

OPINION: Concerned mom: “New Bedford Schools have cement for playgrounds, no security!”

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“Hello. A concerned mother of special education children that has been in the education system for 5 years now and with 2 years of preschool, my children when in recess are playing outside on a PATCH OF CEMENT. This is at deferent schools, too!

I would like to address the early elementary education of the New Bedford public schools because their preschool program has some schools where the playground for the kids is just a patch of cement, and there is no outside security at all.

The children that have wheelchairs? or any other disability that need a padded play area are not given the opportunity to have an area for it.

I need help. Where do I go? Who do I talk to? We need to do better as a community and do better for these kids...”

OPINION: “Why does New Bedford’s Zeiterion get \$31 million while the Orpheum crumbles away?”

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“I understand that the Zeiterion Theatre received \$31 million to remodel and update the theatre. I can’t see where that is needed unless there are issues with the building that I’m not aware of.

But what really gets me is the Old Orpheum Theatre sitting there crumbling away. It’s so sad to see this beautiful building with trees growing out of its facade and the bricks coming loose.

This place would be a great arts center or a cultural center. I really wish the city would do something to save this Grand Old Lady before it’s too late and then we will be crying we should have done something to save it.” -Bob Marshall.

OPINION: “Nothing is being

done about the illegal animal dumping ground in New Bedford!”

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“I’ve called Animal Control and the Environmental Police several times, and nothing has been done about the illegal dumping in New Bedford’s industrial park behind the powerlines. It’s all coyotes and deer that have been illegally dumped after being shot.

If you can share this and keep me anonymous that would be great. Something has to get done!”



OPINION: “Mayor Mitchell, I dare you to spend one night in New Bedford’s Ash Street jail!”

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"Mayor Mitchell: spend one night in the Ash Street Jail!"

The recently printed comments of Mayor John Mitchell regarding the proposed closure of the New Bedford Ash Street jail and that "the proposal to close Ash Street may or may not ultimately make sense," are puzzling and disappointing.

The mayor remained essentially silent and non-responsive, during the many years of his administration, despite the continuing reported and documented complaints of unhealthful and unsafe conditions at the facility. And despite being informed by various committees, and having access to publicly printed Massachusetts Department of Public Health yearly inspection reports, that identified repeated health and safety violations at the Ash St. facility Mayor Mitchell never weighed into the discussion.

The local and state-circulated newspapers, and other media, consistently described in graphic detail, the continuing allegations of rodents, roaches and moldy cells. And most disturbing were reports of plumbing failures that produced raw sewage seeping down some of the cell walls.

Just reviewing the myriad of law suits filed by the estates of incarcerated individuals who committed suicide, which are available at the Superior Courthouse in New Bedford, attests to the desperation of some of the these detained at this facility.

Putting aside the humane and rehabilitative aspects of closing the jail, fiscally mindful residents would be appalled if they were accurately informed about the enormous financial costs of running this antiquated jail for the last twenty five years.

Mayor Mitchell, not having previously commented, or utilizing his office or position to improve the conditions at the jail, nor joining the chorus of concerned citizens to shutter this abysmal antiquity his comments are unhelpful and appear

politically motivated.” -Betty Ussach, Dartmouth.

10 people who could run for mayor of New Bedford in 2023

Jon Mitchell has served as New Bedford’s mayor for over a decade but hasn’t committed yet to running for re-election in 2023. A 4-year mayoral term may be hard to commit to if Mayor Mitchell has ambitions for higher office or may just be ready for a change and one should assume the chances he runs for mayor are 50-50%.

In 2011, popular mayor Scott Lang did not seek re-election opening the door for several well-known candidates to compete for the job. Will 2023 see the same results? Candidate Mitchell defeated City Councilor Linda Morad and State Representative Antonio Cabral to become the city’s 49th mayor. **In 2017, I wrote an article on the 10 people I thought should run for Mayor** and I thought it was time to write an article for who I think are likely candidates to run in 2023. The job is for a 4-year term and Mitchell’s decision to run or vacate the job will determine the quality of candidates.

1. Antonio Cabral

In 2011, long-time State Representative Antonio Cabral lost to Mitchell by a meager 837 votes in the general election and could throw his hat in the ring should Mitchell vacate the job. There is little risk for Cabral because he can keep his state representative job if he loses.

