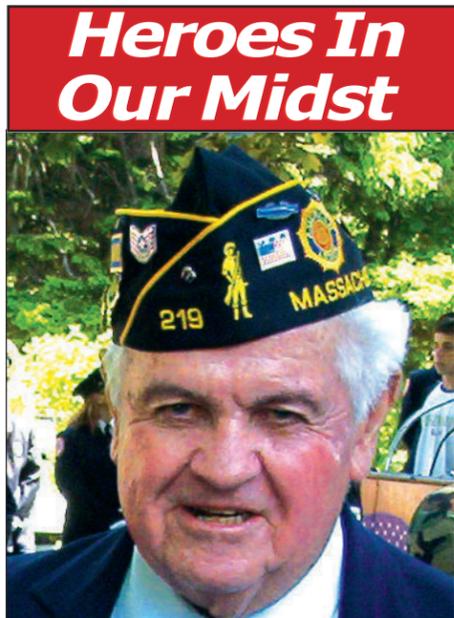




Exclusive!

Methuen's Chief Solomon Speaks Out

Defends Grant Spending, Says Tribune Attacks on Him and Dept. Motivated by "Racism Against Arab-Americans"



Heroes In Our Midst

Valley Patriot of the Month

Corporal James M. Cassidy
U.S. Army - WW II

Ted Tripp

HAVERHILL—On the morning of June 6, 1944, the Allies finally began the liberation of Europe from the Nazi nightmare. Tens of thousands of American, British, and Canadian troops poured onto the shores of Normandy to engage the Germans and drive them out of France. The Allies had trouble at first fighting through the treacherous French hedgerows, but by late fall General Eisenhower's armies were nearing the German border.

As the Americans advanced, Pfc. Jim Cassidy and his machine gun squad were attempting to enter a Rhineland town when almost immediately they were pinned down by a German sniper perched in the church steeple. There was little they could do as they hunkered down in their foxholes to avoid the bullets whizzing by. Finally, late in the day, supporting artillery moved up

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"...you don't find prostitutes and drugs and gang members in the Arlington neighborhood now. Fifteen years ago you had to send a two-man cruiser and a one-man cruiser for every call. You had to send three cruisers to protect the fire trucks and ambulances when they were responding to emergency calls. Today you can go there at night and not be in fear of being attacked. I think the quality of life has increased a thousand percent for the people who live there."

Methuen Police Chief Joe Solomon defending Methuen Police Department's use of federal grant money from the Dept. of Justice

Tom Duggan

Methuen Police Chief Joe Solomon said in an exclusive interview with The Valley Patriot this week that federal grant money from the Department of Justice for the city's Weed & Seed program was spent legally and in compliance with federal regulations.

Solomon was reacting to an Eagle-Tribune report which outlines how the chief and the Methuen Police Department spent money on travel expenses at conferences around the country which was paid for out of the Weed and Seed federal grant program. Methuen received the Weed and Seed five year grant from the Department of Justice in the amount

of over \$1 million dollars. The Tribune focused on the spending of a mere \$27,000 in travel expenses, something the chief took exception to.

In his discussion with The Valley Patriot Chief Solomon said he wanted to correct the record about the travel expenses and discuss the appropriation of over \$1 million from Weed and Seed to transform the Arlington neighborhood from a crime infested area to a place where families feel safe and where children in that neighborhood are thriving in school thanks

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Local Volunteers Saving Lives Overseas: Please see Page 20

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Valley Patriot

* Editorial *

Lawrence Cabbie is No Criminal

Here we go again in Lawrence where the victim is arrested and treated like the criminal, instead of focusing on the real criminals.

Last year, hero Marine Dan Cotnoir was arrested and charged with attempted murder for defending himself and his family when kids outside his apartment on Broadway were throwing bottles into his window.

This month, Lawrence cab driver Bienvenido Rodriguez is being charged by police for shooting Herman Irene, an armed robber who held him up at knife point in front of witnesses and a man with a long criminal record.

We say, as the result of his own criminal behavior, Mr. Herman Irene got exactly what he deserved: a bullet, a medflight to Boston and a series of weeks filled with discomfort and physical rehab before he can recover from the injuries he received as the result of his own criminal behavior.

In both the Cotnoir and Rodriguez cases, we believe that the Lawrence police were too quick to judge and make arrests.

Both men were victims, both men had a right to defend themselves and both men did what they believed at the time was right to stop the violence against them.

With Rodriguez the cab driver, fearing for his life after being robbed, he was simply trying to prevent being robbed or assaulted by Mr. Irene again. As the victim of a crime, he was making what amounted to a citizen's arrest.

