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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2024

# THE BOSTON SUN

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY

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## LIGHTING UP THE NIGHT FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

PHOTO BY DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN

A group of neighbors find friendship in the holiday gathering at the Commonwealth Ave. Mall lighting ceremony. See more photos on Pages 6 and 7.



MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY JEREMIAH ROBINSON

Mayor Michelle Wu, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, and title sponsor, The Province of Nova Scotia, hosted the 83rd annual Boston Common Tree Lighting, on Thursday, Dec. 5. This year's tree - a 45-foot white spruce - continues the 53-year tradition of Nova Scotia gifting Boston a holiday tree as a thank you for relief efforts following a Dec. 6, 1917, explosion of a ship in Halifax Harbor. Within 24 hours of the disaster, Boston sent a train loaded with supplies and emergency personnel to Nova Scotia.

## CRWA releases statement on Muddy River oil spill

Special to Sun

According to a statement from the Charles River Watershed Association: "This Sunday (Dec. 8), an oil spill in the Muddy River prompted an emergency response from MassDEP, Brookline, and Boston officials, as the spill dumped heating oil into the Charles River tributary and left birds and animals in the area covered in a layer of oil.

"A longtime effort of the Charles River Watershed Association has been restoring the Muddy River, which requires addressing the root challenges of urban drainage, including wet weather pollution, due to storm-

water runoff, and dry weather pollution, including illicit discharges such as this oil spill.

"As a nonprofit dedicated to the protection and restoration of the Charles River and its tributaries, we at CRWA are heartbroken by this terrible news and the impact this spill has had on both the river and the local wildlife.

"The spill is still being investigated by MassDEP, and we are eager to see appropriate corrective action taken to prevent anything like this from happening again.

"This oil spill will continue to have numerous negative effects

(CRWA, Pg. 3)

## Wu announces expansion of the City's annual toy drive

Special to the Sun

Mayor Michelle Wu announced that the City of Boston is expanding its annual toy drive, and will be distributing more than 1,800 toys to children and families in need. This year, the toy drive is led by the City's Community Engagement Cabinet, Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF), and the Boston Housing Authority (BHA) with support from partners Amazon, The Toy Foundation, Ameri-

can Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and Greater Boston Building Trades Unions. Over the course of six days, Mayor Wu will join City leadership and staff, union partners, community volunteers, and The Toy Foundation to distribute toys to children ages 0-17 living in BHA housing or neighborhoods surrounding BCYF centers.

"Every single child deserves to experience the joys of the holiday

(TOY DRIVE, Pg. 3)

# EDITORIAL

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: THE SCOURGE WITHOUT END

When we heard the news last Friday morning that a 32 year-old woman had been shot and killed in broad daylight on a busy Chelsea street, the first thought that immediately crossed our mind was: The husband or boyfriend did it. Just a few hours later, police announced that they had arrested a suspect, the victim's 31 year-old estranged husband who, according to news reports, had called police to turn himself in.

We've been in the news business for longer than we care to remember and the world has changed in ways that were unimaginable when we began our career in journalism more than 50 years ago. But despite the changes in technology and societal attitudes regarding countless issues, the one constant that has remained is the pathology of domestic violence.

It still is the case today, just as it always has been, that a woman is more likely to suffer violence by a partner than from any other source. The statistics tell the tragic story: Nearly half of all women murdered in the United States are killed by a current or former intimate partner; 1 in 4 women will experience physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime; 1 in 3 women will experience some form of sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime; and 1 in 6 women will experience stalking from an intimate partner in their lifetime.

It also has remained true that the most dangerous time for a woman in a relationship is the period when she first decides to leave her partner. The victim in the shooting this past week had been married to the suspect for 10 years, but they had become estranged only within the past two weeks.

In addition, an article in this week's New York Times has highlighted another dangerous time period for women: According to the Times, the second-leading cause of death (other than from the pregnancy itself) for women who are pregnant or recently postpartum is domestic violence.

What also was not surprising about Friday's tragic event is that a gun was used by the perpetrator. The mere presence of a firearm in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500% and more than half of intimate partner homicides are by firearm.

Fortunately, the U.S. Supreme Court recently let stand laws that exist in every state that require a person with a domestic violence restraining order to turn in his guns. However, there had not been a restraining order between the parties involved in Friday's tragedy.

Domestic violence cuts across all racial and economic lines. Just the week before Friday's incident (in which the victim and the suspect, both of whom are Haitian immigrants and are Black), it was announced that the Cohasset man who allegedly murdered and dismembered his wife -- both of whom are white -- at Christmas time two years ago will stand trial next year. We also would note that today's Massachusetts domestic violence laws stem from the 1970s after an incident in that wealthy suburb of Cohasset in which the husband shot and killed his wife and then shot and wounded his children before turning the gun on himself.

We generally conclude our editorials by offering our view on what lawmakers or individuals can do in order to bring about societal change. However, when it comes to domestic violence, we have no ready solution to this long-standing problem. We can only recommend to women and anyone who is in an abusive relationship to end it immediately and seek help from law enforcement, the courts, and the many services available to victims of domestic violence in our communities. (In Chelsea, HarborCOV offers services for victims of domestic violence. Its 24 hour hotline number is 617-884-9909.)

