

# \$3.5 Mil Override Planned for Town Meeting

Sandy Gleed

A year ago I wrote an open letter to North Andover, asking that we all try harder to solve our financial difficulties.

I've seen many improvements since then: reasonable increases in fees for municipal services; renewed negotiations and sensible accommodations for the Lucent property development; more aggressive collection of overdue taxes; discussions with prospective developers and other large property owners about donating improvements to our community; our Board of Selectmen's commitment to encouraging smart growth in our community; a credible school budget and our School Committee's commitment to maintain open communication with other municipal departments.

I am a frequent visitor to many other Massachusetts communities, on behalf of one of our local non-profit organizations. I see, firsthand, the negative consequences of towns whose budgets can not keep pace with inflation and whose infrastructure is deteriorating. North Andover is not alone.

This is the year that we must find the courage to set emotion and politics aside and look at our financial picture objectively, using facts that this year are accurate and publicly available for our review.

We have reached the crossroad; we must make an informed choice of which direction we want our town to take: up or further down. If we allow North Andover to continue in a downward spiral, how far down can we go and still have the strength to recover?

Today I filed a petition to add a conditional override article to the warrant for Town Meeting, in the amount of \$3 million to benefit the schools, and \$500,000 to benefit remaining municipal departments.

The amount requested is my rough estimate of what might be sufficient to bring our town services back to where we stood three years ago.

These amounts are certainly not enough to restore or add every position and program our town departments need. I have inserted this article strictly as a place-holder, to preserve our right to discuss this option, should the need arise. Am I a "tax and spender"? No. I simply believe that if our leaders demonstrate between now and May that there simply isn't enough money to buy services critical to our town, then we need to examine every available option before choosing to do without critical services. An override is a tool, a financial option. The Massachusetts legislature provided this tool for the very reason that citizens have the legal right to decide if they are willing to pay more money to receive more services.

Do I believe we need an override?

The correct answer for every citizen in North Andover at this early date is "I don't know." Our elected and appointed boards have just started their examination of department budgets and revenue projections. Clearly, the budget cuts of the past year were very hard on our citizens. The school difficulties have been widely discussed, but how long can we also ignore the fact that our public safety, youth and senior centers and library, not to mention administrative services, will need expansion, not cuts, to accommodate our projected growth over the next few years?

Let's bring this down to the bare facts: If our projected revenue is insufficient to pay for our critical expenses, then our options are (a) find additional revenues; (b) increase existing fees or implement new fees; (c) increase state aid; (d) use funds held in reserve, (e) cut budgets and make the conscious choice to do without services, or (f) pass an operational override to buy us time to find those revenues and change state laws. Can we really afford to ignore any one of these potentially useful tools on the budget table?

Going forward, we can continue to encourage our state and local leaders to seek ways to improve our financial picture. Better state funding formulas, better contract negotiations, more options for negotiating fair health benefits, and funding our local capital improvement projects with debt exclusion overrides so they won't eat up large shares of our operating funds, should already be on our to-do list. But in the meantime, override is not a dirty word – it may spell relief if it's the only tool left on the table.



*"The allegations of embezzlement and the misuse of funds filed against Ms. Entsminger, has been an embarrassment to our school community. The excellent reputation that Community Programs held for many years has been compromised by the actions of Ms. Entsminger."*

N. A. School Committee Chairman Al Perry

## Educator Must Pay Back Town

From Page 1

Community Programs administers before and after school programs, such as the extended kindergarten program.

After further investigation, Entsminger was charged with larceny over \$250 and was arraigned in Lawrence District Court in early February. It was alleged at the time that Entsminger stole \$27,339.00 in cash from the school program.

The Valley Patriot has learned that a deal has been reached and that Entsminger has agreed to pay back \$25,820.36 to the North Andover school system, plus attorney fees. This amount is based upon the audit's documented amount Entsminger misappropriated. As part of the agreement, Entsminger will also receive five years probation.

This plea deal is to be presented in Lawrence District Court on March 14<sup>th</sup> and school officials and members of the School Committee are hopeful that the judge accepts the deal.

On February 27, 2007, School Committee Chairman Al Perry wrote a victim impact statement directed to the court.

In his letter he states, "The allegations of embezzlement and the misuse of funds filed against Ms. Entsminger, has been an embarrassment to our school community. The excellent reputation that Community Programs held for many years has been compromised by the actions of Ms. Entsminger."

The letter goes on to say, "It is the opinion of the North Andover School Committee that the serious nature of Ms. Entsminger's offense must not go unpunished. A strong

message must be sent to future would be offenders stating that similar actions by any administrator in our school district cannot and will not be tolerated."

Perry's letter concluded, "Ms. Entsminger has agreed to reimburse the District in the amount of \$25,820.36. This equals the amount of funds which our audit documented Ms. Entsminger misappropriated, plus attorneys' fees the District incurred in pursuing this matter. Based on Ms. Entsminger's agreement to reimburse the District forthwith, the School Committee concurs in the District Attorney's recommendation for sentencing." The letter was unanimously voted on by the School Committee last week.

Chairman Perry said he was "very satisfied" with the deal: "We played hardball and got the money back, plus attorney fees." According to Perry, the reimbursed money will be placed back into the Community Programs revolving account.

Thomson School PTO President Dawn Crescitelli said she was glad the schools finally received some good news. "Maybe now the school's reputation is going in the right direction," she said. "Maybe the community can see that the School Committee is doing the right thing and have more faith in them," she added.

School Committeeman Bill Kelly was also pleased with the agreement. "This is a good deal for the schools; we are financially made whole," he said. "Also, since we now have set procedures in place to ensure that this should not happen again in the future," he concluded, referring to the no-cash policy the School Committee approved last year.

Rick Gallard has replaced Catherine Entsminger as the Community Programs Director.

## Perry Registers Car in N. H.

Paula Porten

North Andover School Committee Chairman Al Perry has been seen driving around town in a new 2007 Cadillac Escalade with New Hampshire license plates. This week he admitted that he registered his new car in the state of New Hampshire, explaining that, "after March, I plan to spend much of my time at my new home in New Hampshire and that is where the car will be."

Rumors have been spreading furiously throughout North Andover that the School Committee chairman registered his cars in New Hampshire and is really a New Hampshire resident. Something that Perry denies.

Perry said the rumors are a political ploy to negate his voting on the committee. "People in town are not happy with my vote for O'Neill for superintendent and are trying to make trouble for me. They are trying to make a case that I am a New Hampshire resident, so my vote does not count and that I would have to immediately resign from the School Committee."

"I have five other cars that are registered in Massachusetts for which I pay excise tax here in North Andover," he said. "I also have a business in North Andover and pay income taxes and property taxes in Massachusetts."

Perry's term expires at the end of this month and he says he is not running again for office in North Andover.

In addressing the controversy, Perry spoke candidly with The Valley Patriot. "A year and a half ago, I purchased a lake house in Meredith, N.H. It is a beautiful 7,000 square foot home with seven bedrooms and six baths. I pay \$18,000 a year in property taxes in New Hampshire for that home and \$1,000 a year for a car tax.

