



The Pantigo Mill behind Home, Sweet Home in East Hampton

Abbey Faulhaber

East Hampton Approves All Its School Budgets

Five of them failed in Southampton Town

BY AMANDA ANGEL
AND TAYLOR K. VECSEY

All the proposed school budgets in East Hampton Town were approved on Tuesday, compared to 85 percent of the school districts across Long Island. However, the Bridgehampton School District's budget proposal failed by six votes — despite the fact that the tax rate would not have increased next year.

"After the weeks we've had, we're more than delighted and thankful to this community," said Wendy Hall, the East Hampton School Board president, alluding to the recent arrest of a student who allegedly threatened two Latino students with a machete and a chain saw behind his house. That incident caused an uproar and questions about student safety and racism at East Hampton High School, as well as widespread media coverage.

Between the recent arrest, a 12.9-percent hike in last year's school budget, and a \$79-million school expansion project approved in March, school officials were nervous about Tuesday's budget vote. The monthly school board meeting that night was adjourned at 8:30 with the understanding that members would reconvene an hour later if the budget were defeated.

At 9:15 p.m., after the results were tallied in the high school cafeteria, Donna Russo, the district clerk, gave the board members a thumbs-up through the cafeteria windows.

About 800 voters turned out to approve the \$50.7 million budget by over 60 percent, 441 to 284. The budget was up 9.49 percent over last year, and the tax rate is expected to increase 11.5 percent, or \$43.67 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

A second proposition, to provide busing for elementary school students living within a one-mile radius of the John M. Marshall Elementary School, found stiffer opposition than the budget, even though it will not increase spending. It passed 500 to 296.

Laura Anker Grossman and Stephen Talmage, who are incumbents, were elected to three-year terms on the school board. Both were unopposed.

BRIDGEHAMPTON

The news was not good for the Bridgehampton School, whose proposed \$9.8 million budget, exactly the same amount that voters approved last year, was defeated 141 to 147. Only one of four propositions on Tuesday's ballot

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Asphalt Squeeze Is On

Close-by plants closed amid F.B.I. investigation

BY JOANNE PILGRIM

East Hampton's roadways are likely to become a bit bone-shaking, as the Town Highway Department, which would normally have begun a spring road-repair campaign to fill winter potholes, is having trouble getting the asphalt it needs.

Three Suffolk asphalt plants, including one in East Hampton, have been closed, two following federal indictments of their owners on charges of bid-rigging and mail fraud.

"We lost three major plants on the East End," Chris Russo, the town highway superintendent, said this week. Asphalt must be kept hot until use, and so must be bought from plants in proximity to East Hampton.

Mr. Russo said Newborn Construction in Westhampton Beach and a small plant in East Hampton that was owned and operated by John Montecalvo both closed in the wake of federal allegations that implicated four leading Long Island road-paving contractors in what the Federal Bureau of Investigation called an "asphalt cartel." The bid-rigging was alleged to have occurred in connection with millions of dollars' worth of bids on roadwork for Suffolk County and Brookhaven Town.

In addition, a Riverhead asphalt plant at the town landfill there has closed in the face of operating problems and neighbors' complaints.

A Speonk asphalt plant, also owned by Montecalvo Paving, remains open, but there is competition for the available asphalt, and major paving contractors are generally served first. "With all these

plants off-line, there isn't enough to go around," Mr. Russo said.

Although the town can use a heated truck trailer to keep picked-up asphalt hot, East Hampton uses relatively small quantities that can get cold quickly, Mr. Russo said. The colder material doesn't compact and hold together well.

He also said that sending a truck to Speonk to wait on line for asphalt — with no guarantee that the order will be filled that day — and then return to East Hampton can eat up the majority of a work day, and the transportation cost is expensive.

Fresh asphalt is used by the Highway Department to patch roadways and to create roadside berms that direct water away from properties.

Right now, Mr. Russo said, Highway Department workers are using recycled asphalt for road repairs — "a good Band-Aid, but not a finished product. We're patching the same holes five times," he said.

