



# Free Cancer Screening Van Coming to Valley

**\$100K gift from Lawrence native Cynthia Alekel Mohr means free mobile mammography screening in Lawrence!**

**Innovation Valley**  
Page 19  
**Miracle on Merrimack St.**

**Heroes In Our Midst**



**Chief Master Sgt. Michael Ingham  
U.S. Air Force**

Ted Tripp

Haverhill – Next month Mike Ingham will retire after 33 years of service in the Air Force, both on active duty and in the reserves. His assignments have taken him all over the world: Germany, Italy, Spain, England, Alaska and Central America.

Born in Haverhill in 1953, Mike grew up in the city and attended Haverhill High School. He graduated in 1971 and at the time had no interest in joining the military, particularly since the Vietnam War was still being fought.

His mother urged him to continue his education and signed him up at the Montserrat College of Visual Art in Beverly. She told him that if he didn't pursue educational opportunities, he would end up "driving a truck."

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Photo courtesy: Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Paula L. Porten

Women in the Merrimack Valley will soon have easy access to free mammography screening in the convenience of a mammography van thanks to a gift from Lawrence native Cynthia Alekel Mohr.

The Dana Farber Cancer Institute's (DFCI) Mobile Mammography Van, which now travels throughout Boston, will soon be on the streets of Lawrence to provide free mammogram screening.

Thanks to a \$100,000 gift from Cynthia Alekel Mohr establishing the Cynthia Alekel Mohr and Family Mobile Mammography Fund which will pay for the expansion of the van services to include screening for women in the greater Lawrence area.

Mohr was born and raised in Lawrence and said she wanted to give back to the community by promoting health care for women.

"Lawrence is a diverse community that has greatly enriched my life" Mohr told Impact, (the Dana Farber Cancer Institute's quarterly newspaper.) "I believe in the future of this underprivileged community and I am proud to be able to give back by promoting health care for women."

According to Dana-Farber, the Mammography Van began providing mammography screening for Boston area women in the May of 2002. Because of the

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**"The Attacks on Chief Solomon Must Stop!"**



Methuen Councilor

**Debbie Quinn**

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Georgetown Selectman

**Lonnie Brennan**

**Page 5**



Former Haverhill Mayor

**Jim Rurak**

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Lawrence Mayor

**Mike Sullivan**

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## Valley Patriot \*Editorial\*

### Methuen Councilors Should Butt Out

Last month, Methuen city councilors tried to inject themselves into the so-called controversy between Police Chief Joe Solomon and the officers and union members under his command.

What's more, they tried to subvert the Methuen City Charter by interfering with Mayor Bill Manzi's clearly defined duties as the chief executive officer of the city.

Under the charter, the mayor is the sole authority on all matters regarding personnel, including the hiring, firing and discipline of all city employees. And while it is true that the City Council must give approval for the hiring and firing of department heads and a handfull of other employees, nowhere in the charter does it give councilors any say over whether or not the police chief can be forced out of his job or even how he does his job.

Over his long career as a law enforcement officer, Joe Solomon has served the city of Methuen honorably. And because he has been a police officer for so many years, it is not hard to imagine that he has made enemies with a few politicians and perhaps even some members of the community.

But everyone knows what is going on here. At least two Methuen city councilors have a personal agenda against the chief and they will use any excuse they can to "get" him, or at least embarrass him publicly if his removal is not possible.

Methuen City Councilors needs to butt out of the affairs of the police chief and how he does his job. If Chief Solomon has committed a crime, the district attorney will investigate and prosecute him, not the City Council. If Chief Solomon is deserving of disciplinary action for violating a city ordinance or department policy, the mayor and the mayor alone will make that determination, not the City Council.

It's time for certain city councilors to get pro-active about doing their own job and start putting items on the agenda which will increase the quality of life in Methuen, instead of interfering with the jobs of the mayor and the police chief.

With all due respect, councilors, keep your personal agendas away from the council table and out of the pulbic light and do the job you were elected to do.

### Essex Street Coming Back!

For years, officials in the city of Lawrence have been talking about returning Essex Street to two-way traffic. But all we've heard is talk. This past January, District "B" City Councilor Grisel Silva wrote her very first column in The Valley Patriot calling for the restoration of two-way traffic downtown and now it seems that Mayor Michael Sullivan is following suit. This means Essex Street will finally start down the path to revitalization. Whether it is the Veterans Memorial Stadium, the new water treatment plant, or two way traffic on Essex St., Mayor Sullivan has proven that, while previous elected officials talked the talk for years to get elected and then did nothing, he is walking the walk and getting things done.

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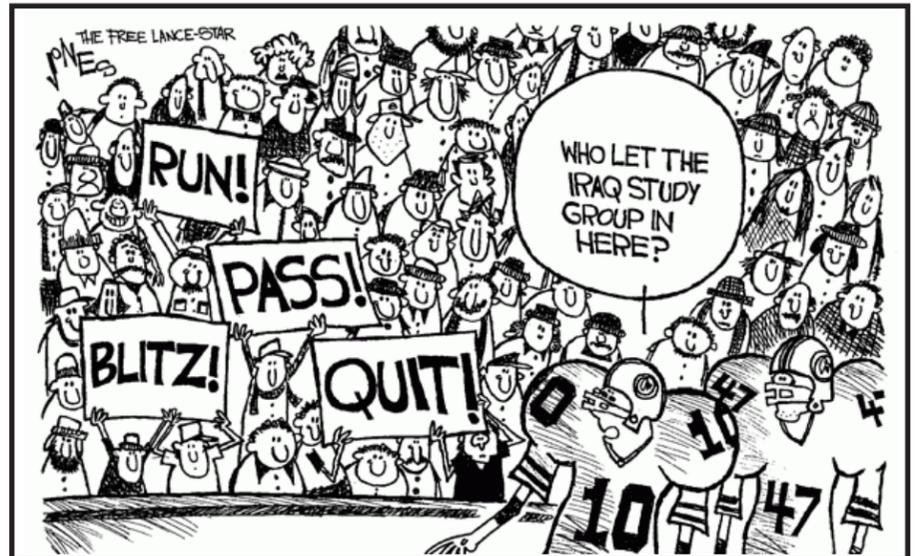
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### Our Voice is Your Voice!

