



Papal Blessing...Alexa (Puscas) and Paul Sifuentes recently traveled to Rome in order to have their marriage blessed by Pope Benedict XVI. The couple was married Jan. 17 at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart on the campus of the University of Notre Dame and honeymooned in Italy. The bride is a 2001 graduate of Bacon Academy in Colchester, and both bride and groom are graduates of the Masters in Theology program at the University of Notre Dame. The couple lives in Indianapolis, IN, where both are employed by the diocese of Indianapolis.

Man Injured in Snowmobile Accident

by Michael McCoy

A Middletown resident was flown by Lifestar to St. Francis Hospital, following a collision with a pick-up truck on Main Street in Portland Monday evening.

Portland Police Sgt. Scott Cunningham said Andrew Jarosik, 53, of Portland was traveling north on Main Street in his 2002 GMC Sonoma Monday at around 5:35 p.m. He said Jarosik told police he was poised to make a left turn onto Edgewood Road, when he witnessed an ATV traveling south (toward Middletown) go "screaming by." The ATV was driven by Michael Rizzo, 21, of Middletown.

Seeing no other traffic, Jarosik began his turn, Cunningham said, but before he could finish, he was struck on his right by Middletown resident Christopher Brown, 22, who was operating a Ski-Doo Rotax 470 snowmobile.

Officer Peter Paranzino and Lieutenant Ron Milardo responded to the accident, along with fire and medical personnel. Brown was transported to the Portland Volunteer Fire Department Company 2 firehouse, located on Main Street a mere 100 feet from the accident site. Lifestar transported him to St. Francis shortly thereafter, Cunningham said.

Cunningham said Thursday that Paranzino is still actively investigating the case, and still determining just how fast Brown and Rizzo were going. Cunningham said the speed limit in that area is 25 miles per hour. It has also yet to be determined if Rizzo, who continued without stopping, was aware an accident occurred at the time.

"It seems [Brown] was operating without headlights," Cunningham said, but added that Brown was apparently wearing a helmet.

However, the impact was tremendous, and Cunningham reported the collision "blew the snowmobile apart." The truck only sustained moderate damage to its right side, he said.

Brown sustained "serious injuries," according to a police press release, and Cunningham said he was in critical condition as of Monday. Wednesday, St. Francis Hospital reported he was in the Intensive Care Unit.

Cunningham said Brown sustained head injuries in the accident, and added, "I would imagine he was pretty banged up all over."

So far, the only charges that have been filed in the accident are against Rizzo, Cunningham

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Proposed Portland Budget Features Six Layoffs

by Michael McCoy

The proposed 2009-10 budget presented by Portland First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield calls for the layoffs of six employees, and would feature a 3 percent tax hike.

The total budget proposal comes in at \$29.32 million, a \$481,146, or 1.67 percent, increase over current year spending. Bransfield called this "one of the lowest [percentage increases] at this stage I've seen in many years."

The anticipated mill rate is 27.82, up 0.83 mills from this year, or a 3.08 percent increase. (Last year, the mill rate stagnated.)

Bransfield did admit "we have to make a lot of cuts," but justified it by adding, "We have a very tight ship right now."

The word on everyone's mind, no matter the town, seems to be "layoffs," and unfortunately, they look to be coming to Portland. A total of eight positions will be eliminated, according to Bransfield's budget, though some of those will come from currently vacant positions that will not be filled. (That category includes a part-time custodian position and a part-time grounds maintenance spot.) However, Bransfield is proposing the cutting of a fulltime highway position from public works, the zoning enforcement officer (part-time) and four library employees, three part-time and one fulltime.

Bransfield said that, if her budget is passed in tact, she anticipated a cutback in library hours. The proposed budget also features a reduction in book purchases from \$46,000 to \$16,000. Also, last year, the library was allotted \$4,455 for discs and videos, but that item has been ut-

terly eliminated in this year's budget.

Of those eliminated positions, only the zoning enforcement officer and one of the part-time library workers are non-union. Bransfield said all the unions (there are four in Portland, not including the teachers' union) have different protocol for choosing which employees to lay off. She said that, by and large, length of service and classification are the determining factors.

Bransfield said that many services that are worthwhile will have to be cut, and said, "The philosophy of this budget is concentrating on the core functions of the town." For this reason, she said she could not in good conscience make cuts to the offices of the collector of revenue, town clerk or town planner.

Certain costs, however, were considered unavoidable. For instance, Bransfield included in the budget proposal the replacement of a salt spreader, as well as the Board of Education maintenance truck, which she said is "rotting out underneath." Two police cruisers that have exceeded 100,000 miles will also be replaced (there are another two over 100,000 that won't be replaced).

"I did my best to keep money for snow removal and road repair," Bransfield said. Also, she said, "I don't want to give up on capital. You can't get off that schedule," figuring that proves to be a slippery slope if you do. To this end, she proposes \$145,000 from the general fund to provide for capital.

Like other town executives, Bransfield ex-

pressed hope for federal stimulus money for capital projects, but signaled that, other than items related to education, she was not holding her breath.

While layoffs account for a lot of the cuts, there were also double-digit line item increases across the board. This is primarily because most of the employee fringe benefits (medical insurance, Medicare, social security, pension contributions) are listed separately this year, while in previous years, they were included in their respective department. Bransfield remarked that the previous method was "very difficult for our payroll system to track."

Bransfield's budget proposal also features a reduction of \$274,999 from the Board of Education (BOE) budget. (School board members adopted an \$18.24 million budget in January.) "If it wasn't for the economic times, I would simply put in the number they gave me," Bransfield said. "They make their own cuts."

BOE chair Christopher Phelps and Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen seemed to take the cut sportingly, however. "We're all facing challenges this year, to say the least," Phelps, echoing Bransfield's assessment, said, "We've made a point to propose a budget where the cuts have already been made."

Phelps said every measure would be taken to stretch dollars without cutting teachers. Operating under the BOE's proposed budget, Phelps said layoffs would not happen, but could not predict what would happen with Bransfield's cut. He said school board members are already

in a precarious situation, as they are not sure exactly what funding the school system will receive from the state. But, he said, "We can't wait for them." (The town is estimating \$4.39 million in state education money and approximately \$549,000 in other state funding.)

However, there is good news for the BOE, in that \$160,000 of those cuts Bransfield ordered have already occurred, sort of. Within the last couple of weeks, the BOE's health insurance estimates came in \$160,000 less than predicted. "It really is a blessing in many ways," Doyen said, "that this came in so low."

A silver lining is a proactive move on the part of the police union. Portland Police Lieutenant Ron Milardo reported the 11 members of the police department voted to surrender their raise for the coming year, despite being scheduled for a 3.25 percent bump.

"We're hoping other unions will follow suit," Milardo said.

According to Milardo, 90 percent of the officers live in town, so the crunch effects them from both sides.

Milardo said Sergeant Scott Cunningham approached him with the notion, and the rest of the force supported it. The police then approached Bransfield with the idea. Neither Bransfield nor Milardo could recall a precedent for a proposal of this sort.

"The town is very grateful for this measure taken by the police union," Bransfield said. "Being approached voluntarily was certainly

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the right way to go.”

Also, Bransfield and Milardo said the police, in an effort to save the town money, will be cracking down on speeding. While the quest for safety is a given, Milardo explained that just within the last several years, the town receives \$10 for every moving violation ticket collected directly.

Bransfield also anticipated increasing fees in the Parks and Recreation, Youth Services, and Resource Recovery Departments.

On Wednesday, Bransfield said she was approached by the public works union, which “asked what they could do to help.” Bransfield said she would be talking further with them before long. On average, the union positions are all scheduled to receive a 3.25 percent raise for the 2009-10 fiscal year.