The highway superintendent has three times sent out requests for bids from asphalt suppliers. The East Hampton plant, which is reportedly changing hands so that it can reopen, replied, Mr. Russo said, but is still not producing asphalt. "If they get it up and running by mid-June, we can put everything back together."

Otherwise, "I think we'll survive a year of this — I don't think we'll go more than that." He said there is "no question" that drivers will begin to notice more potholes.

If a local supply of asphalt remains un-

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A Provider Of Challenge And Comfort

Rabbi left corporate law for Jewish law

BY CARISSA KATZ

As a former partner with the Midtown law firm Satterlee Stephens Burke & Burke, Rabbi Jan Uhrbach once spent her working life in courtrooms, corporate law offices, and sleek conference rooms with sweeping views of Manhattan.

So the conference room high above Sixth Avenue where she met with a visitor from East Hampton last Thursday was not unfamiliar territory for the rabbi, but it was a part of her past.

In 1997, just after making partner at her firm, she decided to give up law and enter the Jewish Theological Seminary. "From a personal perspective, I was surprised by the number of people who weren't surprised," she said. "My firm was extremely supportive."

She had specialized in First Amendment and media-related litigation. "I felt like it mattered," she said. "It was exciting, but litigation is not really about truth. It's about winning, and I needed to be in a setting that was explicitly about truth."

No sooner had she announced her intentions than "a number of people in my professional world started revealing to me all their unfulfilled hopes and dreams."

For much of her life she had a religious sensibility, but was not observant, and she only began to attend synagogue as an adult. "I didn't grow up with a strong Jewish background, but when I started learning about this really magnificent tradition, I realized that what I sought to learn was really waiting for me all along."

"I was at a point in my career, in my life, where I was looking at what my values were and what would be a worthwhile way to spend my life," she said. Her first inclination was to do some volunteer work, maybe through a synagogue community. After talking about that for two years, finally, "one Friday, I went to service and I was just captivated. . . . The second time I went, I remember sitting there thinking, I could do that." She did not even know how to read Hebrew at the time.

She began to attend synagogue regularly and to study Jewish theology on her own. In less than three years, she was enrolled in the seminary. "You don't hear Jews use this term very often, but I did very genuinely feel a sense of calling. I was very strongly pulled in this direction."

Shortly after she enrolled, friends who were part of the re-

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Keeping a Close Eye on Red Tide

Poisonous marine algae have been migrating south from Maine

BY RUSSELL DRUMM

Dan Lewis, a biologist with the State Department of Environmental Conservation, donned foul-weather gear against the parade of rain squalls on Monday, walked out onto the Rough Riders Landing dock on Fort Pond Bay in Montauk, leaped over the side and, using a boat hook, retrieved a string of net pouches containing mussels. The pouches, replaced every two weeks, also contain the future of shellfishing on the East End and beyond.

The D.E.C. is keeping a close eye on a dinoflagellate form of algae whose colonies are better known as the red tide. The algae, *Alexandrium fundyense*, which produce a toxin, are consumed by finfish and shellfish, and can be passed up the food chain to cause a malady known as paralytic shellfish poisoning, potentially fatal to humans.

Fort Pond Bay is the easternmost and therefore the most likely place for wind and current-borne organisms native to New England waters to be pushed by the east and northeast winds the East End has experienced this spring.

Mr. Lewis said his agency was testing the waters for evidence of red tide by hanging strands of mussels off the dock at Rough Rider Landing for two-week stretches before replacing them with fresh mussels. The soaked mussels are taken to the marine division headquarters in Stony Brook and examined for evidence of red tide.

The stakes are extremely high. Should the dinoflagellates be detected in any number, shellfish beds would be



Dan Lewis, left, a biologist with the State Department of Environmental Conservation, showed John Aldred, director of the Town Shellfish Hatchery, a string of mussels used to test for the presence of red tide in Fort Pond Bay, Montauk.

Russell Drumm

shut down on eastern Long Island until testing of specific areas was undertaken, Mr. Lewis said.

