



THE VALLEY PATRIOT

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FREE

"Congress shall make no law..."

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF NEWS, COMMENTARY AND OPINION SERVING THE MERRIMACK VALLEY

Erroneous Eagle-Tribune story costs Monarch \$40M

Bogus asbestos story shuts down \$200M Lawrence development

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT EDITOR

An exclusive interview with Bob Ansin

Earlier this month, several erroneous *Eagle-Tribune* stories alleged that **Robert Ansin**, CEO of sustainable development company MassInnovation, was running out of funds and that asbestos was found inside the Monarch on the Merrimack building. On Sunday, September 16, the *Eagle-Tribune* ran a cover story by Jill Harmacinski and Bill Kirk which claimed that "workers in Tyvek suits and respirators were on site Thursday clearing the contaminated material out of the building."

That claim, said Ansin, was categorically untrue."

Construction on the first phase of the Monarch Lofts project in the old Wood Mill Building on Merrimack St. in Lawrence was approaching 40% completion after Ansin invested \$25 million of his own money into the

project. The project was selling strongly despite the broader market conditions: 53 of the 201 lofts in the first phase were already under agreement before the building was even completed.

Erroneous *Tribune* stories endangered Monarch's funding

According to Ansin, a San Francisco-based bank backed out on their commitment on a \$40 million construction loan days after the *Tribune* story came out.

"The bank cited the *Eagle-Tribune* story as a reason for pulling their commitment," Ansin said. Construction on the \$200 million project has been halted while Ansin seeks funding from other sources.

"We've had to spend a lot of time correcting the inaccurate perceptions that the Trib story created," said Ansin. "Harmacinski and Kirk's story raised concerns about environmental issues that caused the bank to pull its financing



Rendering by Tangram, courtesy of MassInnovation

commitment. Those concerns were unjustified. But now we, the crews, and our buyers are paying the price for the inaccurate claims in those *Tribune* articles."

"What makes it more surprising is that the *Tribune* had accurately reported on that story back in July," said Ansin. "They had the facts. We had found a small pocket of asbestos in the ground

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VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

Gold Star Mothers HEROES IN OUR MIDST

Paula Porten
VALLEY PATRIOT EDITOR

Our Valley Patriot of the Month is usually dedicated to a man or woman who fought in war to defend the United States. This column usually names a brave soldier and provides his or her story of his experience in the military and their community service once they return.

This month's column, however, is dedicated to the Gold Star Mothers as our Heroes in Our Midst. On the last day of September, Gold Star Mother's Day is

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Editorial

ELECTION SEASON

Election season is in full swing here in the Valley with a special congressional election in the 5th district this month and the general municipal elections in November.

Few people, however, seem to care. During the Lawrence primaries last month, only 12% of registered voters bothered to brave the 80 degree weather and exercise their right to vote. The numbers weren't that much better in either Methuen or Haverhill. In Lowell, politicians decided that saving money was a little more important than grassroots democracy and didn't even hold preliminary elections. It was a sad day for Lowell's history, yet few seemed to notice.

This dangerous trend seems to be going unnoticed as fewer people (and even fewer politicians) in the Valley show any respect for our democracy or the mechanism by which we safeguard it. We hope that the special congressional election and the general municipal elections bring out more voters on October 16th and November 6th respectively.

Voting in the United States is not only a right, it is a privilege. And it is the one way your voice can be heard and make a real difference in your community.

You should not only vote but you should do so diligently. Look at each candidate and where they stand on the issues, make an educated decision as if you were researching an applicant for a job opening at work. Elections should not be popularity contests but a way for voters to choose the best applicant for the job. Free and open elections are a critical part of our democracy and we will be in peril if we take them for granted.

In Iran most woman cannot vote, there are no religious freedoms, due process rights, and homosexuals are routinely executed, even publicly hung just for being gay. Neither their president nor their culture values freedom or democracy, yet last month Iranian president Ahmadinejad had the nerve to come to this country because the president of Columbia University invited and allowed him to speak at the University.

Only in America do we naively give a voice and a platform to a terrorist leader who routinely speaks of eliminating Jews, and his hatred for Americans. Freedom of speech does not mean that we must (or even should) allow leaders from other countries that do not share those rights with their own people to come here, lecture us on truth and peddle their terrorist propaganda.

Instead of allowing Ahmadinejad to have an international soapbox to spew more hatred toward Americans and Jews, the president of Columbia should have been out on the New York streets with the protesters demanding the Iranian president stop his cruel treatment of his own people and grant them the freedoms we foolishly granted to him.

So, when you (hopefully) go to the polls this election season, we want you to think about the privileges you have living here in the United States and how more than 2/3 of the world have no say at all over who will run their government.

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Letters to the editor and op/eds can be submitted to the address above or to valleypatriot@aol.com

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LETTERS

This November, the voters of District E will be presented with an opportunity to elect a candidate with the experience, knowledge and dedication to provide the quality leadership the district and the City of Lawrence needs. That candidate is David Abdo.

A lifelong resident of Lawrence, Dave has served as Chairman of the city's Planning Board since 1999 and is keenly aware of the issues facing the city with regard to budget concerns and capital planning. His professional experience at the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation, the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, and the Statehouse have provided him with a unique understanding of the interaction between local, state and federal governments.

As a member of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, Dave has made it a top priority to bring an optimal level of economic and residential development to

Lawrence and will continue to do so when elected as District E Councilor. Dave is committed to bringing a fiscally responsible approach to city governance without decimating the public safety and works services, something recently proposed by several misguided Council members. Maintaining and improving quality of life issues within District E as well as the city will be high on his agenda.

Once elected, it will be Dave's keen insights, experience, and sound judgment that will provide the Council with the much needed voice in fiscal discussions that City Hall desperately needs. Quite simply, Dave Abdo is far and away the most competent and qualified candidate for the position of District E Councilor. I urge you to support him in the general election on November 6.

Mark McKallagat
25 Dunstable St.
Lawrence Ma.

This is an open letter to all the residents of Methuen, but most importantly those that live within the Central District (Precincts 1, 2, 6, 10) regarding the upcoming elections.

It's time to wake up to what has and is currently going wrong in this city. It's time to stop voting for candidates who simply call themselves independent, and vote for ones that truly are.

How "independent" are these council members who have family spread throughout city jobs or where once in or currently hold a job in the city?

How independent is a councilor that has a grudge with city officials and votes with a chip on his or her shoulder instead of looking at the overall picture for the city of Methuen and its residents?

How many times will a councilor have to abstain or leave the chambers during a vote – especially ones dealing with the district you live in – over conflict of interest?

These are all questions you should be asking yourself before heading to the polls.

Central District voters have the opportunity to make sure they are always represented in City Hall with a vote for Jamie Atkinson.

Jamie is a man I have grown to admire and respect – a man I looked up to and

learned a lot from as my youth basketball coach back in the late 1980s and someone whom I now consider a friend.

More importantly, Jamie is a friend to the city of Methuen and all its residents. The heart and soul of this city, its people, need to stand up and begin caring more about the city's future:

- * Building a new state-of-the-art high school for the children.

- * More affordable housing for the elderly.

- * New and updated tools and equipment for the police and fire departments.

- * Intelligent economic development, while preserving our valued historic treasures.

These are just a few of Jamie's main goals if elected. They are goals I support, and goals anyone who truly cares about their city will fight for.

The preliminary election results show there are a number of voters that want change. Come Nov. 6, show your support for that positive change we are all looking for and vote for Jamie Atkinson.

Sincerely,
George Scione
Methuen Precinct 2 resident

Our crazy health-insurance system

John Stossel
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

Almost daily, we're bombarded with apocalyptic warnings about the 47 million Americans who have no health insurance. Sen. Hillary Clinton wants to *require* everyone to have it, big companies to pay for it and government to buy it for the poor.

That is a move in the wrong direction. America's health-care problem is not that some people lack insurance — it's that 250 million Americans *do* have it. You have to understand something right from the start. We Americans got hooked on health insurance because the government did the insurance companies a favor during World War II.

Wartime wage controls prohibited cash raises, so employers started giving noncash benefits, like health insurance, to attract workers. The tax code helped this along by treating employer-based health insurance more favorably than coverage you buy yourself. And state governments have made things worse by mandating coverage many people would never buy for themselves.

Competition also pushed companies to offer ever-more attractive policies, such as first-dollar coverage for routine ailments, like ear infections and colds, and coverage for things that are not even illnesses, like pregnancy. We came to expect insurance to cover everything. That's the root of our problem. No one wants to pay for his own medical care. "Let the insurance company pay for it."

But if companies pay, they will demand a say in what treatment is - and is not - permitted. Who can blame them? And who can blame people for feeling frustrated that they aren't in control of their medical care? Maybe we need to rethink how we pay for less-than-catastrophic illnesses so people can regain control. The system creates perverse incentives for everyone. Government mandates are good at doing things like that. Steering people to buy lots of health insurance is bad policy. Insurance is a

necessary evil. We need it to protect us from the big risks - things most of us can't afford to pay for, like a serious illness, a major car accident or a house fire.

But insurance is a lousy way to pay for things. Your premiums go not just to pay for medical care but also for fraud, paperwork and insurance-company employee salaries. This is bad for you and bad for doctors. The average American doctor now spends 14 percent of his income on insurance paperwork. A North Carolina doctor we interviewed had to hire four people just to fill out forms. He wishes he could spend that money on caring for patients. The paperwork is part of insurance companies' attempt to protect themselves against fraud. That's understandable. Many people *do* cheat. They lie about their history or demand money for unnecessary care or care that never even happened. So there is a lot of waste in insurance — lost money and time.

Imagine if your car insurance covered oil changes and gasoline. You wouldn't care how much gas you used, and you wouldn't care what it cost. Mechanics would sell you \$100 oil changes. Prices would skyrocket. That's how it works in health care. Patients don't ask how much a test or treatment will cost. They ask if their insurance covers it. They don't compare prices from different doctors and hospitals. (Prices do vary). Why should they? They're not paying. (Although they do in hidden, indirect ways).

In the end, we all pay more because no one seems to pay anything. It's why health insurance is *not* a good idea for anything but serious illnesses and accidents that could bankrupt you. For the rest, we should pay out of our savings. Next month, we'll look at alternatives to this crazy system.



John Stossel is an award-winning news correspondent and author of *Myths, Lies, and Down-right Stupidity: Get Out the Shovel—Why Everything You Know is Wrong*.

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THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Fighting with both hands tied behind our backs

Dr. Charles Ormsby
NORTH ANDOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE

What was President Lincoln thinking when he let General Sherman invade the Southern States? Was he nuts? Or President Roosevelt when he allowed the bombing of Germany, not to mention actually letting Allied armies cross into Germany? Were they Neanderthals?

Until the Korean War, the United States had never failed to win a war. We've now failed to win two times running and we're working hard to make it three straight.

There is one thing recent "wars" have in common: the enemy is given a sanctuary where attacks by U. S. forces are prohibited. In Korea, Truman declared China off-limits to U. S. forces. In Vietnam, during most of the conflict, Cambodia, Laos, China, and North Vietnam were excluded from either ground or air attack, or both. Now, in the Iraq conflict, Iran, Syria and portions of Pakistan are safe havens for our enemies and their sponsors.

What sanctuary was Germany afforded in WW II? None. Were the Philippines offered to the Japanese as a sanctuary? China? Southeast Asia? Taiwan? No, No, No, and Hell No. We bombed them, shelled them and invaded their lands whenever it was militarily advantageous.

We often recognize the Greatest Generation (although never enough) and every possible honor we give them is well deserved. But did they fight an enemy that had a place to rest up without fear of attack? A place to recoup, reconstitute, and prepare to attack us unmolested? No sireee, Bob!! We rained death and destruction on them wherever and whenever we could. And countries that supported our enemies understood that we would give them little mercy when their number came up.

Compare that to another great generation ... the one that had the privilege of fighting in Vietnam. Don't bomb here. Don't go there. Bomb this bridge but not that bridge. Bomb this month but don't bomb next month. Send Jane Fonda to entertain the enemy and

then welcome her back with something other than a tailor-made noose. Don't pursue the enemy retreating into Cambodia; we wouldn't want to admit to the public that the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) had built an elaborate infiltration route with way stations, munitions dumps, and supply depots all designed to kill our troops and win the war. Let's not offend Cambodia's Prince Sihanouk by implying that he had a special deal with the North Vietnamese. That wouldn't be nice.

If you saw the movie or read the book, *We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young*, by Lt. General Harold Moore, you have some inkling of the ferocious and courageous fighting that took place in the Ia Drang Valley in late 1965. After the events at Landing Zone X-Ray, portrayed in the movie based on this book, an equally vicious battle took place only about two miles away at Landing Zone Albany. U. S. forces killed over 3500 North Vietnamese regulars in these two engagements, while suffering about 300 of our soldiers or airmen killed in action.

After these battles, Lt. Col. Moore wrote, "We knew for a fact the three North Vietnamese regiments that we had fought in the Ia Drang had withdrawn into Cambodia. We wanted to follow them in hot pursuit, on the ground and in the air, but could not do so under the rules of engagement."

General Kinnard (then Lt. Col. Moore's superior officer) said, "I always thought as an officer that in a pursuit situation you continue to pursue until you either kill the enemy or he surrenders. Not to follow them into Cambodia violated every principle of warfare. But the decision was made back there at the White House, that we would not be permitted to pursue into Cambodia. It became perfectly clear to the North Vietnamese that they then had sanctuary; they could come when they were ready to fight and leave when they were ready to quit."

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“Tsongas will grant amnesty to 12 million illegals, I will vote to deport them.”

Jim Ogonowski
CANDIDATE FOR CONGRESS

I grew up on a small family farm in Dracut. A farm my dad worked as a second job to send his kids to college. I learned about farming and about hard work. I want to take this lesson of hard work to Congress. That's why, after 28 years in the military, I decided to run. I never could have expected the overwhelming support that I have received. I am both grateful and honored to have the support of so many dedicated people.

I am running for Congress because Government has stopped working for the people. Congress is broken. Washington is a mess – too controlled by special interests and partisan politicians. Between corruption and backroom deals, Congress continues to prove that they can only be trusted to do what is best for them and not the American people. We deserve better.

On October 16th, we have a chance to send a message to the politicians that we are tired of the way things work in Washington. There are real differences between Niki Tsongas and Jim Ogonowski.

Niki calls herself a Washington insider - claiming to know how Washington works. I think Washington has stopped working for the people and we should not send someone to congress who thinks a broken system works. If we keep sending politicians to Washington, we'll just keep getting more of the same. It's time we

“On immigration, Niki Tsongas wants to grant amnesty to the 12 million illegal immigrants in our country. This is wrong. I believe true immigration reform and border security does not include amnesty for illegal immigrants and that leaving our borders unprotected threatens our national security.” - Jim Ogonowski

change Washington as we know it. We have a Congress that is controlled by special interests and plagued by scandal. I'm running for Congress because I want to end “business as usual.” It's time government represents the people again, not special interests and not partisan politicians. I believe that both Republicans and Democrats have betrayed the public trust and they must be held accountable. We have to end partisan bickering and attacks.

I'm not a partisan politician. It's not how I think. It's not how I operate. To me it's only an issue of whether it is a good idea or bad idea for America and the people of this district. I will work with Republicans and Democrats to turn the best ideas into good legislation. This is way government is supposed to be - working together for real solutions.

On immigration, Niki Tsongas wants to grant amnesty to the 12 million illegal immigrants in our country. This is wrong.



I believe true immigration reform and border security does not include amnesty for illegal immigrants and that leaving our borders unprotected threatens our national security. As the grandson of Polish immigrants, I believe that we must first secure our borders and reaffirm our legal pathways to citizenship. We cannot reward those who have broken our laws.

Niki believes in big government and has said she wants to repeal the recent tax cuts, which would cost over \$4,000 to the average family in our district. Congress already taxes too much and spends too much. I will work to end wasteful government spending and will never vote to raise taxes.

I believe both Republicans and Democrats in Washington have betrayed the public trust with their excessive spending. No more earmarks, no more pet projects, no more bridges to nowhere. Congress must lead Americans down a more efficient path toward energy inde-

pendence. I remember waiting in line with my dad 35 years ago to get gas. We need to make the 5th district a leader in the development of clean renewable energy. As a farmer, I say we must tap America's energy and ingenuity by investing in research and development of alternative means of energy. This election is about a broken Congress that continues to fail us.

If you are happy with the business as usual mentality in Washington, happy with the partisan bickering and the inability of Congress to get anything done, then join the politicians and support Niki Tsongas.

If you want change, vote for Jim Ogonowski. If you want someone who will stand up to Washington insiders and special interests, vote for Jim Ogonowski. If you believe that we can do better, vote for Jim Ogonowski.

Its time we return the government to the people. Patriotism before partisanship. People before politics. This is government the way it's supposed to be. It's a Congress that works for us and listens to us. I ask for your vote on October 16th.

To contact the Ogonowski campaign please call Barney Keller, Deputy Communications Director, Jim Ogonowski for Congress - Office: (978) 269 - 5080 - Cell: (617) 290 - 1544

Legislature should approve market competition in auto insurance

D.J. Deeb
GUEST COLUMNIST

Massachusetts is the only state in the nation where the State, not the free market, sets the auto insurance rates. As a result, Massachusetts has the 6th highest auto insurance premiums in the country. To his credit, Governor Deval Patrick is trying to introduce market competition to Massachusetts, but he faces obstacles from members of the Massachusetts Legislature.

The average annual premium for auto insurance in Massachusetts is \$1,062.39. This includes mandatory liability coverage, collision, and comprehensive coverage per automobile. In contrast, the average annual premium for the same coverage for residents of our neighbors to the North in New Hampshire is \$778.64.

This constitutes a difference of over \$300.00. The same coverage in Vermont costs \$734.00 while residents of Maine pay about \$671.00. GEICO will not sell auto insurance in Massachusetts because the state sets the rates and the premiums that companies can charge. Market rates for insurance coverage would be lower than the mandatory rates set by the Massachusetts Insurance Commission. It seems like a no-brainer to allow market competition in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Legislature has resisted all efforts to allow market competition for auto insurance in our state. This of course begs the obvious question, “Why?” Well, our elected lawmakers have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. This is because the second most common profession in the Massa-

chusetts Legislature is that of insurance broker. In addition, insurance lobbyists representing the few companies that sell auto insurance in Massachusetts are big campaign contributors on Beacon Hill. Thus, our elected state officials have a vested interest in ensuring that auto insurance rates remain high. They are working hard to feather their own nests; not reduce your insurance premiums.

Massachusetts is already one of the most expensive states to live in. Members of the Massachusetts Legislature should pass legislation to give resident rate-payers a break. They can do this by embracing Governor Patrick's efforts to introduce free market auto insurance competition in the Commonwealth.

D.J. Deeb is an adjunct Professor of History and Government at Bunker Hill Community College and a Political Science Instructor at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He teaches Social Studies full-time at Reading Memorial High School. He is an elected member of the Dracut School Committee and Greater Lowell Regional Vocational-Technical School Committee.



D.J. Deeb is an adjunct Professor of History and Government at Bunker Hill Community College and Northern Essex Community College. He teaches Social

Studies full-time at Reading Memorial High School and is a member of the Dracut School Committee and Gr. Lowell Regional Vocational-Technical School Committee.

To The People of Lawrence

*I am humbled and grateful
for your vote on Election Day*

THANK YOU!

**Nilka
Alvarez Rodriguez**

**Lawrence City Council
At-Large**

**Committee to Re-Elect Nilka J. Alvarez-Rodriguez
as City Council at-Large**

Education testing in Massachusetts

Guy Darst

WALL STREET JOURNAL

BOSTON — Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick has produced one surprise after another since taking office nine months ago. He stunned people by spending \$12,000 on office curtains, by suggesting that union construction workers be asked to find illegal immigrants at job sites, and by saying that the 9/11 terrorist attacks were partly about “the failure of human beings to understand each other and to learn to love each other.”

But his biggest surprise is the scope of a planned overhaul of what is probably the nation’s best public school system — a reform effort he calls his “Readiness Project.” He has asked for reports on 66 proposals ranging from making school days longer to dropping tuition in community colleges. The fear is that he’s about to emasculate testing requirements put in place more than a decade ago.

It’s not an irrational fear. The governor is strongly supported by labor unions that oppose the tests, has appointed a testing critic to the Board of Education, and aims to kill school-district performance audits.

Back in the 1992-93 school year, the Bay State instituted rigorous testing requirements, including exams 10th-graders must pass in order to graduate from high school. Massachusetts students usually do well on the exams of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. But fourth-graders and eighth-graders in the past two years came in first, or statistically tied for first, in both English and mathematics on the NAEP. No state had ever done that.

Many credit the success to the state’s testing regime, the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), and the reforms that came with it, including money (inflation-adjusted state aid to local education has doubled since 1993). Unlike the dumbed-down standards of some states, the MCAS “proficiency” award tracks well with the same NAEP designation.

A writer for the liberal Washington Monthly said in 2001, when the tests were given for the first time, “The MCAS, and the reforms that have come with it, may be the best thing to happen to poor students in a generation in terms of improving the quality of their education.”

Each student gets five chances to pass English and math exams and may continue to try after leaving school. Eighty-seven percent of the class of 2009 passed both on the first try, an increase from 84% last year and 68% for the class of 2003. More than two-thirds achieved a “proficiency” rating. After five tries, 97% pass. Even a majority of dropouts have passed. The tests are sophisticated: English requires a brief essay; math requires a showing of the work on some questions for which partial credit is possible.

The anti-testers, however, aren’t happy. “In states throughout the country, student assessment is done with multiple measures including course work, projects, in-depth study and grades, along with standardized test scores,” two of them wrote earlier this year. Gov. Patrick insists he supports MCAS as one measure of achievement. In announcing his “Readiness Project” in June, he said, “Being ready means public education that is about the whole child, not just success on a single standardized test.” That’s the

kind of language that can be code for junking standardized tests.

Former State Senate President Tom Birmingham, a Democrat and Rhodes Scholar, is from Chelsea, Mass., a gritty Boston suburb with schools so bad that they were given to Boston University to run in the 1980s. He worked with three Republican governors to strengthen education. He found the governor’s appointment of Ruth Kaplan, an activist and founder of the Alliance for the Education of the Whole Child, to the Board of Education “troubling.” And he has said that his “understanding of Ruth is that she’s Janey one-note” against MCAS.

James Peyser, chairman of the Board of Education until last year, also says he “worries” about Ms. Kaplan’s appointment. As does former Board of Education member Roberta Schaefer. She fears the governor “is about to gut” the testing requirement by making it just one of several measuring sticks schools use.

Gov. Patrick has already demonstrated a willingness to bend to union desires. In January, the state Labor Relations Commission ordered the Boston Teachers Union to back off of a threat to call a strike. Gov. Patrick’s response was to propose a budget that would zero out the commission. The legislature funded it anyway.

