

State forces New Bedford City Councilor to work without pay

The following was submitted to us from Henry Bousquet, Ward 3 City Councilor:

To the People of New Bedford and the Voters of Ward 3,

I am writing to inform you of what I see as a great unfairness.

Since April 17, 2014, I have been performing my duties as a City Councilor without pay while I examined an apparent conflict in state regulations (MGL Ch. 39, Sec.6A.) regarding compensation of public employees as it concerns my career as a public educator and my public service as an elected official of Ward 3.

In March of 2014, I received a call from the state, followed by a letter from the Ethics Commission, which stated in a legally complex manner that I unknowingly had a "conflict of interest." Somehow my career as an educator at Greater New Bedford Voc-Tech was in conflict with my duties as a city councilor. The conflict is not in the work I do, but because of the fact that I receive a salary from both positions and they are from the same municipality. It stated I had 30 days to choose one salary only. Apparently, because of a court ruling the ethics law conflicted in definition in such a way that I and my employers were unaware: based on the phrasing of the law, it seems regional school district employees and its teachers are municipal employees. Despite the fact that no "actual, material conflict exists" I am not allowed to collect the pay I have earned.

As your councilor I spend an average 30 or more hours per week at committee and community meetings, working with constituents to solve problems no matter the day or the hour. I have always worked hard on behalf of the people of New Bedford; it is a promise I made when elected in 2011, and one from which I have never wavered. It includes learning all aspects of those issues brought before the council and how to maintain good government in order to cast the most informed votes that I can, with integrity and fairness.

Fairness is what I seek for myself in this case, and I ask for your help in achieving it.

I have always worked two jobs to make ends meet. My family depends on it. I gave up my second job to serve the people of Ward 3. Like many of my neighbors, I am not wealthy. I live in a two-family in the heart of a working class neighborhood in my ward. I have young children, and my wife and I work hard to make it work. Being a city councilor was never a way to "get rich" but to improve Ward 3 and our city overall.

Please support the initiative to have my salary restored and to collect what is rightfully owed to my wife and children for the hours I spend away from them, working for you. I don't expect all the compensation I have lost in the 12 months of foregone salary. I simply ask for the portion within the current fiscal year.

I am committed to the people of my city and want to continue to serve them, but this is an unfathomable sacrifice for my

family. Help me right this injustice and help me to continue serving you to the best of my ability. Write a letter or send an email to the Standard Times, call WBSM , call your City Councilor, call the Mayor's office and advocate on my behalf so that I can continue to serve you, New Bedford.

Gratefully,

Henry Bousquet CEC – Ward 3 City Councilor

Want to voice your opinion?

Petition

here: http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/restore-ward-3-councilor?source=c.em&r_by=8634735

Contact the State Ethics Commission

State Ethics Commission

One Ashburton Place, Room 619

Boston, MA 02108

Phone (617) 371-9500

Fax (617) 723-5851

Contact details: <http://www.mass.gov/ethics/contact-us.html>

OPINION: Winter Reflection



"If you can't find a good role model, be one"
Gale Anne Hurd.

I'm sorry Ned Stark, winter isn't coming. In fact, Spring is almost here.

The birds are chirping, the snow is melting and dripping, and going out isn't as taxing as it has been. Honestly, every winter I get annoyed with the complaints about the cold and of course the snow. I've been thankful to live in an area that truly experiences each season at its greatest. Though this Winter, put me in my place.

I can drive in the snow. I don't mind shoveling and

stockpiling the fridge and pantry "just in case." It isn't an unusual task for me...but the snow kept coming. My body was screaming from the work it caused. Going anywhere became such an aggravation. Being a good driver didn't mean that other people would have the same skills on the icy/snow covered streets. This was the worst case scenario for many people and even their cars!

Now let's face it, everyone got a touch of depression and annoyance at the weather. So when the snow blindness sub-sided and the sun started shining a little brighter many of us started to feel better. I know I did. But with my mind a little clearer and the bouts of cabin fever behind me I started to reflect on things.

