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

At age 31, breast cancer survivor inspires councilor

Paula Porten

VALLEY PATRIOT EDITOR

METHUEN - "We love her. We want to adopt her and take care of her, (and give her) anything she needs."

These are the words of Methuen City Councilor Debbie Quinn and Methuen Fire Department and Veterans Affairs employee Dottie Avery when speaking of Riverbank Vice President and Branch Manager Veronica Calixto.

Quinn and Avery are taking part in the breast cancer three day walk benefiting the Susan G. Komen For the Cure Foundation. The walk will take place August 15-17 in Boston and Quinn and Avery will be walking in Veronica's honor. Veronica's name will appear on their t-shirts and anyone who makes a donation in honor of a loved one or in memory of someone will have that name appear on their t-shirts.

Quinn met Veronica at a recent Board of Trade meeting where Veronica was seated at her table. "Her story is so compelling and moving and we knew that we needed to tell it," related Quinn. "I noticed this young, pretty girl wearing a wig. She was speaking so

bravely and confidently about the situation she was going through that I was overcome by the reality of her situation. She was facing life and death and yet was moving forward in a positive and optimistic manner. Right then and there I knew Dottie and I needed to walk in honor of Veronica," concluded Quinn.

Veronica is 31 years old, married to Johnny and they have two beautiful, young daughters, ages 7 and 2. Veronica jokes that last year around January or February she began hearing commercials for the walk for cancer and heard the statistic that one in five women will be diagnosed with breast cancer.

She said, "I have four very close girlfriends whom I grew up with and we are in our 30's and I used to say to them, jokingly, that one of us is going to get it."

Then she recalled, "But that statistic of one in five kept playing in my head over and over and I decided to begin doing self exams."

Several months later, in September 2007, Veronica became a statistic from

VERONICA, page 24



PHOTO: COURTESY

Methuen City Councilor Debbie Quinn (l) and Veterans' Affairs & Fire Department employee Dottie Avery (r) with Veronica Calixto (bottom) of Riverbank in Methuen.

Quinn and Avery are taking part in the breast cancer three day walk benefiting the Susan G. Komen For the Cure Foundation. The walk will take place August 15-17 in Boston and Quinn and Avery will be walking in Veronica's honor.

Donations can be sent to RiverBank, 148 Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

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VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH: Natasha Young

Tech Sgt. James Moore USAF
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

LAWRENCE - A patriot, as defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is "One who loves his or her country and supports its authority and interests." The word is sometimes overused or even misused, but not when we use it to describe Natasha Young, make that Staff Sergeant Young, United States Marine Corps, who is this month's Valley Patriot of the Month.

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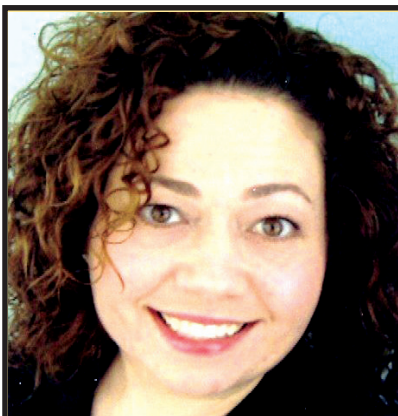
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EDITORIAL



Obama's wants "change" ...to what

The nationwide exposure of Reverend Jeremiah Wright's church rantings provides startling insight into the kind of challenges facing this country's progress toward better race relations.

It was indeed an eye-opener for most Americans to learn about the lies, racial slurs and divisiveness being preached to some black congregations. The Reverend Wright carries a message of hate toward white people, and self-pity to the black community – a formula that is guaranteed to produce irreconcilable differences and ever-widening divisions between the races. His now famous exhortation, "God Damn America", leaves no doubt about what he thinks about his country.

Both Barack Obama and the Reverend Wright are eloquent public speakers with wide followings. All the more reason to temper rhetoric with truth, honesty and good will toward fellow citizens.

It is clear that the Reverend Wright has been Obama's mentor for at least 20 years.

Obama's denial and rejection of the Reverend's sentiments, and then of the Reverend himself, at this late date, rings hollow. Too little, too late. The Reverend Wright dismisses Senator Obama's responses as "political calculations". Perhaps here, the good Reverend is not far off the mark.

How deep beneath the smooth and polished veneer of hope and change lie Obama's true feelings? Like his pastor, does he harbor a deep grudge against America? Has he been shielding us from his very negative personal feelings about his country?

Obama's earlier gaffe about working class people in Pennsylvania – they "cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them..." – provides yet another window into his thinking. As time passes during this election campaign, the real Barack Obama is beginning to emerge – as much through his words as through the company he has kept.

His wife's remark that **now** was the only time in her adult life she was proud of her country begs the question – How did she feel about her country during the rest of her adult life? Michelle Obama's senior thesis at Princeton, titled "Princeton-Educated Blacks and the Black Community", provides insight into her thinking as she describes the students' world from a racial perspective.

She "examined the effects of a Princeton education on Blacks." In her conclusion, Michelle Obama seems distressed to find that Black Princeton students tend toward increased integration into the mainstream of white society after their Princeton experience. The tenor of her entire thesis supports separation rather than integration as a preferred pathway for the Black community.

Senator and Mrs. Obama need to better explain their persistent calls for hope and change. Change to what?

Override Time again in N. Andover?

It's override season and the FinCom and North Andover United (NAU) are hard at work trying to raise your taxes.

Despite the agreement of all elected boards, plus the town manager and finance director, that a police station and pre-K building can be funded within the operating budget, NAU and the FinCom still want a \$10 million override. What they really crave is more money for more services – taxpayers be damned. Haven't they ever heard of living within a budget?

Come to town meeting, May 13th at 7 pm, to stop the madness.

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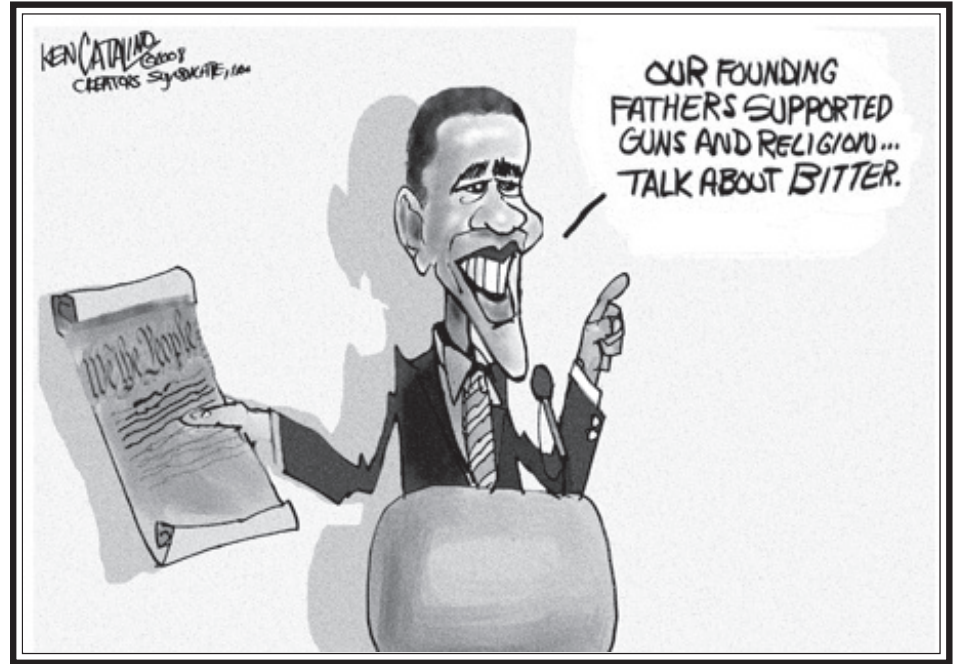
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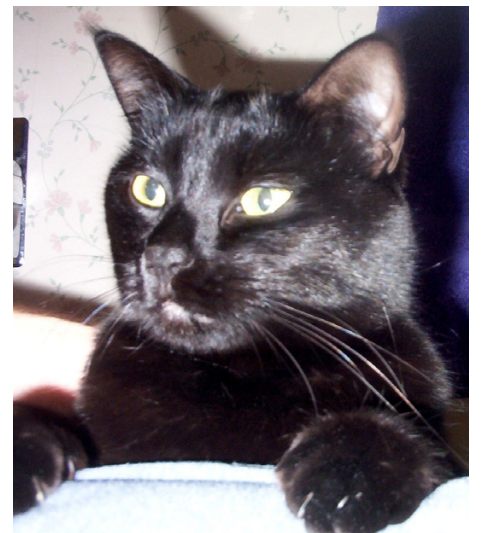
LETTERS

On behalf of the Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society (MRFRS), I would like to thank the community for a very successful Kitten Shower held on April 20th at our headquarters in Salisbury, MA. Twenty-five kittens and one cat found loving homes as a result of the event.

We were thrilled to receive a large number of donated supplies and food donations, which will feed the numerous cats and kittens MRFRS cares for.

Many of our cat toys and t-shirts were sold with proceeds benefiting feral and locally-owned cats and kittens and MRFRS's free and low-cost programs and services.

We were also fortunate to have great weather for the event and can only hope for similar conditions for our 13th annual Strut for Strays taking place from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on June 8th at the Bartlet Mall in Newburyport.



Many thanks to everyone for your support and we look forward to seeing you at future events.

Sincerely,

Stacy LeBaron, President of the Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society

Privatize 495 Rest Area

Having the opportunity to travel several times a week on 495, I feel the need to voice my dismay over a certain public rest area, specifically the Massachusetts Visitor Information Center between exits 32 and 33 in Chelmsford. My gripe here is its decision to keep its restrooms locked between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Where are weary highway motorists, who legitimately "need to go to the bathroom," supposed to go during this particular off-peak time frame?

Although I'm not too sure about the one on the southbound side, the northbound facility has a souvenir shop in the same building as the men's and women's restrooms. If that's the reason they chose to lock this building up at night, then they should, at least, have about a half dozen porta-potties outside that building so that motorists can relieve themselves of their biological wastes in a private and dignified manner – especially with an operation being supported by taxpayer funds.

In order to properly maintain this facility, there's heating in the winter, air conditioning in the summer, and electricity all year round. I would also assume there's cleaning and maintenance taking place on a regular basis. Outside the building, there are signs warning people that surveillance cameras are recording anybody urinating on the side of the building. I would think that's just a

deterrent to prevent people from peeing too much on the side of that building. If not, how much are the taxpayers paying to install, operate, and maintain these surveillance cameras?

And this is all for the sake of operating a souvenir shop?

I think it would definitely make a lot more sense just to bulldoze that building to the ground and put up a bunch of porta-potties in its place.

Let me just say that whenever I've stopped in that area, I just simply want to, "take care of my business" and then, "be on my merry way". I'm certainly not interested in purchasing a tee shirt which states, "Massachusetts" on it, or "stretching my legs", or even buying then drinking a soda from one of its outdoor vending machines that can only make my need to go to the bathroom about a zillion times more intense.

Instead, I wind up relegating myself to going behind a tree (or some other dark, remote area in that vicinity) and possibly subjecting myself – and my good name – to alleged public urination charges by some undercover cop lurking about where I least expect it. I feel as though I'm living in rural India or someplace like that. It's absolutely disgusting!

Also, when I tell others of my tales of woe regarding this matter, there seems to

NEXT PAGE

In response to Soner Unz’s letter on Islam

Islam is not the ancestral religion of humanity, contrary to what Soner Uguz says in his letter to the editor published in the April edition of The Valley Patriot.

Americans will continue to have problems with Islam if we see it only as a religion. It is better understood as a Total Belief System, prescribing political, economic, legal, dietary and sanitary restrictions on the whole world, including New England. Soner Uguz says Islam is misperceived. Maybe Soner Uguz claims it is misperceived because Muslims are advised in the Qur’an to deceive unbelievers. Soner Uguz quoted many passages from the Qur’an. Let us look at a few other verses from the Qur’an:

Qur’an 3:28 says: “Let not the believers take the unbelievers for friends rather than believers; and whoever does this, he shall have nothing of (the guardianship of) Allah, but you should guard yourselves against them, guarding carefully; and Allah makes you cautious of (retribution from) Himself; and to Allah is the eventual coming.”

One Qur’anic commentator notes, regarding this verse: “This is a foundation of the idea that believers may legitimately deceive unbelievers when under pressure.”

From the word used for “guard” in the Arabic, the term “taqiyya” is derived.

Taqiyya refers to the concept of Muslim lying to infidels. Is Soner Uguz playing the traditional Muslim role of untruthfulness as he is instructed to, by this verse?

Why would I ask this? Well, in the West we have the tradition that truth is “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth”.

Where Soner Uguz seems untruthful is in not telling us the whole truth. The Muslim conception of his God is that Allah is not limited by such trifles as consistency or goodness or rationality. So Allah may say one thing one time and the opposite at another time. This happens commonly in the Qur’an. In general, the earlier verses are from the Meccan period; the latter from the Medinan. The first are pacific; the latter, bellicose. The first are repudiated by God himself; the latter are the corrected versions that God has revealed.

The Muslim solution to contradictory statements by Allah is the concept of abrogation, whereby chronologically earlier verses are “abrogated” or superseded by later verses.

Qur’an 2:106: “Whatever communications We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it.”

So Soner Uguz can pick and choose and quote peaceful-sounding portions of the Qur’an. But these verses are countermanded and corrected in Islam by later revelations! Soner Uguz refers to Qur’an 2:256: “There is no compulsion in religion...” This is one of five verses in the Qur’an that counsel peace, whereas there are hundreds of verses mandating Muslims to attack, subjugate, humiliate and kill unbelievers.

Conversion to another religion by someone born into Islam is deemed to be apostasy. And it is punishable by death.

Anyone converting from Islam is subject to a death sentence! Yet Soner Uguz blandly tells us there is no coercion.

Muhammad is believed by Muslims to be the perfect role model for humanity, and so his biographies are to Muslims second in sacredness only to the Holy Qur’an itself.

What do these say about conversion from Islam? Consider this quote from Muhammad: “Whoever changed his Islamic religion, then kill him.” (Bukhari, Volume 9, Book 84, Hadith Number 57)

The most famous recent convert from Islam is Magdi Allam, baptized by the Pope. Listen to him: By baptizing Allam in the public ceremony, the Pope “sent an explicit and revolutionary message to a church that until now has been too cautious in the conversion of Muslims ... because of the fear of being unable to protect the converted who are condemned to death for apostasy,” Allam said.

“Thousands of people in Italy have converted to Islam and practice their faith

serenely,” he wrote. “But there are also thousands of Muslims who have converted to Christianity who are forced to hide their new faith out of fear of being killed by Islamist terrorists.”

Soner Uguz quotes Bernard Lewis to the effect that there is no terrorism in Islam. Well, based on the evidence of our own eyes and ears, we can find plenty of reasons to know he is wrong. What does the Holy Qur’an say about terrorism?

8:12: “When your Lord revealed to the angels: I am with you, therefore make firm those who believe. I will cast terror into the hearts of those who disbelieve. Therefore strike off their heads and strike off every fingertip of them.”

Finally, Soner Uguz comments on the rights of women.

Muslim women are restricted in not feeling the sun on their faces; they cannot appear in public without a male escort of their immediate family; they are subject to honor killings by their own families for besmirching the family honor if they fraternize with unconnected males; their word in court counts for half of a man’s word; the onus in any rape trial is on the woman to prove her innocence; and the penalty for adultery is stoning. Under Sharia law, there must be four male eyewitnesses for a rape conviction. Think about how often men get convicted of rape, with that burden of proof!

Look at the recent film “Fitna” on the internet and notice that every word said in the film is a direct quote of Muslims.

No, Soner Uguz, Islam is not misunderstood at all. We are beginning to understand it very well.

Dennis Walters, Methuen

REST AREA: from previous page

be some sort of gay misconception associated with public highway rest areas around here. Aside from the fact that I usually have my kids with me when I’m stopped at this facility, I’ve never been propositioned by any gay men at this place.

Relieving one’s bladder every once in a while – especially after a rather lengthy highway drive – just happens to be the way God created us, whether or not we are straight or gay.

My suggestion to resolving this major crisis? If the half dozen or so portapotties aren’t a good idea, then why not sublease the main facility out to a lowest

bidding coffee franchise (which would definitely help motorists stay awake on the highway) with the agreement that it operates its business out of that facility year-round, 24-hours per day, and then, of course, cleans and maintains the restroom areas. That sounds like it would be a “win-win” situation all the way around.

This particular rant of mine might come off as a little bit obnoxious, but I think if you ask around, you’d find a ton of folks who probably feel the same way I do on this topic, but are too embarrassed to publicly say anything about it.

Frank Zabierek, Nashua, NH

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How liberals lost a liberal by betraying their values

Dennis Prager

SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

The Democratic Party's preoccupation with the question of when America will leave Iraq rather than with how America will win in Iraq reminds me of how and why this nearly lifelong liberal and Democrat became identified as a conservative and Republican activist.

I have identified as liberal all my life. How could I not? I was raised a Jew in New York City, where I did graduate work in the social sciences at Columbia University. It is almost redundant to call a New York Jewish intellectual a liberal. In fact, I never voted for a Republican candidate for president until Ronald Reagan in 1980. But I have not voted for a Democrat since 1980.

What happened? Did I suddenly change my values in 1980? Or did liberalism? Obviously, one (or both) of us changed.

As I know my values, the answer is as clear as it could be — it is liberalism that has changed, not I. In a word, liberalism became leftism. Or, to put it another way — since my frame of reference is moral values — liberalism's moral compass broke. It did so during the Vietnam War, though I could not bring myself to vote Republican until 1980.

The emotional and psychological hold that the Democratic Party and the word "liberal" have on those who consider themselves liberal is stronger than the ability of most of these individuals to acknowledge just how far from liberal values contemporary liberalism and the Democratic Party have strayed.

Here are four key examples that should prompt any consistent liberal to vote Republican and oppose "progressives" and others on the left.

The issue that began the emotionally difficult task of getting this liberal to identify with conservatives and become an active Republican was Communism. I had always identified the Democratic Party and liberalism with anti-Communism. Indeed, the labor movement and the Democratic Party actually led American opposition to Communism.

It was the Democrat Harry Truman, not Republicans, who made the difficult and

This in turn led to the liberal embrace of the immoral doctrine of moral equivalence. As I was taught at Columbia, where I studied international relations, America was equally responsible for the Cold War, and there was little moral difference between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. They were essentially two superpowers, each looking out for its imperialist self-interest. I will never forget when the professor of my graduate seminar in

Every major liberal newspaper in America condemned Israel's 1981 destruction of Saddam Hussein's nuclear reactor (in which one person — a French agent there to aid the Israeli bombers, and who therefore knowingly risked his life — was killed). As The New York Times editorialized: "Israel's sneak attack ... was an act of inexcusable and short-sighted aggression."

Most Democrats in Congress even opposed the first Gulf War, sanctioned by the United Nations and international law, against Saddam Hussein's Iraq and its bloody annexation of Kuwait.

And today, the liberal and Democratic world's only concern with regard to Iraq, where America is engaged in the greatest current battle against organized evil, is how soon America can withdraw.

There were an even larger number of domestic issues that alienated this erstwhile liberal and Democrat. But nothing quite compares with liberal and progressive abandonment of the war against evil, the most important venture the human race must engage in every generation.

I can understand why a leftist would vote for the party not one of whose contenders for the presidency uttered the words "Islamic terror" in a single presidential debate. But I still cannot understand why a true liberal would.



Dennis Prager hosts a nationally syndicated radio talk show based in Los Angeles. He is the author of four books, most recently "Happiness Is a Serious Problem" (Harper Collins). His Web site is www.prager-radio.com. COPYRIGHT 2008 CREATORS SYNDICATE, INC.

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unpopular decision to fight another war just a few years after World War II — the war against Chinese and Korean Communists. It was Democrats — John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson — who also led the war against Chinese and Vietnamese Communists.

Then Vietnam occurred, and Democrats and liberals (in academia, labor and the media) abandoned that war and abandoned millions of Asians to totalitarianism and death, defamed America's military, became anti-war instead of anti-evil, became anti-anti-Communist instead of anti-Communist, and embraced isolationism, a doctrine I and others previously had always associated with conservatives and the Republican Party.

This change was perfectly exemplified in 1972, when the Democratic presidential nominee George McGovern ran on the platform "Come home, America."

advanced Communist Studies, Zbigniew Brzezinski, chided me for using the word "totalitarian" to describe the Soviet Union.

