



Merrimack Valley Hospice Welcomes Dr. Sherry Graham to Medical Director Team

Lawrence, Mass. – Merrimack Valley Hospice is pleased to announce that Dr. Sherry Graham has recently accepted the position of Medical Director.

“My inpatient experience sparked my interest in palliative care,” said Dr. Graham. “This is a wonderful opportunity for me to specialize in hospice care and it allows me more time to spend with my patients during a very important stage in their life.”

Dr. Graham will be joining Dr. Jennifer Reidy, Medical Director for Merrimack Valley Hospice. Prior to joining the not-for-profit agency Dr. Graham worked at the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center. She is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester, MA. She received her undergraduate degree at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

“I’ve always been very interested in the psycho-social aspect of medicine,” said Dr. Graham. “This is a chance to use those skills in caring for Merrimack Valley Hospice’s patients.”

Dr. Graham resides in Arlington with her husband and their two children.

Merrimack Valley Hospice *the* trusted name in end of life care for more than 25 years, is one of the largest, most respected, not-for-profit hospices in the region. The agency is affiliated with Home Health VNA and HomeCare, Inc. The three agencies serve more than 80 communities in the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire from their offices in Lawrence, Chelmsford, Peabody, Haverhill and Newburyport. Learn more about the agency on www.merrimackvalleyhospice.org.

Jan 23 Set as Financial Aid Night at Greater Lawrence Tech

**Greater Lawrence Technical School
57 River Road, Andover, MA 01810
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**

**Vacirca Performing Arts Center
Application process, filling out FAFSA form, admissions, alternate funding
For seniors, juniors and parents**

Tuesday, January 23, 2007 is the date for the Annual Financial Aid Night at Greater Lawrence Technical School to be held in the performing arts center from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Seniors and their parents/guardians are urged to attend; juniors accompanied by parents are also welcome.

Sponsored by the Guidance Department, the evening will include tips on financing a college education and completing financial aid applications, including the FAFSA, the form that must be submitted to apply for monetary assistance.

A representative from the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA) will discuss the process parents and students go through when applying to college. Parents and students will learn how to fill out financial aid forms and how to compare financial aid award letters. The seminar will explain how financial aid is calculated and awarded, and give insights on making alternative financing decisions. In addition, Christine Mordach from Merrimack College will be on hand to offer information and answer questions about the admissions process.

State Fiddles While School Funding Shrivels

Georgetown Selectman Lonnie Brennan

Budget season is upon us. Make the sound with me: ka-ching, ka-ching, ka-ching. That’s the sound of the potential impact on our future tax bills (think override requests) if nothing changes.

First ‘ka-ching’: our School Committee members have begun their search for a new superintendent. They’ve looked at the salary (\$116,000+) paid to our 16-year veteran and decided it’s just too low for a new guy or gal they hope to hire this spring, so they’ve set the bottom line at no less than \$135,000 (and numbers have been floated in the \$142,000 range or more for a newbie). That is, of course, before any benefits and other provisions which come with the top-dog position of a school system that has three buildings and approximately 400 kids in the entire high school.

Oh, and did I mention that there’s some talk about possibly lowering the credential requirements for the new hire? So let’s see, there’s a possibility that we could pay more and get less?

Only one member of the School Committee, Don Cudmore, bucked the trend and voted against the recommendation of the hiring consultant (did I mention they’re using a consultant?) and suggested that this whole idea of setting an initial salary higher than the current experienced superintendent, and trying to ‘compete’ with others in an unknown race to find the best and brightest, could use a little more discussion. While the team is indeed eager to move forward with the hiring process, ‘Cuddos’ to Cudmore for asking the challenging questions are in order.

Another ‘ka-ching’: the initial requested increase of \$1,901,624, or 18.66%, to next year’s school budget.

That’s a lot to swallow in one year. A year in which the state continues to leave Georgetown as well as many other communities in our district short-changed in local aid funding. For those counting, most cities and towns in our district are still limping along with aid numbers that are 5% or more below the levels they were receiving before the big dig and out-of-control state spending stole our state aid away.

Funny term, ‘aid.’ Makes it seem like the state is being kind to the cities and towns. In reality the state takes our income taxes, our sales taxes, our meals taxes (on every cup of coffee, on every ice cream cone, on every dinner, on every pizza, on every take-out order) and spends it on whatever it wants, and trickles back a small percentage to our town and to our schools.

So, getting back to the 18.66% increase, it includes a lot of things, most designed to provide our students with the best education possible and to meet the shortcomings noted in the New England Association of Schools & Colleges, Inc.’s Commission on Public Secondary Schools accreditation report rendered onto the school system in October of 2006. While the commendation list was long and heartfelt, the concerns list was almost as long and led to the Georgetown school system being placed on a warning status.

