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City Council Circus

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT REPORTER

LAWRENCE - Attacking and berating city employees, their colleagues and members of the public have been a standard operating procedure for members of Lawrence City Council over the past two years. But last month, the antics of Councilors Patrick Blanchette, Grisel Silva and Nilka Alvarez-Rodriguez reached a new low when meetings degenerated into screaming matches, accusations of bias and corruption and an all-out personal attack on Mayor Mike Sullivan, Chief John Romero, Lawrence police officers, and other members of the Sullivan administration.

Attacking Police

For the past two and a half years, councilors Blanchette, Silva and Alvarez-Rodriguez have been publicly advocating taking control of the Lawrence Police Department and passing a city ordinance prohibiting undercover police officers from taking home their unmarked vehicles. The three councilors who drove the issue claimed their only motivation was to save the city money in gas and insurance costs to close a \$10 million deficit in the city budget.

Chief Romero pointed out that the officers are on call "twenty four hours a day, seven days a week," and he needs

to have officers respond on a moment's notice to a crime in the process of being committed. Romero also publicly explained to councilors that insurance for most of the undercover take home cars are paid out of a drug forfeiture fund and that "the money you save on gas for forty vehicles won't save enough money to pay for one police officer." Romero presented his case to the city council which degenerated into a wild rant by Councilor Grisel Silva accusing Romero of "exaggerating the need for public safety in the city of Lawrence."

She claimed that Romero's exaggeration was designed to increase the number of cops under his command. Silva has also accused Romero of "lying" about crime statistics to pad his budget and even stated that it was "a shame that in the city of Lawrence we are not even going to dare laying off police officers and firefighters."

Silva has previously been under investigation by the police herself and openly declared war on the department after her daughter was criminally charged with possession of an illegal handgun. Since then she has routinely made speeches from the council table (with no challenge from her eight colleagues), accusing the Lawrence police officers of bias, corruption and favoritism, while

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VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

PAUL B. THOMPSON

"Lonnie" Brennan
VALLEY PATRIOT HERO REPORTER

"There are a lot more (people) who are much more worthy than I am" the humble 'gentle giant' softly responded when notified that he had been nominated as a Valley Patriot Hero of the Month. "We have a lot of guys, so many. I thank you. I'm honored," said Paul Thompson, the Commander of the American Legion Rene J. Gagnon Post 211, Georgetown.

On Monday, May 25, 2009, countless Georgetown residents filled the streets for a grand Memorial Day parade and ceremonies at the newly dedicated Harry Murch Memorial Park. Mr. Thompson, the 76 year old post commander and master

of ceremonies for the event explained afterwards that "When I turned the corner and saw the new flag poles with all of the services represented, I have to admit it was a bit emotional."

For years, Commander Thompson has joined a dedicated group of American Legion and VFW members and many others in town to commemorate major events, including Veterans Day and Memorial Day.

A familiar prominent figure in town, having won 8 elections, served on the board of selectmen for 17 years, served on the school committee for two terms, and served on the finance committee and

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EDITORIAL

We Support the Haverhill Firefighters

Haverhill Mayor James Fiorentini is planning to close the Bradford Fire Station in June and we find that unacceptable. Even more unacceptable is how Fiorentini blames the firefighters for racking up overtime and exhausting the city budget. But the firefighters we talked to showed us hard facts and figures proving that the fire department has not yet exhausted their budget and will most likely have a budget surplus of \$200,000-\$250,000 at the end of the fiscal year.

We are sure Mayor Fiorentini cares as much about public safety as everyone else in Haverhill, but his actions over the last five years show a clear bias against Haverhill firefighters.

Fiorentini has kept the fire department woefully understaffed since 2004, reducing the number of firefighters from 104 in 2004 to 90 firefighters today. That means the firefighters left on the job are forced to cover shifts for the fourteen missing men he refuses to replace. When you add injuries, sick time, vacations, or major emergencies to that equation it is easy to see why firefighters who have been working without a contract for so long are frustrated and burned out.

Instead of closing the Bradford fire station, Mayor Fiorentini should adequately staff the fire department, driving overtime down, response time up and saving a few bucks in the process. This seems like a no brainer for a mayor who is keenly aware of the stakes

Is it murder?

This past Sunday, a gunman fired one shot and killed famed abortionist George Tiller while he attended "church" services in Wichita, Kansas. Tiller is famous because he is one of very few abortionists who, for a handsome fee, will end the life of viable fetuses, sometimes in the 9th month.

In most cases these are fetuses could have survived outside the womb had a physician merely performed a Caesarean section. The fetus no longer needs the mother for its continued survival. In five years it would be ready to have its lunchbox packed and get on the school bus.

The board of The Valley Patriot is not of one mind on abortion. Our perspectives range from "radically pro-life" to a strict "right to choose" during early pregnancy. But certainly never after the fetus achieves viability. We agree, once a fetus can make it on its own, it should be protected by society. Any act by an outsider, including the mother, to end the life of a viable fetus is undeniably murder.

What if the law permitting this procedure were extended to include ending the life of children up to a week after birth? Would that be acceptable? How about two days? Twelve hours? Five minutes? What is philosophically critical about the event of birth when viability has long since been established?

It is time to outlaw, as murder, all abortions that occur after viability is achieved. The debate on the ethics and the appropriate legal framework for earlier abortions can then proceed.

News tips

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LETTERS

An open letter to Lawrence's Mayor Sullivan

Dear Mayor Sullivan:

Many people in Lawrence recognize the contributions made by Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy; however, under the current conditions, his effectiveness as a leader of this district has been irreparably damaged. It is time for Lawrence to find a way to move on quickly and fairly. I respectfully suggest that all parties involved find a way to resolve this situation now, so that Lawrence Public Schools can find a new leader at the beginning of January, 2010.

This process should be conducted in public not behind closed doors; there is nothing to hide. Transparency must be always the norm for how government works, this case not being different from any other.

Recent revelations may be embarrassing, but they also present a rare opportunity to show the public that we are handling this situation responsibly and can be entrusted to do the right thing. Confronting this challenge will allow us to demonstrate not the failures, but the successes of good government.

As a parent, citizen, and educator I am deeply troubled by this situation and am further disturbed by the lack of action and openness we have witnessed in the weeks since the beginning of this scandal. We expect that the School Committee will act in the best interest of the citizens and students of Lawrence.

Sincerely,

Pedro Payano, Lawrence



Fomer House Speaker Sal DiMasi may be facing 8 Federal charges for corruption, but ... he STILL reads The Valley Patriot!

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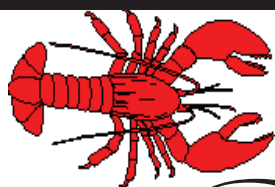
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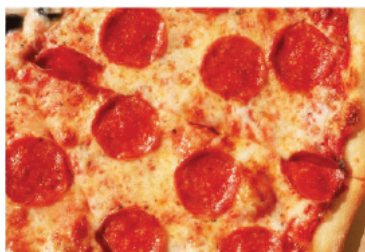
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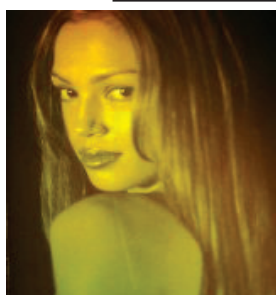


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THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Welcome to the Latest Government SNAFU Part II

The Cure: Government or Free Markets?

Dr. Charles Ormsby
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST AND EX-MEMBER
OF THE N. ANDOVER SCHOOL COMMITTEE

As the financial meltdown accelerated in 2008, politicians came forward with their plans to fix the problem. Barney Frank showed the most chutzpah. Barney crawled from beneath the rubble of his own “man”-made disaster and immediately pointed the finger at the private sector.

As usual, the government was “there to help.” But, of course, it almost never does.

Before we accept the government’s offer of help, we should ask ourselves, “What is it about the federal government that qualifies it to fix economic problems?”

Government has two characteristics that some might view as advantages. First, it is very large. And second, it has the means to force everyone (or nearly everyone) to follow its dictates.

But are these assets or impediments to success in reviving our economy? Remember that the government possessed these same advantages as it drove the economy into the ditch. Might it be that these advantages are the root of the problem?

We hear a lot today about systemic risk, yet no-one seems to recognize that the most critical attribute needed to create systemic economic risk is the ability to steer a high percentage of the economy down a single path. Our federal government, through its immense size and its power to broadly dictate economic decisions, is the entity that is the most capable of doing just that. When it comes to systemic risk, central planning by the federal government represents the ultimate example.

Maybe we just need do something to ensure that the government’s systemic influences are beneficial. Maybe more laws, more regulations, additional agencies, more bureaucrats, different legislators, and/or a messianic president can magically transform government into a guarantor of economic prosperity.

It is difficult to understand how rational adults can still believe that such a transformation is possible. Even if one just reviews the fruits of the last hundred years of government intervention, one must conclude that there is no evidence whatsoever that such intervention has been beneficial to our economic well-being. Just consider education, health care, Social Security, welfare, rent control ... and now mortgage lending and monetary policy.

Summary of Part I (To read Part I go to ValleyPatriot.com): Three actions of our federal government were outlined as prime causes of the current economic crisis:

First, federal insistence that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac provide a guaranteed market for mortgages to low income borrowers. By 2005, 52% of Freddie’s and Fannie’s loans consisted of such high-risk lending.

Second, changes in the Community Reinvestment Act in 1995 dictated elevated levels of high-risk “investments” by banks in low-income communities. This dictum was enforced by the Federal Reserve.

Third, the resulting real estate boom was supercharged by the Federal Reserve’s low interest rates (a repeat of the Federal Reserve policy that caused the Great Depression).

Let’s contrast the requirements of a sound economy with the offerings of government.

In the end, a sound economic system steers available labor and capital to the production of the goods and services most desired by consumers and does so as efficiently as possible. But the process of getting to this “end” is more complex than any human being can possibly imagine. Today there are many millions of products and services; each of which are dependent for their production and distribution on thousands of other products, services, and labor skills.

The market signaling and decision making needed to orchestrate this process is incredibly complex. Every day it involves billions of good decisions and, because we are fallible beings, millions of not so good decisions ... some down-right boneheaded.

But therein lays the genius of the free market. In a free market, economic decisions are made by those with their own assets at risk or by people who, because of their past track record of good decision making, are entrusted by others to make decisions on their behalf.

Every economic decision has at least two consequences. The first is its actual economic result ... good or bad. The sec-ond is the impact of the decision’s success on the reputation of the decision maker.

In a free market, decision making powers are continuously adjusted and re-assigned based on the abilities and track records of all participants, from the mail room to the board room and from the entry-level engineer to the chief scientist. At any given time the allocation of decision making authority is imperfect, but adjustments are continually made to improve it.

If you consistently make good decisions, your decision-making responsibilities will grow. If not, they will be curtailed.

So what characteristic does our government possess that leads to an expectation that it can improve matters by substituting its judgment and policies for the billions of informed and interconnected decisions being made daily by those in the private sector ... decisions made by those who have acquired their decision-making authority based on merit and objective evaluation?

Well, let’s count the ways.

Government decision makers spend their time in government buildings isolated from the issues faced by those actually designing, producing, transporting and selling goods and services. They are largely ignorant of the tradeoffs that must be considered to succeed in these endeavors.

Even if we could magically cure the bureaucrats' ignorance (an impossibility), it is unlikely that their decisions would improve since they are not rewarded based on the economic merits of their decisions. Instead, they are rewarded based on the political impact of their actions. This is true from the president all the way down to the lowest level bureaucrat.

Policies at the highest level are bought and paid for by special interests: unions, ethnic groups, and business interests; all of which are looking to distort economic decision making to their advantage.

If one compares how decisions are made in the private sector to the corrupt political process employed by government, no rational person can prefer the latter or be surprised when government policies and programs trigger economic malaise and failure.

The cure, in a nutshell, is to eliminate government interference in economic decision making. To do so will require a massive reduction in the size of government, exactly the opposite of what is occurring today.

Extracting government from the various economic spheres where its tentacles have penetrated will be difficult but not impossible. There are several precedents: elimination of the Interstate Commerce Commission, welfare reform, and airline deregulation. In all cases, the result was a substantial and incontrovertible economic benefit.

To accomplish the needed downsizing of government, there needs to be a greater awareness of the detrimental effects of government interference in our economy and the miracle that is represented by capitalism and free markets. The voters must see big government for the criminal enterprise it has become, realize that it is destroying their economic well being, and be sufficiently enraged to cut its lifeline - the income tax. The Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution (the authority for implementing an income tax; a tax that was specifically prohibited by our Founding Fathers) should be repealed. In the meantime, the highest marginal tax rate should be reduced rapidly to 10% and corporate income taxes eliminated altogether (dividends, when paid, would be subject to the 10% rate, thus being taxed once, not twice).

This single event would lead to an explosion of unprecedented economic activity and prosperity. While the government roaches scurry about trying to figure out how to preserve their government jobs, the economy will soar, the housing market will rapidly recover, the unemployment rate will drop to under 5%, the DOW will shoot through 12,000, your 401k statement will be worth reading again, and your paycheck will actually contain most of what you earn.

The only downside to this prescription is that the resulting increase in economic activity will tend to restore government revenues, and then some fruitcake like Barney Frank will suggest that the government should try to help us again. When we experience the dramatic effects of this tax reduction, we will all know where to tell Barney Frank to stick it!

Stay tuned for Part III: Embracing Classic Liberalism, which will provide a prescription for the restoration of economic liberty and prosperity.

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



A COUCH WITH A VIEW

(Jon and Kate) + 8 = Heartache

Ray Shackett
VALLEY PATRIOT ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

I’m about to take on a topic I have been trying to avoid. But whether I like it or not, they are in the headlines, they are on the magazine covers and they are in millions of homes every Monday night. Jon and Kate Plus 8, the hit reality series on TLC that tells the story of the Gosselin clan starring, Jon the husband, Kate the wife and their 8 children - twin girls (2 girls) and sextuplets; (3 girls and 3 boys.) Now in its fifth season, the show has taken a terrible turn or an inevitable turn depending on your sense of reality TV irony. That irony, of course, is that given enough time a happy beginning is doomed for a destructive ending when cameras invade one’s lives 24/7 (see the happy newlyweds Nick Lachey and Jessica Simpson).

Jon and Kate began their spotlight journey two years ago when the Discovery Channel filmed 2 hour long specials based on the birth of the sextuplets. In 2007, TLC picked up the show as a weekly series. Over the past two years Jon and

Kate slowly began to separate in values. While both seemed to be dedicated to their 8 children, Jon became less enthusiastic about their “celebrity-hood” while Kate began embracing her new found fame writing books on parenting and speaking around the country to rabid fans. Even on screen, you get the sense that Jon is just not there while Kate plays up every moment as if the Hollywood Foreign Press is watching and taking notes. Add Kate’s nagging and controlling behavior and Jon’s laziness and woe-is-me demeanor and you have a recipe for great tabloid fodder.

The so-called “beginning of the end” started (conveniently) before the start of the fifth and current season. With Kate on the road promoting her new book, Jon took it upon himself to break away from the clan for a night of clubbing with friends. As with any celebrity out on the town, Jon was soon photographed by the paparazzi climbing into a car at 2 a.m. with a female companion. Adding juice to the story, there are the rumors Jon has been running around kissing college co-eds and carousing about town. The season

premiere in mid-May promised the once happy, if not semi-emotionally removed, husband and wife would be suffering for answers throughout the new season. Apparently, the marketing scheme worked as they drew in a record ten million viewers for the premiere.

Now, I believe nothing to be what is portrayed with this form of entertainment. “The true story of seven lives...” as MTV’s Real World claims. Sure, search the background of all these “real” people in any given reality show and chances are “aspiring actor/model” is in their bio. But I will give it to some of the more respectable networks like A & E, TLC, the History and Discovery Channels among others for their looks into the real lives of real people. Real people go through real situations like Jon and Kate - correct? Yes, but real people don’t bash their loved ones in the tabloids and try to position themselves as the next Oprah.

It’s apparent that fame has gotten the best of our friend Kate. As mentioned, she has always been a self proclaimed control freak. But now it’s easy to see by the way she dresses, the Gucci sunglasses,

the styled hair and the way she carries herself on camera Kate has another agenda. Watching the new season I see a woman looking for viewers to take sides, I see a man looking for viewers to give him break and let his family be. I see a mother doing what she thinks is best for her children but may be a bit disillusioned by what is motivating her.

I see a father who needs a break once in a while as he remains the constant parental figure in his children’s lives. And I see children who could be hurt in the long run if Mom and Dad don’t pull the reality TV plug while wounds can still be mended when the cameras go dark. Shamelessly stealing a great line from SNL - No one wants to watch Jon Plus 4 and Kate Plus 4.

Ray Shackett is the co-host of Merrimack Magazine Afternoon Edition and host of Living For The Weekend on 980 WCAP. For questions, comments or suggestions, email Ray at ray@980wcap.com



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4 pm						*	*
5pm	*	*	*	*	*		
7pm	*	*	*	*			

Schedule subject to change, check website for updates - www.bikramyogamv.com

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Riverbank Shred Days



Michael and Sonia Ohanian of Andover with Branch Manager Linda Firth at RiverBank's third annual Shred Day on Saturday May 16 at its North Andover Headquarters branch.

Approximately 80 people from the community came to RiverBank's North Andover, Massachusetts branch on 30 Massachusetts Avenue to shred their personal and sensitive documents and have them safely destroyed in bulk.

"Shred Day is a wonderful service provided by RiverBank. We are grateful that they want to protect our security and privacy free of charge," said Mr. and Mrs. Ohanian. "Doing business with RiverBank is an absolutely wonderful experience. The employees are beyond helpful and always go out of their way to be of service."

Nearly 2 tons of paper were shredded and recycled over the course of the three-hour event. RiverBank, a community-focused bank providing "friendlier, easier, and better service" held its Shred Day as

a free public service, to help protect the greater North Andover area residents from becoming victims of identity theft.

Ms. D'Emanuele was the winner of a personal shredder during a free raffle at RiverBank's North Andover Shred Day, at its Massachusetts branch on 30 Massachusetts Avenue. Approximately 80 community members came to shred their personal and sensitive documents and have them safely destroyed in bulk.

This year RiverBank shredded and recycled 4.2 tons of paper at its three Shred Day events in Derry, NH, Methuen and North Andover. RiverBank, a community-focused bank providing "friendlier, easier, and better service" held its Shred Days as a free public service, to help protect the Merrimack Valley from becoming victims of identity theft.

North Andover Senior Activities

SUPPORT THE TROOPS— Every month the Senior Center sends out a care package to a soldier in Iraq or Afghanistan. We rely on the generous donations of the community to do this. Some suggested items to drop off to us are: toiletries, magazines, books, powdered drink mixes, candy, snacks, small boxes of cereal, cookies, small containers of laundry detergent, batteries (AA), toiletpaper, sunscreen, hand sanitizer, granola bars, lip balm and eye drops. Please drop the items off at the temporary office of the Senior Center.

GOLF CLINIC FOR SENIORS – Wednesday mornings 9:00 – 10:00 at Rolling Green Golf Course May 27 – June 24, 2009, \$150.00. Registration forms available at Senior Center. Call 978-688-9560.

BASIC COMPUTER CLASSES – Wednesday mornings, cost \$4.00 per class. Learn to turn on the computer, set up e-mail, search the internet or just come in and ask for help in a particular area. Call 978-688-9560 for an appointment.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY CLASSES— Wednesday afternoons 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. for 4 weeks for \$25.00. Bring in your camera and learn how to use and download pictures on the computer. Send pictures to friends and family. Sign up soon, class size is limited to 4 people every 4 weeks. Call 978-688-9560.

LOW VISION SUPPORT GROUP – Wednesdays for 4 weeks starting June 4, 2009, 12:30 -2:00 p.m. Call 978-688-9560 to sign up. Transportation provided.

NATURAL HEALING FOR STRESS RELIEF - 20 minute treatments available by appointment on Friday afternoons starting June 5, 2009. Call 978-688-9560 for appointment.

MASSAGE THERAPY— Certified Massage Therapist is taking appointments every other Monday starting on June 15, and June 29, 2009. 15 minute chair massages for \$10.00. Call 978-688-9560 for an appointment.

NEW BEGINNINGS – Fridays at 12:30 – 2:00 p.m. at the Senior Center. This group is open to the public and is a weekly meeting to explore how we deal with transitions in our life. Lu Bonano from Beacon Hospice facilitates this group and is a bereavement coordinator.

Golf Passes: North Andover Country Club (a member only Country Club) has once again extended a special Monday afternoon invitation to North Andover resident only over 60. (NO GUESTS) To purchase your pass stop by the Senior Center, ID must be shown for proof of residency. The following Monday dates apply June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, July 6, 13, 20, 27, August 3, 10, 24, 31. The golf course will not be available on August 17. This pass will allow you access into the Country Clubs golf course proper dress code is required. The fee for a 9 hole game is \$15.00 and for a 18 hole game \$20.00. Golf passes are \$6.00.

Change in location - Walking Group

Our Walking group will now meet every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning @ 9:00 at the Memorial Park behind the Stevens Library on Main Street. It's FREE and open to all ages and ability levels. Facilities are available at the Library.

Triad Shredding Program – Thursday and Friday afternoon 1:00-3:00. You are responsible for the material to be shredded. We ask that you limit your shredding to only necessary items. Please sign up at reception desk, you must have an appointment for use of machine.

Cell Phones – With regret, the Essex County Triad Program (Essex County Sheriff's Department and Essex County District Attorney Office) has suspended the distribution of all 911 Emergency Cellular Phones to Essex County Triad due to changes in service. The cellular companies are no longer required to allow access to 911 on analog phones. Please return all 911 Emergency Cellular Phones to the North Andover Senior center. We continue to accept cell phones and ink cartridges for our recycle program. Thank you for your support in this fundraising effort. Phones and ink cartridges can be dropped off at the Senior Center at any time.

Sketching & Oil Painting Classes - Thursdays, 1:00 -300 at the Senior Center. Mary Ann Manning, who is an award-winning artist and is geared to all ability levels, teaches this class.

Spring is here and it's time for the 2nd Annual High Tea Fund Raiser at the Wyndham Hotel, Andover, MA on Sunday, June 7, 2009 from 12:30-3:00. This year's Tea will feature a Fashion Show by Appleseed's Retail Store. Tickets are on sale now at the Senior Center and cost \$20.00 per person, children under 16, \$5.00. For more information call Barbara @ 978-688-9560 or e-mail Bchampigny@townofnorthandover.com if you want to purchase a block of tickets. This event is open to the public; bring your granddaughter, or your favorite niece!

Outreach Blood Pressure Clinics are back! Debbie Rillahan, the public health nurse for the Town of North Andover, will be joining Donna Delaney, the Outreach Coordinator, in providing clinics on the following dates and times:

June 11	Fountain Drive	10:00
June 11	Foulds Terrace	11:00

More dates will be published in the next newsletter.

MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP – "Man to Man" A support group for men who are: living alone for the first time, are unhappy being retired, are experiencing health problems causing stress, recently lost a loved one or have had to give up independent activities, such as driving. The first meeting is Thursday, June 4th, 2009 at 10:30 following the Men's Breakfast and will be on the first Thursday of each month.

Dr. Stupnytskyi, MD is now accepting new patients for his Internal Medicine Practice- Please see our ad on page

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City Council Circus: From Page 1

offering no evidence to support her claims.