I recall, too, asking the late eminent liberal historian Arthur Schlesinger, in a public forum in Los Angeles in the late 1970s, if he would say that America was, all things considered, a better, i.e., more moral, society than Soviet society. He said he would not.

It was therefore not surprising, only depressingly reinforcing of my view of what had happened to liberals, when liberals and Democrats condemned President Ronald Reagan for describing the Soviet Union as an "evil empire."

Identifying and confronting evil remains the Achilles' heel of liberals, progressives and the rest of the left. It was not only Communism that post-Vietnam liberals refused to identify as evil and forcefully confront.

The Economics of College

Thomas Sowell

SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

A front-page headline in the New York Times captures much of the economic confusion of our time: "Fewer Options Open to Pay for Costs of College."

The whole article is about the increased costs of college, the difficulties parents have in paying those costs, and the difficulties that both students and parents have in trying to borrow the money needed when their current incomes will not cover college costs.

All that is fine for a purely "human interest" story. But making economic policies on the basis of human interest stories - which is what politicians increasingly do, especially in election years - has a big down side for those people who do not happen to be in the categories chosen to write human interest stories about.

The general thrust of human interest stories about people with economic problems, whether they are college students or people faced with mortgage foreclosures, is that the government ought to come to their rescue, presumably because the government has so much money and these individuals have so little.

Like most "deep pockets," however, the government's deep pockets come from vast numbers of people with much shallower pockets. In many cases, the

average taxpayer has lower income than the people on whom the government lavishes its financial favors.

The general thrust of human interest stories about people with economic problems, ... is that the government ought to come to their rescue, presumably because the government has so much money and these individuals have so little.

Costs are not just things for government to help people to pay. Costs are telling us something that is dangerous to ignore.

The inadequacy of resources to produce everything that everyone wants is the fundamental fact of life in every economy - capitalist, socialist or feudal. This means that the real cost of anything consists of all the other things that could have been produced with those same resources.

Building a bridge means using up resources that could have been used building homes or a hospital. Going to college means using up vast amounts of resources that could be used for all sorts of other things.

Prices force people to economize. Subsidizing prices enables people to take more resources away from other uses without having to weigh the real cost. Without market prices that convey the real costs of resources denied to

alternative users, people waste. That was the basic reason why Soviet industries used more electricity than American industries to produce a smaller output than American industries produced.

That is why they used more steel and cement to produce less than Japan or

Germany produced when making things that required steel and cement.

When you pay the full cost — that is, the full value of the resources in alternative uses — you tend to economize. When you pay less than that, you tend to waste.

Whether someone goes to college at all, what kind of college, and whether they remain on campus to do postgraduate work, are all questions about how much of the resources that other people want are to be taken away and used by those on whom we have arbitrarily focused in human interest stories.

This is not just a question about robbing Peter to pay Paul. The whole society's standard of living is lower when resources are shifted from higher valued uses to lower valued uses and wasted by those who are subsidized or otherwise allowed to pay less.

The fact that the Soviet economic system allowed industries to use resources wastefully meant that the price was paid not in money but in a far lower standard of living for the Soviet people than the available technology and resources were capable of producing.

The Soviet Union was one of the world's most richly endowed nations in natural resources — if not the most richly endowed. Yet many of its people lived almost as if they were in the Third World.

How many people would go to college if they had to pay the real cost of all the resources taken from other parts of the economy?

Probably a lot fewer people.

Moreover, when paying their own money, there would probably not be nearly as many people parting with hard cash to study feel-good subjects with rap sessions instead of serious study.

There would probably be fewer people lingering on campus for the social scene or as a refuge from adult responsibilities in the real world.



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Pigging out on your money

Big Surprise: Tax Hogs Fear Loss of State Income Tax!

Dr. Charles Ormsby
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Most parents are watchful of the company their children keep. If you hang out with a questionable crowd, your character and morals will be in doubt.

Hang out with druggies or thieves and your involvement with drugs or your respect for property rights will be suspect.

I've been the focus of such doubts myself on two occasions.

First, since I went to college in the late sixties and early seventies (spending four years at Cornell, the "Berkeley of the East," and then five years in liberal Cambridge), it is often presumed that I must have experimented with illicit drugs. While that presumption would be false, it is understandable.

Now it is happening again. I must confess that I have been spending an inordinate amount of time with ... I'm ashamed to admit this ... the "village people." You know what I'm referring to: big-government types.

Of course, being from Taxachusetts we are all accused of being tax-and-spend liberals when we encounter people from states south of Washington, D.C. or more than a few hundred miles from the ocean.

"Oh, you're from Massachusetts," they say as they clutch their wallets, back away and look at you like you are a leper. If you are from Massachusetts, you are guilty; case closed.

So I guess I shouldn't be surprised when I hear complaints from local citizens that the North Andover School Committee (of which I am a member) has done this or that, with the assumption that its members are a monolithic, single-brained, five-headed monster.

Unfortunately, fulfilling my duties as a School Committee member requires me to mingle with the village people on a regular basis.

This wouldn't be so bad if they shared a diversity of opinions, but instead they seem to embrace a single ideological perspective: Growing the size of government and increasing our taxes is always desirable. Never, ever, reduce tax revenues or government programs!

A recent meeting at North Andover's Middle School organized by our legislators and supported by our town officials provides a prime example.

The meeting was purportedly arranged to give citizens an update on the generosity of our state government and to permit local officials to genuflect to the

extraordinary efforts, wisdom and kindness of our legislative delegation.

Even by Massachusetts' standards, this was a one-sided affair; a contest with just one contestant; a super bowl with just one team on the field.

Have you ever heard anyone begin a story with, "There are two kinds of people ..."? Well, they were right. You can guess what these two "kinds" are.

With a few exceptions including a senior citizen who came to complain about the Legislature squandering taxpayers' money by handing out undeserved pensions (three cheers for her!), the meeting was dominated by one kind.

Given that our citizenry is pretty diverse politically, why were the views of those attending this meeting so one-sided? What gave rise to this preponderance of a single ideological perspective?

I could begin answering this question by referencing the concentration of flies around a certain substance dropped by farm animals ... actually, I think I will.

Flies go where they need to, to get what they want. They swarm around warm smelly stuff that they like and which the animals no longer have a use for. While their culinary choice may be disgusting, they are at least morally accountable since they don't take anything the original owner seeks to keep.

But other insects are not so respectful of the barnyard animals. They are equipped with devices designed to administer local anesthesia and then drain the lifeblood from animals that would prefer to keep the blood for themselves.

If these insects were people, their thievery would be contemptible.

With the exceptions noted earlier, it appears that those who attended this meeting have one thing in common. They are all net consumers of your tax dollars; i.e., they receive more in payments, goods and services from the government than they pay in taxes. They and their families personally benefit from higher taxes and their lives would be diminished if our tax burden were reduced.

While there was considerable oratory at this meeting regarding the great benefits of government spending, no attendees thought to acknowledge their shared conflict of interest.

After the initial pontification period ended, the time came for questions from the audience.

Amazingly, one gentleman went to the microphone and decried the lack of state aid to the city of Lawrence whose annual budget is supported with \$140 million annually from the state; not to mention being given a new high school costing the state well over \$100 million with essentially no contribution coming from Lawrence residents. He concluded with a plea for greater social justice!

Then North Andover United (NAU) took over the microphone. NAU, in case you are unaware, is the group that pretends to be a neutral arbiter of tax and spend issues but which campaigns full time for increased government services requiring, you guessed it, HIGHER taxes!

I thought I'd heard softball questions before, but NAU's doe-eyed pleading for reassurance from our legislators should be nominated for the softball hall of fame.

A leader of NAU asked (I'm paraphrasing), "Do you think it would be good if the taxpayers of Massachusetts eliminated the income tax thus requiring you to reduce state spending?"

Oh my GOD! You would think that Armageddon was at hand.

Reduce government spending? Disaster! Even the great depression would be a welcome alternative.

I was waiting for someone to cry, "Give us more taxes or give us death!"

These people, as they say, need to get a grip. If the income tax is eliminated in Massachusetts, the total of our state and local taxes, on a per capita basis, will merely drop to just above the level that currently exists in New Hampshire – the fastest growing state in New England.

Here are the current state and local per capita tax burdens in New Hampshire and Massachusetts (from the U. S. Department of Commerce and the Census Bureau):

- * Massachusetts: \$5,203
- * New Hampshire: \$3,321
- * Difference: \$1,882 more in Massachusetts for every man, woman and child.

When you multiply this difference by Massachusetts' state population, you get over \$12 billion, which is more than the projected reduction in tax revenues if the state income tax is eliminated.

But the argument for eliminating the income tax is not merely that it won't do harm. It is that it will lead to tremendous growth in the state's economy, create a multitude of jobs, and ensure a better standard of living for our citizens.



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN
Dr. Charles Ormsby of the North Andover School Committee

Why? Because, a dollar you earn will be spent wisely by you; whereas that same dollar, taken from you and spent by a government agency, will often be squandered or used to enrich public sector employees beyond what they could have earned in the private sector.

Check out the income taxes you paid to Massachusetts last year. How much better off would you be if you could keep those earnings year after year? Would you be able to save more and be more secure? Would you have more job opportunities as businesses moved into Massachusetts and prospered? Would Massachusetts begin to grow again instead of standing out as one of the few states losing population?

Remember the barnyard animals that keep having their blood drained by the insect swarm. If you reduce the flow of blood to the insects, they will protest vehemently ... but the animals will regain their health and will live longer, more robust, and happier lives.

Now for the important question: Are you one of those having the life sucked out of you, or are you one of those living off the lifeblood of others?

Ignore the protests of the village people. The sky will not fall, but a heavy burden will be lifted from your shoulders.

If you are tired of your earnings being sucked dry to support a ruling class of ravenous public employees and special interests, STAND UP for yourself and your family by supporting the initiative to END THE INCOME TAX .

Visit www.smallgovernmentact.org and offer to help out in any way you can.



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



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School principal responds to Valley Patriot story on internet death threats

Tom Duggan

VALLEY PATRIOT REPORTER

Last month The Valley Patriot reported a news story on our front page: "Several North Andover Middle School students are being investigated by the North Andover police for personal profiles posted on the AOL Internet service threatening to harm fellow students and naming at least one teacher and a classmate the student pledges to 'kill.'"

One of the students being investigated by North Andover Police lists a profile saying that his "life goal" is to "kill Mr. (X) and (name withheld)" a fellow student. Mr. (X) is a teacher at the North Andover Middle School.

"According to documents, in one on-line profile a student promises '... and one day im gonna kill somebody so bad there mother will know who it was the second they see there sons skin stapled to a tree and there bones burned in a pit fire I made.'"

Three days after the April edition of The Valley Patriot hit the newsstands, Middle School Principal Joan McQuade sent a letter home to parents addressing the story. Her letter states:

"On Thursday, April 4th, a local paper The Valley Patriot, published an article

about students at the North Andover Middle School. The topic was cyber-bullying and threatening. While the paper offered some helpful and logical tips for parents for parents at the end of the article, the headline and allegations written about NAMS' students are concerning to anyone reading the front page."

The letter addressed some parents' concerns that a safety threat currently exists at the school but there was no mention as to what actions, if any, were taken by the police or the school. The letter also did not mention what actions were (or have been) taken to protect the teacher and or students who were threatened by name in the on line chat.

"In this particular situation," principal McQuade's letter continues, "standard protocol was followed. In brief, a few weeks ago a parent brought information to the police regarding cyber-bullying and threatening involving some of our students. Officer Castiglione carried out an extensive investigation and made a determination that the students involved made very poor choices; however, the evidence that she gathered indicated a low threat situation. While this is considered an out of school issue, we chose to involve ourselves in partnership

with the police for the benefit of our families."

Sources at the North Andover Middle School say that the students who made the on-line death threats are still attending the school but that classes have been rearranged to segregate the students who were threatened from those making the threats.

Principal McQuade said that the school and the police do collaborate and that, even though some incidents do not take place in school, NAMS' faculty work closely with police.

"I'd like to take this opportunity to inform our school community about our collaborative relationship with the North Andover Police Department and the process we have in place for communication," the letter states. "Standard procedures in any incident that the police and/or NAMS' administration feels may put student(s) safety at risk, communication is initiated from either the school or police side depending on the circumstances."

"Officer Tracy Castiglione, our school resource officer, spends at minimum one day here weekly and is always available when needed. Our ultimate goal is to assist our students and their families on any issue that could be viewed as a police

or safety matter. Regardless if a situation arises in or outside of school, Officer Castiglione and NAMS' administration attempt to be as proactive as possible with guiding our parents and students towards appropriate solutions."

"In closing, I hope I have alleviated safety concerns by explaining the collaborative partnership we share with the NAPD in order to keep our students safe. NAMS' students, faculty and parents continue to strive to make NAMS' the best teaching and learning environment possible. We are proud of our school and our students. As always, please do not hesitate to call us with comments or questions."

"Students with issues of bullying, whether or not it is by computer, phone or in person are encouraged to talk to a guidance councilor or contact officer Tracy Casitglione at the North Andover Police Department."

For on-line resources on cyber-bullying parents can visit the following websites:

www.onlineteendangers.com

www.Officer.com

www.missingkids.com

For news tips please email us at valleypatriot@aol.com

Middle School students perform Guys & Dolls



PHOTOS: TOM DUGGAN



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Eulogy of Alex Farese, Track Captain for North Andover High School

Paul Murano
UNCLE OF ALEX FARESE

As Alex’s uncle, among the great honors of my life was being asked to be his godfather. Alexander Paul Farese was baptized on July 1st, 1990, and I remember the day. The newborn Alex was squirming so much in his mother’s arms, that the priest kept missing his head with the holy water.

Months later when he learned how to crawl I was truly amazed at how quick and skilled he was as a four-legged sprinter, tearing up the living room rug with his speed and agility. It’s not surprising that 17 years later he would become co-captain of his track team.

But I did not come up here to expound upon all of Alex’s good qualities:

I will not tell you that Alex had great intelligence, although he did;

Or that he was one of the most disciplined people you’ll ever know, although he was;

I am not going to tell you he had a great sense of humor, although he had;

Or that he was a good athlete, good-looking, a near-perfect student, and yet quiet and humble, although he was;

And I’m not going stand here and tell you that he was a great son, a good friend, a loyal teammate, a model grandson, a great cousin, and an awesome nephew; although he was all of those things and more.

The truth is that Alex can not be fully captured in a eulogy. After reading an essay the other day that he had recently written for school, even Alex himself admitted that the mystery of who he was was unfolding in a way that was not always easy to understand. It confirmed

for me something I had always suspected, that being a middle child among six may have been a struggle for Alex in carving out his own independent identity. Despite this he worked very hard, was about to graduate high school near the top of his class, had been accepted to several good colleges, and was about to embark on what seemed to be the beginning of something new, something big, and something life-changing.

So now we ask: Why then did he have to leave us so soon?

In today’s gospel reading Martha said to Jesus in what seems to be an almost accusatory manner: “*Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died*”. After a grueling week of Alex lying there unconscious and clinging to life, with countless people from around the community and around the world praying for his recovery, the temptation for us now is to repeat Martha’s statement; or even worse – to claim that God doesn’t care or that He doesn’t exist. Alex with all of his great potential did not recover, and it just doesn’t seem fair.

But how are we to judge what is fair? Are we the Author of this story we call life, or simply characters on a few of its pages? Without seeing the big picture, how can we possibly understand why some of us leave the story sooner than others and at different stages of life? Only the Author of the novel knows the entire story and sees from His eternal perspective how all the chapters of this great drama fit perfectly together like a beautiful puzzle. Ours is to trust, as St. Paul put it, that *All things work for the good for those that love God*; and that the story we’re all a part of will culminate in the *happily-ever-after* of the resurrection of the dead and life everlasting. The sacred Author assured us of this when *He*



PHOTO: COURTESY

The Farese family of North Andover, left to right, Alex Farese, cousin Sean McSweeney, Alex’s younger brother Louis Farese, cousin Cherise Grifoni, and older brother Damon Farese. Siblings of Alex *not* pictured: Rachel (25), Eric (23), and Gabrielle (15)

became a character in His own novel 2000 years ago, to conquer death and to ask Alex and the rest of us to follow Him into eternal life. One day, if by the grace of God we enter His eternal realm, maybe we’ll be given a glimpse of His vision and see how it all made *perfect* sense, and how Alex’s departure was *perfect* timing.

So instead of being resentful for his passing, we should be grateful for the *gift* of Alex that was given to us for 18 years. No question we will miss him around the campfire in the summer, playing point guard for the Camptrotters, sharing in witty puns with his brothers, being fixated on his computer in the living room, being the teammate and friend he was for so many; and we will certainly miss him around the dinner table at family gatherings - but it’s only temporary.

St. Paul stated in the NT that, if Christ did not rise from the dead, our entire faith is in vain; and if that were the case then this gathering here would be nothing but a lame attempt at feeling good in the face of a senseless tragedy. But conquering death is what Jesus came to do 2000

years ago with His resurrection; and what that means for us here today is one thing: What would have been a *goodbye* is instead just a *see you later*. And it means that Alex finished the race before we did; not surprising for Alex. And it means that he waits for us in the great *happily-ever-after* that we *all* yearn for in our hearts.

Alex, acknowledging this is not a good-bye, we say to you *see you later*, and look forward with anticipation to sitting around the table with you once again, in the eternal house of God, where the joy is complete and the feast never ends.

Please pray for us Alex, as we pray for you, that we may be made worthy of this promise.



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

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ETHICS: from page 23

MRB business, Driscoll used his official position to secure for himself unwarranted privileges of substantial value not properly available to similarly situated individuals. By doing so, Driscoll violated G.L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(2).

By failing to disclose his friendship with MacDonald in connection with the award of the building contract and the decision to hire MacDonald as the facility manager, Driscoll knowingly acted in a manner which would cause a reasonable person, knowing all of the relevant facts, to conclude that MacDonald could improperly influence or unduly enjoy Driscoll’s favor in the performance of Driscoll’s official duties as an MRB member. Thus, Driscoll violated G.L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(3).

“Public employees violate the public trust when they use their positions to benefit themselves or their friends. Public employees who have private friendships that overlap with their public duties need to perform their public duties fairly and objectively and disclose those personal relationships to avoid creating an actual or apparent conflict of interest,” said Executive Director Karen L. Nober. “It also goes without saying that public monies may not be used to reimburse personal expenses.”

valleypatriot.com

PUPPY LOVE!

Salem Animal Rescue League needs volunteers

Kate Whitney

VALLEY PATRIOT CONTRIBUTOR

A few weeks ago, I received an email from a woman named Pat Blodgett. Pat is a volunteer at the Salem Animal Rescue League (SARL) in New Hampshire. She said that she enjoys my articles in The Valley Patriot and wanted to know if I would write about some of the upcoming events at SARL.

She was quick to let me know that SARL is not affiliated with the MSPCA at Nevins Farm, although they are located near each other (apparently people tend to confuse the two shelters).

SARL serves 18 communities in southern NH and the Merrimack Valley of Massachusetts. The shelter that started in 1992 and offers a variety of programs, now takes in and adopts out close to 700 animals a year.

I was surprised to learn about all the programs and events this shelter sponsors. I know I'm guilty of thinking that a shelter is just a place where stray

introduced me to every animal, staff member, and volunteer on site at the time of my visit. She told me about the programs the shelter offers and also about all the wonderfully exciting upcoming events.

SARL works in collaboration with the animal control officer in Salem, NH. If a stray dog or cat is found, they are brought to the shelter. If the pet's owner does not claim the animal within the allotted amount of time, the animal is then seen by the vet in the on-site clinic and then put up for adoption. SARL offers quality care for all the dogs and cats that come into the shelter.

I was also impressed by the shelter's high adoption rate of 99.9%. This is absolutely fantastic! Another wonderful fact about this shelter is that it falls into a "No-Kill" category. The shelter would never euthanize an animal due to a lack of space.

Many shelters today are "Kill Shelters" which means that an animal is given an allotted amount of time to be at the

SARL also recognized the current foreclosure problem and arranged a program to take in pets and keep them safe until the family can find a new place to live. The "Military Deployment" program offers help to the wonderful, brave people who are involved in the military.

The reason I am so impressed with these different programs is because this shelter recognized needs within the community and developed a plan to help. We need to remember that in a life changing event, we can't just forget about our pets!

