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THE BOSTON SUN

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D-4 sees 3-percent spike in Part One crime in '25 from previous year

By Dan Murphy

As 2025 was drawing to a close, Part One crime in District D-4 was up 3 percent from the previous year.

According to Boston Police, 3,346 incidents of Part One crime were reported in the district, which includes the Back Bay, South End, Lower Roxbury, and the Fenway, between Jan. 1 and Dec. 28, 2025, compared with 3,261 incidents during the same timeframe the previous year. The district's five-year average for Part One crime was 2,999 incidents.

The number of homicides fell to two in '25 from four the previous year, while the district's five-year average for this category was 2.8 incidents.

In contrast, rapes and attempted rapes were up more than 29 percent as the number climbed to 31 from 24 in '24. The district's five-year average for this category was 26 incidents.

Robberies and attempted robberies were down nearly 12 percent, with the number falling to 100 in '25 from 113 the previous year, while the district's five-year average for this category was 113.2 incidents.

Incidents of domestic aggravated assault decreased around 29 percent as the number fell to 46 last year from 65 in '24. The district's five-year average for this category was 52 incidents.

Likewise, incidents of non-domestic aggravated assault were down nearly 4 percent, with

the number falling to 195 in '25 from 203 the previous year. The district's five-year average for this category was 211.6 incidents.

Commercial burglaries were up slightly as the number climbed to 51 in '25 from 49 the previous year, while the district's five-year average for this category was considerably higher at 73 incidents.

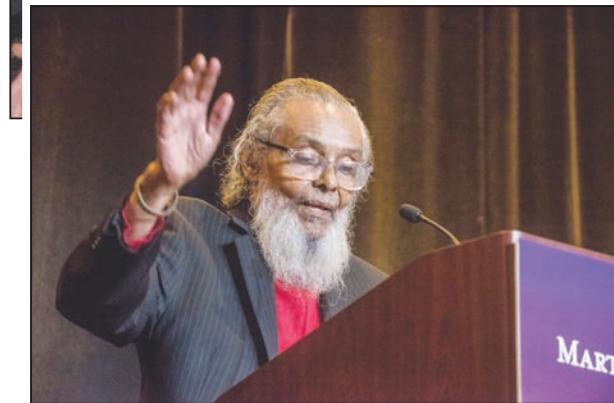
On the other hand, residential burglaries dropped 30 percent, with the number falling to 56 in '25 from 80 the previous year. The district's five-year average for this category was 97.2 incidents.

Incidents of larceny from a motor vehicle decreased more than 12 percent as the number fell to 412 from 470 in '24, while the district's five-year average for this category was 435.6 incidents.

Other larcenies were up nearly 9 percent, with the number climbing to 2,294 in '25 from 2,113 the previous year. The district's five-year average for this category was 1,828 incidents.

Incidents of auto theft were up almost 14 percent as the number climbed to 159 in '25 from 140 the previous year, while the district's five-year average for this category was 158.8 incidents.

Citywide, Part One crime was down 3 percent last year as the number of incidents fell to 16,529 from 16,969 in '24, while the five-year average for Part One crime across the city was 16,200 incidents.



56TH ANNUAL
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.
MEMORIAL BREAKFAST

DEREK KOUYOUNJIAN PHOTOS

The Boston Arts Academy Spiritual Ensemble performed Bright Mansions Above.

Shown to the left, True Compass Award recipient Byron Rushing gives his remarks during Boston's 56th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast.

See Pages 8 and 9 for more photos.

Beloved Service Dog Rescue to be honored at Celebration of Life event at Copley Square BPL

Special to Sun

The Greater Boston community is invited to gather at the Boston Public Library in Copley Square on Saturday, Feb. 7, from 3 to 4 p.m., for a Celebration of Life honoring Rescue, an extraordinary NEADS Service Dog and local hero, whose impact will reach far beyond his years. The family-friendly event is free and open to all ages.

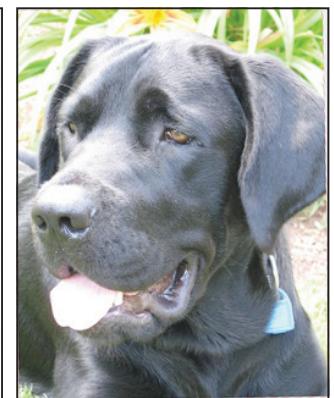
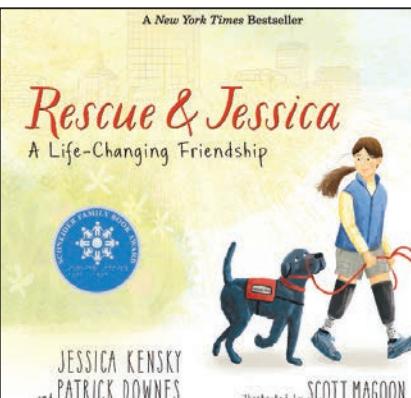
Participants can register at: <https://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events/693c87e-06f92613600aa9b0>

NEADS Service Dogs, headquartered in Princeton, Mass.,

will be onsite to reflect on Rescue's legacy and answer questions about the organization. For 50 years, NEADS has offered the widest array of Service Dog programs in the industry, includ-

ing Service Dogs for adults and children with physical disabilities, Service Dogs for veterans, and Service Dogs for people with hearing loss or deafness. NEADS

(RESCUE, Pg. 3)



EDITORIAL

LET'S GO PATRIOTS!

For those of us who are longtime fans of the New England Patriots, it seems like it was only yesterday that the Pats of Brady and Belichick were the dominant team in the NFL.

We were around in the early days of the AFL when the Boston Patriots were run (and eventually run into the ground) by the Sullivan family and their immediate successors, culminating with the depressing late '80s and early '90s before Bob Kraft bought the team.

But time flies (even when you're NOT having fun) and the reality is that it's been seven years since the Pats have had even a reasonable chance of reaching the Super Bowl. After two decades of our Pats grabbing the spotlight during the Brady era, we've been on the outside looking-in for these past six seasons.

But after two of the most dismal seasons ever, head coach Mike Vrabel has turned the team around, along with offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels and 23-year-old, second-year quarterback Drake Maye, into a legitimate Super Bowl contender that unexpectedly is one game away from reaching the big game.

The Pats are back, bringing our region together (even for the non-sports fans among us) in a way that only a shared passion for a sports team can do.

As fans across the country have witnessed during all of the exciting playoff games these past few weeks, the difference between winning and losing often (actually, usually) comes down to one or two outstanding (or freaky) plays.

Some might call it luck -- and whether the football gods have aligned the stars (Josh Allen was eliminated and Bo Nix got injured on the second-to-last play of their game) to create a path for the Pats to reach the big game will not be known until Sunday evening's final score is posted.

But regardless of the outcome of the big game with the Broncos, we'd like to congratulate the Patriots' players and organization for a great season that made our fall Sundays a bit more fun once again.

AS WE'RE SHIVERING NEXT WEEK, REMEMBER, WE'RE HALFWAY THROUGH WINTER

When the National Weather Service issued its long-range forecast for this winter last fall, it was a good news/bad news scenario. They were predicting warmer-than-normal temperatures for our region, which was the good news (after all, who likes cold weather?), but the bad news meant that this was further evidence of climate change and global warming. Our recent winters in Eastern Mass. had been the warmest on record and that trend seemed poised to continue.

However, Ol' Man Winter had other ideas. Instead of spinning his polar vortex in a nice tight loop around the North Pole (which keeps the cold air contained around the pole), he's been playing a sort of yo-yo effect with the vortex, allowing it to dip south and bring that frigid air to us. December was the coldest December in our region in 25 years.

The chronic instability and disruption of the polar vortex has been a relatively recent phenomenon. Climatologists tell us that the colder air that we experience when the vortex dips south ironically is a sign of overall global warming. The Arctic region has been among the fastest-warming places on the planet (four times faster than the rest of the world, which is why the polar bears don't have enough sea ice for hunting seals in the summer months).

The warming of the Arctic, according to these scientists, is causing a weakening of the vortex and ultimately sending cold air much further south than usual, resulting in the record cold waves of the sort that the weatherman says is coming our way next week.

For those of us who have oil heat, prices thankfully are the lowest they've been in a few years. Users of natural gas have not been so lucky, with prices much higher than in the recent past. Many low-income families are having trouble paying their heating bills, especially with the elimination of the federal energy assistance program.

So yes, it would be nice if this winter were warmer. But as cold as the weather has been, our wintry conditions could be a lot worse (and yes, we're thinking of the Snowmageddon we experienced 11 years ago!).

On the bright side, we've already passed the halfway point of meteorological winter (the three months of December, January, and February) and the sun has been setting later and later every day (sunset is now 30 minutes later than it was on December 1), noticeably lengthening our days amidst the cold.

Hopefully, the worst of the winter of 2026 will be behind us after next week -- and we'll be on a path to glide through the month of February en route to warmer days ahead.

SEND YOUR NEWS

The Boston Sun encourages readers and residents to submit their local news!

Engagements, weddings and birth announcements, news releases, business and education briefs, sports stories and photos for publication. Submitting does not guarantee publication that week. Content will be printed on a space available basis. Items should be e-mailed to stephen.quigley@thebostonsun.com or deb@thebostonsun.com

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GUEST OP-ED

Your Property Matters: FY 2026 Boston Residential Tax Exemption can save you up to \$4,353.74 on your property tax bill

By Diana Coldren

Did you know that qualified taxpayers can apply to effectively save up \$4,353.74 on their real estate tax-bill for fiscal year 2026?

If the residential exemption does not appear on your Fiscal Year 2026 third quarter tax bill (recently mailed in December and due Feb. 1), you may still file an application by April 1, 2026 for the fiscal year 2026 exemption.