2. Linda Morad

Long-time New Bedford City Councilor Linda Morad would likely consider entering the race should Mitchell not seek re-election. She's been voted City Council President several times over her career and is a seasoned politician. Unlike Tony Cabral, there is a risk – she'd have to vacate her city council job to run for mayor as you can't run for both.

3. Brian Gomes

Another long-time New Bedford City Councilor, Brian Gomes has run for mayor or considered the job several times and likely would eye the job should Mitchell not seek re-election. Brian has some political baggage though. In 2017 after 29 years on the job, Gomes was fired from his job at St. Luke's Hospital following a sexual harassment investigation and had his \$1.5 million wrongful termination lawsuit dismissed by a judge a year later.

4. Maria Giesta

Maria Giesta was handily defeated by Mayor Mitchell by nearly a 2-1 margin in 2015 and moved on to become a successful Ward 2 City Councilor. Again, if Mitchell does not seek re-election Giesta will likely consider running for the job.

5. Ryan Pereira

In 2021, Ryan Pereira beat long-time incumbent and then-current City Council President Joe Lopes to take the Ward 6 City Council seat. He knows how to raise money, is a very competent speaker, and is a rising star in New Bedford politics.

6. Jeffrey Pelletier

Junior Achievement of Southern Massachusetts President Jeffrey Pelletier was considered a solid potential candidate 4-years ago but never threw his hat in the ring. Pelletier is a polished speaker, leads a successful non-profit, and would

make an excellent candidate. If Mitchell does not seek re-election, expect Pelletier to consider a run.

7. Scott Lang

While highly unlikely, Former mayor Scott Lang could decide he misses politics and run for mayor again. He would immediately be the favorite in the race.

8. Henry Bousquet

Henry Bousquet was a popular city councilor but due to being a Republican the “double dip” rule ensured he couldn’t get paid for the job. The excuse was that as a culinary teacher at Greater New Bedford Voc Tech High School, he could not also collect city pay even though two other city councilors at the time were double dipping into state/county salaries.

9. Erik Andrade

Local activist Erik Andrade spotlights issues often ignored by the local media and would make debates lively and interesting. He did try but failed to run for City Council though he did perform strongly for a first-time candidate.

10. You

Care about New Bedford? Considering running for mayor, city council, or school committee. [Details here.](#)

New Bedford memories: Smuggler’s Den, Clyde Beatty

Cole Bros Circus, Bowling On The Green...

"Things have changed so much from when I was a kid down here in the south end of New Bedford growing up on Bellevue St. All us kids were always doing something with everything available to us.

We played Little League Baseball and I played for 'Me & Ed's.' My friend Mike Pimental's father and his Uncle Carl Pimental owned the restaurant. Later Carl bought 'Smuggler's Den' if I recall, and it became 'Billy Wood's Wharf.'

Back then it was called Clegg Field, home of the South End Broncos. The old concrete grandstand was on Brock Avenue at Lot 13 and we played chicken walking across the very top ledge.

We played football and when winter came we couldn't wait for the pond to freeze so we could skate and play hockey. I can still remember the smell of the burning wood in the fireplace in the warming house and the light pole in the center of the pond hurt like hell when you skated into it, lol.

We played until it got too dark to see the puck after the light went off around 9:00 pm, if I recall correctly. We were always outdoors year-round. We were always doing something whether it was that, playing basketball at Hazelwood Park, or staying in our room – a punishment we hated and our parents knew it.

These days it's hard to get Little League teams together because not enough kids are interested in playing. Not sure if the Pop Warner Football teams are around anymore, and that pond has been abandoned for many years with no interest in skating. I took my daughters there a long time ago for a circus and I sat there remembering how where the acts were

performing I played hockey with my friends.

When I do on occasion see any small group of kids around here they are staring at their phones and have no idea what they are missing out on.

Like I said, for us having to stay in our room was what our parents did to punish us but these days to punish a kid you have to walk in their room and shut off their video game and computer and take their phone and make them go outside and play.

And I also remember the Clyde Beatty Cole Brothers' Circus coming to town and the parade with their convoy of trucks and guys riding elephants coming down Brock Avenue to set up their tents at Lot 13 and we would watch them use the elephants to pull the ropes to get the tent poles up.