Some of you might like to know what you can do to help. Because SARL is 97% volunteer, they are always looking for generous people to lend their time and skills. Everyone out there could be of use to the shelter. They need people to work on special events, clean the cages, help with fundraising, groom the animals, work as an adoption counselor, walk the dogs, play with the dogs and cats to help socialize them, and help with gardening and carpentry.

They are also in desperate need of foster homes for both dogs and cats. As some of you already know, I started out fostering and have since adopted two beautiful dogs. So I speak from experience when I say how rewarding fostering can be. Be sure to check out the website and take a look at the upcoming events calendar. There are so many wonderful events coming up.

What's better than having fun and helping homeless dogs and cats? All proceeds from these events go directly to helping the animals. Be sure to read about **Dogfest, Paws on the Runway, and Fore Paws Golf Tournament.**

One ongoing event that is really great is **Pennies For Pups**. Organize a penny drive at your office, school, church, or wherever and watch those pennies add up! Anyone who might be able to donate a gift basket or any goods for the silent auctions, please contact the shelter. Most needed right now are supporters.

If you can't donate money or goods, just donate your time and show your support. I encourage all of you to attend as many events as you can and bring your dogs to the dog friendly ones! The shelter is in the process of revamping the premises.

Anyone who might be able to donate plants, trees, or bushes, please call the shelter. To view a complete list of items needed, please visit the website.

I want to also mention a live, monthly television show that Valorie Hayes hosts, called "Time for Animals."



PHOTO: COURTESY

Boxford resident Kate Whitney holds Honey, a puppy she took in temporarily as a foster parent. Honey is a golden retriever/lab mix.

This show highlights the animals at the shelter, features a veterinarian who gives helpful advice, and also gives tips from trainers. Call your local cable company and request that it be shown in your community.

Lastly, I want to share something that almost brought tears to my eyes (in a good way). At the shelter, I met a little 6 year old boy named Ben Plumley. He was there with his mom and his friends, Tim and Kaitlyn Bedard with their mom. Inspired by his 8 year old sister Aislinn's donation, in lieu of gifts, Ben collected donations from his friends and brought a check for \$175 to the shelter.

Ben's mother said that now many of Ben's classmates and friends are following in Ben's footsteps and making donations instead of collecting toys for their birthdays. I was so impressed by this act of giving I just had to share it with all of you. Maybe it will inspire some of you to reach out and donate. If 6 year old Ben can do it, so can you.

For more information, visit the website, www.sarl-nh.org or contact the shelter at 603-890-2166 or info@sarl-nh.org. Please bring donations to the shelter: 4 SARL Drive, Salem, NH. (if you use mapquest, use the street: 344 South Broadway). And as always, you can contact me, KAHW313@aol.com



If you are interested in adopting a puppy or becoming a foster parent to a puppy waiting for a home you can email Kate at Kwswingrite@aol.com



PHOTO: COURTESY

dogs and cats are housed until they are adopted. After visiting SARL, I quickly learned that this just isn't the case.

There is so much that goes on behind the scenes and so many hard working, dedicated people that allow this shelter to function.

When I arrived at the shelter, I was greeted by the shelter's Director of Media Relations, Valorie Hayes. Mrs. Hayes gave me a tour of the shelter and

shelter. If the animal is not adopted, it would then be destroyed. This is NOT the case at SARL, however. Every animal is given a chance which, I think, is very impressive.

I want to briefly touch on a few of the wonderful programs this shelter offers. "Meals on Wheels" is a program to help seniors with pets. "Safe Home, Safe Pet" helps people and animals in domestic violence situations.

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HAVERHILL ON THE MOVE

From the desk of Haverhill Mayor Jim Fiorentini

Mayor promotes Borden to Fire Chief, makes two other promotions

HAVERHILL- Mayor James J. Fiorentini appointed Richard B. Borden as Chief of the City of Haverhill Fire Department last month. Mr. Borden has been serving as acting chief for two and half years.

Mayor Fiorentini also promoted Robert Irvine to the position of Lieutenant in the Haverhill Fire Department. He also promoted Lt. Paul Weinburgh to the position of Temporary Captain. All three men were the top finishers on the civil service examination for their respective positions.

"Today I am pleased to announce that I am appointing Richard Borden from Acting Fire Chief to Fire Chief for the city of Haverhill," announced Mayor Fiorentini. "Mr. Borden was unanimously recommended by the retired fire chiefs on our Fire Department Selection Committee. He was twice the top finisher on the civil service examination for fire

chief. He has been the acting chief of two and a half years and during that period he has done the job, and done it well," added Mayor Fiorentini.

"I look forward with confidence to continuing to work with Chief Borden to improve fire safety in the city. He is completely dedicated to our fire department, and his promotion adds needed stability to our department.

Chief Borden stated: "I am looking forward to serving the citizens of Haverhill and the fire department to make our excellent fire department even better."

"These promotions bring us back to the number of captains and lieutenants we have in our complement," noted Mayor Fiorentini. "We are hopeful that these promotions will lead to a new day in the fire department and help to promote harmony within the department."

"We were grateful to have two excellent candidates for Fire Chief. Our interview committee felt unanimously that both of them would be excellent chiefs but unanimously recommended that I go with the top finisher on the test," stated the Mayor.

Borden has served as Haverhill's Acting Fire Chief since 2005. He was first appointed to the Haverhill Fire Department in 1983, becoming a company officer as a Lieutenant in 1987. He rose to the rank of Deputy Chief in 1994 and served as Training Officer. In

1999, Borden was assigned to the On-duty Deputy Chief position.

Chief Borden has studied at the Massachusetts Fire Academy and the National Fire Academy. He is also working on an Associates Degree in Fire Science from North Shore Community College, along with other training.

Borden follows in the footsteps of his father, Richard H. Borden who was Fire Chief in Haverhill from 1986 to 1999.

The Mayor thanked the members of the Fire Chief Selection Committee, former Haverhill Fire Chief John Hamel and former Lawrence Fire Chief Joseph Marquis.

"This Selection Committee dedicated many hours to the process and I thank them for their work elaborated Mayor Fiorentini. "I look forward to working with Chief Borden to protect the residents of this City." Chief Borden's appointment took effect immediately. His swearing-in ceremony will be Tuesday, May 6.

Governor Patrick and Rep. Dempsey Come Through for Haverhill!

Haverhill got more great news this past month when State Representative Brian Dempsey announced that he has secured an additional \$2.4 million for us in State aid as relief for the Hale debt.

This brings a total of \$9 million in State aid that the city has obtained over the years for the Hale debt. This is \$1.4 million more than the amount recommended by Governor Patrick as Hale debt relief. We are thrilled with this great news for our city! I'll have more news on how this money will help us with the budget in coming weeks. Keep checking The Valley Patriot website at

valleypatriot.com for more detailed information.

Mayor Announces First Phase of Street Paving List for 2008

Mayor James J. Fiorentini and Director of Public Works Michael Stankovich today announced the list of city streets that are scheduling for repaving in 2008. These streets were on the list submitted to the Massachusetts Highway Department for Chapter 90 (state funding) approval.

The first group of streets approved are as follows:

Hyatt Avenue, Edgewood Ave, Eastern Ave, Glenwood Circle, Wedgewood Drive, Amesbury Line Road, Old Amesbury Line Road, Merrimack Road, Inland Street, Plaistow Road, South Crystal Street, Washington Avenue, North Main Street, and Booth Street.

The Mayor said that more streets will be approved and a second list submitted later.

"This is all part of our effort for better customer service. We are working hard to keep the streets in better condition" noted the Mayor.

In addition to this City-funded work through the Commonwealth's Chapter 90 program, roadwork improvement and repaving is expected for River Street/Route 110 from Maxwell Street to the Methuen line. This project is State-funded.



Jim Fiorentini is the mayor of Haverhill and is serving his third consecutive term. You can email him at Jimfior@aol.com

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Straight From Boston's North End

Haverhill Police Chief swears in Junior Police Officers

HAVERHILL – Haverhill is about to become a safer city! Chief of Police Alan DeNaro swore in almost 800 members of the Junior Police force on April 30th at Silver Hill School. The Junior Police program sponsored by the Exchange Club of Haverhill is facilitated in cooperation with two detectives from the Haverhill Police force, Ozzy Hardy and Jack Moses.

Each year the service club and detectives host two classroom sessions to every third grade class throughout the city of Haverhill, including Sacred Hearts, St. Joe's and the Hillview Montessori School. Detectives Hardy and Moses work with the students on safety issues and help them identify potentially unsafe situations in their environment. The Exchange Club provides an activity book that also features a fingerprinting section. Each student is fingerprinted, and their families have the book as a record of their child's fingerprints. Major sponsor of the program is Trinity EMS.

"We are very proud of this program," said Officer Karen Currier, who is also an Exchange Club member and Co-Chair of the Junior Police Program. "Our volunteers work with the police department to bring this important program to all the third graders throughout the city. The kids love it and

it offers them an open line of communication with the police officers."

Students have an opportunity during the classroom sessions to ask questions. Both Hardy and Moses emphasize that the most important tool a police officer carries is a pencil, not a gun.

"A pencil is the most important tool because our job is to get information. The information we obtain about a crime helps us to solve it," said Moses to the students at the assembly. "It is far more important than a gun."

After all of the classroom sessions are completed, an assembly is scheduled for the 'swearing in' ceremony for the new Junior Police officers. Silver Hill School hosted the 800 person assembly, and Chief Alan DeNaro had an opportunity to speak with the kids before swearing them in.

"We are so proud of how hard you've worked to become our newest recruits of Junior Police Officers," DeNaro said to the students as they held their right hands up for the ceremonial swearing in. "You will help to keep our community safe and we know we can count on you making good decisions."

Following the ceremony students had an opportunity to walk through the Haverhill Police Command Center as well as a Trinity ambulance.



PHOTO: COURTESY

The Junior Police program that the Exchange Club of Haverhill developed has been used as a national model for Exchange Clubs across the country.

"Third grade is a perfect age for introducing this type of program," said Sam Ambra, Exchange Club member who has been working on the program for well over a decade. "The kids are really interested in learning about the work a police officer does, and they have a lot of questions. We also have a lot of support from community businesses who purchase advertisements in our activity book, and Trinity EMS has been the major sponsor of the event for the last several years."

The Exchange Club of Haverhill is a non-profit service club dedicated to the prevention of child abuse. The club is made of approximately 50 volunteers from throughout the Greater Haverhill community, and meets weekly at noon on Thursdays at Olivia's in Haverhill. The club hosts several nationally recognized programs such as the Junior Police program, Fire Prevention, Read Across America, Trees for Tots and supports many local programs for child abuse prevention. For more information on the Exchange Club of Haverhill, or if you are interested in becoming a member please contact membership chair Ron Carpenito at 978-521-5721 or visit www.haverhillexchangeclub.com

EDUCATING OUR KIDS

The truth about Lawrence’s school violence “problem”

Peter Larocque
LAWRENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

There’s been lots of attention in the daily newspaper given to school violence recently, including an e-mail message sent to many past and elected officials in Lawrence. This same e-mail message was reprinted in a local bilingual newspaper with the title, “The Truth about School Violence”. The author is a self-proclaimed whistleblower, who acts like a savior of the City of Lawrence and someone who is exposing corruption which public officials are willing to overlook. In the message, the author states that several violent incidents have taken place in and around Lawrence Public Schools.

The purpose of this article is not to deny or confirm that these particular incidents have taken place, but to answer the accusations that our city officials are made up of cowards and sell-outs, who look the other way, and places the blame for these violent incidents at the feet of the Superintendent of Schools in the City of Lawrence as well as the Lawrence School Committee who allow him to talk his way out of situations that he is confronted with.

Also the title of the message, “The Truth about School Violence,” is erroneous and is VERY far from the Truth!

The Lawrence Public Schools not only fight day after day for the education of

the children of Lawrence, but also for the very souls of these children, many of whom lack the parental oversight that they are crying out for.

It is a known fact across this wonderful country that we are in a moral and spiritual fight for the very lives of our children. So, time and time again the Lawrence school faculty and staff have to take on the oversight that parents should be providing at home. But let me assure you this is not just a Lawrence problem. Just look at some of the news from other school districts.

Third-graders from Waycross, Georgia, attempted to do bodily harm to their teacher because the teacher stopped one of them from standing on a chair. A whole plan was thought out by the three third-graders who were arrested for this conspiracy - a plan by eight, nine, and ten year-olds to do physical harm to a teacher. In this Georgia case, school officials found a knife, duct tape, handcuffs, and a heavy paperweight in one of their backpacks. In another school district, fifth-graders were caught putting an overdose of Tylenol in their teacher’s coffee to make their teacher physically ill, all because their teacher disciplined them.

A 20-year old in Homestead, Florida, caught with a weapons cache that included four AK-47 machine guns, 13 firearms in all and more than 5,000 rounds of ammunition, (some that could have pierced police armor), with 100



View from school video cameras inside Columbine High School show students with machine guns causing real school violence.

rounds in a feeding clip with bullets meant to take down aircraft or military machinery. This was all in an effort to undertake a Virginia Tech-style massacre, which the young man posted in a message on the Internet.

North Andover, Methuen, and Haverhill Public Schools, along with Central Catholic, have all had students allegedly making so-called “hit lists.” So anyone with a good sense of reality gets the point that school violence is not just

happening in the Lawrence Public Schools. Given all of this, I find it hard to believe that a video educating teachers, staff and some students on why we do not allow shirts to be tucked in, is in my humbled opinion, not inappropriate at all!

When I was in high school back in the 1970’s, fights between high school students were happening all the time, and they are still happening today. It was

SCHOOL VIOLENCE, page 37

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Marinated grilled chicken with Feta, romaine lettuce

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Chicken in lemon wine sauce with mushrooms, garlic, capers & sliced lemon with ziti

Veal Picatta.....\$9.95

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PAYING ATTENTION! WITH TOM DUGGAN

It's time to stand up and help those who are here *legally*

Sal Lupoli teams up with City of Lawrence to ease the process and clear the pathway to becoming a United States citizen

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT EDITOR

While the politicians and the American people debate about what to do with illegal immigrants and whether or not to give them a pathway to citizenship, nobody seems to be doing anything to help the people who followed the law, did the right thing and are having a difficult time navigating the maze of government red tape and confusing legal requirements to become a citizen legally ... that is until now.

Sal Lupoli from Sal's Riverwalk and Lawrence Mayor Michael Sullivan have come up with a plan to assist *legal* immigrants by streamlining the process and making it easier for them to become citizens of the United States.

"We are not talking about a program to take illegal immigrants and bring them through the process," Lupoli said at a press conference last month. "We are talking about legal immigrants who are working and want to stay and lead productive lives in the city of Lawrence and in the United States of America."

Lupoli said that the pilot program will help ten employees who are in the country legally, by providing one-on-one help with cumbersome and confusing legal documents, translation services, English as a Second Language classes, enrolling them in other educational classes required for citizenship, and easing the burden associated with becoming a citizen of the United States.

A reward, if you will, for doing the right thing.

Without realizing it, Sal Lupoli and Mayor Sullivan have touched on something that, if successful, will have national implications far beyond helping a few workers become U.S. citizens.

By paying attention to the needs of legal immigrants and streamlining the process for them in a private-public partnership at the local level, they've cleared a hurdle that creates a new incentive for people to follow the law and come here legally.

And, if this pilot program is successful, the Lupoli/Sullivan team will be contributing something else: clarity on the national stage where it is desperately needed.

As the rhetoric about illegals has intensified over the last several years, those who favor border enforcement and deporting illegals have been cleverly labeled "anti-immigrant."

It's a label that has been very effective in distorting the issue and clouding the debate. And it has resonated among immigrants who are being told that the American people do not want them here.

By its very existence, this new immigrant assistance program will show new immigrants that, as long as they are willing to go through the process, we are willing to help them through it.

It will show those who have been here and fallen for the propaganda that they



Jessica Todisco and Susan Leger Ferarro with Joe Bevelacqua of the Chamber of Commerce and Lawrence Mayor Michael Sullivan have all teamed up to make the immigration assistance program possible. Inset, Ralph Carerro and Sal Lupoli shortly after the press conference.

are not wanted, that America is a nation that loves immigrants no matter where they come from ... as long as they come here legally.

We are even willing to help them through the process, as well as trying to make the process easier. Well, at least Sal Lupoli and Mayor Sullivan will, for now.

As someone who has always been staunchly pro-immigrant, I applaud Mayor Sullivan and Sal Lupoli as well as Ralph Carerro, and the rest of the team assembled to work on this problem.

Their program shows that determination and effort can solve any problem as long as there are those who are serious about clearly defining what the problem is, and then doing what it takes to get it done.

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



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Reinventing the American High School

Wilfredo T. Laboy

SUPERINTENDENT, LAWRENCE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

When is a passing score actually a failing score? Answer: When the test measures factors that are irrelevant—or at least insufficient—in assessing a desired outcome.

If we're truly measuring proficiency in our schools, we must first examine what it takes for our students to be successful in today's world. Otherwise, we have set a standard for mediocrity, and base our ideals of proficiency and success on an antiquated notion of our society and world economy.

Our nation's educational model dates back more than a century-and-a-half. Based on an agricultural calendar, high schools were designed to send graduating students to the fields or to the factories. At the time, this model was effective in preparing young people to enter into a mainly industrial and agricultural workforce. The basic concepts of reading, writing and arithmetic were all that were needed in those days, and the educational model worked.

Fast-forward to 2008. Our world is vastly different in almost every aspect. Science, technology, medicine, international politics, art and music, and media have all undergone advancements, discoveries, paradigm shifts that likely would have boggled the mind 150 years ago. Almost every job and every employer demands that employees can operate in the "information-age" and have the cognitive and problem-solving skills that businesses and organizations succeed.

A new global economy brings competition of skilled laborers from nations around the globe. With such dramatic shifts in our economy and society, why then has the model upon which we operate, evaluate, and manage our high schools remained almost the same for more than a century?

I believe the basic foundation of our nation's high schools is outdated and obsolete. Our measures of proficiency are only an indicator of meeting a century-old standard of success. Most of our nation's schools are devoid of rigor, particularly in the later high school years. Students are expected to learn content that is a mile wide and an inch deep, rather than focus their studies on rigorous pre-college or career-oriented coursework.

By adhering to those old ideas and standards, the result is that students lack the subset of skills that are necessary to compete for admission into the college of their choice and are unable to compete in a global economy.

According to a study by the Massachusetts Division of Unemployment Assistance, it's estimated that between the years 2000 and 2010, our state's economy will have produced more than 300,000 new jobs, with half of those jobs requiring at least a bachelor's degree. However, according to a study sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, barely a third of our nation's high school graduates had completed the coursework necessary for admission into a college or university.

That same study found that in Massachusetts, those numbers fell to 29 percent for African-American students

and 14 percent for Hispanic students. Furthermore, the study also found that one out of every four students in Massachusetts drops out of school. Among African-Americans and Hispanics, the drop-out rate climbed to 41 and 54 percent, respectively.

As tragic as these numbers are, it's no surprise that high school students are disengaged, disenchanted and disinterested in school. Our instructional strategies are designed in a manner that is irrelevant to students' lives. Simple reading, writing, and arithmetic may still be core skills, but if presented in the abstract and devoid of real-world relevance, they leave students disconnected with the concepts.

Federal and State officials have been calling for education reform for years. But, as much as university scholars and so-called education industry experts talk about making lesson content relevant, the very structure and delivery of this content is completely counterintuitive to how students and adults process and learn information.

When you consider the old educational model, it's easy to understand why so many students are ill-prepared for college. Our schools are not designed to help students develop the analytical, reasoning, and problem solving skills necessary to succeed in a career-oriented, university environment.

Innovation requires that we abandon our reliance on an old model. Innovation requires that we embrace something new, foreign, and perhaps at first, cumbersome and frustrating. Changing a paradigm is not easy, as we are all creatures of habit. But I submit to you that it is this same habitual nature that has lulled us into complacency and into a state of obsolescence in our schools.

Our schools need to be places that stimulate and challenge students. The instructional day must be restructured, teaching must stress students' mastery of the content, schools must be smaller, and learning must be project based. We need to bring skills, concepts and data into a setting that is relevant and actionable for these young people. We need to fan the flames of their interests and passions, and help them use their time in high school as a catalyst and an accelerator for their future career success.