Bransfield said this bump is usually perfectly reasonable. However, she added, “These are not usual times, and we’re struggling.”

The town budget includes a contingency fund of \$150,000 (double what is allotted in the current year budget) to offset “unforeseen expenses.” “We live in very uncertain times,” Bransfield said.

Bransfield has turned in slim budgets to her fellow selectmen in recent years. However, during a BOS meeting two weeks ago, Bransfield warned the selectmen and the public not to expect the same this time around. She explained that cuts would be so heavy that she would leave them up to the board as a whole; instead, she said at the time, she would deliver a budget that reflected what the needs of the town were, though not necessarily realistic in this climate.

However, Bransfield’s budget came through as slim as ever, as Bransfield explained that the aforementioned pursuit was looking to result in a 1.8 mill increase. “I knew that was not an acceptable number to the community,” said Bransfield, so she took a different approach. Furthermore, Bransfield said that even just two weeks ago, “I didn’t know just how bad the numbers were gonna turn out.”

When asked if she thought further cuts were imminent now that the selectmen have received the budget, she responded, “I will not predict what they will do.” She acknowledged that she has heard of people desiring another tax halt, similar to what the current budget allowed. However, she said, “It seems kind of impossible at this point.”

This is merely the First Selectwoman’s proposed budget, and not the final product. The next step in the budget process is a public hearing, scheduled for 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, at Brownstone Intermediate School, 314 Main St. The BOS will begin its series of budget workshops Tuesday, March 17; the workshops will run until Wednesday, April 1. (The session with the Board of Education will be Wednesday, March 25.)

The selectmen must adopt their budget Wednesday, April 8. The town budget meeting takes place Monday, May 4, and the budget referendum is scheduled for Monday, May 11.

Bransfield’s full budget is available at www.portlandct.org. Copies are also available to view in Bransfield’s office as well as the Town Clerk’s office, both of which are at Town Hall, 33 East Main St.

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said. Rizzo was charged with operating an ATV without registration and operating an ATV on a public highway. Cunningham said that, while all ATV and snowmobiles must be registered, they may only drive on a public road when crossing that road perpendicularly from one private property to another.

“With the snowfall we have witnessed many snowmobiles on the road,” Cunningham said, but added that it had been “many years since a [snowmobile] accident.”

From the Editor’s Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Jim Calhoun won his 800th game as coach of the UConn Huskies last week. But that was overshadowed by Calhoun’s YouTube moment from a few days earlier – the “shut up” heard ‘round the world (or at least, ‘round Connecticut and the college basketball world). By now, I’m sure most of you have seen the video clip in question, in which Calhoun goes off on a freelance reporter who asks him about his salary at a post-game news conference. And tons of people have weighed in, including Gov. Rell and scores of sports reporters in newspapers, on TV and on the radio.

Now it’s my turn.

I’m not particularly bothered by Calhoun’s \$1.6 million salary. Yes, that “We made \$12 million last year for this university” line was something of an exaggeration (two *Hartford Courant* reporters looked into that figure and learned that last year revenue you can attribute directly to the men’s basketball team totaled \$7.3 million. Corporate sponsorships accounted for roughly another \$5 million. But all this is revenue-only. The way Calhoun talked, you’d think it was straight profit. Indeed, team expenses during the 2007-08 year totaled \$6.1 million, the *Courant* reported). But the fact is he did put this school’s basketball program on the national map – which in turn helped build up the school’s profile as a whole. I don’t mind seeing him well-compensated for his achievements.

What I did have a problem with was the way he handled himself during that post-game interview. Calhoun-sympathizers have said that press conference was not the proper venue for the freelance reporter, Ken Krayske, to ask the coach about his salary. And to that I say, to quote *M.A.S.H.*’s Col. Potter, horse hockey! Why shouldn’t have Krayske asked that question then? It’s a post-game news conference. If you’ve ever seen a sports player interviewed by the media after a game, you know that sometimes the questions have little to do with the game itself. Trust me, I’m a Mets fan. I’ve been watching players get hounded by the New York media for years. If there’s a subject the media finds juicy — like a player’s pending divorce — baseball is the *last* thing that gets asked about.

And if a player finds a subject raised by a reporter too uncomfortable to deal with, they say “no comment” and move on to the next question. And that’s what Calhoun should have done. Nobody was forcing him to answer that guy’s question. He could’ve said, “I don’t want to talk about it; next question.” To be fair, Krayske probably would have persisted — he doesn’t seem like the type to ever go away quietly — but Calhoun still could have been a professional, and taken the high road. Instead, he lost it, right there in front of the cameras.

That’s what annoyed me. Calhoun was very unprofessional. He insulted the guy, told him to “shut up” and finally just outright yelled at him. It was an embarrassing display, and frankly too many people came to Calhoun’s defense after the tirade. I give Rell credit for coming out and calling his outburst embarrassing, and State Senator Mary Ann Handley even more credit for partnering with a state representative to send a letter to the president of UConn, calling Calhoun’s behav-

ior “unacceptable” and asking that the university “take appropriate disciplinary action to reinforce the high ethical standards we have come to expect from our flagship institution.” I don’t think the “disciplinary action” needs to be too extreme; there’s no need to suspend the guy. At the very least, it would help if UConn forced Calhoun to apologize.

Because it’s pretty clear Calhoun won’t be doing any apologizing on his own. The closest he’s come is saying in an e-mailed statement that his comments were “misinterpreted by some as being insensitive to the current economic climate.” But apparently the way he delivered his comments was just hunky-dory; after all, it was the reporter’s fault for asking the question in the first place, right?

A little apology goes a long way, coach. Admit you were wrong to act like a spoiled kid, and maybe we can all get back to basketball again.

* * *

If you’ve been reading the town news sections of the *Rivereast* the past few weeks, you no doubt have come across more than a few Dean’s List notices. (And if you’ve sent a notice in but haven’t seen it yet, don’t worry, you will; we have quite the backlog of these academic achievements, and we’re getting to as many each week as we can.) But for every college student that makes the Dean’s List, there are several that don’t. There are also a few who are just hanging on to their collegiate lives. I thought of those types when, earlier this week, I came across a letter written by a college student to her parents. The letter is actually said to be something of an “urban legend,” and never was really written, but I bet you at least a few kids have tried something like this over the years:

Dear Mom and Dad:

I’m sorry to be so long in writing again, but all my writing paper was lost the night the dormitory was burned down by the demonstrators. I’m out of the hospital now, and the doctor says my eyesight should be back to normal sooner or later.

The wonderful boy, Bill, who rescued me from the fire kindly offered to share his little apartment with me until the dorm is rebuilt. He comes from a good family, so you won’t be too surprised when I tell you we are going to get married. In fact, you always wanted a grandchild, so you will be glad to know you will be grandparents next month.

Please disregard the above practice in English composition. There was no fire, I haven’t been in the hospital, I’m not pregnant and I don’t even have a boyfriend. But I did get a “D” in French and an “F” in chemistry, and I wanted to be sure you received this news in proper perspective.

Love,
Mary

* * *

See you next week. And don’t forget to move your clocks ahead! Daylight Saving Time starts this Sunday, March 8. This is “spring ahead,” meaning we all lose an hour of sleep. But that short-term loss is more than offset by the gain of daylight in the evening. It’s one more sign warmer days are coming. Eventually.

School Board Members Want to See More Budget Reductions

by Sarah McCoy

Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski's 2009-10 schools budget, which he presented to the RHAM Board of Education Wednesday, calls for a zero percent budget increase. But that proved to be not quite enough for school board members, who asked the superintendent to continue to crunch the numbers to find an additional \$269,000 in reductions.