Under the city charter, the day-to-day operations of the Lawrence police fall squarely on the chief of police who answers solely to the mayor on management issues. Romero accused the council of trying to “inject politics into the running of the police department” and warned councilors that the public discussions about take home vehicles put police officers lives at risk.

Romero says that prior public discussions by the city council about officers taking home undercover cars crossed the line when councilors demanded the colors, makes, models and VIN numbers of the vehicles undercover narcotics officers were using as well as where they lived.

Putting Lives At Risk

“A number of our police officers pose as drug dealers and drug buyers. In this instance an officer was posing as a drug dealer. He had a drug dealer with him who had a loaded gun. He [the drug dealer] started talking about the vehicles that were being utilized by the undercover unit. In that case, they only had a couple of them, not the one our officer happened to be in, thankfully. He [the drug dealer] said to our officer, ‘have to watch out, they are driving this, and driving this and gave the details of our undercover units.’ Later on in another incident, individuals named other vehicles we were using. And that came right after our discussion [at the council meetings] about the Escalade that was being used. Narcotics work is probably the most dangerous work in policing, barring nothing else. And believe me in Lawrence we are deeply entrenched,” Romero said.

Councilor Alvarez Rodriguez, who was in on those previous discussions and who asked detailed questions about the vehicles, stated she now believed it was wrong to publicly discuss “that level of detailed information”, prompting Council President Patrick Blanchette to blame Romero for the threat to the officers’ lives.

“I believe it was the chief who provided us a list of the make and the VIN numbers of the vehicles, and the color of the vehicles. And I don’t think the council did anything wrong,” Blanchette said.

But Romero shot back “that information about the cars did not come from this side of the table when someone asked about some of our undercover cars, saying [publicly] they have this car, they have that car. That discussion came from that side of the table,” he said pointing to city councilors.

But Blanchette deflected blame saying, “Perhaps people would be more concerned when some of the undercover cars are on the front page of the paper in a [police] sting. Should people read that too?”

Romero pleaded with councilors again not to engage in public discussion about where undercover officers live or where

they garage the unmarked vehicles saying that they could not return cars to the police station at the end of their shift because they would be easily recognized by drug dealers and criminals.

Councilor Nick Kolofos asked Romero what the furthest distance was from the city, that an officer takes home his car. Romero said he would not reveal the name of the town but that it was “approximately 30 miles away.

That’s when Councilor Blanchette blurted out the town and state Romero was referring to, causing a gasp in the audience.

Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan responded saying, “Some of these statements, when people speak before they think, they are putting police officers in harms way. We need to be very careful. I am awfully surprised that elected officials don’t understand that.”

Blanchette Proposal Rejected

Sullivan said he was happy that the majority of the council rejected Blanchette’s proposal to end the take home policy and that he was happy that Romero “confronted the lies and really got the facts out about what’s been happening.” He continued, “Now, that left a couple of them bitter and they can’t accept the fact that their strategy failed so they have to continue. It’s been a sign that some of the councilors are very bitter people. They realize their political dreams are gone. They are hanging on for the next seven months and are trying to disrupt as many things as they can because they are angry,” said Sullivan.

Councilors Moran, Blanchette, Silva and Alvarez-Rodriguez all voted to support Blanchette’s proposal to end the take home policy for undercover police vehicles. Supporting the chief and his officers were councilors Fielding, Abdoo, Twomey and Kolofos.

Councilor Disrupts Meeting, Calls Police

City Councilor Grisel Silva called police during one budget hearing last month, accusing a city worker of disrupting the meeting. Silva chairs the budget and finance committee of the city council. The committee is responsible for approving the \$250+ million city budget.

Silva began the conflict during a discussion about the DPW budget. DPW Director Frank McCann was before the council to discuss his budget when she called out the name of Planning Director Michael Sweeney in the audience. Silva berated the city worker and when he began to answer her, she called him out of order.

Sweeney answered the councilor from his seat several times saying that if she

It’s been a sign that some of the councilors are very bitter people. They realize their political dreams are gone. They are hanging on for the next seven months and are trying to disrupt as many things as they can because they are angry.”



Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan

was going to call him out and address him publicly from the council table he was going to answer her allegations in public. The two traded barbs and insults until Silva recessed the meeting and called police. Department heads and city employees slated to make a presentation on their budget were left shaking their heads waiting to find out if the meeting would continue as Chief Romero met with her in the city council office. The chief was accompanied by Deputy Chief Driscoll.

Silva demanded that Sweeney be removed from the meeting and arrested. When Chief Romero refused to arrest or remove Sweeney from the public meeting, Silva came back into council chambers and closed off budget discussions by recessing the hearing until Monday, June 1st.

Sweeney said after the meeting that the councilor’s constant outbursts at public meetings and what he called “disgraceful behavior, is proof that she is unfit to hold public office.”

“She is an embarrassment to the city of Lawrence and she should resign immediately,” Sweeney added.

“The history of this is,” Sweeney continued. “Councilor Silva and another city councilor have been harassing myself and members of my staff. Apparently she does not like the fact that I will not hire any of her political hack friends. And she does not like the fact that we took over the operation of the city’s parking garages, that were consistently losing between 20-40K a year under DPW. We are now operating in the black. We are showing a profit and saving the taxpayers money.”

Silva and Blanchette have actively fought to take the management of the city’s parking garages away from Sweeney and placing it back under the control of DPW Director Frank McCann. Both Silva and Blanchette are public supporters of McCann.

Sweeney also said that Silva had done tremendous damage to the city’s image by attacking the police at public meetings and added, “I find it shameful that a city councilor would call the police, and demand they come down to city hall because she disrupted her own meeting. Especially in the City of Lawrence, where our police officers have enough real crime to deal with.”

Sweeney told Silva several times during their public argument that he would be happy to stop responding to her publicly if she stopped addressing him publicly. But Silva continued to lose her temper before eventually calling police.

“She is wasting their time to respond to a meeting at city hall,” Sweeney said.

“It’s a circus.” “The city is facing a ten million-dollar deficit and all they can talk about is \$90,000 stipends for city employees, police officer’s take home vehicles and how much they hate me. How is that solving the city’s economic crisis? I just don’t get it.”

“Punishing” the Administration

After more accusations of corruption and law breaking by members of the city council against Mayor Sullivan and his administration, the next causality of city council antics was Acting Economic Development Director Tom Schiavone. For nine years Schiavone has been performing the duties of acting Economic Development Director and councilors have long criticized Sullivan for not sending his name down for permanent appointment.

Last month Sullivan did just that, nominating the former Dowling appointee to serve in the position permanently. But when the council took up the measure

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Alvarez-Rodriguez, Silva and Blanchette spearheaded the effort to defeat Schiavone’s appointment, saying that Sullivan should have done so a long time ago.

Councilor Alvarez-Rodriguez, a candidate for mayor, said she believes the next mayor ought to make the appointment to that position and accused Sullivan of back room deals as well as manipulating the process.

Both Silva and Blanchette railed against Schiavone’s appointment garnering enough votes to kill his nomination for the job.

Budget and Finance Director Mark Andrews, a frequent target of councilor’s attacks, maintained his composure and professionalism as he was insulted and verbally accosted over a period of several meetings. Andrews, who was responsible for the budget being passed on time last year for the first time in recent memory, tried to placate councilors and refused to engage in confrontations with them, which only escalated the public ridiculing and baseless claims.

Stipends and Furloughs, Do as I say ...

Given that most city workers are now taking work furloughs (taking unpaid days off) to save money in the city budget, Councilor Frank Moran said he believes the city council should “lead by example” and give up part of their pay as well. “We are asking our employees to take ten days off and I believe it’s only right that we do that as well,” Moran told The Valley Patriot. “If we can stop one family from going through the tough situation of losing their job, to me it will be worth it.”

City Council president Patrick Blanchette referred the issue to the budget sub-committee where Councilor Dave Abdo made a motion to accept the pay furlough. Not one of the other members would second his motion. City Councilor Grisel Silva said she couldn’t afford to take the pay cut and the matter was “tabled” and never brought back up by Silva or her colleagues.

In 2004 councilors made only \$5,200 a year, today they get-paid \$15,000 a year, plus city paid health insurance, cell phones, blackberries, and out of state

travel.

“We are facing an economic crisis in the city,” Mayor Sullivan said.

“And I don’t see anything productive happening at those meetings. They are more concerned with their own bitterness and anger than they are in helping me keep the city running and maintaining city services. I mean, we have more than a million dollar shortfall in DPW alone and I have never heard one question about that. We have state funding being cut and 40 DPW workers being laid off, permanent employees taking a pay cut through furloughs, we are downsizing everything we can in the city to save money and they just can’t get their act together long enough to see how serious this situation is.”

An Irrelevant Council?

Two years ago, because of the city council’s inability to get a budget passed on time or follow legal procedures, Mayor Sullivan had to get state officials from the Department of Revenue to approve the city budget without a vote of the council.

“When that happened,” Sullivan continued, “ they rendered themselves irrelevant and they ended up having no say at all about the spending in that budget. If it comes to that, I have no problem saying I will go down that road again to keep the employees in the city getting paid, and to maintain vital city services. Now, I took a furlough and agreed to take a pay cut, as have all of my department heads. Most people who work for the city understand that it’s a matter of taking a cut or losing your job. I don’t see the councilors taking a cut and helping out the city,” Sullivan said.

All members of the city council are up for reelection in November. The Preliminary elections are in September. Mayor Sullivan is unable to run again because of term limit restrictions.



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 morning from 10am-noon. You can email your comments to Tdugjr@aol.com .

Women and retirement: put some “life” in the mix

Gregory Loosigian
FINANCIAL SERVICES PROFESSIONAL
NYLIFE, INSURANCE COMPANY

Planning for retirement is a complex undertaking for all of us, but for women, it’s especially challenging.

One reason is that women live longer than men, so they have more years of retirement to prepare for. Another is that they spend more of their active years out of the workforce — in many cases, raising children or caring for aging relatives — which gives them less opportunity to build up retirement savings and private pensions.

As a result, women wind up more dependent than men on Social Security to pay for retirement, and Social Security often isn’t enough. On average, it pays just 40% of what a wage earner made in her working years.1

But as a woman, you can improve your prospects for a secure retirement through smart long-term planning:

- Start saving on a regular basis. Even \$20 a week can add up to a decent nest egg, especially if you start young.
- Take retirement into account when choosing a job. Ask potential employers if they offer a retirement plan and/or pension plan. Find out how they work. Look for employers that match at least part of your contribution to a retirement account.
- Work as long as you can. The longer you earn income, the more time you

have to amass savings. The older you are when you stop working, the fewer years of retirement you’ll need to budget for. Delaying the start of Social Security benefits up to age 70 will result in a larger monthly check, too.

• Purchase a life insurance policy. Permanent life insurance provides guaranteed death benefit protection for your loved ones in the event of your death. Additionally, it offers valuable “living” benefits and tax advantages. For example, as a policyholder, you can access accumulated cash value through loans and withdrawals2 to supplement your retirement income. Plus, these funds can also be used for college expenses, as collateral for a small business loan, or any other happily anticipated or unexpected event.

Using life insurance is a little-known option that can be a big help for women down the road.

For additional information on the information or topic(s) discussed, please contact Gregory J. Loosigian at 978-273-8377.

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Our Lady of Good Counsel School Student Council Inauguration

Jeff Guerra - The 2009/2010 Our Lady of Good Counsel School Student Council had its Inauguration Ceremony on Friday May 22nd. The Keynote Speaker was the Honorable Mayor of Lawrence, Michael J Sullivan. Mrs. Paula Delmonte, Assistant principal and Election Chair and Organizer, was glad to have the Mayor here for his final time. "Mayor Sullivan has been very supportive of our school and our election process," said Delmonte. "He's graciously given his time to talk to our incoming council and always has given excellent words of wisdom and support."

The Mayor then handed out Official City of Lawrence Citations recognizing each student for being elected to the Council. A reception was held afterwards in the school gymnasium.



PHOTOS: JEGG GUERRA

Notre Dame High School Student part of grand prize winning Gearheads Team

LAWRENCE – Kane Weber, 14, of North Andover and a freshman at Notre Dame High School of Lawrence has his first college scholarship thanks to the Science behind the Sports Club at the Lawrence Boys and Girls Club.

Kane, his sister, Chasity, age 9, and five other Boys and Girls Club members worked with adult mentors from Raytheon every other Monday for several months testing their hypothesis that a larger gear ratio would give the best performance on a bicycle model they constructed with the help of the Raytheon engineers.

Kane and his sister worked on the scientific approach to the project, making a very large poster display similar to a lab report listing their findings and conclusions. They included pictures of



their model and the team.

At the Science of Sports Science Fair 2009 held recently at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, Kane's team had 11 minutes to introduce and present their project and conclusions. Judges included Patriots linebacker Jerod Mayo, owner Bob Kraft and Raytheon CEO, William Swanson.

Kane says, "There were 11 teams competing that day. We viewed the other projects, toured the stadium and got Mr. Kraft's autograph, but the suspense was high as we waited to hear how our team had done. All the other teams were presented with trophies except us.

Finally we heard "Gearheads of Lawrence" called as the Grand Prize winners." In addition to a heavy trophy, each member of the team received a \$1000 scholarship to be applied to college

Mr. Pastore, an admirable Central Catholic teacher

Sara Matar
HIGH SCHOOL REPORTER

Have you ever had a teacher who made a change in your life?

In my third year at Central Catholic High School, a teacher has made an impact on me. His name is Mr. Pastore.

Although he is my math teacher, I would also like to call him my morality teacher.

Mr. Pastore has taught at Central thirteen years, including this school year. Besides teaching math, he coaches the golf team, moderates the math league, and peer leaders at Central. As a hobby, he also enjoys coaching basketball. Being a teacher, coach, father, and friend may be hard work, but Mr. Pastore has a deep love for what he does.

Mr. Pastore said that he loves teaching and that he has the best job in America.

He wakes up every morning eager to go to school to see all his students and friends. "Teaching keeps me thinking young, feeling young, and acting young," He says.

He really is a kid at heart. He also says, "I love school, but I still get excited with the thought of a potential snow day, a late start, an assembly, or any other activity that breaks up the day."

Mr. Pastore has developed relationships with his students. He is a unique teacher and he has a different method in teaching.

In my second semester, Mr. Pastore began reading a book to my class called "Tuesdays with Morrie" by Mitch Albom. It is a true story of sociologist Morrie Schwartz and his relationship with a student. The book is about the lessons of life that Mitch learns from his teacher, Morrie, who is dying.

Mr. Pastore has read this book to all his classes over the last ten years. It has been a tradition ever since. "It moved me so much that I had to pass it on to my students," he says. It is obvious that Mr. Pastore believes in the life lessons that the book teaches. Oftentimes you can hear him quoting Morrie from the book and, I have to admit, I also found myself doing the same. I asked Mr. Pastore which of Morrie's quotes he liked most.

or a summer camp focusing on math or science.

Kane works at Kraft Foods in Woburn as part of the HireEd program at Notre Dame.

He spends one day a week doing data entry and inventory management, thereby earning the majority of his tuition at college preparatory Notre Dame High. Kane recently participated in the Walk for



"Once you get your finger on the important questions, you can't turn away from them. As I see it they have to do with love, responsibility, spirituality, and awareness," He answers

Mr. Pastore, like Morrie, believes that people need to seek happiness "by doing for others, we find purpose and meaning in our lives," Pastore said. We all must learn to find what truly makes us happy in this life. What it comes down to, is having good relationships with others.

Mr. Pastore teaches that human beings just want to be loved. And he is living his life based on the true messages of Morrie. Mr. Pastore is loved by all his students and I am thankful he is my teacher. Although the school year is coming to a close, the lessons I have learned from Mr. Pastore will stay with me as I go through life.

I would just like to thank Mr. Pastore for teaching my classmates and me so much, whether it's math or life lessons. We will always remember him!



Sarah Matar is going into her senior year at Central Catholic High School and is the Valley Patriot's new High School reporter. You can send story ideas or comments to Sara at:

sara06matar@yahoo.com

Hunger in Boston as part of the school's Campus Ministry team, raising money from his colleagues at Kraft and others.

This well rounded young man says his favorite part of the Gearheads experience was "getting to know and work with everyone.

We built a friendship working together." Kane is certainly on his way to a very impressive resume for college.

Lantigua wins local funding in state budget

BOSTON - State Representative William Lantigua (D-Lawrence) announced today that four of his funding requests were included in the fiscal 2010 state budget approved by the House, despite a steep revenue shortfall that resulted in the near-elimination of local earmarks.

"I've been fighting hard to bring something home," Lantigua said of his negotiations during the week-long House budget debate, which was marked by deep, widespread cuts and grim projections for the year ahead. "I wish I could have gotten more, but everybody here is facing the same reality."

Lantigua said that two local organizations received 75 percent of fiscal 2009 funding levels: International

Institute of Greater Lawrence received \$123,000, and Family Service, Inc. received \$37,500. Meanwhile, the YWCA of Greater Lawrence was funded at \$87,500, half the amount it received last year.

In addition, Lantigua secured approximately \$1 million for a statewide foreclosure prevention pilot program, which will receive 40 percent of the Division of Banks line item estimated at \$2.5 million.

Nearly two dozen other requests for Lawrence non-profits, many of which had received funding in past years, were left out altogether.

Faced with the current economic crisis, Lantigua said, House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Charles Murphy (D-Burlington) had maintained his hard-

line stance against earmarks – budget amendments filed for explicit, usually local, uses. While advocating strongly for all Lawrence-based organizations, Lantigua was able to include funding for International Institute, Family Service, and the YWCA in larger line items devoted to social services and health and human services.

Although he acknowledged his disappointment that more of his funding requests were not included, Lantigua noted that many of his colleagues were even less fortunate. "A lot of people walked away with nothing," he said. "And when I say nothing, I mean zero."

State funding for local schools remained unchanged from fiscal 2009. Lawrence Public Schools received \$136 million, while Greater Lawrence Technical School

held steady at \$21.4 million. Lawrence will receive \$16.5 million in state lottery revenues, down from \$24.2 million last year.

On a brighter note, Lawrence could receive as much as \$7 million from the state federal stabilization fund, part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, popularly known as the federal stimulus package.

Lantigua vowed to pursue additional local funding options as debate moves to the Senate in the coming weeks, and when the legislature debates supplemental appropriations later in the year.

"I don't know how much it will help, but I'm going to keep bugging people for more money," Lantigua said.

"People are hurting, and I'm doing it for them."

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK!

LAWRENCE – Sal Lupoli endorses Dave Abdoo for Mayor. Sal Lupoli, owner of Sal's Pizza and Sal's Riverwalk in Lawrence made a stunning announcement last week, making his preferences known about who should be the next mayor of Lawrence. City Councilor David Abdoo held a fundraiser at Sal's Riverwalk where Sal himself made an appearance and took the microphone saying he supports Abdoo in his bid to be the next mayor. Abdoo has long been considered one of the front-runners in the race and an endorsement by Lupoli may keep that buzz alive despite the large number of candidates already in the race. Also in attendance supporting Abdoo were Police Chief John Romero, the Sullivan Brothers and Lawrence Planning Director Michael Sweeney.

HAVERHILL – Sources close to School Committeeman Scott Wood say he is giving serious consideration to running for City Council. Wood would not comment on the record, but he did indicate that he has made his decision on the matter and promises to let The Valley Patriot know as soon as he is ready to make an announcement. Keep an eye on the website (valleypatriot.com) for an update as soon as we get it.

GEORGETOWN - The Northeast Independent Living Program (NILP) will host its annual Golf Tournament for Independence on Thursday, June 18, 2009 at the Georgetown Country Club. 8a.m. shotgun start. \$150 fee per golfer (includes cart, fees, bag drop, breakfast and lunch, t-shirt). Sponsorship opportunities are available. Contact Kevin Farrell at 978-687-4288 for more information.

LAWRENCE - Pig Roast -The Knights of Columbus on Market Street in Lawrence is holding its semi-annual pig roast on Saturday June, 20 at 1pm. Pork, baked potato, old fashioned baked beans, corn on the cob, watermelon and coleslaw will be served. Tickets are \$20 each. For reservations please call (978) 687-9834 or (978) 686-5525.

N. ANDOVER – Here's one for Ronnie Ford, Tea and SCONES! The High Tea and Fashion show by Appleseeds of N. Andover will be held at the Wyndham Hoel in Andover, Sunday June 7th from 12:30 to 3pm. Tickets are \$20, children 16 and under are \$5. English teas, scones, miniature pastries, chocolates and assorted finger sandwiches. The proceeds will go to benefit the seniors of North Andover. For tickets call Barbara at the N. Andover senior center at 978-688-9560.

LAWRENCE - Hero Marine Enters Mayor's Race –Dan Contnoir's job as a marine was to drag the dead bodies off the battlefield in Iraq, sometimes under heavy fire. Now Contnoir has entered the mayor's race. His candidacy was featured on the Boston TV news networks last month. Contnoir is also well known for defending his family against a bunch of drunken, rowdy teens who were throwing rocks and bottles into the windows of his home late at night. Contnoir shot into the crowd

of scum and was shamefully charged by the Lawrence Police when a stray bullet hit one of the teenagers. A jury found Contnoir not guilty but police chief Romero decided to punish Contnoir anyway by taking away his gun permit (not Romero's

most distinguished moments). I, for one am thrilled that Contnoir was set free by a jury and entertained by the fact that Chief Romero seems very nervous at the prospect of Contnoir becoming his boss. Contnoir joins Marcos Devers, Julia Silverio, Willie Lantigua, Pedro Payano, Dave Abdoo, Nilka Alvarez-Rodriguez, and Israel Reyes seeking the city's top spot on election day.

FLORIDA – One of the prime suspects in the disappearance of young Andy Puglisi decades ago was found murdered in Florida last month. To learn more about the Andy Puglisi case or the movie "Have you Seen Andy?" you can visit <http://www.haveyouseenandy.com>.

LAWRENCE - Nunzio Changes his mind. Remember a few months ago when former Councilor Nunzio DiMarca stood up at a school committee meeting and called for the removal of Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy? A funny thing happened shortly after that meeting. I ran into DiMarca who said he wanted to come on my radio show on WCAP and let the people know he changed his mind. "When I look at his accomplishments as an educator myself, I cannot dispute all the good work he has done, increased test scores, lower drop out rates, I spoke out of emotion and I was wrong," DiMarca told my Saturday morning audience. Less than a week later, I received a call informing me that DiMarca now has a new job teaching at Lawrence High School.

LAWRENCE - April Showers Bring Cell Towers. District "A" city council candidate April Lyskowski is now under attack by the Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association (which is controlled by Patrick Blanchette, her former fiancée) because her condo association is considering allowing a cell antenna on top of their building. The communications company making the proposal will pay the condo association a monthly fee for allowing the antenna on the building and the money will go directly to the association for improvements to the property. But the neighborhood group's newsletter and their mentor Patrick Blanchette are on the attack stating publicly that April is a corrupt city official who got some inside deal and will personally profit from the antenna going up. At the last Prospect Hill meeting, Blanchette told the group that April, as an employee of the city's planing department, had a conflict of interest because, he stated that she was involved in the approval process by the city. "The fact is, Ann Marie Doherty worked on that project," Planning Director Mike Sweeney said. "April had nothing to do with it." It is easy to see where all this is coming from. April nearly beat Blanchette two years ago when she ran against him for council and Blanchette (who has YET to pay his federal taxes) is working overtime to try and find a way to destroy April's reputation so that either he or one of his hand picked cronies can run for the seat in November. I just think it is disgraceful that a neighborhood group would partake in this kind of character

assassination regardless of where they stand on cell towers. But they are puppets for Blanchette and we all know his M.O.

