

Asst. City Attorney Charges

"Patrick Blanchette Is a Dangerous Individual"

Jim Bowers, Assistant City Attorney

Lawrence City Council President Patrick Blanchette publicly called for the firing of Assistant City Attorney Jim Bowers at a public meeting and also announced that he would be reporting Bowers to the Board of Bar Overseers so that Bowers would be disbarred. Blanchette called for Bowers' job because, he said, Bowers had "lied" to the city attorney regarding his involvement in negotiating a buyout deal for Finance Director John Griffin (whom Blanchette also drove out of Lawrence).

Below is the word-for-word response Assistant Attorney Bowers gave at the January 3rd meeting of the Lawrence City Council, where Blanchette had placed the item on the agenda to fire Bowers.

I would like to now make a personal response to the allegations made against me, as the allegations have been personal in nature, and are an attack on my integrity, and question my ethics as an attorney.

Please do not mistake my outline as an effort on behalf to "save my job." I am a part-time employee for the city. I am an attorney with a private practice in Lawrence, having practiced in Lawrence for the last fourteen (14) years. I have been an assistant city attorney for just short of seven (7) years.

In the past, I have offered my resignation to the city, due to the significant workload placed upon me as a part-time attorney for the city. I was asked to stay on, and, after the hiring of a full-time assistant city attorney to assist with the city of Lawrence caseload, agreed to do so. As I told Councilor Patrick Blanchette in my phone conversation with him on December 19th, "fire me if you want to, but please make sure you have your facts correct."

Apparently, Councilor Blanchette did not take me up on that offer. Councilor Blanchette is apparently not one to let the facts get in the way of an agenda he is pursuing.

My purpose for providing this information to you is to correct the record, and at the same time, make an effort at restoring my reputation, which has been tarnished by Councilor Blanchette, as my reputation is far more important than my position as an assistant city attorney for the city of Lawrence.

For what is a game to Councilor Blanchette, is real life for others. He has no sense of accountability. Councilor Blanchette's comments have been broadcast on television, and have been published by secondary media outlets within the city.

As for City Attorney Charlie Boddy, I would like to give him the benefit of the doubt in this matter, by stating that, with the many things going on today in city government that require the attention of the city attorney's office, that he had an incorrect recollection of the events from the week leading up to December 19th, however difficult that may be to believe, given the importance of the subject matter. However, I cannot overlook the fact that, once the correct

"As for Council President Patrick Blanchette, he is a dangerous individual... When one sets out to work in municipal government, he or she does not sign on for the likes of Patrick Blanchette ... I lament the fact that Patrick Blanchette is president of the City Council."

- Jim Bowers, Assistant City Attorney for the city of Lawrence



set of facts was brought to his attention, he did nothing to formally correct his earlier statement. In fact, it took me four requests to even get a copy of his memorandum from him.

As for City Council President Patrick Blanchette, he is a dangerous individual. He is reckless, and states things that are either in ignorance of facts, or in complete disregard for the facts, regardless of whose reputation he is damaging. His defamatory allegations, with full knowledge of the falsity of the statements, or in reckless disregard for their truthfulness, are far worse than any allegations he has made against the mayor of the city.

One should be allowed to be a participant in government without having to be the subject of personal attacks. When one sets out to work in municipal government, he or she does not sign on for the likes of Patrick Blanchette.

One should not have to work in fear that Patrick Blanchette will use his microphone to launch a personal attack upon an individual, regardless of worthiness of such an attack, or the truthfulness of his comments.

I lament the fact that I had to spend time over the New Year's holiday, having to prepare a response to Councilor Blanchette's reckless statements, taking away time from my wife and two small children, in order to defend myself.

I lament the fact that an individual such as Patrick Blanchette serves as the president of the council. I lament the fact that so much time has been taken to address this issue, when there are far more important matters that require the council's attention.

Councilor Blanchette drew me into this fray, despite having documentation that the information supplied to him by Attorney Charles Boddy, regarding my knowledge of a signed contract, was factually inaccurate.

Councilor Blanchette decided to broadcast his falsehoods, both verbally and in print, because it advanced his agenda for that evening, which was an attack on the mayor.

Councilor Blanchette has no credibility with me. Whatever impact his actions have on the remainder of this council, and the citizenry of Lawrence, is not known. However, in the least, I would hope that any words spoken by Councilor Blanchette in the future be met with extreme skepticism, given his actions in this manner, and the depths into which he will dwell.

Until this moment, I had never gauged the actual levels of Councilor Blanchette's recklessness, having only viewed it from the sideline. I have now witnessed it first-hand, and have been damaged by it.

In my close to seven years as a part-time assistant city attorney, I have made an effort to stay out of the political aspects of city government, as politics has no place in the city attorney's office. Unfortunately, I apparently was unable to remain dissociated with the politics of the city completely.

I now speak openly regarding my impressions of this city council president.

I am not a native to the city, but have worked in the city for the last 17 years, a personal choice on my behalf. I enjoy this city, and have been welcomed by the people who live and work here.

