



Mind, Body & Soul; Health in The Valley

THE DOCTOR IS **IN**

Managing pain with medications ... Part I

Rami Rustum, M.D.
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

"My doctor sent me here to get my pain medications".

This might sound a routine statement to many pain physicians. I can say that at least once a week I hear it from one patient referred to our pain clinic!

There is no doubt that prescribing pain killers proposes a dilemma to many caregivers, but what would be the reasons for such problems?

I believe there is no easy or convincing answer to this question despite the widespread knowledge about the available pain medications on the market since it is multi-factorial problem! But one of the answers is: the physician's fear of the patients' drug abuse or addiction and to a lesser degree the opposite direction: patient's fear of becoming addicted!

The problem has been on the rise nationally despite vigorous efforts to crack down on the violators.

Narcotics abuse and/ or addiction are two serious problems which could be difficult to manage by already overwhelmed physician dealing with other health issues like Diabetes, Asthma, High blood pressure, Stroke...etc.

On the other hand, can you imagine what will happen if every patient is referred to the pain clinic for the script?! Simply put, we will have patients standing in lines!!

In order to avoid such issues, some clinics tell the patient that they only do injections and don't prescribe medications!! This is also not acceptable.

The success in preventing abuse/ addiction depends on the efforts of BOTH: Patient + Physician (PP).

I always believed (and still do) that the success part of the physician depends on his belief that pain is a DISEASE like asthma, diabetes or high blood pressure.

So the problem should be explored carefully with specific attention paid to all previous treatments, social and medical history.

Let's examine the PP relationship:

²- The Patient: Usually constitutes the passive part in the relationship ... meaning: the patient comes to receive the appropriate treatment to reduce his pain.

However, this is not the case every time. Many patients come to request certain medication since EVERYTHING ELSE HAD FAILED!

Someone can argue that there is some truth in such a statement, but how do you define failure?

Is it inadequate pain relief?

Is it having side effects?

How do we measure pain relief? Is it just a number on a scale?

Is it improved function or is it being less pills taken??

The patient must remember that the goal is controlling the pain and improving quality of life not the name of the medication.

II- The Physician: bears the active role in the relationship; however, this doesn't make it easier since every physician should be his patient's advocate!



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

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

To a certain extent, the physician may play some role in abuse/addiction problem, but how?

1- Failure to adequately assess the condition and rushing to prescribe narcotics: remember, narcotics are NOT the first line in treatment and other options like physical therapy, injections or over counter pain medications should be tried.

2- Failure to offer alternative treatment options to the narcotics: as mentioned above.

3- Failure to monitor the patient by doing random urine and/ or blood toxicology screening, random pill count....etc.

4- Failure to recognize previous "alarming signs" as previous addiction problem, changing physicians frequently, too many E.R. visits, asking for specific medication, and/or calling for early refills.

5- Failure to confront the patient with the problem as it rises.

6- Failure to recognize a serious problem in prescribing narcotics on "as needed bases".

7- Failure to recognize the difference between addiction vs. tolerance.

8- Failure to recognize when to switch short acting narcotic to a longer acting one: A patient with lower back pain may require 1-2 tablets of Percocet per day. If the condition worsens the need for medications will increase and the common mistake committed here is to increase the Percocet tablets instead of switching to longer acting drug like Duragesic® or MS Contin supplemented with FEWER Percocets!

The discussion may go on and on with a two-way argument on both sides, but the bottom line is to have the patient engaged in the treatment plan as the first step as much as possible and not to be afraid of making appropriate and necessary changes to the plan as the problem progresses.

PERSONAL INJURY

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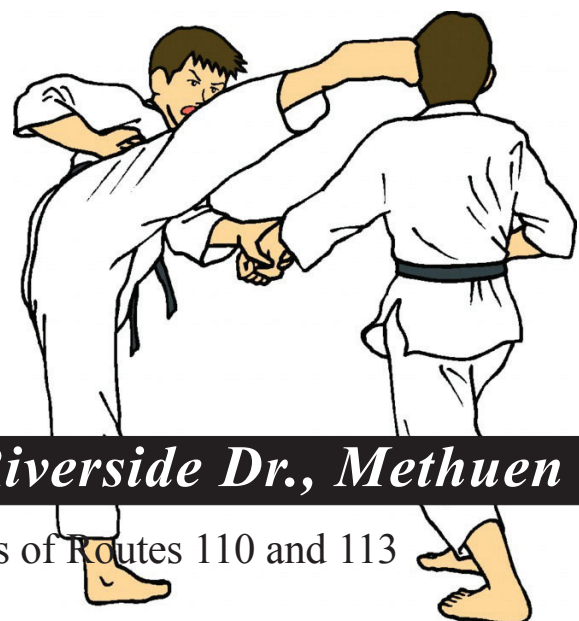
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YOUR HEALTH WITH DR. RALLIE MCALLISTER

Migraine sufferers face higher risk of serious disease

Dr. Rallie McAllister
SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

Migraines are more than just occasional, minor headaches. Not only do they produce significant pain and suffering in susceptible individuals, they're also linked to a higher risk of stroke.

Studies show that among all migraine sufferers, including men and women, the risk of experiencing a stroke is more than double that of people without the condition. Recent research suggests that the risk of stroke among female migraineurs is especially high.

The latest findings from the Women's Health Study demonstrated that compared to women without the condition, those who had migraines at least once a week were three times more likely to have a stroke. The study followed nearly 28,000 women age 45 and older for more than 12 years.

