

KAMARCK: WHY DEMS CAN'T ELECT A GOV. • SKOCPOL: BEWARE OF MUGWUMPS

CommonWealth

POLITICS, IDEAS, AND CIVIC LIFE IN MASSACHUSETTS

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TEAM PERFORM A
MASSACHUSETTS
MIRACLE?

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Project-Based and Experiential Learning
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Expanding and Coordinating Cultural
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dle class. We envision a growing, dynamic
middle class as the cornerstone of a new
commonwealth in which every citizen can
live the American Dream. Our governing
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CONTENTS

VOLUME 8, NUMBER 3



DEPARTMENTS

6 CO-CHAIRMEN'S NOTE

8 CORRESPONDENCE

11 CONSIDERED OPINION

Why Democrats lack the knack of electing a governor
By Elaine C. Kamarck

19 WASHINGTON NOTEBOOK

Romney's public-safety chief calls for a targeted approach to fighting terrorism
By Shawn Zeller

23 CIVIC SENSE

Public higher ed deserves attention—and some respect
By Robert Keough

27 TOWN MEETING MONITOR

Marblehead hikes property taxes and avoids a sticky trash situation
By Melanie Nayer

29 INQUIRIES

New questions about high-tech work visas; Marion offers residents a tax break to declare their houses affordable; *Car-Free in Boston* finally pulls into bookstores; Bristol County lawmen hedge their bets on gambling; Commonwealth Forum figures the odds on slot machines and stock markets

36 HEAD COUNT

The best hunting grounds for charitable donations

38 STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT

The baby-name hit parade; newest census standings; car-crash trends; toting up cancer risks
By Robert David Sullivan

40 STATE OF THE STATES

Spending on public higher education

41 MASS.MEDIA

The *Boston Metro* is a tabloid on the fast track
By Jeffrey Klineman

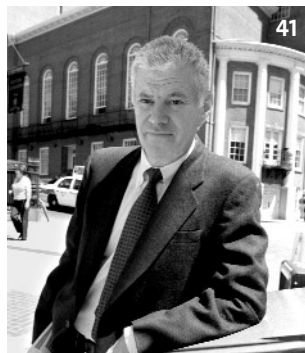
ARTICLES

48 MASS. PRODUCTION

Business leaders are waiting for Gov. Mitt Romney to put his MBA skills toward jump-starting our economy
By Michael Jonas

60 COLLEGE CREDIT

Is Fitchburg State College a poster child for higher-education reform?
By David S. Kassel



DISCUSSION

70 CONVERSATION

Sociologist Theda Skocpol worries that the demise of the Odd Fellows and the rise of advocacy groups leave citizens with nothing to do

78 ARGUMENT

The Governor's Council has outlived its usefulness
By Brian A. Joyce

79 COUNTERPOINT

By Christopher A. Iannella Jr.

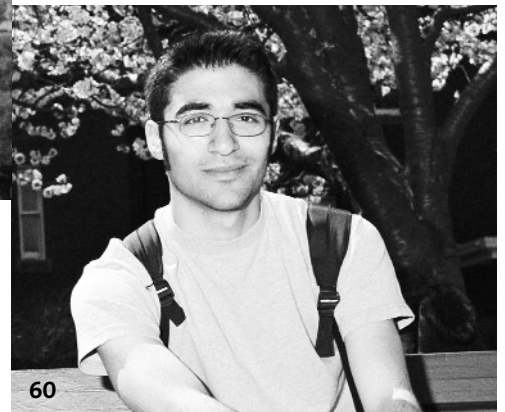
83 REVIEWS

A devastating picture of the teacher crisis
By Abigail Thernstrom

A celebration of doing nothing
By Robert David Sullivan

90 TWO BITS

Getting the biggest return on human capital in state government
By Mary Greendale



CO-CHAIRMEN'S NOTE

Letter of introduction

On behalf of the MassINC Board of Directors, it is our pleasure to introduce readers to Ian Bowles, the new executive director of MassINC and publisher of *CommonWealth*.

As MassINC begins an important new chapter in its growth and development, we are fortunate to have found someone with Ian's extraordinary blend of talents and experiences. We were drawn to his proven commitment to public service and public policy and to his personal dedication to MassINC's nonpartisan mission of promoting the growth and vitality of the middle class. It is hard to imagine someone better suited to building on the solid foundation left by Tripp Jones's seven years of service to the MassINC cause than Ian Bowles.

A resident of Charlestown, Ian comes to MassINC by way of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, a charitable foundation established by the co-founder of Intel Corp., where he served as a senior advisor, and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where he has been a senior research fellow.

But those are just his most recent postings. A respected public policy expert, Ian has worked at the highest levels of government—and on both sides of the aisle—advising national leaders on a variety of international and domestic issues. As senior director of environmental affairs at the National Security Council in the Clinton White House, Ian

profit organization with a presence in 37 countries and a budget of roughly \$100 million. Over the course of eight years, he developed formidable management, fundraising, and communication skills while helping to build Conservation International. Serving most recently as vice president, Ian directed the organization's policy research, led its conservation financing program, oversaw its development assistance funding, and managed its relationships with international and domestic government agencies. He raised his own department's \$2 million annual budget and

coordinated \$15 million in funding for specific projects.

On top of all this, Ian comes to MassINC with a strong sense of community and a desire to give back, as evidenced by his teaching, writing, and research, as well as his foray into politics as a candidate for the 1996 Democratic nomination in the 10th Congressional District, which



includes his hometown of Falmouth. Civic engagement—an important component of MassINC's work—is something that Ian takes very much to heart.

During a search process that lasted almost six months, many of MassINC's friends and supporters offered helpful counsel and advice. Thanks to all of you. And a special thanks to the MassINC board members who devoted considerable time and energy to our most critical responsibility: selecting an executive director to lead the organization forward.

Please join us in warmly welcoming Ian Bowles to the MassINC fold. We ask that you lend your support as he leads this vibrant and still-young organization into the future. And get ready for MassINC, and *CommonWealth*, to reach new heights of civic and journalistic achievement.

Join us in welcoming Ian Bowles to the MassINC fold.

oversaw the development and coordination of US policy related to international environmental issues. His broad portfolio gave him a decision-making role in matters that included trade and finance, intelligence, energy policy, and security. As a legislative assistant to former congresswoman Claudine Schneider, a Rhode Island Republican, he developed expertise in a range of domestic policy areas, including housing, veterans affairs, and the judiciary.

When it comes to guiding MassINC into the future, Ian's experience in organization building is just as important as his public policy credentials—and just as impressive. Ian played a central role in growing and leading a major non-

Gloria Cordes Larson *Peter Meade*
Gloria Cordes Larson Peter Meade



Maybe it should be called healthcare assurance.



Quintan family Members

We have six kids from 1-12 years. We've kept Blue Cross very busy over the past couple of years. We know we will be taken care of and with minimal work on our part.



Kristin Murray Member

Blue Cross took care of us like we were family. From the smallest question to the most complex matter, they went out of their way to be polite, be friendly and be informative. I would never consider changing health plans.



Hospital Nurses Members

In our practice as nurses we notice insurance coverage. Blue Cross Blue Shield opens the doors. It gives patients the freedom they need and it gives patients the freedom they need. Everybody should be able to have Blue Cross.



Scott Wilson Member

I read about Fitness Rewards and thought it was a great benefit for being part of Blue Cross. It gives you \$150 per year all you have to do is fill out the form — it is nice and easy.



Miller family Members

The Living Healthy Babies Program is this wonderful video, book, and monthly newsletter. There must've been a lot of mothers that put this together at Blue Cross because it has a lot of nice touches to it.



Pamela & Danielle Diecidue Members

Blue Cross has been right there. They are a partner in Danielle's health care. Excellent care. Excellent coverage. That's what Blue Cross means to me.

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CORRESPONDENCE

WIND FARM COVERAGE, OPPOSITION DEFENDED

Mark Jurkowitz did a fine job telling a rather complex story in “Gale force” (Spring 2003). However, I am compelled to add clarity to three points: 1) the *Cape Cod Times*’ ability to separate news and opinion, 2) our motivation for opposing the Cape Wind proposal, and 3) why we voiced our opposition early in the process.

Jurkowitz offers a fair amount of commentary on whether or not the *Cape Cod Times* successfully separates daily news coverage from editorial opinion on the Cape Wind offshore wind farm proposal. Based on quotes in the story, I am pleased to read that people believe opinion has not influenced news coverage. A key reason for this is that separation between news and opinion is greater than was characterized by Jurkowitz. The *Times*’ editorial voice is a product of the editorial board, which consists of the editor, managing editor, editorial page editor, assistant editorial page editor, and publisher. Jurkowitz correctly asserts that editor Cliff Schechtman sits on the board and that the editorial page editor reports to him, but neglects to point out that the publisher guides the newspaper’s editorial position, as is the case with all newspapers I am aware of, particularly when it comes to controversial issues or when board opinion is divided.

Jurkowitz questioned the *Times*’ motivation for its opposition and characterized it as purely aesthetic. Aesthetics are an important consideration, but our position is based on a multitude of factors. After an initial meeting with Cape Wind, it became clear that the project’s benefit of generating less than 1 percent of the power needed for the New England power grid was not an equitable trade-off for industrializing Nantucket Sound. This project is not the

solution to global warming and will not reduce foreign oil consumption. (We must look to the transportation industry to significantly impact these foes, but that is another story.) Industrializing Nantucket Sound without producing significant benefits is a dubious proposition. These failings, compounded by the absence of adequate siting regulations for offshore wind generation and using public land for private enrichment, are reason enough for staunch opposition.

We chose to oppose the Cape Wind project early on because the cost/benefit equation was unfavorable from the start. Besides, had we waited until all studies were complete, permitting could have followed shortly afterwards, leaving insufficient time for debate.

In a nutshell, Cape Cod, the islands, and surrounding waters are jewels of the Northeast, and the local daily newspaper must vigilantly protect them. Readers can expect “another in a series of occasional editorials on offshore wind farms” soon.

Peter Meyer
President and publisher
Cape Cod Times
Hyannis

SETTLING ACCOUNTS WITH PRESTON ON HUMAN SERVICE PROVIDERS

The Spring edition of *CommonWealth* reported the remarks made by Ronald Preston, secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, at the Commonwealth Forum “Innovation and Economy: The Role of the Nonprofit Sector in Tight Fiscal Times.” I find that they reflect curious views about the nonprofit human service sector that provides the majority of services to one out of six Massachusetts citizens needing an “essential” service.

Preston suggested that nonprofit human service providers, contracted

by his secretariat to deliver services to the state’s most vulnerable citizens, believe that they are on a “mission from God.” Providers grimace when we hear the expression “you are doing God’s work” from state budget managers, for we know that it is a precursor to another fiscal affront to the clients, the staff, and our organizations, which are responsible for delivering quality care. Providers interpret that expression as the state’s way to “soften the blow” of budget cuts that force clients, staff members, and providers to “do more with less.”

Nonprofit managers take their work exceedingly seriously. They are responsible for protecting vulnerable and fragile human beings—those who are homeless, individuals with physical or mental disabilities, children at risk of abuse or neglect, people with a major illness, and people in need of protection from battering or hunger. That does not give these managers any deistic delusions about what it takes to meet that challenge. It is vital to their mission and to the provision of quality services to operate as businesses.

This leads directly to my next point. Preston went on to say that nonprofit providers “don’t keep their books very well...and need to start getting responsible in terms of business.” I would counter that the state system for purchasing human services uses its monopoly powers to make it very difficult for providers to operate like businesses.

Providers are audited annually by independent certified public accountants under strict government auditing standards to meet all Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. In addition, providers are subject to an extensive and expensive restatement of their audits that, quite honestly, gives the state more business information than it can possibly process.

In fact, these nonprofits are required to provide a level of detail that far exceeds the requirements for the for-profit sector. If the information we send were used, it would be manifest in a fair price for services. But the state has virtually destroyed the pricing mechanism that would allow for fair and adequate rates in the contract negotiation process. Furthermore, the state reserves the right to alter contracts unilaterally if it wishes to add expenses to any contract. Both state practices, I would conclude, are extremely un-businesslike and work to the detriment of the good work providers are attempting to perform. The secretary should confer with the Massachusetts Society of Certified Public Accountants' nonprofit division to help correct his misperceptions.

I cannot overlook one more fact that illustrates the operational efficiency of our sector. By the latest calculation of the state's Executive Office for Administration and Finance, human service providers conduct their business using less than eight cents of every dollar on administrative overhead. This is a remarkable achievement and demonstrates the excellent managerial skills and responsible accounting processes.

Reducing complex issues to glib remarks creates stereotypes and unfortunate prejudices. This only serves to diminish the good work that can be done by virtue of the generosity of the taxpayers of Massachusetts. We would be pleased to work with the secretary and anyone in this administration to provide credible information on our nonprofit business as we seek to provide the best services to the people in the Commonwealth.

Michael D. Weekes

President

*Massachusetts Council of Human
Service Providers*

Boston

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to the very special
individuals whose
ideas, advice, and
generosity support
our work.**

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Prescriptions we can all take for rising health care costs.

Partners HealthCare was founded in 1994 by Brigham and Women's Hospital, (BWH) and Massachusetts General Hospital, (MGH), and today includes valuable community hospitals and physicians, as well as two nationally recognized specialty hospitals.

We are proud of our exceptional work in patient care, research, and education. We are equally proud of our work in controlling rising health care costs. We have reduced our cost per hospital patient by 22 percent (adjusted for inflation) since Partners was formed.

Health care is everyone's concern. The ideas below are meant to stimulate discussion about how everyone can contribute to keeping health care strong, affordable, and available. We have taken the same medicine we prescribe for others.

What business can do. Employers pay the biggest share of the health care bill, which means they have great leverage should they choose to use it. Partners joined with General Electric and others to develop a plan that encourages physicians to use systems that improve quality and make care more cost-effective. Companies should work actively to promote and achieve wellness among their own workers. Businesses can encourage employees to work with caregivers that provide coordinated care and encourage physicians and hospitals to adopt systems that reduce errors and provide safe management of medications.

What caregivers can do. Those of us who deliver quality health care to patients have no less an obligation to deliver that care in ways that are mindful of costs. This includes looking for the most cost-effective choices for prescription drugs, which

we at Partners have done through our Pharmacy Management program. In promoting the use of generic drugs and the lowest priced name-brand medications by our hospitals and physicians, the program is already saving more than \$20 million a year for outpatients and insurers. We providers should continue the work we've begun to control costs by ordering tests when and only when results may change patient management; and by arranging care for our patients in the most cost-effective site, including their own homes.

What HMOs and insurers can do. With financial stability returning to HMOs in greater Boston, private insurers are now in a position to encourage physicians and hospitals to continue to improve efficiency. Incentives should also be in place for health care providers to adopt systems that reduce errors of overuse and misuse of medications. Since 3 percent of patients use 47 percent of all health care dollars, HMOs need to work with doctors to identify and manage the illnesses of high-cost patients.

What patients can do. With spending on prescription drugs rising 16 percent in 2001, patients need to be smart consumers. Ask your doctor to review medications to look for opportunities to reduce costs and co-payments. Buy and take generic medications. Use your primary care doctor, not the expensive and often overcrowded emergency department, for non-emergencies. And participate in your own care; that is, help manage your own chronic conditions, like hypertension and diabetes, so you can avoid complications and hospitalization.

We work hard to save money because, in medicine, money saves lives.



Partners HealthCare includes Massachusetts General Hospital, Brigham and Women's/Faulkner Hospitals, North Shore Medical Center, Newton-Wellesley Hospital, McLean Hospital, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, Dana-Farber/Partners CancerCare, community health centers, and the community-based doctors and hospitals of Partners Community HealthCare, Inc.

Glass ceiling

Why the dominant Democrats can't elect a governor

BY ELAINE C. KAMARCK

Why can't Massachusetts elect a Democratic governor? This stands as one of the bigger political puzzles of the last decade.

In national politics, Massachusetts is a bulwark of Democratic strength, and has been in most elections since 1928, when the state went for Al Smith. After two Bay State victories for Dwight D. Eisenhower, in 1960 favorite son John F. Kennedy put Massachusetts in the Democratic column so solidly it has hardly budged. In 1972, Massachusetts was the only state in the union to support Democratic nominee George McGovern, and although Ronald Reagan twice won the state by a narrow margin, since then the Bay State has been a Democratic stalwart.

In the three presidential elections of the last decade, Massachusetts consistently outperformed the national Democratic vote. Clinton ran five points ahead of his national vote here in 1992, and 12 points ahead of his national vote in 1996. In 2000, the outcome here was in so little doubt that Democratic nominee Al Gore aired no ads in the Boston television market, the sixth largest in the country. Massachusetts money raisers like Alan Solomont had to go to campaign headquarters in Nashville, Tenn., to see the commercials their dollars bought.

During this period Massachusetts also showed overwhelming Democratic strength at other levels. In spite of serious Republican challenges to Ted Kennedy in 1994 and John Kerry in 1996, Massachusetts retains two Democratic US senators. All 10 Massachusetts seats in the US House of Representatives are held by Democrats. In the state Legislature, the number of Republicans has dwindled to near-token levels. Since 1993, there have been insufficient Republican members of the 40-seat Senate to sustain a gubernatorial veto, and in the House, the Republicans have a margin of just three over the 20 needed to force a roll-call vote. In party registration, Democrats outnumber Republicans by more than 2-to-1.

This lopsided partisan advantage made the 2002 election of Gov. Mitt Romney a bitter disappointment for Massachusetts Democrats. But if the loss by Shannon O'Brien—a moderate who united all factions of the party, in addition to being the state's first female nominee for

governor from a major party—came as a shock to the Democratic faithful, it should not have been such a surprise. Indeed, the Democrats' showing in the gubernatorial elections of the '90s was the exact opposite of the party's strength in presidential tallies. Whereas Democratic presidential contenders received 48 percent, 61 percent, and 60 percent, for an average well over 50 percent, Democratic gubernatorial candidates got 47 percent of the vote in 1990, 27 percent in 1994, and 47 percent in 1998.

Four losses in a row aren't flukes to be explained away.

With O'Brien capturing 45 percent of the vote last November, it's about time for Massachusetts Democrats to realize that four gubernatorial losses in a row may be a trend to be explained, rather than flukes to be explained away.

So what's going on? Why can't Massachusetts, which is so Democratic at every other level of politics, manage to elect a Democratic governor? A closer look at the electorate—and at those votes of the 1990s, presidential and gubernatorial—yields some answers.

PARTY, IDEOLOGY, AND THE MIDDLE CLASS

Though they remain by far the largest political party in Massachusetts, Democrats slipped from 41.8 percent of registered voters to 36.6 percent between 1990 and 2000. But their loss was not the Republicans' gain—the GOP's share of party registration remained almost identical over the decade, at roughly 13 percent. Instead, the percentage of independent, or "unenrolled," voters increased by 7.5 points, from 42.1 percent to 49.6 percent. Virtually half the Massachusetts electorate now identifies itself with neither major party.

Among these independent voters, the Democratic candidates had varying degrees of success in the 1990s. Though gubernatorial nominee John Silber and presidential candidate Bill Clinton got roughly the same share of the independent vote (44 and 43 percent, in 1990 and 1992, respectively), in 1996 and 2000 the Democratic presidential candidates (Clinton, in re-election, and Al Gore) won

solid majorities of the independents, while gubernatorial candidates Mark Roosevelt, in 1994, and Scott Harshbarger, in 1998, won over no more than 37 percent of the unaffiliated. The presidential hopefuls combined majority shares of independents with a solid Democratic base for comfortable victories in Massachusetts, but the gubernatorial candidates had just one-third of the independent vote to add to the party faithful—not enough for a win. The weakness of statewide Democratic candidates among this important and growing part of the electorate is a large part of the explanation for their failure to capitalize on the advantage Democrats hold in Massachusetts.

DEMOCRATIC VOTE FOR PRESIDENT AND GOVERNOR AMONG INDEPENDENT VOTERS

1990 Governor	1992 President	1994 Governor	1996 President	1998 Governor	2000 President
44%	43%	21%	58%	37%	56%

Source: VNS exit polls

This shift in the electorate away from party identification does not signal any shift in ideology that would seem to disadvantage Democratic candidates for governor. If anything, the Massachusetts electorate grew slightly more liberal over the course of the 1990s, with Voter News Service exit polls showing a slight rise in self-declared liberals from 23 percent in 1990 to 26 percent in 1996 and '98, and a jump to 35 percent in 2000. Self-described moderates made up roughly half of the electorate for most of the decade, then dropped somewhat, to 42 percent, in 2000.

But ideological appeal explains little about the voting patterns of the 1990s. Presidential candidates Clinton and Gore, who both identified themselves as “New Democrats”

Republicans have claimed New Democratic territory.

periodically at odds with the liberal base of the party, captured a far larger share of liberal votes in Massachusetts than did Roosevelt and Harshbarger (let alone Silber, who seemed to delight in irritating liberals). They won more moderate votes as well. This would seem to give the lie to typical ideological critiques of the gubernatorial candidates, both from the left (they were insufficiently liberal) and from the right (they were too liberal to appeal to moderates). Democratic candidates for governor in the 1990s neither mobilized the liberal base nor made as strong inroads among the moderates as the party's presidential standard-bearers did. With the exception of Silber's relatively strong showing among Massachusetts conservatives, the gubernatorial candidates of the '90s failed to

win as big a following as the presidential candidates did across the ideological spectrum.

The fact is, ideological labels matter less in state elections than they do in national politics. For instance, governors don't appoint Supreme Court justices who could overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the preservation of which has been one of the rallying points for liberals and feminists for nearly three decades. In addition, Republican gubernatorial candidates in Massachusetts have managed to be sufficiently liberal, particularly on social issues, to pacify some liberal voters and, most importantly, not to scare off moderate ones the way GOP presidential candidates did throughout the '90s. Finally, it has been the Republican candidates, not the Democrats, who have staked out the New Democratic territory—conservative on fiscal matters and liberal on social matters such as abortion and affirmative action.

DEMOCRATIC VOTE FOR PRESIDENT AND GOVERNOR BY IDEOLOGY

	1990 Gov.	1992 Pres.	1994 Gov.	1996 Pres.	1998 Gov.	2000 Pres.
Liberal	54%	NA	46%	88%	72%	84%
Moderate	49%	NA	26%	64%	45%	61%
Conservative	45%	NA	16%	30%	21%	20%

Source: VNS exit polls

Finally, there are the demographics of the electorate. Democrats have always fancied themselves the champions of “working people.” But the average working person of the 1990s bears little resemblance to the factory worker of the 1930s, around which so much Democratic Party rhetoric still swirls. The electorate has been changing in ways consistent with the emergence of an information-age economy. The industrial economy, which was centered around factories that were breeding grounds for the politics of class, are distant memories to many voters—although for most of the candidates at the June 2002 Democratic Convention in Worcester, that world seemed to be alive and well.

According to exit polls, during the 1990s the proportion of voters with a high school education or less dropped from 30 percent to roughly 20 percent, while the segment with post-graduate degrees increased from 20 percent to more than a quarter. At the beginning of the decade, college graduates constituted slightly less than half of all voters, but they were up to 55 percent by the end.

These rising education levels ought to be good news for Democrats. The most reliable Democratic vote in the '90s came from those with post-graduate degrees—the fastest growing portion of the electorate. But at all other levels of education, Democratic presidential candidates held on to clear majorities, whereas their gubernatorial counterparts did not.

DEMOCRATIC VOTE FOR GOVERNOR AND PRESIDENT BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000
< High school	NA	NA	NA	67%	NA	NA
High school	53%	NA	23%	57%	41%	65%
Some college	46%	NA	30%	63%	43%	60%
College degree	47%	NA	27%	59%	42%	57%
Post-graduate	50%	NA	30%	66%	59%	60%

Source: VNS exit polls

The information age has changed the economic structure of the electorate as well. In the economic boom of the 1990s, the growth in the electorate in Massachusetts came at the top of the income distribution. In 1992, 64 percent of those who went to the polls earned less than \$50,000 a year; by 2000, only 37 percent earned less than that. The share of voters earning more than \$100,000 a year grew from 9 percent in 1994 (it was not a reported category in 1992) to 21 percent in 2000.

Democratic candidates in the '90s did well most reliably at the bottom of the income scale, where numbers are shrinking, and least well at the very top of the income distribution, which is small but growing. But the Democratic presidential candidates of 1996 and 2000 still man-


aged to capture roughly two-thirds of the vote up to the \$75,000 income level, and majority support even in the highest income brackets. In between, gubernatorial candidate Harshbarger lost almost as much ground in the broad middle class (\$30,000 to \$100,000) as he did among the most affluent, holding on to a slim majority only in the \$50,000-to-\$75,000 category.

DEMOCRATIC VOTE FOR GOVERNOR AND PRESIDENT BY ECONOMIC STATUS

	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000
Under \$15,000	NA	57%	39%	62%	54%	NA
\$15-\$30,000	NA	54%	27%	64%	53%	63%
\$30-\$50,000	NA	45%	29%	64%	46%	65%
\$50-\$75,000	NA	47%	25%	61%	51%	61%
\$75-\$100,000	NA	44%	24%	66%	48%	57%
Over \$100,000	NA	NA	24%	59%	41%	57%

Source: VNS exit polls

These findings, on educational attainment and income, suggest that national Democrats have a strong appeal to Massachusetts voters across social class and education levels. Democratic presidential candidates have managed to maintain their strength among the poorest voters while




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still appealing to the broad middle class—even, to an extent, to the growing number of affluent voters. Democratic candidates for governor, however, hold sway principally among the poor; they lose political traction not only among the wealthy, but even among the moderately well-off, except for the most highly educated.

One demographic advantage Massachusetts Democrats have long counted on is the gender gap, but it has done more good for presidential candidates than for gubernatorial nominees. Republican candidates in Massachusetts have managed to avoid the right-wing positions that characterize the national Republican Party, and therefore have avoided the fate of Republican national candidates at the Massachusetts ballot box.

In recent presidential races other than 1992's (when independent candidate H. Ross Perot siphoned off many men's votes and left no gender gap between Republican George H.W. Bush and Democrat Bill Clinton), women's Democratic votes exceeded men's Republican votes by large enough margins to produce huge advantages for the Democratic candidates. In 1996, Clinton beat Republican Bob Dole in Massachusetts by 20 points among men and by 46 points among women, a "net" gender gap advantage of 26 points for the Democratic candidate. Al Gore came

out of Massachusetts with a net gender advantage of 24 points. But in every governor's race of the 1990s, the male vote for the Republican candidate exceeded the female vote for the Democratic candidate, thus producing a net GOP advantage. In 1990, Democrat Silber seemed to go out of his way to insult the working women who have, traditionally, given Democrats a net gender gap advantage. But that doesn't explain why Roosevelt gave away a two-point gender advantage to Weld, and Harshbarger a 10-point gap to Paul Cellucci.

Unfortunately for the purposes of this article and our general understanding of politics, the Voter News Service failed to release exit polls from the 2002 election. As a result, we cannot fill out the story of the past 15 years with as precise a picture of the voters as we have obtained from previous election results.

But a University of Massachusetts same-day poll of people who voted on Election Day, conducted for *The Boston Globe*, confirms some of the patterns of the 1990s. By income, O'Brien won a majority only among those earning less than \$50,000 a year, a group that constituted just 26 percent of respondents; in education, only voters at the two ends of the spectrum—those with a high school diploma or less and those with post-graduate degrees—

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avored the Democrat. Even for the first major-party female gubernatorial nominee, the gender gap went against the Democrat: Though women favored O'Brien by 9 percentage points, men preferred Romney by 11 points, for a net gender gap of 2 points in the Republican's favor.

VOTE FOR GOVERNOR 2002 BY EDUCATION AND INCOME

	O'Brien	Romney	Stein*
EDUCATION			
High school or less	54%	43%	2%
Some college	26%	58%	8%
College degree	42%	54%	3%
Post-graduate	53%	40%	4%
INCOME			
Less than \$25,000	56%	34%	7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	51%	42%	4%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	53%	47%	2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	46%	49%	3%
\$75,000 to \$149,999	41%	53%	4%
More than \$150,000	39%	59%	2%

* Green Party candidate

Source: University of Massachusetts Poll, *Boston Globe*

Although we can't conclude anything specific about how ideological groupings (liberal, moderate, and conservative) voted in the last election, the UMass poll tells us that Romney beat O'Brien among independents by a margin of 49 to 45 percent. (O'Brien did seem to solidify the party base better than previous gubernatorial candidates had done: Only 24 percent of Democratic voters defected to Romney.) Geography tells a political tale as well. As reported in the *Boston Phoenix* last year, Sarah Kahan, a Princeton University senior, did a study of voting patterns in Massachusetts and found that the majority (52 percent) of unenrolled voters live in the 89 towns between Route 128 and Interstate 495—the Silicon Valley of Massachusetts. (Population growth in these areas undoubtedly contributed to the growing numbers of unenrolled voters statewide over the past decade.) This region was not kind to O'Brien. According to the UMass poll, Romney trounced O'Brien in the Route 128 area, 56 to 42 percent, and edged out a two-point win, 49 to 47 percent, in the vicinity of I-495.

