

### The one and only Savvas

Savvas Fotiadis of The Manor (pictured with his wife Janet) is a hero to officers and directors of HolyTrinity Nursing & Rehabilitation & Nursing Center. Savvas' sister Katerina Rajotte talks about her brother's selfless spirit and his humanitarian work around the world.

**PAGE 5.**



### A Small world

Painter Allan Forrest Small returns to the Prints and the Potter with an exhibition of his work.

**PAGE 7.**

# The Rambler

**A literary journal**

**November 2017**



District 1 City Council candidate Sean M. Rose at Panera Bread on Gold Star Boulevard in Worcester the morning of October 28th, 2017.

## Advantage Rose? Or Moynihan?

District 1 race pits two men who are among city's best

By ROD LEE

**T**he first question I asked Sean M. Rose during a talk we had at Panera Bread on Gold Star

Boulevard ten days before the municipal election was, "what would possess a father of four young daughters who already has a full personal and professional life to run for Worcester City Council this year?"

"It's now *five* children," Mr. Rose said with a smile that I quickly decided is kind of a trademark. "We (he and his wife Maureen) are fostering a seven-year-old boy!"

Actually, both Mr. Rose and Edward L. Moynihan who is his opponent in the race to succeed Tony Economou as District 1 councilor feel "its time" for them to step into the maelstrom that is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Edward L. Moynihan outside Bagel Time on Park Ave. on October 30th.







## —THE COVER STORY

Continued from Page One

Worcester city politics. In explaining his reasoning, Mr. Rose, who splits his time between Needham and Thompson, Connecticut as executive director of JRI CT (the Justice Reform Institute), said “my wife’s cousin Molly McCullough (of the Worcester School Committee) told me ‘it’s your time.’”

Mr. Moynihan feels the same way. Discussing his candidacy at Bagel Time on Park Ave. on October 30th, just before teaching a 9:30 a.m. class in Urban Studies at Worcester State University, Mr. Moynihan recounted growing up in Vernon, Connecticut (“a town like Millbury with old mills, I was the eldest of five kids, my dad was a cop, we grew our own food”), attending Holy Cross and Providence College, working at Tweed’s in Worcester and Spag’s in Shrewsbury and falling in love with research and policy while employed in the

Connecticut State Legislature. In winning a special caucus to earn a spot on the town council in Vernon in 1991, he quickly discovered that “politics was 24/7 there. I know the demands” required to be a Worcester city councilor. “I know how hard Tony worked,” he said, of Mr. Economou. “You have to pay attention to your constituents. I work in the city. I love the city.” As evidence of this, he was wearing “I love Worcester” and “Moynihan-for-Worcester” buttons on his blue dress shirt.

Elizabeth A. “Beth” Proko of Holden St., who headed Worcester Citizens for Business and who is an ardent supporter of Mr. Moynihan, told *The Rambler* she admired his “tenacity” in co-chairing the “Vote No Slots” initiative that kept gambling out of Kelley Square even though she didn’t completely agree with his position. After meeting with Mr. Moynihan for coffee and hearing him talk of the need for a new master plan and after assessing his experience in the private sector, she determined that he will “continue the groundwork laid down by Mr. Economou” (she noted that “what others see as an obstacle, Tony sees as a challenge—let’s get it done”). Mr. Moynihan will help bring the city to the next level by working to link neighborhoods, transportation and infrastructure so that areas like “our bustling West Boylston St. corridor become destinations again,” Ms.

Proko said.

THAT THE DISTRICT 1 race between two highly qualified aspirants is the most interesting contest on the ballot and that it has voters enthused is apparent in veteran community and political activist Meg Perreault Mulhern opting to back Mr. Rose and in fact becoming his campaign manager (Mr. Moynihan’s son Connor is running his bid). Mr. Economou endorsed Mr. Moynihan early on, because, he told me on November 1st, “Ed has been around longer and has more experience in dealing with city government.” Also, Mr. Moynihan’s stances are more closely aligned “with mine on the tax base and he has articulated his positions well.” Mr. Economou predicted that the vote “will be a lot closer than people think.”

