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JULY, 2010
VOLUME 7, ISSUE 7

THE VALLEY PATRIOT

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

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PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

Lawrence firefighters (and police officers) say Mayor Lantigua targeted them for layoffs and refused to cut other areas in the budget to save their jobs. Fire Chief Murphy says he's been specifically targeted to be fired for criticizing Mayor Lantigua's obsession with depleting the ranks of the Fire Department. Lantigua laid off 23 firefighters and 25 police officers last month, as well as demoting 12 superior officers.

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July Road Race and
Parade

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PHOTO: TOM CHRISTIANO

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VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

Fred Kuehn - WWII

Gary Mannion

VALLEY PATRIOT HERO COLUMNIST

During WW II, many young men and women answered the call to serve their country. They did so whole heartedly, never dreaming the impact their generation would have on the future of the world. Fred Kuehn was one of them.

His generation was a different kind of generation; it has been called the "greatest generation". Fred claims that "perhaps we were a great generation, but other generations have been also, and so will other generations to come." In 1943, Fred Kuehn joined many of his fellow Americans in the armed services. He was drafted

and eventually became a member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Although Fred had previously tried to enlist with the Army Air Corps, his hopes were crushed when it was determined that he was color blind. In all of his disappointment and anger, he said: "If they don't want me, then they can come and get me." And they did; soon after he was drafted into the United States military.

Born in Lawrence, MA, Fred grew up in the Prospect Hill district of the city. He attended Lawrence High and was a member of Christ Presbyterian Church. The

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EDITORIAL

Obama's Oil Spill

For more than 80 days, millions of gallons of oil have been billowing into the Gulf of Mexico. And for 80 days President Obama has done absolutely nothing to take control of the situation.

We agree with Obama's blind defenders that he cannot put on a cape, fly to the gulf and personally plug up the leaking pipe(s).

But, since he is President of the United States and his political party controls both houses of congress, we reject the excuses that he is incapable of doing anything to clean up the oil, protect the coastlines or stop the spill from continuing.

President Obama could have declared a national state of emergency on the first day of the spill and put the full weight and force of the federal government behind stopping the spill, cleaning up the oil and building jetties along the coast of Louisiana.

He could have taken the responsibility of investigating the spill away from BP so that they could not cover up their misdeeds. He could have sent the Army Corps of Engineers to try and plug up the whole instead of letting the culprits continue to bungle along while they try to "recover" more oil instead of plugging the hole.

Yes, there is a lot Obama could have done (and could still do) to minimize the damage to our environment, protect our coastline and take action! Yet, President Obama is doing what he has done with every major issue facing America in the last two years... NOTHING. He has held meetings, he has held press conferences, he has walked on the beach with his pleated pants but ... for more than 80 days he has not lifted one finger to make the situation better for the people of the Gulf Coast.

Just imagine if President Bush had been in charge and he was allowing a Halliburton oil rig to spew millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf every single day!

Environmental groups would be calling for his impeachment as would most in the new media and every so-called environmental activist would be demanding action, accusing Bush of being completely and totally responsible.

Yet, so-called environmentalists are strangely silent with President Obama in charge. These are the same people who have claimed for decades to care about our fragile ecosystem and demanded government action (force if necessary) on everything from protecting rare slugs living in streams, to solving the global warming... er, global cooling... er, global climate change problem.

It is time for President Obama to stop having meetings, stop playing golf, stop having super-soaker fights on the lawn of the White House and start acting like the environmental president he promised us he would be.

President Obama needs to immediately waive all permit restrictions for businesses and states trying to clean up the spill and prevent it from destroying the very delicate waterways in the Gulf Coast.

He needs to start walking the walk... for we have had enough of him talking the talk and not backing it up.

News tips

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

Letters to the editor, columns and op/eds

can be submitted to valleypatriot@aol.com. The Valley Patriot is not responsible for the opinions expressed in submitted letters or columns. It is the policy of The Valley Patriot not to edit or exclude submitted material based on content.

Corrections; Please contact the editors at valleypatriot@aol.com

The Valley Patriot is not responsible for, nor do we necessarily share the opinions of columnists and contributors that are published in the paper. Columns, by definition are opinion pieces.

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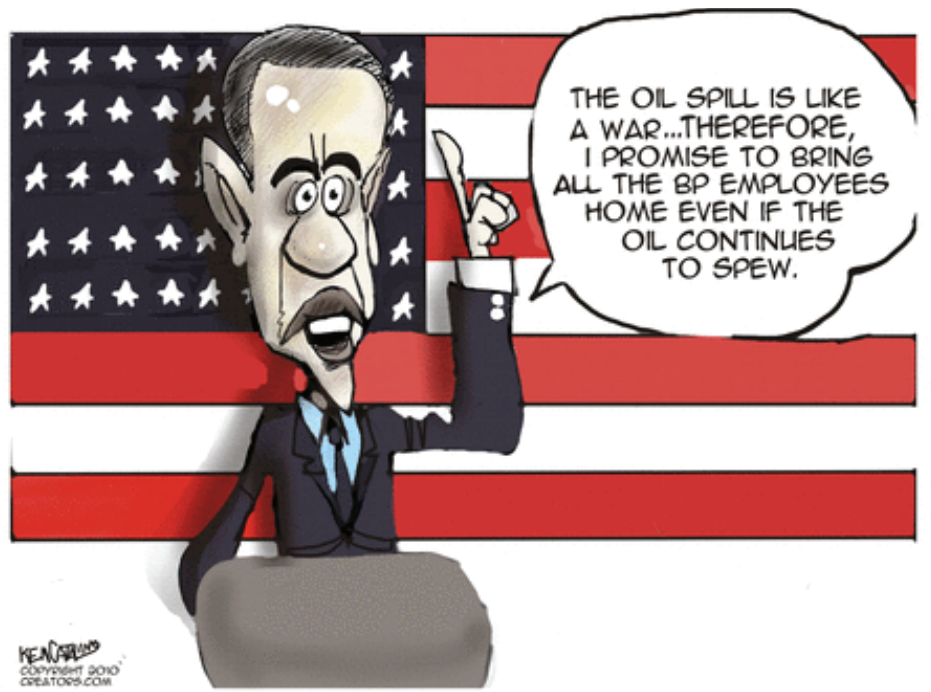
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An Open Letter to State Rep. Dave Torrisi

First and foremost I want you to know that I agree that the illegal immigration problem is a layered and complex one that will require a layered and complex resolution. No simple amendment will cure this problem and I agree that a "one size fits all" approach will also not work. However to state that Rep. Perry's motives were simply to score cheap political points is wholly misleading – it is my understanding that he has brought this forth for the last three years....but I digress to what I really wanted to speak to.

In your letter you speak to the jobs that illegal immigrants are willing to do but Americans are not willing to do. Sorry to throw your words back at you but that statement was simplistic and moronic. That argument is used all the time (same as illegal means illegal) and to be honest I see it as a lame liberal line to denigrate hard working Americans.

David you know what I do for a living....I have spent almost 20 years in the affordable housing arena so I have been up close and personal with folks just trying to scratch by. I work with families who literally survive because Mom serves coffee at Dunkin Donuts or changes linens at the local Hampton Inn. Those extra dollars pay for the kids to participate in sports or other activities they otherwise would not be able to. Sometimes those nickels and dimes afford these families a few of life's luxuries...like food on their table or a new pair of sneakers for the

kids. Oh and yes these folks are AMERICANS who are MORE than willing to do those jobs!

My father was forced into early retirement from Wang Labs the summer before I started college. What did he do to ensure I would still be able to have a college education? He opened a CLEANING COMPANY and he cleaned those office buildings in the middle of the night many times with my mother by his side all the while employing AMERICANS who were grateful to have the job. Needless to say but I am proud of the fact that my folks literally cleaned toilets to give me a better future. You can bet if needed I too would clean toilets if it meant the possibility of bettering my son Cameron's life. And yes I am an AMERICAN.

Were you aware that our good friend Phil also has spent a lot of time in office buildings cleaning them while he was in college? Yup that's right Phil did the job too that Americans won't.

I am not blaming any one group for America's ills – there's way too much that ills us to blame one group and I again state that the illegal immigration issue is a complex and layered one but I implore upon you to take a step back and really open your mind to other views.

It's not only the illegal immigrant that wants to live the American Dream.....AMERICANS do too.

Thanks,

Tracy Watson, Chairman North Andover Board of Selectman



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Tea Party 101

Christine Morabito
MERRIMACK VALLEY TEA PARTY

With new Tea Parties popping up all over the state, there is no question that the message of limited government strikes a chord with a great many Bay State residents.

An enthusiastic group of American patriots is forming right in our own backyard with the emergence of the Merrimack Valley Tea Party.

We represent Republicans, Democrats, Independents and Libertarians who are concerned about and wish to change the direction of our country.

Because we threaten the political status quo, the liberal elite are desperate to marginalize and demonize us. Perhaps we should feel flattered that they think we're that important.

Ironically, we have been called an angry mob, radical right-wing extremists, astro-turf and--my personal favorite--racist. And those are just the nice names! But despite all the petty name calling from the left, if you spent any time at all with Tea Party folk, you might be surprised how polite, normal and mild mannered we are. The rhetoric is an attempt to shut down debate and intimidate people from joining us.

Luckily, these attempts have failed and our numbers continue to grow. Informed citizens know there is nothing radical or racist about what the Tea Party stands for:

- * Limited Government
- * Free Markets

- * Free Speech
- * Individual Liberty
- * Personal Responsibility

The Tea Party has become an outlet for many people who would otherwise have no voice. It offers hope to those of us who have suffered in silence while our poor, neutered Constitution lies crumpled in the corner.

For many of us, it has been an amazingly liberating experience to "come out" as conservatives.

So, if you're sick and tired of working like a farm animal, yet keeping less and less of what you earn, come join us at our next meeting. We promise, you'll be in good company.

We have an exciting several months ahead as we seek out and help to support conservative, constitutional-minded candidates to replace the out-of-touch incumbent politicians who have made our positions of honor into places of profit.

Our Tea Party does not endorse specific candidates. Instead we invite them to speak to us (regardless of their party affiliation) about their positions on various issues. Armed with that knowledge, we are then free to decide who will best represent us. We are having an enormous impact on the mid-term elections. This is just a warm-up for November!

Coming events:
Merrimack Valley Tea Party Meeting—Wednesday, July 14th
Guest speaker: Chip Faulkner, Ex-

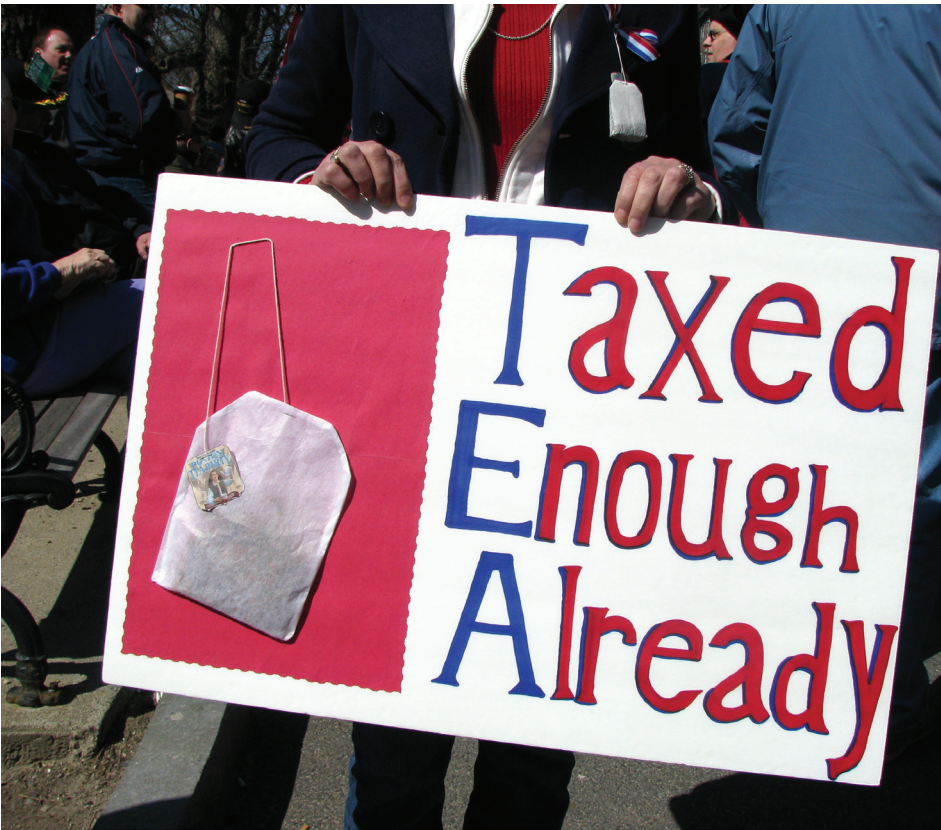


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For more information, feel free to contact us: Mike Mosca: 978-681-1890 moscam@msn.com. Ted Tripp: 978-725-6509 tripp@gis.net. Dan Lanen: 978-857-7555 danlanen@yahoo.com

"The people are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty"— Thomas Jefferson

Merrimack Valley Players Proudly Presents:

Noises Off by Michael Frayn

Directed by: Chad P. Dow – Lawrence, MA

Dates: Friday, August 13, 2010 at 7:30 PM

Saturday, August 14, 2010 at 2:00 PM & 7:30 PM

Venue: Rogers Center for the Arts, Merrimack College Campus, 315 Turnpike St. North Andover, MA 01845, Tickets: Reserved Seating, Evenings: \$20 for Adults* and \$18 for Seniors / Students, Matinee: \$18 for Adults* and \$15 for Seniors / Students \$3 discount for all tickets purchased before August 1st. Contact: Phone: (978) 914-5384, E-mail: tickets@mvplayers.org, www.mvplayers.org.

Noises Off, depicts the onstage and backstage antics of Nothing On a dire sex farce. Act one shows the dress rehearsal of Nothing On the night before it opens, and nothing is going well. In act two we see and hear the first act of Nothing On from backstage, one month after the show opened. The third act takes us back to the first act of Nothing On, the show now near the end of it's ten week run. The actors attempt to cover up a series of mishaps but only compound the problems and draw attention to the bungling performance.

Produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.,

Cast Members: Rachael Cina - Londonderry, NH, Dave Cunningham – Lowell, MA, Jeffrey Kucukistipanoglu –Methuen, MA, Matt Mattox – Pepperell, MA, Heather Price – Tyngsboro, MA, Beth Sousa – Tewksbury, MA, Ken Vining – Somerville, MA, Glenn Wakeley – Andover, MA, Jaimie Winkler – Somerville, MA

Police, Merchants Association, & Woodridge Homes sponsor:

National Night Out 2010

Richard M. Stanley
NORTH ANDOVER CHIEF OF POLICE

The North Andover Police Department, Neighborhood Crime Watch, Woodridge Homes and the North Andover Merchants Association will be sponsoring "National Night Out 2010" (NNO) for all North Andover residents. NNO 2010 will be held on Tuesday August 3, 2010 at the Hayes Stadium behind the North Andover Middle School, from 6:00-8:00 pm.

Last year's event was a complete success, with a large number of residents attending. Attendees had the opportunity to view police vehicles, fire apparatus and equipment, as well as police and fire personnel. Children were given rides by police officers on police department ATV's. This is great opportunity to have pictures taken of your family with public safety officials.

Information about municipal departments and programs will be available. North Andover Youth & Recreations Services will once again be offering games and face painting. There will be a barbecue with hot dogs, hamburgers, snacks and soft drinks. A chef from a local restaurant will oversee the grill with the police officers serving the public.

While the generous donations by some of our local businesses were much needed and appreciated, we are looking to expand the event to include all businesses from throughout town. We would like you to set up a table or booth. We request you offer items related to your business such as discount coupons, vouchers and samples. This

is a great way to advertise and promote your business. No sales can be made as this is a totally free event.

We are looking to have a wide range of businesses present giving residents an opportunity to experience all the Town of North Andover has to offer. Hopefully this will assist in keeping a good amount of business within our community. We ask that you, as a business owner get involved in this event and to help make it even a greater success than NNO 2009.

This will be the 27th anniversary for National Night Out, which supports the Neighborhood Crime Watch initiative for crime and drug prevention.

The program is designed to heighten awareness, and generate support and participation in anti-crime programs. It strengthens neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships. Most importantly a message is sent to criminals letting them know that the neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

The North Andover Police Department is in its 7th year of National Night Out involvement. With the recent success of our Neighborhood Crime Watch program, we have elected to go ahead with a town-wide celebration. Our Crime Watch members and Block Captains have been very responsive in suggestions and volunteerism.

Please email our Crime Watch Unit at crime-watch@napd.us or contact Program Coordinator Lieutenant Paul Gallagher pgallagher@napd.us at (978)683-3168 with any questions or ideas that you may have and to advise us of your interest.



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Congratulations Carol for a Wonderful 32 years

Tracey Zysk

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Year after year Main St North Andover, the core of our community has worn many different faces. It has seen a series of changes from growth and expansion, to economy downfall and empty store fronts, to most recently a surge of remodeling and redevelopment.

But one thing that has never changed is Carol's Pet Care. Carol Farrington not only has been in business

the longest of all the grooming salons in town, she is one of the longest standing businesses on Main Street. Recently, she just celebrated 32 yrs. and all those years have been in the heart of our community. MAIN ST. This is an amazing accomplishment for any business and defiantly a great achievement for a sole proprietor, female business owner.

Tucked away in an ally next to the fire department and behind Mal's Barber shop it may not be a place you would easily see if you were driving downtown however, her clients have no problem finding her. I asked Carol about her location and as she said, "I have been here for years, people know where they can find me and I am very flexible in my schedule to them. I am on my third generation with many clients and I have just started my fourth generation with a few too."

When I was interviewing Carol, I asked her how she has managed to remain and grow year after year. Competition is tough and there are groomers everywhere, even the major pet stores have grooming services available. How does one compete with

that? Carol responded that she focuses on quality not quantity. Her goal isn't how many dogs she can push through the door in a day but taking the time to get to know her clients individually and grooming their dogs to their liking. "Because I take

the time to get to know each client one on one I believe it helps me provide a cut that the owner will be very happy with." Looking at Carol's bulletin board of heart felt thank you letters; it is obvious she really takes

that one on one time very seriously with each client.

One of Carol's biggest supporters is Fire Chief Andrew Melnikas "Carol has been grooming my dogs for over twenty years....starting with my having golden retrievers and now the switch to the Welsh Corgis. She gives all dogs a personal touch and having groomed them for probably most of their lives, my dogs, at least, view her almost like part of the family. I would not take my "boys" anywhere else."

Selectman Tracy Watson and Board of Director of the North Andover Merchant's Association put it quite simply "For the businesses of Main Street that have had decades of success shows that their devotion and dedication to our community has rewarded them with the devotion and loyalty of our community to their businesses." Carol, once again, Congratulations on a very successful 32yrs and hopefully many more years to come.

Carol's Pet Care is a full grooming salon located at 126-128 Main St and she may be reached at 978-794-0744



Bailey's Legacy

Tracey Zysk

VALLEY PATRIOT DOGGIE COLUMNIST

On June 13, 2010 Treadwell's Ice Cream at Smolak Farms, North Andover held their 3rd Annual Dog Day Festival. Having attended this event each year as a vendor, I am the first to tell you this is a wonderful day for your family, friends and of course your pooches.

Dog vendors line the field with a variety of dog related products, food and treats, clothing, groomers, pet care businesses and veterinarians. Almost anything dog related is available to purchase and there are several activities for your dogs to participate in too. Bring your dog along for a nice and relaxing dog massage and a quick nail trim then purchase a bag of home made organic dog biscuits. You can also get your dog micro chipped. Your dog will be in complete heaven. Pamper your pooches - They deserve it!!

But how did the Dog Day Festival come about? Actually it is a great day in honor of the belated Bailey Fitzgerald. Who was Bailey and what is Bailey's legacy? Well, it is a simple but beautiful story...

When Treadwell's Ice Cream found a new home at Smolak Farm's in the spring of 2007, Jackie Fitzgerald's first golden and the love of her life "Bailey" had passed away at the age of 13.

Treadwell's always had an MSPCA donation canister and had always felt strongly that the MSPCA would be the organization that Treadwell's tried to support in anyway possible. Jackie and her business partner Jerri Roberts decided after Bailey's passing they wanted to do even more to help others that have animals with extenuating medical issues. As Jackie has stated, because of her Bailey's medical conditions, "Bailey was the million dollar dog." For that reason they decided to open

up a fund in Bailey's name at the MSPCA that would dedicate all money donated to "Angels for Animals." This fund benefits animals with serious medical issues and it helps provide the money needed to pay for those specialized medical care treatments that can become quite costly.

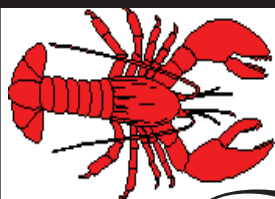
Jackie and Jerri were brainstorming ideas of other ways to raise money for this fund and they came up with "Bailey's Legacy" This is a doggie ice cream dish for your pup. A small amount of low fat vanilla soft serve with a few mike bone dog treats on top. All proceeds of this item go directly to the MSPCA/Bailey's fund. In addition to the dog dish they decided that their new location would be the perfect place to share their love of dogs with others. Knowing that Smolak's is a great venue for festivals, Jackie and Jerri got together with Michael Smolak and tossed out the idea of having a "Dog Day Festival" with the main intention of supporting the MSPCA. The girls felt this would be a great way to bring people to the farm, provide a venue that was animal friendly and collect money for the MSPCA. Most importantly it would honor and respect the late Bailey Fitzgerald.

Treadwell's Ice Cream is located at Smolak Farms 315 South Bradford St, North Andover.

This year's Dog Day event raised over \$3500.00. Next year's goal \$5000 Hope to see you there!

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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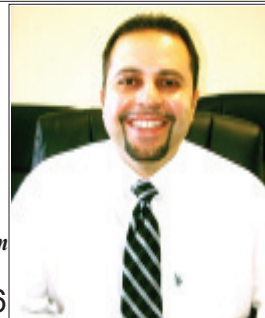
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Countdown to the Revolution: 120 Days

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

If Paul Revere stopped by your house ...
would you join the fight for freedom?

Dr. Charles Ormsby
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

The future of your country and of human liberty may depend on the political battles that are fought over the next four months. The final tally of these battles will be counted on November 2, 2010.

Your children don't understand what is at stake, but they depend on you to know. The quality of their lives and the lives of future generations depends on you.

Will you do whatever it takes to preserve the American Dream for them? Will you make sure the Flame of Freedom isn't extinguished on your watch?

Approximately a dozen American generations inherited the Dream, preserved it, and protected it. Then they passed its blessings on to the next generation.

Will you be part of a generation that lets the American Dream die?

Were your ancestors there when the battles for that Dream were fought at Lexington, Trenton, Brandywine, Saratoga, Valley Forge, Guilford Courthouse, or Yorktown? Or maybe they helped preserve the Dream at Bull Run, Shiloh, Antietam, Fredericksburg, or Gettysburg. How about the Battle of the Marne, Normandy, Bastogne, the Bulge, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, or Iwo Jima? Maybe you or family members served in Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, or more recently Iraq or Afghanistan.

Now we all have an opportunity to serve our country.

While millions of brave men and women were risking their lives - and many even lost them - to preserve our freedoms, a committed segment of our fellow Americans has fought to undermine those freedoms and bankrupt our country. They neither understand nor value true freedom. In fact, many of them actively despise and seek to weaken America and to substantially diminish, if not completely extinguish, individual liberty.

The enemies of freedom have accomplished much. The American Dream is in jeopardy.

So the task of restoring individual liberty and fiscal sanity falls to us.

Some of your neighbors have already stood up and have declared their candi-

dacy for elective office. They have committed themselves, their families, and their fortunes to the fight.

They are storming the barricades. Will they do so alone, or will they have your backing?

Our current political class has betrayed our trust and undermined our liberties while weakening our economy. It is time to replace these turncoats!

Here are the names of some of our courageous neighbors who have stepped forward to fight for you and your future:

In the 5th Congressional District (Chelmsford-Lowell-Methuen, Lawrence-Haverhill area), there are several excellent candidates that oppose the anti-liberty and anti-market policies of the current office holder. Among them are four Republican candidates (**Sam Meas, Jon Golnik, Bob Shapiro, and Tom Weaver**) and two independent candidates (**Dale Brown and Bob Clark**).

In the 6th Congressional District (from Bedford to Salem and from Reading/Wakefield to Newburyport/Salisbury), two Republican candidates (**Bill Hudak**, a small business entrepreneur and attorney, and **Rob McCarthy**, attorney and USMC veteran) are opposing one of the most liberal of Pelosi supporters in Washington.

In the 2nd Essex and Middlesex District (Lawrence, Andover, Dracut, Tewksbury), the state Senate seat being vacated by Sue Tucker has attracted two Republican candidates (**Jamison Tomasek and Patrick Rahilly**) and one Independent (Jodi Oberto).

In the 14th Essex District (Precincts 1-6 in North Andover and southeastern sections of Lawrence), the incumbent liberal (excuse the redundancy) state representative is being challenged by two North Andover Republicans (**Kevin Begley and Stanley Novak**).