I do know some members of this council, while some of the members I do not. Let me state that, what plagues this city is the destructive efforts of the few which impede the progress advanced by the many. I hope that the remaining council, in this New Year, can re-focus its efforts, away from the destructive agenda of one, and toward the constructive agenda of the many.

I will make available my comments and the documentation provided to the city council this evening to anyone who so requests.

I am willing to answer any questions that the council has on this matter.

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While Blanchette Attacks City Worker for Office Renovations, His Own City Council Office gets \$16,000 in Improvements

While other communities are making cuts in their budgets and forcing some layoffs, Lawrence continues to spend on unnecessary items. Recently, DPW spent its time, resources and money to remodel and make improvements to the City Council chambers and the City Council office floors at a cost of about \$16,000 to the taxpayers.

The renovations included the following: two air conditioners at a cost of \$6,523.50, City Council chamber floor at \$6,494.81 and the City Council office floor at a cost of \$2,784.91. The Valley Patriot has obtained a memorandum by DPW Director Frank McCann to Mayor Michael Sullivan, dated November 16, 2006, detailing the itemized costs of these renovations.

The funding source for these renovations comes from the DPW budget as opposed to the City Council budget.

Ironically, Council President Patrick Blanchette had been attacking former Budget and Finance Director John Griffin for making renovations in his office, calling those renovations "plush" and "unnecessary at a time when the people of Lawrence are

facing an increase in taxes or a reduction in city services."

Blanchette used the renovations as one of his reasons for calling on Griffin to be fired by the city. After months of verbal assaults on Griffin at council meetings and in the Eagle-Tribune, Griffin negotiated a buyout of his contract and has left the city's employ.

The City Council budget is more than \$200 million. When District "B" City Councilor Grisel Silva asked Blanchette who had paid for the cost of renovating the council office during a City Council meeting, Blanchette told the council that it was paid for by "Comcast," in direct contradiction to the memo obtained by The Valley Patriot.

City councilors say they were unaware that these renovations were being paid for out of the DPW budget while one councilor told The Valley Patriot that the councilors "never voted on these renovations and believe that the money should be paid out of the City Council's line item in the budget, not DPW."



"We approved the DPW budget to pay for road repair, plowing, garbage removal, etc. We did not vote on the DPW budget to pay for new floors in the City Council chambers," Councilor Silva said. Councilor Gonzalez agreed. "Why does the City Council have a budget if it is not going to pay for City Council items? We should pay

the DPW back," Gonzalez continued. Most city councilors The Valley Patriot asked had no idea where the money came from to pay for the renovations. They also did not recall any votes taken with respect to the improvements. Attempts to speak to the City Council president, Patrick Blanchette, were unsuccessful.

"Jim Bowers lied to the city attorney. I will recommend this matter be referred to the Massachusetts Board of Bar Overseers and I will further recommend that Attorney James Bower's contract not be renewed."
 - Patrick Blanchette - November 2006

The column below was written by Pat Blanchette in August of 2005, just three months before the last mayor's race.

Take a Good Look at Lawrence.... Do You Love What you See?

Patrick Blanchette, Lawrence City Council President

Once again the city of Lawrence is experiencing serious financial difficulties.

Local historians of city government relate the current fiscal woes to those of the early 1990s under another familiar administration. The Lawrence City Council is currently in the process of reviewing the Fiscal 2006 budget as was proposed by Mayor Sullivan on June 7th. Due to the lateness of this document, the City Council needed to approve two thirty-day spending packages in order to keep city government running.

It is my hope that by mid-August the city will have a budget approved that is balanced and one that is accurate. Up until this point it seems that, once again, Mayor Sullivan is playing games with our wallets and, more disturbing, he is mixing his own words.

On June 7th Mayor Sullivan submitted a proposed budget along with a three-page letter detailing the budget for the upcoming year. In the last paragraph of the Mayor's document he states that this budget contains "no tax increase for residential homeowners and commercial business owners." I as one councilor was happy to read this statement and started informing all that would listen that the city of Lawrence will not raise taxes this year. The citizens of Lawrence seemed to be overjoyed with this news as they have been dealt some tough

blows in the last three years under the Sullivan administration and they were looking forward to "no new taxes" ... so we thought! Once again, the document was filled with deception. According to the Sullivan administration, as of last week, a tax increase is in the works and has been added right into the fiscal 2006 budget, a direct contradiction from Mayor Sullivan's June 7th memo on the budget. My fellow citizens of Lawrence, I'm asking each and every one of you to voice your concerns. Make your opinions heard in the City Council chambers. In the month of August the City Council will have a public hearing on the Mayor's proposed budget and I want to hear from you.

The citizens need to have accurate information in order to properly budget their own accounts in the upcoming months. Why have our taxes gone up for the past three years under this administration when they continue to dole out plush contracts to friends? Why have our taxes gone up for the past three years and less than ten streets have been re-surfaced in the last year? Why have our taxes gone up and the Mayor pretends they have not? Why have our taxes gone up and we have so little to show for it?

Take a good look at Lawrence - do you love what you see?