TOPSFIELD - The Northshore Youth Symphony Orchestra (NYSO) will be scheduling auditions for young musicians. NYSO is widely recognized as a premier youth orchestra and music ensemble program of excellence for young musicians (ages 6-18) who play orchestral instruments and for vocalists grades 8-12. They serve over 275 students from 40 towns north of Boston providing 10 ensembles—Symphony Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, Intermezzo Orchestra, Overture and Prelude String Ensembles, Clarinet Choir, two flute choirs and the NYSO Chorale. NYSO will be holding auditions the week of June 8-13. Auditions may be scheduled by emailing their office manager at sperron.nyso@gmail.com or calling 978-578-

6353. NYSO presents four concerts each year and performs many outreach concerts. Auditions will take place at Trinity Episcopal Church in Topsfield, 124 River Road. For more information, go to their website at www.nysorchestra.org.

LAWRENCE –Blanchette still not paying his taxes. The next time you see Council President Patrick Blanchette you might want to ask him if he has made any payments on the nearly \$9,000 in back taxes he owes to the government. And, you also may want to ask the Sullivan administration what happened to the "investigation" into who "diverted" the IRS wage garnishment letter that was sent to city hall so that they could take the money out of his council paycheck. It is strange that a guy who lectures the mayor and the rest of the community about fiscal responsibility is himself a tax cheat but even more strange is the silence in the community over what happened to that letter sent by the IRS.

NEWBURYPORT – Write, Publish, be known. A free, public writer's workshop will be held at Jabberwocky Bookshop at the Tannery, 50 Water Street, Newburyport, Friday, June 12 at 7:00 p.m. Deidre Randall, CEO of Peter E. Randall Publisher and Blueline Publicity, and Skye Wentworth professional book publicist, will discuss small-press publishing and offer tips on low-budget traditional and Internet book promotion. Anyone searching for a publishing company or looking to build a strong marketing plan on a modest budget will benefit from this interactive workshop.

LAWRENCE - Martina Cruz spends \$1,000 on junket. Lawrence School Committeeman Martina Cruz is well known for complaining about how Superintendent Laboy and the Lawrence Public Schools spends money. At any given meeting, Cruz can be heard complaining about all expenses, large and small. Whether it is



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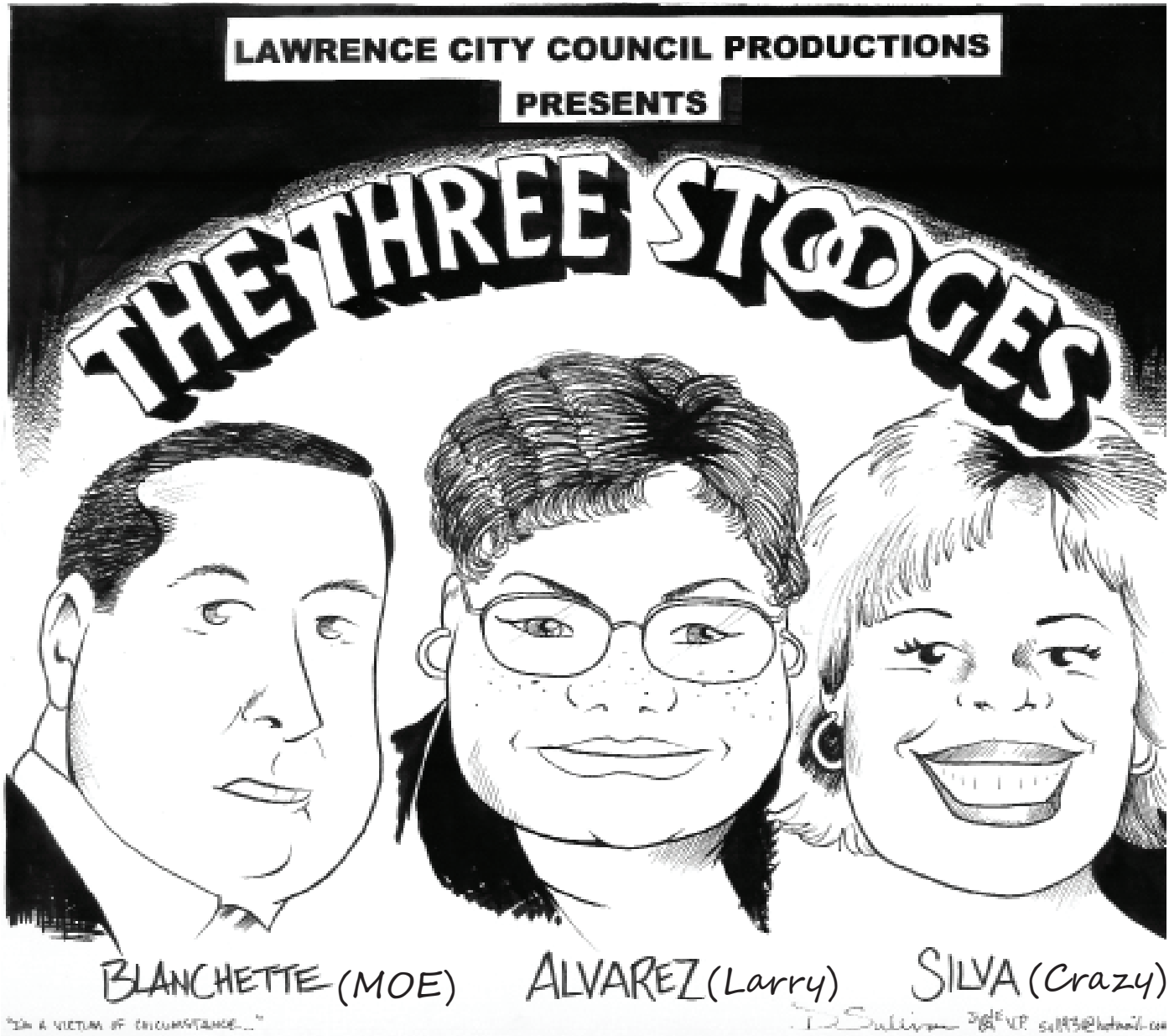
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Sal's PIZZA



an issue of salaries for administrators or out of state trips taken by school officials, Cruz has been consistent about pretending to pinch every penny and eliminating anything that might be considered waste. That is, unless it has to do with her taking free junket to San Diego, California on the dime of the Lawrence School Children. Then ... she seems far less concerned about education dollars being spent in the classroom. Last month, Cruz petitioned the Lawrence School Committee to pay her more than \$1,000 in reimbursements for the trip she took without prior approval of the committee. Surprisingly, Cruz's request was approved unanimously. So, I asked Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan (who serves as chairman) if Cruz had presented anything to the committee proving she actually attended the conference. "Uh... no" Sullivan answered. I then asked him if she had made a presentation to the committee showing what she learned at the "conference" she claimed to attend. After all, the school system should benefit from the "educational" trip the taxpayers paid for. "Well, no she didn't but we should require that," Sullivan answered. Finally, I asked Sullivan if she had even bothered to make copies of materials she supposedly received at this "conference" in San Diego and passed them out to fellow board members. Again, Sullivan answered in the negative. "Nope, not a thing", he replied. So, just remember that the next time Martina Cruz complains about frivolous spending and people taking advantage of out of state travel expenses.

LAWRENCE - The Pot Calling the Kettle Black? Mark Gray is a candidate for the Lawrence School Committee who has taken a strong public stand against those currently on the committee whom he believes were campaigning on city time or with city resources. But, Gray himself has been seen on multiple occasions abusing public participation at school committee meetings to discuss campaign issues. Last month, Gray held up campaign literature he claims was produced by the Lawrence Public Schools and complained that elected officials need to be held to a higher standard. Yet, both he and Mr. Maali (another candidate) have been using public participation to try and increase their name recognition, thereby creating a two minute TV commercial for their school committee campaign. This is nothing new to Lawrence politics, but those who express outrage and demand that taxpayer resources NEVER be used to benefit a candidate for office should lead by example. In order to have any credibility on this issue, both Gray and Maali must stop taking advantage of school



News Item: Lawrence City Councilors vote to take away police cars from undercover officers

The Valley Patriot is always interested in reader suggestions for local, political cartoons (valleypatriot@aol.com) You can email Dave at Sull93@aol.com.

committee's time to increase their visibility or get out their campaign message.

METHUEN - Mayor Billy Manzi announced on his blog last month (billmanzi.com) that Methuen High Principal Arthur Nicholson is stepping down to move to a new job as Assistant to the Superintendent. "Arthur's primary focus will be the High School project, which is moving in to high gear," Manzi said. "Arthur Nicholson has left a huge legacy of achievement at Methuen High School, and his retirement from that position is a loss for all of us. But Arthur, as he always does, has put the kids of Methuen first. His agreement to stay on, and to help us mold the educational component of our High School project, is a huge win for the project and the High School. We thank Arthur for all of his



service at Methuen High School, including two separate tenures as principal, as well as just about every other job in the school.

We are fortunate as a community to have had his service in that capacity, and we remain fortunate through his continued tenure in support of our school system," Manzi said.

LAWRENCE - Valley Patriot banned from Lawrence High School Library. Here's one for the books. Last month, a few Lawrence High School students wrote in asking if they could intern at The Valley Patriot. (By the way INTERNS ALWAYS WELCOME!) But, when they asked members of the faculty at the Lawrence High Library if there were copies of the paper available so they could take a look at the latest edition they were each told "that paper is banned from the

LHS library." Banned? Wow. I guess the faculty at Lawrence High doesn't want their students to read the only newspaper in the area that consistently trumpets the achievements of the teachers and faculty in the Lawrence public schools. Or, maybe they just don't want their students being bogged down with facts and opinions that do not comport with the indoctrination that occurs in the classroom on a daily basis. Either way, any student who wants to bring Valley Patriot's to school and leave them in the library for their fellow students to read should contact me at valleypatriot@aol.com. And you should let me know right away if any faculty member gives you a hard time or is seen throwing them out. Unlike Dalia Diaz, I recognize we do not have a constitutional right to have our newspaper

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Terra Luna Café creates a new buzz in Lawrence

Terra Luna Café is newest player in the burgeoning Lawrence dining scene. The new restaurant offers the city an upscale and hip slice of nirvana for both lunch and dinner. Starting with the reclusive entrance on the cobbled stone pedestrian street of Appleton Way, the newly renovated historic building reveals lavish architectural details and modern décor.

Local residents and owners Jose and Julia Del Carmen wanted to create a dining experience for the Merrimack Valley that was culturally as rich as the historic city itself. The young entrepreneurs created a team headed by Chef Richard Garcia (formerly of L'Andana Grill) to create a culinary variety of exquisite flavors of American, Italian and Latin dishes.

The super sleek bar and intimate seating create an unforgettable dining experience. Lunch features gourmet salads with fresh greens, homemade soups made daily, great appetizers and classic sandwiches ranging from an Angus sirloin burger to a Cuban sandwich. For dinner, the restaurant menu heats up with grilled sirloin steak, spicy seafood, and pasta and chicken dishes. The restaurant has an extensive wine list and a spectacular list of signature cocktails. Come Tuesday thru Sunday and enjoy lunch from 11am - 3 pm, or enjoy a night out for dinner from 5 pm-9 pm or stay late for cocktails as the bar serves until 1 a.m.

Terra Luna Café - 225 Essex Street (Appleton Way), Lawrence, MA. Phone: 978-747-7989. Website: www.terralunacafe.com

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GEORGETOWN



PHOTO: COURTESY

Erie 4 welcomes Action Ambulance to Georgetown

Erie Fire Association No. 4 (Erie 4) has entered into an agreement with Action Ambulance Service to house “Medic 4”, an Advanced Life Support (ALS) paramedic unit at the Erie 4 Fire Station on North Street.

The agreement represents the placement of the first and only ALS service located in town. Action Ambulance will use the location to service area communities.

Old Meets New

This agreement brings together the newest and most advanced pre-hospital technology with the oldest private fire protection company in the United States.

“This agreement extends beyond the simple housing of a Paramedic Unit. It creates a unique symbiotic relationship between the two organizations” said Michael Woronka, Action Ambulance Service’s CEO. “Action is proud to be a partner with the Erie 4 community and looks forward to working together to provide various EMS services to the residents in these communities,” he said in a press release.

In addition to housing a Paramedic Unit at Erie 4, Action Ambulance Service will be assisting Erie 4 personnel with EMS related training and medical supplies. Action Ambulance Service will also make Action’s resources available to Georgetown and surrounding communities.

“This agreement will help Erie 4 in defraying ongoing operating costs for fire apparatus, as well as provide Erie

4 Headquarters with facility upgrades without burdening local taxpayers” stated Dan Brodie, President of the Erie 4 Association.

To commemorate this historic agreement, Woronka presented Brodie with a 31-star American flag. The 31-star flag design dates to July 4th, 1851 when California was admitted to the Union. This unique flag flew for 7-years, under three Presidents (Fillmore, Pierce, and Buchanan) and was the first flag flown at Erie 4 in 1854. “It is a great inspiration for Action Ambulance to team up with an organization as rich in the tradition of serving as Erie 4, which celebrates 155-years of fire protection,” Woronka said.

Since 1854, the Erie Fire Association No. 4, Inc. has been owned and operated by its members, providing millions of dollars worth of equipment and a fire station, at minimal expense to taxpayers.

As America’s oldest privately owned non-profit Corporation, the Erie 4 Association provides the support needed for the town’s on-call firefighters who are deployed from the North Street station.

Although privately owned fire companies were common in the mid-eighteen hundreds, most have become owned by the taxpayers. Erie 4 has changed with the times and over 155 years it has matured into a fully modern, well trained fire company, which, along with the Central Fire Association, works as one Georgetown Fire Department.

BOXFORD

Town government by illusion

John McCormack

VALLEY PATRIOT BOXFORD COLUMNIST

An earlier America viewed itself through images such as the “City on a Hill” which symbolized for the Massachusetts Puritans their covenant with God and its absolute requirement for moral and ethical rectitude. Government today has replaced these archaic ideas with leadership techniques borrowed from advertising and behavioral psychology. Consider these items from Boxford’s recent Annual Town Meeting.

The \$25.5 million Town budget passed with little discussion. The 18.2% increase in Town pension appropriation for the Essex Regional Retirement Board was presented without explanation, as is every budget item, but drew no questions from Town Meeting. The \$673,892 amount is just 2.6% of the budget and was more than offset by decreases in other budget areas. The economic meltdown has hammered pension fund values which will result in much greater future appropriations. The Salem News just reported that the Retirement Board is allowing another class of employees to retire at an earlier age, driving up costs. Perhaps a significant future Proposition 2½ override will focus attention on this issue.

A \$470,000 article to fund the design and permitting of a new Boxford Village Library was defeated. This was the latest battle in a long-running war between several potent State and local forces.

The “up to” \$2,784,242 State library construction grant is the 800 pound gorilla. Unfortunately it is accompanied by design standards from the State of Wisconsin, of all places, which essentially require a single central library sized by a twenty year Town population projection. This building would have 19,000 square feet of floor area and would cost around \$6,000,000 to build in the dizzying environment of public construction and prevailing wage rates. So the State tempts us with a “50% off” sale by giving us back our own money in a grant. This is usually irresistible for getting voters to pay for things they wouldn’t otherwise buy as our experience with the Community Preservation Act has shown, but not this time.

The countervailing local force is the “New England Village” image. Boxford is rightly proud of its East and West

Villages, with their traditional mix of older homes, churches, and small businesses. The Boxford Library Trustees seem enamored with the image of an enormous, brand new book castle. The grant money (which expires at the end of this year) is the deal closer which should overcome any objections. But the consistent message of the voters is for an appropriately sized and styled Village library.

The present East Village site of the main library could apparently support a new library but the high water table requires slab construction with all of the mass above ground. Some years ago the Town proposed building a 20,000 square foot library on this site. This idea was criticized as too large and destructive of the Village and soundly defeated.

Next another Town Meeting voted on some non-binding location questions which led the Town to propose development of the former dump site with the library, a senior center, and who knows what else. This plan would create a remote and characterless “government center” and abandon the Villages; it too was defeated.

The newest plan for the East Village site attempted to hide the building mass with a sloping earth mass culminating in a “green roof” over part of the structure. This is the proposal defeated last month. It drew more support than the previous attempts (library fatigue?) but didn’t impress the Historic District Commission, which must approve the plans, and wasn’t even supported by the Selectmen.

Meanwhile, the West Village Library has been closed “due to budget cuts.” This budgetary fig leaf is more of a pine needle as its budget was about 0.1% of the Town budget. A shoestring effort by the Council on Aging to appropriate \$250,000 to design and permit an expansion of the former library failed. This is an idea which could enliven the West Village and make good use of the building. The Selectmen, though, didn’t support the article and may have other plans for the parcel.

Finally, Town Meeting approved a zoning amendment allowing “small” wind turbines by a lopsided 145 to 12 vote. The largest turbine allowed, 60 kilowatts, can weigh over 20,000 pounds with its monopole and stand over 170 feet tall to the tip of its 50 foot diameter rotor. The

BOXFORD, page 22

HAVERHILL

Mayor announces pilot single stream recycling program

HAVERHILL- At Tuesday night’s city council meeting, Mayor James J. Fiorentini will announce the start of a Pilot Program for curbside ‘Single Stream recycling’ in Haverhill. This Pilot Program will test the feasibility of collecting its residential recyclables mixed together in one recycling container. This collection method is known in the recycling industry as “single-stream” collection.

Single stream recycling will thus allow residents in the Pilot Program area to place a commingled collection of: glass, tin, steel, aluminum, mixed paper, cardboard, paper and plastics (#1 through #7) into one collection bin.

No sorting will be necessary. New state-of-the-art machines at recycling plants now allow for sophisticated sorting capability to process these materials and recycle them in to other useful products. The city is currently using a single stream model at its

recycling depot at 500 Primrose Street, with very positive feedback.

The Pilot Program will commence on July 7 and run for at least six months through the end of 2009, where further evaluations will be made. The route announcement will be made at the city council meeting.

This new initiative seeks to determine how city residents can be encouraged to recycle more, not only for environmental benefits, but to ultimately save tax dollars. For every ton of trash residents recycle, the city saves \$ 54.00 on residents’ trash disposal fees.

“While the recycling rate in Haverhill is approximately 11% and exceeds other communities, single stream recycling offers us the best opportunity to further increase our recycling efforts,” explained Mayor Fiorentini. “I’m excited that we can offer this new service to over 3,200 households at no cost to the City budget.”

AMESBURY

Little Sprouts prepares to open 10th school

Little Sprouts, an early education organization with over 26 years’ experience, is proud to announce their preparation of the opening of their tenth school in Amesbury, MA. The Amesbury School is targeted

to open on July 1, 2009. The school will educate 85 students of all age groups, infants, toddlers, preschoolers and kindergarten.

This new addition is located on 36 Sparhawk Street, conveniently located right off of both Interstates 495 and 95.

“Little Sprouts is delighted for the expansion and the opportunity to continue to grow their legacy within the Commonwealth,” noted Susan Leger Ferraro, President and Founder of Little Sprouts.

“We are excited to have the opportunity to offer our award winning early education

to the Amesbury community.”

To find out how you can enroll your child at any of the 10 Little Sprouts schools please visit www.littlesprouts.com



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 11 schools in Massachusetts supporting families that reflect 32 cultures speaking 23 languages from all walks of social, economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds. To learn more about how you can join us in making the world a better place, visit us at www.littlesprouts.com

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INNOVATION VALLEY (ivalley.org)

Model for business, education and government partnerships in our own backyard

John Michitson

INNOVATION VALLEY/PATRIOT COLUMNIST
ON BEHALF OF THE HYMN TEAM

As the Merrimack Valley continues to try to find its niche in the knowledge economy, an exemplary model for successful collaboration between business, education and government is flourishing in our own back yard. The University of New Hampshire's InterOperability Laboratory (IOL) in nearby Durham, New Hampshire is the Data Networking Industry's chief independent test authority.

One would expect the gold standard for product verification in the networking industry, known for giants like Cisco and innovative startups, to be located in Silicon Valley or in Cambridge/Boston with their wealth of leading universities, including MIT. Yet, it was UNH that had the foresight to develop this non-profit enterprise that employs 150 graduate and undergraduate students and more than 30 full-time staff members.

I've had the pleasure to tour their 32,000 square foot facility on two occasions, which happens to be the

best-equipped 3rd-party independent test facility for data communications and networking. UNH IOL (<http://www.iol.unh.edu/>) interacts with hundreds of companies to ensure compliance with industry standards and interoperability between products from different vendors. In plain English, UNH IOL validates that Cisco's and Juniper's routers can properly "talk" to each other. This is important since the Internet's success is dependent on the ability of products from thousands of vendors to work seamlessly.

UNH IOL will test your product against industry standards, such as those published by the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF,) and test the performance of your product above and beyond the industry standards, upon request. IOL also works with industry forums such as the IETF to resolve contentious issues with vendors in a neutral environment. IOL will also facilitate "plugfests" where many vendors interoperate in a "sand box," in order to check how well their products work together. Competing vendors are able

to play together because they are so comfortable with IOL's objectivity and reputation for protection of company intellectual property.

The business model for UNH IOL is also exemplary. IOL is 100% funded by the companies and organizations that use their services, including government, such as the Department of Defense. They have standard membership fees and charge for additional testing or other professional services, such as network integration and custom test development, above and beyond what is provided under the membership fee. There is another advantage for the members. They have access to scores of UNH engineering students that are getting leading edge hands-on training in technology and business, to augment classroom instruction.

The Merrimack Valley should consider applying UNH IOL's successful model to create new regional research and test centers to serve as catalysts for business, education and government collaboration on next generation technologies, with the

end game to attract emerging industries.

UNH IOL "Plugfest",
(Source: <http://www.iol.unh.edu/>)



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.



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

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.

NOTEBOOK: Continued from page 13

distributed in a public building or library, but it certainly does say something about the mindset at the school and those in charge of teaching our children.

NORTH ANDOVER – The Republican Town Committee is giving away copies of the U.S. Constitution to all graduating seniors from North Andover High School this year. This is one of the best ideas I have heard in a long time. What better gift can be given to graduating seniors to prepare them for the real world. Now if only they could spare one of those constitutions for the decision-makers at the Lawrence High School library with the first amendment highlighted in yellow.

LAWRENCE - Gonzalez' playing into his opponents hands. We all know that Modesto Maldonado was one of the architects of the Latino Agenda, a racist group of Hispanics whose sole mission was to recruit, support and get candidates elected based solely on their race (Whites, Blacks and Asians need not apply). He has been race-baiting for more than 20 years in Lawrence politics and appeals to the very base fears of uneducated Latino immigrants. Now, Maldonado is running for city council against Jorge Gonzalez in District "C", a councilor who has long been admired for his

record of treating people fairly regardless of race, (or being color blind, as Martin Luther King would say). Gonzalez has never been one to pander to the Latino Agenda crowd ... until last month.

And it very well could jeopardize Gonzalez' reelection in November. When Mayor Sullivan nominated Tommy Schiavone to be the permanent Economic Development Director, Gonzalez sided with Maldonado and the group of racists in Lawrence who opposed the nomination (like Nilka Alvarez) and want that job to be filled by a "Latino" when the next mayor takes office in January.