The RHAM middle and high schools serve Andover, Hebron and Marlborough.

Last fall, the regional school board requested that Siminski develop three budget proposals – one that showed the cost of continuing everything being done at the two schools, one with slight reductions to the first budget and a final one which showed the ramifications of a zero percent increase.

Siminski did just that. However, he also included the \$269,000 the district is expecting from the federal stimulus plan – and that didn't sit well with some board members.

"I'm just not comfortable counting on that money," board member Maryanne Leichter said at Wednesday's meeting.

Fellow board member Danny Holtsclaw agreed. "Before we get carried away with \$269,000 of stimulus money we need to see what strings are attached," he said. "The intent was to see what a zero percent budget looked like and go from there. Two hundred and sixty nine thousand dollars of stimulus money gives a whole different look to the budget."

Siminski said he has been told to expect the stimulus money, but understood the board's reluctance to count on the funding. "That's why I separated that money out in a separate line item on the bottom," he said.

But that wasn't good enough for some board members who requested Siminski reduce the budget to reflect a zero percent increase before factoring in any potential stimulus money.

As it stands, Siminski's recommended budget is \$23,555,357, the same total approved last year. Without the stimulus money this number jumps to \$23,824,357, a 1.14 percent increase over last year.

Siminski had already made hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of budget reductions. In his presentation Wednesday, Siminski noted that one of the hardest hit line items was instructional supplies. This account was reduced by nearly \$200,000 meaning that only art, science, technology education, and fam-

ily consumer science classes will be able to purchase supplies.

Other reductions include a special education position (a current teacher is retiring and the position won't be filled), two paraprofessionals, one custodian, \$56,000 worth of textbooks, \$32,000 in library books and reducing a music teacher from full-time to half-time. Also, three vacant positions – a paraprofessional position, a secretary and a computer technician position – will not be filled, according to Siminski's recommended budget.

"We need to be cognizant of our environment," Siminski said of his reasoning for recommending his budget. "There are a good deal of risks but we've tried to keep them away from places that directly effect students."

One factor that's hindering the district's ability to keep costs down is the rise in enrollment. While the middle school population is expected to stay level, school officials are expecting about 80 new students at the high school. This means more teachers and more desks.

To mitigate the effects of the enrollment jump some positions will be reallocated from the middle school to the high school. The exact number of positions has yet to be determined but RHAM Middle School Principal Michael Seroussi expects class sizes to remain within the board recommended guidelines. He estimated classes to be between 21 and 23 students.

Additional savings are expected as a result of five expected retirements. Siminski reported that the district, as it's done in the past, has budgeted at the third step for the new hires.

In his budget presentation, Siminski recommended a 25 percent increase to the pay-to-play program and reducing the athletic department by \$15,000 between the middle and high school. In order to achieve this, Siminski presented some ideas for savings including eliminating scrimmages, boys' and girls' freshman basketball and freshman football.

The Board of Education will meet again Monday, March 9, at 6:30 p.m., in the Chorus Room at RHAM High School, 85 Wall St., Hebron. They will, presumably, review the changes requested of Siminski for an additional \$269,000 cut from the budget.

Budget meetings will continue throughout the month until a public hearing scheduled for April 13. Voters will have the final say on the budget at the tri-town referendum on May 5.

Andover PZC Hoping to Entice Businesses

by Sarah McCoy

With requests for building applications down, the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) is taking a proactive stance to address some of its regulations, and members hope their actions will make the town more appealing to potential developers.

Actions taken by the PZC include reducing the setback distances buildings must be from the roadway and other buildings, as well as adjusting the list of potential uses in the town's business district.

"The commission's actions are designed to address our regulations and any shortcomings they might have," Andover Zoning Agent John Valente said. "By doing this we're doing what we can to encourage business growth in Andover."

In December, PZC members voted to reduce the setback requirements from 100 feet measured from the center of the roadway to 45 feet measured from the start of the property. Commission chair Jeanne Gagnon called the old regulations "ridiculous," as they pushed builders back so far that they were likely to encroach on wetlands or ledge.

Valente said the changes came after a thorough study of neighboring towns and careful consideration of what Andover officials hope their business and commercial zones will eventually look like.

The town has 310 acres zoned as industrial and another 240 acres zoned for business use. Almost 75 percent of those 550 acres is currently undeveloped, and virtually all of it falls along the Route 6 corridor. (Valente stressed that some of that acreage simply cannot be developed, due to physical barriers such as stone ledge and wetlands.)

In addition to the setback changes, the PZC also reduced the amount of frontage required for a building permit if the building was approached as a combined property. Previously,

developers needed to have 150 feet of frontage for their development. That number can be reduced to 100 feet if two properties are presented at the same time. Valente said he hoped this change would allow for different types of developments not previously allowed for in Andover.

Criteria for shared developments include sharing a driveway, signage, and possibly, landscaping. The buildings can even be located as close as 10 feet from one another. Gagnon believes this change will allow for more developments without causing safety hazards with multiple turns from Route 6.

At a meeting last month, the PZC also made adjustments to the uses permitted in the town's industrial zones. According to Gagnon, many of the areas in town zoned as industrial should be business zones. But instead of changing the zones, PZC members added to the uses permitted in the industrial zone. "Zone changes means redoing mapping," she said. "This seemed like the better way to go to achieve our goal without adding a lot of cost to taxpayers."

Those uses now permitted in the business district include medical offices, retail sales, fitness clubs, restaurants without a drive-thru window and churches.

Gagnon said the next order of business for the Planning and Zoning Commission will be the possibility of extending the town's business zone. She said she expects this to be an intense process as all property owners must be contacted individually. Gagnon hopes to have a public hearing on the matter before the upcoming elections in May.

"During these economic times we want to do all we can to help Andover," she said.

The next PZC meeting will be held Monday, March 16, at 7 p.m., in the Community Room at Town Hall, 17 School Rd.

Hebron's Hinman Wins Another Crossword Crown

by Sarah McCoy

It was bittersweet but Tyler Hinman will take victory any way it comes.

The former Hebron resident, who now lives in California, captured his fifth straight American Crossword Puzzle title last weekend. The weekend-long tournament, held in Brooklyn, NY, brought together nearly 700 puzzling enthusiasts. Hinman combined speed and accuracy to take home the top prize.

"It's bittersweet because I had to watch two good friends of mine suffer, but I'm happy I won," Hinman said earlier this week.

Each puzzler competing in the tournament completes six puzzles. After that point the scores are tallied and the top three competitors compete in a winner-take-all final round. The final round is played on large boards with an audience of hundreds looking on.

This year Hinman and fellow finalists Tripp Payne of Boca Raton, FL, and Frances Heaney of Brooklyn made it into the finals with identical scores.

In the final round Payne, who has finished second behind Hinman three times, completed the puzzle in the fastest time. But with an error on his board, Payne's title hopes were erased. Heaney finished next but with, coincidentally, the same error made by Payne.

For the clue "basic" both gentlemen wrote A-L-L-A-L-O-N-E. The correct answer was alkaline.

At that point all Hinman needed to do was finish the puzzle correctly.

But for a moment Hinman found himself unable to do just that. He got caught in a corner with answers unknown to him. With a little patience, Hinman was able to work it out.

For "tied at the top" Hinman wrote C-O-L-E-A-D-E-R. For "they're in socks" he wrote B-O-N-E-S. And for "Star Trek actor," the final clue, the answer was James Doohan.

"I finally put it together in a frighteningly similar way as past tournaments," he said.

Four of Hinman's five titles have come after other finalists made errors.

