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## Hebron Aiming to Improve Recycling Efforts

by Sarah McCoy

In terms of recycling the Town of Hebron is getting "around a C."

That grade is according to Mike Harder, a Hebron resident and former Bureau Chief of Waste Management for the State of Connecticut. Now retired, Harder is collaborating with Hebron Public Works Director Andy Tierney to improve recycling townwide.

Of all the solid waste collected in town, only about 21 percent is separated for recycling. This is under the state average of 28 percent and far under the state goal of 58 percent. In hopes of turning this around, Harder and Tierney are appealing to the pocketbooks of Hebron's residents.

Currently it costs the town \$61 to burn a ton of trash at the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority (CRRA). As of July 1, this number will go up to \$72 a ton. This is in stark contrast to recyclables, which the town actually gets back \$10 a ton for.

"If we can get people to help recycle then we can hopefully avoid the sticker fee or pay to throw initiatives that we'll need

to offset the increase in CRRA's cost," Tierney explained. "Because right now, I just don't have it in my budget."

With a little more education, pushing and prodding, Harder knows residents can do better and the results, he said, will be felt not only in the environment but in the wallet.

"You hear all the time people complain about taxes," Harder said. "Well, here is something people control in their own hands that can reduce the cost of government."

The rate of recycling for those residents who bring their trash to the transfer station is 26 percent. If this number were to go up just two percentage points, the savings would be about \$4,000. If the number were to increase to the state goal of 58 percent, the town would save over \$50,000.

And those figures don't even include the savings for residents who have curbside trash pick-up. Harder reports that town residents who have All-Waste pick up their trash – about 50 percent of residents – only

recycle about 16 percent of their trash. If they would increase that number to 28 percent, they would save \$20,000, assuming All-Waste passes all the savings down to their customers.

One way in which residents can improve their recycling habits is with a simple phone call to All-Waste.

"Get another recycling bin," Harder urged. "Visually people see a large can and a small bin and, once the bin is full, everything else goes in the can. If you want to recycle more, get more room."

Harder also suggested that residents become familiar with what, exactly, can be recycled. For example, pasta and cereal boxes can be recycled, as can junk mail, juice boxes, and batteries. A complete list of all the items that can be recycled is available on the town's web site, [www.hebronct.com](http://www.hebronct.com).

"We're not looking to beat up the public," Tierney said. "We want to work with the public."

Tierney said that, as Recycling Coordi-

nator for Hebron, he has challenged the schools in town to increase their recycling. Tierney and Harder hope to visit the schools and inform students about its importance and how they can help.

"Hopefully," Tierney said, "the students will take what they learn at school and apply it to their lives at home."

Other new initiatives the town is undertaking to promote recycling include the installation of recycling bins at the ball fields, the distribution of fliers at the Transfer Station to inform residents of the recycling process, and a forthcoming update to the town's web site.

With all the financial benefits that recycling brings, it is easy to overlook the obvious environmental benefits. Studies have shown that no other single act has a larger impact on reducing green house gas emissions than recycling.

Those with questions about recycling or the Transfer Station can call Tierney at the Town Garage at 228-2871.

# East Hampton Man Faces Multiple Charges After Shot by Son

by Michael McCoy

A local resident shot in the neck by his nine-year-old son was arrested last week on multiple charges, East Hampton police report.

Joseph Simonelli, 60, of 23 Wopowog Trl., was arrested April 3 and charged with criminally negligent storage of firearms, risk of injury/impairing morals of a minor, first-degree reckless endangerment, second-degree falsely reporting an incident and second-degree giving a false statement, police say.

According to documents on file at Middletown Superior Court, East Hampton police dispatch received a call from Marlborough's Middlesex Hospital Emergency Clinic at 8:42 p.m. Sunday, March 30, reporting that Simonelli was at the facility with a gun shot wound in his neck.

Officer Kevin Wilcox went to the clinic to speak with Simonelli, who told him that while in his driveway getting cigarettes, he felt a pain in his neck just before hearing a rifle shot, the court documents state. He later claimed there are "frequently poachers around his home."

However, the court documents say, officers John Wilson and Charles Harmon "were unable to locate any blood or indication that Simonelli was in fact shot outside his driveway," during their visit to Simonelli's Wopowog Road residence. They did, however, find "an empty long gun case as well as scattered .22 caliber casings, pellets, etc." on the rear deck, the court documents state.

According to Wilson, Simonelli said his wife, Alexandria, 48, offered to call 911, but he declined, opting to go directly to a hospital.

Wilson said Alexandria returned to the home around 9:15 that night, but was skittish and would not let the officers enter the home because, "her husband has valuables in the home," court documents state. She did, however, corroborate the poachers' stray round theory, as

did their nine-year-old son.

Wilson remained at the house throughout the night. At 12:50 a.m., Alexandria Simonelli returned to the home, and shortly thereafter Wilcox and East Hampton Police Sgt. Michael Fitzpatrick arrived. This time, Wilson said, Alexandria Simonelli "was cordial and once inside she permitted us to walk freely throughout the home." However, he said, "the home was in complete disarray. The interior was deplorably cluttered with items and debris of varying nature and origin. We noticed that there were scattered bullet casings and live rounds throughout the home."

Wilson said he, Wilcox and Simonelli "located a gun cabinet that was wide open and completely accessible in [the son's] bedroom." That cabinet was filled with firearms, the court documents state, and "more firearms, dangerous knives, and vast amounts of ammunition" littered the rest of the room.

Wilson said officers found a myriad of holes in the walls, including small ones that may have come from a .22 caliber round. All told, police found 12 .22 caliber rifles, one .22 caliber pistol, and two BB rifles in the room of the nine-year-old, according to court documents.

Further inspection of the living room yielded the discovery of a hole the size of a .22 caliber round in a couch, the documents state. The hole was located about where someone's neck would be situated when sitting down, according to the court documents, and the officers found blood on the couch as well.

Wilson interviewed Alexandria Simonelli again at 2:20 a.m., where she recanted her original story, explaining that the lie sprung out of fearing her husband. She said he "has repeatedly threatened to kill her and bury her in the yard on past occasions."