Recent history has made the D.E.C. more cautious than usual. Each year, the red tide comes to Maine waters. Last year, it was far-reaching, and northeast winds pushed the algae colonies south off Massachusetts causing the closure of a number of shellfish beds near the shore, and as far offshore as George's Bank.

"It's a muscle paralyzer," Mr. Lewis said, with symptoms that can range from a tingling in the mouths of people eating seafood containing the toxin, to paralyzing them. If enough toxin is ingested, it can paralyze the diaphragm and cause death.

The biologist said that unlike the brown algae bloom that killed off the delicious and valuable Peconic Bay scallop beginning in 1985, the red tide does not

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SOUTHAMPTON

Anxiety Mounts With Assessments

Confusing notices about rising values lead to fears that taxes will jump

BY JENNIFER LANDES

Some Southampton residents have been reeling in the past few weeks as notices have trickled out from Town Hall announcing that the assessed value of their properties has gone up. Their anxiety, and that of those who had not yet received reassessment notices, was evident on Monday at a state-mandated Grievance Day at St. Rosalie's Catholic Church in Hampton Bays.

Hundreds of taxpayers, including people with walkers and in wheelchairs, stood waiting in the rain while the five members of the town's assessment review board accepted grievance forms and other documentation.

One person who arrived at 7:30 a.m. to get a reassessment figure reported not being seen until 11 a.m., and then watching and waiting as board members left their posts to answer calls on their cellphones. The board worked from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. with two-hour breaks at 12:30 and 4 p.m.

Town officials have been saying that

tax rates cannot be determined until school budgets are approved and the town's annual budget has been arrived at in the fall. Tax bills do not go out until after that time.

However, some people who did the math based on last year's tax rates were worried about projections that in some cases seemed to triple their taxes.

Southampton Town Supervisor Patrick A. Heaney said at Friday's town board work session, however, that with the overall increase in assessments across town, the tax rate for individual properties could be expected to go down about 26 percent on average.

While the town board heard an update on the reassessment process on Friday, a line of Southampton Town residents, some clutching next year's reassessment notices and others still wanting to know what their assessments would be, snaked out of the assessor's office and down the second-floor hallway at Town Hall.

Richard Blowes, the town's general services manager, described how, for the

assessment process, the town had been divided into 60 neighborhoods. The assessor's office used those areas to compare sales figures and apply them to other properties.

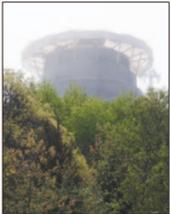
To meet state requirements, the town added a licensed real estate appraiser to the staff at the assessor's office and hired appraisers to review the assessments a computer program had come up with. It also collected information about new construction and consulted aerial maps to confirm data about new construction and improvements to older properties. It identified conditions such as high-tension wires or the availability of town water that might affect property values.

The town also devised a formal process to log and track questions and posted the assessment roll, with links to pursue the grievance process, at the Southampton Town Web site. E-mail and postal addresses as well as phone numbers were provided for those with questions.

Since many residents had still not re-

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INSIDE



No, That's Not The Mother Ship

An explanation for a mysterious 'mushroom' atop Montauk water tower

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Soft-Shell Crabs in Season

Grilled, boiled, or sautéed, how to tell the jimmies from the sooks

C1

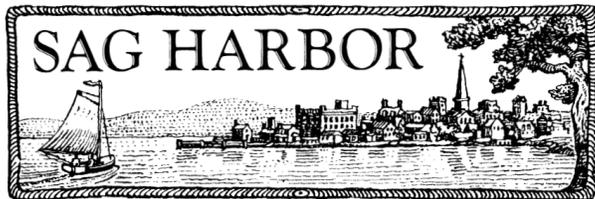


Lifeguard For Life

John Ryan is honored by many of the people he trained over his long career

D1

Arts.....	C1	Galleries.....	C3
Business.....	B13	Nature.....	D16
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Classifieds.....	D5	Schools.....	A6
Letters.....	B2	Sports.....	D1



TAYLOR K. VECSEY
324-7827

A spaghetti dinner to be held at the Sag Harbor Fire Department on Brick Kiln Road on Saturday will benefit the department's dive team. Spaghetti, garlic bread, and salad will be served from 5 to 8 p.m.