It is that car tax and that registered car that are the center of this controversy.

"This new Escalade will be driven predominately in New Hampshire, so I registered it in New Hampshire," Perry continued. "I am still a registered voter in North Andover," he says. "These attacks are purely political."

School Committeeman Bill Kelly questioned Perry's judgment in registering his car in New Hampshire. "A member of the School Committee must follow the rules as we ask our students to and not evade them," he charged. "We need to lead by example."

Upon learning that Perry was registering his new car in the state of New Hampshire, North Andover Selectman (and Police Officer) Dan Lanen was outraged. "This town has been vigorously going after out-of-state registrations and unpaid property taxes. I do not know the particulars of this case, but I would be shocked if one of our elected officials would be skirting the law. If you live in North Andover, your car should be registered in North Andover," Lanen concluded.

When asked about the regulations regarding registering a car in Massachusetts versus New Hampshire, Tom Sullivan of Sullivan Insurance in Lawrence said, "It is a question of fact. In what state is the car principally garaged? That is where the car should be registered. Anyone who lives in Massachusetts and registers their car in New Hampshire is breaking the law unless the car is principally garaged in New Hampshire."

"Al Perry is an elected official and owns an insurance agency in Massachusetts. He, of all people should know better than to register a car in New Hampshire," Sullivan concluded.

# Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics in N.A.



Ted Tripp

This month, let's take a step back in history. On February 15, 2000, North Andover voters went to the polls and by a margin of 3,431 to 1,574 approved the building of a new \$58.5 million high school. Many in town were unhappy with the old high school built in the 1970s with its open classroom concept and expensive electric heat. The building was also showing its age with roof leaks and foundation cracks. But there was also the issue of an expanding population and where to put the kids.

At the end of this column is the cover of a brochure put together by the new-school proponents. You may remember it; the title was "Our Town Our Future." Next to the cover is the first of several pages outlining why you should vote for the new

Table 1

Year	Transition Factor
1997	0.81
1998	0.82
1999	0.82
2000	0.80
2001	0.80
2002	0.86
2003	0.89
2004	0.97 <small>New HS</small>
2005	0.96
2006	0.87

This, however, is the enrollment number with the new high school. We know that there was a significant jump in the number of students when the new school was opened as parents decided to send their kids to the recently completed facility.

school. Note that the number one reason listed is that room will be needed by 2005 for the expected 50 percent increase in high school enrollment. The 1999-2000 enrollment was stated as around 1000 and the schools expected 500 more by 2005.

It is now 2007. So, how close did the school department predictions come?

The simple answer is: Not very close!

This year, 2006-2007, there are about 1365 students in the high school. Although a year later than 2005, one might still argue that the 365 student increase is not too far removed from the projected number. However, in percentages, it is only a 37 percent increase instead of the 50 percent figure predicted by the schools.

But what would the enrollment have been in 2005 if the new school had not been built? That, after all, is what the school administration was telling us what would happen if a fancy new school was *not* approved.

Table 1 shows the "transition factors" for the years 1997 to 2006. These are the fractions of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students going on to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The difference between these numbers and one represents the fraction of students who did not move on to the high school in North Andover. The majority of

those most likely went on to attend private school somewhere in the area.

Note that for the first five years in the table the transition factor averaged around 0.81. This means 81 percent of 8<sup>th</sup> graders went on to our high school and 19 percent went elsewhere. The factor increased as the new high school was under construction and reached a peak of 0.97 when the school opened in 2004. Since then the transition factors have been decreasing and this school year dropped down to 0.87. Apparently, many parents who decided to transition their kids into the new school have found out that a pretty building does not necessarily correlate with a private school education.

Let's go back and look at the numbers if the new school had not been built. It would not be unreasonable to assume that the transition factor would remain around the 0.81 average through 2005 and beyond. Using birth records and historical grade data, one can put together the numbers shown in Table 2. This indicates what the actual and predicted enrollments are and would likely be, from the year 2001 to 2013, for both the old and new high schools.

Note that if we had kept the old high school that there would have been 1176 students present in 2005, not the 1500 the schools predicted. This is an 18 percent increase, not the 50 percent the schools

Table 2

Year	Old HS # Students	New HS # Students	Difference in # Students	Cost to Town at \$8K/student
2001	1052	1052	N/A	N/A
2002	1092	1116	24	\$191 thou
2003	1120	1181	61	\$490 thou
2004	1159	1315	156	\$1.24 mil
2005	1176	1360	184	\$1.47 mil
2006	1179	1365	186	\$1.48 mil
2007	1161	1367	206	\$1.65 mil
2008	1160	1362	201	\$1.61 mil
2009	1156	1346	190	\$1.52 mil
2010	1115	1328	213	\$1.70 mil
2011	1107	1317	210	\$1.68 mil
2012	1115	1291	175	\$1.40 mil
2013	1130	1319	190	\$1.52 mil

wanted us to believe. Since the difference between this and the actual number of students in the new high school in 2005 is 1365-1179 = 186 students, we can fairly confidently assume that this is the additional number of students attending because of the attraction of a new school.

But there is a cost to the town for bringing back these students who used to go elsewhere. At approximately \$8,000/student, this represents an additional yearly cost to the town of \$1.5 million dollars in 2005 on top of the town's financial portion of the \$58.5 million new school. Do you think the School Committee anticipated this operational budget increase? If it did, why didn't it convey this financial information to the public before the school was voted

**Continued on Page 29**

**\*ELECT\***



**Joe Edward Smith**

**\*ELECT\***



**Candidate for North Andover Selectman**



**Army Veteran, Principal Civil Engineer, Principal Electrical, Notary Public** - North Andover resident since January 1977 **Member of Town:** (former) Zoning Board of Appeals, (former) Zoning Task Force Member, American Legion, Rotary Club, and Saint Michael's Church Parish Council, VFW - Office Planning, Design & Construction State Engineer's Union (M.O.S.E.S.) Executive, Board Officer and Steward (14 years) Trustee/Treasurer Heritage Green Condominium Trust

**The only candidate who has signed the North Andover Taxpayers Association "Taxpayers Pledge" not to raise taxes!**

We need you, your family, neighbors and co-workers to go to the polls on **March 27, 2007** and give Joe Edward Smith your vote for Selectman! Let's fight for a **cleaner environment**, equitable funding for education, larger return from the state of **our tax dollars**, as well as **smart government spending**, expansion of **our tax base** and **equal access** and input in Town government **decision making**.

Let me know your concerns! (978) 689-0845 or joeeds@msn.com

**"It's not the critic who counts; It's not the one who points out how the brave man stumbles or how the doer of deeds may have done them better; It's the one in the arena, who's face is covered with sweat, dust and tears!" - Teddy Roosevelt**

**Paid for by The Committee to Elect Joe Edward Smith 16 Edgelawn Ave #3, North Andover, MA - 01845**

# Proposed Education Legislation: From Page 3

The first bill (see Box #1) is step one in a two-part process. It modifies what is known as the Blaine Amendment to the Massachusetts Constitution. The Blaine Amendment makes it unconstitutional for public money to go to private schools and therefore makes "education stamps" or "vouchers" unconstitutional in Massachusetts.

