



THE VALLEY PATRIOT

"Congress shall make no law..."

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

City settles lawsuit for \$610K over computer porn

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT EDITOR

Lawrence's former assistant city clerk, Jennifer Padellaro, settled her workers' compensation claims as well as her federal lawsuit against the City of Lawrence last month for \$610,000.

A settlement conference (called a lump sum conference) took place at the Industrial Accident Board in Lawrence on November 30, 2007 when an Administrative Judge approved the settlement between Padellaro and the City of Lawrence. Both her workers' compensation attorney, Alan Pierce of Salem, and her federal lawsuit attorney, Kevin Powers of Boston, were present at the conference.

This settlement also ends the federal lawsuit against the city.

Attorney Alan Pierce filed a workers' compensation claim with the Industrial Accident Board in Lawrence claiming emotional stress and mental disorder arising from her allegations that she was sexually harassed by then City Clerk James McGravey and that the City of Lawrence did nothing to either prevent

nor appropriately react to the alleged harassment.

Attorney Powers of Boston also filed a complaint in Federal court alleging sexual harassment by then City Clerk James McGravey and retaliation by the City of Lawrence when City Council President Patrick Blanchette refused to hire her to replace McGravey.

Padellaro filed her lawsuits alleging that the sexual harassment began in 1998 when her boss, then City Clerk James McGravey, used the office computer to visit pornographic websites and pass around pornographic material.

Padellaro further alleged that pornographic sites then began popping up on her office computer while she was trying to work.

Padellaro said she reported all of this to the city attorneys and the Mayor but, according to the lawsuit, little was done and McGravey continued to visit porn sites at work. McGravey's wife, Carrol Hajjar McGravey, was an Assistant City Attorney at the time.

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Dr. Rustum's New Column, The Doctor is IN



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

Dr. Rustum from the Lawrence General Hospital's Pain Management Center begins his exclusive new monthly column.

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Editorial

Taking it in the Ear(marks)

It's time for Congress to get slapped upside the head.

Our irresponsible and corrupt legislators in Washington have attached almost 12,000 earmarks to the latest defense appropriations and omnibus spending bills. We have yet to total the cost of these, but in FY06 the cost of earmarks totaled over \$63 billion – up approximately \$16 billion over the cost of earmarks in FY05 (a 33% increase).

Have all of these earmarks been carefully considered by Congress and voted on prior to being forwarded to the president for his signature? Certainly, the Congress carefully reviewed these expenditures before committing the president to spend your hard-earned money, right? You did work hard for it, didn't you?

The answers probably won't surprise you. The vast majority of these earmarks have had little or no review. They were never read, studied, debated or subjected to a vote. They were written into committee reports by individual congressmen – often to please friends, supporters, and special interests – with the requested money just added to the overall appropriation amount. And, yes, you did work hard for the money you earned and that Congress shamelessly squanders.

Do you want your taxes to pay for these?

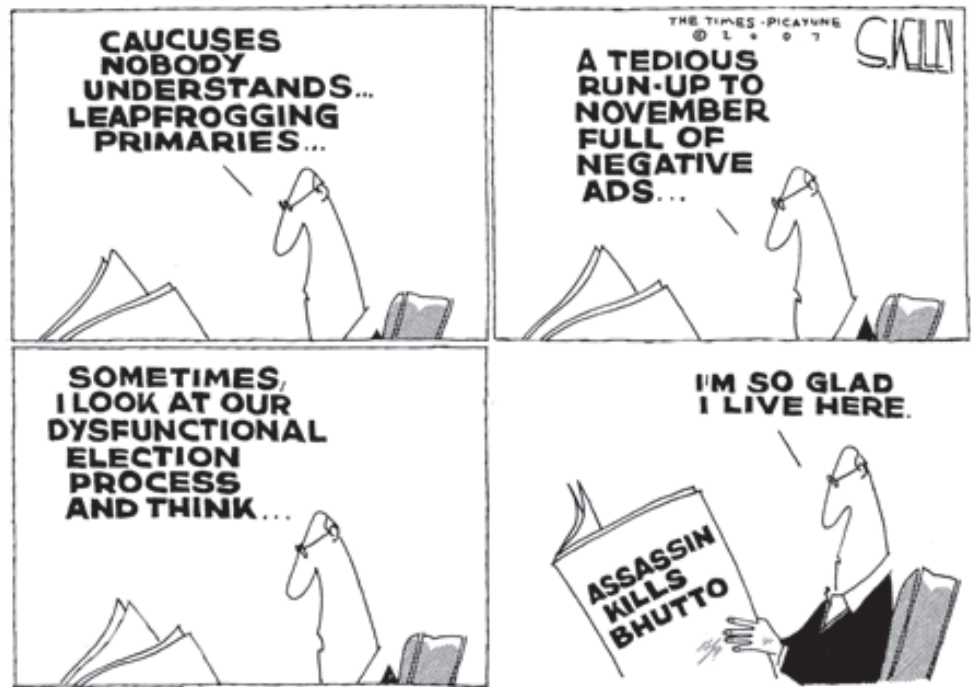
- * **\$300,000 earmark for the San Francisco Exploratorium museum proposed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi**
- * **\$1 million earmark for the Woodstock Museum proposed by Senators Hillary Clinton and Chuck Schumer**
- * **\$2 million earmark for the Charles B. Rangel Center for Public Service, the Rangel Conference Center and the Charles Rangel Library in New York City proposed by Congressman Charlie Rangel**

What might surprise you is that these spending bills, which were passed by Congress and sent to the president, don't explicitly include over 90% of these "funded" earmarks. They are only mentioned or listed in committee reports that accompany the bills on their way to the White House.

Since these bills do not explicitly reference the earmarks, such spending has not been "approved" nor been "presented" to the president as required by Article 1, Section 7 of the U. S. Constitution. Therefore, they are not legally binding and should be ignored by the Executive Branch.

That is right, Mr. President, IGNORE THOSE EARMARKS!! More specifically, prohibit federal agencies from spending money on them without your specific approval. That will get Congress' attention!

Oh, it would also save the average U.S. household nearly \$1000. Can anyone say, "TAXCUT!"!



LETTERS

Dear current City Council members;

Please help me to understand why the majority of you feel that you have the right to put my family's safety and quality of life in jeopardy with this continued nonsense about the budget of the Great City of Lawrence.

Each of you have to admit that the Lawrence Police are doing a great job making our city safer, the Lawrence Fire Dept. is also doing a great job keeping us all safe and, lastly, the city employees add a value to the quality of life here in Lawrence. I've watched some of your meetings on the cable channel and they look like an episode from "Kid Nation".

Looking at a property tax increase, my first response would be that I don't want a property tax increase, but if it was needed to keep my family safe and to improve the quality of life in this great city, a \$218 average increase, as quoted from the paper, isn't that bad.

Lets do the math. \$218.00 per year divided by 52 weeks comes out to about \$4.19 per week, or to put it in simpler terms, one coffee and donut or one fast food meal. I've discussed this increase with many of my fellow homeowners and they all agree this isn't to much to ask for.

Let's not forget, as the crime rate falls, we home owners and auto owners will be seeing a decrease in our insurance rates. Continued layoffs will mean more crime, because the criminals know their chances of being caught will go down to where it was in the late 80's and early 90's.

Do you remember when Lawrence was the **Fire Capital** of the state and also the **Car Insurance Fraud Capital** of the state?? The majority of you do not seem to care if we end up back there! Instead of the reaction, that we need more cuts to balance the budget, why don't you work on the things that can be done to increase money paid to the Great City of Lawrence?

* Home owners that owe back taxes. Why isn't this being pursued aggressively?

* Home owners that owe back water bills. Why isn't this being pursued aggressively?

* Business owners that owe back taxes. Why isn't this being pursued aggressively?

* Business owners that owe back water bills. Why isn't this being pursued aggressively?

* Residents, businesses and business owners with New Hampshire plates on their vehicles, who are STEALING excise tax money from Lawrence. Why isn't this being pursued aggressively?

* Enforcing the different city ordinance codes on the property owners. Examples include: Fining homeowners and/or landlords for not shoveling the sidewalks in front of homes.

And also, why don't we fine the homeowner/landlords for putting out trash too early and keeping barrels out too long after trash is taken, and having trash bags on the ground and not in barrels. Why isn't this being pursued aggressively?

* Setting up "speed traps" like our neighboring town of Andover does on River Road and on RT28 coming into Lawrence by the pool center. Why isn't this being pursued aggressively?

* Catching and ticketing the motorists that do not stop at **RED LIGHTS** in our city. A great example of this is the intersection in South Lawrence on RT114 by Store 24. Many of these motorists, more than likely, have other illegal, outstanding issues such as driving uninsured vehicles or vehicles with expired inspection stickers, etc.

The police would be able to deal with and perhaps prevent some future serious crimes! Instead of the police having to track down these low lifes, they are coming right to the police!

This Great City of Lawrence was on track to becoming a greater city than it currently is, but now all the hard work that has been done to this point, is being undone! Lawrence again is making the newspapers with more embarrassing and negative news instead of the positives that have been accomplished!

George Herman - Lawrence

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

Corrections

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PART II of II

N. Andover’s poor education choices should not be repeated in other communities

Ralph Wilbur
VALLEY PATRIOT EDITOR

The following article by Ralph Wilbur has been serialized by The Valley Patriot into two parts. Last month, Part 1 examined one school system’s failed experiences with experimental teaching techniques, and focused on their latest new venture, Inquiry-Based Science, and School Committee inattention to selection of teaching materials. This month, Part 2 explains more fully what Inquiry-Based Science teaching is all about, its costs, and the handicap it poses to improving student test scores. For the complete article, see our website, www.valleypatriot.com.

What is the inquiry-based approach to learning? Inquiry-based science substitutes entertainment for acquiring factual knowledge and problem-solving practice and experience.

The program chosen by the North Andover School system has no textbooks. Instead, the children are provided kits of experiments and pamphlets.

Divided into groups, they will be given, for example, a kit with some wire, a battery and a light bulb, and asked to figure out how to make the light bulb light up. Parents will be hard-pressed to follow what their child is learning. Parental disconnect as to what actually goes on and is being taught provides yet another barrier to accountability in the classroom.

The target of the inquiry-based method is a child with a disinterested intellect, who is figured to be coaxed into a passion for science by a tantalizing bag of tricks to play with. Conventional fact-based science programs do have a lab component. But inquiry-based science turns this on end, and the so-called “lab work” takes over. The freedom of the classroom teacher to apportion the amount of experimental demonstration needed to reinforce basic teaching and learning is stripped away.

Here is a partial list – just four examples, and their costs – of the types of kits being purchased by North Andover:

14 **Weather** @ 429.00 ea. \$6,006.00
14 **Solid & Liquid** @ \$553.00 ea. \$7,742.00
14 **Rock & Mineral** @ \$925.00 ea. \$12,950.00

14 **Life Cycle Butterfly** @ \$165.00 ea. \$ 2,310.00

There are 14 each of 24 different kinds of kits proposed, for a total of 336 kits. The average initial cost per kit is \$650.00, followed by recurring yearly costs for maintenance and replacement. Kits are very expensive to manufacture, involving custom-tailored, diverse manufacturing processes and hand assembly. In contrast, there are thousands of textbook printers.

Printing is a mass production process in a stable and competitive industry. Textbooks can be provided for anywhere from \$15 to \$50 each, and they will last five to ten years.

Kits are prone to damage, destruction or just being lost. Most children aren’t well known for taking care of their toys and carefully putting them away when finished, with all parts accounted for. The promotional video didn’t delve into the housekeeping aspect of getting everything back together after the class is over. It didn’t factor in the teacher’s time checking that all kit parts are accounted for. In addition, many kits use up materials that need to be continually replenished on a regular basis.

A five-year rollout of the FOSS inquiry-based system costs just under \$700,000.

Over the same period, the cost for the Houghton Mifflin textbook program would be between \$400,000 and \$550,000, depending on the budgeted amounts set aside for professional development – but at the end of the five

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

A triumph of reason and free will From Somalia to America

Dr. Charles Ormsby
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Imagine being born into a society that views you as chattel. You are expected to believe what you are told, not question authority, and obey your masters. You are constantly threatened with beatings, death and eternal damnation if you don’t submit.

You are told that you are a tool of Satan if any portion of your body is exposed and that exposure leads others to have evil thoughts or to commit immoral deeds. You are not permitted to choose your own husband, but instead, one will be chosen for you. Even if you have never met your selected master, you must submit and you will obey.

Everyone in your world supports these beliefs and practices. Anyone who questions them is an outcast who must be ostracized, severely punished or killed. This is all you have ever seen, heard or witnessed. It is your entire life’s experience. It is the way of the world as you know it. There are no other possibilities.

This was the world of Ayaan Hirsi Magan. Here is a very brief sketch of her life (drawn mostly from her highly recommended autobiography, “Infidel”):

Ayaan was born into the Osman Mahamud subclan of the Darod clan in Mogadishu, Somalia in 1969. During her childhood, her father – a prominent member of a Somali revolutionary group – was often absent and so he left her upbringing to her mother who was a devout Muslim and insisted on a strict interpretation of the Qur’an. At the age of five, Ayaan was genitally mutilated according to Muslim tradition.

Because of her father’s involvement in the Somali Salvation Democratic Front, Ayaan’s family had to escape from



Mogadishu to Saudi Arabia and then to Ethiopia and finally to Nairobi, Kenya.

Ayaan’s mother favored a rigid interpretation of Muslim traditions and laws that, during this period, were on the ascendancy due to substantial financial support and influence from Saudi Arabia. Ayaan attended a Muslim girl’s school in Nairobi that focused heavily on the teachings of Islam and memorizing the Qur’an – often in Arabic, a language that to Ayaan was mostly just a string of meaningless sounds. A charismatic religious leader at the school led Ayaan to fully accept Islamic teachings.

She was taught that any exposure of the female body would drive men to lose control of themselves, so she wore a hijab whenever she was outside her home. She routinely recited the Muslim prayers five times a day as dictated by the Qur’an. Her brain was programmed and any thoughts of deviating from these religious

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PUPPY LOVE

Proper ways to care for your new pet

Kate Whitney

VALLEY PATRIOT CONTRIBUTOR

Last month in my column, I wrote about my experience as a foster parent to rescued puppies. My hope was that sharing such a wonderful experience would encourage others to lend a hand and help this effort. Many of you did respond, and for that, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

A few weeks ago, I took my puppy, Dash, to the vet to get her final set of puppy shots. As I sat in the waiting room, I realized how important it is for people to remember to keep their pets up to date on routine shots and preventative treatments like heartworm pills and flea/tick products. This may seem like a no-brainer, but I think some people may need a little reminder.

After the excitement of getting your new pet settled, you'll be left with a lot of responsibilities, some of which can be



PHOTO: COURTESY

Dash has been given all her shots and visits the vet regularly

pretty expensive. Please don't think, because your cat will be kept indoors and will not be exposed to outdoor conditions or other animals, that you don't need to take him to the vet. And please don't think, just because your new puppy is your only pet (and will not come in contact with other dogs), that you don't need to take her to the vet. Every pet needs to be seen by a veterinarian on a regular basis.

And *please*, don't fall into the trap of thinking, because your dog will not be in contact with other dogs, that it doesn't need to get spayed/neutered. Please be a responsible pet owner and get your cats and dogs fixed.

Being a pet owner means that you will have many years of excitement and happiness. Don't forget that in order to raise a happy pet you, as the owner, need to provide love and discipline along with remembering that it is your responsibility to keep your pet healthy.

Among other things, here are a few things that I thought were especially important to remember:

In order to provide the best life for your pet, you need to make sure that they'll remain healthy and safe. Ask your vet about getting your pet on a preventative health care plan including heart worm pills, (Heartguard is a good brand), flea and tick control (like Frontline), and all the necessary vaccines that are applicable to your pet depending on their age.

Try to keep your pet's records in an organized book or folder. The easier you can reference their records and history,

the easier it is to keep track of what they need. Bring this information with you every time you visit your vet so you can take notes and write down any information your vet might share with you.

When you first get a new pet, make sure to have a pet ID tag made before you bring him anywhere. This is going to be the one thing that will bring you and your pet together again if, by chance, he happens to get lost. Another very popular idea these days is to have your pet microchipped. A pet is microchipped by inserting a tiny chip under the skin. Each individual pet has their own number assigned to them. When the microchip is scanned, the ID number appears on a screen, the number is entered into the database, the pet's ID info appears, then the pet's owner is contacted.

Make sure to establish a close relationship with your vet. They are the ones who are up-to-date on new treatments and information regarding your pet. Be sure to discuss these very important things with your vet:

Spay/Neuter: PLEASE SPAY AND NUETER YOUR PETS! This is the number one thing that is going to help reduce the number of stray and unwanted dogs and cats and cut down the already too high number of puppies and kittens who are euthanized every day. Responsible pet owners get their pets spayed or neutered. This procedure should be done prior to adulthood, so make sure to discuss with your vet when the time is right.

