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THE BOSTON SUN

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SERVING BACK BAY - SOUTH END - FENWAY - KENMORE

Remembering Rose Brigade founder China Altman

By Dan Murphy

China Altman, a longtime Back Village resident who died Feb. 2 at age 93 in hospice care at Massachusetts General Hospital, could never have imagined the Rose Brigade she established nearly four decades ago to tend to the rose beds in the Public Garden would grow into what is reportedly the longest, sustained volunteer group operating in the city.

“It has seemed to me that the people who have come and gone over the years – we have about 250 alums – fell out of the sky,” said Ms. Altman at a 2017 ceremony in the Public Garden honoring her and the group. “I feel astonishment and love in my heart when I think about all of them and all of you who make up the Rose Brigade now.”

Upon that occasion, the Friends of the Public Garden commissioned a hybrid rose named the ‘China Altman’ and

officially dedicated it in her honor

Born Mary Helen Altman on Dec. 20, 1932, Ms. Altman, grew up in Waycross, Ga., as the second of five siblings.

Ms. Altman, who outlived all her siblings, told The Boston Globe in 1974, she adopted the name ‘China,’ after leaving college as “part of [her] youthful rebellion.”

She relocated to Boston in the late 1950s to work for the wire service office for United Press (later United Press International).

Credited for being the first female radio talk-show host in Boston, Ms. Altman later moderated her award-winning ‘Generation’ talk show on WRKO-AM and WROR-FM. She also wrote for Life and People magazines, among other publications, during her illustrious career in journalism.

(CHINA ALTMAN., Pg. 2)



BLIZZARD OF '26

MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY MIKE MEJIA

City workers were busy Sunday night into Monday as they worked to keep roads as clear as they could be following last weekend's blizzard which dropped another 18 inches onto the Hub, adding to the piles and snowmounds throughout the city, still leftover from the previous storm. See more photos on Page 5.

Amid area development, Fenway Free Market connects neighbors

By Julia Hendler and Erin Cromwell

Boston residents gather monthly at the Fenway Community Center (FCC) to exchange clothing, toys and household items at the Free Market, an event designed to reduce waste and build community.

The market is unique in that residents drop off unwanted items and take whatever they find useful, all free of charge.

The event is hosted in collaboration with Fenway Forward, an organization the FCC works closely with. Formerly known as the Fenway Community Development Corporation, Fenway Forward is a neighborhood

advocacy group that strives to preserve the integrity of the Fenway neighborhood through initiatives such as expanding affordable housing and strengthening community engagement, according to the Fenway Forward website.

Sage Carbone, the community programs director at Fenway Forward, said free markets are uncommon because they're hard to fund, but they provide an essential service to the community.

“The whole point is that we are learning to live in an economy that doesn't need to be based

on capitalism and how much money you make or what you have,” Carbone said. “It's also about what you give.”

FCC Executive Director Mallory Rohrig said the event is designed to serve the neighborhood's key demographics by making it more convenient for them to dispose of unwanted items.

Two of the “highest populations [in the Fenway] are college students and senior citizens,” she said. “Both groups that are looking to offload items and don't necessarily have the means or the

(FENWAY FREE MARKET, Pg. 4)



COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF THE PUBLIC GARDEN

China Altman, founder of the Rose Brigade (at right), with Henry Lee, late president emeritus of the Friends of the Public Garden, inside the Public Garden.

EDITORIAL

WE ARE SO DONE WITH WINTER

When winter finally released its icy grip last week, with temperatures reaching above freezing for the first time in weeks, we had figured the worst of this winter season was behind us.

Needless to say, that was wishful thinking.

As native New Englanders, by no means were we so naive as to believe that Mother Nature would fail to have a few surprises remaining for us.

When March 1 starts to roll along on the calendar, we always are reminded of the proverb we first learned as young children at Our Lady of Grace parochial school in Everett: “March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.”

So we were well-aware that nasty weather still lay ahead. We were braced for a lion, but we weren’t expecting a prehistoric beast.

So we were both incredulous and exasperated as we listened to the weatherman’s increasingly-dire predictions for a major weather event headed our way as this weekend approached.

We’ve all become familiar with the relatively-recent meteorological term of “bombogenesis” to describe the rapid intensification of a storm system that seems to take on a life of its own.

But we did not anticipate the fury of this week’s blizzard that had such a wide impact and that caused so much misery for so many of us.

We well remember the Blizzard of ‘78, the No Name Storm of 1991 (also known as The Perfect Storm), and the Snowmageddon Winter of 2015.

We took all of those major weather events in stride. As impactful as they were, they were simply annoyances for us at the time. But we were younger then, and youth has a way of brushing aside even the harshest of circumstances -- a four-foot drift looks like a playground instead of a back injury waiting to happen.

Despite the frigid temperatures, we still ran outside almost every day throughout this winter, even in the face of daily, single-digit wind chills. We were determined not to let Ol’ Man Winter get the better of us.

But truth be told, this winter season of 2026 has pushed us over the edge. The “lion” finally bit us -- and Florida suddenly seems very appealing.

WHY HASN’T THE NHL BANNED FIGHTING?

Our love of hockey dates back to the 1960s, the golden era when “Bobby Orr and the Big, Bad Boston Bruins” (that was the title of a book that we’ve had since our youth) ruled the hockey world and the B’s were the toast of the town.

We recall the bad blood between the Bruins and some of their notable opponents, the Canadiens and the Rangers (among others), and well recall the game when Derek Sanderson got into a fight with a member of the Chicago Black Hawks -- Sandy pulled off an opponent’s jersey and then, while skating around the rink, jersey in hand as if it were a trophy, tossed it into the stands (in Chicago!).

Fighting was not merely just a part of the game, it was even expected. Each team had its “enforcer” who could be expected to take a run at the other team’s star player, which in turn would trigger a retaliatory run by the enforcer on the other side, and mayhem inevitably would be the result.

We were just youngsters at the time and just accepted it as “part of the game.” It was a time when goalies still didn’t wear masks and certainly no player wore a helmet.

Times have changed. Goalies wear expensive masks and every player is helmeted. Teams no longer devote a roster spot to an enforcer and rates of fighting have decreased significantly.

But fighting remains a part of the game and is tolerated to an extent not seen in any other sport. The fans still lust for blood and cheer with every punch. ESPN shows the highlights of every fight.

We were thinking about this as we were watching -- and thoroughly enjoying -- the Olympic hockey matches these past two weeks. It was so nice to watch a game with no fights and none of the chippiness and illegal hits that are trademarks of the NHL. The teams just skated relentlessly up and down, without the long delays caused by brawling and fighting.

Fighting remains a vestige of pro hockey’s brutal past -- and in our view, the sooner the NHL bans it all together (which it could easily do with harsher penalties than just a five-minute major), the better.

The time has come to retire the Rodney Dangerfield joke, “I went to a fight the other night, and a hockey game broke out.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

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

BOSTON WARD 4 DEMS 2026 CAUCUS

Join fellow Democrats from Back Bay, Fenway, and the South End in electing delegates to the 2026 Mass Dems convention! The caucus will take place on Saturday, Feb. 28, at 11 a.m. at Union Church (485 Columbus Ave.).

The 2026 State Convention is a nominating convention, where delegates will gather to vote on Democratic candidates for state-wide office- and determine which candidates qualify for the September 2026 primary ballot. All are welcome to attend, but you must be a registered Democrat in Ward 4 (or register as such) in order to run as a delegate or vote for delegates. Questions? Email ward4dems@gmail.com.

(NEWS BRIEFS, Pg. 3)

CHINA ALTMAN *(from Page 1)*

In 1988, Ms. Altman founded the Rose Brigade, which is sponsored by the Friends of the Public Garden and works in collaboration with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department. The group cares for the park’s four rose beds that span 4,150 square feet and consist of around 280 bushes from mid-March through early December and every Tuesday during the summer months.

“China showed us that beauty thrives when people care enough to show up, rain or shine, season after season,” said Liza Meyer, president of the Friends group, in a statement. “Through every volunteer she inspired and every rose she lovingly tended, she reminded us that community is built one moment at a time. As we mourn her loss and celebrate

her life, we will honor her legacy through the continued work of the Rose Brigade and by creating opportunities for people to feel more connected to their parks and to one another.”

Ms. Altman admitted she knew nothing about roses at the time of the Brigade’s inception but soon began to become more knowledgeable after spending countless hours exploring the subject at the Copley Branch of the Boston Public Library.

“I loved doing the research – I am a nerd -- and I even wrote myself a report on how to do it,” Ms. Altman told this reporter in 2017. “And of course, my research has continued all these years, from many sources, and most of all from the roses themselves.”

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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Downtown Boston records region's fastest office-market recovery rate

By Sun staff

Downtown Boston is currently experiencing the fastest post-pandemic office market recovery of all primary office districts in the region, according to a new report released last week by the Downtown Boston Alliance (DBA).

The DBA service area, which comprises Downtown Crossing and much of the Financial District, recorded its sixth consecutive quarter of declining vacancy, according to the Newmark

Q4 2025 Office Report. Since reaching its pandemic-era peak, the district's vacancy rate has improved by 3.3 percent. This recovery rate is more than double the 1.5 percent improvement seen in the Back Bay while also significantly outpacing Kendall/East Cambridge and elsewhere.

"The data is clear: Downtown Boston is recovering faster than any other major office hub in the area, and there is a palpable new energy as more companies and workers enter the neighborhood more often," stated Michael J.