Although the exact cause of migraine headaches remains a topic of intense scientific debate, most experts agree that the condition is related to a disordered function of nerves, blood vessels and neurotransmitters in the brain. Regardless of the cause, migraines are considered to be a lifelong condition of recurring headaches that can strike as often as several times a week or as infrequently as once a year.

Migraine headaches can affect anyone, but they're roughly three times more common in women than in men. More than two-thirds of cases occur in women between the ages of 15 and 55.

Approximately 30 percent of migraineurs experience a phenomenon called an "aura" before or during the headache. The most common form of aura is a visual illusion of bright flashes of light that appear as stars or sparks, or as complex geometric patterns that shimmer across the visual field.

The associated headaches are often so intense that they send their victims scurrying to the nearest dark, quiet place. In addition to pain, migraine sufferers typically experience overwhelming nausea, vomiting, and extreme sensitivity to light and noise.

In most cases, the onset of symptoms is associated with specific substances or situations called triggers. Common triggers for migraines include stress, fatigue and hunger.

Cheese, chocolate, alcohol and the food additive monosodium glutamate (MSG) may also be to blame. Among women, hormonal fluctuation — especially around the time of menstruation — is an important trigger.

The results of a study conducted by researchers at Thomas Jefferson University's Headache Center in Philadelphia suggest that women are twice as likely to experience migraines with aura during the first two days of their menstrual cycles compared to the remainder of the month.



The researchers also noted that women have a significantly lower risk of having migraines during the time of ovulation, which typically occurs around the 14th day of the menstrual cycle.

Although migraines are relatively common, drugs designed specifically for the treatment of the condition are few in

number. Many medications prescribed for the treatment of migraines, including painkillers and anti-nausea medications, are extremely sedating. For some individuals, the treatment of migraines can be just as incapacitating as the condition itself.

Fortunately, the frequency and severity of migraine headaches can be reduced by implementing a few preventive strategies. Avoiding known migraine triggers is an excellent place to start, and taking a few key nutritional supplements may help even more.

A number of studies suggest that because migraineurs have low magnesium levels, taking supplemental magnesium can be an important part of an effective migraine-prevention program. Magnesium is known to help regulate serotonin, a neurotransmitter involved in the onset of migraine symptoms.

Many foods are rich in magnesium, including dark green vegetables, whole grains, beans, bananas and seafood. For individuals with a magnesium deficiency,

however, eating a well-balanced diet isn't sufficient.

Taking a nutritional supplement containing the mineral may be most beneficial. In recommended doses of 400 to 600 milligrams daily, magnesium supplements are generally safe and well tolerated by healthy individuals, with the most common side effect being diarrhea.

In addition to magnesium, vitamin B2 and an herb known as feverfew have long been used in the prevention and treatment of migraine headaches. The recommended dose of vitamin B2, or riboflavin, is typically 400 mg a day.

In clinical trials, migraine sufferers who took feverfew extract on a regular basis enjoyed a significant reduction in the frequency of migraine attacks. When they did experience headaches, they reported less severe pain, nausea and vomiting.

Nutritional supplements won't necessarily cure migraines, but for migraineurs in search of relief, they could make the condition far more bearable.

Rallie McAllister is a board-certified family physician, speaker and the author of several books, including "Healthy Lunchbox: The Working Mom's Guide to Keeping You and Your Kids Trim." Her website is rallieonhealth.com. To find out more about Rallie McAllister and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at: creators.com. COPYRIGHT 2008 CREATORS SYNDICATE INC.

Northern Essex designs training program for nursing students

Soon, Northern Essex Community College nursing students as well as nursing students and veteran nurses across the state, and possibly the country, will practice their nursing skills on a simulated infant with cardiac disease, thanks to a scenario developed by the NECC nursing faculty in partnership with area nursing professionals.

The project was funded by a \$10,000 state Nursing and Allied Health Initiative grant which the college recently received from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE). The grant is designed to increase the number and quality of nurses graduating from the higher education system in Massachusetts.

This project expands the opportunities at NECC's existing clinical simulation laboratory on the Lawrence campus which includes a simulated family of a man, a pregnant woman, a young child and an infant. In the clinical simulation laboratory, faculty control the manikins from a laptop by typing in commands that change the manikin's symptoms and nursing students learn to respond appropriately and deliver the proper care.

Northern Essex nursing faculty worked with three clinical agencies, Caritas Holy Family Hospital, Lawrence General Hospital, and Merrimack Valley Hospital, to develop the cardiac disease scenario for the Sim Baby infant simulator used in nursing training at Northern Essex and other nursing programs across the state. "The choice for this scenario," says Patricia Demers, assistant dean division

of health professions at NECC, "was based upon the fact that there is a cardiac clinic for children at Lawrence General and as nurses we believe it is important to identify and simulate cases that may not be seen often, but if present would constitute early recognition and treatment."

The scenario will become the property of DHE and will be disseminated to other nursing programs and hospitals that have infant simulators. It will be used at different levels of nursing.

"These manikin scenarios are ideal," says Demers, "because the nursing students and nurses can practice their skills based on a real-life scenario."

NECC was one of just three institutions to receive a scenario development grant from a field of 18 applicants.

