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JACKSON VOTERS DEFEAT SCHOOL BUDGET FOR EIGHTH STRAIGHT YEAR

By Lauren Puglisi

For the eighth consecutive year, voters said no to the Jackson School District budget. Voters defeated the 2008-2009 proposed budget by a tally of 3,319 to 2,741.

Allison Erwin, communications specialist for the district, said the budget defeat is an obvious disappointment.

"The board hoped to put together the best

budget for the public. The tax levy was a two percent increase from past years and was reasonable and appropriate for the needs of the students," Erwin said. "The board felt that they provided the best balance for the students and taxpayers of Jackson."

According to Erwin, since the budget was denied, the Town Council will now step in. The township governing body will examine

the school budget to make recommendations and modifications.

"When the board receives the revisions made by the council, they will then be given the opportunity within the next two months to accept or appeal the budget. If the board decides to appeal, it would go before the Commission of Education," she said.

The 2008-2009 defeated budget will be re-

viewed by a special examiner contracted by the township, who will then make suggestions to the Township Council on possible cuts.

Also on Tuesday, one incumbent and one newcomer were chosen by voters to serve on Jackson's board of education. Current Board Vice President Barbara Fiero will be joined by Scott Sargent. Both will serve (Budget - See Page A3)

ELECTION 2008

Kafton & Slate Challenge For Three Council Seats

By Lauren Puglisi

Council seats are once again up for grabs in Jackson Township. This year, two slates of candidates are vying for three seats on the Jackson Township Council. Election Day is May 13.

Jackson needs people on the council who know the pulse of the town and understand what the residents are thinking, say a slate of challengers running for three seats on the Township Council.

"The Right Team for Jackson" is made up of a longtime politician in Michael Kafton, a devoted community volunteer in Michael Reina and an advocate for the township's senior/adult communities in Bobbie Rivere. Together they promise to provide residents over 80 years of combined experience in each of their specialized fields.

Under the old committee form of government, Kafton served as a committeeman for six years, as well as mayor in 2003 and deputy mayor in 2005. Kafton, who is a graduate from South Jersey Professional School of Business, Kovats School of Real Estate and Atlantic School of Insurance, said one of the reasons he decided to run for council again is because he believes the current administration has failed the residents of Jackson.

"They continuously seem to blame everybody for everything that they have done. But what they have done, is they've raised the taxes by 32 percent, they have time and time again messed up the gypsy moth issue, the illegal road to Johnson Park and the basketball courts at almost a half million dollars," Kafton said.

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Jackson Liberty High School And All That Jazz



--Photo Courtesy Of Terrie Basko

Saturday night was the first time that Jackson Liberty's jazz band performed alongside other Big Band performers during the school's first annual Jazz Festival.

By Lauren Puglisi

Sounds from saxophones, trumpets and trombones echoed throughout Jackson Liberty High School's Auditorium last Saturday night during the school's first-ever Jazz Festival.

While music was the first thing on everyone's minds that night, Liberty's band members were also thinking about the importance of hosting the first of many planned jazz events to be held at their school on an annual basis.

Commemorating April as National Jazz Appreciation Month, the school's band director, Scott Katona, said he wanted to set a personal goal to find a way to promote the culture of jazz.

"I thought what better way to be a part of Jazz Appreciation Month than to host a jazz festival at Liberty," Katona said.

After joining forces with the Liberty Band Parents Association, Katona came up with the idea of having eight schools from different areas join together to compete and perform various musical selections in front of a diverse audience.

Performers included students from Jackson Liberty, Jackson Memorial High School, McAuliffe Middle

School, Goetz Middle School, Monmouth Regional High School, Toms River East High School, Nottingham High School and Hamilton West High School.

In addition, the crowd in Liberty's auditorium was not only made up of parents and friends from Jackson, but also new faces from various communities outside of the township.

"I was happy to see that there were about 300 people in attendance," Katona said. "I can't wait to host the Jazz Festival again next year."

According to Terrie Basko, a member of the Liberty Band Parents Association, the festival wasn't just about the competition between Big Band performers, which only consist of four trumpets, four trombones, five saxophones and a rhythm section.

In order to allow for more students to get involved during the festival, Katona expanded the jazz idiom past the stereotypical Big Band ensemble by including Liberty's jazz choir and percussion ensemble as well as Memorial's jazz percussion ensemble and small jazz combos in between main performances.

"This allowed the evening events to expose as many students as possible to the world of jazz," Basko said.

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ELECTION 2008

Ingram & Slate Running For Open Council Seats

By Lauren Puglisi

Council seats are once again up for grabs in Jackson Township. This year, two slates of candidates are vying for three seats on the Jackson Township Council. Election Day is May 13.

With one candidate confident in her firsthand experience on the council and two newcomers confident that their fresh perspective will work towards implementing change in Jackson's current administration, "Working Together for Jackson's Future" believes their slate will improve the township of Jackson while putting the residents' needs first.

The slate is made up of incumbent Councilwoman Emily Ingram and two new faces to Jackson current administration, Charles Garofano and Todd Porter.

Certified public accountant, mother of two and private business owner, Emily Ingram graduated from St. Francis College in Brooklyn, New York before moving to Jackson and becoming a permanent resident in 2001. She was elected into the township's new government in May 2006 and believes that serving on the council for two years is not enough time to accomplish all she wants to accomplish.

"I am who I am, and I enjoy being involved. I'm still young and energetic enough to provide an extensive amount of time and effort that I feel is required to serve as a committeeperson. If you want to do the job, it is an everyday job. Not two times a month during council meetings," Ingram said. "I

(Ingram - See Page A10)

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