The Blaine Amendment, originally passed as an anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic measure in the mid-1800s to keep Catholic/Irish schools from getting the same funding as the Protestant "public schools," makes widespread competition of educational services illegal and robs our children of the opportunity to benefit from competing providers. Once the proposed modification of the Blaine Amendment is enacted, subsequent legislation can be introduced to initiate a voucher system and the much needed competition can begin.

## #1 Proposed Article of Amendment

(Docket # 07SD01738)

Article XLVI of the Articles of Amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth is hereby amended by adding the following sentence to the end of section 2: In addition, nothing herein contained shall be construed to prevent the Commonwealth from making grants-in-aid to students or parents or guardians of students attending private primary and secondary schools and nothing herein shall be construed to prevent the Commonwealth from providing tax deductions or tax credits for educational expenses, including tuition, textbooks, and transportation incurred by taxpayers whose dependents attend public or private primary and secondary schools.

The second bill (Box #2) eliminates state-mandated compulsory collective bargaining for municipalities in Massachusetts. If enacted, communities will be able to hire employees and negotiate the terms of employment in the same manner as private businesses. Communities will have no more ability to dictate the terms of employment than their private counterparts.

They will need to attract workers and compete for their services on the open market. Job requirements, hours, wages, and benefits must be mutually agreed upon. Employee unions can still exist and they can still bargain for their members, if they can convince municipalities to deal with them. But they will not be able to prevent other prospective employees from offering their services or negotiating individual employment contracts.

## #2 Proposed Legislative Act (Compulsory Bargaining)

### A Bill to Repeal Various Provisions of Ch. 150E

(Docket # 07SD01449)

The provisions of Chapter 150E are hereby repealed. Contractual obligations entered into under Chapter 150E prior to enactment of this legislation with respect to wages, hours, standards or productivity and performance, and any other terms and conditions of employment, including without limitation, in the case of teaching personnel employed by a school committee, class size and workload shall be binding on all parties until the termination date of such contracts. Notwithstanding the foregoing, there shall be no continuing obligations with respect to future negotiations or terms of employment.

## #3 Proposed Legislative Act (Special Needs)

### A Bill to Add a New Section to Chapter 71B

(Docket #07SD01460)

Chapter 71B, Section 16

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Chapter, school committees shall have the option to select an "all-IEP" method of determining its allocation of resources to educational programs to best meet the needs of all its students. If the "all-IEP" option is not selected, the processes, procedures, and obligations of the other sections of this chapter shall prevail.

Under the "all-IEP" option, a school district must establish IEPs for all of its in-district students. The form and content of IEPs, and the processes and procedures by which they are established and maintained, shall be established by the school committee at its sole discretion subject only to the appeal provisions outlined below. Once a school committee has established its IEP processes and procedures, and the district has established IEPs for a minimum of 98% of its in-district students, its obligations under the other sections of this Chapter to preferentially fund the needs of in-district Special Needs students is eliminated and replaced with the following:

(a) The designations of Special Education and Regular Education as they apply to funding of in-district educational programs, personnel and services, are eliminated. In its place, districts are obligated to develop educational programs and allocate available resources taking into account the sum total of the needs of all of its students as reflected by their IEPs. While 100% of the needs expressed by student IEPs may not be met because of resource limitations, school committees are obligated to set policies and develop educational programs in a manner that in good faith attempts to reasonably and proportionately meet the needs of all of its students as reflected in their IEPs.

(b) While the intent of this section is to provide reasonable latitude to school committees to maximize its ability to effectively utilize available resources to provide the best educational opportunities for the students of its district, if a parent or guardian of any student believes that a school committee has not acted in a reasonable manner to proportionately meet the needs of their student in accordance with the provisions of this section, they may initiate a Review Process. The Review Process shall consist of two steps: First, a meeting of the parent and/or guardian with an appropriate group of education professionals selected by the school administration to determine if the concerns of the parent or guardian can be met under current district policies and educational programs. If this initial review does not lead to a mutually acceptable accommodation of the parent or guardian's concerns, the parent or guardian may request a hearing before the district's Mediation Committee.

(c) To support this Review Process, school committees shall annually establish a Mediation Committee consisting of one member of the community selected by the city council or board of selectmen, one member selected by the school committee, and one member jointly selected by the school committee and the city council or board of selectmen. This three-member committee shall review the complaint in accordance with a Mediation Process determined by the school committee and approved by the Department of Education. Only costs incurred by the Mediation Committee consistent with carrying out its duties in accordance with its established procedures shall be the responsibility of the school district. The majority findings of this Mediation Committee shall be binding on the school committee and fulfillment of the responsibilities outlined in this finding shall fulfill school committee obligations under this article.

Finally, a bill (Box #3) has been introduced that gives communities an option in how they can fulfill their obligations under our Special Education laws. Today, special needs children (approx. 15 % of students) are given an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and communities must fund these plans first before any dollars are spent on the remaining, regular education children. Approximately 85 percent of our children are legally second-class citizens. They get whatever is left over regardless of how little or how inadequate. The option provided in the proposed legislation allows communities to put ALL our children on

an equal footing. Every child would get an IEP and school committees would have "to set policies and develop educational programs in a manner that in good faith attempts to reasonably and proportionately meet the needs of all of its students as reflected in their IEPs."

The remainder of the bill outlines procedures for dispute resolution – the details of which are not critical to the overall intent, which is to ensure all our children are provided equal treatment under the law.

There are only three things blocking enactment of these reforms: Apathy, a presumption of hopelessness, and special interests. If you really want to improve education, reduce the burden of taxes, improve municipal services, and stop being ripped off by special interests, this is your chance. Call your legislators today and demand their support for these reforms.

*I have done my part. Now it is up to you.*

#### Contact Information:

Senator Baddour:	Tel. 617 722-1604
Senator Bruce Tarr:	Tel. 617 722 1600
Senator Susan Tucker	Tel. 617 722 1612
Rep. Linda Dean Campbell	Tel. 617 722-2060
Rep. Barbara L'Italien:	Tel. 617 722 2080
Rep. David Torrisi:	Tel. 617 722 2014
Rep. L'Antigua:	Tel. 617 722 2810
Rep. Harriett Stanley	Tel. 617 722 2676
Rep. Barry Finegold	Tel. 617 722 2676
Rep. Bradley Jones	Tel. 978 664 5936
Rep. Bradford Hill	Tel. 978 356 9008
Rep. Brian Dempsey	Tel. 978 372 2750

For e-mail addresses go to:

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/memmenuh.htm>

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North Andover

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**Dr. Ormsby is a member of the North Andover School Committee. He is a graduate of Cornell and has a doctorate from MIT. If you have any questions or comments, you can contact Dr. Ormsby via email: [ccormsby@comcast.net](mailto:ccormsby@comcast.net)**

## M/A-COM Federal Credit Union Sponsors Runner to Support Children's Hospital

**LOWELL** – When the shot is fired opening the 111<sup>th</sup> Boston Marathon, April 16, M/A-COM Federal Credit Union's Kaitlyn Callery, Director of Marketing, will be at the starting line as part of the 2007 *Credit Unions of Massachusetts Kids at Heart* marathon team. Each year, team members and their sponsors gather support to raise funds for Children's Hospital Boston. Callery, one of ten runners on the credit union's team, says she's been training hard for the marathon and is excited about running on behalf of Jennifer Sparks, her 14-year-old patient-partner.