So much has changed down here in this area from how it used to be once upon a time.

I get carried away with memories sometimes and don't mean to bore you but I will go further by saying how I remember the old men Bowling On The Green at Hazelwood Park and at night with the lights on and across the street was the Belmont Club where some bikers called the 'Gypsey Jokers' would hang out."
-Gomez Munster.

OPINION: Ventura opposes safe injection sites in New

Bedford; calls for delay of BoH appointment

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“Attorney Jacob J. Ventura, candidate for Ward 3 City Council is opposed to locating any safe injection site within the boundaries of the city of New Bedford and is calling on his Ward 3 city council competitors to make public their opinion on the matter so voters may be well-informed prior to the Special Preliminary Election on January 24, 2023.

“New Bedford is in the midst of a nationwide drug crisis where fatal overdoses are now the norm. Public officials must do everything in their power to solve this crisis but placing safe injection sites within our neighborhoods is not the answer,” said Ventura. “The location of safe injection sites that encourage continued use and dependency of heroin and fentanyl via intravenous will only encourage drug dealers at the expense of addicts. It is very unclear how New Bedford will ultimately pay the price at the expense of keeping our neighborhoods and schools safe.”

Ventura continued, “The state legislation to legalize safe injection sites is in direct violation of federal law and may leave administrators and health professionals who supervise these sites exposed to federal criminal charges.”



Attorney Jacob J. Ventura, candidate for Ward 3 City Council.

S.1258 An Act Relative to Supervised Consumption Sites requires the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to consult with local health authorities. Pam Kavanaugh, Mayor Mitchell's appointee to the Board of Health was up for consideration at a City Council Committee on Appointments and Briefings meeting on December 13, 2022. The meeting was forced to adjourn due to a lack of quorum after two councilors walked out of the meeting. Attorney Ventura is calling for members of the City Council to ask the Mayor's appointee to the Board of Health for their position on the matter of whether safe injection sites should be located in New Bedford prior to any

appointment vote.

“The City Council should take action and ask the tough questions of the Mayor’s appointee to the Board of Health or delay the appointment until the people of Ward 3 have elected a person to ask these questions on their behalf,” said Ventura.

On August 15, 2019, the City Council voted 10-0 in favor of a motion put forward by Councilor Gomes that opposes locating any safe injection site within the city of New Bedford. The motion was presented to the Mayor for approval on August 19, 2019. The motion was returned unsigned on September 3, 2019.”

Mom angry with New Bedford School after 10-year old son was searched because of a “smell”

“Way of controlling our kids at school. They have gone to far and I don’t know how to handle it.

My child attends Rodman School’s 4th grade and last week a passerby noticed a smell’ in the hallway. I can assure you was not coming from my son or his belongings.

However, they took it upon themselves to appoint themselves as detectives and removed my 10-year-old child from class and asked for permission to search his things. The search was conducted and naturally nothing was found but that’s also where the search ended. I was never notified.

My son explained what happened to me after letting me know he was scared to death and didn't understand what was happening. Well, son, you were just a victim of your first illegal search. At 10 years old and in the 4th grade!

I have been waiting and I still have not been notified of the incident. I would like to know how other parents feel about what happened to my son." -Amanda Nicole. #NewBedford

"New Bedford Schools lack of supervision in bathrooms, locker rooms allows bullying to exist."

"Keep this anonymous. What I say is off the record. I do not want my kids getting retaliated against.

The story is about New Bedford Public Schools, specifically Normandin. What no one is talking about is how the majority of children that go there are afraid to use the bathrooms and the locker rooms at gym.

There is no supervision in those places and that is where bullying and hazing take place. Kids have been locked in bathrooms by groups and children have been beaten badly.

The school is a gang hotzone where fights occur daily. The kids that do not involve themselves in that stuff are suffering bc school policies allow these abusers more protections than the abused. It's sad!

I just recently found out about this from another parent and

my kids said 'Yes, it's true.'

A New Bedford Story: “Not faith in God, Trump, Jesus or Picasso, but faith in the human spirit”

“A New Bedford Story:

The tales of how bad this city is could wallpaper a cathedral, but yarns like this one go largely unheard and therefore, as such, need to be told.

