

'With each step taken, we are closer to a cure'

17th Greater Gardner Relay for Life draws national attention at opening ceremonies

By STEVE MARCOTTE
NEWS STAFF WRITER

GARDNER — The Greater Gardner Relay for Life has proven to be such a successful event that a camera crew representing the Relay nationally turned out to capture it all beginning with opening ceremonies Friday afternoon.

'The Greater Gardner area has proven over and over the passion and dedication that we have in our fight against cancer.'

— Jim Cote

— Jim Cote
person for the 17th annual Greater Gardner Relay. "I'm thrilled that they're here."

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A team is filming a promotional video entitled "Relay Remodel 2011" throughout the 24-hour event in Gardner.

"This is awesome for these people to see that all of their work is at least being recognized by somebody nationally," said Marcia Sharkey, honorary chairperson for the 17th annual Greater Gardner Relay. "I'm thrilled that they're here."



News photos by LATRICE COOPER and PAUL DEMEO

Above, walkers circle the track at Mount Wachusett Community College during the first day of the 17th Greater Gardner Relay for Life Friday. At far left, bags containing candles for the evening Luminaria Ceremony spell out "Hope" as participants gather for the Relay's opening ceremonies. At near left, cancer survivors walk the Relay's opening lap.

Ashburnham, Westminster set to decide on school funding

No override has passed since 2004

By JORDAN DAVIS
NEWS STAFF WRITER

After months of school budget discussions and two town meeting votes, residents in Ashburnham and Westminster will take to the polls Tuesday to decide the fate of a \$356,632 Proposition 2 1/2 override for the Ashburnham-Westminster Regional School District.

To pass, the override must garner majority support at special elections in both towns June 15. The override passed its first phase of approval at the May annual town meetings in both communities.

According to a spreadsheet compiled by school officials, overrides have not seen strong

'I think people generally agree to the fact that there's a need ... even given these fiscal times.'

— Dr. Michael Zapanis

support at the polls in recent years. Since fiscal year 1998, only two overrides were approved by voters — the first in 1999 for roughly \$686,000 and the second in 2004 for approximately \$1.5 million.

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News staff photo by MIKE GLEASON

Chantal McMullen of Quabbin Regional High School's class of 2010 addresses her fellow graduates at the school's graduation Friday evening.

Quabbin graduates urged to reach for 'greater heights'

By MIKE GLEASON
NEWS STAFF WRITER

BARRE — There was a time, during the Quabbin Regional High School graduation Friday evening, when the sun, which had been hiding behind a curtain of clouds, suddenly pierced through, bathing the field in front of the school in light.

State Sen. Stephen Brewer of Barre, having just been introduced by Superintendent Maureen Marshall, bounded up to the podium and delivered his message.

"The sun has burst forth on the class of 2010," he exclaimed.

The ceremony opened with the class marching through the assembled throng of family, friends and well-wishers to music provided by the school's concert band.

Class President Joshua LaPierre welcomed those in attendance.

"Your love and support influenced us and motivated us," he said.

Addressing his classmates, he said he had been pleased to serve the class as its president.

"I wish you all the best in your future endeavors," he said.

School Principal Marilyn Tencza spoke about the academic futures of the students, say-

ing members of the class had been awarded over \$241,000 in scholarships.

"Eighty-three percent of our graduates plan to continue their education," she said.

"Fifty-nine percent are going on to four-year schools."

"I wish you luck in whatever you plan to do," she said to the graduates.

Class member Chantal McMullen read her essay "The End of a Beginning," dealing with the changes the class faces, to the audience.

"It feels like just last week that we entered the public education system," she said.

"Ready or not, here we come into the real world."

Ms. McMullen said although graduation marks the end of a path for the students, a new path is just beginning.

"I've accepted that we have the power to do anything, as long as we put our minds to it," she said. "I believe we've all worked so diligently, and accomplished so much, but it shouldn't end here."

"I encourage you to set goals and work to achieve them," she added.

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Prospects program honors first graduate

By STEPHEN LANDRY
NEWS STAFF WRITER

GARDNER — She didn't set out to be a trailblazer, but that's the position 19-year-old Cassie Meaney of Gardner finds herself in.

As the first graduate from the Prospect Street Alternative Program, which opened in January and is geared toward addressing dropout rates in the city by allowing students who have left school to make up enough credits to earn a diploma, Ms. Meaney was the sole focus of attention at a ceremony Friday morning, where she was officially handed her diploma by Gardner High School Principal Andrew Haas.

Ms. Meaney, who had the

'This school really changed my life ... I never gave up on myself.'

— Cassie Meaney

option to take part in last weekend's graduation ceremonies at the high school, instead decided that she wanted to receive her diploma among the students and staff she had come to consider "family" over the past five months.

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News photo by STEVE NYBERG

Cassie Meaney receives her diploma from Gardner Superintendent Dr. Carol Daring during a Friday ceremony honoring Ms. Meaney as the first graduate of the Prospect Street Alternative Program. Also shown are Prospects Administrator Debbie Caligaris and Gardner High School Principal Andrew Haas.

Heads, and hands, held high



News photo by STEVE NYBERG

Members of the third-grade class at Helen Mae Sauter School share a moment of celebration at a graduation ceremony in the Elm Street School auditorium Friday.

CDC, Monty Tech partner to build home

By STEVE MARCOTTE
NEWS STAFF WRITER

GARDNER — Continuing a successful partnership between Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School and the Greater Gardner Community Development Corp., the two groups opened the doors of a nearly-completed home Friday.

Monty Tech students and officials from the CDC showcased the two-story, single-family home — built for income-qualified families — at 18 Guild Road that is nearing completion.

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William Waight, who served as principal of Oakmont from 1987 to 2005, decided to see if he could locate reports on Oakmont commencements via news archives. Mr. Waight said he used Levi Heywood Memorial Library's microfiche to locate graduation articles in old editions of The Gardner News.

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Booklet marks Oakmont's 50th graduation with a look back

By JORDAN DAVIS
NEWS STAFF WRITER

In addition to the regular programs handed out at high school graduations, guests at Oakmont Regional High School's 50th commencement had something extra to flip through last Sunday.

Booklets commemorating Oakmont's

graduating classes from 1961 to 2009 were available for the perusal of guests and alumni at the June 6 event. The booklets are comprised of news articles documenting droves of award winners, student speakers and diploma recipients from Oakmont's graduating classes.

The project began earlier this year when

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WEATHER

Showers. High 68F.
Tonight: Showers. Low 56F.
Sunrise: 5:08 a.m.
Sunset: 8:24 p.m.



— see page 2

SPORTS

Warriors ousted by Hawks in Div. 2 semis

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