Boston West End’s lessons: Political action urban engagement

by Sal Giarratani

What really got me interested in politics happened as a kid when I met James Michael Curley at Boston City Hospital and carried on a political discussion for what was no more than five minutes. The five longest minutes of my life. That and watching the backhoes and cranes tear down the old West End with my father. He stood there watching the destruction and told me how politicians declared the area a slum when it wasn’t. He wondered why people didn’t fight harder to save it and cried for its loss.

I’m young enough to look back to see why it happened and old enough to watch it come tumbling down.

The West End is a shadow of its former self, but somehow it didn’t all die. The spirit of what the West End was somehow survived the implosion of that working class neighborhood.

The city actually has one of those blue oval signs that reads: “Welcome to the West End” on Staniford Street. Here and there a building was saved but mostly it’s in people’s memories.

Could they “West End” a neighborhood today? Probably not. We learned from that mistake and react differently today to razing whole neighborhoods. The “Westendiza-

Frank Privitera

Continued on page 6

West End Museum’s January drawing

The first drawing for 2009 for the West End Museum fundraiser was held in January.

Here are the winners:
$1500 - Zoe Colt
$300 - Laura Caccia
$100 - Delores Anderson
$100 - Michelle Scorzella
$100 - Steve Curley
$100 - John Wilson

The door prize of $200 was won by Duane Lucia.

The West End Museum fundraiser’s next drawings will be held on the last Sunday of April, July and October at 1 p.m.

For only $45 for rest of the year, you will be eligible to win $1500, $300 and four $100 prizes will be awarded. There is also a $200 attendance prize, but you must be present at the time of the drawing to receive the prize.

The West End Museum directly needs your support if it is to continue. So please support this endeavor. You could benefit by winning and even if you lose, you benefit by supporting the museum.

If you haven’t renewed your subscription to The West Ender, now’s the time — $10 Per Year

The West Ender
P.O. BOX 440-413
SOMERVILLE, MA 02144
West End Museum donations

If you are a West Ender and your name is not on the West End Museum’s donation list—it should be. Fill out the donation form below and drop it in the mail.

**WEST END HERO** - $30,000 or more
Frank Privitera

**GOLD PHILANTHROPIST** - $3,000 or more
Bruce Guarino

**PHILANTHROPIST** - $1,000
Sean Jackman—In honor of his Mother and Father Jim and Claire Jackman
Francis Rothwell—In memory of Marie Elaine Rothwell
Judge Domenic Russo

**BENEFACTO R** - $500
Jim Campano
Anna Cohen - In memory of her husband Al Cohen
John DeMarco

**SPONSOR** - $250
Joe Anello +$100
Dorothea (Koresky)
Beth & Marshall Arkin Pastore
Al & Anna Cohen Arnold & Barbara
John Cucinotta + Phillips
Angela DeLuca Judge Santo Ruma
Jim Healy, Boston - $250+
Duck Tours Richard Terranova
Kevin McGrath - $300

**PATRON** - $100
James (Jay) Almeida+
Sam Bellistri
Alan Berkman - In memory of his father, Oscar Berkman
Robert Bova
Carlos & Jennie Caccia +$100
Louis & Laura Caccia
Joseph Calabruso - In memory of his mother, father, sister Connie and brother Mario
The Cancellieri Family
Kevin Clifford - In memory of his father, John Clifford
Bernard Condelli
John Cucinotta
Angie DeLuca
Tony DeMarco
Joe DeSantis
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Francina
Herbert Gans
Arthur Geller
Conrad Geller
Chester Hartman $100
Richard Hartnett
Agnes Iwanow+
Shirley Kressel
Joe Lecco
John Locatelli - In memory of his brother Lee
Tony LoVoulo
William MacAuley
Joseph J. Matara
Richard Nedl
Jim Noe
Anthony Pallotta

Joe Petrank
John Raso
Vincent Raso
Sally Rabin - In memory of his parents, Frank & Eudenia Rabin
Bruno Roberto
Mimi (Baker) Roberto - Remembering Vinnie Roberto
City Councilor Mike Rossi
Russo Family - In Memory of Dominic (Chickie) Russo
Vincent J. Russo
Andrew Samo
Ms. Margaret Scimeci - In memory of her Husband, Michael "Mikey Shoo" Scimeci
Carmella Scott
William Shario
Spina & Della Families
William Tomczyk
Robert Vatalaro
Zina Venezia
Arthur Ventidtii
Malcolm Zimmerman

**SUPPORTER** - $50
S. James Alberino
Theresa Aria - In memory of Isabel & Conato Aria
Santo Aurelio
Louis & Bebe Aurelio
Mr. & Mrs. James Bramante
In Memory of Dominic J. Bruno
Frances Castagna
Anthony Castagna - In memory of Milie Castagna
Irene Collyer $25 - In memory of her deceased parents
Salvatore Condelli
Joe DiFazio
Josephine DiZio Dzygala - In loving memory of parents
Rose & Joe DiZio
Mrs. Helen Feeney
Gloria Fernandez
Ed Fitzgerald
June Getchell
Lawrence Giove

**NEW**

Morello - $25 - In Memory of Thomas J. Christo
William Ingemi
Nicky Gregory - $50
Lorraine Carvalho - $10
Joseph Cancellari

Donations to the Museum are tax deductible.

From the editor: I am a one-man operation and my memory is not that good anymore. If I make a mistake, call me up and I will correct it in the next issue. Any mistakes are not intentional. Thank you.

The West End Museum is open.
For museum hours please call 617-723-2125 for up-to-date information.

Staff

Editor ...................................... JAMES CAMPANO
Co-Founder ............................... RAYMOND J. PAPA
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The West End will return pictures if you enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope, but will retain all rights to publish them and to use the images.

The West End is a quarterly publication.