Some of the items which resulted in the warning include: insufficient number of desks, insufficient parking, use of the stage area as a teaching station, limited access to computers, close proximity of the gymnasium bleachers to the playing area, lack of a regular allocation of capital funds to purchase new equipment, failure of the budget to keep pace with increases in enrollment, and increasing class sizes, amongst others.

One would expect that it’s a relatively easy process to address the technology and facility concerns with sound budget processes and the support of various town boards to set priorities and regular maintenance and upgrade schedules, but it’s the increasing class sizes that really need attention. As the budget process unfolds, more will be learned and one would hope that some of the proposed expenditures will be funded through a portion of currently available free cash to ensure a safe school environment with adequate basics such as furniture and equipment.

But an 18.66% increase? As we enter a new year (another loop around the

sun), our new governor has pledged to restore any and all cuts in state spending vetoed by former governor Romney. Not one cent can be cut from state spending. Indeed, Mr. Patrick has even wasted no time in proposing new taxes (local meals tax) to drain more money from the taxpayers. But wait: have you heard anything about restoring cuts in local aid to cities and towns? Thought not. Stay hopeful, though.

Work Off Your Taxes

On a similar note, our local ‘work-off-your-taxes program’ is getting renewed attention. Run by the Council on Aging, this first-come, first-serve program allows senior citizens to work for the town doing clerical and other work, in exchange for a reduction on their tax bills up to \$500 each year. The fund is currently limited to just 10 seniors, and the demand appears to have spiked recently and may warrant a new look at that 10 person cap.

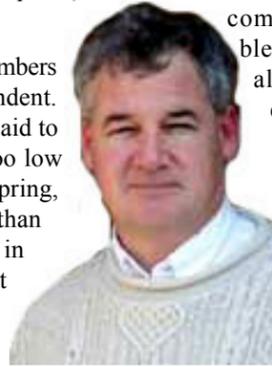
Bridge to Nowhere

The much-debated Bailey Lane Bridge remains closed to all since the fall, due to reported structural defects and decay. Plans are underway to re-open the roadway to ensure the safety of the local residents, but funding sources have yet to be identified as this column went to press.

Georgetown Today Media

Updates of events and items and links of interest can always be found on www.GeorgetownToday.com. It’s a freebie site so just send your posting along. Most budget items will eventually make their way onto the site, so let’s hope we can get through our budget process this year as neighbors and friends, respectful of one another, with a watchful eye and a careful ear, allowing for the inputs of others and the dissention of many.

Lonnie Brennan is a selectman in Georgetown, you can email him at lonnie@thechocolatecellar.com.



Georgetown Today

Lawrence “Lonnie” Brennan, Georgetown Selectman

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Donations collected during a month long drive at Our Lady of Good Counsel School, 526 Lowell St, Lawrence. Mr. Stephen McKallagat, parent of Jasmine and Casey who attend OLG, helped coordinate this effort to collect much needed items for our troops in Iraq. This was a school-wide effort. OLG School will continue to collect items as long as the students keep bringing them in. Pictured, from left to right: Rosemary Kawam - Treasurer; Brittany Contreras - Secretary; Andrew Pichardo - Vice President; Lindsey Mercer - President, all of Lawrence.



Pictured left to right: Norm and Maureen Nimo, Jimmy Kearney, and Jack Shotter. Jack's son, Jonah, is stationed in Iraq at the moment. When the Nimo's heard of the items that he was sending his son and that many of the troops were short these same supplies, they approached Jimmy at The Claddagh Pub to help setup a supply drive for our servicemen.

Valley Patriot Tours Sweden



Methuen Councilor Kathleen Corey Rahme and her husband Eli took along a copy of last month's Valley Patriot to Sweden (we were hoping for the Swedish Bikini Swim Team). If you are taking a Valley Patriot along with you on your vacation, send in a picture and we will be happy to print it.



North Andover State Representative David Torissi held a public forum last month to discuss changing the North Andover charter and the only people who showed up were his "guest speakers," Methuen Mayor Bill Manzi, the Franklin Town Administrator, and N. Andover Selectman Tom Licciardello ... respectfully.



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Former District "B" Lawrence City Councilor Carlos Matos (right) kicked off his campaign for City Council At-Large last month, holding a fundraiser on South Canal Street.



Lawrence District "B" City Councilor Grisel Silva presented a proclamation to Lawrence resident Crystobal Ramos for his years of dedication to the community and his service to our country in the Armed Forces during last week's City Council meeting. Ramos is a radio personality on a local spanish language radio program in Methuen.

Taking a break from making toys at the North Pole last month, Santa stopped by the Tower Hill Neighborhood Association's annual Christmas party to give out toys to the good little girls and boys of Lawrence's Tower Hill area. Above, Santa tries to get this young boy to pose for the camera, to no avail.

