

*From the editor's desk  
(a new feature)*

## Hire from within

A point made by South High Principal Maureen Binienda was probably the most salient of them all in the wake of the announcement by Melinda J. Boone that she is stepping down as superintendent of schools. Why go through the costly expense of a nationwide search for a replacement for Dr. Boone, Ms. Binienda asked, when that money could be put to better use on behalf of students and teachers? *Inside Worcester* concurs. Certainly Chief Academic Officer Marco Rodrigues, Ms. Binienda or someone else right here on the home front who possesses an intricate knowledge of the system and the qualifications for the job would be a worthy successor to Dr. Boone, at a substantial savings. Meantime, our best to Mr. Rodrigues as the interim.

## Rethinking Maj. Godin

It is regrettable that an ill-advised but not out-of-character comment by Junior ROTC Instructor at North High Major Stephen L. Godin resulted in his termination from a job he performed in exemplary fashion for eighteen years. A reprimand? Yes. But to muster the former Marine out with what amounts to a dishonorable discharge is an overreach...and is unwarranted. —R.L.

# Inside WORCESTER

A Journal of Observation & Opinion • NOVEMBER 2015



## Whither Box 4?

Roomier quarters sought for on-call, on-the-scene Special Services Canteen

Retired Worcester Firefighters Steve Fuvulli and Angelo Bongovio at the window of the \$250,000 custom-built truck, ready to respond with food and beverage when the next alarm sounds.

## COVER STORY

# In search of a home for Box 4

By ROD LEE

**W**ho could have predicted on a ten-degree-below-zero night back in 1921 that a blaze that broke out at the Knowles building along Main St. would in part be the impetus for purchase of a \$250,000 Worcester Box 4 Special Services canteen truck to support emergency personnel with much-needed food and beverage at fires, searches, technical rescues, hazmat situations, natural disasters and police operations some ninety years later?

That nineteen city businessmen and residents showing up with blankets that evening after Box 4 was rung would be replicated in a fashion in 1999 when Rob Branca of Dunkin' Donuts, his wife and other family members shuttled food back and forth to firefighters at the scene of the Worcester Cold Storage fire?

That thanks to District 1 City Councilor Tony Economou who is credited with spearheading the effort, At-Large Councilor Kate Toomey and Firefighters Steve Favulli and Angelo Bongovio, a vision would be formed for a “rebirth” of the Box 4 initiative and for the city to acquire a vehicle—a “diner on wheels” as Mr. Favulli puts it—with an on-board inventory that includes sausage and egg, beef stew, chili, chicken cutlets, hot dogs and hamburgers, tuna fish, beans, macaroni, meatballs and sausage, soups, cold cuts, coffee, tea, hot chocolate and cold drinks? Also a separately built-in bathroom, which, Mr. Favulli says, “can mean more than a hot cup of coffee.”

That Dunkin' Donuts would furnish the funding to construct the truck; a donation, Mr. Branca said at the time, that is in alignment with the Dunkin' Donuts and Baskin-Robbins Community Foundation's goal to administer to “the basic needs of



**Collaborating for a cause.** District 1 City Councilor Tony Economou, retired firefighters Angelo Bongovio and Steve Favulli and Dunkin' Donuts franchisee Rob Branca all had a hand in putting a first-of-its-kind state-of-the-art canteen truck on the road to aid first responders in emergency situations across Worcester County and beyond.

our communities.”

That after being brought into action in 2013 the Box 4 truck and its all-volunteer team would respond to forty-nine incidents, and be on scene during the Boston Marathon terrorist bombing? That in 2014 Box 4 would answer thirty-two calls and conduct fifty-four total service runs in Worcester, Middlesex and Hampden counties? That through mid-October 2015 awareness and demand for Box 4 would grow by more than thirty percent—necessitating the search for a bigger facility than its current 1,200-square-foot home in the Worcester Memorial EMS garage on Wells St. for the thirty-foot truck and its smaller, Ford Transit-type support vehicle?

Mr. Favulli says, “we currently have building specs for 5,000 square feet, new construction designed by D.R. Poulin Construction Inc. of Fitchburg at an estimated cost between \$400,000 and \$500,000.” But, he says, “we are investigating the possibility of obtaining an existing building that we can retrofit for potentially half that cost.”