A man does what he can, when he can, with what he has.

He works his job(s), puts his time in, and does things he has to that no one can even conceive of in some very private moments.

He dances around stability, sanity, generosity and civility, but he does it because a man provides for his family- even when called down by said “family” and supposed “friends”.

But he plods on.

Looking.

Finding.

Working.

Being.

Being the best and only thing he can, regardless of the selfish chatter the ones he sacrifices for continue to bathe

in.

So he works.

He works and earns.

Earns and pays.

Pays and fails.

Fails and pays.

And then comes a night the man is contracted to, once again, transport others for a fee. He's done this before, but tonight is different.

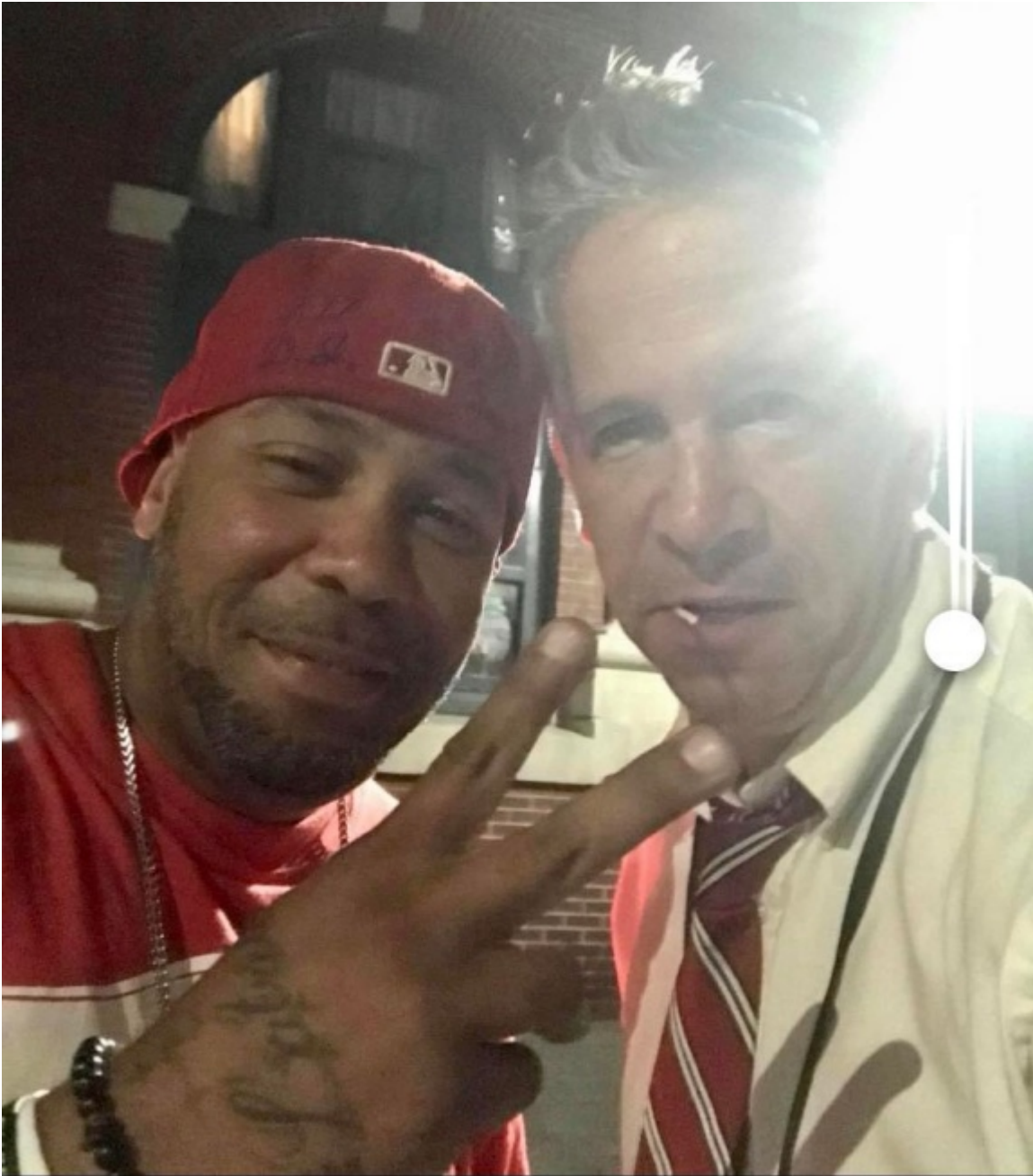
It's felt immediately-there is a particular voltage to this night; he knows that this will be a transport unlike any other. He thinks he's transporting people, but his soul is about to be moved a galaxy or a million galaxies away from here. The task is simple: Transport a family to a Coldplay concert at Gillette Stadium.

