

# CHAOS in LAWRENCE

State to Secure \$35M Bailout Loan for Bankrupt Lawrence

Democrat

UA



\$35MIL Bailout!

How did Lawrence's Finances get SO BAD?


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PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN


I N S I D E

ADOPT A PUPPY


LOWELL DEVILS HOCKEY




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Lowell Devils Columnist  
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## VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

### Robert "Bob" Ahern

Terry Crow Mercier  
VALLEY PATRIOT HERO COLUMNIST

A hero is often considered to be someone in the forefront of a scenario and highly visible to a large audience. I want to tell you about a more behind the scenes kind of hero-- the type of hero that so often goes unnoticed. This particular gentleman, whom I had the privilege of interviewing, is perfectly content not to be recognized, but simply wishes to make a difference in the lives of America's most forgotten homeless Veterans, and for the deployed troops and their families.

Robert "Bob" Ahern is that type of

hero. He grew up in a military family. His Father was a Sergeant in the Marines. Shortly after high school Bob decided to follow in his father's footsteps and enlisted in the Army where he served as a specialist. After completing military service he became a State Trooper for Massachusetts—a career he has had for twenty-two years. His younger brother, Steven, also served in the Marines as a Sergeant, and then went on to become a Police Officer and also serves in the National Guard. Another brother, Chris, works as a Police Officer. Public service

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# EDITORIAL

## Brown Gets it! Taxpayers money is not for protecting terrorists!

When it comes to our national security, U.S. Senator Scott Brown gets it. He understands who the enemy is and how to deal with them. During his acceptance speech after winning the U.S. Senate race he said that our tax dollars need to be spent on the military to hunt down and kill our enemy and not to hire lawyers to defend them. President Obama on the other hand is so naïve in dealing with the war on terror (which he refuses to call a war on terror, for fear of offending terrorists), begs the boldness of our enemies to hit us again and again.

The latest suicide attempt by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, "the underwear bomber", to bring down a plane full of innocent passengers on Christmas eve is but a hint of what is yet in store for us, and does not scratch the surface of the bizarre avenues of ruthless havoc available to these dedicated fanatics.

To them, death in martyrdom is preferred over living.

So how did Obama handle this terrorist attack? First, by denying that it was a terrorist attack or part of any organized Al-Qaeda plot, and treating Abdulmutallab like a common criminal. He was read his rights and provided a lawyer.

If the situation wasn't so serious, this would be a joke. The problem is that America is under attack by Al-Qaeda and Obama is just not prepared to play hard ball. Abdulmutallab should have been treated as an enemy combatant and interrogated immediately by our military. We needed to find out who he worked with and whether there were any other attacks planned. Instead, he was advised that he has a right to remain silent, blah, blah, blah.

So, now while Al-Qaeda is laughing at us for failing to recognize a terrorist attack, Obama shows them how weak we are by closing the American Embassy in Yemen. Why? Because the United States cannot keep our diplomats safe from Al-Qaeda. So, how can we expect that our government will keep us safe?

President Obama has surrendered. And while he had intelligence that Yemen is now the hotbed for terrorism, last month he released 6 terrorists being held at Guantanamo and sent them where? You guessed it, back to Yemen, so they can help train and strengthen Al-Qaeda and attack us again.

Well, he had to keep one campaign promise: closing Gitmo and letting the terrorists go free. Closing Guantanamo and spending millions of taxpayer dollars to buy new prison accommodations in mid-America for these enemies, and giving them the rights and privileges of United States citizens, is about as foolish and suicidal as it gets.

But now with the election of Scott Brown, the situation looks a bit brighter. The trial of Khalid Sheikh Mohammad (KSM) has thankfully taken a reverse course and will most likely not take place in New York City. What a slap in the face of all those who suffered during the 911 attack to suffer again by having the mastermind of 911 tried in a civilian court with the rights and privileges of Americans. President Obama should be ashamed of himself for creating this circus, with the cost of security alone in the millions of taxpayer dollars. Imagine during World War II, having to read all German or Japanese prisoners their rights (reserved for Americans) and then releasing them to fight again, or dragging them back to the U.S. for trial?!

Yes, we are at war, President Obama. And Senator Scott Brown gets it!



## Reader unhappy with Patrick Blanchette

Dear Mr. Pat Blanchette:

I recently skimmed through several articles from the Valley Patriot regarding your many escapades and self righteous endeavors after others to who work for the city, or have worked for the city in the past. I find it quite hypercritical of you to attack others, when you yourself ignored some very important health and safety issues that obviously existed for years. Before you attack anyone else, righteous or not, think about your own ignorance toward the citizens of Lawrence, of whom you so eloquently speak, and the men and women who protect and serve them. Your "White Plantation Owner" mentality is noted and so is your absence in upholding your own oath of office. Before you took ownership of the residents of Lawrence, you must have first been an example of your very words.

You have failed the people of Lawrence, the very residents that have paid you to serve them unconditionally. Instead, you had apparently been busy role playing Mayor of Lawrence and watching others, when you have done the very thing you accused others.

Remember, I contacted you regarding

the conditions of the Lawrence Police Department well into and after the violations. I made you aware of them and you did nothing. For years you ignored the dignity and the integrity of the very residents you make claims of, as well as the people who serve them. Instead, you got your power off of those you tore down, and ignored those in need.

"I would not put my dog in there!" but you allowed for the residents and the people who protect this city to work and be detained in swill. Typical Progressive. You make all these claims of compassion, when you are the least compassionate. You allowed a potential health and safety threat to the city of Lawrence, along with many others, and yet, you speak so viciously about others.

I have a suggestion for you...stop paying attention to what everyone else is doing. There are many things in Lawrence, as you so clearly stated, that need dire attention...that you failed to get done. And it's because you were too busy attacking others.

Look in the mirror, Mr. Blanchette,  
Susan Cummings

## Do You Know- The Average Cost to house an inmate is over \$40,000 a year?

During the current economic times it is difficult to understand how taxes continually go up while salaries are cut, putting a strain on our children and families. Ironically, some of the taxes that we pay go directly to housing, feeding and clothing inmates who have broken the law and jeopardized our safety. The cost of housing an inmate is approximately \$40,000 a year. This amount is excessive and is a direct result of waste in the Sheriff's department. In my experience working in the criminal justice system, I have seen this waste first hand. It is inap-

propriate and shows poor management of our tax dollars. Instead, these taxes need to go to improving our communities and not to pampering inmates. Now is the time for change! As Sheriff of Essex County, I will ensure waste is cut and your taxes are spent appropriately.

All statistics are taken from the Governor's Commission on Correction Reform Report.

Damian Anketell  
4 Oran Circle, Peabody, MA  
Anketellforsheriff@gmail.com  
978-335-7897

### News tips

Phone in news tips to (978) 557-5413, or you may email tips to us at [valleypatriot@aol.com](mailto:valleypatriot@aol.com). We respect the anonymity of our sources if requested.

### Letters to the editor, columns and op/eds

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**Corrections;** Please contact the editors at [valleypatriot@aol.com](mailto:valleypatriot@aol.com)

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# Getting ready for future challenges

Joseph Mendonca  
LOWELL CITY COUNCILOR

The City Manager has begun to reorganize city government. The first change was to replace the Building Commissioner as the beginning of restoring integrity to the City's Inspectional Services. The Manager appointed Rosemary Cashman (former Tyngsboro Town Administrator) as Interim Building Commissioner while a search is conducted for a new Building Commissioner that should be completed within 3 months.

The City Manager has also appointed Henri Marchand as the Assistant to the City Manager after the City Council restored funding for the position. One of Henri's roles will be to seek out greater efficiencies in City government. In addition to addressing complex constituent issues, he will research CitiStat tools for gathering and analyzing data - again with an eye towards achieving more effective and efficient City government. Henri will begin his new job on February 8th.

As a result of a motion passed by the City Council, the City Manager will be establishing the Neighborhood Improvement Advisory Committee comprised of representatives of all the established neighborhood groups and other stakeholders. The committee will meet periodically to discuss the issues that need to be addressed throughout the City, prioritize the issues and bring them to the attention of the City to be addressed. The committee's mission will be to focus on issues that can be addressed with existing City ordinances and resources. The committee should have its first meeting in February.

With the release of the Governor's budget in the last week of January, the FY2011 budget development process begins. While the Governor's budget projects both Chapter 70 school aid and local aid at 2010 levels, local taxes would still have to be raised to cover the increased utility, health insurance, and compensation costs that occur even without negotiated raises. Indications from the Legislature are that this scenario may be too optimistic. Either way, we have to be ever vigilant with City spending to minimize the burden on our residents who are still feeling the pain of the economic downturn.

With the above support in place and with the exception of the FY2011 budget development, our focus needs to turn to economic development. We need to work to make Lowell a place that is attractive for businesses to create new jobs or for businesses to relocate to the City. We need to have an attractive environment for any offshoot of University research to incubate and grow in the City.

With the redevelopment of the Hamilton Canal District under way and without detracting from those efforts, we need to look beyond the JAM area - both physically and in time. Just as the old adage implores us not to put all our eggs in one basket, we must not rely on any single path to success. We must explore other paths and in some cases create new paths. We must continue our efforts until a time when there is full employment in the region.

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Joe Mendonca is a newly elected councilor in Lowell. He is a former Lowell School Committeeman (1999 - 2006) and former Lowell City Councilor (2007) who is familiar with Lowell's City and School Department Budgets.



## Fibromyalgia? Chronic Fatigue?

Do you feel like every drop of energy is drained from your body and some days you just hurt all over? Does going to the bathroom feel like a ten-mile hike?

You are not alone. Six million Americans suffer from the effects of fibromyalgia. But the sad fact is most of them have been told they're crazy, lazy, or just depressed.

**Do You Have Any of the Following Symptoms?**

- \* Aching all over
- \* Disturbed sleep
- \* Tender points in the neck, and spine
- \* Recurring headaches
- \* Fatigue & Stiffness

Maybe your doctor doesn't even think fibromyalgia is a real disease, but you know it is. You suffer with it every day. Fibromyalgia is often called the invisible disease. You look fine on the surface, but underneath you're often exhausted and in excruciating pain.

**My name is Dr. Jin Sung a chiropractic physician and over the past thirteen years.** I've used gentle treatments to help hundreds of fibromyalgia patients feel better and live healthier, more joyful lives. The more patients I helped get better, the more I realized that... **No One Should Have To Suffer The Way You Do.**

I've made it my mission in practice to help those suffering with chronic pain like you.

To help people with fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue, I'm running a special offer for people suffering from fibromyalgia. For 15 days only, \$49 will get you all the services I normally charge new patients \$180 for! Just call by February 20th and you'll get...

An in-depth consultation about your health and well-being where I will listen... really listen... to the details of your case. A complete examination including a detailed consultation, orthopedic examination, neurological examination and a neuromuscular examination. A thorough analysis of your exam findings so we can start mapping out your plan to being pain free.

What Will Your Fibromyalgia Pain Feel Like 1 Month From Today?

One of the biggest myths about pain is that it goes away all by itself, without any treatment.

A May 1998 study in the British Medical Journal proved this myth false, showing that 75% of back pain sufferers who do nothing about it will have either pain or disability 12 months later.

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# One Happy Republican!

Paula Porten  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Well, it’s been a while since I last wrote a column under this title, but maybe it was worth the wait. Last month’s special election here in Massachusetts was electrifying. But not just here in Massachusetts, all over the country people were energized and excited and watching this race very carefully. Senator Scott Brown’s win may have been a terrible upset and surprise to many, but I could feel the energy of voters during his rallies, and I knew he was going to win.

One such rally was right here in my backyard on Main Street, North Andover. Over 1000 people came out right after a snow storm to meet Brown and show support. There were adults and children holding signs and American flags, cheering and taking pictures of themselves with the next U.S. Senator. (number 41).

And right after these rallies, pictures were posted on Facebook for everyone all over the country to see. Facebook really played a roll in this election that the democrats totally underestimated. The network of Republicans across this country tied into Facebook kept growing as the race progressed. My college roommate from New Jersey was closely watching and getting just as excited as the polls changed in Brown’s favor. She was constantly sending me messages on Facebook. Another friend from Ohio sent me a Facebook message that she had just donated to Brown’s campaign. And I continued to read messages from people of all different states showing support and enthusiasm.

Fox news and talk radio also had a huge impact. All of a sudden Laura Ingraham

and Sean Hannity began talking about Scott Brown on their radio shows and TV shows. And Brown began calling into those national radio shows and appearing on national TV. I heard Laura telling her listening audience to go to her webpage if they wanted to donate to Brown’s campaign. She had it all set up.

But, how did Scott Brown get here? Ironically, he won both his State Senate seat and U.S. Senate seat through special elections. The State Senate race was a result of Cheryl Jacques vacating her seat early. The U.S. Senate seat was partially because of Ted Kennedy’s passing but also because our state legislature changed the rules, calling for a special election. Originally, the governor would fill a vacant U.S. Senate seat until the term ended. The legislature voted to change this while Senator Kerry was running for President as they feared that then Governor Romney would be able to appoint a republican to fill the seat if Kerry became president. Pretty funny, huh?

So, now I hope this momentum continues as my faith in the Massachusetts voters has been renewed. I look forward to the Republican State Convention in April and the upcoming elections this fall. The “Scott” heard round the world sent some message that the people will not accept politics as usual. Change has come and I am privileged to be a part of it!

*Paula Porten is an attorney at the Tarshi Law Office in Lawrence and vice chair of the North Andover GOP Town Committee, and a former member of the North Andover Finance Committee. You can please email her at paulalporten@aol.com*

## Senior Activities for FEBRUARY

**Safe Driving for Seniors.** Have you ever wondered what the function of a Senior Center is and what goes on daily at the North Andover Senior Center?

Senior Centers are designated as community focal points through the Older Americans Act. The National Institute of Senior Centers defines a senior center as a place where adults come together for services and activities that reflect their experience and skills, respond to their diverse needs and interests, enhance their dignity, support their independence, and encourage their involvement in and with the center and the community.

Not only do Senior Centers offer helpful resources to older adults, they serve the entire community with information on aging; support for family caregivers, training professionals, lay leaders and students; and developments of innovative approaches to addressing aging issues. While senior centers typically provide nu-

trition, recreation, social and educational services, and comprehensive information and referral, we also provide programs such as fitness activities and Internet training to meet the needs and interests of the new generation of seniors. For more information please call the North Andover Senior Center at 978- 688-9560.

**NEW SPECIAL PROGRAM: A Matter of Balance:** A free 8 week program designed to reduce the fear of falling, increase activity level and provide strengthening exercise. Guest speakers will attend, class is limited to 12. First class meets on Tuesday February 23 the remaining classes on Thursday February 25-April 8. This is an 8 week commitment you must attend all classes NO DROP IN.

Need help understanding your health benefits? Please call 978-688-9560 to set up an appointment. **Our SHINE Counselors** will be holding office hours at the Senior Center on the first, third and fourth

Tuesdays of every month from noon-3 p.m. as well as Thursdays from noon-3 p.m.

**Senior Valentine Dinner Dance:** At the Elks on Friday, Feb. 12 from 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Dinner served at 11:45 a.m. with dancing to follow. The deadline for purchasing tickets for North Andover seniors is Feb. 1 for \$6 per person.

**Mystery Ride for February:** Thursday, Feb. 4, depart the Senior Center at 11 a.m. Cost: \$4 includes lunch and transportation.

**Beginner Ballroom Dancing Lessons:** Starts Thursday, Feb. 4, 7:30–8:30 p.m. for six weeks. Learn the Fox Trot and the Swing. This class is open to all ages. The cost is \$90 per person or \$150 per couple for six weeks. Call Barbara at 978-688-9560 to sign up. This is not a difficult class, come and join the fun.

**Wii Game System:** The North Andover Senior Center has a Wii game in the new living room. The following games are available; bowling, baseball, tennis, golf and boxing. The system is set up on our new 46-inch flat screen television. A great way to exercise and have fun at the same time. Stop in for a game or two, call for availability of room.

**ZUMBA:** At a new time — Wednesdays, 3:30–4:30 p.m., six-weeks for \$24. Come exercise to the beat of Latin Music with Zumba Instructor Tallie Abernathy. (This class starts on Jan. 20, please call 978-688-9560 for sign up information.) Walk-ins are welcome for \$6 per class. No dance experience necessary. Ditch the work out and join the party.

**Support Services and Programs**

**Movie and Discussion Support Group:** Second and fourth Fridays every month from 12:30–3 p.m. in the living room. Join the group and enjoy a movie and discussion afterwards with Beacon Hospice Social Worker Lu Bonanno.

**Too Late Lecture Series:** Every Monday at 10 a.m. Hearing Clinic: Free on the third Thursday of every month. Call for an appointment.

**Pranic Healing:** Fridays, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., 20 minute treatment for a \$5 donation. Call for an appointment.

**Attorney George White:** Available to meet with you to discuss your legal issues. Please call the Senior Center to make an appointment.

**We need Volunteer Medical Transport Drivers:** Call the North Andover Senior Center for more information. Speak with Barbara at 978-688-9560 for an application and assistance.

**Cash Value gift card program:** Stop by the Senior Center to receive your free card.

The Friends of the North Andover Senior Center is pleased to announce its endorsement of the **Cash Value Card Program** recently launched in the Merrimack Valley. Participating merchants include: Amici’s Pizzeria, McAloon’s Liquors, Quic Pic, The Loft, Boston Chowda, Bella Vita Salon & Day Spa, and J. Brian’s Pub & Grille.



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## THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

# Congress Struggles to Create Jobs ... Right!

Dr. Charles Ormsby

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

It always amazes me how our Congress seemingly struggles to accomplish something as simple as "creating jobs."

Actually there is no need to create jobs. There are many more jobs than people.

For example, just walk around your house. Are there no jobs to be done?

Or go to Lawrence and see all the jobs needing attention: Litter to be picked up, buildings to be painted, potholes to be filled, food to be prepared, children (and adults) to be educated, cars to be repaired, snow to be shoveled, ...

Go into any business and ask the proprietor if there are any jobs he would like done. The answer would be the same, "Of course! I would like to do more product development, improve efficiency, increase marketing, open new branches, etc."

So why doesn't she hire more employees to perform these tasks?

The answer is very simple: The increase in after-tax profits resulting from adding employees to perform any of these jobs is either negative (net profits will decrease) or is estimated to be so small as to not be worth the associated risk.

The bottom line: If adding an employee (or multiple employees) reduces your expected profits or offers a less favorable risk/reward ratio than other investments (e.g., stocks, bonds, or going to the movies), you would be crazy to offer these new jobs.

You are not crazy and neither are business executives or entrepreneurs.

While not always successful, everyone seeks to maximize his returns while minimizing risks. Expecting business decision makers to do anything else would be the height of idiocy ... a goal only Congress

"What would you do with a brain if you had one?" asked Dorothy.

"If I had a brain, I would go to members of Congress and tell them how to create jobs," answered the Scarecrow.

"Well, don't they have brains in Congress?"

"If they did, wouldn't they have created jobs by now?"

"For a scarecrow with no brain, you are pretty observant!"

"Maybe they just don't have any courage," suggested the Lion.

"Or, maybe no heart," added the Tin Woodsman.

"I think you are all correct," said Dorothy, "but what they really need is what I have been wishing for so very badly."

"And what is that?" asked the Scarecrow, the Lion, and the Tin Woodsman in unison.

"THEY NEED TO BE SENT HOME!" concluded Dorothy.

routinely aspires to achieve.

Let's think about the profit/return/risk calculation that business decision makers need to perform.

If adding an employee is considered, the increase in resulting revenues and the uncertainty or likely variability of that increase (the risk) must be estimated.

Making these estimates is often very difficult, but whether the estimates are the result of careful calculation or arise from mere guesswork, the estimates are made nevertheless.

The next step, calculating the cost of the added employee, is much easier and can usually be performed with much greater precision. It starts with salary and associated business overhead costs (office space, support staff, supplies, necessary travel costs, etc.). These are the objectively necessary, business-related costs associated with the new employee.

If there were no other costs, the profits/rewards for hiring this extra employee would merely require subtracting these costs from the estimated increase in profits and then evaluating whether those likely

profits justify the associated risks.

Unfortunately, here is where the government comes to help. Nearly everything the government does reduces the attractiveness of hiring extra employees.

First, let's acknowledge the positive contributions of government. To the extent that government protects individuals and businesses from acts of force and fraud, protects private property rights and enforces contracts, it creates a business climate that minimizes risks and permits the greatest confidence in business calculations. Such an environment rewards investments and thus encourages job creation.

Clearly protecting us from foreign threats, including threats from rogue terrorist groups, is a necessary element of creating a positive economic climate.

Thus, the costs of an effective police force and courts to determine guilt or innocence and adjudicate contracts are appropriate ... as are the costs associated with deterring our enemies and killing them when they are not deterred.

Everything else government does destroys jobs.

Every dollar taken in taxes reduces the rewards associated with creating additional jobs.

But the damage doesn't stop there. Those tax dollars are used to add regulations that increase business costs (pensions, health insurance, sick days, overtime, family leave, unions, ...) and thus diminish the likely rewards associated with adding new employees.

But the damage doesn't stop there. The ever-present threat that Congress or some regulatory agency will impose additional regulations, results in increased business uncertainty and greater risk, and thus leads to a reduced willingness to invest and create jobs.

But the damage doesn't stop there. Taxes increase the costs incurred by your suppliers and thus increase your costs and decrease your profits ... again, fewer jobs.

But the damage doesn't stop there. These unnecessary taxes reduce the resources your customers have to purchase your products and thus reduce your sales, reduce your production efficiencies, and decrease your profits ... even fewer jobs.

It should be understood that the private sector jobs that do exist today were created (and persist) with these tax burdens and regulatory risks. Therefore, on average, they pass the risk/reward test in the

current environment.

The last job offered by each business just barely passed the reward/risk test. The next job considered by each business, the one not created, just failed that test. Thus, each business can be considered to be operating "on the margin" ... with a reduction or increase in its job count dependent on the slightest increase or decrease in the tax/regulatory burden.

So the recipe for creating new jobs is obvious. All Congress has to do is reduce the burdens outlined above. Every time this is done, businesses will recalculate the reward/risk equation for that next job and then start hiring new employees until the reward risk calculation again dictates that they cease and desist.

That is why President John F. Kennedy proposed that taxes be cut substantially in December 1962. He knew that the economy would expand and jobs would be created. While these tax cuts were not passed until February 1964, after Kennedy was assassinated, they reduced the unemployment rate by over 35% in less than four years.

In 1981 Reagan, with the support of Congress, passed the Economic Recovery Tax Act (ERTA) which reduced marginal tax rates across the board by 25%. The prevailing unemployment rate was reduced by over 50% from a peak of almost 11% early in Reagan's presidency to an average rate of 5.25% in 1989.

The Joint Economic Committee of Congress in 1996 wrote: "High marginal tax rates discourage work effort, saving, and investment, and promote tax avoidance and tax evasion. A reduction in high marginal tax rates would boost long term economic growth, and reduce the attractiveness of tax shelters and other forms of tax avoidance."

Even President Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers in 1994 pronounced "It is undeniable that the sharp reduction in taxes in the early 1980s was a strong impetus to economic growth."

The lesson to be taken away from this is that encouraging job growth is not rocket science. The necessary prescription is both simple and obvious. Our congressmen, while possibly deficient in the brain department, are sufficiently endowed to figure this out.

They spend their time convincing us that they feel our pain while tightening our thumb-screws. The truth is that they neither feel our pain nor do they care. All that matters to them is that they maintain their power and their status. Their goal is to maximize tax revenues for their disposal, NOT to improve our standard of living.

When it comes to brains, heart, and courage I will take the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodsman, and the Cowardly Lion over Congress everyday.

With apologies to Dorothy: Let's send them all back to Kansas!!



Dr. Ormsby is an ex-member of the N.A. School Committee. He is a graduate of Cornell and has a doctorate from MIT. He is currently a Visiting Professor of Mathematics at UMASS, Lowell.

You can email him at: [ccormsby@comcast.net](mailto:ccormsby@comcast.net)

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# Chaos in Lawrence: \$35M Bailout for Lantigua Team

Tom Duggan  
VALLEY PATRIOT REPORTER

If Governor Deval Patrick has his way, the City of Lawrence will be able to borrow \$35 Million to pay for their (to date) \$24.5 million deficit. House Bill 4421 will allow Lawrence to borrow the money which would be backed by state taxpayers and have no fiscal control board, no receiver and no oversight. State Representatives David Torissi, (D) North Andover, Barry Finegold (D) Andover and Willie Lantigua (who also serves as mayor) all support the bill.

Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua is also the Lawrence State Representative in the legislature and serves on the powerful Ways and Means Committee. He will be able to vote on the very bill that will give him a \$35 million loan to spend as the mayor of Lawrence.

**No Infusion of Capital?**  
Last month Governor Deval Patrick told the Valley Patriot that the help he and the state would be giving to Lawrence would not be financial but would help Lawrence become more accountable with the millions of dollars Lawrence spends every year.

“I will say that what we are looking at in Lawrence is not an infusion of capital,” he told a Valley Patriot reporter. “it’s getting at some reforms that make sure that they get on sounder fiscal footing and management so that this sort of thing doesn’t happen again.”

Governor Patrick is now lobbying heavily for the \$35 million loan for Lawrence at the state taxpayers expense. All the while Lantigua has been using his power as mayor to settle political scores, which will cost the city millions in unemployment compensation, lawsuits and contract labor disputes.

**The Hit List**  
So far, Lantigua has fired Myles Burke, the city’s Inspectional Services Director, tried unsuccessful to fire Planning Director Mike Sweeney, and fired Mary Lou Nichols an office manager at the DPW. He demoted Deputy Chief Mike Driscoll and promoted his campaign manager Sgt. Melix Bonilla to be Deputy Chief.  
He also targeted Recreation Director Linda Schiavone but withdrew her name from the council agenda after reaching a secret deal with her to stay on until June and then retire on her own. Lantigua refuses to disclose the terms or the details of that deal. Coincidentally, Burke, Nichols, Sweeney, Driscoll, and Schiavone, all openly supported Lantigua’s rival Dave Abdoo in the mayors race last November.



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

**The Lantigua Team: Assitant City Attorney Ricky D’Agostino, Lantigua’s Chief of Staff Lenny Degnan and former Council President Patrick Blanchette at a School Committee meeting in Lawrence. The former Council President refused to set the city’s tax rate at his last meeting in 2009, meaning Lawrence has yet to send out property tax bills in 2010. That missing revenue has resulted in millions of dollars in deficit spending since January 1st.**

Because Lantigua chose to lay off Mike Sweeney and other city workers he will be paying unemployment to at least a dozen employees as well as those he plans to hire to refill those jobs. According to postings in Lawrence City Hall, Mayor Lantigua has since posted the jobs of employees he has laid off, in violation of state law.