Had the cab driver been a police officer, would the Lawrence police have been so quick to arrest that officer? We don't believe they would. As has been the case in the past, there would have been an investigation and maybe a clerk magistrate's hearing to determine whether or not there should be any charges lodged against the officer.

This same protocol should have been used here (and with Dan Cotnoir) to get a clear and independent picture of the situation and to determine whether or not there should be any charges against Rodriguez.

But now it is too late, the damage is done and the victim once again is being wrongly accused while the criminal seems to be getting a pass.

We only hope that, as with the Cotnoir jury in its acquittal, that a jury of Massachusetts citizens will once again do the right thing if this case ever gets that far.

One thing for sure, however. Had Mr. Rodriguez called the police, Herman Irene would be out on bail within hours robbing other cab drivers and committing more crimes, instead of laying in a hospital bed contemplating his own future.

Maybe Mr. Rodriguez's actions will give Herman Irene the incentive he needs to stop victimizing people, maybe it will not.

But the one thing we know for sure is, Bienvenido Rodriguez took Herman Irene off the streets for far longer than our police or criminal justice system could have, and for that, we say (legal or not), he did our community a favor.

The Valley Patriot is published by:

All contents (c) Copyright, February 1, 2007



Valley Patriot, Inc.

P.O. Box 453, North Andover, MA 01845
Phone - (978) 557-5413 Fax (978) 258-1964

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Advertising Director: Paula Porten
President: Tom Duggan, Jr.
Vice President/Director: Ralph Wilbur
Chief Editor: Ted Tripp
Editing/Layout: Tom Duggan, Jr.

The Valley Patriot is printed at the beginning of each month. The Valley Patriot is not liable for errors appearing in advertisements provided to us. All ad copy must be submitted seven days prior to publication. Subscriptions to The Valley Patriot cost \$20 per year and are delivered via U.S. Mail.

You can read us on-line at www.valleypatriot.com

The Valley Patriot is printed by GRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT in West Hanover, MA



See page 9 for our new local political cartoonist David Sullivan

To the Editor:

Anti-Semitism is an irrational fear and hatred of Jews. Anti-Semitism ignores history and blames the Jews for the world's troubles. The following are some questions that Andover High School students and administrators need to ask the self proclaimed "Wheels of Justice" (WoJ) and Mr. Ronald Francis, an Andover High School teacher and WoJ supporter:

Why does WoJ limit its focus to the occupation of the West Bank by Israel and the American occupation of Iraq - both of which are legal?

Why has WoJ been silent about the one million Jews who have disappeared from Muslim countries during the last hundred years? Why is WoJ silent about the world's several largest conflicts except for the current Palestinian intifada against Israel and the UN action in Iraq, all of which involve Muslims? Why does WoJ characterize Muslim efforts to annihilate Israel as an immoral, benign Arab-Israeli conflict? Why does WoJ characterize the Jordanian forfeiture of the West Bank during its attempts to exterminate Israel in 1967 as an illegal Israeli occupation?

When a nation (the Palestinian nation of Jordan) attempts to annihilate another nation (Israel), the victim nation (Israel) is under no obligation to restore the losses endured by the aggressor nation (Jordan and its former West Bank Palestinian citizens)?

Why is WoJ silent about the persecution of Palestinian Christians on the West Bank since the Jordanian annexation of the West Bank in 1949, except to blame that persecution after 1967 on Israel?

Why does WoJ blame the legal Israeli occupation of the West Bank for the Palestinian thugocracy that lynches moderate Palestinians? Why won't WoJ call a Palestinian terrorist, a *terrorist*?

Why has WoJ blamed Israel for the Lebanese and Palestinian civilian deaths and not the Hezbollah or Hamas terrorist groups that store weapons and place artillery in and near civilian homes in violation of the Geneva Convention?

The only two possible answers are that WoJ and Mr. Ron Francis honestly lack a realistic understanding of Middle East history and current events, or are anti-Semitic, as seems more likely. It seems that WoJ and Mr. Francis' favorite Middle East boogy-man is Israel, and intentionally ignores the facts of history alluded to above that show otherwise.

As long as WoJ and other so called "peace" groups (as well as their enablers) make excuses for WoJ and those who wish to kill Jews and exterminate Israel, there will be neither peace nor justice in the Middle East, on the West Bank, or in the East Bank's near future.

Mark Nystedt,

Haverhill



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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

Latinos Peddling Racism Further Divides Our City

Robert O'Koniewski

Recently a local Latino publication bemoaned in inflammatory racist terms the development of the Wood Mill by Robert Ansin.



The writer speculated that the development would lead to an influx of 500-600 white residents into Lawrence. The writer was rather upset that this anticipated white migration into our city would greatly offset Latino participation in future elections, thereby ensuring victory for white candidates and defeat for Latino candidates.

