

A presentation of the T&G Ad Sales Division.

Harr raises the bar for playground

Harr Motor Companies' willingness to step forward as gold sponsor for an evening of comedy to benefit the Nelson Place PTO's drive to get a new playground built for students of the Indian Lake-area school typifies the strong support the effort has received to date, Nelson Place PTO VP and Playground Committee Chairperson **Beth Proko** says.

"It's just amazing how many generous people there are in our Worcester community," Proko said.

"Comedy Night," featuring veteran comedian Dick Doherty of Dick Doherty's Beantown Comedy Escape and guest comics Paul Nardizzi, Frank Foley, Steve Bjork, Carolyn Plummer, Greg Howell and Orlando Baxter, is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 3rd at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Lincoln Square. The event—for persons age 21 and older—will also feature music, raffles, a silent auction and food.

Nelson Place School children have been without a playground since 2003 when a previous structure was razed due to changes in code and a bee infestation. Fundraising for the \$60,000 project to replace that playground began in September 2007; donations by local businesses coupled with grants and creative initiatives including a can drive, a yard sale and marketing of CDs of the school's holiday show have generated about a third of the monies needed already.

"We haven't spent a cent," thanks to the outpouring of backing for the project, Proko said on March 5th at her husband Ed's Mill Street automotive dealership. "I keep thinking I'll wake up in a dream. We've raised \$20,000 in six months and we're still working on grants."

Officers and directors of the North Worcester Business Association (NWBA) voted at their March meeting to give \$200 to the cause.

Monies and in-kind donations so far have come from all of these sources: Harr on Gold Star, \$5,000; Home Depot, \$3,000; Saint Gobain,

Economou-RE/MAX Advantage One, \$1,000; Mill Street Motors, \$1000; Hoey Tire, \$1,000; "East Coast Coppers" Fundraiser, \$1,000; Forte Enterprises LLC, \$500; Holiday CDs, \$500; Sam's Club, \$500; Commonwealth National Bank, \$500; Leominster Credit Union, \$250; NWBA, \$200;



The Harr Motor Companies' family of dealerships on Gold Star Boulevard has thrown its financial support to the push for a new playground for students of Nelson Place School.

Cans, \$155 (and \$51); Coins, \$123 (and \$219 and \$67); Copacabana Ent. \$100 (twice); and Sunnyside Ford, \$100.

Sponsors for the event include Harr, the Crowne Plaza, Dick Doherty's Beantown Comedy Escape, WCRN 830, TV Open House, Photo Silk Screen Printing and the Nelson Place PTO.

To reserve tickets, call 800-401-2221. For further info, contact Beth Proko, 508-864-9549, **Tony Economou**, 508-459-5540, or **Angela Bazydlo**, 508-365-8736.

A challenge for WLF

Mere months after establishing its foothold as a new organization for business in the city, Worcester Local First is striving to grow membership under the guidance of Co-Chairs **Alan Lavine** of Percy's and **Bill Cavanagh** of C.C. Lowell. Meanwhile merchants who have readily plunked down their \$100 join-up fee are hoping Worcester Local First will not settle for publishing a directory of member businesses, providing window or door decals, fostering business-to-business patronization, encouraging consumers to "buy local" and holding periodic networking socials similar to its most recent one—at the Beechwood Hotel. **Rocco Froio** of Rocco's, a men's

clothing store on Park Ave., tells Biz Buzz he would love to see Worcester Local First speak up for the eradication of "clutter" signage of the sort that besmirches street corners and empty commercial buildings—for instance. Froio said **Laurel Ciprari** of TD Banknorth, who is a kingpin of the Chandler Business Association (CBA), helped him get the state to remove signage that was blocking a view of his storefront; Worcester Local First, Froio said, could easily expand its mission to play a more active role in discussions and debate about business life in the greater Worcester area. That seems to be what WLF members want from the organization: representation and advocacy.

O'Toole—and you

The Webster House Restaurant here in Worcester will be the site this Thursday (March 20th) of an author talk and book signing featuring **Dave O'Toole**, whose tome "Outing the Senator: Sex, Spies and Videotape" chronicles the destruction of the career of U.S. Sen. David Iqantius Walsh



Bill Cavanagh, Co-Chair of Worcester Local First, a new entity; WLF's members are eager for the organization to be a voice for them in helping foster a more favorable business climate here.

from the town of Clinton, O'Toole will describe the role of the media, the ACLU and ultimately FDR in the "smear" of Walsh in the "Nazi Spy Nest Case" of May, 1942. O'Toole says Walsh was one of Massachusetts's long-serving

senators; he shocked the political scene in 1918 by winning the first direct election of U.S. senators (a triumph made possible by changes championed by Teddy Roosevelt in the Seventeenth Amendment). "The WASP political firmament" in the Bay State was sent reeling by Walsh's victory at the ballot box, O'Toole says. "They never envisioned that an Irish Catholic candidate could win statewide." As a spokesman in the anti-war movement in America, Walsh was systematically torn apart by "a barrage of British and Soviet propaganda" which portrayed him as a gay and a frequenter of a Nazi homosexual brothel in Brooklyn. Professor Thomas Patterson of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University says "Outing the Senator" is "a fascinating and important story...the book would seem to have film potential." O'Toole's appearance runs from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and includes a wine and cheese reception.

A 'Health'y night out

Oriol Health Care is sponsor of a "Build Your Contacts" networking get-together being hosted by the Holden Area Chamber of Commerce on Monday, March 24th at the Chocksett Inn in Sterling from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. Chamber Executive Director **Jen Stanovich** says the back-by-popular-demand event is sure to be "fast-paced" and productive for professionals looking to develop important working relationships. Pre-registration is encouraged for "best matching;" call 508-829-9220 or email info@holdenareachamber.org.

Biz Buzz is published weekly on Tuesdays; contact Rod Lee by telephone, 508-793-9213



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