It is not too late to save on your Fiscal Year 2026 Boston Real Estate Taxes! The City of Boston operates on a fiscal year that starts on July 1 and ends on June 30. For Fiscal Year 2026, the maximum portion exempt from taxation is \$351,108. At a rate of \$12.40 per thousand, this translates to a potential savings in real estate taxes of \$4,353.74.

According to the City's Residential Exemption application, "Every taxpayer in the City of Boston who owns residential property as of January 1, 2025 and uses that property as his or

her principal residence for their calendar year 2024 Massachusetts income taxes, may be eligible for the Fiscal Year 2026 residential exemption. In certain circumstances, you may be eligible if you obtained your principal residence on or before January 1 and June 30, 2025."

The printable online application is now available and the deadline for submission is Wednesday, April 1, 2026. Even if you have received the exemption in the past, you may want to double check to see if the exemption is still in effect for your property. It is important to review your tax bill every year to make sure the exemption is in force.

If you have questions, Please contact the Boston Taxpayer Referral and Assistance Center at 617 635-4287 or at assessing@boston.gov

Diana Coldren is a real estate agent with the CPC team at Compass and has been a Beacon Hill Resident for 25 years

NEWS IN BRIEF

FENWAY FORWARD'S ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR APRIL 16 AT SIMMONS UNIVERSITY

Fenway Forward will hold its

annual meeting on Thursday, April 16, from 5:45 to 8 p.m. at Simmons University, Linda K. Paresky Conference Center, 300 The Fenway.

THE BOSTON SUN

PRESIDENT/EDITOR: STEPHEN QUIGLEY

(STEPHEN.QUIGLEY@THEBOSTONSUN.COM)

MARKETING DIRECTOR: DEBRA DiGREGORIO

(DEB@THEBOSTONSUN.COM)

REPORTER/EDITOR: DAN MURPHY

(DMRPH4@GMAIL.COM)

ART DIRECTOR: KANE DiMASSO-SCOTT

Mayor Michelle Wu announces voting stage of participatory budgeting initiative, “Ideas In Action”

Special to the Sun

Mayor Michelle Wu and the City of Boston's Office of Participatory Budgeting announced the voting phase for Ideas in Action, the City's participatory budgeting initiative. Over 1,200 ideas were submitted earlier this year, recommending how \$2.2 million could be invested. Until February 15, 2026, Boston residents can vote to select their top five projects to help guide how \$2.2 million of the City's budget will be spent on community-driven projects across the city.

Proposals for the 2026 ballot were developed through five community forums held in fall 2025, where residents worked alongside City staff to prioritize project ideas and draft proposals for the public vote. The process started in the summer of 2025 with over 1,200 ideas collected from residents.

“Our residents provided invaluable insights and their ideas will drive how we can deliver on issues that matter most in our communities,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “We are excited to have residents now vote on these proposals, and I am thankful to all community members who engaged in shaping these ideas.”

Below are the 2026 ballot proposals for voters' consideration:

- Neighborhood Fresh Food Access Initiative, \$500,000

- Immigrant Legal Defense Fund, \$400,000
- Immigrant Stories Through Art: Creating Belonging, Building Connections, \$300,000
- Workforce Training Programs Focused on Trades, \$300,000
- Immigrant Career Pathways: Bridging Language and Employment, \$300,000
- Youth Financial Literacy and Empowerment Workshops, \$250,000
- Small Business Development Resource Program, \$250,000
- Community Litter Reduction Campaign, \$200,000
- Green my Block, \$100,000
- Voices of Recovery: Sobriety Supports and Storytelling Pilot, \$200,000
- Healing Through Art: Creative Pathways to Wellness, \$300,000
- Bridging the Gap: Assistance for Housing Stability, \$200,000
- Senior Caregiver Resources & Training Programs, \$200,000

“The projects on this year's ballot represent the direct result of our office's deep commitment to community engagement,” said Renato Castelo, Director of the Office of Participatory Budgeting. “By partnering with 19 organizations across the city, we've brought the voices of hundreds of residents to the table. I invite everyone to participate in this final step and vote for the

projects that will have the greatest impact on their community.”

How to Vote

- Boston residents can vote online by visiting Boston.gov/Participate.
- For in-person voting, residents can visit City Hall and or BCYF Pino; BCYF Quincy; BCYF Holland; BCYF Leahy Holloran; BCYF Vine Street; BCYF Hennigan.

Participatory budgeting voting is open to all Boston residents age 11 and older, regardless of citizenship status. Each resident is limited to one vote, and participants are encouraged to use that vote to indicate their top five preferred projects.

Cycle One Project Updates

Below are updates on the 2025 winning projects that are moving through implementation.

- Youth Reentry Supports
- In December 2025, Mayor Wu and the Office of Returning Citizens announced \$250,000 in grant awards supporting programs focused on reducing youth recidivism and strengthening reentry supports for young people returning from incarceration.
- Fresh Food Access
- The Office of Food Justice reported that their 2025 project, Expand Access to Fresh Foods in Boston, has been completed. These funds supported a coordi-

nated response to the November 2025 SNAP funding delay.

- Rental Assistance For Boston Youth

• The Office of Housing Stability continues to receive referrals from trusted community partners working with at-risk youth. Those eligible can receive assistance of up to \$5,000 to help cover late rent payments or move-in costs, first/last month's rent, security deposit, and/or a broker's fee.

- Benches at High Ridership Bus Stops

• The City's Streets team is currently finalizing the procurement of 120 benches and assessing locations based on impact and need. Installation is expected by early summer 2026. All benches will include plaques acknowledging the resident-led PB process.

- Rat Prevention Initiative
- This project will expand a successful rat prevention pilot to two Boston Housing Authority developments in Brighton. PB funding will help upgrade existing residential trash collection service to commercial-level service; install metroSTOR trash, recycling and compost bins; provide in-unit trash, recycling compost containers, and education for 665 units; and install Micro-Share sensors to test the effectiveness of this pilot. This project is expected to be completed by

mid-2026.

- Support for Community Gardens

• GrowBoston is planning to release a grant application in early 2026, offering grants to nonprofit organizations to build community gardens on underutilized land for public access and use, prioritizing areas where people have limited access to affordable, nutritious food. This project will create a healthier environment, beautify the community, address food insecurity, and build community among residents. Garden operations must have a robust rodent management plan.

For regular project updates, visit Boston.gov/Participate.

Ideas in Action is Boston's participatory budgeting initiative, where residents help decide how to spend a portion of the City's budget on projects that benefit communities across Boston.

The Office of Participatory Budgeting (OPB) provides an official point of entry for Boston residents to contribute to the city's budget process. OPB continues to advance its mission by: furthering public engagement and direct democratic involvement; building collective capacity on issues of racial and social justice; and aligning with the City's goal of achieving and embedding equity and inclusion into City practices.

RESCUE (from Page 1)

also provides Assistance/Facility Dogs for professionals in the classroom, hospital, first-responder, courthouse, and therapeutic settings.

Rescue was the devoted Service Dog to Jessica Kensky. Jessica and her husband Patrick Downes' lives were changed forever on April 15, 2013, when they were both severely injured in the Boston Marathon bombings. Jessica and Rescue became a team in the fall of 2013. Rescue recently passed away.

Rescue was named ASPCA Dog of the Year and was the inspiration for the New York Times bestselling ‘Rescue & Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship.’ The children's book is based on their real-life partner-

ship and reflects their love and teamwork. In addition to changing Jessica's life, the story of Rescue continues to inspire children and adults alike.

The event will include a special reading of Rescue & Jessica by Patrick Downes, followed by a Q&A session and book signing. The program also features two guest speakers who will offer a behind-the-scenes look at the training journey that helped shape Rescue's remarkable life: former incarcerated individual Steven Parkhurst, who helped train Rescue through NEADS' Prison PUP Program, and Rescue's Weekend Puppy Raiser, Sharron Kahn Luttrell.

Steven trained over 20 dogs for NEADS during his time in

prison and said, “It keeps the humanity in you alive.”

Rescue's friends and family, as well as NEADS staff and Service Dogs will also be present to celebrate Rescue's legacy.

This special event is designed for children who grew up loving Rescue, and for all who wish to honor his memory. Rescue's final gift is helping communities talk openly about grief and loss and how sharing stories can bring comfort and healing.

This event will take place in Rabb Hall at the BPL Central Library. Registration is suggested but does not guarantee seating; seating will be first come, first served.

*The weather outside is frightful...
But your budget can still be delightful!*



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The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy announces finalists for the 2026 Dewey Square Mural

Seven artists selected through the first-ever national open call to design Boston's most iconic public artwork in honor of America's 250th anniversary

Special to the Sun

The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, the nonprofit responsible for the management and care of The Greenway, in partnership with Embrace and Everyone250, is excited to announce the selection of seven finalists (5 individual artists and 1 collaborative team of 2 artists) for the 2026 Dewey Square Mural following the Conservancy's first-ever national open call for this site. The selected artists are: Brooke Stewart and Daniela Rivera (team), Destiny Palmer, Ekua Holmes, Escif, Jasmine Chen, and Rixy.

Chosen by a distinguished panel of Boston artists, cultural leaders, and community members, these seven finalists represent a diverse range of approaches to art-making, with practices spanning muralism, abstract and figurative painting, illustration, collage-based work, printmaking, and sculpture that engage with concepts of history, belonging, materiality, and public space. Each finalist and finalist



Various Dewey Square Murals, 2012-2024.

team will receive a \$5,000 honorarium to develop a full mural proposal. One artist or artist team will be selected to realize the 2026 mural and will be awarded a \$25,000 artist fee and a \$50,000 production budget.

