

All About Georgetown

Georgetown Selectman Lonnie Brennan

Georgetown Education Community Honors Superintendent Larry Borin

Some of the most serious moments in one's life occurs when one realizes just how deeply and sincerely someone has touched their soul, or that of their son's or daughter's - and how one never thought to say thank you along the way. Well, an attempt at saying 'thanks' took place last month in a gala event that showcased legends of educators and school supporters, all present at the Haverhill Country Club for a grand celebration and tribute to outgoing school Superintendent. Larry S. Borin. The room was packed.

Somewhere between the conga line led by former Perley Principal Rita Pezzuto, dance moves of former high school Principal Joe Casey, penmanship quips from Lorraine Tardiff, an enormous birthday cake, jokes, roasts, and hilarious stand-up comedy, everyone had an opportunity to finally say thank you.

The most touching moment occurred when Mrs. Alazono, Spanish teacher and basketball coach, summed up Mr. Borin's commitment to the schools: "He gave up his afternoons to watch field hockey and lacrosse, and his evenings to come to basketball games and other sporting events. He's given up other evenings for music and concerts and plays. He seems to have given so much for the education of the kids of Georgetown, so we thought it appropriate to give our 'giving tree' a tree," said Mrs. Alazono, in reference to the book "The Giving Tree," as the staff presented Mr. Borin with a live tree and presents.

After calling out the names of many former School Committee members and colleagues in attendance, including noting the contributions of beloved "Bill Hart, God rest his soul," former School Committeeman John Anderson related his story of interviews and how Mr. Borin was not his first choice as they went through the interview process. But he quipped, "he turned out great," and the room exploded in laughter and applause.

"Supportive both to his staff, and above all to the ideals of the education of kids," Anderson continued, "kids to that moment where kids really appreciate a subject matter and are really inspired by it, and Larry himself had that aspect about his own personality, and I knew that, because I was lucky to spend some time with him ... everyone in this room, I'm going to ring a bell, and everyone, including Larry, is going to take their old jobs back for one year, and this system, will be a great system once again," he exclaimed to a roaring audience.

Having served for 21 years on the School Committee, revered former School Committeewoman Eileen McLaughlin spoke clear and straight from the heart, and pulled no punches: "We are so grateful of all that time that you gave to us. As a School Committee person for many years, I can't begin to tell you how grateful I was for your leadership because we could do what School Committee people are supposed to do, get the hell out of the way and let the educators do what they are supposed to do for the community." Standing ovation.

And former School Committeeman Bill Ford detailed Mr. Borin's "ability to listen to others. Put the individual perspective to every issue. To work with others, colleagues and children of Georgetown ... we will miss you, and the way you led and supported us through the past 16 years."

"A couple of things from the heart," former high school principal Joe Casey, now superintendent in Melrose, began. "We were in there every year trying to win the pennant for our students, to help them hit the home runs ... the key to being a leader is to help other people to be leaders ... and Larry, you've done that for me. When you stop and think about community ... community working with us, very rarely you get to be a part of this," Casey said as he thanked Mr. Borin.

In contrast to current School Committee negotiating skills, high school principal Peter D. Lucia detailed Mr. Borin's handling of negotiations that are within his realm. "You have never negotiated until you have negotiated with Larry Borin ... you have no idea how much money Larry Borin has saved the town in negotiating with his administrators ... his nickname is Larry Scissorhands" he said to an explosion of applause. "A true mentor. A true friend. And I thank you very much. We're going to miss you so much it's not funny. Thank you, Larry,"

Finally taking the microphone, Mr. Borin thanked many, including former school committee members McLaughlin, Anderson, JoAnn Kelley, Gail Fennesey, Margaret Messelear and many others. As for his front office staff: Tricia, Julie, Lorraine, "the best, absolutely the best," he said.