Vaccinations: There are different vaccinations that are recommended



PHOTO: COURTESY

Boxford resident Kate Whitney holds Dash a puppy she took in temporarily as a foster parent but decided to adopt. Whitney has volunteered to provide for a foster home for puppies while they are waiting to be adopted.

depending on your pet's age. Your vet will tell you what your pet needs, but be sure to keep an organized record of what vaccination your pet received, when your pet received it, and when your pet is due again for another vaccination.

Grooming: You should spend a few minutes each day grooming your pet.

WHITNEY, bottom next page

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DOGS, CATS, AND OTHER PEOPLE

Puppy mills under fire

Matthew Margolis
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is ringing in the New Year with a well-aimed bonk to the bread-and-butter of the puppy mill business: pet stores.

In the last six months, the HSUS has conducted three in-depth undercover investigations into the main arteries of the puppy mill industry — puppy mill auctions, puppy mill compliance with state and federal laws, and the role of pet stores in the puppy mill biz.

Just what is the role of pet stores in the puppy mill biz?

They are the heart, they are the lungs, they are the easiest, most lucrative avenue to you, the dog-loving consumer.

And you — your dollars — are the blood, the oxygen, the water, the food — the essential components to keeping the whole despicable machine alive.

By now you've probably heard of Pets of Bel Air. It's an upscale pet store to the stars that has recently been accused by the HSUS of misleading their customers, misrepresenting their "merchandise" and pushing puppy mill puppies as "babies from private breeders." That's right, "babies." The store even displays the dogs in baby cribs. After all, presentation is everything.

But HSUS undercover investigators visited five of the suppliers Pets of Bel Air insisted were private breeders — suppliers with precious names like Kozy Kennels and Puppy Palace — only to find mass-breeding facilities in possession of hundreds of dogs, most with complaints filed against them for everything from cramped quarters to unsanitary conditions. One even had an inspector note that the stench of ammonia was so bad it burned her nose and eyes.

Feel free to visit the Pets of Bel Air website at www.petsofbelair.com. Or, for an entirely different perspective, visit www.hsus.org/pets. Click Pets and Pet Related News. Then, for a real shocker, watch the undercover video clip for the segment entitled "Cruelty Caught in Hollywood Glare." It'll make you think twice about buying animals from pet stores.

According to HSUS President and CEO Wayne Pacelle, "No consumer is immune to the lies and deceit. It doesn't matter who you are or where you shop. This investigation shows that a high price and prestigious address are no assurance of a dog from a reputable breeder."

Some of the things you'll see and hear the manager and employees of Pets of Bel Air tell the undercover HSUS investigator:

"Never say the dog is sick. Ever, ever, ever, ever."

"Never say sick, parvo, distemper. Never. I usually say sniffles. It sounds cuter."

Speaking of sniffles, since HSUS went public with the results of their investigation into Pets of Bel Air — which holds itself up as the gold standard of pet stores - former customers have come forward to HSUS with stories of their experience with the LA-based "gold standard":

In 2005, Jennifer (last name withheld) bought Elvis, an English bulldog, from Pets of Bel Air.

According to her story, found on hsus.org in the segment of Pets and Pet Related News entitled "Holiday Heartbreak": "Store personnel assured her that his cold was just 'the sniffles' and that the 6-month-old puppy had never been owned before.

"But Jennifer later found out that Elvis had indeed been purchased before. In

fact, she found out by accident that he had been returned and had spent two weeks at the veterinary clinic used by the store, suffering from pneumonia.

"Elvis has been plagued by serious health problems ever since, including ear and eye infections, chronic digestion problems and allergies so severe that he nearly died of anaphylactic shock on two occasions."

Elvis and Jennifer's story is only one.

And what of this veterinary clinic used by the store?

In most cases, a health certificate from a pet store means nothing more than a superficial exam was given to your pet by a vet who signs off on the facts that the dog is breathing and no limbs are broken. When I clicked to find out more about Pets of Bel Air's vet, no information was available. Can't say that I blame them.

Most pet stores will offer some flimsy version of a health warranty — designed to instill a false sense of security in the consumer. Usually vague and short-lived (i.e. Pets of Bel Air's 14-day limited viral warranty), these warranties are safe enough for pet stores to provide since they know most people bond with their pets quickly and won't have the heart to return a sick dog to the people who weren't taking very good care of him to begin with.

Am I against pet stores that sell puppies? Yes, I am. And I catch heat from some self-proclaimed responsible pet-store owner every time I write about this stuff. But the truth is: Pet stores and puppy mills are intrinsically linked. No animal lover would ever set foot on a puppy mill for the purpose of buying a dog. They're heartbreaking places. And the bottom line is: Puppy mills would sell no puppies — much less millions of them — were it not for pet stores and the people who buy their puppies from them.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Uncle Matty Margolis is a syndicated pet expert columnist for creators.com

Adopting from an animal shelter — where you'll find wonderful dogs of all breeds, mixed and pure — is a great way to help shut down the puppy mill business. And keep in mind, reputable breeders don't sell puppies over the Internet or through a pet store. They'll want to meet the buyer in person, and the buyer should want to meet them, too.

Woof!

Dog trainer Matthew "Uncle Matty" Margolis is co-author of 18 books about dogs, a behaviorist, a popular radio and television guest, and host of the PBS series "WOOF! It's a Dog's Life!" Read all of Uncle Matty's columns at the Creators Syndicate website at www.creators.com, and visit him at <http://www.unclematty.com>. Send your questions to dearuncle.gazette@unclematty.com or by mail to Uncle Matty at P.O. Box 3300, Diamond Springs, CA 95619. COPYRIGHT 2007 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

WHITNEY: from previous page

Check your pet’s eyes and use a soft damp cloth to wipe away any discharge that might be in the eye area.

Next check their ears. Wipe out any build up with a damp cloth and be sure to make a note of anything that looks unusual.

Make sure you don’t forget to trim your pet’s nails. You can buy a nail clipper at the pet store, or you can bring your pet to your vet or a groomer and have them do it. Monitor any changes you might notice with your pet, write down notes, and then contact your vet.

Diet: A healthy, balanced diet is absolutely necessary for your pet to reach its ideal weight, and to have correct brain and bone formation. Talk to your vet about what type of food is right for your pet.

Some vets recommend a mix of wet and dry food, while others recommend just dry.

When you finally bring home your new pet, make sure it has access to water 24 hours a day. Try to find a heavy metal or ceramic bowl that will not be knocked over

easily or chewed. Get a collar that fits. Please be aware of the size and don’t put something on your pet’s neck that is too tight.

You should be able to slide two fingers easily between the collar and your pet’s body. And remember to upgrade the size of the collar as your puppy or kitten grows! Make sure you have a nice bed for them to sleep in every night. It’s important to make your new dog feel comfortable and safe.

You may choose to purchase a crate or a comfortable bed, or both! I purchased a large crate and put a comfortable liner in it, and this is where my puppy sleeps for naptime or through the night. I also have a nice fluffy bed in the kitchen and living area that my puppy sometimes chooses to lay down on. I like to give her options, but I make sure that there is always a place for her to feel safe, protected and comfortable.

Don’t forget that dogs and puppies need exercise. The amount of exercise depends on the size of your dog, but every dog needs *some* type of physical activity.

So, all in all, remembering to do these things will make for a happy and healthy pet. Please remember that owning a pet is a joyous time, but can also get expensive with food, vet bills, and accessories. As I



PHOTO: COURTESY

Kate Whitney with Blue, a balck lab who was adopted by a Boxford family last month. Black labs are usually the first put down. You can email Kate at KAHW313@aol.com

finished up at the vets with Dash, I was reminded of this financial responsibility that comes along with having a pet...I got my bill.

As I signed on the dotted line, I sighed a happy sigh. I was happy, not only because I now was in-the-know with what’s going on with my puppy, but I was content on knowing that she was healthy.



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Please See our Ad Page 23

HAVERHILL ON THE MOVE

From the desk of Haverhill Mayor Jim Fiorentini

2007- A Year to Remember 2008- Challenges ahead

No question, we had some great successes in 2007. Here are a few: 5.3% gain in MCAS scores, largest gains in 12 years; Big Improvement in school drop out rate; Opening of the two largest retail stores ever to open in Haverhill— BJ's and Target (Lowe's opens in January); Unemployment hits a six and half year low; The Forest City project, representing a \$70 million investment to restore old factory buildings, received approvals and breaks ground; The Comeau Bridge reopens; and having the lowest single family tax increase in the region two years in a row.

Despite these gains, we face major challenges in 2008 and I am nowhere near satisfied with the status quo. Our education system is getting better, but we have a long way to go.

Many of our people are employed at jobs that do not pay the benefits that good manufacturing jobs paid a few years ago. Next year we face tremendous financial problems. In order to get through this, we need to make government as efficient as possible, and we need outside assistance from the State and Federal government. In the meantime, let's celebrate our successes of 2007, and Martha and I wish you and your family a safe and prosperous New Year.

2007: Two Years in a Row, Haverhill Residential Taxpayers Have Lowest Tax Increase in the area. For the second year in a row, Haverhill single family residential taxpayers had one the lowest tax increases in the Merrimack Valley. Average single family homeowner property tax increases per community:

- * Andover \$141
- * North Andover \$229
- * Methuen \$194
- * Lawrence, around \$212 (proposed),
- * **Haverhill \$84**

(To check your home value, go to <http://haverhill.patriotproperties.com/default.asp?br=exp&vr=6>)

One reason for our success: property values for business went up, resulting in an overall shift of the total taxes paid in the city from residents to business.

2007 Review: BJ's, Target, Come to Haverhill

2007 marked the biggest retail boom in our history, with BJ's and Target opening, and with Lowe's scheduled to open in January of 2008. Together, these new stores bring over 400 new jobs and \$350,000 in new tax revenues every single year. Today, Haverhill's unemployment rate of 4% is at a six and a half year low— partially because of these new jobs. But, this low unemployment rate masks the problems facing many of our citizens. People that once worked at Lucent with good salaries and benefits now work at part-time jobs with no benefits. We will continue to work to bring in new jobs to the area.

2007 Review: Comeau Bridge Opens

2007 marked the grand reopening of the Comeau Bridge, an event attended by the Governor and other State and local officials. The first person across the new bridge was Marilyn Comeau, daughter of the World War II hero that the bridge was named after.

Understanding your tax bill: Shortly after you receive this newsletter, you'll receive your real estate tax bill in the mail. Here are a few things you should know about your bill: ·

Your property value is a year behind. Your property value is based, by law, on sales that took place in the city a year earlier, in this case, calendar year 2006. In a rising real estate market, this protects the homeowner.

Abatement

If you believe that your property is overvalued, you can apply for an abatement. You **MUST** apply during the month of January. You should start by checking your value on line.

You should start by carefully checking your tax bill and property sheet of your property. We try hard, but no one is perfect— do we have the right number of bedrooms, fireplaces, bathrooms etc?

You may then want to check the values of properties you believe to be comparable in value.

If you are dissatisfied, you might wish to call the assessor's office and make an appointment to see them. You can reach the assessor's office at 978 374-2316.

If you are still dissatisfied, you have the right to file for an abatement by February 1. You download the form on line, but you must send in your application by mail by February 1st.

*** Tax Exemptions**

An exemption is different from an abatement. An abatement concerns the value of your property. An "exemption" does not concern property values, but exempts a portion of the tax for certain classes of people. Exemptions are governed by State law.

Exemption are available to certain taxpayers aged 70 and over, and to certain blind, disabled and veterans. You can learn more at our city web site.

If you would like to apply for an exemption, our applications are on line, but you must fill it out and mail it in by February 1, online applications are not accepted. Please check the city assessor's web site for more information.

2008— Major Budget Deficit Looms

2008 presents us with a major budget deficit. Despite our health care reforms, which save us \$1.5 million a year, our health care costs continue to grow much faster than our revenues. New growth has narrowed our deficit substantially, but new growth is expected to decline because of the housing crisis. Meanwhile, the State has its own financial problems. We are exploring every option to close this gap. This crisis, facing every city in the State, is caused by rising health care and pension costs. Haverhill faces its own, unique, burden in the

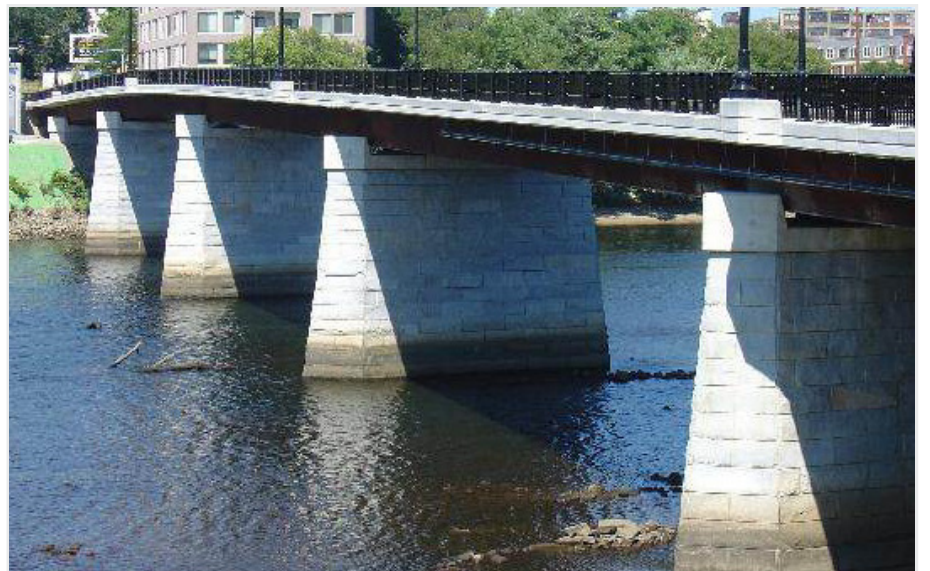


PHOTO: COURTESY

Comeau bridge in Haverhill reopened in 2007

Hale debt. Although the Hale was primarily a regional hospital, only the taxpayers of Haverhill are asked to pay the debt when the hospital collapsed.

2008 Preview: Mayor to Propose Major Reorganization of DPW and Nominating Its New Director

In early January, I will unveil the details of my proposal to completely reorganize the Department of Public Works. At the same time, I will submit my choice as new DPW Director. The reorganization proposal, which must be voted on by the City Council, will propose combining the highway, water, waste water, engineering, and recycling departments into one combined department under one new director. The reorganization will save money and provide for better service. A combined department will bring us to the next level in improving government services: an updated computerized roadway improvement plan and more effort put into maintaining roads before they need repaving.

New Accounting Report Outlines One Reason Why Cities and Towns Face a Fiscal Crisis

Sometimes the most critical matters are the most obscure. Nowhere is this more obvious than the new accounting standards, called GASB (pronounced "GAS-BEE") 45. GASB stands for General Accounting Standards Board. GASB 45 standards require that cities and towns now account for the future costs of paying for health care benefits for employees and retirees. We just completed our required GASB 45 study. The results are staggering. Our liability is \$250 million. Our cost to pay the health care benefits of retired Hale employees, a critical part of what we call the Hale debt, is \$37.6 million or over \$2.4 million a year. (To put this in perspective, the entire police budget is around \$7 million a year.) GASB 45 accounting standards are difficult to understand. Here are a few articles : "You Dropped a Bomb on Me, GASB" "Lassoing GASB 45," Governing Magazine GASB 45 Q&A, by NY State Controller

Feedback: Next year, we face tremendous financial problems, with a looming, multi-million budget deficit. Which better describes your feelings as we begin preparing the city budget;

() I would rather pay more in taxes and get more services such as police, fire, highway and schools;

() I am paying about as much as I can. I would rather hold the line and have fewer services.

How would you rate the article about your tax bill?

() Helpful, it provided information I did not know

() Not helpful, I already knew this

() I did not really read it, just read the headline.

Haverhill Recreation Department Baby Boomer Bash!!!

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Contact Kathy X11/Rita X16 978-374-2390 or kbresnahan@cityofhaverhill.com for Info



Jim Fiorentini is the mayor of Haverhill and was just elected to his third term on November 6th. You can email him at Jimfior@aol.com



Lawrence Fire Captain Lannon (l.), Norm Jones of Corporate Express and North Andover inventor George Peters with the WHAT NOW?? evacuation training aide.

Lancer 1 Inc., based in North Andover, MA, announces that Fidelity Investments is its newest client using the patented WHAT NOW ???™ Evacuation Training Aide (ETA) in all of its Canadian and US facilities.

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George A. Peters Jr., President
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Top ten Lowell political events of 2007

Richard Howe, Jr.
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

As 2007 draws to a close, let's take this opportunity to scroll back through the past twelve months and identify the top ten political events in Lowell.

Marty Meehan resigns from Congress to become Chancellor of UMass Lowell.

