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Lawrence Men Arrested for Selling Fentanyl at Veterans Medical Center

Two Lawrence men have been arrested and charged for allegedly distributing fentanyl and targeting veterans seeking addiction treatment at the Bedford Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

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VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

Gretchen Smith - US Air Force - Fighting for Homeless Veterans

John Cuddy

VALLEY PATRIOT HERO REPORTER

Lawrence's, and the rest of our Merrimack Valley's Homeless are fed daily by organizations such as the Cor Unum Meal Center, Bread & Roses, Good Shepard Center, and the TMF Organization, all working tirelessly to feed our homeless. Curious to find out how many of our Merrimack Valley (and our Nation's) homeless are military

Veterans. I had a conversation with Kevin Drouin, owner of Tough Love Intervention, a Merrimack Valley company whose mission is to fight opioid abuse. Kevin is on the front lines each week, feeding the Merrimack Valley's homeless.

Unlike most of the United States, the Merrimack Valley and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been very successful in housing our homeless Veterans and their families.

While serving as Massachusetts Secretary of Veterans Affairs, US Marine Francisco Urena, learned of a Boston woman, living in a homeless shelter, while one of her sons was serving in the Middle East with the US Military.

Secretary Urena, cut through the red tape of our government, and got the family into public housing. My research on the issue of homeless Veterans, led me to US Air Force Veteran Gretchen Smith, a native of the "hills of North Carolina," an area known to our university academics as "Appalachia."

While learning and educating myself on the issue of homeless Veterans, I found success stories, such as our Merrimack Valley providing Veterans housing, and failures, such as the massive homeless communities of Veterans in Arizona and Hawaii.

Gretchen is the founder of "Code of Veterans" a 501-C3, whose founding was inspired by her own dad's, a US Army Vietnam Veteran, struggle with PTSD, or Post Traumatic Stress syndrome. Currently, the focus of Code of Veterans is homeless Veterans or Veterans facing imminent eviction. Gretchen grew up extremely poor, spending her childhood in Appalachia, while she had plenty of food, much of which the family grew themselves, clothing came from thrift shops, yard sales, and a local discount store, "Sky City," part of a chain of discount stores in the rural south. Both of her grandparents served in the US



Military, as did her father and brother. Shortly after graduating from high school, at the age of eighteen, she joined the US Air Force, to both serve our Nation, and to escape the economic situation at home.

Posted in Germany as a member of the US Air Force Security Forces, she was assigned to Ramstein Air Force Base. While posted at the base, Gretchen

HERO: PAGE 20

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Methuen Police Earn Certification from MA Police Accreditation Commission

Methuen Police Chief Scott McNamara proudly reports that the Methuen Police Department earned certification from the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC).

Certification is a self-initiated evaluation process by which police departments strive to meet and maintain the highest standards of law enforcement. Certification is considered the best measure of a police department against the established best practices around the country. Certification means:

The department is committed to

meeting professional standards.

The department is willing to be assessed regularly by Commission-appointed assessors to confirm compliance with professional standards; and The department agrees to correct deficiencies discovered during the assessment to establish or re-establish compliance with standards.

The voluntary MPAC program requires that departments meet 159 mandatory standards to attain certification. Standards include maintaining up-to-date policies on Jurisdiction and

Mutual Aid, Collection and Preservation of Evidence, Communications, Working Conditions, Crime Analysis, Community Involvement, Financial Management, Internal Affairs, Juvenile Operations, Patrol Administration, Public Information, Records, Traffic, Training, Drug Enforcement and Victim/Witness Assistance.

The certification process is long and rigorous. The Methuen Police Department's certification efforts involved a self-review and subsequent evaluation by a team of Commission-

appointed assessors who visited the department for a two-day assessment on June 28 and 29, and found the department to be in full compliance with all of the necessary standards required for certification.

Certification is considered a significant step toward accreditation, which requires departments to meet additional benchmarks in order to achieve MPAC's highest standard for police departments, and Chief McNamara fully intends for the department to seek accreditation as well.

Thanks to All for Supporting Our Veterans!

Linda Dean Campbell
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Each year, Veterans Day is a special opportunity for us to take stock and reflect on all we are doing to support our Veteran community and what more needs to be done.

During this legislative session, a number of very important laws were passed to support Veterans across the Commonwealth, highlighted below. This is very encouraging progress – and we must continue to do more, especially as it relates to mental health care for our Veterans.

Reform of Soldiers' Homes & Veteran Care: Very importantly, the Legislature passed, and Governor Baker signed into law sweeping reforms that will improve governance and oversight at our Soldiers' Homes, as well as Veteran care broadly across the Commonwealth. This is landmark legislation, a major win for our Veteran community.

As lead sponsor of this legislation alongside Senator Mike Rush, a fellow Veteran, this was a fight we committed to many years ago. It has been a long road – but one that resulted in real, deep, and lasting change. This law has received broad praise from Veterans groups, long-term care experts, and policymakers.

We cannot legislate the character of a leader – but we can require transparency, excellent standards of care, and most importantly, a clear chain of command, a clear line of communication, and



Soldiers' Home reform would not have happened without those who courageously came forward to testify during our legislative investigation into the Holyoke tragedy. We are forever humbled and thankful for their bravery.

responsibility and accountability at all levels of leadership at our Soldiers' Homes. That is what this law demands.

Further, this law will ensure a consistent focus on improving care and services for all Veterans statewide – by elevating the role of the Secretary of Veterans' Services to the Governor's Cabinet and creating an independent Office of the Veteran Advocate. This is deep, necessary reform – and our Veterans and their families deserve nothing less.

Memorial for Deborah Samson: The Legislature also passed into law legislation I filed alongside Representative David Vieira

(R-Falmouth) to create an official memorial for a historic woman Veteran – Deborah Samson.

Deborah was a Massachusetts resident who disguised herself as a man so she could serve her budding nation in the Revolutionary War. She served in an important unit with a dangerous mission, was injured in battle on multiple occasions, and was held in high esteem by leading patriots like John Hancock and Paul Revere. Her story is one of courage, honor, and service. I am proud that Deborah's incredible legacy will be memorialized in the Commonwealth.

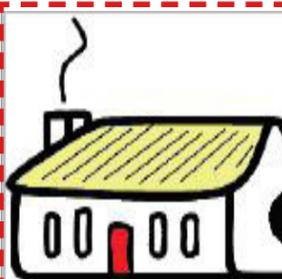
Broad Support for Military Families: The Legislature passed into law a

legislative package with wide-ranging supports for Veterans and military families, including our National Guard. This law will connect Veterans, service members, and their families to resources that will support their health, education, and career opportunities.

Highlights of the law include: connecting Veterans to resources regarding burn pit exposure; creating a Medal of Fidelity to honor Veterans who passed away from service-connected diseases (such as Agent Orange and related exposures to toxins) or PTSD; and supporting military families who relocate to Massachusetts by ensuring that their professional licenses carry over and that they are eligible for in-state tuition at state universities.

The law also establishes a tax credit for businesses that employ National Guard members; ensures that military families receive information on burial and funeral benefits for Veterans; creates Veteran Mentor Programs at our public higher education institutions; and creates the Purple Star Campus Program to incentivize schools to meet the needs of students of military families.

State Representative Linda Dean Campbell represents the cities of Methuen and Haverhill in the State Legislature. She serves as House Chair of the Joint Committee on Advanced IT, the Internet and Cybersecurity. She can be reached at Linda.Campbell@mahouse.gov or (617) 722-2676. ♦



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GREAT TAKE-OUT!

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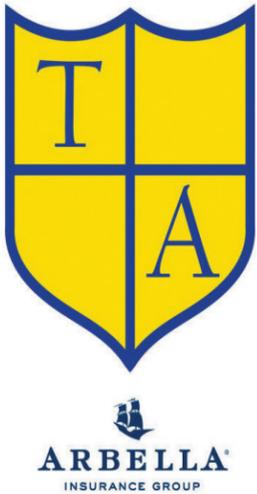
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Mark Sivers, DMD

Dr. Mark Sivers' primary focus is to provide an exceptional patient experience. He utilizes technology, like intraoral photography and 3D imaging, to make the most accurate diagnosis possible and provide effective treatment solutions. For more than 15 years, he practiced in a multi-specialty practice and taught as an Associate Professor at the Tufts University School of Dental Medicine. He also served as the team dentist for the Boston Red Sox. In 2008, Dr. Sivers worked with colleagues at the Harvard Business School to discover more efficient ways to practice dentistry with fewer complications, better outcomes, and greater patient satisfaction.



Ana Mateo, DMD

Dr. Mateo prides herself in her attentiveness to the needs of her patients and providing positive patient experiences while also providing them with quality comprehensive care. She is excited to join the team at Methuen Family Dentistry and to welcome you to the practice and help you reach your dental goals! Dr. Mateo attended Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts where she received her Bachelor's in Chemistry. She then completed her dental training at the Boston University School of Dental Medicine where she graduated magna cum laude. Following graduation, she completed a general practice residency at the University of Washington in Seattle.



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SCREW THE VOTERS!

This year I interviewed almost every candidate for state rep or state senate, including candidates for sheriff, district attorney, governor's council, and statewide office-seekers. During my interviews, I reminded every candidate to PLEASE post the results of their race on their Facebook or Twitter page on election night.

This is a problem every election. Candidates are all over social media 24/7 looking to score votes until the very minute the polls close and they can no longer benefit. That's when every candidate goes dark, as election results start to come in. As members of the public, and for me as a member of the press, we would love to have TRANSPARENCY and have each campaign post their actual results on election night. But the candidates don't care. They completely neglect the rest of us looking for information on whether our candidate won or lost. That's because they are totally selfish and self-centered, and don't really give a damn about what you want or need.

So, after telling EVERY candidate for office this year to PLEASE post results, how many of those candidates that I spoke to actually posted results on their social media accounts?

Zero.

So now you know that they do it on purpose! It's total a slap in the face to voters by all of them.

THE VALLEY PATRIOT 19th ANNIVERSARY BASH!

We are proud to announce that the Valley Patriot's 19th Anniversary BASH will be held on Friday, March 31st at the Firefighters Relief In, 1 Market Street in Lawrence. Last year we gave out over \$42,000 in scholarship money for local students graduating high school. If anyone is interested in helping us run the event or want to make a donation (100% goes directly to the student) you can email me at valleypatriot@aol.com

YOU HAVE TO FEEL BAD FOR THE MA STATE POLICE!

You have to feel really bad for the Massachusetts State Police today after "De-Fund the Police" leader Andrea Campbell won the Attorney General's race on Election Day. The Attorney General is the top law enforcement office in the state and is directly in charge of the state police. You should also feel bad for the people in cities like Lawrence, and Lowell, and other crime riddled communities as Campbell is poised to dismantle the gang task force, the drug interdiction unit, and any other special task force charged with getting Fentanyl off the streets. Campbell is clearly a tool for the Mexican and Dominican drug cartels, and if you don't believe me, just wait until she has been in office for a year or so and the number of drug overdoses doubles and triples. Tough times are

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK



Haverhill High School Football Player Max Bourque was the recipient of this year's Valley Patriot's Michele DeLuca Benedetti scholarship in March. He sent us a thank you message last week with this photo of he and his mom, Katie holding the current edition of The Valley Patriot. We want to wish Max great luck in college and hope he attends next year's BASH on March 31st.

coming for Massachusetts and the state police. Our prayers are with all of you.

MEMO TO THE MA REPUBLICAN PARTY....

The Massachusetts Republican Party had a chance this year to nominate a candidate for governor who was NOT endorsed by Donald Trump and actually had a chance of beating Maura Healey - because he doesn't care if you want to kill your babies or not. Republican primary candidate Chris Doughty would have at least made this governor's race competitive. Instead, the MAGOP ran to the RIGHT ... as always... and FAILED... AS ALWAYS. I love Goeff Diehl, and I voted for him, but we ALL KNEW he had no shot and yet, you republicans nominated him over Chris Doughty anyways.

You have to be smart enough to be on your own side or people like me are NEVER coming back to the Republican Party. Massachusetts Democrats control this state and putting up a far-right candidate (who, I agree with 100% by the way) is a guarantee for failure. I know, I know, the leadership of the Massachusetts Republican Party thinks there's some kind of honor in going down with the ship. There isn't. There is only failure. As long as the state GOP continues to nominate openly pro-life candidates who are tied to Donald Trump they are going to continue to fail and hand the reins of power to the democrats. I hate to say I told you so, but guys, I told you so. Now you have radical left winger Maura Healey in charge of the state. You cried about how bad Charlie Baker was for the last eight years. One year from now you will be longing for the

days when we had a moderate in the governor's office.

A LOT OF VERY NERVOUS DEMOCRATS ON BEACON HILL

The Democrat Party in Massachusetts, and in particular their party leadership and their donors spent millions of dollars trying to stop Methuen State Senator Diana DiZoglio from winning the state primary for State Auditor. They smeared her. They recruited a political hack insider to run against her. They even patted her on the back promising their support, while they were stabbing her in the back behind the scenes. Republicans also worked very hard to defeat DiZoglio, as did sometimes-Republican Governor Charlie Baker who hand-picked Anthony Amore to run against her in the November final. The Boston media, which is almost always in the tank with the democrat candidates, also worked against DiZoglio and were joined by leadership in both parties. They even put up two third-party candidates to try and dilute her vote. Yes, Diana DiZoglio had EVERYONE working against her, even some of the people on her campaign. Yet, come primary and Election Day, she outworked and outperformed them all garnering more than 55% of the vote.

And now that DiZoglio has won the Massachusetts State Auditor's seat, we

WINSTON SAYS!



Thank you Lawrence Mayor Brian DePena for donating proceeds from your Dec. 8th Christmas Party to the Valley Patriot BASH Scholarships!

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will finally get to find out why all these political hacks on Beacon Hill were so petrified at the notion of Diana DiZoglio being the state auditor. We know they are hiding a ton of stuff, now DiZoglio is going to expose it all and there's nothing they can do. I am really looking forward to the next two years!

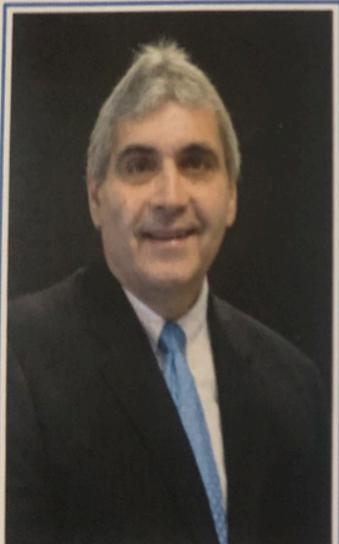
RUN! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES! THE ELECTION DENIERS ARE GONNA GET YOU!

It's almost like a comedy routine on a national level. The so-called news media and the Democrat Party they serve, whined, and cried about "election deniers" through the entire 2022 campaign. They are completely obsessed with anyone who believes the 2020 presidential race was stolen, as if it matters to anyone but them. Every day, CNN and the democrats identified every candidate who "denied the 2020 election results" calling them "traitors" and "domestic terrorists" because they are "threat to democracy".

But election denying wasn't "treasonous" or a "threat to democracy in 2020 when the democrats denied the election results claiming Donald Trump had "stolen the election" and was an "illegitimate president" who only won because Russian President Vladimir Putin "hacked the election".

They even tried to overthrow the

NEXT PAGE



Mike Sullivan
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

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election results of Trump in the U.S. Senate when Maxine Waters and other democrats vocally tried to stop the certification of the 2020 electors. So, in 2016 denying the election results was “patriotic” and “the right thing to do” but now that Trump has done it, it’s “treason”! Democrats even supported Stacy Abrams, candidate for Georgia Governor after she denied she lost the 2018 election to Brian Kemp long after the vote tallies were in.

So, what we have all learned is that denying election results is a “threat to democracy” when republicans do it. But when democrats do it, there’s nothing to see here please move along. This is just more proof that everything the Democrat Party says on the national level is an outright lie.

HEY LAWRENCE! THE DEMS ARE TAKING YOU FOR FOOLS!

