

# The Gardner News

60 CENTS

18 PAGES

The Hometown Newspaper for Gardner, Ashburnham, Hubbardston, Phillipston, Templeton, Westminster, Winchendon

Vol. 208, No. 115

GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS • PUBLISHING SINCE 1869, DAILY SINCE 1897

WEEKEND, MAY 15-16, 2010



News staff photo by STEVE MARCOTTE

Former Judge John Curran, left, and Judge Patrick A. Fox, who retired from the bench Friday, listen to speakers during a ceremony Friday. Supporters filled the Gardner and Winchendon District Court to honor Judge Fox.

## Judge Fox retires from bench after 20 years

BY STEVE MARCOTTE  
NEWS STAFF WRITER

GARDNER — Judge Patrick A. Fox realized before being appointed 20 years ago that he wouldn't make everyone happy with his decisions, but he made a promise to treat people fairly and respectfully, while also upholding the dignity of the court.

Many of those in attendance at a retirement party in Gardner and Winchendon District Court Friday felt he managed to live up to that expectation. They honored Judge Fox with words of praise mixed in with a few comical stories.

"He made it look so easy I thought I could do it," said Judge Arthur Haley, who called Judge Fox a mentor. "It's not as easy as Pat Fox made it look."

Retired Judge John Curran acted as master of ceremonies for the event, which included several citation presentations to Judge Fox.

"There are a number of his colleagues here today who

honor him by their presence," Judge Curran said.

Judge Fox, 63, completed his final day on the job Friday, leaving a career that started in what was then known as the Spencer District Court in 1990. Before walking out of the Gardner and Winchendon court he has been assigned to as chief justice since 1997, the Sterling resident recalled his time on the bench.

Judge Fox said he'll particularly miss the challenge of dealing with complex issues of the law and working with the staff.

"They've always been very helpful and courteous. ... I'll miss being associated with them," he said. "They made it a pleasure to come to work every day."

A former public defender who started out working in a Worcester office in 1973, Judge Fox said he also appreciated the interaction with defense lawyers and attorney's of the commonwealth.

"Everybody conducted

*'(The staff) made it a pleasure to come to work every day.'*

— Judge Patrick Fox

themselves in my tenure here with courtesy and respect and professionalism," he said. "It was a pleasure to have them appear before me and interact with them professionally."

While he couldn't point to any case that stood out more than others over the years, Judge Fox said he enjoyed helping some people make progress to turn their lives around.

"It doesn't happen in every instance and in every case before you, but it happened frequently enough to be a real worthwhile aspect of the job," he said.

Turn to FOX, Page 4

## Longstanding team preparing for Relay

Fundraiser held at Jump 'n' Play

BY STEVE MARCOTTE  
NEWS STAFF WRITER

GARDNER — Taking an idea from one of the younger members of their Greater Gardner Relay for Life team, "One in the Spirit," the group held a fundraiser filled with plenty of entertainment Friday.

The team from the Ashburnham Ecumenical Council sponsored an event at Jump 'n' Play on Chestnut Street, inviting youngsters to enjoy the inflatable playground for a good cause. Proceeds will benefit the American Cancer Society through the 17th annual Relay



News staff photo by STEVE MARCOTTE

From left, Colton LaRose, Jacquelyn Dahlstrom and Davin LaRose prepare for a trip down a slide at Jump 'n' Play in Gardner Friday. The Ashburnham Ecumenical Council team for the upcoming Greater Gardner Relay for Life hosted an American Cancer Society fundraiser.

at Mount Wachusett Community College.

Relay participant Katie Gibbons, 16, said she witnessed a similar fundraiser in New Hampshire and decided to see if it would work in the Gardner area. Katie is taking part in her 11th Relay June 11-12.

"She dreamed (the fundraiser) up and here we are," said Joan Webber, captain of "One in the

Spirit."

The team's goal was to collect \$1,000. In their 10-year existence, Ms. Webber said the team likely raised more than \$50,000 for cancer research.