Making lesson content relevant and interesting has been a topic of school reform for many years. Helping students prepare for future careers is something to which every dedicated educator aspires. However, the very conduit for delivering these skills remains its greatest impediment to achieving those goals.

The basic foundation and structure of the American high school is obsolete. And to break free of this antiquated model, it means moving ahead with the courage and the vision to reinvent high school education. Retrofitting the old model will not suffice. We have 150 years of evidence that supports this idea.

Innovation requires that we abandon our reliance on an old model. Innovation requires that we embrace something new, foreign, and perhaps at first, cumbersome and frustrating. Changing a paradigm is not easy, as we are all creatures of habit. But I submit to you that it is this same habitual nature that has lulled us into



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

The newly opened \$110 Million Lawrence High School

complacency and into a state of obsolescence in our schools. Because we, as a nation, have been unwilling to break old habits and step out of our comfort zones, we have settled into an educational model that is sadly outdated and inadequate.

Lawrence Public Schools has made a bold and dramatic shift. We are one of a small number of high schools in the country to embrace an academy-focused high school model. Also known as Small

Already, we have begun to feel the pain associated with abandoning certain processes, policies and traditions.

I have sat in numerous school committee meetings listening to the complaints and petitions of community members regarding things such as school uniforms, course and elective selections, and other matters associated with dividing a 3,000-person student body into six smaller academies located on one campus.

I take every one of these comments to heart, and consider such feedback as an important component in our efforts to refine and reinvent our high school. However, this process has just begun.

We will continue to refine our approach in instruction, assessment, mentoring, and overall administration management. This is a new model and a new paradigm, and few districts have had the courage to forge ahead with an ambitious new direction such as this. Few have made the commitment to honor their students potential as we have.

Unless education is grounded in the concepts, skills, and realities of today's economy, any measure of proficiency—for student and school administrators—is irrelevant. For educators, the measure of proficiency should be an indicator of students' ability to succeed in the outside world. I challenge my colleagues and peers in Lawrence and across the nation to consider what it means to be truly proficient.

While we may face our own challenges in Lawrence in meeting academic achievement levels, I believe that even the most "high performing" schools across the nation have still leave their graduates short-changed in terms of the skills they will need later in life.

As we move forward, this effort requires the patience, support, and involvement of every member of the community. Changes of this magnitude are very difficult and take time. However, I believe we have the opportunity and the ability to create something that truly serves the needs of our children.

We have the opportunity—and the obligation—to create a better educational model for our young people.

You can email Lawrence Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy at wlaboy@lawrence.k12.ma.us

Learning Communities (or SLCs), the model entails creating smaller centers of learning, typically focused on particular areas of interest. Under the direction of our headmaster, Dr. Thomas Sharkey, and our principals of core content instruction and academy principals, we are rearchitecting the framework upon which we will build our instructional strategies.

We are exploring the best ways to integrate technology and professional mentoring into instruction and student development. We are examining the optimal roles and responsibilities of our headmaster, our principals, and our faculty—all centered-on providing the absolute best education for our children.

Focused on the skills and knowledge required in today's society and economy, core content is being taught through the lens of six areas of interest: Business and Finance; Math, Science and Technology; Health and Human Services; Leadership and Humanities; Performing and Fine Arts, and International Studies.

By giving students the opportunity to embrace their interests and career passions, we create opportunities for them to take ownership of their education, to make the content and lessons relevant to their lives, and to participate in a more engaging educational experience.

Reinventing our high school education framework is a complex process, especially given the fact that we are making these changes in real time.

DPW union says City not bargaining in “good faith”

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT EDITOR

Members of Lawrence’s Local 3 Firemen and Oilers Union responded to comments by Lawrence Personnel Director Frank Bonet and Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan regarding the union’s participation in contract negotiations.

In last month’s Valley Patriot, Lawrence’s Personnel Director said it was “a disgrace” for any union to hold the city’s students hostage to achieve their own “selfish demands.”

“I can’t understand why a labor union would use children to gain an advantage in their demands,” Bonet said.

The comments were in response to what Bonet said was a city union threatening to kill a summer jobs program for Lawrence’s young people. A charge that the union says is not true, claiming that comments made at the negotiating table were being “blown out of proportion” by Bonet.

“When we’re behind closed doors everything is supposed to be private until the contract is signed by all parties,” said union member Bernard Hester.

“For him to go to the media and say that stuff was against the accepted rules of union negotiating; not to mention the fact that it wasn’t true.”

“The meeting started off with them saying they were going to bring back summer programs. We just said, ‘we think you need to look into this before you bring on these kids, because we’ve had people laid off and there’s a previous case on this that the union has won.’ It says you can’t hire temporary help unless you first bring back laid off employees,” Hester said.

“It says, ‘the city agrees it will no longer employ temporary workers to perform bargaining work outside the scope of the collective bargaining agreement. All employees will perform work in the scope of the collective bargaining agreement.’”

Shop Stewart Denise Mailloux said she found it “very distressing” to read Mayor Sullivan’s quotes in the

Valley Patriot story where he said, “For someone to think that the city will buckle under threats of bogus grievances and arbitrations better begin to think about how they can assist this city in its goals instead of taking advantages of its children.”

“This article made our union sound so terrible. It made us look like we don’t care about the youth of the city and that’s so terribly wrong,” she said.

“Listen, we love those kids,” Hester continued.

“I was in charge of those kids. It was extra work that I took on myself to work with those kids. I did their paperwork, I was their supervisor, I met with their counselors, I never got a stipend like some of the other employees in the city who get extra stipends for doing extra wok. So, when they say we don’t care about the city or the kids in this city they are wrong, we care about the kids...”

“But we also need our laid off employees back,” Mailloux added. “It’s not that we don’t want to cooperate. That is so far from the truth. It’s just that, right is right and wrong is wrong. And the fact that we are the bad guys here while they’re breaking a contract that the mayor signed, is just not right.”

“It’s not only with us though,” Hester added. “It’s the Foreman’s Union and the Public Property Union. They’re taking things away that are in a signed contract and they just don’t care. With the vehicle gas allotment, Mr. Andrews (City Budget and Finance Director) decided that he was going to stop paying them unless they singed a contract that says that we can go back to a biweekly payroll. You can’t just take away something in a contract and then offer it back if we give up something else in a contract.”

Mailloux says the Local 3 union has been without a contract for two years.

“The workforce down here has always suffered when the city has been in a financial crisis. Now they are going to the media and making, what I feel, are very unfair and untrue comments about our union. It’s distressing how we’re treated,” she said.



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN
Lawrence DPW workers and shop stewards from Local 3 Bernard Hester, Denise Mailloux and Ricky Rivera

Hester said that it would have been irresponsible not to remind the city of previous court cases that could be used by a laid off union member to file a grievance.

“We know there is court case there and an agreement is in place. We can’t just turn our backs on our employees and pretend it doesn’t exist. They have families, they have kids, and they have mortgages to pay. How would we look if we didn’t do what they elected us to do? They (city officials) led us to believe that once they raised the taxes that everyone was coming back. Now we are hearing nobody is coming back and there could be more layoffs.”

“Yet, they want to give Mark Andrews a \$140,000 job. Where is that money going to come from?” Mailloux asked.

The Firemen & Oilers Local 3 has sixty-four members with four of them currently laid off.

Lawrence Personnel Director Frank Bonet said he stands by his statements that the union was using the summer kids program as a bargaining tool at the contract negotiation table.

“My only hope is that we can move the city forward and people will come together to resolve these issues,” Bonet concluded.

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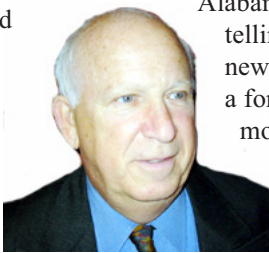
TOM DUGGAN’S NOTEBOOK

“Honoring” poverty pimps

As a big fan of the Lawrence Exchange Club I was not surprised at all to see them put on such an amazing event earlier this year in honor of police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians. And with a stand up guy like Norm Jones at the helm of the Exchange I am always eager to promote events sponsored by the Exchange. So it pains me to be the source of bad publicity for such a fine organization but the fact is they stumbled badly last month when they “honored” Lawrence’s premier poverty pimp Chet Sidel of Lawrence Community Works. With all the people in the Valley who make positive contributions to the city of Lawrence it was really disappointing to see people like Tom Connors of American Training, Norm Jones of Corporate Express, and Sue Mitchell of the Community Action Council overlooked for a man who makes his fortune on the backs of poor people and at the expense of the taxpayers. On an ironic note, Sidel’s partners in crime Wilbur and Armand Hyatt of Lawrence Community Works were “honored” on the same night by the Lawrence Bar Association. You know I really hate to quote former Lawrence Mayor Mary Claire Kennedy but ... this is Lawrence what can you say?

Trib reports Georgetown Water rates ... four weeks later

Last month in the notebook I told you about how Georgetown’s water rates were about to double. And even though we



published the April edition on the 4th, it wasn’t until the 29th of April that the Alabama Tribune got around to telling their readers about the new rates. Next month I expect a font page story about the moon landing. Way to go banjo boys! Great way to stay on the cutting edge of what we here at he Valley Patriot call ... NEWS.

Speaking of Georgetown - The Arrogance of Power

School Committeeman Daryl Barta, a member of the Georgetown 4-H camp directors has taken to displaying political signs on the non-profit organization’s property. Ms. Barta is seeking a position on the board of selectmen. The Valley Patriot has been informed that three signs remain in prominent display at the camp, despite repeated requests for their removal. The Massachusetts 4-H council is now looking into the matter (good luck with that). Ms. Barta’s husband has been seen in past days performing grounds maintenance around the signs, ensuring their high visibility on the non-profit’s property. Ms. Barta, an ardent proponent of tax overrides, had been previously sited with multiple open meeting violations for conducting non-posted, non-documented meetings. All committee members have since been

required to undergo workshop training on the open meeting law following their violations. Now, Ms. Barta has entered yet another realm of abuse of power.

Tripp v. Gleed (Round 3)

With North Andover Town Meeting fast approaching, tempers are beginning to rise and accusations are being thrown around over warrant articles, specifically over the capital improvement (budget) plan or CIP. The Town Manager’s CIP budget includes two big ticket items; a police station and a preschool. Town manager Mark Rees along with the Board of Selectmen believe that the operating budget can support these items without needing a debt exclusion or prop 2 & ½

override. The school committee, spearheaded by Chuck Ormsby supports funding a new preschool within the budget. Sandy Gleed, president of North Andover United has recently sent out an e-mail questioning Selectman Dan Lanen’s public statements about the funding and Rees’ failure to correct him

“It is unfortunate that at the latest Board of Selectmen meeting, Selectman Dan Lanen inaccurately reported on the Finance Committee’s recommendations for both buildings, and the Town Manager neglected to correct him,” Gleed wrote. Gleed’s email goes on to discuss why the Finance Committee voted against funding these items within the budget and

that the voters at Town Meeting should have a choice on funding these items such as: no funding, within the CIP or funding the items as a debt exclusion. Since Chuck Ormsby supports Rees’ budget with respect to the preschool, I assume that NATA and Ted Tripp do to. So, it looks like round 3 for Tripp v. Gleed at town meeting. I have my popcorn ready!

Lawrence Public Schools – Summer Meals Program Dates of Operation – June 25th through August 29th

Lawrence Public Schools is participating in the Summer Food Service Program. Meals will be provided to all children without charge. Acceptance and participation requirements for the program and all activities are the same for all regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability, and there will be no discrimination in the course of meal service. Meals will be provided at the sites and times as follows:

Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society’s 13th Annual Strut for Strays to be held on June 8th

The Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society’s 13th annual Strut for Strays three-mile walk will feature Randy Price as the honorary chairman, great music by Sunchunk, food, children games and activities including face painting and much more. Leashed dogs are welcome and water stations will be available along the walk route. “Strutters” collecting at least \$50 in pledges will be given a Strut for Strays t-shirt. Proceeds will benefit homeless cats and kittens and support MRFRS’s programs caring for cats and



CITY OF LAWRENCE Phone Directory

Due to an error, the phone numbers for City of Lawrence are not listed with 411

e Phone Directory

Not on the citywide VoIP phone system

City of Lawrence Main Number	978-620-3000
Mayor’s Office	978-620-3010
Mayor’s Hotline	978-360-9140
Bellevue Cemetery	978-620-3560
Budget & Finance	978-620-3070
Assessor	978-620-3190
Comptroller	978-620-3050
Purchasing	978-620-3240
Tax Collector	978-620-3170
City Treasurer	978-620-3180
City Attorney	978-620-3030
City Clerk	978-620-3230
City Council	978-620-3210
Community Development	978-620-3510
Department of Public Works	978-620-3090
DPW Yard	978-620-3350
Recycling Department	978-620-3310
Engineering	978-620-3160
After Hours / Emergency	978-620-3590
Public Property	978-620-3370
Municipal Garage	978-620-3300
Streets & Parks	978-620-3350
Election Division	978-620-3290

Fire Department - Emergency	911
Business Line	978-620-3400
Alarm House	978-620-3430
Electrical Inspector	978-620-3427
Fire Prevention	978-620-3424
Emergency Management	978-620-3400
Human Rights Office	978-620-3200
Information Technology	978-620-3700
Inspectional Services	978-620-3130
Health Department	978-620-3260
Tobacco Control	978-620-3120
Licensing Board	978-620-3270
Personnel	978-620-3060
Planning Department	978-620-3500
Recreation Department	978-620-3250
Retirement Board	978-620-3570
Senior Center	978-620-3540
Water Department	978-620-3110
Backflow Prevention	978-620-3320
Water Maintenance	978-620-3580
Water Filtration Plant	978-620-3590
Veterans’ Services	978-620-3280

Police Department - Emergency	911
Business Line	978-794-5900
Animal Control	978-794-5856
School Department	978-975-5905
Adult Learning Center	978-975-5917
Arlington School	978-975-5926
Breen School	978-975-5932
Bruce Annex	978-975-5938
Bruce School	978-975-5935
Frost School	978-975-5941
Gen. Donovan	978-975-5947
Guilmette School	978-686-8810
Hennessey School	978-975-5950
High School	978-975-2750
Leahy School	978-975-5959
Leonard School	978-975-5962
Oliver School	978-975-5966
Parthum School	978-691-7200
Rollins School	978-975-5971
South Lawrence East	978-975-5970
Special Education	978-975-5990
Storrow School	978-975-5980
Tarbox School	978-975-5983
Wetherbee School	978-975-5986
Main Library	978-682-1727
South Branch Library	978-794-5789
Lawrence Municipal Airport	978-794-5880

200 Common Street ; Lawrence, MA 01840

www.cityoflawrence.com

NOTEBOOK: Cont.

kittens in need in the community. The event will take place rain or shine.

When: Sunday, June 8, 2008 - 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Bartlet Mall, intersection of Pond and High Streets, Newburyport, MA. For more information, please call 978-462-0760 or visit www.mrfrs.org.

Classes for Forclosures?

Community “activist” Anna Luna from Arlington Community Trabajando has submitted a request for more than \$35,000 in Federal money through the City of Lawrence (CDBG block grant program) to teach classes on foreclosures. Ah ... another so called “non-profit” looking to make themselves big salaries while pretending to be altruistic in their motives and misleading people to believe that they work for free. I certainly hope the City Council is going to reject this ridiculous waste of money no matter how cute Anna Luna is. On an ironic note: Anna Luna’s home is being foreclosed on May 14th. Discuss amongst yourselves....

Barbara Walters and Senator Ed Brooke

A small scandal broke this week as television icon Barbara Walters admitted to having an affair with then Massachusetts State Senator Ed Brooke in the ’70’s. All gossipers keep talking about how Walters being with a black man in the “70’s would have been a scandal. I say that Walters being with a Republican should be the scandal. lol

Do as I say ...

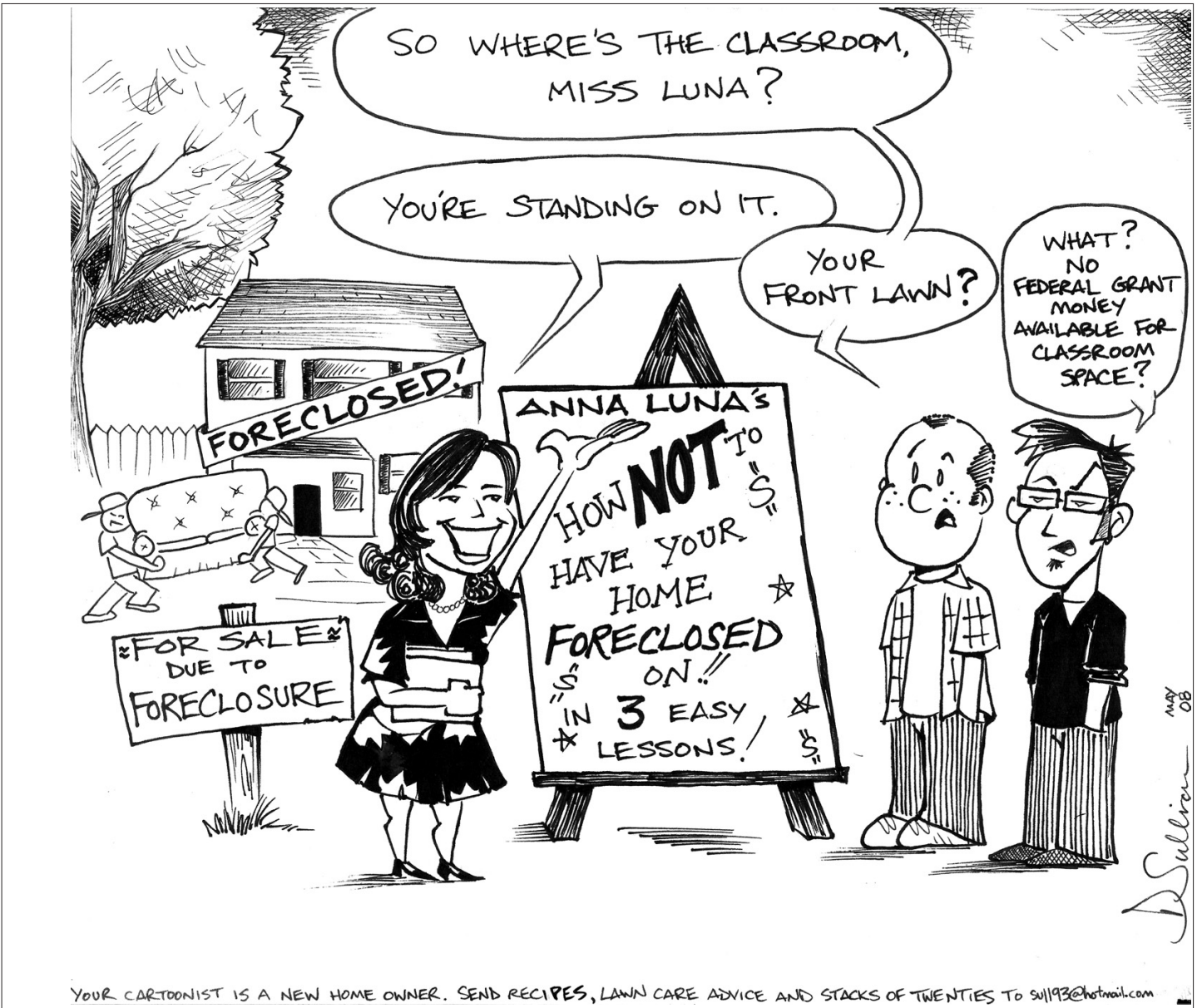
Only a few short months ago Lawrence City Councilor Grisel Silva was lobbying behind the scenes for her colleague Nilka Alvarez Rodriguez to resign from the council because she misses a lot of meetings due to health issues. In fact, two years ago Silva was one of the people (along with council president Patrick Blanchette) who were calling on Alvarez to resign from her District “C” council seat when they learned that Alvarez had moved out of her district. (At the time, Alvarez had a land lord who would not fix the heat in the winter time.) Oh what a tangled web we weave! As of the date we went to print we have been able to



confirm that Grisel Silva is no longer living in her former home on Myrtle Court in Lawrence and when she was asked about where she was living three days she admitted she was no longer living in her district. “I’m a single woman again and I certainly not going to resign,” she said. “I don’t have to.”

She is right of course, the city charter allows for a councilor to complete the remainder of a two year term if they move out of the district while serving. But, shouldn’t someone who so willingly (and publicly) throws stones at others at least have the decency to practice what she preaches? It will be interesting to see how she tries to explain this one to her constituents!

