

Don't Kick the Can

To the editor:

It's an election year and, one more time, the General Assembly has forgone their responsibility to responsibly manage taxpayer dollars and has "kicked the can down the road."

The latest trick is to balance the budget using \$100 million dollars of federal aid that they know will never materialize. This all but ensures that Rhode Islanders will pay the price through gimmicks like the Car Tax. And based on how they are having the debate, you can't tell if they are even reading the bills. This is crazy, bad fiscal management and regular people in Rhode Island are paying the price.

Representative Constantino, Chair of the House Finance Committee, assured us that the General Assembly will reconvene in November to find \$100 million worth of cuts. The only thing that will be different in November is that the election will be over and voters will have lost their chance to vote out those responsible for our dismal economic state. If the Assembly can find \$100 million of savings in November, then they are shirking their duty to us, the taxpayers, in not finding them now, in this legislative session.

It's time for Rhode Islanders to expect more from their government, and this election cycle is the right time to do so.

Ken Block
Moderate Party Candidate for Governor

Come Together

To the editor:

I recently read about a controversy of a mural depicting a series of scenes drawn in a child-like style using bold colors along a 200-foot length of the exterior of Vartan Gregorian Elementary School facing East Street. The intent of the mural is to create an inviting and humanizing environment for the children, and to illustrate the importance of the arts.

However, residents and local businesses disagree with the style, colors and message of the mural.

This is an interesting controversy because it signifies the importance of connecting and engaging a community. The real issue, it seems to me, is not about a particular mural, but about the right of a community to come together and decide on co-creating a possible future worth pursuing.

Rather than a committee meeting in isolation to develop and implement a plan, the Fox Point community should gather to associate in a meaningful conversation, which results in taking shared ownership and generating a commitment by its citizens, residents and entrepreneurs to transform Fox Point.

The mural is an opportunity to build community where people feel connected, share a concern for others and the built environment, where hospitality reigns true by welcoming strangers, and where people can become whole. I recommend extending an invitation to the entire community of Fox Point to gather, converse and develop a structure for belonging and

editorial

A Picture is Worth...

The City of Philadelphia has put up over 2000 murals around their city over the past ten years. Its program is considered the model for how art can be used to create a sense of community and bring neighbors together as part of a positive, proactive process. More than just pretty pictures on a wall, what's left behind are well-forged bonds among artists, residents and city officials.

Unfortunately, despite the good intentions of all the participants, the recent attempt by the students, parents and faculty of Vartan Gregorian Elementary School to beautify the walls of their building seems to have produced just the opposite

effect – at least initially. The good news is that level heads have prevailed and a new design seems to have resolved many of the creative differences that arose.

The secret of the success of the Philadelphia model is that there is a nonprofit arts group intermediary in the process that spearheads their projects. They, with the help and input of the neighborhood, identify appropriate sites. They convene meetings of all the stakeholders early in the process to debate and then determine the subject, style and colors of the mural. And finally, they help organize teams to assist the artists with the design and actual implementation of the project.

Why is this important? Mural projects, if done correctly, are more about community building than artistic beautification. Over the past decade Philadelphia has discovered that some areas of the city preferred more understated palettes, while others opted for brighter, in-your-face designs. In short, one size design doesn't fit all.

The mural flap at Gregorian, overblown as perhaps it has been, has at least produced one of those "teachable moments." Creating art in a vacuum and then imposing it on a community doesn't build much other than resentment, but thoughtful give and take goes a long way towards creating a prettier picture for everyone.

human flourishing that serves a model for how our children, families and neighbors will comport themselves in the future they will co-create.

Councilman John J. Lombardi
Democratic Candidate for Mayor

Chowder Power

To the editor:

I'd like to inform your readers that in the recent 29th annual Knorr's Great Chowder cook-off that was held June 7 at the Newport Yachting Center two local East Side restaurants were among the winners. Hem-enways, 121 South Main Street and its chef Steven Long, won second place in the grand category competition for the Best 2010 Clam Chowder. Meanwhile the Waterman Grille, 4 Richmond Square and its chef Mark Broccoli, won third place for the 2010 Best Creative Chowder. Congratulations to both the chefs and the restaurants for winning in this very competitive event. And on that note, bon appetit!

David Hughes
Dodge Associates



At its May 27th meeting at the Hope Club, the World Affairs Council of Rhode Island presented Mayor David Cicilline with an award honoring his nationally recognized leadership "in developing a new Green economy and preserving the environment in the City of Providence." The award was part of the association's Green World Gala and featured Dr. William Moomaw, a global authority on world resource protection and sustainable development who is the Director of the Center for International Environment and Resource Policy at the Fletcher School at Tufts, as the speaker.