



# THE VALLEY PATRIOT

"Congress shall make no law..."

2004

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## Task Force Cleaning Up Lawrence



A joint task force consisting of Lawrence Police, the State Police Gang Task Force, the North Shore Gang Task Force, and Homeland Security have been cleaning up Lawrence.

**I N D E X**

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**The Valley Patriot BASH (See Page 17)**  
March 27th \* 7pm  
**Lawrence Firefighter's Relief's In**  
TICKETS ON EVENTBRITE.COM

## VALLEY PATRIOT OF THE MONTH

### Don Silba, Joseph Augusta, and the Vets at the Lawrence DAV!

**John Cuddy**

VALLEY PATRIOT HERO REPORTER

#### Heroes Still Serving

Meeting Don Silba, Joseph Augusta, Jim Moran, and the other US Military Veteran members of the Queen City Chapter 2's Service Center at the Lawrence Disabled American Veterans was an eye-opening experience. I stopped by their Lawrence Office at 112A East Haverhill Street, in Lawrence's Prospect Hill neighborhood a couple of mornings before work this month for coffee and donuts. What surprised me the most, was the number of young Veterans waiting in their office for assistance in the early morning hours. A young, twenty-something Veteran was there on one of my visits; he was very happy that Coast Guard Veteran Don Silba had just helped him navigate the complex Veteran's Administration's paperwork.

These men and women are all Volunteers, unpaid, spending hours each week, filling out paperwork, making phone calls, always reaching out to their fellow Veterans, and working on behalf of other Veterans. Founded in 1922, the Queen City chapter of the Disabled American Veterans has around 525 members. These men and women served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War, the Gulf War, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, and during smaller conflicts such as El Salvador, Grenada, Panama, and Somalia. The men and women at the Lawrence DAV have a laser focus to help all Veterans, of all eras, of all branches, anywhere, anytime. We

had an interesting conversation about ear plugs, burn pits, and the Cold War. Our Veterans of the Cold War era are often overlooked, finding themselves ineligible for benefits, despite injuries, exposure to harsh chemicals, and long deployments to undeveloped countries while serving during the Cold War.

What was the Cold War? For two US Navy Crews, the war was not all that "cold". In 1967, the USS Liberty (AGTR-5) was a Belmont-class technical research ship, basically an electronic spy ship. She was attacked by the Israeli Defense Forces during the 1967 Six-Day War. Attacked by several Israeli aircraft, resulting in the killing of thirty-four US Navy Sailors, while wounding another one hundred and seventy-one of her crew. The ship was also severely damaged.

Another Cold War incident was the attack by North Korea on the USS Pueblo (AGER-2) with its crew of six officers and over seventy enlisted sailors on January 22, 1968. Lightly armed with only a pair of .50 caliber Browning machine guns as her heaviest weapons, the ship and her crew were captured by the North Koreans, with a Navy Sailor, Fireman Duane Hodges, killed by gunfire from the North Korean vessels. The US Navy's Seventh Fleet monitored the situation, but like the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor years earlier, United States political leadership and the Navy Brass left the crew unprepared for action. The .50 caliber guns were wrapped in burlap, the ammo was stored far below deck, and only one sailor, a US



Army Veteran, who joined the Navy after his Army service, was properly trained to fire the machine guns. The ship's crew was held by the North Koreans for nearly a year, even our own US Congress did not allow them to be considered POWs until 1990, over twenty years after they had been released by North Korea. Their ship is still moored in North Korea, still on active duty. Many of the crew suffered for years due to injuries from their mistreatment by the North Koreans. Several died very young, passing a few years after being released.

Highlighting stories of the USS Pueblo and the USS Liberty, I am hoping to illustrate to the Valley Patriot readers, just how dangerous peacetime service can be for our nineteen-year-old sailors, soldiers, air-

men, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen. Further examples of attacks on US Military personnel during peacetime, during the Cold War, are too plentiful. I could also have used the attack on the USS Starke on May 17, 1997 by Iraqi forces; or the December 3, 1979 attack on a US Navy Bus by Puerto Rican terrorists, killing two US Navy Sailors, and injuring another ten, including three young women. All the Sailors on the bus were unarmed, the Puerto Rican terrorists used stolen M16 rifles to attack the bus.

Recently, I discussed the Cold War with a civilian, a man who never served himself, he stated, that he did not consider these men and women "real veterans"! During my own relatively short, Military

HERO: PAGE 21

# National Guard Caucus

By; State Rep. Linda Dean Campbell

Last week, I joined Major General Gary W. Keefe, Commander of the Massachusetts National Guard - The Nation's First, and Chairman Harold Naughton at the National Guard Caucus meeting, the only state-level caucus of its type in the nation.

As the Guard's responsibilities and deployments continue to increase significantly here in Massachusetts and nationally, the caucus is an important vehicle to discuss the unique needs of Guard members and their families as well as how the Legislature can support these concerns.

As house chair of the Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs, many bills that impact the Guard are before us. Two on their priority list are before our Committee: An Act relative to the Massachusetts National Guard Family Education Program and An Act amending the Medal of Liberty.

In the 9 months this caucus has existed, my colleagues and I have begun to address these challenges. I look forward to the future of our caucus and work.

Linda Dean Campbell represents Methuen in the 15th Essex District .



# CHOOSE CHRIS!



## SELECTMAN

NORTH ANDOVER

# NORTH ANDOVER VOTES

## MARCH 31st

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The Valley Patriot can be found in more than 800 locations in 48 communities in Massachusetts and NH.



## State Police Gang Unit, North Shore Gang Task Force, and Lawrence Police Seize Significant Amount of Fentanyl

On March 26th, the Massachusetts State Police Gang Unit Troopers assigned to the North Shore Gang Task Force, along with FBI and Homeland Security Investigations Agents on the Task Force and Lawrence Police Detectives, executed a search warrant at second-floor apartment at 429 High St. in Lawrence. Members of the warrant team located and seized approximately 734 grams of suspected fentanyl in numerous packages in a bedroom closet and a dresser.

The occupant of the apartment, Manuel Estheulis-Almonte, 28, was taken into custody and booked at the Lawrence Police Station for trafficking in fentanyl, more than 200 grams.

During the raid Troopers, Agents and Officers also seized materials used in the packaging and distribution of narcotics, including cutting agents, digital scales, blenders, sifters, and plastic baggies.

A Gang Unit Trooper applied for the warrant after members of the Task Force earlier Wednesday observed Estheulis-Almonte accept \$60 cash from a male believed to be from Maine – an interaction the Task Force Officers suspected was the first part of a street-level drug transaction. Information obtained by the Troopers and Agents indicated that the man from Maine

was then supposed to circle the block in his truck and meet up with Estheulis-Almonte again, at which time Estheulis-Almonte would hand over two grams of fentanyl in return for the cash payment.

But before that could happen, Task Force Officers located Estheulis-Almonte. The suspect had returned to his apartment after allegedly accepting the cash, and surveillance units observed him come out of the residence again and begin walking up High Street. As police rolled up on him, the suspect began to run but was apprehended after a brief foot pursuit. Estheulis-Almonte, who had no identification on him, consented to let the Troopers and Agents return to his apartment with him so he could obtain his ID. He added, however, that he did not want his apartment to be searched.

When Estheulis-Almonte entered the apartment with two MSP Gang Unit Troopers, the Troopers immediately observed several small twists – twisted small plastic baggies – containing suspected fentanyl, along with suspected drug paraphernalia. The Troopers immediately exited the apartment and secured it, and applied for the court-ordered search warrant that they received executed later that evening. ◊



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**Congrats to everyone at The Valley Patriot & thank you for the 16 years of credible, reliable news!**



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Valley Patriot: Thank You for  
16 GREAT YEARS!  
**Linda Dean Campbell**



State Representative, 15th Essex  
(Methuen & Haverhill)

42 Sugar Pine Lane, Methuen, MA 01844

Home: 978.989.0722

Office 617.722.2305

www.statereplindacampbell.com

Representative.linda.campbell@gmail.com

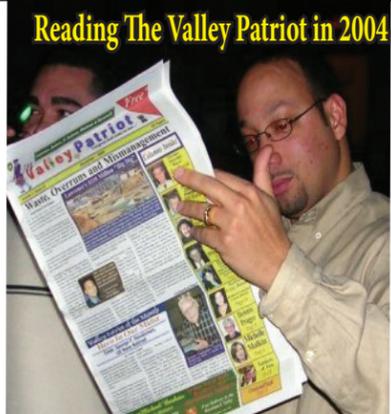
Chair of the Committee on Veterans/Federal Affairs

*Congratulations to The Valley Patriot and your team on 16 years of providing REAL news to the residents of the Merrimack Valley and beyond!*



**Christina Minicucci**  
State Representative

Long before I ever ran for office I was a loyal reader of The Valley Patriot. As Lawrence City Council President - and now a State Rep. I find it vital to keeping up with what's going on in my district.



*Congratulations* on hitting a **GREAT** milestone, your 16TH ANNIVERSARY!  
Here's hoping for many more!

**HAPPY 16TH ANNIVERSARY!**  
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STATE REPRESENTATIVE



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# Councilor Saba's Conflict of Interest, A Criminal Complaint, and a \$48K Payout

**Tom Duggan**  
VALLEY PATRIOT PUBLISHER

The City of Methuen has paid out \$48,000 to the owner of a Sober House on Quincy Street to settle a lawsuit, in part, because of "discriminatory statements" made by city councilors in 2018. The lawsuit claims that members of the city council and employees of the city violated her right to open a sober home on Quincy Street. The federal government identifies those in recovery as "disabled" and as such any discrimination against a sober house would violate federal law. First Amended Complaint

Court documents from the lawsuit reveal that a sitting City Councilor, Steve Saba, not only participated in the initial council discussion while his brother was directly affected by his actions, but that both John and Steve Saba's comments were used by the defendant in the lawsuit to show the city had targeted the homeowner unfairly and violated federal law.

The owner of the sober home was asking for "reasonable accommodations" under the Fair Housing Law and anti discrimination laws. She said that representatives from the city were determined to throw roadblocks in her way and targeted the home to be shut down. In fact, Councilor Saba's brother, John, [who is a neighbor of the sober home on Quincy St.] encouraged the city council, Economic Development Director Bill Buckley, and other city employees to do just that.

At a city council meeting on February 20, 2018 the council was briefed on the city's efforts to issue a cease and desist order against the sober home, shutting them down immediately. The call to shut down the sober home was led in part by City Councilor Steve Saba's brother, John Saba. John encouraged the city council to use zoning laws and building codes to try and have the home shut down.

VIDEO: <https://methuen-ma.viebit.com/player.php?hash=dxTTAvm6zn2T>

"We have the right to shut that house down based on zoning, period. And if they want to bring the fight to the city, then let

them bring the fight to the city because I think we have a choice here. You either get the fight from us, a group of people who are angry at this, or you get the fight from the one, the lady who's trying to circumvent the law. If I was you, I would side with us."

Councilor Saba's brother also suggested that the city fine her for every day she doesn't shut down, something that happened a few weeks later and was the subject of the lawsuit that was settled with the city.

"So tomorrow I would hope we go ahead with the plan and we shut them down, but I'd like to know what is the recourse when she doesn't shut it down? . . . I hope she is going to get fined every day. I hope we are going to make it difficult on her."

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Shortly after John Saba made these comments, his brother City Councilor Steve Saba, advocated for his brother's position from the council table in violation of the conflicts of interest laws. This after John Saba made it clear at the microphone that he had a personal interest in the outcome of the sober home as he is one of their neighbors.

"I'm getting a little tired of being told by the state that -- -- you now, they jam 40B up our throats here. They're jamming 40A up our throats. This is our city, and I know that other cities fight. . . we've got to stop just saying there's nothing we can do. We've got about this many lawsuits that we deal with on a regular basis. This is one that I'm not afraid, [of]" Councilor Steve Saba said predicting a lawsuit.

Saba's comments were specifically mentioned in the complaint against the city that led to the \$48,000 settlement payout to the owner of the sober home.

Saba continually refers to himself as the guardian of the taxpayer's money yet did not comment after his actions cost the city \$48,000.

#### CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Because the city was targeting the disabled by purposely using city zoning laws and other codes to shut down a sober



"We've got about this many lawsuits that we deal with on a regular basis. This is one that I'm not afraid, [of]"

Councilor Steve Saba before losing the lawsuit.

home in violation of federal law, The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) made a criminal referral [request for a criminal investigation] to the U.S. Justice Department charging that officials from the City of Methuen purposely discriminated against the disabled and violated the Fair Housing Act.

#### INDEMNIFICATION

The Valley Patriot has learned that City Councilor Steve Saba and another councilor has asked Mayor Perry to have the city indemnify city councilors, shielding them personally from civil lawsuits and leaving the city on the hook if councilors' actions and comments result in a civil judgment against them.

