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# THE VALLEY PATRIOT

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2004

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# EDITORIAL

## Please! Touch our Junk!

Now, which plane would you rather fly on, the plane with no pat downs and no x-ray screenings, or the one with inconvenient, extensive pat downs and "advanced imaging technology," (also known as a full-body scanner)? Well, we know which one Muslim terrorists who wants to commit jihad would choose. We're going out on a limb and venture to guess that the Muslims who wants to blow up planes would choose the one without the screening procedure.

There is a vocal minority whining about liberties and privacy when getting on an airplane. They obviously forgotten 911 and Islamic terrorists using planes as weapons to blow up the Twin Towers and Pentagon killing over 3,000 Americans.

Recently, two of our Valley Patriot editors flew to South Carolina via Logan Airport. One of our editors wanted to have his "junk" touched but that didn't happen. The other was randomly chosen to go through the full-body-screening scanner. There was no concern about privacy, and no whining about "rights". Both were happy to go through the process to ensure a safe and bomb free flight. Better to be patted down than be blown up, we say!

All the other passengers cooperative with TSA agents and followed procedures to ensure the safety of everyone. As it should be. You do not have a constitutional right to fly on an airplane, but you DO have a right to fly safely when you do! We're glad the TSA takes the measures they do to protect us!

Unfortunately, the real issue on our flight was turbulence, meaning it was a coffee free flight. But that is an editorial for another day. Isn't it great to have such problems?

## All is right with North Andover this Holiday season...

...we cannot say the same about last year though.

At this time last year, there was a dispute brewing over a Menorah on the Common; "Merry Christmas" sign on the fire station, and whether or not there should be a Christmas tree on the Common.

Last year, Chabad House of Merrimack Valley applied for an eight day permit to have a Menorah on the Common for Chanukah. The permit had been approved in prior years, but because of a new ordinance it was denied.

This of course, brought controversy, bad exposure for the Town and a potential lawsuit from Chabad.

Then, the Town Manager questioned whether or not the firefighters at the Main Street Fire Station could place "Merry Christmas" on their door. "Bah Humbug!" was in the air and the Christmas spirit was sadly gone from last year's holiday season.

In the end, the Selectmen did approve an eight day permit for the Menorah and "Merry Christmas" once again adorned the doors of the fire station ... but the damage was done.

Thankfully, that was last year and this year we had none of that nonsense!

This year, North Andover residents are in the giving and festive holiday spirit. The Menorah was on the Common for the eight days of Chanukah and there were no issues with the permit to have it on town property. "Merry Christmas" hangs merrily on the fire station door, the Santa parade went off without a hitch, the Christmas tree is on the Common and Christmas wreaths line Main Street, and the North Andover Fire Department is collecting unwrapped toys for kids of all ages. (see page 7)

Yes, the holiday spirit is alive and well in North Andover this year.

We love celebrating Christmas and Chanukah and are thankful that North Andover does too. From all of us at The Valley Patriot we wish you a Merry Christmas, hope you had a Happy Chanukah and enjoy a safe holiday season!

### News tips

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

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

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

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

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

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# Paul Adams Answers Tribune Story on Finances

**Paul Adams**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ELECT

An Eagle Tribune story last month called into question the source of campaign money spent by State Representative-elect Paul Adams and even insinuated that he lied about his background and work experience prior to the election. Adams issued this press release a few days later, and, not surprisingly, the Tribune refused to print it. Here is Adams' response to the Tribune story:

During the past [month], there's been a lot of loose talk and silly speculation about the financing of my successful campaign for State Representative from the 17th Essex District," observed Adams.

"Worse still," Adams continued, there's been a lot of inaccurate reporting and erroneous gossip about me and my educational and employment background by people whose job it is to be precise, accurate, and non-judgmental, but who, for whatever reasons, have chosen not to be so in my particular case."

"Out of respect for the Office of Campaign and Political Finance that is now conducting an orderly review of my campaign's financing, I will have little to say now until that review is completed, other than this: (i) that I welcome the OCPF review, (ii) that I'm cooperating fully with it, and (iii) that I'll have plenty more to say on this subject once the review is complete."

Adams continued: "Nevertheless, given the degree of attention that this matter has received (fueled, I am sad to say, by some inaccurate press reporting), I believe that as the State Representative-elect for the 17th Essex District I also have a duty to reassure my constituents, both those who voted for me and those who did not, of the following:

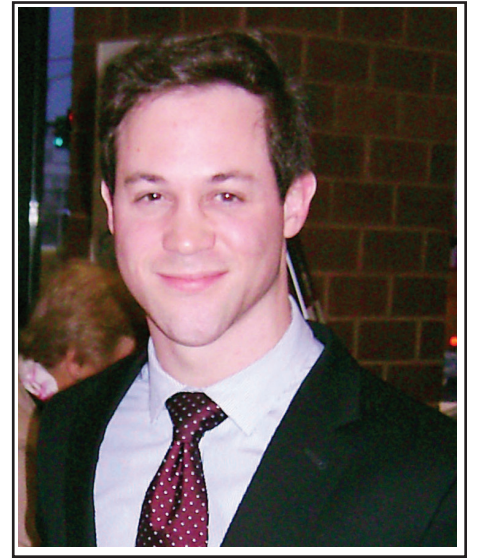
- The sole source of the approximately \$50,000 that is the subject of the OCPF review, whose inquiry I welcome, was my own personal funds.

The sources of most of these were tax-exempt gifts from immediate family members.

- Any errors in the financial reporting or disclosure of those monies, assuming, without admitting, that there were such errors, were, at the end of the day, the result of political inexperience, nothing more.

- Slanderous articles in one media outlet authored by one rogue reporter have consistently and falsely reported that I had misstated my academic credentials and employment history. For example, it was reported on several occasions by that one rogue reporter that I had not received a degree Cum Laude from Suffolk University. Those reports are blatantly false. All are invited to view my Cum Laude undergraduate diploma, which will shortly be posted on my campaign website, [www.voteadamspaul.com](http://www.voteadamspaul.com). Another example of false reporting: it was contended by that same rogue reporter in several stories that I had not worked as a consultant with a certain entity because I had not been paid by that entity. Again, those reports are blatantly false.

The facts are that I was a consultant, that I was paid, and moreover, that I was



paid over a period of 3 years. In short, these reports that I made knowingly false or inaccurate statements about my educational and employment history are themselves false, and worse still, those reports may have been knowingly false when made. These are just two of several

**ADAMS, page 34**

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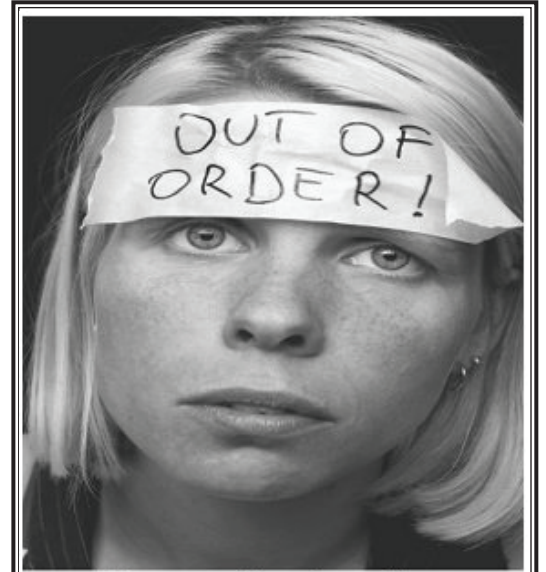
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# Musings from the Gulag

**Dr. Charles Ormsby**

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST/EDITOR

While most of the country woke up and rejected the Democrat-led mad dash to collectivism, approximately 55% of Massachusetts voters (along with a plurality of voters in several other loony states, notably California) clung to their government's apron strings. The 55%, those who voted to continue looting their fellow citizens, should be ashamed both because their thieving ways are immoral and because their vote paints them as either knowingly immoral, or uninformed, or imbeciles.

But I'm being too kind.

The proposition that stealing from others is despicable used to be a perspective shared by the vast majority of the citizens of Massachusetts. Not any more. Now, the majority of our fellow citizens can sleep well after sanctioning a public policy of systematic thievery as long as they concur with -- or they benefit from -- the spoils. The inescapable conclusion is that they are not worthy of even the declining liberty we still enjoy.

Unfortunately, what they do deserve is what we may all be destined to inherit: a steadily declining economy, high unemployment rates, high inflation, steadily increasing taxes, ever more burdensome regulations, a dramatically lower standard of living, and the loss of freedoms that they never cherished.

Besides the immorality of their political persuasion, the 55% who consistently undermine our liberties by voting to increase the weight of the government's steel boot also display an embarrassing lack of intellect. They either have the mental capacity of their party's mascot or, if they have a near-human mental capacity, they rarely bother to put it to any use.

A donkey can see a pile of hay in front of itself and understand that it has an opportunity to eat. It has no concept of the future implications of its decision to eat the hay, with the exception of the immediate satiety that results.

Democrats react to any opportunity to tax or regulate their fellow citizens with

*"If ye love wealth greater than liberty, the tranquility of servitude greater than the animating contest for freedom, go home in peace, we seek not your council nor your arms. Kneel down and lick the hand that feeds you, may your chains weigh lightly upon you, and may posterity forget we were ever countrymen."*

-Samuel Adams

a similar lack of analysis and foresight. They can't fathom that policies have future consequences. They only care that they want or need more of other people's money and they want or need it now. Consequences be damned.

To be candid, they appear to be dumber than a brick when it comes to understanding that human beings (their fellow citizens) will modify their behavior when the government is permitted to confiscate a greater share of profits, or raise the marginal tax rates on income, or impose a greater regulatory burden or tax on economic transactions.

If they had a brain, they would realize that the reaction of the citizenry to these policy changes is very predictable. People will invest less, hire less, work less, and buy less. More precisely, they will do less of these things here and more of them elsewhere. Meanwhile, the dim-witted Democrats wonder why our population is declining and why businesses move to states like New Hampshire that are more respectful of our private property rights.

How hard is it to figure out or predict these consequences? It is not hard if your IQ is greater than your shoe size and you expend some mental effort.

There are multiple barriers to Democrat voters trying to figure this out. They all suffer from some combination of the following:

- \* Inadequate mental capacity
- \* Lack of mental content (education, knowledge, experience)

- \* Unwillingness to re-direct whatever limited mental capacity they have away from Lady Gaga or Lindsey Lohan

- \* Fear of the conclusion they would inevitably reach if they bothered to think about political philosophy and economics (heaven forbid they might conclude that

they shouldn't loot their neighbors)

- \* And, finally, for those in positions of political power, they fear losing that power.

Evidence, on a national scale, for the first three was provided in the most recent election when a Zogby post-election poll indicated that voters who decided how to vote during the week before the election voted Democrat by a margin of 57-to-31. In contrast, those deciding much earlier voted Republican by a substantial margin.

They didn't decide until the last week?! Where were their brains before that? Have they ever watched a news program? Read a newspaper? Read a book about anything of substance? Can they even read? Did they sleep through American or world history? Does economics ring a bell? Can they add fractions or solve the simple equation? Did they learn anything in their three years in fourth grade?

It is hard to imagine the depths of their ignorance and/or avarice.

Thank goodness Massachusetts will lose one congressional seat due to an anemic population growth (between 2000 and 2010, the Massachusetts population grew at less than 22% of the rate of the U.S. as a whole --- 2.1% vs. 9.8%). With the policies of the current Democrat establishment on Beacon Hill, we are likely to lose another one or two seats after the next census. I suggest they play musical chairs to decide who gets booted out.

Question 3 (lowering the sales tax to 3%) lost by 57% to 43%. Some say it should have targeted a 5% sales tax instead of 3%. They are wrong.

Political choices should be clear and unambiguous. When the voters make a stupid decision, the consequences will be felt and we will have a chance to learn

from it. When the pro-freedom position wins, we need to win, not tread water.

Could we ever have a better example of this than the election of President Obama and the disastrous consequences that ensued from the Obama/Pelosi/Reid regime? If McCain had been elected in 2008, we would never have received the political lessons of the past two years. The national consciousness would never have reached its current state.

Let's be clear. The current national state of mind is not a pro-Republican state of mind, but one that has a new-found appreciation for smaller government, individual liberty, and the merits of the Constitution.

But don't become over-confident. This lesson will remain in our national consciousness only so long as concerned citizens (right now that means Tea Party activists) remain focused and hold politicians accountable to our founding principles.

We also need to hold our fellow citizens accountable when they exhibit signs of idiocy or immorality.

Start with reason and logic. Try to convince them to become informed, to start thinking clearly and logically, and to reject the apparent short-term benefits of thievery and power.

If that doesn't work, they are either idiots or immoral, and possibly both. Don't hide your conclusion from them.

We used to put people in the stocks on the public common for acting badly. I understand it was common for those who passed by to throw rotten fruit at them to show that such behavior was socially unacceptable. As a consequence, people behaved much better in those days.

We probably can't bring back the stocks (can somebody look into that?), but a little well deserved ridicule might do wonders.

If the choice is permanent residence in the Massachusetts Gulag or honest incivility, I'll always choose the latter.



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

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## NAMA raises money for Cystic Fibrosis

Tracey Zysk

VALLEY PATRIOT NAMA COLUMNIST

On Saturday, November 27th, over 100 people gathered at North Andover's Rolf's Pub to help the North Andover Merchants Association (NAMA) raise money for Cystic Fibrosis.

"I was very impressed with the turnout," said Rolf's owner Lesley Carlson, who also serves as Vice President of NAMA.

Guests entering Rolf's between 6:00pm and 11:00pm were asked to donate \$5 towards KC's Dream Team,

a North Andover-based group committed to raising money for Cystic Fibrosis. A DJ managed

music, while members of the Dream Team managed a raffle.

"Over 20 local businesses donated prizes to a raffle to maximize how much could be raised," said Phil DeCologero, a member of NAMA who helped organize the event. "All prizes were donated by NAMA businesses."

Combined the raffles prizes were worth an estimated \$2,200.

"I think it really speaks to the generosity of the local business community," said DeCologero.

"I've been involved in events like this for years," said Dean Thornhill, of KC's Dream Team. "I'm grateful we received

such support from local business owners."

The fundraiser was planned to help defray the increased costs of KC's Dream Team's annual fundraiser in March.

"Each March we have a music and comedy night that always sells out," said Thornhill. "We've always been very successful because of the talent that we've been able to attract. Unfortunately, it seems like our comedians always end up making it big – and its getting more and more difficult to get them to do the shows for free."

Raffle prizes were donated by Beabe

Gallery, Bead Happy, Curves, Ed Pedi Photography, Eyes on Main, Fitness Together, Groom-Town Pet

Boutique and Spa, Kids Karousel, Mad Maggie's Ice Cream, Main Street Hardware, NOVA SalonSpa, Rennie's Florist, Roche Farms, Rolf's Pub, Rose and Dove Gift Shop, Second Hand Rose on Main, and Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care.

On March 5th, 2011, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm, KC's Dream Team will have their annual Music and Comedy Night at the Elks Lodge on 40 Old Ferry Rd in Lowell. Music will be headlined by Liz Longley, while comedy will be headlined by Joe Wong. For more information contact Dean Thornhill at deanthornhill@comcast.net.



## N. A. Merchants Association A year in review

The North Andover Merchants Association is an organization made up of North Andover businesses. We are committed to improving North Andover through the promotion, enhancement and growth of local businesses.

We at the North Andover Merchants Association encourage all residents to consider and act on our motto Stay Local. Shop Locally. The success of our business community means the success of our entire community.

\* Help Yourself: Why drive out of town when you can find many of the same products at the same prices that you were previously seeking elsewhere, often within walking or biking distance. You'll save time and help the environment!

\* Help Your Neighbors: By shopping locally you help support existing local jobs while encouraging the growth of additional ones.

\* Help Your Town: North Andover businesses make financial contributions to charities and organizations throughout North Andover. They also pay taxes which in turn supports our schools, our roads and our town services.

In this past year, NAMA has made quite an impact on the community of North Andover. The core of any town is to have a strong business community. The North Andover Merchants embraces the success of a wonderful 2010 year. NAMA also realizes it is the responsibility of the business community to give back to the



ones that have helped their businesses thrive. In 2010 NAMA has been able to make donations to the following:

North Andover Scholarship fund \$150.00

North Andover Fire Dept & TLC toy drive \$100.00

North Andover High

School Chorus \$1000.00

NAMA also sponsored two major events:

The Hair & Mane campaign – local businesses donated hair and pet fur to help the relief efforts of the oil spill in the Gulf.

The Cystic Fibrosis campaign – local businesses donated raffle prizes for the CF event held at Rolf's Pub to donate money to the KC Robinson fund.

Town events that NAMA co-sponsored with the Festival Committee and the NAPD

Sheep Shearing

Fourth of July

National Night Out

Santa Parade

NAMA also hosted two contests in town this year to beautify the outside of our stores

Flower box contest

Holiday decorating contest

The North Andover Merchants Association also added 24 new members in 2010 and is looking forward to its continued growth in 2011. Please feel free to follow us on facebook and become a fan or visit us a northandovermerchants.com

## From the N. Andover Senior Center

As Director of the North Andover Senior Center on my desk is the usual office stuff; tape dispenser, paperclips, telephone, calculator and lots and lots of paper work and articles pertaining to the needs of the older adult population. What I don't have is a red help button connected to the Town Managers Office, State House or to Washington. And while it sure would be nice to have a direct connect, or a hot line to those who determine our funding or resources, I do have the next best thing, over 5,600 seniors who live in the community of North Andover. At the North Andover Senior Center my greatest resource when it comes to advocacy is my Board of Directors and the older adults who participate daily in our programs and receive services. They know what they want and what they don't want, and they're not afraid to speak their minds. The North Andover Senior Center is important to our active adults and their families. Our mission is to provide services and activities that promote health and active aging, and advocacy by our seniors is crucial to keeping our Senior Center strong.

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

THE FIX – IT SHOP: (New Hours) The first and third Monday of the month from 12-3:00. We repair almost anything as good as new; Lamps with cords and sockets, replace watch batteries, small tables and chairs. Anything not listed; we will give it a shot! Your cost is \$2 - \$4 depending on work needed, plus parts. Proceeds benefit the Senior Center.

Anyone Interested? Lite Cardio/Strength Class w/ Patty Ferullo; we need 8 seniors to run this class. Call Barbara at 978-688-9560 if interested. It will run once a week for 6 weeks, \$24 or \$6 a class.

LECTURE SERIES: December 13, Professor Mary McHugh from Merrimack College will hold a Political Science discussion.

ZUMBA GOLD IS COMING SOON: Try Zumba Gold for FREE on Wednesday, December 15 @ 2:30. This class is for any age and any ability. Zumba Gold sessions will start on Wednesday, January 12, 6-week class for \$24.00 or \$6 per class for drop-ins.

ZUMBA, ZUMBA, ZUMBA with Talie: Monday and Wednesdays 3:30 – 4:30 and Thursdays 4:30 – 5:30. Punch cards are \$40 for 10 classes.

YOGA: Yoga Class Monday mornings at 9:00 with Cheryl Cronin. Please call to register.

TAI CHI: Class is Tuesday mornings at 9:30 with Sue and Ed Hosmer. Please call to register.

BASIC COMPUTER CLASSES: Thursday mornings, 45 minute appointments for \$4. Learn to set up e-mail, search the internet and use Microsoft Word. Call 978-688-9560 for an appointment.

Wii Sport Bowling: Stop by the Senior Center on any Thursday morning between 9 and 10 am and try your luck at Bowling with the Wii System. It's fun, good exercise and easier than you think. A volunteer will be on hand to show you the basics.

WALKING GROUP: Wednesday mornings at 9. Meet at the Old Center Common

N.ANDOVER, page 43

## Platinum Nails under new ownership

Platinum Nails Salon of North Andover is open under new ownership. Lina Le and her staff are a dynamic team with over eighteen years of combined experience in nail care. Platinum Nails specializes in the latest techniques such as Axxium and Gel Nails, offering the lowest prices in the Merrimack Valley.

Le brings a unique history and background to her latest undertaking. Business acumen runs in the family for this energetic Vietnamese native and North Andover resident. The mother of two young boys who attend the Atkinson School and North Andover Middle School, it was initially Le's husband, Paul, who inspired her to open her new salon. Paul has owned and operated a thriving barber shop, Top Cuts, located in the center of Watertown for the last three years.

As their children began to attend school fulltime, Le decided to pursue a lifelong dream to own and operate her own venture and with the support of Paul she purchased Platinum Nails. Her goal is to grow the salon and to make it a vital part of the thriving North Andover business community.

In speaking with Le about her unique background, she is keenly aware of the

freedom that comes from living in the United States. She knows, from personal experience, the alternative and approaches her business endeavor with a sense of gratitude.

Le has a philanthropic spirit. This explains why her other career choice would have been to offer her bilingual skills as an interpreter to members of the Vietnamese community undergoing medical treatment. She hopes to contribute to this cause on a volunteer basis as time allows.

Yet, for the time being her energies are focused on developing Platinum Nails Salon. She brings the same sort of enthusiasm and passion to her latest venture as she does to her family and the Vietnamese community.

Le looks forward to broadening her circle of business associates, welcomes new clients and is happy to accommodate individual requests. In addition to nails she also offers a full array of Spa Services. Platinum Nails Salon is conveniently located:

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# Fitness Together-N.A. Launches Type 2 Diabetes Study

## Invites Local Residents to Participate

Tracey Zysk

VALLEY PATRIOT REPORTER

North Andover, Mass. Some of the newest clients exercising at Fitness Together in North Andover are doing more than stepping on a scale to chart their progress. They're giving blood.

They are part of a type 2 diabetes observational study being conducted by area Fitness Together studios to examine the impact of a 26-week individualized fitness training program. Regular blood glucose tests with a small prick on the finger are as important as the exercise in measuring safe success.

"Diabetes is a major health issue affecting more than 24 million Americans, and our franchisees have told us they are happy to have a chance to make a difference," says Jeff Jervik, president and CEO of Fitness Together Holdings, Inc.

Fitness Together studios are welcoming a minimum of 50 subjects to the program and will share the results with the American Diabetes Association (ADA) of Eastern New England where the Fitness Together franchise group is also the Official Health and Fitness Sponsor for the ADA's Step Out: Walk to Fight Diabetes.

In one of the largest research projects of its kind, 43 Fitness Together studios have assembled across Eastern New England to enlist men and women over the age of 30 who have been clinically diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and are more than 30 pounds overweight. They will be monitored a Certified Diabetes Educator as well as Fitness Together studio personal

trainers.

"Through this observational study, we will better understand the impact of diet and exercise on diabetes control, high blood pressure, one's sense of well-being and the costs of medications," explains Joan Hill, Registered Dietitian, Certified Diabetes Educator and Licensed Dietitian/Nutritionist (RD, CDE, and LDN).

"The mission of the ADA is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes. We are supportive of the Fitness Together franchise group's efforts to gather information for a better understanding on how working with a personal trainer can motivate those with diabetes to improve their control," said Chris Boynton, executive director for the Eastern New England area of the American Diabetes Association.

For the next six months, the Fitness Together studios will chart weight loss and conduct A1c tests, which measure one's average blood glucose level and helps track if people are at risk of complications due to uncontrolled diabetes. The studios will also track blood pressure, medication use and sense of well-being before and after test results and look for indicators of significant health improvements from the clients. People with type 2 diabetes who wish to be part of the study can locate participating studios at [www.FTGetsResults.com](http://www.FTGetsResults.com)

Each client who signs up for the type 2 diabetes study must be cleared by a doctor to exercise and must agree to six-months

**DIABETES, page 34**

# TREES FOR OUR TROOPS!



On Saturday, December 4, 2010, USO Military Families were invited to Smolak Farms for a one of a kind Holiday experience with "Trees for Our Troops." BAE Systems provided 100 USO military families from New England, with a loved one who has just returned from deployment or will deploy shortly after the Holiday season, with their own freshly cut Holiday Tree from Smolak Farms. Activities for the families at the farm included cookie and ornament decorating, story time with Mrs. Claus and photos with Santa!

# North Andover Fire Dept 2nd annual "Toys for Local Children" Drive

Tracey Zysk

NORTH ANDOVER COLUMNIST

Tis the Season... a season where Massachusetts and the Merrimack Valley is still feeling the chill of our recent economic slow down. Although the economy may be making a slow comeback it just isn't happening fast enough. Parents all over our State are doing everything possible to make sure their children still receive that extra special toy this holiday season.