"He (Mayor Sullivan) is, in my opinion, using the employees as pawns. It is what Saddam Hussein does in Iraq, he uses the people as pawns when he drives around in taxis assuring that he is not going to get hit."

Council President Patrick Blanchette at a City Council Meeting, 12/16/06



Patrick Blanchette on John Griffin's Office Renovations last Month

In a memo to Mayor Mike Sullivan in November, Blanchette called renovations to Budget and Finance Director John Griffin's office as "a gross misuse of public funds" and said it is another reason he "should be fired."

"While other departments have faced severe budget cuts and freezes on open positions, Mr. Griffin spends freely to pad his office with designer furniture," Blanchette wrote.

"This is not corporate America, but rather a city office, which is entrusted upon us by the people of this city. I'm sorry, but creating 'Trump Style' office suites is not in the cards for this city and ought not to be justified," Blanchette said.

"His (Griffin's) budget never had the money to pay for it, so he illegally paid for it out of the Personnel Department," Blanchette said of a bill of the \$10,000 of Griffin's office improvements.

**Editors Note: at the same time Blanchette was making these comments publicly about John Griffin, he was taking advantage of \$16,000 in office renovations in his own City Council office. See story above.*

"Two years ago, I listened to the inauguration speech of our mayor when he said Lawrence will never be last again. Today, we have the highest unemployment rate in the Commonwealth. Well, guess what? Lawrence is still last!"

Patrick Blanchette - Nov. 2004

The speech below was given by Pat Blanchette in November of 2005, just two weeks before the last mayor's race.

Why I am Supporting Mike Sullivan for Mayor

Patrick Blanchette, Lawrence City Council President

"Ladies and Gentleman. Something seems to be working in Lawrence and those who tell you differently have no vision for the city of Lawrence ... never mind one vision.

Mayor Sullivan is part of something exciting here in Lawrence. For the past six years he has rolled up his sleeves, he has dug his hands in deep and gotten dirty, to make sure the progress of this city moves forward. His opponent has sat on his hands for the last six years, watching others do the work.

There is a clear difference in this race. If you want to continue on with the progress we've been making, if you want to continue on seeing the changes, you are going to join me.

You are going to join my mother. You are going to join my family from North Lawrence, and my family from South Lawrence, and my friends from all over the city, as we support Mike Sullivan for reelection as mayor of the city of Lawrence.

I know our votes are sacred. And I'll tell you that in September I voted for Mike Sullivan, and in November I am voting for Mike Sullivan and I am proud to stand here today and endorse him for mayor of this city."



Lawrence on the Move

Mayor Michael J. Sullivan

More exciting economic development news in the city of Lawrence, as yet another successful business has moved into Lawrence.

I am proud to announce that Mr. Joe Zingales has joined forces with RE/MAX Prestige, one of the largest RE/MAX outfits in the New England area. Together they will be opening their offices here in Lawrence and will be located in Sal's Riverwalk. For years, businesses large and small were looking to get out of Lawrence, and because of the hard work we have all been engaging in for the past four years, businesses have started to look at Lawrence again as the place to do business. The addition of this business will capitalize nicely on the Registry of Deeds recently relocating into Sal's Riverwalk.

The energy that Sal and his team have created along the Riverwalk Complex has been an outstanding benefit to Lawrence. Tom Schiavone and Attorney Dan McCarthy, our land use planner, have worked diligently over the last year to ensure that the entire Merrimack Street corridor is developed in a manner that remains friendly to businesses, pedestrians and vehicles.

Earlier this year, through the direct efforts of Planning Director Michael Sweeney and the Lawrence Redevelopment Authority, chaired by Marc LaPlante, a key cornerstone was set in place as the former parking lot for the old MBTA station on Merrimack Street was obtained by the LRA and eventually sold to New Balance. New Balance will be able to utilize this new site to increase parking for its growing work force and remain a strong and important employer in the city of Lawrence. With a planning department that is newly energized and a revamped LRA, we will continue to accomplish exciting projects.



Team Zingales, with Remax Prestige, is moving its operation from Methuen to Sal's Riverwalk on Merrimack St. in Lawrence.

Additionally, we continue to work on the Riverwalk that we hope will eventually reach from the Rt. 495 area and run along the banks of the Merrimack to the O'Leary Bridge, creating pedestrian-friendly access areas for all of our residents and visitors. This enhancement will underscore the private investments made by Bob Ansin, Sal Lupoli, Attorney Art McCabe, Alberto Nunez, and others.

I also wanted to express my excitement about the creation of a new youth football and cheer organization in Lawrence. My best wishes to the Mill City Youth Football and Cheer, Inc., and to their new board of directors. This sounds like an exciting organization that is really going to move youth football and cheerleading forward in the future. Good luck! This month we also learned that the former 1 Mill Street Restaurant will be reopening very soon under new ownership and with a new name! We are looking forward to their arrival.