Say what you want about our winter apocalypse, good stuff did happen because of it. Faith in humanity was restored for many people who found themselves in need and people came to help. Others found work in snow removal. People took initiative. Maybe not everyone, but many people did. That in itself is a great thing! Even people who just made it to work everyday is a huge deal. There are visiting nurses and hospice workers who care for those that do not get better because the roads are not plowed well. So they went to work. There are teachers who have dozens of students who know them, are comfortable with them and need them there. So they went to work. There are daycare workers who watch the children of parents that need to work to feed them. Those children know these workers and rely on the constancy of their presence. So they went to work. There are grocery store workers who unlock the doors, stock the food, collect the carts and check us out. Who if did not show up, we would be at a loss. So they went to work. There are animal rescuers and officers who can't wait for the weather to subside to get an animal out of the conditions to save it's life or go to shelter so they can feed them. So they went to work. There are also those who run homeless shelters where the need in harsh, unforgiving weather is a matter of

life or death. So they went to work.

There is no insignificant job, only insignificant people unwilling to work them at their fullest capability.

Thank you to the doctors, nurses, teachers, plow drivers, store workers, coffee makers (dear God thank you so much!), utility companies, postal workers, shelters owners and volunteers, and just thank you everyone! You kept the wheels turning when the snow tried to stop us all dead in our tracks.

You all made a difference and I hope you at the very least feel some pride in yourself. Thank you.

OPINION: “Windmills Do Not Work That Way!” -Morbo, Futurama



We missed the chance to be part of the first advance towards renewable energy, let's not balk again.

by Patrick Correia

This winter was rough. Look at the season as a whole, by which I mean February. Our winters, much like our other seasons, are in a state of chaotic fluctuation. Winter seems to have been condensed into an unnecessarily snow filled blur we once called February. Climate change isn't affecting us as bad as Maldives, but that doesn't mean it will always only be as annoying as someone stealing your space saver or having to wearing pants in August. I hate pants in August.

The Cape Wind project has been dealt another excessive blow. What was to become a leased staging area in New Bedford, will now be delayed indefinitely. This delay is a criminal limitation on our energy resources.

The Brayton Point station is the coal burning facility in Somerset that once provided about 1/5th of the electricity used in the Commonwealth. It's not very environmentally friendly, as anyone who took fourth grade biology might infer, and will be retired in 2017. You may know this as the Simpsons-esque cooling towers when you head west on the Braga Bridge, which is surprisingly missing from this list.

While this closure is a step in the right direction, we're depending more and more on liquefied natural gas (LNG) as an alternative, cleaner fuel source. It's cleaner burning. Actually procuring the stuff ruins local environments. I'm sure you've seen the videos of Appalachian families lighting their water on fire or read about the ongoing efforts of environmental activists to end the practice of Hydraulic Fracturing. Sounds a lot scarier when it's the whole word, doesn't it?

We need a sustainable, ecologically responsible form of energy. For example, why has no one done this to the New Bedford Harbor? Just probably something to bookmark or share on Facebook to impress your ex who keeps posting socially conscious Huffington Post articles.

Did the environmental part not piss you off? According to the WBUR article by Michael Norton of the State House News Service mentioned above, "The lease accord called for the project to pay the clean energy center \$4.5 million in rent for the use of the 28-acre facility, which was specifically designed to handle large cranes and meet the demands required of a wind energy project staging area." \$4.5 Million. That is lush. I'm going to say it again; Lush!

Are you afraid of "Wind Turbine Syndrome"? I can't put big enough quotes around that phrase for my own comfort. You live in New Bedford. You have much more to be nervous about than the whooshing sound of a windmill miles away. Route 6 at rush hour? By that logic we should be concerned about Providence being too loud, in some odd macro noise complaint situation.

Is it the birds being injured? I'm fairly certain the Burger King on Cove Road has lead to more gull diabetes related deaths than even the most nefarious turbine could tally. At the very least I'm sure Gull obesity rates are troubling.

Contact your local representative and let them know you're interested in a renewable energy resource and demand a proud step forward for the Greater New Bedford Area. Demand that these delays be rectified and the project move forward. Deepwater Wind LLC has already received the financing to become the nation's first offshore wind farm in Block Island Sound and is expected to become operational in 2016. We missed the chance to be part of the first advance towards renewable energy, let's not balk again.

