



UMass a winner

Behind by 17, Minutemen find way to storm back, beat St. Joseph's

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Artists at work

Youngsters put finishing touches on totem pole for sculpture park.

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WEATHER



31/26

PARTLY CLOUDY

Tori Franjie
Whately Elementary
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1792
GREENFIELD, MASS

MONDAY

JANUARY 16, 2012

75¢

School experience they won't soon forget

Bement students heading to orphanage in Dominican Republic

DEERFIELD — In the hallway of the Bement School, there are nearly 40 suitcases tucked up against the wall. Battle worn from years of travel, the old hand-me-downs are not impressive, but what is inside will be worth its weight in gold a few thousand miles away: books, paper, pens and school supplies.

Bement's 32 ninth-grade students will take them to an orphanage in the Dominican Republic next week, where they will work for a week with the children as part of a service learning project with the country that shares a Caribbean island with Haiti.

"They're not as privileged as we

are," said ninth-grader Streeter Elliot. "We go to a school, play sports and have a family."

The students will travel to the La Suiza Orphanage in San Cristobal. The orphanage rests on a hilltop, about 40 minutes outside of the capital city of Santo Domingo, on a working farm and is home to about 50

orphan boys, ranging from infancy to their early teens.

Since starting the program in 2005, Dean Fusto has lead about 130 students to the orphanage with class advisers Blake Wilson, Alex Bartlett, Leif Riddington and Madeline Surgenor.

"It's a totally unique experience,"

About Town

with

John Tilton



said Fusto. "This is not about traveling the country for leisure. This is

See TRIP Page A2

SLIDE RIDE



Ava Pruitt-Dahl, 8, of Greenfield slides down the Beacon Field hill on Saturday where she was sliding with many others for the first good snow of the season. Recorder/Geoff Bluh

Her life continues to fly

Catching up with Sarah Banks Hartshorne

By ANITA PHILLIPS
Recorder Staff

It has been a whirlwind four years for Heath native Sarah Banks Hartshorne.

The 24-year-old model, actress and standup comedian, who graduated from The Academy at Charlemont, and not long after became a contestant on "America's Next Top Model Cycle 9," is about to graduate from college with a degree in theater. The spunky, animated brunette currently spends much of her time flying around the country and Europe for modeling jobs.

Her high school sweetheart, Ian Leue from Ashfield, proposed to her in Paris and the couple, living together in Connecticut, are hoping to get married in 2013.

"I never thought I'd have so much going on," said Hartshorne, who in a telephone interview from her Connecticut home last week said that she never planned on auditioning for ANTM until a friend dragged her

there. And that's where it all started for Hartshorne — sort of.

She said she had known she wanted to be an actress since she was 11 years old, but just wasn't sure how she'd get there. She did a lot of acting in high school and college, but thinking about making the transition to the professional world of acting seemed daunting.

She said her stint on ANTM helped her ambitions, but her journey has also required a lot of hard work. She said that journey is far from over.

"I've been really lucky," said the only child of journalist Stephen Hartshorne of Sunderland and poet Lea Banks of Conway.

She said her family keeps her grounded.

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HARTSHORNE

Natural gas price drop boon to users

By JONATHAN FAHEY
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The price of natural gas is plummeting at a pace that has caught even the experts off guard.

A 35 percent collapse in the futures price over the past year has been a boon to homeowners who use natural gas for heat and appliances and to manufacturers who power their factories and make chemicals and materials with it.

The country is flush with natural gas as a result of new drilling techniques that have enabled energy companies to tap vast supplies that were out of reach not so long ago.

The country's natural gas surplus has been growing even as the country burns record amounts.

This winter's warm weather slowed the growth in demand, however, and created a glut. In the Northeast, December was the fourth warmest in the last 117 years. Winter supplies are 17 percent above their five-year average.

The natural gas futures price fell 13 percent last week, to \$2.67 per 1,000 cubic feet. That's the lowest winter-time level in a decade.

"The market has been overwhelmed with gas," says Anthony Yuen, a commodities analyst at Citibank.

