

# Audit Shows School Committee Incompetence

Maybe the North Andover School Committee really isn't incompetent. Perhaps it is completely capable of running the schools efficiently and just refuses to do so.

Whatever the case, an education audit released last month on the condition of the North Andover school system showed that the schools were deficient in complying with No Child Left Behind standards. Auditors also outlined lack of leadership, lack of communication, lack of evaluations of teachers and administrators (all of whom got hefty raises), failure to comply with contracts and a failure to have district-wide (or school-based) education standards.

The audit further showed that the hefty raises and bonuses the School Committee gave to Superintendent Harry Harutunian were given illegally because state law (and his contract) called for a public evaluation of the superintendent. Under the "leadership" of Al Perry and Dan Murphy, this never took place in the Kremlin-like secret environment of those Harry Harutunian days.

Remember when Superintendent Harry Harutunian was getting his spending proposals rubber-stamped by Al Perry, Tim Pybus, Dan Murphy and the go-along-to-get-along crowd on the School Committee? It was Dr. Chuck Ormsby who was questioning the lack of standards and voting against those hefty raises.

And when Harutunian's puppet School Committee went to the voters time and again to beg for more money to spend on fantasy budget figures, it was Dr. Ormsby who

(prestando attencione!)

## Paying Attention!

with Tom Duggan



opposed his colleagues. He continually stressed that school dollars need to be spent more wisely, reforms need to be implemented and standards must be raised before the committee could possibly ask the taxpayers for one more dollar.

Remember how Dr. Ormsby was personally attacked, had his integrity questioned and was ridiculed by fellow committee members who ganged up on him, opposing every reform or improvement he tried to put into place? It was Dr. Ormsby, back then, who tried to expose haphazard spending. He tried to work with a School Committee obsessed with throwing money at the problem, while doing very little about student achievement.

What's more, Dr. Chuck opposed extravagant union raises and contracts that did not contain benchmarks for achievement. He voted against budgets that were not balanced and fought for an increase in AP classes, all while Al Perry, Dan Murphy and the rest of the ostriches on the committee were hell-bent on defending Harutunian's budgets and his never ending support for experimental programs (can you say Every Day Math?).

It was the current School Committee members (add Dan Murphy) who failed the school children of North Andover. Not only did School Committee members refuse to

question spending under Harutunian, they made it difficult if not impossible for Dr. Chuck or anyone else to criticize the way Harutunian was running the school system into the ground. Plain and simple, the North Andover School Committee didn't do its job and made it nearly impossible for Dr. Ormsby to do his.

Finally, after years of enduring a misinformation campaign against him, the independent education audit has vindicated Dr. Charles Ormsby. But you would never know it to hear the new spin coming from the very same School Committee members and "school advocates" who got us into this mess.

To hear them tell the story, the reason this education audit showed so many problems in the schools is *because of* Dr. Ormsby and his questioning and opposition to excessive school funding. This, even though his minority points of view had little effect on changing committee votes and policy.

Once again, the big spenders want to irresponsibly shift the blame and throw even MORE money at the problem, even though none of the standards or evaluations called for in the education audit have even begun. It seems this spend-all-you-can School Committee has learned

nothing since their leader; Harry Harutunian, resigned in disgrace last year.

In fact, some are even talking about using the findings of this audit to justify yet another Proposition 2 1/2 Override because, of course, in order to fix the problem they need you to give them more and more of your hard-earned tax dollars.

Can you believe the gall?

The same people who are responsible for getting the North Andover school system into this educational quagmire, the same people who rubber-stamped Harutunian's bad education policies and fantasy budget figures, the very same people who viciously attacked Dr. Ormsby every time he questioned the status quo, are now blaming Dr. Ormsby instead of praising him for having it right all along.

Some are even talking about organizing a recall petition to get rid of the one guy who stands (and votes) alone when it comes to spending your tax money responsibly. If anyone needs to be recalled from the School Committee, it is Al Perry and Tim Pybus for going along with Harutunian's three-year charade on the taxpayers and not doing their jobs when his misdeeds were being questioned by Dr. Ormsby.

**Tom Duggan is the president of Valley Patriot, Inc., a former Lawrence School Committeeman, and hosts the Paying Attention! Radio Program on WCAP, 980AM, every Saturday afternoon from noon-2pm. You can email your comments to [Tdugjr@aol.com](mailto:Tdugjr@aol.com)**

# Licciardello Lashes Out...Respectfully

NORTHANDOVER - At a recent meeting of the Board of Selectmen, where the town's capital improvement plan was being discussed, tax and spend "school advocate" Cindy Jalbert stood before the board whining about how the town needs a Prop. 2 1/2 Override and how her Committee on Capital Planning was not being included in the process of the capital improvement plan.

Selectman Tom Licciardello, so frustrated with Jalbert's nonsensical rhetoric, took a few minutes to address the misinformation she was giving the public. "It is amazing how many obstructions people will throw in front of an attempt to make forward progress," Licciardello said. "To have a plan brought forward, to have it open for discussion, does not mean a final decision was made . . . So, I have to say Cindy, I get a little frustrated when I hear people immediately begin to throw up roadblocks, because, 'well, you didn't talk to me personally about this.'"

