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Bacon Academy boys, and one girl, got a chance to strut their stuff at the annual Mr. Bacon pageant Wednesday night. Luke Whitmore, pictured with his shining crown and bouquet, won first place. In front, kneeling, are masters of ceremony Mary Corrado and Andrew Hill, surrounded by other Mr. Bacon participants.

Naked Teen Named Mr. Bacon

by Katy Nally

His swimwear was his birthday suit; his talent, synchronized swimming. But perhaps what really inspired the judges to crown Luke Whitmore "Mr. Bacon" Wednesday night, was his dash of flattery in the question and answer portion of the pageant.

When asked who his role model was, Luke replied "Mr. Mat" (Bacon Academy Principal Jeff Mathieu, who incidentally was a Mr. Bacon judge), adding, "I want to be just like him."

But that's not to say Luke wasn't a crowd favorite at the 2010 edition of the Mr. Bacon pageant, an annual event held to raise money for Bacon's senior class. Typically, only juniors and seniors participate, although the event is open to the whole school. The auditorium, packed full of Bacon Academy students, went wild when he and his escort, Dan Faski, paraded around the stage during the swimwear portion in what appeared to be their birthday suits. Showing some skin was an understatement for the two, who were guarded only by a clear blue pool float with a beach towel over it.

The duo once again demonstrated their cre-

ativity during the talent portion. With the stage curtains drawn only slightly, a blue sheet was pulled across the opening and it began to ripple. Then Luke and Dan popped up, one in a pink swimming cap, and one in blue. In almost-perfect synchronization, the two performed water ballet moves with grace. Even some fancy footwork was added in.

The pair was a favorite right off the bat. Luke made a grand entrance dressed as the character Alan Garner from the movie *The Hangover*, complete with a satchel – not a purse – as he clarified. Luke even sported a beer belly with a baby painted on his shirt, and wore an unfortunate curly-haired wig.

In second place was Rob Guarino with his girlfriend Mel Furman, another favorite. Rob, a Mr. Bacon veteran, was "forced" to participate in the pageant again, as two boys physically carried him onto stage.

He and Mel sported matching blue and black wetsuits during the swimwear show and later, Rob performed two one-minute talents. First he successfully spun an entire roll of toilet

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Over 100 Area Homes Hit by Flooding

by Katy Nally

In just four of the six towns the *Rivereast* covers – Colchester, East Hampton, Hebron and Portland – a total of 133 basements flooded and were pumped out by local fire department members, as a result of the end-of-March rainstorm.

Residents endured the sloshy mess for about four days. The storm hit Sunday, March 28, and lasted until Tuesday, March 30, but pumping lasted until Thursday, April 1.

Out of these three towns, Colchester officials pumped out the most homes at 70. Marlborough and fire department members also pumped out homes, but an exact number is not known. In all four towns, flooding was contained to the basement, and there was no first-floor damage reported.

Now that the rain has stopped, Colchester officials have begun to seek funding for property damage. Colchester Fire Marshal Reed Gustafson spent Wednesday and Thursday of last week inspecting 40 homes that were deemed to have "significant damage" caused by the three-day storm.

Members of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) went with Gustafson as part of a pre-assessment process for funding. The 40 homes visited all had at least one foot of flooding in the basement.

Of these four towns, Colchester is the only town to begin the FEMA funding process town-wide. Hebron Fire Marshal Randy Blais said this week he referred two residents to seek FEMA funding. However, as towns, Hebron, Andover, Marlborough and Portland, will not apply for federal funds, according to fire officials in the municipalities.

Marlborough Town Planner Peter Hughes

said he's had two inquiries from residents, for funding for wet basement damage and he forwarded the claims to www.chif.org.

Andover Emergency Management Coordinator Sylvia Dake said she too is helping one family receive money from FEMA. She said the flooding caused significant damage to the family's heating and hot water system and "mitigation will involve drainage work" and foundation repair.

In Colchester last week, FEMA recorded damage information from the 40 significantly-damaged sites. The agency will then determine if the town should be declared as part of a disaster area. If FEMA finds the damage was significant enough, Colchester residents with basements affected by the flooding may be eligible for money to replace furnaces, boilers and water heaters. Gustafson said these funds will not cover the replacement of furniture, carpeting, electric work and other damages.

Gustafson said he was unsure when FEMA would come back with its results.

For residents who don't qualify for federal funding, there are state options like low interest loans to pay for damages, Gustafson said. (For information about the loans, visit www.portlandct.org and www.colchesterct.gov.)

The 70 homes that flooded in Colchester were pumped out by Colchester Hayward Volunteer Fire Department (CHVFD) members, who fielded 102 responses to flooding at 70 different addresses. On Tuesday and Wednesday, March 30 and 31, CHVFD members put in 1,216 man-hours to assist in the pumping, Gustafson said.

On April 1, the work continued, as CHVFD officials pumped out buildings on Whitehall



Many Connecticut residents experienced flooding when a three-day rainstorm swept through the state during the end of March. Above is Route 17A in Portland, on the Portland Exchange Club Fairgrounds side.

Avenue in Mystic for over 10 hours.

The incidents in Colchester were scattered throughout the town, Gustafson said, and the flooding ranged from an inch to more than one foot. "From what I've seen [Wednesday] and [Thursday], your neighbor could have six inches and you could have two feet," Gustafson said.

March's rainstorm caused the worst flooding in Colchester in over 20 years, Gustafson

said. He cited a 1982 storm that flooded Route 2 and said there was actually debris floating in the roads.

Throughout Colchester, there was "flooding from the Marlborough town line to the Salem town line," Gustafson added. According to www.weather.com, the rain was heavier on the Salem side. Town-wide, 6.4 inches fell in Sa-

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Luke Whitmore, left, with his escort Dan Faski, came out in their birthday suits as part of the swimwear portion of the Mr. Bacon pageant Wednesday.

Mr. Bacon cont. from Front Page

paper around himself, in less than 30 seconds, then he transported a plate of cotton balls across the stage and over to Mel, using just his nose.

The second runner-up was Brian Baker with his escort Kaitlyn Larew. Brian serenaded the audience with his full-scale talent skit that involved three music videos, a podium and a Lady Gaga look-a-like. On a large video screen, Brian presented his debut performance as Justin Bieber, singing "Baby."

In the music video, Brian's angry side came out as he first drew a heart with sidewalk chalk, then later crossed it out with vengeance. In person, he accepted his "Grammy" award from Lady Gaga and told the audience he was happy his mommy let him come to the pageant, and how he was had since moved on from his "sippy cup." "I plan on hitting puberty soon," Brian said excitedly.

Later on, Brian got real with the audience, during the Q&A portion. Brian said he liked his "carelessness" most about himself, saying, "it's what other people think of as Lady Gaga."

Like Brian, other Mr. Bacon contestants offered some insight into their personalities during the Q&A portion. Chris Bouge said he would like to change the fact that he was sometimes "impulsive" and "obnoxious." "That's why I came here tonight," he said. "I'm just trying to get the real me out."

Brian's commitment to the show was felt by other participants too. Jake Loskant was asked who, besides himself, should win the competition, and he answered, Brian. "He wanted to win so bad," Jake said.

Jake's talent was similar to Brian's, as they both put on skits, but Jake's character was at

least out of diapers. Jake sported a golf shirt, a driver and the letters "T Woods" taped on his back. His escort, Frank Young, wore a platinum blond wig and a short dress, and kept a watchful eye on Jake. The duo parodied the Tiger Woods scandal, as Jake ran around with other girls when Frank's back was turned.

But the Mr. Bacon talents were widespread and covered everything from Luke Cappezone's cliff jumping, to Sam Musinski's Big Mac feast, to Alex Catarino's culinary skills in making ice cream sundaes for the judges. Alex, who was actually a girl, came out dressed as Pinocchio with the nose and all, and subsequently learned to dance like "a real boy" with Gepetto's guidance.

Surprisingly, Alex wasn't the only fictional character during the pageant. Another crowd-pleasing entrance was that of Brian Chalmers, who was dressed as the Gingerbread Man, and his escort, Patrick Spranzo, the Milk Man. A chase scene ensued as Chalmers, a "ginger" himself, tried to outrun the Milk Man.

Andy Bates had lazier entrance, as he laid in bed and was woken up by his escort Alysha Gabree, and Evan Turek did some tricks on his "big-boy" bike.

But there was only one winner Wednesday night, and that was Luke Whitmore, who received a shining crown, a bouquet and a \$100 cash prize. Second and third place received \$50 and \$25 respectively.

The show was presented by masters of ceremony Mary Corrado and Andrew Hill.

Proceeds from Mr. Bacon ticket sales will go to the senior class gift and class trip.

Flooding cont. from Front Page

lem from Sunday to Tuesday March 28 to 30. Marlborough received about two inches less, at 4.3, during the three days.

Marlborough Fire Marshal Joe Asklar said the town's three water pumps were used continuously for four days at multiple sites.

The worst incident was about one foot of water, Asklar said, but on average, pumping out a basement took members of the Marlborough Volunteer Fire Department about four hours. "As fast as we could pump it out, it was coming in," Asklar said.

Even Asklar's own basement collected about two inches of water, he said.

According to Asklar, some homes that hadn't been pumped in 20 years flooded during the March storm.

Nancy Lack, of 355 South Main St. in Marlborough, said her basement had at least three inches of water, which ruined a rec-room rug. "We were among the lucky ones I guess," Lack said, noting other area homes had much more water. Still, Lack said her basement is a large room and things were floating in the floodwater.

In the 40 years Lack has lived at the South Main Street home, her basement has flooded only four times and the last incident was the

worst, she said.

But just one town over, in Hebron, Blais said the damage wasn't too devastating. He said the storm that began March 28 was similar to one that hit Hebron at the beginning of March and yielded a bit less damage.

Overall, 22 Hebron homes were pumped out over a four-day period. Tuesday the 29th saw the most action, with 14 basement floods, Blais said.