Councilor Saba has added the issue to the next city council agenda where he will be asking the council's approval to indemnify him from any personal lawsuits that result from his abuse of power (or any other councilor) while acting in his duties as a city council.

#### PERRY CALLS OUT SABA FOR COSTING CITY \$48,000

Less than 24 hours after it was learned that discriminatory comments by Methuen city councilors cost the city \$48,000 in a lawsuit settlement with the owner of a sober home on Quincy Street, Methuen Mayor Neil Perry says that city councilors need to choose their words carefully or the city will have more lawsuits to settle in the future.

Mayor Perry also admonished Steve Saba and other city councilors for not listening to the advice of City Attorney Rick D'Agostino, who cautioned them in 2018 that their words and actions could result in lawsuit payouts.

At the time, Councilor Saba bragged

that he wasn't afraid of a lawsuit yet is now asking the mayor and council to pay his legal bills if he is sued personally for his abuse of power at the council table.

"A review of documents related to the case shows that the city solicitor informed then-Council Chair Kannan, Councilor Saba, and Councilor McCarty among other recipients that 'the prospects for an adverse finding against the city are highly favorable'." Perry said.

"They were advised that '[a]n ultimate finding of Civil Rights violations by the city would render a judgement in a high dollar amount. . . [and that] in addition to this bleak scenario' there was a concurrent investigation occurring with an independent agency that could potentially result in additional civil or criminal penalties."

"I encourage all elected officials to choose their words responsibly on the floor, to understand the laws, and to reach out to state offices (Ethics, Attorney General, and Inspector General) with questions when difficult situations arise, and to always err on the side of protecting the residents they serve."

Perry said that councilors have a financial "duty to residents to protect [the city's] interests. This includes speaking carefully on the floor to ensure we do not incur liability or breach any person's rights. We also must avoid conflicts [of interest], and always put the interests of the residents and city first."

Perry says that while the previous Mayor negotiated the settlement offer, he did sign the final agreement on the advice of the city solicitor because it was clear that the statements and actions of Councilors Saba and other councilors caused a financial liability for the city. ♦



**CONGRATULATIONS VALLEY PATRIOT ON YOUR 16TH ANNIVERSARY AND FOR ALL YOU DO TO HELP VETERANS, THE HOMELESS, AND HONORING OUR FIRST RESPONDERS!**

STATE SENATOR DIANA DIZOGLIO

**DAWN PEASE**  
PRESIDENT

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THE METHUEN ONION IS NO MORE

It's a sad day in Methuen without the entertainment of Methuen's parody news website Methuen Confidential, or as we like to call it, the Methuen Onion. Word has it that several people slandered on the fake news website have retained attorneys and are in the process of getting a court order to gain the identity of who set up the fake news site. With a day or so of lawyers being retained on this matter, Methuen Confidential announced that they were going to stop publishing their fake news. But, that isn't going to stop the people looking to sue the website owner as the libel they committed against local officials has already occurred and done damage to people's reputations. We will fully update all of you when this lawsuit progresses.

NORTH ANDOVER ANNUAL TOWN ELECTIONS

It's a race for the board of selectmen in North Andover as voters head to the polls on March 31st for the annual town elections. There is one open seat on the board, currently being held by Chris Nobile. In most elections incumbents get reelected more than 90% of the time.

But, with three strong challengers this year Nobile has his work cut out for him if he is going to retain his seat at the end of the month. Challenging Nobile is conservative Luke Noble who says that over development in town is his number one concern for the taxpayers.

Also challenging Nobile are Laura Bates who is an engineer and concerned about not having enough affordable housing in town. Alissa Koenig is also seeking this seat. She is an attorney, a mother, and is concerned about "women's" issues.

The Valley Patriot is holding a debate in this race on the Paying Attention! Podcast March 19th at 5pm at the Studio 21 Podcast Cafe in Salem NH.

**TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK**

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**KEYNOTE SPEAKER: COREY LEWANDOWSKI**

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DEMOCRAT AND THE CORONA VIRUS HYSTERIA

More people are killed every year in America by criminal illegal aliens than have contracted the corona virus. That is a fact. But you would never know it watching democrats in full hysteria over a Chinese virus that has only killed six people in this country as of the time we went to print.

What is most weird about this issue is that the democrats in Washington will do anything to maintain open borders, stop the building of a wall, and want to welcome everyone in the world to this country as if we have unlimited space. But, if we have open borders and anyone can come here unvetted, we are welcoming the corona virus as well as other deadly diseases from the third world.

I will say it again, everything the democrats in DC say they believe in is in direct

contradiction to everything else they say they believe in. You cannot be for open borders and welcome people from every third world hell hole into this country with no medical or background screening and then whip the world into hysteria of doom and devastation when six Americans die from the coronavirus from... another country.

VALLEY PATRIOT ANNIVERSARY BASH SCHOLARSHIPS

Every year at The Valley Patriot's Annual Charity BASH we raise money for local students trying to get to college. We rely on the generosity of our readers and supporters to reach out and donate so that we can give each student as much as we can towards their tuition and fees next fall. The Valley Patriot BASH will be held at the Firefighters Relief's In on March 27th.

We are still taking applications for the Whittier Scholarship and the Dan Coady Memorial Scholarship. See details below.

\*DAN COADY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP- Established two years ago by one of our readers, Al Veilleux who started this scholarship with a \$500 donation to the memory of Dan Coady Jr. who was killed in a tragic accident on Rt. 495 just a week before our annual BASH in 2018.

Dan Coady Memorial Scholarship will go to a student who attended the Thomson School in North Andover where at least one of Dan Coady's children currently attend. Students interested should email valleypatriot@aol.com. Anyone interested in donating to this scholarship can send a check made Payable to Valley Patriot BASH, 75 Main St., North Andover, MA 01845

\*MICHELLE DELUCA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Earlier this year former Lawrence resident Michele Deluca passed away from cancer. In her memory, her brother Kenneth set up this scholarship for a graduating senior from Haverhill High School who will major in Criminal Justice or Social Work in college. Students interested should email valleypatriot@aol.com. Anyone interested in donating to this scholarship can send a check made Payable to Valley Patriot BASH, 75 Main St., North Andover, MA 01845

\*LAWRENCE HIGH JRROTC SCHOLARSHIP The Valley Patriot has been giving out scholarships to students from Lawrence High School since 2012. Three years ago, army vet Eugene Smith offered \$1,000 to our LHS Scholarship on the condition it go to a student of the JrROTC program. This year's scholarship will go to Camilla Herrera who is a member of the national honor society. Because we partner with the Lawrence High Alumni Association, your donation to this scholarship is tax deductible. Anyone interested in donating to this scholarship can send a check made Payable to Lawrence High Alumni Association ECCF, and mail it to 75 Main St., North Andover, MA 01845.

\*WHITTIER TECH SCHOLARSHIP

This Scholarship was established two years ago by one of our readers, Al Veilleux who started this scholarship with a \$500 donation to help a graduating senior from Whittier. Students interested should email valleypatriot@aol.com

\*GR. LAWRENCE TECH SCHOLARSHIP This is the eighth year The Valley Patriot has raised money for a student at the Greater Lawrence Tech School in Andover. This year's winner is Methuen resident Ahlyia Leclerc. Anyone interested in donating to this scholarship can send a check made Payable to Valley Patriot BASH, 75 Main St., North Andover, MA 01845

AUDITOR BUMP: CITIES, TOWNS MUST DO MORE TO PREPARE FOR CHEMICAL EMERGENCIES

An audit released today by State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump calls on the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) to take steps to comply with federal guidelines designed to ensure cities and towns are prepared to effectively respond to chemical emergencies. The audit, which examined the period of July 1, 2016 through December 31, 2018, found the state had not established Emergency Planning Committees (EPCs) for 53 cities and

CONTINUED UNDER FREDDIE

North Andover Selectman Debate



Luke Noble



Chris Nobile



Alissa Koenig



Laura Bates

Thursday, March 19th at 5pm

On the Paying Attention Podcast with Tom Duggan

\*Election day is March 31st

CONGRATULATIONS on your

16th Anniversary!

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT 16 YEARS!



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**FREDDIE SAYS**

The weather is getting warmer, time to let the cat out!

**Freddie also Says  
EAT AT THE DAILY DOSE  
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towns in which businesses use and store significant levels of hazardous chemicals. There were 442 businesses that reported inventories of hazardous chemicals located in these communities.

Under the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), MEMA is responsible for establishing EPCs for cities and towns. These committees are responsible for developing plans to respond to chemical emergencies in their areas.

“The recent explosion in Newburyport makes clear that communities must have a plan in place to respond to hazardous chemical emergencies. However, this audit revealed that the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency has not taken steps to make sure communities are equipped to effectively deal with such events, putting public safety at risk,” Bump said of the audit. “MEMA must quickly take action to ensure communities are fully prepared to respond to similar chemical emergencies.”

In its response to the audit, MEMA reported it will coordinate with communities

to identify areas that should be part of an EPC and take steps to support the formation of a committee.

During the audit, MEMA had not formed Emergency planning committees for 53 cities and towns in which businesses store hazardous chemicals.

Additionally, MEMA was unable to show Bump’s staff that it had received or reviewed each EPC’s emergency response plan to ensure communities were adequately prepared to deal with chemical emergencies. In its response, MEMA reported it would take steps to retain additional documentation for local emergency response planning.

In calendar year 2018, there were 4,277 businesses in Massachusetts that reported to government agencies that they used or stored significant levels of hazardous chemicals.

MEMA is responsible for ensuring the state is prepared to withstand, respond to, and recover from all types of emergencies and disasters. During the audit, MEMA had approximately 80 full-time employees and 12 to 15 contractors. In fiscal year 2019, the agency received \$1,720,000 in state appropriations and \$60,925,000 in federal grants.

**REPRESENTATIVE FRANK A. MORAN SECURES \$995K FOR LAWRENCE POLICE**

BOSTON - State Representative Frank A. Moran (D-Lawrence, Andover, Methuen) announced that a state grant program he filed in this year’s state budget has resulted in nearly one million dollars in increased funding to hire more police officers in the City of Lawrence.

“In my conversations with constituents, public safety has consistently been a concern of theirs. Year after year, I continue to make this a top priority of mine when the state begins to craft its budget. I am thrilled to be able to help secure this funding for the hard working men and women of the Lawrence Police Department,” said Representative Frank Moran. “I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Lawrence delegation, Reps. Christina Minicucci and Marcos Devers, as well as Senator Barry Finegold for their continued support in advocating for those whose tireless work keeps our city safe.”

Proactive measures as a result of this funding could include directed patrols based upon crime analysis and using community policing problem solving to address community concerns. Additionally, these funds can be used to restore, retain or hire police personnel to maintain appropriate staffing levels.

In past years, the grant program has been very successful in Lawrence. The funds have allowed the City to hire additional police officers and it has seen a corresponding decrease in crime.

**MILL CITY GROWS HOSTS ANNUAL COMMUNITY SEED SWAP AT THEIR NEW ROOT COMMUNITY KITCHEN - SATURDAY, MARCH 21st, 1pm to 4pm located at 19 Hall Street.**

This free event welcomes the public to swap and share seeds and network with local growers in anticipation of the spring season! This anticipated seasonal event invites local gardeners and growers of all levels to socialize and swap seeds, stories, and know-how as the planting season approaches. More than 1,000 complimentary seed packets will be available for attendees to take home, and all are encouraged to bring any unused seeds to share with others. The event is free and open to the public. This year’s Seed Swap also offers an exciting opportunity for the public to get a sneak peek at ROOT, Mill City Grows’ brand new fresh food hub and community space. At the heart of ROOT is a 400 square foot state-of-the-art kitchen where Mill City Grows will host its popular Farm to Table Family Cooking Classes, which bring together dozens of families each year to explore and prepare healthy meals created with locally sourced ingredients. ROOT will also be used for educational workshops and for processing and preserving fresh food.

“ROOT is a space and place for food justice in our community, a place where residents can actively take part in our local food system. That is at the core of why Mill City Grows was founded and we are so excited to make this space a resource for the community,” says Mill City Grows Executive Director Jessica Moore-Wilson.

“In a few weeks this space will be thriving with activity as families cook together, explore food culture and traditions, and grow their knowledge of urban agriculture,” adds Giuliana Cappucci, Mill City Grows Education Manager, who will have a key role in ROOT’s day-to-day use and maintenance. “We’ll also utilize ROOT to prepare our freshly harvested foods in our family cooking classes that we host with many community partners such as the Boys & Girls Club, Lowell General Hospital, and Lowell Public Schools. We are excited to have a home base to open up to our community for meetings and social gatherings to learn, cook, and realize the importance of having an understanding of the food system and how it affects us and our community.”