Further, the writer insinuated that the residential units at the Wood Mill are priced at a level to keep Latinos out, because, as the writer stated, Latinos cannot afford to buy at such prices. Amazingly, these sentiments were echoed on local Spanish radio programming after their publication.

I am always bemused at the racist rantings of a Latino writer like this who feels there is some grand conspiracy amongst whites to shut Latinos out of the political process. Apparently, the lack of political success at the polls is due to not a lack of qualified candidates but to some Klan-like master plan cooked up and put into motion by the white overseers at City Hall and in our neighborhoods. (I am sure the sarcasm here will be lost on them.)

I read the printed comments several times and had others read it as well to make sure I saw things correctly.

Only the howling of a bitter, brain addled bigot could equate one of the most ambitious economic development projects our city has seen in some time with an overt racist attempt to disembowel Latino participation in the electoral process.

Only in Lawrence could we find attacks on a privately funded, multi-million dollar economic project that one hopes will revitalize our city's economy, albeit with no guarantee of success, stated in terms designed to inflame and fan racist emotions within the Latino community against their white neighbors. This in a city that helped our state elect the first black governor in our history. This in a city that bends over backwards to comply with federal and state mandates on assisting Latino voters in the election process. This in a city that has witnessed a large jump in Latino homeownership due to the expansion of the city and state's first-time homebuyer programs.

Even more astounding is the silence from the Latino community in denouncing these remarks. I am struck by the apparent acceptance of such racially motivated invective, stated not to unite us in a common purpose to improve our city but designed merely to split our community further apart.

Imagine the reaction if a white proffered the idea that we cannot have more Latinos moving in because they will take over our politics.

Such an attitude has no place in our city. People who harbor such beliefs frankly should peddle their racist wares elsewhere and see the type of reaction they receive. They are certainly not welcome at my doorstep nor should they be anywhere else in our community.

Robert O'Koniewski is an attorney in Lawrence and is the former campaign manager for Marcos Devers. You can email him at: bobokesq@hotmail.com



Thinking Outside the Box!

Dr. Charles Ormsby, N.A. School Committee

BREAKTHROUGH...

Predict Your Child's Academic Success

University researchers have long sought a way to predict a student's academic success. They, like all citizens, have a societal interest in promoting good outcomes. A well-educated citizenry will promote economic growth, a higher standard of living, better social policies, and greater tranquility. This, of course, is why education enjoys such strong support.

Parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles have an additional, more personal interest. They have children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews and would like to understand the factors that will ensure their academic success.

The debate has raged for decades. Is a child's success dependent almost exclusively on genetics? Will more spending ensure that no child is left behind? What can parents, legislators, community groups, and taxpayers/voters do to maximize the best possible result for their children and for society at large?

Now, for the first time, a simplified formula for predicting a student's success has emerged that will provide the needed guidance to both a student's extended family and to society at large.

for grasping the impact of the various factors. For readers who quit when they saw the formula, you can thank your school's fuzzy math curriculum.

One final note before we proceed: The formula is designed to predict the average academic success in a particular academic discipline for those students sharing the same values of the factors included in the formula. Some students will be hit by a truck midway through their high school career and spend months in a body cast while others will, through happenstance, never miss a day of school due to illness. Individual life experiences will cause some variability of results, but the averages will be correctly predicted as the factors are varied. Also, all the factors have to be considered in the context of a particular discipline, e.g., math, language arts, music, science, etc. Individuals do not have the same innate ability across all skill areas and the other factors in the formula can also vary from one skill area to another.

OK, let's discuss the factors one at a time.

First, Innate Ability - Nothing much matters if a student has the IQ of a brick (IQ = 0). This is the educational equivalent of the well-known computer saying, revised

$$\text{Predicted Academic Outcome} = (\text{Innate Ability}) (\text{Home Support}) (1 + \text{Quality of Academic Environment}) (\text{Personal Effort})$$

Note to the more mathematically sophisticated: You can presume that each factor in the formula needs to be raised to an appropriate power that adjusts the overall formula's predictions to best fit experimental data. To those less mathematically inclined, the formula, as stated, is sufficiently precise

here, which says: B-I-B-O or, Bricks In Bricks Out. Multiply anything by zero and you get zero. The term used in the formula is "innate ability" rather than IQ because IQ typically is a composite measure of innate ability across multiple disciplines, and the formula,

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14th Annual TOP COPS Awards

Sunday, May 13
11th Annual Law Ride

Sunday, May 13
19th Annual Candlelight Vigil

Monday, May 14
5th Annual Steve Young Honor Guard Competition
Concerns of Police Survivors Seminars*
12th Annual Emerald Society Pipeband March & Service

Tuesday, May 15
26th Annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Day Service & Wreathlaying Ceremony

Wednesday, May 16
Concerns of Police Survivors Seminars*

*Registration is Mandatory



Haverhill's Future!

