Grain mill owner cited for fire safety violations
By TOM RELIHAN
Reformer Staff

HURLEY — The owner of an old grain mill in the East Deerfield Rural community has been cited for not being present or performing work that sparked a fire that burned the building March 4.

Philip Nash of Northampton has been cited by the state Department of Fire Services for fire violations of the state fire code: failure to maintain livable conditions, failure to obtain a “hot works” permit, failure to ensure employees are familiar with the fire code, failure to possess a permit for liquefied petroleum gas, and failure to have a fire safety plan for renovations, alterations or demolition.

“No one knew what they were doing in there. You can't just go in there willy-nilly and start cutting things up. The big thing for fire departments is that they had no idea what alterations had been made,” Jennifer Mieth, a state professional.

The March 4 fire was ignited by an employee using a cutting torch to remove machinery from the building.

After a small fire broke out, the employee extinguished it and left. But the fire was not properly extinguished and broke out again around 3 a.m., resulting in a response from 27 fire departments, with emergency workers and engines coming from as far away as Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

The cutting torches are powered by liquefied petroleum gas.

Additionally, Nash did not have a permit from the towns building inspector to perform the work being done in the building.

Richard Calisewski, the town's building inspector, said Nash was issued a violation and instructed to perform the work being done in the building.

Nash is a baby’s mobile.

The Coolidge Condominium resident, according to the LaVallee, community preservation planner for the city, it is illegal to use CPA funding for private projects of a historic preservation nature.

At its meeting Wednesday night, the Coolidge Condominium residents association voted not to support the application because of concerns about that.

Sarah Constantine, 14, of Easthampton, left, and Breeca Walunas, 13, of Southampton experiment with the properties of light as part of the field trip to the Mechanics Playground.

Hampshire Regional eighth-graders explore intersection of art and science at Smith College
By CHERRIS LINSLAIR

NORTHAMPTON — Nearly 60 eighth-graders from Hampshire Regional Middle School descended on the Smith College campus Wednesday to spill water, melt ice, and split open a salt shaker as part of a Hampshire Regional Middle School field trip.

Sarah Constantine, 14, of Easthampton, left, and Breeca Walunas, 13, of Southampton experiment with the properties of light as part of the field trip to the Mechanics Playground.

CPA funds sought for staircase fix at old jail
By LAURIE LOISEL

NORTHAMPTON — The sprawling, eye-catching red brick building at 50 Union St. was the county jail from the time it was built in 1832 until the state de-commissioned it as a jail in 1976.

The historic building, and its 12 acres across the Barnard Avenue overpass that turned it into Coolidge Park Condominium, where 27 homeowners now live in a building that may be too much for them to care for on their own.

While the building’s signature exterior graces one crumbling — a set facing Cherry Street on one side and Union Street on the other — the condo association has asked the city’s Community Preservation Act Committee for $238,000 to fix doors.

“Because this historic building is a distinctive and notable part of Northampton, and damage to a historic integrity would constitute a significant loss for the Northampton community,” the association wrote in its application for CPA funding.

According to state law passed in 2000, allows commu-

nities to assess a surcharge of up to 3 percent on property taxes to establish a fund for specific purposes: open space preservation, affordable housing, cultural and historical preservation, and outdoor recreation facilities, and histor- ical preservation.

The Coolidge Condominium residents association has been working to acquire funds for historic preservation projects.

At its meeting Wednesday night, the CPA Committee heard from several CPA Committee supporters of the former Union Street stairwell pavilion's petition to institute a surcharge on property taxes to fund the proposed projects.

Sarah Constantine, 14, of Easthampton, left, and Breeca Walunas, 13, of Southampton experiment with the properties of light as part of the field trip to the Mechanics Playground.

Wood firm’s CEO ousted after Va. lawsuit
By DAN CROWLEY

NORTHAMPTON — Karen M. Slimak, the founder and CEO of a lumber company that sold a problematic wood product to the state for the Mount Holyoke Summit House renovations in Hadley, has been removed as manager of the company by a Virginia judge in a civil case involving investors and former employees.

The company, Timber Treatment Technologies of Greenville, South Car-
olina, also appears to have shut down to manufacturing plant.

A jury earlier had found Slimak’s firm responsible for developing company funds and financial mismanagement after she brought a lawsuit against former employees and a group of investors, alleging complicity.

“It’s over, we sort of won, she didn’t, that’s the big thing,” said Weldon Bailey, of Virginia, who had invested $64,000 in the company and was a defendant in the lawsuit.

Slimak’s company had used the company’s glue-inlaid wood, called Tim-
berTech, which had high moisture content and was non-toxic, environmentally friendly product, for the historic peak-re- construction of the Summit House. However, the wood was deemed to have had high moisture content and would not hold paint, producing much longer delays and resulted in cost overruns of $1.4 million.

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Japan probes death threats to US envoy

By MAHI YAMAGUCHI

A Japanese police investigation is threatening to bully the U.S. ambassador in Tokyo amid escalating tensions between the two countries, a report said.

The probe, which has focused on comments by an anonymous source, was launched by the foreign ministry after a diplomat said he had received death threats against the U.S. envoy.

The diplomat, whose name was not revealed, was quoted as saying he had been threatened by someone who claimed to be a member of a group known as "the Red Army.

This group is believed to be associated with the Red Army Faction, a radical left-wing organization that carried out a series of violent attacks in the 1970s and 1980s.

The diplomat said he had received messages via email and social media that warned of potential harm to the ambassador and his family.

He said he had also been the target of verbal threats and had received death threats on his mobile phone.

The incident comes as tensions between Japan and the U.S. have increased over issues including China's territorial claims in the East China Sea, and the deployment of new missiles in the area.

The Japanese government has been critical of the U.S. military's actions in the region, accusing it of being too aggressive and endangering the country's security.

In response, the U.S. ambassador has said that the country is committed to maintaining a strong alliance with Japan and is working to address any concerns.

However, the diplomat said he feared for his safety and the safety of his family.

He said he had decided to report the incident to the police in order to prevent any future incidents.

The case has sparked concerns about the safety of foreign diplomats in Japan, and has raised questions about the effectiveness of security measures.

The Japanese government has been criticized for its handling of the incident, with some calling for better protection for foreign officials.

The diplomat said he hoped the incident would serve as a wake-up call for the government to take action to ensure the safety of foreign diplomats.

Tensions between Japan and the U.S. have been high in recent years, with disagreements over issues including the deployment of new missiles and the country's defense budget.

The diplomat said he hoped the government would take action to address the concerns and ensure the safety of foreign officials.

He said he would continue to work for the safety of his family and the safety of foreign diplomats in Japan.

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