Editorial: Pulaski Elementary School needs a second street to enter and exit its property



The Pulaski Elementary School in New Bedford's Far North End needs a second way of entering and exiting its property as it is the only elementary school in the city abutting one street. (edlinesites.net)

By Carol Strupczewski

The Pulaski Elementary School is a magnet school serving students from every ward in the city. This school has an enrollment this year, according to the DESE, of 660 students. Add to that the teaching staff and support staff making approximately 700 or more people in that building on a daily basis during the school year. This is the only elementary school in the entire city in which one enters and exits the school property from one street, Braley Road. The school is not visible from the street as it is set back more than 200 feet from the road, has less than 300 feet between the

entrance and exit, is abutted with the entrance to the annex parking lot located in the Pulaski Park, woods, wetlands, and backyards of homeowners.

Why the need for a second point of entry and exit? SAFETY.

1. A few times at the beginning of the school day, 911 calls were made, one in September of 2014. Because of the gridlock on the Braley Road, the emergency vehicles (ambulance, cruiser, and fire apparatus) were waiting in traffic to enter the school grounds. Cars are parked on both sides of the street by parents dropping off their child(ren).
2. There have been at least 4 natural gas leaks on Braley Road, 2 at the entrance and 2 at the exit. About 2 years ago when there was a gas leak on the street at the end of the school day. The principal made the 911 call reporting the leak and NStar and the fire engine from Station 5 responded.
3. This is the only elementary school in the city that has one street in which people can enter and exit the school property. Most of the elementary schools are surrounded by four streets, some are surrounded by three streets, and one or two are surrounded by two streets. At all of these other elementary schools, if the school had to be evacuated, at least students, teachers, and staff would be able to exit the building onto another street surrounding the school.
4. If Braley Road was closed to traffic because of an unexpected occurrence, how do you evacuate all the people from Pulaski School?
5. Some people would say that people in the Pulaski School could walk through the park and exit onto the dead end Jordan Street as an alternative; however, what happens if there is snow on the ground or muddy conditions as a result of snow melting or rain storms? How do you get students and adults with physical disabilities through

the park? Just look at the two feet of snow we currently have on the ground from the blizzard.

The most logical place of creating a second way of safely evacuating people from the Pulaski School onto another street like every other elementary school is by paving a driveway from the Pulaski Park leading to another street abutting it. More than a decade ago the School Department and the City worked hand-in-hand at putting in the annex parking lot on the City land of Pulaski Park. This annex parking lot abuts Maddie Drive which exits onto Acushnet Avenue.

Some of you might mention the cost factors of the driveway and about the wetlands being slightly impacted. My questions are:

1. What price tag do you put on a person's life?
2. Are wetlands more important than a person's life?
3. Would you want members your family or friends going to or working at Pulaski School knowing there is only one road to enter and exit?

Safety should be first and foremost for everyone and should always trump cost. I have addressed this at the School Committee meetings, neighborhood meetings, and have sent out emails to members of the City Council and School Committee members.

Pulaski needs a second way of getting everyone on and off of the school grounds onto another public street. It is now time to take action.

OPINION: Options for runaways



It's important to know who else is in your child's life.

There is a lack of urgency and fear given to the word 'runaway' that is always given to the word "abduction." Perhaps it's the misconception that a minor is in complete control of their situation. Maybe in some cases they are, but typically only for a short while. Minors leave their home for various reasons. Some would seem justifiable as a percentage of runaways report fleeing abusive situations. Taking their lives into their own hands and running, for them, is just what they feel is the only option they have.

This isn't true.

It is important that if you know of a teenager or child in an abusive household that *you* get them help. They may not know how to do it themselves. If you turn your back on abuse, then you are taking sides with an abuser and they are now your victim as well. If you know of a child being abused or neglected you can report it by going to your local police station, Department of Child & Family or by calling the Child-

At-Risk Hotline at 1-800-792-5200.



There are currently 60 records listed from Massachusetts of missing children.

Being silent about abuse is not a burden you want to carry.

There is also a great number of minors who run away that are actually lured away. With technology we have allowed a playground for predators to enter into our child's lives without our knowledge.