"This is an extraordinary and deeply thoughtful group of artists whose practices reflect the many ways people experience, remember, and shape the city," said Dr. Audrey N. Lopez, Director and

Curator of Public Art at the Greenway Conservancy. "As Boston prepares for a transformational year in 2026—with monumental gatherings and increased international attention—this mural will stand at the heart of downtown as both a welcome and a provocation. New and varied perspectives on our shared history and possible futures feel more important now than ever, and this open call has surfaced artists

uniquely positioned to lead that conversation."

As Boston looks ahead to a year defined by both celebration and reflection, the Dewey Square Mural remains a powerful platform for public dialogue. That role takes on even greater meaning as the city approaches the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.

"The 250th anniversary is a milestone, but it's also an invitation to reckon, remember, and reimagine," said Imari Paris Jeffries, Ph.D., President and CEO of Embrace. "Through the Dewey Square Mural, these artists are helping Boston engage history as something living and unfinished, while modeling what it looks like to build belonging in public, together."

All finalists will present their proposals to the Dewey Square Artist Selection Committee, who convene during the last week of January to select one artist or artist team to commission for the 2026 Dewey Square Mural. The commissioned artist will be announced on February 10, 2026. All four runners-up will also have their proposals and other work shown on 2-D panels installed at Dewey Square Plaza from June 2026 to December 2026.

2026 Dewey Square Mural Finalists (listed alphabetically by first name)

- Brooke Stewart (collaborative team with Daniela Rivera)

Boston-based interdisciplinary artist Brooke Stewart explores the intersection of art and sport through large-scale printmaking, painting, and installation. A lifelong athlete, she treats courts and playing surfaces as sacred public spaces, shaping memory and belonging. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including at MFA Boston and Tokyo University of the Arts.

- Daniela Rivera (collaborative team with Brooke Stewart)

Daniela Rivera is an artist and Professor at Wellesley College whose work examines displacement, identity, and belonging through immersive, materially rich environments. With a background spanning Chile and the U.S., Rivera's practice centers storytelling, public engagement, and collaboration, using murals as social processes that invite dialogue between community, history, and place.

- Destiny Palmer

Destiny Palmer is a Boston-based artist, educator, and muralist whose work explores color as memory, inheritance, and cultural language. Inspired



Finalists from top left to right: Brook Stewart, Daniela Rivera, and Destiny Palmer. Finalists from bottom left to right: Ekua Holmes, Escif, Jasmine Chen, Rixy.

IMAGES COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS

(MURAL., Pg. 5)

North Atlantic right whales return to southern New England waters, prompting slow zone for mariners

Special to the Sun

North Atlantic right whales have returned to the waters south of Massachusetts, prompting federal authorities to designate a voluntary slow zone.

Scientists from the New England Aquarium's Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life were flying an aerial survey on Jan. 5 when they sighted an aggregation of eight right whales 37 miles south of Nantucket. A second survey on Jan. 8 found over 20 right whales. Between both surveys, at least 23 unique whales have been identified so far. The group included two

female right whales who have calved in recent years, "Braces" (Catalog #3320) and "Maple" (Catalog #1711), as well as "Atoll" (Catalog #4714), a young adult female who may be nearing calving age. These three females were all seen in surface active groups, a social behavior that involves several right whales closely interacting at the surface. These surface active groups can also provide mating opportunities, although not always. The majority of whales identified have been adult males including "Batman" (Catalog #1017) and "Dune" (Catalog #3351).

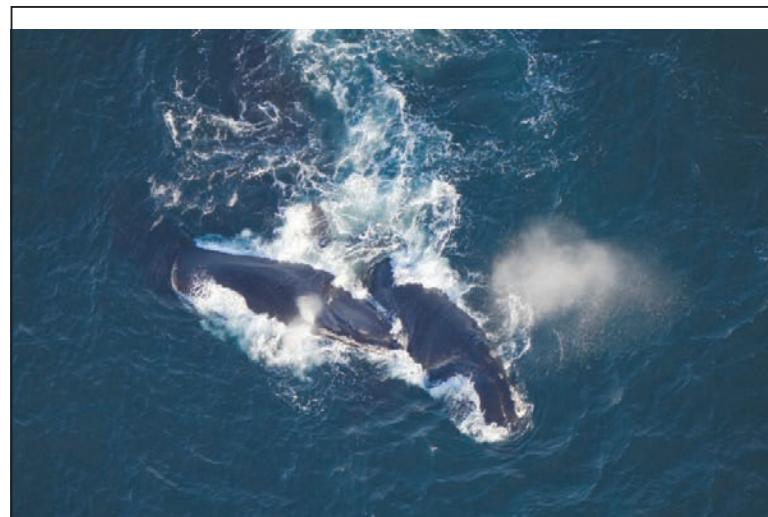
Assistant Scientist Kate Lae-

mmle, who was one of the observers aboard the survey plane, noted the high number of these social groups in such a concentrated area.

"All around us, we saw groups of whales rolling, splashing, and bursting out of the water," Laemmle said. "Seeing these critically endangered right whales on our first surveys of the New Year is a great way to start the season and leaves us hopeful for more whales returning to the area."

The winter/spring season marks the peak time of year for right whale sightings in southern

(WHALES, Pg. 6)



NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM, TAKEN UNDER NMFS PERMIT #25739

Right whales "Maple" (Catalog #1711) and unnamed Catalog #3742 seen in a surface active group south of Nantucket, MA, on Jan. 8, 2026.

MURAL (from Page 4)

by women in her family and the unfinished quilt of her grandmother, Palmer's practice bridges science, history, and community storytelling, centering the unseen labor that holds cities together.

• Ekua Holmes

Ekua Holmes is a Roxbury native, MassArt graduate, and celebrated mixed-media artist whose work centers children, family, and community life. Drawing from personal history and local landscapes, she builds richly textured narratives from found objects and ephemera, creating work that honors everyday beauty, resilience, and the power of self-determination.

• Escif

Escif is a Valencia-based street artist active since the late 1990s whose minimalist murals use sharp lines and restrained color to question capitalism, environmental crisis, and urban life. His work has appeared at major museums and biennials worldwide, including Palais de Tokyo, Shanghai's Power Station of Art, and Banksy's Dismaland.

• Jasmine Chen

Jasmine Chen is a Boston-based visual artist originally from Beijing whose work investigates memory, migration, and mixed ancestry. Her art is in the permanent collection of the Danforth Art Museum and has been exhibited throughout New England. She holds degrees from Harvard and Brandeis and has completed residencies across New England.

• Rixy

Rixy is a Boston-based street artist whose work blends surrealism, intersectional feminism, and Latinx-Caribbean identity. Their murals celebrate Black and

brown youth, queer communities, and diasporic storytelling through bold color and found materials. Recent commissions include the City of Boston and the Boston Triennial Public Art Accelerator.

Since 2012, the Dewey Square Mural has served as a focal point for bold, contemporary, and thought-provoking public art in downtown Boston. Working with a range of renowned artists, ten murals have been installed to date, each viewed by millions of residents, commuters, and tourists, and each sparking conversation and connection in Boston's shared public space. Six of the murals have been presented in collaboration with curatorial partners, including Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art (2012, 2013), the Museum of Fine Arts Boston (2014), MIT's List Visual Arts Center (2015), the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum (2017), and Mass MoCA (2024).

Previously commissioned artists include Os Gemeos (2012), Matthew Ritchie (2013), Shinique Smith (2014), Lawrence Weiner (2015), Mehdi Ghadyanloo (2016), Shara Hughes (2018), Super A (2019), Daniel Gordon (2021), and Jeffrey Gibson (2024). In 2022, Boston-based artist Problak and the GN Crew made history as the first local artist team to be featured, launching a mural beloved by Boston's communities, and which stayed on view for 24 months, the longest run in the program's history.

A Special Thank You to Our Supporters
The 2026 Dewey Square

Mural is supported, in part, by the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism.

Project support for the Dewey Square Mural is generously provided by Meet Boston and The Lynch Foundation.

Public Art on The Greenway is made possible with major support from the Barr Foundation, Goulston & Storrs, Meet Boston, the Wagner Foundation, the Richard K. Lubin Family Foundation, the Mass Cultural Council, The New Commonwealth Fund, and Robert and Doris Gordon.

Additional support is provided by the Deborah Munroe Noonan Memorial Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee.

Embrace and Everyone250's collaboration for the 2026 Dewey Square Mural is made possible through major support from the Barr Foundation, Nellie Mae, the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, and the City of Boston.

Special thanks to our design collaborator, Chen Luo.

The Rose Kennedy Greenway is a contemporary public park in the heart of Boston and one of the most visited attractions in the Commonwealth, welcoming millions of visitors annually. The Greenway is managed by the Greenway Conservancy, a non-profit responsible for the administration and care of the park. The majority of the Conservancy's annual budget is made up of generous donations from the community, and it is with their support that the Conservancy cultivates a gathering space where all are welcome and celebrated.

The Greenway Conservancy

Public Art Program brings innovative and contemporary art to Boston through free, seasonal exhibitions that engage people in meaningful experiences, interactions, and dialogue with art, each other, and the most pressing issues of our time. Past Greenway exhibitions can be viewed on the Public Art Instagram (@greenwaypublicart) or the Conservancy's website.

Embrace is a nonprofit organization working to build a more equitable, inclusive, and connected city through art, culture, storytelling, and policy. Founded in 2017, Embrace activates public spaces, celebrates community, and drives systemic change toward a Boston where everyone feels seen, valued, and a true sense of belonging.

A founding partner of Everyone250, Boston's campaign to commemorate America's 250th anniversary through a lens of equity, justice, and belonging, Embrace creates platforms that amplify diverse voices, reimagine history, and inspire collective

action. Through cultural programming, research, and creative collaboration, Embrace is fostering spaces of connection and care—shaping a future grounded in joy, justice, and shared humanity.

