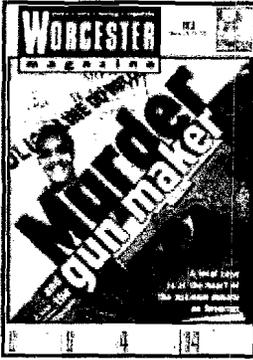




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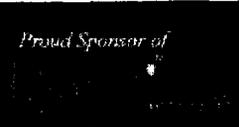
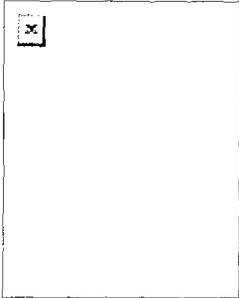
# WORCESTERIA

By Scott Zoback

• **EARLY RELEASE:** The “transitions” at the Worcester County District Attorney’s Office have begun; as of press time, eight staffers had reportedly not been re-appointed by new DA **Joe Early**, with rumors several more are on the chopping block in the next few days. It’s a tough situation. While he has spoken of putting his own impression on the office, Early also reportedly took the personnel moves very seriously and didn’t want to embarrass anyone. According to an anonymous courthouse source, the released staffers span from administrative to motor vehicle homicide and trial lawyers (both Superior Court and District Court), and include District Court Assistant DA **Robert Iacovelli**, Superior Court trial lawyer **Mike Ball**, Conte daughter-in-law and administrator **Keri Hoenig**, Motor Vehicle Homicide Division ADA **Jeffrey Goldstein**, Superior Court ADA **David Johnson**, Leominster District Court ADA **Chris White**, Fitchburg District Court ADA **J. Todd Mathieson**, and Victim-Witness Advocacy Director **Tony Pelligrini**.

• **DISTRICT 1 IN YOUR HEARTS:** Rookie City Councilor **Joff Smith** has picked up some competition for his seat, in the guise of local activist **Sam Rosario**. Both candidates are getting ready for a huge, early push: Rosario is telling people he has about \$10,000 raised; Smith is planning his “official” announcement at Castellana’s for Feb. 1, and says he is going to run a bigger campaign than last time. Read “bigger” as “more competitive.” Smith takes any sort of challenge very personally, and has an already infamous competitive streak. While he says, “I welcome him [Rosario] to the race,” and that he’s going to go about “business as usual,” Smith gives a nod to the fact that he’s not going to run “easy.” “I’m going to go out and campaign just as hard as I always have ... raise money, work hard, and put me in a good position ....” Smith says he’s trying to raise \$20,000 at the February event, on top of the roughly \$7,500 he already has in the bank.

• **REP’S RACE GETS BUSY:** The race for that empty 14th District seat vacated by **Jim Leary** is getting crowded, quick. The newest candidate to officially file papers is Greendale resident **Paul Shea**. He joins Worcester City Councilor **Phil**



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**Palmieri** and West Boylston resident **Jim O'Day** with at least three or four other possible candidates feeling out the scene. Candidates have until mid-March to file their initial papers. It also looks like 17th District Rep. **John Binienda** will have an opponent in 2008; **Scott Broskey** of Leicester recently filed papers for the that contest.

• **KONNIE'S 100 HOURS:** So the world didn't implode with Konnie at the helm for her first official Council meeting; in fact, aside from a few little incidents (City Clerk **David Rushford** called her "Mayor Murray" during a vote) everything went smoothly. New (returning) councilor **Dennis Irish** made his presence known immediately, with floor speeches and referrals, like he had never gone away; Lukes banged her gavel on a couple occasions to quiet down some of her talkative colleagues; and everything went basically (with the exception of **Nat Needle**, below) as it always does.

• **PEROTTO'S PLAN:** But if you want evidence of how Council business gets done behind the scenes, there was this: It's been known for at least two weeks that **Michael Perotto**, after a bit of politicking, had garnered unanimous support from his colleagues for the vice-chair slot, a position left open for the term's remainder when **Konnie Lukes** ascended to the mayor's chair. So it was no surprise when nominations opened early in Tuesday's meeting that he was immediately nominated (by **Joe Petty**). And, before a breath could be drawn, the nomination was seconded — by about five other councilors. The nominations were immediately closed, a unanimous vote was taken, and, before anything else was done, Perotto received his new nameplate reading "Vice-Chair." Yeah, that wasn't planned.

• **NEEDLING:** The other hubbub at Council was a ukulele-infused ballad by activist **Nat Needle** apparently titled "Put down your dukes, **Konnie Lukes**." The entire four-minute ditty garnered a combination of laughs, looks of horror, and plain confusion from the councilors and city employees. It's understandable. Some of the rhymes ("**Palmieri** ... finds you scary," "**Mike Perotto** ... blotto ...." were straightforward; others were confusing. (You can interpret "**Kate Toomey** ... bloomy" any way you want) City Manager **Michael O'Brien**, apparently not a fan of the tune ("Yeah, he's crying,") left his seat at one point to sit with his staff, only returning after Needle was done. Even Needle seemed to recognize the absurdity of the situation. "Only in Worcester," he ended. o

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