Box 4's “core group” of about ten persons (Mr. Favulli, Mr. Bongovio, Brian

Foley, Brian Herman, Jason Menard, Robert Johnson, David Gallagher, Pete Snow and Frank Raffa (Mr. Raffa is the former president of the Worcester International Association of Firefighters 1009) has earned high praise for its work. Typical was a letter of commendation from Lowell Fire Chief Edward J. Pitta for Box 4 easing the “physical as well as emotional toll” on firefighters battling a blaze that claimed seven lives.

Dunkin' Donuts, the Leary Firefighters Foundation, Paul Davis Restoration, Polar Beverages and UniBank are among Box 4's staunchest supporters.

“Firefighters couldn't be more grateful,” says Mr. Bongovio, a first-generation firefighter with thirty-two years on the job who retired in 2011. “Every chief within a sixty five-mile radius knows about the truck.”

As Fr. John Madden of St. John's says, said Mr. Favulli (a 32-year firefighter), “it's time to give back to everyone for what they have done for us.”

**(EDITOR'S NOTE: Jeffrey L. Busha of Busha Brothers Communications LLC contributed significantly to this article)**

## OUR TOWN/ROD LEE

Herbert H. Adams, RIP

# A soldier for the ages

Those of us touched by Herb Adams' life, however briefly, will be forever grateful for the experience. Christian de Marcken, a veteran and historian for the Central Massachusetts Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Major Lamar Soutter Chapter XXII, is one such person.



I spoke with Mr. de Marcken several weeks after Mr. Adams' death, in early October. He shared with me reflections on four afternoons he spent at Herb and Beverly Adams' home in Worcester, interviewing Herb for an article he wrote at the request of a school in Holland entitled "The Life and Times of a Paratrooper." The Dutch government, "so grateful for the liberation of the Dutch and Belgian people," honored Herb.

What emerged from the hours they spent pouring over Herb's time with the 82nd Airborne Division's 504th Parachute Infantry Division (PID) during World War II was a portrait of a fearless Louie Zamperini-like mischief maker whose parents died young (he was then adopted by an uncle), who shot crows and woodchucks as a child growing up in Maine, who showed a knack and a passion for woodworking and who was turned down for military service more than once because of his vocation at the time. He was a shipbuilder.

The Herb Adams that Beth Proko, president of the Indian Lake Watershed Association, District 1 City Councilor Tony Economou, former Worcester City Manager Mike O'Brien, Boy Scout Troop 54 Scoutmaster Joshua Froimson and Persian Gulf War Veteran Sean Lovely (himself a member of the 82nd Airborne) came to know as a highly decorated soldier and "self-appointed" volunteer who unselfishly cared for such public spaces as Morgan Park, the "Eagle" statue on West Boylston St., the site along Holden St. that abuts the Bancroft School fields, the Frostholm Memorial and the Hapgood-Brooks Memorial also counseled and mentored hundreds of scouts and lent his support to a number of veterans groups. A master carpenter, he put a roof on a neighbor's house, hand-carved tables and trinkets and spoke to schoolchildren about his duty—giving of himself in every aspect of his being.

As was so true of members of "The Greatest Generation," he dedicated his post-war life to helping others. In large part as a tribute to his friends and fellow soldiers who did not return from combat.

"There must be a reason I'm still here," he would say.

Mr. de Marcken was moved as so many of us have been by Herb's story. Chris de Marcken chuckles in recalling that Herb thought for the longest time "that I was German. Once when I showed up to be guest speaker at an event Herb, who was in full military uniform, turned to an organizer and said of my appearance "you can't do that." I told him 'I am an American citizen' (of Belgian extraction)."

In his "life" of Herb, Mr. de Marcken tells of Herb "trying out the general's chair" (Gen. Eisenhower's) while on guard duty in Berlin, and of an officer accompanying Ike being furious at the audacity when they discovered him. Gen. Eisenhower, however, simply asked Herb how he liked the chair. "Very nice," Herb said. "Does that mean I should guard the door while you can enjoy this seat?" Ike asked. "No sir!" Herb wisely replied.