With the help of North Andover Firefighter Matt Davis and an organization called "Toys for Local Children" kids will be receiving gifts this year. The joy of Christmas morning is something every child should be able to experience and one that Matt is determined to make happen. Davis, who has been a firefighter since 2003 and is a father of a beautiful 5yr old little girl named Hayleigh, just couldn't imagine a child having to go



without. Not to mention, Matt grew up with his Mom owning one of the local daycares in North Andover. Matt loves children, loves Christmas and simply wants everyone to be able to enjoy the Holidays.

Last year, Tim Grimes of the Dracut Fire Department reached out to Matt and

asked the NAFD to join in the "Toys for Local Children" campaign. Matt got approval and the NAFD immediately started collecting toys. For their first year the success was amazing. Davis stated they started their campaign with only two weeks to collect and in that time frame they had four truck pick ups of toys.

North Andover Fire Chief Melnikas added "This is an opportunity for the Fire Department to brighten a child's Christmas because after all it's all about the kids on Christmas."

Toys for Local Children (TLC) is a charity aimed at supporting families in the community, and making holiday dreams come true. This charity was formed to assist families less fortunate by providing them with a little bit of happiness during the holiday season. [www.toysforlocalchildren.org](http://www.toysforlocalchildren.org)

If you would like to donate an unwrapped toy for children infant to 18yrs old, you may bring it to either of the North Andover fire stations, Billerica, Bedford, Chelmsford, Dracut, Somerville and Tewksbury Fire Departments up until December 25th. All toys will stay local and be distributed to families in Massachusetts.

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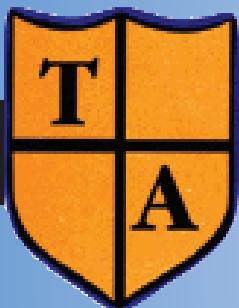
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## Is Lawrence Really Ready?

Robert O'Koniewski

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Recently state treasurer-elect Steve Grossman was whining in the press about legislation his pal, U.S. Senate majority leader Harry Reid (D-Nevada), had filed to legalize on-line video poker across the country. Grossman's gripe? Legalized on-line poker would hurt, allegedly, the Massachusetts state lottery's revenues and the almost \$900 million that it sends presently to our cities and towns as local aid.

One needs to read between the lines to get to Grossman's real concern – legalized online gambling would directly compete with the monopolistic grip the Commonwealth has on the suckers who cavalierly toss their money into the lottery pot in their pursuit of fool's gold. Bulletin to Grossman – your troubles have nothing to do with Harry Reid; unfortunately, your ill-preparation to handle the bad hand you have been dealt will blow back adversely onto the 351 cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

Grossman now realizes what many before him have concluded: Just like the street corner pusher who feeds his junkies the latest, greatest narcotics, the state treasurer needs to keep re-vamping the lottery games so the scratch ticket and Keno junkies continue to play and at a higher rate. Incredible amounts of energy and resources go into the creation and promotion of lottery games, all in the name of disconnecting the suckers from their dollars for local aid. In reality, there is a ceiling that gets hit, in good times or bad. And despite four years of promises by the Patrick administration to provide property tax relief, no cavalry is coming over the horizon to address that, either.

Which makes it even more ironic that these so-called casino opponents get all high and mighty against bringing expanded gambling to Massachusetts but you never see them advocating for legislation to repeal the state lottery.

What started out as a supplement to local aid now has become the monster that needs feeding time after time, all for the sake of the police, firemen, and teachers for which we are told local aid is needed. It really is a sick mentality that we have allowed to fester here that has placed the lottery on the pedestal of fiscal untouchables all because the politicians need it to keep the municipal unions happy.

And this leads to the real problem we all will face.

There is universal consensus that the current \$26 billion state budget, which closes out June 30, 2011, currently is in, at a minimum, a \$2 billion hole. It is expected to be even greater in fiscal year 2012 barring action by the governor and legislature. That is a gap that needs to be filled with some combination of budget cuts and new revenues basically within the second half of the current fiscal year, to be executed by a gubernatorial administration that demonstrates little ability to slash spending and eliminate unnecessary or the



Peter Larocque

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

I was reminded recently of the shot heard around the world which took place on April 19, 1775, where once embattled farmers (70 Minute Men), stood and after being fired upon, returned fire which became the famous shot heard around the world, the war for Independence had now begun and the MESSAGE was sent, and the rest is history!

What got me thinking of this was the recent Lawrence City Council Meeting as a whole with Mayor William Lantigua, they gathered to discuss the violence and the rise of criminal activity in the City of Lawrence. (As of 11/23/2010, there have been 8 murders). Accusations and verbal shots went back and forth between the Councilors and the Mayor.

As a law-abiding, taxpaying homeowner and citizen of Lawrence who has no desire to leave, I asked myself, what were some of the contributing factors that led to this upswing of violence? Well my view is that it all began shortly after January 4, 2010, when the new administration took over the corner office at 200 Common Street. Soon after the Inauguration the newly elected Mayor began to micro-manage the Lawrence Police Department and on January 7, 2010 demoted Deputy Chief of Police Michael Driscoll (a 20 year veteran) to Captain and promoted Sergeant Melix Bonilla (The Mayor's campaign manager) to Acting Deputy Chief of Police, (a jump up of three ranks). This appointment by the Mayor and the corresponding silence by Representatives Finegold and Torrissi and Senator Tucker, (all admitted friends of Mayor Lantigua), and the newly elected City Council (who eventually on September 7, 2010 confirmed this appointment by a 8 to 1 vote) sent a message! This move was in my opinion like the shot heard all around the world and sent the message to the people of Lawrence and the surrounding communities in the Valley, especially to all non-law abiding people, that public safety would not be such a priority in Lawrence!

Then add to that action, asking the legislature in Boston to approve allowing the City of Lawrence to borrow up to 35 million dollars in order to prevent the layoffs of Police and Firemen. Then shortly after receiving permission went ahead and laid off Police and Firemen anyway, again the message was sent that the Administration doesn't really mean what it says and doesn't say what it means.

To the law-abiding, this message will not change their behavior, but to the lawless the message is, Welcome to Lawrence!

Now I am not saying that these moves alone are responsible for the rise in crime in Lawrence, but on the other hand, they

least important programs.

So where does the current budget crisis leave our communities, especially the financially stressed like Lawrence? Outside of the \$35 million bailout that the Lantigua administration generously received from the governor and the mayor's former colleagues in the legislature, the City of Lawrence suffered multi-million dollar cuts in local aid, a situation the prior administration at 200 Common was ill-prepared to address.

Because of the bailout's stipulation of state oversight, the city finances are controlled by a state official who signed off on all those Sullivan administration budgets that apparently were not as balanced as we were lead to believe, leading to deficits requiring the bailout.

So moving forward, is Lawrence prepared to meet the upcoming fiscal tsunami the state has pushed into 2011? It is not as if we do not know what is coming. Days after the governor signed the budget he announced in mid-July that it was already out of whack by a billion dollars. As the election year progressed, the number doubled. Now the governor and legislature are talking about yet another spending bill to be passed before the end of the year to cover certain accounts whose needs are higher than expected. Where are these monies coming from? A federal bailout? Highly unlikely. More borrowing? Who knows. State and local budgets also have benefited from a system of jerry-rigging based on one-time federal stimulus dollars. But you do know the state cuts are coming, most likely again in local aid. Also keep in mind that as Lawrence pays off its bailout, those payoffs come directly out of the city's local aid.

Which comes back to this – Is Lawrence ready? What is the plan? We've heard no serious discussion of what the Lantigua administration intends to do to avert additional fiscal heartache beginning in 2011 and going into the next fiscal year starting in July. The streets are increasingly unsafe with the drastic cuts in police that Chief Romero is suffering. It will be interesting to see what's next in the Lantigua playbook, for what we have seen so far certainly has not been a stellar performance.

## Message Sent!!

didn't help!

It would seem to me that if I were the newly elected Mayor of Lawrence that my first action as Mayor would not be to screw around with PUBLIC SAFETY just so that I could repay my campaign manager. Nor would I take an action that would divide the city! My focus would be doing things that would bring the city together, things that would heal the city from a hard fought campaign because not everybody would have voted for me. I would want to send a message that would communicate that we can work together to make Lawrence a better city and to tell the citizens of Lawrence that SAFETY was my number one concern! Next I would bring in the leaders of the Neighborhood Associations to discuss the difficult decisions that were ahead and that together we would deal with them. I believe that there are two types of politicians; no I am not referring to the standard Democrat or Republican, or liberal or conservative. What I'm referring to is that there are politicians who divide and there are politicians who unite.

I believe the Administration started on the wrong foot and sent the wrong divisive message, the wrong shot heard all around the Valley! In addition, why did it take so long for the Mayor to act and come up with his 6 point plan to combat crime, one point being to ask for additional funds from Beacon Hill and Washington?

For the record, I want my Mayor and my city to be successful. I pray for him and the city, I pray for right decisions to be made. I also pray for the City Councilors (who really are good people), to make the right decisions and to do the right things when called upon. As instructed in 1 Timothy 2:1-2, we should pray for those in authority. Why? "... that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honestly". I pray for the best, but on the other hand I am not as ignorant as I used to be either. I'm reminded of the idiom, "Fool me once and shame on you, fool me twice and shame on me".

Scripture also teaches us, to be Wise as serpents and Harmless as doves, Matthew 10:16. It is going to be interesting to see what happens and how things shape up between now and the next city election in 2011.

God Bless each and every one of you and have a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Safe New Year!

Peter Larocque



*Peter Larocque is a former member of the Lawrence School Committee. . You can call him at 978-682-0900, email him at [peterlarocque@hotmail.com](mailto:peterlarocque@hotmail.com)*



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# Election 2010, Lawrence by the Numbers

**Jamison Tomasek**  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

I was recently a candidate for the Massachusetts State Senate representing Andover, Dracut, Lawrence and Tewksbury. I have time on my hands to write this because I lost the election. While doing well in the towns, I lost Lawrence, and I lost it big. Voters, VP readers or Eagle Tribune "Commenters" who rail about politics here in the central Merrimack Valley need to get used to the fact that there are certain things are not going to change soon because of the big Lawrence voting bloc. What I hope to do in a multi-part series is discuss how voting lines up in Lawrence and elsewhere, and present some scenarios about how this can change (or be changed) in the future.

Lawrence is one of the most partisan cities in Massachusetts; most people are voting the Democratic ticket in every election. Beyond that there are definitely more Democratic parts of the city. To those not living in Lawrence (the "I vote for the best candidate" people) it seems crazy. In Andover no part votes substantially different from other parts, and the town can go overwhelmingly for Barack Obama in 2008 and then put up the same numbers, but this time for Republican Scott Brown, a little over a year later.

Besides the sheriff's race the largest recent vote for a Republican in Lawrence was McCain's 3,600 votes in the high turnout of a presidential year (Obama got

over 15,000 in 2008). What is more typical is Baker's 3,100 or Karen Polito's 3,400. I will separate out the Essex County sheriff's race (Frank Cousins) at this point and cover it later.

This is significant because if the numbers for Democrats is around 9,000 in a non-presidential year, and 15,000 during presidential election, Lawrence is an electoral force.

Lawrence divvies up with Districts A, B, C & D north of the river and these are mostly Latino and almost entirely registered Democrat or unenrolled. A couple spots in A (Prospect Hill) resemble the Lawrence of old. Districts E & F, while south of the River, are not homogenous at all. E-4 is between Andover St. and the river. Mt Vernon's E-1, if you didn't know it was part of Lawrence, could be a suburb. E-2 and 3 has a variety of housing, and parts of which are Mt. Vernon. Most of F is Latino and Democrat with the exception of F-1, which is nearest Andover and more similar in voting to Mt Vernon.

I did best in some E precincts only losing 55% to 45%, but north of the river I lost about 80/20. I wasn't expecting to win them but I got only 10% in some



B precincts! All Republican statewide candidates lost these districts in the same manner as I did. Other races in Lawrence show the effect of bloc voting a little differently. Republican Kevin Begley challenged sitting Democratic State Rep. David Torrissi in the Fourteenth Essex District. Without the votes of Lawrence, Rep Torrissi would have lost as he lost the N Andover part of the district. Begley, even with Lawrence roots, lost his A and most F precincts by 2 to 1. In E-2 and F-1 however he basically tied his opponent. Same guy, same city, significantly different results by neighborhood.

Republican State Rep-elect Paul Adams of Andover had four precincts in Lawrence, D-1 and D-2 (Tower Hill) as well as E-1 and E-4 (Mt. Vernon). His race bears some additional interest as Mayor Lantigua (a Democrat) supported Adams at the end of the campaign. Adams still got beat in Lawrence (3 to 2), though he almost won Mt Vernon precinct, E-1. One might conclude that the Mayor's support had some positive effect, but not much.

Between now and the 2012 election the Legislature (in Massachusetts not an

independent commission like many other states) will be redistricting. Will the state spread Lawrence's Democratic votes around? The Eighteenth District (Barbara L'Italien's soon to be former district) could use some more Democratic votes. Maybe Rep. Torrissi never wants it close again. Maybe they add to the Seventeenth (Adams) to give his 2012 challenger a leg up.

Many wonder if the Mayor is now in charge of the Democratic vote machine, or is it just the result of people who can't see past the letter D? Sheriff Cousins might provide part of the answer. He is a bit of a special case: the race is only every six years, his role does not directly effect most of us, he's a person of color, and lastly he's a great guy and an excellent campaigner. As he was from the start the Mayor's choice for sheriff and if the Mayor truly controlled Lawrence voters, Cousins should have gotten 100% of the vote. He did do by far the best of any Republican in Lawrence, winning 5728 to 5545. Maybe he should be running for governor in 2014!

So people who vote like robots seem to be problem rather than "the machine" telling them what to do. A great candidate might be able to break the Democratic spell. The Mayor has some influence, but not as much as some think.

Look for some ways the current situation might change in my next column.

## Cub Scout Pack 13 entertains Seniors at Colonial Heights Nursing Home



Christmas party at Colonial Heights Nursing Home with Cub Scout Pack 13, of the Yankee Clipper Council of Massachusetts. Located at Lawrence Catholic Academy. Cub Master is Sarah Anderson Lacroix and the Chairman is Michael Laroque, David Abdo and Councilman Marc Laplante, along with many of the scouts parents, were also in attendance to help serve refreshments. The scouts and residents sang songs, enjoyed holiday goodies and a couple scouts even entertained them with their violins.



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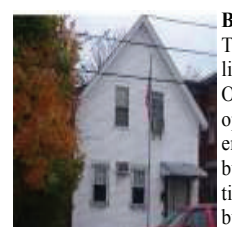
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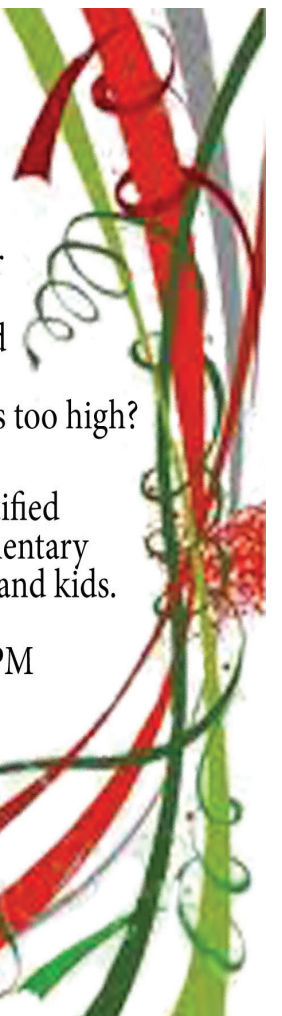
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# The Zombie Congress; Scaring the Living Daylights out of You!

Christine Morabito  
MERRIMACK VALLEY TEA PARTY

I love classic films, but the one that always makes my skin crawl is the 1968 cult classic, "Night of the Living Dead." I could not help noticing the eerie parallels between this film and the Lame Duck Congress, recently referred to as the Zombie Congress. These soon to be unemployed legislators hold all the power between now and January, when the new Congress is sworn in.

Paralyzed with fear, we watch as almost 100 Representatives, either retiring or freshly wounded by election defeat, and 16 undead Senators attempt to pass the very same progressive bills they were unable to pass when they had to consider voter retaliation.

Just when we thought these ghastly bills were dead and buried, they have come back to life, leaving our freedoms cowering in the fetal position. You remember, the bills with the Orwellian names like: the DREAM Act, the Food Safety Modernization Act, the Paycheck Fairness Act, the Employee Free Choice Act, the Combating Online Infringement & Counterfeit Act and -- the one that repeatedly grabs us by the throat--Cap and Trade. These nightmares will all appear on the very busy agenda of the Zombie Congress.

The following briefly explains why we should be very afraid: The DREAM Act, more appropriately called "amnesty," has reached up from the grave and grabbed our ankles. This time progressives claim that it's for the children. However, the children in question are eligible for citizenship until they reach the tender age of 35. The alleged "food safety" bill sounds fantastic, until you consider the bizarre fact that the bill puts the nation's food supply and production in the hands of not only the Food and Drug Administration,

but also the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense, giving them poorly defined, and therefore, unlimited powers. Under the guise of safety, the bill imposes crippling restrictions on small farms, farmers' markets, organic growers and even dietary supplements. The so called Paycheck Fairness Act, which has trial lawyers smelling blood in the water, will actually decrease the incentive for employers to hire women, for fear of lawsuits. The freedom killing, union benefiting bill we call Card Check eliminates our right to a secret ballot and opens the floodgates for voter intimidation. And finally, the internet censorship bill slithers under the door granting government the permission to shut down websites it considers harmful. Do we seriously want to go there?

The most pressing issue facing the unburied Congress is the fate of the Bush Tax Cuts, which will automatically expire in January if not extended. The left cannot seem to agree on which rich people to punish the most. Some want to punish only the ones who make over a million dollars a year, while others want to include those with yearly incomes exceeding \$200,000. Conservatives want to extend the tax cuts to everyone, believing that it's the wealthy--not the government--who create the jobs, take the risks and will ultimately rescue our economy. The left does not seem to be budging, and the right has little incentive to compromise, since they can just blame the left if--and when--taxes increase. It looks as if the average family is about to become \$200 poorer each month.

The Zombie Congress is coming for you. They're coming for your paycheck, your food, your energy supply, your free speech, your secret ballot and your nation's sovereignty. Like the ghouls in the



horror film, there is no reasoning with them. Any attempt will be met with vapid stares, as if you were talking to a hollow, empty shell of a human being. They do not care what you think. Their drive for devouring the Constitution is never satisfied and their thirst for power cannot be quenched. Boarding up the windows and doors will not save you; they are relentless, as they surround your house and claw their way in. I will never forget the chilling words of Nancy Pelosi as she described the lengths to which Congress would go in order to force Obamacare upon the people: "You go through the gate. If the gate's closed, you go over the fence. If the fence is too high, we'll poll-vault in. If that doesn't work, we'll parachute in. But we're going to get health care reform passed for the American people."

Against incredible adversity, we must bravely defend our Constitution, our values and our love for this great coun-

try. Time is on our side. We only have to fend off the zombies for another month before there's a new sheriff in town. Stay informed and engaged and put your Representatives on speed-dial. But be respectful or you will not be effective. At this point, it would be a shame to discount Senator Scott Brown. Right now he's the best friend we have, and he may yet turn out to be our hero!

Please join us at our next Merrimack Valley Tea Party meeting:

Wednesday, December 15th @ 7 p.m.  
VFW Hall 32 Park Street N. Andover, MA, Guest Speaker--Tom Weaver will discuss the Constitution



Christine Morabito is a resident of Haverhill and a member of the Merrimack Valley Tea Party. You can email her at christine.morabito@hotmail.com

mail.com

## The 111th Congress has returned to Washington, D.C. for its "lame duck" session

Jon Golnik

VALLEY PATRIOT POLITICAL COLUMNIST

There has been much discussion and concern over whether the Democrats will use the remaining days of power to push through controversial legislation, and whether serious legislation will be passed without proper vetting, done so in the spirit of "let's just get it done."

However, in its remaining days, Congress would be wise to listen to the will of the people. The same people who resoundingly rejected its' policies on November 2.

It appears the 2001/2003 tax cuts which are scheduled to expire at the end of the year will be extended. This has been ac-

complished in a 'compromise' where the Republicans have agreed to yet another extension of unemployment benefits.

But what about the other issues facing the country?

Harry Reid is determined to revisit the DREAM Act. The Act would allow illegal immigrants who arrive in the United States before age 16 to become legal residents after five years by completing higher education or military service. It also would allow them to qualify for federal tuition aid. This act is being called 'reform'. However, how can we reform before we 'enforce'? Addressing how to increase benefits to illegal immigrants

instead of addressing how to stop illegal immigration is a flawed strategy.

Passing the annual defense authorization bill includes a repeal of the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Given the Joint chiefs have recommended that this policy be repealed expect a vote by Congress on this any day.

President Obama has requested Congress immediately ratify the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia. On the surface, it appears to be a sound Treaty. However, there are serious unresolved issues related to the new START such as the modernization of our existing nuclear arsenal. This involves our national security. Let's slow down. Pushing through votes prior to proper vetting is how we found ourselves with the flawed healthcare legislation.

Ahmed Ghailani, the first Guantanamo detainee tried in civilian court was recently acquitted on 284 of 285 charges. The experiment of trying military prisoners in civilian court has failed. The treat-

ment of remaining prisoners should be a priority. 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed is awaiting his trial. While the jurisdiction of this decision lies in the executive branch, Congress has the ability to withhold funding from these trials and if the 111th doesn't do so, 112th should. Let the new military commissions try these individuals.

How Congress will act on the above mentioned issues? All Representatives and 1/3 of the Senate faced the wrath of the voters this year, and all Representatives and another 1/3 of the Senate will do so in two years. The people held their elected officials accountable in the 2010 election cycle, and I know they will in 2012 as well. The question is, will Congress hear their message?



Jon Golnik is a resident of Westford and a former candidate for Congress in the 5th Congressional District. You can email him at jonathan@redrivertradingco.com



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**GEORGETOWN TODAY!**

**Christmas Wishes to Our Deployed Heroes**

Lawrence "Lonnie" Brennan  
VALLEY PATRIOT GEORGETOWN COLUMNIST

As our little New England villages soon dampen to the soft steps of the Christmas cheerful walking on angel dustings, way off across a vast ocean United States soldiers Sean Maguire and Cam Moyer stand on the ready.

Georgetown knows Sean and Cam. Both are active members of our on-call Georgetown Fire Department. One a member of Erie Four, the other a member of Central Fire Company, both united as members of one fire department at home, both united as American soldiers abroad. Both young men are deployed amongst the brave, fighting in 2010 to secure the future of their families and all Americans, as they serve where duty calls.

From home, they receive messages, small packages, reminders of simpler activities and fond thoughts from friends and family. As we approach the Christmas season, reminders of the small things and comforts of home life can go a long way for connecting with one another, and reminding our deployed soldiers of a grateful extended family at home.

Over the next several weeks, the Erie Fire Association No. 4 is collecting small items, cards, trinkets, gifts, and reminders to send to Mr. Moyer and Mr. Maguire. Erie 4 Association member Scott Kochakian has begun a robust collection effort, asking neighbors near and far to contact him at Erie Four, via the website at [www.ErieFour.org](http://www.ErieFour.org), or call him or send a note or any item to Erie Four, P.O. Box 133, Georgetown, MA, 01833.

Personal notes or Christmas cards, knit hats – black or army green, Red Sox baseball caps, military Sudoku, socks,



United States soldier Sean Maguire of Georgetown is a volunteer firefighter

crosswords, iTunes gift cards for when they have access, or any item you can think of that will travel well. If you can, send along things that they can share with others who might not receive letters or packages. Feel free to mark the item "any soldier."

Turning back to Georgetown for a moment, here's a hearty reminder and suggestion that each of us take a stroll through the grand Sedler's Antique Emporium, or one of the many gift shops or local businesses or restaurants this month. Shop local. There's a lot of hidden jewels in-town. Let's support those, who support us, our children, and our community.



Lonnie Brennan is a former Georgetown Selectmen and current Clerk for the 1854 -established Erie Fire Association No. 4. He can be reached at [Lonnie@justlonnie.com](mailto:Lonnie@justlonnie.com).



**MOVING HAVERHILL FORWARD**

with Mayor Jim Fiorentini

**Mayor Fiorentini Names Leslie Maguire as Artist of the Month**

Mayor James J. Fiorentini named Leslie Maguire as December 2010 Artist of the Month.

Leslie has been interested in painting since she was a small child and her talent for art was noticed by the art director of the Springfield schools. At that point, she envisioned a career as an artist. She attended New England School of Art majoring in commercial art following high school.

Though needs of her family interrupted her career, she returned to making art after her children were grown. She has been specializing in doing "house portraits" for the past 16 years. She enjoys painting landscapes, cityscapes and animals, working in oil, watercolor and pen and ink mediums. Leslie credits her achievement in

water color to her studying with Pat Lutz.