It's important for children to be taught stranger safety and for teens who are going online to understand how someone they meet on there can very much be a fictional character with a live action dialogue. They study today's kids/teenagers as if they are studying for a test. They will know their music, movies, video games and how they talk. They have nothing but compliments to give and agree with everything your child says. When you haven't experienced the world as they haven't, you are naive to it.

We forget how impulsive and foolish we all once were. The generation that are parents to teens now, did not have the access to the world like their children do. We are learning

but they are succeeding past our knowledge. A targeted teen may even be taught by the predator how to erase their tracks. Clear the history on their computers and phones. If there is something for your child to act guilty about there is something for you to be worried about. There should be no secrets that leave room for danger to sneak in between you and your teenager. It's important to know who else is in your child's life. It's important for them to know that if a person wants to be kept a secret than they have ulterior motives. It's not because they agree with your child and mom and dad "are nosy jerks," it's because mom and dad have been around long enough to see the devil behind a smiling Facebook picture.



*Sometimes despite
our best effort
they are not
feeling that at
home.*

The enemy we know. It's hard to pick your child's friends and you can't shadow them at school or maybe other activities they're involved in. They WILL know people you do not. Those people will know them. Details about your family that you may have not wanted to share. Details about your teenager that they shouldn't have shared. They could be the type of person, maybe even teenager, that you would not want around your own. There can be something alluring about the bad element.

Something that children who have everything going for them will throw it away, unwittingly for.

We can blame movies and television for baiting our children into thinking this is how the world works. We can blame negativity influences but we have to understand that it's on the parents just as much. We have to know our children, be their parent not their friend and realize that they are more important than ourselves.

If a situation has gotten out of our control we have to ask for help. Turn to the school, to their doctors, to trained professionals with resources. They have to know they matter that much to us. It's an incredible and important lesson to teach your child that it's okay to go for help when you need it.

Teenagers want to feel love and acceptance. Sometimes despite our best effort they are not feeling that at home. They deal with the pressures we have forgotten and the needs we grew out of. They are not mature enough to control or understand them. It took us years and it's the same for them. We didn't believe it when our parents told us and they won't believe it when their parents tell them. But while they are going through this pivotal moment of their lives they can fall victim to others who are waiting in what was once the shadows but now the bright screens of computers, tablets and cellphones.

There are currently 60 records listed from Massachusetts of missing children. Some would now be older than you who is reading this now. They disappeared as a child and were never found. One has the name John Doe, a recovered body of a child that couldn't even be buried with his name. Nobody knows who is or rather who he was.



*Being silent about
abuse is not a burden
you want to carry.*

We know that a child that has been abducted is in danger. What we forget is that a minor on their own is also in danger. Children and teenagers need the guidance of an intelligent and responsible much less loving adult (a legal guardian) until they become an adult themselves. If you disagree with that than you must be a teenager who knows everything. Who also believed in Santa Claus and the tooth fairy not too long ago. Who thought their first crush was the best until they met their second. Who doesn't have the understanding of expenses much less money management. But does know that you'd prefer a five dollar bill over four quarters. You've grown up and learned a great deal of things but you have a great deal more to learn.

Every emotion, everything you feel is magnified because you are so young. Anger can become rage so easily and like really feels as if it's love. But I promise you that in a few months, a year or a few years things change so tremendously for you. Stay in school and focus on who you want to be. You will never get these years back so don't let you or someone else take them away.

When we say children are our future it's because we know how important children are. We not only want you to succeed in life but need you to.

You are all that important.

Opinion – Taking Things For Granted

We have supermarkets that have prepared food that we need only heat up. It wasn't till I had an experience with someone from another country at a grocery store that I realized how easy everything became for us.

Charity isn't a seasonal thing. Although it may seem like it is. During the winter months we hear more about the importance of giving. Living in the northeast we sympathize with the fear of being too cold and not being able to find shelter. Or have a warm coat & warm clothing to get us through the winter. With the holidays we're reminded by bell ringers that when we're out shopping that others are out there hoping and praying for help.

It's a humbling experience to face the bleak realities of others who struggle day to day. Some of us have grown bitter from past experiences of helping someone who returned that kindness into a joke. So to those of us who have experienced that type of betrayal in trust and faith, we see everyone else who is asking for help as that one person who burned you. That is just not the case.

