



Greater Lawrence Tech Nominates Senior for Technical Student of the Year Award

Superintendent John Lavoie is pleased to share that Greater Lawrence Tech recently nominated Bridget Severino, a senior of Lawrence, for the MAVA Vocational Technical Student of the Year award.

The Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA) recognizes one technical student statewide each year for their exemplary commitment to their career and technical education. The annual MAVA Conference and Awards Banquet is being postponed until it can be held safely in person, and all awardees will be notified and recognized later this school year. Pg.12

Dominicanos de Lowell izaron la bandera



Ceremonia celebrada frente al Ayuntamiento de Lowell durante el izamiento de la bandera dominicana en la inauguración de su independencia. Vea más fotos en la página 5.

Council's proposed changes to the Lawrence City Charter

By Richard Russell - Pg. 6

GLCF awards record \$152,500 in grants to local nonprofits



Catie's Closet, Inc. is a 2020 Discretionary Children's Grant recipient to support their Lowell program. Catie's Closet volunteers with special request bags packed with urgently needed items for children. Pg. 9

WBC Extrusion Products, Inc. awarded Business of the Month distinction



HAVERHILL- The Greater Haverhill Chamber has named WBC Extrusion Products, Inc. as its business of the month for February 2021 for their outstanding commitment to the local community during this past holiday season.

Since 1979, WBC Extrusion's Haverhill based facility has provided quality products, specializing in single-use blown polymer films for a variety of industries. Last year, WBC Extrusion was acquired by Gelpac, a Canadian leader of high-performance packaging solutions. Today the company is even more competitive and dedicated to the values of respect, integrity, team spirit and customer satisfaction.

"I am so grateful for the support of WBC Extrusion over the holiday season,"

said Chamber President and CEO Irene Haley. "Their donations to our holiday celebrations and to the Santa Fund were crucial in this difficult time. Thank you to all the people at WBC Extrusion for your generosity and congratulations on being named February's business of the month!"

Just north of Boston in the Merrimack Valley, The Greater Haverhill Chamber serves a wonderfully diverse, local, small business community. The connectivity between the people and the businesses in our Chamber is what really matters. Our Chamber supports more than 400 businesses, and we work to extend our reach and value every day. Visit us at www.haverhillchamber.com.

Legisladores envían carta a unión de maestros para que abran las escuelas

Legislators to teachers' union ask to open schools to students

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Regreso al aprendizaje en persona en las Escuelas Públicas de Lawrence

Estimados miembros del Sindicato de Maestros de Lawrence:

Le escribimos hoy para solicitar una reunión para discutir el regreso al aprendizaje en persona en las Escuelas Públicas de Lawrence. Reconocemos que este año escolar ha sido excepcionalmente desafiante para los maestros, estudiantes, administradores y personal, y estamos muy agradecidos por todo el arduo trabajo que los miembros de LTU 1019 han realizado para ayudar a los niños de Lawrence a continuar aprendiendo y creciendo a pesar de la pandemia.

Sin embargo, meses de aprendizaje remoto han tenido un impacto severo en el bienestar socioemocional de nuestros estudiantes, y el continuo fracaso del distrito para regresar a la educación en persona exacerbará la brecha de rendimiento entre los estudiantes de Lawrence y los de las comunidades más ricas. Para brindar a nuestros estudiantes la mejor educación, los legisladores y los miembros de la comunidad escolar deben trabajar juntos para garantizar que los niños de Lawrence regresen al aprendizaje en persona lo antes posible. Sabemos que los maestros preferirían pasar tiempo con los estudiantes en el aula en lugar de detrás de una pantalla, y esperamos trabajar de manera colaborativa con los miembros de LTU 1019 para hacer realidad la educación en persona.

La ciencia es clara: como ha subrayado el presidente de la Academia Estadounidense de Pediatras, "los niños necesitan absolutamente regresar al aprendizaje en la escuela para su desarrollo saludable y bienestar". Los principales pediatras y expertos en salud pública presentaron un argumento similar en una carta al comisionado del DESE, Riley, la semana pasada. La carta enfatizó cómo el aprendizaje remoto ha resultado en una pérdida de aprendizaje, así como en un aumento de los problemas de salud física y del comportamiento. En pocas palabras, el aprendizaje en persona es crucial para que los niños desarrollen habilidades socioemocionales y relaciones con sus compañeros. En ese sentido, los niños que sufren maltrato en el hogar a menudo dependen del acceso a profesionales en la escuela que se ocupan de estos problemas, y las redes de apoyo remoto son sustitutos inadecuados.

El aprendizaje en línea ha demostrado ser especialmente dañino para las comunidades de color más pobres y los estudiantes con discapacidades. Muchas familias en Lawrence han luchado con el acceso a Internet y la tecnología durante la pandemia, y los padres que trabajan se han visto en apuros para ayudar a sus hijos a superar las dificultades del aprendizaje remoto. Como ha indicado la AAP, "Sin acceso a los sistemas de apoyo que brindan las escuelas, las disparidades entre los estudiantes negros, hispanos, indígenas estadounidenses/nativos de Alaska y que viven en la pobreza continuarán aumentando". Estas disparidades aumentarán aún más si las comunidades más ricas y blancas regresan a la educación en persona mucho antes que las comunidades menos acomodadas y más diversas.

Con los protocolos de seguridad

adecuados, se ha demostrado de manera concluyente que el aprendizaje en persona es seguro. El enmascaramiento obligatorio, los sistemas de ventilación robustos, el distanciamiento social forzado y los nuevos desarrollos en las pruebas rápidas han ayudado a las escuelas a prevenir los brotes de COVID y responder rápidamente a nuevos casos. La mejor evidencia disponible muestra que la transmisión de COVID-19 en las escuelas es baja tanto entre maestros como entre estudiantes, particularmente entre los estudiantes más jóvenes.

Las escuelas de Massachusetts que han permanecido abiertas para la educación en persona rara vez han tenido transmisión intraescolar. Las escuelas de otros estados han tenido un éxito similar. Por ejemplo, en el otoño de 2020, 11 distritos escolares de Carolina del Norte con más de 90,000 estudiantes y personal estuvieron abiertos a la educación en persona durante 9 semanas con sólidos protocolos de seguridad. La reapertura de la escuela no condujo a la propagación en la comunidad: fuera de la población escolar, solo hubo 32 infecciones adquiridas en la escuela, 773 infecciones adquiridas en la comunidad y ningún caso de transmisión de estudiante a personal. En Wisconsin, las tasas de infección fueron incluso más bajas en las escuelas que en la comunidad en general. Cabe destacar que la situación de salud pública de Lawrence continúa mejorando, con las tasas de positividad de COVID bajando drásticamente y los casos diarios reduciéndose de 171 por 100,000 a mediados de enero a menos de 47.5 por 100,000 la semana pasada. Ahora es el momento de traer de regreso a nuestros estudiantes.

Ayer, el Comisionado Riley alentó a todos los distritos, independientemente de la prevalencia de COVID en la comunidad, a comenzar a planificar el regreso de los estudiantes de la escuela primaria en un modelo híbrido o completamente en persona. Nuestros estudiantes más jóvenes necesitan más educación en persona y tienen menos probabilidades de propagar el virus, y esperamos que LTU 1019 trabaje con los administradores escolares para ayudar a estos niños a tener oportunidades educativas en persona. También creemos que los estudiantes en años de transición (como los grados 6, 9 y 12) deben tener prioridad para el aprendizaje en persona, y que la planificación debe comenzar ahora para el aprendizaje durante todo el año para los estudiantes con grandes necesidades y aquellos a quienes los maestros identifican como necesitados de ayuda adicional.

En general, los estudiantes de Lawrence necesitan desesperadamente regresar al aprendizaje en persona y queremos trabajar con usted para hacerlo de una manera segura y metódica. Esperamos poder programar una reunión con usted y escuchar su opinión sobre este tema fundamental.

Atentamente,

Sen. Barry R. Finegold
Rep. Christina A. Minicucci
Rep. Frank A. Moran
Rep. Marcos A. Devers
Mayor Kendrys Vasquez

Returning to In-Person Learning in Lawrence Public Schools

Dear Members of the Lawrence Teachers' Union,

We are writing today to request a meeting to discuss a return to in-person learning in Lawrence Public Schools. We recognize that this school year has been exceptionally challenging for teachers, students, administrators, and staff, and we are so grateful for all the hard work that LTU 1019 members have put in to help Lawrence's children continue to learn and grow in spite of the pandemic.

However, months of remote learning have had a severe impact on the socioemotional well-being of our students, and the district's ongoing failure to return to in-person education will exacerbate the achievement gap between students in Lawrence and those in wealthier communities. In order to provide our students with the best education, policymakers and members of the school community need to work together to ensure that Lawrence's children return to in-person learning as soon as possible. We know that teachers would prefer to spend time with students in the classroom instead of behind a screen, and we look forward to working in a collaborative manner with members of LTU 1019 to make in-person education a reality.

The science is clear: as the President of the American Academy of Pediatrics has underscored, "Children absolutely need to return to in-school learning for their healthy development and well-being." Leading pediatricians and public health experts made a similar argument in a letter to DESE Commissioner Riley last week. The letter emphasized how remote learning has resulted in learning loss, as well as increased behavioral and physical health issues. Simply put, in-person learning is crucial for children to develop socioemotional skills and peer relationships. In that vein, children who suffer maltreatment at home often rely on access to professionals at school who deal with these issues, and remote support networks are inadequate substitutes.

Online learning has proven to be especially harmful for poorer communities of color and students with disabilities. Many families in Lawrence have struggled with Internet and technology access during the pandemic, and working parents have been hard pressed to help their children navigate the difficulties of remote learning. As the AAP has indicated, "Without access to the support systems schools provide, disparities among students who are Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaska Native and living in poverty will continue to widen." These disparities will widen even more if wealthier, whiter communities return to in-person education much sooner than less well-off, more diverse communities.

With proper safety protocols in place, in-person learning has been conclusively shown to be safe. Mandatory masking, robust ventilation systems, enforced social distancing, and new developments in rapid testing have helped schools prevent COVID outbreaks and quickly respond to new cases. The best available evidence shows that COVID-19 transmission in schools is low among both teachers and students, particularly younger students.

Massachusetts schools that have remained open for in-person education have rarely had intra-school transmission. Schools in other states have had similar success. For example, in the fall of 2020, 11 North Carolina school districts with more than 90,000 students and staff were open for in-person education for 9 weeks with strong safety protocols. School re-opening did not lead to community spread: out of the school population, there were only 32 infections acquired in school, 773 community-acquired infections, and no cases of student-to-staff transmission. In Wisconsin, infection rates were even lower in schools than in the broader community. It bears emphasis that Lawrence's public health situation continues to improve, with COVID positivity rates dropping sharply and daily cases falling from 171 per 100,000 in mid-January to less than 47.5 per 100,000 this past week. Now is the time to bring back our students.

Yesterday, Commissioner Riley encouraged all districts, regardless of community COVID prevalence, to start planning to bring back elementary school students in either a hybrid or fully in-person model. Our youngest students need in-person education the most and are least likely to spread the virus, and we hope that LTU 1019 will work with school administrators to help these children have in-person educational opportunities. We also believe that students in transition years (such as 6th, 9th, and 12th grades) should be prioritized for in-person learning, and that planning should start now for year-round learning for high-needs students and those whom teachers identify need additional support.