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

ValleyWorks Career Center

www.valleyworks.cc

March Madness

Job Fair

DATE

Thursday, March 1st, 2007
9:00AM – 1:00PM
 (9:00am – 1:00pm) – "Mature Worker"
 (10:00am – 1:00pm) – General Public

LOCATION

ValleyWorks Career Center Heritage
 Place - 430 South Union Street,
 Bldg. 2, Suite 106
 Lawrence, MA 01843

CONTACT

Employers interested in participating
 please contact
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Planning for Our Future

Lawrence Planning Director Michael R. Sweeney

During the month of December we learned that two of our most valued and trusted colleagues would be leaving the City of Lawrence. Caroline Ganley and John Griffin have made decisions to pursue their career aspirations elsewhere.

Too often the work of fine people goes overlooked or unnoticed. If anything the general public mostly hears about the bad or the spin placed by others to make people look bad. I wanted to make sure I publicly acknowledged both Ms. Ganley and Mr. Griffin.



Caroline Ganley worked under difficult circumstances to make Lawrence a better place. She brought a passion to her job and truly cared about the people

who live and work in Lawrence. She had a keen understanding about how the lives of people were effected by basic health, sanitation and environmental issues; on a daily basis her focus was to ensure that peoples lives were improved or at the very least not made worse by the action or inaction of her department.

Working in Lawrence is like working in the Wild West, few appreciate when someone attempts to bring code enforcement and decency to town. With few resources and with people in City Hall often purposely undermining her, Ms. Ganley reminded the professional and tried to move the City forward in key areas.

One of the many areas of her responsibilities was the Board of Health and helping the City in emergency planning. I remember at the height of the flood, Ms. Ganley moved forward and spent the next six weeks making sure that she and her staff saw to the real issues of the day - ensuring building and walls were structurally sound, checking

rooms and basements for mold, helping people deal with their losses and advising Mayor Sullivan and his team on next steps.



She was a team member. She is an educated and professional woman whose expertise and grace is going to be sorely missed.

John Griffin is another professional who is moving forward. Even this past Friday, Mr. Griffin was repeatedly on the phone with representatives from the Department of Revenue, working through last minute questions and suggestions that DOR had concerning the City of Lawrence and our attempts to set a tax rate and get the bills out on time.

Mr. Griffin got caught in the perfect storm of political opportunism and the politics of personal hatred. Despite an almost daily bombardment of questionable behavior and outright harassment, Mr. Griffin stayed engaged on his duties and worked with Mayor Sullivan and his staff to accomplish something few have done, get the tax bills out before the end of the year. Mr. Griffin was respected by DOR, his staff, and other professionals in his field.

John and Caroline should be acknowledged for their personal and professional integrity as well as their commitment to the City of Lawrence. Finding professionals who will match their dedication and honesty is going to be difficult. John and Caroline - thank you.

Michael Sweeney is the planning director for the city of Lawrence, a former member of the Lawrence City Council and School Committee. You can e-mail Mr. Sweeney at Esqsweeney@aol.com.

(prestando attencione!)

Paying Attention!

with Tom Duggan



Lawrence Should Pay More in Taxes

Over the last several months, we have heard members of the Lawrence City Council complain about wasteful city spending while at the same time voicing strong opposition to raising property taxes up to the Proposition 2 1/2 levy limit.

While I agree that there is a lot of wasteful spending in the city, the main reason for that waste is because most of the money being spent does not come from local taxpayers. This results in lack of community interest in how the city spends its money and how much it spends. That is, until officials start talking about raising taxes, and even then only a handful of active residents show up to protest.

I do understand that some Lawrence residents on a fixed income will bear a hardship if property taxes are increased, but the fact is, the Lawrence City Council approved a budget that calls for more than \$200 million in spending ... and that money has to come from somewhere.

What's more, it was the Lawrence City Council that approved this amount, knowing that the property owners in Lawrence are only contributing approximately \$40 million to the city budget. The rest of the \$160+ million is paid for by state taxpayers in North Andover, Methuen, Georgetown, Boxford, Dracut and the rest of the state.

That's like buying a \$2,000 stereo system at Circuit City and only paying \$400 bucks for it.

What's more, hearing councilors pander to their voters by complaining that Lawrencians pay *too much* in taxes is like complaining that Circuit City is now going to charge you \$500 for that \$2,000 stereo instead of \$400, while someone else is still picking up the rest of the tab.

This leaves the people in surrounding cities and towns who pay the rest of the bill (and fight each year for revenue to keep their own police on the streets) to wonder: When is the city of Lawrence going to start paying its own way? When are city officials going to start kicking in more of their fair share for the \$200 million plus in services that the rest of the state is providing?

The \$40 million the people of Lawrence are paying for the \$200 million in services they receive is simply inadequate. Especially when you factor in another \$50 million plus (approximately) in federal grants that get funneled into city coffers that are not counted in the city's budget. Just imaging running a business that spends \$250 million dollars a year, yet only makes \$40 million in revenue to pay for that spending?

It is for this reason that the mayor and City Council have an obligation to raise property taxes to the levy limit. The municipal budget in Lawrence is on welfare from the state and federal government and city officials act like they are entitled to that money without taking any responsibility for how it is spent.

