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Attorney General Maura Healey announced her candidacy for Governor of Massachusetts in Maverick Square last week.

AG Maura Healey announces bid for Governor

BY JOHN LYNDIS

Standing in Maverick Square in East Boston last Thursday Attorney General Maura Healey officially announced her candidacy for Governor of Massachusetts.

Healey has long been touted as the successor to Gov. Charlie Baker's governorship and emerged as a frontrunner for the corner office well before Baker announced he would not seek a third term. Healey's political rise began during her upset victory for Attorney General over Warren

ren Tollman who had former Gov. Deval Patrick and former Boston Mayor Martin Walsh in his corner.

With over \$3.5 million in her campaign war chest, Healey is poised to become the first Massachusetts Attorney General to be elected governor since James Sullivan pulled off the feat in 1807 --although many have tried with the last being Martha Coakley's bid against Baker.

"I think about where we are right now as a state," said Healey during her press conference in East Boston. "We have

been through a lot or people have been through a lot. Our businesses have been through a lot. Our children have been through a lot, a lot of anxiety, a lot of despair, some incredible hardship. But I have seen over the last two years such incredible acts of resilience, of caring, of compassion. I have long believed, because I've had the privilege of serving as your attorney general for the last seven years, that the state and its people

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Wu extiende el plazo para que los empleados de la ciudad se vacunen

BY LAUREN BENNETT

La alcaldesa Michelle Wu anunció el 24 de enero que extendió la fecha para que los trabajadores de la ciudad cumplan con su mandato de vacunación.

El mandato originalmente estaba programado para el 15 de enero, y aquellos que no cumplieran serían colocados en licencia administrativa sin sueldo. Se había extendido nuevamente hasta el 24 de enero y ahora se

extenderá hasta el 30 de enero. Los empleados deben demostrar que han recibido al menos una dosis de la vacuna.

"Estamos dando a nuestros empleados una semana más", dijo Wu en una conferencia de prensa. Wu continuará las conversaciones con los sindicatos, algunos de los cuales han expresado su oposición al mandato.

Se realizaron clínicas de vacunación para los empleados de las Escuelas Públicas, el Departamento de Bomberos y el Departamento de Policía.

Más del 94 por ciento de los empleados de la ciudad están totalmente vacunados, lo que equivale a 18.720 empleados. Casi todos los departamentos tienen una tasa de vacunación del 90 por ciento: la policía, las escuelas públicas, los bomberos, las bibliotecas, servicios de inspección, y parques. Los departamentos con una tasa

Continued on page 2

Eliot School to receive grant from the National Endowment for the Arts

BY LAUREN BENNETT

For the third year in a row, the Eliot School of Fine and Applied Arts will receive a \$20,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

The grant will help fund the school's Artist in Residence project, which allows professional artists to work with youth in the Boston area as part of the school's Teen Bridge program. The Gazette spoke with the Eliot School's Associate Director Alison Croney Moses to learn more about the grant and how it will be used.

Croney Moses said of receiving the grant that it is "very nice to

be acknowledged in this way. I think it means that we are doing something that's worthwhile."

The 2022 project involves Boston artists GoFive and TakeOne, who will work with local teens on creating murals at English High School. The theme is "Spaces of Belonging," Croney Moses said, adding that she feels this theme is "relevant" as people still deal with the effects of isolation from the pandemic.

The project will also seek feedback from English High students, parents, administrators, and teachers, as well as the larger

Continued on page 9

Wu extends deadline for city employees to comply with vaccine mandate

BY LAUREN BENNETT

Mayor Michelle Wu on Jan. 24 announced that she has pushed back the date for city workers to comply with her vaccine mandate.

The mandate was originally set to take effect on Jan. 15, and those found to not be in compliance would be placed on unpaid administrative leave starting on that date. It had been extended again until Jan. 24, and is now being extended once more to Jan. 30. Employees must prove that they've received at least one dose of the vaccine by then.

"As you've seen, we are giving our employees one more week to get vaccinated, and that means

that there will be no unpaid leave between January 25 and January 30," Wu said at Monday's press conference. Wu said that conversations are continuing with unions, some of which have expressed opposition to the mandate.

Wu said that more than 94 percent of city employees are fully vaccinated, which amounts to 18,720 employees.

"I'm incredibly encouraged by this process," Wu said.

Wu also said that "almost every department is at more than 90 percent vaccination rate across the city." She said that 94

Continued on page 2

Wu

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percent of Boston Public Schools employees are fully vaccinated, along with more than 95 percent of the Boston Police Department, 91 percent of the Boston Fire Department, 95 percent of the Boston Public Library employees, 96 percent of the Inspectional Services Department employees, and 97 percent of the Boston Parks Department.

There are also some city departments where 100 percent of employees are fully vaccinated—these include the Registry and Treasury departments, as well as

the City Clerk's office, the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, Youth Employment and Engagement, and Office of Streets, Wu said.

Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission, said that vaccination remains the best way to "mitigate the impact of COVID-19."

She also said that vaccine clinics were held for employees of the Boston Public Schools, Boston Fire Department, and Boston Police Department.

"There is a bit of reason to be hopeful right now in the City of Boston," Ojikutu said. She said that vaccination rates have increased recently, and that 70

percent of Bostonians are fully vaccinated, while more than 82 percent have received at least one dose.

Ojikutu also spoke about current COVID trends, saying that at its highest, the city's positivity rate was more than 32 percent, but for the week ending on Jan. 21, the positivity rate was 18.9 percent.

She said that though the city continues to see new COVID cases, the number of new cases is down 50 percent, and the number of COVID-related emergency room visits is down 16 percent.

Hospitalizations, however, are still "extraordinarily high," Ojikutu said, and are up 12 percent from last week.

Extiende

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de vacunación del 100 por ciento incluyen el registro, el tesoro, y la oficina de jóvenes.

La Dra. Bisola Ojikutu, directora ejecutiva de la Comisión de Salud Pública de Boston, dijo que la vacunación sigue siendo la me-

jor manera de mitigar el impacto de la COVID-19.

La tasa de vacunación ha aumentado recientemente y el 70 por ciento de los bostonianos están completamente vacunados, mientras que más del 82 por ciento han recibido al menos una dosis.

Para la semana que finalizó el 21 de enero, la tasa de casos positivos fue del 18,9 por cien-

to. La cantidad de casos nuevos se redujo en un 50 por ciento y la cantidad de visitas a la sala de emergencias relacionadas con COVID se redujo en un 16 por ciento.

Sin embargo, las hospitalizaciones siguen siendo extraordinariamente altas, y aumentaron un 12 por ciento con respecto a la semana pasada.

Jamica Plain Fuel Assistance benefits now at \$1,650

By JOHN LYND

Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) kicked off the annual Fuel Assistance Program at the ABCD offices in Jamaica Plain.

ABCD President/CEO John J. Drew is now urging Jamaica Plain residents to apply for fuel aid now as federal funding to the program has increased.

Drew said with the new round of funding households at or below the federal poverty level can now receive \$1,650 in fuel assistance, while those with slightly higher incomes receive increased benefits on a sliding scale.

Residents can apply by calling ABCD Fuel Assistance at 617-357-6012 or get in-person help with applications at ABCD's Jamaica Plain sites and partner sites located at Jamaica Plain Head Start & Children's Services, 315 Centre Street; Nurture Learning Lab, 33 Bickford Street; and Horizons for Homeless Children – Putnam Community Center, 555 Amory Street.

There is also a new online system for first-time fuel assistance that can be accessed at toapply.org/MassLIHEAP.

Drew said due to the huge

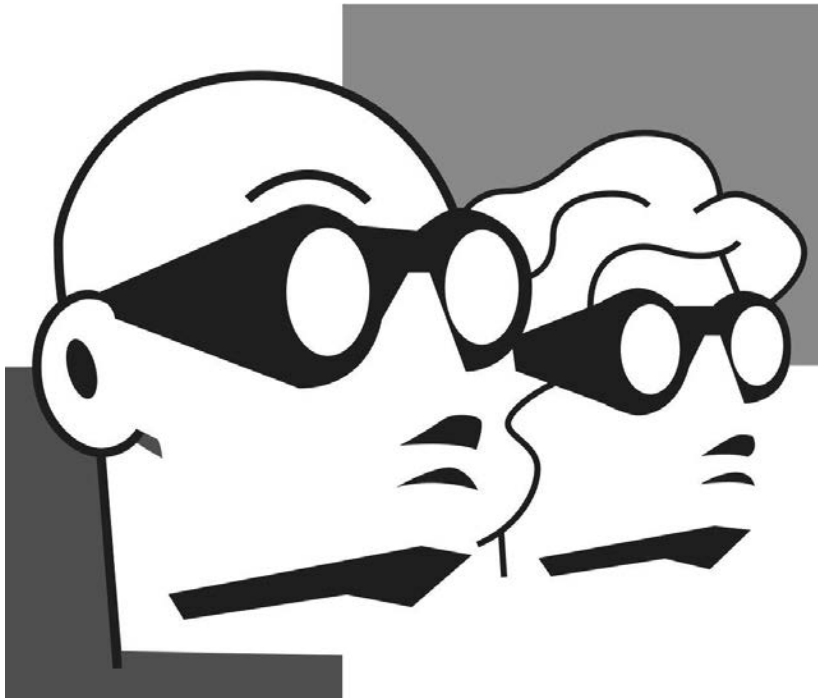
spike in energy costs and the ongoing economic crisis battering our most vulnerable households, benefits from the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) have been increased. Last year the highest fuel assistance benefit was \$1,210.

"We are thankful for this increase and look forward to the allocation soon of the significant funds committed by President Biden to get everyone safely through the winter and reduce the number of utility shut-offs in April," said ABCD President/CEO John J. Drew.

Home heating oil in Massachusetts is currently at \$3.43 a gallon and up, almost twice the cost last year. It costs about \$800 to fill a tank, and that can run out in a matter of weeks in bitter New England weather. Vulnerable elders and others who cannot afford to keep their thermostats at a comfortable level put themselves at risk of getting sick – or worse.

To keep struggling families and elders from falling through the cracks, help with fuel costs is also available to those slightly above poverty level.