NOTEBOOK, page 33



Richard Dewhirst received that Person of the Year award from the Methuen Board of Trade. Dewhirst is seen here with Joe Belevacua of the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce and Nancy Carace president of the the Methuen Board of Trade. The evet was held at the new Day's Hotel and Conference Center formerly the Tara Mara on Pelham St.

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For more information visit: www.lawrencechilicookoff.org



This event to benefit The Lawrence Rotary Foundation on behalf of Lawrence children has been sanctioned by the International Chili Society.

The ICS.
 Members of The International Chili Society compete for best Red Chili, Green Chili, and Salsa. Taste samples and vote on “Peoples Choice”.

PROUD SPONSORS



Lawrence Rotary Club of Massachusetts

Salvatore's



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PHOTO: COURTESY

Central Catholic Basketball Champs Visit The Statehouse

BOSTON - The Division I State Championship Central Catholic Basketball team was honored at The State House by Senators Sue Tucker and Steve Baddour as well as State Representatives Linda Dean Campbell, Barry Finegold, William Lantigua, and Barbara L'Italien. Each member of the team received an official recognition from both chambers during their respective formal sessions.



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City of Lawrence
Building Department

Building Safety Awareness Week
May 5th - 10th



City Hall

200 Common Street

Monday thru Friday 8:30am-4:30pm Saturday 9:00am-12:00PM

*Displays *Presentations *Information *Assistance *Raffles

Bring your questions on:

- * Building permits
- * Inspections
- * Zoning Requirements
- * Signs
- * Swimming pools
- * Fences
- * Licensing regulations
- * Work-site safety
- * New businesses
- * Driveways

Special topics, events and presentations daily

- MONDAY** Building Safety Week Opening Ceremonies - Mayor Michael J Sullivan proclamation - 10:00am
- TUESDAY** Fire prevention-Fire Inspectors on hand with information on smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and household safety.
- WEDNESDAY** Construction and worksite safety. Power tool safety. Safe scaffold demonstration.
- THURSDAY** Hazardous materials, lead and asbestos removal
- FRIDAY** Contactor licensing requirements, Building code changes
- SATURDAY** HOME-OWNER DAY! Inspectors and others available to answer your questions and assist you with permits and zoning issues.

Door prizes — REFRESHMENTS

Sponsor by: City of Lawrence Building Department
& The Mayors Health Task Force



JAMbra makes a difference in Lowell

The JAM District in Lowell, defined by Jackson, Appleton and Middlesex Streets, is bursting with entrepreneurial spirit. This long neglected area of the city is the focal point of a revitalization unparalleled in the city's history. Beginning in 1996 with its designation as an Economic Opportunity Area the JAM district's businesses and residents participated in meetings and helped develop plans to change the face of the neighborhood.

The business and residents' group, JAMbra, was founded in 2004 by Karen Bell, owner of The Club – Fitness, Health & Spa on Middlesex Street. Working in partnership with the city, this very active group has a mission to make the area an inviting, safe, attractive place in which to live, work and play.

Its list of goals and objectives includes; semi-annual clean up days, the installation of surveillance cameras throughout the neighborhood, the implementation of recycling, the development of streetscapes that reflect the historic neighborhood, the support of new urban development concepts which promote a harmonious residential and business community as well as long-range plans to connect the downtown, JAM district, Hamilton Canal and Gallagher Terminal as an expanded, cohesive downtown.

On Saturday, May 3rd more than 50 volunteer residents and businesses from the JAM District and surrounding areas joined JAMbra Clean-up day. Breakfast was donated by **Dunkin Donuts**. The City Parks Department Director, **Tom Belgarde**, made sure that volunteers were well equipped with brooms, rakes, shovels and trash bags. **Trinity**

Ambulance was, as always, there to help. **Weza Landscaping** worked to plant shrubs, while **Maquire and Son Painting** made a dramatic difference by painting the Hanover Leather store front. "Everybody got there" because **WCAP** did a tremendous job promoting the day. Our thanks to **Harmon's** for supplies and **Assistant City Manager T.J. McCarthy** for help with street cleaning and trash pick-up. Following a tireless effort by all the volunteers, lunch was served at The Marston Building.

Our very special thanks to **Espresso Pizza** on Central Street for delicious Pizza and The **Lowell Transitional Living Center** for scrumptious hot soup and salads. It is amazing to see the difference in a community that can be made by people working together.

The new Early Garage is open and great space is available for anyone interested in "getting in on the ground floor." JAMbra is working on attractive financing packages with The Washington Savings Bank.

The Marston Building has undergone an amazing revitalization. Condos on Jackson Street are now populated with "new urbanists" who are happy to get involved in their neighborhood's development.

Trinity Financial is in the wings with the Hamilton Canal Phase I. 165 Jackson St. is being transformed into the new home of Lowell Community Health. Along with numerous residential lofts by the Architectural Heritage Foundation in Partnership with Bank of America.

There are even plans for a "Black Box Café Theatre" by the developers of The



PHOTO: KAREN BELL

JAMbra volunteer "Eddie" celebrates the cleaning up of his neighborhood on Middlesex Street in Lowell. JAMbra had more than 55 volunteers picking up the neighborhood last month.

Appleton Mills Cotton House Lofts. The JAM District is creating new energy in Lowell.

On June 14, JAMbra is planning a festival with **Honorary Chaiman, Mayor "Bud" Caulfield**, appropriately named a "JAMBRAre." Celebrating art, creativity and the adventurous spirit in us all, the JAMBRAre will begin on Middlesex and Marston Street with a street fair and entertainment from noon until 5:00 pm.

A classic car show, raffles, business exhibits, craft and jewelry sales, face painting, fortune telling, clowns, balloons, street entertainers and various food booths will be streetside. The new Marston building and The Charter School will host art exhibits. The daytime fun

will be followed by a reception on the top floor of The Early garage from 5:00pm to 7:00pm, featuring a local group now receiving national acclaim, Hot Day at the Zoo.

To participate in JAMbra or the coming JAMBRAre: Contact: Karen Bell 978 441-1166 for sponsorships, exhibits, food Bob Dugar bobdu@lchealth.org for sponsorships or exhibits

Jessica Hossman jessicahosman@gmail.com entertainment Crafts, art, etc.

Look for complete list of participants and schedule of events in the June issue of The Valley Patriot.



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atop the Early Garage



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REALTY GROUP

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or Bob Dugar at bob



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is spirit in us all!

Saturday June 14th

Noon - 5PM - Entertainment, food,
5 - 7PM Party atop the Early Garage

**Honorary Chairman
Mayor Ed “Bud” Caulfield**

Jambraree Sponsor Opportunities

Advertising space is also available in
our event program

Master Developer \$10,000.

As our major sponsor you will receive:

Your own large Banner with name, logo and Festival name, date and time The Garage top party will bear your name and logos Recognition from Our Honorary Chairman, Mayor Ed “Bud” Caulfield during Street Fair and at Garage top party Name and Logo at top of Event Posters Full page ad in our program Story about your company as a community builder in The Valley Patriot Appearance on WCAP Morning Magazine and acknowledgment in PSAs

Developer \$5,000.

As our second level sponsor you will receive:

Your name and Logo on top of Large Sponsor Banners Recognition from JAMbra during street fair and at garage top party A section about your company in story on festival appearing in Valley Patriot Name and Logoon Prominently displayed on Event Posters Acknowledgment on WCAP MORNING SHOW and in PSAs Tickets to garage top party

Architect \$2500

As our third level sponsor you will receive:

Your name and Logo in center of Large Sponsor Banners 1/4 Page ad in Program Mention in festival story in Valley Patriot Recognition from JAMbra during Street Fair and at garage top party Name and Logo on Event Posters Acknowledgment on WCAP Morning Magazine and in PSA's Tickets to garage top party

Contractor \$1000

As our Fourth Level Sponsor you will receive: Your Name and Logo on Event Banners 1/8 page ad in Program Mention as sponsor in festival story in Valley Patriot Name in PSA's Recognition from JAMbra during Street Fair Tickets for Garage top Party!



Contact: Karen Bell at (978) 441-1166
odu@lchealth.org



The Minutemen of 1861

Richard Howe, Jr.
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

On a small patch of grass wedged between two busy streets in front of Lowell City Hall sits a twenty-five foot high granite obelisk.

Few passersby know that this monument commemorates nineteen year old Luther Ladd and twenty year old Addison Whitney, two Lowell mill workers who, along with Sumner Needham of Lawrence and Charles Taylor of parts unknown, were the first soldiers to die in the American Civil War. Fewer still realize that Ladd, Whitney and Taylor are actually buried beneath the monument, right in front of City Hall.

While our neighbors may commemorate Patriot’s Day by recalling the opening battles of the Revolutionary War at Lexington and Concord – not to mention the Marathon and an early Red Sox start – some in Lowell devote a few moments each April 19th to remembering the members of the Sixth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, a unit drawn primarily from Lowell and Lawrence, and their struggle in Baltimore on another April 19th.

Here’s what happened.

Shortly after learning that the South Carolina militia had attacked Fort Sumter, President Abraham Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers from the northern states to come south to suppress the rebellion.

Because of the foresight of Governor John Andrew and Lowell’s Benjamin Butler (a general of the Volunteers) the Massachusetts troops were well organized, well equipped, and ready to leave on short notice.

The train carrying the regiment left Lowell on April 17, 1861, just two days after the surrender of Fort Sumter. Because Washington, DC, was garrisoned by only six companies of regular troops and fifteen companies of local militia whose pro-Southern sentiments made them more of a threat than an asset, the Sixth Regiment was ordered to proceed to the capital as quickly as possible.

The quickest route to Washington led through New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, a city with extensive economic, social, and cultural ties to the south.

The configuration of the rail route through Baltimore heightened the risk of confrontation. Trains coming from the north arrived at the President Street Station.

Individual cars were then decoupled and drawn by horse a mile through the city to Camden Station (adjacent to the current Camden Yards baseball stadium). There, the cars would be reunited with a locomotive and continue the journey southward.

Upon his arrival in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, at 5:00 P.M. on April 18, Colonel Edward F. Jones, the commander



PHOTO: RICHARD HOWE

Ladd and Whitney Monument with Lowell City Hall in background

of the Sixth Regiment, learned of the likelihood of violence in Baltimore and formulated a plan designed to avoid confrontation.

Rather than remain the night in Philadelphia, the regiment would depart at 1:00 A.M., placing it in Baltimore at first light, when the troublemakers would still be asleep.

Once there, the entire unit would dismount from the train and quickly march through the city to Camden Station. The logic of the plan was clear since an entire regiment would likely intimidate any mob that appeared.

The plan went awry before the troops even reached Baltimore.

Crossing from Delaware into Maryland, the ten cars of the train were floated across the Susquehanna River by ferry. Although Colonel Jones failed to realize it at the time, the cars were reattached to the locomotive in a different order, leaving Jones in the fourth car of the train, not the first.

When the train finally arrived in Baltimore, the railroad workers immediately began shuttling individual cars through the city.

By the time Jones realized what was happening, his unit was scattered throughout Baltimore, and all he could do was wait and hope that the cars all reached Camden Station intact.

The first seven cars did just that, but their passage had alerted city residents who took to the street, blocking the way of the final three cars.

A captain took command of the troops in those cars, got them off the train and led them through the streets and the ever-

growing crowd. Bricks and then bullets soon followed the insults of the crowd.

Four soldiers were killed; thirty-one were wounded.

The men of the Sixth returned fire, killing twelve and wounding an untold number of civilians. After reaching the relative safety of Camden Station, the regiment reformed and continued on to Washington where its men were welcomed as heroes and housed in the Senate chamber.

The riot in Baltimore gave the Sixth Massachusetts an early prominence that was eclipsed by the enormous scope of the war and that regiment’s limited participation in it.

At the time, however, Ladd, Whitney, Taylor and Needham were seen as “the first martyrs of the great rebellion” and provided the North with symbols to rally around. The men of the Sixth Regiment were not professional soldiers.

They were ordinary citizens who came from all walks of life, from lawyers to laborers. Some died during the war, others never returned to the Merrimack Valley.




Those who did return, however, made countless contributions both big and small to their respective communities throughout the post-war period. We still feel their influence today.



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

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

LOWELL SENIORS COUNT



MEETING OUR SENIORS...ONE DOOR AT A TIME!

The Lowell Senior Center, in conjunction with UMass Lowell, is currently recruiting volunteers for “Lowell Seniors Count,” a door-to-door census and needs assessment of all adults 60 and older living in the city. This ground-breaking outreach effort, scheduled to begin on May 1 and continue for several months, will help us better serve the needs of our diverse community of older adults.

Volunteers are needed to...

- * Conduct door-to door surveys in your building, on your street or in your neighborhood (working in pairs).
- * Stuff 15,000 free resource bags for every senior we meet

Flexible Times...No long term commitment required!

- * Free T-Shirts
- * Digital Name Tags
- * Free Canvas Bags
- * Invitation to our recognition party

CORI SCREENING NECESSARY

If you are interested, please arrange to attend one of the following training sessions, co-sponsored by the Lowell Police Department:

**Training Location: Lowell Senior Center,
276 Broadway Street, Lowell**

Call our Lowell Seniors Count Hotline 978-446-7200, press 9 when prompted, enter extension 2000 & leave a message for Munty Pot at 978-275-6328

Little Sprouts-Lowell marched to support children

Little Sprouts participated in the Walk for March of Dimes

LOWELL - Little Sprouts Child Enrichment Center in Lowell showed their support for the March of Dimes by participating in their annual March for Babies Walk on April 26, 2008.

The 3 mile march started at the LeLacheur Park in Lowell and then traveled around the city. The Little Sprouts Center not only participated in the walk, but they are also showed their support by collecting donations for the March of Dimes for the past few months.

The Lowell Little Sprouts Center had a goal to raise \$1000.00 and to date; they actually raised over \$2000.00!

The center collected donations in three fun ways – 1) each individual walker collected donations from family and friends. 2) The center participated in a “change race” where each classroom collected change from parents and staff. 3) Families and staff also bought a March of Dime donation card for \$1.00. Each card was displayed throughout the halls of the center to help represent the support that families gave to such a great cause.

All of the money raised for March for Babies will support lifesaving research, services, education and advocacy that

helps babies get a healthy start. “We are grateful for all the support we received from all the families and friends that allowed us to participate in such a worthy cause.”, stated Jessica Todisco, Community Outreach Specialist for Little Sprouts. “I am proud of all of the staff at Little Sprouts in Lowell for putting their time and effort into helping the quest in saving the lives of our future.”

About Little Sprouts Inc.: Little Sprouts has been a leader in providing award winning early education since 1982. A group of humanitarians that believe in the power of literacy to change the world; social, emotional, intellectual and physical literacy for children, youth, teachers and families. Little Sprouts believes in the commonality in humanity. We embrace that unity is best achieved by celebrating diversity. Little Sprouts has 7 schools in Massachusetts supporting families that reflect 32 cultures speaking 23 languages from all walks of social, economic, religious & ethnic backgrounds. To learn more about how you can join us in making the world a better place, visit us at www.littlesprouts.com

About March of Dimes: The March of Dimes champions the needs of moms and babies in our community and across the nation. The March of Dimes mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality. For more information please visit <http://www.marchforbabies.org>



Blood Services - Northeast Division
Connecticut Region
209 Farmington Avenue
Farmington, CT 06032
www.bloodct.org
New England Region
180 Rustcraft Road, Suite 115
Dedham, MA 02026
www.newenglandblood.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Demand For Blood Products Increasing

American Red Cross and the Lowell General Hospital team up to boost blood supply

The uncertainty of the times in which we live require a new commitment to maintain a 5-10 day community blood supply.

That's why **the Lowell General Hospital**, and the American Red Cross are teaming up to help ensure that a safe and adequate blood supply is available when needed. Please continue supporting your family, friends, neighbors and coworkers by donating blood on **Friday, May 30, 2008 in the Clark Auditorium, 295 Varnum Ave., Lowell, MA. The hours for blood donation are 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

The fact is, nearly 2,000 units of blood are needed each day to help those in need right here in our own community. It is a challenge to collect enough blood to meet the needs of hospital patients year round.

It only takes about an hour of time – and one small pinch – to become a hero to someone in need. Giving the “Gift of Life” is one way to help those in need. Every blood donation is an opportunity to help an accident victim, a surgical patient, or a child battling leukemia, to name a few.

Anyone 17 years of age or older, weighing 110 pounds or more and feeling in good health may be eligible to donate blood. **Please call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (1-800-448-3543)** with any questions about donating blood, or visit our website at: www.newenglandblood.org



State Ethics Commission Fines Former Middlesex Retirement Board Member Lawrence P. Driscoll

Driscoll pays \$10,000 fine, \$2,683 civil forfeiture

Former Middlesex Retirement Board (“MRB”) member Lawrence P. Driscoll admitted violating the state’s conflict of interest law by (1) improperly awarding to his friend a \$557,000 building renovation contract for the MRB’s headquarters and failing to disclose the friendship; (2) subsequently voting to hire this friend as the headquarters facilities manager and failing to disclose the friendship; and (3) submitting improper expense reimbursement requests. Driscoll paid a \$10,000 civil penalty and a civil forfeiture of \$2,683.

According to the Disposition Agreement released today, the MRB sought to renovate its headquarters in Billerica in 2002. The MRB created a three-person building subcommittee, which included Driscoll, and delegated to the subcommittee the handling of the headquarters renovation contract. Driscoll used his official position to award the contract to his friend John C. MacDonald. MacDonald was a builder who, at an October 5, 2002, MRB building subcommittee meeting, verbally submitted a bid of \$557,000 to do the renovation. At that meeting, MacDonald also verbally submitted a bid of \$595,000 on behalf of another builder. Driscoll knew that MacDonald had solicited and received the bid from the second builder prior to calculating his own bid. The subcommittee awarded the renovation contract to MacDonald at this same meeting. After the contract was awarded, the subcommittee instructed MacDonald to prepare and submit two written bids – his own bid and a second bid on behalf of the other builder. When the building project was completed, Driscoll and the other members of the subcommittee voted unanimously to hire MacDonald as the

full-time manager of the facility. At no time did Driscoll file any disclosures regarding his friendship with MacDonald. In addition, during the period between 2002 and 2004, Driscoll requested expense reimbursements from the Middlesex Retirement System (“MRS”) for conferences he did not attend, non-MRS-related airfare and other personal expenses, totaling \$5,120. Driscoll has repaid the MRS \$2,437.

Section 23(b)(2) of G.L. c. 268A prohibits a state employee from using or attempting to use his official position to secure for himself or others unwarranted privileges or exemptions which are of substantial value and not properly available to similarly situated individuals. Section 23(b)(3) prohibits a state employee from acting in a manner which would cause a reasonable person, knowing all of the facts, to conclude that anyone can improperly influence or unduly enjoy that person’s favor in the performance of his official duties. This subsection further provides that the appearance of impropriety can be avoided if the state employee publicly discloses all of the relevant circumstances which would otherwise create the appearance of a conflict of interest. By voting to award MacDonald the contract through a process that gave the false impression of being a competitive bid process, Driscoll used his official position to secure for MacDonald an unwarranted privilege of substantial value not properly available to similarly situated individuals, and, therefore, violated G.L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(2). By submitting for reimbursement expenses that were not incurred in connection with legitimate

ETHICS, page 7



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Lowell Seniors COUNT

The Lowell Senior Center has received funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health in partnership with the University of Massachusetts, Lowell and from a Healthy Community Grant to support “Lowell Seniors Count,” a comprehensive, door-to-door census and needs assessment of all seniors living in Lowell, to be conducted in the spring and summer of 2008. Inspired by City Manager, Bernie Lynch’s 10-year Plan to End Homelessness, “Lowell Seniors Count” will enable us to accomplish several important goals related to health and well-being of our diverse community of seniors.

First, it will allow us meet all seniors living in Lowell over the age of 60 and get their input in the form of a questionnaire.

Second, it will provide outreach in the form of gift bags, which will be distributed to all participants and will include several safety- and health-related items and products.

Third, it will supply a comprehensive portrait of Lowell seniors’ health, well-being, and quality of life, and of the resources and services needed to achieve “optimal aging” for all community members.