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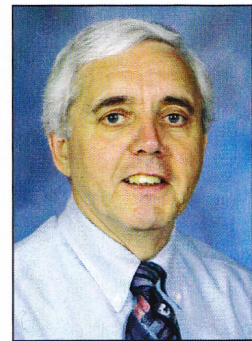
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**THE NEIGHBORHOODS**



The unveiling. His fellow participants look on as Mr. Gomez takes the wraps off the new logo for CENTRO Inc.

**CENTRO Inc. it is**

SYCAMORE ST.—These are heady times for what was formerly Centro Las Americas, now simply CENTRO Inc. The equivalent of a view of Boston from the Top of the Pru, Manhattan from the observation deck of the Empire State Building, or Worcester from the steps of the Bancroft Tower. A rebranding ceremony that took place on the second floor of CENTRO’s offices on October 6th also represented a chance for President/CEO Juan A. Gomez and his administrative team to tout how far the organization has come in the past seven to eight years: from a deficit of \$140,000 to a healthy surplus of \$300,000 today, for instance. CENTRO in 2015 boasts ninety-eight employees and an operating budget of \$7.2 million—reflecting what Mr. Gomez refers to as an upward “trajectory” that he promises will be continuing in the near future. Regardless of whether CENTRO meets its growing pains on-site in an antiquated structure or creates a brand-new home through recent purchases of nearby properties (47 Hermon St. and 14-16 Sycamore), “we will remain an anchor in this neighborhood,” Mr. Gomez said. This is good news for both the Latinos who CENTRO has served since its founding in 1977 and non-Hispanics who are now coming into the fold. As Roberto Diaz, who is director of Community-Based Services for CENTRO, pointed out during the event, the agency’s mission is “ever-expanding” with an increasingly broadened commitment to diversity and inclusion. “Walking the walk,” as Mr. Diaz put it. CENTRO at the age of thirty-eight, Mr. Diaz said, “is no longer a teenager.” Today, “over 40 percent of our clients are not Latino.” The new name and new logo, then, go hand-in-hand with CENTRO making a dynamic impact for all underserved peoples in Worcester. The largest minority-led, community-based, multiservice, multilingual nonprofit in Central Mass., CENTRO offers such programs as Developmental Disability Services, Adult Family Care, Elder Services, Community Based Services, Clinical & Behavioral Services, Children & Family Services, Food Pantry Services and the Institute of Latino Arts & Culture. In a word, it provides: EMPOWERMENT.



Carmela Villavicencio awaits the arrival of her mother, Dulce Carpio, for a Quinceanero celebration at Centro.

## THE NEIGHBORHOODS

# StartUp(ing) on the right foot

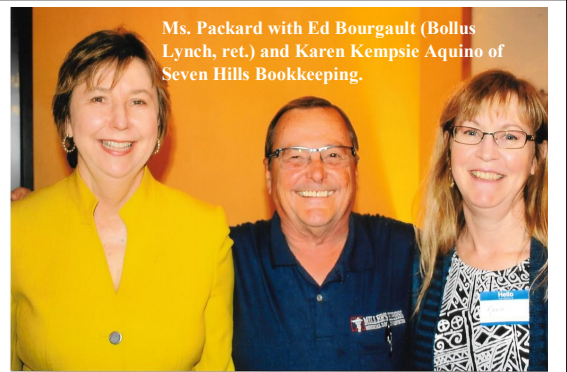
MAIN ST.—Picture getting a leg up of this sort, upon launching a new enterprise: full-year memberships in the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, Running Start (co-working space) and The Venture Forum—plus access to SCORE business



Mr. Murray kicks off StartUp Worcester 2016.

counselors. Who wouldn't want that advantage in establishing a toehold? That is exactly what is going to happen when the administrators of StartUp Worcester 2016 select twelve winners with original business plans to receive support to develop their ideas from concept to marketplace. In kicking off the second year of the