In the 18th Essex District (scattered precincts in Andover, North Andover, Boxford, Georgetown, Methuen, and Haverhill), the incumbent who supported increasing the sales tax by 25%, undermining our local economy and destroying jobs (not to mention dozens of other outrageous votes) is being challenged by



two Andover Republicans (**Jim Lyons and John Thorlin**).

You should also consider providing financial help to candidates who are strong advocates of liberty and fiscal sanity in other parts of the country. Examples include Senate candidates Carly Fiorina (CA), Sharon Angle (NV), Rand Paul (KY), John Boozman (AK), Mark Kirk (IL), Rob Portman (OH), Patrick Toomey (PA), and Kelly Ayotte or Bill Binnie (NH; Primary Sept 14th).

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: Start with the races near where you live. Go to the Web sites of the candidates listed above, study their backgrounds, and review their positions on the issues. Then call those who appeal to you and offer your support.

DON'T SIT OUT THE FIGHT!! Don't be a sunshine Patriot!

Pick a fight and join in.

Voting is critically important, but it is not enough. It is like showing up for the ribbon cutting. You are needed during construction.

Things you can do: Bumper stickers, lawn signs, letters to the editor, financial support, hold signs, make calls, send post-

cards, literature drops, stuff envelopes ... and, yes, stick your head out your window and scream, "We're mad as hell and we're not going to take it anymore!"

Then, when the work is finished and the battles have been fought ... VOTE! And make sure everyone you know who shares your pro-liberty perspective also votes.

It is easier to do nothing. It is easier to hide.

But don't pick the easy route. You won't feel good about yourself. You will not be able to look your children in the eye or yourself in the mirror.

Help make history. Do not just watch it.

What will you say when your grandchildren ask you what you did during the revolution?

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Fire Chief Murphy: I'm Being Targeted

Tom Duggan

VALLEY PATRIOT REPORTER

Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua is targeting Fire Chief Brian Murphy after the chief publicly opposed the mayor's efforts to layoff more than two dozen firefighters and close two more fire stations, the chief told the Valley Patriot.

Since Chief Murphy appeared before the city council opposing Mayor Lantigua's fervent efforts to layoff firefighters, the mayor has announced that he wants to remove the chief's job from Civil Service protection.

Civil Service is an agency that protects public employees from political retribution. If Lantigua succeeds in removing the chief's position from civil service protection, he can remove the chief at-will and hire anyone he wants (even a non-firefighter) to lead the Lawrence Fire Department.

When Chief Murphy was asked by the Valley Patriot if he thought the mayor's efforts to take his job out of Civil Service protection was a personal attack, Murphy said he does.

"I believe that's what it was. Initially the Mayor indicated... or his Chief of Staff indicated that we wants to take the chief's job out of the civil service process. That's the process where we take exams and go on a list for hiring and promotions, the process is supposed to be fair and take the politics out of it.

So, I signed that list for Chief and shortly after I started speaking out about these layoffs, I learned that the mayor proposed to take it out of Civil Service. Nobody had actually let me know that was going on. I had to hear about it from someone else, so yeah, I think it's personal. I think it is because I've been outspoken on what these cuts have meant for the city as far as devastating the fire protection in the city. I think that's part of it, and I think that it's unfortunate. This department is already understaffed with the cuts from last year and now we are talking about a serious risk of life and property with any additional layoffs," the chief concluded.

Members of the Lantigua "team" have also said that, not only do they want to take the fire chief's job out of civil service, they are looking to eliminate all of the officials in the fire department. If

Mayor Lantigua and his city council decide to eliminate superior officers, all the sergeants, lieutenants, captains, etc, could be demoted to the rank of firefighter.

"There was a proposal from the Budget and Finance Committee," Chief Murphy said. "They are going to recommend that [demoting all officials] to the city council, that is my understanding. I have not been involved in any communications on that, in fact I really haven't been in on any of the communications on anything. I certainly would hope that the chief would be involved in any attempt to re-structure the fire department. I would hope that those decisions wouldn't be made without talking to the fire chief. But I don't know. Right now, our structure of how we have run this department has worked very well for more than 100 years. Our department is very efficient. The problem we have now is we simply do not have the manpower and we have no say at all in the decision making."

The Lawrence Fire Department suffered devastating layoffs last year when Mayor Sullivan cut the fire department's budget due to a \$10 MIL cut in state aid by Governor Deval Patrick. Sullivan left it up to whom he called "the experts" as to what cuts to make in their respective departments when Governor Patrick cut local aid from Lawrence's budget.

"I have always believed that as mayor, you are a politician. You're not an expert at anything except getting more votes than someone else," former Mayor Mike Sullivan said.

"The guys who work in the fire department or the DPW or the police department... they are the experts. They know far better than any elected official does, what kind of impact that layoffs like this will have on the city."

"How the process is supposed to work is, the mayor cuts the bottom line of the fire department's budget, say, by a million dollars. Then you leave it to the chief and the officials over there to figure out if they can make cuts without having to lay anyone off. Chief Murphy's right, Lantigua is not a fire expert, he isn't a police expert. He doesn't do their job every day and he shouldn't be making those decisions from city hall. I never laid off one city worker without getting input from the department heads and giving them the chance



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

96.9FM Talk's Michele McPhee at the Howard Street Fire Station in Lawrence, chatting with Fire Chief Brian Murphy about mayor Lantigua's obsession with laying off police and firefighters while giving raises to administrators in city hall. Murphy says he is being targeted by Lantigua for speaking out against the layoffs. Lantigua laid off 23 firefighters last month.

to avoid that by cutting somewhere else in their budget. What Lantigua is doing now is just reckless and irresponsible. He is slashing and burning public safety in the city with no regard for people's lives or the impact his political decisions will have on the moral of our dedicated public safety officials."

City Councilors like Frank Moran have confronted Murphy at public meetings, challenging his years of expertise and his assertion that the city cannot operate safely with another round of layoffs. At times, Murphy and Moran as well as Councilor Dan Rivera exchanged words over Murphy's formula for staffing requirements on the department.

At times, councilors who are open allies of Mayor Lantigua hinted that they had statistics and formulas that disputed the chief's minimum staffing requirements.

"I am not sure they have those formulas," Murphy told the Valley Patriot. "The formula that I was using was based on the same formula that the Police Chief Romero was asked to present as to how many police officers he needed based on his experience.

He gave the city council the number he said was needed to maintain public safety and that was just fine with them. They accepted his word no problem. Then they asked me how many fire fighters I needed.

I said, based on my years of experience these are the numbers ...and they did not like that. That wasn't good enough.

Based on 30 years of experience, myself and four deputy chiefs have determined that we need a minimum of 24 firefighters per shift. That's not a luxury that is the minimum we need to get by. That's five engine companies, two ladder companies and a rescue.

That means Engine 6, and both stations opened and that's what we've determined is the minimal level. That doesn't give us any extra, that's the minimum to get by. There is no way, no matter how you work the math, that anyone's numbers are going to come out any less than that.

Right now, that is actually going to be the lowest level in the state. Right now [before the last round of layoffs] we are below the lowest level in the state for the community size. If we go to the projected overseer's budget of 13 to 17 firefighters [per shift], that is going to be the equivalent of a city with less than 40,000 people ... and Lawrence has at least 80,000 people. So we would be expected to run an entire department with the number of firefighters that a community with 40,000 people would have. It just isn't acceptable."

Mayor Lantigua laid off 23 firefighters on July 6th.

Lantigua attacks Firefighters for "getting paid to sleep"

Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua's war against police and firefighters in the city of Lawrence has reached a new low, firefighters told The Valley Patriot last month after Lantigua attacked them as lazy and greedy during several city council meetings and public statements in the press.

Lantigua has accused the Lawrence firefighters of refusing to "come to the table to negotiate" in public even after admitting that there would be no negotiation with the unions. Lantigua was offered a counter proposal of cuts by fire and police unions that would avoid most of the layoffs and demotions Lantigua proposed in his original budget.

But the mayor refused to accept any

alternatives to layoffs, refusing to even address public safety officials' offer to take a pay cut, give back raises and make department cuts in other areas.

But it was Lantigua's comments that the cops and firefighters were lazy, "being greedy" and "getting paid to sleep" that caused firefighters to start speaking out individually.

"One of the earlier speakers talk about moral responsibility, I like that," Lantigua told the Lawrence City council while trying to convince them to approve his budget which contained dozens of layoffs in public safety while he was handing out raises to friends in city hall.

"I don't think any of you get paid when

you sleep, some of them [firefighters] do. I don't think any of you get paid overtime on your day off, some of them do. I don't think you get paid to change your uniform when you get work, and then change it back up when you leaving. So, when we talk about saving jobs, let's look in the mirror. Let's be serious. Our doors have been open from day one. I came before you June first and stated clearly (inaudible Willie-speak). Most recently some have eluded to try to negotiate, eluded to.. to walk away and go home... that's it. And they want to blame US? That's easy to do. But if that comes with the job I will take that responsibility."

Lantigua said that if people get hurt as the result of the layoffs he fought for in public safety, the blame lies with the Sullivan administration whom he blames for the city's reported financial "crisis".

"What the mayor did was gross. I've been a firefighter for about 10 years and I have never seen anything like this," one firefighter said after calling into The Valley Patriot newsroom and asking not to be identified for fear of retribution "like what's going on in the police department and what he is doing to Chief Murphy."

"He wants to paint us like a bunch of lazy clowns who get paid to sleep. I would like to see Willie Lantigua climb a ladder and pull a baby from a third floor porch with third degree burns unable to cry because she is in so much pain. I'd love to see any politicians in this city do what we do for one week and tell me we get paid to sleep. We get paid to miss Christmas and holidays with our families. We get paid to respond to emergencies on a moments notice. We have tried very hard to work with this new administration but they were determined, and I include Bob Nunes from the State Department of Revenue in this, they were determined to destroy this department for political reasons. God help this city!"

The Valley Patriot newsroom received no less than a dozen similar calls from Lawrence firefighters saying that they were worried about the lives of those firefighters remaining on the job after the Lantigua layoffs take affect. One firefighter said he didn't "know how this city can go a year with this kind of staffing and not lose a life as a result."



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Government, jobs, God, and taxes

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

As another election season is very quickly approaching us, I would like to send a message to all the political candidates as they prepare their platforms and speeches. Please stop using the phrase, "We need to create jobs". Our government was never established to create jobs! This misconception of this being a function of government has gotten us as a Country, as a State and as a City in the economic mess that we find ourselves in.

As a point of reference, I turn to the

June 4, 2010 United States Labor Department Report of May 2010. The report states that unemployment is down from April's 9.9% to 9.7%. It further states that 431,000 jobs were created. But most of which were government jobs paid for by stimulus money, 390,000 to be exact and only 41,000 were private jobs. The government jobs were added mostly to help complete the 2010 United States Census. So the news doesn't contribute any sustaining help for the economy.

Having this information before us, we see clearly that even with all the best

intentions, government cannot create jobs that will add real growth for our economy. So when politicians start lining up this summer to make their speeches and laying before us their reasons for running for Public Office, (it doesn't matter whether it is for Federal, State or Local Office), and they say that they are running to help create jobs to get our economy running again, my friends it is not going to happen! The only real action a politician can do to help in the job issue is to not inhibit in anyway what our founders set before us in the following.....

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.- That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,- That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organiz-

LAROCQUE, page 12

Farmers Market Triples in Size Business as usual, chaos and no plan

The Lawrence Farmers Market will celebrate its 16th season this summer with two new days and two new locations around the city.

Beginning July 6th, McGovern Train Station at 211 Merrimack Street will host a Tuesday evening market from 4:00-7:30 PM. Starting Saturday the 10th a third market be open from 9:00 – 1:00 at the Park St. Greater Lawrence Family Health Center's new parking lot at the corner of Park and Lawrence Streets. Of course, our Wednesday market is continuing and will take place every Wednesday from 9:00 – 4:00 at Appleton Way, between Essex and Common Streets and next to City Hall.

As in previous years, the market accepts EBT cards (SNAP/food stamps), as well as WIC and Senior Farmers Market-specific coupons, debit and all credit cards.

The Lawrence Farmers Markets were also chosen as one of five markets in Massachusetts to pilot acceptance of the new WIC cash-value vouchers, offering WIC recipients the chance to use their monthly fruit and vegetable checks on nutritious and locally-grown produce for their families.

In an effort to ensure that Lawrence residents who are eligible for food stamps are receiving benefits, Groundwork Lawrence will offer SNAP eligibility screening at the market. In addition, WIC, the UMass Nutrition Extension Program, and MassHealth will host tables at the market where shoppers can receive bi-lingual information about nutrition and health, and the Frost Foundation of Lawrence will feature local artists and cultural happenings around the city. We also look forward to hosting Greater Lawrence Family Health Center health staff at different markets throughout the season.

"The Farmers Market provides a healthy shopping alternative for all Greater Lawrence residents," said Janel

Wright, program manager at Groundwork Lawrence. "We are committed to making the market a place where convenience, value, and accessibility combine to make it easy for residents to incorporate more fresh fruits and vegetables into their diets and to build good eating habits for themselves and their families."

The Lawrence Farmers Market is sponsored in part by Greater Lawrence Family Health Center, MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources, and the Bank of America and New Balance Foundations.

For information about the Lawrence Farmers Markets vendors and special events, visit <http://www.groundworklawrence.org>.

What: More access to fresh, healthy, delicious local fruits, vegetables, baked goods, jams, jellies, art, crafts, and more!

When & Where:

*** Tuesdays at McGovern Train Station, 211 Merrimack Street, 4-7:30, July 6 – Oct. 26**

* Johnson's Highland View Farm, Windham NH, * Nagog Fruitters, Littleton, MA, * Clock Tower Café, Lawrence, * S & C Exchange, Lawrence

*** Wednesdays at Appleton Way 9:00 – 4:00, July 7 – Oct. 27 (between Essex & Common Streets, next to City Hall),**

* Roma's Bakery, Woburn, * Boston Hill Farm, North Andover, * Brox Farm, Dracut, * Riverdale Farm, Groton, *Clock Tower Café of Lawrence, * S & C Exchange of Lawrence

*** Saturdays at 216 Lawrence Street (parking lot at the corner of Lawrence & Park Streets across from GLFHC), 9 am - 1 pm, July 10 - August 28**

* Brox Farm, Dracut, * Riverdale Farm, Groton, * S & C Exchange, Lawrence

Robert O'Koniewski, Esq.
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

When Mayor William Lantigua took over city government in January, he promised a break from the business as usual that we have seen under all previous administrations. His rhetoric may have been lofty, but it belied the fact that he was going to be severely handcuffed by a debilitating fiscal situation. Even the new councilors, to a person, were willing to give him the usual bouquets of cooperation and conciliation to move the city forward. The only problem is – where is the city moving to? The mayor has yet to really articulate a long-term plan half-way through the first year of his four-year term, and the city council has been a willing enabler.

For once, the City of Lawrence actually completed its budget deliberations in time for the start of the 2011 fiscal year on July 1, albeit with no discernible vision or plan for our city. You had all the usual administration heavy hitters, including the guy who drew up the budget, state overseer Bob Nunes. But what would politics be in Lawrence without the usual name-calling, finger-pointing, and hypocrisy. This year's City Council efforts certainly did not disappoint.

Despite all efforts by Budget Committee chairman Dan Rivera to create a process more along the lines of a Woodstock love-in as opposed to the usual Saturday night of gladiators and lions at the Roman Forum, leave it to the likes of the mayor's chief of staff and erstwhile insurance salesman to ignore all decorum and respectability and throw hand grenades into the proceedings simply because he can. The subject of his continual, unjustified ire? District F councilor Marc Laplante. The reason? Mr. Laplante simply sought assurances of transparency and accountability not only in the development of the

budget but also in its implementation. The chances of that happening, this being Lawrence, perennial ward of the state? Slim to none.

Who would have thought at this time six months into the takeover by the Lantiguaistas that the budget bulldog sticking up for the real taxpayers would have been Councilor Laplante? Councilor Laplante amongst his colleagues has been the only All-Star to date to insist that the administration provide real answers to serious questions about spending, the hiring process, the qualifications of new hires and board appointments, city hall efficiencies, and salary hikes, just to name a few. What has he been met with by the mayor and his chief of staff? Accusations of racism and puerile rants and open hostility, with no back-up from his fellow councilors. As we have written on these pages before, when you cannot win on the facts, accuse your opponent of being a racist. It is the ploy of the intellectually lazy and feeble minded. It's no wonder that the mayor's chief of state has turned it into an art form.

As he started the budget proceedings weeks ago, Councilor Rivera gave appearances of advocating for group hugs as he handed out tie-dyed shirts. His was going to be a Budget Committee built on decorum, orderliness, peace, sweet nectar flowing forth as councilors and administrators engaged in high-level discourse on how there would be shared pain throughout the system, all for the sake of creating the New Athens. To his credit, his first act was to do something no mayor was apparently capable of since time in memoriam – he put all budget documents and contracts on a separate website link for everyone to see. What he could not deliver, however, were the doves, white puffy clouds, wine flowing in the streets. Instead, we got hypocrisy in its basest form, despite his best

LAWRENCE, page 29



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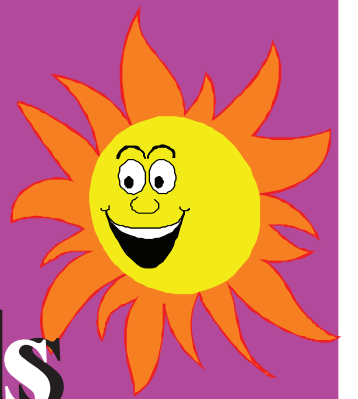
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1. Arlington Ed. Complex	150 Arlington St.	B 7:30-8:30	L 11:30 - 12:30
2. South Lawrence East	165 Crawford St.	B 7:30 - 8:30	L 11:30 - 12:30
3. Parthum Ed. Complex	255 E. Haverhill St.	B 7:30 - 8:30	L 11:30 - 12:30
4. No. Common Complex	233 Haverhill St.	B 7:30 - 8:30	L 11:30 - 1:00
5. Leahy School	100 Erving Ave	B 7:30 - 8:30	L 11:30 - 12:30
6. Wetherbee School	75 Newton St.	B 7:30 - 8:30	L 11:30 - 12:30
7. Guilmette Ed. Complex	80 Bodwell St.	B 7:30-8:30	L 11:30 - 12:30
8. LHS Campus	70 N. Parish Road	B 7:30-8:00	L 11:30 - 12:30

Dates of Operation - July 6th through August 27th

9. Beacon Courts	71 Duckett Ave	L 11:00 - 12:00
10. Merrimack Courts	56 Melvin St.	L 1:00 - 2:00
11. Giesler Pool	High St.	L 11:30 - 12:30
12. Higgins Pool	Crawford St.	L 11:30-12:30
13. Community Boating	7 Eaton Pl.	L 12:15 - 1:15
14. Stadium Courts	179 Osgood St.	L 12:45 - 1:45
15. Hancock Courts	61 Hancock St.	L. 1-2pm

Dates of Operation - July 12th through August 18th

16. No. Common Park	Haverhill St.	S. 1:30 - 1:45pm
17. Howard Park	Lawrence St.	S. 1:30 - 1:45pm
18. Bruce Park	Providence St.	S. 1:30 - 1:45pm
19. Riverfront Park	Emmett St.	S. 1:30 - 1:45pm
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Might needs right

John McCormack
VALLEY PATRIOT BOXFORD COLUMNIST

Abraham Lincoln delivered his Cooper Union speech in 1860 setting out the case against the expansion of slavery to Federal western territories. He closed with this exhortation: “Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.”

This perfectly expresses the idea that morally justified action will garner support of the public with no direct stake in the outcome and secondly that even absolute power cannot be arbitrarily exercised.

Sixteenth century Calvinists saw hard work with its attendant prosperity morally justified as possibly indicating personal salvation, an idea neatly captured as the Protestant Work Ethic by sociologist Max Weber in the early twentieth century.

This brings us to recent events in Boxford. A bicycle club was cited last year for permanently marking bicycle route runes on Boxford’s roads. It’s unclear why a club believes it can vandalize public property for its purposes.

More recently, several residents have been exercised enough about the road manners of cycling groups to complain for relief to the Board of Selectmen. Complaints include running stop signs, blocking traffic, and using obscene language and gestures to motorists. Again, one wonders why people prosperous enough to buy expensive bicycles, helmets, and jerseys and dedicated enough to ride thirty-mile routes would engage in this behavior.

Cycling was always correctly touted as a healthy and resource-frugal activity. Its philosophy and benefits were largely an individual concern. Now, for some,

cycling has become a group activity of otherwise unrelated members and cycling is seen as countering the malign effects of “climate change.” I think it reasonable that less-stable members of a faction, reinforced by groupthink and confirmation bias, might express physical contempt for those resource-squandering suburban sots who provide the bicycle routes. It may be an environmental salient in the “culture wars” of recent decades and not an isolated incident.

Wrong-headed belief in one’s moral justification can result in economically irrational behavior as well as anti-social behavior. Last fall town meeting appropriated \$7,000 to search for possible wind turbine sites in Boxford. The most likely site was atop Bayns Hill, but I later heard that FAA regulations forbid such a structure four miles from Lawrence Airport. I thought that might end it, but there were still murmurings from the Capital Budget Committee last January about a \$95,000 appropriation contingent on a grant.

If you study wind turbine economics you will realize the closest analogy is a child’s lemonade stand which will use ten dollars in materials and free labor to produce three dollars in revenue. We do this because we’ve been convinced that we are helping the environment and making the transition from fossil fuels even though none of those things are true. Most wind turbine installations are a tribute to corporate lobbying and the blinkered ideology of politicians. Their biggest effect is to get the public invested in “climate change” and ready to accept more draconian and expensive restrictions on energy availability and use.

The wind turbine project underway in neighboring Ipswich has encountered delays and more financial difficulties. Ipswich ordered its turbine from AAER,



PHOTO: COURTESY

a Canadian startup which went bankrupt. Pioneer Power Solutions, a U.S. company entering the business, purchased AAER’s assets and reportedly intends to fulfill several outstanding orders.

Our final topic of moral delusion is “affordable housing.” Joe the Plumber would recognize this as another scheme to “spread the wealth around.” At least 25% of the units in overly dense 40B projects are sold at state-dictated prices either through buyer or taxpayer subsidies. The market rate buyer in a private 40B pays tens of thousands extra so that identical units can be sold for less. Public 40Bs like the proposed Haynes land condominium project are subsidized by town or state taxpayers through land gifts and outright cash payments. Property tax payments are discounted and condominium maintenance fees are subsidized by market rate buyers. Subsidized units are allocated by lottery unless, as is often the case, there is no demand and they are sold first-come-first-served.

We accept this because we are told there

is a housing crisis; public employees are allegedly unable to live anywhere in the state; our single children are unable to buy a home in Boxford right out of school. Neither incomes nor generations today are static. We don’t live in Ethan Frome’s Starkfield. 40B is a Ponzi scheme of denser residential development supporting intensive business development providing tax and fee revenue plus, alas, expenses, conflict and alienation.

Politicians at all levels of government want to control and limit middle class resource consumption: your house, your car, your mobility. We must recover our belief in the justification of work and its rewards. Accepting moral delusions gets us closer to Neo’s pod existence in The Matrix.



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

LAROCQUE: FROM PAGE 10

ing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.” (Taken from the Declaration of Independence).

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”

These words serve as our standard for any issue, whether it is jobs, the economy, immigration, health care, etc, etc, etc. These words place us all on equal standing.

When government participates in the practice of taking from those who have successfully pursued happiness and then

gives it to those who have not been successful pursuing their happiness but were very capable, they in fact are in opposition to this standard!

So what is government supposed to do to help those who are not capable and are in need? My friends, this question has caused no small problem for lots of people. The answer can’t be totally discussed in this one article but can be elaborated on in future. This is where in my opinion government ends and the family and the church takes over. I am a Christian and as a Christian (one who is not perfect, but forgiven) we are admonished to take care of one another with the instructions that even if one who is fully capable of working but freely refuses to work, then he or she is on their own. Some might call this tough love, but even a kind loving God expects

every capable person to work. Our country affords us the opportunity to work and reap the benefits from that work. There is nothing godly in taking from those who have to give to those who are capable but refuse to work. Now enters the catch 22. On one hand we have the family and the Church which for the most part has failed in its responsibility to take care of one another. Due to this failure, we have allowed our government to step in and take on this responsibility which it was never established to do and as a result it has caused our government to grow out of control. We find ourselves now financially burdened by being over taxed which really makes it difficult to help those in need. The solution must be to shrink government by removing people’s dependents on it and placing the responsibility to help those in

need back on to the family and church. To do this successfully, the government then must end its practice of taking from those who have and giving it to those who have not because they, (the able ones) refuse to work. This would allow government to really focus on everyone’s safety and their freedom to pursue happiness. For some, this might be a too simplistic way to look at things. But hopefully we can agree that it is not our Government’s responsibility to Create Jobs!

God Bless



Peter Larocque is a former member of the Lawrence School Committee. . You can call him at 978-682-0900, email him at peterlarocque@hotmail.com

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Mayor announces 2010 street paving list

Mayor Fiorentini and DPW Director Michael Stankovich announced last month a partial list of streets to be repaved in 2010. These streets are being redpaved-with state, Chapter 90 roadway improvement funds.

