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Kimble Greene stocks the table full of maple products at the Winding Brook Sugar House stand along Main Street last weekend during the Hebron Maple Fest.

Hebron Maple Fest Big Success

by Sarah McCoy

"You couldn't keep them away with a firehouse," Hope Valley Sugar House owner Craig Cyr said, describing the volume of visitors to this year's Hebron Maple Festival.

Despite the downpours on Saturday, it appears last weekend's Maple Fest was one of the best.

"They were lining their umbrellas along the wall of the sugar house," Wenzel Sugar House owner Ron Wenzel said of Saturday's crowd. "I couldn't believe it."

This year's turnout proved to be just as good as the maple season this year. Wenzel and Cyr agreed that 2008 has been one of the best years for sugaring. Thanks to mild days and chilly nights the two local syrup makers are spending every night boiling the sugar they've collected that day.

Sap is about 97 percent water and 3 percent sugar, so it takes about 50 gallons of sap to yield one gallon of finished syrup.

Wenzel, who's seen his sugaring opera-

tions expand from six buckets to over 400 in the last 20 years, said he's never encountered anything like the sap he's dealt with this year.

"The more mud there is the more sap there will be, and this year we've seen a lot of mud," he said.

Ideal temperatures for syrup production are 40-45 degrees during the day and dipping down to 20 degrees at night.

It wasn't just the sugar houses that saw heavy traffic this past weekend. Main Street was lined with visitors checking out the quilts at Old Town Hall, petting the greyhounds up for adoption, and filling up on the chili dogs, kettle corn and other treats for sale at the Maple Fest.

For the third year in a row the AHM Youth and Family Services Community Room was filled to capacity for the Birds of Prey exhibition and, despite the absence of snow, the Siberian Huskies were out at Christ Lutheran Church for a dog sled-ding show.

Each year the Maple Fest grows in scale and in attendance, and this year proved to be no different.

"Cabin fever always sets in around this time," Wenzel said. "People can't wait to get out and this is the perfect opportunity."

Wenzel has been involved with the Hebron Maple Fest since its inception in 1990. He credits Hebron resident and long-time sugarer Seldon Wells for starting the now annual event.

"Seldon approached the library and told them that he had more syrup than he knew what to do with," Wenzel said. "That first year he sold sugar on snow to raise money for the library."

Eighteen years later, the event continues to fill the town.

If you haven't gotten enough of your maple fix just yet, don't worry. The sugar houses around town sell their fresh local product all year round. For more information, visit the Hebron Maple Festival's web site at www.hebronmaplefest.com

Café Mangia in Colchester Promises Tasty ‘Escape from Reality’

by Kristina Histen

Imagine a restaurant where every experience is just as great as the last.

The fruits and vegetables are hand-picked and the meats personally selected by the chef. The small, intimate dining room creates a mood that is romantic and relaxed; and as the weather warms up, guests can enjoy a refreshing glass of wine while sitting outside on a porch that wraps around the building.

Sound too good to be true? Not quite.

It's the atmosphere the owners of Café Mangia in Colchester have formed so their guests can, co-owner Paul Spada said, “kick back and escape from reality.”

Originally from Providence, RI, Spada and Jason Sherman started from the bottom in the restaurant business and worked their way up. They met bussing tables when they were just 14 years old, and have since remained close friends. With over 10 years of experience from washing dishes to front-house management and everything else in between, they both decided to take a shot and open up their own place. The eatery opened its doors last September.

“When you roll the dice, who else better to do it with than your best friend, no?” Sherman, also the chef, said.

With backgrounds in fine dining at places like Castle Hill Inn in Newport, RI and The Octagon in Mystic, Spada and Sherman say they have made Café Mangia an affordable upscale café, one that offers Italian foods with a touch of vegetarian flair.

“A lot of people want to eat healthy now so we want to cater to them,” Spada said, “and plus cater to other people who want to eat good

wholesome Italian food. We kind of get both worlds.”

Everything is made from scratch, Sherman said, including the sauces and salad dressings. Because of a limited amount of storage and Sherman and Spada's push on freshness, foods are constantly bought at the local markets, at least three to four times a week. The menu offers lots of daily specials, Spada said, adding that he would rather run out of food than throw it away. The two men just received their liquor license not even a month ago, and offer a range of wine and beer.

Overall, business has been going well. “You're going to have your ups and downs, but it's good though,” Sherman said, as Spada continued, “it builds character.”

Café Mangia is located at 68 Linwood Ave., on Route 16. Spada and Sherman bought the place – which incidentally used to house a restaurant – last May, and after months of renovations, opened it up on Sept. 18, 2007. They kept the name of the previous establishment, “Mangia,” because they “really liked it,” as it means in Italian “to eat well.”