If HB 4211 passes, State Representative Lantigua, who also serves as mayor of Lawrence, will be in charge of spending that \$35 million.

**No Cash Flow**  
Lawrence has been deficit spending since January because City Council President Patrick Blanchette adjourned the ‘08-’09 City Council session without setting a tax rate and sending out the property tax bills. As of the date we went to press (February 4th) the tax rate in Lawrence under the new council has still not set a tax rate or sent out property tax bills.

This means the City of Lawrence has no cash flow while continuing to pay for police, fire, dpw services and other city functions.

According to Mayor Willie Lantigua the city’s deficit has climbed from \$9.5 Million in early December, to \$17.5 million by the beginning of January, to \$24.5 Million by the end of January. Lantigua says he inherited the budget mess and shouldn’t be penalized for prior mismanagement. But Lantigua’s new acting Economic Development Director, Patrick Blanchette was chiefly responsible for the city’s financial crisis.

**Interference/Lack of leadership**  
In the last two years, the Lawrence City

Council has raided the school building construction account, the cash reserve account and refused to raise fees, permits and fines, contributing to Lawrence’s dwindling cash flow.

The city has been hit with massive cuts in state spending in the last two years. At one point Lawrence took a \$10 million cut in state funding. Mayor Sullivan restructured the budget to bare bones with no layoffs in city personnel, but further cuts in state aid, a lagging economy, and a burst in the real estate market have all lead to Lawrence’s financial demise.

In addition to all that, Lawrence has not held a stable Budget and Finance Director in the last eight years. This was due to city councilors abusing their authority and threatening city workers with their jobs if they did not comply with political demands.

Former Budget Director John Griffin resigned after a few short months in the budget position, telling The Valley Patriot that it was constant interference and dirty politicking by Council President Patrick Blanchette that lead to him resigning. Griffin said at the time that he was constantly being harassed and bullied by Blanchette and other city councilors to sign off on expenditures or change budget numbers to suit their political agenda.

Former Comptroller Jim Limperis told the Valley Patriot in May of 2007 that Council President bullied him into making expenditures he felt were “illegal.” According to the city charter, the Council President has no authority over the day to day operations of the city and only has the authority to officially act when at the council table.

Limperis says that on several occasions he refused to sign off on city expenditures that he found contained “very suspicious activity” and fell under the category of “excessive spending.” According to emails and memos obtained by The Valley Patriot in 2007, Limperis refused to sign off on non-union raises. He also questioned how the city could legally give raises to non-union workers when no money was available in the city budget and while collective bargaining was still in progress with the city’s 22 labor unions.

That’s when Council President Patrick Blanchette sent an email to Limperis demanding that he not question the expenses, stating:

“Again, the city council voted to appropriate money in the form of a transfer. No other questions should be asked. Let’s stop with the games and leave our difference at the door. Unfortunately I think titles are going to some people’s heads. Even though signatures are needed - it does not allow for people to be obstruc-

tionists. Also, no need to involve someone from DOR (Department of Revenue) in this city matter. Let’s keep our issues in our own house.”

Limperis says that during the entire seven months he was comptroller, he routinely experienced harassment and interference from Blanchette to approve expenditures he felt were “illegal” because there was no funding source for Blanchette’s appropriations.

**Lantigua’s New Economic Development Director?**

Former Council President Blanchette has not only mismanaged the finances of the city of Lawrence but has also mismanaged his own personal finances. In early 2009, the IRS put a tax lien on Blanchette for his refusal to pay approximately \$9,000 income taxes over a period of three years. To date, Blanchette has not paid his income taxes.

At the time Blanchette failed to pay his taxes he was making \$70,000 as a conciliator in the industrial accidents Board in Boston, \$17,000 as the city council president, had a free cell phone, blackberry, an out of state travel budget to go on junkets, free health insurance and contributions to his pension.

Blanchette does not own a property, is not married and has no children.

Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua has named Blanchette to be his acting Economic Development Director and will be largely responsible for spending the additional \$35 million Deval Patrick is going to let Lawrence borrow with the backing of your state tax dollars.

**Conflicts of interest**

Lawrence’s new mayor Willie Lantigua appointed Blanchette to a city job in violation of a state law that prohibits elected officials in local municipalities from taking city jobs in the communities they served for at least six months after leaving elected office.

**Mass General Laws Chapter 268A, states:**

“This section shall not prohibit an employee of a municipality with a city or town council form of government from holding the elected office of councilor in such municipality, nor in any way prohibit such an employee from performing the duties of or receiving the compensation provided for such office; provided, however, that no such councilor may vote or act on any matter which is within the purview of the agency by which he is employed or over which he has official responsibility; and provided, further, that no councilor shall be eligible for appointment to such additional position while a member of said council or for six months



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

January 5, 2010. Left to right: State Senator, and Chairman of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, Steve Panagiotakos, Governor Deval Patrick, and 5th District Congressman Niki Tsongas In Lowell discussing the disbursement of Federal stimulus money. The governor told the Valley Patriot ***“I will say that what we are looking at in Lawrence is not an infusion of capital, it’s getting at some reforms that are sure that they get on sounder fiscal footing and management.”***

# Sweeney Pens Letter to the Mass. Ethics Commission

## Whistle Blower files complaint alleging Ethics Violations by Mayor Lantigua

February 4th, 2010  
State Ethics Commission  
Mr. Scott Cole  
1 Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Mr. Cole:

I am filing a formal complaint against William Lantigua, Mayor of the City of Lawrence and State Representative for the Sixteenth Essex District - City of Lawrence. I firmly believe that Mayor/State Representative William Lantigua has violated a number of sections of the Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.) under chapter 268A Conflict of Interest Law, specifically sections 23 (b)(2) and section 23 (b)(3).

To wit: in March of 2007, State Representative William Lantigua filed an affidavit with the Essex Probate & Family Court regarding a family court matter in which he was the defendant. His ex-wife, the Plaintiff, was seeking a motion for wage assignment of his State Representative's salary and seeking help with their daughter's college expenses.

Signed under the pains and penalties of prejudice, State Representative William Lantigua's affidavit to the court, contends in part,

"I have helped...[my ex-wife] in many ways, including assisting her efforts to get a job with the City of Lawrence Police Department, where she is currently employed."

State Representative Lantigua, of

course, represents the City of Lawrence and has considerable interaction with the Police Department in his role as State Representative and enjoys influence and the perception of influence to direct funding from state sources to the Police Department and the City of Lawrence.

It appears clear that State Representative Lantigua used his position and influence as a State Representative to secure a job in the Lawrence Police Department for his ex-wife. Additionally State Representative Lantigua's actions directly benefited himself and his personal financial situation. By increasing the income of his ex-wife, State Representative Lantigua eased the burden on his own purse. The better off financially she is, the lower the financial burden on Representative Lantigua to provide financially to his ex-wife and their child.

M.G.L. c. 268A, section 23 (b)(2) states in part, "No current officer or employee of the state...shall knowingly, or with reason to know...use or attempt to use his official position to secure for himself or others unwarranted privileges...which are of substantial value and which are not properly available to similarly situated individuals."

Additionally M.G.L.c. 268A, section 23 (b) (3) states in part, "No current officer or employee of the state...shall knowingly, or with reason to know...act in a manner which would cause a reasonable person, having knowledge of the relevant circumstances, to conclude that any person

can improperly influence or unduly enjoy his favor in the performance of his official duties, or that he is likely to act...as a result of kinship..."

By using his status as State Representative to secure his ex-wife a public job in the same city he represents as a State Representative, William Lantigua knowingly and purposefully acted in a manner to violate M.G.L. c. 268A and to further shaken the public's belief in our elected officials and in the general fairness of the public employment system.

Indeed his attorney in this court matter, Attorney Richard D'Agostino, also at the time an attorney for the City of Lawrence, submitted a pleading contending:

**"Defendant Lantigua has helped...[his ex-wife] in many ways, including assisting [her] endeavor to gain employment with the City of Lawrence Police Department, her current employment position. Such help has assisted Mr. Lantigua and [his ex-wife] in providing for...[their] best interests."** [Emphasis added]

I trust the State Ethics Commission will investigate this matter and inform me and the good people of the Commonwealth of your findings.

Sincerely  
Michael R. Sweeney

**Baker says Lawrence Bailout must include Receivership**

Valley Patriot Staff

For the last several weeks radio talk show host Michele McPhee from 96.9 FM talk has made it her personal mission to force Willie Lantigua to resign from his State Rep. seat while also serving as the city's mayor. McPhee has also ramped up her efforts to stop House Bill 4421, a \$35 Million bailout with state taxpayers money. "Not one more penny for the city of Lawrence without a receiver and a fiscal oversight board," McPhee told her listening audience.

"This is outrageous," she continued. "As a Rep., Slick Willie Lantigua sits on the House Ways and Means Committee which means he gets to vote on a bill that will give Lawrence \$35 Million and then, this same guy will get to spend that money as the mayor of Lawrence. This has to stop."

Lowell State Rep. Tom Golden (D), appeared on the Paying Attention! Radio Program on 980AM, WCAP and told radio host Tom Duggan that he opposes HB 4421 unless there is someone appointed by the state to oversee the way those funds are used. Shrewsbury State Rep. Karyn Polito (R), called into the show and expressed her outrage that cities and towns across the state are facing monumental cuts in their budgets, laying off teachers, police and firefighters and closing libraries while Lawrence continues to get millions of dollars that they've proven they can't manage. Mayor Lantigua says that Lawrence currently has a \$24.5MIL budget deficit with no end in sight.

Candidate for Governor Charlie Baker appeared on Michele McPhee's program and said he strongly opposes Democrat Governor Deval Patrick's bill to give Lawrence another \$35 Million with no oversight.

"... we know the right way out of this is

the same approach we took with Chelsea and the same approach we took with Springfield. If a community ends up on the edge of bankruptcy, then the right answer here is; receivership, state take-over, [and] a fiscal control board. Then we make absolutely sure that we get the spending side of the House under control before the State puts one more dime of everybody else's money into solving it's [Lawrence's] problems."

Andover State Representative Barry Finegold, Andover State Rep. Sue Tucker and North Andover State Rep., Dave Torrisi all support a \$35 MIL bailout with no fiscal controls and no oversight.

Andover republican Jamison Tomasek, who is running against Tucker in the fall says he believes it would be "irresponsible" to spend state taxpayers dollars on a bailout for Lawrence after city officials have mismanaged the billions of dollars they have already received.

**"If a community ends up on the edge of bankruptcy, then the right answer here is; receivership, state take-over, [and] a fiscal control board."**  
- Charlie Baker

**Affidavit to the court by William Lantigua admitting he used political pull to get his ex-wife a job in the police department while he was a State Rep. as a way of explaining that HE is providing for his family ... with OUR tax dollars no less!**

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
ESSEX, ss  
ESSEX PROBATE & FAMILY COURT  
DOCKET NO. 88D-0324-DV1

MAGGIE FAWCETT  
Plaintiff  
v.  
WILLIAM LANTIGUA  
Defendant

**AFFIDAVIT OF WILLIAM LANTIGUA IN SUPPORT OF HIS OPPOSITION TO PLAINTIFF MAGGIE FAWCETT'S MOTION FOR WAGE ASSIGNMENT/AND HELP WITH COLLEGE EXPENSE**

NOW comes the Defendant, William Lantigua, and on his oath deposes and states as follows:

1. I, William Lantigua, have faithfully paid child support for my daughter, Vanessa Lantigua, (D.O.B. 01/06/85 [22 years of age]) for many years.
2. I have not missed any payments as alleged by Vanessa's mother, Maggie Fawcett.
3. I am prepared to present copies of checks to this Honorable Court, demonstrating the Child Support payments I have made for Vanessa's benefit.
4. I am currently providing Medical Insurance for Vanessa and have submitted evidence of such to this Honorable Court.
5. I have helped with the college expenses for my daughter, Vanessa, to the best of my financial ability.
6. I also support my additional family members, which include my two (2) other children: Vallerie Lantigua (D.O.B. 07/01/91) and William K. Lantigua (D.O.B. 01/31/2002).
7. I live with my Wife, Mayra and my children in Lawrence, Massachusetts.
8. I have also assisted with Vanessa's extra college expenses from time to time, by paying for holiday travel expenses for Vanessa to fly from Miami, Florida to Massachusetts to spend holiday time with her friends and family.
9. I have helped Vanessa's mother, Maggie Fawcett in many ways, including assisting her efforts to get a job with the City of Lawrence Police Department, where she currently works.
10. I believe my assistance with Ms. Fawcett's employment helps us to financially provide for Vanessa's best interests.
11. In addition to paying Child Support, I sometimes directly deposit funds into my daughter, Vanessa's checking account, when I can afford to do so.
12. Vanessa is able to access these funds from a remote location at her college through an Automated Teller Machine.
13. A wage assignment is unnecessary, as I not only meet but try to exceed my Court ordered financial obligations to my daughter Vanessa, whom I dearly love.
14. A wage assignment would be unduly burdensome to me and negatively impact my family obligations to my wife and other children.
15. I respectfully ask this Honorable Court to deny Maggie Fawcett's motion.

Signed under the pains and penalties of perjury this 7<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2007

William Lantigua

# Lantigua Attorney likens firing of city workers with invasion of Normandy, (huh?)

According to the Lawrence city charter, city attorneys work directly for the Lawrence City Council, not the mayor.

When these lawyers are asked to appear before the council, city councilors expect that, under the law City Attorneys Charlie Boddy, Ann Randazzo and Rick D'Agostino will be giving them legal advice about the legalities of the decisions they are making. Since the inauguration of Willie Lantigua (da chief), however, Lawrence's city attorneys have been violating the city charter and instead of acting as legal representatives for the city council have been public advocates for the mayor. Below is a speech given before the Lawrence City Council last month by City Attorney Richard D'Agostino.

"That (the city charter) allows the Mayor or Chief Executive to come in and make wholesale changes without having to give any reason, without seeking a 2/3 majority [of the council]. This language is weak for defense of the employee, I'm sorry to say. It upholds the Mayor's executive authority. That is also your responsibility under the language, is to follow the charter and vote to uphold the executive's authority in this regard.

"You know, this whole situation has now boiled down to leadership. There is nothing pleasant about these experiences. There is always a personal and emotional side to all of this, but this is the dark side of the leadership. This is the tough side of the leadership. This is not about cutting ribbons and taking photo opportunities, this is about making the tough decisions to get the city back on it's feet.

The chief executive wants his own team and he submitted that to you for your support. You have to give him that right.

You know, on June 5, 1944, the night before operation overlord, the supreme allied commander, Dwight Eisenhower, wrote two letters that he held in his pocket, one letter was regarding the failure of the operation on June 6th in the invasion of Normandy. The second letter, was regarding the success of the operation of the invasion of Normandy.

However, those letters spoke of the dark hours that General Eisenhower wrestled with, when he had to make the decision that he knew, either success or failure, would bring casualties. The success or failure of the city of Lawrence and the state breathing down our necks will, also, require casualties and that is where your leadership role, as well as that of the Mayor's, must come forward. Thank you."



# Is it time for a finance control board?

Robert O'Koniewski  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Is it time for Lawrence to have a Finance Control Board? That is the current issue up for debate in our community and at the State House. Just before the clock struck the start of the New Year, Governor Patrick filed legislation that would re-chart Lawrence's journey through its current fiscal mess.

In order to combat what was then calculated to be a \$17 million deficit, the governor's bill, House 4421, not only would allow the city to borrow \$35 million through a bond issue but also would create a fiscal overseer who would work along side the Mayor and the City Council to balance the books by January 31, 2011.

The city would be limited to using \$17.5 million in this current fiscal year that ends June 30, and the other half of the monies in FY2011. If the books are not balanced by that date, and the overseer reports to the state that the city is unable to achieve a balanced budget and fiscal stability, the state would have the option – but not be required – to abolish the overseer and establish in its place a finance control board.

The borrowing is predicated on the bonds getting sold. If no investors want to purchase a bond issue from the city, that has the lowest bond rating in the state, then Lawrence would have to go right to receivership.

At this point in time, many are asking whether the city should skip the overseer process and go right to the creation of the Finance Control Board. "Why should we delay what is inevitable?" they say.

The city has been under critical scrutiny by the state for quite some time. Two years ago this month, the state Department of Revenue issued a scathing report detailing the numerous shortcomings of the Sullivan administration in its fiscal (mis)management. As the city took no action on most of the thirty suggestions in the 2008 report, the city once again faced deficit ruin in mid-2009. And yet again, they city did virtually little to address that problem in time to balance the budget by December 31, 2009, thereby preventing the issuance of tax bills.

Here we sit. Deficit in hand and no way to solve it short of hefty borrowing, departmental restructurings, massive layoffs, union givebacks, and general chaos in the city that could threaten public safety and the protection of our citizens. But to date Mayor Lantigua has yet to submit a plan as to how he will handle the deficit. The Mayor needs to hire the most qualified budget director available, a task that has been neglected to date while extracurricular political vendettas have been pursued. He himself needs to step forward and pitch his vision for how he plans to solve this mess. He cannot rely on his hired guns, the legislative delegation, or the state bureaucrats to pitch the sale.



If Mayor Lantigua fails and a Finance Control Board is needed, the city would not cede total control as would be the case with a receiver. Instead, the board would consist of five members – the mayor, the city council president, and three designees of the state, one of whom would be a Lawrence resident. The state could control the board with its appointees yet the mayor and council would have some input in, but not control of, the management process.

Opponents say that this is a reasonable step to take, especially when all the other surrounding communities, which have balanced their books by making tough choices, are looking at the financial mess and the special treatment Lawrence will be receiving with no carrots or sticks to worry about.

Since the inception of the Lantigua administration four weeks ago, the deficit has reportedly grown to \$24.5 million. The Mayor is asking the public to take a leap of faith to allow this administration a shot to balance the books on their own with the generous infusion of \$35 million. But unless the Mayor has the trust and confidence of the people, it will be doubly difficult for him to succeed here or on Beacon Hill.

I would urge everyone to read the

bill at: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/186/ht04pdf/ht04421.pdf>.

Council Watch 2010

Heroes of the Month: Dan Rivera (Councilor At-Large), for holding the city clerk's feet to the fire and insisting he do his job and get the minutes of the previous council meeting to the councilors prior to the next council meeting; despite the squealing objections of the clerk, it is nice to see a city councilor stick to his guns and insist that the clerk actually do his job, for a change. It's a small step, but a good start.

Marc Laplante (District F), for insisting on proper procedures for council meetings, most prominently during the Sweeney lynching; if these Soviet-style trials are going to be de rigueur in this city, then at least the accused should have some say before execution is carried out.

Goat of the Month: Sandy Almonte-Rosado (District A). In keeping with the self-serving style of her predecessor, her first item filed for council action is a parking ban in front of her mother's house on Woodland Street so that she shouldn't be bothered with all the congestion. It's good to be the King, or, in this instance, the Queen.

You can email Bob at [bobokesq@hotmail.com](mailto:bobokesq@hotmail.com)

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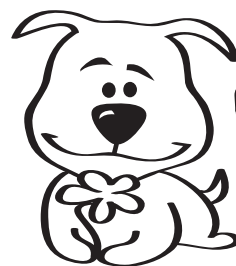
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### Do NOT go to jail or face State Ethics Fines, Charges

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HELP IS AVAILABLE!!!!



Lantigua



Degnan



D'Agostino



Blanchette

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# RiverBank Opens New Branch in South Lawrence

Lawrence, MA (January 11, 2010) - RiverBank opened its newest branch at 10 South Broadway, Lawrence on Monday, January 11th. The opening was commemorated with a ribbon cutting ceremony performed by Mayor William Lantigua and Johanny Guillermo, Riverbank's Assistant Vice President and Branch Manager. Also in attendance were many city councilors, and RiverBank management and directors. A weeklong celebration with free gifts followed the opening.

This new branch was relocated from 300 Essex Street in Lawrence and features the same friendly staff from our Essex Street location plus many new benefits, including: onsite-parking, self-service coin machine, drive-up teller and ATM services, and Saturday hours.

"We are very excited to offer the Lawrence community a beautiful new branch with many added benefits and conveniences", said Mr. Mulligan, President and CEO of RiverBank. "We are especially pleased to add to the revitalization of South Lawrence with this building and our signature 'Friendlier, Easier, Better' service".

#### About RiverBank

RiverBank, ([www.riverbk.com](http://www.riverbk.com)) headquartered in North Andover, MA, has been providing the Merrimack Valley and southern New Hampshire with "friendlier, easier and better" banking service for over 141 years with over \$800 million in assets, and a localized, personal approach. A subsidiary of LSB Corporation, a publicly held company, the common stock is traded over the counter on the NASDAQ National Marketing System under the symbol "LSBX". Sales prices of the stock are reported in the Wall Street Journal as "LSB CP." RiverBank is a member of FDIC and DIF, with all deposits 100% insured. RiverBank has seven branches in Massachusetts' Merrimack Valley and southern New Hampshire.



## Early progress report for the Lantigua administration shows inconsistency

Peter Larocque

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

First to be fair to the new Mayor and his administration, I realize that this progress report is early, but one has only one chance at a first impression.

On Monday January 4, 2010 the citizens of Lawrence were told that Leadership is finally here. On Wednesday January 20, 2010 Leadership went MIA. In this short period of time the Lawrence City Charter has been used, abused, and pick at just like a cherry tree. When the need to feed became apparent, the Charter Rules were cherry picked with great inconsistency. Individuals were chosen to be terminated because they lacked the vision of the Mayor.

But just a few months ago, Candidate Lantigua was being vilified because he refused to share his vision for Lawrence at any candidate forum or debate. So it may be safe to say that nobody outside of the Mayor's inner circle of followers shares Mayor Lantigua's vision. Most Lawrence citizens know that there is allegedly more evidence of wrongdoing with Superintendent Laboy than any of those people who Mayor Lantigua wants to fire. But

in contrast the same City Attorney, Mr. D'Agostino advises the Lawrence School Committee, (who by the way have their own Attorney), to proceed with caution because we don't want the city to face any law suits. This same Attorney then tells the Lawrence City Council that it is their duty to fire the City Employees immediately without fear of Law Suits. This is very interesting!

In addition the Mayor hired past City Council President Patrick Blanchette as his new Economic Development Director without Mr. Blanchette waiting the appropriate time required by M.G.L. 268A. Also Mayor Lantigua has gone to great lengths trying to distance his Administration from the previous Administration but while doing so he rehired Mr. Frank Bonet as the City's Personnel Director.

It just so happens that Mr. Frank Bonet is also on the Lawrence School Committee. Is it me or does this look a lot like what the prior Administration was doing with Mr. Greg Morris working for DPW and at the same time being a member of the Lawrence School Committee? I don't see a difference with both individuals. Now if it wasn't right for Mr. Morris to

do both then it's not right for Mr. Bonet either.

Subsequently Mayor Lantigua took Lawrence School Superintendent's Office Manager Maria Cruz to be his Personal Confidential Secretary and Office Manager. There's nothing wrong with this, but what is wrong and against the Law is that he told the School Department to keep her on their payroll. She cannot work for the City and be paid with Chapter 70 School Money.

Chapter 70 Money is for School purposes only! The Mayor and his posse are fully aware of the rules, but obviously only certain rules apply to them. Then shortly following this the new Mayor demotes Deputy Chief Mike Driscoll to Captain and promotes Sgt. Melix Bonilla to Deputy Chief. I remember hearing from the critics of the former Administration that Lawrence doesn't need a Deputy Chief, but I guess it is okay now.

In conclusion, concerning this early progress report of Mayor Lantigua's Administration, it can be described in a word, Inconsistent! One can't pick and choose which rules to follow. The entire Lawrence City Charter is for all to abide

by. The Mayor along with the City Attorney say that they are following the Charter, well check again because I think it is obvious that some rules are not being followed.

There is one thing that the new Mayor has done and must be commended for and receive high marks for and that is he softened and in some cases has silenced the once hard hitting defender of any wrongdoing in the City of Lawrence which is the Editor of Rumbo. In her latest edition after all the above activity had taken place, she chose to go after the new City Councilor at Large, Dan Rivera for his voting to fire Myles Burke and allow Mike Sweeney to keep his job. She accuses him of being inconsistent! Very interesting don't you think?



*Peter Larocque is a member of the Lawrence School Committee. He was elected by the City Council to fill the unexpired term of Amy McGovern in 2006 and then elected in his own right in 2007. You can call him at 978-682-0900, email him at [peterlarocque@hotmail.com](mailto:peterlarocque@hotmail.com)*



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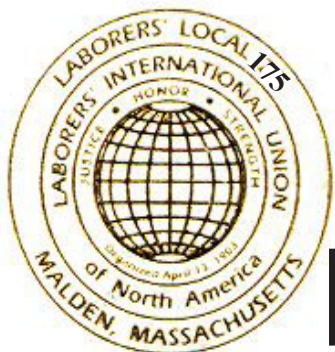
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GEORGETOWN TODAY

‘Together We Tax’ – Year in Review

Part 2

Lawrence “Lonnie” Brennan  
VALLEY PATRIOT GEORGETOWN COLUMNIST

In “Year in Review, Part 1” (January Valley Patriot), I noted how 2009 was riddled with spending and tax plans of ultra-liberal Gov. Deval Patrick, most notably his insane proposal to increase the gas tax by another 19 cents per gallon, and grant drivers licenses to illegal aliens. His motto must be: “Together we tax.”

Locally, 2009 brought a package of financial gymnastics from school committee members George Moker, Dave Bjork, Anne Donahue, Anne Blythe, and Eric Zadina who added more than \$222K to the salary base for the school teachers. Anyone notice the economy when handing out taxpayer money?

Yes, despite various changes in contract language, elimination of some stipends/salaries, reductions in retirement special accounts, etc., whatever, etc., the committee still added more than \$222,270 to the town’s salary base cost moving forward. And, according to a document the Valley Patriot received from Director of Finance and Operations, Terry L. Wiggins and Superintendent Carol Jacobs’ office, the spenders also agreed to hike that number to \$276,725 next year, and then a whopping \$408,158 salary increase outlay the following year.

Too many numbers? Bottom line: average teacher salary increases are 3.08%, 3.72%, and then 5.29%. Not exactly in step with the spirit of prop 2 ½, as it sets up a “ticking time bomb” (their own words), of doomsday deficits in our future. Dah.

I must ask (at least) one more time: is anyone up for just keeping what we have and freezing all taxpayer salaries for a year or two until we can get back on our feet? Now that’s a warrant article I would love to see. (But given our history, heck, it would probably fail. Unless there’s a secret ballot vote, folks in this town will yes-to-death almost every spending increase rather than subject themselves to the ridicule and scorn from their neighbors.

So, while I had desired to continue the year in review (it will have to wait ‘til next month) due to an interesting thing that happened on the way to writing this column...