Leslie is a member of the Haverhill Art Association as well as the Arts Institute Group of Merrimack Valley, Inc.

"Leslie is displaying beautiful paintings of familiar Haverhill landmarks as well as views of downtown," the mayor said.

"She has captured the spirit of our community in her oils and I invite everyone to come and see her fine work this month in the Mayor's office."

The Haverhill Artist of the Month was created by Mayor Fiorentini to foster and profile Haverhill's thriving art community. Haverhill artists interested in being considered for Artist of the Month can submit copies of their work and artist's statement to the Mayor's Office.

**New Garage Construction Milestone**

**Pile Driving Operation Concludes; Parking to Be Restored to Essex Street**

HAVERHILL- Mayor James J. Fiorentini and the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority (MVRTA) has announced that construction activities at the new Railroad Square Parking Garage on Granite Street are progressing well, and that pile-driving work at the site has concluded as of today.

"The noisiest and most disruptive element of the construction of the parking garage is now over," the mayor said. "While there is obviously a long way to go with construction, completion of this milestone before the onset of winter puts the project on track for completion by Fall 2011."

"I greatly appreciate the patience and tolerance of the downtown residents, abutters, businesses and commuters who dealt with the noise, vibrations and the road closures over the past couple of months," he said.

As a result of the conclusion of the pile driving portion of the construction, the City is making plans to reopen on-street parking next Tuesday along the southeast-bound side of Essex Street in front of the building at 98-108 Essex

Street owned by Lotus Realty. Jersey barriers have cordoned off this perimeter in order to ensure public safety from any risk of falling debris from the abandoned building.

The new 5-story, 315-space parking garage and intermodal transit center is a project of the MVRTA, funded by federal, state and private funding, in partnership with the City of Haverhill. The garage site is at the intersection of Granite Street and Moulton Way at the west end of downtown, and will connect to the Haverhill MBTA/Amtrak train station platform via an elevated walkway. Colantonio Construction of Holliston is the general contractor for the project.

Currently, pile caps and other concrete foundation elements are being poured and formed at the site, while other pre-cast sections are being constructed off-site.

While possible road closures and general construction noise may still occur over the life of the project, a significant portion of these problems has now been resolved. Construction is expected to continue throughout the winter, Monday through Friday during normal working hours.

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# “Why I Support Permanent Term Limits in Methuen”

**Kenneth R. Willette, Jr.**  
METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEEMAN

I am still trying to analyze the recent vote taken by the Charter Commission to pose the question to the voters of Methuen, which is designed to remove term limits for elected officials.

I cannot understand the rationale behind it. I am a strong advocate for permanent term limits, always have been and always will be. Many people will ask me why I support the concept of term limits, and I look to the vision and foresight of our Founding Father and first President of the United States, George Washington. President Washington, who was very mindful of the need to distance our still young nation at the time from the royal trappings of England, self-imposed two terms of office where he could have theoretically and constitutionally run and been elected to the office of president for life.

This unwritten yet strictly followed benchmark was practiced by every President until FDR, who continued to run for an unprecedented four terms of elective office during the Great Depression and the commencement of World War II. Eventually a constitutional amendment was ratified that legally limited the length of office to any future President to no more than two full terms. We have had very popular Presidents from both parties—Reagan and Clinton, who could have run and likely succeeded in gaining a third term of office in the absence of this very important constitutional amendment. But the wisdom of Washington carries to this very day.

The idea of the citizen legislator is an element that has to be rekindled. People will then ask me the valid question: Why are you so interested in term limits and yet run for office every two years?

This is a legitimate question, but it misses the point. The voters have elected me to School Committee and City Council over the years, and I have defeated former City Councilors and other elected officials in the process. I have been outspent by much older candidates, some of whom have served longer years of public service. I have been victorious because I bring a certain message of fiscally conservative politics, with a healthy dose of accountability and independent thinking to every issue.

I am fully supportive of term limits, and they should be applied equally to everyone, including me, but I will not solely penalize myself when we are operating under the current pretender system of term limits



in Methuen. The current system allows for a two-year time-out after six consecutive years in a particular office, but then allows that same individual the opportunity to run again for the previously held office.

This is not term limits under any definition on this planet. The Methuen City Council should put this issue to rest by adopting a Home Rule Petition in the affirmative to implement permanent term limits for every elected office in Methuen. Once approved, I would pose the following question back to opponents of term limits.

If you could run for every elected office in Methuen and serve a maximum of six years, depending obviously on the final verdict of the voters every two years, how could you arguably be denied an opportunity to serve the public?

In other words, even under permanent term limits, you could serve a maximum of six years in each office as a School Committeeman, City Councilor, Mayor, Greater Voke Tech School Committeeman, Nevins Library Trustee and Methuen Housing Authority Member, for a grand total of 36 years, which would represent an impressive feat of public service in a variety of capacities.

The same philosophy holds true for many elected officials today who have transitioned from local to state to federal offices. The system of checks and balances in our nation can only be strengthened by the implementation of permanent term limits, which would encourage a diversity of candidates and would enable officials to maintain their public service in alternative capacities if the voters so decided every two or four years. In the end, the concept of term limits is an integral part of the system of checks and balances dating back centuries and must be restored once again.

Email Ken Willette: kennethwillette@comcast.net The 111th Congress has returned to Washington, D.C. for its “lame duck” session.

# America’s Heroes

As a strong supporter of the military, I was honored when the local recruiter from my area, Sgt. Natasha Young asked if I would be interested in going to Parris Island, South Carolina and witness the Marines’ boot camp as part of the “educator’s workshop.”

Parris Island in Beaufort, South Carolina is where male Marines on the east coast and all U.S. female Marine recruits receive an extremely rigorous 12 weeks training course before becoming a United States Marine. There, recruits learn what it takes to become a Marine and they learn about honor, courage and commitment. They go through the toughest physical and mental conditioning during this 12 weeks training and when they graduate, they can call themselves “Marines”.

The educator’s workshop is a program that invites educators and the media to go down to Parris Island to understand what the U.S. Marines do, the training they receive, and bring this information back to their schools administration, the community and students who may be interested in joining the military.

Arriving on the base that first day, I had no idea how emotional and proud I would

be while watching the training of these future hero Marines. Watching these young recruits (many only 18 years old) support each other during training exercises, hearing them talk about representing America in a time of war, and wanting to go overseas to protect and defend our freedoms here at home. I

was so honored to be with these men and women who would soon be on the front lines of war to ensure my freedom, fight against Muslim terrorism and Islamic extremists who want to destroy America.

And I was surrounded by Marines who had many stories of their own some had already served one, two and sometimes three tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The hero Marine (a Vietnam Veteran) who works at the Marine Museum talked to me about his tour in Vietnam, where he and another Marine were the only survivors in a platoon of 35 men. The humbling war stories from each Marine I spoke with was more heart warming and yet, heart wrenching at the same time. Many were married with families and yet they were committed to being a Marine and defending freedom even though it took them away from the people they love so much, for such long periods of time.

I had the opportunity to interview a new female recruit, who just turned 19 years old in November and had only been a recruit for four weeks.

Recruit Gallo hails from Pembroke, MA and is a graduate of Pembroke High



PHOTO: PAULA PORTEN

U.S. Marine Recruit Gallo of Pembroke, MA in her fourth week of training on Parris Island Marine Base in South Carolina.

School. She is a member of the 4th Battalion and serves with 59 other women. Her maternal grandfather was a Marine in WWII and her paternal grandfather was a Master Gunnery Sergeant in the U.S. Army. She says that when she told her parents that she was planning on becoming a Marine they were “shocked” and ad-

mitted that they were not very happy with her decision. She says that even though their initial reaction was negative, now they are extremely supportive of what she chose to do.

She says her friends were also “shocked” when she told them. Most of them are in college now. She signed up

through the local recruiter and when her guidance councilor asked her why she chose to be a Marine she said that it was because “she wanted a challenge.”

And a challenge is exactly what she got. Gallo says that the first week was the hardest, mostly because she didn’t know what to expect.

“For anyone interested in the Marines,” she says “don’t give up on your dreams and don’t second guess yourself.”

Recruit Gallo said she’s looking forward to traveling and someday hopes to become a Massachusetts State Trooper.

She says proudly that she has no regrets about her life altering decision to become a U.S. Marine and has met so many dedicated and patriotic people in her four weeks on base that her decision to join has been reaffirmed every single day of her training.

Recruit Gallo says she no longer has any use for electronic equipment: such as cell phones, computers or Ipods. Her only communication with friends and family is by sending letters via U.S. Mail.

There are no clocks anywhere on the base, except in the mess hall so most of

**HEROES, page 25**



PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

Valley Patriot co-owner Paula Porten shoots an M16-A2 on Parris Island Marine Base in South Carolina



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# From the Desk of Mayor William Manzi

**William Manzi III**  
METHUEN MAYOR

I have filed and Methuen City Council has passed a bill allowing borrowing for a deficit in our health care account for the last fiscal year. There has been some misunderstanding over what this proposal entails. Let's review the facts and then allow me to give you my perspective.

The request is to allow Methuen to borrow \$1.9 million dollars to cover a deficit in the account that provides health care insurance for municipal employees. Methuen is "self insured", meaning that we pay for employee health care from a pool of money derived from employee and taxpayer contributions. In Methuen the split is 62% taxpayer, 38% employee. Each year we estimate total usage and base our employee premiums and taxpayer contribution on that estimate.

So what happened? Employee plan utilization was higher than our original estimates, and based on that we closed the year with a deficit. Were there steps that could have been taken before year end to prevent the deficit? The answer to that is NO. And it is an important distinction that needs to be made here. An operating deficit generally means that there may have been some management culpability i.e. the numbers were seen but no adjustments were made to correct the problem. With municipal health care no adjustments can be made under State law, even as we see the deficit coming. Let me cite an example: The State GIC, (I believe in the last fiscal cycle) saw a problem with their plan that was similar to Methuen's problem. What they did was to make a mid-year plan adjustment to reflect the

higher employee usage. This adjustment required a higher level of employee contribution and solved the fiscal issue faced by the GIC. The adjustments were made unilaterally, without any bargaining. Municipalities have no such rights, although we have been clamoring for them for some time. If we wanted to make such a plan adjustment it would have to be bargained. It was not possible to get the unions to agree to any midyear increase.

So what are the alternatives? The actual operating deficit is substantially higher than what we are seeking borrowing authority for. It is actually about \$3.3 million. The City used taxpayer money to reduce that deficit by about \$1.4 million. (A large portion of our percentage (62%) of the deficit). We have sought to borrow only the balance in order to avoid one of two things.

1) Putting the balance on the city tax levy, assigning the full brunt of the deficit to City taxpayers.

2) Putting the balance on the City tax levy and surcharging the employees for their share of the deficit, cutting the deficit but putting a big one year burden on our employees.

Our solution, to deficit borrow that balance, allows the deficit to be spread over three years, avoids a one year hit to taxpayers and employees, and becomes an obligation of the health care trust fund.



It is the optimum solution in difficult circumstances.

With regards to criticism that borrowing instead of taxing residents is not financially sound I understand the point made. Is deficit borrowing the best solution from a business

perspective? The answer, in my opinion, is no. So I understand the angst expressed by some. But within the existing structure it is the optimum solution.

In this case there is not "poor fiscal planning" or "poor management". The rules of the road need to be changed to allow managers to manage. And what has become of our recommendations for changes to the "health care rules of the road"? At the State level the requests for health care plan design authority for municipalities has been repeatedly ignored at the behest of municipal unions. At the local level I filed a Home Rule Petition, similar to one that passed in Lowell that would give Methuen "plan design authority".

That Home Rule Petition, for the second time, has languished at City Council in the face of union opposition.

Finally it is important to note that regardless of estimates of usage we are obligated under Massachusetts law to pay as a City our percentage. If we made a higher estimate of utilization at the beginning of the fiscal cycle we would have been obligated to pay that amount and build it into the budget. We have proposed, and the

City employees have accepted, a health care plan that dramatically increases employee costs in this fiscal cycle. Methuen employees are paying GIC style co-pays and deductibles while shouldering one of the largest overall percentages of health care costs in Massachusetts at 62-38. We are looking at overall system costs that are well below this year's estimates in health care, and while it is too early to say if this will hold up for the entire year we are guardedly optimistic.

As a last note taxpayers should be aware that the health care fund has run in surplus in prior years, with a surplus of one million dollars a couple of years back that was disbursed to both employee and taxpayer. We have taken the strong management steps that are allowed by law to right the health care system in a way that is fair to both taxpayers and employees. Based on the facts I would say that any attempt to compare this request for a health care borrowing cannot be fairly made to a request to borrow for general government purposes. It is also, as I point out above, not due to management or fiscal deficiencies in Methuen. Our fiscal condition, if this borrowing is allowed, will be amongst the very best in the Merrimack Valley, with money in reserve as well as a big amount of levy capacity under Prop 2.5. And that position is a direct result of strong management and extreme budgetary discipline.



Bill Manzi is in his third, two year term as the Mayor of Methuen. You can read his blog at [billmanzi.com](http://billmanzi.com) or email him at [billmanzi1@comcast.net](mailto:billmanzi1@comcast.net)

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**RONNIE'S RANTS**

# Random Thoughts

**Ronnie Ford**  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

With all the humility that he could muster within that greyhound body and computer like mind; Willie (the Chief) Lantigua has reacted to any opinion different from his own. This time the whole Democratic party has reacted, of course today, the Democrats and Republicans are not that much of a choice. Neither of them do much for middle America. The Dems want poor Willie out of their party. Willie made the gigantic error of endorsing two Republicans, Adams and Cousins. Now, if you put the two greatest empires in the greater Lawrence and Haverhill area, that of Lantigua and Cousins; you are looking at two organizations jam packed with patronage and workers. In other words, (unbeatable)! Both men are in and out of communities with the adroitness of the Scarlet Pimpernel. The Pimpernel being a Robin Hood type during the French Revolution. Likable, aggressive and afraid of nothing. In the next election, put your money on Willie. Having said that, we are:

Just wondering how long Lantigua and his merry henchmen are going to run amuck destroying what little is left of Lawrence's government and the school department before either the State or Federals step in?

Just wondering when the populace is going to get sick of all the deceit of Local, State and Federal officials going on? We hold them to a higher standard therefore their punishment should be greater than a slap on the wrist and saying naughty, naughty.

Just wondering when the elected elite are going to get it? Senator Kerry, who has more money than God, seeking more money from his flock of blind followers, to build up his war chest! We are paying through the nose now for everything!

Just wondering what tune Tom Delay is going to dance to as he twirls his way to the Pen? Yeah, right, he will get a slap and a naughty, naughty.

Just wondering if this lame duck Congress gets it and will do something

praise worthy for the people, and not try anything underhanded, with business as usual.

Most parents tell their children not to talk to strangers, don't get into a car with someone you do not know, never take anything from a stranger, and do not let anyone touch you EVER in your private parts. Now comes along the TSA! Children under twelve are exempt from patting or scanning at the airports. However, pubescent children twelve and thirteen are very self conscious of the changes going on in the bodies. They are subject to pat downs and scanning. How degrading, humiliating, unnecessary, vile and just plain disgusting!! Have these TSA workers been checked by background scrutiny? Are any pedophiles lurking among the workers? Did anyone ask? Do they care?

AND, it goes against everything parents have told them. None of us should be searched, manhandled, or scanned without good cause. That is not even mentioning the radiation going through your body. Think about it, when you have x-rays, you have a lead apron put over your genitalia. THE TALABAN HAS WON! We are treating our citizens like criminals and terrorists. Bring on profiling, who cares as long as we do not get blown up by these soul-less savages! To see our children, elderly, nuns, disabled being groped and prodded is beyond comprehension. I would like to see that Napolitano woman go through this. She sits on her brains, along with all the others in Washington! God help us!

Among my friends and I we knew Frank MacDonald almost from his birth. He was aggressive without being aggressive, hard driving without showing it. He was kind and generous, as he supported those who needed support, both financially and personally. Frank built a thriving insurance business as well as a thriving family. His and Nina's four boys are today great contributors to our society. He also was fortunate to have a slew of grandchildren and a lovely wife who saw him through some tough times. Frank would say he was lucky, but

**RANDOM, bottom of page**

**The Merrimack Valley Irish Connection**

# Attack on Ballaghadereen barracks

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

In February 1921, the Sligo and East Brigades joined forces to carry out an attack on Ballaghadereen barracks.

The brigades capture of the barracks was the use of a large mine which was to be conveyed



in a cart to the barracks and placed against the front. The mine was constructed by the Engineering section of the Sligo Brigade and contained a large charge.

(The Black and Tans (Irish: Dúchrónaigh) was one of two newly recruited bodies, composed largely of British World War I veterans, employed by the Royal Irish Constabulary as Temporary Constables from 1920 to 1921 to suppress revolution in Ireland. Although it was established to target the Irish Republican Army, it became notorious through its numerous attacks on the Irish civilian population.) From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A large number of volunteers

entered the town of Ballaghadereen and surrounded the barracks and the approach to the barracks. The cart containing the mine was waiting in an archway convenient to the barracks,

and the men were in charge of it. A patrol of six R.I.C. men who were out on duty at the

same time, apparently got to know of the presence of the I.R.A. party near the cart and opened fire on them.

Any volunteers in that area returned the fire of the police. When this firing started the party of volunteers close to the barracks opened fire which lasted about twenty minutes. As the possibility of getting the mine into position for use on the barracks was prevented by the outburst of fire, the operation was called off and all withdrew. (Keash and Culfadda, a local history pgs 72-73)



Jack Doyle is an author and has published two books: *Echoes of My Past*, and *Medjugorje, Heaven on Earth*. To sponsor Jack's Irish Craic" in *The Valley Patriot* contact: Jack5772@comcast.net

## Local Authors Aid Diabetes Research

Authors Tom & Ellen Zappala of Merrimac, Massachusetts are pleased to announce that they are partnering with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation to help find a cure for Diabetes.

Finding a cure is close to the Zappala's hearts as two children in the family have Type 1 Diabetes. Because of this, the Zappalas will be donating \$10.00 from each purchase of their award-winning first edition baseball book, *The T206 Collection: The Players & Their Stories* which was released in June 2010 to national acclaim.

It is a beautiful hardcover coffee table book with colorful images and captivating stories of the men responsible for our National Pastime. This is the perfect holiday gift for every fan of baseball, even the casual baseball fan.

Books may be purchased on the author's website [www.t206players.com](http://www.t206players.com). For more information, call 978-346-9496. Authors Tom & Ellen Zappala will personally sign each and every first edition book.

The Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) is the worldwide leader for research to cure Type 1 Diabetes. It sets the global agenda for diabetes research,

and is the largest charitable fundraiser and advocate of diabetes science worldwide. The mission of JDRF is to find a cure for diabetes and its complications through the support of research.

Type 1 Diabetes is an autoimmune disease that strikes children and adults suddenly, and can be fatal. Until a cure is found, people with Type 1 Diabetes have to test their blood sugar and give themselves insulin injections multiple times or use a pump - each day and every day of their lives. Even with that intensive care, insulin does not cure diabetes, nor does it prevent its eventual and devastating complications, which may include kidney failure, blindness, heart disease, stroke, and amputation.

Since its' founding in 1970 by parents of children with Type 1 Diabetes, JDRF has awarded more than \$1.3 billion to worldwide diabetes research, including more than \$107 million last year. For more information regarding JDRF, call 781-431-0700 or visit [www.jdrf.org/bay-state](http://www.jdrf.org/bay-state).

Note: For a complete press kit and reviews of the book go to: [www.t206players.com](http://www.t206players.com).

## RANDOM: FROM PREV. COLUMN

those of us who knew him would say he earned everything he had; inclusive of which was the family that he loved and bragged about (without you knowing it). As one of my friends would say, Frank was smart, skipped a grade or two at the Assumption School. Talented with the piano, he could listen to a tune and sit right down and play it by ear. Frank was funny, kind and compassionate. Frank was always a gentleman. Frank MacDonald was one of the good guys, and

he will be missed greatly.

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



Ronnie Ford is a Methuen resident, the former host of the "Hot Line" radio program, a former Methuen police officer and a former member of the Methuen school committee and city council. You can email [Ronnie at Radiotalk@comcast.net](mailto:Ronnie@Radiotalk.comcast.net)

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# TOMORROW'S HEROES

A series detailing How We Make United States Marines, and the Men and Women who said "SEND ME!"

This is the first in a series covering marine boot camp at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, where The Valley Patriot was able to attend an "Educators Workshop" for four days.

Next month we will cover the arrival of educators from Massachusetts and New Hampshire as they learn and experience what new Marine recruits deal with on their first of training as they begin their quest to be part of the greatest fighting force in the history of mankind.

In the coming months our series will begin with a detailed account of each phase of recruit training and the experience of educators on the tour. With hours and hours of audio and video to sift through, our staff will compile the most relevant and compelling information to chronicle how marines are made and what it takes to make it through basic training on the island.

Future segments of our series will include: the basic training of female recruits, an interview Maj. James Jarvis, (the Parris Island visits coordinator), college, health and other benefits afforded to Marines, a visit to the Marine Air Base, a talk from Brigadier General Frederick Padilla, (the Commanding General of Parris Island), The objectives of The U.S. Marines, the core values of a Marine and how it permeates every facet of their lives, physical, combat and rifle qualification, combat water survival, live firing of M16-A2 weapons, the critical importance of safety, Marital Arts training, the crucible, recruit graduation an interview with some of the educators who attended the workshop, and so much more.



PHOTOS: TOM DUGGAN

## MA. and N.H. Educators Attend Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island

Tom Duggan

Forty educators from various public schools in Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire departed last month from Logan Airport under U.S. Marine escort and arrived at Beaufort, South Carolina to attend Marine boot camp on Parris Island to observe and experience how the U.S. Government makes Marines.

Two of the Valley Patriot editors were invited by Staff Sergeant Natasha Young of the Lawrence Marine Recruiting Station to attend this educational event and chronicle how Massachusetts teachers and public school administrators dealt with the rigors of basic training.

According to 2nd Lieutenant Melanie M. Salinas, Deputy Public Affairs Officer for the United States Marines; "The Marine Corps Enlisted Educators Workshop program started in the late 1970s and, while we have no exact number, a conservative estimate of more than 10,000 educators, counselors, coaches and civic leaders have had the opportunity to see how we make Marines at Parris Island.

The program was originally referred to as the Guidance Counselors trip and included educators, school counselors, civic leaders, and former Marines and retirees. The workshop trips began about the same time as Systematic Recruiting was being introduced within the then Personnel Procurement Division of Manpower Headquarters Marine Corps, the precursor to Marine Corps Recruiting Command. The program takes place at both Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island and at

Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego. Participants who attended these original workshops, paid their own way (or were reimbursed by their school districts) and military aircraft was used for travel to and from the Marine Corps Recruit Training Depots. The program was three days long in those early years and concluded with the Recruit Graduation as it still does today.

As a valuable tool within the High School/Community College Program at each Recruiting Station, the workshop was renamed the Educators Workshop and offered teachers, coaches, and school counselors as the main focus of effort as attendees. The workshop program expanded to five days in length and relies on commercial aircraft when it is necessary and pays lodging and meal expenses for attendees. Some Recruiting Stations are located close to the Recruit Training Depots and rely on buses for transportation of the educators.

Each of the 48 Recruiting Stations around the country send approximately 40 educators to their respective Recruit Training Depot each year.

In general, it is the Recruiting Station Marketing and Public Affairs Marine who is in charge of each program until the educators arrive at the Recruit Training Depot, and then the Operations Marines provide the activities and conduct the workshop for the visitors.

Currently, Parris Island hosts 12 Educators Workshops a year, with approximately 960 educators taking part in the program annually.

## Honor, Courage, Commitment

Tom Duggan

OWNER-EDITOR, THE VALLEY PATRIOT

Arriving as a "recruit"

From the minute we got off the bus at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island you could feel the tension and excitement in the air. While some of the educators in our group had a good idea what to expect from their four-day visit, I remained purposely ignorant of what was about to happen. I didn't prepare, didn't read any of the material we were sent, never glanced at the itinerary Staff Sgt. Natasha Young had sent and me the week before.

When Paula Porten, one of the Valley Patriot's editors, tried to brief me before leaving North Andover for our trip to South Carolina I told her she was wasting her time and I tuned her out.

My goal was to experience what it would be like for an 18 year old kid who had no clue what he was getting himself into as we arrived on the base and let the sights, sounds and activities going on around me fill that void of expectations.

Far too often our expectations dictate how we experience a movie or a vacation, and I didn't want that to happen on this trip. Some of the best movies I've ever seen were movies where I hadn't seen any previews and walked into the theatre blind, no knowing what to expect. That was what how I decided I was going to experience Parris Island.