The Annual Community Seed Swap is free and open to the public, thanks to the generosity of Mill City Grows’ 2020 Annual Event Sponsors: Nancy L. Donahue, Microdesk, Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA, Bill Reedy and Darren End, Jeanne D’Arc Credit Union, Align Credit Union, Circle Health, Enterprise Bank, Plenus Group, Inc.

Mill City Grows is grateful to the following businesses for their seed donations: Adaptive Seeds, American Meadows, Botanical Interests, Burpee, Charles Hart Seed Company, Fruition Seeds, High Mowing Organic Seeds, Hudson Valley Seed Company, Johnny’s Selected Seeds, Mahoney’s Garden Centers, Park Seed, Seed Savers Exchange, Territorial Seed Company, Victory Seed Company.

For questions about the event, please contact Enrique Vargas at [Enrique@millcitygrows.org](mailto:Enrique@millcitygrows.org) or call 978-455-2620. Event updates will be posted on the 2020 Seed Swap Facebook Event Page.

**TRAM NGUYEN OFFICE HOURS**

State Representative Tram Nguyen invites the public to visit with her at her North Andover office hours at the Stevens Memorial Library Reeve Room, March 9, 10-11AM. Come by to say hello and learn more about Representative Nguyen’s work at the State House and in the District. Everyone is welcome; 18th Essex residents are encouraged to visit her.

**MOULTON HOSTING TOWN HALL MARCH 16th-** Representative Seth Moulton (MA-06) will host a town hall on Monday, March 16th at the Manchester Essex Regional High School in Manchester, Mass.

“I try to have town halls about once a month because they give me a chance to bring our region’s ideas and voices back to the debate in Washington. I’m looking forward to listening to folks in the district,” Moulton said. “There is a lot going on in Washington as we debate coronavirus preparedness and the nation’s budget. I am looking forward to hearing from you.”

**EVENT DETAILS**

6:00 pm, LOCATION: Manchester Essex Regional High School, 36 Lincoln St., Manchester, MA 01944. Doors open approximately 20 minutes in advance.

**GREENWALD GALLERY OF ARTS** March 4 – 29, 2020 at 307 Market St. Lowell MA 01852.

Almost every artist has work stashed in the corners of studios, closets and hallways...work that might have been experimental, from another time and place or just plain older. Artists move on creatively, but

NOTEBOOK: PAGE 19



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*Purchase tickets through EVENTBRITE*



## Exchange Club Police Officers, Firefighters of the Year

Each year the Greater Lawrence Exchange Club holds an annual dinner for police officers, firefighters, and EMTs from Andover, North Andover, and Lawrence. The dinner was held at the Double Tree Hotel in Andover and was sponsored by FH Cann and Associates of North Andover.

This year's winners were:

- \*Andover Fire Department: Deputy Chief Kyle Murphy
- \*Andover Police Department: Officer Joseph Magliozzi and Officer Justin Murray
- \*Lawrence General Hospital: EMT: Tracy Caldwell, EMT: Robert Powers, EMT: Dave Roberts
- EMT: Nikki Tran, Paramedic Jeffrey

- Condon, Paramedic Jonathan Dyer, Paramedic Lillian Hampton
- Paramedic Paije Massey, Paramedic Bryan Sullivan
- \*Lawrence Fire Department: Acting Lieutenant Eric Humphrey, FF Wilson Ventura, and FF Peter Humphrey
- \*Lawrence Police Department:

- Detective Angel Lopez and Detective Charles Saindon
- \* North Andover Fire Department: Firefighter/EMT Corey Pramas and Firefighter/EMT Nicholas Martone
- North Andover Police Department: Police Officer Julie Nigro ◊



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**JOEL'S METHUEN FOOD CORNER**



# Wah Sang

**Joel Faretra**  
VALLEY PATRIOT FOOD COLUMNIST

After our successful visits to Millers last month, it was time to get back to the Chinese review. There are a few in Methuen. Chef Co, Lucky Dragon, Fu Hing, China Star, and Wah Sang to name a bunch. Fusion House is more of a sit-down restaurant in my opinion so I didn't include them in this column.

With all those choices, I am going with Wah Sang as the best takeout option in Methuen.

**Appetizers-** When you think Chinese food, 90 percent of it is the appetizers. My favorite one from Wah Sang is their crab rangoons. We always get an extra order with our dinner and they never make it through the night. The boneless spare ribs are tender, not stringy like other places. Other family favorites are the Peking raviolis and their egg rolls. The chicken fingers and chicken wings are good; wings are crisp and the chicken fingers have a good amount of batter, not too doughy. On a few combo meals, an option is a curry beef puff. First time I can recall that as an option for Chinese food.

**Main dishes-** For the most part, we are a combo plate family and don't venture deep into the menu. Their General Gau's chicken has improved over the years. Not too spicy and the pieces of chicken are not overcooked. The sauce for the sweet and sour chicken was warmed up a bit too much. It warped the plastic container and had a burnt taste to it.

Most likely, you are getting rice with your meal. I think this is one of the places Wah Sang separates itself from the other take-out restaurants. The rice is tender,

you do not get crunchy clumps like other places. I will usually get a #13- Chicken Wings, Fried Rice and Lobster Sauce. I grew up on fried rice and lobster sauce from Jumbo House in Everett and it took a while to find someplace in Methuen that came close to the quality of lobster sauce that I grew up with and Wah Sang is that place. Nothing better than a chicken finger dipped in lobster sauce!

The kids are fans of the lo mein. My oldest daughter, who is a vegetarian, will go with the meatless lo mein instead of the rice (and a side order of scallion pancakes). My son will get an order of shrimp lo mein and will finish it in one sitting.

DJ Beauregard agrees. Here is his review. "Methuen has its fair share of great Chinese restaurants. However, in my view, Wah Sang takes the cake. You can't beat 'em, especially with it comes to their appetizers, like their chicken fingers and crab rangoons. It's all so darn good!"

I will give Wah Sang an overall rating of 3.5 beards. It is good and pretty consistent.



We have a couple of new places coming to Methuen. Mommy's Pho is coming to Ayers Village Road in early March and Pduz, a new pizza and sub shop, will be opening up in the old Vinny's Star Haven location on Howe St.

I will be venturing out of Methuen for next month's column and will be reviewing craft breweries in the area. There are many and hopefully one can come to Methuen soon! Feel free to reach out to me at jfaretra67@gmail.com with any feedback or recommendations! ◇



## Corey Lewandowski will be Keynote Speaker at The Valley Patriot's 16th Anniversary BASH March 27th

President Donald Trump's campaign manager for president in 2016, Corey Lewandowski will be the keynote speaker this year at The Valley Patriot's 16th Anniversary BASH Scholarship and Award Night on March 27th at the Firefighter's Reliefs In.

Each year The Valley Patriot gives scholarships to local high school seniors attending college in the fall. The Valley Patriot also honors police officers, firefighters, and veterans with awards to commemorate their service to the community.

This year proceeds from the BASH Raffle will go to help homeless veterans through Clear Path New England.

Joining Lewandowski at the BASH this year will be Democrat Massachusetts State Senator Diana DiZoglio, Republican State Rep. Lenny Mirra, Democrat State Reps. Christina Minicucci and Linda Dean Campbell, former Republican Senator Geoff Diehl, world famous weatherman Al Kaprielian and up and coming comedy sensation Eric Spagnoli.

Prior to becoming President Trump's campaign manager in 2016, Corey Lewandowski was a police officer in New Hampshire, worked as a political commentator for CNN, FoxNews, and One America.

"A few years ago our Keynote Speaker was State Auditor Suzanne Bump, who is a left wing progressive democrat. This year we have a conservative republican with Corey Lewandowski. That's the best part about our annual BASH. Each year the great people of the Merrimack Valley put aside politics and personal conflicts,

get together in one room, and take part in helping local kids pay for college, as well as honor police officers, firefighters, and veterans." said Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan.

The Valley Patriot's 16th Anniversary BASH will be held at the Firefighter's Reliefs In, 1 Market St. in Lawrence on Friday, March 27th at 7PM. Ticket are \$40 in advance, \$45 at the door. You can get tickets on line at Eventbrite.com.

Scholarships will be given to graduating seniors from: Lawrence High, Haverhill High, The Greater Lawrence Tech, Graduates of the Thomson School in North Andover, and the Methuen Police Superior Officer's scholarship. Students interested in one of these scholarships can email ValleyPatriot@aol.com and put SCHOLARSHIP in the subject box.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the scholarships or sponsor the BASH can use the email above or call (978)771-4091. Make all checks out to Valley Patriot BASH, 75 Main St., North Andover, MA 01845. Contributions to the Lawrence High School JrROTC scholarship can make a tax deductible check out to LHS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ECCF and mail to the address above.

Dinner donated by Salvatore's in Lawrence. DJ Services by Bell Aire Entertainment. Awards donated by Henry's Jewelry in Lawrence. Function Hall donated by the Lawrence Firefighter's Association. Centerpieces donated by Climate Design Systems. Corey Lewandowski appearance courtesy Dan Strange. ◇

## Happy 16th Anniversary to The Valley Patriot

While other local newspapers have come and gone throughout the years, The Valley Patriot seems to be the one local news source that continues to outlast them all!



**RYAN DIZOGLIO**

**METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

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*Year Remembrance...*

You will never be forgotten

Lawrence Police Officer  
Tom Duggan, Sr.



Killed in the line of duty  
March 16, 1990

*It's not how they died that makes them heroes, but how they lived*



# 30 Years Later, How a Hero was Killed And a Killer Went Free

**Tom Duggan**

VALLEY PATRIOT PUBLISHER

Lawrence police officer Tom Duggan Sr. was a police officer for 18 years.

He was my father.

It wasn't always easy being the son of a cop and the family member of many cops growing up.

At a very young age, I learned to accept the fact that every time my father put on his uniform there was a real chance he might not come back.

It was an awareness and a reality that most people can't relate to.

And though that awareness never went away as I got older, I also learned to have faith that my father was a great cop and he was smart enough (more importantly, wise enough) to handle whatever came his way. There was also a bizarre comfort in the thought that if he ever did lose his life on the job that, it may be protecting the lives of innocent people.

**MURDER IN BROAD DAYLIGHT  
MARCH 13, 1990**

Two blocks from the Lawrence Police Station, shortly after 2pm, Lawrence police officers arrived at the corner of Lowell and Broadway to find a man covered in blood laying in a dirt parking lot.

Because of his condition, they didn't even recognize who they were standing over when the officers tried to revive him and piece together what had happened.

Before an ambulance could arrive, one of the officers commented "I'm surprised Tommy Duggan isn't here, he must have heard the call go out." Duggan was known as an aggressive cop who never passed up an opportunity to respond to an emergency whether on or off duty and had earned a reputation in the community (and especially among his fellow officers) as a "cop's cop".

"Wait, that's Tommy's car, he must be around," one officer said. It didn't take a second or two for them to realize however, who it was laying at their feet fighting for his life. Officer Duggan wasn't chasing down the suspect or just in the area trying to help, he was the unidentified man lying on the ground with multiple head and chest wounds from an apparent metal baseball bat attack.

"My God, that's Tommy Duggan," Officer Samataro said out loud. Within an instant the call went out over the police radio "Officer Down!"

According to witnesses and those who investigated the case, just a few minutes prior, Officer Duggan was taking a right hand turn from Winter Street onto Lowell St. A car being driven by William Rodriguez of Lowell nearly hit him, continuing toward Broadway and finally came to a stop at a red light at the next corner.

Officer Tom Duggan, Sr. was on his way to court that afternoon and in civilian clothes. He was driving his own car when he pulled up behind Rodriguez and his girlfriend Doris Ortiz of Lawrence.

Witnesses said Duggan got out of his car, identified himself as a police officer as he approached them, but before he could say anything more, Ortiz jumped out of the passenger's side of the car and advanced on him, hitting and pushing him in the middle of Lowell Street.

Within seconds, Rodriguez also jumped out of the car brandishing a metal softball bat. He advanced on Officer Duggan slapping the bat in his hand over and over.

Because it was broad daylight, and on

a busy downtown street where kids were walking home from school, and pedestrians were walking close by, Officer Duggan pulled out his gun and ordered Rodriguez to put down the bat while he backed up into a vacant lot.

Duggan matched every advancing step by the perpetrators with a step back, luring them away from innocent bystanders and into the vacant lot in case he had to shoot his weapon.

But as Duggan reached the edge of the lot, Ortiz jumped on him, grabbed at the gun, and held his hands, just long enough for Rodriguez to beat him in the head with the bat. As Rodriguez came down with the first blow to Duggan's head, he fired his weapon, but the bullet only grazed the neck of Ortiz while Rodriguez began beating him repeatedly. Police would later learn that Duggan tried to fire again but his gun had jammed.