Jalbert continued to whine, cutting off the selectman. "We want to be in on the ground floor before you do anything with your buildings," she charged. "You don't think it would have been appropriate to let the School Committee know you were presenting a five year plan . . ."

At that point Licciardello had had enough. "Look, Cindy, I have answered your question. I really do not want to hear

the questions asked again five times. We have a busy agenda and I would like to move forward."

Jalbert continued to insult and interrupt the meeting: "I find it funny to watch Tom Licciardello stand there and say to the school department a few months ago 'kill Foster Farm, the town will never go for it,' and then watch him two weeks ago say 'this town will stand behind an override for the schools.' Well, I'm sorry I find it a little contradictory to watch you do that, Tom!"

"Let me explain this one last time," a respectful but obviously flustered Selectman Licciardello responded. "My position has not changed on that one bit, and let me explain it loud and clear. A plan that the citizens of this town won't support based upon projections that are inaccurate is very different from a well-thought-out plan based on good solid planning and supported by all of the boards. That's the kind of thing I think the people in this town have been crying for. Show us a good, well-thought-out plan and we will support it. But, I am so glad you raised this issue because one of the things I have been getting frustrated about is that some people think the people of North Andover don't care about our children because we don't spend enough in our school department. I would like to - at long last - have that notion dispelled."

"I keep hearing how we don't spend at the state average (for schools). I asked the town manager to do a little work on that and what we found, in fact, was that there are a few different pieces to look at when you fund education. One of the pieces is the foundation budget, that is, what the town spends from the tax dollars it raises. That means net of Chapter 70 (what the state gives us), our spending in North Andover, minus Chapter 70, is \$7,468 (per pupil). The state average is \$6,018; that's 24% higher than the state average."

"The difficulty is that the Chapter 70 money we receive from the state is significantly lower. So if anyone here would like to yell at people who are not spending enough money on the children, don't do it to the good folks in North Andover who are spending 24% more, whose family tax rate is 44.7% higher than the state average. Call your representatives at The State House and say, 'where's the money?'"

"Where's the money for those programs that you have demanded that we have? Where's the money for the special needs programs you demanded we have? Where's the money for the transportation programs you say we must have? Why won't you let us join the GIC health insurance program? Why do we have to have the prevailing wage program that makes us spend 300% more to fix a roof on one of our schools than if we had an average contractor come in and do? Those are the people you ought to be yelling at! I am quite frustrated at hearing how the people of North Andover don't care about their kids. It's not the truth. And I will submit to you that I believe if we do our planning correctly, if we show the people of this town that we can manage in a fiscally responsible way, and we can plan so we are doing the right thing for the town, absolutely they will support an override. I have people coming up to me every day from both sides of the political spectrum saying to me, 'prove to me your doing the right job and I will pull out my check book any day.'"

"We have a perception problem we have to fix, and one of the ways to do that is to stop telling people what a terrible job we are doing. We're not doing a terrible job in our schools and we are not doing a terrible job on the municipal side."

Editor's note: AMEN

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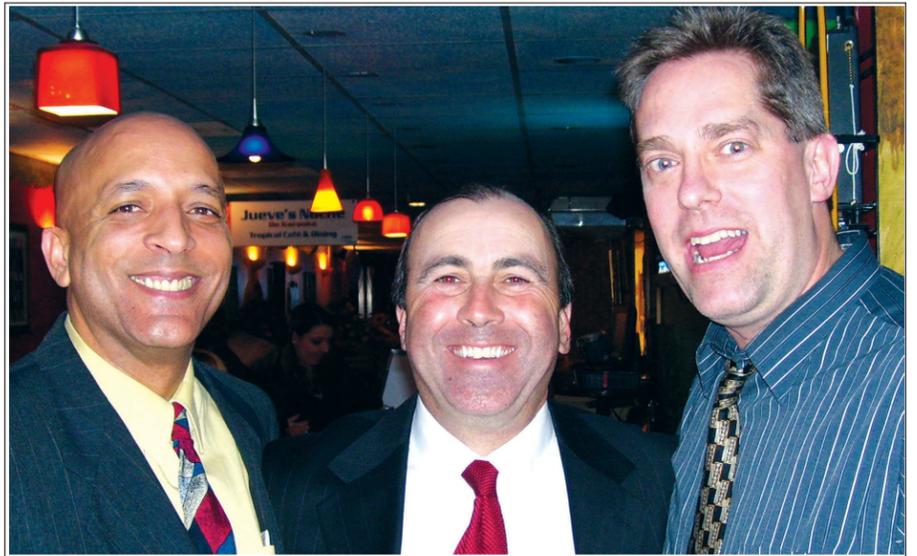
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**Valley Patriot Visits Naples Beach Florida**



Methuen City Councilor Debbie Quinn and Lowell resident Steve Deschene of Lowell took along their copy of last month's edition of the Valley Patriot when they went on vacation to Naples Beach, Florida. If you would like to send us a picture of The Valley Patriot on your vacation (it's a great read on the plane) send it to valleypatriot@aol.com



**Caught in the Act!**

Lawrence state Representative Willie Lantigua, former Lawrence Mayor Kevin Sullivan (brother of current mayor Mike Sullivan), and Lawrence Planning Director Michael Sweeney recently got together at Bali's Restaurant on Essex Street to discuss political strategy for the upcoming Lawrence City Council race.