Nursing program faculty at NECC involved in the project include Kim Natola, RN, MS, pediatric nursing faculty, Sheila Kane, RN, MS, clinical simulation coordinator, Karen Farnum, RN, MS, PND, pediatric nursing faculty, and Patricia Demers, RN, MS, MPH, assistant dean division of health professions. Participating from the partner organizations were Gail Walker, RN, MS, director of maternal child health at Lawrence General Hospital, Theresa Melnikas, RN, MS, neonatal nurse practitioner Lawrence General Hospital, and Lucie Guarino, RN, MS, director of staff development at Caritas Holy Family Hospital. The simulation meets both the



PHOTO: COURTESY NECC

Theresa Melnikas, RN, MS, Neonatal Nurse Practitioner at Lawrence General Hospital and Sheila Kane, RN, MS, Associate Professor and Clinical Simulation Coordinator at NECC, assess BabySim, an infant mannequin programmed with a cardiac disease scenario developed by NECC nursing educators and area nursing professionals funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education.

learning objectives of nursing courses offered at NECC as well as the orientation and professional development needs of existing nursing staff at the partner organizations.

Northern Essex offers a 10-month practical nursing certificate as well as an associate in science degree in nursing. For more information on the nursing programs contact the NECC Academic Advising Center at 978-556-3440 or 978-738-7423.

With campuses in Haverhill and Lawrence and extension sites in Andover, Methuen, and North Andover, Northern Essex Community College is a state-assisted college, offering over 70 associate degree and certificate programs as well as hundreds of non-credit courses designed for personal enrichment and career growth. Close to 13,000 students ranging from recent high school graduates to workers employed locally attend classes days, evenings, and weekends. Northern Essex is the only state college located in the lower Merrimack Valley Region of Massachusetts.

Study finds transitions lifestyle system twice as good as popular diets

GREENSBORO, N.C. (PRWEB) - Transitions Lifestyle System, a low-glycemic weight management system, showed nearly double the weight loss results when compared to popular diets Atkins, Ornish, Weight Watchers and Zone, according to a recent study published in the December 2005 issue of *Alternative & Complementary Therapies*. Study results also showed that the Transitions Lifestyle System reduced waist circumference by three times that of the same popular diets.

The study - "Weight Loss, Body Measurements, and Compliance: A 12-Week Total Lifestyle Intervention Pilot Study," was lead by Shari Lieberman, Ph.D. It followed 56 participants through the 12-week Transitions Lifestyle System™ program.

The Transitions Lifestyle System uses the low-glycemic-index model of dieting. Glycemic index (GI) is a numerical measure of how food elevates blood sugar—a higher GI number indicates a higher likelihood of a blood sugar spike. Popular with diabetics looking to control blood sugar spikes, low-GI diets have been studied and utilized effectively for years. For this study, participants met once per week with a co-

investigator and other participants in the study. During the meetings, participants learned how to follow a low-glycemic regimen, exercise properly and learned how stress can affect weight loss.

Results from the study were compared to a 2005 JAMA study that compared popular diets Atkins, Ornish, Weight Watchers and Zone for weight loss and heart disease risk reduction. In that study, overall weight loss in kilograms after 12 months was 2.1 for Atkins, 3.3 for Ornish, 3.0 for Weight Watchers and 3.2 for Zone. Waist circumference change in centimeters after 12 months was -2.5 for Atkins, -2.2 for Ornish, -3.3 for Weight Watchers and -2.9 for Zone.

At 12 weeks, participants in the Transitions System study showed a weight loss of 6.29 kg, nearly twice that of the popular diets studied. Waist circumference reduction in the Transitions study was nearly triple that of the popular diets at -9.73cm.

The study also showed Transitions Lifestyle System to be more effective in much less time. The results realized on the Transitions Lifestyle System took only 12 weeks versus one year on Atkins, Ornish, Weight Watchers and Zone diets.

"This pilot study shows that dieting is about more than eating less," said Lieberman, best-selling author and co-investigator in the study. "The Transitions system teaches people how to lose weight by following a low-glycemic lifestyle that doesn't rely on pre-packaged meals or unhealthy crash-dieting. Successful weight loss comes from addressing unhealthy habits both at and away from the table."

ABOUT SHARI LIEBERMAN, Ph.D. Dr. Lieberman earned her Ph.D. in clinical nutrition and exercise physiology. She is the best-selling author of "The Real Vitamin and Mineral Book" and "Dare to Lose." She is a Certified Nutrition Specialist, a Fellow of the American College of Nutrition, a member of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine, a board member of the Certification Board for Nutrition Specialists and President of the American Association for Health Freedom. She is the recipient of the National Nutritional Foods Association 2003 Clinician of the Year award. She is a published scientific researcher and a presenter at numerous medical conferences. Dr. Lieberman has been in private practice as a clinical nutritionist for more than 20 years and serves on the faculty of two universities.

September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

In support of National Ovarian Cancer Awareness month in September, Weiman Products will feature teal-colored product caps on six of its top-selling products to honor and increase awareness for the disease " Weiman Cook Top Wipes, Leather Wipes, Granite Wipes, E-tronic Wipes, Stainless Steel Wipes, Stainless Steel Cleaner & Polish. The teal cap products will appear in retailers nationwide, including Wal-Mart, Target, True Value, Kroger, Safeway, Publix and Kmart.

In addition to the teal product lids, Weiman Products made a generous corporate donation to National Ovarian Cancer Coalition (NOCC), included the ovarian cancer

ribbon and NOCC Web site on all product packaging and has a dedicated ovarian cancer page on its Web site.

If you are considering a special ovarian cancer feature during September, please feel free to contact Kayleigh Fitch for Weiman teal cap product samples or product photos at Kayleigh@sweeneypr.com or 440.333.0001 ext. 105. To access the Weiman Products/National Ovarian Cancer Coalition partnership press kit visit:<http://onekit.enr-corp.com/1003980/index.html>

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New college program addresses need for lab technicians

A new program being developed by Northern Essex Community College will capitalize on three emerging new fields: biotechnology, analytical chemistry, and environmental sciences.