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The Second Challenge: Eastern Massachusetts

Kate Morris, Student Correspondent

So here they were. The Tsongas Arena, the Eastern Massachusetts competition. After winning first place at Methuen High, the Hurricanes had continued their legacy and moved on to Eastern Massachusetts, being the only small novice A-Team from the Merrimack Valley. They had competed against two other teams, Lowell and Sudbury. Because there were only three teams, only the first place team could advance on. Lucky for the Hurricanes, they had made it, and now were on to their next challenge.

The Tsongas arena is located in Lowell and, seating about 6,500 people, it is quite an intimidating place, especially for a group of 13 cheerleaders. Arriving there was probably the scariest part. When you walked in the door you were in a hall and beyond the door all you were able to see were rows and rows of people, scary huh?

Well, not when you were used to it. Upon arriving the girls were brought to their section of seats above the floor. After the previous session was done, they were given a section of time to go out onto the floor and practice, tumbling, spacing and other key elements to their routine (not including stunting). When the girls were ushered back to their seats, the first few teams filed out of the main area and brought down below.

The Hurricanes were the fourth team up, so they were one of the first teams to leave. This is when tension started to run high. The wait was nerve-racking. When you were back stage, you weren't able to see any of the teams before you until you were next. Finally the Hurricanes A-Team was up.

The routine went very well. There were no placement issues, and none of the stunts

fell. However, no one knew what the outcome would be. The girls' biggest competition was the Arlington Spy Ponders. Their routine also went very well. The only thing they could do after their routine was over was go back to their seats and wait. This was probably the hardest part of the entire competition. The other A and B teams continued, providing the girls something to focus their attention on other than their awards.

After all the advanced teams had finished competing, the awards ceremony was about to start. The girls filed out onto the floor and after a series of songs the announcer was finally ready. He announced all the B-Team awards, including novice, intermediate, and advanced categories, and right after that the first of the A-Team awards began. That was where the Hurricanes were placed. The announcer called out third place, then it was really the moment of truth, "In second place, from the Greater Boston League" the announcer said. They basically exploded knowing that we must have taken 1st place, "The Arlington Spy Ponders!" A tumult of cheering from their section. "And now, your Midget, small, novice Eastern Mass champions, from the Merrimack Valley."

Now they started to cheer, "The LAWRENCE HURRICANES!" The entire team stood up, and began cheering while the three captains ran up to get the monstrous trophy. When they brought it back the only sound audible was the cheering of the team, and the crowd. They had won! But, the test was still not over. After all the cheering and the joy, they all remembered up next, was Regionals. They had been informed that Regionals was in Rhode Island, and the first thing on everyone's mind, ROADTRIP!

Notre Dame High School Student Has Poem Pulished in National Anthology

LAWRENCE – Stephanie Tineo, 15, a freshman at Notre Dame High School, recently nominated her eighth-grade teacher at the Weatherbee School, Ms. Lisa Stott, for a "You've Made a Difference in My Life" award. When Ms. Stott attended the ceremony for award recipients at NDHS, she surprised Stephanie with the announcement that a poem she had written as an eighth grader entitled, "Protected Love Unwanted," was just published in *The Teacher's Selection Anthology of Poetry*. Stephanie is the only student from Lawrence to have her work included in this national anthology.

When asked the theme of her poem, Stephanie replied, "My mother is so strict, so I wrote about that." Her mother is obviously loving also because the staff at NDHS find Stephanie ever cheerful and very kind.

Stephanie also had a second poem published along with "Protected Love Unwanted" in the Apple Sauce Literary Magazine, a showcase of the creative writing and artistic talents of middle school students from Lawrence, Andover, North Andover, and Methuen. That poem is entitled "Gratitude." In it Stephanie thanks all those who believe in her, especially her mom and her teachers.

Protected Love Unwanted

*"May I go to the movies with boys?"
I ask my mom.
"No!" she says, and I can't stay calm.
"I can't do anything!" I shout in a whining tone.
"It's not fair! I can't even talk to boys on the phone."*

*They're sheltering me
I'm in a lock down
An animal in a cage
Tied, gagged and bound
"Why don't you let me do anything at all?"
I plead
"Because I love you!" she says
thinking
That's the answer I need.*

*"Right!" I say sarcastically
Stopping myself
From acting frantically.

They're holding me back
From what adolescents typically do
I wanna do what's right for me
And not what's right for you!*

Gratitude

*"You are going to be someone when you grow up,"
Many people say to me.
"You will surely succeed in anything
You want to be."

I don't know what to say
When they tell me this
I guess I should say, "Thanks"
For their kindness

But what if I don't become someone?
What if I disappoint them?

Then it all became clear
I don't have to be someone famous
To be someone.
I just have to make something
Out of myself
And live without fear.