According to an e-mail to the chair of

the Board of Selectman by Deputy Fire Chief Rusty Ricker, president of Central Fire Company, Inc., Central Fire Company has purchased two used ambulances with the hope of giving them to the town.

Deputy Chief Ricker, in his e-mail, spells out that Fire Chief Albert Beardsley “is aware of our efforts.” Hmm. An apparent contrast to later statements attributed to the chief, but rising above that pettiness for the moment (who is running the department, Mr. Ricker or Mr. Beardsley, and who knew what, when, and do we really care?), it will be interesting to see the financials of what it costs to own, maintain, equip, certify, insure, and most importantly staff the ambulances.

I love the idea of having multiple ambulances in town. But, if having ambulances in town is such a critical project, why did the Chief apparently have such a big disconnect and apparently contribute to the delays in citing an independent ambulance service (at no cost to the town) at the Erie station on North Street this past year?

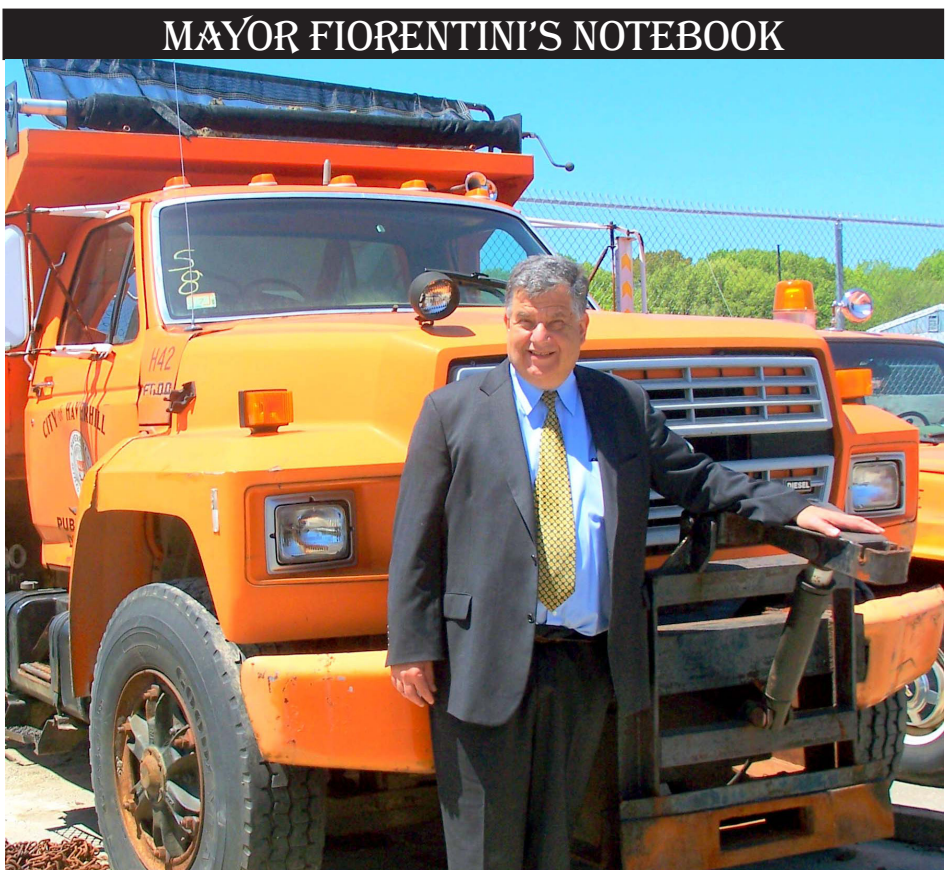
As the simple clerk for Erie (the guy who takes the meeting minutes), I have found myself at a loss as to how paperwork for such a seemingly innocuous project as citing an ambulance in town could continually get delayed and ‘lost’ downtown.

Final note for this month: a financial plan has been promised, and it needs to be validated independently by multiple outsiders. (Remember, the big dig was projected at \$3 billion. It cost in excess of \$22 billion and at least one life.) If the town is going to accept such a magnificent gift, let’s first decide what this gift will cost us.

Finally, I mistakenly referred to the Special Education Parent’s Advisory Council as a political action committee in a prior column. They constitute a wonderful, dedicated, spirited, organization dedicated to protecting and providing for their children, but they are not a political action committee.



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@verizon.net](mailto:Lonnie.Brennan@verizon.net).



MAYOR FIORENTINI’S NOTEBOOK

City gains \$65,000 from auction of used equipment

Mayor James J. Fiorentini today announced that as a result of the City’s second online auction of used equipment, the City has gained over \$65,000 in revenue. The Mayor indicated that this was several times more than the City would have obtained under the former non-online auction method.

About a year ago, the City instituted the practice, for the first time, of auctioning off property online. The City uses a private company known as “govdeals”. The property is posted online and bidders from throughout the country and, indeed, throughout the world, are allowed to bid on surplus equipment. The City has been recognized as an innovator in obtaining maximum value for surplus equipment. The City has been written up in the Wall Street Journal and noted on Boston television stations for use of online auctions to

generate revenue. The Mayor said that, based upon the results, the City would continue to auction its surplus materials online and the City would continue auctioning materials off by this method.

Mayor Fiorentini said that it was imperative in these times of fiscal crisis that the City continues to be innovative and use every tool available in order to hold down costs:

“Online auctions of surplus material are just one way of using every possible innovative method to hold down costs.

“At this time of continued fiscal crisis, we intend to tighten our belts, streamline government and be as innovative as possible so as to balance our books without asking our residential real estate tax payers to pay more.”

Mayor Fiorentini invites Obama, Senator Brown, to Haverhill for “Family Reunion”

A recent spate of news stories that Senator Elect Scott Brown and President Obama are related (10th cousins) has prompted Mayor James J. Fiorentini to invite them both to Haverhill for a family reunion.

According to wire service stores, Obama’s mother, Stanley Ann Dunham, and Brown’s mother, Judith Ann Rugg, both descend from Richard Singletary of Haverhill, Mass. Our clerk’s office has confirmed that Mr. Singletary was, indeed, a Haverhill resident when he died in the 1600’s.

Mayor Fiorentini issued a statement as follows:

“We are thrilled and honored that our great and historic city has connections to both President Obama and Senator Elect Scott Brown. There is a great deal of history in Haverhill and this proves it.

Next week, I am issuing an official invitation to both President Obama and to Senator Elect Brown to come to the city of their common roots and meet for a family reunion.

We will be happy to host them in our

historic city and show them the great things that attracted their ancestor to live here are still here. We still have beautiful rolling hills, lots of open space, beautiful lakes, rivers and streams and two rivers that run through our city. We are still, just as we were in Richard Singletary’s day, within easy distance to Boston, to the seacoast and to New Hampshire.

While we recognize that the President might be too busy to come, we hope that Senator Brown will. We congratulate him and look forward to working with him.

We also hope that this news will encourage visitors to visit our great historic sites including the Buttonwoods Museum where the past is preserved, the John Greenleaf Whittier birthplace, Winnekinni Castle, the Valley Patriot distribution boxes, and other historic sites in the area. The visitors will see why the ancestor to both President Obama and Senator Brown chose Haverhill as a great place to live, a great place to work and a great place to visit. It is still that way today. “

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# Belvedere Road assessments fixed

**John McCormack**

VALLEY PATRIOT BOXFORD COLUMNIST

In last April's Valley Patriot I discussed the "triennial revaluation" of real estate assessments which Boxford had just completed. This revaluation was complicated by state mandates to increase surplus land values and decrease the number of construction quality grades.

Surplus land is lot area in excess of the minimum required. The old value was \$4,500 per acre; the new value was \$10,000 per acre. Most taxpayers were scarcely affected; the median holding is less than a tenth of an acre. My property includes a lot of surplus land and almost nine acres is occupied by a National Grid power corridor and an underground thirty-inch gas pipeline. The area resembles the swath cut through the woods adjacent to Route 213 opposite the Loop shopping area in Methuen. I believe its appearance and possibilities of nuisance trespass and future eminent domain takings make it a detriment; the town now says it is worth \$70,000 or so and I should pay \$800 per year for the ownership privilege.

Construction quality grades determine a factor which multiplies the basic construction cost of your home and is supposed to account for material quality differences and construction difficulty. Fancy homes range up to grade 10, an average home is grade 5. When values dropped in 2007 the factors for grades 5 and below were drastically dropped, grade 6 was lowered slightly and the rest were raised. My house is a grade 6 Modern/Contemporary. The two contemporary homes in grade 6 and one in grade 7 of the five sold in 2007 were downgraded for the revaluation. The result was

the square foot replacement cost for all contemporaries had to increase to match the assessments with the sale prices of those sold.

The result of this for me was a perfect storm of land and building assessment increases which raised my tax bill nearly 20% while others of similar value saw 5% decreases. I applied for abatement and received a small decrease. I decided to appeal the abatement to the Appellate Tax Board.

The ATB is a state agency which hears appeals on many types of state and local taxes. Appeals are heard as Formal Procedures or Informal Procedures. The Formal Procedure involves discovery, rules of evidence, and lawyers. The next step after the Formal Procedure is the Massachusetts Appeals Court. The Informal Procedure is relaxed, somewhat like small claims court, has limited appeal rights and generally doesn't involve lawyers. The Formal Procedure is too expensive for most claims so

## Would you pay \$70,000 for this?



PHOTO: JOHN MCCORMACK

left. I was the only Boxford appellant. The Chairman of the Board of Assessors explained that any reduction is of little value after three years so most people don't bother.

Another downside to the Informal Procedure is that no explanation is given for the ATB decision. I lost. The letter simply stated "The decision is for the appellee" which was the town.

So what happened? The taxpayer has to prove the assessment is too high; like an NFL booth review, the town's assessment is correct unless conclusive contrary

I filed under the Informal Procedure.

I schlepped to Government Center in Boston on the appointed day in December. The day was cold but bearable but for the last hundred yards when I crossed the windswept tundra of Cambridge Street. The Boxford appraisers were there. The case was heard in about an hour and we

evidence is shown. I proved logically and statistically that the town had no basis for its surplus land valuation; proving what the value should be is harder especially since the sale of surplus land is never considered arm's length! Comparing my home with other grade 6 contemporaries would prove nothing (since they're all wrong) so I tried to prove by comparison that my home should be downgraded just as those sold had been. No sale. Given Boxford's housing diversity and low number of sales I had to attack the triennial valuation's validity. This was perhaps not in the ATB's ambit.

The FY 2010 assessments are out now and hint at a "Pyrrhic defeat" where I lost my battle but the war isn't going so badly. Belvedere Road was a prime example in my appeal. Eleven homes, all grade 6 contemporaries, and one sold in 2007 was downgraded to grade 4. The ten unsold had flat assessments even as other similarly valued properties dropped 5%; the sold property's assessment dropped nearly 8%. For FY 2010 all the homes are grade 5, land values have decreased, and the assessments are more equitable. Surplus land valuations have dropped also, from \$10,000 to \$9,000 per acre.

Nevertheless, we still have a "scientific" mass appraisal system where surplus land value isn't measurable but assessed by bureaucratic diktat and construction grade has lost its meaning and is just a number used to plug the assessment-sales gap.



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

## My top priorities for the State Senate

**Eric Dahlberg**

CHELMSFORD SELECTMAN

Last month's historic election results confirm what you and I know: the taxpayers have had enough of business as usual. 2010 is the year to elect fiscally conservative, reform-minded, independent candidates who will bring commonsense back to Massachusetts State government.

I aspire to be one of those candidates - I am running for the State Senate here in the Third Middlesex District. If elected, I will bring the same priorities to the State Senate that I've brought to the Chelmsford Board of Selectmen: improving the business climate, lowering taxes, streamlining government, and serving as an independent, accountable, responsive voice for the taxpayers.

As a Chelmsford Selectman, I have put a high premium on responsiveness. In a recent letter of support for Scott Brown that appeared in the Weston Town Crier, I wrote: "... attention to responsiveness isn't always the most glamorous part of holding public office, but it is crucially important. Taxpayers frequently reach out to their elected officials when they

need urgent information or assistance, so getting back to them quickly is essential." I will keep this in mind every day if I'm honored to serve in the State Senate.

My professional background is in health

care policy. I currently work at the Health Connector, the innovative state agency established in 2006 to implement Massachusetts' landmark health care reform law. I previously worked in policy and speech-writing roles at the US Department of Health and Human Services and as a staffer in the Massachusetts State Senate. I earned my Bachelor's degree in history at Dartmouth College and my Master's degree in public policy at Georgetown University. I reside in Chelmsford with my wife Suzanne and my dog Teddy.

I welcome your participation in my campaign to bring an independent, accountable, responsive voice to the State Senate on behalf of the taxpayers of the Third Middlesex District. Please visit my web site at [www.DahlbergforSenate.com](http://www.DahlbergforSenate.com) to get involved or to learn more.

Note: The Third Middlesex District is comprised of the nine communities of Bedford, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, Lexington (precincts 3, 8 and 9), Lincoln, Sudbury (precincts 1 and 4), Waltham and Weston.





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# Dracut Resident named new baseball coach at NECC

When the members of the Northern Essex Community College baseball team return to the college for the spring semester, they will be met by a familiar face in an unfamiliar position. NECC assistant baseball coach Chris Shanahan, has been named head coach of the award winning Knights baseball team. He replaces Alex Hill who submitted his resignation last month.

Shanahan, a resident of Dracut, brings to the team his experience as assistant baseball coach at NECC, Rivier College, and Daniel Webster College, of which he is an alumnus. He has also served as head baseball coach of the New England Diamond Dawgs AAU Baseball team.

He graduated from Daniel Webster College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Sport Management and completed an internship with UMass Lowell in the spring of 2006 where he focused on game-day promotions for both the hockey and baseball teams.

“I can honestly say that baseball is my forte. I have played or coached for as long as I can remember and it is something I have a true passion for. I am dedicated, organized, and motivated as well as a reliable individual who takes great pride in my performance,” he said. “My experiences as a player and coach have given me the essential skills to make an impact at Northern Essex. I am committed to working hard and giving everything I can to the NECC athletic program and to the college itself.”

He says he has established a strong relationship with the current players as well as the new recruits who plan on enrolling at

NECC in the fall of 2010.

Shanahan, who is a store manager at the CVS Pharmacy in Tewksbury, was the right choice according to Sue MacAvoy, NECC athletic director.

“We had a lot of interest in the position but it was clear that Chris was the best person for the job,” she said. “He knows the players and has terrific chemistry with them. He’s excited and looking forward to taking the team in a positive direction.”

In the fast five years, the NECC baseball team has earned an impressive list of honors including three state championships (2005, 2006, 2007), a regional championship (2006), and National Junior College Athletic Association Runner-up (2005). During that time, two graduating players were drafted and many players have been recruited to play at four-year colleges including Barry and Eckerd universities in Florida; Fitchburg, Framingham, and Salem state colleges, New England College, Suffolk University, U Mass Boston, and Daniel Webster.

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

## Dracut Town Elections are Creeping up

The last day to obtain nomination papers is Friday, March 12th

**D.J. Deeb**  
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT COLUMNIST

It’s been a quiet couple of weeks in Dracut, but do not let that fool you: The Town Elections are upon us and some of our elected officials running for re-election want to fly under the radar. There are certainly many issues with our current School Committee (as I have written about in previous columns). Mike Miles and Mike McNamara are both seeking re-election and I’m sure there will be challengers for those seats. George Malliaros and Jim O’Loughlin are seeking re-election to the Dracut Board of Selectman. They will be facing a serious challenge from local entrepreneur Brian Bond. As of this writing, my good friend P.J. Mercier has pulled papers to run for Housing Authority. This is P.J.’s first run for local office.

The Town of Dracut and the Dracut Water Supply District nomination papers for the upcoming Election on May 3, 2010 will be available February 1, 2010 at the Dracut Town Clerk’s Office at 62 Arlington Street.

The Positions appearing on the ballot this spring are the following:


Town of Dracut:  
Moderator (1) One year term  
Selectmen (2) Three year term  
School Committee (2) Three year term

Trustee of Public Library (1) 3 year term  
Housing Authority (1) Five year Term

Dracut Water Supply District:  
Commissioner (1) Three Year Term

The Nominations papers may be picked up at the Dracut Town Clerk’s Office any-time Monday through Friday from 8:30 am – 4:30 PM after February 1st. The last day to obtain nomination papers is Friday, March 12th. All nomination papers must be signed and returned to the Town Clerk’s Office by Monday, March 15th.

This is our Representative Democracy in action. The time is now. If you think you can make a difference you should consider running for one of these offices. I’m sorry for the short column this month. More to follow!

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

## New Faces in Tyngsboro

**Ashley O’Neill**  
TYNGSBORO SELECTMAN

There have been a lot of changes in Tyngsboro over the past several weeks, a lot of new faces in particular.

January 2nd marked Town Administrator Rosemary Cashman’s last day in Town Hall. January 4th marked Interim Town Administrator Norman Thiederman’s first day in Town Hall. With just less than one month on the job, Mr. Thiederman has already implemented staff meetings, requested overlay account information and delved into the approximate \$30 million budget.

The search for a permanent Town Administrator has been underway since late November. As Chair of the Town Administrator Search Committee, myself along with four members of the community, reviewed nearly 40 applications for the position of Town Administrator. The Search Committee interviewed 10 applicants. Four finalists were recommended to the Board of Selectmen in early January. Those candidates were Michael Coughlin of Whitinsville, Michael Gilleberto of Worcester, John Griffin of Tyngsboro and Scott Morelli of New Gloucester, Maine.

After open door meetings with the Board of Selectmen, the final four were narrowed down to two, Michael Gilleberto and Michael Coughlin. On Tuesday, January 26th, both Michael Coughlin and Gilleberto came to Tyngsboro to interview with the Board of Selectmen and to be aired on our local access channel.

On Thursday the 28th and Friday the 29th, Michael Gilleberto and Michael Coughlin individually spent part of the day visiting with department heads and staff.

Reports from Department Heads were submitted on Friday afternoon with details of the meetings with each candidate. All reports were very positive. At 6pm on Friday, the 29th, the Board of Selectmen held a special meeting and in a 5-0 vote, offered the position of Town Administrator to Michael Gilleberto.

Michael Gilleberto was notified following the meeting and accepted the offer. A contract is being drafted and will be ready in the coming weeks. Michael Gilleberto comes into the position with energy and innovative ideas. The Board is excited to continue moving the Town forward with the assistance and enthusiasm of Mr. Michael Gilleberto.





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### Yazmin's HOT Happenings

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Bob is a local talent who played at the Manning Manse / Livingstone's for 7 years. He sings from Frank Sinatra to Doo-Wop as well as a mix of the popular favorites and takes requests to please everyone for a fun filled evening of dining and dancing at CAFE MADRID!

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# TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

## LAWRENCE - A Fraud on the Public

When the Lawrence City Council met last month to decide on Mayor Lantigua's firing of three city department heads, they were met by dozens of Lantigua supporters lining up to speak at public participation to help the mayor make his case.

They were also greeted by half a dozen Lantigua supporters holding signs that read "24.5 MILLION DEFICIT" and "Sweeney and Burke must go." A week earlier, Lantigua had fired Planning Director Michael Sweeney, Recreation Director Linda Schiavone and Inspectional Services Director Myles Burke. Under the city charter, the city council must approve the firings by a 2/3 majority.

A quick look at the crowd assembled at the meeting looked as though residents of Lawrence came to city hall with their hand made signs to pressure city councilors to support Lantigua's firings. But a closer look at the individuals holding the signs told a different story. You see, the hand made signs being held by Lantigua supporters were really Martha Coakley signs from her failed senate campaign. Lantigua endorsed Coakley and ran her Lawrence campaign out of his Essex Street headquarters. These were not just average citizens coming to city hall to express their opinions on their own, as the city council and the public at home was lead to believe. They were Lantigua operatives who had been "encouraged" to show up in support of the mayor's actions. During the meeting I overheard Dorothy Incropera from the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association, asking the sign holders what their sign meant and why they wanted Sweeney and Burke to be fired. "I don't know," one of them told her. "I was just asked to come and hold a sign." For the record, Linda Schiavone, Myles Burke and Mike Sweeney all supported David Abdo in the last mayoral election. The council voted to fire Burke, not to fire Sweeney and Lantigua himself withdrew the name of Schiavone.

**LAWRENCE - About those signs**  
During the contentious meeting where Lantigua was trying to get Sweeney and Burke fired he came to the microphone and announced for the first time ever that Lawrence's deficit was not \$17.5 Million as he had previous told us. Lantigua told the council that he had received a call from the Department of Revenue at 3pm that day saying that the real deficit was \$24.5 million. Over and over he repeated that these were not his numbers "this comes straight from DOR." Here's the kicker, as Lantigua is making this announcement for the very first time (by his own admission) his supporters were standing



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

(Left), A man with a sign, protesting at a the city council meeting where the mayor was blaming Sweeney and Burke for the city's deficit in an attempt to fire them. (Right) A leftover Coakley sign in Lantigua's campaign office on Essex St. The signs were turned backwards and used for Lantigua supporters who stormed city hall in a fabricated, spontaneous protest before the city council

behind him with signs that said "\$24.5 Million deficit." So here's my question to Willie Lantigua (da chief): if DOR just told you at 3pm that day that the deficit was NOW \$24.5 million, how did all those grassroots residents in the audience know about the new number before the meeting to put it on their signs? As a side note, Lantigua had reached a deal with Linda Schiavone and withdrew her name from the hit list but coincidentally all those random citizens holding signs that night knew about the deal too. "SWEE-NEY AND BURKE MUST GO" was what the signs in the hall read that night. How did they know enough not to put Linda Schiavone's name on their "home made" signs?

**LAWRENCE - Lantigua's Campaign Finance Reports** - As of the day we went to print the City of Lawrence has still not set a tax rate or sent out the 2010 tax bills which is why the city of Lawrence is deficit spending. Mayor Willie Lantigua can blame former Mayor Mike Sullivan and Planning Director Mike Sweeney for the growing debt but if we use his formula, the deficit was \$9.5 Million when he took office. Now it is \$24.5 Million. So, if Mike Sullivan and Mike Sweeney are responsible for the \$9.5 Million deficit, that means Lantigua and his Economic Development Director Pat Blanchette (who, as council president never set a tax rate in December) is responsible for the other \$15 million in deficit spending. After all, if Blanchette and the '08-'09 city council did their jobs and sent out the tax bills by January

first the city would be collecting property taxes and would not be deficit spending at the current rate.

**LAWRENCE - Leaking public information?** - Sources in city hall say that Lantigua Chief of Staff Lenny Degnan has been bullying employees and threatening retribution against anyone who "leaks" information to the Valley Patriot or anyone else. Degnan and former councilor Pat Blanchette are so paranoid about where the "leaks" are coming from, that they have had several staff meetings to strategize how to track down the whistle blowers. Several of our confidential sources in the Lantigua administration say Degnan and Blanchette have also ordered IT employees to spy on emails and compile a list of every email that has been printed out or copied to another computer, which is illegal from our understanding of the law. I find it fascinating that public servants who are doing the public's business with the public's tax money is taking such great pains to conceal public information from the PUBLIC. At least one Internet Technology worker has resigned over the bullying.

### METHUEN - COUPONING

If you could earn a master's degree in couponing, then Jamie Chase of Amesbury would hold a Ph.D. And now, the creative, chronic, couponer wants to impart her couponing acumen to anyone

who is interested in saving money with very little time invested. Chase, the married mother of two toddlers, formerly worked in retail for such giants as Brooks Brothers and J. Jill. She regularly saves \$2300 a month for her family of four. She says she could save four times this if she stockpiled. Chase recently purchased over \$400 of products at a local pharmacy and actually made \$60. She has combined her retail background and her couponing prowess to offer two noncredit couponing classes through Northern Essex Community College's Corporate and Community Education Center at its Methuen site at the Timony School, 45 Pleasant View St. "Couponing and Freebies" 101, is a three-class course offered Tuesdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m., twice this semester, Feb. 2 through Feb 23 (no class on Feb. 16) and April 27 through May 11. The class is \$45. Later in the month she will offer "Master Couponing," for the more advanced couponer. This will be offered Tuesday from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., for three weeks, March 9 through March 23 and May 25 through June 8. The class is \$60. For additional information call 978-659-1200. To register, call 978-556-3700.

### BEDFORD - HERO NEEDS A HOME!

There is a Military Working Dog (MWD) at Hanscom AFB in Bedford, MA. According to the Hanscom Vet Clinic and the K-9 Kennel and the dog's former handler. "Boxie" is a 4 yo German Shepherd and is being retired due to blindness in one eye and she will soon be blind in both eyes. We do have some time because he must be approved by Lackland AFB to be adopted out (personality, disposition, etc); his handler assures us that he is very adoptable. This process could take a couple months, during which time he will be taken care of by the Hanscom AFB K-9 Kennel. In the meantime, they are assembling a list of interested people. Please contact SSgt Rich Crotty (former handler for Boxie, (richard.crotty@hanscom.af.mil) or TSgt Lines (Kennel Master) at (781) 377-7948 for more info, questions, etc. They are VERY interested in getting Boxie a good home. This dog is a veteran of our Armed Services and has likely been in the Areas

of Operations (Iraq or AFG), ie combat veteran.