While he relies on speed to get him to the finals, Hinman said when it comes to the finals he takes a different approach. "The key to winning, for me, has always been to finish the puzzle correctly," he said. "That's more important than finishing quickly."

Hinman was awarded \$5,000 for the victory as well as a slew of crossword paraphernalia. But even national champions have to be brought back down to earth. Just hours after winning the tournament Hinman was on a flight back to California. Not only did he have to get back to work but a dentist appointment awaited him Monday morning.

"No cavities though," Hinman remarked.

With another victory under his belt Hinman will take a break from speed solving for a little while. Now he'll kick back and return to his normal routine, solving five or six puzzles each day at a leisurely pace – about five minutes a puzzle.

Man Arrested After Outburst at Andover Basketball Game

by Sarah McCoy

An Ashford youth basketball coach was arrested Sunday, March 1, after allegedly yelling obscenities and causing damage to school property during a game at Andover Elementary School, State Police said.

Christopher Robson, 44, of 17 Amidon Dr., Ashford, was arrested and charged with breach of peace and third-degree criminal mischief, police said. The incident occurred during the second quarter of a basketball game Sunday between third- and fourth-grade girls' teams from Ashford and Marlborough.

The game was being played as part of the Eastern Connecticut Youth Basketball League tournament, held annually in Andover.

According to tournament director Jay Lindy, Robson approached the referees in the middle of the second quarter questioning the double-teaming rules. He became agitated and started cursing, Lindy said. It was at that point, Lindy said, he asked Robson to leave the school gym.

State police reports indicate that Robson initially refused to leave but eventually did, taking a door off its hinges on his way out. Law enforcement was waiting for Robson

outside the school building. They received word of the incident from parents watching the game.

Robson is due to appear in Rockville Superior Court Wednesday, March 11, police said.

Andover Superintendent of Schools Andy Maneggia said a repair person came out earlier in the week to assess the damage to the gym door. As of Wednesday, no estimates had been given as to the costs associated with fixing the door, but Maneggia said the school district hopes to recover the funds from Robson.

Whatever the cost, Lindy said he feels it will pale in comparison to the costs done to the children in attendance. "The damage inflicted on the kids will never be fixed," he said. "This is something none of those kids will ever forget. It hurts our program and a great tournament."

The Marlborough team went on to win the game 11-3, eliminating Ashford from the tournament. Games will continue for the next two weekends at Andover Elementary School.

Clark Feels Proposed Hebron Budget Won't Fly with Voters

by Sarah McCoy

Despite only including what he calls "modest increases" in department spending, Town Manager Jared Clark is virtually certain his proposed 2009-10 budget has no shot at being passed at a referendum.

"You go through the rationalization and justification of a budget but, the bottom line is, voters are just not going to approve a 6 to 7 percent tax increase," Clark said.

Nevertheless that's what Clark's budget – which he delivered to the Board of Selectmen last weekend – calls for.

"My job was to present a budget that is necessary to continue the work being done," he explained.

One of the biggest hindrances for Clark in compiling a modest budget has been a sharp reduction in revenue sources. Between the drop in tax collection, building permits and real estate transfers the town of Hebron will lose over \$500,000 in revenue, Clark reported.

"Before we can even talk about expenses, we're a half million dollars behind," he said.

Clark's proposed \$33.84 million budget reflects a 3.3 percent increase in spending, a total he said he felt would be reasonable in most years. But, thanks to the revenue decreases and a small increase to the Grand List, the 3.3 percent spending increase would equate to a 6 percent hike to taxpayers.

The proposed spending plan includes the local Board of Education's \$11.83 million recommended budget for the 2009-10 year. It also factors in \$11.36 million – or a 3.5 percent increase over current year spending – for the town's portion of the RHAM schools budget. However, this amount is merely a placeholder, as RHAM Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski did not present his proposed budget until Wednesday. Siminski's budget calls for a zero percent increase in spending, and, if the regional school board adopts that amount, it would bring the Hebron town budget down to \$33.46 million, a 2.12 percent increase over current year spending.

(A full story about the proposed RHAM Board of Education budget is located on

page 30.)

In terms of the town operating budget, the town government line item is up \$265,646, a 4.34 percent increase, and debt services is up \$223,418 to \$1.95 million, due to the repayment of the bond for the park project.

Last fall, the Board of Finance requested from Clark a budget proposal that reflected a zero percent increase in spending. To do that, \$567,318 must be cut from Clark's current proposal.

To achieve this, Clark listed in his budget packet items that the town would be forced to forego next year. Potential cuts include the traditional \$200,000 to open space, a 10 percent cut to the CIP budget, reduction of the Fire Marshal's work week from four days to two and also eliminating the second Resident State Trooper.

"That undoes most of the progress and increase to the quality of services we've made in the last three years," Clark said. "My hope is that voters will support a modest increase and we'll look to the Board of Finance for a definition of 'modest.'"

Whatever 'modest' means, Clark hopes it can be achieved through a combination of reductions from both town operations as well as the local Board of Education. "The budget must be reduced and it can't all come from the town's side without significant decreases to the services we provide," he said.

The Board of Selectmen was scheduled to begin discussions on the budget at last night's meeting. Earlier this week BOS vice chair Mark Stuart said he would prefer not to comment on the budget until that time. "I'm still in the process of reviewing it," he said. "It's going to be a more challenging year to keep expenses in line but we're working hard to develop a good budget that taxpayers can support."

Budget deliberations by the boards of selectmen and finance will continue throughout March. A public hearing on the matter can be expected mid-April, Clark said, although no date has been set yet. The townwide budget referendum is set for May 5.

Grant Received in Colchester for Old Bacon Preservation Plan

by Adam Benson

Nearly a year into a fundraising campaign aimed at creating a preservation plan guiding the future use of Old Bacon Academy, the building's caretakers recently won state help for the cause.

The Bacon Academy Board of Trustees announced this week it received a \$5,000 technical assistance matching grant from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation (CTHP).

The funds will be used to hire a consulting firm which will conduct an exhaustive inventory of needed repairs, upgrades and modifications to the 207-year-old Main Street landmark. "We're very excited," said board chair Diana Norton Giles. "We all have a good feel for what does need to be fixed, but this consulting firm will go through the entire building and give us a complete list."

In December, the Bacon Academy Board of Trustees was one of seven nonprofit entities around the state awarded a portion of CTHP's \$31,600 in historical preservation grant money.

Greg Farmer, a CTHP circuit rider who worked with the board in their application, praised the efforts to keep the building viable and said Bacon's stature in the town made it a good candidate for help through the Hamden-based agency.

"It's architecturally and historically very significant, and it really is a defining aspect of Colchester, but the thing that really closed the deal was the level of interest in the community," Farmer said. "There are people who are really committed to treating it right."

The study "will provide a prioritized list for repair and maintenance work to be conducted on the historic building," according to a grant description on CTHP's Web site.

Old Bacon Academy was constructed in 1802 and served as Colchester's high school until 1961. It is also the former site of the school district's administrative offices and was used to house overflow students, as recently as 2001.

Today, the site serves primarily as a meeting place for cultural and arts groups and as a storage place for the school district.

In 2003, the Board of Trustees developed a strategic plan to oversee the next 100 years of use in the building – and the completion of a capital improvement project list was among its top priorities.

"We want a document that clearly sets out

the kind of money we need," Giles said. "At this point, we've been flying blind."

Currently, only the first-floor classrooms are open to the public because the rest of building isn't yet handicapped accessible. Giles said retrofitting bathrooms, stairwells and hallways are among the biggest upgrades in store.

There's also the possibility of installing an elevator in the back of the building to open up Bacon's second and third-floor classrooms.

