentioning recent school staff layoffs. "I would rather see a less-

ening in police presence than cuts from the school budget," he said.

George, president of the Colchester Land Trust, brought up the question of bonding for open space acquisition. "The land trust in Colchester has stood in line for bonding money," he said.

Bourque noted the importance of maintaining agriculturally viable open space and keeping out-of-state property buyers out. "It's just an investment to them," he said.

Schuster asked whether the town should bond "blindly" without having any piece of property attached to it or have land in mind.

Resident Leslie Curtis said the town should have a fund set in order to take action when property becomes available. "I think that we need to be prepared at a moment's notice," she said.

Curtis added the state might assist Colchester if money were set aside. "The state has funding to match for towns that are serious about preserving open space," she said.

Several residents expressed a desire to make better use of the town's sidewalk funds.

Schuster said the committee plans to make practical use of the sidewalk budget. "We're trying to make the rules less onerous on Planning and Zoning," he said.

"If there's a subdivision in the middle of nowhere it doesn't make sense to put a sidewalk there," he said. "The plan is for sidewalks within a mile of town center."

Schuster also spoke of the possibility of sharing positions with surrounding towns in order to cut back on the budget, but said there can be too many barriers, particularly because Colchester's size and activity level is greater than its surrounding towns. However, he said costs are cut by sharing facilities within town.

The Budget Committee posted a questionnaire on the town's website to get feedback from residents regarding services they would like to maintain, increase, reduce or eliminate and whether or not they would support tax increases in correspondence with the changes.

Tarlov said the survey is a solution to the lack of feedback in the past. "People want to maintain or increase services and cut taxes and we just can't do that."

Colchester Selectmen Formally Ask Hayn to Resign

by Katelyn Kelleher

Members of the Board of Selectmen passed a motion last week requesting Board of Finance vice chair Bruce Hayn step down from his position, due to his pending arson charges.

The motion came following a Jan. 23 letter First Selectman Gregg Schuster sent to Hayn, asking him to resign. Police arrested Hayn Jan. 16 on charges that he set fire to his Norwich-based business last fall and subsequently filed fraudulent insurance claims.

The selectmen unanimously voted to request Hayn's resignation at their Feb. 2 meeting. The motion stated: "While the presumption of innocence is paramount in American jurisprudence, it is the opinion of the board that current circumstances will affect Mr. Hayn's ability to carry out the functions of a member of the Board of Finance at a time when this board is conducting deliberations vital to the town."

The board also sent Hayn a letter – dated Feb. 3 – notifying him of the motion.

As of Thursday, however, Hayn had not stepped down from his position.

First Selectman Gregg Schuster said prioritizing the Board of Finance's functionality was the basis for his decision to ask for Hayn's resignation.

"My biggest concern is having a fully functional Board of Finance with all six members who are able to contribute without the public having any concerns with any of those members," he said.

Selectman Stan Soby agreed. "This is budget season and we have a lot of things to evaluate and we have people there engaged in the process," he said. "That would be difficult for Bruce to be able to do."

However – as Hayn's remaining on the board

would indicate – the board's motion does not guarantee Hayn's resignation.

"He's an elected official and there is no local removal process," Schuster said. "It's obviously a fluid situation. I haven't spoken to him so I don't know what his thought process is."

"I would hope that Bruce would do the right thing for the town," Soby said. "It's about the ability to fill the position."

If Hayn resigns, Soby said the Board of Finance would need to act quickly to fill the seat. "The process by charter would be, if there is a resignation, that seat is filled by vote of the remaining members of the Board of Finance for the remainder of the term," Soby said.

That person must, like Hayn, be a Democrat and would serve until the next municipal election in 2013.

Both Schuster and Soby reiterated the im-

portance of keeping the presumption of innocence in mind.

"I imagine it will take years to deal with this," Schuster said of the charges against Hayn.

Town officials have been working hard to address residents' concerns.

"I think people are concerned about the process and they want to ensure that everything is transparent," Soby said.

Soby said residents are mainly concerned with the information Hayn had access to. "All of us on the board have heard questions," Soby said. "They want to know what [Board of Finance members] have access to. The board doesn't write out the checks themselves."

"We have been answering them as straight forwardly as we possibly can because that's what they expect us to do," Soby said.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Like I'm guessing almost all of you, I spent Sunday night watching the Super Bowl. From a purely objective point of view, I'll grant you it was an exciting game, with the Giants' rallying for a come-from-behind victory and the final seconds spent on a Tom Brady Hail Mary pass that didn't quite work.