**Mayor Sullivan Gives Key to the City to Sully Erna from Godsmack**

Lawrence native Sully Erna (below left) from the rock band *Godsmack*, returned to Lawrence last month to accept the key to the city from Lawrence Mayor Sullivan (see story page 8.) Erna talks to Mayor Sullivan's two sons Casey, Michael, and nephew Tim Sullivan (middle picture below) from the band *Anna Fair*. Erna's daughter Skyler uses a giant pencil to give Sullivan her autograph (pictured below right). At right, Giuseppe & Miguel DiMarca pose for a picture with Erna in Mayor Sullivan's Office.



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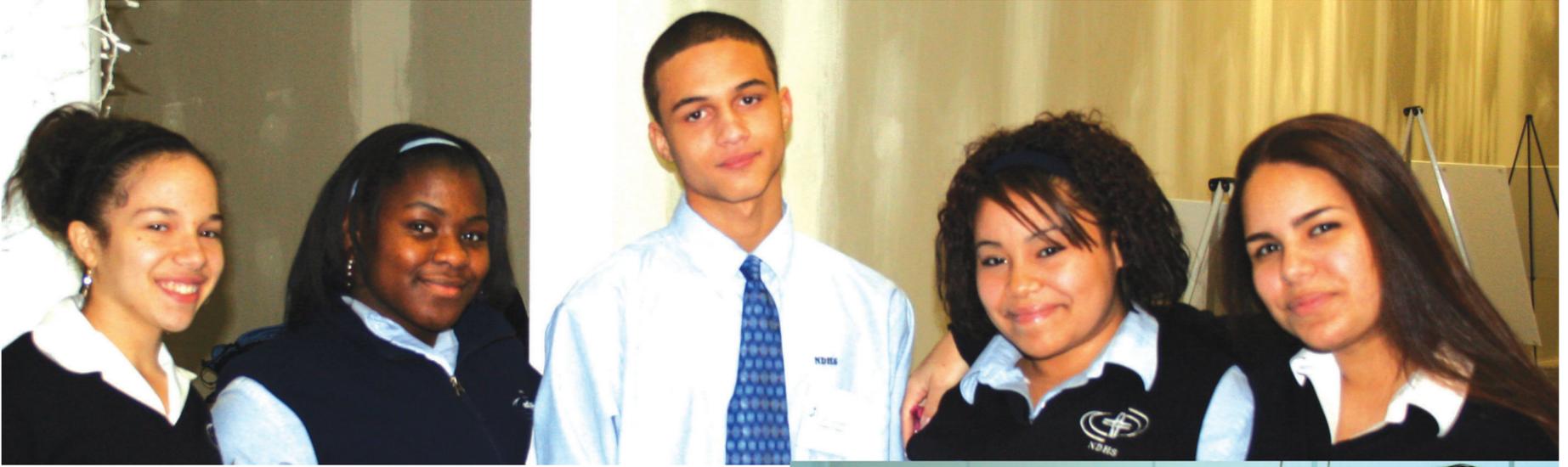
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# Notre Dame Academy **MAKING HISTORY!**



On Thursday, January 18, over 100 people joined host Robert D. Ansin, owner of Monarch on the Merrimack, and Sr. Mary Murphy, SNDdeN, President of Notre Dame High School, to celebrate **Making History**, an event to inaugurate the school's expansion plan.

The event took place at the former Wood Mill in Lawrence, now renamed Monarch on the Merrimack.

Ansin, whose company MassInnovation, LLC is converting the building into lofts and a riverfront park, told the crowd that "the creative, innovative work that Notre Dame High School is doing is something that I support. It's time for all of us to help them."

Capital Campaign Chair Thomas F. Caffrey, Esq. noted the rapid growth of the school and described the need to renovate its hundred-year-old facility. Sr. Mary Murphy, SNDdeN, President of Notre Dame High School, talked

about the presence of the Sisters of Notre Dame in Lawrence since 1859 and the many contributions made by them to the Merrimack Valley. She went on to describe the early successes of NDHS and the school's plans for growth.

NDHS, an innovative Catholic high school for economically disadvantaged youth, provides its students with a college-preparatory curriculum along with the opportunity to earn 70% of their tuition and gain invaluable job experience through its Corporate Internship Program (CIP). The CIP places students in entry-level clerical positions with such partners as Putnam Investments, TDBanknorth, Raytheon, the Lahey Clinic, Caritas Holy Family Hospital, Verizon Wireless, SBLLI, and the University of Massachusetts-Lowell.

For more information about Notre Dame High School, please contact Mark Reimer at 978-689-8222, ext. 14, or mreimer@ndhslaw.org.



**Bob Ansin (right), owner of Monarch on the Merrimack and community chair for the capital campaign, speaks with Senator Susan Tucker and Sr. Maryalcyce Gilfeather, SNDdeN**

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# What Thomas Jefferson Learned from the Muslim Book of Jihad

Ted Sampley, U.S. Veteran Dispatch

Democrat Keith Ellison is now officially the first Muslim United States congressman. True to his pledge, he placed his hand on the Quran, the Muslim book of jihad and pledged his allegiance to the United States during his ceremonial swearing-in.