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City, Boston University, New England Conservatory present Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration

By LAUREN BENNETT

The City of Boston, along with the New England Conservatory and Boston University, presented the 2022 celebration of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his wife, Coretta Scott King virtually on January 18. The event was live-streamed from the Boston University Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground.

Titled "A Celebration of the Lives and Legacies of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King," the program included both live and pre-recorded remarks on topics ranging from democracy to honoring Dr. and Mrs. King to looking towards the future from

many different individuals, as well as musical performances from New England Conservatory students and Boston University's Inner Strength Gospel Choir.

Speakers for the program included:

- Brianna Bourne, Boston University Arts & Sciences '24, Boston Latin Academy '20

- Saida Grundy, Assistant Professor of Sociology, African American Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies at Boston University

- Katherine Kennedy, Director, Boston University Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground

- Jean Morrison, Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Boston

University

- Jean-Luc Pierite, Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana, President of the Board of The North American Indian Center of Boston

- Kelsey Russell, Boston University Arts & Sciences '22

- Tanisha Sullivan, President of the NAACP Boston Branch

- Andrea Taylor, Senior Diversity Officer, Boston University

Martin Luther King, Jr. was a graduate of Boston University, while Coretta Scott King graduated from the New England Conservatory.

"We are pleased to partner with the City of Boston and New England Conservatory to

celebrate the life and legacy of Martin Luther King and the enduring work of Coretta Scott King," Boston University President Robert A. Brown said in a press release sent out ahead of the event. "We pause in our busy lives to reflect on Dr. King's achievement and sacrifice so that we can renew our commitment to do all we can to make our society, our world, just and equitable."

During the program, Mayor Michelle Wu said, "Dr. King, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, and so many activists, dedicated their lives to fighting poverty, systemic racism, and oppression. In Dr. King's case, he both dedicated and lost his life in this fight. His legacy, his impact, endures. It is

on this legacy, that of the civil rights movement, the legacy of the fight for racial equality, the legacy of these giants of history, that today's activists build a brighter future for us all."

New England Conservatory President Andrea Kalyn said in the press release, "We are so pleased to join Boston University and the City of Boston in celebrating the work and contributions of Dr. and Mrs. King, and for the opportunity to reflect together on how their leadership inspires and informs our own responsibility to advance equity, justice, and community."

The full recording of the celebration can be found on the Boston City TV YouTube channel.

Healey

Continued from page 1

have endless capacity to do great things. We're at a hard time now. But we're going to get through it and we're going to go on and we're going to build forward in ways that we can't even imagine right now. That's what excites me. I want to bring to this as your next governor a lot of things to focus on, a lot of things that need attention, especially getting the economy back on track and making sure that it works for everyone across the state. But I'm just really excited to be here and to be out in a community like East Boston. It's about meeting the people where they are. I've always been driven by the people and engagement with people."

Healey said job one for her administration would be a focus on economic growth and job creation.

"So many people are experiencing high cost of living, whether it's in health care, housing, even transit, gasoline, you name it right now, and that's something that we've got to deal with as a state," she said. "I recognize there's monetary policy that the federal government is going to control but there are actually levers and things that we can do as a state to better address that situation. But job one will be making sure this economy is back on track that gets to issues of workforce development and job training. It gets to issues of child care, which is fundamental, especially to getting women back

to the workforce. So there's a lot of opportunity and a lot of work ahead to continue what's working and address what's not working. The general governing philosophy is if something's working, then let's keep with it and if it's not working let's figure out what we need to do."

Healey continued, "That's certainly what I've tried to do in my time holding this office as Attorney General. I think fundamentally the best thing that Massachusetts has going for it are its people and I see so much possibility and capacity there. I think that we've got great people. I think we've got great institutions. We've got some really terrific "know how" across the state. If you look at some of what's happened just in the last few years in nearby Kendall Square or over in the Seaport, the amount of money that's come into the state in terms of investment. I understand that people wonder if we're ever going

to get through this and out of this and I'm just here to say we are and we will and we will move forward in ways that are bigger and better than ever imagined."

In the end Healey said she believes her record will speak for itself when it comes time for voters to pick a new governor.

"I think if you look at my record it speaks for itself in terms of where I am on fighting systemic racism and inequality, fighting for access to affordable health care, recognizing that across every sector, whether it's climate, transportation, the environment, criminal justice," she said. "We can and should apply an equity lens to everything that we do and bring an intentionality and an energy so that we are in fact improving the lives and well being and stakes of everybody here in the state, regardless of zip code, race, ethnicity, and the like. There are so many things happening right now and I appreciate people's voices. I

appreciate their advocacy. I love people, and I love people's enthusiasm and right now we're in a time where people are demanding that what hasn't worked in our systems be addressed. I think with COVID there was so much

being dismantled, so much being disrupted and now we got an opportunity to move forward in new and different ways that are going to be better for every single person in this state."



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El registro de la temporada regular finaliza el 15 de Abril de 2022

La temporada de primavera se extiende desde el miércoles 27 de abril hasta el domingo 26 de junio.

La inscripción cuesta \$25.00 — hay descuentos disponibles.

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Jamaica Plain's weekly COVID positive test-rate decreases

By JOHN LYNDIS

Ten days after Mayor Michelle Wu and the city implemented the "B Together" mandate that requires all employees and patrons at indoor venues to show proof of vaccination, Jamaica Plain's weekly COVID 19 positive test rate has dipped for the first time in weeks. .

The COVID winter surge has wreaked havoc on the city and affected school attendance for both staff and students, closed local business due to staff shortages and put a strain on emergency rooms at area hospitals.

Two weeks ago nearly 2 out of every 10 residents tested for the

virus turned out to be positive but that number has dropped.

According to the weekly report released Monday by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), 3,111 Jamaica Plain residents were tested and 15.6 percent were found to be positive--this was a 39 percent decrease from the 21.7 percent that tested positive between January 10 and January 17.

Four hundred eighty five additional Jamaica Plain residents tested positive for the virus last week and the number of positive cases increased to 3,701 overall since the start of the pandemic.

The citywide weekly positive test rate also decreased last

week. According to the BPHC 30,644 residents were tested and 24 percent were COVID positive--this was a 24 percent decrease from the 31.6 percent that reportedly tested positive for the week ending on January 17. The weekly positive test rate has now decreased 25 percent in Boston since January 10.

The statistics released by the BPHC as part of its weekly COVID19 report breaks down the number of cases and infection rates in each neighborhood. It also breaks down the number of cases by age, gender and race.

Citywide positive cases of coronavirus increased 10 percent last week and went from 141,491

cases to 155,363 confirmed cases in a week.

However, there were 57 additional deaths in Boston from the virus in the past week and the total COVID deaths is now at 1,611. Deaths, which totaled 19 two weeks ago over the course of that week, increased 200 percent last week.

JPNC discusses committee updates

By LAUREN BENNETT

The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC) met virtually on January 25, where members discussed updates from committees, as well as elected two new members.

State Rep. Nika Elugardo was scheduled to speak and answer questions from the neighborhood, but asked if she could reschedule due to the Governor's State of the Commonwealth address, which was held on Tuesday evening at the Hynes Convention Center.

The Council elected Nicholas Chaves and Daniel Pérez Lacera to the council, and then discussed some committee updates.

ZONING COMMITTEE

Zoning Committee Chair Dave Baron spoke about three matters that came before the Zoning Committee and required a vote from the Council.

At 20 Orchard St., the homeowners proposed a dormer on the third floor to add a new master bathroom with more space. Baron explained that the Jamaica Pond Association (JPA) had submitted a letter of opposition, and that JPA Zoning Committee Chair Kevin Moloney had said that a few abutters were opposed to the dormer, including one who is also a member of the JPA Board.

At the JPNC Zoning Committee meeting, Baron said that there were abutters who were also in favor of the proposal. Discussion at this meeting ensued about whether or not Peter

Elmuts, the abutter who is also a JPA Board member, should be allowed to vote on the matter.

Ultimately, the full Council voted to approve the dormer as presented.

At 68 Day St., the proposal is to change the occupancy of the existing building from a two family residence with a church to a three family residence. The scope of work includes renovations to the first floor only--the upper two levels will remain as-is. This was also approved.

At 44-46 Hyde Park Ave., cannabis retailer Apotheca proposed to add recreational sales to their medical sales, which had already been approved by the Council. The request was approved by the Council, as well as the Zoning Board of Appeal on January 25.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Michael Reiskind reported that the committee discussed its initiatives for the year relating to transportation and public safety. He said the group discussed bicycles, as well as "traffic flow and safety, and continuing our support for extending the Green Line to Hyde Square."

Reiskind also said that improvements to the Arborway were also discussed. For public safety, he said the group discussed public works issues, including a master plan for Centre and South Streets and increasing the number of trash and recycling cans in the district.

Reiskind said that once the list of initiatives is finalized, he will bring it before the full Council.

HOUSING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Micah Sachs reported that the Housing & Development Committee heard from the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) about their efforts on outreach and engagement "to better engage under-represented communities," and a discussion about Article 80 projects in the neighborhood.

PARKS COMMITTEE

New Council member Alexis Rickmers said she was interested in restarting the Council's Parks Committee, which has been on a hiatus after its former leaders left the Council. Rickmers reported that she had met with fellow Council member Trevor Wissink-Adams to discuss reviving the committee, and has reached out to several residents who were also interested in participating. She said she will continue to do outreach and figure out where the committee's priorities will lie.

Lastly, JPNC Chair Samantha Montano announced that as of March 1, she will resign from the Council to pursue a race for the Massachusetts House of Representatives' 15th Suffolk District seat, which is currently held by Nika Elugardo. Elugardo has announced that she is running for State Senate.

As of March 1, the JPNC will need a new president.

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Construction begins on city's largest supportive housing development

BY LAUREN BENNETT

Construction has begun on the long-anticipated affordable and supportive housing project at 3368 Washington St.

The mixed-use building is a joint effort between Pine Street Inn and The Community Builders, and will consist of 202 total affordable units, 140 of which will be supportive housing for formerly homeless individuals. The remaining 62 units will be income restricted for families who make between 60 and 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI). Once complete, the building will be the city's largest supportive housing development. The building will also include a new office for Pine Street Inn's case management staff.

Additionally, the building includes community and amenity space for residents, as well as bike storage and 39 parking spots.