Nichols, president of the DBA, in a press release. "Now, intuitively, the region's most accessible office district is also the most rapidly healing one from the scars of the pandemic."

Added Liz Berthelette, head of Northeast Research and National Life Science Research for Newmark: "Downtown Boston's office core is quietly putting together one of the most durable recoveries in the region, with the Downtown Boston Alliance area posting several consecutive quarters of improving fundamentals. Positive tenant movement from firms like HarbourVest and Schneider Electric, together with the steady repositioning of obsolete office assets to alternative uses, have meaningfully reduced vacancy and reinforced the appeal of the submarket. Looking ahead, the DBA area is poised to build on this momentum, as a constrained development pipeline, ongoing office-to-residential activity, and strong, transit-oriented demand set the stage for continued strengthening of office market fundamentals."

The DBA area distinguished itself in the fourth quarter as the only submarket in the region, which also includes the Back Bay, Kendall/East Cambridge,

and the Seaport District, to achieve a 'trifecta' of encouraging indicators, including simultaneous positive net absorption; declining vacancy; and increasing asking rents, respectively.

The completion of Winthrop Tower (with 812,000 square feet of now almost-entirely-leased Trophy/Class A+ office space) and the reinvestment of several property owners, including Synergy Investment at 101 Arch and DivcoWest at 1 Lincoln, also show the neighborhood is rapidly aligning with post-pandemic tenant demands.

Furthermore, 1.2 million square feet of DBA-area office buildings are in the process of converting to other uses, including residential, hotels, and experiential retail, out of the 16.6 million square feet. Two projects are now complete, with another 15 "office-to-everything" conversion projects in the pipeline.

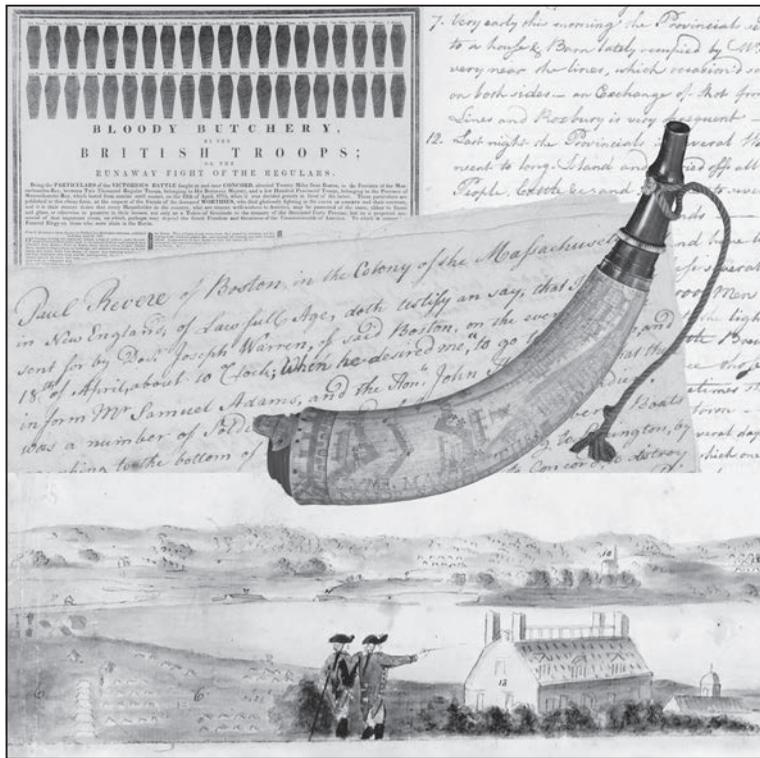
"We've always believed in the strength and resilience of Boston," said David Greaney, Chief Executive Officer of Synergy. "The latest Newmark report shows meaningful signs of stabilization downtown, and our recent acquisitions of 99 High and 101 Arch reflect our continued confidence in the city's

resurgence and our commitment to shaping its next chapter. The fundamentals that make Boston exceptional - its world-class institutions, leading universities, and unparalleled talent base - aren't going anywhere. As innovation accelerates, particularly in AI and founder-led growth, we see Boston uniquely positioned to lead, and we intend to invest alongside that momentum."

Other factors cited for the area's rapid recovery rate by tenants include its transit performance as subway ridership at DBA-area stations increased every quarter of 2025, surpassing 4.4 million rides in Q4.

Also, city-supported initiatives like Color Flows, Boston Blooms, and the DBA's Winter-active art exhibition, which drew 800,000 visitors in 2025, along with overall year-round programming, have helped boost the area's foot traffic toward a milestone of 3 million monthly.

Moreover, tenant interest has risen as city-sponsored programs, like the S.P.A.C.E. grant program and Creative Enterprises initiative and the DBA's own business-attraction efforts, have led to a 50-percent decline in retail vacancy.



The Road to Revolution, a new exhibit in the Old State House is open to visitors. See historical items from Colonial America, including a rare 1776 printing of the Declaration of Independence.

Celebrate the spirit of America with Revolutionary Spaces this March

Special to the Sun

Revolutionary Spaces invites the public to its March events at the Old State House and Old South Meeting House. Please find details below, and I'm happy to coordinate interviews.

Sunday, March 1 & March 8 – Boston Family Days (Free Admission) – In partnership with Mayor Wu's Boston Family Days, free admis-

sion for Boston school-aged children and up to two guests on the first and second Sundays of the month. Register online at <https://www.boston.gov/family-days-signup#/forms>.

Wednesday, March 5 | 10:30 AM – Crispus Attucks Day & 256th Anniversary of the Boston Massacre – Public wreath-laying ceremony (REVOLUTIONARY SPACES, Pg. 4)



NEWS IN BRIEF

Continued from Page 3

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.

BOSTON WARD 5 DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS SET FOR MAY 30 IN WORCESTER

On Saturday, March 14, beginning at 9 a.m., the Boston Ward 5 Democratic Committee will host the 2026 Boston Ward 5 Democratic Party Caucus ("Caucus") to elect delegates and alternates for the 2026 Massachusetts Democratic Convention—which will be held on Saturday, May 30, at the DCU Center in Worcester.

The Caucus will take place at the Old South Church, 645

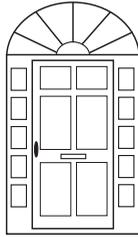
Boylston St., in Copley Square. Persons wishing to attend the Caucus may arrive beginning at 9am. This event is open to the public. However, only those persons who reside in Ward 5 and have previously registered to vote as Democrats, or are 16 years of age by Feb. 19, and have pre-registered to vote as Democrats, will be eligible to sign in to the Caucus and be permitted

to vote and/or be elected as delegates, or alternates, during the Caucus.

Ward 5 includes Beacon Hill, Back Bay, Bay Village, Fenway and parts of Chinatown and the South End. You can check your voter registration status (and whether you live in Ward 5) at: www.sec.state.ma.us/VoterRegistrationSearch/MyVoterRegStatus.aspx.

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Attendees browsing the market's tables.

ERIN CROMWELL PHOTOS



A rack of donated clothes.

FENWAY FREE MARKET (from Page 1)

cars to get rid of those items.” People of all ages browsed the donation tables while snacking on free pizzas served by the market. While parents shopped, their children played in the community center’s kiddy corner.

“Not only are we helping to keep the things out of the trash, but we also are helping to facilitate this connection point and intergenerational aspect as well,” Rohrig said.

Richard Dunshee, 61, lives in East Boston, but discovered the

FCC through his frequent visits to the Fenway Victory Gardens, where he has managed a garden plot since 1994. Dunshee spent the entire day at the market, chatting with other attendees and the organizers.

“You get to meet a lot of people,” Dunshee said. “You get to spend some time here, sit down and talk to them.”

It’s the people, he said, that keep him coming back.

Although not from the Fenway, Dunshee remembers what

it was like before much of the current development — when a McDonald’s restaurant stood where the FCC now operates. Today, the center shares its West Fenway address with a luxury apartment building, where units rent for as much as \$9,000 per month, according to online listings.

While the past couple of decades have seen heavy development in the Fenway, it is one of Boston’s poorest neighborhoods, Carbone said. Thirty-sev-

“[The neighborhood includes] the have and have-nots,” Regina Fink, director of constituent services for State Senator Will Brownsberger, said, who pointed out the sharp contrast between the luxury apartments and low-income housing co-existing in the Fenway.

Brownsberger’s district encompasses most of the Fenway, and his team was at February’s market distributing free and reduced-fare Charlie Cards for eligible residents.

Vicki Moulton, a self-proclaimed regular at the FCC, said she uses the event to shop for herself, friends and family.

“I like the free stuff, obviously,” Moulton said. “But I also like connecting with the neighbors, because I see people here sometimes that I don’t see otherwise.”

en percent of residents live below the poverty line, more than double the city-wide rate of 18%, according to Fenway Forward’s 2023-2025 Community Investment Plan.

Julia Hendler and Erin Cromwell are students in the Boston University Journalism program. This story is a partnership between The Boston Sun and the Boston University Journalism program.

REVOLUTIONARY SPACES (from Page 3)

emony at the Boston Massacre commemorative plaza outside the Old State House honoring the five men killed on March 5, 1770. For more info, contact info@revolutionaryspaces.org.

Saturday, March 14 | 10:30 AM-2:30 PM – Hands-On History Day: 250th Anniversary of Evacuation Day – Family-friendly activities at both historic sites, including crafts, games, gallery talks, music, and more. Included with general admission; free for children 12 and under.

