

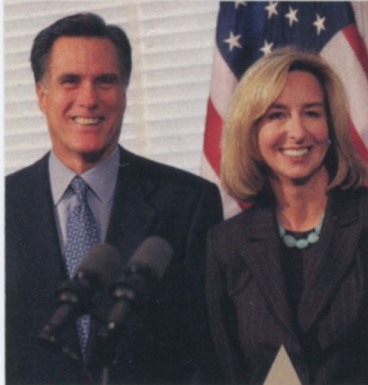
MURPHY

THE
DEMOCRAT SLAYER

CRITICS DISMISS KERRY HEALEY AS A PREPPY LIGHTWEIGHT. BUT BEHIND THE SCENES THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR IS ANYTHING BUT. TO HANG ON TO THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR THE GOP, SHE NOW FACES ONE BIG HURDLE: CONVINCING VOTERS THERE'S A REAL PERSON BEHIND THE POLISHED WINKERY AND PLASTIC PUBLIC IMAGE.

BY JOHN SEDGWICK PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN GOODMAN





FEROCIOUS NORTHEASTER WHIPPED UP

the day that Gloucester Mayor John Bell had planned to honor soldiers stationed in Iraq. This was back in March 2003, shortly after the war had been declared, and the weather seemed only to underscore the risks the servicemen were facing, the wind tearing through the city at 40 miles per hour and rain flooding the streets and nearly drowning anyone daring, or foolish, enough to step outside. Still, several hundred people braved the elements to show up. One of them was Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey. † Healey isn't exactly the Gloucester type. Gloucester people are so insular they rarely cross the bridge into neighboring Essex, and vice versa, and Kerry Healey—tall, slender, always impeccably dressed, with earrings that match her outfits

just so—lives *well* beyond Essex, in what Bell terms “the other side of the world,” ritzy Beverly, where she and her husband have a secluded estate off a private drive on Curtis Point, one of five homes they own in three states. But there Kerry Healey was in Mayor Bell's office, a good 45 minutes before the event. She was a little “windblown,” Bell recalls, but otherwise as well turned out as ever. “I was certainly glad, but I was shocked,” he says. Healey told him that as the daughter of a veteran, she had to come. Later, addressing the crowd in the Kyrouz Auditorium as rain pelted the windows, Healey struck a patriotic theme, giving a simple speech that nonetheless clicked with her audience.

It was a winning performance. Impressed as he was, though, Bell assumed that would be the end of it.

In the three years since, Healey has come back and back and back to Gloucester as if it were her adopted city, securing state funding to maintain its bridges and roads; helping turn an industrial building into 150 units of affordable housing; backing the nonprofit Wellspring House for homeless families; and, in her role as chair of the Governor's Seaport Council—an organization other members of the Romney administration wanted to eliminate—taking on the federal government from the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration on up to the



BLONDE AMBITION: This page, from top, Healey meeting with flood victims; at an anti-gang event in New Bedford; touring Savin Hill with Mayor Tom Menino. Opposite, clockwise from top left: Healey at her campaign kick off; hanging out with her family; her childhood home in Florida; with her husband, Sean, at their wedding; with her father as a girl; at a veterans event with Senators Kerry and Kennedy; fielding press conference questions with Mitt Romney.



secretary of commerce to roll back drastic fishing restrictions that threaten the livelihood of Gloucester's fleet. "I don't think the lieutenant governor understood anything about ports before," says Bell. "But boy, did she get up to speed fast."

At Healey's gubernatorial campaign kick off at the Omni Parker House this winter, Bell returned the favor, breaking ranks with his Democratic party to endorse her candidacy. "Given everything she's done, I had no choice," he says. Now, as her diligent, almost below-the-radar bid to hold the governorship for the Republicans for a fifth term builds steam, the quiet work she's done to win

over the Mayor Bells of the state is warranting a reassessment of Healey. Endorsements from local officials alone won't guarantee her victory. But they do indicate the surprising amount of substance to be found in the woman the *Herald's* Howie Carr consistently derides as a high-prep Muffy.