Jim Rurak, Former Mayor of Haverhill

On January 30, I took the formal step of declaring officially that I was running for mayor. Since announcing my intentions to do so last November, I had heard from and met hundreds of people who shared their concerns with me. The message they gave me loudly and clearly is that Haverhill's growth is out-of-control. They were right.

On the very same day, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission released a study that projected that Haverhill would outgrow Lawrence in just twenty years. In fact, they predict our population will swell from its current all-time high of 60,242 to the saturation point of 72,737. Such growth comes with consequences.

For one, we will need more classrooms. The Tribune reported that School Superintendent Raleigh Buchanan believes we will almost certainly have to build a new school. He sees growth coming and believes we must plan for it. "I'm no fortune teller, but I can see on the horizon we cannot put our heads in the sand and forget about it (the population boom)," he was quoted as saying.

The week before, the police chief was reported as warning that big box retail stores generate a lot of police calls. People shoplift, pass bad checks, etc. inside the stores, and there are often suspicious people, auto accidents and the like outside. He reportedly warned that retail development on the highway will further stretch his currently understaffed department. He already needs more officers. These new stores are great symbols of growth, but they require that we plan now for how to serve the new needs they'll bring to our city services. Councilor Hall wants the mayor to budget for more officers. The mayor wants to wait and see.

In fact, the mayor does want to wait, but there's little chance he'll see anything. He's already in a state of denial about the predictions of rapid growth. He responded to the Merrimack Valley Planning Com-

mission's findings about our burgeoning population with ostrich-like simplicity: "it (the population boom) is just not there."

Mr. Mayor, are you living in "Who-ville" or Haverhill? Dr. Seuss' famous story of the grinch who stole Christmas is set in the city of Who-ville. The mayor there wants to hear or see no evil. He constantly paints himself into the center of every picture of what is good about the city. But his denial of issues makes him an ineffective leader.

Here, our mayor touts the benefits of growth all the time. He talks of downtown residential growth, of big box retail. But economic growth happens because the free-market supports it. It's up to the mayor to manage it. But with over 800 new residential units planned for downtown, the mayor fails to implement a parking plan. For all the growth we've already felt, for new retail stores opening this year, he says it's too early to discuss the need for additional police officers. And, while we sell school building after school building, we ignore that our school population will soon explode. And where will we get the water we need? How much will it cost? Everybody wonders! Only the mayor denies it!

We need a growth summit and we need it now! The mayor should convene it, but so long as he buries his head in the sand, he won't. The one hope is that the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission's report, together with this year's campaign and election, might wake him up. Convene the growth summit, Mr. Mayor. Do it now, or ask the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission to do it for the rest of us. City leaders and city residents need a chance to shape our city's future before all the growth you cannot see changes our lives forever.

Jim Rurak is a professor at Boston College and is the former mayor of Haverhill. Email your comments or questions to Jim Rurak at JARandKAS@comcast.net.



Random Thoughts

Haverhill (NECC) Professor
Mark Palermo

I haven't had a steak in thirty years. I was in Saint Louis, Missouri in May 1977 when I had my "slaughterhouse experience." What I saw, you'll never see on TV. It is true what they say. Even a few moments witnessing the screaming, crying animals in their death agony leaves a mark on one's soul that is difficult to ever erase. Many vegetarians have been made from this experience. I did eat meat very sparingly after that, but I could never again enjoy a meat-based diet. The Yiddish writer, Isaac Singer, was once asked if he was a vegetarian for health reasons. He answered, "Yes, but not my own health, but for the health of the animals. For these noble creatures, every day is Treblinka." I am glad the experience happened. I am 56, and the way I want to get old is by being more conscious, not less.

Most people don't want to consider vegetarianism, and I don't blame them. For so many people, life is stressful; fighting traffic, enduring boring, meaningless jobs, paying bills, etc. One of the few pleasures people have is a nice meal at the end of the day- maybe roasted sausages or a steak smothered in gravy. In my case, I love good food, but I have never felt deprived eating foods like eggplant parmigan, Spanish rice and beans with fried plantains, lentil stew, delicious falafel sandwiches, and so on. With so many great food choices, why eat animals?

But my motivation is more than just pity for the animals. I am very, very choosy about the food I put in my mouth. I read labels and check ingredients. I refuse to drink tap water because of the deadly fluorides and cancer-causing chlorine. I never go back to a restaurant if I get an MSG headache from eating there. If guests in my home leave diet drinks containing aspartame in my refrigerator, I dump them down the drain after they leave. (the diet drinks, not the guests!) I am one of those guys. But I am not a Fascist about it. I like coffee, sweets, and of course beer and wine-

W.C. Fields said, "Never trust a man who doesn't drink."