As long as I have God
And all those who love me
If I work for it, I will succeed!
I can study psychology
And help those in need

What's in my heart is thanks!
Thanks to all those who believe in me
My teachers and my mom
Especially.*



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Curves Girls Donate More Than 280 Bears to Children at Christmas

BRADFORD – It's been tough to squeeze into the workout room at Curves in Bradford – because it was busting at the seams with teddy bears. Throughout the past month, members of Curves have been donating dozens and dozens of bears to be distributed to children in the Maternal Child Health program at Home Health VNA. The group collected more than 280 bears and dropped them off at the agency this week.

The idea stemmed from a Curves member, Kim Klemarczyk. Her daughters have been collecting bears for the agency for the past six years when they decided they wanted to forgo their own Christmas gifts and do something for children who were less fortunate. Each year Kim and her daughters, Kristin and Kelly, have been buying the "cutest and most lovable teddy bears they can find" and donating them to the agency.

Kim's Curves team decided to join the family in their tradition. Shauna Trahan, manager at Curves Bradford, was excited to get involved. "What a great cause – this is a really wonderful project," said Trahan. "Our members were happy to help out and it's been fun watching our pile of bears grow and grow!" Trahan delivered the bears on Monday, December 18th to Home Health VNA's office. Nurses will be bringing new "friends" to children suffering from chronic illness throughout the week as a little gift.

"We're so thankful for the generous spirit of not only the Klemarczyk family, but the members of Curves Bradford," said Pat Palermo, vice president of external relations for Home Health VNA. "Kelly, Kristin and Kim have been making this project a holiday tradition for years, and we are thrilled that their dedication to our youngest and often frailest patients is spreading! The members of Curves have certainly made the holiday brighter for our patients!"

And it doesn't end at Christmas. The agency distributes bears throughout the year, to children in many of their programs including hospice.

"There are times where a young child is struggling to understand an illness, whether it is their own or their parents," said Palermo. "Having a warm, soft friend to hang on to can make things a little less scary."



Home Health VNA is a not-for-profit agency affiliated with HomeCare, Inc. and Merrimack Valley Hospice. Together the three agencies serve more than 80 communities throughout the Merrimack Valley and southern New Hampshire. To learn more about them, visit www.homehealthvna.org.



Mill City Youth Football and Cheer League

Tom Duggan

The Mill City Youth Football and Cheer League has started in the city of Lawrence. The League has been established with the purpose of developing and operating football and cheerleading programs for young boys and girls throughout Lawrence. The League will be providing competitive, supervised football and will seek to implement the ideals of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage and scholarship to the youth of our community — to help them become stronger, happier and more productive adults.

The League is offering programs to youth between the ages of seven and fifteen. League operators seek to be involved with the community and have already established a relationship with Mayor Michael J. Sullivan, the Mill City Maulers - a semi-pro adult football team based in Lawrence - and Verizon. The new League is planning on competing throughout the Merrimack Valley area and hopes to have Veterans Memorial Stadium as its home field.

The board of directors will be familiar to many of those involved in youth sports throughout the Valley. The board includes President Eric Tine, Vice President Ines Faucher, Treasurer Rebecca Gil, Secretary Michael Messina and Directors Eric Glew, Bill Caudill, Wendy Caudill, Laurie Messina, Stephen Faucher and Joan Glew.

On February 4th, the new League will be hosting a breakfast to celebrate its formation and to help with fundraising. The breakfast will start at 9 a.m. and be held at the French Social Club on Broadway Street in Lawrence. The breakfast will cost \$10 and those interested should contact Ines Faucher at 978-689-0696 or by email at inesfaucher@verizon.net.

The opportunity to register and participate in the new League will be on January 14th at the Parthum School on the corner of 255 East Haverhill Street, from 9:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Officials and coaches from the League will be on hand to answer any questions that you have about the program and upcoming season. For more information about the registration event to be held on January 14th, please contact either Eric Glew at (978) 884-5483 or superglew@hotmail.com, or Eric Tine at (978) 685-0031 or tinnye2001@yahoo.com.

The official start date for the new season is August 1st, with games expected to be played on Sundays. The League is expecting to play an eight game regular season schedule with four to six new teams created from the start, and to have one hundred and twenty-five children participating.

RAISE 'EM RIGHT™

"One" Buddy

Barbara Peary, M.Ed.

My son plays with the same buddy day after day in preschool. Both boys are four years old and there are several other boys of the same age in the class, but they play together almost exclusively. His buddy has come to visit us at our home and is an extremely nice youngster. I feel badly that he just seems to have the one friend, though. Should I be concerned?



Not at all. Many children at this age develop close attachments to one friend and then gradually broaden their circle of friends as they get older. It takes a lot of skills to make and keep a friend and it doesn't happen overnight for children or for adults. Do what you can to encourage the relationship he has made. Continue to have the child to your house as a playmate when time permits and allow your son to visit his pal's house. Bonds formed early on increase a child's self confidence and teach them many social skills.