Witnesses said that Rodriguez continued beating him even after he fell to the ground and the two killers eventually fled the scene leaving Duggan in the dirt to die.

As Officer Duggan was rushed to Lawrence General Hospital and while doctors were frantically working to save his life, Rodriguez pulled into the parking lot to drop off his girlfriend to get treatment for her superficial gunshot wound. Rodriguez never made it out of the parking lot as police cornered him and took him into custody, covered in Duggan's blood.

**AN EASY CONFESSION**

When Rodriguez was arrested, police recovered the bloody bat still in the back seat of the car, but Duggan's badge was nowhere to be found. He was brought to the Lawrence Police Station, booked and questioned while word spread through the city and news crews rushed to Lawrence General hospital to report the story.

Rodriguez confessed, admitting he had hit Duggan but denied hitting him in the head saying that he knew a strike to the head would be fatal. He did admit to hitting him in the chest and side with the bat and Rodriguez even signed a confession.

For three days, Officer Duggan was kept in a drug induced coma to keep down the swelling in his head from the multiple blows he took from Rodriguez. Doctors worked around the clock to keep him alive, but said in the first 24 hours that there was little chance he would make it.

Though the incident happened shortly after 2pm, it wasn't until I turned on the evening news that night when I saw Channel 7's Gerry D'Amico standing outside Lawrence General Hospital reporting that a Lawrence police officer was fighting for his life.

Two days earlier the local newspaper had mistakenly identified my father as a police officer who had been wounded in an attack, so I dismissed the report allowing me one more minute of sanity before my life, and the life of my family would be shattered forever. When the photo of my dad filled the television screen and D'Amico repeated his name three more times, reality set in. This time, it really was him and the television reporters were painting a very grim picture of his chances of survival.

**A CITY STUNNED**

**FRIDAY, MARCH, 16, 1990.**

After three days of multiple surgeries, Lawrence Police Officer Tom Duggan succumbed to his injuries and was the first police officer to be killed in the line of

duty since 1953 when officer Peter Manning was hit by a drunk driver.

The whole city came to a standstill. It was all anyone could talk about. Everyone knew who Officer Tom Duggan was.

In a small city like Lawrence, his 18 years on the force had earned him a popularity and respect that was unmatched and still is, even today. I knew the loss my family was going through was unbearable. And so did the people of the Merrimack Valley.

When they called out the name "William Rodriguez" in Lawrence District Court at 10am that morning the entire courtroom, in fact the entire courthouse came to a complete stand still. He was big, muscle bound, and young. The clerks, the judges, the parole officers, even some of the criminals waiting to be arraigned on other charges had tears in their eyes, which was puzzling but something I dismissed as I tried to focus on trying to keep my composure in front of everyone.

As the District Attorney read the charges and Rodriguez' attorney plead "not guilty" on his behalf I caught him winking to his family members sitting just a few feet away from me. It seemed like every cop in the city was there, and every television news station was crowded outside the courthouse waiting for the arraignment to be over so they could do their report.

When it was over, Officer Justin Hart came over to me, put his arm around me. "Can I tell you something?" he asked. "Your dad and I never got along," he said nervously. "But I can tell you Tommy as God is my witness, if I was ever in trouble and had to call for backup, I would pray that your dad would be the guy answering my call. He was great cop, and he loved this department. He was not going to let anything happen to me or any other cop in trouble. He was a cop's cop, and that's no lie."

I was numb from what was happening but Justin's words spoke volumes. Oddly enough, it was the mere fact that I knew he and my dad had issues with each other that made his words ring truer and more powerful than if he had been a friend. He had said it all. Like him or not, Officer Duggan was the go-to-guy and within days I was about to find out exactly how true his words were.

Superintendent of Schools Jim Scully announced that morning that schools in Lawrence would be closed the following Monday for dad's funeral. Shops on Essex Street closed, a large black cloth was draped over the entire police station as the flag was lowered to half-mast.

There was even talk of canceling the annual Saint Patrick's Day parade scheduled for Sunday, but dad was a staple at the parade every year, working a detail and usually on hand afterward to quell any rowdiness from revelers drinking at the many city pubs along the parade route. "He would want the parade to go on," I told one of the parade organizers. And though I couldn't even imagine that it would, I am so incredibly grateful today that it did.

**A CITY MOURNS - MARCH 18, 1990**

With so much to do, so many things to take care of and a wake that was sure to be impossible to deal with, I just couldn't bring myself to think about the parade. But, dad loved watching the kids have fun and it was something he had enjoyed his entire life. It was hard enough just going to the store to buy milk or go through the



drive through for some food as it seemed every person I ran into would either break down into tears upon recognizing me or would just be completely speechless not knowing what to say. Strangers randomly came over and hugged me and even the paperboy knocked on my door to say how sorry he was.

I just couldn't see anyone. I couldn't talk to anyone. I couldn't even leave the house because of the affect my mere presence was having on other people.

But, as I sat in my living room that night, still trying to figure out if all this was real, in shock by what was happening and what was surely to come, my grief turned to utter amazement and even joy as I flipped on cable access. A replay of the Saint Patrick's Day parade was running and it was far better than watching more news reports about Rodriguez and endless recounting of the beating that led to dad's death.

Looking at the tv screen, I instantly noticed almost every float in the parade, nearly every marcher, and the thousands of parade watchers on the side of the road were holding handmade signs saying, "We love you Tommy Duggan", "Rest in Peace Tommy Duggan" "He died for us, A real hero, Officer Duggan".

The spontaneous nature of thousands of people in such a short period of time, on their own with no organized effort to publicly reach out to me and my family to express their love and respect for my dad. It is an image that will be seared into my mind for the rest of my life. It was at that very moment that I realized the magnitude of what Justin Hart had said just a few days before. The man I had only known as dad, was a hero and a mentor to more people than I could have ever realized.

Tears of joy ran down my face as I thought about him watching this surreal, almost twilight zone-like scene from above. Could he ever have imagined that he had touched the lives of so many? Did he ever realize how many people he had helped, how many families he had saved, how respected he was, not just among his colleagues but by the very citizenry he put his life on the line for during his 18 years on the force?

Could he believe it? I could barely believe it. It was as if the whole world knew how I and my sisters and my aunts and uncles were grieving. It was as if they too felt the enormous weight of what was going on. Like our grief was shared by the rest of the community. This was what

HERO: PAGE 20

## WILLS & TRUSTS ARE WHAT WE DO!!!

*Every day when we walk out the door, there is always the possibility that it may be our "last" time. You wouldn't walk out the door without your wallet; if you fail to plan for your Family's future, that's exactly what you may be doing.*



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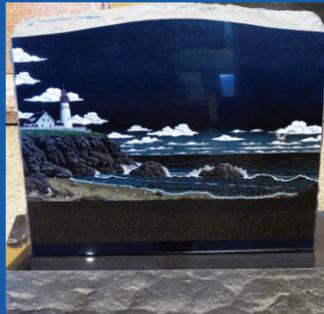
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## Why I Want Your Vote for North Andover Board of Selectmen

**Chris Nobile**  
N.A. BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

In 2017, I asked for your vote with my experiences as a member of our School Committee, Finance Committee, parent, and local volunteer, all combining in a way to make me impactful. I am grateful for the faith you placed in me. From that faith in me, I committed these past three years to advance North Andover:

- Rallying our community from the shameful Columbia Gas disaster.
  - Fostering three years of consensus budgets (and another in progress!)
  - Facilitating a resident-approved, modern Master Plan to guide development for the next 10-15 years.
  - A beautiful new Senior Center is in the works - with expanded programs/activities to support the 20% of our North Andover citizens who are seniors.
  - Recruiting and hiring of a tremendously talented new Town Manager
- I personally worked hard for, and am appreciative to share accomplishments:
- Helped bring in significant capital grants to make North Andover a designated "Green Community", as well as for public safety, and infrastructure improvements.
  - I oversaw Facilities and Capital Improvement plans and helped recruit dozens of resident volunteers for community boards and committees.
  - Fought for transparency and citizen engagement, including a proactive town presence on social media and the expansion of televised board meetings.



- Helped develop and implement a robust mental health program providing essential support to residents of all ages.
- Championed and Implemented a strategy to lower the town's cost of medical coverage for retired town and school employees.
- I continue to work with fellow board members to establish new town revenue sources and bring them to fruition - most currently, establishing the Amazon distribution facility.

I'm most proud of the fact that - while at times everyone disagrees - you've seen my dedication as a Selectman enthusiastically advocating for North Andover, soliciting feedback, and working with everyone for good solutions.

For me, being a Selectman isn't about politics or the next campaign; it's about you, my neighbors. It's been an honor serving our community that my wife and sons have long-called home. I humbly ask for your vote on Tuesday, March 31, 2020 at the North Andover High School.

Thank you,  
- Chris ♦

## Annual Telethon Showcases Community Commitment in Dracut

**Brian Genest**  
DRACUT COLUMNIST

March in Dracut means one thing: There's a lot going on!

At the top of the list is the annual Dracut Scholarship Foundation Telethon. At this time every year, Dracut shows its tremendous generosity and Middle Pride. The annual event is now in its 37th year.

The Dracut Scholarship Foundation, a non-profit organization that works to raise money for scholarships for graduating students of Dracut High School, was incorporated in 1959. Since its inception, the Dracut Scholarship Foundation has awarded more than \$1.7 million dollars in scholarships to nearly 1,700 DHS graduates.

Last year, the Dracut Scholarship Foundation awarded \$148,000 to 67 graduating Seniors at Dracut High School. In other words, it's a worthwhile cause and well worth your while.

The 37th annual telethon takes place March 18th to the 20th from 6:30 to 9:30 pm on each of the three nights. You can watch the telethon live on Dracut cable tv on Channels 8 and 22. You can also see a live stream of the telethon online at dracuttv.org.

Every year, the Dracut Scholarship Foundation Telethon brings out the best of Dracut, shining a bright spotlight on our community's long-term commitment to helping DHS students.

Please, donate to the Dracut Scholarship Foundation this year, if you can. No donation is too small and every donation helps a worthy student. By the way, all donations are tax deductible, too.

Visit the Dracut Scholarship Foundation's page on Facebook to get more information and updates about the telethon: facebook.com/dracutdsf

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In other Dracut news, the Board of Selectmen plans to interview the four finalists for town manager sometime in the next few weeks. The candidates are former Amesbury Mayor Kenneth Gray, Groton Town Manager Mark Haddad,

Framingham Chief Operating Officer Thatcher Kezer III and Southbridge Town Manager Ronald San Angelo.

The interviews will be open to the public and will be broadcast on DATV.

But there's still one question everyone around town seems to be asking: Why aren't there any women candidates on the interview list, including Interim Town Manager Ann Vandal? She's clearly qualified and capable. And she's already stepped up, stepped in and is doing the job.

To add insult to injury, as Selectman Alison Hughes pointed out, some of the finalists look great on paper, but not so wonderful on the internet. Google them and see for yourself.

\*\*\*

The recipient of this year's Varnum Award will be announced at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on March 10. The award was established to recognize a member of the community in Dracut who exemplifies the civic and patriotic spirit of Joseph Bradley Varnum through their volunteerism or demonstration of love of country through military service.

Joseph Bradley Varnum was born in Dracut on January 29, 1751. A veteran of the American Revolution, he fought at Lexington and Concord. After the war, he served as a delegate to the Massachusetts state convention and voted for the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

He also served as a Massachusetts State Senator, a U.S. Senator and a Congressman. He was elected by his colleagues to serve as the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

— Brian Genest is chairman of the Dracut Republican Town Committee and a member of the Massachusetts Republican State Committee representing the Second Essex and Middlesex district of Andover, Dracut, Lawrence and Tewksbury. ♦



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## Timely Bill Passed to Strengthen Local, Regional Public Health Systems

Rep. Linda Dean Campbell  
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

Given recent concerns over infectious diseases like the coronavirus, and EEE last summer, the State is continuing to take proactive action to protect public health. In 2016, the State Legislature created a Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health to find ways to strengthen our local public health systems. Last month, the Massachusetts House of Representatives passed a critical bill based on the Commission's recommendations that will make our public health departments more efficient and effective and improve the quality of services they provide.

Our public health departments are on the frontlines of some of our most pressing issues, including disease control, emergency preparedness, water quality, the opioid epidemic, suicide prevention, and more. Their contributions to our communities are truly invaluable, and this legislation will provide them with necessary support. This is especially needed in smaller communities, whose public health departments are often resource-strained and may lack full-time health staff and health inspectors.