## ANOTHER DICTATOR BITES THE DUST

The demise of the dictatorship in Syria this weekend that brought to an end 50 years of brutal rule by the Assad family -- Bashir al-Assad had succeeded his father, Hafez al-Assad -- was startling to most observers. The Assad regime had successfully fought off a rebel army more than a decade ago, and though Syria had been divided into areas of control by various rebel groups and the government, the Assad regime, bolstered by the Russians and the Iranians, seemed secure.

However, the denigration of Iran's military capabilities by Israel this past year and Russia's weakened position because of its war in Ukraine left the Assad regime vulnerable to the rebel factions who never had gone away over the past decade.

What caught everyone by surprise, including Bashir al-Assad himself, was the rapidity of the rebels' advance from their stronghold in a tiny portion of northwestern Syria in the city of Idlib to the capital of Damascus, hundreds of miles away.

The images of Syrians rejoicing in the streets amidst the toppled statues of Hafez al-Assad were reminiscent of what happened in the immediate aftermath of the fall of so many other Middle East dictators, including Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Muammar al-Gaddafi in Libya.

The quick end to the al-Assad regime brought to mind a phrase by a character in the novel, *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway, about how bankruptcy befalls someone: "Gradually and then suddenly."

We join with the Syrian people in their joy and pray that their future, whatever path it may take, will be peaceful.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### 'PICTURE YOUR PET WITH SANTA' RETURNS DEC. 13 TO THE COLONNADE HOTEL

The Colonnade Hotel, located at 120 Huntington Ave., will bring back its timeless, pet-friendly holiday tradition with "Picture Your Pet with Santa" on Friday, Dec. 13, from 4 to 6 p.m. Hotel guests, neighbors, and passersby are welcomed to bring their four-legged friends for a festive photo opp with Saint Nick himself.

A cash bar, and complimentary hot chocolate and sweets from The Colonnade Hotel's onsite restaurant, LUCIE drink + dine, will be available for free, festive treats for pets. A \$25 donation to the MSPCA Animal Care and Adoption Center is required for attendance. Photos will be delivered to each attendee virtually via email as well as in print during the event.

Reserve your spot by visiting [ColonnadeSantaPics2024.eventbrite.com](http://ColonnadeSantaPics2024.eventbrite.com).

### BOSTON CITY LIGHTS' HOLIDAY SHOWCASE SET FOR DEC. 15

Boston City Lights will offer its Holiday Showcase on Sunday, Dec. 15, at 1154 Washington St. in the South End (across from Peters Park); doors open at 4 p.m., and performances, including Side Street & Chu Ling Dance Company, start at 5 p.m.

The event is free and open to the public, but space is limited, so reserve your spot now at <https://bit.ly/citylightsholiday>.

### CO|SO ARTISTS' HOLIDAY SMALL WORKS 2024 RUNNING THROUGH DEC. 22

Running through Dec. 22, the Copley Society of Art, located at 158 Newbury St., will offer

ColSo Artists' Holiday Small Works 2024, appearing in both the Upper and Lower Galleries.

Featuring work from hundreds of artists, Holiday Small Works is one of ColSo's most eagerly anticipated exhibitions each year. In their Best of Boston 2018 feature for Best Art Gallery, Boston Magazine spotlighted this traditional holiday show, which offers hundreds of affordable small artworks in a variety of media including painting, sculpture, mixed media, and photography.

Several newly admitted artists will contribute their small works for the first time as well.

The Copley Society of Art (ColSo) is America's oldest non-profit arts organization, which is committed to the advancement, enjoyment, and promotion of its member artists and the visual arts. The organization, founded in 1879, comprises juried artists who are selected by a credentialed art committee. ColSo provides artists with a gallery for exhibiting and selling their work and a platform for engaging and educating the community. Visit [copleysociety.org](http://copleysociety.org) for more on ColSo.

### SOWA WINTER FESTIVAL RETURNS TO SOWA POWER STATION

New England's largest indoor holiday marketplace, the ninth annual SoWa Winter Festival, will be open seven days a week through Dec. 22 at the SoWa Power Station.

The festival features more than 100 of the region's best makers, artists, designers, specialty food-and-beverage vendors, craft workshops, holiday lounge, photo opportunities, and the SoWa Winter Food Truck Village, along with on-site parking. Shoppers will find a wide array of unique items including

(NEWS BRIEFS, Pg. 3)

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

Continued from Page 2

art, crafts, apparel and accessories, jewelry, home decor, gourmet foods, and holiday gifts from small businesses.

### EMERALD NECKLACE CONSERVANCY'S WINTER CLOTHING DRIVE CONTINUES

Since 2021, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy has collected over 2,000 items of cold-weather gear for Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) – a nonprofit human services organization that each year provides more than

100,000 low-income residents in the Greater Boston region with the tools and resources needed to transition from poverty to stability and from stability to success.

Please donate a new or lightly used winter clothing to help keep the community warm in this season of giving. Items to donate include coats and jackets, sweaters, boots, hats, mittens and gloves, scarves, blankets snow-pants and snow bibs, and warm socks.