A lawsuit was brought against the project by landlord Monty Gold in 2020, who said he had concerns with the size of the project and that it would create parking issues on Washington St. That suit was eventually settled in May of 2021. Gold owns the building across the street at 3377 Washington St., which is home to Turtle Swamp Brewery, though owners of Turtle Swamp said that they were not party to this lawsuit.

The Jamaica Plain community at-large strongly supported the construction of this building, saying that this type of housing is much needed in the neighborhood and in the city as a whole.

According to a Jan. 24 press release from the city, "The project was funded in part through the Boston's Way Home Fund, started by the City of Boston to create permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals." Other funding comes from "a diverse combination of public, private philanthropic support to finance the building construction, property operations, and resident services."

Construction was originally intended to begin a year ago, according to Bart Mitchell, President and CEO of The Community Builders. Due to the delay, costs have now gone up nine to 10 percent, he said, but "thankfully, it has not changed anything about the project."

Lyndia Downie, President and

Executive Director of Pine Street Inn, told the Gazette about the supportive services that this new building will offer the formerly homeless.

She said that staff will be on-site round-the-clock, and there will also be case management folks to help people adjust to living in housing. People will be able to receive support for things like money management, cooking, and employment.

Downie also said that many formerly homeless people have "complicated medical issues," and supports will also be available to help them with that aspect of their lives.

Mitchell said that "Community Life staff" from The Community Builders will also provide resources for the families living in the 62 affordable units on things like employment and education.

Downie said that "we've got one ell of the building," which is built around a courtyard and features shared common spaces for all residents on the ground floor.

Mitchell also shared some information about the roughly 13,000 square feet of outdoor space that will be available to residents of this building. At the second floor, there is an outdoor roof space where the building is set back from the front, and can be "directly accessed through a lot of the common spaces," he said.

He said this space will be "such a place of respite" and will have "so much light and air that I think it's going to feel really great."

While the second floor deck is



A rendering of the supportive housing development under construction at 3368 Washington St. Rendering courtesy of RODE Architects

the main one, there will also be a small deck on the fifth floor.

Downie said that to become a resident of the supportive housing, people will need to be on the [Boston Housing Authority] waitlist and meet the income and homeless criteria to be selected.

The building is expected to be completed in "just about two years," Mitchell said, with an anticipated grand opening in early 2024.

The beginning of construction for this project comes at a time when Mayor Wu is working on addressing the crisis as Mass and Cass, and aiming to support those dealing with homelessness and/or substance abuse and mental

illness, though the issue is prevalent in other places throughout the city as well.

"I think this project started before Mass/Cass grew substantially," Downie said. "Supportive housing doesn't solve every problem that people have," she added, but said that it does help to stabilize them in a way that allows them to take advantage of other opportunities that they would not have been able to otherwise.

"Some people just need a little bit of support," she said, and

supportive housing is the way to do that.

"This is such an incredible model that can be replicated," Mitchell said, adding that the building will be constructed with "healthy building materials" and will feature "great air quality."

He continued, "there are generous community spaces in the building, including the tremendous outdoor space." Mitchell also

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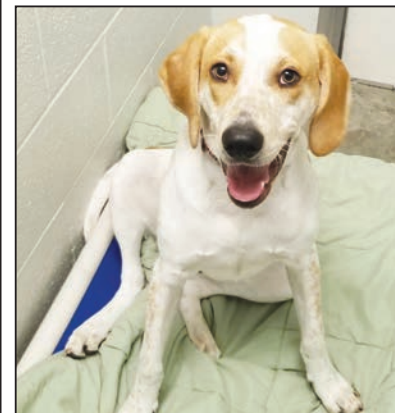
Gazette Pet of the Week

by Sarah Carroll



'BUDDY'

Buddy is a lovable and playful young hound looking for an experienced family to help him blossom into a mature adult! He is house-broken, adventurous, and enjoys care rides. He loves



his toys and food so much that he is not willing to share, so he'd do best in a home with dog-savvy teens 15 and up and as an only pet. He needs some help learning that he can share his stuff along with mastering his basic manners, as he's still young can play rough. He's an energetic pup as well, so an active family would be ideal! He is 9 months old.

"Gazette Pet of the Week" is sponsored by

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JP OBSERVER

A Nation Divided: Peaceful discussions across U.S. required

By SANDRA STOREY / SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Divided, fractured, segmented, split, polarized... we don't need to wait long these days to hear someone using one of those words to describe this country.

"More divided than ever," is a common expression.

Hot issues that separate people headline today's news: masks, vaccinations, race relations, political parties, religion, immigration, voting rights, education, Roe v. Wade, guns, the results of the 2020 presidential election... The list goes on and will get longer and worse until we do something about how Americans communicate with each another.

Polarization is exacerbated by nasty language and personal behavior some people use toward people they don't agree with. Name-calling is common. Verbal conflicts and wild accusations have moved from the streets to social media to town halls all the way to the U.S. Congress. Too many confrontations have turned violent in the form of threats and actions.

Not only is all the strife unpleasant, it also makes us unproductive. Public policies about important subjects are being crowded into existence—like voter suppression laws—or stagnate in a cesspool of refusals to compromise. The voting rights bill and Build Back Better are two current national examples of great ideas so mired in conflict nothing can get done.

Some special nonprofit projects have the goal of bridging the huge gaps between people in the country, but so far, that's not been enough. Media—social and traditional—have a profit motive that encourages conflict the same way it does with lucrative broadcast sports or action movies. Dramatic disagreements attract audience.

Portraying issues as though equal numbers of people support two distinct sides adds to the dissonance. Many topics have way more supporters of one "side" than the other, but the shouting drowns that out.

Political parties aren't equal either, though they are often portrayed as the two opponents. As of Dec. 17, 2020, 31 percent of

Americans said they were Democrats, 25 percent Republicans, and 41 percent—the most of all—said they were not affiliated with a party, according to a Gallup Poll. Most counts show a similar break-down.

Caring people who want to manage the country well have to counteract the splits as well as the exaggerated conflicts, and some are trying.

To begin to reunite our fracturing country, the table we are working from needs to be examined with some perspective. This country is, in fact, divided—into 50 states. The real name is "United States of America" with its people called "Americans." When we abbreviate the country's name to "America" instead of United States, U.S., or U.S.A. we imply nonchalance or even defeat when it comes to the unity part. (We also ignore the rest of the Americas.)

The United States came into being in 1776 when there were just 13 colonies, or states. Managing the huge amalgamation of large and small states we have now is incredibly more difficult than what the founders had in mind. When 50 states—official parts of this large country—have powerful governments of their own—including jurisdiction over national elections—it's no wonder friction leads to fire around the very basis of our type of democracy.

The United States is the third largest country in the world in population and fourth largest in area. But we are 174th in density. Americans are physically separated in space and awkwardly divided by political lines.

Is it a coincidence that two of the four largest countries in area—in order: Russia, Canada, China, and the United States—have totalitarian governments? Probably not, given the difficulty of managing millions of people, thousands of issues, huge and varying geographies so people come to compromise.

China and the U.S. are in the top three most populous countries, with China the heaviest populated. In the absence of the ability to get along well enough to have reasonable, productive

discussions about issues, dictators and authoritarians might easily take over.

We already know the country literally split apart during the Civil War. We got a taste of an attempted coup just last year when an angry mob and its motivators and supporters tried to install an authoritarian U.S. president for another term using force instead of rule of law. No wonder everyone's worried about our heated disagreements.

Empathy has become a focus of some who are concerned. Training of everyone from doctors to school children and adults in how to listen to and understand others is on the increase, thank goodness.

Other localized projects, especially in communities where major divides exist, are helping bring people with differences together to speak together peacefully. CBS News' "Unifying America" series began last February featuring mostly local transformations.

Coverage has included: a welcoming lunch counter with a painful racists history in South Carolina; a school in Newark where police and teens get to know each other; and a former KKK meeting house that is becoming a center for racial information and reconciliation.

Make America Dinner Again (MADA), a national program founded in 2016, encourages small groups of conservatives and liberals who live near each other to talk specifically about political differences in a calm and reasoned way over dinner (or Zoom nowadays) in towns around the country.

Here on the East Coast, in Massachusetts, in Boston, in Jamaica Plain, people live relatively close together. JP and other urban areas tend to be progressive in politics and values. Every U.S. congressional representative and senator in Massachusetts is a Democrat. We need to get out of our liberal bubble sometimes and get to know people elsewhere personally.

In order to heal these United States and make working well together possible, the number of calm communications between

people in different places with different opinions needs to drastically increase. Talking civilly with friends and relatives with whom we often disagree and who agree to be polite, too, can help, as well as joining one of the efforts described here.

The Common Ground Committee is a Facebook group that brings people from around the country together to "engage in civil conversation about the political issues of the day." Name calling and threats are not allowed. Anyone can join.

Time magazine wrote about an interstate effort at understanding called Living Room Conversations. LRC brings people from around the country with varying experiences and ideas to meet online to talking civilly about issues. Conversations on dozens of topics are suggested on its website accompanied by templates that show how to manage them.

This past December, Redditor challenged its readers: "Former racists of Reddit, what made you think the way you do and how did you get out of racism?" The responses vividly illustrate the importance of simple contact and communication among different people.

Actor and activist George Takei reported on his website that the vast majority of respondents wrote that at one time they didn't know many black people and people of other races and nationalities, but they heard bad things about them. Then, mostly by happenstance, they got to know and listen to one or more black people and changed their minds.

One man wrote of growing up in a small town where everyone, including his family, expressed negative things about black people. At camp one summer, a black boy shared his tent. The white man wrote that he was "afraid" of the black boy. He said, "By the end of the third day of camp, I realized that other than talking a bit different, my black cabinmate was no different than my white cabinmates." He said he slowly came to realize that his parents "were wrong about things."

International exchange programs similar to the ones we have for high school and college students make excellent models for expanding opportunities for people across the country to get to know one another. An Interstate Neighbors program would ask young and retired people, at first, to volunteer to live somewhere very different in the U.S. from where they are now for at least six months.

Even in a pandemic, the exchange neighbors could get involved in their new communities and mix with people there. Young exchange neighbors would go to school. Visiting neighbors would agree to live at the same income level as the people in their town. Staff would train and supervise visiting neighbors and the host towns to make sure they were communicating about everyday life as well as public issues in a calm and civil and open-minded manner.