Our three year old goes to preschool several days a week. When I asked the teacher who he plays with she said, "At this point he is engaging in solitary play and parallel play." Solitary I understand, but I don't get what she meant by parallel play.

This is the normal play of very young children, usually two and three year olds. When youngsters first enter group care they play alone, solitary play, or they play beside other children without interacting with them, termed parallel play. For instance, a child may be building a structure with blocks near other children who are engaging in the same activity.

If the child is not talking with the others or involving himself cooperatively in their play as he builds, this is called parallel play by early childhood educators. As growth occurs, children develop their social skills and they move into what is defined as cooperative play. This is playing together

and agreeing on play themes and activities. Cooperative play requires the skills of compromising and negotiating. At this level children need to comfortably join into the play of others and feel free to suggest ideas

of their own. It takes time for children to move from solitary and parallel play to cooperative activities and having your son attend a preschool program will certainly help him gain these skills.

I recently enrolled my daughter in a local day care center. Reading through the Parent's Handbook that they gave me, I found out that the teachers will not give my child any medicine without a doctor's note. They will not even administer over the counter cough syrup. I think this is a bit extreme. What am I supposed to do when she is sick?

Unfortunately, when she is sick, she is supposed to be kept at home. This is certainly a problem for people who work and who have young children who are susceptible to illnesses that pass through child care centers. The only alternative for working parents is to have reliable back up child care for when a child is too ill for day care.

Your center is not alone in having this regulation, which has been put in place by the state licensing agency. In the past, many children attended centers while they were still contagious. Also, some parents have been overmedicating their youngsters in order to enable them to attend school while they were still sick. Put yourself in your child's shoes. When you feel sick, do you want to be in a room full of people or home in your own bed?

Please send questions to RAISE 'EM RIGHT™, P.O. Box 831, Carlisle, MA 01741 or e-mail to RAISEEMRIGHT@aol.com.

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Pop Warner Cheerleading Holds Open Registration



Lawrence Pop Warner Football and Cheerleading, Inc. will be holding open registration on the following dates:

**Saturday 01/27/06
Saturday 2/10/07
& Saturday 2/17/07
from 12-2pm**

at the Knights of Columbus on Market Street in Lawrence. For more information, please call Karen @ 978-683-6150. Discount applies to early sign ups.

2007 Cheerleading and Tumbling Clinic, hosted by Lawrence Pop Warner Football and Cheerleading.

Open to all children ages 8-15. Clinic runs from February 5th, through April 23rd. Learn tumbling, stretching, jumping and stunting, from certified tumbling instructors. Please call Lindsay at 978-869-6017 for info. Clinic will be held at the South Lawrence East School gym.

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Now It's Andover's Turn

Jon Haber

Andover parents just now getting wind of the controversy surrounding the partisan group Wheels of Justice, scheduled to speak to a captive audience of Andover High School students on January 5th, may be bewildered as to how their town became the latest front in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

That is because the Wheels of Justice visit did not originate in Andover, but within the wider context of a small but determined community of anti-Israel activists in the greater Boston area, with extensions well beyond the Bay State.

Locally, approximately 100-200 individuals are responsible for the bulk of anti-Israel political activity in the area, from holding noisy protests at Jewish and Israeli cultural events to running film and lecture series at churches and college campuses.

This group (and younger shorter-term activists - often college students or recent graduates) has traveled under a variety of organizational identities (such as The Middle East Justice Network, The New England Committee to Defend Palestine or One Palestine, and the Somerville Divestment Project) headed by Andover teacher Ron Francis. These organizations have been fluid, often organized around trends in Middle East politics (nationalist, Socialist or, currently, Islamist trends) or specific tactics (such as divestment) and, just as frequently, disbanding, reorganizing or renaming themselves.

These local individuals and groups are, in turn, connected with a network of national and international organizations (such as the International Solidarity Committee or ISM, or the Al Awda "Right of Return" organization), groups committed to anti-Israel activism on a wider scale.

While not part of a formal network or hierarchy, these groups - both in Boston and beyond - share a common overriding goal: to wear away at the generally favorable impression Americans have of Israel by falsely presenting the Jewish state as the inheritor of South Africa's now-defunct racist policies (thus the use of phrases like "apartheid Israel" in nearly every sentence uttered by members such groups).

Because of their small numbers, a key strategy of this "movement" is to attach

their political message to one or more large, respected institutions whose reputation can be leveraged to help the anti-Israel crowd punch considerably above its own limited political weight.

Over the last few years, anti-Israel divestment activities within institutions such as Harvard, the Presbyterian Church or the city of Somerville have not been so much about economically punishing the Jewish state as they have been about forcing the Israel = Apartheid message into the mouths of a respected university, religious organization, municipality or other civic institution.