The college is working closely with area employers to create an associate degree program in applied science which will train students as lab technicians in these high growth fields. Thanks to a three-year \$311,000 grant that the college just received from the National Science Foundation, the program will be ready for launch in September of 2009.

The college currently offers a liberal arts degree with options in biology, chemistry, earth science, and physics designed for students who are interested in transferring and earning a bachelor's degree in science.

Graduates of the new program will be able to get a job right after graduation and/or transfer to a four-year program.

"We found that our students had a genuine interest in the natural science but for practical reasons were choosing other fields," says Professor Mariana Melo, who is developing the program along with Marcy Vozzella, chair of the Natural Science Department, and Noemi Custodia-Lora, natural science professor. With this program, they'll graduate with the financial security of a job along with the option of continuing their education in the field.

The college is working closely with area employers such as the Lawrence Office of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and Charm Sciences of Lawrence to create the program and be sure that students graduate with the skills employers are looking for. Each student will be required to do an externship. The college is also collaborating with local high schools to attract students to the program and with four-year colleges and universities to provide transfer opportunities.

The NSF grant will help the college to create an analytical/environmental analysis lab on the college's Haverhill Campus equipped with state-of-the-art equipment. It will also support development of the program curriculum, the hiring of two additional faculty members, workshops for local high school teachers, and an annual summer institute designed to prepare students to enter the program.

"What's unique about our program is that we will seek out students including nonnative English speakers who might not be quite ready for college level work," said Melo. "Successful science students will be able to jump right into the program but we will also be working with students who need extra preparation before enrolling. We will teach them how to succeed."

While the program won't be offered officially until the fall of 2009, interested students can begin taking courses as early

as this fall. For more information, contact Mariana Melo at mmelo@necc.mass.edu, 978 556-3567, Marcy Vozzella, mvozzella@necc.mass.edu, 978 556-3326, or Noemi Custodia-Lora, 978 556-3517 or ncustodialora@necc.mass.edu.

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Fitness, exercise and nutrition in The Valley

Karen Bell

VALLEY PATRIOT FITNESS COLUMNIST

When Valley Patriot president Tom Duggan asked me to write a fitness column for The Valley Patriot every month I answered with a confident yes. It was later when I actually sat in front of the keyboard that I had second thoughts, not for lack of knowledge about fitness, exercise and nutrition, but because I, myself, have not been following the advice I so easily give to others.

Here I am sitting on the couch, in front of the T.V. morning and night, sometimes throughout the night until 4:00am, watching Mark Phelps, beach volley ball, and ping pong. The only time I get up is to refill my popcorn bowl. Exercise? Right! My sleep-deprived, overfed body barely makes it to work. I have waited four years for The Olympics to give me yet another opportunity to gain ten pounds.

Although I have been in the fitness business for more than thirty years, have taught classes, lectured, trained trainers and fully believe in my product, I do not like to exercise. I have a hard time staying motivated. I have over the years used the quick fix method to spur me on – a wedding in two months or my class reunion. Sound familiar? I have lost count of the number of people who come to me with the goal of losing their excess weight in time for an impending “cruise.”

Just maybe, all is not lost. And maybe my two week hiatus while watching the race for Olympic gold has not been wasted.

I was discussing the Olympics with a friend while having dinner, a lobster roll, sweet potato fries and chardonnay. (Why eat smart when everything else I am doing is dumb?) We were searching for answers as to what motivates these athletes. Why is Olympic Gold the most coveted of any medal, even surpassing

world titles? My friend started talking about how it’s all about the team. Although everyone is trying to win as an individual, the real effort is about not letting your teammates down. Even Mark Phelps could not have been on top of the gold pile without the amazing effort of his team. And every athlete on the top podium is doing it for the big team – his or her country.

Motivating myself to exercise fails when I repeat the mantra “I’m doing it for myself. It’s time for me.” If I’m doing something for myself, why would I choose something I do not like to do? Why not choose lying on the couch with a good book?

My awakening to the promise of a winning motivational tool came with the understanding that I am on a team and I need to become a team player. Where will my family team be if I do not have the strength to lift and play with my Grandboys?

My teammates at work depend on me to pull my own weight. My best friend and life partner needs me rowing our boat together, in sync. It’s tough enough to stay attractive for one another as we age without adding ugly fat to the package. And most importantly, neither of us wants to be unnecessarily burdened by our own or each other’s ill health.

If being part of a winning team means I have to get off the couch, so be it. I will expend any effort, even lifting weights and eating my green veggies, to make sure I do not let my teammates down. I am just glad I had the sweet potato fries before my epiphany. See you next month!



Karen Bell is the owner of The Club – Fitness, Health and Spa, a 40,000 square foot full service fitness facility and spa located at 80 Middlesex Street in Lowell. You can e-mail your questions or topics of interest to: Karen@theclub-lowell.com

What to do if you are in a car accident

Sheldon Fine

VALLEY PATRIOT LEGAL COLUMNIST

Question: I have been in a car accident, what should I do?

Answer: There will be times when you’re in a car accident things can get hectic and confusing, especially if you’ve been hurt. The reason being is that everything happens so fast. It can be hard enough just to remember what day it is, never mind keeping track of all the things you should do to get help for anyone who was injured and to preserve any evidence you might need to protect your legal rights.

Here is a list of suggestions which will be helpful through it all.