Capitol Hill staff said Ellison's swearing-in photo opportunity drew more media than they had ever seen in the history of the U.S. House. Ellison represents the 5th Congressional District of Minnesota. It once belonged to Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States and one of America's founding fathers. Ellison borrowed it from the Rare Book Section of the Library of Congress. It was one of the 6,500 Jefferson books archived in the library.

Ellison, who was born in Detroit and converted to Islam while in college, said he chose to use Jefferson's Quran because it showed that "a visionary like Jefferson" believed that wisdom could be gleaned from many sources. There is no doubt Ellison was right about Jefferson believing wisdom could be "gleaned" from the Muslim Quran. At the time Jefferson owned the book, he needed to know everything possible about Muslims because he was about to advocate war against the Islamic "Barbary" states of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Tripoli.

Ellison's use of Jefferson's Quran as a prop illuminates a subject once well-known in the history of the United States, but, which today, is mostly forgotten - the Muslim pirate slavers who over many centuries enslaved millions of Africans and tens of thousands of Christian Europeans and Americans in the Islamic "Barbary" states. Over the course of 10 centuries, Muslim pirates cruised the African and Mediterranean coastline, pillaging villages and seizing slaves.

The taking of slaves in pre-dawn raids on unsuspecting coastal villages had a high

casualty rate. It was typical of Muslim raiders to kill off as many of the "non-Muslim" older men and women as possible so the preferred "booty" of only young women and children could be collected. Young non-Muslim women were targeted because of their value as concubines in Islamic markets. Islamic law provides for the sexual interests of Muslim men by allowing them to take as many as four wives at one time and to have as many concubines as their fortunes allow.

Boys, as young as 9 or 10 years old, were often mutilated to create eunuchs who would bring higher prices in the slave markets of the Middle East. Muslim slave traders created "eunuch stations" along major African slave routes so the necessary surgery could be performed. It was estimated that only a small number of the boys subjected to the mutilation survived after the surgery.

When American colonists rebelled against British rule in 1776, American merchant ships lost Royal Navy protection. With no American Navy for protection, American ships were attacked and their Christian crews enslaved by Muslim pirates operating under the control of the "Dey of Algiers"—an Islamist warlord ruling Algeria.

Because American commerce in the Mediterranean was being destroyed by the pirates, the Continental Congress agreed in 1784 to negotiate treaties with the four Barbary States. Congress appointed a special commission consisting of John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin, to oversee the negotiations. Lacking the ability to protect its merchant ships in the Mediterranean, the new

American government tried to appease the Muslim slavers by agreeing to pay tribute and ransoms in order to retrieve seized American ships and buy the freedom of enslaved sailors.

Adams argued in favor of paying tribute as the cheapest way to get American commerce in the Mediterranean moving again. Jefferson was opposed. He believed there would be no end to the demands for tribute and wanted matters settled "through the medium of war." He proposed a league of trading nations to force an end to Muslim piracy.

In 1786, Jefferson, then the American ambassador to France, and Adams, then the American ambassador to Britain, met in London with Sidi Haji Abdul Rahman Adja, the "Dey of Algiers" ambassador to Britain. The Americans wanted to negotiate a peace treaty based on Congress' vote to appease. During the meeting Jefferson and Adams asked the Dey's ambassador why Muslims held so much hostility towards America, a nation with which they had no previous contacts.

**In a later meeting with the American Congress, the two future presidents reported that Ambassador Sidi Haji Abdul Rahman Adja had answered that Islam "was founded on the Laws of their Prophet, that it was written in their Quran, that all nations who should not have acknowledged their authority were sinners, that it was their right and duty to make war upon them wherever they could be found, and to make slaves of all they could take as Prisoners, and that every Musselman (Muslim) who should be slain in Battle was sure to go to Paradise."**

For the following 15 years, the American government paid the Muslims millions of dollars for the safe passage of American ships or the return of American hostages. The payments in ransom and tribute amounted to 20 percent of United States government annual revenues in 1800.

Not long after Jefferson's inauguration as president in 1801, he dispatched a group of frigates to defend American interests in the Mediterranean, and informed Congress. Declaring that America was going to spend "millions for defense but not one cent for tribute," Jefferson pressed the issue by deploying American Marines and many of America's best warships to the Muslim Barbary Coast. The USS Constitution, USS Constellation, USS Philadelphia, USS Chesapeake, USS Argus, USS Syren and USS Intrepid all saw action. In 1805, American Marines marched across the desert from Egypt into Tripolitania, forcing the surrender of Tripoli and the freeing of all American slaves.

During the Jefferson administration, the Muslim Barbary States, crumbling as a result of intense American naval bombardment and on shore raids by Marines, finally officially agreed to abandon slavery and piracy. Jefferson's victory over the Muslims lives on today in the Marine Hymn, with the line, "From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli, we will fight our country's battles on the land as on the sea."

It wasn't until 1815 that the problem was fully settled by the total defeat of all the Muslim slave trading pirates.

Jefferson had been right. **The "medium of war" was the only way to put an end to the Muslim problem.** Mr. Ellison was right about Jefferson. He was a "visionary" wise enough to read and learn about the enemy from their own Muslim book of jihad.

## The March for Life was a March for Truth

Paul Murano

The 34<sup>th</sup> annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, gathering tens of thousands from around the country, remained under the radar. The mainstream media, once again, refused to cover it.

Why?