Their theory is, with more than 7 Latinos running for mayor, leaving it for the next mayor means a better chance that a "Latino" will be selected to fill the job Schiavone has been doing for more than 9 years. So, why is Gonzalez in trouble? Those who agree with Maldonado (and Alvarez) on such racially divided issues aren't voting for Gonzalez anyway. His vote against Schiavone isn't going to gain him any support among that crowd. But, those Latinos who reject racism (the silent majority, I believe) and support hiring the best person for the job will be



much less likely to go out and support Gonzalez. Maybe he will change his mind and bring this issue back to the table, but if he doesn't, I predict a much closer race between he and Maldonado in November.

LAWRENCE - French Social moving to South Lawrence? Neighbors in the Mount Vernon section of Lawrence may be in for a treat when the French Social Club on Broadway buys the old Julie and Wendy's building on South Broadway and tries to move their social club into that building. A proposal is before the city's planning and zoning boards for the club to buy the building and put a second floor on the one story building to accommodate the crowds they plan to attract to that neighborhood. Sources at The French Social say this is all but a "done deal" but residents in the surrounding neighborhood say they will oppose another social club in the Mount Vernon area. Look for this one to be as hot as the Saunders School controversy right down the road.

METHUEN - Fundraiser for Citizens for a Better Government - June 26, 2009. A fundraiser for Citizens for a Better Government will be held on Friday, June 26, 2009 from 6 p.m. to Midnight (12 P.M.) @

VFW on River St. Methuen, Massachusetts. Borrelli's pasta dinner, music and dancing. Children welcome. Cash bar. \$15.00 per person For ticket information call: Sharon Ployer 978-208-8128 Pat Uliano 978-682-7006

A Note from Puppy Girl - One Tail at a Time Rescue Adoption Days! Come see some amazing dogs that are looking for their "forever" homes. We rescue all ages and breeds, so you never know what you might find! Stop by to find out more about adopting or becoming a foster home! Visit us June 20 at the Petco in Salem, NH from 10-2 and June 27 at the Saturn Dealership in Haverhill from 10-3 (time may change).

Please contact the Valley Patriot's Puppy Girl, Kate Whitney, at kwswingrite@aol.com. Hope to see you there!



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 morning from 10am-noon. You can email your comments to Tdugjr@aol.com.



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Mind, Body & Soul: Health in The Valley

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JUNE - 2009

What you need to know about Fibromyalgia.... Part 2

Rami Rustum, M.D.
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

"I hurt all over and feel tired the whole day!"

This is the usual statement heard from any patient suffering from fibromyalgia.

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition characterized by widespread pain in the muscles, ligaments and tendons, as well as fatigue and multiple tender points.

The disease affects about 3% of the population in the United States. Women are much more likely to develop the disorder than are men, and the risk of fibromyalgia increases with age. Fibromyalgia symptoms often begin after a physical or emotional trauma, but in many cases there appears to be no triggering event.

Medications

Traditionally, the most effective medications in the treatment of fibromyalgia have been the tricyclic antidepressants, medications traditionally used in treating depression. In treating fibromyalgia, tricyclic antidepressants are taken at bedtime in doses that are a fraction of those used for treating depression. Tricyclic antidepressants appear to reduce fatigue, relieve muscle pain and spasm, and promote deep, restorative sleep in patients with fibromyalgia. Scientists believe that tricyclics work by interfering with a nerve transmitter chemical in the brain called "serotonin." Examples of tricyclic antidepressants commonly used in treating fibromyalgia include Amitriptyline (Elavil) and Doxepin (Sinequan).

Studies have shown that adding Fluoxetine

(Prozac), or related medications, to low-dose Elavil further reduces muscle pain, anxiety, and depression in patients with fibromyalgia. The combination is also more effective in promoting restful sleep and improving an overall sense of well-being. These two medications also tend to cancel out certain side effects each can have. Tricyclic medications can cause tiredness and fatigue while Prozac can make patients more cheerful and awake. Even more recently, study of patients with resistant fibromyalgia found that Lorazepam (Ativan) was helpful in relieving symptoms. Prozac has also been shown to be effective when used alone for some patients with fibromyalgia.

In 2007, Pregabalin (Lyrica) became the first medication approved specifically for treating fibromyalgia. Lyrica has advantages of flexible dosing that can be adjusted according to persisting symptoms.

Other treatments

Local injections of analgesics and/or cortisone medication into the trigger-point areas can also be helpful in relieving painful soft tissues, while breaking cycles of pain and muscle spasm.

Some studies indicate that the pain reliever Tramadol (Ultram) and tramadol/acetaminophen (Ultracet) may be helpful for the treatment of fibromyalgia pains. The muscle relaxant Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril) has been helpful for reducing pain symptoms and improving sleep.

The nonsteroidal antiinflammatory drugs

(NSAIDs), while very helpful in treating other rheumatic conditions, have only a limited value in treating fibromyalgia pain. Narcotic pain relievers and cortisone medications have not been shown to be beneficial in this condition. Narcotics and cortisone medications are avoided because they have not been shown to be beneficial and they have potential adverse side effects, including dependency, when used long-term.

Both biofeedback and electroacupuncture have been used for relief of symptoms with some success. Standard acupuncture was recently reported to be effective in treating some patients with fibromyalgia.

While you are dealing with this problem it is good to know that you are not alone.

Organizations such as the Arthritis Foundation and the American Chronic Pain Association provide educational classes and

support groups. These groups can often provide a level of help and advice that you might not find anywhere else. They can also help put you in touch with others who have had similar experiences and can understand what you're going through.

References: 1- American Pain Society, 2- Mayo clinic website, 3- National Fibromyalgia Association, 4- Medicinenet.com



Rami Rustum, M.D. is the Director of Merrimack Pain Associates at 50 Prospect St. in Lawrence. For any questions or

concerns, please email Dr. Rustum at: ramirustum@comcast.net

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Merrimack Valley Hospice welcomes Starr Shallow as the Merrimack Valley Hospice House Director

LAWRENCE & HAVERHILL- — With the new Merrimack Valley Hospice House slated to open in June; the agency is pleased to announce that Starr Shallow, MS, RN, HNC, has accepted the position of Merrimack Valley Hospice House Director.

Shallow is already familiar with the Home Health Foundation Family of Agencies, which includes Home Health VNA, Merrimack Valley Hospice and HomeCare, Inc.

She started the Maternal Child Health (MCH) Department at Home Health VNA before leaving to develop the Center for Wellness at St. Joseph's Hospital in Nashua, New Hampshire.

In addition to her nursing degree from Rivier College, Shallow holds a Masters Degree in Healthcare Management from New England College, and a Certification in Holistic Nursing.

"Starr brings a wealth of great clinical and management experience to the hospice team," said Joan Stygles Hull, RN, MBA, President / CEO of Home Health Foundation. "Her comprehensive nursing knowledge coupled with her genuine compassion for those requiring end-of-life care will enhance the services we offer at the new Merrimack Valley Hospice House."

When it opens in early June, the Merrimack Valley Hospice House will be the first licensed inpatient hospice in the region, and the only hospice house in Massachusetts licensed to care for children.

Nestled among 39 acres of wooded land, the Hospice House features 14 private patient suites, with accommodations for visitors who are welcome 24 hours a day. Patients, families and friends will find the Merrimack Valley Hospice House warm and welcoming, anytime – day or night. Special areas in the House are designed for solitude and reflection while others are more public gathering areas for those in need of support and interaction with others.

Shallow is excited to rejoin the organization and to be part of the Merrimack Valley Hospice House opening. "It is an honor to be part of the opening of this Hospice House," said



PHOTO: COURTESY

Shallow. "Our goal is to help people to get the best out of every day. We will be helping patients and families through some of life's most challenging days, and it is our privilege to be part of that."

Shallow resides in Hampstead, NH.

Merrimack Valley Hospice is a not-for-profit agency serving the medical, spiritual and emotional needs of terminally ill patients and their families. Together with its affiliate agencies, Home Health VNA and HomeCare, Inc. they serve more than 80 communities throughout Northeastern Massachusetts, the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire.

For more information on the agency and the new Merrimack Valley Hospice House, visit www.merrimackvalleyhospice.org.

Emily Raymond Awarded Program Manager of the Year by Visiting Nurse Association of America (VNAA)

LAWRENCE - Home Health VNA announced last month that Emily Raymond, RN, BSN, Manager of the Maternal Child Health (MCH) Department at Home Health VNA, has been named Program Manager of the Year by the Visiting Nurses Association of America (VNAA).

Raymond was nominated for her work at Home Health VNA, focusing on her commitment to excellence and desire to serve a vulnerable population. This prestigious award is a national recognition, with nominees submitted from across the country. Raymond will be among those honored at the VNAA Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas this month. Emily Raymond has a real passion for caring for the agency's youngest patients. Raymond has worked in the MCH program since 2002, beginning as a visiting nurse before she was promoted to MCH Manager. She serves as one of three home care MCH Managers on a task force with the Jimmy Fund Clinic at Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. The group is dedicated to improving the



PHOTO: COURTESY

continuity of care between the clinic and home care agencies. Raymond also serves as a leader in the Bringing Children Home project with the VNA System of Northern New England (VNASNNE). She has also worked with VNAA as a reviewer of its 2008 Nursing Procedure Manual.

"Emily's work with our youngest, and often frailest, patients is an important segment of our patient care," said Joan Stygles Hull, RN, MBA, President / CEO of Home Health VNA. "She works diligently with her team to keep these children in their most comfortable environment, their home. We are very proud of the work she and the entire Maternal Child Health team do, and we applaud her for this well deserved award."

Raymond resides in Manchester, NH. Home Health VNA is a not-for-profit home care agency affiliated with Merrimack Valley Hospice and HomeCare, Inc. Together the three agencies serve more than 80 communities throughout the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire.

To learn more: www.homehealthvna.org



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Thomas Connors
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Come on! Choose to Live with tremendous positive Anticipation!
Don't just settle to let Life carry you through each day. Be the Captain of your own Life. Grab hold and steer through the river of life and attack each precious moment with a vibrancy that is uplifting. Avoid, at all costs, the temptation to let life's current simply carry you along mindlessly in no special direction and for no particular reason.
Those are the choices you have available to you each and every day. Live Life with a WOW! or live it numbed by life's challenges.

If you want your Life to go in a Different Direction. If you want it to excite your being, your very existence. Then, YOU need to steer it, control it through both life's storms and amazingly calm and enriched waters.
Great things, great and meaningful Moments, come to those who Hope and Anticipate the greatest of Gifts.
Let me tell you, I have seen first hand how positive Anticipation can create the most amazing WOW!
By any measure, the Guests we serve at every Division of American Training should not be able to make anything of themselves. Whether they have experienced a life-changing disability, the scars of a dysfunctional family or emotional put-downs by an abusive relative, all have very good reason to fall back on an excuse to give in and give up.
Yet, despite all odds against them and the many seemingly insurmountable obstacles, they soar to unimaginable heights. We teach them. We encourage them. They LEARN to Anticipate and SEE what CAN be. They Anticipate the great things they can accomplish if they put their minds to it. They SEE their successes in their mind as if they were real. They then attract those successes to them in the real world. And with one success, comes another. Until they have a clear,

complete, vivid picture of a rewarding life filled with one WOW! after another. The way Life was meant to be lived!
They know that positive Anticipation gives them the ability to make the sweetest lemonade with every sour lemon life throws at them!
When you Live in positive Anticipation you Attract the makings of a real WOW! And THAT is a heck of a lot better than those doom-doggy clouds others have following them!
Call it Manifestation or Anticipation, it has proven to be a significant vehicle to change how you approach and live life. Remember, I want you to not just live life but to live it with a WOW! And that is only possible when you can SEE it for all it offers. Sure, there will always be down times and challenging moments. But, for every rainy day there a many more days of sunshine when you learn to Anticipate them in your life. Seeing, picturing in your mind what can be is a formidable way to empower yourself to live life at its best. To Living with a WOW!
Positive Anticipation may take place in your mind, but it only activates fully when you consciously put it to work. Your task is to find the time and place to nurture and develop its benefits.
Let the examples of those who are Living the WOW! spur you to take solid ACTION. It is worth every minute you spend. It may take some time to get used to it but you will not regret it.
Try using prayer as a means to get you started. Use meditation. Plan some quiet time, close your eyes and SEE what God has in store for you. If you could do anything you wanted, have anything you wished for and be any place you ever dreamed. What would all those things look like? SEE yourself. How would you feel? Experience those feelings. SEE the Difference from what life is at the present to what it would be like Living the WOW! Let your Journey to WOW! begin right within you. I Guarantee these actions will bring you new and

welcomed results.
WOW! Expectations generated as a result of positive Anticipation gives us reason to jump out of bed every day and face a world filled with Life's Greatest Promises.
There is something magical about waking up every morning fully alive and looking forward to a day filled with one WOW! after another. What a wonder that feeling does for your attitude and disposition toward yourself and those you meet. What a difference that feeling makes in the quality and quantity of your work. What an incredible opportunity it brings to you to generate one WOW! after another.
Make no mistake this is not some silly feel-good nonsense. HOW you face each day and how you FEEL determines your physical health, your ability to sharpen your mind and be alert to learning and your spiritual growth as well. The ability to create and expect a WOW! in your life gives you a whole different perspective from which to fully enjoy it.
When disappointments begin to disappear with a new found Hope for what the future holds. When barriers to peace-of-mind and success become minor nuisances. When difficulties become manageable. And when even setbacks become learning experiences. Then you will know for sure that you are well on your way toward living the most amazing life possible!
Now, that's a WOW!



Tom Connors is President/CEO of American Training, a diverse collection of companies committed to "Bringing Out the Best in Everyone They Touch". He believes in living life to the fullest by making the WOW! a regular part of your

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“Too Young for Tattoo”

Barbara Peary
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST
Our daughter “desperately” wants a tattoo. She is sixteen. My husband and I both have said “no way.” One of her on going arguments is that if she doesn’t like it, she can have it removed.
Repeat that while she is living in your home, she lives under your rules. Also inform her that many tattoos are proving hard to eradicate. There is laser surgery available, but it is not one hundred percent successful.
As a young, first time parent, I need a check up on my disciplining methods. I do try to speak positively to my children, but I feel like something is missing.
Sounds like you are taking the right focus. Try to deliberately frame tasks in the positive rather than the negative as often as possible. For instance, instead of telling a child not to run inside, tell him to walk. If you observe one child poking another while riding in the car tell him to “keep your hands on your own body.” Take a few minutes to list out the “no” phrases you find yourself repeating then think of ways to rephrase these same statements. Some poor discipline methods that you should take care to avoid include: shouting, name calling, telling children they are bad, using sarcasm, bribing and embarrassing children in front of others. As part of ongoing staff development, many child care centers offer short talks for their staff and parents on this issue and others throughout the year. If you are interested, call centers and ask to receive their parental workshop list. The fee charged is usually minimal.
“I’m mad at you daddy.” “I won’t talk to anyone.” These are the comments I received when my daughter had a sore throat and could not go to preschool for

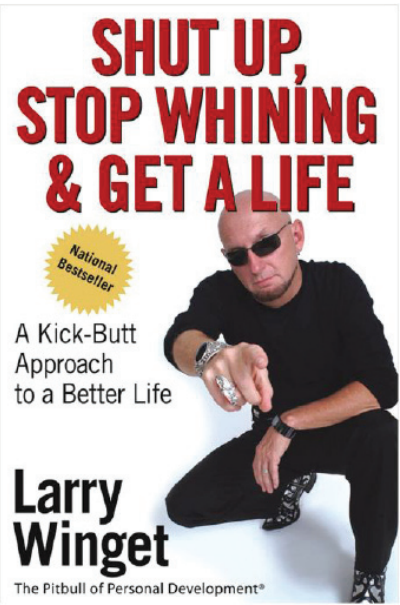
a few days. I felt bad, but what else could I say?
Be glad that she enjoys going and misses school when she can’t attend. As preschooler she is too young to comprehend a long discourse about spreading germs and the need for rest when she is ill, so skip it. Tell her when she doesn’t feel well the teachers want her to stay home, just as they do when they are sick and leave it at that.
Repeatedly, I have told my four-year-old not to leave our backyard without permission. Today again when I looked out the window, she had gone to the neighbor’s yard. When I talk with her there is always a “because.” She left “because the ball went over there.” “We don’t have swing, so I went to use theirs.” I talk until I am blue and I can’t watch her every second. Any suggestions?
Remind her of the rule each time right before she goes out the door to play. Get down on her level and speak directly to her, with words such as, “Remember you do not leave the yard without my permission.” There also needs to be an immediate logical consequence to her disobedience. Such as, she leaves the yard, you see her next door, and she comes into the house for the rest of the day. Do this a few times and if she wants to play outdoors, she will become more cooperative.
I get so tired of the endless progression of junk that is being peddled to children on Saturday morning television. I don’t remember there being so much stuff pushed down my throat when watching TV as a child.
You’ll be surprised to learn that alas this marketing scheme has existed since the beginnings of T.V. land. The first commercial for a toy was in 1952. The product being sold- Mr. Potato Head.

The WOW! Summer Reading List! Parents! WAKE – UP!!!!

Thomas Connors
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Do your children a HUGE favor. Do yourself a favor at the same time. Start them Living the WOW! This summer READ with them one, two or all the books I have listed.
They will do MORE for your children’s future than most of the garbage I have seen as required reading by some schools. Isn’t it incredibly unbelievable that your child’s required reading list does not include any books on motivation, on self-confidence, manifestation or creating a WOW!?
Maybe it is time YOU start getting your child’s future off to a great start. (And yes, you should encourage your child read his/her required books. In fact, YOU read them, too, to appreciate my comments.)
Do this. Read even one of these books with your child this summer. I don’t care how old they are. That in itself will be a WOW! Then, discuss it with them and see how all of you can bring more and more WOW!s into your lives. Make this the Summer you always remember.
Who Moved My Cheese? By Spencer Johnson, M.D. - A book about appreciating Change. How failure to do so can paralyze us.
Beware! - The Last Lecture By Randy Pausch .The rewards and fulfillment of

making the most of your short life here on earth and committing to living your dreams. Celebrate Life!
The Secret By Rhonda Byrn - What you think about, you eventually become. Believe it!
Shut Up, Stop Whining and Get a Life! By Larry Winget - A pull-no-punches, no nonsense book of advice on personal responsibility by the “Pitbull of Personal Development”. Get Real!
The Attractor Factor By Joe Vitale - Become a living magnet! Attract all you want out of life. Enjoy!
Becoming a Millionaire God’s Way By Dr. C. Thomas Anderso - It’s OK. God wants you to be financially prosperous and generous.



Can you handle it? - The Dream Giver By Bruce Wilkinson - Are you just living your life? Or Living your Dreams? Choose!
Excuse Me, Your Life is Now By Doreen Banaszak - What are you waiting for? Start Living today!
All Books are Available from my personal friends at Border’s Books at the Loop in Methuen, MA. Also, stop by the Border’s Café and enjoy one of their marvelous drinks. Tell them I sent you!
[SPECIAL!!! I have a Special Gift for any student who sends me a note telling me what they thought about one of the above books they read and an example of how they are Living the WOW!]

Things to do at the Beach this Summer

SALISBURY BEACH

JUNE

Friday, June 26th - Surfside Live! Concert Series & Fireworks, Music Performance: The Reminisants, Time: 7-10 PM

June 27 & 28 - Third Annual Sand and Sea Festival on Salisbury Beach,

Saturday, June 27th - Surfside Live! Concert Series & Fireworks - Music Performance: TBA, Time: 4-6 PM, Music Performance: James Montgomery Blues Band, Time: 7-10 PM

Sand and Sea Fireworks Spectacular, Time: 10 PM

Sunday, June 28th, Surfside Live! Concert Series, Music Performance: TBA, Time: 2-5 PM

JULY

Sand and Sculpting Spectacular ,, Friday, July 3 & Saturday, July 4, on Salisbury Beach Center Mall

Friday, July 3rd, Night before the Fourth Special Performance, Music Performance: TBA. Time: 7-10 PM

Saturday, July 4th, Surfside Live! Concert Series & Fireworks, Music Performance: Bruce Marshall Group, Time: 7-10 PM

Fourth of July Fireworks Display over Salisbury Beach, Time: 10 PM

Friday, July 10th, Friday Night Beach Parties featuring “The Valley’s Got Talent”an exciting talent competition with DJ Marty Cormier, Time: 7-10 PM

Saturday, July 11th, Surfside Live! Concert Series & Fireworks, Music Performance: Chad Perrone, Time: 7-10 PM

Fireworks over Salisbury Beach. Time: 10 PM

Friday, July 17th, Friday Night Beach Parties featuring “The Valley’s Got Talent” an exciting talent competition with DJ Marty Cormier, Time: 7-10 PM

Saturday, July 18th, Surfside Live! Concert Series & Fireworks, Music Performance: The Brew, Time: 7-10 PM

Fireworks over Salisbury Beach, Time: 10PM

Friday, July 24th, Friday Night Beach Parties featuring “The Valley’s Got Talent”, an exciting talent competition with DJ Marty Cormier, Time: 7-10 PM

MERRIMACK RIVER MARITIME FESTIVAL, July 25 & 26,

Saturday, July 25th, Surfside Live! Concert Series & Fireworks, Music Performance: Bellevue Cadillac, Time: 7-10 PM

Fireworks over Salisbury Beach, Time: 10PM

Friday, July 31st, Friday Night Beach Parties featuring “The Valley’s Got Talent”, an exciting talent competition with DJ Marty Cormier, Time: 7-10 PM

AUGUST

Saturday, August 1st, Surfside Live! Concert Series & Fireworks, Music Performance: The Fools, Time: 7-10 PM

Fireworks over Salisbury Beach, Time: 10

PM, Friday, August 7th

Friday Night Beach Parties featuring “The Valley’s Got Talent” an exciting talent competition with DJ Marty Cormier, Time: 7-10 PM

Saturday, August 8th, Surfside Live! Concert Series & Fireworks, Music Performance: Entrain, Time: 7-10 PM

Fireworks over Salisbury Beach, Time: 10 PM

Friday, August 14th, Friday Night Beach Parties featuring “The Valley’s Got Talent”, an exciting talent competition with DJ Marty Cormier, Time: 7-10 PM

Saturday, August 15th, Surfside Live! Concert Series & Fireworks, Music Performance: Ernie and the Automatics, Time: 7-10 PM

Fireworks over Salisbury Beach, Time: 10 PM, Friday, August 21st

Friday Night Beach Parties featuring “The Valley’s Got Talent” an exciting talent competition with DJ Marty Cormier, Time: 7-10 PM

Saturday, August 22nd, *Surfside Live! Concert Series & Fireworks, Music Performance: de SoL, Time: 7-10 PM*

Fireworks over Salisbury Beach, Time: 10 PM

Friday, August 28th, Friday Night Beach Parties featuring “The Valley’s Got Talent”an exciting talent competition with DJ Marty Cormier, Time: 7-10 PM

Saturday, August 29th, Surfside Live! Concert Series & Fireworks, Music Performance: Fahrenheit, Time: 7-10 PM

Fireworks over Salisbury Beach, Time: 10 PM

SEPTEMBER

Friday, September 4th, Friday Night Beach Parties featuring “The Valley’s Got Talent”, an exciting talent competition with DJ Marty Cormier, Time: 7-10 PM

Saturday, September 5th, Surfside Live! Concert Series & Fireworks, Music Performance: Chris Trapper, Time: 7-10 PM

Fireworks over Salisbury Beach, Time: 10 PM

For more information on the community of Salisbury, Massachusetts contact the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce:, Mailing Address, P O Box 1000, Salisbury, Massachusetts 01952, Phone/Fax: 978.465.3581, E-mail: Salisburychamber@aol.com

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PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

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Eastman’s Fishing & Marine, Deep Sea Fishing and Whale Watching, All Day & Half Day Fishing Parties, 603-474-3461

Casino Cascade Water Slide, 603-926-4541, Water Country, New England’s Largest Water Park!Take I-95 To Exit 5 (The Portsmouth NH traffic Circle) Then Rt. 1 South for 3 miles. (603) 427-1111

Hampton Beach Catamaran Regatta - June 20 - 21, Hampton Beach Catamaran Regatta has become a highlight of the summer as champions and (relatively) new sailors alike converge on Hampton Beach for a weekend of sailing. The weekend is well organized, with races throughout the day, and held close to the shores so that visitors and non-sailors can admire the spectacle. If you want to sail you need to get in contact with the organizers through the details provided here. If you’re just watching, simply get yourself a good bit of sand a camera and relax and enjoy the proceedings. Click to view the Notice of Race PDF. www.sailnecsa.org Scott Malcolm 603-502-7451

9th Annual Sand Sculpting Competition, Sat., June 13, 2009 - Sun., June 28, 2009, Come watch 15 Masters of the Sand Sculpture Universe compete for over \$15,000.00 in prize money. Awards Saturday night, June 20, 8 p.m. at the Seashell Stage. Followed by a Fireworks shoot at 9:30 All for FREE! The fun starts Friday, June 12th when 300 tons of imported sand is dropped on Hampton Beach and the “Grady Bunch” starts pounding up the demo site. The entire area is illuminated for night

Princess50@yahoo.com

Children’s Festival - Mon., August 17, 2009 - Fri., August 21, 2009, Starting at 10 am. Five days (August 17-21) of free activities for children and their families. Friday August 21 - 11 a.m. Children’s Parade with Ted the Cat! A Giant Costume Parade when every child wins a prize.

