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JANUARY 31, 2011

Faceoff over school document request

Greenfield board member angry with delay and superintendent's 'bill'

By MACKENZIE ISSLER
Recorder Staff

GREENFIELD — To say Greenfield School Committee member Maryelen Calderwood has been feeling frustrated for the past several weeks is probably an understatement.

She's been waiting more than two months for documents she requested from her own superintendent's office about a School

Committee bill that cryptically invoked her name.

And it was only after she filed a formal public records request through the town clerk's office that her superintendent, Susan Hollins, did respond, in a formal memo. Hollins said that Calderwood, one of her elected school board bosses, would have to pay for the information, in accordance with

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I was simply shocked when it was suggested I'd be charged.



Maryelen Calderwood
Greenfield School Committee

I didn't neglect to help her, I did what I was obligated to do.



Susan Hollins
Greenfield superintendent

About Town
with
Diane Broncaccio



House of straw may blow them away in Haiti

Charlemont man behind building effort

By DIANE BRONCACCIO
Recorder Staff

CHARLEMONT — This weekend, Andy Mueller of Charlemont left for Haiti — for the fourth time this year — to finish building the first straw-bale house in Haiti.



MUELLER

Mueller, the lead builder in the "Ti Kay Pay" project, is hoping to teach Haitians how to build the inexpensive, energy-efficient shelters that could help reduce some of the homelessness, food-scarcity and even the building rubble left after last year's earthquake.

"Ti Kay Pay" means a "small house of straw," and these are to be made with available materials, easily found in Haiti, that currently just go to waste.

There's a saying: "If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for life." But Mueller and others want to share the straw-bale, natural-building technique with Haitian apprentices, who will eventually teach others how to build the them.

"The thrust is, we are training trainers," he said. "We have two apprentices currently; we're planning on taking them to our next project. We see this as a four-year process."

"Like the Amish do, you help others build their houses," said Mueller. "It will be built just for the cost of materials. The idea is, you have your neighbors help you, and you return the favor."

The "waste" to be used as building material includes the rice straw that is left behind in the fields. The straw can be compressed into "bricks," to be wrapped in baling twine and stacked to form the walls.

"(Haitians) typically will cut the stalk, harvest the rice or seed heads, then discard or burn the straw," Mueller explained. "So it's a waste, and it (the burning straw) pollutes the air. That's what they do with about 88 percent of the straw, although they use some of it for animal beds."

It also includes the rice hulls — a milling byproduct, which can be and used as ceiling insulation.

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Egypt on the brink?



AP photo
A protester waves an Egyptian flag after he climbed on a lamppost during a demonstration in Tahrir square in downtown Cairo, Egypt, Sunday. As Egypt's six-day pro-democracy uprising continued, opposition figure Mohammed ElBaradei emerged from house arrest late Sunday to join protesters in central Cairo, echoing their demand that U.S.-allied President Hosni Mubarak resign.

Opposition finds leader in ElBaradei

By HANNAH ALLAM
and SHASHANK BENGALI
McClatchy Newspapers

CAIRO — Opposition figure

Mohammed ElBaradei emerged from house arrest late Sunday to join protesters in central Cairo, echoing their demand that U.S.-allied President Hosni Mubarak resign and establishing himself as the face of Egypt's six-day pro-democracy uprising.

The dramatic nighttime appearance by ElBaradei — the Nobel Peace Prize winner who returned to Egypt last week after the protests began — suddenly placed him at the forefront of a leaderless grass-roots revolt that has brought one of the Arab world's longest and most entrenched dictatorships to the brink of collapse.

As the banned Muslim Brotherhood and other Egyptian opposition groups said they would support ElBaradei in negotiations for a new government, U.S. President Barack Obama called allies and expressed support for "an orderly transition to a government that is responsive to the aspirations of the Egyptian people," according to a White House statement.

Mubarak's days appeared to be numbered, although the 82-year-old leader showed no obvious signs that he would give up the office he has for nearly 30 years. F-16 fighter jets buzzed protesters in downtown Cairo in a show of intimidation. News services reported that the Egyptian army was sending reinforcements and state television said that the police, who have been absent from the streets since Friday, would resume patrols.

Cairo remained an anxious battle zone: long lines at fuel pumps, markets plucked

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- Clinton appeals for orderly transition.
- The young and jobless behind the unrest.

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Rebirth of the American chestnut

Reforestation effort prepared to take root

By BRADFORD L. MINER
Worcester Telegram & Gazette

PAXTON — For decades the American chestnut — an icon of Americana and vital component of Eastern U.S. forest ecology and economy — seemed lost for all time.

Even the combined resources of the federal government, state environmental agencies and plant scientists had failed to eradicate or slow the airborne pathogen that had killed billions of chestnut trees since first being identified in New York City in 1904.

But in 1983, a cadre of prominent plant scientists took another look at the American chestnut and its remorseless foe.

Founding The American Chestnut

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AP photo
In this Jan. 20 photo, Dennis Melican, who works at Moore State Park in Paxton, poses on the limbs of a chestnut tree in the park's plantation. The Massachusetts Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation is ready to begin chestnut reforestation in forests that originally constituted the range of the American chestnut.

U.S. remains on top in manufacturing

By PAUL WISEMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. factories are closing. American manufacturing jobs are reappearing overseas. China's industrial might is growing each year.

And it might seem as if the United States doesn't make world-class goods as well as some other nations.

"There's no reason Europe or China should have the fastest trains, or the new factories that manufacture clean energy products," President Barack Obama said in his State of the Union address last week.

Yet America remains by far

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