

LET'S GO PATRIOTS!

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Foodie's Markets at 1421 Washington St. in the South End, which will close this June after 30 years in business.

Foodie's Markets to close longstanding South End location this June

By Dan Murphy

Foodie's Markets will close its at location of more than 30 years at 1421 Washington St. in the South End in June, the company announced this week.

"We've made the difficult decision to close our South End location this spring at the end of our lease," Victor G. Leon, general manager of Foodie's Markets, said in a Feb. 2 press release. "Working alongside my father and a group of incredibly hard-working employees to build and

operate this business has been an amazing journey and a true blessing. The South End community has been extraordinarily supportive over the years, and we are forever grateful. Operating a small, independently owned grocery store has become increasingly challenging in today's economic environment, and the grocery landscape has changed considerably since we first opened our doors 30 years ago. I look forward to focusing on our South Boston location and other opportunities."

In a statement, Ted Lubitz, partner of 1421 Washington Associates LLC, which owns the building, said: "Foodie's Markets achievements and involvement in the South End neighborhood have been remarkable. We are proud of their accomplishments and wish them continued success in South Boston and in other future endeavors"

When Foodies opted to close its South End location at the end of their current lease, Lubitz said

(FOODIE'S MARKETS, Pg. 3)

Councilor Culpepper delivers maiden speech before City Council

Special to Sun

District 7 City Councilor Miniard Culpepper delivered his maiden speech before the City Council on Wednesday, Jan. 28, at City Hall.

Councilor Culpepper then formally introduced his priorities in office. He framed his remarks around the concerns he has heard from residents across Roxbury, Dorchester, the South End, and Fenway, and outlined an early legislative agenda focused on transparency, accountability, and shared prosperity.

"I am honored to stand before you as the City Councilor for Boston's District 7," said Councilor Culpepper, thanking his constituents for placing their trust in him "during this defining moment for District 7 and for Boston."

Councilor Culpepper described a community grappling with uncertainty and rapid change, noting that residents



COURTESY OF CITY OF BOSTON

District 7 City Councilor Miniard Culpepper.

have reached out not only with political questions, but also with concerns regarding their place in the city and whether their voices are even being heard.

"Their rights – no matter who they are or where they live – matter, and deserve protection," he said.

Also, Councilor Culpepper

(CULPEPPER, Pg. 3)

Fenway's Ailin Sha named Boston Youth Poet Laureate

Special to the Sun

Mayor Michelle Wu and the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture announced that after a competitive search process, 18-year-old poet and writer Ailin Sha has been selected as Boston's next Youth Poet Laureate. Sha officially started the role on February 1 and will serve until January 2028. Sha is an accomplished young writer whose poetry explores identity, voice,

and belonging.

"I'm honored to announce Ailin Sha as Boston's next Youth Poet Laureate. As an accomplished writer, poet, violinist and civic leader, her artistry and creativity will inspire our communities and empower our young creative leaders," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "I'm proud to celebrate her leadership and the positive influence she'll have in our

(AILIN SHA, Pg. 4)

EDITORIAL

ACCLIMATING TO OUR LOCAL ICE AGE

The bitterly cold weather that we've been experiencing day-after-day this winter has been oppressive (not to mention costly because of our high heating bills).

The daily lows in the single digits, coupled with the strong winds that have brought the wind-chills well below zero, have tested even the hardest New Englanders among us.

We are fortunate to live on an island near the coast, where the ice-bound harbor has created an Arctic-like seascape that is peaceful and calming, leaving us awestruck every morning when we wake up and look out at the frozen tundra that surrounds us.

The usual blue of the ocean has been replaced by a sea of white, and at sunset, the fiery pink and orange hues in the sky are reflected in the ice in soft pastels.

Our daily workout routine has been altered. The sandbar near our home that uncovers for about a quarter of a mile at low tide and that serves as our personal running track has been a sheet of ice when the tide recedes.

When our cold weather first set in a few weeks ago, the sea water on the surface of the sand bar instantly flash-froze as the tide receded. But for the past two weeks, the thick sheets of ice have been left stranded at low tide, rising and falling with the ebb and flow of each tidal cycle.

Still, we've been able to get outside on many occasions during the cold snap and enjoy what we figure have been the coldest runs of our life. Needless to say, we were dressed for the elements with five layers of clothing, a wool cap, a hoodie, and gloves. The wind chill officially was below zero, but we ran back-and-forth in the roadway around our island on the leeward side, protected from the wind by a hill, and being careful to slow down on any patches of black ice.

Most importantly, the sun was shining brightly on these runs. Even when the temperatures are in the single digits, the strength of the sun to provide warmth is apparent and very welcome.

These runs, as cold as they have been, were far better than pounding on the treadmill in our gym. They were invigorating both for our body and our soul.

Although the early part of this week was not particularly warm -- the temps reached the high 20s -- it felt like a heatwave compared to the past few weeks. We shed our coat, hat, and gloves, and wore shorts for our daily runs on the sunny side of our island.

As we ran back-and-forth on our roadway for our 30-minute workouts, enveloped by the piles of snow and the ice floes in the nearby harbor, it occurred to us that as trying as our winter has been, so much of what we dread about these months is in our minds.

It is possible -- with a little bit of sunshine and the right attitude -- to get acclimated to the harshness of winter, and even revel in it.

GO PATS!

It seems like it was just yesterday that Patriot Nation looked forward to our Patriots making it to the Super Bowl almost every year. From 2002-2019, the Pats went to nine Super Bowls in 18 years, winning six of them, a dynastic record of consistency spearheaded by Bill Belichick and Tom Brady that we feel confident in saying will never be equaled in the NFL.

But after a bit of a drought for the past half-decade, the Patriots once again are back in the big game and Patriot Nation is at the center of the sports world's universe, this time with head coach Mike Vrabel and quarterback Drake Maye leading the way.

The Super Bowl is such a gigantic event that it attracts the non-sports fans among us, even if the major draw for them is the halftime show, which this year will feature Puerto Rico's Bad Bunny, the number one recording artist in the world, or the Super Bowl ads, which themselves generate their own conversation.

For our part, we've been getting ourselves pumped-up for the big game by watching highlights of the Pats' previous Super Bowl wins, including the 2015 victory over Seattle in which Brady rallied the Pats from a 24-14 deficit with 8:30 left in the game and Malcolm Butler made his immortal game-saving interception on the Patriot one-yard line.

So whether these Pats will bring us the joy of the Patriots' victories of the Brady/Belichick era or the pain of the losses to Green Bay, the Giants, and the Eagles (or, heaven forbid, the 1986 loss to the Bears), Sunday evening promises to be a fun time for all of us.

News in Brief

COPLEY PLACE MALL BRIEFLY EVACUATED SUNDAY DUE TO SMOKE

Copley Place mall was temporarily evacuated on Sunday, Feb. 1, after smoke came billowing out of an Eversource electrical vault in the building's garage below, the local online news outlet, Universal Hub, first reported.

Firefighter responded to the scene just before 11 a.m., using multiple fans to clear smoke from the building before the blaze reportedly went out on its own.

S.E. LIBRARY AUTHOR SERIES CONTINUES WITH BRUCE COFFIN ON FEB. 25 AT UNION CHURCH

The South End Library Author Series will feature Bruce Coffin, a retired Portland detective sergeant and FBI consultant, discussing his latest book, 'Bitter Fall' on Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 6:30 p.m. at the Connection Room at Union Church, 485 Columbus Ave., (access from Newton Street), followed by refreshments and book signings at 7:30 p.m.

Book sales will be offered by Parkside Booksellers at this free event; come in person or attend virtually.

For virtual link email info@friendsofsouthendlibrary.org to receive the Zoom info. Friends of the South End Library subscribers will receive the Zoom link in the group's Mailchimp newsletter just before the event.

'RECLAIMING HISTORY' EXHIBIT OPENS FEB. 25 AT JOSIAH QUINCY UPPER SCHOOL

Join Mass Cultural Council

for the launch of 'Reclaiming History' -- an exhibit celebrating Boston's Chinatown, Little Syria, and New York Streets neighborhoods -- on Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 6 p.m. (door open at 5:30 p.m.) at Josiah Quincy Upper School at 900 Washington St.

This event, which is free and open to the public, is supported by the Neighborhood and Downtown Activation Grant from the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, the City of Boston, the Mass Cultural Council, and Culture & Community Power Fund.

EVERYONE250 MARKER UNVEILING SET FOR FEB. 27 AT USES

United South End Settlements (USES) will be recognized as a historic location by Everyone250 -- a coalition of over 100 local artists, educators, organizations, and advocates who are celebrating and amplifying unique pieces of Boston in honor of America's 250th anniversary -- on Friday, Feb. 27, from 10-11 a.m. at the USES Courtyard, located at 36 Rutland St.

