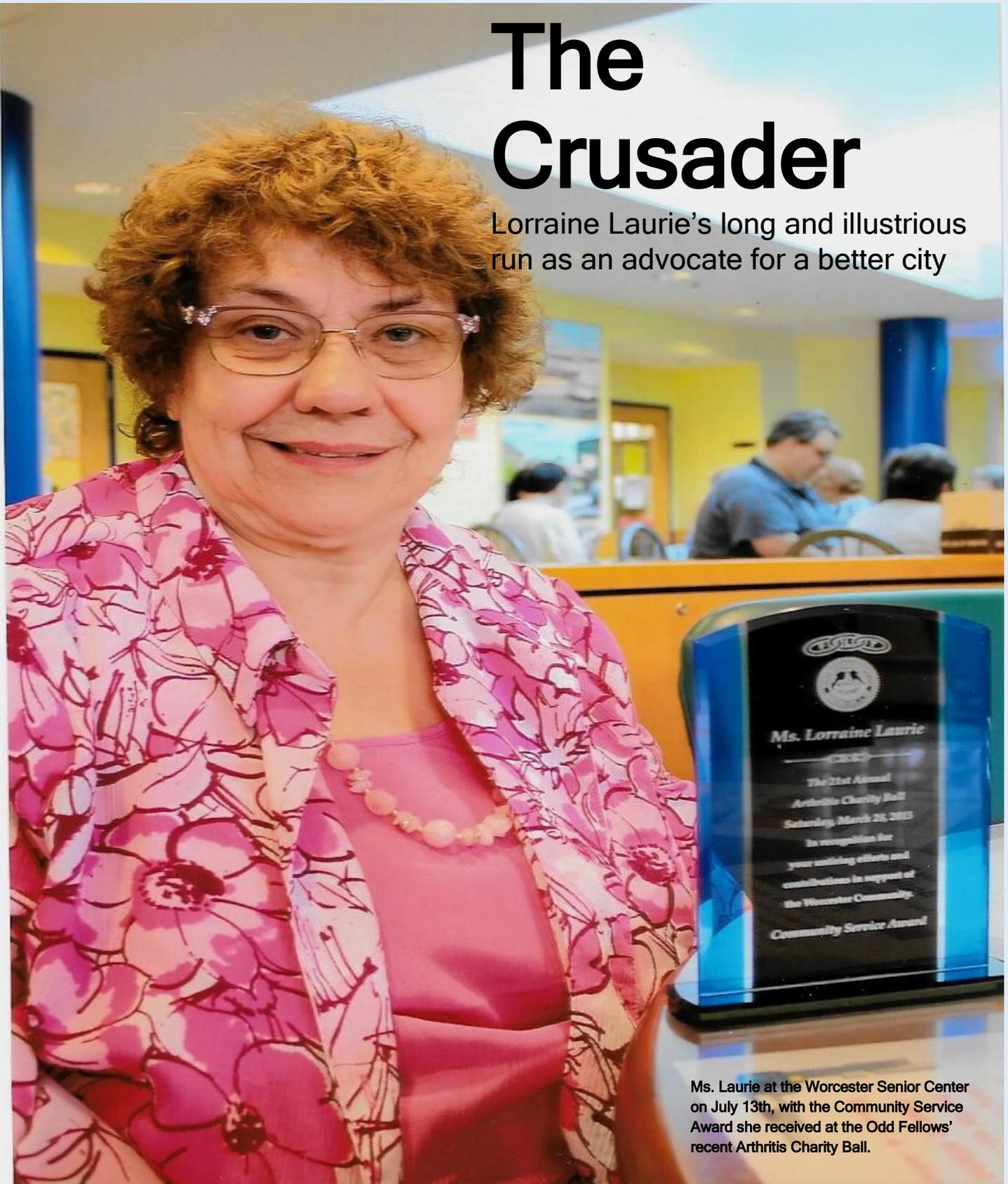


- Woof, Woof: The dog-park debate;. PAGE 4.
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The Crusader

Lorraine Laurie's long and illustrious run as an advocate for a better city



Ms. Laurie at the Worcester Senior Center on July 13th, with the Community Service Award she received at the Odd Fellows' recent Arthritis Charity Ball.