The journalistic arm of the cultural left sees abortion as the necessary back-up for the fornication culture it created upon the birth control pill. This march symbolized blasphemy against the religion of secular humanism and its four-decades-old culture of death, where the gods of equality (translated as sameness) and relativism reign. In this post-Christian religion, women are masculinized and men feminized. With the feminization of thought, personal experience and emotion displace objectivity and reason. Taken to the extreme, nothing is real unless it is experienced and felt.

If truth and goodness are purely subjective, we *create* our reality rather than *discover* it. Here is the crux of our current culture war: Is truth and morality created by us or is it to be discovered and conformed to?

The former is the religion of secular humanism, the latter Christianity. The former has man as its center and ultimate authority, the latter has God. This intellectual path away from ethical monotheism and natural law can look enticing: we can re-create reality simply by manipulating the language and convincing enough people. That's a lot of power. If we don't like the definition of marriage, redefine it. If human beings become burdensome, redefine them to give us room for abortion and euthanasia.

Such self-deception, however, always leads to death. The biblical principle that *lies lead to death* can not be denied for very long. The war in Iraq is a legitimate concern, but



Young women take a break at the 2007 March for Life

the media and intelligentsia of this country have refused to recognize a gruesome war ongoing since January 22, 1973.

The late Mother Teresa once said: *If mothers are killing their own children by abortion, how can we possibly ask other people to stop killing each other?* By making pre-birth homicide a legal choice we have declared war on God; and since that declaration 60 million of us, 1.5 million per year, 4400 per day, *every single day* in this country, have been sacrificed to the gods of the religion of the cultural left. I asked a female friend who is pro-life why, in a world that one-third of us under 34 years old are missing due to abortion, there's so little alarm or outrage. She mentioned it's because people need a face. She admitted that with most people "unless there is a name and a face, it doesn't become part of their personal experience. It isn't *real* to them."

The irony is that this feminine psyche expressed above is what makes women beautiful. The focus on personal experience, relationships, and emotional responses are what

makes them attractive to men as potential wives, mothers, and glue of the community. However, it is a two-edged sword. The first woman in Eden needed to *personally experience* the forbidden fruit in order to understand its value. Adam, who should have utilized his power of reason and objectivity to stop her, gave in. Theologians call him the "first wimp." The more men rely on personal experience and emotion to discern truth and define reality, the more we become a society of wimps. What the annual Walk for Life in Washington, D.C. showed us on January 22<sup>nd</sup> was that there is hope for a non-wimpish future. Experience as well as reason moved many young people, tens of thousands of them, on that bitterly cold day, to stand up for truth despite the gods of egalitarianism, androgyny, and relativism of the religion of secular humanism. Many women held up signs stating, "I Regret My Abortion." They are members of the "Silent No More Awareness Campaign" of women who have had abortions. Young men braved the cold to stand up for those who have no voice of their own, simply because it was the right thing to do. And, both young men and women under 34, realizing they are survivors of the abortion-age, exercised their obligation to speak out.

One third of their peers were not so lucky. It was a time to show that legalized abortion produces broken women, missing children, and a weakened nation. It was a time to celebrate life and mourn all those who lost theirs before birth. It was a time for men, called to love and protect women and children by nature, to speak out against injustice despite how unpopular it might be. On January 22<sup>nd</sup> real men stood up with broken women who had abortions and others who respect the sanctity of human life, to proclaim proudly and courageously together: We must be silent no more.

To Contact Paul Murano email him at [PJDM@aol.com](mailto:PJDM@aol.com)

# Why Carter Attacks the Jews

**Charles Jacobs, The David Project**

What sort of person is Jimmy Carter?

Why did he run from a debate with Alan Dershowitz at Brandeis?

Why did Jimmy Carter damn the Jews with a book full of deceit and lies?

Here are three lies from his recent Globe op-ed:

\* Carter condemns the enormous wall that snakes through the West Bank. The wall is mostly fencing, and while not a perfect solution, is credited even by Palestinians with stopping suicide murderers.

\* Contrary to Carter's statements, Palestinians are deprived of the necessities of life because Yassir Arafat stole nearly a billion dollars in foreign aid, and Hamas won't renounce violence, recognize Israel and thus qualify for international aid.

\* Carter says Hamas would negotiate with Israel, but they'd likely negotiate a truce, not peace, so they can enlarge their arsenals and kill more Jews later. And now comes the news -from Professor Konner at Emory University - who says Carter's book OK's the murder of Jews until Israel accedes to Carter's prescriptions. Read this sentence carefully:

"It is imperative that the general Arab community and all significant Palestinian groups make it clear that they will end the suicide bombings and other acts of terrorism when international laws and the ultimate goals of the Roadmap for Peace are accepted by Israel."(See Konner's full analysis at [www.davidproject.org](http://www.davidproject.org).)

Is a former president of the United States calling for the murder of Jewish children?

None of this should be too surprising. Carter has been accused by a former aide of dramatically misrepresenting meetings at

which others were present taking notes. He has been accused by a former peace negotiator of taking maps without permission, and making changes that misrepresent historical facts.

Alan Dershowitz and Rachel Ehrenfeld now point out that Carter has long acted like a check-cashing employee of the Arab Lobby.