But I – as were many of you, I'd venture to guess – was pulling for New England, so I was disappointed with the outcome. (Yes, I'm actually a Jets fan, but I'm not so passionate about them that I can't enjoy the play of other teams, even other teams in the Jets' own division. It's nice to root, root, root for the home team – plus, the Patriots, so dominant for a while, haven't won a Super Bowl since 2005.)

It was a game of missed opportunities for the Pats, as they could never capitalize on any of the Giants' fumbles, nor did they seem to be able to catch the ball when it counted most. Everybody's talking about Wes Welker's dropped pass, which gave the Giants back the ball with four minutes left in the game, but the Patriots still had chances after that. After the Giants' Ahmad Bradshaw accidentally fell butt-first into the end zone (perhaps the most awkward Super Bowl-winning touchdown I've ever seen), the Patriots still had the ball back with 57 seconds to go. But Tom Brady was just unable to complete a pass, which is what ultimately led to his desperation throw to end the game.

I'm not saying the Giants didn't earn their win – mistakes mean nothing in sports if the other team can't capitalize on them, and boy did the Giants capitalize (Eli Manning's pass to Mario Manningham was pretty amazing) – but it just would've been nice had the Patriots played a little better.

* * *

Speaking of the Super Bowl, after it was determined the matchup would be the Giants and Patriots, I heard a little complaining about how the game would be of little interest to folks outside the Northeast. Well, the ratings are in for the game – and they're huge.

According to the *Hollywood Reporter*, 111.3 million people watched the Super Bowl Sunday, making it the most-watched television program of all time. Last year's matchup, between Green Bay and Pittsburgh, drew 111 million sets of eyeballs.

The *Reporter* further states that four of the five most-watched programs in U.S. history are the last four Super Bowls. (The only non-football program in the top five is the 1983 finale of *M*A*S*H*.)

What Sunday's record-setting rating shows is that where the two teams in the Super Bowl call home doesn't really matter. The big game is the big game. It just further drives home the point that – and as a lifelong baseball fan it pains me a little to say this – football truly is the national pastime these days.

* * *

Last week's cover story about the

Colchester animal control officer generated quite the reaction. There are several letters to the editor about it in this week's *Rivereast* (although not quite as many as there are about the proposed all-day kindergarten expansion in Hebron. That issue is shaping up to prove just as controversial as it did two years ago). Some come to the defense of the officer, Don Favry; others express shock and outrage at the allegations in the article.

I grew up with dogs (two poodles, and then a beagle joined the mix when I was a senior in high school), and as a dog lover, I too was pretty amazed at some of the things I read in the story.

Understandably, a lot of Colchester residents are upset, and it seems like the *Rivereast* email inbox isn't the only one that's been receiving comments about the story. Colchester First Selectman Gregg Schuster's has too. Like the good politician he is (and really, I've had nothing but pleasant dealings with Gregg during his time in office), Gregg responded to his constituents' concerns. A public meeting on the situation has been arranged for later this month, and on his Facebook page Monday, Gregg wrote the following:

Concerned Citizens,

I want to thank all of you for writing to me with your concerns over the comments made by Mr. Favry in the latest edition of the *Rivereast Bulletin*. As someone who has had dogs as part of my family, I too was very concerned with what was said. I will be personally meeting with Mr. Favry and his supervisor regarding his comments and his job performance.

There are always ways we can improve town services. Feedback and ideas from citizens are a critical part of the process. Bearing that in mind, I would like to invite all of you, and any other interested citizen, to a public discussion on animal control that I am hosting on Thursday, Feb. 23, at 6 p.m. at Town Hall.

My hope is to have an open dialogue about how we handle our animal control and our adoption procedures. With your help, I am certain we can make some changes that are reflective of our community's compassion for animals.

Sincerely,
Gregg Schuster

I was impressed by Gregg's swift response, and that he's already put together a meeting on the issue. Yes, it'd probably be nice for the public if the meeting date were a little sooner, but I understand it is budget season. Meeting nights can be tough to come by. If the response we've gotten at the *Rivereast* is any indication, there should be quite the turnout for that meeting.

* * *

See you next week.

LifeStar Responds to Colchester Rollover

by Katelyn Kelleher

A LifeStar helicopter transported a Colchester man to Hartford Hospital for injuries sustained in a Jan. 31 vehicle rollover on Route 149.

Alan Kain, 27, struck a sign, post, tree and stone wall before his vehicle rolled off the road as he headed southbound near 633 Westchester Rd., State Police said. Kain was the only person in the vehicle.

The Colchester Hayward Fire Department was dispatched at 7:45 a.m., Deputy Fire Chief Don Lee said. A paramedic from Middlesex Hospital Marlborough Medical

Center was the first medical personnel on the scene. Both teams worked to remove Kain from the vehicle, Lee said.

