

Perspectives

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Recess was right action

To the Editor:
 Despite the "No" votes by both my state senator (Susan Flargo) and state rep. (Geoff Hall), the legislature did the right thing by voting to recess last week. Individual rights should never be put to a popular vote. Massachusetts has never put individual and civil rights on the ballot and it should not start now.

Thanks to the legislature's vote, Massachusetts will now be spared what was certain to be an ugly, protracted, and expensive ballot fight in 2008. If anyone thinks the gubernatorial race was nasty, the war that the homophobic right wing would have waged for the next two years would have been horrific. It's an enormous relief to know that my family and my marriage will not be subject to that type of repugnant, constant attack.

Emily Kay
 Purcell Drive

For those who write...

Readers' views on any issue of concern are important to us.

Deadline for letters is noon Monday, the week of publication. Keep your letters short, no more than 400 words, that way we can print as many as possible, as soon as possible.

Make sure the letter is legible. If we can't read it, we can't print it. Sign it and include your address, plus a phone number for verification.

Letters will be published as space permits. We reserve the right to reject letters submitted for publication. Letters may be edited for libel, taste, space and clarity at our discretion.

Address letters to: Letters to the Editor, Chelmsford Independent, P.O. Box 9191, Concord, MA 01742; fax to 978-371-5212; or e-mail them to chelmsford@enc.com.



Veterans' day

Susan Coughlin sent in this week's 'Photo of the Week' of this group of Chelmsford Veterans at Saturday's Veterans Day ceremony. Think you have a picture that best represents Chelmsford? Send it to us. E-mail pictures to chelmsford@enc.com, or mail hard copies to 'Photo of the Week' Chelmsford Independent, P.O. Box 9191, Concord, MA 01742.

A Veterans Day story about the Zahers

My Veteran's Day Story:
 This Veteran's Day was very special. A plaque was placed on the McCarthy school grounds in honor of five of our family members. Michael, Meredick, John, Nicholas and Louis, all of whom served in World War II and also Charles, who served in the Korean War.

George junior, the second youngest son was too young for World War II. He stayed at home during the Korean Campaign, to help his now elderly parents run what had become their large farm. We are very proud of the fact, that six of our seven sons have served their country. The plaque reads, "Dedicated to the Zaher Family of Chelmsford who bravely Served Our Country During World War II." Now that this plaque has been placed, hopefully, the Zaher family will be remembered throughout eternity.

This dedication was long overdue. It was very appropriate they placed this plaque on the McCarthy School grounds, formerly known for many years as the Zaher farm. Next to our plaque there is a flagpole on which our national flag was raised and was waving gently in the fall breeze. On this Veterans Day, we had a small ceremony, with many townspeople, family, old friends and a number of town and police officials in attendance.

Veteran's Agent Reggie Jackson opened the ceremony and introduced our guest soloist, Ted Godfrey. Together, we all sang the national anthem. The five town selectmen, Michael McCall, Samuel P. Chase, William Dalton, Thomas Newcomb and Phillip Eliopoulos were in attendance. They all gave a speech. I was then called upon to give a presentation of the family history. The

Guest Columnist
 Joan E. Zaher

four sons placed the wreath. The selectmen presented the four men with a proclamation in recognition of their service and the presentation of the plaque.

We all sang God Bless America and the program was ended.

After we closed our ceremony, we walked for a short distance to the Veteran's Memorial Park (next to the school). The officials conducted a very memorable ceremony. A large number of people, including many veterans of past wars were in attendance.

The ceremony began with guest soloist Ted Godfrey leading us in singing the national anthem and Rev. Robert Noy gave the opening prayer.

Three of the five selectmen, who were in attendance spoke and presented a proclamation. At this point in the ceremony, guest speaker David McAllister (U.S. Army Infantry) gave an inspiring speech. The veterans of all past wars and campaigns, including the Iraq war were asked to step forward and were duly recognized. The co-chairman of Chelmsford's Veterans' Memorial Park Committee, Lt. Col. Sam Poulsen, spoke to the crowd. Following this, the Board of Selectmen laid the wreath. The Chelmsford Police Honor Guard, led by Lt. Daniel Ahern, commander, performed the volley. Poulsen played "Taps" with the response played by Gae Gouveia.