Portland saw a few more basement floods than Hebron, raking in 29 homes that were pumped out, Portland Fire Chief Robert Shea said. Because Portland is situated on the Connecticut River, Shea said many homeowners are familiar with their basements flooding. "It wasn't excessive," Shea said.

Shea called the damage sustained in the March storm "moderate," but added, "We're used to pumping, but we knew we were going to be in trouble on this one."

In total, the Portland Volunteer Fire Department used 117 man-hours pumping out water, Shea said.

Out of the four towns, East Hampton had the fewest flooded basements, at 12, Fire Chief Stephen Palmer said.

Low Turnout for RHAM Budget Hearing

by Lindsay Fetzner

Not one resident spoke during public comment at the RHAM budget public hearing Monday evening. The turnout, overall, was comprised of town officials and very few residents.

Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski said the Board of Education (BOE) strived to make information on the budget readily available online for residents in the surrounding towns, which Siminski said he thinks answered a lot of questions.

"The transparency was evident by the fact that the people knew what was in the budget, how the budget was arrived at and what the board did," he said.

"We are dealing with other people's money," Siminski said. As a result, he said it is very important to "tell them what we're doing with it."

BOE Chair Mike Turner said the turnout at the public hearings has been low for the past several years. He, like Siminski, alluded to the fact that residents can retrieve budget information online or through other means, rather than attending meetings. This, he said, could have had a direct impact on the turnout.

Siminski presented his recommended \$24.22 million budget, which calls for a 1.36 increase over the last fiscal year. At the BOE meeting after the hearing, the board approved the budget 9-2 and sent it to district meeting on May 3, followed by referendum May 4.

The budget is broken down into 56.7 percent for salaries, 11.6 percent for benefits, 11

percent for bond, 7.1 percent for other, transportation at 5.1 percent, 4.5 percent for tuition, 3 percent for utilities and 1 percent for fuel, according to Siminski.

Increases in salaries totaled \$224,532, for health insurance, \$195,934, property casualty insurance, \$85,320, special education, \$74,806 and transportation at \$47,289. "These were the areas of increase we had to address," Siminski said.

Hebron will carry the majority of the levy out of the three towns that attend RHAM. Hebron's levy is 54.14 percent at \$13.11 million. Marlborough is second, at 29.36 percent, for a total of \$7.11 million. Andover has 16.5 percent of the levy, at about \$4 million.

Among the other factors that had direct impact on the budget were the increases in enrollment at both the high school and in special education. For the 2010-11 year, the administration is projecting a total high school enrollment of 1,199 while the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) is projecting 1,149. This year's actual enrollment is 1,084. Turner said the enrollment increase can be attributed to a population "bubble" working its way through the school system.

The financial impact of school choice was also reflected in the budget. Siminski said over time, more students have started attending vocational agricultural (VoAg), magnet and technical schools. In fiscal year 2008-09, only 69 students attended the schools, but that number

jumped to 92 for in 2009-10. Siminski is projecting a possible magnet school enrollment for 2010-11 of 66 students. He said the numbers are "very fluid" because the decision deadline is in late September and will not know the definite number of students who will attend until then. "This is something we had to appropriate for," Siminski said.

Despite the increase in costs for the magnet, VoAg and technical schools, there were several offsets to budget increases that Siminski highlighted. Special education and paraprofessional salary increases were offset by stimulus money in addition to the clinical day treatment program. By offering the program within the region, services can be offered at reduced rates. Siminski said the tuition count is reduced when enrollment is above three students. Presently, there are six students enrolled and the capacity is eight. Out-placement cost for tuition and transportation is roughly \$55,000 (\$48,000 for tuition and \$7,000 for transportation). Stimulus money is being used for one semester of the program in the 2009-10 year and for the entire 2010-11 year. Siminski said offering the program is a "great way" to generate additional revenue for the district.

Siminski noted that in light of the increase in the population at the high school, .8 FTEs will be added, but no additional people will be brought on staff. The responsibilities will be reallocated within the existing staff. A .5 middle school physical education teacher was reallo-

cated to a high school special education position as well and a .5 middle school music teacher was cut.

The money allotted for general supplies remained flat, while the funds for instructional supplies were reduced because they were pre-purchased, and funding for library books was restored to its 2008-09 levels. Funding for textbooks was also increased, Siminski said. Electricity was funded at the same level it is at this year, while heating oil costs were reduced, due to decreased rates from last year and supplies were increased due to the high costs of cleaning supplies for "going green."

Curriculum writing and athletics, two popular topics that drew public concern, were addressed by Siminski at the end of his presentation. Appropriations for curriculum writing were reduced, but there was no reduction to athletic programming or increases in participation fees.

Siminski drew on the region's per pupil expenditure (\$12,310), which is \$495 less than the state average (\$12,805). "We produce a pretty good product," he said. He noted the number of middle school students that scored at or above proficient on the Connecticut Mastery Tests was 98 percent on the math portion and 93.5 percent on the reading. Among high school students, the number that scored at or above proficient on the Connecticut Academic Performance Tests was 94.9 percent on the math portion and 99.3 percent on the reading side.

\$38 Million Budget Sent to Town Meeting in East Hampton

by Claire Michalewicz

The Town Council voted 4-2 Tuesday evening to send Town Manager Jeffery O'Keefe's proposed \$38 million budget to a town meeting and referendum.

The budget calls for a tax increase of .97 mill, or 4.04 percent.

The Board of Finance (BOF) voted last week not to make any changes to the budget, except to increase a quarter-time position at the senior center to a half-time position.

Despite the hours BOF members had spent poring over the budget, not everyone on the Town Council was convinced that the budget did enough to cut costs.

"The budget's too high," said Town Council member Sue Weintraub. "I feel that one mill is too high for the economy we're in and the way people are suffering."

Town Council Chairwoman Melissa Engel agreed.

"We were elected as stewards, and stewards of your money," Engel said. She explained that she was concerned about O'Keefe's decision to hire a full-time engineer. But O'Keefe insisted that the move would save money on other engineering fees.

Ultimately, Weintraub and Engel voted against the budget, but were outnumbered by Vice Chairman John Tuttle, Thom Cordeiro, Barbara Moore and Christopher Goff. Council member William Devine did not attend the

meeting.

"Let the voters speak," said Tuttle, who joined the meeting by phone. Tuttle explained that he felt that the town hadn't been moving forward with its budgets in the past few years. "We've been doing this to ourselves," he explained.

Cordeiro agreed, explaining that a budget with no increase was not feasible. "This is not a 'fat cat' budget by any means," he said. He also thanked the teachers' union for their concessions. East Hampton's teachers agreed to take a reduced 1.4 percent pay increase in the next two years, saving the town \$164,000 in the upcoming fiscal year.

Cordeiro added that East Hampton needed to "come together as a community, and show a united front going for this budget on May 4."

May 4 is the date set for the town referendum, which will be held all day at the high school. Before the referendum comes the town meeting on Monday, April 26, at 7 p.m., also at the high school. Along with the budget, residents will also vote at the meeting on the proposed repairs to Memorial School's roof and oil tank.

At the beginning of the meeting, some town residents spoke out against the budget. Laurie Wasilewski said that she appreciated the BOF's efforts to reduce it, but called the 4.04 tax increase "intolerable." Mary Ann Dostaler was

less forgiving of the BOF, wondering how the budget had made it through "completely unscathed." Dostaler urged the Town Council to scrutinize the budget more carefully, and find another place to cut it.

Before the budget discussion, the council also voted on a revised sidewalk ordinance. A similar ordinance had failed a vote last month, but Cordeiro brought forward a new version that limits the sidewalks that the town will clear.

The sidewalk ordinance shifts liability for sidewalks that are covered with ice or snow from the town to the adjacent property owner. It also provides a list of streets on which the town currently plows sidewalks.

Cordeiro had been concerned that developers who build new streets would request that their sidewalks be cleared, so his version includes wording that prevents new streets from being added to the list.

The Town Council also voted to approve a \$10 monthly surcharge for residents connected to the Royal Oaks water system. The fee, which would continue for 39 months, would be used to repair the filter in one of the wells connected to the system, explained Public Utilities Administrator Vincent Susco.

The water system serves 82 households and Memorial School. In January, Susco explained, one of the wells malfunctioned, causing iron levels in the water to increase. The high iron

levels damaged many residents' pipes and appliances, Susco said.

Many residents from the area attended the meeting to protest the fee. Ethan Hartwig said that it was unfair to charge residents since they were already paying to have clean water, and said he worried that the town would introduce a new fee if these repairs didn't work. Engel encouraged him and other residents to come to town council meetings and protest if the issue came up again.

In another water-related issue, the Town Council also voted to charge a capital improvement fee for future customers of the Village Center Water System. The \$2,675 fee would be added to the \$1,250 connection fee. The council approved the new fee, but urged Susco to offer a payment plan that would allow customers to pay the fee in four interest-free payments over two years.

The Town Council also voted to adopt the Fair Housing Resolution, a move they make every year. Weintraub pointed out that town ordinances also require the town to form a fair housing partnership with 23 members, and the council agreed to look into forming one in the future.

The next Town Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 27, at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall, 20 East High St.

\$33.87 Million Budget Presented at Public Hearing in Hebron

by Lindsay Fetzner

Before a packed house Tuesday evening, the Board of Finance (BOF) presented the proposed town budget of \$33.87 million, an increase in spending of 2.15 percent, and opened the floor for comment during a public hearing.

The figures presented were based on the budget approved at the April 1 BOF meeting. The night before the meeting, a RHAM budget of \$24.22 million, an increase of 1.36 percent, was approved 9-2 (see related story on page 28). As a result, the bottom line Hebron budget sent to referendum is \$33.85 million, which is \$11,879 less than the figure the BOF voted on April 1 (which assumed a RHAM budget of \$24.24 million).

The proposed \$33.87 million budget would be an increase of 2.11 percent over current year spending, and a mill increase of 1.00, or a 3.54 percent tax increase. The budget will be voted on at referendum Tuesday, May 4.