Donations are accepted until Dec. 2 at the following locations: Shattuck Visitor Center, 125 The Fenway, Monday

through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; James Michael Curley House - 350 Jamaica Way, Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; REL, 401 Park Drive, Monday through Friday 11 a.m. to – 8 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; City Feed & Supply, 66 Boylston St., Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; and City Feed & Supply - 672 Centre St., Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

### TOY DRIVE (from pg. 1)

season,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “We are blessed to have the opportunity to partner with so many businesses and community organizations to bring the holiday spirit and some fun toys to families across our city.”

“When you give a child a toy, you are giving hope and joy. We’re grateful for our partners within the City of Boston, Amazon, and our toy distribution partner, World Vision, who are helping us place toys into the hands of thousands of children who need them most,” said Pam Mastrotta, Executive Director of The Toy Foundation.

“Delivering smiles is at the core of what Amazon strives to do, which is why we are delighted to support the City of Boston’s expanded holiday toy drive,” said Jerome Smith, Head of Community Engagement for New England at Amazon. “We’re proud to join with the City once again to not just distribute toys, but to deliver hope, happiness, and smiles to families throughout Boston this holiday season.”

The first toy giveaway led by the Community Engagement Cabinet, BCYF, and BHA was held at the Bunker Hill Housing Redevelopment in Charlestown on December 5. Mayor Wu will distribute toys directly to residents in Roslindale on Thursday, December 12 at the BCYF Menino Community Center alongside City staff and partners. The toy giveaways are open to Boston residents who live in Boston Housing Authority sites and in neighborhoods surrounding BCYF centers.

“It’s wonderful to have so many partners come together to make the holidays a little bright-

er for BHA families,” said Boston Housing Authority Administrator Kenzie Bok. “By delivering toys to children in our communities, we’re not only spreading joy and hope but also creating cherished memories that will last a lifetime.”

The upcoming 2024 holiday toy giveaway dates are as follows:

- Thursday, December 12  
BCYF Menino Community Center  
125 Brookway Road, Roslindale
  - Wednesday, December 18  
Franklin Field Housing  
100 Ames Street, Dorchester
  - Thursday, December 19  
BCYF Gallivan Community Center  
61 Woodruff Way, Mattapan
  - Friday, December 20  
BCYF Johnson  
68 Annunciation Road, Mission Hill
  - Saturday, December 21  
Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building  
2300 Washington St, Roxbury
- “AFSCME Council 93 leaders and members feel fortunate to have the opportunity to work with Mayor Wu to make the holiday season brighter for Archdale Families,” said Council 93 Executive Director Mark Bernard. “Given the work that the Mayor, her team and the AFSCME Boston leadership has accomplished together to improve the lives of our members, it’s nice to work with her directly on something good for our community as a whole.”

“Bringing holiday cheer to children and families directly to neighborhoods is essential to continuing to meet constituents

where they are,” said Community Engagement Cabinet Chief Brianna Millor. “BCYF and BHA have always been a place of gathering for residents. We are grateful for their partnership to help spread joy this season.”

“The Mayor’s Toy Drive is truly a community event, and we’re thrilled to be part of it,” said Boston Centers for Youth and Families Commissioner Marta Rivera. “We’re especially grateful to the donors who join with us in making sure all families can bring joy to children this holiday season.”

In an effort to ensure all residents who do not live in BHA housing or close to a BCYF community center will have toys for their children during the holidays, the City of Boston’s Equity and Inclusion Cabinet will host a Boston Give Back event on Saturday, December 21 in Roxbury at the Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building. Free toys will be distributed to children in the community. This event is supported by partners Fidelity Investments, Boston Public School Custodians, Artists Initiative for Revolution (AIR), Russell Paulding, Ocean State Job Lot, and TD Garden / Delaware North / Boston Bruins.

“The holidays can be a beautiful and complex season for many of our residents, and at the City of Boston we are aware of this reality because many of us have lived it, too. That is why we close the season of giving with an event called Boston Gives Back, a day filled with holiday magic, food, and toys,” said Equity and Inclusion Cabinet Chief Mariangely Solis Cervera.



COURTESY OF THE FRIENDS OF THE PUBLIC GARDEN

Gene Bolinger, new Interim President of the Friends of the Public Garden.

## Gene Bolinger named Interim President of FOPG

Special to the Sun

Ahead of President Liz Vizza’s imminent retirement, Gene Bolinger has been named Interim President of the Friends of the Public Garden.

Bolinger was appointed to the Boston Parks Commission in 2023, and he has served as a volunteer on the Friends Common Committee and Council, becoming

ing Council Co-chair this year. As a former Vice President and head of the landscape architecture practice at the Boston firm, Weston & Sampson, for decades, he most recently participated in completing the Master Plan for Boston Common.

Bolinger will work alongside Vizza as she prepares to part with the organization on Dec. 31.

### CRWA (from pg. 1)

on the Muddy River, as oil contains toxic chemicals that can last in the environment for decades, adhering to the soil.

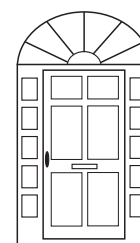
“To protect the Muddy River and the Charles River as a whole from water pollution, we need to adopt a watershed approach. CRWA is working on a community vision plan to improve water quality in the Muddy River by looking at sources throughout

the six square mile watershed, and producing a prioritized list of projects that, once implemented, can enhance water quality in the Muddy River. These projects include widely adopting green stormwater infrastructure like rain gardens and bioswales, and reimagining our parkland landscapes to both filter water and restore ecosystems.”

