

# Alumni Connection

*Linking the leaders of the Valley  
with knowledge and education*

## In This Issue

<b>Upside Down Is Slow</b>	page 1
LBV Greenway team races to 39th place finish	
<b>LBV Class of 2004</b>	page 3
A listing of participants in the current LBV class	
<b>Political Advocacy Workshop - Recap</b>	page 4
Group learns dos and don'ts of political advocacy	
<b>Alumni Association Scholarship</b>	page 4
Christian Desrosiers awarded Alumni scholarship	
<b>North Smithfield Backs LBV</b>	page 5
Two town residents receive LBV Scholarships	
<b>Report Illegal Dumping</b>	page 5
Steps you can take to stop river abuse	
<b>Grow Smart Rhode Island</b>	page 5
Sign up for Grow smart Rhode Island e-news	
<b>Miss Fits Beat To A Different Drummer</b>	page 6
Leadership based on hard work, and fun	
<b>BV Leaders Sought For Study</b>	page 7
Amphitheater planning in the works	
<b>Alumni On The Move</b>	page 7
<b>Upcoming Events</b>	page 9

## Upside Down

Is

Slow



By Jim Bates, Jr.

It seems as if it was just last weekend that the LBV team took to the roads, river and paths of the Blackstone Valley to compete in the Greenway Challenge. The feeling that the event just took place is probably because of the energy and excitement it creates. I had one team member say he's ready to do it all over again next weekend.

This year's team consisted of 5 graduates from LBV and 3 friends of team members:

<b>Jim Bates Jr.</b>	Winter 2002
<b>Tony Deller</b>	Winter 2002
<b>John Flaherty</b>	Winter 2002
<b>Greg Maas</b>	Winter 2003
<b>Michael Peterson</b>	Winter 2002

**Jed Marshall**  
**Cliff Marshall** - a dynamic father and son duo.

**Scott Rossiter** - recruited by Jim Bates and also the volunteer president of the BVCC Education Foundation.

As I waited at Riverdale Mill to pick up our first participant and delivery him to Worcester I wasn't sure if the weather was going to cooperate. Earlier that morning the rain was coming down and it wasn't looking all that great. But Mother Nature was just having fun with us. The sun came out and it turned out to be an unbelievably beautiful day. You couldn't have asked for better weather for the event.

Having a little more experience in the event, the team this year was able to improve on the finishing time - we finished 39 out of 62 teams. It's quite possible we could have finished inside the top thirty if I had been more successful running from Stanley Woolen Mill to Plummers Landing.



Mike Peterson and Greg Maas have the LBV canoe steamin' through Uxbridge.

This may not be the proper time to announce my retirement from the running segment, but it gives other grads plenty of time to think about taking on the running legs next year.

The support from team members was tremendous. All were on time and in place as the wristband was passed on. I truly enjoyed

working with the group. It went so smoothly that at this time I have no problem committing to being a Team Captain next year.

The following are statements from team members after participating in the event.

"What I noticed most about the day was the energy. This energy went far beyond the actual competition, but was more about feeling that we can make good things happen in the Blackstone Valley" [Cliff Marshall](#)

"Wow! What fun. Sign me up for next year. I'm pumped. I'd do it again this weekend." [Greg Maas](#)

"The few times I've been on the river I'm immediately struck by how you instantly feel you're in the wilderness, even though you're quite aware civilization is close by. It's truly refreshing since most times we're so busy zooming up and down the highways. It's a treasure more people need to experience, something I've only done by participating in LBV." [Tony Deller](#)

"I think the most compelling result of the canoe leg was that we proved the Blackstone is not only not swim able/fishable, but also DRINKABLE - and in 2003 not 2015" [John Flaherty](#)

"After careful consultation with Greg ( My Partner of the Day) we were able to confirm that a canoe is meant to ride on top of the water, not beneath ( as other members of our team thought)" [Michael Peterson](#).

"Wow, what enthusiasm, excitement, competition." [Jim Bates Jr.](#)

In closing I'd like to thank all team members and support staff who assisted the team in the event. A special thanks to the following: [Mike and Caroline Peterson](#) for helping out with providing the canoe and getting it to both landings. [Cliff Marshall](#) for 2 awesome bike legs, [Scott Rossiter](#) for the pictures and [Carole Donovan](#) for making sure we had the Team Tee- Shirts.