According to the court documents, Alexan-

dria Simonelli told police she arrived home from work that evening between 8:15 and 8:30. Shortly thereafter, she said, Joseph Simonelli was on the living room couch, when their son entered the room and showed his father a gun with a scope on it. The son left the room and returned with a different gun, she told police, and this time he pointed the gun at his father while showing it to him.

Suddenly, Alexandria Simonelli told police, her husband yelled, "I'm shot, I'm shot!" followed by her son's exclaiming, "Mom, I didn't mean to! I didn't know there was anything in it!"

Joseph Simonelli corroborated that story to police at around 4:45 a.m., according to court documents.

Court documents state that police later searched the Connecticut Pistol Permit registry and found that one of Simonelli's pistols was listed as "revoked" for unknown reasons. Checking with the state Department of Public Safety, police found that Simonelli has 39 registered and two unregistered firearms, according to court documents. Wilson also noted that Simonelli has had at least six prior arrests and associated misdemeanor convictions since 1979.

Officers Wilcox and Wilson obtained a search and seizure warrant on March 31, and spent five and a half hours scouring the residence that day. In addition to the weapons in the son's room, police found rifles, shotguns, and machine guns totaling 62 altogether. They also, court documents state, found 10 pistols, one flare gun, two crossbows, one blowgun, one grenade launcher and "massive amounts of ammunition." Further search also yielded the discovery of more rifles and pistols in the son's room, bringing the total up to 20 firearms.

According to court documents, the nine-year-old told police he "likes to play with his rifles and check them out," which is what he explained he was doing on March 30. He also told police he checked the rifle to make sure it was empty before showing it to his dad.

When his father told him to put it away, he went to his room, but came back, the boy told police. However, the court documents state, he was not sure if he had picked up the same rifle or a different one. Police said the boy told them that "whenever he plays with any gun, he usually keeps his finger away from the trigger to be safe. However, he heard a loud bang and the next thing he knew, his dad was holding his neck."

The boy told police he had not tried to point the gun at his father put figured he must have when he saw this. Wilson recalled, "He said that he was scared because he thought he might have killed his dad," according to court documents.

The boy called the shooting accidental, telling police "he usually only shoots rifles when he's outside with his dad," court documents state. The boy told police "he's never shot anybody before and doesn't plan on doing it again" and "he doesn't even want to see another gun again," according to court documents.

The day after Joseph Simonelli was arrested, Alexandria Simonelli was charged by police with criminally negligent storage of firearms, risk of injury/impairing morals of a minor, first-degree reckless endangerment and second-degree falsely reporting an incident, police say.

Joseph and Alexandria Simonelli were initially arraigned in Middletown Superior Court April 3 and 8, respectively. He is due back in court April 24, while she is due in court April 23.

## RHAM School Board Sends Budget to Voters

by Sarah McCoy

Following a public hearing Monday night, the RHAM Board of Education officially sent its proposed \$23.56 million 2008-09 budget to referendum.

The referendum will take place May 6 in each of the three RHAM towns. The RHAM middle and high schools serve residents of Andover, Hebron and Marlborough.

The regional school board voted unanimously to recommend the proposed budget, which represents a 4.66 percent increase over the current year's spending.

Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski began Monday's public hearing with an overview of the proposed 2008-09 schools budget. His goals for the district included maintaining the current programming, meeting the legal requirements for special education, maintaining class sizes conducive to learning, and addressing the issues that have risen as a result of the increased participation in athletics.

Of the \$1.05 million proposed budget increase, \$917,217 would go to employee salaries and benefits. This number represents a 3 percent raise for all union employees and additional staffing at the high school. With a projected increase of 47 students at the high school, Principal Scott Leslie requested .4 positions in English, math, science, social studies and health/physical education.

These positions will most likely be filled by current members of the staff teaching six periods instead of the traditional five, Siminski has said.

With an increase in overall students, RHAM will also see an increase in special education students. As a result, Director of Special Education Brian Morin has requested an additional special education teacher and two paraprofessionals to accommodate the 22 additional students expected at the middle and high schools.

This year's recommended budget also includes \$21,000 for the district to hire additional assistant coaches for many of the RHAM High School athletic teams.

"We're seeing an increase in participation in

athletics," Siminski said Monday night. "And it's gotten to a point where we feel we need to add adult supervision in the name of safety."

The recommended 2008-09 budget also calls for a \$205,000 increase in debt services. This money will be used to pay off the final bond taken by the district last year for the building construction project.

At Monday night's meeting only a handful of residents came to give feedback to the BOE regarding the budget. Jay Linddy, chairman of Andover's Board of Education and also a member of that town's Board of Selectmen, commended the RHAM board for their "outstanding job." He said the average budget increase for boards of education in the state is 5.99 percent and thanked the RHAM board for coming in much lower than that.

Hebron resident Beth Fitzgerald, meanwhile, continued her quest to see additional money be added to the budget for lacrosse. Fitzgerald has stood before the school board several times in the past year, asking the board to support boys lacrosse. The sport is currently offered at a club level at RHAM, meaning team members and their parents have to pay for everything from uniforms and equipment to referees, transportation, and coaching. Fitzgerald asked the Board of Education to supplement the fundraisers the team already does.

School board chair Sue Griffiths responded by saying that the board based its decision not to include funding for boys lacrosse on the findings of the athletics subcommittee. That committee found that while the district is in compliance with Title IX currently, adding an additional boy's sport would tip the balance. "If we add one sport, it may mean that we have to add others," Griffiths said.

Immediately following the public hearing the Board of Education reconvened and heard two motions. The first was to recommend the proposed \$24.56 million budget go forth to a tri-town referendum to be held on May 6. The second was to adjourn.

Both motions passed unanimously.

## Residents Approve New RHAM Superintendent Offices

by Sarah McCoy

Residents from Hebron, Andover and Marlborough this week okayed spending up to \$350,000 to construct an addition off RHAM High School to be used as administrative offices for the superintendent of schools.

The approval came at a district meeting held Tuesday night in Hebron.

Currently, the regional school district pays over \$54,000 a year to lease a 2,200-square-foot space on Liberty Drive in the center of Hebron. Instead of putting that money towards rent, the district will construct new offices this summer and use the \$54,000 allotted each year to pay off the new construction.

