

Commentary



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Our Views



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Established December 9, 2004
Published weekly by The Step Saver, Inc.
213 Spring St., Southington, CT 06489
editorial: 860-621-6751
advertising: 860-628-9645
circulation: 860-628-9438
fax 860-621-1841
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All editorials are intended to reflect the position of the publisher and not that of any individual editorial writer. Signed columns, on the other hand, reflect the position of the author and not necessarily those of the publisher.
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Bysiewicz should step away from AG run

We have great respect for Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz.

She is an intelligent woman and has done a fine job as an active and highly visible secretary of state in Connecticut.

But we think she should reconsider her ambition to run for the attorney general given the questions surrounding her qualifications.

The state law requires that the attorney general must have actively practiced law for 10 years. This makes sense since the AG is the state's top legal advocate.

Bysiewicz, although she has been an attorney for 23 years, has been a politician for the last several years.

And, she apparently recognized her standing on the sidelines of legal practice. According to the Hartford Courant, Bysiewicz applied for and received discounts on a professional fee for attorneys, stating that she did not actively practice law.

Now, Bysiewicz is hedging on those previous assertions to the state of Connecticut. She even stepped forward to pay up the other half of her fee to make amends for her previous errors.

In the grand scheme of political misconduct, Bysiewicz's little two-step as to whether she did or did not practice law is a minor point. She underpaid by about \$150. But, it does give great insight into her character. If she fudged a bit in paying state fees, and then tries to rectify the situation only when it serves her purpose, we're not sure Bysiewicz is the best person for the job.

Connecticut has been dubbed "Corrupt-icut" because of the myriad of scandals—proven or unproven—that have been uncovered here over the past few years. Through it all, however, the attorney general's office of the Nutmeg State has had a squeaky clean reputation. That's a tribute to the current AG, Richard Blumenthal (whose decision to run for U.S. Senate has paved the way for the ambition exhibited by Bysiewicz).

But what happens to the office of the AG when a newly-elected official has already demonstrated that she is willing to accept fuzzy truths in order to ensure election. What kind of respect will people have for a politician who has been called out on a lie.

We recognize Bysiewicz is an ambitious woman. She probably could hold the post secretary of state indefinitely if she chose. And she might have been able to withstand the little fib regarding the professional fee if she chose to run, let's say, for U.S. representative or even governor. After all, the professional fee discount wouldn't have had an effect on her legal ability to perform either of those jobs.

But she has exposed her feet of clay by trying to pursue a post that she in the past has claimed she wasn't qualified for since wasn't actively practicing law.

From a news organization point of view, it's interesting to watch Bysiewicz do this qualification tap dance. But, it is best that Bysiewicz steps aside and reconsiders another route to fulfill her ambitions because to continue this charade will only confirm for the public what it already fears... politicians are more interested in their own ambitions than the will of the people.

Getting to know Jamie

Life can be tough.
No, life is tough.
And life is definitely tougher for some than for others.

Take Haiti.
I would not want to have what happened there to happen anywhere.

So, our family sent donations and said our prayers for the Haitians, and we will continue to do what we can.

The need never ends.
The longer I am around, the more I understand that pain and suffering, to one degree or another, are lurking around the corner, just as easily found in Haiti as next door: from major catastrophes that register on the Richter scale to the loss of job, the pain of addiction to the death of a loved one, or a sickness.

Jamie Botteon is a junior at Bristol Eastern. She is captain of her soccer team and earned honorable mention as a goalkeeper on the 2009 All Courant Soccer Team.

This past December, she was diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia and has since started an aggressive regimen of chemo, appears to be responding well, and if anything, is one of those grace-filled and rare people who in the midst of her battle meets her nemesis with good spirits, laughter, and love.

How she does it? You'll have to ask her, especially after you learn, as I did, that she lost a brother to the same form of leukemia a few short years ago.

As I read her online journal, she made me laugh with her quips about a reaction to chemo that resulted in her lips swelling "up bigger than Angelina Jolie's."

So, here is what you can do to help.