Sympathy is becoming a rare quality in society. Instead of helping the poor we rationalize the reasons we feel they put themselves in that situation. Most of the time they are faceless to us. We dehumanize them. Charities around the world spend millions to give them faces. To make us empathize. Money that is better spent on their causes are spent to make us

aware, to feel something. Because they know that funds dry up quickly if they can't get a knitch into society, a place in our consciences, without it they will cease to exist.

Most of us live in excess and some of us know that we do. We take these daily conveniences as not a luxury but as necessity. Such as a washer & dryer, microwave. Even A/C in the summer.

A cellphone to many is not something they need but rather want. Much less the type of cellphone.

We have supermarkets that have prepared food that we need only heat up. It wasn't till I had an experience with someone from another country at a grocery store that I realized how easy everything became for us. She just wanted oats to make breakfast in the morning. I showed her the Quaker oatmeal packets and she was just astonished! Then she wanted bread and meats. I showed her sliced loafs and packaged chicken. This was all new to her. A luxury.

Where she is from they have a corner market and you buy meat to prepare within the next day or two and nothing comes prepacked. She pretty much "lost it" when I showed her the freezer section!

I remember going home and looking through my cabinets and fridge. Despite being a mother who knows how to cook well, I've certainly made it easier on myself and how I fed my family with the products I buy. Most people do. So I started to be more conscious of my shopping and that lead to me being more conscious of how I take things for granted.

We live in an area, a country, that sells food items that last a very long time. Despite your feelings towards that we know that there are people who have nothing. If we choose to eat fresh that shouldn't stop us from picking up a non-perishable item each trip (especially if it's on sale) and putting it aside for a shelter. Year round. Being cocky about how we've

lived our lives whether its been an easy journey or a difficult one, should not impact our ability to help others.

For every blessing I have, I try to give. For every luxury I've taken for granted. We can not find an inner peace unless we become humble. As we live day to day, season to season so does everyone else the world. A very many people are just getting by and instead of judging them by forcing them to live in their own harsh existence why not find peace in yourself and give something? Starting now we can make things a little better in the world we're giving to our next generation. Every season, everyday. Live for someone other than yourselves.

Opinion: what is the real meaning of Christmas?

By Brett McCleod

Christmas. It's celebrated yearly by families across the globe, probably including your own and many of your friends'. A simple Google search defines Christmas as "the annual Christian festival celebrating Christ's birth, held on December 25 in the Western Church." Growing up I questioned why my friends who were non-Christian and non-believers celebrated Christmas. I thought Jesus was a big part of it? Even I have my apprehensions about religion, yet yearly I buy presents for those around me, attend gatherings miles out of the way, begrudgingly leave the radio on for Dominic the Donkey, and eat foods that are only acceptable during the holiday season. In the midst of eggnog and aunt Evelyn, I beg the question: what is the real meaning of Christmas?

At a time the Christ in Christmas may have had more meaning, but Christmas has evolved into what Grazian refers to as a pseudo-event. David Grazian, author of "Mix It Up: Popular Culture, Mass Media, and Society," defines a pseudo-event as any media ritual created for the sole purpose of being reported or reproduced. So Christmas is a pseudo-event, and I know this revelation is shocking. Who would have ever thought that Christmas was meant to bring in a metric ton of money into the economy, helping the families of the world ensure that their debt is just as thick as their wallet could be for the coming year, year after year?



Christmas is a cultural icon that is exploited yearly as well, further cementing its position in popular culture as a pseudo-event.

Small pseudo-events within it, like Black Friday and Christmas Eve all thrust the idea of the pseudo-event that is Christmas. Foods, movies, music, coupons, sale prices, and more centralize themselves around Christmas. One day a year that allows families to spend thousands on the needless accessories in their homes for their children, spouses, and themselves.

The beginning of Christmas starts just after Thanksgiving on Black Friday.