The goal of Monday's public hearing, BOF Chair Mike Hazel said, was to present a budget to the public that was "fiscally responsible" and maintained both the current services and staffing levels. The other "aspirational goal," he said, was to present a budget with a zero percent expenditure increase.

The budget was broken down into three components for expenditures: the general government portion (\$8.85 million), the Board of Education (BOE) element (\$11.89 million) and the RHAM BOE portion (\$13.12 million).

Hazel said the general government budget "had no fat left in it" and applauded the town group for "sharpening their pencils" to bring in a budget with an increase of .22 percent.

Due to a population bubble making its way through RHAM, the levy to Hebron is projected to climb from 52.81 percent this year to 54.14 percent for the 2010-11 year. With the levy, Hebron's share of the RHAM budget would be \$13.11 million. (At the hearing, the BOF presented a \$13.12 million figure, but, again, that

number was based on where the RHAM budget sat on April 1 and not where it currently is.) The budget, Hazel said, preserves programs and is "their best presentation."

The proposed local BOE budget features an increase of 1.5 percent, or \$175,739 over last year for a total of \$11.89 million.

The board drew attention to the proposed revenue portion of the budget. "This year [2009-10] is a problem," Hazel said. "Next year is potentially a real issue." One area of concern was the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) assessments. Current revenue for 2010-11 is estimated at \$200,000, which is \$280,000 less than the current year. Hazel said the revenue drops off as the life of the sewer district taxpayer assessment loan gets closer to being complete. Hazel also noted that future funding from the state is uncertain and that miscellaneous general government and state revenues have decreased.

As the budget was presented, there is a 1.00 mill rate increase, which is a 3.54 percent tax increase. Although he said this is "not a small increase," he noted it is comparable to that of recent years. The 2009-10 fiscal year saw an increase of .97 mills, or 3.58 percent. The previous year was a .93 mill rate increase, a change of 3.53 percent. The majority of the increase for 2010-11 is due to the RHAM population shift and the decreased revenue.

An overwhelming number of residents voiced their opinions on the BOE budget, with particular attention to the all-day kindergarten program (ADK). Others voiced concern on the current economic climate and how increases to the budget could not be afforded.

John Gasper asked the board whether a cost-saving analysis on the services Hebron provides was ever completed and asked them to consider outsourcing those services. Hazel said the town had indeed looked at the regionalization of services, but no deal was ever made. He added

that the town is always looking for opportunities for cost savings.

PTA member Nancy Bieri said she did not want to see any further cuts to the BOE budget. David Olio had cuts on his mind too, and said he is "deeply concerned" with them. "To live in Hebron, to me, is a gift and I think we need to fully fund our services," he said.

Claudia Jones said maintaining programs "is of paramount importance to our children" and felt the 1.5 percent increase is not adequate. "Programs are going to be cut and it's going to affect our town's reputation," she said.

Another resident, Maura Baker, said she is in favor of the BOE budget "without further cuts." Drawing on the school's performance, she said, "it is a good value for our money."

Others, however, did not approve of the BOE budget. One resident said that ADK "is an expensive addition to the budget" and that data is needed to confirm and prove its effectiveness. Dominic Marino voiced objection to ADK and said he did not support "any new non-required services." Touching on the extra hours in the full-day versus the half-day program, he said the endurance for kids to learn is somewhat limited after lunchtime.

Loretta McDonnell said she too stands in opposition to the BOE budget and said that the recommended cuts do "not reflect the best the community has to offer." She also encouraged advisory questions be added to the ballot to ask people why they voted in the manner they did. Andrea Pueschel said ADK "should not be added if it means taking away programs that have already been approved."

"ADK has been a non-negotiable addition to the budget," said Karen Cohen. She said there has been no talk of reducing the "sacred cow" or "elephant in the room," as Cohen referred to it. "I am not against the concept and it's not that I don't think there are benefits, I'm just against funding it in the 2010-11 budget," she

said. Cohen feared that if the budget fails at referendum, that ADK "will continue to be untouched at the loss of other programs." Cohen, like McDonnell, brought up advisory questions and said they could be a means of finding where people are still having concerns with the budget.

Marie Egbert asked the BOF to revise the BOE budget to the original request of a zero percent increase and to remove funds for the ADK program. Egbert said the public does not have clear answers to their questions and does not support cutting teachers. "They shouldn't have that as a threat to the parents who have kids in their schools," she said. "Until the ADK program has been eliminated from the BOE budget, my family will not support this budget."

Diane Rees, a kindergarten teacher at Gilead Hill School, read a letter from the kindergarten team, which asked that the budget be supported as proposed. A member of the Hebron Education Association agreed and asked for support on the budget. She said she regretted the most recent cuts, but "the most recent proposal needs to be put forward."

Others urged residents to come together and unify as a town during these tough economic times.

"Let's not be selfish, and help our neighbors," Paula Verrier said. "This is our community and we have to make sacrifices."

BOF member Donna Ferree said the comments from the public were an overall reflection of what the board has been hearing throughout the budget season. Ferree said the board tried to "do the best we could without affecting services," but that in the end, services may still be affected. "We did the best we could with what we got," she said.

The budget referendum will take place Tuesday, May 4, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., at Hebron Elementary School, 92 Church St.

C&E, ADK Dominate Hebron School Board Meeting

by Lindsay Fetzner

A list of recommended reductions to the 2010-11 budget was unveiled at the Board of Education (BOE) meeting last Thursday, revealing that the .7 music position at Hebron Elementary School originally on the chopping block was safe - a decision that many members of the public were grateful to see.

Several parents voiced concern with eliminating the music position during public comment, before the list was presented later in the evening.

Robin Lane said this cut was the most troubling for her family, as the music program "allows a sense of identification with others." Music, Lane said, allows for intangible benefits and a cut of this nature would not only hurt the fourth grade, but "trickle down to the whole program."

Diane Kasper agreed, and said as a mother of five who are all involved in music, "I can't even imagine their lives without it." "Please don't take it away," she urged to the BOE.

The total proposed BOE budget, with a 1.50 percent increase, is \$11.89 million. The increase is \$175,739 over last year's \$11.72 million budget.

Among the \$177,649 in reductions the BOE recommends are one Challenge & Enrichment (C&E) position (\$61,500), a fourth-grade classroom teacher (\$61,500), a custodian (\$27,928) and a paraprofessional position (\$19,695). Supplies (\$5,328) and professional development (\$1,698) were also among the recommended reductions.

BOE member Brian O'Reilly said when considering which reductions to make, the board members asked themselves, "How do we stick to our missions, values and goals with the least affect to the children?"

Cruz said a task force would be appointed to revise the C&E identification guidelines, which would focus on restructuring the program to maintain the current services through "a fresh lens." As a result of the reduction, the services would be under the direction of one district C&E teacher, according to Cruz. She recommended that the program be looked at "right away" and that no time be wasted in the meantime. "We don't want to lose the opportunity to

meet the needs of the students," Cruz said.

BOE member Tina Marie Blinn said she was comfortable with the C&E reduction on the list, as it would present an opportunity to both re-examine the program and allow for parents with expertise to come in and help in the classrooms. BOE Chair Jane Dube agreed with Blinn, and said that although the decision to keep C&E on the list of recommended reductions was tough, "problems can turn into opportunities." Dube said she encouraged feedback from the community on how the program can go forward as well.

Board member Kathy Shea, however, did not agree with C&E's placement on the list of reductions. Shea told the board that forming a task force and studying the program "takes a long time to implement," which would cause the program to be put on hold.

Shea then said she is distressed that the board will not entertain removing the implementation of all-day kindergarten (ADK) from the budget, but instead is looking at program changes - a comment that received applause from the audience of about 20-25 people. "I'm tired of putting out band and C&E and the other hot-button items," Shea said. "There are other ideas we should be considering." Shea also said she is tired of the board ignoring her and the suggestions she has put forth.

Dube responded to Shea by saying, "People are listening to you, but as a board, these are the decisions that the majority is comfortable with." In light of Shea's discussion on ADK, board member Stephanie Raymond added that several people have said the ADK program only affects about 100 children, but in actuality, the number of children affected is cumulative. "It may only impact 100 kids this year, but it will have future implications year after year after year," Raymond said.

The board, along with Cruz, identified the other recommended reductions and the implications they would have on the students. According to Cruz, there are 146 third-grade students currently in the district. With a fourth-grade teacher reduction, Cruz said BOE recommended class sizes of 24 would still be main-

tained by reducing seven sections to six in the fourth grade during the 2010-11 school year.

In terms of the paraprofessional reduction, the responsibilities from the position would be reallocated to existing staff, a result of a paraprofessional recently resigning. The position would not be filled, Cruz said. Responsibilities from a second-shift custodian cut will also be reallocated. To be sure that the buildings are maintained at acceptable levels, Cruz said this might have to be revisited in 2010-11. Conserving paper and limiting professional development opportunities were the outcomes of supply and professional development reductions, according to Cruz.

The resignation of Curriculum and Technology Director Michelle Puhlick was also discussed and a recommendation by Cruz was made. "Talking with the administration team, we felt the void needed to be filled," Cruz said. "And I couldn't think of a better person to fill the shoes of Michelle Puhlick with." Hebron Elementary School (HES) Assistant Principal Vonda Tencza was recommended to fill the position and will bridge the gap between the two positions until the end of the year. Puhlick's last day is April 23.

Shea voiced concern with the fact that Tencza's appointment would become effective immediately. She said that she would have liked to see the position remain vacant for the remainder of the school year. "I am not sure why the idea wasn't fully entertained," she said. "I have deep concerns with filling it as a full-time position when we are having a difficult budget season."

Dube and Raymond responded to Shea's concerns, conjointly saying the position is indeed needed in the school system. Dube said Puhlick's responsibilities keep her "working hard all day long," and that she is not sure how the responsibilities could be reallocated. Raymond said Puhlick's position title is deceiving and does not properly demonstrate or show the wealth of responsibilities it entails. In addition to the curriculum, Raymond said Puhlick is heavily involved in Connecticut Mastery Test analysis and the teacher development program.

