



The

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

# Valley Patriot

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"Congress shall make no law..."

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September ~ 2007

40 Pages

Exclusive!

# Ethics Charges Made Against Councilor DiMarca

## O'Rorke: Fiorentini Has No Team, Doesn't Play Well With Others



**Sally Cerasuolo-O'Rorke: candidate for Mayor of Haverhill, 54 years old, mother of three, former head of the Haverhill Chamber of Commerce.**

Tom Duggan

Sally Cerasuolo-O'Rorke is one of three candidates running for mayor in Haverhill. She is facing incumbent Mayor Jim Fiorentini and former Mayor Jim Rurak. O'Rorke spoke candidly with the Valley Patriot last month about her vision for Haverhill's future, her opponents and what it is going to take to run the city of Haverhill effectively over the next six years.

*Why are you running for mayor?*

"I am running to assemble a team to put Haverhill on the map. I continuously hear that we have potential in Haverhill and people ask; 'Why aren't we Lowell? Why aren't we Newburyport?' I think everyone remembers those communities before they were the Newburyport and Lowell of today

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Tom Duggan

An ethics complaint has been filed against Lawrence City Councilor Nunzio DiMarca for a trip he admittedly took to Italy last spring. DiMarca's plane fare and expenses were all paid for by a local businessman whom he openly lobbied for at the city council table and behind the scenes with other elected officials.

The company, Helios Climate Systems, LLC, is owned by Don Bonelli who has a P.O. Box in Andover. Bonelli was granted a meeting with Lawrence Mayor Michael Sullivan and other city officials "at Councilor DiMarca's insistence" and also met with other city officials to try and secure city services for Bonelli's company, Helios Climate Systems, LLC.

The ethics complaint, dated September 3, 2007 charges "Councilor DiMarca repeatedly used his access as a city councilor to lobby other city officials to help this company by insisting that they direct grants, issue press releases favorable to the company and that they direct their energies to find property and other public dollars that could be earmarked for the company."

The complaint continues; "Councilor DiMarca has told numerous people that his trip was paid for by the company, that he served as a 'translator' throughout the trip and that the company did this because of how valuable he, Councilor DiMarca, could be to this company's growth. Councilor DiMarca also mentioned that he made it clear to business officials in Italy that he was an elected official in Lawrence, Ma (sic) and would use his government standing to 'get things done' for the company."

In a letter obtained by the Valley Patriot addressed to Lawrence Mayor Michael Sullivan, Don Bonelli writes, "Councilman DiMarca has been a tremendous help to us in the negotiation process with our

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Lawrence Mayor

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## Valley Patriot of the Month Hero In Our Midst Francisco Urena

Tom Duggan

Most Lawrence residents know Francisco Urena as the city's Veterans' Services Director, but long before Urena came to work for the city of Lawrence he was serving the United States Marines in the 1<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion in Iraq.

Urena was born in the Dominican Republic and grew up in Lawrence, attending the Lawlor, Tarbox and Arlington Schools before his family moved to Florida. In June of 1998 Urena joined the Marines, training at Paris Island in South Carolina



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# Valley Patriot

## \* Editorial \*

### Sullivan Shows Class

Thanks to Lawrence Mayor Michael Sullivan police officers in Lawrence will not be laid off this year, a firehouse will not close and DPW workers will be able to continue maintaining Lawrence's ball fields, streets and sewer system without political interference by the Lawrence City Council.

Over the last three months, Sullivan has been called corrupt, racist, accused of theft and mismanagement, been the subject of wild conspiracy theories, and the target of a disinformation campaign by councilors so obsessed with making political points and grandstanding for the cameras that the facts fell by the wayside without any of them noticing ... or caring.

Yet, while most councilors were getting down in the mud, pandering to the haters and the malcontents, hurling epithets at the mayor and creating a circus like atmosphere during council meetings, the one thing they were not doing was their job.

*According to the Lawrence city charter and state law, the Lawrence city council has a legal obligation to go through the budget line-by-line at the sub-committee level and vote on each department's spending plan individually. They never did that. They are legally obligated to make recommendations to the full council. They never did that. They were legally obligated to schedule a public hearing within seven days of receiving the budget. They didn't do that. They are legally obligated to pass a budget before July 1st of any given year. They never did that. And, if the council wishes to reject a budget, they have a legal obligation to follow the process outlined in the charter and state law. Not surprisingly, they didn't do that either.*

In fact, for all the speeches that were made about how they are "experts on the charter", "geniuses when it comes to state law", and how much they "care about the taxpayers", the whole time they were grandstanding they were violating the charter, oblivious to state law and ignoring the taxpayers.

Sadly for the people of Lawrence, the city council failed to perform their legal duties at every single step of this budget process.

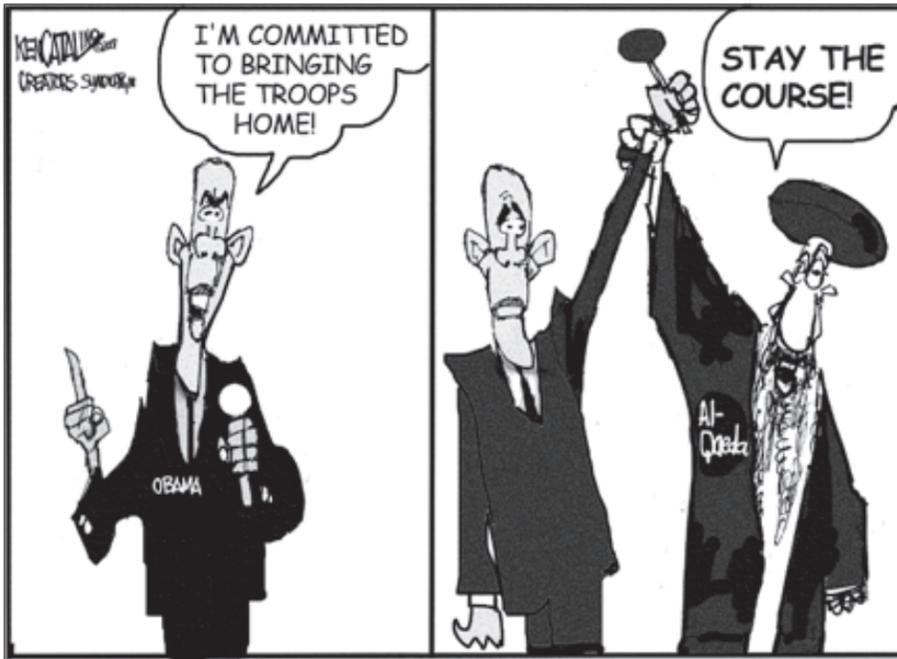
And yet, despite all the unwarranted insults hurled against him (usually in his absence), Lawrence Mayor Michael Sullivan refused get down in the dirt with them. Showing much more class and professionalism than he was shown, Sullivan walked into city council chambers, announced that he had received approval for his budget from the state (without the city council) and then left the council chambers.

He didn't give a long speech about how incompetent the city council is. He didn't engage in name calling or respond to the temper tantrums thrown by councilor members. In fact, Sullivan didn't make one disrespectful comment to the council, despite the fact that they truly deserved it. No, Lawrence Mayor Michael J. Sullivan showed the city council and the voters of Lawrence what being a true leader is all about: rising above the rhetoric, dismissing the personal attacks, and doing what was necessary to solve the problem.

He and his team (Carroll, Sweeney and Schiavone) proved with their behavior and hard work that they can get the job done under the most trying and politically explosive circumstances.

We would have some sympathy for those trying to hold the line on tax increases except for the fact that Lawrence has been sponging off the taxpayers from other communities for decades. It's time for Lawrence taxpayers to start paying more for the costs they incur.

Mayor Sullivan deserves a tremendous amount of credit for sticking to his guns, defending the need for a \$4 a week tax increase, and showing with his behavior (but not one disrespectful word) that problems can be solved without the need for personal attacks.



See page 17 for our local political cartoon from David Sullivan of Dracut

Fellow citizens of Haverhill,

When I first ran for Mayor four years ago, the city stood on the brink of fiscal disaster.

Our fire stations were closed, our library was slated to close, and our high school was on the brink of losing its accreditation. Four years ago, we even faced the possibility of being only the second city in our state's history to be taken over by the State and put into receivership.

We worked hard, implemented the plans I campaigned on, and imposed strict fiscal discipline. We lived by one simple rule: you cannot spend what you do not have.

Then we set out to grow our tax base.

Four years later, Haverhill is undeniably on the move. We are beginning to reap the benefits of our careful planning and hard work. Here are a just few of our results:

- We've made education our top budget priority. Our high school is being totally rehabbed, and our children have modern, state-of-the-art science labs.
- We are fixing our stadium—one of Haverhill's jewels;
- We balanced four budgets in a row, without an override and without layoffs;

- We rezoned, eliminated red tape, streamlined permitting and brought in more retail stores. This year, Lowe's Home Improvement, Target, BJ's Wholesale Club, and Starbucks will all open in our city. They bring with them over 400 jobs, new places to shop, and new tax revenue every year;

- We've put more police on the streets and violent crime is down 22%;

- We re-opened the Bradford Fire Station;

- We fixed school roofs that have leaked for decades;

- Our smart growth plans are working to control growth and manage open space. Haverhill was one of only 22 cities in Massachusetts to receive a Sustainability Award as a champion of green and open space.

Even Wall Street has recognized our progress. Two Wall Street firms, Moody's and Standard and Poor's, have raised our bond ratings two years in a row and credited good management as one of the reasons.

I am running for re-election because I want to build on this progress and work to meet the challenges of tomorrow. If I can ever be of any assistance to you, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,  
Haverhill Mayor, Jim Fiorentini

**Kick-Off Rally for David Abdo**  
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**September 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm.**  
**Lawrence Elks on Andover St.**  
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## Lawrence City Councilors Mised But Should Know Better

Robert O'Koniewski, Esq.

On the threshold of Labor Day weekend as the unofficial close of summer approached, many of us were enjoying the last throes of warm weather, or preparing our children for the new school year, or just plain wondering "Where did it all go?"

In Lawrence, however, for the political power elite, all municipal employees and their families, and the various City Hall denizens of all stripes lurking in the shadows, the approaching September 1<sup>st</sup> Labor Day weekend posed questions of more serious heft – "Would there be a city budget, or would the city effectively be shut down without an approved spending plan?"

What ensued thereafter on August 30<sup>th</sup> will be the stuff of lore for years to come. You can read the story for yourself within these pages. You can see that by reaching out to the state's Department of Revenue for guidance and by using legal legerdemain and statutory interpretation, Mayor Michael Sullivan outflanked the city council politically and legally, plain and simple, to invoke his spending plan.

In reality this was the direct end result, not of any chicanery on the Mayor's part, but of a lack of appropriate leadership from council president Patrick Blanchette as well as the lack of appropriate legal guidance from the professionals in the office of the city attorney and the office of the city clerk upon whom the councilors depend.

The real questions councilors should be asking are, "Why was this budget fiasco allowed to continue for so long?" and "How

did we allow the council president and our attorneys to get us into this mess?"

Why the City of Lawrence did not have an approved spending plan in place well before the July 1<sup>st</sup> start of the fiscal year is the subject of much debate, consternation, and in many quarters just plain old whining. After two 30-day temporary spending plans, passed with council approval, Mayor Michael Sullivan made it clear that he was not interested in a third 30-day budget as the city council could not get itself any closer to finally approving his budget - or any amended budget for that matter - after reviewing it and debating its merits and demerits for two and one-half months.

As the clock was ticking on the second 30-day budget, with no plan for a full budget in place, the Mayor used a legal technicality based on the council's inability to follow proper procedures laid out in the City Charter and in state law.

He took that loophole and drove a Mack truck through it to ensure that police and fire officials would not be laid off and the city would not be shut down for the month of September and thereafter.

Mayor Sullivan filed a notice for an FY 2008 budget plan with the city council on June 5, 2007. The council technically did



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## Thinking Outside the Box!

Dr. Charles Ormsby, N.A. School Committee

## Pro-Override Group's Embarrassing Obfuscation: An Admission of Guilt

**Note to the reader:** The two articles discussed here are available on-line at ValleyPatriot.com. Select the Archives and then July 2007, Page 3 and August 2007, Page 4.

In our July edition, I wrote an article entitled "Snookered" that analyzed a highly questionable pro-override campaign postcard distributed by North Andover United (NAU) just days before our recent override vote (See figure below).

The group's postcard cited home sales statistics for Andover and North Andover since 2002 and used this data to encourage voters to approve the \$1.65 million override. In our August issue, Sandy Gleed, Chairman of NAU, published a "rebuttal" claiming "Dr. Ormsby has it wrong".

Two claims were made by the pro-override people in their postcard:

1. That North Andover home values have suffered a 19% decline relative to Andover, AND

2. That the cause of this decline is "under-funded schools and highly-publicized conflicts."

My "Snookered" article focused on the first claim, because it would be pointless to debate "the cause" of a decline if there was no decline to be explained. To summarize, I made the following four key points in "Snookered" and backed them up by sound analysis and data:

1. The purported decline in home values suggested by override supporters was largely due to their

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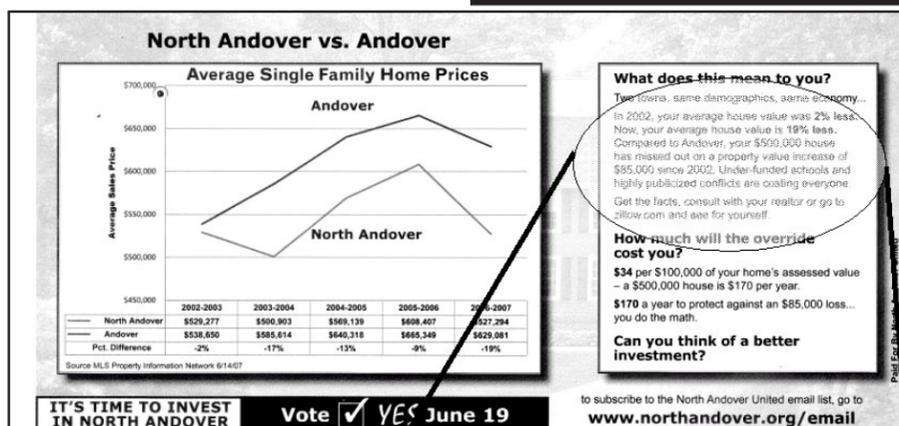


Figure 1 North Andover United's last minute postcard falsely claiming a relative decline in our real estate values and then falsely attributing that decline to under-funding our schools.

In 2002, your average house value was 2% less. Now, your average house value is 19% less. Compared to Andover, your \$500,000 house has missed out on a property value increase of \$85,000 since 2002. Under-funded schools and highly publicized conflicts are costing everyone.

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# O'Rourke: I will Work With the Business Community Not Shut Them Out, Like Current Mayor

and we have to ask why did they succeed and how can we succeed the way they did. We have the same river. We have a lot of resources. We have 35 square miles of land. We are both inner city and farmland. We have a myriad of great things going on. So what is it going to take and when are we going to capitalize on the potential that we have?"

"I look back on the last 44 years and ask 'Are we better off, worse off, or the same as we were 40 years ago, or even 20 or 10 years ago? Most people say we are the same and some say worse off. So what is it going to take for us to succeed? I think there are a few common threads:

"First of all, one person can't do it. It will take a concentrated, orchestrated team effort. And with everyone playing the role that they are strongest at, everyone wins. I use the analogy of the Patriots. If you take Bob Kraft, Bill Belichick, Teddy Bruschi, and Tom Brady, and you ask 'who don't you want on your team?' Well, you want them all on your team! They're all important. It takes more than just one person. You need to be able to build relationships and a consensus to get anything done successfully. I'm capable of doing that. I'm capable of putting together a solid team. I have passion, I have vision and I think I am the best candidate for the job."

Why you? Why should the voters pick you over mayor Jim Fiorentini, I'm sure he would say he has a vision for ... ? "He doesn't have a vision. He doesn't have a team. Who's his team? He has no team. He

doesn't play well in the sandbox and he is not a team builder. I am. And that is what we need."

Can you give me an example of where Jim hasn't ... "The Haverhill Chamber of Commerce, under my leadership, has done a tremendous amount of work in support of the economic development of this city. But we were not embraced by the mayor. Team Haverhill was not embraced by the current administration. They are a volunteer, citizen-based asset in this community and were willing to meet month in and month out to improve the quality of life in this city. They have been ignored by this administration. So those are two glaring examples where he has not reached out to the community."

What could he have done to embrace them? What would you have done? "I would have showed up, for one. I would have had a dialogue with them, embrace their efforts and possibly provide financial support. You know these are good people trying to help and they shouldn't be shut out of the process. And they have been."

What about your other opponent, Jim Rurak? Why should the voters choose you and not Jim Rurak? "I like Jim Rurak. I think Jim Rurak is a good an honorable man. But he had eight years to tap the potential of this city and move it forward. Do I feel that we are any better off because Jim Rurak was mayor for eight years? I'm not sure we are a lot different because Jim was mayor for eight years. So I say, if we couldn't tap the potential in eight years of

**"He doesn't have a team. Who's his team? He has no team. He doesn't play well in the sandbox and he is not a team builder. I am. And that's what we need."**

Sally Cerasuolo O'Rourke on Haverhill Mayor Jim Fiorentini



Jim Rurak what makes anyone believe we will be better off with another Jim Rurak Administration?"

"That's why I think we need new eyes, fresh thoughts, creative thinking outside the box, and no stone left unturned. Everything is up for discussion. The community needs to be embraced and encouraged to give input. This is not Jim Fiorentini's community. This isn't Jim Rurak's community. This isn't my community. Its everyone's community and everyone needs to be at the table being encouraged to participate. That's what makes me different than both previous administrations. I am not part of the past. I am part of the future and I am part of the solution for Haverhill."

What are the quality of life issues in Haverhill? "Education, Education, and did I tell you ... education. I don't see myself as a typical person who runs for office. I am 54 years old. My goal is to make a difference and give back and give the best I have for the community. I've been to 50 teas, knocked on tons of doors, and what I

hear in the community is that education is their number one concern."

"Yes, we have challenges in our schools, but we have a lot of assets in our schools too. We have a fabulous superintendent, but we need to give him the tools to do the job and not micromanage him. I don't believe you hire a professional, pay him \$100,000 plus, and then tell them how to do their job. That's why you hire a professional, because they know how to do their job."