The two men are very hands-on, and seem to remember familiar faces, adding a personal touch to the environment that makes guests feel important.

“We work with people that work with us, it's kind of like a family atmosphere,” Spada said. “It's just the way we were brought up doing it. We try to bring that same concept to Colchester.”

Sherman and Spada said their biggest thing is maintaining consistency. “You can't have a good experience one night and just an ok expe-



Jason Sherman, left, and Paul Spada opened Café Mangia on Linwood Avenue last fall.

rience another night; it has to be great all the time,” Sherman said. “We set those standards pretty high.”

Café Mangia is open for lunch Tuesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and dinner Tuesday through Saturday from 4:30

p.m. to 9 p.m. Starting Easter Sunday Café Mangia will have a kick-off brunch, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; this will continue every Sunday.

“Colchester is an up-and-coming town that is growing, and we'd like to grow with it,” Spada said.

Few Show Up at Portland Budget Presentation

by Michael McCoy

If Tuesday night was indicative of the town's feelings at large, this budget cycle could prove to be a quiet one for Portland.

The Board of Selectmen Tuesday held a public hearing on First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield's proposed budget. Including town employees, elected officials and media, less than 30 people attended, leaving the high school auditorium seemingly empty. The hearing came a week after Bransfield presented her spending plan to the selectmen and about two months after the Board of Education unanimously approved its budget.

The hearing began with a presentation by Bransfield, who noted, “We try to have wide participation in the budget process.” She explained her budget philosophy, which consisted of limiting expenditures, minimizing taxes, passing of the budget on the first referendum, and, ultimately, having an efficient, well-run town.

Bransfield also pointed out that the various town departments might contain unusually high jumps. This simply reflects a restructuring of the budget. Employee fringe benefits and other associated costs were currently grouped together in a separate line item. This year, Finance Director Rob Buden broke the costs down, placing them in their respective departments, in an attempt to effectively show exactly how much money it takes to run each department.

The 2008-09 proposed budget comes to \$29.3 million, a 4.85 percent increase over current year spending. Of that number, \$17.8 million is allotted to the Board of Education. The estimated mill rate is 27.77, a 0.78 increase over the 2007-08 rate.

The most striking increase this year comes in the form of employee health insurance, which is experiencing a 22 percent increase. Addressing the problem, Bransfield had previously said, “Over the last three years, we have had some

very ill employees... Because we're a small pool, when we have extra costs, our rates go up... It's just a very difficult situation for our country and our town.”

The First Selectwoman said Tuesday that while these numbers are not locked in, experience has told her that they will more than likely be quite close to the estimated 22 percent jump. However, she also pledged that she would continue trying to achieve more palatable rates. This 22 percent spike comes a year after insurance rose 14.5 percent and two years after a 9 percent jump.

Buden said Tuesday night that town employees pay about 30 percent of health insurance costs, while the town takes care of the other 70 percent.

Along that line, Bransfield hopes to one day take part in a prospective state program that would allow municipalities to band together, forming a bigger pool, and thereby receiving better rates.

Similarly, addressing the rising costs of education, Bransfield recently spoke before the state general assembly's appropriations committee, requesting that the state take on more of the education cost burden.

In addition to health insurance, liability insurance is up three percent, while workers' compensation has risen six percent.

Looking at some of the town department's Bransfield highlighted the \$2,000 increase in the fire chief's pay, as well as a \$7,000 increase in the fire marshal's bringing the position from an as needed basis to 20 hours a week. Police overtime has increased \$5,000, while \$20,000 has been added to the library's part-time pay. Bransfield noted that this last item comes to about half of what had been requested.

Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen followed Bransfield, with a presentation of the Board of Education's proposed 2008-09 bud-

get. She led off with a list of some of the schools' recent achievements. This included the middle school's ranking first in the state last year on cohort improvement to CMT scores. Also, she said Valley View School was honored by the state for its “exemplary technology lessons,” the first time an entire school has been recognized by the state.

The lion's share of the budget increase comes from insurance costs; 42 percent of the overall increase comes from such costs. The other notable area is salaries, which accounts for another 36.8 percent of the increase.

“We are forced with making a lot of difficult choices with staffing and time,” Doyen said Tuesday. To this end, half-time positions are budgeted for mathematics and science at the middle school, which comes to \$40,000. Doyen anticipated both positions would go to one person. The BOE is also asking for another 0.4 position in math at the high school, accounting for another \$20,000.

