

## Licking up the spring weather



Record photo/JERRY CALLAHAN

Enjoying a spring treat at Uhlman's Ice Cream in Westboro are (from left) Lindsey and Haley Taglienti, 7-year-old twins, and their friend Colleen Morand, also 7.

## 'Strong team' at school district

By Kevin Baldwin  
RECORD STAFF

**NORTHBORO** – When School Superintendent Rosemary Joseph knew she was going to be out sick for more than three days, she asked Director of Student Support Services Jean Bean to call for an emergency School Committee meeting.

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Charles Gobron said no one could have anticipated the meeting would still take place, but for an entirely different and more tragic reason. Or that he would emerge as the acting superintendent.

Joseph, 54, passed away on April 10 at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston as a result of a brain aneurysm.

"We were all in just complete and utter shock," Gobron said. "She was in the middle of great projects for the school district. Now, you hope that some of that vision doesn't die with her."

While still dealing with the emotional aspect of the situation, Gobron said "the School Committee knew the school system was, and is, a legal entity and it was very important leadership be maintained and that somebody was in charge. So, they went ahead with the special School Committee meeting ... to appoint a replacement."

Gobron said he heard some



Charles Gobron

may have felt more time was required to properly mourn the loss of Joseph before considering any replacement for superintendent.

"There was absolutely no disrespect intended," Gobron said. "The School Committee was just looking out for the best interest of the community and the school system as they were legally required to do."

By the end of the special meeting, Gobron said he was nominated the new interim school superintendent for the remainder of the academic year. Paul Gaffney, chairman of the Southboro School Committee and member of the Northboro-Southboro Regional School Committee and Northboro-Southboro Supervisory Union, nominated

Continued on page 6

## Northboro agrees to agree

By Kevin Baldwin  
RECORD STAFF

**NORTHBORO** – By the end of the second night of the two-night town meeting, Monday and Tuesday, voters had approved every article on the warrant, but not before several debates.

"There were 543 voters at the two night town meeting, 382 people registered for the first night and 161 for the second night," according to Town Clerk Andrew Dowd.

Dowd said articles 1 to 26 were discussed the first night, then passed. The meeting Monday lasted about three-and-a-half hours.

The remaining articles, 27 to 47, were discussed and approved by the end of Tuesday night, which lasted about two-and-a-half hours. "There were no hand-counted votes on articles the first night, so most articles passed by a majority," Dowd said. "The second night, only one article required a hand-count."

The item that required a hand-count was one looking to buy replacement desks and chairs at the schools. The article passed, 71-31.

A zoning bylaw, dealing with size restriction of lots, achieved a two-thirds requirement.

Other articles that passed included funding for the library's addition and the new senior center design. The articles for the senior center and the library will be placed on the town election ballot and are contingent on an override vote at the May 14 town election.

"During the first night, there was quite a bit of discussion on article 21, which concerned the senior center," Dowd said, "basically over all the pros and cons of the project. But ultimately it passed."

Also discussed during the second night was the Historical Commission's article, which asked to extend the review period from 14 to 180 days for the proposed demolition of buildings considered historically significant 100 years or older. Voters passed this article after a 20-minute debate.

Another debate was sparked the second night over an article that sought to transfer \$175,000 from the Community Preservation Fund Open Space Reserve and \$372,500 from the Community Preservation Fund to the Conservation Fund. The request was not recommended by the Appropriations Committee, but was approved by voters.

## Biloxi experiences 'cheer' church

By Kevin Baldwin  
RECORD STAFF

**NORTHBORO** – Not many area church services begin with a cheer, but the one held Sunday, April 22, at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church did.

According to Denise

Faneuff, a member of the church, the cheer performed by her and several members of the congregation was actually a "step dance" taught to her and members of her church group that went down to Biloxi as part of a relief effort by Turkey Creek Camps relief organization.

"Some kids who went to the local colleges who were helping in the communities where they went to school taught the steps to other kids in the neighborhoods, who ultimately taught the steps to us," Faneuff said.