This event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments and coffee will be provided. Space is limited; R.S.V.P. online at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf6FPAPNP-W4uV8Bot8E_-GotVc6evaL7n-W0zzB6oK6jqh33Ew/viewform

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.

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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Get a sneak peek of America's 250th exhibit at Old North Church Historic Site



Old North Church will have an exhibit celebrating America's 250th anniversary School vacation week.

Opens Saturday, Feb. 14

Special to the Sun

Step into the story that launched a revolution. During February School Vacation Week, Old North Church Historic Site invites students, families, and history lovers to be among the first to experience new additions to its exhibit celebrating the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States. As the nation looks ahead to July 4, 2026, there's no better place to explore the origins of American independence than the site where Paul Revere's famous "one if by land, and two if by sea" lanterns were hung.

Located in the heart of Boston's North End, Old North offers a fun, immersive, and educational vacation-week experience. Visitors can explore the soaring 18th-century church, discover new semiquincentennial content, and connect classroom lessons to the real places where

history happened.

Designated a Site of Conscience by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience in 2023, Old North Church Historic Site brings Revolutionary-era history together with stories that inspire curiosity, conversation, and civic engagement — making it an ideal School Vacation destination for learners of all ages.

The historic site, which is typically closed to the public during the winter season, will be open Feb. 14 through Feb. 21 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (open 12:30 - 5 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 15). Families can take advantage of a \$10 combo ticket, which includes admission to the church, an immersive audio guide, and a self-guided tour of the historic crypt, where more than 1,100 people are buried. Tours of the Bell Chamber and the Balcony will also be offered periodically throughout the day. For more information, visit: www.old-north.com.

FOODIE'S MARKET (from Page 1)

the property owner wanted to secure another "vibrant tenant that was a good fit for the South End community."

The Croft School then approached the property owner and expressed interest in not only leasing but also renovating the building. The Croft School, which has been in the South End since 2022, will also continue to occupy two other buildings at 1525 and 1310 Washington St.,

respectively.

"Our Preschool through Grade 6 enrollment interest among neighborhood-area families continues to grow, and we see this as an exciting opportunity to continue to serve students living in the South End and other Boston neighborhoods for years to come," said Scott Given, executive director of the Croft School, in a statement. "We love the South End, and intend to

rejuvenate the space into a beautiful, bright school facility for our young learners."

The Croft School is expected to start making significant renovations to the property as soon as Foodie's has vacated the premises.

Meanwhile, Foodie's continues to operate its other store at 230 West Broadway in South Boston.

South End residents voice concerns about 311 system reports

By Eowyn Michaels

South End residents expressed their frustration with the 311 system following an increase in residential break-ins last summer at the Worcester Square Area Neighborhood Association Zoom meeting on Tuesday evening.

Captain Shawn Burns, commander of Boston Police District D4, which includes the South End, reported a "slight uptick" in residential break-ins during the summer, resulting in the arrest of all individuals responsible.

WNASA residents, however, have reported new instances of break-ins to the Boston Police Department, according to John Stillwaggon, co-president of WNASA, and Burns.

Stillwaggon reported that the garden unit of his apartment building was trespassed by a "squatter" while the tenants were out of town.

"We arrested [the squatter]

three times in four days," Burns said, and recommended that residents use 311 to report unwanted neighborhood activities.

Stephen Fox, the South End Forum leader, raised concerns about residents' reluctance to use 311. Fox stated that South End residents who contacted 311 are "disappointed that [cases] are getting closed out faster than they actually get resolved," highlighting an issue many 311 users have been facing lately. Rather than filing the complaint and sending it to BPD, cases are being marked "resolved," resulting in no follow-up or resolution, Fox said.

"They're not seeing the kind of response to their complaint on multiple issues that they would expect to see from 311," Fox said. Burns reminded residents that if a crime is in progress, call 911 immediately.

Kellie Young, director of the City of Boston's Coordinated

CULPEPPER (from Page 1)

highlighted both immediate neighborhood issues and long-term challenges, such as economic mobility, education, transportation, and community health.

Councilor Culpepper's remarks addressed several high-profile issues affecting District 7, including large-scale development projects, economic inclusion, and the future of Madison Park Technical Vocational High School. While affirming that Madison Park "must be rebuilt," he emphasized that decisions about how and where the school is rebuilt must reflect a collaborative process that respects decades of community planning and engagement.

Moreover, Councilor Culpepper formally introduced his first set of legislative filings. "My first set of filings reflects three core commitments: transparency, accountability, and a vision towards shared prosperity," he

said.

The package includes an order for a hearing to develop a comprehensive report on the state of civil rights in Boston and Massachusetts. The proposed hearing would examine whether civil rights protections are being upheld across housing, education, employment, healthcare, public safety, and civic participation, with the goal of identifying disparities and recommending corrective actions through a publicly released committee report.

Councilor Culpepper also filed an order calling for a hearing to explore designating economically disenfranchised areas of District 7 as 'Empowerment Zones.' The hearing would examine how a place-based investment strategy could better align housing, transportation, public safety, education, and economic development efforts to support small businesses, strengthen local

ownership, and improve quality of life in neighborhoods such as Nubian Square and Grove Hall.

Additionally, Councilor Culpepper adopted a resolution supporting greater transparency and community engagement regarding the future of Parcel P-3 and the Madison Park project. The resolution affirms support for rebuilding Madison Park, he said, while calling for clearer information about project costs, phasing, and long-term planning, and for continued collaboration with community stakeholders.

In conclusion, Councilor Culpepper pledged to serve as a bridge between residents and City Hall.

"It's not about me. It's about we," he said, expressing his belief that the Council's credibility is built when it chooses "inclusion over expediency, and partnership over silence."

AILIN SHA *(from Page 1)*

creative communities through her work, rooted in themes of belonging."

Established in 2019, the Boston Youth Poet Laureate (BYPL) celebrates the power of poetry to elevate youth voices and engage communities across Boston. The BYPL program is a collaboration between the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, the national youth literary organization Urban Word, and local youth literary organizers from the Boston Public Library, Mass Poetry, Fine Arts Work Center, 826 Boston, and GrubStreet.

"It's truly an honor to be named Boston's fourth Youth Poet Laureate," said Ailin Sha, incoming Boston Youth Poet Laureate. "I'm excited to use poetry to connect young people to one another and help strengthen access to the arts throughout our city."

The Boston Youth Poet Laureate is a two-year ceremonial role that elevates a young poet as a literary ambassador for the city. In partnership with the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, the current Boston Poet Laureate, and Boston's cultural institutions—including schools, libraries, and museums—the Youth Poet Laureate brings poetry into public spaces, classrooms, and civic conversations where it is not always found.

Through public readings, workshops, and special projects, the program supports young poets to use their creative voices to reflect and shape the city around them. The BYPL program celebrates poetry as a powerful tool for expression, connection, and civic engagement in young people's lives.

"Ailin wears her heritage as a badge of honor and it shines

through her writing," said Emmanuel Oppong-Yeboah, Boston Poet Laureate. "As a proud Asian American immigrant, Ailin writes to celebrate all the aspects of her layered identity—her poetry is moving, lyric, and insightful. I'm proud to support her as she steps into an influential role. She will be a phenomenal youth poet laureate for our city!"

Sha, 18, grew up in Beijing, China, and came to the U.S. when she was 11 years old. She lives in Fenway and graduated from Boston Latin School. She is currently a freshman at Harvard University, where she is studying English and Economics with a minor in Film. Sha is an accomplished writer whose honors include being named the 2024 Massachusetts State Champion of the Poetry Out Loud competition, as well as receiving State Gold Keys and a National Silver Medal from the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

In addition to her work as a poet, Sha is a skilled musician and deeply involved in her local community. For seven years, she played the violin with the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras, performed in her high school orchestra, and spearheaded monthly performances at Mount Pleasant Home in Jamaica Plain for senior residents—experiences that strengthened her belief in the power of art to connect people across generations and backgrounds.

Sha's commitment to civic engagement includes two years as an ambassador for the Mayor's Youth Council and for A-VOYCE (Asian Voices of Youth for Community Empowerment at the Asian Community Development Corporation), where she worked alongside res-

idents to preserve and celebrate community stories. She also interned at the Roxbury Defenders branch of the Committee for Public Counsel Services, fielding calls from incarcerated clients seeking legal assistance.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AILIN SHA

Ailin Sha

Inspired by her experience teaching English poetry to students at her former primary school in Beijing, China, and through the SPARK public service program at Harvard, Sha wants to continue helping young people in Boston discover joy in expressing themselves through poetry. Her goal is to make poetry a more present art form in Boston, using it to build connections across generations, neighborhoods, and identities.