The Valley Patriot welcomes letters to the editor on any topic. We also welcome column/article submissions from elected officials, neighborhood associations, community organizers, average citizens, and newsmakers. Though we may not agree with the opinions expressed in submissions, our mission is to give readers the unique opportunity to receive important information from those who are driving important public issues without the "creative editing" policy employed by most newspapers. Submissions from guest columnists/writers in The Valley Patriot are published without the filtered agenda of an editorial board. If you would like to write a column, letter or article for The Valley Patriot, please email us at: [ValleyPatriot@aol.com](mailto:ValleyPatriot@aol.com)

### Muslim Coalition In Iraq: Winning Iraq's Future

We here at Muslims For America believe that Iraq's and Afghanistan's futures can be won. Iraq, for example, has seen their GNP almost double within one year as literacy rates continually rise, indicating a strong business environment and a growing education community. With that said, ultimate economic and educational development will not be realized until we can fully stabilize Iraq and Afghanistan.

In turn, Muslims For America officially proposes that in order to establish long-term stability in the Middle East, the United States should encourage the governments of Afghanistan and Iraq to request fellow nations of the Muslim World to send their armies into their respective nations for the purpose of peace-keeping and maintaining stability.

Coalition forces led by American soldiers will continue to provide infrastructure repair, with the United States relying upon Muslim countries to stabilize Iraq and Afghanistan under the direction of the United States.

We call upon our Muslim World allies such as Pakistan, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Egypt, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, and others, to invest their country's resources and troops into building the future of

Afghanistan and Iraq. The aforementioned countries have all received aid and/or support from the United States, giving us the ability to work easily with all of them.

Countries of the Muslim World should begin by sending peacekeeping troops into Iraq where they will first be expected to stabilize major areas like Baghdad and Fallujah. Such a move will diffuse Shiite and Sunni discourse and help to strengthen the Muslim coalition. The United States and coalition forces should continue to aid the Iraqi government with reconstruction and relations with the Muslim coalition, allowing American troops to comfortably exit as Muslim coalition soldiers arrive.

We are strongly encouraging the adoption of the following policy for all of our American politicians. This policy will demonstrate to the world that the United States, leader of the free world, continues to provide a vision and viable long-term solution for the ongoing Global War on Terror.

Akir Khan and Seeme Gull Hasan  
Muslims For America

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## Lawrence on the Move

Mayor Michael J. Sullivan

### Bank of America, State Treasurer Cahill & City of Lawrence Partnership

This week, Bank of America will be announcing that the city of Lawrence has been chosen to be a Block by Block city.

The result will be a major partnership between my office and Bank of America that will focus on the critical area of Essex Street and the lower Gateway area. Bank of America will work with Tom Schiavone, Economic Development Director, Ezra Glenn, Director of Community Development, and Michael R. Sweeney, our Planning Director, over the next year to address development issues and how Bank of America can help the city move forward. We will specifically address issues concerning mortgage foreclosures, development loans for new businesses and financial literacy for our citizens.

I have to give a major thank you to Tim Cahill, the state treasurer. Since taking office, State Treasurer Cahill has been a constant and vocal advocate for the city of Lawrence. Over the last year, State Treasurer Cahill and key members of his staff have been advocating for the Bank of America to take a strong look at Lawrence. Working with Economic Development Director Schiavone, the efforts of State Treasurer Cahill will greatly benefit not just the city of Lawrence, but also make the Merrimack Valley stronger. Thank you State Treasurer Cahill!

### Essex Street

Over the next month, I hope to have more major announcements concerning the Essex Street area. I have committed to making the Essex Street area a major focus for my administration as the new year begins.

Over the last three months, Mr. Schiavone and Mr. Sweeney have been conducting meetings with various departments to gather information and proposals to help

improve Essex Street. For decades there has been a great deal of talk about reviving Essex Street. My administration is going to make a major commitment to actually make it happen.

### New Lawrence High School

Over the past few months, we have been working very hard to bring the Lawrence High School project back into acceptable timelines. The team assembled by my office has been working with the surety company to ensure that a new general contractor is engaged to finish the work. This is going to be one of the most exciting and important projects in the city's history. Once the ribbon is ready to be cut, we will have truly created an educational and recreational area that will serve our children from the beginning of their school years through graduating from high school. The new Lawrence High School will stand proudly beside our renovated Veterans Memorial Stadium and the greatest beneficiaries will be the young men and women who will go to the new high school over the course of the next fifty years.

### Good Will During the Holidays

Lastly, I want to wish everyone a Happy Holidays with your loved ones as we enter the holiday season.

On December 7<sup>th</sup>, I will be hosting the annual tree-lighting ceremony outside of City Hall at 4 p.m. If you can, take a moment to bring your family and friends as we officially kick-off the holiday season here in Lawrence with the tree lighting. It is always one of my favorite moments.

Michael Sullivan is the mayor of Lawrence and is in his second four-year term. You can email him at Sull33@aol.com or call his office at 978-794-5858 and ask for NORA.