**DANVERS - North Shore Business Forum** - February 12th, - Charlene St. Jean, of Beverly's Purple Diamond, will speak at the North Shore Business Forum on February 5 on Target Marketing. Target Marketing can be the key to a small business's success. Knowing how to define who are your customers and who will



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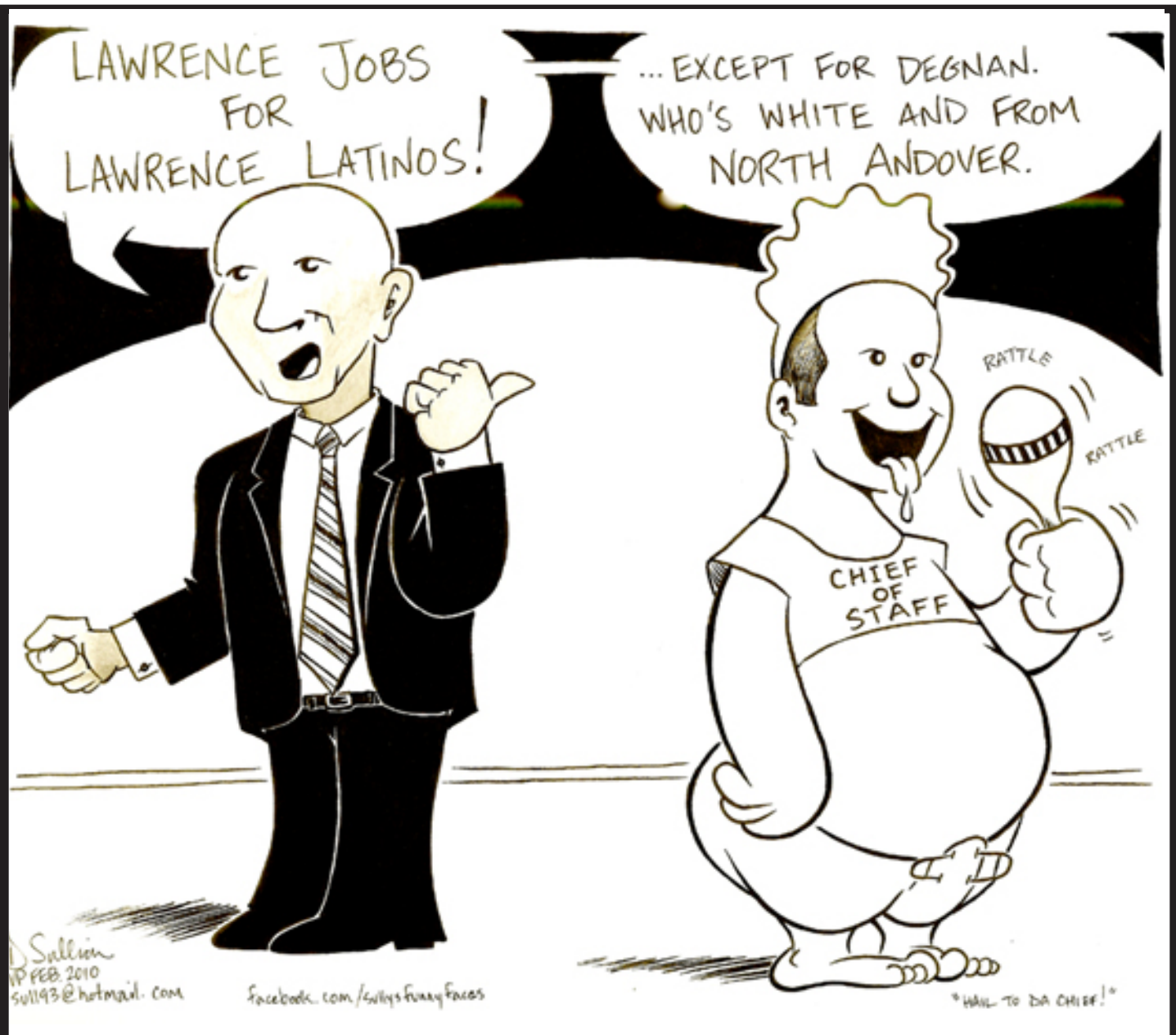


PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

Rock Legend Eddie Money reads The Valley Patriot when he is swinging through The Valley. Last month Eddie was backstage at the Tupelo Music Hall at Salisbury Beach relaxing with the January edition. “Hey, *Borrowed Money*,” he said laughing at our headline. “I love this paper!” **See page 26.**

buy your product will help your business optimize your sales efforts and get better results. This presentation will review why target marketing is essential to your business and how to determine who your target market is. The North Shore Business Forum meets at 7:30am at the Danversport Yacht Club, Rt. 62 East, Danvers, MA. The \$9 admission fee include a continental breakfast and pre-registration is not required. For more information - (978) 774-0322 – [www.nsbforum.org](http://www.nsbforum.org)

**DANVERS - North Shore Business Forum-** February 19th, - George Wallace, President and CEO of The Discovery Communications Group, Salem, NH, will speak at the North Shore Business Forum on February 19 on learn how a well thought out Social Media Strategy can be implemented to enhance all functions and mission specific activities of any company. The North Shore Business Forum meets at 7:30am at the Danversport Yacht Club, Rt. 62 East, Danvers, MA. The \$9 admission fee include a continental break-



**NEWS ITEM:** Newly elected Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua (da chief) promised “Lawrence Jobs for Lawrence Latinos” during the 2009 mayoral campaign. Oddly enough Lantigua’s first two hires in city hall were Patrick Blanchette (who is white) and Lenny Degnan who is not only white but lives in NORTH ANDOVER!

fast and pre-registration is not required. For more information - (978) 774-0322 – [www.nsbforum.org](http://www.nsbforum.org)

**DANVERS - North Shore Business Forum** - February 26th, Beverly’s Paul Van Ness, co-owner of CinemaSalem, will speak at the North Shore Business Forum on February 26. “People want to get out of their own lives,” Van Ness says. “If people are having economic trouble, they come here to keep their dreams alive, their optimism.” The North Shore Business Forum meets at 7:30am at the Danversport Yacht Club, Rt. 62 East, Danvers, MA. The \$9 admission fee include a continental breakfast and pre-registration is not required. For more information - (978) 774-0322 – [www.nsbforum.org](http://www.nsbforum.org)

**ANDOVER - Winter Fun Day, which will take place on Sunday February** Winter is a delightful season to experience the trails at Ward Reservation, parts of which reside in Andover and North

Andover. The Trustees of Reservations and Ward Reservation Property Committee, in partnership with the Andover Trails Committee, Friends of North Andover Trails and Moor & Mountain of Andover will host a Winter Fun Day, which will take place on Sunday February 14th from 12:00 – 3:00 PM. The event will take place with or without snow on the ground. This is a free event. Short to medium length guided hikes to different destinations on the reservation will leave periodically throughout the afternoon. Cross country skiing, snowshoeing, sledding, refreshments and a warming fire will be available throughout the afternoon. Limited instruction for cross-country skiing

and snowshoeing will also be available. If you’ve never been on cross-country skis or snowshoes, this is a great opportunity to give them a try. Moor & Mountain in Andover will have snowshoes and ski equipment available for rent. For prices and specifics on pick-up and drop-off times please call 978-475-3665. Rentals are first come-first served. Parking at the reservation entrance on Prospect Road, east of Route 125, in Andover. For more information, please call the Trustees of Reservations at 978-682-3580 x 1#, or email [cward@ttor.org](mailto:cward@ttor.org).

**LAWRENCE - 6th Annual Hair of the Dog Wine & Beer Tasting**, a ben-

**NOTEBOOK: PAGE 42**



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A photograph of two black leather dress shoes, one slightly behind the other, showing the laces and the toe area.

# Ask the reverse mortgage guy!

**Bob Irving, CSA®**

VALLEY PATRIOT FINANCIAL COLUMNIST

**Q-** Why is there so much bad publicity surrounding the subject of reverse mortgages? – Billy P. Lawrence MA

**A –** Prior to 1989, reverse mortgages were not federally regulated and some lenders took advantage of seniors. After the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) created the FHA product known as a Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) these abuses were largely stopped.

**Q –** I'm curious about those late night TV ads for reverse mortgages. What's that about? - Anne, Salem NH

**A –** It's about capturing your name, address and phone number so the info can be sold to a call center sales operation that will hound you for the next six months to do a reverse mortgage. In my experience, there is nothing of any value on the CD or video tape received from these sources. Find an experienced reverse mortgage professional locally to educate you to the pros & cons.

**Q –** How do we find a "preferred" reverse mortgage lender? – John, Lowell MA

**A –** The term "preferred" is a marketing gimmick used by internet based sales companies that sell your name, address

and phone number to phone bank sales-people. There is no such thing as a "preferred" list. The National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association (NRMLA – an industry trade association) does publish a list of members (who pay \$1,500 or more per year for membership and a listing on their web site). However, there is nothing "preferred" about them that I can determine. Even HUD is not helpful with their list of FHA lenders because HUD's list fails to show everyone in every market. Your best source is to ask for a referral from your attorney, financial advisor, or a close friend who has completed a reverse mortgage.

**Q –** Can we get a reverse mortgage through AARP? - Bob, North Andover MA

**A –** No. Some people mistakenly refer to reverse mortgages as "AARP reverse mortgages" but there is no such product. While it is true that AARP does sell products to seniors (like health and disability insurance), they do not offer nor do they endorse anyone who offers reverse mortgages.

**Q –** Mom and Dad are applying for a government backed reverse mortgage. Am I responsible for the debt when they pass away? - Mildred, Lawrence MA

**A –** If they are doing a HECM, there is

no personal liability for the borrower or heirs. The loan must be repaid, however. The heirs may apply for a conventional loan to cover the amount due, sell the home or simply turn it over to the lender.

**Q –** Aren't all reverse mortgages the same? – William & Sarah, Methuen MA

**A –** No. Reverse mortgages fall into three different general categories: (1.) single-purpose loans, offered by some state and local government agencies as well as nonprofit organizations, (2.) federally insured loans, also known as HECMs, and (3.) proprietary reverse mortgages, which are private loans backed by institutions or companies that have developed them. HECM loans backed by FHA are the most common and the type we refer to in this column.

**Q-** Should we have our own real estate lawyer when we do a reverse mortgage? - Gwen, Andover MA

**A –** If you are doing a government backed HECM reverse mortgage, hiring your own attorney is optional. It is an added expense and loan documents will not be changed in any way. If you are doing a proprietary (non-government) reverse mortgage, hiring your own attorney might be advisable especially if you are doing a "jumbo" loan on a high value property. However, many real estate

attorneys are not widely experienced in reverse mortgages. Make certain you retain a specialist.

**Q –** How is the amount I receive determined? Could I get more money from a different lender? – James, Andover MA

**A –** The amount depends on the age of the youngest borrower, the interest rate, the maximum claim amount (lesser of appraised value or \$625,500), the amount of the monthly servicing fee, and the length of time that you will be receiving payments – for a fixed period or for as long as you live in your home. The older you are, the larger your payments are likely to be. There could be a difference among lenders due to fees and costs. You should check several sources.



*If you have questions about reverse mortgages, get straight answers from the Reverse Mortgage Guy. Bob Irving is a Certified Senior Adviser & Senior Reverse Mortgage Consultant with First Integrity Mortgage, LLC in Lawrence, MA. He has worked directly with hundreds of seniors, family members & their trusted advisors for many years in the reverse mortgage industry. Contact him with your questions at Reverse-Guy@gmail.com or call him at 978-686-0394. Visit [www.rhiring.com](http://www.rhiring.com) for access to much more information. If your question is published here, we will not use your full name.*

## Protecting your business and your family with a buy-sell agreement

**Gregory Loosigian**

VALLEY PATRIOT FINANCIAL COLUMNIST

The successful business you and your partners built together took years of hard work and a great deal of capital. You certainly want your business to remain prosperous long into the future. Preoccupied with the day-to-day details of running the operation, you probably haven't given much thought to what would happen if circumstances abruptly took an unexpected turn. What happens if you or your partner becomes disabled? Worse yet, what if one of you died suddenly? Could your business survive such trauma? Would your heirs be able to take over or would they be forced to sell the business?

### Partnerships Are Not Eternal

Unlike a corporation, a partnership does not have an unlimited life. When a partner dies, the remaining partners legally become liquidation trustees. This obligates them to sell off the deceased owner's share of the business. But to whom? At what price? That's why business succession planning is so important. You'll want to put into writing a formal plan of action that will allow a smooth transition of ownership and protect your family's interest as well. A buy-sell agreement is one way to help assure the continuity of

your business and give your family peace of mind.

### Benefits of a Buy-Sell Agreement

Sometimes called a "business will," a buy-sell agreement is a legal contract among business owners that states what will happen should a partner leave the business due to death, disability, or a lifetime situation such as retirement. The agreement obligates the remaining owners to purchase the business interest of the partner who has left the business, and the departing partner (or heirs) is obligated to sell. This type of arrangement benefits your family in a number of ways: it will help free them of business worries at a time of crisis, guarantee a purchaser, and, if kept up-to-date, ensure a fair price for your business interests. Remaining owners also benefit from a buy-sell agreement: they know the purchase price of the business interests in advance; they don't have to worry about new, perhaps unwanted partners; and the smooth transition will help the company retain the confidence of clients and creditors. With the help of an attorney, these agreements are easy to draft and flexible, allowing for alterations with the consent of all parties involved.

### How You Can Fund Your Plan

Once a buy-sell agreement is in place, the next challenge is funding it. Where

will remaining partners get the funds to purchase the business interest in question? There are a number of available options:

\* **Pay Cash** - If sufficient funds are on hand, cash may be used to purchase the business interest in question. However, using savings that were earmarked for future ventures could endanger the long-term goals of the business.

\* **Take A Loan** - If cash is not readily available, funds could be borrowed. The downside is that the extra expense of loan repayments may put a strain on cash flow and the debt increase may negatively affect the company's credit rating.

\* **Sell Assets** - Another alternative is liquidating assets to raise the money. This method could have a devastating effect on the business's future, and should be considered only as a last resort.

### The Sensible Solution

It becomes clear that a proper funding vehicle is needed to make a buy-sell agreement as effective as possible. With its many advantages, insurance can be a convenient means to fund the agreement without incurring a large financial burden. Insurance creates a guaranteed source of funds to purchase the business interest in question. Proceeds are immediately available exactly when they are needed:

in the event of the death or disability of the insured. In effect, it could be said that the cause that creates the need also creates the funding. Those proceeds are, in most instances, free from federal income tax, and may help avoid the delays of probate. A buy-sell agreement funded by insurance may be structured in a number of different ways to suit particular needs.

### Now's the Time

It's best to consider your options now while you're still in the position to direct your business. Speak with your partners and your family, as well as your legal and tax advisors and your insurance agent. If you're like most business owners, your business and your family are the two most important things in life. You don't want to gamble with the future of either one. A buy-sell agreement funded by insurance is a convenient way to put your business affairs in order while protecting your family's interests. It can give you the peace of mind you need to focus your energies on the continued success of your firm.

For additional information on the information or topic(s) discussed, please contact Gregory J. Loosigian at New York Life. (978)-273-8377. Gregory J. Loosigian Ma. Lic # 183059 NH. Lic. # 2017596 -New York Life Insurance Company



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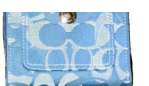
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# Mind, Body & Soul: Health in The Valley

## Tolerating Cold Symptoms May Hasten Recovery

**Dr. Rallie McAllister**  
SYNDICATED MEDICAL COLUMNIST

No matter how healthy you strive to be in the New Year, you're still likely to succumb to the common cold every now and then. Like it or not, most of us can expect to catch two to four colds annually.

Although more than 200 different cold-causing viruses have been identified to date, the symptoms they cause are remarkably similar. An infection with any one of the pesky microbes can result in fever and body aches, accompanied by roughly a week's worth of sniffing, sneezing and coughing.

If you're determined to keep your suffering to a minimum, you may turn to an over-the-counter cold formula for relief. With dozens of brands and hundreds of different formulas on the market, there are plenty to choose from.

Nonprescription cold remedies typically contain some combination of antihistamines, decongestants, cough suppressants, fever reducers and pain relievers. While many of these concoctions can make you

feel a little more comfortable, it's important to remember that none of them can stop the infection itself.

Over-the-counter drugs don't speed healing or recovery, either — they merely mask the symptoms of infection. Even worse, some of these medications actually hinder the body's ability to rid itself of the cold-causing virus, prolonging the illness in the process.

When the respiratory tract is invaded by disease-causing microbes, the immune system is activated to defend the body in a number of ways. Most of the troublesome symptoms experienced during a cold are



caused by the defenses of the immune system, rather than the virus itself.

In healthy individuals, these respiratory symptoms are helpful, and perhaps even essential, in overcoming the illness. Trying to suppress the symptoms with medications may be counterproductive, since it disables the immune system and interferes with the body's ability to protect itself from infection.

When cold-causing viruses invade the body and latch onto tissues in the nose, throat and lungs, they trigger the release of inflammatory compounds that attract white blood cells to the site of infection. As part of the immune system, these cells are

programmed to attack, destroy and engulf disease-causing germs.

After the white blood cells have completed their mission, they begin to pile up by the millions in the respiratory tract.

The runny nose that accompanies a cold may be annoying, but it's what removes these spent cells from the sinuses and nasal passages, along with microbes, mucus and other byproducts of infection.

Taking an over-the-counter antihistamine designed to "dry up" nasal secretions can cause these substances to accumulate in the sinuses, increasing the risk of developing a sinus infection.

If you develop a cough, it's a good sign that your body is working hard to keep your lower respiratory tract clear so you can breathe easily. Coughing is a natural, protective reflex that allows you to expel secretions from your lungs.

Taking a medication designed to suppress your cough isn't always a good idea. The resulting buildup of mucous secretions can increase the risk of devel-

**McAllister, page 22**

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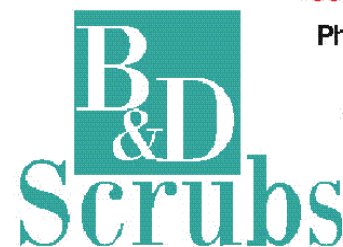
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# The Big Decision

Terry Crow Mercier

VALLEY PATRIOT HERO COLUMNIST

Making the decision to place someone we love in a long term care home can prove to be a difficult one. We so often hear negative things about nursing homes and so little about the positive. Frequently I am asked by people feeling torn if they are making the right choice.

While I cannot answer that for them, I can offer some advice. If you find yourself constantly worrying about your loved one and it is negatively affecting your well-being, then I say you are moving in the right direction. You need to sit down and write out a list of pros and cons for keeping your loved one home versus placement. Remember to ask yourself questions of a wide variety. Everything from safety to health and emotional wellness should be covered. Do you have a support system in place? If you become ill, who will be able to fill in for you? When it is all written out in front of you, it can help make the choice much clearer.

Once you have concluded that placement is needed, the work can really begin. You will want to start by talking it over with your loved one and explain the reality of the situation to them. This is not always an easy task, as they will come up with all kinds of excuses and try to convince you that they are fine. We must remember this is going to be a very emotional time for them. While they most likely have been slowly losing their independence over time, they will have a hard time actually hearing that they need help. Our current elderly population grew up in an era when nursing homes were more of an institution and the people in them were called patients. They most likely will have memories of visiting their relatives in those settings and think that this will be their fate as well. Resident rights were unheard of back then, and advocacy help was not available. Times have changed, and for the better. Now there are many regulations in place to ensure their well-being.

The next task is to put together a list of potential homes. Keep in mind that you will first want to check out the homes closest to where you and your loved one live. This will help them continue to feel connected to their community. Convenience of location will help you be able to have more frequent visits. More than likely they will rediscover old friends living there as well. Consider the size of the nursing home as well.

While some residents do just fine in a larger home, many often feel a true sense of belonging in a smaller home. This can also make it easier for them as well as yourself get to know the staff well.

Tour the homes on your list personally. Did the staff greet you with a smile? Look around for cleanliness-- floors, walls, and furniture. Hallways and resident areas should be free of clutter. Residents should be clean, well groomed and dressed appropriately. Watch for facial expressions with the residents as well as staff. This can speak volumes. Does the staff interact

with the residents, or do they just seem to be going about their routine? Does the staff answer call lights in a timely manner?

Often the biggest mistake I see people make is choosing a home with the prettiest décor, carpeting and chandeliers. While it is a nice thing to have, it will not guarantee quality of care. Question what services can be provided such as audiology, dental, vision, rehabilitation as well psychological support.

Check out the activity calendar and see if it offers a wide variety of groups. A well rounded activity program will have low, moderate and high functioning group activities. Often people look for highly visual large groups and forget that a meaningful activity is based on individual needs. It could mean a cup of coffee and reading the paper for some to playing games or large social groups for others. What is important to your loved one? Will their needs be met?

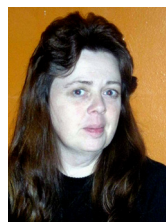
Once you decide on a home make sure you are mentally prepared for the transition. This is when the guilt can consume you if you aren't prepared. Remember that this can be a great act of love, and yet it will be one of the hardest decisions you make.

Your loved one will have many emotions especially when the reality sets in. They will often have a lot of anger over their loss of independence and can try and make you feel guilty for what is happening to them. Do not take it to heart, and remember that change is always hard for us and even harder on the elderly. Be supportive, patient and most of all a good listener for them.

Once they are ready to move in, making their new room feel homelike will help. Placing items of sentimental value to them will often help them feel more at ease. Family pictures, a favorite bedspread and perhaps their favorite chair from home will help. Be sure to bring a decent amount of comfortable clothing and personal items as well. Often the first few weeks will most likely be the hardest emotionally.

Give things a little time, and you will see new friendships start to develop. They will become involved in the life of the home. Get to know the staff well. Often families will tell me how their loved one never had such a big social life. They express how much relief it is to not have to worry constantly and find themselves enjoying visits so much more.

Every Family situation can be a little different. Things have changed in long term care and it can be the right choice for you loved one. If you have any questions regarding long term care, many resources are available. If you have any questions, I would be happy to help you.



Teri Crow Mercier is the Director of Activities At Colonial Heights Care and Rehab-where she has worked for many years. You can email Terry at [mike3433@msn.com](mailto:mike3433@msn.com)

## Merrimack Valley Hospice Awarded Grant from TD Bank

Lawrence, Mass. – Merrimack Valley Hospice recently was awarded \$25,000 from the TD Charitable Foundation to support its “End of Life Care for All” program. This program enables Merrimack Valley Hospice to provide subsidized end-of-life care to patients with limited or no health insurance.

“We are extremely grateful for the continuing support of the TD Charitable Foundation,” said Joan Stygles Hull, RN, MBA, President / CEO of Home Health Foundation, the parent company of Home Health VNA, Merrimack Valley Hospice and HomeCare, Inc. “As a mission driven agency, Merrimack Valley Hospice is committed to providing care for all who need us, regardless of their ability to pay privately for services.

This grant will help us care for many more patients in any number of settings including a patient’s own home, assisted living or long-term care facilities, and our own Merrimack Valley Hospice House in Haverhill.”

Hospice services are available to patients whose illness is no longer responding to curative treatment and palliative or comfort care has been chosen. Services are provided by specialty teams of trained

professionals that are comprised of physicians, nurses, social workers, chaplains, aides and volunteers, who together provide comprehensive medical care, social and supportive services to patients and bereavement support and counseling those grieving the loss of a loved one.

Hospice is a special kind of care, designed to provide sensitivity and support for people in the final phase of a terminal illness.

Hospice care seeks to enable patients to carry on a pain free life and to manage other symptoms so that their last days may be spent with dignity and quality surrounded by the people and things they love most.

Merrimack Valley Hospice, the trusted name in end of life care for more than 30 years, is affiliated with HomeCare, Inc. and Home Health VNA.

Together the three agencies serve more than 80 communities throughout the Merrimack Valley, Northeastern Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire.

The agency also opened the Merrimack Valley Hospice House, the first in the region, in June 2009. For more information, visit [www.merrimackvalleyhospice.org](http://www.merrimackvalleyhospice.org).

## About Unique Healing and Wellness

By: Vanessa Orsini

Unique Healing and Wellness, located at 140 Main Street in the heart of North Andover, MA, primarily offers nutritional counseling, massage therapy, Reiki, and sells organic, quality, supplements and vitamins with absolutely no cereal fillers. Its shelves are also stocked with healthy foods, essential oils, candles, and self-care products. The grand opening to this wellness center was recently hosted by Darlene Torosian, the business owner and a woman of extensive specialized training. There, Torosian will hone in her wide-ranging skills to offer the community a tranquil environment with services that provide a combination of both luxury and necessity based on individual needs. It is a spiritual powerhouse opening its arms to all who enter.

Darlene Torosian is an established Certified Health Counselor, and Massage Therapist, who also specializes in Contact Reflex Analysis and Reiki Healing. She has continued to build upon her existing education over the past fifteen years and always stays up-to-date with the most current health-related information via ongoing schooling and independent research. Torosian boasts great success in helping

her clients lose weight by focusing on their nutritional needs. Part of that success is due the individualized approach Darlene takes in working with her clients. Knowing that no one diet plan works for every person, she enthusiastically and attentively immerses herself in each client’s specific needs, providing them with the guidance and resources that are fundamental to the lifestyle changes to be accomplished during the time elapsed over the course of any of her unique programs. The Unique Healing and Wellness philosophy deems everything people welcome into their lives to be food, not only the literal meals they consume. This encompasses the nutritional, the physical, and sometimes even the emotional or spiritual. Darlene’s approach to weight-loss and health counseling is positively unique, effective, and fun.

The overall experience at Unique Healing and Wellness is a sanctuary for the senses and the soul, proudly welcoming newcomers who will surely be pleased by the atmosphere and the quality of service. The establishment will feature health related workshops, classes, art exhibits, and social events on a regular basis, and is currently offering initial health consultations free of charge.

## McALLISTER: From page 20

oping pneumonia.

Having a fever can make you uncomfortable, but it’s an excellent way to rid yourself of infection-causing viruses, which typically thrive at normal body temperature. Even slight elevations in body temperature create an environment that is too warm for these germs to survive, much less reproduce.

You can think of a fever as the body’s way of “pasteurizing” the blood, similar to the process used to kill microbes in milk with short bursts of relatively high temperatures. A fever also kicks your immune system into high gear, accelerating the production of germ-killing white blood cells.

A higher body temperature causes your heart to beat faster, speeding the delivery of blood and nutrients to the site of infection and hastening the removal of cellular debris and toxins. Higher body temperatures also speed enzymatic reactions,

whether they’re involved in killing germs or repairing injured tissues.

As long as you’re healthy, there’s no real danger associated with running a low-grade fever, and there’s no real need to take a fever-reducing drug. In fact, letting a mild fever run its course may shorten the duration and the severity of your cold by killing more of the viruses responsible for the infection.

Recovering from any illness, including a simple cold, takes time. Over-the-counter cold medicines might make your symptoms a little easier to tolerate, but they won’t help your body heal any faster.

Rallie McAllister, M.D. is a family physician, speaker, and co-founder of [www.MommyMDGuides.com](http://www.MommyMDGuides.com), a website featuring child-raising tips from trusted doctors who are also moms. To find out more about Rallie McAllister, M.D., and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com). COPY-RIGHT 2010 CREATORS.COM

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## Snow birds going south for the winter leaves cancer patients in need

### Drivers Wanted for cancer patients to get treatments.

(Weston, MA) – Sometimes the biggest challenge in cancer treatment is getting there. Thankfully, the American Cancer Society is here to help with a committed group of individuals who drive patients to nearby treatment centers to get the care they need. But according to the Society, many volunteer drivers have headed south for the cold weather months, leaving many cancer patients without rides to the treatment they need now.

“There is a great need for people to help by picking up cancer patients from their home and transporting them to their nearby treatment centers,” said Lynn Basilio, Area Director for Health Initiatives with the Society.

The American Cancer Society is currently seeking volunteers from every town in Eastern and Northeastern Massachusetts to drive cancer patients to their treatment appointments. “If you have a car, and even one hour once a month, you can make a real difference in someone’s life by becoming a driver,” explains Basilio.

