

**PAYING ATTENTION! with TOM DUGGAN**

# Seven years later we're still going strong!

**Tom Duggan**  
VALLEY PATRIOT EDITOR

For as long as I can remember, my ability to succeed has always been underestimated by others.

So, when the experts told us that going into the newspaper business was a losing proposition back in 2004, we paid no attention to their predictions of failure.

The print publication industry was starting to falter, the age of internet news consumption was booming and very few people had any faith at all that The Valley Patriot was going to last seven weeks, let alone seven years.

But, North Andover residents Paula Porten, Dr. Charles Ormsby and Ralph Wilber understood the unique vision of printing a monthly newspaper that focused on honoring Veterans, had a conservative editorial policy and investigated

real news stories purposely being ignored by the daily paper.

They had the foresight to recognize that The Valley needed another newspaper and, done correctly, such a newspaper could succeed far beyond what the naysayers said was possible. So, the Valley Patriot was born. A final meeting was held at Graphic Industries on Sheppard St. and we began the process of trying to find a printer and figuring out how we were going to make this thing work.

None of us had any experience in running a newspaper. None of us had any idea how to do layout, design advertising, or what would be involved in the business of running a print publication. So the first order of business was to try and find a printer in Lawrence, Methuen, Andover or North Andover as we were committed to helping the local economy.

With no commercial printers who could handle the job, (well, there was one but it was the competition), we hired a guy named Bill Samatis at Graphic Development (in Hanover).

Samatis and the people at Graphic were not just interested in printing our newspaper, but were willing to help walk us through the design process on our first edition. They advised us on layout development, tutored us on dealing with color and photo issues and became a vital part of our production process far beyond just printing a newspaper.

In March of 2004, a mere 2,000 copies of The Valley Patriot rolled off the presses at Graphic Development in West Hanover, Massachusetts for the very first time.

Destined for deliveries in Lawrence, Methuen, Andover and North Andover,

this little 16 page publication took less than a day to deliver to 25 locations throughout The Valley.

Very few people noticed what we were up to that month and even fewer people were impressed with what we had considered a major accomplishment. But, I remember tuning into Ronnie Ford's "Hot Line" program that first day to hear Ford reading through the paper on the air and saying how much he liked it.

This gave way to a spate of on-air calls from people laughing hysterically at the prospect of "Tommy Duggan running a newspaper". Some of them cited well known statistics that nearly 90% of all new businesses fail within the first year ... and that 50% of those that survive, fail within the second year. Some questioned whether or not The Valley Patriot would,

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## Local preschool partners with award winning safety program to deliver Peace of Mind;

*Little Sprouts Early Education and Child Care center at Northern Essex Community College's Haverhill campus held a Super Safety Day for the children this month. Paul Lenz, the local Guard-A-Kid Child Safety Specialist visited the school in an effort to enhance safety and awareness for the children.*

*Guard-A-Kid provided an opportunity for parents to receive state-of-the-art child IDs. The ID is in line with the recommendations of the National Center for Missing & Exploited children; the leading non-profit organization in the U.S. working with law enforcement to address the problems of missing and sexually exploited children. The IDs included 2 laminated wallet ID cards, a full - size sheet with vital information and a CD-ROM with all the information in digital format.*

*In the all too often case, a child goes missing or simply wanders away, having a Guard-A-Kid Child ID, a child's biographical information and recent photograph at a parents fingertips is crucial to the success of finding a child quickly.*

*Little Sprouts children also received award winning safety instruction, courtesy of Guard-A-Kid. The Stranger Safety instruction utilized an instructional video produced by John Walsh (host of America's Most Wanted) and Julie Clark (cre-*

*ator of Baby Einstein). This highly effective presentation was not only educational but kid-friendly and fun.*

*The local Guard-A-Kid is based in Amesbury, MA and is very proactive in providing safety instruction and tools to all organizations in the community. Little Sprouts' teaming up with Guard-A-Kid to bring Super Safety Day to the Haverhill/Amesbury community is just another way in which Little Sprouts is BIG on ensuring peace-of-mind for all families.*

*About Little Sprouts Inc.: Little Sprouts has been a leader in providing award winning early education since 1982. They are a group of humanitarians that believe in the power of literacy to change the world; social, emotional, intellectual and physical literacy for children, youth, teachers and families.*

*Little Sprouts believes in the commonality in humanity. We embrace that unity is best achieved by celebrating diversity. Little Sprouts has 11 schools in Massachusetts supporting families that reflect 56 cultures speaking 23 languages from all walks of social, economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds.*

*To learn more about how you can join us in making the world a better place, visit us at [www.littlesprouts.com](http://www.littlesprouts.com)*



## The Central Catholic Karate Club wins gold at Almeida's Invitational

Sensei Jarrod Brown and five Central Catholic Karate Club varsity athletes traveled to New Bedford last week to compete in the annual John Almeida's Goodwill Invitational Karate Tournament. This is the second time Central Catholic High School (CCHS) students competed in this tournament. Eight trophies were awarded to the five participants. Four took first place in either their individual forms or fighting division: Brendan Stolarz, Jeff Duchesne, Junellie Leon, and Amanda Meli while Amy Whitney Perry placed in top five of her division in the competition.

CCHS students competed in two disciplines of Kyokushin Karate:

- Kata to demonstrate proper form and technique which is the foundation of movement in Kyokushin-style karate
  - Kumite to demonstrate an individual's ability to defend themselves against and overpower another opponent
- Students who placed in the tournament include:
- Brendan Stolarz (senior) - 1st place in Forms and 4th place in Fighting
  - Amy Whitney Perry (senior) - 5th place in Forms and Fighting
  - Jeff Duchesne (junior) 1st place in Forms and 3rd place in Fighting
  - Junellie Leon (junior) - 1st place in Fighting and 1st place in Forms

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