

August 16, 1990

GREENFIELD: GCC trustees cut intercollegiate sports funding. Page 2.

MONTAGUE: Village prepares for 31st Old Home Days. Page 2.

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Greenfield, Massachusetts

SINCE 1792



This afternoon, partly sunny, warm, dry, in mid-80s. Tonight, fair, mild, 60 to 65. Friday, mostly sunny, warmer, more humid, 85 to 90. Details, Page 7.

Steven Patnode, Warwick Center School

40 CENTS

Only Orange escapes cuts in state local aid

Recorder Staff

The state Department of Revenue announced local aid figures totaling \$2.43 billion this budget year, \$140 million less than last year, Franklin County towns learned Wednesday.

But since the Revenue Department's figures did not include \$210 million won by municipalities in a lawsuit against the state, the actual loss is \$350 million.

The state was not as generous with

local aid as Greenfield officials had hoped, but the town is not expected to raise the full amount of a \$1.36 million override of Proposition 2 1/2 approved by voters this past June.

The only Franklin County town to see an increase was Orange. There, aid rose \$202,219, from \$3,194,765 to \$3,396,984.

Stephen Smyder, Orange administrative assistant, said the town had been counting on a \$165,000 cut. But he said the new figures may include about \$400,000 in a first-year pay-

ment for construction of a new elementary school.

He said he would be happy if the town did not have to cut \$185,000 from what it received last year, but he does not expect that, he said.

Greenfield Town Manager Norman E. Thidemann told the town council Wednesday night that while he had not yet seen the report, he has been told that Greenfield will be getting \$7.9 million this budget year.

In the spring, Greenfield finance officials were more pessimistic

about local aid prospects, anticipating only \$7.6 million from the state, a cut of roughly \$1 million from what the town had been initially promised for the previous budget year.

Voters were asked to override the tax levy cap by \$1.36 million in June to restore services town officials believed would have to be cut from the budget due to the aid shortfall.

But earlier this summer, when aid prospects began to look a little rosier, town officials became increasingly optimistic. Thidemann said he

was anticipating \$8.2 million in aid, level with what the town actually got for last budget year.

Had the town received that much, only half of the \$1.36 million override would have been needed, according to Thidemann.

The full \$1.36 million override would have added \$1.50 to the tax rate. Raising only half that would have lowered the impact on the tax rate.

But based on the new aid figure, it now appears that Greenfield will

need to raise \$1 million of the \$1.36 million authorized by the override vote to make up the aid reduction, Thidemann said.

"We really expected that was going to be more," Thidemann said of the local aid amount. "It looks like we're getting closer and closer (to using) that \$1.3 million."

The Mohawk Trail Regional School District will receive \$150,302 in state aid under a special budget. See LOCAL Page 8.

Global debaters prevail

By MICHAEL TERAULT
Recorder Staff

GREENFIELD — The town council will continue to discuss national and international issues at its monthly meetings, after voting 11-9 Wednesday night to uphold the practice.

The council voted to adopt a resolution drafted by Precinct 4 Councilor Wendy Foxmyn and backed by a majority of the council's Regional, State and Federal Matters Committee, which she chairs. The resolution says the council is indeed an appropriate forum to discuss issues that are national or global in scope.

Foxmyn proposed the resolution because she thought the council was wasting too much time at meetings arguing over whether so-called global issues are appropriate to discuss.

The issue came up when the council was asked recently to adopt a resolution concerning U.S. policy in Central America and councilors debated whether the council was the

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Giant coupon nets \$500 in popcorn

The Associated Press

STOUGHTON — A social worker and two helpers cut an eight-foot section from a 25-foot-long coupon on a billboard and will get \$500 worth of popcorn for their trouble.

"It took some doing, but we got some of it down," said Diane Sullivan, 32, of Taunton. She and her sister and a friend used a knife and a 30-foot ladder to get a piece of the coupon from a billboard here.

The company which put the coupon in its advertising, Smartfood Inc. of Marlboro, was not entirely surprised.