"By building and using the money to pay off the note, it eventually becomes something to eliminate from the budget altogether," Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski said of the proposal.

The scant number of residents who attended Tuesday's district meeting agreed with Siminski. The motion to move forward with the project passed unanimously, 10-0, with most of the votes coming from Board of Education members. "Based on the questions we were getting and the positive reaction from residents, it struck me that this was a plan that made sense to them," Board of Education Chair Sue Griffiths said.

The plans for the new addition call for a 1,458-square-foot office that will run parallel

to the counseling offices at the high school, located at 85 Wall St. in Hebron. In a cost-saving measure, the offices will not contain their own restroom; rather, administrators will use the existing high school lavatories. The office will have its own separate entryway and the facade will be consistent with the current look of the building.

These offices will house Siminski, Director of Finance William Mazzara and administrative assistant Kathy Mund.

For the past year the administration has been considering various options for their offices. The current set-up on Liberty Drive is just too big for the three individuals who work out of the administrative offices plus its away from the school, Siminski reported. The small addition to the high school will enable the district to save on insurance and utility costs as well as bring the administrators into the fold of the school.

At the same time residents were approving the expenditure for the project, the Hebron Planning and Zoning Commission gave the green light for construction. Griffiths said the district will now work on bid documents to move forward with construction.

Griffiths said she expects construction to occur this summer, and that there would be enough time to move the administrators before their lease on Liberty Drive expires on Sept. 30.

# Marlborough Youth Burned in Explosion ‘Healing Amazingly’

by Kristina Histen

The 10-year-old boy that was severely burned in a backyard explosion is making great progress at the Shriners Hospital for Children in Boston, his mother said.

The community is continuing to support the family with various fundraisers, including an upcoming Rock-a-thon next week.

On Feb. 8, Mike Hyde and his son, Jordan, 10, were burning brush on their property, 80 Chapman Rd., when fumes ignited from a gas can and exploded. Jordan suffered from third- and fourth-degree burns on his face, hands, back, stomach, neck and thighs; Mike had third-degree burns on his hands and face. LifeStar took both to Westchester Medical Center Burn Unit in Valhalla, NY.

After about a week and a half, Mike was discharged from Westchester, his wife Leslie Hyde said. After about three and a half weeks, they were able to have Jordan moved to Shriners because they were not happy with the care at Westchester, she said.

“In the future I would hope that when an accident like this happens, whether or not it be a burn accident, to avoid sending people to Westchester,” Leslie said. “It’s just a better burn unit at Mass General. I would feel so much better if I had access to this hospital earlier.”

Leslie is grateful that they are now “in the right place,” noting how great a hospital it has been. She said as soon as Jordan was ready, the hospital began putting garments on him. He has been “healing amazingly” because of how well they take care of the wounds, she said. To help minimize some of the scarring, Jordan will have to wear custom fit pressure garments and a facemask for 23 hours of the day for at least a year, but most likely up to two years, Leslie said.

The pressure of the garment tells the body to stop thick scar tissue and helps to circulate the blood flow. The plastic mask is made with a computer; it takes a picture of the face and produces a mask specifically designed for the contours of the face, she said. Like the pressure garments, it applies pressure to the healing face so the scars don’t have raised ridges like a normal scar. Leslie said after the skin graft on his back, it now looks like it was “gnawed off by a shark.” Mike and Leslie are hoping the pressure garments will be able to fix some of the scarring, and they are not sure about plastics yet for the future.

Jordan is “handling it,” Leslie said. When he first discovered his back he cried that the hospital took too much skin off, but she explained it was all burnt. He is discovering his scars, but has yet to see a mirror. His face is badly marked, she said, but work has not been done on it so far.

Because he was healthy and strong before the accident, he has been making fast progress. Jordan has started to walk around and “is pleased to be up and out of bed,” Leslie said. He is anxious to get up, and has been doing it more and more everyday, she said. However, since he was bedridden for so long and the muscles in his legs are weak, he has been having difficulty walking. Still, he hasn’t lost much muscle though, Leslie said, “just lost a lot of flesh.”

Part of the Shriners’ plan is called the reentry program, which encourages Jordan to get back to school as soon as possible so he can feel like his life is normal. He has school sessions now, working on things that he would be doing back in Marlborough. Papers and books from school have been sent to him, and mentally that is helping him recover by realizing that life is going on, Leslie said. When he is

ready to go back to school, representatives from Shriners will go with him and do whatever the school would like. This usually involves talking with students to socialize the issue and explain the importance of the pressure garments and the dangers of fire. It will make it easier on Jordan so he doesn’t have to answer these questions on his own, Leslie said.

As for Mike, Leslie said, he is doing “good,” but “having difficulty with post-traumatic stress,” and there are parts of the accident he will never talk about again.

“This has made my family unit closer,” Leslie said. “We’ve realized how important a family is. It is usual that in times of trouble people find that out.”

Before Jordan is discharged, he will have to achieve a “plan of milestones” the hospital comes up with. Leslie admitted that she doesn’t know what to expect in the future, but the goal in mind is to have as good a quality of life as they can after the accident.

“One of the things they help us manage here is to try to take it day by day,” she said. “We’ll be coming back to Shriners over the years as Jordan grows and I don’t know what it’s going to be like. I’ve taken this like how it comes. I don’t have a lot of expectations because they’ve made me feel like they’ll help me deal with whatever comes up.”

There has been quite a response by the community to this traumatic incident, and they have continuously shown their support. Leslie admitted to being “very surprised” about the community reaction, since her family is relatively new to town. Jordan has been receiving a lot of letters and packages from school and has been on a lot of people’s minds, which has really made him feel good, Leslie said.

“Jordan’s been helped greatly, and so have I,” she said.

On April 18, members of the Marlborough Congregational Church Junior High Youth Group will hold a “Rock-a-thon” to benefit Jordan, Youth Director Christine Walz said. The event is open to all young people in grades 5-12 and so far about 30 have signed up but they are hoping for 50, she said.

The Church Youth Group has been thinking about Jordan, sending him some well wishes through blessings and prayers, Walz said. Because they can’t see him or hear from him, “people feel helpless,” and this is a way they can do something.