One initially unanticipated expense comes as a result of state mandate. Starting the next fiscal year, municipalities are being forced to fund magnet school tuition. Doyen explained this cost was left to the parents, while the state subsidized a small portion of it. “We have had children who have attended magnet schools for many years,” said Doyen. Though she said the numbers are not set in stone, since full commitment has not yet been necessary, Doyen expects five or six Portland students to attend magnet schools, corresponding to an anticipated cost of \$20,000.

Prompted by a question from resident Susan Allison Young, Doyen said that the entire Board of Education budget breaks down to about \$9,000 to \$10,000 per student.

Resident and former selectman Scott Adamsons said, “We have a lot of great projects that the Board of Selectmen are working on.”

However, he suggested applying some money from the town's fund balance towards the budget, in light of financial difficulties residents are currently facing, including rising fuel prices and the poor housing market. (In the current spending proposal, no money from the fund balance has been allotted. The 2007-08 budget includes \$115,000 from the account.) He also inquired as to the potential for residents to piggyback on the town's fuel contract, giving residents some financial relief. Adamsons mentioned that this was something that Chatham Court recently did.

Buden responded that this would not be feasible, and said Chatham Court worked out because, “They are pretty much a quasi-governmental agency.” Buden said a town-wide attempt to do this would simply result in residents paying the money back in taxes.

Resident Roy Guild asked if a cost analysis had been done, exploring how reverting to a resident state trooper system could save the town money. Though Bransfield did not have any such numbers in front of her, she remarked that the shift to a town police department was made a little over 10 years ago, and had much to do with swiftness.

“The response time was not what it is today,” Bransfield said, adding, “There was not 24-hour coverage at that time.”

After closing the public hearing, Bransfield said to the audience, “We will hopefully see you at some or all of our workshops.” The Board of Selectmen will host a two-week series of budget workshops with all of the town departments, boards and commissions, starting next Tuesday, at 7 p.m. at Portland Library, 20 Free-stone Ave.

The Board of Selectmen must approve a budget no later than April 9. The town budget referendum is set for May 12, also in the library.

Hebron Budget Proposal Calls for 5.28 Percent Tax Increase

by Sarah McCoy

Town Manager Jared Clark last week presented his proposed 2008-09 budget to a joint meeting of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance, a spending plan that calls for a 6.78 percent increase and an overall tax rate increase of 5.28 percent.

The difference between these two numbers is largely attributable to the \$607,800 increase the town will receive in state aid for education.

Overall, the \$33.15 million budget represents an increase of \$2.1 million in spending over the current year's budget. Of this increase, \$546,309 is due to a proposed increase in the Hebron Board of Education's budget, \$804,526 is due to a proposed increase in the RHAM Board of Education's operation budget and debt management and the remaining \$755,335 is attributable to the town's operating budget.

The RHAM Board of Education is currently evaluating the budget presented by Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski. The Town of Hebron has no control over what budget the RHAM board puts forth to Hebron, Andover and Marlborough voters on May 6.

The rest, however, is up for grabs, as the Board of Finance prepares to make possible adjustments to the town's 2008-09 budget.

"There is a limit as to what the Board of Finance can ask the community to take on," Clark said. "I fully expect them to make adjustments as they deem fit."

As to where these possible cuts come from, time will tell. The Hebron Board of Education came in with an overall budget increase of 4.96 percent, a number that Clark commended. On the town operations side, there is a proposed increase of \$755,355, a number which is driven, largely, by the approved park project. Between the bond repayment for construction, and an additional position and a half added to the Parks and Recreation staff, the town is looking at spending an additional \$304,553 in 2008-09.

The remaining \$450,000 increase comes from a combination of factors including the fixed costs associated with lighting, heating, and insuring the town, as well as contractual salary increases for town employees. Clark is proposing new initiatives for 2008-09 that will cost the town just under \$59,000. These initiatives include spending \$13,000 on technical support for the town, \$15,000 to hire an outside consultant to capitalize on insurance benefits for the recent improvements made to Hebron's Fire Department and \$14,000 to improve employee compensation.

"Last year we lost three employees who took comparable jobs for higher pay," Clark said. "The \$14,000 would be used to adjust certain

salaries to make the town more competitive."

Also receiving a slight increase in the proposed budget is the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), which saw its bottom line increase by just under \$38,000. This, however, is not nearly enough according to CIP Committee chair Mark Stuart.

Stuart, a member of the Board of Selectmen, presented the CIP budget to the boards of selectmen and finance at last Thursday's meeting, and repeatedly said that what the town allocates to capital items isn't even making a dent in the total amount of needs across town. "We just can't keep up," he said at the meeting.