Jamie and her family are planning a benefit right here in town.



David Fortier Around the House

The fundraiser is a pasta dinner on Feb. 19 at Nuchie's. Doors open at 6 p.m. There will be raffles and live music with a DJ. Tickets can be purchased beforehand by contacting jamforjamie@gmail.com or via a Facebook event and page called Jamie Botteon's Super Benefit.

Also, donations, checks made out to Jamie Botteon, can be dropped at Nuchie's.

To learn more about Jamie and her progress, her online journal is at <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/jamiebotteon>.

Word is out.

People are rallying.

One of Jamie's teachers, Kevin Toomey will be raising funds for leukemia research later this year.

I ran into Kevin in the Eastern High parking when I was running an errand last week.

"Just the person I was looking for," Kevin said, and began rifling through some papers. When he found what he was looking for, he turned to me.

"Here," he said. "This is a great kid and she's fighting cancer and she's got a benefit coming up that everybody should know about."

He caught his breath, because if

anyone knows Kevin—and we all know Kevin around here because he's taught and advised and coached most of my kids—he talks fast in a South Boston accent so it's easy for him to get ahead of himself.

"Jamie Botteon," he said.
"Fantastic kid. Just found out she has cancer. Lost her brother to the same disease a few years ago. She's a fighter, and things with cancer research have progressed so much further since then that she's got a good chance to beat it."

Kevin, who has lost two spouses to cancer, and his wife, Molly, who lost a good friend to Leukemia, are attempting to raise \$10,000 for Leukemia research.

Later in the year, Kevin is going to run the "Anchorage Alaska Marathon" in June and Molly is going to participate in the "Bloomin Metric 100 Kilometer Bike Ride" in May for the Connecticut Chapter of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society "Team in Training" program, which allows athletes to raise funds through sanctioned athletic events.

Jamie has consented to be Kevin and Molly's "Honored Patient," for whom they will run and ride.

People do what they can.

We do what we can.

We all don't have to run a marathon or bike 100 kilometers, but we can write a check, show up for the pasta benefit, send a note of encouragement, and be there for each other when we can.

Life is tough, tougher for some than for others.

You cannot do anything for the ones you do not know about, but you can for the ones you do.

Now, you know about Jamie.

David Fortier, a Bristol resident, is a freelance writer.

The words unspoke over legislative breakfast



Elio Gugliotti

What isn't said often sends a more powerful message than what is said.

Every year, the Chamber of Commerce hosts a breakfast meeting in which area legislators come together to speak about the upcoming legislative session. I've attended this annual meeting for the past several years and this year was no different. I sat in the

back of the banquet room at The Clarion waiting to hear a message that unfortunately never came.

Heading into this year's meeting, you didn't need to be psychic to know what topic would dominate discussions, the state's budget crisis.

"We're in a world of trouble in the state of Connecticut," State Rep. John Piscopo (R-Thomaston) told the audience.

Yeah, tell us something we don't know. We've been hearing about our world of trouble ever since the bottom fell out of the economy. It's not exactly a secret. A \$500 million or so deficit awaits legislators in the upcoming session. Things don't look much brighter in

the years to come as the deficit is expected to grow into the billions.

As each legislator addressed the crowd, there was plenty said about the world of trouble the state's in.

There was talk of the philosophical difference between Republicans and Democrats on where to make cuts, which is hindering budget negotiations between the two parties. There was talk of the "gotcha" politics that goes on between the two parties. There was talk about how the state has only created one net job over the last 19 years.

Hell, there was even talk about the commuter rail line city leaders want to see come through Bristol

again, just to add a little variety to the meeting.

Yet, for all the talk of the trouble the state's in, there was no talk of how the state's going to get out of trouble. To me that says a lot without saying anything at all.

It says to me the legislature is no closer today of getting the state out of trouble than it was this time last year.

I understand this isn't exactly an easy time to be a legislator. There's really only two ways to close a deficit, cut spending or increase revenue. But, when every cut or tax increase proposed is met with staunch opposition and politically motivated press conferences there are plenty of

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