Continued on page 10

## Westboro voters head to polls Tuesday

### Three vying for two selectmen seats



Timothy Dodd

**WESTBORO** – No resident of Westboro can deny that our town has changed over the last century, decade, and even in the last year. These changes have created many positives for the town, including an influx of business, a school system with a strong

Continued on page 5



Denzil Drewry

**WESTBORO** – I am asking for your vote to represent you on the Board of Selectmen. As in the past, I will be open, candid and responsive to the concerns of all citizens. I will continue to support our excellent town services with the best possible cost basis to

Continued on page 5



Leigh Emery

**WESTBORO** – I seek re-election to the Board of Selectmen. My first term and 10 years on the Finance Committee uniquely qualify me and demonstrate strong commitment. I am conscientious, respect all petitioners, consider all sides of issues before

Continued on page 5

**Westboro polling places, which will be open Tuesday, May 1 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., are located at:**

- Precinct 1, Gibbons Middle School gym, 20 Fisher St.
- Precinct 2, Hastings Elementary School gym, 111 E. Main St.
- Precinct 3, Gibbons Middle School Gym, 20 Fisher St.
- Precinct 4, Mill Pond School, 6 Olde Hickory Path
- Precinct 5, Mill Pond School, 6 Olde Hickory Path

More candidate statements, page 5

## Westboro voters get down to work at town meeting on May 12

By Kevin Baldwin  
RECORD STAFF

**WESTBORO** – Westboro voters will have a full plate when they go to the town meeting May 12, beginning at 1 p.m. at Westboro High School auditorium and gymnasium.

The largest item on the warrant is for a "Sewer Treatment Plant Upgrade" which includes: \$1,490,000 plus an additional \$500,000 for "the design and other engineering services associated with of the Wastewater Treatment Plant improvements recommended in Phase 3 of the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan performed on behalf of the Westborough Treatment Plant Board"; and \$28,235,000 for construction costs and related engineering services for the same project.

Some of the issues on the warrant have regularly recurring articles:

• Fire Department request

reauthorizing a revolving fund for "receiving and expending funds for public CPR and First Aid Training."

• Youth and Family Services request reauthorizing a revolving fund for "receiving and expending funds for youth activities."

• Police Department request to "raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds the sum of \$94,251 to purchase three police vehicles and related equipment."

Other articles on the warrant include:

• The Department of Public Works (DPW) is requesting \$849,790 for the "reconstruction and improvement of town roads."

• The town coordinator is seeking \$130,555 for "various town buildings and ground repairs."

• The School Committee is seeking \$380,000 for "various capital and repair items," which include "but are not

limited to: Hastings School washroom modifications to comply with the American Disabilities Act."

• The DPW manager is seeking \$2.75 million for the "reconstruction of town roads," which includes engineering services of Oldham Wheeler and Birch roads, Cortland, Armstrong and Denfield Drives.

The DPW manager also is seeking additional funds for work on the town water system, which includes: \$40,000 for a stand-by emergency power for the Andrews II well site; \$350,000 for work on Task II of the Sandra Pond Tree and stump removal program; and \$1,221,220 for a water replacement upgrade for Wheeler, Oldham, and Birch roads, Cortland, Armstrong, and Denfield drives, and for Brigham Street.

• The DPW manager is also seeking funds for work on the

Continued on page 2

### Don't miss...



COURTESY PHOTO

'Manon Lescaut,' an opera by Giacomo Puccini, featuring performances by Irina Rindzuner (left) as Manon Lescaut and Todd Geer as Des Grieux will be performed by the National Lyric Opera of New York, at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, April 28, at Shrewsbury High School, 64 Holden St., Shrewsbury. The show is sponsored by Opera Worcester Inc. Tickets are \$40 for general admission and \$24 for full-time students.