“This paving list is the result of research that has been conducted on roadway conditions through the computerized Pavement Management Study as well as personal observation, with which we address the worst streets first in order to stretch our resources. This is not a complete list,” the Mayor said. “Some inner city streets can be undertaken with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, while other roadways are the responsibility of the State, such as Route 125 and the Groveland Bridge. “If other streets can be added, they will be repaved,” the Mayor added.

The streets to be repaved this year are: Alpha St., Bateman St., Birch Ave, Corliss Hill Rd (sections), Cross Rd (sections), Dwight St., Essex Ave, Farmington Ave, Gile St. (sections), Hannah Dustin St., Irving Ave, Juneau Ave, Lakeland St., Leonard Ave, Mill Street (Arlington St. to Kenoza Ave), Monument St.(Hilldale Avenue to North Broadway), Mountain Ave, Newton Rd (sections), Pine St., (Riverside), South Elm St. (South Main St. to South Prospect St.), State St., Thornton Ave, Valley view Ave, Vreeland Ave, Water St. (section), Welcome St.,

In addition, sidewalk and pedestrian improvements are scheduled for Bethany Avenue near Central Plaza with Chapter 90 funds as well.

Celebrate recycling success

Join Team Haverhill in celebrating a long-awaited milestone in the history of the city. On Wednesday evening, July 14th, at 6 pm, we’ll honor all the community partners who helped accomplish this important change-and have some well-deserved fun with colleagues and friends! The location is Lounge 59, at 59 Washington St. downtown. The owners of Lounge 59 have graciously offered to provide appetizers. There will be a cash bar. RSVP to team.haverhill@comcast.net.

For two and a half years, Team Haverhill has pursued the goal of citywide single-stream recycling at curbside, working alongside a widening list of partners. This effort began at our first annual “Possible Dreams” community event held in January of 2008 at NECC Tech Center. The party on July 14 will celebrate everyone who helped Haverhill reach this milestone, including; Haverhill Environmental League, former and current City recycling committees; staff members from our state’s Department of Environmental Protection; Haverhill’s Brightside; city Recycling Coordinator Steve Clifford; Mayor Jim Fiorentini; Haverhill City Councilors; former Council President and mayoral candidate John Michitson; and--most important--over 1,200 Haverhill citizens who signed a petition urging expanded curbside recycling. This was a collaborative effort that couldn’t have happened without this intensive partnership!

So--please join in the celebration and help kick off the effort increase our recycling rate and revenue, decrease the City’s trash disposal budget, and preserve our environment! Please RSVP if you plan to attend team.haverhill@comcast.net.



MOVING HAVERHILL FORWARD

with Mayor Jim Fiorentini

Increasing Efficiency in City Government

In this day of a permanent fiscal crisis, governments everywhere have to make do with less. The debate is often between those who say we have to raise taxes, and those who say we should cut services. There is, however, a third way—increase government efficiency. Increased efficiency cannot overcome every fiscal crisis, and it will not solve every problem. But it can play an important role in meeting the deficits that face every government seemingly every year.

In Haverhill, increased efficiency started in city hall. We outsourced portions of our assessor’s office, introduced a “lock box” procedure to collect taxes, outsourced our deputy tax collector’s position, and introduced new technology to city government. We eliminated a number of department heads, and introduced the concept of “floaters” where clerical staff would float from department to department to cover if there was a vacancy. Over the past six (6) years, we’ve been able to cut the number of city employees by 26%, and have reduced our work force by over 100 employees.

In the highway department, increased efficiency meant eliminating certain shifts where workers were paid to sit and answer the telephones, and outsourcing the nighttime telephone answering service. We outsourced some of the roadway paving, pothole patching, tree removal and tree trimming, and drain cleaning. We were not 100% successful, our efforts to outsource street sweeping, which would have resulted in a very substantial savings, was defeated by the city council by a single vote, with one councilor saying he wanted to the city to pay more so that highway workers would get overtime. We learned from that: it is important to work with the unions, and, wherever possible, to get union buy-in to outsourcing. Today, our highway department is down about 12 people since I took office, but our performance measures indicate that we are patching potholes more quickly than we did with a larger, more expanded work force.

In the police department, increasing efficiency meant dealing with, and changing, the union contracts that built in inefficiency. The union contract provided for “must fill”: that we had to fill certain positions at overtime rates when an of-

ficer was out, even if we didn’t have the money, and even if the police chief felt that the position did not need to be filled that particular day. Must fill reached its illogical peak with computers: we were required to fill the computer operator’s position even if the person we were bringing in did not know anything about computers. We refused to fund must fill, and then settled an arbitration case with the union to eliminate it from the contract. Today, the city has a good relationship with the city’s police union, and we consider them partners in our efforts to continue the modernization of the department.

In health, our efforts to control health care costs and increase efficiencies, meant that we combined five (5) health care plans into one plan, and then worked with the unions to persuade every union to increase the percentage they paid in their health care premiums from 10% to 20%. Our efforts today are to increase co pays and deductibles. Thus far, over 200 city workers have signed on. There is more to do.

To control and monitor sick time, we instituted new software, and began a program to identify potential sick leave abusers. Today, sick leave is down dramatically in the highway, police and fire departments.

Today, we are going the next step in increasing efficiency. We are instituting a new set of programs to measure government performance and, ultimately, to improve it. The programs will be called “HaverhillStat” and will be modeled after the citistat programs that have been successful in Baltimore, Somerville and Amesbury. HaverhillStat will measure government performance in many of our departments.

Increasing efficiency is not a cure all and it is not a total answer to the fiscal crisis that every city in the country is facing. Even with our increased efficiency, we still had to eliminate about 17 jobs, sadly, 2.5 by layoffs. We still had to raise the meals tax, which we estimate saved 10 jobs and kept a fire station open. Increasing efficiency is not easy, and there were many setbacks along the way. It is, for all its problems, part of the answer in these tough fiscal times.



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Why the Methuen High renovation project is critical to our city's future

Ken Willette
METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

One of my proudest moments of public service recently occurred when I was able to vote in favor of the Methuen High School renovation project and make a full recommendation for funding with the Methuen City Council.

I commend the members of the Methuen City Council who, through direct negotiations with Mayor Manzi, were able to reach an historic agreement on a funding mechanism to commence the high school renovation.

While there has been some controversy regarding utilizing surplus school department funds to support construction costs, I had absolutely no reservation or regret about backing that funding mechanism to protect our future accreditation, provide the best educational environment for our students and modernize our flagship school.

The threat of lost accreditation was certainly very real and very punitive. The periodic accreditation teams that came to observe our high school were not critical of the faculty, the school's mission statement, academic standards or curriculum, but they were very adamant about the major infrastructure deficiencies associated with open classrooms and outdated, limited and non-functional science labs.

The specter of lost accreditation would have had a devastating impact on educators, students, parents, property owners and taxpayers alike. Property values would have definitely declined for every taxpayer; businesses would have not come to Methuen; and we would have experienced a mass exodus of young families leaving Methuen and prospective young families selecting other communities over Methuen.

This loss of accreditation would have worsened an already terrible housing market and further depressed an already very difficult municipal budget picture. In order to restore our accreditation, we would have had to undertake the same identical renovations (new science labs and enclosed classroom spaces) at 100% local property tax funding as opposed to the roughly 69% reimbursement rate from the state. This was not sound fiscal policy during any economic environment. Our advanced students would have been denied access to top colleges through our direct actions in not approving funding.

Many school and city leaders also realized the folly of having the vot-

ers travel to the polls to authorize the high school project funding. If the high school project was not approved within 120 days after the School Building Authority made its decision on May 26th, we would have lost the 69% reimbursement from the state and directly jumped to a long-term loss of our accreditation. The grammar school renovation projects were never decided directly by the voters, but by the School Committee and City Council. A previous administration lost an opportunity at 90% state reimbursement to fund the high school at the turn of the new century. However, at 69% reimbursement from the state and better fiscal oversight from the School Building Authority, coupled with today's lowered construction costs, we will be able to monitor and control overall costs better than on other previous schools.

The Mayor presented a number of contingency funding plans that would not raise taxes or escalate our modest debt ratio. He identified quantifiable funding resources, gave numerous public presentations, and answered questions at town meeting forums and public meetings.

The Mayor, the school administration and the school building committee should all be commended for their openness, their transparency, their visual presentations, their financial handouts and their expertise to address all concerns—both short-term and long-term.

I am also grateful that many parents, community leaders and taxpayers reached out directly to the then uncommitted City Councilors and provided a strong, united and assertive voice to the process. I always told Methuen residents to be respectful, positive and polite during their conversations, phone messages and email exchanges with the uncommitted Councilors. I also advised them to always take the high road in their discourse with the Councilors. There were a few bad apples that viciously attacked the Councilors, which was unwarranted, counterproductive and unforgivable.

However, the vast majority of constituents made their voices heard in a positive and constructive way not often displayed in such large numbers in Methuen. For those individuals that directly participated in this truly multi-generational campaign, I am so honored and pleased that we worked together and achieved a lasting victory for the future of our children and grandchildren.

Feds give Methuen Fire Dept. \$138,494 grant

Mayor William M. Manzi, Senators John Kerry and Scott Brown, together with Congresswoman Niki Tsongas today announced that the Methuen Fire Department will receive \$138,494 under the Department of Homeland Security's Assistance to Firefighters Grant program. The federal funding will enable firefighters to deal more effectively with fire-related emergencies.

"This is a moral issue, pure and simple. Our firefighters put their lives on the line every day and we've got a fundamental responsibility to keep them as safe as possible. This investment will allow Chief Steven Buote to upgrade equipment and enhance the department's ability to respond to emergency situations quickly and effectively," said Senator Kerry.

"Every day, our hardworking firefighters risk their lives to keep our families and communities safe, and we owe it to them to provide the financial resources to keep them safe in their incredibly dangerous jobs. This funding is an important step in that direction, and I am pleased our firefighters will soon receive upgraded equipment that will allow them to better carry

out their work," said Senator Brown.

"Our fire and rescue personnel selflessly serve our communities and it is so important that they have the emergency equipment they need to do their jobs and stay safe," said Congresswoman Niki Tsongas. "I congratulate the Methuen Fire Department for its work in obtaining these funds which will help further these very important goals."

"The hazards associated with the duties of being a professional firefighter are numerous and well documented. For this reason, it is imperative that today's firefighters are well protected. The protective clothing that the firefighters employed by the City of Methuen currently use is old, worn-out, and non-compliant with today's standards," said Chief Steven Buote.

Mayor Manzi thanked the Federal Delegation for the grant. "I promised Chief Buote and the Fire Department new gear this year," Manzi stated, "and even in these hard economic times, we are now able to get the equipment needed to protect our firefighters. This is money well spent."



Steve Sirmaian
Chief Operations
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RONNIE'S RANTS

Tribute to a great man

Ronnie Ford
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

A hearty congratulations to everyone's friend Bruce Arnold. The master of the Radio communications industry will be inducted into the National Radio Announcer's Hall of Fame! Bruce is loved by everyone who has come in contact with him in person or by radio waves, especially in the greater Merrimack Valley area. Ever since Bruce Salvucci sweet talked Lenora Pettinelli into marrying him, his personality and compassion for everyone around him has stood out like a beacon light on a Lighthouse. Bruce is an easy going guy, and the Lynn resident loves the Lawrence area. Lawrence is so special to him, that he has chalked up almost fifty years bringing music, news and happenings to all who listen to him. He has an uncanny ability to make people feel like family. Once you have met him, you feel as though you have known him forever. Not only did he envelope the greater Lawrence area, but in a carefully planned operation, he managed to capture the heart of one of the loveliest girls in the area. We wish Bruce the best in his recognition by the Radio Community. Bruce has earned it and then some. Bruce is the personification of Mr. Radio! Way to go Brucie!

What is character? Character is the sum of all the qualities of who we are. It is our values, thoughts, words, and actions. It is usually formed by the time we are twelve or thirteen years old. That is of course, provided we have had responsible parenting and environment, or extended family. In today's world with donor sperm Dads, of casual sex, resulting in pregnancy and the biological father taking off, where is the guiding? We have street wise kids. Character is trustworthiness, not to steal, be reliable in what we say and do. Character is tolerant of differences, respect for others, good manners, consideration of others feelings, not to hurt anyone. Character is having responsibility, do what you are supposed to do, persevere, do your best. It is having self control, being disciplined, be accountable for your

actions and choices. It is fairness, play by the rules, do not take advantage of others, take turns. Character is caring, being kind and compassionate, expressing gratitude, forgiving others, helping people in need. It is citizenship, doing your share to make improvements in schools and your community. Getting involved, staying informed, being a good neighbor, respect lawful authority. Look at our elected officials, do they have character? Most of them are conniving, ready to fill their pockets at every opportunity. If anything goes wrong or they are caught, it is always someone else's fault. Or, they have this marvelous story making them look good, or saying someone set them up. Look to the people we encounter in our daily lives, are they fair, courteous, helpful? Case in point: The shameful antics of the EMT's and Firefighters caught not being certified. That is a large character flaw! Character is being the best we can be 24/7. Sadly, character has gone by the wayside, very much like Common Sense!

If you grew up in the area of Lawlor's Drug Store, The Downey Flake, or went to school at St. Rita's, Tarbox, Hood, or Assumption schools, and did not make the neighborhood reunion, you missed a great time! Lots of camaraderie, do you remember, great food and many hugs and laughs. Jackson's Restaurant did it again, outstanding buffet!

A reminder on Tuesday, November 2, 2010, take out the trash! Lets get rid of the do nothings in office!

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

Jack's Irish Craic



Ballinfad Castle

Jack Doyle, County Sligo

VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST COLUMNIST

Ballinafad is situated about 20 miles southeast of Sligo Town. A picturesque village at the foot of the Curlew Mountains it lies on the shore of Lough Arrow. There is a small castle of the Curlews which can be found in the village. One of the few limestone lakes in Connaught, measuring 3,123 acres, Lough Arrow contains four main islands named Anaghgon-da, Inismore, Inisbeg and Much Island. I live around 11 miles from the quaint little village and used to visit often.

Known as the Castle of the Curlews, this castle was built around 1590 to protect the pass over the Curlew Hills. It was garrisoned by a Constable and ten wardens from 1610 to 1626 and, after a stout resistance, had to surrender in 1641 due to lack of water. The plan of the castle is modeled on those of 13th century castles, with a small central square block dwarfed by four massive towers at the corners which are round outside and square inside.

There isn't much to do if your vacationing in Ballinafad except to view the ancient castle or drive through the Curlew mountains. Climbing the Curlews could be rewarding. The panoramic view seen from the mountains is outstanding. If you

climb the hills your more than likely to meet up with a herd of sheep grazing in the green grass. A pile of rocks over to your right might be an ancient hot tub, still in usable condition today, but hasn't been occupied since the 1800's. Stone walls and ancient ring forts occupy the hills around Ballinafad.

My partner and I decided to investigate the hills further west along the ridge of the mountain but were warned by the locals that there were many deserted coal miles through-out the area and we might not find our way back. I haven't heard of anyone that fell into a shaft, but of course, I was a novice in searching coal mines and would not of heard of any "tourist" having such a fate.

Wishing you a rainbow, For sunlight after showers—Miles and miles of Irish smiles, For golden happy hours—Shamrocks at your doorway, For luck and laughter too, And a host of friends that never ends, Each day your whole life through!



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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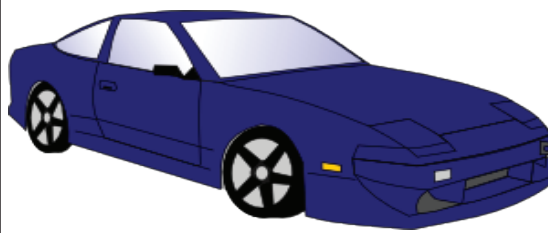


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Gang of three sticks it to Dracut taxpayers yet again with Superintendent’s contract!!

D.J. Deeb
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT COLUMNIST

Last month, the Dracut School Committee voted 3-2 to hire Dr. Stacy Scott as the District’s new Superintendent of Schools. Although Dr. Scott appears to be qualified for the position, Dracut School Committee members Matt Sheehan, Bonnie Elie, and Mike Miles appear to be up to their old tricks once again when it comes to the contract. In approving the contract for Dr. Scott, members of the Dracut School Committee voted to give the Chairman Matt Sheehan sole authority to approve out-of-state conferences for Dr. Scott where he is paid for his professional services. In other districts, this requires a vote of the entire School Committee, but not in Dracut.

Dr. Stacy Scott is coming to Dracut from Montgomery County in Maryland where he serves as Associate Superintendent, making approximately \$250,000 per year. The Dracut School Committee awarded Dr. Scott a 3-year contract that pays \$152,000 per year and allows for annual raises based on performance. I agree that performance based raises are appropriate here, but the starting salary for Dracut is somewhat high. This is a much higher starting salary than most new superintendents in this region are

used to getting. The position salary was advertised for between \$140,000 and \$160,000.

Dr. Scott is President of the Center for Understanding Equity and the head of ExecResults Consulting. In these positions, Dr. Scott frequently attends conferences as a paid guest speaker. The reality is that Dracut Public Schools are in dire shape. Dracut has a higher than average dropout rate and is below state and national averages on SAT scores, for starters. The high school will likely lose its accreditation next year, or at the very least, be placed on warning. Parents who can afford to do so would be well advised to place their kids in private school under the current circumstances. Dracut needs a superintendent who will devote 100+% of all energies to improving the school district. This cannot be overstated. The language in Section 6 of the current contract, supported by Sheehan, Miles, and Elie states:

The Superintendent, with prior approval from the School Committee Chair, may undertake consultative work, for his personal remuneration, speaking engagements, writing, lecturing, or other professional duties and obligations, provided such activities do not in any manner interfere with the performance of the duties and responsibilities as Super-


intendent. Such approval shall be given reasonably and in good faith.

Committee members Mike McNamara and Ron Mercier saw through this and voted against the contract because of this language. McNamara and Mercier both argued that paid consulting trips should be approved by the entire School Committee, not just the School Committee Chairman on his own personal judgment. This arrangement gives Chairman Sheehan too much power and not enough accountability is afforded to protect the taxpayers and the District. Dr. Scott will certainly have his hands full trying to put his theories to work in improving the overall performance of Dracut Public Schools.

Although Dr. Scott appears to be qualified for the position and has very good educational credentials, there are some unanswered questions. In addition to taking a \$100,000 salary reduction by coming to Dracut, Maryland Circuit Court records show that two federal tax liens were filed against Dr. Scott in July and October 2008, for the amounts of \$50,444 and \$13,591, respectively. The tax liens have since been paid. In addition, the state of Maryland was criticized by the U.S. Department of Education for having one of the “worst overall records” in terms of compliance with federal

special education mandates, according to a report that came out of Dr. Scott’s office in 2009. Dr. Scott stated that he was working to rectify the situation, but records show that he has been applying for Superintendent jobs throughout the country. Recently, he was a finalist for a superintendent position in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and in Newton, Massachusetts.

I sincerely wish Dr. Stacy Scott well in his new position as Superintendent of Dracut Public Schools. He certainly has a lot on his plate and three difficult committee members to deal with – Sheehan, Elie, and Miles. Hopefully, he will have a much stronger personality than did former Superintendent Dr. Mullin and will not be intimidated or easily driven out of the position for trying to move the District forward. Good luck, Dr. Scott.



D.J. Deeb is a of the Town of Dracut Committee on Government Rules and Regulations, served on the Dracut School Committee from 2005-2008 and the Gr. 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.

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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.



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TEEN TALK with TYLER



PHOTO: COURTESY

Remembering Grandpa on the 4th of July

Tyler Dumont

VALLEY PATRIOT TEEN COLUMNIST

It was Sunday, the fourth of July of the year 2010, and it was one of hardest days for me I've had in a long time. On a day that is supposed to be filled with joy, happiness, and fun – I faced sadness and hurt. Okay, maybe not that hurt – but it was tough. It was tough for several reasons. Perhaps the biggest reason was the fact that it had been several months since my grandfather passed away, but it hadn't hit me nearly as hard as it did on that day.

You see, the fourth of July is the biggest celebration of the year in my family. It's the biggest party in town. With over two hundred people expected every year, they never let us down. They come in car after car after car. A couple hundred pounds of meat, dozens of desserts, and more kids than you can imagine. And it's all the product of my grandparent's dream – seeing their family and friends together, enjoying their hard earned beautiful lakefront property, and most importantly, seeing everyone happy. It's almost impossible to imagine waking up one day and know that nothing could go wrong in the next twenty four hours. A day when you can expect to see every single person around you smiling and happy. But yet, it's exactly what I look forward to and expect every single year. It's never turned out otherwise.

The fourth of July truly is my favorite holiday. But the reason isn't America's independence. It's not the fireworks. It's not even seeing my aunts and uncles get a little tipsy. It's being with everyone. It's talking to family members and friends, many whom have moved away and I see only one day a year. But most importantly, it's seeing all of the people who couldn't even imagine being anywhere else on the fourth of July. I know I certainly couldn't. It's a tradition that has developed into a true addiction.

Fifty-one years later, quite a few people still recall the first year. Some of them chuckle as many still make the same dishes every year. (Not that anyone is disappointed...) Fast forward to this year,



and not much has changed. Except for one thing. Perhaps one of the biggest parts to the party. One of the reasons it all started. The reason I was able to live my past seventeen years, and get to go every single year. My grandfather. Paul Dumont.

I'll miss you grandpa. You'll always be remembered. That party was for you this year. We weren't sure if we should go on without you – but we soon realized it would've been a sin if we didn't. Your dream every year was to see your family, together and happy, on this one day of the year. And, as long as I'm alive, I will do everything I can to be sure your dream lives on.

I hope you had a great fourth of July everybody. And to all the folks reading this who still have grandparents who are living...tell them how much they mean to you next time you see them. Give them an extra hug. Call them randomly, take them out to lunch. You never know when the day will come that you won't be able to do it anymore.

Tyler Dumont is the seventeen year old host of "Teen Talk" on 980 WCAP in Lowell, MA. You can contact him through email at teentalk@980wcap.com or by phone at 617-433-6174. Become a fan of his show on Facebook by visiting www.facebook.com/TeenTalkwithTylerDumont

Enterprise Funds Need To Be More Enterprising

Joe Mendonca

VALLEY PATRIOT LOWELL COLUMNIST

Lowell, like most communities, has established Enterprise Funds for functions that have their own revenue streams. Lowell has established enterprise funds for Water, Waste Water (sewer), Parking, and the Arena. The Arena fund will be phased out once the remaining debt is paid.

Without an Enterprise Fund, each of these utilities would be funded in the City's budget. Any costs not covered by rate revenue would be covered by the City budget (property taxes) and any surplus revenues would be returned to the general fund. The cost of running the utility would be examined as part of the budget process and could face cuts along with other city functions.

With an Enterprise Fund, the utility can carry over any surplus in revenues (into "reserves") to be used for future capital improvements or operating costs. The intent would be for the "enterprise" to operate as a business where the revenues generated would sustain the operation of the enterprise. However, it cannot run a deficit (once all the carry forward funds are depleted) – then the Enterprise Fund budget must be balanced by an infusion of funds from the City budget and/or rate increases.

The downside of an Enterprise Fund is that it tends to receive less scrutiny during the budget process. As long as there are sufficient funds to operate the enterprise, there is virtually no effort to reduce costs to minimize the need for any rate increases. There is also little effort to have gradual rate increases to sustain the enterprise fund. It is only when the fund is projected to exhaust its funds that rate increases are considered and by that time the rate increase required to balance the enterprise fund's budget are double digit percentage increases.

In Lowell, the rates for the enterprise funds were last changed in 2008. There were no changes in 2009. Now in 2010 and working under the FY2011 Budget,

we are facing large increases in the rates to avoid a large increase on the Property tax levy.

The Wastewater Enterprise fund is currently drawing 29.1% of its budget from reserves. At that rate, the reserves will be depleted in 18 months. There was an 11% increase to the rates in 2008. At that time, it was projected that additional rate increases of 26% in 2010, 11% in 2011 and 11% in 2012 would be needed to keep the fund self-sustaining.

The Water Enterprise fund is currently drawing 8.3% of its budget from reserves. That would require \$757,000 from reserves, but there is only \$113,478 in reserves as we enter FY2011. If the rates are not increased, then an additional \$643,522 will have to be raised in property taxes in FY2011.

The Parking Enterprise fund is currently drawing 5.7% of its budget from reserves. That requires 332,000 from a reserve of \$754,000. At that rate, the reserves will be depleted in just over 2 years.

In essence, all of our Enterprise Funds have structural deficits that will have to be addressed immediately. We have to do something to address the needs of these funds. Although, rate increases appear inevitable due to capital improvements that were approved by previous Councils; we have to do what we can to minimize the costs of operation and debt service to minimize the cost increases to the users of these services.

We are awaiting the City Manager's proposal to address these Enterprise Fund issues. This must be addressed before the State can set our FY2011 property tax rate (usually in December).



Joe Mendonca is a former Lowell School Committeeman (1999 - 2006), a former Lowell City Councillor (2007) and was elected to the Lowell City Council last year.