COVER STORY

Ms. Worcesterific

By ROD LEE

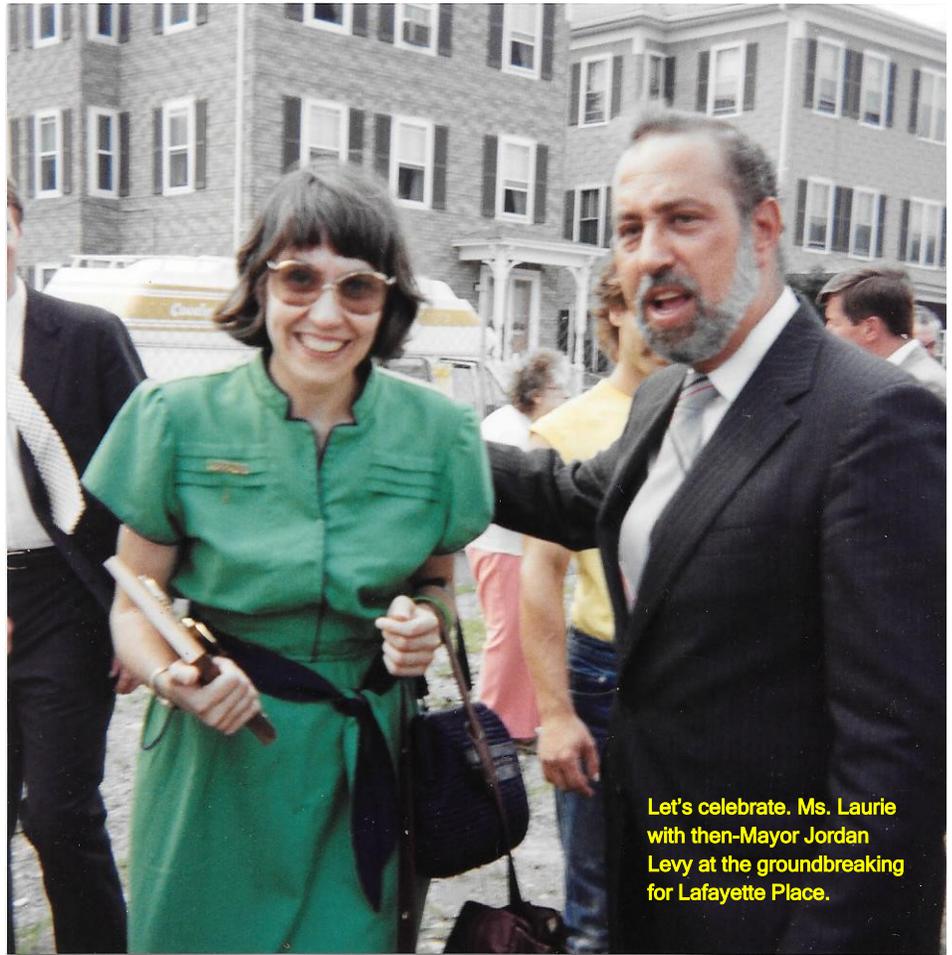
Lorraine Michelle Laurie described the Community Service Award she received at the Grand Lodge of The Independent Order of Odd Fellows and Rebekah Assembly of Massachusetts' annual Arthritis Charity Ball back in March at The Manor Restaurant as a crowning moment in her life.

"I will be sixty-five years old next month and this Cinderella can finally say 'I went to the ball!'" she told an audience that included Mayor Joseph M. Petty (who nominated her for the honor), event Chairperson Clarence Plant and other dignitaries.

"This is the culmination of my career," she said. "I was diagnosed with arthritis in my knees. I used to run!"

