



THE VALLEY PATRIOT

"Congress shall make no law..."

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Mayor-Elect Dan Rivera!

Calls for Hiring Freeze, Will Stop Paying Indicted Cops



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VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

HERO IN OUR MIDST: SERGEANT THOMAS F. SIOPE, U.S. ARMY

Helen Mooradkian
VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

In the early dawn hours of March 25, 1969, in the rice paddies of South Vietnam, near Bong Son, in the province of Binh Dinh, 22-year old Sergeant Thomas F. Siopes, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (separate), was leading a patrol on a "search and destroy" mission to clear out "Charlie," the Viet Cong, before his entire platoon advanced into the area.

Tom led his men swiftly through the rice paddies. If ambushed, they would have no cover. Tom knew the enemy's hit-and-run tactics, their surprise attacks that never let up, day or night.

Suddenly a massive volume of small-

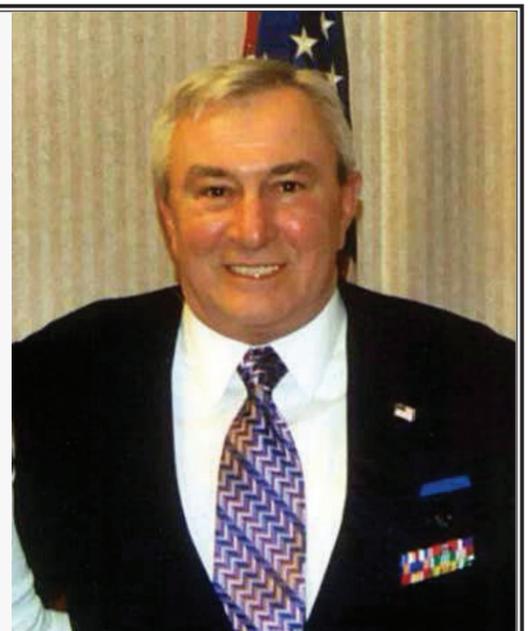
arms fire shattered the silence, pinning Tom and his squad to the ground. The volley of gunfire was intense. It lasted what seemed like an eternity.

Tom Siopes saw his point man, Franklin Aquino, go down. As bullets whizzed past his head, Tom half-crawled, half-ran to the front of the column to help him. He hit the ground several times, dodging the bullets.

On reaching the wounded paratrooper, Siopes found him having difficulty breathing. A bullet had penetrated the man's chest and exited through his back, causing one lung to collapse. Blood was flowing out. The "sucking chest wound" was life-threatening. After quickly applying first aid, Siopes

HERO: PAGE 35

Sergeant Thomas F. Siopes, U.S. Army, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (separate)—known as "The Sky Soldiers"—served in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969 as part of a special strike force for all of Southeast Asia, in a war marked by guerrilla warfare and constant ambushes by day and night. In two outstanding acts of heroism, in which he deliberately risked his life to save the lives of his men, Tom was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device for "Valor", the Silver Star Medal, the Purple Heart, and the Air Medal. The Republic of Vietnam also awarded him four medals including the Gallantry Cross. After his discharge, Siopes joined the Andover Police force, retiring as Lieutenant in 2011.



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Valley Dems Support Voter ID, Are They Racist?

Last month all three of Lawrence's State Representatives voted in favor of Voter ID in Massachusetts.

This is odd given that we are told day in, and day out by the Democrat leadership, and the so called "news" media that people who support Voter ID are, in fact, "racists" trying to deny Latino's the "right to vote."

It's odd because two of the three legislators representing Lawrence are Dominican (ie: Latinos) Marcos Devers and Frank Moran. The third is Diana DiZoglio who speaks fluent Spanish and garnered a large amount of support from Lawrence's Latino population in the last election.

How can this be?

Are Marcos Devers, Frank Moran and Diana DiZoglio racist against Latinos?

If we believe what we hear from Deval Patrick, Barack Obama and the Democrat Party, Lawrence's reps are having secret Klan meetings in the base-

ment of the State House complete with white hoods, plotting the destruction of Blacks, Whites, and Jews.

Sounds absurd doesn't it?

We believe that the propaganda being put forth by the Democrat party leadership and the "news" media to slander anyone who supports Voter ID, has now been debunked.

The tired old excuses about racism and non-existent voter fraud have been proven to be lies time and time again in the City of Lawrence where voter fraud has been rampant for decades.

And Lawrence's reps know it.

Guess who else supports Voter ID?

Newly elected Mayor Dan Rivera (a Latino) told WCAP's Paying Attention radio audience before the election:

"I think we definitely need Voter ID, it's for everybody. And if there is an elderly person who doesn't drive we have to find a way to help that person vote. There's no reason [why we can't].

I mean we put a person on the moon. We have phones that you can use without wires. We can figure out a way so that we can know who's voting and this is a process we can all feel good about."

Is Lawrence's Mayor-elect Dan Rivera a "racist" against Latinos for supporting Voter ID? We think not.

The fact is, those who oppose Voter ID are lying purely to protect themselves and their candidates who benefit from voter fraud.

There is no doubt in our mind that if illegal aliens or those committing voter fraud were all voting Republican, the Democrat party leadership, Hollywood and the so called "news" media would be spreading an entirely different kind of propaganda.

If that was the case, we would all be getting a daily dose of anti-Latino, anti "immigrant" rantings from Jon Stewart on the Daily Show (where most low information voters get their news), the so

called "news" media, and the Democrat Party Leadership.

We applaud Lawrence's State Representatives DiZoglio, Devers, and Moran, and Lawrence Mayor-elect Dan Rivera for supporting Voter ID.

Clearly, these four Democrats have proven with their very behavior that their own party leadership is full of baloney when it comes to their propaganda against ensuring the integrity of our election system.

Thank you Marcos Devers, Diana DiZoglio, Frank Moran and Dan Rivera for standing up against your own party's lies and doing what is best for Lawrence and for our country.

If only more Democrats had that kind of courage years ago, our election system would be more secure and perhaps, current Mayor Willie Lantigua never would have become mayor in the first place.

Tis The Season

Jeff Katz

VOTED AP's BEST RADIO TALK SHOW HOST

It is that time of the year when Christmas is in the news. For many of my friends it is an extremely important time of the year. For truly faithful Christians, this is all about the birth of their Messiah and the tremendous hope and joy this brings to them. For them, indoor trees, electrified reindeer and some fat guy in red are not the reasons for the season. Nope, they are not at all concerned with a snowman being reduced to a puddle. To my friends in this

group, I wish them not just a merry, but also a meaningful Christmas.

Over the years we've all read and heard the complaints about the over-commercialization of Christmas. It seems that it was all about buying lots of stuff and then going back to buy even more. Sales started first thing on the Friday morning after Thanksgiving. Now the sales start at the same time as we're reaching for that first scoop of stuffing. I'd assume that next year there will be some wonderful sales on sunscreen as the shopping season will kick off when the fireworks fly on July

4th. Most of the folks who have complained about this strange emphasis on the money making aspect have also pointed out that many of the stores engaged in this never ending commercialization have also instructed their clerks to stop saying, "Merry Christmas."

Why have stores decreed that the ubiquitous phrase "Happy Holidays" be substituted for the traditional "Merry Christmas"? There's the proffered excuse that the store personnel don't wish to offend anyone who might not be celebrating Christmas. Sorry, but the good and positive feelings behind "Merry Christmas" render that explanation completely invalid.

There's that old standby line about wanting to include everyone which I suppose is at least partially true at least when it comes to sources of revenue. These stores have truly removed Christmas from their retail lexicon, but I've begun to wonder if that is actually a bad thing. Seems to me that they may actually be doing a good thing by forcing people to focus on the real meaning of Christmas.

So why have some truly religious people who wish to stop the crass commercialization of Christmas begun to call for boycotts of stores which don't include



Jeff Katz is a former police officer, former talk show host on Talk1200AM and won the Associated Press Award for Best Talk Show In Boston two years in a row. He is now an exclusive columnist for The Valley Patriot. WEBSITE: visionaccomplished.net

"Christmas" in their commercials? I am truly puzzled by this but I presume it will be part of the airing of the grievances as the rest of us gather around the Festivus pole.

I wish you a Happy Chanukah, Merry Christmas and a wonderful new year!

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Majority Rules on Climate Science?

Jeff Jacoby

VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST COLUMNIST

Dr. Ormsby has taken the month off. In place of his column he has asked our friend Jeff Jacoby to pinch hit in a republication of Jeff's column from December 4th.

BACK IN 2006, around the time Al Gore's global-warming documentary, "An Inconvenient Truth," was released, I started a file labeled "What Climate Consensus?" Gore was insisting that "the debate among the scientists is over," and only an ignoramus or a lackey for the fossil-fuel industry could doubt that human beings were headed for a climate catastrophe of their own making. But it didn't take much sleuthing to discover that there was plenty of debate among scientists about the causes and consequences of global warming. Many experts were skeptical about the hyperbole of alarmists like Gore, and as I came across examples, I added them to my file.

The thicker that file grew, the more shrilly intolerant the alarmists became.

Over and over the True Believers insist that their view is not just widely accepted in the scientific community, but virtually unanimous apart from some crackpots. Rajendra Pachauri, chairman of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has likened doubters to members of a Flat Earth Society. CBS news reporter Scott Pelley, asked why his "60 Minutes" broadcasts on global warming didn't acknowledge the views of skeptics, reached for an even more wounding comparison: "If I do an interview with Elie Wiesel, am I required as a journalist to find a Holocaust denier?"

It seems to make no difference that those challenging the doomsday narrative include some of the world's most distinguished scientists, or that numerous experts in climatology and related earth sciences have repeatedly gone public with their critiques. To climate ideologues, they're invisible. "Ninety-seven percent of scientists agree: climate change is real, man-made and dangerous," President Obama tweeted in May.

Really? That's not what the American Meteorological Society learned from a recent survey of its professional members. Only a bare majority, 52 percent, said that climate change is mostly being driven by human activity. Scientists with a "liberal political orientation" were much more likely to regard global warming as human-caused and harmful, the survey's authors found — in fact, as a predictor of respondents' views on global warming, ideology outweighed greater expertise.

"This would be strong evidence against the idea that expert scientists' views on politically controversial topics can be completely objective," the authors observe.

In that light, consider the findings of a new study published in the journal Nature Climate Change. Of 117 global warming predictions generated by climate-model simulations, all but three "significantly" overestimated the actual amount of warming that occurred during the past 20 years. The models typically forecast that global surface temperature would rise by more than twice as much as it did.

Physicist and Nobel laureate Richard Feynmann: "If we want to solve a problem that we have never solved before, we must leave the door to the unknown ajar. . . . [D]oubt is not to be feared but welcomed and discussed."

Why would so many scientists have relied on models that turned out to be so wrong? The authors propose several plausible explanations — volcanic eruptions? solar irradiation? — but their bottom line is that climate science still has a long way to go: "Ultimately the causes of this inconsistency will only be understood after . . . waiting to see how global temperature responds over the coming decades."

That understanding won't be advanced one millimeter by ideologues who thunder that the "science is settled" and that anyone who challenges the current consensus is no better than a flat-earther or a Holocaust denier. Perhaps all those climate models wouldn't have been programmed to over-predict global warming if the pressure to conform to the alarmists' view weren't so pervasive.

In a classic 1955 lecture on "The Value of Science," the celebrated physicist (and future Nobel laureate) Richard Feynmann warned that science would be hobbled if it tried to stifle its doubters and skeptics. "If we want to solve a problem that we have never solved before, we must leave the door to the unknown ajar. . . . [D]oubt is not to be feared but welcomed and discussed."

Science isn't settled by majority vote, and invoking "consensus" to shut off debate is authoritarian and anti-scientific. There are always inconvenient truths to challenge what the majority thinks it knows. Ninety-seven percent of experts may be impressed with the emperor's new clothes. That's no reason to silence those who insist he's actually naked.

(Jeff Jacoby is a columnist for The Boston Globe, reprinted with permission).



2013 A Year in Review

We started off the year of 2013 losing our good friend and colleague, Ronnie Ford of Methuen. We missed him all year and it would be impossible to start a "year in review" without reemerging Ronnie and his family.

AUDITOR SUZANNE BUMP & ALL THOSE MISSING EBT CARDS

Massachusetts State Auditor Suzanne Bump conducted an audit of the state's EBT (Electronic Benefits Program or more commonly called "welfare"). Given that welfare is a sacred cow issue for Democrats in Massachusetts, Bump managed to anger Governor Deval Patrick and Massachusetts Democrat Party leaders because one of their own was blowing the whistle on one of their main political platform issues.

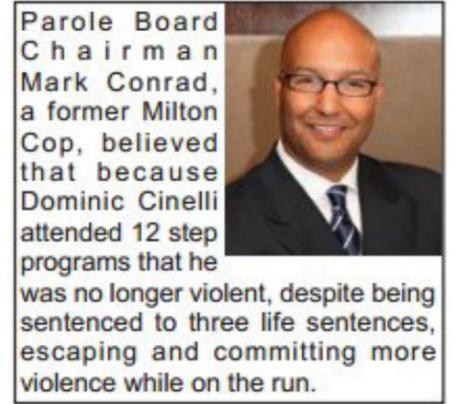
Among other things, Bump's audit found 1,164 dead people receiving welfare benefits under Deval Patrick, and 30,000 blank EBT cards (welfare cash cards) completely unaccounted for. "They just walked out the door, charged cards with our tax money and nobody can account for them," Bump told The Valley Patriot.

Valley Patriot Publisher Tom Duggan interviewed Auditor Bump on his WCAP radio program on June 1st. The state auditor not only explained the role of the Auditor's office but also was able to back up her numbers on the audit she conducted.

The Democrat party leadership on Beacon Hill is still unhappy over Bump's revelations.

METHUEN'S "TEEN TERRORIST"

In May The Valley Patriot broke a story that got national attention when we reported on a story involving a



Parole Board Chairman Mark Conrad, a former Milton Cop, believed that because Dominic Cinelli attended 12 step programs that he was no longer violent, despite being sentenced to three life sentences, escaping and committing more violence while on the run.

Methuen High School student, Cameron D'Ambrosio, who had been arrested on terrorism charges.

Methuen Police Chief Joe Solomon told the Valley Patriot in an exclusive that the terrorist threats D'Ambrosio made were in the form of text messages and postings on Facebook.

One of those threats, Solomon said, "was in the form of a rap, where he mentioned the White House, the Boston Marathon bombing, and said 'everybody you will see what I am going to do, kill people.'"

D'Ambrosio was charged under Massachusetts General Law Ch. 269, Section 14, a state statute regarded as "the terrorism statute" by police. It includes communicating a bomb threat or a hijack threat by means of electronic communication.

He was initially ordered held on \$1M bail after a dangerousness hearing before Lawrence District Court Judge Rooney.

D'Ambrosio was immediately hailed as a free speech poster boy by 1st Amendment advocates on the internet who por-

2013: PAGE 23

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Andover Events in December

Ann Knowles

VALLEY PATRIOT ANDOVER COLUMNIST

YOUTH SERVICES - Christmas Trees have arrived at the Skatepark, 80 Shaw-sheen Rd. The Andover Youth Service has supported this program to raise funds for the group since 1994. The tree lot will be opened Monday through Friday from 3-8:30 p.m., and on Saturday and Sunday 9a.m.-9p.m. from November 27 to December 22. In addition to the trees, wreaths, kissing balls, and centerpieces for decorations will be available.

The Andover Youth Service has many programs throughout the year. Information on their activities is available through the Andover Youth Center, 978-623-8241 or their website, andover-youthservices.com. A visit to the website will be a great way to check out the many programs that are available year round.

The Andover Historical Society will present Tree Time at the Society, 97 Main Street, Andover Center. This event features over 30 trees, decorated by individuals and businesses in the area. The event will be on display for the month of December, Tuesday through Sunday from noon-5p.m. Admission is \$8.00 per person, \$5.00 for children, seniors, and members of the Society. Children 5 and under are free.

NEW YEARS IN ANDOVER

A New Year can mean new opportunities for beginning a new activity, new social group, supporting a community need, or just keeping a promise to one's self to be more engaged in your surroundings. Andover is one town that has many municipal groups and societies that welcome new members, or groups that

welcome interested participants without undue pressure, to become an active or even passive member.

The Memorial Hall Library is a wonderful place to look for programs or activities that might be of interest. The library, located in the center of Andover, has activities for all ages. Begin at their website - mhl.org, for the listing of the outreach of programs that the library sponsors. The website for the library is particularly viewer friendly. From there you can reach a large variety of organizations. For new residents of Andover, read the "Living in Andover" page. It is an excellent website for everyone.

Andover Public Schools website invites parents, students and interested citizens, to read about the many programs and activities that are a part of the educational framework for Andover. School times and yearly calendars, bus schedules, and specials events are included.

There are many groups within the schools that could be of interest to everyone interested in Andover's schools.

Andoverma.gov website is also viewer friendly, for anyone who is interested in the many activities of a very well run town. View the Boards and Committees page to check on the available positions that are open. Becoming a part of the town by volunteering is a beneficial way to become an integral part of the Town of Andover.

The history of Andover has been one of active and supportive citizens down through the years. Andover has a rich and varied history, and its story is still to be told through the men and women, young and old, that make Andover their home.



Frank Serano and Mr. Sid (Eric Sideri) together again, at Frank's Barber Shop on Main Street in North Andover across from J&W Shoes.

The Two Old Men and the Sea, Lifelong Barbers, Friends Reunited after 50 Years

It's a weekend afternoon, and a young father and mother walk through the doors of the newly opened "Frank's Barber Shop" on 150 Main Street in North Andover. Two boys are in tow; knees dirty, shin pads in place, snug, along with jerseys which are draping loosely on the shoulders of both. On their way home from a soccer game, no doubt. There are two chairs open and the barbers, Frank Serrano and Mr. Sid (Eric Sideri), give the unfamiliar faces a warm welcome. Their lighthearted and affable demeanor immediately puts a smile on the otherwise apprehensive faces of the two young boys.

This brand new barbershop is run by two Merrimack Valley natives and lifelong friends: Frank Serrano and Eric Sideri.

Fifty years ago, Frank Serrano met Eric Sideri (Mr. Sid) at the Salisbury Beach Barber Shop. Both were in their early twenties at that time, and both eager to begin successful careers. Among the many stories you may overhear at Frank's Barber Shop, as he and Mr. Sid recall "Good Ole' Days" are some from their time spent at the Salisbury shop.

For those of you who remember, Salisbury Beach was the place to go for your

summer entertainment. The shining star of Salisbury Center was "The Frolics", a Vegas style nightclub that weekly featured the biggest names in entertainment at that time. The Frolics were marked on every local's calendar. People came from all over the area for sea-side fun and big-name musical entertainment.

While servicing their regular customers and walk-ins during the summer "Frolics Season", they also trimmed the hair of some of the big name stars who appeared at the Frolic's like Paul Anka, Steve Lawrence, Frankie Avalon and even Tony Bennett, along with others. ("The only reason we got to trim their hair, Frank tells, is because there was no other Barber Shop within 10 miles!!") Make no mistake; Frank and Mr. Sid have no lack of stories, history or experience.

However exciting these times were that they shared together, their lives eventually took them in separate directions. Serrano opened up his own barbershop "Casa de Serrano" where he debuted the very first instance of Razor-Cutting as a method of men's hairstyling in Massachusetts-a method he still continues to use to this day, and a method that produces an especially

BARBERS: PAGE 17

Notices From the N. A. Senior Center

Knife Sharpening! Here at the NA Senior Center, 9-2. \$3 per item, including lawn mower blades! Get your carving set ready for the holidays.

Gala Of Trees: Runs through Dec 13. Drawing tickets will be available with reception: \$1 for one, \$5 for six. Take a chance for a decorated table top tree, wreath, gift certificates and gift baskets. Event is sponsored by "The Friends of North Andover" and donations are made by North Andover Merchants.

Medical Transport Volunteer Drivers are needed! You can set your own hours. Call the Senior Center for more information. Speak with our Program Coordinator at 688-9560 for application and assistance.

S.H.I.N.E. Volunteers (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders): Free, confidential counseling on all aspects of health insurance to North Andover residents on Medicare. Call center for an appointment. First Tuesday of the month 10am-1pm, third Tuesday of the month 12-3pm.

UPCOMING TRIPS & EVENTS:

Monthly Supper Club: Dec. 19, Bradford Tavern, Rowley. Sign up begins Dec. 4.

Lecture Series: Every Monday @10 a.m. November 18, Justin Walworth from Charma Grille. "Owning a Restaurant Business in North Andover". Refreshments will be served.

News & Views: Every Wednesday from 10-11:30. Come and join in the lively discussion of current events, politics, history, and you never know what else.

Meet with an Attorney: Atty. Bahrawy and Atty. Cannon, December 4, 10-11:30. Schedule with Reception - first consult is free.

Walk in Clinic: The North Andover Senior Center and Home Health Inc/VNA operates a wellness clinic every



ZUMBA WITH TALLIE!
Zumba Girl TALLIE!
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ALL ages & abilities
welcome!

Wednesday from 9 am until noon. If you are a North Andover Senior, we urge you to take advantage of this opportunity to check your blood pressure, blood sugar, weight and blood oxygen level. Consult privately with an RN regarding any medication and health issues that you are concerned about. There is no charge for this service, but donations are gratefully accepted.

Foot Care: RN Catherine Languedoc, Foot Care Specialist, will be available on the third Friday of every month from 9-12. The next date is December 20. Dr. Connolly is available on the second Wednesday of the month from 1-4 pm. The next date is December 11. Please call to schedule an appointment.



NAFD Hosts Annual Holiday Toy Drive

Tracey Zysk
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Matt Davis and the North Andover Fire Department will be hosting their "Annual Toy Drive for North Andover Children."

Firefighter Matt Davis started this drive five years ago with a vision that every child would wake up Christmas morning with a toy. No child should go without.

Matt works closely with the North Andover Youth Center, Woodridge Homes and a few other local groups that are resources for children in need. Last year's response to this campaign was fabulous and Davis hopes to keep the momentum going again this year.

Davis has stated all toys will be given to North Andover families in need.

The North Andover Merchants Associa-

tion donated \$150.00 of toys to Matt. All toys were purchased in town from our local merchants, Kids Karousel, Just Dance Wear & Boutique and sleds were donated by Main Street Hardware. However, many more toys are needed. Davis is reaching out to our community for donations.

Residents are encouraged to bring new, unopened and unwrapped toys -- for kids of any age group -- to either of the North Andover Fire Department stations.

Station 1 is located at 124 Main St., right next to Town Hall.

Station 2 is at 9 Salem St.

Do you know a family in need? If you have any questions, please contact Matt Davis at the station 978-688-9590 for more information.

You can bring toys to the Fire Department until Dec. 18th



Barry Pett lights the Grand Menorah on North Andover Common on the 6th night of Hanukkah. Barry is the Director of Community Outreach and Constituent Services for State Senator Bruce Tarr.

Merrimack Valley Comes Together for Menorah Lighting

More than eighty people attended the annual Menorah lighting on the North Andover Common Monday night as Rabbi Asher Bronstein of Chabat Merrimack Valley praised G-d that we live in a country that still respects religious freedom, "even in the public square".

Jews and others from across the Merrimack Valley sang on the common as Orit Goldstein, State Senator Kathleen O'Connor Ives, Barry Finegold, Barry Pratt, Rabbi Borenstein and Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan lit the six candles for the sixth night of Hannukah.

North Andover Police Chief Gallagher, State Representative Diana DiZoglio,

Barry Pett from Senator Tarr's office and several other state and local dignitaries attended to support the public menorah lighting on the common.

"We are so thankful to him for tonight's attendance," Rabbi Borenstein said, "we also need to thank all of the people who helped to make this Menorah lighting happen". Rabbi Borenstein's father-in-law, Rabbi Bronstein, who organized the event for year, was also in attendance and helped to set up the indoor activities.

An inside gathering took place at the Museum of Printing across from the common where a DJ played music for more than a dozen children.

Two Candidates Look to Replace Barry Finegold for State Senate

Republican Alex Vispoli is a member of the Andover Board of Selectmen. Pavel Payano sits on the Lawrence School Committee. The contrast between the two could not be more stark or obvious. Vispoli is a seasoned veteran of Andover Politics, while Payano is still serving his first term on the Lawrence School Committee; Payano is Latino, Vispoli is Italian; Vispoli is in his 40's, married with children and mortgage, Payano is in his 20's, single and just starting out; Vispoli is a conservative Republican while Payano is a liberal Democrat.

The one thing they both have in common, however, is that they are both seeking the State Senate seat being vacated by Barry Finegold. Finegold is running for State Treasurer and not seeking re-election.

Both candidates say they believe they have what it takes to represent the district in the Massachusetts Senate. The 2nd Essex and Middlesex District encompasses Andover, Dracut, Lawrence and Tewksbury.

"The opportunity to serve in the legislature has been a goal of mine ever since I was a student at UMass Amherst," Pavel Payano says. Payano says he has his sights set on becoming the first elected Latino Senator for the District.

