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THE NOOSE TIGHTENS



Coakley joins other agencies in Lantigua Probe: Page 2

ABOVE: Former City Council President and Current Economic Development Director Patrick Blanchette with former Lantigua Chief of Staff Lenny Degnan testifying in 2010 before a joint House and Senate Committee asking the state to borrow \$35 Million. Several state and federal law enforcement agencies are now investigating Lantigua and his administration for dozens of allegations of corruption. Subpoenas were served on Degnan and several Lantigua hires.

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VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

Hero in Our Midst: Colonel Kris Mineau, USAF (Ret.)

Helen Mooradkian
VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

Colonel Kris Mineau, USAF (Ret.), of North Reading, flew 100 combat missions into North Vietnam in 1966 as fighter pilot in the supersonic F-4C Phantom II.

Capable of speed Mach 2.23, more than twice the speed of sound, the Phantom was key to downing the Soviet MiG-21s used by the North Vietnamese to intercept U.S. bombing missions.

Flying out of Ubon, Thailand, with the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW), Mineau

flew deep into North Vietnam as part of "Operation Rolling Thunder," the first sustained—and the longest—aerial bombing assault in the history of American air power. It cut off the flow of supplies moving south down the Ho Chi Minh Trail to the Viet Cong invading South Vietnam.

Supersonic fighter jets. Lightning-speed maneuvers. Aggressive warfare. Suicide missions. "I was a cocky fighter pilot who thought I was invincible," Mineau says.

The Wolf Pack—Record breakers

As a young lieutenant, Mineau was a member of the famed "Wolf Pack," renowned for their aggressiveness and teamwork in destroying enemy aircraft. Their wing commander was the legendary WWII ace Colonel Robin Olds who, in 1944-1945, had 12 kills against the German Luftwaffe. Then, at age 44, he led the 8th TFW, as commander and pilot, to 24 aerial victories and 38.5 kills in Vietnam—both records unsurpassed by any other wing in the war. Olds also masterminded "Operation Bolo," a clever ambush of MiG-21s. The 12-minute engagement destroyed seven MiG-21s—the highest number in any combat operation of the war—without a single American loss. Col. Olds got his first MiG kill in "Bolo" and went on to shoot down a total of 4 MiG-21s. Mineau also flew with another Air Force legend, Colonel Daniel "Chappie" James, Jr., the first black American promoted to four-star general.

Supersonic ejection—toward hell

Following his combat tour, Mineau was assigned to fly F-4Cs in Europe where



Col. Kris Mineau, USAF (Ret.) is a decorated fighter pilot who flew 100 combat missions in supersonic fighter jets over North Vietnam and served in the Gulf War's "Operation Desert Storm." He received the Legion of Merit, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Meritorious Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Air Medal with nine Oak Leaf Clusters. He now serves as president, Massachusetts Family Institute.

MINEAU: PAGE 39

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Feds serve more subpoenas in Corruption probe

Tom Duggan

VALLEY PATRIOT PUBLISHER

Since the days of Willie Lantigua's first campaign for state representative, The Valley Patriot has reported extensively on his failure to report campaign contributions, failure to declare campaign expenses and was accepting illegal contributions such as cash, dollar amounts over the legal contribution limit, corporate checks, contributions from people and companies doing business with the state and the city, and his outright refusal to even file campaign finance reports with the Secretary of State's office.

More than a decade later Lantigua finds himself under investigation by the FBI, U.S. Customs, District Attorney Jon Blodgett, The Office of Campaign Finance, The Attorney General, The State Police, and several unnamed law enforcement agencies at the state and federal level.

A Federal grand jury has been convened for more than a year, hearing testimony of corruption, payoffs, illegal contributions and contracts, money laundering, fraud, illegal influence over city contracts, intimidation and threats, nepotism, misuse of police and law enforcement technology, theft of city services and a host of other undisclosed charges

Last month, yet another round of FBI subpoenas were served on members of

Lantigua's cabinet, including: Deputy Police Chief Melix Bonilla, Personnel Director Frank Bonet, former Chief of Staff Lenny Degnan, members of the city's licensing board (where Lantigua's wife sits as a voting member) and several business owners who have contracts with the city.

THE PLAYERS

Frank Bonet: Hired by former Mayor Michael Sullivan on Willie Lantigua's recommendation, Bonet is responsible for all hiring and firing of city employees and is also in charge of all workplace investigations in the city, settling employee disputes, suspending and disciplining employees and oversees raises. It was Bonet who hired and promoted Lantigua's girlfriend Lorenza Ortega first as a secretary and then as an assistant Personnel Director.

Ortega was caught last year illegally getting government subsidized heating assistance while living with Lantigua and is named in a lawsuit by former city employee Judy Perkins.

Bonet eventually resigned from the Sullivan administration to take a job with the IRS (giving him access to social security numbers) and returned to his position a few months later when Lantigua was elected to replace Sullivan as Mayor in 2009.

Bonet is and has been on the Lantigua "team" for more than a decade and has been

one of the most vital members of Lantigua's cabinet. He has also been a controversial figure, getting elected to the Lawrence School Committee while serving as Personnel Director. While serving in both positions Lantigua named Bonet to the subcommittee that negotiates school employee union contracts, a conflict of interest since, as Personnel Director Bonet is legally responsible for arbitrating disputes between employees and must sign the contracts he negotiated. He eventually was forced to resign from the school committee.

Bonet has also publicly opposed parks in the City of Lawrence being named for veterans, saying that people who kill others and go to war are not heroes and that parks should be named for Latino activists and heroes of the Dominican Republic since so many Dominicans live in the city.

Bonet has intimate knowledge of "behind the scenes" agreements over Lantigua's job hirings and promotions. Our sources say that Bonet is one of two people who can help make the feds case on most of the allegations given his personal knowledge of the players involved and the payments that allegedly took place.

Lenny Degnan: Degnan was Lantigua's mole in the Israel Reyes mayoral campaign during the 2009 elections, feeding information back to Lantigua about the inner work-

ings of Reyes' strategy, donors and issues.

When Reyes was defeated by Lantigua '09 mayoral primary, Degnan was immediately put in charge of the campaign with (then), police sergeant Melix Bonilla.

Degnan was appointed chief of staff shortly after Lantigua won the mayor's seat and was put in charge of the city budget during the first few months of the 2010. Eventually, the budget was in such disarray that the State Department of Revenue had to step in and take control.

Degnan also testified before a joint House and Senate committee asking them to allow Lantigua to borrow \$35 Million more to balance the city budget and avoid lay-offs of fire and police. He was personally involved in doling out city contracts, and our sources in the City Attorney's office say that Degnan micromanaged the handing of lawsuits that had been filed against the city, giving directives to attorneys as to which cases to settle, for how much, and which cases to prolong.

Degnan has already testified (at least) once before the federal grand jury in the Lantigua corruption probe. He abruptly, and uncharacteristically resigned as Lantigua's Chief of Staff last year without the usual Degnan fanfare of speeches at the city council and a long list of what he considers his

CORRUPTION PROBE, PAGE 33

Chris Christie on Israel -- and What It Means to Be a Leader

Dennis Prager

VALLEY PATRIOT SYNDICATED COLUMNIST

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie addressed the American Israel @ Affairs Committee (AIPAC) last week. In the few words reported by the Weekly Standard magazine, he said just about everything one needs to know about Israel; about America and Israel; and about American political leadership:

"America should stand by its friends and its democratic allies, even, and sometimes especially, when it's unpopular to do so."

"... It may not be fashionable in some of the chancelleries, the foreign ministries, and salons around the world to talk about why America stands with Israel — but that's no excuse not to be saying (it), and saying it loudly."

"I admire Israel for the enemies it has made."

"Americans and Israelis believe — we know deep in our bones — that if the Islamic Republic of Iran acquired a nuclear weapons capability, it will be an existential threat to Israel, to America, and to world civilization itself."

"... A threat to Israel is a threat to America. A threat to the Israeli way of life is a threat to the American way of life. Not only for here in America, but for all the nations that emulate our democracy or are

trying to emulate our democracy around the world."

"... Stopping Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability must be a top priority of the United States of America. Any president, Republican or Democrat, who allows such a thing to occur on his watch would be acting in a way that is profoundly against the national security interests of the United States and the security interests of our friends in Israel."

In a few words, a New Jersey governor, generally identified only with state and national issues, made the case for Israel, why America should support Israel, and why Iran must not be allowed to obtain nuclear weapons at least as clearly and eloquently as — and perhaps more so than — any major political figure in America today.

Let's review:

1) America should stand by its friends and democratic allies, especially when it is unpopular to do so. This is a challenge to the Democratic president, Barack Obama, and to Republican Congressman Ron Paul and his supporters.

Since becoming president, Obama has visited Turkey, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Indonesia and Afghanistan, just to name the Muslim countries of the 30 he has visited. The president has not visited Israel, America's greatest ally in the Middle East, not to mention the only country in that

part of the world that shares America's values.

Meanwhile, Ron Paul regards standing by allies as a waste of money and certainly a waste of lives, if military intervention is ever called for.

2) It is indeed not fashionable in the chancelleries, foreign ministries, and salons around the world to talk about why America stands with Israel. That is why this comment alone singles Christie out as a potential national and world leader: He believes it is necessary to say what is right despite what the U.S. State Department, Le Monde, The New York Times and the United Nations think. The first rule of American leadership is to not give a damn what any of those think about you. Wanting to be highly regarded by any of those institutions has led too many Republicans astray.

3) For those who have trouble distinguishing good guys from bad guys — for example, most universities and the left generally — Christie offers a Cliff's Notes summary: Just look at who one's — in this case Israel's — enemies are. Any country that Hamas, Hezbollah, the Muslim Brotherhood and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad hate must be one morally great place.

4) Christie makes the reason to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons as clear as can be: That country poses an existential threat first to Israel and secondarily to America and the West.

The greatest mistake — ultimately a suicidal one — that good non-Jews make

is to dismiss Jew-hatred (known by the euphemism of "anti-Semitism") as the Jews' problem. Had the Western world not dismissed Adolf Hitler and Nazism as primarily a Jewish problem, 50 million non-Jews would not have been killed between 1939 and 1945. Jew-haters, like the above mentioned Islamist successors to the Nazis, hate all that is and all who are decent and good. We turn our attention from Iran's nuclear ambitions at our great peril. Chris Christie knows this. Ron Paul does not. Does Barack Obama?

Even if Chris Christie could be recruited at this late date, I do not believe that I know enough about him to yearn that he be the Republican presidential nominee. But aside from reinforcing already positive feelings about him, these few remarks on Israel and the world should be a lesson to the candidates who are in the race.

And the lesson is this: Say what you believe. Americans are willing to vote for people they differ with on some issues — even important ones. But they have to believe that you believe what you say and that what you say comes from a set of deeply held beliefs.

Dennis Prager hosts a nationally syndicated radio talk show and is a visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He is the author of four books, most recently "Happiness Is a Serious Problem" (HarperCollins). His website is DennisPrager.com. **COPYRIGHT 2012 CREATORS.COM**

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The Tyranny of Despots and Buffoons

Doctor Chuck Ormsby
VALLEY PATRIOT EDITOR/COLUMNIST

Can't they just leave us alone? Why must they constantly meddle in our affairs?

They are like overbearing busybodies with a congenital case of ego elephantiasis. Or is it arrogance elephantiasis?

As children grow up they eventually outgrow the need for parental guidance. The timing of this process varies for different youngsters, but regardless of individual differences, society has agreed that at 18 years of age children are emancipated. Oh, except when the government extends child support to age 23 or requires parental medical coverage until age 26. I guess 26 is the "new 18."

That is except when it comes to sex education and access to contraception. Then 14 is the new 18. Wow, 12 years of sex with no responsibility. What a country!

Whatever age is chosen for entry into adulthood, youngsters should not celebrate prematurely. What they will soon find out is that while they have left the relatively benign dictatorship imposed by most parents, they have entered a regulatory jungle that is so impenetrable that there is no hope of ever sorting it out.

They have jumped out of their incubator and into a rat's nest.

I have never fully appreciated what makes young adults cover their precious bodies with tattoos, puncture various body parts, and/or color their hair like a neon sign.

"Of liberty I would say that, in the whole plenitude of its extent, it is unobstructed action according to our will. But rightful liberty is unobstructed action according to our will within limits drawn around us by the equal rights of others. I do not add 'within the limits of the law,' because law is often but the tyrant's will, and always so when it violates the right of an individual."

~ Thomas Jefferson

I used to think these adolescents were the least intelligent ten percent of the new generation, but I'm now reconsidering that conclusion. It is just possible that they are the most perceptive ten percent and that upon entering the adult world they are the first to figure out what a bizzaro world they are condemned to inhabit. The less perceptive ninety percent figure it out so slowly, if they figure it out at all, that the insanity seems normal.

There is not one reader of this article that knows more than one hundredth of one percent of the laws that they are subject to, and that includes lawyers and judges. In fact, I suspect I could have said one thousandth of one percent and still have been correct, but who would know or could possibly know?

Beyond opening the gates to the arbitrary and capricious enforcement of these

unknowable laws, the regulatory maze has the more profound effect of destroying initiative and entrepreneurship.

How many enterprising individuals would like to embark on a business venture only to be dissuaded by the maze of regulations and associated legal impediments?

For the few that are brave enough to venture into this jungle, how many fail and lose their life savings because of the costs of compliance (including the costs of hiring compliance "experts"), taxes, inspections, or the fees/penalties imposed by worthless bureaucrats?

One shouldn't ignore the fact that these bureaucrats are typically a bunch of buffoons who couldn't run a lemonade stand. But we should give them some credit: they are smart enough to never enter the dreaded private sector and stick to the safe, union-protected, can't-be-fired, pension-laden public sector. Something about the fleas from a thousand camels comes to mind.

The government hacks will tell you that their regulations are there to help the little people and protect the common man from mean, profit-thirsty corporations.

It might surprise you to learn that the exact opposite is the case. The regulations are supported by the larger corporations to protect them from innovative, upstart competitors. Once a corporation reaches a certain size, it can afford a resident staff of lawyers and accountants who, along with computers, software, and an IT staff, can deal with the complex regulatory environment. They can also afford the lobbying staff and political grease needed to tailor regulations to their advantage and to the detriment of any insurgent competitors.

The regulatory maze is like a deep moat filled with alligators surrounding the castles of big business. Businesses who collude with the government to deepen their moat and reward the government for

doing so with bribes and political donations are corrupt. To the extent that they use government to suppress the rights of others to compete - thereby gaining unearned advantages in the marketplace - they are participants in a criminal enterprise. To the same extent, they are not capitalists. They are crony socialists (See: Another Socialist Lie: Crony Capitalism, Valley Patriot, January 2012).

Once the government sets up shop to sell favors and special advantages, it is not surprising that others decide to seek the same privileges. The list is long and growing: unions (public and private sector), public education (both K-12 and higher education ... which is getting lower every year), welfare recipients, not-for-profit corporations, members of licensed professions (from doctors to manicurists to tattoo artists) and, finally, quasi-government enterprises such as the post office, Amtrak, and GM, just to mention a few.

Come to think of it, I don't want to be left out. I think we should pass a law to license professors of mathematics. Just think of the danger to the public if I fail to properly teach calculus to my students: Airplanes will start falling out of the sky, bridges will collapse without warning, and electrical circuits will catch fire (like in the GM Volt)! Clearly this is unacceptable. The public must be protected.

Of course, I wouldn't support such a law for my own benefit. The law would be "adopted" for the public welfare and especially for the innocent children.

Yes, the government is largely composed of tyrants and buffoons, but those that vote for politicians who promise to maintain the status quo have a streak of the very same characteristics. They have a tyrannical streak because they are voting to perpetuate unearned privileges, and a buffoonery streak because they think such advantages confer a net benefit when, in fact, they lower the general standard of living and reduce the liberty of us all.


Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "An elective despotism was not the government we fought for." But it is the one we have today.

From now to November is our time to fight despotism.


Make those who fought for your freedoms proud. Don't sit this one out.

~ In memory of ~

**Lawrence Police Officer
Thomas Duggan Sr.**





**Killed in the line of duty
March 16, 1990**



Time may have passed, but we have not forgotten how you protected our community so well for 18 years. Nor have we forgotten what you lived for and what you died for.

Sadly missed by family, friends, colleagues and a very grateful community.



*Dr. Ormsby is an ex- member of the N.A. School Committee. He is a graduate of Cornell and has a doctorate from MIT. He is currently a Professor of Mathematics at UMASS, Lowell. You can email him at: cormsby@comcast.net*

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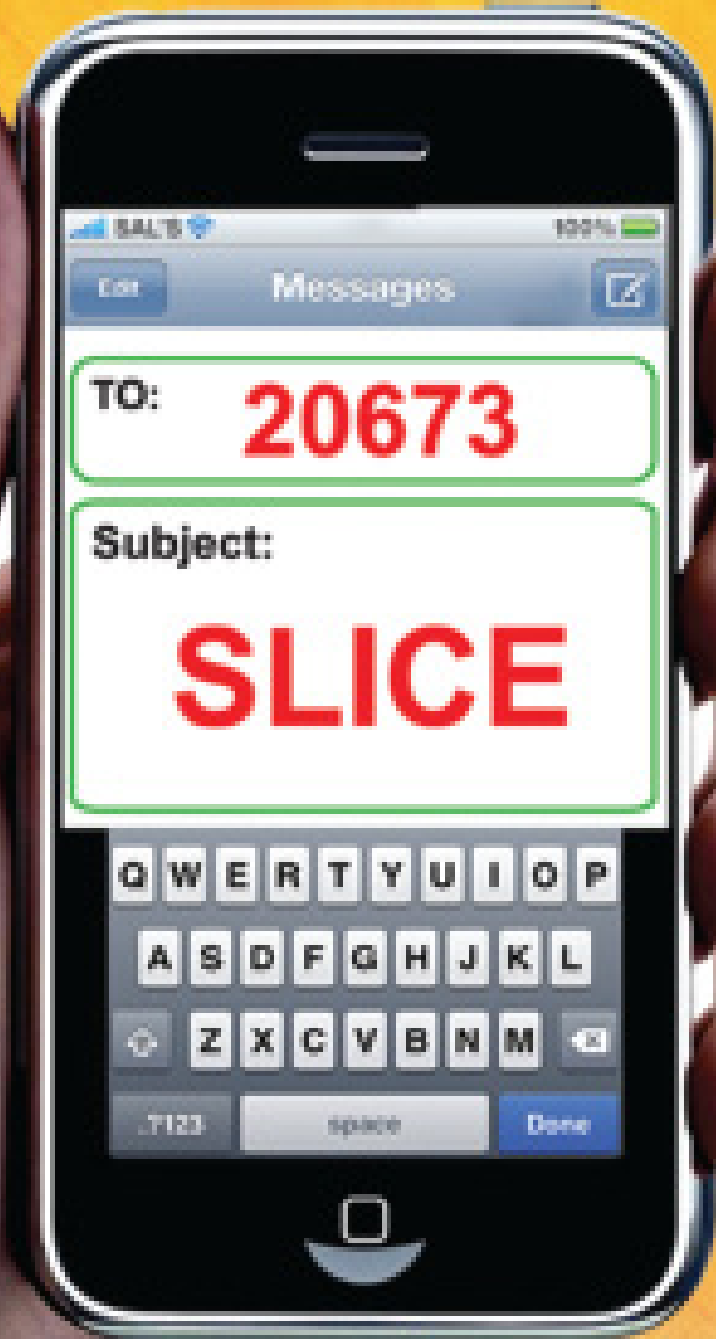
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Romney Attack Machine in Overdrive

Jeff Katz

RADIO TALK SHOW HOST/TALK 1200AM

As I write this, we are a few days out from the Michigan Republican primary and the race continues to evolve.

For the past month, former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum has been leading former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney. In fact, at times, Santorum's lead has been shown to be well into the double digits. But in the prior week or so, the Romney attack machine, which was so successful in sidelining Newt Gingrich, has been in overdrive. Indeed, the Romney attack force has again spent millions of dollars on television commercials. As per usual, the Romney super-pac airs only negative ads against Romney's fellow Republicans but has never aired a positive pro-Romney spot.

What Romney has shown during the campaign so far, is that he has hired the very best DC based campaign staffers. He has shown that he has some excellent organizing efforts in place and a boatload of money. He has shown that he is more than willing to engage in carpet bombing of other Republicans. What he has yet to show is why anyone should vote for him, and yet we hear this incessant mantra that

he is the inevitable nominee.

There have been the usual Mom, Chevy and apple pie speeches from Romney, but they seem empty at best. Conspicuous by their absence have been any Romney speeches where he is animated, let alone passionate. He has been caught pandering on any number of issues to any number of voters, but his prattle in Michigan has been the worst. The proud son of Detroit declared that he loved the big lakes in Michigan and then quickly added he liked the small ones too. Oh and the trees in Michigan are just the right height he proclaimed! As he is wont to do when he wanders from his prepared remarks, he stuck his foot in his mouth yet again, when he reminded unemployed autoworkers that he had lots of cars in his garages. Garages with luxury cars attached to huge mansions. And still, the man with the Brooks Brothers platinum card continues to try and play the regular guy role.

We are a country which desperately needs a visionary and a leader. We are burdened with the worst president ever. I don't say that lightly. Up until now, I have pegged Jimmy Carter as the most inept quisling to ever bunk in America's best public housing, but the current occupier

of the Oval Office clearly eclipses President Peanut. I've never seen a president who simply did not appreciate the unique and exceptional nature of our nation.

To have a president who many believe, rightly or wrongly, does not really like the U.S.A. is a terrible commentary on where we are. Many ascribe a lack of ability to the dear leader, but they are mistaken. Barack Obama is a devoted disciple of Saul Alinsky and a major proponent of the very same style of European socialism which has driven Greece into an economic pit. So why am I fearful that he will be re-elected?

As I've said so many times, I don't have a dog in this race. There are things about each of the GOP's final four candidates that I like. There are things that I find disturbing about each one, as well. I hear the buzz about a so-called brokered convention for us in Tampa and frankly that has begun to give me some hope. Otherwise, I fear it is inevitable that my party will nominate yet another weak, ineffective guy like



Congratulations to the Valley Patriot TEAM on publishing 100 Issues
~ Jeff Katz

Bob Dole or John McCain and that moves us closer to the disaster that would be a second Obama term.

You can email Jeff at jeffkatz@clearchannel.com

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Notices From the North Andover Senior Center

North Andover Senior Center Re- ceives Programs of Excellence Award from the National Council on Aging

National Award Highlights Community Success Stories for Older Adults
Washington, D.C. - The North Andover Senior Center has received an award from The National Council on Aging (NCOA) for its Early Stage Alzheimer's Support Groups. The award was presented as part of NCOA's National Institute of Senior Centers' 2011 Programs of Excellence.

The North Andover Senior Center Program is a unique free support program for Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers. The award, given under the category of education, recognized the North Andover Senior Center for having the most creative and innovative programs in senior centers in the U. S.

The North Andover Senior Center is a member of the National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC), a program committed to supporting and strengthening the nation's 11,000 senior centers. NISC offers best practices, professional development, advocacy, research, and national standards and accreditation.

"Senior Centers play a vital role in helping older adults to stay healthy and connected to their community," said Jim Firman, president and CEO of NCOA. "We congratulate The North

Andover Senior Center on its innovative programs for older adults which can serve as a nationwide model to assist seniors across the country."

Elder Services Director Irene O'Brien called it a great honor to be considered for this national Award.

"This award is such a credit to our entire staff here at the center, even the ones not directly involved with the sessions. Without this wonderful staff, we could never have done this."

For more information about The North Andover Senior Center, please visit www.townofnorthandover.com

and for more information on the National Institute of Senior Centers or visit www.ncoa.org/NISC.

ZUMBA WITH TALLIE!



Mon 3:30-4:30 Zumba Basic (Mary), Wed 3-3:45 Zumba Gold w/Tallie, Wed 4-5 Zumba Fitness w/Tallie, Thu 4:30-5:30 Zumba Fitness w/ Tallie, Sat 9:30-10:30am Zumba Fitness w/ Mary.

develop creative solutions that improve

the lives of all older adults. NCOA works with thousands of organizations across the country to help seniors find jobs and benefits, improve their health, live independently, and remain active in their communities. For more information, please visit: www.ncoa.org | www.facebook.com/NCOAging | www.twitter.com/NCOAging

Mark your calendar – Indoor Flea Market: Sat. Mar 24th-Reserve your 5 ft. tables \$15, 12 ft tables \$30. Call the North Andover Council On Aging 978 688 9560

Memory Support Group Coalition is continuing the series of support groups for those with diagnosed dementia and their care partners. A new group will begin in mid March and continue until June. If interested in participating, please call the North Andover Senior Center, Donna Delaney, 978 688 9560 to learn more and to book a screening. Coalition Members have been trained by the Alzheimer's Assoc. of Mass.

Senior Circuit Breaker Tax Credit: The Dept of Revenue has planned a series of presentations to educate taxpayers 65+ about the benefits of this program for year 2011. This credit is worth as much as \$980 for eligible taxpayers who own or rent their home.

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Celtics Honor North Andover Teen for Disability Awareness

The Boston Celtics and the Mass State Lottery presented North Andover high school student Nathan Richards, (17) with a “Heroes Among Us” award at the March 4th Celtics game. Richards, an Easter Seals youth leader, was honored for starting a disability awareness program at North Andover Middle School. He also has testified on Beacon Hill and recently won the first-ever Youth Advocate of the Year award from Massachusetts Advocates for Children. Shown from left to right are Celtics player Avery Bradley, Mass Lottery Marketing Director Beth Bresnahan, Richards and Knicks player Amar’e Stoudemire.

Conservative Runs for Town Moderator

Dr. Frank MacMillan, Jr. is running for Town Moderator in North Andover with a campaign theme of finding “The Right Balance.” In these tough political and economic times, Frank brings a varied background in leadership, learning and character, the Right Balance of qualities that will serve North Andover well.

As a medical doctor who advises people every day on issues of health, Frank understands the value of listening. This is an important quality given the unchallengeable power that the Town Moderator has in guiding the Town Meeting’s deliberations. Frank MacMillan believes in fairness. He will preside over the debate, but will not sway or monopolize it. The Town Moderator decides when all sides have been heard, closes debate and calls for a vote. In this important role, the people of North Andover can trust Frank to remain impartial at all times. He realizes that the Town Moderator holds an extraordinary amount of influence in the direction of town government, and has a host of duties before, during and after Town Meetings.

The Town Moderator has the sole authority to appoint members of the Finance Committee, a seven-member board that is set up to impartially score, vet, and make recommendations for favorable or unfavorable action on Warrant Articles. Frank understands that this is a vital function that affects serious financial decisions on our spending priorities. The Finance Committee

has a trust, or fiduciary, to the Town Meeting. Frank values this trust, and will assure that all finance committee appointments are carefully made to reflect fiscal responsibility, the community at large, and help the Town Meeting prioritize our spending needs.

The Moderator and the School Committee share the responsibility to appoint the School Building Committee. This important Committee oversees the money appropriated by the Town Meeting for school construction. As Town Moderator, Frank will select and appoint trustworthy individuals to serve, while finding the Right Balance between the large capital needs of the schools and of the town.

Frank MacMillan has an established reputation for fairness, and can disagree without being disagreeable. He has demonstrated these qualities in his service on the North Andover Board of Health. In all of his professional and civic endeavors, Frank deeply understands that leadership is more about listening than lecturing. Frank is a recognized leader in his profession. He was chosen by his peers to be President of the Medical Staff at Merrimack Valley Hospital, and also serves as its current Chief of Medicine.

