

# United Way-Community Fund merger gets OK

By DAVID A. VALLETTE  
Union staff

PITTSFIELD — The joining of the Southern Berkshire Community Fund with Pittsfield-based Berkshire United Way was completed Thursday when the United Way board voted to accept the merger.

As a result, Berkshire United Way will be responsible for an annual fund drive which will include all of Central and Southern Berkshire

County, while North Berkshire United Way will continue to serve North County.

All 12 members of the Community Fund are automatically members of Berkshire United Way. Ten of them had already been included under the Berkshire wing as well as with the Community Fund, while two others—Southern Berkshire Visiting Nurse Association and the Berkshire Council of the Camp Fire

Girls—were members only of the Southern Berkshire organization.

The 10 members are the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Berkshire Center for Families and Children, Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Berkshire Mental Health Center, Red Cross, Berkshire County Association for Retarded Citizens, Salvation Army, United Cerebral Palsy

Association and the United Service Organization.

The communities that will now be covered under the expanded Berkshire United Way are Pittsfield, Lenox, Lanesboro, Lee, Alford, Ashley Falls, Egremont, Great Barrington including Housatonic, Monterey, New Marlboro, Sheffield, Stockbridge and West Stockbridge.

Berkshire United Way's drive in 1983 produced a record \$1,286,215

which was \$21,215 beyond the agency's goal. The South County drive raised \$72,121.

The final approval vote, taken Thursday morning at the Stanley Club, was preceded Wednesday by a formal vote for merging held in Great Barrington by the board and member agencies of the Community Fund.

Discussion toward the merger began in January when 18-year

Executive Secretary Genevieve Cihocki announced she was resigning from the Community Fund and would be moving from the area.

The United Way board is to expand to accommodate South County representation, and an 800 number is to be installed to connect South County with the Pittsfield offices of Berkshire United Way, according to Cynthia A. Spinola, president of the Berkshire agency.

## Nurses to vote on union

By DAVID A. VALLETTE  
Union staff

NORTH ADAMS — The National Labor Relations Board has scheduled an election of registered nurses at North Adams Regional Hospital Aug. 8, to determine which union, if any, will represent the nurses.

Currently, the Massachusetts Nursing Association possesses the bargaining rights for the nurses, and has since 1976. The MNA is in the midst of contract negotiations with the hospital, trying to come up with a new agreement to replace the pact which expired March 31, but has been extended in lieu of a new agreement.

Seeking to take over the bargaining reins, however, is the Service Employees International Union which garnered enough signatures (minimum 30 percent of the nurses) to force the NLRB to hold the new election.

Although the scheduling of the contest for representation rights cannot by law halt the contract negotiating of the MNA, it has impaired prospects for success, according to Shirley B. Astle, negotiator for the MNA which has 125 nurses in its fold.

Ms. Astle contends that incentive for hospital negotiators to reach a settlement has diminished because the election will also feature a third voting option for the nurses: no union representation at all.

Bernard Shapiro, hospital administrator, has issued a letter to the nurses indicating that "the hospital has the willingness and the ability to effectively represent the interests of the nurses without a third party."

Negotiations to date have not closed the gap on a wage differential or on differences in what reduction in force language should be included in the sought contract, according to Ms. Astle.

## Former club owner denies fraud charge

PITTSFIELD — A Sandisfield man pleaded not guilty to a charge of insurance fraud in one of three arraignments held in Berkshire Superior Court Thursday before Judge Charles Alberti.

Jacque Bacque, 26, of Route 57, Sandisfield, was released in his own recognizance following his arraignment on charges of defrauding an insurance company and larceny.

Bacque, the owner of Kabouter's, a night club on Route 7 in Great Barrington which ceased operations in December following a fire, is alleged to have falsely claimed that a video game was stolen from the club in October, succeeding in getting an insurance reimbursement.



Photo by David Vallette

## High-level job

Tom Burt perches atop a ladder against the Berkshire County Courthouse Thursday as he paints the windows of the Berkshire Superior Court judge's chambers. County Superintendent of Buildings James C. Monterosso has scheduled interior and exterior work on the courthouse to keep ahead of the historic building's aging.

## License denial to be appealed

By JILL WALLACH  
Union correspondent

PITTSFIELD — Joseph A. DiMassimo, the owner of Teo's Restaurant in Pittsfield, will appeal the decision of the North Adams Licensing Board to deny him a wine and beer license, for a similar restaurant in North Adams, to the state Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission.

DiMassimo said he received the board's July 12 decision on Wednesday and his attorney will mail the appeal to Boston today. He also said he and his attorney, John A. Bernardo, were not informed of the July 12 meeting, although both attended a hearing on June 21.

DiMassimo, who was not present at Thursday's meeting, said the board's "arguments were weak and there was no basis for the denial other than pressure from North

Adams restaurant people who do not want to see another restaurant in the city."

"I have received a lot of calls supporting opening another restaurant and the board has not been listening to those who support me. There is not a really decent place to have lunch and a beer in North Adams, except one, and I was only intending to bring in a new building and business that would appeal to residents of all ages," DiMassimo said.

DiMassimo has already purchased the property on the corner of Ashland and Porter Streets where the former P.J.'s restaurant was located. He intends to wait until the ABCC hears his appeal before deciding what to do with the property. He had intended to tear down the existing, fire-gutted building and replace with with a \$200,000

facility that would have an 18-seat bar as well as tables.

"I am seeking more information on why the license was denied. Although the sale of beer and wine makes up only 20 percent of the business, it would not be economically feasible for me to open without the license. The availability of the beer and wine actually draws in more people to eat," DiMassimo said.