"I would consider it a great honor to continue the legacy of service to the Merrimack Valley that Senator Finegold and Senator Tucker before him have achieved. I am prepared to serve and I know I can be an effective advocate for the needs of our Senate District. Our district encompasses one of the most diverse constituencies in the state and has a wide range of different needs. I look forward to speaking with as

many residents of the district as possible in the months ahead to help me to confirm my decision sometime in January. "

"I am running for the State Senate because it's time to give the people of our district a break from compulsive tax increases and unresponsive government, these decisions have impacts that hurt our district" Alex Vispoli said in his announcement.

"It's time to look to savings and reforms first instead of automatically voting to tax our already overburdened taxpayer."

While Payano did not outline his campaign issues, Vispoli says his top issues "are going to be providing more job opportunities for the people in our district, fiscal accountability, local aid fairness, improving education, and restoring integrity to the State House. It's time to hold our legislators accountable for their actions.

Vispoli took the legislature to task for passing a gas tax increase and adding a provision to "make future tax increases automatic. They didn't even have the courage to be recorded on any future tax increase," said Vispoli.

"We have a crime lab scandal costing us all \$332 million, and \$200 million in welfare fraud," he continued.

"Instead of the proper oversight, Beacon Hill reaches into our wallets for more tax dollars. That's wrong. I am not going to sit on the sidelines when I know that I can provide leadership to help turnaround our state," said Vispoli.

BIOS

Alex Vispoli

A father of four, Vispoli was first elected to the Andover Board of Selectmen in 2004. On the board, he has led

DiZoglio Visits North Andover High School on Civic Education Tour

Marking the latest stop in her initiative to engage and educate students across the Merrimack Valley about the democratic process, State Rep. Diana DiZoglio (D-Methuen) visited North Andover High School on Friday, November 15.

Held in the school's auditorium, the program covered the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and, through interactive exercises, was designed to educate students about what it means to be a citizen and how to be involved in the democratic process. During the event, students had the opportunity to participate in mock legislative and judicial hearings, the latter conducted by Michael J. Ryan of the Office of Jury Commissioner for the Commonwealth.

"I was delighted to be among so many fantastic North Andover High students as I spoke about how ideas become laws and engaged the students in an interactive mock committee hearing," said DiZoglio, who has sponsored a bill to establish a comprehensive student civic education program. "I look forward to visiting more schools across the Merrimack Valley in the months to come to discuss how our government works."

"Involving students as part of the presentation was a great way to keep people interested so that they could learn a thing about our government that they never knew before," said student Joe Mosby.

"The presentation helped to establish a practical sense of what goes on at the state level of government, even though the federal government is more widely discussed," said student Dillon MacInnis.

"I learned the difference between the federal and state branches, which is stuff I

hadn't learned before," said student Brendan Hartford.

"Rep. DiZoglio and Mike Ryan did a great job of keeping the program interesting and entertaining," said student Matt Varoutsos. "I really enjoyed it."

"I thought the mock judiciary hearing was very helpful in seeing how trials work," said student Emily Crabtree.

In many of today's high schools, civic learning is often only offered toward the end of a student's studies, in twelfth grade.

On the most recent national civics assessment, administered in 2006 by the National Assessment Governing Board, two-thirds of students scored below "proficient." In 2010, more than a quarter of college students reported they did not register to vote because they did not know where or how to do so.

"All too often, our classrooms lack a strong civic education program to inform students about what state government does in our daily lives," said DiZoglio. "It is important that youth begin to genuinely grasp these basic concepts to ensure they are able to actively participate and engage in the process as they are entering into adulthood."

"It is critical for students to have an understanding of our judicial system early on, given they should be prepared to serve jury duty as soon as high school," said Ryan.

In addition to North Andover High School, DiZoglio has visited Methuen High School and Haverhill's Hunking Middle School on her Merrimack Valley Civic Education Tour. The Representative plans to next take the tour to Lawrence.



Alex Vispoli



Pavel Payano

initiatives including: consolidation of Andover's IT organization and infrastructure, creation of the Andover Economic Development Council; 193 proposed interchange project; reduction in town owned vehicles; annual citizens mid-year review for major project updates; and regionalization opportunities with surrounding towns. Andover is an AAA bond rated town.

Vispoli was also elected to the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Board of Directors and the Massachusetts Selectmen's Association (MSA) board in 2011. He is currently the District 2 Representative (Essex and Middlesex Counties) for the MSA.

In addition, he is a member of the Local Government Advisory Commission.

Professionally, Vispoli has been in the information technology business for 25 years. He currently holds the position of Director of Business Development for an Andover-based technology company.

Alex and his wife Ann have been residents of Andover since 1996.

Pavel Payano

Pavel is Vice Chair of the Lawrence School Committee; he was recently elected for his second term on the Lawrence School Committee. Payano has been an active member of the community, by advocating for initiatives that reduce the achievement gap and increase the number of students that plan to attend college.

He is also the co-founder of the Greater Lawrence Young Professionals Network, an organization that seeks to increase and strengthen young professionals in the area and improve the community. Payano is a dedicated Democratic activist, serving on local and national campaigns and initiatives for Governor Deval Patrick, Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, as well



Deputy Grand Knight Bert Hanlon, Sheep Rush Chair Alan Aulson, and Knight Activities Coordinator Ray McManus, Sheep: Lucy, Jennifer, Rocketgirl, and their friends.

Live Christmas Nativity Scene & The Great Sheep 'Pebble Pile' Land Rush

Lonnie Brennan
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Just a stone's throw from the grand farming and grazing commons of old-time Georgetown, the Knights of Columbus have transported the town back in time, with a small flock of sheep. A 'live nativity scene' for the Christmas season adorns the Knight's North Lawn.

This 'live nativity scene' on Main Street has been provided courtesy of Alan and Maureen Aulson, the extended Aulson family, and their Great Rock Farm. And, while the sheep are there, the Knights are selling 'deeds' for a great land rush party and event to be held January 12th on the Knights grounds.

"Everyone is invited to come down and see the sheep, and purchase a 'Deed' of one square of choice Georgetown Land," Sheep Pebble Land Rush Executive Director Alan Aulson explained. "We're selling these great 'Deeds' for \$10 and you get a chance to win \$500 and participate in a great event and fundraiser for the community."

"We'll be letting the sheep loose in a special pen in January, with squares marked on the ground. If the sheep graze your square, you win one of many prizes, up to \$500 for first place," Aulson added. "It's fun, it will be a hoot, and seriously, who has done this in the past 100 years?"

And what do the sheep think? According to the Knights press release, the sheep said 'we're excited to be vacationing at

the Knights of Columbus and getting to watch all the kids and their families and all the people come and go at the Boy Scout Christmas tree and wreath sale here. Come, buy a Christmas tree, and then pet us. We love the attention.'

Well, the sheep are great, they love to have their chins rubbed, and the Scouts have some special food which will have them eating out of your hands.

Updates and information are posted daily at www.SheepDEEDS.com, the Knights' special fundraising page for this event. The Knights are currently rebuilding their facility through the hard work of North Street Woodworking and are installing new doors and windows from Georgetown Door and Windows and are rewiring the building through the hard work of Gansenburg Electric of Georgetown. A true community-rebuilding project.

"The Knights make their property available for use by many Georgetown and Rowley community groups," Knight Ray McManus said. "I'm honored to be a part of this rebuilding effort and these unusual fun events." Ray has played a pivotal role with the Knights running Blood Drives for Children's Hospital to support local children, and in his work with bottle drives, fundraising events, and his work as the photographer and public relations contact for the Knights.

More details, as always, posted to www.GeorgetownTODAY.org.

What is the Mass Commission Against Discrimination?

Attorney Timothy F. Stark, Esq.
VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST COLUMNIST

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (commonly referred to as the "MCAD") was established to enforce M.G.L. c. 151B, often referred to as "The Fair Employment Practices Law." The MCAD is a part of the Executive Branch of the Massachusetts state government. If an employee believes they have suffered an adverse employment action as a result of an unlawful animus, they are entitled to file a complaint with the MCAD within 300 days of the date of the employment action. Typical adverse employment actions include trespass, loss of job responsibilities, and/or involuntary terminations. In order to be covered under the law, the employer has to employ six or more employees. Some of the more common forms of unlawful discrimination include adverse employment actions based on gender, handicap, sexual orientation, age, race, ethnic background, recovering addiction, and religion. These categories are often referred to as "protected classes."

The MCAD has both investigatory and adjudicatory powers. A claim must be filed in person at the MCAD, although if the party is represented by an attorney, the attorney will often file the complaint through the mail. The complaint is then logged in with the MCAD and assigned to an investigator. Once this has been done the complaint is then sent to the employer, who has 21 days to answer the complaint. Once this has occurred, the employee is entitled to reply to the employer's answer. The employer's answer is called a "position statement," and the employee's response is called the "rebuttal." There is often an "investigative conference" held at this point in which the parties present their respective version of the events to the investigator. At this time, the investigator usually informs the parties that the MCAD will continue the investigation, request additional information from the parties, and potentially talk with possible witnesses.

Within approximately 12 to 18 months, the MCAD will issue a decision which will be either a probable cause finding or a lack of probable cause finding. The probable cause finding means the case will proceed to a public hearing to determine



if unlawful conduct took place. For all practical purposes, a finding of a lack of probable cause means the case is over. If there has been a finding of probable cause, the MCAD will order a "conciliation conference" at this time in order to explore the possibility of a settlement. If the settlement conference is unsuccessful, the case will proceed to the public hearing. The hearing is usually scheduled about a year from the date of the settlement conference. If the employee is successful at the public hearing, then he or she may be entitled to back pay damages, emotional distress damages, and attorney's fees. There are instances where additional damages are awarded but the three mentioned are the most common. Interest at a rate of 12% is usually ordered on the award, although the rate may vary according to the statute.

The above is a brief overview of the MCAD process. If you believe that you have a possible discrimination case, it is a good idea to have an attorney review the case and evaluate its merits. If you are an employer and have been named in a MCAD complaint, it is highly recommended that, prior to sending in an answer to the complaint, you contact an employment attorney to advise you.

Remember, the only person who has legal rights is the person who knows what their legal rights are.

Attorney Timothy F. Stark, Esq. has over 25 years of legal experience in Employment Law, Divorce Law, and Divorce Mediation, with backgrounds in both Human Resource Management and Psychology. Please feel free to contact him by calling (978) 685-8777 or e-mailing him at info@timfstark.com. His law office is located at 805 Turnpike Street, Suite 101, North Andover, MA 01845.



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Legislature Moves Forward on Hefty and Charged Issues

Linda Dean Campbell
METHUEN STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Thus far this session, the Massachusetts Legislature continues to make progress on several issues of public interest. House and Senate legislation is moving forward which pertains to on-line voter registration and early voting in Presidential elections; welfare reform; increasing the state's minimum wage; reforming the unemployment insurance system; and last, but certainly not least, legislation to reduce gun violence.

One issue which comes to our attention at this time of year is the minimum wage. One plea from constituents that I hear repeatedly is, "Please try to find a way forward that rewards hard work and savings." More than a few of my very hardworking constituents have candidly confided that it would likely be in the financial best interest of their family if they stopped working and went onto public assistance rather than continue to work, often at several jobs with long hours and little time spent with their children.

Perhaps, the most important issue facing both our Commonwealth and our Nation is ensuring that jobs are available that reward hard work with the opportunity to live decently and with some modicum of security.

Given both the uniqueness and greatness of our Commonwealth and the United States, we should be able to rise to

this challenge and meet it effectively.

Let us consider State tax breaks for those corporate entities and wealthy individuals who create jobs in our state, actually trickle their wealth down to multiply the wealth of everyone. Let us also make modest and gradual increases in our minimum wage to the point where it is the minimum wage that one actually needs to support themselves or that allows two working people as a couple to establish a household together as a young family. At the same time, we should trim our unemployment insurance system that is by far the most generous in the nation. And, finally, let us have further health care system reform to make health insurance independent of ones private sector employment so our businesses are not at a constant competitive disadvantage in the international arena.

Great domestic policies adopted by our country are usually initiated at the state level first – as this is where new ideas, most good and some bad, can be implemented. One of the reasons that serving in the Massachusetts Legislature is so rewarding is that there are so many here dedicated to the public good in both the private and public sectors. They routinely commit their time and personal assets to engage to address the tough but solvable issues before us. For this reason, I am confident about the progress we will make in the coming year.



Festival of Trees Calling for 2014 Historic Preservation Grant Applicants

Methuen non-profit awards matching grants to fund preservation projects

The Festival of Trees, Inc. is calling for applicants for its 2014 Historic Preservation Grant Program. This Methuen-based non-profit organization raises money through its annual Festival of Trees event to fund preservation efforts throughout the Merrimack Valley and beyond.

The Historic Preservation Grant Program is designed to provide preservation funding to private non-profit organizations, private businesses housed in a historic property, and the exteriors of individual homes which are listed on the Massachusetts and/or national historic registers and public entities. Applicants are encouraged to submit their proposals by the December 30, 2013 deadline.

"We started this event with the purpose to restore and preserve our heritage here in Methuen and due to its growth and success over the past 19 years, we are now helping to do the same in many of our surrounding communities," said Sharon Pollard, President of the Festival of Trees.

"We have had a sizeable increase in

grant applications over the past few years and our goal is to help fund as many of these essential projects as we can."

The Historic Preservation Grant Program (HPGP) awards matching grants of up to \$10,000 to qualified historic preservation projects. To qualify, buildings or structures must have been built prior to 1900.

Successful applicants must have completed the bid process and be able to share information including contractors as well as project and construction details.

Grant applications can be requested by calling (978) 685-8878 or by emailing Sharon at info@methuenfestivaloftrees.com. Applications are also available on the Festival of Trees website at www.methuenfestivaloftrees.com.

To date, the Festival has awarded over \$1.4 million in preservation grants throughout the Merrimack Valley. This year, the Festival is celebrating its 20th year of sharing the magic of the holiday season.

President Obama's Dreadful Legacy: A Record of Calculated Partisanship and Missed Opportunities

Ken Willette
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

As we reach the conclusion of President Obama's fifth year in office, it is only fair at this critical juncture to assess the full extent of his domestic and foreign affairs record. The Obama record is one of repeated examples of cold and deliberate partisanship and missed opportunities for transformational leadership. If anyone is an avid reader of historical books on the Reagan and Kennedy administrations, there is a valid argument that Obama has operated a second-tier or even a third-tier presidency. When we add the recent foreign affairs turmoil in Libya, Egypt, Iran and Syria to the equation, it is safe to say that Obama is heading directly into Carter territory. We could easily include the gamesmanship of Russian President Putin, the regional incursions of China and the blatant defiance of North Korea, as part and parcel of the Obama void of global leadership. Sadly, I will need to dedicate a future essay just to go over the house of horrors that is called the Affordable Care Act.

First of all, let us consider the transformational legacy of President Reagan, who won the Cold War, secured approval of large-scale tax cuts, worked with Congressional Democrats to save Social Security

in 1983 and finalized the Tax Reform Act of 1986, which paved the way for tremendous economic growth in the mid-to-late 1980s. The Tax Reform Act garnered the support of conservative Republicans and left-leaning Democrats because it accomplished three major goals at the same time: lowering individual and corporate tax rates; eliminating special interest perks and corporate loopholes; and dramatically simplifying the entire tax code. In a bipartisan fashion, Reagan prolonged Social Security for at least forty years, lowered tax rates for millions of Americans and took an axe to corporate welfare.

The recent book *JFK Conservative* also gives serious credibility to the trailblazing importance of JFK on our times when he advocated for massive tax cuts, challenged the Soviets on the world stage, significantly built up and modernized the entire military, limited non-defense budget expenditures and promoted free trade to encourage economic growth in the free world.

Now you may ask why I am mentioning Reagan's accomplishments and JFK's achievements in a column focused on Obama. Because Obama had the same opportunity on the domestic front to lower tax rates, eliminate corporate perks, extend the life of entitlement programs beyond the next ten or twenty years, reduce discretion-

ary spending and enact \$4 trillion in deficit reduction measures through the passage of the Simpson-Bowles Commission recommendations. Obama failed miserably to advance and promote Simpson-Bowles or a viable alternative, with the end result being the endless series of government shutdowns and across-the-board reductions on both defense and non-defense programs alike, regardless of efficiency, national security merit or economic impact. And many leaders are indicating that we are no safer now than we were on 9/11, so the defense, intelligence and state department cuts are not optimal.

It does not surprise me that Obama would cast blame on the other party, because that has always been his modus operandi. In Robert Woodward's book *The Price of Politics*, when asked about GOP recommendations to the stimulus package during Obama's first few months in office, then Obama Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel declared: "We have the votes, (expletive) them." This tone immediately poisoned the well and it has not improved ever since. Obama consistently uses the twin excuses of blaming Bush and blaming the GOP House for his own anemic economic record. Therefore, let us look at the facts.

Since Obama took office in 2009, over

3.5 million people (and counting) have joined the ranks of Social Security disability; a record 47.7 million Americans rely on food stamps; and the vast majority of the private sector jobs created in the Obama years have been low-wage jobs in retail and fast-food enterprises. Plus, 50% of college graduates will not obtain employment in the professions they studied for. Sadly, millions more are simply not counted in any official employment reports because they hold two or three part-time jobs or completely fell off the grid.

This is after a roughly \$900 billion (interest included) stimulus package was passed. But even Bill Clinton was critical of the stimulus package, because a nationwide smart grid to deal with blackouts, power surges and unforeseen cyber-terrorist attacks never was funded. We could add thousands of unsafe bridges and ancient school buildings that could have been renovated, but were never tackled under the wasteful stimulus umbrella. At best, the stimulus package was a stopgap measure that only delayed the eventual national pain; at worst, it only added to our existing Chinese debt load, with no discernible impact on employment.

WILLETTE: PAGE 14

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Frank Serrano



Mr. Sid (Eric Sideri)

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Frank Serrano, welcomes Mr. Sid to rejoin him at his new Barber Shop in North Andover (Next to Bank of America). Frank worked at Mal's Barber Shop for the past 15 years and Mr. Sid has been at the Andover Barber Shop for the past 7 years.

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LEADING SENIOR LIVING IN NEW DIRECTIONS

The Merrimack Valley Irish Connection

Irish Christmas Traditions

Jack Doyle, County Sligo
VALLEY PATRIOT IRISH COLUMNIST

Ireland, like most countries, has a number of Christmas traditions that are all of its own. Many of these customs have their root in the time when the Gaelic culture and religion of the country were being suppressed and it is perhaps because of that they have survived into modern times.

THE CANDLE IN THE WINDOW

The placing of a lighted candle in the window of a house on Christmas Eve is still practiced today. It has a number of purposes but primarily it was a symbol of welcome to Mary and Joseph as they travelled looking for shelter.

The candle also indicated a safe place for priests to perform mass as, during Penal Times this was not allowed.

A further element of the tradition is that the candle should be lit by the youngest member of the household and only be extinguished by a girl bearing the name 'Mary'.

THE LADEN TABLE - After evening meal on Christmas Eve the kitchen table was again set and on it were placed a loaf of bread filled with caraway seeds and raisins, a pitcher of milk and a large lit candle. The door to the house was left unlatched so that Mary and Joseph, or any wandering traveller, could avail of the welcome.

THE WREN BOY PROCESSION

During Penal Times there was once a plot in a village against the local soldiers.

They were surrounded and were about to be ambushed when a group of wrens pecked on their drums and awakened the soldiers. The plot failed and the wren became known as 'The Devil's bird'.

On St. Stephen's Day a procession takes place where a pole with a holly bush is carried from house to house and families dress up in old clothes and with blackened faces. In olden times, an actual wren would be killed and placed on top of the pole.

This custom has to a large degree disappeared but the tradition of visiting from house to house on St. Stephen's Day has survived and is very much part of Christmas.

DECORATIONS: The placing of a ring of holly on doors originated in Ireland as holly was one of the main plants that flourished at Christmastime, and which gave the poor ample means with which to decorate their dwellings.

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<http://www.ireland-information.com>
'Nollaig Shona Duit' (Merry Christmas)

It has been over five years since I started this column and like all good things I must say goodbye. I hope you enjoyed reading the many stories that I included.

I must thank Tom Duggan for allowing me the freedom of writing in my own style of the memories of Ireland and especially of County Sligo and it's people.

Slán: Goodbye. Jack Doyle @
jack5772@comcast.net



Copy of check made out to the Town of Salisbury from the Tomaselli's A note stating "not to be cashed" was written on bottom and it was never returned to them. The Tomaselli's say they were escorted out of town hall by police on another occasion for trying to give the town another check for more than \$700.

Why Did Salisbury Refuse to Cash \$15K Check from Tomaselli Sisters

In the ongoing battle between the Town of Salisbury and the Tomaselli sisters over the Town's efforts to take their property, Town Manager Neil Harrington recently attacked the Tomaselli sisters at a Board of Selectmen Meeting saying that the sisters are trying to get out of paying their taxes, and hadn't paid their taxes in more than a decade.

In response to a Valley Patriot story about the town's actions last September, Harrington said:

"I want the citizens of Salisbury to know that these claims are false and slanderous. That the Tomasellis haven't paid a cent to the town in property taxes in over a decade which is the real reason the town has moved to take their property."

"They have cost the taxpayers of this town tens of thousands of dollars in legal fees. They owe the town more than 1/4 of a million dollars."

What Harrington didn't tell the taxpayers was that in 2002 the Tomaselli sisters met with prior town manager Tim McInerney.

McInerney agreed that the town made many errors in the case, and both parties agreed that the balance would be paid in full pending the Department of Revenue removing the interest.

The Tomaselli sisters had purchased their property after the Salisbury sewer project in 1991. The Salisbury sewer project began in 1982 and was completed in 1989.

The Tomaselli sisters tried to pay the balance of their taxes in full (in 2002), but town officials refused to cash their check. This resulted in the sisters accruing more interest on their debt to the town, and ballooning up their payments due.

The sisters handed over a check in the amount of \$15,492.04 to bring them current, allowing them to obtain their restaurant licenses to reopen Mangia ... a Café-

Restaurant on the property in dispute.

In total, from 1991 to the present, the Tomaselli sisters show receipts that they have paid the Town of Salisbury more than \$58,700.85 since they purchased their property.

Videotapes of board of selectmen meetings dating back to May 10, 2004, show that Town Manager Neil Harrington stated he had the Tomaselli's uncashed \$15,492.04 check in a folder in his office.

On the videotape, Selectman Henry Richenburg said, "if the Tomasellis have been wrongfully charged, then we should go back on that."

Selectman Tony Papoulias said "it is not right for these people to go through this year after year... there is something wrong here."

Selectman Hunt said at the time, "if it isn't right it should be fixed."

The Valley Patriot first started poring over documents on this case back in 2011, and after two years of researching documents, wrote our first story in September of this year.

The following month, Town Manager Neil Harrington spoke about our story "The \$80 Million Lie", showing he had full knowledge of our reporting, but as of the day we went to print (December 9th), Harrington has never provided The Valley Patriot with any documents showing any of our reporting was "wrong" or "incorrect".

Since Harrington is a loyal reader of The Valley Patriot, our editors continue to encourage Town Manager Harrington to provide documents to us showing the entire cost of the sewer project and any other documents he feels would tell a more complete story.

As of December 10, 2013, the morning this paper went to print, The Valley Patriot has yet to receive any documents from Neil Harrington or anyone from the town.

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The Grinch Has Arrived in Hampton, New Hampshire

Rebecca Pearson
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

As the holiday season brings cheer and joy to our communities, neighbors and businesses come together to support those less fortunate with nothing more in return than knowing their generosity will bring a smile to a child's face and some holiday magic to families that would normally go without. However this year, Hampton, New Hampshire is experiencing the Grinch who stole Christmas from children!

A very well known business in Seabrook, New Hampshire has been involved with the Hampton Christmas Parade for the past 4 years bringing the Toys for Tots float, decorated full of holiday fun and merriment, and collects a considerable amount of toys for some very special little children.

This year they have been told they are not allowed to participate.

According to sources, one man seems to have considerable influence over the rest of the board who oversees the parade. Joe Jones said he had witnessed two things over the past 4 years that he considers to be a violation of the parade rules, and has swayed others to make the decision to eliminate the Chop Shop from being in the parade.

Below is a copy of the correspondence that was emailed to the Chop Shop in regards to the dismissal of their float only one week before the parade, after having their application in for almost a month.

"Mr. Niland, We have reviewed your application to participate in this year's parade and after careful review from both the parade committee and the Experience Hampton Board we unfortunately have to turn your request down for this year. Over the past few years, we have had some concerns and com-

plaints regarding your business participation that involved safety, liability and behavior. We apologize for the late notice but it was because we did spend a lot of time considering your request. If you are interested in participating in future parades, we would recommend that early in 2014 that we all sit down to discuss our future expectations. ~John Nyhan, President Experience Hampton, Inc."

So what could be so terrible that they would take away a float that encourages toy donations and had so many toys that they had to increase the size of the float to have more capacity to put them all in?