Frank has considerable experience in running meetings both large and small. He is formally trained in parliamentary procedures, and attended a Mass Medical Society

MODERATOR: PAGE 36

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Historic Andover Amos Blanchard House

Anne Knowles
VALLEY PATRIOT ANDOVER REPORTER

Andover is one of the best known towns in Massachusetts. It offers great schools, a well managed town and residents from all corners of the world that make this town their home. Andover has an exciting history going back in time to the first settlers around 1634 and continuing to the present.

The Andover Historical Society has been at the forefront of providing excellent programs on the town’s history. One of the most enjoyable is the renovation and opening of the Amos Blanchard House as an ‘on site’ representation of what it was like to live in the 1820’s in a New England town. Since the 1980’s when the Blanchard house was open as a living museum, it has been host to many with special tours for schools, events like the annual Christmas tree exhibit and other special events.

The Amos Blanchard House on Main Street was used as a family home and boarding of young men who were attending Phillips Academy just a short walk “up the hill”. Today the Blanchard House is a “living history” of the life of the community in 1820.

Depending on where you begin your tour of the House you are greeted and invited to step into 1820.

The kitchen has a large fireplace with several cooking utensils set around the fireplace. Many types of vegetables, spices and foods are displayed on the work table. Crock pots, dishes and other kitchen tools are shown. But, where is the refrigerator, the sink and microwave? Your guide will take you back to what a working kitchen was in 1820.

When you go into the family parlor, you will find a table set for supper, shutters on the windows, a sturdy floor covering and candles for light. And perhaps some games to play after supper.

Across the front hall is the formal parlor. It is much nicer than the family parlor and is used for special guests, formal meetings and other important occasions. The furniture is very fine, there is a thick carpet on the floor and an elaborate silver

tea set. Portraits of family members surround the room.

Then it is up the front stairs to the bedrooms, a large room was designated for the boarders, another more feminine room for the lady of the house, a maid’s room and another room that served as a study. All of these rooms are furnished in the style of 1820.

Visitors are encouraged to ask questions about the many items contained in the rooms, some will surprise.

Then visitors will see the barn where farm equipment from that era is on display. The milking shed, the hen roost, where eggs are gathered for the family and sometimes used for “barter” at the store.

The store is set up aging to show what a typical store would be like in 1829. “Barter” was an important part of commerce at that time. Some of the items one could find at the store – mirrors, buttons, sugar, cloth, shoes, pots and pans and books.

Then visit the print shop. This was one of the most important industries in the Andover area. It was a tedious, difficult and rewarding occupation. Many of the graduates of Phillips Academy went on to become ministers and missionaries to many countries around the world. As a result they had to bring with them Bibles, pamphlets and tracts in the language of the people they were going to minister.

Therefore, printing was of major importance, both for the school and for Andover. There were three printing businesses in the town of Andover and they contributed to the prestige of the town.

The guides at The Amos Blanchard House are informative, gifted and held a wealth of insight into the lives of the people who lived in the Blanchard home.

History is exciting and to actively enjoy being a part of the early Andover scene will help everyone see that people of any era are just like we are today.

The Amos Blanchard House is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information the staff is available at 978-475-2236

Gabriel Levine Charity with Legos

Anne Knowles
VALLEY PATRIOT ANDOVER REPORTER

What does a youngster do, when he outgrows his legos? Well if he is Gabriel Levine, a student at West Middle School in Andover, he gives them away.

“I came up with this idea, because I had lost interest in my legos,” he said. ‘But I wanted to give them away to other kids, so other kids could enjoy them as much as I did.’

With help from his dad, Eli, they worked many hours researching legos and putting together “kits”. My Dad and I worked on this project by going “online”,

finding instructions, so we could assemble actual legos sets.

Gabe also had the cooperation the Bank of America in Andover center, which accepted donations of legos and slightly used toys from customers of the bank.

“Other donations came from my facebook site”, he added. A lot of people took the time to donate to this project and Gabe appreciates the support he got from all the donations. “People are really nice and made this all worthwhile”.

The legos sets, some movie CD’s, boardgames as well as some action figures were given to St. Ann’s Home and School in Methuen.

Congrats to the Valley Patriot on 8 Years!

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Blazing Wing Challenge nets Thousands for Local Charities

Mayors and elected officials from Fitchburg, Leominster, and Gardner converged on Buffalo Wild Wings Bar & Grill on Whalom Street in Gardner last month to raise money for charity. Each city’s team of three were challenged to eat as many wings they could (out of 36).

Members of the public were given vouchers in each of the three cities which they turned in when ordering their food that day at Buffalo Wild Wings Bar & Grill to have 20% of their meal check be donated to one of the three charities based on which town they were from.

The Gardner team lead by Mayor Hawke brought in the most money for their charity they Visiting Nurdese Association of Gardner even though they lost the Blazing Wing Challenge.

“We raised a little more than \$1,000 for the Gardner Visiting Nurses Association, but we lost the Blazing Wing challenge. We came in last but at least we are helping a good cause,” said newly elected City Councilor Christine Wilson.

Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong’s team placed 2nd in the wing eating competition raising money for the Animal Care Education program while Leominster Mayor Dean J. Mazzarella’s team placed third raising money for the Loeminster High School Band and Cheerleading teams.

“We only ate 20 Blazing Wings but It was a good time, we all had a lot of fun and endured a little pain for a charity but It was a small price to pay to help the Visiting Nurses they do such a great job in the community.”



PHOTO: COLLEEN MCCAULEY COUGHLAN

Gardner City Councilor Christine Ducharme Wilson, State Rep. Rich Bastien (R), and Gardner Mayor Mark Hawke hanging out with their copy of The Valley Patriot’s 100th edition just before The Blazin’ Challenge kicked off. Mayors from Fitchburg, Gardner and Leominster competed to see which team could eat the most Blazing Wings (out of 36). Leominster Mayor Dean Mazzarella’s teamteam won with 33 wings. The event was held at Buffalo Wild Wings Bar & Grill on Whalom Street.

North Central Massachusetts Tea Party Notebook

Joan Gross
SECRETARY-NORTH CENTRAL TEA PARTY

The North Central MA Tea Party is located in the North Quabbin area of Massachusetts.

In February, we met on the 23rd. We spent time on Scott Brown’s Staff meeting with Tea Party groups across Massachusetts.

A member attended that meeting and reported back to our group what was accomplished. The general consensus is that Senator Brown has to meet the needs of all of his constituents.

Even though his votes have not reflected the conservative viewpoint that he campaigned on, his race with Elizabeth Warren will see most of the Tea Party groups supporting him, at least with their votes.

Many members were not happy that the Senator denied the Tea Party involvement



in his win, but will at least vote for him.

Our group was able to discuss Agenda 21 as it applies to our area. We appointed an Agenda 21 watchdog in our group to monitor developments. We have also enrolled as a group in the Hillsdale College Constitution 101 online course. Everyone should take this 10 week free

online course at <http://constitution.hillsdale.edu/>

In Athol, A member opted to work to get three non-binding ballot questions about Voter ID on the town ballot in April. It was successful. The questions will determine the opinion of the town’s residents

on this.

Questions ask about Voter ID to register to vote, receive state benefits and to actually vote in our elections. I was surprised that anyone can register to vote in this state without showing ID. All you need is an address and a name. This has to change if we are to regain a true vote without manipulation.

Upcoming events

A movie night to see the movie “Agenda” about the Communist agenda for America and how far they have come.

It will be shown in the Masonic Temple in Athol on March 23rd at 7PM. We will have Lew Evangelidis, Worcester County Sheriff at our March meeting on the 29th in the King Phillip Restaurant in Philipston at 6:30 PM.

Lew will speak on secure communities and his Face to Face program in the schools.

An Idea to Completely Restructure Taxation in MA

William Gunn
GUEST COLUMNIST

I submitted a letter similar to the following to a Massachusetts State Legislator asking him to draft legislation that would eliminate the DOR and all income, sales and other taxes in the state to be replaced with a surcharge to every community based on property values.

This would allow every community in the state to decide how to generate the revenue demanded by the state- most would do so via property tax increases because the infrastructure for collection and enforcement already exists. This is not to say that communities that believe in a more “socially just” means of taxation could not incorporate a local progressive income tax or a tax on luxuries or any other scheme that could be thought of.

In my hometown of Ware, we have trouble forming a quorum for the semi-annual town meetings except when a large spending issue or an increase in taxation or fees is being suggested. This reformation of the tax system would necessarily affect every person that lives in the community; if the state were to ask for more or less (my attempt at humor) revenue from the communities every property owner would realize a quarterly change in their expenses and every renter would realize a monthly difference in their costs of living. The increased awareness of

money being confiscated by the community on behalf of the state will surely motivate more people to become involved with their governments at the state and local levels. This measure would facilitate more citizens demanding fiscal sanity at the state level.

A system that generates revenue for the state in this manner will relieve every individual and business in the state of the expenses and inconveniences of tax preparation, record keeping and compliance with ever changing tax codes at the state level and possibly inspire similar legislation nationally. Retailers, utility companies, energy providers, entertainment facilities and town accountants would be relieved of the very large burden of keeping records of and paying monthly sales, use and excise taxes. In Massachusetts that translates to billions of dollars saved, and that is without cutting government services one iota (another topic for another day). The need and expense of enforcement personnel, bookkeepers and an army of bureaucrats will be eliminated.

By creating a firewall between the state and the property of the individual, the efficaciousness of lobbyists will be greatly diminished. The purpose of the corporate lobbyist is to curry favorable tax law, tax exclusions and government intervention on behalf of the group paying the lobbyists. If taxes are determined locally, the



lobbyists will necessarily be required to appeal to the citizens of every community or their local representatives to garner the favor they seek. Autonomy becomes the rule rather than the exception.

I know this sounds like a proposition that could never become reality; but 10-15 years ago we didn’t think a law like Obamacare could ever pass. It is an effective tactic to introduce bills considered impossible or beyond consideration time

and again until they become mainstream. If we do not introduce ideas like this to the public, they will remain ineffectual ideas. If this idea appeals to you, I appeal to you to submit it to your state legislator or Senator; take back the reigns of government and demand that government do your bidding.

Gardner Mayor’s State of the City Address

Mark Hawke
MAYOR OF GARDNER

Thank you President Janssens and thank you for your continued leadership of the Council.

I’d also like to thank all of the Councilors for their work and dedication to the City. These past few years have not been the easiest of times for the City, but working together we have persevered.

In order to continue moving forward I feel that it is important to pause and reflect on where we’ve been and some of our accomplishments over the past year.

In keeping our collective oaths to the citizens of Gardner to be as prudent as possible with their tax dollars, we have been successful in acquiring funding to pursue the development of a wind turbine at the Summit Industrial Park.

This turbine would be capable of producing approximately 120% - 140% of the City’s collective annual energy consumption creating a savings of more than \$600,000.

Keeping with the Green initiatives of the City, Gardner was recently named one of the Commonwealth’s Green Communities. Along with this designation comes grant funds which will be used to install new energy efficient boilers at the Senior Center and High School as well as retro-commissioning of the Senior Center, and adding supplementary insulation to the Senior Center and City Hall among other initiatives. These green initiatives will help us save money!

Through the efforts of our Economic Development Coordinator and Community Development Director we were successful in securing state funding to assist with the redevelopment of a former vacant warehouse on Main Street into what is developing into a beautiful addition to one of Gardner’s Gateway.

This new professional building will

bring jobs and an expanded tax base while beautifying an entry point to the City.

The City’s Urban Renewal Plan was recently concluded after approximately five years of work.

This Plan is not a cure all. It may not reap benefits tomorrow or even next year, but it is a plan for Gardner’s future, it is a plan for the next generation. It is a piece of the puzzle.

In continuing our efforts to open up government to our constituents, the City was once again the recipient of the E-Government Award with Distinction for our efforts in posting all available information and forms on the City’s website.

In 2010 the City’s bond rating was improved from a Baa1 status, jumping three ranks, to an A1 status.

This is due in no small part to our continued fiscal prudence and a continued focus on providing an efficient and streamlined government.

Working in concert with Federal agencies we have demolished the former Country Home Furnishings building which sat precariously vacant and abandoned in a residential neighborhood.

Also, further demolition and remediation has taken place at the former S. Bent factory complex in South

Gardner with more work to continue this year. In conjunction with the S. Bent project the City has acquired ownership of the former Garbose property.

Utilizing a \$1 million Revolving Loan Fund grant award, and working in conjunction with the Gardner Redevelopment Authority, we will be able to remediate this property and return it to the tax rolls. In a continued effort to make Gardner as attractive as possible to industry, this past year we advanced our Mass Bio rating from Bronze to Gold. We have our sights set on the highest rating of Platinum and I am hopeful we will reach that plateau this year.

By working smarter and challenging the way “we have always done things”, we have been able to incrementally restore school bussing. You will recall that school bussing was a casualty of budget cuts and was reduced to the state mandated K-6 allowance. This current school year we are bussing students through grade 9. I am hopeful that within the very near future we will be able to restore bussing for all grades. It is my belief that this is a safety issue and a quality of life issue.

These next two items I am perhaps most proud of.

Working together to hold the line on spending, while still offering the citizens of Gardner the services they expect and deserve from their local government, we have topped the \$1 million mark in our

CITY OF GARDNER: AREA: 22.2 square mils.
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Mayor Mark P. Hawke
95 Pleasant St. - Room 125
Gardner, MA 01440
Phone: (978) 630-1490
Fax: (978) 630-3778

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8:00 AM - 1:00 PM Friday

stabilization fund.

This will further impress the bond raters and is an accomplishment we should all relish.

Perhaps the highpoint of 2010 were the various festivities surrounding the City’s 225th

Anniversary. From the cemetery re-enactments, which included Councilor Gerry, the Fire Chief, and myself among numerous others, to the Fireworks display to the Fireman’s Muster to a magnificent parade and everything in between. It was numerous weekends of immense civic pride and truly showcased Gardner in the best possible light.

I cannot stress enough that all of the accomplishments that I have mentioned plus many others were realized in one of the worst economies in over a generation.

We are once again being challenged this year. While the economy is starting to rebound, the funds we receive from the state in order to perform mandated services is once again on the chopping block. Since taking office in 2008, Gardner’s local aid from the state has been reduced by approximately \$2 million.

If the Governor’s number’s hold true, the City will be receiving less city-side local aid in FY 2012 than we did in FY 1999.

In a few months I will be submitting to you my FY 2012 budget. Through collaboration with the 7 city-side unions over the past several years we have been able to weather the fiscal storm to date. It

is my sincerest hope that this collaborative relationship will be able to continue as we enter negotiations once again.

Change is not always welcome or easy, but it is necessary to survive.

Over the course of the past 5 fiscal years, municipal health insurance costs have increased by almost 75% or \$3 million. This rapid rate of growth far outpaces allowable property tax increases which is limited to an aggregate of 2 ½%.

This is why municipal leaders across the state are crying out to end the outdated practice of collectively bargaining Health Insurance Plan Design. This so-called Plan Design Authority will only temper the out of control growth in Health Insurance. Plan Design Authority will remove the union veto power and allow us to offer quality and economical Health Insurance Plans to our employees. Health Insurance should not be a bargaining chip. Health Insurance veto power was never collectively bargained for by unions, but rather was mandated by the legislature.

Our efforts to control health insurance costs with the filing of a home rule petition seeking Plan Design

Authority was emulated by numerous communities across the state. Last week at a meeting in Salem, MA the Governor told the assembled Mayor’s that we were right and his filing of a bill to allow Plan Design Authority for municipalities was proof that municipal leader’s cries were heard.

This same group of Mayors will be meeting with Speaker DeLeo in 3 weeks to discuss this very same topic. The Speaker is also now in favor of some sort of Plan Design Authority legislation.

This year we will move aggressively forward along the path to a new Police Station. The current police station is inadequate, unsafe, and past it useful life.

After spending a considerable amount of time at our current station, learning what it is the officer’s deal with on a daily basis and touring numerous other facilities within the region, I consider it a grave injustice to ask our public safety employees to put themselves in harm’s way by simply reporting to work.

Their jobs are difficult enough without having to work in substandard conditions.

Some may ask why we are not pursu-

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Liquor License Commission
Tuesday, March 13, 2012
at 4:30 PM
Council Chamber

CDBG Steering Committee
Wednesday, March 14
10:30 AM
City Hall Annex
Conference Room

School Council Meeting
Thurs, March 15th at 3:15 PM
HMS Conference Room

Helen Mae Sauter School
MaryAnn Pour Previti, Ph.D,
Principal
130 Elm Street,
Gardner, MA 01440
Telephone (978) 632-5480
FAX (978) 630-4079

School Council Meeting
Thursday, March 15th, 2012
3:15 PM
HMS Conference Room

CDBG Steering Committee
Wednesday, April 11 at 10:30 AM
City Hall Annex Conference
Room

CDBG Steering Committee
Wednesday, May 9 at 10:30 AM
City Hall Annex Conference
Room

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Outsourcing Methuen City Services

William Manzi

VALLEY PATRIOT CONTRIBUTOR

“With the City of Methuen in the middle of a battle over outsourcing the Information Technology Department (City Council rejected Mayor Zanni’s proposed privatization) former Mayor William Manzi offers a primer on privatizing municipal services, using the White Paper by Stephen Lisauskas and the Pioneer Institute to show what works, and what doesn’t work, when considering outsourcing.”

It seems like an appropriate time to talk about the effective outsourcing of municipal services, which is not only in the news today, but will likely be something that will be on the front burner for some time to come. A good place to start that discussion comes from the White Paper written by Stephen Lisauskas for the Pioneer Institute. Lisauskas has outstanding credentials, and has written a paper that should be read by all those looking to outsource existing municipal services. Lisauskas focuses in on those pesky details which can make or break the results from a decision to outsource. Those details include cost, but are not limited to cost. Lisauskas points out that effective management, and specifically attention to detail, are critically important when making outsourcing decisions. What exactly does that mean, and what does he see as the benefits and drawbacks of outsourcing?

Lisauskas points out a rather obvious benefit, which is the ability to manage and measure “outcomes”, rather than “inputs”. In this day and age the management of “inputs” has become exceedingly complex and time consuming, as well as expensive. It certainly diverts attention from what any good manager wants, which is to measure and judge “outcomes”.

Outsourcing allows managers to focus on measuring and managing outcomes



rather than on dealing with significant input issues. These input issues are typically complicated and time consuming given the many laws, regulations, collective bargaining provisions and financial challenges under which municipalities operate. As a result, a focus on outcomes – and the public reporting and discussion of these outcomes – is often underemphasized or absent when municipalities provide services using internal resources. Outsourcing improves the likelihood that municipalities can focus on what truly matters to many recipients of public services – are school children being fed appropriately, is trash being removed, are schools clean and safe – rather than focusing their time and effort on planning for and managing the inputs used in service provision.

But not all municipal services are created equally, at least as far as the potential for outsourcing goes. Lisauskas points out that those services where “outcomes” are difficult to quantify are less likely to be

successfully outsourced.

Services that are difficult to define and whose outcomes are difficult to quantify are generally difficult to outsource. Seeking private competition for these services could potentially be unproductive or result in higher costs if the work is not properly defined or if outcomes are improperly measured.

The author also offers sound and valuable advice about taking the necessary steps in advance of “outsourcing”. Certainly understanding what it is specifically that you are looking to outsource is critical, and drawing up solid procurement documents that utilize that most fundamental understanding is essential to a successful program.

A well drafted procurement document and contract is critical to a successful outsourcing.

This concentrates risk in discrete events that could be handled in error and, with multiyear contracts, could disadvantage a municipality for some time to come.

You need to have a full understanding of what it is you are procuring, and absolutely need to secure contracts that protect the municipality against potential “gray areas” that could lead to the original cost estimate being wrong on the low side. Lisauskas hits a very, very important point here. The effectiveness of a solid contract, and having a manager that knows the intricate details of that contract, cannot be emphasized enough. Having qualified and experienced legal counsel examining pro-

spective contracts is vitally important, and can save municipalities large amounts of money in the event of disagreements with the vendor. For municipal managers I say do not be penny wise and pound foolish. Make sure your contract is reflective of the municipalities’ best interest, and do not be afraid to utilize some resources to ensure that the contract achieves that.

In order to help avoid contract issues, as mentioned above, Lisauskas talks about the importance of drawing a tight and detailed procurement document that outlines specifically what services are being sought. But Lisauskas is also interested in making sure that all parties agree, up front, on how the outsourcing success will be measured! What metrics will be utilized to allow the municipal manager to judge vendor performance? From the perspective of the municipality this is another point that cannot be emphasized enough. If this is not addressed in the procurement or in the contract then avenues of disagreement are opened, and disputes between municipality and vendor may ensue.

Bid specifications should define in detail the services being considered for outsourcing to ensure all parties have a clear understanding of the services involved. This will also help external service providers offer the lowest possible price to the municipality. Uncertainty creates the opportunity for misunderstanding in the future and will cause vendors to offer higher prices to protect them in the event they need to apply more resources to a particular project. Specifications should also include agreed-upon time frames for status updates and performance reviews, a discussion of the performance metrics and the means to be used to measure performance against these standards, and a process to update performance measures and evaluation tools during the contract period.

Lisauskas has written an outstanding “Practitioner’s Guide to Outsourcing”, which is posted on my blog page.

He gives an honest evaluation, including the positives and negatives associated with the practice, as well as some tremendously constructive advice for those in municipal management thinking about outsourcing services. I cherry picked some items that I consider to be important, but there is far more to the White Paper than what I have written about here. Well worth a read for municipal managers.

Someone Help Me! My Child is an Addict

Phil Lahey

FORMER CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Have you ever felt like going to the top of a mountain and shouting those words? I certainly have. I’m the parent of a drug addict. Unless you’ve been through it, or are currently facing the problem, you have no idea of the pain and suffering it causes to everyone involved.

As the father of an addict, I made all the mistakes you could possibly make. The list is too long to write down. You might say that I was a champion enabler. I felt helpless until I learned that addiction (drugs and alcohol) is a disease. It is nothing I can cure. And, generally, it needs professional treatment like any other disease.

About six years ago, a woman wrote an article in the newspaper about the loneliness of dealing with an addict. I will be forever grateful to this woman. Because of her article, many of us contacted her. That led to the beginning of our support

group called “Circle of Hope”.

Over the years, we have helped each other learn how to cope with such a painful problem. In our group, our goal is for you to feel comfortable talking about your loved one’s problem.

Usually, by listening, you will realize that we’ve all made the same mistakes you have made and maybe even more. We’ve learned through our mistakes and we hope to help other people in the same situation by providing them with information, including resources for different facilities and treatment centers (when the addict is ready).

The main purpose of the Circle of Hope group is support; you don’t have to deal with this on your own! If you would like more information on when and where we hold our meetings, please contact me. You have nothing to lose but a little time, and so much more to gain.

Contact Phil at 978-557-9235 or lahey2000@verizon.net.

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Methuen Native Runs for Children's Literacy

Diana Dizoglio

VALLEY PATRIOT OPINION COLUMNIST

Methuen native Jaime Bellavance Coelho is running the Boston Marathon for children's literacy. ReadBoston is a children's literacy non-profit that raises money for after school reading programs to support inner city schools. The money she is raising will go toward the Storymobile program, which will distribute free books to kids in 78 locations each week over seven weeks this summer.

"This is a critical time for young readers, who often lose what they have learned throughout the school year during summer break. This program will keep them interested in learning and reading throughout the summer", said Jaime.

"Last year, I watched as thousands of Boston Marathon runners from all walks of life crossed the finish line. I saw people of all shapes and sizes finish, and it made me realize you don't have to be an elite runner to complete the marathon. You just have to be determined and work hard to prepare your body to run 26.2 miles. I knew I could run it to raise money for a charity, and that made the goal even more rewarding", she added.

Jaime decided to run for ReadBoston because she is an avid reader, and her entire career is based on reading. When she was a high school student at Methuen High, she worked as a student reporter for The Eagle Tribune. She graduated from journalism school at Syracuse University in 2004, and then worked for Men's Health magazine, Boston magazine and AAA publications. She is currently an associate editor at Rhode Island Monthly magazine.

Last month, she also had the opportunity



to read to a fourth grade classroom at the Murphy School in Dorchester. "The kids were great! They were interested in the book that I read, and they asked tons of questions about my writing career", said Jaime. "They were excited to learn about marathon training, too. One student said I could run the marathon in two hours! According to him, I might be on my way to a world record! I think I proved to the students that reading leads to great things like having a fun career that they

will love", she continued.

Proud parents Robert and Nancy Bellavance of Methuen told The Valley Patriot, "Jamie has always been ambitious, accepting all challenges and setting high goals for herself. This is her latest goal to fulfill her bucket list. She has chosen ReadBoston for her love of children and to make life better for those who can't afford books to read. We couldn't be prouder!"

Jaime has just over a month left to raise \$1,500. She has already raised \$2,500,

but needs to reach a required \$4,000 goal. To donate by check, simply make it out to ReadBoston, and put my name in the memo field, and mail it to ReadBoston.

Katie Sullivan, ReadBoston
43 Hawkins Street, Boston, MA 02114

Also, check out Jamie's progress on the web via her fundraising website, where you can easily donate online. <http://www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/jamiecoelho/bostonmarathon2012>

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Random Thoughts with Ronnie Ford

Ronnie Ford

VALLEY PATRIOT OPINION COLUMNIST

Over the past few weeks, we in Methuen have experienced a first attack regarding our government or at least part of our government, the Housing Authority. Believe me, you ain't seen nuttin yet! The latest battle lines have been drawn between Kenny Martin and some councilors, hiding beneath the ramparts are other people who are known for their makeshift fisti-cuffs. I can excuse the new councilors as they have to learn the ins and outs. With proper direction they will turn out to be decent additions to the law making part of our government. The others know better and should be smart enough to hold their tongues and use it in a proper way to make a point.

I never voted for Kenny Martin. When he came here, he was a young DPW executive, who had to learn quickly. And well he did! The things I saw from him were always on time and making sure the department he headed was on time. He was never late, and always got the job done. He was and is now a very good employer.

As he stayed longer he got better at what he did. Kenny is a good person and treats people with curtesy and compassion, the way they ought to be treated. He is a decent person and kindness is part of his DNA. If you are interested in questioning his salary or his ability, there are ways set in the law to do this right. If you ask for my vote, I am with Ken Martin.

Ok, here we go Obama vs. the Roman Catholics and other religions! The liberal press has taken Obama's cry to enforce religious universities, hospitals, orphanages and various charitable organizations, to mandate giving out birth control, the morning after pill and paying for abortions as part of their health insurance plans for their employees.

The press calls it an attack on woman's rights! It is not an attack on women or health issues. The church has outlawed birth control and abortion always. Granted

many catholic women use birth control with or without their confessor's permission. This is between them and God. If Catholic women want birth control there are plenty of free clinics around who will accommodate them.

THIS IS AN ATTACK ON THE PEOPLES RIGHTS UNDER THE FIRST AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!

The first amendment is as follows: Freedom of speech, press, religion and petition: "Congress shall make No Law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the Free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the peoples peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." Every American Citizen should sit up and take notice on this president niggling, and finagling around the CONSTITUTION! Who does he think he is? The second coming? Where is the outrage?

Where are our glorified congressional leaders? They who took an oath to uphold the Constitution? With their collective heads up their you know where! Why? Because it is an election year and they do not want to lose control! Ciphers all of them! This present administration and congress keep pecking away at our freedoms. Wake up folks! Pretty soon we will have a dictatorship!

What about the gas prices? Why are we not yelling? We just keep paying through our pockets. No one gives a dam anymore. Just keep shelling out folks soon we will be just like Greece and Europe..... flat broke no more money. And we will be speaking Chinese, because they own us! Lock, stock and barrel!!