It was disappointing to see Lawrence Mayor Brian DePena and the majority of the city council fawning all over Maura Healey, Elizabeth Warren, and Andrea Campbell the day before the election in Lawrence. For decades, these democrats have done nothing for Lawrence. They pump millions of dollars into the city every year to fund the so-called non-profits in the city who do absolutely nothing to improve the quality of life for the people who live in Lawrence. Instead, they take all those grants and pay themselves and their friends and family members while almost none of those state and federal dollars ever make it to Lawrence residents. Don’t believe me? Drive around Lawrence and look at the condition of the city. Then ask yourself, if democrats really cared would Lawrence look like this? Would the Lawrence schools be providing an inferior education to the children of Lawrence? Would Lawrence’s poverty rate continue to increase year after year? Yet, there was all of Lawrence’s elected officials, star struck by the celebrity of these democrats, kissing their behinds, and voting for them en-masse, while their residents continue to get crapped on. These democrats are taking you guys for fools while they do nothing for the poor, nothing for the homeless, and nothing for the Latinos in this state. As long as Lawrence’s officials support a party that makes things worse for their own voters, Lawrence is going to continue to fail as a city. It’s time for Lawrence officials to wake up and realize these people are not your friends!

LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS RETURNING TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN JANUARY

State Representative Linda Dean Campbell in Methuen chose not to run for re-election this year. Campbell has been in the legislature for more than a decade and was, for the most part, free of scandal and controversy. Campbell worked her way into a leadership position on Beacon Hill and was said to be third in line to the speaker’s job. So, it was a surprise when she decided to step down this year. Replacing Campbell in that state rep. seat is former Methuen Councilor Ryan Hamilton who ran unopposed on election day and will officially take Campbell’s spot-on Beacon Hill come January.

MARCOS DEVERS - LAWRENCE

This was a tough race to watch as our good friend Marcos Devers was the only legislator in Massachusetts who was defeated this year. Devers lost in the primary to Mayor DePena’s hand-picked candidate Francisco Paulino. Devers was the first Dominican mayor in the country, the first Dominican to win an At-Large city council seat in Lawrence history, and was defeated once before in the legislature, only to win his seat back two years later. I love Marcos, and I hope he will return to elected office at some capacity in the future. For now, however,

Marcos returns to the private sector, and we wish him well!

REP. ESTELA REYES TO FINISH HER TERM ON CITY COUNCIL

I hate to publicly disagree with my good friend Lawrence City Councilor Estela Reyes, (who was just elected as a state rep. in Lawrence), but when I learned that Reyes is not going to be giving up her seat on the Lawrence Council while she is serving her first term in the legislature, I had to say something. While she may have a million good reasons to hang on to her city council seat and serve out her term for one more year, there is one good reason she should change her mind: the voters. In 2010 Lawrence State Rep. Willie Lantigua was elected mayor and decided to keep both jobs. The voters of Lawrence stormed city hall demanding he stop “double dipping” off the taxpayer’s dime. Initially he refused, but eventually capitulated and resigned as a state rep within a few short months because of the public outrage. I love Estela Reyes. I campaigned for her and worked very hard to help her get elected. She should do the right thing here and relinquish her city council seat so that she can focus 100% on her job in the legislature. Otherwise, when she comes up for reelection, the voters could do to her what they did to Willie Lantigua ... and I don’t want to see that happen.

REPUBLICANS TROUNCED IN MASSACHUSETTS

While Republicans were defeating Democrats all over the country on election night, here in Massachusetts the opposite was true. Republicans all across the state were defeated as not one Republican challenger could win at the ballot box.

TYNGSBORO/DRACT

In the 36th Middlesex State Rep. District, it was conservative Democrat Colleen Garry vs. Republican George Boag. Garry beat Boag, receiving 6,718 votes to Boag’s 4,481 votes. What’s interesting about this race is that the Dracut/Tyngsboro voters chose Republicans in every other race. Republican Anthony Amore received 5,630 votes for State Auditor over Democrat Diana DiZoglio who only received 4,942 votes. Republican candidate for Governor Geoff Diehl defeated Democrat Maura Healey 5,903 to 5,410 votes. Even a very popular Democrat Eileen Duff, who was reelected to the Governor’s Council on election day, lost the Dracut/Tyngsboro district to a completely unknown candidate named Michael Walsh by 5,841 votes to 5,214 votes. Rep. Colleen Garry said that she is the most conservative Democrat in the legislature and because she does not agree with her party on social issues, she doesn’t get plum committee assignments that can double the pay of a state rep. “I don’t care, I represent my district not my party,” Garry told The Valley Patriot.

RAMOS WINS 14TH ESSEX STATE REP RACE

In 14th Essex, it was a race between Democrat Adrienne Ramos and Republican Joe Finn (both of North Andover) in a newly carved district that included North Andover, Boxford, Amesbury, Groveland, and West Newbury. The seat is currently held by Christina Minicucci who chose not to run for reelection after serving two terms.

Anyone who followed this race closely knows that Republican Joe Finn started knocking on doors back in April and worked hard every day right up to election day trying to get his message to the voters of the district. Adrienne Ramos, however, didn’t start campaigning until about three weeks before the election. Nonetheless, Ramos romped Finn at the polls. Ramos received 10,692 to Finn’s 9,015 votes.

NOTEBOOK: PAGE 9



Mayor DePena Pledges Christmas Party Proceeds to Valley Patriot’s JrROTC-Lawrence High Scholarship

Lawrence Mayor Brian DePena is holding his first annual Christmas Party & Scholarship Drive on Thursday, December 8th at 7pm at the Lawrence Firefighters’ Relief (1 Market St.).

DePena told The Valley Patriot last month that he is going to donate 50% of the proceeds to the Valley Patriot’s BASH Scholarship for a Lawrence High, JrROTC student going into the military next year. The Valley Patriot Bash will be held on March 31st.

“I love going to The Valley Patriot BASH every year because 100% of what you raise for the kids goes directly to the kids for college. I don’t know anyone else who does that,” DePena said.

“So, this year we are having a Christmas Party on December 8th and we are giving half the door money to your scholarship recipient from Lawrence High’s JrROTC program. This is what giving the

city back to the people really means. I know that the Valley Patriot does great work helping the kids of Lawrence get to college and I am very honored to be part of what you guys do. Every year from now on, we will be running a Christmas party to help you raise scholarship money for kids at Lawrence High through the Valley Patriot.”

DePena said he was disappointed that the mayor of an adjacent town made a similar promise three years ago but never kept that promise. “As long as I am the mayor, I will keep my word and help with the BASH scholarships,” he said.

Tickets are \$50 in advance, \$60 at the door. You can get tickets at the Valley Patriot office in North Andover, or you can visit Eventbrite.com and search Brian DePena after November 12th.

We are also looking for sponsors of this event, feel free to email Tom Duggan at valleypatriot@aol.com for more information. ◇



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Results of MA Ballot Questions

Addressing the Burden of Unfunded Mandates on Our Communities

Hello Valley Patriot Readers,
State assistance is crucial when it comes to supporting the finances of our cities and towns across Massachusetts.

Funding for education, general aid and reimbursements support more than a fifth of budgets for our communities and, for some cities and towns, state aid is the most significant revenue category of all. Additional assistance comes from a host of grant programs, with the state helping communities to invest in water and sewer systems, schools, libraries, and other important municipal services.

Even with all of this assistance, however, there are commitments under state law not entirely kept by the Commonwealth. State law prohibits unfunded mandates, requiring the Legislature to fund anything it requires cities and towns to do but, all too often, these obligations are ignored. For instance, the Legislature has a history of appropriating only a portion of funds to cover mandated expenses for school transportation. This is simply unacceptable.

Recently, Auditor Suzanne Bump released a new report identifying a significant shortfall - \$1.26 billion - between state funding and actual municipal spending on existing programs that are required by the state. The report, which highlights gaps in state aid for education, school transportation, veterans benefits and other critical services for our cities and towns, is a testament to the substantial financial pressures municipalities are facing.

An area with especially significant expenses is special education, with the state paying nearly \$350 million for the special education circuit breaker to reimburse communities with high special education expenses. According



to the Auditor's report, however, that level of funding still leaves another \$400 million to be covered by the school districts themselves.

With recent increases in local aid to cities and towns, we are undoubtedly making some progress in providing our municipalities with the resources they sorely need. There remains, however, much work to be done in addressing the burden of unfunded mandates. Funding must be prioritized in these critical areas, which may require some difficult but necessary choices.

The state must be accountable in meeting its funding obligations to cities and towns. It is imperative we make it a priority to eliminate these shortfalls so that our communities can deliver essential services, balance their budget, and reduce their reliance on property taxes.

If you have any questions on this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me anytime via email at Dizoglio@masenate.gov or phone at 978-984-7747.

Yours in service,
Diana ◊

QUESTION #1 INCREASE TAXES
Voters in Massachusetts voted YES on this question 52% to 48%. The question was: Should there be a change to the Massachusetts State Constitution to permanently increase taxes. Currently, there is a \$2.3B surplus in the state budget. A "yes" vote supports amending the state constitution to create an additional permanent tax of 4% for income over \$1 million, in addition to the existing 5% flat-rate income tax, and dedicate revenue to education and transportation purposes. This tax will also apply to windfall, one time revenue from real estate or business sales.

QUESTION #2 DENTAL PREMIUM REFUNDS - Voters supported this question by a 71% to 29% margin. A "yes" vote gave a refund to dental insurance customers back who do not use their insurance premiums in a full year. It also requires dental insurance carriers to submit an annual comprehensive financial statement to the Division of Insurance; and authorize the commissioner of the Division of Insurance to approve or disapprove of any insurance rates.

QUESTION #3 INCREASE ALCOHOL LICENSES AND PROHIBIT AUTOMATIC CHECKOUT
This measure was defeated by a margin of 55% to 45%. The question was to support incrementally to increase the combined number of retail beer and wine licenses and all alcoholic beverage licenses an establishment could own from no more than nine in 2022 to no more than 18 by 2031; and limit the maximum number of licenses for the sale of all alcoholic beverages an establishment could own to seven; prohibit in-store automated or self-checkout sales of alcohol; change the formula used to calculate fines by using gross profits on all retail sales rather than the gross profits on the sale of alcohol; and add out-of-state driver's licenses to the list of approved identification under the State Liquor Control Act.

QUESTION #4 GIVING DRIVERS LICENSES TO ILLEGAL ALIENS
This ballot measure passed by a margin of 54% to 46%. A "Yes" vote allows the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles to give drivers licenses to illegal aliens regardless of status. It will also grant other state benefits to illegals such as health care and education. ◊



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Lawrence Men Arrested for Conspiring to Distribute Fentanyl at Veterans Medical Center

TARGETED VETERANS SEEKING TREATMENT FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE

BOSTON – Two Lawrence men have been arrested for allegedly distributing fentanyl and targeting veterans at the Bedford Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

Deiby Bladimil Casado Ruiz and Pedro Antonio Sanchez Bernabel, both of Lawrence, were indicted on one count of conspiracy to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl and one count of distribution of fentanyl. Casado Ruiz was charged with an additional count of distribution of fentanyl. The defendants were arrested on Nov. 2, 2022, and, following an initial appearance yesterday before U.S. Magistrate Judge Judith G. Dein, were detained pending detention hearings scheduled for Nov. 9, 2022.

According to the charging document, between July 27, 2022, and Oct. 26, 2022, Casado Ruiz and Bernabel conspired to distribute more than 40 grams of fentanyl in Bedford. Specifically, it is alleged the defendants targeted veterans seeking treatment for substance use disorder at the Bedford Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

“Every day, veterans risk their lives to protect our country, our freedom, and our civil liberties. These sacrifices often come at great expense to their families, loved ones, and mental and physical health. One of the few benefits veterans receive is life-long healthcare services

at any of the 170 VA medical centers and outpatient clinics throughout the country. If a veteran has a substance use disorder or mental health issue, a VA can offer life-saving treatment and services. We allege that these two defendants conspired to sell fentanyl to veterans at or near the VA medical center/outpatient clinic in Bedford,” said United States Attorney Rollins. “Fentanyl continues to be the main driver of overdose deaths in our Commonwealth and nationwide. Last year alone, we lost over 2,000 people in Massachusetts to drug poisonings. The opioid crisis is real and growing. Individuals who seek to distribute fentanyl, especially those who target vulnerable populations, are a grave threat to our communities. We are committed to finding and prosecuting them. That is a promise.”

“Veterans seeking treatment for substance abuse are often at their most vulnerable. The VA Office of Inspector General is committed to ensuring VA medical centers are safe for veterans receiving care,” said Special Agent in Charge Christopher Algieri of the VA Office of Inspector General’s Northeast Field Office. “We thank the US Attorney’s Office, and our law enforcement partners for their efforts in

this joint investigation.”

“What these two men are accused of doing is absolutely appalling. We believe they targeted veterans who have valiantly defended our country’s freedoms and are now seeking treatment for their substance abuse disorder, and plied them with fentanyl, a deadly narcotic 50-100 times stronger than morphine,” said Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division. “This investigation clearly demonstrates that the grave consequences of the opioid crisis extend far beyond street level dealing, and the FBI’s resolve to work closely with our law enforcement partners to do everything we can to rid our communities of this deadly and destructive substance.”

“Massachusetts is in the midst of a devastating opioid crisis as deaths from fentanyl climb,” said Brian D. Boyle, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, New England Field Division. “The DEA will continue to use every resource available to identify those who are contributing to this crisis across our communities. Today’s arrests serve as a warning to those traffickers who are fueling the opioid epidemic and addiction.”

The charge of conspiracy to distribute

and possess with intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl provides for mandatory minimum sentence of five years and up to 40 years in prison, at least four years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$5 million. The charge of distribution of fentanyl provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, at least three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$1 million. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

U.S. Attorney Rollins, VA OIG SAC Algieri, FBI SAC, and DEA SAC Boyle made the announcement today. Valuable assistance in the investigation was provided by the Bedford VA Medical Center Police Service and the Lawrence Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Patrick Callahan, Lauren Graber and Kelly Lawrence of Rollins’ Health Care Fraud Unit are prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging document are allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law. ♦

5 Ways to check on Mom's well-being this holiday season.



- 
GIVE A HUG
 Do you notice weight changes, increased frailty?
- 
OBSERVE HER SOCIAL LIFE
 Are there signs of active friendships, or isolation?
- 
OPEN THE MEDICINE CABINET
 Is your loved one taking medications as prescribed?
- 
CHECK THE MAIL
 Look for unopened mail or unpaid bills.
- 
INSPECT THE KITCHEN
 Look for expired food, broken appliances.

Use this checklist to look for warning signs during your holiday visits. If your mom isn't doing well at home alone, Methuen Village may be the perfect solution. We offer an innovative enriching approach to senior living and memory care.



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WITH TOM DUGGAN



Methuen Youth Center Among Pet Projects Funded by the Legislature

Included in an economic development bill recently passed by the Massachusetts Legislature were several amendments to support projects across the Merrimack Valley.

Among the investments secured is funding to support a Methuen Youth and Community Center, with resources for facilities, staffing and programming. State Senator Diana DiZoglio (D-Methuen) has made the establishment of a formal youth and community center in Methuen one of her top priorities, including participating in a 159-mile March Across Massachusetts in fall 2020 to raise awareness and support for the project. DiZoglio has noted that Methuen is among the few communities in the Merrimack Valley that does not have such a center like many surrounding cities and towns.

“While we still have a ways to go, this crucial investment will bring us one step closer to making the dream of a Methuen Youth and Community Center a reality,” said DiZoglio. “Together, we will have the opportunity to provide our youth with mentorship opportunities and social and emotional learning to inspire them to pursue their talents and reach their goals.”

The bill includes an additional investment for the City of Methuen, with resources toward greenspace for community events and increased parking capacity at Greycourt Park. Also secured are funds toward the City of Amesbury, specifically for the design and construction of improvements to downtown urban pedestrian spaces, and the Amesbury Chamber of Commerce.