A DEMOCRATIC MESSAGE FOR THE NEW ECONOMY

Looking at the patterns that emerge from the last seven state and national elections, the good news for Democrats is that many Massachusetts voters continue to identify with the Democratic Party and, more importantly, very few voters identify with the Republican Party, in spite of a decade of Republican governors. Republican successes at the gubernatorial level have yet to result in large-scale success in other offices in the state. But that's cold com-

fort for the Democratic candidates who keep making futile runs at the governor's office—and to those who think that a Democratic executive branch could make a difference in the lives of Massachusetts citizens.

Comparing Democratic voting strength in the governor's races with Democratic voting strength in the presidential races, we find the following:

- Democratic presidential candidates managed to win independent voters and the Democratic gubernatorial candidates did not;
- Democratic presidential candidates managed to win among moderates and run up large margins among liberals, while Democratic gubernatorial candidates did not;
- Democratic presidential candidates did better than the gubernatorial candidates in the heart of the middle class and at the top of the income distribution, as measured by both education and income; and
- Democratic presidential candidates produced a gender gap that worked in their favor, while the gender gap worked against Democratic gubernatorial candidates.

So what should this mean for the Massachusetts Democratic Party going forward? Some answers can be found in a book from the early 1990s, authored by Morley Winograd and Dudley W. Buffa, called *Taking Control: Politics in the Information Age*. The book was little known and largely overlooked by the purveyors of conventional wisdom in Washington, DC. But it did have one enthusiastic reader: President Bill Clinton.

The book's thesis was remarkably simple: The information-age economy will create a new politics that will replace the politics of the industrial age. "The new technology of the information age will change the American economy and the American government," Winograd and Buffa wrote. "Knowledge workers will become the new majority in American politics. Whoever first offers them a new social contract for the information age will become the dominant political force in America in the twenty-first century." Writing in 1994, Winograd and Buffa could have easily been writing about Massachusetts eight years later.

In the 1990s, Massachusetts found itself at the forefront of the information-age economy. But the Democratic gubernatorial candidates of these years, and since, often sounded as if they were stuck in the industrial-age economy. As recently as last year's state Democratic Convention, candidates for governor went out of their way to pledge increases in the minimum wage, always to the cheers of delegates. Raising the minimum wage is not a bad policy, but it is a policy with direct relevance to less than 20 percent of the electorate. (Indeed, the minimum wage has so little punch in Massachusetts politics that Republicans don't even bother to oppose it: Both Cellucci

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in 1998 and Romney in 2002 came out in support of an increase.) It is not a policy calculated to capture the imagination of the middle- and upper-income suburban voters who are increasingly critical to electoral success. At the same time, these Democrats did not manage—or, in most cases, even try—to identify themselves with making government more efficient or with protecting the tax dollars of the voters.

As we learn more about information-age voters, one of the gross generalizations that can be made is that they tend to be conservative on economic policy, liberal on social policy, and, increasingly, resistant to partisan attachments. In national politics, as demonstrated in the presidential votes of the '90s, the indifference to safety-net needs and extremism on social issues associated with the GOP and its candidates alienate Massachusetts New Economy voters nearly across the board—independents as well as Democrats, moderates as well as liberals. But in governor's races, where Bay State Republicans are moderate and hot-button social issues are less relevant, the issues of economic growth, fiscal prudence, and administrative efficiency become paramount. On these issues, Democrats

Democratic dominance can become a liability.

lose some, if not all, of their built-in partisan advantage. And where their deep penetration of the Massachusetts political fabric becomes associated with an old-fashioned, machine-style politics, the Democrats' very dominance can become an electoral liability.

These factors—overemphasis on traditional appeals to a stagnant, if not shrinking, Democratic base; feeble courtship of political independents in the high-tech belt; association with an insular and self-serving political establishment—could be seen in the waning days of the 2002 gubernatorial campaign. Take the four-day O'Brien campaign bus tour just before Election Day. Beginning with a rally in New Bedford featuring former President Clinton, the bus trip made 22 stops, most of them in the working-class enclaves and black churches of the Democratic base. Only one stop, on the Natick Common, was in a suburb. It is no wonder that suburban voters felt that the Democratic candidate had nothing to say to them.

Meanwhile, the Romney campaign was not only courting those suburban voters, it was playing up O'Brien's ties to the insider politics of Beacon Hill. In a very effective television commercial called "The Gang of Three," Romney depicted the triumvirate that would rule state government if O'Brien were to become governor: O'Brien, House Speaker Thomas Finneran, and Robert Travaglini, who had recently announced that he had the votes to succeed

Thomas Birmingham as Senate president. (Birmingham's failed gubernatorial run should have been a warning to Democrats about the image the Legislature gives to the party.) The implication—and the impact—was clear: O'Brien should be viewed not as a new, managerially minded reformer who could run the state but as part of the machine politics of the past that runs Beacon Hill.

"When it comes to the top job, voters showed that they are willing to embrace a man almost alien to the state's governmental culture rather than opt for a woman seen as too much a part of that culture," observed *Boston Globe* columnist Scot Lehigh in an election postmortem. "Once you get outside of Route 128, you find communities who look askance at the things occurring in the State House," Gerard Desilets, who headed O'Brien campaign operations in the western suburbs, told the *Globe*. "Romney's campaign was very sophisticated in playing that message."

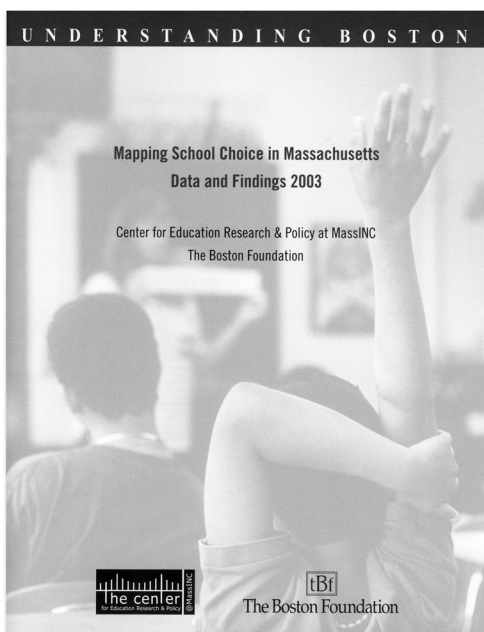
Since the election, Democrats in Massachusetts have begun a healthy debate over what went wrong. Some have accused O'Brien, whose credentials as a moderate were part of her strength in the Democratic primary, of a "leftward lurch" at the end of the campaign. Her response to a question on abortion and parental rights in the October 29 debate struck many as flip and disrespectful. And other

issues, such as gay marriage, which she impulsively came out in support of, got O'Brien stuck in the morass of social issues that do Democrats little good on the state level, distinguishing them from live-and-let-live Republicans only through liberal stands that offend traditionalists even within the Democratic base.

But if O'Brien allowed herself to get caught out on a (left) limb on social issues, it may have been just as harmful, if not more harmful, that she was so easily portrayed as a creature of the Beacon Hill establishment, not as an agent of change. This is where the negative image of the Democratic Legislature spilled over to hurt the Democratic candidate for governor. It was not that O'Brien ran a bad campaign. She was the only candidate at the state party convention to reach out beyond the activists in the Worcester Centrum to the independents in the electorate. She tried to portray herself as a fiscal watchdog, playing up her role in exposing Big Dig overruns, etc. But these campaign tactics did not fit her biography, which was really an insider's biography. In the end, the first female nominee for governor was too easily cast as one of the Good Ole Boys—a disaster for the Democrats.

The negative image of the Democratic Party, despite the Democratic reflex of Massachusetts voters, has swamped

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In recent years, the Commonwealth has offered students and their families a variety of school choice options, but very little funding has been dedicated to studying the impact, availability and enrollment trends of school choice. As a result, policymakers are forced to shape a policy agenda based upon conjecture rather than evidence. The Center for Education Research & Policy, with the generous support of the Boston Foundation, commissioned this school choice mapping research to fill the informational gap.

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Democratic nominees before. One of the great unnoticed ironies of Massachusetts politics occurred in the 1998 gubernatorial race. As attorney general, Scott Harshbarger had targeted corruption within the Democratic Party establishment. But this did him little good with the voters when he became the Democratic nominee for governor. According to exit polls from that race, more than 20 percent of the voters cited "ethics" and "moral concerns" as the issues that mattered most in their choice for governor. Even among those ethics-minded voters, Harshbarger the crusading prosecutor lost by 2 percentage points to Cellucci! This curiosity should have been a warning to Democrats that their image as a party had become an albatross around the necks of their gubernatorial nominees.

In the "Gang of Three" attack, Romney found the real Achilles' heel of Massachusetts Democrats: They are viewed as a party too entrenched to be trusted to run government, at least all by themselves. For Democrats to win back the governorship, they will have to handle not only the balance of left-versus-right on issues, but also new-versus-old in governance.

Nevertheless, if Democrats can come back in Washington, as they did in the 1990s, they can come back in Massachusetts. On the state level as well as the national,

when Democrats convincingly present themselves as competent managers of the economy and the government, they win. That's the way to send a powerful message to the heart of the middle class—to the people who supported Bill Clinton and Al Gore overwhelmingly in three consecutive presidential elections but abandoned Democrats in recent gubernatorial races. Many people in the middle of the income distribution and the middle of the educational distribution are on the fringes of the New Economy—which is the future of prosperity in Massachusetts, the current economic doldrums notwithstanding. They want help in getting into the middle of it, and they want security so that they can rise within it.

The next Democrat to be elected governor of Massachusetts will be someone who shows that he or she can manage a modern, information-age economy and a modern, information-age government. Whether that is in 2006, or not until long thereafter, depends on the party—and its candidates. ■

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The Flynn doctrine

Romney's public-safety chief wants security funds to do double duty

BY SHAWN ZELLER

I t's been a grueling half-year for Gov. Mitt Romney, who has taken his lumps from Beacon Hill Democrats over the state budget and his government reorganization plan, which was summarily rejected by the Legislature in June. But in Washington, Romney has cut an impressive figure as the National Governors Association's point man on homeland security, serving as "co-lead governor" with Delaware Gov. Ruth Ann Minner. His success guiding the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics—the first major international event that took place on American soil in the post-9/11 era—gives Romney credibility on the subject in the nation's capital. But so, too, does his plain-spoken aide-de-camp, Secretary of Public Safety Ed Flynn, who's making his mark as well.

As police chief of Arlington, Va.—where the Pentagon was struck on September 11, 2001—Flynn got his introduction to the threat of terrorism firsthand. And his views on what the federal government needs to do to help states cope with this new threat, but largely isn't doing, are getting heard. Flynn has accompanied Romney to Washington, feeding the governor notes during Romney's testimony before the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee in May, and spent time, as he says, "proselytizing" on Capitol Hill. John Cohen, a homeland security consultant to numerous state and local governments, calls him "one of the most articulate and forward-thinking chief executives in law enforcement today."

US Rep. Barney Frank, who sits on the new House Homeland Security Committee, says he has been "impressed" with Flynn as an analyst of the issues facing state and local governments. "There is pretty general agreement on what the issues are that you have to focus on, and I thought [Flynn] was pretty thoughtful about those," Frank says.

But the Newton Democrat sees Flynn, and other local safety officials, running into trouble on Capitol Hill. "My problem is this: Homeland security requires a strong public sector," Frank says. "I think there is this fundamental contradiction with the Republican right. You can't bolster homeland security by weakening government in general."

The 55-year-old Flynn's attempts to spread his homeland security religion in Washington have been aided by the fact that he has many friends in the capital. During his stint in Virginia, Flynn earned plaudits for his handling of the attack on the Pentagon. But he has deep roots in Massachusetts as well. Flynn was Braintree police chief from 1987 to 1993, and then became Chelsea's police chief for the next four years. The good will he built in those two stints has smoothed his path in Boston.

But the message he's peddling in the nation's capital is a tougher sell. He says that the federal government isn't doing nearly enough to provide states with useful intelligence, to fund state security efforts, to divvy up what federal funding it does provide in a cost-effective manner, and to guide



states in how to spend it.

Certainly Massachusetts's experience on the federal homeland security dole has been mixed so far. Romney's "co-lead governor" status notwithstanding, Massachusetts has only received federal funding to cover about half its post-9/11 security costs. In March, the state was allotted \$11.7 million to help local police and fire departments upgrade equipment. But in early April, Boston was not among seven cities selected by the Homeland Security Department to split \$100 million in additional funding. After city and state leaders complained, Massachusetts was granted \$16.7 million in May to distribute to cities and towns in the Boston area.

Even that's a drop in the homeland security bucket. Flynn estimates that Massachusetts has spent well over \$50 million on extra precautions since 9/11, and he insists on the need for more federal help with these costs. But he is just as concerned about funds squandered on security for show. Whereas many public safety officials in Washington and the states have spent millions in a largely symbolic effort to reassure the public, Flynn has resisted these gestures. In February, for example, when the US Department of Homeland Security raised the terrorist threat level to orange, Flynn decided not to post state troopers outside bridges and tunnels,

he says, because there was no specific threat to a Massachusetts target.

"We need to get to a point where those alerts can come in different gradations of color," Flynn says. "We need useful intelligence from the federal government, so that I know in Massachusetts that what I need to do in Boston is not necessarily what I need to do in Peabody. I suspect there are parts of America that are really blue and green, although no one dares to admit it."

Flynn has the same attitude toward federal funds, which he thinks need to be applied in a targeted fashion, rather than according to share-the-wealth Capitol Hill formulas. That attitude guides Flynn as he prepares to divvy up state and federal security funding among the Bay State's 351 cities and towns. "We aren't going to start distributing money according to population size so everybody gets a

little bit and we are all equally vulnerable," he says. "We want this money distributed in ways that protect the critical infrastructure."

Local officials worry that giving federal security money to the states doesn't target it enough. Boston Mayor Tom Menino believes that the state will politicize the funding—much as Flynn suggests Congress would do—and disperse it to communities across the state, rather than direct the money to communities most at risk. "State governments use the peanut butter approach," says Howard Leibowitz, head of intergovernmental affairs for the mayor. "They want to spread everything around."

Buried under the who-gets-what argument is a deeper question of what homeland security funds are good for. Most jurisdictions have "made homeland

security something adjunct or outside the normal responsibility of government," says security consultant Cohen. "Ed Flynn sees it differently. He recognizes that we can't continue the security guard approach with a massive response to every change in the threat level. We need to integrate homeland security into the day-to-day business of government."

That notion, pioneered by Flynn, is catching on around the country, and is now dubbed the "dual-use" approach to homeland security. Every anti-terrorism outlay, says Flynn, should also support the regular work of public safety officials, law enforcement officers, and firefighters. That's a lesson Flynn learned sifting through the rubble of the Pentagon.

"Our fire department in Arlington was responding to a terrorist attack, but they were also dealing with a building collapse, a plane crash, and



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a fire," he says. "Those are core responsibilities of the fire service."

So, in his Washington lobbying efforts, Flynn has argued for increased federal funding, but funding that won't go to waste even if there is never another terrorist attack. The state wants to go shopping for security goods "with the idea that these are things that can improve our day-to-day services and not just our emergency capacity," he says. "We don't need more things to gather dust."

In fact, Flynn thinks state and local governments can make their biggest contributions to the war on terrorism by going after more mundane forms of crime, "things like cigarette smuggling, alcohol bootlegging, identity theft, credit card fraud—many terrorist cells commit these types of crimes to make money," he says. "Anything we get [from Washington] to help us perform those tasks more effectively

will, as a benefit, help us respond to terrorism more effectively."

Indeed, as much as the states need help with money, they need even more help spending that money, Flynn says. "We need a place that is the functional equivalent of the Consumers Union at the federal level," he says. "There are a lot of vendors out there who want to sell us multimillion-dollar information-technology hardware and software. Hundreds of millions of dollars are going to be tied up in those capital costs, but we haven't got anyone to tell us what's good, better, and best."

Or, he adds, what products offer the best quality for the money. "We haven't got anyone to tell us 'Well, here's the Cadillac, but you know that this Volkswagen over here will meet most of your needs and it's a lot cheaper.'"

In that sense, there is still as much

Chelsea and Braintree tight-fistedness in Flynn as there is Capitol Hill pork-monger. His dollar-wise approach to the homeland-security challenge should be music to the ears of elected officials seeking to restrain spending. But it is also a hard-headed analysis of the terrorist threat. If political pressures cause governments to spend indiscriminately on wasteful security measures, Flynn says, states like Massachusetts will find themselves unable to dig out of the fiscal mess they're in. That, he says, will be as much of a disaster as any dirty bomb.

"The terrorists don't have to attack us ever again," he says. "All they have to do is allow us to bankrupt ourselves, which anyone monitoring the economies of the states right now will see is an achievable goal." ■

Shawn Zeller is a staff correspondent at Government Executive.

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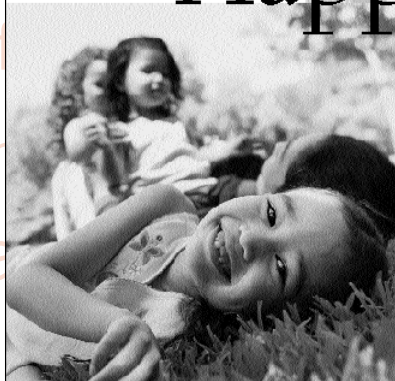
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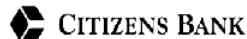
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College bowl

Public higher education ought to be more than a political football

BY ROBERT KEOUGH

As viewed from the peanut gallery, the struggle over Gov. Mitt Romney's government-reorganization plan has been a fascinating, if at times horrifying, spectacle. When the plan was outlined in the governor's budget proposal, the Legislature's first reaction—from a collection of House task forces that summarily rejected nearly every element, one after another—sparked references in my shop to Groucho Marx's Professor Wagstaff, in *Horse Feathers*: "Whatever it is, I'm against it! / No matter what it is or who commenced it, I'm against it!" In June, the state Senate administered the coup de grace to the administration's grand restructuring scheme (then in the form of twin Article 87 reorganization bills, which lawmakers could only accept or reject in their entirety, without amendment), leaving the governor—or at least Eric Kriss, his administration and finance secretary and designated attack dog—to decry the Legislature's resistance to "reform."

But, more quietly, through its favored vehicle of the budget (outside sections have made a big comeback this year), the Legislature has given the new governor a surprising amount of what he wants, considering the shortage of Republican votes in either branch. Most notable is the sweeping reorganization of the state's vast human-services bureaucracy, to which both the House and the Senate have given approval. Many other Romney proposals—some inspired, others half-baked—did fall by the wayside. But it seems safe to say that, for all the posturing of this spring, the slow-turning wheels of government are grinding toward change in a variety of areas.

If only this strange but oddly functional dissonance between public clash and quiet accommodation had held up in the arena of public higher education. Here, however, a serious discussion of substance was upstaged by political theater.

For Romney and his political handlers, the allure of taking on University of Massachusetts President William Bulger, a potent but wounded symbol of politics as usual, might have been too enticing to pass up. But as a wedge into the institutional disorganization of public higher education, the Battle of the Bulger backfired. That's in part because Beacon Hill pols proved to be remarkably

unself-conscious about having the mantle of Bulger draped around their shoulders. As leader of UMass, he has made few enemies and won his share of admirers (see "Big Man on Campus," *CW*, Summer 2000). Even the spectacle of his congressional testimony about what he did or didn't do to aid his fugitive-gangster brother has not been enough to make Bulger as politically radioactive as the governor's strategists presumed him to be.

But the tactic also failed because the decapitation of the state university seemed so much at odds with the thrust of the governor's plan. If anything, UMass was the closest model to what Romney was proposing for higher ed as a whole: a unified system of campuses, led by a single executive, with funds provided by a single line-item in the state budget and doled out by a central governing board. It just had Bulger at the top, along with the UMass board of trustees that hired him, rather than Romney (or education chief Peter Nessen, who resigned once he did not get his secretariat) and the state Board of Higher Education, which, under his proposal, he would have appointed anew. In the end, Romney neither rid himself of Bulger nor gained the authority over the public higher-education system that he sought.

Although the Bulger gambit managed to turn the future of public higher education into a political sideshow this spring, the issue itself has not gone away. There is a certain madness to the method of post-secondary study provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: a virtually independent state university, governed exclusively by its own board of trustees, operating in tandem with state and community colleges that are nominally ruled by the state Board of Higher Education but more directly accountable to their own local boards.

Even more bewildering is the funding process. State monies are allocated in a way that is both arbitrarily mechanical (half of the overall higher-ed appropriation for the university, one quarter each for the state colleges and the community colleges) and politically wired (individual line-items appropriated for each state and community college campus, with legislative clout counting

for more than need or merit). Meanwhile, the incentives built into the pricing structure are perverse, serving neither the institution nor the consumer: Tuition is set by the state, with the revenue reverting to the treasury, while fees are set locally, with those funds retained on campus. Over time, fees have become the lion's share of total student cost, yet even as charges mount, every additional student remains a money-loser for the institution, rather than a money-maker, because it doesn't get to keep the tuition he or she pays. (The exception here is continuing education, courses in which have become cash cows for community colleges.)

In the first of three State House hearings, then-education point man Peter Nessen spoke out about the frustration born of eight years' service on the state Board of Higher Education. "Currently, we have silos within silos," Nessen told lawmakers. "The system must become more accountable." He was referring to the performance measurement system mandated by the Legislature in 1997. After years of wrangling, he said, "We have gotten agreement from the campuses only on five performance indicators." The board, said Nessen, "has never been empowered. It can jawbone, but it can't implement."

Now, all this makes campus leaders bristle, including

the state college presidents who sent a delegation to see me in May. "I find that mind-boggling," says Westfield State College President Frederick Woodward, of Nessen's accountability complaints. Between the state's system, accreditation every 10 years, and regular financial audits, "we feel we spend most of our time on performance measurement," says Woodward. The problem, says Frederick Clark Jr., executive officer of the State College Council of Presidents and a former chairman of the Bridgewater State College board of trustees, is that performance reports "go to the Board of Higher Education and into a back file. Accountability stops at the Board of Higher Education. It should be shared."

And made to count for something, adds Helen Heine-man, president of Framingham State College. "All this performance has never translated into reward," says Heine-man, arguing for a "more rational" method of distributing resources. "There's no connection between performance measurement and reward."

Rationalizing the distribution of state funds and connecting it to performance is, of course, exactly what Nessen and Romney were calling for in their doomed plan. But their brand of rationality is not what the college leaders have in mind. "We feel costs ought to be set locally," says

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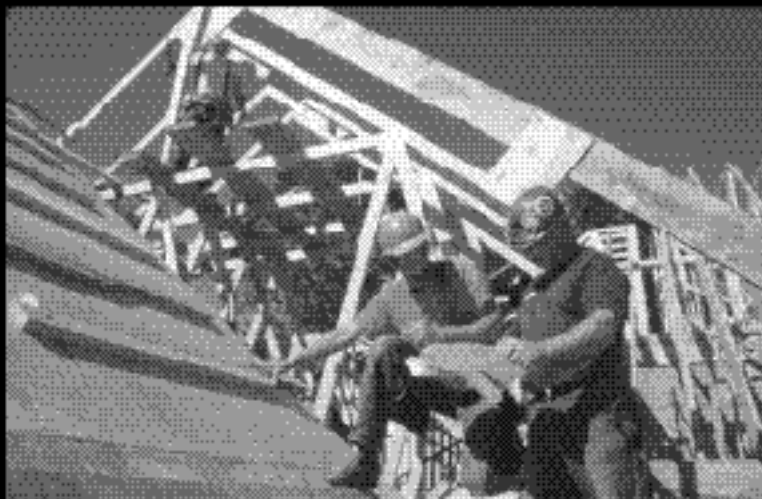
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Woodward. "Peter would like to control it all, set it all."

Campus leaders would like to hear less talk about the power state officials wish they had and see more evidence of leadership as to where public higher education should be going. The board's approach to governance, says Dana Mohler-Faria, president of Bridgewater State, "has not been one of a sense of direction. I don't feel like I've gotten that from the Board of Higher Education."

In January 2002, the board and the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) issued a paper that called public higher education "a shrewd investment with significant returns," citing pay-offs for students, employers, and the state. That conclusion is hard to argue with, but on one key piece of analysis, I think the authors missed the boat.

Looking at the 53,000 high school seniors who graduated in 1996 and stayed in state to attend college, 63 percent went to public institutions. Thus, the authors concluded, the public higher-education system is the "primary provider" of post-secondary study, "educating nearly two thirds of...students who have grown up in the Commonwealth." But, since 26 percent of seniors graduating that year left the state entirely to go on to college, that conclusion is false. In fact, only 47 percent of college-bound Massachusetts seniors gravitated to the state's public institutions that year, while 53 percent pursued college education outside the state system.

That is the nub of the problem here. Our own state's system of college education is the option of choice for fewer than half of our homegrown students. By tradition and inclination, the preference for private universities, here or elsewhere—not to mention, in some cases, other states' public universities—among Massachusetts residents remains strong. As a result, public higher education has been accorded a second-class status here, in politics as well as in the public mind. It is this second-class status that accounts for the state's inconsistent financial support of public higher education, and its lukewarm commitment to quality.

How long Massachusetts residents will be able to indulge their taste for private college is unclear. In MassINC's recent survey on the quality of life in Massachusetts, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, 48 percent of all respondents (and 57 percent of parents) cited the affordability of college education as a major issue; only 7 percent of parents said they had enough money saved to pay for their children's education. As the cost of private post-secondary education continues to escalate, public higher education will have to become more than a fallback for Massachusetts residents—and more than a political football for the state's leaders. ■

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Trash talk

One town opts for a tax hike over paying by the bag

BY MELANIE NAYER

MARBLEHEAD—Mayors and managers in cash-strapped communities may eye Marblehead with a certain amount of envy this summer, and not just because of the North Shore town's rocky beaches. Last month, Marblehead voters passed a Proposition 2½ override by a nearly 2-to-1 margin, providing \$1.4 million in new revenue for the town and scotching talk of deep cuts in municipal services. Specifically, the override disposed of two sanitation scenarios that seemed equally offensive to residents: a "pay as you throw" program requiring stickers—costing \$1.50 each—on each bag or barrel of trash set out on curbs, or the complete elimination of curbside trash pickup.

The property-tax increase was approved June 16 by a vote of 4,174 to 2,094, making it one of the most lopsided victories for a Prop. 2½ override anywhere in the state this year. On the day of the Marblehead vote, Lancaster residents narrowly approved (1,066 to 996) an override to prevent far more drastic cuts than those threatened in Marblehead, including the extinguishing of street lights and the reduction of the town police force from 17 to two. But residents in Millis voted down an override at the same time, and two days earlier a \$4 million override was rejected in Arlington, despite the town manager's warnings that teachers, police officers, and firefighters would be laid off as a result. If the outcome in Marblehead is any indication, over-

ride supporters in those towns might have been better off putting trash collection on the line.

"The government has spent too much, and we need to learn from that," says town resident Peggy Blass, who voted for the override despite being laid off from work last fall. "But we also need to be realistic.... Do you know what government is supposed to do? It provides services for people that they couldn't afford on their own."

Of course, it just may be that Marblehead voters are better able to absorb the cost of a property-tax increase. The town is relatively affluent (with a median income in 1999 of \$74,000, compared to \$51,000 in the state as a whole) and well-educated (62 percent of the residents here have at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 33 percent of the population

statewide). That makes Marblehead demographically similar to the few other towns that have passed Prop. 2½ overrides by overwhelming margins this year, such as Reading. The override here will increase the property tax by 34 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value, meaning that it will cost the owner of a home valued at \$401,500 (close to the town's average) another \$137 per year. That works out to less than \$3 a week to avoid a regular trip to the town dump.

Only a few months ago, Marblehead was bracing for a change to its trash-disposal routine. The board of health had just proposed a "pay as you throw" program, which would require residents to put stickers sold by the town on each bag or barrel of trash to be hauled away by the town. PAYT programs are already in effect in more than 100 communities in the Bay State, including nearby Gloucester, and Marblehead town officials estimated they could raise \$700,000 per year charging by the bag.

"The pay-as-you-throw system very simply [means] that you pay for what you throw out," says Carl Goodman, chairman of the town's board of health. "It's very similar to your utility bill. If you turn the water off, you don't pay. If you leave it running, you pay more."

Besides the board of health, pay-as-you-throw had fans on the town's finance and recycling committees. Currently, Marblehead pays \$90 per ton to have its trash hauled away, recouping only \$10 per ton by selling materials for recycling. Charles Gess-

ner, a member of the finance committee, notes that trash pick-up costs have increased by 59 percent over the past six years; PAYT would be one way to keep this service from eating up more and more of the town's operating budget. Gessner also says that a usage-based pick-up system encourages people to recycle more, thereby minimizing the number of trash stickers they have to buy.