May the good Lord take a liking to you, do something nice for someone today. and, we wish you enough. Ronnie may be contacted at radiotalk@comcast.net



The Merrimack Valley Irish Connection

Crannogs in Lake Gara

Jack Doyle, County Sligo

VALLEY PATRIOT IRISH COLUMNIST

Lough Gara and Itâs Crannogs

Lough Gara is surrounded by meadows and bog lands, an abundance of flora and fauna, plus a resident bird population, augmented summer and winter by migratory species. Their has been a community on Lough Gara's shores for four thousand years. Their influence can be seen in Crannogs, Dolmen Forts and Castles, to the comfortable houses and cottages in which descendants live today.

Lough Gara was known in ancient times as Lough Techet, but the O'Gara's during their ownership of the Coolavin district from about the 13th Century, renamed the lake Lough O'Gadhra. The first documented reference appeared in 1285. Even though the family lost control of all their Coolavfin town lands about 1650, their name has remained on the lake to the present day. The area around Lough Gara is referred to as the O'Gara heartland.

Lough Gara is situated mainly in South Sligo in the parishes of Kilfree, Killaraght, Kilcoleman, with part of the lake stretching over the Sligo boarder into Kilnamanagh, a parish in North Roscommon. From North to South the lake spans about four miles, the widest part of the lake is fro Tawnymucklagh on the western shore,, to Ross on the eastern shore, and the span at this point is over two and a half miles.

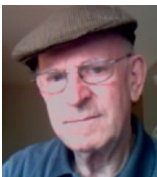
Water is fed into the lake from the Lung River, which enters the lake at the south-western angle, and the Breedoge River which enters the lake at the south-eastern angle. The water leaves the lake at Cuppanagh, in the north-eastern corner, this is the mouth of the Boyle River which flows through Boyle town, into Lough Key and on the Shannon network. The

lake has many islands, some natural and others man made, or crannogs. The Eagle Island, Crow Island, Inch Island Derry-more Island and Inchmore Island.

The lake was drained on two occasions, first in the 1800's and again in 1950-1952. This latter drainage scheme resulted in a severe lowering of the water level and the discovery of approx. 360 Lake Dwellings (crannogs) Sites. Three of these were completely excavated in the following years by the National Museum. Many dug out canoes, spear heads, axe heads swords, jewelry etc.. were discovered on the crannogs and on the muddy shoreline exposed by the receding water. This led to Lough Gara becoming famous worldwide.

In recent years excavation was carried out by a Swedish Archaeologist named Christina Fredengren who spent many years in the Monasteraden. The results in many articles published in newspapers an in Archaeology Ireland (summer 2002). Christina points out that some of the crannogs were built over two thousand years ago. Christina also wrote a bout about Crannogs. This book is now being used as a reference by many people researching the history of crannogs. The lake as it is today offers the visitor beautiful scenery, boating and fishing. Monasteraden, it's past and its people. pgs 126-127

Crannog - lake dwelling: an ancient Celtic settlement in Scotland or Ireland, built on a natural or constructed island in a lake or swamp and usually fortified.



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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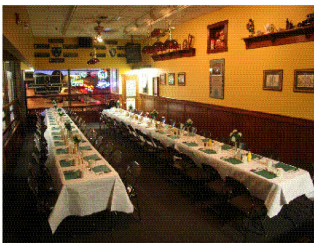
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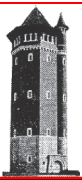
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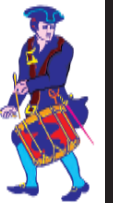
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Jack Kerouac’s 90th Birthday Bash!

George DeLuca
VALLEY PATRIOT LOWELL COLUMNIST
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“I was born at five o’clock in the afternoon of a red-all-over supper time.” In Doctor Sax Jack Kerouac describes his arrival into the world on March 12, 1922, projecting an indelible memory of a lovely day at 9 Lupine Road in the French Canadian neighborhood of Centralville in Lowell, MA. Lowell artist Vassilios Giavis captures the scene perfectly (right).

“As we make note of the 90th edition of Jack Kerouac’s birthday in Lowell in March 1922, the author’s presence in the city and on the cultural radar worldwide is more prominent than ever,” says Paul Marion, executive director of Community and Cultural Affairs at UMass Lowell and editor of Kerouac’s early writings “Atop an Underwood: Early Stories and Other Writings.”

Paul praises Kerouac as a prolific writer who remained committed to his own creativity and true to his roots when he says, “That Lowell has transformed itself in the past 40 years by embracing its heritage as one of the important cities of early America is the kind of big-idea thinking that measures up to Kerouac’s large artistic ambition. One would need only to have seen the huge banner at Appleton Mills a year ago calling for artists to come to Lowell to realize how dramatic a change has arrived.”

“Two reporters from major media outlets in France have been to Lowell in the past month preparing stories to tie-in to the spring release of the long-awaited On the Road movie in Europe. All indications are

that the film will be a newsmaker around the globe once it is in broad distribution. Lowell will see collateral benefits from the attention.” Paul continues.

Kerouac’s good friend and collaborator David Amram wrote the scores for such movies as “Splendor in the Grass” starring Natalie Wood and Warren Beatty (his first film role); and “The Manchurian Candidate” the 1962 film classic starring Frank Sinatra, Laurence Harvey, Janet Leigh and Angela Lansbury. He also played with such jazz greats as Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonius Monk, Sonny Rollins, Charles Mingus, Bill Evans and many other top jazz greats of the era.

David and Jack Kerouac began their collaboration just as Jack began to find himself in the glaring light of fame for his illustrious novel On the Road, a book that brings his followers from all over the globe to Lowell each year. In 1957, the two artists joined forces to become the first to combine readings and jazz; with Jack reading his poetry and snippets from his novels, while David accompanied him on piano at the Brata art gallery on East 10th in New York City.

When asked for his thoughts about Jack’s 90th David, who’s as active as ever at 82, said, “Jack has been described as the great rememberer, but it would be sad if he weren’t remembered and celebrated as his 90th birthday approaches. So it’s a wonderful occasion to see so many people in his home town of Lowell preparing to celebrate his 90th birthday.”

“Through his timeless work, Jack Kerouac is more alive than ever today, and he will continue to remain an inspiration for everyone with a dream to pursue, and fol-



low the road of what their heart tells them to do.” David said.

“By honoring their native son, the city of Lowell sets an example for all communities to honor their own people of distinction, and to give everyone from their community pride in where they live, and make us all grateful to know that outstanding people like Jack usually are the kind of folks who always continue to know who they are by remembering where they came from.

Jack never forgot Lowell and it is heartwarming to see that Lowell continues to remember him.”

David, will ironically be in Oklahoma to perform at Woody Guthrie Centennial events on March 12. From Germany (at this writing), he salutes his old friend with an emotional but triumphant “Bonne anniver-

saire cher Jacky!”

Photo Credit:
“Kerouac Birthplace” by Vassilios Giavis (by permission)

We hope that Valley Patriot readers will join in the celebration. There are a number of events planned to celebrate Jack’s birthday in Lowell. Here’s a listing:

Monday, March 5:
3pm: A Screening of Henry Ferrini’s Lowell Blues a documentary Film which features passages and images from Jack Kerouac’s novel Doctor Sax. UML South Campus at Coburn Hall, Room 210 on Broadway.

Thursday, March 8:
4pm: Introduction to Kerouac’s recently released novel, The Sea Is My Brother.

KEROUAC: PAGE 24

RECREATION REGISTRATION INFO FOR BASEBALL & SOFTBALL 2012

compiled by Connie Molinaro

Baseball

T-ball-Must be 5 by 4/30 \$50.00
Farm-Must be 7 by 4/30 \$50.00
Rookie-Must be 8 by 4/30 \$50.00
Minor-Must be 9 by 4/30 \$85.00
Major-Must be 11 by 4/30 \$100
Babe Ruth-Must be 13 by 4/3 \$100
(Cannot turn 16 before 4/30/12)

Registration for Baseball

Minor Must be 7 before 9/1/12 \$75
Junior Must be 10 before 9/1/12 \$85
Senior Must be 13 before 9/1/12 \$85
(Cannot turn 17 before 9/1/12)

Registration for Softball

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DRACUT HAPPENINGS

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Junior High Production
“Annie Jr” LVJH School 7pm
Progress reports distributed LVJH & DHS
Mon. 12th School Finance Workshop
Harmony Hall-2pm-4pm
School Committee Meeting Harmony Hall 6pm Executive session 7pm General session.
Spring Sports Registration Dracut Rec Website 5-7pm
Tue. 13th PTO Meeting Campbell Elementary 7pm
Wed.14th PTO Meeting Engelsby Intermediate 7pm
Thu. 15th Progress Reports Elementary & Engelsby Kindergarten Registration Greenmont Ave Sch. 7pm
Tues-Fri. (3rd-16th) Dracut High School Telethon DHS 6:30-9:30pm

Check CATV for channel
Tue. 20th PTO Meeting LVJH 7pm
Wed. 21st PTO Meeting Brookside Elem. 7pm
Sun. 25th Breakfast with Easter Bunny Campbell Elemntary chk school flyers
Mon. 26th School Committee Meeting Harmony Hall 6pm Executive session 7pm General Session
Tue. 27th Pre-School Registration El-dridge Admin. Bldg 10am-4pm
Wed. 28th Pre-School Regsitratio El-dridge Amin. Bldg 10am-4:00p
Thu. 29th DHS Musical “How To Succeed in Business” DHS Auditorium 7:00pm
Fri. 30th DHS Musical “How To Succeed in Business” DHS Auditorium 7pm Girl’s “Minute to Win It” PTO Event Campbell Elemntary 6:00-8:00pm
Sat. 1st DHS Musical “How To Succeed in Business” DHS Auditorium 7:00pm

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From the Garage:


- ✓ Fuels/Gasoline/Kerosene/Anti-freeze
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- ✓ Transmission Fluid
- ✓ Car Wax, Polishes
- ✓ Tires (limit of 4)
- ✓ Driveway Sealer (No latex based)
- ✓ Roofing Tar
- ✓ Swimming Pool Chemicals
- ✓ Propane Tanks (empty)(limit of 4)
- ✓ Car Batteries (limit of 4)
- ✗ No Motor Oil (return to place of purchase)

From the Yard:

- ✓ Poisons, Insecticides, Fungicides
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- ✗ Radioactive Waste, Smoke Detectors
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compiled by Connie Molinaro

Dracut Public Meetings

Locations for all town meetings can be found on our Town website: www.dracut-ma.us/calendar

Thu. 8th Open Space Committee 7pm
Tue. 13th Board of Selectman 7pm
Wed. 14th Planning Board 7pm
Thu. 15th Zoning Bd of Appeals 7pm
Mon. 19th Selectman Public Safety Sub Comm. 12pm
Wed. 21st Council on Aging 2:30pm
Historical Commission 7pm
Tue. 27th Board of Selectman 7pm
Wed. 28th Planning Board 7pm

valleypatriot.com

Lawrence's Public Schools Takeover Unconstitutional?

Peter Larocque

VALLEY PATRIOT POLITICAL COLUMNIST

The way the Massachusetts Law that allowed Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester to Takeover Lawrence's Public Schools is being implemented could be Unconstitutional! According to this law, the Commissioner shall appoint a Receiver to a School District that has been declared chronically underperforming by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; who would assume all the powers of Superintendent and School Committee and have full managerial and operational control over the school district. The state-appointed receiver is Mr. Jeffrey C. Riley. The problem, for now, is not Mr. Riley, who by the way is very qualified for the position and has a background in turning around difficult school districts. I only wish him the best and I pray for his success in Lawrence.

My issue is with the process of How Mr. Riley came to be in Lawrence and how the Takeover is being implemented! We at The Valley Patriot knew from the beginning that Mayor Lantigua was not the initiator of this State Takeover as he so wanted and still wants everybody to

believe! He keeps trying to make himself out as the bold and courageous genius who came up with the idea of inviting the State to Takeover Lawrence's failing Public Schools. He mentioned it again in his State of the City Address given before the City Council on Tuesday February 28, 2012. But now that the cat is out of the

bag, (so to speak), by the Eagle Tribune's February 19, 2012 article entitled; "State, not Mayor, first on Schools takeover" by Keith Edgings, which verified what we already knew. Another point that the Valley Patriot knew which was in this same article was that the major contributing factor for the State to takeover Lawrence's schools was not the 5 schools classified as underperforming which again Mayor Lantigua would have us believe. But rather the 81- page assessment by the Education Department that cited ineffective leadership by Mayor Lantigua and the former School Committee which resulted in the chronic underachievement by Lawrence Schools. The Mayor and the former School Committee failed

contributing factor for the State to takeover Lawrence's schools was not the 5 schools classified as underperforming which again Mayor Lantigua would have us believe. But rather the 81- page assessment by the Education Department that cited ineffective leadership by Mayor Lantigua and the former School Committee which resulted in the chronic underachievement by Lawrence Schools. The Mayor and the former School Committee failed

STATE TAKEOVER: PAGE 29



Mitchell D. Chester
Massachusetts Commissioner of Education

On Boston Magazine's take on Lawrence

Jamison Tomasek

VALLEY PATRIOT OPINION COLUMNIST

The entire region was buzzing recently as Boston Magazine published an article titled "Lawrence: City of the Damned." The online version of the magazine added a response from City Councilor Dan Rivera. The Eagle Tribune followed with an editorial which tried to put some positive spins on Lawrence, but basically said the city was "cheated." All of this latest interest represents nothing more than a passing glance at Lawrence and no one really wants to say what needs to be said.

Lawrence is on historic and common downward trend. When a nineteenth century city loses its industrial base, it is impossible to replace. Industrial buildings needed height so that the engines could drive pulleys and they needed proximity to housing so people could walk or take public transit to work. The advantages of flat open land with large metal buildings and ample parking are too great, not to mention places with cheaper labor and utility costs. Large cities like Boston once had manufacturing as well, but that was replaced with financial services, entertainment, education and health care. These attracted upscale residents and supported those down the food chain. Smaller cities like Lawrence don't have this. No reason for it to exist, no job creation, no tax base, existing on state handouts. Lawrence had the odds stacked against it, but accelerating its decline was government policy.

Lawrence was the victim of urban renewal, the downtown was destroyed and vacant lots multiplied. Lawrence suffers as do all blue state cities from an expensive urban government. High pay for city workers, restrictive work rules and a less than "can do" environment make it impossible to get things done. The problems of the schools, parents who don't care,

students moving in and out, and not having English as a primary language, various socio-economic factors, all present hurdles for the schools to be successful. Every school issue has its roots in larger government policies (we're talking welfare, disability, food stamps, immigration, etc). Why is the population of Lawrence going up while many cities having declining populations? I think we can all guess at the reasons.

The state needs to fully take over the city and the legislature needs to work hand in glove with the state administration to pass radical laws to fix this city. Bold, decisive, trailblazing. Just hiring a new superstar superintendent will not be able to address those problems. This is what needs to happen. The population of Lawrence needs to stabilize or better yet be reduced. Stop subsidizing more housing; enforce building codes (illegal apartments) with the state providing the inspectors. The whole social services infrastructure that attracts and supports continued people arriving for more benefits needs to be examined and probably reduced. Fight crime hard. This is not about not helping people that need it. This is about stopping people coming from other places to Lawrence putting more pressure on an overloaded system.

Of course there are some great people in Lawrence and some impressive efforts are being made here and there. No one is diminishing those efforts. We are looking at the big picture here. Maybe only more money can fix Lawrence. Maybe we as a state want to help those less fortunate; including those recently arrived, and do it in small cities like Lawrence. Fine, then let's actually take an approach that at least tries to fix the problem. Charter schools, privatizations, suspension of costly regulations. Whatever it takes. Stop just doing the same thing we've always done.

Celebrating 50 Years of Northern Essex

Northern Essex Community College opened its doors at the former Greenleaf Elementary School in Bradford 50 years ago. There were 186 students that first year. Most were recent high school graduates who planned to get a liberal arts degree and transfer to a four-year college. At that time, there were just five majors to choose from: Liberal Arts Transfer, General Studies, Business Administration, Secretarial, and Electronic Technology.

The college's original five majors have grown to include over 70 certificate and associate degree programs in fields such as health care, criminal justice, and technology. The college's health care programs alone—there are 19 of them—enroll over 550 students

Today, Northern Essex has a 106-acre suburban campus in Haverhill; a rapidly expanding urban campus in downtown Lawrence; and programs, services, and partnerships across the Merrimack Valley. Over 7,400 credit students study days, evenings, weekends, and online, and an additional 6,700 take noncredit workforce development and community education courses.

"Harold Bentley, the college's founding president, wouldn't recognize the college today," says Lane Glenn, current president. "When he retired in 1975, we were a Haverhill college, and most of our students were 19 or 20 years old. Now, we've spread out across the Merrimack Valley, and the average age of our students is 29."

While most Northern Essex students—over 60 percent—plan to transfer after Northern Essex, many are enrolled in

career programs designed to prepare them for immediate placement in jobs after graduation. The college works closely with area employers to create programs in high-demand areas. Recent examples include associate degrees in lab science and paramedic technology and certificates in computer forensics and sleep technology.

"We're very closely connected to local employers, which is why our graduate placement rates are so high," says Glenn. "We survey our graduates each year, one year after graduation. In the past five years, 95% of our graduates have been positively placed in jobs."

Northern Essex prides itself on the quality of its programs, and many highly successful individuals got their start at Northern Essex, including Tom Bergeron, television personality; Lou Schwechheimer, vice president and general manager of the Pawtucket Red Sox; Phil Starks, biology professor, Tufts University; Dan Lyons, technology columnist, "Newsweek"; Steve Bedrosian, former major league baseball player and winner of the Cy Young Award; and Steve Sweeney, president and CEO of Chartwells, a \$2 billion company.

Northern Essex's celebration of its 50th anniversary will culminate in April with a series of events designed to celebrate the college and its rich history. The events will include cultural presentations, a 50th anniversary gala, and the Inauguration of Lane Glenn, the college's 4th president. For a full schedule of events, visit the college's website at www.necc.mass.edu or join the 50th anniversary facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/#!/NorthernEssex50>



For a full schedule of events, visit the college's website at www.necc.mass.edu or join the 50th anniversary facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/#!/NorthernEssex50>

Newcomer Defeats Lantigua on Democrat Committee

Democrat State Committee

(Andover Tewksbury, Lawrence, Dracut)

LAWRENCE

Lantigua 896
Vasquez 716

DRACUT

Vasquez 302
Lantigua 268

TEWKSBURY

Vasquez 253
Lantigua 238

Andover

Vasquez 374
Lantigua 89

TOTAL: Vasquez 1,645 Lantigua 1,491

*unofficial results

Gary Mannion

VALLEY PATRIOT REPORTER

On Super Tuesday the voters of Lawrence, Tewksbury, Dracut and Andover not only cast votes for President but voted for local and state party committees.

Lawrence’s Mayor William Lantigua was on the ballot to be reelected to the Democrat State Committee. His only opponent was Lawrence District “C” City Councilor, Kendrys Vasquez.

When all the votes were counted Vasquez defeated the Lawrence Mayor by 154 votes. Vasquez was elected to the Lawrence city council this past November. Vasquez only lost to Lantigua in Lawrence on Tuesday by less than two hundred votes.

Vasquez an ‘08 graduate of Merrimack College in North Andover (majoring in Political Science) is by no means new to public service; He has served as a volunteer and is on several boards in the city including; Semana Hispana and Arlington Community Trabajando.

Vazquez admitted that he only filed the

documents needed to be on the ballot on the day of the legal deadline.

“Lawrence needed representation and no one else had submitted it (nomination documents)” he told The Valley Patriot.

So, he says, he decided to go ahead and “throw his name in the ring.” He went on to explain that from his understanding, Lantigua had done the same and filed at the last moment.

When asked what he thought his main role will be as a Democrat State Party Committeeman, he explained that he will be a liaison between the party and members of the local community. He also vowed to help local leaders run for office. Vasquez says that the one thing he will be doing differently than Lantigua will be attending the State Committee meetings.

One would assume that this is an obvious duty of the elected office however a little research by The Valley Patriot revealed that on the Massachusetts Democrat’s website we found that Lantigua has not attended a single meeting in the last two years.



25 year old Freshman City Councilor Kendrys Vasques has thrown Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua off the Democrat City Committee in a sleeper campaign that drew no attention from the press. When all the votes were counted Vazquez defeated the Lawrence Mayor by 154 votes. Vazquez was elected to the Lawrence city council this past November. Vazquez only lost to Lantigua in Lawrence on Tuesday by less than two hundred votes.

Councilor Kendrys Vazquez also said that he has yet to speak to the mayor since his win but does not think that it will hurt their relationship.

“I always try to keep a professional relationship with the mayor,” he said, “as it is very important to help move the city forward”.

Vasquez went on to explain that, since being elected to the Lawrence City Council it has allowed him the opportunity to connect with the residents in his neighborhood. He told us that he “did the homework and met with all department heads” which he said was important in helping his constituents.

When asked what his top priority was

as a Councilor he said that is was public safety “we need to make sure our city is safe for residents and for business owners”. Vasquez concluded by saying that as the Democratic State Committee Representative he planned on being “more vocal” and making sure that local elected leaders are provided with the proper resources they need to represent their districts.

Gary is a senior at Merrimack College studying political science. He is also a former candidate for the Lawrence city council and the Greater Lawrence Technical School Committee. You can email him at manniong@merrimack.edu

VALLEY PATRIOT 8TH ANNIVERSARY FLASHBACK... 2006

Actions Speak Louder Than Platitudes

In 2006 The Valley Patriot covered meetings by the Lawrence City Council and state officials on a proposal by Northern Essex Community College to build a multi-million dollar Health and Technology project at the site of the In-Town Mall on Common Street.

The project was eventually passed but the process which lead to that point was contentious, ugly and filled with racist politics. Now that the Groundbreaking of the new facility is about a month away, I thought it would be a good idea to look back at who supported the college, who opposed them and who simply stood on the sidelines while the circus-like atmosphere dominated the discussion back in 2006.

Every two years the voters of Lawrence have to endure the platitudes of politicians like Barry Finegold, Dave (Where-is-HE) Torrissi and State Senator Sue Tucker crowing about how they are “friends of higher education.”

And they always seem to work in the Lawrence Campus of Northern Essex Community College when making their self-serving political speeches, pointing out how “vital an educational institution like NECC is to Lawrence.”

But now we know how much they really care, because actions speak louder than platitudes.

Last month, while Northern Essex Community College was before the Lawrence City Council to bid on the In-Town-Mall (for a \$26 million Health and Technology Center), there was no sign of Sue Tucker. There was no sign of Dave Torrissi. There was no sign of Barry Finegold.

In fact, the only state rep. who bothered

to show up at all was Willie Lantigua, and (because one of the other bidders was a “Latino,”) he was actually there to oppose the multi-million NECC college expansion project. And, while the “Latino Agenda” mob (including Julia Silverio and Nazaio Ezquea) was hurling racial accusations at: the college faculty, as well as Mayor Sullivan, and anyone who supported the college, the absence of Torrissi, Finegold and Tucker spoke volumes for their “commitment to higher education.”

What a difference the presence of Lawrence’s legislators could have made in both the tone and direction of those hearings before the city council. That is, had they bothered to show up! Instead they admittedly took a “behind the scenes” approach, sitting back while the circus like atmosphere nearly doomed the college project at the city council level.

The Sullivan administration (as well as college officials) begged our legislators to write a letter, make a phone call, or appear before the council to support Northern Essex Community College.

Instead, Tucker, Torrissi and Finegold were just as invisible as they were when ten days of flooding shut down sections of the city.

They were just as invisible as they were when, for years, Lawrence officials tried to get funding for the Veteran’s Memorial stadium.

So much for being “friends of higher education.”

What’s really funny is how Torrissi, Tucker and Finegold always show up for photo ops, ground breaking ceremonies and proclamations.

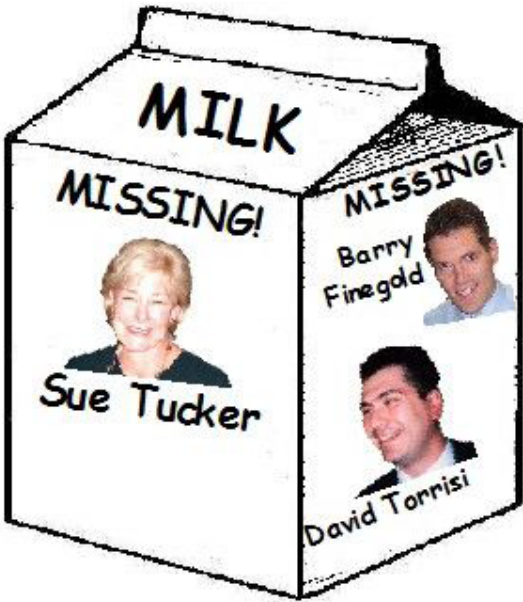
But, when it comes to actually doing hard work- like fighting for a \$26 million college expansion project to revitalize downtown, our Lawrence’s state legislators are, once again, nowhere to be found.

Sure, Torrissi, Finegold and Tucker can brag all they want about how they “fought” for NECC at the “state level”, “behind the

scenes.” But that’s a joke because they blew the funding by missing the filing deadline.

They can try to hide behind the fact that they “helped” to get funding for the project as proof that they truly “care about the children” and higher education.

But if the Lawrence City Council had listened to Councilor Nilka Alvarez (who did everything she could to stop the Northern Essex so she could advocate for a “Latino”) there would be no college project for them to fund.



That’s when Torrissi, Finegold and Tucker would have shrugged their shoulders and blamed Lawrence politicians for the failure of a great educational institution to secure the In-Town Mall for a multi-million Health and Technology Center.

Despite the absence of Lawrence’s legislators at the city council level, the state’s college project was finally approved thanks to the brave maneuvering of Councilors Grisel Silva, Nunzio DiMarca and Patrick Blanchette (who cast the deciding vote).

And now that the project is officially approved, you can bet that Torrissi, Lantigua, Finegold, Alvarez and Tucker will shamelessly show up at the ground-breaking ceremony, shovels in hand, mugging for the cameras and taking credit for the success of the project.

You can also bet that they will each campaign on the success of this expansion project for years to come.

I only hope that when that day arrives, Lawrence residents will remember who was there to support Northern Essex Community College in their time of NEED, (when they were getting hammered at the City Council hearings) - and who was too busy with photo ops and press conferences “behind the scenes.”



Tom Duggan is publisher of Valley Patriot, Inc., a former Lawrence School Committeeman, former political director for Mass Citizens Alliance, a Police Survivor and hosts the Paying Attention! Radio Program from 10-noon on WCAP every Saturday. You can email him valleypatriot@aol.com.

Anyone Can Be A Caregiver

Nathan E. Webster III
VALLEY PATRIOT OPINION COLUMNIST

When I attended this past year's committee appreciation dinner for Relay For Life, we got some great ideas on how to recruit more teams, pack the track with more survivors, shared ideas on fundraising and learned that there is no definition of a caregiver. At least, in the eyes of The American Cancer Society, there is no specific definition. A caregiver can be a family member. They can be a friend. A co-worker or someone who stops by and offers support to a cancer patient. It can be anyone who is there for a cancer patient no matter when or how. It can be someone who offers unconditional love, support, friendship, a shoulder to cry on, an ear to bend and a heart to share. Anyone can be a caregiver.

When I lost my dad in March 2009 to cancer, I was upset as most people would be, especially after losing my mom a few months before to congestive heart failure. But my sister Michelle was more upset. She was closer to our mom and dad because she still lived at home with them. She was the caregiver for my dad when he moved from the hospital to a nursing home and back to the hospital. When he passed away, I was determined to do something about it. I wanted to fight back against the disease that took his life at 66 years old. A few weeks after, I started my own team with Relay For Life Of Haverhill, and named it Uncle Babe's Team. My cousins called my dad that growing up. "Uncle Babe". It's now 3 years later and I am not only the team captain, but I also took on a committee role as Publicity and Communications Chair. My job is to get the word out about Relay For Life. Let me tell you about the great bunch of people, like me and my sister, who are also caregivers.