From the time Marty Meehan was first elected to Congress in 1992, he sent frequent signals that he did not plan to spend the rest of his life in the House of Representatives. Even before he was elected, there was his term limits pledge. Once in office, he seriously considered running first for governor and then for the U.S. Senate. Still, everyone was stunned when Meehan announced that he would resign from Congress to lead UMass Lowell. The new chancellor has received excellent reviews for his first six months in office, but he has also made it clear that leading the university will not be his retirement job.

Niki Tsongas wins Democratic primary in Congressional special election.

Meehan's departure triggered a stampede of candidates to succeed him. On the Democratic side, the initial list of candidates included Niki Tsongas, the Dean of External Affairs at Middlesex Community College; Eileen Donoghue, a Lowell City Councilor and former mayor; Jamie Eldridge, a state representative from Acton; Barry Finegold, a state representative from Andover; Jim Miceli, a state representative from Wilmington, Jim DiPaola, the Middlesex County Sheriff; David O'Brien, a political activist from Concord; and Steve Kerrigan, a political activist from Lancaster. DiPaola, O'Brien and Kerrigan soon dropped out. Tsongas used her name recognition and a top-flight political organization to sprint to a big early lead, which she sustained despite a late surge by Donoghue.

Tsongas defeats Republican Jim Ogonowski in the Congressional special election.

After prevailing in a hotly contested primary race, Tsongas faced a tough opponent in Dracut farmer and career military officer Jim Ogonowski who prevailed against token opposition in the Republican primary. Ogonowski ran a vigorous race that had as its centerpiece an extremely aggressive position against illegal immigrants.

This tactic foreshadowed much of the debate in the current Republican presidential primaries and gave Ogonowski a significant slice of the vote, much more than most pundits had expected. Still, Tsongas won the race by a relatively comfortable margin and is not expected to face significant opposition in the 2008 election.

Superintendent of Schools Karla Baehr opts out of contract renewal to seek Commissioner of Education job.

After seven years as head of the Lowell public schools, Karla Baehr announced in late November that she would not seek an extension of her contract (which expires in June) but instead would seek the position of State Commissioner of Education. Baehr's announcement caught the school committee completely by surprise and may have been precipitated by the strong showing of two critics, newcomer Dave Conway and veteran Regina Faticanti, in the November election.

Radio Station WCAP Sold.

Maurice Cohen who, with his brother Ike, created WCAP (980 AM) back in the 1950s, sold the station to a group led by Clark Smidt and Sam Poulten. The new owners have vowed to keep the station focused on local programming (and they have) but the emphasis has shifted from Lowell-centric political talk to a more regional arts, culture and entertainment format.



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

Former Congressman Marty Meehan was picked to be the chancellor of UMass Lowell with former Lowell City Councilor Eileen Donoghue at last year's Saint Patrick's Day Luncheon at the Claddagh in Lawrence

Changes on the Lowell City Council.

George Ramirez left the council for a position in state government and was replaced by tenth place finisher Joe Mendonca who failed to win re-election. Eileen Donoghue, who would have been a sure winner, chose not to seek reelection and instead ran (unsuccessfully) for Congress. Despite predictions that several incumbent councilors might lose, all but Mendonca were re-elected. The two new members of the council are Alan Kazanjian and Mike Lenzi. They will take office in early January.

School Committee Shake Up.

Five term incumbent Kevin McHugh lost his bid for re-election.

Newcomer Dave Conway, a soon to retire housemaster at Lowell High School, topped the ticket in his first run for school committee. The other five incumbents were all re-elected.

Death of Paul Sullivan.

Sunday morning political talk shows on Boston TV, and ultimately the successor

to David Brudnoy on WBZ radio's evening talk show slot.

Real Estate spiral continues.

Home values were down. Foreclosures were up. By the end of 2007, the credit crunch triggered by the collapse of the housing market and the home mortgage industry threatens to bring down the entire economy.

The Red Sox win the World Series with a team filled with former Lowell Spinners. Jonathan Papelbon, John Lester, Clay Buchholz, Dustin Pedroia, Kevin Youkilis, Jacoby Ellsbury and Brandon Moss. No wonder the Spinners sell out all of their games.



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

An update from Congressman Niki Tsongas

U.S. Representative Niki Tsongas traveled to the U.S.-Mexican border in Arizona and Texas last month on a fact-finding tour to get a first-hand look at border security measures now in place on our Southern border.

Rep. Tsongas toured the Border Patrol station and the Port of Entry in Nogales, Arizona where she met Border Patrol officials and witnessed vehicle and cargo inspections, random checks and detainee holding cells. She also got a first-hand look at an unfenced border area, remote sensors and video surveillance technology deployed along the border, as well as a traffic checkpoint on Interstate-19 some 25 miles from the border.

Finally, Rep. Tsongas inspected border patrol facilities and operations along the Rio Grande and land border with Mexico in the El Paso, Texas area.

Transportation Bill To Benefit Lawrence

Fifth District Representative Niki Tsongas announced that the House of Representatives passed the fiscal year 2008 Transportation, Housing and Urban

Development appropriations conference report, which included federal funds for projects that will benefit the Fifth District. Like the Labor-Health-Education conference report passed by the House and Senate last month, which the President vetoed, the President has threatened to veto this funding bill as well should the Senate also pass this important funding legislation.

"Over the past several months, I heard from people throughout the Merrimack Valley about their support for efforts to make it easier to travel throughout our region," said Rep. Tsongas. "That is why I am so pleased that only one month into my service to the Fifth District, Chairman John Olver has accepted my request for funding to help purchase fourteen new buses for the Merrimack Valley which will help tens of thousands of people get to and from work, school, health appointments, or any other destination. Greater access to public transit is particularly important to our elderly and disabled and it's good for our environment."



PHOTO: COURTESY

Congressman Niki Tsongas on the U.S. /Mexican border speaking with a Border Patrol Agent.

At the request of Rep. Niki Tsongas, \$400,000 was included in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development conference report. The Merrimack Valley Regional Transportation Authority, which serves Lawrence, Andover, Haverhill and Methuen, will use the funds to help purchase fourteen new transit buses that

will replace fourteen 1996 model year buses nearing the end of their service life. This federal funding will be combined with other available transit funds to complete the purchase.

"The Transportation-HUD bill funds important national, regional and local

Dracut must explore new school options

D.J. Deeb, M.A., M.S., M.Ed.
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Last year, the Dracut School Committee and Board of Selectmen approved the submission of a Statement of Interest to obtain funding for renovating, expanding, and/or building a new high school in Dracut. The Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] received 423 Statements of Interest from 162 school districts across the Commonwealth.

Dracut was one of 49 schools to be approved for Feasibility Study funding. In early December, Dracut High School was also chosen as one of 83 schools to receive state funding from the MSBA.

The Feasibility Study, which is also partially funded by the State, will determine the options available to Dracut residents regarding the Town’s high school. It will also tell us how much the MSBA will be willing to contribute towards a new high school or expansion project.

In approving Dracut’s Statement of Interest, MSBA Executive Director Katherine Craven observed that Dracut High School “met some or all of the criteria of having the neediest facility conditions and/or overcrowding contributing to poor educational environments.”

In order to qualify for state funding for a school expansion project, The Town of Dracut needs to follow the MSBA’s regulations and obtain their approval at each step of the process. The first step is the completion of a comprehensive Feasibility Study that explores all available options for school expansion, renovation, and/or new school construction.

Only 17 schools in northeastern Massachusetts, including Dracut, were given priority status for funding by the Massachusetts School Building Authority. Members of the Dracut School Committee (**Ron Mercier, Mary Gail Martin, Nancy Mendonca, Mike Miles, and yours truly**) and Superintendent **Elaine Espindle** deserve much credit for promoting Dracut in this effort. Also, former School Committee members **May Paquette** and **Joe Campbell** deserve some credit for helping to initiate this process prior to their terms expiring last year.

Members of the Dracut School Committee voted unanimously to support my motion on December 10th to request that the Town Finance Committee appropriate \$125,000 to fund a Feasibility Study to explore our options regarding an expansion or new construction project for Dracut High School.

In recent years, Dracut High School has experienced severe overcrowding and

some structural problems within the school itself.

The all too-famous catwalk is in dire need of repair as well as the overhang outside the High School’s main entrance. Most importantly, more classroom space is needed in order to adequately provide for Dracut’s growing student population.

Currently, the high school contains ten [10] portable modular classroom units to house our students. This is okay for the short-term, but forward planning is needed to provide for the long-term needs of our students and our community.

Funding a detailed feasibility study to ascertain our options is a “no brainer.” Dracut residents should rally behind this effort and support Town funding for this study.

Keep in mind that the MSBA is also paying almost half the cost of funding the Feasibility Study. Communities are judged largely by the quality of their high schools when it comes to property values.


We owe it to Dracut’s students and Dracut homeowners to explore all of the options available for repairing Dracut High School and providing for the learning needs of our students by expanding classroom space.

Dracut was fortunate to be chosen to participate in a Feasibility Study by the

MSBA to ascertain whether expanding our existing high school or building a new high school is the best option for the Town. More importantly, the Feasibility Study will determine how much the State would be willing to assist Dracut financially in a future project.

Dracut parents and taxpayers would be best served to at least know what options are available to fix Dracut High School. The MSBA currently has approximately \$2.5 billion to appropriate for school construction and expansion projects over the next 5 years.

Thus, all of Dracut should rally behind and encourage the Town Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen, Town Manager, and Town Meeting participants to appropriate \$125,000, Dracut’s portion of the cost to conduct the Feasibility Study. By doing this, Dracut residents will send a clear and strong message to state officials that it wants to be proactive and move forward in renovating Dracut High School.



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

PADELLARO: from page 1

On June 13, 2004 City Clerk McGravey suddenly resigned and, when Padellaro – his assistant – voiced her interest in replacing McGravey as the next City Clerk, she claims that Council President Patrick Blanchette informed her that the council would probably not appoint her as acting clerk after her complaints against McGravey caused the very job opening she was applying for. Padellaro claims that her denial of the appointment was retaliatory by Blanchette.

Councilor Blanchette said at the time that he was “very sad about the whole incident,” and further stated that “the environment in city hall is really contentious with all of this still very fresh in people’s minds. Jim McGravey has not been charged with anything as of yet and I can’t see how it helps the city to hire someone who’s accusations were responsible for the vacancy in the first place. Some people are saying that this was the plan all along. I don’t know if that is true, but I am not going to put the city into that situation to find out.”

As both cases were making their way through the different court systems, Padellaro’s workers’ compensation case was concluding faster than the Federal suit, so all the parties involved agreed to settle the workers’ compensation case and dismiss the Federal Lawsuit.

On February 17, 2005, Padellaro filed the workers’ compensation claim and the case was heard at Conference on June 30, 2005.

The Judge awarded Padellaro weekly benefits in the amount of \$600 a week based upon an average weekly wage of \$1,000 per week. The City of Lawrence appealed this decision and a Hearing was held several months later upholding the Conference Order.

The City again appealed the case to a three-panel reviewing board, which had not heard the case prior to settlement. During this appeal process, Padellaro continued to receive \$600 per week in workers’ compensation.

While the appeal was making its way through the workers’ compensation system, Attorney Pierce filed a second workers’ compensation claim on December 7, 2006 for Section 28 benefits.

Section 28 benefits are double compensation benefits “if an employee is injured by reason of the serious and willful misconduct of an employer.” These actions are almost quasi-criminal in nature. A judge will decide after a hearing whether to award double benefits based upon willful misconduct. A hearing on the matter was scheduled for October 12, 2007, where it was believed by city hall insiders that the judge was going to



City Council President Patrick Blanchette (middle) with former Assistant City Clerk Jennifer Padellaro (l) and City Clerk Jim McGravey. Padellaro says she was so “stressed and distraught” by her job environment that she had to leave her job with the city. She then applied for the city clerk’s position, but when she was passed over by the council president, she went out on stress leave and filed a lawsuit against the city for retaliation.

award the double benefits. That’s when the parties negotiated a settlement for a lump sum of \$610,000, which was approved on November 30th.

Had the City been ordered to pay Section 28 benefits, Padellaro would have received \$1,200 a week going back to the date of the injury, which was December 2, 2004.

The City of Lawrence is self-insured, meaning that this settlement money

comes directly from the City’s budget, not an insurance company.

When asked how the City will pay for this settlement, The Valley Patriot was advised that the settlement was structured over several years, but the details of the structure was not provided.

In a published report last year, City Attorney Charles Boddy said that the City had no money in the budget to settle this case and recommended that the city take it to trial.

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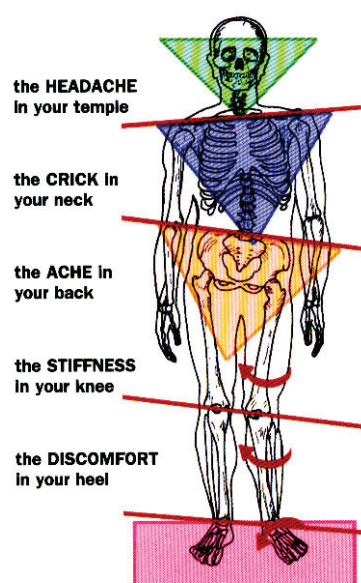
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6:00am MERRIMACK MAGAZINE - with Jack Baldwin,
Teddy Panos, and Dean Johnson * News, Weather,
Local Sports, Merrimack Valley Traffic on the 8's

10:00am Dr. Dean Edel

11:00am G. Gordon Liddy

12:00noon Dr. Joy Brown

3:00pm MERRIMACK MAGAZINE - with Ryan and
Regina News, Weather, Local Sports, Merrimack Valley
Traffic on the 8's

5:30pm WCVB-TV NewsCenter5 The Evening News
LIVE on Your Radio 980wcap

6:30pm The Beatles & Before

8:00pm George at Night - George Anthas - LIVE, Local
call in and interviews

10:00pm The Beatles & Before



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Saturday

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10:00am The Car Doctors

11:00am The Car Clinic with Bobby Likis

12:00noon Paying Attention! with Tommy Duggan

2:00pm The Beatles & Before

980wcap.com

Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy’s contract

Peter Larocque
LAWRENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Greetings and Happy New Year to all of you and I trust 2008 will be a Wonderful and Safe Year for all of us.

I want to thank the Valley Patriot for allowing me this opportunity each month to share with the voters of District E and the rest of the citizens of Lawrence my thoughts and opinions on issues that effect all of us.

Not long ago, a very good friend shared with me that having vision is beginning with the end in mind, I couldn’t agree more. A leader, if he or she is going to lead must have vision! That having been said, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you my reasoning behind my recent votes that I took as a member of the Lawrence School Committee.

But before I do, I must get something off of my chest and that is that I am really looking forward to the day when adults in Lawrence stop the practice of USING children to promote their position on issues! I am all for young students coming before us during Public Participation at our School Committee meetings, sharing with us their concerns about their education, or Policies and Procedures that effect them during their time at school.

But timing is everything isn’t it?

Here we are in the middle of a teacher’s contract and students speaking disrespectfully to school officials and some of the adults in the audience



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

Lawrence Superintendent of School Wilfredo Laboy announces the decision by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges to reinstate Lawrence High School’s accreditation.

applauding them and local newspapers giving them print to give them some credence is a sad state of affairs in my humble opinion. I welcome the participation of young people, and they have every right to come before us at anytime to speak their concerns, but it must be done decently and in order and respectfully.

Now, with that all said and the minutes of some of our past Executive Session Meetings made public, I can share with you my reasoning behind the votes that I took.

At the last Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association’s candidate forum the BIG question put before the Lawrence School Committee candidates was, would you vote to extend the Superintendents Contract?

My answer was that, at that time, I didn’t honestly know. I said that the next step in the procedure would be that the Superintendent would tell us what his

intent was. I also stated that I honestly didn’t know, at that time, if the current Superintendent was the one who could take us to the next level.

Well, the Superintendent told us his intention, which is to retire after his time in Lawrence is completed. But to do this, because of his age and years of service in the Education profession he needed a little more time which amounts to 19 months and a few days. He also stated that he didn’t want to overstay his welcome.

I’m sure that those of you who are retired and those of us who are still looking forward to retirement can appreciate that needing a little more time may be warranted for this purpose. His contract ended November 2009. So my vote was to extend his contract another 19 months, approximately 1year and 7 months and 17 days, not the 2 or more years reported by other newsprint. So, now his contract ends June 2011.

With this small extension, he will be able to retire. I also believe because of where we were as a School District before he came and where we are now as far as student achievement goes, this contract extension was warranted.

I would not have voted for a multi year contract, it is my opinion that the change will be good for Lawrence.

So what this means is that in June of 2010, the School Committee will receive a letter from the Superintendent stating that in one year, at the end of his contract,

LAROCQUE, next page

Lawrence needs to hit the ground running in 2008

Robert O’Koniewski
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

As the 2006-07 version of the Lawrence City Council stumbled toward its end, the only thing missing was Nero’s fiddling.