Overall, Lawrence's students desperately need to return to in-person learning, and we want to work with you to do so in a safe and methodical manner. We look forward to scheduling a meeting with you and hearing your input on this pivotal issue.

Sincerely,

Sen. Barry R. Finegold
Rep. Christina A. Minicucci
Rep. Frank A. Moran
Rep. Marcos A. Devers
Mayor Kendrys Vasquez

Rumbo

The BILINGUAL Newspaper of the Merrimack Valley

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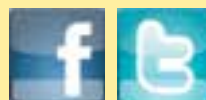
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Publicación de SUDA, Inc.

315 Mt. Vernon Street Lawrence, MA 01843-3206

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Greater Lawrence Family Health Center is currently seeking bilingual (Spanish/English) Medical Assistants, Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses to provide the highest quality care to our patients.

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POR DALIA DÍAZ
daliadiaz@rumbonews.com

READ IT IN ENGLISH ON PAGE 16

Desde Mi Esquina



No es momento de abrir las escuelas

(Vea la carta al sindicato de maestros en la página 2)

Es un oxímoron decir que "los niños absolutamente necesitan regresar al aprendizaje en la escuela para su desarrollo saludable y bienestar" cuando hay un virus que va en contra de esa misma afirmación.

El hecho de que "muchas familias en Lawrence hayan tenido problemas con el acceso a Internet y la tecnología durante la pandemia" es culpa del propio distrito escolar por la falta de capacitación de los padres sobre la tecnología. Además, ¿no fue el hecho de que las Escuelas Públicas de Lawrence (LPS) proporcionaron acceso gratuito al internet a todos los estudiantes que lo requirieron para las escuelas virtuales?

Los informes de la delegación legislativa estatal afirman que "el enmascaramiento obligatorio, los sistemas de ventilación robustos, el distanciamiento social forzado y los nuevos desarrollos en las pruebas rápidas han ayudado a las escuelas a prevenir los brotes de COVID-19 y responder rápidamente a nuevos casos. La mejor evidencia disponible muestra que la transmisión de COVID-19 en las escuelas es baja tanto entre maestros como entre estudiantes, particularmente entre los estudiantes más jóvenes".

Sin embargo, LPS ni ningún otro sistema escolar en los EE.UU. tiene datos para probar ese hecho. No nos engañemos aquí, los estudiantes, los profesores, los padres son personas. Son las mismas personas que han estado recibiendo COVID-19 positivo o transmitiéndolo.

LPS ha alojado a los estudiantes más indefensos en clases en persona. Esos son los estudiantes que no pueden hablar, caminar ni oír, los discapacitados mentales y con más vulnerabilidades que las dos comorbilidades que tiene Massachusetts en la etapa de vacunación de fase 2. Estos son los estudiantes que no pueden hablar para decir lo que duele o no. ¿Cómo puede LPS decir que los estudiantes están seguros si sabemos que LPS tuvo casos positivos tanto en el personal como entre los estudiantes en el salón de clases?

En cualquier día de un año escolar normal, cientos de niños se transmiten la gripe y los resfriados entre sí y llevan esas enfermedades a sus familiares. Las escuelas son un lugar en el que la transmisión es máxima.

El hecho de que la delegación se basó en datos de Carolina del Norte, un estado que ha sido propenso a no ser franco sobre su tasa positiva de COVID-19 es absurdo.

Escriben sobre números bajos de proporción de estudiantes por personal. No es la proporción de estudiantes al personal lo que debería preocuparnos. Es la proporción de personal a estudiante el que debería ser el tema principal. Los mismos estudiantes que contraerían el virus de un maestro o personal asintomático pueden llevar el virus a casa.

La delegación proporcionó datos de los primeros dos meses de días escolares en el otoño (septiembre y octubre) de 2020 para Carolina del Norte. Pero sabemos que los números más altos de COVID-19 de Carolina del Norte comenzaron en noviembre de 2020. En noviembre de 2020, tuvieron las séptimas tasas positivas más altas de los 50 EE.UU. La delegación no utilizó esos números.

¡Lawrence ha sido una de las ciudades más positivas de Massachusetts! La única razón por la que se han reducido las cifras de la tasa de positividad es porque las pruebas se han reducido. Los sitios de prueba en la ciudad están cerrando porque el dinero está en los sitios de vacunas. El Lawrence General Hospital ya no tiene carpas blancas para realizar pruebas, y el sitio móvil de la ciudad ya no está realizando pruebas. Lawrence sigue siendo la ciudad más alta de Massachusetts con una tasa positiva.

El hecho de que la delegación esté proporcionando números bajos es para usar estos datos falsos/incompletos para engañar al personal de la escuela para que regresen al aula. No digamos historias falsas sobre lo maravilloso que es abrir las escuelas en Lawrence. Lawrence debería ser la última ciudad en considerar la reapertura. Quiere estar más cerca de reabrir las puertas de la escuela nuevamente - ¡vacune al personal de la escuela! Consiga que el gobernador los incluya en la fase actual. Todos los conserjes del LPS han sido vacunados. ¿Por qué no los profesores?

Además, el alboroto sobre la apertura de escuelas de manera segura es falso a menos que haya una vacuna que nuestros niños puedan obtener para protegerse, de un virus que ha dado lugar a informes médicos sobre los efectos persistentes o futuros de la salud de nuestros niños.

Para los políticos, incluido el presidente, esta campaña de regreso a la escuela tiene que ver con la economía y hacer que la gente vuelva a su centro de trabajo. Se trata de dinero y siempre será de dinero. Ahora no es el momento de traer a nuestros hijos de regreso a la escuela. Es marzo de 2021, con solo un par de meses para el final del año escolar.

Esta reapertura puede esperar hasta septiembre de 2021, cuando se han administrado la mayoría de las vacunas a

la mayoría de los adultos y se publican los resultados de laboratorio relacionados con las pruebas de vacunas para menores de 16 años.

Para entonces, tal vez las vacunas para menores de 16 años estén en orden. Pero incluso si la vacuna no está en su lugar para entonces, le da tiempo al LPS para gastar los \$33 millones de fondos para COVID-19 adquiridos recientemente para reforzar sus sistemas de distribución de aire en estos edificios escolares muy antiguos.

En primer lugar, es una falta de respeto que la delegación estatal solo esté escribiendo a un sindicato, cuando hay otros 12 sindicatos en el LPS que merecen el mismo respeto. En segundo lugar, ¿por qué diablos está involucrada la delegación? Tenemos al Departamento de Educación Elemental y Secundaria (DESE) y la Junta de la Alianza que deberían estar

CARTAS AL EDITOR RUMBO

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Las cartas deben tener menos de 300 palabras de largo. Favor de incluir un número de teléfono o dirección electrónica para confirmar quién la envía.

negociando estas cosas. No solo apoyaron la petición de autonomía que posponía las elecciones debido a problemas de seguridad de COVID-19, sino que ahora van en contra de ese mismo razonamiento para hacer que los estudiantes y el personal estén menos seguros al regresar a la escuela el 1 de abril.

Si es seguro para los niños ir a la escuela, ¿por qué no lo es para los concejales reunirse en la Cámara para que todos podamos verlos en televisión? Otro esfuerzo para seguir con el engaño.

Vergüenza debía darle al Senador Finegold, los Representantes Morán, Devers y Minicucci, y vergüenza para el recién nombrado Alcalde Interino Vásquez por poner las ganancias por encima de la seguridad de nuestros niños. ¡Apuesto a que todos ustedes todavía están trabajando virtualmente o desde sus casas! ¡Hipocresía!

Fire victims / Víctimas de incendios

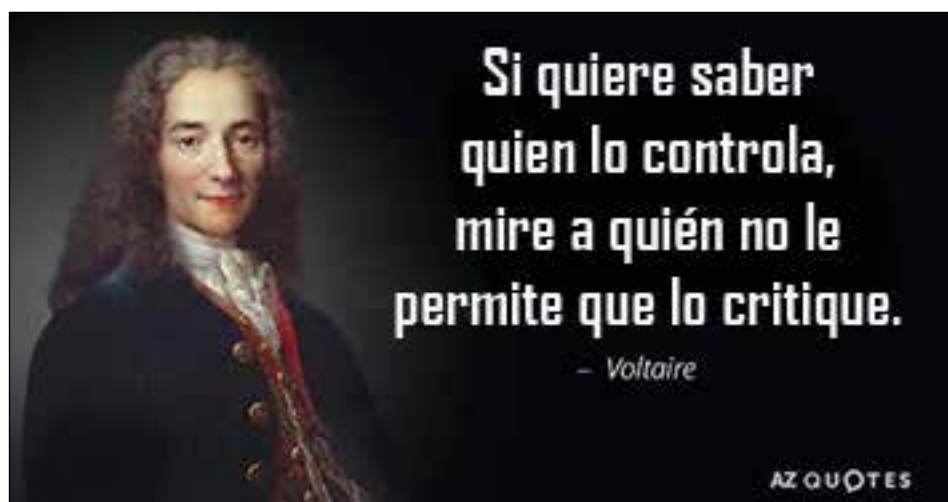
Please contact Heal Lawrence if you wish to make a contribution to the victims of the recent fires in Lawrence. The website has a list of donated items and things that are still needed.

Favor de ponerse en contacto con Heal Lawrence si desea hacer una contribución a las víctimas de los incendios recientes en Lawrence. El sitio en la internet tiene una lista de artículos que han sido donados y lo que todavía necesitan.

<http://heallawrence.org/>

heallawrence@aol.com

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Si quiere saber
quien lo controla,
mire a quién no le
permite que lo critique.

— Voltaire

AZ QUOTES

Dominicanos izan la bandera en su aniversario de independencia en Lowell



Fotos por Maylis María Brito

Dominicanos de los alrededores de Lowell se dieron cita para celebrar otro aniversario de la independencia de su país.

La ceremonia tuvo lugar el 26 de febrero a las 11 de la mañana frente al Ayuntamiento de la ciudad como hacen todos los años. Este año el virus dejó su marca como en todos los eventos sociales en nuestra comunidad y la audiencia fue menos.

Conservando el distanciamiento social, cantaron el Himno Nacional con mucho orgullo patrio.



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Vista de algunos de los asistentes.



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Council's proposed changes to the Lawrence City Charter

By **Richard Russell**

To be quite honest with everyone, I am slightly ticked off by the quick gavel by the 'acting' Council President and not allowing someone to figure out how to unmute their phone to get in their farce of a ZOOM meeting.

Here is a copy of what I was going to say:

First, why was the City Attorney's memorandum regarding changes to the City Charter allowed to sit for almost a month from the eyes of the citizens of Lawrence? The memorandum was dated January 11 of this year and was finally posted on the City Clerk's public meeting notice section of the City's website on February 8th and probably went unnoticed by most until people checked for the agenda of this council meeting last Thursday afternoon.

In Section 2 of the memorandum you want to change the term of office for councilors to 2 years for district councilors and 4 years for councilors at-large and later on you mention with these words "No person shall be elected to the office of city councilor more than 2 consecutive full terms." My first question is "Why the differing length of terms of office between district councilor and councilor at-large?"

My second question is "Does the phrase "office of city councilor" refer to strictly district councilors or does it include councilors at-large also?"

My third question is "Why didn't you include a period of absence from elected office to prevent individuals from jumping from 2 consecutive terms in one office to run for election to another council office?"