Led by a coalition of over 100 partners in Boston's arts and culture sector including co-chairs A Beautiful Resistance, Embrace Boston, MassArt, Mass Humanities and Mathmatik Athletics, Everyone250 is redefining what it means to belong in Boston. Through storytelling, cultural celebration, and honest reflection, we shine a light on the untold histories and unsung heroes who have shaped our city over the past 250 years—ensuring every voice is heard and every person is seen.

More than a campaign, Everyone250 is a living, breathing commitment to inclusivity, representation, and the power of collective impact.

Join the Movement. Explore our mission, attend upcoming events, and help us Reveal More Boston.

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RMV unveils redesigned Disability Placard to improve efficiency

Special to the Sun

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) has announced the introduction of a newly redesigned Disability Placard, created to improve security, curb fraud, and expedite delivery. Current placards will remain valid until their expiration date.

The updated placard features several key improvements:

- A modern design incorporating the widely accepted universal accessibility logo
- Durable material embedded with security features to deter fraud
- Bilingual instructions in both English and Spanish

"This redesign reflects our commitment to improving services for residents with disabilities while modernizing our operations," said Interim MassDOT Secretary and MBTA General Manager Phil Eng. "The new placard is not only easier to read but also reflects current design standards nationally. I want to thank Registrar Colleen Ogilvie and the entire RMV team for their leadership on behalf of the people we serve."

The RMV's Medical Affairs

division issues approximately 140,000 disability placards annually to qualified residents on a temporary or permanent basis. Previously, the placard production process was a multi-step, labor-intensive process. The new placards eliminate the need for individual lamination, cutting processing time by 25%.

"The updated design of the disability placard reflects the RMV's ongoing commitment to accessibility and safety," said Registrar Colleen Ogilvie. "I'm pleased that we can get the placards to customers sooner using a new and innovative process. As a reminder, disability placards are issued to an individual and are not transferable to family members or friends."

While the disability placards will feature a new design, the application process, certification requirements, and parking benefits have not changed, and the placard remains valid for the time it is medically necessary. Residents will continue to provide medical certification of health condition(s) with their application. Once approved, residents will be able to park in designated accessible parking spaces

and meters without paying fees or penalties when displaying the placard until such time as it is no longer medically necessary.

For more information, please visit mass.gov/RMV.

Statements of Support:

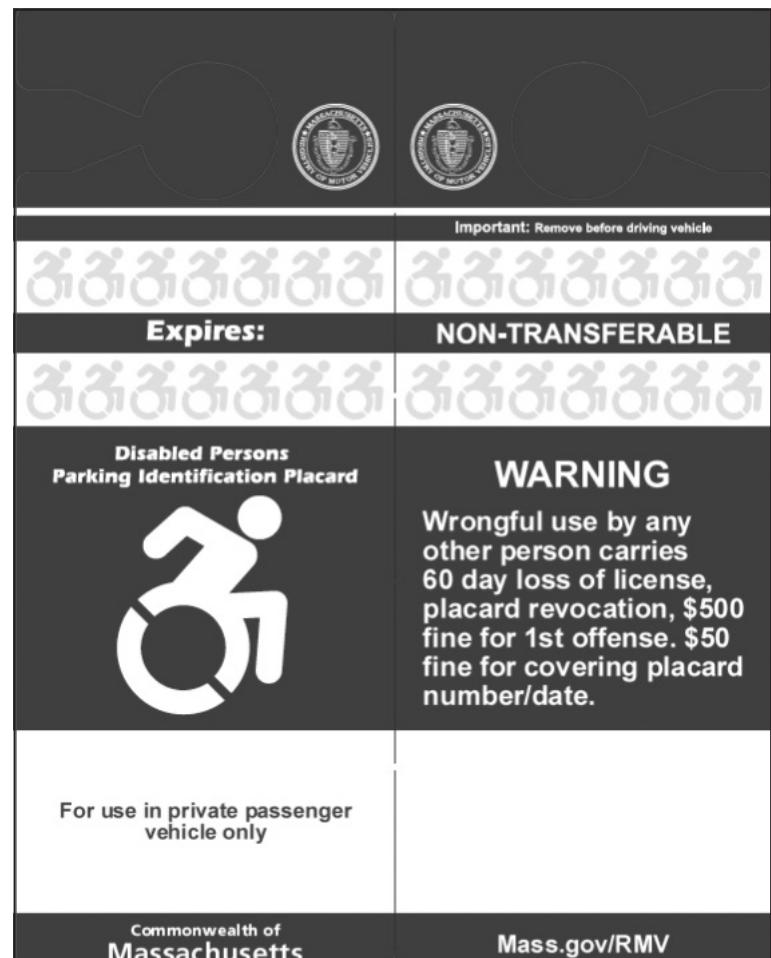
"Disability placards allow people with disabilities who need them to better access and independently navigate their communities. The words and images used in these highly visible placards matter. We applaud our colleagues at MassDOT for updating these placards to address concerns raised by the disability community and more efficiently provide the access to daily life that people with disabilities deserve." – Allan Motenko, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD)

"The new disability placard is an important step forward in making Massachusetts a more accessible and inclusive state for everyone. By modernizing the placard system, we are improving accessibility and ensuring that people with disabilities have equitable access to the services, destinations and opportunities they rely on every day. I commend MassDOT for working alongside partners and stakeholders from this community on this milestone." – Dr. Lisa Iez-

zoni

"It's a huge honor to have this public domain icon now official in Massachusetts. As a parent of a child with disabilities, a professor for young designers and architects, and a citizen of our

state, I look forward to making meaningfully accessible services for all of us." – Sara Hendren, Associate Professor, Art + Design and Architecture, Affiliate Faculty, Health, Humanities, and Society, Northeastern University



New Design – front and back

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WHALES (from Page 5)

New England waters. In addition to the Aquarium sightings south of Nantucket, the Center for Coastal Studies has also sighted right whales in Cape Cod Bay over the last month. Cape Cod Bay is subject to a mandatory slow zone for boats and ships known as a Seasonal Management Area (SMA) until May 15.

The Jan. 5 whale sightings by the Aquarium triggered the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to implement a voluntary slow speed zone called a Dynamic Management Area (DMA) for mariners to reduce their speed to 10 knots to protect the whales. The DMA is in effect until Jan. 20, one of several active voluntary slow zones from Massachusetts to Virginia due to right whale sightings. Vessel strikes are one of the leading causes of injuries and deaths for this species, which numbers about 380

individuals, making it critical that vessels slow down to the recommended speed.

"These recent sightings are an important reminder that right whales can be found throughout New England waters during the winter and spring. Reducing vessel speed in mandatory and voluntary right whale management areas is one of the most effective actions mariners can take to reduce the risk of vessel strikes and help protect this critically endangered species," said Katherine McKenna, Associate Scientist in the Aquarium's Anderson Cabot Center who was aboard the Jan. 8 survey flight.

For the past 15 years, the New England Aquarium has conducted aerial surveys over the waters south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, collecting data on all marine animals with a focus on protected species of whales and sea turtles. In recent years, the

Aquarium has expanded survey coverage in New England including coastal Maine, the Gulf of Maine, and the Canyons along the shelf break. These flights help monitor changes in animal populations, identify various species, recognize trends using standardized data, and monitor aggregations. Determining where right whales occur and how they are using habitats provides crucial information that can be used to better protect endangered species like North Atlantic right whales.

The New England Aquarium is a nonprofit research and conservation organization that has protected and cared for our ocean and marine animals for more than 55 years. We provide science-based solutions and help shape policies that create measurable change to address threats to the ocean faces. We inspire action through discovery and help create engaged, resilient communities.

Historic New England announces 2026 Medal recipients

Special to the Sun

Historic New England has announced the 2026 recipients of the 2026 Historic New England Medal: Nancy R. Coolidge and Stephen S. Lash, two visionary leaders whose decades-long dedication to preservation, culture, education, and the arts have strengthened communities across the region and shaped national conversations about stewardship and heritage.

These distinguished honorees will be celebrated at the Historic New England Medal Gala on Saturday, March 7, at 6:30 p.m., hosted at the Fairmont Copley Plaza, Boston. The Historic New England Medal—the organization's highest annual honor—recognizes individuals whose exceptional civic and philanthropic leadership have made an enduring impact on preserv-

ing and sharing the region's rich history. This year's recipients embody that mission with distinction.

"Our 2026 honorees have played pivotal roles in shaping the cultural and preservation landscape of New England and beyond," said Vin Cipolla, President and CEO of Historic New England. "Nancy Coolidge and Stephen Lash bring vision, generosity, and an extraordinary spirit of leadership. Their work ensures that the stories and places that define our past remain vibrant, accessible, and relevant for generations to come."

A transformative force in the philanthropic and cultural life of Massachusetts, Nancy R. Coolidge has dedicated her career to strengthening the region's most important arts, education, and preservation institutions. She served as a Director of His-

toric New England for fourteen years, becoming one of the most influential leaders in the organization's 115-year history.

In 1979, she became a founding member of the Fidelity Non-Profit Management Foundation, serving for 35 years, and in 1988 she joined the inaugural board of The Lynch Foundation, where she continues to serve today. Her leadership has extended across numerous preservation, educational, and cultural institutions, where she has championed access, excellence, and long-term sustainability.

"Nancy's vision and dedication have elevated countless organizations across Massachusetts and beyond," said Peter Lynch, Founder of The Lynch Foundation. "Her deep belief in the power of history, education, and culture has made her a guiding light in the philanthropic

community. Honoring her with this medal is both fitting and deeply deserved."

A native New Englander and a global leader in the arts, Stephen S. Lash is Chairman Emeritus of Christie's. He joined Christie's in 1976 and soon launched the auction house's U.S. presence on Park Avenue in New York City—an innovation that reshaped the American art market. After nearly a decade as Chairman, Lash remains one of the most respected figures in the international cultural arena.