- 1. Make sure you KEEP CALM because if you panic it will only get worse.
- 2. If someone gets hurt, GET HELP. You may need an ambulance if someone is badly hurt.
- 3. If anyone in the car is hurt call the police to the scene of the accident. Also, if it is safe to do so, leave the cars where they are until the police arrive and tell you to move them. The police after surveying the scene may want to take pictures and even measurements, in cases of serious crashes.

4. Exchange Information with other drivers involved in the accident. At a minimum, this should include name, address, driver’s license number and insurance company of each driver and the registration number of each car.

5. Make sure you get the names of any witnesses, including all passengers.

6. THINK before you speak. In the excitement of the moment, you might be tempted to draw conclusions about how things happened- about things you really don’t really know. When giving the police statements about what happened, tell them only what you actually saw and heard, not what “must have happened” Do Not Guess.

7. If you are hurt, seek medical attention as soon as possible (i.e. orthopedist, neurologist, hospital, doctors, etc. Do not assume your symptoms will just go away with time, this could make things worse.

8. Know your legal rights: If you need medical attention or if your injury makes you miss work, the “No Fault” insurance on the car you were in will pay for your medical expenses and a percentage of lost income (i.e. wages, etc).

Call your insurance company to report the accident and your injury.



Also, you have to file with the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

If you are hurt because someone other than yourself was negligent or careless, you may also be paid money for the injuries and damages you suffer, including disability, disfigurement, and pain and suffering.

Call a lawyer who concentrates in personal injury law as soon as possible to protect your rights.

This is the first monthly column which will answer your questions in the areas of personal injury, real estate and business. Sheldon Fine has more than 40 years experience in these areas.

Please send your questions by e-mail to S.Fine2@verizon.net or call for appointment at (978) 475-9884.



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INNOVATION VALLEY (ivalley.org)

Hot renewable energy market is brewing in The Valley

John Michitson
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Former Army Captain Daniel Leary is a lifelong North Andover resident who was deployed to Kuwait as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom – and was honored last year as a Valley Patriot of the Month.

Now as President for a startup Renewable Energy firm he is fighting to make the Merrimack Valley a global leader again

By John Michitson and Seth Itzkan

Dan Leary started what is now Nexamp, Inc. in North Andover, MA in a garage with co-founder Will Thompson, also an OIF Veteran (Army CPT,) and four other Veterans after completing an MBA program at UMASS/Amherst. In graduate school, he wrote a business plan on clean energy and solar power, and tapped into the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative’s new program that offered rebates to install solar panels.

The company’s initial focus was on solar panel installation in both residential and commercial facilities, including Osgood Landing which is the largest privately owned solar panel array in the state. It has since extended its capabilities to include a wide array of renewable energy technologies such as wind turbines.

More strikingly, Nexamp has transformed into an energy management services company after hooking up with a group of investors that brought capital and management expertise to the partnership. They now will establish an energy use and carbon emissions baseline for their customers starting with a comprehensive energy audit to identify all potentially cost-effective energy efficiency measures. Next, they determine the most cost-effective combination of measures to meet the customer’s energy needs. Finally, they engineer and implement the solutions.

Today, Nexamp provides 25 full-time jobs. However, that is only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the value that Dan Leary and his team bring to the region. He is a young business leader with an open mind about competition and what it means for the region. He proudly stated “Some of the top few solar



PHOTO: COURTESY INNOVATION VALLEY

Nexamp crew after the installation of the first PanelClaw Beta Site on top of Osgood Landing (source: Nexamp)

installers in the State are in the Merrimack Valley.”

In our July column, we featured another solar installer, All-Pro Solar from Haverhill. Mr. Leary referred to All-Pro as a competitor but was quick to point out that direct competition is good for the region and the industry. It is leading to more efficient engineering and installation processes and more volume which creates economies of scale and ultimately lowers the price for commercial, residential and government customers. The value proposition for renewable energy is strengthening for all three market sectors and the Valley is a driver.

The days of major billion dollar corporations controlling huge markets, such as Microsoft in the PC software market, are coming to an end. Today, a small company such as Nexamp, with an innovative management team and forward looking business strategy, can be the catalyst for a regional eco-system in emerging technology markets, such as Renewable Energy.

For example, Mr. Leary came up with the concept of the Polar Bear solar panel mounting system, and then spun off a new business, PanelClaw, Inc., also in North Andover, to develop it. Costa Nicolaou is the President of PanelClaw. Mr. Leary astutely identified a major deficiency in solar mounting systems in the industry and filled

the gap with an innovative design that reduces the component count and installation time. According to Mr. Leary, “There are over a thousand Polar Bear mounting systems in beta sites in the Merrimack Valley. PanelClaw has signed a multi-year distribution agreement with the second largest solar distributor, groSolar, Inc.”

The ripple effect from Nexamp does not stop there. PanelClaw needed a manufacturing partner to produce the mounting systems. They partnered with Olympic Engineering in Haverhill’s Ward Hill Business Park, which is metal machine shop, to extend the regional impact.

What kind of mindset was needed for a Veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom to quickly become a player in the emerging Renewable Energy market and a catalyst for economic development in the Merrimack Valley? Mr. Leary’s golden rule: “I can accept the answer “no” from physics, but not from an organization.”

What It All Means

In the past several months, we have written about several companies in the Renewable Energy Sector that are located in our region. Together, they are forming an emerging eco-system of competitors, partners and spin-offs that are seeking to reach critical mass to become an economic development engine for the region.