Relay For Life is the signature event of The American Cancer Society. It began in 1985 when Dr. Gordy Klatt, a colorectal surgeon from Tacoma, WA began a 24 run around a track and after running 83 miles, raised \$27,000 for ACS. The next year, 220 supports on 19 teams joined the overnight event. This year, the "Relay fever" has spread across 5,000 communities in the United States and to 22 foreign countries, making it the world's largest and most successful fundraiser!

In Haverhill, this emotional and fun-filled 24 hour event is held on the campus of Northern Essex Community College. It takes place on June 8th and 9th, 2012 from 3pm Friday to 3pm Saturday. We camp out around the track and fight back against cancer by raising the much needed funds to help people get well, stay well, find cures and fight back.

Last year we raised over \$167,000 which goes to local programs like Road To Recovery, Look Good Feel Better, Man to Man, Reach to Recovery, and Hope Lodge. We were also awarded All Star Relay, only 1 of 2 relays in the state of Massachusetts to receive it. This year I would like us to hit the \$200,000 mark. Do I hear a challenge?

Please join us this year in the fight against cancer by starting your own team of family, friends, co-workers, teens, schools, faith-based organizations, etc. We have several opportunities to meet with Relay Staff at one of the next team captain meetings on March 15th, April 18th, and May 17th. All meetings are 6:30 pm on the NECCO campus in Haverhill, building C, Lecture Hall A. If you would like more information about Relay For Life, please visit our website at www.relayforlife.org/haverhillma or call Nathan at 978-204-4692. Remember, anyone can be a caregiver.

Local Attorney joins Haverhill Bank Board of Directors

Attorney William J. "Bill" Barron has recently joined Haverhill Bank's board of directors.

A partner with the firm of LaFlamme, Barron & Chabot LLP for more than 20 years, Barron represents small and medium size businesses and also offers a concentration on estate planning, wills, real estate and probate law. Prior to joining Haverhill Bank's board, Barron was a director and general counsel of Economy Cooperative Bank, Merrimac. Economy merged with Haverhill Bank at the beginning of the year.

"I am pleased to have Bill join our board of directors," said Haverhill Bank President and CEO Thomas L. Mortimer.

"With his keen business law expertise, experience in providing legal support to Economy Coop, and his commitment to the local community, Bill is a tremendous addition to the board of directors."

In addition to providing legal services, Barron is an active member in local and regional organizations. He is a director of the Stevens Bennett Home and L'Arche

Irenecon, and is a member of and past president of the Haverhill Rotary Club, which awarded him the Paul Harris Fellowship award. He is a member and past president of the Haverhill Bar Association, a member and past executive board member of the Essex County Bar Association and a member of the Massachusetts Bar Association.

A native of Haverhill, Barron began practicing law in the city in 1977, after completing his education at Merrimack College and New England School of Law. He resides in Haverhill with his wife Nancy. They have two daughters, Emily and Elizabeth.

A depositor-owned institution, Haverhill Bank was founded in 1877 and is the oldest cooperative bank in Massachusetts. The bank's Main Office is at 180 Merrimack St. in Haverhill. Haverhill Bank also maintains offices at 163 South Main St., 1094 Main St., 100 Lafayette Sq., Haverhill High School and Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Haverhill; and 6 West Main St, Merrimac.

GEORGETOWN TODAY

Comedy Night - St. Patrick's Day Celebration in Rowley!

Lonnie Brennan

VALLEY PATRIOT OPINION COLUMNIST

Come celebrate St. Patrick's Day at a Comedy Night Dinner/Dance Charity Fundraiser sponsored by the Frank Meader Council 6064, Knights of Columbus of Rowley/ Georgetown/Boxford/ Byfield and beyond!

Boston headliner comedians for this Adult's Night Out event include Ellen Moschetto (renowned charmer who has performed all over New England), Dave Russo (a regular in the Boston comedy scene and has performed in Las Vegas, New York, L.A., the U.S.O, Comedy Central, The Today Show, Phantom Gourmet, and NESN's Comedy All-Stars) and Dan Crohn (a recent semi-finalist in the Boston Comedy Festival...his daytime job of teaching 4th graders has provided him with endless amounts of material.

The event will be held at St. Mary's Church Hall in Rowley, and the \$35 entry includes a buffet, show, and one refreshment ticket.

The March 17th event starts at 5:30 when the doors open for a wonderful buffet. Come join your friends and neighbors from Georgetown, Rowley, Boxford, Byfield, Groveland, Haverhill and surrounding towns.

Tickets are available at Country Motors, Topsfield; Rowley Pharmacy; St. Mary's Church - Rowley, St. Mary's Church-Georgetown, at the St. Mary's Rectory (352-2024, or call coordinates Tom Parisi (978-771-1931) or Darryl Fedorchak (617-240-5372).

Now, for a few Irish jokes and sayings that you won't hear at the event...sent from one Irishman to another:

An Irishman is never too drunk so long as he can hold onto a blade of grass, and not fall off the face of the Earth.

Question: Why do the Irish only fight amongst themselves? Answer: There exists in this world no other worthy opponents!

Question: How do you get your Irish cousin up on the roof? Tell him the drinks are 'on the house'.

Alright, so an Irish guy walks out of a bar...well, it's possible you know.

Bricks and mortar make a house but the laughter of children makes a home.

No son is as good as his father in his sister's eyes. No father is as good as his son in his mother's eyes.

Better fifty enemies outside the house than one

inside it.

A family of Irish birth will argue and fight, but let a shout come from without and see them all unite.

The best way to get rid of your enemies is God's way, by loving them.

And the most famous blessing of all:

"May the road rise to meet you,

May the wind be always at your back,

May the sun shine warm upon your face,

The rains fall soft upon your fields,

And until we meet again,

May God hold you

In the palm of his hand."

See you next edition. Here's a shout out and thanks for the Birthday card 'from me brudda' Scott and his family, Wes, Elyse, Kinsey, Dianne, Brian, Erin, and everyone else who dropped a note to remind me of my graying. Have a great, safe - surrounded by friends and friends of your future' - St. Patrick's Day!

P.S. The Ancient Order of Hibernians AOH in Salem, MA puts on one dandy of a fine St. Patrick's Day luncheon. For \$5 you enjoy a great feast, but if you're a Catholic gentleman or woman, you should press down \$30 and join the club. Great people. The finest you'll ever meet on this Earth. Oh, and there's Irish Step dancing and all kinds of fun. A sing-along upstairs with the finest of the North Shore's musicians. Get there early, and get someone to drive you up to Rowley after the 4:00 buffet!! A day of festivals!)

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TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

THANK YOU!!!

The Valley Patriot is celebrating back to back milestones in February and March. In February we published our 100th edition. This month we celebrate our 8 year anniversary. So, on March 1st we held a 100th Edition/8 Year Anniversary Bash at the VFW in North Andover. Even though we had a blizzard on the day of the event more than 100 people showed up to celebrate with the Valley Patriot team.

Chuck, Ralph and I want to personally thank those who came and especially those who helped us organize the bash. Please take a minute to jot down the contact information of those who support The Valley Patriot and please patronize them as a thank you for their support.

980 WCAP Radio (980WCAP.com) who donated commercials to promote the event.

Emily's Bakery – 233 Lincoln Avenue in Haverhill, (emilysbakery.biz) donated a wonderful cake for the event.

Eric Walker of QNR Productions, (qnrproductions.com) donated his DJ Services.

Celeste Walker of Dream Imagine Studios (dreamimaginestudios.com) did all the decorations of the hall.

Keith Wlodyka of Daily Dose Café (thedailydosecafe.com) at Sal's Riverwalk donated the Ziti and Meatballs, plastic-wear, coffee and salad.

Greg Fratto of North End Deli on Common Street in Lawrence (thenorthenddeli.com) who donated the deli sandwiches.

Maralyn Twomey who donated fully decorated cheesecake desserts, complete with American flags and plastic army men.

Alex Talcott who helped organize and donated his consulting services for the raffle.

Jen Cooper and Pennie Hale for organizing and planning such a successful event in less than two weeks.

Sam Messina of Wine Connexions on Main St. in North Andover (wineconnexion.com) for donating two bottles of expensive wines for our raffle. (Visit Wine Connexions every Saturday for their free wine tasting events).

Holiday Inns (holidayinn.com) of Lowell for donating an overnight stay with free breakfast for our raffle.

Wyndham Hotels (wyndham.com) for donating an overnight stay with free breakfast for our raffle.

Jessica Scarelli of The Icing on the Cupcake (theicingonthecupcake@aim.com) for donating raspberry and peanut butter cupcakes for dessert.

Congressional Candidate Tom Weaver for donating a Dunkin Donut gift certificate.

LaBoniche of Lowell who donated a gift certificate for our raffle (Laboniche.com).

Welles Emporium of Lowell (wellesemporium.com) who donated a gift certificate for the raffle.

A special thank you to Puppygirl Kate Whitney who emceed the event. Angela Hudak, who brought snacks for the tables and took money at the door, as well as setting up and breaking down the hall before and after the event. Juli Rogers of WCAP who went above and beyond the call of duty to get us some fabulous raffle donations and helped organize things we never would have thought of. Christine Morabito who transported the

massive cake from Emily's Bakery to the hall. The Veterans of the VFW in North Andover who were great hosts, had a fabulous bartender, and who fought for this country with their lives! State Representative Jim Lyons (R) Andover, and Paul Adams (R) Andover, who presented the Valley Patriot with a Proclamation from the House of Representatives. Senators Steven Baddour (D) Methuen and Bruce Tarr (R) Newbury, who presented the Valley Patriot with a proclamation from the Senate, Methuen City Councilors Tom Ciulla and Sean Fountain who presented a proclamation from the Methuen City Council. Congressional Candidate Jon Golnik who presented a framed Valley Patriot 100th Edition. Congressional candidate and former State Senator Richard Tisei who stopped by for the festivities. "The Valley Patrietts" over 30's Softball Team for being wonderfully talented, beautiful and coming out during the storm (and winning almost all the best raffle items). Tracy Zysk whom we have yet to present our thanks to because she wasn't going to be able to make the event and was able to attend at the last minute (making for a much better party!).

Thank you also to our families, our readers, advertisers, supporters, volunteers, staff, drivers, editors, WCAP radio listeners, the warehouse workers at Graphic Industries, Dan Dubrule our Gardner Area Coordinator, Pete Baylies our event photographer who is available for events (athomedads@aol.com).

Thank you to everyone who made this event so successful even in the middle of a blizzard. And, since our first ever Valley Patriot Bash was so successful, we've decided to make this an annual event as we celebrate our anniversaries every March from this point forward. See you all next year!

FROM LAWRENCE CITY COUNCILOR MARC LAPLANT

An Act authorizing the city of Lawrence to establish a program for enforcement against illegal dumping (HB 3729)

The middle class: The goal of this legislation is to grow and retain a middle class in Lawrence.

The median household income in Lawrence is \$31k, while the state average is \$64k. 27% of our population is below the poverty line compared to 11% statewide. Lawrence's homeownership rate is 35% compared to the statewide average of 64%. In order to have economic balance in my city, there are four elements that will help revive the dwindling middle class: 1) Improved schools, 2) Lower crime, 3) Improved housing stock, and 4) clean and well-kept streets, sidewalks and parks, that is, a city with "curb appeal."

This bill deals with the "curb appeal" element. Unfortunately, my city is dirty, and people treat it like a pit. Tires, couches, TV sets and bags of trash are disposed anywhere individuals think that they can get away with it. There are plenty of places where they can get away with it: the banks of any one of our three rivers, alleyways, or alongside most any street. If caught, and that is a big "if," a violator can be fined \$300 - the cost of doing business. It cost Lawrence over \$200k annually for the disposal fees and the personnel costs to get rid of the illegal dumping. Obviously, that is money that can be used to hire more public safety, and spent to provide services that grow

and retain a middle class. In fact, the cost goes beyond the city's direct exposure. Illegal dumping effects the psyche of Lawrence residents, where good people who care for their city's appearance just give up because there is simply too much. This attitude and behavior results in lower housing values and ultimately impacts the tax revenue the city can accrue for services. It is a downward cycle.

This illegal dumping bill will not cure all of Lawrence's ills, but it allows the city to take a proactive, rather than a defensive, posture toward reducing illegal dumping. Giving city inspectors the ability to ticket violators up to three times the costs of the city's disposal expenses, sends a powerful signal that dumping will cost the violators more than it's worth. The money from these new fines will go to a dedicated account to buttress the illegal dumping program. The city will be able to acquire the tools such as cameras and other equipment to strengthen deterrence. I do not want to exaggerate the benefits of the legislation, but I have found that Worcester has effectively controlled illegal dumping with similar authority.

The middle class: The goal of this legislation is to give the city a tool to help revive this diminishing breed. Also, please be mindful that this is an attempt by the city to be self-reliant. It is part of a broader mosaic that we must create to promote less federal and state reliance and gain more economic independence.

There is no cost to the Commonwealth for this legislation, and it gives Lawrence an important tool. Please support this bill, HB 3729.

THE METHUEN MA SALEM NH ROTARY CLUB 2ND ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF ACHIEVEMENT

The Methuen, MA-Salem, NH Rotary Club will be hosting its second annual Celebration of Achievement on April 3 at the Merrimack Valley Golf Club. The Club will honor teachers and students for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the communities of Methuen MA and Salem, NH.

The event, featuring dinner and awards ceremony will honor 3 teachers and 3 students, from Salem High School, Methuen High School and Presentation of Mary Academy. The honorees are nominated by the guidance counselors and superintendents' offices. 3 scholarships will also be awarded that evening in the amount of \$2,000.00 each by the Methuen Salem Rotary Club to high school seniors residing in Methuen and Salem. Applications for the scholarships are available on the Club's website, www.methuensalemrotary.org or through the schools' guidance departments. The deadline for the scholarship applications is March 5th, 2012.

Tickets for the Celebration of Achievement event can be purchased for \$35.00 each by contacting Stephanie Lane, 978-273-5156

The Methuen, MA-Salem, NH Rotary Club meets at Jocelyn's Restaurant in Salem, NH Fridays at 12:15. For more information regarding the Methuen, MA-Salem, NH Rotary Club, please visit our website, www.methuensalemrotary.org

METHUEN VILLAGE:

*Irish Music with Paul Carroll 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 performance by Irish singer and guitarist Paul Carroll on Thursday, March 15 at 2:00 p.m. Advance RSVP encouraged. 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.

*Belly Dancer Performs 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 performance entitled, "Meet us at the Casbah" with Sufiya, a belly dancer from Shimmy Express, on Friday, March 23 at 7:00 p.m. Advance RSVP encouraged. 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.

Methuen Village Presents Trivia Night: TEAM UP -Up to 6 people to a team. Bring your brightest colleagues!

Come up with your team name! You will be given a category for each question. Decide how many points that you want to "bet" on each. You'll have the length of one song to get your answer into the Trivia Jock. No calls to your nerdy neighbor allowed! The highest scoring team wins a \$150 gift certificate to one of our favorite restaurants! There are goodies for 2nd and 3rd place as well. If you lose - enjoy a beverage, mingle, and have fun anyway! Please RSVP by March 12th to 978.685.2220 Hope to see you there!

NORTH ANDOVER - As most of you are aware NAMA will be holding our first annual Knight of Honor event on SATURDAY, MARCH 24TH at the North Andover Country Club... (6pm - 10pm)

This first annual event will honor a local business leader for their commitment to our community and the association will also be presenting two \$1,000 scholarships to a graduating male & female senior majoring in business next year.

This event will feature entertainment, a dinner and an opportunity for the business community of North Andover to honor one of their own. Tickets are \$50 per person and benefit future scholarships. If you are interested in attending this fun filled event please contact me directly for tickets...or check the website www.northandovermerchants.com for more details.

ESSEX HERITAGE - will hold its Annual Spring Meeting and networking event on Tuesday, April 10, 2012 from 8:00AM - 10:00AM, at Merrimack College's Cascia Hall in North Andover. The agenda will include updates on Essex Heritage activities and initiatives, introduction to new Commissioners and the presentation of Essex Heritage's Special Recognition Awards, designed to recognize individuals and/or organizations that exemplify the Essex National Heritage Commission's spirit of collaboration through their initiatives in building partnerships that preserve and celebrate the historic, cultural and natural resources of Essex County.

The public is welcome to attend this FREE,

NOTEBOOK, PAGE 42

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NEWS ITEM: Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua's administration gets another round of subpoenas from the Feds, including members of Lantigua's licensing board, his former Chief of Staff Lenny (De Da Dee) Degnan, & Personnel Director Frank Bonet. Also last month: Attorney General Martha Coakley announced she too is investigating Lantigua.

ELIZABETH WARREN READS THE VALLEY PATRIOT

Professor Elizabeth Warren, candidate for the Democrat nomination for Senate (the winner of which will face Scott Brown in the fall.) Warren was in Lawrence and Methuen last month, touring The Valley during her campaign.

You can read our interview with Professor Warren on Page 35



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

Dizoglio to Challenge Torissi in Primary

Methuen – Methuen resident Diana DiZoglio (D) announced today that she intends to enter the race for State Representative of the 14th Essex District, which includes parts of Methuen, Lawrence, North Andover and Haverhill.

DiZoglio said, "I am excited about representing the residents of this great community look forward to meeting more and more people in the upcoming months." When asked about what she hopes to bring to the race DiZoglio responded, "I provide a fresh set of eyes to the problems that plague our communities. I approach every issue with an open mind, one that is not entrenched in the same old party politics. I believe that our communities deserve someone who spends more time listening to their constituents than they do promoting their own personal agenda or political future. Representing the constituents of this community requires a full-time effort and constant availability. It

is a position of public service that should not be used as a platform to promote one's



own self-interests. The hardworking families of this community deserve transparency, accountability and availability from those that represent them."

DiZoglio is a graduate of Wellesley College and was the recipient of multiple merit-based scholarships and fellowships. After graduating from Methuen High

School, she interned at various faith-based community centers. Upon completing the coursework for her degree in Psychology and Spanish, she began working at the State House as a legislative aide for the 17th Essex District. Shortly after, she began writing for The Valley Patriot and was hired as Chief of Staff to the President at Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts. Her broad range of passions includes mentoring young women, writing articles about local events and promoting civic engagement and community involvement.

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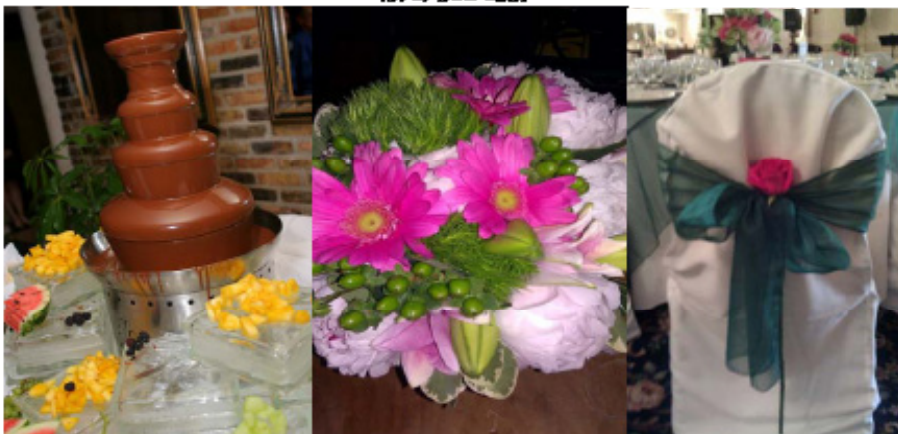
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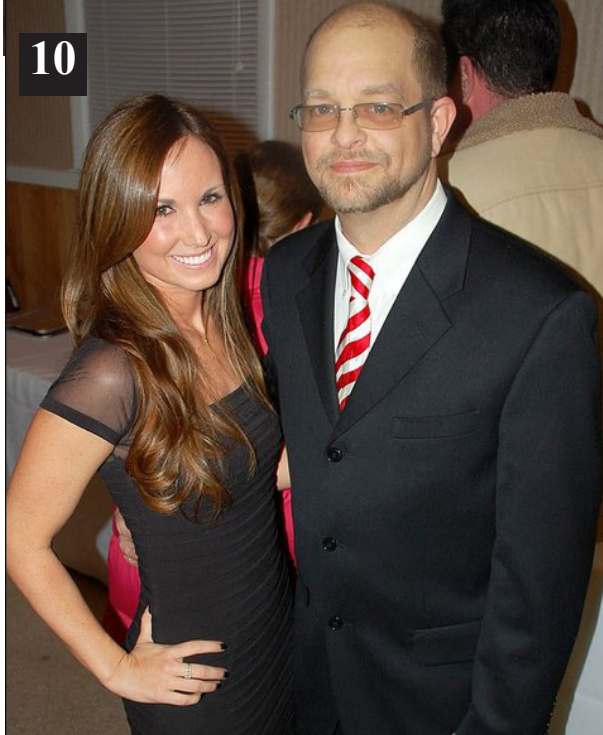
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Blizzard can't stop Valley Patriot Bash



ALL PHOTOS BY PETE BAYLIES

More than a hundred people turned out for the Valley Patriot's 100th Edition/8 Year Anniversary BASH despite blizzard conditions on March 1st. Photo #1) Valley Patriot pet columnists PuppyGirl Kate Whitney (who was our master of ceremonies) and Doggie Columnist Tracey Zysk. #2) Alex Talcott from the Newt Gingrich campaign, Republican congressional candidate Jon Golnik, Valley Patriot Publisher Tom Duggan, Former State Senator and candidate for congress Richard Tisei, and Andover Selectman Alex Vispoli. #3) Our 100th Edition Celebration cake donated by Emily's Bakery in Haverhill (see their ad page35). #4) Valley Patriot Editors Assistant Dawn Brantmuller and Valley Patriot Food Columnist Pennie Hale. #5) Tom Duggan and Angela Hudak cut the cake. #6)The Valley Patriot's New Over 30's, Girls Softball team "The Valley Patrietts" (With Julie Ann Meninno, Cheryl Purpura, Lisa LeMieux and Judy Phothimath) #7) Sheila Mullins and Mike Grammont enjoy the festivities. 8) Tony Palmisano, Tom Weaver, (candidate for congress) Ralph Zazula, Allan Knowles, and Christine Morabito, president of the Greater Boston Tea Party. #9) PuppyGirl Kate Whitney pulls one of the winning raffle tickets. DJ Eric Walker, Pennie Hale and Tom Duggan celebrate, #10) PuppyGirl and Tom Duggan. #11) the Duggan family: Frank Incropera, Walter Pomerleau, Walter Pomerleau Jr., Former Lawrence Councilor Gil Frechette and his wife Joan, Dorothy Incropera, and Rebecca Duggan (Ava was hiding). #12) Andover Selectman Alex Vispoli a candidate for State Senate with Lawrence City Councilor Roger Twomey and his wife Maralyn, #13 Adriana O'Donoghue wins one of the 2004 first edition Valley Patriot, signed by owners Tom Duggan, Ralph Wilbur and Chuck Ormsby. #14 Methuen City Councilor Tom Ciulla who presented Tom with a congratulatory resolution from the Methuen Council. .

Ye Gay Ol' Valley

Proud Daughter of a Lesbian

D. B. Langevin
Abbi Massey

VALLEY PATRIOT LESBIAN COLUMNIST

I knew my daughter was bullied as a child, but didn't know how much until I recently read an eloquent paper she had written for one of her college classes. She survived a life threatening tumor as a child which left her with an unusually large chin and noticeable scarring on her neck from the tracheotomy she needed to breathe through. She was bullied for looking different. Later she was diagnosed with severe scoliosis so the bullying continued because she had to wear a back brace in middle school. Lastly, she was bullied for being the daughter of a lesbian. It was difficult to see the pain she was going through, but I cannot express it any better than she can. So, for this month's column, I defer to my daughter, Abbi Massey. The following is an excerpt from her paper.

"I have never really thought about how I identify myself until I came to college. I am a child of divorce. I am a proud daughter of a lesbian. I am a strong person who never let the bullies of my past get the better of me.

A battle that I have been dealing with my whole life revolves around my mother being a lesbian. Our family had a lot of ups and downs but my mothers worked very hard to make our family what it is today.

My mother met Michelle in 1998. When they first started dating I was embarrassed at first. I was teased every day at school. A lot of kids called me a lesbian because my mom was gay. I remember asking my mother not to hold Michelle's hand in public because I was bullied. In our neighborhood, a family ended up moving out in response to my mom being gay. I would make new friends and ask them over for a play date. Their parents would find out I had two mothers and wouldn't allow my friends to come over.

Middle school was the hardest. I would come home crying every day. When we moved to a new school district and my mother got a job teaching at my school, I asked her not to say anything until I graduated. I started being called a lesbian because of who my mom was. It hurt me a lot. My mother is who she is and I am who I am. Just because my mother is a

lesbian, doesn't mean I am.

When I started high school the bullying stopped. All of my friends knew I had a lesbian mother. They were there for me and supported me in everything. They made me realize that it doesn't matter.

When I started college, I realized how accepting everyone is. I don't hide anything anymore. I talk about my mother more now. It feels great to know I can openly talk about such an important influence in my life. I realized how unfair I was to my mother. I regret asking her not to hold Michelle's hand or tell anyone who she was. I didn't allow her to be who she wanted to be. I love my mother for her strength and how brave she is. She is my hero.

The family that I have with my mother is a very important part of my life. My two moms and two brothers and I have learned to be a loving, caring, accepting and supportive family. I wouldn't trade my family for any other family in the world. There are individuals that wouldn't recognize my family as real. I define family as stability, love and acceptance and it is not defined by number or sex. It's defined by knowing there's a place you can go where there are people who love you, can dislike how you act and be angry about your choices, but will still embrace and support you. A family doesn't have to have a mother and a father.

I have been through a lot in my life. I have survived a tumor. I was teased and bullied throughout my whole childhood. I have been given harsh obstacles that a lot of people would have given up on. I haven't. I have stayed strong and persevered through it all. The family and friends that I have with me today made me who I am. I have learned who I can let into my life and who I can leave behind. Although I have no wish to go back and relive the traumatic experiences I went through, they have made me who I am today."

For the record, Abbi is my hero.



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 Dani-BLangevin@aol.com

JACK KEROUAC: FROM PAGE 15

Book-signing & talk by book's editor Dawn Ward. UML South Campus, O'Leary Auditorium

7:30pm: An Evening with John Sampas.

John Sampas, Literary Executor of the Estate of Jack and Stella Kerouac will engage in a dialog with UML Professors Michael Milner and Todd Tietchen about his history with Jack; at the Lowell National Historical Park Visitors Center, 246 Market Street

Friday, March 9:

5:30-7:00pm Exhibition Opening:

Jack's Serious Exuberance: Paintings and Drawings, Abstractions of Jack Kerouac's Scripture of the Golden Eternity by Barbara Gagel at Ayer Lofts Gallery, 172 Middle St.

6:00-7:30pm: Kerouac's Downtown Lowell Walking Tour, led by Roger Brunelle. Meet at Kerouac Commemorative at Bridge and French Streets.

7:30-9:30pm: Let's Talk About Jack! White Eagle Cafe, 585 Market St.

Saturday, March 10:

1:00-2:30pm: Join a Kerouac at 90 panel to discuss his life and influence. Boott Cot-

ton Mills Museum Event Center at the Foot of John St.