Though not quite as nimble on her feet these days, the dynamo of Dorchester St. is no less involved in the life of the city; particularly the Green Island neighborhood. Or, as she calls it, "The Island."

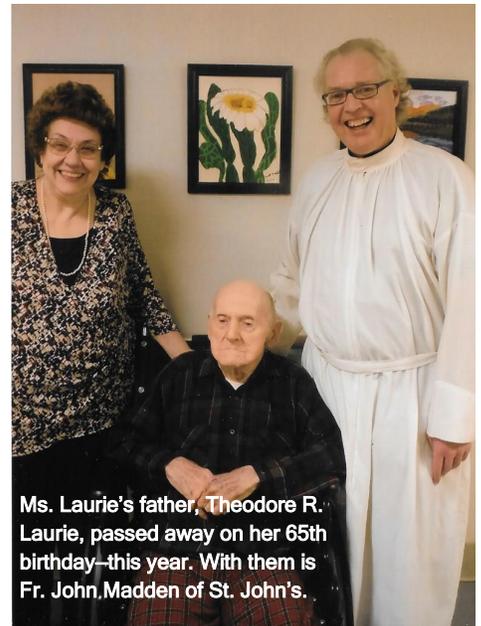
Her Polish grandfather (on her mom the late Gennie Ciuksza Laurie's side) bought the property at 64 Dorchester St. in 1932. Her mother and father were married in 1946 and lived on the second floor. "My grandparents, uncle and aunt lived on the first floor and we rented out the third floor. My dad worked at American Steel & Wire. My mom cashiered at Alpha Lunch on



Let's celebrate. Ms. Laurie with then-Mayor Jordan Levy at the groundbreaking for Lafayette Place.

Main St., near Harrington Corner. I came along on April 21st, 1950. I have been at 64 Dorchester St. ever since," she said.

Involvement of all sorts has been in her blood since attending Ascension Grammar School and then Ascension Central Catholic High School and Anna Maria College where she majored in English and served as editor of the student newspaper. From her time as a Vista volunteer at the Oak Hill Community Development Corp. to her work with the Union Hill School Council (1993-2006) to being a founding member of the Advisory Committee for the Union Hill School City-



Ms. Laurie's father, Theodore R. Laurie, passed away on her 65th birthday—this year. With them is Fr. John Madden of St. John's.

scapes summer program to being an original incorporator of the Green Island Residents Group (which she still chairs), she has been indefatigable in her attentiveness to a cause that is near and dear: a more livable city.

Nor is she anywhere near finished. Presently she is in her seventh year as resident service coordinator for Cornerstone Corp's Village at Ascension Heights, a senior housing complex at 42 Vernon St. on the site of her former school and the garden of the Sisters of Notre Dame de

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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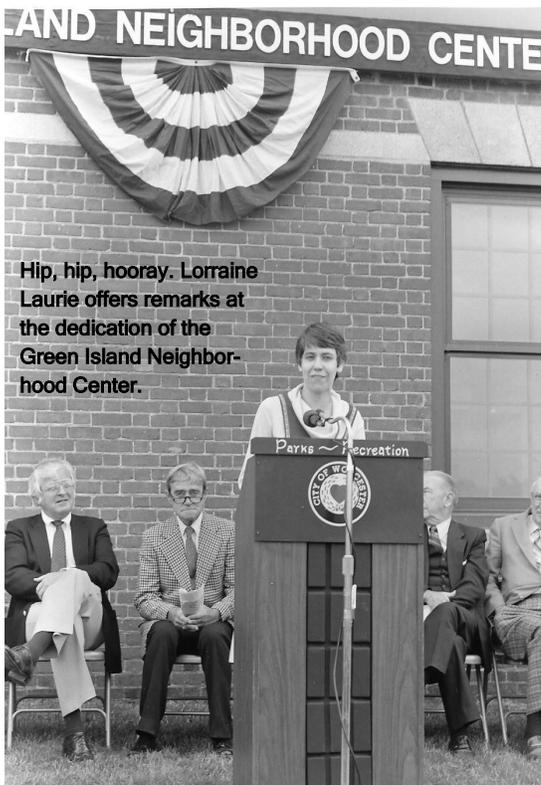
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CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Namur (women who taught at the school for nearly a century).