With stores opening as early as 6 p.m. on Thanksgiving day, Black Friday attempts to bring the best deals of the year,

often hosting enormous lines before opening many retailers' doors. According to BlackFriday.com, "the term 'Black Friday' was coined in the 1960s to mark the kickoff to the Christmas shopping season. 'Black' refers to stores moving from the 'red' to the 'black,' back when accounting records were kept by hand, and red ink indicated a loss, and black a profit." The page continues, explaining that once retailers realized how large the crowds were when discounting prices, it became tradition. In 2012, Business Week reported in their article "What Black Friday's \$59 Billion Really Tells Us" that 247 million shoppers spent an average of \$423. The pseudo-event of Black Friday merely feeds into larger pseudo-event of Christmas.

The pseudo-event of Christmas has undoubtedly helped our economy at a hefty cost to consumers. According to a report by Forbes, "How Big is Christmas For Retail?" electronics and appliances, clothing and accessories, and sporting goods and hobbies see nearly 30-40% above their average sales in the months of November and December alone. These numbers are staggering. So what is the hefty cost? Debt, and lots of it.



*What does
celebrating
Christmas mean to
you?*

ABC News published an article called "Lingering Christmas Bills Can Lead to Debt Woes." They report, "Consumer counseling agencies see a 25 percent increase in the number of people seeking help in January and February, and most of that traffic is propelled to their doors by holiday bills that haunt consumers like the ghost of Christmas Past." Credit cards become a large issue, as they mention "that while 40 percent of credit card users pay their bills in full each month, the remaining 60 percent roll them over – and over and over. [Robert Manning, a senior research fellow at the University of Houston and author of "Credit Card Nation – The Consequences of America's Addiction to Credit] calculates the average balance of these 'revolvers' at more than \$11,500."

Christmas is a cultural icon that is exploited yearly as well, further cementing its position in popular culture as a pseudo-event. ABC Family just began its annual "25 Days of Christmas," where they show a Christmas related film or show every night up until Christmas night. Nearly every year Christmas movies are released, some like "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," which according to Box Office Mojo is the highest grossing Christmas film with a lifetime earning of \$260,044,825.

These films center around Santa Claus, presents, and occasionally wholesome plots like family, the true meaning of Christmas, and more. But when a child is watching "A Christmas Story," will they understand the true meaning of Christmas? Chances are, no. They don't care about the parents' scruples or the way the children learn how to appreciate the holiday. They care about when they finally give their son the famous Red Rider BB Gun that he strived for the entire film. It reinforces the desires for wants, and not needs. Christmas is all about wanting awesome presents, and these films reinforce that notion.



With stores opening as early as 6 p.m. on Thanksgiving day, Black Friday attempts to bring the best deals of the year, often hosting enormous lines before opening many retailers' doors.

Even small parts of our cultures like food products are centralized around Christmas. Eggnog is only sold around Christmas time, for whatever reason. All of the candies emblazon their brands with holly and Christmas trees and Santa.

Popcorn tins with three kinds of popcorn, and a uniquely designed tin flood the pharmacies around America, and candy canes, which nobody likes, are everywhere.

'Tis the season to spend frivolously, and since we bought that TV for our 12 year old son, why not buy him a Nestle Crunch Bar with Rudolph on it. That way we can reinforce that while he's sitting on his couch playing video games, he needs to be eating candy too. It's only fitting.

The circle of life exists within the pseudo-event of Christmas. Retailers make their prices lower to entice those parents, who have to buy a multitude of presents for their children because of how the media portrays Christmas to them. It's not about getting together with family, celebrating the

birth of Christ and relishing in the gift of giving. It's all about receiving, spending money, helping our economy, and going into debt.

Opinion: Ferguson and Massachusetts, What can we learn?



To this day we as a nation are still attempting to overcome the burdens placed on us by centuries of racism and prejudice, and one day we may very well be able to achieve the dream of complete equality and tolerance for all. (Loavesofbread)

Firstly, I know this is a controversial topic so believe me when I say I am reporting everything here as objectively as

possible. In fact, I would not have even considered doing an article on this topic, not because it doesn't matter, but because until outgoing Governor Deval Patrick spoke on it, there wasn't much of a connection to Massachusetts. Sure I've heard about protests here and there, and yes even on the UMass Dartmouth campus, but I haven't witnessed them well enough to discuss them in any further detail. All I will be doing here is talking about Governor Patrick's interview with Meet the Press and what if anything we can learn from this tragic incident where one man died and another's life has fallen to pieces.