In many ways, the Wheels of Justice coming to Andover is as much about getting Andover's name onto the list of towns that have been "happy" to accept the organization's "educational" message, as it's been about proselytizing Andover students with WoJ's political campaign.

The tactics used to implement this strategy are now quite familiar: (1) identify a civic institution such as a school, city or church with a commitment to human rights and other progressive causes; (2) present the Arab-Israeli conflict as consisting solely of Israeli oppressors and innocent Palestinian victims (leaving a century of Arab war, terror and political repression on the cutting room floor); and (3) misuse the language of human rights to ruthlessly push the institution to take an anti-Israel stand that activists claim is their only choice.

Andover is currently experiencing a campaign that has been repeated endlessly across the country over the last few years. In this case, free speech is the argument being deployed to make the claim that Wheels of Justice's "rights" are being violated by not allowing them unfettered access to a captive student audience



(understanding that an open-minded town such as Andover would be sensitive to accusations of stifling free-speech).

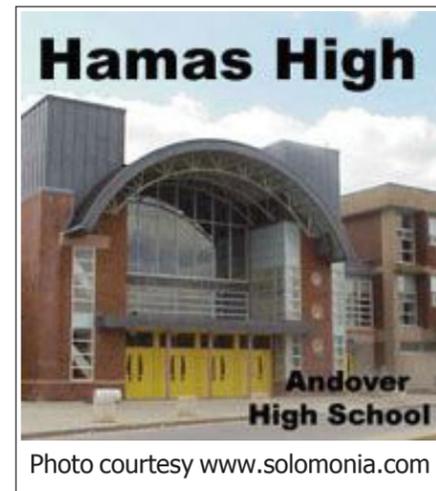
Needless to say, WoJ's champions have not been willing to stand up for the free-speech rights of their critics. And in other instances (such as last year's international controversy over the publications of Danish cartoons featuring the likeness of Mohammed) many of these same "free-speech absolutists" appealed to other hot buttons, such as respect for minorities or the fight against racism, to get their way or silence their critics.

Tip O'Neil's aphorism that "all politics is local" has some resonance in Andover where the Wheels of Justice controversy has as much to do with the battle between administrators and the teacher's union over who controls the schools as it does with Middle East politics.

That said, the small minority that is pushing for this event at all costs, despite protests by students, teachers, administrators and parents, demonstrate that their political desires clearly take precedence over their professional responsibilities.

Despite what some may think, the Wheels of Justice controversy has little to do with Andover per se. Rather, like the city of Somerville (targeted for divestment campaigns over the last several years by at least one of the people currently trying to import the Middle East into your town, Andover High teacher Ron Francis), Andover is a prop in this drama, a piece of political furniture being used by partisans to establish their credentials as "revolutionaries" rather than simple political nuisances.

These local individuals and groups are, in turn, connected with a network of national and international organizations (such as the International Solidarity Committee or ISM, or the Al Awda "Right of Return" organization), groups committed to anti-Israel activism on a wider scale.



In fact, it is a testament to Andover's broad mindedness that it has been targeted by the Israel=Apartheid circus, a traveling show that knows it does best when unleashing its cynical abuse of the language of human rights and justice against those who sincerely hold those values dear.

When this poison was being peddled to Somerville voters, or Presbyterian Church leaders or even college students, one could at least make the claim that the target for such campaigns were adults who were capable of making their own decisions (which they did, rejecting anti-Israel programs such as divestment by margins of 10 or 20 to one).

But abusing their authorities as teachers to force high-school students to sit through a professional, political indoctrination, all so Andover's name can be added to the WoJ bandwagon as it rolls through other cities and towns represents a level of cynicism, not to mention an abandonment of professional responsibility, beyond anything that has yet been seen in the region.

Jon Haber is a Boston area writer and activist who has fought divestment efforts in Somerville and in the Presbyterian Church. His writing on the subject have appeared in the Jerusalem Post and on his two Web sites, www.somervilleMEjustice.com and www.bearing-witness.org.

The Activities of Andover High School Teacher Ron Francis

Excerpts from Ron Francis' Somerville Divestment Project Website

"As usual the media coverage of Palestine is ridiculously biased: Hamas is consistently called a terrorist organization while Israeli actions funded by the US, representing far more and far worse violent "terrorist" activities go virtually unmentioned - and I have listened to and read many stories on this matter."

"Listening to the media, you might almost think that apartheid Israel was a "partner in peace" and that they have negotiated for a fair "two State solution". It's just outrageous and hard to listen to. It is almost never discussed (I sound like Noam Chomsky here!) the fatal shortcoming of the proposals that Israel has offered in terms of Jerusalem, Right of Return and access to religious sites."