The City of Haverhill will receive funds toward the transformation of the old Dutton Airfield into a new business park off Route 110, as well as resources around economic recovery and to help support Haverhill’s Merrimack Street development project, establishing new residential, commercial, and retail space, a parking garage, and other public amenities. The bill also includes funding to support a feasibility study around the building of a new MBTA commuter rail station in the Town of North Andover.

“Our cities and towns need every possible resource as they embark on greatly needed projects,” said DiZoglio. “That is why I am so grateful we were able to secure these funds, with unanimous support, toward important projects in our communities that are designed to bolster the local economy and overall quality of living.”

“I am grateful to Senator DiZoglio for securing these funds for the City of Amesbury,” said Amesbury Mayor Cassandra Gove. “Enhancing our urban pedestrian spaces in downtown will provide additional safety and accessibility for our residents and visitors and will further support a vibrant economy for our

small businesses.”

“We are thrilled to be awarded these funds to support improvements to our downtown development projects, industrial parks, and additional local recovery funds for our small businesses,” said Haverhill Mayor James Fiorentini. “All of these projects are vital to Haverhill’s continued success, and we are grateful for the leadership and support by Senator DiZoglio who helped champion these critically important funding elements in the final economic development bill.”

“We are so thankful to our legislative partners for continuing to lobby for projects that make North Andover the best place to live and work,” said North Andover Town Manager Melissa Rodrigues. “This feasibility study will allow us to gauge our current transportation gaps and plan for the future of improved transit options for our region.”

“I’m proud to have secured funding for important housing and economic development projects across the Merrimack Valley,” said State Senator Barry Finegold (D-Andover), who successfully filed amendments to the Legislature’s bill to allocate \$150,000 for revitalizing six pocket parks in Amesbury’s downtown, \$250,000 for redeveloping the old Dutton Airfield in Haverhill into a new business park, and additional funding for a series of other community projects. “Right now, we are seeing a development boom across the Merrimack Valley, and the Legislature’s bill makes crucial investments to further strengthen our local economy. I look forward to continuing to work with Mayor Gove, Mayor Fiorentini, my colleagues in the state delegation, town managers, and other local leaders to expand economic opportunities throughout the region.”

“This is the largest one-time investment in Haverhill’s downtown issued during my tenure,” said State Representative Andy Vargas (D-Haverhill). “This funding will aid a transformational project for our downtown, creating sorely needed housing and opportunities for jobs and businesses. This is coupled with funding to aid our downtown’s economic recovery, and funding to develop a vacant and unkept airfield. Haverhill’s best days are still ahead.”

“This legislation will have an important economic impact on Methuen, Haverhill, and the Merrimack Valley, attracting new development that will make our communities more vibrant places to live, work, and visit,” said State Representative Linda Dean Campbell (D-Methuen). “I was proud to secure \$500,000 to improve access to Greycourt State Park in Methuen, and I am proud that the teamwork of our state delegation continues to deliver for our region.” ♦

Mayor Integrity Hires Councilor Jim McCarty’s Brother

When Neil Perry was elected Mayor of Methuen three years ago, he promised to put a stop to the nepotism and “good old boy network” in Methuen City Hall.

Three years later he has shown he is no different than previous mayors, dolling out city jobs for political advantage.

On November 4th he hired Patrick McCarty to be the city’s epidemiologist with no medical degree and no master’s degree. What’s funny here is that every surrounding community requires at least a master’s degree for their epidemiologists, some communities actually require a medical degree.

But not Neil Perry. The man who brags about how he is raising the standards for city workers in Methuen had no problem dumbing down the job requirements so that he could give a job to a city councilor’s family member.

Perry also sends out regular press releases when he makes a new hire to inform the public about how he is bringing in the most qualified people to Methuen.

When he hired Jim McCarty’s brother for a city job, however, he didn’t do that. We had to find out from a whistleblower in Methuen City Hall, and when we reached out to Methuen City Councilors to find out their reaction to Perry’s political hire, they didn’t know anything about it.

So much for transparency and doing away with nepotism in city hall.

Two days after The Valley Patriot broke the story about Perry’s political hire, the Methuen City Council held a meeting where nobody bothered to even question the mayor on it.

Now just imagine what the city council’s reaction would be if Mayor Perry had hired - let’s say - Tom Duggan’s brother to be the city’s epidemiologist with no master’s and no medical degree. I think we all know that they would grandstand about political favors and attack me personally, my newspaper, and my family, even if I had nothing to do with it.

But when he hires the brother of one of their colleagues not one of them had a damn thing to say about it. So much for councilors holding the mayor accountable.

Sure, Neil Perry has done a great job at balancing the budget, cutting expenses, raising the city’s bond rating, and trying to hold some city workers accountable for their actions. But, all of that gets thrown out the window when he secretly hires an immediate family member of a city

councilor who votes on his budgets and proposals.

Let’s remember that it was Councilor McCarty who spent the last three years attacking Perry, calling him dishonest and attacking his integrity at public meetings. At one meeting he even called the mayor a liar.

But all of that animosity went right out the window a few months ago when McCarty and Perry made a deal behind the scenes. Suddenly, McCarty did an about face and began praising Perry, carrying his water on initiatives that Perry needs to get through the city council approval process.

Weird how that works huh?

This one move alone destroys whatever confidence Mayor Perry has restored to Methuen voters as to how fairly their local government operates.

Perry, of course, claims that he didn’t KNOW that Patrick McCarty was Jim McCarty’s brother when he hired him. He actually told that to his department heads after the hire. He further insults our intelligence claiming he didn’t interview the candidates for this job, as if that’s a sure-fire guarantee that the hire was on the up and up.

But, we all know that’s a cop out. Mayor Perry is well aware of McCarty and his family’s quest to suck off the tit of city government. Just a few short weeks before hiring McCarty’s brother, he endorsed Councilor McCarty for state representative and even went to McCarty’s house during a barbeque fundraiser to give his stamp of approval to McCarty’s (now failed) campaign.

So, now, we have Councilor McCarty’s stepfather working for Methuen DPW (McCarty lives with his stepfather), his uncle working for the fire department, his brother working for the city’s health department, and of course Councilor Saba’s son working for Methuen’s DPW.

The buck either stops at the mayor’s desk or it doesn’t.

But don’t worry, there’s no nepotism in the Perry Administration, just ask him. ♦



Tom Duggan is publisher of The Valley Patriot, the book “Heroes in Our Midst”, a former Lawrence School Committee member, and hosts the Paying Attention!

Podcast which can be downloaded on iTunes, iHeartRadio, Spotify, & PodBean. Email your comments to valley patriot@aol.com.



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NOTBOOK FROM PAGE 5

I guess all you have to do is have a “D” next to your name and the sheep in Massachusetts will just blindly vote for you. That’s not to take anything away from Adrienne Ramos who did agree to debate Finn on the Paying Attention! Podcast a week before the election and held her own pretty well.

FINEGOLD WINS

In the newly carved Second Essex and Middlesex Senate District between Democrat State Senator Barry Finegold and Navy Seal challenger Sal DeFranco, it wasn’t even close. Despite the fact that Finegold has only submitted ONE piece of successful legislation in the last 20 years and had never represented 2/3 of the voters in this new district, Finegold pulled off a 54% to 45% win on election day. This despite the fact that he blew off the only televised debate in that race.

ANDOVER STAYS BLUE NGUYEN vs. DAFOUR

In the 18th Essex State Rep. District, it was Tram Nguyen over Jeff Dafour in the district that includes Boxford, Tewksbury, Andover, and North Andover.

WILL PERRY RUN FOR

REELECTION?

Methuen Mayor Neil Perry announced two years ago that he would not be seeking a third term. He listed his health and his quest to give other people a chance to do the job. “Yeah, but as you get closer to the election you will change your mind,” I said on the Paying Attention! Podcast where he made the initial announcement. “No, no,” he rebuffed me. “When I give my word, I keep my word and I am not running for another term. NO.” Now Perry is telling everyone he actually WILL run for reelection and has even reached out to some of the people who ran his first campaign asking for help. Unfortunately for Perry, he has betrayed every single one of them and there aren’t many takers. Despite this, I think Perry should run for reelection. While he has many faults, he is doing a far better job than any of the city councilors who are eyeing his job. Methuen needs some stability before turning the mayor’s office over to another political hack.

FINEGOLD’S ILLEGAL SIGNS

On election day The Valley Patriot was inundated with emails and phone

calls from candidates complaining that Andover State Senator Barry Finegold and his supporters were showing up at polling locations, dumping a bunch of signs, and then leaving with nobody to hold them or keep an eye on them. This is illegal in Massachusetts as unattended campaign signs are not allowed at polling places. In previous campaigns any candidate who dumped signs at a polling location would have their signs removed by local officials. But in Haverhill, where mayor Jim Fiorentini endorsed and campaigned for Barry Finegold, his signs stood alone all day. I guess the rules and the laws of this state do not apply to people like Barry.

AMORE’S GAY SMEAR CAMPAIGN FAILS MISERABLY

Usually, it’s the Democrats doing the name calling in an election, “you’re a racist” and “you’re a homophobe” are their go-to smears when they are losing an election. But this year Republican Anthony Amore, (candidate for State Auditor) tried to smear his opponent Diana DiZoglio with the “homophobe” smear because... get this... she attended a conservative church that opposed gay marriage when she was a child. DiZoglio has long since left that church and repudiated their views. Yet, Amore enlisted the Log Cabin Republicans to smear DiZoglio all over social media as someone who hates gays. It didn’t work of course, because DiZoglio is not a homophobe and the people who know her - or have followed her political career - know that she has stood for gay rights in the legislature and even voted for the tranny bathroom bill. Amore should be ashamed of himself, and so should my friend Charlie Baker for supporting someone who would falsely claim homophobia against an ally of the gay community. It makes you wonder who the real homophobe was in that race.

FIorentini TO BOOST MAYOR’S PAY TO MAKE WAY FOR DEMPSEY

Our sources in Haverhill say that Mayor Jim Fiorentini is trying very hard to raise the pay of the mayor’s job to make way for former State Rep. Brian Dempsey, who is rumored to be eyeing the job next year when Fiorentini steps down. Dempsey is said to want the mayor’s job but doesn’t want it unless it pays more. Keep an eye on this one! It looks like the fix may be in!

** CALENDAR **

GLCAC Raising Awareness of Lead Poisoning & Prevention

The Merrimack Valley Lead Poisoning Prevention Program will be highlighting National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week by educating the public about the dangers of lead exposure in children.

This year, National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week ran from Oct. 23 to Oct. 29.

“Our goal is to raise awareness of lead poisoning, highlight preventative steps families can take and provide resources available in the community,” said Evelyn Friedman, Executive Director of the Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. The MVLPPP is a program under GLCAC.

Most lead poisoning cases in Massachusetts are related to lead paint and dust in home built before 1978. When lead paint peels and cracks, it creates paint chips and dust. Lead dust can also come from: opening and closing old windows; and repairs or renovations in older homes. Once airborne, children can inhale lead dust. It also collects on surfaces, like floors and toys, and gets into the body when a child puts objects in their mouth.

Even low levels of lead can permanently damage the brain, kidneys, and nervous system; slow growth and development; damage hearing and

speech; and cause learning and behavioral problems.

Children should be tested at ages 1, 2, 3, and 4 years old. Lead testing is available at your pediatrician’s office, and at family/community health centers.

For more information, call the MVLPPP at 978-681-4940. GLCAC is a multi-faceted social services agency that assists 33,000 individuals through a range of programs including early childhood education, fuel assistance, WIC nutrition assistance, immigration services, lead poisoning prevention, child abuse prevention, English-language lessons, and workforce training.

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING IN HAVERHILL

The Merrimack Valley Planning Commission will hold its monthly virtual meeting on Thursday, November 17th at 11AM. The agenda includes updates on the commission’s activities and is available at the MVPC website www.mvpc.org. For questions or details of this meeting contact Nancy Lavallee at nlavallee@mvpc.org

HEARTS, HUGS, & HOPE - VIRTUAL ALZHEIMER’S SUPPORT GROUP AT METHUEN VILLAGE - November 24th, at 7PM hosted by Methuen Village Assisted Living and Memory Support Community, 4 Gleason Street, Methuen. Dealing with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia isn’t easy, so it is helpful to share your concerns and personal experiences with others who completely understand what you’re going through. You will also learn about proven strategies to help you better care for your family member. Contact Director of Compass Programming Jaylene Noyes at jnoyes@methuenvillage.com or 978-685-2220 for more information and the virtual meeting invitation. Please note that this is a virtual event.

JOIN THE YOUTH ORCHESTRA - Audition for January 2023

IPSWICH, MA – 8 November 2022 – Now accepting audition registrations, the Northeast Massachusetts Youth Orchestras (NMYO) is looking for young musicians to join its ensembles for the winter and spring session of its 2022-2023 Concert Season.

If your child is looking for a great place to play their instrument, perform in concert, and socialize with other young musicians who enjoy playing as much they, then NMYO is the perfect place!

String musicians, with at least one to two years of lessons, are invited to audition. Woodwind and brass students, who have played for at least two years and are taking private lessons, are also welcome. Get more information, view audition requirements, and register for your audition today at nmyo.org/auditions.

NMYO offers six ensembles this year including two levels of string ensembles, two full orchestras, a wind ensemble for intermediate and advanced winds, brass, and percussion, and a flute choir.

NMYO ensembles will perform at least one concert this spring semester. Symphony Orchestra musicians present a chamber music concert in March and all of the NMYO ensembles perform in the May Afternoon of Spring Concerts. The string ensembles will also present a special concert for the Ipswich Council on Aging.

NMYO’s Gold Benefactor and Conductors Circle sponsors are the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Cape Ann Savings Bank, Coburn Charitable Society, Creative County of ECCF, Cummings Properties, Demoulas Foundation, Institution for Savings, and Johnson String Instrument-Carriage House Violins. Rehearsals are held weekly just off I-95 and Route 1 in Topsfield/Boxford. NMYO is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. LEARN MORE – nmyo.org · info@nmyo.org · 978-309-9833



Gr. Lawrence Tech. Students Creating Hardware for International Space Station

ANDOVER – Superintendent John Lavoie is pleased to share that Greater Lawrence Technical School students will see their work launched into space aboard the International Space Station.

The students are part of HUNCH (High School Students United with NASA to Create Hardware), an instructional partnership between NASA and local school districts. Students are tasked with creating cost-effective hardware and soft goods in collaboration with HUNCH team members.

Dr. Florence Gold, NASA Johnson Space Center HUNCH mentor for Massachusetts, met with more than 50 Greater Lawrence Tech students on Tuesday, Oct. 12th.

Students in the Advanced Manufacturing and Machine Tool Technology pathways are creating a latch for a storage locker on the Space Station. Dr. Gold told students that the project is far more important than it sounds at first, because lockers hold equipment, tests, and chemicals that must be kept under tight control in zero gravity.

She praised students for tackling a project that requires intense planning and exacting attention to detail throughout design and manufacturing. Dr. Gold urged students to work as a team and persevere through each step.

“Don’t worry about making a mistake. It’s a learning opportunity,” Dr. Gold



said.

At the end of the presentation, participating students signed a panel that will be attached to the locker.

The HUNCH program works with more than 280 school districts in 44 states. Projects cover six areas: culinary, design and prototyping, design for flight, hardware, softgoods, and video and media.

“Any time you have a project such as this that is meaningful, it brings value to our students,” Superintendent Lavoie said. “They can create something that will contribute in the real world, and they work hard to be successful.”



Norwood Insurance Agency on Main St. in Groveland is again filling the truck with treats for the troops. From now until the Run for the Troops 5K in Andover, Norwood is collecting candy that will be distributed to various veterans' organizations to help spread some cheer. The Peer Leaders at Central Catholic recently took up the challenge and donated a truckload to the program. To help, contact JBachman@NorwoodInsurance.com.



Kevin Drouin from The Movement Family with Miss Massachusetts at the TMF Family Dinner for the Homeless at the Buckley Garage in Lawrence last month.