Americans are mostly unconscious about food and the role it plays in health. When is the last time your doctor asked you about your diet? So I got the idea for this article when a fellow teacher gave me a lemon square at Christmas. While I was grateful because my friend's intent was from kindness and consideration, one look at the ingredients told me the faux lemon square was toxin in a box. Not that there's anything unusual in this. It is typical of so many processed foods sold in supermarkets, sometimes even health food stores, which are not fit for human consumption.

To prove my point, here are the ingredients, which are listed on the box: we start with the requisite enriched flour and corn syrup (AKA white sugar- and plenty of it). There's hydrogenated beef tallow, otherwise known as rendered beef lard, then some hydrogenated soybean and cottonseed oil. (They have to *hydrogenate* the stuff? Isn't there enough cholesterol already?) This tiny 4-ounce "pastry" contains a staggering 390 calories and 36% of a day's allowance of artery-clogging saturated fat. They should include coupons inside- good for discounts on coronary bypass surgery. Then there's modified food starch, salt- and plenty of it- in case you need to elevate your blood pressure. Natural flavors- often a euphemism for brain cell-destroying MSG. But there's more: diastatic malt powder, (yum) mono and di-glycerides, agar, artificial colors #6 and #5 (chemotherapy anyone?), sorbitan, and last but not least, Polysorbate 60! (Bon appetite!) But the most surreal part of this faux food concoction is the brightly colored lettering on the happy, little box which boldly announces, "Real Fruit Filling," yet *no fruit of any kind* is listed among the ingredients!

Continued on Page 22

A Rigorous Exercise in Defining Grounds for Recall

Michelle Thone, Amesbury City Council

Would you recall an elected official on the basis of mere dissatisfaction?

Would you consider recalling an elected official because he or she had opinions or views on one or more of the issues that differed from your own? Or, would you initiate a recall because you didn't like someone's personality?

These questions, which appear to be suitable to consider at election time, have actually become the basis for a recall effort currently underway in Amesbury.

Most expect the typical response to the question of "why recall?" to be unethical, criminal, or egregious acts on the part of a public official. This would justifiably be a judicious use of the recall provision. Given that consideration, recall is a serious matter. So, is initiating a recall based on dissatisfaction with an elected official's views also considered judicious?

In a community like Amesbury that does not, by law, define grounds for recall, any grounds can, and have, become suitable. The remaining question is whether the grounds determined suitable are also palatable to this politically charged community, and more importantly, that the impact it will sustain is acceptable.

These answers will be very telling of whether it is the taxpayers or the special interests (sometimes referred to as the *good ol' boys club*) that have hold of this city.

Amesbury is beginning to realize the precedent such an action taken on this basis will serve.

It's possible that now or in the future *any* candidate, and quite possibly the opposition's, could become the subject of dissatisfaction by a disgruntled group. And the definition of a disgruntled group could be nothing more than an opposing view, of which there will always be one.

Clearly, taking this action on these grounds would only serve to undermine the vote of a legitimate election and grind government to a halt - year after year - and, in effect, make an elected term worthless.

To most people, the basis of this recall should not only appear to be unusual, but the expected timing of the vote as well. It



will most likely occur in the spring, costing taxpayers thousands of dollars - only to repeat these costs six months later in the fall election.

That being said, a reasonable thought might be, if you are unhappy with your elected official's voting record, then don't vote for him or her in the next election, or, better yet, run yourself.

Perhaps the answer to the question of "why not wait?" should be asked of the folks now promoting a meritless misuse of the recall provision.

Why not wait? Well, politics has many layers and to learn the truth you have to know how to peel an onion. Peel back the layers to find what lies beneath.

Amesbury elected a conservative majority on the Council last year. A conservative majority of like-minded individuals that has stuck together on nearly every issue. A conservative majority that truly represents the taxpayers - not

municipal employees, special interests, or those whose only interest in Amesbury is financial gain. The latter no longer control the Council, and liberal spending has come to a halt. So why have a recall that would undermine the vote of the taxpayers?

Political realignment is the simple answer. It could not have been stated better than by Amesbury's mayor who was quoted as saying how a successful recall could affect the Council votes on his vetoes. It could "potentially change" the votes on his vetoes to 5-4.

And "it probably would give me veto power."

This is the same mayor who has vetoed the Council's legislation on eminent domain to protect property rights, and zero-based budgeting for fiscal restraint.

So, what is the intended purpose of this so-called recall? Clearly, this action is not in the best interests of the taxpayers.