In order to strengthen local public health systems, the legislation has two main goals: to improve regional collaboration, and to set consistent standards for staff training and data reporting. These two goals are essential to ensure high-quality public health services in every

community across the Commonwealth.

Regional collaboration is a proven way to maximize efficiency and avoid resource shortfalls. To encourage collaboration, the bill creates a grant program that will support public health departments in sharing services. To create consistency across cities and towns, the bill requires free standardized staff training at least 4 times per year for public health staff and requires that minimum quality standards are met for public health services. Further, the bill ensures that data reporting is adequate and consistent.

The Legislature included funding in last year's state budget to support this new legislation and to begin implementing its provisions.

Regional public health collaboration is already taking place in Massachusetts, but it is greatly in need of a boost. This legislation provides the incentives, resources, and framework to create strong, resilient public health systems across our Commonwealth. This regional approach with consistent standards will create a united front against major public issues like infectious diseases and the opioid epidemic. The bill now goes to the Senate.

State Representative Linda Dean Campbell represents the cities of Methuen and Haverhill in the State Legislature and serves as House Chair of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs. She can be reached at [Linda.Campbell@mahouse.gov](mailto:Linda.Campbell@mahouse.gov) or (617) 722-2380.

IN YOUR CORNER with SENATOR DIZOGLIO

## My Bill for Small Businesses: The MassMakers Act

Hello Valley Patriot Readers,

The importance of a healthy small business economy to job creation and growth in the Commonwealth cannot be overstated.

That is why I was so proud to file An Act to support MassMakers. This comprehensive legislation is the culmination of over a year's dialogue with entrepreneurs, business owners, and business and community leaders. They have told us what they need - increased connectivity, streamlined regulation and service delivery, access to knowledge and opportunity, and empowerment to succeed.

The bill creates a Supply Mass/Buy Mass interactive network to connect Massachusetts businesses shopping for goods and services with Massachusetts businesses who provide those goods and services - making it easier to shop local. We live in a global innovation economy and have to get smarter about using technological advances to connect with each other locally to ensure that small businesses are not just surviving but thriving. The bill also creates a MassMade designation to bolster recognition of businesses that produce or manufacture within the Commonwealth. Recognition is the first step in promoting awareness of the beneficial ripple effect that shopping local has throughout our cities and towns.

Coming from a border community in the Merrimack Valley, I know firsthand the challenges local businesses face - and in the age of online shopping, they are facing more challenges than ever. Under this bill, Small Business Saturday stretches to Friday, Saturday and Sunday to expand awareness and opportunities to shop local over the holidays. Alongside this effort, the Office of Business Development is directed to develop other policies that will encourage keeping consumer dollars close to home.

In addition, the bill establishes a Mass Main Streets office to connect available resources in one municipality, empty storefronts for example, with small business owners in another municipality looking to expand. Almost every state has an office of main streets to coordinate and promote revitalization. It's time Massachusetts fills this gap.

We have so many available resources but I've heard consistently that they are difficult to navigate across numerous state agencies and websites. The MassMakers Act creates the MassMakers Portal, conceptually modeled after the successful

Haverhill Business Portal. The MassMakers Portal will serve as a single gate pathway from aspiration to realization, whether the dream is to start a new business or to take the next step and scale up

an existing business, by providing A-Z toolkits and other resources.

We also need to be aware of the impact of overregulation on our small businesses. Currently, a regulatory impact review is only required of state agencies every 12 years. Less than 40% of small businesses survive past 10 years. It's imperative

that these reviews are conducted in a timely fashion to see what's working and what's not. So this bill synchronizes the review with the economic development policy required during the first year of each new administration so that the review can inform the governor's economic plan.

When we consider access to opportunity, I think of our underserved communities where many children grow up never hearing they could own their own business one day, or, if they do, they are hard-pressed to learn where to start. The legislation creates the HIRE MASS program to give students and adults with valuable trade skills the knowledge they need to start their own businesses. HIRE MASS would provide mentorship and tangible pathways to success. A complement to MassHire, which connects businesses with employees, HIRE MASS takes employees and connects them with the opportunity to become employers.

Another recurring obstacle is lack of capital. It's a particular challenge faced by the smallest of our small businesses. The MassMakers Act defines "microbusinesses" and charges the Office of Business Development and others to examine micro-lending to increase opportunities for access to seed money and ongoing capital for employers. Small businesses can employ hundreds but microbusinesses operate more like mom and pop shops. Having a defined term will help the legislature, when voting on legislation, to consider the unique challenges of microbusinesses and create opportunities specific to their success.

I look forward to continuing conversations with the business community as we advocate for passage of this bill.

*If you have any questions about this or any other piece of legislation, please feel free to contact me via email at [dizoglio@masenate.gov](mailto:dizoglio@masenate.gov) or phone at (617) 722-1604.*

*Yours in service, Diana ♦*



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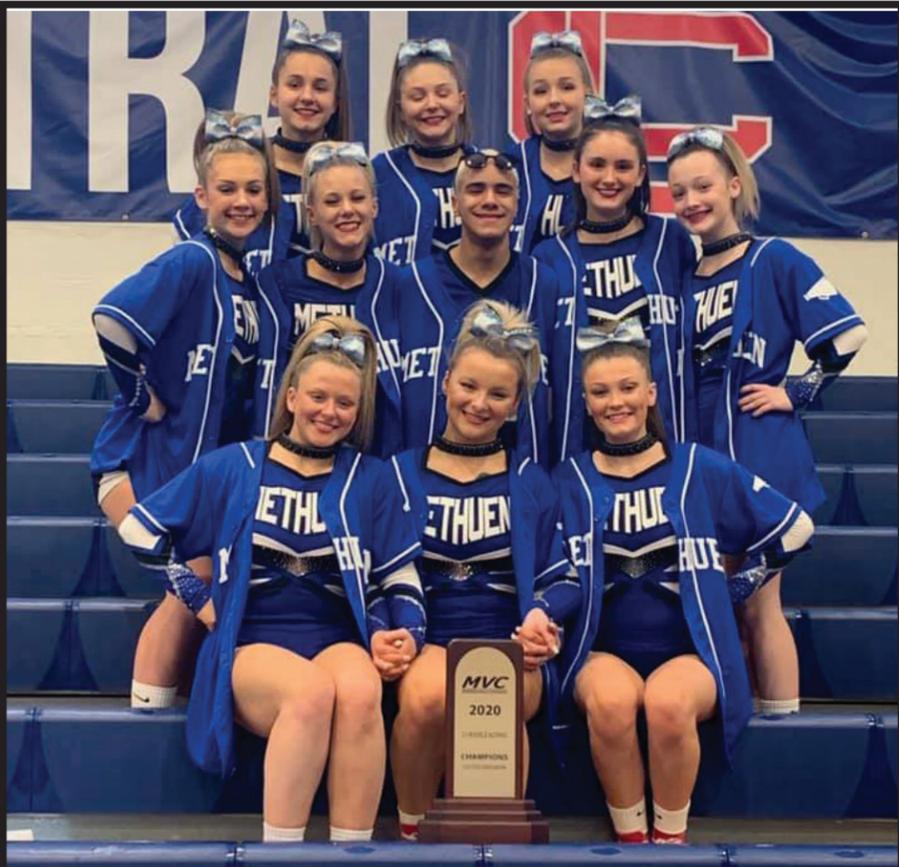


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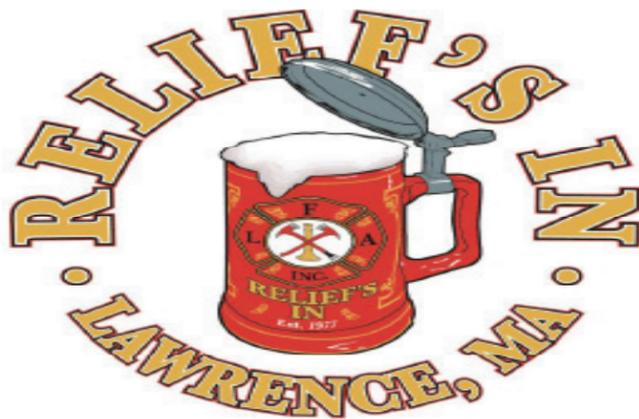
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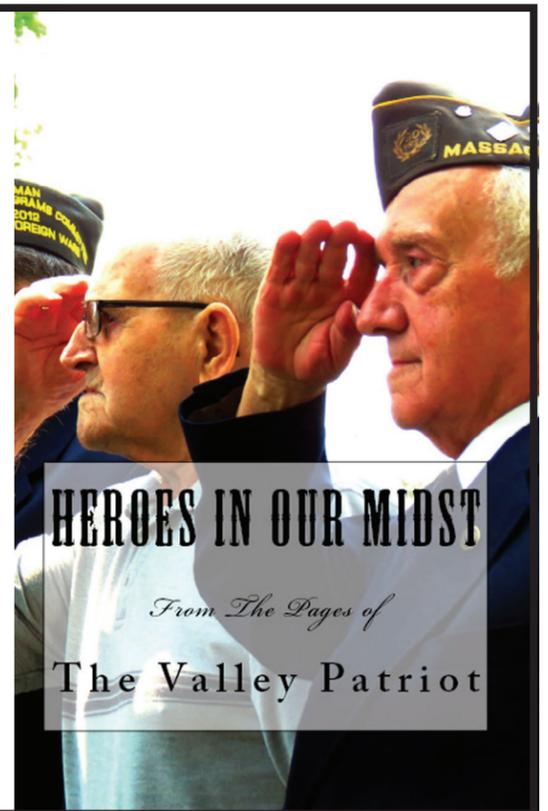
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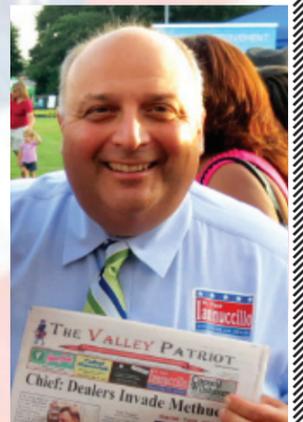
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THE  
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FROM YOUR FRIEND

M. Paul Iannuccillo  
Northern Essex Register of Deeds

## I Remember how they Laughed .... 16 Years and 197 Editions Ago

### I REMEMBER SO WELL ...

I remember when the very first edition of The Valley Patriot was delivered to my office in Lawrence City Hall back in 2004. I had never seen anything like it. It was a breath of fresh air for free speech in the Lawrence area! Tom, you and your team have come a long way since those days, you ought to be proud!

I also remember taking my share of criticism in the pages of this newspaper, too, but it was always fair and never personal.

Mostly, I remember when you first unveiled your vision for standards in journalism, how you were laughed at and mocked by the political insiders and the newspaper industry.



**Mike Sullivan**

(Then) Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan in July of 2005 at the placement of our very first newspaper box on Mt. Vernon St. in Lawrence.

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**NOTEBOOK: FROM PAGE 7**

**Your Health with Rick Bellanti**

leave a trail of work behind, the inevitable result of creative wanderings. And that work piles up!

Take Another Look gives those efforts a second wind, as members of Arts League of Lowell bring forth works that may have been neglected in their archives, to collaborate in an exhibit in the Greenwald Gallery. More than 25 artists are represented in this show, which includes photographs, paintings, ceramics, collage, textile and three-dimensional.

"This show demonstrates the depth and variety of the work of our artists" says ALL president Steve Syversson "and gives interesting insights into how artists refine and develop their creative process". The show also functions as a fundraiser, with commissions going to support the Gallery. On exhibit through the end of March, this exhibit is curated by Mary Hart, and provides a delightful counterpoint to the Faces exhibit in the adjoining gallery.

The Arts League of Lowell is located at 307 Market St. Lowell. Gallery Hours are Wednesday – Saturday 12pm to 6pm, Sunday 12 to 4pm. For more information, please contact Mary Hart: [mjhart206@gmail.com](mailto:mjhart206@gmail.com)

**WEST NEWBURY**

West Newbury Fire Department Reminds Residents to Test Smoke Detectors During Daylight Saving Time

Daylight Saving Time Begins CHECK YOUR SMOKE DETECTORS! Chief Michael Dwyer and the West Newbury Fire Department would like to remind everyone to test their smoke detectors when setting the clocks ahead for daylight saving time, March 8th at 2AM.

"Testing and changing batteries in smoke detectors is a quick, easy habit that can save lives and prevent fires," Chief Dwyer said. "We ask all residents and business owners to take a few moments to check their devices to ensure they're working properly."

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports that 71% of smoke alarms that failed to operate had missing, disconnected or dead batteries. The West Newbury Fire Department asks that all business owners not only change the

batteries in their clocks, smoke or carbon monoxide detectors, but also replace the batteries on wall mounted emergency lights and exit signs. All businesses have emergency backup lighting as a safety feature to provide temporary lighting in case of power failure.