West End Museum Donation

I wish to donate to The West End Museum to hasten its progress so the story of the West End will not be forgotten. Send donations to: PO Box 8996, Boston, MA 02114

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Donations to The West End Museum do not support or in any way go to the West Ender Newsletter.
Boys just having fun!

Photo from 1946: left to right (back row) Hy Fiskan, Ed Kaufman, Sid Kay; (middle) Harvey Elkin, Jack Sinewitz, Stan Abrams; (front) Lenny Nimoy, Phil Freedman, unknown

Playing the field

John Rosato earns entry into Gridiron Hall of Fame

Every year for the past 38 years the Providence Gridiron Club of Rhode Island has inducted six new members into their Hall of Fame.

This year John Rosato of North Providence received that prestigious distinction for his many years of service as a high school official in Rhode Island.

Rosato, 66, was “humbled” when he received the induction letter with his name on it. The Gridiron Club usually selects just one official for induction each year along with a number of players and coaches. Some of the other inductees included Tom Ehrhardt, the only URI player to ever have his number retired, and the late Mike Cortelessa, a standout lineman for Warwick in the 1970’s.

Awards are nice but the thing that Rosato says he will cherish most is the brotherhood that he has developed with his fellow officials.

“The friendships are priceless,” said Rosato. Things like hanging out with the guys after the game and being a part of a cohesive unit on the field are some of his fondest memories. The best evidence of this came was on display at the Gridiron Club induction where about 45 of his fellow officials turned out.

Rosato got his zest for sports at a young age. Growing up in Boston’s North End he lived just a few blocks from the old Boston Garden. On most nights in the 1950s he served as a stick boy for the Boston Bruins or a ball boy for the Celtics.

In high school, Rosato played hockey and football. He was a varsity hockey goalie and the center for his school’s football team. After high school he went on to the Stockbridge School of Agriculture in Amherst, Massachusetts.

Like thousands of other Americans, Rosato was drafted into the armed forces and he proudly served one year overseas in Vietnam. When he returned, he finished his bachelor’s degree at the University of Arizona.

It was in Arizona that Rosato got his first taste of being an official when he oversaw intramural games at the school.

There are two games that particularly stand out in Rosato’s memory. The first was a super bowl game between St. Ray’s and Mount Hope about 15 years ago. With time winding down in the game there was a backward pass by St. Ray’s and the ball was bouncing near the goal line Rosato recalled how the ball curved at the last second and went over the pylon for a safety. He was right in position to make the call that helped Mount Hope to the win.

The second game was a super bowl he worked between North Kingstown and Portsmouth. The game pitted two Rhode Island coaching legends and it was a real nail biter to the end. With less than 10 seconds left North Kingston caught the ball at the Portsmouth 10 yard line needing a touchdown. With no time outs left, they were not able to get another play off however and Portsmouth hung on for the win.

Many officials do not succeed because they take things that happen in the game too personally. Rosato points to a quote from former Major League umpire Bruce Froemming who said “in your heart, you’ve never blown a call.” Once a call is made good or bad you have already moved on.

“My philosophy is to go into every game with a clear mind. The past is the past,” said Rosato, “When you’re officiating you have to be firm and handle people properly. You’re not an enforcer out there, you’re an outsider making sure the games being played the right way.”

After his time on the field is over Rosato wants to continue to give back to the game that has given him so much. “When it ends I want to keep working in developing new officials,” said Rosato.

Despite his age Rosato can still handle himself well on the field, but he knows that he will not be able to referee forever.

“The day that I can’t keep up with the game will be the day that I retire,” said Rosato. “If you can’t keep up you take away from the kids and that’s your responsibility.”

Looking for 45 cents

Enclosed is a check for my dues, the balance is for The West Ender.

I note on page 10 of your last edition; December 2008, a note from Anthony Zakrewski.

I lent this guy 45 cents in 1952, since.

Lawrence Gilligan

P.S. I have been writing this amount of on my taxes ever since.

Checking in & thank you

Dear Jim,

I trust all is well with you and I thank you again for the service you provide all West Enders.

Enclosed please find a check. Please allocate the money for the West End Museum raffle, the annual subscription to the newspaper, the Century Club, the Memorial Circle naming Jack, Miram and Frank Gropman, from Alan Gropman and for the West End Museum.

Still plugging along, Jim, trying not to retire. Still teaching at one of the War Colleges in Washington and also teaching at Georgetown University.

Respectfully and cordially,

Alan L. Gropman
Distinguished Professor of National Security Policy
Industrial College of the Armed Forces

John Rosato

“Nothing says I want to grow up and do this,” said Rosato. “Good officials are made not born.”

Initially one of the reasons Rosato liked officiating the games was the challenge.

“I like the pressure and feeling like you’re a part of the game,” said Rosato. “Being a player, I remember what it was like from their point of view. Now I saw it from the officials view. Nobody likes getting yelled at.”

After coming to that realization, Rosato’s outlook on the game changed a bit. When he returned to Rhode Island he began down the path to becoming a high school official. Like anyone else, he had to start off refereeing Pop Warner games on the weekend and then moved on to freshman and junior varsity games.

Finally in 1983 Rosato made the Rhode Island High School officials board, making him a full fledged football official. He still remembers his first varsity game in Burrville. “I knew what I was doing, but I was still a little nervous,” said Rosato. “I started out being the right person and kept learning more and more.”

Respect for an official is a quality only earned in time. Rosato put in the time and effort and it did not go unnoticed among his fellow officials and league coaches. Over time, Rosato came to be recognized as one of the most fair and honest officials in the game.

The highest honor that a league official can hope for is being selected to officiate a playoff game or super bowl game. To date Rosato has done 14 playoff games and 15 super bowls in his career. “Way back coaches used to have a say about who the officials were for the super bowl games,” Rosato said. “Now it’s all selected randomly by computers.”
Celebrating 55 years of marriage on a Caribbean cruise

Hi Jim,

How’re you doin’? We’re fine here and truly enjoying life.