“When I was in high school Latin was my favorite subject. I wanted to teach Latin at Ascension High School. But they closed it. But I’m working in a building that was on the property so I have gone



Hip, hip, hooray. Lorraine Laurie offers remarks at the dedication of the Green Island Neighborhood Center.

back to my roots!” she said.

Ms. Laurie is active with the Green Island and Union Hill neighborhoods’ crime watches and with the South Worcester Neighborhood Improvement Corp. Board as the Green Island Neighborhood Center’s representative. A member of the former Ascension Church on Vernon St., she is now a

parishioner of St. John’s on Temple St. where she is immersed in various parish activities. She is a big supporter of the St. John’s/Ascension Campus After-School program and the St. John’s/Ascension Campus Clothing Center at 44 Vernon St.

Author of a book (“The Island That Became A Neighborhood”) that defines her allegiance to her home turf (it is now out of print), Ms. Laurie even cleared up some confusion for us, during a sit-down interview at the Worcester Senior Center, as to the geographic bounds that make up Oak Hill and Union Hill.

“Oak Hill is the Friendly House area, Suffolk St., Norfolk St. and Wall,” she said. “Union Hill is around Worcester Academy, Dorchester St. (which used to be Union Ave.)” Worcester Academy’s Davis Hall, she noted, “used to look like a castle to me.”

Bookworm. Ms. Laurie with a copy of her “The Island That Became A Neighborhood.”



Few people are as versed in the state of the neighborhood, today.

“We had our rash of fires and lost a firefighter. But those homes were taken down or renovated. We don’t have a fire station but [we do have] EMS. We’ve had our share of absentee owners. In



Chow time. Ms. Laurie with then-Commissioner of Parks & Rec Tom Taylor...“Mr. Worcesterfic.”

the olden days more of our homes were all-family homes. Now there is more absentee ownership. Before it was Irish, Polish, Lithuanian, Jewish. Now it’s a wider ethnic mix.”

As with anyone who has invested so much of her time and energy in his or her neighborhood, Ms. Laurie is not shy about expressing her opinion on people with whom she has forged relationships and issues that concern her.

“(Mass. Biomedical Initiatives’) Kevin O’Sullivan and I go way back to the 80s. He was community development director for the Worcester Chamber and had worked at Friendly House. He was very supportive of the Green Island group when it started.”

“I’ve known (the RTA’s) Steve O’Neil since he worked for OBCD. The WRTA’s [now-under-construction] maintenance garage on Quinsigamond Ave. has been a long road. A lot of contamination but it’s big deal to clean up a bad brownfield.”

In her view “Kelley Square to Brosnihan Square needs TLC, sidewalks, streets, side streets. We’re lucky to have Inspectional Services and Fire Prevention and the Worcester Housing Authority and Lafayette Place.

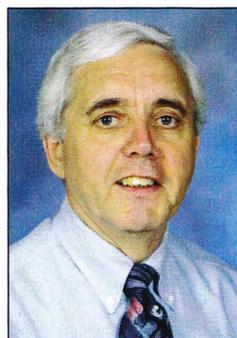
“We could use a supermarket, a pharmacy and a bank.” The city, she said, “should do more to maintain our parks, we have so many. We are looking forward to improvements planned for Crompton Park.”

Ms. Laurie’s contributions are greatly appreciated.

Rochelle Appiah, site manager at the Green Island Neighborhood Center, says Ms. Laurie has been “a real trouper for the Green Island area, for a long time.”

How long will her activism on behalf of Green Island continue?

“Until I go to Heaven, that’s how long,” Ms. Laurie says.