In total, the CIP Committee received \$1.4 million in request this year. It is able to fund \$891,936 worth of projects. Of this, \$206,000 is allocated each year for road repair across town. Some of the other major purchases the CIP Committee approved are a new dump truck for the Public Works Department, a second ambulance, resurfacing and restriping of the Gilead Hill School parking lot, and an extension to the sidewalks in the center of town.

Stuart reported that the state Department of Transportation is planning adjustments to the intersection of Routes 66 and 85. While they are there the state has offered to pick up the tab on pedestrian crosswalks and signals. The CIP Committee voted to include sidewalks from the Senior Center to this intersection to take advantage of the state's offer.

Stuart praised the interdepartmental cooperation he saw during the CIP budget process. For instance, Hebron Elementary School will get the walkway it requested thanks to the Public Works Department's offer to do the construction using materials saved from prior projects.

The boards of selectmen and finance will continue to hear presentations from the various departments across town. Hebron Superintendent of Schools Ellie Cruz will present the local Board of Education's budget at next Thursday's meeting, which will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Room at Douglas Library.

The following Thursday, March 27, the Board of Finance will hold its regularly scheduled meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Office Building to discuss the forthcoming budget schedule for further deliberations.

Clark said the Board of Finance must put forth a recommended budget in time for the public hearing in April. Based on comments received at the public hearing the Board of Finance can make further adjustments before the townwide referendum to be held on May 6.

Hebron Selectmen Form Peters House Study Group

by Sarah McCoy

The future of the Peters House is still unknown, but the Board of Selectmen last Thursday took the next step in potentially resolving the fate of the much-discussed historic home.

The selectmen created an 11-member study group to explore all possible options for the house, which is located at 150 East Street.

The Peters House Study Committee will be comprised of representatives from the Historic Properties Commission, Historical Society, Parks and Recreation Commission, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen. Additionally, five citizens-at-large will also be able to serve on the steering committee.

Board of Finance member Dan Larson and selectman Gayle Mulligan voiced their desire to be the representatives from their respective boards at last Thursday's meeting.

The Board of Selectmen (BOS) will appoint members to the study committee at a future meeting.

While the BOS agreed that 11 would be a suitable number, no one wanted to see people excluded from the process. "Anybody who has a strong interest in helping this house shouldn't be shut out," said selectman Mark Stuart.

The charge of the newly-formed study group would be to examine the potential uses for the Peters House. The committee would be responsible for researching and presenting possible ideas for the home, but the final decision would be up to the Board of Selectman and/or the voters of Hebron.

Initially, Town Manager Jared Clark had recommended a study group in the neighborhood of seven to nine members. However, due to the public interest in the home, the BOS opted for a larger group. "The idea is to get as many ideas as possible," BOS Chair David Schoolcraft said.

Selectman Brian O'Connell agreed. "I'd like to see what the people have to say," he said. "Let the people take charge." If the group becomes too unwieldy, Mulligan suggested they

form sub-committees to look at more specific issues.

Lara Bordick, a member of the Hebron Historic Properties Commission (HHPC), voiced some concern over the make-up of the Peters House Study Committee. She said that while the Historic Properties Commission has been unified in their recommendation that the town retain ownership of the historic home, each individual member has different ideas on what they would like to see happen to the Peters House. She worried that by having only one representative from the HHPC the town would be limiting the flow of ideas.

Her concerns were heard, and then dismissed, as the BOS stood by their initial recommendation for only one representative from the HHPC. "Quite frankly," selectman Mark Stuart said, "if this becomes an extension of the Historic Properties Commission then we're not doing anything to broaden the selection of ideas for possible uses of this property."

He added that he expects all members of the HHPC to be used for their knowledge of the home, but said that limiting it to one formal member was in the best interest for the town.

The town acquired the Peters House in 2004 as part of the 112-acre land purchase that is set to become an athletic field complex. Since that time, the town has been scratching its head for ideas on what to do with the home.

Last summer the town reached a preliminary agreement with Hebron resident Jeffrey Farber, who owns and operates Wexler Construction, to buy the house. However this deal fell through when Farber withdrew his plans in response to the heavy opposition from Hebron residents. The BOS then solicited ideas from other town boards and groups to determine what the next course of action should be in the Peters House saga. The result of that surveying was the Peters House Study Committee the selectmen created last week.

Route 2 Accident in Marlborough Leads to Serious Injuries

by Kristina Histen

Two people were seriously injured after a motor vehicle accident Tuesday morning on Route 2 in Marlborough, according to state police.