3:00-4:30pm: Socio-Linguistic Origins of Kerouac. Join this tour and talk led by Roger Brunelle at St. Louis Church-School compound in the Centralville neighborhood.

5:00-7:00pm: Kerouac Pubs of Lowell Tour, Part 1

8pm-12am: Jazz and Readings at The Back Page at 15 Kearney Sq.

Jack's Last Call, a play by Patrick Fenton with actor Jerry Bisantz.

Jack Kerouac Day in Massachusetts, proclamation by Mayor Patrick Murphy.

Sunday, March 11:

1-4 pm: Walking Jack 90th Birthday Loop

4-6pm: Kerouac Pubs Tour, Part 2, Merimack St. area & a taste of old Moody St. bars.

Others Kerouac Birthday Related Events: Jack's Serious Exuberance art exhibition by Barbara Gagel.

Wed., March 14, 7:30-8:30pm: Panel discussion with local writers and poets.

For details about the above events see

Morality Matters!

The Politics of Fornication

Paul Murano

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

A female Georgetown law student testified before Congress last week claiming that she is going through considerable hardship because her Catholic affiliated university does not offer her free contraception to allow her to fornicate with no natural consequences. In response, Nancy Pelosi commiserated, Rush Limbaugh referred to her as "a prostitute", several of Rush's sponsors pulled their advertising from his radio show, Barack Obama jumped on the opportunity to sympathize publicly with her, Limbaugh apologized, Ron Paul called this apology insincere and self-motivated, John McCain weighed in criticizing Limbaugh, and the American people were left uncomfortably wondering why the ethical status of their post-modern sacred cow, premarital sex, was being challenged. Yet this dust-up was inevitable. When contraception is brought up, as it has been in this political season with the HHS mandate, its major offspring fornication will be close behind.

For those not familiar with this term, before politically correct forces created the morally-neutral sociological term "premarital sex," people referred to it as fornication from the Latin word fornicatio, which is transliterated from the Greek word pornea. Pornea speaks of sexual immorality, including premarital sex, incest, adultery, and prostitution, which in pre-modern societies (untainted by the birth control pill) was understood as a perversion of sexual love.

Throughout history there have been generally three categories of women recognized: married woman, virgin, and concubine or prostitute. A sexual relationship outside of marriage never enjoyed a status recognized as upright, moral, or even neutral.

In fact, the words harlot, whore, concubine and prostitute have been used interchangeably to refer to women that give their bodies to men that are not their husbands. Pharmakeia (from which we get our word pharmacy) referred to drugs or potions intended to either impede or kill unborn offspring and was universally condemned as a grave evil. Today we call it contraception.

The reason many people would find these traditional categories insulting today is because we have been conditioned by the underlying falsehoods that have molded a very unique time in human history - a time when affluence, materialism and relativism have combined in an attempt to redefine human nature and the sexes to create a category referred as "being in a relationship." In effect the "relationship" culture promotes serial monogamy and cheapens marriage

by creating a form of pornea or prostitution by legitimizing sex without permanent commitment - not in exchange for money but in exchange for emotional support and a false sense of security. It has left us with a generation that has known no alternative. This kind of compromise of human dignity is now the norm; and when this young woman proudly proclaimed to congress and the world without a bit of shame or embarrassment that she believes tax payers should subsidize her attempt to impede the natural end of her lifestyle of fornication, she became a fair symbol to be criticized.

Rush Limbaugh was right, even though he should not have singled out an individual to label. It is a culture-wide problem of which she is only a symbol.

This woman's testimony symbolizes how our culture has managed to separate love from commitment and sex from babies with a contraceptive mentality that degrades love, marriage, one's future spouse, and women, leading to a culture of death. Most importantly it is a symbol of how far our society has come in our disregard for God, who instituted marriage as an expression of human nature in that "a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

This gift of self, meant to be a total and unique gift between one man and one woman, has been tragically lost in the cultural psyche of two generations blinded by the lies of the sexual revolution.

When Rick Santorum stated he would use the office of the presidency to enlighten and persuade people of the devastating effects of contraception on the individual, family and society - not legislate, but persuade - the media went crazy and labeled him extreme. However, when a woman stands up in front of Congress without shame and demands that her "right" to fornicate and contracept be paid for by a religious institution that teaches both acts to be the matter of mortal sin, the media applauds and celebrates her as heroic. It's time to take a sober and unselfish look at what we have become over the past four decades and to where it is leading us.



Paul Murano teaches philosophy at North Shore Community College and theology at the College of Saint Mary Magdalen. He is host of

Beneath the Surface television show at Burlington Cable Access TV and is co-host of the Paying Attention Radio program. Paul is also chairman of Heartbeat Pregnancy Help center in Burlington and is a singer/songwriter/musician.

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OUTLAW - STAR SPEEDWAY

Conservatives Draw Strength from CPAC

Christine Morabito
GREATER BOSTON TEA PARTY

Much to the chagrin of Occupy D.C., last month's CPAC was a tremendous success. The unholy mob had been plotting to disrupt the event by pulling fire alarms, cutting electrical power and even physically assaulting participants. If they were incensed by the keynote speaker, Sarah Palin, they were absolutely apoplectic about the appearance of Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, who has enraged public sector unions by asking them to pay a "fairer" share of their bountiful benefits -- never mind that he has managed to cut deficits, reduce unemployment to the lowest level since 2008 and attract new businesses to the state.

Billed as the largest annual gathering of conservatives, the Conservative Political Action Conference hosted over 10,000 freedom-loving activists, reinforcing this year's theme: "We Still Hold These Truths."

With all the depressing news about the economy, skyrocketing gas prices and the general unraveling of our country, CPAC was the shot in the arm this conservative needed to return to Massachusetts and fight the good fight.

We were provided with undeniable evidence that conservative principles are alive and well and work beautifully every time they are tried. The testimonials from Republican Governors Scott Walker, Bob McDonnell of Virginia, Bobby Jindal of Louisiana and Rick Scott of Florida were phenomenal. Here are the facts: In 11 out of 15 business-friendly states, Republicans are in charge. In 7 of 10 states with the lowest unemployment, Republicans are in charge. Now consider the state of Illinois, run entirely by Democrats: The state has

unsustainable obligations to unions and can no longer pay its bills. In 2011 they burdened citizens with 2 massive tax increases. Unemployment is around 10 percent. Illinois was recently downgraded by Moody's and awarded the lowest credit rating in the country. Add to that the fact that residents are leaving the "Prairie State" in droves, and you have a prime example of decades of disastrous liberal policies.

CPAC attendees were treated to an appearance by Republican National Committee Chairman and fundraising wizard, Reince Priebus who proudly announced that the RNC outraised the DNC last quarter and currently has more money in the bank than its Democratic counterpart.

Want more good news? Conservatives are well positioned to gain the majority in the U.S. Senate in November. With 23 Democrats and 10 Republicans up for reelection we have an excellent chance of securing at least 51 seats.

A filibuster-proof majority of 60 is, of course, the ultimate goal. Grover Norquist, President of Americans for Tax Reform, believes we can accomplish this by 2014, when we have an additional 20 Democrat and 13 Republican seats up for grabs.

The 3 presidential frontrunners took their turns on the CPAC stage. Emboldened by his three previous wins, Rick Santorum shared the spotlight with his wife and 6 of his children. He gave an impassioned speech, although noticeably more serious than usual. Newt Gingrich had people out of their chairs more than in them, as he laid out specific issues he would tackle within hours and days of being sworn in. Finally, Romney did a marvelous job, even if he did bend over backwards to convince the audience of his



conservatism. He clarified that while he "served in government" he "didn't inhale."

Ron Paul did not attend; hence he did not win the Straw Poll. The poll results were: Romney 38 percent, Santorum 31 percent and Gingrich 15 percent. Paul came in fourth at 12 percent.

Throughout the 3-day event there were expert panels discussing national defense, balancing the budget, immigration, voter fraud and repealing Obamacare.

By far my favorite speech was by Ann Coulter, the queen of wit, who confessed, "Now, I know what some of you are thinking: Hey, aren't you the one who wrote that smash New York

Times Bestseller "Demonic" - How the Liberal Mobs are Endangering America? And no sooner did it come out then demonic liberals burst out into mobs across the nation? Yes, that's me, and I'm sorry for that. But the good news is: The title of my next book is 'Nancy Pelosi moves to Luxemburg.'"

For more CPAC quotes, check out "CPAC 2012 - Greatest Hits" at www.greaterboston-teaparty.com.



Christine Morabito is a resident of Haverhill and a President of the Greater Boston Tea Party. You can email her at christine.morabito@hotmail.com

Picking Sides in the 2012 Presidential Campaign

Christen Varley
TEA PARTY ORGANIZER/ACTIVIST

As a Tea Party activist, I am asked every day which candidate I am supporting for President in 2012. I know it frustrates people that I don't have an answer but I can't help it. I don't have a favorite. Well, not anymore. My pick got out very early. I respond that I will vote for the candidate whose first name isn't Barack. Yes it is a mediocre response but it is the best I can offer.

I am not shy about admitting that, for me, the GOP field is dissatisfying and uninspiring. I have no issue saying I want to be inspired. I want to get fired up. I'm ready to get out there and WIN! I look to the Rolling Stones for an answer - You can't always get what you want. Fortunately, I see a lot of what we need.

Recent Gallup poll numbers tell us fifty percent of Americans are dissatisfied with the President. Ask any campaign veteran and they will tell you that is good news. Fifty two percent would be much better, but it's early. Obama has plenty of time to get there. Unfortunately, the same polls reveal that Obama's favorability is 12-17 points higher than his closest Republican rivals. I dare say these numbers are not exclusively attributable to Tea Party members.

Dissatisfaction with the Republican field

is all too real. If you were a candidate trying to appeal to fifty two percent or more of a population that is unhappy, underemployed, over regulated and over taxed, how would you do it? Keep in mind that this population ranges from semi-liberal to moderates to conservative Democrats, Republicans and Libertarians. And let's not forget those stubborn Independents who refuse to be labeled. They are multiplying like jackrabbits!

If I were running for president, I would run on the following platform and let the chips fall where they may. On day 1, I would repeal the Affordable Care Act, pink slip all czars and their underlings - no severance as their employment was illegal to begin with - and hold a fire sale to make some quick cash. I would shut down our foreign borders and start immediate registration of illegal aliens - and offer them an opportunity to purchase a ticket home at a group rate!

After lunch, I would repeal Dodd-Frank, pull the US out of the START Treaty, repeal the Patriot Act & NDAA and defund the UN. Before drinks, I would close up the Departments of Education, Energy and Commerce. Not bad for a first day, eh? Please keep in mind, however, that all those repeals are only possible if the bills to do so are sitting on my desk in the oval office. Send more conservatives to the House &



Senate!

On day 2, I would sign a (much smaller) budget and hopefully a Balanced Budget Amendment - tied to GDP, of course. I would lock up Social Security's bank account and only I would know the PIN. I would institute Medicare reform. I would shut down Freddie and Fannie, make the Bush tax rates permanent, lower the corporate tax rate to 15% (maybe lower), call Mahmoud Ahmadi-ninejad, Chavez, Putin, Castro's brother and Kim Jung-Un and tell them all to "knock it off or else." Then I would have dinner with the leaders from the House and Senate, maybe.

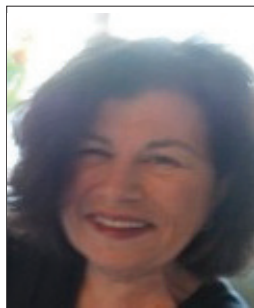
On day 3, I would go golfing! Just kidding. I don't golf. I do garden, though. Does the White House still have a garden or is the press no longer covering it?

You get my point, right? All the Republicans running for president right now support many or all of these agenda items. Republicans across the board are talking about cutting spending, cutting taxes, asserting our sovereignty,

strengthening our national security, downsizing the Federal government and preserving and protecting the Constitution. President Obama supports not one of those. Is this truly that difficult a decision? Will you really take your ball and go home if your guy doesn't get to bat? Seriously?

Before you throw RINO accusations at me, take a breath. This is not an ordinary presidential election. In my opinion, they never are but that's another column. 2012 is a time to choose sides and the Left side is very well defined - they don't like the Constitution and are doing their darnedest to destroy it. The Right side is not as well defined but it is definitely not about destroying the Constitution. There is a pretty big spread between the moderate right and the conservative right but they are all Right. And everyone on the Right side is pulling to the right - and therefore away from the Left. So pick a side. Not a faction or a fraction of a side, an entire side. And start pulling.

Christen Varley is the former president of the Greater Boston Tea Party and now serves as the secretary of the organization. You can email her at: cvarley@greaterbostonteaparty.com



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The Night I Saw the Moon

Noreen Grice
VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST CONTRIBUTOR

What makes a person decide to pursue a particular career? Let me share with you who and what persuaded me to be an astronomer. I was 15 years old and a freshman in high school. Each morning I arrived at my homeroom 20 minutes early; by 8 a.m., the organized chaos would begin. Bells chimed every 45 minutes, and it was a mad dash to get to the next class. My mind became a criss-cross of knowledge, from English to Spanish, history to math, and science to band rehearsal.

One day my science teacher told us about a special open house at a local observatory. He offered to drive any students who might be interested in attending the program. I was definitely interested!

You see, I had started reading about astronomy the day my third grade teacher announced that our class would have a “special lending library.” On her desk sat a shoebox, and inside that box was a collection of paperback books on various topics. We could borrow one book each week. I chose the Golden Guide to Stars. I borrowed it many times!

I remember opening that book and being awestruck over the paintings of the Moon and planets. According to the book, there were nine planets and the smallest planet was Mercury. Years later that designation would shift to tiny Pluto. Many years after that, astronomers at a conference in Prague would decide that Pluto might not be a planet after all.

I asked my mother if I could go on the evening field trip to the university observatory. I wasn’t sure exactly what I would see there but if it had to do with outer space, I wanted to find out!

A few nights later, we walked into the science building at Boston University and took the elevator to the 5th floor. Everyone was ushered into an auditorium. A professor showed us slides of the planets and the moon; these were actual photographs, not the paintings I remembered from the book in third grade.

After the slide show, it was time to explore the Astronomy Department. I wandered down the hall and read all the signs over the doors: Professor Papagiannis, Professor Janes, Professor Brecher and others. I didn’t know any of these people but figured they must be very important. Then I found the sign I was really looking for; it read “Observatory Upstairs.”

I walked up the two flights of stairs and

opened the door to the observatory. One of the astronomy students brought me over to the telescope. “Want to take a look at the Moon?” he asked. I had never looked into the eyepiece of a telescope before. Then, there it was: the Moon. It looked like a lonely gray place, with mountains and craters. I was amazed. I felt like I was actually standing on the Moon.

When it was time to leave, I made a promise to myself that I would someday become an astronomy student. And a few years later, I was: an astronomy student at Boston University.

My future had changed because a third grade teacher lent me a little book about stars and high school science teacher showed me a distant world through a telescope. How has a teacher changed your life?

For those interested in

partaking in an astronomical experience, here are two local options:

The Mendel Observatory at Merrimack College, in North Andover, is located on the top floor of the Mendel Science Center at Merrimack College. Weather permitting the observatory is open to the public each Wednesday. Check the Merrimack College web site (<http://www.merrimack.edu/community/Observatory>) or call 978-837-5011 for upcoming schedule and weather conditions.

The Clay Center Observatory, featured in the book Everyone’s Universe, is located at the Dexter and Southfield School in Brookline, Mass. The observatory is wheelchair accessible and views through the telescope are offered during the year. Check the Clay Center website (www.clayobservatory.org) in advance for the current schedule of public open nights.

About the author: Noreen Grice, who grew up in Malden, MA, is author of five previously published accessible astronomy books, all with text in print and Braille and images that are touchable. Her latest education/travel book is Everyone’s Universe: A Guide to Accessible Astronomy Places. Noreen’s mission is to make astronomy and space science accessible to everyone regardless of any disability. She is a pioneer in accessible astronomy methods and is recipient of several awards including the 2007 Klumpke-Roberts Award (Astronomical Society of the Pacific), the 2008 Jacob Bolotin Award (National Federation of the Blind), the 2009 YWCA Tribute to Women Award, and the 2010 Distinguished Alumni Award from Boston University. You can read more about her work at www.youcandoastronomy.com.

Everyone’s Universe A Guide to Accessible Astronomy Places



Noreen Grice

Reform Before Revenue

Senator Steven A. Baddour
STATE SENATOR (D) - METHUEN

When I was the Senate Chairman of the Joint Committee on Transportation, I helped coin the phrase “reform before revenue” to describe an approach to transportation reform that sought to ensure that tax- and toll-payer money was being spent efficiently and effectively so that the Legislature didn’t pump new funding into a broken system.

By steadfastly standing by this ideal, the Legislature was able to advance an agenda that sought to ensure that we weren’t leaving scarce resources on the table because of inefficiencies and poor planning. With my help, it allowed us to finally take

on entrenched ideas in the transportation arena – particularly at the MBTA whose overly generous benefits enjoyed protected status for decades. As the main author of three major transportation reform bills, I lead the effort to eliminate the MBTA’s infamous “twenty years of service and out” retirement clauses, cracked down on their health care allowances which permitted retirees and others to receive lifetime healthcare virtually free and required their health plans to align with those of the state’s Group Insurance Commission. The costs of providing these grandfathered benefits was and remains a near billion dollar financial burden on the operating costs of the T and I strongly believe that curtailing these benefits was imperative.

This Fall, the MBTA announced that in order to close its \$161 million budget gap for FY13 it needs to adopt draconian methods to balance the books. They informed the public that they could either raise fares 43% and cut several bus routes, ferry service and commuter rail schedules or raise fares 35% and undertake severe schedule reductions for transit services including the elimination of all weekend and evening commuter rail service and some Green Line services. The idea of undertaking such cuts has caused some legislators, businesses, riders and commuters to call for the Legislature to step in and pay for the budget gap by raising the gas tax, draining the Commonwealth’s rainy day

fund, and/or create new taxes and fees – to name a few.

Although it seems counterintuitive, these are the easy solutions. It would be “easy” for the Legislature to throw its hands up and say “well, they need the money”, raise the gas tax and carry

on. But doing so ignores the fundamental issue that this new money will still be poured into broken system. The MBTA must do more to fix itself before it asks for additional funding. In my view, the MBTA should perform a top to bottom review of how they provide mass transit services and determine whether there areas from which it could wring additional savings. For example, last month the state Inspector

General estimated that \$60 million could be saved if the T redesigned its RIDE service, which provides transportation to the disabled. The program is a “budget buster” and should be carefully re-examined. I encourage the MBTA to explore innovative public private partnerships to decide whether private industry can deliver select services more efficiently. MassDOT has done a great job initiating these efforts in its Highway Division and I believe that they can replicate these successes at the T. I also believe that the MBTA should halt expansion efforts until it has a plan to fund its current state of good repair. We simply cannot expand and add more debt to a system that is already struggling to keep up with short- and long-term maintenance.

Let me be clear - I believe in commuter rail services and public transit. I believe it is the backbone of a strong economy, a vital part of our business and educational community and a key component of environmental policy. MassDOT has shown its willingness to think outside the box in the way it delivers road and bridge projects and now they must show the same when it comes to operating and maintaining its transit services. If they do so, our public transportation system will remain strong and vibrant tomorrow and for years to come.



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THE DOCTOR IS IN

Plantar fasciitis or heel pain

Rami Rustum, M.D.
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

Plantar Fasciitis is the most common condition of heel pain. This condition occurs when the long fibrous plantar fascia ligament along the bottom of the foot develops tears in the tissue resulting in pain and inflammation. The pain of plantar fasciitis is usually located close to where the fascia attaches to the calcaneus, also known as the heel bone.

Plantar fasciitis causes the inflammation of the plantar fascia ligament which runs along the bottom of the foot. The plantar fascia ligament is made of fibrous bands of tissue and runs between the heel bone and your toes and stretches with every step. Inflammation develops when tears occur in the tissue.

Symptoms:

In most cases, the pain associated with plantar fasciitis:

- Develops gradually
- Affects just one foot, although it can occur in both feet at the same time
- Is triggered by the first few steps after awakening, although it can also be triggered by long periods of standing or getting up from a seated position
- Feels like a stab in the heel of your foot

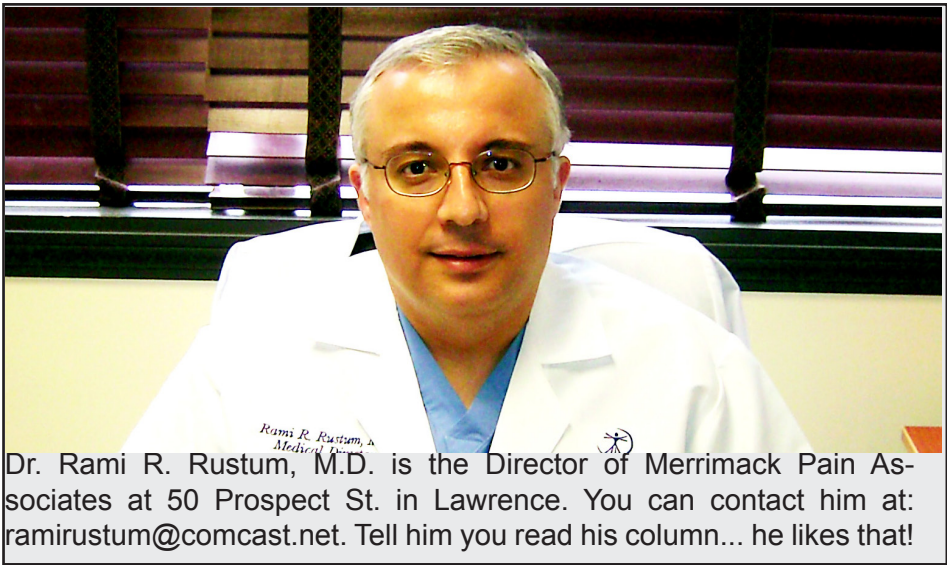
Causes:

Under normal circumstances, your plantar fascia acts like a shock-absorbing bowstring, supporting the arch in your foot. If tension on that bowstring becomes too great, it can create small tears in the fascia. Repetitive stretching and tearing can cause the fascia to become irritated or inflamed.

Risk factors:

Factors that may increase your risk of developing plantar fasciitis include:

- Age. Plantar fasciitis is most common between the ages of 40 and 60.
- Sex. Women are more likely than are men to develop plantar fasciitis.
- Certain types of exercise. Activities that place a lot of stress on your heel and attached tissue — such as long-distance running, ballet dancing and dance aerobics — can contribute to an earlier onset of plantar fasciitis.
- Faulty foot mechanics. Being flat-foot-



Dr. Rami R. Rustum, M.D. is the Director of Merrimack Pain Associates at 50 Prospect St. in Lawrence. You can contact him at: ramirustum@comcast.net. Tell him you read his column... he likes that!

ed, having a high arch or even having an abnormal pattern of walking can adversely affect the way weight is distributed when you're standing and put added stress on the plantar fascia.

- Obesity. Excess pounds put extra stress on your plantar fascia.

tor will ask questions about your symptoms and your past health. He or she will also do a physical exam of your feet that includes watching you stand and walk.

X-rays are not helpful in diagnosing plantar fasciitis, because they do not show ligaments clearly. But your doctor might



- Occupations that keep you on your feet. Factory workers, teachers and others who spend most of their work hours walking or standing on hard surfaces can damage their plantar fascia.

- Improper shoes. Avoid loose, thin-soled shoes, as well as shoes without enough arch support or flexible padding to absorb shock. If you regularly wear high heels, your Achilles tendon — which is attached to your heel — can contract and shorten, causing strain on the tissue around your heel.

Exams and Tests:

To diagnose plantar fasciitis, your doc-

take X-rays if he or she suspects a stress fracture, bone cyst, or other foot or ankle bone problems. X-rays may show whether a heel spur is present, although a bone spur does not necessarily mean that a person has plantar fasciitis.

Treatment:

The goals of treatment for plantar fasciitis are to:

- Relieve inflammation and pain in the heel.
- Allow small tears in the plantar fascia ligament to heal.
- Improve strength and flexibility and correct foot problems

- Allow you to resume your normal activities.

About 8 out of 10 people recover completely within a year. Out of 100 people with plantar fasciitis, about 95 are able to relieve their heel pain with nonsurgical treatments. Only about 5 out of 100 need surgery.

Treatment that you start when you first notice symptoms is more successful and takes less time than treatment that is delayed.

Initial treatment

There are many methods you can try to relieve the heel pain of plantar fasciitis. Even though their effectiveness has not been proved in scientific studies, these methods, used alone or in combination, work for most people.

- Rest your feet. Limit or, if possible, stop daily activities that are causing your heel pain. Try to avoid running or walking on hard surfaces, such as concrete.
- To reduce inflammation and relieve pain, put ice on your heel. You can also try an anti-inflammatory drug such as ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin, for example), naproxen (Aleve, for example), or aspirin.
- Wear shoes with good shock absorption and the right arch support for your foot. Athletic shoes or shoes with a well-cushioned sole are usually good choices.
- Try heel cups or shoe inserts (orthotics) to help cushion your heel. You can buy these at many athletic shoe stores and drugstores. Use them in both shoes, even if only one foot hurts.

- Put on your shoes as soon as you get out of bed. Going barefoot or wearing slippers may make your pain worse.
- Do simple exercises such as calf stretches and towel stretches several times a day, especially when you first get up in the morning. These can help your ligament become more flexible and strengthen the muscles that support your arch. For more information, see:

Avoid using only heat on your foot, such as from a heating pad or a heat pack. Heat tends to make symptoms worse. If you use contrast baths, which alternate hot and cold water, make sure you end with a soak in cold water.


If your weight is putting extra stress on your feet, your doctor may encourage you to try a weight-loss program.

Ongoing treatment

If nonsurgical methods such as rest, ice, and stretching exercises help relieve your plantar fasciitis symptoms, continue using them. If you have not improved after 6 weeks, your doctor may recommend that you continue those methods but add other nonsurgical treatments, such as:

- Custom-made shoe inserts (orthotics). Custom-made orthotics require a prescription. If your foot has an unusual shape or if you have a certain problem that the device will help, then a custom-made insert may fit better and control pain better than a nonprescription one.
- Night splints. A night splint holds the foot with the toes pointed up and with the foot and ankle at a 90-degree angle. This position applies a constant, gentle stretch to the plantar fascia.
- A walking cast on the lower leg. Casting is somewhat more expensive and inconvenient than other nonsurgical treatments. And after the cast is removed, you will need some rehabilitation to restore strength and range of motion. But a cast forces you to rest your foot. Some people report that it is the most helpful of nonsurgical treatments.

References: 1- WebMD, 2- planters-faciitis.org, 3- The 5-Minute Plantar Fasciitis Solution/ Jim Johnson






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The Auto-Immune Connection: Gluten Sensitivity and Thyroid Function

Dr. Jin Sung

VALLEY PATRIOT CHIROPRACTIC PHYSICIAN

According to the National Institutes of Health, autoimmune disease affect more than 24 million Americans a year, compared with cancer and cardiovascular disease, which affect nearly 9 million and 22 million people a year, respectively. Further, only about a third of the cases of an autoimmune disease are diagnosed.

Arguably, gluten allergy and sensitivity are among the most common autoimmune disorders, and perhaps the only one for which the cure is known. According to recent studies, more than half of patients with neurological dysfunction of obscure etiology have elevated antibodies to protein in wheat. Only 35 percent of this group also have histological evidence of celiac disease-allergy to gluten (found in wheat, rye, barley and spelt), which is easily put into remission by wheat avoidance. The remaining 65 percent have gluten sensitivity and elevated antibodies in cerebellum or peripheral nerves. It appears that wheat can directly stimulate an autoimmune response in sensitive individuals.