Walz’s fifth-grade daughter, Kendra, will also participate in the “Rock-a-thon.” Kendra did not know Jordan directly, but said she and her friends were “really scared” when they heard about the accident. Kendra got involved because, she thought, “If I was badly burned and people were doing a fund for me and no one did it, I would feel awfully bad. So I want to do it for him.”

The goal is to raise at least \$5,000 for Jordan and his family by collecting pledges from community members, school and family friends, and although Walz doesn’t know how much has been raised so far, she does think they’ll make the goal. After worship services a lot of pledges and donations for themed baskets have been made. Children in preschool and all the way up to senior citizens have been participating, she said.

“It is nice to know people care when something like this happens,” Leslie said, “It has made me very humble. It is nice to know such friendly people who care about other families. Marlborough and Hebron have been wonderful. I’m glad I live in Marlborough.”

# Marlborough Finance Board Discusses Budget

by Kristina Histen

No cuts have been made yet from the 2008-09 town operations budget by the Board of Finance (BOF), but many questions were answered at the board’s meeting Wednesday night.

According to BOF Chair Cathy Gaudinski, if no changes are made from the proposed budget from the Capital Non-Recurring Expenditures (CNR) account, there will be an estimated .92 mill rate increase that would cause a 3.63 percent increase for taxpayers. The proposed 2008-09 budget would be a 4.14 percent increase over current year’s spending.

Gaudinski first mentioned that a 3.67 percent increase was recommended for the local Board of Education (BOE) budget and she had already discussed it with BOE Chair Maria Grove. There were concerns regarding salary increases and new positions in the budget “considering the town’s economic responsibilities right now.”

Finance board members then asked why certain things were needed for Public Works, Land Use and CNR on the 2008-09 proposed budget where the Board of Selectmen (BOS), Economic Development and Public Works were able to answer.

One question was why a \$5,000 copier was needed for Public Works. Currently, the copier they use is one that got replaced from the Building Department 10 years ago. In order for Public Works employees to print off maps to give to their workers, they have to head out to the Town Hall, which can be frustrating for the vendor waiting at the desk. They also have someone in for maintenance at least twice a year to fix it.

“The copier probably produces more air pollution than all of our vehicles combined,” Public Works employee Chris Corsa joked.

Gaudinski however felt that \$5,000 was a lot of money for a copier, and wondered how inconvenient it was to go to Town Hall.

Another main issue was why \$42,000 was needed for a new roof and gutters at the Town Hall. First Selectman Bill Black and Corsa explained that the present roof was installed in 1984 and not very well. Over the years patching has been done, but mold has begun to form.

Members of the BOF also questioned the importance of new computers. Director of Planning and Development Peter Hughes said the computer for Land Use is eight years old, and he has to boot it four times every morning, twice in the afternoon and by evening it hardly even works. Black said that there are three new computers in Town Hall, but others are up to 15 years old. Gaudinski thought they were still spending money on computers being refreshed, but apparently that stopped in 2004 and computer replacement has slowed down, Hughes said.

Other questions involved new equipment for Public Works, a new water conditioning system in conjunction with Parks and Rec. and debt bonding.

The next step for the budget process is to discuss cuts in order to set the town operations budget. That discussion was to take place Thursday, after press time. A public hearing on the proposed budget will be held Monday, April 28, at 7:30 p.m. in the cafeteria of Marlborough Elementary School, 25 School Dr.

## Route 6 Accident in Andover Sends Three Teens to Hospital

by Sarah McCoy

Three teenagers were rushed to the hospital after their SUV crashed into a boulder early Sunday morning in Andover, according to state police.

Dustin Balula, 18, of 182 Route 66, Columbia, was driving his 1996 Chevrolet Blazer just before 5 a.m. on Sunday morning, state police from the Troop K barracks in Colchester said. The vehicle, which was heading eastbound on Route 6, traveled off the roadway, first striking a boulder and then a utility pole, police said.

The accident occurred just after the Burnap Brook Road intersection with Route 6.

Balula and his rear passenger Natalie Stgermain, 18, of 422 Jerusalem Rd., Windham, were both able to extract them-

selves from the vehicle and were transported to Hartford Hospital by Andover ambulance, police said. Balula suffered a broken leg, police said, while Stgermain received lacerations to her forehead.

Michael Ciurylo, 17, of 244 Route 66, Columbia, was riding in the passenger seat at the time of the accident, police said, and he had to be extricated from the vehicle by the Jaws of Life. Ciurylo was transported to Hartford Hospital by LifeStar helicopter for a broken femur, police said.

At press time Balula and Stgermain had been discharged from the hospital, and Ciurylo continues to be treated in the Intensive Care Unit, a Hartford Hospital spokesman said.

## Alleged Burglars Caught by Portland Police

by Michael McCoy

Portland Police Lieutenant Ron Milardo reported Wednesday that police have solved the rash of burglaries that the town has experienced in the past three weeks.

Milardo estimated there were five burglaries, which occurred on and around Old Marlborough Road, Cox Road and Penfield Hill Road. He said the alleged burglars – who Milardo would not name – forced entry into the homes and made off with thousands of dollars worth of cash, electronic equipment (including computers) and, primarily, jewelry.

Over the past few weeks, police have been working with neighboring departments on the case. Officer Gary Jarzabek had led the in-

vestigation, and visited area pawnshops, where items have been confiscated, Milardo said.

Two of the suspects were apprehended in Wethersfield last week, driving a stolen vehicle, Milardo said.

Jarzabek visited Hartford Correctional Facility on Monday, questioned one of the suspects, and secured a written confession, Milardo said. The statement also implicates two other men, Milardo said. All are in their 20s and none are Portland residents, he said.

Milardo said the confessor stated that the motive for the burglaries was to feed a drug addiction. He said police hope to acquire the arrest warrants within the next three weeks.

## Body Found in Haddam

A Haddam Neck man was found dead in Haddam Monday, April 7, state police said.

According to state police, Stefan James Lasak, 22, of 29 Hurd Hill Rd., died after an “altercation” in the overnight hours with Benjamin James, 25, of Walkely Hill Road, Haddam.