She envisions launching a Youth Poetry Workshop Series at the Boston Public Library—monthly gatherings where young writers can explore poetry as a means of self-expression, con-

nection, and bringing awareness to issues they care about. Sha is also excited to develop a Poetry Pen Pal Project connecting students across Boston Public Schools, inviting young people from different schools, neighborhoods, and backgrounds to exchange original poems inspired by shared prompts, fostering creativity, empathy, and friendships across the city.

Applications for the role were reviewed by a Selection Panel consisting of a distinguished group of local literary professionals. The Selection Panel evaluated all entries and held interviews with the final candidates.

"Ailin's poems move like light through uncertainty, carrying questions of home, language, and belonging," said Angela Veizaga, Chief of Youth & Family Engagement at the Boston Public Library and member of the selection panel. "Writing as a young Chinese immigrant, she gives voice to identity at a moment when it is being publicly tested, meeting that pressure not with fear, but with clarity and quiet bravery. Her work reminds us how poetry can hold truth when the world feels unsteady."

Sha will be Boston's fourth Youth Poet Laureate, following Parker-Vincent Alva (2024-2025), Anjalequa Birkett (2022-2023), and Alondra Bobadilla (2020-2021).

The announcement was made during the Boston Youth Poet Showcase on Saturday, January 31, 2026 at the Central Branch of the Boston Public Library. In addition to naming the laureate, the event celebrated the achievements of the other five talented finalists:

- Rajika Rex Bajgain, 18, Jamaica Plain, student at Boston University, graduate of Boston Latin School
- Ella Doubek, 13, Roslindale, student at Boston Arts Academy.
- Zakea Lowe, 17, Mattapan, student at Boston Latin School
- Aminata Mboum, 13, Mattapan, student at Boston Latin School
- Alisa Paley, 15, Hyde Park, student at Lincoln Sudbury Regional High School

To learn more about the Boston Youth Poet Laureate program, visit boston.gov/youth-poet. Sha is available for readings, workshops, and civic events. For more information, please contact Thomas Johnston, thomas.johnston@boston.gov.

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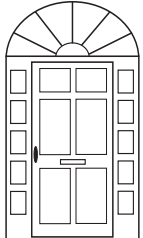


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Rentals

Gibson House Museum to offer all-ages 'Victorian Valentines' event on Feb. 7

By Sun Staff

Just ahead of Valentine's Day, the Gibson House Museum, located at 137 Beacon St. in the Back Bay, will be celebrating the occasion with a special all-ages event, 'Victorian Valentines' on Saturday, Feb. 7, from 1-4 p.m.

"Centered around the lacy and elaborate Valentine's Day cards of the Victorian era, with supplies provided so that visitors may craft their own," the event will also highlight some of the Gibson House's own love stories, as well as feature a mini-exhibition of romantic cards from the museum's collection, said Alyx Colleran, the museum's programming fellow.

Guests will be treated to light refreshments, including tea and sweets, along with a Gibson House valentine, including a rec-

ipe to try at home.

General admission to this event is \$25 per person while members are admitted for \$22 each, and children 12 and under are admitted for \$10 each.

Also, the Gibson House Museum will offer 'Elements of Victorian Mourning with Etiquette' on Saturday, Feb. 21, from 4-6 p.m.

Robert B. Dimmick, etiquetteer, will then look at mourning customs of the 19th century, including its jewelry, fashion, correspondence, censure, and kindness.

Grieving in the Victorian era involved many rules, spoken and unspoken, on how survivors behaved in public, what they wore, and how they communicated. This fashion for prolonged grief was inspired by

Queen Victoria, who remained in deep mourning for her husband Prince Albert after his death in 1861.

The lecture will feature a selection of mourning garments, courtesy of the William Hickling Prescott House and The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (NSC-DA-MA).

General admission to this event is \$25 per person while members are admitted for \$22 each.

Both of these programs are supported in part by a grant from the Boston Cultural Council, administered by the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture.

Space for both events is limited so purchase tickets in advance at: <https://www.thegibsonhouse.org>.



D. MURPHY

The Gibson House Museum.

311 REPORTS (from Page 3)

Response Team, a specialized unit that works to end substance use and address quality-of-life issues, said a BPD unit has been working closely with them to support addiction recovery and ensure timely access to care at on-site locations.

Young said that the collaboration between CRT and the BPD Neighborhood Engagement Safety Team has been a catalyst for positive change on the city's streets.

"The officers that we work with are really invested in the betterment of our community and understand the diversion process," Young said.

Young introduced a specialty court model designed to rehabilitate defendants by addressing underlying issues such as mental health and addiction. Young's model suggests the use of pre-arraignment diversion, probation, and parole to treat arrest or detention as a critical intervention point for individuals with

substance use disorder—prioritizing treatment access, housing stabilization, and long-term support over incarceration, emphasizing its initiative for community betterment.

"There's always a choice," Young said. "They can face their charges and do their time, but we would prefer for them to get the help that they need."

State Senator Nick Collins, a Democrat whose district includes the South End, joined the Zoom meeting to discuss the ongoing dispute over property taxes. On January 15, the Massachusetts Senate rejected a proposal pushed by Boston Mayor Michelle Wu that would have allowed the city to temporarily shift property tax burdens from businesses to residents.

"Compromise is on the way here. We have the ability to lower people's tax bills, the ability to utilize surplus funds, and manage the burden," said Collins.

Eowyn Michaels is a student in the Boston University Journalism program. This story is a partnership between The Boston Sun and the Boston University Journalism program.

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NEWSPAPER



Gov. Healey takes action to keep ICE out of schools, hospitals, courthouses, and places of worship

Files legislation to protect Mass. residents from ICE abuses

Special to the Sun

Gov. Maura Healey today took action to protect the people of Massachusetts from abuses by President Donald Trump and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. She filed legislation to keep ICE out of courthouses, schools, child care programs, hospitals and churches; make it unlawful for another state to deploy its National Guard in Massachusetts without the Governor's permission; and allow parents to pre-arrange guardianship for their children in case they are detained or deported. This is the most comprehensive effort in the country to protect against ICE activity in sensitive locations.

Governor Healey also signed an Executive Order prohibiting the state from entering into any new 287(g) agreements unless there is a public safety need, prohibiting ICE from making

civil arrests in non-public areas of state facilities, and prohibiting the use of state property for immigration enforcement staging.

"In Massachusetts and across the country, we continue to see unlawful and unconstitutional actions by ICE that are meant to intimidate and instill fear in our communities, including against United States citizens who are exercising their constitutional rights," said Governor Healey. "This puts people at risk and in harm's way, and I find it necessary in the interest of public safety to take this action today."

For decades, the Department of Homeland Security maintained a "protected areas" policy requiring ICE to refrain from immigration enforcement actions in sensitive locations, including hospitals, houses of worship, courts, and school programs. This policy allowed all community members to access basic support and services without fear, and protected public safety by encouraging all people to seek necessary medical

care and testify in court when necessary, whether as a victim, witness, or party. On January 20, 2025, the Trump Administration rescinded the protected areas policy, replacing it with a directive giving ICE agents unbridled power to take enforcement actions in medical facilities, houses of worship, courts, schools and child care programs. Governor Healey's legislation would restore the longstanding protections against arrests by ICE agents in these essential spaces where families, children, and vulnerable people should feel safe.

Courthouses

ICE's presence at courthouses creates confusion and chaos and is deterring witnesses, victims and litigants from coming to court. It has resulted in the dismissal of charges and release of defendants. Governor Healey's legislation would ban warrantless civil arrests by ICE agents inside of courthouses to protect access to justice and ensure that anyone who walks through the courthouse doors to seek relief, protection, or to defend themselves should feel safe doing so.

Schools and Child Care Programs

School enrollment has declined dramatically, particularly in districts with high populations of immigrant students, across the state this school year, with record declines of over 5 percent in Chelsea and Everett. The Trump Administration's decision to revoke the protected areas policy has allowed ICE agents to target schools and child care programs. As a result, some families have been fearful of sending their children to school or participating in sports or school events, like graduation ceremonies. In addition, with national reporting of child care workers being followed into child care programs and detained by ICE, parents are increasingly reluctant to use necessary child care services so that they can go to work and continue to provide for their families.

Governor Healey's legislation would prohibit elementary, middle and high schools, as well as licensed child care programs and after school programs, from

allowing an ICE or immigration agent to enter the premises without a judicial warrant. Schools, child care programs, and after school programs will also be required to adopt and implement their own policies on how to interact with or respond to requests from ICE agents, in line with guidance issued by the Healey-Driscoll Administration and Attorney General Andrea Campbell.