La Leche League of East Hampton will meet at Janice D'Angelo's house at 3 Lincoln Street on Friday, May 26. The group will discuss breastfeeding techniques, the father's role, and returning to work while nursing. Other league services include a lending library and 24-hour telephone help.

Historical Society

The Sag Harbor Historical Society will hold its annual meeting at 2 p.m. on Saturday at the Annie Cooper Boyd house on Main Street. The Allan Schneider Preservation Award will be presented, and new board members will be elected.

Copies of Dorothy Zaykowski's book, "Sag Harbor: The Story of an American Beauty," are on sale at the Boyd house.

The society seeks donors to lead tours on Saturdays and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Those interested can leave a message on the society's answering machine. Tours will begin on June 3.

On Friday, May 26, the Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons will begin its summer season with the first of a series of Friday night dinners with Rabbi Jan Uhrbach, to be held every other

week at 7:30 p.m., following the 6:30 p.m. service. The congregation meets in the Old Whalers Church on Brick Kiln Street. More information can be found at www.synagoguehamptons.org.

Temple Adas Israel

The first Shabbat service of the 2006 season at Temple Adas Israel will be held on Friday, May 26 at 8 p.m. Rabbi Leon A. Morris will officiate. The new student cantor, Rebecca Elliston, a Sag Harbor native and the granddaughter of David Lee, a longtime temple board member, will be introduced. The temple is on Elizabeth Street and Atlantic Avenue.

The temple's summer programs will begin soon thereafter. The Saturday morning Torah study group will meet on alternate Saturdays beginning June 3. Rabbi Morris's "Sharing Shabbat," a program of songs, poetry, stories, and study, will begin on June 10.

Gospel Concert

Riverhead's Galilee Church of God in Christ will lend its gospel ensemble to the Christ Episcopal Church on Hampton Street for a concert on Sunday at 4 p.m. The chorus has sung with R. Kelly at the Grammy Awards, and with LeAnn Rimes and Sir Elton John on "Good Morning America" and "Late Night With David Letterman."

The concert will raise money to restore and maintain the church's historic pipe organ. Admission, which costs \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door, includes a wine and cheese reception afterwards. Tickets can be bought at Canio's Books on Main Street.



"It's all about transformation. If someone walks into the service and walks out exactly the same, something is wrong," Rabbi Jan Uhrbach of the Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons said.

Carissa Katz

A Provider of Challenge and Comfort

Continued from A1
cently founded Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons in Sag Harbor invited her to stay in Sagaponack for the weekend and attend services with them. It just so happened that the lay leader of the Friday evening service didn't show up that week. Ms. Uhrbach, then only a rabbinical student, was recruited on the spot.

By 1999, she became the Conservative Synagogue's rabbinical leader. When she was ordained in 2003 on completion of her studies, she became its full-fledged rabbi.

"The synagogue's focus in many ways is very countercultural for the Hamptons. It's not about glitz and celebrities and money," she said.

"It's about intimate community, loving relationships, and really depth-based prayer and study. We're searching for what it means to be a human being and what it means to live in relation to God. We don't have a big budget and we don't want to spend our resources and money doing things that are impressive."

Rather, she said, her congregation is "looking for Judaism that is transformative. . . . It's not just about being comforted, it's also about being challenged."

She has come to see that people are hungry for things that push them and inspire them to "be better than they've been. . . . They want their nobler sides to be drawn out and they need help finding that path."

Music is an important part of the Shabbat services in Sag Harbor, and for many reasons. "Beauty has the capacity to elevate the soul and to inspire," Rabbi Uhrbach said. "I think singing can sometimes help people to let go of some of the inhibitions and stiffness that keep them from really allowing themselves to be moved."

A service filled with song helps move people. "It's all about transformation. If someone walks into the service and walks out exactly the same, something is wrong."