Police said that, at about 9:45 a.m. Monday, James walked into Troop F in Westbrook to report he was “involved in an incident that caused harm and the possible death of a person” and that “the person with whom he had the altercation could be found on Plains Road in Haddam.”

State Troopers responded to the secluded area described by James, police said, and did in fact locate Lasak near the power lines off of Plains Road. Lasak was pronounced dead at the scene, police said.

According to State Police Lt. J. Paul Vance, the state Medical Examiner’s office determined Lasak died of “multiple stab wounds.”

James was arrested later in the day on April 7 and was charged with murder, police said. He was held on \$1 million bond, police said, and appeared in Middletown Superior Court April 8.

# Colchester School Board Puts Back in Enrichment Teacher

by **Kristina Histen**

Seven community members spoke up at the Board of Education (BOE) meeting Tuesday night to advocate for an enrichment teacher, and the room was packed with others who had the same concerns, but were just too shy to speak up.

The residents were likely thrilled when, at the end of the night, the school board voted to put the teacher back in its proposed 2008-09 budget.

"We need an enrichment teacher at the middle school and CES (Colchester Elementary School)," resident Andrea Lamp said. "These students need to get the education they deserve."

Other residents said that without an enrichment teacher it was like students being at the fourth grade level but stuck in kindergarten, while others said the "smart kids" need to be constantly challenged or school becomes too easy for them.

At a BOE meeting on Feb. 28, the school board voted to reduce the proposed 2008-09 budget by \$150,000. Then, at the board's March 11 meeting, board members voted 4-3 to cut

the proposed enrichment teacher, in order to meet that amount.

At that meeting, BOE members Mike Egan, Betsy Ciccone, John Mazarella and Monica Swyden-Bolles wondered where else could \$57,576 be found, and said they felt it wasn't worth risking the health insurance or capital project accounts in order to fund the teacher. But BOE Chair Bill Hettrick, Vice Chair Tim Lamp and board member Mary Lynn Burke felt this addition to the proposed budget was necessary in order for Colchester Public Schools to move forward, and in a proposed \$34.53 million budget, the money could be found.

As of last Friday, that money has been found.

At an April 2 Board of Finance (BOF) meeting, the BOF voted on a combined town/education budget that represents no tax increase for Colchester taxpayers. To help achieve a zero-mill increase, the finance board reduced the BOE budget by \$235,895 (the school board would determine where exactly those cuts needed to be made).

Last week, Superintendent of Schools Karen Loiselle and administration learned about

changes in the special education account, and therefore recommended to the board taking \$159,298 out of special education tuition and \$67,697 from special education transportation. The remaining \$8,900 would be cut from technology. Special education is a versatile account, Chief Financial Officer Maggie Cosgrove said, because students come and go, either by moving out of town or no longer needing outplacement services.

"We don't have control over those students needs," Loiselle said, "but due to needs changing, I feel confident in reducing special education and transportation."

On Monday, Loiselle also found out that another special education student would be making changes to the account. Currently, the student has outplacement education and the town must pay for that individually. However, Loiselle said, administration has been comfortable with the student's progress, and the student will be returned to the district, cutting costs in special education and transportation.

This would allow an additional \$23,231 in transportation and \$37,375 in private tuition to

be reduced from the account, totaling an additional \$60,606 added to the proposed 2008-09 budget.

"It should come as no surprise as to what I want to do with that money," Burke, a strong advocate for the enrichment position, said.

She encouraged the school board to reconsider the enrichment position and add it back to the budget now that they had the "good news." She then provided data that said it was an actual state law for gifted and talented students to be identified. The sad part about that, Burke said, is that the school doesn't have to do anything about it. Burke also quoted an article from the *Washington Post* that said, "Most talented students are falling through the cracks."

It gave Burke "great pleasure" to make the motion to add back the Enrichment teacher for the middle school with salary and benefits totaling \$57,576 for the 2008-09 proposed budget. The school board agreed.

The next step for the Board of Education budget is to go to public hearing, along with the town budget, on Monday, April 21, at 7 p.m. at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Ave.

## Columbia Scales Back Plans to Join AHM

by **Sarah McCoy**

Plans for Columbia joining AHM Youth and Family Services have hit a snag, due to budgetary concerns.

Earlier this month, the Columbia Board of Selectmen voted 3-2 in favor of reducing the amount of money the town will spend on youth services in the 2008-09 fiscal year. Instead of the \$80,000 necessary to make the town a full partner in the AHM bureau, Columbia is hoping to contribute \$28,000 for reduced services for the coming year.

"It's very disappointing," Columbia First Selectman Don Cianci said. "Unfortunately, it came to the point where the fiscally responsible thing to do was reduce the line item."

As it stands now, Columbia will allot \$14,000 to youth services in the town's 2008-09 budget, with another \$14,000 likely to come from a state grant to supplement the account. Last week, representatives from the Town of Columbia sat down with AHM Executive Director Joel Rosenberg and the Board of Directors to ask about a one-year plan with reduced services to get Columbia's foot in the door.

A decision on this is expected early next month.

"What we'll be looking at is to offer a very specific set of programs to Columbia residents," Rosenberg said. "The important thing for our member towns to know is that this move, if it were to happen, would have no impact on the services they receive from AHM."

Rosenberg said the additional staffing hours needed to cover Columbia's involvement would, most likely, come from current employees working more hours, as opposed to AHM hiring additional staff.

This plan has a caveat, though. If AHM were to allow Columbia to join as a partial member this year, it would be with the understanding

that the town would proceed with becoming a full member in 2009. "At that point, they would either join AHM as a full partner or both sides would walk away from the table," Rosenberg said, with the reason being that a long-term partial commitment could have negative impacts on the well-being of AHM and its staff.

Dick Szedga, a member of the Columbia Board of Selectmen and a former long-time employee for the state Department of Children and Families, said he was "crushed" by the decision to reduce the money allotted for AHM. He has headed up the efforts to begin offering youth service options for Columbia residents for the past year.

He thought those efforts were going to pay off when the Columbia Board of Selectmen voted in February to take the issue on whether to join AHM Youth and Family Services to town meeting, where Columbia residents would have been able to vote on the issue. However, the question never made it to town meeting after budget requests to the town came in at a staggering 17 percent increase in spending.