One incident was where a person who was not involved with the Chop Shop was doing a "burn out" on a racing motorcycle during the last parade, spinning their tires. The owner of the Chop Shop, Bill Niland, says that person was not involved with the Chop Shop. He had even spoken with the man and told him it was not the place for such reckless actions. According to Joe Jones, the other incident took place when he "Witnessed two people on the back of the Chop Shop float hanging on like firefighters use to do" which according to him is a violation of the parades policy and motor vehicle. So to recap, an incident that did not involve the Chop Shop at all, and one that you find at every parade, people leaning over and waving were the reasons for this decision.

Niland, owner of the Chop Shop, was heart-broken when he received the email and was quoted saying, "How could they not let us in the parade? We are an upstanding business in the community, the most active community supporter than any other business in the area? The biker community in this area is one of the most generous demographics, hands down. To not let us in the parade was

shocking. They expressed liability issues... going an 8th of a mile an hour there is not much of a liability."

The Chop Shop has been in business for five years, just celebrating their anniversary in October. Bill Niland has been an active member of Rolling Thunder for over 14 years which is a pro Veteran Based Organization, as well as a Master Mason which makes giving back to those that need help part of his life style. Bill has done the Hampton Holiday parade every year since he has been open, with no issues at anytime with the parade or any members of the board that has put the parade together. "We have an awful lot of fans that cheer us the whole line up, we have our holiday characters in costume, passing out candy, we have always had a wonderful time."

"This will be our fourth year doing the Toys for Tots Drive, which includes many sponsorships and donations which continue to double every year. It is very successful and we are very happy to do it especially this time of year with economic times with so many more families that are in need of some help, it is now more important then ever to get more donations to help with the demand." Niland says.

"You can absolutely drop off toys at the Chop Shop even though we are not allowed in the Hampton parade, losing a lot of exposure for the toy drive, we will still be having our CBS reality TV stars that help us promote the fundraiser. They have been with us for the past couple of years and usually accompany us in the parade. It will still be held December 7th and donations can be dropped from now until December 8th, we are here noon until 1am."

When asked what Niland believes is really the reason behind not being aloud in the parade, he said, "Our parade consists of single moms, employees, children and family of the Chop Shop. I had to personally tell an 8 year old boy that has been involved with our float that we would not be doing the parade this year which was the saddest thing I have ever had to do. I feel like this is the most disgusting display of abuse of power by a very small amount of people that seem to have a private agenda. Is it because we are bikers? Is it because we are from Seabrook?"



Owner Bill Niland of the Chop Shop and Colan Demarco

Either one is an unacceptable reason. The Christmas spirit has been lost. To disallow an establishment like ours with such a charitable heart from being in the parade is disgusting and shameful. There is nothing that leaves it to be anything else but discrimination; as bikers we are used to discrimination. What people don't understand, they discriminate against. Unfortunately we have no recourse; we are the most generous, kind, and helping people on the planet. A biker is not some scumbag; this day and age we are doctors, lawyers, family men and women, executives. This is not the 70's, we have grown up."

A Facebook page has been set up in support of the shop where thousands of people have chimed in on the controversy, and not just on their page. On the Experience Hampton webpage many have voiced their concerns:

Daniel Batal of Seabrook ~ "I'm baffled by their decision. This is my 4th year living in Seabrook, since the day we moved in we started coming into the Chop Shop and met Bill and became friends with him and have gone to the Parade because he was in it ... to have him suddenly tell us that he finds out a week before the parade that he is no longer aloud to participate took us all by surprise. ... On the parade organizers website their own pictures of people in the parade have far more infractions then people 'hanging off the back of a float' in the parade. So it to me

GRINCH: PAGE 32

Newburyport Guide.com

Begin your Holiday Shopping with three fantastic choices here in Newburyport MA

Rebecca Pearson
VALLEY PATRIOT NEWBURYPORT COLUMNIST

THE BLING OF THE SEASON WITH M.K. BENATTI JEWELERS IN NEWBURYPORT

M.K. Benatti Jewelers in Newburyport brings a certain sparking glow to your eyes when you walk through the door. Coming up on the holiday season they are gearing up for their rush on engagement rings and wedding bands. This wonderful family run jewelry store is run by Matt Khatib who has been designing jewelry for over 18 years, his talent is in his genes, passed down from his grandfather but with a twist on mixing new age technology that makes his work unique and limitless. Creating intricate and original designs and working with clients to bring them their vision of their perfect peace of wearable art that will be with them for the rest of their lives. "Matt will make a wax model using our onsite state of the art Solidscape wax printing machine, allowing our customer to have a tangible object to try on. From there, Matt will cast your jewelry onsite and handfinish every detail for exceptional quality." They also have a wide range of gift desired jewelry, and offer repairs as well.

Stop by and visit Matt and Karyn, who for the past 14 years have brought families and loved ones together with extraordinary jewelry made for you right in front of you. This is the year of love show it with items from M.K. Benatti Jewelers in Newburyport. M.K Benatti Jewelers, 11 State Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

BUYING FROM YOUR LOCAL ARTIST AT VALERIE'S GALLERY If you love hand crafted goods like pottery and blown glass, local art and printmaking, and artisan-made jewelry, you'll enjoy Valerie's

Gallery in Newburyport. Part craft gallery, part art gallery, they offer a mix of items that are all made in the USA, and often by local artists that are lovely for you, your home, or for giving as a special gift. At Valerie's Gallery their shop offers pottery by Natural Elements Pottery, Kaleidoscope Pottery and James Guggina of western Mass., Lorraine Dilmore of N.H., and local potter Iris Minc of Purple Sage Pottery. One of my personal favorites is the beautiful "lace bowls" by Joy Friedman. You will also find local art, showing printmakers Matthew Smith, Matt Brown, Mary Pollak, Deb DeCicco, Kathleen Buchanan; oil painter Colleen Kidder, and photographer John Geesink, wonderful copper clocks, handmade lamps using rocks and steel, and lamps by Janna Ugone.

With a variety of nearly 100 artists, including a few lines of greeting cards, bronze doorbells, fused glass cheese plates, wood cribbage boards, pewter measuring cup sets, and hanging art on canvases, this shop is a goldmine and worth shopping this holiday season. Valerie's Gallery, 26 State Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

SWEETNESS TO THE TASTE BUDS - HOLIDAY GOODIES FROM EAT CAKE AND SIMPLE SWEET

Looking for the perfect holiday delight for your family, friends, and holiday get together. Two of my personal favorites in Newburyport come to mind. Whether it be a frosted treat or chocolate truffle, your heart will swoon and taste buds will sigh with delight.

Simply Sweet in Newburyport is owned and operated by a local "townie" born, raised and schooled in Newburyport. At Simply Sweet we carry an enormous selection of chocolates including homemade

NEWBURYPORT: PAGE 23

December Events in Newburyport

THEATER AND MUSIC

Fire House Center for the Arts Market Square Newburyport MA www.FireHouse.org

HOLIDAY SING-ALONG - Sat, Dec. 14 featuring the Immaculate Conception Youth Choir and a Christmas story reading.

17 State Street Café, 17 State Street Newburyport, MA, www.17StateStreetCafe.com

Sheila Linehan, Holiday Live Music, December 13, 7 - 9PM

Josef Nocera, Live Music, December 14, 7 - 9PM

The Chuck Walker Jazz Quartet, Live holiday themed music, December 20, 7 - 9PM

Liz Frame and the Kickers, Live Music, December 21, 7 - 9PM

Cuppa Joe, Live Music, December 27, 7 - 9PM

Chris Marino, Live Music, December 28, 7 - 9PM

Events in December

Craft Time for Kids! Wednesdays from 11AM - 12PM

Free crafts every Wednesday at Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt! Great for moms and kids to meet and have fun getting creative with a new craft each week!

Holiday Invitation Nights, December 13, 6 - 9PM

Mark your calendars, book a babysitter and call your friends to make plans for two great nights in Newburyport! Enjoy

merchant hospitality, live entertainment, fabulous shopping and dining - and of course the spirit of the holidays - in beautiful and festive downtown Newburyport and The Tannery!

Santa's Workshop, Saturday, Dec. 14 & 21, 10AM-1PM, Sunday, Dec. 8, 15 & 22 from 11AM-2PM

Bring the kids down to Inn Street in downtown Newburyport where they can meet Santa, share their wish list, and get their very own photo taken with Mr. C! Then enjoy strolling around the beautiful downtown area - a great way to spend a weekend day with the family during the holiday season.

Holiday Sing-A-Long, December 14, 11AM - 12PM

Join in song with friends, family and the Youth Choir from the Immaculate Conception Church directed by Donna Postle who will be there to lead everyone in singing some well-loved carols, with music provided by John Metrano on piano. Terry Blanchard, will once again read 'Twas the Night Before Christmas. After the children listen to the classic tale, it will be time to grab your camera and head for the lobby to meet Santa. A little treat for each child is included in the ticket price. This is a wonderful family event. Plan early to attend as this very popular holiday tradition always sells out. Your children will thank you for it! Tickets can be purchased by calling 978-462-7336 or in person at the box office.

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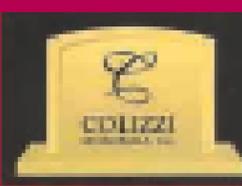


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Firefighter Sullivan, Detective DeLano Honored by Methuen Exchange

Rebecca Pearson
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

The Methuen Exchange Club presented Methuen Police Detective John DeLano with their Police Officer of the Year Award at their annual dinner banquet last month. Late last winter, Methuen Police Chief Joe Solomon assigned Detective DeLano to head up an investigation into 15 robberies in the area. After a three month investigation, Detective DeLano got his "guy" and the task force officers arrested The Merrimack Valley Bandit, Rafael Beamud, Jr., and charged him with the fifteen bank robberies.

On May 5, 2010 Detective DeLano responded to investigate a brutal attack on a woman who had been kidnapped at gunpoint and violently raped. Detective DeLano processed the crime scene, collected evidence and interviewed the woman. He knew that whomever had committed this attack was a savage serial rapist. John worked endlessly trying to solve the case, knowing that this vicious rapist would strike again. In October, Detective Pilz was investigating another kidnapping and assault when Detective DeLano was clever enough to read between the lines in that case, noticing several key facts that were consistent with his earlier case. This time, the detectives had a suspect. Detec-

tive DeLano put together a photo array and showed it to his earlier victim. The victim looked at the photos and immediately began to shake, cry loudly and yell, "THAT'S HIM!"

John knew he had his guy. Detective DeLano attained a warrant and the suspect was arrested.

But, the case doesn't end here. The suspect soon made bail and was back on the streets. Detective DeLano knew it was only time before he would strike again. Over two years later, Detective DeLano was at a hearing involving the suspect who was still free on bail. Detective DeLano witnessed the suspect leave the courthouse during a recess in court proceedings, smoke and then discard a cigarette butt before returning to the courthouse.

What the suspect didn't realize was that he had just provided Detective DeLano with the last piece of evidence he needed. John walked over to the discarded cigarette; the same brand that John had recovered at the original crime scene two years earlier which he had submitted for DNA testing. The DNA was compared and matched. In September 2013, three years after the serial rapes began, the rapist was brought to justice and stood before a jury and was found guilty of this brutal assault. He was sentenced to over 15 years in state prison.

"I believe this investigation alone by

Detective DeLano has saved countless area women from being victims of this monster," Chief Solomon said.

**FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR
MICHAEL SULLIVAN**

The Methuen Exchange Club honored Methuen Firefighter Michael Sullivan for his heroic actions while on vacation at a beach in Mexico last year.

While Firefighter Sullivan was coming out of the water, he noticed a struggling swimmer being pulled under water in the heavy Mexican surf.

With heavy currents downing the woman, Firefighter Sullivan ran to her, swam out through the rough waters, and was able to pull the woman back to land, saving her life.

Firefighter Sullivan is an immigrant from Germany who grew up in Lawrence and went to Central Catholic High School.

He was appointed to the Methuen Fire Department in 2005 and has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Fitchburg State University.

BOOK OF GOLDEN DEEDS AWARD

The Methuen Exchange Club granted it's most coveted award "The Book of Golden Deeds" award to Linda Soucy, head of the Methuen Arlington Neighborhood and program director for the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council.

"In 1995, Linda and her neighborhood

residents established Methuen Arlington Neighborhood, Inc., The Mission of the organization is to increase and enhance entrepreneurial opportunities, neighborhood investment, revitalization activities and self sufficiency of low and moderate income residents of the Methuen Arlington Neighborhood."

Because of the efforts of Linda Soucy, the Lena Lahey Community Center was opened in 2008, providing after school programs, education resources, health and wellness programs, social services and a library. Not only did Linda Soucy establish the MAN and run it's various programs, she also spends an incredible amount of time working directly with young students, tutoring them, coordinating outdoor activities and even buys Christmas presents and supplies out of her own pocket.

Linda also lives in the Arlington neighborhood and was instrumental in motivating city officials to apply for weed and seed grant money which brought in federal dollars to police the neighborhood.

Chief Solomon says that without the efforts of Linda Soucy, the Arlington neighborhood would still be riddled with nightly shootings, prostitutes walking the neighborhood and gangs roaming the streets. "That isn't happening any more, thanks to Linda Soucy," he said.



Thanks to TD Charitable Foundation, CLASS Gets Growing

Social enterprise plans moved ahead at CLASS, Inc. after the TD Charitable Foundation, the charitable giving arm of TD Bank, donated \$10,000 as part of the bank's commitment to giving back to the community.

CLASS, headquartered in Lawrence for more than 35 years, supports people with disabilities and their families with services, programs and employment development. The funds from the TD Charitable Foundation will assist the human services agency in evaluating property on which to build, conducting a site survey and begin building plans for a hydroponic greenhouse at which individuals with disabilities will be employed in greenhouse operations as farmers and customer service representatives.

"The individual is at the center of our work, the heartbeat of everything we do here

at CLASS," said CLASS President Bob Harris. "We are building a bricks-and-mortar solution to the employment challenge individuals with disabilities face, a social enterprise to provide the jobs our clients need to be economically self sufficient and independent. Everybody deserves a job to do. We're building the greenhouse and creating the jobs so that individuals with disabilities can live and work in their communities."

"A staunch commitment to active involvement in the local community is a vital element of the TD Bank philosophy," said Dan Griggs, Market President - Northeastern Massachusetts for Commercial Banking. "The TD Charitable Foundation provides support to affordable housing, financial literacy and education, and environmental initiatives, many of which focus on improving the welfare of children and families.

My Very Own Senior Moment...At 39

Brian Coyne

VALLEY PATRIOT GUEST COLUMNIST

Having worked in the fitness industry for the past 10 years has been rewarding and frustrating all in one. With the alarm going off at 5am most mornings and not getting home until 8pm, it can be exhausting. With last minute cancellations and clients not adhering to their exercise regime, it can be downright infuriating. And don't get me going on client's nutrition habits. I would often ask myself, Is this really worth it? Am I making a difference? Do people really want to change their lifestyle? Or are they content carrying around an extra 20 lbs. or not having the energy to go grocery shopping, or being pre-diabetic with sky-high blood pressure. I say to myself, "I need to make a change NOW!"

Then it hit me, my very own "senior moment" at the tender age of 39. That "aha" moment that I have heard so much about. Am I ready to throw away 10 years of personal fitness training experience just because I am burned out? Or am I going to focus on working with that niche market that has always put a smile on my face and a spark in my step. We can call this group that I have grown so fondly of working with seniors, mature, AARP, or what I like to refer to one of my group's as Geri's (Geriatrics). No need to be offend-

ed by my coinage of this word as I plan to join the ranks of this vibrant population in the not-so distant future.

To be brutally honest, I was absolutely terrified the first time ever working with the Geri's. I am use to training young athletes, middle aged executives and marathon mom's. What business did I have working with seniors? What if I hurt them, or worse? But alas, I didn't hurt them or kill them. I have learned and continue to learn every day from this dynamic demographic. I laugh louder than I have ever laughed. I enjoy their Geri music with them. We balance on one leg, we squat and we surely feel the burn. But much more than that we connect on a level I never thought possible.

And the proof of this came very recently when a client that had been missing for over a month approached me after class. She informed me that she suddenly lost her daughter to a fatal heart attack and coming back to my class was her first step back into a routine of normalcy. It made her smile to rejoin our little family of fitness and fun. And it put a smile on my face for the rest of the day.

I teach them about balance, bone density and proper form. And they teach me more in a session than I ever thought possible. Sometimes I feel guilty because it doesn't feel like work and I am learning a lifetime of priceless experiences. But it

SENIOR MOEMENT: PAGE 22

Protect Your Pets From Household Poisons

Tracey Zysk

VALLEY PATRIOT DOGGIE COLUMNIST

Winter is here and with the season change comes the use of different types of chemicals to help us keep warm. However, these chemicals could be poisonous to our pets.

Our pets are sneaky and they could get themselves into a little bit of trouble if we don't keep an eye on them.

This could leave our curious little ones with a tummy ache, vomiting or even worse toxins in their blood. Some of these items may be household cleaners, some will be outside chemicals and others may even be foods that owners didn't even realize were harmful to their pets.

In fact, Animal Poison Control Center reported in 2010, that they had 167,000 poison cases with the number one culprit being human medication.

A couple of years ago I walked into a client's house and her dog was very lethargic. Not typical behavior for this high energy spitfire.

When I took her outside she started to urinate blood. Immediately the owner and I got her admitted to her vet hospital. The outcome was the dog had gotten into her owner's calcium pills.

Fortunately, this was caught in time and the dog recovered with no permanent damage to her kidneys or any other organ.

In the kitchen please keep your pets away from:

- chocolate
- grapes and raisins
- onion and garlic
- candy and sugar
- fatty table scraps
- all household cleaners
- trash

In the yard, basement or house keep your pets away from:

- holiday decorations



- plants
- anti freeze
- any chemicals
- gasoline and oils

Please keep all medications locked away at all times!

Do you have an Animal First Aid Kit? You can purchase one at any local pet supply store or you can make your own. Keep the basics in it.

Mine includes:

- tick tweezers
- digital thermometer
- bandage scissors
- plastic syringe for giving medication
- small flashlight
- sterilized gauze pads
- ACE bandage wraps
- Hydrogen peroxide
- topical antibiotic ointment
- saline eye wash
- instant cold pack

If we all take a few minutes and walk through our homes or around our proper-

ties, we may be surprised at what we see. Stop, take a moment, and remove anything of concern. Five minutes of your time, could mean a life time for your pet.

In case of an emergency call your vet or call the Animal Poison Hotline

Save this number, it could save your pet's life 888-232-8870



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 wigglegwalk@comcast.net. Become a fan on facebook at Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care.

WILLETTE FROM PAGE 8

There is a strong argument now that the recent resurgence of manufacturing jobs and energy-related jobs could be directly tied to the high-tech advances in fracking, which has enabled us to affordably extract shale gas and other previously untapped natural resources that will soon rival the reserves of Saudi Arabia and other powerhouses.

Therefore, can Obama really take any credit for North Dakota and Texas GDP expansion and population migration, or the impressive Midwest economic recovery underway in states led by Republican governors, who purposely lowered taxes, reduced government spending and balanced their budgets during the darkest days of the Great Recession? Instead of promoting an "All of the Above" energy efficiency and energy independence strategy by approving the Keystone pipeline, ensuring fracking safeguards and utilizing clean coal technology, he has been hijacked by the radical environmental elements of his own party that demonize fossil fuels, penalize drivers with high gas prices, block new pipelines, delay new drilling platforms, over-hype global warming and attack Cape Wind.

Regardless of what we do in our nation, it will pale in comparison to the economic engines of China and India, two countries going through their version of our Gilded Age, which is causing substantial environmental damage in their respective lands and will do so for many decades to come.

Obama's policies are not fooling a majority of us, as his collapsing poll numbers reflect. It is time for us to begin anew and challenge his last years in office.



In Front: Sherrie McGrath, Lynne Pomerleau, State Trooper Daniel Purtell, K-9 Officer "Neko". Standing from left to right: Madison McGrath, Janice Pomerleau, Walter Pomerleau Sr., Tim Player, Walter Pomerleau Jr., Rena Pomerleau, Troy McGrath, Nolan McGrath. At Right, Neko.

Mass. State Trooper "Neko" Gets Extra Protection

The Family of Walter and Gabe Pomerleau donated a \$1,000 bulletproof vest for the Massachusetts State Police K9 unit through a non-profit organization called Vest A Dog.

Vest A Dog works to raise money and resources to support Massachusetts's police dogs by providing bullet proof K9 vests, equipment, training and even dogs themselves to various departments.

Vesta Dog has provided more than 370 bullet proof vests for police dogs in their thirteen years in operation.

The Pomerleau family presented Massachusetts State Trooper Neko and his handler Trooper Purcel at the corner of Beacon and Mount Vernon Streets in Lawrence, where two different memorials were erected to Walter Pomerleau, founder of the Mount Vernon Neighborhood As-

sociation. On the South West side of the intersection is a planter and a plaque dedicated to Walter, while across the street on the North West side is a bench dedicated to him as well.

"We wanted to make this donation to the State Police through Vest A Dog here at this corner in honor both my mother (Gabrielle) and my father," Jan Pomerleau said.

Jan had donated a vest for her hometown police department in Taunton that was received by their K9 officer Blitz, and his partner, handler Officer Robert Swartz in memory of Vivian Gamache.

The K9 vests are bulletproof, stab proof, blunt trauma protective, and only weigh about 5 pounds. The vests are flexible so that the dogs can run, jump crawl, and do all that needs to be done while wearing the vest on duty.

PUPPY LOVE! with Kate Whitney

The Importance of Training Your Puppy

Kate Whitney
VALLEY PATRIOT PUPPY GIRL

This month I decided to write about the importance of training your puppy/dog. Far too many people think that because their dog knows how to “sit”, it’s trained. This is far from true.

Remember one thing, a trained dog is a happy dog.

And a trained dog has a happy owner. For this article I interviewed a woman named Pat Ingersoll. Pat is a Boxford resident and owner of Moose and Me Dog Training. She started training dogs twenty one years ago.

Her first client was her own Rottweiler named Axil. Pat offers private, semi-private, and group dog training classes, and also does in-home care for pets.

I want to thank Pat for taking the time to meet with me so that I could write this article and share with all of you some important tips to remember when the idea of training your puppy comes up. If you only take one thing away from reading this article, please let it be this: the keys to successful dog training are consistency, motivation, and reward.

Why Is Training Your Dog So Important?

You need to let your dog know he’s a dog; your dog is a social creature, just like humans. An obedience class is a great way to socialize your dog.

By taking your puppy to class, you not only create a bond away from the home, but also at the home when you continue the methods even after the class is over. Obedi-

ence class is a place where the owner is taught how to properly teach the dog.

Do You Have Any Rules For Class?

The biggest rule for class is the “one command rule.” When you ask your dog to do something, whether it’s “sit”, “stay”, etc. only say the word one time, do not keep repeating it. If your puppy does not do what you ask, physically help her. Never say “sit down” because that’s two commands.

“Sit” should be accomplished first, and then if you want your puppy to lay down on the floor, you would then say “down.” One command only and say it only once-remember this!

When Should I Start Taking My Puppy to Obedience Class? Are There Any Prerequisites?

You can start your puppy in classes as early as 8 weeks old. However, you should always check with your vet first. Your puppy also needs to have all appropriate shots.

Who Should Accompany the Puppy to Obedience Classes?

The more family members who can go, the better...everyone can benefit from going to class with their puppy. The family needs to be consistent with commands.

This consistency is going to come from everyone learning the correct way treat the puppy. The key here is to make sure everyone is on the same page. If all family members can’t make it to class, the person who does go needs to bring the rest of the family up to speed on what went on in the class.

What’s the First Command Someone

Should Teach Their Puppy?

“Sit.” A sitting dog isn’t jumping on people, isn’t running away from you. A sitting dog is a well behaved dog.

What Is The Best Way To Reward Your Puppy?

There are a few great ways to reward your puppy.

Always try to have something yummy for your puppy. Whether it’s a treat or pieces of chicken or liver, remember it should be something quick, easy, soft, and yummy. Simple words can also be very rewarding.

Things like “good dog” or “good sit” are great ways to show that you are happy with what your dog is doing. Always reward good behavior (positive reinforcement). Make sure that the reward, whether food or praise, comes quickly after the dog performed the good behavior. Remember to say your dog’s name when you praise.

For example, say “good sit, Dash.” Remember that your tone of voice is key.

Your dog can tell a lot by how you say something. If you are happy because your dog did something good, then make sure your voice is happy. If your dog did something that displeased you, make sure your voice shows this.

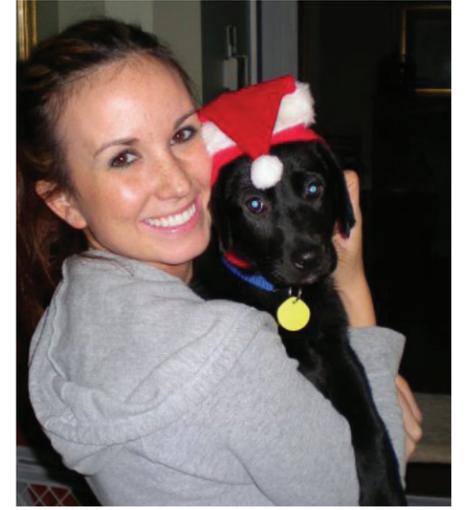
Never hit, kick, yell, or scream at your dog. You want your dog to respect you, not fear you.