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TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

HAVERHILL/LAWRENCE – Mayor Jim Fiorentini and the Haverhill School Committee have hired former Lawrence Superintendent Jim Scully as acting Superintendent of Schools. In 1997, Scully was railroaded by then Secretary of Education Bob Antonucci and former mayor Mary Claire Kennedy for allowing school board members to use laptop computers (which saved the schools more than \$100,000 in paper costs). Scully was targeted after refusing to hire a relative of Lenny Degnan who was an advisor to Mayor Kennedy at the time. Despite the fact that the majority of the Lawrence school committee (at the time) had approved every one of Scully's expenditures that the Department of Education and Mayor Kennedy were claiming to be illegal (including Kennedy herself) those same board members decided to throw Scully under the bus and illegally violated his contract by firing him. So, why do I bring up all this unpleasant stuff 20 years later, while Scully is enjoying a new found sense of redemption? Because I was one of only two school board members who voted NOT to fire Scully and exposed the back room deals being cut by state and local officials to railroad him. As such, I feel personally vindicated for defending Scully against the bogus allegations against him and the outright lies that were used to push him out of a job he did exceptionally well. One thing for sure, the children of the Haverhill Public Schools are VERY lucky to now have a superintendent who cares more about their future than he does his own.

LAWRENCE - Rotary Club Presents: Lowell Spinners v. Brooklyn Cyclones, LeLacheur Park
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Rick Parthum of the Lawrence High School Alumni Association announces Davante Keeshawn Jones as the winner of a \$100 Scholarship donated by the editorial board of The Valley Patriot.

meal includes: grilled steak tips, BBQ ribs, sausages, hot dogs, chicken wings, tossed salad, pasta salad, corn on the cob, baked beans, fruit, water and soft drinks. Beer & wine are available at an extra charge.

To reserve tickets, please email Bill Shack at:ShackLawOffice@comcast.net
CORRECTION - A note a correction: last month we ran a story about Relay For Life's team Pillars of Strength and incorrectly reported that they raised \$200. The actual amount raised was \$2,000 that night.



Sal Lupoli, winner of the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award

LAWRENCE - The Operational Services Division (OSD) has announced that the FREE Connecting Your Business to the Commonwealth Workshop will be held in Lawrence at the Heritage State Park in collaboration with the City of Lawrence Office of Economic Development. The Connecting Your Business to the Commonwealth provides businesses that are interested in doing business with the Commonwealth training on the procurement process and Comm-PASS (the Commonwealth's e-Procurement system). The workshop provides informa-

tion on where to find bidding and grant opportunities for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Federal Stimulus Funding). These free workshops will be held in every region of the State with the intention of increasing the number of potential State vendors – large and small. These workshops normally fill-up in a short time. The Connecting Your Business to the Commonwealth is a 3-hour interactive session scheduled to start at 9 AM on Tuesday, 27 July 2010. We expect this workshop to be packed with businesses energized for success. Additional details are available on our website at www.mass.gov/osd. To register, please send an email to FOConnor@CityofLawrence.com. Details can be found on the Operational Services Division Web Site at www.mass.gov/OSD Business Training Web Page.

LAWRENCE - The Lawrence Teachers' Union awarded six \$1,500 scholarships this year. Three were presented to children of union members and three scholarships were given to members of the class of 2010 at Lawrence High. The union hosted a reception for the winners and their families in the Robert Frost Room at the Lawrence Public Library. The winners are as follows: LHS - Cindy Marte College of

the Holy Cross, Marisela Payano Middlesex Community College, Samuel Paulino University of Pennsylvania, LTU Brianne Deyermund University of South Carolina, Curtis O'Donnell Bunkerhill Community College, and Francis Schaufenbil University of Massachusetts Lowell. Kathy Delaney is chairperson of the Lawrence Teachers' Union Scholarship Committee. She was assisted by Kim Barry, Patricia Driscoll, Sean McCarthy, Nancy Par-chuke, Doug Sullivan, and James White.

HAVERHILL - BJ's Wholesale Club and the nonprofit Operation Gratitude have collected 108,816 letters for deployed troops in celebration of Military Appreciation Month. The letters will be included in care packages distributed to individual U.S. Service Members through Operation Gratitude. BJ's Charitable Foundation is also donating \$50,000 to the nonprofit to help defray the cost of shipping care packages. BJ's challenged the communities in which it has clubs, (including residents in Haverhill) to write personal letters for deployed troops. BJ's Members, Team Members and local community organizations collected 71,031 letters and Operation Gratitude volunteers contributed another 37,785. Letters were dropped in the Operation Gratitude mail-

box at any BJ's Club, submitted online via BJ's Facebook page or mailed directly to the nonprofit. BJ's Charitable Foundation additionally pledged to donate \$1 for every letter received, up to \$50,000, for Operation Gratitude.

Operation Gratitude is a nonprofit, volunteer-based organization that annually sends more than 100,000 care packages filled with snacks, entertainment items and personal letters of appreciation addressed to individual U.S. Service Members deployed in hostile regions.

HAVERHILL - Haverhill Farmers' Market, July 17 don't miss the opening of this year's, further expanded, Farmers' Market. The new hours are Saturdays from 9 am to 1 pm. For information visit www.haverhillfarmersmarket.org.

HAVERHILL - River Ruckus, August 14 Excitement continues to build for the

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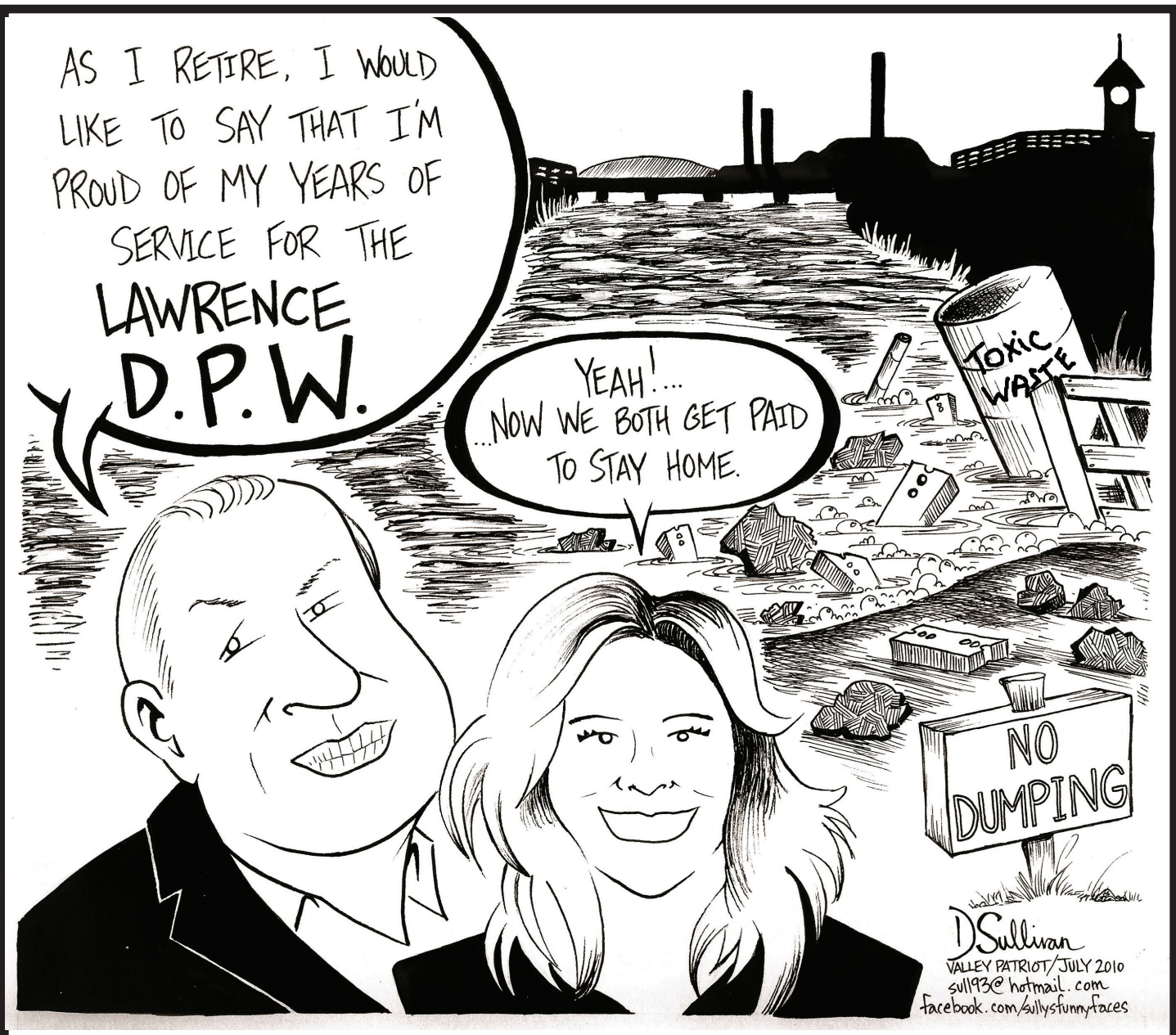
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GRAND OPENING

first annual River Ruckus event, inspired by discussion at Team Haverhill’s “Possible Dreams” community gathering this past January. The day will include street performers, food, classic cars, on-stage entertainment, art exhibits, and special evening activities including a lighted boat parade on the Merrimack River. Rain date is August 15. Sponsors, exhibitors and performers may contact RuckusEvent@comcast.net. :

LAWRENCE- DPW Director Frank McCann retires. In the past six years alone, the Valley Patriot has published no less than half a dozen major stories about environmental disasters in the City of Lawrence. Among them were photos and stories revealing; leaking toxic chemicals found oozing at the water treatment plant, (where city workers were exposed to the hazardous materials every day); Mercury illegally stored at the city’s water pumping station in South Lawrence; DEP reports of E-Coli in the Lawrence water (and the DPW’s refusal to adequately test the water before residents of the city consumed it); illegal chemical storage and illegal dumping by DPW workers along the Spickett River, DPW workers illegally dumping construction waste on the banks of the Shawsheen River; illegal dumping by city workers at the Belliveau Cemetery; EPA reports of untreated raw sewage billowing into the Shawsheen River; and so many more. What’s more, in each of those incidents, McCann was never held accountable by city officials and in some cases state and federal agencies had to force the outgoing DPW director to clean up the hazards. With McCann’s departure we are hearing that former City Council President Pat Blanchette is being groomed to replace him. Blanchette is a strong ally of McCann and his wife Andrea Traficanti who is out on stress leave and being paid to stay home. Blanchette’s brother Peter is now the head of the Inspectional Services Department which is under the authority of the DPW. If Mayor Lantigua does decide to replace McCann with Blanchette we can look forward to years of additional stories regarding illegal dumping by city workers, chemicals being illegally stored and environmental disasters popping up all over the city. As a side



NEWS ITEM: Lawrence DPW Director Frank McCann announces his retirement after years of environmental disasters in the city under his command, including: illegal dumping along the Spickett and Shawshen Rivers, leaking toxic chemicals and health hazards from illegal activity by DPW workers.

note: raw sewage continues to flow into the Shawsheen River behind the South Lawrence East School.

HAVERRHILL – Mayor Fiorentini is cutting the pay of 30 EMT’s whose EMT certifications and licenses have been lifted by the State. Fiorentini said that his final budget cut the Fire Department budget by \$58,000, an amount representing the stipends scheduled to be paid to 30 EMT’s whose licenses have been suspended by the State. “We are not going to pay an EMT stipend to people whose certifications were lifted,” Fiorentini said. The mayor added that the internal probe of the Fire Department EMT’s would continue and that further disciplinary action would be taken against those found to have faked their EMT certifications. Fiorentini told the Valley Patriot that he is considering terminating city employees who were involved in the fraud but that he was awaiting further

information from the State before taking action. “We will not tolerate this type of wrongdoing and we are taking this very seriously” Fiorentini concluded.

LAWRENCE – Now that DPW Director Frank McCann is retiring, City Councilors have suddenly discovered how to criticize and expose the shenanigans that go on in the city’s Public Works Department. Last week, the council discovered that there were two city workers in DPW who were laid off in the 2009 city budget, but these politically connected city workers (carpenters, I understand) just kept showing up for work every day ... and wouldn’t you know it? Frank McCann just kept paying them anyways. Not only that, but Personnel Director Frank Bonet never sent an employee action form notifying the treasurer or the comptroller to stop paying McCann’s buddies. And the best part...they have been on the payroll ever since! Councilor Dan Rivera went on a

tear at the last meeting calling for an official reprimand of comptroller Dave Cummasso for not putting a stop to the illegal paychecks being cut to DPW workers, but none of the councilors called for a reprimand of the department heads who WERE responsible and allowed this happen in the first place. Namely DPW Director Frank McCann and Personnel Frank Bonet.

LAWRENCE/BOSTON– Sal Lupoli, of Sal’s Riverwalk and Sal’s Pizza fame, proudly accepted the Ernst & Young 2010 Entrepreneur of the Year Award of New England last month. Lupoli and 30 other finalists attended a black tie gala event hosted by Ernst & Young at the Boston Renaissance Harbor Hotel. “The competition was fierce and I am truly humbled to have been selected amongst superior competition and resumes of my fellow finalist,” Lupoli said. During his acceptance speech, Lupoli credited his parents, family

NOTEBOOK: PAGE 32



Bill & Charlie's

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Dental Bright Advanced Family Dentistry is a state of the Art Dental practice in the Merrimack valley. All Dentists are either specialists or have completed an advanced degree of general dentistry.

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The Dental Bright team, Dr. Dario Gonzalez, Dr. Adela Agolli Tarshi, Dr. Marci Mazzuca, Dr. Sharmi Shah and Dr. Shila Sharifi are excited to be part of the community and eager to give back to the Merrimack valley city employees, firemen, police officers and troops by providing them with complimentary teeth whitening when they become a new patient.

Dental Bright Advanced Family Dentistry is located at 488 Essex Street Lawrence MA.

Contact: Michael S. Tarshi, Dental Bright Advanced Family Dentistry, 978-975-8888

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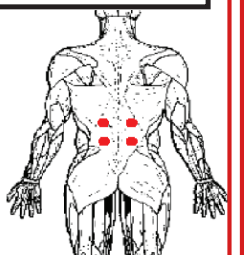
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Rami R. Rustum, M.D. is the Director of Merrimack Pain Associates. For any questions or concerns, please email Dr. Rustum at: ramirustum@comcast.net



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Hampton Beach Activities

Fireworks at Hampton Beach, 14 special Fireworks Displays. The Finest in Display Fireworks. Wednesdays and Holidays, at 9:30 PM, beginning Sun., May 30th (Memorial Day) - Oct., 10th (Columbus Day Weekend).

July 7, 14, 21, 28, August 4, 11, 18, 25 Sept. 1st, Labor Day Weekend-Sept. 5th October 9th, Harvest Festival weekend New Years Eve, December 31 at 8 PM Sat. September 11th - Annual Seafood Festival Special Shoot (at 8:15 pm)

Hampton Beach Casino - Ocean Blvd. Hampton, NH 603-335-5334. Where the Beach meets the Stars! Box Office Hours Mon-Fri 10 am - 5pm, call: 603-929-4100

LaBec Rouge - Live nightly entertainment featuring local bands. Rock, Blues, Jazz. Open Deck or lower level. Full Service Restaurant and Lounge. 73 Ocean Blvd., Hampton Beach, NH, 603-926-5050

Boardwalk Inn & Cafe - Entertainment, Late night menu, Summer night on the patio. 139 Ocean Blvd. Hampton, NH 03842, call: 603-929-7400

Hampton Beach Seashell - Live entertainment weekly. View the summer live entertainment schedule.

Stacey Jane's - Hampton Beach's only multi-venue 365 day a year entertainment spot. Enjoy Karaoke 7 nights a week inside Stacey Jane's Bar & Restaurant. Inside the same building you can enjoy the all new Blarney Stone Food & Spirits, authentic Irish cuisine and Live entertainment. A quick walk upstairs will bring you to Club Madison, a city style dance experience on the beach. There's always something going on under our roof. Restaurant & Lounge. 9A Ocean Boulevard, Hampton Beach, NH, 603-929-9005.

COME SING WITH US ALL SUMMER LONG AT THE SINGING CHURCH!

The Hampton Beach Community Church is a Non-Denominational Church located at 49 Ashworth Avenue, Hampton Beach, NH, (behind McDonald's & the Water Slide, near the corner of D Street and Ashworth). The Singing Church holds Sunday services at 9:30AM each week in the summer time beginning June 20th and running for twelve weeks through September 5th.

BLUE OCEAN MUSIC HALL LIVE ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE THROUGH AUGUST 6, 2010

Thurs., July 8, 8pm - COMEDIAN PAUL D'ANGELO (\$17)
Fri., July 9, 8pm - GARY HOEY Anything Goes opens (\$20)
Thurs., July 15, 8pm - DONOVAN FRANKENREITER (\$25)
Fri. July 16, 7pm - COMEDIAN BOB MARLEY (\$25)
Wed., July 21, 8pm - JUDY COLLINS (\$40)
Thurs., July 22, 6:30pm - TOM CHAPIN (\$15)
Fri., July 23, 8pm - TOYS IN THE ATTIC - The Nation's #1 Aerosmith Show (\$25)
Wed., July 28, 8pm - CHANGES IN LATITUDE (\$25); Pre-show tailgate party - 4pm (\$15)
Thurs., July 29, 8pm - GIN BLOSSOMS (\$38)
Fri., July 30, 8pm - SONNY LANDRETH & LOS STRAIGHTJACKETS (\$30)
Fri., August 6, 8pm - THE FOOLS & FORTUNE (\$20/\$25)
Wed., August 11, 8pm - BELA FLECK, ZAKIR HUSSAIN & EDGAR MEYER (\$40/\$45)
Thursday, August 12, 8pm - COMEDIAN JIMMY TINGLE (\$20)
Friday, August 13, 8pm - THE POUSETTE-DART BAND Satch Kearns Band open (\$25)
Thursday, August 19, 8pm - EVOLUTION A Tribute to Journey (\$25)
Friday, August 20, 8pm - EASTON CORBIN, Chad Burdick opens (\$23)
Thursday, August 26, 8pm - COMEDIAN PAUL D'ANGELO (\$17)
Friday, August 27, 8pm - THE KINGSTON TRIO Allen Williams opens (\$45)

About the Salisbury Beach Blue Ocean Music Hall. Showcasing national and regional bands and solo acts from today, as well as artists and musicians from the past who maintain a dedicated fan base, Blue Ocean Music Hall caters to discriminating adults and baby boomers ranging in age from their 30s through their 60s. The music hall presents artists in a wide range of genres, from rock and R&B, to jazz and country. Comedy shows and children's entertainers are also a focus of the show offerings. Featuring exceptional acoustics and a comfortable, relaxed environment with panoramic ocean views, Blue Ocean Music Hall has a seating capacity of close to 500 people, and a 750-person capacity for general admission shows. Most seats are within 50 feet of the stage and the versatile space can be configured as needed, including cabaret style with cocktail table seating, traditional theater style or open floor with limited seating for larger general admission shows.

Surfside 5 Beach Bar & Grill on Salisbury Beach

Summer's here and it's hot on the beach--and at SurfSide5 Beach Bar & Grill, the region's coolest beach hot spot featuring a huge 8,000 sq.-ft. deck directly over the ocean! In addition to its line up of great live bands and DJs every weekend, don't miss the popular "Reggae Sunday" Island Beach Party with regional reggae favorites

Hot Like Fire performing on the deck every Sunday from 4-8:00pm, rain or shine. SurfSide5

also offers the best viewing for fireworks over the ocean every Saturday night at 10pm! SurfSide5 serves refreshing tropical drinks and cocktails, as well as salads, sandwiches and other light fare prepared on the deck side grill. Located at 25 Broadway on Salisbury Beach, SurfSide5 is currently open every day throughout the summer. For hours and a complete entertainment schedule, please visit www.surfside5.com or call 978.463.9222.

ENTERTAINMENT AT SURFSIDE5 THROUGH AUGUST 1, 2010

Check out live images of the surf at Salisbury Beach from the SurfSide5 deck "surfcam" at surfside5.com, then jump-start your summer with these hot live acts (rain or shine):

Fri., July 9th, 9pm-12:30am - BEFORE THE CRASH
Sat., July 10, Noon - 6pm - SurfSide Saturday Beach Party with DJ Davey K.
Sat., July 10, 9pm-12:30am - MUGSY
Sun., July 11, 4-8pm - HOT LIKE FIRE and the Reggae Sunday Island Beach Party (every Sunday rain or shine on the oceanfront deck)

Fri., July 16, 9pm-12:30am - ROCK DADDY'S

Sat., July 17, Noon - 6pm - SurfSide Saturday Beach Party with DJ Davey K.

Sat., July 17, 9pm-12:30am - BAHAMA BOB - Bud Light Lime Patio Party with WAAF's Hillman Morning Show host, Greg Hill - enter to win a Jet Ski!

Sun., July 18, 4-8pm - HOT LIKE FIRE and the Reggae Sunday Island Beach Party (every Sunday rain or shine on the oceanfront deck)

Thurs., July 22, 9pm-12:30pm - ALAN GOODRICH

Fri., July 23, 9pm-12:30am - PAT HALL & FRIENDS

Sat., July 24, Noon - 6pm - SurfSide Saturday Beach Party with DJ Davey K.

Sat., July 24, 9pm-12:30am - LIQUID AUDIO BAND

Sun., July 25, 4-8pm - HOT LIKE FIRE and the Reggae Sunday Island Beach Party (every Sunday rain or shine on the oceanfront deck)

Thurs., July 29, 9:00pm-12:30pm - ED ANTONELLI

Fri., July 30, 9:00pm-12:30am - BLUES EXPRESS

Sat., July 31, Noon - 6:00pm - SurfSide Saturday Beach Party with DJ Davey K.

Sat., July 31, 9:00pm-12:30am - DISCOUNT GIGALOS

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NEWBURYPORT

Now calling for Artists’ Submissions

Firehouse Center currently seeks new material for gallery exhibitions.

Newburyport MA, June 22, 2010. The Firehouse Center Art Gallery is now calling for submissions from artists for work to be exhibited in the gallery between March 15, 2011 and February 2012. Submissions are now being accepted and the deadline is August 16, 2010. The final selection of artists will be made by the Firehouse Visual Arts Committee by October 30, 2010.

Artists may submit proposals for exhibition of two-dimensional work in any medium. Each exhibit will consist of 1 or 2 person(s), group or themed shows, and typically run for 6 weeks.

Submissions should include: artist’s statement and resume; 10 to 20 digital images of work indicative of the current style of the artist, a self-addressed stamped envelope for return of materials (SASE), \$20 submission fee (check made payable to Firehouse Center for the Arts), and a cover letter with name and contact information. Printed guidelines are available on the Firehouse website at www.firehouse.org.

The first floor gallery accommodates 18 average size (18” X 24”) art works. The Firehouse Visual Arts Committee reviews all submissions and selects artists for exhibition. The Firehouse Center Gallery has been displaying the work of New England artists since 1991.

Submit all materials, including payment, by mail to the Firehouse or they may be hand-delivered to the box office addressed to: Judy Hallberg – Gallery Submissions. Firehouse Center for the Arts, Market Sq., Newburyport, MA 01950.

Senator Tisei offers statewide property tax relief proposal

Calls for casino money to be returned to homeowners, businesses

BOSTON – Senate Minority Leader Richard R. Tisei has called for the creation of a new Property Taxpayers Relief Fund that would use casino revenues to annually reduce property tax bills across the Commonwealth. Tisei filed the proposal as an amendment to the Senate’s casino legislation, which is scheduled to be debated beginning on Wednesday.

Under Tisei’s proposal, the revenues generated through the licensing and taxing of casinos would be deposited in the new fund, and the state would use this money to issue an annual rebate check to homeowners and business owners to offset their local property tax bills. The amount of the rebate would vary from year to year, and would be determined based on the amount of revenues generated for the fund during the preceding fiscal year.

“Four years ago, Governor Patrick campaigned on a promise to end the ‘fiscal shell game’ of high property taxes in Massachusetts,” said Tisei. “But that promise was never kept, and property taxes continue to pose a major financial burden for residents. This is a chance for the Legislature to do what Governor Patrick has failed to do, which is to provide meaningful tax relief for the state’s homeowners and business owners.”

When Governor Patrick assumed office in 2007, the average property tax bill for a single family residence in Massachusetts was \$3,962. Last year, the average property tax bill jumped to \$4,250, representing a 7.1 percent increase.

Statewide, property taxes accounted for \$10.489 billion in municipal revenues in 2007, but generated \$11.553 billion last year, according to figures compiled by the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation. That represents an increase of 9.2 percent since Patrick took office.

“The state has put local communities into an impossible situation,” said Tisei. “Governor Patrick has cut local aid every year he has been in office, and without a workable health care plan design option to control costs, cities and towns have been forced to rely more and more on property taxes to pay for basic municipal services and operating expenses.

“Governor Patrick dropped the ball four years ago with his empty promises to the state’s taxpayers,” he added. “My proposal gives the Legislature the opportunity to provide the long-overdue relief Massachusetts residents have been waiting for since 2006

Georgetown, Obama, & Muslims

Lawrence “Lonnie” Brennan
VALLEY PATRIOT GEORGETOWN COLUMNIST

Georgetown tends to slow down and empty out a bit during July and August, but for those who stick around, there are many hidden gems and future events to add to your calendar, and local destinations within easy striking distance for the day traveler.