Amidst the burgeoning fiscal crisis that seems to perennially expose budgetary mismanagement at all municipal levels, this time highlighted by a November 6th letter from the Department of Revenue to Mayor Michael Sullivan detailing a \$15 million problem in the FY08 budget, the Council decided to ignore the complexities of the situation and ride out the completion of its session, effectively punting the problem to the 2008-09 Council.

The Council that was seated on January 2nd will not have an opportunity to ease into the New Year. But with four new members coming in – including one former incumbent and two previous chairs of substantive city boards – perhaps the new council will comport itself with a higher level of maturity and professionalism that has been lacking over the past 18 months and demonstrate an ability to work with the Sullivan Administration to right our city’s ship.

In order to fix the FY08 budget problem and lay the foundation for a restructured municipal government going into FY09, there are several “big picture” initiatives the Sullivan Administration can implement on its own and others that would need the approval of the Council.

First, with a lack of new revenues, the Mayor should continue with non-public

safety related layoffs and restructure the manner in which City Hall functions.

The last Council thought it could reject any substantial property tax or water/sewer fees increases and then act shocked when budget cuts and layoffs occurred. If the new Council does not approve going to the full levy limit and does not address other problems highlighted by DOR, the only alternative the Mayor will have is to layer additional layoffs on top of the first round made just before Christmas.

This may not necessarily be a bad thing for taxpayers and those who depend on City Hall services. Such fiscal adversity should spur the Administration to undertake reforming the manner in which services are delivered. For instance, the numerous ministerial functions performed by different departments could be placed within the purview of one office designed to handle various paperwork as dictated by government. Such consolidations would restore taxpayers’ faith that government can respond positively to a crisis.

Second, the city needs a website that can provide interactive Internet tools to supplement many functions that one presently needs to visit City Hall to undertake. With the technological tools available in this day and age it is ridiculous that one cannot use the city’s website to obtain, fill out, and file forms provided by the city’s various boards, or even pay a tax or water bill.

This would also be a wonderful tool for encouraging entrepreneurs who are



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

Newly elected Lawrence City Councilors (l. to r.): Frank Moran (at-large), David Abdoo (District E) and Roger Twomey (at-large).

looking to invest in our community to actually be able to start that business here rather easily. Best of all, to establish such an interactive website would cost virtually nothing and pay for itself immediately.

Third, the city should look to privatize such business related functions as the administration of parking garages and lots and the operation of Veterans Stadium. Now under Director Michael Sweeney’s oversight, the city’s parking business is actually making money.

The stadium has yet to tap its full revenue making potential.

Private vendors, driven by profit motive and guided by experience and well-tested principles, would help the city realize monies that presently are being left on the table.

Similarly the city’s new water plant could probably be administered more efficiently through a private vendor. It effectively has been privatized anyway with the retention of a consultant to do what a properly trained water treatment team should have been doing all along.

Fourth, the mayor needs to maintain his advocacy for increasing the water and

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

WCAP Everyone Gets it!

I want to congratulate Clark Smidt and Sam Poulten for coming up with the slogan "980/WCAP ... Everybody Gets it!" Given that it is near impossible to hear the former Lawrence station (WCCM) in most neighborhoods in Lawrence, Methuen and North Andover, marketing WCAP by letting the Valley know "Everybody Gets It" is just brilliant. As one of those people who struggle to "get" the Lawrence station (which has moved on the dial now three times) Clark and Sam have really hit on something here that will resonate with public sentiment. But, an even more ingenious idea was their brainstorm of broadcasting the daily Channel 5 WHDH TV news on WCAP/ 980AM so that commuters can listen to the top news stories in the state on their way to and from work. WCAP broadcasts the Channel 5 news at 5am and 5:30pm every weekday and remember ... Everybody Gets It!

Unemployment down in Lawrence... Except in City Hall

Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan appeared on the Paying Attention! radio program last month to announce that the city of Lawrence had reduced the unemployment rate from 16.8% in 2002 to 7.5% in 2007. Of course these figures were announced just days before the city council refused to set a tax rate and raise water rates to balance the budget, resulting in 40+ layoffs in city hall with a possible 40 more to come.

Team Manzi for Hillary?

According to our Lowell columnist Richard Howe (richardhowe.com), State Senators Steve Panagiatakis of Lowell and State Senator Steve Baddour of Methuen have been vigorously campaigning in New Hampshire for (get this) Hillary Clinton. I wonder if that means the rest of the "Manzi Team" (i.e., Mayor Manzi, Debbie Quinn, Steve Zanni and State Rep. Linda Dean Campbell) will also be supporting Hillary. What puzzles me is: how do local pols (like Baddour) who support conservative issues at the local and state level then betray everything they vote for by encouraging voters to elect someone like Hillary Clinton or Deval Patrick, two politicians who are diametrically opposed to all of those local conservative issues that guys like Baddour fight so hard for. I guess politics really do make strange bedfellows.

Senator Tucker announces local office hours in Dracut

State Senator Sue Tucker announced last week that she will be holding local office hours at the Moses Greeley Park Memorial Library on Monday, January 14 from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. All town residents are invited to stop by with questions, comments or any other issues.

Residents are also invited to contact Senator Tucker at her State House office by calling 617-722-1612 or by emailing her at susan.tucker@state.ma.us.

So Many Puppies in the Tribune

Here's one that had me laughing all month. Maybe it's me but, since the day our December edition hit the streets (12/4) with Kate Whitney and her puppies on the front page, I have never in my life seen so many dogs and cats on the front page of the Eagle Tribune in one month. In the one month that our puppies were on page one, the Trib ran page one stories about adopting kittens (oddly enough the day after we published), followed up by a picture of puppies two days later, dogs being reunited with their owners, dogs helping sick people, how to adopt a kitten at the MSPCA, and even a firefighter in New Hampshire rescuing dogs from a fire in sub zero temperatures. Is there no shame on Turnpike Street? Surely they can come up with their own ideas!

Buy the Saunders School for \$1

Here's something you haven't read in the daily paper. As financially strapped as the City of Lawrence is these days, with layoffs and cuts in city services devastating city hall, you would think the Lawrence City Council would be doing everything humanly possible to raise revenue and avoid raising taxes or laying off more people. But you'd be wrong. Since the city council disbanded the Real Property



Task Force (the group which screened city owned property for sale) they have not only sold valuable pieces of property at bargain basement prices (sometimes to campaign contributors over higher bidders, like on Providence St.) but toward the end of last year, when voters were distracted by the proposed tax and water rate increases, the council unanimously voted to sell the

old Saunders School on S. Broadway for ... get this ... no minimum bid! The planning director and the mayor "highly recommended" that a minimum bid be placed on the historic South Lawrence School, but the '07 council, having no concept of reality (or even consistency) decided to let it go for ... well, whatever you want to pay for it. That means you, yes you, can own your very own school on S. Broadway in Lawrence for one American dollar ... again I say ... only in Lawrence.

How about those Councilor's Cell phones and that 50% Raise?

While members of the '07 city council are wringing their hands about how Lawrence has so little money that they have to lay people off and cut city services to balance the budget, not one of them supported Councilor Grisel Silva's



motion last year to give back their city paid cell phones and blackberry's. Not surprisingly, not even one of them would support her. Nor would they cut their own 50% raise that went into effect January 2nd.

Let's see ... \$5,000 per councilor ... times nine councilors, that's \$45,000 the city could save if we had a truly fiscally responsible council. That \$45,000 could save a cop, a firefighter or even a couple of part time nurses or library aides. Not to mention how much the city is spending on councilor's cell phones and blackberries. It will be interesting to see if any of the new councilors refuse their raise and lead by example in 2008. So far, only Roger Twomey (elected at-large) has refused the blackberry and cell phone. But even Roger has yet to decide if he is going to accept the \$5,000 raise. For the record, this is the second raise that councilors have received in three years. In 2005 the councilors were making \$5,000 per year. As of today they are now making \$15,000, not to mention health insurance and other benefits. It's awfully hard to make the case that real city workers need to be laid off so that city councilors can continue to run up hundreds of dollars in cell phone bills every month and, along the way, take a 50% raise.

Stokes not a Veteran

In District "F", (South Lawrence), voters elected James Stokes to represent them on the School Committee. Many knew that that Stokes was claiming to be a former Marine and wasn't. Even Taylor



Armerding of the Trib wrote a story about it in 2001 when Stokes was running against Marie Gosselin for city council. Yet, not only did the people of the crumbling District "F" not care about the fraudulent claims by Stokes, they purposely supported him over incumbent Gregory Morris. By the way, so did the Lawrence Teacher's Union, who endorsed Stokes before the election. More will be said within these pages over the next few months, as some big news is about to break on the story, but I will leave you with this for now: #1) shame on Jim Stokes for claiming to be a veteran to get elected, #2) shame on the people of district "F" for not giving a damn and electing Stokes anyway, #3) shame on the Eagle Tribune for not reminding the voters that Stokes was a fraud BEFORE the election (no courage in writing an editorial after the fact), and #4) Shame on Gregory Morris and his supporters for not picking up the ball dropped by the Eagle Tribune and making Stokes' lack of service a campaign issue.

Pybus moving out of town (just like his hero Al Perry)

You have to love this. Former N. Andover School Committeeman Al Perry loved N. Andover and its children so much that he just had to serve on the school board as a leader in the community. And, because he loved the children in N. Andover so much, he also fought tooth and nail for every single proposed tax increase and prop. 2 1/2 over ride that came down the pike ... not to mention free health benefits for he and his family. But the minute Perry was no longer an elected official he couldn't wait to dodge the automobile excise tax by registering his new car in New Hampshire and then dodging payments for his COBRA health coverage. And then, all that love for the town (as well as all those tax increases) went right out the window in the Perry household as he moved out of state lock stock and barrel. Now his sidekick, school committeeman Tim Pybus, (who also backed every tax hike) has announced that he is: #1) not seeking reelection in March of this year and, #2) moving out of state. Now, don't all of the lemmings who bought into Perry's and Pybus' tax and spend lunacy for the last 5 years feel like a bunch of fools?

Lahey, Quinn to Lead Methuen Council

Central District Councilor Phil Lahey, who had the widest amount of support

Jeanne Pappalardo West District Councilor



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among political insiders in last November’s city council election, was selected among his colleagues to be council president. Debbie Quinn, the veteran West End Councilor was unanimously picked to be the Vice president.

Ansın Named in Tribune’s List of Top News Stories of ‘07

A few weeks ago the Eagle Tribune published an article about the biggest news stories of 2007 and, according to the editors of the N. Andover daily, the “Bob Ansın/Monarch on the Merrimack” story was prominently featured on their list. Problem is, the story they originally ran about Monarch was just plain made up. Maybe what the Trib editors meant to say was that, of all the stories they fabricated or misrepresented, the made up story about “men in Tyvek suits” removing asbestos from the Monarch on the Merrimack was their most shamefully inaccurate story of 2007. Or ... maybe they are still trying to give their readers the impression that the original story (which they retracted) was legitimate, in further attempts to smear one of the Valley’s greatest assets, Bob Ansın. It’s funny how they never said that it was their own misreporting that caused Ansın to lose a \$40 million investment, effectively shutting down phase two of the project and costing Lawrence millions of dollars in taxes and residual business. In our book, the fake Tribune story about imaginary asbestos being removed from Monarch was the NUMBER ONE news story of the year for Valley Patriot readers who were the only ones in the Valley to get the real story.

Could be Worse! A Brilliant Concept Fun T-Shirts for Everyone

“Life may not always be good,” say Valley residents Sara and Jeff Wormald of Methuen, “but it can always be worse.” Thus began the positive idea of concept T-Shirts from “Could be Worse, Inc.” in Salem, MA which are now available on the Valley Patriot website. The Wormalds say their “optimism for everyone” concept is a refreshingly different look at a sometimes cynical world. The “Could Be Worse” shirts were mentioned once in the Boston Globe (in a pull out section) and the Wormalds say just one mention put them on the map. Now the trendy and

Here’s Something to Pay Attention to!

State Ethics Commission Fines Former Executive Office of Public Safety Employee Diana Brensilber Chidsey (of CREST ASSOCIATES) \$5,000

Chidsey involved in grants to clients of Crest Associates, a company for which she and her husband consulted

The Massachusetts State Ethics Commission fined former Executive Office of Public Safety (EOPS) employee Diana Brensilber Chidsey, \$5,000 for violating the state’s conflict of interest law, M.G.L. c. 268A, by repeatedly participating as an EOPS employee in EOPS grants that directly or indirectly impacted clients of Crest Associates (Crest), and thus Crest, while she and her husband were working as consultants for Crest. Crest was a Boston based firm that provided grant application and program management services to Massachusetts municipal law enforcement agencies that were seeking these grants.

According to the Disposition Agreement, Chidsey served as Director of Research and Evaluation at EOPS from 1997 until August 2003. In 2002, she also held the title of Chief of Staff and, for two months in 2003, she served as Programs Division Acting Executive Director. Chidsey and her husband

provided consultant services to Crest beginning in 2002. Chidsey disclosed in writing to the then EOPS secretary that she was providing consulting services to police departments outside of Massachusetts but she did not disclose in writing that she was working as a consultant for Crest. She also did not respond to a formal request in 2003, when a new EOPS administration took over, to disclose any outside employment.

As an EOPS employee, Chidsey contributed to the planning of a federally funded state homeland security grant program. Crest subsequently applied for grants on behalf of its police department clients. Chidsey served on one of seven EOPS teams which rated applications. While none of the applications rated by Chidsey’s team were on behalf of Crest’s clients, the applications were in competition with those submitted by Crest on behalf of its clients. In August

2003, Chidsey left EOPS and accepted a full-time consulting position with Crest.

Section 23(b)(3) 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.

By repeatedly participating as an EOPS employee in EOPS grants that impacted Crest clients while she was consulting for Crest and its clients, Chidsey violated this section of the law.

"Public employees who have private interests or relationships that overlap with their public duties need to disclose those relationships to avoid creating appearances of conflicts of interest," said Acting Executive Director David A. Wilson.

much coveted “Could be Worse” t-shirts, as well as their mascot “Bob” (who was born out of a birthday cake disaster) are starting to get so popular that the small shop on Rt. 114 in Salem is considering a local outlet in Methuen to distribute their products. Their website is couldbewise.com or you can go to the Valley Patriot website (valleypatriot.com).



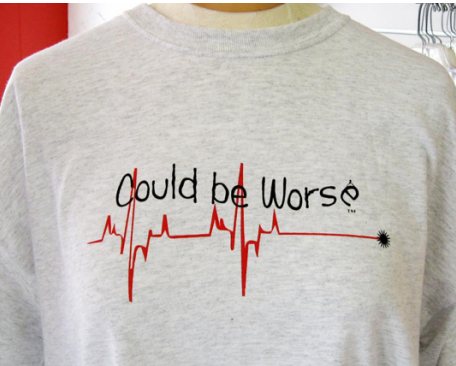
Joe Edward Smith

Local Korean War veteran Joe Ed Smith is once again running for selectman in North Andover and with two vacancies this year (and no prominent names coming forward as of now) Smith may be poised to finally take a seat in elected office.

Essex County Fire Chief’s Association

Last month we ran a story about the new ARINC communication system that allows fire, police and emergency response personnel to communicate all on the same computer system.

What was inadvertently left out of the story was the fact that it was the Essex County Fire Chief’s Association that chose Lawrence as the first community to receive the Homeland Security grant.



Cruz Won’t Pledge Allegiance

During the inauguration of Lawrence’s elected officials last month, socialist school committee member Martina Cruz was the only official on stage to refuse to say the Pledge of Allegiance. We don’t know for sure but, since Democrat presidential candidate Barack Obama also refuses to salute the flag, I suspect Obama is Cruz’ candidate to succeed President Bush in the White House. HMMM... Secretary of Illegal Aliens, Martina Cruz?? Just remember ... it could be worse!

Reverend Hate

Another interesting tidbit from the Lawrence inauguration was the fact that a Latino “reverend” gave the blessing before the services began. Nothing wrong with that, on it’s face, but this was the same “reverend” who spoke before the city council a year and a half ago, yelling,

disrupting proceedings and literally threatening to organize the “Latino community” to defeat city councilors who did not vote his way on “Latino” issues.

Laboy was right about Malcom X Mural

Say what you want about Lawrence Superintendent of Schools Wilfredo Laboy, but when a student painted a mural of Martin Luther King and Malcom X on school property without permission of the administration, Laboy ordered it taken down. That’s when some protested by passing out circulars saying Malcom X was a “pacifist” and that he “never advocated violence.” Some students and even some teachers supported the students’ mural under the “Nunzio DiMarca” definition of free speech (all speech is protected at all times) but the fact is, even in Malcom X’s own words, he hated white people and advocated violence against not only white people but also the US government, because it was established by whites. Laboy was right to have the Mural removed. Taxpayer owned school buildings are no place to be honoring hate and, without permission from the administration, what some have laughingly called “art” is legally considered vandalism. Let’s see a “Mural of Ronald Reagan” put up on school pro-

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Thomas Connors
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Take a hike Jenny Craig! Step aside Weight Watchers! Good-Bye empty promises! This year it's time for *real* change! Here is my *secret, specially-coded word* just for you to make 2008 the year you've been waiting for. Now don't tell a soul.