# OUR TOWNS

## Biloxi

■ from page 1

"Fourteen members and friends of First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist of Northborough, ranging in age from 16 to 75, recently returned from Gulfport and Biloxi, Miss., where they spent a week helping survivors of Hurricane Katrina regain their lives and livelihoods," said Donna Massey, who is president of the church.

According to Massey, the weeklong project was organized by the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC), an international human rights agency based in Cambridge.

"This is the second year that the UUSC has organized volunteers to help survivors of the devastating storm," Massey said. "The UUSC responds to natural and human-made disasters, especially where human rights are at risk."

Massey said the organization particularly reaches out to "marginalized or neglected populations who are not receiving aid from mainstream relief channels."

Erica Baron, student minister of the church, spoke of her group's mission in going down to Biloxi.

"We went down to try and help victims of Hurricane Katrina as they still struggle a year and a half later to rebuild their lives," Baron said. She announced the group was going to try and explain through their stories, music and images the emotional impact their trip made upon them.

"In Gulfport, we worked in collaboration with a grassroots organization, which embraces the mission to restore the first settlement of freed slaves post civil war," Massey said.

Images of the initial hurricane devastation were flashed upon the screen, followed by images of the group's recent trip.

Jon Eisenberg told the history of Turkey Creek, where the group stayed the first week of March.

"Turkey Creek, in 1866, was

one of the first communities of freed slaves in the United States," Eisenberg said. "They settled on 320 acres referred to as the '840's' that was basically swampland that nobody wanted. It wasn't even considered part of the state of Mississippi until 1888. Derrick Evans, who is the executive director of the Turkey Creek Community Initiatives, ... is a sixth generation descendent of those freed slaves. Turkey Creek was named after a stream that flows near Saint Barnard's Parish, where there is an abundance of wild turkeys in the area which we saw first hand."

Eisenberg said development and certain industries hurt and divided the area of Turkey Creek economically to the point where it was once listed as one of the most starving and endangered places in the state of Mississippi.

"When we arrived, we saw an airport under construction and many new strip malls and restaurants," Massey said. "Just off the main road, we saw a different sight ... piles of household trash and abandoned homes, one after the other. It was amazing to see, with our own eyes, what the storm, racism, and poverty had done."

Massey cited neglect by state and federal government and insurance agencies as the reason for the continued economic struggling by many in the area.

Joan Erler spoke of the environmental damage done to the area.

"Many years ago, annual floods were a natural occurrence. With human settlement, the (Mississippi) River was changed," Erler said. "Wetlands were seen as health hazards and unusable land. Levees were built to keep agricultural fields from the annual flooding. Forests were gone. The land began to subside, making it more vulnerable to storm flooding. Biloxi is on the peninsula, surrounded by water, but took the brunt of the wind damage caused by the storm."

"One and a half years later,



Singing during Sunday's service at the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church are (front row, from left) Rec. Dr. Judith Wright, Student Minister Erica Baron and Donna Massey; (back row, from left) Denise Faneuff, Jon Eisenberg and Rosemary and Ted Schantz.

Record photo/KEVIN BALDWIN

citizens of this area are still struggling," Massey said, "living in sub-standard and unhealthy conditions, and preoccupied with enduring and recovering post Katrina."

Massey spoke of how the group got reminded early on of their comforts at home compared to conditions people were living in down in the area where they worked.

"We ate Salvation Army donated food, slept in large huts with rows of cots," Massey said. "Forty individuals shared four toilets and three showers. We ate outdoors on bleachers. It was cold. We realized our discomforts were minor in comparison to the experiences of the amazing people we met."

Dick Boutilier illustrated comparisons between the devastation of Katrina and other disasters.

"It's been 18 months since Katrina. Nothing seems to be happening down there. It must be the fault of the government. They ought to be able to do something about this, but obviously they aren't. After World War II, there were millions of dis-

placed persons in Europe and devastation everywhere. Our secretary of state then, George Marshall, devised the Marshall Plan, and look at the wonderful results. Why can't we do that here?"