Hampton Beach Idol Competition, Fri, August 28, 2009 - Sun, August 30, 2009, Download the Hampton Beach Idol Competition Application on line at http://www.hamptonbeach.org. Come watch talented entertainers compete for cash prizes. 1st \$500, 2nd \$300, 3rd \$200. Limited to Vocalist in one of two categories. (Junior & Senior). Junior category, up to age 18. Senior category, age 18 and over.

20th Annual Seafood Festival - Fri., September 11 - Sun., September 13, 2009. Seafood Festival & Sidewalk Sale Days. Visit www.hamptonbeachseafoodfestival.com for details on times, entertainment schedule and participating exhibitors, free parking and shuttle schedules. Ocean Boulevard (Center Beach) is closed to traffic and becomes a pedestrian mall from the Marine Memorial (The Lady) to H Street to accommodate the anticipated 150,000+ visitors each day! Sample the flavors of the seacoast at New England’s largest seaside festival. Over 50 restaurants join together, offering an extensive menu of seafood delicacies, Gala festivities include:Over 60 Art & Craft dealers, 3 stages of entertainment, children’s activities and our new Children’s Center, street performers, a 200 foot beer tent, sidewalk bargain sales, and an amazing display of fireworks on Saturday night. (Ocean Boulevard closed to traffic). Choose from favorites like lobster, shrimp, clams (steamed, broiled, barbecued or fried) to non-seafood items like “Bloomin’ Onion” and fried ice cream.

* Continuous entertainment on 3 stages featuring some of the best local bands in the area - from Blues to Country, Rock & Roll and even a little Jazz.

* Hospitality and more entertainment in our Beverage Tent serving Budweiser & Red Hook beer!

* Spectacular fireworks display - Saturday, September 6th at 8:15 p.m.

* Sidewalk Sales (end of season clearance-SAVE \$\$\$\$)

* Live Radio Remote Broadcast including Pat Whitley’s syndicated “Dining Out Show”, Sunday September 10th.

* Craft Fair - Over 60 Crafts Persons displaying their wares!

* Children’s Center - Ongoing Entertainment - Face Painting, Games and Street Performers

SEAFOOD FESTIVAL ADMISSION COST: Friday: \$5.00; Saturday, \$5.00; Sunday, \$5.00. Admission proceeds go to the Hampton Rotary. Children under 12 are free of charge. **PETS are NOT ALLOWED - PER TOWN ORDINANCE. SUGGESTIONS:

*Wear comfortable shoes!

*Do not eat before you come!

*Make early reservations at one of our fine lodging establishments

*Bring your friends and family!

*For your safety and the safety of others, NO bicycles or rollerblades!

*Bon Appetit!

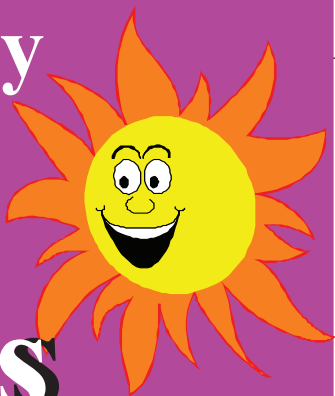


PHOTO: COURTESY





Superintendent Wilfredo T. Laboy
presents



Lawrence Public Schools Summer Meals Program

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:

Dates of Operation - June 25th through August 29th

1. Arlington Ed. Complex	150 Arlington St.	B 7:30-8:30	L 11:30 - 12:30
2. Beacon Courts	71 Duckett Ave		L 12:00 - 1:00
3. Bruce Park	Providence St.	S. 2:15	
4. Community Boating	7 Eaton Pl.		L 11:30 - 12:30
5. Giesler Pool	High St.		L 11:30 - 12:30
6. Guilmette Ed. Complex	80 Bodwell St.	B 7:30-8:30	L 11:30 - 12:30
7. Hancock Courts	61 Hancock St.		L. 1-2pm
8. Higgins Pool	Crawford St.		L 11:30-12:30
9. Howard Park	Lawrence St.	S. 2:15	
10. Leahy School	100 Erving Ave	B 7:30 - 8:30	L 11:30 - 12:30
11. LFD Charter School	34 West St.	B 7:30 - 8:00	L11:00 - 12:00
12. LHS Campus	70 North Parish Road	B 9:30-10:30	L 1:30 - 2:30
13. Merrimack Courts	56 Melvin St.		L 12:00 - 1:00
14. No. Common Complex	233 Haverhill St.	B 7:30 - 8:30	L 11:30 - 1:30
15. No. Common Park	Haverhill St.	S. 2:15	
16. Parthum Ed. Complex	255 E. Haverhill St.	B 7:30 - 8:30	L 11:30 - 12:30
17. Riverfront Park	Everett St.	S. 2:15	
18. South Lawrence East	165 Crawford St.	B 7:30 - 8:30	L 11:30 - 12:30
19. Stadium Courts	179 Osgood St.		L 12:00 - 1:00
20. Sullivan Park	North Parish Road	S. 2:15	
21. Wetherbee School	75 Newton St.	B 7:30 - 8:30	L 11:30 - 12:30

FREE meals for kids all summer

For More Information :
978 - 975 - 2762

Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any USDA-related activity should write or call immediately to: USDA – Director, office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410, (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Cooperating Agencies: DOE, USDA, and Project Bread
Lawrence Public Schools - Summer Meals Program prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, age or disability

Newburyport's Center for the Arts Summer Schedule of Events

All events are located at the Firehouse Center for the Arts, Market Square, Newburyport (978) 462-7336 or www.firehouse.org

Friday-Saturday, June 5-6, Reel People: The Fishermen of Plum Island
Explore the culture of fishing, and what makes anglers tick. This one-hour documentary by Newbury resident and avid fisherman James Waldron captures the many changes that have occurred in the island fishing community through stunning camerawork. Short interviews, with those both young and old who are passionate about fishing, are experienced against amazing 8mm footage and black and white stills of Plum Island. Exhibit opens at 7:00 PM, film begins at 7:30PM

Wednesday, June 10, Chamber of Commerce Mixer, Hosted by: Firehouse Center for the Arts and Not Your Average Joe's. Enjoy an evening of spring networking at the beautiful Firehouse Center for the Arts and enjoy tasty hors d'oeuvres provided by Not Your Average Joe's. Weather permitting, enjoy mingling on the balcony overlooking the Merrimac River. Hors d'oeuvres, cocktails & raffle prizes. 5:30-7:30 PM

Wednesday, June 10 – Sunday, July 19. Gallery – April Odell: "Nostalgia", Hosted by: Firehouse Center for the Arts and Not Your Average Joe's. April Odell has decided to name her new visual arts exhibit at the Firehouse Center for the Arts gallery 'Nostalgia' though she is only 23 years old. Her collection of interiors, architecture and landscapes all serve as historical documentation and reflect her discomfort with mass production as well as the beauty she finds in the design of previous generations. Come view this fresh, youthful interpretation of historic structures Wed.-Sun, 12N-5PM

Friday-Saturday, June 12 – 13. Kate Redgate, In Concert. Come celebrate the release of a much anticipated recording, "Nothing Tragic," from one of the region's favorite songwriters and performers. This will be a concert you won't want to miss and a great show for anyone of any age. Join Kate and the boys (Zach Field on drums, Mike Miksis on bass, Tom West on Hammond, Charlie Strater on electric guitar, Jon Nolan on

pedal steel and special guest Justin Quinn on harmonica) after the show for food and drinks as she hosts a CD-signing party immediately following each concert in the lobby. 8PM

Friday-Sunday, June 19 – 21. Yankee City Theater Project: "Searching for the Soul of the City" Newburyport MA1956-2009. The Yankee City Theater Project is a multi-media documentary theatre piece chronicling the changes that have swept through the city of Newburyport Massachusetts in the last fifty years. Through interviews with over fifty Newburyport residents from all walks of life, Greg Moss, Stephen Haley, Myron Moss, Maureen Daley and Dylan Fuller have recorded an important, illuminating entertaining piece of oral history. The Yankee City Theater Project traces the historical arc from the initial highly contested reconstruction of Newburyport in the late 60's to the current debate over land development and use of the waterfront. The play shows Newburyport once again on the edge of a major change. Fri-Sat 7:30pm, Sat-Sun 2:30pm.

Wednesday, June 24 TWO SHOWS!! Jake Shimabukuro, Jake is back! A Firehouse favorite for three years! Though many still have trouble pronouncing his last name and the instrument he plays, Jake Shimabukuro (she-ma-BOO-koo-row) is becoming recognized as one of the world's top ukulele (oo-koo-LAY-lay) musicians. Renowned for lightning-fast fingers and revolutionary playing techniques, Jake views the ukulele as an "untapped source of music with unlimited potential." His virtuosity defies label or category. Two shows, 7PM and 9PM.

Friday, July 3, The Mystix in Concert. The Firehouse Center for the Arts welcomes The Mystix, "Boston's Heavyweight Band". The Mystix proudly announce the release of their 3rd album: "Down to the Shore". Not only does the album features songs by some of the early giants of roots music but also sensational new original songs! The Mystix are journeymen musicians at the top of their game. 8:00 PM.



Friday, July 10. Vienna Teng in Concert – Part of the RiverFest. Vienna Teng is a Taiwanese American pianist and singer-songwriter based in New York City. She has released four studio albums: Waking Hour (2002), Warm Strangers (2004), and Dreaming Through The Noise (2006). Her latest album, Inland Territory, was released in the United States on April 7, 2009. Teng's musical style incorporates folk, pop, classical piano, and a cappella. She uses piano as her primary instrument and writes lyrics with emotion, narrative, and personal history. Teng is a baseline alto, but sings over a wide range.

Sunday, July 16, Methuen Ballet Ensemble. Each spring the semi-professional company's Artistic Director, Vanessa Rae Voter, stages a well-known children's story as a ballet. Voter's ballets are not yet another tired performance of the same ballet, nor are they inaccessible, hard to understand modern pieces. The production is tailored to families and is very relatable for children. Following the performance Voter allows children in the audience to come up on stage and take pictures with the dancers on the set. Sunday, July 16 at 3:00PM.

Friday/Saturday July 24& 25 and Thursday/Friday July 30 & 31. Footloose (Musical)* Newburyport High School with Firehouse. Nominated for several Tony Awards, "Footloose" has become one of the most frequently performed school musicals in recent years, thanks to the award-winning music. The story centers on Ren McCormack, a teenager who was raised in Chicago but has moved to a small town where the local government has banned dancing and rock music. Ren and his classmates want to have a senior prom with music and dancing. They must figure out a way to get around the law and Reverend Shaw Moore, who makes it his mission in life to keep the town free from dancing and rock music.

Saturday, August 15. Maria Muldaur, Muldaur was first known for her 1974 top ten hit, "Midnight at the Oasis." In the eighties, Maria recorded two critically acclaimed jazz albums, two gospel albums and one album of swing tunes for "kids of all ages." Sweet and Slow, a duet album with longtime collaborator Dr. John, featured songs by Fats Waller, Duke Ellington and another of Maria's blues heroines, Sippie Wallace. She also toured extensively with her band both in the States and abroad. Her frequent gigs with Dr. John led to a growing appreciation and fondness for the New Orleans sound. She incorporated that flavor into her own musical repertoire and dubbed this gumbo of straight ahead blues, R&B and Louisiana music, "bluesiana." Maria and her group called the 'Red Hot Bluesiana Band' play her own brand of New Orleans flavored, swamp funk and r&b on August 15 at 8PM.

August 20 – 23. Oliver! (Musical) (Anna Smulowitz presents). Oliver! (music and lyrics by Lionel Bart) was the first musical adaptation of a Charles Dickens work to become a stage hit. This adaptation of the classic tale of a boy who runs away from an orphanage, hooks up with a group of boys trained to be pickpockets by Fagin, and dares to ask for more comes to life again.

Sunday, September 1st. Tom Rush. Credited by Rolling Stone Magazine as the driving force ushering in the era of the singer/songwriter, folk-rock legend Tom Rush returns to the Firehouse in 2009 following sell-out performances last year. Music luminaries ranging from James Taylor to Garth Brooks credit Rush as one of their top musical influences. His songs have become folk hits—country hits—heavy metal and rap hits. His shows are filled with the rib-aching laughter of terrific story-telling, the sweet melancholy of ballads and the passion of gritty blues. Two shows at 3Pm & 7PM.

BOXFORD: From page Page14

tip speed of the rotor exceeds 100 mph at full power.

We're not likely to see many of these for several reasons. The turbine has to be as far away from property lines, buildings or overhead lines as it is tall, which would be a 1.6 acre circle around that 60 kilowatt turbine. Average wind speed in Boxford is less than 10 mph which would allow the turbine to run at less than 10% power, making recovery of its six-figure cost difficult.

So we may see smaller units with lower cut-in wind speeds. It is unusual for a zoning regulation to allow increased land use by the owner; it probably wouldn't have happened but for the current renewable energy mania.

Incumbent Chuck Costello and candidate Preston Galarneau won seats on the Board of Selectmen in the Town election. The storm over increased horse regulations may have cost incumbent Mark Mitsch and candidate Francis Brickelmaier seats on the Board of Health; these were won by Laura Grabski and Thayer White.



John is a Boxford resident and was vice president of Lattice Trading and Batterymarch Financial Management. You can email him at jmacprime@yahoo.com



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UMass Lowell River Hawks sports collide

Shawn Hansen
VALLEY PATRIOT LOCAL SPORTS COLUMNIST

From San Angelo, Texas, Juniors Doug Caves, and Haley Catarius led the UMass Lowell River Hawks track and field in championship sprints.

Caves pulled in sixth place finishing the 400-meter dash in 47.00 seconds. St. Augustine’s Sophomore Josh Scott won the dash running at a lightning speed of 45.41 seconds.

Catarius bolted into seventh place running the 800-meter dash in 2:15.70. Northwest Nazarene Senior Ashley Puga won the race finishing with a time of 2:07.24. Seniors Christina DaLomba, and Sarah Brassard ran past their old marks set at UML. Twelfth in the 1,500 meters, DaLomba came in sixth place in the preliminary at 4:33.78, and finished eleventh in the final carrying a speed time of 4:42.84 down the track. Brassard stole eighth in the preliminary running in the 3,000-meter race at 11:03.29. In the finals, she placed a time of 11:37.75.

River Hawks softball had a devastating season picking up a record of 10-31-1. In the NE-10, the Hawks’ fouled off a 9-18-1 record landing them in thirteenth place. Despite a trembling season, Senior Stacey Lajoie batted .355 with 34 runs, 21 RBI, 16/17 stolen bases and 15 walks. Her three home runs this season totaled a career number of 21 that surpassed the UML record of 19 set by Laurie Tanguay in 2008. Lajoie was named to the Daktronics All-East Region Team, and received All-Northeast-10 Conference First team honors, as she was a finalist for the Laurie Mann Award.

Finishing the season 25-21, River Hawks baseball swung for the fences until a duel of consecutive losses ended their season in New Hampshire. In the last two-playoff games, the Hawks lost to



PHOTO: SHAWN HANSEN

Assumption 5-2, and Franklin Pierce 12-3.

Despite the fact the Hawks didn’t advance further into the post-season, freshman pitcher Jack Leathersich was named The Freshman Pitcher of the Year. He was also named to the First Team, and was one of three pitchers to be added to the all-star team as three Hawks (Leathersich, Pat Devlin, Dallas Nunes) were named to the All-Rookie Team. On the season, Leathersich’s numbers lined with a 7-5 record pitching in 14 games. Of those games, he picked up a 2.89 ERA striking out 66 batters, allowing 68 hits, giving up 24 earned runs, nine homers, 21 walks, 12 doubles, and a triple.

This summer, head coach Ken Harring will conduct a 2009 Baseball Clinic from July 13-16. The clinic will run from 9-3 p.m. The cost of the clinic will be \$180. For more information, contact Harring at

ken_harring@uml.edu.

Left behind a plate of butter, the rest of the Hawks’ sporting events made some impressive marks. The men’s basketball team led by Coach Greg Herenda (first year on the job) finished the season with an outstanding 21-8 record. Their impressive mark landed between the dates of December 29 – January 31, as they were unstoppable riding on a 13-game winning streak.

The Hawks’ men’s basketball team acquired Methuen High Romeo Diaz and former Lexington High star Scotty Tavares-Taylor. The 6’4 Diaz averaged 26 points, 8 rebounds, and three steals. The best game of his high school career tabbed 51-points, 17 rebounds, and 11 assists against Dracut. Tavares-Taylor averaged 11 points, 5 assists, and two steals a game.

On the other side of the court, the women’s basketball team tarnished a record of 8-19. The field hockey team gathered together a 20-5 record as men’s hockey blue lined a 21-16-2 record. The women’s soccer team kicked in a 8-5-5 record as the men’s netted home 13 wins, four losses, and four ties. Lastly, the women’s volleyball team volleyed together a 15-15 record.



Shawn Hansen currently attends UMass Lowell. He has written for “The Campus Report” at Middlesex Community College in Bedford and was also sports editor. Hansen has also written for “The UMass Lowell Connector” and is now a sports columnist for “The Valley Patriot”

Pumped up

Chris Papoulas
VALLEY PATRIOT LOCAL SPORTS COLUMNIST

With the ongoing steroid problem in professional sports growing, bigger names are being released and has us questioning the sports we love. With the revelations of Alex Rodriguez (“A-Roid”) and Manny Ramirez, our once great game has been called to justice. Fans are growing less concerned with the purity of the game and more concerned with their roided up freak of a player missing some games. It is of poor taste that the “fans” of baseball find it reasonable to vote Manny Ramirez into the all-star game? He is now 4th in the voting. Since when have fans lost their sense of respectability and the sense of right and wrong?

With all of Manny’s antics and his parade of foolishness, we never thought of him to be a cheater. Not even with the trouble he caused during his final days as a member of the Red Sox, before the steroids scandal came to light.

By voting Manny into the all-star game, fans are pretty much saying, “Hey everyone is on them now, who cares?” The purity of this game is in question and in jeopardy. Players who have been caught, suspended, and reinstated are treated the same as those coming back from injury. It is becoming more accepted instead of hated. For example, A-Roid gets caught for having used steroids. He then hosted a press conference in which he would have us believe it was his idea (yea right). And as he was laughing and joking before taking the stage he began lying about the steroid he was taking. A-Roid claimed it could be bought over the counter when in reality you can’t even

get it with a prescription. People were in uproar the first couple of weeks, but as stories get old, people lose interest. That’s when these cheaters slide into the darkest corner they can find. Now with Alex being back and hitting again, it’s as if it never happened.


Less people are showing that they care about the purity of a sport. Before we know it, we will be seeing 250 lb players belting 60 homers and 140 RBI’s. And instead of people being suspicious of this, they will embrace it. The fact that something as serious as steroids is being taken so lightly sends a horrible message to the young athletes today. They will assume that since their favorite athlete is doing it, it’s ok for them to do it. Not even keeping in mind the lethal danger that comes along with taking steroids. The Mitchell report in my opinion was a complete joke.

All this money and time wasted to find the names of mostly all retired players and a few that no one really cared about. Was Bonds brought to justice? How about McGuire or Sosa? In the end it was all for nothing. The names people expected weren’t revealed and the names no one really cared about were, with the exception of Roger Clemens. To the youth of today: I urge you to understand many of the so called “role models” are anything but.



*Chris Papoulas is a Dracut resident, avid New England sports fan and former co-host of Front Row, a sports talk show on Dracut and Lowell Cable Access with George Papoulas.

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PUPPY LOVE! with Kate Whitney

Make sure your home is safe for your dogs

Kate Whitney

VALLEY PATRIOT PUPPY COLUMNIST

In celebration of summer and the warm weather, I thought I'd write this month about dog proofing your home. There are some things that I think would be beneficial for you to know. In an at-tempt to open up our homes for Spring, many of us clean both inside and outside our homes. From cleaning products inside, to fertilizers and mulch outside, many things can be very harmful to our pets. I hope that you take some time and make sure that you are not using anything that could be seriously dangerous for your pets.

The first thing I want to talk about is what not to give your dog for food. Spring and Summer mean parties and BBQ's so make sure you are on the lookout when you have guests over. Some people don't realize there are things dogs should not eat. So be aware of your guests, and make sure they don't feed your dog anything that's listed below. There are certain things that we humans eat all the time, but are awful and sometimes deadly for dogs to eat. Some of these things may seem obvious, others may surprise you. Some foods you should NEVER give your pet (and make sure they don't accidentally eat it either): chocolate, onions, garlic, mushrooms, grapes, raisins, macadamia nuts, baby food, bones from fish and poultry, cat food, fat trimmings, milk and other dairy products, raw eggs, raw fish. Always make sure that you never leave food unattended on the counter, you never know what your dog might get into.

Be aware of chemical hazards like pool chemicals, antifreeze, paint thinners, and lead from paint chips and dust. Cleaning products can also prove to be very dangerous for your pets. If ingested, death can occur. Most cleaning products are not only bad for animals, but they are bad for the environment. So do something good for the Earth and for your pets, and replace your cleaning products with natural ones like baking soda and vinegar.