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OUR TOWN/ROD LEE

Woof, woof

Those of us who either grew up with dogs that we owned (in my case, collies), fell head over heels with via television (Lassie, Rin Tin Tin) or read about in books (Jack London's "Buck") can identify with the call for a dog park to serve Worcester. We can do so even while wondering if we would have taken advantage of such a recreational spot were "Sheba," our collie/Samoyed mix, still around. My practice upon taking up residence on Cohasset St. in 1985 was to walk Sheba on neighborhood streets (Farrar, Ingleside, Dana, Hamilton) and to romp with her in the back yard, which was spacious enough for her to stretch out. Un-



like some members of her breed, she didn't like being confined in an automobile, window cracked for air or not; she would become fidgety and slather the back seat with saliva. So a ride to Boynton Park in Paxton, or a facsimile of that destination, probably wouldn't have occurred to me as advisable.

The case for a dog park, so eloquently and forcefully enunciated by District 5 City Councilor Gary Rosen, among others, is overshadowed, in my mind, by the argument for responsibility on the part of dog owners. To me, it always comes down to being accountable for when and where a malamute or miniature poodle poops—regardless of the site chosen for the deed—just as it comes down to how a pit bull be-

haves around people. The onus is on the owner of the pet to make sure his or her animal is not an obtrusive presence.

The city should pay attention to Individuals who have weighed in on the issue of a dog park because they are talking common sense. Letter writers to the Telegram & Gazette, for instance. One of these, Sally Gore of Worcester, noted that in walking through Beaver Brook Park she sees that the site has become a trash heap. Why ban certain groups from parks and playgrounds,



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Ms. Gore asks, when "parents and/or their Little Leaguers" who litter profusely are not held to the same standards? "It seems to me," she writes, "that (butts, flavored cigar wrappers, beer caps, half-eaten sandwiches, etc.) are far more offensive and destructive to public property than any dog walking on a leash through the park, cared for by an owner who cleans up after it."

Richard Chapel of Worcester makes a similar point in asserting that it's time for the city to stop "harassing and fining dog walkers" (although I wonder about his claim that "my dog poops in the bag I always carry; never hits the ground"—a maneuver that is hard to visualize being conducted repeatedly, with nary a miss or a mess).

That the burden should be on dog owners is made clear too by Michael G. Moore of Worcester of the forty-year-old Boynton Park Softball League who says once-beautiful Boynton Park has been become "a barren field covered in feces, holes and broken dog toys."

Who's to blame? Not the dogs.

Cheers to Councilor Rosen—a former dog owner—for at least keeping the subject at the forefront.

"From my childhood into middle age, I had a dog," Mr. Rosen told Inside Worcester. "My last was a beautiful blue-eyed Siberian husky named Molecule (which stemmed from my career as a Chemistry teacher). Although I walked her daily along our neighborhood streets and sidewalks, I'm sure that she did miss the fun, exercise and companionship that all dogs at Boynton Park seem to love.

"Today, as a senior citizen, I am no longer a dog owner. But, even though I now have joined the feline crowd and have a fifteen-year-old indoor female cat, I'll always remain a dog lover.

"Worcester (and the thousands of responsible dog owners) needs a dog park. And it needs one soon. As the chairman of the City Council's Youth, Parks & Recreation Committee, I hope to be instrumental in putting the Woo back in woof."

All well and good. But the city's focus should be less on where dogs are allowed to "do their thing" and more on the need for dog owners to act in the best interests of all.



THE NEIGHBORHOODS

The Boys of Summer

HANOVER INSURANCE PARK—Anyone expecting cooler temperatures, another Ruthian swat by Zack Tower or a come-from-behind win by the Worcester Bravehearts against the Torrington Titans on July 28th left “the HIP” at Fitton Field disappointed. Stifling heat (despite a rare first pitch at 11:05 a.m.), Mr. Tower’s bat held in check and a rally that fell just short added up to a 7 to 5 loss in ten innings.

None of this diminished the sheer exhilaration of being at the ballpark as part of a mostly kids-crowd on an otherwise uneventful Tuesday—save maybe for a lack of shade to escape the unforgivable rays of the sun, climbing to its nasty noontime position in the sky, directly overhead.