"As people drive down the road, they're not going to see anything different. Whatever we do will probably be in the back of the building," she said.

Although Bacon caretakers say the building's primary function will always be to augment school district needs, town and school officials are looking toward other uses as the district's facilities continue to expand.

"This is a school. Our goal is always to provide room for the school if they need it," Giles said. "But its use has evolved over the years to fit the needs of the community, and that's something that's in our minds."

Giles and other board members rejected the idea of turning the facility into a museum, fearing it would cut down on traffic and lead to disrepair.

On top of that, meeting space in town is at a premium – and Bacon Academy could help fill that need.

"There are not that many people who spend their weekends going to museum after museum all over the state. That's not a good way to make the building a vital part of the community itself," Giles said. "It really is a centerpiece of the town."

Farmer encouraged that thinking.

"They're being very responsible in their stewardship of the building," he said. "The best way to preserve a building is to keep it in active use."

Giles said the hope is to convert the schoolhouse into an arts or cultural center for an array of local outlets.

"Knowing there will be a time when the school doesn't need that space, our next goal is to make it an art center," she said.

Giles said the Board of Trustees hopes to have a completed preservation plan in hand by mid-May, and will pay for the matching grant through donations contributed to its 21st Century Giving Campaign – A Million Dollar Drive.

Colchester Police News

2/25-Paul Peterson, 49, of 43 Dutton Rd., was charged with driving under the influence, State Police said.

2/26-Reginald Hansen, 37, of 25 Christy Ln., was charged with disorderly conduct, third-degree assault and strangulation, State Police said.

2/27-Jessica Otko, 30, of 103 Elliott Dr., was charged with driving under the influence and operating under a suspended license, State Police said.

2/27-Ronnie Brooks, 53, of New Britain, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

2/27-Raymond Viens, 52, of Uncasville, was charged with driving while intoxicated and failure to maintain the proper lane, State Police said.

2/28-Michael Fuller, 22, of 159 Waterhole Rd., was charged with driving while intoxicated and possession of drug paraphernalia, State Police said.

2/28-Jeffrey Wallace, 52, of Bristol, was charged with driving while intoxicated and failure to maintain the proper lane, State Police said.

3/2-Paul Peterson, 49, of 43 Dutton Rd., was charged with threatening and sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

3/3-Jesus DeJesus, 21, of Hartford, was charged with first-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

3/4-Jojo Lantiegne, 39, of Salem, was charged with second-degree failure to appear, State Police said.

Marlborough School Board Adopts \$7.2 Million Budget

by Adam Benson

The local Board of Education last week signed off on a 2009-10 budget Superintendent of Schools Sal Menzo said strikes a balance between the nation's economic turmoil and a commitment to keeping services and programs intact for students.

"I think we were very prudent," Menzo said Thursday, Feb. 26. "We thought we had a great core of services for our students and we wanted to maintain it."

On Feb. 26, school board members unanimously approved a \$7.2 million spending plan that reflects increased costs in negotiated salaries, the inclusion of a \$43,100 boiler and the addition of a part-time school psychologist to accommodate students with special needs.

The plan, which marks a 1.45 percent increase over last year's version, was unani-

mously accepted March 3 by the Board of Selectmen as part of the town's overall \$21.4 million operating budget in the upcoming fiscal year.

As surrounding towns and school districts struggle to make ends meet by looking at staff layoffs, dramatic reductions to programming and services and other grim financial decisions, Menzo said local educators were able to put forward a relatively pain-free spending plan thanks in large part to advanced planning and concessions made by both the teachers and teamsters unions during contract negotiations.

"Both groups came to the table recognizing the situation in Marlborough and were willing to have conversations, and it was not the least bit contentious," Menzo said.

Health care costs for the district only rose by .39 percent, and administrators were able to

recognize even greater savings by consolidating health insurance, life insurance and liability coverage through their carrier.

And during contract talks, Menzo said teachers agreed to higher co-pays and cost sharing for premiums in an effort to keep the district's budget as small as possible.

The Board of Finance had directed the district to craft a budget that didn't swell by more than two percent of its current rate.

Menzo credited the district's participation in a collaborative purchasing program as another cost-cutting measure.

"I believe that this year's budget is another example of the continued hard work on the part of the entire Marlborough school community," Menzo wrote to parents in his March newsletter. "Throughout the entire process ... the Board (of Education) and administration has been

committed to doing what is best for the students while also being mindful of community members during these fiscally challenging times."

In January, when Menzo first pitched the 2009-10 budget to the school board, he said the expanded school psychologist's role will save the district thousands of dollars a year because without it, students would have to be transported to other schools with similar programs in place.

"We've got to be creative, and it's all of our responsibility and I don't think we lack that in this community," Menzo said. "This is not my budget. This has the fingerprints of many people on it."

The Board of Finance will meet jointly with the local and RHAM boards of education on Tuesday, March 24, to go over both districts' proposed budgets.

Portland Middle, High School Schedules to Line Up This Fall

by Michael McCoy

The Board of Education voted unanimously Tuesday to align the middle and high school schedules – a matter that drew some concern from parents when it was introduced in January.

Superintendent of Schools Sally Doyen explained to parents at a January public hearing that the high school (grades 9-12) currently begins the day at 7:30 a.m., while the middle school begins at 8 a.m. The plan she pitched would start both schools at 7:45 a.m.

During that January hearing, Doyen listed the reasons the school board was considering this change. One reason was that board members felt it would provide more opportunities for students. For instance, Doyen said, middle school students who are eligible to attend high school courses have trouble scheduling those because the periods do not line up. For the same reason, Doyen said, there is a “beautiful state of the art language lab” on the high school side that middle schoolers cannot conveniently access.

But at the January hearing, some students and parents raised concerns about younger students being subjected to bullying or simply being exposed to behavior beyond their maturity level; these comments were mostly related to the busing. But Doyen told parents she called districts that had similar alignments and came away from those discussions convinced that parents need not be concerned. Also, she said, by and large, juniors and seniors largely do not take the bus to school.

Board of Education chair Christopher Phelps said Tuesday the realignment was supported by “strong educational arguments that it would improve everything up here.”

But, Phelps added, this issue would need to be revisited if the board ever decided to move sixth grade students to the middle school.

Earlier in the meeting, several parents sounded off about the Open Choice Program,

which would bring Hartford public school students to Portland. The board then discussed the issue later in the meeting. (More than 60 people showed up to a public hearing on the matter last week.)

Board of Education member Ben Srb, anticipating a tighter-than-usual budget for next year, wondered what position the school board would be left in if, once approving participation in the program, they were faced with cutting teachers. “Once we’re in, can we cry ‘poor’ and then get out?” he wondered.

However, Doyen seemed to think the board could prevent this by simply proceeding with caution. Doyen said Department of Education Commissioner Mark McQuillan told her that Portland “could design its own plan.” “We could start as small as we want,” she said.

Phelps told those in attendance Tuesday that the state “has intermittently approached the board on this” since he began serving in 2003. And, he added, the issue was first raised in Portland during the 1990s. “I wouldn’t agree that we’re rushing into this,” he said, alluding to an accusation that has been levied by the public quite often in recent weeks.

However, he also said he probably would not be in favor of starting the program with the 40 or more Hartford students (the figure that has been mentioned during Open Choice discussions), instead, figuring a smaller number would be better, at least at first.

“If we participate in this program, we want to get it right,” he said.

The Board of Education will most likely take action on Open Choice during their next meeting, March 17, at 7 p.m., in the media center at the high school, 95 High St. And if board members don’t reach a consensus that night, Phelps said, a special meeting would need to be held, as the board needs to decide by the end of the month whether it will be involved in the program.