Before you plant your Spring plants or bring a beautiful bouquet of flowers home, read this section carefully! Here's a partial list of the many toxic plants: Azalea,

Daffodil, Hydrangea, Rhododendron, Lilies, and Poinsettia. Go online and view a full list just to be sure you aren't planting something that is harmful to your 4-legged friend. Also, talk to your vet about what mulches and fertilizers you should not use. Many kinds are hazardous to dogs, and always make sure it has dried before you allow your dog to walk in an area that was just treated.

Keeping your dog healthy this Spring and Summer also means keeping them up to date on their heartworm prevention and their flea and tick prevention. These things only work if they are given at precisely the right time each and every month. So don't skip a dosage, keep up to date and keep your dog protected.

We all hope that our dogs will never ingest something that is life threatening, but in case they do, here is some helpful information. Make sure your vet's info is posted in your home and in your cell phone. ASPCA poison control has an emergency vet available 24/7. That number is 888-426-4435. FYI: There is a \$60 consultation fee for each call. Another suggestion (one that is new to me and I am in the process of finding out more about) is to take a pet CPR class and purchase a pet first-aid kit. I am really interested in this....we take CPR classes so we can save humans, why not take one geared for saving pets?

As always, please talk to your vet about taking the right precautions.

When we bring a dog into our home, we vow to keep that dog safe. Knowing what things are harmful to our pets will allow us to keep that promise and make sure our dogs live a great life, free from anything that might be dangerous. #Now with all of that said, let's light up the BBQ, break out the Sox jerseys, and enjoy!

Enjoy the Summer!



Kate Whitney is a Boxford resident and owner of the Swingrite corporation. 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

Boxford resident Kate Whitney, Dash and Honey all want you to know how important it is to adopt a shelter dog. For more information you can email One Tail at a Time at onetail@comcast.net

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Training dogs with positive methods can decrease dog bites

Greenville, SC- The Association of Pet Dog Trainers, the largest professional and educational association for dog trainers in the world, believes that training dogs using positive methods can be a critical part of reducing dog bites in the home and in our communities.

How serious is the problem of dog bites? According to the Centers for Disease Control (<http://www.cdc.org/>), approximately 4.7 million Americans are bitten annually, about half of which are children under the age of 12. This figure most likely does not account for many more bite victims who receive injuries that are not serious enough to require medical attention or hospitalization. In addition to human suffering, the cost of dog bites is tremendous. The Insurance Information Institute (<http://www.iii.org/>) has found that one third of all homeowner's insurance claims are due to dog bites, and recent figures put the cost of dog bites to insurers at \$356.2 million (2007).

A recent study (Herron M.E. et al. 2009) found that dog owners who used aversive methods when working with dogs with a history of aggressive tendencies were more likely to trigger aggressive responses from the dogs. Such methods included yelling, "alpha rolls," forced downs, and leash corrections, among others. The researchers concluded that "such interactions create a substantial risk for owners."

What should dog owners do when they have a dog at risk of biting? Researchers in the United Kingdom (Hiby E.F. et al. 2004) surveyed training methods used by pet owners and found that "punishment was associated with an increased incidence of problematic behaviors" and therefore "positive training methods may be more useful to the pet-owning community." The APDT strongly supports this conclusion.

If you are dealing with a dog with aggressive behaviors, the APDT recommends:

1. Consult with your veterinarian to determine if your dog may have an underlying internal or medical cause that is creating or exacerbating the aggression.
2. Contact a professional experienced with aggression to work with you and your dog. You can find trainers experienced with aggression listed in the Trainer Search on the APDT web site, www.apdt.com. Only use professionals who use positive methods and are familiar with the science of behavior modification.
3. Manage your dog's interactions with household members, especially children, and with strangers while working with a professional to ensure that your dog is not

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<<<Bailey - I'm a beautiful, smart boy. I would do best in a home with children ages 10 and up, because of my intensity around certain high-value treats. I need to go to a home with a fenced in yard because I LOVE to run. I get along great with other dogs and lived in a house with cats who I loved to chase and play with. If you come visit me in the shelter I'll even show you how I can shake hands!



Myrtle- Aren't I just a beautiful bunny? I have an adorable face and

two different colored eyes!

>>>Luke - I am a sweet old boy looking for a home. I am looking for a family who can keep me in shape, maybe even one with another dog to keep me active! I know some cool tricks too, like when you say "BANG!" I play dead! I get along with other dogs really well and would love to visit the dog park. My former family really loved me, but they hit some rough times and lost our house. They tried really hard to find me a new place to live but ran out of time and decided that the great folks here at Lowell Humane would help me find the right family. Are you my forever home?



>>>Amber

- I am a very loveable kitty! I've had a challenging life taking care of many litters. It's time now for me to get some attention, don't you think? I need a nice loving home where I can finally relax!



put in a position where he feels he must resort to aggression.

4. Modifying a behavior problem takes time and effort. Many popular television shows create the illusion that aggression can be cured quickly through techniques based on mental and physical intimidation of the dog. These methods will not alleviate the problem and will likely increase the probability of more bites. Owners with an aggressive dog must realize that solving the problem takes patience, an understanding of your dog's behavior and needs, and the use of humane training methods.

Citations: Herron M.E., Shofer, F.S. and Reisner, I.R. (2009). Survey of the use and outcome of confrontational and non-confrontational training methods in client-owned dogs showing undesired behaviors. *Applied Animal Behavior Science* 117:47-54. Hiby EF, Rooney NJ, Bradshaw JWS. (2004). Dog training methods: Their use, effectiveness and interaction with behaviour and welfare. *Animal Welfare* 13:63-69. The APDT is a professional educational organization of trainers who are committed to becoming better trainers through using positive, dog friendly methods based on sound scientific principles. With over 5,000 members worldwide, the APDT provides professional dog trainers with a respected and concerted voice. The APDT promotes caring relationships between dogs and people and works to increase public awareness of dog-friendly training techniques. For more information, visit the web site at <http://www.apdt.com/>.

Dear Bings

Dear Bings,

I heard my parents talking about getting my cat Ridges fixed. He's not that old. When do you recommend that a cat should be spayed or neutered? Will this change the way he acts? Thanks Bings!

Jenny - Portsmouth, NH

Well Jenny, cats are usually spayed or neutered as early as 6 months of age, although many veterinarians prefer to wait to neuter male cats until they are about 7 to 9 months old.

The main purpose for spaying and neutering animals, of course, is to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Many of the homeless puppies and kittens from these accidental litters suffer neglect and eventually are destroyed.

Neutering male dogs and cats also can help prevent unwanted roaming and fighting. Sometimes this can make a pet more affectionate to the owner and much easier to live with. In addition, the surgery reduces the risk of prostate disease and various types of tumors.

Female dogs or cats will be healthier and look better without unwanted puppies or kittens. Spaying females when they are less than 1 year of age will dramatically reduce the chances of breast cancer later in life.

Female dogs and cats that have not been spayed are at risk of developing pyometra,

a life-threatening medical emergency where the uterus becomes infected. Any change in your pet's personality after being altered will be from the natural maturing process, rather than a result of the surgery.

Another concern is that the pet might gain weight. After being altered, some animals need fewer calories. The amount of food they receive should be adjusted by the owner depending on the level of activity and rate of metabolism. A male dog that is fighting and carousing needs more calories than after he is neutered, when he is content to stay closer to home.

For both spay and neuter surgeries, a general anesthesia is used. Your veterinarian will advise you about the importance of a preanesthesia blood test, depending on the age and health of your pet. This test can help determine how safe the surgery will be for your pet and sometimes indicates the need for using a special anesthetic.

To help avoid complications in your pet's spay or neuter surgery, make sure that the operation will be performed in a sterile surgery room by a licensed veterinarian.

After surgery, most veterinarians prefer to have patients recover overnight at the hospital, except for some male cats that might be sent home the same day.

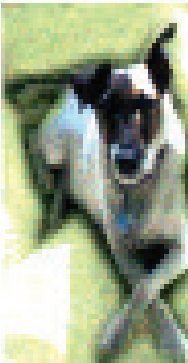
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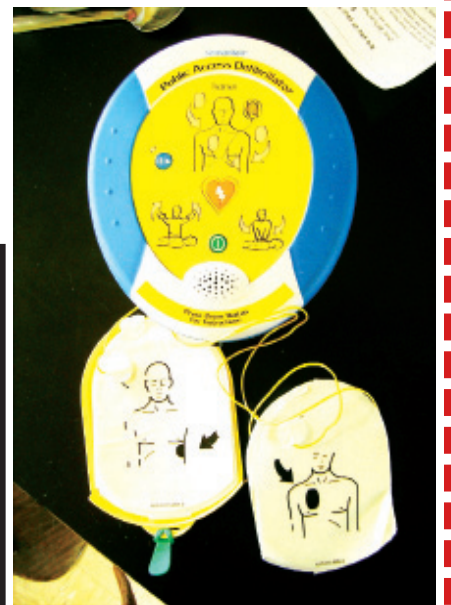
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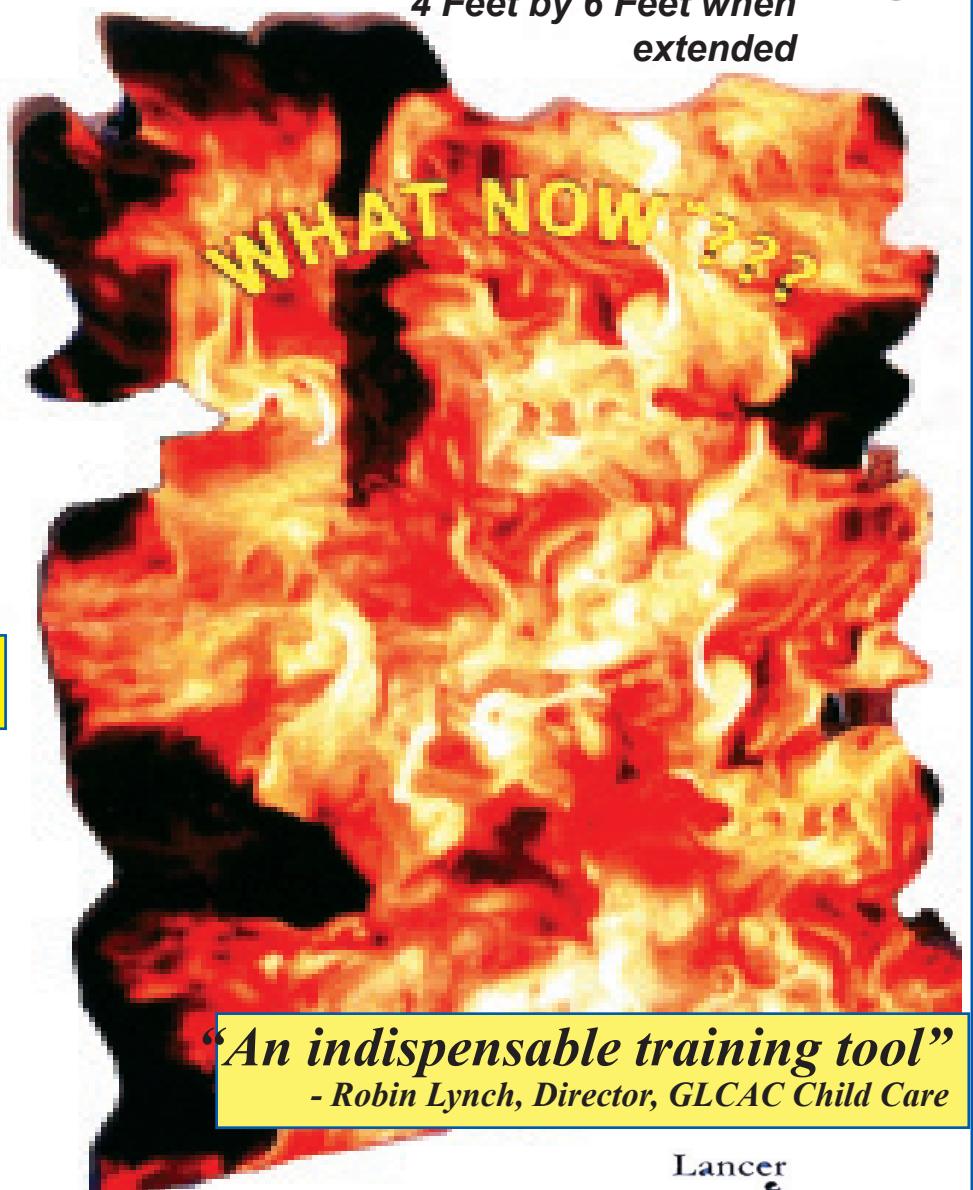


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The Merrimack Valley Irish

Jack’s Irish Craic

An Gorta Mór : Irish Famine, or was it a holocaust!

Jack Doyle, County Sligo

VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST COLUMNIST

Touring County Sligo with one of its most respected residents, Martina (Cunningham) Small, of Townaghmore, Culfadda, was the happiest experiences of my entire escapade in Ireland. It seemed that Martina knew just where to go for historical artifacts and resources. (although I must admit she didn’t know that the ruins, next to the gas station, where she got her petrol everyday, was the first Franciscan Abby in Ireland.) In most of the cemeteries we visited, there was an area that was a burial ground, within the burial ground, without stones or markers for recognition for who were buried there. “They were the grounds of the many people that died during the Famine of 1844 to 1849. Seeing so many of these graves I decided to research the Famine and decide for myself if it was truly an act of God or was it a holocaust?

Historians have well documented the cause and effect of the Famine, or the potato plight as it was also known, and have come to their own conclusion of what the cause of so many deaths. Records show that there were over one million deaths caused by the catastrophe. Quite a difference from an earlier Famine.

During an earlier famine, that of 1782 -17/83, the Irish ports were closed to keep the food and materials from leaving Ireland, but oddly enough during Queen Victory’s reign, 1837 - 1905. The ports were open and most all of the food were sent from Ireland to England. Within 5 years it would become the UK’s worst human disaster, with starvation and emigration reducing the population of Ireland itself by over 50%. The famine permanently changed Ireland’s demographics and became a rallying point for nationalist sentiment that pervaded British politics for much of the following century.

Cecil Woodham-Smith, an authority on the Irish Famine, wrote in The Great Hunger; Ireland 1845–1849 that no issue has provoked so much anger and embittered relations between England and Ireland as “the indisputable fact that huge quantities of food were exported from Ireland to England throughout the period when the people of Ireland were dying of starvation.” Ireland remained a net exporter of food throughout most of the five-year famine.

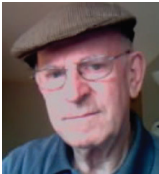
I ran across an article that stated that the Choctaw Indians donated \$750.00 to the Irish people to save the children

that was deprived of natural food from England. It was just sixteen years since the Choctaw’s went through “A trial of tears” and had faced starvation. (In 1847, midway through the Great Irish Famine (1845–1849), a group of American Indian Choctaw’s collected \$710 (although many articles say the original amount was \$170 after a misprint in Andgi Depos(The Rise and Fall of the Choctaw Republic) and sent it to help starving Irish men, women and children. “It had been just 16 years since the Choctaw people had experienced the (Trail of Tears) and they had faced starvation... It was an amazing gesture. By today’s standards, it might be a million dollars.” according to Judy Allen, editor of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma’s newspaper, Bishinik, based at the Oklahoma Choctaw tribal headquarters)

Christine Kinealy expresses the consensus of historians when she states that “the major tragedy of the Irish Famine of 1845–52 marked a watershed in modern Irish history. Its occurrence, however, was neither inevitable nor unavoidable.” The underlying factors which combined to cause the famine were aggravated by an inadequate government response. As Kinealy notes,

(The government had to do something to help alleviate the suffering, the particular nature of the actual response, especially following 1846, suggests a more covert agenda and motivation. As the Famine progressed, it became apparent that the government was using its information not merely to help it formulate its relief policies, but also as an opportunity to facilitate various long-desired changes within Ireland. These included population control and the consolidation of property through various means, including emigration... Despite the overwhelming evidence of prolonged distress caused by successive years of potato blight, the underlying philosophy of the relief efforts was that they should be kept to a minimalist level; in fact they actually decreased as the Famine progressed.) Continued next month.

D-F-X, THE DEFECTS an outstanding hard rock band from Ireland is looking for gigs for the up-coming fall season. Contact: jj_doyle123@msn.com



Jack Doyle is an author and has published two books: Echoes of My Past, and Medjugorje, Heaven on Earth. To sponsor Jack’s Irish Craic” in The Valley

RONNIE’S RANTS

Ranting around The Valley

Ronnie Ford

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Tragedies occur all too often. Fear, heartache, sadness, trauma, and just plain unhappiness, enter our lives so many times. But, with all the melancholy and stress, there lies within the same plain, so many kind and decent people. People who take it upon themselves to try to eradicate offset the heart wrenching experience that has occurred amongst their friends or relatives. Here they come , from all walks of life,hungry to see if they can make things a little bit easier for others. The beauty of man helping man shines so brightly.

I think it is a great part of what keeps us pushing forward. Lets thank each other for each other, it makes things better. Sonia Sotomayor, the new nominee for the United States Supreme Court, is probably the strongest example of the ultra liberal left wing segment of our society. Somewhat of a racist, the circuit court justice was quoted as saying “ a female Hispanic or Latino, can make a more intelligent decision than a white male”. She may be right, I doubt it, but she should not have said it.

But, not to worry, she will readjust and say that is not what she meant. On with political life. Had a rather unsettling experience the other day. Went to Mass up in the Lakes Region.

Posted on the door were two notices, one for each door. Attention it said, I started to read it but was interrupted half way down the page, by people trying to enter. The notice was in reference to the swine flu. Bishop McCormack decided that the archdiocese of NH would not give out Holy Communion in the chalice, and dispense with the shaking of the hands. All of which I heartily approve. What I missed on the notice was they would not be giving Holy Communion on their tongue. So up I go to receive and stick out my tongue, and the deacon touched

my hand and said no, in the hand. I was so startled when he put the Host in my hand, that I said I have never done this before, put the Host in my mouth and turned away. I will tell you for 65 years, I have been receiving Communion on the tongue the ordinary way of receiving. How dare the Bishop mandate receiving Communion in the hand,(that was the rest of the message on the door). Moreover, when we stick out our tongue to receive Communion, we naturally hold our breath.

Try it - you will find that in order to breath during the first several seconds after sticking out you tongue, you’ll have to think about breathing. It is simply a natural reaction. That minimizes the possibility of transmission of the virus through the air. So mandating the reception of Communion in the hand seems at best an overreaction, and at worst , perhaps the less sanitary way to go.

The second problem with mandating Communion in the hand is that by its nature, a denial of the the right to receive Communion on the tongue. And that opens up a real can of worms. With the arrival of seasonal church goes to NH, the priests should tell the people of the change at the beginning of the Mass.

Don’t forget to mark your calendar, Monday June 15, 6:00 P.M. at Jackson’s Restaurant, the 6th annual neighborhood reunion of the Arlington district. For \$5.00 you get a fantastic buffet, and lots of good cheer! Many stories and lots of belly laughs. So come on down!

May the good Lord take a liking to you, do something nice for someone today. And we wish you enough.



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

Merrimack Pain Associates



Dr. Rami R. Rustum, M.D. is the Director of Merrimack Pain Associates at 50 Prospect St. in Lawrence. You can contact him at: ramirustum@comcast.net



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From the Desk of

Methuen Mayor William Manzi

Health care costs and how they affect Methuen

William Manzi
METHUEN MAYOR

The Municipal Relief Commission released their long awaited report this month, and while local officials appreciate the time and effort that went into the production of the report we are deeply disappointed with the recommendations made on municipal health care.

These recommendations actually take us backwards in terms of not only cost, but in terms of manageability. They would be an unmitigated disaster for cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth.

Public health care in Massachusetts falls into two broad categories, which are state and local. Health care provided by the state is run by the Group Insurance Commission, an eleven member body controlled by the Governor. This body makes all decisions relative to state plan design, including what co-pays will be for office visits, emergency room visits, in-patient hospital stays, out-patient surgeries, diagnostic tests, and pharmaceuticals.

The percentage borne by the state and the employee is also determined by the Commission, and is not bargained. The differences are not just academic. The Commonwealth, utilizing the superior legal rights they have bestowed upon themselves, managed to have health care inflation of 29% between 2001 and 2005. Municipalities, forced to deal with the higher cost legal structure imposed upon them by the Commonwealth, have seen cost inflation of 63% in that same time span.

The recommendations of the Municipal Relief Commission on health care start by providing a lengthy and cumbersome process for determining benchmark costs at the State GIC. Communities would then have to achieve cost parity with the State plan, or suffer penalties that would be imposed on the taxpayers of the locality, and not recalcitrant unions. Additionally the benchmarking would ignore key differences that currently produce disparate costs for municipalities, including geographic considerations, as

well as existing differences in how cities apportion their health care percentages between employer and employee.

The Commission plan also reintroduces binding arbitration, which had been abolished under Proposition 2.5. The threat of binding arbitration on top of the potential penalty assessed against the taxpayers of localities because of failure to reach agreement on health care costs with municipal unions makes this "reform" a non-starter for localities.

As we consider efforts to produce reforms at the municipal level it is critical to understand that the current system of double digit increases in health and pension costs are not sustainable under any economic model.

The rises in costs are so large that it is not possible to raise sufficient revenues through taxation to pay for them. As an example let us look at Methuen's health care costs over the last few years. In FY 2006 our health care costs were \$7,398,000. As we prepare for FY 2010 our health care costs were scheduled to rise to \$10,238,000. In the same time period our general pension obligations rose from \$4,809,000 to \$6,423,000.

These costs are eating away at our ability to deliver core governmental services, and cannot be addressed through additional revenues. The cost side must be addressed now or municipalities will continue to spin out of control financially.

The "reforms" advocated by the Municipal Relief Commission do not even scratch at the surface of what is needed, and in fact will make a bad situation even worse. The Budget Conference Committee should kill this effort, even if it means leaving the existing system in place. It is time for the State to look at real cost side reforms that would produce a system that puts taxpayers before special interests.

Visit my blog at www.billmanzi.com



Bill Manzi is in his second, two year term as the Mayor of Methuen. You can read his blog at billmanzi.com or email him at bill.manzi1@comcast.net

Methuen Shred Days at Riverbank



PHOTO: COURTESY

A RiverBank employee helps a Methuen resident recycled her newly shredded sensitive documents, at RiverBank's third annual Shred Day

RiverBank, a community-focused bank providing "friendlier, easier, and better service" held its Shred Day as a free public service, to help protect the greater Methuen area residents from becoming victims of identity theft.

Approximately 125 people from the community came to RiverBank's Methuen, Massachusetts branch on 20 Jackson Street to shred their personal and sensitive documents and have them safely destroyed in bulk. Nearly 2.6 tons of paper were shredded and recycled over the course of the three-hour event.

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PHOTO: COURTESY

Lindsay Waller and Jayan Landry of the Trauma Interventoin Program with Methuen Mayor Bill Manzi, celebrating 16 years of volunteer service to the people of The Valley in times of emergency and hardship.

Metheun student receives academic award

SPRINGFIELD, MA (05/27/2009) (readMedia)-- Christopher Carozza of Metheun was one of more than 60 students recognized for academic achivement recently at American International College.

Friends and families joined faculty and staff for the annual Academic Awards and Class Night ceremony in the Griswold Theatre.