Whose interests *are* being served?

Michelle Thone, a former Director of the Amesbury Taxpayers Association, currently serves as the Vice President of Amesbury's Municipal Council, as a District Representative, and an appointed member of the Council's Finance subcommittee. You can email her at CouncilorThone@att.net



Moving Haverhill Forward

Haverhill Mayor James Fiorentini

When I took office for a second term, I outlined an aggressive plan, which I called my “plan for tomorrow,” to move our city forward.

This plan included building a new parking garage downtown, bringing in more retail to our city, and taking a project that had been dormant for decades — a new boardwalk for downtown — and making that project happen. People had been talking about parking garages and boardwalks for decades. I was determined to bring them to reality. We took a big step forward on the boardwalk project this past month with our design open house, which showcased the proposed boardwalk to be built downtown.

As you may remember, in the October 17 issue, we told you about the rezoning of downtown. To ensure that the new construction area is faithful to the historic look and feel of downtown, we have adopted new design standards for the historic areas of our downtown.

Last month, I updated you on our plans for a new parking garage. This issue concentrates on our plans for a new boardwalk downtown, along with some ideas on what you can do outside in Haverhill. All of these things are pieces of the same puzzle: how do we improve our quality of life and our tax base here in the city?

Next month, I’ll concentrate on the most difficult and most important piece of the puzzle: how do we improve public education?

Parking Garage Update

About a year ago, Congressman Meehan and Senator Kennedy worked to secure \$7.2 million in federal funding for a new parking garage in Haverhill. We narrowed the site down to three possibilities— Essex Street, the corner of Granite and Moulton Way, and the parking lot across from Maria’s Restaurant. Last week, we held a public meeting on the garage and heard from engineers, traffic consultants, architects and planners on their ideas. They rated the three sites in order. Their top rated site is shown here. They rated first a smaller garage in the city owned lot at the corner of Granite and Moulton and then continued up and over onto the parking area owned by the MBTA. Our goal is to construct a garage that doesn’t look like a garage — with retail in the front, brickwork and design to match the adjoining structures. If you would like the site selection committee to consider your comments, please send a separate email strictly about the parking garage to mayor@cityofhaverhill.com, attention Parking Garage Task Force. To see all of the designs for all the proposed locations, visit: <http://jamesfiorentini.com/parkinggarage.htm>.

Boardwalk Project Takes a Leap Forward



In the 1970’s, Haverhill put in a boardwalk on Merrimack Street behind where the Haverhill Bank is today. This was supposed to be the start of a project to run a boardwalk from bridge to bridge, but the next phases were never built. When my second term began, I made a pledge to move this project forward. Rather than wait until we had the money to build the entire project, we decided to build what could be built with money available. We settled on the area behind the Tap Restaurant, shown in this photograph. Last week, we held a design open house at the Haverhill Bank and heard from our designers, Earth Tech, on some proposed plans. We asked the public to attend. About fifty people did attend and gave us some excellent input.

Earth Tech proposes to do the boardwalk in two phases. *Phase A* will design a new river walk in the area shown behind the Tap, running the entire length of the parking lot,



and probably the areas on both sides of the lot. The river walk will connect to boat docks. The wall behind the Tap is not strong enough to hold a river walk, so they propose building it inside the wall, with the wall as the outer edge. As part of Phase A, they will also totally rebuild and redesign the existing boardwalk behind the Haverhill Bank on Merrimack Street. I caution that there is a lot that can go wrong to delay any project: permitting problems, engineering or structural issues, and funding. Assuming all goes well, the construction of Phase A is to start late this fall or early next spring and be completed in a year. *Phase B* is to do a 25% design showing what a total boardwalk will look like from bridge to bridge downtown. Phase B awaits further funding. Please take a look on our web site at the entire presentation and send us your thoughts on the proposed boardwalk.

After Fire, Mayor Orders Review of All Abandoned Buildings

After a fire destroyed a building on Middlesex Street in Bradford, I have ordered a complete review of all vacant and abandoned buildings in the city. I visited the fire site on Saturday and again on Sunday. During the visit on Saturday, I issued an emergency order ordering that the building be demolished within twenty-four (24) hours. I have asked our building and fire officials to determine if any of the buildings should be ordered demolished.

The Future of Our Landfill

The Haverhill landfill is located along the Merrimack River in Bradford. We are under an order from the EPA to cap it within the next four or five years. The total cost of capping is \$20 million. We own the landfill in conjunction with Aggregate Industries in Groveland. We have a contract with Aggregate to split the cost of capping the landfill. Starting three years ago, the city made a decision to bring in dirt to level the landfill. We are paid for the dirt and thus far have made about \$1 million for our taxpayers. Other cities have made use of old landfills. I have appointed a Task Force to make recommendations on future landfill reuse. If you would like to apply for membership, please send an email to Mayor@cityofhaverhill.com.