Our Recommendations

One of the important recent events has been the Merrimack Valley’s Planning Commissions’ Economic Vision process. This vision is provided to the state and used as a basis for state investments in the region. The vision calls for the region to provide “an environment of innovation” that will encourage start-ups. It also calls for a “regional branding program” that would “reinforce the image of the Merrimack Valley as a cluster for technology investment”. Specific action items identified are: 1) Increase coordination between economic and community development groups, 2) Expand the “Means Business” website, and 3) Explore best practices from around the country on regional branding efforts and interagency cooperation. To all of these we say, Hurrah!

We believe a regionally branding campaign should be initiated now, such as the Genetown branding campaign for Boston and surrounding area, embarked upon by The Massachusetts Biotechnology Council and



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: john@michitson.com

Biospace.com. The Genetown campaign, first initiated in 1993, is a collaborative branding effort to promote the regional biotech industries and investment opportunities. The campaign is part of a larger effort organized by Biospace.com to help brand “Hotbed” regions in the U.S. and Canada where biotech industries are strong. Other Hotbed regions include Biotech Bay, centered in San Francisco; BioCapital, centered in Washington D.C.; and BioForest, that includes Seattle and Southwest Canada. As explained on the Biospace website: “As regions compete for resources, these marketing and branding campaigns help to attract capital, talent and other resources to specific geographic areas”.

“Innovation Valley,” or alternative, could be our signature brand, analogous to “Genetown,” and each of the Merrimack Valley’s economic development clusters, such as Renewable Energy, could be branded as a “Hotbed.” We have already developed a web site at our cost, www.ivalley.org, for stakeholder collaboration and branding across the Merrimack Valley.

The way ahead: regional leaders are needed to step up.

The Renewable Energy Eco-System in the Merrimack Valley, Companies that we have covered: **Solectria Renewables** of Lawrence - designs and manufactures premium efficiency, high reliability power electronics and systems for renewable power generation; **Nexamp** of North Andover - installs solar panels and other renewable energy solutions and provides energy management services; **All-Pro Solar** of Haverhill - installs solar panels and other renewable energy solutions; **PanelClaw** of North Andover - designs the Polar Bear revolutionary flat roof photovoltaic mounting system; **Olympic Engineering** of Haverhill - manufactures the Polar Bear solar mounting system; **Powerhouse** of Lawrence - green and modular home builder that uses “healthy” materials. **Evergreen Solar**, Fort Devens - one of the largest solar panel manufacturers in the country. Their products are used across the Merrimack Valley. Some additional companies (courtesy of the Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council’s web site): **Environmental Solar Systems** of Methuen – designs and manufactures a variety of solar-powered products for home use; **Ulvac Technologies** of Methuen - the North American headquarters of a Japanese company, Ulvac is a leading equipment supplier for solar cell manufacturing industry.



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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Thomas Connors
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Manna from Heaven! What a mistake that was. Instead of bread maybe God should have dropped a load of 2x4s smack on the middle of our heads! When you see how some people act these days it really makes you wonder doesn't it?

There are a good many people out there who live life under the premise that they are *Entitled*. Entitled to a free ride through life. And expect to do or give nothing for anything they get in return. Worse still, is when they actually stumble onto something worthwhile they can't even appreciate that gift from above.

Ask them why they choose not to physically work or pursue their dreams even a tiny bit and you get a clear sense that the world owes them a living. And of course you get the typical nonsense thrown in for good measure; "Don't you know? It's not easy getting up early in the morning *every* day."

Do you believe it? Getting up early *every* day? And then work for eight hours? Do people actually do this???

Here's reality. I know this may come as a shock to some people but there are actually millions of people who get up early every day and stay up to the wee hours working day and night to make ends meet and reach the American Dream for themselves and their families.

They are conscientious workers from every age, race, religion and nationality who recognized a long time ago that good old fashion hard work will result in eventual success. The kind of hard work that has been the backbone of this great Country of ours. The kind of work that resulted in a lot of sweat, blood and tears as we grew and prospered into the most accomplished Country on the face of the earth.

Visit for a few minutes the Contract Services Division at American Training. I dare you to not be impressed. Here you have people with disabilities who retain that same determination and persistence that characterized this nation at one time. These are people focusing on what they CAN DO with total disregard for what they can't. If THAT doesn't motivate you to push yourself beyond your own limits then you need to reevaluate your attitude. If their lack of entitlement and their determined willingness to earn their way doesn't encourage you to wholeheartedly support their efforts, then maybe you do need to ask how your thinking has become so warped.

Or maybe you need a good smack on the head with one of those 2x4s!

There's no such thing as a Free Lunch. Even if you get something for nothing you will ultimately pay the price by shortchanging yourself in the most destructive way!

If it is worth having, it is worth working for. If something is so important to have, no matter what it is, then it is up to YOU to find a way to make the effort to EARN it. By committing to Living the WOW! you know that in order to get something you want you must seek out or create exciting ways to motivate yourself until you finally reach your goal. You work at it. You earn it. Tirelessly and undeterred. Then, you don't view your *reward* as something you are *Entitled* to but rather something you are *Grateful* for getting.

Change your stinkin' attitude before it takes over your body, mind, heart and soul.

Living the WOW! is about how you think and act. Putting it into practice today will kill that entitlement attitude.

There's a huge difference between living an ordinary life trying to find every handout available and Living the WOW! Those looking for handouts become slaves to the whims of others; the government, their own family and even the many do-good organizations out there. Those Living the WOW! on the other hand constantly seek out and pursue opportunities. They look down the road and figure out how those opportunities can enhance and expand their lives. They have no intention of relying on others for their own health, happiness and eventual success. They go out and control their lives and determine the level of their own success.