What Are Some Good Treats And Toys For Puppies? Anything To Avoid?

Peanut butter in a Kong is a great treat! Make sure the treats that you feed your puppy do not have any wheat, corn, or gluten in it. Stay away from onions, grapes, chocolate.

A list of many other hazardous foods and plants can be found on www.AKC.org.

For toys, try to stay with toys that are made in the USA. Remember to never give a rawhide chew if your dog is going to be alone and unsupervised. A soft Frisbee known as a “chuck it” is great and even just a stuffed toy can do the trick of providing a well-liked toy.



Make sure you do not use human toys. Try to get dog friendly toys: no small parts that can be chewed off, no small beads used for stuffing, no hard eyes, etc. Inspect a toy before giving it to your puppy.

What’s the Difference Between Leather And Nylon Collars/Leashes? What Do You Recommend? How Do You Fit A Puppy for A Collar?

Nylon can burn your hands and also your dog’s neck if it pulls. Leather is great! The collar should be loose enough so that you are able to put your fingers under the collar, but tight enough so the collar can’t slip over the head. A retractable leash is okay for some situations. It allows freedom in the right place.

If you are walking your dog on a busy street, please don’t let it be out twenty feet in front of you, keep it on a short leash.

Housebreaking a Puppy, Any Suggestions?

Consistency...try to take the puppy out as much as you can and remember to reward the good behavior of going potty outside. If a puppy has an accident inside, be sure not to get angry at it. Make sure your puppy’s crate is large enough so that

PUPPYGIRL: PAGE 28

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TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

SANTAS LIST

Given that we have confidential informants in Santa's Workshop at the North Pole, we were able to get an advanced copy of Santa's Christmas list and it's pretty obvious from what we can see, who has been naughty and who's been nice. Here is what Santa is planning on leaving under the tree for some of the Valley's better-known characters:

Salisbury Town Manager Neil Harrington - A new board of selectmen that won't bobble their heads every time he opens his mouth.

Lenny Degnan - A big fat conviction for his role in the Lantigua administration and his treatment of city workers during his reign of terror in city hall.

Dan Rivera - Scott Jenkin's ACT security team. After defeating Willie Lantigua for mayor, he is going to need all the personal security he can get.

David Torrisi - A legislative citation from Diana DiZoglio for his years of service to the illegal aliens in Massachusetts and the Willie Lantigua administration. He did try to redeem himself by supporting Dan Rivera for mayor this year, but Santa still has TWO naughty X's next to David's name, so it looks like he still has some penance to do.

The Lawrence Police - A new chief who will give the officers on the street credit instead of claiming it all for himself like former Chief Romero used to do. Also a chief who will not play race politics and will cooperate with all members of the press instead of buying the local daily to pay his resume.

State Auditor Suzanne Bump - A shiny new calculator and a fresh set of pencils to help her audit more of the social programs that are being ripped off every day in Massachusetts by state workers and their co-conspirators in the private sector.

Lawrence City Attorney Charlie Boddy - A pink slip.

The State Taxpayers - An indictment of Willie Lantigua and his election department.

Lowell Councilor Rita Mercier - A candlelight dinner for two at Tom Duggan's favorite restaurant.

Billy Manzi - A book called 'How to Hatch a REAL Conspiracy, Ten Steps to Dinner Table Conversations that will keep you out of court' Santa crossed out the author's name.

Frank Cousins - At least four more investigations and a media with the balls to report on them.

Diana DiZoglio - Some Ritalin and a bottle of Nyquil. If you've ever met State Rep. DiZoglio, you might have noticed she is a little ... high-strung.

Willie Lantigua - Coal... again

Niki Tsongas - The good sense to actually question the president and other democrats before carrying their water and shilling their message to her constituents.

WINNING THE MENORAH IN NORTH ANDOVER



Look who won the menorah in North Andover at the Grand Menroah Lighting last month. See story, page 6.

Tsongas was elected to advocate her constituents concerns to the president, not advocate the president's propaganda to her constituents (without question) when she promised you all that "you can keep your doctor".

Santa also left a set of reading glasses so that Congressman Tsongas might actually read the bills she is rubber stamping for the Democrat party insiders. It's clear she didn't read The Obamacare act. If she did, she NEVER would have said... "YOU CAN KEEP YOUR DOCTOR."

John Tierney - Some new talking points so he doesn't have to be stuck with pointing to his opponent and saying "tea party extremist, tea party extremist, tea party extremist".

Last time he ran against an openly gay candidate in Richard Tisei, who was neither a tea party member nor an extremist, and he is facing him again this coming year. Shouting "tea party extremist" may not cut it this time.

Deval Patrick - A copy of Dante's Inferno. He is going to be there soon and he should probably have an idea of what is waiting for him.

Andover Selectman Vispoli - A senate win.

Charlie Baker - Two hours free coaching from yours truly, on how to make conservative arguments using liberal talking points, and neutralizing a hostile media.

State Rep. Jim Lyons - New neighbors who are not convicted criminals.

Attorney Sal Tabit - Better clients and a copy of the Valley Patriot's deadline schedule for 2014 so he will schedule his famous pig roast on a night I can actually make it.

James Fiorentini - A framed copy of the Eagle Tribune's story that outed him for blogging on their webpage under an assumed name. It seems Jimmy has forgotten how the Tribune took his confidential information and plastered it all over the front page, because he is still kissing their backsides.

Al White of the Eagle Tribune - More of what he got in 2013.

Haverhill School Committeeman Paul Magliocchetti - A subscription to the Valley Patriot to inspire him to start writing a column and inform the people of Haverhill what is going on in their school system.

Lawrence School Receiver Jeff Riley - A win for Charlie Baker as Governor.

State Rep. Lenny Mirra - More Republican colleagues come November so that the House of Representatives will be more balanced.

Shawn Toohey - The good sense not to try and run for office again. It's only going to end the same way it did last time.

Senator Ives - Lots and lots of presents! Though Ives is a liberal democrat who considers herself a "tree hugger", she has a 70% rating from Mass. Fiscal Alliance, she supported penalties for violations of the state's public records law, she opposed the gas tax, signed on to repeal the tech tax, and has stood with her constituents on most major issues.

PuppyGirl - The job of being the MC of The Valley Patriot's 2013, tenth anniversary BASH in March.

Methuen Mayor Zanni - A free subscription to the Eagle Tribune. I hear they mayor REALLY likes that paper.

Eliizabeth Warren - The Movie Pinocchio on DVD.

Jen Kannan - 20 minutes alone in a room with

Laborer's Union President Mike Gagliardi, no cops, no bodyguards, and nobody leaves the room till the buzzer goes off.

DJ Deeb - A trip to Jerusalem to meet with BB Netanyahu so maybe he will get it on the Palestinian question.

Marcos Devers - A reelection to his state rep. seat by a larger margin than he won last time, which was 86%.

Linda Dean Campbell - Singing lessons. Santa has something scribbled in the margins about Saint Patrick's Day, but I can't make it out.

Barry Finegold - An apartment on Park and Hampshire Street in Lawrence so he has to live in the conditions that he is responsible for doing absolutely nothing about in the last 16 years he has been an elected official representing the city.

Steve Grossman - An audio tape of his interview with Tom Duggan where he promised that if he was elected he would help the Valley Patriot put teeth into the state's public records law. Maybe if he hears his own words making a promise, he might actually learn how to keep them.

UPDATE ON THE DIADAMOS

The libel case filed by against the Valley Patriot by fired worker's compensation attorneys William and Carmine DiAdamo in 2008, continued into 2013.

DiAdamo filed his lawsuit demanding my "sources" on the story that I reported on the radio (not in the newspaper) about the DiAdamos being fired by the Sullivan administration. In emails and phone calls, Carmine DiAdamo threatened to file a suit so they could find out "who dined us out," on their firing from the city. The DiAdamos were fired by Mayor Sullivan after they lost the Andrea Traficanti-McCann worker's compensation case in 2008.

The DiAdamos had several conflicts of interest and never recused themselves from the case even after being asked by agents of the City of Lawrence to do so. The DiAdamos worked for the GLSD while Frank McCann sat on the board, the Workforce investment board, while McCann sat on the board, DiAdamo is the landlord for the Lawrence School Department's central offices, which McCann as DPW director was in charge of maintenance for, and DiAdamo

also worked with McCann on other workers compensation cases when DPW employees claimed injuries at work.

Yet, at no time did the DiAdamos reveal their conflicts while they continued to represent the City of Lawrence against Andrea

Traficanti-McCann.

In emails to the Valley Patriot, DiAdamo admitted that he was suing to find out who the "sources" were on that story and those "sources" were most likely responsible for them losing their contract with the city. "They will get DiAdamo Justice", Carmine told us back in 2008, making it clear that



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NOTEBOOK CONTINUED

a lawsuit would be retribution for those responsible for the DiAdamos being fired. Even though the Valley Patriot had nothing to do with the radio broadcast of DiAdamo's firing, the DiAdamos continue their legal quest to bankrupt the newspaper with their frivolous suit.

In depositions last month, Billy Di-Adamo admitted he had no damages from the radio broadcast and even admitted that he never had permission from the City of Lawrence to even file the case against the Valley Patriot. Because DiAdamo was the initial attorney on the Traficanti-McCann case, he is prohibited from even discussing the case without the City of Lawrence's permission. Yet, DiADamo filed his lawsuit against this newspaper and others claiming he was going to detail the work he did in that case...which he still cannot do because he is legally prohibited from doing so.

Carmine DiAdamo, Billy's father, told the Valley Patriot back in 2008 that the he has no doubt he will win a libel suit because he is so "networked" with every judge and every court clerk, and that he has long reaching influence in the court system "despite my age".

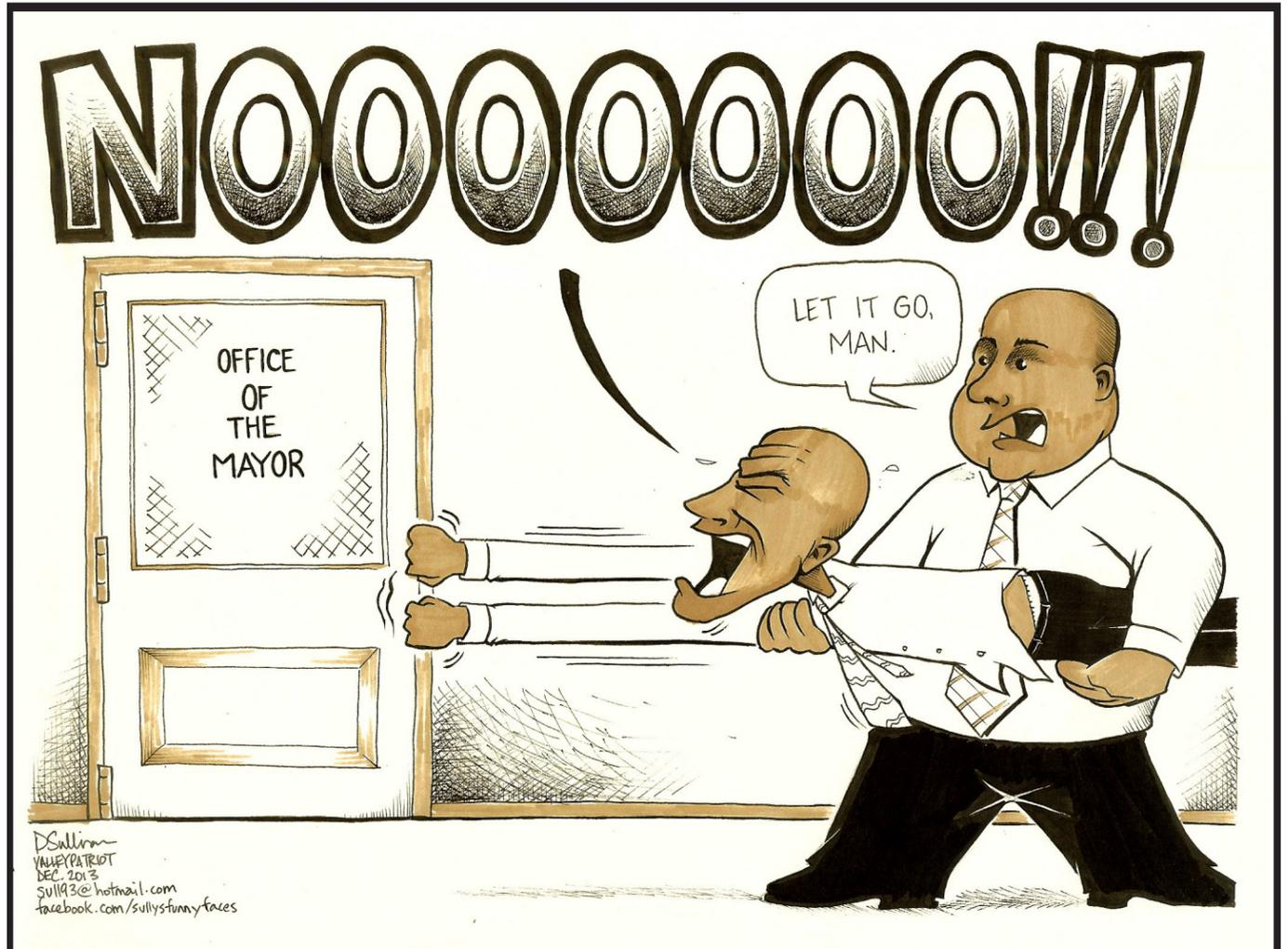
Despite claiming he has no political connections to Andrea and Frank McCann, Billy DiAdamo admitted under oath that it was Frank and Andrea's family friend, Larry Conlon, of Conlon's Office Products who called him to tell him about the "offending" broadcast in 2008.

Oddly enough, Larry Conlon is not only a family friend of the McCann's, but attended their wedding right around the time DiAdamo's contract was not renewed.

Larry Conlon also had contracts with the Lawrence DPW under Frank McCann where he sold office products to the city.

This was an interesting development in the story as DiAdamo has claimed from the beginning that they had no conflicts of interests representing the city against Traficanti-McCann's workers compensation claims.

DiAdamo also admitted in his deposition that in the last five years, he has never met even one person who had heard the 2008 broadcast (when his firing was revealed).



Lawrence Mayor-elect Dan Rivera may have a hard time getting into his new office come January. Thank you to David Sullivan of Dracut, Massachusetts for his custom drawn cartoons every month, always at the last minute, and yet somehow he always seems to get perfectly on paper what I have in my head.

~ TOM DUGGAN.

Yet the lawsuit continues. CNA INFO SESSION AT NECC AT SALS RIVERWALK Information sessions for individuals interested in becoming a certified nurse's aide or home health aide will be held Tuesday, December 3, from 10 to 11 a.m. and Thursday, January 2, from 10 to 11 a.m. at NECC Riverwalk, 360 Merrimack St., Building 9, in Lawrence.

Community Action of Haverhill will offer this six-week nurse aid training pro-

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"The Scallion - A Bastion of Journalistic Excellence"
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After Defeat, Lantigua Plans Second Term Agenda

D.J. Beauregard
VALLEY PATRIOT SATIRIST

After the votes were counted (and recounted) in the Lawrence mayoral race, defeated Mayor William Lantigua sat down with his political team to make plans for his second term. "I know that the people have spoken," Lantigua said, "but I have a job to do. No matter how the people voted in this past election, I am the Mayor and I will continue to be the Mayor."

He said that his second term agenda consists of continuing to pave Lawrence's roads, including ones that were already paved during his first term. According to Lantigua, "There are still too many potholes. Lawrence's roads are a mess! I will continue to work to pave every road, every year." He also plans to purchase several new garbage trucks to give as gifts to his political supporters. "I promised several folks in the Dominican Republic that, once I won a second term, I would send them a few more trucks as an appreciative gesture for their efforts to help

me win again."

Lantigua's opponent, Mayor-elect Daniel Rivera, said that the Mayor's plans are preposterous. "I won this election fair and square," Rivera said. "I am looking forward to taking the Oath of Office in January. I just hope that we can get Mr. Lantigua to move out of my office. The people of Lawrence just want to move on."

Lantigua believes that, although he fell short to Rivera in the final tally, there is no need for him to move out of his office any time soon. "Look, I don't care that Mr. Rivera feels that he is entitled to move into my office. If he is going to be such a stickler about this, I guess we could come to some sort of an agreement that would allow us to have two desks in the Mayor's Office. I'm willing to share my space with him if I have to."

When area reporters tried to ask several of Mayor Lantigua's former aides about their views regarding the second term agenda, the correction officers on duty said that none of the aides were available for comment.

BARBERS FROM PAGE 5

sharp haircut. Mr. Sid began a successful 35-year business "Hair Designs for Guys and Gals" in Lawrence which was, after a legal battle with the Board of Registration, the first shop which allowed barbers and hairdressers to work side-by-side within the same building, thus changing the operation of barber and hair-salon businesses across Massachusetts forever. There is no doubt that Frank and Mr. Sid were, and are leaders in their field and simply exude experience and skill.

Eventually the two friends retired, but not content with simply doing nothing, and along with the desire to stay sharp as the scissors they use, both continued to work as part-time barbers at various locations making friends and devoted customers along the way. Recently Serrano, looking for the same sense of excitement that marked his time at Salisbury, opened up his new business "Frank's Barber Shop" right on Main Street in North Andover just a few doors down from where he has worked for the past 15 years. One day in passing, Mr. Sid, who at the time was working a few hours a week at the Andover Barber Shop in Andover, saw his old friend putting the shop together. Mr. Sid stopped by to say "hi", one thing led to another and they decided to work together again - much older, much wiser, and much better barbers!

So, do you prefer the warm welcoming that a new small business owned by members of the community creates, or rather

the faceless chain-store "Who's next!?" approach? Aren't the memories you have of going in to your regular barber with your parents among the best? And if they are, would you not also want your boys to have the same? Today's world is fast, no doubt. Sometimes we are busy morning to night. We grudgingly swap old experiences and memories for speed and efficiency - but, in some ways this leaves us longing for the days when things seemed a lot simpler.

Although solving the big world and national problems might be asking for a little too much, Frank Serrano and Mr. Sid would be more than happy to listen to your problems and give sage advice, lend a compassionate ear and give quality, personally styled haircuts for men and/or their sons. A professional, positive and fun experience is guaranteed and waiting for you at the newly founded Frank's Barber Shop on 150 Main Street, North Andover, Massachusetts (Next to Bank of America)

For right now Frank is available on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8 to 5:30 and Saturday from 7 to 4. Mr. Sid is available on Wednesday from 8 to 5:30.

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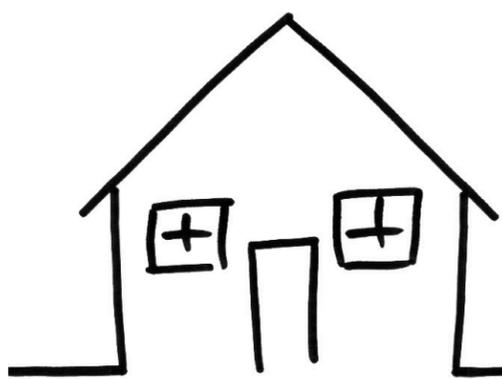
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Veterans Assisting Veterans Black Tie Event Raises More Than \$71K in Tribute to the United States Medical Corps

Veterans Assisting Veterans held a black tie fundraising event at Salvatore's Restaurant at Sal's Riverwalk in Lawrence last month in honor of the armed services medical corps.

The event raised more than \$71,000 that will be distributed to the following charities:

American Veterans with Brain Injuries, Operation Thank You, The American Widow Project, and Ironstone Farm Equine Program for Veterans.

Vets Assisting Vets is also purchasing a wheelchair for an Iraqi War veteran, James (29), who sustained his injury at Al Asad Airbase in Iraq on March 18, 2004.

James was assigned to a unit, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16, or simply MALS 16, based out of Marine Corps Air Station, Miramar, CA. This squad primarily dealt with rotary aircraft aka Helicopters.

James was an Aviation Ordnance.

John Saro of Pentucket Medical at Sal's Riverwalk, is a VAV board member, a surgeon and Navy vet who operated on and treated many injured soldiers told the audience of the incredible courage he witnessed by dedicated members of the armed services medical corps.



Coffee Cann at Sal's Riverwalk next to Enterprise Bank on Merrimack Street in Lawrence. Coffee Cann now has a DRIVE THRU!!



(Left to right) Gary Halloran, founder and president of Par 4 Technology Group in Wakefield, and Manny Ayala, a 20-year employee at the Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence, were inducted into the Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence Alumni Hall of Fame on Nov. 13 at the organization's 24th Hall of Fame reception.



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Sheri Cann, Owner of F.H.Cann & Associates is pleased to announce that F.H. Cann & Associates has just been honored as one of the top five mid-sized collections agencies in the country by InsideArm.com for the third year in a row. F.H. Cann & Associates (FHC), a comprehensive ARM company, was founded in 1999.

CEO, Frank Cann stated "I am so proud of my employees and management team. Their united success allows us to offer some of the best benefits and work environment in the industry. We strive to always offer the best to our loyal team!" FHC typically promotes from within and boasts a structured Career Pathing program that offers consistent, structured monthly feedback customized to the individual employee. Employees are offered multiple commission, bonus opportunities and a 401(k) program.

Medical coverage offered to employees and dependents includes vision discounts, health club reimbursement, and weight loss program reimbursements. The company and employee share costs of healthcare premiums, and new hires are eligible 90 days after start date.

Part of the award process was to poll employees. One FHC employee was

quoted "Everyone is treated with respect and courtesy. Makes for a good workplace because there is a goal in place and the effort is put in by the employee as well as managers to get that goal."

To facilitate open communication, an everyday practice is constant and consistent communication on trends, key performance indicators, statistical data analysis, and 360 degree feedback on portfolio collection practices. FHC also hosts regular meetings, employee luncheons and monthly recap meetings where employees are encouraged to share their thoughts, concerns, and ideas for improvement with senior leadership and executives.

F.H. Cann was previously named one of the Best Places to Work in Collections in 2011 and 2012.

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Now the Real Healing Begins!

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Almost four years ago at the inauguration and installation of Mayor William Lantigua which had the atmosphere of a coronation of a king, the posture and disposition of his administration was unveiled. Then, State Representative Lantigua entered the auditorium from the back and walked through the crowd of loyal supporters to the tune of Frank Sinatra singing, My Way! This song set the tone for what was to come. From that moment on, it no longer was about the City of Lawrence, it became all about him and those who supported him.

During the campaign, he refused to debate his opponents or even give interviews to any English speaking media, and he was proud of it. This most definitely was his way, but it was and never will be the American way!

He became so full of himself that he truly believed the lies that he would tell time and time again. Beginning with asking the State Legislature to deficit borrow so that he would not have to lay-off Police and Firemen, which after receiving the money, he immediately did anyway.

The next lie was telling the Lawrence citizens that he asked the state to come in and takeover Lawrence's public schools. But anyone who was and still not under his mind control, knew that the state had already made its decision to take over the public schools due to his poor management of the schools as the Chairman of the Lawrence School Committee.

This tale was told at every State of the City Address that he made, which also included the other tale of him balancing four budgets in a row. But if the truth ever gets a hearing, the budgets were balanced by the State Overseer who came to Lawrence attached to the loan he received at the beginning of his administration.

So, Mayor Lantigua's so-called achievements, came by the state doing the heavy lifting. Also during the last four years, many of Mayor Lantigua's top officials were indicted and now are awaiting their trials, bringing much unwanted bad publicity upon our city. The City of Lawrence when talked about outside of the city, has a negative cloud over its head which does very little to attract businesses resulting in jobs for its citizens.

When re-election time came approaching, Mayor Lantigua dusted off his way of campaigning play book of four years ago, but this time he added to his bag of tricks.

The fixing of potholes and the paving of streets in neighborhoods began to take place, making it known he was doing this because he really cared. But in effect, one

could say he was attempting to buy the peoples votes because if he really did care he would have done so earlier, don't you think?

The truth of the matter is that these were state and federal grant funded projects which the Mayor had nothing to do with. He just added these projects to his list of accomplishments, placing large blue signs on the corners of the new paved streets lauding himself as the city's most concerned Mayor. These blue signs, in actuality, had the same effect as campaign signs. But thank God more than half of the citizens of Lawrence saw through the lies and had enough.

We all know now what happened next. The election of 2013 took place and the recount which followed and after all said and done, Lawrence's nightmare has come to an end! Come January 2014 we will be inaugurating and installing a new Mayor, former City Councilor, Dan Rivera! New beginnings for our city!

Lawrence will finally have a Mayor who will represent the entire city, not just a selected few. The people of Lawrence will now have their voice back which was taken away four years ago. The new Mayor has lots of work ahead to change the image of the city, and to do so he will need our help! All of us working together can make the city better. We can and we will make it happen!