Moving through the checkpoints onto the base, our bus full of civilian educators eventually came to a stop outside a series of brick buildings where we were told to get out and line up on rows of painted yellow footprints. This is where every single Marine recruit who comes to Parris

Island begins their twelve weeks of basic training.

Within less than a minute a very tall staff sergeant took over, screaming orders at the group. Regimented and detailed he told us what was expected of us as new "recruits". "This is where you will begin your processing," he told us.

The day before, Staff Sgt. Lopez had given us practice drills back at the hotel. She was in charge of our group from the time we arrived at the hotel to the time we got on the bus to leave for home.

Prior to our arrival on the island she had lined everyone up in the parking lot of the hotel and taught us how we were to line up in formation. She told us how to stay in formation, explained how we were expected to act, how we were to answer any question posed to us by an officer with "Sir, yes sir" or "Ma'am, yes Ma'am."

Not being as physically fit as I used to be, and being a member of the press I was allowed to opt out of the running and physical demands that the educators were expected to adhere to and it's a good thing too. I could barely keep up with school teachers and guidance counselors running around the hotel parking lot the day before as they tried to stay in formation to the calls from Sgt. Lopez yelling which direction to go in. There was no way I was going to keep up with Marine recruits let alone full fledged Marines.

From the yellow footprints we were brought through heavy metal doors with the words "Through these portals pass prospects for America's finest fighting force, the United States Marines".

Inside the processing center we were informed of the mountain of paperwork recruits had to fill out before their train-

ing was to begin. Medical, dental all of the physical, safety and health were now to be taken care of by the United States Marines.

"When you are finished processing," the drill sergeant yelled. "Recruits have to go through what we like to call the moment of truth."

Anything that a Marine recruit may have lied about on their application or paperwork, anything they failed to disclose "this is the time to come clean" we were told.

Some recruits lie about having asthma, juvenile criminal records, experiences with their local police back home, whatever it is "the moment of truth" is the time to come clean on whatever they have concealed or have been dishonest about.

From there, recruits are moved to a room adjacent to the processing room and told they get to make one phone call from the row of metal phone boxes on the wall. On the inside over of the box were instructions as to what they were allowed to say while making that call:

"This is Recruit (last Name). I have arrived safely at Parris Island. Please do not send any food or bulky items to me in the mail. I will contact you in 7 to 9 days by letter with my new address. Thank you for

your support. Good bye for now."

Each recruit has one minute to make that call.

"It is usually at that moment," one Marine explained, "that it all sinks in."

Having been on the island for only a few minutes it was sinking in for me too. This was serious business. These men and women arriving on the island for training were about to embark on training to go off to Afghanistan, Iraq or some other far off place to fight for their country and every thing they did had to follow a code of conduct expected of every other Marine.

Honor, Courage Commitment

As we left the processing center, Marine recruits with automatic weapons were doing drills as the sun slowly started to come up and illuminate the rest of the base, mostly unseen by the touring educators upon arrival.

And throughout the tour we experienced hundred of marines in various states of training. But two things continued to permeate the consciousness of every person on base throughout each day: first, that "Honor, courage and commitment" were not just a slogan it was a way of thinking, a way of behaving, a way of life. Each Marine and Marine recruit had a code of ethics to follow and that if that code of

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PHOTOS: TOM DUGGAN

New Marine Recruits are allowed one phone call upon arriving on Parris Island and are told exactly what to say. The call must not last more than one minute. Above right, educator Krista Rose of South Boston.



PHOTOS: TOM DUGGAN

The Valley Patriot interviewed Quincy native Luke McLellan in the chow hall on Parris Island. McLellan is expected to graduate this month as a United States Marine and says he hopes to one day become a Massachusetts State Trooper.



PHOTOS: TOM DUGGAN

Educators from Massachusetts and New Hampshire line up on painted yellow footprints outside the processing center where every new Marine recruit begins their basic training.

ethics or conduct were not adhered to it could mean their life or the life of a fellow soldier. Secondly, I couldn't help feel safer than I had ever felt. It was nothing like the movies where out of control and power hungry drill sergeants abused cadets, deprived them of food, swore in their faces or insulted their mothers. "That's the stuff of movies," Colonel Mellinger told us later on in the tour. "It's all Hollywood. That just doesn't happen here and you've probably seen that for yourself. We are not allowed to deprive recruits of food or use food as a punishment. We are not allowed to put our hands on recruits or abuse them. That's not what we are all about. We are about Making Marines. We are about making sure they get the training they need to accomplish their mission and stay alive in combat. Honor, courage and commitment are ethos we live by. If a marine sees someone abusing a marine or a recruit it is their duty to do something about that. I can tell you I have seen all the Hollywood movies and they are entertaining. I like watching them, but that's all they are, entertainment. Here, we teach recruits about the culture of Marines."

Recruit Luke McLellan

Each day we were on the base we got to

eat lunch, or as the Marines call it "chow" with a Marine recruit. On our first day on base I interviewed Marine recruit Luke McLellan from Quincy, Massachusetts and Recruit Carnevale of Beverly. They looked young, very young, if I had seen them walking the streets of Quincy and Beverly I would have guessed them to be 15 or 16 years old. And to be honest they looked scared as they stood at attention in front of their table with a boxed lunch on it and shortly thereafter when I struck up a conversation with them (which will be published in January).

But what I mistook as fear, recruit McLellan admitted was nervousness. "Why aren't you eating, with all the physical demands of being a recruit you must be hungry," I asked him. "No, sir. This recruit is not hungry sir," was his answer. "Why not, are you nervous," I asked. "This recruit is nervous, sir." It was refreshing to speak with a young man of 19 years old who spoke with such respect and was so dedicated to making a difference in the world. Why was he nervous? We were the first civilians he had spoken with and probably the first non-Marines he had seen since standing on those yellow footprints on his first day of training.

Both Carnevale and McLellan answered every question referring to themselves as "this recruit". When I asked McLellan what he wanted to do with his life when he got out of the military his answer brought a tear to my eye when he said "This recruit hopes to be a Massachusetts State trooper, sir."

I couldn't think of better life experience for a future State Trooper than Marine training. As I sat there, fumbling through my questions amid the noise of recruits outside shouting and doing physical training, I couldn't help but think about what Recruits McLellan and Carnevale might be dealing with in a few short months if (when?) they are called to fight Muslim Terrorists in Iraq or Afghanistan. How these Marines will deal with the death and brutality of the Muslim world on the other side of the globe.

These were tomorrow's heroes. Heroes, because at a time when America is under attack at home and abroad they recognized that our nation needs help fighting the Muslim enemies who wish to destroy our way of life and take down our government in order to strip us of our freedoms. And when the United States needed someone to go overseas and

fight those enemies, Recruit Carnevale and McLellan, still in their teens, stepped forward and said "send me".

At a time when kids his age are stressed about car payments, girlfriends, and where they are going to get beer money for their college parties on the weekends, Carnevale and McLellan are thinking about how they can keep me and my family safe. They are training and being educated about how to fight evil and how important courage, honor and commitment are to preserving the American way of life at a time when Muslim terrorists live, breathe, eat and sleep with the sole mission of killing everyone we know.

I pray that recruits McLellan and Carnevale safely make it through their tour of duty. And I hope that some day in the future I have the pleasure of speeding down Route 93 and being pulled over by a hero State Trooper Luke McLellan. That ticket is one I will gladly pay.

*Tom Duggan is the president of Valley Patriot, Inc., a former Lawrence School Committeeman, and the editor of "Beyond the Badge" a new police publication in The Valley. You can email your comments to Tdugr@aol.com.*




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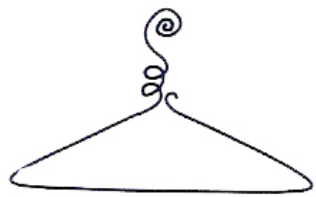
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[valleypatriot.com](http://valleypatriot.com)

# TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

**CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP** - Are you helping care for a family member or friend? Do you ever feel overwhelmed, tired, stressed, or depressed because of the strains you undergo in your quest to help keep your loved one safe and well cared for at home? If so, you are not alone. You are welcome to attend the monthly caregiver support group at St. Michaels Parish in North Andover the first Thursday of each month from 10:00 am – 11:30 am. The support group is co-facilitated by Kelsey Call, Masters in Clinical Social Work of Elder Services of Merrimack Valley and Trisha Boutilier, Outreach Coordinator of St. Michaels Parish. This free, drop-in, on-going support group is open to anyone that would like to attend. You may contact Trisha at St. Michaels Parish for more information at 978-686-4050 x15.

**SING-A-LONG, NEWBURYPORT** - Scenario: It's the last Saturday before Christmas and you have a MUST-DO list and several items on your shopping list still to pick up. How to keep the kids happy and avoid a stressful meltdown? Take a break from your Holiday shopping on Saturday, December 18 at 11AM and come over to the Firehouse at Market Square in Newburyport for a little old-fashioned Holiday Sing-A-Long. Tickets are \$3 and may be purchased through the Box Office at 978/462-7336. The Youth Choir from the Immaculate Conception Church (Newburyport), directed by Donna Postle, will be there to lead everyone in singing some well-loved carols, with music provided by John Metrano on piano. Our favorite elf, Terry Blanchard, will once again read "Twas the Night Before Christmas" while wearing his famous stocking cap knit exclusively for this annual presentation by the North Pole's very talented Mrs. Elf. 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. With innovative academics complemented by a strong creative arts program, Brookwood School (Beverly) believes it is important to celebrate and empower the artist in every child and is proud to sponsor this Firehouse Center for the Arts family event. Plan early to attend as this very popular Holiday tradition because it always sells out! **WHAT:** Holiday Sing-A-Long



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**WHEN:** Saturday, December 18, 11 AM. **WHERE:** Firehouse Center for the Arts, Market Square, Newburyport, MA. **TICKETS:** \$3 and are available at the Box Office or by calling 978/462-7336.

**OPEN REHEARSALS** - Do you like to sing, dance and perform? Would you like to learn vocal production techniques and presentation skills? Are you longing for applause? If you're looking for the fun and satisfaction of a cappella singing, performing Broadway show tunes and popular music of yesterday and today, the Liberty Belle Chorus is for you. Go to a rehearsal any Monday evening at 7pm in St. Camillus Church hall, 1175 Concord Turnpike (directly off of Rte 2, Exit 57) in Arlington. Isn't it time you heard a little applause? Call: 617.735.9254 or 978.287.4445.

Web: <http://libertybellechorus.org> e-mail: [libertybelle.info@yahoo.com](mailto:libertybelle.info@yahoo.com)

**HAVERHILL COUNCIL ON AGING** - There is a dramatic need for drivers to provide transportation to doctor and hospital appointments through the NEET program. Many seniors are no longer able to drive and have difficulty getting to appointments to area hospitals and doctors. If you can give a few hours a month to assist, contact Kathy Fairchild at NEET (Northern Essex Elder Transportation) 978-388-7474.

Here is a list of some of our available upcoming day trips: Symphony Hall for the Holiday Pops on Monday, December 13, for 4:00 p.m. show. Cost of front row center balcony tickets and motor coach transportation is \$80.00.

The Council on Aging is also planning the following overnight trips: March 24-27, 2011 Washington, D.C. for Cherry Blossom Time \$595 pp. April 7-14, 2011: London and Paris, \$2,799 pp. April 10-16 2011: Southern Charm, Charleston, Savannah & Jekyll Island \$2,149. Sept. 13-19, 2011: South Dakota Black Hills and Badlands, \$1,899 pp.

August 19-Sept. 5, 2011: Pacific Northwest and California \$2,299. October 13-21, 2011 – Southern California and Vegas Adventure \$2399. March 17-25, 2012: Tropical Costa Rica. Passports are required for London/Paris trip and Costa Rica. All prices are based on double occupancy. Details on all trips and activities are available by contacting Kathy Bresnahan (ext 11) or Rita LaBella (ext 16) at 978-374-2390 or [kbresnahan@cityofhaverhill.com](mailto:kbresnahan@cityofhaverhill.com). Be sure to pick

up a copy of our newsletter, The Voice, for a complete listing of our activities and trips. The Voice is available for viewing at [www.ci.haverhill.ma.us](http://www.ci.haverhill.ma.us) or you can send your email address to [rlabela@cityofhaverhill.com](mailto:rlabela@cityofhaverhill.com) to receive your copy via email. Rita LaBella and I would love to hear from you if you have any ideas, suggestions or questions regarding the Council on Aging.

**HOOP MOUNTAIN HOLIDAY BASKETBALL CLINICS** - Day Middle School, Newton MA. Mid Season Tune-Up: December 28-29, 2010, Time: 9:00-12:00 PM. Grades: 3rd - 8th, Cost: \$75.00. Fundamental Skills - Shooting/Scoring Improvement - Scrimmaging, SPACE IS LIMITED, February Vacation, February 22-23, 2011, Time: 9:00-12:00 PM, Grades: 3rd - 8th, Cost: \$75.00, Fundamental Skills - Shooting/Scoring Improvement - Scrimmaging, SPACE IS LIMITED. \*\*\*Cost if registering for both clinics \$125.00 (Savings of \$25.00)



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LACE computer classes for January and February. The Learn About computers Everyday (LACE) PROGRAM OF Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley Inc., 360 Merrimack St., Lawrence, MA is offering a variety of computer Classes in January and February 2011. Classes are based on the Windows Vista operating system. Classes are Intro to Computers, January 10 to February 14, 12:30 – 3:00 p.m., Basic Word 2007, January 11 to February 15, 9:00 – 11:30 am, Computer Creativity, January 11 to February 15, 12:30 – 3:00 pm, Digital Camera/Pictures, January 12 to February 16, 9:00 – 11:30 am, Internet and E-Mail, January 12 to February 16, 12:30 – 3:00 pm and Intermediate computer, January 13 to February 17 12:30 -3:00 p.m. Advanced registration is required by January 5. For more information call 800-892-0890 ext. 1516 and leave a message or e-mail [lace1050@yahoo.com](mailto:lace1050@yahoo.com). Visit <http://elder-services.tripod.com>

Text a Librarian Today: (photo) "I'm having trouble accessing a library database. Can you help me?" "Do you have access to an historical newspaper?" "I rented a DVD on Saturday, but 16 minutes into the film it didn't work. Can you get me another copy?" "I'm having trouble logging into the library website. What am I doing wrong?" "Do you have a fax machine?" This is just a sampling of the text questions awaiting the Northern Essex Community College reference librarian team members when they reported to work one recent Monday morning. North-

ern Essex has been offering a reference texting service since September. Students, staff, and faculty have been able to text the librarians with any number of inquiries. If texted during library hours, the three full-time and five part-time librarians between the Haverhill and Lawrence campuses will answer within minutes. The texts are routed to the librarians through a program called LibAnswers, which converts the text to an anonymous email. To date, they have fielded more than 80 text questions. Text questions into the library now eclipse email questions. Texts range in topic from technical questions to inquiries about book and DVD titles. If a text is sent when the library is closed then the sender receives an automated message telling them that a librarian will answer their question first thing in the morning. As Grandmaison quips, "Librarians need sleep too". If you have a question, just text an NECC librarian at 978-709-1955.

Methuen Village - Storyteller and Guitarist Performs at Methuen Village: Methuen Village at Riverwalk Park, a senior community offering assisted living and state-of-the-art Alzheimer's care, invites the public to a performance of Doug Rickard on Wednesday, December 15 at 2:00 p.m. Doug will take you on a musical journey across the USA with his story telling and guitar playing! Methuen Village is located in the heart of downtown Methuen at 4 Gleason Street. For more information, call 978-685-2220 or visit [www.Methuen-Village.com](http://www.Methuen-Village.com).

**JUNIOR MAULERS** - The 4th grade Jr. Maulers are a very talented team they went undefeated for the season. Now they have a chance to play winter indoor football. It is very expensive just to register the team cost \$3000 dollars, not to mention travel costs and practice space costs. The Junior Maulers are looking for companies and individuals that would be willing to donate. They are a non-profit youth program. No amount is too small! Anyone that is interested can reach them at [coachbill@jrmaulers.com](mailto:coachbill@jrmaulers.com) or can send a check to 323 South Broadway, Lawrence 01843. Please make checks out to Mill City Jr. Maulers. Thank you for supporting the Valley Patriot's adopted football team, the Mill City Junior Maulers!

Methuen Village goes Hi Tech - The Methuen Village now has an Alzheimer's blog- [www.alzcareblog.com](http://www.alzcareblog.com): Erin Whalen, SLR's Alzheimer's Specialist, writes an informative blog on a variety of topics, all related to Alzheimer's disease and other types of dementia. Some examples of posts include Wandering and Alzheimer's, How to Have a Good Visit, and Benefits for Individuals with Early-onset Alzheimer's Disease. Our Compass Memory Support Program Directors also contribute to the blog, sharing personal experiences from their communities. On this page you can leave comments and suggest topics that would be beneficial to you. You can also subscribe to receive a notification each time a new post is published. SLR's Facebook fan page: Search for Senior Living Residences on Facebook and you will see our fan page pop up! This page offers a continuous (almost daily!) flow of information pertaining to SLR and our communities. They post event details, recent news, suggested articles, nutrition facts and tips and more. We also post photos of residents, families, and associates at community events. The next time you attend an event at one of

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our communities, be sure to check our Facebook page a few days after to see the photos! They'd love for you to share comments, photographs, and suggestions with us on Facebook. Their YouTube site-[www.youtube.com/TheSeniorLiving](http://www.youtube.com/TheSeniorLiving): This page contains unscripted videos that we filmed of our management team, SLR's principals, family members, and residents themselves. As Methuen Village becomes more tech savvy they say they plan to post videos of significant events and presentations. You can subscribe to the YouTube channel to receive a notification each time we add a video. [www.examiner.com/alzheimers-care-in-boston/leanna-moran](http://www.examiner.com/alzheimers-care-in-boston/leanna-moran): Examiner.com is used more and more as a news resource and what makes it unique is that the content writers are self-published. Leanna Moran, our Assistant Executive Director, writes articles as Boston's Alzheimer's Care Examiner. Visit the site when you have time!

-LinkedIn.com: Many of Methuen Village's Executive Directors, as well as their corporate team, have profiles on LinkedIn. This is a great way for colleagues and other elder care professionals to keep in touch and share contacts and resources.

A Mothers Last Touch - Thursday, December 16, 2010. 5:30PM-9PM, Chester's at Bell Tower Square

60 Island Street, First Floor, Lawrence, MA 01840. \$25.00 donation-food/non alcoholic beverages included

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LAWRENCE Emergency Winter Parking Ban - Notice to Motorist - Sec. 19-72. Parking prohibited during certain months between 12:01 AM and 6:00 AM on public streets, alternate sides on alternate days on certain streets. During the period from December 15 to March 15 annually, between the hours of 12:01 AM. and 6:00 AM., vehicles shall, unless otherwise prohibited by law, be parked alternating on a daily basis, on one side of the street only.

Sargent School PTO seeks used books for fundraiser - Want to get rid of your used books? The Parent Teacher Organization of North Andover's Sargent School is raising money through donations of new and used books, CDs, DVDs, videos, records and audio books. The group has recently placed a drop-off donation container to collect these items from community members who'd like to repurpose their used goods while also helping the PTO raise money. The group will be paid on an ongoing basis for all items collected in their donation container. The gray book



Lawrence May-O Willie Lantigua visits Santa and gets the bad news about how naughty he's been.

donation container, distinguished by its purple and yellow 'Got Books?' signs, is located near the rear entrance of the school near the playground at 300 Abbott Street, North Andover. This program is an ongoing fundraiser and donations can be made by the public at any time. All funds raised through the collection of these donations will benefit the general funding of the PTO. For more information contact Got Books at [www.GotBooks.com](http://www.GotBooks.com) or call 978-284-2500.

Home Health VNA honored as Pinnacle award finalist designation - Visiting Nurse Association of New England (VNANE) recently announced that Home Health VNA has been named a Pinnacle Award finalist for superior patient satisfaction. The Pinnacle Award and finalist designations are presented annually to the members of VNANE ranking highest in patient satisfaction among agencies of comparable size. This is the 2nd honor bestowed on Home Health VNA in as many months. In October the agency was named among the top 25% of the "Home Care Elite", a listing of the top tier of home health care agencies in the United States. "Home Health VNA has a remarkable history of excellence in patient care outcomes and in satisfaction with care" said John G. Albert, President and CEO. "It is a privilege to care for patients and fami-

lies in our communities. We honor that privilege with our commitment to patient satisfaction." Home Health VNA is a not-for-profit agency affiliated with HomeCare, Inc. and Merrimack Valley Hospice. Together, the three agencies serve more than 90 communities throughout Northeastern Massachusetts, the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire. For more information, visit their website [www.homehealthvna.org](http://www.homehealthvna.org)

METHUEN SALEM ROTARY - On Saturday, December 18th the Methuen Salem Rotary will be meeting as a group to put together over 125 food baskets for the less fortunate members of our community. Their next meeting will be at the Presentation of Mary Academy at 8AM. If you have any questions feel free to contact Maureen Campaiola.

We are not Methuen Life! Organizations like the ones above who send us press releases for the notebook take notice. We are NOT Methuen Life. Press releases that come in to us asking "Methuen Life" to please cover their events will be met with crickets from now on. I guess it's better than being confused with the Tribune, but if you cannot get the name of the paper you are soliciting correctly how can you expect support?

GINGERBREAD HOUSE- "Culinary Housing" Smolak Farms Presents Exclusive Gingerbread House Workshop

with the Sweet Holiday Imagination of Donna Garlough, Senior Food Editor of Boston Magazine! Once upon a time, you were invited to an event that not even Hansel and Gretel would have passed up! On December 18th, 2010 from 10AM to 11:30AM, join Senior Food Editor of Boston magazine, Donna Garlough, as she extends her valuable insight and imagination to host the first-ever,

"Culinary Housing: Gingerbread House Workshop" - filled with sugar, spice and everything nice at

Smolak Farms located in North Andover, Massachusetts! During "Culinary Housing," Kids from "1 to 92" can experience the joy of creating a sugary masterpiece under the careful guidance and assistance of one of Boston's most acclaimed food editors! Smolak Farms will provide parents and children with all of the tasty delights that they'll need to construct their very own personalized houses including items such as: flavored icing(s), candy canes, chocolate snowmen, candy sprinkles, gum drops, cookies and loads of fresh-from-the-oven gingerbread to start constructing their ever first culinary home, or condo if you feel that is more economically sound. Holiday cheer will be in the air with Christmas carols, warm cider and cocoa available for purchase, and a very special visit by you know who...SANTA CLAUS! The class will cost you \$40 (per couple or parent/child) and a portion of the proceeds from the workshop will be

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# Tiffany Kira Johnson Performs 6TH Annual FREE Holiday Concert for Children of Lawrence



There is frost on the ground, a chill in the breeze, and holiday spirit throughout Lawrence High School. Tiffany Kira Johnson was back in Lawrence for the 6th consecutive year to perform a free holiday concert for the kids of the community and spread goodwill and cheer.

Tiffany Kira Johnson, performed two, free holiday concerts at Lawrence High School on December 7, 2010 at 9:15am and again at 11am. In what has become a holiday tradition the first performance was for elementary students. The second performance was for students at the high school itself.

The first concert took place in 2005 at the Parthum School on Lawrence's Prospect Hill. Former School Committee Member Peter Larocque attended a subsequent concert. Says Larocque "What I saw happening on that stage was magical. The children were excited beyond words. Tiffany made them a part of something



Quianna Louise Roy (20) of Lawrence andover was the Host and Guest performer for ReggieB Productions Third Annual "Rock the Runway" Fashion event, that was held at the Hyatt Regency at Downtown Crossing, Boston.

The show featured six local designers fashions and over twenty models from the greater Boston/New Hampshire area. The show raised over six thousand dollars that was donated to the American Cancer Society, the chosen charity for the show. Quianna, a Sophomore studying psychology and drug rehabilitation at Northeastern University in Boston, will also be the featured guest performer for the next Reggie B Productions fashion event, "The Santa and Stiletto Ball" also to be held at The Hyatt Regency at Downtown Crossing on December 11th 7PM-12AM.