The driver, Darrell Baker, 43, of 1791 Norwich New London Rd., Rt. 32, Uncasville, and his passenger, Amalfis Payano, 31, of 64 Oakwood Knoll, Norwich, were traveling eastbound on Route 2, about a half-mile east of the exit 13 ramp, state police said. Their vehicle left the left travel lane, police said, and struck approximately 100 feet of guard wire on the left shoulder median with its left front end, police said.

The vehicle broke through the guard wire

and struck a tree in the center median with its right passenger side door and quarter panel, state police said. It then spun around and came to a final rest down a steep embankment in the center median of the highway.

Baker was taken to Hartford Hospital with injuries, State Police said. Payano suffered from more serious injuries and was transported by LifeStar to St. Francis Hospital. Trooper Joseph Marsh was the officer who responded to the accident, and he was unavailable for comment at press time.

Due to a lengthy extrication of Payano from the car, Route 2 East was shut down to traffic for about three hours, state police said.

East Hampton Grand List Growth Slows

by Michael McCoy

The 2007 East Hampton Grand List shows a trend indicative of the market in general.

The Grand List comes in at \$1,125,246,148, according to assessor Donna Ralston. This marked a \$29.2 million, or 2.67 percent, increase over the 2006 list.

The vast majority of this list of taxable properties comes in the form of real estate, accounting for about \$1.01 billion. Motor vehicles made up another \$90.2 million, while personal property came to \$23.9 million. The largest percentage leap came from motor vehicles, which grew 3.73 percent over last year's list.

When asked this week about the overall increase, Ralston said, "Right now it's low, if you look at what other towns in our area are experiencing." She added that "we've had a lot of new subdivisions," but figured "we're probably on the tail end of the boom."

By comparison, the 2006 grand list was a 3.61 percent increase over the 2005 list.

The Top 10 taxpayers on the 2007 Grand List were: 1. CT Light and Power- \$12 million; 2. Landmark East Hampton- \$7.4 million; 3. Skyline Estates- \$3.5 million; 4. Ed Jackowitz/

American Distilling- \$3.1 million; 5. Rechovos- \$2.5 million; 6. Royal Oaks- \$2.2 million; 7. Global Self Storage- \$2.2 million; 8. Dream Developers of Cape Cod- \$2.2 million; 9. Shaw's Supermarket (Personal property only)- \$2 million; 10. Paul's & Sandy's Too- \$1.9 million.

As far as the Top 10 goes, Ralston said in previous years she had grouped all entities under the name of the owner. For instance, last year, Wayne Rand was number two. His name no longer appears on the list, though Skyline Estates and Global Self Storage, two companies he owns, are on the list.

New to the list this year are Rechovos and Dream Developers. The former owns a new subdivision called Salmon Run on Waterhole Road, while the latter owns the over-55 community Laurel Ridge

The mill rate will be set once a budget is adopted. The Board of Finance begin meeting with various departments and boards today, and the matter will go to a public hearing on April 7 at the high school, 15 North Maple St.

Colchester School Board Barely Approves \$34.53 Million Budget

by Kristina Histen

The Board of Education (BOE) approved a \$34.53 million 2008-09 budget Tuesday – but not without lengthy debate.

And that debate was reflected in the school board's final vote on the budget, as three of the seven board members voted against approving the spending plan.

The budget represents a \$1,226,923 or 3.68 percent, increase over the current year's spending. It will be presented to the Board of Finance at the end of March.

At the Jan. 22 BOE meeting, Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle presented her proposed budget, which at the time called for a 4.13 percent increase over the current year's spending. It was the lowest budget proposed by a Colchester schools superintendent in 15 years. However, at the Feb. 28 BOE meeting, the school board was advised by its Board of Finance liaison to reduce the proposed 2008-09 budget by \$200,000. At that meeting, the BOE determined they would make \$150,000 worth of cuts, and would decide these cuts at their March 11 meeting.

At Tuesday's meeting, Loiselle presented a list of possible reductions from the proposed budget that added up to \$201,523. Included were such reductions as nurse's summer hours at Bacon Academy; choral risers at Colchester Elementary School (CES); and various reductions in proposed new furniture and software.

But the biggest-ticket item on Loiselle's list was the elimination of a proposed enrichment teacher, including salary and benefits, for the middle school, for a savings of \$57,576. Other proposed positions eliminated included: a .6 FTE health teacher for eighth grade, including salary and benefits, for a savings of \$38,917; a Title I reading paraprofessional for Jack Jackter Intermediate School, including salary and benefits, for a savings of \$28,584; a .2 FTE Math Leadership teacher at Bacon Academy, for a savings of \$9,329; and a .2 FTE social worker for Bacon Academy, for a savings of \$9,329.