But, before I get too far along, let’s first stop and take note of how Mr. Barack Hussein Obama has ‘boldly gone’ were no president has gone before. Let me explain.

As I write this column, Mr. Obama’s new appointee, NASA Chief Charlie Bolden, has announced to the press both in writing and in video footage that he has been directed by the Muslim lineage bearing Obama to give NASA a new mission: go forth and seek out better relations with Muslims. Say what?

Google it. Watch the videos. Search your heart and think and pause for a minute: According to well-documented, clear video, repeated press articles, unabashed declarations with no retractions or alterations, the new mission of our United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration will shift from space exploration to, yup, gulp, pause, shake head, hold nose and shake head: Muslim diplomacy.

Can anyone remember John Fitzgerald Kennedy? Can anyone remember JFK’s vision for NASA and for the American people?

Turning to Georgetown, if you’re new around here, or if you’ve gotten yourself into a rut, you might not have visited or partaken in some of the local settings and events.

Let’s start with our three ponds. Rock Pond has easy boat access near the former Rock Pond Restaurant, and parking is easy. If you want to cool off a bit, it will do. If you can find the American Legion Park (hint, seek out Georgetown Lumber Supply, the best and most helpful lumber shop around), you’ll find a treasure land: swings, kiddy play lands, ball fields, basketball areas, bandstand, tennis courts, and of course, swimming, etc. Go across the pond and find easy boat access and nice fishing. The Summer Concert Series will

start soon making it a great place to spend a festive couple of hours for food and entertainment on Sunday early evenings.

Across town, you can find a cool respite in the shaded trails of Camp Denison off Nelson Street. Bring your canoe and a picnic lunch and have a great time.

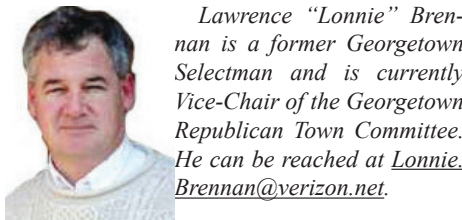
Farmer’s Market is starting up downtown, and before too much time goes by, we’ll be having Georgetown Days in Sept. (24-26, mark the dates). Also, for those who remember that dates on the calendar are closer than they appear, be sure to stop down the Police Station and purchase a raffle ticket (only 100 are being sold, for \$20 each) to win a pair of the best seats at Fenway, and help support the Georgetown Police Department’s Baseball Clinic.

Also, the Knights of Columbus is well along with sales for the Fall “Kadet Club” fundraising event. Scheduled this year for Oct. 16th, Police Chief James Mulligan will be the Master of Ceremonies. Only 200 tickets will be sold, and at press time, less than 30 are remaining at \$70 each for unlimited food, beverages, and a chance to win up to \$5,000.00. Contact any Knight or check out www.GeorgetownKofC.org for details.

Finally, a hat’s off to the Georgetown Fish and Game Association for two great recent events: a magnificent Flag Day ceremony and the training and subsequent certification for awarding of merit badges to many of the local Boy Scouts!

2010 Georgetown Summer Concert Series, 5-7 pm at American Legion Park:

July 11: Soul Alley; July 18: Porch Rockers; July 25: Under Atoms; August 1, Jeeny Dee & the Deelinquents; August 8: Girls Guns 7 Glory; August 15: Erin Harpe; and local blockbuster favorites, August 22: Don’t Call Me Shirley! Check out www.gtownculture.org for more details on these events and bands, and other events in Georgetown, along with www.GeorgetownToday.com!




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.

Governor Patrick Accuses Baker of being responsible for The BIG DIG

“Today’s Boston Globe story raises troubling questions about Charlie Baker’s central role in the failed financing and oversight of the Big Dig. It is clear from the story that Baker has repeatedly misled the people of Massachusetts about his role in developing the finance plan that has now saddled taxpayers with over \$800 million in debt, and that he failed to reign in billions in cost overruns. Baker owes the people of Massachusetts a full and

honest accounting of his role in the Big Dig.

Charlie Baker’s credibility is at stake here. His repeated claims that he played a limited role in developing the failed financing for the Big Dig have been proven false by public documents uncovered by the Boston Globe. Voters cannot take anything Baker says seriously until he comes clean about his role in the failed Big Dig financing scheme.”



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Chelmsford Celebrates America's Birthday



Photo of Scott Brown and Martha Coakley by Tom Christiano of Chelmsford. All Other Photos: Tom Duggan

LAWRENCE: FROM PAGE 10

efforts to the contrary.

While fire and police budgets were being irresponsibly slashed by 17% and 13%, respectively, you had city councilors, who basically are part-time city employees, balking at 20% pay cuts and health insurance eliminations. This when scores of fire and police are being laid off and the survivors are suffering major pay cuts. The councilors did not come to this conclusion based on any facts or in-depth policy analysis. No, they balked at cutting their own featherbedding based simply on their own personal situations. One city councilor on a fixed income couldn't handle the pay cut, even though the pay would still be at a level higher than when he was first elected three years ago.

Another city councilor said it wouldn't work for her, but she left out the fact that she quit a full-time, well-paying gig with the school department so she could take on the role of a part-time city councilor. Good jobs at good wages be damned. The discussion about their accessibility for health insurance on the taxpayer nickel was even worse, voting for the elimination before they realized what they did and then reversing it, thinking no one was watching at home at such a late hour. So much for shared sacrifice and pain.

Sure, the city is in dire straits, as are most of the other 351 communities across the Commonwealth. And sure, the city is so bad off it had to borrow \$24 million dollars, and spend it faster than it came in.

But one would think that such a disaster would be prime time for revamping the entire city hall system and instituting much needed consolidations and modernizations. Instead, what we got is an administration whose first act was to declare war on the public safety components of our city services – the one sector we really need. And to top it off, their idea of improving code enforcement and bringing in more revenue through more fines and penalties is to cut the Inspectional Services Department by 14%. It is as if the Lantiguaistas want to drive us so far into the hole that a receiver will be faced with a city whose burgeoning middle class was driven out by short-sighted, petty policies of those ill-equipped to govern.

The mayor has made the point a thousand times if he has made it once – we are suffering under very expensive union

contracts. We agree. But to telegraph your negotiation stance ahead of time and to cut public safety personnel beyond the necessary levels demanded to maintain societal order in the criminal chaos that is Lawrence is no way to go about governing and building confidence amongst the taxpaying constituents.

Whether by design or by accident, this administration has set us on a downhill course and most of our city councilors are too blind with glory to see it.



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

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Ye Gay Ol' Valley

WWJD

D. B. Langevin

VALLEY PATRIOT LESBIAN COLUMNIST

Last March, in Boulder, Colorado, two grade school girls were kicked out of Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish because their parents are lesbians. The same thing happened in May at St. Paul Elementary School in Hingham, MA. This time it was an 8-year-old boy with lesbian mothers who was denied entrance. In both instances the residing pastors of the school stated that the children's parents do not adhere to Catholic Church teachings.

Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston and the superintendent of Catholics schools, Mary Grassa O'Neil, both agreed that children should not be denied a Catholic school education because of gay parents. They went on to say that there is, "... no policy barring children of gay parents from attending Catholic schools." Parents simply need to be aware of and accept that Catholic Church teachings are a major part of their school's curriculum. O'Malley even went so far as to send a letter to all Catholic Schools stating that no scholarship money will be awarded to any school that discriminates.

The reaction by the Archdiocese in Denver was quite the opposite. Archbishop Charles Chaput supported the decision of the pastor at Sacred Heart of Jesus parish. Chaput is quoted as saying that their admission policy states, "No person shall be admitted as a student ... unless that person and his/her parent(s) subscribe to ... and abide by the educational policies and regulations of the school and Archdiocese. If parents do not respect the

beliefs of the church, or live in a manner that openly rejects those beliefs ... their actions disqualify their children from enrollment."

Both sets of lesbian parents say that they are Christian and find the curriculum of Catholic schools valuable and desirable. The parents in Colorado are active in their church, attend mass regularly, and one of them has even been awarded for her work in the church. They are disheartened by the school's decision.

Naturally, public opinion is split on whether or not Catholic schools have the right to deny entrance or expel students whose parents are gay. I say they do. As a private institution they have that very right. They are not public schools that, by law, must accept any child who lives in their district. Private schools have luxuries that public schools do not. They have the right to pick and choose their student body. They can kick out students for major or minor infractions. Give a nun the finger, break dress code, or announce you're gay- you're out. No such thing in the public sector. Students in public schools can do anything from telling a teacher to go perform a physically impossible sexual act on themselves to threaten them with bodily harm and the school has little recourse. Try to pass down any type of discipline and you'll get an angry phone call from an irate parent or guardian faster than you can say 'suspended'. The student's legal care taker will be up one side of the school's administrator

WWJD, page 31

Opposing the Death Penalty

Paul Murano

VALLEY PATRIOT CULTURE COLUMNIST

The terms capital punishment and decapitate come from the same Latin word for regarding the head.

Although the death penalty was often the removal of one's head, there have been other ways of administering it throughout history. Socrates was poisoned, Stephen was stoned, and Jesus was crucified; representing the Greek, Jewish and Roman methods in antiquity. Historically it was given to those seen as causing instability to the status quo or corruption to the people. But why do we have it today? If you asked people on the street you would probably get emotional responses like... For the sake of the victim's family, or They don't deserve to live, or I don't want them to breathe the same air I breathe. But should the state act out of anger or vengeance? The deterrence argument has evidence on both sides and the justice argument of an eye for an eye lacks credibility; that principle of justice would demand that killers be killed, rapists be raped, thieves be burglarized, slanderers be defamed, etc. Is this how punishment should be meted out? At this point two questions need to be asked:

- a. What is the purpose of punishment?
- b. Does a cold-blooded killer deserve to live?

To answer the second one first, perhaps not. Equal justice demands a murderer's death. But does perfect justice always demand equal justice? As mentioned above, that would be impractical and absurd. And where would each of us be today if we got exactly what we deserved throughout our lives? The role of an authority figure,

whether it be a parent or the state, is to administer with prudence the appropriate punishment that would bring about maximum benefit for the individual and community.

The purpose of punishment, therefore, is to redress the disorder caused by the act, ensuring security for the community and an opportunity to change for the perpetrator. The idea of correction seeks this end; keeping in mind that change of heart does not necessarily translate into rehabilitation. Healing from habitual compulsion can take a lifetime, and such penance should be lived separated from the innocent. Natural law demands that authority keep the innocent safe from an unjust aggressor, and this principle of legitimate defense could include a fatal blow is necessary – but only if excessive force is avoided and killing the aggressor is not intended. And this brings us to the most important question of the debate: Is the death penalty necessary to protect the innocent?

There are legitimate arguments on both sides of this question, but it seems most reasonable to conclude that in this society, and in most (if not all) others of the 21st century, we have the means to protect the innocent without resorting to killing. Yes, in the past murderers have killed after parole as well as fellow inmates while in prison, but these rare instances are a result of a lack of political will to deal correctly with the problem. We have allowed the debate to crystallize into two extremes: The liberal attitude is to parole killers as soon as possible while the conservative position is to kill them as soon as possible. Both are wrong and are led by emotion

MURANO, page 31

Opponents of the Death Penalty Have Blood on their Hands

Dennis Prager

VALLEY PATRIOT SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

Those of us who believe in the death penalty for some murders are told by opponents of the death penalty that if the state executes an innocent man, we have blood on our hands.

They are right. I, for one, readily acknowledge that as a proponent of the death penalty, my advocacy could result in the killing of an innocent person.

I have never, however, encountered any opponents of the death penalty who acknowledge that they have the blood of innocent men and women on their hands.

Yet they certainly do. Whereas the shedding of innocent blood that pro-

ponents of capital punishment are responsible for is thus far, thankfully, only theoretical, the shedding of innocent blood for which opponents of capital punishment are responsible is not theoretical at all. Thanks to their opposition to the death penalty, innocent men and women have been murdered by killers who would otherwise have been put to death.

Opponents of capital punishment give us names of innocents who would have been killed by the state had their convictions stood and they been actually executed, and a few executed convicts whom they believe might have been innocent. But proponents can name men and women who really were -- not might have been -- murdered by convicted murderers while



in prison. The murdered include prison guards, fellow inmates, and innocent men and women outside of prison.

In 1974, Clarence Ray Allen ordered a 17-year-old young woman, Mary Sue Kitts, murdered because she knew of Allen's involvement in a Fresno, California, store burglary.

After his 1977 trial and conviction, Allen was sentenced to life without parole.

According to San Francisco Chronicle columnist Debra Saunders, "In Folsom State Prison, Allen cooked up a scheme to kill the witnesses who testified against him so that he could appeal his conviction and then be freed because any witnesses were dead -- or scared into silence." As a result, three more innocent people were murdered -- Bryon Schletewitz, 27, Josephine Rocha, 17, and Douglas White, 18.

This time, a jury sentenced Allen to death, the only death sentence ever handed down by a Glenn County (California) jury. That was in 1982.

For 23 years, opponents of the death penalty have played with the legal system -- not to mention played with the lives of the murdered individuals' loved ones -- to keep Allen alive.

Had Clarence Allen been executed for the 1974 murder of Mary Sue Kitts, three innocent people under the age of 30 would not have been killed. But because moral clarity among anti-death penalty activists is as rare as their self-righteousness is ubiquitous, finding an abolitionist who will acknowledge moral responsibility for innocents murdered by convicted murderers is an exercise in futility.

Perhaps the most infamous case of a death penalty opponent directly causing the murder of an innocent is that of novelist Norman Mailer. In 1981, Mailer utilized his influence to obtain parole for a bank robber and murderer named Jack Abbott on the grounds that Abbott was a talented writer. Six weeks after being paroled, Abbott murdered Richard Adan, a 22-year-old newlywed, aspiring actor and playwright who was waiting tables at his father's restaurant.

Mailer's reaction? "Culture is worth a little risk," he told the press. "I'm willing to gamble with a portion of society to save this man's talent."

That in a nutshell is the attitude of the abolitionists. They are "willing to gamble

BLOOD, page 31

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WWJD: FROM PAGE 30

and down the other in seconds placing blame on everyone except their child into provoking the emotionally fragile little darling into such an action. The student is now free to go. That would never happen in a Catholic school.

Catholic schools are elite and literally have the God given right to bless or rid their selves of anyone they see fit or unfit for that matter. By all means, Saint Education, ban all children being raised by dykes, faggots, transwhatever, and the few who can't make up their minds whether they like men, women, or better yet, both. Besides, if you do fall into either of those categories why, on God's great earth, would you want your children to go to such a hypocritical, judgmental, unchristian like institution? And I am certainly not addressing every Christian school nation wide. I am referring to those who are willing not to value God's children as individuals. If they are willing to deny your children a Christian education, then they clearly do not have your child's best interest at hand. If the pastor's decision is overturned, you need to consider if they truly have the mantra 'what would Jesus do?' in their heart or do they simply want

your money?

I know many people who have received Catholic educations. Some of them were students of single parents, divorced parents and even Muslim parents, all of which go against Catholic teachings. I watch many of my public school students move onto Catholic high schools and I have no doubt that their educational experience is equal to, less than or better than that of my own children's public schooling. I just don't understand why any self-respecting member of the gay community would subject their children to a mind-set that condemns their life style, minimizes their relationship and refuses to recognize their marriage to the point of calling it an aberration. Please do not tell me it's God's will. If that's what you believe, then your god is too small and not nearly as loving of her creatures as mine.



Dani Langevin is a teacher and has a Bachelors in Fine Art and Masters in Education. She has written four young adult novels, one of which is self-published. You can email Dani at DaniBLangevin@aol.com

MURANO:FROM PAGE 30

rather than reason. We have the means to keep citizens safe from dangerous killers; all we need is the will.

The issue of capital punishment will never be in same the category as abortion or euthanasia, which are moral absolutes because one can never intentionally kill an innocent human being. There you have the direct killing of the innocent, the defenseless unborn and elderly, and it is always under any circumstance morally forbidden. But with the capital punishment there is no direct killing of the innocent; rather, it is a matter of keeping the innocent citizenry safe from an unjust aggressor. This means the death penalty is at least theoretically permissible where legitimate defense would necessitate it. Whether such a place actually exists on earth is another question.

Therefore to summarize, these final two

questions can bring us to a satisfactory conclusion:

- a. Can we keep the innocent safe from a dangerous criminal? Not do we, but can we?
- b. In a culture that regularly kills its preborn offspring and is about to turn on its elderly, does more legal killing further send a message that killing people is a legitimate answer to problems?

The answer to both of these questions is Yes -- therefore capital punishment is wrong.



Paul Murano taught theology and philosophy at Assumption College and Northshore Com. College. He is also a co-host of *The Paying Attention!* radio program on WCAP and Host "Beneath the Surface" on Burlington Cable Access. You can E-mail Paul at PJDM@aol.com

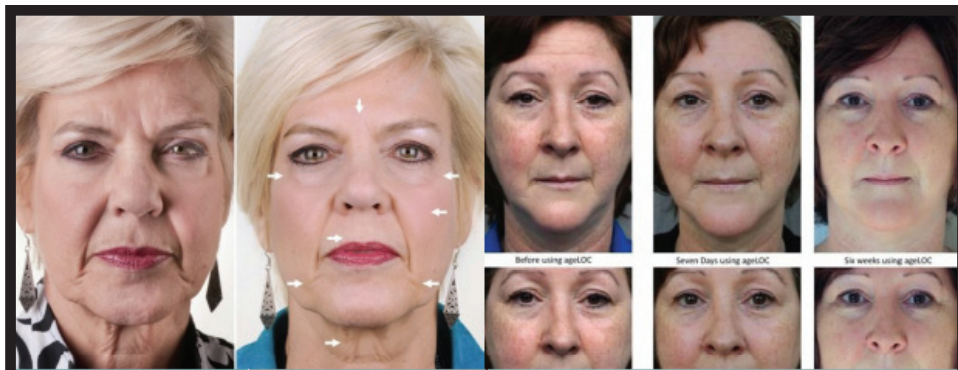
BLOOD:FROM PAGE 30

with a portion of society" -- such as the lives of additional innocent victims -- in order to save the life of every murderer.

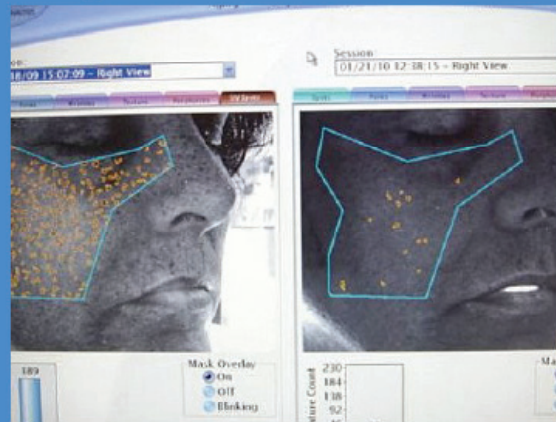
Abolitionists are certain that they are morally superior to the rest of us. In their view, we who recoil at the thought that every murderer be allowed to keep his life are moral inferiors, barbarians essentially. But just as pacifists' views ensure that far more innocents will be killed, so do abolitionists' views ensure that more innocents will die.

There may be moral reasons to oppose taking the life of any murderer (though I cannot think of one), but saving the lives of innocents cannot be regarded as one of them.

Nevertheless, abolitionists will be happy to learn that Amnesty International has taken up the cause of ensuring that Clarence Ray Allen be spared execution. That is what the international community now regards as fighting for human rights.



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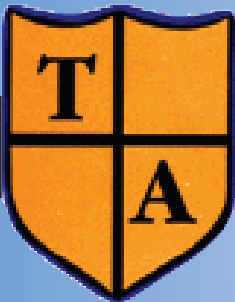
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NOTEBOOK: FROM PAGE 23

and staff for making the award possible and praised the Ernst & Young judging committee/program for hosting such a superior event and competition. As a result of winning the prestigious honor, Mr. Lupoli will compete for the National Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year this November in Palm Springs, California. Lupoli is President/CEO of Lupoli Companies, the flagship name for the divisions of Sal's Pizza Retail/Wholesale Divisions, Salvatore's Restaurants, Mary's Pasta & Sandwiches and Riverwalk Properties.

NEWBURYPORT - On Saturday, July 31, 2010 from 9AM-2PM, the creative, industrious volunteers of the Firehouse are having a yard sale at 16 Laurel Road, Newburyport. All proceeds will benefit the Firehouse Center for the Arts in Newburyport.

HAVERHILL - Kiwanis Clubs and the Council on Aging of Haverhill are sponsoring a Bastille Day Celebration on Wednesday, July 14th. The day-long celebration will take place at J. P. at McBrides in Lafayette Square and begins at 11:30 a.m. French cuisine will be featured along with McBride's regular menu. Entertainment: Pianist Ben Benson will perform from 11:30 to 12:30 p.m. and will play La Marseillaise at noontime; Guitarist Paul Prue will perform from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. and Dixieland Band entertainment will be by The Jazz Disciples from 6 to 7:30 p.m.; Robert Lapierre will supply an abundance of French humor throughout the day. There is no cover charge for this event.

HAVERHILL - COA is hosting a Maine Lobster Bake and Lighthouse Harbor Cruise on July 28. Cost is \$90 per person.

HAVERHILL - Attorney Joseph Cleary will present a seminar on Wills, Estates, Living Wills, and Health Care Proxies on July 15 at the Citizens Center, 10 Welcome St., at 10:00 a.m. Call Kathy Bresnahan Ext. 11 or Rita LaBella Ext. 16 at 978-374-2390 or kbresnahan@cityof-haverhill.com for details.

HAVERHILL - Leslie Bresnahan RN, HIV Program Manager and Tasha Gliklich RN, HIV/AIDS program nurse from Home Health VNA were presented awards by the Merrimack Valley Area Health Education Center (AHEC) and the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center for their dedication and commitment to HIV services at their Annual HIV Awards Breakfast at the Holiday Inn in Tewksbury. Leslie Bresnahan R.N. received special recognition for her 20 years of HIV/AIDS education and prevention, and for her extraordinary contribution to building the HIV service infrastructure in the Merrimack Valley. Tasha Gliklich RN, received the HIV Caregiver Award for the dedication, compassion and expert medical care she provides to patients and families throughout the region. Home Health

VNA's HIV/AIDS program, funded in part by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, promotes positive prevention with an emphasis on providing medical and supportive services for the client and family. For more information, visit www.homehealthvna.org

METHUEN VILLAGE - "Christmas in July" at Methuen Village: Methuen Village at Riverwalk Park, a senior community offering assisted living and state-of-the-art Alzheimer's care, invites the public to a celebration of "Christmas in July" on Wednesday, July 21st at 2PM. Activities include entertainment by folk guitarist and singer Doug Rickard and a presentation of previously collected nonperishable food items for Lazarus House in Lawrence. Anyone wishing to donate food items between July 14 and 21 should contact Methuen Village. - Karaoke Methuen Village at Riverwalk Park, welcomes the public to a karaoke party with Carol Neal on Saturday, July 24 at 2PM.

- Scot Andrew on Piano at Methuen Village: Methuen Village at Riverwalk Park presents Scot Andrew, an accomplished pianist and singer, on Thursday, July 29 at 2:00 p.m. Scot will perform songs from Fats Waller, Scot Joplin, and Duke Ellington. Methuen Village is located in the heart of downtown Methuen at 4 Gleason Street. For more information, call 978-685-2220 or visit www.MethuenVillage.com.

LAWRENCE - For \$100 you can have a chance at winning the following (and support the NECC Foundation at the same time!): (2) tickets to Dancing With The Stars (final results show), (2) RT airfares, \$500 cash (for hotel?) ... ONLY 400 tickets are being sold! They have not even gone on sale yet - let me know if you have any interest, or you can call me at 978.738.7403. Drawing will be held 10/1/10. Contact Martha Leavitt, Director, Lawrence Campus Operations NECC, 78 Amesbury St., Lawrence, MA 01840, 978.738.7403, www.necc.mass.edu

HAVERHILL - MTEL Prep Course Begins August 4 - Northern Essex Community College's Corporate & Community Education Center in North Andover is offering a prep course for individuals who plan to be teachers and are scheduled to take the Massachusetts Tests for Educator



Local Motorcycle Club visit Colonial Heights Nursing Home. Residents had expressed their wish to have some motorcycles come to their home for a show. The local group, The Chieftans, were more than happy to fulfill their request. Residents were treated to motorcycle show from The Chieftans. They were able to have their pictures taken with their favorite bike and member of the club. Everyone enjoyed a cookout and spent the afternoon asking questions and checking out the great variety of bikes.

Licensure (MTEL) in September. Offered on Wednesday evenings, beginning August 4th, this four-week, non-credit course is designed to prepare those who plan to take the September Communication and Literacy Skills Test (CLST). The CLST is the first test required towards licensure as a teacher or educational administrator and for students transferring to four-year colleges to become teachers in the state. This course provides an overview of the test, an intensive review of the skills assessed by the test, the opportunity to take sample tests, and strategies for test-taking. The cost is \$195, which includes materials. For additional information or to register contact Erin O'Brien in Northern Essex's Center for Careers in Teaching at 978-738-7436 or eobrien@necc.mass.edu.