Recently my wife Josephine and I, plus our four sons, went on a cruise to the Caribbean to celebrate 55 years of marriage (on Nov. 1). We had a great time.

Enclosed is a photo from the cruise. It was the first time in 30 years that we all were able to spend a vacation all together.

Please feel quite free to edit and thank you for your kindness.

Cordially, Santo Aurelio

Santo and Josephine Aurelio celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary on a cruise to the Caribbean given by their four sons. Santo and Josephine both had lived on Ashland Street. (front, 1-l-r) Josephine, Santo, Mark. (back, 1-l-r) James, David, Richard.

Update on last issue’s wedding picture

Hi!

I am enclosing my subscription to The West Ender and a little information.

The wedding picture of my brother John Corso and sister-in-law Camille in your last issue is beautiful and so are and were the attendants in the wedding party.

I thought your readers would like to know all the attendants are former West Enders. From the left, my cousins Mary Purpura Roberts, J. Purpura, Mary Loguidice Vinci (deceased), Camille Loguidice Corso (deceased), Johnny Corso (deceased), Morris Zaffrio, my young brother Joey (deceased), sister Eva Corso Consolo. The little flower girl starting from the left: “Chickie”, Mary Anne’s sister; the ring bearer Philip Zucco, my nephew; Anna May, my niece; and Maryanne Cordaro, who sent in the picture, my sister-in-law Camille’s niece.

Maryanne was too young to know who the people in the wedding picture were. Hi Maryanne, it has been some time since I’ve seen you. I think it was before you went to California. I am Barbara’s mother.

One of eleven, we are four left.

Nini Corso White

(91 years young)

Thanks for memories

Dear Jim,

Sorry if I am late. I want to continue my subscription, don’t want to lose it. Sending a little extra.

Thank you so much for the memories. So glad I was born in my generation 1927.

Sincerely, Jeni Naso Skiffington

Still hanging in

What can I say that hasn’t already been said. Still hanging in there.

Samuel Kaplan

The West End Golf League needs golfers, hackers, willing to learn.

Monday mornings at Cedar Glen Course, Saugus.

Call Mike Messina at 617-851-5990.
Wish for continued success

To the West Ender;
Dear Jim,

As we look forward to the New Year, let us all wish you continued success with The West Ender. We await each issue and share in the wonderful, warm memories of our lives not so long ago. The uniqueness lives on in all of us who shared the paradise of the West End. Embedded in our hearts and minds forever.

Our donation and best wishes.
Marshall and Beth Arkin

Knew Fr. Micklick

2-14-09

Hi, Happy “heart” day.
Thanks for doing what you do to keep the West End connection going!
Quite a while back someone asked if anyone knew or remembered Fr. Micklick, the young priest at St. Joe’s. I’d love to communicate with that person or any others at my home mailing address. My former spouse knew him from St. Rose’s parish in Chelsea.

Elise Lockhart
Box 636
Talent, OR 97540-0636

Grew up on Charles St.

Hi Jimmy,

I grew up on Charles St. next to the Elizabeth Peabody House with my sisters Celine and Marcelia. It saddened me to pass the sign that said if you lived here you would be home now.

Hi to you and all the wonderful friends and neighbors we grew up with.

Good luck in 2009.

Catherine Gargan Hurley

Enjoyed museum

Hi Jim;

I really enjoy reading about my old friends and neighbors. The West End is no longer the place for bilingual families and multi-cultural harmony. It is a lingering memory that will last a lifetime.

Check is enclosed with a little extra for my subscription renewal. Merry Xmas and Happy New Year to all West Enders wherever you are.

J. Almeida (Bomber)

Look forward to the paper & the stories

Happy New Year, James.
Sending your check early. I have moved and have enclosed my new address.

Thanks for the stories. There was not a better place to live. Look forward to every edition.

B Lashus-Takacs

Keep us updated on WE activities

Dear Jim:

Thanks for the reminder! Just got back from not-so-sunny California and almost forgot to mail in my subscription payment.

Please find enclosed a check for my subscription to The West Ender. Also, included is a donation for the museum.

I really enjoy reading about my old friends from the West End and seeing some of their old and recent photos in the paper.

Please keep up the good work!! Keeps us old timers entertained and updated on the activities of the West End. Your efforts are really appreciated!

Joe Anello
Castle Rock, Colorado

A blast from the past

Frank Privitera (center) flanked by actor, singer-celebrity Frankie Avalon (left) and comedian Jack Carter (right) during a Privitera extravaganza at the Park Plaza Hotel. The event was attended by 800 people of which 200 were “West Enders.”
Annual St. Rocco's summer cookout

(Left to right) Michelle Jolke Scorzelia, Kris Moroz Nazarro, William Tomczyk, Michelle Moroz Gustafson and Michael Jolke

Sandy Sarno, Auntie Helen, Michelle and Andy Sarno

Hi Jim Campano,

Long time no see.

My name is Michelle Moroz Gustafson. I was born in the West End and lived on 47 Chambers Street with my mom and dad, Mike and Stella Moroz, and my younger sister, Kristine.

I attended Saint Joseph's School, graduated in 1958 and then my family moved out of the West End to Canton.

I will always remember and cherish my youth in the West End.

Watching the 4th of July on the roof of our apartment with my family and neighbors.

The characters roaming the safe streets, like the "Monkey Man"

Picking up money on Easton Street with my cousin Diane Dembicki, as well as us being the first women to be let onto the sailing club on the Charles. Oh the stories there!

Hanging out with my older cousins, Paul Dembicki and Andy Sano, members of The Dukes. We called ourselves The Blue Dots!

The dances at the Peabody House where I met my first boyfriend.

My best friend Pattie Bova, who I have lost contact with. If you're out there... give a shout.

I could go on and on.

I'm sending you pictures of the Saint Rocco's summer cookout that my Aunt and Uncle Paul and Virginia Jolke have every year in Malden. Thanks for all your hard work.

Keep the pictures.