Hospitals and Medical Facilities

Health care providers have been reporting that more immigrant families are skipping medical appointments, delaying care or canceling their health insurance because they fear being detained by ICE. Hospitals also used to fall under the protected areas policy until it was revoked by President Trump. Governor Healey's legislation would prohibit hospitals, community health centers, nursing homes, and substance use disorder programs from granting ICE access to nonpublic areas without a judicial warrant. These facilities will also be required to issue policies on how their staff and volunteers should interact with or respond to requests from ICE. In Massachusetts, no one should have to hesitate to seek essential or life-saving medical treatment because they fear detention, deportation or being separated from their families.

Churches and Houses of Worship

The Trump Administration's cancellation of the protected areas policy has deterred many immigrants from attending religious services, as reported by religious organizations across the country. Governor Healey's legislation would codify a statutory privilege against civil arrest for individuals within places of worship while attending services, protecting the First Amendment right of free exercise of religion.

National Guard

President Trump has been sending National Guard troops from other states into cities like Chicago and Los Angeles against the wishes of state and local officials. These deployments have

drained resources, taken members of the Guard away from their day jobs, and have not made anyone safer. Governor Healey is the Commander of the Massachusetts National Guard, and her legislation would make it unlawful for a military force under the control of another state's Governor to enter Massachusetts without her permission.

Guardianship

Governor Healey's legislation would also allow parents to pre-arrange guardianship for their children in the event that they are detained or deported by ICE, ensuring that their child will be transitioned to a trusted caretaker. Parents will be able to designate an adult to be on standby to automatically assume temporary guardianship of their child, without losing their legal or parental rights.

Other Provisions

Governor Healey filed these provisions in "An Act Making Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2026 to Provide for Supplementing Certain Existing Appropriations and for Responding to Recent Federal Actions." The supplemental budget proposes \$411.3 million in time-sensitive appropriations for deficiencies.

In addition to the supplemental appropriations, the legislation proposes veterans benefits access reforms to ensure eligible veterans are able to obtain state benefits even if they are denied federal benefits, indemnification provisions to protect public employees acting within the scope of their duties in connection with federal investigations, and technical and privacy-related amendments affecting higher education access and student records. The legislation also includes an important time-sensitive proposal that allows for the Joint Hazard Incident Response Team to proactively work together and coordinate for large scale events, such as the World Cup or Tall Ships. Finally, the legislation includes several collective bargaining agreement ratifications.

Executive Order

Governor Healey's Executive Order prohibits any office or

(ICE, Pg. 7)

AFT Massachusetts stands with State House efforts to protect residents from ICE

Special to the Sun

The American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts joined Governor Maura Healey today as she unveiled an Executive Order to protect Massachusetts residents from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers who continue to operate with unchecked authority fulfilling the immigration agenda of the White House.

"Masked ICE agents have been raiding communities across the Commonwealth for months, ignoring the Constitution and our basic human rights. Immigrant families are gripped by fear," said American Federation of Teachers President Jessica Tang. "Children cannot learn if they don't feel safe. These threats take an emotional, psychological, and physical toll on our chil-

dren and their families."

For more than thirty years, schools, hospitals, and places of worship were considered "sensitive locations" – places protected from immigration enforcement. Under the Trump Administration, those places have been stripped of these protections, allowing ICE agents to target residents and families at their most vulnerable.

Today's Executive Order bans ICE agents from entering schools, hospitals, places of worship, local courts, and other state-owned public property to conduct immigration enforcement. ICE would only be permitted in those locations with a judicial warrant.

"Educators are going above and beyond to try to reas-

(AFT, Pg. 7)



Senator Collins votes to improve literacy standards

Special to the Sun

Last week, the Massachusetts Senate passed legislation that supports young learners by ensuring reading instruction is rooted in proven, evidence-based practices.

The bill creates new statewide standards for literacy education and assessment, offers professional development resources for educators, and offers flexible options and supplemental funding for public schools that work to implement evidence-based

curricula.

"Massachusetts' reputation for academic excellence precedes itself, and I am proud of the steps the Senate is taking to support children from the very beginning of their educational journey," said Senator Nick Collins. "We

know early childhood is a critical time for intervention, and with reading proficiency declining in the wake of the pandemic, the time has come to correct course, and this legislation is an important step toward doing just that."

The bill, S.2924, An Act rel-

ative to teacher preparation and student literacy, ensures that every Massachusetts student from kindergarten to 3rd grade learns to read using phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehen-

(LITERACY STANDARDS, Pg. 8)

ICE (from Page 6)

agency in the Executive Department from executing any new agreement under section 287(g) of the federal Immigration and Nationality Act, or any similar agreements, unless there is a specific and certified public safety risk or need.

The Executive Order also prohibits civil arrests by federal immigration officers in non-public areas of state facilities, except when authorized by a judicial warrant or judicial order. Staff will be made aware of this requirement and trained on interacting with federal immigration officers.

The Executive Order also prohibits state facilities, and other property owned or controlled by the Executive Department, from being used by federal immigration officers as a staging area, processing location, or operations base for civil immigration enforcement efforts.

Additionally, the Executive Order directs the Executive

Office of Education and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to support public and private entities in developing policies and guidance on interacting with ICE.

Statements of Support

Attorney General Andrea Campbell:

"ICE's activity across the country is a reckless, dangerous and lawless abuse of power. When militarized federal agents kill people in the streets, detain innocent children, attack protesters with tear gas and pepper spray, and remove law-abiding residents from their loved ones, it does nothing to make our communities safer. Attorneys general are stepping up to hold the federal government accountable, and I am grateful to Governor Healey for today's announcement to further protect Massachusetts residents. I look forward to working with her and others, including legislative lead-

ership and the Black and Latino Legislative Caucus, on related efforts."

Dr. Mary M. Bourque, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents:

"Our students, families, and educators continue to live in terror and trauma because of the cruel and often unlawful acts of federal ICE agents. We are grateful to the Healey-Driscoll Administration for standing up to the Trump Administration, particularly to ensure that parents can send their children to school every day without fear."

Bishop Cristiano Borro Barbosa, Archdiocese of Boston:

"As an immigrant myself and as a bishop ministering here in the Commonwealth, I can affirm that many among the good people we serve are experiencing and living in constant fear and distress. Legal protection for safe

spaces in schools, hospitals and houses of worship are needed as one means of providing locations and institutions to renew the spiritual and physical lives of all of us and our neighbors. All human beings with their God given dignity deserve to feel safe and protected."

Dr. Anne Klibanski, President and CEO, Mass General Brigham:

"Earlier today, Governor Maura Healey introduced legislation intended to limit immigration enforcement activity in hospital and care settings in Massachusetts. At Mass General Brigham, we support efforts that help ensure hospitals remain a place where patients feel safe seeking care, and preserving the integrity and trust of the care setting is essential to our ability to serve our communities."

Suma V. Nair, President, Boston Bar Association:

"Courthouses must be safe spaces for justice. When people are afraid to show up, the system fails. The Governor's proposed courthouse protections are more urgent now than ever in the face of federal agents' disregard of due process, accountability, constitutional limits, and longstanding norms that kept—and should continue to keep—Massachusetts courts, schools, hospitals, and places of worship off limits to immigration enforcement."

Nicole Obi, President and CEO, BECMA:

"Massachusetts' economy depends on the stability, dignity, and full participation of immigrant families, including many who are business owners, workers, caregivers, and essential contributors to our local communities. Governor Healey's actions make clear that public safety, economic vitality, and human rights are not competing priorities, but deeply connected and mutually reinforcing."

AFT (from Page 6)

sure students and families that schools and their surroundings are the safe spaces they are supposed to be," continued Tang, who was present at today's announcement. "But that message rings hollow when parents are detained on the way to dropping their child off at school or when students who are here legally are detained and sent out of state. Children fear when they walk out the door, their family might not be there when they return."

The Governor's Executive Order takes a number of steps to protect students and families from a federal government that continues to operate above the law:

- Establishes a system for "standby guardianship" allowing parents to designate an alternative guardian that will spring into effect for 30 days in

the event they are detained or deported;

- Directs the state to work with public and private schools, child care providers, medical providers, and shelters to make sure that they know their rights and have policies in place for interacting with ICE and knowing how to ask for warrants; and

- Bans state agencies from entering voluntary agreements with federal immigration enforcement.

"What we saw on the ground in Minnesota was inhumane and un-American. No one should be afraid to drop their child off at school or go to the hospital or get essentials at the grocery store because they're worried about being targeted for the color of their skin," continued Tang. "We must use every tool at our disposal to safeguard our communities against a federal

government that is making our streets more dangerous and dismantling our very democracy. The Governor's action today is a crucial step in that work. We remain committed to working with the Governor, Legislature, and critical allies to build upon today's steps and ensure we're doing everything we can at the state and local level to protect our students and communities."

