

Around town

Office hours

ADAMS — State Rep. Frank N. Costa, D-Adams, will conduct office hours for constituents today from 10 a.m. to noon in the selectmen's conference room on the second floor of Town Hall. Residents of North Adams, Adams, Cheshire, Savoy, Clarksburg, Florida and Windsor may meet with Costa on a first-come, first-served basis.

Speed skating

PITTSFIELD — The Berkshire Hills Outdoor Speed Skating Championships will be held on Onota Lake, in front of the city's new Controy Pavilion, today at 1 p.m. and Sunday beginning at 11 a.m. The event is part of the Pittsfield Winter Carnival, operated by the Pittsfield Winter Sports Committee.

Family reunion

PITTSFIELD — The steering committee of the Peaslee Allied Families Association will meet Sunday at 2 p.m. at the home of association President Robert E. Peaslee, 5 Cypress Lane, Lake Onota Village, to review last year's reunion and plan for the 1984 reunion. All family members and interested persons are invited.

Poetry reading

WILLIAMSTOWN — Poet Edward Hirsch will read from his works Wednesday at 8 p.m. in Griffin Hall at Williams College. His book of poetry, "For the Sleepwalkers," published by Knopf in 1981, was nominated for the National Book Critics Circle Award, and he is the 1983 recipient of the Peter I.B. Laven Younger Poets Award of the Academy of American Poets.

Computer club

PITTSFIELD — The Commodore 64 Club, an organization for computer owners who want to exchange ideas on home computer use, will hold a meeting Wednesday at 7 p.m. at Morningside School in Pittsfield. Prospective members are welcome.

Pregnancy risks

PITTSFIELD — A discussion on "Coping with a High-Risk Pregnancy," will be led by Joyce Johnson Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. in the dining room of Berkshire Medical Center, in a meeting of REACH, a support group for parents who have experienced miscarriage, stillbirth or loss of a newborn.

Cultural differences

LENOX — Dr. Gordon Northrup, medical director at the Avalon Center, will describe two contrary cultures — the Limbu of Nepal and the Yanomamo — in a presentation Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the conference room of the center on Old Stockbridge Road. Using slides and a documentary movie, the session will contrast the exceptionally peaceful Limbu with the exceptionally violent Yanomamo, illustrating the influence of culture on traits of aggressiveness and machismo. Suggestions for designing programs for violent youth and for managing individual violent acts are offered through the studies. The free program includes wine and cheese.

Snowshoe walk

DALTON — A seven-mile trek on snowshoes will begin at 9:30 a.m. today from the parking lot of Crane & Co. on South Street. The event is the first of the winter season for the Berkshire Knapsackers hiking club. Uphill terrain rates the route to be taken as "difficult."

Square dancing

NORTH ADAMS — The Hairpin Turners Square Dance Club will hold a dance at McCann Technical High School tonight at 8. Norman Choquette will be the guest caller. The Promenabers Western Style Square Dance Club will also hold a dance at 8 p.m. today at Mitchell School in Williamstown.

Winter sale

LEE — The Lee Youth Association and the Lee Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Team will sponsor a winter equipment sale today from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Community Center on Academy Street. The sale is to benefit a weeklong winter carnival planned for February.

Jury finds pair guilty of armed robbery

By DAVID A. VALLETTE
Union correspondent

PITTSFIELD — After 90 minutes of deliberation, a Berkshire Superior Court jury Friday declared two New York state men guilty in the Aug. 18 armed robbery of South Side Pharmacy.

James Seminira, 29, of Staten Island, N.Y., and Glenn C. Haynes Jr., 28, of Cobleskill, N.Y., will be sentenced Wednesday by Judge William Simons. Both will appeal their convictions.

Neither defendant had taken the stand in the three-day trial, but their attorneys pointed out in closing arguments a long roster of inconsistencies in testimony by prosecution witnesses and emphasized that their clients had not been identified directly.

"The worst thing that can happen in a

courtroom is that the wrong man is convicted of a crime," Haynes' attorney, Francis X. Spina, warned the jury.