"Just saying curriculum and technology doesn't describe what the person really does," she said.

During public comment at the close of the meeting, Dominic Marino said he would have liked to see the job posted online. Cruz said this week that according to board policy and the administrative contract, the board is not required to post the job. This issue was discussed with the BOE attorney, administrative union and BOE chair as well, Cruz said, to ensure the process was following all necessary guidelines.

Also at the meeting, HES Principal Kevin Hanlon announced the retirement of Cindy Daniels, third-grade teacher at HES, who has been teaching for over 30 years. Hanlon said she will remain at HES for the remainder of the calendar year. "She is always looking out for raising the bar in the classroom ... and has been a delight to work with," Cruz said. Cruz, along with board members and administrators, thanked Daniels for her dedication to Hebron over the years and wished her well in her future endeavors.

However, during the public comment at the end of the meeting, it was again ADK that was a heated topic of discussion.

Resident Karen Cohen was "frustrated to hear how much the board has listened to the public," but did not hear discussion on ADK. Cohen said she is not the only person who has brought this up. "Everything should be on the table," she said. Cohen asked the board, "What is the worst thing that would happen if ADK was not implemented this year?" She said in light of the school being up for a blue ribbon award, "How bad can our kindergarten program be?" Marino sided with Cohen, and said that the board "is out of touch" and "not reflecting the values of the residents."

Maura Baker, however, said that ADK "reflects the values of the community" and is a huge supporter of the implementation of the program. Baker told the board that despite the outcry, "there are people that are in favor."

The next BOE meeting will be held Thursday, May 13, at 6 p.m. (there is an earlier start time due to a BOE social) at Gilead Hill School, 580 Gilead St.

New Class Aims to Help Students Make a Difference in Portland

by Claire Michalewicz

Some Portland High School (PHS) seniors are getting the chance to make a difference in their school and community, through a new course called Leadership.

This is the first year that PHS offered the class, which teaches high-achieving seniors how to develop their leadership skills, and apply what they've learned to help the community. Their projects range from a senior lounge to a mentoring program to a play for elementary school children.

Bob Miles, one of the class teachers, said he was inspired to create the class to focus on students who showed potential for leadership, and help them apply their abilities toward serving the community.

Miles said he wanted to use the class to improve the school atmosphere, which he described as being full of "apathy and mediocrity." Teachers recommend students for the leadership class and interested students are interviewed.

Working with other teachers to create the course curriculum, Miles looked at leadership classes that other schools offered, and borrowed

some components of the course from them.

"There's a strong sense that it has real direction and purpose," Miles said. "It has real value." Miles said his class is unique - he took some ideas from other leadership classes, but noted that all the classes he'd seen at other schools seemed to focus more on building self-esteem rather than leadership.

In the first semester, Miles explained, he focuses on historical examples of leadership, and helps the students select role models to look up to. Later, they move on to more practical applications of their leadership skills.

Kristin Novak, along with Charles Ryan, teaches the second semester of the class, when students develop and carry out service projects. "All had some things that were unique to their personalities," Novak said of the five projects the class is working on. Novak said the students' ideas evolved during the class, and all five projects are currently well on their way to being completed.

One of the projects is to create a senior lounge at the high school. The lounge, said student Matt McGrath, would create an incentive

for seniors to keep their grades up, as they would need a 3.0 GPA to use the space.

"There needs to be an area that we can claim for our own," Matt said. So far, the group has obtained furniture for the lounge, but is still seeking a donation of a non-electric gaming table, like a ping pong or foosball table.

Another project is a mural in the main hallway of the school, which will highlight all the different clubs and sports teams at PHS. Kaylee Ryan said many other high schools have colorful murals in their halls, and she wanted to make Portland's halls brighter and more inviting.

Students say they're enjoying the class. Chris Waller, who's working to build a display case for the old sports trophies that he found in a closet, said he's been learning a lot from the class.

"I complain about the school so much, so I figured I should try to do something to make it better," he joked. Chris said the class has taught him a lot of useful skills for the future. "I definitely know how to work with people now, and I understand different points of view."

Other projects reach outside the high school

to younger students. One group organized a program called Developing Young People, which organizes events and provides mentoring services for middle school students. Student Logan Manning said she believes the students could use positive role models.

Some of the projects show a fusion of the students' different interests. Natalie Pozzetti and Arleen Barningham are working on a project called Need To Read. They're performing traditional children's stories for elementary school students in Portland and Harford. Their project came about when they combined Pozzetti's interest in theater with Barningham's concern about reading skills among elementary school students.

Both of them say the class has taught them a lot about themselves and opened up more opportunities for the future. Arleen said she's learned to deal with difficult situations. "This is more than just a class and credit," she said. "It's also a life lesson."

"This course is the best," said Natalie. "It showed me who I am and what I can do."

Marlborough Home Dogs Solve Future Problems

by Katy Nally

Some of the most challenging issues facing today's society were recently analyzed, and potentially solved, by four Marlborough 12-year-olds who call themselves the Home Dogs.

The four sixth-grade boys competed in the Future Problem Solving (FPS) competition, junior division, on March 26 and 27, and won first place in two events – the team and skit competition.

There are four aspects to the event: scenario writing, skit, individual and team competition. At least one of the Home Dogs placed in each area. Because of their win, brothers James and Michael La Bella, Ryan Masotti and Jack Caplan will compete in the international competition this June.

The team, officially named the Virginia Rail Homeschoolers because all four boys live on Virginia Rail Drive, was organized by Michael's and James' mother, Irene La Bella, a first-time FPS coach.

For the state meet, the boys looked at solutions to the challenge of food distribution. James said the situation involved farmers who were growing corn to feed a kind of "superfish." On the surface at least, there didn't appear to be a problem. The people grow the corn to feed the fish, which they then eat.

But as the team dug deeper, they noticed it was risky for the farmers to grow only one crop. "Our problem was that it was a mono-system," James said. "If one factor failed, then the whole thing would fail."

The Home Dogs decided they would create a "totally humane injection for the fish that would allow them to live on nothing but water forever," James said. This way, "hungry people would never starve."

The hypothetical situation takes place in the future, Irene clarified, prompting the participants to "think outside the box." She said some scenarios are "a little fantastic," but for the most part, "it's not out of the realm of 50 years from now."

During the first day of the competition, the team had two hours to create a "booklet" that detailed how they would solve the problem. On the second day, the four boys acted out their solution in a skit they wrote. Irene said the skit was "very funny," as "all four of the boys are kind of hams." During the skit, the boys were allowed to use designated props like a garbage bag and tinfoil, and they had to incorporate a

quote into the dialogue.

The four boys of the Virginia Rail Homeschoolers worked on similar hypothetical problems since the beginning of the school year, Irene said. In the past few months, they have studied, and addressed, other issues like orphaned children, invasive species and sensory overload.

To bone up on these topics, the 12-year-olds attended seminars and met between once and twice a week. One of the Home Dogs even sacrificed two hours from his birthday to work on a practice booklet in November, Irene said. "They're very motivated and ambitious," she added.

To qualify for the state competition, the boys submitted a booklet to solve a problem dealing with orphaned children in Brazil. The orphans, who live in a park, were to be ousted to make way for a launch pad, James said. To rectify the situation, the boys utilized an idea they learned about in a seminar – an SOS Children's Village, where one parent looks after the orphans. "You really connect information you learn," James said.

Irene recalled another solution the boys thought of, which was to resurrect an old battleship that would already be equipped with a kitchen and bedrooms for the orphans.

James said he enjoys the competition, partly because he learns more about current issues. "It's very educational because each year they pick six topics that are happening in our world now," James said. This too was a highlight for Irene. "The boys have such a better understanding of the world around them now," she said.

The Virginia Rail Homeschoolers was one of 60 teams to submit a booklet in January to qualify for the state competition, then only 20 teams went on to states. "We were over the moon," Irene said about the team's acceptance.

The international competition, held in LaCross, WI, from June 10-13, will be a bit more daunting than the state event, with 1,400 students competing.

When the boys are presented with a situation, James said the team's strategy is to pull out four underlying problems each, 16 in total. From there, each member thinks of solutions and then they critique each other's answers. "With the best solution, we write an action plan that explains the whole thing," James said, and the product is a booklet.



Four boys on the Virginia Rail Homeschoolers team won the team competition at the FPS event in March. Picture from left in the first row are Michael La Bella, Jack Caplan, Ryan Masotti and James La Bella. From left in the second row are Selectman Joe La Bella, Selectman Riva Clark, and First Selectman Bill Black.

Irene said the boys worked extraordinarily well together and noted how "engaged they were." She said the team had some heated discussions, but then came to an agreement in the end. "Because they're boys they would yell at each other," Irene said, adding, "When they'd finish, they would high-five and say, 'Let's go play soccer.'"

James said the booklet work can "get kind of stressful," but overall, he said "it's a really good time. ... I am definitely happy I went through all this."

Irene said the Home Dogs have that "typical boy kind of mentality," so their interests are easily piqued by scenarios involving "superfish" and battleships.

Clearly, the Home Dogs were very engaged in the FPS competition, as each one placed during the event. In scenario writing, Jack received third place, and James, second; and in the individual competition, Michael took third and James, another second place. All four boys were recognized for winning the skit and team

competition.

"It was beyond my wildest dreams," Irene said about the team's success.

But before the Virginia Rail Homeschoolers were announced as the winners, the Home Dogs got to cheer on their fellow classmates from Marlborough Elementary School, who were the runners-up in the team competition. Kellan Navarre, Tara Peng, Anya Vrabie and Kyle Hunt, who were coached by Julie Caron, took second place.

"The boys were just so thrilled for them," Irene said.

Now it's on to the international competition, where the topic of discussion will be green living.

To get there in June, Irene said the team is currently seeking corporate sponsors.

"I really never could have dreamed we could have come this far, and now we're going to Wisconsin," James said excitedly.

For more information about Connecticut FPS, visit www.FPSofCT.org.