A large contingent of children assembled in the bleachers along the left-field line spent the minutes prior to the game whooping and hollering in an attempt to lure Mr. Tower away from some catch-playing and limber-stretching in which he was engaged in the hope of securing an autograph from the big red-headed first baseman. They got a smile, a nod and a wave. News of his hitting exploits, including a tape-measure blast onto I-290, had no doubt reached their ears. They were eager to see a similar show of force from the locals’ “Tower” of Power, perhaps a white dot crashing off the top of one of the tractor trailer trucks or a Vital EMS ambulance traveling east or west on the highway. Just the night before Mr. Tower’s three-run shot had provided the Bravehearts with an 8-5 win over the Brockton Rox in fourteen innings. Alas, it was not to be. In his first at-bat, he was hit by a pitch. In his next, he struck out weakly.

Nor could the Bravehearts pull this one out, despite overcoming a 5-0 deficit. Second baseman Derek Gibree gave them a chance, singling in a run in the seventh to break up the shutout and then adding a bases-loaded double to right in the eighth to tie the score. Still, a defeat.

Let’s hope for a better result this Wednesday night against Nashua...7:05 p.m.

“Take me out...” (you know the rest). Ice cream at 10:45 in the morning (Sandra Anim, with Brittany Henderson and a group of Positive Direction kids from South High), Jake the Lion hob knobbing with a fan, Slugger Zack Tower (foreground, warming up) and Brieanna Baron at the Bravehearts’ merchandise table were all part of the scene as the local collegiate leaguers prepared to take the field against the Torrington Titans for a matinee game on July 26th.



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NOTES ON A NAPKIN

- The food-truck blues ■ Jo Hart at Peppercorn's ■ SMOC's good-guy role
- Washburn House as a substance-abuse center? ■ The city's tax-exempt woes

For comparison purposes on the matter of whether food trucks should be allowed to operate in Worcester ("food truck-friendly zones" are apparently in the offing), perhaps Manager **Augustus**, Mayor **Petty** and councilors ought to look a little more closely at what "with-it" cosmopolitan cities like Toronto are doing. Profiled in the July issue of *Good Housekeeping*, Sarah Rafferty, who portrays a savvy executive assistant named "Donna" on USA Network's lawyerly "Suits," notes that "the food-truck scene" in Toronto, where the show is filmed, "is getting serious." So, says the magazine, "keep your eyes peeled for a range of diverse street food." The "Good Eats" item is accompanied by a photograph of a roast pork sandwich from the food truck "Fidel Gastro." Love the play on the name! Love the whole idea of letting "The Dogfather" and operatives of that sort do their thing—infusing our fair metropolis with color and charm!... Lo and behold who do we encounter in the dining room at Peppercorn's where the living is easy especially on a quiet mid-July afternoon (after a shopping stop at Sam's Club) than **Jo Hart**. Guaranteed to talk transportation which is her favorite subject. After a casual bite to eat (plain pizza with sausage and a Wormtown IPA for myself, fish and chips with eggplant fries, cole slaw and water for my wife...thanks **Tom Oliveri** and staff!) I paused to chat with Ms. Hart, who immediately told me "write something about that tractor trailer accident in Kelley Square. People say it's a Kelley Square issue. It's not a Kelley Square issue! It's a **CSX** issue!" Jo has spoken... Not sure SMOC is setting the standard for effectiveness in running the new assessment and triage center on Queen St. where by some accounts chaos seems to rule (cops and ambulances are frequently on-site in the evening) but the organization deserves credit when it is due; as for instance with word from **Paul Collyer** of the Chandler Street Business Association that for the second straight year SMOC is funding four kids in the CBA's summer youth employment program. An arrangement negotiated by Pho Hien Buddhist Temple Youth Director **Hien Nguyen** and SMOC Executive Director **Jim Cuddy**... Safe to say that **Tim Rassias** of Safeway Luxury Transportation on Grove St. (No. 112, rear) brings a stellar track record to his bid to acquire the former Washburn House on Main St. and convert it from its most recent use (as a hospice-care site, under the