METHUEN - Spread the word! The Valley Patriot's ad designer, Dairon Skye is performing at Paul's Pub on July 10th at 28 Broadway in Methuen. The show is a 21+ event and admission is FREE. The show begins at 9PM.

MERRIMACK/LOWELL - The Merrimack Old Home Days Committee is joining The Lowell Spinners for a Home Run Fundraiser. Try your luck by purchasing a numbered ball for \$10. Following

the Spinners game on September 1st (rain date is Sept. 2nd); a prize target will be placed on the field. A helicopter will then fly over the field, releasing the numbered balls. The ball closest to the center of the target will be awarded the grand prize. Five cash prizes ranging from \$200 to \$2,000* (as well as other prizes donated by local businesses) will be given away. You do not need to be present to win! To purchase your ball or for more information contact Kevin O'Keefe @978-346-4680 or e-mail Old Home Days (oldhomedays@gmail.com) or visit lowellspinners.com *Cash prize based on a minimum total of 2000 balls sold from all participating organizations

DANVERS - NORTH SHORE BUSINESS EVENTS: July 9 - Connie Komack, of Gloucester's Life Work Consulting, will speak at the North Shore Business Forum on how a life coach can improve your business. The North Shore Business Forum meets at 7:15am at the Danversport Yacht Club, Rt. 62 East, Danvers, MA. The \$9 admission fee include a continental breakfast and pre-registration is not required. July 16 - Nicholas Martorano, of Melrose, will speak on July 16 at the North Shore Business Forum on how to turn around a business in trouble. The North Shore Business Forum meets at 7:15am at the Danversport Yacht Club, Rt. 62 East, Danvers, MA. The \$9 admission fee include a continental breakfast and pre-registration is not required. July 23 - Ken Halkin, of Amesbury's Halkin Management, will speak on July 23 at the North Shore Business Forum on how to obtain financing from the bank and other sources. The North Shore Business Forum



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TRAINING:FROM PAGE 34

meets at 7:15am at the Danversport Yacht Club, Rt. 62 East, Danvers, MA. The \$9 admission fee include a continental breakfast and pre-registration is not required. July 30 - Bring plenty of business cards and marketing materials to the open networking event at the North Shore Business Forum on July 30. The North Shore Business Forum meets at 7:15am at the Danversport Yacht Club, Rt. 62 East, Danvers, MA. The \$9 admission fee include a continental breakfast and pre-registration is not required. August 6 – Kate Ritter, of Essex’s PC9LIVES, will speak on August 6 at the North Shore Business Forum on how to sell on Ebay. The North Shore Business Forum meets at 7:15am 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

CHELMSFORD - FALL BULB AND PERENNIAL SALE - The Middlesex Conservation District, a nonprofit environmental agency, will be holding its annual Fall Bulb and Perennial Sale on 9/24 (3-6 pm) and 9/25 (8am - noon) at the 4H Fairgrounds, 51 South Chelmsford Rd, Westford, MA. All items may be ordered in advance for best selection, through September 3; please visit our website at www.middlesexconservation.org, or call 978 692 9395 to receive a sales brochure. All proceeds benefit the District’s conservation programs.

LOWELL/TEWKSBURY - FROM RARA “Got Books” wants your old golf clubs and balls. After a talk with an Iraq veteran, our partner company owner Bob from “Got Books” learned that many troops abroad are looking for golf clubs & golf balls to pass the time. The vet said that during his last 2 weeks overseas he had a lot of downtime and found much needed entertainment in hitting around some golf balls. To help our brave heroes, RARA of Lowell is collecting golf clubs and balls now through July 15th for Local Heroes to send to Iraq and Afghanistan for our troops. You can drop them off at any Used Book Superstore to support the cause! Or you can drop them off at RARA

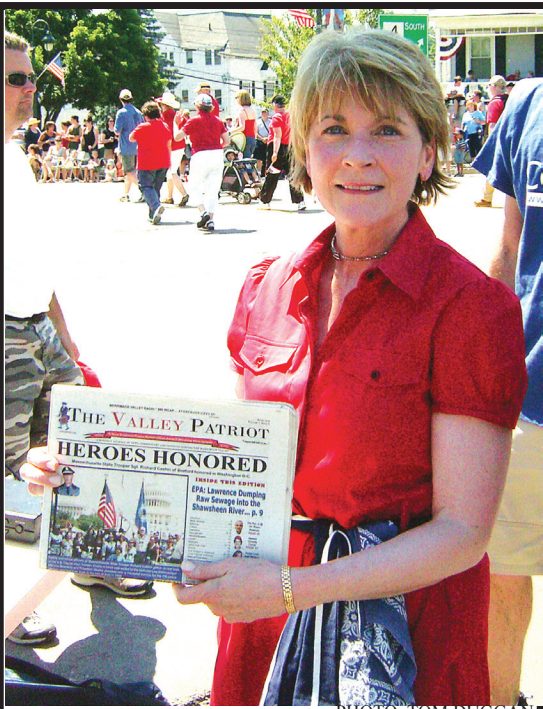
at 117 Walnut Rd in Tewksbury. three-goils2001@yahoo.com. Thank you for supporting our Troops.

VETER-ANS - Senate Democrats torpedo relief for ROTC instructor. The Massachusetts Senate has blocked an attempt by our friend, Senate Minority Leader Richard R. Tisei to protect a junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) instructor in Worcester who is facing termination for refusing to pay \$500 in dues to the local teachers union. Tisei tried to amend a bill that was up for debate in the Senate last month by attaching language that would exempt ROTC instructors employed by any Mass. public secondary school from having to pay union dues, including so-called “agency fees” assessed to offset collective bargaining costs. The amendment was ruled out of order by Democrats as being beyond the scope of the bill. Tisei filed the amendment on behalf of U.S. Marine Major Stephen L. Godin, a junior ROTC instructor at North High School in Worcester, who will lost the job he has held for 14 years because he does not pay the local teachers union by June 15. Tisei said the union’s demands amount to a form of “extortion,” as all of Major Godin’s benefits – including his health insurance and half of his salary – are paid for by the U.S. military. “This is outrageous,”

said Tisei. “Major Godin is facing the loss of his livelihood in just a few days. This is an emergency situation, and I am very disappointed that my Democratic colleagues are not willing to help this man and other individuals who are being strong-armed by the unions. Many of them had no

problems trying to take up a special interest bill today dealing with Presidential elections, but when it came to assisting our veterans, they refused to act.” (FYI: During the session, Senator Tisei challenged the ruling of the chair, but the ruling was upheld on a 31-5 vote of the senate with every Democrat voting against Tisei’s amendment.).

METHUEN - On Saturday, July 17th, the Greater Lawrence Community Boating Program and The Loop shopping center will host the first annual “Concrete Regatta” with



MARTHA READS THE VALLEY PATRIOT - Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley honors our men and women in uniform at the Chelmsford 4th of July Parade and Roadrace (more photos page 29).

hands-on rowing / kayak demos, community fitness challenges, boating games, coloring contest, raffles, giveaways, music and much more. This free event will be launched in the Loews AMC Theatres courtyard from 11 am to 2 pm, and is a great way for families to learn about safe boating and the wide range of GLCBP programs and activities available at the Abe Bashara boathouse. Registrations will be accepted onsite for the second summer session, which starts on July 19 with beginner, intermediate, and advanced classes for youth and adults.

GLCBP has been operating on the Merrimack River for over 30 years, and has recently expanded to add community rowing, fitness classes, school field trips and other educational programs to their activity roster.

For more details on the upcoming 2010 “Concrete Regatta” or information on becoming a member of GLCBP, please call (978)681-8675 or (978)946-9333.

LAWRENCE - Groundwork Lawrence and the City of Lawrence have been awarded \$2.6M from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for its Spicket River Revitalization Project. The funds allow for the realization of a decade-long effort to build the Spicket River Greenway, which will link the new and existing parks along

the River through the lowest-income areas of Lawrence.

LAWRENCE – I know I have been very hard on Councilor Eileen Bernal for not speaking up and refusing to defend people who are being attacked at the city council table but I am starting to see a more aggressive style out of the South Lawrence Councilor and I think I like it! I am still not very happy with her refusal to back up Councilor LaPlante and not deferring to his expertise and POLITICAL wisdom, especially when other councilors with ulterior motives are shutting him down, but the newer, more aggressive Councilor Bernal is starting to make me think there is hope! I am going to sit back for another month or so and wait to see if Bernal starts to grow a set so the people of Lawrence will have two councilors willing to stand up for what is morally right and demand civility and decorum at these meetings.

NORTH ANDOVER – There’s a new Sheriff in town and his name is Dan Lanen. The North Andover Board of Selectmen elected a new chairman last month (as is the custom every year). Chairman Tracey Watson chose not to run again after a very controversial year as chairman. Controversy aside, Watson was a GREAT chairman who has come into her own and certainly grown as a Selectman. I remember when Tracey was first elected she was so worried about not making people mad at her that she was completely ineffective and taken advantage of. Now, Watson has come into her own and is no shrinking violet. I am looking forward to seeing what she is can accomplish now that she is no longer chairman and has the time and energy to be proactive.

LAWRENCE – When it comes to priorities, Mayor Lantigua certainly seems to have things backwards. Since taking office in January he has laid off fire and police officers, given raises to his conies in city hall and blown \$24.5 Million in loan money without accounting for where that money went. But while all this was going on, and Lawrence is supposedly in such a financial crisis, Lantigua STILL has not hired someone to fill the all important BUDGET AND FINANCE DIRECTOR’S position. Imagine that? Lantigua keeps claiming that the financial crisis in the city is so bad that he needed to borrow \$35 Million and layoff dozens of public safety officials but he has yet to hire a Budget Director.



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-noon. You can email your comments to Tdugjr@aol.com.

LAWRENCE CULTURAL COUNCIL IS LOOKING FOR A “FEW GOOD VOLUNTEERS” FOR THE LOCAL COMMITTEE

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You’ve just lost someone close to you, and it’s a difficult, stressful time. You’re grieving, yet there’s so much to do: funeral arrangements to make, family to care for. And as painful as it may seem, there is also urgent business concerning your finances. Here’s a checklist, by no means complete, to help you get started:

- Contact your loved one’s places of employment. Find out whether he or she was covered by employee group insurance. You should also ask about any pension benefits, accrued vacation or sick pay, and credit union accounts.
- Contact any unions and service or professional organizations your loved one belonged to. You might be eligible for benefits through these groups.
- Gather your loved one’s bills. Some loans and service contracts are covered by credit life insurance that pays off the balance in the event of a customer’s death.

Security for Your Future - If you’ve been left a significant inheritance, you face further decisions for the long term. Some people choose to use a small part of the money to pay debts, or buy something they might not otherwise be able to afford.

Keep in mind, though, that your loved one probably intended to provide security for your future as well. After your loss, other family members may be even more

dependent on you. You may decide to use your inheritance to provide security for them, just as it was provided for you.

Life insurance can play an important role. A single premium policy can guarantee* your heirs a financial legacy that’s generally free from federal income tax. Life insurance can also offer living benefits, like the option of borrowing against a policy’s value.**

Life can change swiftly and unpredictably, so it’s always wise to have your affairs in order. The best time to make arrangements for tomorrow is today.

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

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Gregory J. Loosigian, Ma.Lic#1830459, NH. Lic #2017596, New York Life Insurance Company, 10 New England Business Ctr. Dr., Andover, Ma. 01810, (978)- 273-8377

Bob Irving

REVERSE MORTGAGE COLUMNIST

A primary lender announced this week that approval has finally been received from the Massachusetts Division of Banks for the HECM for Purchase program. It’s been a long time coming here in the Commonwealth. While this special reverse mortgage program backed by FHA has been available in many other states for some time, (including New Hampshire) volume has been disappointing to date. The program has not yet achieved popularity. This will change as seniors begin to understand the special advantages of the HECM for Purchase. But it’s going to take some very serious effort on the part of lenders to teach the benefits.

How Regular Reverse Mortgages (HECMs) Work - Let’s review. The Home Equity Conversion Mortgage (HECM) program is a reverse mortgage program guaranteed by FHA for seniors 62 years of age and older who own their own homes. Most often, seniors taking advantage of the special HECM programs fully intend to remain in their present home as long as possible. They can use the equity built up over the years to supplement monthly income and/or eliminate conventional mortgage payments without selling the home. Some need to payoff home equity loan notes accumulated in years when banks touted the benefits of “cashing out” rapidly increasing home value... implying that it would go on forever. Others have large debt that has become a serious burden in retirement. But the single most common characteristic of these borrowers is that they choose to remain in their existing home. The regular HECM program was originally designed specifically for them.

Well, what about seniors wanting to down-size in retirement? The 4 bedroom, 2 bath home now seems difficult to maintain, heat, and keep clean. Or what about others who may wish to move closer to older children and grandchildren? Or seniors wanting to enjoy a warmer climate? Each of these clients could eventually do a reverse mortgage, but the process has been pretty complex and costs were terrible; closing expenses for original purchase of the new home or condo plus closing expenses again to convert the regular conventional mortgage to a HECM. Only very experienced reverse mortgage loan consultants knew how to make this happen seamlessly.

HECM for Purchase Example - The newly approved HECM for Purchase allows the senior to sell an existing home and buy another while keeping much of the cash realized from the sale. Here’s an example - Joe & Mary in their mid 70s sell their 4 bedroom home in Cambridge,

MA for \$650,000. They are left with about \$450,000 after paying off several home equity loans, the real estate broker, and closing costs. Their plan is to buy a much smaller home or condo in the western part of the state to be close to grand-children... and Tanglewood (a popular classical music venue in the Berkshires). They locate a nice 2 bedroom condo near their daughter and negotiate a price of \$280,000.

If they pay cash for the new condo, they will have about \$170,000 remaining that will go into CDs at the local bank and earn about 1/2 percent interest.

But if they opt instead to use the HECM for Purchase program, they will qualify for about \$170,000 on the new home. That means they only need to come up with \$110,000 at closing instead of the full \$280,000 as originally planned. The extra cash that they get to keep (\$170,000) will also go into CDs giving them a total of \$340,000 in the bank.

Better Result - With the HECM for Purchase program, Joe & Mary are in a new home close to Tanglewood and the kids. They will make no mortgage payments as long as one of them remains in the home. And.. they have \$340,000 cash remaining in the bank. Their goals are accomplished; they have no monthly mortgage payments to worry about and they wind up with twice as much cash left over from the sale of the old home - life is good!

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

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THE DOCTOR IS **IN**

The Piriformis Muscle Syndrome

Rami Rustum, M.D.
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

This month, we continue our discussion about possible reasons for lower back and buttock pain.

The muscle takes its name from its pear-like shape; the piriformis muscle is a fairly small muscle deep to the gluteus muscles across the upper buttock.

Like any other muscle we have, it may go into spasm caused by extra stretching, arthritis or other reasons causing lower back and buttock pain.

As shown, The sciatic nerve passes deep to piriformis in most cases (approximately 90% of people) but can in fact pierce the piriformis itself, predisposing to piriformis syndrome and subsequent sciatica. Even if the sciatic nerve runs deep to piriformis, spasm in this muscle put direct pressure on the nerve, causing the resultant pain and discomfort.

It has been suggested that this condition would be better referred to as piriformis impingement due to the impingement of the sciatic nerve.

Piriformis syndrome is also known as "wallet sciatica" or "fat wallet syndrome," as the condition can be caused or aggravated by sitting with a large wallet in the

affected side's rear pocket.

What Causes Piriformis Syndrome?

Piriformis syndrome is predominantly caused by a shortening or tightening of the piriformis muscle, and while many things can be attributed to this, they can all be categorized into two main groups: Overload (or training errors); and Biomechanical Inefficiencies.

Overload (or training errors): Piriformis syndrome is commonly associated with sports that require a lot of running, change of direction or weight bearing activity. However, piriformis syndrome is not only found in athletes. In fact, a large proportion of reported cases occur in people who lead a sedentary lifestyle. Other overload causes include:

- * Exercising on hard surfaces, like concrete;
- * Exercising on uneven ground;
- * Beginning an exercise program after a long lay-off period;
- * Increasing exercise intensity or duration too quickly;
- * Exercising in worn out or ill fitting shoes; and
- * Sitting for long periods of time.

Biomechanical Inefficiencies: The major biomechanical inefficiencies contribut-

ing to piriformis syndrome are faulty foot and body mechanics, gait disturbances and poor posture or sitting habits. Other causes can include spinal problems like herniated discs and spinal stenosis. Other biomechanical causes include:

- * Poor running or walking mechanics;
- * Tight, stiff muscles in the lower back, hips and buttocks;
- * Running or walking with your toes pointed out.

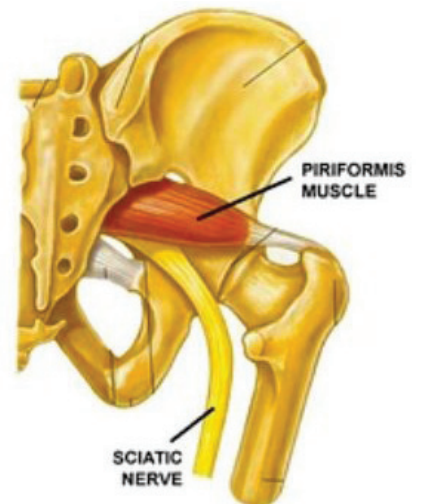
Symptoms of Piriformis Syndrome

Pain (or a dull ache) is the most common and obvious symptom associated with piriformis syndrome. This is most often experienced deep within the hip and buttocks region, but can also be experienced anywhere from the lower back to the lower leg.

Weakness, stiffness and a general restriction of movement are also quite common in sufferers of piriformis syndrome. Even tingling and numbness in the legs can be experienced.

Piriformis syndrome remains controversial because, in most cases, the diagnosis is clinical, and no confirmatory tests exist to support the clinical findings.

Treatment- Rest is usually recommended. A two to three week break from the sports and activities that cause pain can be very helpful. Relative rest, meaning less intense workouts, and fewer miles is also helpful, and should be used during your return to activity. Like Achilles tendonitis and iliopsoas tendonitis this is a very dif-



ficult problem to eliminate.

- Strengthening and Stretching Exercises: as directed by specialized personnel such as chiropractor or physiatrist.

- Taking anti-inflammatory non-steroidal medications and applying heat or ice pads may play a role in treating some cases.

- Some times, the patient may need muscle cortisone injection under X-ray guidance.



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

email Dr. Rustum at: ramirustum@comcast.net

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When are simple headaches not so simple?

DR. Jin Sung

VALLEY PATRIOT CHIROPRACTIC COLUMNIST

Approximately 10 million Americans suffer daily headaches, and 50 million have headaches often enough to seek medical care. Approximately 23 million Americans suffer from migraines. Headaches are big business. For the drug companies, that is.

Billions of dollars are spent each year on Aleve and Motrin for tension headaches and Imitrex for migraines.

But all that money might just as well be poured down a hole in the ground, because the statistics haven't changed in almost 20 years. Approximately one out of every six Americans suffers from headaches.

Tension headaches are most common, caused by muscle spasm in the neck and shoulders, stress, and even eye strain. The dull, pounding pain may be severe, and there may be nausea. Migraines are even more debilitating, and may be preceded by an "aura" - visual symptoms such as flashing lights or loss of portions of a visual field.

Headaches, although common, should never be taken for granted. People suffering headaches should, at some point, have a physical examination to rule out underlying problems such as high blood pressure.

Importantly, an unusual headache, accompanied by brand-new symptoms, should be evaluated by a physician immediately. A sudden, severe headache, "like nothing I ever had before", needs immediate attention. If you've never thrown up as a result of a headache, and suddenly you are, you need to see a physician. An unusual, unexpected level in the increase of headache pain needs immediate attention. Any of these situations could be caused by a serious underlying problem, and an MRI is usually necessary.

Chiropractic treatment may be of benefit for many people suffering with tension headaches and even migraines. A chiropractic physician will perform a complete physical examination, which may include x-rays. Underlying causes of headaches are ruled out. If a medical condition is suspected, the patient may be referred to the appropriate specialist.

Chiropractic spinal manipulation is a gentle procedure that reduces muscle tension and increases spinal mobility. Neck and shoulder muscles are freed from being held in fixed positions, resulting in increased circulation, improved nutrition, and more efficient muscle activity. The frequency and intensity of tension headaches may improve noticeably. Migraine headaches may improve as well.

Regular exercise and a balanced diet are very important in the treatment of headaches. Exercise improves all aspects of muscle function and improves circulation. Improved cardiovascular function means more blood is flowing to neck and shoulder muscles, bringing oxygen and nutrients and



removing irritants such as lactic acid.

A balanced diet ensures that neck and shoulder muscles are getting the energy sources, vitamins, and minerals they need to work properly. A balanced diet in combination with regular exercise also results in weight loss, removing unnecessary mechanical stress in the form of excess pounds.

Headaches are usually a symptom of being out-of-balance. Exercise, balanced nutrition, and chiropractic care can help restore balance to our highly stressed lives.

Functional Chiropractic, Inc is located at 126 Merrimack Street in Methuen behind Heavenly Donuts. Dr. Sung can be reached at 781 688-6999.

High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure (HBP) is a common unrecognized cause of headaches. And, HBP itself is very common - according to the American Heart Association, approximately one-third of American adults have HBP. And nearly one-third of these people don't know they have HBP. This is a big problem.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health has recommended the DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension). This diet has been shown to reduce high blood pressure within two weeks. Daily recommendations include

- 7 to 8 servings of grains
- 4 to 5 servings of vegetables
- 4 to 5 servings of fruit
- 2 to 3 servings of low-fat or non-fat dairy
- 2 to 3 servings of fats and oils
- 4 to 5 servings per week of nuts, seeds, and dry beans

1 "Hospital Treats Headache Sufferers". The New York Times, 12/25/88.

2 Source: National Headache Foundation - www.headaches.org

3 Source: Yale Medical Group - www.ymghealthinfo.org

Summer BBQs, picnics, and allergies!

Dr. Thomas Johnson

VALLEY PATRIOT ALLERGY COLUMNIST

During the summer season, many of us take weekends to enjoy a day at the beach, family barbecues, and more outdoor activities. With all this time spent outside, we need to be cautious of food and environmental allergies.

At outdoor picnics and barbecues, people may bring various dishes with hidden ingredients. This can present a real danger to people with food allergies. Accidental exposure to a number of different foods can occur at a picnic, including peanut, egg, milk, seafood, and other nuts. Therefore, people with food allergies should always be prepared to treat an allergic reaction to foods, and it is always a good idea to bring your own dish just in case.

These same outings can cause exposure to smoke from various sources, such as barbecues and campfires. While this exposure often results in non-allergic irritation of the eyes, nose and lungs, it is possible to be allergic to smoke. If a person is allergic to the pollen of the tree from which the wood was taken, allergy symptoms



can occur. People with asthma and sensitive noses and eyes should avoid being directly exposed to smoke from barbecues and campfires, and have asthma medicines readily available.

Other factors to consider are high heat, humidity and the air quality index. They can play a significant role in for asthma sufferers or anyone with breathing difficulties.

Also be sure to be prepared when cooking and eating outdoors for stinging insects. Remember while enjoying the sun and outdoors this summer, to travel with any allergy and asthma rescue medicines. With the proper preparation you can have a safe and happy summer season.

Please see your Allergist for any and all consistent allergic or asthmatic reactions.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Ray's of Hope! Relay For Life

Paul Stanford, Judy Berube, and Valley Patriot columnist Dani Langevin, walking on behalf of the team "Ray's Of Hope". We lost my parents, Ray and Marcelle Langevin to colon cancer.

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Thomas Connors
VALLEY PATRIOT WOW! COLUMNIST

Send in the Chefs!

I love gourmet food. You know, where the food actually becomes a work of art. Fresh seared tuna on a bed of some variety of cumquat puree, topped by buttery field greens, under a roof of carefully placed bamboo shoots made to look like a hut on some far away Pacific Island. The presentation is so beautiful it is almost sinful to cut into it. (Oh, one lesson learned ... ask the ingredients AFTER you try it. You wouldn't eat most of this stuff if you knew what you were eating. Yet, you'd miss out on some delicious delights!)

I'd also give my right eye for a scrumptious juicy hamburger, brown-sugared beans and franks or a peanut-butter and fluff sandwich.

My daughter, Paige, took me out for Father's Day and we had one of the Best ever! Where did we go? We went to Santarpio's in East Boston for a mouth watering extra cheese pizza that topped the culinary charts. It was out of this world!

Life is the same way. It's a virtual Banquet! Gourmet to Everyday Common Opportunities. Grab all the Plates you can because there is a Bounty of Harvest Waiting for You.

Success is not like a meal where once you are finished it's over. It's not like going to a restaurant and getting fed step by step with appetizers served first, then the entrée

and finally dessert.

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So step right up and dig in! Sample the FEAST of Opportunities for Success available to you. Some items on that buffet are gourmet like the opportunity to become the CEO and owner of your own company, a world known celebrity or star or maybe even President of the United States. That's just the beginning.

Life's banquet also provides you with plain and simple burgers. Those simple moments we too often ignore and let just pass by. Moments like a child's first steps or first words. Taking in new blooms in the garden you prepared. Purchasing a new used car. These are SUCCESS milestones we all need to learn to recognize and celebrate as WOW! Moments as well. And they're out there in abundance just waiting for you to sample a taste.