Regards,

Michelle Moroz Gustafson

Costa named Augusta Boston Club 2008 Man of the Year

At its Annual Dinner Dance, the Augusta Boston Club honored Andrea Costa as its 2008 Man of the Year. Andrea had been the President of the Augusta Boston Club since its inception in 2002. He was instrumental in the restructuring of the Augustanese Fraternal Association which was founded by Augustanese immigrants in Boston's West End in 1936 into today's active and popular Augusta Boston Club. He has been responsible for leading the Club through many changes as it sought how best to meet the needs and expectations of the Augustanese community. His main desire was to help create an organization that would encourage maintaining the traditions and culture of Augusta, Sicily.

Andrea Costa was born in Augusta, Sicily in 1937 and emigrated to the United States at age 17. His family settled in the West End of Boston where Andrea became involved in the construction trade and became a plasterer. In 1959 his family was forced to leave the West End because Boston took it over by eminent domain. They relocated to East Boston, another area that was primarily Italian with many Augustanese moving there from the West End. Andrea was drafted into the Army in 1962 for two years. Upon his release, he returned to Augusta to marry his childhood sweetheart, Maria Teresa Romeo. Returning to the United States, they raised four children and now are proud grandparents of six, three girls and three boys. In 1988 Andrea chose to join an organization he had heard many good things about, the Augusta Fraternal Association. The following year he was elected as its Chairman Trustee, a position he held until it's restructuring in 2002. At that time, Andrea Costa was elected President of the newly formed organization, the Augusta Boston Club.

A man with many dreams, Andrea worked on establishing new and innovative programs. High Achievement Award, Man of the Year, Scholarship Awards, Annual Scampagnata, and Memorial Mass are some of his accomplishments together with an awesome administration that worked with him to make it happen. Dedicating himself to the needs and betterment of the Augusta Boston Club, he has been a driving force for excellence in all aspects of Club business. He invested huge amounts of his time to ensure that the Club ran smoothly. His hard work and expertise have not gone unnoticed, the Augusta Boston Club is well known and respected by its fellow organizations. Ending his six year presidency in December, Andrea pledged with the new administration to continue to work for the advancement and growth of the Augusta Boston Club.

Dear Jim,

This has been a long time coming. Charlie always sends me the newsletter, now I'll get my own. I look forward to the annual reunions and of course, The West Ender.

Love, Dione LaRosa

Enclosed is my subscription. Thank you Mr. Editor, Publisher for all your efforts to maintain all our nostalgia, events and photos. Can't wait for the next issue. God Bless.

Margaret & Frank Spinale

Thanks for all the effort to make this newspaper work so well.

Rosalind LaFond

Really enjoy the paper

Dear Jim,

Enclosed please find my check to cover the costs associated with my renewed membership, as well as the listing in the Memorial Circle.

Keep up the good work. We enjoy the paper, especially articles and photographs directed toward the good old West End.

Sincerely,

Joseph Interrante

Enclosed is my subscription. Thank you Mr. Editor, Publisher for all your efforts to maintain all our nostalgia, events and photos. Can't wait for the next issue. God Bless.

Margaret & Frank Spinale

Thanks for all the effort to make this newspaper work so well.

Rosalind LaFond

Joseph Morello, President Salvatore Pustizzi, and Past President Andrea Costa

Thank you for a wonderful paper.

Nat Spinale

We look forward to receiving and reading The West Ender.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert R. Fallavollita

Thanks for the reminder. Always looking forward to the West Ender for news of old friends and events. Keep up the good work.

Joe Paci

We look forward to each issue of The West Ender.

Sylvia Werner

Thanks for the great job you are doing.

John Cucinotta
DiMare brothers from the West End

The five DiMare Brothers playing their legendary “Whist Game” exclusively played among the brothers. The photo shows them playing cards at their “cold water flat” at 24 Hale Street, 4th floor in the West End, over 50 years ago. They have since upgraded their respective residences. (l-r) Joe DiMare, Sammy DiMare, Jimmy DiMare, Johnny DiMare, Dom DiMare. (photo submitted by Joe DiMare, presently residing in California.)

Frank Privitera (center) with the DiMare brothers. The photo was taken by Joe DiMare 30 years ago (1978). Frank Privitera is a prominent attorney (formerly from Hale St., West End). He was a close, personal friend of the DiMare brothers. (l-r) Dom DiMare, Sam DiMare, Attorney Frank Privitera, Joe DiMare and Jimmy DiMare. Frank Privitera, a West Ender and eminent Boston philanthropist, was a close, personal and best friend of Joe DiMare when the two lived on Hale St. (photo submitted by Joe DiMare, presently living in Calif.)

Pictured left to right are Giuseppe Lanzerotta, Salvatore Bramante, Joseph Morello, Andrea Costa, Judge Santo Ruma, Francis Privitera, Phillip Privatera with his son Payton, and Giovanni Noe

Augusta Boston Club Honors
Honorable Santo J. Ruma

On October 11, 2008 the Augusta Boston Club honored one of it’s distinguished members Santo J. Ruma, with the Augusta Boston Club High Achievement Award.

The Honorable Santo J. Ruma was born and brought up in the tight knit neighborhood of the West End of Boston. The West End was home to many immigrants from Europe and especially from Italy. Of the Italians who settled there, a large percentage came from the wonderful city of Augusta, Sicily.¹

So it came to pass that in the early 1900’s judge Ruma’s father, Joseph Ruma, left Augusta, Sicily and arrived in the West End of Boston with his parents. Here he met and married Mary Pustizzi, Boston born daughter of Augustanese parents. The family grew with the addition of four children, and Joseph Ruma established a fruit and produce business.

In 1949, the Ruma family left the West End for the suburb of Medford, Massachusetts. Santo Ruma transferred from the Boston school system to the Medford school system, from which he graduated and entered Boston University in 1958. During this period, he continued to travel to the West End to work at his father’s business.