Learning about and coming to understand other people, their lives, and their thoughts, through forging relationships can transform enemies into colleagues. Colleagues can cooperate to get good things done. They can share more laughs than swear words.

It sounds simple. Something like Interstate Neighbors would be complicated to set up and fund. The recruitment effort of hosts and visitors would need to be big. It could take a few years before effects on discourse and feelings of empathy and common purpose would improve significantly nationally.

Encouraging comradery among people who usually live far from one another and have differences is a fundamental action that needs to take place if peaceful coexistence and productivity can be restored. Could it be that it's too hard or too late to pull our divided country together? It's never been more important, and it's never too late to try.

Sandra Storey is the founder and former publisher of the Jamaica Plain Gazette.

ZBA approves Doyle's restoration project; new headquarters for YES

BY LAUREN BENNETT

The Zoning Board of Appeal (ZBA) approved several projects in Jamaica Plain on January 18, including the proposal for a new headquarters for Youth Enrichment Services (YES) at 265-267 Amory St., as well as the revived Doyle's Proposal on Washington St. and Williams Streets.

265-267 AMORY ST.

Lee Goodman of Watermark Development presented the proposal for 265-267 Amory St., which is to build two separate buildings—one four-story, nine-unit residential building with nine parking spaces, and one three story building with an office and classrooms, along with a ski shop on the first floor.

Goodman said that this is a “joint venture with Youth Enrichment Services (YES), a social service agency that serves about 1600 kids a year currently in their location on Mass. Ave.”

This proposed site is right across from the Brewery Complex, he said, and presents challenges due to the fact that the Stonybrook culvert runs across the front of the site and there is an MBTA easement along the train tracks in the rear. He said the buildings are pushed back on the site away from the culvert, which also helps to lessen the impact of the height and massing of the buildings.

Aside from the two buildings, Watermark and YES are also proposing a bus drop off for the youth ski trips.

Goodman said that the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) has increased from 1.0 to 1.5 and 1.8, and explained that while the zoning height in the area is 35 feet, PLAN:JP/Rox allows for 45 feet. He said the buildings are 45 and 46 feet tall. There is also a rear yard setback violation, as one of the buildings sits three feet from the rear yard—but it's really to the MBTA easement, he said.

There is also a parking violation for off-street parking, Goodman said. YES will have five parking spaces along with the bus drop off, and there will be nine spaces for the residential units.

Goodman said that they are “actually going to rent spaces from the MBTA to have additional overflow parking.”

The nine units will be three bedroom market rate home own-

ership units. He said instead of an affordable unit, they “worked with the neighborhood to create a benefits package” that is “equivalent to the cost of one unit.”

The package includes sidewalk improvements as well as improvements for two crosswalks near the project, a path through the Southwest Corridor, and a \$100,000 donation to the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (JPND). Additionally, “Watermark agreed to work pro bono for YES throughout the pre-development and construction,” Goodman said.

“It's really a great project,” he said. “YES does so much for the community. They provide skiing and outdoor trips for kids throughout the city. This will allow them to expand from their current location to a permanent headquarters.”

Tiffani Caballero from the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services said that this project had gone through an “extensive community process,” and received support from the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council (JPNC) as well as 88 letters of support.

An abutter on Amory St. said that she lives in one of Watermark's buildings and pointed out the “quality of work they do.” She said she supports this developer as well as looks forward to the sidewalk and crosswalk improvements in the area.

Rebecca Plaut Mautner of the JPND said that the JPND is “extremely supportive” of this proposal. “We believe the massing is very appropriate given the location near the T stop,” she said, adding that the organization also feels the proposed buildings work well with those in the area.

Attorney Sheryl Furnari spoke on behalf of opposing abutters, saying that “they welcome the YES program,” but their main concern is with the height of the buildings as they would like them to remain at 35 feet.

Goodman said that the site is “currently a parking lot, so anything we build there feels like an extreme change and we understand that,” but PLAN:JP/Rox does allow for the 45 feet, he said. “We're really just following the maps that the [Boston Planning and Development Agency]

(BPDA) wanted to see there.”

The ZBA voted to approve the project with BPDA design review.

DOYLE'S

The revived Doyle's proposal was also approved by the ZBA, and consists of three different buildings. The first is at 3484 Washington St., which includes the renovation of the existing restaurant, along with a new 5,000 square foot market and the construction of 16 new condo units above the market and 22 parking spaces. The second is at 60 Williams St., which includes the construction of a four-story, seven unit condo building, and the third is at 69 Williams St. to erect a new three-story building with six affordable units (in conjunction with the JPND) and six parking spaces.

This proposal is also being made by Watermark Development, and Lee Goodman said, “I think Doyle's Cafe needs no introduction but this is our attempt to restore it...”

The proposal also includes knocking down the existing two family home next to the restaurant to make room for the market. The new restaurant will be operated by Brassica Kitchen + Cafe.

The affordable units will be family sized, and two of them will be four bedrooms, two will be three bedrooms, and two will be two bedroom units.

At One Gartland, which is the 16 units above the market, there will be 12 three bedroom units and four two bedroom units, “all 1500-1600 square feet.”

At 60 Williams, there will be four three bedroom units and three two bedroom units around the same size. All units are for home ownership.

Goodman said that there will be 29 parking spots for the residential units and an additional 29 for the commercial spaces.

He said that the market will be a bodega-type store. He said it's “not going to be a Whole Foods; not going to be a Trader Joe's.” No retailer has committed to the site yet, as Goodman said many require approvals for the project before they can commit. “They need a lot of certainty,” he said.

The Doyle's restaurant will be “a little under 5,000 square feet,” Goodman said, and will include a new community room that the

team has dubbed the “Kennedy Room.” It will serve as a “private room for community meetings,” he said, in “the same way that Doyle's always did.”

ZBA member Eric Robinson said that “I think the proponent has done a good job trying to pull a lot of facets together here,” and also acknowledged that this is a “complex project.”

Goodman said that the project has received 140 letters of support from the community, as well as from former City Councilor Matt O'Malley and State Rep. Liz Malia. “It was an extensive process,” he said. “It was about 14 months.”

Tiffani Caballero of the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services said that the city has received those letters of support, and the Stonybrook Neighborhood Association (SNA) and the JPNC.

“This applicant and proposal has undergone an extensive community process,” she said.

The ZBA reported that it has received letters both in support and in opposition.

Resident Allan Ihrer said “please vote to deny the proposal. It badly needs fixing and mitigation.” He said that the “project relies on the BPDA's PLAN: JP/Rox for density, but

ignores abutters and neighbors.”

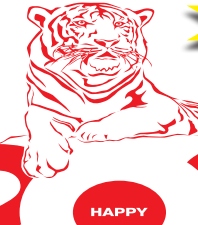
Pete Fraunholtz, a resident on Williams St., said “We welcome more housing and we welcome getting Doyle's back up and running, but as was mentioned, there are a lot of violations. The process was rushed. 60 Williams is way too tall and way too close to the neighbors.”

He also had issues with traffic and parking as it relates to the project.

“I would love to see this project move forward,” said Sean Fitzpatrick, a resident on Everett St. “I think it's a great plan. It's a black hole over there now. It would be nice to have some street activity and have another market close by. I think this would be a wonderful addition to the neighborhood.”

Resident Marcus Walker said he is also in support of the project, as he believes it will “add a lot of value to the neighborhood,” as well as “create community space that has been really needed since the pandemic.”

The Boston Transportation Department (BTD) had also expressed concerns to the ZBA regarding the parking plan. The ZBA voted to approve the proposal with BPDA design review and continued discussions with the BTD to address concerns there.



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JPNC Zoning Committee approves two projects

By Lauren Bennett

The Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council Zoning Committee met virtually on January 19, where several matters were heard and discussed, including a proposal at 44-46 Hyde Park Ave. to include the sale of recreational marijuana to the existing approval for medical, as well as a proposal at 68 Day St. to change the occupancy from a two family with a church to a three family dwelling.

Also discussed was a proposal at 3-5 Woodlawn St. to build ten micro-units on the vacant lot but due to concerns from abutters and to give the applicants more time to discuss changes with them, no vote was taken on this one.

44-46 HYDE PARK AVE.

Apothca has been approved for the sale of medical marijuana at 44-46 Hyde Park Ave., but has now requested the addition of recreational marijuana for the store, which has yet to open.

The Apothca team said that there will be three separate ID checkpoints for all customers, as well as a security guard on duty during store hours, and round-the-clock cameras on the exterior

of the building.

Apothca co-founder Joseph Lekach said that a police detail will be on site “for as long as they think we need one,” and he also promised “quarterly community meetings for at least the first year,” and once a year after that first year is up.

JPNC Zoning Committee Chair Dave Baron asked about the police detail and whether it would be focused more on security or on traffic and parking. Lekach said it is “primarily about traffic and parking,” as Apothca has other existing locations in Lynn and Arlington, and they “haven’t had a security incident,” he said. “We’ve been operating for quite some time.”

The committee voted to approve this proposal.

3-5 WOODLAWN ST.

Baron said that this was the second time a proposal for this lot had come before the committee, as “when it came here the first time, it was an application for 12 micro-units on vacant land, and now it’s 10.”

Architect Chris Drew said the original proposal was for 13 units, but is now a proposal for a “new three story building with 10 compact studio units,” as well as

a common lounge area, laundry room, and bike storage facility on the first floor for the building’s residents.

He said that changes from the previous proposal include the removal of the fourth floor (which makes the building zoning compliant), reduction of the unit count by three, reduction of height from 41 feet to 30 feet (which makes it zoning compliant), a reduction in Floor Area Ratio, a larger bike storage room, and an increase in Group 2A accessible units from one to two. No parking is proposed as part of the project, as compact living guidelines prevent the inclusion of parking, the team said.

“I’d like to commend the team for creating very efficient, very small footprint units,” said committee member Kendra Halliwell. She said that while there is a need for larger three and four bedroom units, there is also a need for micro-units like these.

The project team said that an abutters meeting outlining these changes has not been held yet, and many residents expressed their concern with the process.

Drew said that much of the new things in the proposal are a result of previous feedback from abutters.

