



LOCAL & STATE, A5

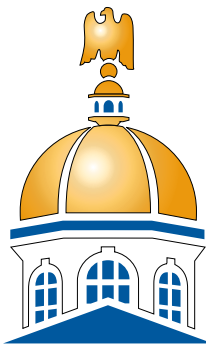
State employee pensions worrisome

SPORTS, B1

Pats score big



CONCORD MONITOR



MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2008

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CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

50¢

State workers: Where is the love?

Pay raise debate turns not-so-nice

Heard about the new Christmas show? It's called *How The Lynch Stole Pay Raises*.

Meanwhile, mommy won't be kissing Santa Claus under the mistletoe any night soon. Not if mommy works for the private sector and Santa is employed by the state.

The budget deficit is back in the news these days, when peace and



RAY DUCKLER
MONITOR COLUMNIST

harmony are supposed to rule. This time, Gov. Lynch is proposing a freeze on raises, slated at 5.5 percent starting Jan. 1, for union and nonunion state workers.

That would save the state \$7 million. Next year's revenue is expected to slip \$250 million behind original projections.

So, relatively speaking, Lynch's idea would barely save enough to stuff a stocking, while taking income from people who sorely need it and planned their 2009 budgets as though they'd get it.

Still, nonstate employees were quick to defend Lynch, bombarding the *Monitor's* website with letters this week. Take the hit, they barked. You're lucky to have a job, they proclaimed. Think of the big picture,

they reasoned. Bah, humbug, they insisted.

Read one comment, "State employment is just another form of welfare. It rewards non-performing employees who could never hold a real job..."

And, by the way, Happy New Year.

Meanwhile, state workers were hurt by this lack of holiday cheer and compassion. Don Miller of Sanbornton has worked for New Hampshire Fish and Game for 33 years.

See **WORKERS - A10**

BAGHDAD

Bush defends war, ducks shoes in Iraq

Farewell trip goes off with one hitch

By **TINA SUSMAN** and **CAESAR AHMED**
Los Angeles Times

In a farewell visit to Iraq, President George W. Bush yesterday defended his handling of the war but warned that it was "not over" yet, nearly six years after he launched the invasion that toppled a brutal dictator but left Iraq, and the president's legacy, struggling to recover.

The unannounced visit, which lasted about eight hours, came 37 days before Bush hands power to President-elect Barack Obama.

THE U.S. reconstruction effort in Iraq has been described by government investigators as a failure that wasted billions. **A2**

In a final speech to cheering American forces inside one of Saddam Hussein's former palaces, Bush said his decision to bolster the U.S. troop presence early last year to

quell sectarian bloodshed was "one of the greatest successes in the history of the United States military."

"Thanks to you, the Iraq we're standing in today is dramatically freer, dramatically safer and dramatically better than the Iraq we found eight years ago," he said before boarding Air Force One for the flight home.

But in a sign of the lingering animosity many Iraqis have toward Bush, and in a moment that undercut White House hopes of a glitch-free visit to a relatively quiet nation, an Iraqi journalist hurled his shoes across the room at Bush and called him a "dog," the height of insults in the Arab world. The shoes slammed into the wall behind Bush and Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, who proceeded to take questions from other journalists after the assailant was wrestled to the ground and taken away.

The president, upon arriving aboard Air Force One at Baghdad's airport, was greeted by U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker and Army Gen. Ray Odierno, the commander of U.S. troops in Iraq. Bush then threw himself into a flurry of meetings with Iraqi officials, including President Jalal Talabani, vice presidents Adel Abdul Mehdi and Tariq Hashimi, and al-Maliki.

"The work hasn't been easy, but it's been necessary," Bush said after his meeting with Talabani, Mehdi and Hashimi.

Bush said his visit was in part

See **BUSH - A3**



APT video

Top to bottom: A man throws a shoe at President George W. Bush during a news conference with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki yesterday in Baghdad. Bush was unhurt.



WILLIAM DeSHAZER / Monitor staff

Richard Uchida, an attorney with the law office of Orr & Reno, speaks to the Concord Zoning Board for the third time to try to get a variance to move a buffer zone for his client, Tropic Star Development, at city council chambers Wednesday. Uchida is a well-respected and well-known land-use attorney. **Below:** Uchida takes notes during the meeting.

The King of Compromise

Prominent land-use attorney commands respect, even from opponents

By **SHIRA SCHOENBERG**
Monitor staff

His colleagues and adversaries agree: Attorney Richard Uchida is all about respect.