"I think the schools, the facilities themselves, have had no capital projects plan and we don't have a maintenance program for the community. The schools need to be involved in that. I think the teachers and administrators have been taken advantage of, not appreciated, not encouraged, not given the tools, and sometimes it just takes a kind word of appreciation that you are in the trenches with them and that we are all working as a team to educate these kids. Many teachers I talk to say they don't feel appreciated. They get it from both ends, they get it from

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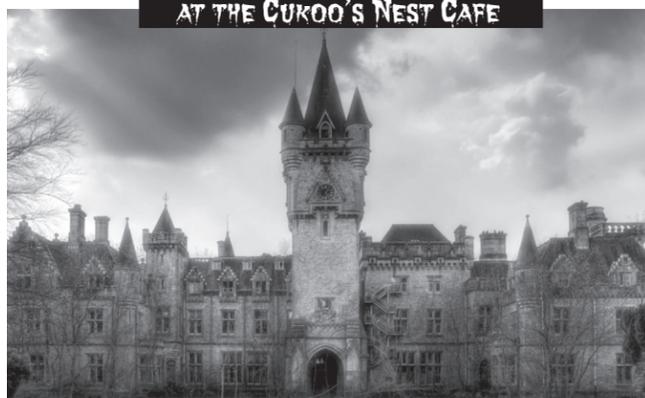


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the parents and they get it from the politicians and it isn't right."

What kind of tools would you give them? "I want to start a program called the blue ribbon panel where we find private financing and donations from businesses and give those funds to each school to be used as the principal sees fit. I would like to do it to the level of twenty-five thousand dollars for each school. Just that encouragement alone, for teachers and administrators to know that they can buy paper and chalk and school books, takes a tremendous amount of pressure off their shoulders. I would also have teacher appreciation and 'highlight a school.' Do we have challenges? All communities have their challenges, but we have to think differently and work with people to make a difference in our education system. That's not happening now."

Would that include ads on school buses or in the schools like we've seen out west? It could. We have to be willing to look at everything, but, you see, it comes down to more than just dollars and cents.

Dollars and cents are very important to the big picture, but what is equally important is the quality of education our kids are getting at the end of the day. One in four kids don't make it to high school graduation in Haverhill. We lost 121 kids dropping out last year. We failed those 121 kids. Parents that can afford it can opt out and some are doing that, and that's fine. But, I would like the parents to opt out because they have two great choices not because they feel like they have no choice at all. But what about the kids who can't opt out? We have an obligation to raise the standards and educate them well.

So you Support School Choice? Yes, I support school choice.

What about Merit pay for teachers? "I think there is merit to merit pay, forgive the pun, but I think it's hard to compare one classroom to another classroom. Someone who has a higher success rate in their classroom could be because the parents in that class are more involved. So, it's hard to measure the merit of a teacher. I'm not sure how you can control standardizing the product [education] in order to base merit pay and measure it effectively. But, like I said, everything is going to be on the table."

How about the health insurance costs in Haverhill? "I know we have the majority of the unions who have opted into a single payer plan, but I would be interested in looking at Governor Patrick's municipal partnership act."

What percentage do city employees pay now? "I think most are 80% (paid by the city) - 20% (paid by the employees) and I know there was a move to go to 75% - 25% ..."

Would you support something like that? I would have to look at it. Under my administration everything will be up for discussion and research. I am going into my office the first day to open the windows, educate the people and understand what we are dealing with and then come up with the best solution, which I believe always comes from Dialogue."



What about the police department and the crime rate in Haverhill? "Haverhill has the lowest ratio of police officers per-capita in the commonwealth of Massachusetts. We have 1.5 police officers for every 1,000 residents. When one of our residents needs the attention of a police officer, that leaves the other 999 residents without protection."

So what would you do, add more cops? "Again, look at the big picture. What can we afford? How can we

better utilize the resources we have? I think we have a terrific chief of police and he is doing an admirable job without the resources or support he needs and at some point, if we don't address it, it is going to get worse. We need to be ahead of the next crisis. Until you know what you are doing as a community when it comes to public safety, things are not going to get better. Does it mean we have to spend more dollars? Maybe. But maybe we can utilize the dollars that we have to spend and let the police do their jobs."

"I know we were very successful with a grant we helped write with Methuen. There's an awful lot of homeland security money, state and federal dollars available, but we don't even have a grant-writer so we are losing out on millions of the dollars available."

That was a little vague on adding more cops. Should more cops be hired? "I do think we absolutely have to add more police but it has to be done in a responsible manner. That's what I'm saying. When I talk about the

big picture, this is it. You cannot save police at the expense of fire, you cannot save police and fire at the expense of education. We have to look at the big picture and be realistic about what we can afford. We have to look at it in an equitable manner. So to say we are going to add 'x' number of officers without knowing how you are going to pay for it or what they are going to be doing isn't the answer. I certainly wouldn't second guess the chief. It goes back to what I said about the Superintendent, I think we have hired a great chief of police but you have to let him do his job. I certainly wouldn't be interfering with his decisions for public safety. We need to have a multi-year plan."

Is the current mayor not doing that? Is he not letting the chief have a say in the way crime is being fought in the streets? "Yes. I think so. He is micro-managing the department. If you are a micro-manager you tend to want to micromanage everything. You don't pay people over \$100,000 to micro-manage them. It's that simple. That's a leader, someone who assembles the team hires the people and then lets them do their jobs."

How about 40B? [low income housing requirements for cities and towns] "We are between 8 1/2% to 9 1/2% affordable housing. We are right in line with what the state is looking for as far as affordable housing."

One of our columnists John Michitson wrote a piece for us recently saying that basically, government cannot solve problems by it's very nature. That it really takes the private sector to solve community problems. You come from the private sector, do you agree with that? "I am a strong believer in Deval Patrick's mindset that no one sector can solve the problem, but collectively everyone needs to be at the table to address these issues. Do I think government plays a role? Yes, it plays a major role. This community is

succeeding or not succeeding collectively. Everybody is in the same boat. We all succeed or fail together. The answer is not the business sector, or the non-profits, or the government. It is a collective effort."



*I like Jim Rurak. I think Jim Rurak is a good and honorable man. But, he had eight years to tap the potential of this city and move it forward. ... So I say, if we couldn't tap the potential in eight years of Jim Rurak what makes anyone believe we will be better off with another Jim Rurak Administration?*

Jim Fiorentini writes a column for us called 'Moving Haverhill Forward' where he talks a lot about his business successes and the new businesses moving to Haverhill. As the former head of the Chamber can you give him credit for...? "I'd love to talk about this. I'm hoping that you can get this message out because I know the facts. When I look at the community's tax base, it's value-based. So 'x' amount of value in the community is broken into two sections; the residential and the commercial. In 1984 33% of the value of properties were residential and 67% was commercial, according to the assessors' office. This year we are 88 % residential and 12% commercial. Now, those are facts. Those are glaring facts! Those should be shocking facts!"

"So, if he's growing the commercial base, why doesn't it show in value? It doesn't show for two reasons: residential is growing off the map and commercial is not keeping pace. Now, you go to the specific projects he (Fiorentini) talks about that are supposedly growing the commercial base. Look at Starbucks. It replaced a Mobile gas station which was commercial property before. So where's my growth? There's no growth, only turnover. Look at BJ's. They are mostly entry level jobs with 220 part-time jobs and 30-full time. It replaced Victory Plastics that was paying us \$80,000 in taxes and had 50 median income jobs. Look at Lowe's and Target stores. They are replacing Analogics who, on the books, is paying us \$175,000 in taxes. They're empty, but paying taxes. Estimates yesterday show maybe an additional \$250,000 in additional taxes. So, all this economic growth we are hearing about by the mayor may bring in under 100k in new taxes and that brings me back to my original question: Is the current 'growth' under Jim Fiorentini bringing that 12% commercial value up? No, it is not. Jim Fiorentini is not growing the business community. He has shut them out."

What do you want to see downtown look like? We have 19 store fronts downtown that are empty. We have to ask the community what they want it to look like and how do we want to make that happen. You have to be proactive, and figure out what we as a community want downtown and then do what it takes to make it happen. The way it's being done now, this administration is just sitting back and taking whatever comes along. We have to have more involvement. I see a cultural center for kids. I see a Gourmet-to-go, a wine bar and upscale restaurants. Maybe we could be subsidizing some of them at the beginning so they will flourish and contribute to our future success.

This is part one of a three part series. Next month The Valley Patriot will be interviewing former mayor Jim Rurak. Mayor Fiorentini's interview will be published in the Special Election Edition to be printed October 25th.

*Team Haverhill was not embraced by the current administration. They are a volunteer, citizen-based asset in this community where people are willing to meet month in and month out to improve the quality of life in this city. They have been ignored by this administration.*

James Donahue

City Council

It's time for a change...

www.Donahue2007.com

Please Vote!

The Preliminary Election  
in Haverhill is September 18th

# “Beyond the Sound Bite”

## In-depth interviews with Haverhill’s Mayoral candidates

### John Michitson

We challenged the candidates in Haverhill’s mayoral race to come to the table with their concrete plans and innovative ideas to address Haverhill’s most significant challenges: 1) projected long term financial deficits; 2) sub par academic performance in the Haverhill schools and 3) economic development strategies.

Former Mayor James Rurak, who served four terms as Mayor, former Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce President Sally Cerasuolo-O’Rorke, and local river legend Captain William “Red” Slavik are challenging the incumbent Mayor James Fiorentini for the office. All four got to pitch their proposals for one hour on Haverhill Community Television (HCTV.) Follow-on goals are to post the videos on YouTube, or an alternative web site, for easy access and to initiate a blog discussion with citizens about the interviews at [www.ivalley.org](http://www.ivalley.org).

The candidates’ pitches are summarized below.

**Sally Cerasuolo-O’Rorke:** Sally presented a well thought out, comprehensive plan that integrates City management, public education and economic development initiatives to move Haverhill forward. She believes that such a plan should be kept current, coordinated with all constituents, and used as a tool to guide the City. She correctly stated that such a plan does not exist today.

Her key points include:

1. While the Mayor has kept the City afloat, he has failed to adequately address the projected financial deficits, especially the wide gaps predicted in Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010, last estimated over a year ago by the Mayor to be approximately \$7M and \$9M, respectively. She will implement an action plan to address the gaps, as well as apply zero based budgeting for efficiency gains. She also cited over reliance on one-time revenues, such as selling City land, to address budget deficits and problematic mismanagement, such as the Hale Hospital’s financial woes and the on-going investigations in the Public Works Department. Her plan includes additional revenues through economic development (\$2M), a comprehensive parking plan for downtown (\$2.5M), various cost savings and efficiencies such as bulk purchasing (\$800K), and on-going revenue streams (\$1.5M), such as enactment of the Governor’s Municipal Partnership Act (e.g. meals tax, telecom pole property tax) for a total of approximately \$6.8M against the projected gaps. Sally will support a tax override or debt exclusion only as a last resort;

2. The Haverhill public schools are underachieving. Leadership is needed to reign in the School committee and support the Superintendent. Sally will leverage her business ties to raise at least \$25K per school and allow each school community to determine how to spend it. She will also seek “linkage” funding from developers to raise \$1M for sports, music and arts;

3. Her centerpiece is an aggressive \$100M commercial expansion, which includes about nine projects spread across the City; many of which she has already played a key role in, such as the Woolworth redevelopment and the expansion of the Whittier Rehab Hospital in the Ward Hill industrial park. She also wants to recruit leading edge businesses with high paying jobs to Haverhill, such as green technology, the creative economy, biotech, nanotech and renewable energy.

Follow-on questions:

1. Provide further details of the \$100M commercial expansion proposal. She provides some insight during her pitch on HCTV, but further details are needed to determine realism;

2. Identify some of the direct causes of unacceptable academic performance in our schools and possible solutions to show a practical understanding of the issues that teachers and parents face.

**James Rurak:** Jim described a detailed timeline of the transformation from the Hale Hospital to the Merrimack Valley Hospital (MVH) which was a key accomplishment when he served as Mayor. Jim states that the impact of the Hale debt is being overstated by the Mayor and is being used as a crutch to hold the City back from its potential. He further states that after the sale of the city-owned Hospital, there has been a steady improvement in Haverhill’s financial outlook as evidenced by our increasing bond ratings. He believes that bold leadership and some risk taking are needed to move Haverhill to the next level.

His key points include:

1. A description of the Hale-to-MVH transformation timeline dating back to the 1980s to help support his assertion that about a \$3.5M windfall associated with the sale of the Hospital partially offsets the annual Hale debt of approximately \$6.5M. The \$3.5M figure was rationalized with a combination of straight-forward factors, such as the \$500K or so in property taxes that the City collects from MVH, and estimates of the amount that the City spent to subsidize the Hale as far back as the 1980s; a cost that no longer exists today. Jim also clearly identified that most of \$6.5M in debt has been in place since the 1980s, including Hospital retirees’ pensions and medical insurance benefits and the mortgage on the new building. Moving forward, he plans to attack the “net” deficit from the Hale, which he estimates to be about \$3M, by bulk purchase of citizens’ electricity through the City, health insurance concessions from City workers and to leverage Governor Patrick’s Municipal Partnership Act. He will not support a tax override or debt exclusion under any conditions.

2. Jim believes that leadership is needed to support the Superintendent’s sound multi-year academic performance improvement plan, instead of the negative

bickering that dominates School Committee meetings. He also wants to establish neighborhood centers where parents can gather to learn about how they can help their children succeed in the Haverhill Public Schools. Updated and additional technology is also needed in the schools.

3. The former Mayor stated that he believes that the best approach for economic development is to get the City’s house in order, including its finances, public education and infrastructure, and to have the know-how to approach the right companies. He pointed to his innovative Corporate Connection program, where he asked CEOs for business leads. Major companies, such as Globalware and Pepsi, came to Haverhill under Jim’s watch, in addition to the 400 new private jobs at the Merrimack Valley Hospital, which brought to the City more recurring revenue than the three new “big box” department stores combined.

Follow-on questions for Jim:

1. Are there other factors, such as increased health insurance costs, or payment of the Haverhill High School renovation project, that extend the City’s projected financial deficits beyond the “net” deficit that you attribute to the Hale (\$3M)?

2. If the City’s deficit is greater than the “net” deficit that you attribute to the Hale, what additional revenue opportunities would you pursue?

**William “Red” Slavik:** Captain William “Red” Slavik focused on point issues that are important to him and the many senior citizens that he advocates for. He contends that Haverhill’s Fire and Police Departments are world class and that the schools are much better than the perceptions. Lewis Burton was his favorite Mayor because of the deep understanding that he had of Haverhill due to his many years as a fire fighter and fire chief.

The river served as the basis for many of his recommendations. Red believes that there is illegal dumping of raw sewage into the river taking place behind the wastewater treatment plant on a regular basis and that the Mayor needs to put a stop to it. He wants to clear the brush to expose the river along Water Street so that senior citizens can enjoy the view and he does not support the residential towers that are slated for the former Friends Landing on Water Street, because it will block the view of the river. The feisty retired harbormaster thinks that once the river is dredged and boating traffic extends to the downtown on a regular basis, many people will dock and visit the shops and restaurants downtown, a model that has worked for Newburyport.

**Mayor James Fiorentini:** Mayor Fiorentini’s presentation was all about real results. His administration applied a three-point plan to keep the City afloat by controlling spending, expanding the tax base, and bringing in more state and federal tax dollars. He stated that the City was on life support when he took office. Now, Haverhill is stable as evidenced by

**Mayor Fiorentini’s presentation was all about real results.**



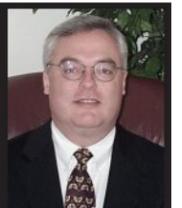
**She believes that such a plan should be kept current, coordinated with all constituents, and used as a tool to guide the City. She correctly stated that such a plan does not exist today.**

**He (Jim Rurak) believes that bold leadership and some risk taking are needed to move Haverhill to the next level.**



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

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





# Moving Haverhill Forward

## Haverhill Mayor James Fiorentini



**Bradford Elementary**

### Welcome Back to School!

Every year, I have the pleasure of welcoming our 7,500 plus students back to school. This year, our students and teachers find new improvements as they head to their classrooms. Throughout the city, students have 550 brand new, state-of-the-art computers -- 125 at the high school and the rest throughout the middle schools. High school students have new state-of-the-art science labs as part of our new high school renovation project. Returning students in grades K-12 have brand new textbooks in English Language arts. Middle school students and students in grades 6-12 have brand new science textbooks to help them pass the new science MCAS test. It is our largest textbook replacement program in years.

Haverhill High School offers a wide variety of courses, including far more foreign languages than are offered at most

area schools. Last year and this year we added something new: our virtual high school. Students at Haverhill High School can now take on-line courses at high schools and colleges throughout the country. This year, returning High School students will find something new for the first time — the Haverhill Classical High school.

I call it Boston Latin North. Haverhill Classical High School is an exam school within a school where our children can get a classical education as they learn the languages and cultures of ancient Greece and ancient Rome. I am excited about the classical school, since part of my campaign platform in 2003 was that we should have a classical high school.

In the middle schools, students will find



that we have begun to reverse decades of neglect to our school buildings. At the Whittier

Middle School, the roof, which leaked for over 15 years, was replaced last year. The roof at the Tilton School was patched and a new public address system was installed at Whittier school. This year, a new telephone alert system has been installed system-wide to notify parents in the event of school

closings or emergencies. We are installing new security cameras, door buzzers and doorbells at every school to prevent unauthorized access.

At the high school, we have new security cameras and a new state-of-the-art fire alarm system. We know that sports is important to many of our students. With the help of a \$1 million state grant, we have begun to renovate our stadium, a true Haverhill gem. We hope to get additional funds to complete the renovation.

While money is important in public education, improving education is not all about money. It is about standards, and measuring results. This past year, we made it a school committee goal that we wanted MCAS scores improved every year. We tied the pay of administrators to MCAS improvement.

We have mandatory summer school for students who fail the MCAS tests. Starting this fall, we have a new MCAS computerized assessment program in every middle school. Our goal is to improve our standardized test scores. When the MCAS results come back in two weeks, I predict we are going to see a significant improvement.

I wish all of our students a healthy and happy new school year. We hope it is the best ever!



**Comeau Bridge is Open!**

The Comeau Bridge reopened last Thursday. As I promised, the first person to cross the bridge was Marilyn Comeau, daughter of Joseph C. Comeau, the World War II hero that the bridge was named after.

### BJ's Opens, Target to Follow

I had the pleasure of representing the city of Haverhill at the grand opening of BJ's Wholesale Club. Two years ago, I asked the city council to join with me in rezoning parts of our city and eliminating red tape and regulatory barriers to give us a chance to bring in some new retail stores. Today, BJ's is open, with Target scheduled to open in October and Lowes in December. Together, these new stores bring over 400 new jobs, and \$350,000 in new tax revenues every single year.



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# Controversy Over Park Land

Valley Patriot Staff

Controversy is brewing before the North Andover Zoning Board of Appeals over property located at 50-53 May Street.

The property is presently owned by the North Andover Housing Authority. An application was recently submitted by the Authority to the Town of North Andover for a special permit under Chapter 40B to "erect a two-family dwelling upon vacant premises."

The prior owner of the property is opposed to the Housing Authorities request to build a two family house and argues that the property is not a "vacant premises." Prior owner of 50-53 May Street, Violet Kondrat, states that the property is a park and should remain a park.