"It's exciting that our credit union is able to sponsor me for this run," Callery said. "I've wanted to run a marathon for several years, and I'm excited that I can combine that dream with teaming up with the *Credit Unions of Massachusetts* for such a good cause."

Cold weather notwithstanding, Callery has been training for the Boston Marathon with a group of other Children's Hospital Boston runners on Saturday mornings.

"We have a coach who sends out information on what we should be doing each week, and that helps us stay on track," Callery said.

Callery had the opportunity to meet Jennifer Sparks at a get-together in December, planned by the *Credit Unions of Massachusetts Kids at Heart* program. "It makes it much more personal to know I'm running for Jennifer," she said. "Even when it's cold out, just knowing Jennifer motivates me to push on. I'm so grateful to be able to do this and to have her for my patient-partner."

The *Credit Unions of Massachusetts Kids at Heart* program was founded in 1996, and M/A-COM FCU President/CEO Barbara Frazier says her credit union is enjoying serving as a sponsor because it makes a tangible difference for the children served by Children's Hospital Boston.



Kaitlyn Callery (right) to run Boston Marathon on CU's of Massachusetts Kids at Heart team

"Working with the *Credit Unions of Massachusetts Kids at Heart* program is all about what credit unions do best: serve people. It's uplifting to know you are working for a good cause," she said.

According to Frazier, sponsors of the *Credit Unions of Massachusetts Kids at Heart* program have raised more than \$2 million for Children's Hospital Boston over the past 10 years and they are now working toward another million-dollar goal. Last year, funds were used to build a state-of-the-art family lounge.

Currently, 55 credit unions participate in the *Credit Unions of Massachusetts Kids at Heart* program. For more information about the program, please contact Joyce Burke, at (781) 994-3324, or [jburke@eascorp.org](mailto:jburke@eascorp.org).

M/A-COM Federal Credit Union serves a large number of area businesses and invites interested readers to visit its Web site at [www.macomfcu.org](http://www.macomfcu.org) or call (866)-622-6628 for more information. The credit union has more than \$20 million in assets and serves some 3,000 members. For more information on how you can join M/A-COM FCU or donate to the *Credit Unions of Massachusetts Kids at Heart* program, please contact Kaitlyn Callery, at (978) 328-5108 or [kcallery@macomfcu.org](mailto:kcallery@macomfcu.org).

## It's Almost Election Time

Peter Larocque, Lawrence School Committee

Next month marks the beginning of another election season for us in the great city of Lawrence. Monday, April 2, 2007, nomination papers become available to all Lawrence residents who want to participate and make themselves candidates. They can pick up their papers at the election office at the Lawrence City Hall.



If I may, I would like to say to all registered voters in District E, that it has been a privilege and a honor to serve and represent you and the parents and the children of the District on the Lawrence School Committee.

This has been an experience that I will always cherish as long as I live. I'm well aware that in my case it has been just a short time of service, but I will be asking you to send me back so that I can continue the work that I have begun.

As I'm sure some of you remember, I ran two years ago which afforded me the wonderful privilege of meeting many of you along the campaign trail. I so look forward to seeing you again, along with the new residents, as I go around the neighborhoods of District E. Many of you told me last time that if you were not already voting for Ms. McGovern, that you would have no problem voting for me.

Well, I'm counting on your word! I'm also well aware of what some are saying around the District, that since I ran against Ms. McGovern two years ago, that this automatically disqualifies me from running again. This kind of logic is absolutely absurd! Some have even said that due to my years of volunteering on the P.T.A. of the Lawrence public schools and being a past president of the P.T.A. of the Lawrence High School, that this makes me a rubber stamp for the superintendent and the mayor.

This is the kind of rhetoric that stops others from coming forward and placing their names on the ballot and participating in the election process.

Two years ago, my campaign was not an anti-Amy McGovern campaign as some others were. What I said then and what I am still saying today, now with even more conviction, is that the Lawrence School Committee must change how it conducts its business.

I advocated that the School Committee take a lesson from the Lawrence City Council and establish sub-committees, similar to how our City Council operates. Imagine the City Council without the availability of sub-committees to do research and studies in areas of concern. The job of a city councilor would be overwhelming. Well, the position of School Committee in Lawrence is just as important and crucial to our city and especially to the future education of our children.

Since I was appointed to the School Committee in October of '06, we have established two sub-committees in addition to the finance sub-committee. We now have a sub-committee on school safety made up of principals and assistant principals, central office personnel, parents and students.

I have the wonderful privilege of chairing this sub-committee with Patricia Sanchez-Reyes as the vice-chair. We now have two School Committee members involved at the discussion table concerning school safety issues that effect the entire school district before they come before the whole School Committee to be voted on and adopted.

This is a new procedure which has not been done before. Also we now have a sub-committee on school uniforms for the new Lawrence High School which will open September of '07. This sub-committee has the same make up of members as the school safety sub-committee. Again involving parents along side of school personnel and School Committee members. This was another point I made before and still highly in favor of and that is the School Committee being more parent friendly and inclusive.

There are more sub-committees needed, for instance, we need a Sub-committee on academics and curriculum and another one on buildings and new construction.

These are just some of the key areas that I believe the Lawrence School Committee should be involved in at the discussion table. There is always more room for others. I also am a firm believer in having parent and community forums on subjects that concern the entire school district.

This was the first action I took as a School Committee member, at my first School Committee meeting: I recommended to the School Committee that we should conduct a city-wide community forum on the subject of school safety which we held on October 24, 2006 at the Lawrence High School.

I was also given a wonderful privilege again this year of being appointed by the mayor to the FY08, CDAB, the Community Development Advisory Board. This is my second year on the board and this experience has afforded me a look at the inner workings of the city and the organizations that exists to help our low to moderate income citizens. Many wonderful programs are available to Lawrence citizens and to be a part of this process has truly enriched my life and allows me an opportunity to help others. Having said all this, I know that the citizens of District E are well informed and knowledgeable of the issues that face our city and school district. They are used to having a School Committee member very involved in these issues and asking the right questions and not just at election time.

I am committed to being that person. I ask for your support as we go forward in this new election season. I remain committed to being a voice for parents, always keeping in mind the strong family values that we all hold dear in our lives. I am really looking forward to seeing you around the District.