Take Full Advantage of Life's Menu of Opportunities and Goodwill. It was put there for one very good reason; to help you become all you can be!

When God created woman and man, He made us unique not only in the way we Look but in our Purpose in Life as well. He made sure we all had many Opportunities to Succeed over and over again in our own very special ways.

God knew precisely what He was doing. He made sure Success came in many forms and levels of intensity to encourage and motivate us to fulfill our reason for being. The small Successes serve their purpose as well as the very big ones. The Miracles in His own Life here on earth magnified this very same concept.

The Good Lord could have raised the dead in impressive fashion day and night. But, He chose to mix it up a bit. He threw in a few small and medium ones in order to not set the bar too high for us to measure our own accomplishments.

He knew that providing a Menu or a Banquet of Opportunities for Success from which we could choose, would keep us motivated to accomplish great things in His name.

So, Feed Yourself a regular Diet of Success WOW! Moments every day of every week, of every month, each and every year!

At American Training we stress this regular Diet of Success for each of our Guests. Sure, some Successes might seem ineffectual to some. But, to the person learning a new skill for the first time or meeting a fear head on, these Opportunities provide a much needed psychological boost to struggle on to the next level of performance and achievement.

Always remember that each Success reached makes you a different, more balanced and well-rounded person. Each Success experienced brings you closer to

fulfilling your Purpose in Life and will bring you meaningful happiness.

PAY ATTENTION to what you take in every day. Don't just settle for recognizing the Successes in your life only on special occasions. Don't just save them for the weekends.

There are too many Opportunities that pass your way each day to not be aware of them.

Your physical body becomes what you feed it. Feed it junk food and you get a junky body that is out of shape. Feed it healthy, fresh vegetables and meats and you will energize your body to operate at its peak performance.

Same thing is true with that mind and attitude of yours. Feed them a Regular Diet of Successes; both large and small, fancy and plain. Taste Success every chance you get and you will be Nourished for a Lifetime of Living the WOW!

Now, that's a WOW!



Tom Connors is President/CEO of American Training, a diverse collection of companies committed to "Bringing Out the Best in Everyone They Touch". He believes in living life to the fullest by making the WOW! a regular part of your personal, spiritual and working life. You can reach Tom at Tom@American-TrainingInc.com or by writing to him at Tom Connors, American Training, 102 Glenn Street, Lawrence, MA 01843 © 2009

Simple Wisdom

Straightening Shelves

Gail Van Kleeck
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

A few weeks ago I had the brilliant idea of reading this year's columns aloud and creating a CD. I thought it might be a nice gift for some of my family and friends. Eager to support me in my endeavor, Parker found a microphone and installed a recording program in my computer.

Early the next morning I clicked into the program and began to read aloud. I'd been reading for quite a while before discovering I'd forgotten to click the second button...the one that says "record"!

My second attempt was going splendidly until about half way through when I needed to clear my throat and realized I didn't know how to stop the recording without re-starting it from the beginning. On my third try I recorded the entire 72 minutes without stopping. When I replayed it, my voice came back to me in a whisper. The mike, it seemed was too far from my mouth.

By then my throat was feeling raspy, so I took a swig of honey flavored cough syrup and read the entire year's worth of columns again. This time the mike was too close to my mouth.

Before I began my fifth try I took a sip of Southern Comfort, for medicinal purposes of course. I hoped it might anesthetize or at least warm my throbbing throat. This time I began to read more slowly. I noticed I was enjoying the stories. I forgave myself my occasional stumbles. I thought of friends and family members

listening as I read to them. I thought of them feeling comforted or cared for by something in my words. When I replayed the last recording it was far from perfect, yet it seemed just right to me.

Sometimes I think it's important to keep trying. It's important to learn from our mistakes. It's important to risk feeling foolish or inept. It's important to stretch ourselves. It's important to learn. It's important to grow.

Sometimes too I think we need to remind ourselves that we need not reach perfection before giving ourselves permission to stop.

Sometimes I think our focus on perfection diminishes our sense of enjoyment and robs us of our ability to appreciate the simple successes that we've already achieved. Mostly I think it is our human imperfection and not our super-human perfection that connects us to others in a way that helps them to value and honor themselves. So perhaps our caring, our compassion and our sometimes stumbling imperfection are the greatest and the most healing gifts that any of us can give.

WHAT WE FOCUS ON IS TRULY WHAT WE SEE



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

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PUPPY LOVE! with Kate Whitney

Reading pet food labels is more important than the brand of food you buy

Kate Whitney
VALLEY PATRIOT PUPPY COLUMNIST

It's hard to believe summer is here! I want to share something with you that I do every year. I look through each of my pet's health records to make sure they are up to date with shots and vaccinations. Also be sure to check your heartworm pills and flea/tick preventative; it's imperative that these be given at the same time each month to ensure protection.

Something that seems to be on the top of people's lists these days is eating healthy. I know I am constantly surrounded by words like organic, holistic and fresh. So if we humans are so conscious these days about foods and our diet, what about our pets? Have you ever really stopped to read the label of your dog's food?

Do you just buy whichever food your vet recommends or whichever food is on sale at the grocery store? I would guess that most of you don't read the label on the bag and for those of you who might, do you really understand what you are reading?

In the spirit of starting our summer off on a healthy foot, I would write about how to make sure you are feeding your dog (or cat) healthy, nutritious food. I decided to discuss the topic with Justin Pepelis. I first met Justin when I visited Salem Animal Rescue League in Salem, NH. I was there to learn more about the shelter and its programs which I wrote about in one of my past articles.

I noticed Justin walking around with a tool belt on. He looked busy. Not only is he an adoption counselor, he also donates his time at the shelters doing maintenance and lends advice and training tips to anyone who needs help. He has a passion and a respect for dogs that anyone would admire. He also has two adopted dogs, the Boxer I mentioned earlier and

a Doberman Pincher (one of my favorite breeds, I grew up with two Dobies.) He's like a local Cesar Milan!

With so much knowledge about dogs, I wasn't sure what I wanted to interview him about. I didn't have to think much harder, though, because right when we sat down, he said "I know what your article can be about ... nutrition and diet." I was immediately drawn to this topic. I am always wanting to learn about ways to keep my dogs healthy. What prompted Justin to learn more about food and diet, was his dog Mercedes, a Boxer. She had severe allergies and no one could figure out the cause.

There are two types of allergies: environment and food. Veterinarians can only test for environmental allergens, so figuring out what is affecting our dogs can sometimes be frustrating. Some dogs are even allergic to grass! If you have a dog that is allergic to things, I'm sure you go out of your way to monitor what goes into its system. I once had a cat that had diabetes, and I was always on the lookout, making sure everything he ate wouldn't affect his blood glucose levels in a negative way. For those of us who care about our animals, this is just how we are.

Ok, so should you have a pet that is allergic to some-thing, you first need to look at the ingredients in the food. Look especially at grain ingredients. In order to figure out what the specific cause is, rotate off different foods. Give the animal 2-3 weeks before making any conclusive results. It takes time for the animal's body to adjust.

There are two especially dangerous things you do not want to see on your pet's food label: BHA and BHD. These are preservatives that are carcinogens (cause cancer) and are put in food to make it last longer, in some cases the



The Valley Patriot's PuppyGirl, Kate Whitney with Honey. Kate and Honey rescue puppies from abuse and neglect. Please adopt a shelter dog or foster a puppy looking for a permanent home! For more information you can email One Tail at a Time at onetail@comcast.net

food would last forever. A healthier choice is something called tocopherals. The food won't last as long, but it's much safer!

Make sure that corn is no where in the ingredients list. Corn is the worst grain possible. Dogs can't digest it, it's the #1 allergen, and it promotes yeast infections in female dogs.

When reading a label, make sure the first five ingredients make up 80%-90% of the food. There should be at least two meat sources, preferably three. The words "fat" and "byproducts" should be nowhere in the first five ingredients.

Wheat and soy can also be harmful ingredients. It's important to be aware of how each is processed. What I mean by this is that if the main healthy components in each of the foods are used up, and then whatever is left over is put into the dog food, this is not good. You don't want that left over junk in the food. Justin also pointed out an example of "Dried Beet Pulp."

He said that this is bad and has no nutritional value. It's just a filler composed of sugar residue and, just like carbohydrates, it turns into a sugar-like substance that compares to giving your dog caffeine. A few harmful foods that should never be given to dogs are choco-

late, grapes (can cause a seizure), raisins, and onions.

So let's talk a little bit about food brands. Everyone knows the top brands such as Science Diet, Iams, Pedigree, etc. These are big companies that spend exorbitant amounts of money on advertising and some even have contracts with your veterinarians. I know that I would rather have money put back into making a healthy, safe food than spending it on TV ads. I asked Justin what the best foods on the market were.

These companies are smaller, you may never have heard of them. If money is no object, check out these brands: Artemis, Innova, Timberwolf Organics, and Solid Gold. The best value foods (bigger bag for a little less money) are Canidae, Wellness, and Chicken Soup.

If you have questions regarding diet or training and would like to consult with Justin, please email me and I can put you in touch with him.

Kate Whitney is a Boxford resident and owner of the Swingrite Corporation. If you are interested in adopting a puppy or becoming a foster parent to a puppy waiting for a home you can email Kate at Kwswingrite@aol.com



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‘Oh, Deer’

by Tom Prezkop

In early May I was enjoying a pleasant late afternoon drive from Newburyport, where I live, to my office in Lawrence. I’ve done this trip at least twice a day for the past 6 1/2 years without any extraordinary circumstances other than the usual traffic snags. Ever since the fuel prices hit the \$4.00-plus mark, I resigned myself to slowing down my driving pace to 55-60 mph to reduce my carbon impact and to conserve on fuel costs. I just settle into the right hand lane for a relaxing drive.

This particular day was not unlike so many others, until I noticed an unusual movement a couple hundred yards up ahead to the right, on the other side of the guardrail. All I could see was the head of a deer moving fast, like being chased by a pack of wolves. For some reason I haven’t understood yet, I glanced into my left side mirror to get a sense of who was around me, just in case. By the time I refocused on what was happening up ahead, the deer had reached the end of the guardrail that separated her from the highway. With two long strides, this deer was heading straight across my path in what seemed to be microseconds.

My sharp swerve to the left was what



made the difference in the outcome of this story. Moments after the surreal impact I realized there was a large animal next to me, upside down in the passenger seat, taking up a huge amount of space that had been completely empty seconds before. I managed to navigate my car to the shoulder of the road while thinking this critter could spring to life at any moment. (I had

a vision of being trapped in Mad Max’s Thunderdome). I groped for the gear shift between the seats, but this intruder was taking up lots of space that I thought I knew so well.

I focused on turning the engine off, undoing my seat belt, and getting the door open. That part went smoothly. A young man, who had been behind me on

a motorcycle, appeared moments after to inquire about my condition. Together we walked to the front of the car with mouths agape at what we saw. “Oh, Deer!”

After many hours of reliving those few seconds, and my twice-daily trip past that guardrail, I realize how quickly one’s life could be altered with little or no advance notice, and how little control we have over it. Behind the wheel, we forget how fast we’re moving, how vigilant we need to be, how quickly surprises come at us, and how even a moment’s distraction can have a devastating outcome. Thank God, I was alone.

Come to the Lowell Humane Society and take us HOME!

>>> Pooka- Pooka is a sweet young lionhead rabbit who deserves a good home! She was originally purchased at a pet store and the day after they brought her home she gave birth to her first litter at just 5 months old! All her babies have found homes and now its Pooka’s time to shine and relax in a home of her own!



>>> Gizmo- Sweet and fluffy, Gizmo needs a home! Don’t you think he belongs at your place?!



>>>>>Tiger - Single, charming, tall, brindle and devilishly handsome APBT looking for meaningful long-term relationship. Must enjoy long walks on the beach and trails, frequent slobbery kisses, games of fetch, and ample snuggle time. Frequent fine dining (hot dogs) appreciated. Looking for no-nonsense training partner willing to share the spotlight. Feline-free home a must, prior large breed experience necessary. Please call 978-452-7781 and ask for Tiger or come and visit me!



Ben - I’m quick and active, with a lively curiosity for all things! I can be stubborn at times, but I’m super smart, and ready to soak up all the information I can at a training class. My compact size makes me a good choice for apartment life in the big city, or at home in the ‘burbs. Plenty of playtime and a few daily walks will take care of most of my exercise needs, and I have an easy-care coat which requires occasional brushing and shampooing.

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Pets, great medicine for the elderly

Terri Crow Mercier

VALLEY PATRIOT HERO COLUMNIST

The elderly are at high risk for isolation. This is a fact and serious issue with our aging population. All too often family members are busy with their own daily demands in life to fulfill their need for companionship with frequent visits. Owning a pet can truly be their lifeline. It becomes their reason for getting up each morning. A pet needs them and they need to feel needed. This bond between person and pet can be a simple fix to a most serious issue in their life. However never force an animal on someone whose heart is truly not in it.

Choosing the right animal is very important as well. Always take into consideration what type of housing the pet will be in. What type of exercise they will need. Can your loved one provide the appropriate exercise for a dog in the changing seasons? If they live in smaller housing then perhaps a bird or guinea pig would suit them better as they do well in cages. Cats are often the most popular choice as they tend to be content in most living situations and are very independent. Your loved one may need some back up support if the occasion arises. Are you willing to fill this need? When making the final decision to get a pet, do it together. Our local animal shelters are the best resource for pets. Elderly are often living on fixed incomes and they will be able to adopt for a small fee. The pet will be neutered or spayed and have all its shots. Another great bonus from adopting from a shelter is that they are usually a little older and you will get a good sense of the animal's personality. A puppy or kitten has to go through the housebreaking stage, teething, and that never ending stage of boundless energy. Older pets come with the bonus of having all that behind them.

Pet ownership comes with many tangible benefits as well. Some studies have shown that regular physical contact with a pet can lower blood pressure in those that have high blood pressure. It has even proven to lower cholesterol in those with high levels. Elderly that have pets tend to complain less of body aches, headaches

and digestive problems as well. It enhances their overall sense of well-being.

Researchers have speculated that when an elderly person takes on that "care-taking" role for a pet, it gives them a sense of purpose and responsibility. This encourages them to be less apathetic and more active on a daily basis.

Elderly living in nursing homes also receive a great benefit from pet visits as well. Can you think of a more exciting reason to visit then to bring Fido or Fluffy in? This type of pet therapy is so beneficial for their psychosocial well being. Be prepared to bring many smiles to many faces as you make your way to your loved ones room. A pet can warm a heart for an elderly person like nothing else here on earth. They demand nothing but to be simply loved. This can be the best form of medicine for some. All too often family members approach me to discuss their loved one. They express they often find it difficult to carry on conversation with them. My advice, bring in the family pet! Amazingly something this simple will open a whole new world for the visit and the words will come easier. Please keep in mind that most nursing homes have regulations that they must meet so check with them first. You most likely will have to provide a copy of good health and current vaccinations before you can start to bring in the pet. Keeping the pet on a harness or leash is also required in most situations as well. If your pet startles easily then I strongly advise against the visit. However you can bring in current photos or a video for conversation as an alternative.

Ultimately the choice to have a pet must be made with all parties involved. Situations vary from one individual to another. Many considerations must be included in this decision making process. Everyone wants what is best for not only the elderly person but the pet as well. In the end if you decide to get a pet remember to go to our local shelters first. There are so many pets just waiting for someone to give them a home and some TLC. Too many of our elderly are just sitting at home waiting to find purpose again in life. Why not make some good medicine happen and help bring them together.



Courtesy Photo: Pictured are Lawrence Fire Department, Acting Fire Chief Brian Murphy along with Nelson Ortiz of the Lawrence Recreation Department and his Summer Program Staff as they accept the donation of First Aid Kits from the Lawrence Fire Department.

Lawrence Fire Department trains Recreation Dept. Summer Workers

As an Authorized Provider of American Red Cross Health & Safety courses the Lawrence Fire Department recently certified the staff of the Lawrence Recreation Department Summer Programs. Staff members were certified in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and the use of the Automatic External Defibrillator (AED). In addition to CPR/AED certification the staff was also certified in basic First-Aid. At the conclusion of the program, the Lawrence Fire Department made a donation to the Recreation Department of five First Aid kits so that the newly trained summer staff will be prepared in the event of an emergency. The Lawrence Fire Department instructs monthly courses in CPR and First Aid at the Central Fire Station located at 65 Lowell Street. Courses are offered in both English and Spanish.

American Cancer Society's 2nd Annual Bicycles Battling Cancer

WESTON – Local cyclists are invited to make their miles more meaningful by participating in the American Cancer Society's second annual Bicycles Battling Cancer event on Sunday, July 25. The event allows participants the opportunity to get fit, have fun, and make a difference, all while reducing their cancer risk.

The 75-mile ride takes beginner and veteran cyclists alike through scenic back roads from Worcester to Boston. The first twenty miles of the route takes riders from Worcester through Oxford, Millbury, Sutton, and Northbridge, and then north to the half way point in Hopkinton. The second half of the route takes riders through towns such as Medway, Millis, Medfield, Dover, and through Needham to Newton with the finish in Chestnut Hill.

Riders can participate individually or as a team with a variety of ride options:

- For the full 75-mile ride, beginning at Institute Park in Worcester and ending at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, there is a \$50 registration fee and a \$500 minimum fundraising goal to participate; teams of five or more commit to a \$400 fundraising minimum per rider.

- A 25-mile option, beginning at Grace Bicycles in Holliston and ending at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, with a \$50 registration fee and a fundraising commitment of \$350; teams of five or more commit to a \$300 fundraising minimum per rider.

- A 15-mile youth ride, children ages 10 – 16 accompanied by an adult registered participant, beginning at Chickering Elementary School in Dover, MA and ending at Boston College in Chestnut Hill, for a \$25 registration fee and youth riders are encouraged to raise at least \$100.

Kylie Boos of Pittsfield is participating once again in Bicycles Battling Cancer. Her dad will also be riding, together they

comprise 'Team Alex'. "We ride for my cousin Alex. He's the only living person in the United States with heart cancer and has it once again for the third time in ten years", explains Boos. Kylie discovered Bicycles Battling Cancer last year when searching for a ride she could participate in with her father. "It was such a fun ride," tells Boos. "Of course we want to do it again!"

Thomas Furlong, a cancer survivor from Kingston, NH, is participating in the 75-mile ride option. This will be Furlong's first endurance cycling event, "I've been looking to get into it for awhile. I've looked into larger bike events, but their fundraising minimums are so enormous," he explains. "There's also no time limit for Bicycles Battling Cancer, which is good for me."

Funds raised through Bicycles Battling Cancer support the Society's critical mission to save lives and create a world with less cancer and more birthdays. The American Cancer Society helps people stay well, by preventing cancer or detecting it early; get well, by being in their corner through every step of their cancer experience; by finding cures, through groundbreaking research and treatment discoveries; and by fighting back, through influencing public policy.

All registered cyclists raising a minimum of \$500 will receive a Bicycles Battling Cancer jersey. Riders raising \$1,000 or more will receive an event jersey and a Bicycles Battling Cancer grill/cooler, and riders raising \$2,500 or more will receive a jersey, grill/cooler, and a Bicycles Battling Cancer wind breaker.

For more information, or to join Bicycles Battling Cancer, please visit cancer.org/bicyclesbattlingcancer or contact your American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 or bicyclesbattlingcancer@cancer.org.

Medical expert shares health tips for parents

Summertime Fun Doesn't Mean Children are Immune

Hobart, NY – Now that it's summer, chances are your kids are by the pool or out playing in the park. And with this increased outside activity comes increases in insect bites, accidents and other seasonal health issues. Sometimes this usually means a trip to the doctor's office, but what if parents are conscious of over treating their children with traditional medicines and want to seek natural alternatives?

As a physician trained in both standard and holistic medicine--and as a parent herself--Lauren Feder, MD presents the facts about children's health in her books *Natural Baby and Childcare* (Hatherleigh Press) and *The Parents' Concise Guide to Childhood Vaccinations* (Hatherleigh Press), just released in a digital edition for ebook lovers.

Among alternative solutions to the common summer childhood concerns, Dr. Feder offers these suggestions:

Bee Stings and Insect Bites. Summer is about being outside, and having to share the space with Mother Nature which also means more insect stings and bites. Dr. Feder recommends the following natural medicines: *Apis mellifica* is a homeopathic medicine known for the effects of a

bee's sting. *Ledum palustre* is well-known as an acute homeopathic for bites, stings and wounds. Both are available in tablet and topical forms.

Bumps and bruises. Accidents and other types of trauma are a fact of life. As a busy mother of boys, Dr. Feder knows to expect complaints after a soccer match or a day at the beach. *Arnica montana* (Arnica) is the homeopathic first line treatment for injuries--big and small. Arnica comes as chewable tablets to topical gels and creams.

Colds. Catching a chill on a late summer afternoon following a day of sun and fun can lead to colds with runny noses and congestion. When possible avoid extreme temperature changes of heat outside and cold air conditioning inside. Onion slices on a plate by the bed help clear sinuses during the night. *Allium cepa* is a homeopathic remedy for early colds and runny noses. Vitamin C, Echinacea and other immune boosters can speed the healing process.

So keep your children safe and naturally well this summer while enjoying the good weather and all the season has to offer.

valleypatriot.com

Athletes sign in Quincy

Shawn Hansen

VALLEY PATRIOT SPORTS COLUMNIST

Summer is here, so Major League Baseball is in session, and the National Basketball Association playoffs are taking over ESPN, and TNT.

Getting caught up in summer sports although; does an autograph signing come to mind? If not, it will now as Sure Shot Promotions, and MAB Celebrity Services hosted the Beantown Bonanza on the weekend of May 1.

Pete Rose, Wade Boggs, Don Zimmer, Andre Dawson, Jerod Mayo, Johnny Pesky, Jojo White, Patrick Chung, Derek Sanderson, Kevin Faulk, Nate Archibald, Curt Schilling, Ken Hodge, Tom "Satch" Sanders, and Brittany Flickinger all attended the 'Bonanza at the Granite Links Golf Club at 100 Quarry Hills Drive in Quincy.

Athletes that weren't available to make the event were Bruce Sutter, Kenny Florian, Gary Guyton, and Whitey Herzog.

Talking with recording artist Flickinger, she said, "It's pretty crazy. I've been all over the world, and doing anything you could possibly want to do, I've done it already."

She said Japan was the best place she has been to so far because she went to the Music Video Awards, and ate amazing food.

"I'm recording my album right now with people from the Black Eyed Peas, and producers like Chuck Harmony, Rediscover, and it should be out sometime this year, but I'm working on signing a label right now."

Coming to a signing event, New England Patriots Linebacker Mayo said, "It's great, just to see the fans out here, and the support we have in the New England area. It's just a great time."

Finishing his third season with the Pats out of Tennessee, Mayo can't wait till the fall.

"I'm really excited to go into this season healthy, having all the guys back. We have the nucleus of our team coming back. As far as the draft, we trust what Bill does, and Nick do, as far as the draft decisions, and I think they brought in some really great players. I can't wait to see them in training camp."

Pesky, an infielder with the Red Sox from 1946-1952 said he is flattered to be at the 'Bonanza, and didn't think he was good enough to have his number retired at Fenway Park.

"I didn't think I was that good of a

player. Ted's number was retired, Bobby Doerr, Jimmy Rice was retired, and Carlton Fisk," said Pesky.

Bringing up the topic of his real last name, "Peveskovich," Peksy said, "You know you're the first guy that pronounced that right. Ted Williams used to say, 'How do you spell that Johnny?' He did this on a TV show, he says, 'Pesky, his Christian name was Johnny Pavo-sco-vich, and he said what is that a disease?'"



PHOTO: SHAWN HANSEN

Boggs, a Hall of Famer who played for the Red Sox from 1982-1992, the Yankees from 1993-1997, and the Tampa Bay Devil Rays from 1998-1999 reflected back about his favorite moment in his 18-year career.

"Winning the World Series in '96. Every player wants to be a World Series champion, and that's probably the highlight," said Boggs. "I had 18 wonderful years in the big leagues, and I had just as much fun in Boston as I did New York, and Tampa Bay as well."

Nowadays, Boggs has been coaching baseball for Wharton High School in Tampa, FL, and has an outdoor show on Direct TV.

Hall of Fame inductee this July, Dawson played with the Montreal Expos from 1976-1986, Chicago Cubs from 1987-1992, Boston Red Sox from 1993-1994, and the Florida Marlins from 1995-1996.

Looking back at his career, Dawson said, "Pretty much my career came full circle, I played 21 years," said Andre Dawson. "I got to experience playing in both leagues, and never envisioned playing the game for that reason, but just for the enjoyment as a kid."

He said he was fortunate to play with some of the best baseball players out there, and that being inducted into the Hall of Fame is a dream come true.

Working on bits and pieces of his Hall of Fame speech, Dawson said, "There's going to be a few different parts to it. Probably addressing the youth, you know you always have to thank some people. I'll do a dedication to my mom, and my grandma."

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BYLLI CRAYONE / PRESTO!



Lawrence artist releases album in Japan

BYLLI CRAYONE (Pronounced: Billy Kray-OH-nay) of Lawrence, MA recently released his latest album entitled "PRESTO" by means of Japan.