Mayor Sullivan has the right idea. The city of Lawrence needs to get off the welfare dole by slowly starting to pay more so that the rest of the state taxpayers can pay less.

When that happens, you will see more vigilance by city officials in the way they spend money and more interest from the Lawrence taxpayers as to how that money is being spent.

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.

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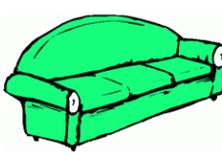
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New Course Will Help Freshman Adjust to College Life

This spring, Northern Essex Community College will introduce a three-credit seminar, College Success Seminar, for incoming freshman. It is designed to help them make a successful transition to college life. The course will cover campus resources, career exploration, and information literacy. It will encourage students to take the initiative for their own success. The course is not restricted to first semester students.

The course will be offered in two sessions; Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1 to 1:50 p.m. on the Haverhill campus and from 9:15 to 10:30 a.m. on the Lawrence campus.

"We believe that students who complete this course will be much more likely to have the tools needed to succeed in college," says Gene Wintner, professor of developmental studies at Northern Essex and co-leader of the team that developed this pilot course after extensive research.

Not only will students earn three credits for this elective, but they will be given the

tools to help them earn better grades by learning efficient ways to study, how to avoid common mistakes, and how to explore new careers ideas.

For additional information contact the Advising Center at 978 556-3440 in Haverhill or 978 738-7423 in Lawrence.

To register for this class, call 978-556-3700.

With campuses in Haverhill and Lawrence and extension sites in Andover, Methuen, and North Andover, Northern Essex Community College is a state-assisted college, offering over 70 associate degree and certificate programs as well as hundreds of non credit courses designed for personal enrichment and career growth. Close to 13,000 students ranging from recent high school graduates to workers employed locally attend classes days, evenings, and weekends. Northern Essex is the only state college located in the lower Merrimack Valley Region of Massachusetts.



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Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy: Strong Leadership to Turn a District Around

Part II from Beyond-theBook.com



This is the second installment of a two-part interview with the superintendent of Lawrence Public Schools, Wilfredo T. Laboy. In part one, Dr. Laboy discusses his leadership perspective. In part two, the superintendent shares his Seven Essential Elements for School Transformation.

BTB: What inspired you to develop the Seven Essential Elements for School Transformation for Lawrence Public Schools?

WL: My work on the Seven Essential Elements for School Transformation has been a reflective, thought-provoking journey for me. I spent a great deal of time pondering key questions: How do I frame the work I've done? What do I think are the critical components to positively affect change? How do I approach organizational structure and culture reform?

We talk a lot about school reform in this country; I think it's about transformational leadership. Transformation has a lot to do with motivation and inspiration. I am fortunate to understand one thing: I am not the smartest person in the district. There are smarter people in their subjects of expertise. How could I observe a physics class and make a judgment about content? But I do know what good lessons look and sound like. I know the necessary components for effective lesson delivery to boost student engagement and comprehension. My task is to lead our bright teachers, inspire them, and motivate them to deliver for our students every day.

I have done a lot of reading, had a lot of conversations, made many observations, and implemented numerous changes over the years. Through reflection, I have identified seven principles that I think apply to school districts that are trying to build a framework for change. Too often system leaders don't take time to adequately reflect and assess before overhauling a district. You have to investigate best practices, and get your arms around what's working and what's not, to be a transformational leader.

BTB: From your vantage point, what are the Seven Essential Elements for School Transformation?

WL: The Seven Essential Elements for School Transformation highlight the areas that school and district leadership must address to initiate and sustain improved student achievement efforts. Each of the essential elements

has unique components that represent or define the element more thoroughly, and provide expectations within each element. The Seven Essential Elements for School Transformation and their critical components are:

- 1) Leadership and School Culture
 - A shared belief system and values
 - Strategic and systematic leadership
 - A professional learning community
 - Operational management
- 2) Coherent Curriculum
 - Clearly defined
 - Equitable opportunities for every student
 - Rigorous and cognitively engaging
 - Data collection and analysis
- 3) Instructional Practice
 - Research-, data-, and standards-based
 - Differentiated for every student
 - Student-centered and teacher-facilitated
 - Procedures and routines for a positive classroom culture
- 4) Assessment and Accountability
 - Informative and comprehensive
 - Data analysis
 - Data management
 - Reporting and monitoring system
- 5) Professional Learning
 - Strength-based
 - Differentiated and responsive
 - Aligned with district and school goals
- 6) Student Support Services
 - Comprehensive prevention and intervention programs
 - Continuum of services
 - Systematic data management
- 7) Family and Community Engagement
 - Purposeful and responsive
 - Family-friendly schools
 - Full-service community school

BTB: How has the development and adoption of the Seven Essentials Elements for School Transformation changed Lawrence Public Schools?

WL: Combined, the Seven Essential Elements for School Transformation drive our district's comprehensive educational plan and its measurable outcomes. We use data to assess whether our targets have been met, and connect back to the seven essentials as a guide.