Healey's up-from-not-much biography, too, can be compelling, once you've heard the details. And then, of course, there's the figure she cuts: that long blade of a nose and Pepsodent smile and imposing height that, when raised by high heels, rivals *Commander in Chief* Geena Davis's. Stylistically, Healey is one part the gracious Elizabeth Dole, the political wife turned North Carolina senator, and two parts the businesslike former New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman. Put that together with the advantages of incumbency and you can see how, believe it or not, Healey has a fighting chance to become our first elected female governor. Because Kerry Healey is no lightweight. All she has to do—and for her, this will be the hard part—is let us finally get to know her.

†††

GIVEN THAT HER PREVIOUS POLITICAL EXPERIENCE consisted of two failed races for state representative and a brief stint as Republican state chairperson, people weren't exactly bowled over four years ago when Mitt Romney tapped Healey as his chosen number two. The only thing clear about her credentials was that she was pretty good-looking, as if she had been selected not as his running mate, but as his wife. And indeed, her gender was probably her primary qualification,

since the party had deep-sixed the floundering candidacy of acting Governor Jane Swift and Romney was likely to face a riled-up Shannon O'Brien in the final. "I want our state government leadership to reflect the fabric of society in terms of gender and ethnicity," he tells me, delicately, explaining his selection.

Lieutenant governors have always had their pet issues: domestic violence for Paul Cellucci; education for Swift. Healey's job has been different, since she has served under a boss who, early on, turned his attention out of state. Along with oversight of some of her particular interests, such as criminal justice and homelessness, Romney granted to Healey a responsibility previous governors had always retained: managing the state's relationship with its cities and towns. It was not exactly a plum assignment, considering that the message she had to deliver was that the governor was cutting their already tight budgets. "There was a lot of screaming and yelling, impromptu press conferences with all kinds of disgruntled distress, and quiet, measured mayors who pour you a cup of tea and then usher you out, as if they expected never to see you again," she says. But Healey hung in. During her latest round of visits, she's been able to announce 17-percent budget increases, a nice election-year gift.

From 1986 to 1997, Healey worked for the Cambridge think tank Abt Associates, where she was termed a "quick read-in," someone who always got it fast, no matter how complex the matter, according to her boss, Joan Mullen. That quality has become a potent political asset. She's been to Lawrence 23 times by Mayor Mike Sullivan's count, and when he told her his big problem was all the vacant lots in the city, she summoned the state's land-court justices to meet with him regularly to figure out how the city can legally acquire the plots and shift them to productive use. And so it goes with other officials, from Democratic Senator Steven Tolman of Brighton, with whom she's worked to bring down the state's nation-leading rate of illegal drug use (and whose fundraiser she dropped in on), to New Bedford's Representative Steve Canessa, to whom she lent ideas about safeguarding witnesses in order to better prosecute gang violence. She has also, to use her term, "quarterbacked" Melanie's Law, drumming up support for the tough-on-drunk-drivers legislation after the House tried to gut it; taken the Ally Foundation's campaign against sex offenders national through the Lieutenant Governors' Association; and is aiding the Pine Street Inn in building housing for the homeless.

"I thought she was just a rich girl from Beverly," says South Boston Representative Brian Wallace. "We used to make fun of her every St. Patrick's Day." Then he went with her on a tour of the Cushing House drug treatment center, where Healey helped launch a new girls' wing. As she likes to do, she talked drug policy with him—at length, and in copious detail. "I figured she would never get it," says Wallace, "but she really understands this stuff. Crystal meth, heroin, OxyContin—she knew all the issues, the numbers. She'd been all over Roxbury, Chinatown, Eastie, knew all about the gang violence, about the jails. I was amazed, shocked. She blew me away, she really did."