"Well folks,... we have our work cut out for us... the silver lining though is that Hamas victory does provide great opportunity to educate people about Palestine through our literature and talking to people - explaining to them the myths perpetrated by the media."



Andover High teacher Ron Francis Protesting Israeli Independence Day in Boston

An Email from Ron Francis on how he plans to Indoctrinate Andover High Students

Ron Francis [ronwf777 at yahoo.com](mailto:ronwf777@yahoo.com)

Mon Feb 20 08:48:32 EST 2006

I talked with a social studies teacher at my school (Andover Public High school) and he is amenable to having students earn credits to do internships similar to what Michelle did as a community organizer. There may be other teachers as well. I will probably try to get Michelle to make a brief presentation to the social studies class and maybe help her to enlist more students in using the "West Somerville" model that Michelle executed and refined, post-execution, I both hope and suspect that several students will be interested... we need to find anchors. Communities similar to West Somerville would be ideal and perhaps some of the students can help out with low-income communities ... but that is a longer story and also an untested model.
Ron

An Email from Ron Francis on his views of the Israeli Independence Day Celebration in Boston

Ron Francis

ronwf777@yahoo.com

Wed Jun 14 11:28:19 EDT 2006

Dear Adcom,

We should endorse this protest...

The "celebration" is of the ethnic cleansing and subsequent denial of refugee rights for the 5.2 Palestinians around the world who are recognized by the UN as refugees.

It's a racist event should be protested. Jewish privilege nature of the state of Israel is apartheid (legalized racism) plain and simple and it must be ended.

If we do endorse, let's bring the GRP banner to make our support known.

are there any concerns ???...

Ron

A Salute to Our Fallen Police Officers

NLEOMF Chairman Craig W. Floyd

WASHINGTON, D.C. — More than 150 law enforcement officers made the ultimate sacrifice during the past year. This means that, on average, one law officer was killed somewhere in America nearly every other day. If history is our guide, another 56,000 officers were assaulted by criminals, resulting in about 17,000 injuries.

Yet, despite these incredible dangers, we are indeed very fortunate to have more than 800,000 federal, state and local law enforcement professionals serving and protecting us. Too often we take their service and their sacrifice for granted. We forget that while we are home with our families during the holidays, our law enforcement officers are patrolling the streets of our communities to keep us safe. We forget that extraordinary work performed by our law enforcement officers is the main reason we have not had another terrorist attack here at home since 9-11. We forget that as violent crime plummeted over the past decade, more than 1,600 law enforcement officers sacrificed their lives in the name of public safety.

A police officer never knows when that life-threatening moment may come, but they know that it could come on the very next call, and they handle it with amazing courage and selflessness. For Fairfax County (VA) Detective Vicky Armel and Master Police Officer Michael Garbarino that moment came on May 8 when a crazed gunman launched a cold-blooded ambush attack in their police station parking lot. Both Detective Armel and Officer Garbarino took heroic actions to end the bloodshed and save other officers' lives, while sacrificing their own.

On March 1, New York State Trooper Andrew J. Sperr was investigating a bank robbery when he spotted the getaway car

and was shot and killed while attempting to make the arrest. On May 11, Roane County (TN) Deputy Sheriff William B. Jones was attempting to serve felony arrest warrants on two men wanted on assault charges when the suspects opened fire as he pulled into their driveway. Deputy Jones and a civilian ride-along were both shot more than 40 times and killed.



While these incidents clearly point to the dangers when confronting violent criminals, the greatest threat to our law officers in 2006 was on our roadways. In fact, of the 151 officers who died in the line of duty during the past year, 73 were killed in traffic-related incidents. This was the ninth straight year that traffic-related incidents claimed the lives of more officers than shootings (54) or any other cause of death. Chasing down fleeing felons, responding to emergency calls for help, or even conducting a traffic stop or assisting at an accident scene can put our officers in tremendous peril; further proof that a law officer is always at risk, no matter how seemingly routine or benign an assignment might appear.

As we continue to fight the war on terror abroad, we are also fighting it here at home; and with recent reports of a surge in violent crime, now more than ever we depend on our law enforcement professionals to protect us. The officer fatality figures for 2006 are a shocking reminder of the sacrifices being demanded of our law enforcers at this critical time.

With so much at stake and so many lives at risk, we must ensure that law enforcement continues to receive the manpower, training and equipment resources necessary for our officers to perform their jobs not just effectively, but safely. We also owe our officers, and their families, one more thing — a huge debt of gratitude.

The World in 2007

Dennis Prager

On the eve of the year 2007, it is evident to anyone with the fortitude to see reality that the world is not getting better, nor even staying the same, but getting worse.

There are a few positive developments. But they are mostly technological and medical. More people are eating better and living longer than ever before. And the Internet gives more people access to more information (and more lies) than ever before. But aside from medical and technological progress, there is little positive to report. And, as always, the technological breakthroughs are frequently morally mixed bags.