Sunday, March 21 | 9-10 AM – Sen-

sory-Friendly Mornings at the Old State House – Early-access hour at the Old State House with adjusted lighting and sound, limited attendance, and hands-on activities for visitors who benefit from a quieter museum experience. Register online at <https://revolutionaryspaces.org/visit/sensory-friendly-mornings/>.

All Month – The Road to Revolution is a new exhibition at the Old State House, developed with the Massachusetts Historical Society, featuring a rare 1776 printing of the Declaration of Independence. On view through January 2027.

DINE OUT
BOSTON
SINCE 2001

Save room for Boston.

February 22 - March 7, 2026



Take a Council Chambers tour with Revolutionary Spaces at the Old State House.

SCENES FROM THE BLIZZARD IN BOSTON



Mayor's Office photos by Mike Mejia

After the Blizzard of 2026 hammered the Northeast with historic intensity, Boston is finally emerging from a whiteout that brought the city to a standstill. While the official record at Logan Airport will note 17.1 inches, anyone with a shovel in Boston neighborhoods knows the reality on the ground felt closer to two-feet.

These photos capture the scale of the logistical counter-attack now underway. With more than 900 plows and pieces of equipment deployed, the city's recovery has shifted from survival to a race against time and space. Public Works crews and private contractors are navigating the narrowest corridors of the North End and Southie, hauling mountains of powder to the city's 14 snow farms, where melting operations are running at full capacity.

The Recovery Effort by the Numbers:

- Crews have already cleared over 4,620 cubic yards of snow to prevent intersections from becoming completely blind.
 - The storm forced a two-day closure of Boston Public Schools and triggered a 48-hour snow emergency, leaving over 160,000 residents across the state without power at its peak.
 - This nor'easter pushed Boston's seasonal snowfall past 60 inches, the highest total since the legendary winter of 2014-2015.
- Mayor Michelle Wu has praised the "around-the-clock" grit of the teams clearing over 700 bus stops and carving paths through residential sidewalks. As the city digs out from a storm that has already secured its place in the history books, these images reflect the exhaustion and resilience of a city that knows exactly how to handle the "Big Dig" of 2026.



Design tweaks and funding deadlines: the road ahead for the South End Branch Library

Special to the Sun

Our last Community Meeting about the new South End Branch Library was on May 28, 2025. Since then, the architects have been working to finalize the design and get drawings ready for the bidding/contracting process which was planned for Fall/Winter.

In October we learned that neighborhood associations adjacent to the library had raised concerns about the ability of plows and garbage trucks to negotiate the alleys between and perpendicular to the new library building footprint. In

the months since this issue was raised, relevant city departments have been determining specific requirements for ensuring these vehicles can service the residents who use these alleys.

In a recent conversation with David Leonard, Boston Public Library President, we learned additional information. He shared, "We hope we are now in the very last stages of a design adjustment caused by these clarified requirements for a turning circle coming in and out of the alley. This should be completed in a matter of a few weeks."

Also impacting the progress of this project is more-than-nor-

mal uncertainty about funding and rising costs. Even though the City's Capital Budget was approved for FY 27 in late 2025 during the city's budget process, there is an Office of Budget Management release that must take place before the funds are available for planned capital projects. That release has not yet occurred. David is hopeful that the library will be given an update on this prior to the release deadline of April 8th.

We will continue to keep the South End community informed of both design progress and funding status.

Ajustes de diseño y plazos de financiación: El futuro de la biblioteca del South End

Nuestra última reunión comunitaria sobre la nueva sucursal de la Biblioteca South End tuvo lugar el 28 de mayo de 2025. Desde entonces, los arquitectos han estado trabajando para finalizar el diseño y preparar los planos para el proceso de licitación/contratación, previsto para otoño/invierno.

En octubre, nos enteramos de que las asociaciones de vecinos adyacentes a la biblioteca habían

expresado su preocupación por la capacidad de las quitanieves y los camiones de basura para circular por los callejones entre y perpendiculares a la nueva planta de la biblioteca. En los meses transcurridos desde que se planteó este problema, los departamentos municipales pertinentes han estado determinando los requisitos específicos para garantizar que estos vehículos puedan dar servicio a los residentes que

utilizan estos callejones.

En una conversación reciente con David Leonard, presidente de la Biblioteca Pública de Boston, obtuvimos información adicional. Él comentó: «Esperamos estar en las últimas etapas de un ajuste de diseño debido a la aclaración de los requisitos para un radio de giro para entrar y salir del callejón. Esto debería completarse en unas pocas semanas».



DCR News & Updates



Attendees to last year's maple sugaring programs get a hands on learning experience.

Learn to make syrup with maple sugaring programs at DCR

Special to the Sun

Join us for maple sugaring programs at DCR parks across the state. Learn how to make maple syrup, a skill learned from Indigenous people from the northeast. Activities vary depending on location but include identifying maple trees, tapping trees, and gathering sap.

All ages welcome, children must be accompanied by an

adult. Dress for the weather.

Reasonable accommodations are available upon advance request.

Maple Sugar Days

Saturday, March 14 and Sunday, March 15

Blue Hill Reservation
11 Hillside Street, Canton MA
P r e r e g i s t r a t i o n

(MAPLE SUGAR, Pg. 7)

Boston man charged as common and notorious thief in string of high-end Back Bay store robberies

Special to the Sun

A Boston man with a history of theft and trespassing offenses dating to 2001 was arraigned Friday in BMC Central for a series of robberies from various Back Bay clothing stores in November, Suffolk District Attorney Kevin Hayden announced.

Peter Cutelis, 40, of Boston, is charged with four counts of larceny over \$1,200, possession of class A, B, and C drugs, and one count of being a common and notorious thief.

Judge Joseph Griffin set \$2,500 bail for each docket and ordered Cutelis to stay away from the locations of each offense. Griffin also ordered Cutelis held without bail on a fugitive from justice charge out of Brentwood, NH for failure to appear. He will return to court on March 6 for a probable cause hearing.

On November 12, Boston police observed a man, later identified as Cutelis, enter the Lululemon store at 208 Newbury Street, grab various clothing items valued at \$1,556.59 and exit without paying. Officers stopped Cutelis outside, identified and arrested him, and returned the items. During the arrest Cutelis became limp and fell to the ground. Cutelis told officers he had ingested illicit drugs. Officers recovered fentanyl, crack cocaine, and Clonazepam from a glove in Cutelis's pocket.

On November 16, officers responded to the Ralph Lauren Polo store at 93 Newbury Street for a reported larceny. Store employees showed officers surveillance footage of a man, later identified as Cutelis, taking two leather jackets, a cashmere sweater, and a leather bag total-

ing \$4,398 in value and exiting the store. Two days later, officers responded to the same location for a report that a man had stolen three jackets valued at \$1,464 and then fled on a bicycle. Surveillance footage was disseminated to police stations in the surrounding area and several officers identified Cutelis as the suspect.

On November 21, officers responded to a larceny at the Lululemon store inside the Prudential Center Mall. Loss prevention representatives showed officers a photo of a man who stole \$2,157 in various clothing items. One of the items contained a GPS tracking device, which officers used to locate Cutelis at the Copley MBTA station. Officers found Cutelis in possession of multiple Lululemon items with tags still attached. The items were returned to the store.

"The current retail environ-

ment is difficult already and the last thing our merchants need is someone making a habit of coming into their stores and leaving with a lot of high-value, unpaid-for merchandise. We know the outsized impact repeat offenders can have on retail theft and we're committed to reducing it," Hayden said.

Hayden's office, the Boston Police department, regional retailer groups and small business owners in 2024 launched the Safe Shopping Initiative, an effort to increase consumer safety and help store managers strategize responses to shoplifting and retail larcenies. The initiative formed amid increasing national and local frustrations around retail crime, along with concerns over the closure of several pharmacies serving minority communities in Boston.

All charged individuals are

presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Suffolk County District Attorney Kevin Hayden's office serves the communities of Boston, Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop. Our office handles more than 20,000 cases a year. Nearly 160 assistant district attorneys practice in nine district and municipal courts, Suffolk Superior Court, the Massachusetts Appeals Court, the Boston and Chelsea Juvenile Courts and the Supreme Judicial Court. Our office employs some 300 people and offers a wide range of services and programs for anyone encountering the criminal justice system. We are committed to educating the public about our mission and services while focusing on crime prevention to keep the residents, workers and visitors of Suffolk County safe.