But pay-as-you-throw prompted angry comments from residents at public meetings held by the board of selectmen and the board of health in April. "I don't want to be hassled 52 times a year," said resident Laurie Barham, according to *The Marblehead Reporter*. "I just think that this makes Marblehead a meaner place."

"Many of those opposed to the plan were just knee-jerk anti-tax types who had willfully misled the public about the process and the proposal," says Goodman. "But the loudest is not necessarily the majority." Recycling committee member Don Morgan says "doomsday" predictions made by some PAYT opponents—such as an increase in littering and illegal dumping by residents trying to avoid the user fees—were "simply untrue."

Nevertheless, PAYT opponents won, at least in the short run, but in a way that put everyone's trash collection at risk. After the contentious public meetings, the board of selectmen rejected the board of health proposal, instead tying the fate of curbside pickup to the Prop. 2½ override vote.

Just \$400,000 of the \$1.4 million override was earmarked for trash removal, with \$740,000 going toward the school department and the remaining funds spread over several town departments. But the garbage stakes were particularly high. If the override failed, residents would have more to worry about than buying trash stickers at Town Hall.

Town officials insist they were not playing chicken with the trash pickup. But the opposition made them ner-

vous. Gessner says that selectmen and finance committee members worried that even if the proposal passed at the annual town meeting in May, opponents would get enough signatures to put a repeal on the ballot in a June special election. If the town balanced the budget with pay-as-you-throw but had the program tossed out by voters, the town would be

avoid these sorts of programs."

And a woman who voted against the override (and didn't want to be identified) has her own doubts that the trash plan would be complied with. "I really don't support that idea," she says. "People are just going to leave their trash on the sidewalk [without stickers] anyway. It sounds far-fetched."

MARBLEHEAD



Founded: 1649

Population: 19,971

Town Meeting: Open

FACTS:

- ◆ Bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the west, north, and east, Marblehead covers 19.63 square miles of Essex County. It is located 18 miles northeast of Boston.
- ◆ The average value of a single-family home is \$401,500, according to the town board of assessors.
- ◆ In its early years, Marblehead's main sources of income were the fishing and shoe industries. Once known as the "birthplace of the American Navy," Marblehead has become one of the yachting capitals of the world. Today, the picturesque seacoast town is mainly a residential community sprinkled with retail shops and restaurants.

headed with a \$700,000 deficit in the middle of the summer. The selectmen decided they had a better chance of winning voter approval for a tax increase than for trash stickers.

"I think the anti-PAYT sentiment could have been turned around if we had had more time to explain the program," Gessner says. "But we only had a few weeks, and a lot of misinformation had been put out by the anti-PAYT side, which made our task more difficult."

Goodman agrees, adding, "PAYT was branded a regressive tax early on, and that only added to the difficulty of public re-education."

Indeed, voters on both sides of the override express reservations, personal as well as general, about PAYT. "It sounds really inconvenient," says Jonah Hulbert, who supported the override primarily because it increased spending on schools. "I can understand why people would not want to raise taxes, but if people [paid] more, we could

Nevertheless, Goodman thinks that the town government should have put the proposal to a direct vote. "I think we failed to give the people the choice," he says.

But the Marblehead trash-payment saga may not be over. "The epilogue is that PAYT is likely to be considered again in Marblehead within the next one to two years," says Goodman, "not [just] as a revenue producer, but rather as an environmentally sound and fiscally responsible way of reducing municipal solid waste and encouraging recycling."

Marblehead resident Mary LeBlanc, a PAYT supporter who also voted for the override last month, sounds a similar theme. "Do I think we need increased revenue? Yes, I do," she says. "But we need to make long-term changes, not just annual ones." ■

Melanie Nayer is a reporter for Banker & Tradesman. Jan Wolfe provided additional reporting for this article.

Visas for foreign workers roil the tech world

BY MICHAEL JONAS

Gina Minks, a technical trainer at EMC Corp. in Hopkinton, knew full well that the high-tech industry was in trouble, so she wasn't shocked to be laid off last year. But when Minks saw newly hired foreign workers coming through the door as she and other American employees were sent packing, the 37-year-old Milford resident was less philosophical.

"I was really angry," says Minks. "They were bringing in people at the same time I and other people were being laid off."

Minks says her position was eliminated, but insists that she and other laid-off workers were qualified for jobs for which foreign workers were being hired.

It's a bit of turnabout that Minks and other technology workers are saying is anything but fair play. In the overheated economy of the late 1990s, US firms desperate for trained employees increasingly turned to H-1B visas, which allow skilled foreign workers to be brought into the US for stays of up to six years. But with the high-tech industry in the doldrums, out-of-work IT workers are charging that the visa program is costing Americans jobs.

Not only that, but the displaced techies have identified a new visa villain: L-1s, which allow firms that have US and overseas operations to transfer their foreign workers here. Critics say the guest-worker category is being abused by firms that bring workers here to do jobs for other companies.

When Alison Campbell was laid off in March from her position at Centive, a Bedford software company, she left behind her a team of foreign-born programmers working under contract with Westborough-based Virtusa Corp. Campbell says the workers were in the US on L-1 visas, transferred here from Virtusa's offices in India or Sri Lanka.

Bob Conlin, Centive's vice president of marketing, says the Virtusa team didn't knock anyone out of a job, because none of the workers laid off during Centive's recent downsizing had the skills to perform the specific work Virtusa was hired for. "We contracted with them because they convinced us they could do a good job," he says of Virtusa.

As for the workers the contractor brought in for the project, Conlin says, "we didn't care where they come from."

Conlin says he's aware that Virtusa makes use of L-1 visas, but doesn't actually know whether the six or seven programmers sent to his company were here on L-1 visas or not.

Officials at Virtusa declined several requests to speak about their use of foreign workers. But the practice of bringing workers to the US on L-1 visas and then using them in contract jobs is coming under increasing scrutiny from immigration officials.

"If someone came into the United States and then was being farmed out to a third party—not working for the subsidiary in the United States—that would appear to be a clear violation" of visa regulations, says Christopher Bentley, a spokesman for the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, formerly known as the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Bentley says the bureau has begun an investigation into charges that L-1 visas are being used improperly.

In contrast to H-1B visas, there are no limits on the number of workers who can enter the US under L-1s, nor is there any requirement that firms pay wages comparable to US industry standards. The use of L-1 visas has increased fully 50 percent over the past five years, with 38,307 visas issued in 1998 and 57,721 issued last year, according to the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs.

In 1998, Congress authorized an increase in the yearly cap on H-1B admissions from 65,000 to 115,000 workers,

DISPLACED TECHIES HAVE IDENTIFIED A NEW VISA VILLIAN.

and then in 2000 increased it further to 195,000 workers. The moves came amid cries from the US computer industry about a severe shortage of qualified workers. On Oct. 1, however, the visa limit will revert to 65,000 unless Congress reauthorizes a higher cap.

"Our position is, it definitely should roll back to the 65,000 level," says Paul Almeida, president of the department for professional employees at the AFL-CIO national office in Washington. "We feel it was never truly utilized for what its purpose was."

The number of H-1B visas issued reached 201,543 in 2001 (workers at nonprofit employers are not counted toward the cap) but declined to 109,576 last year, according to the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services.

In 2000, US Sen. Edward Kennedy supported the visa-cap increase but sponsored an amendment to the bill that doubled the fee paid by US firms for each H-1B worker from \$500 to \$1,000, with a portion of the new revenue funneled

to training programs for US workers. Kennedy has yet to take a position on whether the higher cap should be reauthorized this fall. But a Kennedy spokeswoman, Stephanie Cutter, says that with so many people out of work, there's less agitation for extending the quota this time around. Meanwhile, two bills have been filed in the US House of Representatives that would restrict the use of L-1 visas.

Greg Eden, manager of corporate public relations for EMC, says 300 to 400 of the data-storage company's 11,200 employees in the US are here on H-1B visas. EMC has been a leading voice in calls for beefed-up math and science education in Massachusetts schools in order to "improve the talent pool here," Eden says. But H-1Bs remain "important," he adds, "because they give employers access to a broader talent pool and they improve on a company's ability to compete."

While industry officials tout the foreign-worker visas as a necessary tool for US firms to maintain their competitive edge, high-tech casualties of the economic downturn say that edge seems to be coming at their expense.

Six months after being laid off, Minks, a single mother of two, finally landed a new job, but one that paid \$11,000 a year less than her old one at EMC. "If thousands of techies are being laid off, there seems to be no reason to go outside the country" for new hires, she says. "It's not right." ■

Trading tax revenue for 40-B compliance on Buzzards Bay

BY MICHAEL JONAS

Like all but 27 Massachusetts communities, the small coastal town of Marion doesn't have enough affordable housing. At least not according to the Department of Housing and Community Development, which tracks town-by-town progress toward the state's goal of keeping 10 percent of each locality's housing stock available for low- and moderate-income residents. Marion clocks in at a paltry 1.5 percent, with just 31 of its 2,095 housing units in the affordable housing inventory. But to Stuart Richardson, chairman of the Marion housing committee, the state's calculations are based on fuzzy math.

"There are plenty of affordable homes in town," says Richardson. "The problem is they don't have the deed restrictions, marketing covenants, and all the other good stuff that DHCD requires to [define] them as affordable."

Marion thinks it has a better way to do just that. In a case that's drawing wide interest, the picturesque town of 5,100 on Buzzards Bay is pushing a plan to count existing, privately owned homes toward the 10 percent goal. The town's housing committee has drafted a proposal to waive property taxes for homeowners who meet the state's income guidelines and who agree to deed restrictions that would hold down the sale price of their homes for future buyers of low and moderate income. (Under state guidelines, that means households earning 80 percent or less of median income in the area, a cutoff that translates to a maximum of \$48,250 for a family of four in Marion.)

The housing proposal won unanimous support at Marion's April town meeting, but it must now be approved by the Legislature as a home-rule petition, and, most importantly, win the blessing of the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Until it hits the 10 percent affordable housing mark, Marion, like the other 324 communities that are also short of the goal, is ripe for large-scale housing proposals under the state's controversial anti-"snob zoning" law, known as Chapter 40-B. The law allows developers to bypass local zoning approval in towns below the 10 percent threshold if they set aside 25 percent of the units they build as affordable housing. A groundswell of opposition to 40-B has taken hold across the state, with communities saying that oversized projects are threatening everything from municipal budgets to town character. Marion is now in the throes of its first 40-B battle, contesting a plan for 192 units of rental housing.

But as they brace themselves for more 40-B proposals, town leaders are hoping at least part of the solution lies in their own backyard. Including existing homes in the affordable housing count would help Marion meet its goal while also helping lower-income homeowners who, facing rising tax bills, are "hanging on by the skin of their fingernails," says housing committee chairman Richardson.

Edna Bumpus may not be in such dire straits. But the 68-year-old widow, who makes do on Social Security and a small pension, is finding it harder and harder to make ends meet. She says she would gladly sign up for the program.

"Everything's going up, but your income doesn't," says Bumpus, who pays \$1,200 a year in property taxes on the tiny two-bedroom home she shares with her daughter.

Based on a survey of 523 homeowners whose property is assessed at \$125,000 or less, researchers from University



Edna Bumpus is eager to shed her property tax for deed restrictions.

of Massachusetts—Dartmouth estimated that 48 homeowners would qualify and be interested in swapping future appreciation in their home's value for tax relief today. If they did so, that would bring Marion's affordable housing count up to 4.4 percent—not enough to ward off 40-B proposals, but a step closer.

"We're not solving the problem," Richardson says. "We're solving part of it, and in the process, we're serving the people in town." Richardson says he's already heard from officials in several other towns, who seem eager to follow suit if Marion's proposal is approved.

Which is exactly what has some housing advocates worried. "It doesn't produce any additional affordable housing," says Aaron Gornstein, of the Citizens Housing and Planning Association.

Tom Callahan, director of the Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance, sounds a similar concern. "We need new production, because too many people are chasing too few housing units," he says. At the same time, Callahan says there has to be flexibility in meeting affordable housing goals, especially for small towns like Marion. "We have to use all the tools available to us [to increase the stock of affordable housing], and I think this is a creative approach," he says of the town proposal.

Bumpus isn't concerned about the deed restriction. She plans to leave her house to her daughter, who works at a local manufacturing company and is likely to qualify under the state's guidelines for affordable housing.

But what about homeowners whose heirs won't qualify

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to take over the family home, or those tempted to give up equity they might later need for health care or other retirement costs? Anyone considering the Marion program would "need to think this through," says Len Raymond, director of the nonprofit Homeowner Options for Massachusetts Elders, which provides counseling to older homeowners.

So far, state officials are taking a wait-and-see attitude toward the Marion plan, which has not yet come before the Legislature. "I think it shows some good thinking on the part of the community," says Sarah Young, deputy director for policy development in the Department of Housing and Community Development. "It has to be looked at and balanced against what else they're doing."

Plenty, say Marion officials. At the April town meeting, residents also approved a new "inclusionary zoning" bylaw, which requires that any new housing development of six or more homes set aside at least 10 percent of the units as affordable housing.

"Holy smokes, you talk about support, that's awfully good," Richardson says of Marion's housing package. "The town right now could not be more behind the business of affordable housing and getting to 10 percent." ■

Bristol lawmen hedge their bets on gambling

BY KATE MCGREGOR

If those in the Romney administration say they are "ambivalent" about legalized gaming, even as they support the introduction of video slot machines to boost state revenue (see "Getting a Fix," opposite), imagine the bind the gambling question puts Bristol County law-enforcement officials in.

For some time, southeastern Massachusetts has been a hotbed of agitation for expanded gaming, which boosters see as a jobs and economic-development boon. Former state representative and current New Bedford city councilor George Rogers has been pressing for a casino there since 1968, helping to pass two non-binding referenda supporting the initiative. The Wampanoag tribe of Aquinnah, the

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GETTING A FIX ON THE ROLE OF CHANCE

The Bay State's current fiscal crisis has, not surprisingly, revived discussions on increasing revenue by expanding legalized gambling here. At the Commonwealth Forum "Taking a Gamble: Risk, Reward, and Rolling the Dice in Government and Society," held on June 11 at the Omni Parker House Hotel in Boston, panelists discussed the role of risk-taking at all levels of American society, from slot machines to the stock market. Robert Keough, editor of *CommonWealth* Magazine, moderated the forum.

Featured speaker Jackson Lears, author of *Something for Nothing: Luck in America* (see "Trusting to Luck," *CW*, Spring 2003) advised policy-makers that before making decisions regarding gambling they need to acknowledge "the complex needs that gambling satisfies in American society." Lears, a history professor at Rutgers University, noted that the country's attitude toward different forms of risk-taking has been inconsistent, if not hypocritical: "Public policy has talked about gambling in the context of other vices [and] illicit activities...but when 'speculation' succeeds, no matter how wild, it is embraced."

This equivocation is also prevalent in Massachusetts, according to panelist Robert Pozen, chief of commerce and labor for the state, who admitted that the governor is "ambivalent" about the expansion of gambling as well. "The citizens of the Commonwealth are split 50-50" on the issue of casino gambling, he said, adding that while no new gambling ventures are included in this year's budget, "if economic conditions get worse, then I think gambling will be back on the table." As an alternative to full-blown casinos, Pozen said, he preferred forms of gambling that could be taken down as quickly as they can be put up. He suggested following Rhode Island's lead by allowing recreation halls to lease slot machines. "One facility generated \$700,000 a day" in revenue, which can be taxed at a rate of 51 percent, Pozen said. "There's nothing permanent...not a fancy facility, but a modest building."

George Donnelly, editor of the *Boston Business Journal*, agreed with Pozen that experiments like leased slot machines make more economic sense than the "overkill" solution of large casinos. "A slot machine pays for itself in 100 days of opera-

tion," he said; after that, the gambler's losses are pure profit. "That's a remarkable business model." But Donnelly also warned that "you don't need to be around these places long to realize that they don't add any value to the state." He worried about increased gambling addiction and other social costs and asked, "Would a plain old tax [increase] do less harm?"

Sheryl Marshall, a stockbroker and founding partner of Axxon Capital, brought the discussion around to the role of chance in

our economy, especially the risks that are inseparable from modern investing. "The only difference [from gambling] is that with investing you have an illusion of control," Marshall said, "but as we now know, the markets can be extremely erratic." She added that the bursting of the dot-com bubble has left many investors more wary of risk-taking.

Returning to the role of government, Keough asked Pozen about the risks that accompany "public investments" such as the Big Dig and education reform. "We have totally vacated and made meaningless the concept of investment," Pozen responded. "When-

ever we spend money now, we call it an investment," he lamented, saying that the concept should be restricted to situations where one expects "a financial return larger than the money we put in." He cited not only the Big Dig but also the new Boston convention center as examples of expenditures that may be warranted but don't meet his definition of investment. "I can guarantee four years from now we will all be paying \$20 million a year to subsidize the convention center," he said.

Lears returned to the broader topic of risk-taking, suggesting that the real threat to America's entrepreneurial spirit will not be from a faltering economy but from the "sharks and cheats who...want to rig the casinos for the rest of us and never took a chance in their own lives." But, he concluded, "the country that added bluffing to poker is not going to settle for mere diligence as the only path to success."

The Commonwealth Forums are a joint project of MassINC and the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. A transcript of this forum provided by State House News Service can be found on the Internet at www.massinc.org.

—JAN WOLFE



Lears: historian of chance.

only federally recognized Indian tribe in the state, has also sought permission to open a gambling hall there. And state Sen. Joan Menard of Somerset recommended Bristol County as a potential gambling site in a bill she filed in March.

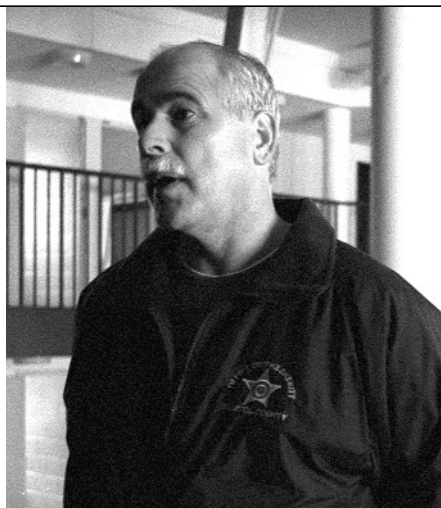
Traditionally, law-enforcement officials have been leery of gambling, worrying about its criminal side effects, even if some experts see those fears as overblown. "Crime would increase no more than if a new mall opened in the area that also drew great numbers of people," says Christine Reilly, executive director for the Institute for Research on Pathological Gambling and Related Disorders at Harvard Medical School. Indeed, the commission appointed last year by then-Acting Gov. Jane Swift to study the effects of legalized gambling, chaired by former Essex County district attorney Kevin Burke, reported that "there is no evidence conclusively pointing to an increase in crime rates from expanded gambling."

Even though the state has kept gambling at bay to date, Bristol County lawmen have come to terms with the craze in their region. District Attorney Paul Walsh Jr. says casino gambling has become inevitable; the issue for him is no longer support or opposition but preparation. Indeed, Walsh's office set up a casino unit in 1995. "The decision is going to be made, so we want to be prepared for it," he says. "If a casino comes to my district, I want it to be squeaky clean."

Sheriff Thomas Hodgson still has his doubts about the economic benefits of the gaming industry. "We have to examine whether gambling will draw people to Bristol County and how much it will help the economy outside of the casino," Hodgson says. "The problem with gambling is it's a short-term solution that is not going to solve the long-term economic problems in the area."

But others in his department are hoping that the county—and the county correctional system—will cash in. "We absolutely support casino gambling here," says Superintendent Peter Perroncello. "We would support any effort to bring casino gambling to Bristol County." That's in part because local governments that host gambling facilities tend to benefit from increased revenues. For a model, jail officials look to Biloxi, Miss., where the police department gets 20 percent of casino profits.

The department could use the money. After losing \$1.6 million in state funding in the past two years, the county



Sheriff Hodgson: Gambling is only a "short-term solution" to economic woes.

closed the David R. Nelson Correctional Alcohol Center last July, moving more than 100 inmates and 20 correctional officers into the Bristol County House of Correction, in Dartmouth. "If casino gambling were to show up here, we would need to receive some of that money to fund more beds and for more jail space," Perroncello says. "It would be absolutely necessary."

His underling's enthusiasm notwithstanding, that's not enough to sell Hodgson on the idea. "Gambling is not something I would consider to solve this particular budget crisis," says the sheriff. It's not even clear whether county jail-keepers could get a share in gambling profits. But the Burke commission report does not exactly deal them out: "It is undeniable that additional gambling opportunities in the Commonwealth...will produce increased revenues for the state, and perhaps for local government." ■

Freelance writer Kate McGregor is a former Commonwealth intern.

Car-Free guide is back on track

BY ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN

After nearly a decade in the shop, *Car-Free in Boston* is back in service—and, for those who prefer their transportation public rather than private, not a moment too soon.

A compendium of every conceivable way of getting around Greater Boston without getting behind a steering wheel, *Car-Free* has had loyal fans since 1977, when it was first published by the nonprofit Association for Public Transportation. But some MBTA riders have been worrying that their copies would fall apart before they could get replacements.

After being updated every two years or so, the guide disappeared from bookstores after 1995, when the costs of production became too much for the APT to handle. This

year, the group handed publishing duties over to Rubel BikeMaps, a Cambridge-based firm well known in New England's cycling community.

The new edition, which sells for \$10, looks a bit sleeker than its predecessors, with more-detailed maps (including pick-up spots for rent-by-the-hour Zipcars) and bus schedules.

"Our standard is one of being informative without being ridiculously punctilious," says editor Jeff Perk, who notes that the MBTA "has its idiosyncracies that have grown over the years." So while *Car-Free* tries to explain the convoluted fare system of the Green Line, it won't tell you to watch out for the outdated signs, which in some stations go back to the Carter administration.

While Perk and his staff avoided judgmental language in listing the services of the MBTA and other transportation

between North and South stations "bailed" from APT after their pet project lost steam.) Moore won't say how many members his group has today, though he calls it "lean and mean." He'd be glad to get some new blood, though, and Moore sees *Car-Free* as a good recruiting tool.

And despite his occasional reference to "bike path hyenas" who want to tear up unused railroad tracks, Moore sees strategic advantage in the publishing partnership between APT and Rubel BikeMaps founder Andy Rubel. "Andy is going to be the bridge builder between the bike lobby and the transit lobby," says Moore.

Perk agrees, to a point. "Everyone involved with the [*Car-Free*] project would characterize themselves as rabidly pro-rapid transit," Perk says, but he adds that the book won't be used as a platform for more specific political views. "You'll find no snide comments about the expansion of the Greenbush [commuter-rail] line, for example."

Though their styles of advocacy may differ, Moore and Perk both see Boston as a great place to be car-less. "All the carping about the T's ability to govern itself and provide adequate services aside," Perk says, "by and large Boston is very well served by mass transit." ■

"THE SILVER LINE...MADE FOR AN EDITORIAL HEADACHE."

providers, they had to tread carefully in describing one new feature on the mass-transit landscape. "The Silver Line defied every categorization," Perk says. "That made for an editorial headache."

Car-Free ultimately swallowed the MBTA's party line, describing the Silver Line as "bus rapid transit" and placing its schedule with those of the subway lines rather than the bus routes. The Silver Line, which began operation late last year, currently consists of natural-gas-powered buses running in a "dedicated" lane along Washington Street from downtown to Dudley Square; the T ultimately plans to extend the route through tunnels to the Seaport district and Logan Airport.

But the "bus rapid transit" label rankles Fred Moore, president of the APT, who calls it "the most flagrant misuse of terminology since 'German Democratic Republic,'" referring to the communist regime in the former East Germany; he says the Silver Line is nothing more than a bus. (Moore often peppers his rhetoric with such politically charged language; the "systemic extermination of light rail," in which he includes the MBTA ripping up the tracks of the old Green Line branch to Watertown, he refers to as the "trollocaust.")

The APT was founded in the mid-1960s to fight proposed superhighways through and around Boston—one of which would have traveled the path of the current Orange Line—and the group's membership has fluctuated in sync with various transportation controversies in Boston, according to Moore. (He says that advocates of a rail link

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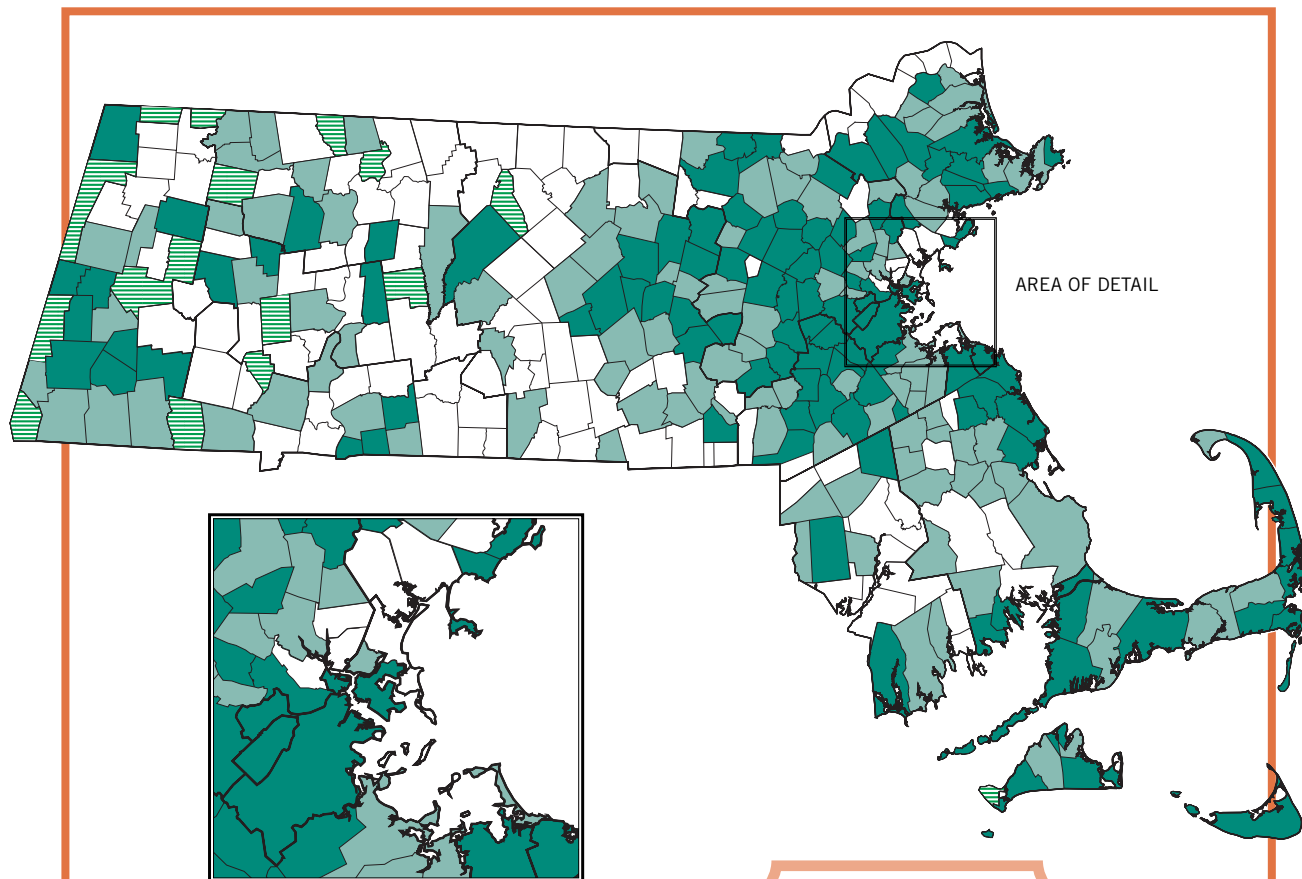


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HEAD COUNT



Soft touches

Charities are advised to stay close to Boston—or head a bit to the west—when shaking their tin cans. *The Catalogue for Philanthropy*, a consortium of nonprofits that says it “promotes philanthropy itself,” recently released its latest Massachusetts Generosity Index, which ranks 333 Bay State cities and towns by their level of giving. The name is slightly misleading. The Index does not necessarily indicate how generous citizens are in each town; rather, it suggests which localities would be the best prospects for fund drives. Rankings are based on three criteria from 1997 federal income tax returns (the last year available): the percentage of taxpayers in each town who itemize charitable deductions (which eliminates lower-income taxpayers who use the “EZ” forms from the survey); the amount of those donations; and donations as a percentage of donors’ annual incomes.

Not surprisingly, the generosity rankings track fairly closely with median incomes, but the percentage of college graduates turns out to be the best indicator of where a city or town ends up on the Generosity Index. The western suburbs of Lincoln, Concord, and Wayland

GENEROSITY INDEX

- Top Third
- Middle Third
- Bottom Third
- No Data

occupy the top three spots on the Index; they rank 10th, 16th, and 13th in the state in terms of the percentage of college graduates. The most highly educated community, Carlisle, ranks 30th on the Generosity Index.