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# BPS elementary schools honored as national 2024 distinguished school

Special to the Sun

Boston Public Schools is delighted to announce that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has honored Bradley Elementary School as a 2024 National ESEA Distinguished School in the category of exceptional student achievement. Each year, DESE nominates just two schools across the Commonwealth for this national recognition.

"It is always an honor to have one of our schools nationally recognized," said Boston Public Schools Superintendent Mary Skipper. "This achievement is a reflection of the Bradley Elementary School's leadership and staff and their deep commitment to our students. It is also a reflection

of the hard work that happens every day in our school and community-at-large and a proud achievement for the district."

The Distinguished School program recognizes schools, which receive federal funds, whose students perform at very high levels, make significant progress in closing the achievement gap, or demonstrate excellence in serving special populations of students. Principal Claire Carney attributes the school's success to several factors, including:

- A focused commitment to implementing high-impact instructional strategies, underpinned by the belief that all children bring inherent value and contribute meaningfully to their classroom communities;

- A culture of staff collaboration aimed at enhancing student

learning outcomes, with a particular focus on the implementation of tiered support systems to address the diverse needs of our students; and

- A welcoming environment that values parental input and ensures clear, consistent communication between the school and families, facilitating the recognition of successes and the identification of areas requiring improvement.

"The Bradley school community is honored to be a National ESEA Distinguished School," said Carney. "I extend sincere gratitude to DESE and the National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program for recognizing our school in this way. Our staff have worked together with our families to create an exceptional environment where our students

can thrive. Thank you to every member of the Bradley team."

Regional School Superintendent Dr. Tommy Welch added that, "this accomplishment shows what is possible in a diverse public school when staff members, families and caregivers, and district leaders see each other as partners and work together to make sure that every child experiences high-quality instruction with an emphasis on inquiry-driven learning."

Bradley Elementary School will be recognized alongside up to 100 other schools from across the country at the National ESEA Conference in February in Austin, TX. Schools are honored with a commemorative award package, a dedicated section on the ESEA Network website and a special presentation at the

conference. Additionally, select sessions at the conference will feature stories of success from Distinguished Schools and highlight the notable work they do for students.

The Boston Public Schools (BPS), the birthplace of public education in the United States, serves more than 48,000 pre-kindergarten through grade-12 students in 121 schools. BPS is committed to transforming the lives of all children through exemplary teaching in a world-class system of innovative, welcoming schools. We partner with the community, families, and students to develop in every learner the knowledge, skill, and character to excel in college, career, and life.

## Old North Church unveils hidden 18th-century angels in ongoing restoration

Special to the Sun

An interior revolution is underway at Boston's Old North Church and Historic Site. On Sept 30, a 6-month paint conservation and restoration project began to uncover 18th-century painted angels hidden beneath layers of white overpaint on the balcony arches in the church's sanctuary. I invite you to join renowned paintings and murals conservator Gianfranco Pocobene for the multi-step process that has begun at Old North Church in Boston's North End and will continue through late March.

The angels at the center of

this work were painted by John Gibbs, an accomplished decorative painter and congregation member, who completed Old North Church's first major interior decoration, including the painting of 16 angels, between 1727 and the 1730s. The angels are depicted as cherubs, with round childlike faces and wings.

While Old North Church once boasted a colorful interior filled with intricate and ornate designs, all of this artwork – including Gibbs's angels – was painted over with white paint in 1912. However, a paint study conducted in 2017 revealed that the lost cherubs still exist. Expert crafts-

people painstakingly removed layers of white paint to partially uncover one of the angels painted in 1727. Old North's team nicknamed this angel "Howard" in honor of a beloved advocate and supporter of the church.

The 2024-2025 paint restoration project is restoring more of Gibbs's work: the rest of the angels and decorative festoons between them. In order to uncover the angels, lead conservator Gianfranco Pocobene and his team apply a solvent gel similar to a paint stripper that softens the layers of white paint, manually remove the overpaint with a plastic scraper, and then do additional cleaning with a cotton swab covered in solvents. An exciting discovery has been that Gibbs's angels do not have identical faces; each one was designed to be unique. Watch this video interview with Gianfranco to learn more.

"The timing of this project is particularly exciting. As we approach the 250th anniversary of Old North's signal lanterns and Paul Revere's midnight ride in April 2025, visitors to the church will get a glimpse of the sanctuary as Revere knew it," said Nikki Stewart, Executive Director of Old North Illuminated.

This project will be done in two phases:

- Phase 1 (through Dec.):



A close up of one of the the recently uncovered angels.

Gianfranco and his team will work on scaffolding in the rear of the church while they conduct the work and test solvent mixtures on small areas of paint. The winning solution will be used on the surface to swell and dissolve an estimated three to four layers of paint, which will be delicately stripped away to reveal 8 of the hidden angels. The project will then pause as scaffolding will come down for holiday services in the church.

- Phase 2 (mid-Jan. through late March): Scaffolding will go back up in the front of the church to continue the stripping process. Eight more angels will be revealed. In early 2025, visitors will see half of the work complete and the other half in progress, making it an ideal time for media coverage. The grand reveal, when all 16 angels will be uncovered, will be in April.