## Thinking Outside the Box!

Dr. Charles Ormsby, N.A. School Committee

## We're All on the Dole

### Have We Passed the Point of No Return?

Picture what it would be like to live in a truly free society. You would have the right to associate, or not, with whom you choose. You would have an absolute right to any property that you have earned. You could use or trade your property with other willing participants as long as you don't infringe on the equal rights of others. Governments would have only two primary purposes: to enforce laws against the initiation of force (or fraud) and to protect us from aggression by outside entities.

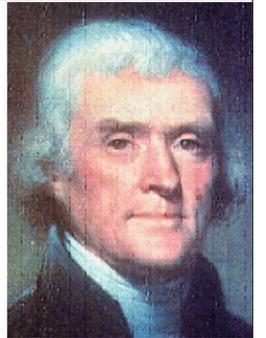
OK, OK ... quit dreaming! We live in the twenty-first century, not the eighteenth century.

The principles that were invoked at the birth of our nation and that created a free society, largely like that described above, have long been forgotten. Sure, they still exist in some dusty old history books and in the political rantings of a few radical wing-nuts, but the flame of freedom is rapidly being extinguished.

The barriers to the re-establishment of a free society are just too substantial. The two biggest impediments are ignorance and government entitlements.

Ignorance: Well over 95% of our fellow citizens don't have any concept of what it means to be truly free. Our long-standing population has lost sight of what it once

*"The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants."* -



Thomas Jefferson in a letter to William Stephens, November 13, 1787.

had and new immigrants have no history of freedom to remember. If our fellow citizens had no concept of freedom, we'd be better off. Unfortunately, their "understanding" of freedom is hopelessly confused by a gaggle of entitlements that they have accepted and that make a free society impossible.

The big four entitlements are guarantees related to education, healthcare, a "living" wage, and economic security in retirement. These are quite sufficient by themselves to stop freedom dead in its tracks. Additional guarantees of "adequate" housing, healthy food, or the myriad of other entitlements

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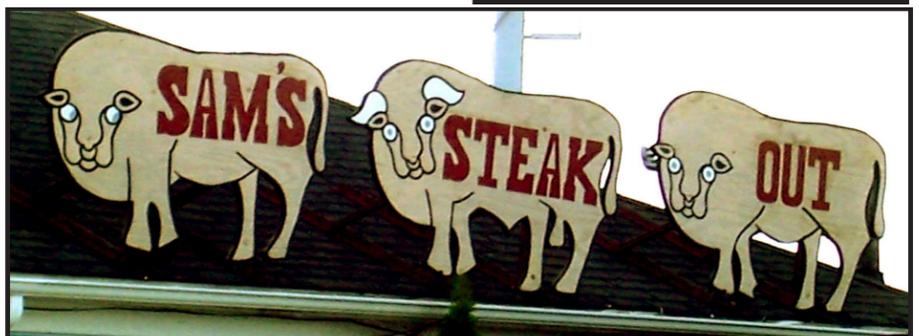
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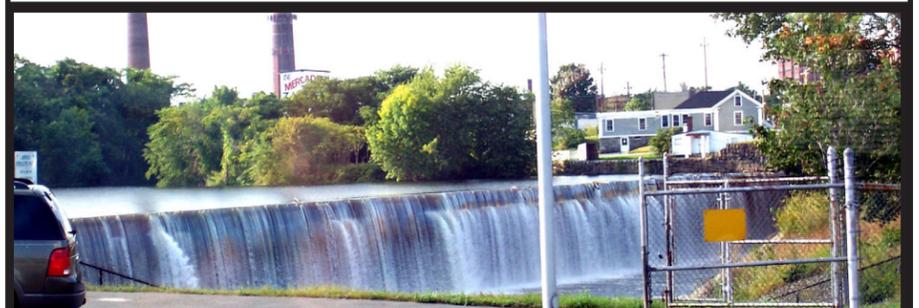
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# Foster Farm "Taxpayer Rip-Off" - Time to Fess Up?

Ralph Wilbur with Ted Tripp



The decade-long saga of the Foster Farm School effort has finally come to a close. After frittering away millions of dollars over the years, the North Andover

School Committee – against some members' personal wishes - has reluctantly decided not to pursue the building of this new elementary school. The untold story is that the school department's projections of over one thousand new elementary school students flooding into an overcrowded system proved to be pure fiction.

In May 2002, the annual town meeting appropriated \$2.3 million to begin a design study for the new school. The justification for the design expenditure was based on an enrollment study by the MISER organization, as requested by then Superintendent Bill Allen and School Committee members Diane Huster, Dan Murphy, Bruce Baker, Don Sternfeld and Al Perry. MISER, which no longer exists, was an educational research organization that contracted out its services to various school districts.

The MISER study conveniently showed that a "massive increase" in enrollments was to be expected. A parallel facilities study concluded that the elementary schools would be 39 to 44 classrooms short for the 2005/2006 school year and an incredible 81 to 85 classrooms short for the 2011/2012 school year. The overall inference, not surprisingly, was that North Andover was in desperate need of a new 880-student Foster Farm Elementary School.