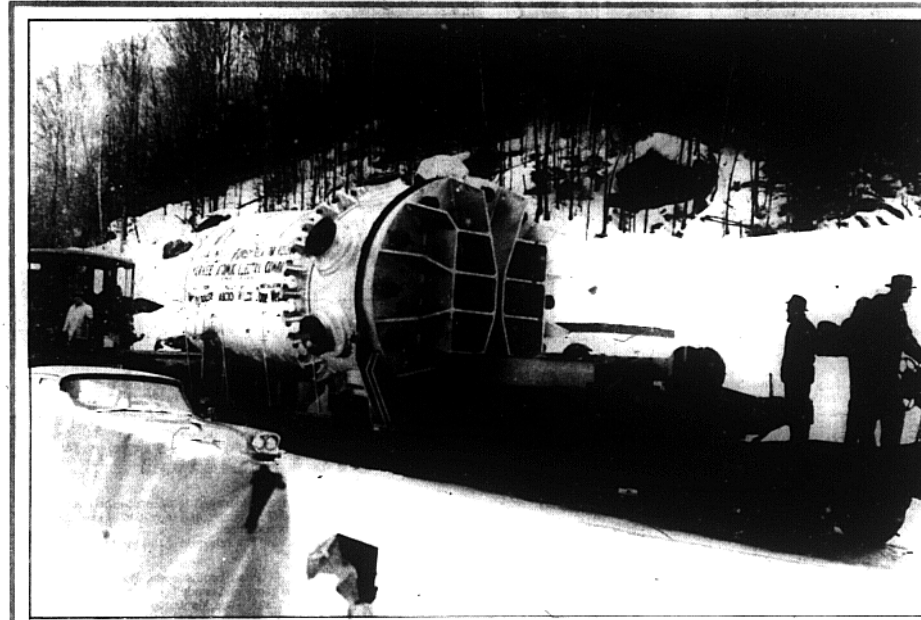
"We had an inkling that there were some crazy people out there upon whose minds it might cross to get the coupon down," Meyers said. "But we were ready to take that chance."

Seven billboard coupons were put up in Massachusetts, and Mullen Advertising in Wenham, where they

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A reactor vessel arrives at the nuclear power plant job site of Yankee Atomic on Feb. 7, 1960.

The early days Yankee originals go back to beginning

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second installment of a three-part series on Yankee Atomic's nuclear generating plant in Rowe.

First, some historical perspective: Until 1954, the United States government maintained exclusive control over nuclear research and development. Private ownership of nuclear reactors and fuel was forbidden in the 1940s — the technology was classified Top Secret — and the atom's potential was harnessed only for bombs and then, eventually, to power Navy submarines.

Things started changing in the early 1950s, as the government began to consider sharing its exclusive rights to the use of nuclear energy. On Aug. 30, 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower signed into law amendments to the Atomic Energy Act that allowed private ownership of nuclear reactors for the first time.

The day after this momentous occasion, representatives from 10 New England utilities met and agreed to form Yankee Atomic Electric Company — the company that would eventually build the

30 years: Atomic power in Rowe

first New England nuclear power plant, in the rural hills of western Massachusetts. Using the nuclear experience gained in government laboratories across the country, scientists and engineers designed the Yankee reactor and plant, which was built in 1958-1960. About 15 area engineers, most with steam engineering experience but little if any nuclear knowledge, arrived at Yankee Atomic in 1959 to train as control room operators and supervisors, the people who run a nuclear power plant. They arrived at Yankee while it was still being constructed and received a crash course in nuclear physics and electrical generating plant operations. They and the other new employees were also responsible for much of the pre-operational testing. We talked to four of these Yankee originals, three have retired from the plant and one is still working there — about those early days.



Karl Jurentkuff remembers the plant had dirt floors when he began working and how surprised he was at the inspection responsibilities he was given.

By VICKI RITTERBAND
Recorder Staff

ROWE — Karl Jurentkuff, a 30-year Yankee Rowe veteran, remembers his 1960 interview with then plant superintendent Glenn Reed as if it were yesterday.