Board members felt there was a real need for the additional staffing at Bacon Academy, especially because of overcrowded classes and students unable to take certain courses that had already been maxed out.

"We are trying to meet the needs of all kids," BOE Chairman Bill Hettrick said.

Ultimately, while they were included on the list of potential reductions, Loiselle and administration recommended to the board keeping the reading paraprofessional, the Math Leadership teacher and the social worker, but making the other reductions that were on the list Loiselle had presented to the board; these cuts would total \$154,281.

The reduction of the proposed enrichment

teacher at the middle school caused tensions to rise at Tuesday's meeting. Hettrick, school board vice chair Tim Lamp and board member Mary Lynn Burke felt this addition was necessary in order for Colchester Public Schools to move forward.

However, BOE members Mike Egan, Betsy Ciccone, John Mazzarella and Monica Swyden-Bolles wondered where else \$57,576 could be found, and felt it wasn't worth risking the insurance or capital project accounts in order to fund it. There was discussion, albeit briefly, of eliminating indoor track, tennis and/or golf – but this line of thought was quickly dismissed.

"The whole board needs to be in unison," Hettrick said, "or I'm worried about presenting [the budget]. It will end up being a ratio of 4-3, so it is going to pass, but we're going to have to sell it and so we all have to agree."

"I'm just not sure that we can sell this," Swyden-Bolles said. "Colchester is almost last in spending in the state of Connecticut. Our teachers are in the bottom third in the state and they take up 78 percent of the budget. There is no money. We are trying to find money that just isn't there."

But Burke, in her eight years of experience on the school board, felt that because it was a \$34 million budget, the money could be found, and she could not support it without the enrichment position.

"Taking money from health insurance to pay for something else is not responsible," Ciccone said. "I don't think we should take it from capital because we do that every year, and not sports because that has a larger affect on our students."

Egan said there was no public outcry for the enrichment position, and that although it was a very worthwhile position, the board is unable to fund it.

"This is Colchester," he said, "and times are tough."

Lamp said he felt there was a lot of "ambiguity about the capital accounts" and it was important for the BOE to make "educated judgments" about the future.

After hours of discussion, it was finally decided that the proposed enrichment teacher would in fact be reduced, and the board followed the administration's recommendations. The total cut from the budget only came to \$150,000, though, and not \$154,281, as school board members had agreed at their Feb. 28 meeting to only eliminate \$150,000 from the proposed spending plan. (Board members opted to apply that remaining \$4,281 towards proposed special education furniture.)

The new, \$34.53 million budget passed 4-3, with Hettrick, Lamp and Burke opposed.

Colchester Town Grand List Increases by 1.9 Percent

by Kristina Histen

The Oct. 1, 2007, grand list of taxable properties totals \$1,268,783,960, according to Town John Chaponis.

The figure represents a 1.9 percent increase over the 2006 net grand list, Chaponis said. This increase is due to motor vehicles and real estate, which was predominately, all new residential new homes. There was no commercial growth.

Colchester historically has larger percentage increases than the other towns in the region, and that continued this year, Chaponis said. While the percentage increase is lower than the "ten year average prior to revaluation of 2006," it is consistent with last year, Chaponis said.

"During those 11 years (1994-2005) prior to the 2006 revaluation we were averaging a 4-5 percent Grand List growth per year," Chaponis said in an e-mail. "However, we also were averaging 100 new houses per year. Last year, we had 51 new residential starts and 21 of them were over-55 (years of age) developments which have lower assessments due to their smaller average size."

There was growth in two of the three categories of taxable property: real estate and motor vehicle. There was a decrease in personal property.

The biggest dollar jump occurred in real estate, which saw a \$17.78 million net increase over last year, or 1.64 percent. The motor vehicle portion of the grand list was the second largest, growing by \$5.69 million, or 5.53 percent.

Personal property decreased by 1.38 percent over last year, which is not uncommon, Chaponis said. Personal property is mainly "business equipment" which depreciates from year to year, he said.

Comparisons of the 2006 list with the 2007 list show real estate rising from \$1,085,680,600 in 2006 to \$1,103,468,080 in 2007, an increase of \$17,787,480; motor vehicles rising from \$102,991,560 in 2006 to \$108,687,870 in 2007, an increase of \$5,696,310; and personal property dropping from \$37,843,290 in 2006 to

\$37,328,010 in 2007, a decrease of \$515,280.

The combined total of \$1,246,515,450 in 2006 went to \$1,268,783,960 in 2007, an increase of \$22.26 million over the previous year.