Ms. Mulhern said she wasn’t keen on dedicating “another nine months to a fourth straight campaign” but after getting to know Mr. Rose she was inspired by his “intelligence and experience, trustworthiness and sincerity.” They first met two years ago at a Planting the Seed Foundation Christmas toy drive and fundraiser. Mr. Rose, she said, was a PSF board member. She was in attendance on behalf of a new group, the 365Z Foundation, which focuses on daily acts of kindness. In the fall of 2016, Ms. Mulhern said, Mr. Rose came to a 365Z board meeting and was well-received because of his interest in helping and his background with underprivileged families. He became a board member with 365Z in January of 2017. It is obvious to her, Ms. Mulhern said, that Mr. Rose “listens first and foremost.”

At Panera Bread on October 28th, Mr. Rose, casually confident in a beige sweater and light blue shirt open at the neck, reiterated that he is running on a platform of “streets, schools, sidewalks and safety” and pointed to his career with JRI CT as good preparation to take on the role of city councilor. The Institute meets the needs of underserved individuals, families and communities through a broad spectrum of programs.

Overseeing “\$16-\$17 million” in business contracts has given him expertise in fiscal management and policy implementation, he said. “I have experience in “clinical, therapeutic and development too, so I am well-prepared and well-positioned to do well for the city.” Also, he added, “I work in the most emotional field imaginable, sometimes life or death.”

Mr. Rose hails from an impressive political lineage. His father-in-law Tom White, to cite just one example, “was Harriette Chandler before Harriette Chandler, and a District 1 city councilor,” he said. Maureen Rose’s grandfather James D. O’Brien “was an early mayor of the city” (from 1954 to 1958). Politics, he said, is “in the family bloodline.” As the Democrat in the race (Mr. Moynihan is unenrolled), Mr. Rose has strong union support working in his favor along with close relationships with State Rep. John Mahoney and State Rep. Jim O’Day.

Mr. Rose and Mr. Moynihan are both passionate in expressing their views on such issues as the city’s property tax rate. In response to a question posed by Joan Crowell’s watchdog group AWARE about whether it is “feasible and fair” for Worcester to further close the gap by increasing the residential rate while lowering the commercial/industrial rate they concurred to some degree that “marching toward a single rate” is a worthy goal.

Both also shared their thoughts on a comment made by Ronnie Miller who became friends with Mr. Rose by way of the Joe Schwartz Little League and the Greendale Neighborhood Basketball League. Mr. Miller told me Mr. Rose is “very open-minded, very fair” and is eager to change the minds of “those folks” who don’t believe “Worcester is and can be a really good city, people on our side of the city who are leaving to the Holden’s and Paxton’s.” Asked about this, Mr. Rose said “I don’t know why this may be happening but my wife grew up here, we have lived here thirteen years, my kids are thriving here, maybe it’s because those locales are quieter but there are no exit interviews” to decipher the exact reason. “What do you find when you Google the city, nothing good comes up. Right now the No. 1 thing trending is Mike and Coreen Gaffney. It’s great you’re developing downtown but how do we get there? We need a city traffic study done. Tony did a nice job renovating parks and recreational spaces, now we need affordable rec spaces.” Mr. Moynihan said “people are still moving into District 1” and he has championed a “Worcester’s Future Program” he put out for consideration that would provide a 10 percent discount toward college tuition to any student who has lived in the city for at least two years and an additional 5 percent discount if they have been educated in the Worcester Public Schools. As his children were.

Both are working hard to win next Tuesday. Mr. Rose confided to me that “we lost all of Pct. 2, I am disappointed in that.” Mr. Moynihan said “I feel good. He can’t run away with Pct. 1 (Mr. Rose’s home precinct).

Of his willingness to be frank, Mr. Moynihan said “why the hell am I looking to get elected if I can’t take a stand?, like Harry Truman said.”