Next; in Section 5, you mention 3 member standing committees; if one member is absent, you still have a quorum. However, it is my understanding that the



chairman of a committee cannot make motions or second them. How effective is that for committee work?

Continuing on to Section 10, what safeguards are there to prevent nepotism and the hiring of politically connected individuals for jobs that usually require no heavy lifting or thinking?

In Section 12, you mention that public hearing notices will be posted on the city's website... Well, IMHO, the city needs to do some serious work on making these notices more readily accessible to the general public. Some of us know where this information is usually 'hidden', a lot of citizens are not savvy with the inadequacies of the city website.

In Section 19, why the change from 5 to 12 percent of the signatures? Isn't this going to add work to an already understaffed and overworked City Clerk's Office and Election Department?

In Section 21, you mention as 15 percent of the registered voters as the required minimum number of signatures

on recall petitions. First, you haven't clearly stated which officials are recallable and the time frames to be required clearly enough; and second, if a district councilor were to be recalled, does that require 15 percent of the registered voters in the city or just 15 percent of the voters in their district? And why is the required number set at 15 percent? Why not lower the number to a more manageable number for the citizens of Lawrence to obtain? Or is the number set artificially high as insurance that no one can be recalled?

Continuing on I, and a lot of others, would like to see councilors pay docked for missed meeting and subcommittee meetings.

Last and most importantly, I take it as a slap in the face to the citizens of Lawrence that only you, the councilors, have the expertise to be the only ones to be able to come up with these suggested changes to 'our City Charter' that are supposedly for the benefit of the residents of the city. Furthermore, to conduct these meeting, on this issue, while we are operating under the Governor's exemption to Open Meeting Laws flies in the face our American rights. Particularly when you, the council, are making changes in the way the city is governed.

Why was there no outcry when the 2010 Charter Review was tabled and never finished? I can't see any problem with this Charter review being tabled until Governor Baker's Open Meeting Law restrictions are lifted and a real honest to goodness face to face public hearing in the City Council chamber can be held. Or are some of you afraid of facing irate citizens of Lawrence over some if not all of these changes?

If you desire to continue with a zoom public hearing on this matter, it only shows that you, the council or at least some of

you have no concern for the citizens as this would be the second time in a little over a month that you railroaded something through the council without providing the citizens of Lawrence a proper forum to express their concerns!

If other communities are starting to open up their legislative processes to public attendance, then I think that that the City of Lawrence should do so also. To use the COVID-19 pandemic as an excuse to not have opened to the public city council meetings is not exactly to our American way of life; then I think that you should look back on the year 2020 where we had 2 primary elections and a Presidential election with no outbreaks of COVID-19 forthcoming from those events.

Quite frankly in the opinion of myself and others, the Lawrence City Council has put the ZOO back into Zoom meetings. The city bought quite a few plexiglas shields for use at the various polling locations for protection from the COVID-19 virus; why not put them to work by using them as separators between the councilors at the council desk? You have so few attendees at the council meetings, that there would be enough room in the council chamber to seat everyone safely. If the city can't do better with what passes for council meetings with Zoom meetings, then I think that it is time that you should consider going back to open meetings.

Tonight's meeting is a prime example of why we should open city council meetings; no more of this ZOOM meeting BS! Hanging Judge Roy Bean gave convicted horse thieves more time to say a few words after being sentenced than the council president did in waiting to see if anyone wanted to say anything at the public hearing on the 'proposed changes to the city charter' before gaveling the public hearing closed!

THE EXCHANGE CLUB OF HAVERHILL'S 19TH ANNUAL

RICK BARRU

St. Patrick's Day Celebration

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17TH 2021 AT 10:00AM
VIRTUAL EVENT FILMED LIVE FROM HC MEDIA

To benefit the prevention of child abuse and other Exchange Club programs.

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\$40 PER PERSON - INCLUDES FUN EVENT BOX FILLED WITH SIGNATURE ITEMS, SURPRISES, AND SCRATCH TICKETS
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EVENT STREAMING
Look for our event streaming live through Facebook, the HC Media website and Public Access TV!

The Haverhill Exchange Club looks forward to entertaining you this St. Patrick's Day. Join us for laughs, prizes and fun during your 10:00 coffee break. Thank you for supporting our community projects and the prevention of child abuse. Sláinte!

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GRANT WEBINAR

Join Susan Leger Ferraro, Founder and CEO of G3 Consulting Group to learn more about workforce development training grants. Susan will uncover opportunities to tap into state resources for grant funds ranging from \$10,000 to \$250,000.

March 10, 2021
11:00 - 12:00 p.m.

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

GREATER HAVERHILL CHAMBER

SBA Prioritizes Smallest of Small Businesses in the Paycheck Protection Program

Steps to Promote Equitable Relief for Mom-and-Pop Businesses

WASHINGTON – Building on a month of strong results, the Biden-Harris Administration and the U.S. Small Business Administration are taking steps with the Paycheck Protection Program to further promote equitable relief for America’s mom-and-pop businesses.

The latest round of Paycheck Protection Program funding opened one month ago and already the Biden Administration has succeeded in making major improvements to the program’s implementation:

- For businesses with fewer than ten employees, the share of funding is up nearly 60%
- For businesses in rural communities, the share of funding is up nearly 30%
- The share of funding distributed through Community Development Financial Institutions and Minority Depository Institutions is up more than 40%

“The SBA is a frontline agency working to create an inclusive economy, focused on reaching women-owned, minority-owned, low- and moderate-income, rural, and other underserved communities in meaningful ways. While reported data illustrates we have made real strides in ensuring these funds are reaching underserved communities, we believe we can still do better,” says SBA Senior Advisor Michael Roth. “The important policy changes we are announcing further ensure inclusivity and integrity by increasing access and much-needed aid to Main Street businesses that anchor our neighborhoods and help families build wealth.”

These simple progressive steps by the Biden-Harris Administration further demonstrate the commitment to racial and gender equity, reaching low and moderate-income, rural, urban, and other underserved areas. The SBA will:

- Establish a 14-day, exclusive PPP loan application period for businesses and nonprofits with fewer than 20 employees
- Allow sole proprietors, independent contractors, and self-employed individuals to receive more financial support by

revising the PPP’s funding formula for these categories of applicants

- Eliminate an exclusionary restriction on PPP access for small business owners with prior non-fraud felony convictions, consistent with a bipartisan congressional proposal

- Eliminate PPP access restrictions on small business owners who have struggled to make federal student loan payments by eliminating federal student loan debt delinquency and default as disqualifiers to participating in the PPP; and
- Ensure access for non-citizen small business owners who are lawful U.S. residents by clarifying that they may use Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) to apply for the PPP.

The 14-day exclusivity period will start on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 at 9 a.m., while the other four changes will be implemented by the first week of March. The SBA is working on the program changes and will communicate details throughout this week.

These actions will help to lay the foundation for a robust and equitable recovery for small businesses across the country. Small businesses employ nearly half of the American workforce; they create 2 out of 3 net new private-sector jobs; they reinvest 68% of revenues to build and sustain communities. Borrowers can apply for the Paycheck Protection Program by downloading the First Draw PPP loan application or Second Draw PPP loan application and working with a participating PPP lender through the SBA Lender Match tool.

Through SBA’s nationwide district offices, the Agency will work in close partnership with the Administration to further leverage its resource partner network and expand on multilingual access and outreach about the PPP. Updated PPP information, including forms, guidance, and resources is available at www.sba.gov/ppp and www.treasury.gov/cares.

COVID/VACUNA: Lanza n campaña "De Ti Depende" para educar hispanos sobre la vacuna

El 25 de febrero, el Ad Council y COVID Collaborative, en colaboración con más de 300 organizaciones lanzó una campaña educativa sobre la vacuna del COVID-19 con el fin de informar a la población, específicamente las comunidades hispanas y afroamericanas, sobre la vacuna y la importancia de vacunarse.

La campaña busca responder las dudas y preocupaciones de la población y motivarlos a que se inoculen en contra del virus una vez que la vacuna este disponible para todos.

La campaña, llamada “De Ti Depende”, se enfoca en las comunidades hispanas y afroamericanas debido a que estos dos grupos no solo han sido los más afectados por la pandemia, sino también son los menos probables en ponerse la vacuna.

El objetivo es informar y educar a la población sobre las vacunas en contra del COVID-19 y asegurarse que están tomando una decisión informada basada en la ciencia y los testimonios y estudios de expertos y la comunidad médica.

“La educación pública es un componente crítico de nuestra respuesta a la pandemia del COVID-19 – es un esfuerzo compartido para estimular a las personas para que se protejan a sí mismas, especialmente aquellas en poblaciones desproporcionadamente agobiadas”, dijo la Directora de los CDC, Dra. Rochelle P. Walensky. “Así como estamos tomando medidas para abordar los desbalances que esta pandemia dejó al descubierto, necesitamos un enfoque convenido para poner fin a la pandemia y aprovechar las lecciones aprendidas durante ella para lograr una salud óptima para todos” agregó.

Los hispanos y afroamericanos son más propensos a desconfiar del gobierno y este tipo de iniciativas. Dado su miedo y sus preocupaciones, “De Ti Depende”

ha desarrollado una serie de mensajes específicos para estas comunidades. El objetivo es encontrar la manera de crear empatía y demostrar que la única prioridad es proteger el bienestar de todos.

La pandemia dejó en evidencia las desigualdades que existen en nuestra sociedad y debemos aprovechar este momento para impulsar un cambio en nuestra sociedad y crear un país más justo y equitativo. Sin lugar a duda, esta campaña es la más importante de nuestra generación. Tenemos la oportunidad de ser agentes de cambio y salvar vidas.

“De Ti Depende” es una coalición de medios, empresas privadas, organizaciones sin fines de lucro, personalidades influyentes, miembros de la comunidad religiosos, y líderes comunitarios que juegan un rol crucial en estas comunidades. Más allá de educar a la población y apaciguar sus dudas y preocupaciones con respecto a la vacuna, también es la oportunidad perfecta para abordar temas como la desigualdad y falta de acceso a la salud pública en estas comunidades.

Algunas de las organizaciones que formarán parte de “De Ti Depende” y estarán compartiendo en sus plataformas los mensajes de la campaña incluyen Adobe, Disney, Facebook e Instagram, Google y YouTube, IBM Watson Advertising, iHeart Media, LinkedIn, NBC Universal y Telemundo, Spotify, Twitter, Unilever, Verizon, Warner Media, entre otros.

“De Ti Depende” estará disponible a nivel nacional en todos los medios de comunicación, incluyendo medios impresos, medios digitales, radio, TV, y redes sociales, y será transmitida en inglés y español con el fin de asegurarse que todo el mundo tenga acceso a información veraz que será crucial para impulsar los esfuerzos de vacunación en el país.



Sueño de Maravilla es un programa interactivo para el público en español por la 1490 AM y 3.7 FM, además de Facebook y próximamente por YouTube.

“Impactando la vida de los oyentes”

Producción de Luis Piñeyro

Miércoles, de 2 a 3 de la tarde por la 1490 AM



Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce

MV Chamber Invites You to Events and Business Assistance Webinars Coming Up!