Marlborough BOF Keeps Lifeguards in Budget

by Katy Nally

The Board of Finance (BOF) submitted an overall 2010-11 town budget of about \$20.89 million at its final workshop on Tuesday. The proposed spending plan keeps funding for lifeguards – which had been a hot topic among townspeople in recent weeks.

Earlier this year, the Board of Selectmen had proposed eliminating funding for lifeguards at Blish Park in next year's budget. The move had not gone over well with several members of the public, who had criticized it both at public meetings and in *Rivereast* letters to the editor. At Tuesday's workshop, about \$38,000 was put in for the lifeguards, BOF Chair Cathi Gaudinski said Wednesday.

"We are a lake community, so I think it's right to have lifeguards at the park," Gaudinski said, noting the BOF took into consideration the complaints from residents.

Also Tuesday, the board opted to keep the public works supervisor/buildings and grounds position full-time; the original budget proposal sent by the selectmen to the BOF called for the hours to be trimmed to 25, in the hopes the Board of Education (BOE) would kick in the funding for the other 15 hours. However, the BOE didn't include any money for the position in its budget, which was adopted in February. The selectmen then asked the BOF to put the money back in.

Despite these two reinstatements, the town operations budget decreased by about \$82,000, showing a 1.86 percent decrease. However, once the other budgets are factored in, the overall budget is actually a .25 percent increase over current year. The spending plan calls for the mill rate to climb .11 mills, to 26.59. This would be a .41 percent tax increase.

At the budget workshop on March 30, Parks and Recreation Commission Chair Barbara Lazzari said her minimum expenditure for lifeguards would be \$37,585, which is what the BOF approved. Parks and Rec. Commission member Louise Concodello said this week the commission is "very pleased," adding, "we will make it work."

The money is less than the \$44,000, the current year budget allots for lifeguards. Due to the decrease, Concodello said there might be three guards working at one time instead of four. "There's going to be some juggling," she said. "They're going to have to be flexible with us and we'll be flexible with them."

To offset the Parks and Rec. budget, several fees have increased. The pavilion will now cost \$20 to rent, the tennis fee has increased to \$70 and the registration fee for Netto's was upped by \$5.

Of the six pieces of the budget – town op-

erations, education, RHAM, contingency, capitol and debt – the debt was the only one to increase, Gaudinski said. That figure increased by about \$175,000, or 7.51 percent.

In March, Superintendent of Schools David Sklarz presented a \$6.905 million education budget that was a 0.8 percent decrease from the 2009-10 budget. Gaudinski said the BOF made no changes to Sklarz' budget, despite some board discussions about the teachers' union. On Wednesday, Gaudinski said the BOF had not heard from the union.

Sklarz' budget included a moratorium on new books, increasing the sixth-grade class size, reducing a custodian position and cutting the equivalent of one paraprofessional.

The Marlborough portion of the RHAM BOE budget was originally presented to the BOF as \$7.19, but after deliberations by members of the regional school board, that number was cut down to \$7.11 million. Like the elementary education budget, the Marlborough portion of RHAM represents another decrease over the current budget, at 2 percent.

The contingency was halved, from \$40,000 to \$20,000, which keeps the line item at the current year's figure, netting a zero percent increase.

Capitol spending, which was originally at

\$40,000, and was slated to fund renovations at the library, was eliminated. Gaudinski said the Small Towns Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) funding that was granted for the library second-floor project might be divided up for other Richmond Memorial Library improvements, such as renovations to the electric system, or the roof.

Gaudinski said she hoped voters would pass the budget during the upcoming referendum. "It's been quiet, and I think people have been watching," Gaudinski said regarding the recent public comments.

As the budget season neared an end last year, voters were not so quiet. During this time last year, before the budget went through three referendums, the overall town budget proposal represented an increase of 6.8 percent, Gaudinski said. But, after residents voted down the package, the budget was cut down to a 0.73 percent increase.

But, as of now, Gaudinski said, "so far so good."

The next event in the budget schedule is a public hearing Monday, April 26, at 7 p.m., at the elementary school, located at 25 School Dr. There will be a referendum vote Monday, May 10, from 6 a.m.-8 p.m., also at the school.

RHAM School Board Names Assistant Principal

by Lindsay Fetzner

RHAM Middle School Interim Assistant Principal Carri-Ann Bell officially assumed her post as assistant principal when the Board of Education (BOE) made the appointment on Monday evening.

Bell began her career at RHAM 10 years ago, when she was hired as a PE/Health teacher post graduation. Two years ago, she became the PE/Health Coordinator and this past February, when the former assistant principal, Anne Starr, left the school district, Bell became the interim assistant principal.

Bell, an Andover resident, was one of over 80 applicants to apply for the position, RHAM Principal Michael Seroussi said. The search for the position began in March, and lasted a little over a month. A search committee consisting of 10 individuals – including a parent, a school board member and high and middle school staff, among others – were responsible for screening the candidates, Superintendent of Schools Robert Siminski said. They were narrowed down to 11 and then finally, to a group of four. The BOE was presented with the final two candidates, and the decision to appoint Bell was made, Seroussi said.

“I am glad I went through the process,” Bell said. “I wanted whoever was the best for the job.” She said the process allowed her to personally identify ways to improve the school and better the system in general.

One of the aspects Bell is most looking forward to in her new role is the challenge it will present her. Working with students in a new light and working more closely with both teachers, guidance and the rest of the administration are other things Bell said she excited about. “I am wearing a totally different hat now,” she said.

As interim assistant principal, Bell said she “got to see firsthand what goes on in a day.” Although Bell is still learning the ropes, moving from a teacher to administrator’s mind, she said, “I like a challenge. It keeps me on my toes.”

Seroussi described Bell as an enthusiastic,

levelheaded individual with a wealth of experience in the middle school arena. “She is well-respected by both staff and community,” he said.

Seroussi said Bell has experience working in the front office as well. She completed an internship at the middle school while working toward her administrative certification at Sacred Heart University. Bell worked alongside the principal and “did a lot of discipline, started programs, and worked with guidance,” among many other things, she said, giving her a firm grasp on the daily responsibilities.

One special quality that Bell possessed, Siminski said, was her love of middle school kids. “It’s a special individual that likes that age group,” he said. Bell not only exhibited this quality, Siminski said, but also knowledge of teaching and learning as well as working with teachers to improve their performance. “She understands the whole notion of database decision making,” he said.

Communicating with the students and a strong sense of leadership were other strong qualities Siminski said Bell possesses. “She understands them,” he said, referring to the middle school students.

BOE Chair Mike Turner said the middle school age range is “unique” and having experience working with them was a strong component in her interviews. He said the final two candidates were very qualified, and added that Bell had “a bit more experience behind her answers.” Seroussi agreed with Turner, and said that Bell rose to his attention among the pool of internal candidates.

Although Bell has come to know many parents and families over the past 10 years, she said she hopes to meet more. She also expressed interest in working with the staff, students, community and administration to keep the school moving in a positive direction.

“We are excited to have her aboard,” Siminski said. “She is a fine complement to the community.”

Police Investigating Car Break-Ins at RHAM High School

by Lindsay Fetzner

Students’ cars were the target of break-ins at RHAM High School last week.

On Wednesday, April 7, two students’ vehicles were broken into in the school parking lot, State Police said.

It is unclear whether the break-ins were committed by RHAM students, RHAM High School Principal Scott Leslie said on Monday. As of Wednesday of this week, the person or persons who broke into the cars were still unknown.

State Police said the incident occurred between 7:20 a.m. and noon on Wednesday. A wallet with personal information, credit and debit cards was taken in addition to a GPS unit. Windows were smashed on both targeted cars, State Police said. Two 17-year-olds and a 48-year-old Hebron resident were listed as victims. The case is still under investigation, State Police said. Anyone with information on the incidents is asked to contact Hebron Resident State Trooper Mark Gendron at 860-228-3710.

Although there are cameras in the high school parking lot, they were installed when the building was first constructed and are “limited in what they can do,” Leslie said. The cameras are stationary and only capture in the direction they are pointed in. Leslie

said the school is looking into getting an additional camera that would pan the area of the parking lot and have zooming capabilities. Subsequent cameras are also inside the high school.

Although the high school has seen a rash of theft in the locker rooms, theft in the parking lot is “really rare,” Leslie said. “We haven’t had anything like this happen.”

Leslie said the school has done a lot to address theft because of issues in the locker rooms this year. This past winter, a monitor was hired to patrol the locker room area Monday through Friday. During April vacation, which begins Monday, April 19, additional cameras will be installed near the locker rooms as well to help combat the problem.

During the morning hours and later after school, two hall monitors also patrol the parking lots. “The challenge would be putting someone out there full-time,” Leslie said. “We are trying to find a balance.”

Leslie said throughout the entire process, the police have been “invaluable.” The high school has a school resource officer, Denise Sevigny, on the premises. She was unavailable for comment this week.

Officers Rescue Family from Burning Home in Portland

by Claire Michalewicz

Two Portland police officers rescued a family of five from their house when it caught fire early on Saturday morning.

A neighbor reported the fire at 56 Fairway Dr. around 3 a.m. April 10. Portland Police Sergeant James Kelly and Officer James Capello arrived on the scene first. The two police officers entered the house and rescued the five people inside, said Fire Chief Robert Shea.

Kelly said he was just around the corner when the call came in, and when he arrived at the burning house, the neighbor who had called was standing outside, trying to alert the residents. Kelly entered the dwelling, and found the homeowners, who were already awake. They said that their two elderly relatives in a bedroom down the hall. Kelly went to the couple and helped them quickly dress and exit the house, he said.

When Capello arrived, he located the other resident of the house, the homeowners’ adult daughter. The two officers helped the five

people safely exit the house, Kelly said.

Fire crews from Portland and Middletown arrived shortly afterward, and conducted a second search of the house to make sure no one was still inside.

“They did a phenomenal job of getting the residents out,” Shea said of the two officers.

But Kelly said the real credit should go to the neighbor who called 911 and then alerted the family.

Firefighters extinguished the fire within a few minutes. The fire was concentrated on the exterior of the house, and the garage and the area directly above it suffered significant damage, Shea said. There was also some smoke damage in the main part of the house, and to a car that was inside the garage, Shea said.

