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**MORE PARADE
PHOTOS
PAGES
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2 SECTIONS

Businesses, Citizens Strike Up A Fundraiser For Band Uniforms

by Alan Pollock

CHATHAM — Everyone agrees that, after nearly 80 years, the Chatham Band sounds as good as ever. But thanks to aging, moth-eaten uniforms, the band is a little less kind on the eyes than they are on the ears.

“They can’t wear these for much longer,” band supporter Marianne Lewis said, holding up one of the older uniforms. They’re riddled with holes, they have frayed edges and they have unsightly stains, something that just won’t do when the band celebrates its 80th anniversary next year, she said. Many people are surprised to learn that, while the weekly band concerts are Chatham’s signature summer events, the band does not get financial support from the town budget, Lewis said.

The last time the town band purchased uniforms was more than 15 years ago, and many of the uniforms date from the days when the band regularly performed throughout the year, not just in the summers. For that reason, some of the older jackets are made partly of wool, and are torturously hot to wear in July and August. It’s not surprising that most also bear unsightly perspiration stains, Lewis said. It could cost around \$16,000 to replace all of the uniforms, each of which costs around \$400, she said. The Friends of the Chatham Band have solicited local businesses for donations, but public donations will also be necessary, she said.

Last week, Lewis asked members of the board of selectmen to provide space where volunteers could sell T-shirts, raffle tickets or set up a face-painting booth for children, collecting donations. Board members voiced strong support for the band, but pointed out that fund-raising activities

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Band supporters Anita Harris (left) and Marianne Lewis are raising money to replace the Chatham Band’s aging uniforms.

ALAN POLLOCK PHOTO

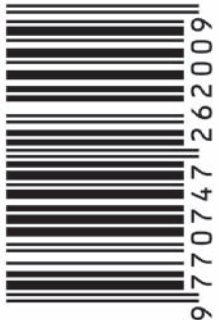
Festive Fourth

The Benoit family helped dad Bill sell balloons for the St. Martin’s Masonic Lodge. From left: Michelle, Sarah, Bill, and William.

Fine weather and a three-day weekend conspired to bring out big crowds for Monday’s Independence Day parade. More than a few folks came in festive patriotic garb to mark the holiday. Shown in their red, white and blue finery are Jack, Lauren, Christina, Jessica and Ben Grossi. For more photos and a list of the winning entries, see page 7. BING TERRIO PHOTOS

The Uncle Sam hat no doubt helped Chris Fitz hit the right notes.

Sophia Lasnicki, Ema Staff, Quintin Gabriel-Staff, Rowan Dodge, Ava Doge, Oliva Lasnicki and Kate Staff enjoy the parade.



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Uniforms

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are prohibited on the grounds of Kate Gould Park. Finance committee member Norma Avellar, speaking as a private citizen, said that because the band brings a great deal of revenue to downtown businesses, the town should pay to replace the uniforms. Selectmen agreed to take up the topic on short notice this week.

But when Lewis came back before the board Tuesday, she had good news to report: Allyson and Ken Wynne, owners of the Wynne/Falconer Gallery, volunteered the use of their private driveway for band supporters to staff a fund-raising table during band concerts. The table was up and running last Friday, "and we actually did very well. We raised over \$1,000 for the band in one night," Lewis said. "It was a great response from the public. Everyone loves the band and understands the importance of the band,"

she told the board. The owner of the downtown clothing store Violet's, Lewis said she and other merchants see a direct boost to their bottom lines because of the band concerts. "As a business owner, we have a responsibility," she said.

Given that strong start, Lewis said she and most mer-

chants think the money can be raised privately without having to tap town coffers. "We don't want to compete with any of the town's necessities," she said. A number of people of means have already expressed interest in making contributions, Lewis added. But the fundraisers during band concerts will be critical, she said.

As a backup location to the Wynne/Falconer driveway, Lewis asked the board to allow the band supporters to re-

Lewis also asked selectmen to reserve space in a town building where the new band uniforms can be stored, "even if there is a modest rental charge," she said. The uniforms are now kept in a rented storage unit in Brewster, and the lack of climate control has contributed to the garments' deterioration. It seems hopeful that private donors will come up with the thousands of dollars needed to replace the uniforms, "but nobody wants to spend that type of money and not preserve [them] well," Lewis said.

"I think we can take care of that. We are all very aware of how important the band is," Whitcomb said.

Selectmen voted unanimously to provide storage space for the uniforms, and to reserve at least one parking space during band concerts for the volunteers.

Lewis said organizers hope to be able to purchase the new tropic-weight uniforms shortly. The fund-raising table at band concerts is a temporary arrangement, she said;

once the money for uniforms is successfully raised, the fund-raiser will stop.

To donate to the uniform fund, send a check to the Chatham Band, Box 14, Chatham, MA, 02633, attention George Goodspeed. Or visit the band's website, www.chathamband.com, where you can also hear clips of the band's music.

"They can't wear these for much longer," band supporter Marianne Lewis said, holding up one of the older uniforms.

serve a parking space in the lot near the bandstand where the table could be erected, if necessary.

"I think it's a great idea," Selectman David Whitcomb said. In fact, it might be wise for band supporters to staff two such tables during the busiest concert nights, he said.

Convenience Store Arson Investigation Heats Up

by Alan Pollock

HARWICH PORT — Though they remain tight-lipped, investigators are following very promising leads in their probe of the apparent arson fire at the Cumberland Farms convenience store last week.

The state fire marshal's office posted a reward of up to \$5,000 for information about the person or people who allegedly started the fire that gutted the store at 576 Route 28 early last Wednesday morning. No one was injured in the blaze, but the interior of the building and all of its stock was destroyed by the heat and heavy smoke.

Fire Chief William Flynn said the store

clerk discovered the blaze shortly after midnight and tried unsuccessfully to put out the flames before calling 911. The first firefighters arrived to find heavy smoke coming from the building, which is not equipped with a sprinkler system. Though the first arriving fire engine had only two firefighters aboard, owing to a medical call which had come in a few minutes earlier, crews still extinguished the fire quickly.

Officials would not disclose the fire's exact point of origin, except to say that it was in an area accessible to the public near the back wall. Harwich Police Det. Paul Ulrich would not say what was allegedly used to start the fire.

Fire investigator Lt. David LeBlanc



Firefighters overhaul fire debris from inside the convenience store early on the morning of June 29. HFD PHOTO

said a digital video recorder and security camera were salvaged from the fire, and Ulrich said usable evidence was collected and reviewed by state police assigned to the Cape and Islands District Attorney's Office and the state fire marshal's office.

"We have some solid leads," LeBlanc said.

Ulrich said investigators have identified several people of interest who were

customers in the store earlier in the day, and police intend to interview these people later this week. He said police have not yet identified a motive for the crime.

Anyone with information about the crime is asked to call Det. Ulrich at 508-430-7541, or the state fire marshal's anonymous tip line at 800-682-9229. Fire Investigator



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