The AFT Massachusetts represents educators and public school employees working in many of the state's Gateway Cities. These districts, including Boston, Lynn, Lawrence, and Chelsea, are seeing significant enrollment drops due to the current immigration climate. Not only do these communities stand to lose generations of students, they face devastating shortfalls in funding due to enrollment declines.

To prevent these catastrophic shortfalls, the AFT Massachusetts is calling on the state to intervene, like it did during the COVID-19 pandemic, and support districts facing enrollment disruptions.

The Fiscal Year 2022 budget included one-time assistance grants for districts facing "pandemic-related disruptions in their enrollment." Nearly \$15 million was provided to 128 districts across the state to help stabilize school budgets during this unprecedented time.

"These communities, which serve disproportionate numbers of immigrant and high-needs students, are already being hit hard by skyrocketing costs while being a frequent target of the White House's agenda to dismantle public education as we know it," continued Tang. "The enrollment crisis will bring

these districts to the point of no return. We urge the state to take action to ensure all students of the Commonwealth have access to the quality public education and safe schools they deserve."

The AFT Massachusetts, a strong voice for collaborative education reform that is good for students and fair to educators, represents over 25,000 educators and staff working in public schools, universities, libraries, and health offices across the state.

AFT MA's budget priorities for Fiscal Year 2027 are outlined in their recent letter to Governor Healey. It includes a call for the state to use funding from the Fair Share Amendment to provide additional support to districts facing enrollment disruptions, similar to grant funding they provided during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Six manhole fires in Back Bay prompt street closures and evacuations

By Sun staff

Six reported manhole fires in the Back Bay on Tuesday night, Feb. 3, resulted in street closures and evacuations in the area, according to published reports.

The first call for a manhole fire reportedly came at 5:21 p.m., at the intersection of Dartmouth and Newbury streets.

Four buildings were eventu-

ally evacuated as a precaution, while Boston Police temporarily closed Newbury Street between Exeter Street and Clarendon Street, as well as both Dartmouth and Exeter streets from Boylston Street to Commonwealth Avenue.

No injuries were reported, and the matter remains under investigation.

LITERACY STANDARDS (from Page 7)

sion, and phonemic awareness—practices that data show as the best building blocks for lifetime learning.

To support school districts and educators with implementation, the legislation would create a new Early Literacy Fund seeded with \$25 million in 'Fair Share' funding to help districts with costs and support educators' professional development. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) would also make additional professional development resources available.

Schools would have three DESE-approved options to implement the new curriculum requirement: utilize a complete curriculum that is made available

for free by DESE; use a curriculum from a list that meets evidence-based criteria; or receive a waiver authorizing the use of another curriculum that meets the same standards but had not been previously reviewed and approved by DESE.

The legislation makes sure parents and schools engage in constructive communication about student progress. It requires twice-yearly assessments to gauge every young learner's reading progress and to screen for dyslexia, and requires schools to contact a parent or guardian within 30 days if a student has fallen significantly behind and propose a response if that is the case.

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

"Dogs laugh, but they laugh with their tails," said Max Eastman in his book *Enjoyment of Laughter*. Anyone who has ever watched a dog at play would have to agree. Dogs use tails to express all manner of mood.

Social Signals

A tail can say many things, and to understand what the dog is communicating, you have to look at more than the wag. The position of the tail, the speed of the wag, and the signals coming from elsewhere on the dog are all important.

There are a few tail actions that humans can understand. A tail held high and still, or with stiff, small wags, is a sign of a dog on alert and perhaps even threatening. A tail tucked between the legs can be a sign of a fearful and/or submissive dog. Low, slow wags signal a dog questioning and unsure.

A dog feeling relaxed and secure holds its tail in its most natural position. Add a dose of happiness to that, and you see a gentle wag. The return of a favorite person could bring on a mighty circular wag.

There are exceptions to these rules. For some breeds, like Grey-

hounds, a tail tucked between the legs is the natural position. A shepherd will know that a herding dog, like a Border Collie, is concentrating on the job when the tail is tucked between the legs. In this instance, a wagging tail means the dog is goofing off.

On The Job

Tail shape and size have evolved to fit each breed of dog. A precise tail description is part of most breed standards in the show dog world. The fine print will describe the size, thickness, color, curl, feathering, and how the dog carries it in minute detail.

Frequently, a dog's tail has evolved to fit its intended work. Beagles and other hunting dogs often have white tips on their tails and carry them high over their backs so hunters can spot them easily in tall grass.

Dogs that hunt underground, such as Dachshunds and Terriers, have been bred to have tails that a person can use to haul them out of burrows if they get stuck. Sled dogs, like the Siberian Husky, have long, curved, furry tails to keep them warm when they curl up in the snow.

Some dogs are also said to use their tails as a counterbalance when running. Water dogs can use their tails as rudders when

swimming.

Other Tales a Tail Can Tell

A dog's tail can also alert you to a medical problem. Anytime you see your dog's tail carried in an unusual position, you should do a bit of checking. It can signal something simple (like an itchy hot spot on the skin) or a more serious condition.

In his book, "What's Wrong with My Dog?" Boston resident Jake Tedaldi, D.V.M., writes about tucked tails. "It can be a sign that a dog is experiencing pain or discomfort of some sort." Since it can also be a sign of fear, he suggests that you should first do what you can to make your dog comfortable and relaxed. If the tail is still tucked, look carefully for other signs of pain or injury in the spine, anal region, or abdomen. A visit to the vet may be in order.

On your next walk, check out the puppy tails around town. See how many types, shapes, and uses you can observe and brush up on your "tell-tail" language skills.

Do you have a question or topic for City Paws? Send an email to Penny@BostonZest.com with your request.

OBITUARIES

All obituaries and death notices will be at a cost of \$195.00 per paper.

Includes photo.No word Limit.

Please send to

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or call 781-485-0588



Beagles have white tips on their tails and carry them high over their backs so hunters can spot them easily in tall grass.



Annual tax prep services available for residents

Mayor Michelle Wu today announced that the Boston Tax Help Coalition (BTHC) has launched the 2026 tax season, offering free tax preparation for residents who earn \$70,000 per year or less. Eligible residents can file safely while maximizing their refunds and credits at one of 35 tax help sites across Boston. The service is offered remotely and in-person, and interpretation is available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, Portuguese, French, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, and American Sign Language (ASL). “In Boston, we are proud to work together with our partners to create economic stability and pathways to financial empowerment for our residents,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “With these free, multilingual tax assistance services, residents can keep

more of what they earn, access trusted financial resources, and stay rooted in our neighborhoods. I encourage all who qualify to participate and take advantage of this valuable resource.” Led by the Worker Empowerment Cabinet, the Boston Tax Help Coalition (BTHC) aims to expand pathways out of poverty and toward financial empowerment. The free tax preparation service helps low- to moderate-income residents keep more of their earned income by eliminating predatory, for-profit tax preparation fees. Given that BTHC clients have an average income of \$30,000, this service can provide a substantial financial boost for these households. Last year, the BTHC completed over 11,500 tax returns, putting over \$22 million in tax credits

(TAX PREP SERVICES, Pg. 10)

DCR announces series of events and programming to celebrate Black History Month

Special to the Sun

To celebrate Black History Month, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is hosting free interactive events at Roxbury Heritage State Park and Fall River Heritage State Park. The series will provide opportunities for visitors to explore the history of Massachusetts’ Black community this February. Programming will include artistic exhibitions, conversations with local leaders and historians and a variety of activities for participants of all ages. “Throughout February, we are inviting visitors to join us at two heritage DCR properties to learn about the Black community’s role in Massachusetts’ history. Black History Month is a time to celebrate and reflect,” said DCR Commissioner Nicole LaChapelle. “Our goal is to provide a space where visitors can have a meaningful experience covering not just the triumphs and hardships of the past, but the realities of the present and the possibilities of the future.”

Among DCR’s upcoming Black History Month offerings is Community Conversations, a new series of lectures and discussions examining various chapters of Boston’s history, starting Feb. 1 with a screening of the documentary Redline Narratives: The Lost Cultural Hubs of Boston. Following the screening, DCR will hold a community discussion with the film’s producer and the founder of Boston’s Afrimerican Culture Initiative, Marlon Solomon. This event and the other series offerings are being held at Roxbury Heritage State Park’s Dillaway-Thomas House, one of the oldest buildings in Roxbury and the headquarters of the Continental Army in 1775 during the Siege of Boston. The Community Conversations also includes the following programming:

- Feb. 8: Conversation on the history of local Black-owned businesses with Marie Firmin, creator of the Roxbury Black Wall Street Historical Project.
- Feb. 15: Historical discussion on the roles Roxbury and the Black community played in

the American Revolution.