In closing, my intent here is not to dump on our former Mayor as he exists, but to collaborate or prove my remarks describing the former administration. Here is Mayor Lantigua's own words during his concession speech to Mayor-elect Dan Rivera; "If my name were John Sullivan and I looked like some of you, my face would be on the cover of Money magazine or Forbes because of what I've done".

These are words that can only come from a man who is full of himself and who insisted on doing things his way! These words from his own mouth concerning himself sum up the last four years.

Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall."

Thank God This Nightmare is Over!
God Bless you all and God Bless the Great City of Lawrence!

Merry Christmas to all and it already is going to be a Happy and Safe New Year!



Peter Larocque is a former member of the Lawrence School Committee and is a regular columnist for The Valley Patriot. You can email him at: peterlarocque@hotmail.com

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Rivera Calls for Hiring Freeze – Will Stop Paying Indicted Employees

Tom Duggan

VALLEY PATRIOT PUBLISHER

Lawrence Mayor-elect Dan Rivera appeared on WCAP's "Paying Attention" radio program last month saying he has already spoken with state receiver Robert Nunez and outgoing Mayor Willie Lantigua to implement a hiring freeze on all city jobs.

"I am hoping that the mayor will do a hiring freeze," Rivera said. "I asked the Overseer [Bob Nunez] to implement a hiring freeze. And I am asking Willie to also do a hiring freeze between now and January 1st, so that there are no runs on positions that are open."

River said he also wants an audit of personnel and that he wants an expansion of the upcoming audit on the city's finances.

"I think that as a matter of course we have an audit coming anyway and we just want to expand it to be just a little bit more thorough so we have a benchmark. I don't want people to say that 'Oh, Dan is blaming Willie for stuff that he left, and it's really Dan's thing,' or 'Dan is taking credit for stuff that Willie really did.'"

Rivera said that he was going to be evaluating employees and contracts with a new standard not seen in the Lantigua administration.

"We are going to open up the books and let people see what's going on. I'm not going to hide behind stuff ... if there are

contractual relationships that are based on personal relationships, people should just know right now, those things are gone. We're going to do it based on what's best for the city 100%. We are going to 'lean on' making sure most of the money we spend is with businesses in Lawrence."

Rivera says that having an open book policy with city documents will stop the speculation between real conflicts and rumors of conflicts.

Rivera announced his transition team would include Attorney, University of Massachusetts Board of Trustees member, and Lawrence resident Zoila Gomez and National Board Chair for Groundwork USA and Lawrence resident Maggie Super Church as co-chairs of his transition team.

HITTING THE GROUND RUNNING, GETTING INDICTED CITY EMPLOYEES OFF THE PAYROLL

The Lawrence City Councilor At-Large will take office in January and admits the task of turning Lawrence around is daunting, but promises he is hitting the ground running. He says that the very first thing he will do is stop paying indicted city employees, and send a message that things are going to be different.

Over the last four years of the Lantigua Administration, several city employees have been indicted for corruption including the deputy police Chief, Melix Bonilla.

Lantigua continues to pay them while they await trial.

"Listen, I was in the service, and we always thought about, not so much the overall goal, but the small stuff to get to that goal ... so you go in, and you make a top ten list, and you start picking away at it. But, the first thing you have to do is, you have to take the guys who are indicted off of the city payroll and put that money in escrow, and put them on leave without pay."

"You've just got to do that right away because that sends a message very clearly that you're going to do things differently, that the expectations that people have with their money is going to be different, and you start rebuilding that trust. And that's what you've got to do from day one."

"The way I am going to try and rebuild people's trust is by being more trustworthy," Rivera said.

Given that several high profile police officers and the Lawrence Firefighter's Union endorsed Lantigua, Rivera was asked what his relationship would be with both departments.

"I have been telling every police officer I have been talking to and every firefighter, we are going to de-politicize this thing.

I will never accept a check or a donation from a police officer or a firefighter. I think it's wrong, I think their job is hard enough. I am going to be a partner at the negotiat-



ing table. I am not petty; I actually have a very short memory on things like that. It doesn't really bother me at all. This thing is a difficult thing, politics is hard. People can disagree and some people can take it very personal, but I don't."

Asked what he thought about the problems with ballot machines at the polls on Election Day, Rivera was quick to joke about Lantigua's storied history with elec-

RIVERA: PAGE 22

Looking Back at Four Years of Lantigua Shenanigans

Right to the bitter end, Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua went down swinging as he told reporters on the day he conceded that if he were white, he would be on the cover of Forbes or Money magazine for his financial achievements as mayor.

"Those who are not blind of conscience, as I always say, will have to conclude that we have a much better city today than when I came into office," Lantigua said after his concession. That concession was in Spanish, on Spanish language radio, just two days after a recount showed Lantigua lost the election by 82 votes.

"We came into a financial fiasco with a deficit of almost 30 million dollars. We came in and balanced four budgets, the first one as you know very difficult, laid off police and fire, got into a lot of political problems, but since those days we balanced three more. Each one of those budgets we came out with some pluses in the water enterprise and the general fund. That's something the city hasn't seen for close to 25 years."

He also pointed out that Moody's has upgraded the city's credit rating twice.

Near the conclusion of Lantigua's statements to the press, he just could not resist one more chance to play the race card saying, "If my name was John Sullivan, and I looked, maybe like some of you," he said pointing to the white reporters, "my face would be on the front page of Forbes



Magazine, or Money Magazine because of what we have done here as an administration."

What Lantigua didn't say is that he had nothing to do with balancing those budgets. The State's Department of Revenue was so panicked at the prospect of Lantigua running the city's finances four years ago that they appointed a state receiver.

That state receiver (Rob Nunez) has been in charge of the city budget since the beginning of Lantigua's four years.

It was Rob Nunez and the Lawrence City Council that balanced the city budget over the last four years. Not Mayor Lantigua.

The state also appointed a receiver to run the school system after Lantigua, as chairman of the school committee, refused to appoint a superintendent months after firing Wilfredo Laboy.

As for Lantigua's \$30 Million deficit that he supposedly inherited in 2010, there was no \$30 million deficit. If you remember, Lantigua was elected in 2009 when there was supposedly a \$9.5 million deficit. That deficit occurred because the city council at the time was run by Patrick Blanchette.

Blanchette refused to set the 2009 tax rate, send out the tax bills and forced the city into 30 day budget cycles.

But, the facts didn't matter back then as Lantigua inflated the number from \$9.5 million to \$17.5 million in speeches he made after being elected, but prior to taking office.

By the time he took office in January of 2010, Lantigua had ballooned the number again to be a \$24.5 million deficit, even though nothing new had occurred in the city's finances in the three months prior.

That's when Lantigua went to the legislature asking for a \$35 Million bailout loan that Deval Patrick swore he wouldn't allow, but eventually authored and approved House Bill 1441 with the help of State Representative's David Torissi and State Senator Barry Finegold.

Even if Lantigua really had a \$24.5 million deficit, he was asking for \$35 million and threatening to lay off cops and firefighters, predicting chaos in the city streets if the loan was not approved.

But it was approved. And after Lantigua and Robert Nunez got the \$35 million, they

proceeded to lay off 24 cops and 25 firefighters, closing a fire station and creating chaos in the city as firefighters were hurt, crime spiked and police officers themselves started to speak out.

After Lantigua had publicly called the firefighters in Lawrence "lazy", telling the city council at an open meeting that "we pay them to sleep", and telling the press that cops were likely starting the fires in Lawrence and then purposely going slow to the scenes of those fires to exacerbate fire damage. Lantigua then encouraged citizens to videotape the city's firefighters going to and from fires and at the scene of fires so he could prove his case.

No case of firefighter misdeeds was ever proven.

Also part of the fallout of the fire cuts was Fire Chief, Brian Murphy. Chief Murphy was alerting the media that the fire situation in Lawrence was getting bad. Several large fires occurred, where 10 or more other cities had to be called in to assist the LFD.

Murphy became a whistle blower, telling the public that the shortage was putting his men at risk and making it nearly impossible for them to respond adequately to the number of fires and magnitude of those fires in Lawrence under Lantigua.

Without missing a beat, Lantigua got his cronies on the Lawrence City Council to approve a home rule petition to the state legislature where Representative David

LANTIGUA: PAGE 29

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SENIOR MOMENT: FROM PAGE 13

took me 10 years to realize this is what I am meant to do and I am going to enjoy every second of it. It is a payoff I wouldn't chance for the world. I am just happy my senior moment came so early.

Brian Coyne is a Nationally Certified Personal Trainer with the National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM) and has been in the industry for over 10 years.

He has experience with all ages and levels including seniors and special needs individuals. He resides in Methuen with his wife Heidi, son Logan and their dog Rosie. He can be reached via his website, www.coynefitness.com or brian@coynefitness.com.

STATE SENATE: FROM PAGE 6

as serving as Co-Director of President Barack Obama's Nashua office for Latinos in New Hampshire during the 2008 race for the U.S. Presidency and as Outreach Director for the Massachusetts Democratic Party.

Payano served as Special Assistant to Congresswoman Tsongas, where he worked on economic development and helped advocate for constituents with issues like immigration and social security. While he worked at the Department of Transitional Assistance, he accepted a position as a Program Director at the Merrimack Valley Sandbox, a joint initiative

between the Deshpande Foundation and UMass Lowell, which seeks to boost the economic and social well-being of greater Lawrence and Lowell by advancing entrepreneurship and innovation.

While Attending the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, he served as President of the Student Government Association and oversaw its \$1.8 million budget. Payano has a Master of Science in Public Affairs from the University of Massachusetts-Boston and he is currently finishing his second year at Suffolk University School of Law.

RIVERA: FROM PAGE 21

tion fraud.

"One of the things that shows we have been vindicated is, when you have Willie Lantigua talking about ballot box problems, and problems at the polls, you know you've done something (right) there," he said laughing.

VOTER ID

"I heard you talking about voter ID, I support voter ID," Rivera said on WCAP.

"I think we definitely need Voter ID, it's for everybody. And if there is an elderly person who doesn't drive, we have to find a way to help that person vote. There's no reason [why we can't]. I mean we put a person on the moon. We have phones that you can use without wires. We can figure out a way so that we can know who's voting, and this is a process we can all feel good about."

NO LANTIGUA

INVESTIGATION UNDER RIVERA

Rivera said he was not going to fully investigate the last four years of the Lantigua administration but would not stop others who want to.

"We have a lot of real important things to do and I am not going to get sidetracked with some of these things that are less important. They are more bureaucratic," Rivera said.

Rivera said if he gets a request for public information, "I'm not going to deny it. We

are just going to give them the information. I think it's really important for folks who want to do that type of research, like newspapers ... they should do it. I'm not going to hold court. There isn't going to be any kind of Nuremberg type stuff going on here. We're going to work to make the city better and if we do that, all the other stuff doesn't matter."

WHAT WILL LAWRENCE LOOK LIKE IN 4 YEARS

Rivera was asked what he wants people to say about Lawrence in four years.

"I think there are two things. Number one is, 'Wow, there's actually this much growth in Lawrence.' Because if we do that, that means there are more jobs in Lawrence and then we will make a dent in the unemployment number. So many people don't have jobs in Lawrence.

"The second thing is perception. That people can say, 'I remember when Lawrence was a basket case. It's not that way now. That people inside [the city] can feel like this is a great place. And people from the outside as well can think, 'wow, something really special is happening in Lawrence and it's different than it had been before.'"

Rivera said he has not heard from, nor spoken to Mayor Lantigua since before Election Day.

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From Page 3: 2013 A Year in Review

trayed D'Ambrosio as a victim of persecution by the government for expressing his views.

The issue saw an odd mix of defenders for D'Ambrosio as libertarians and Tea Party supporters saw themselves on the same side as liberal first amendment advocates.

A grand jury refused to indict the Methuen High student, and he was set free early in June.

WHAT ERIN COX TAUGHT US ABOUT THE NATIONAL MEDIA

North Andover High School volleyball captain, Erin Cox, and 41 other students from North Andover High were caught by police at an underage drinking party in Boxford this past September. She claimed she was only there to pick up a drunk friend who needed a ride home.

Cox was suspended from the volleyball team for five games and lost her position as captain for being present at the party. Two other students were also suspended from their extracurricular activities as well.

It should have been an open and shut case of a local high school kid caught doing something wrong and paying the price for it. In fact it wasn't even a news story. But, that was before the Cox family tried to stop Erin's suspension from the volleyball team.

The Cox family hired famed attorney Wendy Murphy, who went on national television claiming that Cox was being unfairly suspended from the volleyball team because of a "zero tolerance policy" at NAHS, meaning that there was no discretion by the school principal to suspend Cox from the team.

But after the story went global on CNN, MSNBC, BBC, FOX and every other major television, newspaper and radio stations across the country, Bryan

McGonigle of the North Andover Patch reported his interview with Superintendent Hutchinson who revealed for the first time that there is "no zero tolerance policy at North Andover High school."

What's more, The Valley Patriot learned that despite an email written by a Boxford Police Officer "clearing her" of any wrongdoing, Erin Cox was indeed charged by that officer and eventually plead guilty to not only being at the party, but drinking alcohol as well.

This was after Wendy Murphy "demanded" that the Valley Patriot retract our story that Cox was scheduled to appear in court on juvenile criminal charges, saying emphatically that Erin was "not charged".

Not one member of the national media bothered to do their homework on this story before reporting on it. Even after the Valley Patriot reported that the national news media was wrong about every major fact in this story (complete with court documents), none of the national media corrected their story with one exception, The Huffington Post.

Locally, only WCAP radio, Dan Rea of WBZ's Nightside, North Andover Patch and Barstool Sports Boston made an effort to correct the story for their readers and listeners.

The Editors of the Valley Patriot see the Erin Cox case as proof Duggan was right, though we were hoping that he wasn't.

LANTIGUA DEFEATED - There really is no single story in 2013 that produced the shockwaves that Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua's defeat last month had throughout the Valley and the state. Mayor Elect Rivera out-networked and out worked Mayor Lantigua. See COLUMN Page (21)

PUBLIC RECORDS - 2013 was a KEY year for progress and revelations on the state's impotent public records law Chap-

ter 66. The law states that records and documents produced by public entities (like municipalities, state agencies, public boards, etc.) must be made available to the public within ten day upon request, and at minimum costs. The Valley Patriot spent an inordinate amount of time in 2013 reporting on violations of the state's public records law and calling for penalties for officials who violate it. Currently there is no penalty for violating the public records law.

The Valley Patriot filed a public records request for documents showing payments to the DiAdamo Law Office back in February of 2012. DiAdamo represented Mayor Lantigua and Patrick Blanchette in a personal criminal matter, but the public still doesn't know who paid for DiAdamo's legal fees that day. As of the time we published this edition (December 9th), we still have not received the information we have been seeking to determine whether or not the taxpayers paid DiAdamo, or if Lantigua violated any laws by employing an attorney who's contract he signs. Even after orders from Judge Murtaugh and Cornetta, Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua has refused to comply because the law has no way to be enforced.

Enter Republican State Representative Jim Lyons, and Democrat Rep. DiZoglio, as well as State Senators Kathleen O'Connor Ives and Jamie Eldridge (both Democrats). These legislators submitted bills with similar language to add stiff fines and penalties for violations of the public records law statute so that public officials who refuse to turn over documents will be personally held liable.

Senator Ives and her staff facilitated a meeting with Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan and Senator Donnelly of the Administration Committee where her bill on public records is being heard. Representa-



tive DiZoglio and Lyons are both waiting on a hearing on their bills as well.

Whichever legislator's version of the bill makes it to the floor for a vote, officials we spoke to said that they believe, one way or another, penalties will be attached to MGL Ch. 66.

The Valley Patriot's public records case against Mayor Lantigua has also had some new developments. Judge Cornetta has ordered Mayor Lantigua to allow Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan to inspect the records on file at city hall.

We will update you when that happens.

PAROLE OFFICIALS WHO FREED COP KILLER REINSTATED

In August, an arbitrator reinstated two of the parole officials responsible for the release of cop killer Dominic Cinelli.

Cinelli was in prison serving THREE life sentences for attempted murder, had shot one man, robbed dozens with a gun, and escaped. While on the run, he willfully committed more violence and was eventually caught ... again.

But what happened next was outrageous. Dominic Cinelli, a hardened, violent criminal was put back out onto the streets once AGAIN by Deval Patrick's hand-picked parole board.

This time, while he had the blessing of Deval Patrick's parole board to prowl the streets yet again, Cinelli shot and killed Woburn Police Officer Jack Maguire.

Rest in Peace Officer Maguire.

NEWBURYPORT: FROM PAGE 11

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DESSERTS TAKE A NEW PATH

Alden Merrell originally began on Plum Island in Newburyport by Preston Alden Reed and Skip Merrell Stern in the 1980's, their branding of the all famous creations began in a little beach hut. In May 2012, the new owners of Alden Merrell took the

lead and Dianne's Fine Desserts was created. Their mission was to bring a smile to everyone's face with delicious treats for all occasions. Dan Scales and Mike Knowles continue the Alden Merrell tradition, but with a different name. If you have driven by Graf Road in Newburyport, you may have done a double take at the cheesecake factory and have seen the name of the sign changed to Dianne's Fine Desserts.

"If we were selling signs, we would have left the name the same but we are selling the same great tasting desserts we always have," Knowles said. "The Alden Merrell brand is alive and well. We have very much kept the recipes the same. We have not made any significant changes to any of the recipes. We use nothing but the best quality ingredients, and we are very much a premium brand. There is nothing to be gained by trying to cheapen those things because people will stop buying it." - quoted in the daily newspaper.

Their bakery store front is now redone bringing a clean fresh look to their cases filled with frosting cakes and amazingly mouthwatering treats, you are greeted with a smile from your favorite faces of the many years of work at Alden Merrell, they have revamped the menu keeping your favorites and introducing some new products. They provide many non profits and charitable efforts with their desserts, brining the love of their baked goods to families in the area.

Dianne's Fine Desserts in Newburyport will help you sweeten the occasion everyday so stop on by and see what's new at Dianne's Fine Desserts located at 4 Graf Road in Newburyport, MA. (978) 462-4495 www.diannesfinedesserts.com

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Let's Talk About FOOD Addiction with Pennie Hale

Its the holiday season! Christmas is a special time of year. We celebrate the birth of Christ and enjoy time with our loved ones. Some of us have time off from work to plan and attend events. Sometimes we see people we only get to see at Christmas time. Or we make an effort to contact someone we miss. It can be a wonderfully festive time. It can be full of cheer and good times and making lasting memories.

How do we take the time to plan healthy meals and to exercise? Is that important? We all know that exercising increases endorphins. We also know that getting plenty of rest and eating enough protein helps us minimize stress. But stress can't always be avoided. And the urge to overeat doesn't end at Thanksgiving. It can be an issue through New Years.

Temptation is everywhere! If you're like me, its hard to resist all the treats that people bring to work, events and gatherings. I may start the day with a plan to keep the snacking to a minimum, but I can't resist when someone offers me a Christmas cookie or a cup of hot cocoa with marshmallows. I want to enjoy this time of year and all its blessings and bounty without struggling with the urge to binge. It's an urge that can consume my mind and distract me from having fun.

If you've been reading my column, you have read my references to an eating disorder. I always knew that I did not have healthy dietary habits. When a person eats to the point of mild to severe discomfort, its pretty obvious that person has a problem. I'm that person. I cannot say no to certain foods. I crave sugar. I crave chocolate. There are times when I have left my house very late at night to get a sugary and/or chocolate snack. I can't help myself. I start to crave, then I obsess over that craving. Taking my mind off my craving is virtuously impossible. So, the theory that if snacks aren't in the house, I can't eat them has a simple solution. When I'm craving something and I don't have it in my house, the store is right down the street. And its open 24 hours a day.

My original weight loss was 75 pounds.

That was an amazing accomplishment and feeling. Since then, I've gained 50 back. I don't like how that feels. I liked how I felt then. I want to go back. I want to go back to myself when I first lost the weight and tell myself that weight-loss maintenance is harder than losing weight. What I didn't know then but I do know now is that I'm bulimic. I'm an overweight, carb-addicted bulimic. I have heard that word as many times as I've heard the word anorexia. People who have anorexia are usually easy to identify. Bulimics may not be that easy. I always thought that bulimia was bingeing and purging (overeating then vomiting). I have recently learned that isn't the case. Bulimics can use many methods to purge. My method is dieting. I binge to the point of rapid weight gain. Then I diet until I don't feel quite as uncomfortable or big. You're familiar with the phrase: feast or famine. I wouldn't describe my situation using that exact phrase, but it comes pretty close to my situation.

How does someone recover from bulimia? I don't know. I have done a lot of research since I learned the truth about it. Like I said, I've always described what I do with food as crazy and "like" an eating disorder. But it IS an eating disorder. So, where do I go from here? Do I pursue counselling and seeing a nutritionist? Do I keep dealing with it the best way I can as I always have? How do I deal with people who think its just all silly and I should just eat more fruit? All I know is, its tiring to always think about food. It's exhausting and mentally taxing. I either feel in control, or totally out of control.

I will continue to share my experiences with you. Being open with my weight-related issues has helped me learn and understand more about addiction and eating disorders. The feedback I receive from you lets me know that I'm not alone.

I wish you all a happy, healthy, safe holiday and a very Merry Christmas. If you wish to share your story with me, email me at pennielacouture@verizon.net

New Hampshire School Choice Scholarship Act: Good for Students and Parents

D.J. Bettencourt

VALLEY PATRIOT NEW HAMPSHIRE COLUMNIST

The vast majority of Granite Staters know from experience that New Hampshire public schools offer an outstanding education for most students.

But while many flourish in their assigned school, some students need a different educational environment. Every child learns differently, and all children hold within themselves their own particular genius. This potential can best be realized when children and their families have the ability to choose what school they believe will best engage, prepare and educate them for the future.

Unfortunately, other than the choice to uproot and move to a different school district, most middle-class families lack choice in education, which is a barrier preventing many children from achieving their full potential.

The New Hampshire School Choice Scholarship Act (NHSCSA), of which I was the primary sponsor, was passed in 2012 to allow businesses to make tax-deductible donations to K-12 educational scholarship programs. Such programs offer up to \$2,500 scholarships to disadvantaged and special needs students toward the cost of out-of-district public schools, independent schools, and even certain home-schooling expenses.

With these scholarships, students and families can investigate and select the educational forum that best suits their needs.

The best school for a child may offer smaller class sizes or a vocational technical program or a "move on when ready" system for gifted students, or a particular expertise with a child's special needs. In addition to better serving our students, choice will empower their parents to get engaged in their children's education. These reforms will create better accountability in education - the single biggest factor in improving academic performance.

Scholarship programs like NHSCSA is a low-risk first step in educational innovation. Similar programs have been tested as successes in eight other states. Moreover, studies from Harvard, Stanford, and the University of Arkansas have shown that school choice programs have positive impacts on academic performance.

As for school choice in general, 18 of 19 studies in Milwaukee, Florida and Washington, D.C., showed improvements in educational outcomes directly related to school choice.

Sadly, certain special interests have aggressively resisted the NHSCSA and other attempts to alter the status quo in education. Despite the careful manner in which the program was crafted, it hasn't stopped the public school lobby from scare tactics and putting forth outrageous claims.

More dishearteningly, they have initiated a careful and manipulative litigation strategy this spring to challenge the

legality of the NHSCSA. Currently their legal challenge is pending before the New Hampshire Supreme Court.

These critics fail to appreciate that school choice is neither an indictment on public schools nor a battle of public vs. private schooling. It's about giving disadvantaged and special needs students and their families the opportunity to excel in an education that fits their needs.

Facilitating scholarships to disadvantaged and special needs students should not be a partisan issue. After all, few object to scholarships to attend colleges and universities. Why should we wait that long to offer students a chance for educational success? The foundation for a child's academic career is built in the early years. We cannot afford to keep him or her locked into an unsuitable educational environment until adulthood - it's just too late.

The 2011-2012 legislature was sensitive to church-state separation concerns should a family choose to apply a scholarship at a church-affiliated school. We didn't want taxpayer dollars supporting religious activities any more than we want churches to become dependent on government money.

That's why scholarships under the NHSCSA are entirely privately funded. Any choice to use scholarships at a religious institution is entirely the choice of parents. As affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court, such programs give families choice without entangling the government in religious affairs. It's a fair and sensible solution. New Hampshire students and parents can only hope that the New Hampshire Supreme Court will reach the same sound conclusion.

The NHSCSA is about looking to the future in education, a future starkly different from today. We know the 21st century school must be different than the 19th- and 20th-century system we're still living with. But how?

That's the role of innovation, a process that is, by its nature, incremental, testing for successes while leaving behind what proves ineffective. Choices in education will kick-start that innovative process.

Sadly, this important innovation for our students could be lost to union and special interest initiated litigation. We can only hope the New Hampshire Supreme Court does the right thing for students. Every student deserves the best.