A cancer patient who needs radiation therapy might require between 20 and 30 trips to the clinic within six weeks. A patient receiving chemotherapy might report for treatment weekly for up to a year. Treatment can make a patient feel too sick to drive. In many cases, a patient is driven to hospitals and clinics by relatives or friends, but occasionally they need to seek alternative transportation. That’s where Road to Recovery, an American Cancer Society community program, helps.

#### One Hour Once A Month

Volunteer drivers receive simple training and an orientation from the American Cancer Society, and are asked to volunteer for at least one hour, one day, once a month.

The Society matches drivers’ availability with the needs of patients who call.

“Some volunteers say driving patients is one of the most rewarding jobs you can do,” said Basilio. “Sometimes a driver will have the opportunity to bring the same patient several times, get to know them, and be able to offer support. For patients who have no family in the area, volunteer drivers really make a difference.”

For more information, or to volunteer as a Road to Recovery driver, contact your American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end suffering from cancer. As a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers, we fight for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. We save lives by helping people stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early; helping people get well by being there for them during and after a cancer diagnosis; by finding cures through investment in groundbreaking discovery; and by fighting back by rallying lawmakers to pass laws to defeat cancer and by rallying communities worldwide to join the fight. As the nation’s largest non-governmental investor in cancer research, contributing more than \$3.4 billion, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, more than 11 million people in America who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will be celebrating birthdays this year. To learn more about us or to get help, call us any time, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

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Ben Franklin, who invented the printing press and started dozens of newspapers himself, is impressed with the Valley Patriot. Ben was in North Andover last month to greet Scott Brown and cheer him on.

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PHOTOS: TOM DUGGAN

HEROES IN THE VALLEY: #1) Andover Police Officer Kevin Burke receives his award from Police Chief Brian Pattullo. #2) Andover Firefighter James Landry, Sr. #3) North Andover Police Officer Thomas Donovan. #4) Lawrence Police Chief John Romero with Hero Lawrence Police Officer Christopher Bussey, #5) Andover Firefighter Brian Wright with his daughter Madison. #6) Acting Lawrence Fire Chief Murphy with hero Lawrence Firefighter Gary Clement. #7) North Andover Firefighter Graham Rowe receives his award from Chief Martineau, #8) North Andover Police Officer Robert Barter. #9) North Andover Firefighter Jeff Crosby receives his award from Chief Martineau. #10) Patriot Ambulance EMT's Kristy Pappas, Krista Cote, and Christopher Leavitt. #11) Andover Firefighter Joseph Cahill.

# Lawrence Exchange Club Honors Fire, Police, EMT's

**Andover Fire:** Andover is proud to honor Act. Lt. James Landry, Sr., Ff. Joseph Cahill, Ff. Christopher Morgese, all from Engine Company 3, and Ff. EMT Brian Wright and Ff. EMT Ryan Beal of Ambulance 2. Their combined efforts, in conjunction with the Lawrence General Advanced Life Support Paramedic Unit, saved the life of a person choking at the Chateau Restaurant last May 4th.

Both Andover Fire/Rescue teams were dispatched at 12:31 PM from the emergency report of a choking patron. Upon arrival, the Engine 3 team replaced a citizen who had been performing CPR and made a thorough assessment of the patient. Quickly, they applied the ambu-bag and oxygen while Ff. Cahill prepared a nasal airway for insertion. Within 2 minutes, Ambulance 2 arrived. Ff. EMT Morgese determined that a piece of meat was obstructing the patient's airway almost completely. He radioed the ALS Paramedic unit en route describing the nature of the life-threatening obstruction. The ALS Paramedic unit arrived momentarily and they were able to employ specialized equipment to clear the airway, whereupon the patient was intubated and transported to L.G.H. by Ambulance 2. Thanks to their rapid response, assessments and accurate application of appropriate life-saving techniques, the patient recovered

consciousness within minutes of arriving at the hospital and the tube was removed. Andover Fire/Rescue is proud to recognize these five professionals.

**North Andover Fire:** North Andover is proud to recognize Ff. Jeff Crosby and Ff. Graham Rowe who consistently devote their time to improving our community. Both teach CPR to High School students, senior citizens and other residents. Ff. Crosby is also NAFD lead fire investigator and is active in the juvenile fire-setter intervention program. He has sponsored regional Fire Investigation Training and attended the National Fire Academy in Maryland. Ff. Graham is part of the NEMLIC STARS program that provides intervention and assistance with school emergencies, including bomb threats, school violence and other issues.

Both of these firefighters represent the ideals of service, training, competence and dedication that make the North Andover Fire Department successful and trusted by those we serve.

**Lawrence Fire:** Lawrence is pleased to recognize a lifetime of service by Ff. Gary Clement who has just retired after 32 years. Gary has always performed the duties and responsibilities that are essential to the success and recognition of the quality of our Department. As our representative he volunteered to coordinate

funerals and wakes of many retired and active firefighters. He made arrangements for Honor Guards at wakes and for Color Guards and pallbearers at funerals. Clement would personally contact the families of the deceased and made sure their wishes were followed and he represented the Department's caring for them and for the fallen. We appreciate this opportunity to honor Gary Clement, and we will miss his contributions to the health and success of the department.

**Andover Police:** Andover is proud to recognize Officer Kevin Burke, a 36 year veteran of the department. Kevin is currently our Court Liaison/Evidence Technician Officer. He has specialized in crime scene analysis and fingerprint identification. In his career, he has collected and processed evidence in nearly every crime scene or incident in Andover. He is now the only person in the U.S. to hold all three of the International Association for Identification's certifications as Senior Crime Scene Analyst, Ten Print Examiner and as Latent Print Examiner. In addition, he also sits on the National Scientific Working Group (SWGFAST) that is establishing standards and guidelines for all crime scene analysts. His extensive work has earned him both local and national awards and citations. Officer Burke's expertise has assisted with many investi-

gations and identifications, resulting in numerous arrests for literally hundreds of crimes. He has always represented the Department with excellence and the has been antionally recognized for his crime scene and fingerprint analysis. We are proud to name Kevin Burke our Police Officer of the year.

**North Andover Police:** North Andover is pleased to honor Sergeant Timothy Crane, Detectives Daniel Cronin, Thomas Donovan, Robert Barter and Sean Daley, and F.B.I. Special Agent Margaret Cronin with whom they cooperated in the investigation of an October 27th bank robbery. On that day, a man entered the downtown Sovereign Bank office on Main Street where he demanded and received money from a teller made fearful by his angry and agitated demeanor. The suspect fled and a widespread investigation ensued, including other officers and K-9 units. The investigation led officers to believe the man came from the area and that he had committed larceny at the nearby CVS store a day earlier. Forensic investigators discovered that the thief had left palm prints on the bank counter. The investigation continued into the next week and, on November 4th, a child custody inquiry was fielded by Sgt. Crane. When he referenced the child's father through

# Eddie Money Rocks Tupelo Music Hall in Salisbury

"My daughter Jesse always steals the show, watch her steal the show tonight!" Eddie Money

The new Tupelo Music Hall at the Salisbury Beach Pavilion hosted Rock and Roll legend Eddie Money last month packing in new and old fans alike.

The crowd at Tupelo ranged in age from people in their 40's to teenagers just discovering Money's music for the first time.

"You know it's really amazing when I see these kids and they are loving it. They are loving the music and they are loving the Money Man and it just feels great!" he said.

Belting out such hits as Baby Hold On, Gimme Some Water, Shakin and Two Tickets To Paradise, Money ran around the stage with more energy than a 20 year old, shaking hands with giddy fans and joking with the crowd about his recent separation with his wife. "I wish she was a fan of my music but these days I'm staying at the Motel 6," he said. "Hey, but at least they leave the light on for me."

Back stage, the 62 year old Money relaxed before the show telling the Valley Patriot's Tom Duggan that he feels fortunate to be able to rock with his fans in the Valley. "I love coming to the Valley and by the way I love the Valley Patriot I pick it up every time I'm here, but I have to tell you Tom, I do this for the fans,



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

Rock Legend Eddie Money and his daughter Jesse Money at the Tupelo Music Hall at the Pavilion in Salisbury Beach.

man, seriously. I don't do it for the money or anything else. It's great that so many people still love my music and at my age I just think it's great so many people still love what I do."

Money's extremely gifted 21 year old daughter, Jesse joined Eddie on stage doing backup vocals on "Take me Home

Tonight" a duet he originally did with singing sensation Ronnie Spector. Jesse Money also did a Janice Joplin song solo and backed Eddie on the rest of his hits, singing and dancing with her famous father.

"Listen," Money said during his radio interview earlier. "She steals the show, she

is recording songs and she is great! She's following the footsteps of her old man and she has the genes she's gonna be a big star in her own right."

Jesse showed a wide range of vocal talent on stage and shocked the crowd with her melodies.

Money also dedicated his single "Peace in Our Time" to the troops. In his call to the Paying Attention! Radio Program on WCAP earlier that day, he told Tom Duggan that his daughter Jesse's boyfriend is in the National Guard and about to be deployed overseas. As a former Police Officer in New York, Money has always been a supporter of the troops and law enforcement. He took several opportunities during the show to recognize the troops, even calling some out by name, telling the crowd that they are heroes and prompting them to give our troops an ovation ... which they did.

Money spent over an hour after the show signing autographs and joking with his fans and promised he would be back later in the year.

The Tupelo Music Hall is the newest venue for concerts and events in the Valley. See their concert schedule below.

## Shawn Hansen's Comedy Corner: Jeff Dunham comes to Lowell

Shawn Hansen

VALLEY PATRIOT SPORTS WRITER

Introducing comedian and ventriloquist Jeff Dunham to a crowd of 6,300 at the Paul E. Tsongas Arena on Jan. 17, 2010 on the big screen television appeared his puppet Achmed the Muslim Terrorist saying, "Good evening infidels."

Dunham is known for his politically incorrect comedy and he definitely gave the crowd what they were expecting.

Scurrying back stage to get ready, Walter told Achmed that he needed to keep his privates out of his dresser.

Achmed replied, "... what ...?" At that time, Walter threw a bomb to Achmed, it blew up, and the show started.

Once brought up on stage, Walter said, "Oh, my Lord. Where the... are we now?"

To this question, Dunham replied they were in Lowell, Mass.

"How sad is that? There's not even a consonant in there. We're in Lowell, Mah," said Walter before the giggling crowd.

Reminiscing about a recent trip to a casino, Walter was not only confused at the Mexican bathroom attendant, and why anyone would be in that line of work. He said he couldn't understand it along with the fact there was a Mexican working for the Indians at the casino.

Explaining Manuel's job qualifications, Walter said all he does is hand you a towel.

Finishing up with his bathroom break, Walter said, "I turn around, flush the toi-

**DUNHAM, PAGE 31**



PHOTO: SHAWN HANSEN

## LIVE CONCERTS IN SALISBURY AT THE TUPELO MUSIC HALL

### MARCH 2010 CONCERT SCHEDULE

Thursday, March 4, 8pm – **LEON RUSSELL** (\$35 / \$38 / \$40)  
 Saturday, March 6, 8pm – **"CAPTURED" The Journey Show** (\$25)  
 Sunday, March 7, 7pm – **HOT HOUSE FLOWERS** (\$30)  
 Saturday, March 13, 8pm – **ROOMFUL OF BLUES & BELLEVUE CADILLAC** (\$25)  
 Wednesday, March 17, 8pm – **GLENGARRY BHOYS** (\$25)  
 Friday, March 19, 8pm – **RICHIE HAVENS** (\$30 / \$35)  
 Saturday, March 20, 8pm – **THE STOMPERS** (\$25)  
 Sunday, March 21, 7pm – **THE ROBERT CRAY BAND** (\$50)

### APRIL 2010 CONCERT SCHEDULE

Thursday, April 1, 8pm – **THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS** (\$40)  
 Friday, April 2, 8pm – **JO DEE MESSINA** (\$40)  
 Friday, April 9, 8pm – **JOHNNY A & ALBERT CUMMINGS** (\$25)  
 Saturday, April 10, 8pm – **RICHARD MARX & MATT SCANNELL** (\$35 / \$40)  
 Sunday, April 11, 7pm – **JANIS IAN** (\$30)  
 Saturday, April 17, 8pm – **JOAN OSBORNE** (\$45)  
 Saturday, April 24, 8pm – **STANLEY JORDAN TRIO** (\$25 / \$30)

Get up close to your favorite artists at Tupelo Music Hall Salisbury. Offering a new wave in year round live entertainment, most seats in this brand new, 468-person capacity state-of-the-art oceanfront venue are within 50 feet of the stage. Tupelo Music Hall Salisbury is located at 4 Oceanfront North on Salisbury Beach, and is easily accessible from Routes 1, 95 and 495. Table service including a limited menu and full selection of beverages is available; doors open 90 minutes before show times. Tickets can be purchased by calling 978.462.5888, or purchase online at [www.tupelohall.com](http://www.tupelohall.com).

### FEBRUARY 2010 CONCERT SCHEDULE

Saturday, February 6, 8pm – **NEW ENGLAND WINTER BLUES FESTIVAL** (\$22)  
 Friday, February 12, 8pm – **TAB BENOIT** (\$25 / \$30)  
 Saturday, February 13, 8pm – **MARKY RAMONE'S BLITZKRIEG** (\$30)  
 Friday, February 19, 8pm – **POCO & PURE PRAIRIE LEAGUE** (\$35 / \$40)  
 Saturday, February 20, 8pm – **BO BICE** (\$25 / \$30)  
 Sunday, February 21, 7pm – **JUDY COLLINS** (\$35 / \$40)  
 Saturday, February 27, 8pm – **TOM RUSH** (\$30 / \$35)



## VALLEY PATRIOT TV REVIEW



## Cougar Town, ABC Wednesdays-9:30 pm

Beth Daigle

VALLEY PATRIOT ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

I am a huge fan of ABC's Wednesday night line-up of "Modern Family" followed by "Cougar Town." Both shows have entered the scene with a funny take on family dynamics in the here and now. My immediate focus is on "Cougar Town" simply because I love Courtney Cox and I have found myself looking forward to the show week after week.

In this mid-week mood booster, Courtney Cox plays Jules, a 40- something divorcee, who is optimistically getting her life back on track post-breakup. She is pleasantly surrounded by a group of friends (sound familiar?) who are her support system, social outlet and comic relief as she re-introduces herself into the scary scene that is dating. Her frantic, yet endearing, persona is over the top yet perfectly offset by the sarcastic and comfortably confident nature of her ensemble cast.

Supporting roles include Jules' best friend, Ellie and her husband Andy who play the happily married couple; permanently unhappy with their ongoing, Mars vs. Venus, battle of the sexes. I hate to laugh at other's struggles, but in this case it's unavoidable as their antics are purely comical. Jules' ex-husband Bobby, still very much a part of the picture, is refreshingly secure with his mediocrity and lack of sophistication creating a nice balance to Jules' perfectionist style. Rounding out the cast you have Bobby and Jules' witty teenage son, Travis; Jules' young, hot colleague, Laurie and, saving the best for last, Jules' adorable neighbor Grayson

who is also recently divorced, but having a far easier time getting back into the swing of dating.

The obvious mutual, yet unspoken, desire between Grayson and Jules brings me back to the early days of Ross and Rachel and I love the anticipation now just as much as I did then. Of course, to keep things interesting the plot takes an interesting triangular twist as Laurie and Grayson "connect" leaving the fateful destiny of Jules and Grayson's indeterminately in question.

Overall "Cougar Town" offers a light-hearted and humorous look at a phase of life that is challenging whether you are going through divorce or simply entering that stage of mid-life where crisis takes on a whole new meaning. The only thing that I don't like about this show is the title. "Cougar Town" sounds like cheap, cop-out of a name that diminishes the shows ultimate potential. It's as if writers forgot that a title was necessary and had to scramble for something catchy at the last minute. My aversion to any and all "cougar" references aside, "Cougar Town" is definitely a keeper.



*Beth Daigle is a freelance writer who writes for several area publications. Beth is a North Andover resident and happily reports on the good, the bad and the ugly in television entertainment. Beth's background is in marketing having earned her BA from University of Massachusetts, Amherst and MBA from Bentley College. Send comments to Bethdaigleyp@comcast.net*

## A COUCH WITH A VIEW

## What About The Children?

Ray Shackett

VALLEY PATRIOT COUCH POTATO COLUMNIST

When Mommy and Daddy fight they tend to forget the impact it has on the children. They may kiss and make up in the end or agree to disagree or even find no hope and eventually part ways, but it's the kids that ultimately pay the price. My family has been through quite a lot lately. I have spent many o' nights sheltering my delicate ears with a soft pillow and hoping that tomorrow will bring a brighter day. I daydream about who I will be loyal to when it all falls apart or who I will be forced to chose when Mommy and Daddy walk away from each other. Recently, my nightmare came to light and a tough decision has been brought to my attention. To understand the true essence of my very own winter of discontent I must go back in time a spell and paint a picture for your apathy towards my heartbreaking situation.

Our story starts so many years ago but we will begin on the date that would change television history as we know it. September 14th 2009. The day the laughter, and prime-time ratings, died. Former host of the Tonight Show Jay Leno premieres his 10:00PM prime-time talk show that was promised to revolutionize television as we know it. If revolutionize meant creating and executing one of the worst television disasters since Cop Rock then, congratulations, you won Mr. Leno and NBC! But, unfortunately Webster doesn't allow definition rewrites too often so we stick with the original meaning which they failed to define with content. The Jay Leno Show was a ratings disaster as Conan O'Brien, left with the job every comedian aspires to obtain from the first day they hit the stage of The Giggle Shack, became the fifth host of Tonight Show since its conception in 1954. I might as well start a little further back so that you can make an educated decision when we conclude.

A Brief History Of The Tonight Show Steve Allen hosts a local show called Tonight on New York's WNBT in June 1953. The show went national in 1954 where Allen did the show live and featured jokes, music and sketches with guest stars. Allen was replaced in the Summer of 1957 by Jack Parr where he turned the

emphasis of the show to talk and interviews. Parr hosted Tonight for 5 years. Enter Johnny Carson. The man, the myth, the legend, who revolutionized (using the word in its proper form) the late night talk show. At first the show ran almost 2 hours from 11:15 to 1:00AM. Then 90 minutes and then finally, in 1980, to one hour. Carson, along with his sidekick, the late, great and local Ed McMahon and his band leader Doc Severinson, went on to host the tonight show for nearly 30 years. When it was time for Johnny to say goodbye a major history changing decision was to be made. Who would take the reigns of one of the most beloved nighttime rituals in bedtime history? Two men were considered for the job. Frequent Tonight Show guest and fill-in host Jay Leno or David Letterman, the man who had been following Johnny from 12:30 to 1:30 for years with Late Night. After much campaigning (and back-stabbing on Leno's part... read the 1994 book The Late Shift or see it's 1996 HBO adaptation about the late night wars between NBC, Leno and Letterman) the show ultimately fell in the hands of Jay Leno leading Letterman to flee to CBS leaving his Late Night chair to the relatively unknown Conan O'Brien. And now the lightning round... In September of 1994 NBC announces that Leno will retire in 5 years leaving The Tonight Show in the hands of Conan O'Brien. In 2007 Jay Leno announces that he may stick around a little longer and so lights the fuse to the powder-keg that will soon follow. July 2008, NBC announces Leno's departure and Conan's start date.

Summer of 2008, Leno refuses to retire altogether and speculation mounts as to where he will go. December 2008, speculation becomes reality. Leno will stay with NBC as they fear having to compete with him on a nightly basis on another network. Leno will host a revolutionary (there's that word again) show for NBC. A five night-a-week, primetime talk show that had everyone scrabbling including this writer (see A Couch With A View - May 2009). June 1st 2009, Conan officially begins duties as the fifth host of

COUCH, PAGE 31

## Shawn Hansen's Comedy Corner: SNL's Rob Schneider

"From Saturday Night Live" to "Home Alone 2", "The Hot Chick", and "Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo", Rob Schneider has performed in a school bus full of movies, not to mention an arm sleeve of movies with Adam Sandler.

Performing at the Wilbur Theatre in Boston on Jan. 9, Schneider started his night off talking about the Boston Red Sox.

"Ninety years ago, last month, you guys decided to sell Babe Ruth to the Yankees for a musical. Wow, good idea there. It would be like trading Tom Brady for a Jonas Brother to be named later."

Schneider chuckled about Bill Buckner saying anyone related to him will most likely be in trouble. "Isn't your aunt related to the grandma of the second cousin of Bill Buckner? Yeah, yeah, right? Well, F\* you."

Talking about TSA Agents in the airport, he said, apparently you don't have to be Sherlock Holmes to fit this job prescription.

"To be a TSA, all you basically need is

a pulse, and the ability to identify bottled water."

Schneider also joked about his concern for old people taking prescription drugs they see on TV.

"Forget about getting kids off drugs, get those seniors off drugs," joked Schneider.

Explaining how whatever they hear on TV, old people apparently have it he rifled off a number of different potential syndromes.

Schneider also touched on stories about Tiger Woods calling him "quite the goof ball" for crashing into a row of hedges, a fire hydrant and a tree to escape his outraged wife.

After leaving his cell phone behind when going to a friend's house to play poker, his wife saw sexting conversations

on his phone that was left on the kitchen table. Now with the media revelations about the philandering Woods, Schneider said the bar has now been lowered for all men.

"Honey, I only cheated on you with two women. Look at this a-hole, he did it with 85 women."

Lastly, when Schneider is seen in public, he occasionally will encounter a fan coming up to him in disbelief that it's actually him. Reminiscing about his lunch outings, he was once greeted by a fan who admitted he doesn't usually bother people while they're eating. At this time, Schneider said, "Well, thank you for making an exception in my case."

Nowadays, people seem to be obsessed

with celebrities, and want to know what they're doing all the time.

Schneider said someone came up to him once saying, "You must hate it when people come up to you, huh? You hate it, huh? People coming up to you, and you hate it, right? Huh?"

Some people are so stupid!

Coming to The Wilbur Theatre Friday, Feb. 12 will be Pauly Shore. In his illustrious career, Shore has been part of the cast on Married with Children (1989), Beverly Hills 90210 (1996), Nash Bridges (1999), King of the Hill (1999), and many, many more. Talking to Shore about coming to Boston, he said, "I'm excited about The Wilbur Theatre. I haven't played there before. I've heard some good stuff about it. I always remember going to Boston, and having a good time."

To see Shore at The Wilbur Theatre, reserve your tickets today by calling 1-617-248-9700. For the complete interview with Shore, and review on his show, look for the March edition of The Valley Patriot.



PHOTO: SHAWN HANSEN

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# Devils meet The Domino Effect

**Shawn Hansen**  
VALLEY PATRIOT SPORTS WRITER

Over the past month of AHL hockey, the Lowell Devils, affiliate of the New Jersey Devils sit in third place. With a record of 27-17-3-1 as of Jan. 24, Lowell is in a close race compared to the first two teams. Manchester Monarchs (27-14-2-5) and the Worcester Sharks (28-14-1-2).

The Domino Effect – Winning by one score, and then losing by that same score the next game, then winning once again by that same score. New Years Eve, the Devils upset the Manchester Monarchs 5-2 followed by a 5-2 loss the next day to the Worcester Sharks on Jan. 2, and a 5-2 win against the Springfield Falcons on Jan. 3. A few days thereafter on Jan. 6, the Devils snuck by the Hartford Wolf Pack 3-2, fell to the W-B Scranton Penguins 3-2 on Jan. 8, and slated the Binghamton Senators 3-2 on Jan. 9.

Is that the rest of the effect? No. On Jan. 22, and 23, the Devils copy and pasted the same score 4-1, both on the road to the Providence Bruins, and the Portland Pirates.

Getting to the big games of the month, on Jan. 3 the Lowell Devils beat the Springfield Falcons 5-2.

In the first period of play, the Devils



Springfield Falcons (#22) Ryan O'Marra faces off vs. Devil Ben Walter

slathered in the first goal of the night to make it 1-0 on a loose puck pick up by #7 Tyler Eckford who shot it past Falcons goaltender Devan Dubyk. Moments later the Falcons flew to the nest making it 1-1 on a goal by #9 Liam Reddix. At the half way point of the period, the Devils took the lead once again, this time on a goal by #14 Nathan Perkovich.

The Falcons twined things up one

more time as #18 Colin MacDonald scored a goal on a wrist shot.

Star of the game, #15 Patrick Davis then scored two goals within 44 seconds as the game concluded with #25 Nick Palmieri picking up his 12th goal of the season.

Closing out January, the Devils tip toed by the Hartford Wolf Pack 3-2. According to lowelldevils.com, the Wolf


Pack found themselves in an early 2-0 hole. Both goals came within the time frame of three and a half minutes by #14 Nathan Perkovich, and #19 Brad Mills.

The Wolf Pack would get on the board however with 15:10 of the first when Dane Byers slapped a shot past Devils goaltender #1 Mike McKenna. With a 2-1 lead going into the second period of play, the Wolf Pack knotted things up at 2 with 9:10 on the clock.

With six minutes remaining in the game, Mills scored his second goal of the game to put the Devils ahead by one.

Defeating the Wolf Pack granted the Devils their franchise high, six consecutive wins on the road. Also, McKenna picked up his 16th win of the season saving 35 of 37 shots.

For more information about Lowell Devils AHL hockey, read my columns as I highlight the top games every month.

*"Shawn Hansen is currently in his last semester at UMass Lowell. He wrote for The Campus Report, and was sports editor. Hansen now writes for the UMass Lowell Connector, the Billerica Minuteman, and the Tewksbury Advocate. To get in touch with Shawn, email him at Shawn.Hansen.sportsentertainment@gmail.com."*

## Methuen inspiration goes for the Extreme!

**Josie McCarthy**  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Those of you who reside in Methuen, MA, went to Methuen High School or UMass Lowell may recall a guy named Erik Corbett. If so, you may want to tune into ESPN and watch the Winter X Games, as you may see a familiar face or hear that familiar name.

Erik Corbett, 30, grew up in Methuen, MA. Erik played many sports while at Methuen High School. Following his junior year Erik transferred to a school in Vermont. This is where Erik learned to love the mountains and its surroundings.

Erik returned to the Merrimack Valley area where he attended college and was a 2005 UMass Lowell graduate. He now resides in Glen, NH, and was in a car accident in January of 2000. Erik suffered a spinal cord injury which was caused by two broken vertebrae, a broken arm and shoulder blade. Although suffering these injuries, he still lives a full, normal life. He drives a truck and lives like everyone else. He has not allowed his disability to take over his life. He is a very inspiring individual.

Erik never complained nor did he allow his injury to stop him from doing what

he loves best, competing in sports. Erik now competes in the Winter X Games in Aspen, CO and during the summer he competes in wheelchair races.

Due to the accident that Erik was in, he had a difficult time getting back on regular skis and keeping his balance, but that did not make him give up on what he loves to do best, which is to stay in sports and enjoy the mountains. He discovered Monoskier Cross. It is a single ski with a bucket to sit in. Monoskiing is a sport that gives people with a disability the ability to still compete. Corbett competed along with 11 other disabled individuals for the chance to move forward to the Winter X Games.