“Not everything has to be facilitated for you and scheduled,” Baron said. “You know who your abutters are; you can talk to

them.”

Resident Rob Kerth said “I think it looks like a really great project.”

Abby Stewart, who lives on Woodlawn St. said that it is “silly to think no one’s going to have a car,” as she pointed out numerous cars shown in a photo of the street shown by the project team. “At least one person is going to have a car,” she said.

Attorney Francis Adams said that under the compact living guidelines, residents of this building would not be permitted to obtain a resident permit parking sticker.

Due to the outlying concerns, no vote was taken on the matter.

68 DAY ST.

At 68 Day St., Jacob Simmons of City Realty proposed to change the use of the existing two family with a church to a three family residence. He said that there are no changes to the outside of the building, nor are there changes proposed for the existing units on the top two floors.

A church used to occupy the first floor and the basement, which now sit unfinished.

“Our proposal does not have any basement living space,” Simmons said. The plan is to keep these units as rental units, including the new one on the first floor.

The committee voted to approve the proposal.

Construction

Continued from page 5

said that at five stories tall, “it fits on the street” and it’s “not some gigantic building.”

Downie also thanked the Jamaica Plain residents who supported the project at community meetings and otherwise. “It is a groundbreaking project in so many ways. It wouldn’t have happened without their support.” She and Mitchell also thanked the city and state agencies for their support as well in making this a reality.

“This is the first, I hope, of other projects like this,” Downie said.

Mitchell, who has been a JP resident for nearly 40 years, noted that Pine Street Inn has been housing people in the neighborhood “for at least 20 years.”

He added, “every neighborhood is a neighborhood that has room for all of our households. That was really heartwarming.”

In the press release, Mayor Michelle Wu said: “This project, with units for individuals moving out of homelessness, and wrap-around support services, is a significant step towards ending homelessness in the city. Once complete, these apartments will represent the largest supportive housing development in the city, delivering stable, affordable homes to those who require it most. I’m thankful to the community and all our partners who helped make this development possible.”



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Jamaica Plain projects to receive funding through various agencies

BY JOHN LYNDS

Two Jamaica Plain projects aimed at preserving affordable housing in the neighborhood will receive funding from the Mayor's Office of Housing, the Neighborhood Housing Trust (NHT), and the Community Preservation Fund (CPF).

Last week, Mayor Michelle Wu announced \$40 million in new recommended funding from the Mayor's Office of Housing, the NHT and the CPF to create and preserve over 700 income-restricted units of housing in Jamaica Plain as well as Dorchester, Chinatown, Hyde Park, and Roxbury.

The city will allocate \$4,800,000 for The Community Builders' for transformative re-

development of the Amory Street Public Housing campus.

The Community builders will create a new income-restricted building on the site of a former Boston Housing Authority's (BHA) public safety building and garage with 96 units. This phase of development will also create a central common that will serve as an amenity for the entire campus, and will generate 30 new parking spaces.

Another \$3,950,000 has been allocated to Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation and Traggoth Companies for the Stonley-Brookley Homeownership Development, which will create 45 units of income restricted homes with five units designated for artist live-work use.

Wu said these two proposed projects comply with the Mayor's Office of Housing standards for zero-emissions buildings and represent transit-oriented green development.

"Now more than ever, having a safe and stable home is critical for the health of our families and communities," said Wu. "These housing awards represent significant investments in neighborhoods across Boston, making them stronger and more accessible for our residents. I'm grateful to the Neighborhood Housing Trust and the Community Preservation Committee for their leadership and partnership with the community."

In August 2021, the City of Boston released two Requests for Proposals (RFP) offering

funds for affordable housing developments. The Mayor's Office of Housing, (formerly the Department of Neighborhood Development), the Community Preservation Committee, and the Neighborhood Housing Trust evaluated the proposals and prioritized 14 projects.

These two Jamaica Plain projects will promote the city's goals to affirmatively further fair housing, and will efficiently utilize City resources and/or land to increase the supply of housing available to low- and moderate-income households.

Wu said to ensure that all units receiving City funding will remain affordable, developers are required to agree to long-term affordability for all income-restricted units. All rental projects

are permanently deed-restricted, and all homeownership projects are deed-restricted for 50 years. In addition, developers of rental projects are required to set aside at least 10 percent of their units for homeless households, and projects that offered additional units at lower AMI levels received priority in the evaluation process.

The CPA is recommending more than \$14.6 million for the Jamaica Plain projects and the other projects across the city. These projects are part of a larger award that includes affordable housing, historic preservation, and open space projects. The final slate of CPA recommended projects will go to the City Council for review and approval in February.

Eliot

Continued from page 1

Jamaica Plain community as a whole. She said that the "hardest task" will be figuring out how to "engage authentically with the community."

Croney Moses said that Go-Five and TakeOne "have been really engaged with different communities in Boston and youth," and Eliot School is "excited" to have them on board as part of this project.

She said that this spring, the artists will hold workshops with Teen Bridge participants to come up with some different ideas and "spend some time building that trust and that community."

In July, there will be an "intensive period of planning and art making," in which final designs will be presented to the Boston Arts Commission for approval, and once approved, the mural will be installed at the school, though the exact location is to be determined.

"What's really exciting about this project," Croney Moses said, is that "there's a lot we don't know because it comes from the people who participate in it."

Eliot School has also partnered with Open Door Arts, an affiliate of Seven Hill Founda-

tion, as well as Wheelock Family Theater at Boston University. Funding in the form of a \$30,000 Grants for Arts Project grant was also awarded to this group for training for art teachers.

This funding will allow for the continuation of a professional development program for art teachers called SPAC (Supporting the Processing of Experience through the Arts during Crises).

Following the "racial awakening and racial reckoning" in the summer of 2020, Croney Moses said that people were "recognizing teachers were going back into the classroom with a lot of uncertainty and a lot of wanting to acknowledge the culturally rich student body that they teach."

She said that a pilot of the professional development series was offered this past fall to help teachers be able to offer more support to their students.

The professional development series included five sessions and five themes, Croney Moses said, which include:

1. The history of education through the lens of race
2. The history of education through the lens of disability
3. The social and emotional needs of students and how they can be supported
4. Colonizing curriculum and how to "question past ways

we've taught certain things."

5. "How do we put that into practice over Zoom and make it engaging?"

Croney Moses said that the program was "open to all teaching artists, not just visual artists," and "allowed folks to think about theatrical ways to engage."

With this new round of funding, "it's really exciting—we can expand," she said. She said that the hope is to offer professional development sessions this summer.

She said she feels that "the desire is still there" for this type of program, and "it's really exciting to have funders that support the work."

Additionally, she said she is grateful for the funding for the mural project as well.

The teens participating in the Teen Bridge program receive stipends for their participation and collaboration. "It's amazing to see them take ownership," she said.

"To me, it's a really big deal," she said of getting the funding, as well as "recognizing the hard work of our youth, our artists, and acknowledging that it's something that's relevant."

For more information about the Eliot School's Teen Bridge and Artist in Residence programs, visit eliotschool.org.



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Mike & Patty's looking to expand to Jamaica Plain

By JOHN LYNDS

A Boston-area sandwich shop that has made a name for itself among foodies is looking to open its fourth location in Jamaica Plain.

Mike and Patty's, owned by Ania Zaroda and Michael Gurevich, signed a lease last year to open up its latest location at the former Sorella's at 386 Centre St. Sorella's, the neighborhood's landmark breakfast joint, called it quits in March 2019 after 36 years in business.

Zaroda and Gurevich have launched an online crowdfunding site at <https://mainvest.com/b/mike-pattys-boston> to raise needed capital to get the business up and running. The duo has already raised \$52,000 towards a \$100,000 goal.

"The Jamaica Plain restaurant space requires minor remodeling as well as updated utilities and equipment," wrote Zaroda and Gurevich. "While we've self-funded two other locations, we believe Mike & Patty's Jamaica Plain - our largest and first dine-in location - is an exciting opportunity to bring the community into our business."

Funds raised will be used for

construction costs to finish remodeling the restaurant space, code-compliant commercial kitchen equipment and initial operating expenses.

Those who decide to invest will be rewarded according to Zaroda and Gurevich.

A \$300 or more investment gets you a Mike & Patty's T-Shirt. Invest \$500 or more and you'll get a Mike & Patty's Hoodie. Those who invest \$1,500 or more get a full breakfast for 20 people. Invest \$2,000 or more and you'll receive tickets to the Mike & Patty's launch party. If you invest \$5,000 or more you'll become a "Sandwich King" and get a Mike & Patty's sandwich named after you and will run on the shop's menu for a minimum of one month. A \$10,000 or more investment gets you a Mike & Patty's sandwich of your choice every day for a year. For a \$20,000 or more investment the owners will throw a private party for you and 35 guests. Finally, with a \$25,000 or more investment you'll get Mike & Patty's sandwiches for life.

Owners Zaroda and Gurevich purchased the original Mike & Patty's location in Bay Village in 2012 and fell in love with the



A sandwich from Mike & Patty's. Mike & Patty's looks to expand to Jamaica Plain this year.

business of providing an amazing breakfast experience to both Boston locals and out-of-town visitors.

"Breakfast has always been our favorite meal of the day, and we've been able to expand our Tiny Sandwich Shop to two other locations in the greater Boston

area," they said.

In 2018 Mike & Patty's expanded to Somerville and then to Newton in 2021.

"Our mission is to create an unforgettable craft casual food experience that inspires guests to spread the word," said Zaroda and Gurevich.

Mike & Patty has been featured on the Phantom Gourmet and over the years Eater Boston wrote they had one of the best breakfast sandwiches in Boston, and Boston Magazine named Mike & Patty's Carolina Caviar sandwich one of the best in the city.

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Tips on keeping your pet safe this winter

With major winter storms hitting the East Coast and other parts of the US, it's important for everyone to take the necessary precautions to stay safe – including your pets.

Trupanion, a leader in medical insurance for cats and dogs, offers the following 5 tips to keep your furry friend warm and protected all winter long. Please let me know if you would like additional information or to speak with one of our staff veterinarians for further tips. Thank you.