There are a few surprises. Tyngsborough ranks seventh on the Generosity Index but 180th in terms of college graduates. Chelsea, which is third from the bottom on the college-graduate scale, is a relatively high 188th on the Generosity Index; other cities, including New Bedford, Springfield, and Worcester, were also near the middle despite educational disadvantages. As for the stingier towns, Westford ranks 138th in donations despite being 12th in wealth and 40th in higher education, and Boxborough comes in 175th despite ranking 28th in wealth and seventh in college degrees. ■



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STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT

BY ROBERT DAVID SULLIV

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Here's one more way that Massachusetts is out of the courtesy of the Social Security Administration: popular baby names in America, released in January. The most popular boys' name in the United States in 2002 was Jacob, with 28,119 instances. But Jacob did not make the top five in Massachusetts. Matthew took the naming prize here, followed by Michael, Nicholas, Ryan, and John. (Only three other states—Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York—kept Jacob out of the top tier.) The continued popularity of John may seem obvious in a state that has produced several presidents (Adams twice, Kennedy) and now a presidential candidate (Kerry) with the name, but its charm is wearing off elsewhere. It's now 17th on the boys' national chart, the lowest it has been since the SSA started tracking all newborn babies' names in 1991.

Girls' names in Massachusetts more closely matched national trends, with Emily topping both the national and state charts. But the country's runner-up, Madison, was absent from the Bay State's top five and, like Jacob, was relatively weak in northern, Democratic-leaning states. The rest of the top five in Massachusetts were Olivia, Emma, Sarah, and Abigail. The name Olivia, by the way, is on the fast track. It ranked 62nd among girls' monikers in 1991 and is now up to 10th place, perhaps because of a series of popular children's books featuring an energetic piglet of the same name.

DRIVING FORCES

It's car crash season in Massachusetts. According to the US Department of Transportation, 58 percent of the 446 fatal car crashes in Massachusetts in 2001 occurred during the last six months of the year. Apparently, it's not icy roads but mild weather that puts drivers most at risk: Fatal crashes were least frequent in March, then nearly doubled in April (from 17 to 33) and remained high throughout the summer and fall, peaking at 50 in November. (In the nation as a whole, 54 percent of fatal crashes occurred in the second half of the year, with the highest number in July.)

Where are the roads most deadly? Whately, of all places, at least in terms of fatalities per capita. During the eight-year period with complete records (1994 through 2001), seven fatal crashes occurred in the Franklin County town of only 1,573 people, which includes a stretch of I-91. Other western towns were close behind in auto-related deaths per capita: Bernardston (also on I-91), Blandford (on the Mass. Pike), Royalston, and Montgomery. The most populous community without a single fatal crash was Winthrop.

The most fatal crashes per square mile occurred in Chelsea: 11 of them in an area covering 2.19 square miles. The rest of the top five were also eastern cities: Revere, Boston, Lowell, and Lawrence. The largest community without a single fatality was Sandisfield, in Berkshire County on the Connecticut border.

And what about the drivers in these deadly accidents? Where do they come from? Taunton (02780) tops the list of zip codes that drivers in fatal car crashes (37 from 1994 through 2001) had on their licenses, followed by 02360 (Plymouth), 02790 (Westport), 01201 (Pittsfield), and 02184 (Braintree).

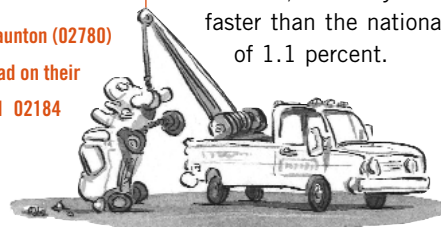


DOWN FOR THE COUNT

After a decade of slow but steady growth, Suffolk County has begun to lose residents again, according to estimates released this spring. The US Census Bureau pegged the population of Suffolk County (which includes Boston, Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop) at 689,925 as of last July 1—a loss of 2,987 residents from July 1, 2001. The county still has about 40,000 more people than it did in 1992, before an economic boom in Boston drew people back into inner-city neighborhoods. But it's a long way from the city's population peak of 896,615, reached in 1950.

Only two other Bay State counties lost population, according to the 2002 estimates. Berkshire County fell for the 12th consecutive year (this time by 626 people) and is now down to 133,462. (Berkshire peaked in 1970, at 149,402.) Middlesex County fell for the first time since 1991, but not by much. The state's most populous county now contains 1,474,160 residents—down 1,047 from its record 2001 count.

The state as a whole gained 26,637 people from 2001 to 2002, reaching a new high of 6,427,801. The increase of 0.4 percent placed Massachusetts 41st among the states in growth rate. (Nevada, which grew 3.6 percent in the year, took the top spot.) Still, four Massachusetts counties—Barnstable, Dukes, Nantucket, and Plymouth—grew faster than the national average of 1.1 percent.



SUN, SMOKE, AND SPARE TIRES

According to the American Cancer Society's 2003 "Cancer Prevention" report, 32 percent of Bay State adults reported that they had suffered a sunburn—defined as "any part" of the body that was reddened for more than 12 hours—at some point in 1999. That's slightly below the national average (35 percent) and puts us in a tie for 28th place among the states. (Wisconsin and Wyoming tied for first, with 47.8 percent of adults reporting sunburns, while Arizona, where people know enough to stay out of the sun, came in last, with only 20 percent of adults getting scorched.) Nationally, there was a sizeable gender gap, with 40 percent of men but only 29 percent of women reporting sunburns. But in Massachusetts, women were barely more sensible about their sun exposure than men: 34 percent of men got red under the collar (ranking 36th among all states), compared with 30 percent of women (21st among the states).

In cigarette smoking, we did far better, even without a statewide ban on smoking in bars and restaurants. In 2001, two years before Boston took the lead by enacting its own ban, Massachusetts had the third-lowest smoking rate among adults: Only 19.6 percent reported being "regular" smokers, compared with 23.4 percent for 11 other states to score lower were Utah and California.

statewide ban on smoking in bars and, like Massachusetts, has long had a major anti-smoking campaign financed by excise taxes). But, as with sunburn, the national gender gap almost disappears in the Bay State. Nationally, 25.5 percent of male adults and 21.5 percent of female adults are professed smokers. Here in Massachusetts, 20.5 percent of men smoke (lower than any state but Utah) and 18.9 percent of women smoke (five other states are lower).

But we have women to thank for the Bay State's enviably low ranking in residents who are overweight—third lowest, behind Colorado and Vermont, with 54.7 percent of adults considered overweight. (The national average is 57.9 percent.) For its standard of portliness, the Cancer Society uses the body mass index, or BMI, which measures weight against height. A 5-foot-10-inch man, for example, is called overweight if he tips the scales at more than 174 pounds; for a 5-foot-4-inch woman, the breaking point is 145 pounds. Among Bay State men, 65.4 percent have lopsided BMIs, not far from the national average of 66.2 percent. Only 43.8 percent of Massachusetts women

EASY As FROM AUDUBON

Woody Allen once said that 90 percent of life is just show. Most enough to get you a 100 percent rating from the Massachusetts Audubon Society. For 2002 rates the 39 voting members of the state's upper house (the Senate) on the basis of 12 roll-call votes on environmental issues. The average score was 97 percent, and 29 members got perfect scores—which isn't surprising, given that Mass Audubon's preferred position won unanimously in all 12 votes. Senators lost points only if they missed votes entirely, as Guy Glodis did five times; with a score of 79 out of 100, he was the lowest ranked member of the Senate. (Appropriately, the stingiest scores for Bay State lawmakers may come from Citizens for Limited Taxation. For the 2001-2002 legislative session, the 39 senators got an average score of 26 percent, with newly elevated Senate President Robert Travaglini and four others getting flat zeros.) As recently as five years ago, the environmental group was a lot tougher, giving an average score of 57 percent to Senate members—primarily because of two roll-call votes in which legislators ignored Audubon Society concerns and overwhelmingly backed electric utility deregulation.

On the House side, seven roll-call votes were considered, five of which passed unanimously. In one case, a budget amendment to restore funding for several environmental programs, only one legislator voted no (Republican John Locke, who retired last year). The final vote on a \$597 million environmental bond was a relative squeaker, passing 124-18. Thus, Mass. Audubon gave perfect scores to 106 members of the 160-member House, with three members tied for the lowest score at 71 percent (again, more due to absences than to casting votes that offended the environmental advocates).



Financial aid

Even before recent budget cuts, Massachusetts was considered a skinflint in the area of public higher education. According to the Center for the Study of Educational Policy, we ranked 48th in per-capita funding of public higher education (\$158.32 per state resident) in fiscal year 2002 and 49th in funding as compared with the state's total personal income (see chart). In the portion of the state budget devoted to state colleges and universities, we came in 47th, according to the National Association of State Budget Officers. But in terms of state spending per student, the Bay State doesn't look so miserly. When *CommonWealth* measured total spending against total enrollment in public colleges and universities in 2001, the last year for which complete figures are available, Massachusetts came in a respectable 11th in the nation.

The Bay State may not spend that much on public higher education overall, but that's in part because fewer students go to public colleges and universities here than elsewhere. Indeed, Massachusetts is the only state in the nation that has more college students, including those drawn here from out of state, enrolled in private institutions than in public. Only 43.5 percent of college students in Massachusetts attend public institutions, far below the national figure of 74.4 percent.

Still, we may be slipping even in our per-student spending rank. A 1998 report from the National Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis—which counts students in FTEs, or “full-time equivalents,” to equalize for part-timers—ranked Massachusetts third in per-student spending, behind Alaska and Connecticut. We've apparently fallen from the top 10 since then, and the decline may just be starting. According to the Center for the Study of Educational Policy, the Bay State cut appropriations for public higher education by 8.8 percent in the last two fiscal years, from 2001 to 2003. Only three other states (Iowa, Missouri, and Oregon) cut spending by larger percentages, and 41 states increased spending over the same period. ■

RANK / STATE	SPENDING PER STUDENT FY 2001	TOTAL APPROPRIATIONS FOR PUBLIC HIGHER ED. FY 2001, IN \$000S	PUBLIC HIGHER ED. ENROLLMENT FALL 2001	HIGHER-ED SPENDING AS % OF STATE EXPENDITURES FY 2001 (RANK)	HIGHER-ED SPENDING PER \$1,000 OF PER- SONAL INCOME FY 2001 (RANK)
1. Hawaii	\$7,371	\$339,025	45,994	10.7 (30)	\$9.95 (17)
2. Alaska	\$7,315	\$192,183	26,271	NA	\$10.55 (13)
3. Connecticut	\$7,005	\$706,032	100,788	9.3 (35)	\$5.18 (47)
4. North Carolina	\$6,845	\$2,398,489	350,418	13.7 (19)	\$11.28 (6)
5. Mississippi	\$6,563	\$824,717	125,656	19.9 (5)	\$13.10 (3)
6. New Jersey	\$6,087	\$1,678,018	275,655	7.4 (39)	\$6.07 (40)
7. Iowa	\$6,070	\$851,182	140,227	25.3 (1)	\$10.88 (9)
8. Minnesota	\$5,971	\$1,349,137	225,941	10.1 (32)	\$8.36 (26)
9. Arkansas	\$5,946	\$636,907	107,108	15.4 (14)	\$10.64 (11)
10. New York	\$5,905	\$3,479,112	589,199	7.2 (40)	\$5.75 (42)
11. Massachusetts	\$5,903	\$1,077,226	182,490	4.5 (47)	\$3.99 (49)
12. Pennsylvania	\$5,703	\$2,005,364	351,611	5.4 (44)	\$5.59 (43)
13. Kentucky	\$5,616	\$1,001,625	178,349	19.4 (6)	\$10.65 (10)
14. South Carolina	\$5,547	\$880,120	158,661	17.3 (8)	\$9.23 (22)
15. Nebraska	\$5,537	\$496,362	89,639	23.7 (4)	\$11.89 (5)
16. Maine	\$5,504	\$228,917	41,594	4.6 (46)	\$7.00 (37)
17. New Mexico	\$5,477	\$568,295	103,758	24.6 (2)	\$15.75 (1)
18. Indiana	\$5,393	\$1,283,197	237,922	8.6 (37)	\$7.80 (28)
19. Georgia	\$5,380	\$1,600,329	297,445	16.3 (13)	\$7.09 (34)
20. Maryland	\$5,367	\$1,174,820	218,899	16.7 (11)	\$6.88 (39)
21. Tennessee	\$5,286	\$1,045,546	197,794	12.4 (23)	\$6.93 (38)
22. Alabama	\$5,209	\$1,088,446	208,959	24.0 (3)	\$10.31 (14)
23. Idaho	\$5,199	\$294,651	56,673	9.4 (34)	\$10.57 (12)
24. Wyoming	\$5,129	\$151,523	29,545	15.1 (15)	\$13.37 (2)
25. Ohio	\$5,124	\$2,181,991	425,835	6.7 (41)	\$7.01 (36)
26. Illinois	\$5,090	\$2,719,734	534,280	7.6 (38)	\$8.46 (25)
27. Delaware	\$5,090	\$185,840	36,510	5.2 (45)	\$7.43 (30)
28. Virginia	\$4,986	\$1,629,776	326,842	14.1 (17)	\$7.25 (32)
29. West Virginia	\$4,923	\$387,432	78,693	17.0 (10)	\$9.58 (19)
30. Washington	\$4,859	\$1,333,911	274,549	16.5 (12)	\$7.35 (31)
31. Texas	\$4,848	\$4,511,814	930,635	13.2 (20)	\$9.08 (23)
32. North Dakota	\$4,821	\$185,659	38,510	11.7 (27)	\$12.11 (4)
33. Michigan	\$4,759	\$2,234,157	469,412	6.5 (42)	\$8.85 (24)
34. Oklahoma	\$4,747	\$789,155	166,253	17.1 (9)	\$10.00 (16)
35. Missouri	\$4,679	\$959,402	205,055	6.4 (43)	\$7.24 (33)
36. Wisconsin	\$4,660	\$1,170,122	251,082	12.2 (26)	\$10.17 (15)
37. Florida	\$4,582	\$2,833,007	618,270	9.0 (36)	\$6.00 (41)
38. Louisiana	\$4,572	\$880,064	192,494	12.6 (22)	\$9.34 (21)
39. California	\$4,362	\$8,922,931	2,045,497	11.6 (28)	\$9.84 (18)
40. Oregon	\$4,315	\$691,207	160,169	12.4 (23)	\$8.14 (27)
41. Rhode Island	\$4,157	\$162,750	39,149	10.2 (31)	\$5.43 (46)
42. Kansas	\$4,120	\$683,084	165,801	17.7 (7)	\$11.20 (7)
43. Utah	\$4,055	\$547,506	135,034	12.7 (21)	\$11.07 (8)
44. South Dakota	\$3,739	\$136,154	36,415	14.7 (16)	\$7.07 (35)
45. Nevada	\$3,648	\$316,611	86,790	11.0 (29)	\$5.48 (45)
46. Montana	\$3,599	\$141,686	39,368	10.0 (33)	\$7.73 (29)
47. Vermont	\$3,308	\$67,753	20,480	2.9 (49)	\$4.21 (48)
48. Colorado	\$3,286	\$746,478	227,180	14.0 (18)	\$5.57 (44)
49. Arizona	\$3,077	\$892,621	290,086	12.4 (23)	\$9.48 (20)
50. New Hampshire	\$2,704	\$100,666	37,224	4.5 (47)	\$2.49 (50)
US total	\$4,990	\$60,762,734	12,172,209	11.3	\$7.34

Sources: Total appropriations and spending per personal income from the Center for the Study of Educational Policy at Illinois State University (www.coe.ilstu.edu/edpolctr); fall enrollments from State Higher Education Executive Officers (www.shceo.org); based on data from the US Department of Education; percentages of state expenditures from the National Association of State Budget Officers (www.nasbo.org).

Riding the *Metro*

The subway freebie is catching on. But is it the future of news or the beginning of the end?

BY JEFFREY KLINEMAN

Joe Pesaturo gets paid to know what's going on at the MBTA. So you'd better believe that when Pesaturo, the transit authority's chief spokesman, is waiting for his trolley, he's watching what his fellow riders are doing. And what are they doing? According to Pesaturo, they're picking up the *Metro*. "It's almost automatic," he says. "They stop at the corner, they grab a *Metro* out of the box, and they board the Green Line."

In May, the *Boston Metro* marked its second birthday, and the thin tabloid with the green masthead and the staples in the spine had plenty to celebrate. In two years, the audited circulation—picked up, not paid—for the commuter newspaper had risen from a little less than 100,000 to about 165,000. After a launch that saw some of its distribution boxes forcibly removed from MBTA stations and advertisers given two-for-one deals to make up for the rough start, the *Metro* has become an established presence on the T. According to its parent company, Modern Times Group, the Boston edition is on pace to turn a profit well ahead of its three-year target; its ad sales are up 41 percent for the year.

The slim giveaway will never be mistaken for a source of high-impact journalism—the company's European parent even has a "no investigations" policy to keep *Metro* from stepping too deeply into controversy—but it has become the daily briefing of choice for thousands of T riders. Look around any train car in the morning, and lots of commuters are reading *Metro*—or at least hiding tired eyes behind it.

"It's good for keeping you occupied on the train," says Andrew Shane, 23, a hospital Web-site editor heading to work on a May morning. "But I wouldn't ever pay for it."

That should be good news for the Hub's established newspapers, which tend to dismiss the *Metro* as "news lite," while they see their own products as classier, more all-encompassing—and worth paying for. While *The Boston Globe* and the *Boston Herald* did institute some localized, defensive price cuts when the *Metro* first came to town, the consensus among newspaper watchers was that they

really didn't sweat the new arrival.

The question is, will readers like Shane pay for anything? Newspaper readership on the whole has been declining for years, especially among young people, where it has dropped by more than half since the 1970s. Has the *Metro* won the hearts of those vexing young readers by giving the news away for free? And if so, what does that mean for the media mainstream?

"It's the biggest question facing the entire newspaper community," says *Boston Phoenix* media critic Dan Kennedy. "Has the cultural disengagement from public life doomed newspapers? No matter how they try to reinvent themselves..., it may be that they can't get away from the fact that their primary mission is to inform us about public culture. If we don't care about that public life in the way we used to, [newspapers] will never have the same role."

NEWS KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Boston is a newspaper town. A recent Newspaper Association of America report showed the Boston metropolitan area had an adult readership penetration of 66 percent, fourth highest in the country. It is one of a handful of American cities supporting more than one strong daily newspaper. Given that penetration, the institutionalized competition between the *Globe* and *Herald*, a group of established suburban dailies ringing the city, and a respected free alternative weekly, Boston would seem a hard

Its rivals dismiss the *Metro* as "news lite."

market to crack. Tougher still is imagining that a new publication—even a free one—could waltz in and win readers at a time when newspaper circulation is in decline. But the rise of the *Boston Metro* is there for all to see, in subway riders' hands, tucked under their arms, or left on their seats.

"I do a 20-minute train journey every day," says Katrina Humblers, 28, a bartender at the Burren in Somerville's



Davis Square, as she solves the *Metro*'s crossword puzzle during her Red Line commute. "It fills it almost exactly. It's not all I want, but it's just there, so I pick it up."

Such comments come as no surprise to Russell Pergament, the man behind the *Boston Metro*. "Boston has been an easy city," says Pergament. "It's got a European-style mass-transit system, and it carries people whose income is higher than the surrounding market. They're well-paid, young professional working people, and they're taking the train in."

In May, Pergament announced that he was giving up the role of publisher—or "managing director," in *Metro* parlance—to seek new adventures. It surprised no one that a man sometimes described as a "serial entrepreneur" would get antsy once the *Metro* got its feet on the ground.

A charismatic, fast-talking publishing veteran who resembles the late actor and one-time Celtic Chuck Connors, Pergament gained renown for growing a single weekly serving Brookline and Newton into the *Tab* Newspaper Group. The free, upstart weeklies found a strong circulation base among suburban homeowners because of their intensely local focus. Pergament's *Tab* success became the topic of a Harvard Business School case study. The papers were eventually scooped up by the venture capital arm of the mutual fund giant Fidelity Investments, which purchased the *Tab* group—by the early 1990s, 14 editions—as one of the major components of the Community Newspaper Co., a group of more than 100 Eastern Massachusetts publications.

Transit-friendly Boston was an "easy city" for the Metro.

"It was quite a time," Pergament says of the *Tab*'s suburban insurgency. "We were taking on three or four entrenched papers."

Fidelity later sold CNC to Pat Purcell's Herald Media, but by then, Pergament was long gone, having lost a power struggle over control of the direction of CNC. He later invested some of his profits in the State House News

Pergament's quirks made the Boston edition distinctive.

Service, a small syndicate that doles out news from Beacon Hill to newspapers and lobbyists, run by a *Tab* alumnus, Craig Sandler.

When the *Metro* organization looked to launch in Boston, it turned to Pergament to find a candidate for publisher. Like Dick Cheney heading the vice-presidential search committee, Pergament picked himself, then sprinkled *Boston Metro*'s front line with seasoned *Tab* soldiers. His first editor was Dan Cacavarro, a *Tab* veteran recently of the *Valley Advocate*. But after about 10 months, Pergament tossed Cacavarro overboard, replacing him with John Wilpers, a former *Tab* editor-in-chief. The *Boston Metro* also started off with a column—since discontinued—from WB56 political analyst and former *Tab* reporter Jon Keller, and still runs a Sandler-penned weekly State

House news roundup.

Pergament is also responsible for the quirks—the daily animal item on the front page (“the animal always wins”), the listing of restaurants with health code violations—that have made the Boston edition distinctive, despite the rigid *Metro* format.

Two years after launch, however, Pergament felt satisfied that the paper could carry on without him. “This paper’s made it,” he says. Filling in for Pergament on a temporary basis is Steve Morris, an executive with *Metro*’s parent company. Morris says *Boston Metro*’s next publisher will likely come from within the company.

But on the editorial side, Pergament’s legacy will endure. “We’re both cowboys,” says Wilpers. “I’m not quite as manic, but I share his editorial philosophy, and it will be protected. I wouldn’t be here if he and I didn’t agree. All the things he loved to do, I love to do.”

RIDING THE T

Boston Metro is one of 25 papers owned by a Modern Times Group subsidiary, Metro International. Pelle Tornberg, the Swedish company’s CEO, has said he wants his free newspapers, with their signature high story count, miniscule story length (fewer than 250 words), and uniform layout to be as identifiable a brand as McDonald’s. For content, the paper relies principally on Reuters, Bloomberg, and occasionally *Christian Science Monitor* wire copy, plus cultural coverage and sports scores. *Metro* takes no editorial stances apart from bylined columns.

The target market for *Metro* is young, urban commuters aged 18 to 34. Revenue for the newspaper comes from advertising geared toward those readers, such as H&M, the discount clothing store for young people that was a staple of *Boston Metro*’s early issues. *Metro* keeps its staffing lean and non-union.

In a typical launch, *Metro* partners with a public transportation authority, trading free advertising to obtain exclusive distribution rights within transit stations. Paris, Barcelona, Rome, Warsaw, Stockholm, Buenos Aires, and Toronto are among the cities with Metro International-owned papers. The company gives its newspapers three years to reach profitability, or else they are shut down. That happened in Zurich last spring, with the company drawing fire as a case study in the hazards of a globalized media from an international press association because of its swift summary action against a failing franchise.

Boston was the company’s second US launch. The year before, *Metro* invaded the Philadelphia market via the city’s transit system, fighting off a lawsuit from Philadelphia newspapers that disputed a government agency’s right to make an exclusive distribution deal with an individual publication.

In Boston, the MBTA would not enter into any kind of

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agreement with *Metro*. The morning of its launch, in fact, MBTA officials removed some *Metro* boxes that had been left at stations.

In response, Pergament brought in an army of 200 hawkers to hand the papers to commuters. He eventually reduced that force to 75, placed in busy, high-visibility locations like Boston's Downtown Crossing, and planted free *Metro* boxes in the landscape of newspaper coin boxes near T stations. *Metro* is also distributed on college campuses, in Dunkin' Donuts stores, and other spots, for a total of about 800 locations.

What did the established Boston papers do to respond to the launch of the *Boston Metro*? Very little. There was no lawsuit and no defensive launch of their own competing publication. (In Chicago, both the *Tribune* and *Sun-Times* put out youth-market tabloids, in part to keep the *Metro* out of their backyards, according to Chicago Reader columnist Michael Miner.)

"It was our prediction that the market that it would affect the most wasn't the one that reads our product the most," says *Globe* president Rick Daniels.

Still, the *Globe* and *Herald* both cut single-copy prices at some high-traffic locations, and added hawkers to work near some of the *Metro*'s people. And there is no

doubt that the *Boston Metro* has tapped an advertising audience long coveted by the mainstream press.

"The *Metro* has become a compelling product," says newspaper consultant David Cole. "When the advertiser says, 'We want the 18- to 35-year-old slot,' they say, 'We deliver that.' Newspapers right now can't talk about delivering slices."

"Our ads sell like a sumbitch," says Pergament.

The *Metro* has tapped an audience coveted by the press.

In fact, the paper has filled up with so many ads it has squeezed out the "cover story," the oddly named (it never appeared on the front page) feature that was *Metro*'s only in-depth fare.

"When you start a new product, you've got a lot more space," Morris explains. "We're at a point where we're willing to suffer the loss of cover stories relative to our total page count—as a result of gaining ad pages." Still, *Boston Metro* plans to run one cover story a week, drawn either from the company story bank that offers in-depth features to all of its publications—the Boston staff con-



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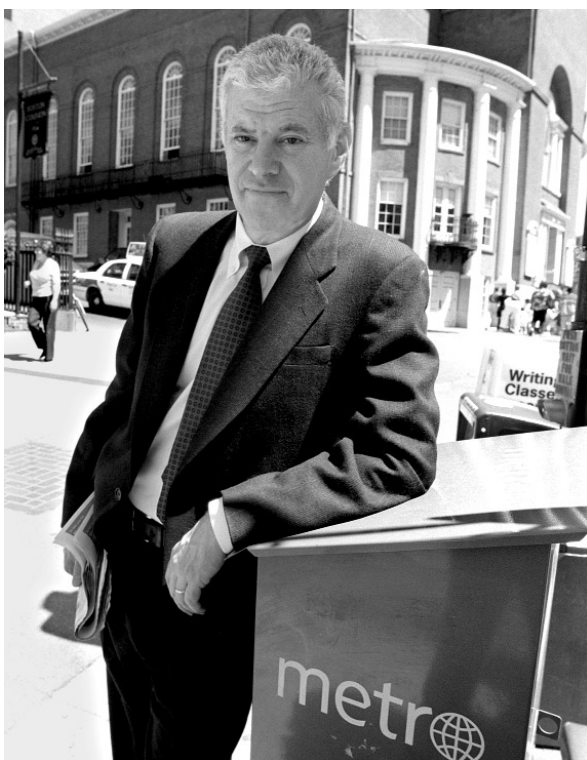


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Former publisher Russell Pergament says the *Metro* is actually helping to build future newspaper consumers.

tributes two locally generated cover stories a year—or the *Christian Science Monitor* news service.

The paper's growing ad-page count has caught the attention of the *Globe*, in more ways than one. "They've got an interesting group of advertisers," Daniels says. "We share some of them. Today, there was Filene's on the back, with a Lancôme ad, an Acela Express ad, auto dealers, and here's this whole thing about medical experiments.... It's interesting, eclectic, kind of funky."

The *Globe* professes not to be worried about losing advertisers to the transit tabloid. "Have we seen our budgets be reduced by any advertiser who is using the *Metro*? No," says Daniels.

On the other hand, the *Globe* has let some of its own advertising revenues drip into the *Metro*'s coffers. For more than 18 months, Boston Works, the *Globe*'s recruitment, or "help wanted," section, has placed advertisements in a highly visible Monday *Metro* pop-up section.

"We had a need to extend our reach in some demographics where they're particularly strong—the commuter demographic, the younger demographic that uses public transportation all the time," says Tim Murphy, director of marketing for Boston Works. "The *Globe* is dominant in this marketplace by all kinds of reach metrics, but college kids are tougher for anybody, any media, to hit. The way *Metro* meets that demographic, through the commuting stations—that's a compelling idea."

THINKING YOUNG

Reaching that youthful demographic is important for the future of newspapers, according to Lawrence Eagle-Tribune editor William Ketter, a former *Globe* executive who also

teaches journalism at Boston University.

"I think every mainstream newspaper is trying to find ways to attract young readers," Ketter says. "The young people starting careers and families are not getting into papers in the ways they have in the past."

That does not mean they never will, says *Phoenix* media critic Kennedy, who argues that the *Globe* and *Herald* still represent a value proposition in terms of their in-depth content. "I do not think the *Globe* or *Herald* did anything wrong with respect to *Metro*, unless charging for the paper can now be defined as wrong," he says. "I suppose either or both papers might have done what the *Tribune* and the *Sun-Times* did in Chicago—that is, try to claim for themselves the market for callow young people who can't name who the vice president is—but that would have taken a lot of money, money far better spent on real news coverage."