Beautiful Haverhill

I love this time of year in Haverhill, there are so many things to do here in our great city. There were so few days to ice skate safely, we created a small outdoor ice rink behind the stadium to ice skate outside. We call it our “Haverhill Skates” program. We plan to keep it open until 8 pm. On cold days, you can ice-skate at the Winnekenni basin, or on Round Pond, or on Plug’s Pond. Make sure the ice is

safe though. If you want to skate indoors, try our indoor rink, right behind the High School. Call them for their hours, lots of very inexpensive family skating. When there is enough snow, try cross country skiing or snow shoeing around Winnekenni Park or Tattersall Farm, or sliding at Winnekenni. In the spring time, bring the kids to the new swing sets we’ve installed at Winnekenni Park and behind the stadium. It’s all part of improving quality of life. Tell us, what can we do better to improve quality of life for you and your children?

New Tool Means New Business for Merrimack Street

Merrimack Street, Haverhill has been designated as an “SBA Hub Zone.” Federal procurement laws require that 3% of federal contracts go to companies with offices in SBA hub zones. This designation has brought a new company to Haverhill — AgilePath, a government computer contractor. AgilePath starts with four Haverhill employees but has big plans, and hopes, to expand to 100. We welcome AgilePath to Haverhill and hope it is the first of many Hub Zone contractors who find that *Haverhill Has It!*

Retail Update

Starbucks is scheduled to open early spring. The Target and Lowes complex off of Broadway is scheduled to open in October ‘07. **BJ’s Wholesale Club**, to be located off of the 495 connector in Ward Hill, is scheduled to open in late spring or early summer.

Downtown Update

The Beacon project (shown here) is under construction and is expected to be ready for occupancy in late spring. The Forest City project is still in the due diligence stage. Rezoning of downtown put Haverhill on the map.

Haverhill is the Picture of Progress

Your input wanted: **What do you think should be done with the old landfill site?** () Fence it off and do not reuse it, () Reuse it as active recreation— ball fields, etc., () Reuse it as “passive recreation”— hiking trails, () We need more information before we make a decision. If you have comments or suggestions concerning the parking garage, please send a separate email to jimfior02@aol.com.

Jim Fiorentini is the mayor of Haverhill and was just elected to his second term. Mayor Fiorentini is a Democrat. No public money was used to produce or distribute this newsletter. You can E-mail Jim Fiorentini at: jimfior02@aol.com or call 978-374-2300



WE WANT YOU!
TO SEE OUR AD
ON PAGE 17

Footnotes from

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

You can't make this stuff up!

Hey Councilors, You're Not the Mayor

City Council President Patrick Blanchette has set a terrible precedent over the last few years by trying to micromanage City Hall from the council table (and behind the scenes). Under the city charter, the mayor of Lawrence is in charge of hiring and firing city employees, runs the day-to-day operations of each city department and is the chief financial officer of the city. The City Council's function is (with a few exceptions) to vote on budgets and city ordinances, and not to evaluate city employees, not to dictate to the mayor how he runs each city department and not to interfere with personnel investigations of city workers. But you would never know it the way Blanchette (and some of his colleagues) has been throwing his weight around City Hall. As I sit through each City Council meeting, I have to wonder to myself, "do these people really know what their job is?" It's evident that the City Council has no clearly defined goals, and no effective plan to achieve said goals. It is also evident that for the last two years the City Council has haphazardly moved on from issue to issue, complaining about the Sullivan administration (no matter what it does), but doing very little (if anything) to solve the city's long term problems. When was the last time the City Council had a "goals" meeting to set a plan in place to achieve something ... anything? Does the City Council have a clear direction for the city and a plan to bring us there? Or are they just a group of nine individuals who pull in nine different directions every time an issue comes up at random? Is the City Council even capable of coming up with solutions on its own or is it stuck in the quagmire of reacting to everything the mayor does or a daily headline in the Tribune? One thing for sure, Patrick Blanchette may think he is the anointed successor to Mayor Sullivan, but if he cannot do the job of council president adequately, how is he going to handle being CEO of the city?