Ms. Uhrbach, who now teaches at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, has never encountered resistance as a female rabbi, but she also recognizes that people have different reactions to and relationships with rabbis when they are women. "One of the things that most interests me about having women as rabbis is what new pathways it opens theologically and spiritually for people when the metaphors for God stop being strictly masculine."

She also believes that in some ways Conservative Judaism is misnamed or misunderstood. Conservative Jews are not conservative thinkers, she said.

"We consider Jewish law binding, but we don't consider it frozen. Jewish law needs to evolve in order to stay alive," she said. "What we see is that Jewish law genuinely changes, and different things are demanded of us in different eras."

She observes the Sabbath according to tradition — she does not write, carry money, or drive between sundown on Friday and sundown on Saturday — but

she also recognizes that "the tradition has to evolve. We're supposed to be helping the tradition grow, as it helps us grow. If either side of that dies or becomes fixed, then the whole system breaks down."

She was drawn to Conservative Judaism because it seemed to embrace the fine balance between tradition and change.

"The core, if not the absolute, defining ethos in my life is holding paradox and balancing dialectic, living in balance among competing poles," she said. "Dialectic fascinates me. It's where the energy is, and, I deeply believe, it's where truth lies. . . . One of the things I fear in the world today is our ever-increasing intolerance of complexity and paradox."

The balance she speaks of can be a difficult one to maintain. "It's hard, it's not an easy way to live. We're not necessarily the easiest synagogue to belong to. This is really not the place to just go for the kiddush," she said of the blessing over bread or wine. "We're not a scene, we're a place to come if you want to learn how to give."

"I think it's very easy, particularly in the Hamptons, to be drawn into constantly envying and constantly comparing. I think it's very important to have a ballast," she said.

The Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons provides that for its 40 or so member families. "We want to be absolutely open and welcoming to everyone," Ms. Uhrbach said. While the synagogue has been growing "slowly and steadily," the rabbi said, the congregation has no plans right now for a building of its own. Services are held at the Old Whalers Church in Sag Harbor.

"I think there is something very affirmatively wonderful and positive about sharing space with a church," she said. "It's important that people of faith find common ground, to be able to help each other any way we can and focus on our shared mission rather than our differences."

Having a building to take care of can also get in the way of religious life, she said. "Once you have a building, the building's budget starts to drive the entire agenda."

Ms. Uhrbach leads services in Sag Harbor from Memorial Day through about October and lives in Sag Harbor full time during that period. For the rest of the year, she lives in New York, where she teaches and writes.

Like many people in her congregation, she considers the Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons her primary synagogue, even though she attends temple in New York for a good part of the year.

"I'm really proud of the community. I'm very deeply rooted and connected there. We've grown together and hopefully we will continue to do that," she said.

The first Shabbat service of the season will be held on Friday, May 26, at 6:30 p.m. Saturday morning services are at 9:30.



JANIS HEWITT
668-3349

The Montauk Boy Scouts will hold a car wash and bake sale at the Montauk School on Saturday from 8 a.m. to noon. The cost is \$10 per car.

A blood drive will be held at the Montauk Firehouse on Tuesday from 2:30 to 7:45 p.m.

A yard sale to benefit the Darlene Lycke Memorial Scholarship will be held at Joan Lycke's house at 42 Gravesend Avenue on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be a large variety of items for sale, including jewelry, cookware, pocket-books, clothing, and furniture.

Everyone has been invited to the Montauk Firehouse on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to "meet and greet" their emergency service technicians. The open house will include demonstrations, tours, blood pressure readings, and light refreshments, and East Hampton Town police officers will be on hand to offer tips on making sure that children's car seats are secure.

At 10:30 a.m. Saturday at the Montauk Library, Betsey Perrier, a landscaper, will give a slide show and lecture on how to have an environmentally friendly lawn and garden. Sponsored by the Concerned Citizens of Montauk, her presentation will also include a discussion of native plants, sprinkler techniques, and other tips.