Healey likewise turned heads last fall when she attended a party at the Seaport Hotel celebrating the 40th anniversary of the *Bay State Banner*, the area's largest black paper. "I expected the mayor to show, but not her, a rich, white suburban woman," says Joyce Ferriabough, a media and political strategist who has worked with many Democratic candidates. "And she didn't just breeze in and out. She knew a lot of the folks there, and she didn't do the usual white WASP shit that [continued on page 134]

(KERRY HEALEY)

[continued from page 93] Romney does, you know, that remote, 'Hi, how are you?' thing. I really like her approachability. She was genuinely concerned. She's formidable. Democrats can't assume that she'll just roll over in this race."

Little of this has attracted media attention, partly because of Healey's own reticence and partly because of the nature of

Healey resists most personal questions. When I ask why, she shrugs: "Not everyone finds themselves very interesting."

her office and partly, again, because of the unique circumstances of playing backup to Romney, who has run a corporate-style administration that's famously spoken with one voice—his. He claims that she was fully involved in all the decision-making, but so much of it was behind the scenes, so it's hard to know. A pair of fairly typical press release headlines from last December makes one suspicious:

ROMNEY APPROVES \$11 MILLION PLAN TO TARGET GANG VIOLENCE.

HEALEY CALLS FOR RESPONSIBLE DRIVING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

Consequently, Healey is having some trouble as she tries to distance herself from Romney, affirming her commitment to abortion rights, stem-cell research, and access to contraception—positions strikingly counter to Romney's now that he is veering hard right in his bid for the presidency. "She didn't disagree earlier," complains Lois Pines, a former Democratic candidate for attorney general who is generally supportive of female candidates. "So that would cause me to say, 'Who is she? What is she?'"

†††

I got off on the wrong foot with Healey in my efforts to find the answers to those questions. I think it was because I let the campaign know early on that I was interested in her from the woman angle. Massachusetts, famously, has not been kind to female candidates for higher office, having never elected one either to the U.S. Senate or to the governorship. Healey hadn't

touched that fact in the campaign. During our first get-together, chatting in the back seat of her state-issued Crown Victoria while her driver whisked her up I-93 to a Chamber of Commerce event in Haverhill, I asked her if she was deliberately avoiding the issue. "I don't avoid it," she said, a cool tone coming into her voice. "It's fairly obvious I'm a woman, and I'm a candidate. But the reason that people are going to vote for me has nothing to do with that." I persisted, bringing up what is sometimes referred to as the Three H's—the media's preoccupation with hair, hemlines, and husbands. She tossed that one to her press secretary, who was riding in the front seat, saying with a laugh, "First I heard of that." Then she turned back to me and said, evenly: "I don't think I've had too much attention in that regard." But her husband, for one, has become an issue for claiming and then returning \$1.2 million in tax credits for moving his asset-management firm to Beverly—just as she and Romney made Shannon O'Brien's husband, former lobbyist Emmett Hayes, an issue by suggesting that, having represented Enron in the debate over deregulation of the electrical



Bring Boston to Your Door.

Our readers are going places. Doing things. They have discerning tastes and the need to satisfy them. Put out your welcome mat and bring them to your door.

Advertise in *Boston* magazine.

Call 617.262.9700 to reserve space now.

Boston
magazine

utilities, he had somehow persuaded O'Brien to add the energy company to the state's pension fund. "She and Romney were very nimble in going after my husband," Shannon O'Brien says. "And it drove me nuts." Healey makes no apologies. "Questions have to be asked and answers given in the course of a campaign."

A little while later, I noticed that the sunlight angling in from the rear window was in Healey's eyes. My arm was draped over the seatback between us, and I shifted my hand a little to block the light. A bit of chivalry, and an unspoken apology for having irked her.

"Does that help?" I asked.

"It does," she replied. "But it's odd."

And maybe it was. Still, there was something remarkable about Healey's steadfast frostiness, her refusal to even try to project the false bonhomie that more adroit pols display to interviewers. The only time she showed real emotion during our conversations was while saying she was "very excited" by the 39.4 percent increase in the number of condos and houses on the market and the drop in prices that would bring, not that it

will necessarily please sellers. She resists most personal questions, sometimes squirming in her chair while shooting her ever present press secretary an anxious look. When I ask why, she shrugs: "I don't know." But she adds that her mother was the same way. "Not everyone finds themselves very interesting."