Stadium Chiropractic



NEW LOCATION! 2 DURSO AVE BEHIND TACO BELL IN LAWRENCE

Dr. John Armano is pleased to announce the opening of Stadium Chiropractic PC located at 2 Durso Ave in Lawrence, adjacent to the Registry of Motor Vehicles behind Taco Bell. Dr. John Armano has been serving the Merrimack Valley for the past 31 years specializing in injury rehab sports medicine, as well as pain management for acute and chronic conditions. Dr. Cindy Armano has been serving Boston's North shore for the past 31 years also specializing in injury rehab, as well as family care and nutritional counseling. PHONE: (508) 350-7036. Se Habla Espanol.

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The average Massachusetts Resident uses 65 gallons of water per day. Here are some easy ways to **reduce water use** and **save up to 50% on your water bill!**

- UPGRADE FIXTURES & APPLIANCES**
 - Install a low-flow showerhead. **Saves 2 gallons per minute or more.**
 - Install a faucet aerator. **Saves up to 30% of water use at household sinks.**
 - Install an ultra-low flow toilet. **Saves up to 4.5 gallons per flush.**
 - Install a front-loading washing machine. **Saves up to 30 gallons per load.**
 - Install an ENERGY STAR-labeled dishwasher. **Saves 5-10 gallons per load.**
- ADJUST YOUR HABITS**
 - Turn off the water while shaving, washing hands or brushing your teeth. **Saves an average of 10 gallons per person/day.**
 - Run full loads and adjust the water level in your clothes washer to fit the load being washed. **Saves 5-20 gallons per load.**
 - Use a dishwasher, with full loads, instead of washing by hand. **Save up to 24 gallons per day.**
- FIX LEAKY PLUMBING & APPLIANCES**
 - Check your faucets, toilets, showerheads, and indoor plumbing and repair the leaks! **Save an average of 14% of household water use.**

To help reduce water consumption, the City of Lawrence Water Department is providing **water saving faucet aerators and leak detector tablets** to customers for free!

EYE ON DRACUT

Dracut Economic Development Committee Spreads Holiday Cheer

By Brian Genest

VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT COLUMNIST

Here's something to put you in the holiday spirit: Shop in Dracut for Christmas this year and you could win a \$500 gift card to the town business of your choice.

To promote in-town shopping and support local businesses, "Make It Dracut for the Holidays" was put together by the members of the Economic Development Committee and Dracut Economic Development Project Planner Dan Phelps.

For the promotion, Dracut's retail businesses and restaurants have been put into 12 categories. To participate in the prize drawing, shop in at least one store in each category in the month of November and have the representative from the store stamp your entry form. Then submit your completed entry form into the prize drawing. (No purchase is necessary at the stores, but you're certainly encouraged to do so!)

In addition to that \$500 gift card for first prize, there will be three other winners: a \$50 gift card will be awarded for second prize and two third-place winners will each receive \$25 gift cards.

You don't have to be a Dracut resident to participate, either. All are welcome.

The winners will be announced at the Dracut Holiday Tree Lighting on Saturday, December 3, at the Daoulas School Complex on Lakeview Avenue.

Entry forms are available at the participating stores, as well as Dracut Town Hall, the library, and the senior center.

For more information, including a complete list of participating merchants, or to print out an entry form, visit www.makeitdracut.org/holidays/.

"Make It Dracut for the Holidays" is just the latest effort to help stimulate the local economy by supporting

town businesses. In the last couple of years, there's been a renewed focus on economic development and it's paying off for the town and its residents.

Have you noticed all the new businesses in Dracut? Month after month, there are ribbon cuttings, grand openings, and new offerings all over town. Dracut is home to a wide variety of different businesses and new ones are opening all the time, providing the town with more tax revenue and citizens with more in-town choices.



Bringing new businesses to town is just one area of focus when it comes to economic development. Supporting existing businesses is another.

Every month, an existing establishment is named "business of the month" and highlighted in an article by Phelps on the town's economic development website. Some of the Businesses featured this year include Scola's Restaurant, Brox Farm, Wignall Animal Hospital, Essex Silver-Line Corporation and Lucky Oil.

You may have also noticed the new signs around Dracut delineating the town's nine business districts: Broadway Road, Bridge Street, Collinsville, Dracut Center, East Dracut, Hovey Square, Kenwood, Lakeview, and Navy Yard. Members of the Economic Development Committee developed the program to give each district its own identity and help encourage local commerce at businesses in all sections of town. On the back of each sign, there's a code you can scan to get more information about the history of the specific district and the town's sign program.

At the holidays, and all year long, Dracut is open for business!

— Brian Genest is the producer and host of Eye On Dracut, winner of the 2022 Hometown Media Award for news, which air on DATV Channel 8 and online at DracutTV.org. ♦

Former Lowell Sun Reporters Dan Phelps and Patrick Cook Join Team of Contributors to InsideLowell

Lowell, MA – The list of contributors to InsideLowell is growing with the addition of a pair of seasoned reporters well versed in the Greater Lowell community and media scene. Dan Phelps and Patrick Cook, who made their mark as reporters and columnists for the Lowell Sun, have agreed to contribute news and information to the new media company. Phelps and Cook join a talented group of writers as "Insiders" on the new venture.

Phelps and Cook are childhood friends, growing up in the Highlands neighborhood, attending St. Margaret's elementary school together, and playing Little League baseball together at Callery Park. Their fathers – Robert Phelps and Jimmy Cook - worked together at Massachusetts Electric on Perry Street. Their paths crossed again when both wrote for The Sun.

Phelps is currently the Economic Development Project Planner for the neighboring town of Dracut. Over his 36 years reporting for the Sun, he established himself as an inside source of information in Greater Lowell, while also becoming one of the more popular columnists for the hometown paper. He will help launch the InsideDracut feature of the new local media entity, reporting on news and events in that community.

"Teddy is the perfect person to launch this venture," said Phelps. "When he asked me to participate, I jumped at the chance to let folks know about the exciting developments happening in Dracut."

Cook began writing for the Lowell Sun while attending the University of Lowell in 1984 and then worked as a full-time police reporter for the Sun from 1985-1995. He left the paper to work as Communications Director for the Lowell Police Department under Ed Davis and then went on to serve as District Director for U.S. Congressman Marty Meehan before joining MCC. Cook is currently the Vice President of Administration at Middlesex Community College. He is

one of the most well-connected people in the Lowell area and is a primary source of information about the college through press releases and social media. An avid runner, comic book and sci-fi geek and Bruce Springsteen aficionado, he will add content about the college, pop culture, Lowell history, and local events for InsideLowell.

"I grew up in Lowell and have raised my family here, and care deeply about the history, present, and future of the city," Cook said. "There's an infinite amount of stories the emanate from this city and its neighbors, and we need to do whatever we can to chronicle those stories and celebrate what makes this area so unique. I'm really looking forward to connecting and re-connecting with folks through this much needed and welcomed platform on Inside Lowell."

"I am beyond thrilled to welcome Dan and Patrick to the team," said InsideLowell Founder Teddy Panos. "They add a wealth of reporting experience and institutional knowledge to our venture. Along with the already announced team of Insiders, they lend instant credibility as we try to establish ourselves as a go-to place for local news and information."

InsideLowell, part of InsideMedia Corporation, is set to launch its website www.insidelowell.com on October 24th. You can also follow the site on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram or by signing up to be part of the In Crowd at <https://bit.ly/InsideLowellEmailList>

InsideLowell is a 21st Century multimedia platform that informs, entertains and engages the community. It provides the Insiders' story of the people, news and events that shape Lowell, Massachusetts, and the surrounding towns. Through contributions from a talented and diverse team of contributors, InsideLowell will connect you with the movers, shakers and newsmakers who create policy and events in the Mill City, making it the go-to place to stay informed on local issues and happenings. ♦

SBA Announces Path Forward for Veteran Small Business Certification Program

WASHINGTON – Today, during National Veterans Small Business Week (NVSBW), Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman, head of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the voice in President Biden's Cabinet for America's 33 million small businesses, announced consequential updates to the planned launch of SBA's new Veteran Small Business Certification Program—including her intention to grant a one-year extension to firms verified by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)'s Vets First Verification Program through the Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE) as of the January 1, 2023 transfer date.

"As we celebrate National Veterans Small Business Week, I am proud that the SBA is designing its new Veteran Small Business Certification Program to be the gold standard in customer experience and support to ensure we grow our base

of veteran federal contractors," said Administrator Guzman. "Adding this certification to SBA's portfolio of capital, bonding, and contracting programs will enable us to better serve our veteran entrepreneurs and help them grow their businesses through federal procurement opportunities."

Scheduled to officially begin operations and accept new applications in January 2023, the Veteran Small Business Certification Program will be the Agency's primary vehicle for handling certification for veteran-owned small businesses (VOSBs) and service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSBs)—important classifications that enable those businesses to qualify for sole-source and set-aside federal contracting awards.

Administrator Guzman also shared much-anticipated news that she intends to grant a one-time, one-year extension to

current veteran-owned small businesses verified by the VA's Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE) as of the transfer date on January 1, 2023.

On that one-year extension, Administrator Guzman added, "Our team is committed to supporting a smooth and seamless transition for our veteran customers and will be providing a one-time, one-year certification extension for VA certified veteran-owned firms, making it as easy as we can for them to continue their entrepreneurial journey."

"The decision to extend the certification will make a real difference for our nation's veteran business owners as we move forward with transitioning this certification from the Department of Veterans Affairs," said Larry Stubblefield, Associate Administrator for the SBA's Office of Veterans Business Development. "In addition to supporting a smooth transition for currently certified

firms, we will be able to focus on certifying new entrants and growing our base of certified firms."

"We have been working closely with the SBA for a long time supporting the transfer of this certification program to the SBA and are glad to see it come to fruition," said Chairman Jay Bowen, Veterans Employment and Education Commission at the American Legion. "We know that the veteran community will be well-served by this move and that the SBA will make the transition from the VA as smooth as possible. The announcement of the one-year extension for both veteran and service-disabled veteran small business owners further demonstrates the SBA's dedication to helping the veteran small business community succeed and thrive."

"NVSBC is pleased to see veteran certification moving to the SBA and

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AVISO DE FACTURA ATRASADA

Estimado Cliente, El Departamento de Agua y Alcantarillado está en el proceso de enviar avisos a las propiedades con facturas atrasadas del año fiscal que terminó en junio, 30 de 2022.

En caso que una factura no sea pagada para el 1ro de diciembre, 2022, será sujeto a un embargo contra la propiedad donde el servicio de Agua y Alcantarillado es suplido; de acuerdo con la Ley General de Massachusetts, Capítulo 40, Sección 42A-D.

Si recibió este aviso y usted no es el dueño de la propiedad, por favor, contacte al propietario en cuanto le sea posible. Si recibió este aviso por error, debe contactar al Departamento de Agua y Alcantarillado al 978-620-3110. !Gracias!

El residente promedio de Massachusetts usa 65 galones de agua por día. ¡Aquí hay algunas maneras fáciles de **reducir el uso de agua y ahorrar hasta un 50% en su factura de agua!**



ACTUALIZAR ACCESORIOS Y ELECTRODOMÉSTICOS

- Instale un cabezal de ducha de bajo flujo. **Ahorres 2 galones por minuto o más.**
- Instale una mezcladora. **Ahorre hasta un 30% del uso de agua en los fregaderos domésticos.**
- Instale un inodoro de flujo ultra bajo. **Ahorra hasta 4.5 galones por descarga.**
- Instale una lavadora de carga frontal. **Ahorra hasta 30 galones por carga.**
- Instale un lavavajillas con la etiqueta ENERGY STAR. **Ahorra 5-10 galones por carga.**

PROGRAMA TUS HÁBITOS

- Cierra el agua mientras se afeita, se lava los manos o se cepilla los dientes. **Ahorra un promedio de 10 galones por persona/día.**
- Ejecute cargas completas y ajuste el nivel de agua en su lavadora de ropa para que se ajuste a la carga que se está lavando. **Ahorra 5-20 galones por carga.**
- Use un lavavajillas, con cargas completas, en lugar de lavar a mano. **Ahorre hasta 24 galones por día.**

ARREGLAR PLOMERÍA Y ELECTRODOMÉSTICOS CON FUGAS

- ¡Revise sus grifos, inodoros, cabezales de ducha y plomería interior y repare las fugas! **Ahorre un promedio del 14% del uso doméstico de agua.**

Para ayudar a reducir el consumo de agua, el Departamento de Agua de la Ciudad de Lawrence está proporcionando a los residentes mezcladoras de agua que ahorran agua y tabletas detectoras de fugas de forma gratuita.

 **City of Lawrence, Massachusetts**
 Brian A. DePeña
 Mayor of Lawrence

Para obtener más detalles sobre cómo puede reducir el uso de agua, visite <https://www.mass.gov/guides/indoor-water-conservation>.

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Officers Union Exposes Stabbing at Middleton Prison

I am contacting you on behalf of the Essex County Correctional Officers Association (ECCOA), the union that represents correctional officers and sergeants employed by the Essex County Sheriff's Department, including at the Middleton Jail.

As you know, on Saturday, October 22, 2022, correctional officers in the Middleton facility responded to a melee involving at least seven inmates armed with edged weapons -- known as shanks -- in which multiple inmates and officers were injured.

The local media picked up on the story but based on Sheriff Coppinger's statements in which he downplayed and diminished the event, the prevailing sentiment among the officers involved is that the incident was inaccurately reported to the public. The ECCOA would appreciate the opportunity to clarify some facts about the incident, and to provide additional context and insight into the alarming rise in inmate violence at the Middleton facility in recent years.

On October 22nd, correctional officers responded to an extremely violent melee involving at least seven inmates, four of whom are awaiting

trial for murder. At least three shanks were utilized by the inmate combatants against other inmates and correctional staff. The responding officers -- unarmed and outnumbered -- had no choice but to attempt to immediately disarm the brawling inmates to prevent grievous or deadly injury. Throughout that effort, the armed inmates were wildly swinging their shanks through the air, tearing one officer's uniform, and very nearly maiming the responding K-9.

To describe the scene as chaos would be an understatement. Two of the four officers who first responded were injured and treated at the hospital. One veteran officer described the incident as the most terrifying situation of his entire career. Privately, officers have admitted to experiencing symptoms commonly associated with post-traumatic stress in the aftermath of the incident. Clearly, the facts do not reflect Sheriff Coppinger's characterization of the incident as "nothing serious."

Additionally, inmate violence in the Middleton facility occurs far more frequently than "on occasion," as stated by Sheriff Coppinger to the media. The incident on October 22nd was by no

means an isolated incident. Over the past twelve months, there have been six hundred fifty-eight (658) inmates charged with fighting, thirty-nine (39) inmate-on-staff assaults and eighty-four (84) inmates charged with possession of a weapon.

Significantly, yearly inmate-on-staff assaults have tripled since 2016.

In the view of those who actually interact with the inmate population, the Middleton Jail has been a pressure cooker for the last several years and the atmosphere is rapidly deteriorating. There are alarming staffing shortages and officers -- especially young officers

-- are subjected to forced overtime (also known as "holds") on a near-daily basis. Probationary officers are expected to work their first year without a weekend off. Between an emboldened inmate population and officer fatigue and burnout, morale is at an all-time low.

If you would like to further discuss the events of October 22nd, as well as the current general working conditions at the Middleton Jail, an ECCOA representative (and other officers involved) can provide a firsthand account of what occurred.

Sincerely,
ECCOA EXECUTIVE BOARD ♦



Groundwork Lawrence Announces New Executive Director Lesly Melendez

LAWRENCE - Groundwork Lawrence President Marianne Paley Nadel announced that Lesly Melendez will become the fifth Executive Director of Groundwork Lawrence (GWL). "We are thrilled to have Lesly take on the helm of Groundwork! Lesly's deep commitment to Lawrence and Groundwork has always been clear. She will transition into this role with the continued mentorship and guidance of GWL's long-time Executive Director, Heather McMann."

Over 18 years at GWL, Melendez has demonstrated extraordinary leadership in the increasingly complex roles of Outreach Coordinator, Project Director, Community Engagement Director, and for the past 6 years, Deputy Director. In each of these roles, she has often been the face of Groundwork; carefully guiding the education team's efforts, growing the Green Team and acting as a mentor and guide to the youth, organizing our largest community-wide service events, knitting our park restoration projects into the community, and helping to recruit and retain amazing, talented staff representative of the Lawrence community.