Back in 1981 then owner, Violet Kondrat, sold her land on May Street to the North Andover Housing Authority with the expectation that it would become a park. The attached letter dated September 13, 1981 written to Violet by then executive Director of the North Andover Housing

Authority, Louis Minicucci, states "This property will be utilized for the construction of a park."

During this negotiation process between Violet and the Housing Authority, the Town of North Andover applied for and received a Community Development Block Grant in the amount of \$80,000 to "develop new park at May Street, adjacent to McCabe Court." as indicated in the Authority's Annual Report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1982.

And in the Housing Authorities Annual Report for Fiscal Year ending September 30, 1983, under the heading *Modernization Activity Completed*, it states "completed park on May Street, adjacent to McCabe Court."

Prior owner, Violet Kondrat, has filed a written objection with the North Andover Board of Appeals, asking that the land remain a park.

The matter is scheduled to be heard at the September 11<sup>th</sup> Board of Appeals meeting.



NORTH ANDOVER HOUSING AUTHORITY  
16 FOUNTAIN DRIVE P. O. BOX 373  
NORTH ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS 01845  
TEL. 882-3932

September 13, 1981

Mrs. Violet Kondrat  
52 May Street  
North Andover, MA 01845

Dear Mrs. Kondrat:

This letter will introduce Mr. Minicucci, who represents the North Andover Housing Authority, in the capacity of negotiating agent who will discuss with you the acquisition by the Housing Authority of the property which our records indicate is owned by you. This property will be utilized for the construction of a park.

We have made an initial appraisal, and find that after careful analysis, we can be prepared to offer you \$18,000 as of March, 1981 for the purchase of your property.

We believe that the above offer is most equitable and we urge your favorable consideration and acceptance of it. If this meets with your approval, the Authority has prepared a Purchase & Sales Agreement for your signature, herewith attached.

Sincerely yours,

Louis P. Minicucci, Jr.  
Executive Director

LPM/hm

Enc.

## Continued From Page 3 - Dr. Ormsby: N. Andover United

selection of a demonstrably unrepresentative starting point. Their selected starting point (2002/03) was the only year during which the average sales price of North Andover's homes came close to that of Andover's (2% below). The average sales price in North Andover for the two years before 2002/03 and the two years after 2002/03 was 11% below that in Andover. Conclusion: Override supporters selected 2002/2003 as the starting point to deceive North Andover voters.

2. Simple statistics indicate that the fluctuations in home sales price data can be completely accounted for by sampling errors. I pointed out that the data used in the politically motivated postcard was an average of the sales prices of only about 5% of the single-family homes in both towns (~300 homes). Just as polling a sample of voters yields a polling error (and honest polling organizations report this margin of error), so will sampling home sales data. In this case the entire variation cited by override proponents is within the margin of error due to sampling.

3. Next, I showed that there is a systematic variation in the sales data each year caused by changes in the number of new residential developments (all very expensive homes) completed and sold each year. Low and behold, if you look at the individual homes sold, the override supporters' starting point of 2002/03 included 37 expensive new

homes that were completed and sold in North Andover – this was the year the average North Andover sales price was only 2% less than Andover's. In the final year (2006/07), when North Andover's home values looked like they had declined, only 7 new homes in North Andover were completed and sold. Wow! It looks like we might have identified why the average sales price appeared to decline ... and it had nothing to do with taxes or schools or highly-publicized conflicts!

4. Finally, I obtained all single-family assessed property values from the town assessor's offices in both North Andover and Andover. This data indicated that there was **NO DECLINE** in North Andover's property values when compared to Andover's. In fact, there may even have been a slight advance in North Andover values over Andover's between 2004 and 2007 (See nearby figure). Note that the assessor's data is NOT subject to sampling errors; it represents 100% of the homes, not just a 5% sample. Also, the assessor's data separates out the values of new construction so it will not corrupt the averages AND it is audited by the state for accuracy.

Wouldn't you expect the override proponents' rebuttal to respond to these four carefully researched points?

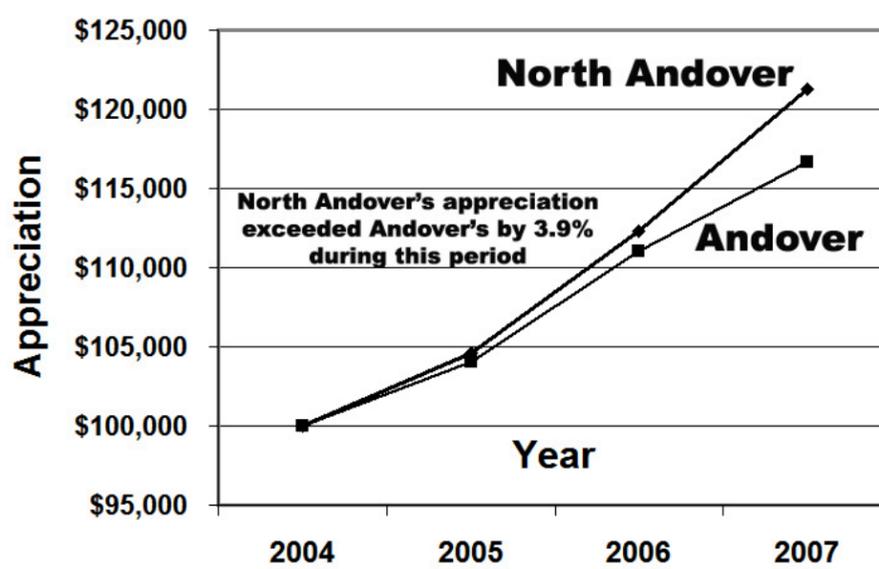
Which of these four points did they attempt to refute?

NONE! Not a single one.

Override supporters need to actually defend their choice of starting date. They need to demonstrate that, in light of the sales data before and after their selected starting point that it is representative of sales data of that era. Instead they just ignored the issue.

Did the pro-override supporters address the fact that the observed fluctuations in average sales prices can be completely explained by errors resulting from random sampling? NO! They just dismissed reasoned analysis as "mathematical gibberish."

Single Family Residence Appreciation Comparison



How anti-intellectual. Is this how they respond to serious analysis? Is this the attitude they wish to promote in our schools with the extra tax revenues they will be extracting from our overburdened citizens?

When did basic statistics become "mathematical gibberish"? Should our high school students avoid taking courses in statistics because it is "gibberish"? I can't help it if the leaders of the override effort are innumerate, but I suggest they not celebrate their mathematical illiteracy in public.

"Snookered's" research concerning the distortions in sales statistics arising from the sale of expensive homes in new developments (Point #3) and the analysis of our town assessor's data (Point #4) were not addressed at all. Are these facts too tough to handle for the override people?

Instead of providing a reasoned rebuttal, override supporters dodged my arguments by trying to muddy the water. Here is just a sample of what they said with quick responses:

Override proponents wrote, "You don't need a doctorate from MIT to know that statistics are merely used to show relationships, not causality."

I agree. This is a point I often make. In this case, it is the override supporters that are claiming a relative drop in real estate values and a causal relationship between school funding and property values – **not me**. Therefore, it is **incumbent upon them** to prove their claims. Their postcard presented data purportedly supporting the claim that our real estate values declined by 19% relative to Andover's. The purpose of "Snookered" was merely to show that the data they presented does not support their claim and, in fact, that there is credible data that contradicts their claim. If the override supporters' argument now merely boils down to "Go ask your real estate agent," then they should admit that the data they presented was simply designed to deceive the voters ... a deception they now seek to perpetuate.

The pro-override people also wrote, "we used data from reputable, professional sources," implying that I questioned the source of their data. But I never did. **Quite the contrary, I used data from the very same source** (to determine sales statistics for the two earlier years, to determine sample sizes, and to determine the number of homes in new residential developments sold each year) to demonstrate that their claims were nothing more than nonsense.

The override leadership's commitment to honesty was defensible before they wrote their rebuttal — when it was still possible that they were unaware that their data did not support their claims. After my article made the facts clear and they could not mount a serious rebuttal, the override

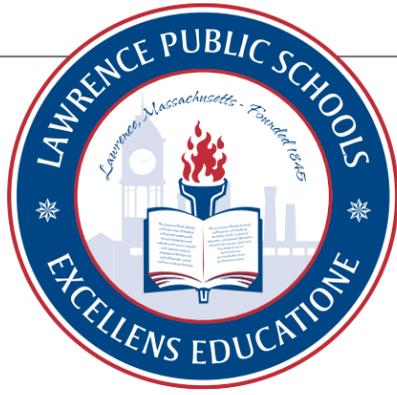
organizers should have been honest and admitted as much. Instead, they chose to ignore the facts and distract the readers from the real truth. They can no longer claim honest intent.

The pro-override supporters conclude their obfuscation with a lecture to me about my responsibility as a School Committee member, "to improve academic standards in a positive way." Anyone who has been paying attention for the last four years knows that I have been the only School Committee member who has openly and aggressively challenged our administrators and staff to raise academic standards and expectations.

So my four points still stand. And the override zealots are still welcome to address them. One-by-one. Either disprove them with facts and sound analysis – no gibberish, no obfuscation, no muddying the waters – or fess up.

Further obfuscation will just lead to further embarrassment.

**Dr. Ormsby is a member of the N. Andover School Committee. He's a graduate of Cornell and has a doctorate from MIT. You can contact Dr. Ormsby via email: [ccormsby@comcast.net](mailto:ccormsby@comcast.net)**



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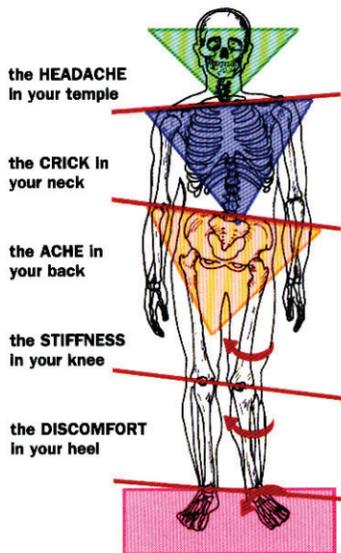


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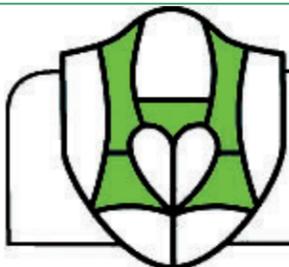
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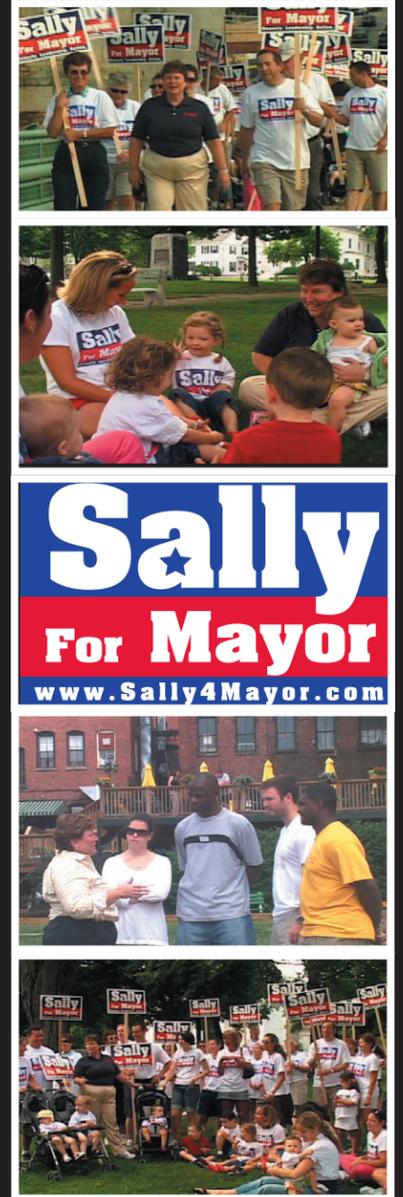
**Honesty. Leadership. Action.**

**As Mayor of Haverhill I WILL:**



Sally Cerasuolo-O'Rorke

- ★ Have a Long Term Fiscal Plan for The Future.
- ★ Move From Short Term Gimmicks to Long Range Planning.
- ★ Move From Crisis Oriented Government to Responsibly Managed Government.
- ★ Strategically Recruit New Businesses to Diversify Our Base and Create New Jobs.
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# Dave Abdo

## Candidate for District "E" Lawrence City Council

My name is Dave Abdo. I am a candidate for the District E City Council seat. I believe I have the qualifications and, more importantly, the desire to help serve the citizens in this District. I have several ideas that I would like to bring before the Council. I promise that if I am elected, I will serve you faithfully, always keeping the best interests of my constituents as my first priority. If you have any thoughts or questions for me, please feel free to call me at 978-989-0864, or email me at [dave\\_abdo@yahoo.com](mailto:dave_abdo@yahoo.com)



- Lifelong resident of the City of Lawrence, homeowner since 1998
- Attended Frost Elementary School, Graduate of St. Patrick Grammar School
- Graduate of Central Catholic High School, 1985
- Graduate of Salem State College, BA in Political Science
- Suffolk University, Masters of Public Administration candidate
- Military Service, Massachusetts Army National Guard, Captain, 1990-2007
- Lawrence Planning Board, 2000-present, Chairman 2003-present
- Lawrence Representative to the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, 2000-present
- Board of Trustees, Salem State College, 2005-present; elected Chairman, 2007
- Member of the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association, 1999-present
- US Dept. of Health & Human Services, Governmental & Public Affairs Director, 2002-present
- Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation, Chief Policy Analyst, 1999-2002
- Legislative Aide, Massachusetts State Senate, 1997-1999
- United Parcel Service, Teamsters Local 25
- Parishioner, Lector and Finance Council member, St. Patrick Church
- Married to Stephanie, children: Elizabeth & Michael

# Abdo

## Councilor - District E



# Planning for Your Future

Lawrence Planning Director  
Michael R. Sweeney

In the September 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the New York Times, writer N.R. Kleinfield wonders if the remembrances, tributes and honoring of the dead from September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 has gone too far. He seems pained not by the senseless murder of over 2,000 people, but by the fact that six years later, people all over the world will stop and remember the tragic events of that day. As a nation we will pause and remember the lives lost, the dreams that were ended and the terrible pain and horror endured by hundreds of people trapped in the World Trade Centers.



machines of family members who will forever treasure those tapes. So many everyday people, fighting against fire, heat, broken bones, horror and the unknown to help others who were hurt and dying.

On the ground in NYC hundreds of firefighters, police officers and EMTs ran into the gates of hell to help. Hundreds of these public safety officials would die in the Towers. Scores of children lost their fathers or mothers that day. Heroes were made, legends were created and America and the world learn anew why freedom is never free or easy. We learned again that only by facing hard realities and ugly truths can we preserve a way of life that allows people to make individual choices about how we conduct ourselves in our personal lives, in our expressions of religious faith, in the choices we make regarding our education and career choices and how we decide to honor those who died protecting our way of life.

But it has been six years and the New York Times and N.R. Kleinfield have grown weary with the burden of living and taking a moment to remember. How sad, pitiful and empty they are.

On September 11<sup>th</sup> this year you need only take a personal, private moment to remember those who were murdered and the sacrifices they made on that day. Perhaps it will be another beautiful, perfect weather day this coming Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup>, just as it was in 2001. We should all continue to move forward and live our lives and embrace new friends and new opportunities and cherish those we love. But please, do not forget those who died on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

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](mailto:Esqsweeney@aol.com).

We will, but apparently not the New York Times or N.R. Kleinfield. Instead Kleinfield believes that the nation is "fatigued" by the ceremonies that occurred to remember those murdered on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. The first I heard of this 'national fatigue' with the events that occurred on September 11<sup>th</sup> was in this New York Times column. Always on the cutting edge of bashing America and anything associated with the ideals this country was built upon, the New York Times and Kleinfield have apparently found that honoring the dead from Sept 11<sup>th</sup> to be too much of a burden.

What the New York Times and Kleinfield cannot comprehend and certainly cannot honor, is the sacrifice made that day by men and women, ordinary people, most American citizens, some from other countries, all of whom were exercising their individual freedoms through the engagement of their various professions or by freely traveling across this country. Many on the planes that day, including infants and children, were on their way home, or to visit loved ones in another part of the country. American, Israeli, British, Mexican or Russian it did not matter. They were each murdered, many making desperate phone calls to 911 or to loved ones. Many leaving messages expressing their love or their regrets into the answering



# Lawrence on the Move

Mayor Michael J. Sullivan

## Lawrence Needs Mark Andrews

Over a number of months the City of Lawrence has searched for a Budget and Finance Director with the skills and background that will allow that person to be effective in such a challenging position.

This past week, I submitted to the Lawrence City Council my candidate for this very important position. Mr. Mark Andrews was the top selection of an interview team headed by our Personnel Director, Mr. Frank Bonet. Mr. Andrews is someone I fully support for this job because I believe that he has the critical skills for success in this job and success for the city of Lawrence.

Mr. Andrews is a graduate of the University of Lowell with a Bachelors of Arts in Education. He continued his education at Suffolk University earning a Masters of Public Administration in Finance. More years ago than he probably cares to remember, Mark graduated from our very own Lawrence High School.

Since 1998 he served at Northern Essex Community College as Vice President of Administration. He was responsible for the college's budget and finance division and also oversaw the college's buildings and grounds department as well as the bursar's office.

While at NECC, Mr. Andrews also served as the college's liaison to the state legislative members who interact with the college and the communities that NECC has a presence in.

One of the most exciting projects that Mr. Andrews was involved in concerned the construction of their Technology Center. He was also involved in the college's remodeling of our Beharkis Student Center - both projects are located on NECC's Haverhill campus.

Mr. Andrews worked directly with the David Hartleb, (President of NECC), in developing during each of his nine years at the college.

During that time period NECC had a balanced budget and ended each fiscal year with a positive balance. Like all state colleges throughout Massachusetts, there were years that NECC faced challenging budget cuts, but working as a team, Mr. Andrews helped to create a sound budget process and operational budget.

He also has a background in municipal matters, having served as the Director of Economic Development and Planning for the City of Haverhill from 1994 to 1998. While serving in this capacity he was successful in helping Haverhill tackle many of the issues that face urban cities as they try to engage economic growth and seize opportunities. I believe his background and hands on experience in Haverhill in this capacity will benefit us here in Lawrence as he takes on this new challenge.

During the month of September the Lawrence City Council will consider Mr. Andrews' background as well as his ability to help the city of Lawrence implement the our new \$239 million spending plan. I am confident that at the end of the process, a majority of the City Council will find Mr. Andrews to be a qualified professional with the work and education background that will lead to success of our Budget and Finance Director.

I hope that you will join me in welcoming Mr. Andrews and in giving him a chance to prove himself in his new position.

Michael 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](mailto:sull33@aol.com)

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## NIGHT AT THE MOVIES



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Lawrence City Councilor

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# Neighbors Object to Club in Mt. Vernon



Neighbors in the Mount Vernon area of Lawrence crowded into the community room of the Lawrence Police sub-station on Merrimack St. last month to hear Dave Bashara of the United Lebanese Cemetery present his plans to erect a building at the corner of Corbet Rd. and Sylvester Street.