"IFITISTOBEITISUPTOME!"

WOW! *That* is a mouthful!!! Ten of the smallest words in the English language that add up to one of the biggest ways to make your life the **WOW!** it can be! It's called RESPONSIBILITY.

If-It-Is-To-Be-It-Is-Up-To-Me! Not your Mother or Father. Not your kid's teachers. Not even the Federal or State Government. It's up to YOU. Until YOU take complete responsibility for what happens to you and put into action what you know needs to be done, you will never achieve all that is available to you in this great big wonderful world.

Toss out all those same old New Year's Resolutions to lose weight and "be good" until you learn to face your personal RESPONSIBILITY head on!

There is nothing wrong with all those weight loss programs. In fact, many of them are terrific. There is also nothing wrong with taking a look at your life, recognizing areas where you might like to improve and promising to do just that. But, too often we make one huge mistake. Our intentions are good. We just choose to not dig deeper and recognize the real issue. Maybe we are afraid of facing it head on. Maybe we don't want to be held accountable. Maybe we know it will take effort.

No matter the reason, nothing will change if we don't learn to take FULL and total Responsibility for what happens to us. Even when we know it is detrimental to our health and well-being too often we continue to stray from course and break all those New Year Resolutions. Face your Responsibility

head on and start tasting all the **WOW!** life has to offer.

Take Responsibility for your own life! It's too precious, too valuable to trust to anyone or anything else. YOU, and only YOU can make lasting and meaningful change. Don't just talk about it. Take the ACTION to do it today! Make it a WOW!

Make this the year you make real lasting change happen once and for all!

God gave you the means to be somebody special! He gave you the ability to be a **WOW!** But YOU have to make it happen! No one is going to do it for you.

What exactly does this idea of Responsibility mean? Well, it means sacrifice. It means shutting off the TV and studying. It means reconsidering who your so-called *friends* are and breaking away from them if they are bringing you down by being involved in a lifestyle that leads nowhere. It means learning about successful people and how they accomplished what they did, the effort they took and the sacrifices they made.

It means taking good care of your health and eating properly. It means making the time, actually scheduling it if your have to, to exercise and build up your stamina. It means discovering and growing your spiritual life by finding what you love to do and fulfilling your unique God-given Purpose; your reason for being. It means finally getting off your duff and making the effort. Together all these things add up to you becoming the very best you can be and using your talents and experiences to be fully ready to keep those New Year Resolutions. It's living the **WOW!**

If you need to lose weight, go ahead, join Jenny Craig, Weight Watchers or any of the many programs out there. Just realize; IFITISTOBEITISUPTOME! If excessive drinking or drug use is destroying your relationships, just know where the change begins;

IFITISTOBEITISUPTOME! If you resolve to spend more time with your family this year, again, always keep in mind this reality; IFITISTOBEITISUPTOME! If you commit to improving your education and knowledge, don't kid yourself and look for an easy way out; IFITISTOBEITISUPTOME!

Once you fully realize that YOU and *ONLY* YOU control your life through all your thoughts and action, then you will start to experience kept resolutions and a lifetime of one **WOW!** *Experience* after another.

Take charge! Don't just sit there! Control HOW you respond to what life throws your way! Be positive. And never, ever give up!

During our work with at-risk youth at American Training's LARE Training Center, we have heard comparisons of two friends who grew up in the same inner city environment. We learn of random shootings, rampant drug use and drinking and complete lack of parental guidance. We discover one friend who joins a gang, racks up an arms-length rap sheet and ends up doing 15 to 20 for armed robbery and assault and battery with a dangerous weapon. His friend meanwhile, takes responsibility for his actions and looks inward. He makes learning and education his ambition during his teen years. He gets involved with internships and puts his God given talents and abilities to use as he begins to climb slow but sure the corporate ladder to success. He realizes with all the confidence and faith he can muster that IFITISTOBEITISUPTOME!

Same neighborhood, same huge challenges, different terms of responsibility. One leads to no self esteem and a wasted life. The other leads to a life of **WOW!**

Living the WOW! is a Choice! Doesn't matter who you are, how old you are or mistakes you've made in



the past. There is no better time to begin than NOW!

Whether you are rich or poor, sixteen or sixty. Whether you graduated from school or not. Whether you have been in jail or church, you are who you are because of choices you made. And all those choices led to experiences that will ultimately either hold you back or motivate you to soar ahead.

I encourage you make the wisest choice you have ever made. Start today to take responsibility for who you become. Make the choice to be happy in the here and now. Then, and only then, will you be ready to take on those New Year Resolutions. Realize ... have no doubt ... that IFITISTOBEITISUPTOME!

Now, *that's* a **WOW!**

*Tom Connors is President/CEO of American Training, a diverse collection of companies committed to "Bringing Out the Best in Everyone They Touch". He believes in living life to the fullest by making the **WOW!** a regular part of your personal, spiritual and working life. You can reach Tom at Tom@AmericanTrainingInc.com or by writing to him at Tom Connors, American Training, 102 Glenn Street, Lawrence, MA 01843*

Larocque: from previous page

he intends to end his position as Superintendent of Lawrence Public Schools and retire.

This will allow the School Committee an entire year to find his replacement. This also allows the New Mayor to have a full year under his belt before dealing with the search for a New Superintendent. This also takes away the circus atmosphere that goes with the change in administrations.

The need to hire an Acting Superintendent will not be necessary because there should be enough time for the New Superintendent to have a smooth transition period with the current Superintendent. I remember, as a parent of children who were in the Lawrence Public Schools during the removal of the two previous Superintendents, that that time in Lawrence and in the Schools was terrible!

That kind of a crazy circus atmosphere should not be happening this time. Someone had to have the vision of what would be in the best interest of the children in the schools during that time, and that is why I voted the way I did.

The Superintendent received a 5% raise, which I did not vote for. I only voted for a 2% raise, but as you know, I am only one vote out of seven. The reason behind my vote for only a 2% raise is because that

amount has been already budgeted for. Plus, I am of the opinion that the Superintendent and his administration and the teachers are all in this thing we call the Lawrence Public Schools TOGETHER!

A 2% raise is what we are offering the teachers and, if that is all we have the money for, then that's that! As far as the teacher's contract goes, I believe the new, three year contract that we offered to the teachers is a good and sound contract. Even the superintendent's strongest critic, Mr. Vittoriosio stated that the contract is a good contract.

Using the Superintendent as a reason for voting against the new contract is a shame. Superintendents come and go, but the wonderful teachers in Lawrence are here to stay.

I also am fully aware that the timing of all this could not have been worse, with what is happening on the city side with all the layoffs and budget cuts.

But there is something that I have learned in my short time in politics, and that is that I must deal with what is before me and make the best decision based on the facts and information that I know. Decisions made by others that are completely out of my control, like the timing of things, will have to be accounted for by them!

As for me, I believe it would be worse to not deal with the issues and not make decisions, one way or the other, and leave it for someone else.

There is something else that I have learned recently, and that is: who really has my back? I must, in the future, think of my family first! Who pays my bills? Certainly not the LPS, or the Mayor or the Superintendent. I will never go out in a snowstorm again for a School Committee Meeting, especially after a State of Emergency has been declared and everyone has been asked to stay off of the roads.

I realize that the votes I took, and the votes I will take over the course of the next two years, will not please everybody. But I will continue to do what I believe is in the best interest of the education of the children of Lawrence.

God Bless you all.



Peter Larocque is a member of the Lawrence School Committee. He was originally elected by the Lawrence City Coun-cil to fill the unexpired term of Amy McGovern in 2006 and then elected in his own right last month. You can email him at peterlarocque@hotmail.com

NOTEBOOK: from page 13

perty and watch how precious ‘free speech’ is to all those who are defending the Malcom X mural.

Mayor To Name Sweeney & Bonet to Search Committee

City Council President Patrick Blanchette has called for a search committee to find a new Community Development Director and Mayor Sullivan has taken his suggestion to heart, naming Personnel Director Frank Bonet and Planning Director Michael Sweeney to head the committee.

24 Hours After Close Election Win, Blanchette Gets State Job in Boston

City Council President Patrick Blanchette landed a cushy job at the Industrial Accidents Board in Boston as a conciliator just 24 hours after squeaking out the closest election win of his political “career.” Blanchette lost his job at the Voke School because he didn’t pass the State certification test required to keep his job. Blanchette, who has been campaigning for mayor for the last four years, is now considered the front-runner for the corner office in city hall in ’09, despite his weak showing at the polls in November.



Town of North Andover Sues Al Perry

Former North Andover School Committeeman Al Perry is being sued by the town of North Andover for failing to pay \$4,800 for his COBRA Health insurance. Perry chose to sign up for the town’s health insurance after the benefit was discontinued earlier this year, agreeing to pay the premiums to continue on the town plan. But Perry refused to pay, leaving the town to foot the bill. Town officials made repeated attempts to contact Perry, but he has ignored letters and phone calls to his home, prompting a lawsuit to be filed against the former school committeeman.



Tom Duggan is the president of Valley Patriot, Inc., a former Lawrence School Committeeman, and hosts the Paying Attention! Radio Program on WCAP, 980AM, every Saturday afternoon from noon-2pm. You can email your comments to Tdugjr@aol.com .

(prestando attencione!)

Paying Attention!

with Tom Duggan

Blanchette absolutely did the right thing

A few years ago Assistant City Clerk Jennifer Padellaro made allegations against her (then) boss City Clerk James McGravey. Among other things, she claimed that McGravey was looking at porn on his city computer and shared those sexual images with her. She claimed McGravey created a hostile work environment and further claimed that the issue was being covered up by members of the Sullivan administration who were friends and political allies of McGravey.

Strangely enough, Padellaro was so emotionally distraught by seeing naked pictures on a computer, and so psychologically damaged by the “hostile environment” of having to deal with McGravey’s friends in city hall every day, that she ended up applying for McGravey’s job after he resigned in total disgrace.

Whether or not Jim McGravey was guilty of sexual harassment or any of the other allegations made against him is something we will probably never know. We know something happened of an inappropriate nature in that office, but what we don’t know are the details. Did Padellaro encourage him to behave this way? Did she participate in said behavior until such time as other city hall workers became aware of it and then threw all the blame on him? Did she willingly go along and use this little piece of

information to get favors from McGravey and his “political friends” in city hall?

Again we will never know. But there were certainly enough public suspicions at the time (long before Padellaro applied for McGravey’s vacant job) that Jennifer Padellaro had set up McGravey because she was next in line to be the City Clerk. Why would a woman who was so emotionally distressed by working in city hall with the friends of her lecherous boss and so psychologically damaged by seeing a naked picture even WANT to be elevated to city clerk where she would have to deal one-on-one with these very same individuals she claimed made her environment “hostile.”

Then, and only then, when City Council President Patrick Blanchette refused to hire her or even recommend her for the city Clerk’s positions, did Padellaro suddenly realize that her work environment was unbearable. So unbearable that she could no longer continue working in city hall and needed to go out on disability, being paid more than \$600 per week for staying home.

Besides getting a big fat paycheck every week for doing nothing, Padellaro also filed a Federal lawsuit against the city claiming Blanchette and members of the Sullivan administration retaliated

PAYING ATTENTION, page 30

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Local lawmakers announce OxyContin settlement grant to lawrence

Boston – State Senator Susan Tucker and Representatives Barry R. Finegold and William Lantigua are pleased to announce that the City of Lawrence will receive funding to improve and expand their capacity to provide comprehensive, youth-focused substance-abuse prevention initiatives in January 2008.

The funding stems from a May 2007 multi-state consent judgment reached with Purdue Pharma, the maker of the narcotic pain medication OxyContin.

The Office of Attorney General Martha Coakley has awarded \$835,811 in grant funds to 10 qualified community coalitions throughout the Commonwealth, including Lawrence.

“I am so glad that the Attorney General has awarded this funding to the City of Lawrence,” commented Tucker (D-Andover). “OxyContin is a terrible drug and its impact is felt far beyond the individual. Families have been destroyed by it.”

Massachusetts was a leader of a multi-state investigation concerning Purdue Pharma’s extensive off-label marketing of Oxycontin. The investigation uncovered that Purdue failed to disclose abuse and addiction risks associated with the drug. The consent judgment ordered Purdue to pay a total of \$19.5 million to the 26 participating states.

As part of the judgment, Massachusetts received a portion of the settlement to

fund or assist funding programs directed at combating prescription drug abuse and addiction, which includes, but is not limited to, education, outreach, prevention, or monitoring programs.

“I’m thrilled that the City of Lawrence took the initiative to apply for this grant. OxyContin abuse can devastate families,” said Representative Barry Finegold (D-Andover). “Helping to ensure that members of our community have the resources they need to combat prescription drug addiction is a great way to start off 2008.”

Lawrence is among the 10 cities and towns that have been selected to receive portions of the grant funding. Grant appropriations were determined through a

detailed application review process which took into account a number of factors including geographic and economic diversity.

Representative Lantigua echoed the Lawrence delegation’s sentiment. “OxyContin addiction continues to pose a major health risk to those who abuse it and a significant threat to public safety. We must do all we can to address both problems and this grant is a giant step in the right direction,” he said.

The deadline for grant applications was November 15, 2007. Portions of the grants will be distributed to each grantee starting in January 2008.

O’Koniewski: from page 12

sewer fees in order to address the shortfalls DOR pinpointed in its November 6th letter.

Politically, these proposed increases have been turned into a red herring by those arguing that the higher fees will cause more foreclosures. It is beyond rational thought, however, to suggest that any one is losing one’s home due to such fees.

The foreclosures occurring throughout our community have roots in other things such as unscrupulous lenders and unwise borrowers, but water and sewer fees are not amongst them. If the fees are to be increased, properly trained personnel need to be hired to operate the water

plant. Also, the city needs to stop paying 50% more on a sewer assessment to the sanitary district than it should be. We must stop subsidizing the lower assessments Andover, North Andover, and Methuen are paying. The fees increases need to go hand in hand with these two reforms.

Finally, the mayor should promote an examination of changing the current form of government to explore whether or not a city manager form of municipal governance may make sense.

Such a change, if effected, is not without its downsides.

But, at a minimum, the mayor, who is serving his final two years with no ability to run again due to term limits, could demonstrate renewed leadership by focusing on ways to address the components of the systemic dysfunction that is presently holding Lawrence back from realizing its full potential.

As the mayor and the new council commence the New Year, they begin a process of formulating solutions to the FY08 budget problems as well as creating the foundations for the FY09 and FY10 budgets.

Plodding along with the status quo is a recipe for magnificent disaster. With change come new opportunities, however. The mayor has a unique chance to put the

old council behind him and to tap into the new blood coming on board. Combined with the returning veterans on the council who want to solve our problems rather than continue in promoting petty immaturities and name-calling, the mayor has an opportunity to cement a legacy for his tenure that is one of true substance and not one of “what ifs.”

Robert O’Koniewski is an attorney in Lawrence, a member of the Lawrence zoning board and is the former campaign manager for Marcos Devers. You can email him at: bobokesq@hotmail.com

"A Campaign for Proficiency for ALL"



Lawrence Public Schools

Embraces

**The "7" Essential Elements
of School Transformation
"A Campaign for Proficiency for ALL"**



School Committee: Mayor Michael Sullivan, Peter Larocque, Martina Cruz, James Vittorioso, Priscilla Baez, and Sam Reyes



Students from the North Andover Middle School's student council donated boxes and bags of animal food and pet supplies to the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Methuen last month.



Fiorentini for Hillary
Haverhill Mayor Jim Fiorentini's daughter Regina, with former first lady and presidential candidate Hilary Clinton.



December 26, 2007—Lowell, MA— M/A-COM Federal Credit Union, together with the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, sponsored 6 underprivileged children and purchased dozens of gifts on their "wish lists." By the end of the drive, members and staff generously donated over 40 gifts of clothing and toys. Danielle Bergeron, Director of Marketing, was thrilled with the positive response. "The holiday drive is a perfect example of how people truly want to make a difference, especially around the holidays. This act of kindness fulfills the credit union mission of 'people helping people.'" M/A-COM Federal Credit Union opened its doors in 1958. In 2005, they expanded to the city of Lowell to add its third, main branch in historic downtown Lowell. M/A-COM FCU is a full service financial institution with 2,900 members and \$19 million in assets. Its field of membership allows anyone who lives, works, worships, or goes to school in the city of Lowell to be eligible for membership.

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2007 was a deadly year for law enforcement

Craig Floyd

NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS MEMORIAL

Officer fatalities rose more than 28 percent to the second highest total in nearly two decades; fatal shootings surged 33 percent, while a record 81 officers died in traffic-related incidents .