"Being from Lawrence has always been a point of pride for me as has been being a part of Groundwork," said Ms. Melendez. "I firmly believe that to

fully change systems, we need to work together to create policies that support all residents, develop an understanding and dedication to equity versus equality, and ensure that everyone has access and opportunities to pathways enabling them to achieve their dreams. I am excited to explore new opportunities for Groundwork to help create safe, strong, and healthy communities for everyone and for the larger role I can play as the Executive Director."

Melendez assumes the role of GWL Executive Director as Heather McMann vacates the position to take on her new role as Executive Director of Groundwork USA.

"I'm deeply excited to be stepping into this new role in the Groundwork community at this time of growth," said Ms. McMann. "And couldn't be more thrilled to have Lesly take on the ED role at GWL where we can continue our work together to ensure healthy, economically strong, and environmentally just neighborhoods."

GWL is indebted to McMann for her leadership of the organization over the past 17 years. During her tenure, she has grown the organization by every metric: honed the mission while expanding the vision and fostering the organization into a widely recognized dynamic model for environmentally based community



development. Under McMann's guidance, the Spicket River Greenway was opened, and the Merrimack River Trail and Lawrence-Methuen Rail Trail are well underway, changing the open space opportunities for city residents. Her leadership throughout the gas explosions and COVID was innovative, strategic, and deeply caring, adapting food access when it was most needed. McMann leaves Groundwork in the

most secure financial position the organization has known.

GWL congratulates both Ms. McMann and Ms. Melendez on their new and well-deserved leadership positions. We invite the community to celebrate their leadership and the 2022 accomplishments of Groundwork Lawrence at the Glow Gala, on November 17, 2022, at 15 Union Street, Lawrence. ♦





Lawrence's Linette Perez, head of the Lawrence Democrat City Committee was on hand at the Copley in Boston on Election Night to celebrate Diana DiZoglio's win as Massachusetts' new State Auditor.



Methuen Police Department Donates Proceeds of Pink Patch Project to The Jimmy Fund

Methuen Police Chief Scott McNamara has reported that the Methuen Police Department donated \$6,302 to The Jimmy Fund as a result of the department's participation in the Pink Patch Project, which raised funds and awareness of Breast Cancer throughout October.

October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month and the Methuen Police Department participated in the Pink Patch Project for the first time to raise funds for The Jimmy Fund and the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute while also raising awareness and supporting the families of the Methuen Police Department.

The Pink Patch Project seeks to raise awareness of the importance of early screenings for Breast Cancer, and funds to support cancer care and research into treatments.

Officers, dispatchers, and other Methuen Police Department employees were able to voluntarily participate by contributing \$50 to The Jimmy Fund in exchange for two pink Methuen Police patches that they were able to wear on their uniforms. Members of the community were able to obtain the patches as well, in exchange for a \$10 donation to The Jimmy Fund.

The pink patches were purchased thanks to the generosity of the Methuen Police Superior Officer's Association and the Methuen Police Patrolman's Association. The dispatcher's union, New England Police Benevolent Association Methuen Dispatchers Local 117, generously contributed funds to have the patches mailed out to those who donated.

On Tuesday, Chief McNamara visited the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute's Offices in Methuen and presented Kathryn Wurster of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute with a \$6,302 check from the Methuen Police Department.

"Our participation in the Pink Patch Project is to help draw attention to the larger issue of cancer awareness and the need to find a cure for the deadly disease. Like so many families involved in this struggle in our community, our MPD families are no different and have been affected," Chief McNamara said. "When one member of our Methuen Police Department family is hurting, we all hurt. When one of us is struggling, we all struggle. For us, it is about coming together as an organization, supporting this effort, and showing them, we are here for them and will always stand by their side." ♦



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LAWRENCE'S OWN PROSPECT HILL PERFORMS ANOTHER SOLD OUT SHOW AT WALLYS IN HAMPTON





Lawrence Mayor Brian DePeña, DPW Director Jorge Jaime, and Police Chief Roy Vasque joined and members of the city council for the unveiling of the three new traffic enforcement vehicles and animal control vehicles for Lawrence Police.



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KANE'S CORNER

In Tandem: Pedaling Through Midlife on a Bicycle Built for Two

This month Kane wanted to do something different and asked if he could do a book review, as he believes people just aren't reading enough. With our blessing he reviewed "In Tandem: Pedaling Through Midlife on a Bicycle Built for Two."

This book is an intriguing metaphor that captures the challenges of jointly peddling through life on a bike that requires cooperation and communication and likens it to a new growing relationship. It is by Jay Livingston with Szifra Birke.

Kane has never ridden a bicycle, but he does see Szifra and Jay zoom around his neck of the woods regularly on a bicycle built for two. They always say hello and take an interest in his well-being. I bet many of the readers of this article and their book "In Tandem" (2022) know Jay Livingston and Szifra Birke, very much entrepreneurs and community leaders in the Lowell area.

Szifra (is the daughter of the owners of the former famous Birke Department store downtown Lowell. Her parents were Holocaust survivors and very much part of the fabric of what makes the city of Lowell great. She selflessly fosters a sense of community by working countless years as a Mental Health Therapist, volunteering and assisting with youth development programs, supporting substance abuse prevention initiatives, and small business development. Jay has a similar background, also a mental health clinician and executive coach for people as well as our K9 companions and their humans. He is an expert sailor. Both are avid exercisers, and the list goes on of interesting hobbies.

Szifra and Jay sound a lot alike, right? Kane says WRONG. Actually, with the exception of being givers and similar professions they are very different, and they are in a successful committed relationship. Szifra being an energetic extravert basking in the sun of human interaction and Jay being energized by introspection and quality alone time. Kane has never been in a romantic relationship, although he sometimes feels shy, and tongue tied when he met a beautiful chocolate lab. He could use some pointers on how to communicate. This topic peaked Kane's interest. How exactly could Kane build a new relationship? And exactly how do Szifra and Jay work together traveling on a tandem bike up mountains, and riding for miles, days, and weeks.

So, who knew that you can purchase a tandem bike with an independent Coasting Drivetrain called a Devinci model. Kane learned this when he attended the book signing at the Lala Bookstore in Lowell. Unlike the traditional tandem bike where the pedals function in unison automatically the Devinci allows the front and back driver to pedal independently with above and beyond communication to keep riding safe and productive. This is not much different than the need for two independent people who honor and value their independent individual needs as well as the needs of the couple. The book signing was filled with other cycle enthusiasts who discussed the roles of the captain at the front of the bike and the stoker at the back of the bike. Both members of the team have an obligation to themselves and their team mate to stay safe, in shape and communicate



their individual and collective needs. Also, a good description of a healthy relationship.

So to get his humans attention especially if they are on the computer, Kane pretends he is chewing something then they ask him, Kane "what do you have in your mouth", it's usually nothing, but this does get their undivided attention and sometimes a run through the kitchen. My sister Dog Ruby simply walks over for a pat or sits next to her people. I guess Kane has a lot to learn. In Tandem is an open book of the challenges associated with relationship building including an honest look of the good, the bad, and the ugly. This is presented with humor, compassion, and open

communication.

The book also explores how our previous upbringing and relationships contribute to our present relationship. However, on the tandem bike, which is a very in the moment activity, the only two people riding are the couple. That couple Szifra and Jay have found a mesmerizing rhythm on how to keep the pedals moving when the going gets tough as they ride into their future. If you would like to read In Tandem there are copies and can be ordered at the Lala Bookstore in Lowell (Independent bookstore) and Amazon.

Woof, Kane Peaslee,
Columnist Valley Patriot ◊

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WHAHV Relocates to Art Deco-Styled Building That Still Bears its Name

The WHAV call letters were first voiced on local radios during the spring of 1947, but the new station would not move into its new downtown studio building until the fall of that year.

Now, 75 years later, today's 97.9 WHAV is likewise going home to the art deco-styled structure. Today's WHAV—like the original station—broadcasts from the Silver Hill transmitter and tower site. Its studios, now in the Ward Hill section of Haverhill, Mass., are in the process of returning to the building at 30 How St. that still bears its name.

"WHAHV is pleased and grateful to be joining WXRV—'The River'—at the classic broadcast building that has long been associated with accurate, timely and reliable reporting and delivery of essential local news," said President Tim Coco, whose news career began at WHAV more than 40 years ago. "Today's WHAV is even more committed to original local news coverage as it is the last, Haverhill-based news source serving the nearly 70,000 people in its city of license."

Coco also thanked Covanta Haverhill—particularly Area Asset Manager Mark Van Weelden and Facility Manager William Zaneski—for underwriting a significant portion of WHAV's relocation expenses. He said the station's annual fall fundraising effort is focused on securing the rest of the money needed.

The two-story How Street building was designed by local architect Clinton F. Goodwin, who once said he was inspired by classic broadcast buildings. Goodwin relied on older examples as most new construction was halted during World War II. Initial station engineering was contracted to Frank H. McIntosh, who would develop the iconic McIntosh audio amplifier. The

building was constructed by local contractor William H. Starbird.

WHAHV's main on-air studio will be in a room virtually unchanged by time with original built-in cabinetry and acoustic wall treatment, while the Edwin V. Johnson Newsroom moves to the building's former Music Library. Both will be equipped, however, with the most modern and advanced furnishings and electronics for the finest quality, stereo sound.

While licensed under LPFM rules, today's WHAV operates as a traditional, noncommercial educational broadcast station. It has worked with previous WHAV owners to continue the radio station's legacy and maintain continuity.

At its formal rededication in 2017, descendants of WHAV founder John T. "Jack" Russ took part in the celebration and heard Russ' voice for the very first time. It was part of a segment featuring Russ discussing the importance of local news.

"We in the newspaper business have followed radio closely. We have had to, because we know that broadcasting is closely linked with the job that a newspaper has to do—the dissemination of news and advertising and public service to the community and its business life. As time goes on, the vital part that radio plays in a progressive community will become more apparent," Russ told the WHAV audience March 16, 1947.

Seventy-five years ago, Massachusetts Lt. Gov. Arthur W. Coolidge braved a snowstorm to attend the dedication of the downtown Haverhill studios. He offered greetings on behalf of Gov. Robert F. Bradford. Once WHAV completes its return, a formal ceremony is planned. ◇

WEATHER 101 with AL KAPRIELIAN

First Full Month of Fall

Welcome to November which marks the last full month of the fall season. Our average daily high temperatures fall through the month. For Boston, the average temperature for the start of November is 57 degrees.

By the end of the month the average temperature falls to 47 degrees. As we go through the month the days will continue to get shorter and the nights longer. Daylight Savings time ended at 2am on Sunday November 6. As a result, the sunset on that day was near 4:30 pm.

As we go through the month of November the sun angle continues to get lower in the sky. This results in the weather getting colder as the month moves along causing the average temperatures to fall as I stated above. In the past we have had snowstorms in November. Snow can occur in November; however, it may not occur each year. Warm weather can also occur in November with high temperatures in the 60s and even 70s.

November marks the last month of hurricane season which will end on November 30th. Recapping October, temperatures averaged above normal, and rainfall was also above normal. The rain that fell in October helped with our drought which became severe during the summer.

In terms of temperatures, we saw many days in the 60s. There were also some chilly days. Many areas had a frost and freeze at the later part of the month which ended the growing season. By now those of you that have an underground sprinkler system should have had it winterized to avoid frozen pipes this winter.

To prepare for winter make sure your furnaces have had maintenance and are working properly in preparing for winter's cold. If you have to run the generator this upcoming winter, make sure you run it outside, well away from the garage and house. This October did not feature any snow or snowstorms unlike a few years ago when we had snow for Halloween. In fact, this year we had mild temperatures for Halloween.

After hurricane Ian in late September there were no major hurricanes making landfall in the US in October. Tropical systems in October effected Mexico and portions of South America. Any other storms tracked over the open Atlantic

Ocean and did not impact our region.

During October some of the rain that occurred was heavy and did cause some flooding on the roads. With fallen leaves on storm drains, this can enhance flooding and make it worse. Remember if you are driving and get to a road that is flooded do not drive through the flooded road - turn around!! A lot of you are probably now wondering if it will be a cold and snowy winter.

Yes, we will have some cold days and snow this winter. It is difficult to say how much snow will occur.

A lot will depend on the jet stream and how much phasing occurs with the northern and southern branch of the jet stream. If phasing does not occur a low-pressure system off the east coast south of New England would most likely track too far out to sea that we would miss getting the snow. Also is there a high pressure system up near Montreal that would cause deep cold air aloft to drain south and make it cold enough to give us snow?

Is there a high-pressure system in Greenland, Canada? If yes, this high-pressure system can block the jet stream from moving north keeping our area on the north/cold/ side of the jet stream. With a low pressure system off the east coast to our south would give us a snowstorm with the Greenland high pressure along with the phasing jet stream.

The Greenland high can also cause the storm to move slower by blocking it from moving northeast and away from our area. A slower storm would give us higher amounts of snow.

Lastly if the high pressure is off the east coast this would not give us a snowstorm, it would pump warm air into our area giving us more rain than snow. So, you can see all of these factors I mentioned affects us getting snow and how much?

Halloween this year was mild giving us a mild end to October. There were more mild days in October than cold days. With the mild weather in October some people were still wearing shorts. Will this mild weather continue in November making it warm enough to wear shorts rather than a heavy jacket? Any snow this November?? Stay tuned to next month's article for these answers. In the meantime, enjoy the fall season and stay safe!! ◇



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VETERANS FROM PAGE 11

being applied across all the federal government agencies,” said Scott Jensen, Executive Director at the National Veteran Small Business Coalition (NVSBC). We applaud the SBA’s leadership in driving a process focused on success and supporting veteran-owned businesses and are excited to see the implementation. We also applaud the Administrator’s decision to extend existing certifications for one year. This decision will provide valuable relief to those already certified during a year of increased demand as other companies pursue the mandatory certification requirement.”

“As a voice for disabled American veterans, we are thrilled to hear of the SBA’s commitment to the veteran community through the new certification program,” said Dan Clare, Chief Communications and Outreach Officer at Disabled American Veterans (DAV), a nonprofit charity that provides more than a million veterans and their families support each year by empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. “Service-disabled, veteran-owned small businesses (SDVOSBs) will positively benefit from the one-year extension of existing certifications, and for self-certified firms to be able to continue to compete for designated set-asides during the grace period. I am confident that both DAV and the SBA will support SDVOSBs through the transition and certification when the time comes.”

The certification period will extend to four years on a one-time basis for firms verified by VA as of January 1, 2023.

Updates in the new program will include:

Firms verified by the VA Center for Verification and Evaluation (CVE) as of

January 1, 2023 will be automatically granted certification by SBA for the remainder of the firm’s eligibility period.

All firms verified by VA as of the January 1, 2023 transfer date will receive a one-year extension to their eligibility giving veterans an extra year to get recertified under the new SBA system.

The extension will allow SBA to process applications from new entrants into the program and grow the base of certified firms.

New applicants certified by SBA after January 1, 2023, will receive the standard three-year certification period.

Along with the recertification extension, the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act grants a one-year grace period for self-certified SDVOSBs until January 1, 2024.

During the grace period, businesses have one year to file an application for SDVOSB certification and may continue to rely on their self-certification to compete for non-VA SDVOSB set-asides.

Self-certified SDVOSBs that apply before the expiration of the one-year grace period will maintain eligibility until the SBA makes a final eligibility decision.

Beginning January 1, 2024, both veteran and service-disabled veteran small business owners will need to be certified to compete for federal contracting set-asides, unless an application from a self-certified firm is pending an SBA decision.

For the latest information on the Veteran Small Business Certification program, visit www.sba.gov/federal-contracting/contracting-assistance-programs/veteran-assistance-programs or email cvtransfer@sba.gov.