Orange Line will be suspended between Back Bay and Forest Hills for nine days, Feb. 28 – Mar. 8

Special to the Sun

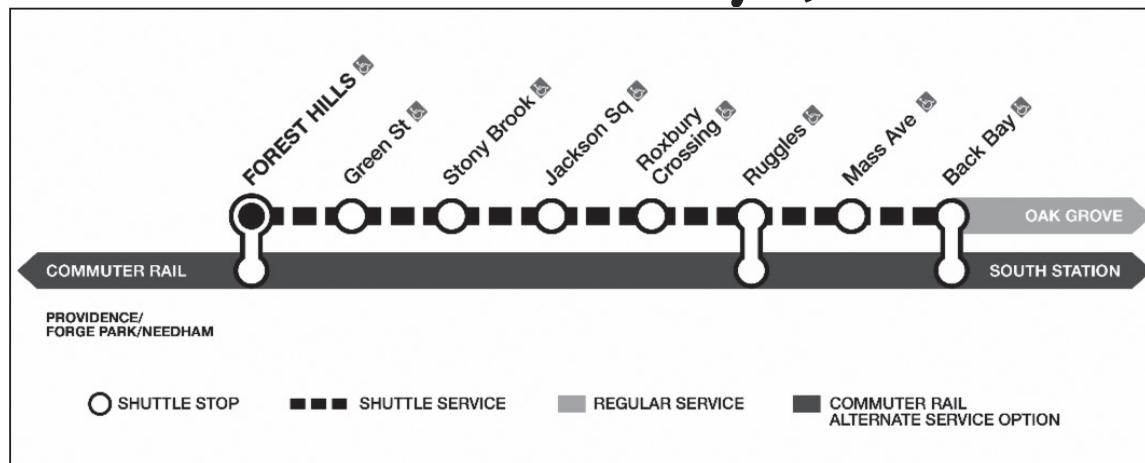
The MBTA is reminding riders that Orange Line service will be suspended between Back Bay and Forest Hills for nine consecutive days, beginning Saturday, Feb. 28 – March 8.

The MBTA will continue signal upgrade and modernization work on the Orange Line. By upgrading and modernizing its signals, the MBTA will significantly increase operational efficiency and improve scheduling reliability for riders.

Riders can find complete information at mbta.com/Orange-Line. More information on these service changes and alternate travel options is below:

Free and accessible shuttle buses will make stops between Back Bay and Forest Hills.

Riders are also encouraged to consider the Commuter Rail for fare-free service between Forest Hills, Ruggles, Back Bay, and South Station. The trip between



Forest Hills and Back Bay on the Commuter Rail is approximately 10 minutes.

Riders using shuttles bus service should budget ample extra travel time. For example, a rider travelling to Downtown Crossing from Forest Hills should budget at least an additional 30 minutes of travel in addition to their regular commute.

More information is also available through in-station signage and public announcements.

Transit Ambassadors and MBTA staff will be available on-site to offer information and assistance during these service changes. Riders are encouraged to subscribe to T-Alerts or to follow the MBTA on X @MBTA for up-to-date service information.

For more information, please visit mbta.com/OrangeLine or connect with the T on X @ MBTA, Facebook /TheMBTA, Instagram @theMBTA, Threads @thembta, or TikTok @thembta.

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) opened America's first subway tunnel in 1897, pioneering public transportation in the United States. Today, the MBTA is one of the largest public transit systems in the country, operating an extensive network of subway, bus, Commuter Rail, ferry, and paratransit services across 176 cities and towns. The MBTA is undergoing a transformative period, focusing on cultivating a

culture of safety and excellence, modernizing infrastructure, and improving reliability and accessibility. Current priorities include accelerating critical infrastructure repairs, expanding accessibility, and reducing emissions. The MBTA is committed to providing dependable, frequent, and accessible service that riders can rely on while supporting the region's economic vitality. Through initiatives like the unprecedented Track Improvement Program, Better Bus Program, and Rail Vision, the MBTA aims to connect communities and improve riders' daily experiences and trips. For questions or assistance, riders are encouraged to contact the MBTA Customer Center at 617-222-3200. Members of the press are encouraged to contact mediarelations@mbta.com. For the latest updates on MBTA services, projects, and initiatives, visit [MBTA.com](https://mbta.com) or follow @MBTA on social media.

Boston nonprofit awarded \$1.5 million to link high school learning opportunities to in-demand careers

Special to the Sun

EdVestors, a longtime Boston-based school improvement nonprofit organization, has announced it has been awarded \$1.5 million to strengthen its city-wide effort to scale career-connected learning opportunities and deepen students' sense of purpose, belonging, and social capital. The grant is made by the Pathways Impact Fund, a national initiative of StriveTogether.

"Boston's young people bring tremendous assets, and it is our responsibility to help them see and pursue the full range of opportunities available," said Marinell Rousmaniere, CEO of EdVestors. "This investment strengthens our collective work across our city to connect students' talents and interests to real-world pathways and expand access to experiences that open doors after high school."

Anchored by over two decades of partnership with Boston Public Schools (BPS) and backed by a growing body of research, EdVestors is a critical local connector focused on driving the

systems-level alignment needed to put BPS's 46,000 students on a path to economic mobility. Core to EdVestors' strategy is the recognition that students need not just skills but experiences to help them make informed choices and build connections to put those skills to work after high school. Through the New Skills Boston network, which EdVestors facilitates, enrollment in pathways programs, including health care, life sciences, and business finance has doubled in the last five years, and nearly half of the BPS Class of 2024 completed an internship by graduation.

Over the next three years, EdVestors will expand access to high-quality career pathways for thousands more Boston students while strengthening advising, career-connected learning, and accelerated coursework across the system. Working with key partners, EdVestors will support deeper student engagement and stronger postsecondary transition supports, so more young people enroll in and complete college or career training.

"EdVestors has been a valued partner to Boston Public Schools

for more than two decades, helping us strengthen the citywide partnerships that ensure our students graduate prepared for college, career, and life beyond the classroom," said Boston Public Schools Superintendent Mary Skipper. "This continued support advances our shared commitment to expanding access to meaningful, career-connected learning experiences so every BPS student can discover their path and pursue their goals with confidence."

This grant award to EdVestors is part of the Pathways Impact Fund's \$7.5 million commitment to regional intermediaries working to scale high-quality pathways across five states. Backed by several of the nation's largest philanthropies, the Fund's strategy focuses on ensuring that more young people have access to high-quality advising, accelerated coursework, and career-connected learning that lead to purposeful pathways and economic mobility.

"EdVestors understands that pathways aren't just about career

(EDVESTORS, Pg. 8)

MAPLE SUGAR *(from Page 6)*

required: Maple Sugar Days

Join us for a fun and informative guided exploration into all things maple sugar! Learn about the fascinating local history of maple sugaring and the evolution of the practice over hundreds of years. Learn how trees are tapped and practice drilling yourself, and finish your tour inside our aromatic sugar shack where you will see (and smell!) just how maple syrup is made! Families and curious adults are welcome!

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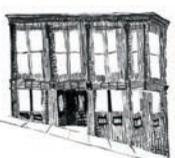
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Councilor Flynn to hold a hearing on purchasing snow melting machines on Tue. March 3

Special to the Sun

Next Tuesday, March 3rd at 2:00PM in the Iannella Chamber at City Hall, Boston City Councilor Ed Flynn will hold a hearing to discuss the City of Boston purchasing snow melting machines. The hearing will also cover hearing orders from Councilor Brian Worrell and Councilor Enrique Pepén on other snow removal strategies and the creation of a snow corps.

Residents who would like to testify at the hearing in-person, or virtually via Zoom, are invited to please contact shane.pac@boston.gov. If you would like to also provide written testimony, you can email the committee at ccc.csit@boston.gov or email

ed.flynn@boston.gov. Neighbors are also invited to watch the livestream of the hearing at the following link: www.boston.gov/city-council-tv.

Following a significant storm with over 23 inches of snow, Councilor Flynn wrote a letter to both Mayor Wu and Interim Chief of Streets Nick Gove to thank dedicated city employees who worked under extremely difficult conditions. At the same time, Councilor Flynn relayed the areas of opportunity and improvement for the city's response. Due to the feedback he received from dozens of calls, emails, and letters from residents and businesses to their elected officials and public servants, Councilor Flynn advocated for

the City of Boston to explore the potential purchase of snow melting machines.

Specifically, Councilor Flynn highlighted reports that New York City deployed eight snow melting machines to remove snow from streets, sidewalks, and bus stops that would have otherwise taken weeks to melt. New York City has used these melting hot tubs for nearly 20 years, which remove 60-120 tons of snow per hour. In the difficult winter of 2015, the City of Boston rented machines at a cost of approximately \$600,000, while Massport purchased two snow melters for \$555,000 at that time. The city also benefited from New York state lending two for free.

Councilor Flynn noted that District 2 neighbors continue to provide feedback on public safety issues, including difficulties navi-

gating streets and sidewalks and limited accessibility for all (our seniors, persons with disabilities, and young families with strollers), along with restricted access to fire hydrants and catch basins. Neighbors shared reports of difficulties with road accessibility for first responders (an ambulance on Huntington Avenue), the inability of neighbors and families to return to park cars on snow emergency routes following removal of the parking ban (L Street, First Street, Dorchester Street), and the difficulties of residents to utilize MBTA bus stops (Tremont Street).

In 2015, Boston experienced significant snowfall, with 24.6 inches from January 26-27th, 16.2 inches on February 2nd, and 23.8 inches from February 7-9th. Councilor Flynn echoed the concerns of many constituents on calls for a similar

response to the winter of 2015, when many two-way streets were also turned one-way for weeks.

"With significant snowfall an inevitability in Boston, it's critical that the city explores investment in snow melters, and any other equipment, to ensure accessible pathways and roads for all - including first responders, our seniors, persons with disabilities, and young families," said Councilor Flynn. "On account of the many concerns I've heard on public safety, accessibility, and quality of life - I believe it is critical that we deliver these enhanced basic city services to support both our neighbors and Boston's local economy as well."

For more information, please contact Councilor Flynn's office at 617-635-3203 or Ed.Flynn@Boston.gov.

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EDVESTORS (from Page 7)

skills—they're about helping young people discover who they are and who they can become," said John Garcia III, executive director of the Pathways Impact Fund. "We're investing in their continued growth because this is exactly the kind of coordinated, student-centered approach we believe can transform pathways work across the country."