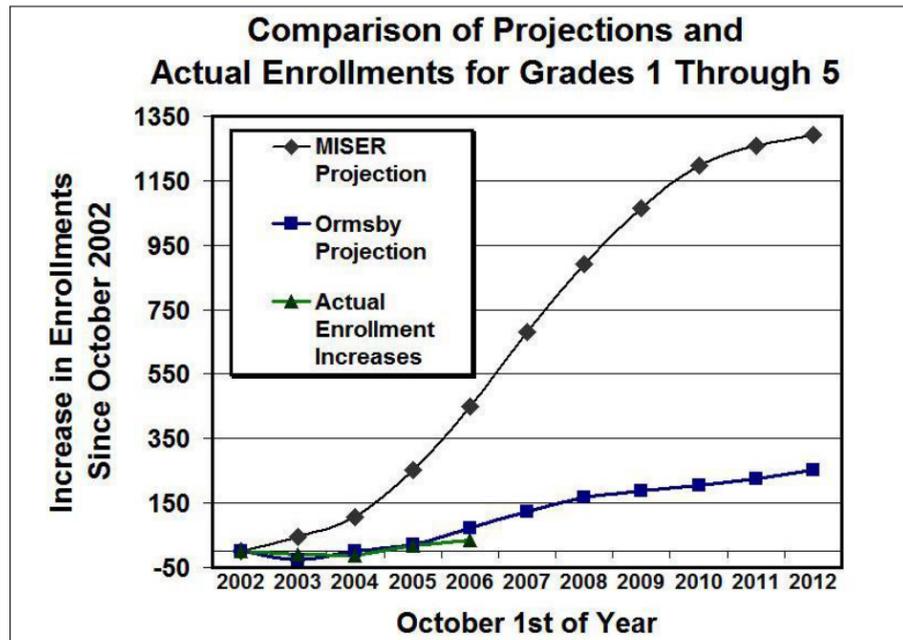
The 2002 town meeting also called for a \$4 million Proposition 2 ½ Override with most of that money going to the operational budget of the schools.

A month later this proposed tax increase was soundly defeated by the voters and all those discussions about the override caused some members of the community to begin taking a closer look at the school's never-ending appetite for more money. One of those taking an interest was North

## High School Football



As teammates provide blocking, Central Catholic's Tucker Devine advances the ball during a junior varsity game against Andover at the new Lawrence Memorial Stadium. Central won the contest 26-6. Sophomore Devine played fullback during part of this November 18<sup>th</sup> JV game.



Andover Taxpayers Association member Chuck Ormsby.

In September of 2002, when the actual school enrollment figures were announced, Ormsby noticed that there was a *reduction* in elementary students from the previous year, rather than the increase predicted by MISER and the school administration. Ormsby, who was then not yet on the School Committee, requested a delay in the spending of the \$2.3 million until there was a *full review* of the enrollment projections and facility needs.

Ormsby had also independently developed a mathematical model to project future enrollments based on enrollment history, births and new growth.

The results were quite startling: The Ormsby data showed that K-5 enrollments would increase very slowly if at all over the coming decade. It further showed that the enrollment would be 538 students short of what MISER projected for October 2006.

By October of 2011, the Ormsby numbers showed MISER to be 1203 students beyond what could be expected. Clearly, someone was fudging the numbers.

In an October 2002 School Committee meeting, Ormsby presented his findings in a 45-minute slide show on his methodology and the results. During the presentation, Diane Huster, a member of the School Facilities Master Plan Committee and a leader in Taxpayers United for the Future (TUFF), mocked Ormsby's conclusions and data. And afterwards, Chairman Dan Murphy rose and said, "Well, we didn't learn anything new tonight."

Now then ... whose projections were correct? The nearby figure shows a comparison of (1) the School Committee's projected enrollment increases from MISER for grades one through five, (2) Ormsby's 2002 projections, and (3) the actual enrollment increases for 2003 through 2006. You can see that the Ormsby projections are almost indistinguishable from the actual enrollment increases while the School Committee projections were off by hundreds of students.

Note that for 2006 the MISER projected estimate is 415 students over the actual number that showed up this year. (Including kindergarten, MISER was high by a whopping 609 students!)

This begs the obvious questions: Are we looking at gross negligence here? Or could it be intentional deception to justify a new school? Either way, we are looking at \$23-35 million in taxpayers' money that could have been wasted if Ormsby had not intervened.

Up until the recent October 2006 meeting at which the School Committee finally cancelled the Foster Farm project, the School Building Committee had already spent - or wasted - about \$1 million of the \$2.3 million in funds the taxpayers had generously appropriated. This money is gone forever.

So, have the profligate-spending school advocates learned anything from this experience? Probably not. In the several months leading up to the cancellation, the School Building Committee actually commissioned a new study with a consulting firm to see if there was any chance in justifying going ahead with the

project anyway. Although several members of the SBC felt construction of the school was probably unwarranted, it is hard to understand why the committee still felt compelled to spend the taxpayers' money for an unneeded school.

In this new study, the consultants assumed in their calculations that the Bradstreet School would be unavailable, that the town would sponsor a full-day kindergarten program, that portable classrooms would not be used, and that classrooms would have not more than 18 students in kindergarten and 22 in grades 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup>. With these assumptions, the consultants created a case for a new school.

Ormsby reworked their assumptions and came up with a different conclusion. If the Bradstreet School is reopened, if the kindergarten enrollments can be moderated, and if class sizes of 18 in kindergarten, 22 in 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 24 in 2<sup>nd</sup>, 26 in 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 28 in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> are allowed, then our current facilities will accommodate 500 more students than the consultants' analysis.

This satisfies the realistic, projected enrollments over the *next decade*, even with no portable classrooms and still allowing for kindergarten space along the lines of current enrollment.

The end result is this: While a brand-spanking new school would be nice, there never was any justification to pursue the expenditure of \$23-35 million of taxpayers' money on a new school project. The millions that have been spent so far could have much more effectively been used on textbooks, curriculum initiatives, science labs and other critical school items currently in short supply.

Those who supported this ill-advised venture and who ignored honest enrollment projections should confess their sins. But don't hold your breath.