It took crews 24 minutes to extract Kain from his Dodge Durango. Lee said the prolonged amount of time it took to extract Kain prompted the LifeStar request at 8:01 a.m. Kain was flown to Hartford Hospital.

A spokeswoman for Hartford Hospital listed Kain as no longer in the hospital's care.

Crews cleared the scene completely by 8:38 a.m., leaving the road closed to traffic just shy of an hour, Lee said.

Colchester Police News

1/31: Kevin Verrell, 46, of 70 South Rd. was charged with a DUI, stop sign violation and failure to renew registration, State Police said.

2/1: Andres Rico, 23, of 4 Beechwood Rd., Oakdale, turned himself in on active arrest warrant and was charged with operating an unregistered motor vehicle, illegal operation of a motor vehicle without insurance, operating with a suspended license, failure to return a license and registration and second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

2/1: Matthew Klusek, 25, of 79B Kenyon Rd., Hampton, was charged with a DUI after an accident on Chestnut Hill Rd. and Norwich Ave., State Police said.

2/2: Barbara Metcalf, 39, of 50 Steeler Crossings Rd. was charged with third-degree larceny and second-degree forgery, State Police said.

2/2: Joseph Gamache, 39, of 191 Stanavage

Rd. was charged with failure to appear, State Police said.

2/2: Rachel Blandina, 20, of 23 West Ridge Rd. was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

2/2: Stephen White, 26, of 777 E. Beaumont Hwy., Lebanon, was taken to Backus Hospital with "possible injury" after losing control of his vehicle and colliding with a metal guardrail. White was issued an infraction for making an improper turn, State Police said.

2/4: Alex John Niver of 107 Lebanon Ave., Apt. 3, was charged with failure to appear in court, State Police said.

2/6: Katlyn Hobbs of 64 Old Colchester Rd., Lebanon, was charged with third-degree criminal mischief and sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

Andover Police News

1/30: Jennifer Young, 24, of 48 Edwardson St., Danielson, struck a utility pole in an accident heading eastbound on Route 6 west of Route 87 in Andover and was taken to Windham Hospital with "complaints of pain," State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

2/1: Police are investigating a larceny at a residence on Jones Hollow Road. A plastic water jug containing approximately \$3,000 in coins was taken from the residence. No forced entry was reported. Anyone with information is asked to contact Troop K in Colchester at 860-537-7500.

2/3: Kimberly Rodrigue, 24, of 56 South Rd., was charged with fifth-degree larceny, State Police said.

Hebron Police News

2/2: Virginia Zaino, 43, of 216 Prospect Hill Rd., Colchester, was charged with DUI and speeding, State Police said.

Portland Police News

1/31: Sean Cunningham, 21, of 77 Harvest Wood Rd., Middlefield, was charged with DUI, evading responsibility and failure to drive right, Portland Police said.

1/31: David Frank, 48, of 311 Main St., was charged with sixth-degree larceny, police said.

1/6: Dawn Jarvis, 42, of 116 Pepperidge Rd., was charged with DUI and evading responsibility, police said.

Obituaries

Colchester

Barbara June Pohlman

Barbara June Pohlman, 78, of Colchester, widow of the late Robert F. Pohlman and beloved mother, passed away Thursday, Feb. 2, at Middlesex Hospital Hospice in Middletown.

Born June 7, 1933 in Springfield, MA, she was a daughter of the late James and Elizabeth (Casey) Kelly. Both she and her future husband were raised on Columbia Lake in Connecticut.

Mrs. Pohlman was married to Robert in 1952. He predeceased her in 2009.

Barbara enjoyed camping, gardening and feeding the hummingbirds. She had a great sense of humor but will be remembered most fondly as a kind and devoted mother.

She is survived by four children, Gary Pohlman and partner Bernard Clavette of Old Saybrook, Sherry DiBella and Bill Hickey of East Hampton, Cindy Sledjeski of Manchester, Lee Lanterman and Wife Amy of Union; a sister Joan Olson of Little Rock, AR; five grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and numerous extended family and friends.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to the caregivers at Marlborough Health Care Center and Middlesex Hospital Hospice for the loving care extended to Barbara. For this reason, donations in her memory are requested to benefit the Middlesex Hospital Hospice, Office of Philanthropy, 28 Crescent St., Middletown, CT 06457.

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

Portland

Judith Lynn Lockrow

Judith (Judy) Lynn Lockrow, 52, of Portland, beloved wife of David Lockrow, mother of Todd Patterson and Kevin Lockrow, passed away after a courageous battle with cancer Saturday, Feb. 4, at Middlesex Hospital, surrounded by her loving family. Judy was born in Sharon, PA, on Nov. 22, 1959, the oldest daughter of James and Barbara Patterson.