Carozza, a senior majoring in interdepartmental science, received the alumni memorial award. http://fc.aic.edu/pr/images/chris_carrozza.jpg

During the ceremony, Senior Class President Charlene Williams presented the Class Gift to AIC President Vince Maniaci and Mathew Wisniewski, class of 2009, delivered the Ivy Oration.

American International College is a private, coeducational institution founded in 1885, offering undergraduate and graduate programs in the schools of Arts, Sciences and Education, Business Administration, Health Sciences and Continuing and Extended Studies.

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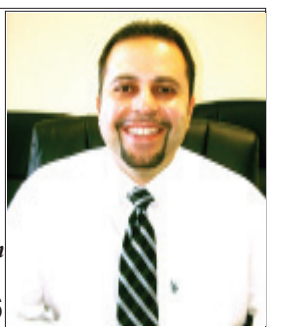
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Volunteers on Duggan Way in Lawrence clean the Lawrence Police Memorial at St. Mary's Cemetery.

More than a Picnic- Memorial Day in Methuen

Kathleen Corey Rahme
VALLEY PATRIOT METHUEN COLUMNIST

When people look forward celebrating Memorial Day, hot dogs and watermelon is the usual order of the day. Annually, Memorial Day in Methuen is that and more. Several projects take place in our wonderful city that truly marks this holiday as memorable for those who have participated. Memorial Day began in 1866 and evolved in 1971 into what we celebrate today. It honors those who have served and died for this country. It has also grown to include remembering our deceased loved ones. For others still, it marks the beginning of summer. Still others, it means a time of volunteerism to honor our deceased veterans.

Volunteers from many groups with whom I have been involved have spent the past ten years honoring our deceased veterans. Annually, thousands of flags are placed on the graves at Walnut Grove, St. Anthony's, Elmwood, St. Mary's, Bellevue, and Immaculate Conception cemeteries. These groups partnered with both the Methuen and Lawrence offices of veterans' services led by Tom Hargreaves and Francisco Urena respectively. They include the Methuen Youth Corps, First Church Congregational, Methuen Village at Riverwalk Park, Riverside Baptist Church, the Lawrence Exchange Club, Raytheon employees, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, JROTC Methuen and Lawrence High Schools, numerous veterans and volunteers. Apologies if I missed your group!

Over 150 volunteers dined on sandwiches prepared by Dottie Avery and her family at the cemetery. A ceremonial flag internment was done after lunch.

The city-wide clean-up involved about 60 volunteers edging the bronze markers at the Elmwood. This is very hard but gratifying work. It is actually the favorite project of most of our volunteers. Removing the sod from the veterans' graves for Memorial Day is a monumental task (pun intended!). We have been doing it for the past five years.

Placing the flags was especially nice this year. The Methuen JROTC was there

and they worked very hard with a Viet Nam veteran volunteer named Gerry. A few WWII veterans came out as well. It has become an annual tradition for Mike Beshara, Joe Castro, and Charlie Boddy to be there. Other regulars include Jim Fiorante, John Drelick, and Col. Bernie Stansbury of Methuen High School JROTC. Mike Bolduc who is currently serving in the Army was there with his young son. I could go on and on with the stories of who participated. Newcomers, Gene Nicolaison and Bill McGrath both WWII veterans and Werner Sohn, Korean War veteran all of Methuen Village did most of St. Anthony's cemetery themselves. We certainly welcomed the help!

This year's 10th annual Wall of Honor at St. Monica School and Parish community was well attended. This year Edmond Levesque was a special guest who has graced the wall for the past nine years and he has never been to view the over 650 veterans' photographs. Meeting Levesque, WWII Army veteran for the first time was a privilege. Regular visitors to the wall included Sara Payne Hayden, WWII WASP, Tommy Petrillo, WWII Navy, and Luther McIlwain, Congressional Gold Medal Recipient and Tuskegee Airman. The Werner Sohn and Bill McGrath from the walking club from Methuen Village attended as well.

This year's Memorial Day parade was the best attended in many years. Crowds lined the streets waving American flags provided to them by the Methuen Exchange Club. I was the official driver of the Lincoln Town Car for American Legion Post 417. Hot dogs and pasta were served at the American Legion and the VFW. Somehow, it tasted a little better knowing that our deceased veterans were honored because of our volunteerism in preparation of Memorial Day.



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

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MINGYA VALLEY USA!

You can demolish beautiful and historic buildings, but....

Mingya, you can't tear down the memories

Andy Kelley
VALLEY PATRIOT MINGYA COLUMNIST

Mingya, If you grew up in Lawrence in the 60's, getting rid of the old and bringing in the new was popular.

Hippies were in and anything old was out. Urban Renewal tried to demolish old memories of the Merrimack Valley. Urban renewal was extremely controversial as it involved the demolition of priceless historic structures, and the relocation of people.

Urban renewal efforts often led to the demolition and replacement of vibrant neighborhoods with highways and housing projects. My recollection of urban renewal is that it often tore down old, beautiful, historic structures and replaced them with vacant lots.

Go to MingyaValley.com on Facebook and take a look at the photos members have posted of some of these old buildings.

Comments on these long lost buildings will lead you to the conclusion, you can demolish beautiful and historic buildings, but mingya, you can't tear down the memories.



Mingya, it's the old Lawrence jail on Hampshire St.

The old Post Office was at the corner of Broadway and Essex Street. Donna Lopez, who posted two pictures of the old building commented, "The Old Post Office ... was a beautiful old building .

It was a shame that the city tore down the old post office." Others noted, "my dad worked in that post office, as well as my uncle back in the 50s and 60s... We would always cut through the post office on the way to Pearl's." My father worked in an office above Louie Pearls store which was beside the Old Post Office. My brother recalls visiting my father one day, and witnessing the wrecking ball having its way with the old building.

Theatre row was a series of theaters on the east side of Broadway between Lowell Street and Common; the Palace, the Modern, the Broadway & Strand. Several people on Facebook had fond memories of growing up and going to these old movie houses that showed news reels and movie classics. Paul Ramey shared that theatre row was, "the longest string of theaters in the world at one time. My dad remembers 5 cents on weekdays and 10 cents on Sundays." Judy O'Connell writes, "and when you finished your popcorn, you flattened the box and sailed it towards the screen."

There were other theaters in Lawrence like the Strand, the Warner, the Capitol, the Premier and the Central. "Don't forget the Warner Theater... I lived at the Warner

theater every weekend beginning at age 10." writes another Facebooker. The old library is at the corner of Haverhill and Hampshire. How this old building avoided the wrecking ball may have something to do with people like my father who opposed urban renewal. My house was beside the old library. When I was very little, I remember a neighbor talking to my father about the old library. "They need to tear that ugly old building down and replace it with a new one" the neighbor said. My father disagreed with knocking down the old sandstone building. Dad said, "I have an idea, let's knock down your house and see what a new one will look like before we put a wrecking ball to this one." Fortunately, the Old Library stands tall today.

One old building that I was not sorry to see demolished was the old Lawrence Jail on Hampshire Street . Some of the more curious conversations on Facebook , 26 in all over the last month were about this old jail. People commented

on how they played in the playground by the swing set across the street from the old jail.

Hey wait a minute, did I just say swing set, playground and jail in the same sentence? Yes I did. For those of us who lived near it, it was not until we started reminiscing about the old jail in our back yard that we realized just how creepy it was to have a playground across the street from the jail.

"I lived two blocks away from the prison and was sent to the park by my mother to play all the time. Now that i think about it, it was creepy. Thanks Mom. I still love ." This and some other very funny comments can be found in the Mingya Valley group.

Next months column, Summer in Mingya Valley. Please post photos of Salisbury or Canobie Lake, etc. on Facebook or email to me at andy@andykelley.com .

Quote of the Month:
"Mingya, I was bohn heyah, my mothah was bohn heyah, and my fathah was bohn heyah."

Become a member of Mingya Vally on Facebook. Go to www.mingyavalley.com .



Andy Kelley left Lawrence a long time ago, but it turns out, Lawrence never left him. He lives in Andover with his family and owns Effective Student Marketing, Inc. a marketing firm for colleges. He can be reached at andy@andykelley.com



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Lowell Film Collaborative - Summer/Fall 2009 Schedule

All screenings take place in fabulous downtown Lowell and seating is on a first come, first served basis. For more about the Lowell Film Collaborative, visit . E-mail: lowellfilmcollaborative@live.com

Right at Your Door - Thursday, June 11 @ 7 p.m. 2006, Rated R (under 18 not permitted) Location: Studio A at Lowell Telecommunications Corporation (246 Market Street) - Suggested donation: \$5 What begins as just another day for everyman Brad quickly disintegrates into an ordeal of terror when a dirty bomb is unleashed on Los Angeles. Unable to contact his wife, Brad decides to barricade himself in his house while awaiting her return from work, facing isolation and panic during his tense vigil. With a strong script and talented cast, writer-director Chris Gorak's skillfully wrought thriller delivers high-level suspense.

A Convenient Truth: Urban Solutions from Curitiba, Brazil - Thursday, June 18 @ 7 p.m. - 2006, not rated Location: Tabocas Brazilian Steakhouse (26 Andover Street), Free admission

The LFC and the Green Building Commission finish their four-part documentary film series with this incredible, inspirational documentary that shows a city where urban solutions are not just theory, but a reality. This award-winning film aims at sharing ideas to provoke environment friendly and cost-effective changes in cities worldwide and focuses on innovations in transportation, recycling, social benefits including affordable housing, seasonal parks, and the processes that



transformed Curitiba into one of the most livable cities in the world. Cities should be a solution not a problem for human beings — the city of Curitiba has demonstrated for the past 40 years how to transform problems into cost-effective solutions that can be applied in most cities around the world. Come be inspired! Join us at Lowell's newest hotspot, Tabocas Brazilian Steakhouse, for food, drinks, and socializing after the film!

Nerdcore Rising - Thursday, June 25 @ 7 p.m.- 2008, not rated - Location: Studio A at Lowell Telecommunications Corporation (246 Market Street) Suggested donation: \$5

Meet MC Frontalot, a hip hop vocalist who heads up one of the most popular bands in a genre known as nerdcore. Nerdcore Rising follows Frontalot and his band on their first tour of the US, rapping about things they love like Star Wars and Magic: The Gathering. This humorous and insightful film gives nerdcore its proper due.

Twelve - Thursday, July 9 @ 7 p.m. 2008, Rated R (under 18 not permitted) Location: Studio A at Lowell Telecommunications Corporation (246 Market Street) -Suggested donation: \$5 This unique film is a "loosely-connected" series of shorts, each made by a different Boston-based director and representing a month of the year. It was conceived by

Salem filmmaker Scott Masterson, whose goal was to create a film collaborative where a group of up and coming filmmakers could assist each other in producing their own short films, ultimately to be packaged as a collection of different styles and forms of expression.

The Real Dirt on Farmer John - Tuesday, July 14 @ 7 p.m. - 2005, not rated - Location: Lowell National Historical Park Visitor Center (246 Market Street), Free admission. The epic tale of a maverick Midwestern farmer! An outcast in his community, Farmer John bravely stands amidst a failing economy, vicious rumors, and violence. By melding the traditions of family farming with the power of art and free expression, this powerful story of transformation and renewal heralds a resurrection of farming in America. The film is a haunting odyssey, capturing what it means to be different in rural America.

Momma's Man - Thursday, July 16 @ 7 p.m. - 2008, not rated - Location: Studio A at Lowell Telecommunications Corporation (246 Market Street). Suggested donation: \$5. During a short business trip to New York, 30-something Mikey pays a visit to his parents' home and decides never to leave, forsaking all his responsibilities as a husband and new father back in Los Angeles. Written and directed by Azazel Jacobs, this unique independent drama delves into the fear of facing adulthood, the romanticizing of the past and the unwillingness to accept change, regardless of its inevitability.

O Brother Where Art Thou? - Tuesday, July 21 @ 7 p.m. - 2000, Rated PG-13 Location: Athenian Corner Greek Restaurant (207 Market Street) Suggested donation: \$5 It's Mississippi, 1937. Three convicts escape from a jail chain-gang intent on getting to the loot stashed away by one of them. As this is at his house soon to be flooded by a new dam, speed is of the essence. They find themselves fast-talking their way out of one jam after another, and along the way not only have to be wary of riverside sirens but even get to make a pretty good country record. Come join us for a film kick-off to

the renowned Lowell Folk Festival!

Monster Road - Thursday, August 6 @ 7 p.m. - 2004, not rated - Location: Studio A at Lowell Telecommunications Corporation (246 Market Street) - Suggested donation: \$5 Brett Ingram's award-winning documentary explores the world of legendary claymation filmmaker Bruce Bickford, the eccentric animator who became an international sensation following his collaborations with Frank Zappa in the 1970s. Using home videos, interviews and footage from several of Bickford's never-before-seen productions, Ingram paints a portrait of an artist noted as much for his iconoclastic worldview as he is for his art.

Medicine for Melancholy Thursday, August 20 @ 7 p.m. 2008, Rated R (under 18 not permitted) - Location: Studio A at Lowell Telecommunications Corporation (246 Market Street), Suggested donation: \$5. Medicine for Melancholy is a love story of bikes and one-night stands told through two African-American twenty-somethings dealing with issues of class, identity, and the evolving conundrum of being a minority in rapidly gentrifying San Francisco—a city with the smallest proportional black population of any other major American city.

Hinterland Film Festival - a selection of short films - Thursday, September 3 @ 7 p.m. - 2009, not rated - Location: Studio A at Lowell Telecommunications Corporation (246 Market Street). Suggested donation: \$5 Conceived by Sara Blaylock and Brian Baldi, the Hinterland Film Festival was held at the Montague Book Mill in Montague, Mass., in May 2009, and proved to be a success, selling out on all four nights it was held. This is a selection of some of the short films screened during the Hinterland Fest, showcasing an array of talent from not only Massachusetts but every corner of the globe.

Before the Music Dies - Thursday, September 17 @ 7 p.m. 2005, not rated Location: Studio A at Lowell Telecommunications Corporation (246 Market Street). Suggested donation: \$5 This very relevant documentary tells the story of American music at this precarious moment. Filmmakers Andrew Shapter and Joel Rasmussen traveled the country, hoping to understand why mainstream music seems so packaged and repetitive, and whether corporations really have the power to silence musical innovation. The answers they found on this journey - ultimately, the promise that the future holds - are what makes Before the Music Dies both riveting and exhilarating

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FARMTOWN LOWDOWN

A Recap of Dracut Town Meeting, June 2, 2009
2 1/2 Mil cut from Budget for Vocational School

George Papoulias
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT REPORTER

June 1st marked the date of Dracut’s Spring Town Meeting. The Dracut High School auditorium was filled with Dracut residents, anxious to hear the fate of the town during these challenging economic times.

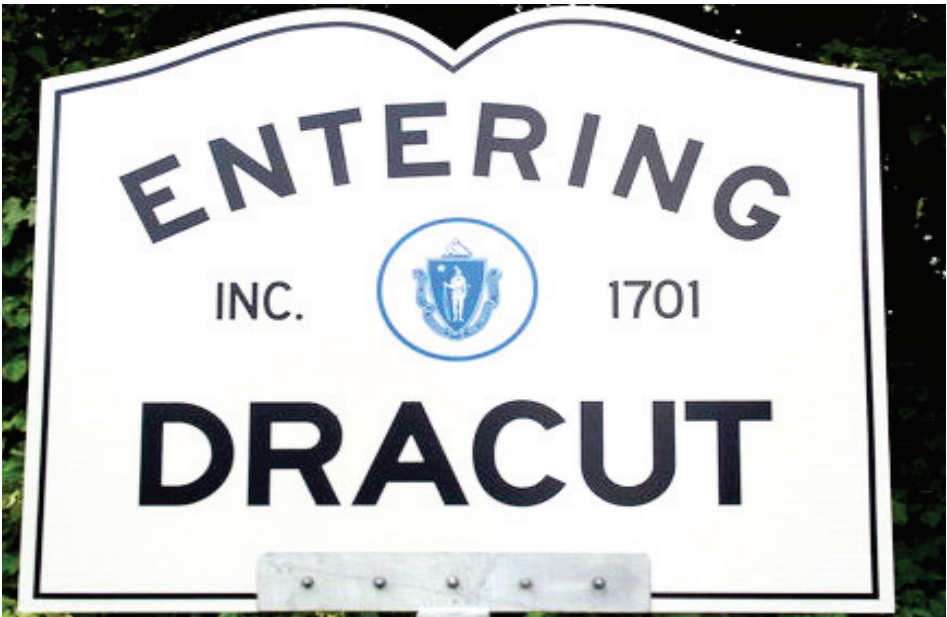
The following articles passed at the town meeting which will begin effective July 1st (next fiscal period), most of which in majority fashion

Article 5- The town using any/all available finances to bear town expenses.

Article 6- The town transferring a portion of available money to operate the Sewer Department. The Sewer Department budget for next fiscal period is \$4,868,975. This is comprised of salaries, expenses, sewer treatment charges and debt service.

Article 7- Dracut appropriating a portion of the town’s finances to operate the Kenwood (East Dracut) Water Department. The Kenwood Water Budget will be \$1,181,625.

Article 8- The town borrowing money for the reconstruction and improvement



of roads and/or sidewalks. The money will be fully returned as ruled by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Article 9- An appropriation of \$2,000 to repay medical bills that have carried over from previous years.

Article 10- A transfer of \$20,000 from the Wetland Protection Fund to bear costs of the Dracut Conservation Commission.


Article 12- An appropriation of \$51,931 for financial aid to the Moses Greeley Library

Article 14- An appropriation of \$130,000 for a new water metering system for the Kenwood Water Department.

Article 16- Town beginning a late fee policy of a 14% interest rate applied to residents, whose bills are unpaid for more then 30 days.

Article 18- An appropriation of \$1,900,000 from the Community Preservation Fund for the development and site work of Canney Farm. Canney Farm is a recreational hotbed which will be located at 2166 & 2178 Lakeview Avenue. It will include recreational fields, tennis and basketball courts, parking, fencing and walking trails.

(Though this article passed, it did also attract much resistance from some in attendance.)



George Papoulias is a Dracut resident and graduate of Rivier College with a B.A. in Communications. He is a producer at WCAP 980 AM in Lowell, MA for Merrimack Valley Afternoons, Paying Attention with Tommy Duggan, Lowell Devils Hockey, the J-Team with John Molori and Riverhawk Radio with Bob Ellis

NEWS FROM THE BLOG-SIDE

Dracut news and opinions available on-line

Shawn Ashe
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT REPORTER

Dracut has been mired in a discussion for the last couple months regarding the development of a Walgreen’s at the corner of Mammoth Road and Lakeview Avenue.

This project first came to the notice of most of the people of the town when the Board of Selectmen chose not to vote to accept a donation from Walgreen’s to pay for a peer review of a traffic study of the intersection.

Since that point, there seems to have grown a disconnect (often heated) between the Board of Selectmen (who are all opposed to this project) and the Planning Board, which has jurisdiction over the process that would allow or not allow the project to continue.

The neighborhood has unified against the project, with lawn signs and community input at every opportunity.

I use this issue as an opportunity to discuss the differences between

the various online venues that Dracut residents have to learn about this issue.

Brian Flaherty’s Dracut Politics blog at <http://dracutpolitics.blogspot.com> does a good job covering this and other issues from a citizen’s point of view. Brian doesn’t hesitate to give an opinion, and does well capturing the essence of the issue at hand. Unconnected to any of the political beings in town, his voice is a fresh entry to the blogosphere.

Frank Zabierek’s Voyager Infosystems forum remains the same as it always has been. While this Walgreen’s project has been the major issue in town for months, his site continues the anonymous attacks on a young man who has gotten into some legal trouble over his alleged behavior.. as well as attacks on the boy’s family, his girlfriend and her family, and continued insinuations of conspiracy and neglecton of duty among town and city departments. With nobody taking any responsibility for what is written on that site, it continues to be of no value and only damaging to the community.. but that’s the nature of all the communities online that allow for anonymous comments.

DJ Deeb’s site at <http://www.djdeeb.com> has become a professional resume, which is as it should be. His previous creation of www.warrenshaw.com where he took his arguments with Shaw public was a poor decision that ultimately damaged his political career.

This past weekend was an interesting one on my own blog, <http://www.dracutforum.net>, I had put up a posting that included two audio clips of callers to the 980 WCAP Saturday Morning Live program. Brian Bond of the Planning board had called to discuss his positions and behaviors during this Walgreen’s spat, and the our senior Selectman, Jim O’Loughlin called in to rebut.

Throughout the following day on Sunday, comments appeared on this posting from both Bond and O’Loughlin,

as well as Chairman of the Planning Board Phil Thibault, Flaherty, myself, and a former Dracut Politician Jeanne Balkas. All comments were attributed to their authors. All wrote with respect and courtesy, adding value to the conversation.

As far as I see, this is how a blog should be.

I’ll admit, it doesn’t happen often that people involved in an issue will want to take the risk of taking a stand and putting it in writing. But when they do, it makes you proud to be able to provide a safe venue for them to do so.

Feel free to join in the discussion at the blogs, we all encourage responsible participation.



Shawn Ashe is a producer for 980 WCAP’s Saturday Morning live program, and the owner and operator of the Dracut Forum website at <http://www.dracutforum.net>

Lowell’s Financial crisis

Joseph Mendonca
VALLEY PATRIOT LOWELL CONTRIBUTOR

Once again, the City of Lowell is in a Financial crisis - only this year it is to an extreme not experienced before. The last time we had such a huge short fall was in 1991 and the State was able to bail out the City with a loan and a Finance Oversight Board to get the City out of a mess of its own making.

This year, it is the State that has created the problem with an enormous reduction in local aid -- a reduction that cannot be replaced with local funds. To absorb this reduction on the City side of the budget would require a reduction of nearly 20% of the City’s labor force (about 200 jobs). The City Manager is recommending

reducing the City’s contribution to the School Department by \$5M. That would shift the jobs losses to the School Department budget, but still require the cutting of more than 100 jobs on the City side.


In recent years, we have heard the term “maintain services” during budget deliberations. This is code for maintain jobs. With a reduction of this magnitude, that will be impossible. Somehow, services will have to be reduced. Which services are hit the hardest will depend on the priorities of the City Manager and the City Council and will play out during the next few of weeks. Cuts to Public Safety seem unavoidable. The question of to what extent will likely be among the toughest decisions the City Manager and the City Council will have to make.

There is a non-human side of the budget that also affects services to the residents of the City. These are the line items for supplies and funds to maintain the City’s infrastructure. You only need to drive the section of Central St between Middlesex St and Market St to experience the infrastructure maintenance deficit. One of Lowell’s main arteries is in ruins - ironically, due to an effort to display our history. Will it be possible for the Council and the City Manager to deal with the infrastructure needs in this budget climate? Or is it just about the jobs?

With changes of this magnitude, it is time for the City Manager and the City

Council to consider a restructuring of City government. It is time to re-evaluate if the current organization of City departments is the most efficient and effective way to provide the services needed by its residents with such reduced resources.

There is likely not time to undertake such a task for the current budget discussions, but by all accounts, there will likely be another year of economic and budget pain. It could be during this next year that the City Manager could review City functions and recommend a reorganization to the Council to maximize the necessary City services in a climate of reduced financial resources.



Joe is a former Lowell School Committeeman (1999 - 2006) and former Lowell City Councillor (2007) who is familiar with Lowell’s City and School Department Budgets.