Meredith Hatfield leads a group of neighbors vehemently opposed to a new CVS on North State Street that one of Uchida's clients wants to build. Last week, Uchida called Hatfield to tell her that a zoning board meeting was postponed. Although Hatfield, the state's consumer advocate, is acting as an area resident, not an attorney or even a direct abutter, Uchida met with her and other neighbors to go over changes to the plans.

"He emulates what any lawyer should be," Hatfield said. "Our work is so challenging that when you can trust your colleagues on the other side, it makes it what it should be - it's wonderful."

Uchida is a familiar face to Concord's planning and zoning officials, and to anyone following local development. So familiar, in fact, that people who have seen him on



CCTV's coverage of board meetings will approach him in the supermarket to ask about their pool encroachment or Class VI road.

Uchida had his hands in the legal work for many of Concord's prominent projects, including Dick's Sporting Goods on Loudon Road, the old Blue Cross building on Pillsbury Street and Red River Theatres on South Main. He has helped CATCH, a nonprofit that builds affordable housing, and the Courtyard by Marriot Conference Center. Recently, he has been hired to take on

some of the area's more controversial cases - the CVS on North State Street, a workforce housing development on Parmenter Road and a gas station at Pages Corner in Dunbarton.

"Hardly a month goes by when he doesn't have at least one case before the zoning board and/or planning board, and there have been nights when we've described it as the Richard Uchida show," said city zoning administrator Craig Walker. "He's been there with two or three applicants and is the only one on the agenda."

Uchida, 51, was born in Pennsylvania. He graduated from Colby College in Maine in 1979 and worked for two years as a reporter in Louisiana before moving to New Hampshire to attend Franklin Pierce Law Center.

There, Uchida said he studiously avoided all real estate courses. "I knew there was no way I'd ever end up in that area," he said. He planned to work in civil rights

See **UCHIDA - A4**

CONCORD

City sees garage use rise, tickets decrease

Drivers avoid fines in economic downturn

By **SHIRA SCHOENBERG**
Monitor staff

A month into the city's experiment with overnight parking and earlier meter enforcement, ticket numbers are dropping and garage

use is rising.

But city Parking Manager Dave Florence said it seems to be the economy, rather than the new rules, that is driving people's behaviors. "People are now getting the idea that if I put in a nickel for six minutes when I get coffee, rather than not pay, I won't get a \$5 ticket," Florence said.

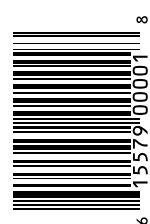
See **PARKING - A3**

CONGRESS WANTED to guarantee that the \$700 billion financial bailout would limit the eye-popping pay of Wall Street executives, but the Bush administration insisted on a one-sentence change that became an executive-pay loophole. **A2**



MILD WITH SUN
High 51. Low 34. Julianne Souza, 5, of Hooksett draws the day. **A10**

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HOPKINTON

Powerless, some go where everyone knows their name

Tavern provides cozy distraction for residents

By **MADDIE HANNA**
Monitor staff

It was a cold Sunday for hundreds of thousands of people across the state still without power yesterday, but it was warm inside Blaser's Fireside Tavern.

Nearly everyone in the Hopkinton tavern yesterday afternoon didn't have power at home - or much to do, either.

"No TV. No football games," Dan Stephens said, sitting at the bar, explaining the situation. He and his wife have a generator, he said, so they've stayed in their home. But their grandchildren,

See **POWERLESS - A10**

UCHIDA Continued from A1

or personal injury litigation.

Uchida was hired by prominent Concord developer and attorney Ray D'Amante in the mid-1980s to do litigation. The day Uchida arrived, the company's land-use attorney left, and Uchida was asked to help out until the company could find a new one. Uchida never looked back.

D'Amante mentored him in land use, and Uchida did some work toward the development of Steeplegate Mall. Over the years, he built his experience in land use, real estate, business transactions, purchase and sales acquisitions, and legal ethics.

"In litigation, you're often dismantling, taking apart an agreement or a relationship," Uchida said. "In land use, at the end of my involvement in the project, there's something to touch and see and marvel at."

In 1992, Uchida started his own firm, Hebert and Uchida, which later became Crisp, Barrett, Hebert and Uchida. In June, he joined Orr & Reno. His work occasionally takes him to Plymouth or Claremont, but his bread and butter is Concord, Bow and Dunbarton.

Knowing the players

Clients say Uchida's relationships with Concord city staff and board members are invaluable, as is

his experience born of years of attending meetings and working within the system.