Wednesday, March 3rd - 12Noon!
MVCC Virtual Women in Business Program with Susan Leger Ferraro, CEO of Imagine That, G3 and Inspirational Ones
 Sponsored by The Savings Bank

Thursday, March 11th - 12Noon!
Lunch with the MVCC at Shadi's Restaurant
 Sponsored by A.P. Michaud Insurance Agency

Friday, March 12th - 10:00 AM!
MVCC Virtual Business Networking Mixer
 Sponsored by BurchTree Advisors

Thank you to our sponsor:
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Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce
 Website
 978.686.0900



Los canales públicos de Lawrence dan lástima



Por José A. Ayala



Una pobre programación y lo que menos tiene es acceso del público a una programación de calidad, acceso de los residentes a entrenamientos y producción de programas sobre los temas de su preferencia. El

objetivo es que la gente común y corriente tenga acceso a la libre expresión del pensamiento y por eso todos pagamos cada mes a Comcast y Verizon una pequeña cuota de mantenimiento técnico de estas frecuencias. Sin embargo, ¿es la Ciudad de Lawrence la responsable de su funcionamiento efectivo y cumplimiento de los objetivos para los cuales fueron creados?

Comcast y Verizon nos tienen canales asignados por mandato de la FCC y por eso nos cobran. Búsquelo en su recibo mensual. Ellos hacen su trabajo: Asignar y mantener las frecuencias. Una tecnología avanzada pobremente administrada, una verdadera y vergonzosa violación de la ley.

Los canales públicos deben promover su programación y todos sus servicios, incluyendo ser parte de su junta de directores, y ahí deben también participar ambas compañías, la Ciudad, las organizaciones comunitarias y el sector privado.

Deben estar abiertos e invitar a todas las organizaciones comunitarias y los residentes a entrenarse y producir programación con calidad.

Miren los canales públicos de Cambridge. Esto es lo que debe ser un canal de TV de acceso público, según la ley: <https://www.cctvcambridge.org/about>

Knights hang on 71-68 over NHTI

By Dan Blair
NECC Director of Athletics

The Northern Essex Community College men's basketball team led wire to wire on Wednesday night and hung on for 71-68 victory over the NHTI to improve to 1-1 on the season.

It was the second straight game in which the Knights featured four players in double figures led by Luis Parilla (Lowell, MA) who scored a game high 13 points. The Lawrence trio of Jaylen Alicea, Angel Herrera and Christian Kinsley added 12, 11 and 10 points respectively.

On the defensive side of the ball, the Knights showed markedly improve effort from Saturday's game when they allowed 98 points to the Lynx. The defensive effort was keyed by Cameron Stratton (Haverhill)

and Kevin Garcia (Methuen)

NHTI had three scorers with 14 points apiece to tie for the game high.

Full stats will be available on Thursday. Northern Essex Community College competes as a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and sponsors 12 varsity intercollegiate sports including baseball, men's basketball, women's basketball, softball, women's volleyball, men's and women's cross country, men's soccer, Esports and men's and women's track and field. For more information on Northern Essex Community College Athletics please visit the official website of Northern Essex Athletics (www.neccknights.com).

Volleyball wins 3-0 in exhibition opener (Thursday night match)

By Dan Blair
NECC Director of Athletics

On Thursday evening the Northern Essex Community College women's volleyball team had the opportunity to finally take the court and secured a 3-0 exhibition victory over the SLAM Volleyball Club.

As a team, the Knights attacked with a team .263 kill percentage. Abigail Heredia (Lawrence) led the offense and she put home 10 kills and added an additional six service aces. Yonelli Batista (Lawrence) had a strong two way game as put down four kills and added 9 digs on the defensive side.

Vielka Sanchez (Lawrence) dished out 22 assists from the setter position and Chantal Melgan (Lawrence) had a team high 11 digs on the defensive side of the ball.

The Knights will return to the court

on Monday for a second exhibition match as they will host the Dig Deep Volleyball Club of New Hampshire. First serve is set for 6:00pm.

Northern Essex Community College competes as a member of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) and sponsors 12 varsity intercollegiate sports including baseball, men's basketball, women's basketball, softball, women's volleyball, men's and women's cross country, men's soccer, Esports and men's and women's track and field. For more information on Northern Essex Community College Athletics please visit the official website of Northern Essex Athletics (www.neccknights.com).





Science Teacher Perspective Vacancy (Lawrence) SY21-22





To view open roles, head to our website:
www.upeducationnetwork.org/careers

Workplace English Classes Forming at the Merrimack Valley Immigrant & Education Center

Registrations are now being taken for Workplace English classes at the Merrimack Valley Immigrant & Education Center (the former Asian Center), 439 S. Union Street, building 2, Level B, Lawrence, MA 01843. These classes are free to Lawrence residents but students must have a high beginner level of English.

Anyone interested in signing up for morning or evening classes should call MVIEC, The Merrimack Valley Immigrant & Education Center at 978-683-7316. Check out the MVIEC's website at www.mviec.org for directions and more details.

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GLCF awards record \$152,500 in community grants to 30 local nonprofits

The Greater Lowell Community Foundation (GLCF) awarded \$152,500 in competitive grants to 30 local nonprofits within a framework of Children’s Services, Elder Services, Racial Equity and Inclusion, as well as Water Resources initiatives. The focus areas collectively work toward creating a better quality of life for Greater Lowell residents and supporting local nonprofits.

These grant awards are part of a competitive grant process in which nonprofit organizations apply for funds, and an independent committee reviews the proposals and selects awardees. The Discretionary Grants Program is one of several competitive grant programs offered through the Community Foundation each year.

“The Foundation awarded a record number of discretionary grants in this cycle to support the important work of our local nonprofits,” said GLCF President and CEO Jay Linnehan. “Through generous contributions from our community, GLCF can provide critical support that allows our community to thrive and grow.”

Catie’s Closet, of Dracut, received a Children’s Services Grant to assist supplying clothing and toiletries through their ‘stores’ for students in need. “Receiving this grant award means that we are able to provide our homeless students with the clothing and basic necessities they need,” said Mickey Cockrell, CEO & Co-founder of Catie’s Closet.

The Cambodian American Literary Arts Association (Lowell) received a programming grant to address racial equity and inclusion. “The leadership team at the Cambodian American Literary Arts Association is grateful for the opportunity to host our community dialogues and workshops addressing racial equity and inclusion. These are profound topics that affect our everyday lives,” said Lena Sarunn, Executive Director of Cambodian American Literary Arts Association.

OARS, Inc. (Concord) received a \$5,000 grant to improve environmental and public health. “This grant from GLCF will make it possible to track down and work to eliminate the sources of bacteria in a polluted stream that runs through a Lowell community,” said Alison Field-Juma, Executive Director, OARS: For the Assabet, Sudbury, and

Concord Rivers. “Eliminating this pollution will allow the community to enjoy a healthy waterway with a clean green open space! Local volunteer citizen scientists learn about water quality while also helping to collect the valuable data.”

2020 Discretionary Grants

Children’s Services Grant:

- Catie’s Closet, Inc. (Dracut): Catie’s Closet Next Steps Meeting the Needs of the Lowell Community - \$5,000
- Mission of Deeds (Reading): Beds for Kids - \$5,000
- Raising A Reader Massachusetts (Boston): Raising A Reader Massachusetts (RAR-MA) Lowell - \$2,500
- Reach Out and Read (Boston): Lowell Rx for Success - \$2,500
- Rise Above Foundation, Inc. (Northbridge): Activities for Youth in Foster Care - \$2,500

Leclair Elder Services Grant:

- Clear Path for Veterans New England (Devens): A Happy and Healthy Path to Veteran Wellbeing - \$5,500
- Gaining Ground, Inc. (Concord): Growing Fresh Food for Hunger Relief with Community Volunteers - \$1,000
- Habitat for Humanity of Greater Lowell (Westford): Critical home repairs for elders - \$5,000
- Habitat for Humanity North Central Massachusetts, Inc (Acton): Aging in Place: Improving Health, Achieving Financial Stability, and Increased Socialization - \$5,500
- Lowell Association for the Blind (Lowell): Adult Services Program - \$1,000
- Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS) (Lowell): Lowell Immigrant & Elder Services Program - \$2,000
- Open Pantry of Greater Lowell (Lowell): Food Pantry - \$5,500
- Power of Flowers Project (Tewksbury): Power of Flowers Project - \$1,500
- Project Citizenship (Boston): Citizenship Services for Older Residents in Greater Lowell - \$1,500
- Lowell General Hospital (Lowell): Lowell General Hospital (LGH) Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Program - \$5,500
- Virginia Thurston Healing Garden, Inc.



OARS, Inc.’s volunteer citizen scientist collects water samples in Lowell stream. OARS, Inc. received a 2020 Discretionary Water Resources Initiative Grant \$5,000 grant to improve environmental and public health.

(Harvard): Language Services Supporting Psychosocial Care for Elderly Cancer Patients - \$1,500

Racial Equity and Inclusion:

- Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell (Lowell): Addressing Racial Inequities as a Trauma-Informed Community - \$10,000
- Budget Buddies, Inc. (Chelmsford): Virtual Financial Empowerment Program for Women with Latinx Community Center for Empowerment - \$7,500
- Building Audacity (Lynn): Say Their Names (in Greater Lowell) - \$10,000
- Cambodian American Literary Arts Association (Lowell): Cambodian American Literary Arts Association Community Dialogue and Workshop Series - \$13,000
- Cultivate Care Farms (Bolton – serves Greater Lowell): Diversity Training and Consultation - \$1,000
- Free Soil Arts Collective (Lowell): Hidden in Plain Sight: Stories of Black Lowell - \$15,000
- Kids in Tech, Inc. (Lowell): Afterschool Tech Club Program - \$10,000
- Merrimack Valley Housing Partnership (Lowell): Project Genesis Home Buyer Training Program - \$7,000
- Project LEARN, Inc. (Lowell): Elevating Stories, Changing Narratives - A Student-Led Antiracism Program - \$10,000
- Tewksbury Public Library (Tewksbury): Public Library Libraries Working Towards Social Justice - \$1,000

Water Resources Initiative Grant:

- Mass Audubon (Lincoln): Lowell Leaders in Stewardship TREES program - \$2,500.00
- Merrimack River Watershed Council (Lawrence): Clean Water for residents of Greater Lowell- a Community-Based Approach - \$5,000.00
- Nashua River Watershed Association (Pepperell): Water Quality Monitoring for Improved Recreation and Aquatic Weed Control - \$2,500.00
- OARS, Inc. (Concord): Improving environmental and public health: Source tracking bacteria pollution in Lowell waters \$5,000.00

For more information on the Greater Lowell Community Foundation, visit www.glcfoundation.org.

The Greater Lowell Community Foundation (GLCF), founded in 1997, is a philanthropic organization comprised of over 350 funds, currently totaling over \$50MM, dedicated to improving the quality of life in 20 neighboring cities and towns. The Community Foundation annually awards grants and scholarships to hundreds of worthy nonprofits and students. GLCF is powered by the winning combination of donor-directed giving, personal attention from its staff, and an in-depth understanding of local needs. Our donors’ generosity has enabled GLCF to award more than \$25 million to the Greater Lowell community.



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Los legisladores estatales y los grupos de defensa piden a las compañías de seguros que cumplan las promesas de protección a las pequeñas empresas

Proyecto de ley obligaría a las compañías de seguros a respetar el seguro de interrupción del negocio reclamaciones presentadas durante la pandemia

Trabajando con grupos de defensa locales, la Senadora Estatal Diana DiZoglio (First Essex) y el Representante Estatal Dylan Fernandes (Barnstable, Dukes y Nantucket) presentaron una legislación tanto en el Senado como en la Cámara la semana pasada que proporcionaría otro salvavidas muy necesario para las pequeñas empresas luchando para superar la pandemia de COVID-19. Tanto la HD 3170 como la SD 1845 requerirían que las compañías de seguros respeten las reclamaciones legítimas en torno al seguro de interrupción del negocio y eliminen las cláusulas de exclusión de virus.