- Feb. 22: Celebration of the Juneteenth Flag’s origins in Massachusetts.
- Feb. 28: Unity in the Community. An event bringing together community leaders, and featuring music, activities and resource booths.


Coinciding with Community Conversations, staff at Fall River Heritage State Park are hosting the following programming:

- Feb. 13: Lunch and Learn, where visitors can bring their own lunch and hear from park staff about the role Fall River and New Bedford residents played in the Underground Railroad
- Feb. 18: Kwanzaa-themed sewing workshop, where visitors can learn sewing and embroidery techniques while creating a specially designed table runner
- Feb. 21: Presentation on the American Revolution’s 1st Rhode Island Regiment and its primarily Black and Indigenous soldiers
- Daily: Exhibit on South Coast abolitionist Lewis Hayden

(BLACK HISTORY MONTH, Pg. 13)

BACK BAY ARCHITECTURAL COMMISSION

The Back Bay Architectural Commission will hold its next monthly public hearing virtually on Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. This hearing will only be held virtually and NOT in person. You can participate in this hearing by going to our Zoom Meeting or calling 646-828-7666 and entering meeting id # 160 782 8073. You can also submit written comments or questions to BackBayAC@boston.gov.



- Public testimony begins at 4:30pm
- Discussion Topics
- Violations Committee - 4:30pm

- VIO.26.1016 72 Commonwealth Avenue:
 - Violation: Unapproved masonry repairs at front facade. (CONTINUED FROM 1-14-2026 HEARING)
 - VIO.26.1014 345 Beacon Street:
 - Violation: Unapproved masonry work at front facade, and unapproved removal of tree and landscape work at front garden. (CONTINUED FROM 1-14-2026 HEARING)
 - Design Review - 5:00pm
 - Ratification of 1-14-2026 Public Hearing Minutes
- APP # 26.0546 BB 157 NEWBURY STREET:
 - Proposed Work: At front facade of existing headhouse reconfigure and replace windows and doors.
- APP # 26.0537 BB 511 BEACON STREET:
 - Proposed Work: At rear elevation replace existing casement

windows with two double-hung windows.

APP # 26.0512 BB 192 MARLBOROUGH STREET:

- Proposed Work: At roof install deck, headhouse and mechanical equipment. WITHDRAWN BY APPLICANT

APP # 26.0612 BB 392 MARLBOROUGH STREET:

- Applicant: Allison Goldman
- Proposed Work: At roof remove existing access hatch and install headhouse with skylight.

Administrative Review/Approval

APP # 26.0613 BB 190 BEACON STREET: Repair masonry, repair and repaint ironwork, replace light fixtures, and replace 23 non-historic windows with historically appropriate wood windows.

APP # 26.0575 BB 352 BEACON STREET: At rear addition

replace existing decks, stairs and railings in-kind.

APP # 26.0605 BB 180 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE: At front facade replace four sixth floor six-over-nine non-historic wood windows in-kind, and at rear elevation replace three sixth floor one-over-one non-historic wood windows in-kind.

APP # 26.0611 BB 255 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE: Repoint and repair masonry, repair entry steps, repaint wood elements and metalwork, and replace roof slate, copper flashing and copper gutters in-kind.

APP # 26.0607 BB 103 MARLBOROUGH STREET: At front facade replace two second floor one-over-one non-historic wood windows, and two two-over-two non-historic wood windows in-kind.

APP # 26.0533 BB 350

MARLBOROUGH STREET: At roof remove roof deck and replace rubber membrane roof.

APP # 26.0595 BB 445 MARLBOROUGH STREET: At rear elevation replace two windows and two doors with historically appropriate wood windows and doors.

APP # 26.0602 BB 201 NEWBURY STREET: At front facade replace existing wall sign.

APP # 26.0560 BB 227 NEWBURY STREET: At front facade install awning at lower level retail space.

APP # 26.0493 BB 279A NEWBURY STREET: At front facade install a temporary vestibule enclosure at lower level commercial space.

Staff Updates

Projected Adjournment - 6:30pm

TAX PREP SERVICES *(from Page 9)*

and refunds back in the pockets of Boston families and saving them approximately \$2 million in filing fees.

“This launch is about making sure every Boston resident knows that free, high-quality tax preparation is available in their neighborhood and in their language,” said Trinh Nguyen, Chief of the Worker Empowerment Cabinet. “The City is putting critical dollars back in the pockets of working families and supporting long-term financial stability. Thank you to the volunteers who are stepping up to serve residents. Their commitment, and that of our community and government partners, is what makes this work possible and ensures Boston’s workers and families can access the benefits they’ve earned.”

To provide this service, the BTHC relies on the dedication of its IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers each year. More than 500 volunteers—over 100 more than last year—will be serving residents this tax season. Of particular benefit, the preparers assess taxpayers’ eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a credit for low- and middle-income workers. The BTHC generated \$7.9 million in EITC credits for residents in 2025. The EITC has played a crucial role in helping millions of workers out of poverty. Yet, according to the Internal Revenue Service, an estimated one in five EITC-eligible workers fail to claim this valuable credit each year.

“The story of poverty is in large part the story of low wages,” said Joe Diamond, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association for Community Action. “Our tax sites support thousands of working people across the state to become economically stable and mobile by helping them access state and federal tax credits, including the Earned Income Tax Credit. Depending on family size and income, taxpayers can realize over \$10,000 to spend locally, to pay bills, address debt, cover necessities, and save. We are honored to join with the Boston Tax Help Coalition to urge taxpayers to visit a tax site and work with the certified volunteer tax preparers to file a return for free.”

The BTHC relies on over 25 dedicated partners to help provide tax services each year, including the Massachusetts Association for Community Action, Action for Boston Community Development, the Massachusetts Depart-

ment of Revenue, and banking partners Santander, Citizens, and Harbor One. Of note, the BTHC is continuing its partnership with the Massachusetts Commission of the Blind and DEAF, Inc. to provide dedicated service days to visually- and hearing-impaired residents. Through this partnership, the BTHC served over 188 taxpayers with disabilities in 2025. Learn more information at boston.gov/disability-tax-help.

“MCB is proud to partner with the Boston Tax Help Coalition and its Disability Working Group to ensure that people who are blind or visually impaired have access to safe, accurate, and accessible tax preparation,” said John Oliveira, Deputy Commissioner at Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. “This work goes beyond simply filing taxes—it’s about protecting our community from predatory practices, maximizing eligible benefits, and promoting financial independence. The success of this program last year has demonstrated the power of trust, collaboration, and disability-informed services. With our new location at the Copley Branch of the Boston Public Library, and continued partnership with BTHC and the City of Boston, we are committed to expanding these services, reinforcing inclusion, and supporting the financial empowerment of every member of the Blind and Low-Vision community.”

In addition to tax preparation, the BTHC connects residents to free, comprehensive financial and asset-building services to promote economic growth. This year, six tax sites, Dot House, Codman Square Health Center, Urban Edge, BHA-Charlestown WORKS, Community Economic Development Center, and the Center for Working Families, will offer clients a Financial Check-Up (FCU). The FCU is a free, optional credit advising session with a trained Financial Guide who will help residents understand their financial situation, create a personalized one-year plan to improve their credit, and provide relevant service referrals. Taxpayers who participated in the FCU improved their FICO scores by an average of 15.5 points in less than one year. The BTHC provided credit advising and financial education to 1,135 tax clients in 2024.

Learn more about the Boston Tax Help Coalition’s free tax services, including the 2026 tax sites at boston.gov/tax-help.

City Licensing Board approves first five liquor license upgrades

Special to the Sun

The Boston Licensing Board has approved five applications from beer and wine licensees upgrading to non-transferable all alcoholic beverages licenses. The businesses—89 Charles, Bebop, Carmelina’s, New England Wicked Craft Company, and Serafina—are the first five businesses in Massachusetts to take advantage of this legislation, which was included in the Fiscal Year 2026 Massachusetts State Budget. The Licensing Board will send the five applications to the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission for investigation and final approval.

“This first batch of upgraded liquor licenses will strengthen our neighborhoods, expand opportunities for business owners and bolster the vibrancy of our communities,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “I’m thankful to our state legislators who made this possible and encourage local businesses across our neighborhoods to take advantage of this upgrade and apply for an available liquor license. We look forward to celebrating the success of these restaurants and community spaces as they continue to grow and thrive.”

As part of the Fiscal Year 2026 Massachusetts State Budget, the State Legislature gave municipalities across Massachusetts the opportunity to opt into legislation that allows licensees permitted to sell only wines and malt beverages to trade in their license for a non-transferable all alcoholic beverages license.