The cause of the fire was still under investigation, but the fire marshals’ office suspected it started in an outdoor waste receptacle outside the garage, Shea said.

East Hampton Woman Arrested After Toddlers Found Outside in Rain

by Claire Michalewicz

A local woman was arrested Friday, April 9, after her two toddlers were found outside in the rain wearing only diapers, East Hampton Police said.

Julie Root, 27, of 33 Flat Brook Rd., was charged with two counts each of risk of injury to a minor and second-degree reckless endangerment, police said.

A neighbor on Flat Brook Road called police around 8:30 a.m. to report that there were two children playing outside alone, Sergeant Garritt Kelly said. About half an hour later, the same neighbor went outside to check on the children, and found the two boys, ages 2 and 4, walking through a swamp with their dog, wearing only diapers. The neighbor called police, and took the boys inside to clean them up, Kelly said.

When police arrived on the scene, they ar-

rested Root, who was responsible for the boys’ care at that time. Root explained that she had worked an overnight shift, and had fallen asleep while she was supposed to be watching her sons, Kelly said.

The case is still under investigation, Kelly said, and police are unsure how the children got out of the house. Root’s husband was also home at the time, but he has not been charged.

The two children were taken to Marlborough Medical Center, where they were found to be cold, wet, and frightened, but unharmed. They were released back to the Roots’ custody under supervision from the Department of Children and Families, Kelly said.

Root was released on \$10,000 bond and is due to appear at Middletown Superior Court on April 20.

Police Searching for Missing Woman in East Hampton

East Hampton Police are searching for a local woman who has been missing for several weeks.

Family members last saw Kerri Devine, 22, of 43 Main St., on March 17, though Devine was in touch with friends as recently as April 1, Sergeant Garritt Kelly said. Police have been investi-



Kerri Devine

gating the case, and have not found any communication from Devine since then, Kelly said.

Devine is a white female, 5’6” tall and 135 pounds, with brown or auburn hair and a fair complexion, Kelly said.

Kelly said that Devine is “involved in the drug culture.” She was last known to be in Hartford, though she also has friends in Boston. Police are concerned that Devine may have fallen victim to crime or foul play, Kelly said.

Anyone with information about Devine is asked to call East Hampton Police at 860-267-9922.

Police: Man Threatened to Kill Mother, Sister in Portland

by Claire Michalewicz

Portland Police talked a man with a gun into surrendering after he threatened to kill his mother and sister in a family dispute Sunday morning.

Officers David Bond and Gary Jarzabek responded to a call about a domestic dispute at 470 Main St., around 10:45 a.m. April 11. The call said there were “guns involved or guns present,” Jarzabek explained.

“That kicks it up a notch,” Jarzabek said, saying that he and Bond prepared themselves for a potentially dangerous situation.

When they arrived at the house, family members explained that their son, Troy Nursick, 39, had threatened to kill his sister and disabled mother, Jarzabek said. Nursick had then run upstairs and retreated into a bedroom. Jarzabek said the outburst was caused by “unresolved family issues that erupted.”

From the bedroom, the “very irate” Nursick

threatened the officers, saying that he had a gun and “wasn’t going to go peacefully,” Jarzabek said.

After about half an hour, Jarzabek and Bond managed to talk Nursick into surrendering, Jarzabek said. They searched the bedroom after arresting him, and found a loaded .40 caliber pistol near where Nursick had been sitting, Jarzabek said.

“I’m glad that he was reasonable and we could talk with him,” Jarzabek said. “I’m glad that it ended peacefully.”

Police charged Nursick with breach of peace and four counts of second-degree threatening. Nursick was held overnight at the police station on a \$150,000 bond, Jarzabek said. He appeared at Middletown Superior Court on Monday morning, and was released on a \$25,000 bond. He is due back in court on Monday, April 19.

Obituaries

East Hampton

Christine M. Coleman

Christine M. Coleman, 57, of East Hampton, died Tuesday, April 13, at Middlesex Hospital. Born Jan. 6, 1953 in Northampton, MA, she was the daughter of Ernest Vanasse and Marion LaFleur Vanasse. Christine was a data processing designer for the insurance industry before her retirement. She was a communicant of St. Patrick Church in East Hampton.

Besides her father, she is survived by her sister, Patricia Ann Dunkel of Massachusetts and her close friend Diana Resler of East Hampton.

A memorial service will be held Tuesday, April 20, at 11 a.m. in the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton. Burial will be private. Friends may call at the funeral home on Tuesday morning from 10 a.m. until the time of service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Connecticut Humane Society.

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

East Hampton

Joanne C. Lanzi

Joanne C. (Hedrick) Lanzi, 72, of East Hampton, widow of the late Morris "Moe" Lanzi, died Tuesday, April 13, at her home surrounded by her loving family. Born Feb. 15, 1938 in Hartford, she was the daughter of the late Joseph and Edith (Nelson) Hedrick.

Joanne had lived in East Hampton for more than 50 years and was a member of the Bethlehem Lutheran Church. She worked until her retirement at Middlesex Hospital in the Business Office.

She is survived by her son, David Lanzi of East Hampton; her daughter, Deborah Lanzi of East Hampton and her dear friend, James Breen of Cobalt. She also leaves her seven grandchildren: Henry J. Stone IV, David Stone, Daniel Stone, Amanda Silveria, Ryan Lanzi, Dylan Lanzi and Jayson Lanzi, and a great-grandson, Adrien Stone.

Funeral services will be held today, Friday, April 16, at 11 a.m. in the Bethlehem Lutheran Church in East Hampton. Burial will follow in the family plot in Lakeview Cemetery.

Friends called at the Spencer Funeral Home, 112 Main St., East Hampton on Thursday.

To leave online condolences, visit www.spencerfuneralhomeinc.com

Colchester

Kevin Harward

Kevin Harward, 46, of Colchester, passed away unexpectedly Wednesday, April 7, at home. Born Oct. 12, 1963, in St. Louis, MO, he was a son of John Harward and Matha Ruble, both of Kansas City, MO.

Mr. Harward was proud of his service with the U.S. Army. During peace time, he served for six years on foreign and domestic soil. Kevin worked as a quality control assistant for Olympus NDT (formerly Staveley Sensors, Inc.) in East Hartford for over 18 years.

He was an avid fan of the Kansas City Chiefs and he had a passion for guitar playing. Most importantly, his greatest joy was in the time he spent with his son, Shawn, working computer wizardry and bike riding with his son Daniel.

Surviving him are two sons, Shawn Harward of South Windsor and Daniel Harward of Colchester; a stepmother, Lorraine Harward of Kansas City, MO; a stepfather, Gene Ruble of Kansas City, MO; two brothers, Timothy and Jeff Harward, both of Kansas City, MO, and numerous extended family members and friends.

A memorial service was held Sunday, April 11, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester, with military honors. Burial was held privately in the State Veterans Cemetery in Middletown.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Harward Children's Education Fund, c/o Liberty Bank, P.O. Box 188, Marlborough, CT 06447.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Portland

Gerald A. Kuzina

Gerald A. Kuzina, 41, of Portland, beloved son of Gerald J. and Theo (Labbadia) Kuzina passed away Tuesday, April 6.

Jerry is also survived by his loving brother, Joseph J. Kuzina; his maternal grandmother, Olive (Bransfield) Labbadia; as well as many loving aunts, uncles and cousins. Jerry was predeceased by his paternal grandparents, Richard H. and Helen (Organek) Kuzina; and his maternal grandfather, Anthony J. Labbadia.

Relatives and friends attended a Mass of Christian Burial Monday, April 12, at the Church of Saint Mary. There were no calling hours. Arrangements are under the direction of the Portland Memorial Funeral Home, 231 Main St., Portland.

In lieu of flowers, gifts in Jerry's memory may be sent to the Church of Saint Mary 51 Freestone Ave. Portland, CT 06480.

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

Hebron

Edward J. Goss Sr.

Edward J. Goss Sr., 85, of Manchester, beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, peacefully passed away Friday, April 9, at Litchfield Woods Health Care Center in Torrington with his family at his side.

Ed was born Sept. 1, 1924, in Berlin, NH, son of the late Philip and Eleanor (Lavoie) Goss and had resided in Manchester as well as East Hartford, Ft. Pierce, FL, and at Amston Lake for many years. He was a Navy Seabee veteran of WWII and had received the Purple Heart for wounds while serving in the Pacific. Ed was a life member of the Disabled American Veterans. He was a graduate of the University of Hartford, Class of 1953 and in 1973 he received the Distinguished Service Award in recognition of outstanding service to the University and the Alumni Association.

Ed was employed with Pratt & Whitney Aircraft for over 20 years retiring as a Supervisor of Major Construction. He was a former parishioner of St. Bridget Church and St. Bartholomew Church in Manchester as well as St. Rose Church in East Hartford where he had served as a Eucharistic Minister. Ed was an avid outdoorsman, fisherman and golfer but the most important thing in his life was his family.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Mary J. "Irene" (Cadorette) Goss, his eight children, Edward J. Goss Jr. and his wife Mary of Connecticut, Barbara McKay and her husband, Thomas of Connecticut, Richard Goss and his wife, Shirley of Virginia, Sally Goddard of Connecticut, Jacalyn Miner and her husband, Steven of Massachusetts, Jennifer Garrett and her husband, Steven of Virginia, Philip Goss and his wife, Kristen of Illinois, and Colonel Thomas Goss and his wife, Andria of Rhode Island, his son-in-law, Terrence Ruzzo of Colchester, 18 grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, his sister, Helen Johnson of Vernon and numerous nieces and nephews.

Besides his parents, Ed was predeceased by an infant son, Timothy Goss, his daughter, Patricia Ruzzo, a granddaughter, Michelle Goss, a brother, Philip Goss and two sisters, Lorraine Wiswell and Elizabeth Duclos.