Upon receiving his Bachelor’s degree, he continued on at Boston University Law School and graduated in 1965. His legal career found him practicing business, real estate, and commercial litigation. In 1977, Santo Ruma opened a private practice in Boston. He served as counsel to several state agencies and drafted the first state wide regulations governing wetlands protection. Santo J. Ruma was appointed as an Associate Justice in 1983 and retired as the Presiding Justice of the Peabody District Court in 2006.

Judge Ruma has always been and continues to be involved in educational and charitable endeavors. He resides in Winchester, Massachusetts with his wife Joan.

Judge Ruma followed in the footsteps of his Father and Grandfather in becoming a member of the Augusta Boston Club and it’s predecessor Augusta Fraternal Association which was founded in Boston’s West End in 1936 by immigrants from Augusta, Sicily.

Judge Santo J. Ruma was honored for his commitment to preserving the ideals and traditions of his heritage, and for the fine example he has set for the Italian community.

Remember me? Still the same....

Hi,

I enjoy The West Ender paper. I enjoy seeing how people from the West End have changed in looks and stories. Keep up the good West Ender.

Here is my 2009 money.

Joe (Chicky) Shochat

PS Wonder if people remember me still? I have same smile, looks, laugh too and new clothes and some old?!! Hello to all!

Remembering all our loved ones

Dear Joe,

I spoke to you a while back, in regard to having my husband’s obituary in the paper. Sorry for the delay, I hope we are not to late for the March issue.

I am sending a donation to help this wonderful paper keep going. I would like to say hello to near and far friends in the West End. My maiden name was Isaacson.

Sincerely,

Leah Guertin

To whom it may concern,

Enclosed is a check for my for subscription and in memory of my dear husband who died in July of 2004. William J. Sharrio (Bill). He lived at 139 Brighton St. in the West End.

Good luck and thanks.

His wife,
Rita Sharrio

Hi,

Here is my check for my subscription and the rest toward expenses. I send this in memory of my husband, Larry Savoia. Thank you very much.

Connie Savoia

Please renew my West Ender subscription and use the bit extra as needed. In memory of my dad, John Saraceno.

Carol Williams

Enclosed is my check for my renewal for March 2009. I have enclosed extra in memory of my brother Patrick Palmisano.

Thank You,
Camille Palmisano

Great memory newspaper

Friends!

Thanks for the reminder of renewal of the great memory newspaper, check for which is enclosed.

Someday I plan to share with you some of the many vignettes I experienced while a 12 year old shining shoes in my Dad’s barber shop on Green St. (Al the Barber). Best wishes and good luck in your efforts to keep the “Old West End” alive.

Joe & Ceil Franchina

2009 West Enders Century Club

The following West Enders have contributed $100 or more to our cause in 2009. We salute them! Now is the time to send your check in the amount of $100 if you are interested in becoming a member.

Beth & Marshall Arkin  Paul & Joyce Dembicki  Nino Parisi
Santo Aurelio  Alan Gropman  Frank Privitera
Salvatore Bramante  Bruce Guarino  Judge Santo Ruma
Anna Cohen  Kevin McGrath  Richard Terranova
Victor DeMarco  Leonard Nimo  Robert Vatalaro

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Russell G. Guertin

Russell G. Guertin, of Allston formerly of the West End, died on January 23, 2009.

He was the beloved husband for over 55 years to Leah (Isaacson). Devoted father of Steven E. of Allston. Brother of John McGinty of Mashpee, Douglas McGinty of Somerville, Lois Lacy and Yvonne Shaugnessey both of OH and the late Rita Brenner and Janet Rockford. Son of the late Edward Guertin and Rose McGinty. Loving grandpa to Steven Russell Guertin and Michael Morrow. Also survived by many dear friends. Mr. Guertin was an Army veteran of the Korean war.

Donations in memory of Russell may be made to the Salvation Army, 147 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116 or to a charity of your choice.

The Guertin family would like to express their gratitude to the staff of Brigham & Women's Hospital and especially to Dr. Sweeney, Dr. Charles Morris, and Dr. Samuel Goldhaber.

Salvatore P. “Sal” Sacoco

Salvatore P. “Sal” Of Stoneham, formerly of Medford and the West End of Boston, died on January 17.


Mr. Sacoco was a late U.S. Army veteran of WWII.

Funeral was from the Dello Russo Funeral Home, Medford. Burial was at Oak Grove Cemetery, Medford.

Bernard W. Baker Sr.

Bernard W. Baker, Sr. of West Somerville, formerly of the West End of Boston, died on December 7.

He was the beloved husband of the late Leona (Giannelli). Loving father of Stefanie Merrill and her husband Steven of Burlington, Pamela Chaves and her husband Danny of Somerville, Dean Baker and his wife Rita of Somerville, Bernard W. Baker, Jr. and his wife Lisa of Reading. Brother of James Baker and the late John Baker. Grandfather of Cailyn, Caleigh, Cameron, and Christopher Merrill, Jillian Chaves, Deano, Julia, Jessica and Haley Baker.

Memorials in Bernie's name may be made to Merrimack Valley Hospice, 360 Merrimack St., Building 9, Lawrence, MA 01843.

Joseph Arena

Joseph Arena, off Burlington formerly of the West End of Boston, died on January 24, 2009.

He was the beloved husband of the late Mary (Lillian Zinkowski) Arena and loving father of Deborah and her husband John Hogan, loving grandfather of Alicia Hogan, beloved son of the late James and Rose (DeFranzo) Arena and loving brother of the late Rose Noe and Marie Gigiants.

Mr. Arena was a late veteran of the USAF WWII and the Korean Conflict. He was a B-24 Bomber Squadron Pilot. Late graduate Norwich University. Retired Civil Engineer BPW of the Commonwealth of MA. Usher at St Margaret's Church Burlington and past president of the Burlington K of C. He held many offices in the Burlington Housing Authority during the last 24 years. His hobbies included traveling, golf, cards and the lottery.