Immediate Gratification feels great for about 24 hours. Once the initial exhilaration wears off you are left yearning for more much in the same way an addict craves more drugs.

You get what you pay for. And you get what you give. Simple as that. If you choose not to work for your success, then any success you might achieve by accident will always feel empty and meaningless. You may think you beat the system and have yourself a good chuckle, but, what you get is really crumbs compared to the huge rewards waiting for you. The only one being conned is you. In over thirty years of having the pleasure of working with and coaching people to success, not once have I heard a son or daughter brag about their mom or dad being on welfare or receiving assistance of any kind. Not once.



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.

Excitement! Dancing! Shouts of, "WOW!" THAT is the reaction I see when kids are told their mom and dad just got a job or promotion after completing a program at our LARE Training Center. Sure, even kids, young or old or in-between KNOW the difference when it comes to succeeding through hard work and having crumbs land on your lap!

Don't just wait or expect miracles to happen. Become the architect of your Dreams. Paint your own picture and make your life come alive with a magnificence that will be remembered for generations to come.

Get off your butt. Make up your mind to Live the WOW! Be an example of ACTION and for those with whom you come in contact. Inspire generations. Inspire yourself!

When you can honestly say your life made a difference in so many other lives you will forever rest in peace when that time comes. But, as important, you will have lived beyond your expectations and beyond those of the people who know you best.

Now, that's a WOW!

SIMPLE WISDOM

Gail Van Kleeck
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

A friend of mine once told me about an extraordinary basket ball player. He wasn't the fastest man on the team, nor the tallest. He didn't have the best form when he was passing or making baskets, but there was something about the way he played the game that consistently made him one of the team's most valuable players. While he was never arrogant, he seemed so comfortable and confident that everyone played better when he was on the court.

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The voice we hear

This player had a habit of seeking out a place away from the players shortly before their game began. He sat quietly on the locker room bench, listening to a CD that he kept in his locker. Some of his team mates thought he was listening to music. Others thought he was quieting himself by listening to the peaceful sounds of nature or perhaps replaying the words of a motivational speech delivered by a powerful and empowering orator.

One day a player who'd had arrived much earlier than the others discovered the CD on the locker room bench. Hesitating only a moment, he put the speaker in his ear.

"You are an extraordinary athlete" the CD said. "You know how to prepare yourself before making a shot. The ball feels natural and comfortable in your hands. You know when to release it and when to hold on. You are able to jump high enough to make the basket. You are a good team player. You understand that you don't need to do everything yourself. You're not afraid to pass the ball to those who are faster or closer to the net. You are wise and powerful beyond your wildest imagination. You know everything you need to know to play this game successfully. You've taught yourself to look for what is possible. You have everything you need within you. You have everything you need within you. You have everything you need within you."

The player put down the CD and was silent for a moment. The words he had heard were clearly positive and powerful, but there was something beyond the words themselves that made him understand his team mate's composure and self assuredness. His team mate had recorded the sound of his own voice.

How often I wonder does the sound of our own voice make us feel fearful and small? How many times does it tell us that we've a victim of circumstance or that we don't have all we need to succeed? How often does it say that we have failed or that we need to feel guilty? How often does it tell us that we are somehow not enough?

The most powerful voice we will ever hear is the voice that comes from within us. That voice has the power either to free or imprison us. It has the power to help us see endless possibility or tightly closed doors. The most amazing thing about that voice is that we have a choice about what it says to us and how we hear it.

"You have everything you need within you. You have everything you need within you. You have everything you need within you."

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



Sitting in the waiting room

The Answer Man

This Month is a Theme Quiz on noted leaders around the world. See how you do on it.

1. Name the Communist leader of Cuba since 1959.

2. What Chinese official led fleeing citizens from the Chinese mainland to set up a free China in Taiwan?

3. Of what country was Golda Meir the prime minister from 1969 to 1974?

4. Egypt's president was assassinated in 1981 while working diligently for peace with Israel. Name him.

5. What Nazi dictator ruled Germany from 1934 to 1945 when he gave in to suicide?

6. Who was the first premier of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)?

7. Which U.S. president refused a third term and rejected being referred to as president following the end of his second term?

8. Name the Fascist dictator who ruled in Italy from 1922 to 1943.

9. This U.N. secretary general of Swedish heritage died in a plane crash in the Congo where he was trying to block the fighting. He was granted a Nobel Peace Prize posthumously in 1961. Name him.

10. Name the emperor who ruled over Japan from 1926 to 1989.

Answers: 1. Fidel Castro is the Cuban ruler. 2. The leader of Nationalist China was Chiang Kai-Shek. 3. She was in charge of Israel. 4. It was Anwar El-Sadat. 5. It was Adolf Hitler. 6. It was Vladimir Lenin. 7. George Washington

Sudoku

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Puzzle by websudoku.com

Answer on page 34

preferred to be referred to as general following the end of his second presidential term in office. 8. The dictator was Benito Mussolini. 9. The U.N. leader was Dag Hammarskjold. 10. The Japanese emperor was Hirohito.

Note: A few weeks ago we noted that Chubby Checker introduced "The Twist." Simi Valley, Calif., Answer Man-er Greg Moses points out that the song was first put out by Hank Ballard and the Midnighters. Checkers' recording of the tune followed that of the Midnighters.

Take "The Answer Man" to work or to school. Challenge your friends for "Bragging Rights."

Send your questions and answers to: The Answer Man, Andy Seamans, Horizon House #603, 1300 Army Navy Dr., Arlington, VA, 22202.