His distinguished career includes leadership and trustee roles across arts, civic, and preservation organizations, reflecting a lifelong commitment to stewarding art, architecture, and history for the public good.

"Stephen's impact on Christie's, the art world, and the preservation community is immea-

surable," said Bonnie Brennan, CEO of Christie's. "His integrity, vision, and passion for cultural heritage have inspired generations of colleagues and collectors. Historic New England could not have chosen a more worthy honoree."

Celebrate this year's Medal recipients with Historic New England on Saturday, March 7, at the Fairmont Copley Plaza, Boston during an unforgettable black-tie gala honoring these remarkable leaders. The evening will bring together preservation advocates, cultural partners, philanthropists, and community leaders in a celebration of civic impact, shared history, and inspired generosity.

To reserve your table or learn more, visit: <https://www.historic-newengland.org/get-involved/donate/gala/>


From the State House

Tax Relief legislation overwhelmingly passes Senate

37–1 vote to approve property tax relief for homeowners, seniors and small businesses

Special to the Sun

Last week, Massachusetts State Senate voted to make housing more affordable in Massachusetts, approving new tools that give cities and towns the ability to lower the cost of property taxes and put money directly back in residents' pockets.

"Last week my colleagues and I passed the vast majority of what was included in the Mayor's home rule petition, with the exception of the proposed tax increase on small businesses," said Senator Nick Collins. "The Senate acted to advance meaningful tax relief for seniors, homeowners, and small businesses across Boston and the Commonwealth."

If signed into law, the measures together would prevent residents from being blindsided by sharp tax bill spikes, make it easier for seniors to access tax deferral programs, allow cities and towns to implement tax rebates, and create a new program for qualifying seniors to

lower their tax bills.

S.2900, An Act relative to municipal tax relief, would allow cities and towns to offer enhanced rebates to taxpayers who already receive a local residential tax exemption. If a city or town takes advantage of this tool, the local government would determine residents' eligibility and set its own thresholds around assets, income, or other factors.

In addition, amendments adopted as part of the bill would strengthen existing senior property tax relief by allowing municipalities to further expand eligibility, increase the personal property tax exemption to provide relief for individuals and small businesses, and extend the filing deadline for property tax abatements by 45 days for properties that have been improperly assessed.

"I'm pleased to see that the State Senate passed an increased elderly exemption as an amendment that will allow seniors to see their exemption tripled and eligibility requirements loosened to 50% AMI and the asset level raised to \$80k for singles and \$110k for couples," said City Councilor Brian Worrell. "This is much-needed relief for our

seniors and will help more of those on a fixed-income stay in their community, which is why the City Council also passed it unanimously last year as a stand-alone measure and has included it in other legislation."

As part of this broader legislative effort, the Senate passed four other related measures to enhance municipal tax relief, expand senior exemptions, and protect homeowners and small businesses from rising costs. Collectively, these actions reinforce a statewide commitment to housing stability and affordability.

S.2899, An Act to prevent property tax bill shocks, gives cities and towns the ability to shield their most vulnerable taxpayers from the shock of an extraordinarily high tax bill in a year when the community's residential property tax levy is rising by more than 10 per cent.

S.2901, An Act relative to senior property tax deferral, would expand eligibility for the Senior Tax Deferral program by lowering eligibility to seven years of state residency, instead of the current ten-year requirement, to keep more money in seniors' pockets at a time when property values and tax bills are steadily

climbing.

"Seniors across the Commonwealth have called for relief from rising property taxes that threaten their economic security and ability to age in their homes and communities," said Rosa Bentley, President, Massachusetts Senior Action.

"S.2901 addresses critical issues in the property tax deferral process that have prevented many from using this option. These changes will reduce barriers to this valuable program and meet a critical need in relief efforts. We look forward to further action to expand relief for those burdened and to enable revenue streams that support that expansion."

S.2902, An Act authorizing the establishment of a means tested senior citizen property tax exemption, would make it easier for municipalities to offer local property tax exemptions to seniors. It builds on the success of the recently-increased Senior Circuit Breaker. The bill creates a statewide opt-in program that prioritizes longtime residents and gives controls to local authorities.

"We know that property taxes can be burdensome for many older homeowners," said Jen Benson, Massachusetts State

Director, AARP. "We appreciate the Massachusetts Senate taking action to help mitigate financial pressures so our older residents can stay in their homes and communities and continue to age with dignity."

S.1948, An Act relative to veteran property tax work-off, bolsters the targeted tax relief offered to veterans and spouses of deceased or disabled veterans. Eligible residents could receive up to \$2,000 per year in property tax reductions for municipal volunteer service, up from \$1,500, under an optional local program.

"These policies largely align with the Mayor's own proposals for Boston and reflect priorities we share," Senator Collins added. "We disagree over specific components, but the broader goal of providing relief to residents is something we definitely agree on. I hope the Mayor will consider putting her support behind these proposals so we can move forward quickly and deliver the relief that Boston residents need."

Now that they have been passed by the Senate, all five bills head to the House for further consideration.

ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL BREAKFAST

DEREK KOYOUMJIAN PHOTOS



Former Massachusetts State Rep. Byron Rushing with State Reps John Moran, Jeff Turco, and Russell Holmes.



Boston Mayor Michelle Wu speaks: "We are all stronger together...we've got to get together for our people."



MLK Art Award Recipients were students from the Fenway High School and Mass Art.



MLK Scholars receiving awards: Able Ebbi from Boston Latin School, Carl Matteus Washington and Daniel Idemudia from Boston Latin Academy, Cliddanie Bellevue, Kelyse Foster, Aeisha Beckford, and Fraydique Alexander Gaiton Rodriguez from the John D O'Bryant School, Hannah Banh from the Dr Albert D Holland School, and Rebecca Kabeya, Amani Pagan, Ludiane Mayara Pereira Castro, and BjBellie Jean from the Edward M Kennedy Academy for Health Careers stand with US Representative Ayanna Pressley and Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones.

Special to the Sun

With great reverence and pride in our city, Mayor Michelle Wu joined in Boston's 56th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast.

Mayor Wu offered these thoughts: Dr. King knew that when fundamental rights come under attack—when hard-won progress must be defended again and again—it becomes difficult to imagine a better future.



The Keynote Speaker was Nikole Hannah-Jones, Pulitzer Prize-winning creator of *The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story*.



WCVB Award winning journalist Brittany Johnson served as Leader of Ceremonies.



The Reverend Kevin Vetiak of St Cyprian's Episcopal Church, one of the organizers of the MLK Breakfast.



Lori Harper sings *Lift Every Voice And Sing*, often referred to as the Black American National Anthem.

But he insisted that we are not truly free until we push beyond mere resistance.

He called us toward creation.

He called us to move forward with the brave work of building the Beloved Community—something too strong for fear to tear down.

And that's what we are doing in Boston, with the fierce urgency of now. We choose to go forward.

Because a Boston that moves forward together is a Boston no one can control.

We refuse to be defined by what we oppose.

We choose to be measured by what we create.

If Dr. King's life taught us one thing, it's that history does not move on its own.

So let us march forward together in the footsteps of those who set the standard here in Boston: Prince Hall. Elma Lewis. Melnea Cass. Napoleon Jones-Henderson. Allan Rohan Crite. Reverend Dr. Michael E. Haynes, and so many more.

And let us march with a new generation urging us forward.

Thank you to everyone who came together to celebrate and remember Dr. King this morning.



The Reverend Jay Williams of the Union Combined Parish (United Methodists), one of the organizers of the MLK Breakfast.



Boston Children Chorus Executive Director Andrés Holder.

ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL BREAKFAST

DEREK KOYOUJMIA PHOTOS



President of Stull And Lee Inc David Lee (center) is a recipient of the Drum Major Award. He is presented with the award by Rev Jay Williams, Rev Kevin Vetiak, Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones, and US Representative Ayanna Pressley. This award is named from what the Rev Dr King said in a 1967 sermon where he urged his congregation not to focus on his accomplishments but that he "tried to give his life serving others".



The audience applauds after the performance by the Boston Arts Academy Spiritual Ensemble.



President of the Epsilon Gamma Lambda Chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Andreas Douglas (right) is a recipient of the Drum Major Award. He is presented with the award with EGL Director of Membership Jason Burrell (2nd from left), Rev Jay Williams, Rev Kevin Vetiak, Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones, and US Representative Ayanna Pressley. This award is named from what the Rev Dr King said in a 1967 sermon where he urged his congregation not to focus on his accomplishments but that he "tried to give his life serving others".



Darius Smith and Neil Daniel accept the Drum Major Award on behalf of YouthBuild Boston (center). They are presented with the award by Rev Jay Williams, Rev Kevin Vetiak, Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones, and US Representative Ayanna Pressley. This award is named from what the Rev Dr King said in a 1967 sermon where he urged his congregation not to focus on his accomplishments but that he "tried to give his life serving others".



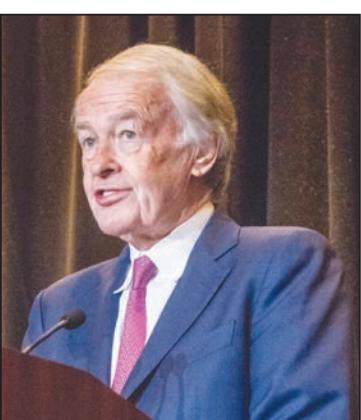
Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey spoke of remembering Rev Dr King "celebrating and affirming what Dr King represents... Freedom, equality, decency, dignity, and that we are all God's children".



Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell.



U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley introduces the Awards segment of the MLK Breakfast.



Sen. Edward Markey.



Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones and US Representative Ayanna Pressley with True Compass Award recipient Byron Rushing. He is a civil rights activist and community organizer as well as serving the Commonwealth as a State Representative. The True Compass Award is given to individuals whose life's work has contributed to the promotion of social justice, racial equality, and civil discourse.

