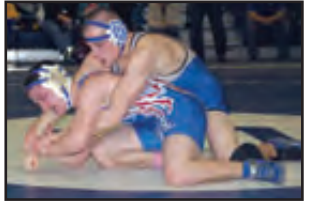


Southington Education Foundation hands out 10 grants, Page 3

School officials, groups work to feed school children breakfast, Page 4

Blue Knight wrestlers host interstate event, Page 17



TAMMI KNAPIK

The Southington YMCA held its annual dinner at the Aqua Turf on Wednesday, Jan. 27.

Above, Bonnie Misiorski receives one of the volunteer service awards from Terry Lombardi. For more photos see page 16.

Schools seek \$80 million Board reduces Erardi's proposal by .39 percent

By ROB GLIDDEN
STAFF WRITER

The Board of Education voted to send a budget request of \$80,441,401 to the Board of Finance after making several reductions to Superintendent Dr. Joseph Erardi's original proposal.

Factoring in the capital costs of property and facility maintenance, the total budget request represents a 4.3 percent increase over

the current year. Erardi's original request was 4.69 percent.

Though the officials were able to reach a consensus, they were frustrated by their lack of options about the major factors in the budget increase.

"The increase is driven primarily by three expenses we can not control," said Chairman Brian Goralski, adding that he hoped the

Board of Finance would take this into account when deliberating.

The major increases are a 13 percent jump in health insurance premiums, reduced funding from the state to deal with special education costs, and an increase in Magnet school tuition. The school district does not have the option to

See BUDGET, page 10

Adult store is open for business

By ED HARRIS
Editor

The controversial Very Intimate Pleasures (V.I.P) adult store is open for business.

Last year, staff at Town Hall reviewed the proposal to open a VIP in the former Ethan Allen store at 228 Queen Street. They determined the request was within the town's current regulations and a permit was given.

Because it was a permitted use of the property that complied with the regulations, the zoning board did not have a chance to vote on the matter.

Though the Planning & Zoning Commission had no direct hand in the matter, it did not stop the public from attending its meetings and voicing displeasure over the store coming to Southington.

A moratorium on sexually oriented businesses was instituted a few months ago, as officials seek to update the town's zoning regulations. This was after VIP was issued its permit.

"There was a lot of give and take," P&Z Chairman Michael DelSanto said

about the negotiations with VIP "In the end, they did all we asked them to do."

The store was issued a

Certificate of Occupancy (COO) permit last week

See VIP, page 9



TAMMI KNAPIK

Very Intimate Pleasures (V.I.P) opened on Queen Street Monday.

Sam Spade comes alive at library

By ROB GLIDDEN
STAFF WRITER

The Southington Library stepped back in time to the era of classic film noir during their recent "Sam Spade Soiree."

The evening was the latest event tied to the Big Read, a large scale program made possible by a \$7,500 grant the library received from the National Endowment for the Arts last year. The initiative hopes to get the community at large excited about a particular book and reading in general.

Southington chose Dashiell Hammett's classic detective novel "The Maltese



ROB GLIDDEN

Patrons were asked to dress up for the soiree. Above are costume winners Susan Sterniak, Michelle Lord, Barbara Riel, John Lord and Rebecca Lord.

See SOIREE, page 4

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