

TRO SOUTH PLUS

East Longmeadow • Longmeadow • Enfield • Somers • Suffield

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2007

Published Every Wednesday



Staff photos by MICHAEL S. GORDON

Griffin McMahon, 14, of Longmeadow, an eighth-grader at Williams Middle School, is already a veteran of musical stage and live performance in the Springfield area. Wednesday afternoon he sang and played piano for the Silver Foxes and Silver Belles seniors' group at the Springfield Jewish Community Center.

Student sets tone for music career

By CHRISTINE WHITE

LONGMEADOW – In three short years, Williams Middle School eighth-grader Griffin McMahon has gone from beginning piano student to professional – the result of focus, hard work and a great love of music.

The young singer and pianist's repertoire includes a wide variety of music, from Billy Joel and James Taylor to George Gershwin and classical music. He performs around the area at nursing homes, the Rays of Hope breast cancer walkathon, the Academy of Music in Northampton and the Majestic Theater in West Springfield. He has even performed in restaurants, including Fusion in East Longmeadow.

"I like doing solo performances," said Griffin. That's obvious from the patter he keeps up between songs and the way he engages his audience.

At a recent appearance at the Jewish Community Center in Springfield, the 14-year-old entertained the audience with songs from several eras, encouraging them to sing and clap along to such tunes as "If I Were

"I'm lucky to have it. I want to keep music going for the rest of my life."

Griffin McMahon

a Rich Man" from "Fiddler on the Roof," Frank Sinatra's "My Way" and Taylor's "Carolina on My Mind." He finished with "Rhapsody in Blue," which earned him a standing ovation from the crowd.

He performed the latter piece a week later for Kevin Rhodes, conductor of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra, as one of four finalists in the Rhodes Competition to perform with the orchestra. Although Griffin – the youngest finalist – didn't win, he enjoyed the experience and meeting Rhodes.

"It was an honor to play for him," said Griffin, who is the son of John and Donna McMahon, of Longmeadow.

The youngest of four children,

Please see Music, Page SP4

Retiring prosecutor earns loving verdict

By PATRICK JOHNSON
pjohnson@repub.com

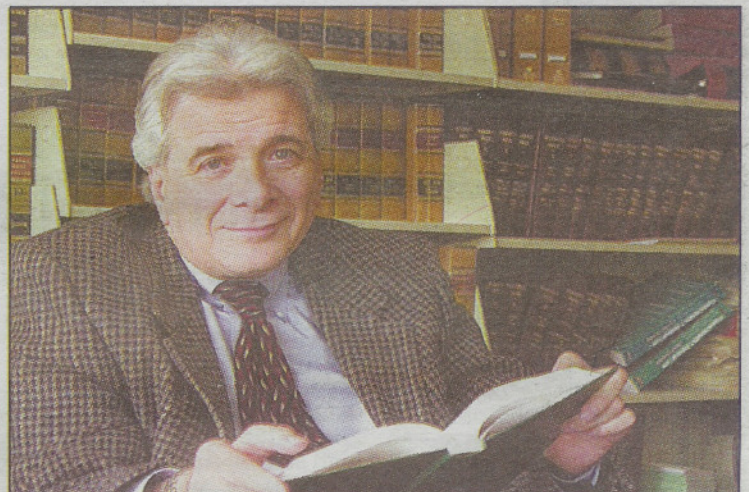
INSIDE

The legal community bids Howard Safford a happy retirement, Page MSP11

WEST SPRINGFIELD – Assistant Hampden District Attorney James C. Orenstein said he is always amazed at the number of people who come out of nowhere to say hello, shake hands and even hug his colleague and fellow prosecutor, Howard I. Safford.

"I'll say, 'Howie, who was that?' and he'll say, 'I don't know. I think I sent him to jail

Please see Safford, Page SP5



Republican file photo

Howard I. Safford, retired assistant district attorney for Hampden County.

Music: 14-year-old mastering the keys

Continued from Page SP1

Griffin said he began playing the cello in school in the fourth grade, but has since moved on to the double bass. But he wasn't bitten by the music bug until about three years ago when he began piano lessons. His teacher is Abby Thomsen, whose students comprised three of the four finalists in the Rhodes Competition this year.

Now, he says, he likes to practice.

"Piano for me is a way to relax. It brings me up and calms me down and gives me an opportunity to think of my day." He adds, "I'm lucky to have it. I want to keep music going for the rest of my life."

In addition to the piano, he plays the organ. He plays that professionally as well – at the Church of the Good Shepherd in West Springfield.

The family's home reflects his interest.

"I've given up my dining room," said his mother.

Where a table should be, there's a 1916 Baldwin grand piano and a Wurlitzer organ.

"But it's wonderful to be able to sit and listen to him play," she said.

Griffin recently began playing jazz with the Charles Majid Greenlee Jazz Scholarship Ensemble at the Community Music School, a group for which he had to audition. He calls it a "new adventure."



Staff photo by MICHAEL S. GORDON

Griffin McMahon, 14, of Longmeadow, an eighth-grader at Williams Middle School, performs for the Silver Foxes and Silver Belles seniors' group at the Springfield Jewish Community Center.

He's also teaching eight beginning piano students and "getting into song writing," he said. His brother Sean is a student guitarist, singer and composer at the New England Conservatory of Music.

Mike Smith, choral director and music teacher at Williams Middle School, speaks enthusiastically of Griffin and calls him his right-hand man.

"He accompanies my choruses," Smith said. "He plays

like a professional. He told me he'd like to go to Harvard and major in music. He can do it. He's a straight-A student."

Griffin said he admires music star Bono for his charity work. Down the road, he'd like to be able to do something similar with his music.

For right now, though, this young man is just looking forward

LEARN MORE

You can learn more about Griffin McMahon on his Web site:
www.griffinmcmahon.com

ward to going to high school and working with the music staff at Longmeadow High School.

Game Plan



Will your money keep working long after you retire?

Your retirement plan needs to work as hard as you do. Attend a free retirement planning seminar and learn:

- Date: 2/21/07
- Time: 6:00 PM
- Place: Storowtown Tavern
1305 Memorial Ave., West Springfield, MA 01089
- Speaker: Kurt Czarnowski, Regional Communications Director for the Social Security Administration in New England.
- Rsvp: Lynn Riley at (413) 734-7311

Dinner will be served.
 Space is limited, reserve your seat today!



Citigroup, Inc., its affiliates, and its employees are not in the business of providing tax or legal advice. These materials and any tax-related statements are not intended or written to be used, and cannot be used or relied upon, by any such taxpayer for the purpose of avoiding tax penalties. Tax-related statements, if any, may have been written in connection with the "promotion or marketing" of the transaction(s) or matters(s) addressed by these materials, to the extent allowed by applicable law. Any such taxpayer should seek advice based on the taxpayer's particular circumstances from an independent tax advisor.

© 2006 Citigroup Global Markets Inc. Member SIPC. Smith Barney is a division and service mark of Citigroup Global Markets Inc. and its affiliates and is used and registered throughout the world. CITIGROUP and the Umbrella Device are trademarks and service marks of Citigroup Inc. or its

Need something to do?



Read Weekend every Thursday for entertainment listings.



"There is a difference!"

**Pristine
 Orientals**

Wash & Restoration

800-659-7874