Nevertheless, both Boston dailies are shaking things up a bit, whether in response to the *Metro* or not. At the *Herald*, Ken Chandler, a veteran of the *New York Post*, which has gained circulation by tarding up its offerings and halving single-copy prices, has come on board as a consultant. Recently, the *Herald* has inflated its headlines and expanded its gossipy "Inside Track" column into a two-page spread. Herald Media has also recently implemented cost-cutting measures.

"I think that *Metro* in a market like Boston is really a threat to the *Herald*," says Steven Burgard, director of the journalism program at Northeastern University. "It's really the street paper, the straphanger paper, the paper with the lunch-pail readership of yore." Last year, *Herald* publisher Pat Purcell admitted to the *Boston Business Journal* that some of his tabloid's circulation drop was attributable to the *Metro*. In a June interview with the *Phoenix*'s Kennedy, Purcell labeled the *Metro* "an annoyance." (Purcell did not return repeated calls requesting an interview for this story.)

Meanwhile, the *Globe* pretends not to take notice of the *Metro*, but does so, in its own way. "Honestly, when we were doing the planning for any kind of campaign or considering changes, the subject and the word *Metro* didn't occupy much of our time," Daniels says. But, he adds, "The demographic did, the single copy demographic, the younger skew, those went through our mind a lot."

Indeed, the *Globe*'s response might not come in the paper itself, but in other products aimed at younger readers. "Seven years ago, we launched Boston.com for this very segment," Daniels says of the Web portal the *Globe* started in 1995. "It has a great advertising budget; it's profitable. We think it's one of the great brands for

younger readership in Boston.”

And there may be more in the offing. “We also have focus groups going talking about what kind of products we can and should be doing to attract a readership of that age,” says Daniels. “I’m talking about a print product now. It could be free, paid, weekly, daily—there’s a lot of options right now.” Daniels wouldn’t elaborate further.

TO EACH HIS OWN

If you ask Pergament, the *Boston Metro* is actually helping to build future newspaper consumers. “We’re sort of a farm team for the bigger papers,” he says. “We’re bringing more readers into the field. I don’t think we’re taking away their readers. A real sports junkie is going to buy the *Globe* or *Herald*, for example. We’re going after the non-traditional newspaper reader. For half of our readership, we’re the only way they get their print news.”

For some, it’s apparently the only way they want to.

It’s a warm Thursday morning in May, and inside the Porter Square T station a pair of newspaper hawkers are working side by side—one from the *Globe*, one from the *Metro*.

At 9 a.m., the woman from *Metro*, who speaks with a strong Russian accent about the benefits of her Herbalife

supplements, takes off her green *Metro* jersey, puts her remaining papers in one of the free daily’s two boxes just outside the station, and departs.

Adam “Wildman” Wilde, a goofy, goateed 36-year-old actor hired by the *Globe* as part of a promotional push, remains behind. He is one of five actors the paper has hired to support a recent television ad blitz, which featured a preachy, semi-hip hawker spouting the *Globe*’s slogan (“Your world, unfolding daily”) to workers in the Financial District. For the next several weeks, Wilde will be pushing the papers all over town: Copley Square, Fenway Park, but mostly at T stations, during the morning commute.

Wilde is down to the last two papers in his stack when a young woman enters the station, stops, looks around, and turns towards him.

“*Metro*?” she asks. Wilde tells her the *Metro* woman has gone.

But wait. He reaches between his two remaining copies of the *Globe*. Hidden in there, folded in half, is a *Metro*, and he hands it to her. She takes the *Metro* and walks back to the escalator, heading for the train. Another satisfied customer. ■

Jeffrey Klineman is a freelance writer in Cambridge.

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Workers at Nova Biomedical in Waltham prepare to ship supplies used in laboratory blood analysis.

MASS. PRODUCTION

With the economy on the skids, does our MBA governor have what it takes to boost business?

BY MICHAEL JONAS

More than a dozen executives from high-tech companies doing business in Massachusetts are seated around a rectangle of wooden tables in the Governor's Council chambers in the State House. They've been invited for a "technology summit" to discuss the challenges facing business with Gov. Mitt Romney and his top deputies on economic affairs, Robert Pozen and Barbara Berke. As they await Romney's arrival, Pozen, a former Fidelity Investments executive who is the state's new secretary of economic development, offers the business leaders a quick Beacon Hill update.

"You guys should feel good," says Pozen, and he proceeds to tell them why. Both the House and Senate, he says, have so far left in place the "single-sales factor" tax, a 1996 change in the way businesses are taxed that industry leaders said would save manufacturing jobs in the state. He tells them legislators also appear poised to approve a five-year extension of the investment tax credit, and to maintain a separate tax credit for spending on research and development. Pozen's message: Massachusetts has become a pretty good place to do business.

With all that good news, Joyce Plotkin, president of the Massachusetts Software & Internet Council, which has helped organize the session, can't help herself. "Well, should we leave?" she says, as the high-tech honchos break into laughter.

The declare-victory-and-go-home quip was delivered with tongue firmly in cheek. But it raises a serious question, and one that has received little attention during Romney's first six months in office: With a string of tax cuts and credits adopted during the 1990s that made the state a more business-friendly place, what does a businessman-turned-governor do now to get the state's economy out of the doldrums?

A year ago, this didn't seem such a mystery. As he crisscrossed the state in last year's gubernatorial campaign, Romney seemed to ooze executive-suite confidence. As founder of Bain Capital, he had a track record of whipping troubled companies into shape and returning them to profitability, and he pledged to bring the same business know-how to a Massachusetts economy that had gone from high-flying to wobbling in fairly short order. Romney vowed to spend his first 60 days in office as the state's "top salesman," meeting with out-of-state corporate chiefs to woo to them here and convincing local business leaders to remain and expand in Massachusetts.

By the time spring arrived, however, it was House Speaker Thomas Finneran, a 25-year creature of the State House, who made the biggest waves on the economic-development front, proposing an infusion of \$100 million into a state fund used to spur growth of technology-related businesses.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FLINT BORN

And with Romney yet to pay an out-of-state sales call, it was Boston's workaday mayor, Tom Menino, who returned from a retailers' convention in Las Vegas trumpeting news that he had sealed a deal, albeit months in the making, to bring a Target discount store—and about 200 jobs—to the city's South Bay Center.

Economists agree that governors can have, at best, a modest impact on any state's economic fortunes. That said, in Romney, Massachusetts elected a man who, by résumé alone, came into office with more business know-how than any governor in memory. And he has brought into his administration individuals with equally impressive business-world credentials. Along with Pozen, who serves in the newly created post of commerce-and-labor czar, overseeing the departments of business and technology, labor and workforce development, and consumer affairs, Romney tapped Barbara Berke, a highly regarded former vice president of the Boston Consulting Group, a management consulting firm, as director of the business and technology department (the office lost its former designation as the Department of Economic Development at the same time that Posen took the title of secretary of economic development).

If any gubernatorial team should be capable of making bold moves on the business front, it's this one. But none has been forthcoming. So far, the Romney administration has spent most of its time preserving the tax-code status quo—resisting new taxes, as well as preserving the business tax-breaks of the '90s—and maneuvering for its budget and reorganization plans on Beacon Hill. That has left some observers wondering when the state's ailing economy is going to get its due. Brockton Mayor Jack Yunits says he has friends in the private sector who were salivating over Romney's arrival in the Corner Office. Their attitude, he says, was, "Here's a businessman; he can lead us to heaven." Instead, says Yunits, "it's been all politics."

BACK TO THE FUTURE

Without much fanfare, the outlines of a Romney economic-development plan have quietly emerged. Romney has made good on his campaign promise to establish regional "economic competitiveness councils" across the state to focus on the unique strengths—and economic needs—of the state's different regions. He's also met with groups representing industry "clusters" that are components of the



Barbara Berke's business credentials now make her an important figure on Beacon Hill.

state's knowledge-based economy.

In early May, in a speech to the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, Romney laid out the elements of his administration's economic development strategy. The six-point plan came complete with acronym: TOP, which stands for "tapping our potential." Among the main points were vows to hold the line against tax hikes, to preserve the pro-business tax changes adopted in the 1990s, and to use the new regional competitiveness councils to align state colleges and community colleges with employer needs. Romney also used the occasion to trumpet a recent decision by Fujifilm to expand a Bedford production facility, adding about 90 jobs. (See "Driving a Harder Bargain," opposite.)

While the Fuji announcement garnered attention the next day in both Boston daily newspapers, the unveiling of Romney's economic development strategy barely registered. The *Boston Herald* story made no mention of the TOP plan, while *The Boston Globe* cited the initiative but said it "contained few new elements" aside from themes Romney had sounded in last year's campaign.

But it's not just that the plan echoed last year's campaign; it also sounded very much like gubernatorial pronouncements of a decade ago. In 1993, the administration of Gov. William Weld issued its blueprint for economic development, *Choosing to Compete*, which followed closely the views of Harvard Business School professor Michael Porter, a Weld advisor whose theories on economic competitiveness and industry clusters have made him one of

the world's pre-eminent business thinkers. The plan called for Massachusetts to leverage the potential of its increasingly technology-driven economy by coordinating the state's education system to meet the needs of workers and business, streamlining permitting and regulation requirements, and focusing on the state's distinct regional economies and their unique needs.

The parallels with Romney's plan are plain, right down to Porter himself, who chaired Romney's transition committee on jobs and the economy and is serving as a consultant to the regional councils the new governor has formed. Says one development specialist: "There's nothing new. You've seen this movie before."

Which is not to say it's a film undeserving of a sequel. There was plenty to be said for the first run, say industry leaders and economic development officials, who claim the Weld era helped the state shed its anti-business reputation. Weld championed a series of business-friendly tax law changes as well as a major overhaul of the workers' compensation system that cut rates paid by employers 60 percent.

But there is plenty of room to improve on that record,

and all eyes will be watching to see if the state's MBA governor is up to the job. The challenge to link the state's higher-education system to workforce needs is one that has gone largely unmet.

And the state has lagged far behind competitors in tapping the potential of the higher-education system to team with business and government as a driver of economic development. Meanwhile, Romney has pledged to ease the regulatory path for new housing and business development at the same time he has committed to an anti-sprawl agenda that tries to steer growth to areas with established infrastructure.

"It's a conceptual framework," says Michael Widmer, president of the business-backed Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation. "But it's only a framework. The unanswered question is, what specific initiatives will follow?"

HIGH-TECH LOWS

It's a sunny Wednesday morning in April as about 80 people, most in their 40s and 50s, take seats in a large meeting room at Congregation B'nai Shalom in Westborough.

DRIVING A HARDER BARGAIN

When Gov. Mitt Romney announced to the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce in May that Fujifilm Microdisks USA had decided to expand its Bedford processing facility, adding 90 new jobs, Romney implied that he helped smooth the way. But, in fact, it seems that, if anything, administration officials had thrown something of a wrench into the company's expansion plans. The Fuji episode suggests that, when it comes to programs that offer state subsidies or tax credits, the new administration's approach will be anything but laissez-faire.

Fuji had been planning the Bedford expansion for months, awaiting only final approval of a 5 percent tax credit from the state. Under the state's investment tax credit provisions, any firm can claim a 3 percent tax credit for capital spending. But a 5 percent credit is available to businesses in an approved "economic target area," a designation created as part of the state's Economic Development Incentive Program, adopted in 1994

under Gov. William Weld.

Although the larger tax credit was intended to attract jobs to economically depressed areas of the state, it is also available for projects that provide a "regional" benefit. As a result, portions of 156 of the state's 351 cities and towns qualify for this additional investment tax break, according to a Senate Post Audit and Oversight Committee report issued last December.

Looking to join this list, the town of Bedford designated a 200-acre area, including the Fuji site, as a "regional technology center." In that way, Bedford may have "technically" met the standard for the tax credit, says Robert Pozen, Romney's secretary of economic development, but the new administration was not satisfied. "That's not enough," says Pozen. "We want more."

That "more" the state was looking for was a commitment from Bedford to work with neighboring Billerica and Burlington, both of which already had

state-approved "economic target areas," to jointly market sites to potential defense contractors. Romney has been working with the state's congressional delegation to spare Hanscom Air Force Base, in Bedford, from the next round of military base closings. One key to Hanscom's survival, say state officials, is room for businesses serving military needs to grow. Once Bedford signed on to the save-Hanscom plan, the administration signed off on the higher tax credit for Fuji. Pozen calls the deal a "twofer"—and an example of how the Romney administration plans to use its tools to leverage maximum economic benefit.

"What you're seeing is the state getting a lot tougher about who's going to get the [economic target area] designation," says Pozen. "We want to encourage growth," he says, but when it comes to special tax breaks, the administration wants to make sure there are "public benefits to make it worth it."

—MICHAEL JONAS

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Rod Davis, a genial 56-year-old computer specialist, takes to the stage and gets the meeting going. "How many of you have been out of work for 12 months or more?" asks Davis, who was laid off from his position as an IT manager in February 2002 and is still searching for a new job. About half of those in the room raise their hands. "Isn't it great to be retired?" says Davis.

A little black humor may not be a bad way to begin the weekly gathering of the 495 Network Support Group. Formed two years ago, the group brings together the growing ranks of those who have lost jobs in the once bustling corridor of high-tech firms between Route 128 and Interstate 495. With more than 1,000 people now on its e-mail list, the organization acts as a clearinghouse to match employers with prospective employees, and as a support group for those contending with life in the out-of-work world.

For those in high-tech—as well as many other sectors of the state's economy—the news has been grim indeed. For the two-year period from January 2001 to January 2003, the state led the nation in its rate of job loss, with 4.7 percent of all Bay State jobs, or 157,000 positions, disappearing. "The state's in pretty big trouble," says economist Paul Harrington, associate director of the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University. The state's 5.3 percent unemployment rate for May remained below the national average of 5.8 percent, but Andrew Sum, director of the center, says the unemployment figure "only tells you part of the story," because it doesn't count the New Hampshire and Rhode Island residents who have lost their Massachusetts jobs. The jobless rate also doesn't reflect the drop in wages for those who have gone from full-time to part-time employment or been forced to take jobs at lower pay.

Scott Gauthier fits that bill on both fronts. Laid off 19 months ago from his job as a desktop support technician at 3Com in Marlborough, the 55-year-old father of two college students has resorted to a part-time job at the Home Depot in Bellingham. Though he's earning only one-third of his previous salary, Gauthier says he may try to move into a full-time job at the home supply retailer and hope to move up a new career ladder. In the tech world, he says, "I'm not really seeing any kind of a turnaround."

And perhaps the most troubling trend of all is the re-emergence of a phenomenon that hit the state during the recession of the early 1990s: out-migration, or the loss of residents who grow so discouraged with the job outlook that they pack their bags and leave the state. "In the short run, [the exodus of workers] makes your unemployment number look better," says Sum. The trouble, he says, comes in the subsequent upturn. "A lot of these people who left from '90 to '94 we could have used in the boom because they were young and they were highly educated."

The pattern seems to be starting up again. According



MassDevelopment's Michael Hogan: Our tendency to ignore "spade work" when times are good is "the curse of Massachusetts."

to census figures, in the one-year period from July 2001 to July 2002, roughly 28,000 more people left Massachusetts than came here. "You'll have the same problem again," says Sum. "You won't have the well-educated people you'd like to have."

Mark Leary is one of those who won't be around for

HIGH TECH LEADS TO BIG SWINGS.

the economy's rebound. A software engineer who was laid off last September, he finally landed a job this spring—but it's in Maryland, where he'll work for the giant defense contractor Northrop Grumman. The Franklin father of three has rented an apartment for the summer, but he hopes to buy a house and have his family join him by the start of the school year. "I can't leave fast enough," he says.

HOLDING OUR LEAD

The big swings in the Massachusetts economy over the past dozen years have inflicted their share of pain. But such volatility may simply be the price we pay for having an economy tied to the rise and fall of technology. That's certainly the view of the governor. "I don't think anyone would

say, 'Gee, we'd like to get out of the high-tech world and get into heavy manufacturing,'" says Romney, in an interview.

The state's salesman-in-chief peddled that same point to business leaders at the WBZ Business Breakfast in May. "I read last night a piece that came over the Internet from the state of Ohio," Romney told the gathering at the Westin Copley Hotel in Boston. "Apparently they're going to be voting on a bond proposal of up to one and a half billion dollars to try to attract scientists and researchers and high-technology efforts to the state of Ohio. And I chuckled to myself—because we [already] have that," he said. "We have over a hundred colleges and universities. Some of the best research in medical areas and other high-tech areas in the entire world are here." Other states, added a self-satisfied Romney, would "trade their left arm" for our advantages.

When it comes to venture capital investments, grant-dollar support of cutting-edge biomedical research, and other measures of New Economy horsepower, Massachusetts ranks at or near the top in nearly every category. But a growing chorus of voices in the state's business and academic communities is urging state leaders not to take those advantages for granted.

"Ohio may not have MIT; Colorado may not have Harvard," says Christopher Anderson, president of the Massachusetts High Technology Council. "But what they do have is a commitment to create an environment where these jobs flourish."

During last year's gubernatorial election, five prominent leaders in business and health care called on the Democratic and Republican nominees to form an alliance

of universities, health care institutions, and technology-centered businesses to drive economic development in the state. Shortly after the election, *An Economy at Risk*, a report issued by the business-funded research organization Mass Insight, highlighted the lack of such a coordinated effort. The report argued that other states—including some of Massachusetts's most significant competitors—have been aggressively supporting their leading research institutions and technology-oriented companies to leverage federal research support for economic development, citing examples such as a \$50 million state grant recently awarded to the State University of New York at Albany, which was matched by a \$100 million grant from IBM, to fund a microchip research center. But in Massachusetts, the report charged, state government “has been a bystander, at best, and an impediment at worst, in our economic success.”

New York and California have “specifically allocated capital money as match funds for federal dollars and private dollars to build up the research centers of excellence at the public universities and to support collaboration between public universities, private universities, and businesses,” says William Guenther, president of Mass Insight. In Massachusetts, he says, “We’ve had an implicit slogan that said, ‘We’re smart, send money.’”

Indeed, the teaming up of higher education and high technology has become a hot economic strategy of state leaders across the nation, says Phil Psilos, director of economic development and technology policy studies at the National Governors Association. “What you see this year, from the governors’ policy proposals and state of the state speeches,” says Psilos, “is an increasing state investment in the university systems, because competition is global, and it is based on high-end skills.”

But Massachusetts has largely counted on that happening on its own, and with public colleges and universities taking a back seat to the private. “There’s always been this ambivalence around the role of state government in sponsoring the [public] research universities and making commitments for them to be world-class when you have Harvard and MIT in your backyard,” says Ray Stata, chairman of Analog Devices. “That attitude needs to change.”

There are some early signs that that attitude is changing. Along with renaming the state’s economic development office as the Department of Business and Technology, the Romney administration wants to hire someone to focus exclusively on “technology competitiveness,” if funding permits. More importantly, say advocates of this approach, the administration is also coming through with some bottom-line support for science and technology initiatives.

In the first months of the new administration, Romney signed off on commitments of \$6 million in matching funds for two major grant proposals the University of Massachusetts has pending with the National Science

Foundation. The larger of these is a \$5 million pledge the state has made toward a University of Massachusetts–Amherst proposal to conduct research on weather sensor networks; UMass is a finalist for the highly competitive \$17 million grant. The second state pledge, for \$1 million in matching funds, would support a joint proposal from UMass–Lowell, Northeastern University, and the University of New Hampshire for nanotechnology research.

Tom Chmura, UMass vice president for economic development, says these pledges represent the “first time in memory” that the state has stepped forward with financial support for large UMass grant proposals. The National Science Foundation grants are peer-reviewed on their merits by panels of scientists, but with the field for the weather-sensing project, for example, now winnowed down to just a handful from more than 100, Chmura says the state’s

HARVARD & MIT CAN'T DO IT ALL.

financial pledge can make a big difference. “Think of it from the National Science Foundation’s point of view,” he says. “They want the most bang for the buck.”

The state commitment was remarkable for two other reasons: the ongoing budget crisis, which makes state funds hard to come by, and the governor’s battle to eliminate the office of UMass President William Bulger, which makes the state university an unlikely beneficiary of gubernatorial largesse. But the Romney administration turned to the capital budget for the matching funds. And even while Romney was hunting for his head, Bulger says, top Romney aide Pozen was “critical” to gaining the state’s backing for the grant. Bulger says Pozen was a “very quiet but effective friend of the university’s.” (Perhaps quieter than Bulger thinks: Bulger and Chmura both say a phone conversation between Bulger and Pozen was the key to securing the state funds. But Pozen says he only recalls getting a call from Bulger thanking him after the governor signed off on the grant.)

“I don’t want to be Pollyannaish here,” says Chmura. “But I do think there is a consensus emerging that I haven’t seen in 10 years around these issues. We hope the governor’s support [of the two UMass grants] is the start of a trend.”

MAKING AN INVESTMENT

No such consensus seemed to be emerging around another proposal to use state spending to leverage economic



Making the pitch: Gov. Romney greets high-tech execs.

growth, this one put forward by House Speaker Thomas Finneran. In April, Finneran called for a massive boost in the Emerging Technology Fund, a 10-year-old loan pool administered by MassDevelopment, a quasi-public state agency. Rolling out his formal plan in July, Finneran proposed a \$110 million investment in technology companies, administered by several agencies and funded by

tobacco settlement monies.

Although the details changed, Finneran's argument did not: that the state must do what it can to jump-start the flagging Massachusetts economy. And, the Speaker adds, if the governor's not going to do anything, he will. "I think there's been a regrettable silence or inactivity from the Corner Office," says Finneran. "There's been nothing there."

Ironically, Finneran opposed the idea of a state-funded technology fund when Gov. Weld first proposed it in 1993. But times have changed, Finneran says, and so has he. "There's been a little bit of a shift and a little bit of an evolution on my part," he admits. "The reality is the New Yorks and Californias in the world do engage in this stuff; so does North Carolina. For us to fail to recognize this gives our competitors a huge lead."

Romney immediately threw cold water on Finneran's idea. "Somehow, the idea of state employees deciding which businesses to invest in is not a model which I would subscribe to," the former venture capitalist told reporters.

Still, Romney's not unalterably opposed to such state investments in private firms. In late January, he appeared in Lowell to make grants to several area businesses out of the state's Renewable Energy Trust, which is funded by a

Pick-up Skadden Arps ad from page 83 of spring issue

small tax on electric bills. He also announced plans to move \$15 million from the renewable energy trust into a new fund that will make venture capital investments, as well as provide loans and other assistance to companies developing alternative energy products. Recently, he's even softened his stance on the Finneran technology-fund boost, pending further details.

Romney says he generally believes the private market should be the one to "support enterprise that is viable and has a great future." But the governor allows that the state might appropriately put money into "a project or an initiative that does not meet market standards or market-rate returns, and where the state may decide to bolster the investment attractiveness."

THINKING REGIONALLY

The handsome red-brick former mill buildings along Canal Street in Lawrence pay testament to the city's once-proud industrial past. But the 40 or so people gathered in one of the now-converted mill buildings have come to talk about the region's economic future—especially, how to identify and capitalize on the area's "competitive advantages," in the Michael Porter phrase.

It's the inaugural meeting of the Northeast regional competitiveness council, one of the six regional panels the Romney administration has established. Although the governor himself attended the kick-off meeting in each of the five other regions, he has skipped the Lawrence session to take in opening day at Fenway Park, and Berke, the state's director of business and technology, is running the session.

A former vice president at the Boston Consulting Group, Berke earns praise from leaders in business, academia, and local economic development groups for the energy and purpose she has brought to her new post. Andrew Scibelli, the president of Springfield Technical Community College and a member of the Pioneer Valley regional council, calls her "a real dynamo."

But even her boosters have their doubts that Berke is going to make any big breakthroughs with the new regional councils. For one thing, in several areas of the state, regional economic development organizations are already in place—outgrowths of the earlier Porter-inspired push to think of the state's economy in regional terms. Some even include higher education leaders—a key selling point of the Romney initiative. Scibelli, for example, already sits

on the board of the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts, formed seven years ago.

"I think the competitive council concept is a good one," Scibelli says. "It is, however, a little bit duplicative of what is already going on, at least in Western Mass."

The same could be said for a chunk of the area covered by the Northeast council, where the three-year-old Merrimack Valley Economic Development Council is in operation, or in the New Bedford and Fall River area, where the SouthCoast Development Partnership was established more than three years ago to bring a regional voice to



Avant's Una Ryan applauds the state's efforts to get biotech sites up and running.

economic development.

Still, there are areas, such as Worcester County, that had no regional entity to coordinate development. And even where there were such groups already, such as the Pioneer Valley, local leaders hope that the council's direct link to the state apparatus will translate into greater responsiveness to regional needs and issues.

Nearly everyone, however, has the same worry: Once the regional councils come up with development priorities, will the state be able to deliver? "Even if we end up with the best ideas in the world, [the state] doesn't have a dime to spend," says William Kennedy, publisher of the New Bedford *Standard-Times* and co-chairman of the SouthCoast Development Partnership. The South Coast group has already identified five priority areas for their region, including marine science and engineering, tourism, and "back office" clerical work. Kennedy's question for state leaders is, "Are they going to be able to help us fund

missions, help us acquire land?”

Joseph Alviani, a secretary of economic development in the Dukakis administration, says that, in the current fiscal crisis, these councils could be set up for an exercise in futility. “The danger, I think, is [what happens] if you have all these meetings and raise expectations and then you’re not in a position to invest anything because of the budget crunch,” says Alviani.

Concern about resources seems well-founded. Last year, the budget for the Massachusetts Office of Business Development, the main unit within the Department of Business and Technology focusing on business growth, was down to \$1.7 million, nearly \$1 million less than in fiscal 2002. And money remains tight in the 2004 budget, which level funds the business development office while making cuts in other areas of the business and technology office.

But the problem isn’t just the fiscal crunch of the past two years. The economic-development apparatus was losing money and staffing even during good times, when state revenues and spending were on the rise. Appropriations for the business-development office fell from \$4.3 million in fiscal 1998 to \$3.3 million in 2001, before the economic slide began. Staffing has fallen from 42 full-time positions in 1995 to 21 last year.

Michael Hogan, who directed the state’s business-development office from 1993 to 1995, says Massachusetts seems to let up on development efforts when the economy is humming, whereas other states maintain their efforts at business boosting.

“Our inclination as a state is, when things get really good, that you don’t have to do the kind of spade work everyone else does,” says Hogan, who now directs MassDevelopment,

she heard ads on National Public Radio promoting business development in three or four different states. “It’s been at least two years since we’ve had any budget to promote Massachusetts,” she laments.

But that will soon be changing. Despite the tight budget times, Romney and state economic development leaders unveiled plans in June for a multimillion-dollar marketing campaign to promote Massachusetts as an ideal location for firms in biotech, medical devices, and other fast-growing industries. The state’s Department of Business and Technology and MassDevelopment are each contributing \$250,000 toward the \$1 million budget for the first year of the campaign, with private companies funding the remaining \$500,000.

And if the Romney-as-salesman role is one we’ve seen little evidence of to date, gubernatorial spokeswoman Shawn Feddeman says that with the budget now completed, Romney will “focus his attention almost entirely over the summer and fall on job creation.”

Berke, seemingly an incurable optimist, claims there is much that can be done with the state playing the role of catalyst. She makes frequent references to Malcolm Gladwell’s book *The Tipping Point*, which argues that trends or new ways of thinking can burst forth after reaching a critical mass, often driven by small groups of social “connectors” who spread the word.

“I am not a central planner, and I am not at all certain that adding state resources in state government guarantees results,” says Berke. “I need just enough resources here to provide the ‘activation energy’ and to provide some of the basic networks.”

MAKE IT IN MASSACHUSETTS

One area where Berke and others hope the new marketing campaign and other efforts will provide those networks and activation energy is in the state’s biotechnology industry. Although Massachusetts is home to firms doing some of the most advanced research in the field, the biotech industry employs just 30,000 people in a state workforce of more than 3 million. Industry officials say a big area of untapped biotech potential in the Bay State is the manufacturing of biotech products. But it’s a potentially rich area of growth that won’t take root here on its own.

That’s the message at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council in late April. “We are behind, we are losing ground,” Cynthia Fisher, chairman of the council, tells members of the trade group at the Sheraton Hotel in Boston. “As our companies have matured from R&D to manufacturing, the manufacturing job growth has been going elsewhere.” She cites “hundreds of millions” of dollars in biotech capital and thousands of jobs that have landed not in Massachusetts, but in states like North Carolina, which has made an aggressive pitch

“GROWTH HAS BEEN GOING ELSEWHERE.”

the quasi-public economic development agency. “We are a boom-and-bust economy,” he says, and the state’s commitment to economic development “ride[s] that wave too. That has been the curse of Massachusetts.”