The legislature, however, went along with his proposal to get rid of another union bugbear, the Office of Educational Quality and Assessment. The EQA examines the performance of dozens of school districts across the state each year. And according to an analysis of 76 EQA reports by the Boston-based Pioneer Institute, 44 of those 76 districts had curricula that did not meet state standards

— their students could have been facing MCAS without having been taught some of the material on the tests. The governor this year recommended defunding the agency and the legislature agreed, giving it just enough funding to wind up its work. Ms. Schaefer, calls the move “a mistake.” Instead, she says, the agency “should have been strengthened.”

So far, many of the people the governor has turned to help him institute reforms dispute the idea that the governor will water down standards. One of whom is Paul Reville. He’s a lecturer at Harvard and in the early 1990s was instrumental in helping to create MCAS. This year the governor tapped him to be the new chairman of the state Board of Education. If the governor did want to dilute MCAS, he said recently, “I hardly think he would have chosen me [to be chairman].”

Chris Anderson, executive director of the Massachusetts High Technology Council and a member of the Board of Education, says the state needs to do better and not view “the 49 [other] states as competitors.” Instead, Massachusetts educators need to worry about India and China.

But the fact that debates over education center on whether the state will backslide is a bad sign. Massachusetts should be pressing ahead - closing the achievement gap between white and minority students, for one thing — not resting on its laurels. The governor wants reform. But if he wants better schools, he’ll need good testing.

Guy Darst is a retired deputy editorial page editor of the Boston Herald. Reprinted with permission of the author and the Wall Street Journal.

An imaginary conversation about the race for Congress

Tony Accardi

GUEST COLUMNIST

The other day while thinking about the fifth congressional district race I imagined the following conversation between myself and a non-political friend. Take it for what it is worth...

Friend: Who do you think will win the special election for congress? Niki Tsongas or Jim Ogonowski?

Me: What about the other three?

Friend: What other three?

Me: The other three candidates running for the 5th congressional seat?

Friend: Who are they?

Me: Well, for starters there is Patrick Murphy?

Friend: Who is he? Is he related to someone famous like Tsongas and Ogonowski?

Me: No.

Friend: That’s too bad? A famous name really helps in today’s political world...you know like Clinton or Bush or Kennedy.

Me: I think you’re a little narrow minded. Let me tell you about Murphy. He lays bricks for a living and boxed at the West End Gym in Lowell as a kid with his twin brother Dan.

Friend: Yeah, but does he have any political roots?

Me: Patrick’s grandfather was a Lowell City Councilor and later became a state legislator.

Friend: Not bad...but a bricklayer? Did he go to a technical high school?

Me: No...Patrick graduated from one of the most prestigious high schools in the world, Philips Academy in Andover. The same school George Bush, Bill Belichick and John Kennedy Jr. went to.

Friend: Then he became a bricklayer?

Me: No. Then he went on to American University, Trinity College in Dublin and Emory University.

Friend: You know...all politicians are the same...money, money, money.

Me: Not Patrick...he refuses to take campaign contributions.

Friend: What? Is he crazy?

Me: No, he’s more of a unique thinker and doer.

Friend: OK, you’ve piqued my curiosity. Who else is running for the 5th besides the Famous Namers and Murphy?

Me: Kurt Hayes?

Friend: Is he a boxer too? I’ll bet he’s related to the famous Johnny “Sweet Pea” Hayes former lightweight champ of the world.

Me: No, he is a software salesman for IBM.

Friend: Oh, did he grow up in a ritzy town?

Me: No, he grew up in Peoria, Illinois.

Friend: Peoria, Illinois?

Me: He has two sons and a daughter and lives in Boxborough with his wife.

Friend: Peoria, Illinois?

Me: As a kid he also lived in Indiana, Connecticut and New Mexico.

Friend: How did he end up settling in the 5th district?

Me: Love...

Friend: Of course, I should have guessed it. He met his wife here, right?...So there’s Tsongas, Ogonowski, Murphy and Hayes...who’s the other candidate?

Me: Kevin Thompson.

Friend: I knew it. Another famous name...he’s related to Fred Thompson the famous actor running for president, right? Instant name recognition.

Me: Wrong... Kevin Thompson is a local teacher and pastor.

Friend: Boy, these three really do have an uphill battle against the Famous Namers. They’re not related to anyone famous and they’re “independent candidates”.

Me: Wrong again. Thompson is the Constitution Party candidate for the 5th congressional seat...in fact, he is the Secretary of the Constitution Party.

Friend: I’ve never heard of the Constitution Party

Me: Believe it or not the Constitution Party is the third biggest party in the country based on enrollment.

Friend: Still never heard of it... But, come on now! Seriously! How is one of these three going to beat famous named people like Niki Tsongas or Jim Ogonowski?

Me: Sometimes it is not about winning. Sometimes it is about leaving the spectator seats and coming down into the center of the arena.

Friend: What arena?...Are you talking about boxing again?



More of Tony Accardi’s columns can be found on line at Richardhowe.com. You can e-mail him at a.accardi@comcast.net

valleypatriot.com

Rurak: Mayor Concealing Growth Numbers

Why should the voters look to you for leadership in Haverhill instead of mayor Jim Fiorentini?

When I was mayor we had a certain sense of balancing growth with preserving Haverhill's quality of life and I think we are losing that balance. The mayor is concealing the fact that his growth is really on the edge threatening to eat up our quality of life. I acquired over 300 acres of open space when I was mayor. I am pro growth. I believe in economic development and industrial expansion but, I think you need to manage it in such a way to preserve what is unique to Haverhill.

Haverhill is a community with over 40 square miles, has lakes and open spaces, a well developed downtown as well as an industrial park, but the balance between the two needs to be upheld. You see, the mayor is not being truthful about the growth numbers. That's why I brought an Eagle-Tribune to show you the headline about ...

That's not going to help your case.

Well the point is that the balance between residential growth and incoming revenues is just not happening. Now we find out that ... and I warned about this in February ... we learned that there are 121 new students as the result of new growth.

During my tenure as mayor we planned for growth, we built new schools and kept under the levy limit just to make sure the revenues that were brought in kept pace with new growth. Right now we are getting to the point where the new growth is outpacing the revenue, and that is why I think people ought to vote for me. I have found a way to balance new growth and provide the revenue needed for the services that are required to run the city. Fiorentini is bringing us to the edge where it's going to take quantum leaps in our tax rates and our water rates to pay for the growth and he's denying that's happening.

OK, so you say you have a plan for doing that how do you go about it?

We need to put a residential cap on growth downtown. During the 90's we also had caps on buildings throughout the city. We had two kinds of caps; one was an absolute building cap every year. The other was, there was no development permitted that was to be built out all at once. They had to do it over a period three years. So you don't get an all-at-once influx of new people.

In 1995, when we didn't have the water we froze all permits and didn't allow another one unless we could find a way to pay for the water without increasing the water rates. As soon as we did, we imposed a hookup fee for new construction to pay for the water lines that come from Crystal lake and cross downtown to Kenoza. So we did those types of hard decisions to control growth and make sure we had the money to pay for it.

You said he is concealing the growth numbers why would he do that?

He claims that the growth that we have is not going to demand more services and it's going to pay for itself but the numbers are showing there's going to be a demand for more services. If the numbers show that we are going over the threshold then the growth is not good, that's what the numbers show now. If the numbers didn't show that and they showed an even pace that is good. So, he's concealing the numbers and it's going to push us beyond our limits.

What are the quality of life issues that you see as the most important for the people of Haverhill

One of them is the preservation of our natural resources.

We acquired over there hundreds acres of open space when I was mayor and at least half of that was on watershed. Haverhill has seven lakes, four are tied into the water system and we acquired land around all of them. We put in recreation spaces. These are natural attractions that are part of the fabric of Haverhill. He sold off some of the open space that we acquired.

"During my tenure as mayor we planned for growth, we built new schools and kept under the levy limit just to make sure the revenues that were brought in kept pace with new growth. Right now we are getting to the point where the new growth is outpacing the revenue, and that is why I think people ought to vote for me."

- Jim Rurak



PHOTO COURTESY INNOVATION VALLEY

The Schools are also a quality of life issues. There needs to be a different tone set with the school committee and the superintendent.

What kind of a tone is he setting?

Divide and conquer. I'll give you an example, one of the things Haverhill fell behind in recently are the books to keep up with MCAS. We are teaching from books that do not contemplate what it is that the test is going to check up on. So, the school committee says 'well look, we'll buy the books but we can't borrow money because the city's getting financial aid for the schools.' So, in order for the schools to borrow money they have to go through the city council. We'll pledge \$150,000 a year for three years to buy \$450,000 worth of text books today, we just need the council to authorize it. And he votes for it. So Mr. mayor your job is now to take this request from the school committee to the state house and advocate for it. He decides all on his own that he is going to try and look like a fiscal conservative and say 'well, no the school have to put up the money out of this years' budget and he would only let them borrow the money over three years. They don't have that kind of money. He ripped the loan order in half and it caused

an enormous outcry. He finally backed down and he went and did what he was asked to do in the first place. That sets a very bad tone.

Is he a fiscal conservative?

I don't think so, but I think he wants to project himself that way.

The other quality of life issue is the services we provide to our seniors and our kids. We've cut back on our senior services, the nursing programs and other programs like after school programs for the youth. We've turned our backs on programs for kids after school. A lot of kids don't have a stable home and they need a place to go after school. He cut that.

What about MCAS, there is talk of lowering the standard to make it easier for kids to pass the test. Do you support MCAS?

I was the first mayor to embrace MCAS. I supported it then, I support it now. I think it is always important to look at whether it is pushing at the appropriate level. I'm not an expert at that. So I think we need to let the experts tell us about that. So we have to look at that but I don't support lowering

HAVERHILL – The Council on Aging is planning a trip to CitiArts Performing Center in Boston on Thursday, December 20, 2007, to see Irving Berlin's White Christmas the Musical. Boston's newest holiday tradition returns this year after dazzling Boston audiences during the 2005 holiday season. It is full of dancing, laughter and some of the greatest songs ever written.

Cost of this trip is \$80 per person including transportation. Lunch will be on your own at Legal Seafood prior to the show. Bus will leave Westgate at approximately 10:30 a.m. for the 2:00 p.m. matinee. We have a limited number of tickets, so please call early.

To purchase tickets or for additional information contact Kathy Bresnahan or Rita LaBella at 978-374-2390 or kbresnahan@cityofhaverhill.com or rlabella@cityofhaverhill.com.

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One city, two visions of its future

Constantine Valhouli
GUEST COLUMNIST

This week, we are pleased to present the Alternate Master Plan to the mayor, city council, and residents of Haverhill.

This report was written to raise awareness of the best strategies for reviving historic downtowns. These strategies are absent from Mayor Fiorentini's "official" Master Plan, which favors short-sighted policies that favor immediate payoffs at the expense of the long-term public good. The Mayor's plan encourages demolition and no design standards, which will result in the lowest common denominator of development for Haverhill. If these trends continue, the qualities which make Haverhill distinct will be gone, and the only people who live here will be the ones who cannot afford to live elsewhere.

This plan seeks to raise the awareness of Haverhill's heritage, and to promote the thoughtful use of both its rich history and its architectural legacy. Founded in 1640, Haverhill is one of the oldest cities in the United States. It was a prosperous town for over 300 years, and played a role in almost every period of American history. Many of downtown Haverhill's public buildings and private homes were built during these periods of prosperity. These historic buildings connect us with the people and events which helped shape our nation's history. Downtown Haverhill is recognized as one of the finest examples of Queen Anne industrial architecture in the United

States. However, the combination of Urban Renewal in the 1960's and 1970's, neglect, and incompatible development has destroyed many of the visible connections to this rich heritage.

Our current efforts to revive downtown Haverhill are more difficult as a result of the demolition of much of the historic downtown during Urban Renewal. Had it not been for that short-sighted decision, today we would have an easier time of reviving downtown. It would be a question, as it is in Newburyport and Amesbury, of repairing older buildings and finding an appropriate tenant mix to create a lively street environment. Instead, we are faced with the problems of new construction without design guidelines.

Haverhill is approaching a tipping point: unless our approach changes, Haverhill may soon not have a critical mass of historic buildings to revive downtown and the nearby historic neighborhoods. To date, the importance of historic and natural resources in Haverhill has been consistently overlooked. Historic buildings continue to be demolished. This loss is more than just aesthetic - historic downtowns and heritage resources can be powerful catalysts for economic development.

Residents have become increasingly concerned that the Fiorentini administration's failure to preserve

MASTER PLAN, page 21

MOVING HAVERHILL FORWARD

Mayor announces sale of Bradford College to Zion Bible College

HAVERHILL - Mayor James J. Fiorentini today joined with officials from the Angelo-Gordon Development Company and Zion Bible College to announce the sale of Bradford College to a private development group. The development group, will, in turn arrange for Zion Bible College of Rhode Island to re-locate to the former Bradford College site.

Mayor Fiorentini, who has met regularly with officials from Zion, the developer and Angelo-Gordon called it "one of the greatest days in the history of our City."

Fiorentini said that the sale meant that the former Bradford College site would remain as an educational institute which he called "a far better alternative for Haverhill than another housing development."

Fiorentini said that the use of Bradford College by Zion Bible College fit exactly with Bradford College's tradition:

"Bradford College has a long history as a religious and missionary institution. Some of the earliest graduates of then-Bradford Academy were missionaries sent to other parts of the world. Ann Haseltine-Judson, whom Haseltine Hall and Haseltine Street in Bradford were

named after, was the first female American missionary to Burma and a notable early Bradford Academy alumna," Mayor Fiorentini stated.

"The new Bradford College used by Zion Bible College will fit exactly into that great tradition," the Mayor added.

Fiorentini said that the sale to Zion Bible College happened because the zoning laws in Bradford prohibited the use by anything other than an educational institution without special permission from the City:

"Last year I flew to New York and met with officials from Angelo-Gordon Company. I made it crystal clear to them that the City wanted an educational institution, not a housing developer. I also made it clear that we would work proactively with them to speed up the permitting and to provide any other assistance we could, if the use were educational. The people of Bradford and Bradford College Neighborhood Association stood steadfast and firm that the former college remain as an education facility. The constant and unrelenting pressure eventually led to the sale. I salute the efforts and dedication of the Bradford College Neighborhood Association in realizing this achievement," the Mayor added.

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PLUS "Halloween Nite Finale" Wed. - Oct. 31st!
WINNEKENNI CASTLE - Haverhill, MA

Special Sponsor Nite!
Thurs. Oct 11th 6:30-9:30pm
"Sponsors ONLY" ~ Private Showing!
10-FREE (Oct. 11th) PASSES for any sponsors donating \$150 or more to support the event.
Valid Oct. 11th only
(*SPONSOR PASSES* may also be used for \$2-off one adult admission on any Open Nite)

Public Haunting Schedule
Fri./Sat. Oct. 12th & 13th - 7 - 10:30pm
Sun 14th - 7 to 9:30pm
Thurs 18th - 7 to 9:30pm
Fri/Sat 19th & 20th - 7 to 10:30pm
Sunday 21st - 7 to 9:30pm
Thursday 25th - 7 to 9:30pm
Fri/Sat 26th & 27th - 7 to 10:30pm
Sunday 28th - 7 to 9:30pm
Wed. 31st Halloween NIGHT!
7 to 9:30pm

SPECIAL! Childrens Party!
SUN. Oct 28th - Noon-3pm
\$7-child & \$5-adult.
Incl. ~ Games, Treats, Prizes
Child's Souvenir Photo & MORE!

FOOD AND REFRESHMENT NIGHTLY AT THE CUKOO'S NEST CAFE



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North Andover seniors show appreciation for The Valley Patriot

NORTH ANDOVER - Valley Patriot editor Tom Duggan was asked to be the guest speaker at the North Andover Senior Center last month where both he and editor Paula Porten were presented with a certificate of appreciation "in recognition of your outstanding contribution to the senior community."

Duggan spoke to the group of seniors about the value local, independently owned newspapers have to the communities they serve and the need to provide a voice to those who are

routinely ignored by the large, corporate, daily newspapers.

"One of the most important things any newspaper can do is reach out to people in the community who have something to say but do not have a vehicle to communicate that message to those who may benefit from it the most," Duggan said.

Asked why the Valley Patriot is free, Duggan told the crowd it was very first

decision the board of directors made when they formed Valley Patriot Inc., in March of 2004.

"If there's one thing that offends me more than inaccurate reporting it is a newspaper that makes you pay for important information about your community after they have already been paid by their advertiser," Duggan responded.

"The Valley Patriot will never charge, we will always be free. As far as I am concerned if a newspaper is doing their

job right and giving you the best and most accurate news, analysis, and information, they'll have plenty of local advertisers to cover their costs. It's the advertisers, especially the small business owners who have their finger on the pulse of any community and if you have to charge money to compensate for lack of support from your local business community then you really aren't doing anyone a service."

The Valley Patriot is owned by Tom Duggan Paula Porten, Dr. Chuck Ormsby and Ralph Wilbur, all of North Andover.



Valley Patriot editors Paula Porten and Tom Duggan with former Valley Patriot columnist and Valley Patriot of the month Jim Cassidy



Gail Holleran lecture series coordinator for the North Andover Senior Center with Tom Duggan and Paula Porten.

College names new building for North Andover Entrepreneur

LAWRENCE - The Northern Essex Community College Allied Health and Technology Center in Lawrence will be named in honor of an Egyptian immigrant and longtime North Andover resident who, through hard work and education, achieved the American dream.

The Northern Essex Community College Board of Trustees voted unanimously to recommend to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education that the center be named the *Dr. Ibrahim El-Hefni Allied Health and Technology Center*. The Technical Training Foundation was started by the late Dr. El-Hefni, has pledged to donate one million dollars to the building to be used for equipment for student programs.

"Dr. El-Hefni was a self-made man who believed passionately that access to high-

er education was the best opportunity for personal and economic advancement," said NEC president David Hartleb. "It's very fitting that this building, which will bring affordable, high quality education to Greater Lawrence residents, will bear his name."

A native of Egypt, Dr. El-Hefni came to this country in 1959 after receiving an engineering degree from the University of Cairo and a PhD in Electrical Engineering from Sheffield University in England. After working at Bell Labs and Lincoln Labs, he started his own company in the early 1970's in the basement of his North Andover home with an initial investment of \$3,000. For the next 30 years, Dr. El-Hefni grew his business, providing jobs for hundreds of people, most of whom were residents of the Merrimack Valley.

When his business became successful, he turned his sights on the plight of the working poor in the neighboring community of Lawrence, providing scholarship money for needy students. In the decades that followed thousands of needy youth, both in Lawrence and around the world were given the opportunity to succeed through education.

Dr. El-Hefni's commitment to

the working poor of Lawrence did not end with his focus on education. He also pledged hundreds of thousands of dollars of his own money to improve health care in Lawrence.

As the result of his own illnesses, he knew well the importance of access to excellent health care and helped to ensure that Lawrence residents would have the best health care possible in their community.

Since his death in 2005, his family has continued to support Dr. El-Hefni's commitment to the Lawrence community. Dr. El Hefni's widow, Mrs. Wensley El-Hefni, is the foundation trustee.

"My father did not believe in hand-outs," said Suzanne Wright, his daughter, an attorney now living in California. "He believed that, if someone was willing to work hard to advance themselves, he would happily provide the funds for their education if they could not afford it. Having lived it himself, he truly believed in the American Dream. He knew that, for most people the secret of living that dream meant access to higher education.

The college is planning to build the Dr. Ibrahim El-Hefni Allied Health and Technology Center at the site of the InTown Mall on Common Street in Lawrence.

In June of 2006, the Lawrence City Council voted 7 to 2 to transfer title of the InTown Mall to the NECC Foundation which plans to demolish the dilapidated building currently located there and then transfer the title to the state which will build a \$22.8 million Allied Health and Technology Center for the college.

The building will be funded by a state capital bond. Private donations, including the million dollars from the Technical Training Foundation and an additional quarter million that has been raised by the

college, will be used to equip the building.

At this time, all of the former tenants of the building have been relocated and the college and state are preparing to transfer the title of the building.

"When it's constructed, our Allied Health and Technology Center will be a source of great pride for the Lawrence community," says President Hartleb.

The college currently has two sites in Lawrence: The Louise Haffner Fournier Education Center, 78 Amesbury St. and the John R. Dimitry Building, 45 Franklin St.

Some of the college's premiere programs—health care, criminal justice, and paralegal—are taught solely in Lawrence, providing opportunities for Lawrence residents to train for well-paying careers and attracting students to the city from all over the Merrimack Valley. Over 2400 students study in Lawrence each semester, a 23 percent increase over the past five years. Close to 450 students are enrolled in health care programs alone.

The Dr. Ibrahim El-Hefni Allied Health & Technology Center will complement the two other locations in Lawrence and allow the college to grow its health care and criminal justice/homeland security programs.

With campuses in Haverhill and Lawrence and extension sites in Andover and Methuen, 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.



North Andover United invites you to attend the
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Thursday, November 15, 2007
 7:00pm-8:45pm
 North Andover High School Auditorium

North Andover's Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen, School Committee, and State Representatives and Senators will come together for a panel discussion about our current state of affairs. Panelists will address questions about government at both the local and state level, as well as offer insight into the upcoming 2009 budget process.

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This is your chance. Please go to www.northandover.org/forum2007 to submit a question for our panelists.* Representatives from citizen groups such as NAU, Seniors, NATA, TUFF and ABC will work collaboratively to select questions of wide interest to the community. Questions may be submitted from October 1 through 14th, 2007.

Submitting questions in advance via the website will ensure an opportunity for greater community representation, allow the panelists to answer a broad spectrum of questions, and facilitate making efficient and effective use of the under 2-hour time limit. Any unanswered questions will be given to panelists to address during the course of their regularly scheduled meetings, as well as posted at www.northandover.org.

Please join us for this unprecedented opportunity to become better informed about your town!

* Questions may also be mailed to NAU, 81 Prescott St., North Andover

A dollar a day is not too much to ask for a ride to school

Peter Larocque
LAWRENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Dear Valley Patriot Readers,

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

Again, let me say that it has been an honor and privilege to serve these last eleven months as the Lawrence School Committee Member representing the parents and children along with all the rest of the good citizens of District E.

All the hard work that I have done has returned to me by your vote of confidence for which I will be forever grateful and I promise to never take your support for granted. After the long day of campaigning on Tuesday September 25, holding my campaign sign until the polls closed, I decided not to go to city hall but to celebrate with some friends at Sal's Pizza and then call it an early evening and went home.

Once home I checked the Valley Patriot Web site for the final tallies and fell asleep watching the Red Sox game. The reason for this is because I knew I had a full day of yard work to do on Wednesday, projects that need to be done before Winter comes.

Plus I needed to work on contacting the Mayor to get answers and work for a solution to the crossing guard issue. Tuesday morning I promised parents and those who are former crossing guards at the Frost School that I would be in contact with the Mayor and would work for a solution to this issue as soon as possible.

So between working on my yard stuff and calling and e-mailing the Mayor's

office, this left no room for hanging out at city hall Tuesday night

Of course, in the morning I read all the comments by the other candidates for School Committee in the Eagle-Tribune. I trust that they realize that they don't get into office until January of 2008. So I hope and pray that the issue dealing with the crossing guards is over by then!