An additional special thanks needs to go out to all LBV volunteers and friends that help out at the many transition sites. They are truly what made the event move along.

A Truly Very Special Thanks goes out to [Barbara Dixon](#) and [Sue Barker](#), fellow graduates of LBV and Co-Chairs of this years Greenway Challenge. Awesome job!!

Remember, mark your calendars for Saturday, September 26, 2004 the Fourth Annual Greenway Challenge. •



Jed and Cliff Marshall execute a perfect handoff.

The 2003/2004 LBV Class is off and running. Here's a list of the current participants, along with their professional or volunteer organizations and towns of residence.

- Lance Anderson** Heritage Design Group  
Uxbridge, MA
- Mary Lou Anderson** Planning Board  
Millville, MA
- Irene Blais** Museum of Work and Culture  
Volunteers in the Park  
Woonsocket, RI



- Carolann Bombard** Grafton Job Corp  
Worcester, MA
- Anne Conway** Museum of Work & Culture  
Cumberland, RI
- Christian Desrosiers** WJ. Larrivee  
South Grafton, MA
- Joe DiGiallonardo** Alternatives  
Unlimited  
Millbury, MA

- Chris Foley** UniBank for Savings  
Grafton, MA
- David Fontaine** Prescott Chatellier  
Fontaine & Wilkinson  
Harrisville, RI
- Joe Garlick, Jr.** Woonsocket Neighbor-  
hood Development  
Corporation  
Providence, RI
- Hasan Hussain** American Development  
Partners, LLP  
Worcester, MA
- Mark Jewell** National Heritage  
Corridor  
Providence, RI
- Michele McGovern** Beaumont Nursing  
Homes  
Millbury, MA
- Katherine McKay** Mendon Upton Library  
District,  
Upton, MA
- Phyllis Nathanson** Blackstone Studios  
Providence, RI
- Colin Novick** The Greater Worcester  
Land Trust  
Worcester, MA
- Claire O'Hara** North Smithfield  
Schools  
North Smithfield, RI
- James Pardee (Tony)** Grafton Job Corps  
Webster, MA

- Jeanne Pennell** Blackstone Valley  
Chamber of Commerce  
Education Foundation  
Chair, Uxbridge School  
Committee  
Uxbridge, MA
- Louise Redding** National Heritage  
Corridor  
Uxbridge, MA
- Redford Salmon** Grafton Job Corp  
Leominster, MA
- Michael Seibold** Alternatives Unlimited  
Whitinsville, MA
- Alison Specter** Whittin Community  
Center  
Sutton, MA
- Lourdes Torres** CVS  
North Smithfield, RI
- Jeanne Zavada** Old Slater Mill  
Providence, RI



# Political Advocacy Workshop Recap



On September 19th, 30 people attended the Alumni Association's workshop on political advocacy.

John Gregory, Northern Rhode Island Chamber; Charlie Hawkins, Senator Lincoln Chafee's office; Michael Creasy, National Heritage Corridor and Bob Billington, National Heritage Corridor Commission, joined the group to talk about the dos and don'ts of political advocacy.

Below is a summary of some of the points made.

**Jurisdiction** - Determine who has jurisdiction over issues in your community. Federal legislators typically do not get involved in local issues. They may want to know about what's going on, but they will defer to the local folks. An exception is when federal money is involved.

**Politicians want to be asked** - Don't just inform them, ask them to do something specific.

**Get them out to see it** - Have your legislators tour a site, ride in a canoe, talk with the residents. Make sure you have a point person to manage the legislator's time.

**Get it to the press** - Getting media attention is value-added for the representative and your organization.

**Make friends with the legislator's staff** - Staff manage the legislator's schedule and are their source of information on the issues.

**Get to know the schedule** - The legislative calendar dictates the schedule for the legislators. Learn when they are out of session and when they spend time in their home districts.

**Make sure there are no surprises** - Know what will be going on when the legislator is at your event. Also know what other legislators, candidates and/or citizen activists will be on site.