*Peter Larocque is a member of the Lawrence School Committee. He was elected by the Lawrence City Council to fill the unexpired term of Amy McGovern. You can email him at [pamelalarocque@hotmail.com](mailto:pamelalarocque@hotmail.com).*

Two years ago, my campaign was not an anti-Amy McGovern campaign as some others were. What I said then and what I am still saying today, now with even more conviction, is that the Lawrence School Committee must change how it conducts its business.

# Lifestyles

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Local Child Enrichment Center Recognized

# Little Sprouts Named Best Child Care Facility

Market Surveys of America has recently named Little Sprouts the Best Child Care Facility of 2007 in the Greater Methuen/Lawrence area - for the second time!

"We are thrilled to be recognized as the best of the best," commented Methuen Executive Director Erica Reed. "Our innovative early education centers provide extraordinary care for our infants all the way through school-age children!"

A member of the Better Business Bureau, Market Surveys of America awarded Little Sprouts this honor based upon a recent public opinion poll. Findings can be found on their website: bestofsurveys.com.

Little Sprouts CEO Susan Leger-Ferraro explain-ed the importance of this award, "We won this award last year and this time it's just as exciting. It means that we are continuing to provide outstanding service and care in our field. Our innovative programs and caring teachers are continually allowing the children to grow in a positive environment!"

**About Little Sprouts Child Enrichment Centers**

Little Sprouts Child Enrichment Centers have been leaders in high quality childhood education since 1982, focusing on involving

families in each child's development and education. From the beginning, Little Sprouts has been committed to creating a holistic experience for children, combining a stimulating atmosphere and cutting-edge curriculum with an outstanding range of services. Little Sprouts has received national recognition from the U.S. Department of Education for the quality of its programs, having been named a Preschool Center of Educational Excellence and awarded the prestigious Early Reading First Grant two times, once in September 2003 for \$1.5M, and again in September 2006 for \$3.49M. Little Sprouts centers include six sites in Andover, Methuen, Lowell, Lawrence, Haverhill and Westford. Founder Susan Leger-Ferraro has been recognized as Intriguing Individual of the North Shore by *North Shore Living* in 2005 and received the YWCA's Tribute to Women in 2004. In December 2006, Little Sprouts received additional national recognition as one of the "Top Businesses in the United States" by DiversityBusiness.com. For more information, visit [www.littlesprouts.com](http://www.littlesprouts.com).

For additional information, please contact: Amy Luckiewicz, Community Connector, Little Sprouts Child Enrichment Centers, (781) 588-0257, [aluckie@littlesprouts.com](mailto:aluckie@littlesprouts.com).



**Community Action Council's Even Start Program Graduation**

Even Start staff and enrollees: Carlos Hernandez, Angela Martinez, Lorraine Alvarado, Omaira Santiago, Lyमारis Lopez, Bernice Moran, Marlene Berges, Lorie Jorge, Alba Meregildo, Janet Tirado, Jessica Lara, Yahaira Rodriguez, Deyanira Ortiz, Ede Laine Guillon, Mayra Torres. Next month The Valley Patriot will begin a regular series on G.L.C.A.C's Even Start Program.

## Our Lady of Good Council Sponsors Family Breakfast

Meet some cool costumed characters at a family buffet breakfast sponsored by Our Lady of Good Counsel School serving Methuen and Lawrence on Sunday, March 11. From 8:30-11:30 am, enjoy a full menu of breakfast goodies and a break from the winter doldrums. At this tropical-themed breakfast, one lucky winner will score a trip to Florida for four people.

The "Sunny Adventure" raffle winner will be selected at the end of the breakfast. The prize includes a weeklong stay at a waterfront condo in North Palm Beach, four airfares, four one day passes to Disney World in Orlando and \$1000 to spend. The winner can choose a week based on availability. Second place receives \$500; third place receives \$200. "Sunny Adventure" raffle tickets are just \$5. The prizes for this raffle are donated by parishioners in memory of Rick Rainville, beloved basketball and football coach, and Sophie Scuto, in honor of her spirit of generosity.

Breakfast on March 11 will be \$5 for adults, \$3 for kids ages six and up. Under five is FREE! For "Sunny Adventure" raffle information, call Our Lady of Good Counsel school at 978-682-9761. The school is located on the corner of Lowell and Ames Streets in Lawrence.

Help a small catholic school continueto offer a quality education. Our Lade of Good Counsel. Currently serces 202 students from Lawrence, Methuen, and the surrounding area.

# RAISE 'EM RIGHT™ Getting Ready to Leave the Nest

Barbara Peary, M.Ed.

**I have twin girls who will be ready for preschool shortly.**

**They have no trouble separating from me when I leave them with their grandparents or babysitters, so I do not think this will be an issue when they begin school. Both of them are looking forward to going. They are excited about all the toys and equipment that the school has that we don't. Since I think they will be OK with leaving me, is there anything else I can do to make the transition to school easier for them?**

**a tradition we had established, but am I being selfish not to want to do this again next year?**

Time for a new tradition. Driving all that way with one child would be challenging enough, but taking four children that distance could not have been a "vacation" for you or your wife. Now is the time to speak to both sets of parents and tell them that next year you would like them to visit you.



See if you can arrange to have one set come for the weekend before the actual holiday. Plan on spending the week you have off alone with just your wife and children and ask the other parents to visit for the weekend after the holiday. If you don't have room in your home to put them up for the weekend or don't feel comfortable doing so, when you talk with them about this, offer to make hotel arrangements for them when the time draws near. If they decline your suggestions, tell them that you will plan on visiting them when you have more time and when it will be more of a vacation for you.

**My four year old struggles to get his jacket on day after day and becomes so frustrated. He wants to do it by himself. Is there an easy way to help him out without taking over?**

Yes. Lay the coat on the floor with the collar or hood facing towards your child's feet.

Have the lining of the jacket facing upward. If you have him bend down and place one arm into each sleeve, he can flip it over his head and it will be on his body the correct way. Try this yourself first, it is easier to do than it is to explain.

A big part of the preschool experience for children is making that separation from the parents day after day for extended periods of time. Additionally, in preschool children practice other independence skills ritualistically. They are required to hang up their own coats, put their lunch or snack away, wash their hands with minimum assistance, use the toilet on their own, and put their coat on and off with little assistance. Start now to work on some of these basic skills at home, if your children do not have them. This will help make the first days in preschool easier for them.

**As a teacher in the public school system, I usually have a week free at the Christmas holidays. We have four children - a child who is six months old, a three year old, and twins who will turn five shortly. This past year, the whole family drove five hours each way to spend the holidays with both sets of our in-laws. It was quite hectic since we went back and forth during the week between the two homes.**

**I was worn out when we returned and I felt like all I did was drive. My wife was also exhausted. Both sets of parents are healthy and I see no reason why they could not visit us instead. I also think it would be nice for the children to have a chance to play with their gifts at home and not be running around visiting relatives all week. This is**

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

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# Valley Journalists Honored by New England Press Association

## Flood Coverage Dominates Award Ceremony

Coverage of the devastating flood that ravaged most communities in the Merrimack Valley for ten days last May dominated much of the New England Press Association awards given out to local journalists at the Boston Park Plaza last month.