## THE BUSINESS SCENE

## Last days

A city says so long to a neighborhood institution

**G**oodbyes are seldom easy, especially when they involve an old friend which is how many people including not only contractors but do-it-yourself folks thought of Elwood Adams Hardware on Main Street in Worcester.

Asked how things were going the afternoon of October 18th, Store Manager Fran Neale, a cherubic-faced man who was standing behind the sales counter at the time, said, “it’s going. We’ve got a few days left. The 20th.”

Mr. Neale’s thinning gray hair is a tipoff to the number of years he was associated with Elwood Adams Hardware. “Forty-one,” he said, his face brightening, when we made a return visit on the 20th. “It would have been forty-two in January.”

Asked what he was going to be doing now, Mr. Neale said “I’m going to Barrows. The other guys are trying to decide,” he added, of his colleagues.

Barrows Hardware, a family-owned business in Webster Square that is presently expanding into an area on the east side of its building that was formerly occupied by the Webster House Restaurant, boasts some longevity of its own at more than a century in existence and with no sign of slowing down. Somehow Barrows Hardware has avoided succumbing to what Worcester City Manager Edward M. Augustus Jr. describes as the same pressures from “Amazon and the big-box stores” that hastened Elwood Adams Hardware’s exit.

Mr. Augustus’s remarks came during an appearance on CBS Sunday Morning with Jane Pauley, in which Elwood Adams Hardware was identified as “the oldest continuously operating hardware store in the country,” with roots dating back to “before George Washington was president.” When, Ms. Pauley noted, the hottest sellers were “clock bells and pinions.”

Elwood Adams acquired the store, which opened in 1782, in 1886, becoming the third owner. His son took over in 1947.

In her piece Ms. Pauley said Elwood Adams Hardware “is kind of like Cheers, without the beer.” In a reflective moment summing up his attachment to the store, Mr. Neale told Ms. Pauley’s film crew that “it’s all about the relationships we’ve made over the years.” This works two ways, as evidenced by a customer with purchases in his hands who said as he prepared to leave “thank you Elwood Adams staff for all your years of service.”

Mark Lannon, who has been at Elwood Adams Hardware for nearly as long as Mr. Neale, told CBS Sunday Morning that the most unusual situation he ran into during his thirty-five years at the store was “a woman wanted a pole installed in her house. She was a stripper and wanted to practice. We didn’t do the job.”

When Mr. Neale was asked on the 20th what the atmosphere had been like as the time to close the doors approached, he said, “like a carnival but like a funeral too. It kind of feels like our wake.”

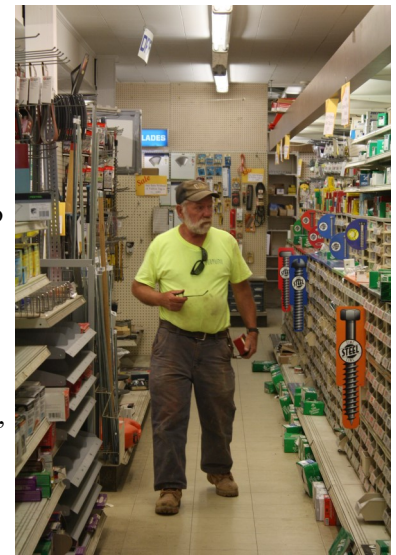
Well wishes poured in from near and far. “Oregon, Texas, Florida, Arizona,” Mr. Neale said. When the telephone rang, as it did frequently, it was often someone expressing congratulations. Or condolences.

Typical of those who wanted to be part of the last days of Elwood Adams Hardware were two men who drove two hundred miles, from somewhere around Cooperstown, New York, to say goodbye.

“Two guys in their seventies.”

The five-story building is for sale, its legacy secure.

Left, Mark Lannon and Fran Neale; above, the familiar Elwood Adams storefront, and a patron foraging for bargains.





Here and at right, Auburn Fire Chief Stephen M. Coleman Jr.