D.J. Bettencourt served as a State Representative in the New Hampshire House of Representatives from 2005 to 2012 and was the House Majority Leader for the 2011-2012 legislative term. He currently works

as a special education academic assistant and is the Volunteer Coordinator at the Salem Animal Rescue League.

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Ye Gay Ol' Valley

Dying to Teach

D. B. Langevin

VALLEY PATRIOT LESBIAN COLUMNIST

In 1927, fifty-five year old Andrew Kehoe, school board treasurer in Bath, Michigan shot his wife, fire-bombed his own barn then set off a bomb at the Bath Consolidated School killing thirty-eight school children, six adults and injuring fifty-eight others. It was and still remains the deadliest act against an American school in the history of the U.S. There would not be another attack on an American school until 1966 when twenty-five year old Charles Whitman, an engineering student, climbed a clock tower at the University of Texas and began shooting a high powered rifle. In the next hour and a half, Whitman would shoot forty-nine people, killing seventeen before he was shot multiple times and killed by Texas authorities.

Between the Texas University Massacre in 1966 and 2005 there would be, on average, 1.7 school shootings per year with an average of 1.9 deaths in schools across our great nation. Twelve of those thirty-nine years would see no 'school shootings' at all. From 1990 on, the United States would not see another year pass without a school being assaulted by a gunman. That would make twenty-three solid years where our children and their teachers have not been safe in our schools.

Although the above statement is true, something changed after 2005. That would be the last year that school shootings would number under three and deaths under six. If we average the shootings and deaths over the past seven years we would see about ten shootings and over fifteen deaths per year in our educational institutions. Education has become a very dangerous vocation.

As a social studies teacher of young teenagers I make it a point to discuss headline news with them. Inevitably our conversations are about the rash of school shootings that plague our nation all too often. It's a slippery slope and a very shaky tight rope I walk upon when these discussions emerge. Thirteen and fourteen year olds have more information directly at their finger tips than ever before. And though they may not be able

to conjugate a sentence or solve the latest algebraic equation, they are no dummies. They hear, see and feel everything that's going on in the world around them and it frightens them. It's very difficult to quell their fears and concerns about the rising school violence when I can hardly do the same for myself. I bring up the number of schools that exist in our country and state along with the number of students that go to school across our nation on any given day and hope that they believe statistically we are safe within our building. I'm not sure how convincing I am.

With every school shooting, we hear stories of uncommon valor and acts of selfless heroism. Teachers shield students with their own bodies, hurry them to safety while jeopardizing their own and place themselves between the assailant and the children they were asked to teach not to save. Gone is the old fashioned school marm that would scream at the rubber snake placed strategically in the top drawer of her desk. Unfortunately, there are countless parents today who can thank a heroic teacher that their child is alive.

Teachers are now placing their lives on the line every day they step into the classroom. Recently 3,000 teachers were polled by the National Education Association across America. Half reported being harassed by students at school. Others revealed theft and property damage. One quarter admitted to being victims of physical attacks which include but are not limited to being hit, kicked, bitten slapped, stabbed or shot. There is no rational explanation to this rise in violence, but it goes without saying that this is not your grandmother's job anymore.

Teaching is not a career for the faint of heart. To our students we are not just educators. By necessity we have taken on the roles of surrogate parents, therapists, make shift medical responders, nurses, mediators, policemen, and bullet proof vests and that is only scratching the surface. Teachers have evolved into something that would be unrecognizable by one from even just twenty years ago. We have dedicated our lives to making the lives of your children the best that they can be and we are now laying down our own to do it.

CULTURE WARRIOR

Peace on Earth

Paul Murano

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

"Our world has always been at war with itself because it has been at war with God." These are the words of renowned philosopher and author Peter Kreeft. In the same vein, spiritual theologian Thomas Merton once wrote: "We are not at peace with others because we are not at peace with ourselves. And we are not at peace with ourselves because we are not at peace with God."

This raises the important question: Can the Christmas message of Peace on Earth be attained without submitting to the Baby in the manger? Did the three magi kings from the east who came to do Him homage have the right idea?

If the past century has taught us anything it is that peace on earth can never take place by the initiative of man alone. Collectively man has made himself an enemy of God by willing to "be like gods" (Gn 3:5) to make himself the highest authority. Human ideologies of "peace" such as nazism, communism, and secular humanism are all attempts at world peace without God, and have been responsible for untold millions of deaths in the past century by the war on Jews, capitalists, and the unborn respectively. Representing these three modern movements in the Christmas story was King Herod, the political arm of the Romans at the time. Herod attempted through lies and manipulation to kill the baby Jesus (Mt 2:8) and eradicate His influence from society, just as these movements have attempted to do.

The Herods of our day, however, are more subtle than to call publicly for the murder of every male child. The modus operandi is the same though, in the forms of killing reputations, making truthseeking a crime with "politically-correct" language and laws, and even killing the innocence of children so they may grow up adopting a subconscious psychological defense mechanism that rejects truth and goodness out of an attempt to avoid self-loathing.

The answer to these attempts is found in the two-fold Christmas message: first, despite all the regurgitated Herods that pop up in history, Truth & Goodness will never be squelched; and second, that despite having hardened hearts, each heart has another opportunity to submit to the Truth Incarnate in order to find peace. So,

let each of us hold onto the Hope that is True. Every Christmas when we see those three kings bowing before the Baby in the manger we are reminded that peace is actually attainable:

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage."... King Herod called the magi secretly and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. ... "Go and search diligently for the child. When you have found him, bring me word, that I too may go and do him homage."

After their audience with the king they set out... They were overjoyed at seeing the star, and on entering the house they saw the child with Mary his mother. They prostrated themselves and did him homage. Then they opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh... When they had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him."

... When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under. (Mt 2:1-15)

As the secular humanist Herods of our day continue their march of death -- death of innocence, of freedom, of the pre-born (with abortion) and the elderly (with euthanasia), of marriage, of the family, and of society - all in the name of "progress" -- Christmas reminds us that such an attempt at peace without God is pure folly; and that the Child in the manger who escaped the clutches of Herod can and will bring peace to our hearts and to the world... as soon as we let Him.



Paul Murano teaches philosophy at Middlesex and North Shore Community College and theology at Magdalen College. He is host of *Beneath the Surface* on WCAP radio 980AM Sunday nights 10pm-midnight, 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.



IN YOUR CORNER ... WITH SEN. KATIE IVES

The challenge of growing wages, jobs and our small business economy

Senator Katie O'Connor Ives
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

At the end of this year's legislative session, the Senate took up a bill to increase Massachusetts' minimum wage rate from the current \$8.00/hr. to \$9.00 in 2014, with automatic increases to \$10 in 2015 and \$11 in 2016. These increases would also be tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This bill passed in the Senate with a vote of 32-7. I voted against that bill, not because I oppose raising the minimum wage—I support increasing it.

I support increasing the Massachusetts minimum wage to \$9 in 2014, which would make it the highest in New England. Then, the Legislature could assess the economic impacts before raising it to \$10, \$11 and indexing the minimum wage to the CPI. This approach keeps the Legislature's hands on the wheel as the Commonwealth embarks on an unprecedented, though needed, series of minimum wage increases in a short period of time.

The minimum wage has risen six times over the past twenty years. In 1996 it increased from \$4.25 to \$4.75. In 1997, it

increased to \$5.25. In 2000 it increased to \$6.00, and the next year in 2001 it went to \$6.75. It stayed stagnant at that level until 2007, when it increased to \$7.50. It was raised to its current \$8.00 level in 2008 before the economic downturn. In that period of time, the minimum wage has never gone up by a full dollar in Massachusetts for three consecutive years. It is important for our local small business employers to participate in the discussion over the minimum wage.

I proposed three amendments as compromise language, one of which was included in the final bill. The first amendment successfully changed the implementation of a new minimum wage from the bill's original start date of January 2014, to a start date of July 2014. The intent of this amendment was to give employers time to prepare and adjust to an increase in the minimum wage. The second amendment did not pass and sought to distinguish our smallest businesses from larger businesses by exempting employers of less than fifty employees from the increase. I do not believe we should place big and small

business in the same group. Big business is better positioned to absorb the costs of an increased minimum wage on account of the competitive advantages such as bulk purchasing, distributed risk, access to credit markets, supply chain capabilities, as well as the ability to offset losses at one location with profits from other stores.

By increasing labor cost for all businesses uniformly, we may unintentionally expand corporate dominance and influence in our local markets because small local businesses are squeezed out and do not have the same cushion for new increases in expenses. We need to consider what may be the difference for some small business between staying in the black and going in the red.

It is important to note that other regions of the United States have adopted or considered a tiered minimum wage system and Massachusetts could take part in the growing interests in a more tailored approach to the minimum wage. The city councils of Chicago and Washington D.C. passed ordinances mandating big box retailers pay a higher minimum wage, only to see those measures vetoed by their respective mayors. Minnesota, Montana and Oklahoma have tiered minimum wage systems where large businesses pay a higher minimum wage.

Lastly, the third amendment I proposed sought to have a straight increase from the current minimum wage of \$8.00/hr. to

\$9.00/hr. The intent behind this amendment was to pass an increase of \$9.00 so that an increase in the minimum wage would garner rapid and widespread support and could be adopted as law quickly and avoid the unknowns related to indexing and automatic increases. I believed it preferable to increase the minimum wage to \$9.00 and assess the impact of future increases and indexing on the state economy so that the legislature may revisit the matter in the near future armed with the data to be assured our actions serve to maintain and grow jobs and earning in the state.

There is growing income disparity that needs to be addressed; those that work should not live in poverty. However, the minimum wage is still not a living wage, and growing manufacturing, bringing down the cost of higher education, developing housing that's affordable and bringing down the cost of healthcare all factor into improving quality of life and stabilizing the cost of living in Massachusetts. I am optimistic that the Legislature can have an impactful role in strengthening opportunity and removing obstacles for small business growth. The bill currently awaits action in the House.

State Senator Ives is a Democrat from Newburyport and represents 1st Essex District, which encompasses Amesbury, Haverhill, Merrimac, Newburyport, Methuen, Salisbury, and portions of North Andover.[1] Before her election to the Massachusetts Senate in 2012, O'Connor Ives was a member of the Newburyport City Council.

Taxation without Representation? Not with the Tea Party Around

Christine Morabito

PRESIDENT, GREATER BOSTON TEA PARTY

In July of 2013 the Massachusetts legislature did something both historic and fiendishly clever. When voting to increase the gas tax (not historic) they also voted to index the tax to inflation, meaning the tax will continue to rise, and rise without lawmakers having to perform the unpleasant task of voting for it.

This slick maneuver was viewed by conservatives as the epitome of "taxation without representation." Just like the original Tea Party, the modern day Tea Party was having none of it. Limited government groups, conservative activists and Republican lawmakers joined forces to collect over 100,000 raw signatures from embattled taxpayers of all political persuasions, who have had enough of this nonsense. The goal was to give voters an opportunity to repeal the automatic tax increases during the 2014 elections.

About 87,000 certified signatures for the repeal were delivered to the Secretary of State's office this week. That was 18,000 more than was required, illustrating the popularity of this citizen effort. The initiative is now on its way to appearing on next year's ballot.

Not surprisingly, Governor Deval Patrick is not amused. Perhaps still stinging



from the embarrassment of the Tech Tax repeal a few months ago, he is now lashing out at advocates of the gas tax repeal. Patrick said, "... I think those that are advocating that the indexing be undone need to answer for why it is they keep showing

up for all the ribbon-cuttings every time there's a new bridge or a new road project done, but don't seem to want to participate in how to pay for it."

While it was not crystal clear who the governor was referring to, we can safely rule out the activists and petition signers who are far too busy working and paying taxes to attend ribbon-cutting ceremonies. A reasonable person could deduce that the ribbon-cutting enthusiasts Patrick was speaking of were the several Republican lawmakers who supported the petition; his veiled threat to them: Good luck getting state funding for your district's construction projects in the future.

During the budget debates, Beacon Hill lawmakers ignored Republican attempts to solve some of the state's financial problems through reform efforts. Seems the lopsided legislative body was only interested in measures that would raise taxes – I mean, revenue. Patrick's knee-jerk defense of roads and bridges is old and tired. Tax revenue is plentiful if only it were spent properly. In fact, Patrick recently announced that he will begin ac-

cepting his full salary of \$151,800, having foregone some of it in previous years. He states, "We're running a surplus. I think it's fair." The state did indeed end its fiscal year with a surplus of \$1 billion. So, tell me again why we need to raise taxes?

The gas tax increase will disproportionately affect the poor and the elderly on fixed incomes. While I do not begrudge the governor collecting his six figure salary, if fairness was his goal, he would support tanking the gas tax because the little people cannot afford it.

If the repeal fails and this "forever gas tax" is allowed to stand, our slippery lawmakers will be given the green light to tie future legislation to inflation, as they have already done with their own salaries and are attempting to do with the proposed minimum wage increase. Like a naughty toddler acting up in the toy store, politicians should not be rewarded for bad behavior if we expect them to act appropriately in the future.

Luckily, some people are demanding politicians be held accountable. A debt of gratitude goes out to all those hard working Tank the Gas Tax activists, conservative talk show hosts and legislators who spend countless hours collecting signatures in all kinds of weather, promoting the effort on radio and television and delivering and retrieving petitions from city and town halls all across the state. This was no easy task for unpaid activists. The fact that these sometimes disparate groups were able to work so well together for the common good is worth noting.

Massachusetts drivers now pay 42.4 cents in taxes per gallon of gasoline, figuring in state and federal taxes. The prospect of this tax going even higher in the future is not sitting well with them and they are speaking out. This citizen's petition is their way of telling their representatives that they are Taxed Enough Already. Good for you Massachusetts!



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

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PUPPYGIRL FROM 15

it can stand, turn around, and lay down, but not so big that it has the opportunity to go potty in one end of the crate, and lay in the other end.

You can buy dividers to make the crate smaller if you need to. You should always confine your new puppy to a specific area (baby gates are great for helping with this). In the beginning, the puppy should not have free reign of the house and they should always be supervised.

Keep in mind that you are going to have this puppy for a long time, you want to start off on the right foot. You need to bond with your dog and recognize that you will be learning new things about each other every-day! Owning a pet should be a fun experience, not a hassle or burden, and remember to make fun memories with your pet! Pat said that the biggest mistake people make with regard to training is that they take one class and think they know everything.

Training is an ongoing experience and process that takes time. As the interview came to a close, Pat reminded me of one thing. She said, "You don't get Lassie in eight weeks."

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PAYING ATTENTION FROM PAGE 21

Torrisi and State Senator Barry Finegold walked through a measure to remove Chief Murphy from Civil Service protection so that Lantigua could fire him.

That's not exactly the kind of behavior that gets one on the cover of Forbes or Money Magazine.

For a man who started his political aspirations lobbying bogus allegations of racism against anyone who stood in his way twenty some-odd years ago, Willie Lantigua proved to us last month exactly why he, his administration, and his agenda are miserable failures. He just doesn't get it.

When Lantigua took office, he could have reached out across the aisle to all the Abdo supporters (his opponent in 2009) and reached out to the White community to finally bring both communities together to make Lawrence a better place.

Instead, he took office attacking "Anglos", looking to settle every score, major or petty, against every person who had ever offended him. Real and perceived "enemies" were targeted, named publicly the way third world dictators do when they seize power, and proceeded to systematically, and publicly fire them in the most humiliating way possible.

Lantigua decisions were colossal; he hired former Lawrence City Council President Patrick Blanchette, the person most responsible for the city's financial deficit. He hired Lenny Degnan as his Chief of Staff. Degnan was last involved in Lawrence politics when he served failed Mayor Mary Claire Kennedy. Kennedy was the last mayor to have a fiscal control board and state receivership guarding the city's finances.

While Blanchette has not been indicted, Degnan has, and his criminal trial is expected to come up shortly.

CASH ONLY

When Lantigua took office one of his first orders was for the city to no longer accept credit cards or checks for certain purchases, that included the city's parking lots and garages.

He also put Just Garcia in charge of counting the money. Garcia had worked on Lantigua's multiple campaigns and also worked for him when Lantigua was a state representative. Federal agents followed Garcia and caught him red handed depositing money collected from the city's parking garages into Lantigua's campaign account.

CAMPAIGN ACCOUNT

In the last four years, Lantigua has so many violations of campaign finance laws that he was fined by the Office of Campaign and Political Finance for accepting illegal cash, corporate checks, checks from donors above the amount allowed by law, failing to file four years of campaign finance reports, misleading information on his reports and more. Lantigua's campaign shenanigans are so numerous that State Representative Diana DiZoglio says she had him in mind when she had her campaign reform bill passed last month. DiZoglio's bill would prohibit any candidate from being on the ballot if they have outstanding finance reports or unpaid fines for previous campaign violations.

Then there are the forged signatures on Lantigua's campaign nomination papers both in 2009 and 2013, populating city jobs with unqualified friends and family, and his heavy handedness with the police department.

DEPUTY CHIEF BONILLA

One of the more egregious actions Lantigua took upon arriving as mayor was to elevate former campaign manager Melix Bonilla from sergeant at the Police Department, over the ranks of lieutenant and captain, and named him deputy chief.

He then took most of Chief Romero's job duties away from him and put those job responsibilities under the control of Bonilla and ordered that Bonilla answer directly to Lantigua himself, cutting Romero directly

out of the loop. Bonilla has also been indicted.

In the last four years of Lantigua's reign, the racial tensions between Dominicans and Puerto Ricans, and Latinos and Whites have heightened. Violent crime has increased, gang activity has saturated neighborhoods where there was once progress being made, fire response and emergency services have decreased, quality of life issues have worsened, businesses have closed and fled the city, and the department of public works has been incapable of handling the city's infrastructure problems.

Add to all that Lantigua's refusal to comply with public records laws, his rehiring of the DiAdamo Law firm to handle the city's worker's compensation claims and then concealing their bills from the public despite orders from the Secretary of State's Office, the Attorney General's Office and two different judges at Lawrence Superior Court.

I could write a book on all the shenanigans Lantigua has pulled off over the last four years, and a few follow up books on the shenanigans he was involved with prior to being elected mayor of Lawrence. Some people say, 'Why bother? He lost and he is gone come January, you won't have Willie Lantigua to kick around anymore.'

I say it's important because there's one thing I know for sure about Willie Lantigua the man. He is not going away, and he will be back. Next time he will be back stronger, angrier and with a whole new set of scores to settle.

When that happens, it's important for people to remember what happened the last time Lantigua held a position of power and trust. It's important to remember all the people whose lives he destroyed, the careers he ended, the corruption he fostered (and that the feds believe he took part in), the damage he did to the people of Lawrence, and fleecing of the state taxpayers who are stuck with the bill for all of it.

Support for Common Core's Fuzzy Math Doesn't Add Up

Sandra Stotsky

VALLEY PATRIOT EDUCATION COLUMNIST

Unless high school students can prepare for a calculus course in grade 12 or as college freshmen, they are unlikely to become science, engineering, or mathematics majors. Common Core doesn't let them. James Milgram's analysis in Lowering the Bar makes that very clear.

Interestingly, Jason Zimba, the lead writer of the Core's math standards, noted as much at the March 2010 meeting of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. He explained that Common Core's version of college readiness means getting kids ready for non-selective community and state colleges. According to the official minutes of the meeting: "Mr. Zimba said that the concept of college readiness is minimal and focuses on non-selective colleges." Just in case that isn't clear enough for you, dear reader, here are Mr. Zimba's videotaped comments at the meeting.

These folks need to be put on the record – how do they justify signing onto a set of mathematics standards that do not lead to STEM careers?

That is why in a September 2013 Hechinger Report piece Zimba acknowledged that: "If you want to take calculus your freshman year in college, you will need to take more mathematics than is in the Common Core."

Common Core proponents repeat the mantra that Common Core is about college and career readiness. But, given the limited mathematical literacy of most education policymakers, shouldn't the federal government and other pro-Common Core organizations inform local and state edu-



cators in charge of secondary school curricula—and high-tech employers—about Common Core's definition of college and career readiness?

It isn't as if those who are mathematically literate are speaking up. In fact, it's a puzzlement why the heads of the associations listed below, which should want secondary students prepared for STEM disciplines, expressed "strong support for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics." Why would these lemming leaders endorse K-12 mathematics standards that prevent students from preparing for a STEM career? Did the "presidents" of these associations actually review Common Core's high school standards before putting their names and the names of their organizations on the dotted line? These folks need to be put on the record – how do they justify signing onto a set of mathematics standards that do not lead to STEM careers?

"...We, the undersigned presidents of the following member societies of CBMS (Conference of the Board of Mathematical Sciences), hereby express our strong support for the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics."

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NOTEBOOK: CONTINUE FROM PAGE 17

gram in partnership with Northern Essex Community College's Center for Corporate and Community Education. The program begins January 21, 2014.

This 150-hour daytime program prepares students to sit for the state licensing test to become a certified nurse's aide and also become a home health aide. It includes theory, clinical skills, and clinical practice at a long-term care facility under the supervision of a registered nurse.

For more information, please contact Nancy Tariot at 978-373-1971 x 263 or Ntariot@communityactioninc.org, Dianne Lahaye at 978-659-1222 or dlahaye@necc.mass.edu or Renee Deyermond at 978-659-1223 or rdeyermond@necc.mass.edu .

NECC's Center for Corporate and Community Education offers a variety of non-credit business, computer, occupational and professional development courses, certificates, certifications, and training programs for individuals and companies as well as an array of personal enrichment courses.

Located at the Riverwalk on the Lawrence/North Andover line, the NECC Center for Corporate and Community Education also provides high quality, cost-effective, cutting-edge programs designed to meet the training needs of local employers. For more information call 978-659-1200, visit us online at www.necc.mass.edu/noncredit or email us at noncredit@necc.mass.edu.

HIRE A VET SAVE ON TAXES
IRS to Employers: Hire Veterans by Dec. 31 and Save on Taxes

IRS Special Edition Tax Tip 2013-15
If you plan to hire soon, consider hiring veterans. If you do, you may be able to claim the federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit worth thousands of dollars.

You must act soon. The WOTC is available to employers that hire qualified veterans before the New Year.

Here are six key facts about the WOTC:
Hiring Deadline: Employers hiring qualified veterans before Jan. 1, 2014, may be able to claim the WOTC. The credit was set to expire at the end of 2012. The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 extended it for one year.

Maximum Credit: The tax credit limit is \$9,600 per worker for employers that operate a taxable business. The limit for tax-exempt employers is \$6,240 per worker.

Credit Factors: The credit amount depends on a number of factors. They include the length of time a veteran was unemployed, the number of hours worked and the amount of the wages paid during the first year of employment.

Disabled Veterans: Employers hiring veterans with service-related disabilities

may be eligible for the maximum tax credit.

State Certification: Employers must file Form 8850, Pre-Screening Notice and Certification Request for the Work Opportunity Credit, with their state workforce agency. They must file the form within 28 days after the qualified veteran starts work. For more information, visit the U.S. Department of Labor's WOTC website.

E-file: Some states accept Form 8850 electronically.

For more about this topic, visit IRS.gov and enter 'WOTC' in the search box.
WHO'S YOUR CANCER HERO
Who's Your Cancer Hero? Nominate Yours Today for Mass General's One Hundred

Nominations from across the country for the 2014 One Hundred, the Mass General Cancer Center's annual gala honoring 100 heroes in the fight against cancer, are being accepted now through the end of December. Individuals and groups whose diligence and discoveries, philanthropy and passion have helped advance the fight against cancer can be nominated now for this event. Nominees do not have to be affiliated with Mass General Cancer Center.

The 2014 One Hundred will be held on Monday, June 10, 2014. Funds raised at the event support cancer research, patient care, education, and community outreach programs. Nominate your cancer hero today by visiting www.theonehundred.org/nominate.

NEWBURYPORT GOP
The Newburyport Republican City Committee is thrilled to host the annual GOP Christmas Party to be held on Tuesday, December 17, at The Grog in Newburyport. We look forward to celebrating this wonderful season with you.

LAWRENCE CHESS CLUB
The Lawrence Chess Club will meet on Wednesday, December 18, 2013 from 6-8pm at the Lawrence Public Library, corner of Haverhill & Lawrence streets. This is always a FREE event, held the third Wednesday each month.

Please bring a friend and a chess set. ALL ages and abilities welcome. Play, learn and help teach. We can teach anyone to play in about 20 minutes, but it requires a lifetime to master. English is not required.

BILLERICA
Mass GOP has announced the date of the Nominating Convention for Saturday, March 22, 2014 in Boston. The Billerica Republican Town Committee will be holding its delegate selection meeting on January 15, 2014 at 7pm, at Billerica Town

Hall in Room 210. Snow dates are January 16, 2014 and January 28, 2014. You MUST be a registered Republican by December 1, 2013 to be eligible.

For more information contact Chairman Ventresca at Billericartc.org

LAWRENCE CATHOLIC ACADEMY - OPEN HOUSE AND REGISTRATION

Lawrence Catholic Academy is hosting an Open House and Registration for Nursery through Grade 8 on Tuesday,

December 17, 2013 from 9:00 am to 1pm at 101 Parker Street, Lawrence, MA.