stewardship of Holy Trinity) to a thirty-bed "Phase 3" substance-abuse facility for men eighteen and over. Mr. Rassias has going for himself that he grew up in the neighborhood (on Woodland St.). Also working in his favor (there is at least one other offer on the table) is a similar extended-care operation he launched in Ashby in 2008 and then sold (www.springhillrecovery.org). Mr. Rassias' objective for the home, if he is successful in winning approval to proceed? "Skill-building, jobs and community service..." It isn't Darius Rucker's "Wagon Wheel" (one of our favorite Country hits) but rather **Joan Crowell** and **AWARE** warning that if tax-exempt institutions like Worcester Academy keep gobbling up property the wheels are going to fall off the wagon. According to FY 2015 DOR stats, Ms. Crowell points out, tax-exempt properties account for nearly 31% of all property values in Worcester—compared to 13.61% statewide in FY 2014. Of the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns, Worcester ranks third-highest in percentage of tax-exempt properties (in order, these are Huntington, Gill, Worcester, Mount Washington and Cambridge). Now along comes WA purchasing two parcels that will also become tax exempt (if used for charitable purposes): 121 and 124 Providence St., the assessed value for which is \$5 million and on which the previous owner—Vernon Hill Development Realty—paid nearly \$115 in property taxes for FY 2015 before selling the parcels to Worcester Academy for \$3 million. Before making taxpaying entities (businesses, residential property owners and rent payers) pull even more weight, **AWARE** says, the city should be try to keep these kinds of properties on the tax rolls. As for the state, in the name of fairness the Commonwealth should recognize that because Worcester's nonprofits contribute to the good of the state and the region, the city should be compensated for delivery of services to these institutions.

Harmony Club of Worcester golf tournament

Fri., Sept. 11th at Leicester Country Club

\$110 per golfer, \$500 corporate sponsor (includes sign and four golfers); 11:00 a.m. registration

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THE ECHO CHAMBER

(Feedback on the July issue of Inside Worcester)

Amy Vogel Waters

"Thanks so much for the Senior Center feature!

Kevin O'Sullivan

"Very nice cover shot of the 3 Amigos. Jill (Dagilis), one classy, effective lady; Craig (Blais), a guy who gets things done; and Karyn (Polito), is the best! Mullen Sawyer seems like a really effective community leader and organizer. We need his continued help in the lower Grafton St./upper Providence St. neighborhood. Glad to see he is joining forces with the turnaround Canal District. Cheryl Houston has been at it a long, long time and looks great. Like your Notes on a Napkin section. Jim Normandin?! Tree Initiative led by Jim McGovern and Tim Murray is truly an amazing success story!"

Alan Cooper

"I do not think it's a lack of Civics why Worcester citizens do not vote. Without leadership and leaders who do not have a vision or {capability} of carrying out their vision why go to the polls to vote. This is America



and we should not lose sight of 'the right to vote.' But instead of a media blitz and education symposium on voting

I hope Inside Worcester will start talking of how we make Worcester a Destination. Develop a campaign for creating excellence in education (in-school and after-school) and bringing good companies to our city (with a smile). Most important keeping our elected officials accountable and electing people who care (about) wanting to run for office. Good luck Worcester and let's try to make it great again."

CITY FOLK



Goddard grubfest. Roland and Jenn Boudreau ("he's French, I'm not"), residents since November, and Tom Rouvina and Al Dhavour (below) were among those who dug into clam chowder, lobster and other scrumptious fare during an Independence Day cookout at Goddard House on June 30th. Mr. Rouvina is the organization's treasurer.



What's for lunch? Pals Kaitlyn and Elizabeth soak up the atmosphere before a noontime concert on the Worcester Common.