The Carter Center has taken tens of millions of dollars from Saudi royalty and M.E. sultans, says Dershowitz. Not a peep about the despotism of these benefactors from this man so concerned with human rights. Carter's failing peanut farm took loans from the corrupt Pakistani Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI).

Then he took half a million dollars from Shiek Zayed, founder of the Arab League think tank, the Zayed Center, which was closed after Boston student activist Rachel Fish lobbied Harvard to return Zayed's \$2.5M gift.

Fish showed Harvard that Zayed's Center hosted anti-American and anti-Semitic speakers.

Little wonder that Carter raised funds for the PLO, certified corrupt Palestinian elections, shells for Hamas, and defames the Jewish state and its supporters.

After his failing peanut farm was bailed out by the corrupt Pakistani bank - BCCI in a shady deal involving Saudi money, Carter told the American people, There has not been any nation more cooperative than Saudi Arabia. Now here's a real case of dual loyalty. This is a national scandal.

**For background pieces on Carter and his finances, go to [www.davidproject.org](http://www.davidproject.org)**

# "Immigrants" Faked Fear of Persecution is Asylum Fraud

**Miguel Perez**



Immigrants who obtained green cards after entering the United States through political asylum now run the risk of losing that privilege if they return to the countries where they claimed they were persecuted, according to a warning posted on a federal government Web site.

The measure is long overdue!

For too long, too many immigrants have made a mockery of the political asylum system.

While many who truly deserve asylum are not getting it, others are exploiting U.S. compassion for the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Immediately after receiving a green card, they turn around and return to their homelands as tourists — although they claimed to have a "well-founded fear of persecution" upon returning. If they go back home so quickly, then obviously their green cards were obtained through fraudulent claims, and their permits to remain here should be revoked.

Since they no longer fear traveling to their country of origin; when they go home, they should not be allowed to return.

And that's exactly what may now happen to fraudulent asylum seekers.

The warning came in the form of a "fact sheet" posted in late December on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Web site. While those who truly fear persecution in their homelands would not dare return anyway, the warning will undoubtedly deter others from abusing the system.

Although the warning is based on longstanding laws and regulations, the policy of enforcing them is new. Legal U.S. residents who obtained their green cards through political asylum had never been given such a warning.

The new policy has immigration attorneys and some immigrants very concerned. Some are even outraged by the warning.

Why? Because for attorneys, the business of representing asylum seekers may dwindle. For fraudulent political refugees, there will be a price to pay for cutting in front of the immigration line. If they come in under asylum, they will have to wait a few years — until they become American citizens — to be eligible to return home.

Critics say the policy is unfair to green-card holders who may need to visit a dying relative, attend a funeral or tend to some other emergency. That's a valid concern.

They also claim that those returning to countries where political conditions have changed, and where their chances of being persecuted have evaporated, should not be penalized. That's also a valid point.

Yet U.S. government officials told The Miami Herald that those who return home because of emergencies or changed political conditions would not be affected by the new crackdown. Officials say they are after those who are obviously abusing the system by frequently traveling to countries where the political conditions have not changed, making it clear that their claimed fear of persecution was a fraud.

These asylum seekers, who come from many countries where some people are actually persecuted, were really economic refugees pretending to have political motives for coming here.

And there are plenty of them. The "tourists" who go back to vacation in countries where they were allegedly persecuted are a much larger group than those who have genuine emergency reasons to return.

Some go back to their hometowns to boast about the wealth they have acquired in the United States. Some even make a business out of it — flying back and forth as "mules" carrying either cash or goods to resell in their own countries.

Of course, there are thousands of political refugees who do deserve to be here. Those are the ones who have proven that their fear of persecution was legitimate by staying away from the countries and the people they love - even after becoming American citizens.

But those who came under false pretenses, those who lied about a fear that never existed, deserve the new policy.

For making a mockery of an asylum system that is meant to save lives, and to make room for those who really deserve political asylum, they need to be stopped.

**To find out more about Miguel Perez, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).**

**Tower Hill Neighborhood Association February meeting**

**Wednesday Feb. 28th at 7pm.**  
 Our Lady of Good Counsel Schools, Judson Hall.  
 Guests speakers to include the Police Chief, Fire Chief, representatives from the DPW.  
 "Interactive Neighborhoods are Safer Neighborhoods"

For more information contact THNA President, Nick Kolofoles at 978-688-3705.  
**ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND**

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# Volunteers Send Medical Equipment Around the World

For North Andover resident Al Movsesian, volunteering a day of his time at the old Lucent Technologies building on Rt. 125 is a labor of love.

With 150,000 square feet of warehouse space made available by Orit Goldstein, Movsesian and dozens of other volunteers for the International Medical Equipment Collaborative or IMEC (a 13-year-old non-profit organization) collect donated (mostly used) medical supplies and equipment from area hospitals, test and fix the equipment, then package and ship the supplies to impoverished hospitals and clinics in underdeveloped countries around the world.

IMEC is the brainchild of former hospital administrator Tom Keefe, a Haverhill native who left his full-time job to run the non-profit after seeing the "dire need" of hospital patients around the world. "You go to other countries and you see that they do not even have basic hospital needs, like sutures, heart monitoring machines or incubators," Keefe says. "Our goal is to get donated medical equipment in this country and supply an entire hospital overseas."