†††

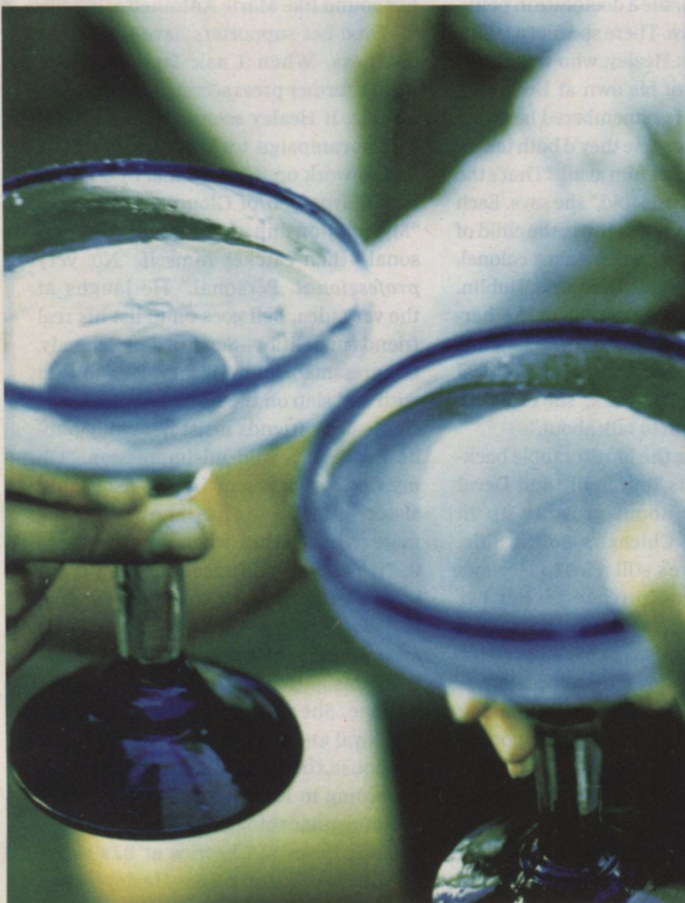
The only child of only children, Kerry Murphy was born in Omaha but grew up in Daytona Beach, a place she remembers for its "violence and racial tension and drug use." The Murphy household, by contrast, was a haven of bookish conversation and community-mindedness. Her parents, Ted and Shirley, had met on an archaeological dig. Ted was a World War II veteran and smalltime real estate developer who was keen on ancient civilizations; Shirley, a schoolteacher and daughter of immigrants, was more focused, says Healey, on the "here and now." Both parents were reserved to the point of being secretive. Healey never did learn her father's political affiliation; he declared that "what happened in the vot-

ing booth was private." And her mother has still never spoken of many details of her childhood on a citrus farm during the Depression "doing what she could to survive" and, later, losing friends in the war.

When Healey was 15, her father suffered a heart attack that nearly killed him. She well remembers that night—along with the fact that at 7:30 the next morning

Healey rarely animates her policies with human details. They remain a collection of white papers, strangely abstract.

she had a math test, which she took. Her father could never work again, and Healey had to do odd jobs to chip in. One of them was high school correspondent for the *Daytona Beach News-Journal*, where she fell under the sway of editor Josephine Davidson, who taught her the writing basics and encouraged her to take classes in computer science at a local community college—courses [continued on page 136]



sonesta al fresco!

enjoy our riverside café for
cool drinks, fun food and great sox.

cambridge just got a little hotter this summer at our gallery café & patio. friday nights, unwind with our island-inspired menu and live music. wednesdays, catch the game on our oversized tv. open daily for lunch and dinner. for reservations for parties of 6 or more, call 617.806.4122 or visit us at sonesta.com. patio availability is weather permitting.