EdVestors' mission is to

advance equitable, meaningful education that prepares every Boston student to activate their power and shape their future. EdVestors is a school improvement organization that combines strategic investments, content expertise, and collaborative implementation to drive system-level impact in Boston schools. EdVestors works at the classroom, school, and district level, serving as a connector

that partners across sectors, a champion that shines a light on the bright spots in Boston schools, and a catalyst for systems change. Since 2002, EdVestors has raised and invested over \$57 million in school improvement efforts. Learn more at www.edvestors.org.

The Pathways Impact Fund, backed by several of the nation's largest philanthropies, is a national effort to ensure more young people are on pathways with purpose, gaining the experiences beginning in high school that build momentum to fulfilling, well-paying careers and economic mobility.

StriveTogether is a national network of community partnerships that bring together neighbors, including youth and families, nonprofits, businesses, schools and more, to work toward a future where youth can thrive in their communities. Cradle to Career Network members change the way their communities work together by building connections, sharing resources and using data to put more young people on a path to economic mobility. Our work helps young people meet seven key life milestones so that they have the opportunities they need to reach their goals, and, ultimately, thrive. Learn more at StriveTogether.org.

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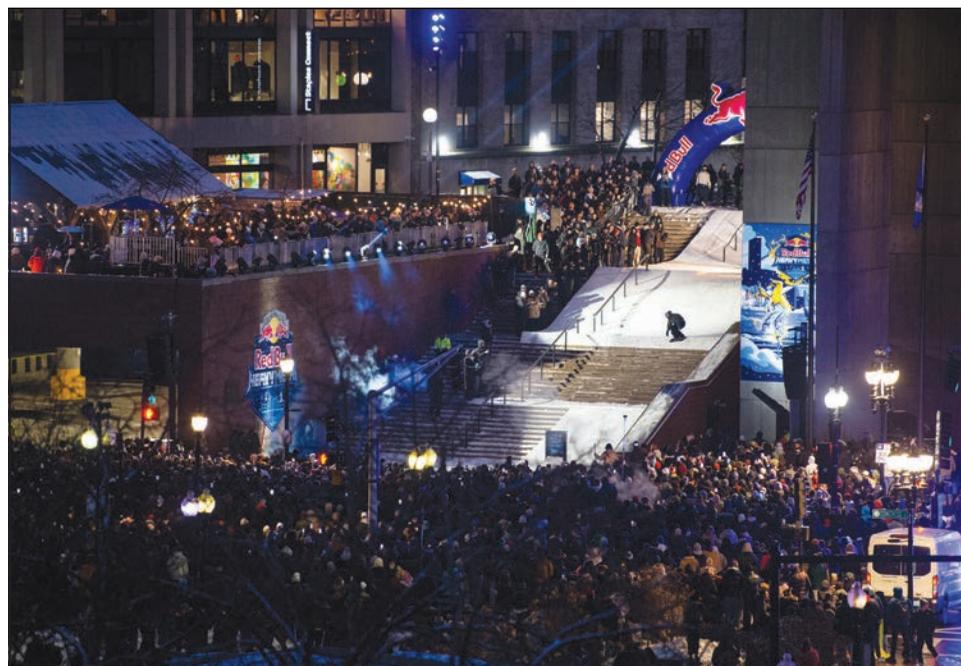
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Detail of "What Shall We Say
About Hope" © Sioux Gerow



PHOTOS BY MARK CLAVIN / RED BULL CONTENT POOL

Benny Milam hits the ledge at Red Bull Heavy Metal in Boston on February 21.

Lj Henriquez hits the jump at Red Bull Heavy Metal in Boston.

LJ Henriquez and Telma Särkipaju crowned Red Bull Heavy Metal 2026 Champions

Special to the Sun

More than 25,000 spectators packed Boston City Hall Plaza on Saturday for the return of Red Bull Heavy Metal, one of the top contests in modern street snowboarding. Energized by the largest crowd in street snowboarding's history, LJ Henriquez and Telma Särkipaju claimed overall titles in the men's and women's category.

Overnight snow and light flurries helped set the stage as the world's best riders took on three zones built into Boston City Hall Plaza's natural terrain, using the city's rails, stairs, gaps and brick walls to put street riding on full display in front of a live audience.

LJ Henriquez, a Northeast native from Little Falls, New Jersey, described the win a milestone moment.

"This is the pinnacle event in the world for street snowboarding right now," Henriquez said. "To win here, close to home, in front of my friends and family is such a surreal feeling. Everyone here is the best, so I had to go as hard as possible at all times to come away with the win."

Särkipaju, a first-time Red Bull Heavy Metal competitor who recently returned to riding after a back injury, said the win felt like a defining moment in her comeback.

"I had no expectations coming in and was just hoping to make finals, so to actually win something this big means a lot," Särkipaju said. "I saw videos from last year and thought it was next level, but being here and feeling that crowd was unlike anything I've experienced. Their energy definitely made the difference."

The single-day finals unfolded across three distinct zones integrated into City Hall Plaza's renovated architecture, with the Loon Mountain Terrain Park Team trucking in roughly 150 tons of snow to shape the competition zones. Riders competed for individual zone wins and overall titles as the field mixed contest standouts with video part heavy hitters, including Lucas Magoon, Egan Wint, Halldor Helgason, Jess Perlmutter and Zeb Powell.

Powell, one of the sport's most recognizable riders and a fixture at Red Bull Heavy Metal, said the event's second year in Boston raised the bar.

"This was another one for the books for Boston," Powell said. "Same energy just leveled up. The production was bigger, the features were cleaner and more playful, and it was more dialed in for everyone. Seeing the Northeast snowboard community show out in record numbers meant everything to me. I can't wait to see where we take Red Bull Heavy Metal from here."

Red Bull Heavy Metal's legacy is rooted in video part riding and rail innovation, led by generations of riders who built street snowboarding into what it is today. The 2026 season honored that history by providing a platform designed to elevate the next generation of talent and introduce more people to the sport.

For the latest Red Bull Heavy Metal action and event updates, follow @redbullusa and @redbullsnow and visit redbull.com/heavymetal.



BRANDON PAYNE / RED BULL CONTENT POOL

Red Bull Heavy Metal 2026 Champions, Telma Särkipaju and LJ Henriquez.



RILEY HOWLAND / RED BULL CONTENT POOL

Nick Fox hits the jump at Red Bull Heavy Metal in Boston on Feb. 21.

RED BULL HEAVY METAL 2026 WINNERS

Overall

Men: LJ Henriquez
Women: Telma Särkipaju

3 Benny Milam

Women: Zone 1

- 1 Telma Särkipaju
- 2 Veda Halen
- 3 Jaylen Hanson

Women: Zone 2

- 1 Egan Wint
- 2 Jess Perlmutter
- 3 Veda Halen

Women: Zone 3

- 1 Jess Perlmutter
- 2 Telma Särkipaju
- 3 Egan Wint

Men: Zone 1

- 1 Benny Milam
- 2 Mees Oostdijk
- 3 Nick Fox

Men: Zone 2

- 1 LJ Henriquez
- 2 Beck Lobben
- 3 Benny Milam

Men: Zone 3

- 1 Nick Fox
- 2 LJ Henriquez

Eight winning proposals of the 2026 Participatory Budgeting Initiative selected

Special to the Sun

Mayor Michelle Wu and the Office of Participatory Budgeting (OPB) have announced the winning projects of the second cycle of the Participatory Budgeting Initiative, “Ideas in Action.” The eight winning proposals reflect priorities identified and selected by Boston residents and will direct \$2.2 million in community-driven investments across the City.

The winning proposals include: Immigrant Legal Defense Fund, Neighborhood Fresh Food Access Initiative, Bridging the Gap: Assistance for Housing Stability, Immigrant Career Pathways: Bridging Language and Employment, Green My Block, Workforce Training Programs Focused on Trades, Youth Financial Literacy and Empowerment Workshops, and Small Business Development Resource Program.

As part of the participatory budgeting process, residents submitted ideas for how the City should allocate \$2.2 million. Community members then helped shape and refine proposals alongside city staff for the voting phase. Following a public voting period, residents selected the projects that will receive funding beginning the spring of 2026.

“Participatory budgeting continues to demonstrate what is possible when residents have a direct voice in shaping Boston’s future,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “The projects selected this year reflect our communities’ focus on housing stability, immigration support, workforce opportunity, youth empowerment, small business growth, and climate resilience. We are grateful to every resident who participated and look forward to implementing these investments across our neighborhoods.”

Participatory budgeting was established following voter approval of a ballot measure in 2021. Mayor Wu and the Boston City Council adopted the

ordinance establishing the office in 2023. Each year, funding from the City’s operating budget is invested in one-time and non-recurring community-driven projects across Boston.

The process is open to all Boston residents aged 11 and older, regardless of citizenship status. Voting is available in multiple languages and accessible both online and in person, with outreach conducted in partnership with community-based organizations and City departments to ensure broad participation. This cycle, a total of 4,841 votes were collected from residents across the city.

“Through collaboration with community partners, guidance from the Office’s External Oversight Board, and partnerships with City departments, we worked to build on the success of the inaugural cycle and strengthen accessibility and equity in this second round,” said Renato Castelo, Director of the Office of Participatory Budgeting. “We look forward to advancing implementation to ensure these investments are delivered effectively and translate into measurable progress across the city.”

Each of the eight winning proposals will receive dedicated funding, and relevant departments will oversee its implementation. Details on each proposal are below.