StartUp program, which is run by the Chamber's Higher Education-Business Partnership, Chamber President/CEO Tim Murray had high praise for the companies in the first go-round, including Petricore. A digital gaming company founded by Becker College grad Ryan Canuel, Petricore created "Mind the Arrow," a game featured on both the App Store and Google Play in more than two hundred fifty companies with over 200,000 downloads, Mr. Murray said during a ceremony in Tilton Hall at Clark University. Then there such other award winners as the agroponics firm, whose goal is to more efficiently grow food in island nations; and a company that integrates technology into exercise and physical therapy to provide real-time feedback to the user. "These bright minds are working to implement their ideas here in Worcester and that's just what we want to see," Mr. Murray said. Joe Vignaly, chair of The Venture Forum, shares Mr. Murray's enthusiasm in helping boost startups' chances of success. The Venture Forum, Mr. Vignaly said, "offers a foundation for learning and networking that is essential to launching and growing successful technology businesses." StartUp Worcester 2016 is supported financially by Chamber members and lead sponsors Commerce Bank and Grove Street Commercial Properties along with supporting sponsor DarrowEverett LLP.



Ms. Packard with Ed Bourgault (Bollus Lynch, ret.) and Karen Kempse Aquino of Seven Hills Bookkeeping.

## 'Building' a legacy

STAFFORD ST.—Unlike Superman or Mighty Mouse swooping in to pluck people from harm, Preservation Worcester cannot save every historically important building. But a "20 successes for 20 years," celebrating the organization's "Endangered Structures List," is ample testimony to the impact PW has had on the local scene since coming to the rescue of Mechanics Hall in 1969 as a founding initiative. PW has also been instrumental in protecting such assets as Union Station, the elementary school in Quinsigamond Village and the Bull Mansion (presently vacant), Executive Director Deb Packard told a luncheon meeting of the Webster Square Business Association on October 14th at Zorba's Taverna. One of her favorite projects? "The street clock on Front St." Should it come as any surprise that PW is now involved in design guidelines for Union Hill and Lincoln Square, and that it is active in the relocation of the Stearns Tavern to the Coes Pond area? (SEE PAGE 8 for more on the Stearns).

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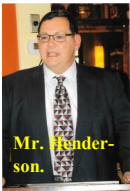
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## THE NEIGHBORHOODS

### 'The Sun' also rises

WEST BOYLSTON ST.—Can a different approach to journalism work in Worcester, where the T&G has long dominated? Mark Henderson, president and co-founder of the new, strictly online (for now)



*Worcester Sun*, issued an emphatic “yes” during his appearance as guest speaker at a luncheon meeting of the North Worcester Business Association at O’Connor’s on October 21st. Mr. Henderson and his colleagues (several of whom, like himself, are former employees of the T&G—Bronislaus Kush, Lee Hamel and celebrated cartoonist Dave Hitch) are staking their reputation on the premise that “a reboot of local news” at a mere two dollars a week (with no advertising support) will earn them an audience. So far, it’s working, he said. The Sun is quickly attracting “members” (“we don’t call them subscribers”). The formula? Take a “longer-lens view” in reporting the news. Add in teddy bears, a business spotlight, a “Sunshine” feature. Eventually, too, he says, a print edition on Sundays, which would pit The Sun head-to-head with the Telegram. If and when that happens, he notes, it’s “game on!”

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## AWAREness at election time

BERNICE ST.—There is probably no more relevant a question for candidates for At-Large seats on the City Council this election season than one that comes up repeatedly even when November is not nigh: “Should all of the city’s colleges and universities be required to make payments in lieu of property taxes?”

In furnishing for public consumption the twelve responses that were given by the prospective office holders to the query, Joan Cusson and the AWARE group remind voters that, whatever course is taken, something has to give. Tax-exempt properties in Worcester account for a staggering nearly 31 percent of all property values in the city (according to FY 2015 DOR statistics). That makes Worcester the third-highest municipality in the state in terms of percentage of tax-exempt property, right behind Huntington and Gill.