In order to keep your home safe and prevent fires, Chief Dwyer recommends that residents follow safety tips outlined by NFPA:

- \* Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button. Replace the smoke alarm immediately if it doesn't respond properly when tested.

- \* Replace batteries when you change your clocks.

- \* Make sure that everyone in the home understands the sound of the smoke alarm and knows how to respond.

- \* Replace all smoke alarms when they reach 10 years old.

- \* Smoke alarms with non-replaceable (life-long) batteries are designed to remain effective for up to 10 years. If the alarm chirps, a warning that the battery is low, replace the entire smoke alarm right away.

The replacement process is fairly simple and batteries can be purchased for most units at the local hardware store. Many fire protection companies can also provide this service.

**JAMES MONTGOMERY BENEFIT FOR VIETNAM VETERANS**

James Montgomery is going to be performing in Lowell on March 14th at 7pm at the Elks Club. This will be a special benefit performance entitled "On Track to the Wall," a pilgrimage for Vietnam Vets to the Washington D.C. Vietnam War Wall. The concert will raise funds to help send 50 Vietnam Vets to visit the Vietnam War Wall. The purpose of this event is to give these Vets a "once in a lifetime experience" including roundtrip transportation, a reception in Washington and a visit to the White House. This honor is being bestowed on this select group to thank them for their past service, as veterans from this era are now passing on at a growing rate; many of them still suffering from PTSD and the ravages of having been exposed to Agent Orange. ◇

**Sugar Free Foods vs. No Sugar Added Labels**

**Rick Bellanti**

HEALTH & WELLNESS COLUMNIST

We've all heard it before, a healthy eating plan with low sugar consumption will lower your risk of heart disease, diabetes and other health conditions. Food labeling and advertising are tricky and downright deceitful, if you don't know what you are looking at. (It's as if they want to keep us all plump and chubby).

When reading food labels, it's important to know that sugar is listed as grams and 4 grams of sugar is equal to one teaspoon of sugar. When trying to avoid added sugars, watch for ingredients like raw sugar, high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose, and molasses. Added sugars are the worst ingredient in our diet, it has no nutritional value and can have harmful effects on your metabolism and of course can contribute to weight gain and other diseases. Simple refined sugars, found in processed foods (food not made by Mother Nature), are just a source of energy and have no nutritional value. Its job is to create a spike in blood sugar and then eventually a crash which in turn makes you crave more.

You should know that sugar itself is not the enemy, it isn't necessarily bad for you, but it's the way we eat sugar that can be detrimental to our health. While naturally occurring sugar in fruits and vegetables are a part of a healthy diet, it is the added sugar in soft drinks and processed foods that should be consumed at a minimum or not at all.

So how do we know which food items to buy when products carry claims of Sugar Free or No Sugar Added in their advertising? Keep in mind that seeing either one of these claims, does not mean that it's healthy for you. Sometimes just the opposite. Which is why a few columns ago I wrote about reading food labels and its importance when following a new healthy plan of eating.

When a store-bought item is labeled as No Sugar Added, it means that while processing the food, no sugar containing ingredient was used to make it, including sugar, raw sugar, high-fructose corn syrup, sucrose, cane syrup or molasses. But it doesn't mean there is no sugar in the product itself so be sure to read the label carefully. Most "No Sugar Added" ice cream, for instance would still list a certain amount of grams of sugar per serving due to other ingredients such as fruit with

natural sugars or milk sugar (lactose). Be careful and read your labels. For foods to be labeled Sugar Free, it doesn't mean that it is 100% sugar free it just has to have 0.5 grams or less of sugar (per serving). So watch your servings!

Sugar free items can be just as scary. If it is a food that is typically full of sugar (say a candy bar or soda), the artificial sweetener that is added to make it still taste sweet is very bad for us. Artificial sweeteners in our food trick your brain into thinking you are having something sweet, these artificial sweeteners have been shown to have the same effect on your

body as sugar triggers insulin, which then puts your body into fat storage mode and of course leads to weight gain. Artificial sweeteners have also been linked to trigger the onset of migraine headaches in the millions of people that suffer from them.

When reading food labels, under the ingredients list, watch for (not so Sugar Free) items hidden in there that say, aspartame, saccharin, sucralose and neotame all are artificial sweeteners that can be found in Sugar Free or No Sugar Added food products. While a diet too high in sugar of any kind can increase your risk for cavities, eating too many added sugars can raise your risk for chronic disease such as heart disease and Type II Diabetes.

Try to stay clear away from processed foods, baked goods, and soft drinks that may contain added sugar to enhance the flavor of the food. Added sugar includes baking products such as brown sugar, honey, maple syrup, high fructose corn syrup, granulated sugar, and more. Also, watch for sugar alcohols found in items labeled Sugar Free like chewing gum and hard candy and appear on ingredient lists as sorbitol.

Even if food companies are not being deceitful on purpose, they are just trying to sell their products after all. Labeling the products as "Diet" "Sugar Free" "No Added Sugar" or even "Unsweetened" for all us sugar conscious eaters, distinguishing one claim from the other is very confusing, so read those labels carefully and remember a little knowledge goes a long way!

*Rick Bellanti is a wellness columnist and is on a journey himself to lose 240lbs, and has lost 160lbs since the start of 2015. If you have any questions or comments, please post them to his Getting Healthy with Rick Bellanti Facebook page and once a month he will address a few of the topics here. ◇*



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## HERO: FROM PAGE 11



Dorothy Duggan Incropera, Thomas Duggan, Jr. and Melissa Duggan

he had lived his life for. These were the people he was willing to sacrifice his life to protect. And now that he had lost his life in that endeavor, they were all reaching out to say thank you. It was a more fitting tribute than anything I, or anyone else could have orchestrated.

**SUPPORT FROM THE LATINO COMMUNITY - MARCH 19, 1990**

During the wake and the funeral thousands of people crowded Lawrence and Lebanon Streets outside and down the street from Saint Mary's Church. Cops I had known growing up, their wives, their children, shop owners, crossing guards, even men my dad had arrested showed up to pay their genuine respect.

"He kicked my ass more times than I can remember," one man told me, dressed in a leather vest with tattoos up and down his arms and looking at least double my dad's size. "But if it wasn't for your dad setting me straight, I would be dead or in jail right now." Hundreds of people told similar stories without a hint of exaggeration in their voices.

When word of a news report that the killers, Rodriguez and Ortiz, were claiming racism and that my father had targeted them for being "Latino", a group of young Dominican men came over to me just an hour before the funeral was to begin.

"We heard the reports," one said indignantly. "Benny might have been a lot of other things, but he ain't no racist and if you don't believe me you just watch." Dad had a special relationship with the Latino community and had, on several occasions reported other cops for acting out on their own racial bias. They called him Benny because they said he reminded them of Benny Hill, the English comedian.

As the funeral procession made its way from Saint Mary's Church to the cemetery, I witnessed firsthand just exactly what those Dominican young men were trying to tell me.

Hundreds of Latinos lined the funeral procession through North Lawrence all the way to the cemetery with signs in English and Spanish, saying "We will miss you Benny". "Benny was one of us".

### THE CRIMINAL INJUSTICE SYSTEM IN MASSACHUSETTS

By October 1st jury selection had begun for the murder trial of Rodriguez and Ortiz in Salem Superior court. It was a media frenzy that dwarfed the death and the funeral.

Right out of the gate these criminals were demanding that "Latinos" be empaneled on the jury claiming racism that the jury was all "White". It was a charge that garnered lots of media attention and again raised the "race card". Adding insult to injury, Judge John Ronan began to unravel the evidence against the killers, first throwing out Rodriguez' confession claiming that it was "coerced" because the environment of the Lawrence police

station where he was interrogated made him "feel coerced" being surrounded with officers who had worked with my dad.

Throughout the trial Rodriguez changed his story multiple times, contradicting previous statements and claiming that it was Officer Duggan who had assaulted his girlfriend and his assault on my father was in defense of the woman he loved.

But the myriad of witnesses told a different story. A story of an enraged and out of control Rodriguez who wielded the bat and continued to advance while being ordered to drop the weapon. Several witnesses said they watched the brutal attack from the bay window of a car dealership right across the street, in the middle of broad daylight. While other witnesses said that they had seen parts of the incident in progress as they drove down the busy downtown Lowell street, all recounting how Rodriguez was the aggressor and Officer Duggan was backing away.

After 12 days of testimony, unforgivable mistakes by prosecutor Bob Wiener, and truly bizarre rulings by Judge John Ronan it was time to give the matter to the jury.

That's when Ronan stunned the courtroom with his jury instruction.

### VERDICT ROCKS A COMMUNITY

Ronan told the jury that in order to find Rodriguez guilty of 2nd degree murder they had to find that Rodriguez was the aggressor in the situation. He also told them that because Officer Duggan was not in uniform that they had to disregard the fact that he was a police officer at the time of the incident. This, despite the fact that multiple witnesses said he identified himself as a cop, and that his badge was never found at the scene left the courtroom attendees in shock. Ronan's jury instruction also flew in the face of Massachusetts State Law which says that a police officer who activates himself in response to a crime is considered "on duty". Not to mention that according to the law, police officers are considered on duty while traveling to and from work, including going to court.

It didn't take the jury long to come back into the court, but even with the bungling prosecutor and a judge who was clearly trying to skew the verdict we were all convinced that the jury couldn't possibly come back with a not guilty verdict given the mountains of evidence they had heard.

At about 6pm on the Friday before a long weekend, the jury foreman, Mr. McDonald stood and read the verdict, "not guilty" on all counts for both defendants. For a minute, it seemed like nobody in the courtroom even heard what he had said.

There was a long pause for what seemed like forever before the killers cried and hugged their lawyers. Within a few short minutes though, Rodriguez, Ortiz and both their families began singing and dancing all the way out the courtroom under police protection before our family was allowed

to leave, but not before Rodriguez looked me directly in the eye and literally laughed in my face.

I had been on the news every day trying to correct the misinformation he and his lawyers were spewing into the community and I had become a lightning rod for snide remarks by his friends in and out of the courtroom during the 12 day trial. Now it was he who was having the last laugh.

It had all come down to this. A stone-cold killer, spitting on the life my father lived, and laughing, after getting away with taking his life after backing him up on a busy downtown street.

I couldn't help but think, and I may have even said out loud, "he died for nothing!" At least with a conviction my father's death would have resulted in getting a cold-hearted killer with no regard for human life off the streets. At least dad's death would have protected other innocent people from this man's rage and disrespect for the lives of others.

It was dark and raining outside when we finally left the courthouse on October 12, 1990. We were stunned and confused, outraged and filled with grief all at the same time. It was like he had been beaten with that metal baseball bat all over again. As we got outside I could see McDonald, the foreman of the jury being interviewed by a local TV reporter. He was saying in a very casual tone how he and the other members of the jury had no choice but to let Rodriguez and Ortiz go free because they had to disregard the fact that officer Duggan was a police officer at the time of the incident.

He further explained that a man who was not a police officer, approaching someone else's car the way my father had done, showed aggression on his part and, to add insult to injury, McDonald said that a gun was a more aggressive weapon than a bat. To find second degree murder, the prosecution had to prove Rodriguez was the aggressor and "with what we had to work with, we felt they didn't do a good job of proving that."

Eight months later Rodriguez car jacked a man in Lowell telling his victim "I just got away with killing a F\*ing cop if you don't do what I say I will kill you too". Rodriguez served eight months in prison for that crime. The last I heard he was still living in Lowell and according to our sources his former girlfriend, Doris Ortiz, still lives in the city of Lawrence.

### THE NATION REMEMBERS A HERO

In May of 1991, Lawrence Police Officer Thomas Duggan, Sr. was honored in our nation's capital at a ceremony for Police Officers killed in the line of duty. His name is now permanently etched on panel 36W of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial on Judiciary Square in Washington D.C. Every year in May, police officers who had been killed the year before are honored at a candle light ceremony and the names of those officers are added to the national monument.

The memorial was built entirely with private money after Congress deeded the land for national monument to our nation's peace keepers who made the ultimate sacrifice.

In Lawrence, the men and women who served with my father also erected a memorial to commemorate the service and sacrifice of both Officers Tom Duggan Sr. and Peter Manning, the only two police officers to lose their lives protecting the people of Lawrence.

Former Lawrence Mayor Mike Sullivan approved the naming of a street for both officers, Duggan Way and Manning Way, the two streets surrounding the Lawrence Police Memorial in Saint Mary's Cemetery on Tower Hill.

Officer Duggan's name also appears on the Massachusetts Police Memorial in Boston.