## A fire chief in the heat of the battle

A conversation with Auburn Fire Chief Stephen M. Coleman Jr. on the morning of September 6th began around events commemorating the 100th anniversary of the department, per agreement, in recognition of a milestone that has been celebrated with periodic fanfare throughout 2017 culminating with an anniversary dinner at the Auburn Elks Club a few days later.

But during the course of the next hour in his office at fire headquarters on Auburn Street the dialogue took an entirely different direction, as Chief Coleman, a twenty seven-year veteran of the Massachusetts fire service, shared his thoughts on an alarming trend.

“The numbers are down” for the twenty-four departments in District 7 “that employ call firefighters,” he said.

This is an issue of particular concern to Chief Coleman. He began his career as a teenaged call firefighter in the town of Charlton in 1989. He quickly rose through the ranks, driven by a love for his profession. As an EMT-Intermediate he was instrumental in the formation of the department’s first officer training program for new hires to ambulance. In 2005 he received an award as Massachusetts Firefighter of the Year from State Fire Marshall Stephen Coan and Gov. Mitt Romney for his efforts in recruit training. On July 1st, 2006, he left the Charlton Fire Department to become the first full-time deputy chief of operations in Auburn. He became acting fire chief in October of 2010 after the retirement of Chief William Whynot and permanent chief on May 31st, 2011, only the sixth in the town’s history.

“I was acting chief when Julie (Town Manager Julie Jacobson) was hired,” Chief Coleman said. “Within her first couple of days here she and I got thrown in together. There were roof collapses all over the state because of the snow, including six or more here in Auburn. All within the first week. She was thrust into emergency mode right away. She’s been great,” he said, pleased about the partnership they have formed.

As the chair of Massachusetts Fire District 7 (he also serves as both a strike-team commander for the district and as a task-force leader with the state’s fire-mobilization plan), Chief Coleman is painfully aware of the need for more call firefighters throughout the district. He knows why there is a shortage but admits that a solution is elusive. “The training requirements are harder,” he said. “Departments demand more. Most households are two-income, which wasn’t the case when I started. There are more commitments involving children. Dance, music, sports. In 2006 we had twenty-five call firefighters. In the six years I’ve been chief I’ve hired fifteen call firefighters. Thirteen are gone.

“No one seems to have the answer” in turning this situation around, he said.

“The job is different. In 1989 when I got on the fire department we were outfitted with a helmet, coat and a pair of boots and someone said ‘that’s Don, he’ll show you what to do.’ It was all on-the-job training. In today’s world you are hiring a union employee and here in Auburn they’ve been unionized for three decades. Call firefighters are employees and you have to hire them as employees.

“Times have changed. There used to be highway or water-department people on the fire department. Those times are gone. The town of Spencer used to be in the same boat. Today Spencer has one call firefighter on a roster of forty. It’s not the money. Today it is so much more technical. We are asked to do so much more. The words ‘fire department’ don’t explain it all. It’s all-encompassing. I have thirty-five full-time people. Not everyone is a diver or can hang off a rope. There is specialization and perishable skills involved.”

The chief thoroughly enjoys talking fire service but admits to frustration with the state of it.

“I don’t know how someone with outside commitments does it. I can’t imagine doing anything else but I don’t know where I’d find the time to fit it in. In two weeks I have two full-time firefighters going to structural collapse training. Eight hours, seven days a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

## —Chief

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

week. It's a huge commitment.

Fortunately or unfortunately, communities have to look at a full-time model.

"When I went before the Board of Selectmen in East Brookfield to advocate for more on-call firefighters, I was told it's just little old East Brookfield.' I told those selectmen that in saying that 'you are downplaying your community and the position. By statute East Brookfield and Boston have the same challenges and responsibilities. Those two thousand people in East Brookfield deserve the best.' And they said 'you're right.' They were a good board to work with and they looked at things differently after I gave my pitch."

IT BOTHERS Chief Coleman that young people today are not choosing public service as a career.