As might be expected, positions on the issue vary. If there is a common thread, it is the one enunciated by Mayor Joseph M. Petty, Khrystian E. King and Kathleen M. Toomey—for instance. All three stress the importance of a good working relationship between the city and its higher-ed community, regardless of what direction the PILOT debate takes. Mr. Petty would like to see schools expand a free-tuition program that has been initiated. In exchange for this investment “in our youth,” students should live and work here, the mayor says. Mr. King says schools could do more by way of giving back; they could “pool resources” to fund programming for young people before and after school and with day activities in the summer. Ms. Toomey says the city should work to find “good matches” with college and universities’ “mission” as is already being done (Becker-Digi; WPI-Gateway Park and Running Start).

Juan A. Gomez is also for establishing a better dialogue and getting more creative. Christina L. Zlody says the city needs to make a stronger commitment to “keep our college students here after graduation.” Linda F. Parham says colleges and universities “should contribute” and payments they make should be compared to the value of the property—“same as with residential.” Morris A. Bergman says they should be persuaded to step up because “the financial strain is growing.” Matthew E. Wally says an ongoing conversation between the city and the schools “is beneficial and should continue.” Robert A. Sargent says all of the schools should be required to provide more leadership. Konstantina B. Lukes in typical Konnie fashion minces no words in asserting that schools MUST enter into PILOT agreements—or “provide equivalent services.” William S. Coleman III says PILOTs are “already occurring” and the city should value contributions the schools are presently making.

Did you really think “outspoken” Michael T. Gaffney would remain silent on the matter. Not a chance. His one-word response to making the schools ante up?

“Yes.”

## CITY FOLK

Let the good times...Put together an enthusiastic team of volunteers, WCRN 830 AM and Charter's Hank Stolz serving as MC, Mayor Joseph M. Petty offering words of welcome, vendors, food, a raffle, entertainers 2 Left and P.E. James and the Worcester Bravehearts' Jake the Lion frolicking on the bounce inflatable (and posting with State Rep. Kathleen Campanale and what do you get? A first-ever Webster Square Block Party in the Webster Square Plaza. The event was sponsored by the Webster Square Business Association.



## Eat and drink, for Holy Trinity



It really doesn't get any better than Worcester's Food & Wine Fest at St. Spyridon Cathedral on Russell St., a benefit for Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center and Holy Trinity Hospice. The ninth annual version of the event on October 15th drew the usual throng for a scrumptious array of hearty fare from participating restaurants and bakeries (including Eller's, whose Jeff Eller and Aaron Ghizzi are pictured). Introduced for the first time too was a bourbon and tequila tasting. Congrats to Committee Members Chris Liazos, Mary Charmchi, Eugenia Christy, Heather Dubeau, George Gourousis, Ursula Hanus, Tina Niedbala, Georgia Parafestas, Bernadette Petralias, Serena Sheilds, Paul Swydan, Tina Thamel, Joan Theros, Basil Tolos, Irene Tsoules and Jim Vasiliadis for a rite of fall that is not to be missed!



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## THE ECHO CHAMBER

**Konstantina B. Lukes**

"I just read the October issue. Thank you for your thoughtful words about my service to the city."

## NOTES ON A NAPKIN

### You Inc. hitting like No. 44

How fitting that new You Inc. CEO David P. Forsberg summoned the name of legendary slugger Henry Aaron at the outset of the organization's annual meeting at The Beechwood on October 20th. Not only



was the Atlanta/Milwaukee Braves' Hall of Famer with his quick, supple wrists "my favorite player" growing up, Mr. Forsberg said, during its forty-four years in existence YOU Inc. has conducted business with the same "modesty and integrity." Appropriate too that Mr. Forsberg recognized You Inc. Founder Moe Boisvert, who was warmly applauded by those in attendance. The keynote address at the event was delivered by Secretary of Health & Human Services Marylou Sudders. Awards were presented to Sarah Chalke (Community Service), and Abigail Dennis (Profiles in Courage).