GALLERY CAFÉ
& PATIO

 Royal Sonesta
Hotel Boston

on the banks of the charles river at
40 edwin h. land blvd. cambridge, ma 02141

the sonesta collection: boston • miami • new orleans
st. maarten • brazil • peru • egypt • orlando (2007)

For great tips on everything from plastic surgery to flank steak—Check out *Boston* magazine's Tip Sheet for a little expertise.

PROTECTION

Research your Plastic Surgeon to see if he/she is board certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery. Given the popularity of cosmetic surgery, not all doctors performing cosmetic surgery are plastic surgeons or board certified. Verify your plastic surgeon's credentials at plasticsurgery.org.

- Division of Plastic Surgery, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA

PRESENTATION

Create an eye-catching, maintenance-free patio and outdoor kitchen using concrete pavers and walls. Concrete pavers come in beautiful textures and earth tone colors. Be the first in your neighborhood to start this project. Visit techo-bloc.com for elegant patio ideas and a list of dealers.

- Eric Emanuel, GM, Techo Bloc, Middleboro, MA

PREPARATION

To prevent flank steak from curling, score a cross hatch on both sides with a sharp knife before grilling.

- Tom Yameen, Owner, Butcher Boy Marketplace, North Andover, MA

Boston
magazine

(KERRY HEALEY)

[continued from page 135] taught, as it happened, by NASA scientists—and then return to help the newsroom shift from typewriters to word processors.

Admitted to Harvard on a substantial scholarship, Healey majored in government and served as membership secretary for the Republican Club. "There were only 12 members," she says, "so it didn't take much effort." She also got into experimental theater, producing student performances of Alban Berg's atonal opera *Wozzeck* and Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, and, for two weeks during her freshman year, coxed for the varsity men's crew; she'd been recruited by legendary coach Harry Parker, who'd gleaned her tall, skinny frame from a class roster and assumed "Kerry" was male. After Harvard, it was off to Trinity College in Dublin on a Rotary

Healey's friends insist her chilly public image is a wild misimpression. "Oh my God," says one. "She's tremendously fun."

scholarship to pursue a doctorate in political science and law. There she met a fellow Harvardian, Sean Healey, who was studying on a Rotary of his own at University College Dublin. He remembered her from a natural science course they'd both taken; she didn't remember him at all. "That's the story that always gets told," she says. Each had grown up in a beach town, the child of a schoolteacher and a lieutenant colonel, before going to Harvard and now, Dublin. They soon decided to complete the harmonic convergence by marrying. "He'd been a lit major and was doing political philosophy for his master's," she explains. "There was enough to talk about."

If it's not quite the hardscrabble backstories Democrats Tom Reilly and Deval Patrick can tell about growing up in Springfield and Chicago's South Side, respectively, there's still a lot to Healey's striving for voters to relate to. But her story remains in pieces, just parts of a whole that you have to fit together yourself. It's the same way with her platform. She says that she has a vision for making Massachusetts a "place where people would want to live." A place with good schools, well paying jobs, reasonable commutes, and a feeling of safety. Fine, but little of that connects to what she's done, which involves far more her spe-

cial concerns of homelessness, domestic abuse, and criminal justice. And most of that's been on a small scale, like the 12-bed wing at Cushing House, or the Pine Street Inn, which, for all the fanfare, plans to add just 20 or so units. Then there's that just-the-facts manner: Healey rarely animates her policies with the human details, the stories, that would help fill out the picture, and allow us to connect. They remain a collection of white papers, strangely abstract.

†††

Healey's air of detachment has not served her well. It's not just Howie Carr who's gone after her, as ironic as his attacks are (he, after all, is the Deerfield boy, and she graduated from Seabreeze public high.) The issue flares up with any verbal slips. Such as when she said that children of illegal immigrants shouldn't receive the tuition discount normally accorded state residents at public colleges, and should "go to private schools" instead. With her two children—11-year-old Averill, a budding gymnast, and 14-year-old Alexander, who's crazy for lacrosse—in Shore Country Day School, the remark made her sound like Marie Antoinette.