Musical selections were played by the Comeback Kids, a local senior band, all of whom are veterans. They played a song for each branch of the

service. Rev. Noy then gave the closing prayer. The guest soloist and all those present sang "America the Beautiful" and "God Bless America."

As I was walking back to my car, I couldn't help but wonder how many towns have forgotten that this day is not meant for shopping, but is a day to honor our veterans. So important, for if it was not for our veterans, we would not be enjoying all the freedoms, and other wonderful things that so many of us take for granted today. I am so proud of the way in which my town honors its veterans. How wonderful it would be if more towns would do the same. Our town was incorporated more than 350 years ago. Our motto is "Let the children guard what the sires have won."

We hear so much today in regard to the so-called "silent majority." The American people as a whole have been silent much too long. It is time to stand up and fight for your rights, which are granted to you through the Constitution. Have you wondered recently what ever happened to the "independent vote"? Why you must declare one of the two parties in order to vote? Our rights are slipping away from us slowly and silently and unless we all stand up and fight for those rights, before long we will not have any at all. It is all up to you as Americans, to protect what our forebearers have given us. Stand up and let your voices be heard before it is too late. Please, help keep our America the way we remember it to be.

THE ZAHER FAMILY HISTORY

Thomas and Romia Zaher emigrated to America from Saldnaya, Syria in April of the year 1910. Upon arrival the Zaher's lived in Lowell. George Sr. worked at the Trull farm and later at

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the George C. Moore mills in North Chelmsford. In 1925, they heard of a house in Chelmsford that had been vacant for a very long time. They purchased the house and land and moved to Chelmsford where the family is still in residence. This place soon became known as The Zaher Farm. The Zaher family grew to have seven boys and four girls. Three of the girls and four of the boys are still living.

There was also a herd of cows and chickens at the farm. The cows' milk was sold to local dairies. I have fond memories of our children rushing down to the farm in years past to welcome the new heifers (baby cows) when they were born. Apples and other fruits, vegetables, eggs from their chickens and flowers were raised at the farm. Roma made homemade preserves and they too were sold. It took 10 years of hard work to get the land to produce. Once it did, the farm became very successful. They had a farm stand and trucked produce and other products into Boston.

Chelmsford eventually took more than 25 acres of the farm by eminent domain to build a school. Shortly after the town took the land, the barn burned down. While the cows were saved, George Sr. suffered a fatal heart attack that evening.

When the school was built, I called our state Rep. Carol O'Brien, who lives in town and asked if the school could be named after the Zaher boys. She refused and they named the school after a teacher. Finally, I discussed this matter with my brother-in-law Nicholas and he helped me with the battle at town hall. Yesterday's ceremony was the end result of our efforts.

Today, three of the surviving sons, who fought in World War II are all in their 80s. Charles, the youngest son and a Korean veteran, is 76. Three sisters, who are still living are all much older (88, 96 and 85). We were so happy, that we could accomplish this while they are still with us and could enjoy this tribute to our family.

A member of the Zaher family still resides in the old farmhouse. In four more years, the family will have been in America for 100 years and in Chelmsford for 85 of those years. There is now a Veteran's Memorial Park, a school administration building (in the old police station), a new police station and a multiple purpose commercial building on that part of the land.

Our family all gathered together after the ceremony and went to dinner at Princeton Station. We toasted our veterans and our family — a perfect ending for our very special celebration.

I was so exhausted when I got home, that I went to bed for a nap with a smile on my face and much love in my heart, for all who helped us honor our veterans and a town who cares.

I hope you have enjoyed my special Veteran's Day story.

Submitted by
 Joan E. Zaher
 (wife of Meredick Zaher)

SEND US YOUR NEWS

The "Chelmsford Independent" prints announcements of academic, professional and personal achievements of residents free of charge. Photographs to be returned must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The staff

of the Independent will do its best to return photos, however the paper is not responsible for lost items.

Send announcements to the paper's office at P.O. Box 9191, Concord, MA 01742. Or you can bring

them by the office at 150 Baker Ave. Ext., Suite 101 in West Concord.

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