Among items cited by Spina and Andrew T. Campoli, Seminira's attorney:

- Testimony by a store worker that Seminira had a gun in his belt when he wasn't wearing a belt.
- Testimony that Seminira could be seen from inside the store through the window when photos showed vision impossible through the window.
- Discrepancies in descriptions of height, shirt and hat colors and type of glasses worn by the robber.
- Descriptions of damage to the defendants' car which a witness said had not been on the getaway car.
- An accounting of the amount of money taken which showed \$18 more than

the two men possessed when arrested minutes after the robbery.

In rebuttal, First Assistant District Attorney Daniel A. Ford contended that inconsistencies are not surprising and that they are common in all multiple accounts of events. He called the case one in which circumstantial evidence tells the whole story.

Ford said the jury could "assume" that the man seen running down the street by the store manager after the robbery and getting into the passenger seat of a gold car was the robber. Seminira was found in that seat minutes later when police halted the car, he pointed out.

Ford also pointed to testimony that the money was found strewn around the car's front seat and that some could have been dropped by the robbers, that police found a plastic gun inside a rolled baseball hat and

that the toy gun and hat fitted witnesses' descriptions, that the car's driver, Haynes, sped away from police and, when he lost control of the car and it went off the road, jumped out and over a hedge in an effort to get away.

The defendants' only witness was a man from a Schenectady, N.Y., garage who said Seminira was still at the garage at 1:30 p.m., making it impossible for him to have entered the pharmacy at 2 p.m. in Pittsfield.

"He said 1:30 because Seminira told him it was 1:30," Ford charged, contending that the witness was "wrong," rather than dishonest.

After the verdict, Spina filed objections to statements Ford made in summation, contending the prosecutor represented to the jury statements differing from those actually made by some of the witnesses.



Photo by David Vallette

Marking the spot

Once the site of Fort Massachusetts, a strategic outpost which fell after a battle to a large force of French and Indians, this historic plot of snow-covered ground in North Adams is marked only by a chimney and plaque. The site is adjacent to a supermarket parking lot off Route 2.

Williams fights sale of farm

By JOHN HITCHCOCK
Union bureau chief

WILLIAMSTOWN — Williams College has initiated legal steps to block the proposed \$2 million sale of Mount Hope Farm, once owned by the college.

The present owner, August E. Mansker, accepted the \$2 million offer last week from the Carley Capital Group of Madison, Wis., after first considering a bid of \$1.2 million from a group of Williams alumni.

Attorney Bruce D. Grinnell of Williamstown, a Williams alumnus, confirmed Friday afternoon that he has been retained by the college to fight the sale.

He said he filed a petition Thursday in Berkshire Superior Court seeking a declaratory judgment on the proposed sale and expects a hearing early next week.

Williams bought the 1,000-acre former Rockefeller estate, including a 72-room Georgian man-

sion, from Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City in 1963 for \$325,000. The property had been willed to the hospital by the Rockefeller family.

The college sold it in 1978 to Mansker, who operated a chain of health clubs with his wife, for about \$850,000.

Mansker said he does not have time to "enjoy" Mount Hope and that he plans to consolidate his home and business headquarters at another estate he owns in Macon, Mo.

Mansker said he was spending about \$500,000 a year to maintain and improve Mount Hope after spending another \$500,000 decorating it.

Williams attached numerous stipulations regarding resale of Mount Hope when it was sold to Mansker, including a 30-day first option whenever an offer is made for the property. The college reserved the right to meet with any prospective buyer before the sale can be consummated.

The option period expires Feb. 6 and Williams officials were scheduled to meet with John Wilson of the Carley Capital Group next week.

Carley formed a new organization, Mount Hope Realty Trust, and hired Pittsfield lawyer Frederick M. Myers to represent the new group.

Grinnell said Friday there were "too many uncertainties and contingencies in the proposed sale."

He said the purpose of obtaining a declaratory judgment is "to see exactly what is required before the sale is completed."

Wilson had said that his group does not plan to subdivide the lush estate, once the home of John D. Rockefeller's daughter, Alta, and her husband, Col. E. Parmalee Prentice. They built the mansion in 1928 and purchased several large farms at the time. They were interested in improving farm practices and established a nationally recognized program in breeding cows and chickens.