If you wish to view photos from the Rock the Runway event, or wish to pre-purchase tickets for the Stiletto Ball, visit [www.ReggieBProductions.com](http://www.ReggieBProductions.com)



Celebrity Bartending at Glory benefits One Tail at a Time Rescue! L to R: Celebrity Bartender, The Valley Patriot's PuppyGirl, Kate Whitney, (One Tail at a Time's President, Meg Reynolds, Celebrity Bartender and Volunteer for One Tail at a Time, Dana Heywood, and the Foster Coordinator for One Tail at a Time, Lisa Cerroni were all on hand last month to raise money for abused and neglected puppies. Please help PuppyGirl save the puppies by donating to One Tail at a Time Rescue, Inc. P.O. Box 8361, Bradford, MA 01835, Email: [onetail@comcast.net](mailto:onetail@comcast.net)

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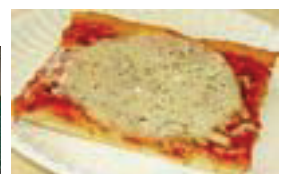
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PHOTOS: TOM DUGGAN

(TOP LEFT) Marine Recruits on Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island do physical training in the sandpit. (TOP RIGHT) Recruit Carnevale from Beverly Massachusetts whose interview along with Quincy resident, Recruit McLellan will be published next month. (Middle Left) Marine recruits learn combat water survival, complete with M16 and complete gear pack. (Middle Center) Tori Glasser, a guidance counselor at Medford Middle School learns to shoot an M16-A2 automatic assault weapon. (Middle Right) A marine recruit guards his platoon's weapons while the line up for chow. Weapons are not allowed in the chow hall but cannot be left unattended. (All photos Tom Duggan)

## HEROES: FROM PAGE 17

the day Recruit Gallo has no idea what time it is. She told me that she liked school and was a good student with B's and C's.

During the workshop, I had the opportunity to fire an M16-A2 machine gun, go through some of the obstacle course training, tour the pool facility, housing, the air base and so much more.

Recruit Gallo, as well as the Drill Sergeants and Officers on the base are setting the bar so high in representing this country with honor, courage and commitment that it was an incredible privilege to interview her and witness the heroism of all the other Marines during the educator's

workshop.

I thank all of the hero U.S. Marines and especially Sgt. Natasha Young for this amazing opportunity.

Semper Fi!



*Paula Porten is an attorney at the Tarshi Law Office in Lawrence, vice chair of the North Andover GOP Town Committee, a former member of the North Andover*

*Finance Committee, and part owner of The Valley Patriot. You can please email her at paulaporten@aol.com*

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# Dracut Voters Made the Right Choices!

D.J. Deeb

VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT COLUMNIST

Dracut residents chose their candidates and issues wisely in the November 2nd statewide election. Although the state of Massachusetts voted for higher taxes and bigger government, Dracut voters made the right decisions.

First off, Dracut School Committee Chairman Matt Sheehan lost his bid as an Independent candidate for State Representative. Sheehan not only lost, he got crushed. The reason for this crushing defeat was a combination of his own negative campaigning and incumbent State Representative Colleen Garry's exceptional record of service to the 36th Middlesex District, which includes Dracut and Tyngsboro. Garry won re-election gathering 8,192 votes (53%). Republican George Boag, a first-time candidate for public office, collected 5,463 votes (32%). George Boag's showing is impressive for a first-time candidate and can be largely attributed to his positive issue-oriented campaign. Matt Sheehan gathered a mere 1,575 votes (Just 10% of the vote).

In the interest of disclosure, I ran against Rep. Garry as a Republican challenger in 2002. At that time I had many differences with Rep. Garry over her voting record.

Since that time, however, I believe that Rep. Garry has done an exceptional job representing her constituents at the State House. She has voted against raising the Sales tax, Alcohol tax, Meals tax, Telecommunications tax and Gas tax.

Most experienced observers would agree that Rep. Garry would have easily won re-election this year even in a 2-way race, but the dismal showing by Matt Sheehan surprised many.

Colleen Garry has been an independent voice representing Dracut and Tyngsboro well on Beacon Hill. In addition to opposing taxes, Colleen has led the charge in supporting Ethics Reform, Pension Reform, Transportation Reform, and for cutting State government spending. Rep. Garry has also voted repeatedly to prevent illegal aliens from receiving State benefits.



While Republican George Boag mounted a largely positive and issues-oriented campaign, Matt Sheehan embarked on a campaign of lies, slander and deception. Sheehan attacked Rep. Garry for increasing taxes and causing jobs to be lost.

Colleen Garry's voting record obviously shows different as discussed earlier.

During the campaign, Sheehan stated, "I firmly believe that elected officials should not be collecting pensions." The problem here is that Sheehan and all other Town officials, who receive a stipend, contribute to the Middlesex County Retirement System. Sheehan offered no specifics. Is he saying that those who contribute are not entitled to at least receive their money back to invest as they choose in their own individual retirement accounts? Why has Mr. Sheehan not made this an issue in the

two years that he has been on the School Committee? In addition, why didn't Matt Sheehan follow Selectman John Zimini's lead earlier this year when Zimini refused to accept a stipend in order to save the Town money? Matt Sheehan has been accepting his stipend checks each month. This was nothing more than electioneering on Mr. Sheehan's part and the voters saw through it.

On another note, Dracut voters wisely chose Charlie Baker for Governor, Jamison Tomasek for State Senate, and Jon Golnik for Congress. In addition, Dracut residents voted YES on all three ballot questions. Even though the rest of the state bucked the national trend and voted to retain the state's Democratic delegation in Congress, Dracut voters made the right choices.



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



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## Archinski announces run for Dracut Selectman

Dracut resident Tony Archinski has come out early in his quest to become the next Dracut Selectman. Archinski announced today that he has wanted to become a political candidate for many years, but job and family time constraints have made it difficult in the past. Archinski is

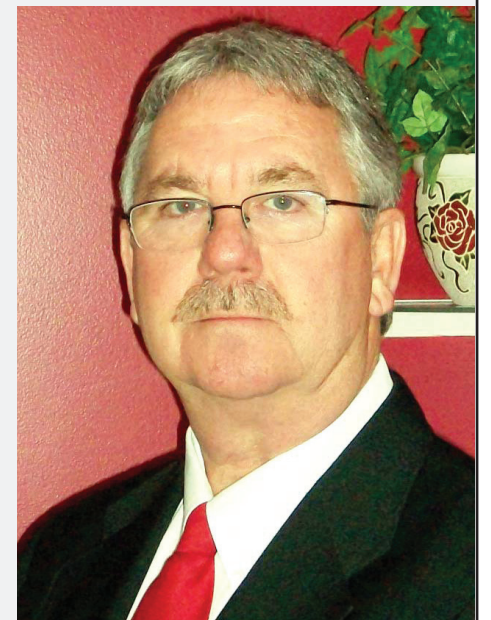
a former Dracut Police Lieutenant who retired in 2008 after 32 years of government service. He is a Vietnam Era veteran, who is married with two school aged children.

Archinski was a founding member of the Dracut Soccer Association, and currently sits on the Dracut Govern-

ment Rules & Regulations Committee. He holds a Masters Degree in the Administration of Criminal Justice, and currently works as the Director of Administration for the New England Police Benevolent Association.

"I believe that my administrative, organizational and personal skills will help me become an effective leader in town government" Archinski said.

Archinski stated that he knows and respects all of the current Board of Selectmen, and believes that he possesses the skill set that will keep Dracut moving forward in a positive direction.



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# A Sneak Peak at Santa's Naughty and Nice List!

## Gerry Nutter

VALLEY PATRIOT LOWELL COLUMNIST

Since we are in the Holiday season, I thought I'd save time and hand out my Christmas presents to the area politicians a little early so they don't forget I got them something. Some you may get and others only a few may get but it's done in the spirit of fun and Holiday Cheer!

**Bernie Lynch, Lowell City Manager:** A new Teflon suit since the retirees have chipped away at the old one, A "I Don't Snitch" Tee shirt along with a book "How to be a better Communicator".

**Lowell Mayor, Jim Milinazo:** A framed picture of Bud & Rita for his office and a copy of Rudolph W. Giuliani's book "Leadership".

**Lowell Councilor Bud Caulfield:** His own talk show, appointment as Official City Greeter and some paint for the Lowell High stairs.

**Lowell Councilor Rita Mercier:** A 2nd for any motion, a pinky swears from Bud that he's got her back and continued employment when the new Sheriff takes over.

**Former Lowell City Councilor Alan Kazanjian:** A front page apology from the Lowell Sun and a lifetime towing contract from Bernie Lynch

**Retiring State Senator Steve Panagiotakos:** No target letters, A lucrative consultant contract with a major company and being named permanent host of Election Night on WCAP Live from the Blue Shamrock.

**UMass Lowell Chancellor Marty Meehan:** The early retirement of John F. Kerry or Gov. Patrick to come to his senses, both

are long shots.

**Lowell State Rep. Kevin Murphy:** A committee chairmanship or Partner offer with Nutter McClennen & Fish LLP (I'll put in a good word for you)

**Lowell State Rep. Tom Golden:** An I Love My LOBBYIST T-shirt, A meeting with the FBI (just to be able to say you're important enough to have had one) and a real job for the first time in your life.

**Lowell State Rep. Dave Nangle:** A copy of America's Toughest Sheriff, a tour of Middlesex County and a dinner date with Gov. Patrick

**Lowell City Councilors Patrick Murphy & Bill Martin:** Dave Nangle being named Sheriff of Middlesex County.

**Supt of Lowell Schools Chris Scott:** Dinner with Regina, A school committee that pays like the TECH Board and a new contract either in Lowell or a city that appreciates all you have accomplished without taking an extra dime.

**Lowell School Committeewoman Jackie Doherty:** A soccer ball, Accounting for Dummies to pass out to those in need and her own lunch with the Headmaster.

**Lowell School Committeeman Jack Leary:** An I am NOT John Leahy LHS Sweatshirt, a copy of "The Tough Negotiator" and his own writer at the Sun like Paul Georges has.

**Greater Lowell Supt. Mary Jo Santoro:** The re-election of Mike Lenzi and Dave LaFerriere to the School Committee and lessons in How to be an effective Superintendent from Chris Scott.

**Greater Lowell Tech School Committeeman Dave LaFerriere:** A long and Happy Retirement and live broadcasting of the

Tech School Board Meetings.

**Former Tech School Committeeman Mike Hayden:** A do over for your comments at Jim Cassin's retirement Party and lunch with Lynne Lupien.

**Maurice Cohen:** A do over and the ability to sell the station to a man who would keep his word. Another reunion with your old staff. Lowell misses you.

**Sam Poulton, Co-Owner WCAP:** A large mirror that shows up everywhere he goes and a partner with money to buy out Clark Smidt,

**Clark Smidt Co-Owner WCAP:** Free Lifetime pass to Jimmy Tingle's OFF BROADWAY Theater, A basketful of Athenian Corner & Shaw Farm Gift Certificates and a subscription to 50 Ways to Be a Better Boss.

**Ted Panos WCAP:** Low Kai Gift Cards, a week to sleep in and someone to talk local politics on a regular basis for the morning show.

**Andover/Dracut Senate elect Barry Finegold:** His own "I love Willie" T-shirt, another pass from the Ethics Commission and a Printing for Dummies book.

**Dracut State Rep Colleen Garry:** A Judgeship just as her term is ending, gift certificates to Coyle's Tavern and Shaw Farm and a happier 2011.

**Dracut Selectman Bob Cox:** Promise by State Rep. Colleen Garry to hold 3 Fund-raisers at his place and a lesson on ethics from someone besides his brother John and Barry Finegold.

**Dracut Selectman Jon Zimini:** Endorsements from Jimmy O, Warren and Joe D and an Ice scraper because you know what must have froze over.



**Former Selectman Jim O'Laughlin:** Personal Invitation to Town Meeting along with directions since he has lost his way there since last May and a paying gig at the Lowell Sun.

**Dracut Town Manager Dennis Peindak:** Retirement tips from Mike McLaughlin, a Red phone with a dedicated line to "The Farm" and the courage to announce a definite retirement date.

**Tom Duggan:** He already got his, a new station with a better boss and not having to deal with the GRINCH who stole WCAP.

All of these gifts were done with a smile on my face, a song in my heart and the wish for all to have a Merry Christmas and Happy, Healthy and Joyous New Year



Read Gerry Nutter's Blog at [gerrynutterslowell.com](http://gerrynutterslowell.com) or email him at [GNutter@docuserve.com](mailto:GNutter@docuserve.com)



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THE DOCTOR IS **IN**

## Osteoarthritis... Part II

Rami Rustum, M.D.  
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

### What is the treatment for osteoarthritis?

Aside from weight reduction and avoiding activities that exert excessive stress on the joint cartilage, there is no specific treatment to halt cartilage degeneration or to repair damaged cartilage in osteoarthritis. The goal of treatment in osteoarthritis is to reduce joint pain and inflammation while improving and maintaining joint function. Some patients with osteoarthritis have minimal or no pain and may not need treatment. Others may benefit from conservative measures such as rest, exercise, diet control with weight reduction, physical and occupational therapy, and mechanical support devices. These measures are particularly important when large, weight-bearing joints are involved, such as the hips or knees. In fact, even modest weight reduction can help to decrease symptoms of osteoarthritis of the large joints, such as the knees and hips. Medications are used to complement the physical measures described above. Medication may be used topically, taken orally, or injected into the joints to decrease joint inflammation and pain. When conservative measures fail to control pain and improve joint function, surgery can be considered.

Resting sore joints decreases stress on the joints and relieves pain and swelling. Patients are asked to simply decrease the intensity and/or frequency of the activities that consistently cause joint pain.

Exercise usually does not aggravate osteoarthritis when performed at levels that do not cause joint pain. Exercise is helpful in osteoarthritis in several ways. First, it strengthens the muscular support around the joints. It also prevents the joints from "freezing up" and improves and maintains joint mobility. Finally, it helps with weight reduction and promotes endurance. Applying local heat before and cold packs after exercise can help relieve pain and inflammation. Swimming is particularly well suited for patients with osteoarthritis because it allows patients to exercise with minimal impact stress to the joints. Other popular exercises include walking, stationary cycling, and light weight training.

Physical therapists can provide support devices, such as splints, canes, walkers, and braces. These devices can be helpful



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

in reducing stress on the joints. Occupational therapists can assess the demands of daily activities and suggest additional devices that may help people at work or home. Finger splints can support individual joints of the fingers. Paraffin wax dips, warm water soaks, and nighttime cotton gloves can help ease hand symptoms. Spine symptoms can improve with a neck collar, lumbar corset, or a firm mattress, depending on what areas are involved.

In many patients with osteoarthritis, mild pain relievers such as aspirin and acetaminophen (Tylenol) may be sufficient treatment. Studies have shown that acetaminophen given in adequate doses can often be equally as effective as prescription anti-inflammatory medications in relieving pain in osteoarthritis of the knees. Since acetaminophen has fewer gastrointestinal side effects than NSAIDs, especially among the elderly people, acetaminophen is generally the preferred initial drug given to patients with osteoarthritis. Medicine to relax muscles in spasm might also be given temporarily. Pain-relieving creams applied to the skin over the joints can provide relief of minor arthritis pain. Examples include capsaicin (ArthriCare, Zostrix), salicyl (Aspercreme), methyl salicylate (Ben-Gay, Icy Hot), and menthol (Flexall).

New treatments include an anti-inflammatory lotion, diclofenac (Voltaren Gel) and diclofenac patch (Flector Patch),

which are being used for the relief of the pain of osteoarthritis.

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) are medications that are used to reduce pain and inflammation in the joints. Examples of NSAIDs include aspirin (Ecotrin), ibuprofen (Motrin), nabumetone (Relafen), and naproxen (Naprosyn). It is sometimes possible to use NSAIDs for a while and then discontinue them for periods of time without recurrent symptoms, thereby decreasing side-effect risks.

The most common side effects of NSAIDs involve gastrointestinal distress, such as stomach upset, cramping diarrhea, ulcers, and even bleeding. The risk of these and other side effects increases in the elderly. Newer NSAIDs called COX-2 inhibitors have been designed that have less toxicity to the stomach and bowels. Because osteoarthritis symptoms vary and can be intermittent, these medicines might be given only when joint pains occur or prior to activities that have traditionally brought on symptoms.

Some studies, but not all, have suggested that alternative treatment with the food supplements glucosamine and chondroitin can relieve symptoms of pain and stiffness for some people with osteoarthritis. These supplements are available in pharmacies and health-food stores without a prescription, although there is no certainty about the purity of the products or the dose of the active ingredients because they are not monitored by the U.S. FDA. The National Institutes of Health is studying glucosamine and chondroitin in the treatment of osteoarthritis. Their initial research

demonstrated only a minor benefit in relieving pain for those with the most severe osteoarthritis. Further studies, it is hoped, will clarify many issues regarding dosing, safety, and effectiveness of these products for osteoarthritis. Patients taking blood thinners should be careful when taking chondroitin as it can increase the blood thinning and cause excessive bleeding. Fish-oil supplements have been shown to have some anti-inflammatory properties, and increasing the dietary fish intake and/or taking fish-oil capsules (omega-3 capsules) can sometimes reduce the inflammation of arthritis.

While oral cortisone is generally not used in treating osteoarthritis, when injected directly into the inflamed joints, it can rapidly decrease pain and restore function. Since repetitive cortisone injections can be harmful to the tissues and bones, they are reserved for patients with more pronounced symptoms.

For persisting pain of severe osteoarthritis of the knee that does not respond to weight reduction, exercise, or medications, a series of injections of hyaluronic acid (Synvisc, Hyalgan) into the joint can sometimes be helpful, especially if surgery is not being considered. These products seem to work by temporarily restoring the thickness of the joint fluid, allowing better joint lubrication and impact capability, and perhaps by directly affecting pain receptors.

Surgery is generally reserved for those patients with osteoarthritis that is particularly severe and unresponsive to the conservative treatments. Arthroscopy, discussed above, can be helpful when cartilage tears are suspected. Osteotomy is a bone-removal procedure that can help realign some of the deformity in selected patients, usually those with knee disease. In some cases, severely degenerated joints are best treated by fusion (arthrodesis) or replacement with an artificial joint (arthroplasty). Total hip and total knee replacements are now commonly performed in community hospitals throughout the United States. These can bring dramatic pain relief and improved function.

References: 1- Mayo Clinic Website  
2- Mayo Clinic Internal Medicine Book  
3- Medicinenet, 4- Web MD



Rami R. Rustum, M.D. is the Director of Merrimack Pain Associates at 50 Prospect St. in Lawrence. For any questions or concerns, please email Dr. Rustum at: ramirustum@comcast.net

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# How to beat Peripheral Neuropathy

DR. Jin Sung

VALLEY PATRIOT CHIROPRACTIC COLUMNIST

"I haven't slept well in months due to burning and tingling in my hands and feet. I get temporary relief with medications but it doesn't seem to last. It really hurts, plus I feel tired and groggy all the time from the medications that were prescribed to me."

These are some of the common things I hear, in my practice, from patients afflicted with peripheral neuropathy. Neuropathy is a fancy term used by your doctor to describe nerve "damage or malfunction".

There can be many causes for peripheral neuropathy in the United States, such as diabetes, chemotherapy treatments for cancer, smoking, prescription medications, idiopathic (unknown origin), and even over the counter self medication and dietary supplements.

But, the good news is that there has been significant progress in the treatment of peripheral neuropathy that now allows patients to not only get excellent in-office care, but to be discharged in a very reasonable period of time to a home treatment program with follow-up.

In the modern world, we are subjected and exposed to many environmental toxins, including heavy metals. We also are seeing patients surviving cancer and living much longer. Unfortunately, one of the undesired complications of chemotherapy is the development of peripheral neuropathy. We are also seeing patients developing compression neuropathy, such as carpal tunnel, chronic sciatica and back pain and nerve damage associated with conditions like degenerative spinal disc disease and spinal stenosis. Part of this, of course, is because we are living longer and being more active than ever before.

Other common causes of peripheral neuropathy: is the use of statin medications, kidney disease and hormonal diseases that occur in patients with hyperthyroidism, as well as Cushing's disease, which affects the adrenal glands and the output of cortisol. Alcoholism can cause peripheral neuropathy, as can vitamin deficiencies, especially deficiencies of thiamin, or vitamin B1. There are still more causes: chronic hypertension, cigarette-smoking, immune-complex diseases, generalized degenerative lifestyles that include obesity, poor diet combined with cigarette smoking, abuse of over-the-counter medications, etc.

Symptoms initially may include such things as mild loss of sensation of the hands and the feet, progressive worsening

of tingling and numbness that will often times wake the patient at night, or completely disturbed sleep.

We also find that many patients with peripheral neuropathy have a combination of these most annoying symptoms. This could include not only the presence of tingling and numbness but shooting pains. I



have had many patients tell me that one of the most annoying symptoms, especially in colder climates, is the coolness of the feet as well as the changes that occur in the feet.

It is very important to have a doctor working with you, who is able to perform the most thorough evaluation possible, evaluate all your records to make sure that all correctable causes of peripheral neuropathy have been addressed. If a root cause can be identified it should be addressed as completely as is medically and humanly possible.

In order to find out what components of peripheral neuropathy you have, your doctor should conduct a very thorough evaluation. This will include things such as your vital signs, body mass index, the mobility and range of motion of your lower back and hips, and the overall health of your feet, skin, nails and hair, blood vessels and circulation. This might include Doppler ultrasound, a simple painless test to check for blood flow or blockages.

As the doctor performs his clinical examination, he'll also perform a very thorough neurological examination including reflexes, muscle-testing, and sensation to touch using a device as simple as a pin, a brush or perhaps even a pinwheel. Doctors commonly will also check your vibration sensation, which very often is disturbed in peripheral neuropathy. This is done painlessly and very easily through the use of simple tuning forks. Your balance will be assessed. Laboratory tests may very well be performed. These would include things such as a chemistry panel, kidney and liver function. Your doctor will also want to double check your blood sugar levels. I have found many patients who present with neuropathy symptoms have not yet been diagnosed with diabetes but may very well suffer from what's called a metabolic syndrome.

The clinical examination along with a complete review of the patient's history will determine the appropriate treatments for the patient.

Dr. Jin Sung is the owner and clinic director of Functional Chiropractic, Inc. He can be reached at 978 688-6999. The clinic website is [www.DrJinSung.com](http://www.DrJinSung.com)

# Avoid Winter Holiday Asthma & Allergies

Dr. Thomas Johnson

VALLEY PATRIOT ALLERGY COLUMNIST

Avoid Winter Holiday Asthma & Allergies

The Holidays are coming quickly! And just like last year along with snowmen, holiday spirit, and mistletoe comes winter allergies and asthma.

It is essential to know what your asthma and allergy sensitivities are to take the steps necessary to avoid them. Even more important is being prepared to take quick action to address these conditions when they occur.

Less than half of the people who know they have allergy sensitivity's actually carry an auto injector or Epi-Pen with them for emergencies. An auto-injector is an important tool to have on you if you have a reaction to a food or drink that you consume. Practicing avoidance measures is obviously your first line of defense. But never forget that ingredients can be hidden deep in any recipe. With that in mind you need to prepare in advance for emergencies.

A key point to keep front and center is the role alcohol consumption can play this time of year. Many people experience hypersensitivity and symptoms after consuming alcoholic beverages. Of particular note is the adverse reaction to wine, especially red wine. Symptoms often present as facial flushing, respiratory distress, and allergic swelling. Alcoholic beverages must be avoided if there is a known reaction.

During the winter holidays, we are likely to spend more time indoors, so it is also important to be aware of the effects of indoor combustion products on your asthma and allergies. This is generally seen with use of fireplaces, wood stoves, and gas stoves. There is evidence that children's exposure to these can result in asthma symptoms. Other indoor agitating exposures include secondhand smoke, frying or other cooking events, and using incense.

Trees and other outdoor plants are often brought indoors during the Christmas and Holiday season. One of the most decorative and popular display plants, the poinsettia, undoubtedly has a traditional place during the holidays. What many people



do not know is the poinsettia shares some common allergen proteins that may cause people with to develop a cross-sensitivity to latex. Also, exposure to Christmas cacti has been reported to cause rhino conjunctivitis to those who are sensitive and exposed to it.

Of course, we cannot talk about holiday triggers without including the Christmas tree. Tree pollen and airborne allergens are common with exposure to pine, fir, or spruce trees. Molds may also be on these trees when taken indoors, and exposure could cause a severe asthma event. It is advisable not to bring these trees indoors if anyone in the home is sensitive to them.

The real message here is you need to be aware of the triggers that can cause asthmatic conditions worsen during the winter holiday season. Knowing what things you are sensitive to can help you avoid them.

You also may wish to consult your local allergist or immunologist for more on how to prevent an allergic reaction during the holidays and how to be prepared for one.

For a happy Holiday Season simply think ahead, know what to avoid, and keep your rescue medication on hand.

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# Live the WOW!

**“Your” GIFTS. What will they be? Those Living the WOW! give GIFTS every day of the year; not just during the month of December. And they’re GIFTS that Last Lifetimes.**

**Thomas Connors**  
VALLEY PATRIOT WOW! COLUMNIST

December is known as the time for Giving. You know, where it is “better to give than receive!”

