Written by JOE LoTEMPLIO, Staff Writer
Saturday, April 21, 2007

PLATTSBURGH — City of Plattsburgh leaders were strongly urged to look into adopting an anti-nepotism law.At Thursday night's Common Council meeting, resident Shannon Parrott said an anti-nepotism law would create a more fair environment for people seeking jobs.
"There are a lot of city employees who are all related, and that's just not fair," she said.
Parrott's son recently applied for one of two full-time jobs in the city's Public Works Department. The jobs went to two people who have relatives that already work in that department.
"The city should have a hiring policy," she said, suggesting the city follow the lead of the Town of Plattsburgh, which adopted an anti-nepotism policy last year.
Kasprzak said City Corporation Counsel John Clute would examine the town's policy and advise the council.
"There is no question that many city employees are related," the mayor said. "Sometimes we tease about it, but it is true."
Kasprzak said he chose the two people for the jobs based on recommendations and that he did not even know them or whether they were related to anyone already working for the city.
"I held off on appointing anyone for 30 days to save money, and I never heard a word about it," Kasprzak said.
Councilor Michael Drew (R-Ward 1) said he was surprised to hear that two people had been hired.
"Don't we usually vote on new jobs?"
Clute explained that the council must approve city officer positions, but when it came to regular full-time jobs, it was the mayor's discretion.
He reminded them that it was the council that approved the filling of the two positions by including them in the budget.
"The chief executive officer should be able to fill the positions if he feels services are not being fulfilled," Clute said.
Drew said they have always voted on full-time positions since he became a councilor in 2002.
"I think we should have another look at it when positions come up for filling," he said.
"Having them go through the council at least puts it in the public eye."
James Godfrey (D-Ward 2) also said he had no idea the mayor had hired two people in Public Works.
Clute said he would look further into how full-time positions are filled and approved, as well as a possible anti-nepotism policy.