Interment was in Pine Haven Cemetery, Burlington MA. Contributions in his wife's memory may go to the Alzheimer's Assoc., MA Chapter, 311 Arsenal St., Watertown, MA, 02472.

Joseph J. Scarlata

Joseph J. Scarlata, 77, of Brockton, died on Dec. 22, 2008. He was a native of West End of Boston, a Boston Gas Company retiree, forever remembered as kind, patient, gentle, easy-going and good-natured, and will be deeply missed.

He was the beloved husband of Loretta "Micky" (Flynn) for 55 years. Loving father of Tina Haskell, Kristen Rose and Sean. Brother of Leo J. Jr. of West Somerville, Lois Dean Baker and his wife Rita of gentle, easy-going nature, the late Edward Scarlata and the late John Baker. Grandfather of Keith W. and Eric Chaves, Deano, Julia, Jessica and Haley Baker.

IN MEMORIAM Frank (Spinale) Paris

Former West Ender Frank Spinale, better known in the blues world as Frankie Paris, passed away suddenly in New York on October 5, 2008. He started his music career in the West End, singing acapella with "The Crescents" and turned professional in New York in the early 60s. He toured the U.S. and Europe extensively and worked at just about every rock 'n roll and blues venue in New York City. Along the way, he formed a number of bands, including "The City Boys" and "Cold Sweat," cutting numerous albums and singles in the process. A new album "The Way I Feel,′ featuring his last blues band, "The Bad Boys," will be released shortly. Frankie is terribly missed by everyone who ever met him. But, fortunately, his music will live on. For a brief glimpse of his life in music, please visit www.frankieparis.com. You will be impressed.

Please send condolences to his wife, Linda Spinale: 52 Pine Street, Great Falls, SC 29055 or spinale917@yahoo.com.

Note: We'll be running a complete story on Frankie in our next issue, including information on ordering his last album plus a full-length performance on DVD, "Frankie Paris Live At Terra Blues." Don't miss it.

In Memoriam

Jack, Miriam and Frank Gropman from Alan Gropman

Catherine Loguidice and Mario Stancato from Charlie LaRosa

Patrick Palmisano from Carmella Palmisano

Joseph and Anita Russo, Donald and Sylvia Grey, Moe Guarino, Joe Solano and Carmine Steriti from Vincent J. Russo

Larry Savoia from Connie Savoia

Bill Sharrio from Rita Sharrio

Barney and Ida Sheff, Lillian Sheff Wallack, Ruth Sheff Rosenberg, and Manny Sheff from Dr. Michael Sheff

John Saraceno from Carol Williams
Once a year a CD comes across my desk with an opening cut that feels so good, so right, that I hit “repeat” until I wear it out. First thing in the morning while shaving; another five or six plays cruising downtown. The next ten cuts I could care less about. This one song utters my life, gives form and momentum to the tangled, surging feelings of the moment.

“Right Around the Corner,” the lead cut and debut CD from Frankie Paris and Cold Sweat (Bahoomba Music), is this year’s nominee. I’m surprised. I’ve known Frankie for more than ten years in a casual way as a fellow member of the New York blues scene some he’s presided at jam sessions, invited me up to blow harp at his gigs more than a few times and such familiarity can breed over familiarity. You think you know somebody; they’re a part of the furniture. I’ve always enjoyed Frankie’s singing, always known he was skilled, passionate, inventive, wise, fearlessly energetic. He always had a kind of polished but heightened showmanship that made me think Vegas, but with a Goodfellas edge, a gruff salty harshness. I’d just never quite known where to place him. (Maybe I was suffering from reverse prejudice, a sense that “white blues singer” is a dose but no cigar proposition. Maybe I was seeing him without quite hearing him.) Then I got his CD. Catchy originals, sidemen who know how to groove and when to cut loose, and a talented veteran belting it out with cracking finesse. And that addictive opening track, a funky sax driven blues about romance on the sly. Where did this guy come from?

This national class soul man from my own backyard. I drove out to Queens to find out.

He is, in his own way, the quintessential New York blues artist, with a survivor’s story to tell. Born Frank Daniel Spinale “Spinal ALLEY,” he pronounces it in 1941, Frankie Paris has had many musical lives. The last fifteen years it’s been blues dubs, but before that it was doo wop, a stint with Dawn (before Tony Orlando), hard time in Vegas, and dues paying with something called the Purple Haze Band. “I knew Hendrix,” he said. “He used to come and see me at Cafe Wha? in the Village.” His most recent band has been working three nights a week for several years at Arthur’s Tavern, just off Sheridan Square. We sat down at his kitchen table and rolled tape.

I grew up with my grandparents, my dad’s parents. And I was brought up by them. Didn’t get along too well with my dad. My mom passed away within the first year I was born.

I love Z. Z. Hill, I love Little Milton. But a lot of my sound came from singers a lot of them were really unknown, but they recorded. There was the Swan Silvertones. They were black. Mostly black gospel in Boston. I grew up with all of that. And then from that I went into listening to people like Little Willie John, who was an underrated singer, but great in his own right. Because he was able to go from blues to R&B to pop music, he had that flexibility. I wanted to be a flexible singer as well. My roots go back to ... it’s blues based, but I’m able to stretch out depending on the gig. You know, for survival.

In 1953, the first R&B record I ever heard was a single by a group called the Crows. Singing groups were becoming very famous in the early fifties. And the Crows did a song called “Gee.” I guess that was considered a commercial hit at the time. Fats Domino, and then about a year later, Little Richard and Chuck Berry and all those guys were just starting to come into their own. Jackie Wilson, Clyde McPhatter.

I got into the records first. I either bought their records or I heard them on the radio, in Boston. There wasn’t many blues stations available. You know, I was the kid in the neighborhood when everybody was listening to Buddy Holly and Elvis Presley, I was listening to everybody else BUT these people. Jimmy Reed, Little Williejohn. I said “Man, THAT’S singing! That’s the way it’s supposed to be done.” So that was my attitude. All my friends were out there saying, Hey man, check out Presley, and I’d say, Yeah, that’s good, okay. But I would go and get Clyde McPhatter records, or I would get the early Coasters.