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King's image continues to evolve

By BRETT ZONGKER
and SAMANTHA GROSS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — On the National Mall in Washington, Martin Luther King Jr. is a towering, heroic figure carved in stone. On the Broadway stage, he's a living, breathing man who chain smokes, sips liquor and occasionally curses.

As Americans honor King's memory 44 years after he was assassinated, the image of the slain civil rights leader is evolving.

The memorial

The new King memorial, which opened in August in the nation's capital, celebrates the ideals King espoused. Quotations from his speeches and writings conjure memories of his message, and a 30-foot-tall sculpture depicts King emerging as a "stone of hope" from a "mountain of despair," a design inspired by a line of his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

MLK Day closings

Today is Martin Luther King Jr. Day, a federal holiday.

All federal, state, regional and town government offices, public schools, post offices and libraries are closed. There is no mail delivery or trash pickup.

Retail stores, including liquor stores, may be open.

Banks and most service agencies are closed.

The Recorder business offices are open.

Some gaze upon this figure in silence. Some smile and pull out cell phone cameras. Others chat about how closely the statue resembles King. And some are moved to tears.

"Just all that this man did so that

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Gaming chairman's holding the cards

By BOB SALSBERG
and STEVE LEBLANC
Associated Press

BOSTON — The head of the state's nascent gaming commission has some advice for would-be casino developers lining up to cash in on Massachusetts' new gambling law.

Be creative. Think outside the box.

"I like the idea of saying to these people, 'Take the wraps off. Let's think big,'" said Stephen Crosby, who was named by Gov. Deval Patrick last month to chair the five-member panel that will award licenses for up to three casinos and one slots parlor in the state.

"Obviously, you're in it to make money. That's fine. If you can figure out a way to make money that is going to be consistent with our value

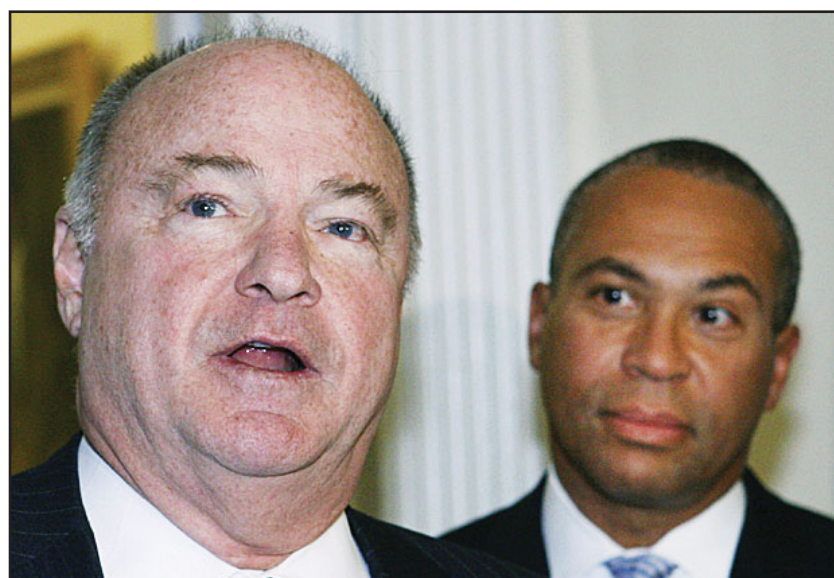
structure and what we lay out as the primary values, go for it," Crosby said during a recent interview with The Associated Press.

Once the commission is fully formed — Crosby is the only member appointed to date — one of its first tasks will be drafting a formal call for bidders on the casino licenses.

Crosby, a former state Secretary of Administration and Finance, sees two ways to approach the task. One envisions a rigid set of guidelines and financial benchmarks that he said would make it relatively easy to compare competing proposals and make decision-making more objective.

Another option, he said, is to write a broad, conceptual invitation for bids that would lay out a system of values that maximizes job creation

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In this Dec. 13, 2011 file photo, Stephen Crosby speaks as Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, right, listens during a news conference at the Statehouse in Boston, where Patrick appointed Crosby as chair of a new state gambling commission. In an interview this month with The Associated Press, Crosby said he wants developers to offer innovative approaches to job creation, while also minimizing any potentially negative impacts on host communities, when bidding for the state's three casino licenses.