"The step-by-step uncovering of the angels at Old North Church is revealing fascinating

aspects of John Gibbs's painting technique," said Gianfranco. "Even more intriguing and exciting is the opportunity to conserve and restore some of the earliest paint decorations in America and make them accessible to the public and scholars alike."

Born in Italy and raised in Canada, Gianfranco received his Master of Arts in Conservation from Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario in 1984. He first came to Boston in the 1980s to earn a Certificate of Advanced Training from the Center for Conservation and Technical Studies at Harvard Art Museums. He then spent the next 15 years working for the Straus Center for Conservation, Harvard Art Museums where he oversaw the restoration of mural cycles at the Boston Public Library by Puvis de Chavannes, Edwin Austin Abbey, and John Singer Sargent. In 2004, he was appointed Chief Conservator at the Isabella

(ANGELS, Pg. 5)



A restorationist works on the angels.

### HOLIDAY-TREE LIGHTING ON THE FENWAY

Mayor's Office Photos by Jeremiah Robinson

Mayor Michelle Wu joined other elected officials and digni-

taries on Wednesday, Dec. 4, for the Fenway Civic Association's annual holiday tree-lighting at the James P. Keller Rose Garden.



The tree lights up the night.



Mayor Michelle Wu and one of her sons are seen with City Councilor Sharon Durkan and Rep. Jay Livingstone.



Mayor Michelle Wu.



City Councilor Sharon Durkan.

#### ANGELS (from pg. 4)

Stewart Gardner Museum where he carried out treatments and technical studies on the paintings collection. Early this year he left the Gardner Museum to focus exclusively on his private practice, Gianfranco Pocobene Studio which was established in 1991. Some of the Studio's signif-

icant mural projects include the restoration of the John LaFarge murals at Trinity Church, Boston, the Women's Gallery mural at Vilna Shul, Beacon Hill, Puvis de Chavannes' Philosophy mural at the Boston Public Library, and Benjamin Constant's mural at the Ames-Webster Mansion, Boston.

## CHRISTMAS TRASH & RECYCLING COLLECTION SCHEDULE



#### Neighborhoods on a Regular Pick-Up Schedule:

- Back Bay
- Bay Village
- Beacon Hill
- Chinatown
- Downtown Boston
- Fenway-Kenmore
- Mission Hill
- Wharf District
- North End
- Roxbury
- South End
- West End

#### Neighborhoods on a Delayed Pick-Up Schedule:

- Allston
- Brighton
- Charlestown
- Dorchester
- East Boston
- Hyde Park
- Jamaica Plain
- Mattapan
- Roslindale
- South Boston
- West Roxbury

*\*All delays in service begin on Wednesday 12/25*

# COMMONWEALTH AVE. TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY



The Commonwealth Ave Mall was filled with spectators waiting to see the historic park light up.

Photos by Derek Kouyoumjian unless where noted

A ceremony was held to light up the Commonwealth Ave Mall with festive lights to help cele-

brate the holiday season. From Arlington Street to Kenmore Square the iconic fixture of Back Bay was illuminated bringing an added quality to the classic ambience of the neighborhood.



Izzy Walsh, Jasmine You, and Taylor Layne Seymour meet The Grinch.



Boston Mayor Michelle Wu thanks the community for working together.



Friends Of The Public Garden outgoing president Liz Vizza.



Matt Sidman from the Committee To Light The Comm Ave Mall offers remarks.



The historic Commonwealth Ave Mall is aglow in festive lights to help celebrate the holiday season.

**EVERYONE KNOWS THE STORY. NOW YOU CAN FEEL IT.**

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The Boston Children's Chorus performed Ala Media Noche, French Carol Duet, and a jazzed up version of Jingle Bell Rock.

# COMMONWEALTH AVE. TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY



Chris Walsh shows off his festive holiday hat.



Interim President of Friends Of The Public Garden Gene Bolinger, City of Boston Chief Climate Officer Brian Swett, Interim Parks Commissioner Liza Myer, Mayor Michelle Wu, outgoing Friends Of The Public Garden President Liz Vizza, Boston City Councilor Sharon Durkan, City Council President Ruthzee Louijeune, and Massachusetts State Rep Jay Livingstone.



Friends Of The Public Garden outgoing president Liz Vizza welcomes everyone to the lighting ceremony.



The historic Commonwealth Ave Mall is aglow in festive lights to help celebrate the holiday season.



Boston City Councilor Sharon Durkan and City Council President Ruthzee Louijeune with Bob O'Neill.



Boston City Councilor Sharon Durkan, Friends Of The Public Garden outgoing President Liz Vizza, Mayor Michelle Wu, and Friends Of The Public Garden Liz Vizza.



The Boston Children's Chorus conducted by Krystal Morin perform.

# COMMONWEALTH AVE. TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY



After a countdown, the Commonwealth Ave Mall is filled with light.

## A Winter Solstice Celebration

Saturday, December 21 | 6:30 pm

Join us for a time of meditation, candlelight, and music on the longest night—featuring James Ruff, tenor and early Gaelic harp.