Fourth, given our focus on the diverse contexts of aging, the project will help us to more adequately serve hard-to-reach populations (including many elderly immigrants and socially-isolated seniors who are “aging in place”), while

also allowing us to mobilize the strengths of diverse communities for the purposes of building long-lasting community partnerships.

Our emphasis on partnership and collaboration is reflected in the composition of our project team, headed by the Lowell Senior Center and the Board of Directors, the University of Massachusetts Lowell, and the City of Lowell Division of Planning and Development.

We also plan to involve the following organizations in the planning and/or execution of the project: Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Lowell Housing Authority, Lowell Community Health, Friends of the Lowell Council on Aging, Community Teamwork Incorporated, Trinity Ambulance, Hunger/Homeless Commission, Merrimack Valley Nutrition and Elder Services of Merrimack Valley, among others.

Finally, we will be approaching non-profits for co-sponsorship and donations to gift bags. If your market is seniors this is a great opportunity to outreach to that population.

We anticipate meeting over 10,000 seniors. We need your help and are seeking volunteers who would like to work in teams and go out to the different neighborhoods. To volunteer/register to help call our Lowell Seniors Count automated phone line at 978-446-7200-when prompted press 9 and then extension 2000.

VERONICA: from page 1

that commercial when she found a lump. "Because I had no family history of cancer, a mammogram would typically not be performed until I was 40. As my case illustrates, women under 40 need to do self exams and go for annual doctor visits," says Veronica.

"I was extremely angry when I found the tumor and I figured this can't be happening to me. This is not part of my plan. This is not acceptable. But then I got over it and realized, thank God I found it!" she says.

Veronica immediately called her doctor, Dr. Kaul in Methuen, who scheduled a mammogram and biopsy at Holy Family Hospital.

"I am very grateful to her (Dr. Kaul) because she dealt with it very urgently. She called the hospital to get me in for a mammogram and biopsy and told them that I needed to be seen immediately,"

After the tests confirmed that Veronica had breast cancer, she then contacted Dana Farber in Boston for a second opinion.

"I had been watching TV and following WCVB Kelly Tuthill's story of how she was dealing with breast cancer and I contacted her plastic surgeon at Dana Farber, Doctor Donald Morris," says Veronica.

Veronica had a 3 ½ cm tumor and was diagnosed with grade 3 cancer and, in December 2007, underwent a transplant mastectomy.

"My breast cancer is HER-2 positive," Veronica explained. "Up until two years ago, Herceptin, the treatment used for patients with HER-2 positive breast cancer did not exist....my prognosis would have been a lot worse."

"I had a transplant mastectomy and a tummy tuck where the doctors used my own tissue for reconstruction. It led to a very difficult recovery and issues with the healing process. That is why I need to undergo a second procedure, because of issues with healing," says Veronica. After the surgery in December, Veronica underwent both chemotherapy and radiation with her last radiation treatment on April 30th.

Veronica will be undergoing further reconstructive surgery this month and then will begin additional radiation treatment the first week of June and additional chemotherapy shortly after that.

"They were able to remove all of the cancer the first time but because Grade 3 cancer is the most aggressive type of cancer, and because I am so young, the doctors and I opted for aggressive treatment with both radiation and chemotherapy after this surgery," she says.



"I was extremely angry when I found the tumor and I figured this can't be happening to me. This is not part of my plan. This is not acceptable. But then I got over it and realized, Thank God I found it!"

Veronica Calixto, Vice President
Riverbank Methuen.

After Chemotherapy the first time, Veronica lost her hair, eyebrows and eyelashes. Her husband has "been amazing," she says noting that he took several months off from work to take care of her.

"This month is our 10 year anniversary, and, hopefully, we can go out for dinner to celebrate."

Her mother also helps take care of her and has taken her for treatments. Her seven year old daughter is quite aware of the situation and they have included her in what Veronica is going through, explaining the process to her, so she will understand.

"I have taken her to chemo and we have met with a councilor. She is having a very difficult time with it." Veronica began to cry while talking about her daughter.

"The other day, she came home from school and asked Mommy, 'Are you going to die? Because kids at school say that people with cancer die.'" Veronica then had to reassure her daughter. Her two year old sees what is happening to her mother but is too young to understand. According to the American Cancer Foundation, an estimated 182,486 NEW cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in 2008.

"These figures are staggering," commented Quinn.

According to the Susan G. Komen For the Cure Foundation website, eighty-five percent of the net proceeds of this event go to Susan G. Komen For the Cure. The remaining fifteen percent of net funds goes to the National Philanthropic Trust Breast Cancer Fund, which provides ongoing support to breast cancer initiatives.

Debbie and Dottie need to raise \$2,500 each to participate in the three day walk. If you would like to make a donation, you can send your check payable to the Susan G. Komen Foundation and mail it to Debbie Quinn at The Valley Patriot, P.O. Box 453, North Andover, MA 01845 or mail or drop off a donation at Riverbank, 148 Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844. (M-W 9-4, Th & F 9-6 and Sat 9-1)

Veronica is not able to walk with Debbie or Dottie this year, but excitedly says, "I will absolutely be walking with them next year."



Paula Porten is an attorney and former member of the North Andover Finance Committee. If you have a news tip or any additional information about this story, please email her at plporten@comcast.net



"She was facing life and death and yet was moving forward in a positive and optimistic manner. Right then and there I knew Dottie and I needed to walk in honor of Veronica."

Debbie Quinn, Methuen City Councilor

Addressing risks and injury caused by childhood sports

Amy Berard

VALLEY PATRIOT CONTRIBUTOR

As the warm weather arrives, more and more youngsters will be venturing outside to engage in a variety of sports-related activities. Along with these activities comes the inherent danger of injuries.

According to the National Safe Kids Campaign, more than 30 million children participate in organized sports in the US. Even more kids participate in recreational activities such as bicycling, in-line skating, skateboarding and riding scooters. Approximately 775,000 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms for sports related injuries, and about 25% of those injuries are considered serious.

This is just what is reported. Often when kids fall in the playground, topple

from their bike, crash into things while wearing wheeled shoes, or hurt themselves in games and sports, they keep playing and do not tell their parents. This can lead to injuries not healing properly and increase the risk for a more serious injury down the road.

There are structural and physical developmental issues that need to be taken into consideration. Children are more susceptible to injuries because they have slower reaction times than adults; are less coordinated; and still growing and developing. Kids often feel invincible and usually push safe boundaries when playing.

Injuries to children's spines are not unique to contact sports like football or martial arts. They are also seen in non-contact sports. Sports, such as golf, baseball, tennis, dance and gymnastics, require repetitive torque and

hyperextension of the spine. This increases a child athlete's risk for spinal misalignments also known as subluxations.

In addition to repetitive torque and hyperextension, the pediatric spine can also have difficulty adapting to the concussive forces sustained in athletic activities. All three types of sports-induced stresses on the spine can result in spinal misalignments, also known as vertebral subluxations.

Subluxations in early stages may not produce pain. Often pain from long standing misalignments produces symptoms outside the spinal area. For example, back or leg pain in a child athlete may indicate spinal conditions known as Spondylolysis or spondylolisthesis.

If left undiagnosed & untreated, subluxations can result in stress on the nervous system, muscle spasms, postural distortion and spinal decay. Nerves going to all parts of the body can be affected.

The good news is child athletes who receive chiropractic care are less likely to have the life long patterns of ill health due to subluxations. Whether children are participating in contact or non-contact sports, a proper evaluation by a chiropractor can keep them in the game and help to minimize if not circumvent often, asymptomatic spinal damage and decay.

Medical textbooks document that what controls the body's ability to move (muscles) is a child's nervous system. This nervous system is also the part of the body that controls a child's coordination and ability to focus (on a fastball, foul shot, etc.) A child's nervous system is also in charge of when they accelerate, when they stop, and of utmost importance, their reaction times. "This is why it is important to keep a child's spine free of misalignments which place stress on the spinal cord and nervous system," adds Dr. Berard

"Athletes have been benefiting from Chiropractic care for many years." Explains Dr. Berard. "In fact, most elite and professional athletes use Chiropractic care to prevent injuries and to increase their performance potential. We see quite a few child athletes at Berard Family Chiropractic which is why we increased our after-school hours."

Chiropractors serve as team doctors for professional, college, & high school sports ranging from wrestling & track to dance & gymnastics. Doctors of Chiropractic are trained and licensed to treat the entire neuro-musculoskeletal system and can provide advice on sports training, nutrition and injury prevention to young athletes.

For more information, visit www.berardchiropractic.com or call Berard Family Chiropractic at 978.685.4444.

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Living with Lumbar Spinal Stenosis

Rami Rustum, M.D.
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Lumbar spine stenosis is the most common cause of lower back pain in middle aged and elderly people.

The lumbar spine canal is formed by vertebrae, ligaments and discs. The canal hosts the nerves allowing them to emerge to both sides of the spine through special openings called foramen.

As we age, more calcium is randomly deposited in these “openings”, ligaments and discs resulting in stiffer and smaller spinal canal as shown in the graph below.

As the lumbar spinal canal narrows, the nerves that go through it are squeezed. This squeezing may cause back pain, and leg pain and weakness.

The causes for having calcified spinal canal may vary but it is believed to be as a result of arthritis, previous falls, accidents, and wear and tear on the spine’s bones and joints.

It is important here to point out that spinal stenosis can affect any part of the spine including the cervical region (neck) however the problem is seen in the lumbar spine in 75-80% of all cases.

What are the symptoms of lumbar spinal stenosis?

It is clear now that people have different pain tolerances and experience pain differently. Based on that, people present to the pain clinic with a variety of complaints. However, the most common

ones are: Lower back ache, lower back pain radiating to the legs upon walking or standing, leg cramps, and leg numbness.

Symptoms usually get better with resting, bending slightly forward or lying in fetal position on the side with the knees brought up to the chest. It’s thought that these positions “open” the lumbar canal and take the pressure off the nerves that go to the legs.

In advanced stages, difficulty walking can occur, as well as problems with bowel and bladder control.

How is lumbar spinal stenosis diagnosed?

As with any disease, the patient’s history and physical exam are the cornerstone of the diagnosis!

During the medical history, the patient will be asked questions regarding symptoms including: How long they have been present? What make it better or worse? What prior treatment the patient has had? What other medical conditions they have? These questions can help the doctor distinguish lumbar spinal stenosis from other disorders.

Plain x-rays of the back is usually ordered. The x-rays can show the doctor various signs associated with spinal stenosis including loss of the normal inter-vertebral disc height, bone spurs (osteophytes), and spinal instability (abnormal motion between the vertebrae). The ultimate diagnosis of lumbar spinal stenosis is made with an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan or CT (computed tomography) scan. These are



Rami R. Rustum, M.D. is the director of the Pain Management Center at Lawrence General Hospital. For any questions or concerns, please email Dr. Rustum at: ramirustum@comcast.net

more advanced tests that show the nerves in the lower back and can show if they are being compressed from lumbar spinal stenosis.

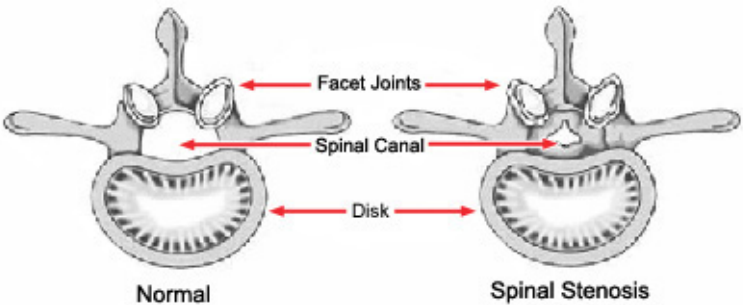
What is the treatment for lumbar spinal stenosis?

In most cases the treatment for lumbar spinal stenosis begins with conservative (non-surgical) treatment. This can include medications to reduce inflammation, short courses of oral cortisone medication, and pain medications. There are also several medications directed specifically at nerve pain that are helpful in lumbar spinal stenosis, including gabapentin (Neurontin) and pregabalin (Lyrica). I find the adding of muscle relaxant like Baclofen or Flexeril is also very helpful.

Physical therapy can help in some cases especially with the use of TENS unit treatment.

Cortisone (steroid) injections in the lumbar spine can also reduce the symptoms by decreasing inflammation and swelling around the nerve tissue.

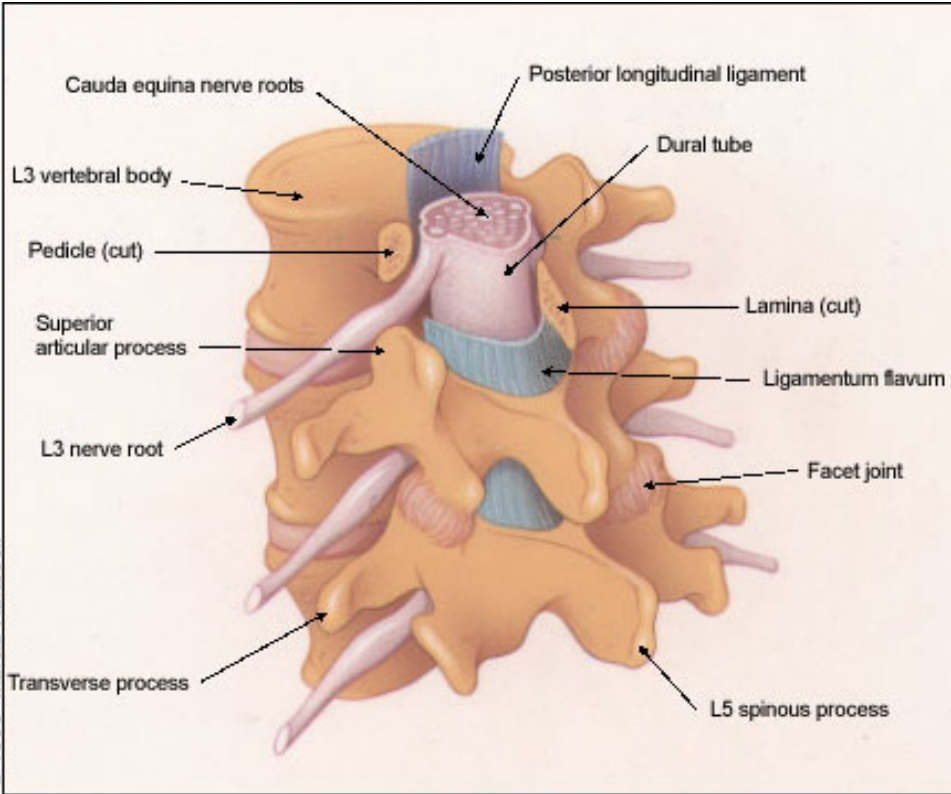
An epidural steroid injection is generally successful in relieving pain in approximately 50% of patients. If a patient does not experience any back pain or leg pain relief from the first epidural injection, further injections will probably not be beneficial. However, if there is some improvement in back pain or leg pain, one to two additional epidural



steroid injections may be recommended. These can be repeated up to three times per year.

As with any invasive medical procedures, there are potential risks associated with lumbar epidural steroid injections. Generally, however, there are few risks associated with epidural steroid injections and they tend to be rare. Risks may include:

- Infection. Minor infections occur in 1% to 2% of all injections. Severe infections are rare, occurring in 0.1% to 0.01% of injections.



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RUSTUM, page 27

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RAISE 'EM RIGHT

“He doesn’t like me!”

Barbara Peary, M.Ed.
VALLEY PATRIOT PARENTING SPECIALIST

How do I help my sixth grader come to grip with the fact that not everyone likes him? He has several close friends, but complains that other children that he would like to hang out with want nothing to do with him.

Let your child in on a little secret while he is young. As he travels through life he will find that there are people that like him, people who do not like him and people who do not care about him either way. Usually there is not much we can do to change what people think about us. This is something to learn now.

My child writes her name and is beginning to read. The problem? She is too young for kindergarten in our city. I am worried she will be bored spending another year in preschool. What other options do I have?

You could enroll her into a private kindergarten either in a parochial school or a private system. Another choice would be to investigate child care centers. Many larger ones offer certified kindergarten programs. After a year there you could probably move her into first grade in the regular public school system.

Recently, my daughter attended a roller skating party, but refused to remove her skates when I was ready to leave. After several minutes of disputing, firmly I told her she would miss her favorite television show “Lizzie” since she was not cooperating. Later in the week, she remembered why she was not allowed to see the show, so I think my point was made. My sister thinks I was too strict.

If your daughter got the idea, why care what others think?

I would like to help my fourth grader improve his vocabulary. Any suggestions?

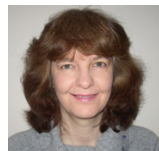
Studies have repeatedly shown that vocabularies are built by reading. Encourage him to choose books that are of interest to him, not you. Many children this age enjoy books about current sport figures and sports themselves. If you make it a regular habit to read and have newspapers, magazines, and books in the home, he will imitate your example.

We need some help quickly. My son did not do well in math this year. Mid-point in the year he did lousy on a few tests and then went downhill from there. He had always done well in the past, but it was as if things started to snowball in his mind and he felt he could no longer do the work. He ended up with a “C”, but was not satisfied as he is an “A” student. How can I get him back in gear when he begins a new term?

You might look into a program to build his confidence. A good one available in many libraries is called “Where There is a Will, There is an A.”

It does sound as though he became mentally defeated. Use the time in between to encourage him to change his thinking, letting him know that what he thinks about will expand. If he keeps thinking he can’t do math, he will continue to be unsuccessful. On the other hand, if he puts it in his mind that he can do it, he will start to manifest that result. To remind him of his past success in math, take out his report cards and show him the grades.

Tell him that the term is over and the opportunity to begin again will start with the new term. If you and he believe that he needs more information on last term’s course to build on for the next one, perhaps he should consider a summer school refresher course or being tutored.



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

SIMPLE WISDOM

Gardening

Gail Van Kleeck
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

My friend Cheryl helped me with my garden last spring. When I moved in my home didn’t have many flowers. My friend, Barbara planted a row of peonies out in front and another friend, Mina suggested that I plant flowers beside the fence. I’ve planted other gardens since then and gardening isn’t as simple as it used to be. There’s more to take care of. Sometimes I disappoint myself by noticing the weeds instead of the flowers. That’s why I’d asked for Cheryl’s help.

When she came, she knelt beside my flower bed. She clipped away the dead stalks, loosening the earth with her fingers. She said she never rakes in spring. She uses a small soft broom instead. She doesn’t want to bruise the tender new buds.

Cheryl said we needed to feed the plants with compost. I led her proudly to my compost pile which is composed almost entirely of leaves. “Flowers need compost with vegetables in it,” she told me. The way she said it didn’t make me feel badly about the inadequacy of the compost I’d been using for years. It’s wonderful when we encounter someone who can help us to expand our awareness without making us feel foolish or small.

Earlier that spring I’d hired four strong men. They came with blowers and heavy

duty rakes and cleaned up my yard in less than three hours. I was grateful for their efficiency and for the way my yard looked after they’d finished. Theirs is the kind of power with which we are most familiar. . It’s the kind of power that visibly flexes its muscles. We need this sort of power sometimes. It rescues us from bullies. It builds sky scrapers. It makes short work of the winter weary yards.

There is however, another kind of power. It’s a power that is much less visible, yet no less vital and strong. It’s the gentle kind of power that connects us. It’s the kind of power that honors life in all its unimaginable forms. It’s the kind of power that opens a place in our hearts so understanding and compassion can grow. We need to become more fully aware of our personal gentle power so we can find new ways to use it. It is the kind of power we need so badly in our sometimes confused and troubled world.

WHAT WE FOCUS ON IS TRULY WHAT WE SEE



To E-mail International inspirational author and motivational story teller, Gail Van Kleeck gail@simplewisdom.com

328 Boston Road (Rte. 3A) - Billerica

978-671-9393



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

Leona the Lion visits Lawrence’s Lil’ Sprouts

LAWRENCE - Leona the Lion, from WGBH’s popular PBS KIDS series *Between the Lions*, recently had an encore performance last month at Sal’s Riverwalk in Lawrence and The Valley Patriot was there to catch them in action. Joining the Leona show was Aaron Nigel Smith the creator of *FUNDamentals of Music and Movement*. Little Sprouts is working with Aaron to expand his program that introduces children, from infancy to fourteen years old, to music and movement in an interactive, energetic and educational environment to engage the whole child, physically, intellectually, emotionally, and creatively, throughout Massachusetts. Aaron put on a 20 minute “after show” for all the children after Leona’s performance. Aaron’s performance got the children up and dancing with their teachers and parents in a fun interactive experience for all. There were over 150 children from the local community and child care centers present at this venue. “We are honored to be working with WGBH’s BTL team who are so committed to doing what’s best for children and communities,” noted Susan Leger Ferraro, President of Little Sprouts. “*FUNDamentals Music and Movement* joining the Little Sprouts team and the Leona show was the perfect match of education, entertainment and inspiration.”