Neighbors expressed opposition to the erection of the building in a residential neighborhood which is not zoned for non-residential buildings. "We don't want it here" said Mary Cox a member of the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association. "But you're telling us that because of this Dover amendment we have no choice and we have no say?"

The Dover Amendment exempts "agricultural, religious, and educational corporations" from many zoning restrictions. Mr. Bashara and members of the United Lebanese Cemetery can legally put the building up on Corbet Road in South Lawrence despite neighborhood opposition. But Bashara said he wants to work with the neighbors to put up a structure that satisfies some of the concerns neighborhood people may have. "We are not looking to have parties or us this building as a place where our members can drink or cause problems for the neighborhood. What we are looking to do is put up a place where we can store our

records and have meetings from time to time."

Mount Vernon Neighborhood President Frank Incropera said that Mr. Bashara of the United Lebanese Cemetery was making a good faith effort to accommodate the concerns of the neighbors adding "If the neighbors go to the zoning board in opposition to this project and the board rejects the project they can go to court under the Dover Amendment and put up whatever they want. This way we can at least put some restrictions on the use of the building and work with them to get something more to the liking of the neighbors."

Some members of the association said that they wanted restrictions on the use of the building and expressed concerns about over flow parking on the street. "We're going to have all kinds of problem up there," one neighbor said. "We don't want this, we just don't want it and you are telling us we have no choice at all? This is outrageous!"

Dan McCarthy, a member of the city's economic development department urged neighbors to try and focus on working with Mr. Bashara given that "he really doesn't have to be here at all. They are making a good faith effort to find out what the neighbors want and try to accommodate you."

"What we want is for them not to build this monstrosity in our neighborhood," another neighbor yelled. Despite some



**Mary Cox, a member of the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association says she doesn't want any building put up on Corbet Road, no matter what.**

harsh words and questions of Mr. Bashara's motives, most neighbors said after the meeting that they were glad that they at least had a say in the restrictions that could be placed on the use of the property.

As the Valley Patriot was going to print the zoning board was set to meet at Lawrence city hall to discuss the issue.

"We want to be good neighbors," Bashara said. "I know that some people will never be happy with whatever we put up on Corbet Road but I'd really like to try and work with as many neighbors as I can to belay their concerns."

*Re-Elect*

**Lawrence  
City  
Councilor**



**Jorge  
Gonzalez**  
(District "C")

**The courage to oppose all tax increases in  
the City of Lawrence!**

Paid for by Jorge Gonzalez

**\* ELECT \*** **\* ELECT \***

**PAMELA J.  
NEILON**

*as the City of Lawrence's Representative to the  
GREATER LAWRENCE  
TECHNICAL SCHOOL  
COMMITTEE*

*I would greatly appreciate your vote.*

Paid for by Pamela J. Neilon

**Write-In  
Gary Mannion**

**Lawrence District "B" City Council**

*"A new and youthful voice for the citizens of Lawrence"*

**A family history of public service:** grandmother Gladys Mannion is the last gold star mother in Lawrence, uncle Dennis Mannion died in action while serving in the marines in Vietnam. I want to continue my family tradition by serving the people of Lawrence.



paid for by Gary Mannion

# City Council Should Have Known Better

Continued From Page 3

not have a document to look at until June 12th.

Nevertheless, regardless of which date one wants to use, by the letter of the law of the City Charter, the council was obligated to set a date for a public hearing at that time and they simply refused to it.

Section 7.2 of the City Charter states the following: "The city council shall, within seven days following the date the proposed budget has been filed with the clerk of the council, cause to be published in a local newspaper the general summary of the proposed budget as submitted by the mayor and a notice stating (1) the date, not less than seven nor more than fourteen days following such publication, and the place at which the city council, or a standing committee of the city council, will hold a public hearing on the proposed budget and (2) the times and places where complete copies of the proposed budget will be available for examination by the public in advance of said hearing."

If the council had just followed its own law, much of this mess could have been avoided. Under the law, setting the date for the public hearing is not even a subject of debate. For this council it is, however. "The council shall" means just that.

The council should have published by June 19th a public hearing notice for a hearing to be held within 14 days from that date. It took several votes cast after debate over several weeks to finally set a date - for mid-August. Even at that they couldn't get it right as the clerk published the wrong

notice with the glaring omission of the general summary on the budget - thereby causing the hearing to be further delayed several days.

As the weeks ticked away, not one person in the city attorney's office or the city clerk's office said to the council, "You may want to look at the City Charter and do things by the book. There's this little law here that you may want to follow."

Some councilors, especially the president, are fond of quoting chapter and verse from the City Charter when it suits their needs. Yet, in this case, the charter was completely ignored. It is this very lack of compliance with the City Charter that ultimately was part of the council's undoing. It was the lack of a public hearing on the June 12th budget that allowed the Mayor to declare his budget as having legal approval.

Furthermore, the councilors received no appropriate legal guidance from the attorney's office or the clerk's office addressing their noncompliance with the charter or state law. Why were the councilors' inappropriate actions met with silence?

We are a nation of laws that are to be taken quite seriously. Statutes, charters, and by-laws are not mere suggestions to be dusted off, looked at and ultimately ignored when it's convenient. Why is our council, time after time, allowed to go down these paths of non-

**As the weeks ticked away, not one person in the city attorney's office or the city clerk's office said to the council, "You may want to look at the City Charter and do things by the book. There's this little law here that you may want to follow."**

compliance? Why are there laws for the other 350 cities and towns of the Commonwealth and a completely different standard set for Lawrence? When will this systemic dysfunction infecting the Lawrence city council come to an end?

At this point in time, as the city moves forward, having averted a serious fiscal disaster with the threatened shut down of services, the city council should not be wasting more time and money by suing the Mayor. Judicial intervention should not be the next act in this soap opera.

The council, instead, should be asking itself what type of leadership it is getting from the current president and what type of guidance it is getting from its own professionals in the offices of the city attorney and the city clerk.

After all, this time it was just a matter of knowing what they should be doing and then doing it. Shame on the Lawrence City Council and its own professionals for not reading the same laws we all have available to us, including the Mayor.

## Preliminary Elections in Lawrence are on September 25th

The 1 candidate who will stand up for YOU on the city council



**Michael Fielding**  
Lawrence City Council District "F"

paid for by Michael Fielding

He's Not all Talk ... He's ACTION!

Safe & Clean Parks, New Streets Sidewalks, Lights & Signs, Promotes Public Safety in the Neighborhood, Advocate for Elderly Concerns



ReElect **Nick Kolofoles**

Lawrence City Council - District "D"

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Nick Kolofoles

"Always Reachable And Certainly Visible"



**MARIE GOSSELIN**  
District "F" City Council



MARIE will continue to be the positive voice we need on the City Council. MARIE will continue to work hard on the issues that we want to address. MARIE will continue to respond to your needs. MARIE will always be up to the challenge of making an important vote for the best interest of the citizens of District F and the City of Lawrence. MARIE will continue to get RESULTS!

I NEED YOUR VOTE ON ELECTION DAY!

*Marie Gosselin*



Signed: Marie Gosselin - 4 East Gilbert Street, Lawrence, MA 01843

**- ELECT -**

**James Blatchford**  
Lawrence School Committee District E



**Reasons for Running**

- Education is the number one priority in my life
- I will guide the committee toward fiscal responsibility
- I will help build a bridge between students and adults

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**Member of** Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association

**Contact Information:**  
3 Harrison St.  
Lawrence, MA 01843  
978-688-4412  
Blatchfordcommittee@gmail.com

"Let Youth Serve"

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Footnotes from

# TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

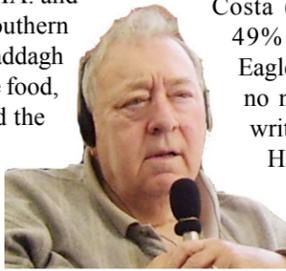
## The First Annual Callahan Cannonball

To benefit the family of Officer Kevin Callahan. The run will start at the Claddagh Pub 399, Canal Street Lawrence, MA. and wind through the back roads of Southern New Hampshire returning to the Claddagh Pub. Following the run there will be food, raffles and music featuring Beyond the Pale. All makes and models welcome. Pre registration is recommended and is available at: [www.CallahanCannonball.com](http://www.CallahanCannonball.com) The Claddagh Pub & Restaurant, the Lawrence Police Department or the day of the run.

Registration / sign-in beginning at 9:00 am. If you can't make the ride come and enjoy the food, music, and raffles. Fees \$25.00 per ride, \$10.00 per passenger T-shirt & Admission to Cookout included \$15.00 for non run participants who would like to attend cook out.

## Local Radio Station Implodes Ronnie Ford Quits WCCM

When I was growing up, anyone who was interested in local news and politics in Lawrence and Methuen were tuned in to local radio where, WCCM (800AM) was the undisputed king of talk radio. Lou Marcell, John Moran, Ben Mevoracch and a host of talented newsmen and talk show hosts covered everything from the national news of the day to the latest breaking stories in the Merrimack Valley. Often times they would "scoop the Tribune" and always saw



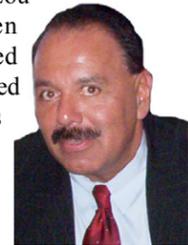
themselves as in competition with the daily newspaper for more in depth news coverage and better fact gathering. Today, however, WCCM is barely a shell of its' former self.

Under the new ownership of Pat Costa (who sold his soul and 49% of the station to the Eagle-Tribune) has absolutely no news team gathering and writing relevant news stories.

Having moved twice on the radio dial and going from a 5,000 watt radio signal to less than 1,000 watts, those who can actually find WCCM's current position on the radio dial can barely hear the broadcast (even in Lawrence) through waves of static. But if you can find the station and you can actually hear the broadcast, you won't find "Hot Line" host Ronnie Ford on the air anymore. Word has it that Ronnie Ford had simply had enough of Costa's meddling when he showed up for work one day with two guests booked for the show, only to find out that Costa himself had booked Arnie Arneson to do the show in place of Ford, telling Ford to come back the next day. Ford reportedly got up and walked out the door, never to return.

## Get John Romero

Lawrence city councilors Grisel Silva and Nunzio DiMarca were quite vocal during last month's budget battle with Mayor Sullivan when it came to their reasons for cutting the city budget and "trying to shut down the city." When



asked why she was so hell bent on cutting \$3.7 million in city services when every single department head testified that it would "devastate" their departments, Silva reacted "We are going to make him suffer, if he wants to back John Romero and let him do whatever he wants on the police department we are going to shut down the city. Romero is corrupt and as long as Sullivan defends him we are not going to pass his budget, Period." Not surprisingly, Councilor DiMarca, who was present when Silva made her feelings known, was overheard less than an hour later repeating her words, but pretending it was *his* original thought, repeating charges that the chief was corrupt and that Sullivan "had to pay the price."



## Did Tribune Concoct Cuomo Bridge Story?

Given the choice between believing what I read in the Eagle-Tribune and believing a politician who claims they were wronged by the daily paper, well, you know who I'm going to believe. But let me put this one out there for my readers in Haverhill and let you decide for yourself. According to Sally Cerasuolo-O'Rorke, candidate for mayor in Haverhill, a "reporter" from the Trib. called her and said he was working on a story concerning the "renaming of the Cuomo Bridge". O'Rorke said she told the reporter she hadn't heard anything about renaming the bridge but the reporter, she claims, pushed her to come up with an alternate name. "He said, 'well if they are going to rename the bridge, what would



name it?' O'Rorke said she couldn't come up with anything off the top of her head but thought that John Greenleaf Whittier might be a good choice. "I never said I wanted to change the name of the bridge, I was asked a question about alternative names and just gave him one off the top of my head, in no way was I suggesting that we take Mr. Cuomo's name off the bridge." Now, I have no favorites in the mayor's race in Haverhill but after interviewing Sally for more than 2 hours I can tell you I believe her 100%. The question now is: will this Tribune-concocted bridge controversy have any effect on O'Rorke's chances on election day?

## Technical School Committee Exonerated ... For Now

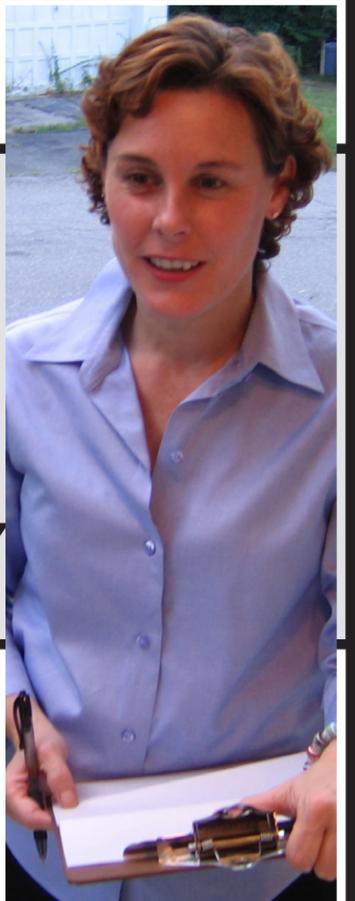
Chairman of the Greater Lawrence Tech. School Committee announced during a meeting last month that the school had received notification from the Mass. Ethics Commission exonerating members of the board for a recent trip taken by board members. Henrick said openly that he wanted the committee to approve sending a letter to the Methuen City Council because "there were public comments made by one councilor on this matter and I think the record should be set straight. The Ethics commission said we did nothing wrong." But, while making the announcement in public, board members immediately began shuffling in their seats and tried talking over Henrick saying they wanted to discuss it in "executive session." When asked by a reporter for a copy of the letter from the Ethics Commission, Henrick said they

# Elect

# APRIL Lyskowsky

## LAWRENCE CITY COUNCIL

### District "A" Prospect Hill



## Finally.... Prospect Hill has a choice as to who represents YOU on the Lawrence City Council

## Elect April Lyskowsky ... and she WILL return your Phone calls



**LFFCU Gets New Team Member**

Lisa Morelli joined the Lawrence Fire-fighters Federal Credit Union on June 4, 2007, as the new Member Service Manager, Bank Secrecy and Compliance Officer. Lisa is a graduate of Hesser College and received her Bachelors Degree in Business Management with a minor in Business Administration. Lisa is a Lawrence native with 23 years of banking experience. During her career, Lisa spent 18 years with First Essex Bank, where she held many positions in the retail banking sector, ranging from the teller line, to Customer Service, Assistant Treasurer/Manager, with her last five years in consumer lending. In 2004, when First Essex Bank merged with Sovereign Bank, Lisa became employed by Enterprise Bank of Lowell, Massachusetts. While employed with Enterprise Bank, Lisa held the title of Vice President Bank Secrecy Officer and Compliance Officer, she also assisted with the auditing, safety and security departments.



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

would have to vote on it in executive session. And apparently that's what they did. After the meeting chairman Henrick said "they decided in executive session not to release the letter." Here's the problem, according to state law, any vote taken in executive session must also be taken in open session. The Tech S Committee didn't do that.

**Conventional Wisdom Who's UP WHO's Down**

**DOWN: Ruth Rojas,** Rojas failed miserably two years ago in her bid to beat Grisel Silva for the District "B" city council seat and this year she failed to properly sign and prepare her nomination papers so the board of registrars threw her name off the ballot. What's worse, two years ago the Valley Patriot took pictures of the trash and deplorable conditions outside Rojas' home and in her yard. With talk of Rojas launching a sticker campaign to get her name on the November ballot we sent a photographer back to her home to see if she finally picked up her property (after all she wants to represent her neighborhood on the city council) but lo and behold the garbage in front of Rojas Summer Street home looks like it hasn't been picked up since before we took our pictures back in 2005. Look for before and after pictures in our next edition... and have fun trying to tell which is which.



**DOWN: Barry Finegold,** A year ago Andover State Rep Barry Finegold was under the misimpression that his Merrimack Valley Colleagues were going to support him in his bud for congress. Now, just a few days after Finegold finds himself on the losing end of a Democrat primary he

has to be looking around and wondering why every single state representative and state senator he serves with on Beacon Hill endorsed his opponents. For what it is worth, Finegold deserved much better treatment from those he thought were his friends. One thing for sure, Finegold now knows who his friends are. I only hope that the next time one of his colleagues asks him for political support in a local or state race he has the courage to tell them all where to go. Hey Barry, you were robbed, but you were robbed by people you thought you could trust. Let that be a lesson to you, there are no friends in politics and no political favor goes unpunished.

**UP: Lawrence City Councilor Joe Parolisi,** he's not even the council president but he made a valiant effort to educate the public during budget hearings as to exactly what kind of cuts would be made to the fire and police department if Grisel Silva's \$3.7 million in proposed cuts were approved by the council. What's more, the fact that Modesto Maldonado architect of Latino Agenda) is targeting Parolisi for defeat in November means he is now a shoe-in to take one of the two top at-large spots on election day.

**UP: Methuen Councilor Phil Lahey:** Lahey picked up a few big endorsements last week with endorsements from former Veterans Services Director Ed "Hoppy" Curran, Methuen Mayor Bill Manzi, and former councilor Mike Hennessey. Lahey is doing the work on the campaign trail and not taking endorsements for granted but he does have a tough race ahead of him in one of the most crowded races in the city.



Continued on page 25

**VOTE for**  
**Robert W. BEALS**  
**COUNCILOR AT LARGE**  
**Tuesday**  
**September 25th**  
paid for by Robert Beals

**No Rhetoric**  
**No Grandstanding**  
**Just professional Leadership**  
**Hard Work ...**  
**And The Ability to Get the Job Done!**

# Why I'm Running for Re-election to the Lawrence School Committee

## Peter Larocque, Lawrence School Committee

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

Now I am humbly asking the voters of District E to send me back to the Lawrence School Committee for a full two-year term. Since being sworn in last October I have been very busy doing the work that I believe has made the Lawrence Public Schools safer, more efficient and more parent friendly.

The first action I took as your School Committee Member was to call for a public forum on School Safety, which was held at the Lawrence High School Auditorium. This led to the establishment of the Lawrence School Safety Sub-Committee, which I also have been given the honor to chair. This School Safety Sub-Committee is made up of central office personnel, high school, middle school and elementary school principals and assistant principals. Also participating on the sub-committee are parents representing all three grade levels

as well as students from the Lawrence High School Student Council. It has always been a platform of mine to have the Lawrence School Committee take a lesson from the Lawrence City Council, which operates with sub-committees to help in their way of governing.

With the use of sub-committees the issues that come before the Lawrence School Committee become more transparent for all to see. For instance we also established the Lawrence School Uniform Sub-Committee, which I am sure you are all aware of. Parents brought this issue before the school committee and as a parent it was an issue that I, along with my colleagues, unanimously approved. The Uniform Sub-Committee has the same make up of staff, parents and students as the School Safety Sub-Committee.