"It was a strange interview," said Jurentkuff, who 32 years later is the manager of the operations department and supervises 24 control room operators.

"He asked me what the size of the tires was on my car," recalled Jurentkuff, during a recent interview at his Rowe home. "I told him, then he wanted to know that

the numbers stood for. Jurentkuff again gave the right answer and proceeded to respond to a battery of mechanical questions about his car: How many revolutions did his tires make per mile? In what order did his spark plugs fire? what did psi stand for?" asked Reed.

What Reed was trying to ascertain, said Jurentkuff, was how observant the 28-year-old was in his personal life, attentiveness being a trait that would presumably carry over in his work at the plant. Reed was apparently satisfied with

See NUCLEAR Page 12

Mural may be 'on' again, pending a possible appeal

By MICHAEL TERAULT
Recorder Staff

GREENFIELD — The on-again, off-again mural planned for downtown may be on again. But no one's getting out the paint brushes yet, pending a possible appeal and a selectmen's decision on scaffolding.

Town officials agreed Wednesday that the building inspector's determination that the mural is not in violation of zoning bylaws should be allowed to stand.

Building Inspector Bruce Austin

reaffirmed Wednesday a determination he made a month earlier, that his office does not consider the mural a sign.

"I know of nothing to be included in it that makes it anything but artwork," he said, noting that it contains no recognizable logo. Since it is not a sign, the mural is not subject to the sign regulations in the zoning bylaws, he has ruled. There are no regulations pertaining to murals, he noted.

Town Attorney Edward P. Smith came to a different conclusion. By

Smith's reading of the statutes, a mural is a sign. And the size of the mural exceeds the size requirements for signs. Smith said Tuesday that a special permit from the zoning board of appeals would be needed.

The coordinator of the mural project, Rebekka Tippens of Colrain, had objected because the process of getting the permit from the zoning board could take weeks or months. Mural artist Janet Braun-Reinitz of Brooklyn, N.Y., arrived Tuesday in Franklin County to start work on the project, which had been months in

the planning and was scheduled to begin this week.

Town officials met Wednesday over the issue. Town Manager Norman E. Thidemann said afterward that because the building inspector is the town's zoning administrator, his previous ruling should be allowed to stand, since it was issued before Smith gave his opinion.

But Austin will be bound by Smith's legal opinion in the future, Thidemann said. If another mural request comes into his office, Austin will have to abide by Smith's deci-

sion, Thidemann said. The town will go by what the town attorney says, Thidemann said.

"His interpretation was wrong, according to our legal department," Thidemann said of the building inspector. Thidemann added that Austin should not be faulted for making what the town attorney is considering an incorrect judgment. Town officials are asked to make "thousands" of determinations each week, Thidemann said. Occasionally, a town official will See MURAL Page 12

Saddam calls Bush a liar

The Associated Press

NICOSIA, Cyprus — Iraq's President Saddam Hussein today accused President Bush of trying to discredit him by labeling him a liar — and accused Bush of misleading the American people in the Persian Gulf crisis. "You, president of the United States, have chosen to be a liar," Saddam said. "You have lied to your people."

As he has in the past, Saddam mixed conciliatory rhetoric with new threats. He insisted he had no aggressive intentions, saying: "We are going to pray to God...that there won't be any military confrontation."

But he warned if the United States persists in entering the "dark tunnel" of intervention, "you are going to receive some American bodies in bags."

"I used to think that you were much more far-sighted than you actually displayed," the Iraqi president said in a statement read by an announcer on Iraqi television that was billed as an open letter to Bush.

The spoken translation was pro- See GULF Page 8

Culture shock

U.S. women surprise Saudis

The Associated Press

The women among the 50,000 American soldiers in Saudi Arabia are likely to be a disturbing if not threatening presence in a culture where women cannot drive, vote, sit in a theater with a man or even show their face and hair.