The Office of Participatory Budgeting will work with the lead departments on next steps for implementation later this year.

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.

Rank	Votes	Proposal	Funding	Lead Department
1	3733	Immigrant Legal Defense Fund	\$400,000	Office of Immigrant Advancement
2	3035	Neighborhood Fresh Food Access Initiative	\$500,000	Office of Food Justice
3	2805	Bridging the Gap: Assistance for Housing Stability	\$200,000	Mayor’s Office of Housing
4	2091	Immigrant Career Pathways: Bridging Language and Employment	\$300,000	Office of Workforce Development
5	1930	Green My Block	\$100,000	Office of Green Infrastructure
6	1661	Workforce Training Programs Focused on Trades	\$300,000	Office of Workforce Development
7	1556	Youth Financial Literacy and Empowerment Workshops	\$250,000	Center for Working Families
8	1202	Small Business Development Resource Program	\$150,000	Office of Small Business

Mayor Michelle Wu backs Ed Markey for Senate, praising record of delivering for Boston

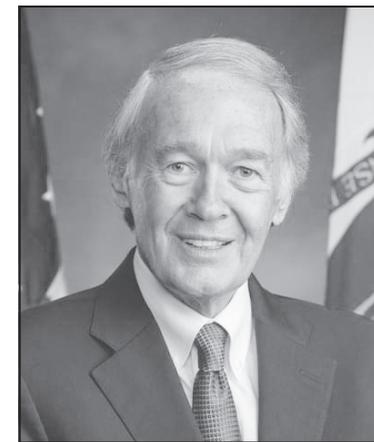
Boston Mayor Michelle Wu has announced her endorsement of Ed Markey for re-election to the Senate, citing his unwavering leadership, progressive vision, and record of delivering for the city of Boston.

“Senator Markey has been a longstanding partner for Boston families, standing strong on our values and delivering results by bringing resources and solutions,” said Boston Mayor Michelle Wu. “He is a bold leader on national issues like climate, health care, and economic justice, while also delivering reliable and responsive constituent services for residents every day. I am grateful for our continued partnership here in Boston and pleased to endorse him for re-election.”

Since Mayor Wu took office, Senator Markey has worked hand-in-hand with her administration to deliver major federal investments to Boston – strengthening transit infrastructure, including \$472 million to replace the North Station Draw One Bridge and modernize rail capacity at North Station, advancing clean energy and cli-



Mayor Michelle Wu



Senator Ed Markey

mate resilience efforts, supporting improvements in Franklin Park, and backing neighborhood initiatives that serve working families and young people. In partnership with Mayor Wu, Senator Markey and Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley introduced the Freedom to Move Act to build on Boston’s fare-free transit pilots.

“Mayor Michelle Wu is one of the boldest and most visionary leaders in America today. I am deeply honored to earn Michelle’s endorsement,” said Senator Ed Markey. “Michelle leads with courage, clarity, and

compassion – always putting working families first and never backing down from a tough fight. Michelle and I don’t just share values – we deliver results. From confronting the climate crisis to protecting our immigrant communities, to expanding affordable housing and building a city where every neighborhood can thrive, she is shaping the future of Boston with urgency. Together, we will continue to fight back against Donald Trump’s chaos, protect our neighborhoods, and make sure Boston stays No. 1 – in innovation, in equity, and in opportunity.”

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FRESH AND LOCAL

Eat your roots

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

This column began as guidance on eating seasonally by including lots of root vegetables in your winter menus. Then Ed suggested we also include the ties that many cultures have to specific root vegetables.

He was right. His Italian family never included rutabaga in their meals. However, it was often on the tables of Penny's Irish family, and it was a must for holiday meals. Moreover, her family often referred to it as "Swede."

Familiar Roots

You may not have considered how many of your food choices come from family history. Most of us have a few universally loved roots in our pantry: potatoes, carrots, onions, garlic, beets, and sweet potatoes, which are having their moment in the sun.

If you have Asian ancestors, your supplies might include ginger, galangal, turmeric, ginseng, water chestnut, lotus root, and daikon.

Climate and growing conditions often make root vegetables a staple in a given area. In Eastern Europe and the Scandinavian countries, ancestors survived on what they could grow and store for their diets. Those diets are heavy in potatoes, turnips, parsnips, and beets.

Some tropical cultures embrace cassava, jicama, yams,

and salsify. Without realizing it, you may be using other root preparations like arrowroot, tapioca, and horseradish.

New Flavors

Shopping trips to supermarkets and stores catering to other cultures have enabled us to try Jerusalem artichokes, kohlrabi, rutabaga, turnips, celeriac, parsnip, and burdock. Some of these are popping up in traditional produce sections, making it easy to buy a sample to add variety to your winter roots.

Root Preparations

We most often roast, boil, and mash our root vegetables, or add those that can be eaten raw, such as radishes, carrots, turnips, rutabaga, kohlrabi, and celeriac, to slaws and salads.

However, as you venture into unfamiliar territory, check because some roots, such as cassava, are toxic unless cooked properly. Cassava, like many roots, has multiple names. Some people know it as yuca, manioc, mandioca, and tapioca.

You might introduce new root combinations, such as mashed potato and rutabaga. We use this to top baked dishes like shepherd's pie. And the next time you make coleslaw, consider enhancing the celery flavor with celeriac and adding color and tang with radishes and shredded daikon.

In soups and stews, root vegetables add bulk, nutrition, and color. Cut a new root to a size



Rutabaga is a root vegetable we always keep on hand for soups, stews, or as a mashed side dish.

that will cook at about the same time as your carrots and potatoes, or add a new flavor, such as fennel, to the base of onions and celery as you sauté them.

Roasted whole potatoes and sweet potatoes serve as the base for a meal when we stuff them with everything from canned beans and sausage stuffing to leftovers.

Ancestral Dialogue

In Food and Wine, Chef Kevin

Gillespie explained how a trip to Scotland changed his attitude toward cooking. "It reframed my cooking not as personal expression, but as ancestral dialogue. To be a future ancestor, I realized, is to carry forward not only one's own story, but the stories of those who endured, adapted, and fed others before us."

As you choose the root vegetables and recipes to cook, share the stories of your personal connection to some of them

with your friends and family. If, like us, you love learning about other food traditions, expand your selections to include those of other cultures and pass them forward as well. Cooking and dining can be a form of armchair travel and mini-adventures into history and the unknown.

Do you have a question or topic for Fresh & Local? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

Old North Illuminated presents "Puritan New England... 2026?"

Join Old North Illuminated for an engaging online conversation with historian Lori Rogers-Stokes exploring what modern-day New Englanders inherit from the Puritans. Set for Wednesday, March 25, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., this virtual event will examine how the religious movement most closely associated with New England shaped the region in lasting ways. While the English religious group known as the Puritans migrated to South America, the Caribbean, and Canada, it was in New England that their culture became both well-defined and dominant. Centuries after the last Puritan lived here, their influence continues to echo across the region. Dr. Rog-

ers-Stokes will highlight three important ideas from the 17th century that New Englanders are still practicing today, inviting participants to reconsider the enduring legacy of these well-known but often misunderstood people. The program is part of Old North Illuminated's ongoing commitment to public history and community dialogue. This virtual event is accessible with a donation of any amount to support Old North Illuminated, the nonprofit that stewards Old North Church Historic Site. The 2026 Speaker Series is brought to you in part by HUB Town Tours. To register, please visit: <https://www.oldnorth.com/events/>.

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Chef Kevin Girshman joins nine

Staff Report

The nine restaurant is thrilled to welcome Kevin Girshman as the new Chef de Cuisine. Girshman will be joining the staff on March 3, from Chicago's renowned culinary scene. Girshman credits Marcos Campos as a pivotal mentor, having worked alongside him during openings and transformations at celebrated concepts such as Mama Delia—which rebranded from Black Bull—and the one-Michelin-starred Porto. His résumé also includes time at Michelin-starred standouts Oriole and Moody Tongue. After years immersed in French, Japanese, and Spanish cuisines—crafting bold flavors and unforgettable dishes—Chef Girshman brings passion, creativity, and a fresh perspective to our kitchen. Get ready for innovative menus, seasonal ingredients, and memorable dining moments at nine.

Located at the iconic 9 Park



Kevin Girshman

Street Place in Boston's historic Beacon Hill, nine is a neighborhood restaurant redefining fine dining. Guests can expect exceptional food and beverage paired with the highest standard of service in an inviting atmosphere. nine's approach to hospitality blends old-school fine dining values with a modern sense of accessibility and personality. The nine team does not view hospitality as just a service standard, but rather as a philosophy that they live by and incorporate into every aspect of the restaurant experience.

Some residents raise concerns about anti-drone effort

By Dylan Shobe

With millions expected to descend onto the World Cup this spring, some Boston residents voiced concerns about the implementation of anti-drone technology that might be deployed to monitor the games.

They said they are suspicious about what would happen to the technology when the matches are over and who will have access to it, given preexisting surveillance devices in Boston.

They also recall this month's spectacle in El Paso, Texas, when US Customs and Border Protection agents used an anti-military laser to shoot down what they said were cartel-linked drones, only to discover they were party balloons.

"We're hungry for order, we're hungry for structure and I'm hungry to hear what logistics will look like because we haven't heard anything," said Eryn-Ashlei Bailey, a member of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood

Council.