More gardening information will be offered at the library at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday by Krystyna Schmier, the administrative director of the Madoo Conservancy. Ms. Schmier will also present a slide show and lecture, in her case about Madoo, Robert Dash's two-acre garden in Sagaponack. The library will host a private tour of the Madoo Conservatory

on June 22 at 10:30 a.m. Tickets, which cost \$30, must be reserved by June 1.

The Montauk Library's board of trustees will meet on Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the library.

The book reading group will meet on Sunday at noon to discuss Penelope Lively's "The Photograph."

This Week's Hours at the Light

The Montauk Lighthouse will be a destination on Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the Long Island Lighthouse Challenge, in which lighthouse-lovers try to visit as many participating lighthouses as possible, having their "passports" stamped at each one. More information is available at Long-Islandlighthouses.com.

With the exception of Wednesday and Thursday this week, the lighthouse and gift shop will be open daily from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on weekends until 4:30 p.m.

Dorothy Moss and Duke Morell took first-place honors in North-South play on Monday when the Montauk Duplicate Bridge Club met at the East Hampton Presbyterian Church. Ronnie and Dick Bryden were first in East-West play.

When the players got together at the Montauk Library on May 10, Al Eisenberg and Bob Van Buren placed first, with Rose DeLeonardis and Duke Morell followed in second place.

Born in Boca

Jaclyn Roget and Chris Schemitz of Boca Raton, Fla., welcomed their third child into the world on May 10. Madison Victoria was born at Boca Raton Hospital, joining a sister, Tatiana, 8, and a brother, Robert, 6.

Joanne Roget of West Lake Drive is Madison's maternal grandmother. Her paternal grandparents are Richard and the late Janis Schemitz of Stony Brook.

Four Will Vie for Justice

BY TAYLOR K. VECSEY

Four people have announced their candidacy for Sag Harbor Village Court justice — a first for a court that was established by the village board in December. Two seats on the board are also up for election, with incumbents running uncontested.

A former East Hampton Town Court justice and three Sag Harbor attorneys have handed in nominating petitions. Only one candidate lives in Sag Harbor Village, a point contested in a lawsuit brought against the village by Patricia Weiss, another Sag Harbor attorney. The suit is pending in Suffolk County Supreme Court.

In February, the village board opened the race for justice to those living within Suffolk County, which is allowed by law for villages with fewer than 3,000 residents, according to Sandra Schroeder, the village clerk.

Michael Bromberg, who lives on Hampton Street, is a law guardian in family court and has practiced law in California and New York since 1969. "I'm the only one who can vote for himself!" Mr. Bromberg said on Tuesday before a meeting of the village zoning board of appeals, of which he is the chairman.

He has served on the board for five years, becoming chairman last year, and is a paramedic with the Sag Harbor Volunteer Ambulance Corps. He has also served on the Sag Harbor School Board. In 1995 and 1999, he ran for East Hampton Town justice on the Independent Party line, losing to Roger Walker twice. In 2001, he ran as a Republican against East Hampton Town Justice Catherine A. Cahill.

Mr. Bromberg and Mr. Walker will

compete again, it seems. Mr. Walker, who was a justice in East Hampton for eight years, is running on the Sag Harbor Party ticket, along with Brian Gilbride and Tiffany Scarlato, who are seeking re-election to the village board.

Mr. Walker, a retired Nassau County Police Department homicide detective who lives in Wainscott, was elected town justice as a Democrat in 1995, a race that also included Robert Savage, a former East Hampton town attorney. In November, as a Republican, he ran for East Hampton Town supervisor, losing to Bill McGintee, the incumbent.

Andrea Harum Schiavoni, a North Haven attorney who also practices in Florida, also turned in a petition. The mother of two children under 5, Ms. Schiavoni runs a private practice, Hamptons Mediation, which is a New York branch of Harum and Harum, a dispute resolution firm based in Florida. She is "trained to work with every type of law and to remain 'neutral' at all times," she wrote in a letter to village residents. "This is much like what is expected as a judge."

Kelly Canavan, an attorney with a practice at her house in Bay Point, said she decided to run because she "wanted to be on the other side of the bench," and thought it would be "nice to analyze legal arguments" for a change. The mother of four children — the youngest is 5 and the oldest is in college — she specializes in civil litigation. She became an attorney in 1991.