Numerous pain syndromes and autoimmune disease have also been associated with both humoral and cell mediated immune responses to gluten intake. From peripheral neuropathies to crippling migraines and ataxia, from acute myocarditis to chronic pancreatitis, gluten can initiate an autoimmune response, producing antibodies to specific tissue outside of the intestines.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION/GETTY IMAGES

This response has been identified with brain and peripheral tissue, liver epithelial cells, pancreatic beta-cells, bone cells, skin tissue, skeletal muscle and myocardium.

Another common tissue vulnerable to antibody production from wheat ingestion is the thyroid. Some studies show that as many as 65 percent of patients with celiac disease will also have elevated antibodies to their thyroid (Hashimoto's disease). In sensitive individuals, elimination of gluten results in a return to normal levels of both intestinal and thyroid antibodies. Where do

we find gluten: beverages, breads, cereals, flour, pastries, wheat products and thickening agents.

Reference: www.niaid.nih.gov/dait/pdf/ADCC_Report.pdf. The origins and applying advance nutritional strategies for autoimmune diseases, March 2006. Am J Clinica Nutr 1999;69:354-65. J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry 2002;72:560-563. ACTA BIO MEDICA 2003;74:9-33. PLoS Med. 2006 Sep;3(9):e358. J Immunology 2007;178:6590-6595. AJG 2001;96(3)



Dr. Jin Sung is a chiropractic physician located at 126 Merrimack Street in Methuen MA. He can be reached at 978 688 6999. His website is www.DrJinSung.com

FROM PAGE 16: STATE TAKEOVER

to hire a Superintendent after firing Dr. Laboy. Instead of providing leadership or direction for the school district, all they provided was a circus atmosphere by fighting among themselves for the entire two year term! Also it seems that the State's Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester wasn't so forthcoming with his public statements as well. He said many times prior to the Takeover that he was having positive productive conversations with the Mayor of Lawrence and that the option of a State takeover was just one of many being considered. It looks like to me that the Commissioner went along with Mayor Lantigua's boastful story of taking full credit for the decision of requesting the State to take over the LPS. He allowed

this public abuse of trust knowing full well plans were being made for a state takeover a month prior to the Mayor's announcement of his decision. What was he thinking?

This brings me to why I am not convinced that the implementation of this takeover by the State is Constitutional. The issue I have with this State Takeover is that it took place without one single vote by an Elected Official in Lawrence. In addition, we are being told that this State Takeover makes the School Committee that we, the citizens of Lawrence just elected to represent us void! Reading through the legislation I have not found any language that clearly stipulates that the School Committee that was elected

by the people of Lawrence is dismantled or dissolved in any way shape or form. Nowhere is it expressed that the School Committee is without its oversight authority or its responsibility to represent the city districts that elected them. Just because Commissioner Chester and Mr. Riley say it does, does not make it so!

This action in my opinion forwards too much power and authority to just one man and as the old saying from Lord Acton goes, "power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely...." We in Lawrence have been down this road before, having one individual with too much power and authority. The law does state however that the receiver is to report directly to Commissioner Chester, which leaves us without representation.

Thankfully, Mr. Riley has made the decision to include the newly elected School Committee members in his turnaround plan and utilize them in a very limited capacity as Ambassadors representing the City Districts that elected them. But Mr. Riley has made it very clear that he is not obligated to include them in any decisions concerning the day to day operation of the school district.

A very important point that must be remembered is that both Mr. Chester and Mr. Riley are appointed individuals and are not elected officials; therefore they are not accountable to the citizens of the Commonwealth. They only need to report and answer to the individual that appointed them.

Furthermore included in this law is the establishment of a local stakeholder group of not more than 13 individuals for the purpose of soliciting recommendations on the content of a turnaround plan to maximize academic achievement of students. This is good for academic improvements but delivers no financial accountability to

the taxpayers!

The way that this state law is being implemented wipes out Lawrence's City Charter which gives the School Committee the responsibility of the management of the public schools of the city. This state law also takes away our right to equal protection under the law as stated in the 14th Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, which states that no State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of the citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

How can we have equal protection without representation? Also according to the Declaration of Independence, "governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; (that's you and me), that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people (that's you and me), to alter or to abolish it."

Our right as citizens of Lawrence to have a Superintendent of Schools over our children accountable to us has been removed by an appointed individual without our consent! To put it bluntly, we are being shut out! The school administration has been instructed by the Commissioner and the Superintendent to stop forwarding any financial reports or school safety incident information to the elected School Committee members. Therefore, in my humbled opinion this Takeover of the Lawrence's Public Schools by the State is in direct violation of the Constitution of the United States of America! To be continued....

God Bless you all!
Peter Larocque

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WHAT’S COOKIN’ WITH COLLEEN!

Review:

Thai Sweet Basil, 209 North Main St. in Andover

Star Power (Maximum rating is 5 stars)



Colleen Flanagan

VALLEY PATRIOT RESTAURANT REVIEW



Colleen’s Review - Thai Sweet Basil is one of my favorite restaurants in the Andover area. I love dining there because I can enjoy generous portions of delicious, yet very healthy, food without guilt. How can that be? Thai Sweet Basil’s recipes depend on healthy ingredients like rice, vegetables and seafood while tantalizing the taste buds with unique Thai ingredients and spices. You can’t help but recognize one characteristic of the dishes at Thai Sweet Basil: the ingredients are of the highest quality and incredibly fresh. The vegetables are crisp and colorful as if they were just picked. The seafood rivals what one would expect to experience at the best restaurants “on the dock.” Also, you will be pleasantly surprised by the generous portions of the most precious ingredients in whatever dish you order. In the case of the entree I ordered, the best Thai ingredients were combined with very generous helpings of shrimp, scallops and squid.

There are few if any ordinary dishes at Thai Sweet Basil. You will find unique vegetarian dishes, authentic curry dishes, and an assortment of delicious Pad Thai alternatives (Pad Thai cuisine is based on stir fried rice noodles). Whether you prefer seafood, chicken, beef, duck, pork, lamb, or vegetables, you will find numerous dishes to love.

Thai Sweet Basil is decorated with handmade Thai wall hangings and provides a comfortable atmosphere with comfortable table seating. A guest might not be able to fully describe the experience he or she has just enjoyed after a visit to Thai Sweet Basil, but will eagerly await their return so they can experience the pleasures once again.

For starters, we ordered both the Thai calamari appetizer served with a sweet sauce and a chili sour sauce, and the fried spring rolls that were crispy and served with sweet chili sauce.

After savoring these appetizers with my favorite Thai beer, “Singha” I ordered the Siam Seafood with sautéed shrimp, squid and scallops plus a tasty mix of cashew nuts, onions, mushrooms, celery, baby corn, snow peas and scallions in a mild chili shrimp paste.

My dinner partner ordered Samui Seafood, a specialty from the island of Samui



“Siam Seafood”

with tiger shrimp, calamari, scallops and crab claws sautéed with scallions, red and green peppers, Indian curry powder, egg and garlic. This curry dish differs from most since it does not use coconut cream. These dishes are served on decorative Asian dishes and are large enough that you might consider taking a portion home for lunch the next day. To accompany these meals you get to choose jasmine rice, brown rice or a whole wheat noodle.

Another favorite of ours was the Thai custard dessert. This dish combines the flavors of coconut milk and palm sugar and is “home made” by the chefs at Thai Sweet Basil. Another great dessert choice is Bananas in the Blanket with slices of banana wrapped in spring roll sheets and deep fried, then drizzled with honey and sprinkled with sesame seeds.

You will find that the service is outstanding with the Manager, Minnie, always there to help you. Our waitress was

attentive and was readily available when needed. Both lunch and dinner menus are offered. The dinner entrees are large enough for another meal or can be shared by two people. The lunch entrees provide better pricing with smaller portions, but just the right size for a mid-day meal. Appetizers range from \$4.75 to \$6.50. Most lunch entrees are offered for less than \$10. Dinner prices range from \$9.95 to \$17.95. Desserts provide an ample portion for two for \$3.50 to \$5.95.

Thai Sweet Basil restaurant gets a Five Star Power Rating for their authentic Asian cuisine using the finest Thai ingredients and fabulous fresh seafood.

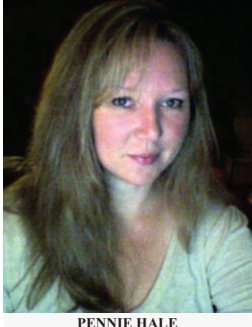
You can contact Thai Sweet Basil at (978) 470-8098 or check out their website at <http://thaisweetbasilandover.com>

If you would like your restaurant reviewed in The Valley Patriot, contact Colleen Flanagan at cmfoboston48@aol.com

LET’S TALK ABOUT FOOD ADDICTION

Pennie Hale

VALLEY PATRIOT FOOD COLUMNIST



How much input into your daily diet do you want from the government? I read an article about how a school cafeteria worker told a student that her lunch wasn’t nutritious enough. That worker then gave the student chicken nuggets to supplement her meal. The child’s lunch consisted of a turkey sandwich, a piece of fruit, a bag of chips and a drink. I know that when I send my child to school with a bagged lunch, I expect that she will be able to eat it without any comment or food exchange from a

school employee. I do believe, however, that if a child had NO lunch, it would have been a nice gesture for someone to offer her or him a meal.

I know that schools have to adhere to governmental guidelines when planning meals. The meals have to be nutritionally balanced and include the proper amounts of food from all food groups. I also know that the government provides nutritional information on the foods we purchase in grocery stores. I, for one, appreciate information. I would not, however, appreciate if a school official decided to “grade” my child’s lunch. Nor would I appreciate it if a grocery store employee decided that what I had in my carriage did not meet with nutritional guidelines provided by the government.

Most of us strive to provide healthy, well-balanced meals for our families. It

promotes good eating habits that will hopefully guide them to continue eating healthy foods when they have left home. We do, however, live in a fast food society. We are all busy and sometimes (perhaps too often) opt for convenience food instead of taking the time to prepare a hot meal. Statistics show that many American children are overweight and in some cases, obese.

In the age of laptops, cell phones, texting, video games and computers, kids are also far less active than kids of my generation. When I was a child, I ate when I was called to the table. I was given one serving of food and on rare occasions, I was served dessert. I was outside all the time.

When the street lights came on, my friends and I knew it was time to go home. We were active kids. We walked if we wanted to go somewhere. We didn’t call or text to keep in touch. We met and talked, played, roller skated, skateboarded, surfed, swam, did gymnastics and did many other activities. Staying inside was not an option.

Now, kids stay inside. That’s partially because neighborhoods are not as safe as they once were. Parents hear far too many stories of kids being abducted or hurt. Now if a child wants to see their friend, they use Skype. If they want to play together, they play games online together using a microphone and earphones. If they want to chat they text message.

Kids are less active and eat foods that are not nutritionally healthy. Is it the business of the government to decide and then enforce what we feed our kids? Is it the sole responsibility of the parents? My answer is that while I do appreciate information regarding raising healthy children, I believe it is up to me to make that environment in my home. I believe that it is my responsibility as a parent to educate myself on the subject of nutrition and physical fitness and I do not want anyone else to make those decisions for my children.

If you would like to share your opinion about this or any other food-related topic, email me at pennielacouture@verizon.net.

Sheila’s Recipe Corner

Sheila Mullins

VALLEY PATRIOT COOKING COLUMNIST

I thought that French Onion Soup would be a good choice given it is still cold outside. Yes, it’s been a warm winter, but doesn’t soup just warm your soul? This is my version which is based upon the classic by Julia Child. I have learned that our forefathers in the “old land” often had to make do with little & create great meals from what they had. French onion soup is definitely one of those things. How could it not be? Originally one would have started with beef bones, some old bread, a little cheese, & some onions. It’s real comfort food. Just be prepared to cry with all those onions! I sure do every time I make it. But the results are worth the tears. Let’s get started!

- 3.5-4 lb. onions, sliced vertically
- 1 c white wine*
- Salt & freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 3 bay leaves
- 96 oz. good beef stock
- 4 T each butter & olive oil
- ¼ c flour



- 2 t sugar
- 2 crusty French baguettes, sliced into ¾” thick slices & oven toasted on both sides **

- 4 c grated Gruyère cheese (about 1 lb.)***
- Oven proof bowls/crocks
- Heat in a 6 qt. Dutch oven (or larger if you have), the oil & butter over medium heat until butter is melted. Add all the onions & sugar, cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally. This amount of onion will take about 45-55 minutes to cook & you want them to turn a warm golden brown with a few being a bit darker. Add flour & stir until cooked, about 2-3 minutes. The flour needs to be cooked so it doesn’t taste “floury” or like raw flour. Add the wine; bring to a boil over medium high heat. Turn down to medium low. Add the stock, & bay leaves. Season. The pot should be nearly full.

Simmer uncovered for 30 minutes. If it starts to boil, turn heat to low. Remove & discard bay leaves.

One can serve from here following the steps below or cool down the soup, place into containers & refrigerate or place into containers & freeze.

Preheat broiler. To serve, ladle into crocks soup within 1.25” of the top. Cover top with baguette slices. Top with a generous amount of Gruyère & place under broiler. You will need to watch this closely as this will take anywhere from 40-90 seconds to melt & just begin to brown the cheese depending on how close you have set the rack to the broiler. Serves 12. Bon appétit!

* (I would recommend a chardonnay but whatever you decide just make sure it’s a wine you would drink & not a cooking wine)

** (if you can find the ones at the gourmet shop that are Canadian made, they will stand up better in the soup & not turn to mush.)

*** (This amount is for the entire amount of soup made & cheese freezes well if you choose to do so)



Recipe by Sheila A. Mullins.

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Hey! You There! Up and At 'Em! Time to Go to Work! Make Something of Yourself. Experience Firsthand that Anything Worth Having is Worth WORKING For. Follow the Example of People Living the WOW!

Thomas Connors
VALLEY PATRIOT WOW! COLUMNIST

W-O-R-K. Some people look at it as a four-letter word. They consider it something to be avoided at all cost. In fact, they won't even let the word cross their lips.

And then you have People Living the **WOW!** They know first hand that anything worth having is worth working for. And they pay their dues willingly! They see Work in all areas of their lives as a real opportunity to make their mark in the world. For them, it is a door of opportunity to pursue their Dreams and fulfill their Purpose here on earth.

Two very different perceptions. One is very negative and demeaning. The other is positive and motivating. Which one will you choose to guide your actions?

The Key is Control. When you WORK at something, no matter what it is, success or failure is in your hands.

People Living the **WOW!** never give up control when it comes to their lives. They value the ability to determine their own destiny. That is the power Work gives you.

Why would you take a huge chance with the most precious thing you have; your life? Why let others determine your happiness and that of those you love? Especially when you have seen and experienced

yourself how empty life is when you are not working. It's one thing to retire after you earned your right to relax. But it takes years of work laying the groundwork that eventually gets you there.

WORK is a Mindset, an Attitude that can make or break your chances for satisfying success.

Engaging in Work gives you the means to obtain financial freedom. It also gives you so much more.

The opportunity to recognize your unique talents and skills is priceless. Deep inside you is a desire to know your LIFE Matters. That in some way you contribute to the betterment of your community or the world in general. Work gives you that stage for potential recognition of how you fit in to your role here on earth. To deny that influence in your Life is to deny yourself the chance to Live the **WOW!**

Life often presents many forks in the road. Which path will you choose when you are faced with decisions to be made?

Work is not just about being employed. It is also about being Engaged in whatever it is you are doing. If you are in high school, Work refers to your studying habits or lack thereof. If you are a homemaker Work is about making the effort to have a

well taken care of house for your family. And if you are Working in a profession, it is doing it to the best of your ability and then some.

In all these instances we often are faced with decisions that can be difficult and challenging. Sometimes you are presented with the choice of taking the easy way out or Working toward earning the things you desire. Other times you are tempted to withdraw from making any decisions for fear of making the wrong choice. There is no avoiding the Work, doing the research, in order to identify the options available to you so you can be assured you made a correct decision.

The same can be said for career choices. How will you know what is best for you if you don't do the Work, the homework, to make the best choice available to you at the time? That effort may be difficult, time-consuming and even cause you to sweat and worry. But, in the end, the experience will leave you exhilarated and at peace with yourself no matter what you decide to do or direction to go in.

Even the Bible clearly reminds us of God's pleasure with those who are industrious and use their talents.

It was no coincidence that God chose Joseph to be Our Good Lord's earthly father. And it was also no coincidence that Joseph's occupation was that of a carpenter, the ultimate worker. And throughout the bible stories are everywhere praising hard working shepherds and other efforts to do God's Work.

I also see what happens when our Guests and Students at American Training put forth the Work and effort into learning new skills and further developing their talents.

The result is a more meaningful and rewarding life. A life they can be proud of and take satisfaction in. In other words, they are beginning to Live the **WOW!**

I have seen it over and over again for 30 plus years. People coming to one of our programs at American Training because they have had enough; enough of the empty promises that welfare and other forms of assistance gave them. They thought a free ride was all they needed to enjoy life; to make it all worthwhile. Then they realized much was missing from their lives. Things like pride and self esteem. The things only hard Work, in all its forms, and determination give birth to.

Fortunately, this disease can be reversed and even you can get back on the right track to high achievement and Living the **WOW!** Commit to the change in Attitude and Work your way out of it. I guarantee you will be a new person as a result. Instead of singing the blues, you will hop out of bed every morning singing, "Hi! Ho! Hi! Ho! It's Off to WORK I Go!

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

You can also visit Tom at his BLOG ... TomConnorsThinkPad.blogspot.com



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PAYING ATTENTION! WITH TOM DUGGAN

Who Cares About the Environment?

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT REPORTER/PUBLISHER

In July of 2009 the Valley Patriot wrote an explosive story, publishing documents that reveled operators at the City of Lawrence’s brand new \$26 million water treatment facility had failed to test the city’s drinking water for a bacteria called E.coli from July 2008 to February 2009. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) requires monthly testing for E.coli which can cause sickness if consumed. It was the second time in less than a year that the MassDEP fined Lawrence for failing to do mandatory e-coli testing.

When we published that story we had fully expected all the liberal, self-anointed “environmentalists” (who form “community organizations” to save the planet and protect the earth) to express outrage, demand accountability and hold

the city’s feet to the fire. We were wrong. In August of 2009 we wrote an exclusive expose about dangerous, leaking toxic chemicals and hazardous waste at the City of Lawrence Water Treatment Plant, complete with photos (some of which are on this page) and testimonials from whistleblowers and city workers who were exposed to the serious health hazards, working in and around the leaking toxic materials, which were open and accessible to anyone entering the facility. City Workers had long complained to officials but nothing was ever done about until after we published our story.

Again, we expected individual environmentalists, local liberals or environmental activist groups to decry the storage of mercury and toxic chemicals at the water treatment plant in such a casual manner. I even called Massspig, environmental advocacy groups, and local



In Augst of 2009 The Valley Patriot published a front page story exposing illegally stored, leaking toxic chemcals at the Lawrence Water Treatment plant, chemicals that city workers were exposed to for prolonged periods of time. A city employee took these photos at work and forwarded them to us resulting in a zero care or concern by environmental “activists” and organizations in Massachusetts.

noise makers whose politics were “pro-environment” to see if we could initiate some action on their part to call for accountability for such environmental destruction. We couldn’t get one single environmental group involved to clean up the environmental disasters we covered in that story. We couldn’t even get them to give us a quote on the record, or return one phone call, e-mail or blog posting. Again and again we published stores of environmental hazards and disasters in The Merrimack Valley and the North Shore. Time and again we were ignored by the very people who demand public dollars to politic to “save the environment” and bill themselves as champions of our waterways and “precious resources.”

Other stories that we exposed and were ignored by so called environmentalists were: Our story about the Lawrence DPW caught on film dumping construction debris onto the banks of the Shawsheen River, our story of the City of Lawrence pumping thousands of gallons of human wastewater into the Shawsheen river (behind the South Lawrence East School), the illegal dumping at the Beliveau Cemetery in Lawrence, illegal storage of toxic chemicals at the city yard on the banks of the Spickett River, and leaking chemicals on High Street in North Andover, and so many more.

So why do I bring this up? No, not to pat ourselves on the back for having so many great, exclusive environmental disaster stories. I bring it up because I am tired of so called liberals who pretend to care about the environment while demonizing conservatives and republicans as “not caring about the environment.” The fact is, this little monthly newspaper, owned and run by conservative Republicans, has exposed more real threats to our environment than any of the other newspapers in the Valley. And yet, every

time we did, we got the sound of crickets by local, state and regional organizations who SAY their sole purpose is to advocate for clean air, clean water and protection of our natural resources. That makes us living, breathing proof of the fraud that is the environmental movement. If it doesn’t have to do with punishing businesses and property owners, if it doesn’t have to do with advocating a one-world government solution to global warming... er, I mean ... global cooling... I mean ... global climate change, these phonies really don’t give a damned about doing anything substantial to protect our air, our water or hold those who pollute it responsible for their actions. Just remember The Valley Patriot the next time a self serving, so called environmentalist starts preaching about global warming and how much they care about the environment. Remember that when a self-anointed lover of clean air and clean water starts demonizing conservatives who support property rights against phoney environmentalist, business legislation. Chances are, there’s a chemical spill, or illegal dumping going on in their neighborhood that they are willingly ignoring. Today, the only acceptable environmental activism is that which is rooted in attacking property rights, growing government, increasing legislation that bankrupts businesses and does nothing to protect the earth. It has nothing at all to do with making the earth a better and cleaner place.



Tom Duggan is publisher of Valley Patriot, Inc., a former Lawrence School Committeeman, former political director for Mass Citizens Alliance, a Police Survivor and hosts the Paying Attention! Radio Program from 10-noon on WCAP every Saturday. You can email him at valleypatriot@aol.com

In July of 2010 the Valley Patriot published a front page story exposing untreated Human Waste Flowing Into the Shawsheen River behind the South Lawrence East School in Lawrence. The EPA had found, via “first-hand knowledge” that the City of Lawrence was pumping wastewater (human waste) into the Shawsheen River. Not one environmentalist, activist or organization condemned the dumping or demanded accountability.



CORRUPTION PROBE : FROM PAGE 2

personal accomplishments. Degnan’s value to the FBI and other law enforcement agencies is significant if the allegations against Lantigua and his “team” are true. Degnan was (and some say still is) Lantigua’s right hand man. Lantigua relied on him for his personal knowledge of which city workers were loyal during the campaign and personally orchestrated the illegal firing of Planning director Michael Sweeney, the smear campaign against former director of inspectional services Myles Burke and a dozen other city employees who had campaigned against Lantigua in the 2009 mayoral election. Lantigua was overheard telling a campaign operative back in 2009 that he needed Lenny to “keep people in line” and “be my eyes and ears.” Deputy Police Chief Melix Bonilla: Bonilla was a sergeant on the Lawrence Police Department during Lantigua’s 2009 mayoral campaign and coordinated fund raisers, sold tickets, coordinated campaign volunteers and has personal knowledge of Lantigua’s fund raising activity. Within days of taking office as mayor, Lantigua promoted Bonilla from Sergeant to Deputy Chief, skipping over lieutenants and captains and demoting Deputy Police Chief Mike Driscoll to make room for his former campaign manager. Immediately the police department was split in two as Lantigua has a long history of publicly accusing the Lawrence Police and Fire Department of being racist, lazy, corrupt and abusive. Bonilla was in charge of all taxi cab licenses and enforcement of city safety codes for tax cab and livery vehicles when he was just a sergeant. Oddly enough, the long tradition of taxicab inspections and safety enforcement was halted the minute Bonilla was made Deputy Chief. Bonilla was seen on numerous occasions rallying taxi owners and drivers to appear at city council meetings to support Lantigua proposals and nominations to the planning board, licensing board and the firing of former Sullivan employees.

Bonilla was also in the news last year when his son was involved with an alleged armed robbery and used a gun confiscated by Bonilla in a criminal case. The younger Bonilla took the gun from the home of the Deputy Chief, even though the gun should have been locked in an evidence room at the police station. Bonilla has had one on one contact with Lantigua and is said to be the de-facto police chief, answering directly to Mayor Lantigua and circumventing the authority of Police Chief John Romero. Bonilla received a subpoena last month from the FBI to appear before a grand jury and his testimony is also said to be paramount to charging Lantigua with corruption and fraud. Where it goes from here? The Federal grand jury will continue to hear testimony and (some say within months others say much longer) either indict Lantigua or acquit him. Parallel to the Federal corruption probe, Essex County District Attorney Blodgett is also investigating financial improprieties and abuse of power by the controversial Lawrence Mayor. After two years of public outcry for Attorney General Martha Coakley to investigate Lantigua’s illegal campaign finance activity, Coakley has finally decided to join the fray and began her own criminal investigation. Coakley enjoyed the endorsement of Lantigua when she ran for reelection last year. Lantigua even went so far as to allow Coakley campaign activity to take place in his campaign headquarters on Essex St.



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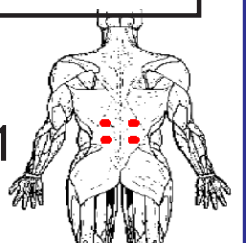
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ELIZABETH WARREN

Two state solution for Israel, Opposes a wall on the border

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT REPORTER

Professor Elizabeth Warren is one of two Democrats seeking their party's nomination to square off against incumbent Senator Scott Brown (R) in November.

Last month she toured portions of the Merrimack Valley including a new solar farm at Mann Orchards in Methuen, where Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan got a chance to interview the candidate.

Valley Patriot: "You are running against an incumbent Senator, Scott Brown. It's very hard to beat an incumbent. What is your game plan to try and convince the voters of Massachusetts to change their mind after they put Scott Brown in the first time?"

Professor Warren: "You know, I know this will be tough. I am not only against an incumbent; I am against an incumbent who had 10 million dollars running when I did not have a dime. So, he has lots of money and all of those benefits that come from being an incumbent. All I can say is: Aren't we out there talking about working families across this commonwealth every single day? You know, that's what I've spent my life working on, America's middle class is getting hammered and for me, this is a question of "who's side do you stand on?" Scott Brown has been judged by Forbes Magazine as one of Wallstreet's favorite Senators. I guarantee, that is not an award I would ever receive."

Valley Patriot: "Is Wall Street bad? Are bankers bad? Are rich people bad?"

Professor Warren: "Of course, not! But, the question about whether or not they should have special subsidies and special privileges, I think is a real problem. Whether or not they should be insured by the Federal Government and not have to pay for that, I think that is a real problem. There are folks on Wall Street who understand that people like Scott Brown can deliver advantages to them, certainly did, during the Dodd Frank Bill. I just don't think that's what the government should be working for. Right now, our government in Washington is working for those who can hire an army of lobbyists. It's not working for

families; it's not working for small businesses. That is what pulls me into this race. I don't talk about that, every single day."

Valley Patriot: With the looming threat of the Islamic terrorists going on in Israel and Iran right now, where do you stand differently than Scott Brown, where do you stand on the issue of Palestine and where do you stand differently with Scott Brown when it comes to National Security.

Professor Warren: "Well, you know, on the question of National Security, generally, I stand very much with Hillary Clinton and the idea that we have to use smart power, we have to use every tool in the tool box, and that means we have to use defense, we have to use diplomacy and we have to use development."

"I think that the President has done a good job of that, he's been out there. You know, let's talk about finally taking Osama Bin Laden out of the game, so I think that's the overall approach. When you ask about the Middle East, for me, we have a very special relationship with Israel and we understand. We need to understand as a country how deeply threatened Israel is by Hamas, by Hezbollah and now a nuclear threat by Iran. We need a stable and peaceful Middle East, that's in the interest of the United States.

Valley Patriot: "But, how do we get there?"