Mike Garrepy, the developer of the Parmenter Road project, is based in Dover and chose Uchida on the recommendation of a local engineer. Garrepy said he was looking for an attorney who knew the regulations and the process in Concord and who knew city politics and would be a "familiar face" before the boards.

"It puts folks at ease when they know who they're dealing with," Garrepy said. "He certainly has a good relationship with the city of Concord and the planning board."

Uchida said he has made an effort to form relationships with city officials, talking to board members at meeting breaks and going over projects with city staff. He knows whom not to call on Mondays and whom not to call in the mornings, he said. He has learned the intricacies of city ordinances and knows which board members care about landscaping and who will always ask about traffic.

"He's developed a very good rapport with the staff, he knows what they like to be made aware of, and he knows the system very well," said planning board Chairman Gerard Drypolcher. "Clients get some-

one who's been through the motions that are involved to bring a plan from infancy to fruition."

Uchida said he often pushes his clients to make changes because he knows that's what city officials will ultimately want.

Garrepy said it was Uchida who pressed him to scale down his original project, from 40 housing units to 37 and eventually to 25, which is what the city eventually approved. "While we hesitated to do it, we appreciated his advice, and it ultimately probably would have ended up differently if we had not," Garrepy said.

Peter Bloomfield, who owns Concord Steam, hired Uchida to navigate the permitting process for a new steam plant off South Main Street. Bloomfield has stacks of data and drawings, but when he approached the planning board with modifications to the building's height, Uchida told him which views of the building and site plan to present and which extraneous details to set aside. "He knows what they're looking for and can be very clear and specific - you need this and that," Bloomfield said.

Bloomfield said he was nervous that the steam plant would be controversial, but Uchida sat down with city officials and residents to work out issues in advance - as he often

does. "I think in part because of his assistance we managed to make it not so much of a controversial issue," Bloomfield said.

A throwback

The word most often used to describe Uchida - "a gentleman" - seems outdated. Concord developer Steve Duprey has known Uchida for years, through their involvement with the bar association, then through land-use cases that Uchida handled for Duprey. They worked together on the Pillsbury Street Blue Cross building, on Horseshoe Pond and on the new Concord Regional Visiting Nurse Association building.

"He practices law the old-school way," Duprey said. "He's very gentlemanly, follows the highest ethical and professional standards and is a very calm, straightforward lawyer who's always looking to find solutions that work for everyone. . . . A lot of boards he appears in front of look at him as an honest broker. He's built up a reservoir of goodwill and trust."

Even Uchida's opponents say they never see him bluster or become hostile. "I would sum his approach up as understated and powerful," said Amy Manzelli, an attorney representing the neighbors who oppose the Pages Corner gas

station. "He knows what he's talking about, knows how to relate well to his audience."

The gas station case dragged on for months before the zoning board, and after the Dunbarton board denied the permit, Uchida appealed to the courts. But, Manzelli said, despite a case that is still "hotly contested," the two attorneys have maintained a courteous and professional relationship.

"We were sharing courtesy copies of filings with the board to each other even though it's not required," she said.

Jed Callen, who represents the neighbors opposing the Parmenter Road project, called Uchida "almost a throwback to the era of exceptional gentility and collegiality in the bar." Although the men often disagreed, Callen said Uchida never made an issue personal.

Some colleagues say the secret to his success on controversial cases is Uchida's willingness to compromise. "You can always talk to Rich," Callen said.

Let's talk

Uchida knows he cannot always make a project's neighbors happy. But he said his first step is to meet with them and try to address their issues. "Often, there's a list of items

the neighbors are unhappy with in the project," Uchida said. "If eight of 10 things are easy to do, you can't do 10, you do eight, and they get some sense that we're responsive."

With the Dunbarton gas station, for example, Uchida made a multitude of small technical changes to appease abutters. When a zoning variance was denied in the CVS case, he shrank the size of the proposed store and returned with a plan that would need just one variance instead of three.

That willingness to compromise, some say, helps him avoid litigation. City Planner Doug Woodward, who has worked with the city for nearly 20 years, said he can only recall being on the opposite side from Uchida in a courtroom once.

"He's not an attorney who comes through the door looking to pick a fight," Woodward said. "If he sees some sort of middle ground, if he feels that the criticism the city has, he can find a solution that his client and we can live with, he generally looks for those."

The one case that could not be settled out of court was when Uchida and the planning board disagreed over whether pictures on the side of Dick's Sporting Goods should count as signs or not.

Uchida won.

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