1) Frigid Cold Temperatures

Many people may see their pet's fur coat and assume that it's perfect protection from the winter weather. But given the severe drop in temperature and windy conditions, your pet may

be in danger of hypothermia if their body temperature falls below normal at this time. This drop in body temperature has the potential to lead to frostbite to your pet's ears, paws and tail. Consider a sweater for your pet, especially if they are small or have short hair.

2) Blizzard Conditions

Your pet should not be left outside alone if you your area is experiencing blizzard conditions. Blizzards can be scary and dangerous for pets as their senses can be overwhelmed – leading to disorientation. Make sure your-pet has proper ID (tags or microchip) in case they become lost.

3) Shelter

If possible, keep your pets indoors during extreme winter

weather. If they are in an outside shelter, make sure that it is free of drafts. Also, keep the shelter well insulated with thick blankets and bedding for the comfort and safety of your pet.

4) Undernourishment/Dehydration

Colder weather means expending more energy to keep warm. Make sure to keep your pet on a balanced and healthy diet. Also provide plenty of water for proper hydration.

5) Antifreeze

A common chemical for our vehicles – antifreeze is toxic to your pet. Make sure to monitor your garage floors for any possible leaks that your pet might find tempting (antifreeze is sweet tasting to pets).

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Action for Boston Community Development fuel assistance can help you stay warm

Bitter January cold is hitting Massachusetts and ABCD (Action for Boston Community Development) wants to remind residents that households at or below the federal poverty level can now receive as much as \$1,650 in fuel assistance, while those with slightly higher incomes receive increased benefits on a sliding scale.

Due to the huge spike in energy costs and the ongoing economic crisis battering our most vulnerable households, benefits from the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) have been increased. Last year the highest fuel assistance benefit was \$1,210.

"We are thankful for this increase and look forward to the allocation soon of the significant funds committed by President Biden to get everyone safely through the winter and reduce the number of utility shut-offs in April," said ABCD President/CEO John J. Drew.

APPLY NOW!

Drew calls on residents in need to **APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**. Boston-area residents can apply by calling ABCD Fuel Assistance at 617-357-6012. Those living in the Mystic Valley region can call 781-322-6284. Help with applications is also available at all ABCD neighborhood centers. A new online system for first-time fuel assistance applicants can be accessed at toapply.org/MassLIHEAP. Go to bostonabcd.org/heat for detailed information, including a listing of neighborhood centers with contact information.

The 2022 federal poverty level for a family of four is \$26,500 in earnings annually or \$12,880 for a single person. To keep struggling families and elders from falling through the cracks, help with fuel costs is also available to those slightly above poverty level. For example, a family of four earning \$78,751 or a single person with an income of \$40,951 may currently qualify for \$989 in fuel assistance.

Sky-rocketing costs

Home heating oil in Massachusetts is currently at \$3.43 a gallon and up, almost twice the cost last year. It costs about \$800 to fill a tank, and that can run out in a matter of weeks in bitter New England weather. Vulnerable elders and others who cannot afford to keep their thermostats at a

comfortable level put themselves at risk of getting sick – or worse.

The rise in home heating costs is sparked by a 30 percent increase in the cost of natural gas. Based on national data, the average residential natural gas bill will increase from \$572 to \$859 this year while heating oil costs per household can rise from \$1,272 to \$1,900. Costs are higher in the Boston-New England region.

Last year a total of 21,501 applications were received for the 2020-2021 heating season, 2,000 more than the previous year. To date this season, ABCD has received more than 16,000 applications. Based on an early surge of applicants, fuel assistance pro-

grams are predicting a significant increase in the number of households seeking aid.

Qualifying for fuel assistance opens the door to a comprehensive range of no-cost energy services to keep families warm, safe and healthy including repair and replacement of heating systems, energy-efficient appliances, utility discounts, weatherization, programs to improve energy conservation, and much more.

ABCD also offers more than 70 programs to meet basic needs and to equip individuals with the knowledge and resources to pursue their goals and achieve financial stability. For information about and referrals to all ABCD programs and services, contact

abcdconnect@bostonabcd.org or 617.348.6329.

Donations gratefully accepted- ABCD is grateful for any private donations to the ABCD WINTER FUND which will be used to help those in fuel assistance emergencies after using up their allocation. Your generous gift can save a household from hypothermia, stop a family from turning to dangerous heating substitutes, prevent sickness, and dramatically improve the quality of life. If you'd like to donate to the ABCD WINTER FUND, please call 617-348-6559, email give@bostonabcd.org or visit bostonabcd.org/donate.

A nonprofit human services community action organization,

ABCD provides low-income residents in the Boston and Mystic Valley areas with the tools, support and resources they need to transition from poverty to stability and from stability to success. Each year, we've served more than 100,000 individuals, elders and families through a broad range of innovative initiatives as well as long-established, proven programs and services. For more than 50 years, ABCD has been deeply rooted in every neighborhood and community served, empowering individuals and families and supporting them in their quest to live with dignity and achieve their highest potential. For more, please visit bostonabcd.org.

food for thought



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Fisher College announces scholarships for addictions counseling

Dr. Peter C. Everett and Anne C. Berlin have established a scholarship fund at Fisher College in Boston, Massachusetts for students interested in pursuing graduate level coursework in addictions counseling.

The Theodore Everett Berlin Scholarship Fund, set up to embody the generous and compassionate spirit of their son, Ted, will provide \$6,000 scholarships to selected students. Scholarships will be based on the following criteria: a desire to help others through addiction

counseling, status of academic standing, demonstrated financial need, and with a preference given to students who wish to further pursue a graduate Certificate in Addictions Counseling or Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology with a concentration in Addictions Counseling.

The current opioid crisis as well as their son's accidental overdose inspired this donation to Fisher College.

"In the context of the larger opioid crisis, there is a need for substance use disorder counsel-

ing that is not being met. We hope the Theodore Everett Berlin Scholarship will lower the financial barrier for these students to get the training and education they need to be effective counselors," Dr. Everett said.

Availability of the scholarship funds will be determined by the donors and a Scholarship Review Committee, with the intent to distribute one to three scholarships annually.

For more information about this scholarship, please contact Amanda Matarese at the Of-

fice of Advancement and Alumni Engagement at 617-236-8822 or amatarese@fisher.edu

About Fisher College For more than a century, Fisher has been changing lives by providing students with the tools they need to compete successfully in today's challenging economy. Though built around the liberal arts, our on campus and online programs reflect our expertise in practical fields like management, accounting, fashion merchandising, criminal justice, biology, information technology, and cybersecurity, to

name a few. We believe in educating students through close intellectual engagement with our faculty, meeting together in small-group classroom settings, or with industry and business leaders through internships, guest lectures, and site visits. We take full advantage of the educational resources of Boston, a city both rich in history and culture, and a center of intellectual ferment, entrepreneurship, and scientific advancement. For more information, please visit www.fisher.edu.

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Jamaica Plain/Mission Hill Gazette

2022 Publishing Calendar

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JANUARY

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 Mission Hill Gazette  Jamaica Plain Gazette



HELPING THE HOMELESS

Public Action for the Arts and Education's first clothing drive was recently delivered to The St. Francis House for the homeless.

Attending the kickoff drive is Shannon Steele, Development Dept., Patrick Murray, Chairman PAEE, Leroy Buissereth, Joseph Hill, President PAEE, and Maria Fallavollita, Clothing Program Supervisor. PAEE is now collecting winter clothing, visit www.publicaction.org for more information.



LOCAL STUDENT EARNS ACADEMIC HONORS

CURRY COLLEGE FALL 2021 DEAN'S LIST

Curry College congratulates roughly 1,000 students who were named to the Fall 2021 Dean's List.

Nicole Mertiri of Jamaica Plain was named to the Fall 2021 Dean's List at Curry College.

Luke Murray of Jamaica Plain was named to the Fall 2021 Dean's List at Curry College.

Curry College, founded in Boston in 1879, is a private, co-educational, liberal arts-based institution located on 131 acres in Milton, Massachusetts. The College extends its educational programs to a continuing education branch campus in Plymouth. The College offers 19 undergraduate majors in specialized and liberal arts programs, as well as graduate degrees in accounting, business, education, criminal justice, and nursing to a combined enrollment of nearly 2,500 students. The student body consists of 1,700 traditional students and nearly 800 continuing education and graduate students. The College offers a wide array of co-curricular activities ranging from 16 NCAA Division III athletic teams to an outstanding theatre and fine arts program. Visit us on the web at www.curry.edu

LOCAL STUDENTS NAMED TO HOLY CROSS DEAN'S LIST

A total of 1,375 students were named to College of the Holy Cross' Dean's List for outstanding academic achievement during the fall semester of the 2021-22 academic year. The following local students made the list:

Aidan Carroll of Jamaica Plain, member of the Class of 2025, majoring in Undeclared

Lisalina Pena of Jamaica Plain, member of the Class of 2023, majoring in International Studies

The College of the Holy Cross, in Worcester, Mass., is among the nation's leading liberal arts institutions. A highly selective, four-year, exclusively undergraduate college of 3,100 students, Holy Cross is renowned for offering a rigorous, personalized education in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition. Since its founding in 1843, Holy Cross has made a positive impact in society by graduating students who distinguish themselves as thoughtful leaders in business, professional and civic life.

SNHU ANNOUNCES PRESIDENT'S LIST

It is with great pleasure that Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Fall 2021 President's List.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above are named to the President's List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits; undergraduate day students must earn 12 credits in the fall or spring semester, and online students must earn 12 credits in either EW1 & EW2, EW3 & EW4, or EW5 & EW6.

Nabil El Fatmi of Jamaica Plain

Isaac Pirie of Jamaica Plain

Olga Ramos of Jamaica Plain

Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) is a private, nonprofit institution with an 89-

year history of educating traditional-aged students and working adults. Now serving more than 160,000 learners worldwide, SNHU offers approximately 200 accredited undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs, available online and on its 300-acre campus in Manchester, NH. Recognized as the "Most Innovative" regional university by U.S. News & World Report and one of the fastest-growing universities in the country, SNHU is committed to expanding access to high quality, affordable pathways that meet the needs of each learner. Learn more at www.snhu.edu.

OCKENE NAMED TO DEAN'S LIST

Misha Ockene from Jamaica Plain has been named to St. Lawrence University's Dean's List for achieving academic excellence during the Fall 2021 semester.