WASHINGTON, D.C. - 2007 has been a deadly year for law enforcement in the United States, with 186 officers killed nationwide as of December 26, according to preliminary statistics from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) and Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.). When compared with 2006, when 145 officers died, officer fatalities rose more than 28 percent this year. Outside of 2001, when 239 officers died — 72 in the September 11 terrorist attacks — 2007 is the deadliest year for American law enforcement since 1989, the NLEOMF and C.O.P.S. said in their preliminary report on 2007 officer deaths.

The number of officers killed by gunfire and in traffic-related incidents both increased in 2007, the latter reaching a record high of 81. So far this year, 69 officers have been shot and killed, up 33 percent from 2006, when there were 52

fatal shootings. Six times this year, two or more officers were gunned down in the same incident, including a shooting that killed three Odessa (TX) Police officers in early September.

”In 2007, our nation’s law enforcement officers were confronted with more brazen, heavily armed and cold-blooded criminals than they have faced in many years,” said Craig W. Floyd, Chairman and CEO of the NLEOMF, a non-profit organization that researches officer fatalities and maintains the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, DC. “Even in the face of incredible danger, our men and women in blue displayed remarkable bravery in working to protect the rest of us. As this tragic year comes to a close, every American owes our law enforcement officers an incredible measure of gratitude,” Mr. Floyd added.

Law enforcement officers killed in traffic-related incidents also increased, from 73 in 2006 to a new high of 81 this year. The previous high was 78 in 2000. 2007 is the 10th year in a row in which traffic-related incidents were the leading cause of officer deaths nationwide. Of the 81 traffic-related deaths this year, 60



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington D.C. where the names of every law enforcement officer killed in the line of duty are inscribed.

officers died in automobile crashes and six in motorcycle crashes, and 15 were struck by automobiles while outside their own vehicles. Among other causes of deaths, 18 officers died from physical causes, primarily heart attacks, four

drowned, three fell to their deaths and two were killed by falling objects. Three officers died in aircraft accidents, and one was killed in a boating accident.

POLICE, page 30

Should Mitt’s religion matter?

Paul Murano

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

There’s been a lot of talk lately regarding Mitt Romney’s religion and whether it should matter to the voter. America has sat through two major speeches on this topic of faith in politics, first from John F. Kennedy regarding His Catholicism and now Mitt Romney regarding his Mormonism.

Should one’s religion matter when selecting a president? This question needs a little clarification.

All religions have three parts – faith, morals, and worship. Faith is what a people believe, morality is what they propose as right behavior, and worship is how they attempt to unite with the divine. Church and state rightly separate on two of these three parts, faith and worship.

They have no place in civil law.

No one should ever be forced by law to attend mass, for example, or to proclaim that God created the universe out of nothing. However, *morals* and state do coincide. The commandments thou shall not kill, steal, slander, and even commit adultery are the law of the land in many states, as they should be. Why does the state legislate a moral code of conduct that coincides with the great religions?

It is a matter of justice, not only religion. It is unjust to take a human being’s life, their possessions, their spouse, or their reputation, regardless of one’s faith. A person’s theology related to faith and worship would matter when choosing a friend, a spouse, or a church to attend; but a person’s theology related to morals and values matter when choosing a president.

So then the question should be rephrased to, “*Should a candidate’s moral values and sense of justice matter?*” When it comes to stealing does the candidate believe that both white-collar crime and blue-collar crime are unjust? Or that not giving a just wage is a form of stealing? When it comes to bearing false witness does the candidate believe that the press should have an obligation to restore a person’s reputation after they intentionally (and falsely) damaged it?

When it comes to divorce and adultery does the candidate find no-fault divorce and adultery unjust and worthy of rectification? When it comes to killing the innocent does the candidate include the preborn, the elderly, the incarcerated, and the foreign country that has

not attacked us as innocent victims to whom the law against killing should extend? All of these questions and more would manifest how one’s moral formation and sense of justice will directly affect how he governs; and a candidate’s religion may or may not have been influential in shaping it.

However one understands God, salvation, worship and eternal life, although very important in one’s relationship with God, have little effect on what kind of president he may be.

As a believing Catholic I would much rather have a devout Mormon as president than a nominal Catholic.

A devout Mormon is more Catholic in his or her values and moral sense than today’s cafeteria Catholic; and politicians such as Rudy Guiliani, Joe Biden, Ted Kennedy and John Kerry that support the choice to kill preborn human beings and to create some kind of marriage right for people of the same sex, not only give true Catholicism a bad name, but are dangerous for this country.

Civil law must be in harmony with natural law which is in harmony with the Constitution, and if a politician can not recognize this they are morally disqualified from holding public office, regardless of their religion.

I personally believe Mormonism is false religion begun in the 19th century and disagree with much of its theology; and although some Mormons like to call themselves Christian they do not recognize an essential doctrine that defines Christianity, that Jesus is the divine Son of God whose divinity is the second Person of the eternal Trinity. However, none of this alone would stop me from voting for a Mormon for president.

Although Mitt Romney is not the perfect candidate, I find him to be the most electable of all the top tier that shares my values on social and economic justice. Although I would never want him as a religious leader and would never agree with him on the nature of God or the resurrection of the dead, at this point in history Mitt Romney has a chance of becoming a great president of the United States.



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

Quiet Desperation

Mark Palermo

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

“Most men lead lives of quiet desperation.” Life has taken me around the world and shown me many people, but this quotation from Thoreau calls to mind Ethan, who was born in the rugged hills of Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom in 1950.

A severe speech impediment made him awkward and painfully self-consciousness all his life. Back in the bad old days, they used to put kids like Ethan into a “special school” even though many of them showed normal or even above-normal intelligence. They had fancy names for these schools, but other kids invariably called them “retard schools.”

School was bad enough, but Ethan’s family was dysfunctional and poor; his family dynamics were like a karmic magnet, attracting a steady life-long flow of difficulties, bad luck, illnesses, accidents and catastrophes. Ethan always seemed troubled, and when he entered his teens, folks in the village would see him out walking at all hours of the day and night, even in the rain. Dark things were whispered about Ethan, that he had relations with his sister... that he was a peeping Tom (which he really was). There were vague intimations of violence. Gossip is always relentless in a small town. Something happened back then, and the state was called in. They say Ethan attempted suicide a couple of times.

When the mine closed, it was a hard time for everyone in those old hollows. Ethan’s mother bought him a piece of cheap land, presumably to keep him busy. The land was full of rocks and brush and needed a lot of work. Just around that time, I bought a piece of land close to his and I built a rough cabin on a cliff. It had no electricity or running water, but it was in the deep woods, which is what I wanted.

And so we slowly and cautiously through common circumstance of location became acquaintances. We had nothing in common except for two things: we were the same age, and we both understood- without talking about it- that we were refugees from the world. He, shunned and abused by virtue of his miserable life. And me? I felt disconnected because I was thirty, alone, marginally employed at a time when others my age were starting families and businesses, buying homes, earning Ph.D’s. At that time, I was spending a lot of time alone.

Ethan was preparing his land for a small dairy farm. He cut trees, pulled stumps, and cleared brush. His body

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SCIENCE: continued from page 3

years, the school system would own the Houghton Mifflin textbooks.

This would provide at least another five years of use, thus amortizing its cost over a much longer period. In science, particularly, there is no need to purchase new books every five years as some publishers (for obvious reasons) may recommend. Science is a stable art, particularly at the elementary level.

At sea level, water still boils at 212° F and freezes at 32° F. The laws of motion remain basic since Newton. There is nothing new, at least in grades K-5, that requires an update every five years. Elementary science texts, 100 years old, offer much the same fare as modern ones do today, perhaps even more thoroughly and with greater depth and focus.

With the FOSS system, the costs keep recurring year after year, as kits and parts of kits have to be replenished. There is no textbook.

The inquiry-based system instead provides pamphlets, giving the background history of science and scientists. The children will read about Ben Franklin, Thomas Edison and Isaac Newton, but that is history, not science. The amusement portion of the curriculum is emphasized, and the learning of facts, procedures and basic scientific information appears incidental. The children are supposed to be make-believe scientists and ask the right questions to become fully informed. One thing that should arouse parental concerns is the publisher-promoted feature that inquiry-based instruction “does not rely on memorization.” Since knowledge is built on the accumulation of remembered facts, parents should be wary of any program that trivializes the exercise of one’s memory.

Referring to the young brain, Robert Lee Hotz wrote in a July 6, 2007, article in the Science Journal section of the Wall Street Journal, *“From a single cell in the womb, it swells at such speed – 250,000 cells a minute – that by early childhood it has more neurons and nerves connecting them than do any older, wiser adults. It is buffeted by tumultuous bursts of growth that prime it for mastering new skills and ways of thinking... By age 12, many children are as proficient as adults by most measures of mental performance.”*

It is common knowledge that a human’s early years are best for learning languages. A child’s brain absorbs knowledge like a sponge — and now our neo-educators would have us endorse a teaching concept that shies away from encouraging students to retain factual knowledge? Such thinking seems logically flawed, particularly when directed toward a time in life when learning is the easiest and most efficient.

According to a January 19, 2006, Wall Street Journal article by Robert Tomsho, some feedback on the inquiry-based programs has begun to trickle in and alarm bells are sounding.

He writes, *“[T]he board overseeing the Department of Education’s National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP] – often known as ‘the nation’s report card’ – recently voted to increase the proportion of science tests devoted to fact-oriented questions about principles, theories and laws. Such questions will make up 60% of the 2009 science test, up from 45% of NAEP’s latest test. NAEP officials say the shift is necessary to cover developments in science since the test’s last overhaul in the early 1990s.”*

The article cautions the effect of inquiry-based teaching on standardized test results. *“The leading federal test, the [NAEP], is taking a step back from the inquiry-based model and rewriting its next test to include fewer questions based on student experimentation and more questions based on material typically taught in lectures and textbooks.”*

“And there are more tests to come. Starting [in 2007], under the No Child Left Behind Act, states must test for achievement in science annually. States that don’t comply can be denied federal funds. Some policy makers and educators fear that students whose science education is heavily weighted toward the inquiry method will score poorly.”

The inquiry-based programs are coming in direct conflict with testing. So if the object is to improve our students’ MCAS scores, which focus on much the same

kind of factual material and body of knowledge that science students have successfully mastered in the past, we can forget about improving our MCAS scores with the inquiry-based approach.

Tomsho further states, *“In the 2003 test by the Programme for International Student Assessment, American 15-year-olds scored below average in science literacy and ranked 19th among 29 participating countries, below Liechtenstein, Poland and South Korea... [I]t is clear that, in top-performing countries like Taiwan and Singapore, science curriculums are tightly focused and students move on more quickly to specialized courses in chemistry and physics.”* It appears that inquiry-based science theory has already become obsolete as testing practices turn more towards an integrated knowledge of facts in evaluating students’ progress.

Just as the drastic changes into whole word reading and new math were philosophically-based, inquiry-based instruction involves a philosophic change in how to teach.

The propensity to similarly change the way we learn is an affliction of our halls of academia promoted by the education colleges. The academic trail is strewn with the wreckage of failure after failure of these new-fangled fads. Advocates of inquiry-based instruction propose that we conduct another five-year to ten-year experiment with our children’s education. These are years which, once failure is assessed, are beyond recapture.

The futures of numerous potential scientists and engineers will be severely impacted. Should parents take such risks, or should a more traditional, structured and proven science program have been the choice? One can suppose that the law of averages eventually will come up with a winner, but what about the damage that is done by all the losers in the meantime? The record is discouraging. Who wants to continually roll the dice with their child’s education?

While the inventor of the steam engine may have been inspired by observing the rattling lid on a kettle of boiling water, most advances in science and engineering evolve from a store of knowledge that individuals draw upon to address challenges and solve problems. The earlier this knowledge is learned, the larger base there is to build upon, and the greater potential is developed.

There is definitely a place for experiments and lab work to prove postulates, to test our theories and to gather empirical data, but there needs to be a fountain of knowledge from which to start. Inquiry-based instruction leads children down a different path. It removes structure and direction, leaving the student with little substance to build upon.

There may yet be time for parents to reverse the course of this downward spiral of knowledge content in educating children. The North Andover School Committee neither understands the issues, nor has the will to challenge them. They, too, are buffeted by winds of the latest education jargon and gimmickry. Presently, those who cavalierly choose the latest educational fads with their associated high price tags are too easily able to impose their way on an unsuspecting public. It’s time to call a halt before they do more damage.

Those parents and civic leaders who want a real and rigorous education must stand up and demand that their voices be heard loud and clear. We simply cannot afford to let our children fall further behind in the international race to solve our world’s energy,

Ralph Wilbur is the vice-president of The Valley Patriot, a member of the North Andover Taxpayers Association and the owner of Graphic Litho on Glen Street in Lawrence. You can email your comments to sales@graphiclitho.com



Newburyport adult & continuing education has the answers for your New Year’s resolutions

As the holidays draw to a close, most people begin to ask themselves, “What’s my New Year’s resolution going to be this year?” Newburyport Adult & Continuing Education (NACE) knows that while you inevitably grow and make changes all throughout the year, there’s something refreshing and definitive about resolving to make changes at the beginning of a brand-new year. Take a look at some of the top New Year’s resolutions people make every year and how Newburyport Adult & Continuing Education’s classes can actually help you follow through.

1. Enjoy Life More - Given the hectic, stressful lifestyles of millions of Americans, it is no wonder that “enjoying life more” has become a popular resolution in recent years. It’s an important step to a happier and healthier you! Consider taking **A Sweet Valentine Chocolate** and prepare five chocolate desserts in one evening. Or take up something new, **Hip Hop** or **Horseback Riding**.

2. Get in Shape - The evidence is in for fitness. Regular exercise has been associated with more health benefits than anything else known to man. Exercise keeps you healthy and makes you look and feel better. Why not make this the time to start getting in shape for one of our popular classes? Suggestions include **Easy Does it Yoga**, **Pilates for Beginners** and **Kripula Yoga**.

3. Become Smart about Money - Join other like-minded folks who have resolved to spend this year getting a handle on their finances. It’s a promise that will repay itself many times over in the year ahead. Sign up for the **Reverse Mortgages Workshop** - Convert the Equity in Your Home Into Income. Or take one of our retiree selections.

4. Spend More Time with Family and Friends - Work shouldn’t always come first! Take the time to laugh and enjoy life with your family and friends through taking classes together. Sign up for Bonnie Jean Wilbur’s **Improviseational Comedy** class, or speak to one another in French, Italian or Spanish and dream about traveling to foreign countries together. Why not drink whiskey with your friends at Paul Souza’s **Great Whiskey** class?

5. Learn Something New - Have you vowed to make this year the year to learn something new? Perhaps you are considering a career change, want to learn how to use that new digital camera, or design a web page. Sign up for **Basic Interior Design** or **Introduction to Digital Photography** or maybe even **Web Design: Introduction to HTML**. Whether you take a course or read a book, you’ll find education to be one of the easiest, most motivating New Year’s resolutions to keep.

Newburyport Adult & Continuing Education offers plenty of options for simply enriching your life and taking new chances. Is there something you’ve always wanted to do but never knew how to, or never felt qualified to undertake? Do you have pages of notes for short stories, or even a novel, but no idea what to do with them? Why not take a writing class? The same goes for any skill or art form that you’ve always been interested in. Now is the time to take advantage of our educational opportunities and to set aside the time to live out your dream for the New Year.

Newburyport Adult & Continuing Education begins its winter program on January 28th. Most of our classes take place at the Newburyport High School at 241 High Street. To request a catalog, call 978-465-1257. Or, you can view and sign up for classes at our new website: <http://www.newburyportadulthood.org>.

Hi, I'm Errin Livingston & I'm a member of

Team Zingales

360 Merrimack Street, Sal's Riverwalk Bldg. #5 in Lawrence

Please See Our Ad - Page 23

Is Georgetown Selectman “Bah-humbug” or just plain ignorant?

Darrah Ostrander
GEUST COLUMNIST

Apparently business at the Chocolate Cellar is slow this time of year for Lonnie Brennan. He has time to sit around and come up with juicy headlines that demean not only developer John Longo, but all developers in Georgetown. (Not much Christmas spirit Mr. Brennan) He accuses all developers of making a killing and then moving on. He writes that their goal is, “Promise anything and never deliver”.

It was just this kind of unprofessional, uninformed conversation that caused Mr. Longo to stand and walk out of the Planning Board Meeting. And yes, Mr. Brennan, Mr. Longo is a nice man and it was, “a heated moment, a misperception and a bad night”.

Mr. Longo had requested being put on the agenda to release funds from the bond for roadwork completed in the Whispering Pines Subdivision.

The work was inspected and signed off by Jack Moultrie, Georgetown Subdivision Inspector. The inspection report was submitted to Sarah Buck, Town Planner, who after reviewing the report submitted it to the Planning Board. All paperwork in. A reasonable expectation to receive the bond money to pay for roadwork completed.

The Planning Board of Georgetown seemed not to be informed, after all this time, that the two projects Mr. Longo had received permits for were complete and separate. One is Whispering Pines Subdivision and the other one is Raymond’s Creek Independent Senior Housing. It was their goal at that meeting to hold the bond money for the Whispering Pines Subdivision as ransom for the completion of affordable units attached to Raymond’s Creek.