FIRST CHURCH BOSTON 66 Marlborough St. Boston, MA 02116 | [firstchurchboston.org](http://firstchurchboston.org)



MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTOS BY MIKE MEJIA

Shown above, guests on hand for the event are all smiles once the lights turn on.

Shown to the right, Mayor Michelle Wu and Liz Vizza, outgoing president of the Friends of the Public Garden.





# Metropolitan Beaches Commission annual hearing focuses on climate adaptations and access for all to state's recreational beaches

Special to the Sun

On Monday Nov. 18 at 10am, the Metropolitan Beaches Commission and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay hosted their annual hearing on the state of the beaches at the Massachusetts State House. The hearing featured testimony from Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Brian Arrigo on the progress the agency has made toward infrastructure, maintenance and equity recommendations by the Commission, as well as a discussion of the vulnerability of the recreational beaches to storm surge and sea level rise.

"I have really appreciated the responsiveness from DCR over the past year under Commissioner Arrigo," said MBC Co-Chair, Senator Brendan Crighton. "While we continue to make progress on our water quality issues on the North Shore, our district regularly sees the impact of storms on our coasts, seawalls and beaches. MBC looks forward to supporting DCR in understanding the vulnerabilities our beaches face."

"I've seen first-hand how much people in my district in East Boston rely on Constitution Beach for recreation, especially in the hottest summer on record," said

MBC Co-Chair Rep. Adrian Madaro. "I know East Boston residents are eager for infrastructure updates to this critical natural resource, so I look forward to learning about the progress that DCR has made under Commissioner Arrigo. In addition, I am interested in their accomplishments towards the equity recommendations in last year's Breaking Barriers report and hearing about goals for the coming beach season."

Arrigo testified to the Commission, highlighting the actions DCR took in 2024 to address the MBC's recommendations for improved beach access for non-English speakers, people with disabilities and people of color.

"Having access to beaches, parks, and green spaces is a matter of equity," Arrigo affirmed. "As we experience more and more periods of climate-change driven extreme heat during our summers, it's vitally important that all of our residents and families feel welcome at and can safely enjoy our beaches to cool off. These spaces build healthy communities. We are grateful to the Commission and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay for their continued partnership in our work to

break down accessibility barriers to our Metro Beaches."

To that end, in the past two years, DCR has introduced new water safety and shorebird protection signs, featuring QR codes that offer translations into nine additional languages. Additionally, every Metropolitan Beach now hosts welcome signage in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, Arabic, Mandarin, Traditional Chinese, and Russian. DCR will also be installing new easier to understand English and Spanish beach rules signs at all beaches, ahead of the 2025 summer season. The new signs, which will be available in the nine languages via a QR code, feature logos reminding beachgoers not to engage in certain activities for their safety.

DCR also invested more than \$300,000 on new beach wheelchairs and over 1,000 feet of mobility mats. Over the last two years, DCR has added 44 new beach wheelchairs to the Metro Beaches. The DCR Universal Access Program, tasked with providing adaptive and accessible recreation opportunities, worked alongside Save the Harbor staff to conduct an accessibility audit of public beaches in

2023, and this data is being used to plan future capital projects. Save the Harbor also established the Beach Accessibility Advisory Committee to help update DCR lifeguard training.

Finally, Save the Harbor's Executive Director Chris Mancini commended Commissioner Arrigo's continued support for the Better Beaches Partnership, which aims to give decision-making power directly to community members over community spaces. This year, Save the Harbor distributed \$315,000 in grants to 83 community groups, artists, and coalitions to host free events all summer long on DCR beaches. "72% of our 2024 Better Beaches grantees are led by or directly serve people of color," Mancini reported.

Following Commissioner Arrigo's testimony, Save the Harbor Policy Manager Jason Rundle presented an update on the Commission's work around coastal resilience, which featured 11 community climate workshops in 2024. "Understanding that the vast majority of community members value their beaches as spaces for rest and recreation emphasizes the importance of preserving these resources," said Rundle. "We need to take a look

at both short-term vulnerabilities to storm surges and long-term beach migration and sea level rise so that we can support the state in developing interventions that can protect our beaches."

Finally, the hearing opened to public comment during which residents from across the region brought attention to instances of poor water quality on some beaches, improvements to bathrooms and public bathrooms, and the need to reevaluate the state testing and flagging protocols that communicate when beaches are open and closed to the public.

Looking ahead, the MBC intends to prioritize better understanding of the beaches' vulnerability, consistent efforts to improve equity and accessibility, as well as ongoing maintenance and infrastructure improvements to playgrounds, seawalls, plantings and other needs as identified by beachgoers in each community. The MBC Commissioners agreed that each of the 13 Metropolitan beaches needs its own vulnerability assessment to plan adaptations in the face of increasing climate impacts. Save the Harbor is looking forward to supporting DCR in this effort in 2025.

## CITY PAWS

# Suddenly, your dog is a senior

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

The ASPCA says, "Most dogs enter their golden years between seven and 10 years of age, with large/giant breeds becoming seniors earlier than small breeds." The signs of aging are subtle and usually include a bit of a slowdown. Your dog may be sleeping more and showing signs of stiffness when moving.

Our Westie Poppy is now twelve. At this point, she shows no signs of loss of vision, hearing, energy, muscle tone, skin elasticity, hair, immunity, arthritis, or other joint problems.