"Lawrence Catholic Academy strives to provide a curriculum that enhances the intellectual development of all our students, helping each to realize his/her God-given potential and grow stronger in faith", said John M. Licciardi, Director of Advancement. "LCA is a community of believers who strive to permeate the school with the love and compassion of Jesus Christ."

Lawrence Catholic Academy offers: Individual Attention, Shadowing Program, Anti-Bullying Policy, Financial Aid, Tuition Rewards Program, Child Circuit Vouchers, Advanced Technology, State Certified Faculty, Diversity, Interactive Whiteboards, Before & After School Programs and over 100 Years of Academic Excellence.

Lawrence Catholic Academy faculty, staff, and students will be on hand to answer any questions you may have about our school programs. Bring your family and friends to tour the school, enjoy some refreshments, and take a chance to win a special door prize. For more information on our Open House or our school programs, please contact the main office or John M. Licciardi at 978-683-5822 or email him at jlicciardi@lawrencecatholicacademy.org.

FBI ANNUAL CRIME STATS
According to the FBI's Preliminary Annual Uniform Crime Report released today, the nation experienced a 1.2% increase in the number of violent crimes and a 0.8% decline in the number of property crimes in 2012 when compared with data from 2011. The report is based on information the FBI gathered from 13,770 law enforcement agencies that submitted 6 to 12 comparable months of data for both 2011 and 2012.

Violent Crime
■ In 2012, the violent crime offenses of murder and non-negligent manslaughter increased 1.5% from the 2011 figures, aggravated assault increased 1.7%, and robbery increased 0.6%. Forcible rape offenses declined 0.3%.

■ Violent crime increased 3.7% in cities with populations of 500,000 to 999,999, the largest increase in the city groupings. There was a 1.0% decrease in violent crime in the nation's cities with 10,000 to 24,999 inhabitants. Violent crime increased 1.2% in metropolitan counties and declined 0.9% in non-metropolitan counties.

■ Murder and non-negligent manslaughter offenses increased in all city groups but one, with the largest increase (12.5%) occurring in cities with populations of 500,000 to 999,000.

Cities with populations of 50,000 to 99,999 showed the only decrease of murder and non-negligent manslaughter offenses (1.3%). Murder and non-negligent manslaughter offenses declined 4.8% in metropolitan counties and 0.4% in non-metropolitan counties.

■ Cities with populations of 1 million and over in population experienced a 3.2% increase in forcible rape offenses. Cities

with 25,000 to 49,999 inhabitants experienced a 3.5% decrease in forcible rapes. Forcible rape offenses declined 1.2% in

metropolitan counties and increased 1.3% in non-metropolitan counties.

■ Robbery offenses decreased 2.9% in cities with 10,000 to 24,999 inhabitants, but increased 2.4% in cities with populations from 250,000 to 499,999. Robberies increased 1.1% in metropolitan counties and declined 1.1% in non-metropolitan counties.

■ Aggravated assaults remained virtually unchanged in cities with 25,000 to 49,000 in population and declined

0.6% in cities with 10,000 to 24,999 inhabitants. Aggravated assaults increased in all remaining city groups, with the largest increase, 5.2%, occurring in cities with 500,000 to 999,999 in population.

■ Violent crime increased in three of the four regions (3.3% in the West, 1.3% in the Midwest, and 0.6% in the South). There was a 0.6% decrease in violent crime offenses in the Northeast.

Property Crime
■ Nationally, the property crime offense of burglary decreased 3.6% in 2012 when compared with 2011 data. Motor vehicle theft increased 1.3%, and larceny-theft offenses remained virtually unchanged.

■ Property crime increased 0.4% in cities with 50,000 to 99,999 inhabitants. Decreases of 1.0% in property crime were reported in cities with 25,000 to 49,999 in population and in cities with 1 million or more in population. Property crime decreased 3.5% in non-metropolitan counties and 2.1% in metropolitan counties.

■ Burglary offenses decreased in all city groups, including the largest decrease, 7.0%, which was reported in cities with 250,000 to 499,999 in population. Burglaries decreased 4.3% in non-metropolitan counties and 3.1% in metropolitan counties.

■ Larceny-theft offenses increased in all city groupings except those with populations of 25,000 to 49,999 and those with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, each of which reported a 0.2% decrease. Larceny-thefts decreased 3.2% in non-metropolitan counties and 2.2% in metropolitan counties.

■ Motor vehicle thefts increased 4.9% in cities with 250,000 to 499,999 inhabitants, but decreased 5.1% in cities with 1 million or more inhabitants. Metropolitan counties reported a 2.1% increase in motor vehicle thefts while non-metropolitan counties reported a 2.1% decrease.

■ Three of the nation's regions had decreases in property crime in 2012 when compared with data from 2011. These offenses declined 3.5% in the South, 2.1% in the Midwest, and 1.6% in the Northeast. However, property crimes increased 5.2% in the West.

Arson
■ Arson offenses, which are not included in property crime totals, decreased 1.2% nationwide. Arsons declined 4.3% in both the Northeast and the South, but increased 1.6% in the Midwest and 1.0% in the West.



Tom Duggan is the publisher of The Valley Patriot, lectures on media bias, is a former Lawrence School Committeeman, and hosts the Paying Attention! Radio Program on WCAP, 980AM, every Saturday from 10-noon. You can email your comments to valleypatriot@aol.com

Christmas Time Comes Once a Year, Let's Celebrate with Holiday Cheer!

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE ANNUAL GOP CHRISTMAS PARTY ORGANIZED BY THE NEWBURYPORT REPUBLICAN COMMITTEE

What: food, friends, fun, festivities
When: Tuesday, December 17 7-10 pm
Where: Upstairs at the Grog in downtown Newburyport
Who: This is a Regional GOP event. All area Conservatives are invited!

What else? To cover expenses, \$55 per person will be collected at the door. Checks accepted. Also, donations will be collected for the Salvation Army Food Pantry. Please consider Bringing a donation. For more information, contact Cfalongop@gmail.com

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Assertocracy is the path to Kleptocracy

Dr. Bharani Padmanabhan
VALLEY PATRIOT OPINION COLUMNIST

With this column I present a newly coined term - assertocracy - and show it's current use. In her superlative book - In The Footsteps Of Mr Kurtz - Michela Wrong applied the term kleptocracy, government by theft, to the post-war nation state. In the same vein, assertocracy is government by assertion. Assertocracy is intended to hide kleptocracy, the real goal, a simple example being a huge chunk of doctors asserting government actions against medicines for chronic pain ("We use more pain medicines in the US than in Africa!") just happen to run cash-only Suboxone clinics. (100 patients x \$200 per month = \$20,000 cash every month) Given that the Holocaust began in hospitals with nurses and doctors murdering thousands over the years it would be ignorant to accept their assertions at face value thinking because they are nurses and doctors of course they must be noble. (<http://goo.gl/IHk15s>) Never forget.

The past month has brought to the public eye the total lack of governance embodied by Healthcare.gov and the allegedly absent leadership of both HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Marilyn Tavener who took over from Sir Donald Berwick as Chief of Medicare. Signature of the \$93 Million contract for Healthcare.gov with the Canadian company CGI occurred on Sir Donald's last day in office as Medicare Chief, similar to Marc Rich's pardon years ago. Such high-value contracts do not get signed without the personal involvement of the Chief over months. Does. Not. Happen.

Even after the website's meltdown, when it was evident that leaving the integration of the site's numerous components to the blatant incompetence of Medicare Chief Tavener and her staff was the fundamental error, Sir Donald asserted on the record to the Boston Globe that it was absolutely the correct decision. In the last paragraphs of this essay you will understand why.

An assertocracy depends entirely on the lack of direct questioning. The New York Times even asked readers - "I'm looking for reader input on whether and when New York Times news reporters should challenge 'facts' that are asserted by newsmakers they write about" because to do so would turn reporters from stenographers into "truth vigilantes" or insurgents or cult-followers of IF Stone. Government by assertion.

The HHS Office of the Inspector General had reported to Congress back in August that they had been thwarted by Medicare Chief Tavener from testing the new website to ensure it protected the personal information of Americans. OIG explicitly reported that they could not make any assertions about the safety of citizens' data.

OIG clearly did not get with the assertocracy program. Which explains why OIG's budget was gutted and it is to lose 400 members of it's staff! "Truth vigilantes" applies to the OIG staff now being let go. OIG reported the cuts to Congress making it clear this was not due to just evil Republicans and laid out a list of investigations that would now go undone including audits of hospitals for Medicare fraud + poor care as well as fraud involving the new insurance exchanges created by Obamacare. Fraud has now been deliberately helped by the gutting of OIG by the current assertocracy.

It thus comes as no surprise that Chief Tavener asserted that the website was good to go even after HHS CIO Tony Trenkle refused to sign off on it. He cared about Americans and was overruled by Tavener herself. He resigned. This naturally suits assertocracies which over time weed out honest public servants leaving behind people who equate governance with assertion. See Tavener's note here - <http://oig.hhs.gov/oas/reports/region1/181330070.pdf> Government by assertion.

One could of course assert that since no one is bothered that full details of America's physicians, including their fingerprints, already reside in a British company called Pearson, surely no one should care that full personal

details of American citizens now belong in a Canadian company and through Healthcare.gov to any hacker on earth. America's physicians are coerced by various Boards to give their fingerprints to said British firm.

Assertion has made strong inroads into national 'healthcare' policy. A year ago the leadership of Cambridge Health Alliance, well versed in insurance fraud themselves, asserted in a magazine called Health Affairs (the organ of a private advocacy group called The People-to-People Health Foundation, Inc.) that providing physicians with images of scans directly increases the number of tests ordered and that this applies particularly to neurologists because most neurologists own MRI machines, without actually publishing a single shred of supporting data.

WBUR and the allegedly nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation asserted that Democratic Gubernatorial candidate Sir Donald Berwick is a "healthcare quality guru" despite the ongoing Mid-Staffs scandal in his reformed NHS, reforms so huge he was knighted by the Queen. You don't get knighted for nothing. Thousands of Brits wait their entire lives. Kaiser chose to NOT inform Americans about the 1200 extra deaths from starvation and dehydration in the very recent past.

This month we were presented with pure assertions about the nominee for the post of US Surgeon General, Dr Vivek Murthy, 36 years old, part-time hospitalist at Partners Healthcare and most importantly Founder of Doctors for Obama. Churnalism leads to cut-and-pasted assertions about a nonprofit "founded" by him ("In 1995, he founded VISIONS Worldwide, a nonprofit dedicated to AIDS and HIV education in India") but Google is singularly unsuccessful in locating a current website for it. Even his rah-rah boosters at WBUR would agree that the nonprofit's website is "invisible." The money for the venture seems to have come from a privately funded foundation (meaning we don't know the source). (<http://infinityfoundation.com/irspg1.shtml>) We are easily successful however in locating his other venture, a for-profit company that sets up clinical trials for Big Pharma, likely in the Third World.

Surely WBUR knew this when it published it's puff piece. No "truth vigilantes" at WBUR and no Nieman IF Stone Medal for them. WBUR and the Globe quoted close friends who asserted that the Senate should "concentrate on Murthy's impressive record," namely his founding of a noble (invisible) nonprofit and campaigning for Obama. "The nomination of Dr. Vivek Murthy as the US Surgeon General cements the reputation physicians of Indian origin have across America," asserted Dr. J. B. Shah, president of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI). The reputation of physicians of Indian origin is now officially doomed.

Sir Donald Berwick himself asserted "By nominating Vivek Murthy, President Obama has chosen one of the finest doctors in our nation to be our next Surgeon General." At 36, he will be the youngest Surgeon General ever. And the first hospitalist in the post. Hospitalists are doctors who don't have patients of their own.

Dr Murthy's former colleague at Partners, Dr Julian Harris, who also served on the Obama Campaign, worked at Cambridge Health Alliance, was appointed Director of MassHealth the day he finished residency training and now is the Associate Director for Health Programs (OMB) in the White House, received the same assertions upon his elevation. Impressive records by assertion.

Seriously, is this the best the United States can come up with? Have we completely run out of people made of real stuff? Then again an Eric Topol would be as much of a misfit in the current assertocracy as Trenkle, even though tax-paying citizens would for once actually be served.

Steven Syre wrote in the Globe - "But I got the feeling an important lesson from the recent past had been lost, or ignored, when the president came to Boston three weeks ago. Obama flew into town hoping to revive support for his most important accomplishment with a

TEEN TALK WITH ANA DEBERNARDO

An Assignment on "Forbidden Love"

This past week, my Spanish teacher required the class to write an essay about amor prohibido, or "forbidden love". The assignment was given after we read a story about a prince and a princess from different lands who fell in love but were unable to live out their lives together because of their parents' disapproval of the relationship.

My classmates and I were charged with writing a paper on a story of forbidden love in our own families. While considering my options, I got to thinking about what a prominent issue this has been, and still is, across every corner of the world. There is no minimum of outside influences at work, impeding the natural course of love. At first, I had absolutely no idea who to write about but after some help from my mother, I realized I had the perfect story to share.

Joseph Evan Cartwright and Mary Ellen Hanratty were my great-grandparents. Joseph was from Scotland, and they lived in Liverpool, England. They had three daughters: my great aunts Kathleen and Mary, and my grandmother, Eva.

During World War II, my grandfather, Dominic, was sent to Belgium. He always wanted to visit England, and so on one weekend leave, he convinced some buddies to go to Liverpool. A major port at that time, and now, the city was a popular destination for American GIs due to Liverpool's status as the entry point to Europe for many American ships and soldiers, and transportation to and from Liverpool was always easily available to the American men stationed in Europe. It was there that he met my grandmother, Eva Teresa Cartwright. He was 20 years old, and she was 16.

He told me one time that from the first moment he saw my grandmother, he knew that they were meant to be together. But after that weekend, he returned to Belgium. From then on, they communicated only through letters and poems that my grandmother kept all her life.

My grandmother always told us that my grandfather never proposed formally. They just knew that they would get married

someday. One weekend, he finally returned to Liverpool to ask my grandfather for my grandmother's hand in marriage. Joseph rejected his request, firmly and without discussion.

My great-grandfather opposed the marriage because he didn't care for American guys. He thought that Americans came to England and married their women, separating them from their families to live in the United States. Consequently, my grandmother had to make all the preparations for the wedding herself, and in secret. To add to the sadness, England had ration cards and she had to get the food on the black market.

The date for the marriage was set for December 22, 1945. They say that it was a very cold day and very few guests came. But this wedding's biggest disaster was that my grandmother had to walk down the aisle alone because her father had refused to hand her over to my grandfather. After the ceremony, the new couple went to my great-grandparents' house to pay their respects.

When they arrived, my great-grandmother (who did attend the wedding) told my grandfather, "Joseph, your son-in-law is here," to which he responded in his authoritarian Scottish brogue: "Son-in-law? I have no son-in-law." It was then that my grandfather lost his temper and spoke up. He told him that if he had a problem with Americans, then he could take it, but it was not fair of him to treat his own daughter so heartlessly.

When the war ended, my grandparents went to live in San Antonio, Texas, where my grandfather was now stationed. My grandmother returned to England many times to visit her family, but my grandfather never returned. After a few years, they moved to Rochester, New York, and had 5 children. They lived happily for 56 years together. My grandmother Eva died on October 21, 2001 and my grandfather Dominic, on June 29, 2013. During the 12 years that my grandfather lived without my grandmother, he never forgot his first and only love.



high-visibility celebration of its Massachusetts roots (managing to get upstaged by Game 6 of the World Series). The event had the look and feel of a partisan political rally, utterly contrary to the sensibility that made the Massachusetts experiment successful. Talk about missing the point."

In reality it is Syre who has missed the point. The whole point IS to ratchet up partisanship and a sense of crisis so that more millions can be shovelled to friends via no-bid contracts. Perhaps Syre knows this too and chose to not go there. Already the \$93 Million website has hit \$292 Million (\$630 Million expected) and CGI's share price as expected has hit an all-time high. Everyone within the current assertocracy already fully knew about the problems with the website. This is proved by the OIG report above plus NYT's report that Henry Chao could decide nothing on a daily basis without a daily conversation with the Obama White House. Naturally this means that Secretary Sebelius consciously committed perjury in her Congressional testimony, something ProPublica did NOT tell the public. Given that a Federal judge has already publicly condemned her for proven deliberate bad faith, perjury is not a surprise. Since she has already escaped once despite deliberately violating the Hatch Act and since the 113th Congress does not care about perjury, her risk was minimal this time.

(On page 145 - <http://democrats.energycommerce.house.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Preliminary-Transcript-HE-PPACA-Implementa-tion-HHS-2013-10-30.pdf>)

mentation-HHS-2013-10-30.pdf)

People in power counted on the coming crisis to lead to bigger windfalls and the stock market has cottoned on too, just as Peugeot shares have risen with the new Iran deal. This explains Sir Donald Berwick's off-message assertion that it was the correct decision (for the kleptocrats!). When you question seasoned power-players however they will instead claim to be innocents abroad. Richard Grenier nailed it with - "Aw shucks. I'm just a big kid really."

The NYT further reports that Obama has demanded that all government officials and contractors involved with Healthcare.gov keep their involvement confidential. Secrecy is essential for kleptocracy and to hide those no-bid contracts. There is zero legitimate reason for secrecy in a tax-payer supported public program that, thanks to the mandate, involves every single person in the US and their personal information (the only thing not protected by secrecy). Tax-payers' sole hope now are whistleblowers (such as <http://goo.gl/2KpCD9>).

Partisan noise and secrecy are imperative for an assertocracy to thrive, leaving this poor nation a kleptocracy (exactly like Africa! woo hoo!) in the hands of Sebelius, Berwick, Tavener, Julian Harris and soon Murthy. Which naturally raises the question, on this the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address - how does one now distinguish between public servants and economic hit men?

TV TALK WITH BILL CUSHING



Give the Gift of Classic TV Comedy for Christmas

Bill Cushing

VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST



Christmas is upon us again. If you're having trouble deciding what to buy that TV fan on your list, then maybe some Classic TV Comedies will do the trick. Here is a little guide

as to what's available this holiday season. All of these sets are available in stores and through Amazon.com

M*A*S*H - The Complete Series

This sitcom, set during The Korean War, successfully balanced between comedy and drama, hilarity and tragedy, filled with one liners and gags and also intense set pieces which set the program apart as one of TV's all time greats. The series premiered in 1972 and ran for 11 seasons and 256 episodes. The series finale, which aired February 28, 1983, was watched by more than 125 Million viewers and still remains the most watched episode of a TV series ever. It was nominated for a staggering 109 Emmy Awards of its run. Starring Alan Alda, Wayne Rogers, Harry Morgan, and Loretta Swit. The set also includes the 1970 film that the series was based on.

Barney Miller - The Complete Series

Set in a New York City police station, this comedy series ran from 1975 to 1982 for 168 episodes, and featured the stories of the detectives of the 12th Precinct and the day to day life in the squad room. Over its 8 seasons, it was nominated for an Emmy award for Outstanding Comedy Series 7 times, finally winning in its final season. Widely cited by police officers as the most realistic police series ever. Starring Hal Linden, Max Gail, Jack Soo, Ron Glass, Abe Vigoda, and Steve Landesberg.

Seinfeld - The Complete Series

Named by TV Guide as the greatest television series of all time. Created by Larry David and Jerry Seinfeld, this series about nothing, followed the exploits of Jerry Seinfeld (as a fictional version of himself) and his 3 friends, Kramer, George, and Elaine. It ran from 1989 to 1998, for 180 episodes. Through the years of its original run and now in syndication,

the show has become a cultural phenomenon. Spawning catch phrases, merchandise, and many references to the series in popular culture. Starring Jerry Seinfeld, Michael Richards, Jason Alexander, and Julia Louis-Dreyfus

Everybody Loves Raymond - The Complete Series

Based on the stand up comedy of Ray Romano, this series ran from 1996 to 2005 for 210 episodes. The show followed the life of sportswriter Ray Barone, and his family life with his wife and 3 kids, while living across the street from his parents. It was nominated for Outstanding Comedy Series for 7 times over its run. Starring Ray Romano, Patricia Heaton, Brad Garrett, Peter Boyle, and Doris Roberts.

Cheers - The Complete Series

This classic sitcom followed the goings on at a popular Boston bar named Cheers. It ran from 1982-1993 for 270 episodes. It garnered a record 111 Emmy nominations during its time on the air, and won the Outstanding Comedy Series 4 times. The show struggled in the ratings at first, but by the 3rd season, it found its footing and remained in the top 10 from season 4, until it went off the air. Starring Ted Danson, Shelly Long, Rhea Perlman, Woody Harrelson, John Ratzenberger, George Wendt, Kelsey Grammer, and Kirstie Alley

Friends - The Complete Series

This series revolved around a circle of friends living in New York City, and ran from 1994 to 2004 for 236 episodes. It quickly became a critical favorite and commercial success, remaining in the Top 10 of the Nielsen ratings for its entire run. Starring Jennifer Aniston, Matthew Perry, Matt LeBlanc, Courtney Cox, and David Schwimmer.

Hope I gave you some good ideas for that TV lover on your Christmas list.

Merry Christmas Everyone!

Do you have any questions about TV? Email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future column.

For daily TV news, follow Bill on Twitter @TVNewsandNotes and on Facebook at TVNewsandNotes

www.tvnewsandnotes.com

EMPTY CHAIR SHOW Exposing Addiction

Phil Lahey

VALLEY PATRIOT'S PHIL OF THE FUTURE

Well the elections are over and I would like to congratulate all the winners. It's now up to you to fulfill all the promises you made during your campaign. Being so involved in the world of addiction, I couldn't help but notice many candidates in Methuen had the issue of drug abuse very high on their list of concerns. I will be contacting all candidates in the near future.

I'd like to give you an example of a politician who doesn't just talk about an issue but acts on what she says. A couple of months ago Senator Kathleen Ives and Representative Diana DiZoglio were guests on The Empty Chair Show, produced by MCTV. If you search Theemptychairshow (no spaces) on YouTube, you can see this episode as well as, all the episodes thus far. I'm certain you will find this show informative as well as bringing an awareness to this deadly disease. After the show, Rep. DiZoglio decided to take action. With the help of a wonderful young lady, Jennifer Burns and my daughter Colleen, we started to work on setting up a round table discussion on addiction. The meeting was held in the Sanborn Hall at the Quinn Building and was sponsored by Rep. DiZoglio. The turnout was amazing! I did not do a count but it was standing room only. I am pleased to say that among those who joined Rep. DiZoglio were Representative Linda Dean Campbell and Representative Elizabeth Malia, who chairs The Committee on Substance Abuse.

Also, Sen. Ives who could not attend sent an aide in her place. We had a huge turnout from people who work in recovery. There was Judge Michael Brooks from Lawrence Drug Court, Deputy Sheriff Jason Farro from the Sheriff's Department, Drug Councilor Dean Bruder from the Methuen School Department, CEO Ken Hamilton from the Psychological Center and Chief Joe Solomon from the Methuen Police Department,

and, many others from various organizations in the field of recovery. Also in attendance were parents of addicts, and addicts in recovery. I'd like to thank all who attended and gave their input.

Oh by the way, none of those who campaigned on the issue chose to attend. I will give them a pass on this one because they were on the campaign trail but I expect their participation in the future. So, what did we accomplish?

First, we generated enough interest to continue these sessions every other month.

Second, instead of many people in recovery working independently, we now have an army of people working together to share our resources and combat this deadly disease.

Third, and probably most important, with the encouragement of Rep. Molia who again chairs The Committee on Substance Abuse, we will as a team make recommendations and suggestions for legislation that will help in the treatment, recovery and prevention of drug abuse.

Not too bad for a freshman Rep. who knows how to walk the walk. I believe Rep. DiZoglio and all of our local State Legislators will help us on the state level. For that they have my unending gratitude.

Now I also ask not only my new legislators in Methuen, but across the Merrimac Valley to join our army. It doesn't cost anything but a little time and the reward is, you just might save a life. It doesn't get any better than that. Again, one final thank you to my good friend Diana DiZoglio. If you want info on future meetings or just want some general information, please call me at 978-557-9235 and ask for Phil. You can also check out our support group "Circle of Hope" for loved ones of addicts on our website www.methuenhope.com, or check our Facebook page

"The Empty Chair". Never give up hope!

Thank you, Phil Lahey

GRINCH: FROM PAGE 11

is more of a witch hunt. The float isn't about the Chop Shop, the float has always been about trying to bring people together to fund the Toys for Tots drive. The parade starts it and it ends here at the Chop Shop where hundreds of people come with toys. For this to happen it bothers us a community, and it bothers people like us that takes these kinds of charities seriously."

Paul Goodrow of Seabrook ~ "I think it is absolutely discrimination against bikers. If this bar was in Hampton this wouldn't be a problem at all, but we are in Seabrook and it feels like to hell with us. I have been coming here for a couple years and enjoyed many fundraisers, Bill is a very unselfish person and he thinks of everyone else before himself. I just don't think it is right and I believe there has to be something done about it!"