"In 2014, 10,000 signed up for full-time civil service. In 2016, just over 6000. That's a 28% reduction. That to me is telling," he said.

"Public service as a whole did not make *Forbes* magazine's Top 30 list. I fear for the future of government as we move forward.

"This was not a post-World War II problem. Public service is where young people flocked. At fifteen more than half of us wanted to be cops or firefighters. I had one hundred thirty resumes for eight positions in 2003. Last year I advertised for six positions and I had forty resumes.

"We've seen this coming, seen it on the career side and it bodes ill for the call side." Auburn and other towns and cities cannot afford to face calls lacking manpower, he said. The Auburn Fire Department, the chief said, is "already on a pace of 3500 emergency calls this year and we'll probably break 3600.

"There is not an emergency that occurs in this community that we are not involved with. We are an all-hazards department, a go-to for citizens and for every other department that doesn't know who to call.

"Who in their right mind is going to sign up for something like that?"

## AWARDS

## Savvas Fotiadis, humanitarian

**K**aterina Rajotte was taking advantage of a rare lull in her busy schedule as general manager of The Manor in West Boylston on a Thursday afternoon to talk about her brother Savvas Fotiadis who was the honoree at Holy Trinity's 11th annual Food & Wine Fest at St. George Orthodox Cathedral on Anna St. in Worcester on October 19th.

"Savvas is the kindest, most sincere, hardest-working person I know," Ms. Rajotte, an effervescent woman whose jet-black hair was offset handsomely by a light-blue



Savvas Fotiadis.

blouse, said, while

discussing Mr.

Fotiadis in the lounge at the now-four-year-old Draught House Bar & Grill at The Manor.

"Tears come to my eyes when I think of what a beautiful human being he is."

When she was first asked by *The Rambler* for comment on Mr. Fotiadis, Ms. Rajotte hadn't yet seen the program from the event

in which he was extolled as a faithful supporter of Holy Trinity Nursing & Rehabilitation Center. This is typical of her brother's humble acceptance of plaudits for giving back on many fronts, she said. In offering an example, she said that when he once, without a second thought, handed a warm coat to someone in need and was asked what he would do for a replacement, he said "I will buy another one."

From the moment their late mother, Kiriaki "Kiki" Fotiadis, entered Holy Trinity for a short-term rehab fifteen years ago, Mr. Fotiadis has been there for the home. He has been a loyal donor to Holy Trinity's Treasured Generations Annual Fund and has served as main spokesman for its CD Ad Campaign.

Chris Liazos, owner of the now-demolished Webster House Restaurant and a friend of Mr. Fotiadis, recalled Mr. Fotiadis's donation of tables and linens for the Food & Wine Fest in its early years. Mr. Liazos described Mr. Fotiadis as "very religious."

When we spoke to Ms. Rajotte, her brother (a second brother, Tony, is also an owner of The Manor) said that Mr. Fotiadis was in Africa. "He is president of orphanages in Uganda" (where he is building a dining facility, kitchen and guest house and providing means for solar energy and retention water), she said. "He holds two fundraisers a year for them. He also feeds the homeless at St. Spyridon once a month."

Mr. Fotiadis is involved with Project Mexico. As a Shriner, he arranges for Cypriots arriving in Boston to get transportation to Springfield. "The Shriners gave him a humanitarian award I didn't even know about," Ms. Rajotte said.

"There is no limit to his kindness and it's so pure."

In that regard he is his mother's child. "She was fantastic," Ms. Rajotte said, of Kiki. "When we needed cucumbers she would go into the backyard and get them."

Mr. Fotiadis similarly thinks first of others.

"I think of Savvas as Jesus Christ on earth," Ms. Rajotte said. "January 7th is the true epiphany.

"Guess what day Savvas' birthday is?"



## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

# Tapping into a dream

**B**rian Kretchman began home brewing beer more than twenty years ago, never imagining at the time that what essentially started as a hobby would lead to the launch of a small brewery with go-to sales by growler only on Thompson Road in Webster in 2012.