According to Grinnell, the agreement between Mansker and Carley Capital calls for the sale only if various town and state permits are obtained and if financing can be arranged "on the buyer's terms."

Ryan declares bid to unseat Wadsworth

By DAVID A. VALLETTE
Union correspondent

PITTSFIELD — Former city councilor Joseph W. Ryan Jr. became Friday the first announced challenger to incumbent JoAnn H. Wadsworth in her bid for re-election as Berkshire County treasurer.

"I just think I can do a better job," Ryan said in outlining his reason for running.

Asked about the ongoing dispute between Mrs. Wadsworth and county commissioners over the paying of county bills, Ryan contended it would not have happened if he had been in the treasurer's office.

"I would emphasize cooperation and communication" with the commissioners, he said.

The candidate said he would apply a technique called "exception accounting" in handling the county books and that such a management technique "could go a long way toward solving the conflicts that presently exist."

Exception accounting is based on the fact that "typically, 90 percent of the time is spent on searching out problems, with only 10 percent spent on correction," he said. As he did as chairman of the City Council's Committee on Audits, Ryan said, he would work with computers to provide exception accounting which identifies problems and allows for preventive or corrective measures to be taken.

He said he prefers not to be

dwelling on the current situation in the treasurer's office. "I'd rather run on my qualifications than on the incumbent's problems," he said.

Ryan ended a 10-year stint on the council when he opted not to seek re-election last fall. He said at the time that he wished to devote his efforts this year to seeking county-wide office without potential conflicts from holding another office.

Ryan said he had thought about forgoing the battle for the Democratic nomination for treasurer by running as an independent, but "key" Democrats contacted him about running and he decided to enter the primary.

Mrs. Wadsworth declared her candidacy for the nomination during a press conference in December which she had called to explain her position that the treasurer had the right to reject a county commissioner's order to pay bills. She was subsequently overruled, however, when the commissioners succeeded in gaining a court order requiring that she pay bills as determined by the commissioners.

As a city councilor, Ryan was chairman of the Data Processing Commission, which worked to set up the city's computer system. He also cites his eight years with IBM as a qualification for the treasurer's post since the county and the city are exploring joint use of city computers and the county could go its own way with a computer system soon.

Lee couple loses suit against doctor, clinic

By DAVID A. VALLETTE
Union correspondent

PITTSFIELD — A Lee couple has lost Berkshire Superior Court suits filed against a Westfield doctor and hospital over emergency-room treatment of auto-accident injuries.

A jury found that Dr. Paul Legac "did not deviate from accepted medical practice in not calling in a radiologist or neurosurgeon to read X-rays" taken of patient George Stumbaugh, 137 Main St., Lee.

In a companion suit against Noble Hospital in Westfield, in whose emergency room Dr. Legac treated Stumbaugh, Judge William Simons issued a directed verdict, dismissing the action against the hospital.

Stumbaugh had been injured in a crash March 16, 1977, and was taken to Noble Hospital for emergency treatment. Court records show that Dr. Legac treated him for head and knee injuries

by having an X-ray taken of his head, giving him a tetanus shot, sewing up his head wound and applying antibiotic ointment to his cuts, and then discharged him.

The next day, Stumbaugh said, he was telephoned by a member of the Noble Hospital staff who advised that he needed further examination. Consequently, he went to the emergency room at Berkshire Medical Center, where Dr. Edward J. Galla began treatment for a skull fracture.

Stumbaugh, with his wife, Mary Ann, charged negligence on the part of Dr. Legac and Noble Hospital for not acting on the evidence found in the X-ray, which they said showed a "strong suggestion of a depressed skull fracture."

The delay in treatment of his skull led to infection and added to the time and cost of treatment as well as to additional pain, the Stumbaughs said in suing for \$75,000.

Teen denies charge of burning building

PITTSFIELD — An 18-year-old Mountain Regional High School student pleaded not guilty in Berkshire Superior Court Friday to a charge of burning a building.

Steven L. Sartori, Route 41, West Stockbridge, was charged with setting a fire at the high school Dec. 14.

The fire damaged an electrical panel governing the school's fire alarm system and apparently was started with gas cigarette lighters.

Judge William Simons allowed Sartori to be released on his own recognizance pending a pretrial conference.