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CITY PAWS

Winterize your dog walks

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

It's tempting to look out on a winter day with snow, rain, icy sidewalks, or below-freezing temperatures and decide to forgo a substantial walk with your dog. Just a quick trip to do their business has to be enough on the worst of days. However, with proper dress for both of you and picking your time with the help of radar, those days can be limited.

We also know that some dogs hate walking in the rain and snow. However, there are pups like our Poppy who love the quiet and calm that snowy days can bring. All these factors enter into your decision to take longer winter walks.

Ways To Keep Warm

If your companion is a short-haired, skinny canine, like a Whippet or Italian Greyhound, look for signs that it is too cold for this dog to walk far. Some of those are obvious, like shivering or trembling, a tucked tail, or a hunched posture.

We recently discovered heat-

ed vests thanks to a friend who uses them on cool days in Florida and on her cruises to northern destinations. These are also available for dogs. We both wear shoes and boots with Arctic Grip Vibram soles to keep from slipping on icy sidewalks. These are available on many shoe brands and really make a difference, even on black ice.

You can choose shorter walks, layers of fabric to insulate, or heated vests. Even with these precautions, you have to be aware when you are not walking an Alaskan Malamute or Siberian Husky.

We see people walking dogs without hats or gloves. Your dog may be made for winter with a double coat that insulates and sheds moisture. You have to create your own insulation by layering materials and using winter accessories to cover sources of heat loss and protect vulnerable spots like your fingers and ears. Many of these accessories also come in heated versions.

Choose Your Route

Many of us have normal walking routes that are either a



Dressing smart and planning well can make winter walks longer and more fulfilling for both you and your dog.

long loop or a straight-out-and-back path. These need to be adapted for nasty days. Consider smaller loops that will take you back to your home to decide if you or your dog has had enough for that day. You can always do a second or even third loop.

Windchill is real, and your route can be adjusted for it. Ed is especially good about checking all aspects of the weather before he sets out on a walk with Poppy. If the wind is going to be in your face for part of the

walk, start out in that direction. Then you'll have it at your back when you are beginning to feel the cold. You can also use side streets to zig-zag and give yourselves breaks from the wind.

Consider taking some warming breaks along the way. If your area has some dog-friendly shops, transit stations, hotels, malls, or other warm places, visit them to take a break. If you do, please be considerate of these havens by being as unintrusive as possible. Pause at the entrance to

let your dog shake off snow and ice, support the business with your patronage, and be aware that being there is a privilege, not a right, in most cases.

Planning well, having the right warming gear, and knowing your dog will set you on the right path for cold winter walks.

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

Edwards advances legislation to ensure fairness, due process, and access to the courts for all

Special to the Sun

Senator Lydia Edwards has filed legislation reaffirming a fundamental promise of our democracy: that everyone has fair and safe access to the courts. At a time when increased immigration enforcement activity has created fear around courthouses, the legislation ensures that all residents can participate in legal proceedings, assert their rights, and seek justice without intimidation or obstruction.

This legislation is one of two major initiatives introduced by Senator Edwards to safeguard residents of the Commonwealth. The newest bill joins a bill filed in November to update Massachusetts' U and T Visa law to better protect trafficking and abuse survivors.

Protecting Access to Justice

An Act protecting access to justice (SD 3607), filed today by Senator Edwards, establishes clear limitations on arrests,

detention, or custody actions within Massachusetts courthouses.

The proposal is rooted in a simple principle: courthouses must remain safe spaces where justice is practiced without fear. Increased ICE activity in and around courthouses has not only undermined the sense of safety within these buildings, but also has had a chilling effect on access to the courts – stripping residents of their ability to fully exercise their right to due process.

As a result, justice itself is being disrupted. Witnesses are afraid to testify, individuals are avoiding regularly scheduled hearings, and in some cases prosecutors have been unable to complete trials. When people cannot safely access the courts, the entire justice system suffers.

The legislation:

- Requires any law enforcement agent entering a courthouse to identify themselves to court personnel and state their

enforcement purpose

- Mandates judicial warrants or judicial approval for any civil arrest.

- Bans face coverings that obscure identity in the courthouse, unless medically necessary

The legislation is designed to protect the integrity of judicial proceedings, preserve public trust in the courts, and enhance public safety. Similar courthouse-protection laws have been enacted in states including Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York.

"Courthouses exist so people can seek justice – not to be places of fear or enforcement ambush," said Senator Edwards. "When individuals are too afraid to show up to court, justice breaks down for everyone. This legislation is about defending the rule of law, safeguarding due process, and ensuring our courts remain places where fairness and equal access are upheld for all."

Strengthening Protections for Survivors of Trafficking and Serious Crimes

In late November, Senator Edwards filed An Act relative to trafficking and abuse survivors (SD 3394), a comprehensive update to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 258F concerning U and T Visa certifications.

U and T visas are federal immigration protections designed for victims of serious crimes – including assault, domestic violence, kidnapping, and human trafficking – who assist law enforcement in investigations or prosecutions.

The current state law requires a 90-day response to U and T Visa certification requests, a delay that can leave some vulnerable during critical moments. The proposed legislation shortens that timeline to 30 days, and to 10 days in extreme circumstances, such as when a survivor is already in deportation.

"People who have survived some of the horrific crimes such

as slavery, trafficking, and violence, face so many obstacles as it is, in standing up to their perpetrators. We need to make sure that they feel safe to talk to local law enforcement."

The legislation:

- Clarifies that judges, state agencies, and law enforcement entities may issue certifications

- Establishes a right to appeal previously denied certifications to the courts

- Ensures timely responses that align with the urgency of immigration proceedings.

This legislation, if passed, would assure that victims and witnesses of crime will feel safe to come forward. "This is what will help keep our communities safer, when people feel safe to come out of the shadows, seek justice and our courts remain bastions of access to justice," Senator Edwards

Meet Boston announces exciting winter activities

Frostival Lodge furnished by Wayfair at Copley Square and a spectacular Ferris Wheel on the Greenway

Special to the Sun

The inaugural Boston Frostival swings back into gear this February with two signature activations – the Frostival Lodge furnished by Wayfair at Copley Square opening February 6, and the 75-foot Frostival Ferris Wheel on the Greenway operating throughout the entire month of February. Following the scintillating drone shows that captivated thousands in December, this winter celebration promises to wow residents and visitors alike.

"Frostival represents our dedicated effort to reimagine winter in Boston with new and interactive programming that is appealing to audiences of all ages," said Meet Boston CEO Martha J. Sheridan. "The activation at Copley Square will be an anchor for us, creating memorable winter experiences to drive new and repeat visitation. Imagine the magic of a Scandinavian landscape, a chateau in the Italian Alps, a cozy alpine lodge in Quebec, all coming to life in the heart of Back Bay with a distinctly Boston flair. Book your trip today!"

The Frostival Lodge furnished by Wayfair will feature fun and festive offerings thanks to a unique partnership between Meet Boston, Eataly, Wayfair, and NBC Boston. Wayfair will outfit the space with cozy, comfortable cabin furniture and decor, and the entire collection is shoppable on their site. Eataly will offer food and drink options

befitting a winter wonderland. Visitors can immerse themselves in Winter Games-themed programming that brings a taste of Milan-Cortina to Copley Square.

"We're thrilled to partner with Meet Boston to help bring The Frostival Lodge to life in our own backyard," said Kate Gulliver, chief financial officer at Wayfair. "As the trusted destination for all things home, Wayfair's unparalleled selection helped us curate cozy furniture and décor that make the Frostival Lodge a warm, welcoming space all season long. We're incredibly thankful to our partners at Meet Boston for the opportunity to collaborate on an experience that celebrates the city we call home."

"As your Milan/Cortina Winter Games destination, NBC Boston is proud to partner with Meet Boston to bring all the excitement to Frostival," said

Chris Wayland, President and General Manager of the Boston stations of NBC and Telemundo. "We are thrilled to support Boston's latest and most exciting winter attraction and enhance with Olympic-themed content that Bostonians won't want to miss."

In addition to warming nooks and a heated outdoor patio, the Frostival Lodge furnished by Wayfair will include the following activities:

- Weekly trivia nights
- Kids movie time with silent Disco headphones
- Small-scale live musical performances
- Curling lane and cornhole boards
- Table-top and group games such as Scrabble, Jenga, chess, and backgammon
- Winter Games in Italy watch parties
- Winter Games-themed and

Valentine's Day-themed Kids Crafts

- Pasta-making classes for food enthusiasts

Please visit meetboston.com/frostival for a full lineup of programming. Additional events will be added in the weeks to come.

While the Lodge is generating buzz in Back Bay, Meet Boston is also working with the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy to install a 75-foot Ferris Wheel adjacent to the park's iconic carousel. The Frostival Ferris Wheel will operate Wednesday through Sunday between January 31 and March 1. And for the first time ever, the carousel will be open during weekends in February.

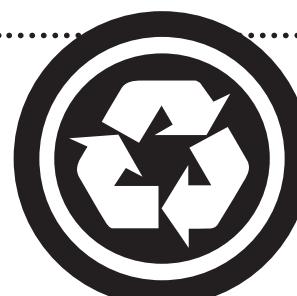
"The Ferris Wheel on The Greenway is a perfect symbol of what Frostival represents — bringing people together in unexpected ways, even in the coldest months," said Chris

Cook, Executive Director of the Kennedy Greenway Conservancy. "Thanks to our partnership with Meet Boston, we're able to turn The Greenway into a true winter destination for residents and visitors alike."

Boston offers a variety of exceptional seasonal experiences all winter long. Cozy cocktail bars and fireplace suites encourage guests to linger and spend a night (or two) in the city. Outdoor skating, winter art installations like Winteractive, arts and culture experiences, vibrant theatre and live entertainment, wine and food festivals, Dine Out Boston, sporting events at TD Garden and much more make for the perfect winter escape whether you are traveling as a family, for a romantic weekend or a getaway with friends. Visit the Boston Frostival site to explore all details, including hotel packages, and book your trip today.