Something I have learned over time is that before I speak on an issue to make sure I know exactly what I'm talking about by getting all the facts first from the parties involved and not from the radio or newspapers. But trust me, I now fully understand their excitement and, believe me, I will not forget the voters of District E.

I now look forward to November and will continue to work hard for the district. I, for one do not believe that charging .50 cents (\$1.00 a day) is asking too much from those who ride the school bus every day.

School Uniforms are wonderful. I was there opening day and believe me to see the majority of students in uniform at the New High School Campus was breath taking. Awesome! But the Lawrence Public School Department is not going to give free uniforms out and free bus passes out.— not while I'm on the Committee! Having said that, we are a

compassionate people! I understand there are situations that come up and financial hardships are real and present. There are organizations in Lawrence set up to handle these hardships and have come forward and have stated that any family in a difficult financial situation can get help. They have the means to give free uniforms and bus passes to families that need them. All parents have to do is communicate with their child's School

Principal and they can put them in contact with these groups who are in the City of Lawrence ready to help in time of need.

But having said this, time and time again there are those who see a Big Pie and all want a

piece of it. I think we all saw during the City Budget process that The Pie is shrinking and all can't have a piece anymore. Reality has to, at some point, come in to play here and all can't expect Government to pay for everything any more. But there are still ways for those who need assistance to get their needs taken care of. But again, proper procedures must be carried out in order to get taken care of properly.

Some School Committee members are of the opinion that just showing up at the School Committee Meetings and complaining about all that is wrong is really representing their district. How can this be? If I found out that a parent in my district kept her children home from

school because they could not afford the school uniforms I would not wait until the next School Committee meeting to bring this up and complain! I would take that parent by the hand and put them in contact with the proper organization that is here to take care of exactly this kind of situation. Nothing, and I mean nothing, should stop a child from going to school and getting an education. The same goes for free meals. There is a procedure in place that if you need a free or reduced cost meal, there are forms to fill out and you're all set. Showing up in the lunch line stating you want a free meal is not the way to get a free meal. Then the School Committee member comes to the next meeting stating that she heard of students not getting a meal because they can't afford one.

As adults, we need to take control over these issues and teach children and even other adults, if necessary, that there are proper procedures that must be followed. It's apart of growing up and a part of life!

Okay I have said enough for now. Let me end this by saying thank you again to all the voters of District E for your vote of confidence. It is my prayer that I won't disappoint you. Maybe I won't be able to please everybody all the time, but I'll try to continue to do my best!



Peter Larocque is a member of the Lawrence School Committee, 255 Essex St. Lawrence, MA 01842. He was elected by the Lawrence City Council to fill the unexpired term of Amy McGovern.

You can email him at plarocque@lawrence.k12.ma.us

"...the Lawrence Public Schools department is not going to give free uniforms out and free bus passes out, not while I'm on the Committee!"

- Peter Larocque

Re-elect

Joe Parolisi

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PLANNING FOR YOUR FUTURE

Lawrence's bright economic future

Michael R. Sweeney
LAWRENCE PLANNING DIRECTOR
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

The Monarch

Taking a step back is often necessary to move forward. I believe that is the current situation with Mr. Bob Ansin and the Monarch project. Bob Ansin has a bold vision for this historic mill and for the city of Lawrence.

Turning the Industrial Revolution on its head, Mr. Ansin set out to create hundreds of condo units based around the concepts of smart growth and eco-friendly construction. Without sacrificing luxury or quality, the Monarch project challenged us to rethink development and the future of this city. Best of all Mr. Ansin moved his vision forward with respect and integrity to the local community, evidenced in his ability to tap local talent and also his contribution to the Lawrence Boys and Girls Club.

This project has been forced to take a step back, but I have full faith and confidence that Bob Ansin will complete the canvas he and his team have started in the Wood Mills.

The Riverwalk Complex

The engine of the Merrimack Valley, Mr. Sal Lapoli, showed again this weekend why a future governor or U.S. Senator is in our mist. With a bold move Mr. Lapoli placed his dreams on the Merrimack River and found partners in Peter J. Matthews and John A. MacDonald. This past Saturday was truly a historical night as the Merrimack Valley Federal Credit Union held its grand opening at its new facilities within Mr. Lapoli's Riverwalk complex. It has been decades since a major financial institution decided to call Lawrence home. Mr. Matthews shared the vision that Mr. Lapoli could see in these old mill buildings. In just over a year, what was an abandoned stream mill has been turned into a modern facilities housing the home offices of the credit union.

\$3 Million Lead Hazard Control Grant

A major congratulations goes out to Ezra Glenn, Community Development Director and some of his amazing staff. Recently the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced the award of a \$3,000,000 Lead Hazard Control grant. Taylor Caswell, HUD's Region I Director announced the award and also came to Lawrence to present the award to Mayor Michael J. Sullivan.

The City of Lawrence, through the direct efforts of Steve Vega, Yesenia Gil and Lloyd DeJesus, from Community Development have been aggressively addressing the issue of lead paint in the City of Lawrence for years. Every year, efforts to remove lead paint from homes and apartments are taken on by the Community Development Department and each year they establish a great record of success on this important issue.

Polartec

Last week city officials from Lawrence and Methuen had the opportunity to catch up with Polartec's President Andy Vecchione and his team. We had an insightful conversation and the good news is that Polartec is aggressively attacking the market place and Polartec products continue to stand out in the market place. All branches of the United States military continue to use Polartec products. The superior quality of the Polartec products have established a firm position in the marketplace. With the employment opportunities that Polartec provides to families throughout the Merrimack Valley, that is good news for everyone.



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.

LAWRENCE ON THE MOVE

The new Mount Vernon park

Michael J. Sullivan
MAYOR OF LAWRENCE
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Mark this October as one of the more exciting months in recent Lawrence history.

During the first week of October my office will be officially cutting the ribbon on the newly-renovated Mount Vernon Ball Park. The completion of this project represents a \$3 million investment in one of the most heavily-used recreational facilities in the city.

One year ago, in September of 2006, construction began across the entire park site. The engineering team of Cuoco and Cormier and contractor Argus Construction worked hard to complete the project in a timely manner while maintaining a high level of quality.

I am inviting everyone to take the opportunity to stop by the newly renovated park in the coming weeks and see for yourself this major accomplishment that we can all be proud of.

The Mt. Vernon Ball Park will consist of four fully-renovated ball fields. Each field is equipped with scoreboards and lights for night games, a state of the art multi-purpose building for concession items, team meetings and equipment storage, and 134 parking spots including eight designated handicapped parking spaces. Additionally, a sidewalk which complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act is located at the entrance of the park to help ensure the safety of pedestrians entering and exiting the ball park.

Security lighting has also been installed at Mount Vernon Park to help police and neighbors make sure that this new park stays in top condition.



courtesy of the City of Lawrence

We have also provided a children's play area with updated equipment that I am sure children throughout the city will enjoy playing on.

An unusual feature at the new Mount Vernon Park is the installation of bat boxes to help control insect population near the wetland areas. This has been found to be a significant deterrent in other playgrounds and ball fields.

Visitors and participants will also notice a walkway that extends around the perimeter of the fields, covering ¼ mile and ½ mile loops. Natural stone seating is present throughout this area.

I particularly want to thank Tom Schiavone, my Economic Development Officer and Ellen Minzner, our Community Development Manager. They both worked tirelessly to make this happen. The newly renovated Mt. Vernon Ball Park is a facility that we as Lawrencians can be proud of for at least the next twenty years.



Lawrence Mayor Michael J. Sullivan is in his second, four year term as mayor of Lawrence. His term expires in 2009. You can email him at sull33@aol.com

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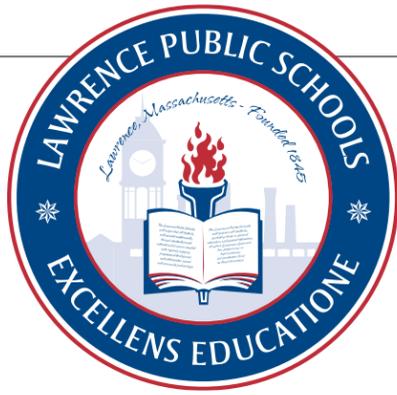
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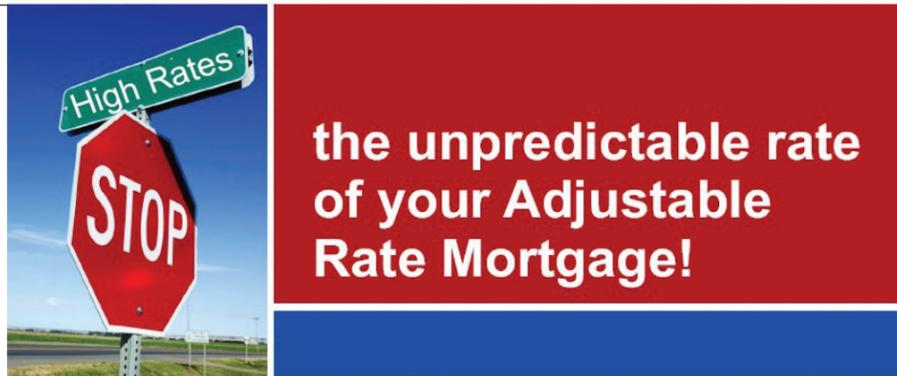
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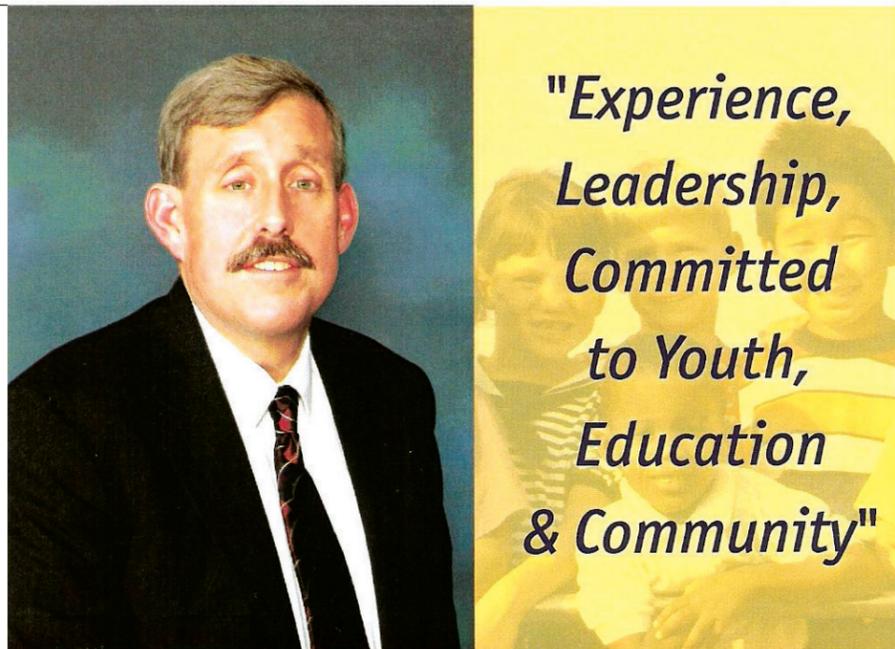


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DISTRICT E

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 Advisor to the Lawrence P.T.A.
 Former President of the P.T.A. at the Lawrence High School
 Member of Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association
 Member of FY07 & FY08 Community Development Advisory Boards
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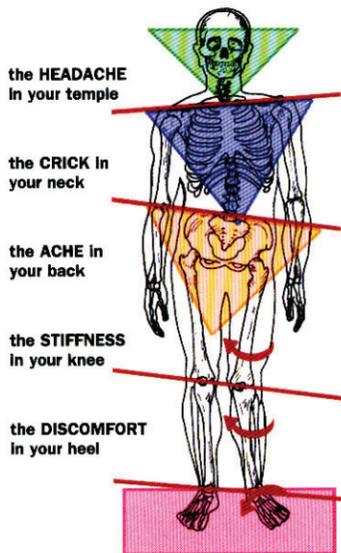


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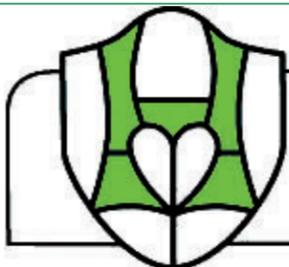
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In the Shadows of Saint Patrick's Church



***Thank you, to the voters of District E,
for your show of support on Primary Day last month.***

***I have thoroughly enjoyed my time knocking on doors and meeting the residents who live
in District E. Whether you live on Packard, Border, Carlton, Corbett, Brookfield,
Amherst, Westwood, or any other street in the District, I know there are concerns that
you have, and I want to know about them!***

Together you & I will make a difference.

As I continue my campaign, please know that your concerns are my first priority.

***If you have questions, concerns or suggestions, you may reach me by email at:
dave_abdoo@yahoo.com or by phone at 978.989.0864.***

I look forward to hearing from you.

To learn more, please visit www.daveabdoo.com

I respectfully ask for your vote on Tuesday November 6th.

Sincerely, Dave Abdoo

Abdoo

Councilor - District E

Notre Dame High School Holds Open House for Prospective Students

LAWRENCE - Notre Dame High School-A School that Works will be holding an Open House for prospective students and their families on Sunday, October 14, 2007 from 2 pm to 4 pm. All those interested in applying to NDHS are encouraged to attend. Current NDHS students will lead tours, refreshments will be served, and admissions information, including registration for the High School Placement Test and application packets, will be available.

Notre Dame High School is located at the corner of Hampshire and Haverhill Streets in Lawrence. Students attend classes 4 days per week and work for

local companies one day a week, with the school transporting students to and from work. The salaries earned by the students cover 70% of the cost of their tuition at the coeducational, Catholic, college preparatory school. In addition, financial assistance is available for families in need.

Notre Dame High School admits students of all races, creeds and religions. For further information, contact Delia Duran, Director of Admissions, at 978-689-8222, ext.16 or dduran@ndhslaw.org or Elizabeth Delgado at 978-689-8222, ext. 17

Elder Services RiverWalk/6K Run

Special guest Red Sox legend Johnny Pesky

LAWRENCE - Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc. is hosting its annual newly named RiverWalk/6K Run, on Sunday, October 14, 2007 at 10:00 AM at 360 Merrimack Street, Lawrence, MA. Join us for the 18th annual River Walk/6K run along the historic and scenic banks of the Merrimack River.

We are delighted to announce our honored guest is Red Sox legend Johnny Pesky. He will meet folks, sign autographs and participate in all the event ceremonies. We are honoring Mr. Pesky for his many years of service to the community.

The RiverWalk will have plenty of food, beverages, games, music, clowns, face painting, massages and our very popular raffle. This year our special sports raffle prize is a pair of Red Sox tickets to the game of *your* choice.

ReMax Prestige/Team Zingales will provide hot air balloon rides starting from 11AM-1PM.

The new 6K run has been certified and Yankee timing will be our race timer. Runners will receive a free t-shirt and medals will be awarded for the top three finishers in seven age categories.

Our title sponsor is RealTime One; we'd like to thank them as well as all of our sponsors for their generous support. The money we raise is used to support our Elder Care Fund, an emergency resource for elders in need. Each year this fund provides basic necessities to over 300 elders in our community.

Our new *Team Spirit* trophy and prizes will be presented to the team with the most spirit and enthusiasm. As you can see, there is plenty of fun and excitement for all ages at the RiverWalk. Please call Tony Palmisano at 800-892-0890 for further information or visit us on line at www.esmv.org for registration and walk information.

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc is a private non-profit agency supported by state and federal contracts, foundations, corporations and private donations that help provide choices for older adults allowing them to remain safe at home.

For additional information please contact Tony Palmisano, director of development/communications, at 978-946-1350 or tpalmisano@esmv.org.

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- New Balance, S. Union St.
- Transportation Cntr. Merrimack St.

- Dunkin Donus, Essex St.
- Post Office, Common St.
- Holy Rosary Church, Essex St.



Haverhill

- Bradford Post Office, S. Main St.
- Haverhill Post Office, Washington St.
- Haverhill Train Station

Lowell - Council on Aging

- N. Andover - Market Basket Rt. 114
- N. Andover - Dunkin Donuts, Main St.
- N. Andover- Richdales, Main St.

Georgetown - Post Office

- Boxford - Post Office
- Groveland - Post Office

Methuen

- Post Office, Broadway
- Methuen Family Restaurant, Bway
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Lawrence City Councilor

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(District C)

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RE-ELECT

NICHOLAS J. KOLOFOLES
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TOM DUGGAN'S ELECTION NOTEBOOK

Mayoral Debate in Methuen – October 13th

Methuen Mayor Bill Manzi and City Councilor At-Large Kathleen Corey Rahme have agreed to debate each other on the Paying Attention! radio program on WCAP/980AM. The debate will take place on October 13th from noon to 2pm.

Those of you who have never heard a real debate before will be in for a real treat as we break all the traditional rules of what is considered a debate. There will be no time limits and the candidates will not be taking turns responding to scripted questions with scripted answers. Instead we will be having real debate where the candidates will talk to each other, not the moderator, discuss amongst themselves how they feel about the issues affecting Methuen and will offer up to the voters a full discussion and in-depth analysis of the issues facing the people of Methuen. If you miss the debate, don't worry, we will be podcasting it on The Valley Patriot website Sunday morning, October 14th and will leave it up on line until the day after the election so that you can download it and listen to it at your leisure.

From Irrelevant Moron to Power Broker in two short weeks

Two weeks before the Lawrence preliminary election (September 25th) Lawrence City Councilor Nunzio

DiMarca launched a personal attack against "that moron Tom Duggan" from the council table during a meeting in a desperate attempt to deflect attention away from our front page story about his free trip to Italy and the possible conflicts of interest charges stemming from the trip. DiMarca went on and on (with no objection from the council president) about how that "so called newspaper the Valley Patriot" had no credibility and was "irrelevant." On election night, however, DiMarca told Boston Globe Journalist Russ Contreras that he was defeated at the polls because of all the "slander" written about him The Valley Patriot. DiMarca was later overheard whining that "Tom Duggan cost me the election." This is a great example of why Mr. DiMarca will not be returning to the city council next year, when you are praising him and "on his side," you can do no wrong by the at-large councilor and he will make any excuse he can to defend you. But when you disagree with him and call him to task you considered the enemy and everything you say or write about is vilified. I think it's funny how I went from a moron with no credibility two weeks before an election to being so powerful and relevant on election day that I could have cost Mr. DiMarca the election all by myself. Maybe if the councilor put that much thought into reading conflict of interest and campaign finance laws he wouldn't be illegally accepting a \$100 donation from "Helios Climate Systems" or taking

free trips to Italy on the dime of a man he is actively lobbying for at the council table.

Don't miss the Special Election Edition

Two years ago the Valley Patriot published our first "special election edition" just two short weeks before the 2005 final elections in Methuen and Lawrence. It was such a success that we decided to do it again this year. Our special edition will be published on October 25th and will profile every race for city council and school committee. We will also analyze the Methuen mayor's race, print sample ballots, and give you the inside scoop of what's happening behind the scenes. We're even going to have a few surprises in store. Be on the lookout for our special edition at all of our Valley Patriot distribution locations, in Lawrence and Methuen. If you live in select neighborhoods in Lawrence or Methuen we will be expanding our home delivery program, so you may just end up getting one on your front porch sometime before election day.

Conventional Wisdom: Who's Up Who's Down

UP: Methuen City Councilor Steve Zanni – Prior to last month's front page story in the Eagle-Tribune about Chief Joe Solomon filing a lawsuit against councilor Steve Zanni, it looked like he might be the odd man out in the four way

race for three seats in the at-large race for city council. Boy has that changed. As soon as the city council took a public stand defending their council chairman against attacks by chief Solomon, talk in political circles went from "Zanni's all done" to "Zanni's got my vote." It just goes to show you how volatile an election can be and how quickly things can change. It also goes to show you how fickle the voters can be. He may not be out of the woods just yet as there are three open seats and four powerful candidates, but the amount of sympathy generated for Zanni in the Solomon v. Zanni debacle may just be the one thing that saves him on Election Day.

UP: Lawrence City Councilor Nilka Alvarez – Nobody, and I mean nobody (not even me) predicted at-large city councilor Nilka Alvarez would top the ticket in the city preliminaries on September 25th. Most (including me) predicted that former Licensing commissioner Roger Twomey would top the ticket (by the way, I am sticking to that prediction for the final election) but when the votes were all counted it was Twomey in second place and Nilka in first. I don't think the good natured councilor Alvarez is going to repeat that in the final election but the primary numbers certainly prove that it's possible.

DOWN: Lawrence City Councilor Joe Parolisi – Predicted to easily win the first or second spot in the at-large race for city council, Parolisi was pushed into



Elect

APRIL

Lyskowsky

LAWRENCE CITY COUNCIL

District "A" Prospect Hill

Finally....

Prospect Hill has a Choice!



Paid for by the committee to elect April Lyskowsky



Important Notice to Voters of new Polling Locations in Lawrence

Due to the conditions of the Prospect Hill Community Center Located on the Corner of Prospect and East Haverhill The City Clerk Department and the Election Division has changed the District A-1 and A-2 polling locations to the Edward F. Parthum School, 255 East Haverhill St.

Oct. 16, 2007, -Special Election for Congress
Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2007 - City of Lawrence Election

If you have any question regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact The Election Division at 978-620-3290, or 978-794-5807-08 and 978-794-1336.

fourth place by political newcomer **Frank Moran** on primary day. One reason for Parolisi's poor showing was his insistence that he was not going to campaign and that he wasn't going to spend any money trying to get elected. The good news for Joe is that he now has almost five weeks to go out and do the grunt work he should have been doing for the last two years. Joe is no slouch and he has both the capability and the political knowledge to close the gap on Election Day.

UP: Jim Stokes... (huh?) While most Lawrence politicians were still in shock election night over **Nilka Alvarez** receiving the most votes in the at-large race, the real stunner was overlooked by most observers until much later in the evening. The biggest surprise of all turns out to be **Jim Stokes'** win over incumbent School Committeeman **Greg Morris** for the District "F" seat in South Lawrence. Stokes has run so often for public officer without ever winning that even I can't remember how many there were. But Stokes has always run a grassroots campaign, always knocks on doors and attends many, if not most public events in the city. He should be congratulated for working so hard and making a great showing and I want to take nothing away from his win last month, but there was another reason Stokes did better than the two year incumbent Greg Morris. Because Greg Morris won his seat two years ago without a challenger and has not been on the forefront of any major issues of public interest in the last two years, he was really running as a challenger facing his first real opponent on the ballot. If Morris sees this primary loss as an indication that the voters don't want him and he gives up, Stokes is sure to repeat his win in the November 6th final. But if Morris puts it in gear and takes his message to the people, points out his strengths and accomplishments to the voters and spends a little money, he should have no problem turning things around. This race will be hard to predict right to the end.