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HERO: FROM PAGE 1

met and married her husband, who was also assigned there, as a Transportation and Logistics Specialist. A native of the birthplace of NASCAR, Gretchen said she only reached 90mph on Germany's Autobahn, her husband drove the car 100mph+. The couple both served nearly five years in the US Air Force, rising to the rank of Senior Airman or pay grade E-4.

Her dad served in Vietnam, as a teen, in combat, he was an 11B or Infantryman in the US Army. After serving four years, including two tours in Vietnam, he left the US Army and returned home. The war would haunt him for the rest of his life, poorly served by his local Veterans Administration, his PTSD went untreated, and he was never able to get his personal or professional life together, as a result, the family was poor, and often a paycheck away from homelessness. He became another casualty of the Vietnam war in 2017, his untreated PTSD finally getting the better of him.

It was this tragedy, which led to Gretchen Smith and Dr. Cindy Walter, a public health professional, to founding and building the organization now known as Code of Vets. Using small donations generated from social media, they have raised nearly \$6.5 million dollars, ninety eight percent of the funds are used to assist veterans in distress, only two percent is used for overhead. The fact that currently the average American charity is spending thirty six percent on overhead, Gretchen's figures illustrate just how efficient and effective, Ms. Smith and Dr. Walter's organization really is.

Code of Veterans, is a lean organization, run by two unpaid volunteers, spending ninety eight percent of the funds received on direct service to our Nation's Veterans. As good stewards of their limited funding, Gretchen and Dr. Walter personally verify the need, then preform triage, prioritizing three specific issues, in this order, "family living in car," "Veteran (and or family) living in a shelter," and "utilities being turned off." Gretchen shared with me the story of a Veteran, a single father of two, working as a bartender, living paycheck to paycheck, but otherwise keeping it together. Then the US Government restrictions around COVID- 19, shut his bar down. His income cut off, Federal aid months off, the single dad and his

two children faced homelessness.

Just one of many cases at Code of Veterans, where a Veteran and his family, faced a crisis, and even a disaster, through no fault of their own.

After leaving the US Air Force, Gretchen and her husband raised two children, she was a proud full-time housewife and mother. Her daughter and son are now grown, and she is the grandmother of two today! Protecting homeless and indigent Veterans, Gretchen Smith is truly a "Hero in Our Midst."

Wishing all US Marines, a Happy 247th Birthday on November 10th, and all Veterans, a Happy Veterans Day on November 11th!

To help support Code of Vets efforts to assist Veterans in crisis, simply visit the organization's website, <https://www.codeofvets.com/>. All the organization's financial reports are posted on the site. They depend on our patriotic Americans that donate small amounts, often as little as \$5.00 a month, around the price of a large coffee with tip, to service our Veterans in need. and expand the footprint of the organization. Are you, or do you know a Veteran in need of assistance? Or, are you a concerned citizen looking to get a specific Veteran aid? The referral link is on the same site.

The Dracut American Legion asks all World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans, to call (603) 518-5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC! Veterans of all eras are asked to go the American Legion's Web site www.legion.org, and join the American Legion, our mission is working with Congress, Veterans, and the Community, preserving our Veteran's Benefits for future generations.



John Cuddy served in the US Navy's Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the US Navy; he earned a bachelor's in history and a master's in economics from the University of Massachusetts on the Lowell Campus. He has been employed in Logistics at FedEx for the last 25 years. If you know a World War II, Korean War, or Vietnam War Veteran who would like their story told, please email him at John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com

THE DOCTOR IS IN!

Where is the Proof? Give Me Facts

Dr. Pierre Ghassibi
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

Greetings everyone.

I have examined and studied Hypnosis, Mindful and Transcendental Meditation and questioned people on Enlightenment. It sounded to me that these pleasant human endeavors are not what I thought they were. I used to think that these were techniques that lead to mystical and almost supernatural states. After studying and undergoing hypnosis and talking to many hypnotists, I realized that Hypnosis, like Meditation, is only a state of concentration and relaxation of the mind and muscles. There is no real trance unless the person does self-brainwashing and imagines what is not really happening. Hollywood and stage Hypnosis are fake. The trance, if we insist on using this term, is a state of comfort and temporary happiness and pleasure. Deep prayer, a church ceremony for a believer, a beautiful piece of music, a pleasant but intense session of cardio exercise, all do the same. There is no supernatural magic. It is interesting and pleasant, but not magic in the literal sense.

As for enlightenment, the definitions are a state of oneness with the Universe, a comprehension of the truth of life, a high level of consciousness and self-realization. Wow! Superb stuff that is totally meaningless. What is the truth of

life, what is self-realization? How can we practice mindful meditation or strive toward enlightenment if we treat our employees with disrespect and do not pay them a livable wage. How can we enjoy Yoga and relaxation if we do not care about a suffering friend whom we do not try to help? How can we get into Transcendental Meditation if we impose our opinions and ways without consideration of other's. Enlightenment means being noble, kind, respectful and loving.

It is not enough to teach people how to bake a better loaf of bread. This is useless if these people are too poor to buy baking flour. To bake better bread, you need to have flour. To do meditation, you have to be able to afford some dinner first (pay your bills, provide a roof for your family), but you also have to have a clear conscience.

I will leave the topic of useless supplements, beauty products, harmful antiseptics, and magic bullets for another time. We use tons of useless products that are entering our flesh and creating havoc in our immune system. We listen too much to advertisements. In the 50s smoking and Cocaine were promoted as a treatment for asthma and as vitamins. Similar claims continue now. But it is not our fault if we are being lied to.

P. Ghassibi, MD
ghassibi@hotmail.com ♦

MASS Lottery Hosting Christmas Toy Drive at Lawrence Claim Center

DORCHESTER, MA (November 7, 2022) – The Massachusetts State Lottery is requesting that its customers consider participating alongside them in its seventh annual Holiday Toy Drive to benefit the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program and other local efforts, while raising awareness that lottery tickets are not suitable gifts for those under the age of 18.

From Monday, November 7th through Friday, December 9th, new unwrapped toys can be dropped off at the Lottery's Dorchester headquarters and at its prize claim centers in Braintree, Lawrence, New Bedford, West Springfield, and Worcester. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (excluding holidays).

"Supporting communities is what the Lottery is all about," said State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg, Chair of the Massachusetts State Lottery Commission. "We are grateful for the kindness and generosity that our customers and employees demonstrate each year to bring joy on the holidays for deserving families throughout the state."

Coinciding with the toy drive, as part of the Lottery's partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Office of Problem Gambling Services (OPGS), the Lottery is joining the OPGS in conducting a holiday awareness campaign, the theme of which is that Lottery tickets are not for children and young teens.

"We thank our customers and employees for pitching in to help others during the holiday season," said Mark



William Bracken, Interim Executive Director of the Mass Lottery.

"This is also a good time to remind people that Lottery tickets are not an appropriate gift for anyone under the age of 18."

Toys will be donated to holiday campaigns in the respective regions, including multiple Toys for Tots programs and the New Bedford Firefighters' Union Toy Drive.

The toy drive is part of the Mass Lottery's participation in an annual holiday season campaign organized by the National Council on Problem Gambling and the International Centre for Youth Gambling Problems and High-Risk Behaviors at McGill University. The mission of the campaign is to discourage the giving of lottery tickets as gifts to children.

To learn more about the risks of youth and gambling, visit mass.gov/youthgambling. ♦

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BENEATH THE SUFACE

Halloween and the Obsession with Death

Paul Murano
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

I went to get my hair cut today, and walked into a shop filled with decorations of skeletons, ghosts, spiders, bats, disembodied skulls, and cemetery grave stones. When I was a kid, Halloween seemed less morbid. Do kids dress up anymore as clowns, pirates, princesses, hobos, and Superman?

It got me pondering.

Humanity reacts to morbidity in two extreme ways: fearing death and glorifying death. They're opposites and yet the same. Like Fascism and Communism, they metaphorically go down opposite sides of a circle and meet at the bottom. Fear and glorification of death are opposite but similar reactions, and fit reasonably into two different eras.

People who have read some of my past articles know I loosely see the world as having three distinct ages: the pre-Christian, Christian, and post-Christian eras. Some of the world (cf. some of the Far and Middle East) is still pre-Christian. The Western world is post-Christian. It's the difference between anticipating hope and rejecting hope – personified in Christ. It's no coincidence that our abortion holocaust began around the time academia started changing B.C. and A.D. (Before Christ and Anno Domini – Latin for “the year of our Lord”) to B.C.E. and A.C.E (Before the Common Era and After the Common Era) to separate and identify history. You are longer in a Christian era when it's legal and commonplace to murder preborn babies.

In pre-Christian times, fear of death

dominated. In post-Christian times we tend to glorify death. Both are spiritually sick. Pre-Christian obsessive fear of death points to a recognition of a dark mystery over which we have no control, of being intimidated by forces higher than ourselves. The post-Christian glorification of death obstinately stands in the face of heaven and foolishly cries out, “Death is mine!” as we abort millions of babies and legalize euthanasia. Pre-Christians didn't know God, post-Christians claim to be God.

When I was a kid, and our country was at the tail end of the Christian era, Halloween was fun. There was no obsessive fear of death, nor did we glorify it. Christians knew it was the eve of All Saints Day, when the souls of the dead in heaven are recognized and celebrated. Death neither had sting, nor any lure or attractiveness. Christians knew they were protected ghost souls of the damned and from demons by virtue of their union with God, and they one day hoped to join the saints in heaven. But when Christ is rejected, hope is rejected, and the only thing left to do is to arrogantly claim to be the ultimate arbiter of life, and belligerently embrace and maintain a culture of death.

Fear and glorification – the pre- and post-Christian reactions to death. Both are obsessions that inevitably lead to injustice. Both miss the point of life.

Paul Murano is producer and host of Beneath the Surface video podcasts, has taught college philosophy & theology, and is a producer/writer for St. Michael's Media. Check out his website at Paulmurano.com. E-mail Paul at PJDM@aol.com



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Anyone interested in learning more can contact The Carriage Barn at 603-378-0140, email info.carriagebarn@comcast.net, or check out our website at www.carriage-barn.org.

The program offers services in Kensington, NH and seeks to promote the health and well-being of individuals of all ages with disabilities by enhancing their physical, psychological, cognitive, and emotional healing and strengthening through equine activities. The Carriage Barn is a 501c3 Not-for-Profit Organization, as well as a member center of the Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship, International. ♦



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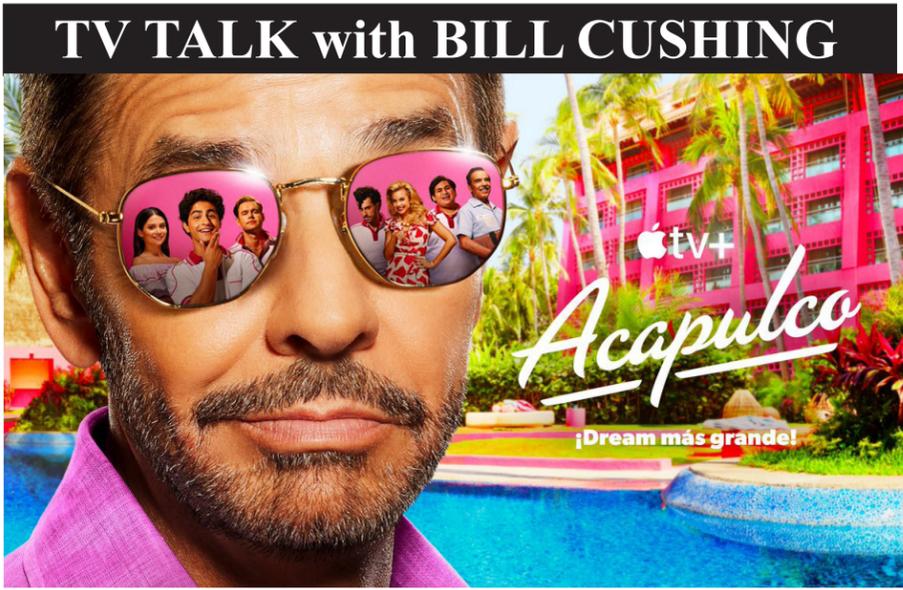
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‘ACAPULCO’

Bill Cushing

VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

Maximo Gallardo takes in the view of the Pacific Ocean from his sprawling estate on a day off from his life as a financial mogul. He welcomes his young nephew Hugo over for his birthday and begins to tell him the tale of his own teenage days and how he became the man he is today. That is how ‘Acapulco,’ Apple TV+’s delightful bilingual comedy series, begins.

As the show jumps back and forth between present day and 1984, we are introduced to Maximo as a teenager, and to his friends and family. Maximo tells us that his dream job is to work at the fancy beachside resort, Las Colinas, which he sees as a way out of his mundane life, a chance to help his widowed mother and his sister, and a chance to rub elbows with the same ritzy folk that he has looked at and admired from afar his whole life.

Maximo is hired as a pool boy and his natural instincts and charm quickly make him a hotel staple, which helps him towards his goal of funding his mother’s eye surgery. We are introduced to the resort through his eyes, so we get to experience the hotel with the same awe and wonder as he does. The resort is bathed in bright colors that fill up the whole screen and reflects the series’ cheerful outlook on life. One of the show’s most realistic and smartest attributes is how it effortlessly jumps between English and Spanish. The workers at the resort are ordered to speak English around the guests, but they will speak their native language at other times.

Maximo begins to fall in love with the beautiful Julia at the front desk, who happens to be dating the resort’s general manager, Chad, whose mother is a former soap star and owner of the resort. Chad

is an obnoxious guy who takes an instant dislike to Maximo, until Maximo helps him get over his fear of proposing to his girlfriend. Maximo also meets Don Pablo, who is the Head of Operations for the resort, and becomes a mentor and role model to him. They form an almost father-son type relationship by season’s end.

‘Acapulco’ is another winner for Apple, who continues to give us quality programming. The series treats us to wonderful heartfelt storytelling, as we see Maximo’s coming of age story unfold, and throughout the series, each episode features the very entertaining Spanish-language covers of various hit songs from the ’80s performed by Las Colinas’ poolside duo.

‘Acapulco,’ created by Austin Winsberg, Eduardo Cisneros, and Jason Shuman, and starring a terrific cast, with Eugenio Derbez and Enrique Arrazon as the adult version and as the 1984 version of Maximo, respectively. Camila Perez is charming as Julia, and Chord Overstreet is the perfect rich buffoon, Chad. Damian Alcazar as Don Pablo, Fernando Carsa as Maximo’s best friend Memo, and Vanessa Bauche as Maximo’s mother round out a great ensemble.

If you’re looking for something to pick you up and make you feel good, while giving you some laughs and nostalgia, watch ‘Acapulco.’

‘Acapulco’ is available to stream on AppleTV+, with new episodes every Friday.

If you have any questions about TV, you can email me at BillsTVPatTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future Mailbag column.

Follow me on Twitter and Instagram @BillsTVPatTalk and on Facebook at BillsTVPatTalk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion. ♦

The Ark of the Covenant!

Peter Larocque

VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

God Bless and Greetings to all of you in the wonderful Name of Jesus Christ! It is an honor and privilege to come to you this month of November 2022 with another column about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! As I said many times

in the past, Jesus Christ fulfilled the law of Moses. He didn’t come to destroy the law but to fulfill the law and all its requirements as stated in

Matthew 5:17. We also read in John 1:17, “For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” NKJV. Through Jesus Christ, we also have the forgiveness of all our sins. All our sins are washed away because of Jesus’ sacrifice. He lived a perfect and sinless life so that we can be in a relationship with our Heavenly Father God.

Before Jesus, the priest who ministered in the Temple could only make sacrifices that covered the sins of the people. In contrast, Hebrews 10:10-14 states, “By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. 11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12

But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are

being sanctified.” NKJV. We have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all. Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again, and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Jesus had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice, he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.”