One of the accomplishments of the School Safety Sub-Committee this past school year was the establishment of an Action Plans that will immediately affect the Safety of the Lawrence Public Schools. One such plan is to have the Emergency & Crisis Response Plans for each school



practiced just like we see fire drills practiced on a monthly basis.

As your school committee member, I also have not forgotten the Lawrence PTA which is where I began my involvement with the Lawrence Public School System when my children were students.

There are three meetings per month that I make myself available for without hesitation. (I attend more but for sure these three. And then, there are, of course, the Lawrence School Committee Meetings, the Lawrence School Safety Sub-Committee Meetings, and the President's Council Meetings. The President's Council Meetings are monthly meetings involving the presidents and other officers of all the school's PTAs and the Lawrence School Superintendent.

At this meeting all the latest updates, progress reports and concerns are discussed between all those present. Each PTA Officer has the ear of the Superintendent and is able to share his or her issues that pertain to their school.

It is at this meeting I hear first-hand the concerns of parents and then I am able to

make myself available to help where needed. Being a father of three, I am able to share my experience and give a voice to parent concerns and issues. I am also able to serve as a mediator between parents and the school administration if necessary. I would like to continue this service for the parents of District E. I bring leadership, experience and commitment to the district as a taxpaying homeowner to every vote I make.

I would like the privilege of receiving your vote on election day so that I can continue to pursue transparency, maintain fiscal responsibility and improve student achievement while giving parents a voice by bringing their concerns to the table and while keep Lawrence Public Schools safe for all students, teachers and staff. Yes, I know that there is much more work that needs to be done, but I am of the belief that together we can make Lawrence Public Schools second to none! Thank you again for your vote on election day!

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](mailto:plarocque@lawrence.k12.ma.us)



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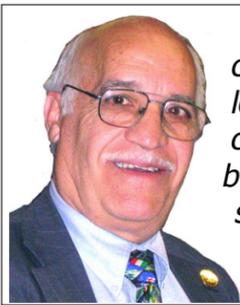
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# DiMarca Admits Local Businessman Paid for Trip to Italy

Continued from Page 1



*He paid for the whole trip," DiMarca said after a city council meeting where he had just openly lobbied for Bonelli's company. "After all, I am a city councilor and he needs help getting his business started in Lawrence. He also needed some-one to go with him to Italy who speaks the language, so I served both as a representative of the city and as a translator."*

European partners. As you know the councilman recently accompanied me on my recent business trip to Italy and represented the council's interest as well as acting in a translator capacity. His help was instrumental in securing a deal which will benefit both Helios and Lawrence."

Councilor DiMarca admitted to a Valley Patriot reporter (in front of several other councilors) that he had taken a trip to Italy and that Mr. Bonelli paid for his trip.

"He paid for the whole trip," DiMarca said after a city council meeting where he had just openly lobbied for Bonelli's company. "After all, I am a city councilor and he needs help getting his business started in Lawrence. He also needed someone to go with him to Italy who speaks the language, so I served both as a representative of the city and as a translator."

DiMarca explained that Bonelli is planning to open his manufacturing firm in Lawrence once he has secured contracts with European companies to supply energy efficient heating and cooling units.

Section 23(b)(2) of Massachusetts' conflict of interest law prohibits a public employee from using or attempting to use his position to secure for himself or others

an unwarranted privilege of substantial value not properly available to similarly situated individuals. Section 23(b)(3) of the law prohibits a public official from knowingly, or with reason to know, acting in a manner which would cause a reasonable person, having knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to conclude that anyone can improperly influence or unduly enjoy the public employee's favor in the performance of his official duties.

According to the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission website, public officials "may not ask for or accept anything (regardless of its value), if it is offered in exchange for your agreeing to perform or not perform an official act... (public officials) may not ask for or accept anything worth \$50 or more from anyone with whom you have official dealings. Examples of regulated "gifts" include: sports tickets, costs of drinks and meals, travel expenses, conference fees, gifts of appreciation, entertainment expenses, free use of vacation homes and complimentary tickets to charitable events.

"I am concerned because Councilor DiMarca has used his position as a city councilor to gain direct access for this company to city officials," the complaint

alleges, "including those directly involved in the decision-making process for economic development in the city. Councilor DiMarca has made demands for, before and after this trip, face-to-face meetings with the mayor, the planning director, the economic development officer and other city officials to lobby for the Helios company to receive benefits from the city."

Several city officials told the Valley Patriot that Councilor DiMarca "actively lobbied" them to give preferential treatment to Mr. Bonelli as well as demanding that they give him access to Community Development Block Grants and possibly helping Bonelli acquire city owned land. The Lawrence City Council recently dismantled the real property task force and is now the governing body in charge of selling surplus land.

The complaint also states: "Councilor DiMarca has been very angry with a few city employees because they have repeatedly denied his requests to set up "investor" meetings with some wealthy businessmen in Lawrence. Councilor DiMarca wanted these city employees to use the relationships they have built with other business people to give creditability to this new company, Helios, and to use their creditability to convince these business people to invest with this new company. He was refused this request because city officials felt it was improper for them to be conducting an "investors" meeting and asking private people to invest directly in this new company. **Councilor DiMarca repeatedly expressed his strong displeasure that this was not being done.**" (emphasis by author)

The Valley Patriot confirmed with three different city officials that DiMarca was lobbying for Mr. Bonelli to receive special treatment both before and after taking the trip as well as DiMarca's insistence that "investors" meetings be set up by city employees.

"He wanted us to use the resources of the city to help Mr. Bonelli start up his company," one city employee said. "He then suggested very strongly that we (the city) act as Bonelli's business agents by setting up meetings with local businessmen who have a good relationship with the mayor's office. He specifically wanted the mayor's office to give our official stamp of approval in front of these Lawrence business owners as he pitched his business proposals to them. That is just not something that's appropriate for me to do as a city employee and Mr. DiMarca should know that. When I told him I didn't feel comfortable doing him this 'favor', he

began to make overtures about how much power a city councilor has and how my job could be cut out of the budget on 'one councilors recommendation.' It was a very uncomfortable position to be put in and through this whole budget process I was really worried I was going to lose my job." Saying they feared retaliation by the councilor, all three of the city officials who spoke with the Valley Patriot asked that neither their names nor job titles be identified.

While bragging to a Valley Patriot reporter about his free trip to Italy, DiMarca was asked if he did any sightseeing in his "home country". DiMarca said they had no time. "We didn't have any time for leisure. This was a business trip. I was representing the city and I was translating for Mr. Bonelli. He is going to bring jobs to Lawrence and the city should be doing everything we can to help him start up his business right here in Lawrence."

DiMarca also stated that he had the opportunity to visit family members while in Italy but added, "I was there to help Lawrence. It was a win-win for both of us, he needed a translator to help him make his business dealings and Lawrence needs business. Lawrence needs jobs. Why don't you write a story about that?" he asked. "But you won't print a story about how Councilor DiMarca is doing the mayor's job and the job of the planning department. I'm doing more to bring business and economic development to the city than the so-called economic development department and I'm not getting any credit for it."

"Yeah, he's doing all he can to help a guy who gave him a free trip to Italy," one city employee responded. "And who knows if he is benefiting in other ways in exchange for greasing the skids and promising free city services."

Lawrence Mayor Michael Sullivan said he would not comment on the matter other than to say he did meet with Mr. Bonelli and councilor DiMarca about Helios Climate Systems "at councilor DiMarca's insistence."

Several members of the Lawrence City Council said that DiMarca did speak favorably about Helios Climate Systems during city council meetings but that the city council, as a body, "never voted to send him to Italy as our representative," nor did he "represent the city council's interest." The Lawrence City Charter only gives councilors authority to represent the City of Lawrence when acting as a body or when appointed by the council president to represent the council in official city business. Council President Patrick Blanchette could not be reached for comment.

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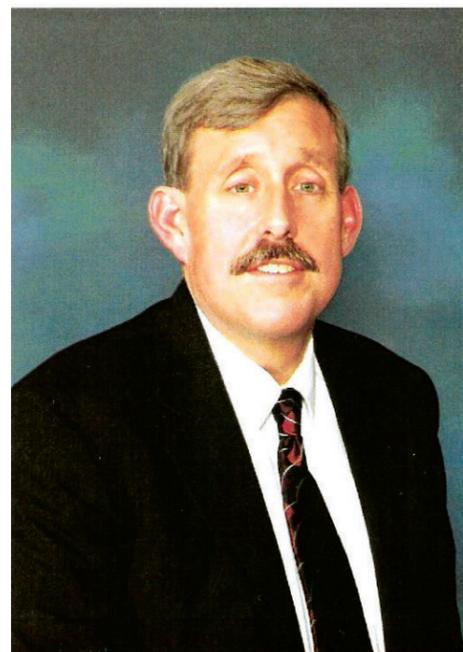
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Please feel free to contact me at (978)265-0196 [plarocque@lawrence.k12.ma.us](mailto:plarocque@lawrence.k12.ma.us)

# Thank You Linda Soucy of the Methuen Safe Haven Program



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# Local Family Hosts Fundraiser to Benefit Merrimack Valley Hospice

Lawrence, Mass. – A local family was so touched by the end of life services their father, Richard Barker, received during the winter of 2007 from Merrimack Valley Hospice, they wanted to do something to give back. The family was so grateful for the care provided by Merrimack Valley Hospice that they planned a fundraiser event in memory of their loved one to benefit the non-profit organization.

Beth Torla, daughter of Richard and Constance Barker, wife of Richard, held a Barbeque Birthday Party on Sunday, June 30<sup>th</sup> at the Berkely Club in Lawrence in memory of Richard. The family acquired product donations and support for the event from several local businesses including Haverhill Beef, the Berkeley Club, and Dube Lock Company.

Funds were raised through a \$10.00 suggested donation per person attendance the event and through a raffle. Over \$4,000 was raised at the event to benefit patient care at Merrimack Valley Hospice. The fundraising event was so successful that the

family plans to make this Barbeque Birthday Party in Memory of Richard an annual event.

“Every year, we have several community members help us raise funds for Merrimack Valley Hospice that amount to significant resources for the organization,” said Janine Papesh, Manager of Development at Merrimack Valley Hospice.

“We are so honored to be chosen by these families and truly appreciate their efforts.”

If you or someone you know would like to make Merrimack Valley Hospice recipients of a fundraising activity, please contact, Janine Papesh, Manager of Development at [jpapesh@homehealthfoundation.org](mailto:jpapesh@homehealthfoundation.org)

Merrimack Valley Hospice is a not for profit agency affiliated with Home Health VNA and HomeCare, Inc. Together, the three agencies serve more than 80 communities throughout the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire. Visit them on the web at [www.merrimackvalleyhospice.org](http://www.merrimackvalleyhospice.org)



**The Barker Family of Lawrence and Methuen who hosted a Birthday Barbeque in memory of their late father, Richard. The family gave \$4,000 to Merrimack Valley Hospice.**

## Home Health VNA Launches New Program Helping Newburyport Elders

Newburyport, – This spring Home Health VNA launched telephone reassurance program geared towards reducing hospitalizations, “Keeping You Home & Healthy.” This new program is a pre- and post-discharge telephone follow up and information service for elderly Newburyport patients receiving home care from Home Health VNA.

“This program acts as a ‘safety net’ for our patients,” said Celeste Dalton, Newburyport Branch Manager for Home Health VNA. “We want to ensure that our patients, especially frail patients that live alone, continue their recuperation as planned and maintain their independence in the home.”

Nurse Nancy Paquin, RN, BSN, is the friendly voice patients hear on the other end of the telephone. She calls patients getting ready for discharge from services on a day they are not scheduled for a visit. She also checks in with those who have already been discharged to make sure they are doing well and progressing as planned.

Paquin makes a call to the patient to check on their well being. She offers nursing advice, and acts as a knowledgeable resource for patients who might have questions about their recovery. Questions are geared to assess for changes in their condition, including how they are managing their medications. Often, Paquin’s call may trigger a concern they may have inadvertently forgotten to mention to their visiting nurse.



“The response I’ve gotten has been very positive,” said Paquin. “The patients have really enjoyed the call and appreciate the chance to ask questions about their recovery.”

They are always so thankful that we have checked in on them. We cover a lot of different subjects in our conversation – making sure they have everything they need from medications to food and we closely monitor any changes in their condition or concerns they may have.”

The new program has received generous funding from two local foundations. The Newburyport Society for the Relief of Aged Women gave \$10,000 to start the program, and the Mosley Fund of Social Services provided \$5,750. This support has been

crucial to getting the program off the ground. Patients residing in Newburyport over the age of 65 who are at-risk for re-hospitalization receive calls from Paquin.

“Our goals for the program are to reduce re-hospitalization, provide additional support and reassurance and ensure a continuity of care of our patients,” said Dalton.

“This program enhances our customer service and provides an opportunity for the patient to ask questions they may have forgotten to ask during their discharge process. Many times a patient won’t call a health care provider with a question or concern. This program is an important tool that will ensure patients avoid any emergency situations.”

The Newburyport Society for the Relief of Aged Women also donated an additional \$15,000 to the agency to specifically fund care for women in Newburyport over the age of 65. This donation will provide care to women in the city of who are uninsured or underinsured or have few or no resources to access the medical care they require.

“We are happy to support Home Health VNA in their work,” said Elizabeth Swanson, from the Newburyport Society for the Relief of Aged Women. “The services they provide to the women of Newburyport are critical for elderly women in this region and directly in line with our group’s mission.”

“It’s amazing what a difference a simple phone call to an elderly patient recuperating at home can make,” said Dalton. “The generous support of these two organizations has really made a difference in the lives of some of our most at-risk Newburyport patients.”

Home Health VNA is recognized as the regional leader in the delivery of home and community-based medical and supportive care to patients in Greater Newburyport. The agency is affiliated with HomeCare, Inc. and Merrimack Valley Hospice.

Together, the three agencies serve more than 80 communities throughout Northeastern Massachusetts, the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire. Visit them on the web at [www.homehealthvna.org](http://www.homehealthvna.org).

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# Chemical Compound in Curry May Combat Alzheimer's, Cancer

**Your Health by Dr. Rallie McAllister**

A chemical compound in turmeric, an Asian spice used to flavor curry powders, may prove useful in treatment of Alzheimer's disease. The compound works by triggering cells of the immune system to gobble up brain-clogging plaques associated with the condition.

These findings, published in the July edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, support previous claims that curry may help combat Alzheimer's disease. Other research has shown that regular consumption of curcumin, the active ingredient in turmeric, may even boost brainpower.

In a study of more than a thousand elderly Asian adults, researchers at the National University of Singapore evaluated performance on a standard test of cognitive function. Individuals who consumed curry often or even occasionally scored significantly higher than those who rarely or never ate the spice.

Observational studies support the notion that curcumin may have protective actions in the brain. In India, where curry consumption is commonplace, the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease is among the lowest in the world.

In the United States, however, the condition is a major problem among elderly Americans, and one that is expected to worsen in the coming years. Currently, one in eight Americans age 65 and older suffers from Alzheimer's disease.

While there's mounting evidence to suggest that a curry-rich diet is beneficial for Alzheimer's patients, scientists are investigating a number of other potential medicinal uses of curcumin. One of its most promising properties is its ability to thwart the runaway growth of cancer cells.

In a study published in the medical journal, The Prostate, scientists evaluated the effects of the compound on mice injected with human prostate cancer cells. Six weeks after initiating treatment, tumors in the mice receiving curcumin were at least 70 percent smaller than tumors in the mice fed a placebo supplement.

When scientists at the University of Texas added curcumin to samples of melanoma skin cancer cells in the laboratory, they

found that the more spice they added, the more cells died. Researchers speculate that the compound blocks the signals that cancer cells need to survive.



In human subjects, a curcumin-containing ointment was found to produce significant improvements in the symptoms of individuals suffering from skin cancer. Most patients treated with the ointment reported less itching and pain, and some noted a reduction in the size of the cancerous skin lesions.

Curcumin has been shown to cause death in cultures of colorectal cancer cells in laboratory studies.

In animal models, the chemical is known to slow the progression and shrink the size of colorectal tumors.

A curry-rich diet may reduce the likelihood of developing stomach ulcers. Not only does it trigger production of the mucus that lines and protects the stomach, it also appears to inhibit the growth of Helicobacter pylori, a bacterial cause of many stomach ulcers.

As an agent with potent anti-oxidant properties, curcumin shows promise in the prevention and treatment of coronary heart disease. Recent research suggests that the compound reduces total cholesterol levels, as well as levels of unhealthy LDL (low-density lipoprotein) and VLDL (very low-density lipoprotein).

Regular consumption of curry-containing foods may reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Studies conducted by Danish researchers demonstrated curcumin's ability

to inhibit the formation of artery-clogging blood clots in the vessels of the heart and brain.

Curry has long been known to possess powerful anti-inflammatory properties. For thousands of years, practitioners of Hindu medicine have prescribed it for the relief of swelling caused by injury and infection.

This property makes it useful in a number of roles, including the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. In a preliminary trial involving 18 patients with rheumatoid arthritis, researchers found the effects of curcumin just as effective as those of a prescription non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug.

Arthritis sufferers taking 1,200 milligrams curcumin daily for two weeks reported significant improvements in morning stiffness, joint swelling, and walking times. The supplements are known to be safe and are generally well tolerated: no toxic effects have been observed among patients taking doses as high as 8 grams daily for 12 weeks or longer.

In the United States, curcumin extracts are available as dietary supplements without a prescription. Most manufacturers recommend taking 500 milligrams one to three times daily.

If you enjoy the taste of curry, you can feel good about digging into your favorite Indian and Asian foods. While the active ingredient protects your brain and body, the flavor is sure to delight your taste buds.

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](http://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](http://www.creators.com).  
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## Simple Wisdom

Gail Van Kleeck

### Knowing What We Value

The first time I saw Parker, I'd just sworn off men. It was a warm day in early spring. I was wearing a long skirt made of the kind of soft cotton fabric that gave it a life of its own when it moved. Parker was sitting in front of me at a lecture, engaged in conversation with the woman beside him. His warm and easy laughter made me smile.

At the break in the lecture, I headed for the ladies room. When I came out, Parker and his companion were standing near the door. She smiled and introduced us. As I reached out to shake his hand, my left arm brushed inadvertently against my side. It was then that I realized I'd tucked the hem of my skirt into the elastic of my panty hose. That was nearly thirteen years ago and Parker still insists he didn't notice. He says he was too busy looking at my eyes. It's typical of him to want to care for me in that way.

We began with a gentle kind of friendship. We did simple things together. We laughed a lot. He'd been a jazz musician and had also built a sailboat he'd journeyed in for years. I didn't know much about either jazz or sailing and didn't have much trust in relationships with men. He didn't pressure me. He was loving and considerate. After a while he asked if he could put a few of his things in my closet. I told myself it would be alright, as long as he could clear everything out in less than half an hour if I needed to ask him to leave. A little later I upped my comfort level to an hour. After that I upped it to two. It was about then that we had a terrible argument.

