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Nelson Benton: Tale of two registers

Nelson Benton

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Be thankful you live in the southern part of Essex County.

Your register of deeds, Lynn's John O'Brien, has been in the forefront of efforts to expose a scheme by banking industry giants to evade the normal mortgage filing requirements via something called the Mortgage Electronic Registration System. The alleged improprieties have stopped many foreclosures in their tracks and are the subject of investigations being launched by Martha Coakley and her fellow attorneys general nationwide.

O'Brien was featured in an NBC News report this week in which he complained that the banks are not playing by the same rules, or paying the same fees, that apply to the average person who walks into the Registry office in Salem.

Meanwhile, O'Brien's colleague at the northern end of the county, was also on TV recently. Robert Kelley was featured in a Fox News piece that was not nearly as complimentary.

The station found that Kelley, whose office is in Lawrence, spent much of the time during the eight days its crew trailed him, tending to his private law practice, running personal errands and drinking at a local bar. Nevertheless, Kelley is expected at the Claddagh Pub in Lawrence this noontime to receive the Judge John E. Fenton Citizenship Award from the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Only in Massachusetts.

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Why are people fed up with government? Salisbury police Chief David L'Esperance is

forced to resign amidst allegations of gross misconduct, but departs with \$44,700 in unused sick and vacation time.

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The National Republican Congressional Committee has got to be more creative. It routinely sends out the same press release blasting different Bay State congressmen for their votes. Only the name of the person targeted changes.

For instance, this week the newspaper received three e-mail releases from the NRCC with the heading, "Obama & Pelosi take 'victory' lap at fundraiser for vulnerable Dem ... (insert Tierney, Keating or Tsongas)."

Nothing like a mention of the president and the House minority leader in the same line to get a conservative's blood boiling.

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Such is the concern among members of the Economic Alliance of the North Shore about the 6th District's fate with the number of congressional seats being reduced from the current 10 to nine, that it's established a special committee to lobby on the region's behalf. Top choices to co-chair the panel are Michael Harrington and Peter Torkildsen, Democrat and Republican respectively, who both served in the seat previously.

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Received a recent missive from state Rep. Jerry Parisella, D-Beverly, an Army Reserve major currently stationed in Iraq.

"Today I met a Lt. Col. Cahill who looked familiar to me," Parisella reported, "so I asked where he was from. Turns out it was Jim Cahill from Salem, a former Salem Evening News intern. (Parisella once worked as a reporter for the News.) He is now the Deputy Commander for Administration with the 86th Combat Support Hospital."

Parisella's with the 804th Medical Brigade.

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Datebook: A dinner-dance to support the scholarship fund set up in memory of late Peabody mayor Peter Torigian will be held Saturday, March 26, from 6:30 to 11 p.m. at the Holy Ghost Society Cultural Center on Howley Street in Peabody. Tickets are \$35. For information call 978-530-1616 or e-mail TorigianScholarship@gmail.com. ... District

Attorney Jonathan Blodgett will host a comedy night Thursday, March 31, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Danversport Yacht Club. Tickets are \$50 apiece.

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Nelson Benton's column on North Shore politics appears every Friday in this space. Read him daily at blogs.salemnews.com/fullnelson. Follow him on Twitter at www.twitter.com/nelsonbenton.