En un momento en que tantas pequeñas empresas en Massachusetts han visto interrumpidas sus operaciones comerciales de alguna manera, las aseguradoras han estado negando estrictamente todas las reclamaciones bajo la cobertura de interrupción del negocio diciendo que la situación actual no se ajusta al acuerdo de aseguramiento; que las pandemias no están cubiertas. Sin embargo, un argumento presentado por los asegurados, y amplificado por el grupo de defensa de la industria hotelera nacional THIRST, es que no fue la pandemia lo que obligó a cerrarlos, sino que lo hicieron las órdenes estatales, lo

que provocó una cobertura adicional en la mayoría de las políticas llamadas "acción de la autoridad civil", que está cubierta por la mayoría de las pólizas de seguro por interrupción del negocio.

THIRST se fundó a principios de 2020 para ayudar a los propietarios de la industria hotelera a presionar por la protección por la que han pagado después de que hubo informes generalizados de compañías de seguros que negaban reclamos por interrupción de negocios de pequeños restaurantes y bares en todo el país. Las oficinas de la Senadora DiZoglio y del Representante Fernandes trabajaron con el Capítulo de Massachusetts de THIRST para reelaborar y reforzar un proyecto de ley similar que se presentó en la sesión legislativa del año pasado.

"Esta pieza esencial de legislación es crucial para proteger a nuestras pequeñas empresas, que se han enfrentado a un desafío tras otro a lo largo de esta pandemia", dijo la Senadora DiZoglio. "Es inaceptable que nuestras tiendas familiares locales paguen reclamaciones de seguros para protegerse contra incidentes de esta naturaleza mientras no se les permita acceder a los fondos que tanto necesitan. Las compañías de seguros lo han hecho bien durante esta

emergencia y están sentadas con una cantidad significativa de dinero, reservada para pagar reclamaciones como estas, que nuestras pequeñas empresas necesitan desesperadamente. Tengo la esperanza de que este proyecto de ley se apruebe y esté en el escritorio del gobernador lo antes posible".

El organizador estatal de THIRST en Massachusetts, Christopher Almeida, explicó, "Según el Insurance Information Institute, la industria de seguros tiene cerca de \$800 mil millones en reservas y se necesitaría menos de la mitad de eso para pagar las reclamaciones legítimas hechas por las pequeñas empresas que han pagado decenas de miles de dólares al año por esta cobertura". Almeida, que también administra un bar en Plymouth, agregó: "Tenemos muchas esperanzas de que este proyecto de ley tenga un impacto positivo muy necesario en las pequeñas empresas aquí en Massachusetts".

El impacto de la reducción del patrocinio y los ingresos a nivel individual y empresarial es bastante malo, pero esas pérdidas tendrán un impacto más amplio en la economía de nuestro estado y las sentirán todas las comunidades locales en todo el Commonwealth. "La pandemia ha cerrado

a más de un tercio de las pequeñas empresas en todo el estado, devastando nuestras comunidades locales. Estas empresas pagan el seguro de interrupción del negocio todos los años, pero las compañías de seguros se han negado a cubrir las pérdidas relacionadas con la pandemia", dijo el Representante Dylan Fernandes. "Las pequeñas empresas están experimentando un dolor sin precedentes mientras que las compañías de seguros que supuestamente deben ayudarlas obtienen ganancias y están sentadas sobre una pila de efectivo. Esta legislación trabaja para garantizar que las compañías de seguros hagan su trabajo y brinden apoyo a nuestras pequeñas empresas locales durante un momento de gran necesidad".

Amanda Converse, directora ejecutiva de Love Live Local, una organización de defensa empresarial local en Cape Cod, se unió a los esfuerzos de THIRST en septiembre cuando escuchó de muchas pequeñas empresas que este tipo de legislación sería un "cambio de juego" para ellos. "La mayoría de las pequeñas empresas

POR FAVOR VEA **NEGOCIOS**
CONTINÚA EN LA PAGINA 12

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State lawmakers, advocacy groups call on insurance companies to deliver on protection promises to small businesses

Bill would compel insurance companies to honor business interruption insurance claims filed during the pandemic

Working with local advocacy groups, State Senator Diana DiZoglio (First Essex) and State Representative Dylan Fernandes (Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket) filed legislation in both the Senate and the House last week that would provide another much-needed lifeline to small businesses struggling to make it through the COVID-19 pandemic. Both HD 3170 and SD 1845 would require insurance companies to honor legitimate claims around business interruption insurance and do away with virus-exclusion clauses.

At a time when so many small businesses in Massachusetts have had their business operations interrupted in some way, insurers have been strictly denying all claims under business interruption coverage saying the current situation doesn't fit the insuring agreement; that pandemics are not covered. However, one argument presented by policyholders, and amplified by nationwide hospitality industry advocacy group THIRST, is that it was not the pandemic that forced their closure – state orders did, triggering additional coverage under most policies called “civil authority action” which is covered by most business interruption insurance policies.

THIRST was founded in early 2020 to help owners in the hospitality industry lobby for protection they have paid for after

there were widespread reports of insurance companies denying business interruption claims from small restaurants and bars across the country. Senator DiZoglio's and Representative Fernandes' offices worked with the THIRST's Massachusetts Chapter to rework and bolster a similar bill that was introduced into last year's legislative session.

“This essential piece of legislation is crucial for protecting our small businesses, who have faced one challenge after another throughout this pandemic,” Senator DiZoglio said. “It is unacceptable that our local mom and pop shops pay insurance claims to protect against incidents of this nature while not being permitted to access much-needed funds. Insurance companies have done just fine during this emergency – and are sitting on significant money, set aside to pay out claims like these, that our small businesses desperately need. I am hopeful we will get this bill passed and on the Governor's desk as soon as possible.”

THIRST Massachusetts State Organizer Christopher Almeida explained, “according to the Insurance Information Institute the insurance industry is sitting on close to \$800 billion in reserves and it would take less than half of that to pay out the legitimate claims made by the small businesses that

have paid tens of thousands of dollars a year for this coverage.” Almeida who also manages a bar in Plymouth went on to say, “we are really hopeful that this bill will have a much-needed positive impact on small business here in Massachusetts.”

The impact of reduced patronage and income on an individual and business level is bad enough, but those losses will have a broader impact on our state economy and be felt by every local community across the Commonwealth. “The pandemic has shuttered more than a third of small businesses across the state, devastating our local communities. These businesses pay for business interruption insurance every year, but insurance companies have refused to cover losses related to the pandemic,” said Representative Dylan Fernandes. “Small businesses are experiencing unprecedented pain while the insurance companies that are supposed to help them are making a profit and sitting on a pile of cash. This legislation works to ensure that insurance companies do their job and provide support to our local small businesses during a time of great need.”

Amanda Converse, CEO of Love Live Local, a local business advocacy organization on Cape Cod, joined THIRST's efforts in September when she heard from many small businesses that

this kind of legislation would be a “game changer” for them. “Most small businesses have limited cash on hand that hasn't begun to cover their lost revenue as a result of this public health crisis, and funding from various government agencies has been difficult to access or failed to address the long-term nature of the pandemic.” She went on to say, “saving these restaurants cannot simply fall on consumers to eat out, get takeout and buy gift cards. This continues to be a state of emergency and we need all-hands-on-deck”

The Massachusetts Restaurant Association has also offered its support for the bill.

“Unpaid business interruption insurance claims continue to be a punch in the stomach for the battered restaurant industry, an industry that has felt the most devastating impacts of the pandemic,” said Stephen Clark, vice president of government affairs for the Massachusetts Restaurant Association. “Restaurant operators dutifully paid interruption insurance premiums, only to have those claims rejected or ignored when they were truly needed. This issue is being played out in courtrooms across the country, and we are glad to see the Massachusetts legislature continue to look for ways to address this ongoing frustration.”

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Greater Lawrence Tech Nominates Senior for Technical Student of the Year Award

Superintendent John Lavoie is pleased to share that Greater Lawrence Tech recently nominated Bridget Severino, a senior of Lawrence, for the MAVA Vocational Technical Student of the Year award.

The Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA) recognizes one technical student statewide each year for their exemplary commitment to their career and technical education. The annual MAVA Conference and Awards Banquet is being postponed until it can be held safely in person, and all awardees will be notified and recognized later this school year.

Severino is a student in the Medical Assisting program at Greater Lawrence Tech and plans on studying biology as an undergraduate student with a goal of one day attending medical school. She has experience as a medical assistant at Steward Medical Group in Andover and Methuen, and was also a caregiver assistant at New England Cardiology in Lawrence.

"I owe everything to my education, it is the reason I have gotten this far in life in such a short time. I am proud of everything I have accomplished and it is an honor to even be nominated for such an award," Severino said. "I do not regret any decisions I have made during my high school career. I have always strived for success and even when it did not seem like I was not going to get anything out of stressing myself out, I ended up feeling better once I finished any challenge I have gone through during my time in high school, whether it be academic or not. GLTS has taught me how to manage

school and work, and though it has been tough, it gave me a realistic view of the real world and that is the greatest gift I have received from the school."

She holds a 4.15 GPA and is currently ranked 10th out of 390 students in the class of 2021. Severino is also involved in concurrent enrollment classes with Middlesex Community College and will graduate from high school this year with 12 undergraduate credits.

"Bridget is an exemplary student--academically she has demonstrated a sincere commitment to learning everything she can about biology to prepare her for a career in medicine. She has shown initiative and a drive to gain experience in her field by seeking out opportunities with multiple local medical facilities, and on top of all that, she cares deeply about volunteering and giving back to her community," Superintendent Lavoie said. "She is known by her peers and teachers as a leader, and has sought out opportunities to help her peers through tutoring and other school programs."

She has also been awarded an Adams Scholarship. As a junior, she was also awarded the Bay Pay College Book award and was the Greater Lawrence Tech representative to the Harvard University Biomedical Conference and Smith College's National Academy of Future Medical Leaders Conference in 2020.

At Greater Lawrence Tech, Severino is also a three sport athlete competing in golf, swimming and diving, and tennis. She is a Reggie Leader, peer mediator, member



GLTS senior Bridget Severino, of Lawrence has been nominated by the school for the MAVA Vocational Technical Student of the Year Award. (Courtesy Photo Greater Lawrence Tech)

of the yearbook committee and a member of the stand and deliver program. She also volunteers for Olive in July, a nonprofit organization that focuses on providing help to disabled children and their families as well as low-income families using donations and resources from the community.

Severino has been accepted at University of Massachusetts Lowell, Northeastern University, New England College, Merrimack College, Suffolk University, University of Kentucky, and the University of Maine along with others for the fall of 2021.

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CONTINÚA DE LA PÁGINA 10
NEGOCIOS

tienen un efectivo limitado disponible que no ha comenzado a cubrir la pérdida de ingresos como resultado de esta crisis de salud pública, y el financiamiento de varias agencias gubernamentales ha sido de difícil acceso o no ha abordado la naturaleza a largo plazo de la pandemia." Continuó diciendo, "salvar estos restaurantes no puede recaer simplemente en los consumidores para comer fuera, comprar comida para llevar y comprar tarjetas de regalo. Este sigue siendo un estado de emergencia y necesitamos todos los recursos disponibles".