It wasn't as though we hadn't argued before. If our relationship was going to work for either of us, we needed to confront our differences and find a way to build bridges between them. This time we didn't even try to build a bridge. Our argument grew more heated. I asked him to take his things and leave. He was silent for a

moment. When he spoke his voice was low and clear. He said he wasn't leaving, that he wasn't going anywhere. In my mind I saw myself reaching for the phone to call the police then I heard him speak again. He said throughout his life, he'd always had a back door to escape through in his mind. This time he said he'd nailed that back door shut. He said he felt as though the life we were beginning to build together was the harbor he'd always been heading toward. He said that he couldn't walk away.

Being clear about what we value helps us to make the kinds of choices that add richness and fulfillment to our lives. When we are clear about what we value it's easier to see the difference between what we think we want and what we truly need. More than ever in these challenging times, we need to keep asking ourselves if the way we are living truly honors what is most unrepeatable and precious in our hearts.

WHAT WE FOCUS ON IS TRULY WHAT WE SEE

#### Who is Gail Van Kleeck?

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 and 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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## 5th District Congressional Race

# Tsongas Wins Democrat Primary

Richard Howe, Jr.



Niki Tsongas rolled to a closer than expected victory in the Democratic primary portion of the special election to fill the Fifth District Congressional seat vacated by Marty Meehan this summer. While Tsongas certainly campaigned as hard as anyone else, the outcome of this race was decided last March when Meehan announced his

plans to leave Congress. That set in motion a statutory scheme that left little flexibility in the scheduling of the special election. With the primary falling on the day after the long Labor Day Weekend, the schedule seemed designed to suppress both voter interest and turnout. In such an environment, Tsongas's name recognition and the residual good will voters of this district still felt for her late husband Paul gave her a big head start in the race. The limited time available before the election and the limited interest by voters ensured that none of the other candidates could catch up.

While the Democratic primary still retained some drama right up until the end due to the vigorous campaigns waged by Eileen Donoghue, Jamie Eldridge, Barry Finegold and Jim Miceli, the outcome of the Republican primary that pitted Jim Ogonowski of Dracut against Tom Tierney of Framingham never seemed in doubt. Ogonowski's big victory sets the stage for an intense six weeks of campaigning between he and Tsongas and a handful of lesser known third party candidates.

But the primary race to watch was the Democratic one. Tsongas never relinquished her head start. She put together a crack staff, raised a ton of money, and gave anyone who watched plenty of reasons to vote for her with solid performances in all debates. Niki didn't win by default because her four opponents all ran aggressively. The big University of Massachusetts Lowell debate on August 27 in some ways symbolized the entire race. Barry Finegold

**Tsongas never relinquished her head start. She put together a crack staff, raised a ton of money, and gave anyone who watched plenty of reasons to vote for her with solid performances in all debates.**

was in the middle of the stage, Jim Miceli was to his right and Jamie Eldridge was to his left. Eileen Donoghue and Niki Tsongas were at either end. Despite their determined efforts to break out of the pack with their respective positions, the three state representatives were engulfed by the smoke from the confrontation between the two women. Donoghue was the clear aggressor, ratcheting up the rhetoric against Tsongas, saying that her campaign was funded by special interests from outside the district seeking to hijack the Congressional seat from the voters of the Merrimack Valley. Tsongas held her own and fought back, challenging Donoghue to pull a recent TV ad that Tsongas said misrepresented her position on Iraq.

It wasn't just Congressional race that shattered the usual calm of August. The Lowell City Council entertained two controversial issues: the elimination of the city council primary election and the possible extension of City Manager Bernie Lynch's contract.

Some Lowell residents were disappointed when the City Council unanimously voted to eliminate a primary in this year's municipal election. Eighteen candidates may appear on the ballot in the November election, so if more than that number turn in sufficient signatures on nomination papers, a primary election is necessary. In recent years, only eighteen or fewer candidates have made it to the ballot, so no primary has been needed. This year, there are twenty-

one candidates. The council, however, unanimously voted to request the state legislature to grant a home rule petition eliminating the need for a primary this year. The council's reasoning was that the city's election budget for the fiscal year is already in the red with the special elections (primary and general) for Congress plus the presidential primary in March, so it would be a pointless expenditure of much needed funds to hold a primary that would only eliminate three candidates.

The council waded into another controversy when it took up a motion by Kevin Broderick requesting the council to consider extending the contract of City Manager Bernie Lynch for an additional two years. At its August 28 meeting, the council, by a vote of 6 to 3, referred the matter to its Personnel Subcommittee for a report and recommendation. This motion reignited the fifteen month-old controversy that began with the resignation of John Cox from the office of city manager in April 2006. The vote to support the Lynch contract extension mirrored the expected results of the vote of no confidence in Cox that was never actually taken but would have, but for his resignation. Back then, councilors Broderick, Eileen Donoghue, Rodney Elliott, Mayor Bill Martin, Jim Milinazzo and George Ramirez stated publicly that they had lost confidence in Cox. (Ramirez has since resigned, but he was replaced by Joe Mendonca, a former school committee member who seems to be pleased with Lynch's performance and who voted for the contract extension process).

With the Congressional special election in mid-October and the general election in Lowell in early November both looming, the intensive political activity we saw during August was just a warmup for the next two months.

Richard P. Howe Jr. is the creator of [www.richardhowe.com](http://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](mailto:lowelldeeds@comcast.net)

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# All About Georgetown

**Georgetown News**

**Georgetown Selectman Lonnie Brennan**

Most Fall columns are filled with cheer of school openings and the faded memories of over-hyped, over-exaggerated and typically failed override attempts. Fortunately, our local papers and the weekly fish wrap continue to print such drivel. Meanwhile, life moves on. Here are a few updates on things you might not have read in the local papers:

**Richie Clough**

Former Selectman Richie Clough, surrounded by a small group of family and friends, including his devoted, seemingly tireless wife Nancy, had major surgery again. He lost one leg last year. This August, he lost the battle for his second leg. Two days after surgery, my bride and I visited Richie. Talk about good spirits. He's determined, despite the loss of both legs, to walk again. "By walker or by tow-truck, I don't care, I'll get fitted (for prosthetics) and I'll walk again. That's my goal," he told us." Brave guy. The Clough family could use our prayers and our support. Cards can be sent to 48 Andover Street. Stay tuned for more info.

**Taxes**

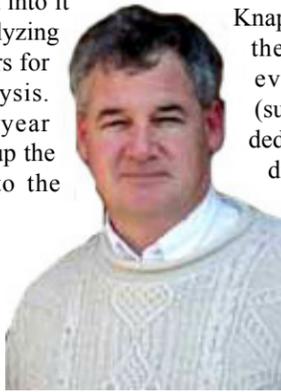
I promised a tax assessment update, but with regret, the Summer months have not leant themselves to full analysis. Suffice to say, as reported in the Spring column, some folks received great reductions. Our assessor's daughter received a 15% reduction, later deemed "an error we're going to fix" by our assistant assessor. Well, surprisingly, it appears her dad faired pretty well too. See the chart on this page. If you can pick out his tax increase, from amongst his neighbors on the Rock Pond, please send an e-mail to [IfoundTheChairmanOfTheBoardOfAssessors@](mailto:IfoundTheChairmanOfTheBoardOfAssessors@)

[justgeorgetownma.com](http://justgeorgetownma.com). Read into it what you want. We're still analyzing things and have enlisted others for additional advice and analysis. Hint: It's not # 14. Free year subscription (you must pick up the paper a your local store) to the winner(s).

**Why Georgetown?**

A decade or so ago, Georgetown was a mixed-place: seemingly mostly blue-collar workers, nice homes and nice community. Now, it's gone a tad upscale and the little guy is feeling the squeeze. I still find myself taking very unpopular positions and votes to protect the community from spikes in tax increases. Not a way to become popular or make friends with the jet-setters, but I hope they'll understand someday. Some have asked, repeatedly, what's so good about Georgetown? Well, here's my quick list of just three dozen things that are good about Georgetown:

1. On-call firefighters responding today to a lockout situation (child locked in building, mother more than nervous at her mistake);
2. Many folks of all ages pitching in again (I think first time in eight years) to clean the Penn Brook school (and this time, outstanding);
3. Charlie Mendez taking photos of the above, and taking video of so many things and events in town;
4. The treasures at Sedler's. When is the last time you spent some time there?;
5. Folks walking their dogs;
6. The friend who asked me to haul some of his kid's furniture last week;
7. the neighbors who help one another with roof leaks;
8. Our veteran's agent, Terrance Hart;
9. The



Knapps for their tireless efforts for the historic society and other events; 10. George Moker (surprise, surprise) for his tireless dedication to the schools. I might disagree violently with him on funding and negotiations, but you have to give it to the guy, he's dedicated to his cause, just like Margaret Messelaar who previously served on the school committee; 10. Our PTA. What an outstanding group, past and present!; 11. The folks who don't let humanity and friendship get destroyed because they disagree on one or two things; 12. Fiscal conservatives if you can find one or two in town. I'm told there are three on the nine-member finance committee; 13. Almost all of my kids's teachers, from preschool through high school.; 14. The local K of C and their charity work (yes, I'm a member there); 15. The Summer Concert series; 16. The pool guy; 17. The husband/wife team who own the Napa store and are so tremendously helpful when I ask silly questions; 18. Dinners at Erie station; 19. Country Gardeners; 20. The weekly fish wrap; 21. Camp Denison walking paths and opportunities for taking photos; 22. Soccer in town; 23. Our churches, our priest our pastors; 24. Knowing most of the police officers by name, at your kids events, or just around town when you see them; 25. Mint Chip at Henborg's; 26. Chocolate covered graham crackers at The Chocolate Cellar (a little personal plug from the owner's husband here); 26. The high school builder's club; 27. Three ponds; 28. The extreme mixture of social/economical folks; 29. The infusion of Haverhill kids in our school system (sad the numbers will be

reduced moving forward now...); 30. Mike's Favorite - the best breakfast sandwich at Theo's; 31. Shirts from Georgetown Clothing; 32. Our pharmacist, Mr. Lamonica; 33. Butchie's (Stewart's) oil changes; 34. Bike rides to W. Box. Provisions for lunch; 35. Our seniors; 36. Our conservation agent.

Need I continue? You just need to look around. Sure geography has a bit of an effect, but it's almost all about people. It's about your neighbors. Try to do something nice for a neighbor if you can this fall. Folks, send me some e-mail. It would be great to add your items to this list. I could make it 200 items, but this paper is only so big.

**September Events:**

The Kadet Club - The K of C is resurrecting the Kadet Club. Pay \$70 and have a great meal, donate to charity, have a great evening, and possibly win a ton of cash. See [www.kadetclub.com](http://www.kadetclub.com) for details.

The Merrimack Valley Chapter of Marriage and Family is hosting an event at the Byfield Parish Church: David Parker will headline the night's event on September 15th, detailing the problems he's encountered while trying to discuss and explain the inappropriateness of having school officials introduce his kindergarten child to homosexual activities and indoctrination in the Lexington, MA school system. Truly amazing stuff. I'll post details at [www.GeorgetownToday.com](http://www.GeorgetownToday.com).

The board of selectmen have extended an initiation to the schools, the recreation path committee, and the planning board to share with the town their recent activities. Please tune into Channel 9 or Channel 42 for their presentations.

## Tom Duggan's Notebook: From Page 17

**DOWN: Willie Lantigua:** Lantigua backed Lowell City Councilor Eileen Donoghue in Lawrence while his rivals in the Marcos Devers camp were supporting Niki Tsongas. Guess which candidate won Lawrence in the Democrat primary for congress? Yup, Tsongas overwhelmed Donoghue by a vote tally of 1,425 (Tsongas) to 927 (Donoghue). Looks like Lantigua's endorsement doesn't carry as much weight as it use to in the mill city. But at least Lantigua can brag about one thing, his candidate defeated Barry Finegold in Lawrence by seven votes and Finegold actually represents Lawrence in the House of Representatives. Lantigua must be nervous now with the possibility of Devers challenging him next year but Finegold has to be smarting even more knowing he lost big in a city he has always enjoyed wide popularity.



**UP: State Senator Steve Baddour:** Even though his candidate for congress, Eileen Donoghue was (barely) defeated at the polls in the special primary last week, Donoghue won Methuen by more than 200 votes. Baddour was the architect of a series of newspaper ads (something Finegold failed to capitalize on) showing Donoghue and Baddour touting them as a "team". The team concept is wildly successful if done correctly and Baddour and Donoghue almost pulled it off perfectly. Now if only Finegold had been smart enough to spend his money on local newspapers (where super voters are best targeted) instead of wasting all that cash on silly television commercials. Now, let's see how the Baddour "team" does in the Methuen municipal elections come November.



**Essex St. Development**

Congratulations to Michel S. Tarshi on the groundbreaking of his new construction project on Essex Street. (see picture on page 17). Tarshi, formerly of Donald Trump's "The Apprentice" is helping the city of Lawrence with his development near his father's law office at 510 Essex Street. Tarshi's building will hold retail and office space, perfect for the redevelopment of the down town area.

**All in the Family**

President of the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association Frank Incropera may be supporting David Abdo in the District "E" city council race but his cousin Jay Incropera is backing Abdo's opponent Matty Brien. According to insiders involved in both races, the Brien campaign is planning to mail out friend to friend cards signed by "The Incropera Family" to fool people in Mt. Vernon into thinking that Frank and Dotti Incropera are endorsing Brien and not Abdo. It's typical Willie Lantigua politics if it's true.

**A Shameless Plug**

Since my friends Danielle Lamorandi and Ray Torrisi recently had a baby this gives me the perfect chance to kill two birds with one stone. First, to put a picture of her daughter Kayla (god I hope I spelled that right) in the paper (our readers love babies) and secondly to promote a new idea for the Valley Patriot baby pictures and BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS! Yes, for \$45 you too can post your baby announcements in the Valley Patriot and, if this is successful enough we will mark out a whole section for baby pictures, and birth announcements.



Photo by Jason Sweeney

WCAP's Gary Francis at the Saturday night Sock Hop last month at Salisbury Beach, is flanked by Molly and Katina Tsongas, daughters of Democrat nominee for congress Niki Tsongas.

### TRIBUNE TALLY

Number of stories picked up by the Eagle~Tribune from the Valley Patriot print edition (and the website) in August 2007: **15.**

Number of stories the Eagle~Tribune actually gave credit to the Valey Patriot for: **0.**

[www.valleypatriot.com](http://www.valleypatriot.com)

# Old Pilots & Bold Pilots

## Lawrence Municipal Airport Hosts WWII Fighter Planes

There must be something in the air that makes people like Sara Payne Hayden, WWII WASP; Jim Baker, Marine and retired Delta pilot; Sam DiNoto, WWII B-17 flight engineer and top turret gunner; and Luther McIlwain, Tuskegee Airman all seem so young. Or is it something about taking a trip to the Lawrence Airport to see their beloved planes that brought about this transformation? On August 18 during the EAA (Experimental Aviation Aircraft) sponsored air show, we planned a rendezvous.

The featured attractions were the B-17 Flying Fortress, Aluminum Overcast and James Baker's vintage WWII 1944 AT-6 plane. I was lucky enough to be there.

A few weeks ago when the Methuen VFW hosted a motorcycle rally to raise money for a new roof, Hayden along with her contemporary Mary Habib were on hand to announce "ladies and gentlemen; start your engines." During the playing of the National Anthem, the AT-6 did a fly by. Baker made his way back to the VFW to meet Hayden who flew his plane during WWII while serving in the Women's Airforce Service Pilots. Of course they traded stories and anecdotes about the plane and that is what led Baker to invite Hayden to take a ride.

When I heard the B-17 Aluminum Overcast, the heavy bomber was coming

to Lawrence on August 17-19; the only thing I had to do was worry about the weather. We all committed to meeting up on one of those days to participate in the EAA outing. See [www.EAA106.org](http://www.EAA106.org).

Baker, 75 of Boxford, a sergeant during the Korean War who served as a Radar Navigator in Miami wanted Sara to go flying with him. He asked her if that was a possibility and she told him in no uncertain terms she "never flew the AT-6 from the back seat." It was priceless. The wind was so great that Hayden, 88, declined the invitation to fly. But not only did she sit in the cockpit to revisit her familiar home, she took a rain-check.

There was so much excitement among the crowd when they saw Sara return to the seat in the plane she flew over 63 years ago. What they talked about, I cannot even begin to share because it was so far out of my realm of knowledge.

Hayden played with all the buttons and pushed on the rudder for the crowd. She remembered where most of the instruments were located. Baker said of the experience, "I got goose bumps when she sat in the cockpit and asked where the backup hydraulic pump was." He acknowledged how great it was to have this volunteer WWII female pilot sit in his plane.



**Methuen News**  
**Kathleen Corey Rahme**  
 Vice Chair, Methuen City Council,  
 Methuen Youth Corps Founder



**James Baker and Sara Payne Hayden with the AT-6**

Luther McIlwain, soon to be 86, and a great friend of Hayden accompanied us to the airport that day and he took his turn sitting in the cock-pit. The Tuskegee Airman is triple rated as a bombardier, radar navigator and pilot. Upon hearing this gentleman is a Congressional Gold Medal of Honor recipient, the crowd went wild with jubilation and gratitude.

There to capture this remarkable reunion between pilot and plane was Al Grant of Methuen and MCTV, producer of the series "Old Pilots and Bold Pilots" and "Call to Serve." I learned the origin of the title from Baker. He quipped, "There are old pilots and bold pilots but very few old, bold pilots." Grant recorded commentary about the memories that were resurrected during this wonderful visit.

The B-17 has the acclaim of being one of the fiercest fighting machines of WWII not only because of her mechanical capabilities but because of her crewmen like Sam DiNoto, 83 of Methuen. Being with DiNoto, you can truly appreciate the admiration for the B-17 shared by the numerous men who visited the airport that day donning their "Mighty 8<sup>th</sup>" Airforce caps covered with flare from ruptured ducks to Purple Hearts.

What makes these old veterans pilgrimage to see the B-17 is no mystery. They come to these EAA air shows to pay tribute to the bird that they have loved and respected for over six decades.

While my husband and I were just hanging around taking all of this in, Tom Hatem of Methuen was there to take a ride in the B-17. He encouraged us to join him and with very little coaxing, we did. All I can say is that I am grateful that I didn't let

this once in a lifetime opportunity slip by. We were given a series of pre-flight instructions and then we took off in the magnificent bird. What a thrill!

It was very windy and of course there was no on-board service. We were able experience a small glimpse in 45 minutes what our brave men did for several hours, every day in WWII. One needs to magnify the experience with increased elevation and cold temperatures as well as the stress of combat that occurred in the original flights.