This was Erik's 3rd year competing. This past weekend Erik qualified for the Semi's in Monoskier Cross and came in 5th place, which will air on ESPN. When Erik is not competing, you can find him in New Hampshire where he works as a program director for Ability PLUS, at the New Hampshire ski resort, Attitash. Erik helps other people with disabilities who want to learn to ski. He has worked at the ski resort for a few years and enjoys what he does.

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**Dr. Michael Provenzano**

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# \$35MIL BAILOUT: FROM PAGE 7

thereafter. Any violation of the provisions of this paragraph which has substantially influenced the action taken by a municipal agency in any matter shall be grounds for avoiding, rescinding, or canceling such action on such terms as the interest of the municipality and innocent third parties require.”

Blanchette, who lost the mayor’s race when it was learned that he refused to pay

three years worth of income taxes to the IRS was legally responsible for the city’s budget according to the city charter. When he left office on Monday, January 4th, Blanchette left the city with a \$17.9 million budget deficit, did not set a tax rate or balance the budget as required by law.

**Keeping the seat open for himself**  
Fired Economic Development Director Thomas Schiavone was denied a contract

by Blanchette two months ago after nine years on the job. Blanchette not only voted against Schiavone to get the job but as the council president he lead the charge to stop Schiavone from getting the contract. Other members of the Sullivan team say they plan on taking legal action against the city and have already retained lawyers to represent them in a lawsuit against Lantigua.

**Blanchette/Councilors took while services were being cut**

At the same time the Lawrence Police Union, Fire Union and laborers unions in the of Lawrence were taking furloughs, facing layoffs and losing benefits, Patrick Blanchette and the Lawrence City Council raised their own pay. In the six years Blanchette has been president of the council he has raised the city council pay from \$5,200 per year (times nine councilors) to \$15,000 per year with a \$2,500 bonus for the council president himself. The Lawrence City Coun-

cil also had free cell phones, blackberries, an out of state travel allowance to go on junkets, free health insurance and payments into their pensions.

Three city councilor fought during the last budget cycle to cut the council’s pay and reduce their own budget, but Blanchette and his Budget Committee Chairman Grisel Silva buried it in committee and the proposal never saw the light of day. During the subcommittee discussion Silva said she would not support a cut in the council’s pay because she “could not afford to take a furlough”.

Since then Lawrence has laid off essential personnel, reduced benefits for city workers, cut staff, become slow to pay vendors doing business with the city, closed two fire stations, is down to one food inspector and the city council has yet to reduce their own pay, perks or their budget ... even under the new council.

**Over their Heads**  
Two years ago the Lawrence City Council was so bogged down with petty squabbles and political agendas that they were incapable of passing the city budget. After three months of stalling a budget vote, (then) Mayor Sullivan had to go over their heads and get the city budget Certified by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue without a vote of the city council. Councilors had violated so many policies and procedures while trying to hold up the Sullivan budget that Sullivan had the legal footing to go over their heads, in effect rendering them irrelevant. City Councilors vowed revenge against the Sullivan administration for putting an end to the dog and pony show that included screaming fits, degrading members of the public from the council table, berating city employees and wild accusations about conspiracies.

**No End in Sight**  
Even if the Lantigua administration in Lawrence gets the \$35 million loan, that will only go to pay for the current operating deficit in city expenses. A new budget cycle will begin July 1st, if the new city

council passes a 2010-2011 budget on time. That budget will include additional cuts in state aide, increases in pension and unemployment payments, raises for union and contracted employees, a lagging economy, a decrease in local property tax revenue and the expense of repaying a \$35 million loan that the state is allowing them to borrow.

Lowell State Representative Tom Golden (D), Lowell, and several other state representatives on Beacon Hill have already said they oppose giving Lawrence a state backed, \$35 million loan to cover operating costs in the current city budget unless there is an oversight board and a receiver to control the money Lawrence’s mayor will be allowed to spend. Several reps. have predicted that this would be “bailout 1” for Lawrence as the economic prospect for Lawrence’s financial future “is going to get worse before it gets better”.

Governor Patrick and officials at the Department of Revenue say that if House Bill 4421 is passed without a receiver or fiscal oversight board, Mayor Lantigua and the Lawrence City Council will have until January of 2011 to get their fiscal house in order or face full receivership.

But some state officials like Karyn Polito (R) Shrewsbury, say that is too late with the financial crisis in the state getting worse every day and the deficit in Lawrence becoming insurmountable to the point where Lawrence is no longer solvent.

Mayor Lantigua has yet to name an economic team or present a spending plan to manage the city’s finances, nor has he revealed what he would do with the \$35 million if the legislature passes the loan



*Thomas 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 from 10am-1pm. You can email your comments to Tdugjr@aol.com .*

5226

Department of the Treasury - Internal Revenue Service

Form 668 (Y)(c)

Rev. February 2004

Notice of Federal Tax Lien

Area: 09ALC, BUSINESS/SELF EMPLOYED AREA #1

Lien Unit Phone: (800) 829-3903

Serial Number: 506276309

For Optional Use by Recording Office

As provided by section 6321, 6322, and 6323 of the Internal Revenue Code, we are giving a notice that taxes (including interest and penalties) have been assessed against the following named taxpayer. We have made a demand for payment of this liability, but it remains unpaid. Therefore, there is a lien in favor of the United States on all property and rights to property belonging to this taxpayer for the amount of these taxes, and additional penalties, interest, and costs that may accrue.

Name of Taxpayer: PATRICK J BLANCHETTE

Ek: 11433 Pa69 #1290

01-20-2009 @ 01:41p

Residence: 215 FERRY ST

LAWRENCE, MA 01841-1319

IMPORTANT RELEASE INFORMATION: For each assessment listed below, unless notice of the lien is refilled by the date given in column (e), this notice shall, on the day following such date, operate as a certificate of release as defined in IRC 6325(a).

Kind of Tax (a)	Tax Period Ending (b)	Identifying Number (c)	Date of Assessment (d)	Last Day for Refiling (e)	Unpaid Balance of Assessment (f)
1040	12/31/2005	XXX-XX-8626	05/22/2006	06/21/2016	1451.15
1040	12/31/2006	XXX-XX-8626	05/28/2007	06/27/2017	388.42
1040	12/31/2007	XXX-XX-8626	05/26/2008	06/25/2018	7048.72

Place of Filing: Registry of Deeds

Northern Essex County

Lawrence, MA 01843

Total \$ 8888.29

This notice was prepared and signed at: MANHATTAN, NY

on this, the 08th day of January, 2009.

Signature: R.A. Mitchell

Title: ACS

21-00-0008

For: THERESA HARLEY

(800) 829-3903

Form 668 (Y)(c) (Rev. 2-2004)

Rev. Rul. 71-456, 1971-2 CB 409

Part 1 - kept By Recording Office

Form 668 (Y)(c) (Rev. 2-2004)

CAT: NO 60025X

Tax Lein on (then) City Council President Patrick Blanchette. Blanchette failed to pay his income taxes for three years and dodged the IRS until they put a tax lein on him. The IRS sent a wage garnishment letter to Lawrence City Hall to withdraw payemnts from his city council paychek but the letter was “lost” by someone in city hall. An investigation by the Lawrence City Attorney’s office has never uncovered who was responsible for “diverting the letter.

## DEVINE MILLIMET WELCOMES PETER J. CARUSO, SR.

Devine Millimet is pleased to announce that Peter J. Caruso, Sr. has joined the firm as a shareholder in our Andover office. Attorney Caruso brings extensive experience in all facets of the law, including family and business planning, real estate, asset protection, estate planning, as well as in media law--newspaper, privacy, defamation, advertising, media, internet copyright, and publications. He is the former managing partner of Caruso and Caruso, LLP and now joins the firm’s 80 attorneys in offices in Manchester and Concord, New Hampshire as well as in Andover. Established in 1947, Devine Millimet has served the Merrimack Valley for more than 25 years.



## DEVINE MILLIMET

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Please contact Peter at: 978.475.9100  
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Fri. 5 <sup>th</sup>	Over 60	
Sat. 6 <sup>th</sup>	Souled Out Show	
Sun. 7 <sup>th</sup>	Super Bowl - Free Half Time Buffet	
Thurs. 11 <sup>th</sup>	Last Laugh	Claddagh Restaurant & Pub 399 Canal Street Lawrence, MA 01840
Fri. 12 <sup>th</sup>	Hot Sauce	
Sat. 13 <sup>th</sup>	B. St. Bombers	
Thurs. 18 <sup>th</sup>	The Complaints	978.688.8337 www.thecladdaghpab.com
Fri. 19 <sup>th</sup>	Under the Covers	
Sat. 20 <sup>th</sup>	Beyond Pale	
Thurs. 25 <sup>th</sup>	Deziel	\$3 entry on Thurs. \$4 entry from Fri. - Sat.
Fri. 26 <sup>th</sup>	Spike the Punch	
Sat. 27 <sup>th</sup>	Lunch Box	

To appear on this list to advertise your upcoming event, please feel free to contact :

Dairon Skye  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

Cell: 978.397.6175  
Email: daironskye@yahoo.com

The Valley Vibe is the newest addition to The Valley Patriot, where we cover events, interview with artists/bands and everything else across the nation. Great exposure to any band and/or venue, please feel free to receive your FREE consultation on how we can give you the quality that you're looking for!

## Women’s Mixer in Newburyport

Newburyport, MA - A new mixer event for women’s business owners comes to Newburyport’s own Mission Oak Grill Saturday, February 27th. Female business owners will enjoy A Standout Evening of Standup with the 5 Funny Females Comedy Tour while networking with others. The new mixer concept is the creation of Drinkwater Productions.

The night will begin with a special women’s business networking hour from 7 pm -8pm and the 5 Funny Females hosted by Susan Alexander, will take the stage at 8 pm. The comedy show will feature performances by Bethany Van Delft from the Boston comedy festival, Maria Ciampa, Jessimae Peluso, and Chantal Carrere. This is a great opportunity to connect with other female entrepreneurs in various industries while still having a fun night out. “We encourage women to bring plenty of business cards”, says Drinkwater owner, Lisa Knight. “There is a huge increase in women owned businesses in the area brought on by the man-cession we have

entered in this tough economy”, says Knight.

The comedy tour brings a lineup of five women having varied ethnic backgrounds and comedic types. The tour is refined yet quirky. These laugh inducing women show off their unique points of view as they engage the audience with their offbeat life stories and opinions.

5 Funny Females Comedy Mixer is on Saturday, February 27th at 8 PM. Doors will open at 7 PM with the opportunity to network from 7 - 8 PM. There will be a cash bar is available. Mission Oak Grill is located at 26 Green Street in Newburyport, MA. Tickets are general admission and cost \$25. They can be purchased online today at [www.drinkwaterproductions.com](http://www.drinkwaterproductions.com).

*About Drinkwater Productions -Drinkwater Productions LLC based in Exeter, NH, is a full-service event planning and promotions company, working to help its clients realize profits through unique marketing opportunities. To learn more about Drinkwater Productions, please visit [www.drinkwaterproductions.com](http://www.drinkwaterproductions.com).*

## COUCH: FROM PAGE 27


The Tonight Show.

September 14th 2009, The Jay Leno Show premieres. January 8th 2010, NBC execs announce Leno is tanking in the ratings and will most likely return to NBC. And then begins the fight of all fights that brought about the end of all ends. NBC vs. Conan vs. Leno.

The month of January was cold. Announcements that Leno will indeed return to his 11:30PM time slot with The Jay Leno Show thus moving the forever-scheduled-after-the-news Tonight Show to 12:05AM. The Tonight Show, technically airing tomorrow!!! Conan agreed with my sentiments and refused to be a part of NBC’s plot to sully the long lasting tradition that is The Tonight Show. In the end, after all the fighting and name calling, “Mommy and Daddy” finally parted ways. Conan took a 40 million dollar plus severance package and said goodbye with grace and honor. Leno has been rather silent about the situation planning his words and moves carefully. Leading me to believe

that our “local boy done good” isn’t the nice guy he portrays on TV. The fact that he was willing to backstab a close friend to get the job back in 1992 and then again just months ago makes me wonder. Will he win back his fans and/or make new ones? Time will tell. Chin up Jay (pun intended) it’s going to be a rough road ahead.

As for this writer and child of a painful separation, what about me? No one considered the feelings and effects it will have on me, the fan. Forced to choose I suppose I’ll take weekends with Daddy Leno and lend a show of support to Mommy Conan. Will we be a family again? Who knows? Stranger things have happened. All we can do is try to love as much as we are allowed.



Ray Shackett radio veteran and fan of all things entertainment. For questions, comments or suggestions, email Ray at [kidcruise2003@yahoo.com](mailto:kidcruise2003@yahoo.com)

# The Book of Eli

**Ben Flagg**  
VALLEY PATRIOT MOVIE REVIEWER

You might be asking yourselves is The Book of Eli anything like The Road?


The answer to which is a big, resounding, NO! It differentiates with the fact that The Road is somewhat of an epic, lyrical poem. This movie is more of an action movie that maybe takes itself a little too seriously. What I mean by this is that there’s too much action to be taken as seriously as it wants to be, and it just comes off as (dare I say) silly. It just doesn’t know what it wants to be. However, the acting is good, the dialogue is decent, and the action is awesome, which makes this movie pretty entertaining, at least enough to keep you interested until about the last 20 minutes.

One thing this move does have, as I said above, is good acting. This is mainly thanks to Denzel Washington as Eli. Most of the side characters’ are done very well too, with performances by Gary Oldman as the bad guy, Mila Kunis (who I will talk about later), and Ray Stevenson, who turns the classic bad guy’s henchman role into something generally interesting. However, this movie’s worst actor (as I said above) is Mila Kunis, who plays a whiny little girl who’s trying to be a big girl. In my opinion, she is just annoying. She relies on Eli through the entire thing, interrupting his epic quest repeatedly just because she needs help because she REPEATEDLY gets herself in way too deep. I can see how it wouldn’t get to some people (like my mom), but it honestly got

to me, as I think it will with many people.

However, my major problem with the movie is the last 20 minutes. They are so boring, so mind numbing, and just plain jarring that I honestly couldn’t wait to just leave the theater. To top it off, there’s a twist in the movie that makes ABSOLUTELY NO SENSE!!!! The whole reason I liked the first half of this movie was because it was Eli walking around, doing awesome stuff, and just being overall cool. The movie then does the completely wrong thing by making it an escort movie, therefore making him uncool in one fell swoop. It’s hard to explain why this uncoolifies him, it just makes him more of a mentor than a lone wolf warrior. However, the plot is nice and simple, with only that one twist and otherwise being completely straightforward. I can’t even say the plot, because you don’t really figure it out until half way through the movie.

So, in retrospect, this movie wasn’t all that good. Unless you watch it strictly for the acting I guess. The action scenes are okay, but they’re very short and always shrouded in darkness. If you want to see a good post-apocalyptic movie, go see The Road. Or of course, the 1970’s classic A Boy and His Dog (speaking of which, there’s even a poster in the movie about that movie.) So go see it at a matinee, as long as you’re going for the performances.



Ben Flagg is a freshman at Methuen High School. He participates in the JROTC and Drill Team. He also enjoys playing the bass guitar in his spare time.

## DUNHAM: FROM PAGE 26

let, automatic flusher. I look at the side of the toilet, and there’s a little button there that said, ‘manual flush.’ I thought, oh my God, for another dollar, he’ll come flush it for me.”

When Dunham made a remark to Walter about his age, he said, “You’re not too far behind me, and you are gaining on me every year. Staying on the subject, Walter said he looks the same as he did when the show started 20 years ago, and Dunham looks a lot different, and older.

Babbling that the show started off with a young man, and an old man, Walter told Jeff he will eventually pass on, and, “I’ll be on a shelf somewhere. Well, no more nightly prostrate exams.”

Looking at Achmed, Dunham asked if he could tell the audience what happened the week before they showed up in Lowell. Achmed agreed as Dunham let the cat out of the bag saying he was arrested for trying to blow up a store.

“It’s not my fault. The sign said, everything must go,” said Achmed.

Coming on stage, Peanut the puppet sang, “Lo-welllllll, Lo-welllll, yes I love Lowell, Massachusetts.”

Dunham asked what was with all the singing.

“The star of the show always sings,” said Peanut. Peanut went a mile a minute until Dunham calmed him down. “Why are you so rambunctious “Nyquil, and Red Bull,” Peanut replied,


Peanut then went on about going to the dentist for his check up. He said it feels like an interview as the dentist asks you a zillion questions while they are using their instruments

Bringing out Jose Jalapeno, a story about his winter vacation with Achmed, Peanut, and Bubba J was had the audience in stitches. Apparently, Achmed caused an avalanche because he brought a bomb, and thinks he is a workaholic. Jalapeno joked, “We were trapped in the snow for three days.”

Ending the night with Bubba J discussing his favorite sport, Naskill, Dunham was curious as to what the game entitled.

“It combines two of my favorite things, car racing, and hunting. We race around the tracks in our trucks, and we hit the animals.”

Dunham’s show was as funny as any comedy routine can get. It was easy to see why Dunham has risen to national notoriety in the world of comedy and entertainment. Any chance you get to see Jeff Dunham live is well worth the price of admission.



“Shawn Hansen is currently in his last semester at UMass Lowell. He wrote for The Campus Report, and was sports editor. Hansen now writes for the UMass Lowell Connector, the Billerica Minuteman, and the Tewksbury Advocate. To get in touch with Shawn, email him at [Shawn.Hansen.sportsentertainment@gmail.com](mailto:Shawn.Hansen.sportsentertainment@gmail.com).”



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## Salvatore's written into Romance Novel

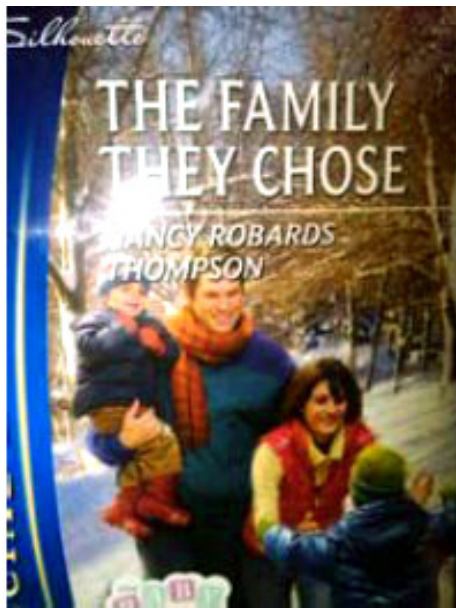
LAWRENCE/BOSTON – Sal Lupoli, President/CEO of Sal's Pizza Retail and Wholesale Divisions, Salvatore's Restaurants and Riverwalk Properties, proudly announced that Salvatore's Restaurant in Boston was written into a romance novel. In the book *The Family They Chose*, written by Nancy Robards Thompson, Salvatore's Restaurant is mentioned within the romantic pages of the book.

"They celebrated with lunch at Salvatore's down on Boston's waterfront. After ordering lunch – Jamison chose the lobster ravioli and her mouth watered in anticipation of their famous salad with gorgonzola cheese, walnuts and green apples..."

Sal Lupoli was quoted as saying "When you work hard day in and day out you never know who is going to end up appreciating your efforts. I'm excited and not a lot of places can say that they have been written about in a novel."

Sal's Pizza has corporate-owned properties in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

The business has close to 40 locations has become a large retail franchise and wholesale operation serving all of New England with additional locations in Cali-



fornia, Florida and Arizona.

Today Sal's Pizza and Salvatore's Restaurants make thousands of pizzas a week! Riverwalk Properties is one of the largest pieces of office and retail space in all of Massachusetts.

## Kid Corner with Morgan Cotnoir

### What my school means to me

School. I wonder what this interesting word means. It might mean happiness or awesome. Or maybe sadness or loneliness. It all depends on who you are. If you could describe it in one or two words, what would you say? To me it means creativity and a time to be with friends. Where we are all equal and work together. One word... Teamwork.

Teamwork: Here is another interesting word. I think it means loyalty, kindness and hard work. It could also help you build new friendships.

Friendship: Another interesting word. I love that word! My two best friends are Natalie and Cassandra. They are my best friends

because they are funny, loyal, smart, and they're themselves. They are not afraid to be who they really are. I'm proud to be their friend. I think they will have very bright futures. Hey look! I found another word.

Future: This word scares most kids out there. When you hear this word, how do you feel? Scared, Nervous or just plain terrified? But I believe that everyone can make their future a happy one. All you have to do is work hard and be yourself. It's easy. Trust me.

These three words are what school means to me: Teamwork, friendship and futures. And I'll leave it at that.

## Stay At Home Dads

### Get your Sex on!

Pete Baylies

VALLEY PATRIOT DAD EXPERT

Another source of tension for at-home dads and their working partners is lack of intimacy. While you may have thought that with the new arrangement there would be less craziness in your lives, it can still be exhausting for both of you. This on top of the fact that she or both of you may be lacking sleep by getting up at night to check on the children or to breast-feed, leaves little time for intimacy. At-home dad Joe Finkelstein said, "Our 9-month old son, Will, is still breastfeeding, there's usually two long breast-feeds at night and then she's pooped. I get resentful sometimes that there is little time and energy on her part for any intimacy."

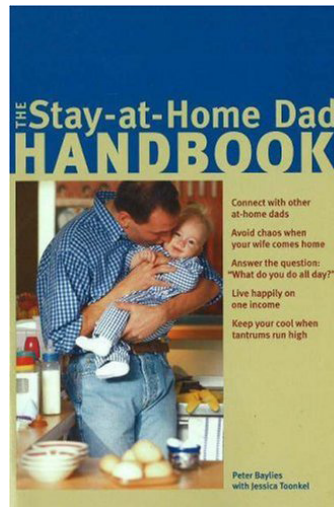
Ted Pena of Syracuse, NY, offers tips on increasing intimacy. "We will take day trips in the van just to get an hour or so that we can talk to each other. Or even talking over the phone when the timing is right. I imagine that we both believe that as the kids get older this will change a bit. We have found a baby-sitter so that we can get one or two nights out a month... but that still leaves the everyday time that a couple of any age needs to recharge their relationship."

Bob Jackson of Denver, an at-home dad for seven years, says, "The first 18 months after having a child your wife may be so overwhelmed that the only

thing she can say "no" to is sex. Don't worry, intimacy will return, and you will slowly start to reconnect as the kids grow older and demand less attention from you. "The circle does come back... it's just that when you are in the middle of it, you just can't see it because you are just so frigin' mad." He recommends regular doses of exercise, and taking regular breaks for yourself.

At times like this it can be hard to keep things in perspective and by talking it through you may not be able to change your current situation, but at least you will understand each other better and that can keep the tension down. In the meantime look at other ways of creating intimacy with your wife.

For example, try taking a massage class. Even if she is too tired for intimacy and sex, you can at least relax her to sleep and create closeness between the two of you. If setting aside time for a class seems overwhelming, set up some alone time for the two of you. Even if it's just once a month, it can act as something for the both of you to look forward to and provide you with some one-on-one time.



Pete Baylies lives in North Andover and is the author of the *At-Home Dad Handbook*, provides free resources for stay-at-home dads at [athomedad.com](http://athomedad.com). E-mail: [athomedad@aol.com](mailto:athomedad@aol.com).

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# Americas VetDogs & Veteran K9 Corps

Tracey Zysk  
VALLEY PATRIOT DOGGIE COLUMNIST

About six months ago when I was doing some research on working dogs I came across this organization that I was immediately taken with:

America's VetDogs Veteran's K9 Corps

Being a proud supporter of police, military and fire K-9, I was totally thrilled as I read what this organization was all about. America's VetDogs is an organization that provides service dogs to our disabled veterans. Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind started their organization in 1946. However, with an aging veteran population and more and more military personnel returning home with life changing injuries and disabilities, they realized they needed to provide additional resources for these veterans. This organization decided not only to offer guide dogs for the blind but they wanted to be able to help disabled veterans with service dogs.

Service dogs help provide an injured or disabled person with the freedom to live an independent lifestyle. Most people with service dogs are able to gain employment,

go the store, travel, and basically live a traditional every day life as much as possible. The dogs help give this person the confidence needed to transition back into society.

VetDog's mission as stated at [www.vetdogs.org](http://www.vetdogs.org)

"Helping those who have served our country honorably to live with dignity and independence whether they are visually impaired or have other special needs, by using guide dogs, service dogs, and innovative technologies"

The Need to Generate Awareness for America's VetDogs:

Thomas P. Staudt, chairman, America's VetDogs: "The impact that a VetDog has on improving the quality of life for their disabled veteran is profound. But the need to provide more support dogs to a greater number of disabled veterans is even more profound. Getting the word out to a disabled veteran whom you may know is in need of creating greater awareness that such a support program as America's VetDogs exists is important for each of us as concerned and involved citizens. We

must do what we can for these deserving men and women who have given so much for their country."

As an American I thought to myself, what a beautiful gift to give to the one's that fought so hard for us. Massachusetts and especially the Merrimack Valley have several of our family members and neighbors enlisted in the military. We all know someone who has returned or is currently overseas. We have or will know a veteran who will be injured. Why not help them for helping us. If you know a veteran that may benefit from a service dog please reach out to America's VetDog for further assistance. If you would like to make a donation you may do that by going directly to their secured website.

Tracey Zysk, owner of Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care in North Andover MA is a local pet care professional. She has been featured on local radio, tv and newspapers educating the general public on animal care and animal health & wellness. Tracey is a proud supporter of Police, Fire & Military K9 units. Tracey may be reached at [wigglewalk@comcast.net](mailto:wigglewalk@comcast.net)



## Come to the Lowell Humane Society and take us HOME!

>>>**Yoda** - Hello, I'm Yoda, and I'm a handsome 3-year old pointer mix. I've had a rough start on life. My previous owners never really wanted me and they showed it in the way they treated me. I'm very skittish at first of new people and in new situations. But I'm a very smart boy who's willing to learn, and in the right home, I will be a great dog. I would be happiest in a home with another dog and quiet, gentle owners who will give me the time and will help me build my confidence. I'm very active, so a fenced-in yard is a must! I'm wonderful with other animals, including dogs and cats. Just spend some time with me, and you'll see I'm a love.



>>>**Chester** - Hi there! I am an adorable young bunny who is looking for my forever home. My siblings and I were all born here in the shelter and have spent the last 2 months in a wonderful foster home until we turned into the cute fluffy faces that you see! I'm young and curious and energetic and would make a great pet!



<<<**Azul** - Hi, I'm Azul, and I'm a beautiful Siamese boy who is about 2 years old. I'm very handsome and laidback and sweet. I was found and brought to the Humane Society, but I seem to be an indoor-only cat who just got a little lost. Now I'm looking for my new home. I'll be a great companion, so if I'm the kitty for you, come adopt me!