Decision-making based on data has become the norm, and we expect everyone to know how to do it. Analyzing data is not something reserved for the superintendent and

Continued on Page 25

ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUBLIC HEARINGS & WORKSHOPS

The City of Lawrence, through its Community Development Department, will be conducting Public Hearings and Workshops regarding the use of approximately \$2.5 million in Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME grant funds available on or about July 1, 2007.

The Mayor's Community Development Advisory Board (CDAB) will host the meetings, whose primary objective is to solicit public participation in determining the needs of the city, and to contribute to the decision making process regarding the use of Federal funds.

The City is soliciting proposals that benefit people of low to moderate income and the homeless, that address slums and blight, and that relate to the availability of decent, safe, affordable housing and home ownership in the City.

The meeting will review the accomplishments of programs and projects receiving funding in the previous year, and provide information the process for receiving funding for the upcoming year.

Technical assistance in preparing your proposals is also available upon request.

Applications will be available December 15, 2006 at the Community Development Department, 147 Haverhill Street, Lawrence, MA 01840. Electronic copies are available by request to AGil@cityoflawrence.com.

Completed applications must be received at the City of Lawrence Community Development Department **no later than Friday, February 2, 2007 at 4:00 PM.**

The Public Hearing & Workshop Schedule is as follows:

**January 4, 2007 5 - 8PM
(Public Hearing)**

Lawrence Senior Center
155 Haverhill St.

Provide Program info and obtain citizen input in determining city needs

**January 16, 2007 9 AM-12 PM
(5-8 PM*)**

(CDBG Workshop)
Lawrence Senior Center

155 Haverhill St.

Explain application process * two times are provided for your convenience

**February 15, 2007 5-8 PM
(CDAB Presentations)**

Lawrence Senior Center

Presentations by all applicants to CDAB with public input

Merrimack Valley Hospice is a not-for-profit agency providing important medical, spiritual and supportive services to terminally ill patients and their families. The agency is affiliated with Home Health VNA and HomeCare, Inc. Together the agencies serve more than 80 communities throughout the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire. For more information on the agency, visit www.merrimackvalleyhospice.org.

Merrimack Valley Hospice Offers Upcoming Bereavement Support Groups

Lawrence & Haverhill, Mass. – Merrimack Valley Hospice is offering several bereavement support groups throughout the area. All support groups are free and open to the public.

General Bereavement Support Group
Thursdays January 18 – February 22
9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Merrimack Valley Hospice – Board Room
360 Merrimack Street, Lawrence, MA
Facilitated by Lois Marra, MA, LMHC & Nancy Thornton, MA, LSW

For more information contact 978-552-4537
Sponsored by Merrimack Valley Hospice

Grief & Loss Support Group – Loss of a Child
2nd Monday of Every Month beginning
March 12th
6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Merrimack Valley Hospital – The Atrium, Haverhill, MA - Facilitated by Lois Marra, MA, LMHC & Nancy Thornton, MA, LSW

For more information contact 978-552-4537
Sponsored by Merrimack Valley Hospice

Beginning the Grief Journey – Adults who have Lost a Parent

Six week group beginning March 21
6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Merrimack Valley Hospital – Board Room
Haverhill, MA - Facilitated by Lois Marra, MA, LMHC & Nancy Thornton, MA, LSW

For more information contact 978-552-4537
Co-sponsored by Merrimack Valley Hospice & H.L. Farmer & Sons Bethany Bereavement Center

Grieving the Loss of a Child
Wednesday Evenings Jan. 24 – Feb. 28
6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Merrimack Valley Hospital – Board Room
Haverhill, MA - Facilitated by Lois Marra, MA, LMHC & Nancy Thornton, MA, LSW

For more information contact 978-552-4537
Co-sponsored by Merrimack Valley Hospice & H.L. Farmer & Sons Bethany Bereavement Center

GLCAC Awarded \$90,000 Grant

The Early Education and Care Department has recently announced that the GLCAC, Inc/ and the Greater Lawrence Community Partnerships for Children Program have been awarded a Mental Health Consultation Service Grant in the amount of \$92,219.00. This proposal reflects a collaborative project between the Greater Lawrence Community Partnerships for Children Program servicing centers and family child care providers in Lawrence, Andover North Andover and Methuen, the Greater Lawrence Head Start and Family Services, Inc.

This grant will fund on-site mental health consultation services to sixteen centers, two family child care systems and three independent family child care providers over the course of the next six months. The intent is for caregivers to gain the following through in-class modeling and mentoring:

- Ability to recognize warning signs and types of challenging behaviors.
- Knowledge of direct observation methods and methods of recording
- Ability to manage challenging behaviors
- Importance of time management along with group problem solving
- Ability to draw from all informational sources and other data in an effort to better understand the child
- Ability to implement a support team which will analyze all data and information and develop a behavior intervention plan along with strategies for monitoring the implementation plan and evaluating the effectiveness of the plan.