The details are not so simple-this family, though happy and celebratory, is battling a demon. A beast that knows no colors, sex, race, or party affiliation. Cancer has tried to claim them and the matriarch of their clan.

She is a warrior.

Brave and, let me tell you, Beautiful as they come; There is nothing more awesome than seeing a survivor raise their fist in defiance to the scourge that is cancer.

He picks them up and brings them to a show that is OutSTANDING, but finds that it is not the Music, the band or the venue that matters-it is their Love.



Sean G FitzGerald photo.

They rejoice before, during, but most importantly, after.

Mom is tired. Fatigued. She has given so much, but continues to smile and give to her two teens because tonight is about that.

It's about Now.

It's about, no matter what, we Love Now and Always.

Now.

Now.

And the night is So perfect.

Tears, hugs, Love and a peaceful ride home.

He knows he has been blessed with this assignment.

He has seen this, smelled this and been this before-but this is not his time to occupy the night-they must get home. And he does just that, because that's his freaking job.

His heart is heavy, because he recalls, as he drives home to his love, about life passed, love lost and opportunities missed.

It is a long drive from Rochester to Dartmouth on a low gas tank, but he hadn't thought of that since he'd arrived to take the transport vehicle.

He was going on his 71st hour of work that week after all, and when he'd arrived, he saw that the gas light was glowing, but ignored it to do his job.

Ignored for then, because the next job is due and waiting.

So it's 2 AM.

On the way back from Rochester and his car runs out of gas on 195 West.

He glides down, taking exits to try to get as close to a gas station as possible and his car dies coming off the Pleasant S.t exit entering the Weld Square district.

50-year-old white male in a shirt and tie broken down in Weld Square at 2:00 AM.

He stops, throws it into park, and sits to laugh.

This is the city he was born in.

The city he's succeeded and failed and succeeded and failed in.

So, it's home.

Oh, and the phone charger crapped, so he has no communication to the "safe world".

He laughs and wonders.

Then a white truck pulls up.

The man in the passenger seat asks if he needs help, which of course he does.

He explains his situation and the man in the truck says he'd be happy to go get some gas but is short on cash.

So our hero throws all caution to the wind and tells him to take some \$\$\$ on him to please go get some gas.

The passenger gladly accepts and promises to come back.

He has no change except for a \$50 dollar bill, but he has no choice but Faith.

Not faith in God, Trump, Jesus or Picasso, but faith in the human spirit and he knows, he doesn't guess, he KNOWS this is what he needs to believe in.

So the money is given and the truck and accommodating passenger drive away, promising to return.

10 min.

15 min.

30 min.

His phone springs to life miraculously and he panickingly betrays his faith and calls his wife.

And, as he's explaining, the passenger in the truck pulls up-explaining and apologizing for the wait, but that they had to go to 3 diff stations to find a tank.

The passenger then goes to our hero's tank and puts in the gas to get it started.

He shakes our hero's hand and promptly refuses any cash for his time.

Instead, he obliged to a hug that I believe I needed more than him.

We snapped this photo and said goodbye.

He told me his name, but through the tears, I forgot and feel terrible about that.

I want to say thank you, but wasn't sure how to reach him & how to compose this until now-yeah, it's taken a year!

I believe he said his name was "Buddy".

So if anyone talks about how bad this city is, remember, a city isn't bad, it's the people who occupy it who give it its identity!

And, this 50-ish yr old homeboy who has spent time in and out of this city will forever exclaim, "THIS is why I LOVE NEW BEDFORD!!!" -Sean G FitzGerald.