Looking to do something special for the Lowell Humane Society? You can donate pet items that will assist us in caring for the thousands of animals who pass through our doors each year. Your support is greatly appreciated! The Lowell Humane Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization which receives no local, state or federal funding. Your donations are tax deductible and will greatly impact the lives of the animals we care for. For more information on volunteering or making a donation to The Lowell Humane Society contact Community Outreach Coordinator Chris Arnott at 978-888-4770 or [chris@lowellhumanesociety.org](mailto:chris@lowellhumanesociety.org). For a full list of adoptable animals visit their website at [www.lowellhumanesociety.org](http://www.lowellhumanesociety.org).

Contact Chris for details at (978) 452-7781 or [chris@lowellhumanesociety.org](mailto:chris@lowellhumanesociety.org)

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# Animal Relief Coalition for Haiti

Tracey Zysk

VALLEY PATRIOT DOGGIE COLUMNIST

When a massive 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti near the capital of Port-au-Prince on Tuesday, January 12th life not only changed for every man, woman and child on that island, it also changed for all the animals.

Family pets, livestock, wildlife and strays not only lost their homes they lost their owners, their shelter, and their food supply and clean water. These animals were left to literally fend for themselves.

As the entire world watched this event unravel, emergency rescue, non profits, and volunteers immediately started to help with the search and rescue of the hundreds of thousands of people buried alive. But what about the animals...

In past disasters (hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquakes) I have been asked over and over by people, how can I help the animals? Can I help the animals? Should I help the animals? Shouldn't I be donating to a fund for people instead of animals? I feel guilty not helping the animals but shouldn't the people come first? As I have told people before and will continue to say: Donate where you feel you will make the most impact. Help is help and both animals and humans need our help! For me my forum is animals. I am most effective in that area.

Haiti is known for its large stray, wildlife and livestock population which is estimated at over 5 million. It also has countless numbers of family companions,

all of which now have become homeless.

Several animal organizations have joined together and formed the Animal Relief Coalition for Haiti (ARCH)

Some of the organizations that are collecting donations for ARCH are the following:

- \* Best Friends Animal Society  
www.bestfriends.org
- \* International Fund for Animal Welfare  
www.ifaw.org
- \* Humane Society for Animals  
www.humanesociety.org
- \* World Society for the protection of animals: www.wspa-usa.org

Your donations will help to provide: food, water, vaccinations, medications, and supplies. Let's help to prevent the spread of diseases and to help the critically injured livestock and family companions.

Unlike other disasters, this earthquake happened to an entire country. All of these animals have now become displaced and with the high death rate they will probably never be reunited with their families. Not only are they homeless, they truly need our help.

Tracey Zysk, owner of Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care in North Andover MA is a local pet care professional. She has been featured on local radio, tv and newspapers educating the general public on animal care and animal health & wellness. Tracey is a proud supporter of Police, Fire & Military K9 units. Tracey may be reached at wigglewalk@comcast.net



Luis Carrillo, PT, CCRP is helping Buddy with his water exercises at Good Dog Aquatic Fitness located at 29 North Main St, North Andover

## Canine Rehabilitation & Hydrotherapy at Good Dog Aquatic Fitness

Tracey Zysk

VALLEY PATRIOT DOGGIE COLUMNIST

Buddy, Buddy, Buddy ...everybody loves Buddy. He is your typical happy go lucky, friendly and cuddly golden retriever. Like most goldens Buddy loves to play ball, go for walks and sit and beg for treats. Buddy is one of my dog clients and it is very common to see us running around Hickory Hill having play dates with all the other dogs in his neighborhood.

However in late September of 2009, Buddy's owner JoAnn Cooperstein noticed Buddy was limping on his right front leg. After a series of tests and a second opinion the conclusion was Buddy had premature closure of his distal ulna physis.

Basically, what this means is one of the bones of a two-bone segment may grow at a slower or faster rate than the other bone. This will cause a disruption in the growth pattern making one bone to overlap or to not grow long enough to connect properly with the other bone.

Once the diagnoses came in, there was no question Buddy was going to have to have surgery to straighten his leg.

This is referred to as distal ulna osteotomy and distal radius osteotomy. To put it simply...the vet shortened the joint in Buddy's leg to help it grow properly.

This required Buddy to rest and relax and to wear a cast for the next six weeks. Once the cast was removed it was time for therapy.

As a pet owner your nerves are always a little on edge after your dog goes into surgery. Will the surgery help, was it successful, is there permanent damage, will he recover and most importantly what do I do now for my dog? These are all common questions that swirl through the owners mind. But what does one do next?

HYDROTHERAPY...yes, Canine Rehabilitation Hydrotherapy is the next step in the recovery process. When JoAnn was telling me about the surgery I immediately said "No worries after his cast is off go to Good Dog Aquatic Fitness. It's a complete rehabilitation center for canines and it is located right in North Andover." I gave her their brochure and website and recommended she speak to her vet about a referral. Buddy has now started his treatments at Good Dog.

But what is Hydrotherapy? Hydrotherapy is the use of water to help pain-relief and treating illness. This is mostly used for pre or post surgery recoveries. The mission for Good Dog Aquatic Fitness is to provide skilled rehabilitative services in a dog-friendly environment. Their goal

is to assist in a speedy recovery and to improve the overall quality of life for your dog. They offer hydrotherapy in a heated spa, specialized exercises in a doggy gym and canine massage.

Luis Carrillo, owner and Certified Canine Rehabilitation Practitioner develops individual curriculums for each dog to include conditioning programs to build strength, endurance and increase mobility and function, while reducing pain and inflammation.

But why are treatments done in water? The benefits of swimming and moving in water on the canine body is that the water supports and lessens stress on the joints, and encourages freer movement which helps the Canine Rehabilitation Practitioner work more effectively with the dog.

Who should inquire about treatment? After consulting with your veterinarian, a client will seek canine hydrotherapy for reasons that include geriatrics and arthritis, paralysis and other mobility issues, pre and post surgical rehabilitation, injury prevention and rehabilitation, helping obesity, dysphasia, increasing body awareness, balance and coordination, and to help fitness and muscle development.

How long are the treatments? Well, that depends on the type of treatment needed but on average the sessions are approximately 45 min and the dog may need to 4-6 sessions.

For further information on Good Dog Aquatic Fitness please visit [www.good-dogaquatic.com](http://www.good-dogaquatic.com)

And most importantly how is Buddy doing?

On Friday January 22, 2010 Buddy went back to his vet to have the plate and seven screws removed. Once his incision heals he will head back to Good Dog Aquatic Fitness to finish up his rehabilitation treatments. By spring of 2010, Buddy and I once again will be running through the streets of Hickey Hill and enjoying those play dates with all the neighborhood dogs. It's been a long winter and everybody misses Buddy!



Tracey Zysk, owner of Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care in North Andover MA is a local pet care professional. She has been featured on local radio, tv and newspapers educating the general public on animal care and animal health & wellness. Tracey is a proud supporter of Police, Fire & Military K9 units. Tracey may be reached at wigglewalk@comcast.net

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PUPPY LOVE! with Kate Whitney

Tips for pet safety, please use common sense

Kate Whitney  
VALLEY PATRIOT PUPPY COLUMNIST

Hi Everyone!  
A quick thank you to those of you who have sent in donation checks to help my rescue, One Tail at a Time! Also, don't forget to check out **Evenfall Restaurant in Haverhill.**

*They were kind enough to run that special ad in the paper (buy 2 entrees and get \$10 off or donate it to One Tail at a Time). A big thank you to them and a huge thank you to everyone who chose to donate their \$10 savings to the rescue!*

This month I wanted to talk about pet safety.

I had a very unfortunate experience driving back from work a few weeks ago. It was nighttime and as I was traveling home through side streets I noticed some

stopped cars and commotion up ahead. There was a lady standing in the middle of the road, I could tell immediately that something was not right. I suddenly saw a little dog running towards me and another, a black ball of fur, motionless in the middle of the road.

Whenever I see a dog running in the road, my reflexes take over and immediately put my car in park and I jump out.

I ran over to the frightened little dog and scooped him up. Thank god he was safe; unfortunately I couldn't say the same for his little friend. I then had to tell the owner, a woman who came running down her driveway after the two dogs, that one of her dogs didn't make it. Her scream sent chills through my body and stuck with me for the rest of the night. Having to tell someone that their dog has passed away is something I never want to have to do again, and I hope none of you ever have go through that. So why am I telling you this true story? I want to remind you how important safety is. It is something that



always has to be in the front of your mind. If you have kids, you know you are always looking out for them, safety is first. Well the same should go for your dogs. Make sure they are secured each time you open the door. If you have a fenced yard, check and make sure all doors and gates are closed and locked. One mistake can lead to a terrible accident, like the one mentioned above. So please, remember safety at all times. Also, if you ever come across a situation like this, don't panic. If you have a towel, blanket, or sheet in your car, put that over an injured dog before you pick it up. When dogs are scared, they might lash out so always remember to protect yourself first. If you are uncomfortable helping, call for help.

Make sure your home is safe place for a pet. Although your dog appears to be very smart, he is about as smart as a toddler.

He's going to be curious and explore, and he needs you to make sure that nothing he can get into will harm him. Something to think of: expect the unexpected. Something that has always made me nervous when I go to other people's homes is when I see a dog jumping on a glass door. Maybe he wants to go out or come in, but jumping on a door, especially glass, could lead to trouble. Train your dog to not jump but instead ring a bell or bark if he wants to go out or come in.

Please make sure that your dog is prepared when he goes outside. He should always have on his collar and ID tag. In addition to wearing a collar, my dogs are microchipped. This is another great way to protect your dog. If he runs off or gets stolen, a microchip can't fall off or be taken off by someone. If you take your dog for a walk, please make sure to put some type of reflector on him and on you. I can't tell you how many times I've passed people walking their dogs and I can barely see

them! Wear reflecting clothing and carry a flashlight.



PHOTO: COURTESY

**The Valley Patriot's PuppyGirl, Kate Whitney with Zoey, the latest of Kate's foster puppies and Honey, Kate's newest adopted puppy. Zoey has been adopted by her new family in Melrose. Please adopt a shelter dog in the new year! For more information you can email One Tail at a Time at [onetail@comcast.net](mailto:onetail@comcast.net)**

Some foods that you should NEVER feed your dog: chocolate, grapes, raisins, fruit pits, rotten/moldy food, chicken/fish bones, or fat. Keep an eye out for signs that a dog has eaten something poisonous. Signs include vomiting, drooling, difficulty standing, seizures, or having difficulty standing.

Make sure to keep certain flowers and plants away. Things like poinsettias, azalea, and daffodils should not come in contact with your dog. Of course don't let your dog near antifreeze, fertilizers, pesticides, paint, bleach, or medications. When you clean your toilet remember to put the seat down! You wouldn't want to have cleaning solution in there and have your dog go take a drink.

Some dogs like to "counter surf." This means they put their front paws on the counter and look around for anything they can grab. If your dog does this, be very careful about what you leave on the table. Pens, food, glass, etc. should all be kept in safe places. Also, be careful of the stove. If he smells something yummy cooking on the stove, make sure he doesn't decide

to "surf" up there or else he's in for some very painful burns on his feet. To protect your dog, keep him out of the kitchen while you're cooking. That is a sure way to avoid accidents.

Lots of dogs like to chew cords. Keep computers, lamps, vacuum cleaners, etc. unplugged when not in use. That way if your dog decides to chew the cord, they won't get electrocuted. Dogs can choke on lots of things. The best idea is to make sure your floor is clear of "stuff" like toys, shoes, food, bags, cans, etc. I've decided that in the near future I am going to take a dog CPR class. Look online to find out when there is one near you. I want to be prepared if anything ever happens.

I hope you find these tips helpful! Safety is very important not only in our lives, but also for our dogs. I hope you and your four legged friends have a very happy and SAFE February and beyond.

*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 [Kswingrite@aol.com](mailto:Kswingrite@aol.com)*

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After seeing that their primary exit path is blocked, the teacher immediately redirects the children to their secondary exit.

# The Edge Hair Salon

The ladies of The Edge Hair Salon at 222 Merrimack St., Methuen, not only read The Valley Patriot but they keep it in stock. Need a hair cut? A perm? Coloring? You'd be crazy not to have these ladies working on your hair! Check out The Edge Hair Salon across from New England Seafood on Rt. 110 in Methuen.

Mention The Valley Patriot and get a special discount on your hair cut, perm or coloring!



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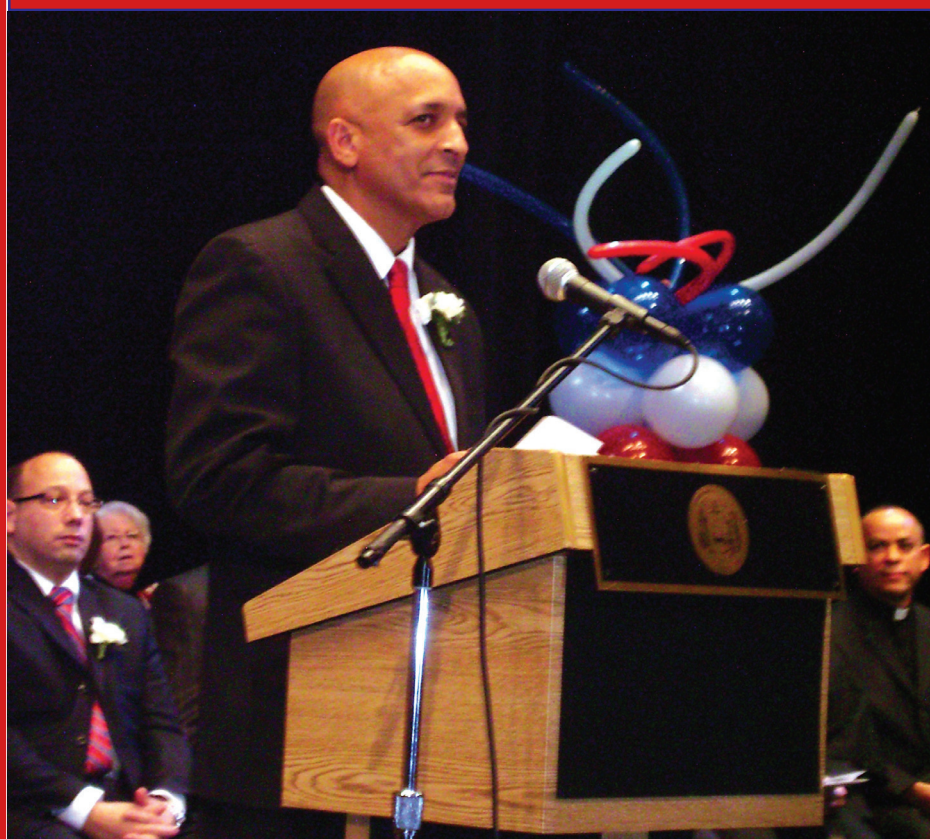
# **Laborers' Union**

## **(LOCAL 175)**

# **Proudly Congratulates**

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# **Willie Lantigua**



**Methuen Mayor**

# **Billy Manzi**

**When the Merrimack Valley needs leadership, great men like Willie Lantigua and Billy Manzi step up to the plate and do what others refuse to do..... LEAD! Congratulations to William Manzi on his reelection as Mayor of the City of Methuen and Willie Lantigua on his stunning victory as the newly elected mayor of the City of Lawrence. The Laborers Union, local 175 is proud to have endorsed both Lantigua and Manzi before the election and are convinced both men, working together, will make Lawrence and Methuen better places to live, work and visit!**

**-Mike Gagliardi,  
Local 175 Laborers' Union of North America**

# From the Desk of Methuen Mayor William Manzi

**William Manzi**  
METHUEN MAYOR AND VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Thanks to the Valley Patriot for giving me an opportunity to outline some of the priorities for our city. In the next few months there will be some pretty exciting things happening. Here are just a few.

Methuen High School - Our Building Committee has worked hard and diligently to move this process forward. On our current schedule we should be prepared to present schematic design to the Massachusetts School Building Authority at their May meeting. If approved by the M.S.B.A my Administration will present to the community a finance plan that will detail how we will pay for this renovation/expansion. For Methuen, and especially for our students, there is not a more important project. Our high school is an "open concept" school, with little or no separation between classes. Due to its age our science labs are badly outdated, and despite its size the changing nature of how we educate our children has presented us

with space problems as well. The City has been told that our accreditation is at risk due to this infrastructure, and we need to modernize it now. Our Building Committee has made it quite clear to our design team that we are looking for cost effective solutions that emphasize classroom instruction. On that basis we will produce a schematic design that emphasizes instruction and the creation of an infrastructure that allows our school administration to create the best environment for learning. The entire Building Committee deserves our appreciation, but I would especially like to thank the Chair of the Committee Suzanne Lamoureux. Without her leadership this process could not have come this far as quickly as it has. She has given countless hours of her time, and has made sure that we have stayed focused on the



goal at hand. Thank you Suzanne! Our Building Committee meetings are on the second and fourth Tuesday of every month in City Hall, and the Building Committee has a page at the City's website at [www.cityof-methuen.net](http://www.cityof-methuen.net)

The Budget - The Governor has filed his budget recommendations, and they contain some relatively good news for our City. Governor Patrick has recommended that general local aid be level funded, and that Chapter 70 (school aid) be increased so that each community in Massachusetts be brought up to "foundation" level. This proposal is better than most expected, and it is my hope that the Legislature will find a way to at least keep the local aid portions of the Governor recommendations intact. Level funding the city side of local aid still presents us with huge problems with

fixed expenses going up substantially, but the Governor has also filed pension legislation that would help cities and towns by extending the full funding schedule to 2040. That should help by dropping our annual contribution substantially, allowing us to put more resources into maintaining critical services. The Governor is to be commended for looking to help municipalities. I urge all those concerned with the maintenance of those services to lobby your legislators to keep the Governor's local aid recommendations intact.

We continue to work on economic development projects as well as city infrastructure, and I hope to bring some good news on both fronts in future columns here at the Valley Patriot. If you have any questions or concerns please give me a call at 978-983-8505, or email me at [wmmanzi@ci.methuen.ma.us](mailto:wmmanzi@ci.methuen.ma.us) or visit my blog at [www.billmanzi.com](http://www.billmanzi.com)

## Methuen's Residency Enforcement Policy

**Kenneth Willette**  
METHUEN SCHOOL-COMMITTEEMAN

The Methuen School Committee votes every year at a public meeting against offering a school choice program within the district. Therefore, it is critically important to review and strengthen the current district policy relative to investigating, identifying and removing any out-of-district student not presently authorized to attend our public schools. It is also practical and cost-effective to seek out tuition reimbursement from those families that are directly and legally responsible for sending their out-of-district students to our schools in the first place.

This policy mandates that every family or individual that is sending a student to the Methuen Public Schools must provide proof-of-residency documentation to their school site administrative office by September 1st of each new school year. The current list of acceptable documentation that families of new student enrollees are required to provide will also serve as the necessary documentation for all remaining students attending our public schools. In order to save costs for both the district and the families and individuals sending students, the Superintendent shall develop a method to allow families and individuals to return residency documents along with other information normally required every summer before a new school year begins.

The Superintendent shall send out a timely notice every summer warning parents and guardians relative to the residency enforcement policy. The notice shall provide a brief summary of the goals of

the policy; enclose a list of acceptable and mandatory proof-of-residency documents; highlight a deadline of September 1st every year for the submission of acceptable copies of documents to the school site administrative office where a student is assigned; and give prominent publication to the legal and financial penalties associated with violations of the policy, including the issuance of tuition billing statements and the exact dollar amount for a full school year of tuition. The acceptable documents shall reflect a recent three-month window of time to ensure that submitted documents are relevant, accurate and valid.

Each school's administrative office shall receive, review and maintain proof-of-residency records for every assigned student. Any family failing to provide the acceptable and authorized documentation by September 1st shall be reported to the Superintendent for follow-up investigations. The Superintendent shall send out written warning letters to these families, informing them of the requirements of the residency enforcement policy to submit proof-of-residency documents or else be obligated to pay full tuition billing statements. Parents and guardians shall have the right to appeal the warning letters and the submission of full tuition billing



statements to the Superintendent, but only insofar as to confirm proof-of-residency. In the event that parents and guardians acknowledge that their student is attending the school system as an out-of-district student, they will be given one business week to remove that student from the school system or automatically be responsible for paying the tuition bill for the full school year. The Superintendent shall provide an annual written report to the School Committee at the first meeting of September that provides a total number of students for which families failed to provide sufficient documentation, and gives an overview of his/her efforts to send out warning letters and tuition billing statements.

The Superintendent shall also establish a hotline for the purposes of allowing for confidential calls regarding out-of-district students not currently authorized to attend our public schools. This hotline shall be advertised on the school district channel and website, and shall be included in the Superintendent's summer notice to parents and guardians. The Superintendent shall provide a monthly report to the School Committee based on the following tracking information:

- 1) How many calls were made to the hotline providing concrete and verifiable

information (vehicle identification, specific bus stop, etc?)

- 2) How many calls with concrete and verifiable information were investigated by the Superintendent or his/her designated party?
- 3) Based on the results of the investigation, how many students were found to be in violation of the residency rules?
- 4) If an investigated case is found not to be in violation of the residency rules, the Superintendent or his/her designated representative shall provide a written summary of how the investigation was conducted without identifying the complainant or compromising the privacy of any party being investigated.

Upon final approval of the residency enforcement policy, the Superintendent shall take every reasonable step to promote the policy language and goals via the school district channel and website, through notices and flyers sent homes to parents and guardians, through outreach to PTOs and other school based organizations, and through official press releases to area media outlets.

The main goal of the residency enforcement policy is to ensure that every parent, guardian and student is abiding by the School Committee's vote not to participate in school choice within the district. A direct and positive result of this residency enforcement policy may be an overall cost-savings to the district and a subsequent reduction in class sizes, which should be encouraged and welcomed by all staff, faculty, parents, guardians and Methuen taxpayers.

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## POLITICALLY ACTIVE IN METHUEN



## It's wake-up time for politicians everywhere. Can you hear us now?

Jamie Atkinson & George Scione  
METHUEN COLUMNISTS

The message was sent by the people of Massachusetts for the people of a great nation on Brown Tuesday. That's Jan. 19, 2010, for anyone who's been in a cave the last few weeks.

If it wasn't loud enough then, it's going to be a bloodbath for incumbents (Democrat and Republican) in the next round of elections.

Massachusetts voters - led by those classified as un-enrolled - made it clear that the time for backroom deals, earmarking and political games is over.

With the election of Republican Scott Brown to a United States Senate seat held for decades by Democrat Ted Kennedy, nobody can justify ignoring the people and continuing on the same path.

Of course, there are some who will try, and those are the first ones gone when the people hit the ballot box again.

What some politicians don't get is that they work for us. Just as we have to answer to our bosses at work, they too must answer to us - their bosses. To deny us the right to question them, evaluate them, or check on the progress of campaign promises is a big mistake they can no longer afford to make.

That's why what took place at Mann Orchards in Methuen on January 26 was important. For those who have not yet caught on, our radio program Politically Active (heard every Tuesday from 10 a.m.-noon on WCCM 1110-AM) is pushing transparency and accountability for the elected officials across the State and more specifically in Methuen.

On January 26 our program held a live-remote broadcast from Mann Orchards to discuss the budget process of Methuen (both city and school side) and the state.

The panel of politicians - State Senator Steven Baddour, State Rep. Linda Dean Campbell, Methuen Mayor Bill Manzi, Methuen School Superintendent Dr. Jeanne Whitten, Methuen West District Councilor Jim Hajjar and Methuen School Committee Vice-Chair Robert Vogler - joined us for an open forum on the budgeting process.

Methuen residents packed the Mann

Orchards cafe to hear these elected and appointed officials discuss the difficulty of dealing with skyrocketing healthcare and pension costs and offer ideas on fixing the process and avoiding similar pitfalls down the road.

Residents also had the opportunity to take the microphone to ask questions and interact with the panel.

There was no sugar-coating by anyone in the building, and that's just the way we like it.

This process is about being open and not hiding from the constituents that put you in office. Most of Methuen politicians seem to understand that. However, there are still some that seem to be caught up on petty issues or unresolved grievances with other officials that they can't seem to understand this is about the community and the people living in it - not their own insecurities or grudges.

There is hope that those individuals will see the past for what it is, and move forward to better the community we all live in. If that doesn't happen, nothing - despite all our best intentions and efforts - will get the job done.

That's why we at Politically Active are in the works to expand our live-remote forums to cover the most important issues to Methuen and the State.

In the coming months, we'll open the door for residents and politicians to discuss issues ranging from the Methuen Charter to the renovations of Methuen High School.

It is important our voices are heard and that those we elect know how we feel on the issues most important to this community. As for the state and national landscapes, we here in Methuen and the Merrimack Valley played a big role in sending the message home of transparency and accountability it doesn't matter what your party affiliation is - game over.

Jamie Atkinson and George Scione are hosts of Politically Active radio (Tuesday's 10 a.m.-noon on WCCM 1110-AM) and TV (Monday 7:30 p.m. and Tuesday 9:30 a.m. on MCTV Comcast channel 22, Verizon channel 33). They can be reached for questions or comments at [politicallyactivebroadcasting@yahoo.com](mailto:politicallyactivebroadcasting@yahoo.com) or 978-372-0720.

## Methuen SOAR Award

In January we had two SOAR Award winners. Congratulations to Michael Norcia for his outstanding student record, and his very substantial academic achievements.

Michael is a member of the National Honor Society, Art Honor Society, and the History Honor Society. Michael also tutors Methuen High math students at the high school on his own time after school. He is a member of the Methuen High School Outdoor and Indoor track teams, and is currently a cap-



tain of the Indoor Team. Michael is a member in DECA, and in April of 2009 he participated in the Leadership Development Academy at the International Career Development Conference in Anaheim, California.

Reason(s) for Recognition: At last, but certainly not least, Michael was awarded a full tuition Academic

Scholarship at Merrimack College for his winning entry in the Science, Technology, and Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) competition.

## HEROES: FROM PAGE 25

the RMV system, Crane recognized a similarity with surveillance photos of the bank suspect. With the help of the F.B.I. Bank Robbery Task Force, a warrant was obtained and the suspect was ultimately arrested in Dorchester. The palm prints and other evidence resulted in indictment and conviction and this person is now serving his sentence. The Department is pleased to recognize the professionalism and collaboration exhibited by its officers and by Special Agent Cronin in the prompt conclusion of this case.