Birds of a Feather (Blanchette and Alvarez)

I don't want to pick on Patrick Blanchette too much this month, but if there is one thing that never ceases to amaze me it's when an elected official lies when he really doesn't have to. Never letting facts or current events get in the way of spinning his political agenda, Lawrence Council President Patrick Blanchette laughingly insulted our intelligence again last month. He surprisingly praised fellow Councilor Nilka Alvarez-Rodriguez "for all the hard work you have done" in helping the Berroa family acquire land on Bromfield Street. While it is true that Councilor Alvarez-Rodriguez has been on the forefront of many disability issues in the city (sometimes to the point of overkill), the fact is, Nilka Alvarez-Rodriguez tried her best to STOP the Berroa family from purchasing the property at 2 Bromfield St., where they wanted to build a single-family home with wheelchair ramps for their disabled son, Rodrigo. Alvarez-Rodriguez even went so far as to lobby the Berroa's neighbors to have them circulate a petition to put a playground on the site the Berroas were trying to purchase. When that didn't work, Alvarez-Rodriguez accused



Councilor Patrick Blanchette taking a little too much for granted

the Berroa Family (at a public meeting, no less) of making some kind of back room deal with other councilors to obtain the land illegally. What's worse, Council President Blanchette and Councilor Alvarez shamelessly used procedural maneuvers to stall the process for weeks while the Berroas were left twisting in the wind waiting for City Council approval so they could build their dream home for little Rodrigo. The Berroas themselves have said publicly that, despite the roadblocks thrown in their way by Councilor Alvarez-Rodriguez, they were very grateful for the help they received from Mayor Sullivan, the planning department, and councilors Grisel Silva and Jorge Gonzalez. What is sad about all this is that councilors Blanchette and Alvarez-Rodriguez would willingly try to block or delay projects like this that are good for the city because they are so filled with hatred for those who did the work and deserve to get the credit. And at the end of the day, they try to take credit for the project going forward despite their back room dealings to try and stop the project.



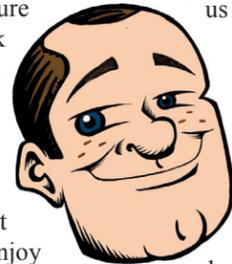
Gosselin Reportedly Not Running? Don't believe it for a minute!

Siglo21, the Spanish language newspaper in Lawrence, has reported that Marie Gosselin, Councilor for District "F" (South Lawrence East), is not seeking reelection and that it is "Willie Lantigua" who has recruited former Councilor Michael Fielding to run for the "open" seat. Siglo21 lamented that no other qualified candidates are on the horizon to challenge Fielding, specifically "Latino" candidates. First of all, don't believe for one minute that Councilor Gosselin will be

bowing out of a reelection race. Marie Gosselin has professed not to be seeking reelection every year for the last ten years and yet she runs in every election anyway. Secondly, the alliance between Michael Fielding and state Representative Willie Lantigua is long over. Michael Fielding, as you may remember, lost the at-large council race in '05 (going from second to fifth) because of his alliance with and endorsement from Willie Lantigua. According to Fielding supporters, Lantigua's help and endorsement are not welcome this time around as he contemplates defeating Marie Gosselin once again for the District "F" seat on the council.

Valley Patriot Welcomes Cartoonist David Sullivan!

It has been a long three-year search for a talented cartoonist who could harpoon local pols and capture the news of the Merrimack Valley, and the search is finally over. This month The Valley Patriot welcomes Dracut resident David Sullivan to the team and, from the looks of his first cartoon, we know you will enjoy his work as much as we do! If you have an idea for a political cartoon, please email me at valleypatriot@aol.com.



Cheating the Students... Is Expensive!

Last month the North Andover school department asked to have five full school days this spring reduced to half days. Superintendent O'Connor said the teachers needed the extra time to complete paperwork required by state agencies. For some

reason, the teachers do not have enough time after the normal school day ends. The School Committee approved the plan so that now kids will miss five half days of educational instruction this year. Isn't this just simply "cheating" the students? Not to mention the taxpayers. With a \$32 million budget and 180 days of school a year, the five half days are depriving the students of \$440,000 worth of educational benefits. That's not chicken feed, folks!

It's the Political Reshuffle! State Senator Billy Manzi?

A week before the mainstream media reported that Congressman Marty Meehan would be interviewing with UMass for the chancellor's job, The Valley Patriot posted the story on our website, complete with the names of local pols who were gearing up to replace him. Within 24 hours we received a phone call from Meehan's office emphatically denying the story and asking us to take the posting down. Three days after our posting, Fox 25 News and the Lowell Sun were reporting that, lo and behold, Marty Meehan was in fact looking to jump ship as a congressman and would be interviewing with UMass.

A few days later the Eagle-Tribune began postulating on who might replace Meehan, should he leave Congress early (no surprise, listing the same names we did a week earlier). Now, our vast network of sources are telling us that not only is Methuen state Senator Steve Baddour and Andover Rep. Barry Finegold looking to run for Congress, but former Meehan aide Doherty, who is currently the lead prosecutor in Middlesex County, will be the odds on favorite to run and win a special election when Meehan takes the final

Continued on Page 8



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