Live the WOW!

NEVER give up! Don't lose hope. Don't throw in the towel. Don't ever stop believing you can make all your dreams come true when you *Live the WOW!*

Thomas Connors
 VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Don't let life get you down. Don't give up on yourself. Ever. And don't let yourself get distracted by challenges and bumps that are put in your path. Live your Life fully.

Be Realistic! Don't con yourself into thinking that Life itself is a perfect, straight and smooth path each and every day here on earth. It doesn't work that way. There will be ups and downs, moments of joy and disappointments and times of extreme confidence followed by self-doubt. Realize that life is a transition from one event to another. Nothing is the end all. Everything can be a new and exciting beginning when you are Living the WOW!

Sure, sometimes Life WILL throw you a curve ball. It's going to happen throughout your life. That's doesn't mean you turn and walk away. Heck, No! That's the time to step up to the plate, plant your feet firmly on the ground and get ready to knock that ball right out of the park!

Take one right out of the old playbook. When it comes to life, you want to follow the lead of Major League Baseball's greatest hitters. Focus. Keep your eye on the ball.

THAT one trait has always separated the also-rans and no-name players from the superstars of yesterday and today. They stood at the plate with every ounce of confidence and no distraction could keep them from taking their eyes off that ball. From the time it left the pitcher's hand right up to the point it made contact with their bat. It didn't matter if it was a fast ball, curve ball or knuckleball. It didn't matter if a fan was tormenting them or the opposing team was trying to get their attention. They were intensely focused. Their eye remained glued to the path and speed of that ball.

What about you? Is your eye glued to the Dreams you have for yourself?

Are you ready to face and successfully knock those sometime-problems over the fence and right out of your life? Or are you hesitant to even step into the batter's box of life; making one excuse after another why you can't succeed?

Get ready. Accept the fact you will swing and miss the ball from time to time. Some days you'll even miss three in a row and strike out! But, DO NOT change your course and stray off it. Stand in there. Be confident. Continue to focus. Wait with confidence, knowing you can knock that next pitch out of the park!

When clouds are overhead and thickening, know one thing; not only will the sun shine again, it is right

around the corner just waiting to welcome you with open arms. THAT is the HUGE difference between those who Live the WOW! and those who succumb to defeat and give up.

Life can be difficult. You can lose a loved one. Debilitating illness may strike you or a family member. Friends might let you down. You could lose your job. Your daughter could get pregnant at a very young age. Your son could be addicted to drugs. Fire could have destroyed everything you had. Your spouse wanted a divorce. God didn't answer your prayer. The bank foreclosed on your house. The car was stolen and destroyed. The pay raise never came through. Your child came down with a life-threatening illness. The dog gets run over. The gold fish is swimming upside down. You get an "F" on your last exam. You're stuck for hours on the highway in a traffic jam. There is no money to pay the rent this month.

Life's giving you Lemons? Well, you can suck on them and become sour or you can make Lemonade. That choice is yours and yours alone!

Getting Lemons? Feeling Life is sour? You have a choice. You can allow yourself to suck up all that sourness and let it become a part of you or you can sweeten it and make it into a refreshing and delicious Life. Don't let anyone kid you, the choice is yours. You must learn to accept the not-so-great times and learn from them. God has put them there to help you build character and make you stronger for bigger and better things down the road.

The greatest GIFT I get in my position at American Training is the opportunity to see the amazing things people can do when they put their minds to it. Our Starworks and Contract Services Divisions showcase success stories that bring tears to anyone's eyes. Let these three miracle makers inspire you.

Paul, a Guest with a double leg amputee who fought his loss by becoming one of the area's best hockey players.

That's right! Hockey! He joined a league where he was strapped into a sled-like piece of equipment and maneuvered around the ice like a pro.

Jeff was faced with a complete loss of hearing. His choice was to take his disability and let it sour his life or let it enhance it. He chose to stand in the batter's box and swing away. He perfected an ability to *feel* the vibrations of a printing press instead of relying on listening to its nuances as others before him had done.

Let Eric's example motivate you to get through those down-in-the-dump days. He compensated for his memory loss by using a relatively cheap set of taped messages to help him with his job as a delivery driver.



PHOTO: COURTESY

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.

By any measure, these Guests of American Training could have thrown in the towel and given up. But, they developed an intense motivation to not only stay in the ballgame and take their place in the batter's box, but, they were determined to settle for nothing less than hitting the ball right out of the park!

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Never lose sight of the fact that the Good Lord ALWAYS has our best in mind for us. He has promised that all we ask for or Better will come our way. And every disappointment, every hurt, has a unique and beneficial purpose to bring us even closer to fulfilling our role here on earth.

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

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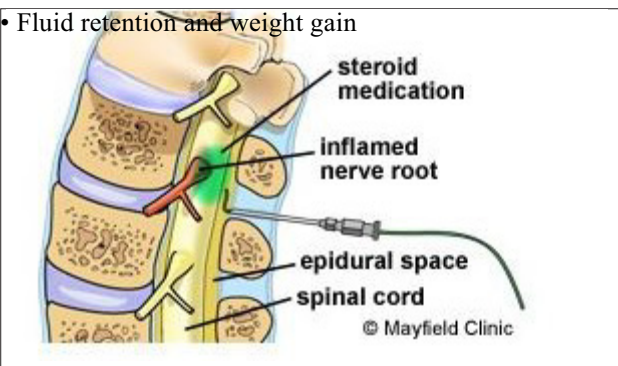
RUSTUM: from page 25

- Bleeding. Bleeding is a rare complication and is more common for patients with underlying bleeding disorders or taking blood thinners.
- Nerve damage. While extremely rare, nerve damage can occur from direct trauma from the needle, or secondarily, from infection or bleeding.
- Dural puncture ("wet tap"). A dural puncture occurs in 0.5% of injections. It may cause a post-dural puncture headache (also called a spinal headache) that usually gets better within a few days. Although rare, a blood patch may be necessary to alleviate the headache.

Paralysis is not a risk since there is no spinal cord in the region of the epidural steroid injection.

In addition to risks from the injection, there are also potential risks and side effects from the steroid medication. These side effects from an epidural steroid injection tend to be rare. Side effects from steroids are more common when taken daily for several months. Risks and side effects may include:

- High blood sugar
- Stomach ulcers



- Cataracts
- Facial flushing
- Metallic taste in the mouth
- Increased appetite

Lumbar epidural steroid injections should not be performed on patients who have a local or systemic bacterial infection, are pregnant, or have bleeding problems. Epidural steroid injections should also not be performed on patients whose pain is from a tumor or

infection, and if suspected, an MRI scan should be done prior to the injection to rule out these conditions.

Surgical Treatment

In general, surgery is only considered as a last resort if all attempts at nonsurgical therapies are unsuccessful, and if the overall potential benefits of surgery are greater than the potential risks. Surgery may be recommended on an urgent basis if a patient has severe weakness or loss of bowel and bladder control.

If surgery is ultimately necessary, the surgery most commonly performed to decompress the spinal canal is called a lumbar laminectomy.

Is lumbar spinal stenosis preventable?

Unfortunately, the degenerative changes responsible for lumbar spinal stenosis can occur as part of the normal ageing process. There is little that can be done to prevent lumbar spinal stenosis.

Remember: this is what you may pay for too many birthdays!!!!



Bike Run for the Methuen VFW

He's not from Methuen and he's not even a veteran, but Lawrence resident Dave Goulett is spearheading an effort to raise thousands of dollars needed to fix the roof at the Methuen VFW. Goulett is sponsoring the VFW Bike Run on July 13th at 10AM. Stay tuned next month for more information on the ride. To help out you can call him at (978) 994-7019.

Campbell Achieves Success for Methuen in House Budget

The House of Representatives completed their work on the Fiscal Year 2009 budget, with Representative Linda Dean Campbell of Methuen achieving some notable success for her community during that process.

Campbell had laid out her budget priorities early, and worked diligently through the process to secure some vital funding for Methuen.

Campbell budget amendments that were adopted included \$200,000 (two hundred thousand) for environmental cleanup of Methuen's Appleyard site, a critical piece for Methuen's downtown area, as well as \$150,000 (one hundred fifty thousand) for Methuen parks and recreation.

Campbell successfully included budget amendments that funded the Adult Learning Center in Methuen, the Methuen Y.M.C.A., and the Methuen Senior Center. Campbell, who helped to bring funding for the new community center in Methuen's Arlington Neighborhood, secured additional funding for ongoing operations there for neighborhood after school programs.

Campbell noted that "despite budget difficulties we have produced a balanced budget that meets some critical local needs, including an increase in Chapter 70 education aid monies for Methuen that total over one million dollars. I remain committed to doing our best to meet local needs while maintaining the fiscal stability that is vital for our Commonwealth."

Campbell also secured fifteen thousand dollars for the Merrimack River Watershed Council for water testing along the Merrimack.

Campbell pointed to some important features in the budget for cities and towns. The House budget made up the shortfall in the lottery account, adding \$124 million dollars to ensure that this local account remained level funded and not cut.

Additionally, Campbell cited a two million dollar increase in the circuit breaker account that will help some districts with the cost of transportation in the special needs area, as well as two million dollars in increased Shannon Grant monies. Methuen was a recipient of such money in the last fiscal cycle.

Campbell was also successful in securing police grant money that currently funds four full time police officers in Methuen. Campbell said "public safety for Methuen continues to be a top priority for me, and the successful inclusion of monies to directly put more police officers on our streets will promote that value." Campbell indicated that one of the pleasant surprises in the overall house budget which she strongly advocated through co-sponsorship of amendments both in last year's budget and in this budget was the additional spending for Massachusetts Firefighters.

Campbell noted that for several budget cycles MA firefighters have received the short end of the stick.

In this year's budget they received much need increases for equipment upgrades and training. Campbell said, "This increase was absolutely essential for residents and for basic protection for our firefighters who put their lives on line each and every day."

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Methuen State Representative Linda Dean Campbell will be holding summer constituent hours every Friday from 10:30am - 11:30am at the Methuen Senior Activity Center, 77 Lowell St., Methuen, MA. No appointment necessary. Representative Campbell can be reached at home at 978-989-0722 or in her office at 617-722-2810.



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Taste of Methuen raises more than \$20K for local charities

This year all four of The Valley Patriot food critics attended the Original Taste of Methuen at the Windham Hotel in Andover, sponsored by the Methuen Exchange Club.

Exchange Club President, Kenneth Willette told The Valley Patriot that the event raised more than \$20,000 for local charities. The judges loved the rice balls from Borelli's Deli in Methuen and the teriyaki steak tips from Brown and Budnick's Meats of Dracut. Honorable mentions went to the Greater Lawrence Vocational School for their delicious pastries and clam chowder, Shadi's Restaurant in Methuen for their authentic Middle East food and Mike Condon's Sweetheart Inn for his famous chicken pot pies. At right, Courtney Ordway and John Vellardita enjoy ice cream sundaes from Jay Gees ice cream in Methuen.



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Brown & Budnick



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Gr. Lawrence Tech



Honorable
Mention: Shadi's,
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LIFE IN METHUEN

Honoring those who have served

Kathleen Corey Rahme
VALLEY PATRIOT CONTRIBUTOR

What better way to honor our veterans than to prepare their final resting places for Memorial Day?

I know that when I participate in the various holiday events such as the parade and traditional picnics, the day means so much more to me because I have placed flags and edged bronze markers. This is an open invitation to all to join us for these meaningful activities as we prepare for Memorial Day.

The month of May is my favorite month because of all the events that lead up to Memorial Day. Below is the list of volunteer opportunities for young and old alike. Won't you please consider joining the Methuen Youth Corps for these volunteer opportunities?

Saturday, May 3, 2008

The annual spring clean-up day took place in the Elmwood Cemetery from 9-12 Noon. We had more than sixty volunteers edging the veterans' bronze markers and cleaning the area. It was a wonderful event and I want to thank everyone who participated.

Saturday, May 10, 2008

Flag replacement for veterans' graves. We will be replacing flags at the Walnut Grove at 9:00 am. It is located on Grove Street off of Lowell Street (the first left going west after Mt. Carmel School). At 10:30 am we will be placing flags at St. Anthony's Cemetery on RT.113 West.

The St. Anthony's Maronite Youth Group will be partnering with us for this event. Everyone is welcome!

Saturday, May 17, 2008

St. Mary's Cemetery, Methuen will have the flags replaced. We will meet rain or shine at 9:00-12 noon in front of the Mausoleum. Lunch will be provided. We will eat in front of the red barn on Woodland Street. RSVP by May 9 so we will know how much food to get. Last year we replaced 7000 flags! There will also be a flag burning.

We are partnering with Tom Hargreaves, of Methuen and Francisco Urena, of Lawrence, both Directors of Veterans' Services. Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts will be there too. This annual event is in its 5th year and we are always joined by the Methuen High School JROTC cadets and their commander Lt. Col. Bernie Stansbury.

The 8th annual Veterans' Wall of Honor will be held at St. Monica School on Saturday, May 17 from 2-6 pm and on Sunday, May 18 from 12 noon to 4:00 pm. The wall features approximately 650 photos of veterans with ties to the Merrimack Valley.

This may be the largest private collection of military photographs in the area. The event is free. If you have a photocopy of a photo you wish to have displayed on the Wall of Honor please contact me. No originals are taken and the photo will remain in the collection to be displayed every year. Contact me if you are able to volunteer for these events. All welcome!



Kathleen Corey Rahme is the former City Councilor in Methuen, is the founder of the Methuen Youth Corps., and hosts "Call to Serve." You can email her at kcoreyrahme@comcast.net or call 978-686-0008

Methuen group assembles to change charter

Jack Burke

CITIZENS FOR A BETTER GOVERNMENT

Our current Federal system of government did not spring "full born" into existence. It took 11 years to get from a Declaration of Independence to a functional Constitutional Government. During that time there was much discussion and review of government format by diverse citizens.

Similarly, Methuen now has a group dedicated to the same type of discussion and review. The newly formed Citizens for a Better Government has come into existence to discuss and review the existing City Charter. The group is formed by a diverse cross section of active Methuenites to create a citizen driven Charter Study Commission under Massachusetts general law.

The elected Executive Committee is made up of President Pat Uliano, Vice President Sid Harris, Treasurer Alex Vannett, Clerk Kathleen Corey Rahme and Secretary Sharon Ployer (978-208-8128).

The group has been meeting monthly at the Methuen VFW ,Arnold Greenwood Post 8349, 26 River Street. They invite everyone to come, listen and decide for yourself.

Every new member is asked, "Why are you here? What are your concerns? What should be changed?" These responses have become a framework for a series of non-binding ballot questions which the group hopes will be on the Presidential ballot this November (2008). This is a way to tap the pulse of Methuen's 46,000 plus citizenry.

Some of the major items being discussed are the form of government,

mayor or manager or a combination. Can a balance between the Administrative and Legislative bodies be struck? What are your feelings on term limits. Should they stay the same? Become permanent (serve for x time and that's the end). Should terms be 2 ,3 or 4 years? How many terms should be allowed? Should we review other voting processes? E-voting?

One item becomes clear early when meeting members of this group. They believe that one needs to "Think Positive." This is becoming a mantra. They are looking for best practices in Government in a fashion similar to the private sector search for best practice.

The group is leading a petition drive to create a ballot question for the 2009 Municipal Election cycle. The group needs about 5000 signatures to get the question on the ballot for next year. They have registered with the City Clerk as a Ballot Question Committee under Mass. Law.

They look forward to gathering the required signatures so that a Charter Study Committee question can be on the ballot. If successful, citizens will also be able to get nomination papers to join this elected Study Commission during the same voting cycle.

Their first fund raiser will be an Italian style meal at the VFW on June 27th. Tickets should be on sale soon. There will be a DJ and plenty of excellent conversation.

In summary, all citizens of Methuen are invited to get involved in these efforts. Donate your time, your thoughts and your signature to assisting in improving the City we all love. Further information or questions can be forwarded to CBG@mymethuen.org



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

Friends, family members and co-workers from Little Sprouts in Lawrence and Methuen turned out for The Pink Ribbon Party at the Claddagh in Lawrence last month. The fund-raiser was to raise money and show support for Melissa Hubert. As a result of recently being diagnosed with Breast Cancer, Hubert, (shown above in the second row middle in a black t-shirt) is an Associate Director at the Little Sprouts in Methuen. Because of the rising cost of health care, Ms. Hubert is facing some hefty medical bills. All proceeds from the Pink Ribbon Party were donated to Melissa and her family to defray medical costs of her ongoing treatment. "Melissa is a true inspiration to everyone she has touched", said Erica Reed, Executive Director of Methuen Little Sprouts. "This was our chance to show our support and reward her for the role model she has been with her family, in her work, and in the community."



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RONNIE’S RANTS

Kids, Sports and Politics

Ronnie Ford
 VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Police Athletic League

The Police Athletic League is an organization that keeps young kids in Lawrence busy and out of trouble. We know it as the PAL.

It is run on a shoestring budget by a man named Bill Benjamin. Hundreds of kids have six nights a week of basketball, or a visit to Fenway Park, or maybe a spaghetti dinner put on by The Sons of Italy and my good friend and former classmate, John Mele. All this under the direction of Bill Benjamin. Without this program a lot of youngsters would be out of luck and up to their necks in street trouble, jail or even worse.

There is a need for more kids to participate, but money problems exist. Anyone interested in helping financially can contact Ronnie Ford at 978-686-3365 and I will put you in touch with Bill Benjamin. By the way, if we are successful, let’s give a tip of the cap to Mr. Harold Magoon of the Lawrence-Methuen Coalition for remembering the kids on Prospect Hill. He was instrumental in enabling them to join PAL.

Tech School Sports

What do you think about what is happening at one of my favorite institutions - The Greater Lawrence

Technical High School? Their sports program is paramount. The wrestling program ranks right at the top throughout the commonwealth.

For two years in a row, they have won the division 2 state championship! This is unheard of! For a vocational school to win it once was the first time in state history; but they repeated the effort! That’s fifty straight wins, these kids are incredible!

Also, their future looks bright because of the returning lettermen. Coach Tony Sarkis and his brother Coach Deeb, along with Coach Dube, have done a remarkable job with these youngsters.

Tony has been named coach of the year twice throughout the state and within the league. That’s not all.... Coach Tony and Coach Deeb (get this) took over a football program that was down and floundering; and with many of their wrestlers, won twelve games this year - including the division 3 Super Bowl at Gillette stadium in Foxboro.

Guess who was coach of the year statewide and in his conference for football? Yup, Tony Sarkis! The Sarkis brothers’ and the kids’ greatest fans are the faculty and school board. Coach Sarkis demands schoolwork first, checks their grades, stays in touch with their families and is an absolute stickler when it comes to showing respect to all teaches, opposing coaches and players.

I don’t want to forget some of the other programs - the girls and boys basketball teams are also doing well, along with many of the other different teams. If you want to see a real classy school, stop by for one of their great meals at the school restaurant. Check it out for yourself.

State Rep Race in Methuen

It didn’t take long, but guess what? The battle lines are being drawn with the impending joust between The Lady Linda (Campbell) and Crashin Chris DiBella. And enter Joe Leone! I wonder why? And the prize? A seat in the House of Representatives, commonly referred to as the Great and General Court.

Be careful Sir Knight. Watch what you say! Many political observers feel DiBella might have been the champion had he not been branded with the endorsement of an organization that was somewhat unpopular. Certainly DiBella’s quest for the Methuen seat in the House will be formidable. Sit back and relax - this one could be a corker.

I attended a fundraiser at Jackson’s Restaurant. The affair was hosted by that apex of political machinations Mike McLoughlin, former everything.

The party had its usual guest list of Director of, CEO of, Assistant Secretary of, oh yes, and a man named Tim Murray. As sure as God made little green apples, Murray is not known to many people. He is your Lt. Governor. McLoughlin put on


a great party; introducing everybody in North America. Hillary, why don’t you wake up and hire Mike? He is one guy you won’t have to fire!

Baddour Brings the Gov.