Public officials need to learn that their job is *not* to be a biased advocate for some special interest group.

Their job is to be an honest broker of the facts and present to the citizens an even-handed assessment of the situation in order that a rational, unbiased decision can be made in the best interests of the entire community.

Ralph Wilbur is a member of the North Andover Taxpayers Association, owner of Graphic Litho and vice president of Valley Patriot Inc. You can email him at [sales@graphiclitho.com](mailto:sales@graphiclitho.com).

## A New Lanen Enters the World

North Andover Selectman Dan Lanen, who is also a North Andover police officer, is now a proud new daddy. Pictured at right, Selectman Lannen with his new son Danny relax on the couch.

Lanen is rumored to be gearing up to run for state representative against David (Where-IS-he) Torissi in two years.

Lanen does not currently live in Torissi's district, but sources close to Lanen say he is looking to purchase property closer to the incumbent state rep so he can mount a formidable challenge.



# Budgets and Tumbleweeds?

Georgetown Selectman Lonnie Brennan

This time of year our focus tends to shift to family, friends, dream shopping at the mall, school concerts, football and snowflakes. As we transition into the winter weather, thoughts of town budgets, school committees, zoning changes and such get shuffled to the backburner, struck out of memory. But not for all.

December marks the beginning of budget planning sessions. Last year wasn't pretty. For months, most folks didn't pay attention. Budgets? Boring. The school department held countless meetings and forums. You could hear the crickets chirping, the tumbleweeds blowing. With the exception of a few regulars, the meetings were sparsely populated.

In January, the schools handed their finished "education-based" budget to the Finance Committee. It sat for a bit of time, then the schools eventually got their response when the snow melted in the spring: we like your budget, it looks nice and pretty, we trust your numbers, but cut it! In response, the schools ended up asking voters for a \$381,167 supplemental budget (tax override) in May that went down in flames (failed). Later, the schools discovered they had a \$143K budget windfall (end of year surplus), and then they received a state bonus of \$77K in increased Chapter 70 money, leaving them just \$160K short of their initial request moving into the school year. Fast forward to today. The town now finds another \$508K in "free cash," money that is extra, surplus, and will most likely sit until the spring before any of it is touched. A lot of angst, a lot of kids left with changes that could have or might have been made, but were not made. A lot of arguments over money and shortages. All along, the money was there.

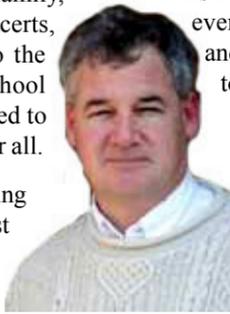
So what will make this budget season different? What will prevent pitting neighbor against neighbor, asking for overrides then finding the money? A few things will help: a revised universal budget process is in the works, the renewed request to restore the position of finance director in town to manage the millions we raise, invest, and spend, a dedicated Finance Committee with two members now tasked to act as liaisons to the schools, monthly school budget reporting, and most importantly, good people like you taking time away from Christmas shopping and helping out right now, early in the budget process. I urge you to attend any of the school hearings and Finance Committee meetings and become informed. Don't wait until the spring when it's too late.

One of the biggest gifts you can give the town budget process is to firmly and repeatedly express and support the need to have a priority list for any extra funds which might surface. Without a priority list, salaries get paid and equipment gets purchased, but when extra money is made available, somehow it gets spent and the newspapers get filled with conflict on how that money is spent. What we need is a list that tells us exactly where the "vintage 1979 textbooks" are being used in our schools, and exactly where on the priority list that set of books sits for getting replaced. Such a list doesn't exist and needs to come out of this budget process. The entire town needs to be able to see not only where every dollar is going to be spent today, but what the short-term and long-term financial needs will be moving forward, and how they will be addressed. A priorities list will solve that problem. A re-energized capital improvement planning process will also help, but that's a subject for another column.

## The Largest, Brightest Santa Parade

But it's December, and so let's shift to one of the best-run programs in town: the Fire Department's Toys for Tots campaign, held in conjunction with the United States Marine Corps. Reserve. This year, as in every year, very loud and cheerfully adorned fire trucks and equipment will wind through the streets of Georgetown with Santa and

his helpers. December 10th is the date. Every street, every path. And children of all ages will come forth and donate new, unwrapped gifts and toys for Santa to give to needy families. For details on the Santa Tour, contact Santa Tour Co-coordinator Rusty Ricker at [RRicker@georgetownma.gov](mailto:RRicker@georgetownma.gov).



## Karen Reddy, Mitt Romney, Ray Flynn

What does Georgetown resident Karen Reddy have in common with Governor Mitt Romney and former Boston Mayor Ray Flynn? Answer: A deep conviction in democracy and participation in government.

Ms. Reddy took center stage on the State House steps in November, stepping in front of the big microphones, the TV cameras and a CNN crew, and calmly, confidently addressed a 5,000+ crowd gathered at a State House constitutional rally. (And a small 200+, but obnoxious crowd of detractors whowouldn't even stop shouting insults during the Pledge of Allegiance!)

In a very deliberate, straightforward manner, Ms. Reddy laid out the history of her involvement in a citizen petition process regarding marriage, and how that process has been stomped on by approximately half of the legislators who are determined to put their own personal feelings and agendas ahead of our constitution and the law. Putting aside how one feels about homosexual marriage, many of the speakers at the event focused on the illegal actions of the legislators to break any law they desire to break to forward their own personal agendas and feelings.