The Myth of the state budget crisis 2009

D.J. Deeb
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Here we go again, the sky is falling! We are hearing that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is facing one of the worst revenue shortfalls ever to impact the state's budget. The fact is that Beacon Hill has a spending problem, not a revenue problem. Instead of cutting spending like most households are being forced to do in order to cope with these difficult economic times, state leaders are proposing a new series of tax hikes to deal with projected revenue shortfalls. Increasing taxes is definitely not the answer if we are to grow Massachusetts businesses, increase tax revenues, and put people back to work. Instead, a combination of realistic spending cuts and new sources of revenue, along with a reduction in taxes, should be sought out by state leaders.

Let's examine the current state budget. The FY 2009 budget was \$28.22 billion, an increase of 5.2% over the previous year's budget. The proposed FY 2010 House budget totals \$27.4 billion, while the Senate version totals \$26.7 billion and relies on \$1.1 billion in Federal stimulus aid as well as almost \$300 million from the Commonwealth's "rainy day" reserve fund. Massachusetts currently faces a \$1.1 billion budget deficit for FY 2009 and it is expected that more than \$3 billion will have to be cut from the FY 2010 budget, which is currently being finalized. The high unemployment rate (estimated to be more than 8 percent) has reduced the number of people paying taxes and forced households to reduce their spending. The Senate's proposed budget cuts to local aid, which amounts to 30 percent, are the largest reductions in state history.

Why is the Commonwealth facing this "crisis?" Well, even though the Bay State has been experiencing an exodus of more than 40,000 people annually since 2000, over 2,000 new state government positions have been created since 2006 when Governor Patrick took office. State funding appropriations in over 140 accounts increased by more than 9

percent last year alone.

This past month the Massachusetts House and Senate voted to increase the Massachusetts sales tax from 5% to 6.25%. It is estimated that \$900 million of additional revenue will be realized by increasing the sales tax to 6.25%. The House voted 108-51 and the Senate voted 29-10 to support the sales tax increase. To their credit, most of our local legislative delegation voted against the sales tax increase, including Senators Sue Tucker (D-Andover) and Steve Baddour (D-Methuen) as well Representatives David Torrisi (D-North Andover) and Colleen Garry (D-Dracut).

Governor Patrick himself has proposed a series of tax hikes to address the budget shortfalls, including increasing the gas tax by 19 cents per gallon. One of the best kept secrets is that currently, the Massachusetts gas tax is already 23.5 cents per gallon. The Governor and some legislators have also proposed eliminating the sales tax exemption on alcohol, soda, and candy.

The fact remains that local aid, which impacts the most people, need not be cut, nor do we need to cut fire, schools, police, public schools, higher education, or public works. These proposed House and Senate budgets are a farce and our state leaders are lying to the people once again. Of course, I am likely to be called out on the carpet for making such bold statements so I need to elaborate in the paragraphs that follow.

In mid-May, the Senate rejected an amendment by 31-6 to allow 2,500 slot machines at each of the state's four racetracks and at Logan Airport. Allowing slot machines would have brought in an estimated \$2-3 billion per year in revenue. At the same time, the Senate voted against prohibiting pay raises and imposing a hiring freeze for most state workers. The Senate has also refused to abolish Quinn Bill benefits for police officers hired after July 1, which would have saved the Commonwealth more than \$45 million per year. Finally, the Legislature recently passed a \$110 million annual tax credit for the film industry.

What are some other ways of increasing revenue without raising taxes? Massachusetts State Treasurer Tim Cahill estimates that the Commonwealth could gain \$1 billion this year and an additional \$900 million per year (the amount the sales tax increase projects to raise) by privatizing the state lottery system. Here, Here! Maybe the system can actually be made efficient instead of serving as a dumping ground for patronage political appointments. Can we privatize Beacon Hill while we're at it?

What are some of the realistic cuts in state spending that should be explored? Health and Human Services amounts to 49% of the current state budget. That's a large share of the budget being used to benefit a relative few. Hundreds of millions of dollars can be saved annually by combining the administrative functions of the Departments of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. Mass Health is currently costing \$10.3 billion annually and \$10.46 billion has been budgeted by House lawmakers for FY 2010. This is one of the worst programs ever created by the Legislature with the support of former Governor Mitt Romney. This program subsidizes health insurance to private business owners and contractors making more than \$100,000 per year at taxpayers' expense. Massachusetts is the only state that does this. Our neighbors to the north provide no such program, nor should they. It is one thing to provide health coverage for needy children and disabled individuals, but I am certainly not interested in subsidizing health insurance for everyone else. This is not the job of government. We should make drastic reductions in this program. I'm talking cutting it by 50% or more, saving the Commonwealth over \$5 billion per year. With this savings alone, we can increase local aid and slash the Massachusetts income tax (currently 5.3%) in half. This is just the beginning of the cuts that I would suggest.

Are we having fun yet? Let's keep cutting. \$590 million is currently being spent on Early Childhood Education and Care. This includes the pre-school Head Start program. These programs are laudable, but not accessible to

all. Parents who utilize these programs could be charged for them. The current budget also includes \$24 million for Environmental Administration and almost \$65 million for Environmental Protection. How about eliminating part or all of the \$24 million for Environmental Administration?

The current state fiscal "crisis" was predictable and is largely the result of poor fiscal management by state leaders, including former Governor Romney and current Governor Patrick. Raising taxes never stimulates economic growth in the private sector. Growing the economy requires putting more money into the pockets of working people so that they can spend their money as they see fit. Local aid coupled with adequate funding for schools, higher education, police, fire, and public works are what matters to most taxpayers and these should not be cut. Let's hope that our leaders will find the courage to do what is right. If they fail to do so, we will have our chance to turn things around and make ourselves heard in the November 2010 elections!

D.J. Deeb served on the Greater Lowell Regional Voc-Tech School Committee from 1997-2009. He also served on the Dracut School Committee from 2005-2008. Deeb is an Adjunct Professor of History/Government at Bunker Hill Community College and Adjunct Instructor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He teaches Social Studies full-time at Reading Memorial High School.



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Sotomayer and the role of justice

Paul Murano
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

The current debate about Judge Sotomayer for the Supreme Court raises some very fundamental questions, not the least of which is the meaning and role of justice in society.

It can be said that the two sides of love, which are the two sides of God, are justice and mercy. Justice is rightness and corresponds to truth and law, while mercy recognizes weakness and imperfection and includes compassion and forgiveness. When dealing with the human condition a proper balance of both is needed.

This harmonious duality of justice and mercy relates to the duality found universally in the masculine and the feminine, the anima and the animus, the yin and the yang, head and heart, reason and intuition, etc., and is often the underlying strata for being "conservative" or "liberal" in contemporary politics – conservatives tend to focus on truth,

law, and justice while liberals emphasize compassion, fairness, and mercy. While we recognize the need for proper balance of these masculine and feminine realms, when it comes to the Supreme Court the question is what is the role of government?

Historically we see the general pattern of the state administering justice while the family and Church attending to mercy. The state is father while church and family is mother. Because of the contemporary breakdown of the family and faith community, which is an integral part of the agenda of the contemporary left, the state increasingly sees its role as both father and mother. Not only does this violate the principle of subsidiarity by usurping the authority of parents and church, but it also contributes to their weakening.

One result is that the justice system becomes the mercy system, where compassion and "fairness" replace law

and justice as the primary focus. Hence, a judge like Sotomayer is praised for stating that a Latina woman can make better judgments than a white man, and that courts don't just interpret law but engineer policy (based on perceived need, minority status, etc.). Justice is blind but the eyes of "fairness" are wide open because at times it must ignore the law and judge differently for different people, depending on their personal story.

One reason why the American government has worked so well for over 200 years is because of its triadic nature of executive, legislative, and judicial branches, reflecting the Trinity Himself. The executive reflects the Father inasmuch as the president leads and executes authority; the legislative reflects the Son inasmuch as it is the law, the word, the logos; and the judicial the Holy Spirit inasmuch as it interprets the law and the word of the constitution as the Spirit through the Magisterium authentically

interprets the word and law of God. This Trinitarian form is threatened and becomes imbalanced and disintegrated when the courts make law rather than interpret it.

As the contemporary left continues its war on authority and law, symbolized in the white male but having its ultimate aim at God, the white house will now have another friend on the supreme court, who, as a Latina woman, promises to judge arbitrarily according to her own interpretations of compassion and fairness, based on her personal experience and biases. In a body that is meant to simply interpret law and the authentic word of the constitution objectively, this is not progress.



Paul Murano teaches theology and philosophy at Assumption College and Northshore Com. College. He is also a co-host of The Paying Attention! radio program on WCAP. You can E-mail Paul at PJDM@aol.com



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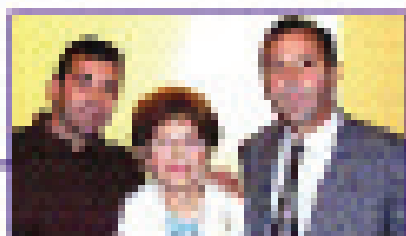
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VETERANS BENEFITS

Death Benefits for our military heroes

Susan Piazza

VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

Memorial Day and Veterans Day are the two days of the year we specifically set aside to remember and celebrate of our Nations veteran's. Memorial Day is a day for honoring and remembering our dead. Veterans Day honors and remembers the living. In keeping with the season, the focus of this column will be on death benefits.

Eligibility: The deceased veteran is entitled to several death benefits. These benefits are broken down into burial and memorial benefits. To qualify for such aid one needs to be able to produce the veteran's DD214, ones discharge papers. For those who are unable to locate this vital document check out: www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/standard-form-180.html This is the website for the National Archives-National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri. Or check out: www.archives.gov/veterans/evetres/index.html to retrieve copies of ones Military Personnel Records. For those without Internet access obtain a copy of: Standard Form-180, Request Pertaining to Military Records. The veteran, or the next of kin of a deceased veteran, can use Standard Form-180 to retain a copy of the veteran's military records.

Eligibility for death benefits may exist for the veteran and may, in some cases, exist for the spouse and/or dependent children as well. Eligibility may be granted if the veteran was discharged from active military service under conditions other than dishonorable, or if death occurred while on active duty.

A veteran does not have to predecease a spouse or dependent child (children) to have them buried with the veteran in a government facility. Surviving spouses, after 2000, who remarry can still be interred with the veteran if the remarriage is terminated by annulment, divorce, or death. However different burial conditions may apply to different national cemeteries.

National Cemeteries: Not all national cemeteries are still open, and of those still open some accept casketed interments while others are open to cremated remains only. The funeral director or the next

of kin must now make arrangements at time of need. Under a prior program reservations were taken, this is no longer the case, though the government will honor requests made under that prior program. To locate a national cemetery check out: www.cem.va.gov. To view the Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne go to: www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/massachusetts.asp

Military Burial: One's funeral director normally coordinates the elements that comprise a military burial. These honors consist of the playing of 'Taps', the folding of the United States Flag, and an honor guard detail (normally comprised of at least two uniformed military members, at least one from the veterans branch of service). The ceremony concludes with the folding of, and presenting of, the American Flag to the spouse or next of kin. For more information about military honors go to: www.militaryfuneralhonors.osd.mil/.

It is always advisable to inform the funeral director of the deceased membership in any veteran's organizations. Disabled American Veterans and the American Legion both send representatives for their deceased members. Both perform a ceremony in accordance with family wishes and organizational protocol. The American Legion also has a firing detail as part of its gravesite ritual. (As a member of both the DAV and Legion I am familiar with their rituals. One may want to check with one's own veteran's organizations regarding rituals provided for deceased members.)

Presidential Memorial Certificate: This certificate is given to the next of kin and/or loved one(s) upon request. The person seeking such a certificate must provide a copy of the veteran's DD214 discharge papers and a copy of the veteran's death certificate. Information and a sample certificate can be found at: www.cem.va.gov/pmc.asp. If one does not have access to the Internet one can simply fill out "VA Form 40-0247 Application for Presidential Memorial Certificate," and submit one's completed form to:

Presidential Memorial Certificates
(402E12)

Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC20420-0001

Funeral Reimbursement: The VA

will reimburse \$300. burial and funeral expenses for veterans who, at the time of their death, were receiving either pension or compensation payments, or would have received them had they not been receiving military retirement pay. Reimbursement may also be authorized if the veteran dies while in a VA facility, VA nursing home, or VA contracted nursing home. Costs associated with transporting the deceased from a VA facility (hospital or domicile) may, under certain situations, be reimbursable as well.

Plot allowances of \$300. are authorized if the veteran meets the requirements for the \$300 funeral and burial expense reimbursement. (Plot is defined to mean a casket burial; columbarium; or in ground niches for cremated remains.) Total reimbursements will not exceed \$300. for funeral and burial and \$300. for plot expenses. If burial is in a government cemetery or a government section of a private cemetery the state or government receives the reimbursement, if there was no charge for the veteran. There is no allowance for burial in a cemetery out of US jurisdiction.

Service-Connected Deaths: A death is considered service-connected if the veteran died as a result of their service-connected disability or if, in the opinion of the VA, the service-connected disability contributed to the death of the veteran. If the death is determined to be service-connected the payer of the veterans funeral expenses may be entitled to reimbursement of up to \$2,000. This sum cannot be combined with the \$300. funeral and burial allotment or the \$300. plot allotment. The government, in some cases, will pay to transport remains to the nearest open national cemetery. And, there is no time limit for filing service-connected claims.

Non-service connected deaths. These claims for reimbursement must be filed within two years.

Headstones and markers: Inscription for veterans is free.

Delivery is free of charge to either a government or civilian cemetery anywhere in the world. But, spouses or dependent children are entitled to this benefit only if burial is at a national or state veterans cemetery. And, grave markers must be consistent with those at the chosen government cemetery.

In Memory Of: In some cases a veteran may be entitled to an "In Memory Of" marker. These are normally granted to those whose remains have not been located, are still unidentified, were donated to science, were buried at sea, or whose cremated remains were scattered. (Some national cemeteries have 'scatter areas' where one may actually release the veterans' ashes.)

Private cemeteries may charge a placement fee for a headstone, marker or memorial, not reimbursable. So, check with your own cemetery about requirements and fees for placement prior to procuring. To apply for a grave marker or headstone call: (800) 697-6947 or go to: http://www.cem.va.gov/hm_hm.asp and complete VA Form 40-1330, Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker.

Other Useful Information: <http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=veteranshomepage&L=1&L0=Home&sid=Eveterans> This is the official website for Department of Veteran Affairs for Massachusetts. It has a section for: Federal Government, Key Resources, News & Updates, etc. There is also a large section with items geared for Returning Veterans, Women Veterans, Education Benefits, Family & Dependents, Housing, etc. An excellent local resource.

<http://twitter.com/disabledamericanveterans> Sign up to receive current updates on legislative issues, latest news on benefits, and upcoming DAV information.

Any questions or concerns can be sent to me via e-mail or brought directly to your veteran's service organization or your local veterans agent. All are extremely knowledgeable, and are there to assist you.

As always, God bless our men and women fighting for our liberty. We pray they remain safe, now and in the future.

And may God bless this great United States of America.



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

Let us fly "Old Glory" not burn it !!

John Lenotte

VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

This time of year, with June 14th, Flag Day approaching it is an appropriate time to make note of the importance of the US flag. It is more than a piece of cloth. The flag is a symbol of our country and our freedoms.

We "pledge our allegiance" to the flag. Members of the armed forces, past and present, salute the flag and it has been carried to the forefront of many battles. The flag drapes the coffins of troops killed in action and veterans who die days or years later.

Let me bring you up to date on some important legislation in the US Congress. This is from the Citizen's Flag alliance: Following a three year absence, a flag protection amendment has returned to the United States Senate. On May 6, U.S. Senator David Vitter [R-LA], along with 17 colleagues, introduced Senate Joint Resolution 15, a constitutional amendment to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States. The language of the amendment is concise: "The Congress

shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States."

A flag amendment has moved successfully in the House of Representatives through six consecutive Congresses, only to fail by as little as one vote in the Senate.

The issue has been debated since a 1989 Supreme Court decision struck down flag protection laws in 48 states. A 5-4 vote of the high court declared that flag burning was permissible – a right under the free speech provision of the First Amendment. Groups like the Knights of Columbus, Jewish War Veterans, Gold Star Wives of America, Marine Corps League, Elks, AMVETS, Knights of Columbus, and The American Legion, all part of the 140-organization Citizens Flag Alliance, continue to work to reinstate the protection.

In similar action, Reps. Jo Ann Emerson [R-MO] and Jim Marshall [D-GA] introduced a companion measure, House Joint Resolution 47, which on introduction was referred to the House Judiciary Committee.

"Opponents have said that respect cannot



be mandated or legislated, it comes from the heart. That is true – as far as it goes. But, while respect cannot be mandated by law, it can be undermined by law. That is exactly what the 5-4 Court majority did, defying a tradition of two centuries' standing. And that is what the proposed constitutional amendment would undo," said Harvard Law Professor Richard Parker, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Citizens

Flag Alliance.

It is time to let the citizens of our nation decide on this amendment. Both US Senators Ted Kennedy and John Kerry have in the past voted against this amendment. As have some of our US Representatives. If you feel as I do about the flag, it is time to contact their offices and let them know how you feel. This should be done for both US Senators and US Representatives. More information is available on the Internet.

And if you do not have Internet access, visit the local library or talk to family and or friends who do have Internet connection. I plan on making my voice heard, will you join me?

God Bless America and the troops who are protecting our way of life. And do so under the US flag.



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

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Valley Patriot of the Month Paul Thompson; From Page 1

the board of health, more than one parade patron nodded and smiled when noting that in uniform Commander Thompson gives the familiar look of John Wayne in the movie 'Green Berets'.

"This is the best event I have attended in all my years" he remarked. But with some sadness, he noted during the ceremony that Armond J. Soucy, age 92 would be stepping down from leading the rifle firing squad. "He's served for 65 years. Incredible. Absolutely incredible," the commander said.

Married for 52 years to Catherine B. "Buffy" Thompson, the commander and his wife have six children, 3 boys, 3 girls "and two redheads, two blondes, and two brunettes," he noted, "the gene distribution was kind to us."

In 1950 Mr. Thompson entered the Coast Guard and was trained at Cape May, New Jersey, the Coast Guard's boot camp. He later attended the Navy's Sonar school in Key West "because the Coast Guard didn't have their own sonar school at that time, we joined with the Navy for



advanced trainings and such. I went there and became a 'sonar man' he said.

Deployed predominately in the mid-Atlantic, the young Thompson could take up to 5 days sea voyage to "reach station." From there, a typical tour lasted approximately a month of monitoring at sea, as well as weather and instrumentation relays to government as well as commercial aircraft.

"I learned a lot and spent a lot of time at sea," he explained.

After serving he "figured I would take more classes, high dreams and such, then by chance, I met my future bride at a restaurant in Woburn. The rest is, how we say, history. Fifty two years of marriage, it's been incredible," he said about the new direction of community service that began after marriage.

"What makes me tick? I don't know. I just love Georgetown. This is where we've been since oh '62. We've raised our children here. I, well, I just have tried to help" he said.

"I served with 13 different selectmen and women over the years. When I won my first election, I got some advice from Joe Soucy. He said he had some advice, and if you want to take it, fine, if not O.K. The first year you should spend learning the position and the board and town operations, the second year contributing more and more, the third year you are a full board member and that's when you'll do the heavy lifting. Basically his message was to get to know the job," he said. "I've always told that to other selectmen. I've served with some guys that were very good, and some that, well, needed some learning."

"It's never easy, you know, being an elected official you try to please folks, you try to get consensus. It's not always easy you know.

Like most former military men, Commander Thompson continued his service through community involvement, and passed along the tradition of service to his family.

"I was the chairman of the school committee in 1975, so I had the distinct pleasure of presenting the diplomas to the graduates. My daughter graduated and she went into the Army shortly after and stayed there for 30 years. Suzanne just retired a while ago as a Sergeant Major" he said.

"I don't really like to talk about myself that much. I have a great sense of pride in this community. Ah, when we were marching down East Main Street yesterday, and we were going towards Harry Murch Park, and as soon as I saw the (new) flags up there, I got emotional. The veteran's group and me, we all got to see our own service flag up there," he said. "What a project for the town. I've penned a letter to Peter Durkee (Highway Surveyor) thanking him and others for



PHOTOS: COURTESY

their tremendous work on this project," the American Legion Post Commander said as he related the re-dedication of the memorial park.

The Valley Patriot highlights veterans and veteran support groups and organizations that have contributed to our communities. Please send your nomination for future profiles to the editor.



Lawrence "Lonnie" Brennan is a former Georgetown Selectman and is currently Vice-Chair of the Georgetown Republican Town Committee. He can be reached at Lonnie.Brennan@

More than 100 senior centers across the state to participate in the Massachusetts Bar Association's 2009 Elder law Program

Boston, MA- Local seniors can learn about their legal rights on a variety of topics at free events hosted by Senior Centers and Councils on Aging in more than 100 communities across the state over the next few months.

The program is part of the statewide Elder Law Education Program presented by the Massachusetts Bar Association with assistance and cooperation of the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys. The program matches attorneys with councils on aging or senior centers throughout the state to make the free presentations about the law.

With the assistance of a group of

volunteers from the MBA's Probate Law Section Council, the MBA has prepared a revised and expanded edition of "Taking Control of Your Future: A Legal Checkup," a resource guide that was distributed to all participating senior service related agencies and attorney volunteers this year. The guide contains information on a wide range of legal issues affecting the lives of seniors and is updated each year.

Topics include:

Twenty commonly asked questions in elder law;
The rights of a nursing home resident;
Aid and Attendance Veterans Benefits;
Elder Abuse, Neglect, Financial

Exploitation;

Reverse mortgages; Medicare/Medicaid changes; and

Real Estate Tax Exemptions and Deferrals

Volunteer attorneys have participated in the Elder Law Education Program since 1987. Past topics have touched on the Homestead Act, estate planning and long-term health insurance. The program is presented with the generous assistance and cooperation of the Massachusetts Chapter of the NAELA.

Check with your local senior center or council on aging to find out if a program will be hosted in your community.

For an online copy of the elder law

resource guide, visit www.massbar.org/elderlaw.

Incorporated in 1911, the Massachusetts Bar Association is a non-profit organization that serves the legal profession and the public by promoting the administration of justice, legal education, professional excellence and respect for the law.

The MBA represents a diverse group of attorneys, judges and legal professionals across the commonwealth. You can write to the Communications Department, Massachusetts Bar Association, 20 West St. Boston, MA 02111-1204.

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- Increased enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP) courses by more than 200%, with student enrollment over 400, and all teachers certified to teach an AP course
- Increased placement of students meeting state graduation requirements from 70% (prior to 2003) to 85% (prior to 2008)
- New construction of three elementary and middle schools
- Increased teacher retention rate from 48.7% to more than 50%
- Implemented full-day kindergarten; opened the Early Childhood Center
- Implemented consistent core curriculum, instructional practice, assessment and professional development system-wide

- Revised long-term strategic development of Elementary and Secondary Education for meeting requirements in Special Education – only district to receive this recognition 14 schools/district
- Increased student attendance at all levels, with average elementary attendance outperforming that of state
- Implemented after-school and summer school programs available to students from all schools
- Expanded opportunities for parent participation and leadership through PTA, Project ELM (Parent Leadership Assistance Network) and EPC (Every Person Influences Children)
- Developed the Standard Mover program to provide students with secondary and business courses

MCAS TESTING