The state announced last month that it received \$21.2 million in grant funding from the federal government to cover safety measures, including additional personnel and methods to detect, destroy or disable malicious-drone activity at the World Cup. The investment will ensure state and local law enforcement agencies "are equipped to safeguard residents and visitors during events like the World Cup," said public safety and security Secretary Gina Kwon in a press release.

The grants include nearly \$11 million for the Boston Police Department, nearly \$4 million for the Foxborough Police Department and nearly \$7 million for the Massachusetts Police Department.

Funding comes from the federal Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems Grant Program, which is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"These grants will help state and local police agencies bolster security, training and equipment to keep residents and visitors safe throughout the games and surrounding celebrations," Gov. Maura Healey said in a press release announcing the grants.

The grants are part of a larger \$500-million initiative that will be split over the 2026 and 2027 fiscal years, according to FEMA documents. The World Cup and America 250 celebrations will receive priority, with unallocated funds directed to next year.

FIFA World Cup 2026™ will be staged across 16 host cities in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and include 104 matches. It is expected to attract 5 million people.

Boston will host seven matches this summer at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, according to Boston Host Committee for the World Cup's website.

In addition, thousands are expected to descend onto Boston City Hall Plaza to celebrate the game in the heart of the city, and World Cup watch parties will be held throughout the neighborhoods.

Authorities have said that as part of their World Cup planning, they aim to keep the public safe.

Bailey said that she is concerned about counter-drone technology deployed in communities that face constant pressure from Immigration Customs and Enforcement agents. She said she also worries about overpolicing people in communities of color who are fearful of ICE.

People are afraid," she said. "Then you're bringing in this mass, powerful technology. The default would be, 'We don't want this technology. We want to protect our neighbors.'"

She said she hopes authorities will hold public conversations in communities near the World Cup, including Boston, about how these safety measures would be used.

David Chase Brewster III, another neighborhood council member, said while JP will be a distance away from the Boston World Cup matches, he is concerned about the increasing use of technology by people with bad intentions and by the government, which is supposed to protect the people.

Drones are inexpensive, small and easy to hide, he said.

"I see this being a concern of the Boston police," said Brewster. "I would be happy if bad guys aren't driving drones into my house."

Dylan Shobe 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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Real Estate Transfers

BUYER 1	SELLER 1	ADDRESS	PRICE
BACK BAY			
Palumbo, Michael J	Reiser, Hans	18 Arlington St #53	\$1,800,000
1945 Columbus Avenue LLC	Larosa Dev Corp	1945 Columbus Ave	\$1,532,697
Myerberg, Jonah	408 Hexagon LLC	408 Beacon St #1	\$3,650,000
Vitt, Ursula A	Lacaprucia, Joyce D	570 Massachusetts Ave #5	\$925,000
Jewell, Timothy	Blodgett, Mark S	74 Commonwealth Ave #9	\$649,000
Fitzgerald, Mark R	80 Beacon Street Rt	80 Beacon St #32	\$550,000
BEACON HILL			
Welsh, Peter	Ladakh Realty LLC	142 Chestnut St #11	\$4,900,000
Kwon, Young-Min	Thompson, Harris E	145 Pinckney St #404	\$685,000
Trae Tremont LLC	Dianne R Rottenberg RET	165 Tremont St #1401	\$2,300,000
Dmcc Properties LLC	Zhao, Valerie Z	668 Tremont St #3	\$540,000
Stormcastle Auto LLC	Ladakh Realty LLC	70 Brimmer St #128	\$625,000
BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE			
116 Concord LLC	Dunhouse, Steven	116 W Concord St #4	\$900,000
Milford House LLC	4 Milford Street LLC	4 Milford St	\$2,000,000
DOWNTOWN/WATERFRONT			
Ohanley, Ronald P	Rowes Wharf 309 Rt	20 Rowes Wharf #309	\$3,700,000
236 Lewis Wharf LLC	240 Lewis Wharf LLC	28-32 Atlantic Ave #236	\$750,000
Schwartz Jr, Robert C	33 Pearl Street LLC	33 Pearl St #4	\$1,100,000
Tavarez, Joel	Figueroa, Cristina	88 Hudson St #609	\$227,225

Attention to Detail

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER

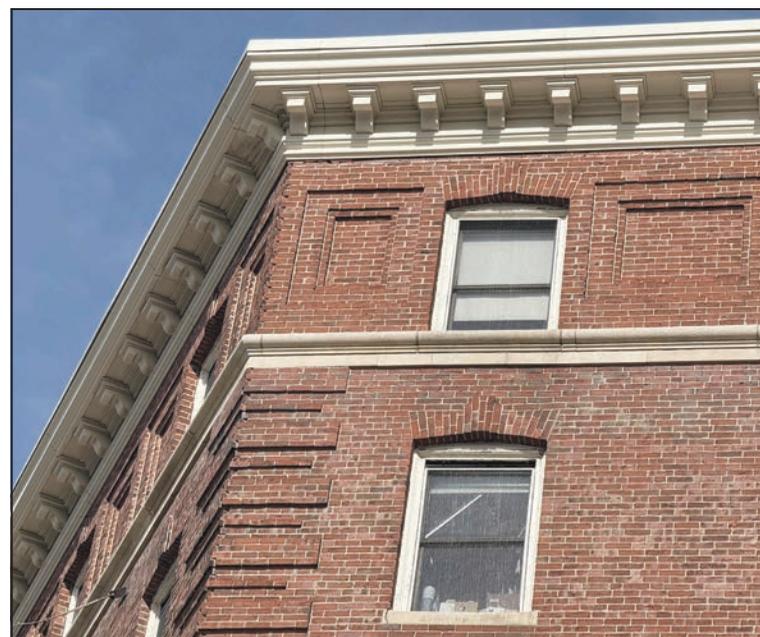


The feet in the last clue are on sculptor Fern Cunningham's statue of Harriet Tubman at the intersection of Columbus Avenue and Pembroke Street. The National Park Service's "...interactive digital map showcases the people and places associated with the Underground Railroad in Boston." Search for "Mapping the Underground Railroad in Boston."

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



NEW Health announces new dental services

Special to the Sun

North End Waterfront Health (NEW Health), a community health center in Boston, announces the launch of new dental services: ClearCorrect aligners and 3D printing services for faster, more convenient and more affordable dental care. These are in addition to new facial cosmetic services that launched in fall of 2025.

NEW Health has added ClearCorrect clear aligner therapy to its dental services, expanding access to modern orthodontic care within our community.

ClearCorrect provides customized treatment plans using advanced digital technology to gradually and predictably align teeth. The aligners are clear, removable, and designed for comfort, allowing patients to eat, brush, and floss normally without brackets or wires. Offered at competitive pricing compared to other area providers, ClearCorrect at NEW Health makes high quality orthodontic care more accessible for those seeking a

discreet alternative to traditional braces.

NEW Health now also offers 3D printing services with cutting-edge technology. The dental team is trained to scan and print a variety of products—many available the same day as a patient's appointment, including: Crowns, Occlusal/Night Guards, Athletic Mouthguards, Clear Retainers, Veneers, Ceramic Inlays, and Onlays.

"We are always looking for new ways to expand our services to provide what our patients are looking for, while at the same time supporting and maintaining our core mission of being a community health center," said Vincenzo "Vin" Scibelli, NEW Health CEO. "We look forward to welcoming new dental patients in 2026."

These new services are an expansion of the already robust dental department at NEW Health, which also provides comprehensive dental examinations, digital radiography, professional dental cleanings, tooth-colored restorations, teeth

whitening treatments, removable dentures, root canal therapy, oral surgery, restoration of dental implants, and pediatric dentistry.

New facial cosmetic services also launched in fall of 2025. Licensed and certified dentists provide Botox and dermal filler treatments designed to refresh appearance and enhance natural beauty. With advanced training and an expert understanding of facial aesthetics, they bring both artistry and precision to every treatment for natural-looking results in a trusted health care environment. These quick, non-surgical treatments provide results with little to no downtime and NEW Health dentists, Dr. Elodia Kore and Dr. Erika Omansky, are highly trained to deliver all services with expertise and compassion.

The services are open to all — those who are interested do not need to be primary dental care patients at NEW Health, although they will undergo a

(NEW HEALTH, Pg. 15)

BEACON HILL WOMEN'S FORUM HOSTS GUEST SPEAKER MEREDITH GOLDSTEIN

Photos & Story by Marianne Salza

Associate editor for The Boston Globe, Meredith Goldstein, presented "Love in the Modern Age: Insights from an Advice Columnist" during the February 10 Beacon Hill Women's Forum at The Union Club of Boston. The feature writer shared her relationship perspectives, and how her work has changed in

this digital age since she began her "Love Letters" column, and later, podcast, in 2009.

"Opinions I have have radically changed. Back then, I was like, 'Be polite. You can't ask someone out by text,' and now I would say, 'Call them? They're going to think there's an emergency,'" exclaimed Goldstein. "The boundaries and the way people talk have changed so

much."

Born in New Jersey and raised in Maryland, Goldstein attended Syracuse University, where she met many people with ties to Boston. Their love for their home, and investment in the city's news coverage attracted Goldstein.

At the difficult time when Goldstein began her journalism career, organizations were starting to shrink; but she convinced The Boston Globe of the value in the topic of love. For hundreds of years, advice columns have been historical commentary on the dynamics of domestic life and relationships.

"Love Letters" was one of the first features in The Boston Globe to be reverse published: questions were posted and commented on first, and then published in print.