Through diligent planning and tough decisions the BOS in Columbia hopes to bring this number down to "around 3 percent," Szedga said.

"The good news is that the decision is strictly financial," he said. "We have been exceedingly impressed with the professionalism and the quality of services offered by AHM. The problem is the same one that many other towns are facing: How do we pay for it?"

Rosenberg is currently compiling a tentative schedule for the possible services that would be available to Columbia as a partial member. After the AHM Board of Directors has a chance to process the information, it will decide on the issue, likely at the beginning of May.

## Portland Selectmen Propose Budget with No Tax Hike

by **Michael McCoy**

After a week of budget workshops with town boards and departments, as well as six hours of deliberations, the Board of Selectmen unanimously sent its proposed 2008-09 budget to referendum Tuesday evening.

The proposed \$28.84 million budget marks a 3.03 increase from current year spending. However, the budget calls for a projected mill rate at 26.99 mills, which is identical to the current year's taxation rate.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield initially pitched a \$29.35 million budget, a 4.85 percent increase over current year spending, to the Board of Selectmen on March 5. But on Tuesday night, the selectmen voted to cut just over half a million dollars, or 1.82 percent, from that proposal, bringing it down to \$28.84 million.

The selectmen actually deliberated on the budget Monday, but waited until Tuesday to vote on the proposal. It passed 7-0.

One cut came from the fire marshal's office, which employs four people. Bransfield had wanted the four to work a total of 20 hours per week, as opposed to just working on an as-needed basis. To achieve this, she proposed increasing the pay for the office from \$19,600 to \$28,600. However, the selectmen cut it down by \$5,000, bringing the four-per commitment back down to 16 hours.

The selectmen did, though, completely retain Bransfield's proposed addition of one new police officer, which would bring the force to 11 sworn officers. The newest officer will start in January 2009, and the half-year's salary comes to \$23,000.

One of the biggest dollar changes from Bransfield's budget was not a selectmen cut at all. Pension and workmen's compensation came in lower than anticipated, decreasing the budget by \$120,000. The largest cut, \$150,000,

came from the Board of Education, bring it down to \$17.6 million.

The selectmen also cut \$150,000 from the capital nonrecurring fund. As a byproduct, the selectmen increased the vehicle maintenance line item by \$10,000, bringing it up to \$110,000.

Another \$5,500 was cut from the allotment for a Planning and Zoning Commission consultant, bringing it down to \$10,000.

Because resident Mike Dapkus will no longer be providing the fireworks show this year, Bransfield had proposed \$3,000 for the effort, which is typically paid for 100 percent by donations. The selectmen cut this item completely. The contingency fund was cut from \$100,000 to \$75,000. Finally, the BOS cut \$16,152, which eliminates a part-time position at the library that is currently vacant.

"I think the selectmen believed that we needed to pass a budget with no tax increase this year... and provide a break to the citizens," Bransfield said.

Selectman Mark Finkelstein expressed some apprehension, however, especially over decreasing pay raises for department heads.

But selectman Carl Chudzick responded, "This isn't punitive. I think it's a reflection of the economy today."

Selectman John H. Anderson said that, with this budget, "I think everybody wins, the taxpayers especially." He said proposing a zero-percent mill rate increase is "something I've been wanting to do for years."

Anderson also expressed his pleasure of the selectmen's addition of roof repairs to Brownstone Intermediate School's slate roof.

The budget will go to a town meeting at Brownstone Intermediate School on Monday, May 5, at 7 p.m. The referendum will be held one week later at the library from 6 a.m.

## Colchester Police News

4/1-James Wallington, 60, of Renee Dr., was charged with possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

4/2-Derek Okane, 18, of 419 Middletown Rd., was charged with possession of marijuana and weapon in motor vehicle, State Police said.

4/3-Terri Krol, 37, of 86 Newberry Rd., East Haddam, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

4/4-Austin Rice, 20, of 44 Jan Dr., was charged with operating under the influence of drugs/alcohol and traveling unreasonably fast for conditions, State Police said.

4/4-Paul Kus, 37, of 319 Meadowgate Rd.,

Granby, was charged with larceny from a motor vehicle, State Police said.

4/5-Ryan Morin, 27, of 386 Hartford Rd., Manchester, was charged with illegally obtaining drugs and forged prescription, State Police said.

4/5-Carole Pothier, 27, of 104B Squire St., New London, was charged with bad checks and fifth-degree larceny, State Police said.

4/7-Tyler Wilson, 18, of 44 Jan Dr., was charged with DWI, failure to stop at stop sign and possession of alcohol by a minor, State Police said.

## East Hampton Police News

4/3 — James W. Johnson, 18, of 2113 Cromwell Hill Dr., Cromwell, was arrested pursuant to a warrant on a charge of third-degree assault, East Hampton Police said.

## Portland Police News

4/2 — Jeremy Adams, 37, of 36 Miles Ave., Middletown, was charged with illegal use of credit card, second-degree larceny and second-degree failure to appear, Portland Police report.

## Marlborough Police News

4/3-A youthful offender was charged with no insurance, reckless driving and operation without registered ATV, State Police said.

4/5-John Lane, 69, of 99 Clark Hill Rd., East Hampton, was charged with second-degree harassment and breach of peace, State Police said.

# Obituaries

## East Hampton

### Stefan James Lasak

Stefan James Lasak, 22, of Haddam Neck, beloved son of Hilary James and Mary (Nopper) Lasak, died tragically Monday, April 7, in Haddam. Born Feb. 13, 1986 in Middletown, he was proud to be a lifelong resident of Haddam Neck. Stefan was a volunteer firefighter with the Haddam Neck Fire Department and had volunteered at the Haddam Neck Fair.

Besides his parents, he is survived by his maternal grandmother, Jean Nopper of Clinton; his sister, Nina Lasak of Haddam and her fiance Tucket Morrissey, and many aunts and uncles.