People would say, Frankie, why are you buying this album I’d say I’m buying this album because it’s real. I was living in a predominantly white world. Except for a few black families, and mostly Italians. The West End of Boston, which is now a Government Center.

I spent a lot of time in my room by myself I would play records and sing along, cause I knew nobody else would appreciate ‘em. They’d say What the hell are you playing, man? What is this music, it’s like jungle music, man! That was the word that they used in those days. My ear told me a lot of white groups would cover black music. A group like the Crewcuts. They did it very watered down. They did their version of it. But if you play the original version by the Chords, it is night and day. I used to hear both versions on the radio. But I’d go out and buy what I heard on the rhythm and blues stations, not the white stations. My grandmother got to the point she’d say, “What the hell are you listening to?” And I’d say, “Ma, I like Perry Como, I think Perry Como’s good, but I’m a young guy and I wanna hear what the music’s supposed to be like. I wanna sing, I don’t wanna bullshit nobody. I don’t wanna water down nothing.”

I found a bunch of guys who felt the same way: the Crescents.

That was my first vocal group, in 1958. And I realized then that I could harmonize. I had an ear for it. That was my first training, to be with three other singers and myself. We’d do gigs anywhere. If they said Go to Ethiopia and do a gig for ten dollars a man, we would have done it. I was seventeen.

We did a lot of what they called record hops. The local DJ of the station in your town would run a dance at some kind of big hall that they would rent out. They would pay us like gas money to arrive. Sometimes there was a band at the record hop. Most of the gigs were a cappella. Doo wop. Predominantly the audience was white, except for a few. And the kids were waiting for more of Dion and the Belmonts. And we were covering the Harptones. I had a big pompadour and all that. You know. We had black pants with white jackets. V neck t shirt. Come on and snap your fingers.

I started in ’58 with the Crescents, and we were together for three years. And I finally said I don’t know what I want to do with my life. Do I want to get into this business? I always wanted to be a nightclub singer. If I can make a living doing that, I’ll be fine. And I said, How am I gonna go about this? Well let me go in the dubs, I cause I know I can make a living by the week. And in between that, I’ll see what I can do recording-wise. Where am I gonna go? What direction am I gonna be in?

Who am I? I was still at the discovery stage. Who is Frankie Paris, and where does he come vocally, and what is he gonna be about?

I took the name Paris from another singer I saw in Boston who was working in the clubs. You know he was a very straight, white American kind of singer. He was almost like a Bobby Vinton. But he had the name Bobby Paris. And I said, I need a name that is gonna be easy, Americanized. I’m not gonna use anything Italian that looks like you own a pizzeria or something like that! So I changed it up. Most Italian American artists, like Frankie Avalon, Fabian, they all changed their names because it made it easy for the public to re-
The Frankie Paris story

Continued from page 9

Was I ever hurt by a girl? Oh shit. I had a girl a long time ago I was nineteen, she was seventeen. You get somebody who loves you more than... I mean you cherish her, like I did, and then she turns around and deceives you? On that lowdown, gutbucket level, so low that a roach couldn’t even crawl under your foot. Yeah, I know all about that. Women became my drug. I stayed away from the hard stuff, though, whatever was floating around in the some back then. Just women.

I used to go uptown in Boston, and there was the whole strip of dubs. By the time I hit the scene in 1960, a lot of the dubs were black and white audiences, which was cool. A lot of vocal groups were coming in. Every weekend I’d go up there, see who was playing, say, Oh man, this is great. I wasn’t even thinking of recording at the time. First I got to pay my dues. So I used to go to the various dubs every weekend, and they’d have what they called Talent Shows. They’d have people come up. And I’d say, Well now, what song am I gonna do? In 1959, the Falcons, with Wilson Pickett in the lead, had a song called “You’re So Fine.” So I used that song to enter talent shows. And this is not to brag, but all the talent shows that I did, I won at least eight out of ten. I’d get like fifteen dollars. That was a big deal. So it was also my chance to test myself and see, Do I really have it for the general public? Do I have what it takes if I’m gonna pursue a career working in New York, and record, and try to get a band, and whatever it was?

I did that weekly, almost weekly. This was the proving ground. And the reaction was always positive. And so I said, All right. I’m convinced I’m gonna become a singer. Maybe I’ll go into rhythm and blues or whatever, I cause I wanted to get mainstream. I wanted to make money. But I didn’t forget all the blues I used to listen to, either.

Then in 1962 I ventured into New York by myself and just came herewith eighty bucks in my pocket on a Greyhound bus, with one suitcase. And asked somebody, Can you tell me where Broadway is? I swear to God, man. Like in a movie. And some guy looked at me, he said, Make a left here, and that’ll lead you right into Broadway. He said: Good luck, kid.

So he knew! I was about twenty two.

I said to myself, This is Broadway. The lights, the movie theaters. Continued on page 11

Jim: Had meant to send this. A great photo of Frankie with group. He looks very strong and determined. Proud of what he does. Note that the photo is autographed to one of “The Crescents,” Jack Carroll.

Jack Carroll

Looking for photos of Cassaro’s Bakery

I would love it if anyone has any photos of Cassaro’s Bakery on South Margin St. My e-mail is lisa.cassaro@yahoo.com

Lisa Cassaro

Will be at church reunion

Enclosed is my check for renewal of The West Ender. I really enjoy reading it. I’ll be back for the church reunion, since I graduated from St. Joseph’s in 48.

Thanks again,

Jane Ralston

Thanks for the memories!

Hi Guys,

We love The West Ender. Lots of great memories especially when reading the paper. Enclosed is a check plus extra for publishing expenses. Love you guys.