Patriot Ambulance: Patriot Ambulance recognizes EMTs Krista Cote, Christopher Leavitt and Kristy Pappas for their life-saving, life-restoring response on Decem-

ber 14th at 6:21 PM. At that time a "911" call reported an unresponsive 18 year old male who had collapsed after playing handball. Upon arrival, they found Lawrence Police Officer Jeff Malenfant applying CPR. Quickly assessing the patient's condition, the team employed the Automated External Defibrillator and shocked the patient's heart into a life-sustaining rhythm. His heartbeat and breathing were restored. Subsequently, he was transported to Holy Family Hospital and later, Med-Flighted to Mass. General Hospital. He walked from the hospital two weeks later. The entire Patriot's team is proud to work with EMTs Cote, Leavitt and Pappas.

## Hero Lawrence Police Officer Christopher Bussey Exchange Club Police Officer of the Year

Lawrence Police: Lawrence is proud to honor Officer Christopher Bussey whose quick action and clear thinking resolved a potentially deadly situation in the early hours of November 1st. At about 1:40 AM auxiliary Chief Jay Jackson reported that shots had been fired near the "Auto Zone" at Broadway and Cross Streets. Thanks to his careful description of a van speeding away toward Manchester Street, Officer Bussey was able to identify the same vehicle seconds later and his request to pursue it was quickly granted.

Bussey was calm and controlled as he reported the pursuit, which ended shortly just off Current Hill Road where the van collided with grave-stones. Here, damage to the door forced the suspect driver to exit from the passenger side. Officer Bussey illuminated the scene with his cruiser and stationed himself at the rear passenger side of the van where he could observe without being seen by the driver or anyone still in the van. From there, he ordered the suspect to get on the ground, which he did after running back and forth in a panic.

Officer Bussey waited for backup and then, safely secured the suspect while the van was being searched. The search revealed a 40 caliber Glock pistol on the driver's side floor.



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN



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RONNIE’S RANTS

Random Thoughts

**Ronnie Ford**  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Now I don’t claim to be an expert on the Lawrence City Charter.

Neither do I know all the facts in the Lantigua / Sweeney battle, as Will Rogers once said, “all I know is what I read in the papers.”

So far at this writing, my friend and yours Willie DA Chief Lantigua, is heading down a road that will serve up a delicious plate of chaos and mismanagement. And, an increase of individual hate that will spoil the efforts needed to straighten out the City of Lawrence.

“The Queen City of the Merrimack Valley”, come on Willie, you are better than that! The first Hispanic Mayor of the great City of Lawrence, has an obligation to the people. Let go Mayor, be a winner!

Drop the ill feelings and put in the minds of the people that Willie is going to win for the city. Get a better “think tank” to surround you. Make your political moves after we are at least on a non bumpy road. Then you can truly answer the phone, this is da Chief, friend of the people.

\*\*\*\*\*

Salem, New Hampshire has a 9 % meals tax, Andover has a 3 or 4 % cut of the meal tax. Methuen has none, (hold on) the council is going to propose guess what? Yup a tax on meals, this will go to the City of Methuen. The proposal will bring in \$230,000 to \$300,000. Good Idea? Let us know and your councilor know. See what happens

\*\*\*

The State of New Hampshire wants to put up tolls in Salem on route 93. This would be very detrimental to the citizens of the town. To avoid paying the toll, people would use routes 38, 28, Howe and Hampstead streets in Methuen to get to Bridge and Wheeler Avenue clogging the already congested roads. The Salem Board of Selectman are against the toll and that is good. The Salem Representatives need

to step up to the plate and start doing their jobs. New Hampshire has a representative on almost every corner, (like drug stores and banks).

Do we hear anything from them? They cannot have gambling at Rockingham Track to help alleviate the taxes and the burgeoning school budgets because the Yankees in the top of the State do not want it. They will not want tolls leading to the Lakes Region either.

The tourists you know! Salem is at the bottom of the State and gets dumped on all the time. Put it in Salem, not in our back yard, they cry!

So New Hampshire legislators take a lesson from Massachusetts and start doing the people’s business. Let us hear you!! Be you Republican, Democrat or Independent, you can and will be replaced if you do not start fighting for the rights of Salem citizens. Be hefty, hefty, not wimpy, wimpy.

\*\*\*\*

I think it is disgraceful when our National Anthem is played or sung at sporting affairs, that the players are very disrespectful. Most of them stand there looking like dumb idiots, their hands everywhere but over their hearts. Smarten up guys! Kids look up to you! If you don’t respect the flag and what it stands for, they won’t either. Start showing some class!

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

Ronnie may be reached at radiotalk@comcast.net



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

The Merrimack Valley Irish Connection

The Quiet Man Cottage

**Jack Doyle, County Sligo**  
VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST COLUMNIST

The village Cong in County Mayo is where much of the Quiet Man movie, starring John Wayne and Maureen O’Hara, was filmed. (Anyone that’s over fifty years of age can remember this award winning movie.) Situated in one corner of the village, the quaint little white Irish cottage with its Irish laced curtains is a tourist’s “must see”.



As you enter the cottage you are taken back to the memories of many an Irish country men and women; of a time when Ireland was run by the church and men ruled the land. While inside the cottage I could see the bedroom door where John Wayne echoed the words, “There will be no locks nor bolts between us Mary Kate only those in your mercenary little heart”. The furnishing of the home was that of vintage Ireland with everything set in the kitchen with its open fireplace.

Most of the props from the movie were still there, the old bicycle that was used by Barry Fitzgerald, the old kitchen table with the cups and saucers still in place, memories of a long gone era. You can hear “Isle of Innisfree” (the movie’s theme song), echoing through-out the building as you take in all the memories of the past.

About fifty yards past the cottage is a small bridge spanning a river where you can spread your legs out and be in County Mayo and County Galway at the same time. I did.

distance outside the village is magnificent Ashford Castle, perhaps the most dramatic castle in Ireland.

I was astonished by all the Irish history around this little village. Ashford Castle dates from the 12th Century, and you are permitted to stroll around the grounds to get a feeling of what Ireland was like hundreds of years ago. \*Cong Abbey founded in the early 7th century, by Saint Feichen, the abbey was destroyed by fire in the early 12th century. Turlough Mor O’Connor, High King of Ireland, re-founded the abbey circa 1135. His son Rory O’Connor, the last High King of Ireland before the Norman Invasion, constructed new buildings and also lived the last 15 years of his life at the abbey, dying in 1198. The monastery adopted the Augustinian rule some years later. \*Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. Thanks to the people that sent me emails concerning my column. Keep them coming.

Also, there is an authentic famine house nearby and the ruins of an old abbey right in the town. Adjacent to the abbey, you will find a path along the river where you can stroll through one of the loveliest forests in Ireland. And, best of all, a short



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 Patriot contact: Jack5772@comcast.net

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# NOTEBOOK: FROM PAGE 19

efit for the Methuen MSPCA on Friday evening, April 30th, from 6 to 9 p.m. Hosted for the fourth year in a row by the Essex Art Center at 56 Island Street in Lawrence, the tasting will also feature an art show of works by over 20 Merrimack Valley artists.

In an effort to build on last year's successful event, which had over 350 attendees and raised more than \$10,000 for the Nevins Farm, the event this year will be even bigger and better. We've expanded the space this year to include Chester's (which is right next door through the courtyard) giving us more space for attendees, artists, food and of course wine and beer! As usual the event is jointly sponsored by Essex Art Center in Lawrence and the owners of Andover's Shawsheen Village Liquors, Michael and Sheri Helman and Whole Foods Market Andover.

**LAWRENCE - The Lawrence General Hospital Auxiliary** is having a Half Price Sale at their Thrift Shop from February 2nd - February 12th. All merchandise in the store will be half price. Don't miss the bargains! All proceeds benefit the Lawrence General Hospital Auxiliary. The Thrift Shop is located across the street from the hospital, at 1 General Street, Lawrence MA - enter by lot 2. Store hours are Tuesdays - Thursdays 10am to 2pm, and Fridays 10 am to 3 pm. Please call me if you have questions! 978 397 2476

**ALABAMA/NORTH ANDOVER, Trib Supports \$35MIL loan** - The Eagle Tribune, (which is headquartered in Alabama) seems to have a split personality these days (or maybe they are just hypocrites?) On the one hand, they are ripping Lantigua apart and exposing him and his administration as corrupt hacks who are using the city payroll to get revenge against their enemies and give patronage jobs to their friends. But then, on the other hand they wrote an editorial supporting Lantigua's quest for a \$35 Million bailout by the state with no fiscal controls and no fiscal oversight. Now, I know that editor Al White has made two deals with Willie Lantigua (da chief) and he is bending over backwards to kiss Lantigua's ass. But come on! Lantigua called the Tribune a racist newspaper and was quoted in Siglo21 saying that the "anglo" newspaper is out to get him because he is Latino. Seriously? Exactly what are the people at the Tribune thinking? This House Bill 4421 bailout plan will only give Lantigua and his cronies more power to screw their enemies and when it's over there will have to be another bailout when the 2011 budget comes up in June. On a personal note; The board of directors of the Valley Patriot want to thank ass-kisser Al White for taking a stand in favor of

Lantigua getting \$35 Million of your state tax money. It has destroyed their credibility and shown that they care more about making political deals than being the watchdogs for the taxpayers. Looks like we are now the only game in town!

**LAWRENCE - Mayor Doesn't File Finances** - As if there weren't enough shenanigans going on in Lawrence, State Rep and Mayor of Lawrence Willie Lantigua (da chief) has still not filed his campaign finances due the first week of January. Last October Lantigua never filed his campaign finances at all before the primary, as required by state law. He then missed the deadline for his November filing, violating state law again. He did eventually file his forms before election day but now that he is in the mayors office, hasn't yet bothered to file his year end reports. So, why does Willie think he can get away with breaking the law that everyone else has to follow? Well the person who is responsible for investigating and fining candidates for breaking such laws is Secretary of State Bill Galvin. The same Bill Galvin who helped Lantigua kill the voter ID bill a few years ago and the same Bill Galvin whom Lantigua has endorsed and campaigned for in previous elections. Maybe Martha Coakley will pick up the ball and investigate... oh wait... Lantigua supported Coakley too and even let her use his Essex Street campaign office for her senate campaign. SO when people ask, why does Lantigua get away with things and nobody holds him accountable... just look at his friends and who is protecting him.

**ANDOVER/LAWRENCE Republican Jamison Tomasek** officially announced his candidacy for the office of Senator in General Court, Second Essex & Middlesex District. Mr. Tomasek says he is running to bring change to the status quo in the Massachusetts State Senate. "Only with more balance in the legislature will anything change about the way government operates in Massachusetts," he said. Tomasek said he believes he is qualified for this position because the state's fiscal problems require a person that can understand complex financial issues. He is a CPA and currently works as the director of internal audit for a company in Chelmsford. "I am not a professional legislator like most of incumbent Democrats," he states. "These times require a numbers person, a person who is by temperament frugal and has views on spending money more aligned with the electorate." Additionally he adds, "as a CPA I am held to a very high ethical standard. I will bring those requirements of my profession to this position."

**BOSTON - Join the American Cancer Society** at its fifth annual Key

Gala beginning at 6pm, Thursday, March 4, 2010 at Boston's newest entertainment venue, the House of Blues. This year's event, themed "Hope is in the House," benefits the AstraZeneca Hope Lodge Center in Boston, a program of the American Cancer Society. Or join us beginning at 9pm for a Late Night Party at a special price perfect for Boston area young professionals interested in supporting the cause and enjoying an evening of live entertainment. In its first year, the Lodge, located at 125 South Huntington Avenue in Jamaica Plain, has provided free temporary residence to more than 700 cancer patients and family members who have traveled to Boston from 35 states and five countries for cancer treatments not available at home. Thanks to generous financial contributions from donors, organizations, foundations, and events such as the Key Gala, guests and caregivers have received 14,500 nights of free lodging and 4,000 rides to and from treatment appointments, saving them more than \$1.6 million in hotel and travel expenses. Proud sponsors of the 2010 Key Gala include: gold sponsor Dana Farber Cancer Institute and silver sponsor Arbella Insurance Group Charitable Foundation. For more information or for tickets, contact Caitlin Bell at 508.897.4323 or caitlin.bell@cancer.org or visit [www.cancer.org/boston-keygala](http://www.cancer.org/boston-keygala).

**NEWBURYPORT - Healthy Heart Torch** - From Saturday, February 13, through Saturday, February 27, heart disease survivors, elected officials, community volunteers, and professional runners will be carrying a special battery-operated Torch between Newburyport, Newbury, Rowley, Georgetown, West Newbury, Salisbury, and Amesbury. In keeping with the spirit of the Olympic athletes gearing up for the Gold in Vancouver, The Tannery Marketplace is introducing Lace Up & Shape Up, a weight-loss challenge for a healthier heart, to begin with the Healthy Heart Torch tour, and to end in May, with weigh-ins and rewards along the way. For heart disease survivors in your town, or for the Healthy Heart Torch artwork, please contact Jennifer Karin, 978-771-3435, [publicrelations@ajh.org](mailto:publicrelations@ajh.org)

**NORTH ANDOVER - Congratulations NAHS musicians**

Senior musicians John Baylies (Tuba) and Tess Sammartino (Alto) have been chosen to perform at the 2010 All-State Music Festival. Having received all-state recommendations at the Massachusetts Eastern District auditions in December, Baylies and Sammartino auditioned for the All-State Band and Chorus respectively on January 23, along with three other

North Andover High School musicians - Ben Barker, John Baylies and Scott Chamberlain. Selection to the All-State Music Festival is one of the highest honors any high school student can achieve in music. Approximately 1000 students representing over 250 public and private Massachusetts high schools auditioned for the MMEA All-State Music Festival, of which about 450 were selected for the honors band, orchestra and chorus. The NAHS students will be attending rehearsals on March 18-19 at the Boston Seaport Hotel. The festival will culminate in a gala concert at Symphony Hall, Boston on March 20, 2010. The All-State Music Festival is held in conjunction with the Massachusetts Music Educators Association Annual In-Service Teachers Conference.

**North Andover - High off "warning" status** -Principal Carla Scuzzarella reports that she "has received word unofficially - a letter will arrive later in February - that the warning designation for high school accreditation has been lifted in all 3 areas by the NEASC as a result of our Two Year Progress Report.



**METHUEN - City Councilors are schizo** -Last week, the Methuen City Council voted to change how the mayor makes board appointments. These are unpaid appointments that need to be confirmed by the council. The council voted 6-3 to bar elected officials from serving on city boards for one year after leaving office. Because this is a charter change, it

requires a second reading and vote at the next meeting, so it is not law yet. Then, right after the vote, the council voted 5-4 to appoint former City Councilor Debbie Quinn to the planning board. (Quinn was not re-elected in November).

Huh? Didn't the council just argue and take a vote against such appointments. The rationale behind the Quinn vote was that it was not law yet. So, either you are taking a vote on principle or not. Well, I am glad Debbie got the vote and what I see is a council chipping away at the Mayor's authority and limiting his powers. Many of these councilors are the same ones that publicly favor term limits but will continue to run until term limits are in place.

Schizo or hypocrites? You Decide.



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 from 10am-1pm. You can email your comments to [Tdugjr@aol.com](mailto:Tdugjr@aol.com).

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# Advice for our veterans from the American Legion

**John Lenotte**

VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

Congratulations to Scott Brown, our newest United States Senator.

And to Martha Coakley for a good campaign. But even more so to the 2 million plus citizens who went out and voted. Our system continues to work.

Keeping the glass half full, I prefer to think that the real winners are the citizens of Massachusetts who spoke their mind, no matter which candidate they voted for.

But all does not end with this or any election. There are many issues on the table for the US Congress. One major issue for veterans is that of VA benefits.

The American Legion web site reports that: The consensus was clear Jan. 20 when Rep. Bob Filner, D-Calif., hosted a roundtable discussion in Washington with The American Legion and about 40 other veterans service organizations: the staggering backlog of VA disability claims and appeals must be substantially reduced in 2010.

"Beyond that, our key issues cover a spectrum of concerns," said Steve Robertson, director of The American Legion's Legislative Division. "We're addressing - as we always have - the welfare of all veterans." While the claims backlog is the

Legion's top legislative concern, it has other priorities as well, including calling upon Congress to work with VA on health care for women veterans, timely access to quality rural health care, and homelessness among veterans and their families.

"Our agenda doesn't end there," Robertson said. "We favor enhancements to the new Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, such as expanding benefits to those in vocational schools. That should be part of the package, as well as some financial tweaks and enhancements."

The American Legion is also pushing for more veteran's employment opportunities and training in a time of serious economic downturn. The Legion sponsored or co-sponsored 100 job fairs for veterans last year and continues to press for legislative changes that would facilitate the hiring of more veterans.

In a written document given to Filner's committee before the roundtable session, The American Legion outlined a proposal that would allow VA to bill Medicare and Medicaid for the health care of veterans enrolled in those programs. Robertson said the Legion is also urging Congress to continue and expand long-term VA health care for veterans.

In his written remarks to Congressman Filner, Robertson stated, "Mr. Chairman,

The American Legion knows the time challenges facing you and your colleagues in this Second Session of the 111th Congress, but it pales (by comparison) with the real-life challenges faced by veterans and their families."

To assist veterans, The American Legion has just launched an online tool to help veterans and their families learn more about what benefits are entitled to them. This is available at this website: <https://www.legion.org/benefitscalculator>. Included in this information will be how to contact a department service officer who can assist the veteran and their family. Also included is a list of documents you will need to provide the service officer.

Last but not least, current Legion events will be broadcast on the internet. More American Legion events and activities than ever before will be streamed live on [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) this year. The Commander's Call at the 50th Annual Washington Conference kicks off the schedule on March 2 from Washington, D.C. Also new this year will be live webcasts from American Legion Boys Nation and portions of the 92nd National Convention from Milwaukee.

This schedule includes: The 50th American Legion Washington Conference Commander's Call, Grand Ballroom

Washington Renaissance Hotel

March 2, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. (EST). National Commander Hill and some of the nation's top elected officials are scheduled to address Legionnaires during the Commander's Call portion of the conference.

The American Legion National Oratorical Championship University Place Conference Center, IUPUI Campus, Indianapolis April 11, 10 a.m. (EST). The final round will be streamed live for the third year in a row. To see winning orations from 2008 and 2009, visit [www.legion.org/legiontv](http://www.legion.org/legiontv) and click on "Oratorical Contest."

As I noted in last month's issue, The American Legion is not about a member's lounge or as some would call a "bar". It is about the many programs that are sponsored, promoting issues like veterans benefits, national security, Americanism along with children and youth programs.

May God Bless America and the troops who defend our way of life.



*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](mailto:JohnLDistrict8@verizon.net)*

## DAV helps prepare for death and its' aftermath

**Susan Piazza**

VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

Death finds most of us unprepared. I write this column with a heavy heart; I have just read of the untimely death of one known throughout the veteran's community.

Though not a veteran herself, Barbara DesRoche was probably familiar to anyone who went to a DAV meeting, visited, or attended a function at the VFW or American Legion. Our condolences go out to her family and loved ones. We are sorry for their loss. Though this article is not directly about her, it is directly about the topic of death - preparation for it, and the VA's assistance with its aftermath.

Normally I begin the year discussing documents needed to prepare for the inevitable, this year other subjects took precedent. Now is a good time to revisit this issue. This column will be in two parts. This month will deal with paperwork needed, next month will cover the benefits and burial rights the VA can supply.

To access benefits your survivors must have access to your paperwork. It needs to be in a secure location, one safe from fire or theft. If a safe deposit box works for you then your loved one needs to know the location of the key; they may also need to be a signature on said box.

The following is a list of important documents that should be completed

and made available for your loved ones.

Veterans all know that they need to have their discharge papers (DD-214, DD-215, or for World War II veterans a WD form) in a place accessible to whomever will handle matters once the veteran is deceased. These papers as well as a copy of the veteran's marriage certificate, birth or adoption papers of any child, and/or the veteran's birth certificate are necessary to establish eligibility for veteran benefits, survivor benefits, and/or dependent benefits. Any award letter given by the Veterans Administration should be kept with these papers.

The award letter shows whether a disability rating has been established, whether it is service-connected, and the percentage of disability. Different or additional benefits may be available for service-connected veterans.

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

Advance Directives The Department of Veterans Affairs uses this umbrella term for two types of documents, the "Durable Power of Attorney," and the "Living Will". Many VA facilities stock these papers so ask for one when you go to your next appointment, or check with the social worker for assistance. They will even help in filling out these papers.

According to the VA, the Durable Power of Attorney for health care is used

to appoint a person you trust to make your health care decisions when you are unable or unwilling to do so. Remember, these documents are only activated and used when the person for whom it is written is unable to make his or her own decisions. Changes to these documents can be made at any time.

The VA states that its Living Will "lets you state in advance what kind of care you would want or not want if there comes a time when you cannot make these decisions for yourself". Decisions regarding life support, under what conditions one wishes ones life maintained, or not maintained, etc. are all matters that someone may need to decide for you one day. It is better to have your wishes on record than to trust in a stranger, or the court to make these difficult decisions for you.

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

One important piece of estate planning that is often overlooked is the obituary.

Many veterans, especially combat veterans, are adverse to discussing wartime experiences, and with good reason.

Do not push unless you are 100% sure that pushing is the correct method, you may make a bad situation worse by insisting someone who is not ready to remember do so. Not all experiences blur with time. I have seen too many WW11 veter-

ans open up; one can see the horror they witnessed by looking in their moist eyes. Your intent is to find out how they wish to be remembered, not open old wounds.

Ask them to write something down about their life, their educational background, work experience, etc. sometimes mundane experiences make the more difficult ones easier to recount. Also remember to ask about any service organizations they belong to. And when the veteran passes contact that organization (DAV, VFW, Am Legion, etc.).

These organizations normally attend the wake and/or funeral, will perform a ceremony (with the families approval), and in many cases bestow a certificate or other memento to the family.

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

Next month we will focus on the compensation and burial benefits due veterans or their survivors.

May god protect our service men and women, here and abroad. And may god bless this great democracy, this United States of America. Until later, I remain, Sue Piazza, Past Commander, Chapter 2 Queen City, DAV



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



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## AHERN: From page 1

is clearly at the heart of this family. Bob lives in Stoneham, Massachusetts with his wife Eileen and their three daughters: Riley 16, Shannon 15 and Karrin 13. Bob had planned on attending a special event honoring Medal of Honor recipients that was to be held on September 14th, 2001. We all know how devastating September 11th turned out to be that year, and the event was rescheduled until later in October. Bob says he was deeply moved by the patriotic speeches, and one in particular about the ongoing plight of our homeless veterans caught his attention. He fell asleep that night thinking about it.

When he awoke the next morning he suggested to his wife that they should host their annual Saint Patrick's Party at a hall instead of their home and charge a fee to donate to the homeless veterans. His wife agreed, and she was thrilled to not have to do the dishes and all the clean up. That is when his vision came to life. Bob went to the Montvale Plaza in Stoneham, Massachusetts, and explained what he

was doing. The staff there thought his idea was great and told him to expect about a hundred people. The hall that could hold three hundred was filled to capacity, and he raised \$10,000. The year following the start of the war in Iraq Bob moved the growing fundraising event to the Burlington Marriott. He then filed for non-profit status making the "Ahern Family Charitable Foundation" official. During his second and third years he was raising \$40,000 and selling out the 500 seats. By the 4th year he once again had to find a larger hall-- the Quincy Marriott. Now in its ninth year, attendance reaches six hundred and is a jacket and tie or military dress occasion with dinner and dancing as well as guest speakers. This year Bob has two Medal of Honor recipients being flown in to speak at the event: Tom Kelley, Secretary of Veterans Affairs who served in the Vietnam War and Tom Hudner who served in the Korean War. They were both in the Navy.

Each December Bob also hosts a



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## The Ahern Family Charitable Foundation



**Fighting for those who fought for us...**

The Ahern Family Charitable Foundation (AFCF) was formed in November of 2001 as a non-profit organization. The AFCF is registered in Massachusetts with the Secretary of State and the Attorney General's Office. It is also classified as a 501 (c) 3 charity under the Internal Revenue Service, tax ID #06-1661229. The foundation's mission is to raise money and awareness for those veterans past, present and future who may be in need.

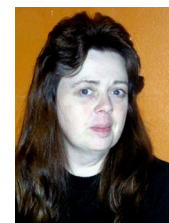
Through our fundraising efforts we have been able to assist the many brave men and women serving our nation. Our goal for 2010 is to raise and donate \$40,000.00 for military support organizations who assist our troops directly. In the past we have supported such organizations as the Fisher House Foundation, Friends of National Guard and Reserve Families, Homes for Our Troops, Local Heroes and the New England Shelter for Homeless Veterans to name a few. To date, we have raised and donated over \$275,000.00 for our veterans and military families.

The 9th Annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner Dance will be held on March 20, 2010 at the Marriott Hotel in Quincy, MA. As in past years the foundation is expecting 600 + guests. We will be providing our guests with a program. Within this program there will be ad spots for business owners to purchase and show their support for our troops. The ad spots will be business card, half page and full page sizes and can be purchased for twenty-five, fifty and one hundred dollars respectively. There will also be a page dedicated to corporate sponsors who donate \$1,000.00 or more. A Medal of Honor sponsorship for \$2,500.00 includes a table of ten at our St. Patrick's Day Dinner Dance, a full page ad in the program as well as a full color logo on the back cover. Also included is a private reception before the dinner for your table of ten with the Medal of Honor Recipients and other VIP's.

If you would like more information about our foundation and the event please go to [www.ahernfoundation.org](http://www.ahernfoundation.org)

smaller family style event called "Operation Ensuring Christmas" at the Bostonville Grille in Lynnfield Massachusetts. This Army / Navy event offers a football type luncheon where kids can play video games while parents socialize. The money raised provides gifts to military families having difficult times financially. As Bob points out many who are called up for duty leave behind jobs where they were earning as much as \$1000 a week and now on active duty may only be making \$1500 a month. This leaves a lot of stress on the families, especially in the current economy. Sacrifices are truly made all around. The foundation spreads its funds around each year helping out various military organizations here in New England-- from homeless shelters to groups that send care packages overseas to our currently deployed troops. This year's event will be on March 20th and tickets are available for a donation of \$75 each. Booklets are also

printed in which businesses can advertise. The main organization that will benefit from this year's event will be The Fisher House in Boston Massachusetts. Some of the funds will support "Local Heroes of Wilmington," "Pack It Up" of Boston, and "Helping Our Troops" of Stoneham. All donations of any size are always welcome. For tickets to the events or if you wish to advertise you can contact Bob at 1-617-212-1508 or you can visit the website at [www.ahernfoundation.org](http://www.ahernfoundation.org). Bob's motto is simple and to the point, "Fighting for those who fight for us."



*Terry Crow Mercier is the Director of Activities At Colonial Heights Care and Rehab-where she has worked for many years. You can email Terry at [mike3433@msn.com](mailto:mike3433@msn.com)*

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