Now, I don’t know about you, but, for the longest time (like decades), I really enjoyed the receiving part. Getting a bike for my birthday as a kid, a cool train set or sports equipment was pretty exciting. Even as I got older and entered the workforce, getting a raise or a bottle of wine at the holidays certainly made me feel good.

**Then, all of a sudden, for some crazy reason, something kicks in and you realize there is so much more to life when you Live the WOW! by Giving.**

I don’t even remember why or when, but I started to pay attention to people I thought were Living the WOW! Some of these people were financially successful in life while others were successful in much different ways. They projected a genuine peace of mind or an unusual enthusiasm for life. Most important, they all shared the thrill of GIVING in their lives. And they gave all year round. Not just material things. But, giving of themselves, their time, their money and even their wisdom and emotions.

Oh, and I noticed one more thing. Whatever Gift they gave, they made it a WOW!

**GIFTS that are a WOW! and last a Lifetime usually DO NOT involve money or material things. They DO, however, ALWAYS Touch the receiver’s Heart!**

“But Tom, this Gift stuff, I don’t have money for expensive presents or large sums of cash to make a difference in anyone’s life. In fact, I’m lucky to be just getting by myself with what little I have.”

That kind of small thinking and narrow-mindedness gets you nowhere. It’s like slamming the door on your inner ability to make a difference in someone’s Life. We all have GIFTS inside of us just waiting to be wrapped and handed over to others who desperately need them.

Ask yourself this pretty simple question. “Why would you do that?” Why would you choke off any chance to create a spectacular life for yourself and those around you? Why would you jeopardize your ability to create miracles in the lives of others when the opportunity is right there for the giving?

Start this very minute to zap those tendencies to find excuses for not Living the WOW! Instead of being shut down by barriers or roadblocks or just plain warped thinking, forge ahead and consciously bust through those limitations. Trust me, it’s worth the Effort!

**Put money aside and put all your attention on giving Gifts that come from the Heart and Soul. Gifts that are a WOW! because of the Passion you put into them!**

Come on you Senior Citizens give the GIFT of Time to your Grandchild. Sure, I know you are probably generous with them already but make it a WOW! Call them up and go for an ice-cream. Yes, in December! And yes, even if they are 16

years old! They will always remember you for it. Take them to a movie during their upcoming vacation. You don’t like the movies playing these days? Who cares! You are going for THEM not you!

The important thing is to chip away that “poor me” crust of aches and pains and do something for someone else.

**Recognize the Gifts from above. Do you actually think the Good Lord has nothing better to do?**

Two of the greatest Gifts given to us here on earth involve the Gift of Life. The mother and father who hold a new born in their arms for the first time. Talk about miracles of Life. Talk about a WOW! The conception and nourishment for nine months cannot even begin to prepare any of us for the exhilaration of that newborn’s cry and bright eyes filled with wonder.

Words too can give us a WOW! Especially when we hear the Dr. assure us that the cancer is gone and Dad is coming home ... for Christmas ... for good! Appreciate the talent God has Blessed those Drs. and scientists with in their abilities to create cures for your loved one.

**Even seemingly simple things that might not be seen, felt or affect another, can be a WOW! for those involved.**

Like Gerry, who works at Lowe’s and sees his son walking down the aisle during a surprise “Coming Home” from a tour of duty in the Middle East. Now, there’s a WOW! that fills a father’s heart with tremendous pride and relief knowing his flesh and blood is ok.

At American Training’s graduation, no matter the level of study or achievement, that simple piece of paper takes on its own meaning. It recognizes a Guest of ours for a job well done or program successfully completed. It represents a WOW! many never thought possible. Their hard work did pay off.

**GIFTS that WOW! are as varied and diverse as the people initiating them.**

**So, set your sights on the things that Really Matter in Life.**

I want to tell you about one last person who Lives the WOW! in a quiet, most effective Giving way of all. A number of times a week she makes herself available to tutor some of our community’s younger people at the Public Library. These are kids who just can’t seem to grasp certain math concepts, particular sentence structure or reading in general. Or, they just might need some impartial advice on how to deal with one of life’s many ups and downs.

Sure, there are many tutors who do similar things. But, Joyce does it with a WOW! She puts her complete heart, her complete soul and her total passion into communicating with her young friends. She does it in ways they understand. These characteristics show through and leave a lasting impression on each one to not only listen but follow through as well. She helps them open up a whole new world of opportunity through knowledge.

Joyce not only gives Gifts that last a Lifetime, she gives Gifts that will eventually last Many Lifetimes through the kids she mentors and the eventual lives they lead.

Now, that’s a WOW!

Now you can visit Tom at his NEW BLOG ... **TomConnorsThinkPad.blogspot.com**



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

*life. You can reach Tom at Tom@AmericanTrainingInc.com or by writing to him at Tom Connors, American Training, 102 Glenn Street, Lawrence, MA 01843 © 2010*

## A Blue Christmas: Elderly and Depression

**Terri Crow Mercier**  
VALLEY PATRIOT SENIOR COLUMNIST

It’s time to head home for the holidays to visit parents or elderly loved ones. Maybe it has been weeks, months, or even years since your last in person visit. Visits become more special and precious to the aging. However, your arrival at their home this time proves to give you cause for concern. Your loved ones do not quite seem the same — now more distant, irritable, and anxious. That special little light in their eyes that used to greet you at the door is now gone. The season that once made them so joyful seems now to be making them nervous wrecks. They do not seem to be able to focus on the festivities. Your loved ones have lost interest in what once held such special meaning. They may prefer to talk about family and friends that have passed away.

These can all be signs that something more is happening. Late life depression could very likely be the culprit. Very often we see this with elderly that have suffered from a major medical issue. Perhaps they have had to deal with heart ailments, cancer, or even joint, hip, or knee issues during the past year. It is believed that one out of every seven elderly suffer from late life depression -- about twenty percent of the senior population.

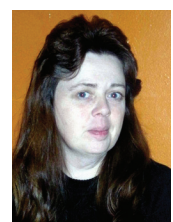
In many instances it is the out of town relatives that pick up on these changes before those who see them regularly. Some people try to dismiss depression as a myth. It certainly is not. Some will say it’s just a normal part of aging. This is also untrue. Late in life depression is as treatable as depression at any other age.

Often it is not the actual holiday that brings on depression but the fact that the

holiday season brings back memories of happier times for them. Sometimes people confuse depression with dementia. These illnesses do share similar signs and symptoms. Dementia will present as a slow mental decline. Loss of recognition of familiar places, people, and things are typical with dementia. Speech, motor skills, and writing ability are often affected along with memory loss that is not acknowledged as an issue by the elder suffering from dementia. Depression on the other hand, is usually a quicker mental decline. The elder will still be oriented to time, date, place, and recognize people that should be familiar to them.

The elderly will often deny there is an issue. They do not want to be a bother to others and dismiss things as no big deal. They can fear the label of mental illness, and it can be very frightening to them. Make them a priority in your life. It’s their turn for some TLC. Be responsible and rise to the occasion. Getting them to a doctor is one of the first but most important steps to helping them get back on track. Be a good listener for them, for all too often they just need to feel that they have been heard. Offer the emotional support they desperately need at this time in their life. Do not look away expecting someone else to step up to the plate. You can and will make a big difference in their life and help get rid of those holiday blues.

Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah and Kwanza!



*Terri Crow Mercier is the Director of Activities At Colonial Heights Care and Rehab-where she has worked for many years. You can email Terry at mike3433@msn.com*

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## On Condoms: Did Pope Benedict Change Church Teaching?

Paul Murano

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

As the secular media falls over itself in a frenzy spinning a leaked passage from a new book that interviews Pope Benedict XVI, we ask the question: Has the Pope changed Church doctrine on the matter of contraception? Three questions first need to be asked: What did the Pope say? What did he mean? Can this teaching be changed?

Here is the passage in question: "There may be a basis in the case of some individuals, as perhaps when a male prostitute uses a condom, where this can be a first step in the direction of a moralization, a first assumption of responsibility, on the way toward discovering an awareness that not everything is allowed and that one cannot do whatever one wants. But it is not really the way to deal with the evil of HIV infection. That can really lie only in a humanization of sexuality."

Perhaps the first mistake the Pope made is to assume the public will think like adults. Critical thinking does not include taking a passage out of context in an attempt to justify sin, nor does it include reducing everything to simplistic black and white concrete poles. It does include making subtle distinctions, in this case between the objective and subjective realms.

The Pope seems to be conversing about a hypothetical person's conscience, not the objective moral law. Respected moral theologian Dr. Janet Smith says it this way: "If the Pope were to say, 'If you're going to rob banks, using a gun without bullets would be a first step towards morality,' would you think that the Pope was approving of using guns without bullets to rob banks? Would the headlines read 'Pope Approves Bank Robbery - In Certain Cases'?"

Even if the Pope was talking about objective morality, using a condom during an act of sodomy is not contraception. Acts of sodomy themselves are contraceptive, for they preclude both the unitive and procreative potentiality of sexual union, its teleological ends. Adding a condom to sterile acts in an attempt to stave off disease is at least displaying some semblance of conscience, or as the Pope said a first step toward moralization.

But pointing out a positive movement within one's subjective conscience does not mean that it is in line with the objective moral law. The Pope was not condoning acts of prostitution, sodomy or contraception.

To address the general question of contraception (chemical or barrier) in relation to the moral law we must think clearly and without selfish bias. The natural moral law cannot be changed by any human power, nor could even God change it, for He can not contradict Himself. We are created for love and designed in a way that brings about optimal happiness. The intentional thwarting of the permanent union and potential procreation that is natural to sex, which contraception accomplishes, violates the truth of our being, the moral law of the Creator, and is literally sexual abuse. Of course this truth is lost to the contemporary mind so conditioned by the secular-humanist media and academia who preach that consenting adults can do whatever they want; but the degradation of persons that contraception imposes can never be made good or freely condoned by a rightly formed conscience.

In short, there are two dimensions of our being that need ethical consideration - nature and person, natural law and personal meaning; because our common human nature and our unique personhood must be respected. With contraception WHAT we are in our nature is violated by a form of sexual bulimia and WHO we are as persons is degraded by objectification. Bulimia is to eating what contraception is to sex because from the standpoint of nature they are similar disorders: Both begin the natural process but violate its proper end. Both objectively seek pleasure but negate purpose. Both seek love but block life. Love is inherently life-giving, for it is ordered to the sustenance of life for the individual (food) and the species (sex) that includes spouse and family. Contraception violates persons inasmuch as it reduces the other to an object and means of pleasure, depersonalizing both parties while transforming an act of love and union into one of selfishness and disunion. It is no small wonder that while 50% of marriages now end in divorce only 1% that practice natural family planning instead of contraception do.

To answer the original question of whether the Pope changed the Church's constant teaching on contraception, he did not. But perhaps more importantly, he can not.



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

## Killing off Baby Jesus

Kathleen LaPlante

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

That is what Christmas is about these days. Killing off and eliminating Baby Jesus from the Christmas season. It's infanticide, of sorts.

For example, Happy Holidays, Happy Hanukah and Season's Greetings are okay, but Merry Christmas is out. Holiday Gathering and Tree Lighting Day are okay, but Christmas Party is not. Santa Claus and his reindeer and elves are in all the stores and homes, but St. Nicholas has long been forgotten.

The extended gift buying in December, and now November, has become the norm. The shift occurred during World War II, when many Americans were stationed overseas in the military. People here bought their gifts early in December to insure that the packages would arrive in time for Christmas. Merchants enjoyed the extra revenue that year, that they expanded advertising and sales of Christmas merchandise earlier into December on an ongoing basis. Commercialization is now rampant.

Christmas carols are often diluted or replaced with secular songs. (Heaven forbid we say the name of Jesus in public.) Prayers are nowhere to be found in family celebrations, and employees are told to take down their pictures of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, because they might offend someone.

This de-Christianization of Christmas has greater problems. Other things get killed off with Baby Jesus. For instance, Advent is gone. It is the pre-Christmas preparation for the coming of Jesus, and it has been replaced with the extended gift buying season mentioned above. February 2 is another example. It has traditionally been a marking of the Presentation of Baby Jesus in the Temple. It is 40 days after Christmas, because in Hebrew tradition, the 40th day after birth is considered the last stage of birth when the mother brings the child to Temple. This Feast Day has been replaced with Groundhog Day.

All is not lost, though. There are ways we can reverse the trend. We can speak up about the dangers of removing Nativity scenes, and point out the benefits of keeping them. Instead of remaining silent, we

can dare to say Merry Christmas to others. We can also bring St. Nicholas back into Christmas celebrations, and curb extensive gift buying, replacing it with Advent and its wonderful practices for reflection and preparation.

We can do something new, like learn the genealogy of Jesus. His lineage is recorded in two places in the Bible, Matthew 1:1-17 and Luke 3:23-38. One account is from Joseph's side, and the other is from Mary's side. Both accounts are rich with interesting characters that can be weaved into the Christmas story. The origin of the date of



Christmas, December 25, is another topic that can be researched. For many years, people thought it was arbitrarily chosen in an attempt to override a pagan holiday, but it was not. Recent research by Thomas J. Talley testifies to that.

Taking any of these steps can gradually bring Baby Jesus back to life, and lead to a revitalization of Christianity, something we terribly need. Ben Stein, a speech writer for Presidents Nixon and Ford, could see this back in 2005. At that time, he provided some insightful commentary about what I call the infanticide of Baby Jesus.

He said, "I am a Jew, and every single one of my ancestors was Jewish. And it does not bother me even a little bit when people call those beautiful lit up, bejeweled trees Christmas trees. I don't feel threatened. I don't feel discriminated against. That's what they are: Christmas trees. It doesn't bother me a bit when people say, 'Merry Christmas' to me. I don't think they are slighting me or getting ready to put me in a ghetto. In fact, I kind of like it. It shows that we are all brothers and sisters celebrating this happy time of year. It doesn't bother me at all that there is a manger scene on display at a key intersection near my beach house in Malibu. If people want a crèche, it's just as fine with me as is the Menorah a few hundred yards away."



Along those lines, Merry Christmas to all! ;-)  
Kathleen LaPlante is a member of the Catholic Church. She can be reached at [klaplante2@yahoo.com](mailto:klaplante2@yahoo.com)

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# In this Holiday Season, Remember the empty seat...

**Austin Roy**  
VALLEY PATRIOT TEEN COLUMNIST

Remember this Christmas: When you're eating your dinners, smiling and laughing, remember that somewhere, in another house there's an empty chair where a hero should be sitting.

Those Heroes gave up their life so you can sit with your family. So light a candle for the Heroes that did not make it back and for those ...who are still serving our country! As Christmas approaches we keep in our prayers those who have made the sacrifice so that we can be safe with our families and have a Merry Christmas. Three close friends of mine have made the ultimate decision and have decided to serve their country.

My neighbor Mitchell Dennis, my cousin Danny Gauthier, and my best friend, Chris Bohne all are enlisted in the military. I have known Mitchell my whole life as he lived just a couple houses down from mine. He also went to Whittier Tech and he knew his whole life he wanted to enlist in the Marines. He is fulfilling his dream now and was recently deployed to Afghanistan.

My cousin Danny Gauthier was in R.O.T.C. at Haverhill High School. Then he enlisted in the Army and trained to be a battlefield medic. He is another one of my heroes. When he was stationed in Germany, we never lost touch. Every chance I got I would talk to him on Facebook, play Call of Duty with him online and much more. This week, he too was deployed to

Afghanistan leaving his wife in Germany. Before he left, he came home for 2 weeks and he got to spend some quality time with us.

We had a Thanksgiving and Christmas party for him and his wife. Everyone made sure that they could be there. It was an emotional moment seeing Danny in his dress uniform. Danny's mother was moved to tears when a Massachusetts State Trooper saluted him in Logan Airport as he was leaving for deployment last week.

Several months ago I met a kid named Chris Bohne. He was a senior in graphic communications at Whittier Tech in Haverhill. It turned out that we had a lot in common.

We both started to hang out and became close like brothers. He always looks out for me and I look out for him. You can basically describe him as a 15 year old kid in a 19 year old's body. He always likes to have fun and just not caring what people think. We had a routine of going to the Loop on Friday night meeting other friends. On Saturday nights we meet



Students at the Thomson School in North Andover hold a ceremony on Veterans day and explain the significance of "The Empty Seat"

PHOTO: TOM DUGGAN

friends at Skateland and it seems like the same thing but it is always fun.

His military shipping day is coming up soon. We recently had a going away party for him that was an amazing night with many close friends.

What I learned a while ago about him is that Chris had enlisted in the United States Marines on the motivation that it was a family tradition. His great grandfather was the first of his family to enlist in the military. From then on it was the male tradition on his mother's side to be in the military.

When I first meet him I noticed he always had on an old set of dog tags. I later found out that those were his great grandfathers. He always said that those dog tags were his motivation in becoming a Marine as his uncle and cousin currently serve.

I understood completely. His dedication to the Marines is amazing. He trains constantly with his Drill Sergeant getting himself ready for when he steps off the bus. All he has been able to talk about is

how he can't wait to leave. The normal person would be afraid of what lies ahead but he is excited. His courageous attitude has touched the hearts of many of his close friends including me. He will be missed.

These heroes are some of the many brave people that keep us safe not only in protection but with a safety of mind knowing that these amazing souls are protecting us. It is hard to say good bye, it is painful, frightening, and one of the hardest things I have done in my life. But I have also thought that it was a great feeling to be helping someone fulfill their dream and having a peace of mind knowing that one of your loved ones is protecting us.

Hearing the stories about the ups and downs of boot camp and the training new recruits will go through sounds like hell. But it's what they want to do. So when you are sitting down getting ready to have a Christmas dinner with your family, think about the people that leave an empty seat. That empty seat stands for the courageous men and women that keep us safe. Every night I am thinking of them wondering how they are and hoping they are safe.

*Austin Roy is 15 years old and lives in Haverhill. He is a sophomore at Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School. He plays football, baseball and wrestles for the Wildcats. Austin also enjoys fishing with his dad and spending time with his family and friends.*



## It's time to show the Troops how much we care

### National Call for Christmas Boxes for the Troops

Daytona Beach-, FL – 'Tis the Season! And this is a national call to all good Americans to show their love and support this holiday season for our deployed troops. Join us in our mission to ship Christmas Care Boxes to our soldiers overseas, and help us send a little bit of home and comfort their way.

SupportOurTroops.Org makes this call on behalf of the 60+ troop support groups across America who send care packages to the troops.

Our deployed soldiers are far away from their loved ones, sacrificing daily for us and our country. Many don't have a support network at home. We need to show them we are with them now more than ever during the holidays, when things can be especially tough.

"We currently have Airmen stationed at forward operating bases throughout Afghanistan performing "outside the wire" operations in harsh conditions and many of them haven't received anything from home. I was hoping you could send some care packages this way. I know it would definitely boost their morale. Thank you for your continued support! It really means a great deal to everyone here." ~ Chief Bud, Afghanistan

Want to make a difference in the life of a soldier this Christmas? It's simple!

\*Just go to SupportOurTroops.Org, and click on the Christmas 2010 Care Package Icon.

\* Over 90 groups are listed there.

\* Just pick the one you want to send your care box goods to and follow the instructions.

\* The types of things the troops request are listed there.

\* The care box rules are posted there.

Martin C. Boire, Chairman of Support Our Troops, said "during 2010 SupportOurTroops.Org has shipped over \$7,200,000 in goods to the troops

worldwide with a 1.3% overhead. To Afghanistan, Iraq, Korea, Japan, Bosnia, Qatar, Kuwait, Guam and on and on. We are asking everyone to help us spread the word to send care packages to the troops for the holidays."

He continued, "The items and the money to ship them come from generous people across America. It is amazing to see the way people step up for their troops. If you would like to provide items for future care boxes or make a donation to help pay to ship the goods, you can find everything you need to know posted on SupportOurTroops.Org, such as the type of things the troops are asking for, and where and how to send them to us. This shows them how much we all care."

Our troops have a tough job -- and they can't go home at the end of the day to relax, get a hug from a loved one, or sleep in peace through the night to start fresh in the morning. Join us in sending a little bit of love and appreciation their way with a Christmas Care Package to boost their spirits and their hearts during the holidays.

It's a gesture that means more than you know. So come on. Let's get to it!

"Thank you, Thank you, and Thank you so very much for the packages we received. We, the 2025th Transportation Company want you to know how appreciative we are for all that was sent to us yesterday. It is a hard road for us over here especially during the holiday season. Being away from our families is really tough but with the care boxes it made everyone feel like getting into the holiday spirit. From the 2025th Transportation Company Family we would like to extend our heartfelt "Thank You" for all of your support. We will always have a place in our heart for you. Thank you." ~ Major Earnest, Iraq

## CHRISTMAS!

Have you ever wondered what you're getting for Christmas? Well...I have! Every year I make a wish list. At the top of the list I put the stuff I want the MOST! This year, at the top of my list is an iPod Touch. I wonder if I'll get it... Usually I get what I want the most. My family does this thing called "Homemades". The reason we call it "Homemades" is because you have to make a homemade gift for the person you pick out of a hat or box. It's fun! This year I got my cousin. I'm not going to say the name because their mom reads this paper. And that will give it away. Ok back to YOU people!

Some families take a pickle ornament and stick it somewhere in their tree and whoever finds it gets a special "prize". It sounds fun doesn't it? My family doesn't do that though. Every year I go to my Grandmothers' house in Boston and help set up the tree (like decorate it) It's fun! I just did it a few days ago... Some people (kids specifically) enjoy putting up the Christmas tree, Like me! I am practically an artist so I would like to do that kind of thing! Well, this has just been another one of my fantastic articles about monthly stuff! Keep checking in each month to see what topic I'm on top of next! Until then this has been....

Emily, Methuen Resident, Junior Reporter for the Valley Patriot!



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D. B. Langevin

VALLEY PATRIOT LESBIAN COLUMNIST

I've been watching the Tea Party movement, well, not really. I've actually just been hearing about it, listening to the fact that it's growing faster than a bald man's hair plugs and had some sort of impact on the recent elections. I will always be the first to admit that I do not follow politics very closely. I vote and I try to keep up with what each candidate stands for so that my vote is well spent. That's about it. Issues keep changing, loyalties become fuzzy and candidates are all corrupt. It's the way it's been since the first caveman picked up the biggest stick and demanded to be head of the clan. I truly feel disconnected from the political world. But right from the get go, something about the Tea Party movement put up red flags in my head.

Just what are they all about? What is their agenda? Thanks to Tom Duggan, his column in last month's Valley Patriot opened my eyes and allowed even a political light-weight like myself to have a somewhat better understanding about what this movement is trying to do and they frighten me a little.

In his article, Tom talks about the first settlers and how, "They were searching for self fulfillment, versus being told what to do by the ruling class. . . They were looking for freedom." Amen to that.

Freedom, yes! As long as you were a white, land-owning man you had your freedom. Me, being a white, lesbian woman would not have had the luxury I do now of owning my own home. In fact, I'd probably be tried for witchcraft for loving another woman. Is this what the Tea Party wants to return to, a white, male agrarian society? Tom also mentioned that the settlers, "accepted that they needed to rely solely on themselves and their God, their families and their neighbors." 'Their God', not just God, but 'their God'. If that's truly the case then it could be the Jewish God, the Christian God, the Muslim God, the gay God or whatever god they pray to, but I don't get the feeling that's any of the gods the Tea Party is referring to.

Back in the good ole days of freedom, sovereignty, and hard work defense against attack formed by local militias. Would that really work today? I can't imagine arming the general public and relying on them to come to my defense against a terrorist attack. I've got to think that several of them want me dead just for my life style alone. I'll keep the defense of my freedom to the well-trained men and women of the U.S. armed services not the John Wayne wanna be with his private hoard of guns, grenades and ammo.

What I did agree with in Tom's article is that our founding fathers held certain truths and rights as basic principles of human dignity, the Constitution creates a government of just laws and actions for the whole country - not an individual or special interest group. Does the Tea Party extend this school of thought to the gay community? Will my marriage to my wife still be honored? Will all gays and lesbians in all states be allowed to marry, adopt children and pursue their happiness?

I get the distinct feeling that derailing our marriages, denying us adoption rights and sidelining our pursuit of happiness is on this party's agenda because it doesn't fit under their view of family values.

I believe in family values. My Catholic parents ingrained them in me.

As soon as I could get married legally, I did so that I could model a loving, com-



mitted relationship to my children. We have dinner together every night and we discuss our day. When my children were growing up we had movie night, game night, and dinner out night. My wife and I made it clear to our children that they could talk to us about anything. We were and are visible, involved, loving and forgiving and we've taught them to be the same. My fear is that the Tea Party's idea of family values will devalue my relationship with my wife and children because we are two women.