Things have taken off from there, as they



have for so many craft brewers who have capitalized on the public's fervor for beer manufactured in small batches. Wormtown in Worcester, Stone Cow in Barre, Wachusett in Westminster—for example.

Today, KBC Brewery & Beer Garden is situated in a two-story building at the bottom of Frederick Street in Webster, directly behind the police station and abutting the French River and its river walk.

"I gave up a six-figure job to do this. I'm happier than I've ever been," Mr. Kretchman, a former software engineer, said one morning in mid-October while giving a visitor a tour. The building consists of a brewery and tap room downstairs and a theater—called The Wintergarten—on the second floor. There is also an outdoor beer garden.

Mr. Kretchman landed at 9 Frederick St. quite by happenstance. The building's owner, Joseph Waskiewicz of JV Mechanical Contractors "came and saw us at our old property. He wanted to rent to someone who would bring his building back and help with the revitalization of downtown Webster," Mr. Kretchman said. "He is a very good guy. We were a startup. He had that vision and we were in sync. Everything he promised he has come through with."

The building, which had been empty for

a while, has a long and colorful history going back one hundred fifty years, Mr. Kretchman said. "It was built as the Falcons Club, probably like a Lions Club, probably Polish. During Prohibition it was a speakeasy. People would come and bring a bucket of beer from home, back and forth. It was different pubs including The Bucket of Blood in the 80s and 90s. It was the Maple Leaf Lounge and then K-Ray's. It was a dump. Joe began a renovation about ten years ago.

"The first time I saw this room," he said of the now-beautifully-appointed Wintergarten, "I knew we couldn't afford it. But I had an idea of what it could be."

The Wintergarten features a large stage suitable for all sorts of entertainment, a big screen for video presentations, its own pouring station, power recliners to one side, a "Viking ship booth" that seats six, a love seat, chairs and tables that can accommodate up to more than one hundred patrons and a "peace tree" that changes colors.

"We just opened this space in May," Mr. Kretchman said of the Wintergarten.

"We've had private functions, weddings, a bridal shower, even a kids birthday party with disco and an open soda bar."

On October 28th the Wintergarten hosted the fifth installment of KBC's "The Beer Show: A Royal MocktoberFest."

MR. KRETCHMAN'S entrepreneurial spirit mirrors that of his great grandfather, who was a glass painter, and his grandfather, who owned parking lots in New York City. He, however, spells his name differently. His grandfather changed the spelling of the family name to Kretschmann "to make it look Jewish" and thus "help get him back on track" in the midst of anti-Germany feeling. The old spelling, Kretschmann, which means "innkeeper," is maintained in KBC today, as is the moon man logo and family crest "in honor of my family," Mr. Kretchman said.

Mr. Kretchman in KBC's Wintergarten Theater. Below, Emil Kretschmann, a glass painter, with his son Alfred (Brian Kretchman's grandfather) in 1908. Left, a Stein Club mug.



His family came to the U.S. around 1908.

In acknowledging that "beer is huge," Mr. Kretchman said "it is the foundation of what's here.

Everything else is built on top of that. People will travel," he said, "for beer."

He has added American beers to the line of German beers he began with. His "Gateway Lager" was created in response to "lots of locals who kept asking for Budweiser or Bud Light, thinking we'd have that. I kept telling them 'try craft beers.' Then I developed my own version of Bud and it's become popular." Customer favorites, meanwhile, include such choices as Café Munich and seasonal stuff—like a roasted pumpkin ale.

KBC is "different," Mr. Kretchman said. "We're smaller. Rather than grow through distribution we have built an atmosphere. So I don't have to brew up a ton of beer and ship it out the door. When you start mass brewing you lose the character. And we are the only brewery around without a food license but with a full liquor license (patrons are allowed to bring or order food in).

Next steps, Mr. Kretchman said, are to "boost sales, increase patronage and better define Wintergarten."

That may be something that can be mulled over, downstairs, by members of KBC's "Stein Club."