“I am thrilled to see these recipients take advantage of this meaningful program that will allow them to grow their businesses responsibly. Allowing businesses to upgrade liquor licenses while still respecting the neighborhood process will lead to great opportunities for restaurants and bars all across the City,” said State Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair of the House Committee on Ways & Means (D-Boston). “I want to thank the Mayor for her continued support of this initiative and her unwavering commitment to the economic growth of the City.”

“Congratulations to District 1’s very own New England Wicked Craft and Carmelina’s, along with the other initial recipients of the City of Boston’s liquor license upgrades. This is a major win for

our local economy and for restaurant owners who have long faced barriers to operating and growing their businesses,” said City Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata. “With liquor licenses costing upwards of \$600,000, access to an upgrade is critical to helping small businesses increase profit margins and compete in an increasingly challenging industry.”

Mayor Michelle Wu introduced this legislation to the City Council and on September 20, the City Council approved the adoption of this legislation. On October 21, the Boston Licensing Board held an informational hearing to receive public feedback from licensees and opened a public comment period, which closed on December 3. On January 8, the Board voted on the final regulations. The guidelines include eliminating the need for a community process for anyone who has already completed the process in the past two years.

“Just weeks after finalizing the regulations, we are thrilled to approve the first five beer and wine upgrades,” said Kathleen Joyce, Chair of the Boston Licensing Board. “Business owners have been enthusiastic about this opportunity, and it’s clear from the number of applications that there is a need for these upgrades. We look forward to approving additional applications and are here to help throughout the process.”

The beer and wine upgrades, alongside the 2024 influx of new liquor licenses, enhance the City’s ability to support diverse local entrepreneurs and boost economic growth.

After Mayor Wu and the Boston City Council filed a successful Home Rule Petition, Governor Maura Healey signed legislation on September 11, 2024, bringing 225 new liquor licenses to Boston. This new batch is the single largest addition to Boston’s liquor license quota since the end of Prohibition. With this influx, the City has the ability to support diverse local entrepreneurs and boost economic growth. Specifically, the legislation created:

- 195 zip code-restricted licenses (both all alcohol and beer and wine) in Charlestown, Dorchester, East Boston, Hyde Park, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Roslindale, Roxbury, South End, and West Roxbury, to be granted to the City

over three calendar years

- 15 all alcohol licenses for community spaces, including non-profits, small theaters, and outdoor spaces

- 12 transferable all alcohol licenses

- 3 all alcohol neighborhood restricted licenses in Oak Square, Brighton

On December 18, the City of Boston Licensing Board approved the first three transferable all alcohol licenses. The Board approved applications from Ama, the new restaurant in Allston from Comfort Kitchen’s Pearl & Law Hospitality Group; Leather District coffeshop Gracenote; and Merengue Express in Mission Hill.

In total, the Board has approved over 60 liquor license applications. In early 2025, the Licensing Board approved 37 new liquor licenses. During the summer, the Licensing Board approved 21 neighborhood restricted licenses and three community space licenses. This fall, the Board approved four neighborhood restricted licenses.

The Board will vote on additional applications for both new liquor licenses and beer and wine upgrades in the coming weeks. Potential applicants—both for new licenses and those interested in upgrading beer and wine licenses—are encouraged to start the process as soon as possible. The Mayor’s Office of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, the Office of Neighborhood Services, and Office of Small Business staff will continue to support potential applicants. The City of Boston Licensing Board hosts virtual office hours addressing the liquor license application process. Applicants can also make a drop-in appointment with the Boston Licensing Board at City Hall, Room 809 by contacting 617-635-4170 or emailing licensingboard@boston.gov.

When reviewing additional applications, the Board will continue to factor in evolving neighborhood needs, market realities, the strength and sustainability of an establishment’s business plan, and the applicant’s ability to further economic growth for surrounding businesses.

Learn more about applying for a liquor license or upgrading an existing license on the Licensing Board website.

BHS WINTER 2026 SEMESTER KICKOFF



Beacon Hill Seminars members enjoying a reception during the Winter 2026 Semester kickoff on January 14 at Church of the Advent.

Photos by Marianne Salza

Beacon Hill Seminars (BHS), an independent, member-supported organization dedicated to intellectual engagement, held its Winter 2026 Semester kickoff on January 14 at the Church of the Advent to introduce the 25 courses offered in subjects from biomedical science research, to President Trump’s economy, and postapocalyptic science fic-

tion. Founded in 2000, BHS is dedicated to lifelong learning, providing stimulating off-site visits, discussions, and lectures that take place in historic venues around Beacon Hill and Back Bay, as well as virtually through Zoom. For more information visit www.BeaconHillSeminars.org, call (617) 523-0970, or email info@BeaconHillSeminars.org.



Liz Goodfellow, Dave Driscoll, and Cheryl Miller, former BHS executive director for 12 years.



Cheryl Miller speaking with Brad Conner at the seminar.



Susan McWhinney-Morse, Beth Sanders, instructor of course, “From Illustrations to Icon: Winslow Homer’s Artistic Journey,” and Carol Ann Hayes.



Barry Ripley, Katherine Kimball, and Bart Menitove.



Paul Weissman, instructor of course, “White-Collar Prosecutions: How far is too far?” and Alice Levine.



Tony Merzlak, instructor of course, “The Real Frankenstein,” Nat Butler, Robert Manning, instructor for course, “The Odyssey: 7-12,” and Charlie Schuerhoff.



Renate Heuser being served a non-alcoholic IPA from Stephen Sanders.

Mayor Wu announces City's Black History Month programming

Special to the Sun

Mayor Michelle Wu and the City of Boston's Equity & Inclusion Cabinet today announced a series of programs to mark the start of the 100th anniversary of Black History Month. This year's national theme, "A Century of Black History Commemorations," invites residents to honor a century of collective remembrance while examining how Black history observances have shaped identity, fueled movements for justice, and continue to inform how Black communities define their past, present, and future. Mayor Wu, local elected officials and residents kicked off Black History Month yesterday with the City's annual

Black History Month celebration and flag raising.

"The deep impact of Boston's Black communities is woven into the fabric of our city and we honor these contributions during Black History Month and throughout the year," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "I'm thrilled to announce this year's Black History Month programming, where residents, families and visitors can engage in a range of activities that educate and inspire."

"As we commemorate the 100th anniversary of Black History Month, we honor a century of Black history, achievement, and contribution that has shaped our city and our nation," said Chief of Equity & Inclusion

Mariangely Solis Cervera. "This milestone invites us to reflect on the power of remembrance and to recommit to building a future rooted in dignity, opportunity, and belonging for all."

"In this centennial year of Black History Month, we are reaffirming that Black history is not peripheral to Boston's story, it is central to our identity, our values, and our future," said Lori Nelson, Senior Advisor on Racial Justice.

In observance of Black History Month, Boston Public Library (BPL) is releasing Black Is..., a booklist featuring recently published titles that celebrate the achievements, complexities, struggles, and culture of the Black experience. Additionally the BPL

will be hosting special events for all ages at various branches. More information about the booklist and BPL events can be found online at <https://www.bpl.org/news/boston-public-library-celebrates-black-history-month-3/>.

For all programming hosted by the City of Boston, please visit <https://www.boston.gov/departments/mayors-office/black-history-month>.

City of Boston Black History Month Celebration and Flag Raising Program

Tuesday, February 3, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

This event featured remarks from Mayor Michelle Wu, poetry from Amanda Shea and a cer-

emonial flag raising.

Location: Boston City Hall - Third Floor Mezzanine, 1 City Hall Square, Downtown

BCYF Black History Annual Skate Night

Thursday, February 19, 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Location: Chez Vous, 11 Rhoades St., Dorchester, MA 02124

Boston youths, ages 17 and under, can skate with friends and families from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Chez Vous Skating Rink in Dorchester.

Black Veterans Appreciation Luncheon

Saturday, February 21, 11:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Location: Hibernian Hall, 184 Dudley St, Boston, MA 02119

This event, hosted by the Mayor's Office of Veteran Affairs, will celebrate and honor the contributions and sacrifices of Black veterans in helping to create and add to the United States' legacy. The City will also be honoring deserving veterans with Community and Outstanding Service awards.

Finding Acceptance as LGBTQIA2S+ in the Black Church

Thursday, February 26, 6:00 - 7:45 p.m.

Location: Bruce Bolling Building, 6th Floor, Boston, MA 02119

This in-person event brings together affirming Black pastors and community partners to explore the intersection of Black identity, queerness, and spirituality, uplifting inclusive faith spaces and fostering connection and belonging within Boston's Black LGBTQIA2S+ community.



MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY JEREMIAH ROBINSON

Mayor Michelle Wu joined local leaders and residents for the annual Black History Month Celebration Kickoff at Boston City Hall.