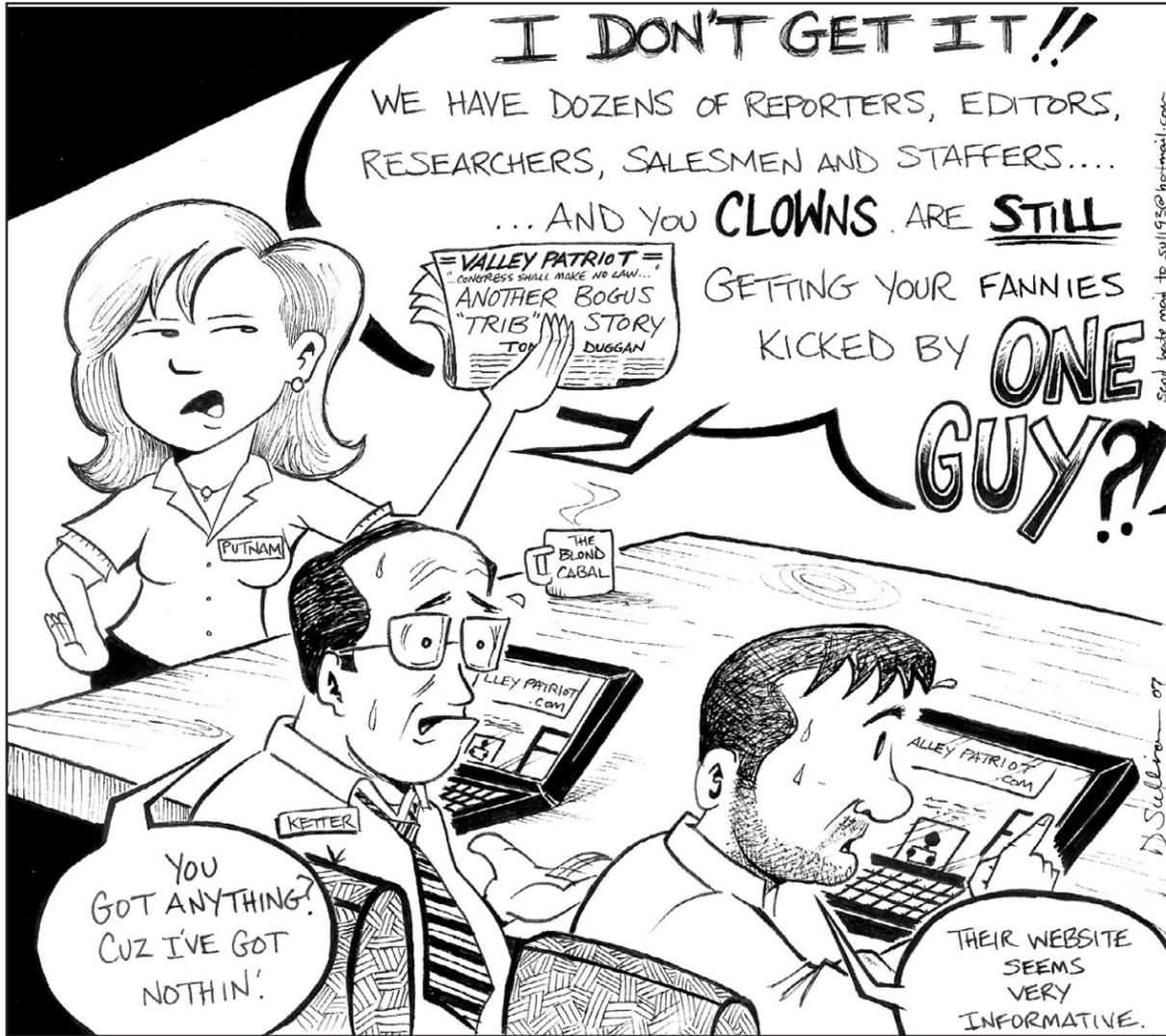
DOWN: Lawrence Council President Patrick Blanchette: Going into last months primary, six year incumbent Patrick Blanchette's supporters were predicting he would win "by a margin three to one" in the primaries for the District "A" city council seat.



But when the votes were counted Blanchette was only 99 votes ahead of a first tie candidate with nearly no name recognition and a very hard name to say (and read) **April Lyskowski**. Given that the Blanchette family name has been on the ballot consistently for

more than 25 years and his thumping of a very popular Rick Parthum four years ago, the Blanchette supporters were right when they said Patrick "should" beat his challenger by more than three to one. Remember, politics and elections are all about expectations and the Blanchette supporters set their expectations a little too high, underestimating the hard work of the Lyskowski campaign (and of course dismissing the babe factor). This race isn't over, not by a long shot, but the momentum is on April's side meaning that if the council president wants to keep his seat he is going to have to get a new message, spend a lot of money (at least \$8-\$10,000) and he has run a positive campaign.

UP: Haverhill Mayor Jim Fiorentini – You have to hand it to Haverhill Mayor Jim Fiorentini. For the last two years he has been called everything under the sun, attacked both personally and politically, had every single decision he has made questioned, distorted, challenged, and obstructed. Those who oppose the mayor (legitimately or not) seem to have made criticizing the



Cartoon by David Sullivan of Dracut: Sull93@hotmail.com

mayor a full time job. So much so that many were expecting him to lose (or at the very best come in second) last month in the mayoral primary. Yet despite all the hand wringing and vocal opposition he has endured, Fiorentini overwhelmingly defeated both his opponents at the polls.



UP: Lawrence Finance Director Mark Andrews – When Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan nominated Mark Andrews as his nominee for the budget and finance director's position last month it was no surprise that "reporter" **Mark Vogler** would write several stories exposing his personal life on the front page of the paper and making a concerted effort to sink Andrew's nomination before the city council. The articles despicably described two drunk driving arrests. The Trib then used this story as an excuse to rehash mayor Sullivan's own arrest six years ago in an attempt to smear him as well and kill two birds with one stone. Ironically, when **Mayor Sullivan** was originally arrested he was on the Tribune's list of protected officials and they never reported the incident. Now that he's out of favor ... well you see how it goes.

Is there no depth too low for **Mark Vogler** of Waverly Road in N. Andover and his editors at the Tribune? Apparently not, but Andrews got the last laugh as the city council in Lawrence ignored the smear campaign by the Tribune and unanimously confirmed Andrews to be the new budget and finance director. Anyone want to guess what kind of treatment Andrews will get from Trib reporters now that he has the job and their efforts were thwarted? Don't worry, every time they get it wrong or cross the line the Valley Patriot will be right there to straighten things out.

Park will remain a park

Thanks to the hard work and efforts of **Violet Kondrat**, the McCabe Court park in North Andover will remain a park. Last month, The Valley Patriot reported that the North Andover Housing Authority had submitted a proposal to build public housing where the McCabe Court Park exists. Back in 1981, Violet Kondrat sold her land at 50-53 May Street to the North Andover Housing Authority to build a park. When the Authority submitted an application for a special permit to be heard before the Board of Appeals to build a two-family dwelling where the park land exists, Violet opposed the project. Because of Violet's vocal objections and proof that North Andover received federal funding for the land to be converted into a park, the Authority withdrew its Board of Appeals housing application and the park will remain a park. The Authority even plans to buy benches and maintain the park.

The Valley Patriot's new look

Three years ago, 2,000 copies of the first edition of the Valley Patriot rolled off the printing presses at Graphic development in West Hanover, MA under the management of our good friend Bill Samatis. At the time we were very proud of our little 16 page monthly newspaper and we had a lot to be proud of.

But, because we concentrated all of our time and effort on reporting news accurately, providing a vehicle for public debate in the Merrimack Valley, and building and maintaining the content and credibility of the newspaper, the one thing we sacrificed was a professional design and a standardized look. But it was always our intention to give the Valley Patriot a complete makeover once we were well established and we could dedicate the time and effort to doing the job right without spending a million dollars on media consultants.

People laughed, of course, predicting the Valley Patriot would be a memory within a few shorts month (like "Latino News," anyone see them around lately?) and yet every month we continued to grow at a pace we could barely keep up with so, we had no time at all to devote to the look and feel of the paper.

So, they continued to laugh. Those who call themselves "professional journalists" laughed. They ridiculed us for "not doing it the way other newspapers do it." The political elites laughed, calling us a "rag" and a "scandal sheet with no credibility," especially when we published re-ports about local officials and their bad behavior. As we grew and grew beyond anyone's expectations, the laughing slowly turned to praise. However, one thing continued to fall by the wayside on our end that kept them laughing: the Valley Patriot still looked like it was done by an amateur who didn't know a thing about newspaper design ... and that's because it was.

Despite our "unique" look, in three and a half short years, The Valley Patriot grew from 2,000 papers in 2004 to 15,000 papers last month. We grew from 16 pages in 2004 to 48 pages this August. And we grew from four cities and towns with 35 distribution points in 2004, to 20 cities and towns with more than 400 distribution points just last month. We even won a New England Press Association award for our coverage of Red Cross officials throwing Lawrence residents out of a shelter and on to the streets during the floods of in 2006. We received the award in February of 2007. Not bad for a "rag" or "scandal sheet" with no credibility and a chaotic design that looked like it was done by an amateur.

This month, The Valley Patriot begins a new phase in our plan for growth, redesign and expansion throughout the region. With a new front page that's easier on the eyes, and a more uniform look and feel throughout the paper for easier reading, we wanted you our readers and advertisers to know that we have been "paying attention" to your comments and concerns and we do hear you. In fact, we look forward to hearing "your voice" more and more each month and providing a vehicle so that "your voice" can continue to be "our voice" from Westford and Acton to Amesbury and Newburyport and beyond!

The one thing we don't expect to hear all that much of anymore, however ... is laughing.



"The bank cited the Eagle-Tribune story as a reason for pulling their commitment..." - Bob Ansin



Eagle-Tribune offices in North Andover

STAFF PHOTOS

MONARCH: continued from page 1

outside, which was probably debris from when the Wood Mill's twin building was demolished in the 1950s. We halted excavation work and filed an action plan with the Department of Environmental Protection."

"The *Tribune* writers should have looked at the plan filed with the DEP when they wrote their story. Last week, the subcontractors were working outside the building, according to the plan. They were certainly not 'clearing contaminated material out of the building' as the Trib had written," said Ansin.

"One thing for sure, this project is moving forward. I have made a commitment to the city of Lawrence, and I am keeping that commitment.

Monarch is the largest eco-friendly development in New England, and has brought positive national attention to a town that many people had overlooked. The project has been featured in CNN/Money as one of the top green developments in the nation, in *Forbes* as a Home of the Week, in *Businessweek* as Hot Property, and has been profiled on National Public Radio and the *Wall Street Journal*. *Commonwealth* magazine has described the project as "catalytic for the city of Lawrence" and as a "lynchpin in the city's revival."

Eagle-Tribune issues a correction: too little, too late

Shaw Rosen, the Chief Operating Officer of MassInnovation and **Constantine Valhouli**, principal of The Hammersmith Group, a firm which advises developers and cities on reviving historic downtowns, met with the *Eagle-Tribune* on Monday, September 17, to discuss the inaccuracies in Harmacinski and Kirk's reporting.

The *Eagle-Tribune* issued a brief (50 word) correction the next day that confirmed that asbestos was not found inside the building. "But there's a huge difference between a 1450-word cover

story that alleges asbestos in the building, and a tiny correction on page two," said Valhouli.

The *Tribune* also issued a correction for having written that MassInnovation was based in Fitchburg. "MassInnovation's offices moved from Fitchburg to Lawrence in 2003. Part of our commitment to helping Lawrence revive was to become part of the community," said Ansin. Many developers are seen as outsiders who come to a town for a project and then leave. "The Trib had reported that we were based in Lawrence

Tribune) moved its' offices out of Lawrence in 1968 and built their brand new (then) state of the art facility in North Andover.

"We chose to make a stand on this issue."

Valhouli and Rosen discussed several other inaccuracies, including misattributed quotes, with the *Tribune* reporters, but no corrections were issued on those erroneous reports.

"The maintenance fees for the garage appear to be much higher than they should be," said Ansin. "It turns out that they were a no-bid contract. We have withheld payment until they can demonstrate that the contracts were legal, and their figures could be supported by a public bid process, something the MVRTA has not yet been able to do."

"Here's what the *Trib* didn't tell their readers," Ansin continued. "I donated the land so that they could build that parking garage at the new commuter rail station. As part of the agreement we were to get free parking on the top two levels but we agreed to pay the administrative costs to manage the building. Well, those costs turned out to be astronomical. We were paying two or three times the price we ought to be paying. So I began to question the billing." That's when, Ansin says, he learned that the contract for managing the garage never went out for a competitive bid. "That's why we were withholding payment, not because we were going belly up as the Trib made it seem."

"The real story here is about whether it's acceptable for public services to go out for no-bid contracts," said Ansin. "Our goal is to help the city of Lawrence revive. But Lawrence cannot be a sustainable city unless it is an efficient city. Public bidding helps keep costs down for the city and the residents. We chose to make a stand on this issue."

"Why is *that* story not getting covered?" asked Ansin.

Monarch Loft buyers offered a refund - but most refuse

After the *Tribune* story torpedoed the Monarch project's \$40 million financing, Ansin recognized that there would be a delay for buyers who were expecting to move into the lofts this winter. "I was troubled that our buyers' lives would be on hold because of our problems with

MONARCH, next page



The Carberry sisters of North Andover, shown here at a holiday party at Monarch on the Merrimack, have purchased a riverside loft at Monarch and are staying with the project despite recent negative publicity from the *Eagle-Tribune*.

in a number of previous stories. So it was surprising that they got that small but important fact wrong in their cover story."

In contrast to Ansin contributing to the revival of the city of Lawrence by moving his MassInnovation's facility to Lawrence from Fitchburg, the *Eagle-Tribune* (formerly the Lawrence Eagle

Rosen responded to the *Eagle-Tribune*'s claim that Ansin is behind on his payments to the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA) for parking across the street from Monarch. Ansin said that he has been withholding payment because of a legitimate concern about the contracts at the MVRTA.

VOTE

Grisel Silva

"Working hard for the community!"

Lawrence City Council District "B"

I wish to thank all the voters of District "B" for supporting me during the last two years. I need your vote to continue our progress.



paid for by the Silva Committee 9 Myrtle Court - (978) 689-9922

PAYING ATTENTION! WITH TOM DUGGAN

Citizen hero apprehends drug suspects in neighbors' garage

Eagle-Tribune continues their smear campaign against the Silva family

Lawrence resident Nelson Silva apprehended two criminals last month on Erving Avenue and Alma Street after hearing banging noises in the garage that abuts his Myrtle Court home.

Nelson Silva is the husband of Lawrence City Councilor Grisel Silva and was recently appointed as a constable in the city of Lawrence.

"I kept hearing this banging next door and at first I thought it was a couple of kids fooling around so I ignored it," Silva said. "But then the noises continued so I got my flashlight, I called the police and my father and I went over to see what was going on before police arrived."

When Silva and his father arrived at the garage, Silva says he saw two individuals

"After reading what they did to Bob Ansin. I am convinced that his approach is the only one that will work. Freeze them out, refuse to talk to them and do not give them any more legitimacy by giving them quotes they can use to sell a story." - Nelson Silva



"on their knees" in the corner of the garage. "When I yelled to them to identify themselves, they began to come out of the garage, one of them was holding a screwdriver in his hand."

According police officers investigating the incident, Silva drew his weapon and

demanded that the men stop advancing and drop the weapon, which they did. Silva then holstered his gun and began to have a conversation with them while waiting for police to arrive.

When a Lawrence police officer showed up, he found hypodermic needles, a

spoon and a mirror as well as the screwdriver and various other items. The two men were arrested and taken into custody.

"I admit I was scared. I've had my gun permit for five years and I have never had to draw it on anyone," Silva continued. "But when one of these guys came out of the dark towards me and I could see he had something in his hand I had to pull it out, I really didn't have any choice. I wasn't going to take any chances. I have a wife and three kids and my father was standing there with me. I'm just glad they did as they were told and nobody got hurt, they dropped the weapon and they stopped advancing on me when I ordered them to."

DUGGAN, page 22

financing," Ansin said. "We offered each buyer the chance to rescind their purchase agreement.

Ansin offered each of the 53 people who had deposits or contracts on a loft at Monarch the opportunity for a full refund.

Almost every one of the buyers refused to take their deposits back.

"Almost every one said they believed in the project and were willing to wait, despite the uncertainty of when construction will resume," said Ansin.

Several buyers said that they were not bothered by the bad press.

"Of course we will wait," said **Ed and Joannie Warnshuis** of Tewksbury, who were the first buyers at Monarch in April 2006. "We looked everywhere and there is no place else we would rather live."

John Grange, a retired wine broker said he was not discouraged. "I'm sticking with this for three reasons: for the quality, for the vision, and for the integrity of the team," said.

locally because it was the right thing to do. Right now, returning deposits was also the right thing to do," said Ansin.

"We're touched that so many people are standing by Monarch."

The Impact on Lawrence

"Bob Ansin didn't have to offer a refund to anyone," said Michael Sweeney, Planning Director for the city of Lawrence.

"He has a signed contract with each of his buyers. Most developers would have said, 'you're just going to have to wait.' But Bob didn't do that. He showed he is a stand-up guy and he did the right thing, just as he did last summer when a small patch of asbestos was found in the ground outside the building. He could have paved over it and not said a word to anyone. Nobody would have been the wiser. But Bob voluntarily stopped the project, notified the Department of Environmental Protection, and had the problem taken care of at great personal expense. It's really unfortunate for Lawrence that this project has been delayed. It's going to have a very

Eagle-Tribune reporter Bill Kirk of Gloucester MA, co-wrote a story that claimed "men in Tyvek suits and respirators" were seen removing asbestos from the Monarch on the Merrimack building at 250 Merrimack St. in Lawrence. The story caused Monarch to lose a \$40 million loan that was slated to come in that week. The Tribune later retracted the story, but Kirk's managing editor Gretchen Putnam told the Boston Globe that the Eagle-Tribune "sticks by their reporting."



STAFF PHOTO

Sal's for dinner after work. They are spending their money locally because they live here. Closing down this project for any length of time is going to hurt Lawrence businesses"

"We're all pulling for Bob and we're going to do whatever we can to help him through this," said Mayor Sullivan. "As Monarch succeeds, Lawrence succeeds. The people in the Merrimack Valley ought to be rallying around him and his efforts to get this project back on track."

Only days after *Tribune's* retraction, Managing Editor Gretchen Putnam says she "Sticks by their reporting"

On Saturday, September 22, the *Eagle-Tribune* ran a cover story alleging that the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) was investigating asbestos "inside and outside the building." The Trib article quoted Joe Ferson, spokesman for the DEP, saying that the agency had an "enforcement action" against Monarch.

When questioned by the *Valley Patriot*, Ferson clarified the terms and contradicted the *Tribune* story.

"There is a difference between an 'enforcement investigation' and an 'enforcement action,'" said Ferson.

When Ferson was asked if the *Eagle-Tribune* account about "an enforcement action" against Monarch was accurate or whether there were any "enforcement actions" related to recent allegations against Monarch, he said, "No."

This directly contradicted what was reported in the *Eagle-Tribune* article printed on Saturday, September 22.

"If you're asking me if there's an investigation going on at 250 Merrimack Street, yes," said Ferson.

The enforcement investigation is directed against an independent subcontractor who was performing work at the site. According to the DEP website, a Methuen company called Premier Abatement & Labor Services, Inc. was fined \$1,000 on June 25, 2007. The DEP website described the incident as follows:

"During a routine inspection of a demolition/asbestos abatement site at 250 Merrimack Street in Lawrence, MassDEP observed asbestos containing waste material which was not properly sealed or labeled in Premier's asbestos-containing waste trailer."

However, the *Tribune* story clearly stated that the DEP had an "enforcement action" against Monarch, instead of a routine and minor investigation against a subcontractor.

Despite these continued inaccuracies in their coverage of the Monarch story, *Eagle-Tribune* managing editor **Gretchen Putnam** was quoted in a *Boston Globe* story on Thursday, September 27, as saying "We stick by our reporting."

Ansin said he is going to continue to seeking funding for the project but that the *Eagle-Tribune's* continued attacks on Monarch are making it difficult.

Ansin said he has not ruled out a legal action against the daily newspaper.



"Bob Ansin was using his own money to pay local companies to work on his project. Those companies in turn were hiring and paying local people to do the work. These workers put that money right back into Lawrence's economy ... Closing down this project for any length of time is going to hurt Lawrence businesses"

profound effect on the economy of this area."

Lawrence Mayor Michael Sullivan said he was very disappointed in the halt of construction at Monarch saying that a ripple effect would be felt by local businesses.

"Bob Ansin was using his own money to pay local companies to work on his project. Those companies in turn were hiring and paying local people to do the work. These workers put that money right back into Lawrence's economy. They get their coffee in Lawrence before work, eat their lunch across the street or walk to

Ansin said of the three who asked for their deposits back, all three said their decision was driven by external circumstances, not a lack of faith in the project.

Monarch's sustainable approach quickly transformed the mill conversion from a local project to a national success story. But Ansin's vision of sustainable development went beyond eco-luxury, renewable materials and resource efficiency: "We try to run every aspect of our business sustainably. When the project started, we bought and hired

MASTER PLAN: continued from page 7

Haverhill's resources is making Haverhill a less desirable place to live.

The administration has encouraged projects at the expense of the qualities that have made Haverhill's neighborhoods and downtown distinct. City leaders have repeatedly ignored or opposed initiatives that could revive downtown. Mayor Fiorentini has repeatedly opposed an Architectural Review Board. There has been a continued weakening of the Scenic Roads Ordinance in favor of rezoning for additional development. The Mayor's "Design Guidelines" for the 40R Smart Growth District barely contain any design standards whatsoever. His administration appears to believe that any design review or landmark designation will cause us to lose development to another town. **Worst of all, the Mayor's Downtown Master Plan essentially encourages another Urban Renewal.**

Given that the Mayor has retained the firm of Gruen, Gruen + Associates to produce a Master Plan, why is there a need for an independent plan?

The public needs multiple points of view in order to reach an informed conclusion about how Haverhill should develop.

The Gruen plan seems written to justify Mayor Fiorentini's policies. This can only result in a generic downtown. **The issues of historic preservation, conservation of open space, and architectural review are conspicuous by their absence from the Gruen report.** The Mayor's plan recommends demolition of historic buildings. Our plan recommends preserving them. The Mayor's plan recommends honoring Haverhill's heritage through "giant fiberglass shoes throughout downtown." Our plan honors the city's past by restoring its architectural integrity and by preserving the buildings which make our city unique.

We encourage the press, public officials, and residents to compare the Mayor's "official" Master Plan with this document. We hope that it will generate discussion on the points where it differs from the Mayor's plan: why are

these issues missing? And are they worth fighting for?

The Alternate Master Plan should provide city leaders with the criteria to evaluate decisions on downtown development.

The Mayor's Downtown Master Plan proposes changes in zoning and regulations. These will affect how downtown Haverhill looks, functions, and connects with the rest of the city. As citizens, it is our obligation to critically examine how each of those decisions affects the quality of life for current and future residents of Haverhill.

As you compare the Alternate Master Plan with the Gruen report, we ask you to imagine what kind of city Haverhill will become if the different recommendations become policies. How can Haverhill become a place where people are proud to call home, instead of somewhere to live because they cannot afford to live elsewhere? How can we encourage people to settle in Haverhill instead of settling for Haverhill?