Eighty steins on the wall. That is what you call strength in numbers.



## SHOWTIME

## Thinking Small

**A**llan Forrest Small is not just any artist or any watercolorist, which is why Norman Ringdahl gets excited in talking about an exhibition of Mr. Small's work that is now being presented at **The Prints and The Potter Gallery** on Highland St. in Worcester. The show runs through November 15th but some of the pieces will remain up for viewing and purchase during the holiday season. As it turns out, Mr. Small, who lives in Ashburnham, in a historical home he is restoring, worked at Mr. Ringdahl's West Side store in a variety of capacities for seventeen years or so until his recent retirement. Meanwhile he continues to paint and



was in fact as of mid-October involved in a "Plain Air" painting competition in the Rockport area. A native of Massachusetts, he started painting at an early age and then, after spending four months painting and drawing throughout France with a fellow artist, he started studying the craft, and lithography, with instructors from George University, George Washington University and the Union Printmakers' Atelier. He paints all over New England and has captured a number of Worcester scenes including some of the city's celebrated diners "and local scenes in the Highland St. area," Mr. Ringdahl said the morning of October 13th. A lifelong interest in architectural history and historic preservation sometimes informs Mr. Small's choice of subjects. Many of his compositions are "cropped abruptly" to create formal—essentially abstract—patterns, but with details rendered more or less naturalistically. This approach stems from his interest in the way these close-ups suggest broader scenes, while leaving the bigger picture to be filled in by the observer. Similarly, he is drawn to neglected places, fascinated by the way their decay engages the imagination, drawing the viewer into a kind of silent conversation with the picture. His ultimate goal is to communicate mood and

atmosphere that infuses a place with emotional content. His award-winning work has been displayed in numerous solo exhibitions and juried shows from Virginia to Maine. Like Mr. Small, The Prints and the Potter Gallery has received its share of recognition. It is one of Worcester's oldest custom picture-framing workshops—in business since 1974.



*Mill Keeper's Cottage by Allan Forrest Small.*

## Bravehearts, Saint John's turn up the heat

There are many reasons to appreciate the existence of the Worcester Bravehearts and one of them is the organization's willingness to keep the season going for area baseball fans. To that end, the Bravehearts will be hosting a "heart stove" event for the third straight year on Thursday, November 16th at the Robert R. Jay Performing Arts Center at Saint John's High School in Shrewsbury. ESPN's Buster Olney, NESN's Tom Caron, Iowa Cubs Outfielder John Andreoli and Minnesota Twins Pitcher Ryan O'Rourke will be participating in a one-hour panel discussion in Founders Hall at 7:00 p.m. They will then take questions from members of the audience. The setting is appropriate. Mr. Andreoli and Mr. O'Rourke are both from Worcester and both are Saint John's High School graduates. As an added attraction, a celebration of the connection that has been established between the Bravehearts and Saint John's—ten Saint John's alumni have played or coached for the Bravehearts in just four seasons—will immediately precede the main event in the form of an on-stage video presentation at 6:30 p.m. There is also a 5:30 p.m. cocktail reception. "Robert Stanbury 'Buster Olney' III and Tom Caron ("TC" to his colleagues) are familiar faces in their respective roles. Mr. Olney grew up in



Vermont and has been covering baseball since 1989. He now lives in Yorktown Heights, N.Y. Mr. Caron hails from Maine and graduated from Saint Michel's College in Vermont. He joined NESN in 1995 and has been with the network ever since. He lives in Framingham. Tickets for the "heart-stove" event are \$30 per person; these gain the bearer admittance to the cocktail hour as well. Also, for every ten tickets purchased, the Creedon family's team will donate one turkey to the Worcester County Food Bank. Attendees are encouraged to bring nonperishable items to support the Food Bank, that evening.

Tickets may be purchased by calling the Bravehearts' box office at 508-438-3773.