Berke acknowledges the reality of limited resources, conceding that she can’t even assign one person full-time to work with each regional council. “Our investment in economic development has declined, and relative to other states it’s been declining even more sharply,” she says. During a recent drive to Amherst for meetings at UMass about the National Science Foundation grant, Berke says

for biotech production. A report issued by the biotech council last fall claims that with the right support, the Massachusetts biotech industry could employ 100,000 people by 2010 and generate as much as \$1 billion in state income tax revenue.

One area in particular where many industry leaders say Massachusetts risks missing the boat is in "pilot manufacturing," or the early-stage production of biotech drugs used in clinical trials. "There is a significant advantage to having pilot manufacturing in close proximity to R&D," says Fisher. "We have it all here. We have all the right ingredients. It just takes leadership and focus to make it happen."

State and industry leaders say that leadership and focus may finally be crystallizing. In January, MassDevelopment hired the former site selection manager for Genzyme, one of the state's leading biotech companies, to head a new effort to convince biotech companies to locate manufacturing facilities in Massachusetts.

"First and foremost, we need to talk to companies that are here and dispel some of the misconceptions," says Scott Sarazen, the new biotech industry ambassador at MassDevelopment. When the cost-of-living is compared to a national benchmark of 100, Sarazen says, areas just


outside Route 495 register at 110, while Springfield is rated 102. And when it comes to business costs, says Berke, "You don't have to go very far outside of the Greater Boston area to find production costs that match or beat North Carolina or Texas." Until recently, however, she says, "We weren't telling the stories."

With about 30 Massachusetts companies at or near the stage of making decisions about where to locate production facilities, Berke and her staff have teamed up with Sarazen, Secretary of Environmental Affairs Ellen Roy Herzfelder, and officials from the biotechnology council to start "telling the stories." They are identifying promising locations for biotechnology production ahead of time, and working with municipal officials in an effort to "pre-certify" potential manufacturing sites. Having sites ready to go can be important in biotech. Firms often cannot commit to production until late in the research phase, yet patent and other competitive considerations mean they must move quickly once they've got positive results. "So they are the poster child for in-late and up-fast in terms of putting plants in the ground and ramping it up to production," says Berke.

Una Ryan, CEO and president of Avant Immunotherapeutics, a Needham biotech firm that will soon be

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deciding on a production site, says the state's new focus is a welcome shift. In a recent talk, Ryan mentioned the possibility of doing her company's manufacturing in Missouri. Afterward, she says, Sarazen "buttonholed me at the door and said, 'I want to change that to Massachusetts.'"

That kind of attitude from the state is exactly what biotech entrepreneurs are looking for, says Ryan. "We know we have high land costs, high employment costs" in Massachusetts, she says. "We're not looking to change reality. But we don't need to wait 18 months to get a permit when, in another state, the state government will walk you through and get [you] a permit."

BALANCING THE PORTFOLIO

Not only would biotech production mean more jobs in Massachusetts, it would broaden the workforce of an industry now top-heavy with PhDs and highly trained scientists to include many more good jobs that pay in the \$40,000-to-\$50,000 range. Such an evolution in biotech, as well as in other areas of the knowledge-based economy, is crucial given the decline of the state's older, industrial manufacturing sectors.

VITALITY ISN'T JUST ABOUT TAX BREAKS.

Without it, Massachusetts will become "a lot less conducive toward a broad middle class than it ought to be," says Jack Donahue, a lecturer at the Center for Business and Government at Harvard's Kennedy School. Right now, he says, "we're moving into more of a winners-and-losers structure."

One thing such growth is predicated on, however, is the ability of Massachusetts workers to step into those jobs. A report issued by MassINC three years ago found that as much as one-third of the state's workforce, or 1.1 million workers, lack the basic skills and training that are needed for the jobs of the state's fast-changing economy. It's something Ryan, the biotech CEO, knows full well, and worries about as she contemplates expanding here. "We've got all sorts of Harvard and MIT PhDs," she says. "But we don't have enough people who know how to run a fermenter."

"We have to do a lot better on the community college level, and make sure those are geared to what we have as workforce needs," says Pozen, Romney's secretary of economic development.

Some community colleges are widely recognized for doing just that. Springfield Technical Community College secured money from the Legislature in the early '90s to establish a technical park adjacent to the campus on a former Digital Equipment Corp. site. The business center now houses 18 companies with more than 750 full-time workers and has become a vital hands-on training and internship center for its students as well as a pathway to post-college employment. Nonetheless, Springfield Tech's president calls the workforce development system in Massachusetts "an absolute nightmare."

"It's a quagmire. It's overly burdened with bureaucracy," says Scibelli. Even after 20 years at the Springfield college, he says, "I still don't fully understand it." In contrast, North Carolina uses its community colleges "unabashedly as workforce development centers, end of story," he says. Some Bay State community colleges do that, says Scibelli, "but we do that on our own."

Indeed, some experts say education may be the state's single most critical investment for economic development. "What do states need to get right?" asks Harvard's Donahue. "They need to have good, efficient K-12 and higher-education systems, including worker training and vocational education systems. That especially applies to Massachusetts, because we don't have oil fields or cheap commercial land or amber waves of grain to bail us out if we drop the ball on human capital."

In that sense, economic vitality in Massachusetts is not just about tax breaks, government regulation, and industry clusters. It's also a function of public investment.

That message came through loud and clear when MassINC convened five leading officials from the Weld and Dukakis administrations several years ago to talk about how state government can best aid economic growth. In that 1998 report, *Lessons Learned: 25 Years of State Economic Development Policy*, the former officials emphasized the importance of infrastructure spending and the imperative of building a top-notch public education system. At the same time, the five former officials—three Democrats and two Republicans—also urged state leaders to hold the line on state spending and taxation, calling, for example, for a return to the state's pre-1989 5 percent income tax rate, a goal Romney has vowed to achieve by the end of his first term.

It's these conflicting imperatives—public restraint, in taxing and spending, versus public investment, in education and infrastructure—that make a bold and coherent economic-development plan a tough sell for Romney. In the current fiscal circumstances, striking the right balance may be the ultimate economic challenge facing the new administration. But then, the importance of maintaining a balanced portfolio should be clear to any investor as savvy as the state's MBA governor. ■

College credit

Fitchburg State may not be
the basket case Bain says it is.
But for students—and the state—
is it good enough?

BY DAVID S. KASSEL

Ben Lieberman's tiny office on the third floor of the old Miller Building is crammed with books. In his 10 years at Fitchburg State College, the associate professor of history has done research ranging from the Weimar Republic to "ethnic cleansing" in both the Holocaust and the Balkans. At Fitchburg State, he says, he's been able to stretch his intellectual interests to a degree that might not have been possible at a larger or more prestigious institution.

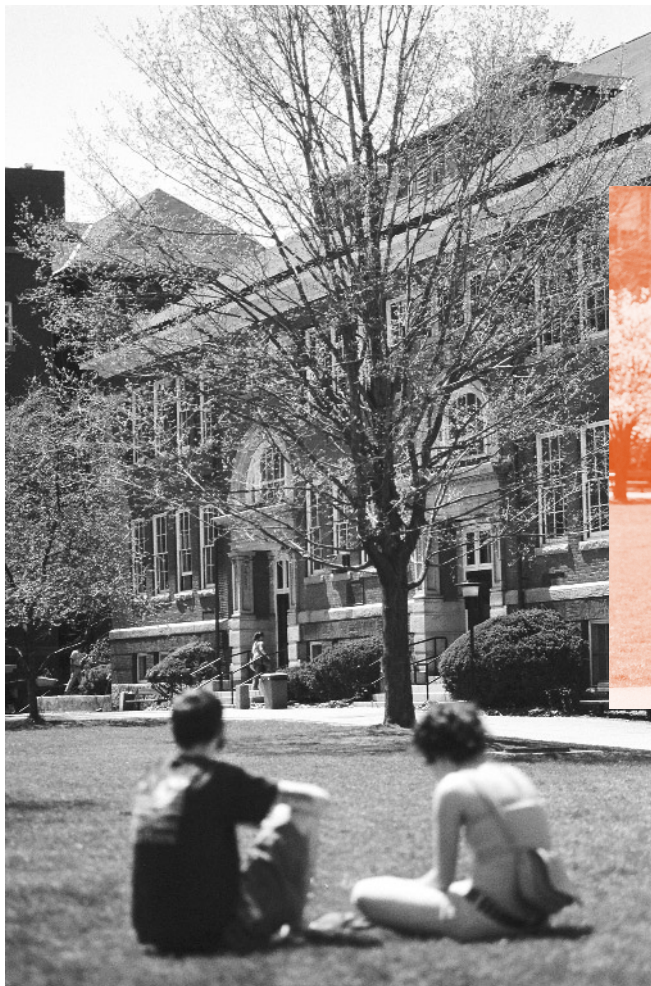
"You're not pigeonholed here," says the Yale graduate with a University of Chicago PhD, as he gets ready for an afternoon class on the French Revolution. "You don't have to worry about stepping on other people's toes. If I can make a case to go into a new area of research, there's a positive attitude about it here."

But where Lieberman sees openness and freedom, others see waste and duplication. When newly elected Gov. Mitt Romney asked Bain & Co., the consulting firm he once headed, to assess the state's higher-education system, Bain singled out Fitchburg State as not only a problem child but a candidate for closure. Romney decided against trying to shut down any

campus, but he did recommend that Fitchburg State be merged with Mount Wachusett Community College in nearby Gardner.

This and other proposed campus reshufflings were quickly overshadowed by the governor's attempt to eliminate the office of University of Massachusetts President William Bulger. By the time the Legislature shot down Romney's higher-education reform package this spring, the proposed merger had already been abandoned.

Fitchburg State no longer faces shutdown or merger, which many of the school's supporters considered just as bad, but still has to face the music of Bain & Co.'s unflattering assessment. Although the consulting firm identified three other schools as candidates for elimination (Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, which Romney proposed merging with Berkshire Community College, and Massachusetts College of Art and the Massachusetts Maritime Academy, which Romney proposed to spin off as "state assisted" institutions), only Fitchburg State met two separate criteria for closure—"geographic re-



PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANK CURRAN

dundancy,” meaning students could be served at another nearby institution, and “poor performance.” In the poor-performance category, Bain slammed the school for a “low completion rate,” a “negative enrollment trend,” and “not serving Massachusetts residents,” as well as for its high spending per student in a variety of administrative functions.

Coming after two years of budget cuts that af-

fected all of public higher education, the Bain report card was a slap in the face. Judith Gill, chancellor of higher education, stops short of calling Fitchburg State a college in trouble, but she does say the institution could benefit from “new approaches.”

The consulting firm’s scathing review also came at an awkward time. Michael Riccards, the college’s innovative but combative leader, had stepped down

in June 2002 to take a job with the College Board, which administers the SAT test. Taking his place on an interim basis was chief financial officer Michael Rivard, who was on the verge of retirement after 37 years with the institution. With Romney's merger proposal pending, the search for a new president was briefly suspended, making the institution look even more directionless. But in May, the Fitchburg State trustees selected Robert Antonucci, former commissioner of education in the Weld and Cellucci administrations, to take over the reins—an appointment that itself caused controversy on campus. (See "Hail to the Chief," opposite)

In all, it's been a tough six months for the college—its faculty, its students, its administrators, its alumni, and its boosters in north-central Massachusetts. But to Fitchburg State loyalists, the assault on the institution's reputation—indeed, its very existence—has been as mystifying as it's been infuriating. They see not a poster child for higher-education reform, but a thriving and vital small college that provides an educational pathway to middle-class life for a region's young people, one that also feeds local schools with new teachers and local industries with middle managers.

And they take issue with nearly every item in the Bain bill of particulars. But the case of Fitchburg State poses another question that goes far beyond a single campus, and one that's far harder to answer: When it comes to providing *public* college education, how good is good enough?

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

In the school's sun-dappled quad, film major Vatche Arabian relaxes on a bench next to a blossoming cherry tree. It's almost May, and Arabian's sophomore year is winding to a close. He says that Fitchburg State has been an "ideal fit" for him. He's just far enough away from his family in Watertown for his taste. And with a yearly cost of about \$8,000, Fitchburg State isn't going to leave him with a mountain of debt when he gets out—the fate looming for some of his friends who have taken out huge loans to go to more expensive schools.

There's also a feeling of intimacy at Fitchburg State. "When you're out here on the quad, you inevitably run into someone you know," Arabian says. He was accepted at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst but decided on Fitchburg State because he didn't want to deal with the "sea of people" at UMass. Of most importance to him, though, is the high quality of the film program at Fitchburg State. "Technically, the program here is very in-depth," he says. "The kids leave here knowing more than at other schools."

Fitchburg State's communications/media program is touted by Lieberman and Rivard as well. "I think this is *the*

school in Massachusetts to go to for communications," says Lieberman. Rivard points out that a graduate of the program, Jonathan Egstad, won an Academy Award a few years ago for technical achievement. "We compete with Emerson," Rivard says, referring to the private communications college in the heart of Boston.

Rivard and Lieberman maintain that the communications/media department is just one example of academic superiority at Fitchburg State that the Bain bean counters failed to recognize. "The Bain analyses used a very narrow information base," Lieberman says. "There was no broad consultation with constituents. I don't think the report sees the excellence in the system."

Other supporters also dispute Bain's characterization of Fitchburg State as a poor performer within the higher-education system. "I've never been impressed with the sense that [Fitchburg State] is in trouble," says state Sen. Robert Antonioni, a Leominster Democrat who is Senate chairman of the Legislature's education committee. "It's not a stagnant institution. It's hardly the case that the school is teetering."

Antonioni, whose district encompasses both Fitchburg State and Mount Wachusett, is also skeptical about the idea of a merger between two very different schools. "There are two very different groups of students attending those institutions," he says. "At Mount Wachusett, you have some students who didn't have the grades to get into a four-year institution and other students who may be looking for [training in] a trade. At Fitchburg State, you have students looking for some sort of undergraduate degree—a four-year program." Given the different missions of each school, he says, a merger between them might destroy the advantages each has to offer.

Even though a merger now seems off the table, Chancellor Gill says that the state and community college have more in common than it first appears. "Both campuses are very involved in [teacher training], particularly K through 12," she notes, "and they are very involved in programs and activities involving workforce development. Both campuses are geographically so close, they serve, in essence, the same population. It makes sense to consider a different collaboration between them."

Rivard concedes that the proposal "has caused us to think more collaboratively." He arranged a June meeting of administrators of higher-education institutions in central Massachusetts, which include Worcester State College and Quinsigamond Community College, in addition to Fitchburg State and Mount Wachusett. The purpose of the conference was to look for ways the institutions could work together to improve educational programs in light of

**They take issue
with nearly every
item in the Bain
bill of particulars.**

continuing state budget cuts. “The governor’s plan was the catalyst for this,” he says.

While the governor’s plan stressed efficiencies in back-office operations, some experts think these institutions could benefit from closer coordination of academic programs as well. James Samels, president of the Education Alliance, a Framingham-based higher-education consulting firm, has proposed a “collaborative plan for learning communities” in the region, which he calls the Johnny Appleseed Consortium. The plan would involve not mergers but “partnerships” among the state and community college campuses, with each one pursuing certain workforce development specialties, and efforts made to avoid duplication of programs.

CRUNCHING NUMBERS

Behind the governor’s plan was a series of documents—all PowerPoint presentations, the preferred medium of the business-consulting world, and of the Romney administration—prepared by Bain & Co., at first for the Romney transition team, then for the state Board of Higher Edu-

cation. These were all products of an elaborate number-crunching exercise intended to detect discrepancies in cost and effectiveness at the state’s 29 public campuses. The Bain analyses hit Fitchburg State hard for high non-



HAIL TO THE CHIEF

When Robert Antonucci emerged as one of five finalists for the presidency of Fitchburg State College, some faculty members objected, contending that he was neither a scholar nor an experienced college administrator. His doctoral degree, from Boston University, was in “educational leadership,” a credential more suited to the superintendent of schools he had been in Falmouth for 12 years than the state college president he was a candidate to become. But when it came to making a final selection, the trustees of Fitchburg State decided that, in Bob Antonucci, they had found their man.

“What we found in Bob was a demonstrated ability to systematically effect change while leaving the primary mission of student learning intact, particularly in the face of severe budget cuts,” says Peter Alcock, chairman of the college’s board of trustees and a member of the presidential search committee, which included trustees, faculty and union members, an alumnus, and a student.

In making that judgment, the trustees placed great weight on Antonucci’s role in public education reform in Massachusetts a decade ago. As commissioner of

education under the Weld and Cellucci administrations from 1992

to 1998, Antonucci was involved in the early haggling over the 1993 Education Reform Act, as well as its roller-coaster implementation. After leaving state government, he was a founder and president of an online, for-profit college owned by Harcourt, the educational publisher. After Harcourt sold the college to another company in 2001, Antonucci joined Riverdeep, a Boston-based educational software marketing and development company, as president of its schools group.

The 57-year-old educator-businessman and Fitchburg State alumnus—he holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the college he’s now going to lead—insists he is not the type who runs headlong into change. “We want to get the whole college community behind [any change of direction] and to take a hard look at it,” he says. “And we need supporting documentation and data for this. We want to make the decisions based on good research rather than how someone feels

about a particular program.”

That mix of change-agent and steady-hand helped Antonucci beat out about 100 other candidates for the president’s job, his paper credentials notwithstanding. “I would not have applied for this job if I wasn’t qualified for it,” Antonucci says. “Spending your whole life in higher education is not the sole criteria for [being] a good president.”

Antonucci plans to explore a number of routes to reform at Fitchburg State, including rigorous assessment of what students are learning, secondary accreditation for all of the school’s academic programs, and attempts to improve the college’s performance in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. And the goal, he says, is clear.

“Fitchburg State needs to be competitive,” says Antonucci. “I want employers to know that the students graduating from there are as competitive and qualified as other students.”

—DAVID S. KASSEL

instructional costs per student and declining enrollment.

The fullest public presentation of the Bain analysis and Romney plan for “increasing efficiencies” in public higher education came in a Board of Higher Education briefing on March 20. The PowerPoint document distributed at that time noted that, for instance, Fitchburg State spent more than \$500 per full-time-equivalent student on “academic management,” compared with a median spending level among the state colleges of less than \$200 per student. Based on discrepancies such as these, the Romney administration insisted that it ought to be possible to capture \$30 million in savings from the state colleges alone without a single cutback in instructional programs, based on “targets” set midway between the median and lowest cost shown by a comparable institution (what Bain called “best demonstrated practice”). The campuses considered to have the biggest room for administrative savings were Bridgewater, Salem, and Fitchburg, accounting for nearly \$21 million of the \$30 million total.

(Even the extent of waste and inefficiency implied by these savings goals paled in comparison to the treatment Bain gave Fitchburg State in a “discussion document” prepared for the Romney transition team in December. It was in that pre-inauguration PowerPoint presentation that Bain singled out Fitchburg State as a candidate for closure, on the grounds of both regional redundancy and “poor performance.”)

With campus closings off the table but a budget crisis still to be solved, Peter Nessen, Romney’s education advisor and then-secretary-designate, maintains that the purpose of the Bain analyses was to identify areas of potential savings that could protect educational programs from cuts that would otherwise be unavoidable. “We asked Bain to dig into shared services,” says Nessen, who has since resigned. “We suggested we wanted to avoid duplication of administration. We’re not looking to save money. We’re looking at ways to maintain campuses we couldn’t afford otherwise.”

Rivard agrees that savings and efficiencies are possible at Fitchburg State, but he takes issue with several of Bain’s findings, particularly the claim that Fitchburg State operates at an unusually high cost per student. According to Rivard, that conclusion is based on old and incomplete data. Fitchburg State’s cost per student did appear to be higher than other



Interim president Michael Rivard says Bain relied on old and incomplete data.

state colleges a few years ago, he says, primarily because of a decline in enrollment at the college—a decline largely due to higher admissions standards required in the 1990s by the Board of Higher Education. (A 3.0 grade point average is now required to get into the state colleges.) Rivard says the higher admissions standards disproportionately hurt Fitchburg State because the population in central Massachusetts has remained stagnant over the past decade, while it has grown in places like the southeastern region of the state.

But enrollment at Fitchburg State has turned around in the past two years, and Rivard cites education reform as the reason. The MCAS test appears to have helped students get better prepared to meet higher admissions standards at the state colleges, he says. As a result of this uptick in enrollment, the cost per student at Fitchburg State has fallen. (The rise in enrollment at Fitchburg State is actually recognized in the March 20 Board of Higher Education briefing document. It showed a 7.5 percent increase in undergraduate enrollment at Fitchburg State between fiscal years 2001 and 2003.)

Rivard also says that in calculating Fitchburg State’s cost per student for the 2000-01 school year, Bain failed to take into account approximately 1,000 students who began

school after the fall cutoff date in measuring enrollment figures. Those overlooked students represented roughly a quarter of Fitchburg State's total enrollment, a larger fraction than at any other state college. If "annualized," or full-year enrollment figures are used, Rivard says, Fitchburg State's cost per student drops into the middle range of the state colleges.

And Rivard disputes the claim that Fitchburg State has below-average graduation figures. Indeed, the December Bain report does not include any numbers to support its finding that the college has a "low completion rate." Rivard maintains that the 42 percent graduation rate at Fitchburg State was the third highest among the nine comprehensive state colleges in Massachusetts in 2000. (In its Spring 2003 journal *Connection*, the New England Board of Higher Education placed Fitchburg State 18th out of 40 New England public institutions in graduation rate in 2000.)

Despite his problems with the report, Rivard says that some of Bain's suggestions on cutting costs were helpful. He adds that the consulting firm "did force us to look at the

numbers ourselves."

Chancellor Gill concedes many of Rivard's points. In fact, she was so impressed with Rivard's argument about mid-year enrollees that the Board of Higher Education will use annualized figures for enrollment from now on. Gill also acknowledges that Fitchburg State had the third highest graduation rate among comprehensive state colleges in Massachusetts in 2000, behind Westfield and Bridgewater.

She says that Bain's conclusion about a "low completion rate" was based on a comparison between Fitchburg State and a sample of similar institutions from around the country, rather than other Massachusetts colleges. (Other state college officials object to the use of the completion-rate measure for judging their effectiveness. A yardstick used widely for distinguishing between private four-year colleges, the measure

counts only first-time freshmen who receive their degrees within six years; the state colleges aren't able to count the many students who start at community colleges and transfer. And they say that six years is an unrealistic timeframe for students who pursue their degrees part-time, or take time

The report "did force us to look at the numbers for ourselves."

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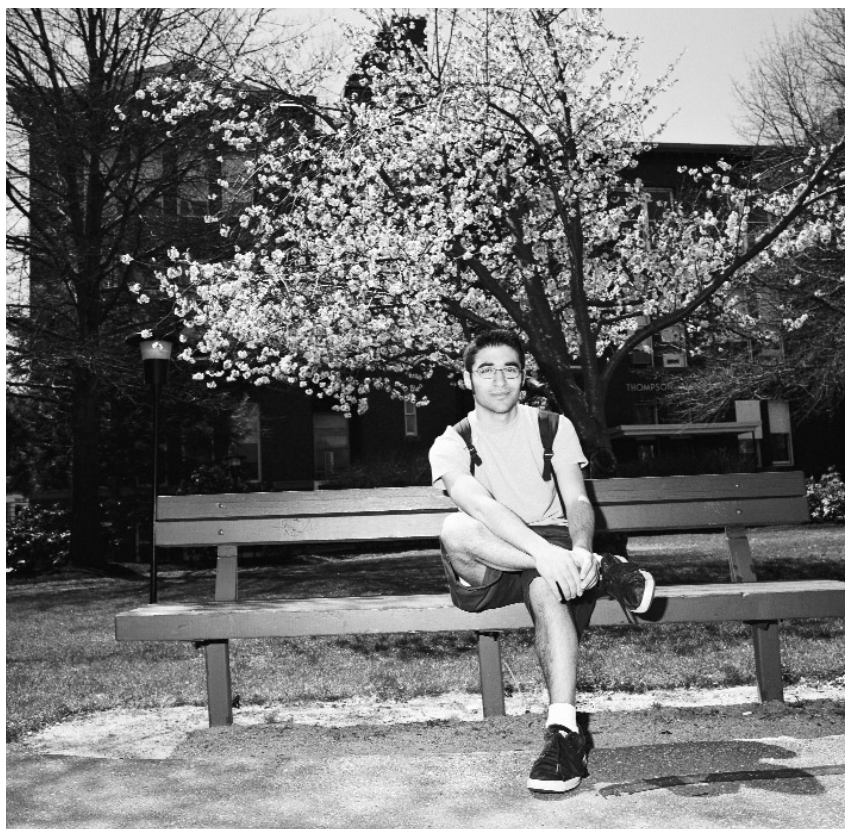
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As for Bain's finding that Fitchburg State was "not serving [Massachusetts] residents," Gill expresses puzzlement. "I don't know what that means," she says. Fitchburg State was not, for instance, on the New England Board of Higher Education's 2003 list of the 25 New England public institutions with the highest percentages of out-of-state students.



Film major Vatche Arabian says Fitchburg State is an "ideal fit" for him.

CLASS RANK

Refuting Bain's numbers, in whole or in part, does not, however, settle broader questions about quality and cost-effectiveness at Fitchburg State, or the rest of the public higher-education system. With state budgets under stress and an increasing proportion of young people in need of post-secondary study to get ahead in a changing economy, those issues are getting harder to avoid.

"In a world where institutions are competing more intensely, every institution is going to have to ask harder questions," says Frank Newman, a professor of education at Brown University and director of The Futures Project on higher-education reform. He likens the current situation to that faced by American automakers when they first met competition from the Japanese in the 1970s. Suddenly, he says, "they had to go out and really make a better car."

Or at least make sure the car gets the best review it can.

Peter Alcock, chairman of the Fitchburg State board of trustees, is out to improve the school's standing in the influential *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings. Currently, Fitchburg State is stuck in the third of four tiers in the *U.S. News* rankings for colleges in the Northeast, which includes the New England states as well as New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. The rankings are based on academic and non-academic measures such as "peer assessment" scores, graduation rates, educational expenditures per student, SAT scores of enrolled students, percentage of classes with fewer than 20 students, and faculty degrees and compensation.

Even a third-tier rating is not bad compared with Fitchburg State's cohorts; the other state colleges in Massachusetts can all be found in the bottom category. But Alcock's goal is to move Fitchburg State into the second tier and thereby to become "the leading Massachusetts state college." It burns him that state colleges in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey have dominated the second tier of the rankings in recent years.

Alcock thinks one reason for the Bay State's poor comparative showing is New York and Pennsylvania's recent emphasis on the accreditation of individual academic programs. So-called secondary accreditation is granted by private and professional associations in fields such as nursing and computer science. The process requires institutions to undertake rigorous assessments of their quality and effectiveness in those fields. While Fitchburg and other Massachusetts state colleges have long been accredited by the New England Association of Schools and

Colleges, the principal accreditation agency, Fitchburg State has only recently adopted a voluntary goal of gaining secondary accreditation for all of its specialized programs. (Secondary accreditation is currently not required by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education.) Alcock thinks secondary accreditation of all programs is the best way for Fitchburg State to move up—in part because those who bestow these certifications also vote on the *U.S. News* rankings.

But Newman maintains that *U.S. News*-style assessments are not enough. He says institutions of higher education need to explore a new generation of performance measures that look specifically at what students are actually learning. Call it MCAS for college.

A pioneer of this type of measurement is Truman State College in Missouri, which has developed a series of tests to track student learning. Newman says the assessments used at Truman State range from measures of a student's writing

ability to competence at solving mathematical and scientific problems. "It's seldom that potential employers want someone with a detailed knowledge of the Punic Wars," he says. "They want a good set of independent skills."

Alcock agrees, noting that the search committee at Fitchburg State specifically directed the next president to institute a "systematic institutional plan for the assessment of student learning outcomes." But he acknowledges that this approach to outcome measurement is controversial — and unpopular with faculty members, who don't want to tailor their teaching to the tests.

MISSION CONTROL

The question remains whether all these approaches—a push for secondary accreditation, moving up in the *U.S. News* rankings, measuring student learning outcomes, and forming regional partnerships—will be enough to chart a new and reliable course for Fitchburg State College, the mission of which has been changing rapidly with changing times. Like many other state colleges, Fitchburg State started out as a teacher training academy. In 1932, it became the State Teachers College at Fitchburg, offering a four-year degree in education. It wasn't until 1960 that the institution, then called the State College at Fitchburg, expanded its purpose to offer degrees beyond education.

That mission has continued to grow. Today, the state Board of Higher Education says it is the role of state colleges to "integrate liberal arts and sciences with professional education." In addition, "each college has a distinctive academic focus based upon its established strengths and regional and state needs. Each college is a leader and resource for the community and contributes to the region's cultural, environmental, and economic development."

Fitchburg State defines its own mission, in part, as "integrat[ing] high-quality professional programs with strong liberal arts and sciences studies" and "foster[ing] excellence in teaching, service, and research." It is a mission broad enough to encompass teacher training and Vatche Arabian's film-studies programs, a nursing school, and Ben Lieberman's research on the Weimar Republic. Indeed, under this rubric, Fitchburg State now offers more than 50 undergraduate degree programs and 30 master's degrees.