DiBurro’s in Haverhill was packed with black suits and red-striped ties. Women dressed to kill, perfume and shaving lotion hung like a heavy mist over Steve Baddour’s fund raiser. The Governor himself received all the top contributors. Ronnie sat in his car and read about John Adams until the poor people showed up. And believe me there were plenty of them. The food was great and the walls came close to implosion.

I love the political season. Just to watch the humorous reactions and actions are enough to make you tingle. (Tingle, not tinkle). Although sometimes some people really do tinkle me off! I leave you with this: politicians give an aspirin a headache!

May the good Lord take a liking to you and do something nice for someone today.



Ronnie Ford is a Methuen resident, the former host of the “Hot Line” radio program, 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

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Haverhill's golden opportunity to boost relevance in a global economy

John Michitson

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNISTS

Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick visited Haverhill in April to announce that the City is the first of 16 regional "growth districts" designed to be magnets for new business development. The "regional growth districts" are key to the Governor's long-term economic development strategy for the State. The districts are targeted for older mill towns and cities near highways or other transportation. The state will help the city or town clear land, secure needed permits and improve infrastructure in the hopes of luring businesses.

This presents a golden opportunity for Haverhill to boost its relevance in the global economy and find its niche in the creative and innovative economies.

The Governor has focused much of his energy to date on the bio-tech and clean energy sectors. The bio-tech industry is clearly centered in Greater Boston, while the clean energy sector is more dispersed across eastern Massachusetts.

However, one look at the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council's (MVEDC's) nifty new web site at <http://www.merrimackvalley.info/> reveals that the life sciences, clean energy and green technology sectors have a presence in the cities and towns to the west of Haverhill, but not in Haverhill or the cities and towns to its east.

Preliminary Thoughts on How to Reverse Trend

I had the pleasure of attending a regional economic development meeting



PHOTO: JOHN MICHITSON

Northern Essex Community College's Technology Center Atrium

this past week sponsored by the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC) (<http://www.mvpc.org/>.) The MVEDC and the MVPC play complementary roles in economic development. MVPC tends to focus on supporting infrastructure and long term trend analyses, while the MVEDC works directly with industry. Both organizations should play key roles in developing and implementing economic development plans across the region – including the plan to help Haverhill leverage Governor Patrick's regional growth district designation. Two key strategies discussed that could be applied in Haverhill and region are highlighted below.

Agility is Key Enabler

While large Federal and State grants serve a useful purpose in developing

infrastructure, agile funding mechanisms that have less red tape are needed to lure emerging creative and innovative companies. This could be a loan pool with \$50K stipends that are fast tracked to qualifying businesses.

Quickly identifying and preparing available properties for immediate use was also identified as a priority. If the traditional model is followed, it may take several years to acquire Federal and State grants to redevelop a property. Bob Halpen, MVEDC President and CEO, astutely commented: "that equates to 2-3 business cycles for the companies seeking a facility." Mr. Halpen suggested to identify and redevelop five properties from across the region to show tangible progress.

Stakeholder Collaboration across Region Critical to Success

There was wide agreement that the various stakeholders from across the region, including academia, financiers, Government and industry, need to collaborate to help each other succeed in the global economy. The Merrimack Valley Regional Innovation Network (MVRIN) is being developed to provide both on-line and face-to-face emerging technology collaboration opportunities at places like NECC's Technology Center in Haverhill, so that partnerships can readily be formed to co-develop new products and services. Doing business abroad was cited as an example benefit of regional collaboration. Perhaps a partner has had success in doing business in China and can share those best practices across the region, as opposed to each company starting from scratch on their own. Workforce development is a key ingredient for success. That includes providing our children with the appropriate knowledge and skills for the 21st century.

It is recommended to identify two of Bob Halpen's five pilot sites at Haverhill's Hildale Industrial Park and at a mill building in the downtown respectively. The Hildale Industrial park is ripe for next generation companies while the downtown is in dire need to diversify. An influx of creative and innovative jobs and talent with pizzazz would suit the downtown well. Then, perhaps Haverhill can become the Innovation Hub of the eastern edge of the Merrimack Valley, like it once was.



John Michitson was a Haverhill city councilor for 10 years; the last 2 as president. He is a manager and electrical engineer at the MITRE Corporation in Bedford, Mass. John and his wife, Heidi, are enjoying the childhood of their 7-year-old daughter and 9 year-old son. email: michitson@mitre.org



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

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

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NECC commits to greener future

Northern Essex Community College (Haverhill and Lawrence, MA) has made a commitment to the environment that could serve as a model for other organizations and institutions.

Last fall, Northern Essex President David Hartleb signed the American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment with a pledge to move the college toward eventual total climate neutrality.

The first initiative of the Climate Commitment has been achieved by creating the college' Environmental Impact & Sustainability Committee. The mission of this committee is to integrate the economic, social, and environmental principles of sustainability throughout the curriculum and operations of the college and to help the college respond to changing local, state, and national requirements for public institutions. It is hoped that students will observe these changes, understand the relevance, and develop strong values in this area.

In moving NECC toward climate neutrality the committee will address eight possible areas upon which the college may focus including reduction in: energy use; pollution; garbage through recycling efforts; automobile travel by students, faculty, and staff. Additional areas of focus may include alternative energy use, natural landscaping, infusion of sustainability into the college's curriculum, and environmentally friendly procurement practices.

The goal is to complete, by September 2008, a comprehensive inventory of all of the college's greenhouse gas

emissions (its "carbon footprint") including emissions from electricity, heating, commuting, and air travel. The committee will update the information every year as it will measure the progress made toward the goal of reducing carbon emissions.

By September of 2009, the committee will develop an institutional action plan to help NECC become climate neutral. This will include a target date for achieving neutrality, steps to make climate neutrality and sustainability a part of the curriculum and the educational experience, and mechanisms for tracking progress.

In addition, NECC's action plan, inventory, and periodic progress reports will be made public through the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) as well as NECC's website.

For additional information, contact co-chairs Paul Chanley, 978-556-3502 or pchanley@necc.mass.edu, or Tom Fallon, 978-556-3866 or tfallon@necc.mass.edu.

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NOTEBOOK: from page 17

Speaking of Resigning....

According to the Lawrence city charter (Lawrence's Constitution, so to speak) no person can serve on more than one elected or appointed board in the city. That is a fact. And you would think my good friend Lawrence City Councilor Nick Kolofoles would know that. He's the self proclaimed "expert" on the city charter, bragging at every city council meeting how he knows the charter "inside and out."

But as much as the good natured councilor quotes the carter, chapter and verse he never seems to get around to citing the one that clearly prohibits anyone from serving on more than one board. Maybe that's because Kolofoles has been quietly sitting on the Lawrence Cemetery Board for years and is himself in violation of the charter.

It seems to me that Mr. Kolofoles should make a decision as to whether or not he wants to be on the cemetery board or the city council. After all, the city council is charged with approving the budget for the cemetery board and even if

the councilor has never voted on that particular budget, the charter is clear. It is a conflict.

Speaking of the Cemetery Board

The Lawrence Cemetery Board could not agree on a candidate for the job of Superintendent (there were four candidates, each getting only one vote) so the job has been reposted. In the mean time, Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan has added a temporary member to the (now) five member board.

Lawrence School employee Kevin McCarthy has been appointed to the board in an emergency appointment and will serve until a permanent appointment can be made.



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



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VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH Natasha Young: from page 1

Staff Sergeant Young hails from Lawrence, MA and joined the United States Marine Corps in 1999. This October will mark her 9-year anniversary as a marine. When I asked her whether she plans to make the Marine Corps a career, she said in an earnest tone, "Absolutely!"

Staff Sergeant Young is a Marine first and foremost, but also a Bulk Fuel Specialist currently serving as an Enlisted Accessions Recruiter in Plymouth, MA. Her 8 year career has taken her to Ft. Lee, Va., Okinawa, Japan, the Humvee Detachment in Londonderry, NH, New River, NC, Cherry Point, NC, Camp Lejeune, SC, Iraq, and now to The United States Marine Corps Recruiting Substation, Plymouth, MA.

She always sets the pace in whatever position she holds and is doing many great things with her new position as an Enlisted Accessions Recruiter. She has been awarded a Navy Commendation Medal, 4 Navy and Marine Corps Medals, the Navy Unit Citation, 2 Meritorious Unit Service Medals, an Iraqi Campaign Medal, and Expeditionary and Service Medals in the Global War on Terror.

When I asked her which awards and/or decorations are the most important to her she replied, "Do you want me to be completely honest?" and then continued,

"I don't wear them because they look nice, but the one that is the most important to me is my Navy Commendation Medal..." Staff Sergeant Young earned this award while she was deployed for a year in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

While stationed at Camp Lejeune, Staff Sergeant Young was tasked with the 2nd EOD Company (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) and was attached to that Company for two years. She was hand-picked by the Company Commander of the 2nd EOD Company to accompany them to Iraq due to her organizational skills and her attention to detail.

She went on to say that some of the men and women she was deployed with from the 2nd EOD Company paid the ultimate price and did not return with her.

"They are an, awesome, awesome group of men and women and for the first time in my career, I felt that I was amongst heroes."

She continued by saying that this particular deployment was the toughest, and at the same time the most gratifying, deployment she has ever participated in. "I worked with extraordinary men working under extraordinary conditions. They were GREAT! It was the hardest work I've ever done. They should get all the credit in the world."



Staff Sgt. Natasha Young with the Commandant, General Conway, while forward deployed to Iraq.

When I first spoke to Staff Sergeant Young, I was really impressed with her professionalism and demeanor as she spoke of her service and commitment to the Marine Corps. Her enthusiasm and sincere appreciation for being a part of the Corps was ever present during our conversation.

She loves the fact that the Marine Corps has taught her many things, but what she cherishes the most about her service in the Marine Corps is her fellow Marines and the friendships that she has developed over the years.

These are people that have come from all walks of life. The one thing they have in common is that they are Marines. She admits, "I don't take no for an answer, and I don't ever lay my head down at night and wonder if I made a difference on any given day. I gave it all. I love what I do."

Staff Sergeant Young is pursuing an Associates Degree in Liberal Arts at this time and, in the future, she would like to earn a Bachelor's degree in Social Work/ Youth Counseling. She has aspirations of setting up her own "Boot Camp" for youngsters in the future.

Staff Sergeant Young has a very big soft spot for the youngsters generally, and for Lawrence youth in particular. She says, "If they can dream it, they can do it!" She attributes her strong-willed, can-do attitude to living and growing up in Lawrence.

As for the way she feels about serving in the United States Marine Corps, she says, "To do things that you thought weren't possible ... to be able to do them...it's very gratifying."

This local heroine is aware of some of the ways that women in the Marines (maybe all military women) are often portrayed. "I'm a Marine and a lady first," she declares, "I'm class. We're still women, but we just wear cammies to work because of the nature of our job. We are Marines, but still moms, still wives and still homemakers. Some of the best moms are Marines..."

She is truly a Patriot and no doubt a top-notch, quality individual that exudes enthusiasm and is fervently proud to serve her country.

She describes herself as "colorful" and "vibrant" and I would have to say that that is an apt description after speaking with her. You may see Staff Sergeant Natasha Young on her brand-new 2008 Harley Nightster somewhere on I-495. If you do, say, "Hi" and "Semper Fi".

Staff Sergeant Natasha Young, thank you for your dedicated service!



Tech. Sergeant James Moore is a member of the United States Air Force and our Hero columnist. You can e-mail Sgt. Moore at moore.jr5@verizon.net

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CARING FOR OUR VETERANS

A day of reflection

John Lenotte

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

First, a few facts. Memorial Day was formerly known as **Decoration Day**. This holiday commemorates U.S. men and women who have died in military service to their country. It began first to honor Union soldiers who died during the American Civil War. After World War I, it was expanded to include those who died in any war or military action.

The first Memorial Day was observed in 1865 by liberated slaves at the historic race track in Charleston. The site was a former Confederate prison camp as well as a mass grave for Union soldiers who had died while captive. A parade with thousands of freed blacks and Union soldiers was followed by patriotic singing and a picnic.

The official birthplace of Memorial Day is Waterloo, New York. The village was credited with being the birthplace because it observed the day on May 5, 1866, and each year thereafter, and because it is likely that the friendship of General John Murray, a distinguished citizen of Waterloo, and General John A. Logan, who led the call for the day to be observed each year and helped spread the event nationwide, was a key factor in its growth.

General Logan had been impressed by the way the South honored their dead with a special day and decided the Union needed a similar day. Reportedly, Logan said that it was most fitting; that the ancients, especially the Greeks, had honored their dead, particularly their heroes, by chaplets of laurel and flowers, and that he intended to issue an order designating a day for decorating the grave of every soldier in the land, and if he could he would have made it a holiday.

Logan had been the principal speaker in a citywide memorial observation on April 29, 1866, at a cemetery in Carbondale, Illinois, an event that likely gave him the idea to make it a national holiday. On May 5, 1868, in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, a veterans' organization, Logan issued a proclamation that "Decoration Day" be observed nationwide. It was observed for the first time on May 30 of the same year;

the date was chosen because it was *not* the anniversary of a battle. The tombs of fallen Union soldiers were decorated in remembrance of this day.

The alternative name of "Memorial Day" was first used in 1882, but did not become more common until after World War II, and was not declared the official name by Federal law until 1967.

On the Thursday before Memorial Day, the 1,200 soldiers of the 3d U.S. Infantry place small American flags at each of the more than 260,000 gravestones at Arlington National Cemetery. They then patrol 24 hours a day during the weekend to ensure that each flag remains standing.

Locally, a few Veterans, led by the American Legion, place the American flags on the gravesites of our fallen warriors. In Haverhill, the number has risen to over 5,000 graves. A number that will only increase over time.

Yet again this year, most of us will focus on going to the beach, lake, barbecue and yard sale. Can we spare a bit of our time to salute those who have served the nation in times of peace and war? Is it so hard to come out and cheer those veterans who march in the parade? Let us not forget that all gave some and some gave all. And give a moment of homage to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Let us cherish the freedoms we have. Freedoms that came with the price of the fallen soldier, sailor, marine and airman. A price that continues to be paid daily. Put politics aside for the day. And let us say 'thanks'.

I am asking all our veterans, including those still on active duty, to participate in the parade on Memorial Day. Let us honor our fallen brothers and sisters. If you cannot march, ride in one of the many vehicles. Let us show our elected representatives that we care and we are very much part of the silent majority. I challenge you to join me as I march for those who cannot.

God Bless America and the troops who protect us.



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



PHOTO: LONNIE BRENNAN

Peter Wojtkun's trial continues in Lawrence Superior Court. Mr. Wojtkun completed approximately 8 days in the witness box. Trial resumes May 12. More coverage and court documents to follow.

Georgetown News Update

Lonnie Brennan

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

How dare they! How dare Joseph Soucy run against a sitting member of the board of assessors? How dare Sandy Gerraughty run against a sitting member of the water commission. How dare Evan O'Reilly and Daryl Barta run against each other for an open seat on the selectboard? Because they care! And they each feel they can add value to our community.

Each of these daring individuals should be praised for stepping forward and putting their names on the ballot. What do they stand for? Ms. Gerraughty has served on the finance committee, and while I for one have disagreed with her on an issue or two or three, she would be a stellar addition to the water board.

Mr. Soucy has served in many volunteer capacities over the years, and has been dubbed an energizer bunny of determination. Ms. Barta has committed time on the school committee and serves on the board at Camp Leslie where her campaign signs are in prominent display, and

is a supporter of schools and overrides. Mr. O'Reilly is home-grown Georgetown, young, popular and intelligent. You make the choices. Your vote counts.

Also on the ballot is a request for approx. \$2-3 per month from each household to ensure emergency response by our Fire Department. We have a stellar department, and outstanding command staff including Chief Anderson, Deputy Chiefs Durkee and Dubois, Captains Ricker and Bridges, and others.

Peter Wojtkun's Trail Continues

The Georgetown Club remains in the spotlight as club owner Peter Wojtkun's trial continues in Lawrence Superior Court. Mr. Wojtkun completed approximately 8 days in the witness box. Trial resumes May 12. More coverage and court documents to follow.



Lonnie Brennan is a selectman in Georgetown, the owner of the Chocolate Cellar and the Republican candidate for state representative in 2008. You can email him at lonnie@thechocolatecellar.com.

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SCHOOL VIOLENCE: from page 13

wrong then and is still wrong now! This behavior is not tolerated - period.

I would like to humbly ask every parent who has children in the Lawrence Public School System to hear what I am about to say.

We have a Lawrence School Safety Sub-Committee which meets every second Tuesday of the month. I have been given the privilege and responsibility to Chair this Sub-Committee. Also on this Sub-Committee is Assistant Superintendent Dr. Mary Lou Bergeron, whose commitment to the safety of schoolchildren is relentless.

We also have the Director of Human Resources, Mr. Sal Petralia, who provides to us tremendous insight into the state and federal laws dealing with teacher and child safety in our schools. Mr. Kevin Clement, our department head for school safety, is also part of the School Safety Sub-Committee.

We also have the Headmaster from the Lawrence High School campus, Dr. Thomas Sharkey and Assistant Principal Mr. Michael Qualter, Principals Ms. Elizabeth Qualter, Mr. Juan Rodriquez, and Mr. Peter Lefebre and Assistant Principal Ms. Lori Butterfield. Together, these professional staff members represent 142 years of experience in dealing with school age children. How thankful and appreciative I am to have the privilege to work with such a caliber of individuals. In addition to the school staff, we also have parents representing all three levels, and finally we have

students from the Lawrence High School Student Council on the Lawrence School Safety Sub-Committee.

With all this experience and knowledge on the School Safety Sub-Committee, I would be foolish and derelict in my duties as an elected official to not adhere to their wisdom. We all are committed to School Safety and we look at many, if not all, of the incidents that take place in the Lawrence Public Schools. We review these incidents, along with the actions taken after the incidents have taken place, and we discuss what corrective action should have been done better, if any.

So, when someone writes in a message sent via e-mail and then reprints it in a local newspaper claiming that school violence is overlooked by officials in the Lawrence Public School System, I take it personally because I know differently. Parents of the children in the Lawrence Public Schools can rest assured that a healthy and safe school environment is our priority and no one is sweeping anything under the rug.

Now, I am not saying that every incident that happens in the Lawrence Public Schools is handled perfectly, because believe me, they are not. For instance, I believe the most recent incident at the South Lawrence East Middle School involving an allegation of sexual assault by a seventh grade male student was handled incorrectly, and corrective measures are being taken to see that it doesn't happen again.

Furthermore, I don't believe that we should be making sure that our policies and procedures measure up to the standard of a radio talk show host or the author of the e-mail message in question.

Finally, let me say as a parent, to all other parents, there is a cry by children going on in this country that must be heard. May I humbly suggest to all parents everywhere that they read a wonderful book entitled, "Come on People: On the Path from Victims to Victors", written by Bill Cosby and Boston psychiatrist Alvin Poussaint, M.D. (published by Thomas Nelson, 2007).

The book points to better parenting as part of the solution. "Successful parenting starts with a commitment to giving a child love, guidance and a foundation of character," the book states.

"A parent who doesn't have that 'mantra' about raising a child will be lost." The message is that there are parents across all races and income levels who psychologically abuse their children, don't spend much time with them or control the quantity or quality of the TV programming their kids watch. Poussaint says: "Mr. Cosby says, you have to continue to work at it and work against the radio, television, movies and even actions on the street that are anti-advancement of the child."

"Families simply aren't spending enough parent-child time together in general." In conclusion, it seems to me that only when we as a country take parenting and the education of our

children seriously will we see a turnaround in the violent behavior of our children. Pointing fingers and the namecalling of elected or appointed officials gets us nowhere as a community.

In the City of Lawrence and around the country there are wonderful, hard working parents who are doing their best to bring up their children and they know who they are.

I am so thankful for their efforts. As a parent myself, along with my wife, we know firsthand that in today's world it is not an easy task. But, as we move forward in seeking solutions to the problem of school violence, it is my opinion that better parenting by some has to be part of the discussion.

As a member of the Lawrence School Committee, I can say that I do not believe what others seem to be suggesting as a probable solution: having a police officer in each classroom. That course of action goes way too far and sends the wrong message.

Thank You and God Bless You and may God Continue to Bless the Lawrence Public Schools!



Peter Larocque is a member of the Lawrence School Committee. He was originally elected by the Lawrence City Council 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



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