Funeral services were Wednesday, April 14, at Holmes Funeral Home, 400 Main St., Manchester, followed by a Mass of Christian Burial at St. Bridget Church, 80 Main St., Manchester. Military honors followed outside of the church after Mass. Burial will be private in St. Bridget Cemetery, Manchester at a later date. Calling hours were Tuesday, April 13, at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions may be made to Manchester Area Conference of Churches (MACC), P.O. Box 3804, Manchester, CT 06045-3804.

To sign the online guestbook or for directions to the funeral home, visit www.holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com.

Andover

Michael Marco

Michael "Mike" Marco, formerly of Andover, passed away Sunday, March 21, at his winter home in Ft. Myers, FL, following a brief illness. He was born in New Jersey, the son of Anna and William Marco, but grew up on the family farm in West Willington.

Mike is survived by his beloved wife of 58 years Jean Herrick Marco and was particularly close to his sister-in-law Evelyn Hampson of Bolton and brother-in-law Carl Herrick of Leesburg, FL. Mike was predeceased by two sons Michael and John, two brothers George and Nicholas, and three sisters Elsie, Mary and Eva. He is survived by a sister Helen Sadow, several grandchildren, nieces and nephews. He retired from Hamilton Standard where he worked as a machinist for many years.

Mike was very active in sports, playing baseball as a pitcher for the Hamilton twilight league, and also Stafford and Willimantic leagues. He also belonged to several 10-pin bowling leagues where he accumulated many trophies. In his retirement, he became an avid golfer, belonged to the Cross Creek Golf and Country Club at his winter home in Fort Myers, FL. He played golf often at local Connecticut clubs where he was lucky enough to make a hole-in-one at Tallwood Golf Club.

He enjoyed cars and working on his Andover home which he built in 1953. He also belonged to the Andover Seniors Young at Heart Club.

Funeral arrangements are incomplete at this time. A memorial service will be planned for a later date.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Andover Fire Department, Andover, CT 06232 or a charity of the donor's choice.

Portland

Carlvin Mark Stone

Carlvin Mark Stone, 61, of Riverside Street, Portland, passed away Monday, April 12, at his home, surrounded by his family. He was born in Hartford, the son of the late Carl and Elizabeth (Spencer) Stone.

He is survived by his two children, Matthew Stone of East Hampton, and Carrie-Mae Stone of Enfield; two brothers, Carl Stone and his wife Sharon of GA, and Carlton Stone and his wife Linda of Portland; four sisters, Carol Planeta and her husband Tom of Higganum, Carlene LaMontagne and her husband Mark of Portland, Cathy Gleason and her husband Milt of Cromwell and Carla Aleksiewicz and her husband Mike of East Hampton; several nieces, nephews, and many more loved ones.

He was predeceased by a son, Curtis Stone, and a brother, Clifton Stone.

Thanks to Stoney and Linda, especially Linda, "who had her own troubles but was always there for me," and thanks to Hospice and Palliative Care of Middletown.

Graveside services were Thursday, April 15, at St. Joseph Cemetery, Poquonock Avenue, Windsor. Friends visited with his family Wednesday, April 14, at Biega Funeral Home, 3 Silver St., Middletown.

Colchester

David F. Eifler

David F. Eifler, 50, of Colchester, passed away suddenly Monday, April 12, surrounded by his loving family and friends. Born Nov. 9, 1959, in New Haven, he was a son of the late Richard and Elaine (Lane) Eifler.

Early on, he was raised in Cheshire before moving to Colchester in December of 1973 and was a 1979 graduate of Bacon Academy in Colchester. Dave was a carpenter for Care-free Small Buildings in Colchester for over 25 years alongside his dad, brothers and brothers-in-law.

A dedicated and longtime member of the Colchester Farmers Club, he had served as House Committee Chair and volunteered for numerous club activities. Dave was also a member of St. Joseph's Polish Society in Colchester. Some of his many hobbies included cooking, gardening, NASCAR racing, river rafting and camping.

He will be remembered for his witty sense of humor, always bringing joy to those around him, and will be truly missed by all that knew and loved him.

He is survived by seven siblings (and their spouses), his identical twin, Richard and Lori Eifler Jr., of Colchester, Judith and Edward Taranto of Lebanon, Mary-Jo and Paul Withee, Nancy and David Haggerty, Kurt and Annette Eifler, Deborah and Mark Gallagher and Bonnie Eifler, all of Colchester; 14 nieces and nephews, Rachel and Danielle Taranto, Jason Eifler and his wife, Jennifer, Jacquelyn and Cody Eifler, Jaymie and Logan Withee, Kylie Haggerty, Ben, Julia and Sarah Eifler, Trevor Tuck, Brianna Gallagher and Samantha Renninger; a great niece, Madisyn Porter; his extended family at the Farmers Club, as well as many other family members and friends.

The family will receive guests from 4-6 p.m. Monday, April 19, at the Aurora-McCarthy Funeral Home, 167 Old Hartford Rd., Colchester. A vigil service will be observed at 5:45 p.m. A celebration of his life will follow at the Farmers Club. Burial will be private in the family plot in the New St. Andrew Cemetery, Colchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations in his memory may be made to the Colchester Food Bank, 127 Norwich Ave., Colchester.

For online condolences, visit www.auroramccarthyfuneralhome.com.

Marlborough

Charles Francis Hughes

Charles "Charlie" Francis Hughes, 64, of Prescott, AZ, formerly of Marlborough, husband of Linda (Johnston) Hughes, passed away Thursday, April 8. Born in New Haven on Oct. 17, 1945, he was the oldest son of Charles and Helen (Mahon) Hughes.

He grew up in New Haven and graduated from Quinnipiac College in 1967 with a Bachelor of Science degree. He was a veteran of the Army National Guard and retired from the Hartford Insurance Group after 36 years of service. Charlie and Linda married in 1982 and shared a wonderful life together. They relocated to Prescott, AZ, to spend their days enjoying life, playing golf and following his beloved Boston Red Sox. One of his greatest joys was when they won the 2004 World Series.

In addition to his wife Linda, he is survived by his brother, Jerry and wife Suzanne and their two children Chelsea and David; his brother, Robert of Merrimac, NH; his sister and brother-in-law, Pam and Don Woods of Calgary, Alberta; and his brother, Kenneth and wife Debbie and their son Matthew. He is also survived by numerous aunts and uncles and too many cousins to count.

He leaves behind his best friend Richard Drake, who was by his side throughout his entire ordeal always providing hope and encouragement and all his friendships made as a member of Prescott Lakes Golf and Country Club.

The family wishes to express their appreciation to the staff of Mountain Valley Regional Rehabilitation Hospital in Prescott Valley for the wonderful respect and support given to Charlie during his stay and especially to the outstanding care Charlie received during the past few months by Dr. Michael Trainor.

There will be no calling hours but a Celebration of Life service will be held in the near future at the convenience of the family.

Donations in his memory can be made to the American Cancer Society Arizona Division, 2724 E. Larkin, Suite 9, Flagstaff, AZ.

Heritage Memory Mortuary, Prescott, AZ is handling arrangements.

Marlborough

Richard J. Akatyszewski

Richard J. Akatyszewski, 79, of Marlborough, beloved husband of the late Joyce (Casida) Akatyszewski, entered into eternal peace Monday, April 12.

Richard was a veteran of the Korean War and retired from Pratt & Whitney Aircraft after 30 years of dedicated service as a draftsman. Dickey was an avid UConn Women's Basketball fan and was a season-ticket holder for the UConn Husky football team. He loved to cook, making a day-long event of preparing a meal and he would enjoy trying out his new recipes on his reluctant family!

He is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, June and Ron Bailey of Marlborough, with whom he made his home; two loving granddaughters, Erin Sodhi and her husband Raj of East Hampton, Bre-Anne Cooper and her husband Jaret of Marlborough. He also leaves five great-grandchildren, who affectionately called him "Papoosh," Kayla, Trace, Rylan, Kolby and Amani. Survivors also include his sister, Marion Sevete of Hartford and several nieces and nephews.

He was predeceased by his son, Kyle Akatyszewski and a sister Eleanor Nogas.

He will be missed by many extended family members and friends. The family would like to extend a sincere thank you for all of the support and to the special team of doctors, nurses and staff at Hartford Hospital Bliss Wing (fifth and seventh floors) for their compassionate care during his times in the hospital.

A funeral service will be held today, Friday, April 16, at 11 a.m., at the Rose Hill Funeral Home, 580 Elm St., Rocky Hill. Burial will follow in Rose Hill Memorial Park, Rocky Hill. There are no calling hours.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the Hartford Hospital Palliative Hospice Care, Bliss Wing 5 East, or to the American Heart, Lung, or Vascular Associations of Connecticut.



Marlborough

Zora Sue Kermode

Zora Sue Kermode, 83, currently of Marlborough, passed away peacefully April 7 in Middlesex Hospital, Middletown. Zora Sue was born in Little Rock, AR, Oct. 5, 1926, to Martin Elza Wingo and Zora Cecil Baker Wingo. She was raised in Willard, MO, but has been a New Englander for 46 years, living in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

She is predeceased by former husband, George Kermode and survived by her close family of eight children, Suzanne Freeman of Peabody, MA, Gwen Kermode of Charlton, MA, Lynn Kermode Furbush of Stratford, Pat Mouring of Nashua, NH, Debbie Scarpace of Marlborough, Terri Cameron of Marlboro, MA, Geoff Kermode of Colchester, Michael Kermode of Vernon; 25 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

She was a secretary for Bright Beginnings preschool in Natick, MA, owned a convenient store in Derry, NH, and was in real estate in Kirkwood, MO. She especially loved boating, the lake and camping with her family. Zora Sue was our mom and grandmother and will be greatly missed and always remembered.

Friends may call today, Friday, April 16, from 9-10:30 a.m., Wadsworth-Chiappini Funeral Home, 318 Union Ave., Framingham, MA, followed by a Mass at 11 a.m. at St. Bridget's Church, 832 Worcester Rd., Framingham, MA. Burial is at Edgell Grove Cemetery, Framingham, MA.