Judy was a woman of great strength, a loving daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, sister and aunt. She was kindhearted, and centered her life around her family. She enjoyed motorcycle rides with her husband, casino trips with her mother, spending time with her granddaughters, playing setback with friends and gardening. Judy will be greatly missed, leaving her family with many cherished memories.

In addition to her parents, James and Barbara Patterson of Meriden, and loving husband David Lockrow of Portland, she is survived by her beloved two sons, Todd Patterson and Kevin Lockrow; her precious granddaughters, Brianne and Emalee Patterson; her daughter-in-law, Michele Patterson; her sister and brother-in-law, Lisa and John Strong and their children, Karista and Jessica; her brother and sister-in-law, Michael and Brenda Patterson, and their children Amanda and Michael. And her loving cat, Mocha.

A memorial service in celebration of Judy's life was held Thursday, Feb. 9, at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland. Family and friends called on Thursday before the service, at the funeral home.

The family wishes to thank the staff of Middlesex Hospice & Palliative care, for their compassionate and loving care to her and her family.

Memorial donations may be made to the Middlesex Hospital Hospice 28 Crescent St Middletown, CT 06457.

To send an online expression of sympathy, visit portlandmemorialfh.net.

Colchester

Helen Gillette Richardson

Helen Gillette Richardson, 94, of Southington, wife of the late Raymond W. Richardson, died Thursday, Feb. 2. She was born in Colchester, daughter of Isaac and Adeline Maynard Gillette.

She was a 1939 graduate of Wheaton College and a resident of Southington since 1949. She was a paraprofessional in the Southington School System prior to retirement. A devoted member of the First Congregational Church, she was a deacon and held office in women's groups. She was a member of Calendar House and Orchard Valley Garden Club.

She is survived by a son, Paul Richardson and wife Joan of New Hartford; two daughters, Jean Konon of East Hampton and Joyce Dion and her husband Robert of Sharon, VT; six grandchildren, Christopher Richardson of Niskayuna, NY, Emily Redman of Canton, Eric Konon of Brooklyn, NY; Ashley Konon of West Columbia, SC; Noah and Rajana Dion of Sharon, VT; three great-grandchildren.

She was predeceased by her brother, Claude Gillette and sister, Mary Minella.

Memorial services will be held at First Congregational Church of Southington in the spring.

Memorial contributions may be made to the church memorial fund, First Congregational Church, 37 Main St., Southington, CT 06489. Burial will in at Linwood Cemetery, Colchester, at the convenience of the family.

Plantsville Funeral Home has been entrusted with handling the arrangements. For online condolences and directions, visit plantsvillefuneralhome.com.

Colchester

J. Patricia Martelli

J. Patricia (Gallo) Martelli, 73, of Colchester, passed away Sunday, Feb. 4, peacefully at home, surrounded by her loving family, after a courageous battle with breast cancer. She was the widow of Robert A. Martelli. Born in Waterbury March 4, 1938, she was the daughter of the late James P. and Elizabeth D. (Leone) Gallo.

Pat graduated from Waterbury Catholic High School in 1956 and then from the M. Kavula Institute of Hairdressing in 1957. She worked for many years at Jane's Beauty Salon in Waterbury. She also worked at several law firms as a receptionist and at The Spa at Grand Lake.

She is survived by her three daughters, Deborah Levesque of Coventry, Kathryn and husband Louis Bocciarelli of Griswold, Michelle Martelli and Michael Harte of Thomaston; seven grandchildren, Matthew Levesque and friend Cara, Andrea Levesque and fiancé Justin, Emily, Robert, Nicholas Douglass and friend Natalie, Cole and Emma Bocciarelli; a brother Joseph and wife Sylvia Gallo and family of Denver, CO; an uncle, Francis Leone and wife Shirley, Alan Levesque, Steven Douglass, Martelli in-laws; many nieces, nephews, cousins, her special friends Emma and Richard Muth, Barbara and Stephen Del Buono and all the many friends she was blessed to have in her life.

Pat and her family would like to thank Dr. Sorcinelli, Dawn Tiedemann and the nursing staff at Midstate Oncology Dept. Her funeral was held Thursday, Feb. 9, from the DellaVecchia Funeral Home, 211 N. Main St., Southington, to Mary Our Queen Church, 248 Savage St, Southington for Mass. Burial was at Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Watertown. Calling hours were on Wednesday, Feb. 8.

Donations may be made in her memory to the Palladino Family Cancer Center, "Survivor Day Event," at Midstate Medical Center, 435 Lewis Ave, Meriden, CT 06451.

For online condolences and directions, visit dellavecchiafh.com.