Governor Patrick believes that Darren Wilson should have been indicted and tried for the killing of Michael Brown making the case that it would bring comfort to the community and the family, and certainly I can see his point. Something that needs to be considered though is that a trial over the course of several months may have caused protests on either or both sides to intensify through its duration, and if Wilson had still not been found guilty it may have angered protesters even more and caused even more chaos.

In this case it may have been best to let this proverbial powder keg blow up sooner rather than later when it may have been more dangerous. On the other hand if true justice were to prevail in the end it could have resulted in a mass calming effect, and an easing of tensions across the nation. And if indeed Darren Wilson had committed a crime then he should have undoubtedly been held accountable.

I don't know what truly happened in Ferguson. In cases like this all we can do is trust that the grand jury, which heard evidence and witnesses on the matter and spent a great deal of time deliberating, made the right decision. I don't know anything about experiencing prejudice, but I do know that power needs to be checked otherwise it grows like a weed, getting more and more out of control and destroying anything beautiful in its path. Thus I would ask policy makers to equip

police with cameras, not as an indictment against police for corruption, but as insurance.

One way or the other if Darren Wilson had been wearing a camera on him we would know exactly what happened and maybe could have avoided this strife. On the other hand there was also recently a case in Staten Island, New York where a man illegally selling cigarettes was strangled in a chokehold used by a police officer. The whole incident was caught on tape and ruled a homicide, but yet the grand jury refused to indict. Was it the white members of the jury and some sort of prejudice, or is there some other reasonable explanation for the reason they ruled as they did?

Again I don't know, I'm no expert on prejudice or race relations, but these questions must be asked and these decisions must be analyzed because of what they could potentially signify. If we can approach the topic with some sort of reasonable, objective discourse than I'm confident we'll find and be able to reach a solution that will benefit everyone in the long run.

Another thing I think police departments should consider is minimizing their reliance on army grade weaponry and vehicles. This isn't some comic book universe where super-villains can strike anywhere at any time and it certainly isn't the Middle East, and so there is little reason the police need to be equipped like soldiers at all times. I can appreciate being prepared, but how many armored vehicles that resemble mini-tanks do we need?

To this day we as a nation are still attempting to overcome the burdens placed on us by centuries of racism and prejudice, and one day we may very well be able to achieve the dream of complete equality and tolerance for all. Through protest great change can be accomplished, but only if it is peaceful, and so if you do choose to protest please follow the example of those who aren't resorting to violence. If this is important to you,

don't be disparaged by setbacks, and don't give up, even though this will probably be forgotten by the news media and most of America once the next crisis comes along.

A Look at Chanukah, an Unfortunately Underrepresented Holiday

As a kid I was more fortunate than most around the holidays, due to the fact that I got to celebrate both Christmas and Chanukah. Chanukah, or Hanukkah, or Hanukah or whatever other way you choose to spell it, is commonly known as the Festival of Lights and is one of the most famous of the Jewish holidays alongside Passover. Yet for some reason, it has been grossly underrepresented in the media compared to Passover, which has had several movies that have been made about it, the most recent being Exodus: Gods and Kings.

This is especially puzzling considering the story of Chanukah takes place immediately following one of Hollywood's favorite things to make movies about, i.e. war and revolt, but I digress. Most people I think know the rest, but for those who don't... basically after the revolt against the occupiers of the region succeeded, a menorah was to be lit each night however there was only enough oil to last for one. Miraculously the oil lasted eight days, long enough for new oil to be made, and so the holiday was born.



*As with every holiday
people celebrate in
their own different
ways.*

As with every holiday people celebrate in their own different ways. In my family the kids get some gelt or chocolate coins, we light a candle on our menorah each night and occasionally we'll have latkes or fried potato pancakes. Of course, when I was younger I would get dreidels, little spinning tops with Hebrew symbols on them, and I would listen to Adam Sandler's "Chanukah Song" which is one of the only options other than singing "Dreidel, Dreidel, Dreidel".

Doing this every year made me feel special, different from the other kids but in a good way like I had won some kind of lottery and gotten a prize to boast about. It was only later in my teenage years that I began to appreciate more the solemnity and tradition of the holiday when my family visited Temple Beth-El in Fall River. On the outside, it was a dull gray and rather unappealing building, but inside its main ceremonial hall, it was as ornate and wondrous as you'd expect from a place of worship. I didn't spend much time there and eventually, my interest faded away with my visits there, but I still look back on the short time I spent there fondly.