Artist's rendering of the Frostival Lodge at Copley Square.



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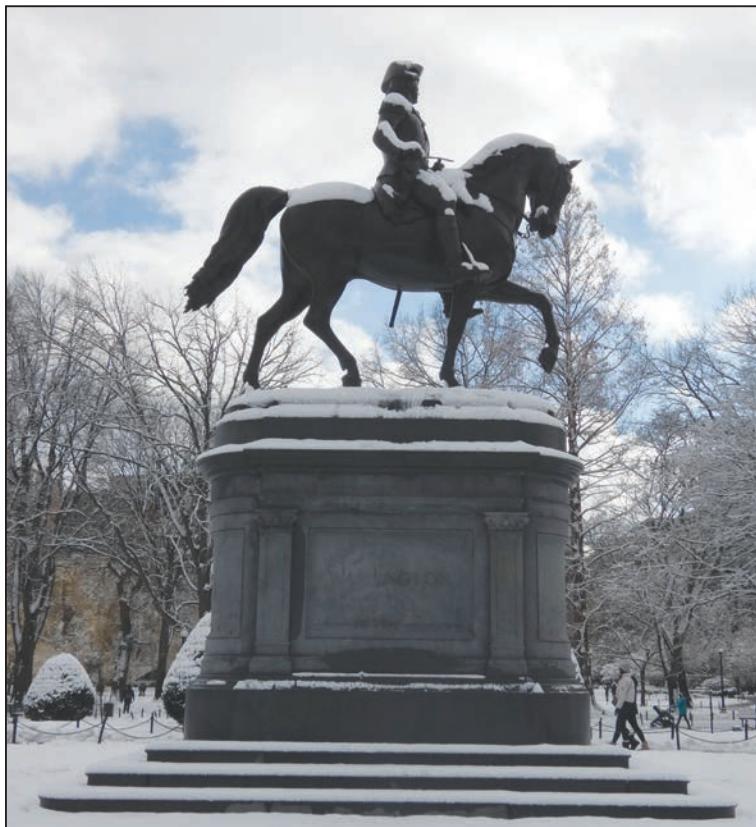
D. Murphy Photos

A winter storm arrived in Boston on the morning of Mar-

tin Luther King Day, Monday, Jan. 19, leaving about five inches of fresh snow.



A sledder traverses the Boston Common.



The George Washington statue in the Public Garden braves the cold.



Sledders descend on the area of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on the Boston Common.



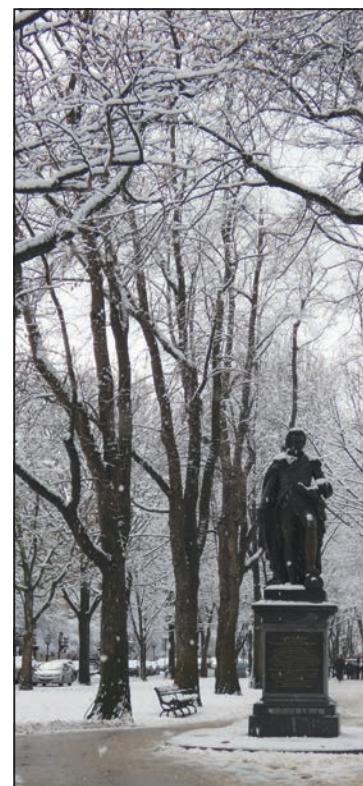
Snow coats the Public Garden footbridge.



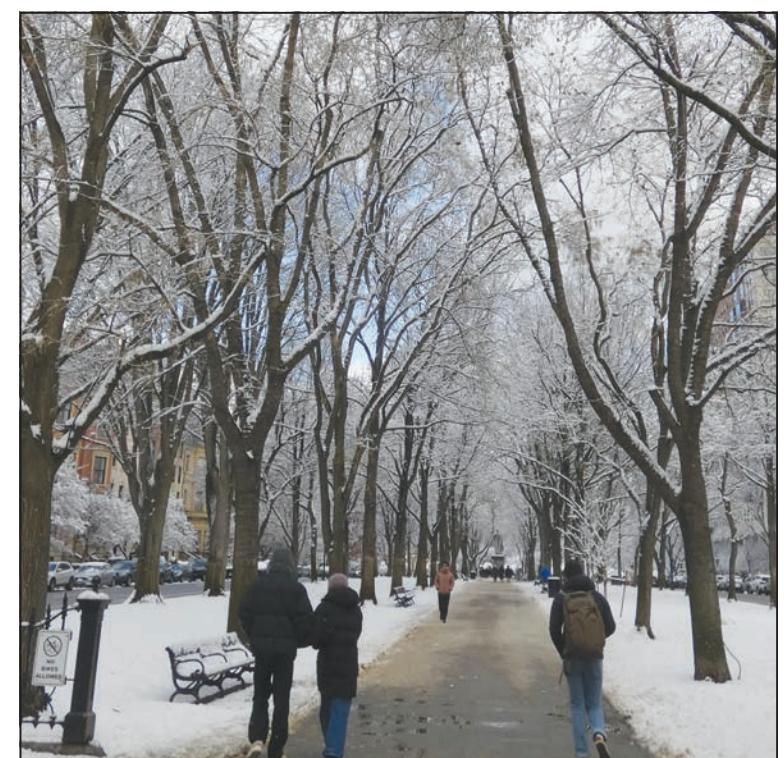
A snow-capped Parkman Bandstand on the Boston Common.



Snow covers the top of The Embrace sculpture on the Boston Common, which pays tribute to the union between Martin Luther King Jr. and his wife, Coretta Scott King.



Snow caps the statue of John Glover on the Commonwealth Avenue Mall.



Pedestrians walk along the Commonwealth Avenue Mall.

Real Estate Transfers

BUYER 1	SELLER 1	ADDRESS	PRICE
BACK BAY			
Levin Ft	Rosenthal, Lee	1 Huntington Ave #401	\$935,000
Siskind, Neal	Samdor LLC	1 Huntington Ave #903	\$4,000,000
Daylor, Andrew W	Daylor, Susan R	10 Dartmouth Pl #1	\$500,000
Morganelli, Jason R	Altor Holdings LLC	191 Beacon St #1	\$1,150,000
Thach, Lee	Chung, Candace Y	241 Beacon St #1	\$745,000
Lopez, Gabriel	Maxwell P Campion RET	390 Commonwealth Ave #305	\$1,150,000
Hegarty, Jacquelyn	Hegarty, Michael	401 Beacon St #1B	\$1,500,000
Birsen LLC	Barry-Heffernan, Timothy	413 Beacon St #5	\$815,000
Lopez, Gabriel	Maxwell P Campion RET	425 Newbury St #F7	\$1,150,000
Carr, James	Ts Pied-A-Terre Hldg LLC	430 Stuart St #1507	\$975,000
Walker, Robin	Gehl, Kevin R	457 Beacon St #5	\$1,215,000
OConnor, Breda	OConnor, Gerard	471 Massachusetts Ave	\$1,850,000
J Fuller Const 527 Ma Ave	Gullwing Realty LLC	527 Massachusetts Ave	\$1,053,823
Giri Foxboro LLC	78 Charles St Propco LLC	76-82 Charles St S	\$24,000,000

BEACON HILL

Kinzer, Stephen	Weber, Susan	1313 Washington St #605	\$1,760,000
Kelly, Susanne	Davidson, Nagy O	14 Joy St #1	\$720,000
Sahin, Andrea	Wells 2016 Ft	165 Tremont St #902	\$1,275,000
Abelson, Annalee	South Bay Properties LLC	2 Hawthorne Pl #10K	\$430,000
Abelson, Annalee	South Bay Properties LLC	2 Hawthorne Pl #90	\$500,000
Lower Roxbury Cmnty Corp	Madison Washington li LL	2201-2209 Washington St	\$6,354,619
Kipp, Bryan	Temple Street 410 Rt	45 Temple St #410	\$1,460,000
Liu, Dehong	Turbiak-Magnotti, France	771 Tremont St #2	\$925,000
Abelson, Annalee	South Bay Properties LLC	9 Hawthorne Pl #15H	\$525,000
Abelson, Annalee	South Bay Properties LLC	9 Hawthorne Pl #2C	\$505,000
Adelson, Annalee	South Bay Properties LLC	9 Hawthorne Pl #9D	\$718,000

BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE

Boyle, Erin	Rosen, Matthew A	112 Union Park St #1	\$1,220,000
Tran, Catherine	Kinzer, Stephen A	33 Union Park #4	\$1,425,000
Lixian, Wu	Brian B & C A Corcoran L	379 Shawmut Ave	\$1,050,000
Roshanrouz, Naseem	Henley Holdings LLC	5 Appleton St #2D	\$1,277,500
Hallal Ft	Glaude, Hadrien P	81 Appleton St #1	\$1,549,000
Ryder, Carreau	Swani, Rahul	9 Bond St	\$2,950,000

DOWNTOWN/WATERFRONT

Thomas A Giblin 2012 T	Monterubio T	1 Avery St #15D	\$1,398,000
Lybarger, Hudson T	Hsiao, Joseph A	109-119 Beach St #1F	\$735,000
Stein, Eric	Huff, Scott A	28-32 Atlantic Ave #534	\$1,075,000

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Attention to Detail

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The stained-glass detail in the last clue is at 362 Commonwealth Avenue. According to BackBayHouses.org, this was originally three buildings, 362, 364, and 366, "...were operated as one building and have been owned in common since they were built." In 1981, the property was converted to a condominium community with both residential and commercial units.

You'll find the next clue in the Fenway.