The choice of which future will come to pass is ours – the recommendations in this report can only become a reality if Haverhill citizens and city leaders make these issues a priority. The residents of Haverhill must act to preserve the city's history and to help restore Haverhill to the great place that it once was to call home.



Constantine Archimedes Valhouli is a principal of The Hammersmith Group, a firm which advises developers of luxury properties, and consults to cities on reviving historic downtowns. The firm and its projects have been featured in CNN/Money, Forbes, Fortune, NPR, Oprah, Urban Land, and the Wall Street Journal. Valhouli is a Charles G. Koch Fellow with the Institute for Humane Studies.

ORMSBY: continued from page 3

General Kinnard then added, "When General Giap says he learned how to fight Americans and our helicopters at the Ia Drang, that's bullshit! What he learned was that we were not going to be allowed to chase him across a mythical line in the dirt. From that point on he was grinning."

Winning in Vietnam, as defined by the press and our politicians, was based on the enemy surrendering and the subsequent stop to the continuing stream of casualties reported every night on the evening news.

Even with this as our goal, we allowed the NVA to have a sheltered retreat to lick its wounds and then attack again and kill more Americans. NVA troops could lose every battle and yet, with these generous ground rules, they were guaranteed to win the war. Except for Nixon's massive/desperation bombing of the North (finally!), we would have never extricated ourselves.

Does this remind you of the Iraq War? The similarity is not that both had an unjust cause as the liberal press would have us believe. Quite the contrary: Stopping communism and ending terrorism are both very worthy and just endeavors.

The similarity is that our leaders have put our troops in a straight jacket and the press keeps asking why we're getting our nose bloodied. Al Queda, Iran and Syria can train terrorist fighters, assemble munitions (rifles, ammunition, RPGs, IEDs, ...) with impunity, send them into Afghanistan and Iraq, and then start all over again.

In the meantime, we not only don't crush these activities, we permit Iran to sell oil on the world market to help finance them! Is Usama bin Laden sitting in Pakistan grinning? How about Ahmadinejad in Teheran or Assad in Damascus?

Is it time to get out of Iraq? If we are going to stick to these policies, let's get out. After a few more buildings in New York City are destroyed or the fans at a Super Bowl are exterminated, maybe, just maybe, we'll get the courage to declare war and mean it!

Maybe it is time to start holding accountable the politicians that start "wars" without actually declaring them, are not serious about winning, and send our brave young soldiers into battle with their hands tied behind their backs.

Bush didn't lie about weapons of mass destruction. He lied about our "get tough policy" to go after terrorists and destroy them. After 9/11 Bush said, "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." Well, if Iran and Syria are aiding the terrorists, who-the-hell do we think they are with? If we're at war with the terrorists, why aren't we at war with Iran and Syria?

It is time to get in this fight for real or get out. Don't send our kids into battle with no intention of winning. Don't let them get maimed and then decide we didn't really mean it.

We owe a HUGE apology to our Korean and Vietnam veterans. Committing this crime a third time is inexcusable.

Why? Because it is the third time. When will we learn?

And because, in the current war in Iraq, we don't have the possible justification for military timidity we had in Korea and Vietnam. At least in the case of Korea and Vietnam, an argument could be made that we couldn't risk nuclear annihilation and that we were just containing communism,

draining it economically, and waiting for it to implode. If only we were so clever!

The current policy, to play nice in the Iraq War by allowing sanctuaries for the terrorists and their supporters, has no such justification. In fact, the situation is precisely reversed. Iran, Syria and the terrorists have no nuclear weapons now, but they will if we keep pussyfooting around.

Instead of curtailing our battle strategy because we could be nuked now, we are wasting time while Iranians, Syrians and North Koreans are preparing their nuclear capability so they will be able to nuke us later. Stupid hardly covers it. Criminal and treasonous would be a better characterization.

Do we value our freedoms enough to fight for them? Our men and women in uniform do. Do the rest of us?



Dr. Ormsby is a member of the North Andover School Committee. He is a graduate of Cornell and has a doctorate from MIT. You can contact Dr.

Ormsby via email: ccormsby@comcast.net

Re-Elect Kenneth R. Willette, Jr. Methuen City Councilor At-Large

FIRST ON THE BALLOT, FIRST FOR METHUEN!

On the Issue of Accountability:

Ken Willette will continue to ensure that all elected officials and city employees are held accountable to the taxpayers. Ken has always maintained high ethical standards.

On the Issue of Identifying Sex Offenders:

Ken Willette recommended the placement of detailed information, including photos, on level 3 sex offenders on our local government access channel - to protect families and children

I am grateful for your support & your vote on Election Day, Tuesday- November 6th.



Paid for by the Committee to Elect Ken Willette, Jr.

DUGGAN: continued from page 19

Silva dismisses the notion that he is a citizen hero, instead giving credit to the Lawrence police for acting "professionally" and "responding quickly" to his call. "It really made me feel good about the Lawrence cops. I just did what I think anyone would do. This is our neighborhood and we have to watch out for each other, we have to watch out for each other's property. That's what neighbors do and we have a really tight knit neighborhood."

"They (the police) showed up, interviewed the suspects, conducted a search and were respectful both to me and to the two suspects the entire time. This officer did an exceptional job," he said modestly, "he made the arrest and I only hope that these two guys never come back to our neighborhood. We don't need junkies and criminals wandering our neighborhood, using or selling drugs. I hope they learned their lesson."

The Tribune Makes a Villain out of a Hero Despite Silva's heroic actions that night, the *Eagle-Tribune* ran a front negative page story four days later, (coincidentally?) on the day of Lawrence's municipal primary elections where Mr. Silva's wife, Grisel was on the ballot in Lawrence as a candidate for reelection to the city council.

In their attack on Silva, the *Eagle-Tribune* told their readers that Silva was in big trouble with Lawrence police for his actions while apprehending the two drug suspect. The story, written by Zach Church claims that Silva acted improperly when he left his property with his firearms. The article stated:

"Now, Nelson Silva, a security officer at city public schools and husband of City Councilor Grisel Silva, is in danger of losing his license to carry a handgun due to the weekend incident."

According to Lawrence Police however, Silva had been cleared of any wrongdoing and the matter was closed.

The *Eagle Tribune* has been smearing the Silva family for over a year, printing inaccurate stories about their personal lives and publishing accusation after accusation concerning an incident last summer where the Silvas called a police officer to investigate a gun that was found in their home.

Councilor Grisel Silva was repeatedly accused of wrongdoing within the pages of the *Tribune*, who used sources in the police department to allege that the councilor improperly used her influence

to conceal the gun possession by her daughter in 2006.

Councilor Silva was exonerated by the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission and the matter was officially "CLOSED". Her daughter was never found guilty of any crime (though she was charged with illegal possession of a gun), facts that should have put to bed the *Eagle Tribune's* notion that a "crime" was being covered up. Yet, as of the day this column is being published (October 4th) the *Eagle Tribune* has never once published, or even referenced the fact that Councilor Silva was vindicated. Instead they launched a whole new series of negative stories using the heroic actions of the councilor's husband as yet another excuse to report on the gun incident in 2006, never informing their readers that those stories were just plain false.

This is how Zach Church ended his front page story (on election day) regarding Councilor Silva's husband and his heroic acts:

"This is the second gun incident involving Silva in just over a year. In July 2006, he and his wife found a handgun in their daughter's bedroom. The couple turned the gun over to an off-duty police officer who also is a family friend. That officer, Alberto Inostroza, never turned the gun in at the police station, prompting an internal investigation. Inostroza served a 10-day unpaid suspension and was later fined \$2,000 by the state ethics board."

There was no mention of the fact that the Silva was cleared by the Massachusetts ethics commission after a series of stories linking her to wrongdoing, and no mention was ever made of the fact that Silva's daughter was not found guilty of gun possession.

Something Nelson Silva says "has pushed me to the point where nobody in my family will ever talk to the *Eagle-Tribune* again."

The attacks continue

The *Eagle Tribune* article by Zach Church also informed their readers that some phantom police lieutenant gave the following quotes:

"Silva, 28, who also is a constable, will not face criminal charges, but a police lieutenant said Silva acted 'irresponsibly and outside the scope of his (license to carry)' when he left his property while armed."

Silva, however, has a license to carry firearms with no restrictions, a license he was more than happy to provide to the *Valley Patriot*.

"I don't believe a police officer, much less a lieutenant, would tell that to the *Tribune* since I brought in my license to the police station and gave them a copy. They [the police] know there are *no restrictions* on my license. This reference in [last month's] paper about restrictions on my gun license is totally false. They know it. They just don't care. They are out to get my wife and they will stoop to any level to see her name and our family name destroyed."

According to state law, a constable possess fairly extensive powers; "While there may be residual aspects of common law powers contained in the office of Constable, the office is vested with a broad range of statutory powers as well. The statute providing the general powers of Constables goes so far as to give them the powers of sheriffs to require aid in the execution of their duties.

M.G.L.c.41, section 94 reads in whole: Indeed, Constables possess the awesome power of arrest in certain circumstances. Constables possess a broad range of civil and criminal arrest powers, in most jurisdictions arrests for criminal matters an illustration of the power of arrest is contained in M.G.L.c.271, section 2, which reads; "Whoever, in a public conveyance or public place, or in a private place upon which he is trespassing, The Constable, under M.G.L.c.266, section 120, may arrest without a warrant any person who he finds committing a trespass, after notice, upon " a dwelling house, building, If discovered in the act, he may be arrested without a warrant by a sheriff, deputy sheriff, constable or any officer qualified to serve criminal process. It is significant to note here that the power of the Constable predates the powers vested in our organized police forces. The Constable has the power to enforce our election laws and, under M.G.L.c.56, section 57 has the power to arrest without a warrant violators thereof. The Chief of Police as keeper of the lockup, as required by M.G.L. c.40, section 37 must make the local lockup accessible to the Constable and if he fails or refuses to do so, he is subject to fine. And, under M.G.L.c.41, section 39 "

Given that Chief Romero has the *Tribune* on speed dial, and his quotes were laced throughout the article, it seems out of place for Zach Church and the *Eagle Tribune* to be relying on an anonymous

source within the department to further smear Silva.

"This is just one more attack against me and my family by the *Eagle Tribune* since my wife has been elected to the Lawrence City Council," Silva said in an exclusive interview with the *Valley Patriot*.

"They print allegations and negative stories based on nothing and then they repeat those stories over and over without ever informing their readers that the matter was resolved and the people they are smearing were cleared. After reading what they did to Bob Ansin (see page one) I am convinced that his approach is the only one that will work: freeze them out, refuse to talk to them and do not give them any more legitimacy by giving them quotes they can use to sell a story," Silva said bitterly.

Silva said he was also upset about what was missing in the *Tribune* story.

"Because Zach Church and the *Eagle Tribune* decided to run this story as a political smear on election day, it overshadows the great work done by the Lawrence police," he said.

"They did a great job. They acted professionally and they resolved the situation. You didn't read that in the paper today and that's why Lawrence has the reputation [that] it has. The daily paper rushes past every opportunity to focus on something good that happened in order to find and create scandal to smear people who don't play ball with them. Well, they can print whatever they want from now on. I'm not talking to them. I am joining Bob Ansin in a *Tribune* boycott and I hope that everyone who has ever been burned by them takes inspiration from Bob [Ansin] and follows his lead."

Nelson Silva's wife, Grisel, is facing Ruth Rojas in the Lawrence municipal elections on November 6th. Councilor Silva is running for re-election as the District "B" City Councilor and you can bet that the *Eagle Tribune* will not stop with their campaign of allegation and innuendo to have councilor Silva defeated on election day.



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.

ELECT

Barbara

Beals-Gonzalez

Lawrence City Council

District "C" City C



paid for by Barbara Beals-Gonzalez

The Ability to Get the Job Done!

The summit that matters:

Green chemistry business to become a reality in the Merrimack Valley

Seth Itzkan

This article is about an imminent summit that can have a major influence on economic development in the Merrimack Valley, but even more than that, it's about the evolution of an idea from a visionary man and scientist - Dr. John Warner. I remember the feeling I had the first time I met Dr. John Warner some two years ago. The feeling was not one of awe ... not yet. That would come soon afterwards. Actually, the feeling was frustration. Frustration because we were both presenting ideas for economic growth, and I sensed that his proposition was better than mine. Not that there was anything wrong or ignoble with my idea, which is still valid, but his idea had an urgency and allure that mine lacked, and most importantly, it had the potential to draw major corporate sponsors with ballooning economic spin offs.

What was his idea? It was nothing less than to create the world's premier Green Chemistry research center that would set the vanguard for nontoxic manufacturing, and, in the process, help the Merrimack Valley to once again establish itself as the nexus for industrial innovation. Well, who could argue with that? And that loftier goal for the Merrimack Valley complemented perfectly with what former Haverhill City Council President, John Michitson, and I had been trying to do with our Innovation Valley initiative.

So, it wasn't long before we became major advocates for Dr. Warner's vision, and anyone who has been reading our Innovation Valley column in The Valley Patriot is well aware of that. Thus, I am happy to announce, here first in The Valley Patriot, that the vision is becoming a reality. Less than six months after leaving the Chemistry Department at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, Dr. John Warner, in collaboration with the Merrimack Valley Venture Forum, The Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council, and with organizational support from myself and John Michitson, is hosting a first-of-its-

"The Summit is an opportunity for the Merrimack Valley to position itself as a world leader in realizing the business potential of nontoxic manufacturing and research through Green Chemistry." - Dr. John Warner, Warner Babcock Institute for Green Chemistry

kind summit of industrial leaders, scientists, and financiers, assembled to harness the global business opportunities for nontoxic manufacturing through Green Chemistry.

As John Warner puts it, "The Summit is an opportunity for the Merrimack Valley to position itself as a world leader in realizing the business potential of nontoxic manufacturing and research through Green Chemistry".

Indeed, the business potential is mammoth and expanding. As a field, Green Chemistry sits squarely within the intersections of the \$280 billion chemical, \$229 billion pharmaceutical, and now, the \$1.6 billion "green technology" industries. These industries, and many others, including electronics, cosmetics, and consumer goods, are all demanding nontoxic replacements for their products. These products include just about everything: from computers, to carpets, to polish, to solvents, to adhesives, to apparel, to paper. Basically, if it can be made, there's a role for Green Chemistry in its future. It's the field that will help move industry into a nontoxic era, and the early adopters will reap high dividends, generating jobs and profits.

Bob Halpin, the President and CEO of the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council, who's job it is to promote the economic interests of the region, states;

"The principles of Green Chemistry are creating a new wave of innovation"

leading to safer, cleaner and less toxic products and processes. This summit will highlight the full extent of the opportunities and benefits of Green Chemistry for Merrimack Valley businesses and industries."

Eugene Buff, Consulting Director for Yet2.com, an intellectual assets company that specializes in a multi-faceted approach to R&D called "open innovation", states.

"I think the green chemistry is going to be a big success story... We only recently started to think outside of the box to consider green solutions for many industries. And open innovation, by definition - is about thinking and acting outside of our routine/corporate boundaries. This is a clear match."

Mr. Buff will be speaking at the Summit, as will many other representatives from the financial, investment and intellectual property management industries. One of the unique aspects of this summit, is that it is targeted to the business, investment, and workforce development communities. Its objective is to help grow the Green Chemistry commercial and employment sectors and to demonstrate how nontoxic manufacturing and research can be an integral of the region's economy.

Other speakers at the conference will include Berkley Cue, Retired Vice President of pharmaceutical giant, Pfizer; Abigail A. Barrow, Director of the Massachusetts Technology Transfer Center, and Jon Cronin, Director of Sales for Andover-based, InnoCentive, Inc.

Joining Dr. Warner in the keynote presentations will be special guest, Paul Anastas, who, with Dr. Warner, co-founded the field of Green Chemistry, and is co-author of the authoritative book in the field, Green Chemistry, Theory and Practice. Dr. Anastas was formerly the Assistant Director for the Environment in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and is today the Director for the Center for Green Chemistry and Green Engineering at Yale University. Both Dr. Warner and Dr. Anastas have extensive experience

consulting with industry on the development of nontoxic products through the application of Green Chemistry principles.

Since leaving UMASS Lowell, Dr. Warner has also helped found two entities that will enhance Green Chemistry research and education in the region. The first is the Warner Babcock Institute for Green Chemistry. According to Dr. Warner, the Institute, based in Woburn, "is a collection of scientists dedicated to working with industry to co-develop environmentally responsible nontoxic technologies".

Dr. Warner and his wife, Amy Cannon, have also helped found the Beyond Benign Foundation. Where the Institute is committed to industrial research, the Foundation is focused entirely on education, and builds on Dr. Warner's long time practice of requiring his graduate students to do educational outreach. According to Dr. Warner, "The Beyond Benign Foundation is dedicated to the development of Green Chemistry curriculum for K-12, graduate, community, and industrial education for the emerging trends and opportunities in Green Chemistry technologies".

The summit will take place October 31st, from 8 AM to 5 PM at the Technology Center at Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill, MA. Registration is available through the Innovation Valley website, www.ivalley.org/greenchemistry.

So, on this Halloween, before you take your kids out trick-or-treating, treat yourself to a taste of economic foresight at the Green Chemistry Business Summit. It's an event that's time has come.



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. 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.

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Methuen Rt. 110 Convenience Store sells million-dollar scratch ticket



Hasmu Vora (above), owner of the Rt. 110 Convenience Store on Merrimack St. in Methuen sold a million dollar lottery ticket last month. Hasmu will receive \$10,000 from the state lottery commission for selling the winning ticket. Hasmu says he is going to use the money to help defray the cost of college for his two sons Hem and Deep. The Rt. 110 Convenience store carries the Valley Patriot.



Three Cheers for the Valley Patriot!

The Mill City Maulers Semi-Pro football team has a new cheer-leading squad and The Valley Patriot was there to help them raise money for their new uniforms. Here the Maulers cheerleaders give The Valley Patriot a special cheer!



Jimmy Tarshi and his daughter Cloe (age 2) enjoy their dinner at the American Legion

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Three Generations of Billy Kannan's. All three Billy Kannans were on hand to support Jennifer Kannan at a fund-raiser for her campaign for city council last month.



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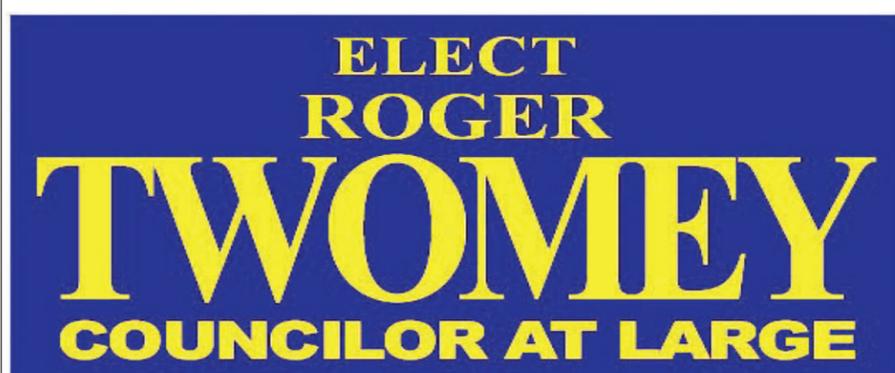


Left to right: Alaina Romano, Renee Vance, Beatrice Gomez, Lizmelanie Ruiz, Marissa Calomonici, Veronica Calixto, Noris Frias

Team RiverBank Participates in Care for Cancer Walk

METHUEN - The Care for Cancer Walk was held on September 23, 2007 in Methuen and was a great success. The annual walk, formerly known as the Sports for Life Walk, raised over \$100,000 to support the Cancer Center at Holy Family Hospital in Methuen, Massachusetts. The Cancer Center benefits Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire residents by providing them with local quality care for cancer.

Twenty-four RiverBank employees joined many others in the Care for Cancer Walk. Veronica Calixto, Branch Manager of RiverBank's West Methuen branch, said, "I was proud to be part of the RiverBank Team in contributing to such a great cause with my co-workers. We can all do our part in helping to improve the lives of others."



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Love that YAZ! Outgoing Lawrence City Councilor Gilbert Frechette (District "E" Mount Vernon) won this autographed baseball by Red Sox legend Carl Yastremski as well as an autographed litho of the Red Sox great!



Methuen's West End City Councilor Debbie Quinn and Jeannie Pappalardo, the top two vote getters in the West District's Primary Election last month. Quinn and Pappalardo were laughing it up at Jennifer Kannan's fund-raiser at the American Legion on Broadway

Home Health VNA offers tips to keep elders safe in their homes

LAWRENCE – Did you know that falls are the second leading cause of accidental death in the United States? Are you or someone you love at risk for this type of injury?

Home Health VNA is making an effort to educate the public and their patients about the dangers of falls and how serious they can actually be through increased training with staff members and with their enhanced Falls Prevention program for home care patients.

Falls are a major health concern for the elderly, family members and the health care system.

Seventy-five percent of all falls occur in the elderly population, and one third of elderly people who fall sustain a hip fracture and are hospitalized. Falls can occur anytime, any place and to anyone while doing every day activities, however, the numbers of falls and the severity of injuries incurred increases with age.

Governor Deval Patrick recently signed a proclamation declaring September 20,

2007 as Falls Prevention Awareness Day in Massachusetts. This is the first time such a declaration has been made in our Commonwealth.

The reasons elderly people fall are typically environmental factors and health problems.

Environmental factors include improper lighting, slippery floors, throw rugs, and/or clutter in the home. Health problems include vision loss and changes in depth perception, medication interactions, and high blood pressure.

In addition, diabetic related foot problems, foot pain, poor circulation and difficulty walking can cause an older person to fall. And, falls can lead to a tragic loss of an older person's independence and mobility.

"Once a fall has occurred, the elderly typically become fearful of falling again, leading to loss of self-confidence and inactivity," said Elaine Bradley, Rehabilitation Manager at Home Health VNA. "This fear of falling is not only associated with falling down, but also

with getting up once having fallen. Many serious injuries occur with individuals who lack strength and coordination to recover from the fall, and those who do not understand the proper techniques to use when getting up from the fall."

With proper prevention and education, falls can be prevented. Research shows that simple safety modifications at home – where 60% of the elderly fall – can substantially cut the risk of falling. Protect yourself with some simple changes in furniture arrangement, housekeeping and lighting to prevent falls. Here is a list of some simple tips to help reduce the risk of a fall in the home.

- * Get an annual physical and eye exam – particularly an evaluation of cardiac and blood pressure problems
- * Wear properly fitting shoes with no skid soles
- * Place a lamp, telephone and flashlight near your bed
- * Install a night-light along the route between your bedroom and the bathroom

* Arrange furniture so you have a clear pathway between rooms

* Don't run extension cords across pathways

* Remove scatter rugs or throw rugs – they can be extremely dangerous

* Keep stairs clear of packages, boxes and clutter

* Install grab bars on the bathroom walls

With these tips you can help to prevent one of the major causes of injuries to the elderly. Home Health VNA has provided this information in an effort to keep the public informed on how to remain safely and independent in their homes.