"As the years have gone by, we have had more fundraisers," she said. "We've raffled Red Sox tickets on our (website)."

Turn to RELAY, Page 4

## Local seniors weigh in on affordable senior housing project

BY JEAN-PAUL SALAMANCA  
NEWS STAFF WRITER

PHILLIPSTON — More than a week after Phillipston residents at the May 5 Annual Town Meeting voted to appropriate \$25,000 for costs related to the affordable senior housing project, townspeople had an opportunity this week to present their ideas to project officials on what they want to see at the proposed center.

According to Thelma McMahon, chairperson of the Council on Aging, a "good-sized" crowd of seniors attended Thursday's senior housing meeting at Town Hall, where they had

the opportunity to meet Richard Heaton of H&H Associates, the consultant for the housing project, and share their input for a "wish list" comprised at the meeting of features desired to be featured at the 10.7 acre former Stoddard property expected to provide 16 to 20 housing units for elderly Phillipston residents.

Among the ideas seniors discussed at the meeting were possibly adding "green" energy alternatives such as solar panels, making sure the building would fit in with the Town Common area, creating a space where local groups could meet and also interact with seniors at the center, and ensuring residents would have

*'...one of the biggest things is we need to determine whether the land we have for the housing project can house all of the necessary components...'*

— Thelma McMahon

plenty of sunlight, walk-in showers, and a fully refurbished kitchen.

Turn to HOUSING, Page 4

## Westminster resident will be missed



Courtesy photo

Elizabeth "Betty" Aveni is shown here hard at work at the Westminster Historical Society in 2000.

BY JORDAN DAVIS  
NEWS STAFF WRITER

WESTMINSTER — The legacy of lifelong Westminster resident Elizabeth "Betty" Aveni will not soon be forgotten, officials and residents said Friday.

Author, town personnel clerk, zoning board clerk, neighbor, mother, friend—these are just a few of the many hats worn by Ms. Aveni throughout her life. According to former co-workers and friends, her actions and achievements had one common thread: a love for the town of Westminster. And to see that emotion reflected, all one has to do is mention Ms. Aveni's name.

Turn to AVENI, Page 4

## Teamwork off the field



News photo by STEVE NYBERG

Helen Mae Sauter School first graders listen to members of the Gardner High School football team, left to right, Mike Griczika, Steve Guercio, Brian Connors, Jamison Craft and Chris Wihetlin who were on hand to show the values associated with loyalty as they read, "The Legend Of The, Blue Bonnet" Friday in the gym at the school on Elm Street in Gardner.

## Group to offer free transportation to Athol seniors

BY STEPHEN LANDRY  
NEWS STAFF WRITER

ATHOL—Senior citizens will ride for free over the next few weeks, as officials with the Franklin Regional Transit Authority, or FRTA, seeks to boost ridership in the region.

"Essentially, we're just looking to find our ridership back

with our Athol seniors," explained FRTA Assistant Administrator Michael Perreault, explaining that a change last summer in service contracts resulted in an immediate and dramatic decrease in ridership.

"We've been working with the town and the Council on Aging to try and increase our numbers

and win back the confidence of the seniors in Athol," he said. "We're contracting with (another company) for a number years, and we weren't really sure how much of a strong relationship the seniors had with the previous contractors and how much that affected us."

Turn to FRTA, Page 4

### INDEX

Advice — 15-16 Lottery — 2  
Classified — 13-14 Obituaries — 2  
Comics — 17 Religion — 7  
Editorial — 6 Sports — 9-11  
Local News — 3 TV Listings — 15-16

### WEATHER

Areas of dense morning fog. Partly cloudy. High 68. Winds WNW at 15 to 25 mph. Sunrise: 5:25 a.m. Sunset: 8:01 p.m.



— see page 2

### SPORTS

Bulldogs make quick work of Valley Tech



— See Page 9

### Leagues Now Forming

Mixed • Men's • Women's • Children's  
Newcomers Welcomed  
Gardner Ten Pins  
560 W. Broadway, Gardner  
978-632-0010



6 56525 10371 1