On this, the 30th anniversary of his tragic death, and the senseless incompetence of our criminal justice system which set his killers singing and dancing out of a courtroom, it is important for the community to remember how he died. But far more important is remembering how he lived. A father, a brother, a husband, a grandfather, a man who was always there to answer the call when someone's life was in danger.

I was honored to be the guest speaker at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. to read from the Roll Call of Honor on the 20th anniversary of my dad's death. A memorial which has inscribed upon it, the names of every police officer killed in the line of duty in our nation's history. There, before President Obama's cabinet and the families of slain officers from across the country, Officer Duggan's service and sacrifice was honored thanks to Craig Floyd, President of the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund.

Even today, thinking about how he took such precautions to back up into a vacant lot to make sure he was in a position to fire his weapon without harming an innocent bystander, instead of just taking out his attackers as they advanced on him, is a glaring example of how he cared for other people and always thought of others before himself.

He wasn't perfect. Nobody is. But he walked the walk every single day of his life. He didn't leave the hard work for others and he was always the first guy in the door when someone called for help.

A piece of our safety and security died that day on March 16th 1990 when his life slowly slipped away forever. And a piece of me died when the people who killed him were set free as if his life had meant nothing. But his memory and the cause he took on every single day, protecting others, lives on in the men and women who continue to put on a badge and a gun and carry on without him.

Rest in Peace dad. Your spirit lives on. You are not, and will not be, forgotten. ◇



1990 Police Survivor Thomas Duggan, Jr. speaks at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial services in 2010, alongside Homeland Security Director Janet Napolitano, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and in front of thousands of law enforcement officers and family members from all over the country.

# TEEN TALK with ABBY

## The Census; What it is and Why you Should Take it

What is the United States Census?

By basic definition, the Census is a national count of the number of people living in the country. Done every ten years, as 2020 has begun, the United States has been preparing to roll out the new Census to figure out some essential things for the country's future.

How exactly is the Census used, and why is it so important? The Census count is used to figure out how and where to distribute more than \$860 billion in federal funding for health systems, infrastructure, schools, and more. The Census count is also used to determine how many members of the U.S. House of Representatives a state will need to represent said state's needs accurately.

This year, the Census, for the first time, will be available to be completed online, by phone, or by mail. Some other new updates to the Census include the option to check same-sex marriage, after the 2015 legalization in all fifty states. One of the main concerns about the Census is how accurately smaller communities will be counted, with people who live in rural communities in particular who have limited to no internet access.

Another concern of many is how exactly the government will keep its citizens safe from cybersecurity threats and hacks if chosen to do online. That issue can mostly be resolved by either taking your Census over the phone or with good old-fashioned pen and paper.

What are some important dates to keep in mind in the upcoming months? Starting in March from the 12th to 20th, households will begin to receive the official Census Bureau mail with information on how to respond to the Census through their preferred method. On April 1st, Census Day is observed nationwide, and by this date, every home will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. Then by May-July, Census takers will be out in the community to make sure that all who have yet to respond to the Census are accounted for.

The Census, while it may seem daunting, is a crucial thing to participate in helping create a better future and provide better and equal opportunity for everyone in the Country because they deserve it.

Visit <https://2020census.gov/en.html> for more information on the 2020 Census. ◇



## HERO: FROM PAGE 1

career, I personally knew a Navy Electrician who was electrocuted and killed during the Hurricane Hugo Recovery in Puerto Rico, a US Marine with a young wife and family, killed while maintaining a minefield in Cuba, and a US Navy Diver, killed by Muslim terrorists on a TWA commercial flight out of Greece, he was out of uniform, and unarmed, flying home from a deployment to Greece. These three American heroes died serving their nation, how can a civilian or a politician not call them "Veterans"? More importantly how can they and their families be denied Veteran's benefits?

The men and women who volunteer at the Lawrence DAV understand this, and are adept in navigating the forms, phone calls, and appointments required to assist all Veterans. The men who waded ashore on June 6, 1944 at Normandy, deserve their Veteran's Benefits, the men and women who worked six and seven days a week, often 12 to 16 hours a day, at the Pentagon during our Nation's wars, deserve their benefits, and the nineteen Sailors who were ambushed by Puerto Rican terrorists while riding on a bus in December of 1979, also deserve their benefits.

US Coast Guard Veteran Don Silba, US Navy Veteran Jim Moran, and many others at the Lawrence DAV are rolling up their sleeves and providing our Veterans with the assistance they need in obtaining these hard-earned benefits. Lawrence DAV Commander Joseph Augusta took me on a tour of their office in Lawrence, showing me the medical equipment

stashed in every available space, ready to be issued to a Veteran in need. The easy smiles, and the subtle enthusiasm of these heroes is contagious. If you served, or never served in the US Military you still can help the Lawrence DAV! How? This spring, I challenge every Valley Patriot reader to brown bag their lunch for a couple of days at work, and with their savings, send a small check made out to the Lawrence DAV, PO Box 374, Lawrence, MA 01842.

If you're a Veteran, or a widow of a Veteran, stop by on a Monday morning and introduce yourself to these "Heroes in Our Midst"; bring some Heav'nly Donuts!

The Dracut Veteran Services Officer asks all Vietnam era Veterans who currently live in Dracut to contact him as soon as possible at 978-455-1349. The Dracut American Legion asks all World War II and Korean War Veterans to call 603-518-5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC!

*John Cuddy served in the US Navy's Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the 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 23 years. If you know a World War II veteran who would like their story told, please email John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com. ◇*



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# ‘High Fidelity’

**Bill Cushing**  
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

I'm a huge fan of the 2000 film 'High Fidelity' starring John Cusack about a music lover and record store owner recounting his five worst breakups. So when I heard they were remaking the story for a Hulu series, I was very skeptical.

In this version, Zoe Kravitz takes over the Cusack role as Rob. Rob fears commitment, is fixated on the past, and can be highly self-motivated. She is the owner of Championship Vinyl, a sparsely attended Brooklyn record shop. Rob (short for Robin) is still reeling from a relationship with her fiancé that ended a year ago when he moves back to town and she runs into him on the street. Rob is desperate to know why all her breakups have been so hard, even the boyfriend she had for only 3 days in middle school, and she proceeds to name her top 5 breakups.

'High Fidelity', much like in the film, breaks the fourth wall. Meaning that the characters, mostly Rob, talks directly to us, to tell the story. Also, much like in the film, there are 2 other record store employees. In this iteration, they are Cherise (Da 'Vine Joy Randolph), and Simon (David H. Holmes) and they lend their own life experiences to help Rob, including crafting their own top 5 lists.

The show is produced so beautifully too, from the soundtrack to the great shots of the city and the title sequences of a 'High Fidelity' sticker in various places such as mailboxes and stop signs. The neighborhood becomes a character too as much of the action takes place while the characters are walking around the streets, bars, coffee shops, and of course, the

record store. Kravitz is terrific as Rob, and her performance as the protagonist of this show is what drives it. The entire series follows Rob and is seen from her perspective, except for one outstanding episode that follows Simon in his own relationship story. Holmes is the big breakout star from the show, and this episode really showcases his talent.

While it is based on a film from 20 years ago, the narrative is updated for 2020, with references to such things as social media, and how a record store can stay in business in the age of digital and streaming music services. Of course those aren't the only differences, with the main character changing from male to female we get to see the differences in how women deal with relationships as opposed to seeing it through a man's eye in the film.

'High Fidelity' was adapted for television by Sarah Kucserka and Veronica West, and makes great use of Kravitz and a whole cast of talented actors. For fans of the film, it may seem familiar, but the new storytellers give us a touching story of relationships and heartbreak. The 10 half hour episodes are just the perfect length for a weekend binge.

'High Fidelity' is available to stream on Hulu.



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

*Follow me on Twitter @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at BillsTVTalk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion. ♡*



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# Success God's Way

Peter Larocque  
RELIGION COLUMNIST

God Bless you all and greetings in the wonderful name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! Before I get into this month's column I must pause and give a shout out to the Lawrence High School Performing Arts Students who participated in the recent production of Jesus Christ Superstar! The play was performed at The Performing Arts Center at Lawrence High School at the end of January and beginning of February 2020. I was very impressed with the level of performance portrayed by the students. I am no professional critic but I know a good performance when I see one and this production by The Lawrence High School students was exactly that, very professional and spectacular! So, to all those involved with this production, I take my hat off to you and say, thank you, job well done!

What is success today? How is success measured? By who's standards? According to the dictionary, success is defined as the accomplishment of an aim or purpose. Purpose, isn't that what many are looking for? Purpose in or for life?

Obviously, the answers to these questions can't be summed up into this one column so I think we are looking at a series here. But for now, when it comes to being a success God's way, take a look at these scriptures from Psalms 1:1-3, "Blessed [Happy] is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.<sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. <sup>3</sup> And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

Blessed or Happy is the man who doesn't walk in the counsel of the ungodly. What does the counsel of the ungodly look like? Most likely it looks like Psalms 2:2-3, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,<sup>3</sup> Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Taking counsel together against the Lord and His Anointed would most definitely qualify as ungodly counsel, don't you think? Here's another section of scripture that adds to our inquiry of ungodly counsel. Psalms 83:1-3, "Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.<sup>2</sup> For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate

thee have lifted up the head.

<sup>3</sup> They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones." Again, we read that God's enemies, those that hate Him lift themselves up and take crafty counsel and consult against His people.

So, just in this small grouping of scriptures we see ungodly counsel comes from those who are against the Lord and his anointed, those who have set themselves up as God's enemies and who hate Him and have taking crafty counsel and consult against His people! This makes it very clear why by not taking counsel from these ungodly people one would be happy!

This begs the question you and I must ask ourselves, who are we allowing to speak into our lives? The people around us lend what kind of voice? The answer to that goes directly to how happy and successful we are in this life.

Now let's look at the book of Proverbs also known as the Book of Wisdom. Proverbs 1:2-3, "To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding;<sup>3</sup> To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;" Here we read that we can know wisdom and receive instruction from wisdom. Another words, receiving counsel from godly wisdom. Proverbs 11:14 tells us, "Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." A multitude of counsellors giving instruction from godly wisdom results in safety! But where there is no counsel from godly wisdom, people fall which is just the opposite of being safe! Proverbs 12:15 adds, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." Proverbs 15:22, "Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counsellors they are established." We read earlier the definition of success which is the accomplishment of purpose, and here Proverbs tells us without godly counsel purposes are disappointed. Nothing successful or safe about that!

So, now we can see clearly why God's Word The Bible says, blessed or happy is the man that does not walk in the counsel of the ungodly and that with godly counsel he can be safe and have his purpose established resulting in success.

This is just for starters folks; I am looking forward to building on this and seeing more on how to be successful God's way.

God Bless, Peter Larocque  
peterlarocque@hotmail.com ◇

## BENEATH THE SURFACE

# The Value of Suffering

Paul Murano

VALLEY PATRIOT MORALITY COLUMNIST

There may be no greater difference in the two competing world views today, secular progressivism and Catholicism, than how each views suffering. As a significant part of the human condition, today's world tends to see no value in suffering. Catholicism sees it differently. This season of Lent is a good time on which to reflect and reevaluate the meaning and purpose of suffering.

Three things to consider of the bat: First, suffering in itself is not good. Second, only humans suffer. Animals certainly feel pain, but do not suffer, since suffering necessitates possession of self-consciousness and the ability to mentally reflect on one's pain. And third, no one of sound mind enjoys suffering. It is not fun.

There are also three general ways to react to the reality of suffering – the secular progressive response, the eastern Buddhist response, and the Catholic Christian response.

The secular progressive response is to avoid all suffering at all costs, since to them it has no meaning. This is a cowardly approach since it often effectively passes on the suffering to others.

The eastern Buddhist response is to deny the existence of suffering by denying the existence of self. In other words, kill the patient to anesthetize the pain.

For the Christian, suffering is a consequence of original sin, and now serves as redemptive punishment. Different than the first two responses, the Christian response is neither flight (like the secularist) nor denial (like the Buddhist), but rather one of facing the reality of suffering with courage. When suffering comes our way and no reasonable means of pain-killers can alleviate it, the Christian response is one of acceptance, to face it head on, and to embrace it with honor and dignity. Doing so atones for sin – ours and other people's.

We all deserve suffering. This is because we all have contributed to the evil and injustice in the world by our sins and selfishness. The Christian knows that if we accept our crosses humbly we can satisfy justice and become better persons in the process. Accepting it without bitterness or complaining serves as expiation to redress the wrongdoing and serves as medicine to

combat the imbalance within us that sin has created. It is rehabilitative to an ego that foolishly believes we're in complete control of our lives. If we respond humbly to suffering we both 'pay the price' due to the injustice we perpetrated onto others and we purify our souls in the process.