Home Health VNA is a not-for-profit agency affiliated with HomeCare, Inc. and Merrimack Valley Hospice. The three agencies serve more than 80 communities throughout the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire. For more information visit www.homehealthvna.org.

Tickets still available for 6th Annual Wine Tasting to benefit Merrimack Valley Hospice

LAWRENCE/ANDOVER - November marks National Hospice Month, and Merrimack Valley Hospice is kicking it off with its 6th Annual Wine Tasting on Friday, November 2nd from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. at Andover Country Club.

For the past three years, the agency's wine tasting fund-raiser has proven to be a huge success, growing each year. Last year's sold out evening raised over \$33,000 for terminally ill patient care. Participants at this year's event will be treated to some of the finest wines and beers from around the world with spec-

taclar hot hors d'oeuvres, musical entertainment and an exciting silent auction.

"We're excited to be hosting this event again this year," said Janine Papesh, Development Manager at Merrimack Valley Hospice. "Each year this event has grown, and Messina's Liquors and Flowers by Steve have continued to generously support our event."

The evening gives hospice staff members an opportunity to reconnect with families and friends of their former patients.

Proceeds from the event will be directed to programs at Merrimack Valley Hospice that are not covered by traditional insurance like the bereavement services and the volunteer services. Merrimack Valley Hospice is committed to providing those essential services regardless of a patient's ability to pay.

"This year we will be showcasing our plans for the new Hospice House we are building right here in the Merrimack Valley. Participants will have an opportunity to view our floor plans and find out more about this exciting project, Papesh said."

Tickets are \$50 per person and can be purchased by calling 978-552-4171 or emailing support@homehealthfoundation.org. They can also be purchased online at www.merrimackvalleyhospice.org, click on news & events. The event is already selling quickly, and MVH expects this premiere wine tasting event to sell out. Major sponsors of the event are Messina's Liquors who will be providing all of the wine for the tasting and Flowers by Steve who donate all of the beautiful floral arrangements.

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I ASK FOR OUR VOTE ON OCTOBER 16th



YOUR HEALTH

Growing list of breast cancer risks underscores need for screening

Dr. Rallie McAlister

SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

A recent study conducted by British scientists points to a potential link between aluminum-based antiperspirants and breast cancer in women. Researchers at Keele University in England investigated the association by measuring the aluminum content of breast tissue samples from 17 breast cancer patients.

Compared to tissue collected from the inner region of the breast, tissue from the outer region of the breast had significantly higher concentrations of aluminum, a known carcinogen. According to the researchers, the higher content of aluminum in the outer breast tissue can be explained by this region's closer proximity to the underarm and greater exposure to antiperspirant products.

Aluminum-based antiperspirant is just one of many suspects in a long lineup of agents accused of increasing the risk of breast cancer. Earlier this year, researchers at the National Cancer Institute reported that high-fat diets can significantly boost the chances of developing the disease.

Last year, Harvard researchers announced their discovery of the link between red meat and breast cancer. Their study of more than 90,000 women revealed that the more red meat the women consumed as young adults, the greater their chances of developing hormone-related breast cancer later in life.

Why red meat might increase breast cancer risk still isn't entirely clear. Some scientists believe it's because cooking meat produces carcinogenic substances, while others say that growth hormones given to beef cattle could fuel breast cancer in women who consume meat from treated animals.

Steaks and burgers aren't the only culinary culprits. In 2005, Harvard scientists discovered a potential link between childhood consumption of French fries and an increased risk of breast cancer risk during adulthood.

As part of the ongoing Nurses' Health Study, the researchers analyzed the health and previous dietary habits of more than 2,000 women. They found that for every extra weekly serving of fries the women reportedly consumed as preschoolers, their risk of breast cancer as adults rose significantly.

Alcohol consumption is a well-established risk factor. Women who drink more than one alcoholic beverage daily have been found to have a 20 percent greater chance of developing the disease than women who abstain. Even the use of antibiotic medications appears to influence the likelihood of breast cancer.

After evaluating the pharmacy records of more than 10,000 women, researchers

at the University of Washington made the connection. Women who had taken antibiotics for a lifetime total of more than 500 days had double the risk of breast cancer compared to women who hadn't used the medication.

The researchers speculated that antibiotics may interfere with the body's immune system, making it less effective in warding off all types of illnesses, including cancer. On the other hand, it could be that women with less robust immune systems not only take antibiotics more often, they also may be more susceptible to developing cancer.

While some cancer risks can be managed or modified, others are completely beyond a woman's control. In 2005, researchers in the Netherlands reported that left-handed women appeared to be more than twice as likely to develop breast cancer as those who were right-handed.

Last year, the results of a study published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute demonstrated that women with extremely dense breast tissue had nearly four times the risk of breast cancer than women whose breasts were mostly fat tissue. And researchers at the University of Liverpool in England discovered that women with breast cancer were significantly more likely to have breasts that were asymmetrical than women

without the disease. With so many potential risk factors, it's no wonder that one in eight American women will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point in her lifetime.

This year, an estimated 178,480 women in the United States will receive a breast cancer diagnosis, and more than 40,000 women will lose their lives to the disease. The good news is that with early detection and treatment, more women are surviving and returning to active, productive lives.

One of the most important steps women can take to protect themselves is to have regular screening exams. For women without a family history of cancer or other significant risk factors, the American Cancer Society recommends clinical breast exams every three years until the age of 40. After age 40, women should have clinical breast exams and mammograms annually.

Regular screening won't prevent breast cancer, but it can facilitate early detection. Even better, it can dramatically increase the likelihood of a cure.

Rallie McAllister, M.D., M.P.H., is a family physician in Kingsport, Tenn., and author of "Healthy Lunchbox: The Working Mom's Guide to Keeping You and Your Kids Trim." Her Web site is www.rallieonhealth.com. To find out more about Rallie McAllister, M.D., and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com. COPYRIGHT 2007 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.



SIMPLE WISDOM

The Flying Horse

Gail Van Kleeck

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

When I was young, we lived in a town in Michigan called Coldwater. My father told me it got its name one especially frigid winter, when an Indian fell through the ice on the near-by river and screamed out, "Cold Water!"

We lived in a house nestled between the Methodist and Presbyterian churches. Across the street was a Mobil gas station with a huge flying horse sign that came to life at night. My sister and I could see his flashing red neon wings through our bedroom window. I remember watching his flight as we drifted off to sleep.

World War II was being waged then. Sometimes the wail of air raid warning sirens would cut through our safe little town and the flying red horse would grow dark and still. On nights like those our father would pull down the worn green roller shades in our bedroom window. Then he'd kneel with us on the little rug between our beds and pray for the soldiers fighting in far away lands, asking God to keep them safe. The day the war was over our father came to our room to pray with us too. It was the only time I ever saw him cry.

Years later when I stood amidst the endless white markers on the Normandy coast, I remembered asking him why we had wars. He told me that as long as families didn't look for ways to treat one another with understanding and compassion that countries, which were made up of lots of families, would have trouble being kind to each other as well.

The way he said it, made me want to be nicer to my sister and do my best to make this a kinder and more loving world.

My father said that we needed to have the courage to fight for what we believe. He said we needed to have a kind of faith that goes far beyond the places of worship we belong to. It was the kind of faith he explained which helped us to believe deep within ourselves that the world could be a better place if each of us truly did our part.

Yes, I know my little town probably didn't get its name from an Indian with chattering teeth and that the Mobil's flying horse didn't really fly. Yet I also know that our best hope for a kinder, more peaceful world lies within our hearts and hopes and not within our guns and fears.

Sometime I think my father was a very wise man.

WHAT WE FOCUS ON IS TRULY
WHAT WE SEE



International inspirational author and motivational story teller, Gail Van Kleeck spent seven years as a hospice volunteer. Her writing and speaking contain insights drawn

from the families with whom she was privileged to work. She also draws from her childhood experiences, her journals and her life as a daughter, wife, mother and friend. In addition to her skills as a writer and speaker, Van Kleeck is an accomplished interior designer. Her business, Dover Interiors is based in Westwood, Ma. With an educational background in both psychology and design, she specializes in helping clients create surrounding support their lifestyles and nurture their spirits. Gail was born in Michigan, is a graduate of Michigan State University. The oldest of five children, she has two grown children, four grandchildren, numerous pets and a life partner who is a former jazz musician.



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RAISE 'EM RIGHT™

Caught "Raising 'Em Right"

Barbara Peary, M.Ed.
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Recently, I took a plane trip and a little boy was seated in front of me. His mom said he had turned two a month earlier. The child was extremely well behaved for the hour trip playing with some small toys. After landing, we had to wait on the tarmac for over a half hour before heading to the gate. The parent held the youngster up to the lights that were lined up overhead, so the child could see cause and effect. There was a yellow light, a blue call button and then a second yellow light. Twice the mom, told the child (two years, one month) not to touch the blue button in a kind, but firm voice. To my surprise, in over fifteen minutes of playing, he never touched it. Obviously, she is "Raising 'Em Right!"

My son, a junior in high school, has expressed an interest in becoming a teacher. Currently he tutors some sophomores in math and last summer he worked in a YMCA day camp. Any other suggestions of where he could get more experience with children?

Early childhood centers (also called day care centers) often hire students his age to work after school because some programs are open until 6:30 p.m. Directors like to supplement their staff in the afternoon with fresh, energetic people. If your son would be interested in seeing the developmental level of younger children, many centers offer the opportunity to work with children from 4 weeks to 6 years old.

My four year old goes to a child care center two days a week while I work. I think she is taking too long of a nap. Many times on Tuesdays and Thursdays (the days she attends child care) I can not get her to sleep until after 9 p.m. Then of course, she doesn't want to get up in the morning. I feel

funny bringing this up with the teachers, as I know nap is part of the children's routine.

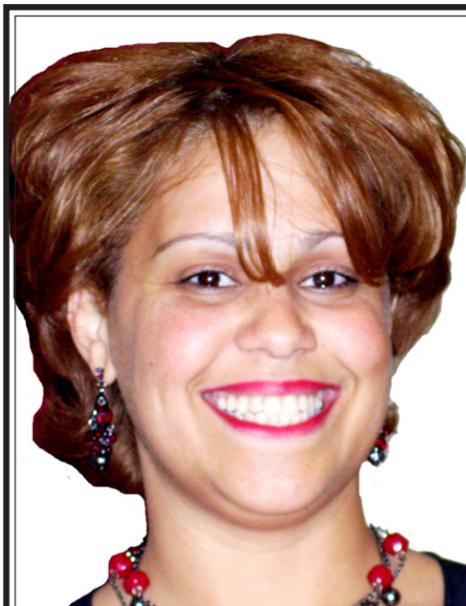
Many children this age no longer need a lengthy nap time. Feel free to ask her teachers to wake her up after a half hour and then let her look at books or play with a stuffed animal on her mat. This is a common occurrence in schools as the needs of all the children in care differ. You should not feel "funny" discussing any of your concerns with the teachers in your child's center. Their bottom line concern is and should be your daughter's welfare.

Another Halloween is quickly approaching and I have a dilemma. I do not plan on letting my children go trick or treating. We live in the city and I don't want them getting razor blades, etc. in their candy. What alternatives can you suggest?

Time to come up with a new tradition. You could talk with some of your neighbors who have young children and see if people would be willing to take turns hosting an annual party. Check the mall nearest your home and ask if they will be holding trick or treating sponsored by the stores. This is commonly done in some areas. Other alternatives: let your children go to a few houses, then dump the candy and replace it with candy you have purchased, let them go only to the homes of people you know, or make it a tradition to do something special as a family that night.



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Mahmoudapalooza: The Good, the Bad and the Craven

Michelle Malkin
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

When my children are grown, I can tell them where I was when bloodthirsty Iranian thug-in-chief Mahmoud Ahmadinejad dared to disgrace Columbia University with his presence. I was standing with Jewish leaders, Iranian-American dissidents, World War II veterans and other concerned citizens, young and old, taking a stand against evil outside the campus gates.

Banafsheh Zand-Bonazzi, an Iranian-born activist whose dissident journalist father is jailed in her homeland, was appalled at the ignorance and moral equivalence of the leftists who paraded in front of the TV cameras with their Bush-is-a-terrorist paraphernalia. A few goons held a large banner that read: "Ahmadinejad is bad. Bush is worse."

"It's not always about Bush," Zand-Bonazzi exclaimed after schooling the Ahmadinejad apologists and pointing out fellow Iranian protesters holding signs memorializing persecuted and executed countrymen. The ANSWER mobsters, she fumed, "have their history wrong. They don't see the greater threat. They don't get it."

Rabbi Avi Weiss, a Jewish Orthodox leader from the Bronx, gets it. Standing amid a small but sturdy sea of "Hitler lives" and "Never forget" placards, Rabbi Weiss told me: "The First Amendment means you have the right to invite in the arch-terrorists of the world. It doesn't mean that you are obligated to do so — especially when this whole visit was initiated by the Iranian mission, and Iranian missions around the world are known to have fomented and orchestrated in the communities where they are."

Instead of being feted, Rabbi Weiss said, "this man, who is responsible for contributing to the killing of American troops in Iraq, should be served with papers and hauled into court."

Several anti-Ahmadinejad protesters expressed disappointment that a larger crowd had not turned out in New York City. I concur. Ahmadinejad's nuclear ambitions, Mahdi devotion, Jew hatred, Holocaust denial, human rights repression and American troop-murdering machinery threaten us all. Not just Jews. Not just persecuted Persian activists. Not just military families.

Immediately before landing in the Big Apple, the Iranian madman was grandmaster of a military parade in Tehran punctuated with "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" posters.

Newsflash: It's not an either/or death wish.

Lost in the debate over the Columbia "debate" are the jumbo-sized jihadi dots

connecting Iran to global Islamic terrorism, including 9/11. The 9/11 Commission Report stated in a section on Iran and the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing that "the evidence of Iranian involvement is strong."

On Iran and al Qaeda partnerships, the report concluded, "there is strong evidence that Iran facilitated the transit of al Qaeda members into and out of Afghanistan before 9/11, and that some of these were future 9/11 hijackers. There also is circumstantial evidence that senior Hezbollah operatives were closely tracking the travel of some of these future muscle hijackers into Iran in November 2000."

The report said of Iran training al Qaeda that "In late 1991 or 1992, discussions in Sudan between al Qaeda and Iranian operatives led to an informal agreement to cooperate in providing support — even if only training — for actions carried out primarily against Israel and the United States. Not long afterward, senior al Qaeda operatives and trainers traveled to Iran to receive training in explosives . . . The relationship between al Qaeda and Iran demonstrated that Sunni-Shia divisions did not necessarily pose an insurmountable barrier to cooperation in terrorist operations."

You won't be surprised, then, to learn that the weekend before Mahmoud arrived at Columbia, foreign ministers of Iran and Saudi Arabia met to "stress the need for unity among world Muslims, and called for vigilance in the face of plots hatched by enemies to sow discord among the Shiite and Sunnite Muslims." No, it didn't come up in the "debate."

On my train ride home from Mahmoudapalooza, I spoke briefly with a Columbia University grad steeped in the Ivy League haze of non-judgment. She was upset and embarrassed — not by Columbia president Lee Bollinger's bone-headed decision to legitimize Ahmadinejad at its World Leaders Forum. No, she was mortified that Bollinger had delivered his face-saving introduction challenging Ahmadinejad.

With childlike naivete, this Columbia alum told me: "I'm frightened by the polarity." Which about sums up the majority view of academia and the Ahmadinejad excusers on the left: They are more afraid of standing up and calling out evil than losing the West, their country and their own lives to it.



Michelle Malkin is author of "Unhinged: Exposing Liberals Gone Wild." Her e-mail address is malkinblog@gmail.com.

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Understanding the Lowell city council race

Richard Howe, Jr.
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Despite the multitude of political signs popping up in front yards throughout the city, the Lowell city election still seems to be running in the background. Perhaps it's electoral fatigue brought on by the special Congressional primary and general elections, or maybe Lowell voters are just content with the city's current direction. Whatever the case, here's a look at some of the issues that will effect the race.

The performance of City Manager Bernie Lynch will be a decisive factor. Hardly a day goes by without some average Lowellian telling me what a great job Lynch is doing, especially with the city's finances. That sentiment is not universal, however, since there is a slice of the population that is ill-disposed towards the Lynch administration.

Still, much of the negativity relates, not directly to Lynch, but to the manner in which his predecessor, John Cox, was forced from office by a majority of the city council back in the summer of 2006. The wounds from that episode still run deep despite the protestations of some that it is all ancient history.

There is a sense that those who will cast their votes based on that episode are a distinct minority. The greater mass of the electorate is content with the status quo in city government and want a continuation of the fiscal stability that has been a clear priority of the Lynch administration.

The incumbents had the opportunity to make their feelings on Lynch known when City Councilor Kevin Broderick recently filed a motion to extend Lynch's contract for two years.

The motion passed by a vote of six to three. While the three dissenters (Rita Mercier, Bud Caulfield and Armand Mercier) took great pains to praise Lynch's performance, they still voted no which provides voters with a simple measure of who supports the current administration and who does not.

Another issue affecting the council race is the special Congressional election in which Niki Tsongas defeated Lowell City Council incumbent Eileen Donoghue (and three others). The council split endorsement-wise in the Congressional race with Rita Mercier and Bud Caulfield supporting Tsongas and Kevin Broderick, Rodney Elliott, Jim Millinazo and Mayor Bill Martin with Donoghue.

Despite the post-primary unity rallies, people have long memories, so it's likely that hardcore Donoghue supporters who have always voted for Mercier and Caulfield in council races past might reconsider that habit this time due to the Tsongas endorsements. Conversely, Tsongas supporters might express like displeasure with the councilors who were with Donoghue.

Eileen Donoghue will also influence the council race by not being a candidate. The filing deadline for the council was back in August in the midst of the run-up

to the Congressional primary. With her focus totally on that race, Donoghue did not submit council nomination papers. Since she has finished at or near the top of the ticket in each of her council races, she almost certainly would have been re-elected to the council.

The fact that Donoghue is not running ensures that at least one newcomer will join the council in January. The council also had a resignation this year. George Ramirez, who finished ninth in the 2005 race, left this past summer to become legal council in the state's Executive Office of Community Development.

Ramirez was replaced on the council by Joe Mendonca, a former member of the Lowell school committee who finished tenth in the last council election. Mendonca will certainly benefit from running as an incumbent this year.

With these issues in mind, here's how the council candidates stack up. Rita Mercier has topped the ticket in all but her inaugural race, so it is likely that history will repeat itself this year and the possibility of her finishing out of the top nine is inconceivable. Rita's council allies - Bud Caulfield and Armand Mercier - have always won re-election comfortably, but this year might not be so easy for them. Still, it's very difficult to defeat incumbents, so they both should be re-elected.

The loose block of four pro-Lynch incumbents (Broderick, Martin, Millinazo and Elliott) should all win re-

election unless we have totally underestimated the number of voters who want to re-fight the final battle of the previous administration.

Should that be the case, the final two council seats and perhaps even a seat held by one of these four incumbents, would probably be filled by challengers Alan Kazanjian, Mike Lenzi and Bob McMahon, all of whom have been publicly endorsed by former City Manager Cox.

If the electoral tide flows in a direction that is supportive of the Lynch administration, Joe Mendonca will probably benefit most since he has been an enthusiastic Lynch supporter during his short tenure on the council.

Challengers who would also benefit from this dynamic would be Kristin Ross-Sitcawich, Mehmed Ali, Jo-Ann Keegan, Lou Stylos, David Koch and Curtis LeMay.

Other candidates on the council ballot are Dave Laferriere, Edward Mackness, Patricia Stratton and Darius Mitchell.



Richard P. Howe Jr. is the creator of www.richardhowe.com, a blog that provides commentary on politics in Lowell. He also serves as Register of Deeds of the Northern District of Middlesex County. You can email him at lowelldeeds@comcast.net

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Please See Our Ad Page 35

Last chance to enter Hometown American Idol

GEORGETOWN - The Greater Georgetown Rotary presents Hometown American Idol 2007 on November 2 at 7:00 PM. Just like on TV! Right now, we're scouring the "hood" searching for talent.

Cash prizes will be awarded! 1st Place \$500.00, 2nd Place 250.00, 3rd Place 150.00

If you're talented and love to perform, send us a VHS tape or DVD of yourself (or group) singing, dancing, juggling, telling jokes or performing some other type of art. You can perform a capella or with music, but there can be NO backup talents. The tape or DVD should be no longer than 3 minutes in length.

Be sure to include a label on your VHS tape or DVD that lists your name, age, hometown and home and cell phone numbers. The tape or DVD becomes the sole property of the Greater Georgetown Rotary and will not be returned. Send your VHS tape or DVD to us by **Friday, October 19**, to the following address:

Hometown American Idol
James Mulligan
47 Central Street
Georgetown, MA 01833

Finalists will be notified by phone and must be able to perform at our talent show, to be held live on November 2, 2007 at the Georgetown Middle/High School auditorium. A "local celebrity" panel of judges will judge the finalists on the basis of performance art ability and star quality. However, it's the audience who votes and gets to determine the winners. If you want to perform but don't have a DVD to send us, call Jim Mulligan at 978-352-5700 or send an email to jmulligan@georgetownma.gov.

AMESBURY

AMESBURY RECEIVES \$5380 in GRANT MONIES FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL, APPLICATIONS FOR SUBMISSION DUE BY OCTOBER 15.

Organizations, schools and individuals may apply for grants to support cultural activities that will benefit Amesbury residents. Grant applications are available in the lobby of the Amesbury Town Hall and on the web at www.massculturalcouncil.org. Once completed, they should be returned to the Amesbury Cultural Council at the Town Hall. The deadline for the receipt of applications is October 15, 2007.

According to local Council Chairperson, Amy Sherwood, these grants support a variety of artistic projects and activities that benefit Amesbury residents including exhibits, festivals, short-term artist residencies, performances in schools, workshops and lectures.

The Amesbury Cultural Council will also entertain funding proposals from schools and youth groups through the PASS Program, a ticket subsidy program for school-aged children. PASS Program applications are also available at the Amesbury Town Hall and on the web at www.massculturalcouncil.org.

The Amesbury Cultural Council is part of a grass-roots network of 329 local councils that serve every city and town in the state. The program is the largest, most decentralized one of its kind in the United States. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which then allocates funds to each local council.

For further information, please contact Cultural Council member, Amy Sherwood at 603-380-1676.

ANDOVER SURGERY CENTER

PLEASE SEE BACK PAGE

ALL ABOUT GEORGETOWN

A friend passes

Georgetown Selectman Lonnie Brennan

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

I've been struggling with how to write this column. Usually, it's pretty simple - a summary of activities and events that have/may/or will affect my neighbors, the taxpayers of Georgetown, and a little roundup of local events, groups and such. This column is different. Richie Clough died.

You see, for the past few years, I went from barely knowing Richie to getting to know him pretty well and to respecting him. More importantly, I got to call him friend," and mean it.