God Bless,

Marie and Eddie Sicari

Enclosed is my subscription and some extra for publishing a great paper. Thanks for the memories to my childhood and teen years from McLean Ct

Best wishes for 2009.

Irene Collyer

Thanks for the memories, and a wonderful link with home and the past.

Catherine Curtis

Enjoy reading the paper, keep it coming, brings back old memories.

Selma and Louis Ferullo

Thank you for the many memories of past years thru The West Ender. We can never forget our West End, and all the wonderful friends. Our families and friends had to move, but our thoughts and wonderful memories are still there. God bless.

Ralph (Freddie) & Mary Mele

Thank you, for preserving the memories of the West End experiences that shaped our lives. Enclosed is my subscription to The West Ender. Best wishes.

Steve Maio

Thank you Jim. Nothing can ever take the place of the West End.

Fred Shulman

Please continue my subscription for the coming year. I look forward to every issue. Thanks for the memories.

Frank Fischella

32 Wall St.
**I'm complete!**

Thank you, Jim,
Enclosed is a check for my dues and thanks for sending me The West Ender again as I never received the original Dec. issue. Now I am complete!
Wishing everyone a very happy, healthy New Year. Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Kathy Deary, Corso D'Aloisio

**Brings back little a bit of home**

Hi Jim;
Keep up the good work, as you help in bringing a little bit of home back into our lives.

Joe DiMare
P.S. the little extra to cover mailing

**Makes my day**

I am enclosing my check and a little extra to renew my subscription to The West Ender. Your paper makes my day.

Thank you,
Dorothy (Kushinsky) Suddenfield

**Riverside Club shout out**

Here's a little extra to keep the paper going. Bless all my friends from the Riverside Club and Allen St.

Jim Milloni

**Please renew**

Please renew my subscription and I have enclosed some extra $$ to help with costs.

Gerald Feld

**Help Us to Help You**

The West Ender is compiling an e-mail database. Send your e-mail address to rnedd@comcast.net so we can inform you about West End functions & events.

**The Frankie Paris story**

**Continued from page 10**

I walked straight up there. And then I saw this pool hall. It said "Ames." That's where they made that movie, The Hustler, with Paul Newman. And I met this guy, who was also in a singing group. His name was Al Vega. He was married at the time. And I said, I just got here. And he said, Well man, you can stay with me in my house. And then him and I got together, went to Broadway a week later, and met two other guys.

The first was this guy playing a guitar, kinda shabby dressed. He came from Washington, D.C., he's standing on the corner playing. He had a homemade electric guitar that he made 'cause he couldn't afford to go buy one. He was singing rhythm blues. I said, Wow, he sounds good. So me and Al said, Hey man, sounds great! We're trying to put a vocal group together. So we started singing. And the harmonies sounded great! Just like that. So then we walked farther up towards the Ed Sullivan Theater, the three of us. And this guy comes down the street, his name is Chuck Howard. He used to be with the Flamingoes. He hears us singing. And then he goes, Hey, let's do something.

He sang baritone. And in those days, I was a real high first tenor. So we put this all together. We had three lead singers: Chuck Howard, myself, and Glen Hockaday. Glen was black, but he was part American Indian. This was my first interracial group. Al Vega was Spanish, the other two guys were black, and I'm Italian American. I was the only cream of the Oreos in there.

We started singing in the streets. Later on we got the name the Wonders.

There was this rehearsal studio at 1697 Broadway, at 53rd Street. We rented a hall, for like a buck and a half. You could rent a whole hall with a piano, like a rehearsal room. And we started rehearsing, singing different songs, saying, Yeah, we can do this. So we were doing our thing in there, and next room over was a production company. Independent producers were the thing at that time. So they send somebody over. Knocks on our door, says, Hey we heard your sound, man. We love it. Would you guys be interested in recording? Just like the movies. And I said sure. Come to find out these guys are independent producers, there's four of them, and they're the Tokens, the ones that made "The Lion Sleeps Tonight." They said, You got any original material? We said, We just got together. They said, Yeah but the sound is interesting. Go write some songs. Come back on Monday.

So we went to Glen Hockaday's house in Brooklyn, wrote two songs, came back on Monday. They heard one song, they loved it, they signed us to a two year contract. We recorded. Two months later we had a record out, "Say There." The B side was "Marilyn," written by the Tokens themselves. I'm singing tenor. It did very well, got a lot of airplay, started climbing up the charts, and then Charlie Koppelman and Don Kirshner left the label, new people came in, and they lost the promotion. It made it to about seventy fifth place on the charts.

We met everybody on Broad-

**Thank you for the book review**

Dear Jim,
What a pleasant surprise to see that review of my book, "Urban Villagers," in the current issue. It's the first one, I think, from a West Ender and if you are in touch with Mr. Vatalaro, give him my thanks for a careful reading and the nice things he said about the book.
Happy holidays and a great 2009 too.

Herb Gans

**Time flies by**

Hi Jim,
Can't believe another year has passed. How are things at the West End Museum going?
Keep up the good work and hopefully we'll see each other at the West End Mass.

Eleanor (Spinale) Venezia

Dear Jim,
It's time to renew. Where did the year go—wow! Best wishes to all West Enders.

Al Grosser

**The years are flying by**

Dear Jim and hello to fellow West Enders;
Enclosed is a check for The West Ender. Years are flying by and we're still, more or less, keeping in touch. When The West Ender arrives, everything is put on hold till it's completely read. What memories it brings. Thank you Jim for making this possible.

Sincerely,
Ida Caccia Ordwa
The following West Enders have donated above the subscription amount:

- Rose Abaid
- Lorraine Alessandro
- Jay Almeida
- Beth & Marshall Arkin
- Thomas Arria
- Santo Aurelio
- Ruth Berg
- Beatrice Berkman
- Joe Bianco
- Lillian Bockser
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Buy 300 fundraising tickets & we have our condo fees for the year (condo fees are $1200 a mo.)

PLEASE HELP!!