Keefe estimates that 55-70 40-foot containers full of medical equipment are shipped each year to hospitals and clinics in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and South and Central America.

As Keefe walked through the warehouse at the old Lucent site, he showed us the millions of dollars of equipment waiting to be inspected and shipped.

Specialty items like baby monitors, heart monitors, incubators, IV machines, respirators, tables, chairs and hundreds of other supplies needed to refurbish and maintain a hospital or clinic.

"One of the first things we wanted to do," Keefe says, "was to make sure that the equipment we were going to ship overseas would not be diverted to corrupt government officials or sold on the black market. So we make sure we have someone at each location to follow the supplies where they are needed, like the Oncology Hospital in Yerevan, Armenia."

Keefe says that through "shepherding organizations" like the Knights of Vartan, Rotary Club, the Seventh Day Adventists, and other non-profits, all the customs paperwork is filled out exactly as the host country requires. The non-profit shepherding organizations then follow the equipment through the lengthy process of shipping the containers overseas and that the customs of the host country are respected.

As just one example, the Knights of Vartan have shipped four 40-foot containers of equipment in the last couple of years, packaged by IMEC and the volunteers in North Andover, to Armenia. That's twenty pallets of supplies and equipment per container which were shipped to the Central Oncology Science Center and Hospital in Yerevan. Keefe himself has been to Armenia, evaluating its needs, taking stock of inventory and overseeing the installation of the medical equipment.

Since IMEC does not use government funds, and depends on the charity of non-profits and others, Keefe says that what they need most is not donations but more volunteers with specialized medical and technical knowledge to test equipment, as well as those willing to help package and ship the containers.

"What we really need most are volunteers, bodies, we need bodies to help us package and ship these materials," Keefe says. We have been blessed to have so many good people give of their time, and we are even more blessed that companies like UPS, Timberland and Phillips lend us some of their workers to help, but we always need more."

"What we try to do is provide medical equipment that doctors in hospitals and clinics around the world tell us they need. But it isn't just specialized medical equipment, some hospitals don't even have a computer, or desks, or exam tables - simple things we take for granted in this country. So we send them what they need."

A map of the world in Keefe's conference room at Lucent has 70 colored flags pinned to it, each representing a country IMEC has delivered one or more containers full of medical supplies to a needy hospital or clinic. For information or to volunteer, you can contact IMEC at 978-557-5510 ext. 316, or visit the Web site at [www.imecamerica.org](http://www.imecamerica.org).



*Hi, I'm Betty Tavares*  
*I'm a member of*  
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# Our Future Economy: The Movie

Seth J. Itzkan, Karl Thidemann, John Michitson

Imagine the year is 2107 - one century from now. You're not around, of course, but your great-grandchildren are. Like you once did, they now live in the Merrimack Valley. One Saturday afternoon, a group of your kin decides to go to the newly created Visitor Center for the Merrimack Valley National Innovation Park and Incubator. This facility, a greatly expanded version of what you and I once called the Lowell National Historical Park, now focuses on the entire Valley, with branches in all constituent cities.

At the center, your descendants relax, sitting down comfortably in an atrium that is a marvel of technologically advanced, environmentally-friendly design. You and I, silent witnesses peering wide-eyed through time, could not begin to fathom how it's possible for the fabrics covering the walls, the floor, the furniture - and even our future family's clothing - to respond to one's gaze and touch by changing color, texture, and pattern. But not all would be so mysterious and unfamiliar. The sounds of children playing and the smell of freshly cut grass thankfully remain ageless.

Your future clan is about to experience a multi-sensory show that recaps the great regional achievements of the previous century. Triggered by an unseen signal to dim the room lights, the numerous transparent skylight panels comprising the atrium's cathedral ceiling each assume a different color, slowly becoming nearly opaque, resulting in a stunning stained-glass ceiling.

As the show begins, your kin are surrounded with the sights, sounds and smells of our present era. A narrator intones: "The year is now 2007, the year historians mark as the beginning of a dramatic rebirth of the region - catapulting it, once again, to the height of world envy it enjoyed one-and-a-half centuries earlier."

**While most of us were thinking that the mill era for the Merrimack Valley was over, Konarka instead went ahead and invented the cotton of the future.**

Now, let's come back to today. It's February. It's cold, but not as cold as it should be. In fact, it's been one of the warmest winters in a lengthening chain of warm winters.

The skiing industry is melting into the red and the newest reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have just hit the papers, issuing their strongest words yet on the "unequivocal" evidence of human-induced global warming. They say that our impact is going to continue to warm the Earth for centuries, even if we stopped production of heat trapping gases today. The best we can hope to do is curb the burden. Argh. You need a break.

So, what do you do?

Well, of course you go to the Lowell National Historical Park where every 30 minutes they show a film on the city's great industrial heritage. The film is titled Lowell: The Industrial Revelation.

You notice the title does not contain the word "revolution," as you had momentarily thought, but rather, "revelation." Revelation, which, according to our friends at American Heritage Dictionary, means (1) The act of revealing or disclosing, and (2) Something revealed, especially a dramatic disclosure of something not



previously known or realized. Hmm. You are intrigued by the second definition - "a dramatic disclosure ..."

Within the film you hear inspiring language, such as:

"What happened here was so successful and so profitable that it convinced young America to pursue a course of industrialization ... Lowell is America's first great industrial city ... The city is a revelation to all who see it. Indeed, American technology is to reach new heights in 19th century Lowell.