Now, what does the Ark of the Covenant have to do with Jesus? The Ark of the Covenant is a picture of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice. When you read the details of the Ark see that the wood speaks of Jesus’ Humanity and the gold of His Divinity. Moses is going to eventually put the tablets of the law inside the Ark. Exodus 25:10-22 states, “Have them make an ark of acacia wood—two and a half cubit long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out, and make a gold molding around it. Cast four gold rings for it and fasten them to its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other. Then make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. Insert the poles into the rings on the

sides of the ark to carry it. The poles are to remain in the rings of this ark; they are not to be removed. Then put in the ark the tablets of the covenant law, which I will give you. “Make an atonement cover of pure gold—two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. Make one cherub on

one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends. The cherubim are to have their wings spread

upward, overshadowing the cover with them.

The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover. Place the cover on top of the ark and put in the ark the tablets of the covenant law that I will give you. There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the covenant law, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.” NIV.

In the NKJV the cover of the Ark made of pure gold is called the mercy seat. That is where the high priest would place the blood after the sacrifice. That is also what the two cherubim would be designed to be looking at. Cherubim is plural for cherub which are winged angelic beings described in biblical tradition as attending to God.

As I was reading about the cover and the cherubim, John 20: 11-12 came to mind where

I pictured the empty tomb that Mary saw. John 20:11-12 states, “but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she

bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.”

NIV. Two angels were sitting in the empty tomb on opposite sides where Jesus’ body had been. His body was no longer there because it had been resurrected. The resurrection means that the payment of our sins had been fulfilled. This is the exact picture that is on top of the Ark of the covenant. This was a picture of the payment that Jesus would make and even more because Jesus didn’t stay dead. He was raised to life. Jesus defeated death, hell, and the grave. When you read about the Ark of the Covenant and why it was so important to Israel think of Jesus Christ. It was a picture of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice and resurrection!!!

We have so much to be thankful for this Thanksgiving Season. Please do not miss this wonderful opportunity when you gather with your family around your turkey dinner to give thanks to the one who has made all this available. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Amen!!!

Have a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving Day Holiday!!!

Love to you and your family,

Peter Larocque, peterlarocque@hotmail.com ♦



METHUEN & NORTH ANDOVER

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Property Sales, Foreclosures for Oct., 2022 in Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, North Andover. (All properties are listed in order; seller, buyer, price, address.)



Northern Essex Registry of Deeds M. Paul Iannuccillo, Register

William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
of Massachusetts

ANDOVER

Alpha Development Corporation,
Christopher & Jean Hostage, \$3,150,000, 1
Aston Ct
Lamb Family Trust & James & Annmarie
Lamb Tr, Lisa & Peter Pizzi Jr, \$2,840,000,
4 Ruggiero Way
Allyson & Brian Gangemi, Christopher
& Courtney Michienzi, \$1,630,000, 14
Basswood Ln
CA Investment Tr & Yvon Cormier
Tr, Fred Arrig Jr Tr & Fred G Arrigg Jr
Revocable Tr, \$1,550,000, 7 Robert Dr Unit
1-4
Michael & Phyllis Hardgrove, Dariush &
Alexandra Aalaei, \$1,540,000, 4 Sawyers
Ln
CA Investment Tr & Yvon Cormier Tr,
Kathleen & Philip Beattie, \$1,532,000, 17
Robert Dr Unit 5-1
CA Investment Tr & Yvon Cormier Tr,
Stephen & Kelly Bernard, \$1,380,000, 1
Robert Dr Unit 1
Bariloche Realty Tr & Linda Aintablian
Tr & Paul Belmont Tr, Hossein Keyhan &
Mehrnoush Fathi, \$1,340,000, 36 Juniper
Rd
CA Investment Tr & Yvon Cormier Tr,
Paul A Lacy 2020 Irrevocable Tr & Marie
Lacy & Jeffrey Roberts Tr, \$1,325,000, 9
Robert Dr Unit 4-1
CA Investment Tr & Yvon Cormier Tr,
Dan You, \$1,260,000, 8 Robert Dr Unit 2-4
CA Investment Tr & Yvon Cormier Tr,
Terence & Sheryl Brennan, \$1,252,000, 16
Robert Dr Unit 3-1
William & Maura Burke, Peter Ahn &
Sookhee Park, \$1,250,000, 2 Alonesos Way
CA Investment Tr & Yvon Cormier
Tr, Bernard J Ristuccia Jr Revocable
Tr & Rebecca & Bernard Ristuccia Tr,
\$1,250,000, 11 Robert Dr Unit 4-2
Robert & Margaret Cuneo, Tobin &
Taylor Spector, \$1,010,000, 15 Yardley Rd
Cheryl Willis, Syed & Syeda Gardezi,
\$1,000,000, 352 South Main St
Patricia, Amy, Paul & John Pollano,
Marie Drenzo, \$957,500, 24 Karlton Cir
Vinod Aggarwal & Shimpy Walia, Bikash
Manandhar & Grishma Khanal, \$935,000,
166 Haverhill St
9 Crestwood Drive Realty Tr & Thomas
& Elizabeth Varley Tr, Tom & Ashley
Attura, \$930,000, 9 Crestwood Dr
Jeffrey & Jacquelyn Nathan, Elshad
Kasumov & Angela Kasumova, \$823,000,
27 Brown St
Megan Evans Est & Gillian & Hillary
Evans, Anthony Buonassisi & Xunling
Zhang, \$820,000, 36 High St
Timothy & Emily Frisch, Scott Burnham
& Jennifer Snell, \$810,000, 79 Pine St
Betty May H Falton Revocable Tr of
2007 & Peter Ahern Tr, SAI Builders LLC,
\$800,000, 99 Sunset Rock Rd
Donald & Jo Krishfield, Mark & Sarah
Trudeau, \$760,000, 175 Lowell St
William & Martha McCarthy, Nicholas &
Sarah Potter, \$750,000, 32 Canterbury St
Steven & Mary Pritchard, Alison Swift,
\$695,000, 2 Clark Rd
Kathleen Luther & Kathleen & Ronald
Wackowski, Mary Williams, \$675,000, 14
Sutherland St
Thomas & Peter Schott, Kaitlin
Vortherms & Ross Mackinnon, \$633,000,
12 Sherry Dr
Panichelli Famil Tr & John & Karen Tr &
John & Karent Tr, Yong Chen, \$550,000, 2
Olde Berry Rd
Silvija Aprans, Gusztav Sztermen &
Barbara Nadasi, \$315,000, 50B Washington
Park Dr Unit 8
Rita Mukasa, Alison Oleary, \$262,000,

10 Crescent Dr
Messina Family Tr & Joseph Messina
Life Est & Melissa Richardson Tr &
Melinda Joncas Tr, Kai Zhang & Wanning
Jiang, \$225,000, 237 North Main St Unit 5
Pulte Homes of New England LLC, Paula
Jones, \$217,100, 6 Overlook Dr Unit 102
Zheng Sun & Lin Wu, Julie Klier,
\$200,000, 42 Michael Way Unit 26
Marguerite Christopher & Marguerite
Burke, Barbara Burke, \$192,000, 6-8 Dale
St
Taylor Cove Development LLC, Javad
Majid & Aiza Sheikh, \$191,000, 27 Taylor
Cove Dr Unit 24
CA Investment Tr & Yvon Cormier Tr,
Andrea L Carlin Tr-2013 & Andrea Carlin
Tr, \$1,300,000, 15 Robert Dr Unit 4-4
CA Investment Tr & Yvon Cormier Tr,
Jason Feinberg, \$1,200,000, 5 Robert Dr
Unit 1-3
Janete Pena & Jose De Mendonca,
Valoree Young, \$950,000, 4 Suncrest Rd.

LAWRENCE

Merrimack Falls LLC, BPG Broadway
Storage LLC, \$4,750,000, 0 Broadway
Diverse Real Estate LLC, Juana Naveo,
\$1,600,000, 303-305,309 Prospect St
Springfield Union Realty Tr & Audley
Jones Tr, Diverse Real Estate LLC,
\$1,450,000, 56-58 Springfield St
Lawrence Communityworks Inc, IP
Phase II LLC, \$1,077,604, 30 Island St
Sick Boy Homes LLC, Ramiro Palacio &
Adriana Castrillon, \$789,000, 21 Tremont
St
Lydia Colon, Olga Nunez & Luis Reyes,
\$750,000, 72 Woodland St
Joaquin Rosa & Milagros Lima, Pedro
Rojas, \$670,000, 230 Colonial Rd
Pappalardo Family Realty Tr & Salvatore
Ragonese Tr, 71-75 Common Street LLC,
\$650,000, 71-75 Common St
Deanne & Thomas Costello, Mauricio
Paredes, \$600,000, 34 Corbett Rd
Jose Batista, Manuel Cepeda, \$600,000,
273 Park St
Carols & Betsy Morel, Sheila Frias,
\$580,000, 26-28 Yale St
Teresa Cueto, Elmen Martinez &
Miosotis Olivo & Jerry Rondon, \$535,000,
302 Water St
Laurel Cortellino & Laurel Memahon,
Jose Rosario, \$500,000, 20 Adams St
George & Lillian Shaheen, William Perez
& Martha Matul, \$499,000, 240 Colonial
Rd
Ivan & Elminia Ballester, Anderson
Sanchez & Katherine Berroa, \$480,000, 25
Lynn St
Robert Conneaney, Gumercindo Frias,
\$470,000, 50 Canal St Unit 1

Andrei Zharov & Natallia Hunik,
Charyanna Perdomo, \$470,000, 19
Mechanic St
Anna & Carmine Realty Tr & Carmela
Cestrono Tr, Angela De Los Santo & Santa
& Santana Disla, \$450,000, 5 Kathleen Ter
Robert Crowley, Jose Vargas & Sara
Batista, \$450,000, 9 Stearns Ave
Brendan Kane & Amanda Macavoy,
Cartus Financial Corp, \$430,000, 9
Ferguson St
Jose Batista, Ysidro Polo Villar,
\$425,000, 12 Lasalle Ave
Nelson & Ada Massari, Carmelo Rios &
Yolanda Lopez, \$425,000, 26 Amherst St
Marion R Joncas Family Tr & Donna
Hannagan Tr & Ruth Stickney Tr, Jomal
Gibbs & Marquin Valdez, \$403,000, 36
Chester St
Pappalardo Family Realty Tr & Salvatore
Ragonese Tr, 6 Methuen Street LLC,
\$390,000, 6 Methuen St
Eleanor Collins & Chris Cavanaugh
& Lisa Iovino, Appleton Grove LLC,
\$375,000, 199 Howard St
Clarland Family Realty Tr & Cheryl
Charland Tr, Nelson Batista, \$355,000, 17
Dunstable St
Jean Mizer, Jerson Espaillat & Hilda
Rodriguez, \$355,000, 9 Greenfield St
75 Bunkerhill Street LLC, 75 Bunkerhill
Realty LLC, \$350,000, 75 Bunkerhill St
Deutsche Bank National Trust Co Tr,
Marte C LLC, \$337,000, 67 Ferry St
Pappalardo Family Realty Tr & Salvatore
Ragonese Tr, Carlos Zapata & Campo Seco
Realty Tr, \$330,000, 7 Campo Seco St
Thuythanh Dang, Jose Portillo, \$330,000,
111 Cambridge St Unit A
US Bank Trust NA Tr & Wilberto Mejias,
Mohamad Yamin, \$283,000, 1100 Essex St
Louis Aliberti, Empire Investments LLC,
\$280,000, 29 Beaconsfield St
Louis Bernabe, Kristina Rodriguez,
\$205,000, 334 Prospect St
Carmen Roman & Andres Rivera-Roman,
Omar Peralta & Caroline Ruiz, \$200,000,
312 Water St Unit 9
Olivera Lynch & David Dufort, Theodore
Michaud, \$200,000, 84 Howard St
Pablo Peralta, A&A Property
Management LLC, \$145,000, 12 Acton St
Unit 204

METHUEN

La Belle Maison LLC, Mcbee
Development LLC, \$1,850,000, 11
Hampstead St
Toll Ma Land III LP, Paul Belmont &
Linda Aintablian, \$980,683, 37 Cardinal Rd
Unit 163
Toll Ma Land III LP, Paula Davis,
\$951,630, 5 Dove Ln Unit 186

Phoenix Credit Acceptance Corp, F & B
LLC, \$939,000, 469 Merrimack St
Toll Ma Land III LP, Phillip & Mary
Bailin, \$915,000, 1 Dove Ln Unit 184
Toll Ma Land III LP, Margaret M Fenton
Living Tr & Margaret Fenton Tr & Michael
Fenton Tr, \$894,324, 35 Cardinal Rd Unit
164
35 Kirk Street LLC, E&C Realty LLC,
\$885,000, 35 Kirk St
Toll Ma Land III LP, Pankaj & Sunita
Shah, \$866,669, 139 Phoebe St Unit 73
Richard Bergeron Family Tr & Richard
Bergeron Tr, Everest Tr & Eric Harper Tr,
\$840,000, 70 Cambridge St
Moises & Kely Camilo & Kely Deleon,
Maria Pereira, \$840,000, 604A Prospect St
Toll Ma Land III LP, Guy Chenard &
Maryse Tremblay, \$829,030, 41 Cardinal
Rd Unit 161
Toll Ma Land III LP, Robin Gorski
Routhier, \$815,328, 48 Phoebe St Unit 97
Toll Ma Land III LP, Michael & Patricia
Quinn, \$804,175, 39 Cardinal Rd Unit 162
Bonnie Alexander, Mia Harbitz,
\$789,000, 3 Sierra Ct Unit 14
Joyce Lyles, James & Pamela Arseneau,
\$770,000, 6 Sadie Ln
Toll Ma Land III LP, Charles & Lynn
Clarke, \$741,200, 46 Phoebe St Unit 98
Steven Defusco, Argentina & Joargy
Perez, \$720,000, 41 Forest St
Kevin & Donna Greus, William & Maura
Burke, \$711,000, 17 Dunrobin Cir
Matthew & Katelyn Maroon, Afeez &
Temitope Atunde, \$700,000, 67 Olympic
Village Dr
Steven D Sordillo Revocable Tr &
Joanne P Sordillo Revocable Tr & Steven
Sordillo Ind Tr & Joanne Sordillo Ind Tr,
Jerika Ruiz & Jonathan Vega, \$700,000, 11
Brookfield Rd
Krystal & Dmytro Karamanesh, T,
Solomon Debebe & Merikokeb Yohannes,
\$699,900, 25 Hunter Ave
Jorge Gomez & Jennie Ortiz, Luis Navas
& Luiz Navas, \$650,000, 7 Apple Blossom
Way
Robert & Virginia Malenfant, Abass &
Martha Kallon, \$649,900, 9 Young Farm Rd
Nancy A Clover Revocable Tr & Therese,
Nancy, & Paul Clover Tr, Elie & Jean
Elhachem, \$637,000, 9 Crestshire Ln
Ufredo Gomez & Ada Vargas & Marjorie
Rizzo, Frenando Gomez & Lisa Jackson,
\$630,000, 199 Jackson St
Debra & Gary Desrochers, Darlene &
James Johnson Sr, \$610,000, 45 Salem St
Christopher & Peter Cammarata,
Elvinson Corporan, \$600,000, 9 Kendall St
Barbara Day & Barbara Folley, Jose
Dejesus & Jose Jorge, \$600,000, 82-84
Oakland Ave
Iryna & Tadevush Batsevich, Kaylee
Bouchard, \$600,000, 5 Dundee Ave
Maureen Daher, Saul Francisco & Maria
Mercado, \$580,000, 5 Barker St
Armano Realty Investments LLC, Erica
& Kevin Ring, \$576,697, 40 Atkinson St
Thomas Abbott & Noreen Rooney,
Monica & Francis Morrison, \$544,900, 31
Blueberry Ln
Chirsotpher & Debra Nocolosi &
Raymond S Nicolosi Jr Special Needs Tr
& Heather Nicolosi Tr, Kara Real Estate
Group LLC, \$540,000, 3 Newbury Ave
Jonathan Vega & Jerika Ruiz, Jessica
Behner, \$535,000, 4 Hemenway St
Jorge Hernandez & Lucila Martinez,
Miguel Paulino, \$530,000, 19 White Ave
Frank Golio & Lucia Golio Est, Krysten
Ayala & Samuel Cianelli, \$520,000, 51
Harvard Ave
Donald Ratliff, Kara Martin & Jason

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LICENSED IN MASS AND NEW HAMPSHIRE

Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley Issues Call For Santa's Helpers

Methuen - Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley (FKMV), a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of foster children in the Merrimack Valley, issues a call for Santa's

Helpers to support the Annual Foster Kids Christmas Party. The Santa's Helpers is a volunteer program designed to anonymously match up individuals or groups from the local community with one or more

foster children to help fulfill their Christmas wish lists. This program is part of the Annual Foster Kids Christmas Party organized by the FKMV, whereby age-appropriate toys & clothing are distributed to local foster children. The Santa's Helpers program provides a personalized, unique kind of gift-giving and creates a memorable holiday season for foster children. The Annual Christmas

Event is scheduled in early December each year.