Rivard says that the broad nature of its mission is the school's strength. If nothing else, he says, Fitchburg State knows what it is not. "We know what our mission is," he says. "We're not the land grant institution. We're not the vocational training school. We educate nurses, teachers, computer scientists. We do business, some liberal arts, criminal justice, social science. We provide the people who make Massachusetts work."

Fitchburg State carries out that mission through work with the city of Fitchburg and area businesses, Rivard says. He mentions a training program for teacher's aides that the

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college runs in conjunction with the Lowell public schools and Middlesex Community College. There are 38 women in the program, he says; nine just graduated. Fitchburg State also has a number of programs linked to area businesses, including one in which business students provide survey research and marketing services to private firms.

Institutionally, Fitchburg State has contributed to revitalizing a section of the city along North Street, Sen. Antonioni notes. Other civic collaborations include sponsorship of the annual AmeriCulture Arts Festival in the city's downtown, an annual film festival, the college's Center for Italian Culture, and the annual fall cleanup of Green Corner's Park and nearby areas by Fitchburg State students.

But some critics say that a laundry list of degree programs and civic projects may not add up to a coherent academic purpose. It may, in fact, be an indication that a school's mission has become too diffuse.

"There is a tendency for the missions of state colleges to be blurred," says Newman. "There's a tendency to try to be

all things to all people. There's a tendency to compete for the best students. That's not where Fitchburg State belongs. Everyone says, 'We have to have a program in X.' Someone needs to say, 'Let's sharpen the mission. Let's focus on things we do and do them well.'"

A laundry list of degree programs may not add up to a coherent purpose.

Alcock agrees with the need for focus but takes issue with the insinuation that Fitchburg State is spread too thin in its degree offerings. Many are quite similar to each other, he says, and are based on similar curricula. Earlier this year, Alcock notes, the college shut down its clinical lab services program because it had only 13 students enrolled. In the business program, however, 300 to 400 students are enrolled, and they want wide choice in degrees, Alcock says.

"We will not be all things to all people. I can definitely say that," Alcock insists. "We will always do what we can do extremely well and nothing else. That is what we believe in."

SHOW THEM THE MONEY

The biggest hurdle in making more out of Fitchburg State may not be reaching agreement on what to do, but rather



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Professor Ben Lieberman: "You're not pigeonholed here."

finding the money to do it. Efforts to institute performance measures and to gain secondary accreditation for programs cost money. And money is growing scarcer in the wake of the continuing cuts in state appropriations.

In May 2002, budget problems at Fitchburg State caused by state funding cuts resulted in an increase of student fees of \$700 a year. Last summer, more than 20 administration and staff employees and nine faculty members took advantage of a state early retirement program. In January, a mid-year budget cut resulted in further reductions in administrative spending at the college, and four months later Rivard had to plan for an additional \$5.2 million reduction in state funding. He immediately put the brakes on the planned hire of 10 new faculty members and began looking at "significant numbers" of layoffs. There will also be another fee increase this coming school year of between \$500 and \$800.

"We can manage the fiscal side," Rivard says. "But it's going to mean increased class sizes and less service."

As his own career at Fitchburg State approaches an end, Rivard is still heavily involved in the college's day-to-day affairs, hurrying from one meeting to another. Heading for a meeting with a group of administrators, he offers one last assessment of the college and the challenges before it.

"I've been here 37 years," says Rivard. "Long after I'm gone and all of these current players are gone, this school will still be here. It's been here since 1894. It's weathered these crises before, and it will weather them again." ■

David S. Kassel is a freelance writer living in Harvard.

"All the means of action - the shapeless masses - the materials - lie everywhere about us. What we need is the celestial fire to change the flint into the transparent crystal, bright and clear. That fire is genius."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
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CONVERSATION



Civic *dissociation*

Bowling alone may be the least of our problems.

Theda Skocpol says we should worry more about the demise of the Odd Fellows, the rise of professional advocacy groups, and the return of the Mugwumps.

Though the title was created for sardonic effect by *Boston Globe* columnist Alex Beam, whose use of it always drips with sarcasm, here's one small reason Harvard might well be considered the World's Greatest University: In almost any grave scholarly dispute, disputants on both (or all) sides can be found right there on the Cambridge campus. Indeed, in a particularly Harvard touch, the battling gurus are likely to have mini-institutions—Centers or Institutes—erected around them like castles, giving their intellectual jousting the look of fiefdoms at war, even if the battles are unusually polite.

So it is with the subject of civic engagement. Robert Putnam, of *Bowling Alone* fame (see "Picking Up the Spare," *CW*, Summer 2000), holds forth at the Kennedy School of Government, which also houses his Saguaro Seminar, an initiative that brings in community builders from around the country to seek cures for civic malaise. But across Harvard Yard there is Theda Skocpol, who teaches in the sociology and government departments, where she is director of the Center for American Political Studies. In her spare time, she also leads the Harvard Civic Engagement Project, a research team that, like Putnam and his acolytes, sifts through the fossil record of civic activity—but reads it quite differently.

While not exactly the anti-Putnam, Skocpol (pronounced SCOTCH-pole) does think her cross-campus colleague is barking up the wrong tree. Putnam sees personal connectedness as the essence of what he calls "social capital"—and therefore sees falling voting rates, dwindling supplies of Boy Scout troop leaders, and decreasing frequency of family dinners as equivalent indicators of civic decline. But Skocpol zeroes in on large, nationwide, voluntary membership organizations that, historically (and, pointedly, less so today), connected individuals not only to each other, especially across class lines, but also to people across the country—and to the issues of the day. Not to do so, she claims, is to misunderstand the lessons of America's civic past.

"American civic voluntarism was never predominantly local and never flourished apart from national government and politics," writes Skocpol in her new book, *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*. To her, what needs to be explained, and counteracted, is not the behavior of individuals—who seem, in Putnam's terms, to have withdrawn from civic life—but the organizations that have changed the nature of civic activity in ways that leave little role for the rank-and-file member. "The social movements of the 1960s and 1970s...inadvertently

PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANK CURRAN

helped to trigger a reorganization of national civic life, in which professionally managed associations and institutions proliferated while cross-class membership associations lost ground. In our time, civically engaged Americans are organizing more but joining less.”

She also sees the focus on individuals as pointing in the wrong direction for political reform. “A number of current good-government reforms would limit the ability of unions and popular groups to raise issues during elections; and some may greatly weaken political party efforts to mobilize new voters,” Skocpol writes, finding the roots of such proposals in the anti-political-machine reformism of the Progressives and the Mugwumps—promoters of political independence over partisan loyalty—at the beginning of the last century. “The United States has now had more than a century of experience with what I will call ‘neo-Mugwump’ reforms, which promise to revitalize democracy by elevating the thinking individual over all kinds of group mobilization—and the results are not happy.”

To learn more about how democracy has diminished in American life, and how it can be expanded, I paid a visit to Theda Skocpol at William James Hall. What follows is an edited transcript of our conversation.

—ROBERT KEOUGH

“Advocacy groups...offer few channels of participation to ordinary people.”

CommonWealth: In the introduction to *Diminished Democracy*, you put the other analysts of civic life basically into two camps: the worriers, those who see civic life in a state of decline over the recent decades, and the optimists, those who think that things are getting better and better, that America is becoming more democratic, more open, and more participatory for a broader slice of people. Which camp do you put yourself in?

Skocpol: Well, I’m a worried optimist, I think. I see a little bit [of merit] on both sides. The optimists make the case that American civic life and democracy have become much more inclusive and pluralistic. Women have a stronger role, as have people of color, [and] a broader range of issues come up than used to come up—new conceptions of the public interest, like environmentalism. I think they’re right about that. The worriers say, yes, but there’s been a decline of all kinds of local social connections, especially face-to-face participation. It’s not so much that I think either side in this debate is entirely wrong as I think together they’re missing some parts of the big picture. The worriers, for example, don’t notice that through much of American history there was a lot of local face-to-face participation, but it was connected to something bigger. It was

connected to a chance to participate in state and regional and national affairs, and build connections across local communities. And I worry about [the worriers’] prescription. If we just concentrate on reinventing local face-to-face ties, we’re going to miss out on some of those links across communities, and between the local and the national, that are very important—especially in an era when more and more Americans are living in class-segregated or racially segregated communities. As for the optimists, I think they’re right as far as they go, but they don’t notice that a lot of the new forms of participation have turned into professionally managed advocacy groups that offer few channels of participation to ordinary people.

CommonWealth: Let’s start with the worriers—Robert Putnam and the communitarians of the various political stripes, mostly of the center and on the political right. Their worry is that social capital has been lost because of the decline in interpersonal ties that come out of participation in local activities. Therefore they’ve prescribed, as an antidote to civic decline, the project of building community from the ground up, beginning at the local level. What’s wrong with that diagnosis of the problem, and what’s wrong with their prescription?

Skocpol: Well, I think a lot of times people don’t want to participate locally if they don’t think their efforts are connected to something that has some clout. A lot of the problems that we face in this society—for example, health care for everyone and access to good jobs for everyone, which Americans list as their greatest concerns, when you ask them—can’t be just dealt with at the local level. It’s also the case that the communitarians often focus on purely social interactions, more picnics or local bowling leagues. While I don’t think there is anything wrong with that, I don’t think we can take it for granted that if people socialize more, then that’s somehow going to transform our politics.

CommonWealth: Your book focuses on the rise and decline of national membership associations, generally those that have state or local affiliates, and that, because of their broad membership, fostered fellowship between people of different classes and different backgrounds. Tell me about some of them, the Odd Fellows and the Masons, and what their significance was for the building of social capital—right up to the mid-20th century, really.

Skocpol: My fellow researchers and I were really surprised,



when we set out to identify all of the large, voluntary membership associations in American history, to find out that many of the 58 groups that eventually recruited 1 percent—or more, up to 10 percent—of the US adult population as members, many of them were formed in the pre-Civil War era or right after the Civil War, so they got a very early start. In many cases, especially those that grew up after the Civil War, they flourished through much of the 20th century, until the 1960s or a little after. These included fraternal groups, the Odd Fellows being a good example, which brought together men for rituals and mutual aid in local communities, and also allowed people to travel to different communities and connect up with fellow Odd Fellows wherever they went. The three little loops you see on many buildings in Massachusetts are the symbol of the Odd Fellows. They built halls in the center of many towns that other groups could use. Many women's associations [sprang up, such as] the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which grew to fight against alcohol and for family values in the 19th century. The General Federation of Women's Clubs, which got involved in a lot of the public policy issues of the early 20th century, along with the PTA, which started out as the National Congress of Mothers—those are examples. The Grange, which built halls in many rural communities, allowed farm families, including men and women together, to participate in community activities and then lobby state legislatures for farm programs and for public education. They were lead-

ers in public education. I would also point to the great veterans' associations, including the American Legion, which is one of the most interesting because it championed the cause of the GI Bill of 1944, one of the most generous and important social programs in all of American history.

CommonWealth: I guess we still see some evidence of these groups today. I just recently heard of the mayor of Chicopee singing the praises of his local Moose lodge, which came up with \$3,000 that was needed to bail a school program out of some sort of crisis.

Skocpol: Yes, the Moose are still around, the Elks; we still see some Eagles, and of course the veterans' associations. Their memberships are often aging, though, because younger people haven't been joining the same way they used to.

CommonWealth: I guess, then, we hear about Grange halls when we get to the Iowa caucuses, but that's about it.

Skocpol: In Maine, where I spend my summers, I'm actually a member of the Grange. It's reinvented itself as a kind of community and environmental organization in parts of Maine, so it is recruiting some younger people again.

CommonWealth: Is that right? Now you say that, at some point after the mid-20th century, organized civic life underwent a transformation of sorts. It was in that era you call the long 1960s, roughly from 1955 to 1975. Basically, the loosely structured social movements, beginning with the civil rights movement, pushed the established state federations off the national stage and gave rise to a new breed of civic organization. These were advocacy groups of various sorts, which eventually came to be managed by full-time professionals and funded by foundations rather than principally through dues-paying members. Even those with large memberships, such as AARP, had little role for member participation, other than making donations.

Skocpol: Yes, just send us a check.

CommonWealth: Some people have called them AstroTurf organizations, as opposed to grass-roots. What makes these groups different from the old federations as vehicles for civic engagement?

Skocpol: Well, of course, the old federations that I've talked about in complimentary terms, so far—because they tied together people across localities, as well as within local communities, and they built bridges across classes, because they usually recruited people from different occupational backgrounds—those groups had some

flaws from our perspective today. They were usually racially exclusive. The white groups excluded blacks and all the blacks formed their own associations—very vital fraternal groups, for example, and religious groups—but they were racially separate. Men and women, also—usually, not always—met in separate voluntary associations in the old days. So, as you can imagine, when the '60s came along—the civil rights movement and the women's rights movement—that [exclusivity] discredited many of these old voluntary federations in the eyes, especially, of younger people, who had new ideals. At the same time, we got new technologies. We got the ability to use computers for mailing lists, [a way] to ask people to join without personally contacting them. We got television as an informal form of communication that new associations could use to recruit followers. And the federal government in Washington became much more active in a whole variety of areas—civil rights legislation but also the new environmentalism and other new forms of social and economic regulation. All of those things placed a premium on forming an association that could claim to speak for large numbers of people but mainly be run out of an office in Washington, DC, or New York City. Some of those technological changes made it possible to organize a citizens group, for

example, or a rights group, without forming chapters in every community across the land, and without asking people to join and contact their neighbors to join and pay dues, especially since foundations were often willing to give grants to set up these offices.

So we got a lot of professionally run associations, some of them with no members at all, others with members recruited through the mail [who] mainly provide checks. Sometimes they're given a premium of some kind, like a T-shirt or a mug, but what people mainly get from these new advocacy groups is the sense that the group is doing an efficient job and a hard-fought job of representing its values in national politics. Now, I don't think there is anything wrong with that. Many of us are members of one or more of these groups. They indeed do a pretty good job of lobbying Congress, contacting the media, and keeping on top of what's going on in environmental legislation or, if you're on the right, fighting for tax cuts. But what's missing is that they don't have any interaction with the members, and they don't foster interaction among all of us in the process of building the association.

CommonWealth: That interaction, compared with the old federations, seems to be highly stratified, as well. These are



IBM is using technology to make our communities better, safer, more welcoming places to live.

very self-selecting kinds of groups, with members who are very similar in background and viewpoint, as opposed to the fraternal orders, and even older cause-related groups like the Women's Christian Temperance Union, which was perhaps the original single-issue organization but still had this broad social appeal in attracting members.

Skocpol: It turns out the WCTU took up a lot of issues along the way. The old associations usually combined having fun with doing some kind of community activity and maybe some politics occasionally. They didn't just specialize in one or another of these things. That's what made it possible for them to appeal to people from a wide variety of social backgrounds. In the late 19th century and the early to mid-20th century, it wasn't really possible to form a very large association only consisting of upper-middle-class people. One of the things that's happened since the '60s and '70s in the United States is that we've generated a huge upper middle class of highly educated people. In Massachusetts, we have more highly educated people than in any other state. Of course, that's a very good thing. There's been an opening up of opportunity for higher education. Maybe a quarter of the population is [college] educated, and a higher proportion in some states. Enough people so that you can actually create a national association mainly based on checks and on virtual participation—reading a newsletter—among those highly educated, upper-middle-class people. It turns out that many of the mailing list organizations, though you might think they could reach out to a broader range of people than some of the old groups did, actually are most attractive to highly educated and relatively well-to-do people—people who can write checks and people who are well educated enough, are discerning enough about politics, that they can understand what the advocacy group is doing in Washington. These groups are more specialized, so you have to really care about a political cause before you'd want to join. The downside is, these organizations turn out to be surprisingly stratified.... These groups are not including the average middle-class people and the blue-collar people who were often members, along with the more privileged, of the traditional associations. I don't think anybody intended that, but it's happened, and we need to be concerned about it.

CommonWealth: I find it interesting that your objection to President Bush's faith-based initiative did not come from the typical grounds expressed by liberals—that religion is going to infiltrate government-funded programs and be

proselytizing—but because of your fear of what it would do to the organized religions, that it will undermine one of the last remaining realms of civil society that still relies on voluntary, dues-paying membership and promotes fellowship among a broad local public.

Skocpol: I don't want to be misunderstood. I do share some of the concerns about too much infiltration of religion into social policy. But I don't think that's the main thing that Americans in general should be worried about [concerning] the faith-based programs. I think we could have another round of unintended consequences. Back in the '60s and '70s, when we started asking state and local nonprofit agencies to be partners in the administration of secular social programs—it turns out that that was one of the forces that promoted the professionalization of many of our voluntary groups. In many local communities, we mean by voluntary groups a nonprofit social service agency, rather than an actual membership group, where people elect officers and come together to do joint activities. Churches are the one remaining area of civic life in America where people pay dues; they pay tithes or other contributions to their synagogues, churches, or mosques. Churches are, if not in every individual faith congregation, then at least across congregations, surprisingly class equal. Both

The newer
national groups
appeal mostly to
"people who can
write checks."

privileged and less-privileged people participate actively—and less-privileged people participate very actively in churches. What will happen if we start asking ministers, priests, and moms to run social service agencies on the side? They'll start writing applications to apply for grants. They'll hire people to administer the programs. They'll become less oriented to their flocks and more oriented toward doing what we really ought to have civil servants doing on behalf of all of us. So, I think the two critiques go hand in hand. But many conservatives agree with the critique, the worry, that I have articulated.

CommonWealth: Let's get around to your prescription for what you think has gone wrong in our civic life, in particular the concern that our civic life has become overly professionalized and elitist in modern times. What you hope to see is the development of new models of association building, ones that combine the professional advocacy that has developed in the modern era with participatory membership that crosses social strata and also that achieves a sufficient scale and impact that it can be involved in issues that make a difference to people and not simply local socializing. Now, you've got some exam-

ples in your book of what you think point in that direction, but I have to say I'm not sure they give us much grounds for optimism, at least here in Massachusetts. The most convincing case that you make, to me, is that of Christian conservatism. In the Christian Coalition, you have that mix of a cohesive and cross-class membership base in fundamentalist congregations, put together with highly professional political techniques and mechanics on the national level.

Skocpol: The state level, too.

CommonWealth: That's true, in many states. But in Massachusetts, there is not much of a base for that, either on the religious side or, even more so, on the political side. There is, however, a presence of the other church-based organizing model that you point to, in the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization and its related groups in Worcester, Lawrence, and Brockton. As much as I admire them and their work, though, I'm not sure they quite have achieved that ideal of a cross-class, urban/suburban mix that you ascribe to them. Also, I just wonder, with the decline in churchgoing rates—apart from the growth of fundamentalist Christianity elsewhere in the country but not here—whether religion can be counted on, in these parts anyway, to provide such links across social groups that can be brought into other forms of civic activity.

Skocpol: We aren't going to go backward to the old, cross-class federations that have dwindled, and I agree with you that building off religious congregations...is not going to work everywhere or for everyone. But I would point to a couple of other realms where I think a certain amount of reinventing civic America, as I put it in *Diminished Democracy*, is going on. In the new labor movement, since the middle of the 1990s, the AFL-CIO under John Sweeney has made an effort to organize new workers but also to form stronger links between unions and other groups in the community, and between work life and family life for workers. And, of course, the labor movement is very active in state and national politics. So, we're seeing some efforts at reinvention there. Some parts of the environmental movement I would also point to, and those are relevant to Massachusetts. For example, the Sierra Club has really made an effort to nurture and sustain its participatory chapters, at the same time that it's a big presence in national lobbying and state lobbying. They're constantly trying to figure out ways to get people involved in chapters or in volunteering activities. I think we might be able to learn some things from their ideas and experiences. We might have some possibility of creating new family movements out of places where families come together around children's activities and for the care of children. Parents



could come together for those things but also begin to address the needs of families in communities, state, and national politics. I could imagine the possibilities for creating those kinds of movements; it hasn't happened yet.

CommonWealth: I think the environmental movement example is one of the most interesting ones. You suggest that within certain organizations, like the Sierra Club, you get these attempts to build local chapters, and to keep members engaged, and to reach out more. But there's also the idea that within the environmental movement more broadly, there is a mix of recreational activity—some of that fun that groups like the WCTU might have incorporated into their organizational life—and not just the grim work of promoting your issue. I find that intriguing, the idea that it may not all be within a single organization that you get this kind of amalgam of activities, but bringing people together around some things that are fun can also be the basis for nurturing a common concern and connecting, however loosely, with nationally based, cause-related professional organizations. Very interesting.

Skocpol: If we think about it that way, there are even broader examples. The AARP [formerly known as the American Association of Retired Persons, but now going by the acronym alone], doesn't have chapters—it's trying to build some now, but it doesn't have very many, compared to the 33 million or so members it has—but old people do come together in senior centers and social centers. If we think about old people, and all of the things they're doing, they may well be socializing as well as following politics and participating in politics.... I don't know that we're likely to go back to the old multipurpose organizations. Organizations now are much more specialized. But one of the things we'd better learn from the past is that we need to make politics and civic life fun. Because if it's just serious, it's only going to attract those college-educated political

junkies, and it's not going to be much fun for them either.

CommonWealth: They might prefer to write a check, at that point.

Skocpol: And we could stand to have the Democratic Party be a little bit more fun, too. That's the way it used to be.

CommonWealth: One of my favorite parts of *Diminished Democracy* is when you argue against much of what passes these days for political reform. In everything from campaign finance to media exposés, the goal of political reform seems to be getting “special interests” out of politics—an impulse you trace back to the Mugwumps, circa 1900. I must say, I've never heard anyone called a neo-Mugwump before, but that's a neologism I very well might adopt.

Skocpol: My friends at Common Cause are not going to be happy with that.

CommonWealth: You argue instead that what we really need is a lot more organized interests that channel ordinary people into the political arena. In fact, rather than trying to enact further limits on special-interest electioneering, on attempts by organized and monied forces to exert influence, you think we might well be better off tearing down the restrictions we have in place now.

Skocpol: We should be doing what we can to encourage broad movements and organizations that actually involve people in leadership positions, in meetings, in interactions between leaders and members—that *have* members, for that matter. We should be thinking of the goal of political reform as getting people into community life and politics, rather than getting money out. Now, there is too much money in politics, there is no question, but we're not going to get the money all out. But if we got the people back in, that would put money more in its place.... We should think about political reforms, or new social norms, or tax policies, that will give a break to groups that actively involve people. If that advantages the Christian Right along with labor unions, that doesn't bother me. I mean, much of our politics today consists of the Christian Right trying to pass laws to get labor unions out of politics, and the labor unions trying to pass laws to get the Christian Right out of politics. What would we be left with if they were both gone? We would be left with basically a politics that consists of a lot of professionals arguing with one another on television, calling us up to take polls at dinner time, and competing to win 51 percent of a dwindling voting base. I think we need to keep our eye on where the real problem is, and I don't think it's just money. It's getting the people back in. That's the real problem. ■

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It's time to abolish the Governor's Council

BY BRIAN A. JOYCE

In May 2001, the Governor's Council emerged from relative anonymity to make newspaper headlines across the country. As a pregnant acting Gov. Jane Swift lay hospitalized awaiting the birth of twins, the council balked at her request to conduct their weekly meetings via speakerphone, instead requesting a legal opinion from the state's Supreme Judicial Court on the legality of running meetings by conference call rather than in person. Scathing editorials accused council members of sexism. *The Boston Globe* likened the councillors to "tiny and opportunistic sharks," while the *Chicago Tribune* called Massachusetts the "Commonwealth of cavemen."

The *Tribune* may have been a few centuries off, but it was right about the council's ancient—and archaic—nature. The eight-member body dates back to the Pilgrims. Established in 1628 as a political check on the royal governor, 400 years later the council lives on, but as an outdated vestige of colonial rule, stripped of its original powers and purpose.

In these fiscally difficult times, we need to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy wherever we can. The council is a logical place to start.

Forty-eight states manage to do without a council.

State Rep. Barry R. Finegold of Andover and I have filed legislation—now pending before the Constitutional Convention, which is scheduled to reconvene on November 12—to abolish the Governor's Council. This legislation would bring Massachusetts into line with the 48 states that manage to do without an executive council.

Let me be clear. I am by no means looking to single out individuals based on their performance, and I believe that many councillors have served the public well. This bill is not a personal attack on any individual. Rather, it is an effort to reform an outdated process.

And it's not the first. In 1962, both the Democratic and Republican party platforms called for the abolition of the council, which had been under attack for years from governors of both parties and former members of the council itself for, among other things, selling pardons out of an underground parking garage.

Two years later, the majority of the body's substantive responsibilities were stripped by voters in a referendum,

including the council's "advice and consent" function on gubernatorial appointments, salaries, and other executive actions. However, the ballot question did not repeal the council's constitutional existence.

Today, the council continues to exercise its remaining powers: approval of expenditures from the state treasury (a function that is largely symbolic, because the council has no real authority over decisions already approved by the governor); approval of pardons and commutations; and approval of gubernatorial nominations—a task that today has been largely supplanted by the Judicial Nominating Commission, which reviews applicants and prepares a list of candidates for the governor to consider, and the Joint Bar Committee on Judicial Appointments, a collaborative effort by the Boston and Massachusetts bar associations, which conducts an independent review of nominees and rates them according to their qualifications.

These duties have not taken up much of the councillors' time or attention. So far this year, only four meetings have lasted more than 10 minutes, and no meeting has exceeded 30 minutes. Instead of serving as a check on the governor in the judicial nominating process, the council largely rubber-stamps the governor's nominees—in some cases, even after nominees have received a rating of "unqualified" from the Joint Bar Committee.

As the council's responsibilities have diminished, its costs have increased. Most recently, councillors received a 60 percent raise, to \$25,000 a year, on a voice vote during the 2000 House budget debate, with many members unaware of what they were voting on.

Our bill builds upon legislation proposed by Gov. Michael Dukakis in 1975. It would shift the council's few remaining duties to other branches, requiring that the state Senate approve the nomination of all judicial officers, as at the federal level, and give the General Court the right to determine the terms and conditions of felony pardons and commutations.

I consider the Joyce-Finegold bill to be a commonsense measure that would remove a long outdated vestige of colonial government that lingers on for no good reason. As we work to streamline government and reduce unnecessary state expenditures, we have to take a good, hard look at the structure of our state government and eliminate unnecessary bureaucracies. We estimate that the abolition of the Governor's Council would save the state \$400,000 a year.

This amount may not put a dent in our current budget problems, but it is still money better spent on teachers, police officers, and prescription-drug subsidies for our seniors.

The elimination of this unneeded body is the next logical step in removing waste in Massachusetts state government. It's time for voters and elected officials alike to ask themselves whether we can afford to support the Governor's Council any longer. ■

Brian A. Joyce (D-Milton) represents the Norfolk, Bristol, and Plymouth District in the state Senate.

COUNTERPOINT

Governor's Council plays a vital role

BY CHRISTOPHER A. IANNELLA JR.

As any parent who ever checked a child's homework can tell you, people work harder and better when they know someone is watching!

Many Massachusetts courts and agencies do a better job every day because the Governor's Council is here to check and double-check—to ask the questions a citizen would ask if they had the time and the chance. Over the last 375 years, how many “so-so” appointments of clerks and judges *weren't* made because the council was watching?

The Joyce plan to abolish this safeguard can't be for cost savings: The Governor's Council costs each Massachusetts resident less than five cents a year!

I don't think Senator Joyce knows much about what the Governor's Council does.

Just as a corporation's shareholders elect a board of directors, our taxpayers elect the Governor's Council to represent their interests. In state government, as in a corporation, every employee and every officer is supposed to follow the rules, to do the job right, to maximize the value

of the enterprise. Given human frailty, that won't happen every time—not in government, not in business. The council, the people's board of directors, is in place to protect against mistake and misjudgment.

The Governor's Council is one of the few bodies in state government that meet every week. In addition to the formal meetings, we hold hearings on judicial nominees, conduct interviews, review applications and supporting documentation, and respond to the many citizen inquiries, recommendations, etc. each member receives regularly.

While the council's work may be “under the radar” of citizens busy with work, life, and family, it is of considerable importance. The Governor's Council confirms approximately 70 clerk-magistrates and over 400 judges—all lifetime appointments. Bar association committees and the Judicial Nominating Commission work hard vetting judicial applicants on background, education, and experience. Governors seek advice before announcing nominees. But the awesome authority of service as a judge—from the District Court through our Supreme Judicial Court—requires that we ensure jurists have more than just book learning. As a councilor I solicit citizen input on nominees, speak to those who know them, and carefully examine all records and documents. I have always insisted that a judicial candidate demonstrate integrity, honesty, trial experience, and judicial temperament before receiving confirmation. I want judges who understand “tough love”—judges who will firmly apply the law and its penalties with carefully measured portions of human compassion.