Grocery Store, Other Businesses Proposed for Portland Elmcrest Site

by Michael McCoy

After years of discussion and speculation, a formal site plan was submitted last month for a large mixed-use development at the site of the former Elmcrest Hospital.

The project, known as Portland Town Place, is planned for what is commonly known as the Elmcrest property, located on Route 66, just off Main Street. The development is to sit on 14.89 acres, which are composed of 14 different lots, owned by eight different entities. The project would contain a mix of retail, office and residential space.

The plan shows 10 total buildings, three of which are already existing. (Thirty-four other structures are up for demolition.) The most high-profile structure at Portland Town Place would be a 65,000 square-foot grocery store. Another of the buildings, labeled the “tower building,” would be a six-story building that will hold a restaurant, offices, and 51 residential units. Parking will be located in a lower level. However, this is the one structure scheduled for “Phase 2,” which would occur after the construction of everything else.

All told, the project would contain 149,127 square feet of commercial use, which breaks down to 125,085 for retail, 17,446 square feet for banks and offices, and 6,596 in restaurant space.

A section of the proposal dealing with signage mentions Walgreens. However, beyond this, no other tenants were identified.

There are six buildings with residential units proposed, with a total of 82 units. One of these is a two-story building, totaling 23,980 square feet. Underneath will be a garage area.

The entire project calls for 522 parking spots, as well as literally thousands of trees, in dozens of varieties.

The vast majority of the property falls within the B-3 zone, or General Business District. A much smaller portion is B-2, Central Business District.

First Selectwoman Susan Bransfield said she thought it was “just wonderful” a site plan was submitted to the town. “It’s a solid plan with a lot of detail,” she said.

Bransfield noted that the project is being pitched despite the recession the country is currently in, and said that “shows a real confidence in the town of Portland.”

Currently, the PZC is scheduled to hold a hearing on the project Thursday, May 7. No location has been announced. However, because of the project’s scope, the town wants a number of consultants and staff to carefully examine the plan, and for this reason, the hearing could end up being pushed to a later date.

Portland Police News

2/24 — Keith Smolka, 27, of 188 Main St., was charged with disorderly conduct and violation of probation, Portland Police said.

2/24 — Justin Dunnells, 22, of 310 Maple Ave., Durham, was charged with second-degree threatening and breach of peace, police said.

2/27 — Luke Bialobrzski, 22, of 122R Skeet Club Rd., Durham, was charged with possession of narcotics and possession of drug paraphernalia, police said.

3/1 — Taylor Duckworth, 41, of 21 Penny Corner Rd., was charged with third-degree assault, police said.

Colchester Fugitive Charged in 2008 Burglary

by Michael McCoy

After nearly a year on the run, a Colchester man was arrested last week in connection with a robbery of a local package store last April, East Hampton Police said.

Joshua Rodriguez, 22, of 677 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, was arrested Feb. 27, East Hampton Police said. According to Sergeant Garritt Kelly, at around 3 a.m. April 3, 2008, East Hampton’s Route 66 Package Store’s front glass door was kicked in and shattered, and the perpetrator made off with about \$300 in cash.

Officer John Wilson headed up the investigation, and on April 30, thanks to surveillance footage, pinned the case on Rodriguez and Jonathon Jonah, 37, of 61 Loomis Rd., Colchester.

Jonah was eventually arrested by East Hampton Police on Aug. 4, and charged with criminal mischief, fifth-degree larceny, third-degree burglary and conspiracy to commit fifth-degree larceny, Kelly said. However, Rodriguez, after a string of other area nighttime break-ins of package and convenience stores in other towns, was “on the run,” Kelly said.

While on the lam, Rodriguez racked up charges in at least three other court districts, Kelly said. “Ultimately, he was charged with numerous break-ins around the state,” he said.

Kelly said bounty hunters tracked the elusive Rodriguez down in Hartford, and unloaded him at the State Police barracks in the capital city. East Hampton Police Officer Jerry Boynton picked him up and arrested him that very day, and he was presented at Middletown Superior Court, also that same day.

Rodriguez was charged with the same crimes Jonah was charged with last August, Kelly said. However, as per East Hampton Police protocol, Rodriguez was also charged with the burglary-related transgressions in the other towns, through court-ordered warrants. The whole list of charges against Rodriguez consists of: third-degree criminal mischief, two counts of fourth-degree larceny, four counts of third-degree burglary, four counts of first-degree failure to appear, two counts of second-degree criminal mischief, fifth-degree larceny and six counts of conspiracy.

Rodriguez is scheduled to appear in court next on March 13, Kelly said.

Attempted East Hampton Home Break-In Leads to School Lockdown

The attempted break-in of a home near East Hampton High School led to a brief lockdown of the school Thursday afternoon, police said.

Police said they arrested Julian Burney, 34, of East Hartford, at around noon Thursday March 5. Police said that, at around 11 a.m., Burney was attempting to enter a local home and steal items from within, when he was interrupted by a resident of the home.

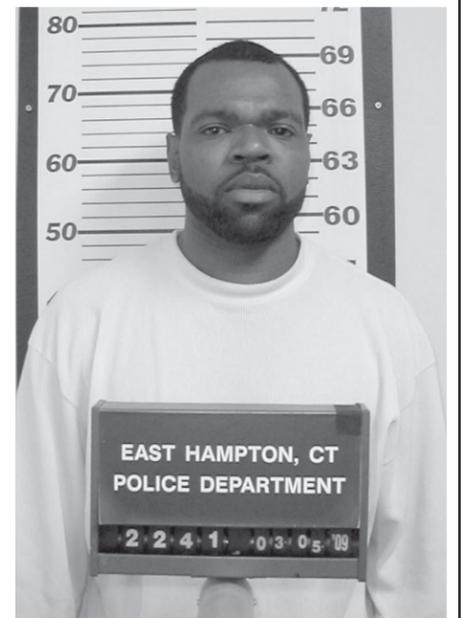
Burney fled from the home after the resident arrived, police said. He departed in a Ford Explorer that was immediately located by East Hampton Police Officer Kevin Wilcox and Chief Matthew Reimondo as it traveled along North Main Street, police said.

The officers followed the vehicle until it parked at a nearby business. Burney then exited the vehicle and fled on foot. A foot chase ensued, police said. A police K-9 team was summoned from the Rocky Hill Police Department, police said, and Portland Police also joined in the operation.

Burney was apprehended as he was running through yards, near the intersection of Route 66 and North Main Street, police said.

East Hampton High School is within the immediate area that Burney fled on foot, police said, and, as a precaution, the school was locked down until he was apprehended.

Burney was charged with burglary, larceny



and resisting arrest, along with various motor vehicle violations. Police said Burney has a “lengthy criminal history” that includes drug- and theft-related crimes. He was being held Thursday in lieu of a \$100,000 bond pending arraignment at Middlesex Superior Court today, Friday, March 6.

East Hampton Police News

2/20 — Alfred Paradis III, 28, of 14 Barbara Ave., was arrested for failure to obey a control signal and operating without insurance, East Hampton Police said.

2/20 — Kevin E. Baigert, 52, of 161 Clark Hill Rd., was issued a ticket for failure to obey a stop sign, police said.

2/21 — Clayton A. McClain, 34, of 1241-8 Woodgate, Washington St., Middletown, was arrested pursuant to a warrant for fifth-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit fifth-degree larceny, police said.

2/21 — Ricky M. Sirois, 32, of 90 Middletown Ave., was arrested pursuant to a warrant on charges of fifth-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit fifth-degree larceny, police said.