**Think economics** -- Your issue translates into dollars: dollars spent, dollars raised

through taxes, etc. Be able to address the economic impact of your project.

**Be respectful of their time** - As with everyone, be aware of your goal for having them show up, identify the window of time you need them, communicate with the staff about your needs and get them in and out as soon as you can.

**Have fun & celebrate** - When you celebrate your success make sure your legislative supporters are invited. •

## Alumni Scholarship



Alumni President Carole Briggs Donovan recently presented the first Alumni Association scholarship to Christian Desrosiers.

The Alumni Association plans to award at least one scholarship each year to promote participation in Leadership Blackstone Valley. •

Town Support



North Smithfield Town Administrator Linda B. Thibault recognized the community benefit of LBV, so she publicly promoted it and then solicited local applicants for two scholarship awards.

Claire O'Hara of Summit Avenue and Lourdes Torres of Sayles Hill Road each received a scholarship from Thibault to participate in the program.

According to Thibault, "These two women stepped forward with a personal interest in leadership development for the benefit of their community and I'm proud of their selfless commitment to help provide visionary stewardship for the future of North Smithfield. This program provides an excellent opportunity to cultivate community leaders with a balanced, non-political, issues-driven curriculum."

The money was raised as part of a fundraiser held last March. "This is a great way for communities throughout the Blackstone River Valley to cultivate emerging leaders who want to give something back to their hometown," said John Flaherty, an LBV alumnus who assisted Thibault with the fundraiser.

"Imagine the potential of LBV and the benefit to the region if more cities and towns followed Thibault's lead".

## Report Illegal Dumping



By Paula Brouillette

Being a member of a Board of Selectman can be challenging and rewarding. Along with the challenges of budget constraints and rapid growth in our communities, there are smaller issues to be researched and solved. One such issue recently was the potential of illegal dumping in the Blackstone River.

I received a call from the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce. A citizen had called the Chamber to find out whom to contact about potential illegal dumping of debris from a truck into a river in Douglas. The Chamber called me to start the process.

First, we determined that the dumping had actually happened not in the Blackstone but Lackey Dam Pond in Sutton. At this point there are two alternatives to take for initial contact. One is the state Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the other is a local conservation official.

Local officials can reach the site quickly and assess the situation; DEP would be called in depending on the severity of the situation. In this particular situation, the information left by the citizen, who preferred to remain anonymous, was not sufficient to locate the actual site. But any such future occurrences should be directed to the local town administrator to coordinate local and state efforts to take action.



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## Leadership



### MISS FITS Beat To A Different Drummer

By Sue Gustafson

**Leadership is everywhere** in our lives even when we're having fun. Last month, **Barbara Dixon** put together an all-women team to compete in the September 6th Taiwanese Arts Festival Dragon Boat Race in Pawtucket, RI.

A dragon boat race is a team event. The boats are painted with decorative dragon heads and tails. The race is 500 meters long, and the crew is up to 22 members, including 20 paddlers, one steerer and one drummer. Paddlers sit in pairs facing the front of the boat, the steerer is in the back of the boat, and the drummer is at the front of the boat facing backwards. It is the job of the steerer to keep the boat on a straight course, and the drummer's job is to keep the pace of the paddle strokes by beating the drum. The steerer and the drummer command the boat.

Our team of mature businesswomen and residents from the Blackstone Valley practiced

for four weeks prior to the event. By race day, we were psyched and determined to compete for the grand prize of \$3,000. As a non-profit group representing the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, we had another cash opportunity of \$1,000.

The race was a series of elimination heats starting at 8 am. Our first race started at 9:30 am and by that time it was clear that our team was appropriately named the "MISS FITS." Wearing our green neon shirts, we stood out in the crowd. By the end of the day everyone knew who we were. Yet, we were not to be discouraged by the highly skilled, well-coordinated, young, and fit all-men teams. After all, we had **Linda McWhorter** as our drummer, **Sue Barker** as our steerer, and 14 capable women paddlers.

Our first heat was a disaster. We ran into the shoreline way before we were due and found that we had a boatful of chiefs and no Indians. However, with each heat we improved, showing that teamwork takes time and effort—our fundamental task for the remaining races.