"No one was fooled by their blatant disregard of the people's petition," Ms. Reddy told the audience. "What more do we, as law-abiding citizens, need to do in order for our voice to be heard? I am concerned about the future for the ability of regular people like us to participate in government. Our constitution grants us the right to petition government and yet our legislature has flat-out denied our rights," she said. "Just remember we are expected to abide by the law. Doesn't it make sense that our lawmakers be expected to abide by the law as well?"

I'm sure Ms. Reddy realizes that most of the legislators who are determined to break the law have been rewarded for their action: sharing in campaign contributions from the homosexual lobby who are determined to keep Massachusetts as the only gay-marriage state in the nation. As Massachusetts Family Institute Chairman Kris Mineau noted, the homosexual lobby poured more than \$1 million into the November 7 election for one key reason, according to their own gay and lesbian newspaper, Bay Windows: "So lawmakers would be indebted to them and return the favor by killing the marriage amendment by any means possible." Money talks.

## Prayers for Richie Clough and Family

As of this writing, Selectman Chairman Richie Clough has been re-admitted to the hospital, following the amputation of his leg from complications of diabetes. Please keep Richie and his family in your prayers this Christmas Season. In an effort to show our appreciation to Richie and the Clough family (a proud, stubborn bunch like myself, I might add), we'll be organizing some potluck dinners and such. Please contact me at [Lonnie@lonniebrennan.com](mailto:Lonnie@lonniebrennan.com) if you would like to get on the schedule. The thought is simply to have families or individuals take turns, once or more each week and show their appreciation to the Clough family with a small gift of dinner or appreciation. Anything to show our appreciation and that we care.

Lawrence "Lonnie" Brennan is a selectman in the town of Georgetown and active in district politics. You can e-mail him at [Lonnie@lonniebrennan.com](mailto:Lonnie@lonniebrennan.com) or call him at 978-352-5449.

## Georgetown Today

Lawrence "Lonnie" Brennan, Georgetown Selectman

# Torrissi and Other Misguided Souls Want to Change Our Town Government

Ted Tripp

At a recent public meeting, state Representative David Torrissi and several selectmen proposed that North Andover review its open town meeting form of government and perhaps consider a new governing arrangement. The alleged reason is that the town has become so large - 29,000 plus people - that it needs a stronger and more centralized system to get things accomplished and move the town forward.



I contend that this is simply a euphemism for raising taxes and increasing spending. There are those in town, whom we call the "tax and spenders," who have been perennially unhappy because the voters have turned down all Proposition 2 1/2 Overrides since 2002. The failure of the trash tax to pass at the July 10th special town meeting was the last straw for these people. They are now desperate to increase our taxes for their selfish projects, whether it's the schools, public safety, library, or whatever. Changing our form of government is simply their latest ploy to separate us from more of our hard-earned money.

These people typically show nothing but contempt for the voter and the taxpayer.



Speaker at this year's Town Meeting

But enough of the niceties. Let's step back a minute and take a look at Representative Torrissi's perspective on this issue. It is no secret that Torrissi has been advocating a mayoral form of government for North Andover for some time. This begs the question: What does he know about a mayoral government that the rest of us don't? Followed closely by: Should we trust his judgement and recommendation?

Perhaps we ought to look a little bit closer at the source. Torrissi's legislative record shows that he is no friend of the taxpayer or average citizen. Twice last year he had a chance to approve the long-promised rollback of the state income tax to 5 percent and he voted not to do so. This year he deliberately broke his oath of office to uphold the Massachusetts Constitution and voted to kill two citizen petitions despite the three hundred thousand people who signed petition forms to bring these issues to the voters.

Every legislator in office is required to take the following oath: "I, (name), do solemnly swear, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and will support the constitution thereof. So help me God." That seems pretty clear to me.

Article 48 of the constitution, which deals with citizen petitions, says, in part, "A proposal for an amendment to the constitution introduced by initiative petition shall be voted upon in the form in which it was introduced, unless such amendment is amended by vote of three-fourths of the members voting thereon in joint session, which vote shall be taken by call of the yeas and nays if called for by any member." This means that the legislators at a constitutional convention must vote on a citizen petition to either approve or not approve it going forward to the voters.

This year, Torrissi consistently thwarted efforts to let the "Health Care for Massachusetts" and "Vote on Marriage" citizen petitions from being voted upon as required by the constitution. In the first case, he voted to send the Health Care petition to committee for further study, which effectively kills it. In the second case, Torrissi voted several times to postpone a ye or nay vote until the last possible day of the session, at which the legislators have a sordid

Continued on Page 30



Hi, I'm Kathy Mamos  
I'm a member of  
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Footnotes from

# TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

You can't make this stuff up!

## 2007 Municipal Elections

Looking forward to the 2007 elections, local politicians and prospective candidates are already positioning themselves. In North Andover, the town is in desperate need of a conservative School Committee member for the March town elections. As The Valley Patriot reported several months ago, Mr. Override - Al Perry - is not seeking reelection. A conservative replacement could change the entire makeup of the board from a majority of tax and spend empire builders to a board concerned with accountability and quality education. In Haverhill, Mayor Jim Fiorentini looks like he will be challenged by former Mayor Jim Rurak (both Valley Patriot contributors). In Lawrence, the mid-term council elections look like they are already attracting a crowded field and the Methuen mayoral rematch between Manzi and Bahan is already starting to heat up. Here's more:

### Matos to Run At-Large

Former Lawrence district Councilor Carlos Matos has announced his candidacy for City Council at-large in next fall's mid-term elections. Matos, who lost the primary for mayor two years ago (placing third out of four candidates), has made a name for himself by suing the city and saddling up with state Rep. Willie Lantigua. Look for Matos to be a formidable candidate in the at-large race no matter how many people run. There are three at-large (elected citywide) councilors and at least two of the current councilors are nearly guaranteed to lose reelection (if they are naive enough to run again). Matos' mayoral ambitions are widely known and a win citywide next



November will propel him into the "formidable candidate" category for mayor in 2009 (though you know he will blow it in the end). Already on the list of formidable candidates for the '09 mayor's race (Sullivan cannot run again) are Council President Patrick Blanchette, who may be our *default* candidate for lack of anyone better, and Isabel Melendez.