2/22 — Nicholas D. Moore, 21, of 80 Hill Crest Dr., Amston, was arrested for third-degree burglary, stealing firearm, first-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit first-degree larceny,

and first-degree failure to appear, police said.

2/22 — Blaire M. Ocelik, 17, of 74 Colchester Ave., was arrested pursuant to a warrant for interfering with an officer, police said.

2/22 — Tammy Balch, 33, of 13 Oak Knoll, was arrested for operating under suspension and failure to drive right, police said.

2/24 — Patrick E. Scott, 21, of 27 Fernwood Dr., was arrested for operating under suspension and traveling too fast for conditions, police said.

2/25 — Frank D. Orton IV, 57, of 20 Spice Hill Dr., was issued a ticket for operating a motor vehicle while using a cell phone, police said.

2/27 — Lyle G. Govoni, 21, of 16B Walker St., Manchester, was arrested for operating an unregistered motor vehicle and operating without insurance, police said.

Bulletin Board Plan Causes Concern in Marlborough

by Adam Benson

A plan by Marlborough leaders to replace a nearly-10-year-old downtown community events board with one of different dimensions has some arts boosters in town crying foul.

"This sign is critical to the organizations and businesses in town, because this is where people drive by," Marlborough Arts Center president Betty O'Brien told the Board of Selectmen Tuesday. "I can't tell you how concerned I am about it."

Around 2000, Marlborough officials installed the four-foot by eight-foot sign at the junction of North and South Main streets and Route 66 in cooperation with a Girl Scout who wanted to see the sign erected as part of her Gold Award project, First Selectman Bill Black said.

Since that time, the bulletin board has become a fixture for groups and fraternal organizations who have relied on the sign as a quick, cost-effective way to communicate with the public. (The public notices on the bulletin board are also available on the town's website, www.marlboroughct.net.)

But the trouble, Black and other town leaders say, is the sign's design and geometry don't fit in with Marlborough's master plan for the area.

Instead, officials want to set up a different structure that can support simultaneous five-foot by six-foot signs and relocate the entire board closer to Route 66.

"This change of the sign and its layout and standards came out in a plan in 2006," Black said. "That is the overall cohesive type of planning that has been put in place so we move in a single direction of consistency."

Black said conceptual sketches for the new sign were sent to the town's Nature Trails & Sidewalks Commission last summer, though O'Brien – who sits on that body – told the Board of Selectmen Tuesday talk of uprooting the existing bulletin board came as news to her.

"We never saw a plan for the sign, and being a member of the Marlborough Arts Center, it has been a big issue for me," O'Brien said. "The design people should be saying to us, 'here are some choices that you have.'"

According to an archive of minutes on the town's website, talk of replacing the sign didn't happen with O'Brien's commission until late last month, though members decided at the meeting the bulletin board's fate ultimately

rested in the hands of the Board of Selectmen.

"The Commission discussed whether they wanted to contact the Board of Selectmen concerning the change in the sign and it was the consensus of the Commission that the project is the purview of the Board of Selectmen and that they had no authority over the project," according to the Nature Trails & Sidewalk Commission's Feb. 25 meeting minutes.

The existing sign is used up to 45 weeks a year free of charge. Representatives must request space on it during the first week of the year in Town Hall and then come up with material costs themselves.

Black said town leaders appreciate the role the sign plays in town, and plans are in place to talk with parks commissioners about finding a new home for it somewhere else. He also said groups can still keep their existing banners on the new sign, though the new dimensions can't accommodate dual four-foot by eight-foot displays.

"That looks like a very reasonable solution but right now, we've got some time before that needs to be addressed," Black said.

Black said the newer model will likely be in place later this summer and will be located nearer the highway. Additionally, it will be illuminated and raised off the ground so it can more easily be seen by passing motorists.

Still, some opponents of the idea say local organizations will be faced with rising internal costs because they'd be forced to come up with new displays to fit the dimensions of the proposed downtown sign.

"The design change is going to be a major inconvenience to organizations, and it's going to be costly for them to create new signage to fit the new format," said Ken Hjulstrom, a member of the Marlborough Lions Club and Marlborough Republican Town Committee.

Black said he acknowledges opposition to the new sign but said officials won't revisit the matter until after they get a budget approved and hear whether they'll qualify for state funding to pay for the completion of a \$12 million sewer improvement project.

"Right now, our number one priority is a budget and a sewer project. There are some bigger issues right now that really demand our attention," Black said. "This is not news."

Proposed Marlborough Budget Features Six Percent Tax Hike

by Adam Benson

The Board of Selectmen Wednesday adopted a 2009-10 budget that calls for a 6.6 percent tax increase.

The proposed \$21.4 million spending plan – which will now head to the Board of Finance for review – represents a 3.5 percent increase over the 2008-09 budget.

Despite holding costs down nearly across the board, the selectmen couldn't avoid asking voters to shoulder the costs of a growing debt load brought on by dwindling town and state revenues.

"It's with no joy that any of us bring forward this number," selectman Joseph La Bella said. "With revenues from various sources being unusually flat if not decreasing, that creates a huge hole."

The town's budget – if approved by voters – would mark a 3.1 percent increase over last year's version, which First Selectman Bill Black blamed on a double-digit gain in debt coupled with what are expected to be dramatic reductions in state funding levels.

The town has \$310,000 less cash on hand this year and has seen its debt margin creep up by 13.9 percent to \$2.3 million. Last year, that figure stood at just more than \$2 million.

Overall, the budget – which includes spending for town government, the local Board of Education budget and Marlborough's portion of the RHAM schools budget – is a 3.57 percent uptick over last year and is reflective of an economy that is stagnant or eroding in virtually every area.

Nearly 79 percent of Marlborough's total revenues in 2009-10 will come from its tax levy – the largest such percentage in several years.

And there's more bad news too, Black said Wednesday.

"The big driver on local revenue is interest

on income, and we use it to offset the budget," Black said. Those assets are down 24 percent this year. Last month, the town also revealed a near zero-growth 2008 Grand List – a key player in determining a municipality's tax rate and mill levy.

Even as recently as Tuesday, Black was huddling with department heads and finding areas he could slash from the budget to bring in a tax rate he said was as low as possible to ensure continuing services for residents.

"I met with the department heads and have gone back and asked them, in light of a very tight budget bite at the state level and a decrease in revenues, what can they provide for us in a budget that will currently maintain the level of services we provide our residents and meet them in as economical a way as fashionable," Black said. "I think we'll be able to make this budget and keep it within there."

In addition to axing summer seasonal help – a savings of \$4,800 – and rejecting purchasing requests for new computers and printers, Black said the town was spared even greater costs because officials had no contract negotiations or major land-use permit issues to tackle this year.

Black said town administrators weighed layoffs or hiring freezes in a bid to save money, but said the savings realized through that move were obtained through internal trims.

"I think we've done our due diligence," selectwoman Riva Clark said. "We have put in numerous hours at very long meetings to come up to where the budget is now."

The budget goes to the Board of Finance next week, and Black said he's confident talks between the two sides will go well.

"This is a good starting step to have dialogue with the Board of Finance," he said.