"The internet is a meaner, scarier place now, but it can also be wonderful," admitted Goldstein. "2009 was a beautiful time. When we first started 'Love Letters' I would post a question,

and people would comment, but we were manually approving the comments. Then it became automated. Some days I think we should go back."

The "Love Letters" storytelling podcast highlights the unique experience of individual stories and has become popular, with the majority of listeners being women between the ages of 25-45. Fifty-percent or more of guest speakers are coupled, but some are single. Goldstein hopes to share a broad range of stories from people of all ages.

"I think couples are looking for virtual community through a podcast, a parasocial relationship with people they don't know, and answers on how to keep their lives bigger," said Goldstein.

Considering the comments that she receives from wives mentioning that "Love Letters" is the first column their husbands read in the morning, and from men who do not yet accept themselves as her demographic, Goldstein estimates that readers of her column are predominantly male between the ages of 55-70.

"This excites me," embraced Goldstein. "I also think there's some sexism and misogyny. I

think, back in the day, there was some assumption that it wasn't important. In 2026, I don't face that anymore. I think everybody at The Boston Globe thinks there are more important things than 'Love Letters' but understands how love and how we love each other is tied to everything."

Topics range from the loneliness epidemic, health insurance laws, public policy, and finances, to break-ups and lessons learned, as well as gender, infidelity, relationship structure, privacy, happiness, and the search for love.

"I happen to think there's a 'Love Letters' story on every person's beat," said Goldstein, who compared the week leading up to Valentine's Day to her Super Bowl.

Goldstein recalled having read an early 20th century Yiddish advice column based in New York. Some issues, like suddenly stopping communication – referred to as ghosting today – are relatable at any time in history.

Social media-related problems; however, are different. With the prominence of remote work, people often have difficulty connecting.

"Feeling lonely because the internet tells you you are lacking is a problem," Goldstein stressed. "When apps became the primary way people were dating, what I saw was a level of dating fatigue that I felt was like a health condition. People would say to me, 'I'm so tired, but I feel like if I don't swipe all night, I could be missing someone.'"

Goldstein, who has been reporting on love for 17 years, considers herself to be a more passive advice columnist who will ask a guest how he or she feels about a relationship, bas-

(BHWF, Pg. 15)



Julie Madjar, Mary Beth Kelley, Meredith Braunstein, and Mimi Sun.



Beacon Hill Women's Forum members gathered at The Union Club of Boston for the February 10 presentation by Boston Globe reporter, Meredith Goldstein.



Grace Lee, BHWF Program Co-Director, and Ying Cao.



Linda Blessing, Meredith Braunstein, and Perla Fernandez, BHWF Vice President and Graphic Designer.



New BHWF members, Jen Corapi, Kaitlyn Bricker, and Jackie DiPersio.



Meredith Goldstein, feature writer for The Boston Globe's "Love Letters" column and podcast, describing love in the digital age.

Mass. House passes bills regulating AI use in elections

Special to the Sun

The Massachusetts House of Representatives today passed bills regulating the use of artificial intelligence in political advertisements. The bills would require the disclosure of AI use in political advertisements and would ban deceptive communications about a candidate or about the electoral process within three months of an election.

“As artificial intelligence continues to reshape our economy and many aspects of our daily lives, lawmakers have a responsibility to ensure that AI does not further the spread of misinformation in our politics. That’s why these bills are so important, as they mandate that campaigns disclose the use of AI in any political advertisements, and they ban the use of AI in campaign ads 90 days before an election,” said House Speaker Ronald J. Mariano (D-Quincy). “I want to thank my colleagues in the House for their work on this legislation, and for recognizing the importance of the safeguards that these bills put in place.”

“If you watched the Super Bowl, you saw how widespread artificial intelligence has become. AI is no longer theoretical - it is in our everyday lives,” said Representative Daniel Hunt (D-Dorchester), House Chair of the Committee on Election Laws. “At the same time, the conversation around election security, which has been front and center for the last several years, feels more turbulent and under siege. Voters deserve to know that what they’re seeing is real. That’s why the Legislature continues to strengthen our election infrastructure, and why we’re focused today on setting clear standards for the use of AI in election materials, so we can guard against deceptive or misleading content.”

“The use of AI-generated

deepfakes for the purposes of manipulating voters and disrupting elections is an attack on democracy,” said Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier, House Chair on the Joint Committee on Advanced Information Technology, the Internet and Cybersecurity. “As technology advances at a rapid pace, voters should not have to wade through maliciously altered or AI-generated content to get the facts about an election. The House is taking reasonable and timely steps to mitigate any possible negative outcomes and preserve election integrity.”

“As we approach another election season, we cannot ignore the reality of artificial intelligence being weaponized to spread misinformation at an unprecedented scale,” said Representative Jessica Ann Giannino (D-Revere). “Deepfakes and synthetic media pose a direct threat to voter trust and to the integrity of our democratic process. These bills send a clear message: in Massachusetts, we will not allow deception to undermine our elections. Voters deserve to know that what they are seeing and hearing is real. I am grateful to Speaker Mariano, Chairman Hunt, Chair Farley-Bouvier, and our colleagues for their leadership in advancing these critical protections to safeguard our democracy.”

“Integrity in our elections is essential to our democracy. These pieces of legislation require that the public be notified when AI is used in a political campaign and prohibits the unlawful use of AI to create fake ads. I am pleased to support both of these bills,” said State Representative Jeffrey Rosario Turco (D. Winthrop).

An Act to Protect against Election Misinformation prohibits the distribution of deceptive communications within 90 days of an election, which includes:

- Audio or visual media which depicts a candidate with intent to

injure their reputation or deceive a voter into voting for or against them.

- Media that concerns the safety or regular operations of an election with intent to disrupt the integrity of the electoral process.

- Content with the intent to mislead voters as to the date and time of an election; the requirements, methods, or deadlines to vote; the certification of an election; and the express endorsement of a candidate or ballot initiative by a political party, elected official, nonprofit organization, or another person.

The bill authorizes a political candidate whose voice or likeness appears in a materially deceptive audio or visual media to seek injunctive or other equitable relief prohibiting the distribution of the media, or to bring an action for damages and attorney’s fees against the party that distributed the media. Exemptions for the 90-day prohibition include: media outlets who air the ads or report on the ads as part of a newscast as long as they clearly acknowledge that there are questions about its authenticity; websites, newspapers, magazines and periodicals; and satire and parody.

Act enhancing disclosure requirements for synthetic media in political advertising requires that any synthetic media audio or video communication intended to influence voting for or against a candidate or ballot proposition must disclose at the beginning and end of the communication that it contains AI generated materials. Violations are punishable by a fine of not more than \$1,000.

“With the rapid advancement in new media technologies, it is important that we have proper safeguards in place to ensure this technology is not abused or manipulated to intentionally mislead voters,” said House

Minority Leader Bradley H. Jones. “House Bill 5094 provides for greater election transparency by mandating the full disclosure of any artificial intelligence-generated synthetic media used in political advertising and establishing monetary penalties for violations. Promoting the responsible use of new technologies in campaign advertising will help to ensure that voters have access to reliable information, so

they can make an informed decision about whether to support a candidate.”

An Act to Protect against Election Misinformation passed the House by a vote of 154-3. An Act enhancing disclosure requirements for synthetic media in political advertising passed the House by a vote of 157-0. Both bills now go to the Senate for consideration.

NEW HEALTH (from Page 13)

comprehensive exam with a NEW Health clinician.

Facial cosmetic services are available at out-of-pocket costs, but at competitive prices. For other dental services, NEW Health Dental accepts most major insurances, including MassHealth and Commonwealth Care Alliance. Free consultations at the North End location (332 Hanover Street in Boston) can be scheduled by calling (617) 643-8070.

As a federally qualified health center and an affiliate of Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Medical Center, North End Waterfront Health (NEW Health) extends its world-renowned healthcare services to people who live and work in and around Boston’s North End, Waterfront and Charlestown neighborhoods. NEW Health is committed to improving the quality of health and life for those it serves by providing high quality health care that is consumer oriented, culturally appropriate, neighborhood-based, affordable,

and produces positive outcomes. NEW Health is a 2025 Health Center Quality Leader (HCQL), receiving a Gold badge from the Health Resources and Services Administration, among the top 10% of health centers nationwide. NEW Health also received HRSA Quality Badges for Heart Health, Cancer Screening, Advancing Health IT, and Preventive Health.

NEW Health has been serving the North End of Boston and the surrounding community since 1971. In addition to primary care services for all patients, many specialty services are also offered including dental, vision, behavioral health, obstetrics, gynecology, laboratory services and x-ray services. NEW Health is a private, non-profit corporation that is governed by a community-based Board of Directors and licensed by the Department of Public Health. More information at www.newhealthcenter.org, on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

BHWF (from Page 14)

ing her response on the fragment of relationship information she receives.

“Universally, loss is horrible. Grief is hard,” Goldstein explained about a common theme she observes. “A lot of people now don’t know if they’re doing okay. This has long been a thing. There’s not a lot that cel-

brates what we have, and that can skew our perspective of all the great things we have.”

In addition to her successful “Love Letters” column, Goldstein – who lives in Boston with a collection of romance books and a cotton candy machine -- is the author of young adult novels, “Chemistry Lessons,” and

“Things that Grow,” as well as the memoir, “Can’t Help Myself: Lessons and Confessions from a Modern Advice Columnist.”

Read or submit to Meredith Goldstein’s “Love Letters” column by visiting Boston.com/LoveLetters.

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