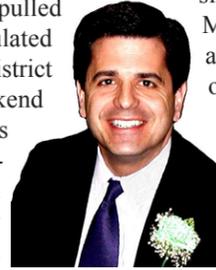


### On the Horizon

At least one of the current at-large city councilors, Nilka Alvarez Rodriguez, will have a very hard time getting reelected if there are enough viable candidates to challenge her. Alvarez, the consummate victim-playing victim's advocate, spends so much time pretending to praise others (while really praising herself and making campaign speeches) at the council table that it has made her an outcast among most of her colleagues. She also made a major mistake earlier in the year when, in her zeal to pick a fight with a colleague, ended up insulting and attacking the family members of a disabled child saying they had made a secret deal to buy a vacant lot to build a wheelchair accessible home for their son, Rodrigo. Alvarez thinks she has repaired the damage in the community after trying to rewrite history and denying her despicable actions. If attacking the Berroa family (and then lying about it, despite the fact that the minutes of the meeting prove otherwise) wasn't bad enough, Alvarez fought against the \$20 million Northern Essex Health and Technology center because one of the other bidders was "Latino" (which may not sit well with her South Lawrence voters). She actually tried to stop the entire project with a maneuver called a "charter objection" and



lobbied heavily behind the scenes to stop Northern Essex Community college from purchasing the In-town Mall. And speaking of those South Lawrence voters, many in the Mount Vernon area are still angry with Alvarez for the stunt she pulled last year when she circulated a picture of herself and district Councilor Gil Frechette the weekend before the election (while he was in Florida), pretending he endorsed her for the at-large seat. It was that stunt which put her over the top last time, but don't expect it to happen again, unless there are no viable candidates to replace her.



### Manzi Taking No Chances (try not to laugh)

Methuen Mayor Billy Manzi held a fundraiser last month (and raised a bundle!), filling up the function room of the Tara Mara on Pelham St. because, he said, Ellen Bahan had announced her intention to run against him next year. Manzi crushed Bahan last year so badly that it was hard to take his concern seriously. But, Manzi says he is taking Bahan "very seriously" (though the expression on his face and the chuckle he was holding back said something quite different). Manzi continued, "I can't take anything for granted! I am the mayor and we only get a two-year term here in Methuen, so I take every potential challenge as a call to arms and we are not letting our guard down. Anything can happen in an election and we are not going to allow the likes of Bahan to sit in the mayor's office." Yeah, OK Billy, it doesn't take thousands of dollars to beat Ellen Bahan. Come clean, what's all the fundraising for?



### David Torissi the Flim Flam Man

A concerned North Andover taxpayer called one of our staff recently about the antics of Rep. Torissi in the Senior Center. He reports that Torissi has been telling the seniors that the cutback in services they have endured this year is a result of the town's dysfunctional Board of Selectmen. He goes on to say that if they sign his petition to open up the charter and change the form of government, the services will magically be restored! Let's hope the seniors don't also fall for it when Torissi tells them that he has a bridge in Brooklyn for sale at a really, really good price... This concerned taxpayer also reports that the soccer moms and dads in town have been collecting signatures for the petition at their kid's soccer games. Gee ... you don't think that this is just a ploy to get more money for the schools, do you?



Just call me a cynic when the "we need more!" school crowd says it wants "to improve our government."

### Onramp Needed on Merrimack/Sutton St.

Let's face it, with Sal's Riverwalk on Merrimack St. in Lawrence attracting thousands of people to its facility every single week, and Monarch on the Merrimack (also on Merrimack St.) attracting thousands more, it is obvious that an onramp is needed to access Rt. 495 south and an off-ramp is needed from 495 north to exit onto Sutton St/Merrimack St. With North Andover being represented in the state Senate by Steve Baddour (who is chairman of the Transportation Committee), you would think something so vital to the area would already be in the works. Since Baddour gives more public speeches than Bill Clinton these days, maybe the next time he steps to the microphone he can address the serious need for access to Rt. 495 from Sutton St., North Andover and Merrimack St. in Lawrence, and why nothing is being done about it while Sal Lupoli and Bob Ansin attract thousands more people to their facilities every week.

### Sullivan to Make Wholesale Changes?

Word out of City Hall in Lawrence is that Mayor Michael Sullivan is planning to make some major changes in his administration by the first of the year. Sullivan will be starting his sixth year as mayor of Lawrence and has made very few personnel changes in that time, but sources whining in the mayor's office say he has had enough of the inner turmoil between certain members of his administration. Look for Sullivan to make "major changes," which we expect he will announce during his State of the City address in January. One of the members of the Sullivan administration who is said to be leaving is Inspectional Services Director Caroline Ganley. I'm going to miss Caroline. She certainly shook things up in the short time she was here and, given the caliber of the people who tried to undermine her, I would say it is an indication that she did a great job during her tenure. But remember the old Chinese proverb ... be careful what you ask for! Word is, Ganley may be replaced by someone just like her ... maybe worse (or better), depending on how you look at things.