Winning first place for General News Story in the *Daily Newspaper* category was the Lowell Sun for its coverage of the flood in Lowell and surrounding areas. The Eagle-Tribune took second place for its coverage of the flood.

The Valley Patriot story which was awarded second place in the *Monthly* category focused on the Red Cross shelter in Methuen where flood victims were staying and the harsh treatment they received by the National Red Cross.

Photos of the flood were awarded as well as Alison McGonigle of the Andover Townsman also won an award for her coverage of an insurance company's slow response to help policy holders after the floods.

Also winning a NEPA award was Ken Johnson of the Eagle-Tribune who placed third in the Daily Editorial Writing category, for his brilliant piece on how the North Andover School Committee voted to spend \$187,000 of the taxpayers money to buy out Superintendent Harry Harutunian and refusing to tell the public why.

NEPA recognized several other journalists in the Merrimack Valley at the annual NEPA Banquet. Among the talented journalists receiving awards were:

**The Lowell Sun, Lowell** - Michael La Fluer, category: convergence, daily newspaper, third place. Paul Watson, category: illustration, 2nd place. Sharon Flaherty, category: editorial daily

newspaper. Jon Hill, category: general news photo, daily, first place for general news story, category: daily. Carmine Frongillo, category: sports story, 2nd place, daily. Julie Malakie, category: sports photo. Dennis Whitton, category: sports column, 2nd place, daily. Paul Sullivan, category: 1st place, humor columnist, daily. The Lowell Sun, category: local election coverage, 1st place. David Perry, category: arts & entertainment reporting, 1st place, daily. Tony German, category: feature photo, daily.

**North Shore Weekly/Sunday, Peabody/Salem** - Barbara Taormina, category: environmental reporting, alternative weekly newspapers. Taormina is the former editor of the North Andover Citizen. Barbara Taormina, category: sports story, 2nd place, alternative weekly. Barbara Taormina, category: coverage of racial or ethnic issues, 1st place, alternative weekly. Barbara Taormina, North, category: health reporting, 1st place, alternative weekly.

**Eagle-Tribune, North Andover** - David Scott & Rosemary Ford, category: infographics, 3rd place, daily newspaper. David Scott, category: photo illustration, 2nd place, daily. Ken Johnson, category: editorial writing, daily. Shawn Regan, category: special issue feature story, 3rd place, daily.

Second Place for General News Story: The Eagle-Tribune. category: daily.

**Andover Townsman, Andover** - Andover Townsman, category: editorial page writing, weekly newspaper. Alison McGonagle, category: general news story, weekly. Brian Davidson, category: coverage of racial or ethnic issues, 3rd place. Tim Jean, category: personality photo, 3rd place, weekly. Brian Davidson, category: business/economic reporting, 3rd place, weekly.

**Haverhill Gazette, Haverhill** - Jean MacDougall-Tattan, category: editorial writing, weekly. Mark Behan, category: sports story, 2nd place, weekly. Mark Behan, category: 1st place, sports column, weekly.

**North Andover Citizen, N. Andover** - Joe McConnell, category: sports story, third place, weekly.

**The Daily News, Newburyport** - Stephanie Chelf, category: environmental reporting, first place Stephanie Chelf and Priti Prabhakar, category: investigative reporting, 3rd place, daily.

**The Valley Dispatch, Dracut** - Julia Malakie, category: photo series, 2nd place, weekly.

**The Valley Patriot, N. Andover** - Tom Duggan, category: general news story, monthly.

**Tewksbury Advocate, Tewksbury** - Franklin Tucker, category: health reporting, 3rd place, weekly. Linda Kush, category: history reporting, 3rd place, weekly.

**The Salem Observer, Salem, N.H.** - Jim Devine, category: general news story, 2nd place, weekly.



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# Congratulations to The Valley Patriot For Your New England Press Association Award!

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**The Valley Patriot**  
"Congress shall make no law..."

Volume 3, Issue 6 June - 2006 28 Pages

## Red Cross Nightmare

Tom Duggan

Flood victims from Lawrence, North Andover and Methuen who were staying at the Red Cross shelter in Methuen during the immediate aftermath of last month's flood say that they were treated so badly by the National Red Cross that their view of the organization has been shattered forever.

The devastating flood that displaced thousands of Merrimack Valley residents last month caused many people to rely on organizations like the Red Cross. But, just days after National Red Cross officials descended onto Methuen High school to replace local volunteers, the Red Cross tried to skip town and toss more than 63 homeless people out on the streets.

**Continued on Page 8**

Lawrence Residents staying at the Red Cross shelter in Methuen had their belongings put on the sidewalk in plastic garbage bags and told not to return. The National Red Cross decided they were skipping town at 3 p.m. on May 24th. Lawrence and Methuen officials had to intervene to stop them from closing the shelter.

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Haverhill Mayor  
**Jim Fiorentini**  
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*"For three years The Valley Patriot has been providing exclusive, breaking news coverage and insightful opinions about the important events impacting the people of the Merrimack Valley. On this, your third anniversary, it is only fitting that the New England Press Association has recognized the contributions you have made by awarding The Valley Patriot: 2nd place for General News Excellence in New England. Your coverage of the 2006 flood was amazing!"*



*Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan*

**RED CROSS NIGHTMARE - JUNE 2006**

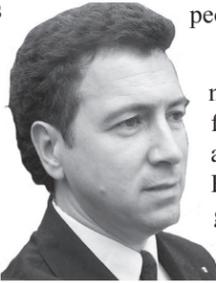
**"Second Place for highest achievement in writing of a general news story"**

# The Academy Awards:

## What Do They Communicate?

Paul Murano

It was stated that over a billion people tuned in to see the Academy Awards last week. That is a hefty chunk of the human race. It probably means many from third world countries as well as Muslim lands, including nations propagandized into thinking we are the great satan. tuned in to see a glimpse of America.



This event, perhaps more than the Superbowl or anything else, answers the question, "What is America?" to many inquisitive peoples across the globe. Many know it's what their cultures may evolve into, given America's influence in the modern world. Well then, what *did* we communicate? What message did we send?

First off, they saw beautiful people. Let's face it, beautiful people are dispersed across the globe but Hollywood has a knack for skillfully displaying them. The world also got to see some talented people who are good at their craft, whether it be in front of the camera or behind it, and they were entertained with humor throughout Hollywood's four-hour marathon reality TV show. It displayed an entertainment industry second to none in its making and distributing of movies around the globe.