While I've always liked Chanukah well enough, I've never really loved it in the same way I do with other holidays like Thanksgiving or Christmas. Even though nowadays Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday I used to love Christmas and all that entailed. Spending Christmas Eve with my mother's side of the

family, the special sugar-frosted fried pancakes I would eat in the morning, and of course the rush of tearing open every present under the tree. Now though, as much as I try to recapture that feeling of excitement and pure unfiltered joy I just can't. Sure there are good moments, and of course, I'm always happy, but it just doesn't feel the same.

Outside of myself though there's also been an argument stirring around this time of year about decorations and specifically if towns and cities should keep Christmas decorations off of public lands. I can certainly relate to people who may feel left out and alienated and would encourage any local governments setting up displays to try to include and represent every one of all races and religions, but at the same time I know that isn't fully possible. Personally I enjoy seeing the decorations and have never thought much about their religious aspect when looking at them. I just marvel at the shiny lights and admire the dedication and effort it takes to try and make a place look good for the holidays, to try and make people smile. And honestly, how can you hate something that was meant to spread messages of goodwill, hope, and peace?

If you don't like it, ignore it, or ask your local representatives to have something put up to represent your religion, but don't resort to forcing someone to abide by your beliefs through something like a lawsuit. With that said remember to enjoy the holiday season, and don't leave gift buying until the last minute.

Five piece pop, punk band Trophy Wives tearing up the South Coast



"Our musical roots go out in various genre directions, but mostly, we're all just fans of music creating what feels right to all of us."

As the South Coast has many influential artists, let's take a minute to drift a little further south and take a trip to Rhode Island.

Trophy Wives, a hard hitting five piece pop punk band hailing from Providence consists of guitarist Chris Piquette, vocalist Sam Boxold, bassist Travis Danforth, drummer Mike Crawley, and other guitarist Tyler Young. These five guys have strived for nothing less than perfection, and they have been on the right track from the get go.

Starting back in 2012, Trophy Wives was originally forged by former front man Pat Crowley, former guitarist Dave Geer, former bassist Ben Pond, Chris and Mike. At that point in

time, many of them were at standstills with their previous bands, but were eager to jump into something new and start getting a new sound out there. With the release of their first EP “Letting Go” in August of 2012, these guys were able to sell out their first show, giving them the start that they wanted. From that point on, they played shows all over Ne



Trophy Wives continues to amaze their fans, and they continue to strive for more.

When I had a chance to talk to Chris about their style and music writing process, he said, “Our musical roots go out in various genre directions, but mostly, we’re all just fans of music creating what feels right to all of us. When writing [we] take influence from bands like Four Year Strong and All Time Low, but also from older bands like Boston all the way to the most modern bands like Beartooth. We usually find ourselves on the same page when it comes to making songwriting choices.” He continued on to say, “What truly brings TW together in our current era is that we all have passions outside of music that we pursue in our daily lives and in our work, but none of them compare to our passion for this band.

Touring and spreading our music and creating new music are the things that we each strive to spend our lives doing. We’re very fortunate to have Artery Global booking for us and getting us out on the road in 2015!”

With their recent signing to Artery Global booking and the release of their second EP, their future holds much more in

store for them. “[We] are beyond excited to be locked into some dates of the 2015 Vans Warped Tour via the Ernie Ball BOTB. The new year kicks off for us with the Ernie Ball final showcase in LA. Till then, we are gearing up with some new tunes for our live set and getting lots of writing done in the studio!” Luckily for them, and their fans, they record at Chris Piquette’s own No Boundaries Studios, meaning that they can make sure that every note, every snare hit, and every bass drop, sounds perfect to them, and hopefully to their audience.

Trophy Wives continues to amaze their fans, and they continue to strive for more. They inspire so many local bands with their hard work, as the Providence scene continues it’s thrive with new up and coming bands. Their music can be found on their Facebook page, along with their merchandise and up and coming shows, and they hope you enjoy listening to their music as much as they love making it.