Yes, you read correctly, JAPAN! - Unlike the US version of "PRESTO" due out later this month, the Japanese release contains 15 tracks. The US release only has 10. Andrea Kwan of Japan Music Marketing states that "Dance" music is the primary music being played on mainstream Japanese radio. Unlike in the US where mainstream radio is dominated by HipHop and R&B.

This isn't the first time Bylli Crayone has had a release in Japan. Back in 2008 his Top Ten dance single "Dizzy Boi" was on the Japanese radio & club charts for several weeks. And just this past January Bylli Crayone appeared and performed at Club Womb in Tokyo. He is very well known in Japan with a huge fan following.

The latest album features the current dance single "WASTE OF TIME" along with new songs featuring artists of the 80's such as NU SHOOZ on "GIVE IT 2 ME 1 TIME" and U.T.F.O. on the song "TALK IS CHEAP". If you are familiar with music of the 80's, NU SHOOZ is best known for their 1986 hit "I CAN'T WAIT" and U.T.F.O. for their 1984 hit

"ROXANNE, ROXANNE". The album was almost a year in the making and there is a part 2 due out later this year. Other artists of the 80's on board to record with Bylli Crayone include SAMANTHA FOX, LISA LISA and BOY GEORGE just to name a few. Oddly enough, 2 Official Boy George websites www.BoyGeorgeUK.com and www.BoygeorgeForever.com already have a promotional ad promoting the collaboration.

The Japanese release of "PRESTO" is available at many online Japanese websites including the Japanese version of iTunes, Napster and Amazon.com. If you wish to buy the imported CD locally (In the US), you can purchase it directly through www.BylliCrayone.com Mail Order & Debit / Credit Card payments accepted.

Crayone's music has also recently crossed over to Brasil and Indonesia with fan sites, song rotation and ongoing interview requests. Seems his music is making noise worldwide these days thanks mainly in part to social sites like FaceBook, Twitter & MySpace.

Bylli Crayone will be going on tour in the near future to promote the new release. For info and tour dates for Bylli Crayone visit the new www.BylliCrayone.com

Shawn Hansen's Comedy Corner looks at the China Blossom

In the summer season, comedy usually tends to dwindle down as people are going on vacation. The China Blossom comedy room however will be open every Saturday night to entertain North Andover, and people from surrounding communities.

In the past year, I have seen three shows at the infamous China Blossom. On Dec. 18, comedians Johnny Joyce, Rick Cormier, Steve Albert, Kris Earle, and Bob Gautreau tore up the stage in front of a group who worked for an ambulance company.

On May 15, Hamilton Johnson, Earle, Cormier, and ex-rated hypnotist Richard Anthony, from Las Vegas gave the crowd at the Chinese restaurant some-

thing to remember.

When coming on stage, Johnson said, "My name is Hamilton Johnson, an old family name, roughly translated, most picked on kid at school."

With his snappy jokes, line after line, Johnson talked about performing in Hamilton, MA a few weeks earlier. This joke killed as everyone in the room went off the walls.

"I was doing a gig a couple of weeks ago in Hamilton, MA. Broke down in my truck, I called AAA, they said, 'what's your name?' I said, Hamilton Johnson. They said, 'Where are you?' I said, I'm on Johnson Road in Hamilton, they kept hanging up on me."

The following week, on May 21,

Joyce, Scotty Lombardo, Dave Decker, and Steve Sweeney put on a show for a room full of fans. The part of that night that had the room in stitches was when Sweeney looked behind him at a picture of Chinese culture, and analyzed it.

Looking at the painting, Sweeney said, "This was the original buffet."

He said they rode up on their horses, and had pork fried rice, and sushi. "This is a buffet," said Sweeney, explaining that the man sitting down is working at the register.

From that comment, one of the waitresses at the China Blossom said, "He's the king." Sweeney acknowledged that, and said, "He's the Chinese king. He's the guy announcing that after the com-

edy, there will be karaoke.

Every time I went to the China Blossom for a comedy venue, I had a great time. They have talented comedians, and a great buffet.

For more information about China Blossom Comedy, go to www.chinablossomcomedy.net. This summer, their will be shows every Saturday at 9:30 p.m.



"Shawn Hansen recently graduated from UMass Lowell. He has published work in eight different newspapers. He also has a television show called, 'Shawn Hansen's Comedy Corner,' which is based as a Late Night show with Jay Leno, or Jimmy Fallon. His show is at Burlington Cable Access TV. To get in touch with Shawn, email him at Shawn.Hansen.sportsentertainment@gmail.com."

VALLEY PATRIOT TV REVIEW

Hooked on “The Housewives”

Beth Daigle

VALLEY PATRIOT ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

If there is one television franchise that I just can't seem to get enough of, it is Bravo TV's, "The Real Housewives." I don't care if they are in sunny California or uptown New York City; I am hooked on them all the same. Something about these ladies simply fixates me. It could be their unadulterated gall which leads them to speak whatever is on their minds in a most unfiltered fashion. Oddly, I actually find their gumption a bit inspiring.

My favorite group of feisty females is, without question, "The Real Housewives of New York City." These women are up-pity, obnoxious, emotional and outspoken in every way imaginable. The constant bickering might seem like a turnoff, yet it is the very thing that seems to fuel the show's success.

If bickering isn't enough, "The Real Housewives of New Jersey" take the diva dynamics to an entirely new level. Their table flipping outbursts and mob-like threats are hard core to say the least. The heat of the second season was up so high that one co-star actually opted to cease filming citing that the show's focus on bad seed, Danielle Staub, was not something she wished to take part in. Staub's ridiculous on-screen behavior can only be topped by her recent off-screen antics which now include a sex tape, an unmerited music career and an unconfirmed lesbian lifestyle. Staub is desperate for attention and will stop at nothing to ensure she remains in the press. It is a shame that her beautiful, young daughters are being dragged along for this unseemly ride. As if having a "normal" mom isn't embarrassing enough.

My general fondness for all things "Housewives" is due in large part to the fact that the entertainment never seems to end. No sooner does one region's stint come to a close; then another begins. Coming up, we will be introduced to the Washington D.C. crew which is set to include White House crashing couple, Michaela and Tareq Salahi. Beyond the show, several of the women have unexpectedly launched singing careers based on their hidden talent known as Auto-Tune and Bethenny of New York was so well received that she has spun off to her own show called, "Bethenny Getting Married?" There is even a post-program talk show hosted by Andy Cohen called, "Watch What Happens Live." This show is not only hilarious but has managed to welcome some top-notch guests including Sarah Jessica Parker, Ellen Barkin, Jerry Seinfeld and Joan Rivers.

Whether it is "The Real Housewives of Orange County, New York, Atlanta, New Jersey or DC," one thing is for sure, this phenomenon is a gift that keeps giving and giving and giving.



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 Bethdaiglevp@comcast.net

Valley Patriot MOVIE REVIEW

Karate Kid vs. the A-Team

Ben Flagg

VALLEY PATRIOT MOVIE REVIEWER

Without a doubt, this was a big month for movies. There were three major releases, the A-Team, the Karate Kid, and Jonah Hex. Unfortunately, I did not get to see Jonah Hex, and I couldn't decide which movie to review.

So instead, I will do a comparison between the two. The A-Team is (unexpectedly) the underdog in this one, namely because so far, Karate Kid has made double the money. So did the fans make the right choice? Let's find out.

Right out of the gate, let's start with characters. The A-Team's characters are definitely more cartoony than the Karate Kid's, but the Karate Kid's are more realistic, letting you attach yourself to the characters and maybe even become emotionally involved. In particular, the mother is underdeveloped, but the director purposely did that so that the parents could project themselves onto her character and feel the pain she's going through with her son being picked on everyday.

On the other end of the spectrum, you have the A-Team, whose characters you honestly couldn't care about, no matter how hard you tried. They seem entirely unrealistic, and at some points even pulling character traits out of nowhere. For example, to get through an airport they have to take on different personas to get through, so they make fake I.D.s.

They never read them before the gate however, so the white, Irish born character gets stuck with a card that says he's from Somalia. Coincidentally, so is the ticket person, so he's trying to speak Somalian to him. This WOULD be funny, but out of the blue, the Irish born character starts speaking it perfectly. This scene makes no sense as it's never explained, they never spoke of Somalia before, and they never speak of it afterwards. It's scenes like that that totally pull me out of

the experience.

Now you may be asking "But Mr. Critic Guy, this isn't trying to have serious characters, or to get you emotionally involved." The problem with that is, it kind of is. It has a (and I say this in the most loose way possible) "deep" story, but over the top characters and action scenes. And on top of that, there's not even that many action scenes. It all comes across as the most expensive TV movie of all time. With the Karate Kid, its pacing is perfect, it never really slows down, except for the few parts they actually show training. And even those are at least interesting.

I've talked about the problems of the A-Team enough so now it's the Karate Kid's turn. The first and most prominent problem is that it's almost the exact same movie as the original. It got to the point where I was turning to my friend and actually saying "in this scene he is going to say...." and he would say it exactly. This just plain gets in the way at some points because (like most people) I've seen the first one, so there were no surprises for me the entire time. Actually, that's sort of the second problem. There really are no surprises or twists, whether you've seen the first one or not. It almost takes the lonely, unwanted trip down "Generic Sports Movie" road at some points.

So if you haven't picked this up by now, I definitely recommend The Karate Kid as the movie you should see this month. In fact, just try to stay away from the A-Team. It's not funny, not cool, and not even enjoyable. However, the Karate Kid is all of those, and more.



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.

Shawn Hansen's Music Corner with Riley Weston

Riley Weston, country singer, living in California has taken on multiple jobs in the entertainment industry to earn her paycheck. As an actress, screenwriter, author, and singer, Weston said some people can take on more than one profession in the industry, and some cannot.

"I'll know when it's time to come forward and be a singer," said Weston.

Before her singing career fell into place, she appeared in movies, and television shows such as Cutting Room, Christmas at Water's Edge, What about Your Friendly Weekend Getaway, Dancing at the Shadows, Felicity, 3rd Rock From the Sun, Nanny Express, Footprints, which will come out at the end of this year, and more.

Singing at the age of five in Poughkeepsie, NY, Weston felt she didn't have what it takes to become a country singer.

"I was horrible, I'd make my family sit through every rendition of Annie, and it was just God awful. I just kept singing and I got better," said Weston. "As far as singing professionally, as an actress, whenever there was a musical, I would just do it."

Songs that Weston has written come from life experiences. If anything happens to her personally, she guarantees it will end up in her lyrics.

"I won't start writing until I have an idea," said Weston. "Usually, I'll have the title first, and then from there, I'll write the rest of the song, or script."

Names of different recordings she has are, Shoulda Been You, Nothing Serious, All That's Left to do is Meet You, You're



PHOTO: LUCIA VIANA

Getting Lucky Tonight, Somewhere Not Here, and Like Me Out Loud.

Writing her first song, If I Said Howdy to You, Weston felt the meaning behind the words she wrote came from talking to people.

"I thought, if there was this person who you only had a relationship with over email, and especially today with the technology with the texting, IMing, and the blackberry messaging. A lot of

the time you can have a relationship with somebody, and have many conversations, and never meet the person face to face," said Weston.

She explained that if two people that had these technological conversations, and happened to be in the same place at the same time, would they recognize each other?

If I Said Howdy to You, and A Country Kind of Christmas can be found on

Weston's Web site at www.rileyweston.com. I'm More White Than Trash is a hoe down.

"I would say to my dad, this is one of those songs that you probably don't want to listen to the lyrics," said Weston, explaining that you should listen to the melody, and appreciate it.

A song titled My Dirty Hair is meant to be comedic as Weston figures every

WESTON, page 43

Celebrating America's Independence - Our Veterans

John Lenotte

VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

In July, we again celebrated what many perceive as just another summer holiday.

There were cookouts, fireworks, family gatherings.

Perhaps you even watched the Boston Pops annual program.

But, how many of us remembered why we were really celebrating the 4th of July?

Remember a document called the Declaration of Independence? Massachusetts was in the leadership of this great work. John Hancock, John Adams and Sam Adams were leaders in the American Revolution. Patriots in the truest sense. And it was Massachusetts militia men who fought the earlier battles. And shed their blood and gave up their lives.

It is a debt of gratitude that can never truly be repaid.

Since that time, many of our Massachusetts men and women have served our country. The American Legion and other veterans service organizations grew out of a need to petition the US government and serve as a watchdog for veterans rights and benefits. The oath of enlistment is a bond between those who join the military and the government. A promise to give all for the country, up to and including one's life. In return, the government is to take care of those who have been injured physically or mentally in the course of their duties. Yet even today, the American Legion and others work closely with the President, Congress, Veterans Administration and other agencies to advocate for veterans. Some current examples follow.

The American Legion is calling upon Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to move quickly in granting benefit claims for three diseases recently declared to have presumptive connections with exposure to Agent Orange defoliant. For sev-

eral months, The American Legion has been pressing VA to publish its final regulations for the three new presumptive diseases: ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's disease, and B-cell leukemia.

"Veterans can't collect their earned disability benefits until VA publishes final regulations on these diseases," said Barry Searle, director of the Legion's veterans affairs and rehabilitation division. "And that's a process that has been dragging through the bureaucratic mire since last October."

While veterans across the country are still waiting for those regulations to be published - so they can start to collect earned disability benefits - another delay will be created by provisions of the Congressional Review Act of 1996. That legislation grants Congress 60 days to review regulations published by federal agencies and possibly disapprove them. If that happens, regulations for the three presumptive conditions will be cancelled and veterans won't be able to claim those new benefits.

A second example comes from a report to Congress on June 14th. The American Legion told Congress that, while the Veterans Benefits Administration has made some recent progress, it believes "there are clearly areas for improvement" in the way VBA processes disability claims for veterans.

"VBA has, to be fair, made many strides forward in recent history, but there are still many areas that must be addressed," said Ian de Planque, deputy director of The American Legion's veterans affairs and rehabilitation division, in his written testimony before a House subcommittee. "VBA struggles with the quality of work and timeliness, not only in the adjudication of claims but also in the implementation of internal regulatory changes and those directed by Congress."

In addition, de Planque said, the accuracy of VBA's work is suffering from the pres-

ures of moving a high volume of disability claims through its own system -- a system that has serious flaws, according to a March 2009 report from the Dept. of Veterans Affairs Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

The OIG report found that VBA has been remiss in reviewing and analyzing its own systemic problems: while 20 reviews were planned for the grant/denial rates for veterans' disability claims, only two were conducted. "Furthermore," the report said, "VBA officials did not initiate either of the two planned evaluation reviews to analyze and improve the consistency of disability compensation ratings, and to reduce the variances between states."

"VBA is not following up on their own projected plans for analysis," de Planque told the House Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs. "Regardless of the potential of STAR (Systematic Technical Accuracy Review, introduced in October 1998), if it is not implemented as intended, it cannot hope to be an effective tool for correction. The exertion of outside pressure would seem essential to enforcing the application of the procedures in place."

The American Legion has already proposed three changes that would improve STAR: develop a system to track errors nationwide, use the gathered data to improve training programs, and strengthen the program's effectiveness with independent oversight.

While the OIG report estimated that nearly one-fourth of all claims processed by VBA contained mistakes, de Planque said the error rate at VA regional offices "is even higher," at least among veterans' claims being filed through American Legion service officers. "During quality-review visits conducted by The American Legion, which encompass a weeklong review of operations in Regional Offices, VBA's error rate often reaches a third of all claims evalu-

ated," he said.

Recent legislation passed by Congress has directed VBA to use measures already in place to expedite the claims process, such as granting interim disability ratings until veterans can submit more supporting documentation. Also -- instead of denying a claim outright -- well-documented health issues can be granted immediately while others that need more data can be deferred for later decisions.

While veterans qualify for back pay of benefits once VBA decides in their favor, de Planque reminded the subcommittee that veterans must also wait for the health care to treat their conditions. "The effects of heart disease and Parkinson's, when untreated, can be devastating. VA must act to move forward on this and grant these deserving veterans their claims with all due haste so they can receive the preventive health care they are entitled to," de Planque said. "The time for delays has long since passed, and this must be a priority for resolution, with no more obstacles thrown in the way of these veterans."

In all fairness, there are many great programs and work being done on behalf of our veterans. But the systemic problems need to be fixed. Only by bringing these to the forefront and citizens like you and me contacting our congressional representatives, will the issues be resolved. Will you join me in asking that these needy veterans get taken care of?

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

VA Employees sentenced for identity theft

BEDFORD, MA- On June 9, former Bedford VA employees were sentenced in federal court for stealing the identities of disabled, combat Veterans living at Bedford VA.

Director, Tammy A. Follensbee said, "Bedford VA has a zero tolerance policy for illegal activity of any kind. Bedford VA Police investigate and seek prosecution of crimes on campus to ensure everyone's safety."

WILFREDO HERNANDEZ, 42 and JESSICA RIVERA, 29, formerly Lowell, were sentenced by U.S. District Judge Edward Harrington. HERNANDEZ was sentenced to one year and a day of incarceration, followed by two years of supervised release. RIVERA was sentenced to

six months of home confinement and two years of probation. Both defendants were ordered to pay over \$3,000 in restitution. On March 12, 2010, HERNANDEZ and RIVERA were convicted after a weeklong jury trial of conspiracy to commit identity fraud, access device fraud, and wire fraud, one count of identity fraud, and two counts of access device fraud.

HERNANDEZ was a housekeeping leader and RIVERA a nurse's assistant. The evidence at trial proved that the two stole checks, credit card numbers, and bank account numbers from several disabled combat Veterans who lived at the hospital in the long-term care facility. HERNANDEZ and RIVERA shared the stolen information with GLADYS HER-

NANDEZ, the mother of WILFREDO HERNANDEZ who previously pled guilty and was sentenced to probation due to her serious health issues. The three defendants purchased in excess of a \$1,000 in goods and services over the telephone and Internet using the Veterans' accounts and identities.

When asked how Ms. Follensbee felt about the ruling yesterday and the impact it would have on Bedford VA she offered, "Honesty, compassion and openness are essential components in the delivery of quality health care. Bedford VA has dedicated, professional and highly ethical staff. This isolated incident does not

define Bedford VA staff."

The case was investigated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General, the United States Secret Service and the Bedford VA Police Department. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Anthony E. Fuller of Ortiz's Public Corruption and Special Prosecutions Unit.

"I am very pleased with the investigative results and outcome from the hearing held in Federal Court. John Duffey, chief of police at Bedford VA and his entire department have been invaluable in supporting our zero tolerance policy here at Bedford. "said Director Follensbee.

ATHLETES: FROM PAGE 41

Talking about a big fight in Boston Bruins history, Sanderson, who played with the team from 1966-1974 said it wasn't his fault!

"The Rangers had planned that, the night before, we had a fight in Boston," said Sanderson, explaining that the fight was to get even. "It got a little carried away. There ended up being five fights, and I didn't know the rule that if you had more than two majors, you'd get thrown out of the game."

Vendor Bill Yanno said, "We have a lot of sport publications, sports magazines, year books, most are Yankee oriented. We have Williams also," said Yanno. "All of these big players came to New York at one time to sign autographs at our card shows there in Albany."

Molly Anne Bracigliano of MAB said her company has been around for seven years, and they are from Fairfield, NJ.

"Mike Josselyn is terrific. He's a good guy, he's an honest guy, and the first time I

wanted to come up to Boston, I wanted to branch out to other markets, and I didn't want to make any promoters in any other part of the country upset with me, so I contacted them, and said, I have an established business in New Jersey, I'd like to do a show, would you like to do one with me," said Bracigliano.

Meeting Boggs, Kevin Griffiths of Rockland said he was extremely nice, took pictures with him and his wife, and showed him his championship ring. "I had him sign a photo for me, and he was nice enough to sign a hat for my son Luke, whose eight months old."

The Beantown Bonanza's authentication was dealt with by JSA Authentication out of Parsippany, NJ. For more information about this organization, go to www.SpenceLOA.com.

If you are interested in buying sports memorabilia from Sure Shot Promotions call 1-781-754-0063, 1-781-290-6008, or send a fax to 1-781-294-9217. The posting address is P.O. Box 158. Hanson, MA. 02341. For more information about MAB, call 1-973-808-1740, or send a fax to 1-973-808-2016.

WESTON: FROM PAGE 42

girl can relate to it. When that inexplicable rush comes, and there is no time to shower, just throw on a baseball cap, and some jeans, and get to work.

Weston's future album will be called, Surrender Laughing. It is about letting go, and doing whatever is on ones plate.

In her career as a country singer, Weston has sung the National Anthem at the Anaheim Mighty Ducks, and Los Angeles Clippers games.

"I sang again when we hosted a huge game when we had the Olympic hockey team there. We were honoring them after the Olympics," said Weston.

Besides performing at sporting events, she has been at the Fourth Annual Red Carpet Jam, where a number of Hollywoods indi artists took stage this past February. Recently, Weston has been

entertaining people at the Cowboy Palace in Chatsworth, CA.

"It's in the middle of no where, and it's awesome, and it's a great little country bar," said Weston.

For more information about Weston, go to www.rileyweston.com. Her music can be bought on iTunes.



"Shawn Hansen recently graduated from UMass Lowell. He has published work in eight different newspapers. He also has a television show called, "Shawn Hansen's Comedy Corner," which is based as a Late Night show with Jay Leno, or Jimmy Fallon. His show is at Burlington Cable Access TV. To get in touch with Shawn, email him at Shawn.Hansen.sportsentertainment@gmail.com."

HEROES IN OUR MIDST, FRED KUEHN: From page 1

grandson of German immigrants, Fred practiced his prayers in German every week at Sunday school. This would later become important while Fred was serving overseas. After graduating from Lawrence High, he attended the University of New Hampshire and became a member of the ROTC, realizing that being drafted could not be far away. Sure enough, he was drafted, but was given a three month deferment until he turned 18. When those three months were up, he was sent to Fort Belvoir in Virginia for basic training and, because of his studies in engineering at UNH, for combat engineer training as well.

He was qualified for the Army Specialized Training Program. This meant that instead of being shipped overseas right away, he would attend Brooklyn College to study engineering.

Shortly after he started classes at Brooklyn College, the plans for the invasion of Normandy were being put into place and the program at the college was discontin-

were sent overseas. His battalion shipped out to Europe from New York Harbor, part of a large convoy of ships numbering over 80 vessels. Along the way, while off the coast of Ireland, one of the ships was torpedoed by an enemy submarine. That ship just happened to be their supply boat. The rest of the ships were forced to dock in Bristol, England, in November of 1944.

Fred's battalion was then ordered to proceed to the continent in December of 1944 on high alert. This was around the time that the last two major German offensives were to take place. On December 31st 1944, they crossed the English Channel and landed on the southern front. They had started their journey at the time the renowned Battle of the Bulge had started, and they wouldn't finish till the end of January.

However, Fred was in the middle of one of the lesser known battles during this time, the second of the last two German offensives known as Operation Nordwind. Although the battle may have been overshadowed by others that claimed the pages in history books, it was still one of the most important battles of the war.

The German objective was to divide the French and the American armies. They did manage to push the Americans back but, in the end, General Eisenhower had ordered the 7th Army, which contained the 21st Engineer Corps, to which Fred belonged, to push forward. And push forward is just what they did. They were successful in April of 1945, only 5 months after Fred had entered combat.

Fred spent the closing months after hostilities in Europe ceased stationed just west of Heidelberg. Fred's battalion had a group of German prisoners of war under their control whom they supervised on work details. One Sunday, while Fred was on guard duty, a few prisoners wanted to attend church. Fred sought and was given permission to do so.

He marched the prisoners to a nearby village with a church. He led the men inside and followed, taking a seat in the last pew. Fred took off his steel helmet, set aside his rifle and joined the congregation. Fred's eyes, as he speaks of this time, grow unfocused and it seems as if he is transported back to that time, so many years ago. At that Mass in a little town in Germany, as the congregation and



the POW's stood at one point to recite the Lord's Prayer, Fred himself stood up and repeated the prayer with them.

At only 19, Fred saw things that most in this generation or any other could hardly imagine. He talks about the cold winters overseas and the action that he saw like it was yesterday, with the matter-of-fact tone more commonly associated with reports of a typical day at work. Those years across the ocean are etched in his mind with the clarity reserved for the very intense. When asked if he had the choice to do it all over again, Fred says, with a simplicity that belies the magnitude of the

statement, that he imagines he would. This is the perfect example of the generosity of men and women like Fred who have made it possible for Americans today to call their country the land of the free and, as embodied by people like Fred, the home of the brave. We are honored to have Fred Kuehn as our Valley Patriot of the Month for July.



Gary Manion is a former candidate for Lawrence City Council and a student at Merrimack College. You can email him at manniong@merrimack.edu



ued. The need for man power in Europe was growing and Fred was assigned to Camp Polk to join the 75th infantry Division as a rifleman. He took part in maneuvers and was then transferred again. In April of 1944, he returned to the corps of engineers and joined the 289th Engineer Combat Battalion at Camp Robinson, AR. In October of 1944, Fred and his battalion

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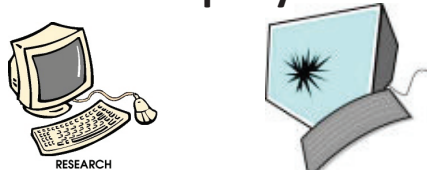
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