La Asociación de Restaurantes de Massachusetts también ha ofrecido su apoyo al proyecto de ley.

"Las reclamaciones de seguros por interrupción del negocio no pagadas

continúan siendo un puñetazo en el estómago para la maltrecha industria de los restaurantes, una industria que ha sentido los impactos más devastadores de la pandemia", dijo Stephen Clark, vicepresidente de asuntos gubernamentales de la Asociación de Restaurantes de Massachusetts. "Los operadores de restaurantes pagaron diligentemente las primas del seguro de interrupción, solo para que esas reclamaciones fueran rechazadas o ignoradas cuando realmente eran necesarias. Este problema se está desarrollando en los tribunales de todo el país y nos complace ver que la legislatura de Massachusetts continúa buscando formas de abordar esta frustración constante".

Greater Lawrence Tech Welcomes Freshmen and High Needs Students for In-Person Learning

Superintendent John Lavoie is pleased to announce Greater Lawrence Technical School freshmen and high needs students attended school in-person for the first time this year on Monday.

"We have been tirelessly planning and preparing to welcome our freshmen and high needs students into the building for in-person learning. It is so exciting to have reached this point to allow our freshmen to take their exploratory classes in person and allow in-person academic support for our high needs students. It's an integral part of the GLTS experience and invaluable for them to explore programs in a hands-on environment, with their instructors and the support needed," Superintendent Lavoie said. "Many people have helped us get to this point, and I want to thank everyone who has played a role, including my staff, the School Committee, parents, guardians, students, and the greater GLTS community."

On Monday, Feb. 22, 263 freshmen, 63% of the class of 2024, began in-person learning. Students are split up so that only half of the freshman are learning in-person throughout the week. One group will learn in person on Mondays and Tuesdays and the other group will learn in person on Thursday and Fridays. Each group is split into cohorts that have no more than 12 students. The district also welcomed back eight high needs students into the building this week and 14 more will be returning next week. High needs freshmen students will attend school in-person four days a week for their academic and exploratory classes. The high needs upperclassman students will learn in-person for their academic classes only.

"Welcoming students in our building for the first time in 344 days was truly an exhilarating feeling," Director of Special Education Kate Burnham said. "One student described the day very simply as, 'it just felt good to walk around MY school again'. I want to thank all the parents and students for the collaboration and patience that was necessary to make this possible, the special education staff for their continued efforts in supporting our students, and the administration for the tireless efforts for a safe building and return plan."

The rest of the freshman class and high needs students have opted to continue learning for the time being in a fully remote capacity. Families of freshmen and high needs students will have another opportunity to opt into in-person learning in March. All others grades will continue to follow a remote learning schedule until further notice.

Greater Lawrence Tech serves the communities of Andover, Lawrence, Methuen and North Andover. The district has offered full remote learning, until now, since schools statewide closed due to the pandemic in March 2020.

Students are required to self-assess for symptoms of COVID-19 before coming to school, wear a mask at all times except for periodic and supervised breaks in their schedule, and maintain six feet of distance from others. Students are also asked to wash their hands regularly, and only one student may eat per table in the cafeteria.

The district has additionally added signage on hallway floors and walls to ensure traffic promotes social distancing. School officials collaborated with state and local health experts to help determine school-wide safety precautions.

The district has strict protocols should any student or staff member fall ill during the school day. Should a student fall ill, their teacher will contact the school nurse, who will travel to their shop or classroom to assess the student. The student will be escorted to the isolation waiting room for further assessment, testing and treatment if their symptoms are COVID-19 related.

Greater Lawrence Tech was one of 134 districts selected by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the U.S. Department of Defense in November 2020 to receive Rapid Antigen COVID-19 Diagnostic tests to help identify cases of coronavirus in the district. The test is approved by the FDA and delivers results in 15 minutes. School nursing staff have been thoroughly trained on how to administer the test using a nasal swab. The decision to administer the test will be made by the school nurse, and parents and guardians will be contacted by phone call for consent before their child is tested. All students who are tested, regardless of their result, will be sent home. To learn more click [here](#).

Each shop at GLTS has also developed its own protocols tailored to the needs of students and staff in that program. For example, in the metal fabrication/welding shop, students are asked to follow guidelines such as cleaning each machine before moving on to the next assigned area, washing their hands often and after using the machines, and not moving from one machine to another until it is safe to do so.

"We are so excited about the return to in-person learning at GLTS!," Jorge Polanco, an exploratory instructor for the metal fabrication/welding program, said. "Our shop is an extremely hands on trade. It is a physical skill that cannot be effectively taught through remote learning. Most students that come here are kinesthetic learners, and need to be able to touch and handle things to learn effectively. While in-person learning is critical for all grade levels, the return of grade 9 students is even more so. Imagine trying to choose a career path without ever actually stepping foot into the shop you select! We all recognize the challenges involved in returning during a pandemic, but we also understand the potential missed learning opportunities for vocational students by not returning. I chose this profession for the students, and I will do everything in my power to protect them and keep them safe, while guiding them to a successful long term career path."

To facilitate the return to school, shop teachers hired GLTS senior co-op students as assistance to help with monitoring safety procedures and also to assist with remote learning students. Each shop has one assistant.

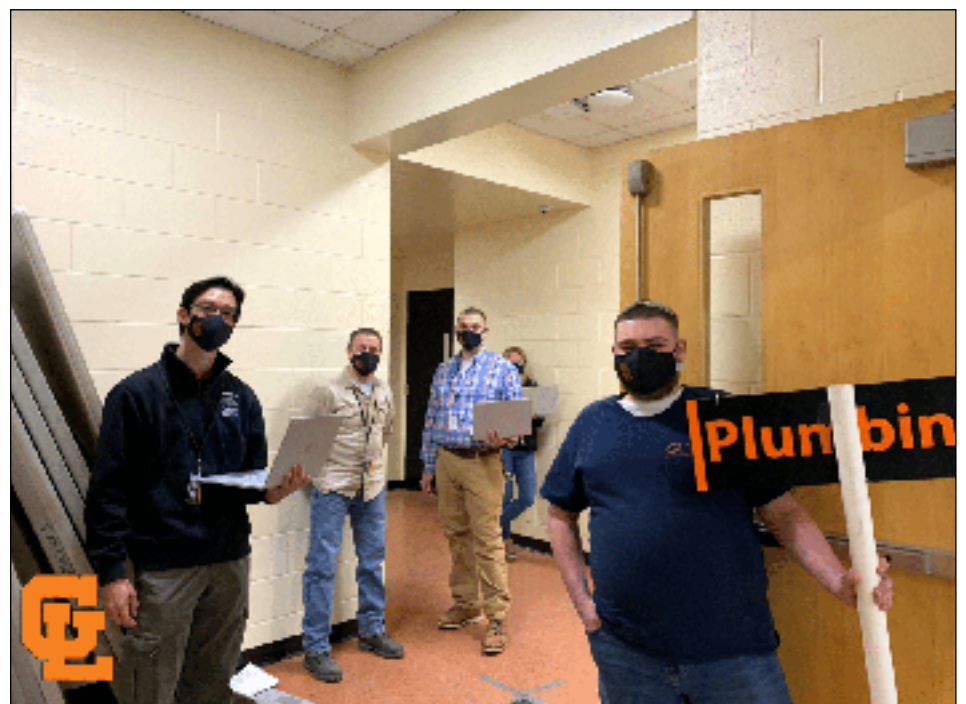
For the latest updates, visit www.glt.net/GLTS. Updates will also be posted on the school's Facebook and Instagram pages.



Kaitlyn Distefano, a GLTS freshman from Methuen, learns how to solder pipes on her first day of in-person learning in plumbing. She is one of over 200 freshman students who began learning in-person for their exploratory courses this week. (Photo courtesy of Greater Lawrence Tech)



HVAC students began working with metal tubing during their exploratory courses on Monday. (Photo courtesy of Greater Lawrence Tech)



From left: Automotive exploratory instructor Christopher Charles, electrical exploratory instructor Robert DeSario, carpentry exploratory instructor John Chester and Tyler Corcoran, a plumbing senior from Methuen, who was hired through the GLTS Co-op Program as plumbing's in-person learning assistant. (Photo courtesy of Greater Lawrence Tech)

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Asuntos Públicos del Sistema de Salud de VA Bedford

Por Kat Bailey

Asuntos Públicos del Sistema de Salud de VA Bedford

BEDFORD, Mass. - VA Bedford Healthcare System se está asociando con el Departamento de Servicios para Veteranos de la ciudad de Haverhill para albergar una clínica de vacunación COVID para veteranos en Consentino Middle School en Haverhill el domingo de marzo. 21 de febrero de 2021, a partir de las 9:00 a.m.

VA administrará la vacuna Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 con cita previa a los Veteranos locales que actualmente están inscritos en la atención médica de VA, sin restricciones de edad. Los Veteranos inscritos pueden llamar a la línea de vacunación COVID-19 de VA Bedford al 781-687-4000 para programar su cita para la fecha y el lugar de Haverhill.

La vacuna Pfizer requiere dos dosis administradas con aproximadamente 21 días de diferencia. VA programará automáticamente a los veteranos para su segunda dosis el 10 de abril en Haverhill, también en Consentino Middle School. Al recibir la primera dosis de VA Bedford, los veteranos acuerdan regresar al mismo lugar para su segunda dosis por su propia seguridad y para garantizar la máxima eficacia de la vacuna.

Se anima a todos los Veteranos a inscribirse en la atención médica de VA. Los veteranos que sirvieron en el servicio militar, naval o aéreo activo y se separaron bajo cualquier condición que no sea deshonrosa, pueden calificar para los beneficios de atención médica de VA. Los veteranos que no están inscritos o que actualmente no reciben atención en VA también pueden visitar la página web de elegibilidad de VA para obtener más información y comenzar el proceso de solicitud.

La escuela secundaria Consentino está ubicada en 685 Washington Street en Haverhill.

Siga nuestra página de vacunación COVID-19 para obtener actualizaciones. Me gusta y síganos en las redes sociales en <https://www.facebook.com/VABedfordHCS> y <https://twitter.com/VABedfordHCS>.

Los medios interesados en cubrir esta clínica conjunta de vacunación COVID deben comunicarse con Asuntos Públicos de VA Bedford en Melissa.bailey@va.gov o con el Departamento de Servicios para Veteranos de Haverhill en Lsantiago@cityofhaverhill.com antes del 19 de marzo, para su inclusión en el palco de prensa. Todos los medios deben ser acompañados al lugar.

VA Bedford, Haverhill Veteran's Services host COVID vaccination clinic March 21

By Kat Bailey

VA Bedford Healthcare System Public Affairs

BEDFORD, Mass. - VA Bedford Healthcare System is partnering with the City of Haverhill Department of Veteran's Services to host a Veteran COVID vaccination clinic at Consentino Middle School in Haverhill on Sunday, March. 21, 2021, starting at 9:00 a.m.

VA will administer the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine by appointment to local Veterans who are currently enrolled in VA health care, with no age restrictions. Enrolled Veterans may call VA Bedford's COVID-19 vaccination line at 781-687-4000 to schedule their appointment for the Haverhill date and location.