I was able to spend of time in the nose turret and it was so amazing that when it was my turn, we were just approaching the Atlantic over Ipswich. The nose turret is covered by Plexiglas from ceiling to floor. Sitting on a bicycle seat with a 180 degree vantage point is what I call a front row seat! It is not for the faint of heart. It is an experience I will never forget.

Baker and co-pilot Maureen Monroe of Atkinson, NH went up in the AT-6 and flew over a couple of times to entertain the crowd. At one point Baker tipped the wings in a gesture to say hello. Baker told me that this was the best time he has had in years because he had the pleasure of being in the company of a bunch of old pilots.

Special thanks to the Lawrence Municipal Airport for hosting this event. It serves the community in so many ways.

**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 [kcoryerahme@comcast.net](mailto:kcoryerahme@comcast.net)**



**Elie and Kathleen with the B-17 at Lawrence Municipal Airport**

# 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](http://www.rahme4methuen.com)

For campaign information, or to volunteer, call: 978-686-0008 or e-mail [kcoryerahme@comcast.net](mailto:kcoryerahme@comcast.net).



*From the Desk of*

**Methuen Mayor  
Billy Manzi**



**Moving Methuen Forward**

**Cable Competition Comes to Methuen**

As I mentioned in my last column, Methuen has taken a giant step towards cable competition by reaching a preliminary agreement with Verizon to license the FIOS cable, phone and Internet system. While Verizon has imposed a statewide moratorium on new negotiations with cities and towns, Methuen pursued these negotiations tirelessly.

I have heard the many citizen calls requesting competition, and it will be a reality shortly. On September 4<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. we will conduct a Public Hearing on the Verizon agreement. I look forward to seeing you there and taking your input on this very important matter for Methuen.

**Credit Union Agreement**

I have reached an agreement with the Methuen Municipal Credit Union on a lease that will benefit the Credit Union and the City of Methuen. As many of you know, the credit union is currently in space at the Searles Building. As they grow it has been apparent for some time that their space is inadequate.

The City has space available at the Quinn Public Safety Building, which is in need of major repair. I will propose a lease of some of that space to our credit union, which will enable us to do repair work to the Quinn Building that is long overdue. The credit union lease will enable the city to do over

one million dollars of work to that building, and offer the services of the credit union to a wider customer base. It is a great public/private partnership that will enable us to do necessary work at no cost to the taxpayers.

**Playground Equipment**

Our Department of Public Works has begun the process of dismantling old playground equipment at the Degaspe Park and at Veterans Park. We will have installed new playground equipment at both parks by next week. This was financed by one-time mitigation money paid to the city by developers. We will continue to evaluate and replace outdated playground equipment in the next fiscal cycle.

**Senior Center Roof**

The City of Methuen has awarded a bid to replace the roof at our senior center. We have completed the preliminary work, and the actual roof replacement should start this week. This roof replacement was financed with a \$50,000 grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. My thanks to former Representative Arthur Broadhurst, Representative Linda Dean Campbell, Representative Barbara L'Italien, and Senator Steve Baddour. We all are committed to keeping our wonderful senior center up to date.

If you would like to submit comments to me on the Verizon license, please do so at



Ray DiFiori and Steve Zanni from Saint Alfio Society during the Feast of the Three Saints in Lawrence

[wmanzi@ci.methuen.ma.us](mailto:wmanzi@ci.methuen.ma.us). Visit my blog at [www.billmanzi.com](http://www.billmanzi.com) and post your thoughts on the events of the day.

**Viva St. Alfio**

Congratulations to the St. Alfio's Society as well as to St Anthony's Church for a wonderful feast weekend. Many Methuen residents who are members of the St. Alfio Society such as Ray DiFiori and City Council President Steve Zanni, as well as Methuen Councilor Lary Giordanno and former city employee David Baine work all year long to prepare for the Feast of the Three Saints on Common St. in Lawrence and this year it really showed.

**Don't Forget to Vote!**

Every American citizen has a right and duty to vote on election day. This year the preliminary elections for city council are being held on Tuesday, Sept. 18, 2007. Polls will be open from 7am to 7pm for the Central and West End districts only.

**CITY OF METHUEN POLLING LOCATIONS**

- Precinct 1: Timony Grammar School, 45 Pleasant View Street
- Precinct 2: Timony Grammar School, 45 Pleasant View Street
- Precinct 3: Tenney Grammar School, 75 Pleasant Street
- Precinct 4: Park Garden Apartments Community Room, 10 Burnham Road
- Precinct 5: Park Garden Apartments Community Room, 10 Burnham Road
- Precinct 6: Timony Grammar School, 45 Pleasant View Street
- Precinct 7: Tenney Grammar School, 75 Pleasant Street
- Precinct 8: Marsh Grammar School, 311 Pelham Street
- Precinct 9: Tenney Grammar School, 75 Pleasant Street
- Precinct 10: Timony Grammar School, 45 Pleasant View Street
- Precinct 11: Marsh Grammar School, 311 Pelham Street
- Precinct 12: Tenney Grammar School: 75 Pleasant Street.

RE-ELECT

# MANZI

## —MAYOR—



**A proven record of leadership**

Led Methuen through the worst flood in a century. • Built a new Community Center for underprivileged children in the Arlington neighborhood. • Revamped emergency management system. • Improved city efficiency by restructuring departments of Community Development, Health, Human Resources, Animal Control, and Fire. • Delivered a finished Master Plan, currently being implemented. • Brought in Harvard School of Design to help redesign Methuen's downtown. • Created a positive business environment that has brought in several new employers to the community. • Started process of renovating Methuen High School. • Secured \$50,000 in State funding to replace roof on senior center.

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

*And he's just getting warmed up*

RE-ELECT

# MANZI

## —MAYOR—

*Proven Leadership for Methuen*

*Vote November 6<sup>th</sup>*

## Sal's Italian Restaurant becomes



Sal's Restaurant and Function Facility, 354 Merrimack Street in Lawrence is sporting a new look these days with a new name and a new sign, but Salvatore's still has the same great Italian Cuisine. A Valley Patriot photographer caught these construction workers installing the new sign last month.



[www.jilliansvillage.com](http://www.jilliansvillage.com)

**Erin Livingston Carroll**

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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



# Welcome to St. Augusta Landing

**\$199,900**

**Have you been waiting for luxury living at a price you can afford?**

No maintenance, just park your car in the garage and enjoy your beautiful townhouse with a large floor plan?! Well here it is; three generous sized bedrooms, large living room, kitchen w/large dining area, your beautiful master bedroom w/cathedral ceilings, 1 1/2 baths, & 1 car garage!

**Hurry, come pick your colors, to customize your maintenance free living!**



**Water Street, Lawrence MA**

**3 Bedrooms/1 Full | 1 Partial Bathrooms  
 1,390 Est. Sq. Ft.**

**Call for your private showing!**

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 Debra Tarshi at (978) 771 - 8079**

\* New construction, two family, \$349,000 pre-construction price



*Why hire one agent when you can have an entire team for the same price?*



**Introducing  
Jillian's Village, Haverhill  
Starting at \$439,900**

14 lot Active Adult Community for 55+. Finely appointed homes on your own lot. Offering a very spacious one floor living - three bedrooms, large basement and walk up attic, plus a two car garage.  
Wonderful upgrades include hardwood, central air and gas fireplace. Six lots remain and plenty of time to customize!



**www.TeamZingales.com**



Lawrence- Call for pricing  
13 room, 7 bedroom, 3 bath  
Great two unit.



Methuen- \$298,000  
6 room, 3 bedroom, 1.5 bath  
Beautiful 1/2 acre lot.



Methuen- \$280,000  
6 room, 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath  
Great deal.



Haverhill-\$249,000  
6 room, 3 bedroom, 3 bath  
Completely remodeled.



Atkinson, NH- \$267,900  
7 room, 2 bedroom, 2.5 bath  
Bryant Woods end unit.



**Methuen Exclusive!**  
10 room, 5 bedroom, 2.5 bath  
Over 18 acres.



Lawrence- Call for pricing  
8 room, 3 bedroom, 1.5 bath  
Over 2,000 sq ft!



Haverhill- Call for pricing  
12 room, 6 bedroom, 2.5 bath  
Corner lot, 2 units.

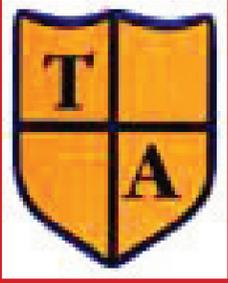


Methuen- Call for pricing  
7 room, 3 bedroom, 1 bath  
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Tremendous gambrel located on a quiet cul-de-sac in Pelham NH. 10 rooms with 4 or 5 bedrooms, beautiful open concept kitchen, 4 car garage and loads of off street parking on a 1 acre plus level lot. Master bedroom has full bath with sauna and jacuzzi. Too many features to list...this house is a must see.

**3 millstone RD. Pelham NH**

**\$379,900 - Call Mark Sullivan at 978-681-8511**

Charming cape in beautiful South Lawrence seconds away from the boat docks. 5 Rooms 3 bedrooms 1 bath, vinyl sided home just painted last year. Quiet private yard with driveway. Priced to sell!



**\$219,000**

Call Mark Sullivan at 978-681-8511 or 617-596-2971



Charming cape on quiet street right around the corner from the Marsh School. 7 rooms, 4 bedrooms with 2 full baths. Home is in pristine condition built in 1990 with only one owner. Exterior new vinyl siding. Above ground pool sits on spacious private yard with security lighting.

**30 Saint Francis Ave.  
Methuen MA 01844**

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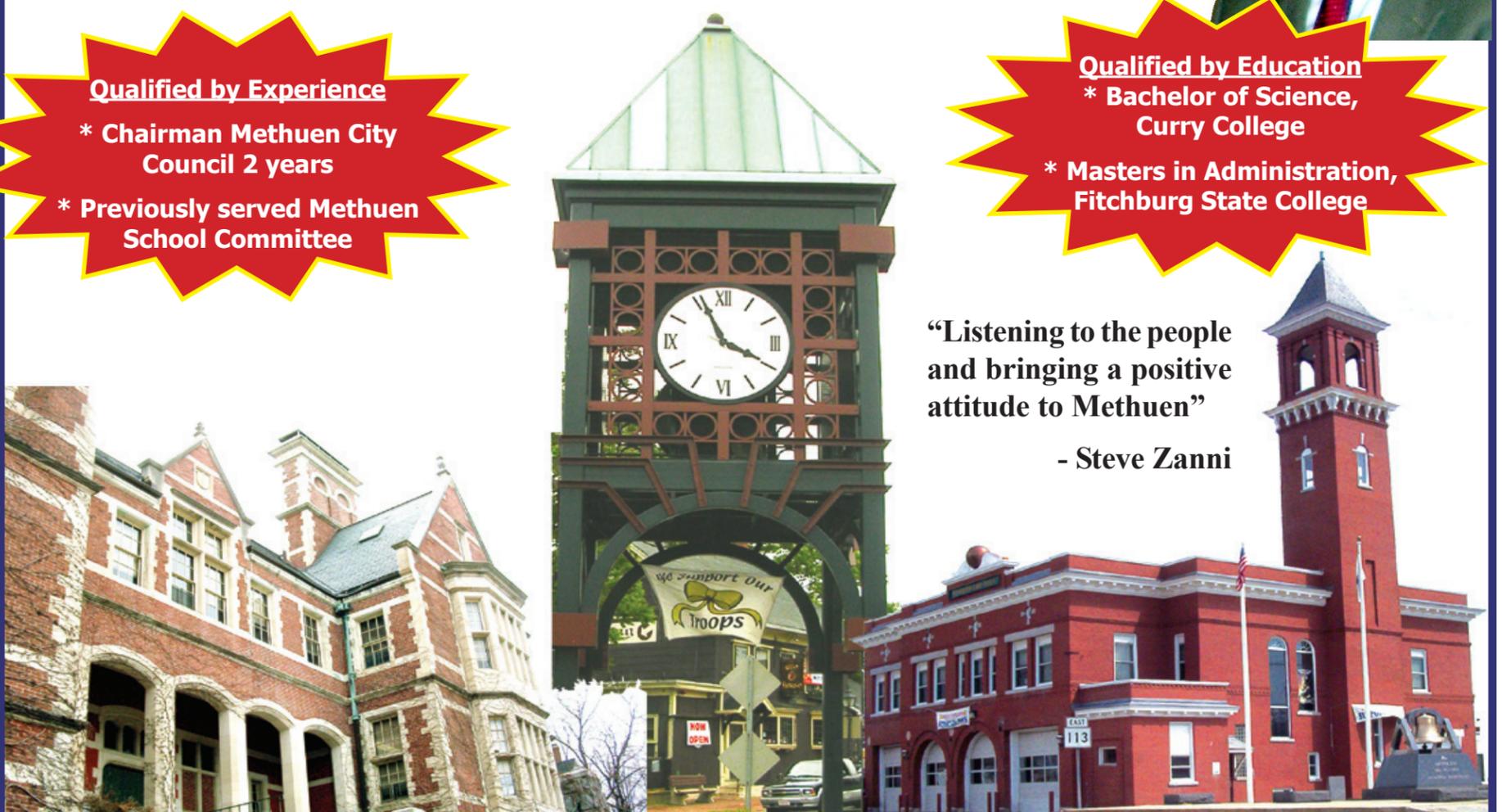
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- \* Previously served Methuen School Committee

Qualified by Education

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- \* Masters in Administration, Fitchburg State College

"Listening to the people and bringing a positive attitude to Methuen"

- Steve Zanni



# Sullivan Declares 'Hanna Porten Day'

# Manzi Declares 'Hanna Porten Week'



Valley Patriot Ace reporter, Hanna Porten, recently celebrated her Bat-Mitzvah at Sal's Restaurant in Lawrence after a ceremony at the Temple Emanuel in Andover.

To her surprise, Lawrence Mayor Michael Sullivan and Methuen Mayor Bill Manzi showed up to present Hanna with several Proclamations. Hanna had interviewed both mayors during the last election cycle and quickly became the subject of competition with Mayor Sullivan presenting Hanna with his lucky Wednesday campaign tie and Mayor Manzi giving Hanna a plaque from his office as

well as his Staples "Easy Button" Manzi had on his desk.

As the two Mayors have been in competition since their high school years at Central Catholic, the competition continued during the Bat-Mitzvah as Mayor Sullivan presented Hanna with a proclamation declaring August 25, 2007 "Hanna Porten Day in the City of Lawrence."

Mayor Manzi, however, topped Sullivan with a proclamation declaring August 25-September 1, 2007 "Hanna Porten Week in the City of Methuen." The Mayors' attendance was a big hit and Hanna was thrilled.

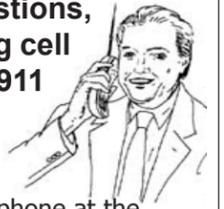
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## RAISE 'EM RIGHT™ "Toddlers Using Sign Language"

Barbara Peary, M.Ed.

**Imagine my surprise. I saw my fifteen month old grandson doing some rudimentary sign language when he wanted some milk the other day. His parents said he learned it in his child care center. Is this something new?**

Not too new, but not popularized. Many early childhood centers have been teaching young children who are still nonverbal basic sign language for words such as milk, more, up, etc. Teachers have found that this has reduced crying in the classroom.

**She is driving me crazy. My four year old daughter cries and gets upset throughout the day for no reason. It has become a habit. For example, one of her friends cheated at Uncle Wiggly and my daughter began sobbing. Once I ignored her she went back to playing as if nothing has happened. How do I stop her from being the drama queen?**

When she is happy and having a good day, sit her down and discuss the problem. Emphasize that she is four now and you expect more grown up behavior. Tell her there are two reasons to cry. Explain that she should cry when she is really, really upset or really, really hurt. Keep repeating this when she cries inappropriately. Advise her that she needs to use her words, so that you can understand what she wants. Tell her to control herself and you will listen to her when she is calm. Do this consistently and things should improve in a few weeks.

**Our fourth grader is having trouble with the concept of fractions. How can I make it easier for her?**

Make it concrete as opposed to abstract, by using food. Start with the concept of half. Have her help you cut apples, grapefruit, even grapes into halves to add some humor to the lesson. Make it a habit during the course of the day, when you cut sandwiches

or anything else in half to mention it. Gradually move on to things that are in fourths. Some candy bars have four sections, you can peel and orange into four, apples can be cut into four. Brainstorm and you will see the possibilities are endless. A banana easily falls into three sections if you tap the top after peeling it. Pizza can be sliced up for six or eight people. Cut cakes into sections. Better than doing it in front of your daughter, have her cut the items herself as much as possible. Repeat, repeat, repeat.

**We are considering hiring a young woman as a nanny for our children, four and six. None of my friends have done this, so I do not have any referrals to count on.**

Go through a reputable nanny agency that interviews, screens, and trains people to be nannies. Initially, ask to see the firm's criteria for placing students in the program and what is covered in the curriculum. In addition to child development, nutrition, and issues such as behavior management, check out what safety concerns are emphasized with the students. An agency will also help you set up a contract with the employee covering wages, hours, and responsibilities. All these points need to be clearly defined for both parties, if the relationship is going to be a successful one.

**I hear horror stories about children not being able to do basic math skills without using a calculator. I am determined not to let this happen with my sixth grader. What can I do?**

At homework time, have him do all his calculations with his mind. Allow him to use the calculator when checking his work.

Please send questions to RAISE 'EM RIGHT™ via e-mail at RAISEEMRIGHT@aol.com.

## Excitement Deprives Children of Happiness

Dennis Prager



If you want your children to be happy adults and even happy children — and what parent does not? — minimize the excitement in their lives. The more excitement, the less happy they are likely to be.

In both adults and children, one can either pursue excitement or pursue happiness, but one cannot do both. If you pursue excitement, you will not attain happiness. If you pursue happiness, you will still experience some moments of excitement, but you will attain happiness only if happiness, not excitement, is your goal.

When we give our child a present, he experiences excitement, and we are delighted when we see how happy he is. When done occasionally — a holiday, a birthday — this is perfectly fine and even beneficial. Children should have those special moments and remember forever that wonderful Christmas, Chanukah or birthday present.

But because we parents so delight in the excitement we see in our children at those moments — because they seem so happy then — we can easily fall into the trap of providing more and more exciting things to keep them seemingly happy at just about every moment. And they in turn come to rely on getting excited to keep them happy and to identify excitement with happiness.

But excitement is not happiness. In fact, it is the ultimate drug.

It is excitement that people seek when engaging in any destructive addictive behaviors. Excitement is a major part of what people seek in doing drugs, in having sex with multiple partners, in gambling (from slot machines to risky stock purchases) or in having an extra-marital affair. And even for many criminals, excitement is a major lure of criminal behavior.

It is argued that we are programmed to desire excitement. But we are also programmed to be lazy, to be irresponsible and to eat unhealthy foods. And just as these other natural instincts do not lead us to happiness, neither does excitement.