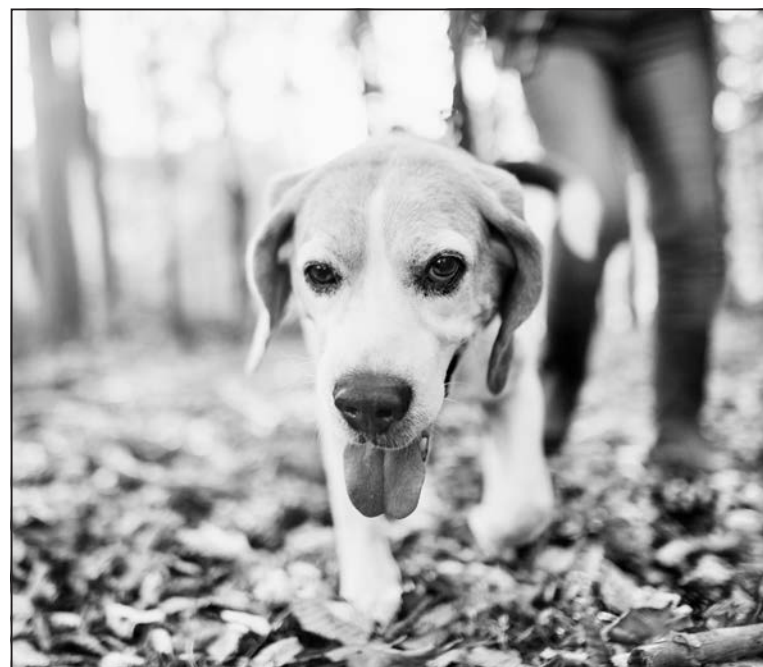
And Poppy's mental acuity is excellent. She quickly learns new things, remembers her favorite people and places, responds to the same words, and reacts to the

same things. You and your veterinary team can use this checklist to communicate how your dog is aging.

### Maybe It's Not Old Age

Some things we consider old age can also be signs of pain. Changes in appetite, routine, getting up slowly, heavy panting, grumbling, and being a bit grumpy can happen as pets age, but these are all signs of pain as well. If a dog changes her sleeping position, has more accidents in the house, doesn't want to play, or avoids jumping up on a chair or sofa, you should note the behavior and report it to your vet.

Most veterinary practices suggest twice-yearly checkups for



*New sights and sounds can stimulate an older dog's brain. Try walking in new places with new paths, smells, sights, and sounds.*

seniors. Discuss weight, exercise, feeding, supplements, and medications at these sessions. Weight control is even more critical in seniors. It takes teamwork to help a dog lose weight. Make sure you have every member of your household on the team. Discuss your specific guidelines for feeding, restricting extra calories, and exercising to anyone who will be pet sitting, providing daycare, or boarding your senior dog.

Improvements in veterinary science, nutrition, and pet guardian education are helping our dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives. After treatment for something other than old age, that old

# Rose Kennedy Greenway announces the return of Hatchlings Winter Lights

Special to the Sun

The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy is excited to announce that Hatchlings by interdisciplinary design team Studio HHH have returned in November. Hatchlings, which debuted on The Greenway last winter, provide a playful reference to one of Boston's most iconic landmarks, the Hatch Shell on the Esplanade, while envisioning a brighter and more environmentally sustainable future.

Selected as the winning design from the Greenway Conservan-

cy's 2023 Request for Proposals for a Winter Lights Program, Hatchlings was inspired by a whimsical question posed by Studio HHH: What if the Hatch Shell on the Esplanade hatched a cluster of baby "shells" that wandered off down the Charles River Esplanade through The Greenway like adventurous ducklings?

"We loved studying the intricate Art Deco architecture of the Hatch Shell pavilion," said Vanessa Till Hooper, founder and creative director at Studio HHH. "Through the process of working to echo its arches

and angles, we discovered many layers of thoughtful design and mathematical elegance. It's a perfect structure, and we are delighted by the opportunity to draw new attention to this beautiful and historic Boston landmark."

Similar to last year's installation, many of the Hatchlings will be powered either entirely through solar power or through a combination of grid and solar power. "Maintaining consistent solar energy throughout the darkest months of the year was a design challenge we were excited to meet, something that our stu-

dio felt was critical to advancing the conversation about sustainability in Boston," said Teresita Cochran, solar specialist at Studio HHH.

In total, nine Hatchlings dot The Greenway, each featuring vibrant arches in colorful animated lights. The Hatchlings appear in a variety of sizes, with the largest standing at 8.5 feet tall and the smallest at 2.5 feet tall. Throughout the winter

months, the pavilions will serve as sites for informal gatherings, photo backdrops, and other activities.

We welcome you to join us in celebrating the re-opening of the Hatchlings at The Greenway's Winter Warmer on Saturday, December 21 from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm at Rings Fountain. Come celebrate the Winter Sol-

(HATCHLINGS Pg. 11)

## CITY PAWS (from pg. 8)

dog may bring you a leash or a favorite toy.