Professor Warren: "Well, that means, in part a very strong partnership with Israel and a strong Israel."

Valley Patriot: "What about the issues of Palestinian Territories? It seems to be the one thing that continues to generate violence in that area."

Professor Warren: "I believe in a two state solution and that means a Jewish Democratic state and a de-militarized home for the Palestinian people. Ultimately, both of those parties negotiating with each other, the role of the United States is to support that and not dictate terms, but to make sure that we come up with the lasting solution that guarantees peace in the region and that security for Israel and that there is a de-militarized state for the Palestinians."

Valley Patriot: "Last question, how do you plan on supporting, protecting the



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

Democrat Professor Warren in Methuen with former mayor and Democrat Consultant Sharon Pollard at Mann Orchard last month where she toured the Fitzgerald family's new solar farm.

borders?"

Professor Warren: "I think that we need, we have been working, I think we've done a step-up on protecting the borders."

Valley Patriot: "Would you favor building a wall on the Southern Border?"

Professor Warren: "No"

Bernice Corpuz of WBZ radio was also present during our interview with Professor Warren. She asked Warren about the violence in Afghanistan in response to the Quran burning incident,

Professor Warren: "You know, it was a terrible incident and I am very pleased to see the President is trying to respond in a way that I think is appropriate. We don't need to put our troops in harm's way because of something like this. I am glad to see the President working."

Corpuz asked Warren about some of

the issues she thinks are unique to this region off of the state?

"Visiting here is visiting American families. Working families have been hammered in a lot of different ways. Someone said to me 'My son is in his 50's and has been out of work for almost a year. In our conversation, I got the importance of investing in our future, so that there are still good jobs here in the United States. We can't just be a country that buys things. We need to be a country that makes things and ships them elsewhere around the world. We need to have policies that encourage manufacturing here in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and across the country and encourage more business activity here. That's the way we build a future."

Transcribed by Dawn Brantmuller.



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Thank You Doggie Columnist Tracey Zysk!

Tom Duggan

VALLEY PATRIOT PUBLISHER

While the Valley Patriot is most hailed for our hard hitting political content and exclusive investigative journalism, one staple of this newspaper has been our Doggie Columnist Tracey Zysk.

Tracey first came to us about four years ago as an advertiser looking to increase her customer base at Wiggles and Jiggles Pet Care (see ad opposite page) in North Andover.

And when Tracey began to get a response from her ads, she spread the word throughout town to other businesses letting them know that The Valley Patriot was the place to be if you want to bring more customers to your business.

Thanks to Tracey, we have been able to bring on board numer-

ous pet businesses and downtown merchants as advertisers. She has informed our readers about legislation affecting dog owners, and covers pet stories in the news that nobody else is covering.

But Tracey isn't just our Doggie columnist. She Volunteers her time to help the North Andover Merchant's Association, National Night out, crime watch, The Spring Fling and various other organizations and events throughout the town.

Tracey is always willing to help out at the Valley Patriot with other duties too. When our North Andover deliver drivers don't show up, Tracey fills in and helps us get papers downtown and makes sure our advertisers get their papers too.

From Chuck, Ralph and myself, we wouldn't be able to celebrate

our 8th anniversary this month without thanking our very own Doggie Columnist Tracey Zysk. Tracey it is people like YOU who make the Valley Patriot what it is: not just a local newspaper but a cause for free speech and an advocate for dog adoptions and pet safety.

THANK YOU Tracey! We love you and we are glad you are part of the Valley Patriot family.



Bark n Roll Canine Care is Rockin' North Reading

Tracey Zysk

VALLEY PATRIOT DOGGIE COLUMNIST

Bark n Roll Canine Care of North Reading has been rockin' around North Reading for the past couple years walking dogs. But now is the time for the Main SHOW... On February 11, 2012 owner and operator Francine DiChiara-Coughlin opened up Bark n Roll's School of Rock!

School of Rock is a dog training facility located at 24C Main St. North Reading MA, conveniently located on Rt. 128, 95, 93 and back road access from all the surrounding towns. Coughlin wants your dog to come and join the band. No need to be a groupie ...all breeds, sizes and ages

are welcomed.

A little about The Band Leader:

Owner/Operator Francine Coughlin is a Massachusetts native. She has never had a time when a special dog (or two, or three!) was not a part of her life. She is the proud "mother" of three rescue pups, an ABC (Animal Behavior College) certified dog trainer (Honors Graduate), and a Northeast Animal Shelter volunteer and volunteer trainer. While living in Los Angeles for five years and working in the film industry, Francine got involved with volunteering at various dog rescue organizations and shelters and found this to be an interesting and incredibly rewarding way to devote her time. Now she's back on the East Coast and via Bark n' Roll has

incorporated her love for all things canine into a service that promises to bring some free spirited and friendly fun into its clients' daily routines by getting to know their dogs and giving them the rock star treatment

The Facility:

Rock Star glamour for your poochie. Glam and glitter on the walls, photos to share and most importantly a training floor for your little rocker to learn his moves. Whether it be puppy basics, advanced level, refresher training or even if you have a naughty one, Francine has programs for all types of dogs and their behaviors.

Bark n Roll's next round of training is starting soon. However, if you are unable to make this next session the tour isn't

leaving town. Bark n Roll is here to stay.

Check out Bark n Roll's website at www.bark-n-roll.com

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. Become a fan on facebook at Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care www.facebook.com/wigglesjiggles-petcare

FROM PAGE 7: MACMILLAN FOR MODERATOR

course on Presiding Skills and Leadership run by Dr Barry Glazer MD, CPP-T, Past President of the American Institute of Parliamentarians.

Frank understands that effective Parliamentary Procedure creates the Right Balance, respecting the needs of both the majority and minority. While Town Meeting uses a somewhat less formal version of Parliamentary Procedure with considerable local tradition, Frank believes that the Town Moderator's responsibility is to educate the voters on how to actively participate, while making them aware of their rights within the meeting. That, he believes, is the essence of fairness.

Frank was raised in North Andover, attended Franklin Elementary and North Andover Middle School. He is a graduate of St John's Prep, and holds both Bachelor and Masters Degrees from Boston College. He earned his medical degree at Boston University, and trained in the Harvard system at Beth Israel Deaconess. Frank completed his Fellowship in Gastroenterology at the Lahey Clinic, and last year, completed his GI Board Recertification. He is also a small business owner employing five people. He understands first-hand the challenges of North Andover's hard-working citizens.

Frank returned to North Andover to raise his family in 1999. He has served the town

on the Board of Health and as an assistant coach with John Whidden for NABCC youth baseball. Frank is married to Laura MacMillan, a recognized good government advocate and a substitute teacher at Kittredge Elementary School. Their eldest daughter, Erica, will be graduating from Austin Prep this spring and intends to study Nursing. Their youngest children, twins Daniel and Brenna, are fourth graders at The Kittredge School, and are involved in music and sports.

Frank's extended family has a distinguished legacy of town service. His father, Dr. Frank MacMillan, Sr., served on the North Andover Board of Health for fifteen

years, his later years as its chairman. He continues to serve the town as North Andover's Public Health Physician. Frank's brother Paul served on the North Andover Police Department for ten years. His other brothers, John and Edward, live and raise their families in North Andover.

Frank MacMillan is committed to service, community, and tradition. His qualifications, temperament and attitude will allow him to serve the people of North Andover effectively. As Town Moderator, he will listen and lead. Frank will work tirelessly, openly, and honestly, with no personal political agenda, to solve important issues by creating "The Right Balance."

PUPPY LOVE! with Kate Whitney

Who gets the family pet in a breakup?

What a great milestone and huge accomplishment! I was so honored to be a part of the 100th Edition Bash that was held Thursday, March 1st at the VFW in North Andover.

The blizzard we had that day and into the night of the party didn't stop us Valley Patriot fans from attending the event.

It was a night for catching up with old friends, meeting new ones, and celebrating Tom Duggan and his accomplishments with The Valley Patriot.

The food and desserts were delicious, too! For those of you who missed it, I highly recommend you come out for the next party. Thank you to Tom and Penny for organizing the event, your hard work was truly appreciated.

During life, we are faced with many questions - some good and some bad. Some questions have easy answers and

some questions have more difficult answers or no answers at all. This is particularly true throughout a couple's relationship, as there are so many unexpected twists and turns throughout the journey.

One of these questions that are becoming increasingly common in today's society is 'should something happen between us, who gets the dog?'

I understand that this is a sensitive subject to many, and please understand this article is written with the utmost respect for all of its readers, and it is a focus on the pet, rather than relationship issues.



Unfortunately, divorce is something that is very common today. It's a sad and often tragic event, and although I can't speak about it first hand, I know and have seen that it is not easy and it is not fun.

According to a survey of divorce lawyers, this question of "who gets the dog" is one of the top issues that couples fight over.

Animal law courses are becoming more abundant in law schools around the country and according to the Huffington

Post, there has been a 23% jump in pet custody cases. Family court, for the most part, views your pet as 'property,' rather than as a family member. Most times the fight over who gets the dog can be settled outside of the courtroom and the legal system does not have to get involved. "Pet custody" as it is being called today, is something that should be discussed when you enter into any relationship.



Whether it's a marriage, a boyfriend/girlfriend, or two room-mates wanting to get a dog together, the question of "should something happen, who gets the dog?" needs to be addressed. I know it's hard to think about such a situation in the midst of the "new dog excitement" (hope-

fully from a shelter or rescue), but it's an important one. Some questions to ask yourself:

If we break up, who will have custody of the dog? Will it be joint custody? Sole custody?



Will the secondary owner get visitation rights?

What if the landlord changes rules about having a dog, what will happen to the dog?

When the lease of the apartment is up, who gets the dog?

Does the primary owner have the resources available to properly care for the dog on his/her own?

When answering the questions above, first think about the welfare of the dog. Resist the temptation to think selfishly of your own pain and sadness as a result of no longer being with the dog every day.

If your partner has the more "dog friendly" lifestyle and you work for 8 hours a day and are never home, then maybe your partner should have primary custody. Before you fight over who gets to keep the dog, make sure that both new living arrangements allow for dogs and for your breed of dog. You wouldn't want to do all this fighting and then find out your new apartment doesn't allow pets. If you have kids, make sure you realize the significance that the pet has on kids, especially during a turbulent time like a divorce or separation. Pets can help kids cope with the emotional stresses that come along with these events. So before you say that you want the kids and your partner can keep the dog, think about the benefits of keeping them together. Another thing to think

about is the expense that comes along with having a pet. If you are the one who is going to keep the dog, will your ex-partner be responsible for any monetary obligations? Think about vet bills, food, heartworm pills, etc. that you will now be paying for by yourself. If you are expecting that your ex help in some way financially, this is something that needs to be addressed, and potentially put in writing.

Pre-nuptial agreements are becoming more and more popular. These agreements are meant to protect one's assets in the case of a divorce. If you have a pre-



nup done, think about including something about who gets custody of the pets. If you don't have a formal document drawn up by a lawyer, think about just writing something yourself and have both parties sign it and have it notarized.

I hope that no one reading this column has to go through a life changing event that would cause you to have a custody discussion. But, if you do, make sure you want the dog for the right reasons. Do not put up a fight only to do such that or antagonize or punish the other person. As they say, in life it's better to be prepared and not need, then need and not be prepared.

As always, please remember to adopt, and always have your dog spayed or neutered.

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Service By Appointment

News from the American Legion

John Lenotte

VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

At this time of year anyone who has children or grandchildren getting ready for college knows the stress of waiting to hear about acceptance the University or College of choice.

Another important aspect is the cost! Are you aware of the many scholarships available? The American Legion has a number of them. Some examples are: Boys Scout Scholarships, Department of Massachusetts Scholarships, American Legion Baseball, Eagle Scout, Oratorical and the Samsung American Legion Scholarship. Last year the Department of Massachusetts gave out ten \$1,000 and ten \$500 scholarships. The American Legion Samsung Scholarship fund gives out about 90 scholarships per year. Information on these and other programs are available at the Massachusetts website, www.masslegion.org and the National Legion website, www.legion.org/scholarships. The National site also has general information about scholar-

ships as well as other programs.

This is also the time of year that Posts and local schools should be connecting about the Boys and Girls state program. This is the third year it is coed and continues to be held at Stonehill College in Easton. The dates this year are June 16 – 22. Previous speakers have included Governor Patrick and Attorney General Coakley.

Well known graduates include: Martha Coakley, Janet Napolitano, Jane Pauley, Steven Baddour, President Clinton, Neil Armstrong, Tom Brokaw, Mark Whalberg, Harry Reid, Mike Huckabee, Michael Jordan, Richard Cheney and George Pataki. Last year over 19,000 boys and a like number of girls attended programs across the United States. There are a number of colleges and universities, including the Military Academy at West Point, that have questions on their application about attending a Boys/Girls State program. Having attending a few sessions the last 2 years,

I have personally seen the enthusiasm and the immense intelligence and love of country in our youth. I would encourage all Legionnaires to visit and help out this great program.

Let's also not forget the Student Trooper program, Boy Scouts and American Legion Baseball. These are all getting ready for summer programs. As noted above, more information can be found on the internet.

As I said last month, my monthly article will include a reminder. This is an important election year. Every four years we get to vote for President of the United States. March 6 is the primary election here in Massachusetts. Are you happy with the way the country is being run? Are you happy with our elected officials? Have you taken the time to see how they are voting? Forget the ads and speeches. Check out the votes. There are a number of sources on the internet to look at this information. Be an educated voter. It is easy to complain but will you

take action by voting? I know I will.

Next month I will report on the American Legion Spring Conference in Washington DC. Twice a year members of the American Legion family travel to our nation's capital. We typically hear from the Secretary of the VA as well as prominent members of Congress. This event includes a briefing from our Washington staff about legislation of interest for our members. A number of us then visit the Congressional offices of our representatives to discuss legislation of interest. One topic we hope will soon disappear from the list is the Flag Amendment.

May God bless our troops and their families as they continue to protect us from those who would do us harm and take away our freedoms.



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

Honor Flight N.E. - Taking Flight to Honor Our Veterans

More than 200 Actions Taken in 23 States

Cecilia Calabrese

VALLEY PATRIOT REPORTER

According to recent statistics, we are losing approximately 1000 World War II veterans every day. Time grows precious scarce for each one of us to take advantage of the opportunity to let these extraordinary men and women know just how deeply we appreciate the sacrifices they made during WWII to ensure the blessings of freedom.

This spring we all will have two chances to do just that by participating in the appreciation flag line to greet war veterans taking part in Honor Flights to visit the memorials of in Nation's Capitol.

Honor Flight New England was started in June 2009 by retired law enforcement officer, Joe Byron. Headquartered in Hooksett, New Hampshire, Honor Flight New England has conducted 19 flights from New England to Washington, D.C., hosting 551 veterans. The mission of Honor Flight is to provide transportation for our veterans to Washington D.C. to visit our nation's memorials dedicated to their service and sacrifice. Without this vital service, veterans might not otherwise have the opportunity to visit these hallowed structures.



On a typical itinerary, trips depart from either Manchester or Boston Logan Airport. The first stop is the World War II Memorial, then over to witness the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown. After that solemn reflection, the veterans

then visit the Korean War Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, the Viet Nam War Memorial, the Iwo Jima Memorial and the Air Force Memorial. The day is capped off with dinner, then the flight home.

Joe says that one of the things he enjoys most about his service in the Honor Flight program is the light-hearted camaraderie that the veterans share. Since they are with people that have similar experiences, they are able to let their guard down and relate stories with fellow veterans that they might not otherwise feel comfortable sharing.

Honor Flight New England is always looking for people to volunteer with donations of time or money, or both. All readers are encouraged to participate in the flag line that will greet veterans arriving for two upcoming Honor Flights.

On April 20, 2012 Honor Flight invites all people interested in showing their appreciation to our veterans by being at the Main Terminal of Manchester-Boston

Regional Airport, Manchester, NH before 6:00am. Veterans will be arriving for their Honor Flight day at 6:05am.

There will also be an Honor Flight on May 22, 2012 out of Logan Airport at the Southwest Airlines Terminal. For that flight the veterans will arrive at 7:40am.

During the upcoming Honor Flights this spring, Joe and the Honor Flight staff will be host to six WWII women veterans and one husband-wife veteran couple.

Funding and volunteerism for this unique program relies greatly upon word-of-mouth. To find out more about volunteer opportunities with Honor Flight New England or to make a donation please visit their web site: www.honorflightnewengland.org.

Why not mail them a check today? Honor Flight New England, P.O. Box 16287, Hooksett, N.H. 03106.

Veterans of all wars are encouraged to file an application to participate in upcoming Honor Flights. Applications can be found on the Honor Flight New England web site. Applications are generally processed on a first-come basis, but any WWII veteran that has been diagnosed with a terminal illness will be moved to the front of the line.

The mission of Honor Flight is to make sure that all veterans get the chance to visit the memorials erected in their honor. Since America made the commitment to build memorials to the service of men and women that made the sacrifices to defend her freedom, Honor Flight believes it is equally important that they actually get to visit and experience THEIR memorial.

Cecilia P. Calabrese is a lawyer and serves on the Agawam City Council. To contact Cecilia about this or any other story, please email her at: cececalabrese@yahoo.com or find her on facebook at [cecilia.calabrese@live.com](https://www.facebook.com/cecilia.calabrese).

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HERO IN OUR MIDST, KRIS MINEAU: FROM PAGE 1

in 1969, his life as an intrepid aviator suddenly crashed. Not in an air battle, but during a routine combat training mission. "I was stationed in England," he says, "leading the life of a rascal with wine, women, and song."

On Tuesday, March 25, 1969, his F-4 Phantom II fighter jet developed a mechanical flight-control malfunction. From an altitude of 15,000 ft, it nosedived at the speed of sound. His electronic weapons officer in the rear seat ejected. But Mineau's seat would not fire due to a design problem —no matter how many times he tried.

As the jet plummeted, reaching an altitude too low for ejection, Mineau says, "My life passed before me. Although never a religious person, I cried out, 'Please, God, help!' Instantly the ejection seat fired."

"Now at an altitude of 1000 feet, I'm diving at 1,280 ft per second. My parachute takes 3 to 4 seconds to open. Only a miracle can save me."

It was later determined his parachute opened in half a second! "Absolutely impossible, mechanically speaking!" he said.

"I looked down and saw this enormous fireball as my plane hit the ground and exploded. I tried to steer away from the fireball but couldn't. The 750-mph supersonic wind-blast had broken all four limbs. I hit the ground like a 200-lb rag doll, unable to move or cry for help."

Mineau is one of the very few pilots in the world to have survived a supersonic ejection.

From brokenness—a new creation
For the next four months, he was

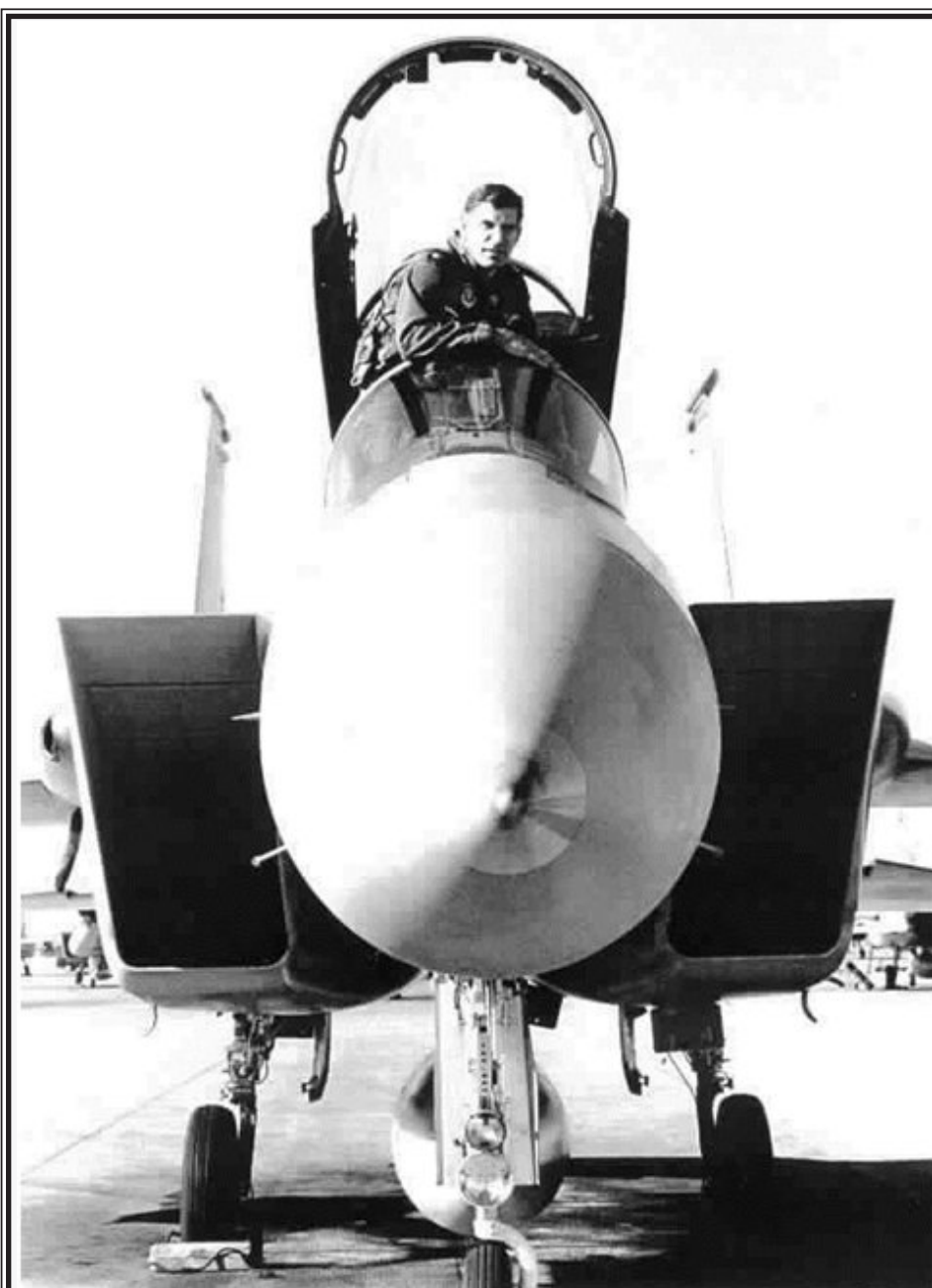
totally immobilized in traction, all four limbs, followed by a total body cast. When doctors in the States removed the cast, they found he had not healed properly. They had to re-break his bones and start all over again. At one point, they even prepared to amputate a leg. For six years, Mineau was in and out of military hospitals undergoing major surgeries.

Worse yet, doctors gave him no hope of ever flying again. His dream of flying, his all-consuming passion, lay shattered. Just like his body. Driven to despair, he hit rock bottom.

At that point, an Air Force chaplain and former pilot on two-week active reserve duty, walked into his hospital room unexpectedly. He talked to Kris of Jesus' love for him. Slowly Kris opened up.

"In that hospital bed," he says, "I asked Jesus Christ to be my Savior. A vision of Jesus on the cross flooded my mind. For the first time, I understood with my heart everything I knew about Jesus in my head. A deep warmth and wondrous love enveloped me. Then this rough, tough barroom-brawling fighter pilot began crying like a baby because I knew Jesus loved me. All my sins were forgiven, erased!"

From that point on, Kris Mineau began a rapid recovery. His doctors were amazed. Within a month, he was walking again, although with multiple casts and crutches. A year later, he relinquished his will and dreams completely to the Lord. Then he heard the words, "Welcome, home, my prodigal son." Like the parable of the father and his prodigal son, Jesus embraced him: "For this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is



Told by doctors he would never fly again, Mineau returned to flying 6 years after the crash, flying the formidable F-15 Eagle supersonic fighter jet. Earlier, he had been a member of the famed 8th TFW "Wolf Pack," led by legendary ace Col. Robin Olds, that set an unsurpassed record of 24 aerial victories in Vietnam.



One of the very few pilots in the world to survive a supersonic ejection—Mineau ejected at an altitude of 1,000 ft. when his fighter jet plummeted at twice the speed of sound and gouged a 50-ft deep crater, with parts imbedded 75 ft below ground. His recovery took 6 years and 10 major operations.

found" (Luke 15:24).

The healing of his shattered life began and he was ultimately made whole in spirit, soul, and body.

On August 28, 1974, the Air Force declared Mineau medically fit for flight status.

On January 1, 1975, Kris Mineau returned to active duty as a pilot.

Six years to the day after his crash, he climbed into a T-38 supersonic trainer. Like "déjà vu," it was again Tuesday, March 25, with 4:30 p.m. take-off. The T-38's tail number was 898, the same as the F-4C that crashed.

At the start of the seventh year after his crash, his new life began.

"Wild Weasels"—suicide missions

For five years, Mineau flew the F-15 Eagle, one of the world's most formidable interceptor fighters, capable of speed Mach 2.5 (1,875 mph).

A second close call with death came in 1984, while serving as F-15 Eagle instructor pilot and squadron commander. Shortly after take-off, a violent engine explosion tore the Eagle apart. Again he called out to the Lord for help. Instantly, the molten mass of engine debris fell out. With flames extinguished, he maneuvered the jet to the runway and awaiting fire trucks.

Later promoted to Colonel and deputy commander for the maintenance group of three squadrons, Mineau spent two years flying the highly sophisticated supersonic jet, the F-4G Weasel, reminiscent of the

"Wild Weasels" that flew in suicide missions in Vietnam. Armed with anti-radar missiles for "hunter-killer" operations, the Weasel "trolled" for enemy surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites, waited for the SAM to launch, attacked, then guided bombers to finish the job—before veering off sharply. They called this "dancing with the SAMs."

The eagle soars to new heights

After retiring from the military in 1992, Mineau served three years in Saudi Arabia under a USAF contract to build F-15 air bases. Then his career took a sharp turn. The U.S. Air Force Academy graduate, with a master's in aeronautical engineering was called to the ministry. He graduated from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and became a pastor. Today he is president of the Massachusetts Family Institute, a public policy organization where he serves on the frontlines in the battle to strengthen and protect the traditional family.

The Eagle has landed.



Helen Mooradkian is our new Valley Patriot Hero columnist and a former business writer. She is also a member of the Merrimack Valley Tea Party. You can email her at hsmoor@verizon.net

—Tracey Zysk

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March 27th is American Diabetes Association Alert Day

Celeste Begley
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Nearly 26 million Americans live with diabetes, yet 7 million of these people do not even know they have the blood sugar disease. To help prevent and diagnose diabetes in all Americans, March 27 is American Diabetes Association Alert Day, a call for people nationwide to take the new Diabetes Risk Test to determine if they are at risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes accounts for approximately 90 percent of cases and is on the rise in the United States.

This year’s 24th Annual American Diabetes Association Alert Day offers a more accurate Diabetes Risk Test and Facebook access. Participants are encouraged to take the test and share the free questionnaire with their social networks. More than 600,000 people took the Diabetes Risk Test in 2011, and the American Diabetes Association hopes to surpass that number this year through the Alert Day’s “Take It. Share It.” theme.

“Right at Home of Boston North encourages everyone of all ages to take the new Diabetes Risk Test,” said Rosaleen Doherty, Co Owner Right At Home Boston North “The questions are simple and quick, and you can participate with family members, friends, classmates and

work colleagues to protect your health together.”