Obituaries

Marlborough

Marilyn R. Egazarian

Marilyn R. “Nana” O’Leary Egazarian, 73, entered into eternal life on Monday, March 2, 2009. She died peacefully at home surrounded by loved ones, after a long, graceful battle with cancer. Nana was born September 7, 1935 in Worcester, MA and lived there until she attended the University of Connecticut in 1953. She met the love of her life, Harry Egazarian, while attending UConn. Their first date was a UConn basketball game and Marilyn continued to be an avid UConn fan for the rest of her life. Marilyn and Harry both graduated from the University of Connecticut School of Pharmacy and were later married on November 23, 1957. Marilyn worked side by side with her husband at Pat’s Medical Pharmacy for 41 years until retirement in 1996. Marilyn came out of retirement to work part-time at Shop-Rite pharmacy until recently. She was a long time member of the East Hartford Women’s Club and the East Hartford Emblem Club. She also helped her husband run KEF Time Hartford, an Armenian dance event, for over 30 years. Marilyn was a faithful communicant of St. Christopher’s Parish since moving to East Hartford in the 1950s. Besides East Hartford, her favorite place to be was Higgins Beach in Scarborough, ME, where Marilyn and Harry owned a cottage. They spent many summers there with their own children and in recent years with their children’s children. Nothing made Nana happier than to watch a sand castle being built by Ryan, Sara & Chelsea, or to hold the sand dollars that Grace always seemed to find or to hold Max during his first visit to the beach. Being with her grandchildren and reading to them was cherished time for Nana.

Marilyn is survived by her husband of 51 years, Harry, and their three children and their spouses, Margaret and Michael McGowan, of Manchester, Gregory and Karen Egazarian, of Warrenton, VA and John and Cheryl Egazarian, of Marlborough, and her five grandchildren, Ryan, Grace, Sara, Chelsea and Maximilian. She is also survived by her sister, Sister Marion Julie O’Leary, SND, of Worcester, MA, and two-sister-in-laws, Margaret Urbec, of Westerly, RI, and Rose Sachetto, of Worcester, MA, as well as many cherished nieces and nephews and their children.

The family wishes to thank Kevin Kickery and his family for the enormous donation of time, love, care, and compassion that they gave to Marilyn and her family during this difficult time.

Funeral services will be Saturday (March 7th) with a Mass of Christian Burial celebrated at 11 AM at St. Christopher Church, 538 Brewer Street, East Hartford. The family has asked that everyone go directly to the church on Saturday morning. Burial will be at Silver Lane Cemetery, East Hartford. Relatives and friends may call at the D’ESOPPO-East Hartford Memorial Chapel, 30 Carter St., East Hartford, on Friday, March 6th, from 4 to 7:30 pm. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Marilyn’s name may be made to the following organizations that helped Marilyn and her family get through this difficult time: Connecticut VNA Partners Hospice, 111 Founders Plaza, East Hartford, CT 06108 or St. Francis Care Regional Cancer Center, 94 Woodland Street, Hartford, CT 06105. For any on-line expressions of sympathy to the family please visit www.desopo.com.

Colchester

Doris Rand

Doris M. Rand, 85, of Colchester, widow of the late Philip O. Rand, died Wednesday, Feb. 25, at Middlesex Medical Center in Marlborough. Born Nov. 21, 1923 in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Thomas P. and Lillian A. (Provost) Reddin.

She is survived by her two daughters, Cheryl Tyler and her husband Galen of East Hampton, Darlene Schultz and her husband Robert of Alabama; four grandchildren, Amy Ordonez and her husband Alex, Adam Tyler, Kristen Folger, Kelley Schultz; five great-grandchildren, Kyle, Kove, Kelsey, Cormac, Heather; and one great-great-grandson, Jonathan. Doris’ greatest joy in her life was her family.

A private memorial service will be held at the convenience of the family.

The Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton, has care of the arrangements. To leave online condolences, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com.

Middle Haddam

Leonard Nelson Blake

Leonard Nelson Blake, 83, of Nokomis, FL, formerly of Middle Haddam, passed away at Venice Regional Medical Center after a short illness. He was born in Nashua, NH, where he lived until he entered the US Marine Corps at age 17. Leonard was the son of Marion I. Lunt Blake and Rodman Ruggles Blake of Nashua and Pepperell, MA.

He was predeceased by sisters Nathalie Townshend of Lowell, MA, and Martha Myatt of Derry, NH, as well as brothers Theodore Blake of San Antonio, TX, Robert Blake of Connecticut, Winston Blake of Concord, NH, Richard S. Blake of Salem, NH and Paul S. Carrier of Middle Haddam, with whom he lived for 43 years.

Mr. Blake is survived by sisters Moudie Blake Carta of Nashua, NH, and Beverly Blake Burleigh of Hudson, NH, and many nieces, nephews, great-and grand-nieces and nephews, as well as dear friends Princess Beatrice, Sir Rodman and Sister Margaret-Mary.

He served in Okinawa during World War II, with the US Marine Corps, and was discharged after five years of distinguished service, with the rank of Staff Sgt. He was a graduate of Emerson College, and received a master’s degree in education from University of New Hampshire and a second master’s degree in psychology from UConn. Leonard was a guidance counselor with the Middletown High School. He was a longtime member of the Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, the oldest theater in the United States and the Venice Little Theater in Venice, FL, as well as numerous community and philanthropic activities.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in Leonard’s name, to Goodspeed Opera House or Venice Little Theater.

To send condolences, visit www.farleyfuneralhome.com. Arrangements by Farley Funeral Home, Venice, FL.

Portland

Esther Tyler Behm

Esther Tyler Behm, 85, of Gospel Lane, Portland, died Wednesday, Feb. 25, after a long battle with Alzheimer’s Disease. She was the wife of the late Howard Wesley Behm. Esther was born in Prinston, ME, on June 20, 1923, a daughter of the late James Tyler and the late Eunice Baker Tyler.

She married Howard on May 10, 1944 and after the birth of their son Howard Jr., they lived for a short period in Maine and Middletown. Esther and her family moved to Gospel Lane, Portland, where she and her husband raised their family. Esther worked at the Jarvis Company and later, along with her husband, owned and operated the Whitmore Behm Tool Company in Portland until her retirement in 1995. She spent the remainder of her life gardening, shopping, traveling and enjoying her children and grandchildren.

She is survived by her three children, Howard W. Behm, Jr. of East Hampton, Sharon L. Rosano of Portland and Deborah B. Davis of the Virgin Islands; her grandchildren, Esther McAvay of Manchester, Shane McAvay of Portland, Rachel Davis of Stamford, Conn Davis Jr. of St. Thomas, VI, Hannah Davis of Manhattan, NY; her great-grandchildren, John Rosano and Jillian McAvay, both of Portland; her sister, Mary Bell of Portland; her sister-in-law and close friend, Edith Tyler of Portland; and many nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her husband Howard Wesley Behm in 2000; her brothers Charles, Peter, Joseph and James and her sisters Kathleen, Christine and Helena.

Her family received relatives and friends in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland, Sunday, March 1. Funeral services were held Monday, March 2, in the Portland Memorial Funeral Home with interment following in the Swedish Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, gifts in her memory may be sent to the Alzheimer’s Association of America, 322 8th Street, 7th floor, New York, NY 10001.

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

Portland

Carl Daniel Bordonaro

Carl Daniel “Candyman” Bordonaro, 63, of Portland, died Thursday, Feb. 26, as a result of an automobile accident. He was born in Middletown, the son of the late Samuel and Bella (Cuccia) Bordonaro. Daniel was employed with Middletown Toyota. He was a motorcycle enthusiast who believed he was a “Free Spirit in the Wind” when riding.

He is survived by his sister, Frances Bordonaro of Portland; his brother, Thomas Bordonaro of Florida; several aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews; and step-children, Chris Holmes and Michelle H. Spagnola.

He was predeceased by a brother, Anthony Bordonaro.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, March 3, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown. Burial will be at the convenience of the family in St. Mary’s Cemetery, Portland. Friends called at Biega Funeral Home Tuesday, prior to the service.

Memorial contributions may be made to St. Mary’s Church, 45 Freestone Ave., Portland, CT 06480.