Is that it? Not exactly. There were a few other things communicated that perhaps made much more of an impact on the world looking in. One message they heard was that America's top priority and number one value is global warming. There is nothing more important nor more alarming, it seemed, than the world's temperature rising one degree each century. To those watching who are living through ethnic cleansing and genocide, who are literally starving to death because of unjust regimes and civil wars, to the millions still living under repressive totalitarian states, the unjustly imprisoned, the tortured, the countless children and adults used as sex slaves, those dying of deadly diseases, those who live in abusive situations whether it be sexually, physically, or verbally with no visible way out, to those suffering from serious addiction, mental illness, severe depression, loneliness, hopelessness and despair; and last but certainly not least, those living in their mother's wombs in our very dangerous abortion age - to all these people and/or those who care for them it must have seemed insulting that the richest and most

powerful country in the world focuses their energy and resources on the weather and what it may or may not do to some people down the road.

Then there was Ellen wearing her masculine pants suit as the cameras focused in on her "partner" in the audience. Not to mention Melissa Ethridge not only giving her girlfriend a big voluptuous kiss as the camera took a close-up shot, but also at the podium thanked her "wonderful wife" for all her support, as the world watched.

Lastly, its hard to ignore the collegin lips, fake breasts, face lifts, hairpieces, implants, straightened noses, fake tans, and highly competitive egos that were displayed en mass to the world's population.

So what was communicated to our fellow human beings across the globe about what we value and stand for? After watching they must think we're a country filled with rich lesbians, routinely undergoing plastic surgery, paranoid about the environment, and mourning that Al Gore is not president. They may be thinking that if freedom, democracy and affluence results in a people going in and out of rehab after their numerous divorces or addictions to drugs, sex or both; a people comprised of women "married" to wives while countless others kill their children before birth out of convenience; if what they see along with the Oscars is the exportation of The Jerry Springer Show, The Sopranos, our multi-million dollar pornography business, the sagas of Brittany and Anna Nicole - it should be no shock that the entire world isn't on board with us yet. Perhaps many aren't willing to redefine the concepts of tolerance and diversity to include social and moral chaos, the breakdown of the family and community, and the inordinate and abusive focus on self.

The next time we wonder why people across the globe who don't share these values resist our influence and fear our exported culture, maybe we should think a little more about the image we send to them of America through our most powerful media.

Paul Murano teaches theology and philosophy at Assumption College and Northshore Community College. He is also the producer of Paying Attention! Radio Program on WCAP. You can E-mail Paul at [PJDM@aol.com](mailto:PJDM@aol.com)

# Global Hot Air

Thomas Sowell

The political left's favorite argument is that there is no argument. Their current crusade is to turn "global warming" into one of those things that supposedly no honest and decent person can disagree about, as they have already done with "diversity" and "open space."

The name of "science" is invoked by the left today, as it has been for more than two centuries. After all, Karl Marx's ideology was called "scientific socialism" in the 19th century. In the 18th century, Condorcet analogized his blueprint for a better society to engineering, and social engineering has been the agenda ever since.

Not all the advocates of "global warming" are on the left, of course. Crusades are not just for crusaders. There are always hangers-on who can turn the true believers' crusades into votes or money or at least notoriety.

Whether the globe really is warming is a question about facts — and about where those facts are measured: on land, in the air or under the sea. There is no question that there is a "greenhouse" effect. Otherwise, half the planet would freeze every night when there is no sunlight falling on it.

There is also no question that the earth can warm or cool. It has done both at one time or another for thousands of years, even before there were SUVs. If there had never been any global warming before, we wouldn't be able to enjoy Yosemite Valley today for it was once buried under thousands of feet of ice.

Back in the 1970s, the environmental hysteria was about the dangers of a new ice age. This hysteria was spread by many of the same individuals and groups who are promoting today's hysteria about global warming. It is not just the sky that is falling. Government money is falling on those who seek grants to study global warming and produce "solutions" for it. But that money is not as likely to fall on those skeptics in the scientific community who refuse to join the stampede.

Yes, Virginia, there are skeptics about global warming among scientists who study weather and climate. There are arguments both ways — which is why so many in politics and in the media are so busy selling the notion that there is no argument.

If you heard both arguments, you might not be so willing to go along with those who are prepared to ruin the economy, sacrificing jobs and the national standard

of living on the altar to the latest in an unending series of crusades, conducted by politicians and other people seeking to tell everyone else how to live.

What about all those scientists mentioned, cited or quoted by global warming crusaders?

There are all kinds of scientists, from chemists to nuclear physicists to people who study insects, volcanoes, and endocrine glands — none of whom is an expert on weather or climate, but all of whom can be listed as scientists, to impress people who don't scrutinize the list any further.

That ploy has already been used.

Then there are genuine scientific experts on weather and climate. The National Academy of Sciences came out with a report on global warming back in 2001 with a very distinguished list of such experts listed. The problem is that not one of those very distinguished scientists actually wrote the report — or even saw it before it was published.

One of those very distinguished climate scientists — Richard S. Lindzen of MIT — publicly repudiated the conclusions of that report, even though his name had been among those used as window dressing on the report. But the media may not have told you that.

In short, there has been a full court press to convince the public that "everybody knows" that a catastrophic global warming looms over us, that human beings are the cause of it, and that the only solution is to turn more money and power over to the government to stop us from our dangerous ways of living.

Among the climate experts who are not part of that "everybody" are not only Professor Lindzen but also Fred Singer and Dennis Avery, whose book "Unstoppable Global Warming: Every 1500 Years," punctures the hot air balloon of the global warming crusaders. So does the book "Shattered Consensus," edited by Patrick J. Michaels, professor of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia, which contains essays by others who are not part of "everybody."

**Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305. His Web site is [www.tsowell.com](http://www.tsowell.com). COPYRIGHT 2007 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.**



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## 2007 Prom Expo Fashion Show

was held at the Elks in Lawrence on March 2, 2007 to benefit the Jennifer Ortiz Foundation

The Jennier Ortiz Foundation was established in 2001 to commemorate the life of a young 19 year old girl who lost her battle with cancer shortly after graduating from high school. The organization donates badly needed money to students wishing to continue their educaiton beyond high school. The annual Fashion Show is a great opportunity for businesses to display their products and services. Manufacturers such as Jovani, Mystique, Night Moves, Calvin Klein and many more were showcased. Anyone interested in sponsoring next year's event can email Judy Perkins at [promexpo@comcast.net](mailto:promexpo@comcast.net). Photos by Tom Duggan.



*All Dresses in this layout were provided by Natasha's on Merrimack St. in Methuen. Private modeling provided by Jade and Shaina Perkins*



## Remembering Tim Roberts

(Front row) Steve Nugent, Nick Ippolito, Joe Mento and (back row) Mat Steele, Mary Lou Connors, Tim Roberts, Pat Roberts, Greg Brennan, Jerylyn Roberts Christopher Smedile and Amy Roberts joined hundreds of friends and family members at the Knights of Columbus in North Andover to raise money for the Dana Farber "Reeling in the Dream" fund. The next fundraiser is a fishing derby on June 2nd. For more information on future fundraisers or to make a donation you can visit

[www.rememberingtim.org](http://www.rememberingt看im.org)

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# Valley Patriot Wins Press Award



NEPA showcased all the award winning articles, columns, photos and illustrations at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. Valley Patriot editor Tom Duggan with his winning article about the National Red Cross.