### Keep up the Exercise

We all understand that daily

#### Computer Training Specialist (Boston, MA):

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exercise is essential for dogs' physical conditioning and weight control. However, more and more research tells us that exercising the brain is important to prevent dementia and improve dogs' quality of life. In dogs, dementia is called canine cognitive dysfunction (CCD). Many lifestyle habits that help human brain health also apply to dogs.

Think about how tired highly-activated brain cells make you when you take a class, learn a new skill, read up on a new topic, or spend time in a new setting or with new people. It can be exhausting. Remember this when deciding on the proper brain workout for your dog.

New sights and sounds may stimulate an older dog's brain. You can try walking in new places, training new behaviors, and playing games appropriate to a dog's age and physical abilities. Old dogs might enjoy a food

puzzle toy that rewards their efforts to get at the food with a steady flow of treats. (Ensure those treats are healthy and part of your dog's daily food intake.)

Knowing your dog is vital. A devoted sniffer may love a good game of find-the-snack. More time with other dogs and people may stimulate a social butterfly. A shy or anxious dog may prefer to sit back and watch or play a quiet game of "push that ball to me."

*Do you have a question or topic for City Paws? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your request.*

## THE PLATTERS BRING THEIR VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS SHOW TO THE REGENT THEATRE



The legendary Platters return to the Regent Theatre in Arlington for a one-night-only performance of their acclaimed "Very Merry Christmas Show" on Thursday, December 19, at 7:30 p.m. The evening features festive holiday classics and timeless hits like "The Great Pretender" and "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," with special guests, including a community choir and Winthrop-based Smokin' Joe and The Henchmen. Shown above, left to right, Jovian Ford, Omar Ross, Brittney Nicole Bellamy, Lance Bernard Bryant

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# Real Estate Transfers

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<b>BACK BAY</b>			
Butternut Nt	Hatch Serena M Est	180 Beacon St #3D	\$2,015,000
Butternut Nt	Hatch Serena M Est	180 Beacon St #3E	\$2,015,000
Jaccard Development T	Bert W Serwitz 2000 RET	324-332 Beacon St #114	\$1,662,500
Tts185 Realty LLC	Back Bay Brighton Rt	185 Marlborough St #2	\$4,100,000
Brindisi, Daniel L	Holm Jr, William N	249 Marlborough St #3	\$2,175,000
<b>BEACON HILL</b>			
Khouri, Kimberly S	Litmanovich, Raisa	42 Joy St #9	\$1,840,000
<b>BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE</b>			
Jennifer Lemley 2024 T	Ts Residences Hld LLC	430 Stuart St #31D	\$5,150,000
Dickinson, Cheryl C	Elizabeth Gay Forbes Ft	189 W Canton St #3	\$610,000
Ngo Pham Ft	Choi, Youngah	636-638 Beacon St #205	\$525,000
Staffaroni, Laura M	Paszcykowski, Joseph L	14 Concord Sq #2	\$910,000
Pomper, Steven D	Chan, Igor	135 W Concord St #2	\$2,412,500
Isautier, Pierre	Nemtsov, Sara	208 W Springfield St #4	\$1,776,000
<b>WATERFRONT/DOWNTOWN</b>			
Riley, Sean A	Peter M Boniface RET	300 Commercial St #207	\$835,000
Callahan, Mary	Gadsden, Eleanore P	580 Washington St #3A	\$1,455,000

# Attention to Detail

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY PENNY CHERUBINO

## THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The ram's head in the last clue is on a frieze at the end of Cazenove Street. Today, this street that once connected Chandler Street to Columbus Avenue ends in a brick wall with this lovely frieze.

You'll find the next clue in the Back Bay. Do you have a favorite building or detail you would like featured? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.



PHOTO BY CHRIS RUCINSKI

## THIS WEEK'S CLUE



## HATCHLINGS (from pg. 10)

stice with FREE programming including a hot chocolate bar, holiday toy workshop, bubble house, photo booth, with live music and an instrument petting zoo by Boston Music Project.

Visit [rosekennedygreenway.org/hatchlings](http://rosekennedygreenway.org/hatchlings) to find the exact locations of the Hatchlings and to download an interactive walking tour. For more information on upcoming events in connection with the Hatchlings, please check the Greenway Conservancy's events calendar: [rosekennedygreenway.org/calendar](http://rosekennedygreenway.org/calendar).

Follow the Hatchlings' winter fun on social media (@rosekennedygreenway) and share your own posts using the hashtag

#HatchlingsOnTheGreenway The Greenway Winter Lights Program is exclusively funded through private sources. Hatchlings by Studio HHH (2023–2024) was made possible through the generous support of Meet Boston.

Studio HHH is an interdisciplinary design studio specializing in creative interventions within the built environment and public realm, led by founder/creative director Vanessa Till Hooper and art production manager Emily Castro. The studio team of all-women designers and artists, including sustainability specialist Teresita Cochran, develops meaningful and engaging exper-

iences at the intersection of art, architecture, and technology. Studio HHH was founded in 2018 in Somerville, MA. They currently operate in Boston, The Berkshires in western MA, and Brooklyn, NY.

The Greenway is a contemporary public park in the heart of Boston. The Greenway welcomes millions of visitors annually to gather, play, unwind, and explore. The Greenway Conservancy is the non-profit responsible for the management and care of The Greenway. The majority of the public park's annual budget is generously provided by private sources.

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