Even her supporters have sensed the coolness. When I ask Jason Kauppi, Swift's former press secretary and a party loyalist, if Healey seems personable out on the campaign trail, he pauses. "She's had to work on it." The otherwise adulatory Mayor Bell of Gloucester starts in, "My relationship with her is very personal," then catches himself. "No, very professional. Personal." He laughs at the very idea. Bell goes on to list his real friends in politics—Senator Ted Kennedy, Congressman John Tierney. Pols to josh with and slap on the back. Not Healey.

Healey's friends insist her chilly public image is a wild misimpression. "Oh my God," says Regan Healey-Asnes, her sister-in-law, who has known her for more than 20 years, when I ask her about it. "If people could meet her, they'd fall in love with her. She's tremendously fun. If you're at a party, and you want to be around someone who's always got something insightful and funny to say, she's the one. She's terrific. Incredibly loving and loyal and helpful. The minute I'm in her house, there's such warmth with her!" According to Healey-Asnes, Healey does lots of regular things, like stocking up on gigantic boxes of Cheerios at BJ's warehouse. Two Easters ago, Healey-Asnes

found Healey in her boots and overcoat at 5 a.m., ready to go out into the dark to hide the Easter eggs she'd just dyed. An annual custom, Healey-Asnes says. But instead of using this anecdote as an occasion to bask in average momhood, a potential selling point for both genders, Healey insists it was nothing special.

"There's no other way to do it!" she tells me. "If you're the Easter Bunny, you've gotta put out the eggs, and gotta get up before your kids, who get up really early. There is no use in waiting until after your kids wake up. And remember, if it's light, they can watch you out the window."

†††

"As a researcher, I guess I was trained to listen to all the stories, and then try to pull out the common threads, and figure out what is *behind* the stories, and what we can do to respond to the underlying needs," Healey says. It isn't until the very end of our time together that she finally tells me one. She'd been saying how almost all the people she'd met in politics had been "kind and generous." Thinking this the usual campaign pablum, I asked for an example, and she told me about Guido Liporto, a World War II vet in his eighties who'd volunteered for her second state representative bid in 2000. After hitting Omaha Beach on D-day, Liporto walked clear to Berlin to join the Allied troops surging in after the Third Reich fell, and he maintained his patriotic fervor. He'd insisted on raising flags outside Healey's headquarters, but vandals kept ripping them down, virtually every night. Each time, Liporto would buy more flags and put them back up. "He must have bought out every flag in the area," Healey says. She herself displays a huge flag in her living room, one given to her by the crew of Old Ironsides after a visit.

Underneath the techno-wonk veneer, Healey has her passions. Like Liporto, she believes fervidly in the system, in perseverance, in generosity, in duty. With Healey, these qualities may seem so abstract—or so outdated—as to be invisible. But they are what have won her supporters in officials like Mayor John Bell. And they are what her friends see in her. Do others? It's early in the game, but it's an open question whether Kerry Healey will ever show enough of herself to capture enough hearts, and not just enough minds, to break through in November. **B**

THE FRENCH LIBRARY

Bastille Day Street Dance



06 6-11PM

FRIDAY, JULY 14

LIVE MUSIC BY
FRANCOPHONE STARS:
Amadou & Mariam
Daby Touré
Daara J

Location:
Marlborough St.,
Boston, MA

Between Berkeley and
Clarendon Streets.

Eat, drink, dance, celebrate.

Tickets:
\$25 in advance.
\$30 at the door.

Tickets are non-refundable.
The event will be held rain
or shine.

**To purchase
tickets contact:**
The French Library
www.frenchlib.org
(617) 912 0400

World Music
www.WorldMusic.org
(617) 876 4275

Programmed by World Music








Your Antique Shops.

Your Mountain Tops.

Explore the beauties of your own backyard with *New England Travel & Life*—scenic drives, inviting B&B's, restaurants, spas, coastal towns, and hiking spots.

It's a local's guide to getting away.

BOSTON MAGAZINE'S
New England
Travel & Life