This consultation model is designed to improve the quality of the childcare experience for children, families and providers and to decrease the number of children suspended or terminated from child care. The consultation model also provides a mechanism for professional development supports organizational change and enhances the healthy development of all children.

CLASS Inc. to Hold Art Auction

LAWRENCE - CLASS Inc. will hold its annual CLASSic Art Auction from 7p.m to 9 p.m. at the site of the new Monarch Lofts, 250 Merrimack Street. The auction will feature many incredible works of art produced by artists with disabilities.



In early 2005, CLASS, Inc., of Lawrence and North Reading, established the Arts Exploration Program for the purpose of developing individuals' natural artistic talents and expressive potential. Those participating in the program have created numerous pieces of artwork using acrylics, clay, and various other media, interpreting the world through their eyes. Sharing these works of art is an integral part of the program.

Proceeds from the auction will benefit the art program and many other programs at CLASS Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with disabilities. Through collaboration with individuals, families and the community, CLASS empowers people with disabilities by providing services that promote personal choice, growth and full participation in their communities.

Tickets are \$25 or 4 for \$75. To RSVP or more information please call 978-975-8587 ext. 1209. For more information on CLASS, visit www.classinc.org.

Home Health Partners Volunteer Program Launches "Give All Year"

LAWRENCE – During the holidays there is an abundance of good will and generous spirit – but once December 25th has passed do those compassionate souls go into hibernation for the winter?

Elaine Miller hopes that is not the case. The North Andover resident serves as Volunteer Coordinator for Home Health Partners, the volunteer program at Home Health Foundation – which includes Home Health VNA, Merrimack Valley Hospice and HomeCare, Inc. Miller is actively recruiting volunteers for the agency's diverse volunteer program.

Volunteers can provide support through a wide range of activities from simple administrative tasks like bulk mailing and collating admission packets to working on special projects, assisting in fundraising event planning and connecting with newly admitted patients to provide reassurance.

"We encourage community members to join our team. Our program is growing and we have a lot of exciting projects in the works," said Miller. "As an agency volunteer, you will gain a skill, lend a skill, meet new people and most importantly help out right where you live. Just a few hours a week can make a significant impact."

Miller encourages area residents to make volunteering one of their New Year's resolutions. "It's a great way to feel good about yourself and contributions you make to a patient or family right here in your community," said Miller. "There are so many ways to make a positive change in a person's life right here in the Merrimack Valley. We have ongoing projects throughout the year, so there is plenty of ways to lend a hand. Don't limit your good will to the holidays – there are needs all year round."

Men and women over the age of 18 who want to join our "Give All Year" campaign are encouraged to call Elaine Miller, Volunteer Coordinator at 978-552-4525 today. Miller can also be reached at emiller@homehealthfoundation.org.

City of Lawrence



Christmas Tree Pickup

Christmas trees will be picked up on Monday Jan. 8th, 2007. If you have any questions call Dept. of Public Works Directors office 978-794-5761 or the recycling office at 978-794-5774.



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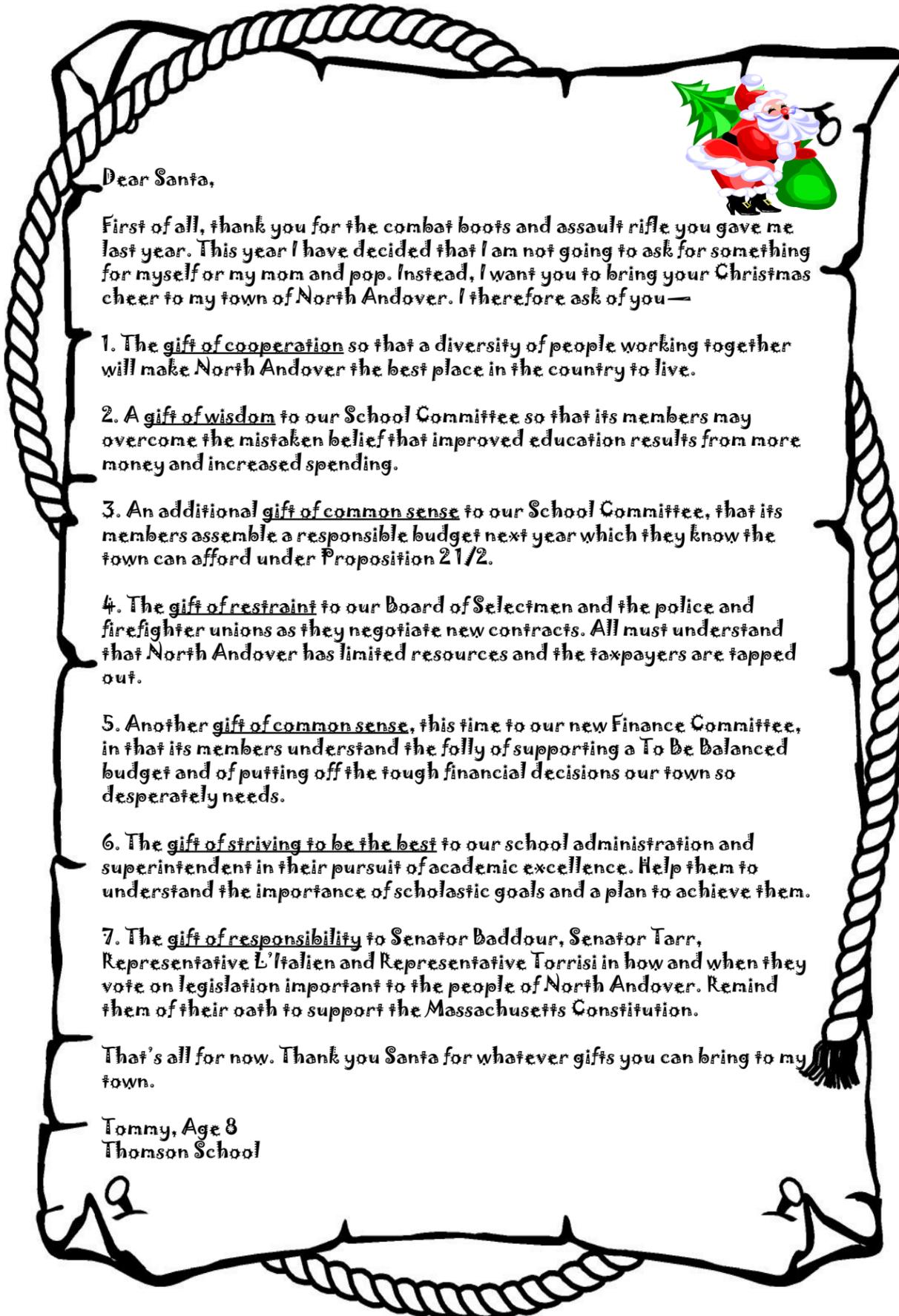
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Rummaging Around the Christmas Tree on December 26th