Ockene is a member of the Class of 2025. Ockene attended Brookline High School.

Founded in 1856, St. Lawrence University is a private, independent liberal arts institution of about 2,500 students located in Canton, New York. The educational opportunities at St. Lawrence inspire students and prepare them to be critical and creative thinkers, to find a compass for their lives and careers, and to pursue knowledge and understanding for the benefit of themselves, humanity and the planet. Through its focus on active engagement with ideas in and beyond the classroom, a St. Lawrence education leads students to make connections that transform lives and communities, from the local to the global. Visit www.stlawu.edu.

LEGAL NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS THE TRIAL COURT PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304 Docket No. SU21P21346D

In the matter of: Jonathan Fiorillo

Of:

RESPONDENT

Alleged Incapacitated Person

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Lemuel Shattuck Hospital in the above captioned matter alleging that Jonathan Fiorillo is in need of a Guardian and requesting that Public Guardian Services, LLC of Braintree, MA (or some other person) be appointed as Guardian to serve on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of 02/24/2022. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition

to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense. WITNESS, Hon. Brian J. Dunn, First Justice of this Court. Date: January 20, 2022 Felix D. Arroyo, Register of Probate

1/28/22 JP

LEGAL NOTICE

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS THE TRIAL COURT PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT Suffolk Probate And Family Court 24 New Chardon St. Boston, MA 02114 CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATOR OR OTHER PROTECTIVE ORDER PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, § 5-304 & § 5-405 Docket No. SU21P2380PM

In the matter of: Nevrik Seferian Of: Jamaica Plain, MA To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Lutheran Home of Jamaica Plain REH of Jamaica Plain, MA in the above captioned matter alleging

that Nevrik Seferian is in need of a Conservator or other protective order and requesting that Advoguard, Inc of Rockland, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator to serve Without Surety on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is disabled, that a protective order or appointment of a Conservator is necessary, and that the proposed conservator is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of 02/17/2022. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

WITNESS, Hon. Brian J. Dunn, First Justice of this Court. Date: January 14, 2022 Felix D. Arroyo, Register of Probate

1/28/22 JP



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MBTA proposes several fare change proposals for riders

MBTA staff presented several fare change proposals that aim to improve equity by closing gaps in existing fare structures for Reduced Fare Riders, minimize pandemic-related revenue implications and budget uncertainties while increasing ridership where possible, and simplify fare tariff rules as the MBTA's Fare Transformation Program (AFC 2.0) moves forward. If approved by the full MBTA Board in March, these fare changes would go into effect on July 1, 2022. The MBTA welcomes public comment on these proposals.

"We're excited about our upcoming fare proposals that prepare for technology updates to come as part of AFC 2.0, increasing equity through improvements to LinkPasses, especially for our Reduced Fare Riders, and making the popular mTicket 5-Day FlexPass permanent for Commuter Rail riders," said MBTA General Manager Steve Pofatak. "If approved by the MBTA's Board in March, these proposals will allow the T to continue to best meet the needs of riders through incremental fare improvements that reflect how they travel now and in the future, while minimizing revenue implications in this time of continued

uncertainty."

Making Permanent 5-Day FlexPass on mTicket for Commuter Rail:

First introduced as a pandemic fare pilot in June 2020, the 5-Day FlexPass available on mTicket for the Commuter Rail is a bundled fare valid for any five days of travel within a 30-day period. Good for unlimited travel within a 24-hour period, these five passes are available for 10% off the cost of 10 one-way trips. An attractive option for riders whose travel patterns have changed due to hybrid work schedules and the availability of remote-work options, the 5-Day FlexPass on mTicket is proposed to be made permanent. If approved, the permanent 5-Day FlexPass would go into effect on July 1, 2022, or sooner.

Reducing Price of the 1-Day LinkPass:

In an effort to increase ridership by encouraging more riders to buy passes and increase equity for low-income and minority riders who often purchase this fare product, MBTA staff have proposed to lower the cost of the 1-Day LinkPass from \$12.75 to \$11. An \$11 LinkPass pays for itself with five subway rides taken in 24 hours. If approved, the \$11

1-Day LinkPass would go into effect on July 1, 2022.

Expanding Second Transfers on Buses, Express Bus Routes, and/or Subway:

Currently, the MBTA only allows one transfer between Bus and/or Subway with one recent addition – CharlieCard riders may transfer from Bus to Subway to Bus. To simplify complexities in the T's transfer policy, MBTA staff have proposed standardizing the transfer process to allow all combinations of second transfers involving Buses, Express Bus Routes, and/or Subway, including Bus-Bus-Subway, Subway-Bus-Bus, and Express Bus-Express Bus. If approved, the second transfers on Subway and Buses and transfers between Express Routes would go into effect on July 1, 2022.

Proposed Changes for Reduced Fare Riders:

Some riders are eligible for reduced fares, including people with disabilities and Medicare cardholders, people 65 and older, some middle and high school students, and people 18 – 25 with low income. MBTA staff have proposed three fare change proposals that aim to improve equity by closing gaps in existing fare structures for Reduced Fare Riders:

• **Introducing the 7-Day LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders:**

Aiming to increase equity by increasing the benefits of purchasing fares in bulk for Reduced Fare Riders, MBTA staff have proposed the introduction of a

7-Day LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders, which is not currently available. This 7-Day LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders is proposed to be available for \$10, which breaks even after nine subway rides. This product is designed to meet the needs of individuals who might not have enough cash on-hand to afford a monthly pass, but who qualify for Reduced Fare programs. Reduced Single Ride fares for Reduced Fare Riders are \$1.10 for the subway and \$0.85 for the bus with a Reduced Monthly LinkPass available for \$30. The Full Fare 7-Day LinkPass is available for \$22.50. If approved, the expansion of Reduced Fare 7-Day LinkPass would go into effect on July 1, 2022.

• **Introducing Monthly Passes for Reduced Fare Riders on Commuter Rail, Ferry, and Express Bus:**

In order to increase equity by closing gaps in the T's offering of products for Reduced Fare Riders, MBTA staff have proposed introducing monthly passes on Commuter Rail, Ferry, and Express Bus for Reduced Fare Riders. This proposal would offer a full set of monthly passes for Reduced Fare Riders at approximately 50% of the full fare pass prices. Currently, Reduced Fare Riders have to purchase Single Ride tickets to benefit from the Reduced Fare pricing. If approved, the expansion of Monthly Passes for Reduced Fare Riders would go into effect on July 1, 2022.

• **Expanding Availability of the LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders on Commuter Rail Zone 1A and Inner Harbor Ferry:**

Currently, a LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders is only available on CharlieCard fare media instead of a printed "flash pass" CharlieTicket that Commuter Rail conductors and ferry staff can see to visually validate a fare. As more updates take place as part of AFC 2.0, customers will be able to use tappable tickets as well as CharlieCards to travel on the Commuter Rail and Ferries. As such, and to increase access and equitable pricing on Reduced Fare passes, MBTA staff have proposed making the LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders valid for Commuter Rail travel in Zone 1A and on the Charlestown Ferry. If approved, this expansion of the LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders would go into effect on July 1, 2022.

The public is invited to comment on these proposed changes at a virtual public meeting to be held on Thursday, February 10, 2022, at 6 PM well as the official public hearing to be held virtually on Thursday, February 17, 2022, at 6 PM. The public is also welcome to submit comments online through Thursday, March 3, 2022, at mbta.com/2022FareChanges or by email to publicengagement@mbta.com. The Title VI analysis will be shared with the MBTA's Board and posted to mbta.com prior to the scheduled March 24, 2022, Board meeting.

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Goldberg and Citizens launch worth and wealth seminars

State Treasurer Deborah Goldberg's Office of Economic Empowerment and Citizens have launched registration for their new Worth and Wealth Seminars. These free virtual trainings will equip Massachusetts women with financial skills and knowledge to build confidence in their economic futures. Participants can choose to enroll in one of the two English-speaking sessions taking place in February and March, or in the Spanish-speaking session scheduled in April.

During each session, participants will attend a kick-off event and four subsequent weekly webinars where they will learn about salary negotiation skills, employment rights, investing strategies, and many other topics that will benefit them in their career and personal life. Registration is open now and all Massachusetts women are encouraged to sign up. The first

cohort kicks off on January 26th and will meet on Wednesdays at 6pm for the following four weeks.

"By providing women access to quality financial education resources and tools, we help level the economic playing field all across Massachusetts," said State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg. "These seminars will empower participants with the skills to overcome barriers and to attain the jobs they desire and the pay they deserve."

The Worth and Wealth Seminars are funded by a generous grant from Citizens to the Economic Empowerment Trust Fund. Citizens staff also volunteer their time to support the program through one-on-one financial wellness checkups for interested program attendees, and lead regional breakout groups to help encourage deeper learning of the topics addressed in the sessions. The Office of Economic

Empowerment also created a "Partners Circle" for Worth & Wealth presenters, non-profit organizations, and state agencies to get involved in the events, and spread the word to their constituencies.

"We must remain steadfast in our efforts to ensure that women, who we know have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, are not left behind as the Commonwealth builds back," said Lisa Murray, President, Citizens Massachusetts. "Financial knowledge is a key lever for economic mobility, and we're proud to continue our work with the Office of Economic Empowerment helping women build the skills to take control of their financial futures."

Treasurer Goldberg created the Office of Economic Empowerment, led by a deputy treasurer, with the deliberate goal of implementing a range of economic empowerment initiatives

that include closing the race and gender wage gap, addressing racial equity, increasing access to financial education, improving college affordability, and investing in STEM careers and education.

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Baker celebrates educational opportunity

"It is important for parents in Massachusetts to explore and identify the best education options available to their children," reads a proclamation just issued by Gov. Charlie Baker, recognizing this Jan. 23-29 as "Massachusetts School Choice Week."

Gov. Baker's proclamation highlights the importance of Massachusetts' diverse educational environments, dedicated teaching professionals, and commitment to continuously improving the quality of K-12 education. In issuing the proclamation, Gov. Baker joined more than a dozen other governors and more than 300 city and county leaders nationwide who have proclaimed School Choice Week in their territories.

For Massachusetts School Choice Week, community members have planned 432 events and activities across the state, including rallies, discussions, school open houses, and more.