BAY VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

The Bay Village Historic District Commission will hold its next monthly public hearing virtually on Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 4 p.m.

This hearing will only be held virtually and NOT in person. You can participate in this hear-

ing by going to our online meeting or calling +1-646-828-7666 and entering meeting id 161 375 9322. You can also submit written comments or questions to bayvillageac@boston.gov.

The public can offer testimony.



Discussion Topics

- RATIFICATION OF 1/13/26 MEETING MINUTES
- DESIGN REVIEW APP # 26.0608 BV 25 ISABELLA STREET: One set of 1/2" thick aluminum letters reading "La Victoire" "Boston",

one 12" x 22" aluminum panel reading "Twenty Five Isabella Street", one set of 6" address numerals reading "25."

• STAFF UPDATES

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BUYER 1	SELLER 1	ADDRESS	PRICE
BACK BAY			
Sullivan, Mark	Cutter, Knut C	175 Commonwealth Ave #A	\$823,500
Dashwood li LLC	Burnett, Elizabeth B	176 Marlborough St #1	\$2,975,000
Ctrl Synagogue Boston Inc	W International LLC	180 Beacon St #1E	\$1,650,000
Campbell Jr, Jon	Afshar, Roshi	193 W Canton St #2	\$759,000
Heymann, Maia D	Knierim, Kevin	228 Commonwealth Ave #9	\$735,000
Osterman, Leah	Richard G Daggenhurst RE	300 Boylston St #907	\$3,200,000
Carbone, Paul	Yang, Liyu	430 Stuart St #25H	\$3,275,000
Schleichkorn, Abigail	Farrer, Zachary J	5 Albemarle St #1	\$740,000
Foley, David	Floyd Jr, Frederick P	57 Warren Ave #3	\$1,685,000

BEACON HILL

Mortimer, Thomas L	Johnston, Martha G	111 Pinckney St #B	\$770,000
Hallemeir, Samuel J	Toomey Boston Nt	1411 Washington St #3	\$730,000
Nguyen, Kim H	230 Washington Street LL	230 Washington St #2	\$888,000
Brooke, Samuel P	230 Washington Street LL	230 Washington St #3	\$1,225,000
Papayan, Nana	230 Washington Street LL	230 Washington St #6	\$835,000
Simons, Stephanie S	Chase, Richard M	3531 Washington St #411	\$750,000
Baker, Charles H	Egan, Michael C	45 Province St #2404	\$3,550,000
Lemay, Sarah	Brodski, Grigori	69 Myrtle St #2	\$1,089,000
9 Hancock 5 LLC	Simon, Michael R	9 Hancock St #5	\$835,000

BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE

Smith, Jackson	Renaissance Invs At 18 M	18 Milford St #2	\$2,710,000
Verity, Robert	Everly 3rd, John D	74 Waltham St #3	\$2,863,000
Kingsley, Edward W	Karp, Victoria R	85 Pembroke St #2	\$2,955,000
Piotrkowski, Stephen J	Michael A Denklaun RET	90 Waltham St #2	\$2,500,000

DOWNTOWN/WATERFRONT

Bohorquez, Jaime	Project 10 Rockland LLC	10 Rockland St #4	\$619,000
Gba Realty LLC	Wang, Qing Z	112 South St #1	\$835,000
Elania Enterprise LLC	Barkley Development LLC	2 Avery St #PH3C	\$8,100,000
Simas Ft	Galipault, Peter	59 Commercial Wharf #1	\$1,235,000

BLACK HISTORY MONTH (from Page 9)

For a full list of programming happening throughout the month of February, visit the DCR programming and events webpage.

Additionally, DCR is inviting families and residents to visit the Melnea A. Cass Recreation Center in Roxbury, where they can view historical interpretive paneling that tells the story of the Center’s namesake and famed Boston civil rights activist, Melnea A. Cass, who was known as the “First Lady of Roxbury.”

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) oversees nearly half a million acres of land, making up one of the largest and most diverse state park systems in the country. Our work

focuses on nurturing the vital connection between people and the environment by protecting, promoting, and enhancing our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the well-being of all. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr or contact us at mass.parks@mass.gov.

Attention to Detail

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY PENNY CHERUBINO
THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The doorway in the last clue is on 488 Columbus Avenue. Today’s answer is from a historic photo showing a youngster on the stairway. City records show this property was built circa 1900 and is now a condominium community.

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.

THIS WEEK'S CLUE



Gov. Healey welcomes delegation from Denmark to strengthen scientific, technological and commercial ties

Special to the Sun

On Tuesday, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey welcomed a delegation from Denmark for a series of meetings focused on strengthening the scientific, technological and commercial ties between Massachusetts and Denmark. During the visit, Governor Healey and Denmark's Ambassador to the U.S. Jesper Møller Sørensen signed an economic partnership agreement, committing to work together to grow their leadership in life sciences, health care, biomanufacturing, advanced manufacturing, robotics and artificial intelligence.

"Massachusetts and Denmark have long enjoyed strong economic ties – especially when it comes to our leadership in cutting edge industries like life sciences and technology," said Governor Healey. "It was great to welcome Ambassador Møller Sørensen and his delegation to the State House today to commit

to strengthening this partnership and express our support for the Danish people."

"Denmark and Massachusetts share a deep commitment to innovation and solutions that improve lives," said Ambassador Sørensen. "By bringing together Denmark's decades of expertise in life sciences and public-private partnership and Massachusetts' world-leading innovation ecosystem, today's agreement translates our shared ambition into a partnership that will benefit both Denmark and Massachusetts."

This agreement formalizes a shared commitment to advance research, foster business cooperation and accelerate the development of cutting-edge technologies. Additionally, the agreement builds on longstanding ties between Massachusetts and Denmark, uniting two globally recognized innovation hubs known for their strengths in life sciences, advanced manufacturing and artificial intelligence.

"Massachusetts and Denmark

are both global science and innovation leaders and this agreement gives us a strong framework to deepen collaboration between our companies, research institutions, and entrepreneurs," said Massachusetts Economic Development Secretary Eric Paley. "Denmark is already one of Massachusetts' top trading partners, and we're excited to build on that foundation and grow our partnership in critical sectors like life sciences, advanced manufacturing, robotics, and AI."

The agreement builds on robust economic ties between Massachusetts and Denmark. Massachusetts trades nearly \$240 million with Denmark, which marks a 134 percent increase since 2010. Massachusetts primarily exports medical devices, organic chemicals and industrial machinery and imports pharmaceutical products, industrial machinery and medical devices. Substantial trade and investment, particularly within life sciences, between

both jurisdictions has enabled companies to thrive.

Members of the Denmark delegation included Ambassador Møller Sørensen, Consul General Ann-Christina Petersen Lange, Senior Vice President and Head of Global Research of Novo Nordisk Jacob Petersen, Vice President & Head of External Innovation of Lundbeck Klaus Simonsen, Chief Investment Officer of EIFO Erik Balck Sørensen, Aalborg University Professor Brian Vad Mathiesen, Chief Scientific Officer of LEO Foundation Anne-Marie Engel, CEO of Danish Biotech Hans Schambye, and CEO of Healthcare Denmark Jakob Skaarup.

Attendees from the Healey-Driscoll Administration included Governor Healey, Economic Development Secretary Eric Paley, Undersecretary of Business Strategies Zenobia Moochala, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office of Inter-

national Trade and Investment Jeevan Ramapriya, President and CEO of the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center Kirk Taylor, Interim CEO of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center Dr. Jennifer Le Blond, and Director of Massachusetts Artificial Intelligence (AI) Hub Sabrina Mansur. Former United States Ambassador to Denmark Rufus Gifford also attended.

The delegation's visit was coordinated by the Danish Agency for Higher Education and Science and the Massachusetts Office of International Trade and Investment. Massachusetts has similar agreements with numerous countries and international regional governments, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Denmark, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Portugal, South Korea, Spain, Sweden and Taiwan.

RENT STABILIZATION *(from Page 14)*

2022, Mayor Wu and the Council voted on a home rule petition seeking to stabilize rents in Boston, which was filed with the Massachusetts Legislature and subsequently sent to committee for study.

According to the resolution, a coalition led by Homes for All Massachusetts has since filed

initiative petition language with the Attorney General to place a rent stabilization measure on the November 2026 statewide ballot. The proposed measure would cap annual rent increases at a rate tied to the Consumer Price Index, or no more than 5 percent per year, whichever is lower. The proposal includes

exemptions for owner-occupied buildings with four or fewer units and for newly constructed buildings during their first ten years.

By adopting the resolution, the Council formally declared its support for the proposed rent stabilization ballot measure.

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