Ted Tripp

After all the Christmas presents were opened this year I was cleaning up the wrapping paper, tissue and discarded bows when I saw something out of the corner of my eye. It was a wrinkled piece of paper partially hidden by all the trappings of Christmas. When I picked it up, I noticed that it was a "Dear Santa" letter with a wish list of items for Christmas. Since the letter was not under the tree prior to December 24th, I wistfully wondered if Santa had mistakenly dropped it when he came by Christmas Eve. Here is that letter in its entirety:



Since this letter was left behind on Christmas Eve, it's impossible to know whether or not Santa was able to deliver Tommy's presents. Perhaps Santa was rushed this year and didn't have time. Maybe Santa couldn't find Tommy's letter after leaving my house and didn't know where to drop off the gifts.

Let's hope that Santa was indeed able to complete his deliveries this year.

The proof will unfold in the coming months as town officials (with state legislator input) prepare their budgets for our annual town meeting in May.

In the meantime, Happy New Year everybody!



Hi, I'm Betty Tavares
I'm a member of
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Please see our ad on Page 26



N.A. Middle School Children Raise Money for Cancer Victims

Paula Porten



Timothy Roberts

Right before the holiday vacation, parents and room mothers are usually shopping to get their children's teachers gifts. But this past Christmas, the teachers at the North Andover Middle School sent out notices to parents stating that,

in lieu of presents, they would like parents to make a donation to the Timothy Roberts "Reeling in a Dream" Fund.

Timothy Roberts was a resident of North Andover and a 2002 graduate of North Andover High School. Unfortunately, at the age of 21, Tim was diagnosed with esophageal cancer and passed away one year later on August 25, 2005. His chemotherapy treatment and subsequent surgeries were coordinated through the Dana Farber Cancer Institute.

Before Tim passed away, he asked that a fund be set up to contribute to the quality of life of young adults with cancer who are patients within the Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center system. The Tim Roberts Quality-of-Life Fund helps young people between 17 and 26 who are being treated for cancer and have requests for items that support a patient's quality-of-life wishes and dreams.

On Robert's website it states, "Tim's wish for young people like himself is being honored each time we match a wish or dream with this wonderful resource."

Some activities that have been supported through the Timothy Roberts Quality-of-Life Fund are: a trip to New York City to stay overnight and see a play, a delayed honeymoon that covered two nights on the Cape, a trip to Key West for a patient who brought a friend, hiking boots, books for a hospice patient and more.

As a result of this request from the North Andover Middle School teachers, the school raised almost \$3,000 from parent donations. The money has already been forwarded to the fund.

Over the past summer, the Timothy P. Roberts Quality-of-Life Fund raised approximately \$15,000, thanks to the Rockin' for Roberts, Tourney for Tim, the Jimmy Fund Walk and the Pan Mass Challenge.

On the website are memories from friends and families as well as pictures from fundraising events. Tim's mother writes, "we dream that someday the 'Timmy Fund' for those over the age of 18 will be as big as the 'Jimmy Fund' is for those under the age of 18."

The next event is scheduled for March 3, 2007 at the North Andover Knights of Columbus.

To make a donation or learn more about Timothy Roberts, you can visit his website at <http://rememberingt看.org>.

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