This past Saturday, friends and neighbors gathered at the Erie 4 Fire Station to honor Richie and let his family know how much the community cares. The place was packed, for hours with people coming and going. (Good thing the gathering occurred upstairs from a fire station as any other location might have been shut down for breaking fire codes for over-occupancy.)

Richie is well known, well loved. I've attempted to chronicle his struggles this past year in this column. Noting his incredible resilience and great spirits even after losing his battle to save his right leg last Fall. Then, as complications of diabetes, infections, and other debilitations attempted to dampen his spirit, I wrote again last month of how cheerful Richie was as he watched a Red Sox game, chatted about looking forward to healing, and getting fitted now for two prosthetics, having lost the battle with his left leg. "By walker or by tow-truck" he told us he would get up and get going and get walking again.

Following his second surgery in as many weeks, Richie was stolen from his family. After a week in a coma, family members gathered their final time. If you've never seen his smile, never heard him speak of his wife (love) Nancy, or his family; never known him before this long slide began last year, you never met the man, and your life is less rich because of it.

Knights of Columbus Raise Funds for Charity

The Knights of Columbus, lead by Grand Knight Bert Hanlon and master of ceremonies Jim Connolly, and many helpers too numerous to mention (Ray McManus, Paul McDonough, Brian Petrie, Tom Parisi, Matt Lewis, Tim Crateau, Joe Soucy, and many more) revived "The Kadet Club" fundraiser for charity. Local charity. Your friends, neighbors, and some folks in Georgetown, Rowley, Boxford, and surrounding towns who you might never know need a little or a lot of help.

Many hands made the event a great re-start. Selectman Matt Vincent and his bride Susan ran the night's lucky-ticket countdown with help from his Rowley counterparts. Matt entertained the crowd at ever



Richie Clough with his family and the photo of Town Hall behind him. Richie, a fixture in Town Hall in Georgetown died age 59.

countdown round with pointed quips such that even the knockouts (losers) were tickled and laughing. Joe Soucy handled a late-night "auction" better than any stand-up comic, making our sides hurt!

The night ended with six big winners, each taking home \$1,000 from various prizes: Mr. Michael Mancini, Mrs. Marie Collins, Mr. Robert McGrath, Mrs. Deanne Lewis, and Mr. William Ferreira split the big pot. Mr. Bob Apprich took the bonus round for his win. Tickets for next year's Kadet Club are available from members of the Georgetown-Rowley Knights of Columbus Council #6064. Plans are underway for a great evening, fine food, and tasty desserts for next year's grand event. Visit www.thekadetclub.org.



Lonnie Brennan is a selectman in Georgetown and the owner of the Chocolate Cellar. He was the Republican candidate for state representative in 2006 and is active in the Republican party. You can email him at lonnie@thechocolatecellar.com.



Pictured Back Row and far right: James Connolly and Judges Matt Vincent, Stuart Dalzell Kay Dalzell and Sue Vincent. Front Row: Albert Hanlon Grand Knight, Robert Apprich, William Ferreira, Deanne Lewis, Robert McGrath, Marie Collins, (Tom Parisi standing in for) Michael Mancini.

METHUEN NEWS

It's not all ribbon cutting

Kathleen Corey Rahme
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Public Service is a truly noble profession. I have answered the call to serve you for the past four years. In 2004, I began serving as your Central District Councilor, and, again in 2006, topped the ticket as your At Large Councilor. Then, I was elected by my colleagues to serve as the Vice Chairperson of the City Council, a position I currently hold.

Since I declared my candidacy for Mayor, many of you have asked me why I am running. Let me explain. I am running because I wish to continue serving the citizens of Methuen. I feel I have given as much as I can as a councilor, and it is my desire to serve you as Mayor. Several people have asked me to run and being your Mayor will allow me take it to the next level of leadership. I have the experience needed to serve as the administrator of a \$120 million budget. I have worked in private industry in management positions. I have the education. I have a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the Jesuit's at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I furthered my education at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario receiving a Master of Arts in Public Administration. I plan to run the city as a public administrator, not a politician.

When I returned home I was eager to give back to my hometown of Manchester, Connecticut. I was appointed

to the Conservation Commission and served as the Vice Chair for two years. I continued my education at the University of Connecticut, receiving a certificate in local land use management.

As one of seven children, I learned everything about having a strong work ethic from my parents. Dad worked two jobs. Having served in WWII, he was able to share with his children the importance of service to one's country and the notion of giving back. Mom, a political activist, volunteer and party faithful, taught us all about politics and the importance of government in everyday life.

I have been an effective and efficient leader on the City Council and this reputation will continue when I am Mayor. I am never afraid to stand up for what I believe is right. I study the issues and make the best decision possible for my constituents. I listen to you. I am your voice.

I am proud of my votes. I do not allow politics to interfere with my decision making processes. I work hard, and I work for you.

I am proud of my legislation.

I fought hard and passed unanimously a Home Rule Petition to extend the drug free zone around parks and playgrounds from 100 to 1000 feet. The goal was to provide the same footage that schools have. I testified in Boston.

Another piece of my legislation that passed unanimously gave much needed relief to abutters for notification of zoning changes. I was successful in amending the Comprehensive Zoning Act of 1989. The original legislation said notification was only required for 50 acres or more. I eliminated that so now all parties are notified regardless of the acreage.

My legislation protecting local access television passed unanimously. Our local television stations will be protected against cancellation or threats by our vote against repealing MGL Chapter 166 A.

I led the council in forcing the Lawrence Regional Vocational School to implement travel policies after some of their school committee members were found to have consumed alcohol on taxpayer money; a violation of Massachusetts General Law.

I have helped and encouraged people to have a voice where they may otherwise have felt they were not able to be heard. I have shown them how to be part of the solution to problems facing their neighborhoods. I have formed and fostered neighborhood associations. Many of my constituents have taken the podium because of my encouragement. Their voices have been heard.

I founded the Methuen Youth Corps so that the young people would be able to become active in their community and at the same time build resumes. These young people participate in a variety of activities both in the nonprofit arenas and for our city. They take on projects that benefit others and themselves. Oral testimony after many of these service projects reflect that the young people of Methuen actually gain more than they give from these projects.

I plan to advocate hard for a new high school, not a renovated one that pours good money after bad. That would be like putting a band-aid on a hemorrhage. We need a building that will take us well into this new century and allow our youth to be competitive.

We need to build up our reserves and to return to our recently reduced bond rating from AA back to A Plus. This administration is treating our city as if it was a bottomless well. My goal will be to restore its economic well-being.

Our city has been in turmoil during this administration. It lacks leadership. If you want to have a positive, new beginning where the business of the city takes precedence over politics as usual with all of its pettiness, then I am your choice for Mayor.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to have served at the pleasure of the citizens in Methuen. I feel personally satisfied with my record and voting history. I have tried my best to serve my constituents. I am ready for a challenge. I am in to win. I need your help to get there. Help me to continue to help you. I would be honored to continue my work in Methuen serving as your next Mayor.



Kathleen Corey Rahme is the former Central District Councilor in Methuen and was elected as a city councilor "at large" in 2005.

She is also the vice chair of the city council and founder of the Methuen Youth Corps. Kathleen is a candidate for mayor of Methuen. She also hosts "Call to Serve." You can email her at kcoryrahme@comcast.net

Kathleen Corey Rahme



for Mayor of Methuen

GOALS:

- * Establish a team of local experts to find an affordable and efficient solution to the building issues at our high school.
- * Work to ensure that the needs of the people are brought to the forefront of our agenda.
- * Continue building strong partnerships between our community and our promising youth.
- * Fight to ensure that the needs of our community's veterans are met.

Education

- * UCONN, Local Land Use Management Certification, 1985
- * Carleton University, M.A., Public Administration, 1984
- * St. Mary's University, B.A., Political Science, 1981

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- * Founded the Methuen Youth Corps.
- * Authored successful legislation to protect our local cable access television stations.
- * Formed and fostered neighborhood associations to give them a greater voice in our community.
- * Amended the zoning ordinance to enhance abutter notifications of zoning changes.
- * Saved taxpayer dollars by requiring the Greater Lawrence Vocational School to create and implement travel policies.

www.rahme4methuen.com

For campaign information, or to volunteer, call: 978-686-0008 or e-mail kcoryrahme@comcast.net.

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Pumpkin Patch coming to Forest Street Union Church

METHUEN - Forest Street Union Church will be holding a PUMPKIN PATCH, a community outreach program that has enjoyed nationwide success. Pumpkins will be on sale on the church grounds at 15 Forest Street at the corner of Forest and Lowell Streets in Methuen. The PUMPKIN PATCH will be open Monday through Friday, from 10am to 6pm, Saturdays from 9am to 6pm and Sundays from 12 noon to 5pm.

Weekends will also include activities for families, a BAKE SALE on Saturday, October 20 starting at 9am and a CHOWDER FEST on Saturday, October 27 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm.

The PUMPKIN PATCH is the brainchild of Richard Hamby, owner of Pumpkin Patch USA. He has raised pumpkins for over 30 years, starting out as a small farmer growing corn, beans, and pumpkins. People loved his pumpkins, and as time went on he became known as the "pumpkin man."

When hurricane Hugo wiped out his fields in North Carolina in 1989, he decided to look for another area to grow the pumpkins. He found the perfect place on land owned by the Navajo Nation in New Mexico. The pumpkins are now grown there through the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry. They have developed an excellent irrigation system and the weather is perfect for growing pumpkins, hot during the day and cool at night. Pumpkin Patch USA pumps more than two million dollars into the local Navajo economy through jobs and land rent permits.

Hamby sends his pumpkins only to churches and other non-profit organizations. Pumpkin Patch USA grows and ships the pumpkins at no charge, trusting the organizations will set up their patches and sell the pumpkins. The organizations keep 25 to 40 percent of their gross sales as their profit. There are now over 1000 PUMPKIN PATCHES across the United States.

For more information call 978-683-8523 or visit www.foreststreetucc.org.

Governor Dukakis, Rep. Linda Campbell advocate for mental health parity at State House

BOSTON - State Representative Linda Dean-Campbell, (D-Methuen), a co-sponsor of House Bill 1871 joined former Governor and Mrs. Dukakis, Commissioner Barbara Leadholm of the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, and dozens of healthcare consumers and leaders calling for mental health parity at the State House today.

House Bill 1871, An Act Relative to Mental Health Parity, was heard before the Joint Committee on Mental Health and Substance Abuse. HB 1871 sponsored by State Rep. and House Chair of the Committee Ruth Balser (D-Newton) is needed to close a loophole in current mental health legislation. While current law doesn't cover full parity, HB 1871 would require coverage for any mental health and substance abuse disorder identified by the American Psychiatric Association. Some illnesses currently not covered are individuals suffering from eating disorders, those battling addiction, and persons recovering from trauma.

HB 1871 not only ensures that individuals receive the treatment they require, but also saves the state desperately needed funds. When health plans do not cover the necessary medical treatment, taxpayers assume the cost that they seek through state agencies. According to a RAND study of the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, the largest health plan in the nation with 8.5 million members showed that parity increased insurance protection without increasing total costs.

Representative Campbell stated, "This legislation is not only absolutely necessary, but it is cost saving as well. The cost of not treating mental illness is a human and financial risk we simply cannot afford." Rep. Campbell serves the 15th Essex District, comprising of the City of Methuen.

Forest Street Union Church Sends CARE Packages for our troops

Great News! At the Forest Street Church's meeting on September 24th we were able to pack 20 packages to send to our people in Iraq. Please see the newest list and continue to bring items in. We plan to send more packages in a couple of months.



For the troops

dvds/cds, puzzle books, brush & comb sets, nail clippers, deodorant, protein bars/drinks, foot powder, hand/body lotion, individual serving cereal boxes, beef jerky

Support Group for Military Families

Meets on the second Thursday of each month from 7:00PM - 8:30PM at the Veterans Northeast Outreach Center located at 10 Reed Street, Haverhill, MA 01830

For additional information please call **John Ratka** at 978-372-3626 or **Edward Mitchell** at 978-688-9525.

PLEASE join us on Sunday, October 14 for our Memorial Day Dedication

Forest Street Union Church, 15 Forest Street Methuen, MA 01844, (978) 683-8523 foreststreet15@verizon.net, www.foreststreetucc.org

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*A new view for the City Council
A new view or Methuen*

Please Vote November 6, 2007.

RiverBank introduces Business e-Deposit

NORTH ANDOVER - River-Bank has announced the introduction of Business e-Deposit, a new service that enables business customers to deposit checks directly from their offices without going to a Bank branch. This allows business customers, particularly those distant from a Bank branch, to spend less time and effort on their daily banking while improving access to their funds.

Gary Sidell of Bell Tower Development worked with RiverBank during the initial product testing. Sidell commented, "This new service has been great, it's convenient and easy to use. It allows us to spend less time on banking and more time focusing on our own projects."

Business e-Deposit utilizes a small table-top scanner provided by the Bank

and easy-to-use software to process and deposit checks. Check images are sent electronically to the Bank for same-day deposit. This new service provides businesses, especially those with a high volume of checks to deposit, a faster and easier way to bank.

RiverBank, established in 1868, offers a wide range of commercial & consumer loans as well as deposit products. RiverBank is headquartered at 30 Massachusetts Avenue, North Andover. The Bank operates six full-service banking offices in Andover, Lawrence, Methuen (2), North Andover and Salem, New Hampshire.



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Jillian's Village will be featured on the front cover of "Homes and Land Magazine" for September! Jillian's Village (Shelby Circle) 55+ Active Adult Community 14 Lot Subdivision, 7 lots available 3 different style of homes to choice from: Granite, stainless steel appliances, hardwood floor, Gas fireplace, etc. Prices start at \$439,900. Haverhill, MA 01830 Take route 110 to West Lowell Street to Shelby Circle.

Well maintained 3/4 bedroom home with hardwood flooring, fireplaced living room, finished room on lower level, laundry room, 2 car garage and a fenced in yard. Now offered at \$334,900! A great home at a nice price. \$1000 back at closing toward closing costs or appliance upgrades... Pleasant Street, Pass the Loop then right on Oak take left onto Anderson Drive. 3 Anderson Drive Methuen, MA. 01844



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Bradford- \$309,900
6 room, 3 bedroom, 1 bath
Great neighborhood.



Methuen- \$284,000
6 room, 3 bedroom, 1.5 bath
Beautiful 1/2 acre lot.



Methuen- \$339,000
9 room, 5 bedroom, 2.5 bath
Pristine Duplex.



Salem, NH-\$325,000
8 room, 3 bedroom, 2 bath
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Bradford- \$349,900
9 room, 4 bedroom, 2.5 bath
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Methuen- \$399,999
10 room, 5 bedroom, 2.5 bath
Over 18 acres.



Lawrence- Call for price
5 room, 2 bedroom, 1.5 bath
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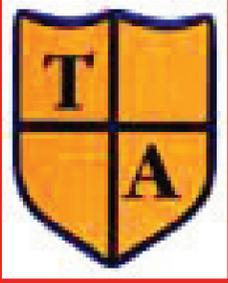
Haverhill- \$159,000
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Sweet Drops out of West End Race Endorses Councilor Debbie Quinn

37 year old Bryan Sweet, candidate for Methuen city council in the West End has decided to drop out of the race for city council and endorse one of his rivals on the ballot, Councilor Debbie Quinn.

Sweet, who placed fourth in a field of five candidates in the primary moved on to the final election 195 votes behind veteran councilor Bob Andrew (who placed third). Topping the ticket in the primary election September 18th was newcomer Jeanne Pappalardo (with 765 votes) and Debbie Quinn (with 488).

Reached at his home this afternoon, Sweet said "I decided I would end my campaign for city council for this term and I am supporting councilor Debbie Quinn 100%."

Sweet said the decision to drop out of the race was "as difficult as the decision to run."

"Given the number of people who volunteered to help and supported me on election day I realize this is probably disappointment to some people but I had to look at this race realistically. It would have very difficult to come from fourth place to win and my fear was that Debbie and I would split our votes and we would both get knocked out in the final election."

Sweet said he chose to support Quinn because "It was really clear that my vision of a new voice in city hall was not going to happen and the closest candidate who shares my same vision and ideas for change and reform in Methuen is councilor Debbie Quinn."

Sweet said he originally ran for the West End council seat with the intention of serving on the council with Quinn but after seeing the numbers on election day he wanted to

make sure at least one of them would serve on the council for the next two years.

"In my mind it's better to have Debbie Quinn on the council than to have neither of us sitting up there. We are very similar in our thinking about what Methuen needs to move forward. We need professionalism and a new vision in Methuen and I just didn't feel comfortable enough with the primary results that that was going to be possible."

"I think very highly of Debbie Quinn," Sweet continued. "She has done a lot of good for our district and for the city and I know she will do more good in the next four years. She will have a future in politics if she wants to because she is a real person she is genuine and she really cares about the issues in our district."

Quinn said she was "thrilled" Sweet has decided to drop out and endorse her.

"Bryan is a really nice kid and he has a lot to bring to the table. I am going to appoint him as my new campaign field coordinator if he wants it, I would love to work with Bryan and I am really honored he has chosen to endorse me."

Sweet said he didn't know Quinn was thinking about bringing him on board with the Quinn campaign in any official capacity but reacted favorably when a Valley Patriot reporter broke the news to him.

"I would love to work on her campaign in any way I can, if she thinks I can help her best as the field coordinator then that's what I will do. Debbie has a positive attitude and she is in this to help the people. She has no personal agendas and that is important when you are making big decisions that affect the entire city."

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- Established an Artist of the Month program to promote local artists and beautify City Hall. —

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RE-ELECT

MANZI —MAYOR—

RE-ELECT

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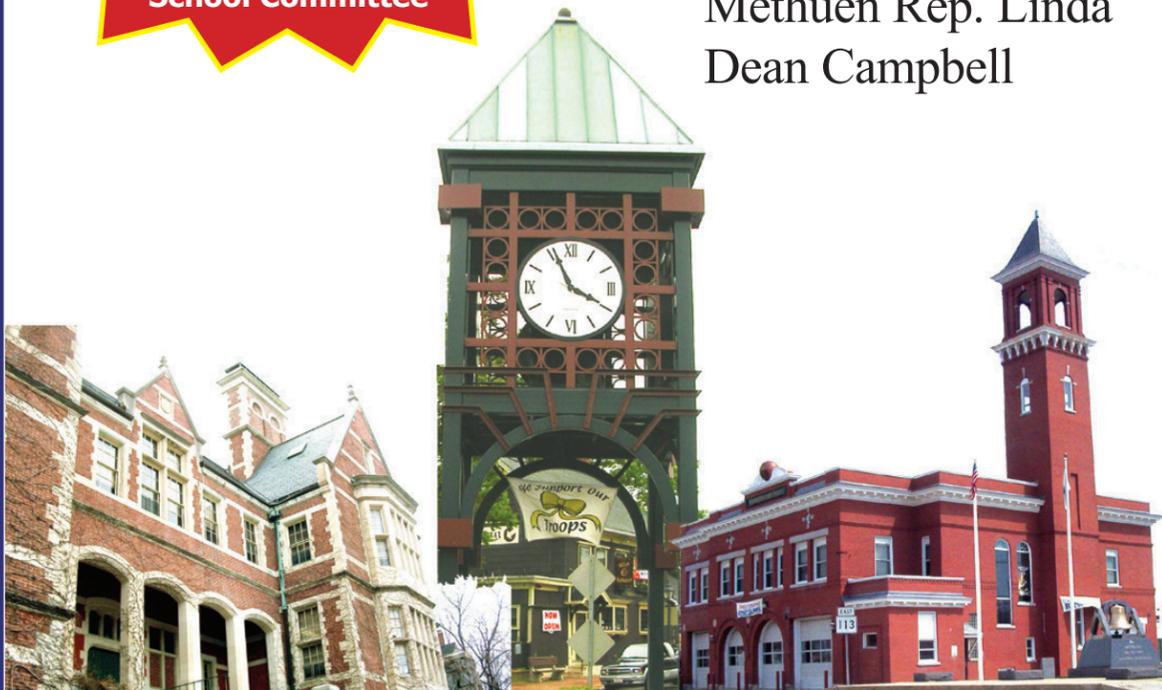
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- * Masters in Administration, Fitchburg State College



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Tsongas receives support from Valley Patriot Hero and Tuskegee Airman, Luther McIlwain of Methuen

METHUEN - Niki Tsongas last month earned the support of Veterans and Military Families for Progress, a national non-partisan grassroots organization dedicated to working for veterans, military service members and their families. At an event in Methuen to show their support for Tsongas, VMFP was joined by a number of local veterans including Congressional Gold Medal of Honor recipient and a member of the Tuskegee Airmen during World War II Luther McIlwain of Methuen, as well as Gold Star families and members of Citizens for Civic Courage who endorsed Tsongas last month. Methuen Mayor Bill Manzi opened the event and Representative Linda Dean Campbell, a Veteran who represents Methuen also expressed her support for Niki Tsongas at the event.

“Niki Tsongas’ strong commitment to the issues that are critical to veterans, active serving members and their families is unsurpassed,” said Bill Dooling, Vice President of Veterans and Military Families for Progress and a Massachusetts resident. “We feel veterans, active duty, military families, and in fact, all people of the Fifth District will be well-served with Niki Tsongas as their Congresswoman by ensuring America remains strong in national defense and in fighting terrorism. Niki’s personal experience has also given her a unique knowledge and understanding of the service and sacrifice that our armed forces members and their families experience while in service to America. Her service to our country cannot be questioned.”

During the primary campaign, Tsongas met with veterans from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Gulf War as well as servicemen and women who have recently returned and the parents of those currently serving overseas. Tsongas also visited veterans at clinics in Lowell and Haverhill, met with a Military Family Support Group in Concord, and visited Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. Tsongas has said from the start of her campaign that

veterans’ care will be a top priority if she’s elected to Congress.

“There are more than 450,000 veterans in Massachusetts, and they deserve the best care this country has to offer,” said Tsongas. “As the daughter of an Air Force colonel whose childhood and teenage years were spent moving from one military base to another, I know how important it is to treat our men and women in uniform with respect and care. I am deeply gratified to have the support of the Veterans and Military Families for Progress because this group is made of, by and for veterans, service members and their families. If elected, I look forward to the opportunity to work with them to represent the interests of those who have served on our behalf, and I thank them for this great honor.”

“Throughout this campaign, I have made a point to hear from veterans, returning soldiers as well as the parents of our servicemen and women currently serving overseas,” Tsongas added. “There is a long-term cost of war and if our young men and women are willing to put their lives on the line to fight for us, providing them with the care they need when they return and into the future is the least we can do. This is a moral obligation we bear as a nation.”

Tsongas noted that if elected, she would set up a Veterans Advisory Committee with local veterans, representatives of their families, as well as those providing veterans with key services so that in Congress, she is continually up to speed on the issues and priorities of veterans from the Fifth District.