"Really, I'm overwhelmed, believe me," Mr. Borin said. "This is all and much more than I ever could expect. To see so many friends ... it's really an honor and privilege to serve you for so many years. There really is no doubt in my mind, that at the end of the day, what makes the difference in a child's life, is you folks. What takes place in that classroom. You can talk about everything else, but that's really where ... we make the difference," he said.

"There's so many people who deserve credit for that. So I appreciate all that you have done as professionals, as educators, and the children of Georgetown are absolutely so fortunate ..."

"It really has been an honor and privilege to work with such outstanding people over the past 16 years. Each year when school starts, it's really, it's exciting, it really is exciting because I know the kind of ... what comes from your hearts and how that's delivered to the children, each and every day. As I've said before, you give of yourself, you give your hearts away, each and every day ... I see that time in and time out, whether it's pre-school or seniors in high school.

"You're only as good as the people that you work with, and the people who work for you. The purpose of school is to make sure that each child absolutely pulls their potential." He said. "You gave them new beginnings, a brighter future, and an opportunity to look to the future. And so I thank you from the bottom of my heart, it has been an honor and privilege to serve you, and to know that the best is yet to come."

It was a night of sincere thanks and best wishes. Surrounded by friends, teachers, administrators, support staff and community members. I was honored to be at the event. A pity for those unable to be there. They missed a great evening

with great people, the soul of the educational community. In thinking back on the night's events, it was clear why the graduating class was filled with students tugging at Superintendent Borin to have their pictures taken with him: Mr. Borin poured his enthusiasm into his work and into the teachers and the children. Above politics, above other considerations. He lived for the schools. He knew each child and almost every parent. By face and by name. He knew the graduating class members personally, having ushered them from Mrs. White's and Mrs. Chick's pre-school classes all the way through senior year and honors English classes. And he cared. Thank you Larry.

Fire Department Re-Organization on the Horizon

Having been directed by voters at the May town meeting to adopt a 'strong chief' structure, the selectmen are currently poised to appoint an interim chief at our meeting of July 16, and dissolve the Board of Fire Engineers. The purpose: to put one person in charge, not a board of five members. With this change, many have scammed forward to make inquiry for new chief's position. Let me take this moment to sincerely thank each of the current board members for their tremendous service and dedication to the town. John Durkee, Brian Coolidge, Chris Dubois, Michael Anderson, and Glenn Silva.

Recreation Path on Danger Course?

Phones have been ringing and ringing as local residents along the abandoned rail track are screaming in opposition now to a proposed non-motorized recreation path behind their homes. Long abandoned, plans continue to be developed on the best way to allow non-motorized transportation from Danvers to Newburyport. Some provisions for routing the path around dangerous areas and residential homes may be in the works. Stay tuned and sharp as we need to get more information on the path, it's location, timeline, and any changes which should be made to ensure the safety of all.

It's All in the Priorities List

The list of projects and priorities facing the selectmen continues to grow and includes many items, some of which are: standard operating procedures for hiring for all job positions in town (this has been my personal pet peeve recently as the processes has been 'fluid' and inconsistent and needs to be documented and codified out of fairness for all; Annual Report - where is it?; town code (bylaws) need to be made available electronically and updated just like the Massachusetts General Laws are available online so that all boards and residents can have easy reference to these currently less-than-accessible documents; budget development process must start this month to prevent the problems of the past; financial bluebook - projections and capabilities with 5, 10, 15, and 20 year projections; cable TV 24 hours/day broadcast; medical response personnel... a whole issue to discuss. We're making progress, but these are just some of nearly three dozen critical issues which need short and long-term attention and need to be prioritized and assigned champions to deliver results in a timely fashion. Go on vacation. Enjoy the weather. Support Sport's Booster's Carnival July 8. I'll be helping to raise some money for the teams and learning to swim in the dunk tank Saturday night. Hope to see you there.

Lonnie Brennan is a selectman in Georgetown. You can email him at lonnie@thechocolatecellar.com.



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