We finished our 5th race with a respectable win over the ASIA team (the only other all-women team) to win the title for Division C. No money of course, but our small victory seemed grand. Overall, it was a gorgeous sunny day, an interesting cultural experience, and a good time with friends.

It was also a lesson in leadership. By the end of the day, our success was determined by

trust in our leaders, focus on the immediate task, and clarity of the goal. Who would think that crossing the finish line would be so tough?

So here we are, back to the beginning... leadership is crucial to any endeavor, large or small. It is a process and an investment but in the end it's truly rewarding as long as we remember to have a little fun along the way.

Thank you Barbara and all the other Miss Fits, and to **Lorraine Provencher** for sharing the RI Dynamite recipe - we had a great day!



Barbara Dixon  
Lorraine Provencher  
Linda McWhorter  
Phyllis Nathanson and sister Judy  
Judy  
Barbara O'Connor  
Lisa Moczynski  
Sue Gustafson  
Charlotte Robidoux  
Sue Barker  
Beckley Alley  
Sara Baker  
Irene Blais  
Amy Picard  
Beth Murray

Amphitheater

## Blackstone Valley Leaders Sought for Cultural Entertainment Study

By Alison Specter

I invite [leaders of the Blackstone Valley](#) (present and future) to join us in a Cultural Entertainment Study initiated by the Whitin Community Center, through a Heritage Partnership Grant from the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission. Our goal, under the direction of the Cultural Consulting Services of Wellesley, MA, is to evaluate the feasibility of building an amphitheater for regional benefit in historic Whitin Park.

This is a future objective within the Whitin Park Landscape Improvement Master Plan. Because of the natural slope of the terrain, it is an ideal setting for an amphitheater. Our master plan, created by landscape designer and local historian Barbara Gaudette, calls for the development of a variety of recreational aspects of the property—one of which is a site for musical and theatrical performances. The idea of building an amphitheater, although a long way down the road, is one the Corridor Commission is interested in and will work with us to research. A feasibility study will tell us

whether there is a market within our region to support the creation of a regional cultural center.

Consultant Andrea Kaiser, president of C.C.S., will work with the WCC steering committee to identify people throughout the Blackstone Valley to participate in focus groups. These groups will be asked to meet for a ninety-minute period scheduled in January to discuss how each person perceives the value of such an addition to our community. Potential uses will be identified and concerns will be expressed. Ms. Kaiser will summarize her findings during a public hearing. Based on the outcome of her feasibility study, the WCC Board of Trustees will determine the future course of action.

For more information about how you may participate on the steering committee or in a focus group, please call me at 508-234-8184 ext. 312 or email [aspecter@kersur.net](mailto:aspecter@kersur.net).

### LBV Alumni Connection

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LBV Alumni Connection is a publication of the Leadership Blackstone Valley Alumni Association - keeping alive and vibrant the relationships among community leaders in the Blackstone Valley.

Alumni on the Move

### Adam Gaudette

Jack Adam Gaudette was born on Tuesday, October 14, 2003 at 3:49 pm, weighing in at 7 lbs, 8.6 oz. Mom and baby are happy and healthy. Dad too.

### Sue Barker

I am traveling to Charleston SC in early November to the East coast Greenway Alliance Board meeting. I will take my Greenway Challenge materials with me to display at the trade show. I have already received my first request to help another watershed develop a similar event but just like a good cook, I will not release our secret ingredient!!!

I am also traveling to Lexington, Kentucky and Sergipe, Brazil at the end of November on a project for Partners of the Americas. Anyone interested in joining this organization cal talk to me. We are always looking for new partners who would like to meet people from South America and form partnerships to do good works. Do you think they would like to sponsor a team in the Greenway Challenge?

### Bill Fredericks

Beckley, I've been appointed to the newly formed Board of Directors at Assumption school in Millbury.

## Sue Gustafson

I joined the Blackstone Valley Tourism Committee as a result of LBV. It's amazing how rich the Valley is and what treasures are in our own back yard. Martha Wetzel and Janet Amerault do a wonderful job running the committee and moving the tourism effort forward. I'm helping the team create a promotional products program that will bring in additional funding to drive new tourism activities. It's great fun and a good education. Look for our Blackstone River Valley denim shirts, we'll be wearing them to promote product sales.