A memorial service will be held at a later date and burial will take place in Rock Landing Cemetery in Haddam Neck. The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, has care of the arrangements. To leave online condolences visit [www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com)

## East Hampton

### Gertrude Carmichael

Gertrude (Rida) Carmichael, 98, of North Main Street, East Hampton, widow of the late Arthur R. Carmichael, died Thursday, April 3, at the Hospital of Central Connecticut in New Britain. Born Nov. 5, 1909, in West Haven, she was the daughter of the late Charles A. and Nellie G. (Philbrook) Rida. She had retired in 1974 as the head telephone operator after being employed for 49 years for the Aetna Insurance Co.

She is survived by her step-daughter Armi and her husband Rankine Dow of Nova Scotia; three nephews and their spouses: Richard and Patricia Thompson, Alan and Mary Rida, Kenneth Baronian; five nieces and their husbands: Marilyn and Bob Ponchak, Donna and Fran Mascaro, Cheryl Thompson, Ann Richardson and Linda Baronian; many great-nieces and great-nephews; and four very dear friends, Eleanor Woodward, David Souza, Linda Naud and Lenny her mailman.

She was predeceased by her two brothers, Leroy Rida and Burton Rida and two sisters, Edith Baronian and Helen Thompson.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, on Tuesday, April 8. A graveside service will be held at a later date in Westville Cemetery in West Haven. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the East Hampton Ambulance Association, PO Box 144, East Hampton, CT 06424. To leave online condolences or for directions visit [www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com](http://www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com)

## Portland

### Jean Scheidel

Jean C. Scheidel of Port St. Lucie, FL died March 5. She was born in Middletown and had been a resident of Port St. Lucie, FL for the past six years. She previously resided in Portland and Meriden.

She is survived by her husband, Ronald Scheidel; three sons, Brian Stender of Clinton, Gary Stender of Independence, MO, and Richard Scheidel of Plainville; two daughters, Juliet S. Bailey of Southington and Jennifer Saucier of Clermont, FL. She leaves her seven beloved grandchildren and one brother, Robert Cunningham of Buffalo, NY.

A memorial service will be held May 10 at 11 a.m. at St. Mary's Church, 45 Freestone Ave., Portland. In lieu of flowers please make any donations to the American Breast Cancer or to the American Heart Association.

## Portland

### Melba Twiss Prout

Melba Twiss Prout, 94, died Sunday, April 6, at Riverwoods at Exeter, NH, where she had resided the past 13 years. Born Nov. 26, 1913 in Hartford, the daughter of Ernest B. and Ethel M. (Florence) Twiss, she resided in Portland and Glastonbury for many years. Melba was a 1936 graduate of the University of Connecticut and was a member of Pi Beta Phi Connecticut Alpha Sorority. For many years she taught Home Economics in the Middletown school system. A lifetime member of the First Congregational Church of Portland, she was also a member of the Portland Garden Club and had been a 4-H Leader.

The widow of Earle W. Prout Jr. who died in 1975, she is survived by two children, Robert E. Prout M.D. and his wife Susan of Naples, FL, and Nancy Prout Berndtson and her husband William of Lee, New Hampshire; seven grandchildren, Matthew, Rebecca and Andrew Prout, Jeffrey, Charlotte and Jason Berndtson, and Sara Nadeau; six great grandchildren, Catherine and Chase Berndtson, Jack and Eliza Noon, Noah and Joshua Prout; two sisters-in-law, Janet Prout and Jeanette Twiss; many nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of her Life will be held at Riverwoods at Exeter, NH and she will be buried in Trinity Church Cemetery in Portland. Visit [www.kentandpelczarf.com](http://www.kentandpelczarf.com) to sign an online guestbook.

## Hebron

### George Milne

George Payne McLean Milne died Tuesday, April 8, in Colchester. Born in Simsbury on Oct. 18, 1915, the son of Lorna Woodford McLean and William Durant Milne, he received the degree of Bachelor of Science from the University of Massachusetts in 1931 and Bachelor of Divinity from Yale University in 1940 and studied at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, from 1948-1949.

On Feb. 21, 1942, he married Janet Odell Milne, his late wife of 61 years. Over the course of four decades, he served as minister of the Congregational parishes in Gilead and Hebron, chaplain in the United States Navy during World War II, and minister of the Woodbridge Congregational church for 27 years. Combining his lifelong interest and pleasure in working with young people and bicycling, he led youth cycling trips through New England and the British Isles, creating relationships that have endured over the years.

After retiring to Gilead in 1979, where he tended to their tree farm, he held interim pastorates at the churches in Hebron, Lebanon, and Gilead, and he was actively involved in the Connecticut Forest and Park Association as a director and its President from 1981 to 1996. Drawing on his love of writing and community service, he authored five books that recorded his ministry of prayers and sermons and the histories of Lebanon, Gilead and the Connecticut Forest and Park Association.

He is survived by four children and their spouses, George McLean Milne and Carol Milne of Niantic and Boca Grande, FL, Margaret Milne Moulton and Peter Moulton of Concord, MA, Duncan Shand Milne and Constance Brown of Durham and Janet Emily Milne and John Kuhns of Etna, NH; his grandchildren, G. Todd and Adam Milne, Alexander and Samuel Moulton, and Gregory, Andrew and Elizabeth Neustaetter; and four great-grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at the Gilead Congregational Church at 11 a.m. on Saturday, April 19. Memorial contributions may be made to the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, 16 Meriden Rd., Rockfall, CT 06481.

## Hebron

### Ethel Damon

Ethel (Bennett) Damon of Hebron, beloved wife of Francis Damon, entered eternal peace Friday, March 28, at Manchester Memorial Hospital. Born June 8, 1922 in Hartford, Ethel was the daughter of the late Matthew and Evelyn (Elliott) Bennett. She lived most of her adult life in Hebron with her husband Francis and was employed as a secretary for the Town of Glastonbury for many years. She was an avid lifelong Boston Red Sox fan.

Along with her husband, Ethel will be remembered by her sister Evelyn Darby of Manchester, and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her brother, William Bennett, and her sister, Frances Leach. A graveside funeral service was held Wednesday, April 9, in Green Cemetery, Hubbard Street, Glastonbury. There were no calling hours. Farley-Sullivan Funeral Home, 50 Naubuc Avenue, Glastonbury, has been entrusted with the funeral arrangements.