The progressive and Buddhist responses to suffering short-circuits golden opportunities to change one's heart and attain salvation. Many people today, with a dearth of spiritual awareness, have no appreciation for this and hold with that euthanasia is a merciful act and should be legalized. Ending suffering, they claim, is worth intentionally ending life.

The Christian, however, understands that life is an unfathomable gift that we have no right to take, regardless of our circumstances. Since intentionally killing an innocent human being is murder, "mercy-killing" is murder. If one chooses self-murder one places oneself in grave danger of losing one's soul to the kind of suffering that is infinitely worse than what one can experience on earth. Since rejecting the gift means rejecting the gift-Giver, one risks the never-ending deep suffering of despair of hell.

Suffering at the end of one's life could be a hidden blessing for the one suffering. It is possible such suffering near death could be exactly what a person needs in order to repent and give his or her heart to God. In other words, taking away the opportunity to accept suffering and offer it up to God could mean the difference between an eternity in heaven or in hell for the person.

Life is not lived fully with a Progressive or a Buddhist view of suffering, where physical or psychological death respectively is preferred. Only the Catholic view of suffering, to take up one's cross for the purposes of expiation and purification, enables us to embrace life fully in this world, and gives us the best opportunity for living in perfect unending happiness with God and the saints in the next.



Paul Murano is talk host of 'Beneath the Surface' radio and video podcasts, teaches college philosophy and theology, and is a staff writer/producer. Check out Paul's website at Paulmurano.com. Email him at PJDM@aol.com.



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## Sue Piazza's Book Corner

### "The Winter Mystery" by Faith Martin

© Faith Martin

Book 2 in the Jenny Starling series  
Revised edition 2018 Published by: Joffe Book, London, Kindle: 229 pages, about 10 pages are some sort of ads for books  
2.0 bookmarkers out of 5

Jacque Walton, the author, uses the pen names: Maxine Barry, Faith Martin and Joyce Cato. Under her first pen name, Maxine Barry, she wrote at least thirteen romance novels. Under the Faith Martin name is one of her most popular series' dealing with CID DI Hillary Greene. There are at least seventeen books in this series.

I must admit that what drew me to this book was the cover. Beautifully done; it stood out. It is dramatic and helps one visualize the setting. One should continuously look at the cover because the way the story is written I kept feeling like this was not a contemporary novel, but one set in a much earlier time period.

PLOT: A cook takes a job over the Christmas holidays. The family's daughter has gone on strike and refuses to cook for her cheapskate father and the rest of the household.

The father is an extremely disagreeable man who no one in the area likes. Though he is the second son and the estate is to go to the first born, legitimate or illegitimate, he controls the property. The first born, a man whose prior health problems has left him a "shell of a man", doesn't have the backbone to stand up to his brother even though he actually owns the assets. The reader is quickly made aware of the fact that no one in the family has the backbone to stand up to the disagreeable 2nd son. The plot deals with English inheritance laws and a will generations old. The action revolves around murder and uncovering the culprit.

This plot is reminiscent of Agatha Christie's Miss Marple series. The cook here is a modern-day Miss Marple. There is the small village life. The being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Working with police, whether invited to or not. The fact that she is an amateur detective that solves crimes that baffle the police and that she does so in an inordinately short amount of time. Though she looks simple and unexceptional, like

Miss Marple, the cook is far from that. She is unsentimental and logical in her deductive capacity. She appears to be a spinster in a quiet little village. The similarities between the cook and Miss Marple are too many to be overlooked.

It might be because of these compounded similarities between stories that I had a difficult time keeping the year correct in my head or that the foods eaten, the village life setting and estate descriptions appear old world, or that the family members felt so trapped I'm not sure, but I had a real problem with the time period. I especially had a difficult time with trying to figure out why, given today's wide range of options for both men, and women, anyone would stay in a clearly miserable and tense situation. This last element added to my feeling this plot seemed off.

An additional problem I had, from the beginning, and I know it's a small issue, but it bothered me is that after 3 feet of snow the author talks about shoe prints that were left. Okay, the main character, the cook, was tall, the mailman, who was of average height also left footprints. I've walked in two feet of snow and did not leave footprints. My feet, and hips, sort of twisted and shuffled since I wasn't able to lift my legs consistently enough to leave noticeable marks. It seemed contrived and unnecessary to the plot development. The author's mentioning of this footprint section REALLY bothered me.

Another issue I had with this book is that English is very different than American English and the fact that there are six pages of Glossary of English Slang for US readers at-tests to that fact.

If you like Agatha Christie, you might like this book.

But, if I may suggest, if you like Miss Marple then read that. It is less confusing. The plot, given the time period, seems more accurate and you will be reading the original character and not a knock off.

For the above reasons I cannot, in good conscience, recommend this book.

Susan Piazza is an author, columnist, and blogger. She can be found at [susanpiazzaauthor.com](http://susanpiazzaauthor.com) Her newly released book "A Bird Call That Isn't" can be found on Amazon at: [www.amazon.com/dp/B0829MHLRX](http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0829MHLRX) ♦

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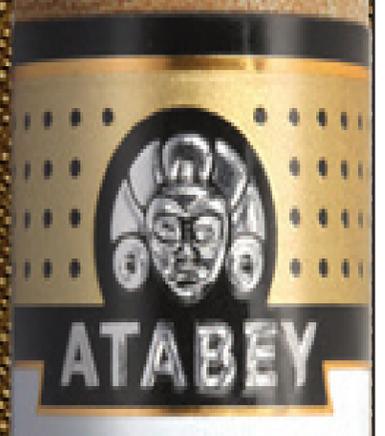
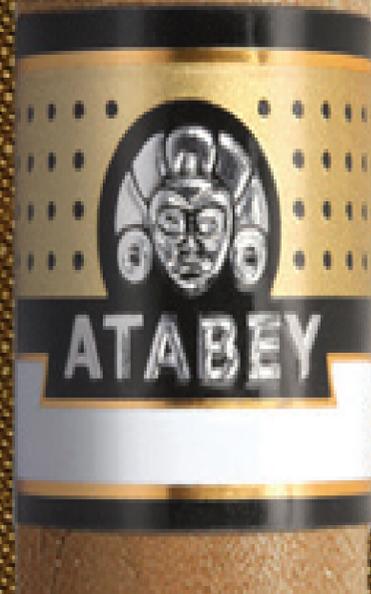
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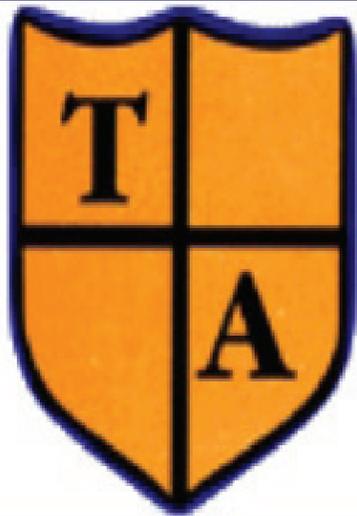
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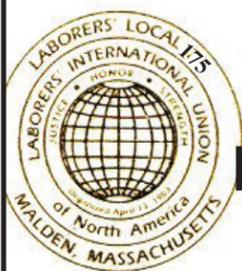
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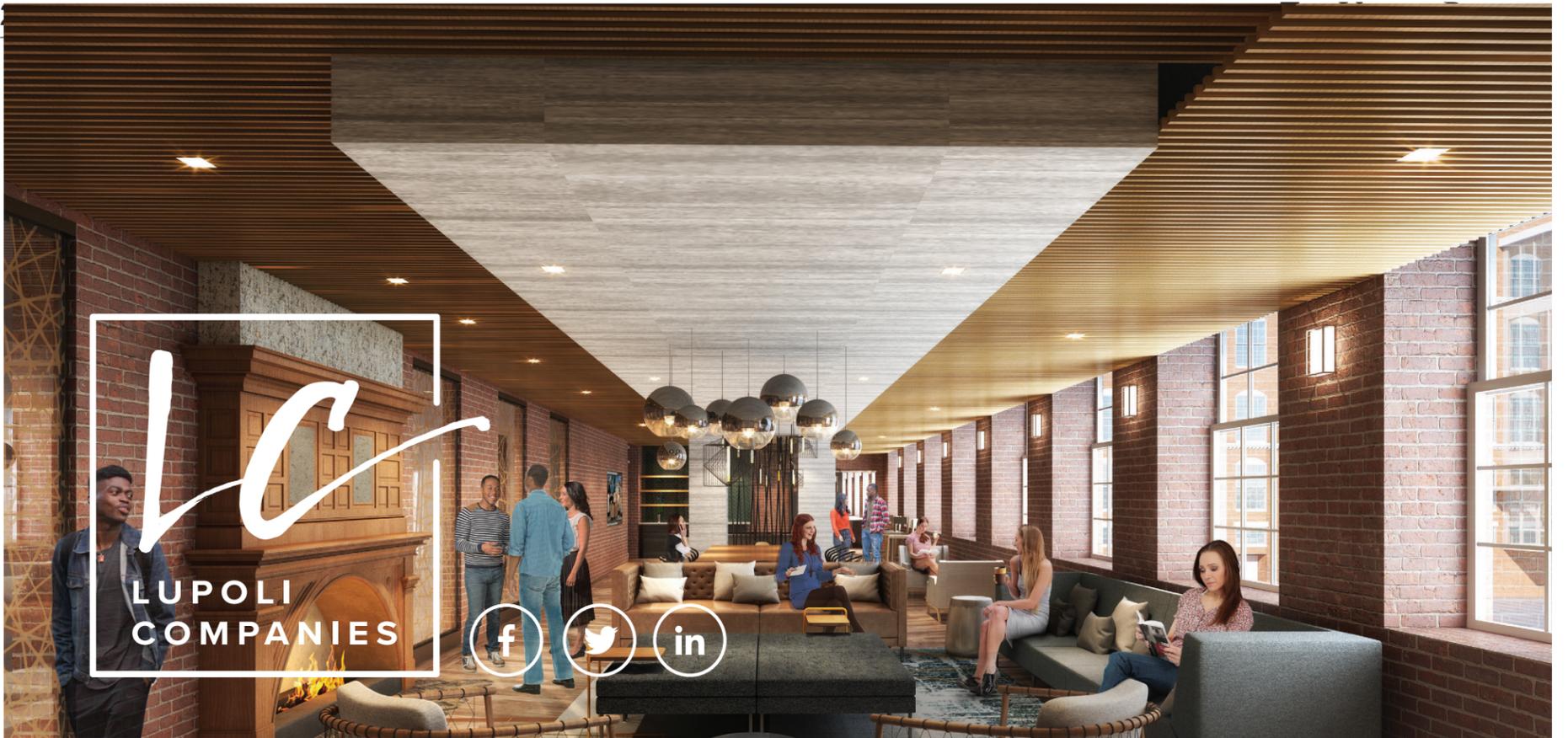
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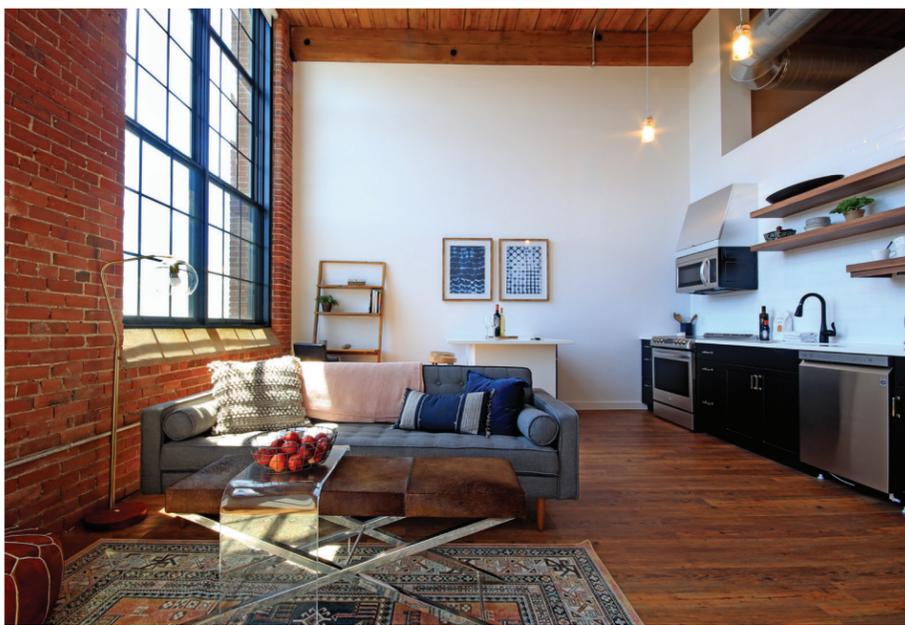
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