An estimated 79 million—one in three U.S. children and adults—have pre-diabetes, higher than normal blood sugar, which puts them at risk for developing Type 2 diabetes. Generally, diagnosis occurs seven to 10 years after onset of the disease, leaving many people with debilitating and deadly complications, such as heart and kidney disease, blindness, stroke and amputation. Often, people with Type 2 diabetes have no symptoms of the disease, but common symptoms can include:

- Frequent urination
- Unusual thirst
- Extreme hunger
- Unusual weight loss
- Extreme fatigue and irritability
- Frequent infections (particularly skin, gum or bladder)
- Blurred vision
- Cuts/bruises that heal slowly
- Tingling or numbness in the hands/feet

The ADA works to prevent and cure diabetes, and the new Diabetes Risk Test asks basic questions about age, weight, family history and other potential risks for pre-diabetes or Type 2 diabetes. Participants receive preventive tips, and those at high risk are encouraged to talk with their

healthcare provider.

Leading risk factors for Type 2 diabetes include being overweight, sedentary, over the age of 45 and having a family history of diabetes. Individuals in the following population segments face increased possibility for undiagnosed diabetes:

- Older Americans—diabetes risks increases with age. One out of every four Americans 65 and older has diabetes.
- Certain ethnic populations including African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, Native Americans and Pacific Islanders.
- Women who have had a baby of nine pounds or more at birth.

Individuals can prevent or delay Type 2 diabetes through:

- A healthy weight—losing just 7 percent of body weight (15 pounds if you weigh 200 pounds) helps control diabetes.
- Regular physical activity—exercise helps lower blood glucose and can decrease the need for insulin or diabetes pills.
- Healthy eating—diabetes.org offers meal and snack guidelines and flavorful recipes for diabetics and those prone to the disease.

The ADA’s local offices are working with community organizations to promote Diabetes Alert Day. In addition to the

March 27 event, the Diabetes Risk Test is available in English and Spanish year-round at stopdiabetes.com or by calling 1-800-DIABETES.

About Right at Home of the North Shore, Merrimack Valley, Wakefield/Melrose and our new location Colonial Gardens in Beverly (Boston North)

Right at Home is an award winning family owned and operated private home health agency. It was started by Jay Kenney and Rosaleen Doherty on the North Shore in 2002. Since that time, they have expanded to three offices serving almost 500 families per week with senior home care services.

Right at Home offers in-home companionship, personal care and nursing care to seniors and disabled adults who want to continue to live independently. They directly employ and supervise all caregiving staff, each of whom are thoroughly screened, trained, bonded and insured prior to entering a client’s home. A

Right at Home serves all of Essex County and cities and towns North of Boston in Middlesex and Suffolk Counties. .For more information on Right at Home, visit www.rightathomemass.net or read the Rosaleen Doherty’s caregiving blog at www.rightathomemass.net and click BLOG.

LAWRENCE HOME CARE WORKERS RECEIVE BOOST TO IMPROVE HOME CARE SERVICES

Last month, the Lawrence City Council voted overwhelmingly to support a resolution backing personal care attendants as they campaign for improvements to PCA jobs and home care services.

More than 800 personal care attendant workers live in the city of Lawrence. Those workers are members of the state’s largest healthcare union – 1199SEIU – and together, they are campaigning for a new contract to improve wages and benefits for PCAs. Advocates say that it is difficult for consumers to retain home care workers because the wages are low and there are no healthcare benefits.

City Council President Frank Moran was the lead sponsor of the resolution. Moran has been a consistent supporter of personal care attendants and of quality home care for seniors and people with disabilities. The PCA program provides vital home care services for the more than 20,000 Massachusetts seniors and

people with disabilities who would otherwise not be able to live in the community.

Elia Alvarado, a personal care attendant from Lawrence and a member of the PCA bargaining committee, spoke about the importance of having the support of the City Council as PCAs begin contract negotiations with the state-appointed PCA Workforce Council.

“We are very excited to have the support of the entire Lawrence City Council as we negotiate our contract and fight to make sure that our jobs are good jobs,” said Elia.

The PCA program brings over \$7 million in state dollars to the Lawrence community. Lawrence is home to almost 7,000 seniors and nearly 13,000 individuals living with a disability (almost 19% of the city’s population). This already high level of demand for long term care services is expected to grow substantially (20-35%) over the next decade.

Personal care attendants voted to join 1199SEIU, the healthcare workers union, in 2008. After negotiating their first-ever contract with the PCA Workforce Council, PCAs won a wage increase to \$12.48 along with a strong voice to help advocate for quality care with their consumers.

This year, after a one-year contract extension in which wages remained flat, PCAs are back at the bargaining table with the Workforce Council and are asking for better wages, health insurance and more training, all in an effort to make the PCA job a quality job and to make sure they are able to stay on the job – providing consistent quality care to consumers.

Caregivers say investments in PCA jobs and services make sense because home-based care costs significantly less compared to institutional care, and is preferred by consumers. While some

improvements were made to PCA jobs in their first labor contract covering 2008-2010, many PCAs struggle to survive at their current pay rate, and turnover within the workforce remains high – a challenge impacting both PCAs and consumers.

###

Representing more than 46,000 healthcare workers throughout Massachusetts, and 370,000 workers in Massachusetts, New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Florida, and Washington, D.C., 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East is the largest and fastest-growing healthcare union in America. Our mission is to achieve affordable, high quality healthcare for all. 1199SEIU is part of the 2.1 million member Service Employees International Union.

FROM PAGE 9: GARDNER MAYOR HAWKE

ing a combined public safety building as some other communities have.

Simply stated, the Fire Department building is in decent shape and adequate for the City’s purposes. We’ve replaced the windows and we are fixing the roof. If the Fire Department expands, it would be wiser to open a substation in another part of the City.

We are now engaging professionals to assist us with the next steps. Some of these steps will include the distribution of information regarding the inadequacies of the current station, the benefits of a new station and asking residents to tour the current station so they can see for themselves the shortcomings of the facility.

We will also be continuing our efforts to be recognized as a Gateway City. We meet all of the arbitrary criteria of Gateway Cities, except for population. This is an illogical criteria and level assigned by a bureaucrat in an office in Boston. We are currently being shut out of funding

streams, meetings and discussions because we do not meet this one ludicrous criterion.

Gateway Cities were originally defined as being the historical urban centers that have a rich manufacturing history and are now saddled with vacant mill buildings.

Gardner is the definition of a Gateway City and we will keep fighting to make ourselves heard on this matter.

I should mention that our efforts are bearing fruit in that we have achieved a label of “middle tier” community and “Gateway Plus”. However, this is an example of one arm of government not knowing what the other is up to. Gardner is not a second class community and we deserve the same funding opportunities and seat at the table that similar communities have.

In 2012 I am confident that we will see a permanent re-opening of the Gardner Heritage State Park Visitors Center. This facility, closed since 2002 offers guests a

glimpse at what made Gardner great and is a tragedy that we have had to endure this building be shuttered for so long. After less than two weeks on the job, the newly installed Commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Ed Lambert, visited Gardner. We met at the Visitors Center and discussed a roadmap to reopening. It was a productive meeting that was facilitated in no small part by Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rick Sullivan and Lt. Governor Tim Murray.

It should also be noted that Secretary Sullivan, Lt. Governor Murray and Commissioner Lambert are all former Mayors and lend a sympathetic and empathetic ear to our cause.

Recently, the City was the recipient of some good news from the state in that we will be receiving grant funding to assist with the roof replacement on three of the City’s schools. This is work that is desperately needed and would have

had to have been done regardless of the grant funding. While the grant funding will only cover a portion of the cost, this project demonstrates the City’s commitment to the schools and the children of Gardner.

It’s clear that I am proud of the accomplishments we have been able to achieve in notoriously treacherous times and it is equally clear that I am enthusiastic about the future of Gardner.

We are tackling the difficult situations head-on and dealing with our problems now.

We are building and planning, as I stated earlier, not for tomorrow, not for next year, but for the next generation.

I thank you all for your continued efforts in moving Gardner, the place we all call home, forward in a positive direction, by working together.

Shawn Hansen’s Music Corner: Dropkick Murphys’ Drummer

Shawn Hansen
VALLEY PATRIOT MUSIC COLUMNIST

Growing up going through grade school one may think to themselves as if their baseball, basketball, or football skills are good enough to go to the next level to play in college, and eventually the professional level.

Matt Kelly of Leominster was a part of his school band who took six years of private drumming lessons from a man named, “Dashing” Don Kirby who was a part of the Mark Marquis Group.

“It was easy and it boosted my lazy grade point average,” said Kelly. “Football season was always the worst. My musical education was thanks 75% to “Dashing” Don Kirby, and about 25% to my parent’s patience and understanding, and Dad’s headphones tied to my head.”

Performing the first time for a Middle School Halloween party at the age of 13 with a friend named Kevin Rheault of Dive, Get High, and Double Nines who dressed up as Angus Young at the time, Kelly played the drums dressed up as Eddie, Iron Maiden’s mascot.

“We did instrumental versions of AC/DC, Led Zeppelin, and Sex Pistols songs if I remember correctly,” said Kelly. “With

Kevin involved, it was probably pretty high-quality, at least on his end.” When his first musical dream to play saxophone slipped down the g-scale, sitting behind his father’s drums Kelly quickly realized what instrument he wanted to play.

“My singing career started and ended at the age of nine or ten with an accidental cup of scalding hot coffee dumping down my chest while ironically singing The Police’s “King of Pain” into a tape recorder,” said Kelly. “While nursing my wounds after my parents had iced my stomach and chest, my Dad came into the living room with my tape recorder and said, ‘Do you wanna hear something funny?’ I of course sheepishly replied, ‘sure.’ The tape recorder had been running before, during, and after the coffee spill, so my reaction to the spill was recorded.”

Before becoming a member of the Dropkick Murphys, Kelly worked in the grocery department at Market Basket stocking shelves, unloading trucks, and breaking down pallets.

While working at Market Basket, Kelly was a member of several bands.

“I’ve always been in multiple bands, as I like a lot of different styles of music,” said Kelly. “We had bands like Com-



mon Sense, Dive, Hatchetface, Get High, Simian Death Squad, Fit For Abuse, the short-lived Armed With Anger, and Pressure Point (MA). They were part of that whole scene based around Club 490 in Fitchburg.”

Kelly, now 36 has been part of the Dropkick Murphys since their second year in the industry. Reflecting on the past 15-years, he said the most important part aside music was that it constantly continues to be a great learning experience.

“You can really learn something new every day while out on the road, and living in a tin can with a small group of individuals makes for good camaraderie,” said Kelly. “It’s like the Mods used to say, “Clean living under difficult circumstances,” being a human being in a bizarre situation.”

Recently finishing their Europe and UK tour, the Dropkick Murphys will be coming to the Paul Tsongas Arena on March 17 for two St. Patrick’s Day shows at 2, and 7 p.m. Doors to both shows will open an hour before each event.

Coming to Lowell, Kelly said he cannot wait to perform in front of his hometown fans, and, “It means that I look in the mirror every morning and am thankful that I’ve been so blessed and so lucky to do what I’ve always wanted to do, and more than I’ve ever dared to imagine that I could do.”

For more information about the Dropkick Murphys, go to their website at www.dropkickmurphys.com. The Paul Tsongas Arena is located at 300 Martin Luther King Jr. Way in Lowell, MA 01852. For ticket information call 1-978-934-5760.



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Friday: "JMac & the Bear" with John MacDonald & George Zaharoolis

Monday thru Thursday, 2-3pm "The Nancy Greenwood Show"
Fridays: 1-5:30pm "Living for the Weekend" 10pm-Midnight "Night Scene" Jazz & Contemporary Music "Live" from the Back Page, Lowell
Saturdays:
6:00-10:00am Warren Shaw Political talk, and Valley Happenings.
10am - Noon "Paying Attention" with Valley Patriot Owner Tommy Duggan Noon-1pm "Lifetalk" with Dr Casey McNeal
Sundays:
6-10am "The Paul Parent Garden Show", 10-11am – "Visiting Angels", 11-12am - ERA Morrison Real Estate,
Noon-1pm – "Helenic Happenings" 1-2pm "The Voice of Araby"
Music all Night with "The Beatles & Before"

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valleypatriot.com

TOM DUGGAN’S NOTEBOOK: FROM 23

valuable networking opportunity that will further connect you with the work of Essex Heritage and that of our partners. Essex Heritage’s semi-annual meetings provide a unique opportunity for Essex Heritage trustees, commissioners, members, supporters and partners to network with the public on a wide range of ongoing initiatives in the Essex National Heritage Area. For more information and to RSVP, please visit www.EssexHeritage.org/annualmeeting or call Essex Heritage at 978-740-0444.

NORTH ANDOVER - The North Andover Senior Center is running a beginner Woodcarving class on Thursdays, 9 – 11:45. No experience necessary as we have an instructor with 26 years experience. If you are newly retired and looking for a new hobby, drop in and see if you are interested. Classes run 6 weeks for \$24 or \$6 per class. All are welcome; we have men and women in this course. Call 978-688-9560 for more info. Class size is limited to 12 people.

METHUEN - Exchange Club to offer forum on prevention of child abuse

To emphasize that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Exchange Club of Greater Newburyport is offering an evening of information and entertainment at the Firehouse Center for the Arts in Market Square on Tuesday, April 3, at 7 p.m.

“So often in a community like the Greater Newburyport area, we can get lulled into a false sense that bad things don’t happen here” said Exchange Club president Kathleen Bailey. “We have seen nationwide, statewide, and within our midst, that abuse and maltreatment of our youth happens – and at an alarming rate.

“The Exchange Club of Greater Newburyport has worked for 36 years raising funds supporting the community, with child abuse prevention at the forefront. The Greater Newburyport community’s involvement with our Field of Honor on the Bartlet Mall, held around the September 11th World Trade Center attack anniversary, has provided funds toward our child abuse prevention efforts.

“The Exchange Club is thrilled to not only share information with the public on this topic of child abuse, but also to present ‘A Night to Celebrate Children’ at the Firehouse Center. As a community, we must showcase our youth – their intelligence, gifts and talents – and let them know that we love them.”

The evening will promote local services available to parents who may be in stressful

situations and provide information to parents on helping their teens to make better behavior choices and to build their self-esteem.

Doors will open at 6:30 p.m., and representatives from several local non-profit organizations, including the Beacon Coalition, the Newburyport Learning Enrichment Center, and the Michael B. Christensen Community and Family Support Center, will have display tables in the upstairs lobby with information for parenting children/teens. A quartet from the Governor’s Academy will be playing as guests arrive.

The program will follow from 7 to 9 p.m. Speakers will include Bailey, Newburyport Mayor Donna Holaday, Representative Michael Costello, a representative from Essex County District Attorney Jonathan W. Blodgett’s office, a representative from The Beacon Coalition, and Susan Mitchell, program director of the Michael B. Christensen Community and Family Support Center in Lawrence, which was founded by and is financially supported by the Exchange Clubs of the Merrimack Valley, with families serviced from Lowell to Newburyport. Mitchell will make a presentation on strengthening the family.

Students from local schools and music programs, including Triton Regional and Newburyport High Schools, will perform during the program as well.

While there is no charge for admission, donations of household goods and toiletries for men, women, and children would be appreciated, such as baby wipes, diapers, baby shampoo and soap, dish liquid, laundry detergent, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, soap for men and women. Cash donations are also appreciated. All donations will benefit the families serviced by the Family Support Center.

The campaign for the prevention of child abuse, under the label of “The Blue Ribbon Campaign,” is one of the four projects of the National Exchange Club. Clubs nationwide raise money to support Exchange Club Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Centers. The other three projects are youth service, community service, and the promotion of the American spirit.

The local club, in addition to supporting the center, puts teddy bears and coloring supplies in local police cruisers for use with children in distress at the scene of motor vehicle accidents or scenes of domestic disputes, sponsors and administers the Kids As Peacemakers mural program, conducts Kids’ Day in the

Park during Yankee Homecoming, sponsors a Pioneer League baseball team, offers two college scholarships, and participates in the September “Peace in the Park.”

In other service areas, the club is known for the September Field of Honor, offers an annual harbor tour for two local adult day care centers, leads seniors in a patriotic sing-along at local nursing homes, offers an annual holiday party for a group home for mentally challenged adults, and prepares dinners for local community meal programs.

The club meets on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at 7 p.m. at the Starboard Galley in Newburyport. Those interested in membership are always welcome.

2012 IRISH HERITAGE MONTH -DIVISION 8 AOH ANNOUNCES SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

The Rev. James T. O’Reilly OSA Division 8 Ancient Order of Hibernians has a full slate of activities scheduled to take place during Irish Heritage Month – March, 2012 in the City of Lawrence. Among the highlights of this year’s activities is an exhibit on “The Irish, the Augustinians: The Story of Our Catholic Heritage” at the Heritage Visitors Center, 1 Jackson St., Lawrence, MA. This exhibit will also feature several lectures by authors of books and historians, a film festival, among other events. All are welcome to attend these lectures and view the exhibit free of charge. A full listing of activities for the month is noted here.

Saturday, March 10, 2012 - THE 141st ANNUAL SAINT PATRICK’S DAY BANQUET AND DANCE at the Lawrence Firefighters Association Relief’s In, One Market Street, South Lawrence, MA 01843. Traditional Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner with dancing to the Jolly Tinkers from 6:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m. Awarding of the Richard Cardinal Cushing Award, Honorable John E. Fenton Citizenship Award and Irishman and Irishwoman of the Year Awards. - For more information please contact Robert Gauthier at 978 686-2786. Sponsored by Division 8 AOH

Sunday March 11, 2012 – WHITE FUND LECTURE featuring the Rev. Sean McManus who will speak on his book, “My American Struggle for Justice in Northern Ireland “ at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 1:00 p.m. (FREE) – Handicap Accessible

Sunday, March 11, 2012 - FAMILY DAY AT THE CLADDAGH 3pm – 6 pm Irish Music, Pipers, Dancers Claddagh Pub and Restaurant, 399 Canal Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 For further information please call 978 688-8337.

Friday, March 16, 2012 - AN EVENING

OF IRISH MUSIC - 3 pm until ? at the Claddagh Pub and Restaurant, 399 Canal Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 For further information please call 978 688-8337.

Friday, March 16, 2012 - 43rd ANNUAL SAINT PATRICK’S DAY LUNCHEON at the Lawrence Firefighters Association Relief’s In, One Market Street, South Lawrence, MA 01843 Traditional Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner with entertainment by the Silver Spears Irish Show Band at NOON. - For more information please contact Jack Lahey at 603 898 7766. Sponsored by Division 8 AOH

Friday, March 16, 2012 - RECEPTION AT LORICA ARTWORKS, 96 Main Street, Andover, MA Opening of Irish Art Exhibit 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. – Handicap Accessible

Friday, March 16, 2012 - ANNUAL IRISH ART EXHIBIT (March 16 – April 21) at Lorica Artworks, 96 Main Street, Andover, MA 01810 for information please call 978 470-1829. Sponsored by the Irish Foundation – Handicap Accessible

Saturday, March 17, 2012 - HAPPY SAINT PATRICKS DAY – Irish Music all day at the Claddagh Pub and Restaurant, 300 Canal Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 For further information call 978 688-8337.

Sunday, March 18, 2012 – LECTURE by Dr Kathleen Shine Cain of Merrimack College who will speak on “Leaving the Troubles Behind: Images and Narratives of Northern Ireland” at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 at 1:00 p.m. Sponsored by Division 8 AOH (FREE) - Handicap Accessible

Saturday, March 24, 2012 - IRISH FILM FESTIVAL at Lawrence Heritage State Park Visitors Center, 1 Jackson Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 10:00 a.m. Sponsored by Division 8 AOH For further information please call 978 794-1655. (FREE) - Handicap Accessible

March 25, 2012 CELTIC MELODIES – A concert performed by Terri and George Kelley with Larry Melia Jr. at the Lawrence Public Library, Sargent Auditorium, 51 Lawrence Street, Lawrence, MA 01840 at 2:00 p.m. Sponsored by the Friends of the Lawrence Public Library. (FREE) – Handicap Accessible

IRISH HERITAGE MONTH IS SPONSORED BY THE ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS DIVISION 8, DIVISION 8 LAOH and THE IRISH FOUNDATION of LAWRENCE

Irish Heritage Month is supported in part by a grant from the Lawrence Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Attorney Ramsey Bahrawy, Why I Want to be Your Town Moderator

Hello my name is Attorney Ramsey Bahrawy. I am currently a member of the North Andover Finance Committee. This has been an exciting and memorable time for me. As such I want thank Town Moderator Charles Salisbury and the members of the Finance Committee for the warm welcome and support they provided to me. I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve the town as a member of the Finance Committee. Working with our government leaders to benefit our town is an experience and challenge I will always cherish.

However the time has come for me to seek another challenge. My 31 years legal experience, my experience as member of the board of selectmen as well as the finance committee uniquely qualifies me for the position of Town Moderator. Accordingly, I am announcing my candidacy for Town Moderator. My established record of accomplishment as a former

member of the Board of Selectmen and current member of the Finance Committee will aid me in working with town officials as I understand the personalities in our town government. I have a track record of working with them effectively. Moreover I have always maintained a nonpartisan attitude when handling town affairs. An attitude that will be even more important as Town Moderator.

The Town Moderator is responsible for presiding over town meetings, handling motions and amendments and the process of deciding. It is an important job. The Town Moderator also makes appointments to the Finance Committee and School Building Committee. Although the most visible function of the Town Moderator is presiding over Town Meeting, the most important function is appointing a fair and balanced Finance Committee and School Building Committee. I believe that the

authority vested in the Town Moderator to appoint the members of the Finance Committee and School Building Committee is a crucial job requiring objectivity in order to assure that the committees are balanced and accurately reflect the make-up of the town.

As your Town Moderator I would seek to improve attendance at town meeting. I would do so by representing to the Town the importance of participation in Town Meeting. I would also educate the voters on the opportunity that Town Meeting provides to participate in the democratic process. In that regard I would make maximum use of my media experience in order to educate voters on the town meeting process and the procedural rules in an effort to have town meeting run more efficiently and effectively. I would also work closely with the local cable TV board to assure the best possible television coverage of town meeting.

To accomplish these goals, I believe, a Town Moderator has to demonstrate his own commitment. I have done that through my participation in Town Meeting both as a private citizen and public official over the last 30 years. As a member of the Finance Committee I participated in discussions with the Town Moderator, Town Clerk, Town Counsel, members of the School Committee, Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee in order to

educate voters on the warrant articles, assure the highest possible voter turnout and preparing effective town meeting presentations.

As a lawyer with 31 years experience, I have mediated many legal disputes. I understand the importance of allowing people to fully and fairly present their viewpoints. I am a patient and careful listener. I am very familiar with rules order. My training as a lawyer allows me to quickly identify issues and make immediate, accurate decisions.

Lastly the moderator guides and molds the meeting from opening gavel to adjournment with an authority that is second to no one during the time the meeting is in session. This requires a person with a calm demeanor, objective personality and an ability to work cooperatively with disputants. Over the last 31 years that I have lived in this town I have demonstrated these qualities in each and every day of my personal and professional life.

If elected as Town Moderator I pledge to be accessible to the community and to share my legal experience, media experience as well as my experience serving on other boards. I believe I offer a unique balance of experience, education, good judgment, and thoughtfulness to the job of Moderator.

If I am to be your next Town Moderator I will need your VOTE on March 27, 2012



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Shawn Hansen’s Comedy Corner: Happy Birthday Valley Patriot

Every year people celebrate New Years Eve, which ironically turns into New Years Day (if one is sober enough to remember it), Chinese New Years, Martin Luther King Day, Groundhog Day, Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Washington’s Birthday, Easter, Shawn Day, Earth Day, National Arbor Day, Mother’s Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Father’s Day, Independence Day, also known as [aka] The Fourth of July, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Halloween, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, and Christmas, or Chanukah, also spelt as [asa] Hanukkah if one is Jewish.

If a person is Chinese they would celebrate Children's Day, Teacher's Day, Nursing Day, Tomb-Sweeping Day, Plant Trees Day, and most importantly Qiang Li (My Beautiful girlfriends birthday).

Anyways, if there is a specific holiday I left out of this rant about holidays, please contact my editor Tom Duggan to (1) Tell him about the holiday you would like me to write about next month, and (2) Congratulate him on publishing the 100th edition of The Valley Patriot newspaper.

In March 2004 Duggan marched around the Merrimack Valley towns of North Andover, Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, and Haverhill with a monthly newspaper called The Valley Patriot (which you ironically are reading right now) to thousands of readers for free.

To be exact, and throw a Raymond Babbitt Rain Man curve ball at you, 62 months after the infamous Valley Patriot started being distributed into the hands of lucky readers who wanted more out of their daily newspaper reads I (Shawn Hansen) joined The Valley Patriot staff, and started writing for (you guessed it) The Valley Patriot ... in May 2009.

Delving into this Rain Man Curve Ball played by Dustin Hoffman in 1998 portraying the character of Raymond Babbitt, if the first edition of The Valley Patriot published on say Wednesday, March 10, 2004 (I’m not sure what day the first edition of The Valley Patriot, aka The VP published), and I wrote my first article on April 26, 2009 (which I did) then I would have numerically started writing for The Valley Patriot 1,872 days after the first edition of The Valley Patriot hit the streets.

I found out what, and when the first

article I published in The Valley Patriot was about mainly because I looked into the Shawn Hansen Archives of The Valley Patriot Articles I Wrote using my trusty MacBook computer. ... If you were wondering, my first article was entitled, “It’s time to spin up a new season with

the Lowell Spinners,” as I wrote about the Lowell Spinners in the summer of 2009.

From the first year The Valley Patriot came out in 2004 they had five towns to distribute the newspaper to. Fast forwarding the DVD 9-years to 2012 The Valley Patriot has now distributed to over 30 different towns in the Merrimack

Valley each month.

Ironie Mishaps

The Valley Patriot ironically has the same last name as the New England Patriots, which by the time this article publishes in February hopefully they got the memo I sent them to have a GIANT win in Superbowl XLVII.

The only reason the Patriots has an s at the end of their last name, and The Valley Patriot doesn’t is because there are multiple players on the Patriots, and there is only one Valley Patriot newspaper.

In the span of life of The Valley Patriot (2004-2012) the Boston Red Sox won the World Series in 2004, and 2007, the New England Patriots won Superbowl XXXIX in 2004, the Boston Celtics won the Championship in 2008, and the Boston Bruins won the Stanley Cup in 2011. ... Note to self along with everyone who is reading this article, if the Patriots (New England, not Valley) win Superbowl XLVII (which they should) I should either (A) rewrite this article, or (B) Have YOU the reader reread this article adding Superbowl XLVII to the Championship list for the Patriots (New England, not Valley).

Shawn Hansen as he said has been writing for The Valley Patriot since May 2009 (February 2012 is his 31st month writing for the paper, and the article you read is his 63rd article published in The VP). Hansen has a lot of other qualifications that is on his resume including a late night television show called, “Shawn Hansen’s Comedy Corner,” which has produced 214 episodes in less then 2-years (Currently as of Feb. 02, 2012) so to find out more go to www.ShawnHansen.weebly.com. ... whatever the weebly means.



When 104 year old Methuen Village at Riverwalk Park resident Salvatore “Sully” Savinelli learned the Lawrence History Center was celebrating the Centennial of the 1912 Bread and Roses Strike, he and his family were eager to sign-up for the field trip. Rain, ice and wind did not keep him from attending this wonderfulcelebration. One hundred years ago, his father Angelo, an Italian immigrant was responsible for transporting the children of the strikers to Barre, Vermont for safekeeping. In the picture above, Sully is holding a calendar that was brought to our attention by Barbara and Bob Innes of Andover that shows the efforts of the elder Savinelli and the then three year old Salvatore.



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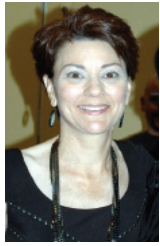
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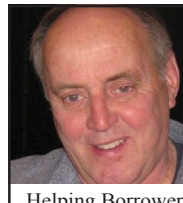
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