Almost wherever one looks, there are more reasons for pessimism than optimism.

Africa is probably in worse condition than at any time in recorded history. Though often exaggerated, great numbers of young and middle-aged people are dying from AIDS; corruption in Africa is so widespread and deeply rooted that aid workers are telling the West to stop giving funds to Africa because those funds only serve to prop up corrupt regimes and increase poverty, malnutrition and violence; about three million people have died in the ongoing wars in the Congo; and the Islamic Arab regime of Sudan has allowed or directed genocide.

In Asia, China, sitting on reserves of over a trillion dollars, is beginning to regard itself as a world power, and most of where it meddles, it plays an immoral role (regarding Iran's nuclear weapons and the North Korea regime).

As China's economic power grows, it will increasingly seek to flex its muscles. This could mean tension over Taiwan, but it will even more likely mean that Japan will try to become a military power once again and perhaps develop its own nuclear weapons — because of North Korea's weapons and because of China's strength and ambitions. A strong Japan, given North Korea's lunatic regime and China's drive for regional dominance, is a positive development but an unfortunate one nevertheless.

Russia, like China, increasingly uses its power in immoral ways, and its government is becoming increasingly authoritarian.

As bad as Africa and parts of Asia are, the Arab world is in many ways in even worse condition and poses a far greater threat to world stability.

The Arab world is largely divided between corrupt regimes and Islamic totalitarians who await the downfall of those regimes. Since World War II, the Arab world has sought a solution to its backwardness — first in nationalism, then in Pan-Arab nationalism and Marxism, and now in Islam. "Islam is the answer" is the motto of vast numbers of young Arabs (and Muslims elsewhere), and the Islam they are referring to is often not benign.

Making matters worse, the Arab world is consumed by hate. Hatred and oil have become its primary exports: hatred of Israel, of America and of other non-Muslims in its midst — e.g., Maronite Christians in Lebanon, non-Muslims in Sudan and Christians in the Palestinian territories.

This hatred within the Arab world is in turn the product of a culture that values face-saving over truth-telling. To this day, the Egyptian government and public deny that the EgyptAir jet that fell out of the sky in 2000 did so because the pilot, an Egyptian

Muslim, decided to kill himself and all those on board. The majority of the Arab world does not believe that Arabs plotted and executed the 9/11 murders of American civilians. And it widely believes that Jews slaughter non-Jewish children to use their blood to bake matzos on Passover; that Israel spreads AIDS in Arab countries by sending AIDS-infected prostitutes into Arab countries; and that "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" is a genuine text authored by Jews conspiring to take over the world.

The Islamic world at large is increasingly influenced, and sometimes dominated, by a violent expression of religiosity that seeks to impose itself on any society it can. One of the largest Muslim countries has declared its desire to see Israel annihilated and is presumed to be developing nuclear weapons that would enable it to do so.

Anti-Semitism in the Arab and Muslim worlds has reached levels most of humanity thought had been vanquished along with Nazi regime.

Western Europe is disappearing demographically and culturally. Like other secular societies, Western Europe is not repopulating itself and has relied on importing immigrants to provide citizens and workers. Most of them are Muslims, and many of them loathe Western Europe and its values.

It is difficult to imagine any other future scenario for Western Europe than its becoming Islamicized or having a civil war. Western Europe is the first secular society in human history and consequently believes in very little beyond having a secure and comfortable life untroubled by war, work or children.

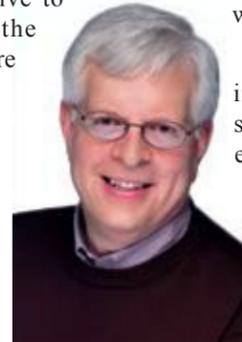
The increasing influence of the world's Left makes combating the above problems very difficult. The Left dominates the world's news media and universities, is regaining power in Latin America, and is socially as well as politically dominant in most Western European countries. And it either sides with America's enemies or makes combating them far more difficult. Thus it is increasingly common to see Che Guevara pictures at Hezbollah rallies in Lebanon and to see Western leftists, like London's mayor, honor radical Muslims.

One society stands opposed to all these developments — the United States of America. But that society is itself deeply divided. About half holds the values of Western Europe; and the other half believes that Western European values — essentially secularism and socialism — are anathema to America. The latter half believes America must remain true to its founding principles: Judeo-Christian values; individual freedom and small government; and a melting pot rather than multiculturalism.

Which side wins will determine the fate of mankind for a century or more. And you can't win if you are naively optimistic.

Happy New Year.

Dennis Prager hosts a nationally syndicated radio talk show based in Los Angeles. He is the author of four books, most recently "Happiness Is a Serious Problem" (HarperCollins). His Web site is www.prageradio.com. COPYRIGHT 2006 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.



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