Do you have a favorite building or detail you would like featured? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

THIS WEEK'S CLUE



Mayor Wu announces Boston Saves' January incentive to help families activate accounts and unlock program benefits

Special to the Sun

Mayor Michelle Wu announced a January promotion through Boston Saves, the City's children's savings account program designed to engage families in financial education and long-term saving and planning for their children's future. Currently, all Boston Public Schools (BPS) K2-6th-grade students have Boston Saves accounts. As part of the promotion, families who log in to the Boston Saves online savings platform for the first time by January 31, 2026, will earn an extra \$25 for their child's account. This money, in addition to the \$50 deposit provided in every Boston Saves account and any additional incentives families earn, can be used to pay for their child's future college

or career training. The promotion encourages eligible families to take the first step of logging into their Boston Saves accounts, introducing them to free financial tools and resources that support college and career readiness.

"Connecting students and families to the tools they need to succeed can be transformative – Boston Saves aims to support our students both in and out of the classroom," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "By providing access to resources and support, we ensure that every student has the opportunity to thrive. I encourage all BPS families to explore this program and discover how they can benefit from Boston Saves."

Led by the Worker Empowerment Cabinet in partnership with Boston Public Schools, Boston

Saves automatically provides savings accounts for all eligible BPS students in grades K2-6. Each account is seeded with an initial deposit of \$50 and paired with free tools and learning opportunities that help families engage in conversation about saving, goal-setting, and postsecondary planning from an early age. An evaluation of Boston Saves' first year found that program participation led to significant positive outcomes on students' academic success, including social-emotional development, reading frequency, parental life satisfaction, and educational expectations. Research shows that the mere presence of savings can motivate post-secondary success. In one study, a low-to-moderate-income child with less than \$500 in an account dedicated to higher education was three times more likely to enroll in college and four times more likely to graduate from college.

"Boston Saves is about more than a deposit—it's a structure that helps families and schools engage early in financial literacy and long-term planning, providing a solid foundation that will set students on a pathway to economic mobility and future success," said Chief of Worker Empowerment Trinh Nguyen. "I encourage all eligible families to take advantage of the program's benefits."

"Boston Public Schools is committed to investing in the future of our students from the very beginning, ensuring every child has the opportunity to

reach their full potential," said Boston Public Schools Superintendent Mary Skipper. "By providing families with access to programs like Boston Saves, we are helping our community better understand the various pathways available to their children. Through this initiative, we are working alongside families to create long-term plans that support students both in the classroom and beyond."

To encourage long-term saving, Boston Saves offers families ongoing incentives to earn additional money for their child's account. To date, the program has set aside approximately \$1,450,000 for more than 28,996 students with an additional \$352,500 in family-earned incentives. During last year's January promotion, over 800 BPS families earned \$22,200 for their children's futures. While enrollment in Boston Saves is automatic for eligible students, the new year promotion is crucial as it encourages families to take the necessary first step of logging into their accounts to unlock the program's benefits. When a family logs in to the Savings Center, they can:

See the money in their child's Boston Saves account

Link their own financial account to the Savings Center to track all their savings for their child in one place and earn an additional incentive

Earn more money for their child's Boston Saves account by taking simple steps like reading with their child or saving regu-

larly

"Boston Saves has played an important role in helping my two young children build a strong foundation in understanding financial health and why it's important to plan for the future," said Monika Bach, Parent, Josiah Quincy Elementary School. "As a proud BPS parent and community member, I'm grateful for the tools and resources I need to help keep me engaged and learning critical life skills alongside my kids so that we're all invested in building a strong and more resilient pathway to success for our children."

The Boston Saves New Year's promotion will be applied to the accounts of all students whose families have logged in to the Savings Center for the first time since November 2025, when the platform first became available to current K2 kindergarten families. All BPS K2-6th-grade students have Boston Saves accounts. Families of students in select older grades may also have accounts (and be eligible for the promotion) if they were part of the Boston Saves pilot program or joined a pilot cohort. Families with eligible children should have received an email from bostonsaves@boston.gov with a direct link to log into their child's account. Parents/guardians who believe their child is eligible but did not receive an email can contact the Boston Saves team at bostonsaves@boston.gov with their child's name, grade, and school. For more information, visit boston.gov/boston-saves.

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City offering free winter fitness series

Special to the Sun

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department and Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) are pleased to announce the 2026 Boston Parks Winter Fitness Series, sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. The series will offer free weekly classes in City of Boston parks until April 4.

This season, Bostonians can enjoy a variety of healthy activities both indoors and outdoors, including Walking Group, line dancing, Bota Foga, Kids Dance Fitness, Strength and Balance,

Tai Chi, Yoga, and more. Classes are designed for all skill levels and ages, with options that are family-friendly, age-friendly, and welcoming to those who may be new to fitness.

"Throughout the winter months, our parks remain active and welcoming places for Bostonians to move, connect, and care for their well-being," said Cathy Baker-Eclipse, Interim Commissioner of the Boston Parks and Recreation Department. "We're grateful for our partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, which

help bring free, accessible fitness programming and community connection directly into our neighborhoods this winter."

"The Winter Fitness Series is a wonderful opportunity for everyone in Boston to get moving and participate in free and accessible activities that can improve health and well-being," said Bisola Ojikutu MD, MPH, FIDSA, Commissioner of Public Health for the City of Boston. "Resources like these free classes help reduce the risk of chronic disease, which is one of the goals of Live Long and Well, our citywide popula-

(WINTER FITNESS, Pg. 15)

Owner makes difficult decision to close Charles Street Liquors

By Dan Murphy

The decision to close Charles Street Liquors, the longstanding business at 143 Charles St., didn't come easily for its owner.

"For the past year, my wife and I have wrestled with this difficult decision," Chris Pedersen told this reporter in an email. "After more than 20 years of following my passion for bringing fine wine and spirits to Beacon Hill, I have decided to close the store."

His decision came amid a 'perfect storm' of professional and personal factors," according

to Pederson, including changing social habits, which have impacted his business.

"We've seen a shift in consumption habits and neighborhood demographics since COVID, alongside the sad departure of fellow neighborhood staples like Savenor's Market, Panificio Bistro & Bakery, The King and I, Figs, and now, The Upper Crust," he wrote.

The biggest considerations in Pedersen's decision, however, were all personal.

"Last August, I suffered a minor stroke that affected my eyesight and limited my ability



D. MURPHY PHOTO

The now-closed Charles Street Liquors at 143 Charles St.

to drive into Boston to manage the store daily," wrote Pedersen. "That health scare, combined with turning 65 this past October, really shook up my family and me. It made us realize it was time to prioritize health and family."

The building itself is currently listed for sale by the estate of his late business partner (who passed away in 2022), and Pedersen, who owns the liquor license for Charles Street Liquors through the end of this year, said the business is also on the market, although he doesn't hold out much hope of finding a buyer.

"I am not leaving the business world entirely," added Pedersen.

"I still own The UPS Store on Charles Street and five others in Boston, though those are now capably managed by my daughter, Daria, and my general manager, James."

With the closing of Charles Street Liquors, Pedersen has entered the next chapter of his life, and he's now focusing mainly on his recovery and his family, along with a shared passion he and his wife have for Strongwater Farm Therapeutic Equestrian Center in Tewksbury.

"As a board member there, I'm looking forward to dedicating more time with my wife Lynn working with veterans and trauma survivors, helping them find

healing and peace through horses," added Pedersen.

And while he has only just stepped away from Charles Street Liquors, Pedersen is already pinning for his regular interactions with customers on Beacon Hill.

"I will deeply miss my daily interactions with my customers, many of whom I've known for 20 years or more," wrote Pedersen. "Life always changes, but the community on the Hill has been a wonderful part of mine for two decades."

Chris Pedersen invites readers to contact him via email at chris@csliquors.com.



COURTESY OF CHRIS PEDERSEN

Chris Pedersen is seen with two therapy horses at Strongwater Farm Therapeutic Equestrian Center in Tewksbury.

WINTER FITNESS (from Page 15)

tion health equity agenda. By encouraging everyone to engage in physical activity, we are ensuring that Boston is a city where all residents can thrive."

Through this citywide initiative, the Parks Department and BPHC aim to reduce barriers to active living and provide more opportunities for Boston residents to stay healthy and active throughout the winter months. Continuing on the success of the 2025 Parks Fitness Series, the winter series offers the opportunity for residents to stay active

during shorter daylight hours while enjoying safe, accessible outdoor options. All classes are free and open to the public.

"We are delighted to continue our long-standing partnership with the City of Boston to offer Winter Fitness, bringing free and accessible fitness opportunities to Boston neighborhoods," said Jeff Bellows, vice president of corporate citizenship and public affairs at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. "The Boston Park Fitness series offers year-round in-person classes that

support the physical and mental well-being of residents."

For up to date information, including weather-related cancellations for outdoor fitness classes, visit boston.gov/fitness.

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) stewards over 2,200 acres of public open space across 288 properties, including the Boston Common, the Public Garden, and the Olmsted-designed Emerald Necklace park system. Our parks feature walking trails, playgrounds, courts, natural areas, and his-

toric sites, as well as 29 urban wilds, four high school athletic fields, two public golf courses, and more than 40,000 street trees. BPRD offers free cultural and recreational programming for people of all ages, helping to create welcoming, active, and connected communities. Learn more at boston.gov/parks and sign up for updates at bit.ly/Get-Parks-Emails. Follow our social channels @bostonparksdept on X, Facebook, Instagram, and @parks.boston.gov on Bluesky.

Boston Public Health Com-

mission (BPHC) is the country's oldest health department. We envision a thriving Boston where all residents live healthy and fulfilling lives. To accomplish this, BPHC works in partnership with communities to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, especially those impacted by racism and systemic inequities. Learn more about our work at boston.gov/bphc.

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