The top 10 taxpayers in real estate on the 2007 grand list totals \$46,103,700 and is led by Country Place of Colchester LTD Partners, with a total net value of \$10,554,500, comprising 22.89 percent of the real estate portion of the grand list. The second-highest taxpayer is SS1 Colchester LLC and has a net value of \$7,971,800, making up 17.29 percent of the real estate portion of the grand list. In third place is S & S Worldwide Inc., totaling \$4,903,400 in net value, or 10.64 percent of the real estate portion of the grand list.

The remaining seven top taxpayers own property ranging in value from just over \$4 million to just over \$2 million.

They are: Genesis Health Ventures of Bloomfield IN at \$4,268,300; Balaban Road Associates LLC at \$3,768,900; Sharr Realty LLC at \$3,320,000; City of Norwich at \$3,152,100; Colchester Realty LLC at \$2,972,900; GND Too of Colchester LLC at \$2,600,300; and Old Hartford RD LLC at \$2,591,500.

The top 10 taxpayers in personal property on the 2007 grand list totals \$19,206,105 with Connecticut Light & Power Co. taking the lead. The utility's property has a net value of \$8,484,540, making up 44.18 percent of the personal property section of the grand list. Alpha Q Inc. is second-highest with a net value of \$3,466,675, totaling up 18.05 percent of the personal property portion of the list. In third place is S & S Worldwide Inc. at \$1,830,700 in net value, 9.53 percent of the personal property portion of the grand list.

The remaining seven are Stop & Shop Supermarket Co. at \$1,391,900; Laidlaw Transit Inc. at \$1,161,980; Maxi Drug Inc. at \$758,690; Richard P. Baldi Jr. at \$580,560; Elizabeth Manafort and Stephen Hanley at \$572,330; Cingular Wireless LLC at \$508,590; and Backus Properties Inc. at \$450,140.

East Hampton Police News

2/21 — A 17-year-old female juvenile was involved in a one-vehicle accident on Flanders Road, one-tenth of a mile east of Smith Street, East Hampton Police report. The juvenile was issued a ticket for failure to drive right and having a passenger in violation of the three months after issue, police say.

2/24 — David M. Palmieri, 28, of 424 East Haddam-Moodus Rd, Moodus, and Brian J. Halibozek, 27, of 47 River Rd., Haddam, were arrested for third-degree burglary, sixth-degree larceny, third-degree conspiracy to commit burglary, and sixth-degree conspiracy to commit larceny, police say.

2/29 — Heath R. Galvin, 18, of 61 North Main St., was arrested for violation of a protective order, police report.

2/29 — Mary Beth Barner, 42, of 286 Niantic River Rd., Waterford, was issued a ticket for failure to have a stop lamp and failure to renew registration, police report.

3/3 — William Dickenson, 49, of 4 Wangonk Tr., was issued a ticket for operating an unreg-

istered motor vehicle, police say.

3/3 — Gary E. Gustafson, 44, of 7 Barton Hill Rd., was issued a ticket for failure to obey a stop sign, police say.

3/3 — A 17-year-old female juvenile was arrested pursuant to a warrant for the charge of second-degree criminal mischief, police report.

3/3 — Frank Mott, 69, of 8 Hayes Rd., was involved in a one-vehicle accident on Hayes Road, 150 feet east of Forrest Street, police say. Mott was arrested for failure to have insurance, police report.

3/5 — Tammy J. Sperry, 32, of 125 Main St., Portland, was arrested pursuant to a warrant on charges of interfering with a police officer, two counts of failure to appear, police report.

3/5 — Bernard C. Jarzabek, 47, of 3 Middletown Ave., was arrested for second-degree breach of peace, misuse of marker plate, operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating without insurance, police say.

Portland Police News

3/6 — Kathleen McGuigan, 27, of 67 Freestone Ave., was charged with second-degree failure to appear, Portland Police say.

3/7 — Chester Ives, 20, of 177 Rose Hill Rd., was charged with third-degree assault, second-degree threatening, breach of peace and first-degree failure to appear, police say.

3/8 — A 14-year-old male was referred to Juvenile Court on charged of disorderly conduct, police say.

Obituaries

Hebron

Jeanne Scott

Jeanne (Bufkin) Scott, 81, of Amston, widow of Dennis Scott, died Sunday, March 9, at Hartford Hospital. Born Feb. 6, 1927 in Hazelhurst, MS, she was the daughter of the late William and Nora (Allen) Bufkin. She was a retired Certified Nurses Aide, having worked at Liberty Hall Nursing Home in Colchester. Jeanne had been an active member of the Christian Life Assembly of God Church in Willimantic.