Today's young people have the ability to experience excitement more than any generation in history. Outside of school, excitement is available almost 24/7. MTV is exciting (MTV has done far more damage to this generation than has the tobacco industry); video games are exciting; the nearly all-pervasive sexual stimuli are exciting; MySpace (largely a human cesspool) is exciting; getting tattooed is exciting; piercings are exciting; many pictures and videos on the Internet are exciting.

The list of exciting things many children experience is as long as there are hours in the day.

But all this excitement is actually inhibiting our children's ability to enjoy life and therefore be happy. All this excitement renders young people jaded, not happy. To cite a simple example, many children today would refuse to watch a black and white film —

"It's boring," they say. They would even refuse to watch many of the greatest color films if they lacked the amount of excitement — usually meaning violence but also frequently meaning foul language and sexual content — that they are now so used to seeing in films. Plot development is "boring"; blowing up people and buildings is exciting.

That is why the frequent complaint of "I'm bored" is often a sign of a jaded child, i.e., a child addicted to excitement and therefore incapable of enjoying life when not being excited.

All this excitement in their lives bodes poorly for the future happiness of millions of American children. Real life, let alone daily life, will seem so boring to them that they will not be able to enjoy it. And more than a few of them will opt for lives of constant excitement, often in ways destructive to themselves and others.

The solutions are as simple to offer as they may be difficult to enforce. Limit the amount of excitement in your children's lives: the amount of video games, the amount of non-serious television, the amount of music whose only aim is to excite. If they are bored, they will have to remedy that boredom by playing with friends, finding a hobby, talking to a family member, walking the dog, doing chores, reading a book or magazine, learning a musical instrument or foreign language, memorizing state capitals, writing a story or just their thoughts, exercising or playing a sport, or just thinking.

The younger the age from which children are deprived of superficial excitement, the longer they will remain innocent — i.e., not jaded — and capable of real happiness. For as long as they live under your roof, and therefore (hopefully) under your control, you can implement excitement detox. If you do, they may hate you now, but they will thank you later, which is far superior to liking you now and hating you later. And in parenting, that is often the choice we must make.

Dennis Prager hosts a nationally syndicated radio talk show based in Los Angeles. He is the author of four books, most recently "Happiness Is a Serious Problem" (HarperCollins). His Website is [www.pragerradio.com](http://www.pragerradio.com). COPYRIGHT 2007 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.



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- \* Resident of Lawrence for 23 years
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- \* School Uniform Sub-Committee

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- Lawrence Mayor Michael Sullivan

# Omaira Mejia

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*Please See Our Ad - Page 28*

# This Isn't Civil War in Iraq

CARTER ANDRESS

Baghdad, Iraq - We are winning this war. I write those words from my desk in the Red Zone in downtown Baghdad as hundreds of Iraqis working with my company — Shia and Sunni, Arab and Kurd — execute security, construction and logistics missions throughout the capital and Sunni Triangle. We have been here now over three years.

American-Iraqi Solutions Group, which I helped co-found in March 2004, has been intimately involved with creating the new Iraqi security services. Our principal business as a U.S. Department of Defense contractor is to build bases for the Iraqi army and police and then supply them with water, food, fuel and maintenance services. We are on the cutting edge of the exit strategy for the U.S. military: Stand up an effective Iraqi security structure and then we can bring our troops home.

We are not out of the Iraqi desert yet. But the primary problems we now face on the ground are controllable, given a strong American military presence through 2008. These problems include the involvement of Iran in fueling Shia militancy, the British failure to uphold their security obligations in the south and the tumultuous nature of a new democracy.

Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker recently said the one word he would choose to describe the feelings of the Iraqi people was "fear." A bad choice, from my observation.

That's not the prevailing state of mind, except maybe for those sheltered souls in the Green Zone who are getting hit on a regular basis for the first time in more than a year by primarily Iranian-supplied rockets and mortars. What I see on the faces of the thousands of Iraqis working with us, including our subcontractors and suppliers as well as

on the faces of the Iraqi army and police, patrolling and manning the checkpoints and assisting U.S. soldiers in searching for the insurgents is grim determination to get the job done.

I also see exhaustion — exhaustion with the insurgency, whether it be al Qaeda, neo-Saddamist, or Jaish al Mahdi (JAM), or the Shia militia of Moqtada al-Sadr. The exhaustion is real, and the evidence of the falling support among the Iraqi people for the insurgency in its various guises is inescapable — unless you are deliberately looking the other way.

A large proportion of our thousand-man work force — of which 90% are Iraqi citizens — comes from Sadr City, the Shia slum in east Baghdad. Many carry weapons. These Shia warriors have emphasized in the past several months that they and their neighbors are tired of conflict and only want to feed their families.

You only have to note the lack of U.S. casualties in the ongoing surge to clear JAM out of the highly dangerous urban terrain of Sadr City to realize that the people there do not want to fight us. They are sick of fighting.

As for Sunni resistance, I recently visited the boot camp we operate for the Iraqi army at Habbaniyah in Al Anbar, former heartland of the insurgency. For the first time we are seeing entire Sunni Arab recruiting cohorts at the camp, where before we only saw Shia from outside the province.

The Sunnis of Al Anbar — finally tired of al Qaeda assassinating their sheikhs when they disagreed with the

terrorists — have committed their children to the security services of a government dominated by the majority Shias, and paid for and run by the Americans. With such a development, you have real progress in integrating the diverse elements in Iraq.

Slowly but surely, Iraqi security services are building up. You only have to travel outside the Green Zone to see them undertaking heroic risks as they work to control the streets in growing numbers and with growing professionalism. In the past

couple of months, the Ministry of the Interior established an operations center for all of Baghdad that effectively coordinates nonmilitary logistics movements throughout the capital — a function previously only undertaken by a coalition contractor. From chaos has come order and in turn, step by step, the Iraqi military is becoming a truly national, not sectarian, force.

I see no civil war between the Shias and Sunnis as I travel practically every day on the roads of Iraq with my Arab and Kurdish security team. The potential for renewed internecine warfare faded earlier this year, when al Qaeda failed to reignite the waning sectarian struggle the second time around with another attack on the Golden Mosque in Samarra.

The perfect storm at the beginning of 2007 created the necessity of reconciliation. The Sunni Arabs who had used al Qaeda as leverage in the political struggle to re-establish their minority rule faced genocide in Baghdad from the Shia death squads. With pressure from the new Democratic majority in Congress, the Shia government of Nouri al-Maliki realized that time was running out for a dominant American presence in Iraq and finally allowed the U.S. military to clean up Sadr City, thus alleviating the death-squad activities.

Both the Sunni and Shia Arab sides of the Iraqi political equation (the Kurds have sided with us from the beginning) now see that there is no alternative to American protection. As a result, Sadr's people and the Sunnis have both returned to parliament. As always, democracy is messy, but it is working. We have to be patient, particularly because this nascent reconciliation has left al Qaeda as the odd man out.

Just as the rockets landing in the Green Zone are from a foreign source — Iran — the jihadis who destroy themselves in explosions aimed primarily at mass killings of Shia civilians are almost all foreigners. This is al Qaeda, not Iraq.

Even more to the point: The Iraqis basically ignore the al Qaeda car bombs, mourn the dead and then go to work, to school, join and continue to serve in the military and police — and life goes on. There is no terror if no one is terrorized.

Let us, the American people, not be terrorized into retreating before our enemy — al Qaeda — just when they have begun to stand alone, stripped of allies, in a country beginning to enjoy the fruits of a democracy we have sacrificed much blood to help create.

Mr. Andress, CEO and principal owner of American-Iraqi Solutions Group, is author of "Contractor Combatants: Tales of an Imbedded Capitalist" (Thomas Nelson, 2007).



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Susan Piazza, Commander, DAV CH2

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**Exception:** Those who do not file within the one hundred twenty (120) day period may be covered if they apply within sixteen (16) months of release or separation. To be entitled to this extension certain conditions apply so check with the VA for particulars.

If one is terminally ill one may be entitled to early partial payments. Terminally ill is defined as having a prognosis of nine months or less to live. This one-time payment consists of fifty percent (50%) of this policy amount.

**Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (S-DVI)** This program is reserved for those who have a service connected disability but are otherwise in good health. The veteran has two years after being awarded a service-connected disability in which to apply for \$10,000. in insurance. Eligibility is limited to those who were discharged with a disability after 1951.

A waiver of premiums exists if: 1) the veteran is totally disabled, 2) the disability continues for six months and, 3) this disability occurs prior to the veterans sixty-fifth birthday. The veteran may also apply for an additional \$20,000. in supplemental coverage, though the fee for this cannot be waived. Though some older policies do issue dividends, this policy does not.

Different conditions apply if the veteran, during this two (2) year time period, becomes incompetent. The guardian, appointed to care for the veteran, has a time limit in which to apply. Check with the VA for further information.

A number of insurance policies still exist. Because this topic is so lengthy, we will split it into two articles. Next month we will cover policies that relate to veterans who served primarily during World War II, Korea, and to a lesser extent Vietnam.

For those who have lost their policy, their policy number, etc. send whatever information you do have (social security number, dates of service, service number, etc.) to: Dept. of Veterans Affairs, Regional Office and Insurance Center, Box 42954, Philadelphia, PA 19101. They will be able to assist you.

As always, for further information or to confirm something you read in this article contact one of the veterans organizations service officers, your local veterans agent, or the VA itself. And, if the information they provide is not to your liking, call someone else, or call back another time. No one is infallible, even the best intentioned 'expert' can make mistakes. And, the person you speak with tomorrow may tell you something different than the person you spoke with today. Information does change, so please, double check 'facts'. Insurance information, and the proper understanding of such, is essential for you, and your loved ones.

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

## Taking Care of Our Veterans

John Lenotte, American Legion



Freedom is a word that means many things to many people. The most common examples that we think of are freedom of the press, speech and religion and perhaps even the right to bear arms. What about the freedom to live in this great democracy we call the United States of America? And what about a great freedom: the freedom to vote for candidates of our choosing? And, how did we get these rights and who protects these rights?

If we look at the history of America and the days of the American revolution, we can only imagine the turmoil of the times. Our patriots, men like John Hancock, John and Sam Adams, Ben Franklin and George Washington, were considered traitors to the English King and Parliament. Starting in Lexington and Concord with the "shot heard around the world", we started a movement that quickly led to the French Revolution and others since. We started a democratic movement that exists today even though many saw it as an experiment that would fail. And several have tried to — and still try to — extinguish our flame. Let us not forget there was a heavy price paid, in terms of lost lives and property, back in the times of the revolution. And that loss of lives has continued through the years and the wars up to today. And we face possibly the greatest threat today against an enemy who wants not only to end our way of life, but to extinguish our lives as well. The position of the American Legion and other veteran's organizations is that we need to support our troops. It is the soldier not the politicians who have truly given and defended our way of life. Without them, we would be living a totally different existence.

The Freedom to vote is one we take very much for granted. If we look at the voting percentages of even just our friends in Europe, ours is but a paltry number. It is often the immigrant who came from a very

different land, made a home, raised a family and became a citizen who is the most excited person about voting. Perhaps like getting a drivers license, we just assume it is there. I know too many folks who won't vote because they feel their vote will not make a difference. Yet, we just have to look back to the last two presidential elections to see that every vote truly does count.

We are about to vote for a new Congressional Representative for the 5th District of Massachusetts. This is a crucial position for our area. Representatives often are in those seats for many years. Get out and VOTE for whoever your candidate is.

And we will soon be voting for positions of mayor, city council, school committee and others in our cities and towns. Let's hold them accountable for their actions. From a veteran's perspective, we have had a lot of support in cities and towns like Amesbury, Merrimac, Methuen, Andover and North Andover. Support for veterans needs to improve in Haverhill, Salisbury, Newburyport and others.

One of the founding pillars of the American Legion has been the care and support of our fellow veterans in need. How many of you are aware that the American Legion is recognized as the author of the GI Bill, one of the greatest pieces of social legislation. Veterans, their families and friends need to get out and vote. We all, as citizens, need to show that we care about our communities. What better way than to have our voices heard by our elected representatives? Let us continue to work and keep our nation great, but let us not forget those who defend our freedoms. Remember: All gave some, but some gave all. Let us continue to pray for the safe return of ALL our troops and keep in our hearts a special place for Alex Jiminez and all others who are missing in action.

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# Francisco Urena: Heroes in Our Midst - From Page 1

and then attending 2 ½ months of training as a tank commander where he learned how to operate the M1A1 tank, graduating as a tank crewman.

From there Urena was selected to go to Twenty-Nine Palms, California, where he trained with tanks in the California desert. "There were hundreds of miles of desert," Urena explained. "We were trained to be as efficient as possible in combat situations." Little did he know that the training he was receiving would be critical to the United States effort in Iraq to secure the country against international terrorists.

Urena served as a security officer at the United States Embassy after completing a rigorous course at Quantico, Virginia, "They wanted to make sure that the people they selected for security for the U.S. embassies were of sound mind and capable of handling diplomatic and security situations overseas," he explained.

"My first post after completing training was in Damascus, Syria where I spent a year and a half." There, Urena learned how to speak Arabic fluently, "which was very handy later on" he admits.

Urena also learned how to speak fluent Russian when he was assigned to his second post at the United States Embassy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, a country which was formerly part of the Soviet Republic. Kyrgyzstan is located on the western border with China.

After returning home for a brief period of time in 2004, Urena found himself on his way to Iraq as a tank



commander in the Spring of 2005. Urena was sent to the el Anbar province of Iraq on the eastern border of Syria "It was pretty much a no-mans-land out there," Urena says. "Even Saddam Hussein had no power in that region when he was in power. There was no law enforcement at all, no rule of law it was total lawlessness, total chaos" he described.



During his time in Iraq, Urena was part of three major operations; Operation Matador, Operation Spear and Operation Quick Strike.

During operation Matador Urena was issued a navy achievement medal for heroic actions and quick decisiveness during combat operations where he and his company were ambushed by terrorists. Urena was credited for saving numerous lives and evacuated civilians from the area safely while under heavy fire.

During "Operation Spear" Urena showed his heroism once again when he was hit with shrapnel in the face, "We were engaged in operations and the vehicle next to me was engaging a suspected enemy target with 40MM rounds. That's when the van next to the house we were near exploded, blowing fragments into my tank," he explained.

"I could see the shrapnel coming towards me when the van exploded but I couldn't duck fast enough. I didn't realize I was hit at first."

Urena refused to leave the area until several civilians and military personnel could be evacuated and have their medical needs tended to. "I had no idea I was bleeding profusely at the time all I could think about was evacuating the civilians and protecting my men."



Urena laughed nervously as he described how he found out that a piece of shrapnel was still lodged in his cheek weeks later when he went for x-rays. "There it was, embedded in my cheek and I never knew it was there," he said. "I never reported the injury because I didn't want to leave my men behind, so a crewman gave me first aid and I just continued on with the mission. I was on my way out of the Corps. By the time I was nominated and when the investigation of the incident was completed I wasn't in the Marines anymore." Urena was out of the Corps. For more than a month when he was awarded the purple heart.

Francisco Urena was honorably discharged on June 15, 2006, but his service to his country did not end there. Like most real heroes who serve in the United States Military, Urena came back to the states looking for ways to continue serving, only this time serving his local community.

"When I left the military I decided to return to Lawrence," Urena continued. "It was May of 2006 and the flood was just hitting Lawrence so I decided to become involved and help out in any way I could."

Urena immediately went to the tent that city officials had set up at the Hayden Schofield Playstead to help the area flood victims. At first, Urena served as a translator, helping flood victims receive critical information from government officials, but when a local cable access television crew said they needed someone to volunteer as a cameraman Urena didn't hesitate to help.

At one point they asked Urena to take the microphone and speak on camera about the emergency services that were available and as soon as he began talking they recognized his communication skills in front of the camera, asking if he would help report on emergency procedures and news of the flood. Soon Urena was translating for local, state and federal officials, disseminating critical information to the community."

"Really, that's how I became involved in cable access," he said. "Two months later, while the turmoil was going on in the Veteran's Services Office I started helping out Jorge DeJeus, (Acting Veteran's Services Director) doing paperwork and helped him catch up on a backlog of cases." Urena volunteered in Lawrence city hall during the day while attending college at

Northern Essex, taking a full semester of classes in the evening and logging more than 200 hours as a volunteer for the city.

"When the position of Veteran's Services Director became available I applied for the job, but in the mean time I signed up for a five day session of training that's put on by The Department of Veteran's services."

Lawrence Mayor Michael J. Sullivan, recognizing Urena's heroic record in the military and having seen Urena's zealous efforts to help the community as a volunteer, nominated him to be the city's Veteran's Services Director. Urena was hired on February 13, 2007.

But Urena's service to the community doesn't end there. Urena also volunteers his time reading to children in the Lawrence public schools, an activity he began while he was in the service. He's also a member of the VFW, American Legion, is a member of the board of directors for cable access, and works with Boy Scout Troop #2 training adult leaders as a unit commissioner.

Urena is still attending college classes at Northern Essex where he is studying political science.

Francisco Urena, the Valley Patriot would like to thank you for your heroic service to your country and your community. We are honored to be able to tell a small part of your story as our Valley Patriot of the Month. The people of the Merrimack Valley and the United States owe you a great debt of gratitude that can never be repaid.

## Partial List of Francisco Urena's Awards and Medals

- \* Purple Heart
- \* Navy Achievement Medal
- \* Combat Valor
- \* Iraq Campaign Medal
- \* Good Conduct Medal
- \* Outstanding Volunteer Community Service Medal
- \* National Defence Medal
- \* Awarded as a rifle expert
- \* Pistol Expert

## The United States Air Force Celebrates Its 60th!

TEWKSBURY - On September 18<sup>th</sup>, the men and women; active, reserve, and retired will celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of The United States Air Force. On September 18, 1947 the United States Army Air Forces separated from the United State Army. A byproduct of the National Security Act of 1947, signed by then President Harry S. Truman, set in motion the creation of the Department of the Air Force.

This was preceded by Air Force Week New England, Boston, and specifically, Tewksbury, MA 17-26 August, 2007. The Air Force put on display a few of its favorite toys, if you will. At the Wal-Mart in Tewksbury off of Route 38, we showed a bit of our "Bling, Bling" to gain some awareness of the Air Force in the community and to have some fun!

What was on display was an F-16 Falcon, the Air Force number 21 Car (NASCAR), and the original Orange County Chopper's (OCC) Air Force Chopper, which also has its own DVD to show the making of the Chopper.



This was also showcasing one of our newest members of the 319<sup>th</sup> Recruiting Squadron, Portsmouth, NH, from the Air Force Recruiting Office in Lowell, Ma., Staff Sergeant Ligia "Lili" Miguel. SSgt Miguel, a daughter of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, hails from Springfield, MA and is also a MH-53J Helicopter Mechanic, affectionately referred to as "Crew Chief". Her office is located on 101

Middle Street, Lowell, MA, and she can be reached by calling 978-454-3323 if you're in the Lowell area and if you're interested in Air Force opportunities is the Lawrence area, contact me, SSgt Moore 978-686-1464.





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