The Saudi kingdom has the most conservative and rigid Islamic way of life of all the Arab countries. Most Westerners there are employees of Western companies who are kept isolated from the rest of the country.

U.S. women soldiers said Wednesday that Saudi men react with dismay and occasional hostility when they see them doing such non-conformist jobs as repairing airplanes and driving trucks or, in at least one case, giving orders to men.

"I don't think they disagree with what we're doing," said a Victoria, Va., sergeant, whose name was withheld in keeping with the media ground rules. "I think they're more like shocked: 'There's an American See WOMEN Page 7

Mural

From Page 1

give incorrect advice, he said.

The decision to stand by Austin's ruling in this case is not exactly giving the muralist the green light to start work, Thidemann said.

According to the town's zoning by-laws, any person, town official or town board can appeal a decision or ruling of the building inspector to the town Zoning Board of Appeals. Someone may choose to appeal Austin's ruling on the mural.

Austin said he doubts anyone will appeal the decision. He has received no calls except from the media about it, he said. He acknowledged that there is a possibility a selectman might seek an injunction against the project.

Thidemann said the proponents of the mural project might want to hold off. If they get too far into their mural, they might be forced later to stop work or remove what they had already painted if there were an appeal and if Austin's ruling were then overturned, Thidemann said.

The mural is to be painted on the side of the Borofsky building downtown, overlooking the Veterans War Memorial in front of the police station. People involved in the mural project plan to erect scaffolding in front of the wall. The scaffolding would be set up along the short entranceway that connects Main Street to the parking lot behind the police station and town hall.

Thidemann said that setting up scaffolding on a public way probably requires approval of selectmen, which has a say on the use of public ways in town.

Smith said the only real issue is the mural's size — roughly 2,400

square feet. While he did not have specific figures on hand, he said that size mural exceeds a bylaw requirement saying that signs in that zoning district cannot exceed 15 percent of a building face.

"This is not to prevent a mural from going up. It's only because of the size. If that thing was within the size limitations, I wouldn't be saying anything," Smith said.

Three selectmen at Tuesday's board meeting criticized the placement of the mural near the Veterans Mall. But Smith said that is not the real issue. It is strictly a zoning matter, he said.

Smith defended his sign ruling with the following example. If a building were painted with a design and the words "Moxie Cola," that would be considered a sign. But if the two words were removed, the design that is still there would be considered a sign. Smith's point is that a publicly displayed mural or picture need not advertise a product or service to be considered a sign.

Tippens said Wednesday that Austin told her that she can consider his earlier approval of the mural as still valid.

"Legally, at this point, I'm OK," Tippens said.

But Tippens said she is not going to just plow ahead and start the mural project immediately. She said she wants to take some time to make sure all conflicts are settled and that there are not any bad feelings.

"The intent of this project is to be a community participatory thing. I don't want to be there (today) and have people throwing eggs at me," Tippens said. "I want to spend some

time smoothing over feathers. Hopefully, we can work it out."

Tippens said some 20 young people were planning to work on the mural over the weekend. She said she hopes they would be able to begin by then.

When the zoning issue was first raised, Tippens, Braun-Reinitz and others questioned the timing of it. Some wondered why the selectmen waited until the day the artist arrived from New York to raise issue with the mural.

Thidemann said he had not been aware that work on the project was scheduled to start this week until he read a newspaper article about it late last week. Upon seeing the article, he realized there were going to be some procedural issues, he said.

And while attorney Smith said he had read newspaper articles about the project, he said it is not his job to seek out people and convey his concerns to them based on what he reads in a newspaper. Smith said that no one had contacted him to get his legal opinion.

Smith also said that Austin had told Tippens to consult with the town attorney before proceeding with the plan. Smith said Austin had been under the impression that she was going to do that. But she never contacted him, Smith said.

Thidemann said the whole controversy could have been avoided if the mural proponents had met with the selectmen at the very beginning of the process.

Tippens has contended that when the building inspector first gave approval for the mural, she was under the impression that she was all set.