### Valley Patriot Wins NEPA Award!

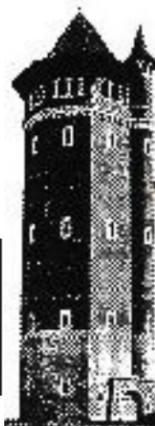
As The Valley Patriot approaches its three year anniversary, we were notified by the New England Press Association (NEPA) that one of our news stories was selected by fellow journalists for a coveted "NEPA Award." We will not know which story was chosen or whether our story won first, second or third place until February 10<sup>th</sup>, but just placing in the top three is quite an honor and we couldn't have done it without YOU, our readers, advertisers, and contributors. THANK YOU!

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# Lawrence Public Schools Reports

## SFA at Johns Hopkins University



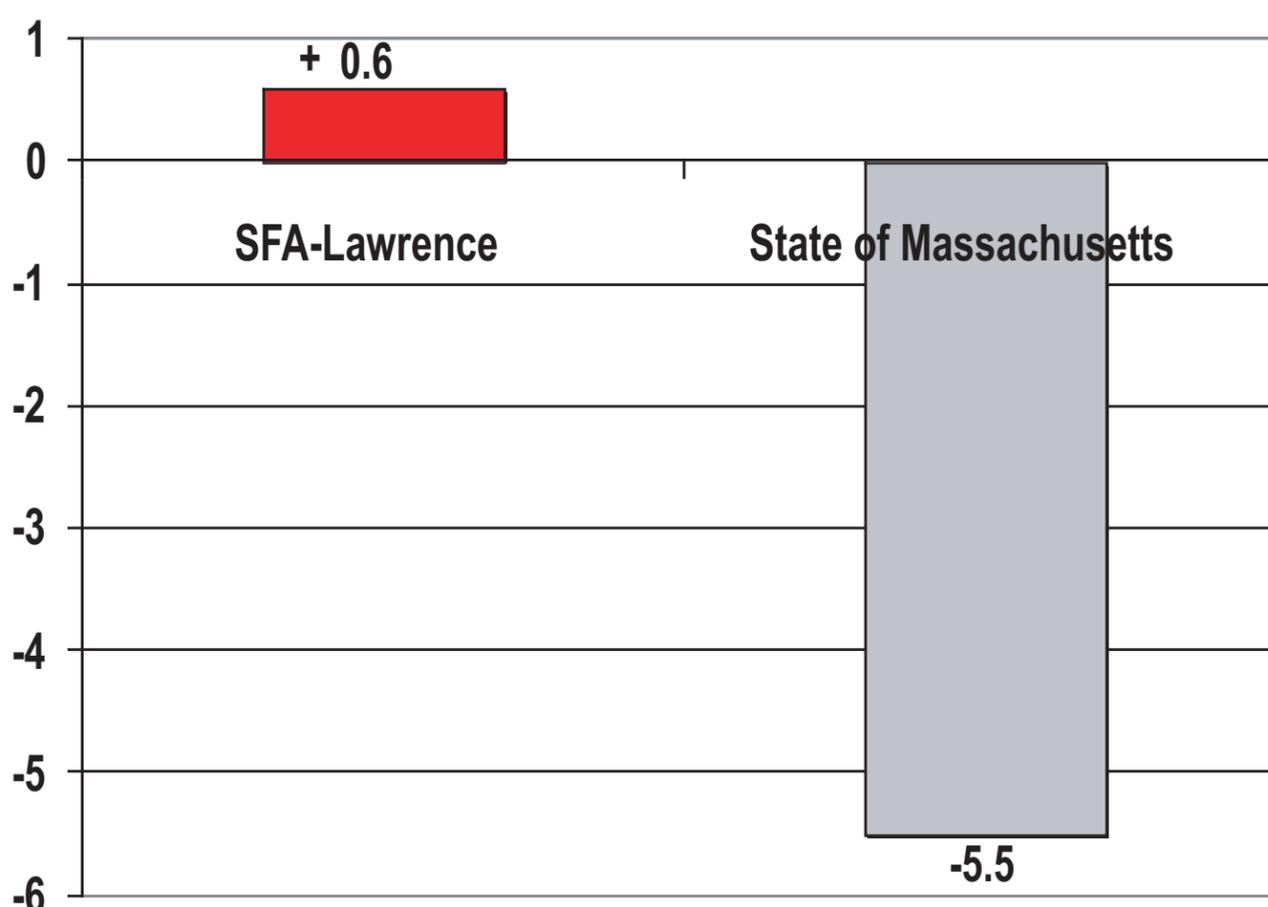
# Success for Massachusetts

### Success for All Elementary Schools in Lawrence Public Schools Gain on MCAS-Reading

Elementary schools in Lawrence, Massachusetts using the Success for All reading program gained on MCAS-Reading while other Massachusetts schools lost ground. **From 2004 to 2006, third and fourth graders in Success for All elementary schools in Lawrence held their own, gaining 0.6% on MCAS. Other Massachusetts schools declined by 5.5%.**

The 2006 MCAS-Reading results reflect findings in states throughout the U.S., affirming that students in Success for All schools gain more than those in other schools on state accountability tests.

Success for All in Lawrence, Massachusetts  
Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System-Reading  
Grades 3-4, 2004-2006



Success for All has been recognized by the Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center as the most extensively researched of all comprehensive reform models for Title I schools (see [www.csrq.org/reports.asp](http://www.csrq.org/reports.asp)).

It incorporates scientifically based principles of reading, cooperative learning, professional development, tutoring, and family support.

The Success for All Foundation is a non-profit organization that develops and disseminates educational reform models originally developed at Johns Hopkins University. For additional information on Success for All programs and research reports on program effectiveness, contact the Success for All Foundation at 1-800-548-4998 or visit our web site, [www.successforall.org](http://www.successforall.org).