## MY BACK PAGES/Rod Lee

### The tragic life and times of Kevin A. Perry Jr.

**T**hose of us who have known Kevin A. Perry Jr. for any length of time were not surprised to learn of his arrest earlier this year and then his change of plea in U.S. District Court to guilty for money laundering, aggravated cash structuring and making a false statement on a loan application and fentanyl distribution.

Mr. Perry came into our lives shortly after we moved from Grafton Hill in Worcester to the Linwood section of Northbridge, in 1988. His family resided in the town of Northbridge as well, then.

For a tumultuous but mercifully brief period during the late 1980s and early 1990s Mr. Perry exerted a strong hold over our son and youngest daughter. As is true of any smooth operator, he was able to draw them into less-than-commendable activities; some of which caught the eye of the Northbridge Police Department. In fairness to him, I must say that their own struggles might have occurred without his influence. But it is hard not to still feel anger for his role in channeling their energies toward behaviors that caused us great aggravation. We were beside ourselves, trying to extricate them from an association with him.

A culminating incident remains vivid. Eventually Mr. Perry and his roving cohorts sequestered themselves in an empty garage apartment set to the rear of a home on a street bordering Good Shepherd Catholic Church, a quarter mile away. They had in effect gone missing. A neighbor, Mike Majeau, and I found them after a search of the area over the course of several days. When we raided the place half a dozen or so of them were milling about in the living room, seemingly without a care in the world. Beer cans and cigarette butts littered the kitchen counter.

Mr. Perry is now forty-four years of age and facing up to life in prison and \$15 million in fines when he is sentenced on January 11th. His punishment probably will not come to that, despite a checkered personal and criminal past. Which I guess is a good thing in that I am at least a little sympathetic to the circumstances from which he sprang. A fractured marriage between his father, Kevin Sr., and his mother Bonnie, a broken home and Mr. Perry's unfortunate decision in his teens to become something of a hustler. From what I know Mr. Perry's sister, Melissa, tried her best to keep him on track.

Long before Mr. Perry was charged by the government with using more than \$1 million in drug proceeds to buy and renovate nine properties including The Usual, a restaurant on Shrewsbury St. in Worcester, and the Blackstone Tap on Water St. in the Canal District of Worcester, he had already established a reputation as a person who flaunts authority. Long before he was convicted of conspiracy to manufacture MDMA (i.e., ecstasy), sent to prison and put on probation, he was admired by close friends for being able to hide beneath a trench coat cassette tapes and CDs he was lifting from a record store in Milford.

Mr. Perry's case is a sad one in several regards. For starters he is extremely bright. He could have remained on the path of "personal trainer" and done alright for himself. Worse in my opinion is his complete disregard for the law; and the ruination he caused by taking advantage of people addicted to drugs. While lining his own pockets.

It is up to Judge Timothy S. Hillman to administer justice.

Regardless of how that goes, Mr. Perry's life, and that of his wife, Stacey Gala, will never be the same.

## The Rambler

**Issue No. 7      November 2017**

The Rambler is a literary journal dedicated to commentary and reflections on life in Massachusetts. It is produced at the discretion and whim of Founder, Editor & Publisher Rod Lee. Submissions of up to 1000 words on Arts & Culture, Business, Crime & Punishment, Education, Entertainment, Faith, Politics, Sports, Volunteerism and other topics of interest to the general

public are welcome.

### Subscriptions

Mailed copies of The Rambler to your home or place of business are available at a price of \$40/year for twelve issues.

### Advertising

- 1) "The Identifier;" your business card in The Rambler; \$60/year.
- 2) "The Spotlight;" a profile of your company featuring text and photos, appearing as a full-page ad in The Rambler one time: \$135.

- 3) Quarter Page ad: \$8/1x; \$90/year
- 4) Half Page ad: \$10/1x; \$105/year
- 5) Full Page ad: \$12/1x; \$120/year

### Make checks payable to:

Rod Lee  
PO Box 656  
Linwood MA 01525

**rodlee.1963@gmail.com**  
**774-232-2999**