Attending the New England Press Association's "Better Newspaper Contest" award dinner in support of The Valley Patriot were: (front row) Dorothy Incropera, Colleen Flanagan, Dr. Chuck Ormsby, Ted Tripp, Georgetown Selectman Lonnie Brennan and (back row) Quianna Roy, Frank Incropera, Diane Brennan and AAI ad executive Mark Hersum.



Valley Patriot Editors Ted Tripp, Paula Porten, Tom Duggan, and Dr. Charles Ormsby in the main ballroom of the Boston Park Plaza just minutes after The Valley Patriot was announced as second place winners.



Methuen Councilor Kathleen Corey Rahme (left) attended the event with her friend Christine Ryan of Methuen. Rahme writes a monthly column in The Valley Patriot.



Lawrence Atty. and Zoning Board Member Bob O'Koniewski with Seth Itzkan from The Valley Patriot's Innovation Valley Column



Separated at birth: Lawrence Planning Director Michael Sweeney and Lawrence Zoning Board Member Bob O'Koniewski enjoy the vegetarian delight.



AAI Ad executive Mark Hersum who recently joined The Valley Patriot team as our new marketing representative sits with Tom Duggan to discuss marketing strategies.



Bill Samatis from Graphic Development, The Valley Patriot's printer for three years, with Valley Patriot President Tom Duggan

Lawrence City Councilor Grisel Silva and her husband Nelson were on hand to cheer on The Valley Patriot.



Valley Patriot editor Tom Duggan's family turned out to see him win a NEPA award. Left to right, Tom's youngest sister Quianna (16) and his parents Frank Incropera (president of the Mt. Vernon Neighborhood Association) and Dorothy Incropera.

*Innovation Valley (www.ivalley.org)*

## Merrimack Valley's Global Summit on Innovation Networking and Green Chemistry

Seth J. Itzkan, Karl Thidemann, John Michitson

We propose a global summit orchestrated in the Merrimack Valley to match two cutting-edge trends key to the region's future.

These are, firstly, Innovation Networking, an emerging business model that promotes sharing of intellectual property amongst diverse sectors, and, secondly, Green Chemistry, a rapidly growing industrial practice that eliminates the use of hazardous materials in manufacturing. The goal is to establish the region as a nexus for advanced and environmentally sustainable industrial research, and in the process help reverse a half-century-long problem. While the knowledge-oriented economy revitalized Greater Boston, it has failed to spread to "gateway cities," such as Lawrence and Haverhill. To alleviate this we need to harness not only new technologies, but also new methods for information sharing.

The lingering economic problems for the region are illustrated in a highly touted report by MassINC and the Brookings Institute, entitled "Reconnecting Massachusetts Gateway Cities: Lessons Learned and Agenda for Renewal." The report states:

"The Gateway Cities have continued to slip in importance in relation to Boston on key measures of economic performance... Gateway Cities continue to struggle with deindustrialization, and have not yet found a niche in the specialized knowledge-oriented economy that has revitalized the Boston area in recent decades."

It is precisely the objective of this summit to address the challenges outlined in the Gateway Cities report

In innovation networks, diverse businesses and research centers collaborate on ideas, technologies and market objectives to develop products and services that were not possible otherwise.

and to help the region find it's "niche in the specialized knowledge-oriented economy."

### What is Innovation Networking?

In innovation networks, diverse businesses and research centers collaborate on ideas, technologies and market objectives to develop products and services that were not possible using in-house inventions and insular intellectual property perspectives. There is mounting adaptation of this methodology as the "do it alone" approach is rapidly dying and become increasingly ineffectual.



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



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

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

A clear example of its appeal can be seen in survey data from the Innovate Forum. This study showed that "75% of CEOs across industries now view external collaboration as indispensable to innovation..." and, further, that "only 17% of global CEOs even mention R&D when listing their sources of innovation," thus, underscoring the value of collaboration beyond traditional corridors.

A prominent player in the field from which we can learn is The Santa Fe Institute (SFI). They have developed a model for business networking that has the participation of some of the largest and most progressive companies in the world. According to a recent Forrester Research report, "The Santa Fe Institute Business Network (SFI) epitomizes a key role in Innovation Networks: the broker. By bringing together world-class researchers from fields as diverse as particle physics and economics, SFI helps businesses like Boeing, Cisco Systems, and Honda find peers with expert advice on new product ideas, forge bonds with new collaborators for intercompany projects, and design more robust organizations."

And closer to home, we are seeing Innovation Networking put to practice at the 2007 Bio International Convention to be held in Boston. The conference will feature an extensive innovation networking agenda. Participants can use a web portal to identify possible partner companies, and invite executives, scientists, and investors to hear their ideas during 30-minute side sessions.

### Innovation Networking and Green Chemistry Integration

Innovation Networking is a great strategy to help jumpstart a Green Chemistry industry in the Merrimack Valley. In fact, Green Chemistry is practically the poster child for Innovation Networking. It sits squarely within the intersections of the chemical, pharmaceutical, and "green technology" industries. It is a multi-disciplinary practice that promises to help grow high-tech and environmentally responsible enterprises in the Commonwealth.

### Merrimack Valley Has The Expertise and Early Adopters

For more than a year, many stakeholders from the business, government, academia and civic communities across the Merrimack Valley have been volunteering to establish a Green Chemistry industry in the region. At the cornerstone of our effort is Dr. John Warner, director, Center for Green Chemistry, and professor, Plastics Engineering, at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell. Dr. Warner is a global authority of the Green Chemistry science.

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He is widely recognized as the founder of the field since its inception in the 1990s, and is today its most sought after consultant. Dr. Warner initiated the nation's first PhD program in Green Chemistry at the University of Massachusetts.

He was influential in creating the Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge for recognition of nontoxic chemical technologies. And, additionally, he helped craft House Bill H.R. 1215, The Green Chemistry Research and Development Act of 2006. That bill has earmarked money for research into clean chemistry for industry.

We are fortunate to have Dr. Warner as a native son. His presence here helps to establish the Merrimack Valley as a home for innovative and environmentally responsible industrial research.

### Summit Vision

Our vision is for a summit in the fall of 2007 to launch the Green Chemistry industry in the Merrimack Valley. Opinion leaders from diverse fields such as life sciences, renewable energy, and finance will share ideas on business cases that cut across their domains. The central figure in the event will be Dr. John Warner, who will present his vision for a Green Chemistry Institute and industry in the Merrimack Valley, as well as help to formulate business cases.

It is our intention to invite Governor Patrick to kickoff the event with a keynote address on his plans for renewable energy and environmentally smart industries in Massachusetts.

Representatives from the Santa Fe Institute will be invited to provide an overview on their Business Network model, as well as guide brainstorming sessions comprised of leaders from diverse fields. A teleconference will be featured to include experts from around the world. The end product will be the launch of Innovation Networking for the region that will help jumpstart Green Chemistry and other advanced industries. We hope that when MassINC does its next study, the cities of the Merrimack Valley will be seen as "gateways" to the future.

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