Mr. Longo informed the Planning Board that their town counsel, Kopleman and Paige, had addressed the question and stated that they are two different projects and must be treated accordingly. Sarah Buck, board secretary, commented that she was aware of that fact and proceeded to recommend the Board initiate a vote. Board members ignored her and continued their conversation about what they would like to do, not what was legally their charge to do.

The Board even suggested that they should find out from Town Counsel how to handle the situation. Apparently, receiving an answer once is not enough. It is this kind of self-involvement that costs towns unnecessary legal costs and, “a heated moment, a misperception and a bad night”.

Raymond’s Creek Independent Senior Housing was permitted with the commitment of affordable housing. Mr. Longo did purchase a house for \$300,000.00 that was approved by the Georgetown Housing Authority to be used as an off site affordable home.

He hired Jill Onderdonk, a professional who was approved by the Planning Board who handles the lottery procedure adopted by the Town. A lottery was held and the result was a potential buyer was chosen who then filed a complaint with the Town Manager about the fact that the home was not in the development.

Subsequently, the Town took no action to resolve this issue and later the Planning Board took the position that the home was unsuitable as an affordable unit.

The Town of Georgetown has accepted other affordable housing units from Mr. Longo and other developers that were not on site of the development. Mr. Longo has since been able to rent this property on his own, having been approved by HUD. The town missed an opportunity to add to its affordable housing stock. A \$300,000.00 investment by Mr. Longo was ignored by the Planning Board.

The Georgetown Planning Board would now like to see a two-family, affordable unit built in the Whispering Pines Subdivision. This is in total disregard of their own zoning ordinances.

It should also be noted that Mr. Longo paid \$100,000 to the Town for the purpose of improvements to be made

BRENNAN, page 31

GEORGETOWN TODAY



PHOTO: LONNIE BRENNAN

2007 Georgetown Fireman’s Ball

Lonnie Brennan
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

November 17, 2007, A date I’ll never forget. It was the day I was humbled and honored to be present in a room filled of public heroes who give of their time and energies to protect us.

The date? The Fireman’s Ball 2007. Yes, there was dancing, but the event was so much more. “The return of a grand tradition” as stated on the night’s program booklet. Sponsored by the Central Fire Company of the Georgetown Fire Department, the event showcased and honored many who have given so much.

“We were able to present certificates to Donald Gordon, David Gordon, Tom Nagle, Mark Durkee, Mrs Norman Manning, and Pete Zibelle in appreciation of their years of dedicated service to the Central Fire Company, and the Town of Georgetown Fire Department. All-in-all well over 150 years of service,” said Captain Rusty Ricker.

“The Central Fire Department and the Georgetown Fire Department have lost many good friends, good firefighters, and long-time supporters in 2007,” Capt. Ricker wrote for the night’s program. “Former firefighter Dana Lampert who served for 12 years; retired Fire Captain Norman Manning who served for 32 years; retired Fire Chief Nelson Chaisson who served for 15 years; retired firefighter Leroy “Sparky” Sparkes who served for 15 years; and retired Fire Captain Frank Maguire, who served for 39 years, all left us this year, leaving a space behind that can never be filled for both their families, and their firefighting family here in Georgetown.”

“This night is dedicated to them, and to all other past members of the Central Fire Company and the Georgetown Fire Department who could not be here this evening,” Capt. Ricker wrote and repeated in his address to the packed audience. “Rest easy gentlemen; know that you have left your legacy for us to follow in.”

Donna Robbins, Rusty Ricker, Bret Moyer, and Joe Riggi were amongst those on the Remembrance Committee who were thanked for their hard work to pull together the event. “She was incredible,” Capt. Ricker said of firefighter/EMT Donna Robbin’s efforts with the event. “Everyone contributed.”

My bride Dianne and I were treated to a tremendous view: firefighters from many, many, many surrounding towns, all gathered to honor those who have served, and to enjoy the night of camaraderie and incredible feast at the Georgetown Club. It was nothing like I expected. Then again, I had never attended such an event, and every day I have served on the Georgetown Board of Fire Engineers, I become more and more appreciative of those who serve, who dedicate their time and their lives for their neighbors.

I had the opportunity to speak with several members of the department and to share in the incredible grand event. Capt. Ricker presented a historic media presentation that engaged everyone— photos and events from years and years of service. Fires, firefighters, equipment, past and present. Don Gordon, Tom Nangle, Pete Zibelle. Our neighbors. I run into Mr. Zibelle every now and then at Theo’s. A few days after the Fireman’s Ball he asked me, “what did ya think of it?” “Humbled, honored to be present. Absolutely incredible,” I said. Then it dawned on me. These folks have no idea how much we appreciate their work, past and present. They do so much for us. We do so little for them.

Toys for Tots and Santa Tours: The Central Fire Company of the Georgetown Fire Department returned once again this year with a grand all-day tour of the town, featuring Santa, his helpers, and more fire equipment than you can imagine. Santa spent his day in Georgetown on Sunday December 9th, starting at 11 a.m. and going well into darkness, visiting every single street and lane to support and collect toys and donations for Toys for Tots. You can visit the U.S. Marine’s Toys for Tots site at www.toysfortotsma.org or our local Central Fire Department’s site at www.gtfdssantatour.com for details on the town tour for next year.. Bless you and your neighbors this Christmas.

A Fireman’s Prayer

When I am called to duty, God,
Whenever flames may rage,
Give me strength to save some life,
Whatever be it’s age.
Help me embrace a little child
Before it is too late
Or save an older person
From the horror of that fate.
Enable me to be alert
And hear the weakest shout,
And quickly and efficiently
To put the fire out.
I want to fill my calling
And to give the best in me
To guard my every neighbor
And protect his property.
And if, according to my fate,
I am to lose my life,
Please bless with your protection
My children and my wife.

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





I'm Andrea Delehanty & I'm a member of

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PHOTO: RACHEL PORTEN

Methuen's progress is something to be proud of

Bill Manzi

VALLEY PATRIOT CONTRIBUTOR

As I prepare for my inaugural to a second term as Methuen's Mayor I would like to thank the citizens of Methuen for their kindness and support during the campaign season. When I was first elected I said that *this* job was the job I always wanted, and after serving two years I still feel the same way. It is an honor and privilege to serve as Mayor, and I feel that the next two years will be even more exciting than the last two.

The choice of Methuen High School as the venue for this year's inaugural is especially appropriate. Methuen was one of forty nine communities selected for advancement to the feasibility stage for our High School modernization project. I will name a Building Committee in the month of January to help advance this project and oversee construction. Addressing the issues at our High School was one of the top priorities from the prior campaign, and we are now positioned to deal with this critical issue. Senator Steve Baddour and Representatives Linda Dean Campbell and Barbara L'Italien deserve our thanks for their hard work.

Another issue that has come to fruition in this term is the construction of the Arlington Neighborhood Community Center. With construction just about complete we will be able to open the Center in the month of January. This process brings to completion a project that had been discussed for years, and will enable us to better serve the children of this neighborhood with after school programs and additional enrichment. We will also leverage this process to try to bring our social services community closer together to look into joint actions in seeking outside funding.

We have changed and reformed our vital Emergency Management Systems, and did so in advance of the worst flooding in Methuen in a century. These reforms enabled us to lead Methuen successfully through this difficult situation. We have had a public session of our emergency management team to explain our systems to the public, and we will continue to devote additional resources to this critical function in the next two years.

I promised, in the last campaign, to modernize our Internet presence. We have done so, and without the use of outside consultants. Methuen's website has been recognized by the Common Cause Campaign for Open Government, one of seventy two communities to win this recognition.

We are prepared to unveil, this month, an online permitting system that will allow many municipal permits to be filled out on-line, further expanding access to local government as well as simplifying our permitting process.

Methuen's park on Osgood Street was badly damaged by the flooding of two years ago. We have reached agreement with FEMA and the design and re-construction of the park will proceed in the spring of this year.

The need for a Master Plan was talked about in the last campaign, and my Administration has produced Methuen's first Master Plan in twenty years. We are working on an implementation plan, which we should be ready to bring to City Council by February of this year. This implementation schedule should include a 40R District, as well as some exciting changes that will benefit our downtown area. This term should also give us the time necessary to complete the environmental work at the so called Appleyards site and convert that parcel to benefit the downtown area.

Design continues on the Bea's site, which is an important gateway project for Methuen. In this term we will complete design and go to construction with a plan to beautify the site and create additional passive recreational opportunities along our river for Methuen's citizens.

We have begun the process of planning for the demolition of our High School Clubhouse (locker room) located at Nicholson Stadium. This demolition and building of a new facility will remove an antiquated facility serving our kids and replace it with one that will truly meet the needs of our athletic programs for the next fifty years. City Councilor Steve Zanni has spearheaded this effort, and deserves recognition for his strong advocacy and commitment to this project.

With the explosion of prices for fuel and heating sources we will step up our efforts to create additional efficiencies in this area, seeking to be environmentally sensitive as we do so. We will expand upon the work of the green committee and seek to work co-operatively with the other communities in the Merrimack Valley in this area.

Finally we must work together to combat the financial pressures Methuen and all other localities face. As we work with our friends at the State House we do not simply come in and ask for more money. We ask for relief from laws that force us to spend more money locally.

The system of financing local government is broken, and before additional demands are made upon taxpayers' fundamental reforms need to take place. We will work as hard as we can to make sure that Methuen's financial condition is sound, for without that foundation our ability to act positively for our citizens will be severely constricted.

As I look forward to the work and challenges ahead I urge you to share your ideas and thoughts with me. You can email me at wmmanzi@ci.methuen.ma.us or visit my blog at www.billmanzi.com. Working together we can make Methuen the best it can be.

Bill Manzi is the mayor of Methuen and is in his first two year term. He served previously as the city council president and is seeking reelection this November. You can email him at wmmanzi@ci.methuen.ma.us.

2008 City Census to be sent out in February

Because Massachusetts has moved its 2008 Presidential Primary up from March to February, the Methuen Office of the City Clerk will conduct its annual City Census in early February, after that election. Conducting the census annually is mandated by state law, and its results are used for keeping the voting list current. The language on the census form regarding the removal of a voter from the active voting list as a consequence of failure to respond is not intended to be a threat, it merely states what the law says it must. It should also be noted that a voter's placement on the inactive list does not take away the voter's right to vote.

Census responses are used to begin a statutory four (4)-year process to remove voters who no longer reside in the City of Methuen from the city's voting list. The right to vote is so important that the only ways a person can be removed from a municipality's voting list are if he or she personally notifies the clerk's office that he or she has moved (or requests removal from the voting list), if the person is deceased, or if the person registers to vote in another community and notification is sent to the voter's old municipality. Otherwise, state law mandates a process that requires that a voter be made inactive, be sent a confirmation mailing after being made inactive, and not vote in two consecutive state elections before the voter can be deleted from a voting list. A voter is rendered inactive if he or she does not respond to the annual census or to the subsequent confirmation mailing that is sent thereafter.

One important note is that a person cannot register to vote by responding to the census. If the person is not listed on the form, adding the person's name to the form will result in the person being listed as a resident, but not a voter. The only way to become a registered voter is to complete a voter registration affidavit, which can be obtained in person at the Office of the City Clerk, located in Room 112 at the Searles Building, 41 Pleasant Street, Methuen, or by calling (978) 983-8515 and requesting that a form be mailed to you for your completion and to be returned to the Clerk's office. You can also register to vote at the Registry of Motor Vehicles when obtaining or renewing a driver's license.

Please feel free to contact the City Clerk's office with any questions or concerns about the City Census or voter registration.

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RONNIE’S RANTS

Random thoughts for the New Year

Ronnie Ford
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

* East Haven Connecticut - In a recount for mayor, more ballots were counted than the number of people who voted. Hmmm, how did that happen? It’s underhanded things like this that makes me love that bumper sticker, “Don’t vote, you only encourage them”.

Seriously speaking, the politician is crafty being, endowed with natural cunning. Buried within their craftiness is lying, changing their minds, even making illicit deals that at times seem to benefit them personally.

So, what do we do? I always liked that expression, “throw the rascals out.” It’s time for voters to unite. The best way to do that is to join or start a citizens’ watch group and question everything! Remember, “United we stand, divided we fall”.

- * Rumors: The rumor that Mike Sullivan is headed for Sal Lupoli’s payroll is about as big a secret as the Armistice. I don’t know if this is really true or not, but there’s no question that the “Gaelic and Garlic” mayor of Lawrence (half Italian and half Irish) is the best PR man anyone can find. Sal could do worse if it is true because even people who hate Sullivan’s politics, like him personally.
- * Political correctness at Christmas: The grinch population is still active. When will our decision makers get the guts to stand up to the politically correct

crowd? Let’s tell it like it is. There is a “Santa Claus,” you dopes! Merry Christmas.

* Our sincere condolences to the family of Ralph Mercier, who recently passed away. Ralph was the husband of Lowell City Councilor Rita Mercier. Ralph was one of the good guys. He will be missed. Rita will keep doing her job as a very effective councilor. If you do not know Rita, she is a cross between the Tasmanian devil and Mother Theresa. She is a councilor the people of Lowell love on their team. Keep going Rita! We love you.

- * Methuen’s Festival of Trees was another booming success this year. The City of Haverhill has now followed suit and are growing by leaps and bounds. New businesses are flourishing in our neighboring city and it is refreshing to see community functions that benefit us all!
- * Here we are again looking for state monies for a new or renovated High School in Methuen. Some of the buildings still standing are so strong a bunker buster could not dent them. Some are over a hundred years old and still strong as an oak. Our high school in Methuen is only thirty years old. And you wonder why we are always out of money.
- * **Proposed New Years Resolutions:**
- Rev. Jim stokes resolves to join the Marines so that he really will be a veteran the next time he runs for office.
 - Methuen Councilor Kathleen Corey Rhame resolves to find something to do for two years.




Andover’s Michael Tarshi of Donald Trumps “The Apprentice” with his father, Attorney Michael J. Tarshi of the Tarshi Law Firm in Lawrence.

- Lawrence Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy, will resolves to get another raise from the money Chief of Police Romero refused!
- Haverhill Mayor Fiorintini resolves to repair the Baseliere Bridge.
- Senator Obama resolves to see if he can trip Hillary while she is going up or down stairs.
- Hillary Clinton resolves to see if she can trip Obama while he is going up or down stairs.
- Senator Edwards resolves to see if he can trip Obama and Hillary going up or down stairs.
- Young Michael Tarshi of “The Apprentice” fame resolves to keep on building and make billions of dollars, hire Donald Trump, and then fire him.

* Lastly, but most importantly, let my family and I say thank you to the army of people who are supporting our son Dan in the fight of his life. Your thoughts, good wishes, and especially prayers are a tremendous boost to us.

Happy New Year! and May the good Lord take a liking to you. And, hey, do something nice for someone today.



Ronnie Ford is a Methuen resident and the former host of the “Hot Line” radio program. Ford is also a former methuen police officer and a former member of the Methuen school committee and city council. You can email Ronnie at Radiotalk@comcast.net

Tsongas: from page 8

priorities - like funding for more than 15,000 new housing vouchers for veterans, the disabled, and low income families, funding for Amtrak, and needed funds to repair deficient bridges to avoid the kind of disaster that happened in Minnesota. I have heard the demand for change from the residents of the Fifth District and I stand ready to overturn this veto for all these reasons and more,” Tsongas concluded.

Tsongas says her votes will Protect Middle-Class Americans from the AMT

Congressman Niki Tsongas released the following statement following passage of a bill to protect tens of millions of Americans from the Alternative Minimum Tax.

“I am supporting this bill because we need to bring fairness back to our tax code. In 2005, more than 17,000 families in the Fifth District paid the Alternative Minimum Tax - a tax that is complicated, outdated and unfair. And, if we fail to act now, that number skyrockets to nearly 90,000 Fifth District families and more than 20 million families nationwide - that’s what I call a massive tax increase. By enacting this long overdue fix, we are preventing the AMT from unfairly burdening millions of middle class families and I am proud to stand up for them.”

“The Democrats attempted to make this bill fiscally responsible by closing unfair tax loopholes for the wealthiest Americans so that we would not add to the deficit. However, Republicans have blocked that effort, and the President threatened to veto the bill if it included this provision. Therefore, this bill ...

passed without a provision to prevent hedge fund managers from avoiding millions in taxes by hiding money in offshore accounts. I think that is a mistake. We should not be protecting a tax break that skews the tax code in favor of the most advantaged Americans. We have a generational responsibility to safeguard the economic security of our children and grandchildren.”

Tsongas Opposes funding for Iraq War

Niki Tsongas released the following statement following passage of a federal funding bill that included \$70 billion for the war in Iraq:

“It is long past time that we stop giving the President a blank check to continue an endless war. The American people want to bring an end to the war in Iraq, and I was sent here to deliver that message from tens of thousands of voters.