The Pfizer vaccine requires two doses given approximately 21 days apart. VA will automatically schedule Veterans for their second dose on April 10 in Haverhill, also at Consentino Middle School. By receiving the first dose from VA Bedford, Veterans agree to return to the same location for

their second dose for their own safety and to ensure maximal vaccine efficacy.

All Veterans are encouraged to enroll in VA health care. Veterans who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and separated under any condition other than dishonorable, may qualify for VA health care benefits. Veterans who are not enrolled or do not currently receive care at VA can also visit VA's Eligibility web page to learn more and begin the application process.

Consentino Middle School is located at 685 Washington Street in Haverhill.

Follow our COVID-19 vaccination page for updates. Like and follow us on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/VABedfordHCS> and <https://twitter.com/VABedfordHCS>.

Media interested in covering this joint COVID vaccination clinic should contact VA Bedford Public Affairs at Melissa.bailey@va.gov or Haverhill Dept. of Veteran's Services at Lsantiago@cityofhaverhill.com before March 19, for inclusion in the press box. All media must be escorted on site.



Durepo Tabbed Merrimack College Women's Lacrosse Head Coach

The Merrimack College Athletics Department announced Tuesday the hiring of Ashley Durepo as head coach of the Warrior women's lacrosse program.

Durepo arrives after she transformed the University of Southern Maine women's lacrosse program for the past three years. Since she took over the Huskies' head job in August 2017, she drastically improved the team's winning percentage and led the team to its first Little East championship game since 2013. She boasts 10 years of collegiate coaching experience, which includes assistant roles at Southern Maine, New Hampshire and UMass Lowell.

"We are thrilled to announce Ashley Durepo as the new head coach of our women's lacrosse program," stated Director of Athletics Jeremy Gibson. "Ashley's coaching experience, dedication to her student-athletes and overall passion for women's lacrosse will serve her well as she begins her Merrimack career. It is my pleasure to welcome Ashley to our Warrior family!"

In late-2017, she inherited a Huskies team that finished 7-9 the season before and went on to compile a 19-14 record the following two springs. She also coached one All-Region player and eight that earned spots on LEC All-Conference teams. Her team in 2019 set program records for the highest goals per game average and most assists and she was named the LEC Coach of the Year for the effort. The 2019 Huskies also had the highest winning percentage in program history with their 10-6 record. The roster also grew significantly with her at the helm, as the number of student-athletes grew from 19 in fall 2017 to 31 by fall 2020.

"I am honored to be named the women's lacrosse coach at Merrimack," said Durepo. "I would like to thank Jeremy Gibson, Diane Metcalf and the entire search committee for providing me with this great opportunity and I truly look forward to becoming a part of the Merrimack College community. I also want to express my appreciation to my team and colleagues at the University of Southern

Maine. My time at USM provided me with so many great experiences and relationships that I am very thankful for."

Before her time in Gorham, she helped start nearby UMass Lowell's Division I program from the ground up. She arrived in the summer of 2013 and helped the River Hawks for two seasons after their 2015 debut. Prior to her first stint in the Merrimack Valley, she was an assistant for the University of New Hampshire during the 2012 campaign. She also spent two seasons as an assistant at Southern Maine during the 2010 and 2011 seasons.

"I am excited to lead this team through the remainder of the Division I transition and for competition in the Northeast Conference," said Durepo. "I look forward to getting to know the team, their families and the North Andover community. Merrimack is one of the fastest growing institutions in the country and it is an exciting time for the athletic department and the college. Our team plans to continue to build on our recent success by maintaining a tradition of hard work and excellence in our program."

Additionally, Durepo has been the head coach and/or recruiting coordinator for a trio of travel lacrosse programs since the summer of 2006. Her most recent experience has been as the head coach of Maineix Lacrosse Club of Portland, Maine since August 2017.

As a student-athlete, she was a four-year starter at New Hampshire and helped the Wildcats to a berth in the 2008 NCAA tournament. She was also a three-time America East All-Academic team member, was twice named to the league's All-Conference Second Team and earned a spot on the 2006 league All-Rookie Team.

She graduated from UNH with a bachelor's degree in sociology in the spring of 2009 with a minor in business administration.

For continuing coverage of Merrimack College Athletics, visit MerrimackAthletics.com and follow the Warriors on Twitter, Instagram and on Facebook.

Women's Basketball Nearly Completes Fourth-Quarter Comeback vs. Mount St. Mary's

The Merrimack College women's basketball team nearly overcame a 13-point halftime deficit on Wednesday afternoon against league-leading Mount St. Mary's, but the Warriors fell by a 59-58 margin in Northeast Conference (NEC) action from Hammel Court. Merrimack outscored Mount St. Mary's by 10 points in the second half, and had the score tied at five different instances in the final quarter.

Freshman Teneisia Brown scored six points in the fourth quarter, tying the game at each point that she scored in the final 10 minutes. The game was even, 57-57, with under one minute to play when Mount St. Mary's forward Rebecca Lee scored

to make it a 59-57 game. Senior Mayson Kimball made it a one-point game with a free throw, and had a chance to win the game with a shot from in close on the final possession, but the attempt missed to give the visitors the win.

Kimball led all scorers with 21 points and eight rebounds, shooting 8-of-10 at the free throw line while adding three steals. Lee netted 20 points to lead Mount's effort. The visitors shot 43 percent from the field compared to 28 percent for the hosts. The Warriors had a significant edge at the free throw line, making 21-of-25 from the line compared to just five attempts for the Mountaineers.

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¡Gracias por tu apoyo!

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Author to Discuss Book About Franco-Americans

In the late 19th century, French Canadian Roman Catholic immigrants from Quebec were seen as a threat to the U.S., even as potential terrorists. David Vermette, author of "A Distinct Alien Race: The Untold Story of Franco-Americans," will speak about this little-known episode in U.S. history on Thursday, March 4, at 7 p.m. The Nashua Public Library will hold the event on Zoom.

This program is part of the library's

celebration of International Francophonie Month in March. Join the library and Club Richelieu of Nashua in celebrating the French language and the countries where it's spoken.

Participants must register to get an invitation to the Zoom event. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/npllectures>.

For more information, contact Carol at carol.eyman@nashualibrary.org or 603-589-4610.

Franco American Singer in Virtual Library Concert



On Wednesday, March 24, at 7 p.m., enjoy traditional and contemporary folk songs from Quebec and Acadia performed by Franco-American singer Josée Vachon. The virtual concert is presented by the Nashua Public Library and Club Richelieu of Nashua.

Josée, 2019 recipient of a bronze medal from La Société Académique Arts-Sciences-Lettres of Paris, will also introduce some of her own compositions.

Registration is required to get an

invitation to the Zoom event. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/nplconcert>.

This event is part of the library's observance of International Francophonie Month in March. Join the library and Club Richelieu of Nashua in celebrating the French language and the countries where it's spoken.

For more information, contact Carol at carol.eyman@nashualibrary.org or 603-589-4610.

The Merrimack Valley Immigrant & Education Center

The former Asian Center at 439 South Union St., building 2, Level B, Lawrence, MA 01843 is enrolling students for an intensive ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes.

The classes will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays either from 9 AM to 11:30 AM or 6 M to 8:30 PM.

Class fee is \$50. Call 978-683-7316 for more information.

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LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Notice is Hereby given by Sheehan's Towing L.L.C. of 26 Lawrence St Methuen, MA, pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L.c. 255, Section 39A, that they will sell the following vehicles on or after March 16, 2021 beginning at 10:00 am by private or public sale to satisfy their garage keeper's lien for towing, storage, and lien fees. Vehicles are being stored at Sheehan's Towing and may be viewed by appointment only.

1. 2010 Honda Pilot VIN 5FNYP4H45AB028248
2. 2014 Mercedes Benz CLA250 VIN WDDSJ4GB5EN100499
3. 2009 Honda Accord VIN 1HGCP26309A113252
4. 2011 Toyota Sienna VIN 5TDDK3DC3BS024536
5. 2017 Mitsubishi Mirage VIN ML32A3HJ6HH014473

Robert Sheehan
Owner, Sheehan's Towing L.L.C.
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Nashua Library Reopening March 1

The Nashua Public Library will reopen with limited service on Monday, March 1.

Monday-Thursday: 9 am-7 pm
Friday and Saturday: 9 am-5 pm

Services available

Customers will be able to enter the building to do the following:

- Pick up materials they have reserved, and browse and check out new materials. A small collection of items for children and teens will also be available for browsing and checkout.
- By appointment, browse the adult stacks to select books, DVDs, CDs, audiobooks, videogames, and magazines. Call 603-589-4600 for an appointment.
- Ask librarians to retrieve items from the stacks for them.
- Get advice from librarians about what to read or watch next.
- Use computers and printers, by appointment. Call 603-589-4600.
- Pick up packets of nonperishable food for children under 18.
- Use the tax PC in the lobby to print tax forms.
- Pick up items printed remotely (including tax forms) using the [Print From Anywhere](#) service.
- Make photocopies and send faxes.

Curbside pickup will continue to be available both for items placed on hold and food packets. The expanded Books by Mail program is also available.

Hours

The building will be open, and curbside pickup available:

Monday-Thursday: 10 am-7 pm
Saturday: 10 am-2 pm

Calls, emails, and chat will be answered:

Restrictions

To keep customers and staff safe in light of COVID-19, these restrictions will be in effect:

- A maximum of 23 customers may be in the building at a time.
- Masks will be required. The library will have a limited supply available for customers who arrive without one. For people who cannot wear masks, staff will retrieve items and bring them outside the building.
- Customers must observe social distancing.
- Items will be available using self-checkout only; staff will not check out materials (except for curbside pickup).
- The Children's Room, Teen Room, and the Chandler Memorial Wing and its meeting and study rooms will be closed.

Returning materials

Items can be returned either to the book drops or the lobby. Because of COVID-19 precautions, items returned are quarantined for four days before being checked in. As a result, items that were checked out may continue to appear on a customer's account for several days after being returned.

No fines

Overdue fines are currently suspended. People who need to pay for lost items are asked to pay by check or online.

More information

Customers having questions about the reopening can call 603-589-4600 or email information@nashualibrary.org.

Buon Giorno Good Morning Buenas Tardes

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BY DALIA DÍAZ
daliadiaz@rumbonews.com

LEÁLO EN ESPAÑOL EN LA PÁGINA 4

From My Corner



It's not the time to open schools

(See letter to teachers' union on page 2)

It's an oxymoron to say that "Children absolutely need to return to in-school learning for their healthy development and well-being" when there is a virus that goes against that very same statement.

The fact that "many families in Lawrence have struggled with Internet and technology access during the pandemic" is the fault of the school district themselves for the lack of training to parents on the technology. Additionally, was it not the fact that the LPS provided free hot spot internet to all students that required it for virtual learning.

The reports from the legislative state delegation state that "mandatory masking, robust ventilation systems, enforced social distancing, and new developments in rapid testing have helped schools prevent COVID-19 outbreaks and quickly respond to new cases. The best available evidence shows that COVID-19 transmission in schools is low among both teachers and students, particularly younger students."

However, neither the LPS nor any other school system in the US has any full data to prove that fact. Let's not kid ourselves here, students, teachers, parents are people. It's the same people who have been getting positive COVID-19 or transmitting the same.