## Portland

### Joyce Hiler

Joyce Elizabeth Kelly Hiler of Newington, formerly of Portland, died Thursday, April 3, at Hartford Hospital. She was the daughter of the late Francis D. and Olga (Jackson) Kelly. Joyce attended Portland Public Schools, Luralton Hall, and the University of Hartford. After graduation she taught at the American School for the Deaf in West Hartford until she retired. At ASD, she took great joy in working with her students and valued the life long friendships with members of the faculty and staff. When she retired, she did volunteer work at the School for Children at St. Joseph College, and at Jubilee House in Hartford.

She leaves her brother, Philip F. Kelly and his wife Susan, her sister, Sr. Louise Kelly of the Sisters of Mercy, two nieces, Laura and Maria, her nephew Phil and their spouses, grand nieces and grand nephews. Her close friend Robert Hiler also survives her. She was predeceased by her twin brother John Kelly.

The funeral was held Monday, April 7, from the Molloy Funeral Home, 906 Farmington Ave., West Hartford, with the celebration of her funeral Mass of Christian Burial in St. Peter Claver Church, West Hartford. Burial followed in St. John's Cemetery, Middletown. Calling hours were Sunday, April 6, at the funeral home. Joyce's love for teaching can be honored by making memorial contributions to Jubilee House 40 Clifford St. Hartford, CT 06114, or Trust House Inc. 155 Wyllys St. Hartford, CT 06106. Online messages of remembrance and condolences may be made at [www.molloyfuneralhome.com](http://www.molloyfuneralhome.com).

## Portland

### Charles Kalinowski

Charles "Casey" Kalinowski, 95, of MacDonough Place, Middletown, passed away on Wednesday, April 2, after a brief illness. A local resident his entire life, he was predeceased by his wife of 64 years, Eleanor Czaja Kalinowski of Middlefield, and also a son, Richard. He leaves two sons, Raymond Kalinowski of Durham and Robert Kalinowski of Columbia, and their spouses, Sandi and Lynda. Five grandchildren and four great grand children mourn his passing.

Casey was one of 11 in a Portland family, son of Charles and Eleanor Orzel Kalinowski, and is predeceased by six brothers and three sisters. A brother, Edward Kalinowski, lives in Portland.

Casey was inducted into the Portland Sports Hall of Fame and enjoyed a reputation as a fine baseball player in the Middlesex County area during the 1940s. He was a resident of Rockfall for over 55 years and owned and operated Casey's Package Store there. He was a member of Rockfall's Kosciuszko Society and a proud member (4th degree) of the Knights of Columbus. Casey has been a lifelong member of St. Mary's Church in Middletown.

Funeral arrangements were made by Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. There was a Mass of Christian burial at St. Mary's Church, Middletown, on Monday, April 7. Friends called at Biega Funeral Home on Monday, April 7. Internment was at the family plot in Middlefield Cemetery after church services.

## Andover

### Olive Carini

Olive (Langmaid) Carini, 84, of Florida and Connecticut, passed away Monday, April 7, at the Windham Hospital. Born Nov. 18, 1923 in Manchester, NH, she was the daughter of the late Willis "Twin" and Helen (Joyce) Langmaid.

Early on, she was a model in New Hampshire and went on to serve in the Army as a cryptographer during WW II; breaking the Japanese code and was thence named the "Coca Cola Girl." Most importantly, she was a devoted mother and will be remembered for her kind and gentle way.

Survivors include her three children, Colleen and husband, Leland Bradley of Amston, Helen Wolfram of Bolton and Gregory and wife, Nancy Carini of Columbia; six grandchildren, Jeffrey Thrall, Jennifer Ballsieper, Willis, Chad and Olivia Wolfram and Casey Ray Carini; five great-grandchildren, Cheyenne, Sierra and Shania Ballsieper and Abigail and Emma Thrall; and numerous extended family members and friends.

She was predeceased by her parents; two brothers, Tommy and John; and her former husband, Eugene "Paul" Carini.

The Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home of Colchester has been entrusted with private arrangements.

## Marlborough

### Leahbeth Fritsch

Leahbeth (Harvey) Fritsch, 87, of Marlborough, formerly of Wethersfield, beloved wife of Robert W. Fritsch for 67 years, died peacefully surrounded by her loving and devoted family, Tuesday, April 8, at Marlborough Health Care Center. She was born Oct. 7, 1920 in Kenosha, WI, and was the daughter of the late Elton B. and Ruth K. (Van Buskirk) Harvey.



Leahbeth was a graduate of Bulkeley High School, Class of 1938 and a member of the National Honor Society. She attended Iowa State University. Leahbeth loved gardening, painting and interior decorating. She enjoyed pressing and framing the beautiful flowers that she grew. She will be dearly missed by her family and many friends. A very special thank you to the doctors, nurses and staff at Marlborough Health Care Center for the care, love and compassion shown to Leahbeth and her family.

Besides her husband, she is survived by a daughter, Lindalee F. Favry and her husband Donald of Marlborough, with whom she made her home; two sons, Robert W. Fritsch II and his wife Janie of Dexter, ME, and Stephen H. Fritsch and his wife Linda of Darien; grandchildren, Katherine Treat and her husband Michael, Jennifer Fritsch, Michele Lampert and her husband Jonathan, Melissa Abbotts and her husband Glenn, Leahbeth Hentschel and her husband James, Jason Fritsch and Shauna Fritsch; great-grandchildren, Caitlyn and Melinda Lampert, Alexis and Jessica Abbotts and Allison and Emily Treat; a special sister-in-law Marjorie "Midge" Harvey and numerous nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by a brother, Elton B. Harvey.

A funeral service to celebrate the life of Leahbeth will be held Saturday, April 12, at 10 a.m. at the D'Esopo Funeral Chapel, 277 Folly Brook Blvd., Wethersfield. The burial will follow at the Marlborough Cemetery. In lieu of flowers memorial donations may be made to the Nature Conservancy, High Street, Middletown, CT 06457 or the Alzheimer's Association, 279 New Britain Rd, Suite 5, Kensington, CT 06037. For online expressions of sympathy visit [www.desopo.com](http://www.desopo.com).