The council's duties extend to approving weekly state expenditures, certifying elections, appointments of notaries and justices of the peace, to confirming members of the state Parole Board (just recently we denied re-appointment to a member whose service didn't measure up). When a citizen is injured on the job and appears before a Workers' Compensation judge, or when a taxpayer appeals an unfair property tax value at the Appellate Tax Board, it is the Governor's Council that ensures that the judge who decides these vitally important matters has both the *credentials* and the *character* to deliver impartial justice.

I work hard at my “part time” job as Governor's Councilor. I take pride in having voted for some pardons where the circumstances were exceptional, just as I take pride in voting against some that didn't deserve special treatment. I've had the chance to cast historic votes! I voted to free a man con-

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and open society evolved
from a tradition of thought
and experience that
we call the humanities.
Each generation must sustain
and renew this vision
through shared inquiry
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victed by perjured testimony—at last he is back home with his wife and family. I voted to confirm Justice Margaret Marshall, the state's first female chief justice of the Supreme Judicial Court, and to confirm Justice Roderick Ireland, that court's first African-American member. Both are eminently qualified and outstanding jurists.

Sen. Joyce proposes to save less than five cents a year per citizen by dumping the Governor's Council duties on an already overburdened Legislature. In the context of hundreds of proposals that reach the Legislature, the budget crisis and long-term planning for the Commonwealth, it's hard to believe that the General Court has time to provide essential attention, review, and approval that would be due 50 times every year (that's about how many lifetime clerk-magistrates and judicial appointments we act on annually).

Take Sen. Joyce as an example. Beyond floor work on the budget and other legislation he considers in session, this year he has filed over 200 measures.

While the Joyce measures run the gamut from simple constituent service (an extra liquor license for Milton, relaxing standards for police appointment preference) to major issues (expanded health care, computation of retirement credits) to the somewhat whimsical (to deal with the financial crisis he proposes putting paid ads on state documents, maybe you'll see one that says, "*Here's your income tax form—Brush your teeth with Pepsodent*" and, despite the financial crisis, Joyce wants the state to give the governor a mansion in Joyce's district) to the somewhat confusing (he has bills to encourage affordable housing and sponsors another for a three-year moratorium on building affordable housing). All those details aside, it's obvious the Legislature has its own work—it shouldn't be further burdened. In the midst of deciding how best to preserve essential state services, it may not seem important to a senator from Milton who the clerk-magistrate in East Brookfield is. You can bet it's important to a citizen with business in that court!

For the minimal cost, Massachusetts is well-served to have the Governor's Council protecting the hard-won rights and liberties of citizens. ■

Christopher A. Iannella Jr. is the Governor's Councilor for the 4th District.

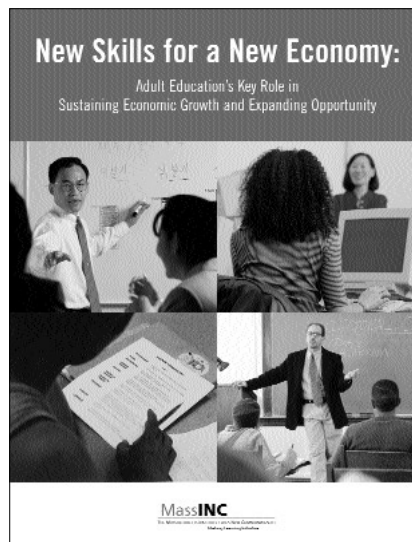
Sen. Joyce responds: I want to thank *CommonWealth* for the opportunity to engage in a reasoned debate. I also want to be very clear that I have great respect for Councilor Iannella and that my bill is by no means a personal criticism of him or any of the individuals who serve on the council. Rather, I am only expressing a belief shared by many—from Gov. Curley to Gov. Dukakis—that the council is an outdated vestige of colonial times, whose few remaining responsibilities can be easily transferred to other branches of government.

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Who's Teaching Your Children? Why the Teacher Crisis Is Worse Than You Think and What Can Be Done About It

By Vivian Troen and Katherine C. Boles

New Haven, Yale University Press, 224 pages

REVIEWED BY ABIGAIL THERNSTROM

Vivian Troen and Katherine C. Boles dedicate their engaging new book “to the hardest working, least appreciated, most undervalued worker in our society... the classroom teacher.” It’s an odd dedication for this volume, the main point of which is the poor quality of America’s public school teachers.

Troen and Boles taught in a Brookline elementary school for more than 20 years; nevertheless, their book is a harsh indictment of the teaching profession. Who’s teaching your children? According to the authors, it’s people who score near the bottom of the scale on the SATs and Graduate Record Examinations, and who can’t find Guatemala on a world map or who themselves misspell one out of 20 words on a blackboard.

And they’re as poorly trained as they are poorly qualified. “An American master’s degree in education is probably the least challenging program on the planet,” the authors write. Education schools are “profit-driven organizations with weakened standards for students, curricula, and facilities,” they say. “Self-esteem seems to have replaced academic rigor even at the top schools, such as Harvard.” No school can afford empty seats and so they accept mediocre students, then give them high grades, regardless of their actual performance. “The pattern of mediocrity and incompetence begins in schools of education with courses like Math for Teachers (read

‘math for dummies’) and infects the entire system.”

One might think, Troen and Boles point out, that teacher certification regulations “would act as a filter to prevent poorly trained or unqualified teachers from entering the classrooms of America.” Not so, they say. “The laws of supply and demand exert enormous pressures to put teachers into classrooms, regardless of their qualifications.” Indeed, such regulations are “less stringent...than those for lifeguards, accountants, hairdressers, cosmeticians, opticians, plumbers, and other people who are licensed to deliver services to the general public.” And even these minimal standards are often waived.

It’s a devastating—and accurate—picture. The chronic shortage of good teachers, as Troen and Boles say, is “the single most critical problem in public education.” But it’s for good reason that the best academic talents don’t head into elementary and secondary schools, the authors acknowledge. Teaching, they say, is “a dead-end vocation with no career path, low pay, low status, and poor working conditions.”

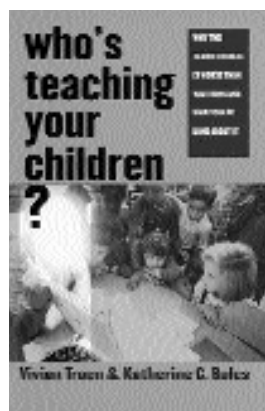
The job is the same on Day One as it is 30 years down the road—unless the teacher leaves the classroom for

administration, where the jobs are a nightmare in their own way. The profession offers no promotions and no pay raises based on performance; thus, there are no incentives for improvement. “How can such a job even be called a career?” Troen and Boles ask.

In big-city schools, teaching “has become increasingly dangerous, unhealthy, and unpleasant.” New teachers find their classes filled with “the most challenging kids in [their] grade level..., all the castoffs the other teachers don’t want to deal with.” They get very little support from principals,

who rarely visit classrooms and are not, in any case, instructional leaders. And woe be to those who seek out assistance. “Teachers learn early that one does not ask for help,” they write. “Should a teacher ask for help, a red flag is likely to go up among her colleagues. ‘She’s in trouble,’ the signal is flashed.... [It is taken as] an admission of incompetence.”

The working conditions are lousy in other ways as well. Teachers seldom have telephones, fax machines, and personal computers—amenities taken for granted in other professions. They have only limited access to a copier. To that list, Troen and Boles could have added no voice mail or e-mail, which would facilitate



communication with students, parents, and other teachers. Moreover, much of a teacher's time is taken up with what the authors call "baby-sitting" on the playground, cleaning cafeteria tables, and other such menial and housekeeping tasks, not to mention the precious hours they waste meticulously documenting the disruptive behavior of "troublemakers."

Of course an important question, which the authors do not pose, is why the school culture has the teachers, rather than the students themselves, wiping the lunchroom tables. Nor do they point out that order in the classrooms, hallways, and elsewhere is seldom an expected and enforced norm. How can working conditions and instructional quality be improved without raising expectations about behavior?

Troen and Boles do discuss at length other aspects of the disastrous

culture of public schools. The isolation of teachers is at the heart of that culture. Classrooms are eggs in a crate, walled-off one-room schoolhouses containing a single grade. The result: Teachers don't grow professionally through the exchange of ideas, collaboration, and teamwork. Rather, having come to the job poorly prepared, everything they learn thereafter they learn by themselves, by trial and error.

And if they manage to become successful as teachers, they will get no reward, only hostility. "In the rigid school culture, star performance is discouraged by egalitarianism—the belief system that supports the preposterous premise that each teacher is the 'equal' of any other teacher," say Troen and Boles. That belief underlies the flat pay scale: Every teacher with the same seniority and the same credentials (as measured by the number of courses taken) is paid the same,

regardless of effectiveness. Moreover, teachers who "try too hard" are considered rate-busters, they say, setting standards that their colleagues resent rather than emulate.

This leveling they see as not only counterproductive, but unnatural. "Without hierarchy there is no status, and without status there are no distinctions," Troen and Boles note. "Distinctions are necessary in order for humans to make sense of their social landscape... In a world without status, we are without a compass."

The consequences of structuring a profession on the basis of misguided egalitarianism are grave. Excellence is not simply discouraged, but actually stifled. Mediocrity becomes the norm. "No cultural value is more stringently enforced than the status quo," Troen and Boles write.

Most of the elements of public school culture that appall Troen and

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Boles are the consequence of collective bargaining agreements that not only address bread-and-butter issues (pay, fringe benefits, hiring, firing, promotion), but also dictate professional development and most aspects of a teacher's day. And yet, astonishingly, the authors basically give the teachers' unions a pass, writing off outside criticisms as "union bashing" ("a popular sport," they note).

Teachers "succeed only when the culture in which they work encourages their efforts to excel," Troen and Boles argue. "That rarely happens." Indeed, they say, the "culture of the schools manages to defeat virtually all education reform initiatives designed to improve public education."

The first statement is unquestionably true. The structure of incentives in teaching today actually discourages a drive for excellence. But the second point—that educational culture defeats all efforts at change—is not. Education reform is certainly an American habit, one with a long record of poor results. But many of the school-improvement initiatives now underway here and elsewhere are in part an effort to change that culture, and appear to be doing so.

In Massachusetts—the state the authors ought to know best—MCAS has altered incentives by clarifying (for both teachers and students) academic expectations and attaching consequences to underachievement. In North Carolina and Texas, the package of standards, testing, and accountability have also improved student learning quite dramatically, by the measure of scores on the nation's "report card," the National Assessment for Educational Progress. It is a point that Troen and Boles do not make because they are adamantly opposed to high-stakes testing, which they blithely dismiss as a "misguided short-term solution."

It's not the only one. Troen and Boles have a long list of other reforms they consider misguided: homework, charter schools, home schooling, vouchers, for-profit educational companies, pay-for-performance salary rules, and curricular materials that script daily lessons to reinforce basic math skills "rather than [offering] a conceptual understanding of mathematics and real-life problem-solving skills." In their view, these are all "Band-Aids and Boondoggles," although some of their reasons for so labeling them are unclear and others border on the bizarre. What's wrong with learning basic math skills? And if schools need to raise academic standards—a crucial matter they ignore—surely homework is essential.

It is their attack on charter schools that is the most curious. For instance, they complain that charter schools have to "duplicate personnel and services ordinarily provided by an existing infrastructure," thus cre-

new teachers get the help they need. In addition, teachers have phones, e-mail, and numerous other add-ons that contribute to learning.

The schools are small. Instruction is usually a collaborative effort; the eggcrate classrooms are gone. Teachers are supervised and held accountable for student results. Those who aren't teaching effectively lose their jobs. The school day, week, and year is often longer. Absenteeism and tardiness are not tolerated. The insistence on disciplined behavior makes every classroom a place of learning and reduces the "baby-sitting" to which teachers are usually assigned. Good professional development is incorporated into the daily life of the school. And so forth. Given everything they have to say about the teaching profession and the culture of the ordinary public school, Troen and Boles should be the strongest advocates of charter schools.

Indeed, the book closes with a description of an elementary school

The authors have a long list of reforms they consider misguided.

ating bloated bureaucracies within each school. It is one of many bewildering charges.

In fact, the charter schools should be immensely appealing to Troen and Boles. After all, the good charters have the differential salaries they're looking for, generally paying more for teachers who are especially needed or simply superb. No misguided egalitarianism works to promote mediocrity and inertia; ambition and imagination are rewarded, and innovators thrive.

The best charter schools attract academically gifted teachers who have not had to get useless graduate degrees in education from an academically vapid institution, and are in a school they have chosen to join. The principals themselves, not a central office, picks the staff. Moreover, the principals are instructional leaders, and

they say would truly work, which they call the "Millennium School." It sounds almost identical to the best of the charter schools that I know—with most of the elements described above. Their other proposals for change seem to clash with their own trenchant critique of the educational status quo. For instance, Troen and Boles insist that teachers need to have a master's degree in education, just one based on tougher standards of admission to graduate schools of education and tougher licensing exams. But what about the pressures that they say keep the standards low—the education schools needing warm bodies in the seats, and schools needing warm bodies in the classrooms? Perhaps they think that more-professional working conditions will attract better candidates, but work-

ing conditions won't become more professional as long as they are dictated by restrictive union contracts. The authors want "school-college collaborations" to deliver professional development, but what's the point of collaboration with graduate schools of education that they say have elevated self-esteem over academic rigor? Troen and Boles want to see professional assessments of teachers before they are licensed, but what's the measure of professional excellence? Will student test results be one criterion? Troen and Boles have a vision of an ideal school and an ideal profession, but are unwilling to confront the obstacles to

realizing their dream.

Thus, the authors open with a hard-hitting critique of public schools and the quality of the teachers within them, but close with a relatively timid solution to the problems they describe. They appear to lack the courage of their own convictions—or the willingness to embrace the full implications of those convictions.

The institution of public education, Troen and Boles write, "is now showing clear signs of disintegration"; it's in a "state of disarray," with the result that "desperate parents are pulling their children out of public schools and looking for alternatives." Dis-

integration in the schools, desperation on the part of parents. Clearly, change much more comprehensive—and thus radical—than what Troen and Boles contemplate would seem essential. In fact, they might have asked a basic question: Within the traditional public school structure, is fundamental reform even possible? ■

Abigail Thernstrom is a member of the state Board of Education, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and a commissioner on the US Commission on Civil Rights. She is also co-author of the forthcoming book No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning.

Up with down time

The Importance of Being Lazy: In Praise of Play, Leisure, and Vacations

By Al Gini

Routledge, New York, 176 pages

REVIEWED BY ROBERT DAVID SULLIVAN

Al Gini is a guy I'd like to have by my side when I ask my boss for more time off, but I'd hate to spend my vacation with him. A professor of philosophy at Loyola College, Gini is the author of *The Importance of Being Lazy: In Praise of Play, Leisure, and Vacations*, which makes a convincing case that Americans work too much for no good reason. Unfortunately, he's something of a prig whenever he describes what we should do with more time away from work.

Gini has nothing against the work ethic. He agrees with German novelist Hans Habe that, for most of us, our occupations are like "skin that we cannot take off without bleeding to death." But Gini believes that Americans have succumbed to work-

holism. "Being overworked conveys status and self-worth," he writes.

The Importance of Being Lazy includes a cartoon in which a boss proclaims to a sleep-deprived office staff, "Great news! Americans now work more hours per year than the Japanese! We're number one!!" Actually, the research on this point is inconclusive, and Gini concedes that some Americans exaggerate their working hours to pollsters because "being busy means we are important." But he adds that statistics aren't the whole story: "The feeling of being pushed, overworked, or too busy is primarily about attitude, concentration, and orientation, and not just about the actual hours we put in on the job."

And that's not healthy. Gini claims that, deep down, "we all seek the ben-

efits of leisure, lassitude, and inertia." He points to a medical study suggesting that "annual vacations sharply reduced the risk of death among middle-aged men." He also paraphrases Nazi leader Albert Speer as saying that "Hitler's chief failings as a military leader were overextension, overexertion, and fatigue." Well, at least overwork claimed one rightful victim.

The *Lazy* parade of quotes continues with sociologist Arlie Russell Hochschild ("Modern workers talk about sleep in the same way that hungry people talk about food"), travel writer Joe Robinson ("We're the most vacation-starved country in the world"), and theologian Wayne Muller ("Too many of us feel that we can be legitimately stopped only by physical illness or collapse. Illness

then becomes our Sabbath.”).

At this point in the book, feeling a little queasy myself, I checked my e-mail and came across the query “Never Get Any Vacation Time?” Was this a job offer? A workers’ rights campaign? Neither. I clicked open the e-mail and it screamed, **SELL OR RENT YOUR TIMESHARE!** It continued, “Do you have a timeshare or vacation membership you never get to use? ... Join the thousands of others who take advantage of renting or selling it!” I wonder whether the guy who came up with this scheme is giving *himself* any vacation time. But I can’t fault his reading of the public mood. In MassINC’s recently released poll on the quality of life in Massachusetts, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, 53 percent of Bay State citizens said that “more household income” would improve their lives, compared with 39 percent who preferred “more free time.”

In some ways, Gini simply mistimed his campaign for a more Continental work ethic. “We smirk at the French practice of closing down [businesses] in August,” he laments in *The Importance of Being Lazy*, surely unaware that all things Gallic would be viewed with even more suspicion by the time his book came out. More important, America now has a war-time (if not empire-building) mentality, and the weak economy has many convinced that they’re lucky to have a job at all. As for political leaders, I can’t imagine Mitt Romney telling Bay State citizens that their problem is they spend too much time at work. And for all their talk about expanding health care and raising wages, I don’t hear any of the Democratic presidential candidates calling for more vacation days. No doubt they’re afraid of being labeled “soft” on work.

Gini admits that the “history of not working is short,” with such concepts as sick time and paid vacations coming rather late in the industrial age. And it was only after World War II that vacationing became part of the American way of life. “While not every worker took exotic trips to faraway places,” Gini writes, “knowing that they had ‘time off’ coming to them played an important role in maintaining their mental well-being.”

Not that the reasons for paid leisure time are entirely altruistic. For example, Gini gives auto manufacturer Henry Ford much credit for the hallowed concept of the weekend. After installing a conveyor-belt system in his factories, he discovered that the rapid pace of increasingly monotonous work led to “rising rates of absenteeism, tardiness, and worker turnover.” Adding another day to the

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traditional time off on the Sabbath gave workers more time to recover—from the strain of the work week but also, I imagine, from the revelries of Friday and Saturday nights. By the 1940s, Gini writes, the two-day weekend was so entrenched that workers “were willing to put in long hours, [but] they wanted the rhythm of the work-week compacted.”

Equally important, Ford wanted to give his workers time in which to spend money on consumer goods—specifically, his automobiles. But Gini says that Americans are now willingly returning to longer work hours “in order to acquire money and stuff.” He cites economist Juliet Schor’s observation that “activities and rituals of shopping have become our main means of recreation and diversion,” and he passes on her startling statistic that there’s “about 16 square feet of mall space for every man, woman, and child in America.”

Shopping is “a desperate substitute for living,” says former Czech President Vaclav Havel. But what is living? Gini turns to German philosopher Josef Pieper for one definition of the good life: “Leisure is time given to contemplation, wonder, awe, and the development of ideas.” I have nothing against contemplation, but what about less noble ways of spending leisure time? Are crème brûlées and martinis also “desperate substitutes for living”? Gini is distressed that “70 percent of the American population visit malls at least once a week,” but would he approve if they visited pool halls instead?

If shopping doesn’t count as leisure time to Gini, neither do most vacations. He criticizes the “travel industry” (I would have used the oxymoronic “leisure industry”) for promoting high-cost destinations such as

Disneyland, and he dismisses the tradition of using vacation time to visit as many relatives as possible (“a blitzkrieg of organized movement”).

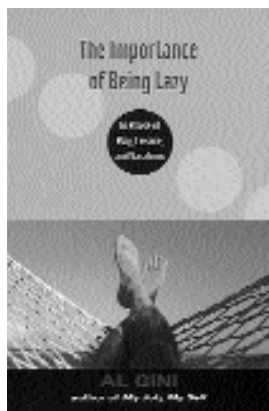
Gini isn’t keen on spending an afternoon at a football stadium, either. He slams professional sports for providing “instant escape, gratification, and pleasure,” though why that’s such a sin, from the *Lazy* point of view, I’m not sure. Today, Gini says, the “drug of choice” in America is “some combination of ‘drink and sports’”—a statement allowing him to neatly tar Budweiser and the Super Bowl with guilt by association, each one to the other.

The criticism of sports culture in America isn’t as convincing as Gini’s attack on consumerism (though any literate person would share his exasperation at the number of sports metaphors used in political debate). Giving a list of supposedly alarming statistics, Gini writes, “Here’s one that politicians hate: more people bowl each year than vote in congressional elections.” It’s a tone-deaf

don’t value leisure time enough. Then again, Gini never says that leisure is supposed to be fun.

For all his promotion of lassitude, Gini sets a poor example. To him, weekends mean “the freedom to think hard, to be serious, to ponder great ideas”—a rather strenuous, not to mention idiosyncratic, notion of leisure. But then, Gini admits that he doesn’t have a lot of experience in figuring out how to use idle time: “I remain a workaholic primarily out of habit, and secondarily, because a modicum of success has led me to injudiciously overextend myself and take on too many tasks.” In other words, he’s too important to follow the advice he’s giving us. Or maybe he’s just one of those people who lie to pollsters about their hours on the job.

And Gini’s not exactly teaching us how to seize the leisurely day. “In traveling,” he writes, “there is the opportunity or potential for solitude, speculation, wonder, and awe.” Unfortunately, he doesn’t provide any stories from his own wanderings, so we’re left to puzzle over what this description means. I thought of Calvin



Gini never says that leisure is supposed to be fun.

statement on two counts. First, most politicians (especially incumbents) are quite happy with low voter turnouts, since they’re easier to predict and control. Second, sociologist Robert Putnam’s 2000 book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* has introduced the bowling league as a metaphor (yes, another sports one) for a healthy civic life. Yes, it’s worrisome that people pay so little attention to politics, but it seems odd for Gini to knock Americans for frivolousness in a book whose thesis is that Americans

Trillin’s marvelous travel writing—about such topics as searching all over Italy for the perfect gelato with his wife and daughters—and wondered whether the guru of goofing off would consider it a kosher use of leisure time.

Gini also says that “we must be very careful in...how we choose to play” so that leisure time is not “the catalyst for camp and kitsch.” Is he worried that too many vacation days will make someone gay? Gini doesn’t seem to accept that free time is inherently subversive. It can lead to loud



essayist G.K. Chesterton's idea that leisure means "to be free to pursue the unusual, the inexplicable, the irrelevant, the interesting, and the idiosyncratic." But as an example he

uses British leader Winston Churchill, both an accomplished painter (on canvas, not walls) and a bricklayer." He doesn't note Churchill's more famous use of leisure time, getting hooked.

He does quote Mark Twain ("I do not like work even when someone else does it"), but I suspect that Twain could be appalled by the anhedonia in *The Importance of Being Lazy*—which, unfortunately, seems to be gaining strength in America. In a 1996 *New Yorker* essay titled "The Fall of Fun," journalist James Atlas complains, "If I had to come up with a symbolic representation of the prevailing ethos, it would be a series of red circles, each with a line through it: No Smoking, No Drinking, No Sex. No Fun."

Three pages before the end of his book, Gini finally gives a nod to pure pleasure, briefly praising the Slow

Food movement that began in Italy a few years ago and is now approaching cult status in America. The concept involves languidly paced meals uninterrupted by cell-phone calls and the like. Gini praises the return to "the primal experience of breaking bread with family and friends," but he doesn't see the Slow Food movement as a form of decadence. It's decadence of a most benign nature, to be sure, one that promotes community spirit, but it's nevertheless a form of self-indulgence. And that's not always a bad way to spend leisure time.

The Importance of Being Lazy is an important manifesto for R&R, which is indeed given short shrift in our workaholic republic. Still, it might have been more compelling if Gini had actually attended a S

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Personnel matters

BY MARY GREENDALE

So it's reform time again in state government. I sincerely wish Gov. Mitt Romney lots of luck. I was there in 1992, when we were trying to reinvent government under Bill Weld. I served in senior management posts at the Department of Housing and Community Development from 1992 to 1999, and then at the Department of Food and Agriculture, until I retired last year. There's one thing you need to know, Governor: The bureaucracy is a living, breathing thing, made up of human beings. You'll have more success if you find ways to work with them rather than against them. Here are my suggestions for getting the biggest return on human capital in state government.

Make every change serve a purpose. What are the outcomes you want? What services or processes do you seek to improve? Keep your eye on the goals, and be flexible about methods. When the methods become the goal, you're in trouble.

I found that out the hard way. As head of the Division of Community Services, I discovered that staff did not regularly share information among themselves, even when their programs were involved in the same communities. I thought the division should provide services more holistically; that would make things more efficient for us and make getting information and assistance easier for communities. We'd be able to help cities and towns with community development more broadly, not just within the specific grant programs we offered.

I undertook several organizational restructurings over a few years, each one inching us toward this goal. Then I made the Big Change. I decided to set up self-directed work teams, based on a successful private sector model.

I thought the team approach would be a win-win for the communities and the employees. The department would become more than a meal ticket for a few communities. The funds were important—believe me, I knew that—but there's never enough money to meet every community's needs. What about those that get no funding—couldn't we help them, too? We could teach communities to fish rather than just serving them one fish banquet. Meanwhile, the staff would learn about broader topics and earn a reputation in the outside world for being valuable guides to the maze of state government. I thought most

would embrace the idea of coming out of the rigid confines of their programs—their boxes, if you will—to spread their wings beyond artificial bureaucratic boundaries.

Instead, what I learned is that people who are attracted to rank-and-file positions in state agencies, as dedicated and public-spirited as they may be, are often very structured folks who not only like the clear definitions of the bureaucracy, they need them. Unclear boundaries, change, unpredictability—these are things that make them uncomfortable. Besides, they had long experience working in a system that rewards staying in your box and doing your job as defined on a piece of paper filed in Personnel. I thought I was liberating them; they thought I was hanging them out to dry.

Before long, the team model itself, rather than the mission, became the focus—and the battlefield. It was no longer just a tool to improve services. I lost sight of the desired results, and those who did not welcome the change found it easy to erode the support I had.

Don't kick public workers when they're down. One danger for the business-minded reformer is that he may not understand that people who pursue jobs in government often do so because the kind of work that interests them is available only in the public sector. They don't care about making widgets or piling up profits. They care about public issues, about the poor, about public safety and public education. I know, because I am one of them. I have a very diverse professional background, in and out of government, but government is what floats my boat.

That's why I still cringe when I recall Bill Weld labeling state workers "walruses." That kind of comment makes every government reinventor's job harder. It's tough to galvanize enthusiasm and commitment from people who hear themselves castigated and insulted on the 11 o'clock news. How would you respond to public name-calling and verbal lashings from your boss?

What's more, they're unwarranted. I'd say that 95 percent of the employees want to do a good job and try to do so. Poor performance, which exists at all levels, must be addressed as a management issue, not as a character flaw of state workers. Rally the troops, Governor, and avoid turning the guns on them.

How? The way they do it in business. "The private sec-

tor revolves around continuous improvement and reform, which often means frequent reorganization and new ways of doing things.” This Total Quality Management message is in your budget recommendation, and it echoes the language of management experts. So far, so good. But where is the expression of faith in the desire of state employees to improve their product, which is public service? Where is the appeal to the best instincts of public workers? Where is the commitment to provide training to staff at all levels, to empower them? Where is the promise to value them, to reward good results, and to enable them to make a difference, even if funds are tight? Do you embrace that TQM advice as well?

Focus on a few opportunities for outstanding results. Nothing succeeds like success. Even within agencies under your administrative control and with no legislative action needed, you can’t hope to fix everything overnight. But if you articulate the results and engage the staffs in conversation, you can find places where you can achieve success quickly. The Registry of Motor Vehicles made significant improvements in a relatively short time by focusing on the most egregious areas of shortcoming: courtesy, cleanliness, long waiting lines, and clerical errors. In just 14 months, customers increased their rating of the RMV from 6.9 to 9.0 on a scale of 10. There’s other low-hanging fruit in state government. Picking it makes you friends among the voting public, and in the bureaucracy as well.

Set a good example. There’s one other reform I have not heard mentioned by any leaders of state government: improving their own behavior. The sparring and posturing of public officials do more to harm the reputation of government—and to undermine efficiency efforts on the ground—than anything else. It’s easy, and therefore tempting, to score points in the press by running down legislative leaders and the like. But Governor, I urge you to resist the temptation. Jockeying for position at the top undermines your authority, and reduces your leverage, with the civil servants down below. You’re asking them to do something hard, something that goes against their experience, maybe even their very nature: to change. Why should they take you, and what you’re asking them to do, seriously if you’re engaged in food fights? They want you to talk about what the core services of government should be and what results we should reasonably expect. They want you and other state leaders to build constituencies and partnerships, not fiefdoms and campaign war chests. They want all of you to do the right thing for the people of Massachusetts. For that matter, so do I. ■

Mary Greendale is a freelance writer and public affairs consultant living in Holliston.

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