The city is transformed into a huge laboratory for experiments in waterpower, engineering, textile chemistry, and machine design."

Of course you are familiar with this story and have heard similar language, but what you really loved about this breathless prose was the opening phrase of the last sentence, "The city is transformed into a huge laboratory ...," repeat, "laboratory." And a laboratory for what, you ask yourself rhetorically? Well, like it said, "experiments in water power, engineering, textile chemistry, and machine design." This gives you pause, and you wonder, are such experiments still going on? Are we still breaking new ground?

OK. Now the movie ends. You go outside and walk down to the banks of the Merrimack River where Boott Mill is being transformed into luxury condominiums. You take a breath of the cool air and ask yourself, what does the future hold for the Merrimack Valley? What would it look like decades from today if, like the past, the whole region acted as a "laboratory" for experiments in industry, energy, engineering, and chemistry? What would it look like if a whole region were the fertile nexus of a new industrial "revelation"? What is the "dramatic disclosure of something not previously known or realized" that this region can offer to the World?

In a quest to answer those questions, your first task is to do a wide-area scan. What do we know about industry and economic growth today? Five points come to mind:

(1) All industry is now global. Competitive advantage is driven almost entirely by innovation and quick implementation. Any industrial rebirth must focus on intellectual capital.

(2) Environmental considerations are paramount. There is zero room for the belchers of yesteryear. Any industrial growth must not only be environmentally friendly, but, in fact, restorative. It must restore the environment even as it creates jobs and commerce.

(3) Fossil fuel dependence is a non-starter. The energy requirements of tomorrow's industry must be satisfied through non-carbon sources.

(4) Human safety and dignity are rule one. Toxic environments are unacceptable. Tomorrow's industry must find ways to create products that are benign and pose no threat to workers or consumers.

So, you ask yourself, can the Merrimack Valley achieve this?

**As the show begins, your kin are surrounded with the sights, sounds and smells of our present era. A narrator intones: "The year is now 2007, the year historians mark as the beginning of a dramatic rebirth of the region."**

Your next task is to perform a local scan of what is innovative locally and indicative of possible growth for the region. Many highlights come to mind, however, you only have room, at the moment, to jot down three of them.

(1) The Merrimack Valley is home to the UMASS-Lowell Center for Green Chemistry, the world's premier academic program for the study of environmentally benign approaches to industrial chemistry.

This innovation is growing rapidly in major commercial sectors, such as pharmaceuticals, plastics, electronics, and consumer goods. It is saving industrial interests billions of dollars in energy and environmental compliance, and producing not only products of equivalent, but often superior quality. It helps industry to do more with less. Companies around the globe send their top researchers to Lowell to better understand how to apply this innovation to their own businesses; they envy this knowledge.

2. The Merrimack Valley is home to what is likely the world's largest geothermally-heated residential development. The Wood Mill in Lawrence, now known as Monarch Lofts, is in the process of becoming a complex of 600 condominiums and 30-plus offices heated and cooled largely through natural, non-polluting processes. It serves as a shining example of how to build high-density urban dwellings of the future ... precisely what every major developer around the world now wants to know.

3. The Merrimack Valley is home to Konarka Technologies, the world's leading innovator in the emerging industry of nano-scale photovoltaics. This exciting technological breakthrough is opening a new world of solar-powered materials, such as plastics, films, and even fabrics that can all create electricity when exposed to light. Konarka is prototyping solar powered tents where the canvas-like fabric is, itself, the electrical generating material.

They also have designs for backpacks and other self-powered solar fabric products. In 1850, the mills on the Merrimack River were producing more than 2 million yards of cotton cloth a week. How much longer before Konarka and its cousin companies are generating 2 million yards a week of solar powered fabric?

While most of us were thinking that the mill era for the Merrimack Valley was over, Konarka instead went ahead and invented the cotton of the future.

Well, that was a mindful, you say to yourself, as you reconsider the questions with new insight: What's in this multi-modal movie that my progeny are going to watch 100 years from now?

What happens, beginning today, that allows this region to become a laboratory for the economy of the future? What are the combinations of innovations that once again will allow the Merrimack Valley's industrial revelations to shine forth upon the world?

Suddenly, it becomes clear, the answers start with you.

The lights go dim. The movie begins.



Seth Itzkan is president of Planet-TECH Associates, a consulting agency identifying innovations in economic development. Recently, Mr. Itzkan helped The Boston Foundation to conceptualize and implement its Hub of Innovations tool. You can email him at [seth.itzkan@gmail.com](mailto:seth.itzkan@gmail.com)



John Michitson was a Haverhill city councilor for 10 years; the last 2 as president. He is a manager and electrical engineer at the MITRE Corporation in Bedford, Mass. John and his wife, Heidi, are enjoying the childhood of their 4-year-old daughter and 6 year-old son. email: [jmichitson@verizon.net](mailto:jmichitson@verizon.net)

The Innovation Valley initiative seeks to help stimulate economic growth and quality-of-life enhancements in the Merrimack Valley. Every month we will report on innovative businesses, practices, and ideas that are helping to make Merrimack Valley the place to be. Look for our article in print media and online at [www.ivalley.org](http://www.ivalley.org).