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Newsday Crossword

IN THE SKY by Billie Truitt
Edited by Stanley Newman
www.stanxwords.com

ACROSS

1 Pile up

6 Practice boxing

10 Immediately, in a memo

14 Pathway

15 Sheltered inlet

16 Ruination

17 Santa ___ (ship of Columbus)

18 Step ___ (hurry)

19 Adorable

20 Featuring big-name performers

23 Tiny bite

24 Your and my

25 Fragrant spring blooms

27 Unoccupied

31 Spicy dip

33 Frequently

34 Hammer or chisel

36 Prankster

40 Beethoven piano piece

43 Black tea

44 Burglar's haul

45 202, in old Rome

46 Beginning

48 In telephone limbo

50 Meeting plan

53 To and ___

54 Captain's journal

55 Publication with a big crossword

62 Tiresome one

64 Old furnace fuel

65 Get away from

66 Takes advantage of

67 Comes to a halt

68 Shy

69 Dole (out)

70 Valentine's Day flower

71 Sports numbers, for short

DOWN

1 Prepares for battle

2 Castle protection

3 Eerie glow

4 Mix, as batter

5 Summer or spring

6 Clean thoroughly

7 Water-lily locale

8 Eager

9 Narrate again

10 Alphabet starter

11 Spa hot spot

12 Playful prank

13 Baby chicks' calls

21 ___-frutti

22 '70s dance music

26 NASA event

27 Jazz accompaniment

28 Skin-cream ingredient

29 Omelet maker

30 When a clock's hands point upward

31 Not ___ (mediocre)

32 Female choir voice

35 Gawk at

37 Mexican snack

38 Gas or elec.

39 Took care of a bill

41 Allows to borrow

42 Tale

47 China cup holder

49 Frequent hotel prohibition

50 Scrapbook

51 Honking bird

52 White heron

53 Untrue

56 Something that's taboo

57 Fathers, familiarly

58 Came down to earth

59 Cougar

60 Revise text

61 Scarlet and cherry

63 Ending for Japan or Vietnam

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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Detoxing from the Beijing Olympics

NORTH ANDOVER – Despite recent efforts to green itself, modern Beijing remains one of the most polluted cities in the world – and the poor air quality has taken a toll on Olympic competitors during their time in China. One local North Andover business has decided to step up and offer athletes a welcome antidote to the Beijing Olympics upon their return home to the greater Boston area.

“We have set up an open invitation to all local Olympic athletes to come in for free detox and oxygen sessions to help purge their bodies of all those airborne toxins we saw floating in the smog over the athletes’ Olympic Village in Beijing,” says Dr. Douglas Wine, founder of DTOX Interna-

tional, located at 1013 Osgood St. in N. Andover, with five locations around Boston.

“What we do at DTOX is help restore proper working function to the cells by ridding the body of the environmental toxins that we pick up in day to day life, especially living in modern cities,” explains Dr. Wine. “When I saw the pictures of the air over Beijing I thought, if anyone needs a DTOX, it’s our athletes. We also want them to know how proud of them all of us at home are.”

Dr. Wine has a history of helping Olympic athletes reach optimal levels of performance. While he lived and owned a practice in Europe his clientele included many members of the Swiss and French Olympic teams. Detoxing has enjoyed

popularity in Europe, where the health benefits of detoxification are well known and sought after, especially by top-level athletes.

Also, says Dr. Wine, it is not just Olympic Athletes that can benefit from these services. “In addition to pollutants in the air we breathe, our daily routine is filled with chemicals that are toxic to our bodies. They slow us down, sap our energies, and prevent us from feeling our best. The DTOX and oxygen services we offer our clients help to restore the body’s natural function – whether for Olympic athletes or the average Bostonian.” In fact, the clientele at DTOX usually runs the gamut from business people wanting more energy, to friends looking for relaxation, to clients

with health concerns, to students rejuvenating after a festive weekend. “The nice part about our world-class DTOX sessions is that they are available to everyone. You don’t have to be an Olympian to enjoy the benefits,” says Dr. Wine. “But we do hope to see a few come in our door.”

DTOX sessions cost between \$8 - \$50 and include oxygen. Appointments in North Andover available by calling (978) 682-7755 or on a walk-in basis, Monday - Friday 9:00-6:00, Thursday - Until 7:00 and Saturday 8:30-4:00. DTOX International also now has locations in Wellesley, Sudbury, Boston and Hampton, NH. For more information see www.dtoxinternational.com.

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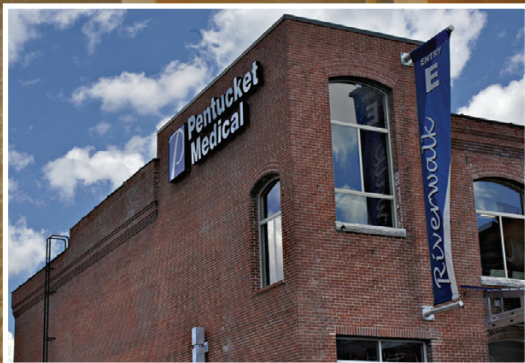
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Seeing a doctor is not always convenient or affordable. Appointment calendars fill up quickly, office hours are limited, and emergency rooms can get expensive.

Where do you go for medical attention when you're away from home?

Now, you can walk into The Pentucket Medical Walk-In clinic and receive medical attention without an appointment, and be on your way. Our attentive medical staff will take care of you quickly and professionally.



Riverwalk – 500 Merrimack St., Lawrence
tel: (978) 557-8800 web: www.pmaonline.com