Representative Harold Naughton from Lancaster has agreed to serve on Tsongas’ Veterans Advisory Committee as well as, founding members of Citizens for Civic Courage, Sam Poulten, Gold Star parents Brian and Alma Hart, and Faye Morrison whose daughter



Niki Tsongas, candidate for the 5th Congressional District, speaks with Luther McIlwain, a recipient of Congressional Gold Medal of Honor, a Tuskegee Airman, a resident of Methuen, and a former Valley Patriot of the Month” about the importance of caring for our veterans.

served in Iraq; John Ratka, Executive Director of the Veterans Northeast Outreach Center; Gold Star parents from Concord Kathleen and Jake Zagata; Veteran Michael Blatus from Dracut; and Veteran Richard Bowen from Andover. The Committee is still being formed but will have representation across the District.

“The first woman to represent Massachusetts in the U.S. House of Representatives, Edith Nourse Rogers, was known as a powerful advocate for veterans and was one of the principle authors of the GI Bill. I would be proud to serve the Fifth Congressional District guided by her great legacy,” Tsongas concluded.

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Rahme on mayor's handling of chief: I would have been a leader

Methuen City Councilor and candidate for mayor Kathleen Corey Rahme sat down with The Valley Patriot and revealed what she says are stark differences between her and mayor Billy Manzi on issues affecting the Methuen Police department.

The four topics discussed were: firing the police chief, suspension of the chief, the vote of no confidence by the city council and the council's vote to cut the chief's pay when his contract expired.

Last month, Police Chief Joe Solomon was put on administrative leave by Mayor Manzi after a series of sensational headlines and months of conflict between Solomon and the city council. The daily paper and several councilors whipped up public outrage against the chief at every step of the way, during this election season and just weeks before the mayoral election.

Removing the chief

Rahme, a two term city councilor, would not say whether or not she would have removed the chief or suspended him and defended the notion that she has not adequately explained how she would have handled the entire situation differently than Mayor Manzi.

"I am not privy to all the information on that. I am not the mayor, he is the mayor, he is the chief executive officer of the city. I am a city councilor. I can't answer that at this time because the mayor has more information than I do."

"But," she added, "I'll tell you one thing, I would have led the city and I

"I'll tell you one thing, I would have led the city and I doubt very seriously that I would have sought outside consultation or have someone come in to make a ruling on my department head. I wouldn't have sought outside sources, have them come in and tell me how to behave my chief of police."

- Councilor Kathleen Corey Rahme, candidate for mayor

doubt very seriously that I would have sought outside consultation or have someone come in to make a ruling on my department head. I wouldn't have sought outside sources, have them come in and tell me how to behave my chief of police."

Vote of confidence in the chief

Last month the city council took a vote of no confidence in the police chief, a vote Rahme did not support. Rahme says she voted not to support the vote of no confidence because, she said there was no hard evidence to support it.

"That vote was merely symbolic," she said. "That vote involved the confidence the city council had toward of the police chief. I voted 'no' on the resolution because I don't know what he is being charged with? What did he do exactly? What are the charges?"

Rahme said that she disagreed with the council's actions and that if she had been the mayor she would have worked with the council to go in a different direction than continuing to keep the issue in the public eye. "I certainly would have cautioned the city council as the mayor and said 'with all due respect councilors,

I don't think this would be prudent at this time."

Chief's suspension and cut in pay

Asked if she would have put the chief on suspension after learning about the federal grants were not spent according to federal guidelines, Rahme said that she would not comment on the matter. "I will simply say that I would not have hired an outside person to come in and do my job for me. Other than that I have said, and I will say again, there is not a lot of information sharing going on with regard to the police department and I do not have all the information the mayor has so I am not going to comment."

Rahme said that she did not support cutting the chief's pay after it was learned that his contract had expired and state law provided the city council with a mechanism to reduce his salary until his contract is renewed. "The other action of the council in regards to cutting his pay, I felt it was the responsibility of the mayor not to leave a person in limbo with no pay."

Reaction to Media "sensationalism"

Rahme did say she was troubled by the media coverage surrounding chief Solomon and the Methuen police. The daily newspaper has been the driving force behind the efforts to oust Solomon and has run a series of front page stories repeating over and over the long list of allegations against him, merging several stories to paint a picture (rightly or wrongly) that the chief is out of control and has been pressuring elected officials to take action against Solomon.

"It is quite unfortunate," Rahme said of the media coverage in the daily paper.

"There is quite a bit of sensationalism going on and I would say mostly it has to do with headlines. I'd say it has to do with picture photography like a huge picture on the front page. I don't remember seeing anyone else as exposed as much as [Solomon] and this city regarding the press."

"I have had a fine relationship with the Eagle-Tribune but I will tell you I don't like the sensational headlines because they don't match up with the story. But I realize they sell the paper with the headlines and the pictures. I'm not talking about the body, I have no problem with particular reporters or articles but I have a real problem with the way they do these giant pictures of the chief of police on the front page and the headlines that don't match the stories regarding the chief, and I called them and told them so."

Rahme will face mayor Manzi head to head in the first Methuen mayoral debate on October 13th on WCAP radio 980AM from noon to 2pm. The debate will be podcast on valleypatriot.com.

Re-Elect

West End Councilor Debbie Quinn



"I think very highly of Debbie Quinn," Sweet continued. "She has done a lot of good for our district and for the city and I know she will do more good in the next four years. She will have a future in politics if she wants to because she is a real person she is genuine and she really cares about the issues in our district."

- Bryan Sweet former candidate for West End Councilor

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ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW

What does conservative really mean?

Mark Palermo

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

What does "conservative" really mean? Is the term too broad to have a specific meaning? The Eskimos are said to have a large number of words for "snow." But we have only one word for "conservative." Most people would agree that all conservatives are not the same and that significant differences in belief and attitude coexist underneath the right's ideological umbrella. So where do you stand in the order of conservative values?

By taking this survey in the privacy of your own home, you can ascertain your own ranking on a graduated scale of values. To find your score, give yourself 3 points if you *strongly* agree, 2 points if you *somewhat* agree, 1 point if you *moderately* disagree, and no points if you *strongly* disagree. Add your numbers and match the sum to the scale at the bottom.

1. The vegetarian diet, and the in particular the consumption of tofu, exerts a feminizing effect upon young males, which is a factor in the development of homosexuality. Young men require a meat-based diet in order to develop a masculine physique and manly demeanor.

2. Blacks in this country used to be content until Jews and northern liberals stirred them up.

3. If I had to share a foxhole with another human being, I wish it were with a stand-up guy like George Bush.

4. America has not only a right, but a special obligation to impose standards of freedom and democracy upon the rest of the world.

5. The solitary vice is a pernicious social evil which has gotten completely out of hand since the 1960's. The sin of self-abuse must be vigorously resisted by youth. It is a prime cause of moral degeneracy, dope addiction, sexual inversion, nearsightedness and nervous tics.

6. We fought on the wrong side in World War 2.

7. I could have gone further in life if others had not prevented me from doing so

8. All feminists either practice lesbianism or have a latent tendency toward it.

9. The rest of the world hates us because we are free.

10. You cannot deal with Arabs like reasonable people. The only thing these people understand is force. Arabs have no souls.

11. One of our biggest problems in this country is protesters. Protesting should be outlawed. If these people don't like America, they should move to Russia.

12. When necessary, the police should be free to break some heads without liberal lawyers harassing them for doing their jobs.

13. When the Red Sox, Celtics, or any of my favorite teams win a championship, I say, "We won." When they lose, I say, "They lost."

14. The CIA plays an indispensable role in defending America's freedom both here and abroad.

15. Too much praise and affection in childhood is a prime cause of today's over-socialized and feminized males. Boys need discipline and order, including corporal punishment. Fathers used to hit kids when necessary, and the kids turned out fine.

16. Howie Carr best expresses my opinion on immigration. I don't know what I would do if I couldn't listen to his program. I wish all immigrants would just go back where they came from.

17. Teddy Roosevelt was right when he said, "No triumph of peace is quite so great as the supreme triumphs of war."

18. Without a doubt, America is the greatest country in the world, but I don't know what the second or third greatest country is- and I don't care.

19. We need a president with enough guts to use our nuclear weapons.

20. Torture is a valuable tool in helping us win the war on terror.

21. Public breastfeeding is a vulgar, filthy practice that sets a bad example for youth. Women's breasts should be covered in public.

22. What we need in this country is a return to good old fashioned values. We should replace the Constitution with the Bible.

23. Concerns over the Patriot Act are overblown. If you haven't done anything wrong, you have nothing to fear from the United States government.

24. God has blessed America more than any other nation because He loves us more than any other nation.

25. It is ordained by nature that the strong have dominion over the feeble-minded, the weak, the dissolute—and those of inferior breeding, all of whom are incapable of sustaining an ordered, disciplined life.

How to rate yourself:

70 or above- Ann Coulter Fan Club
65-69 National Socialist
60-64 National Socialist (liberal wing)
55-59 friendly Fascist
50-54 dittohead /cheap labor conservative
45-49 chamber of commerce conservative
40-44 rapture-ready conservative
35-40- middle America conservative
30-34 Libertarian- free market conservative
25-29 moderate conservative
20-24 socially conscious conservative

Campus Stalinist or 1930's liberal? Trotskyite or trade unionist? Coming soon for liberal readers: A simple test to ascertain your ranking within the left's hierarchy.



Mark Palermo is a professor at Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill. You can email him at markpalermo@lycos.com.

FROM THE RIGHT

The three causes for alarm in our day

Paul Murano

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

There are three things that make people one-issue voters today. Each has a large but distinct segment of the population alarmed. These are global warming, terrorism, and abortion, seen as an affront to the *earth*, the *nation*, and the *human person* respectively. Whichever camp you may fall into, chances are you can't understand why others aren't alarmed in the way you are. You tell them, *If you're not part of the solution you're part of the problem!* - but to your chagrin it doesn't seem to have an affect. Their blindness frustrates you and their apathy angers you. But is your alarm in line with reason? Let's take a closer look at these issues to see which, if any, warrant *your* alarm.

Global warming According to many scientists the earth is slowly warming. Eventually, if we don't scale back on consumption that allegedly causes climate alteration, polar ice caps will continue to melt, certain species may become endangered, and the continents may see some of their coastlines sink. As of now no one has died from global warming.

Terrorism 9/11 woke this country up to the fact that it is not invincible. No nation or empire has had immortality, and this country's health and survival depends on her being diligent against other potential attacks. Over 3000 human beings died on September 11th.

Abortion While global warming and the war on terror have elicited their share of alarm for the past few years, the war on the unborn has accumulated an alarm interval of around 35 years. You would think the AQ (alarm quotient) of this one would have leveled off or disappeared by now. Why the longevity?

It's simple. In America while global warming has killed no one and terrorism has killed 3500, abortion has killed 60 million. What global warming fears and the war on terror has had a taste of, abortion has fully realized - and is realizing it at a rate of 4400 innocents each day. More die on any given day from abortion in this country than has

ever died from terrorism and global warming combined.

Let's look at the object of concern with each of these issues: With global warming it's the earth, with the war on terror it's the nation, and with abortion it's the human being.

Each are legitimate concerns, but they become more urgent as you go from *potentially* killing the earth, to the *potentially* killing the nation, to *actually* killing countless human beings. If you love the planet or the nation *not* for the sake of the human person, then for what end are these two things loved? Loved for their own sakes they become the religions of Pantheism (earth worship) and Nationalism (nation worship), which historically include human sacrifice and ethic cleansing respectively. But the potential for ecological damage and human sacrifice is already realized in America.

We pollute women's body ecologies with chemicals and devices, exploit her natural resources, and make her womb the most dangerous place to live on earth. Strangely, we fear abusing the earth for future generations but accept abusing of women for the present one.

If protection of the innocent is the primary concern of all three issues, then only one has immediate urgency. In our abortion age where women (not the earth) are exploited and a third of us conceived after Roe v. Wade have been lost due to terrorism within the womb, alarm is the natural and appropriate response. If we continue in our complacency and denial we deserve neither the survival of the nation *nor* of the earth; and if they do survive only the (spiritually) dead will inhabit them.

So... what deserves *your* alarm?



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

Attention! Radio Program on WCAP. You can E-mail Paul at PJDM@aol.com

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BENEFITS FOR OUR VETERANS

World War II and Korean War insurance policies

Susan Piazza

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Did you or a family member serve in WWII or the Korean War? Are you aware of the benefits available to assist your family?

One of the seemingly most confusing benefits offered to servicemen and women are the many life insurance policies issued over the years. The following is a simple review of the World War II and Korean War insurance policies, which are closed to enrollment; the one open policy termed Service Disabled Veteran Insurance (S-DVI), and other plans offered in the past. More information is available from your veterans' office and we are always happy to discuss your individual circumstances and needs.

Firstly, there are two basic types of plans: 1) Permanent plans, and 2) Term plans.

Permanent Plans: This type of plan, with fixed premiums, earns cash and loan values. Those who have permanent policies may borrow up to 94% of their cash surrender value. These plans have a variable interest rate.

In civilian terms, this policy is similar to standard "whole life" policies in that a built-in savings plan is made available to the participant. Simply put, a portion of your premium pays for your insurance, and a portion of your premium goes towards a cash value for you to access at some point. Some policies provide a substantial source of needed cash in retirement.

Term Plans: This type of plan does not allow for earned cash or loan values. If the policy did not lapse it automatically renewed itself. It was recommended that those covered under this plan switch to permanent plans. The premiums on a term policy increased (until age 70) with the members' age. In civilian terms, this type of plan is called a "term-policy" and is basic insurance with no cash value towards savings.

Lapsed Plans: Under a permanent plan, one needed to pay back premiums with interest to have the policy reinstated. There were certain time limits, and the policy could only be reinstated under certain medical conditions. Term plans could renew within five years of the lapse date.

All policies, except for Service Disabled Veteran Insurance (S-DVI), sent out annual dividends. These dividends are automatic; you do not need to apply to receive them. You should receive tax-free dividends on the anniversary of your policy date (unless you received termination dividends.) You can take these dividends as cash payments, or in many cases you could use the dividends to pay premiums in advance.

United States Government Life

Insurance (USGLI): This program dealt primarily with individuals who served during World War I. The program closed in 1940 but continued until 1951 for World War I veterans. In 1983 payment of premiums was discontinued, there was enough money in the fund to cover the needs of its members. If your certificate has a letter prefix of "K" this section pertains to you.

National Service Life Insurance

(NSLI): This plan took care of the time

period from 1940 until 1951. The letter prefix for this policy is "V."

Disability Waiver: This program provides for a waiver of premiums for those totally disabled for more than six (6) months prior to their 65th birthday.

Veterans' Special Life Insurance (VSLI): This program was primarily for those individuals who served during the Korean War. The policy was open for enrollment between 1951 and 1956 and was set up as renewable term policy insurance.

The letter designation is "RS" or "W." The policies original prefix was "RS" but legislature allowed policyholders to convert to a permanent plan or to exchange their policies for a convertible term policy. If you converted your policy your new prefix became "W."

Veterans Reopened Insurance (VRI): This program reopened NSLI and VSLI from 1965 until 1966. Only those who met certain conditions (were disabled) could take advantage of this limited offer.

Disability Waiver: This program provides a waiver of premiums for those totally disabled for more than six (6) months before age 65.

Service Disabled Veteran Insurance (S-DVI): This policy pertains to those individuals released from active duty after 25 April 1951. This is the only policy in this article still open. One must have a service-connected disability rating and be in otherwise good health to be eligible for this plan. This policy does not produce annual dividends. Premiums for this policy are waived.

Supplemental SDVI: is available for up to \$20,000 worth of coverage but only if applied for within one year after receiving notice of SDVI waiver of premiums. There is no waiver of premiums for Supplemental SDVI.

As always, for further information or to confirm something you read in this article either contact your local veteran organizations service officer, your local veterans agent, or the VA itself.

You can call the VA at 1-800-669-8477 or contact the VA at their website: www.insurance.va.gov/ This is an excellent web site, very easy to navigate and it deals with all kinds of different VA issues.

Remember, you served your country in time of need, please let us help you now, to navigate the many and sometimes confusing policies and benefits for which you are entitled.

Information for this article was taken from the Department of Veteran Affairs "Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents' 2007 edition, the Department of Veterans Affairs web site, as well as DAV Service Officer Certification Handouts 2005.



Susan Piazza is the past Commander, Chapter 2, Queen City, DAV and was the first female commander of the DAV in 75 years. She has been involved with the DAV for over twenty five years. You can email Susan at WithMara@aol.com

TAKING CARE OF OUR VETERANS

Veterans offer treasure trove of scholarships

John Lenotte

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST
AMERICAN LEGION

Today's students, the next generation of young men and women who will rise to take leadership roles in our nation, were given their freedom, their society, their country, thanks to the spirit, dedication, and unwavering strength of the men and women who served in our armed forces. Today, our veterans continue to reach out and support our youth, offering a treasure trove of scholarship and leadership development programs to all who care to apply.

The American Legion has a rich history of supporting the next generation through their "Children and Youth" programs. Each year, through this little-known program, the Legion contributes hundreds of thousands of dollars nationwide, and provides local, regional, and national learning experiences for our youth.

The "American Legion Boys State" is among the most respected and selective educational programs of government instruction for high school students. It is a "participatory program" where young men and women are challenged to become a part of local, county and state government. Students undergo specific training and practical experience working side-by-side with municipal employees and government officials.

Locally, a one-week immersion program is conducted at Stonehill College for a select group of high school juniors. Students are selected by the local American Legion post, and in most cases, expenses associated with attending this program are paid by the post, or an affiliated local business or other sponsor.

Additionally, two representatives are selected to attend "Boys Nation" in Washington, DC where a Boys Nation president is selected and gets to attend the Legion National Convention as well as obtain a substantial scholarship. The members of Boys Nation also get to tour the Capitol and meet with the President of the United States. Noted attendees include former President Clinton and Tom Brokaw. The American Legion Auxiliary sponsors a similar program for young women called Girls State. Nationally, over \$200,000 is awarded to participants of Boys and Girls state programs.

The American Legion annually honors The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year at its National Convention. The winner of the competition receives a

\$10,000 scholarship and the three runners-up each are awarded \$2,500 scholarships. The American Legion Auxiliary also awards a scholarship to a Girl Scout. High school seniors are eligible and must apply by February 11th.

The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program - "A Constitutional Speech Contest" seeks to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, the rights and privileges of American citizenship. The state winner receives a \$1,500 scholarship and competes for the national award of \$18,000.

Most of us are aware of American Legion Baseball. Haverhill's own Carlos Pena played on the Post 4 team. Over 30% of the current major league players were on a Legion team and 50 members of the Baseball Hall of Fame including Ted Williams are products of the Legion ball teams. Players are also eligible for local, regional and a national scholarship. The 2006 Legion Baseball Player of the year was from Weymouth, MA.

After 9/11, the American Legion established the Legacy Scholarship Foundation. Money is donated to this fund which provides scholarships to the children of any of our military who have lost their lives since 9/11. This is for High School seniors or graduates. Deadline is April 1.

The American Legion offers many scholarships in addition to those noted above. Regrettably, very few students from our area apply for these scholarships. If you have or know of a student who has the drive, determination, and desire to benefit from the programs and scholarships offered by the American Legion, please consider obtaining and application. More information is available at www.legion.org, www.legion-aux.org and www.masslegion.org.



John Lenotte is the American Legion, Commander, Wilbur M. Comeau Post 4 Haverhill and Vice Commander, Dept. of Massachusetts. You can Email him at JohnLDistrict8@verizon.net

MANY WWII VETERANS DIED TODAY
A FEW MORE THAN YESTERDAY
WILL THE NEXT ONE BE ME,
OR SOMEONE WHO SERVED LIKE ME.
WHEN THE LAST ONE HAS LEFT
AND THIS NATION HAS WEPT
IT WILL THEN STAND AT ATTENTION
TO HONOR THE VETERANS OF THE
GREATEST GENERATION

Written by Valley Patriot Hero Harvey Gibeau



MOTHERS: continued from page 1

observed in the United States. In North Andover, we observed Gold Star Mother's Day at the Lawrence Airport in North Andover.

Gold Star Mothers are the those whose sons and daughters served and died in battle for this country. The Gold Star Mothers was founded by Grace Darling Seibold of Washington D.C., who's son First Lieutenant George Vaughn Seibold was killed in aerial combat over France in 1918. Mother's today, like Lawrence resident Sanita Raymond, who's son Army Sargeant Pierre A. Raymond fought and died on September 20, 2005 while serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom are special to all of us and we wish to thank them all.

The name "Gold Star Mothers" comes from the custom of families of servicemen hanging a banner called a service flag in their windows. The service flag has a star on it for each family member currently serving in the military. Living servicemen are represented by a blue star and those who have lost their lives are represented by a gold star. As you drive around, you can see these banners hanging in the windows throughout the community.

According to its website, in 1928, 28 mothers met in Washington D.C. and established the National Organization, American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. Presently, there are 933 members. Locally, there is the Merrimack Valley Military Family Support Group, which has 17 mothers.

In honor of Gold Star Mother's Day, Eagle East Aviation sponsored a fund-raiser at the Lawrence Airport called "Fly for freedom." Helping to coordinate the event were Blue Star Mothers Linda Doherty of North Andover and Haverhill resident Wendy Steeves. Wendy's son just returned from a tour in Iraq and Linda's son Army Spc. Andrew Doherty was also stationed in Iraq.

There was food, entertainment and airplane rides for .15 cents per pound. All proceeds went to benefit the Merrimack Valley Military family Support Group and the American Red Cross. The event raised over \$7,000.00 and the Support Group plans to use the proceeds to buy phone cards for the National Guard 972 MP Company out of Reading, MA, who's soldiers will soon be serving overseas. One member of the Company is a Graves Officer from North Andover.

The money will also be used to buy phone cards for the moms who are members of the Support Group. The Group hopes that the event raised awareness for Gold Star Mothers and helped with outreach and support and to increase its membership.

Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, there have been 20 Gold Star Mothers in the Merrimack Valley, including Barbara Gallagher of North Andover, who's son LCpl. Sean Gallagher was killed in Beirut on October 23, 1983. On that fateful day in Beirut, a truck loaded with explosives crashed through the U.S. Marine Corps barracks, killing 241 United States military personnel, including Sean.

It takes a very special mother to say good bye to a child to go off to war. A mother sharing her child with all of America to defend and protect all of our freedoms. A true patron and hero in our midst. The Valley Patriot wishes to thank all the mothers who allowed their sons and daughters to fight for the freedom of this country and tragically lost their sons and daughters to the perils of war.

We also want to thank all of the blue star and gold star families for the bravery and sacrifices of their children.



STAFF PHOTO

Disply in honor of the Gold Star Mothers and Alex Jimenez, the Lawrence soldier still missing in Iraq. The display was set up at the Lawrence Municipal Airport in North Andover.



STAFF PHOTO

Hanna Porten, Julia Donovan and Rachel Porten, all of North Andover, pose with Lawrence Veteran's Services Director Francisco Urena, last months' Valley Patriot of the Month. Urena helped organize the event at the Lawrence Airport, the proceeds of which are being used to send phone cards to the troops overseas.



STAFF PHOTO

Gold Star Family: The family of Pierre Raymond of Lawrence during the dedication of Lawrence's Veteran's Memorial Stadium. Raymond was killed in Iraq in 2005.



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