On Monday at the Municipal Building, the candidates' names will be drawn to determine their placement on the ballot, Ms. Schroeder said. Sag Harbor Village residents will go to the polls on June 20.

Library Committee Wraps Up

On Saturday, just over a year after the Community Library Committee was formed to help decide the fate of the John Jermain Memorial Library in Sag Harbor, the committee will hold one of its final meetings, at which it will officially vote on various subcommittee reports. The meeting will take place at the Breakwater Yacht Club on Bay Street at 9 a.m.

The committee will recommend to the library board that a new building be constructed and that the historic library building on Main Street, donated by Mrs. Russell Sage in memory of her grandfather, be restored, according to Fred Stelle, the committee's chairman. He said the committee will also recom-

mend that a "modest addition" to the library be built to address fire code violations.

The library owns property adjacent to Mashashimuet Park on the Bridgehampton-Sag Harbor Turnpike. The board would need to acquire more property, however, to build a new library there, Mr. Stelle said, as the lot size will not accommodate a new building's parking and sewerage needs.

On Monday at 6 p.m., the committee will meet for the final time, also at the yacht club, to present its findings to the library board. A "social" to celebrate the committee's yearlong work will follow.

T.K.V.

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Montauk**



The mother ship has not landed, but a protective cover over the water tower on Edgemere Road does make it look a little otherworldly. *Janis Hewitt*

That's Not a Mushroom

With all the rain lately, it may seem as if a giant mushroom has sprouted from the top of the water tower on Edgemere Road. Actually, a cover has been placed over the tower to prevent paint from "splattering" off the property, said Herman Miller, the deputy chief of operations for the Suffolk County Water Authority.

Mr. Miller explained that the tower, which rises 90 feet from the ground, is painted and otherwise spruced up every 15 years. Work on the interior was finished in the fall. With the use of a new paint, Mr. Miller said, this year's job might last 20 years.

The function of the water tower is a mystery to some. Mr. Miller explained

that it serves two purposes. It is a storage tank that can hold up to 1.4 million gallons of water, which in turn supplies the pressure needed to supply water to the surrounding area. When the water level starts to fall, reducing the pressure, pumps that are inside the tower are turned on to provide a steady flow.

In emergencies, the tower can supply a large quantity of water immediately, Mr. Miller said.

The rain has delayed the project. After it ends, a week will be needed to finish the painting job. "We need some sun out there to dry things up, so we can start again," Mr. Miller said on Tuesday.

J.H.

Keeping a Close Eye on Red Tide

Continued from A1
affect the fish that consume it, although it has been known to kill shore birds. "Unlike the brown tide, the red tide can be toxic without actually seeing red," Mr. Lewis said.

John Aldred, director of the East Hampton Town Shellfish Hatchery, explained that a large part of the concern stemmed from a major red tide event in 1972. He said that historically, the Bay of Fundy in the Canadian Maritime provinces seemed to be a place where the algae existed in cyst form. "In the spring when runoff supplies nutrients, the cysts become active cells that rise to the surface." Because of the density and southerly reach of the 1972 bloom, a new bed of cysts was created farther south in the Gulf of Maine. "There is concern that a bed could be forming yet closer to New York," Mr. Aldred said.

"It's always been part of New York's

strategy to have a P.S.P. plan," Mr. Lewis said, adding that the process had been made easier with a laboratory devoted to testing. "We used to have to ship the samples off to Connecticut."

The marine biologist sounded a positive note: "We don't expect to see a problem. We're at the southern edge of the dinoflagellate's distribution. We have warmer water here, different currents, and relatively little freshwater run-off."

Last summer, the organism hit Nantucket and parts of Cape Cod because of unusually persistent east and northeast winds, according to Shelly Dawicki of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, which monitors red tide. Ms. Dawicki said that while the shellfishing closures meant that there was not a single P.S.P. case — "that's the good news" — it was estimated that the bloom cost the Massachusetts shellfishing industry \$3 million per week.