I believe that neighbors should help neighbors, but there's only so much I can do for them or they can do for me. My fear is that the Tea Party will take away government subsidies that help people who are trying to desperately help themselves. What happens to the person who loses their spouse and more than half their income and still has three young children to raise? They can't afford to pay their mortgage or the rent for an apartment that will fit the four of them. They can't work a regular full time job, get their kids to school, be able to get them off the bus and can't afford to pay for a before or after school program and they have no extended family. Will their neighbors step in?

Will they pick up the cost of day care or bring the kids to school and pick them up? A good and just country has a government that picks up the slack our neighbors cannot.

As a history teacher it is necessary to look to the past to improve our future. But looking to the past and going back to it are two very different paths. We should be forever moving forward. Our founding fathers were geniuses. They had a magnificent gift of foresightedness that too many of us lack. Would they be upset with the government corruption, the lack of honest leadership, the extensive taxes and the ridiculously huge government?

Absolutely! What they would not be upset about is that many of us, who didn't have it before, now have the right to pursue our happiness when it does nothing to take away from any one else's. They would be thrilled with a government that takes care of its citizens. The Tea Party can wrap themselves up in the American flag, quote the Constitution and Declaration of Independence while standing on top of a giant cross, but I don't buy for one minute that they have my pursuit of happiness or my right to domestic tranquility in mind and I bet they don't have yours in mind either. Going back over two hundred years will do none of us any good.

Just like the tea dumped in the harbor by our founding fathers, I say the Tea Party is all wet.



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

## JOHNSON: FROM PAGE 24

very special." Larocque says his first thought was "How do we expose more of Lawrence's children to this." Mr. Larocque was then instrumental in moving the event to the new Performing Arts Center at the Lawrence High School. Last years show drew over twelve hundred first, second, and third graders from around the city.

As for Tiffany, she could not be happier about the events success and in continuing the tradition. She says, "Making and performing music is my passion. Being able to share this passion with these great kids and brighten up their holiday makes this concert one of the most special nights of the year for me."

As in past this years event is being produced by Beverly, MA based entertainment company, Ron Bellanti Concert Productions. Bellanti, a Lawrence native and

graduate of Lawrence High School, says "I began promoting this concert to show the kids in my hometown that people actually care about them. This event may have been held in local school auditoriums but it is a national level event. The lights and sound systems all belong to huge national acts, the crew all work at large concert facilities, and the band members have belonged to, performed with, and worked for some of the most successful acts in history." Bellanti goes on to say "I don't think you should have to be a rich kid to be exposed to wonderful music and to see that people care about you. This is my companies favorite day of the year."

For additional information about Tiffany Kira Johnson, contact Nicole Van Eden, at 603-703-4488, or email her at Nicole@tiffanykirajohnson.com

## ADAMS: FROM PAGE 3

inaccuracies.

Allow me one final observation about the published comments in [last month's] Lawrence Eagle-Tribune by Democrat State Committee Chairman, John Walsh, who, among other things, called upon the OCPF and the State Ethics Commission to investigate me. If Chairman Walsh's statements were at all accurately captured by the aforementioned rogue reporter (and that is a big "If"), then I would respectfully suggest to Chairman Walsh the following: rather than distracting the public from the Democrat Party's own looming scandals by issuing unseemly, partisan directives to two state agencies that should remain professional and above the fray, Chairman Walsh ought to focus on putting his own house in order."

"Chairman Walsh can begin by addressing the real corruption right under his nose: the far-reaching and exclusively Democrat Party-driven Probation Department scandal that, thanks to the Boston

Globe and the Ware Report, will soon be attracting the attention of Federal and State Grand Juries," Adams predicted.

Adams added: "I would also respectfully suggest to Chairman Walsh that it is this Democrat Party scandal that is the real story, and one that, to borrow Chairman Walsh's own words from today's Eagle Tribune story, 'raises serious questions that deserve clear and unambiguous answers' to a far greater degree than does a routine review of the campaign finances of a first-time Republican State Representative-elect."

"When might the citizens of Massachusetts expect answers from you, Chairman Walsh?" Adams asked.

Adams concluded by stating: "Let me assure all those voters who supported me in this past election that I am eagerly looking forward to January, when I assume my role as your fearless State Representative and begin the hard work of changing business as usual on Beacon Hill."

## DIABETES: FROM PAGE 7

of observation for the following:

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**PUPPY LOVE! with Kate Whitney**

# What You Should Know About Canine Cancer

**Kate Whitney**  
VALLEY PATRIOT PUPPY COLUMNIST

The topic I want to bring awareness to this month is Canine Cancer. I should have written this article last month, since November was Pet Cancer Awareness Month. Oh well, I'm a month late...better late than never. Last month I participated in the Puppy Up Canine Cancer Walk in Boston. It was a pretty small event: a few vendors were set up and we walked around a few blocks in Boston. But it's not the size of the event that matters it's what the event was for, Canine Cancer. It's estimated that 50% of dogs over age 10 will die of cancer. I feel like the number is higher, because it seems like every person I talk to recently who has had a dog pass away, cancer has been to blame. The slogan behind the Canine Cancer walk is "Cancer. Touches. Everyone." Whether it's a dog or a person, I think we have all known someone who has been touched by this awful disease. Did you know that dogs (and cats) get cancer at approximately the same rate as people do? Early detection is critical (just like for humans). Remember the importance of having your pet examined regularly and be aware for some of the pet cancer signs that I will discuss below.



Be sure to be on the lookout for these pet cancer signs provided by the Veterinary Cancer Society: Persistent, abnormal swelling, sores that do not heal, loss of weight, loss of appetite, bleeding or discharge from any body opening, offensive odor, difficulty eating or swallowing, hesitation to exercise or loss of stamina, persistent lameness or stiffness, difficulty breathing, urinating, or defecating. Also watch for seizers, and lumps/bumps/swelling/growths on the skin, legs, mouth, and breasts.

Don't be part of the 80% of pet owners who have limited knowledge about pet cancer. Educate yourself about this disease and hopefully you can prevent it from happening or better help your dog cope with it if they already have it. The

detection and treatment of canine cancer is improving every day. With routine vet visits, you are increasing the chances that early detection would be made possible. If the vet finds something suspicious, there are many ways to go about getting a diagnosis. Some of the ways are a biopsy, blood tests, x-rays, ultrasound, endoscopy, surgery, CT/MRI scan, urinalysis, and fine-needle aspiration.

Due to improper breeding practices, certain breeds of dogs are genetically prone to canine cancer. Stay away from online sites that sell dogs and stay OUT of the pet stores at the mall. These dogs come from horrible mass-breeding facilities called puppy mills. The dogs are bred only for monetary purposes and things like genetics and breeding lines are not taken into consideration. Remember, don't shop...ADOPT! Some breeds that are prone to canine cancer include, but are not limited to: Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers, Rottweilers, Bernese Mountain Dogs, and Boxers.

Did you know that second hand smoke causes cancer in pets? If you are still someone who smokes, you should think about trying to quit. Not only for yourself, but for your pets. Have you ever thought about the effects your smoking has on your best four-legged friend? Humans have the ability to leave the house frequently to get fresh air, but pets, for the most part, are kept inside the house. Think about all the toxins that are in your home.

So if you smoke, quit. If you can't quit, think about smoking outside, so the inside of the house is kept nice and "clean" for your pet. Why would you knowingly put your pet at risk for developing cancer? I'm sure they would never do that to you.

There have been numerous studies done to show the effects of smoking on dogs and cats. I want to highlight two studies here. First is a study about cats. A study was conducted at Tufts School of Veterinary Medicine, and it was discovered that a strong correlation exists between cats living in smoking households and oral cancer. Scientists determined that the reason is because cats lick themselves to



**The Valley Patriot's PuppyGirl, Kate Whitney says "Please adopt a shelter dog or foster a puppy looking for a permanent home!" For more information you can email One Tail at a Time at [onetail@comcast.net](mailto:onetail@comcast.net)**

groom and they end up licking carcinogen deposits that get trapped in their fur. After exposing the skin in their mouths to harmful amounts of carcinogens over a long period of time, they begin to develop cancer. Some cats were found to have also developed cancer in their lymph nodes.

And now a study about dogs and smoking. In a study performed at Colorado State University Veterinary Teaching Hospital, it was determined that dogs living in smoking households have a 60% greater risk of developing lung and sinus cancer than dogs living with nonsmoking owners. Those numbers increase even more when talking about long-nosed breeds like Dobermans and Collies. This is because longer noses mean more surface area for carcinogens, which means more carcinogens reaching the lungs.

So you might be wondering if you can prevent canine cancer from affecting your best friend. There are a few tips that you can follow, but following them does not guarantee your dog will stay cancer free. For the most part, the tips fall under a category of "healthy living". So, bottom line, provide a healthy lifestyle for your pet.

-Be aware of the water you provide to

your pets. Tap water can contain chemicals such as lead, arsenic, and nitrates. Holistic vets strongly advise using a good-quality water purifier to filter your tap water or provide bottled water.

-Keep your dog's weight under control. The feeding guidelines on the bag aren't there to entertain you. Follow the recommended feeding amounts and stick to them. Also, check with your vet to make sure your dog is getting the right nutrition. A pudgy dog might look cute, but you are not doing it any good with regard to health. A few extra pounds on a dog are a lot. Make sure you are giving your dog enough daily exercise. Take him to the dog park or doggie daycare. A walk around the block doesn't usually cut it for the amount of exercise a dog needs. Sustained, vigorous use of the muscles stimulates all tissues and increases blood circulation. Blood vessels dilate and blood pressure rises. As a result, tissues become oxygenated, which helps to clean the cells of toxins

-Use natural flea and tick products on your dog. Flea collars, sprays, and shampoos are full of poisons. Instead of chemical insecticides, use natural and less-toxic  
**PUPPYGIRL: PAGE 44**



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# Canine Influenza - Doggie Flu

Tracey Zysk

VALLEY PATRIOT DOGGIE COLUMNIST

It's that time of year...you feel horrible, your kids are coughing, everyone seems like they just have a really bad cold or even worse the flu. As your family is fighting this virus that is swirling through your house, don't forget your dog can get the flu too.

People have asked me what are the signs and how will I know my dog has the flu. Basically, the symptoms are the same as humans:

Symptoms may include:

- \* Coughing
- \* Sneezing
- \* Fever
- \* Yellowish-green mucus
- \* Rapid/difficult breathing
- \* Loss of appetite
- \* Lethargy

Whose dog may get the flu?

Any dog may catch the flu but it tends to be prone to dogs that are exposed to multiple dogs. Dog parks, playgroups, kennels and dog day cares. Always keep your dog up to date with the kennel cough shot. Most facilities are now recommending that your dog receives this shot every 6 months..

How serious is the flu to my dog and can my dog die from the flu?

Well, like humans the flu can really make dogs feel miserable for a few days to a couple of weeks. Most of the time,

with a visit to the vet and some extra tender loving care to your pooch your dog will recover quickly. Dogs that are not treated may have more complications. These secondary conditions, such as pneumonia could cause death if not treated. However, overall the death rate from the flu in canines is quite low.

What do I do if I think my dog has the flu?

Call your vet immediately and make an appointment. The vet will do a complete examination and will recommend that your dog get plenty of water and sleep. Your vet will also be taking precautions to prevent the flu from spreading into secondary conditions. He may recommend some supplements, medication to prevent bacterial infections and intravenous fluids to maintain hydration.

Most importantly if your dog has the flu, please remember quiet time, a nice tummy rub and a good bowl of chicken noodle soup will make your dog feel much better!

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

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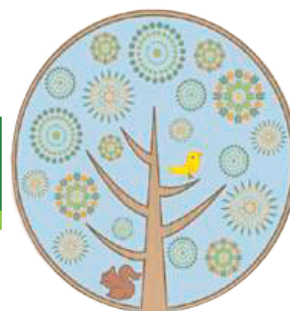
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## Metropolitan Pictures New Tv Show “Quiet Desperation”

**Sarah Sparks**  
VALLEY VIBE CONTRIBUTOR

Metropolitan Pictures, LLC is very proud to announce the airing of its new TV show, “Quiet Desperation” – the ONLY locally-produced television series filmed in Boston; on Friday evenings at 11pm into 2.4M homes on the MyTV New England network, beginning Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24th, 2010.

QUIET DESPERATION, written and directed by Allston comedian/musician Rob Potylo, blends together a hilarious and cutting-edge mixture of near-Reality TV and improvised comedy (think of “Curb Your Enthusiasm” meets “Jersey Shore”) as it follows a cast of Allston-area musicians, artists and comics living, working and trying to “make it” in the entertainment business in Boston.

Many of the stars of the show are already well on their way, including Rob Potylo himself, who was the 2nd place winner of the 2010 Andy Kaufman Awards plus Joe Wong, two-time David Letterman guest and headlining host of the “Radio & Television Correspondents Dinner” with President Obama and Vice President Joe Biden; Tom



Dustin, the only American ever to win the Canadian “Yuck Yuck Comedy Laugh Off” and Friday night host at Mottley’s Comedy Club; and a supporting cast of nearly 200 local musicians, actors and comics with numerous appearances on “Last Comic Standing” on NBC and “Live At Gotham” on Comedy Central among many other accolades.

QUIET DESPERATION will enjoy a 9-month run of 18 half-hour episodes, aired every Friday evening at 11pm with a new episode being premiered two times per month (and a repeat of the current episode on the off weeks). This expanded schedule enables Rob Potylo and Metropolitan Pictures to incorporate current events and developments in the artists’ lives into the scripts, similar to the running-production approach of “South Park”, “Family Guy” and others; as well as to integrate feedback received from viewers

and fans through the extensive Web presence of the show on its [www.quietd.com](http://www.quietd.com) website, Facebook, Youtube and Twitter social networks.

The “running production” approach also enables QUIET DESPERATION to be the ONLY show that offers local and regional

**SPARKS, PAGE 41**

## Artist Awareness: Presenting Gauge

**Darryl A. Braswell**  
VALLEY PATRIOT/THE VALLEY VIBE

DelStar Productions has done it again and always with keeping the progression of others in mind. The same production company that introduced Lawrence to V-Day has teamed up with local artist Gauge of musical appreciation last month on 60 Island Street in Lawrence, MA. The event was a huge success with over one hundred attendees and wonderful raffle giveaways.

Gauge was created by the musical mastermind Paul Thompson in the span of five years and inspired by the challenging streets of the North Shore. The album chronicles the everyday life of a troubled teen at the age of 18, the days of a middle aged young man and then finally ending in the elder years of wise old man looking back on a hard life. The album has strategically been



separated into three sections to identify the three phases within Gauge’s livelihood.

Paul Thompson not only created the character but also created the music that combines urban music to the likes of opera and rock music. I was completely taken aback by the production and was even more impressed to know that Paul is self-taught in a range of different instruments - making him the one-man band! Inspired by the music of Queen, Black Sabbath, hand crafted art and creative patience - this album could easily be a Hollywood score to a major film as

the intro alone is thrilling and will leave any listener on the edge of their seat! Five years of excellence is all I can say, I have not been this inspired by an independent artist in years and I have a feeling that the saga of Gauge will become a sequel, as this is what real music is!

## Shawn Hansen’s Music Corner Featuring: Melissa Jane



In the music industry, Mariah Carey has had a career as an R&B pop singer for over 20 years. Growing up in Abington, MA, Melissa Jane always respected Carey, and loved her music.

Developing as an R&B pop singer from the age of 11, Jane was told by many that she sounds like Carey.

“My style is very similar to hers,” said Eisenhauer. “I get compared to her a lot for some reason. I remind people of her, but I think we’re also very different.”

The reason why she feels they are different is the sound they have. Coming up with various songs, Jane said she usually thinks of a concept or something she has experienced in her life, and takes it from there.

A few years ago when trying to come up with a stage name, Jane, known formally with the last name of Eisenhauer said her family suggested using her first and middle name.

“I didn’t like my last name Eisenhauer. I thought it sounded very military, very determined, so I was talking to my aunt, and she was like, what about Melissa Jane?”

Singing by herself, she sometimes is lent a helping hand from various musician friends. If an instrument is needed for a show, Jane will just make a phone call, and have what she wants right away.

In her career, Jane has had the most memorable times at Fenway Park, Gillette Stadium, the Hard Rock Café in Boston, and the Paradise in Brookline. She has performed in Alabama, New Hampshire, New Orleans, and Walt Disney World.

This past October, Jane was featured in the first production of Astropiano Films called Sunblocked. Jane is in a concert scene, and sings her hit song, “Remember.”

In progression, Jane is working on a couple of new songs along with a Christmas song that will be released sometime before the holidays.

Performing a few times a month, and practicing every day, Jane would like to eventually end up in Los Angeles, California.

To find out more information about Jane, go to [www.melissajane.com](http://www.melissajane.com). Going to her Web site, fans can find links to her Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Myspace accounts.



Shawn Hansen is a graduate of UMass Lowell. He wrote for “The Campus Report,” and was sports editor. Hansen now writes for “The UMass Lowell Connector,” and the “Billerica Minute-man.” To get in touch with sports journalist Shawn Hansen of The Valley Patriot, email him at [smharticle@gmail.com](mailto:smharticle@gmail.com)

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## VALLEY PATRIOT TV REVIEW

## Millionaire Matchmaker

Bravo TV - Tuesdays at 9 p.m.

Beth Daigle

VALLEY PATRIOT ENTERTAINMENT REPORTER

Okay, I am going to let you in on one of my guilty pleasures. It is Bravo TV's, "The Millionaire Matchmaker." I don't know what it is about Bravo TV, but they seem to air show after show that suck me in despite my strongest attempts to resist. Of course, whenever these shows are in their current season, Bravo finds a way to air them constantly so it is practically impossible not to catch a glimpse.

"The Millionaire Matchmaker," is a show that follows dating service extraordinaire, Patti Stanger. Patti is an outspoken New Jersey native who, for the past 3 seasons, has run her match-making business out of sunny and superficial Los Angeles, CA. However in this, her 4th season, Patti has relocated to New York City and is struggling to figure out the many differences between east coast and west coast love hopefuls.

While Patti's clientele may consist of millionaires, most of them are completely clueless in the art of dating and love. They are often pathetic or completely self-absorbed and obnoxious. There is obviously a reason they have yet to find love and have decided to put their desperate search on television for the world to see.

Patti truly steals the show in every episode as she is brutally honest in her observations and direction. While she is often crude, I have to admit that I find her candor refreshing. She says what everyone else in the room is thinking and I can't help but think

it would be so many people's dream, including my own, to say whatever comes to mind.

As with most reality shows, the clever editing and scene cutting only adds to the fun factor. The way they splice and place certain dialogue and reactions is both ridiculous and hysterical. I find it rather obvious, but what the heck, these people are already making fools of themselves so why shouldn't the producers take the liberty of moving things around to add even further to the absurdity and humiliation.

There is of course a price to pay when choosing to indulge in some of reality television's most questionable options. I am pretty sure that with every minute I watch Patti attempt to pair up her millionaire's and companions I am losing brain cells by the plenty. That said, I get the biggest kick out of this show and the sheer audacity of those people willing to put themselves out there in the most awkward and uncomfortable fashion.

For more television reviews and other blog-worthy topics from Beth, visit [www.bdbuzz10.blogspot.com](http://www.bdbuzz10.blogspot.com).



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

## Valley Patriot MOVIE REVIEW

## Harry Potter & The Deathly Hollows Part 1

Ben Flagg

VALLEY PATRIOT MOVIE REVIEWER

I have to get something out of the way before I officially start the review: if you have not seen every single Harry Potter movie up to this point, you will be so lost that it will be hard to enjoy this. Most movies will give you at least a flashback, but this one doesn't even bother with it. Because of this, you don't have any real emotional involvement with the characters, and this movie relies on emotions to keep you interested because it has a much slower pace than the other movies in the series.

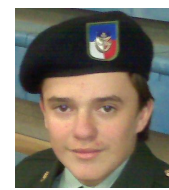
The story is kind of complicated, but I'll try my best to simplify it. Basically, Voldemort (bad guy) is trying to take over the world, and Harry Potter (good guy) needs to stop him. However, even if Harry kills Voldemort, he won't actually be dead, because his soul is scattered around the world and is basically being kept in items called Horcruxes (if that's how you spell it, not entirely sure.) So Harry, Ron (other good guy) and Hermione (good girl) have to find all the Horcruxes and destroy them. That's an EXTREMELY simplified summary of what it's about. However, there's also a very subtle metaphor going on in the background about the Nazi occupation, right down to having basically "Gestapo wizards" and trying to wipe out an entire type of people.

As I said above, the movie is carried forward by emotions. This is a very good thing for fans, but a very bad thing for people who aren't, because if you haven't been following them since movie one, you don't feel a connection so it's hard to care. But the one thing that this movie

absolutely nails is the atmosphere. It has a feeling of helplessness and darkness that's there through the entire thing. But that leads me to another problem; this is no longer a children's series. There is some seriously dark stuff going on in here, from an execution to the stereotypical freaky old lady. This could seriously hurt the film because one of the major demographics these films had going for them were kids.

But although I've been complaining about it, I seriously enjoyed this. It feels like a small indie art film with the budget of a Hollywood blockbuster, and that's absolutely perfect because this movie only uses the budget to enhance the quality instead of "Making stuff blow up reeeeeaaal good." And on top of all that, there's an amazing, beautiful, artsy animation piece in the middle that could have been its own short film. Another thing the movie has going for it is the great cinematography and the overall look of it. It all seems so blank and dark and it makes the sense of foreboding all the more present.

I guess the only thing I can say about this movie is if you're a fan, you'll at least like it, even love it. Heck, even if you hear it's terrible, we both know you're going to see it anyway. If you're not a fan, the only way you would like this is if you're someone who walks into a movie with the mindset of "hurr hurr I wanna see some pretty colors." And again, I really don't recommend bringing your kids.



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

## Comics Come Home: Joe Yanetty and Company

This year in the Boston sports scene, Deion Branch, and Delonte West returned to the respected teams they started their professional careers with. A few weeks ago, nine comedians came home to the Agganis Arena at Boston University to entertain a crowd of 6,000 plus people in the 16th annual Comics Come Home, benefiting the Cam Neely Foundation.

"When I got to Boston I ended up going to a lot of comedy shows instead of movies, and really liked the comedy scene," said Neely. "It was great. I'm a big fan of comedy, and I think when you deal with tragedy, there's no reason why you can't have some fun going through it as far as laughter, and I think it's great medicine."

Before the night started, Denis Leary told me that, "In the case of Adam Ferrara and Lenny Clarke, I have managed somehow without having to put it on paper because it would be against the law to threaten them into keeping this date open every year, so they have to be here."

He mentioned that if they couldn't make it to the show for some reason, their part on Rescue Me would be a small role.

"As for the rest of the guys, it's literally one of those things where tonight we have nine comics, there was at least 18 that wanted to be on the show tonight," said Leary. "I try to get a new guy, and then you look for guys who haven't been here in a while like Steven Wright, and the least of our problems is booking it."

Starting off the night, host Denis Leary thanked everyone for coming to the show and said it is always good to be home. Talking about children, he said if they play

### Shawn Hansen's Comedy Corner

a sport, they get a trophy no matter what. In his lightning speed delivery, Leary mentioned that in his day, you had to win the championship to get a trophy. Looking at today's society, he said anyone could get a trophy even if you weren't good enough to have it.

With that said, Leary passed the microphone to Joe Yanetty. Telling everyone that he is honored to be back at Comics Come Home, Yanetty said that Boston is the best place to live, especially because the Big Dig is done, and now they are fixing it.

Leaving the audience at B.U. in an uproar of laughter, Yanetty started talking about how in Londonderry, NH where he lives, the only company people can get cable from is Comcast.

Trying to get a new phone number from Comcast, because the person who had his number before him is the girlfriend of a convict, Yanetty said the woman told him everything would be fixed in 5 minutes.

"That was a month ago," said Yanetty. "I called her 12 times, and she refuses to

call me back."

Telling the audience to take out their cell phones, everyone laughed as Yanetty said he is serious.



"I'm going to give all of you Jamie Kramer from Comcast's phone number. Here's the phone number, 978- ---

----. Just so you believe me, everyone be quite. At this time Yanetty called the number, and it said, "Hi you have just reached the voice mail of Jamie Kramer."

Waiting for the voice mail to end, Yanetty left a message telling Kramer that he just gave 7,000 people her number since she gave his to a criminal.

Next up was Jimmy Dunn, who has appeared in a few dozen Olympia Sports commercials. Before the show, Dunn told me that this is the biggest night of his career.

"This is unbelievable man," said Dunn. "To be part of something with Denis and Lenny and Cam Neely."