The LPS has housed the most defenseless students in in-service classes. Those are the students that can't speak, walk, or hear, the mentally disabled, and with more vulnerabilities than the two comorbidities that Massachusetts has in the phase 2 vaccination stage. These are the students who can't speak to say what hurts or not. How can the LPS say that the students are safe if we know that LPS had both staff and student positives in the classroom itself?

On any given day in a normal school year, hundreds of children are transmitting flu and colds to one another and bringing those illnesses or diseases home to family members. Schools are a place when the transmission is at its highest.

The fact that the delegation relied on data from North Carolina, a state that has been prone to not being up-front about its positive COVID-19 rate is absurd. They write about low numbers of student-to-staff ratio. It's not the student-to-staff ratio that we should be worried about. It's the Staff-to-Student ratio that should be the main topic. The same students that would get the virus

from an asymptomatic teacher or staff can bring the virus home.

The delegation gave data from the first two months of school days in the fall (September and October) of 2020 for North Carolina. But we know that North Carolina's highest numbers of COVID-19 began in November 2020. In November 2020, they had the seventh-highest positive rates of the 50 US. The delegation did not use those numbers.

Lawrence has been one of the highest positive cities in Massachusetts! The only reason that the positivity rate numbers have been reduced is because the testing has been slowed down. Testing sites through the city are shutting down because the money is in the vaccine sites. Lawrence General Hospital has no white tents for testing up any longer, and the city's mobile site is no longer testing. Lawrence is very much still the highest city in Massachusetts with a positive rate.

The fact that the delegation is providing low numbers is to use this false/incomplete data is to trick the school staff to return to the classroom. Let's not indicate false stories about how wonderful it is to open schools in Lawrence. Lawrence should be the last city to consider re-opening. You want to get closer to re-opening the schools doors again – vaccinate school staff! Get the governor to include them into the current phase. All of the custodians, in the LPS, have been vaccinated. Why not the teachers?

Additionally, the hoopla about opening schools in a safe manner is false unless there is a vaccine that our kids can obtain to protect themselves, from a virus that yet has led to any medical reports of the lingering, or future, effects of our kids' health.

For politicians, including the President, this return to school campaign is all about the economy and getting people back into their workspace. It's about money, and will always be about money. Now is not the time to bring our children back to school. It's March 2021, with only a couple of months left for the school year.

This re-opening can wait until September 2021, when most vaccinations have been given to most adults and laboratory results are published concerning under-16 vaccine testing.

By then maybe vaccines for under-16 are in order. But even if the vaccine is not in place by then, it gives the LPS time to spend the recently acquired \$33 million of COVID-19 funds to beef up their air distribution systems in these very old school buildings.

First it's disrespectful that the state

delegation is only writing to one union, when there are 12 other unions in the LPS that deserve the same respect to be addressed. Secondly, why the hell is the delegation involved? There is the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Alliance Board that should be negotiating these things. Not only did you all support the home rule petition postponing the election because of COVID-19 safety issues, but now you go against that very same reasoning to make students and staff less safe by returning to

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR RUMBO

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Letters must be less than 300 words in length. Please send a telephone number or email address by which we may confirm the sender.

school on April 1st.

If it is safe for children to go to school, why is it not safe for councilors to meet in the Council Chambers so that we can all watch them on television? Another effort to keep up the deception.

Moreover, shame on Senator Feingold, Representatives Moran, Devers, and Minicucci, and shame on newly appointed Acting Mayor Vasquez for putting profit over the safety of our children. I bet that all of you are still working virtually or from home! Hypocrisy.

The Women's Fund of Essex County Awards Emergency Food Insecurity Grants

Organization announces a donation of \$25,000 of targets funds in response to growing food insecurity crisis due to Covid-19 in Essex County

Due to the rising concern of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, The Women's Fund of Essex County (TWF), a philanthropic organization, announces that it recently provided \$25,000 for Emergency Food Insecurity Grants to five community nonprofits serving vulnerable populations, such as the elderly, low-income and homeless.

"Covid-19 is estimated to have dramatically increased the number of people facing acute food insecurity," said Elaine Quinn, President of the Advisory Board of The Women's Fund. "The emergency food insecurity grants will provide critical help to these organizations to cover shortfalls in food donations, operations for emergency food distributions, and to support unanticipated needs during these uncertain times. Meeting the crucial needs of Essex County is of paramount importance to The Women's Fund."

The five community nonprofits receiving grants are:

New Lynn Coalition's Grocery Delivery Program (Lynn, MA) –

This is a coalition of grassroots organizations that are deeply connected with Lynn residents, especially the undocumented, who do not qualify for state or federal aid programs. Delivery is focused on people in quarantine, elders, single parents, and people without reliable transportation that have few options for feeding themselves and their families. The grant will be used to purchase and distribute groceries to those in need.

The Salem Pantry (Salem, MA) –

The Salem Pantry's mission is to eradicate hunger in the Salem Community by providing residents in need with nutritious foods in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. Future plans include expanding their current space and establishing two more mobile markets in Salem's areas of highest needs. The grant will be used to acquire more food, put more vehicles on the road, and expand and sustain daily operations to fight hunger.

Open Hearts Ministries (Haverhill, MA) –

Since its beginning in 1999, Open Heart Ministries continues to grow and expand services to support the vulnerable individuals and families of the city of Haverhill. This includes cooking and serving community meals at the First Baptist Church of Haverhill. The grant will be used to obtain additional food, as well as help cover the costs of distributing food.

Neighbors in Need: Food Pantries (Lawrence, Methuen, Andover, MA) –

Through its nine food pantries open to the public strategically located in neighborhoods throughout Lawrence, Methuen, and Andover, two additional elder pantries for the residents of low-income elder housing clusters in the North Common Area, identified by the federal government as being especially in need of services, two mobile pantries in partnership with Windsor House (a rooming house) and the Department of Mental Health and with the YWCA Fina House, they provide food for over 850 families every week, and over 500,000 meals last year. The grant will provide funds to allow flexibility for specific needs that arise due to COVID-19.

Cor Unum Meal Center (Lawrence, MA)

The center serves hundreds of people every day, with a small core staff and a large army of generous volunteers. Since opening their doors in 2006, in the first ten years they served over two million meals. At the current rate of meal service, approximately 250,000 meals are served annually. The grant will be used to provide curbside grab and go meals, and purchasing food and other essential items.

"We are pleased to support these five worthy organizations who are responding quickly and creatively to meet the increased demand for their services during the pandemic," said Grants Allocation Committee Chair Lisa Parker.

For more information about or how to support the TWF, visit womensfundec.org.



If you want to know
who controls you,
look at who you are
not allowed to criticize.

– Voltaire

AZ QUOTES

Fashion Merchandising Alumna Got Her Start at Middlesex CC

Caroline Donovan was unsure of what to pursue for a future career, but knew she wanted a job in fashion as she had been drawn to it since high school. After researching various fields and programs within the industry, Donovan discovered Middlesex Community College's Fashion Merchandising program.

From Wakefield, Donovan started at Middlesex because the college was close to home and she knew it would offer a strong foundation of knowledge and skills before she transferred to a four-year college in New York City. During her time at MCC, she found everyone she worked with to be helpful and she had "a really great experience."

"There truly is a lot of opportunity for someone in the Fashion Merchandising program at MCC," she said. "Also, if students are planning on transferring to a school after MCC, they're wonderful with the transfer process and can help the student with everything."

While she was at MCC, Donovan worked at Dressbarn as the Assistant Manager on days she did not have classes. To stay organized, she signed up for morning classes to give herself time to complete her coursework in the afternoon.

"My manager at Dressbarn was very understanding about my schoolwork and she would make sure I had enough time to focus on school as well as working there," she said. "I used to take advantage of the library at MCC as well as after school to settle down and get my work done."

Her classes – which all transferred over as credits to her next school – included fashion and retail merchandising, retail management and electives such as algebra, writing essentials and business technology. Donovan enjoyed diving deeper into her subjects and the fashion world, meeting and learning from classmates, and having opportunities outside of the classroom to explore and gain experience in her field of interest.

During her year at Middlesex, Donovan attended two trade shows which she explains as "exhibits that give businesses and companies the opportunity to demonstrate their latest products." These fashion trade shows – including both a local event in Marlborough and another in Las Vegas – offered companies a chance to feature their clothing and accessories for retailers to purchase and then sell in their stores.

"We wore a specific lanyard to show

that we were students, so a lot of the time when we went to the exhibits, they would show us around and tell us all about how it works to be at a trade show showing off their products," she said. "I loved going around and seeing brands that I recognized from boutiques that I shop at since I was able to see what clothing was going to be sold in the future seasons."

Donovan went to the MAGIC Las Vegas trade show in February 2018 with three other students and MCC Fashion Merchandising faculty member Ashli Ree. Calling it the "best trip," she got to experience firsthand what it meant to work in the fashion industry.

For Donovan, Ree was an influential professor during her time at MCC and even after she graduated by offering her guidance on her next steps and how to achieve her goals.

After a year at Middlesex, Donovan transferred to the Laboratory Institute of Merchandising (LIM) in Manhattan to study Fashion Media. Ree reached out to her in August 2020 when she realized Donovan only needed 36 more credits for her associate degree. Going through a reverse transfer process, Donovan was able to take the credits she earned from LIM to use towards an associate degree at Middlesex.

"By doing this reverse transfer, I was able to complete two degrees which will benefit me when it comes to applying for jobs," she said. "Now I have one degree in Fashion Merchandising and one in Fashion Media, so this opens a lot of doors for me."

Having earned a bachelor's degree in Fashion Media from LIM in December of 2020, Donovan is now looking for production assistant jobs in New York. In the future, she is thinking about getting a master's degree in Marketing. She credits her time at Middlesex with helping her succeed at LIM and in the coming steps of her academic and professional journey.

"MCC helped me become the person I am today," she said. "I took everything I learned at MCC and brought it with me to LIM. Even after I left LIM, MCC has helped me with my studies and my career opportunities."

MCC's Business programs help students go into – and succeed in – the workforce or transfer to four-year schools with its award-winning and affordable offerings, small class sizes and flexible schedules. Visit https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/discover/dyp_business.aspx for more information and



Caroline Donovan was unsure of what to pursue for a future career, but knew she wanted a job within the fashion industry as she had been drawn to it since high school. After researching various fields and programs within the industry, Donovan discovered Middlesex Community College's Fashion Merchandising program.

to discover your path to a Business degree at Middlesex.

MCC's accelerated eight-week Spring Mini-mester starts on Monday, March 29. Complete general requirements and earn credits with the same high-quality content, academic standards and number of instructional hours as courses scheduled in the traditional 15-week semester. To register, visit www.middlesex.mass.edu/registration/ or call 1-800-818-3434.

Discover your path at Middlesex Community College. As one of the largest, most comprehensive community colleges in Massachusetts, MCC has been a proven leader in online education for more than 20 years. We educate, engage and empower a diverse community of learners, offering more than 80 degree and certificate programs – plus hundreds of noncredit courses. Middlesex Community College: Student success starts here!

Fire victims / Víctimas de incendios

Please contact Heal Lawrence if you wish to make a contribution to the victims of the recent fires in Lawrence. The website has a list of donated items and things that are still needed.

Favor de ponerse en contacto con Heal Lawrence si desea hacer una contribución a las víctimas de los incendios recientes en Lawrence. El sitio en la internet tiene una lista de artículos que han sido donados y lo que todavía necesitan.

<http://heallawrence.org/>

heallawrence@aol.com

<https://www.facebook.com/heallawrence.mass>

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