These activities aim to spread information about school types and learning opportunities, bringing encouragement and information as families school search. More than half of American families are considering, or have considered in the last year, choosing a new or different school.

More than 26,000 events have

been independently planned for the public awareness effort nationwide, which is celebrated by all types of schools.

"Massachusetts has many excellent schools to celebrate, and families are using the opportunity this January to look for learning opportunities and support in finding the best fit for them," said Andrew Campanella, president of National School Choice Week. "We appreciate Gov. Baker proclaiming the Week and recognizing the importance of every child having access to effective options."

National School Choice Week shines a spotlight on effective K-12 education options for children. As a not-for-profit effort, the Week focuses equally on traditional public, charter, magnet, online, private, and home education options. Every January, participants plan tens of thousands of events and activities — such as school fairs, open houses, and student showcases — to raise awareness about school choice across all 50 states. Year-round, National School Choice Week develops resources and guides to assist families searching for schools or learning environments for their children. The effort is nonpolitical and nonpartisan and does not advocate for legislation.

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EDITORIAL

Safe injection sites are needed now

Among the side-effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has been the increase in drug-overdose deaths in this country. The death rate from opioids finally had begun to decline in 2019, but then came COVID-19 and the number of deaths from drug overdoses began to skyrocket once again. The nation was reporting fewer than 50,000 fatal overdoses as recently as 2014, but in 2020, drug overdose deaths breached the 100,000 mark. The chief cause of the surge in deaths is the increase in availability of the synthetic opioid fentanyl, which is being laced into all sorts of drugs -- from marijuana to cocaine to heroin -- by the drug cartels. According to some news reports, nearly half of drugs tested by the DEA contain a potentially fatal dose of fentanyl. Fentanyl is up to 50 times more powerful than heroin, but is far cheaper to manufacture for drug dealers, who use it as a substitute for heroin powder or press it into black-market oxycodone pills. Fentanyl is now also finding its way into cocaine and party drugs like ecstasy and is even sprayed on marijuana. It has been reported that fentanyl now has killed far more Americans than all U.S. conflicts since World War II combined. In the past decade, it has claimed more than a half million lives, a toll that is growing daily. In view of the combination of the lethality and availability of fentanyl, now more than ever our nation needs to address the tragedy of drug overdose deaths with a realistic solution. Those who think that we can stop the supply of fentanyl are living in a fantasy-world of the 1970s-era movie *The French Connection*. Fentanyl is so powerful that just a few automobile trunk-loads are enough to kill every American citizen. If old-school heroin were to be compared to conventional weaponry, then fentanyl is a nuclear bomb. The Massachusetts legislature has before it a number of bills that would allow for clean injection sites, similar to what New York City and the nation of Portugal (where drug overdose rates have been a fraction of the rest of the world for 20 years) are doing. We urge our state legislators to enact this important legislation forthwith. Every day of delay means more lives lost needlessly to the scourge of drugs.

Omicron can lead to long COVID

Public health officials have defined so-called long COVID as the physical, neurological, and cognitive symptoms that can persist indefinitely after infection. Over the past two years, we've all seen the countless news stories about the devastating effects of long COVID upon those who are unfortunate enough to suffer from it. Although the Omicron variant is causing less severe disease in those who are fully-vaccinated, the number of those infected who suffer from the loss of taste and smell, physical fatigue, and brain fog still is quite significant. During this period of a surge in COVID because of Omicron's high transmissibility, it only makes sense for all of us to continue to take the usual precautions -- wearing a protective face mask (such as an N-95), maintaining social distancing, and avoiding large crowds -- until the Omicron surge begins to wane. Sure, we can play Russian roulette with our health. But with the number of Omicron cases already declining (though still high) in Massachusetts, we figure that if we've made this far through the worst of the pandemic, sticking it out for another two months or so by making careful choices only makes sense.

OP-ED

The 3Gpocalypse is coming — Is your car ready?

By Kane DiMasso-Scott

Just this week I heard about something that I'm surprised has not received more media coverage on the national level, as it's extremely important to us as consumers. Beginning in February and continuing through the end of the year, 3G networks are being shut down by the major players in the cellular network industry, AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile. This poses no problem to our use of cell phones, however, our automobiles are about to get a whole lot "dumber." Nearly every major brand in the auto industry has, from 2010 to as late as 2021, used these 3G networks in certain models for many of their included and on-board features in their cars. With the shutdown of 3G networks, features like GPS navigation, automatic crash detection, SOS emergency features, remote locking and unlocking, and the ability to connect with your phones (wirelessly), among others, will no longer be functional. Some companies have already announced their plans to address the issue, while others still have not said much. Certain brands will be offering free over-the-air updates for your vehicle to ensure that the features continue to work such as Subaru, Honda, and GM, while others look to require a hardware upgrade at a dealership to re-enable your features or

disable warning messages that may arise from the lack of connectivity. The shutdown of 3G networks is not something that comes as a surprise, as it was always an inevitability following 4G and now 5G rollouts. However, what's embarrassing and downright frustrating is the fact that some automakers continued to produce vehicles using this same outdated network, fully aware of the ramifications down the line. I commend the aforementioned companies that are pushing out updates for their consumers, but others who have yet to announce what their plans are is maddening. More often than not we, as the consumer, will spend tens of thousands of dollars on a vehicle, expecting the features included when we purchased the vehicle to always be available. Now, with the shutdown of 3G networks, it seems like a fair number of vehicles will lose those features permanently, or will require additional purchases to re-enable or modernize these vehicles for 4G. So not only will some consumers lose access to features they thought they'd have throughout their vehicle's lifetime, but others may also have to pay additional fees to get those features back. This shouldn't be our responsibility. It's on the automakers and dealers to make it right. They

continued to produce vehicles on an outdated network knowing it would be obsolete, but now, the piper needs to be paid and some of them believe that responsibility falls on you. You can visit <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/01/16/3g-networks-shutting-down-in-2022-could-affect-your-cars-gps.html> or scan the QR code below with your smartphone to see the current list of publicly known affected models. AT&T will shut down their 3G network next month, which certain Honda, Nissan and Volvo models rely on for their features. If this is your first-time hearing about it as well, I suggest you call your dealer, figure out what, if anything, could be done if you have an affected model, and hope for the best. Good luck.



Kane DiMasso-Scott is an art director for the Independent Newspaper Group. The views expressed in this Op-Ed do not necessarily represent the views of the Independent Newspaper Group.

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LETTERS

A good outcome is possible

To the Editor,

On December 3, the Gazette ran an article, "Local Business Worried about its Future," about 21st Century Foods' distress at the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation's (JPNDC) decision to relocate them in order to create the Center for Equity & Prosperity (CEP).

As JPNDC leaders, we are writing today to re-state our desire to keep 21st Century Foods at The Brewery, in an adaptable space only a few hundred feet from their current location. At the same time, we are equally determined to create the CEP so that thousands of families and small businesses can benefit over the coming years.

The CEP (jpn/dc.org/capital-campaign/) will allow JPNDC to dramatically expand and improve its asset-building services to hundreds of low-income and primarily BIPOC Boston families. With the support of more than 250 donors, most of whom

are JP-based, we have now raised 87% of the \$2.7 million needed to create the Center.

The square footage currently occupied by 21st Century Foods—beneath and on both sides of JPNDC's offices—will make it possible for us to create a large, 100% accessible center with ample training, childcare and other space.

Since mid-2019, we have communicated our plans to the business owners about relocating them to an appropriate space. Relocation includes: (1) paying for relocation costs, (2) making adaptations to the new space so it enhances 21st Century Foods' opportunities to thrive, and (3) keeping their rent comparable – and very much below market-rate.

We understand it is painful for 21st Century Foods to consider relocating and that small businesses cannot absorb such burdens. That's why JPNDC has and continues to communicate that we can relocate them, at our

expense, in the same complex. We are not a typical commercial landlord, so we are offering what few other commercial landlords would under similar circumstances.

We are so close to raising the remaining funds needed to begin building out the CEP. Meanwhile, other potential tenants are interested in the space that we are holding for 21st Century Foods (vacant for 18 months). The Brewery, a nonprofit subsidiary of JPNDC, lost close to \$1 million during COVID. We absorbed that financial loss in order to support our business tenants, but we cannot afford to lose more revenue by holding a significant space vacant indefinitely.

We remain optimistic that a good outcome is possible—for the Center for Equity and Prosperity and for 21st Century Foods.

CHARLES HILLS, BOARD CO-CHAIR

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NEWS BRIEFS

Mystic Valley Elder Services Seeks Donations of Blankets

With winter upon us and plenty of cold weather still ahead, Mystic Valley Elder Services is seeking donations of new blankets, all sizes, for its Emergency Closet. The Emergency Closet provides its care managers who work with low-income older adults and people with disabilities a place to access not only new blankets but new towels, new sheets, toiletries, and large print puzzle books for their consumers who need them. Having these items in the agency immediately available can make a huge difference in someone's life and they depend solely on donations.

If you are interested in donating blankets to the Emergency Closet, please contact the Mystic

Valley Elder Services Development office at 781-324-7705 or development@mves.org.

Supreme Judicial Court Further Pauses Jury Trials

The Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) issued an order extending the current pause on all jury trials in Massachusetts state courthouses for an additional two weeks, until February 14, 2022. All courts otherwise remain open for in-person business, with a continued emphasis on conducting matters remotely whenever possible.

"While we are encouraged by the trend in COVID-19 cases in the Commonwealth, the additional two week pause on jury trials is necessary to protect

the health and safety of all who enter and work in our courthouses," said Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice Kimberly Budd. "Assuming the number of COVID-19 cases continues to decline as expected, we do not anticipate any further pause beyond February 14. As throughout the pandemic, however, all plans and expectations regarding the resumption of jury trials may be adjusted at any time in the ongoing effort to balance the safety of court users and personnel with the fundamental constitutional right to a trial by jury."

The order partially amends the existing order regarding court operations during the pandemic, which was issued by the SJC on July 1, 2021, and supersedes a prior amendment issued on December 31, 2021.

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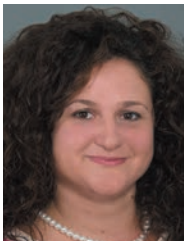
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