She is survived by her son Clifton Scott of Amston, daughter Linda Knowles-Didero of Coventry, eight grandchildren Michelle, Daniella, Greg, Robert, Amber, Renee, Shayne and Jesika, also ten great grandchildren Jimmy, Jenna, Anthony, Jonathan, Jovan, Justice, Marissa, Kayla, Ellianna, Kyla, and her beloved pet dog Smudge. She was predeceased by a son Ernest Scott, a daughter Gretechen Solano, a brother Royce Bufkin, and sister Haskel Waller.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, March 12, in the Spencer Funeral Home 112 Main St. East Hampton. Burial followed in the family plot in Lakeview Cemetery in East Hampton. Friends called at the funeral home Tuesday, March 11. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the Christian Life Assembly of God Church 143 Windham Rd. Willimantic, CT 06226. To leave online condolences or for directions visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

East Hampton

Jeannette Lucinda Johnston

Jeannette Lucinda (Young) Johnston, 83, of East Hampton, passed away Wednesday, March 5, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Oct. 10, 1924, in Randolph, VT, one of six children, she was the daughter of the late Frank and Edie Young. Jean was predeceased by her husband Robert "Rob" Johnston. They had resided at Terp Dairy Farm in East Hampton where they raised their four children, Kathleen Collins and husband Ted of Enfield, Lucinda Giemza and husband Gene of Cambridge NY, Corinne Thresher and Robert Johnston both of East Hampton, six grandchildren and six great grandchildren. She was also predeceased by her son-in-law James Thresher.

Jean was an avid gardener with a special fondness of flowers and she found great pleasure in feeding the birds. She was also a great lover of animals especially her cats Girlkitty and Chubb-Chubb. She was employed at King's Dept. Store in Middletown for many years and also worked at Cobalt Market until retiring at the age of 72. The family wishes to thank the staff at the Palliative Care Unit at Middlesex Hospital for their loving care and concern.

A graveside service was held Monday, March 10, in Gilead Cemetery in the Gilead section of Hebron, with the Rev. Thomas Kennedy officiating. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Connecticut Children's Medical Center Foundation 12 Charter Oak Place Hartford, CT 06106. The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, has care of arrangements.

Portland

George E. Hanson

George E. Hanson, 92, of Portland peacefully departed this life on Wednesday, March 5. He was predeceased by his loving wife Helen, who died in 2007 after 64 years of marriage, and by his sister Mabel H. Hughes of Middletown. He is survived by his sister Grace H. Kitzmiller of Portland and brother Norman P. Hanson of Portland. He leaves four children, Shirley H. LaBrecque and husband Rodney LaBrecque of Wilbraham, MA; Barbara Hanson and husband Earl Peattie of Cromwell; Carole Hanson of Coventry, RI; and Robert Hanson of New Britain; also grandchildren Nicole LaBrecque, Christer LaBrecque and Michael Westcott, and many nieces and nephews. George was born in September 1915 to the late Axel and Alida Hanson and was a lifelong resident of Portland.

He graduated from Portland High School in 1931 as valedictorian, and went on to receive a degree from Morse Business College. He was employed by the home office of Hartford Insurance Company for 40 years prior to his retirement in 1975. George was a veteran of World War II, serving as a Link Trainer in the Army Air Corps, where he was assigned to posts in Miami Beach and Homestead, Florida. He was a lifelong member of Zion Lutheran Church and was active in many groups including the finance and building committees, the choir, chime choir and men's chorus. George loved music and was a member of the Four Fours Glee Club and the Hartford Insurance Company's chorus.

Among his many pastimes, he enjoyed bowling, softball, tennis and golf for many years, as well as playing bridge. He was an avid Scrabble player and crossword puzzler who enjoyed word games and writing rhymes and poems for all occasions. During retirement he served as a volunteer at Middlesex Hospital, and was active in the local AARP chapter and the Portland Senior Center. George always enjoyed summer stays at their cottage on the Rhode Island shore and winter trips to Florida. He was a person of many talents and interests, and was known for his honesty, integrity, and intelligence, as well as his skill with numbers and accounting. His family and friends appreciated his ready sense of humor. The family would like to thank George's home caregivers and the staff of the Hospice Unit of Middlesex Hospital for their diligent and compassionate care.

Relatives and friends called at Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, on Sunday, March 9. A funeral service was held Monday, March 10, at the Zion Lutheran Church with the Rev. James Reemts officiating. Interment in Swedish Cemetery, Portland. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Zion Lutheran Church, Portland or the Hospice Care Program of Middlesex Hospital.