"The Annual Christmas Party has been a mainstay of the organization. I'm always amazed at how our community participation continues to grow. Last year, with the help of our Santa's Helpers, we provided

toys and gifts for more than 250 children and their respective foster parents." stated Larry Giordano, President and Founder of the Foster Kids of the Merrimack Valley. "The holidays are always difficult

times for foster children, they often feel alone and disconnected from their families.

This year more than ever, with everyone's finances being affected we have high hopes that our community will step forward again and help support our

local foster children and bring a smile to their faces again."

What is a Santa's Helper?

We are looking for volunteers including businesses and/or individuals to volunteer to be a Santa's Helper and bring joy to a foster child this holiday season. Each Santa's Helper will be anonymously assigned a child and will receive a personal wish list for that child that includes personal items like clothing as well as toys.

The foster children participating in this program are ages birth to 12 years of age and are currently under the care of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) in the Merrimack Valley, including Lawrence, Methuen, Andover, North Andover, and the greater Haverhill region. Individuals, groups, or businesses may sign up to sponsor one child or

more. Cash donations are accepted in lieu of receiving a Christmas wish list.

Program Details:

October: The sign-up process when businesses and individuals

volunteer to become a Santa's Helper.

November: Each Santa's Helper will be assigned a child and receive a wish list that will provide the age, gender, and sizes of the child.

December 4th: All gifts are due and can be dropped off at:

Methuen Karate Association
70C Bonanno Court
Methuen, MA

Sign Up Information:

To register as a Santa's Helper, please contact our Website: www.fosterkidsmv.org or Email: fkmvsantashelper@gmail.com ♦

REAL ESTATE FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Fiore, \$515,000, 11 Vincent Ave
Paola Sanchez & Diony Cruz-Guzman, Vinicius De Oliveira, \$515,000, 15 Farley St

Exarchos Kalovyrnas & Niki Makris, 42 Washington LLC, \$511,000, 42 Washington St

Randy Hagger & Randy Hagggar, Julie Brennan & Kyle Wakefield, \$510,000, 15 Anderson Dr

Micheroni 2018 Tr & Norma Micheroni Tr, Bonnie Firriello, \$499,900, 24 Arthur St
Phyllis Khentigan, Laura Maldonado & Alfredo Gonzalez, \$480,000, 447 Oak St
Michelle Bibeau, Danielle & Docordo Hylton, \$480,000, 138 Merrimack St

Yolanda Arboleda & Jacob Castro, Jill & Antonio Burgos, \$469,900, 70 Baltic St
Edwin Andrade & Julian Sierra, Julia Isaac & Rocky Medina, \$465,000, 48 Coolidge St

Sylvain Taschereau & Sylvie Kelley, Yolanda Arboleda & Jacob Castro, \$459,900, 14 Jasper St

Diane & Jason Lynch, Rosa Polanco, \$455,000, 18 Sunny Ave

Ruth Thomas & Robert Thomas Jr, Alex & Alba Dominguez, \$445,000, 77 North Lowell St

Jan & Jennifer Mei, Kathryn Conti & Angela Larochele, \$440,000, 2 Loring Rd Unit 1

Battye Family Nominee Tr & William & Jeremy Battye Tr, Gerard & Kevin Hannaford, \$420,000, 52 Davis Rd

Julie Romero & Julia Isaac & Rocky Medina, Ronny Acevedo & Norma Mendoza, \$400,000, 94A Tenney St Unit 94A

Mary H David Trust 2022 & Allen David Tr, Mohamed Salem & Humza Elsiyah, \$356,000, 174 Warwick St

James & Judith Entwistle, Pena Real Estate Investments LLC, \$340,000, 19 Moison Ave

Eduardo & Gail Czarnobai, Paul Scenna, \$329,900, 21 Hampshire Rd Unit 309
Sharon Amore, Allen LLC, \$240,000, 53 Tornton St

Andrew & Sarah Brown, Horace Fazio, \$210,000, 10 Derry Rd

William Grenier, Christopher Chiang, \$153,000, 395 Merrimack St Unit 30

NORTH ANDOVER

Ken & Olivia Cheng, Lucie & Abidemi Adesina, \$1,188,888, 41 Skyview Ter
Geoffrey & Tracy Fulgione, James & Kelly Porter, \$1,050,000, 561 Salem St
Kevin & Lauren McDonald, Mark & Elizabeth Dawley, \$1,030,000, 356 Appleton St
George & Christine Coufos, Sylaja

Murikipudi, \$985,000, 130 Amberville Rd
Frank A Rossi Trust -2018 & Frank & Linda Rossi Tr, Sambit Mohapatra & Bhagyalakshmi Jena, \$885,000, 401 Stevens St

Robert & Patricia Gohn, Drew & Kyla Archer, \$864,000, 650 Forest St

Joseph & Susan Huggins, Christian & Alicia Truesdell, \$856,000, 216 Raleigh Tavern Ln

JY Realty Tr II & Yvonne Ciardiello Tr & John Shagoury Tr, Reem Ahmed & Ahmed Mahaba, \$780,000, 149-151 Pleasant St

Denise Favorat, Julie Jimenez & Randy Hernandez, \$690,000, 31 Johnson Cir
Waverly Road Realty Trust & MHRE LLC Tr, Taytum Florent, \$680,000, 219 Waverly Rd Unit 2

John Garth Gibbins Family Tr of 2019 & John Gibbins Tr, Stephen & Lynn Bowen, \$660,000, 89 Berkeley Rd

Lisa Green, Christine Cloonan, \$650,000, 2702 Tupelo Cir Unit 2702

Salvatore & Marsha Lipomi, Matthew & Katie Rae, \$625,000, 59 Hemlock St
Nicholas & Alison Kehlbeck, Alana & Nicole Swiec, \$610,000, 62 Meadowood

Dawn & Ramon Vargas, Pema Lama, \$600,000, 18 Fernwood St

Sara Hrono, Julian Holbrook & Julian Portilla, \$600,000, 22 Camden St
Ardizzone Living Tr & Jason Ardizzone

Tr, Miranda Bateman & Gabriel Trillana, \$570,000, 30 Buckingham Rd

Brit Lynd Realty Tr & Stephen Doherty Tr, BD LLC, \$560,000, 1000 Johnson St

Paul R Barkhouse Family Tr & Marianne Galeazzi Tr, Stellson LLC, \$510,000, 138 Lacy St

Jrose Realty LLC & Ercole & Angela Sideri, Susan Anderson, \$470,000, 412 Main St

Yokatia Rodriguez, Ana Lopez-Lopez & Carmelina Lopez, \$470,000, 591 Turnpike St

Christina K Rogers Irrevocable Tr & Christina Rogers Tr, Brenda Borowski & Christopher Dufresne, \$450,000, 4 Harvest Dr Unit 210

John Mcduffie Est & Thomas Mcduffie Jr, Michael & Kelsey Lounsbury, \$427,500, 22 Maple Ave

Brenley Properties LLC, Christine Yacubacci, \$305,000, 52 Farrwood Unit 2
James Dangelo, Laura Dangelo, \$295,000, 14 Walker Rd Unit 12

Fernview Green Tr & Sui Gu Tr, Silvija Aprans, \$294,000, 23 Fernview Ave Unit 6

Willow Street Nominee Tr & Louisa & Timothy Tanner Tr, Vincent Grasso, \$225,000, 189 Willow St

Arc Realty Tr of 2014 & Thomas Nigrelli Tr, Debruyckere Realty LLC, \$5,720,000, 100 Flagship Dr.

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Lawrence Mayor Brian DePeña Announces New Electric School Buses for Lawrence

LAWRENCE - Mayor Brian A. DePeña, was joined by Congresswoman Lori Trahan, Senator Edward John Markey, Senator Barry Finegold, State Representative Frank Moran, Superintendent Cynthia Paris, City Councilors, and other school Delegations to give the announcement of the twenty-five new Electric School Buses for the City of Lawrence Massachusetts, which will be available for our scholars in 2024. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021 authorizes EPA to offer rebates to replace existing school buses with clean and zero-emission (ZE) models.

“I am glad that the City of Lawrence will get 25 new electric school buses by 2024 because they will reduce tailpipe pollution. For instance, our students, drivers, and members of the community will be exposed to less harmful diesel emissions.” Mr. Mayor DePeña, said.

Clean School Bus Benefits

- Cleaner air. Electric and alternatively-fueled buses eliminate or reduce school bus exhaust, which is linked to asthma.
- Reduced health risks, especially for children whose lungs are still developing.
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to climate change.
- Grid resilience. Using bidirectional chargers, school buses can store energy for distribution to the grid when needed.

“In addition to having long-term benefits for public health, the environment, and taxpayers, this initiative shows how communities, school districts, private businesses, and state federal officials can work together to lead the way on responsible environmental citizenship,” said Lawrence Public Schools Superintendent Cynthia Paris. “LPS is proud to be part of this unique collaboration.”

“I’m excited that the city of Lawrence

is receiving 25 electric buses through the Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean School Bus Program,” said State Senator Barry Finegold (D-Andover). “These new buses will help reduce harmful emissions and improve public health in our city. I look forward to continuing to work with our federal delegation and local officials on clean energy initiatives in the months ahead.”

“Electrifying our transportation systems is critical to not only fight climate change but also to reduce harmful air pollutants in our neighborhoods. This is especially impactful in environmental justice communities such as Lawrence, said Senator Elizabeth Warren. I fought hard for federal EV bus funding and I’m glad to see Lawrence leading the way in electrifying their school bus fleet.”

“Since getting the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law across the finish line almost a year ago, I’ve been working with local leaders like Mayor DePeña to ensure communities across the district get the funding they need,” said Congresswoman Lori Trahan. “I couldn’t be more thrilled to see Lawrence taking full advantage of this law to build a greener future with cleaner air for our students, our families, and our community. I look forward to welcoming this new fleet of electric school buses and continuing our work across the federal, state, and local levels to deliver more federal investments like this one.”

“This new fleet of buses will ensure that our students are provided with safe and reliable ways to and from school, while also working towards reducing carbon emissions within our community and the state,” said State Representative Frank A. Moran (D – Lawrence). “I would like to thank Congresswoman Lori Trahan and Senator Ed Markey for always making Lawrence a priority in Congress and I look forward to seeing these buses on the road very soon.” ♦





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YE GAY O'LE VALLEY: An Insight Into Public Education

Dani B. Langevin
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

I will speak about being an educator in Massachusetts but will share anecdotal stories from teachers in other states, too. It's extremely important to know that educators in Massachusetts are required to have a master's degree. We are also required to maintain our license. Every 5 years, we need to make sure that we have a certain amount of credits in pedagogy (the science of teaching), teaching English Language Learners, children with learning and socio-emotional disabilities and the subject in which we teach. These are courses and seminars we have to take at our own expense. On average, we will spend several thousand dollars every 5 years only to receive a 1% raise or less that may equal an extra few hundred dollars. Most of us take more than what is required in those 5 years. We read books about the things we need to be educated on. We research and participate in focus groups, book groups, cultural awareness groups, socio-emotional seminars and more. Educators are constantly being educated. Curriculum is dictated to us. It is created by the Massachusetts Department of Education, not the teachers. We can't pick and choose what we do and do not want to teach. We teach it all based on the curriculum standards and maps that are provided.

We have masters. We have teaching practice under our belts before entering the profession and we are constantly re-educating ourselves. Yet, we are treated with such disdain and disrespect even after being told that we are professionals. We can start with the pay. It sucks. We are literally molding the future of America; holding the lives of every child in our hands but, the public refuses to compensate us for what we do. One of my colleagues in another state said this, "This year, with my 3% raise, our insurance went up, dues went up, taxes went up and I'm bringing home \$2 less a week." This is during a time when cost of living has increased at least 8%.

Education is incredibly counterintuitive. Technology has been introduced. We have computer programs where parents, guardians and students have access to their grades at all times. We have classroom programs where they can also access the lessons students should have completed or are currently working on. Every part of a student's academic progress is at the fingertips of every adult with a computer. It is supposed to ease and open up communication between students, parents, teachers and administration and it does.

We no longer have to write progress reports, report cards, or give written updates. It's all right there. Despite all of this, some administration require phone calls home. Isn't this like asking us to go beat our laundry against a rock in 2022? We have all of this technology to open up communication and transparency and yet, we are expected to call a number of homes to inform them of something they already have access to. When are these calls supposed to be made? Our planning time is minimal at best, and we're asked to do this at a time when grades are due, students are panicking, and late work is flying at us like bats from a cave. We don't have time during our scheduled planning time and none of us are going to do it on our own time. And most of the homes that we call, the number is always busy, mailbox is full, or the number has been disconnected.

A teacher from another state shared that she was docked points on her evaluation because she didn't make those phone calls. It was May of last year. She had called parents in September, October, November, and every month up until May. It was the middle of May when the evaluation was done. The month wasn't over, which she tried explaining to her evaluator who wanted nothing to do with the explanation. So, a twenty plus year veteran teacher was punished because she didn't complete a task before the end of

the workday whistle blew, and it was only lunch time.

I've heard of educators being written up for not wearing a tie. Many schools do not have dress codes for educators. Another educator told me about her disability. She had trouble walking. The system wanted to get rid of her even though she was excellent at her job. She was given assignments that would require her to walk from one side of her building to the other, constantly. The union advocated that she have a permanent room and the students come to her. Not unheard of. They wouldn't do it. She left.

Another educator had a noise maker. It had buttons on it that had different noises: baby laughing, small explosion, cheering and so on. She had it for almost 15 years. Used it every year for emphasis. Her kids loved it. One time, a student complained. Instead of asking her to take it home, put it away or not use it, administration took it from her. Like she was a child who couldn't take a simple direction and not the professional with a masters that she was. Imagine the message that sends to an employee.

And then there's the parents. Gone are the days when parents were highly aware of the fact that, when their child complained about school, they most likely left out or added key details to support their objective of looking innocent while trying to destroy their teacher. For some reason, many parents and guardians believe that their child is telling them the gospel truth. Gone, too, are the days where that benefit of the doubt would keep a parent on level ground. They would first reach out to the teacher to get their

side of the story to try to get the truth and proceed appropriately. Nope. Can't do that anymore. An email is written to you, the principal, department head and superintendent with a threat of job closure and license removal. It goes from 0 to 60 in a flash. None of the people above a teacher wants to hear from a parent unless they have first spoken to the teacher. But these customers run right to the CEO of the company instead of the manager of the store. Brilliant!

Oh, the students. I do love my kids, but they don't make things easy either. In fact, many of them do what they can to make it more difficult for all of us. Stories from the classroom include: teenaged boys who purposely hyperventilated and passed out during class, the kindergartener who pulled his pants down every day and exposed himself, the student expected to take a standardized test after their home was invaded, the 16-year-old who threw herself on the floor because a cookie was put on her chair, a third grader who brought a sex toy to school, teens passing out in the halls or bathrooms from vaping, middle schoolers who threaten to kill themselves, or the boy who told a female teacher he was going to kill her. Let's not forget the over 300 students and teachers that have been killed in mass shootings on school grounds all at the hands of other people's children.

Just because you once sat in a classroom twelve years ago doesn't mean you have any idea of what happens within a school or classroom. Talk to more than one educator. I've been to an emergency room scores of times, but I would never assume I knew how one is run or should be run. ♡



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