WTI "hot"shots. Young Adult Foresters Supervisor Beni Robert Lukumu (far right), Shaylee Amidon, Gilbert Marfo and Tyler Griffin weather searing heat while watering trees on West Boylston St., on July 27th as part of the Worcester Tree Initiative's continued due diligence in the campaign to green up the city in the wake of devastation caused by the Asian Long-horned Beetle .

SHOWTIME!
PAGE 8



Cha-cha-cha. Rosa Rivera, Sophia Benalcazar and Maria Cruz show off their dance moves while taking part in Centro Las Americas' Latino Elders program at the Worcester Senior Center.



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SHOWTIME!

Bloody business at the DCU Center

Surely there is more than a touch of symbolism, right, to the upcoming “Motley Crue Final Tour with Special Guest Alice Cooper” at the **DCU Center** (8/15) and the facility’s annual American Red Cross Blood Drive about a week later (8/21, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.)? On the one hand you have “The Godfather of Shock Rock” (Vincent Damon Furnier), famous for his guillotines, electric chairs, fake blood, boa constrictors, baby dolls and dueling swords; a performer whose proclivity for outrageousness landed him a brief appearance as a vagrant in the horror movie “Prince of Darkness” and almost got him asphyxiated after a safety rope broke during a concert stunt in which he pretended to hang himself. On the other you have a staple event (since 2006) that is all about making a positive difference; each unit of blood drawn may help save three lives: accident victims, trauma patients, transplant recipients, those receiving treatment for life-threatening illnesses. Maybe Mr. Cooper will donate a pint, before he leaves town... In promoting the CWE’s 2015 Women-Owned Business Challenge (a New England pitch competition), the **Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce** did not bother turning to Ryan Seacrest of the new “Knock Knock” TV



Shockster: Alice Cooper is DCU Center-bound.

Up and running!

New to Worcester and specifically Webster Square, at 120 Stafford St., is FASTSIGNS, a family-owned and operated visual communications company that taps into Denise Carr’s twenty-nine years of experience in engineering in the computer and data-storage industries and husband Tim Carr’s three decades of experience in telecommunications. FASTSIGNS provides comprehensive signage and graphic solutions including wall, window and floor graphics, architectural signs, banners, trade-show displays, wayfinding solutions, digital signage and more. All products are designed for businesses to raise brand awareness, launch a new product, enhance their building space or increase business visibility. The company’s team includes Graphic Designer Eriks Liepins and Visual Community Specialist Brian Wiles.



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show. Incentive for participation includes a chance to win a \$10,000 package to grow your business. This is an online contest and applications may be submitted up until 8/14. Check out the Chamber’s website for further particulars. One knows that kids are top-of-mind at the **Worcester Public Library** when such offerings as “The Thousand Cranes Project” (an attempt to create 1000 of them in two months, using the traditional Japanese art of Oragami) the “Summer Lunch Program,” “Malik the Magic Guy” and “Giving Earth: Save Our Planet/ Recycling” all occur on the same day (8/6)...More

adult-oriented fare is a highlight of the month at **The Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts** where crafty Comedian John Mulaney is set to appear (8/23). Mr. Mulaney has come far fast, from his New York’s East Village days to Saturday Night Live where he has shown up as a “Weekend Update” correspondent and co-created characters such as “Stefon” with Bill Hader... What better place for a Folk Art Festival to be staged than the **Worcester Art Museum** (8/22)? Drop by to get verbal



Mr. Mulaney.

appraisals of your folksy antiques and flea-market finds from representatives of Skinner Inc.... If you ever needed evidence that “whales compose, bullfrogs chorus and songbirds greet the dawn,” the **Ecotarium** has it with its “Wild Music: Explore Sounds and Songs of Life” (through 9/6)... Columbus Day Weekend in Worcester will feature a new wrinkle this year with introduction of a first-ever “Webster Square Block Party” in the **Webster Square Plaza** on Saturday, October 10th. Solo artist P.E. James and the group 2 Left are already booked as part of the musical entertainment for the event. Proceeds will benefit the sponsoring Webster Square Business Association’s Beautification fund.



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