## Laura Bronwell

Laura was voted in as the First Vice President of the BVCC on Wednesday, October 22nd.

## Juliet Hansel Walker

As you all know, I left the Corridor Commission in May to work for the private sector. Taintor & Associates is a small (three person) planning consulting firm. Rick Taintor, previously based in Hopkinton and Ashland, has done a lot of work in the Blackstone Valley over the years and more recently was working on the Blackstone Valley Institute as a consultant to the Corridor Commission. Rick has since moved the firm to Newburyport, MA, but we still do work throughout Massachusetts, Rhode Island and now New Hampshire and Maine. Our clients are primarily municipalities and state agencies. We specialize in community and regional planning and do basically anything from downtown plans to scenic road by-laws. I hope you'll

check out our web site to get an idea of some of the projects we work on.

I'm still living in Northbridge and keeping in touch with Blackstone Valley happenings. I've been working a few days a week at home and enjoying the change of scene. The LBV Connection looked great! I look forward to hearing news from you all.

Taintor & Associates, Inc., 22 Unicorn St., PO Box 898, Newburyport, MA 01950-5598

(978) 462-0404 fax (978) 462-0107 [www.taintorassociates.com](http://www.taintorassociates.com)

## Charlie Thompson

I'm getting married on June 5, 2004 to Sue Garcia. We met at the Whittin Community Center when Sue came in (spring 2002) to do some volunteer work with Picnic In the Park and our 2003 calendar project.

## Diane Mackintosh

Diane was recently appointed to the Northbridge Board of Health by the Board of Selectmen.

## Kevin Rudden

Kevin, a member of the Mendon-Upton Regional Library District Building Committee, reports that the regional library proposal has been approved at town meetings in both communities and now awaits final voter approval from both towns in early November. "I used my knowledge gained from LBV to help present a rational, justifiable case for the new library."

## Suzanne Buchanan

Park Ranger at the JHCBRVNH has been chosen as the Northeast Region's Freeman Tilden nominee for 2003. Suzanne was nominated for the Blackstone Valley-Wide Interpretive Volunteer Program that's created an "army" of skilled interpretive volunteers throughout the National Heritage Corridor.

Suzanne will be in attendance in Sparks Nevada next month for the possibility of being nominated the National Freeman Tilden recipient, meaning "park ranger of the year award!"

## Jim Bates

My wife has gone back to work part time, 3 evenings a week so I'm not able to participate in as many things as in the past.

I attended a Manufacturing Conference last week in Worcester. The conference was on Lean Manufacturing. It's a manufacturing strategy that uses less of everything compared to traditional manufacturing. It focused on several aspects, primarily reducing inventories and waste elimination. This is a very aggressive approach to operating your manufacturing facility. •



## Upcoming Events

**Thursday, March 11, 2004**

The Alumni Association will be sponsoring a luncheon discussion with the current class of LBV and Paul Harrington from the Center for Labor Market Statistics, Northeastern University on the Economic Health of our Communities in the Blackstone Valley

### April Fun Follies

The Alumni Association will be hosting a Blackstone Valley Follies in the spring to bring us together with fun, laughter and friendship. Do you have a hidden talent?

### The Massachusetts Citizen's Legislative Seminar (CLS)

CLS was established in 1976 through the Massachusetts State Senate and the University of Massachusetts to provide a unique opportunity to both observe and participate in the legislative process.

Participants are selected from a wide variety of fields, representing both the public and private sectors. Once a week for six consecutive weeks, fifty participants gather in the Senate Reception Room for a three-hour period to examine the legislative process.

Topics include: The formal legislative process; The informal legislative process; Budget and fiscal policy; Outside influences; The senate's rules and procedures; and, The future of the legislature.

If you wish to attend this program contact your state senator who will then forward your name to the Legislative Education Office at 617-722-1380.

For an insider's look - contact Jim Bates (LBV, Winter, 2002) [jimbates@lampin.com](mailto:jimbates@lampin.com).