Amy Lavine of Seabrook States "Bill has always supported us with softball and tournaments allowing us to do fundraising here, and he does fundraisers here for veterans."

What is the true reasoning behind the termination of the notorious float that comes once a year offering toys to children through Toys for Tots? It seems as plain as day and it saddens me to think there are people out there who will pass judgment on others and use their power to eliminate people from events that they feel are not worthy of being in them.

After interviewing Bill, his wonderful

friends and family at the Chop Shop I'm saddened to think that a man who doesn't know the true meaning of the holidays would even have a place on a board that was designed to bring a parade of happiness to the community.

Upon hearing the decision of Experience Hampton and Hampton's Board Members that support this ridiculous show of power the selectmen in Seabrook have sympathized with Bill and have given him an alternative with open arms....in 2014 he will be having his very own parade for Toys For Tots with full support from the city of Seabrook. "The Seabrook parade will be based on the Toys for Tots," he said. "Perfect. Perfect resolution to this whole terrible solution. I couldn't be more happy with the final outcome."

Experience Hampton was unable for comment when the article was submitted.

I wish the Chop Shop and the people who support them for what they do the best of luck in continuing to do the Toys for Tots Drive. I will be there and hope that you all take the time to show your support and let them know that things like this should not happen.

So, to the Bah Humbugs out there, remember that if you are ever in need of help, businesses like the Chop Shop might just be helping you one day. Happy Holidays, Everyone.

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What to Do if You Have Thyroid Problems?

Dr. Jin Sung
CHIROPRACTIC PHYSICIAN

Most people realize that their thyroid is important for controlling their metabolism and body weight.

But did you know that depression, heart disease, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, PMS (premenstrual syndrome), menopausal symptoms, muscle and joint pains, irritable bowel syndrome, or autoimmune disease could actually indicate a problem with your thyroid?

The classic signs of a sluggish thyroid gland include weight gain, lethargy, poor quality hair and nails, hair loss, dry skin, fatigue, cold hands and feet, and constipation -- and these symptoms are relatively well known.

However, some of the conditions you might not associate with your thyroid include:

- High cholesterol
- Irregular menstruation
- Low libido
- Infertility
- Gum disease
- Fluid retention
- Skin conditions such as acne & eczema
- Memory problems
- Poor stamina

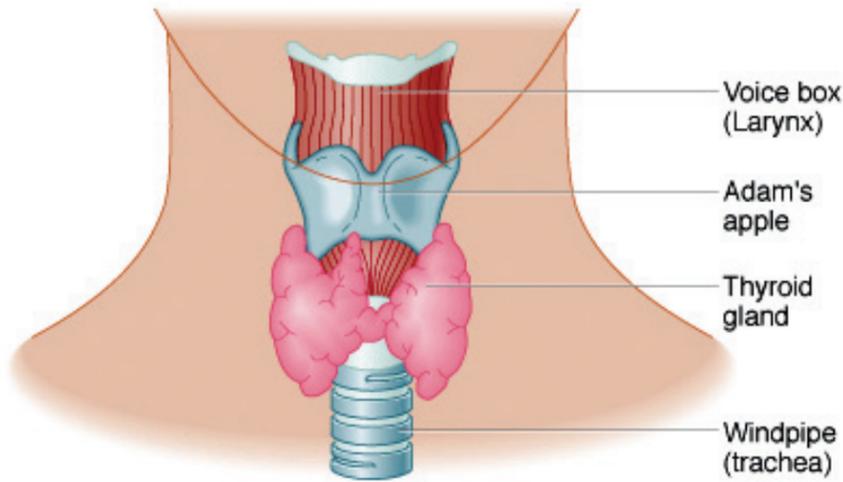
And there are, in fact, many more conditions that can be associated with poor thyroid function. Your thyroid plays a part in nearly every physiological process. When it is out of balance, so are you. This is why it is so important to understand how your thyroid gland works and what can cause it to run amok.

The sad fact is, half of all people with hypothyroidism are never diagnosed. And of those who are diagnosed, many are inadequately treated, resulting in partial recovery at best.

Hypothyroidism: The Hidden Epidemic

Hypothyroidism simply means you have a sluggish or underactive thyroid, which is producing less than adequate amounts of thyroid hormone.

"Subclinical" hypothyroidism means you have no obvious symptoms and only slightly abnormal lab tests. I will be discussing these tests much more as we go on since they are a source of great confusion for patients, as well as for many health practitioners.



Thyroid problems have unfortunately become quite common.

The same lifestyle factors contributing to high rates of obesity, cancer and diabetes are wreaking havoc on your thyroid... sugar, processed foods, stress, environmental toxins, and lack of exercise are heavy contributors.

More than 10 percent of the general population in the United States, and 20 percent of women over the age of 60, have subclinical hypothyroidism. But only a small percentage of these people are being treated!

Why is that?

Much of it has to do with misinterpretation and misunderstanding of lab tests, particularly TSH (thyroid stimulating hormone). Most physicians believe that if your TSH value is within the range of "normal," your thyroid is fine. But more and more physicians are discovering that the TSH value is grossly unreliable for diagnosing hypothyroidism.

And the TSH range for "normal" keeps changing!

In an effort to improve diagnosis of thyroid disease, in 2003 the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE) revised the "normal" TSH range as 0.3 to 3.042. The previous range was defined as 0.5 and 5.0, which red-flagged only the most glaring hypothyroidism cases.

How to Know if You are Hypothyroid

Identifying hypothyroidism and its cause is tricky business. Many of the symptoms overlap with other disorders, and many

are vague. Physicians often miss a thyroid problem since they rely on just a few traditional tests, so other clues to the problem go undetected.

But you can provide the missing clues!

The more vigilant you can be in assessing your own symptoms and risk factors and presenting the complete picture to your physician in an organized way, the easier it will be for your physician to help you.

Sometimes people with hypothyroidism have significant fatigue or sluggishness, especially in the morning. You may have hoarseness for no apparent reason. Often hypothyroid people are slow to warm up, even in a sauna, and don't sweat with mild exercise. Low mood and depression are common.

Sluggish bowels and constipation are major clues, especially if you already get adequate water and fiber.

Are the upper outer third of your eyebrows thin or missing? This is sometimes an indication of low thyroid. Chronic recurrent infections are also seen because thyroid function is important for your immune system.

Laboratory Testing

Even though lab tests are not the end-all, be-all for diagnosing a thyroid problem, they are a valuable part of the overall diagnostic process. The key is to look at the whole picture.

New studies suggest a very high incidence of borderline hypothyroidism in Westerners. Many cases are subclinical, and not showing up at all in standard laboratory measurements.

Coexistent subclinical hypothyroidism often triggers or worsens other chronic diseases, such as the autoimmune diseases, so the thyroid should be addressed with any chronic disease.

Many physicians will order only one test -- a TSH level. This is a grossly inadequate and relatively meaningless test by itself, as well as a waste of your money. It would be like saying you know your water is pure because it tastes fine.

I recommend the following panel of laboratory tests if you want to get the best picture of what your thyroid is doing:

- TSH -- the high-sensitivity version.

This is the BEST test. But beware most all of the "normal" ranges are simply dead wrong.

- Free T4 and Free T3.

• Thyroid antibodies, including thyroid peroxidase antibodies and anti-thyroglobulin antibodies. This measure helps determine if your body is attacking your thyroid, overreacting to its own tissues (ie, autoimmune reactions). Physicians nearly always leave this test out.

Diet

Your lifestyle choices dictate, to a great degree, how well your thyroid will function. Eliminate junk food, processed food, artificial sweeteners, trans fats, and anything with chemical ingredients. Eat whole, unprocessed foods, and choose as many organics as possible.

Gluten and Other Food Sensitivities

Gluten and food sensitivities⁶ are among the most common causes of thyroid dysfunction because they cause inflammation.

Gluten causes autoimmune responses in many people and can be responsible for Hashimoto's thyroiditis, a common autoimmune thyroid condition. Approximately 30 percent of the people with Hashimoto's thyroiditis have an autoimmune reaction to gluten, and it usually goes unrecognized.

How this works is, gluten can cause your gastrointestinal system to malfunction, so foods you eat aren't completely digested (aka Leaky Gut Syndrome⁷). These food particles can then be absorbed into your bloodstream where your body misidentifies them as antigens -- substances that shouldn't be there -- our body then produces antibodies against them.

These antigens are similar to molecules in your thyroid gland. So your body accidentally attacks your thyroid. This is known as an autoimmune reaction or one in which your body actually attacks itself.

Final Thoughts

A thyroid problem is no different than any other chronic illness -- you must address the underlying issues if you hope to correct the problem. The path to wellness may involve a variety of twists and turns before you find what works for you.

But hang in there.

If you approach it from a comprehensive, holistic perspective, you will find in time that all of the little steps you take will ultimately result in your feeling much better than you could have ever imagined.

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The information in the article is strictly informational and not meant to diagnosis, treat or cure any disease. Please

consult your physician before starting any program.



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BABIES AND BRIEFCASES

THE M.V. SANDBOX - CREATING A PATH FOR ENTREPRENEURS

Cheryl Hajjar

VALLEY PATRIOT MOMMY COLUMNIST

As the Yuletide spirit is among us, and the frenzy of holiday shopping has begun, 17 budding entrepreneurs from the Merrimack Valley are preparing to participate in a 12 week program called the 2014 Winter Accelerator Program. Hosted by The Merrimack Valley Sandbox, this is their third program since launching it in the winter of 2013. The Indigo Pixies were fortunate enough to be chosen as one of the 17 finalists out of the 61 applications they received and we are ecstatic to say the least.

So who is the Merrimack Valley Sandbox and what do they do? The Sandbox's mission is to boost the economic and well-being of Greater Lowell and Lawrence by advancing entrepreneurship and innovation. It is offered twice a year (summer & winter) and is free to apply. In the past, the program has helped over 25 businesses and non-profits including a running shoe tracker, a vegan ice cream company and a non-profit that helped juvenile offenders avoid jail time.

Founded in 2010 by the Deshpande Foundation, the program is designed to help start-up companies in a few ways. First, it serves as a networking platform by hosting events to help connect both individuals and organizations to develop new relationships. Second, it assists in the facilitation of ideas and brings them into actual businesses. Third, it helps spread the entrepreneurial mindset, encouraging the youth by giving grants to experiment with their ideas and lastly, the Sandbox encourages socially responsible leadership by offering a program to local leaders to help strengthen both their organizations and communities.

Why is The Winter Accelerator such an amazing program? It offers start-up companies the support they need through 3 months of mentorship, weekly education and workshops, free work-space and the opportunity to compete for \$30,000 in cash prizes to launch your businesses. It also allows entrepreneurs to network with industry executives they would have never had a chance to meet if it wasn't through the mentorship. Think of this like the TV show "The Voice" but for businesses. The mentors are paired up with the founders of the companies to act as their advisory board to help them build a strong sustain-



MERRIMACK VALLEY
SANDBOX

able business or non-profit.

What does the Sandbox look for when choosing start ups? They look for either a business in the pilot stage of development or an idea or concept where the applicant has done enough research to define a target market and a way to reach them. The purpose of the Winter Accelerator is just that, a way to accelerate a business idea that may never of had a chance at becoming a viable business. That's what's so great about it. Many people have light bulb moments but never act on them because of lack of access to the education, funding or even guidance to make it come to fruition. The Merrimack Valley Sandbox is the electrical outlet for the light bulb.

"The Merrimack Valley Sandbox is super excited to be underway with our third Accelerator class," says David Parker, the Executive Director of the Merrimack Valley Sandbox. "We've got a great mix of entrepreneurs and ideas, including a blimp to deliver supplies during an emergency, a Web site offering free tools to draw diagrams, and a specialty cake company. Cheryl's company, Indigo Pixies, shows great promise and we're looking forward to helping her build her business by making available to her office space, experts, mentors, her fellow entrepreneurs, and the possibility of winning cash at the end of the program."

They actually have a great event coming up on December 16th in Lawrence where The Merrimack Valley Sandbox will showcase some of the regions health innovations and a Sandbox Health Mixer. There you will hear from organizations like Whole Foods Market, network with people

SANDBOX: PAGE 35

News from the American Legion

John Lenotte

VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

As we quickly roll through the month of December towards the Christmas and New Year's holidays, we should take time to reflect on all we have thanks to give in our lives. Yes, many of us are unemployed and have various illnesses and family situations. But let us not forget that we live in the greatest country on earth. Every year, there are thousands who come here legally and illegally for the American Dream. Let us not focus on the few that come here for illegal gains and to milk the system. They are a small minority. And there are many more who would like to come and be a part of the United States of America.

The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan are winding down, but there are still thousands of troops in those areas. And let us not forget we have troops in South Korea, Africa and many other locations around the world. They are defending our freedoms and, along with their families, making sacrifices for all of us. This may not be in the daily news, but that is a good thing. When in the news, it is often because we have lost some of our brave men and women. Remember that today's military are all volunteers. And with the technology being used, they really are the best and brightest we have ever had. I read a report recently that only 25% of today's youth would qualify to join the military. That alone speaks volumes.

What can we do to help these troops? I will make one suggestion. Pay for their membership in The American Legion and/or another veterans' service organization. A response to this I have often heard is:

My husband/wife/son/daughter does not drink. Neither do I. Yes, many veterans organizations have a post home with a member's lounge but that is NOT what the organization is about. For example, The American Legion has its four pillars explaining the main areas of focus. These are National Security, Americanism, Children & Youth, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation.

The American Legion, along with the Jewish War Veterans pushed through the original GI Bill, authored by a Legion Past National Commander, Harry Colmery. And the Legion is still fighting today for improvements in the



current GI Bill. Typical dues are \$25 - \$30 per year depending on the Post.

Another way to help is to donate money. For example, charities run by The American Legion do not take out any administrative costs. Those costs are absorbed by dues paid to the organization.

The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation is a nonprofit that has two primary purposes: to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual welfare of children and youth and establish more effective uses of knowledge possessed by well-established organizations. An example of a grant for 2014 follows: the National Autism Center of Randolph, Mass., was awarded \$50,000 for their project, "Evidence-Based Educational Interventions in Public School Settings for Children with ASD." This grant will produce and disseminate information to support an intervention program targeted toward schools and special education administrators.

There are many charities looking for donations and this is but one example. Please consider remembering and doing something for our troops and their families this holiday season. More examples of Legion charities may be found at www.legion.org. Membership information may also be found at www.masslegion.org.

May God Bless our troops, their families and bring them home safe.



John Lenotte is the American Legion, Commander, Wilbur M. Comeau Post 4 Haverhill and Vice Commander, Dept. of Massachusetts. He is also past commander. He is also the recipient of The Valley Patriot Hero Award. You can Email him at JohnLDistrict8@verizon.net

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FROM 1: HERO THOMAS SIOPE

then shielded his wounded comrade with his own body and dragged him about 100 yards to the nearest combat medic. As the enemy began retreating, he prepared a landing zone for a chopper to airlift the soldier to an aid station. Aquino's life was saved. The entire squad survived.

For this act of heroism and sacrifice, Tom Siopes was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" device for "Valor".

Three weeks later, he put his life on the line again in yet another firefight, characteristic of the guerrilla warfare that marked the Vietnam War.

Ambush on the An Lao River

On the morning of April 13, 1969, Siopes, as a platoon sergeant in Company A, was leading a combat patrol along the An Lao River. Around mid-morning, his squad was ordered to cross the An Lao River and defend the ford so the rest of the company could cross over.

Above the riverbank, covered with jungle growth, three or four Viet Cong were lying in wait. Completely concealed in "spider holes" they had dug into the ground. As Tom's squad was leaving the sandbar in the middle of the river, the Viet Cong opened fire with automatic small arms. Taken by surprise, Tom's men at first froze, and

then became disorganized. Completely exposed—surrounded only by water—they had no cover, not even a sandbar.

Quickly sizing up the situation, Tom knew they couldn't stay there in the kill zone. Shouting encouragement to his men, he charged up the riverbank alone—100 yards ahead of his men—deliberately drawing enemy fire on himself to distract the enemy so his men could cross the river to safety. As he raced headlong up the riverbank toward the Viet Cong, bullets cracked over his head and around his feet. The Viet Cong kept firing at Tom, but could not stop him. A grenade exploded at his feet as he climbed the riverbank, injuring his leg and knocking him down. Still he jumped back up and kept going, charging at the enemy, firing at them continuously with his M-16. The wounded Viet Cong ran for their lives.

Tom Siopes was awarded the Silver Star for his valor that day, and also the Purple Heart. However, it was 38 years before he actually received the Silver Star. The original paperwork, submitted by his company commander, Captain Vance Forpaugh, had become lost in the system. When Forpaugh realized what had happened, he worked with platoon leader Lieutenant Joe Weker to resubmit everything again. Finally, in 2007, in a special ceremony at the VFW in North Andover, Tom Siopes was presented his Medal.

Vietnam—ambushes and firefights

Tom Siopes arrived in Vietnam in November 1968, after a year of training Stateside and one week of jungle training at the 173d's base camp in An Khe. He was assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade, a separate brigade formed in 1964 as a strike force for all of Southeast Asia.

The 2nd Battalion penetrated into the most inaccessible enemy strongholds over a wide area—in the four densely populated districts of Binh Dinh Province, in the Central Highlands military region (II Corps Tactical Zone). They were so successful in throwing the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army into confusion that the expected January 1969 TET Offensive never took place in

Binh Dinh.

The 173d Airborne Brigade's chief focus was keeping the Viet Cong disorganized and on the run. Search-and-destroy missions routed the enemy from their hiding places, destroyed their forces, equipment, and base camps.

In January 1969, the 173d discovered two of the largest enemy caches ever found by the Brigade. The 2nd Battalion found the biggest weapons cache of the operation in Binh Dinh—including a recoilless rifle, mortar, rounds for both, a stash of grenades, mines, small arms and ammunition. One week earlier another battalion had found a medical cache of 300 pounds of surgical instruments, drugs, plasma, and a microscope.

Forpaugh. As a Vietnam veteran, he knows full well how these returning heroes were vilified and shunned by the general public. Now he is determined that this will not happen to today's returning veterans who lost limbs in combat during the War on Terror following September 11, 2001. Tom is active in a national, all-volunteer organization that builds custom-designed homes for these severely disabled veterans. Homes for Our Troops has already built 146 homes so far—with another 31 in progress—providing veterans with homes at no cost.

"I'm so happy these veterans are being welcomed home as the heroes they truly are, that they are not abandoned



Tom Siopes, far right, stands behind members of his platoon from Company A on top of one of the mountains in South Vietnam's Central Highlands. Tom led patrols deep into the forested mountains as well as into the rice paddies of the An Lao valley.

Wide-scale guerrilla warfare. Ambushes and firefights. Surprise attacks by day and night. An elusive, invisible enemy that used hit-and-run tactics—and knew the terrain well. U.S. troops could not see the enemy but knew he was there. An extensive intelligence network helped to accurately pinpoint where the enemy was, how large his force was, and what he was doing. "Snoopy" readings detected human odors. Red Haze, using heat-sensors, discovered the heat from enemy campfires. Yet when paratroopers entered these areas, the enemy often fled after light skirmishes, leaving behind caches of rice and medical supplies.

Redeeming the past

After his discharge from the military on August 29, 1969, Tom Siopes went on to serve with the Andover Police force for 37 years, retiring as a Lieutenant in 2011.

He still keeps in touch with Aquino, whose life he saved, and his CO Vance

and forgotten," he says. "Although we cannot change the past, we can learn from the mistakes of the past. And we can choose to make a difference and help those who have gone through the fire for us."

In the Scriptures, the Lord promises: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you... When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch you... I will make the Valley of Achor [trouble] a door of hope" (Isaiah 43:1-2, Hosea 2:15).



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



In South Vietnam's Central Highlands, Sergeant Tom Siopes, 22 years old, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade (separate), led "search and destroy" missions and combat patrols against the Communist Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army. The elusive, invisible enemy was well-concealed, even in the open plains.

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SANDBOX: FROM PAGE 34

from around the region, and people will be sharing their health ideas. The event is co-sponsored by Lawrence General Hospital and is free to attend. For more information, please visit MVSandbox.org.

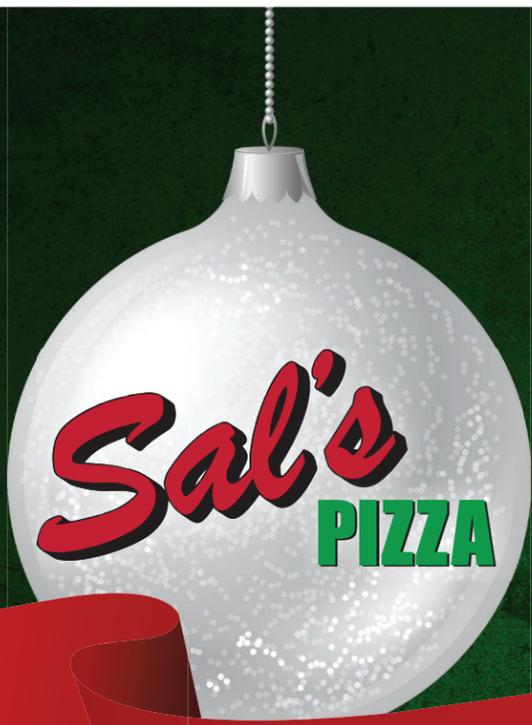
The Merrimack Valley Sandbox is giving my business, The Indigo Pixies a chance to be able to take our books and songs and help educate both parents and children on the importance of gently transitioning through their developmental milestones.

If it weren't for their program, we wouldn't have access to the education, the resources and the opportunity for our business to thrive. This holiday season, The Merrimack Valley Sandbox is giving a chance to local entrepreneurs to make their dreams of owning their own businesses. This in turn positively impacts our communities, both on a social and financial level. I wish the organization the best of luck in its future endeavors.

Cheryl Hajjar, CEO & Co-Founder Indigo Magic
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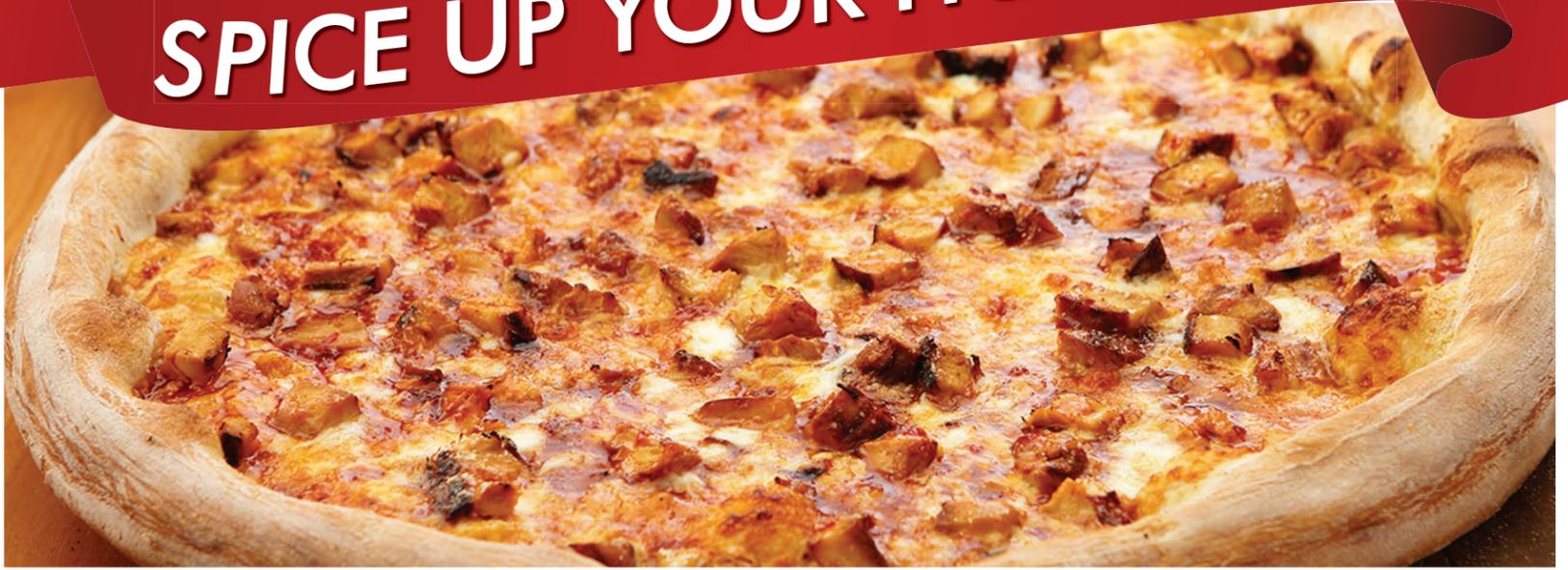


Cheryl Hajjar is a lifelong resident of the Merrimack Valley. She keeps busy by fulfilling her duties as a mother to her young son. She is an entrepreneur and the CEO of Indigo Magic, an interactive children's company. One of her passions is music, songwriting and classical piano which she incorporates into all areas of her life. EMAIL: babiesnbriecases@gmail.com



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