Boutilier commented about the difference between the areas of Turkey Creek where they were staying and along the gulf coast where casinos were operating.

"Five miles south of (Turkey Creek) along the coast what did we see? Not the devastation, but beautiful 10-story casinos going full blast. It looked like Foxwoods with lots of big spenders," Boutilier said.

Boutilier said he and several members traveled to New Orleans to see how things were faring in that area. He said they found the French Quarter to be doing booming business.

"The streets were crowded, the bars and restaurants were open. You wouldn't have thought a drop of rain had fallen there," Boutilier said. "While several miles away, in what they call the Ninth Ward, it looked like an atomic

bomb had gone off."

Boutilier and Massey both said these economic conditions existed before Katrina and still exist long after the hurricane hit.

"It's always the same," Boutilier said, "It's the 'haves' versus the 'have nots.'"

"The last two days of our stay, we had the opportunity to work for Coastal Women for Change (CWC), another grassroots organization dedicated to helping impoverished victims of the storm," Massey said. "This group calls East Biloxi home. The contrast between the vacant, ruined homes and magnificently built casinos in this poverty stricken area was dramatic."

Massey said the UUSC assisted the CWC in cleaning up around the area by painting park benches and tables, doing landscaping and other jobs.

"We prepared and painted the exterior of a home owned by an elderly couple," Massey said, "We destroyed an old shed in preparation for the rebuilding of an abandoned

home, and painted another home by a Vietnamese family who are eager to return home from their FEMA trailer."

Joan Erler displayed a shoe that was covered in blue masking tape.

"Denise Faneuff worked so hard that the sole on one of her work boots actually came off," Erler said. "The only repair kit was blue masking tape, which doesn't make for good shoe repairs."

Erler said she and the other members of the congregation didn't know how long their efforts would last, considering more storms and floods could continue to plague the region where they worked.

"But we were there," Erler said. "We did what we could and the people we worked with knew that we cared to show up."

Some members came away with skills they didn't have before their trip.

"I learned how to wire an electrical outlet," Massey said. "But I also learned about racism, and how to become a better human being. I saw the resiliency, courage and strength of those less fortunate, and I saw the healing power of hearts filled with kindness and hands willing to work for justice."

Massey said her church members gave of themselves, but did not walk away from the experience empty handed.

"We were blessed with immeasurably valuable life lessons that will be with us always, and through us, shared with others," Massey said.

"From age 16 to 70, each volunteer had an unbelievably strong will and passion to make a difference," said Alicia Conte, one of the youngest members of the group. "All of us had the intention to change someone's life for the better, and this is what brought us together."

According to Allen Erler, another participant, the group is currently considering another trip to the area in the future, possibly next year.

## Resor hosted senior conference

MARLBORO - State Senator Pam Resor hosted the senior conference on April 19 at the Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School in Marlboro. The free daylong event, the largest of its kind in the state, provides seniors with valuable information on issues ranging from health care, healthy eating, personal safety, and financial planning.

"The event was a huge success with over 1,400 attendees," Resor said. "It is important to provide resources for senior residents and this event provided a medley of educational resources and fun activities."

Seniors could choose from any of the more than 30 workshops offered throughout the day on topics such as retirement finance management, avoiding scams, long term care insurance, property tax relief, Medicare, genealogy, and personal finances. Fitness classes for seniors included seated yoga and aerobics, and new this year, a belly dancing workshop. Free health screenings to check blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, hearing, and heart health were also provided.

Free samples courtesy of Wyeth Pharmaceuticals and Polar Beverages were also

distributed. Seniors received a hot lunch catered by Mary's Catering followed by live entertainment by the Senior Strutters of Sudbury. There even door prizes including a Bose Wave radio, gift certificates and more.

"I look forward to this event each year as an opportunity to greet and hear from everyone," said Resor, who has hosted this conference for the seventh year in a row. "This yearly event gives seniors the opportunity to gather with old friends and new alike while benefiting from workshop topics on Medicare and injury prevention."

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