### Stearns pushback

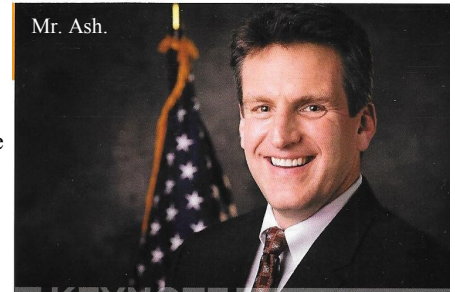
The prospective relocation of the Stearns Tavern from Park Ave. to Mill St. in the Coes Pond area was met with mostly positive reaction during the first of two public meetings on October 19th. Hailed as a plus by Mayor Petty, Manager Augustus, District 5 Councilor Gary Rosen and State Reps. Kathleen Campanale and Harriette Chandler, the project nevertheless got a thumbs-down from a female property owner who lives directly opposite the site that has been designated as the site for the Tavern to be placed. "My water view will be gone!" the woman huffed. "I bought my property with the understanding that I would have a water view." "Let's see how much of an obstruction this will be, and there was a knife factory there," Mr. Augustus reminded everyone (the manager's father worked at Coes Knife for a time). "We will work with you and that's a standing offer," the manager told the woman. She was not placated, staring moodily ahead throughout the rest of the program.

# SHOWTIME

## A dose of Disney at the DCU, Hanover

Disney never gets old. Which is why turnout is likely to be strong for both "Disney on Ice: Celebrating 100 Years of Magic" featuring Mickey and friends at the **DCU Center** (11/5-8) and "Disney Live! Three Classic Fairy Tales" at the **Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts** (11/13). The DCU Center switches it up a bit after that with "Dead & Company"—comprised of Grateful Dead holdovers Mickey Hart, Bill Kreutzmann and Bob Weir teamed with John Mayer and others—to perform the legendary band's timeless classics (11/10). At the Hanover meanwhile the push through the holidays includes "Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical" (11/6-8), "The Nutcracker" (11/27-29) and of course the "Boston Pops Holiday Concert" (12/4)...Good reasons to attend the Central Mass Business Expo (11/5) at the **DCU Center**

include one many persons might not have thought about: professional headshots! (3:30-5:00 p.m.) Of course keynote speaker Jay Ash, secretary of Housing and Economic Development for the Baker administration, is certain to draw an audience too; 55+ companies will showcase their goods and services...Speaking of heavy hitters, Joe Vignaly of The Venture Forum is lined up as guest speaker for the Webster Square Business Association's monthly luncheon meeting (11/12) at **Peppercorn's**...and the very next week (11/18) Tim McGourthy of The Research Bureau takes the podium for the North Worcester Business Association's luncheon meeting at **The Manor**...In his typical rah-rah fashion our friend Clarence Plant is beating the drums for the Odd Fellows Home of Massachusetts' "Worcester Black Tie Ball" (3/19/16) at the **Beechwood**. Break out the duds, guys!...Regrettably the Ben Franklin Bookstore is long gone but Salem St. remains a destination for readers, proof of which is the "Friends Fall Book Sale" at the **Worcester Public Library** (11/7)...Sometimes a single painting is enough to lure an audience to the **Worcester Art Museum** and that may be the case with Pierre Bonnard's "Dining Room in the Country," an oil on canvas of a house in a small town on the Seine River outside Paris that he recreated from memory. Now on display at WAM...For chills aside from the ones provided by the season's falling temperatures, check out "Mysteries of the Unseen World" in the Alden Digital Planetarium (a National Geographic theater) at the **Ecotarium**. Phenomena not visible to the naked eye, narrated by Forrest Whittaker.



Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce President Tim Murray joined Tim and Denise Carr and FASTSIGNS staffers Brian Wiles and Eriks Liepins for a ribbon-cutting ceremony during at Open House at the recently launched Stafford St. business on October 14th. Graphics solutions? FASTSIGNS has them!

## 5 stars for Dodge Park from caring.com

Dodge Park Rest Home's sterling reputation for service excellence in Alzheimer's care has been recognized by caring.com with the awarding of a 5-star consumer rating to the Randolph Rd. facility for 2016—based on accolades provided by residents and their family members. Typical is this observation from "Rosemary:" "My mom has been in Dodge Park Rest Home for almost twelve years now. Before that, her sister had been there. In totality, we've been going in and out of Dodge Park for sixteen years. We always feel welcome. Whenever we have problems, we can discuss them with the owner. Also, the care they provide is wonderful." "We strive daily to deliver high-quality care [to] our residents, and this award helps validate our delivery on that promise, Dodge Park Co-Owner Micha Shalev said.