Being part of the cab driver for the Olympia Sports commercials, Dunn said

his favorite takes where the first one when there was a little kid who was in it because he was wicked funny, and the shot with Jenny Finch, because there were roughly 14 comics in it.

Telling everyone he recently lost \$1400 in one hour playing a game called Lap Dances, he said, "It's very hard to win."

Talking about relationships, and how French is the most romantic language in the world, he said if someone doesn't know the language, have no fear.

Dunn said to say the name of a wine, some cheese, and put a hockey players name at the end of it.

After Dunn's first time at Comics Come Home appeared another new addition to the scene named Thomas Dale.

Talking to Dale before the show, he said, "It's really great. It's an amazing opportunity," said Dale. "The foundation is amazing. I've had a lot of people in my family who I have lost to cancer. Personally for myself, for my career to be an openly gay comic, to be brought on, and accepted is pretty incredible."

Telling the audience that he is a gay comedian, Dale said people usually ask him what type is he? In response, he said he is a regular gay, and isn't fancy.

"I'm a portable gay, you can take me places," said Dale. "I'm house broken, I pee on the paper."

After Dale, Steven Wright came to the stage. As the audience was screaming, and clapping none stop, Wright said in his monotone voice, "Thanks. When I was

COMICS, top of next page



## COMICS: FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

a little kid I wish the first words I said were quote so right before I die, I can say unquote.”

Delivering snappy one-liners, and jokes in a quickly spoken sentence, Wright said, “A friend of mine has Reverse Tourette Syndrome. Random people just swear at him for no reason.

Taking the stage next as he canceled his appointment on the Tonight Show was Jim Norton.

“I had an accidental racist moment,” said Norton. “I’m boarding the plane, and this very attractive black girl is in front of me, she is about 25, and right behind me is an older black woman, she is about 60.”

Thinking that they wanted to sit together because they could be mother and daughter, Norton said, “The younger woman says, what are you talking about?”

Imitating the older woman with a different dialect, Norton said, “Why would we?”

Taking the stage next Pete Correale kept the Christmas theme going as Denis Leary and the Enablers just played their holiday hit.

He said, “I got a Christmas card last year from a friend of mine, and his wife, it was a photograph of their dog just laying there in the grass in the summertime.”

Thinking about Christmas, Correale said there should have been a holiday theme to it. For the Christmas season this year, Correale said he is going to send them a picture of his dog taking a dump in the middle of a snowstorm saying, Merry Christmas, I hope you get a lot of stuff.

Coming from New York, he said his 87-year old mother-in-law is of Polish decent, and wanted to see Ground Zero.

Being lazy, and not wanting to drive all the way down to Ground Zero, Correale took his mother-in-law to a construction sight in his old neighborhood.

Added to the lineup at the last minute, Jim Gaffigan said, “I’m dressed all in black because it’s easier then working out,” explaining that dressing all in black is the beer goggles of color.

A big fan of McDonalds, Gaffigan said

he is the Matthew McConaughey of the popular fast food restaurant because everyone else is overweight.

Making 6-billion hamburgers a day, he said no one ever admits going to McDonalds.

Pretending he is a conversation, Gaffigan said to his friend that he is there for the 99-cent ATM, and asked what he is doing here.

Last but not least, Lenny Clarke came on the stage, and said, “My name is Lenny Clarke, and I am not sick. I know what you’re thinking, that’s not him.”

Showing Boston University a picture of what he used to look like, Clarke told the person in charge of the big screen to take it down, because he can’t look at it anymore because it disturbs him, but he still loves him.

388 pounds with a 56-inch waist.

Talking about his mother having an oscillating Jesus fan in the living room. Adam Ferrara also brought up the subject of getting frequent panic attacks.

“I had to call my friend Lenny and tell him I was getting panic attacks. “Me too, life is terrifying, isn’t it? We’re all going to die,” said Ferrara imitating Clarke’s voice. “I started losing weight so I could fit in the box.”

“Comics Come Home 2010 will get the Cam Neely Foundation closer to their \$5 million pledge we did at the Tufts Medical Center,” said Neely. “We’re close to starting, and completing in the construction of the Michael Neely Brain Tumor Treatment Research Facility which is in favor of my father.”

For more information about the Cam Neely Foundation, go to [www.camneely-foundation.org](http://www.camneely-foundation.org).



Shawn Hansen is a graduate of UMass Lowell. He wrote for “The Campus Report,” and was sports editor. Hansen now writes for “The UMass Lowell Connector,” and the “Billerica Minute-man.” To get in touch with sports journalist Shawn Hansen of The Valley Patriot, email him at [smharticle@gmail.com](mailto:smharticle@gmail.com)

## SPARKS: FROM 39

sponsor/advertisers the ability to seamlessly embed products and promotions directly into the show itself. Metropolitan Pictures president and co-founder Scott Matalon says, “Embedded advertising is four times more likely to reach a consumer than traditional commercials” and adds that “Rob and Quiet Desperation are so smart and cutting-edge, we’re going to reach a lot of teens and young adults with this show, and they’re going to love it.”

MyTV New England General Manager Doug Finck agrees and adds, “To me Quiet Desperation represents the new model of locally-produced television; aggressive, highly creative and offering new ways of advertising into the mix. It’s a powerful combination when creative talent is properly supported by appropriate levels of production, broadcast accessibility and internet-based social networking. MyTV New England is very excited about bringing Quiet Desperation to New England.”

Rob Potylo, who is the creative eye of the tornado that is QUIET DESPERATION says, “We’re trying to make a “Saturday Night Live” for Boston-area comics, and we think people from all over the country are going to watch it. The talent here is incredible, and I’m on Cloud 9 working with all of these people I love.” When asked about working with sponsors and advertisers, Rob adds, “People won’t TIVO past the embedded parts or the commercials that we make, they’re really fun parts of the show, and we’re having a great time making them. We’re very excited about receiving the kind of positive support our sponsors are showing us.”

Metropolitan Pictures (16 Farrington Avenue, Allston, MA) is a local filmed entertainment production studio in Allston, MA and is currently in production of

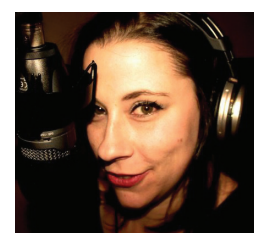
season two of its 7-episode reality-sports “Boston Boxing” series which is broadcast on New England Sports Network (NESN), is currently releasing the feature-length crime-drama movie “Cricket Snapper”, and in 2005 released the feature-length cult comedy movie “Pony Trouble”, which is available at Blockbuster and Netflix.com. Both releases are distributed domestically and internationally by leading underground film distributor Brain Damage Films of Tempe, AZ. [www.metropolitanzone.com](http://www.metropolitanzone.com)

MyTV New England (11 A Street, Derry, NH) is the My Network TV affiliate for the Boston-Manchester market. It reaches 2.4M households in the New England region including MA, NH, ME, VT and Cape Cod. MyTV New England is available on all cable systems (Comcast, RCN, Charter, MetroCast, etc.), both satellite systems (DirecTV and Dish Network), Verizon FiOS and over-the-air terrestrial broadcast.

For more information or to become a sponsor, please contact:

Scott Matalon, Metropolitan Pictures [scott@metropolitanzone.com](mailto:scott@metropolitanzone.com) or 617-901-3418

Doug Finck, MyTV New England [dfinck@ourmaine.com](mailto:dfinck@ourmaine.com) or 207-774-0051 x155



Sarah Sparks is a freelance photographer and a guest columnist for The Valley Patriot. She is also considered a super-hottie by our managing editor.

You can email her at [sarahsparksma@gmail.com](mailto:sarahsparksma@gmail.com)



**BLUE OCEAN MUSIC HALL LIVE ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE**

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Sat. Dec. 18, 8pm – **THE BREW’S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BALL with The New Highway Hymnal (\$15)**

Fri. Dec. 31 – **NEW YEAR’S EVE BLUE OCEAN BASH featuring ENTRAIN (\$20/\$25) Doors open at 7pm; show starts at 9pm. Optional buffet (\$25+) 7–9pm**

**JANUARY 2011**

Sat. Jan. 15, 8pm – **JOHNNY WINTER (\$45)**

Sat. Jan. 22, 8pm – **HERB REED & THE PLATTERS (\$38 & \$48)**

Fri., January 28, 8pm – **BIG SHOT – A TRIBUTE TO BILLY JOEL (\$25)**

**FEBRUARY**

Sat. Feb. 5, 8pm – **HOT LIKE FIRE - Bob Marley Birthday Celebration (\$15)**

Sat. Feb. 26, 8pm – **2ND ANNUAL NEW ENGLAND WINTER BLUES FESTIVAL featuring: MR. NICK & THE DIRTY TRICKS additional artists to be added (\$22 & \$26)**

**APRIL**

Sat. April 16, 8pm – **RONNIE EARL & THE BROADCASTERS (\$25)**

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# TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK: FROM 23

donated to Toys for Tots! Participants will be given step-by-step instructions while under the watchful creative eye of Garlough and some of her baker-assistants from Smolak Farms that have made their cider donuts, gingerbread and pies famous throughout New England!

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**METHUEN HERO HONORED** - Tom-The Methuen Exchange club held an event on Tuesday the 16th of November at 6PM honoring Firefighter and Policemen of the year as well as William Fitzgerald from Manns Orchard. Michael Firth, son of Tom Firth received Fireman of the year for saving a 9 year old boy who played Pop Warner football for him while in Wayland Mass at the 1st game. He had a condition called Longs QT Syndrome which causes heart attacks, as you know a lot of athletes, young and old have died

from this. Firth gave him CPR/Heart massage after Brett actually lost consciousness and, after more than 2 minutes he coughed and responded as Mike got oxygen from the EMT until the firefighters ambulance drove him to Framingham Hopsital. There he was later transferred to Children's Hospital in Boston. He was in ICU till Thursday and had a defibrillator put in and will NEVER play sports again. Methuen resident and former School Committeeman Tom Firth was the other coach on that team and said he was traumatized to see this little boys life leave his body and then see him come back to life. His aunt Sue is raising him The young mans name is BRETT THROWER and he was going to be a great Quarter Back.

**GIVE YOURSELF A LAST MINUTE CHRISTMAS GIFT THAT HELPS OTHERS TOO!**

**CARS FOR CASH** - When you donate your car to charity, you get a car you don't use out of your yard. You also give yourself the gift of a valuable tax deduction and your car helps a very deserving cause. As long as you date and mail the title to your car by December 31st, your car donation will qualify for a 2010 tax deduction even if the car is not picked up until 2011. You can donate car to any of over 1,000 respected charities at Cars4Charities. heir extensive list includes International charities like Aid for Haiti, Food for the Poor, Freedom From Hunger, the Fund for Peace, Helen Keller International, Partners in Health, the Smile Train, TropicalClinics, etc., National charities like the American Foundation for the Blind, the American Macular Degeneration Foundation, the American Parkinson Disease Association, Autism Speaks, the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, the Cancer Research Institute, the Diabetes Research Institute Foundation, the Juvenile Bipolar Research Foundation, the National Association for Down Syndrome, the National Brain Tumor Society, the National Coalition for the Homeless, the Prevent Cancer Foundation, Teach for America, etc. Their list also includes local charities in Northern Massachusetts like the Arc of Massachusetts, Emmaus, the Katydid Foundation, the Merrimack Valley Food Bank, the Yankee Clipper Council of the BSA, etc. If you would like more information on how to donate car, please call Cars4Charities at 866-448-3487 or go to their website at cars4charities.org

## Senior Living Residences Launches Its Compass Memory Support Neighborhood® Brand, Cites Aggressive Growth Strategy for the Firm

Senior Living Residences (SLR) announced the launch of its new assisted living based Alzheimer's care and treatment brand, "Compass Memory Support Neighborhoods"®.

Undergoing internal development for the past three years, SLR worked with leading clinicians and researchers, including staff from the Boston University School of Medicine's Alzheimer's Disease Center, to create an array of cutting edge research-based programming designed to treat the symptoms of dementia and Alzheimer's disease in the residential-style assisted living setting. Compass Memory Support widens the traditional "Alzheimer's Care" customer base by treating individuals with varying levels of memory loss and diagnoses, and emphasizes addressing the needs of those with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI).

It is estimated that one of every two seniors over age 85 is afflicted with Alzheimer's disease or a related cognitive impairment. The rising incidence of Alzheimer's disease and the shortage of specialty Alzheimer's care assisted living communities points to a potentially robust growth opportunity for qualified Alzheimer's care providers. SLR's Compass Memory Support Neighborhood brand is poised to become a major player in New England in this sector.

According to Peter Mullin, SLR's Managing Partner, "Currently in Massachusetts, only 2,519 of the 11,087 assisted living units certified by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs are designated "special care" apartments for Alzheimer's care and most of these are contained within traditional assisted living facilities. There are only 8 free-standing Alzheimer's care assisted living communities in the entire state. Clearly, the growing need is not nearly being met."

The firm opened its first two Compass Memory Support Neighborhood® assisted

living communities this year – Compass on the Bay in Boston with a resident capacity of 55 and Compass at Golden Pond in Hopkinton with a resident capacity of 44.

Robert Larkin, President of SLR, said, "While stand-alone traditional assisted living communities often face occupancy challenges these days, a truly distinctive Alzheimer's care assisted living community is highly sought after by families of those in need. With SLR's historic reputation in the field, the Compass Memory Support Neighborhood® is a strong model for successful future developments. Compass on the Bay, following a \$3 million renovation and conversion from a traditional assisted living facility to a free-standing Compass Memory Support Neighborhood®, is now projecting a substantial year over year growth in revenues."

Larkin added, "With SLR's proven track record of rapid lease-up in new projects, stabilized occupancy rates consistently averaging 98%, and cost-effective operations management, we are confident in our Compass Memory Support Neighborhood® 10-year development strategy. We are currently exploring financing partners to achieve our corporate goals."

SLR's Compass Memory Support programming has also been implemented during 2010 in four assisted living communities with Compass Memory Support Neighborhoods® that SLR owns and/or manages: Concord Park, Concord, MA; Methuen Village, Methuen, MA; Neville Place, Cambridge, MA; and Standish Village, Boston, MA.

SLR currently operates 10 assisted living and Alzheimer's care communities (three of which it owns), with a portfolio value of \$128.6 million and over 450 employees. SLR's total portfolio resident capacity is 725, of which 150 are within its Compass Memory Support Neighborhoods®.

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## WORLD CHAMPIONS

### Massachusetts Tap Dancers bring home multiple Gold Medals for the USA

Kelli Carberry, 26 of North Andover, just returned home from the World Tap Dance Championships in Reisa, Germany where she won the Gold Medal in the Adult Female Solo category, beating dancers from over 30 countries and bringing home the title of WORLD CHAMPION for the United States for the first time since 2002. "It is really more like a life time achievement award," says Carberry, a dance teacher at Nancy Chippendale's Dance Studios in North Andover. "I cried tears of joy during the national anthem. That moment marked the culmination of years of training, hard work and resilience." Having danced at the World Championships before, Carberry was no stranger to this tough competition. She won the Gold medal in 2004 in the Production category, finished 11th in the Solo category in 2008 but brought home 2 gold medals during this year's championships. "The best part about this whole experience was that my students and their families were there to experience this win with me. I am able to show them that hard work and dedication pays off."

Carberry traveled to Germany with 39 other dancers from Nancy Chippendale's who also won the 2010 Gold Medal

in the Children's trio, small group and formation categories as well as the Adult Formation. "This was the biggest win for the United States in over 15 years," explained Nancy Chippendale, who opened her dance studio in North Andover in 1978. "We came home with the highest medal count of the 30+ countries in attendance and the most Gold medals of the entire world competition. It was quite an achievement."

Now the World Champion, Kelli Carberry was contacted to perform alongside Jason Samuels Smith, Chloe Arnold and Dorel and Costel Surbeck in "Tap Reloaded", a European tap production showcasing the talents of some of the biggest names in tap dancing. Carberry will travel to Germany this April for her first performance of the tour. "And so it begins," laughed Carberry, "what a great Christmas present!"

Another great Christmas present for the dancers at Nancy Chippendale's is being delivered on Thursday, December 16, 2010 when 18 Nancy Chippendale Dancers will open for the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes at Boston's Wang Center at 7:30pm. Tickets are available by calling the Wang Center box office.



## N. ANDOVER: FROM 6

and walk for an hour at your own pace. If we have inclement weather we walk at the Youth Center.

Foxwoods: Next scheduled trip, Tuesday, January 18, \$25 includes lunch buffet, transportation and Keno. Bus leaves from St. Michael's parking lot at 6:30 am.

Supper Club: Thursday, December 16 at Angelica's in Middleton. Please sign up by December 7th. Order off the menu, on your own.

### SUPPORT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

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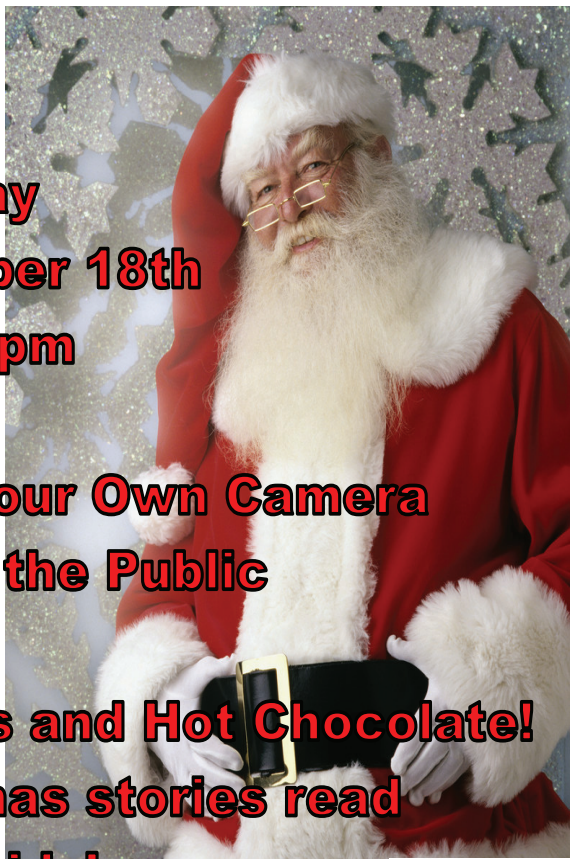
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# Giving Thanks for what we have

John Lenotte

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Like many others on Thanksgiving Day, I watched the Macy's parade on TV; thought about the wonderful meal we will have with family and friends; and planned our run at the Black Friday specials. As we begin the preparation for Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year holidays, let us not forget our troops and their families. Especially hard the holiday season can be for those who are separated because of duty to the nation. Open your hearts, say a prayer, make a donation. They need to know that we care about them.

The recent crowds at the Santa Parades show that we can be motivated, that we do care. The Veteran's Day turnout was good but pales in comparison and there was no photographer or reporter present from the Eagle Tribune. I hope we will see you next Memorial Day and Veteran's Day as part of a bigger crowd.

As both the State and Federal governments again look to cut budgets in the coming year, I hope they will not look at veteran's benefits and the Soldier's Homes in Chelsea and Holyoke. Why should they be immune? I would respond with what is the price of freedom? As often heard around Veterans Day and Memorial Day, a veteran is someone who, at one point in their life, wrote a check made payable to "The United States of America", for an amount of "up to and including my life."

Both veterans and their families make tremendous sacrifices. Away from home and family for the holidays is always difficult.

Let us not forget that those in the

Armed Forces are our family, friends and neighbors. There will be those in need this year. I hope you will find it in your hearts to help them. Many are coming back with physical and psychological wounds. I am not sure we can put a price tag on helping them.

And as for the State soldier's homes, part of their budget comes from the premium that veterans pay for having a veteran's motor vehicle plate. I am not aware of any other State program funded in this manner. And the veterans at those institutions are some of the neediest.

How do we stop those cuts from happening? By making our voices heard to the State and National Legislatures by phone calls and emails. They have heard our voices in the past and will need to hear our voices in the future.

As I have mentioned in previous December articles, congratulations to all those who won the elections last month. Those who did not win should also be congratulated for their efforts and their desire to serve the community. The pay, if any, is minimal with long hours and often very few thanks. It takes a lot of commitment to do the job. Very similar to those who are active in veteran's service organizations and other groups like the Lions, Knights of Columbus and many others

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



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

# Northern Essex Named "Military Friendly" by GI Jobs

Northern Essex Community College was one of 1,200 colleges and universities nationwide and just one of 21 in Massachusetts to be named a military friendly school in the fourth edition of the "GI Jobs" 2011 Military Friendly schools list.

Since the new G.I. bill was passed in 2008, more than 278,000 service members, veterans, and their families have taken advantage of the program. With eligibility for 15 years following the completion of active duty, hundreds of thousands additional military students and their families are expected to take advantage of the education benefits during the next decade.

Among other things, Northern Essex was noted for offering military scholarships, online, evening, and weekend classes, a full-time VA counselor on staff, veteran clubs and associations, and giving credit for military service and training.

"We are honored to be able to offer the very best services and programs to

the men and women who have served our country," says NECC President David Hartleb.

For a list of all school seemed military friendly go to [www.militaryfriendly-schools.com](http://www.militaryfriendly-schools.com)

For additional information about opportunities for veterans or dependents of veterans, contact the college at 978-556-3721 or [admissions@necc.mass.edu](mailto:admissions@necc.mass.edu).

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

# PUPPYGIRL: FROM PAGE 36

methods of flea control such as natural flea shampoos, vacuuming frequently, and combing your pet with a flea comb. Pyrethrins are a natural and safe means of flea control for dogs, but need to be applied frequently. Check out all natural tick repellents as well.

-Don't forget about a well balanced diet. Stay away from the Kibbles and Bits that you buy at the grocery store or Wal-Mart. Also stay away from Science Diet, Purina, Iams, and Eukanuba. Try to visit specialty dog stores that only sell brands of food you have never heard of, such as Holistic Select, Orijen, Solid Gold, Wellness, and The Honest Kitchen. If you want to make sure your dog's nutritional needs are being met, the best way to do that is make sure you have them on a good food!

There are places out there that are currently studying cancer and discovering genetic changes that can lead to the

development and spread of cancer. The more doctors and veterinarians who can understand the different cancers, the more diagnostics and therapies can result for both dogs and people. There are lots of companies who are asking for your help in order to study canine cancer. If your dog has cancer, a simple blood or saliva sample can be sent to a location where they can study the blood and hopefully advance the knowledge about certain types of cancers. Ask your vet or go online to find out more information about how you can participate. All dogs with cancer can help future generations of dogs by donating a sample.

I hope that none of you reading this will ever experience a pet with cancer. But with the odds the way they are, that is just not realistic. Remember that early detection is key, as is a healthy diet, ample exercise, and a stress-free life.

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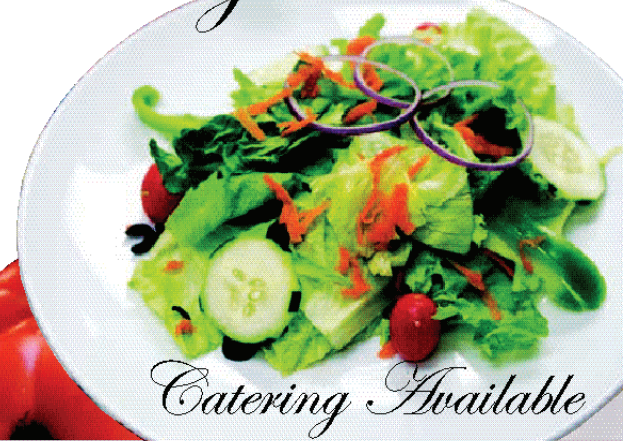
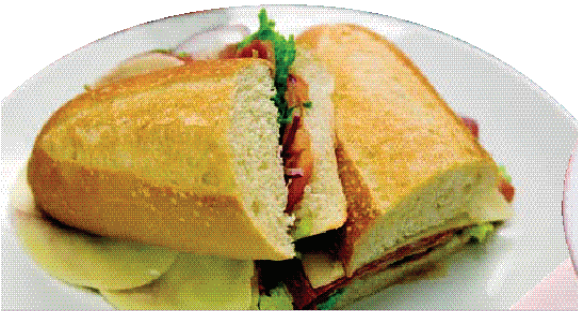
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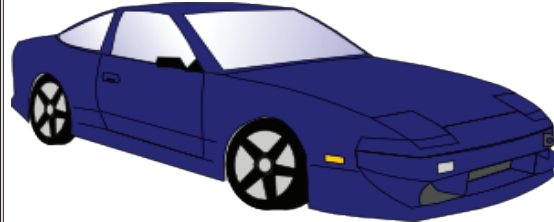
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