In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to Bright Beginnings (nonprofit preschool), 28 Wellesley Rd., Natick, MA 01760.

Wadsworth-Chiappini Funeral Home, Framingham, 508-875-8541. www.wadsworth-chiappini.com.

Couple Charged in Three East Hampton Home Break-Ins

by Claire Michalewicz

East Hampton police have arrested a couple after an investigation linked them to three residential burglaries in town in December and January.

Police arrested Karen J. Olivia, 41, of Shelton, and her boyfriend, Barry Spence, 35, of East Hampton on March 31.

The two have been in jail since January after being arrested in Berlin. The subsequent investigation linked them to burglaries in East Hampton, Portland, and other towns in central Connecticut, said East Hampton Police Sergeant Garritt Kelly.

Police were able to link the two suspects with jewelry that had been stolen from the homes in East Hampton.

East Hampton Police charged Spence with three counts of third-degree burglary, and one count each of first-degree larceny, third-degree larceny, fourth-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit first-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit

fourth-degree larceny, first-degree criminal mischief, and second-degree criminal mischief. Portland Police charged him with two counts of third-degree burglary, third-degree larceny, and fifth-degree larceny. Spence was due in Middletown Superior Court April 15.

East Hampton Police charged Olivia with first-degree larceny, third-degree larceny, fourth-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit fourth-degree larceny, conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny and conspiracy to commit fourth-degree larceny. Portland Police charged her with two counts of conspiracy to commit third-degree burglary and two counts of conspiracy to commit third-degree larceny.

Kelly said the thieves had targeted jewelry because the price of gold is so high, around \$1,000 an ounce. He said that in most recent burglaries, thieves have been ignoring electronics and other valuable items and taking jewelry.

Colchester Police News

4/8: Andreis Upenieks, 35, of 20 Green Hills Rd., Bolton, turned himself on for violation of probation, State Police said.

4/9: Brian Pidden, 19, of 125 North Pond Rd., Amston, was charged with failure to appear, State Police said.

4/9: Jerry Crutchfield, 53, 153 Sheldon St., Apt. C, turned himself in for failure to appear, State Police said.

4/10: Tyler Poole, 18, of 92 Parum Rd., was charged with breach of peace and criminal mis-

chief, State Police said.

4/12: Mark Ogle, 48, of 16 Gustafson Rd., was charged with making an improper turn, interfering with an officer and false reporting, State Police said.

4/12: Joseph Leshiak, 28, of 38 Oak Terr., Durham, was charged with DUI and failure to drive right, State Police said.

4/12: Coty Nichols, 21, of 674 Deep River Rd., was charged with violation of probation, State Police said.

East Hampton Police News

4/30: William Nedobity, 50, of 431 West Field St., Middletown, was arrested for failure to drive right, DUI, possession of marijuana and possession of paraphernalia, East Hampton Police said.

4/1: Randall Russell, 61, of 24 Clark Hill Rd., was arrested for failure to drive right and DUI, police said.

4/2: Gretchen McInvale, 51, of 16 White Birch Rd., was arrested for operating an unregistered motor vehicle and driving without minimum insurance, police said.

4/2: Bonnie Broderson, 40, of 41 Day Point Rd., was arrested for possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of marijuana, police said.

Portland Police News

4/6: Terry Adams, 19, of 276 Stagecoach Rd., Durham, was charged with reckless operation, Portland Police said.

4/6: Alexander Whitney, 19, of 699 Country Club Rd., Middletown, was charged with speeding, police said.

4/8: Rion Bagley, 27, of 125 Waterhole Rd., East Hampton, was charged with speeding, police said.

4/8: Kyle Lapidus, 18, of 8 Arvid Rd., was charged with third-degree criminal mischief, police said.

4/9: Jared Streeto, 23, of 600 Arbutus St., Middletown, was charged with reckless operation, police said.

4/11: Troy Nursick, 39, of 470 Main St., was charged with four counts of second-degree threatening and disorderly conduct, police said.

Andover Police News

4/11: Jason Jamison, 29, of 18 Lakeside Dr., was charged with failure to appear, State Police said.

Salem Police News

4/12: A residence on Chester Court was burglarized and electronics and jewelry were taken, State Police said. The point of entry was determined to be in the rear of the residence. The case remains under inve

Hebron Police News

4/5: Thomas Peno, 50, of 108 Wellwood Rd., Apt. A3, Amston, was charged with sixth-degree larceny, State Police said.

4/6: Curtis Plander, 48, of 112 Faith Circle, Manchester, was charged with violation of a restraining order, State Police said.

4/6: Clint Verdane, 32, of 95 Yorkshire Dr., was charged with third-degree assault and disorderly conduct, State Police said.

4/12: Cameron Lutz, 18, of 61 Congress Dr., Amston, was charged with breach of peace and threatening, State Police said.

Marlborough Police News

4/8: Phillip Sirois, 48, of 176 Saner Rd., was charged with disorderly conduct and third-degree assault, State Police said.

4/12: Scott Jensen, 36, of 203 High St., was charged with breach of peace and third-degree assault, State Police said.

4/12: Karen Porter, 48, of 9 Jurach Rd., Colchester, was charged with breach of peace and third-degree assault, State Police said.

From the Editor's Desk

Observations & Ruminations

by Mike Thompson

Before I commence with my normal ruminating, first an announcement: starting with next week's issue, the deadline for all copy will be noon on Tuesdays, instead of noon on Wednesdays. This is a permanent change, and one necessitated by new requirements from the Post Office.

Unfortunately, no exceptions can be made to this new rule. Also, the change won't impact the day you receive the paper; we'll still come out on Fridays. The deadline is the only thing that'll change. And I'm sure you'll get used to it – because, to be honest, you'll have to.

* * *

So Conan is going to cable. I did not see that one coming.

I was pretty surprised when I logged on to the Internet Monday evening and learned Conan O'Brien – who famously left NBC earlier this year when the network decided to give his 11:35 timeslot back to Jay Leno – is going to launch a talk show this fall on TBS, a cable station.

I knew Conan would land on his feet, but I assumed it would be with Fox. As did most people, I imagine. I know it's 2010 and everything, but being one of the broadcast networks, particularly one of the Big Four (sorry, CW), still carries a certain level of panache and prestige. And it still gives you the opportunity to reach the most people. So it was hard to believe Conan – who just three months ago was hosting television's premier late-night talk show – would forego all that for the seemingly-lesser light of cable TV.

Yet, he did. And after reading about it, it kind of makes sense.

It was reported Monday that Conan still didn't have 100 percent of Fox affiliates behind him. In fact, if he had started a show on Fox this fall, insiders predicted he'd only be shown by about 70 percent of affiliates right away, with the others coming on board when whatever contracts they had to air syndicated programming expired.

And that brings up another problem with the Fox scenario, one that's been there ever since the Conan-to-Fox rumors started surfacing. Right now, affiliates air their own shows during the 11 p.m. hour. Some (like Channel 61) air a mix of late-night news and off-network sitcom repeats like *Two and a Half Men* or *Everybody Loves Raymond*, while others just air the sitcom reruns. Some of those repeats are pretty highly-rated, and stations make good money off of them. The ad revenue from those sitcoms and local news broadcasts go mostly to the stations, whereas, if they were airing a network show in that slot, a sizable portion of the ad money would go to the networks. So while Conan might have brought higher ratings overall than the one-two punch of, say, news and *Raymond*, his show might not necessarily been the same money-maker for individual stations.

At the end of the day, you could've wound up with some angry network affiliates. Don't underestimate the power of angry affiliates; after all, the complaints of NBC affiliates upset about the misfortunes befalling their 11

p.m. newscasts are rumored to have played a large part in NBC deciding to cancel the woefully-rated *Jay Leno Show*.

TBS, being a cable station, has no affiliates to annoy. Plus, one article I was reading Monday about the deal noted that, at TBS, Conan will be a big deal. TBS' brand revolves around comedy. It's built its success on comedy movies and repeats of sitcoms like *Seinfeld* and *The Office*. It will make a big deal about landing Conan. After all, TBS rolled out one giant red carpet for George Lopez when it launched his late-night talk show last year, and Conan is a much bigger name.

Fox, as the article I read pointed out, would have made a big deal about Conan, but not *as* big. As a broadcast network, it's got its hands in a lot of different cookie jars, from shows as varied as *American Idol*, *House* and *Simpsons* to big-bucks sports like the NFL and Major League Baseball. It simply can't devote the majority of its resources to Conan the way TBS likely will.

So, by going with cable, Conan gets to be the proverbial big fish in a small pond. Plus, let's not forget this is TBS; the pond isn't all *that* much smaller than what he'd have with Fox.

As far as cable channels go, TBS is a pretty widely-distributed one, and has always been. Up until a few years ago it was still officially a "superstation" and not just a cable channel, and the station was – and still is – offered in the "limited basic" packages cable systems often offer, packages that usually contain the broadcast channels and the public access channels, for a monthly price usually far less than the broader packages, which contain channels like TNT, USA and ESPN. As a result, it's tough to think of a cable channel more widely available than TBS. Even if you're a subscriber to the most budget form of cable you can get, chances are you have TBS.

So, in the end, while TBS is still only on cable or satellite and thus not quite as far-reaching as Fox (I've read around 90 percent of homes have cable/satellite; a vast majority, to be sure, but that still leaves 10 percent that watch via an antenna), it's more available than, say, FX or Spike TV. Conan still has the ability to reach plenty of eyeballs.

Including mine. I'm glad Conan's found a new home (though a little bummed the show won't premiere until November), and, all in all, this seems destined to be a happier marriage than Conan and Fox would have been. That being said, I'm sure this isn't anywhere close to the path Conan thought his career would take, considering that a year ago at this time he was getting ready to host *The Tonight Show*. In fact, Conan, in typical sarcastic, self-deprecating fashion, said in a statement Monday, "In three months I've gone from network television to Twitter to performing live in theaters and now I'm headed back to basic cable. My plan is working perfectly."

It'll be good to have him back.

* * *

See you next week.