I cannot support the bill before the House today because it puts no pressure on our government to change direction and puts no pressure on the Iraqi government to step up to the plate.

Our soldiers have done everything we’ve asked of them and more, and we must make sure we provide the resources for those who are currently overseas. But this war – now lasting nearly five years, longer than World War II – has cost Americans too much, in terms of lives, dollars, and our reputation around the world. We must change course and I will not stop fighting until we do.

The American people have been demanding change, and my election illustrated this call. They want to bring an end to President Bush’s 10-year, trillion



Congressman Niki Tsongas strolls down Essex St. in Lawrence with June Black and Marcos Devers the day after winning the special election in October.

dollar war, and they want to quickly, safely and responsibly redeploy our troops. I will do everything I can to make sure the President gets the message.

I am grateful to have the tremendous privilege of representing the Fifth Congressional District in Congress as the first woman from Massachusetts in 25 years, and I will honor this responsibility.

Already I have begun serving on the Armed Services and Budget Committees, assignments that will allow me to help ensure we provide our servicemen and women with the equipment and protection they need. These appointments will also allow me to help the many businesses in the Merrimack Valley, like Polartec in Lawrence and Raytheon in Andover, continue to produce the materials that keep our military the best equipped and best protected in the world.”

- In Tsongas’ First Month She has:**
- * Voted for a new direction in Iraq;
 - * Voted against funding troops in Iraq
 - * Voted to expand the children’s health insurance program and provide healthcare to 200,000 children in Massachusetts - and I voted to override the President’s veto of this bill;
 - * Voted to override President Bush’s veto of a bill that authorizes the Army Corps of Engineers to proceed with a study to determine the feasibility of dredging the Merrimack River in Haverhill;
 - * Secured \$400,000 for New Buses to serve the Merrimack Valley Regional Transportation Authority in Lawrence, Andover, Haverhill and Methuen; and
 - * Secured \$240,000 for the Lowell Community Health Clinic.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

From Team Zingales



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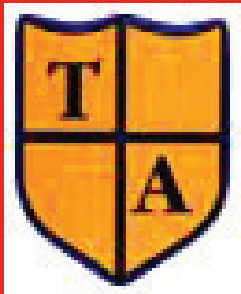
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BENEFITS FOR OUR VETERANS

Health care proxy and living wills

Susan Piazza
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Happy New Year to all. The beginning of the year is a good time to get one's affairs in order. The following are a list of important documents that should be completed and made available to ones loved ones.

Veterans all know that they need to have their discharge papers in a place accessible to whomever will handle matters once the veteran is gone. These papers are necessary to establish eligibility for military/veteran benefits, survivor benefits, and/or dependent benefits. Any award letter given by the Veterans Administration should be kept with the discharge papers. The award letter shows whether a disability rating has been established, whether it is service-connected, and the percentage of disability. Different and/or additional benefits may be available for service-connected veterans.

There are other documents that should be considered when compiling and considering end of life issues.

Advance Directives The Department of Veterans Affairs uses this umbrella term for two types of documents, the "Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care," and the "Living Will," both of which are included in Form 10-0137. This comprehensive form can be downloaded from <http://www1.va.gov/visns/visn02/vet/advance.cfm>.

Many VA facilities stock these papers so ask for one when you go to your next appointment. The explanation and informational section of this form (Form 10-0137A) has a section, under "Your Responsibilities," for those who may need additional help in filling out the form. The end of this official legal document is equipped with a space for the Notary Publics seal.

The VA has tweaked these two documents into its own version. The "Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care" deals only with health care. The VA's version allows your designate to make health care decisions as if the person were you. Remember, these documents are only activated and used when the person for whom it is written, is unable to make his or her own decisions. Changes to these documents can be made at any time.

The regular form of this document is the Durable Power of Attorney. This record allows someone to take care of your business as if s/he were you. S/he is

authorized to buy/sell property, open/close bank accounts, etc. to handle any and all issues that may need to be taken care of while you are incapacitated. This version will need to be completed by someone outside the Department of Veterans Affairs. There are forms one can purchase from stores, like Staples, but for something so life changing I would consult an attorney. It is well worth the investment.

The VA's Living Will is the same as a regular living will. Both cover you in case your incapacity is of such a severity that you may not wish to be kept alive. Decisions regarding life support, under what conditions one wishes ones life maintained, or not maintained, etc. are all matters that someone may need to decide for you one day. It is better to have your wishes on record than to trust in a stranger, or the court to make these difficult decisions for you.


Health Care Proxy's deal with who will make decisions for you when you cannot. If one is knocked unconscious in a car accident, or by a slip and fall on the ice, someone may be needed to make medical decisions, someone may be needed to sign papers in the event one needs to have surgery, or undergo some other life saving method.

Finally, is the Last Will and Testament. This document serves two basic functions. First, it selects the person whom you wish to administer your estate. Again, it is better to have a trusted person handle your affairs than a stranger. Second, the last will allows for the disposal of your assets as you wish and to whom you wish.

Check with your state as the above documents may be called by other names, or contain slightly different information. A good military/veteran source is the VA's own Web site: <http://www.va.gov>. Additional information can be obtained at: <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>.

Please consider these matters and these documents. Life is unpredictable. It is always better to be prepared.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

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

TAKING CARE OF OUR VETERANS

New Year's thanks and resolutions

John Lenotte
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST
AMERICAN LEGION

As is tradition for most of us, we should look back at what we can give thanks for from 2007 and make some resolutions for 2008.

We should give thanks to those unsung heroes among us. Examples are the local veteran's agents, many of whom go over and above in their roles like; Ron Koontz of Amesbury and Francisco Urena of Lawrence. Ron and Francisco have organized a number of events to recognize veterans and, particularly in Lawrence, where they work with the Jimenez family , supporting them in their time of need. And, of course, all of those who have come out and given support and prayers for the return of Sgt Jimenez.

Another person who is a great resource in the Merrimack Valley is John Ratka, Executive Director of the Northeast Veterans Outreach Center. John and his staff do a super job without much recognition or thanks. And we have other groups that lend support to the troops out of the kindness of their heart.

Examples are Operation Troop Support in Danvers and Shauna Trahan of Curves for leading an effort to send packages to troops at Walter Reed Army Hospital. And Jim Sergio-Waring deserves special mention, not only because of his raising money and sending packages, but his efforts in keeping the flag displays going at the bridges. Jim can be seen at every local event honoring veterans.

Donna Blattenberger of the Methuen American Legion Auxiliary, who devotes countless hours to work with the veterans at Chelsea Soldiers Home, deserves special recognition. And we cannot forget Lillian Eaton who is President of the Haverhill's Veterans Council for all her efforts in the many veteran organizations to which she devotes her time. And there are many other individuals, not named here, that work in behalf of veterans causes.

We are also fortunate to have local members of the state legislature who strongly support veterans. Individuals like Senator Steven Baddour, Representatives Linda Dean Campbell and Brian Dempsey. And I know our new Congresswoman, Nikki Tsongas, is already hard at work for us.


Looking into 2008, I am sure the individuals already named will continue their good work. As will the others affiliated with the various veterans' organizations.

We are fortunate in the Merrimack Valley to have active groups like the American Legion, VFW, AMVETS, DAV, Marine Corps League, and others. I hope we will see expanded and mandatory funding for the VA budget. Another issue that many of us have been working on for a number of years is the Flag Amendment. This needs to be pressed with our US Senators and Congressmen/ Congresswomen.

I cannot believe that Freedom of Speech includes the right to burn the same flag that our troops fight and die for. If you feel the same way, let Congress know that this legislation must pass so that the citizens of this country can vote on whether or not to make this an amendment to the Constitution.

I know our State Senators and Representatives are working on legislation to allow a special license plate that will show support to the troops and the funds raised dedicated to the Chelsea and Holyoke Soldiers Homes. Let them know of your support so this can be realized in 2008.

And, let us all hope for peace and the safe return of our troops. May God bless America and all of you.

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





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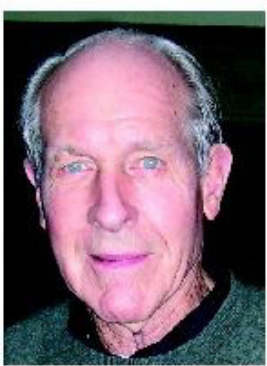
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POLICE: from page 18

“The surviving families of these fallen officers will be struggling for many months trying to adjust to life without their officer,” said Jean Hill, National President of C.O.P.S., which provides resources to assist in rebuilding the lives of surviving families of officers killed in the line of duty. “There will be hundreds more survivors needing our services due to the increased numbers of deaths, and C.O.P.S. will need to increase its efforts to assist these families. We will strive to reach our mission for these families and help them rebuild their shattered lives. And that support from C.O.P.S. will be there for the families for as long as they need our support,” Mrs. Hill continued.

Other findings in the report include the following:

- * Forty-one states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands experienced officer fatalities during 2007. Texas, with 22, had the most officer deaths, followed by Florida (16), New York (12), California (11) and Louisiana (9).
- * Seventeen federal law enforcement officers died this year, including five special agents of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations who were killed in Iraq.
- * The officers killed in 2007 ranged in age from 19 to 76; the average age was 39. The officers had an average of 11.4 years in law enforcement. Seven of the officers killed this year were women.
- * Handguns were used in the vast majority of fatal officer shootings (51).

Shotguns were used in eight officer killings and rifles in nine others, including September’s fatal shooting of Miami-Dade (FL) Police Officer Jose Somohano with an assault weapon.

* Approximately 40 percent of the officers who died this year were killed in felonious attacks; the other 60 percent died from accidental causes. Up until the late 1990s, more officers died in felonious attacks than accidents.

* Alcohol was a contributing factor in 21 of this year’s officer fatalities, up from 17 in 2006; illegal drugs played a role in 21 deaths, up from 11 in 2006.

After peaking at 277 in 1974, officer fatalities have generally declined over the past three decades, with the exception of the increase in 2001. The annual average number of officers killed was 228 in the 1970s, 190 in the 1980s, 160 in the 1990s and 167 from 2000-2006.

The statistics released by the NLEOMF and C.O.P.S. are preliminary data and do not represent a final or complete list of individual officers who will be added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in 2008.

The preliminary report, “Law Enforcement Officer Deaths, 2007,” is available at www.nleomf.org. For more information about C.O.P.S., visit www.nationalcops.org.



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN
National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, DC



Craig Floyd is the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the NLEOMF. Editor’s Note: The NLEOMF is a nonprofit organization established in 1984 to generate increased public support for law enforcement by permanently recording and appropriately commemorating the service and sacrifice of law enforcement officers; and provide information that will help promote law enforcement safety. The NLEOMF operates and maintains the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, DC, containing nearly 18,000 names; is an organizer of the annual National Police Week tribute each May; and serves as a clearinghouse of information about law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. The NLEOMF is leading the building of the first-ever National Law Enforcement Museum, scheduled to open adjacent to the Memorial in 2011. For more information, visit www.nleomf.org.

ORMSBY: continued from page 3

teachings were considered sins that would be severely punished by Allah.

Luckily, Ayaan’s early life experiences were not completely confined to a strict Islamic view of reality. As she progressed through her teenage years, she had the inevitable exposure to the possibility that there might be a different way. While anything western was considered satanic, Ayaan began to secretly read popular western novels like Nancy Drew and assorted romantic stories. A seed was planted. Maybe women could think for themselves and make their own decisions, including controlling their own romantic destiny.

Islam taught that men and women were equal BUT simultaneously instructed that women had to obey their husbands. If they didn’t, it was appropriate for their husbands to beat them. Also, women were at fault if men had unclean thoughts when seeing them. If women were alone outside their homes, this was prima fascia evidence that they were prostitutes and their families were disgraced. If their virginity could not be confirmed on their marriage night ... well, that would be a very bad day.

Ayaan didn’t think these teachings were consistent with the claim that women were equal to men. But years of strict religious training and the very singular societal perspective that surrounded Ayaan for her entire life could not be abandoned easily. Except for the few meager glimpses of an alternate culture she experienced by reading some western novels, she had no life experiences or intellectual structure that supported a different view of reality.

At the age of 22, Ayaan was committed to marry a distant cousin whom she had never met. Her father saw numerous advantages to the family of this union, but Ayaan was horrified. Her protests were dismissed as unimportant and a marriage ceremony was performed even though she refused to attend.

Her prospective husband lived in Toronto and had briefly returned to Africa to obtain a compliant wife. Apparently, the Muslim women he met in Canada were too westernized and refused to obey his every command. He agreed to delay consummating the marriage until Ayaan was transported to Canada, a trip that included a brief layover in Germany.

Her arrival in Europe presented a reality that contradicted nearly everything she had been taught about the West. Women were walking the streets alone and seemed practically naked. Amazingly, men didn’t lose control of themselves. In fact, they hardly noticed and just went about their business as if nothing special was occurring.

While Islam was touted as far superior to any western way of life, Ayaan noted that the communities she saw in Germany were much more modern and maintained than any Muslim community she had ever experienced. Service levels were extraordinary and everything worked. How could this be? If the teachings of



Islam were far superior to western ideas, the opposite should be true.

Ayaan’s mind slowly but steadily declared its independence. She would escape her forced marriage. She would expose Muslim teachings to the tests of reason. She would process the facts of reality and determine what was right and wrong - by herself, using her mind, regardless of how psychologically difficult or dangerous.

Ayaan was now faced with a new culture, the rejection of friends and family, and the real risk of retaliation.

And she triumphed. Her mind triumphed.

Ayaan escaped to Holland. She applied for asylum and, in the process, changed her last name to Ayaan Hirsi Ali. She learned Dutch and attended Leiden University where she eventually earned a master’s degree. Eventually, after working with Somali refugees and asylum seekers trying to escape the same oppression she had endured, she went to work at the Wiardi Beckman Foundation in Amsterdam, a political think tank.

The attacks of 9/11 precipitated her final break with Islam. Usama bin Laden justified Al-Qaeda’s attacks based on teachings in the Qur’an, which Ayaan personally verified. She felt she had to expose the failings of Islam and she began to speak out publicly.

As might be expected, death threats followed but Ayaan was undeterred. She

PAYING ATTENTION: from page 15

against her by not hiring her in the midst of this whole fiasco.

At the time, Blanchette said that, because it was her complaint that lead to the job vacancy in the first place, it would be unwise to elevate her to that job, especially when investigations were still going on regarding the alleged incidents. Now, I am no supporter of Patrick Blanchette and I am certainly no defender of the likes of Jim McGravey, but city council president Patrick Blanchette absolutely did the right thing in not hiring Padellaro.

It was both responsible and in the best interest of the taxpayers to seek a candidate for the job who was unconnected to the controversy and scandal that rocked city hall for more than a month and still had the potential of lawsuits; both by McGravey and by other city employees in that office.

It is a disgrace that the taxpayers of Lawrence have to pay Padellaro nearly ¾ of a million dollars (total) because she was so emotionally damaged by the hostile environment in city hall that she was applying for a job that was, by all definitions, political.

It is even more of a disgrace that the city settled this lawsuit at a time when there is no money in the budget to pay for it, tax hikes are being recommended, water rate increases are being proposed, city employees are being laid off, city services are being reduced, and people who want to work are being sent home for lack of funds.

continued to speak out and, after joining the People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy, was elected to Parliament.

Eventually, Ayaan was forced into hiding. She had authored a 10-minute film entitled “Submission,” (viewable now over the Internet) depicting Muslim women questioning Allah and the teachings of the Qur’an. After its initial release, the producer, Theo van Gogh, was brutally murdered and Ayaan was marked for assassination.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali has received numerous prestigious awards. In December 2007 she was awarded the Goldwater Award by the Goldwater Institute.

Ayaan now works for the American Enterprise Institute, in Washington D. C. , as far intellectually from Mogadishu as can be imagined. After working in the U.S. for a brief period, Ayaan now operates from a secret hiding place in The Netherlands.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali deserves much personal acclaim. But more importantly she has proven the power of the individual human mind to determine truth and declare independence from mysticism and tyranny.

For that, Ayaan Hirsi Ali is a hero.



Dr. Ormsby is a member of the North Andover School Committee. He is a graduate of Cornell and has a doctorate from MIT. You can contact Dr. Ormsby via email: ccormsby@comcast.net

BRENNAN: from page 20

on Warren Street. These improvements were to include drainage, sidewalks and pavement to benefit the residents and neighbors of Warren Street. In fact, an additional \$ 12,000 was also paid by Mr. Longo for survey work on Warren Street to provide the information necessary to build the sidewalks on Town property. After accepting the money, the Planning Board is disregarding the installation of sidewalks and needed drainage on Warren Street.

Hire a lawyer, yes. It would seem to be the only civilized way to make an offer of settlement that is both appropriate for the Developer and the Planning Board of Georgetown.

Finally, Mr. Brennan feels that rumors of comments made in the hallway after the meeting on November 14, are worthy of print. Sad. I probably did say something. When I remember, I will let you know.

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