He also denied charges from about 20 residents of the area near the restaurant that the eatery would be detrimental to the neighborhood or would attract only college students from nearby North Adams State College. He said he doesn't object to having a higher drinking age and suggested that students would come in more for the fast food than for the liquor which is available elsewhere.

## New GE center ready to open in Pittsfield

PITTSFIELD — General Electric Co. will officially open its \$25 million Plastics Technology Center in ceremonies scheduled for 11 a.m. Monday.

The complex, at Plastics and Dalton avenues, represents a "major business investment in Western Massachusetts," according to R. Bruce Farren, communication and community relations manager, who said local, state and federal elected officials will be joining key GE business leaders for the opening ceremonies and tour of the center.

According to Glen H. Hiner, vice president and general manager for plastics operations, the new center represents "a major milestone" and is evidence that GE intends to keep Pittsfield as its world plastics headquarters, and retain its world leadership in engineering plastics.

The center includes interconnected buildings with 73,000 square feet of operations space, plus a 30,000 square foot office building, all adjacent to the prior plastics headquarters which will be converted to offices. Among its features is a vaulted area in which a 30-ton crane has been permanently installed to move steel molds weighing up to 20 tons.

The city cooperated with GE by

approving a payment in lieu of taxes plan, and the state cooperated by selling the adjacent state police barracks back to the company to allow creation of a new entrance to the center which includes a lake dug out during the spring.

The barracks property had originally been owned by GE, given to the state more than a half century ago to build the barracks. State police are currently housed in a trailer on Route 8 in Cheshire, waiting for construction of a new barracks on Harbor Hill there.

The bolstering of GE Plastics represented in the new center, along with continuing business increases in GE's Ordnance operations, contrast to declines in the firm's third Pittsfield division, transformers.

As of the beginning of 1984, GE's total employee count was 7,150, with the once strongest transformer division down to 2,500, while Ordnance had risen to 4,050 and plastics had risen to 600.

While the new center is not expected to immediately affect the employment picture, it will bring customers and engineers from all over the world, boding well on the long-term, according to Nicholas Boraski, the firm's top local executive.

## Selectmen make two appointments

By DAVID A. VALLETTE  
Union staff

GREAT BARRINGTON — After rescinding prior appointments to two vacancies on the town Conservation Commission, the Board of Selectmen has filled the seats.

Named to the board are Martin Clark, a logger and former selectman in West Stockbridge, and Thomas W. Seiger, a retired chief appraiser for the U.S. Forestry Service.

The board had earlier appointed Clark and Lawrence Barbieri, a former selectman who is in the lumber business, but those June 25th appointments were rescinded when a Berkshire Superior Court civil suit was filed contending that the selectmen had violated the state's Open Meeting Law in the process of making the appointments.

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The suit, brought by John W. P. and Eileen W. Mooney, and Dr. Eugene M. and Joan E. Vigneron Jr., was in turn withdrawn following the rescinding of the appointments and after the four complainants gained assurances that the law would be followed in the appointment process.

John Mooney, spokesman for the plaintiffs in the suit, contended that

the board should have selected the two associate members of the commission who were among the six applicants for the seats. The two were his wife, who is a former chairman of the commission, and Seiger.

Pressure to pick associate commission members also came from current Chairman Mary Gilligan.

While the selectmen acceded to naming Seiger from the associate roster, they picked Clark over Mrs. Mooney, citing his experience in dealing with people during his five-year tenure as a selectman.

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The Mooneys and the Vignerons had contended in their suit that the board made the initial appointments without any public deliberations and without a public reading of the candidates' letters of application.

Since the board settled on two of the six candidates without public deliberation, it must have deliberated in private, without proper posting or voting for an executive session, Mooney said.

The selectmen, without admitting to any Open Meeting Law violations, agreed to doing the process over again, and in the new process read all of the candidates' letters in public and deliberated in public.

## Alumni group again sets sights on Mount Hope Farm

WILLIAMSTOWN — The Purple Mountain Partnership, a group of Williams College Alumni, have made a "serious effort" again to repurchase the Mount Hope Farm Estate from August E. Mansker.

William S. Reed, treasurer and vice president of administration at Williams, said Thursday the alumni and college officials have held a

series of discussions with Mansker and his attorney over the last two weeks in an effort to resolve their differences and come to an agreement on the purchase of the property.

A spokesman in the office of Springfield attorney Philip J. Hendel confirmed Thursday there had been discussions. But Hendel was

not available and the spokesman would not comment further on the status of negotiations.

Reed said the discussions, however, have come to a standstill and several issues remain unresolved. He would not elaborate on the issues involved.

Reed also said that a ruling from the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in

Worcester on the validity of Mansker's sale-purchase agreement to sell Mt. Hope to John Campbell, a 29-year old entrepreneur from California, has been delayed because of funding problems the federal court is experiencing because of Congressional debate.

The Purple Mountain Partnership originally offered Mansker \$1.2 mil-

lion for the 1,009 acre estate and 72-room Elm Tree House. But Mansker turned it down for a \$2 million bid from the Carley Capital Group.

Following the college's successful challenge to the sales-purchase agreement, Carley Capital withdrew its bid for the property. Mansker filed for reorganization

under Chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Laws on May 22 when the college sought to recover its \$350,000 mortgage through foreclosure proceedings. He then announced he had another buyer for the property who also wished to purchase the estate for \$2 million. The college has also challenged that sales-purchase agreement.