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APRIL 16, 2020



THE BEACON HILL TIMES

T H E R E A R E N O T I M E S L I K E T H E S E T I M E S

You are not stuck at home...
You are SAFE at home

Upstairs Downstairs Antiques endures trouble-plagued month

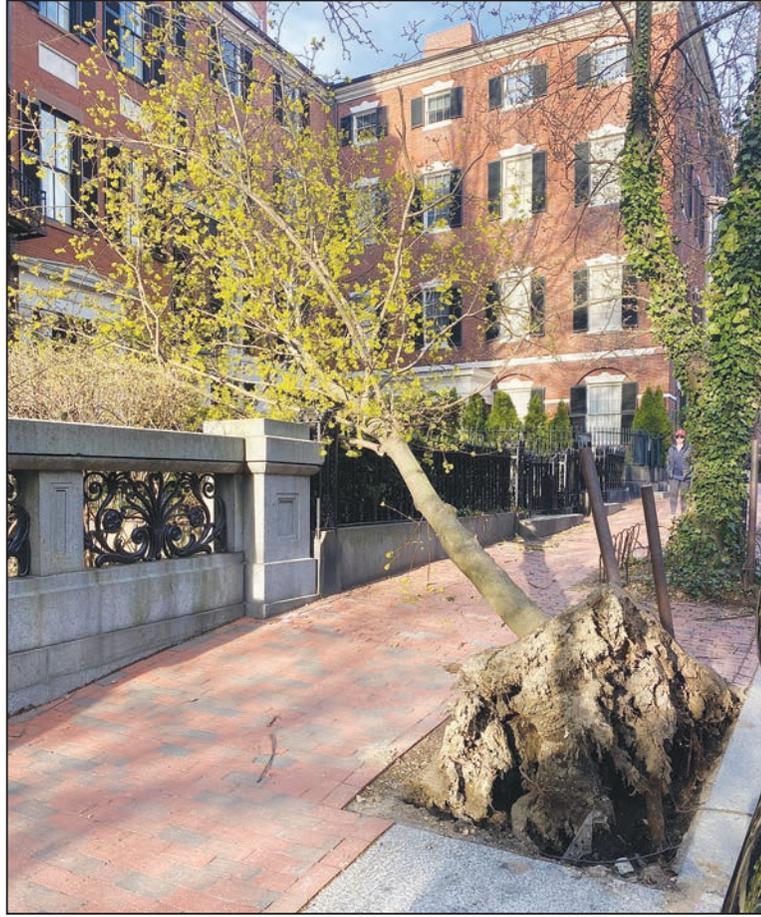
By Dan Murphy

March was a month plagued with troubles for Upstairs Downstairs Antiques.

The first setback for the long-standing Charles Street business that helped launch the annual Beacon Hill Holiday Stroll came on March 10 when a fire hydrant at Pinckney Street and Cedar Lane Way burst during routine maintenance by the Boston Water and Sewer Commission. Two feet of water from the hydrant seeped through the walls and flooded the rear of the store, destroying much of its inventory in the process.

Laura Cousineau, proprietor,

(ANTIQUES Pg. 6)



Walking along Mt. Vernon Street was more challenging after the high winds toppled this tree on Monday.

Antonio's offers unique way to show gratitude to MGH staff

By Dan Murphy

Antonio's Cucina Italiano is offering patrons a unique way to show their gratitude to Mass General with a special offer for food deliveries to the hospital's doctors, nurses and other employees working in the age of COVID-19.

Steven Colarusso, owner of the restaurant at a 288 Cambridge St., said good Samaritans can 617-367-3310 and provide their credit card number for a delivery to a specific MGH staff member. They can select particular dishes for a recipient from the online menu at www.antoniosbeaconhill.com,

or instead provide the restaurant with the recipient's contact information and Antonio's will contact them directly for their orders.

If someone would like to contribute to the cause but doesn't have a recipient in mind, they can also opt to provide their credit card number to the restaurant, which will then select MGH staff members from a particular floor of the hospital.

The restaurant would choose recipients from different floors in the hospital each day to ensure that donations are distributed evenly among MGH staff,

(ANTONIO'S Pg. 2)

Walsh outlines city's efforts in preparation of COVID surge

By Lauren Bennett

Mayor Walsh continues to stress the importance of social distancing, especially as the state prepares for a surge in cases of COVID-19. He also provided some updates on programming and resources the city is offering residents through press conferences and releases.

As of April 14, Boston had 4,286 cases and 84 deaths. So far, 547 people have recovered from the virus.

Mayor Walsh said on April 13 that "the next two weeks are very critical to achieving our goal," and that the number of cases in Boston have "more than doubled in the past 7 days."

He said that new projections put the peak's arrival "closer to the end of April."

As some states and the federal

government talk about reopening the economy after May 1, Walsh said that this is "not only unrealistic; it's impossible. "This is not the time to talk about going back to normal," he said. "We will start to continue to move forward after the surge passes."

He said that as of Sunday evening, 29 patients are in the hospital side of the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center field hospital, and 16 are on the homeless individuals side.

Walsh also said that there has been "quick progress" on the small business relief fund, and the City has received nearly 3000 applications. Businesses can use this money towards rent, payroll, or other challenges this virus has presented. Walsh said that this round of funding has closed, but he will make an announcement

(SURGE Pg. 5)

BEACON HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY CORNER

Beacon Hill's History of Supporting Affordable Housing

by Suzanne Besser

From its earliest days, the Beacon Hill Civic Association has sought to preserve Beacon Hill as a residential neighborhood for individuals and families of all economic backgrounds. Leaders in the community have a long history of creating affordable housing and raising money



Rogerson Communities Beacon House located at 16 Myrtle Street, Beacon Hill

(BHCA, Pg. 7)

For the latest news in Beacon Hill that you need to know, check
www.beaconhilltimes.com

City Council to discuss ways to help residents facing displacement or in need of rental assistance

By Lauren Bennett

The City Council Committee on Housing and Community Development held a virtual Zoom meeting on April 9 on two different hearing orders that have been filed regarding assistance for those facing eviction, displacement, and who are in need of rental assistance.

Councilor Ed Flynn filed an "order for a hearing to discuss ways to support tenants facing eviction and displacement," and Councilor Lydia Edwards filed an "order for a hearing regarding the creation of temporary rental assistance to support residents impacted by COVID-19."

Councilor Edwards pointed out that "this is not a new conversation for many..." as "many people are already dealing with a 6, 7, 8 alarm fire and this pandemic poured gasoline on it," she said. This hearing was the first of many conversations that will help the City "hopefully come up with additional resources to not only deal with this pandemic, but the housing crisis moving forward," she said. "We cannot continue the

way we did before this pandemic."

Councilor Ed Flynn said that over 16 million Americans have filed for unemployment over the past few weeks. "This hearing would be a good vehicle to discuss how we can continue to protect tenants," he said. "I still believe that this is an important conversation to have and I suspect it will be one we will continue to discuss in our city."

The \$3 million in City funds to help residents pay rent "is just the tip of the iceberg," said City Councilor Kenzie Bok. "This comes on top of a situation where people were not able to keep stable housing," she said. She added that recently released data show "an enormous, off the charts application for SNAP benefits."

"Big pieces of this are going to have to be done at the federal and state level," she continued, but she said the Council will do "what we can to push some of our larger agendas around tenants rights."

Dominique Williams, Director of the Office of Housing Stability, said that 4,467 households had applied to the rental relief fund as of April 8, and the city is targeting those relief funds to those

who are either not eligible for unemployment benefits or whose titles would mean that they would not receive enough money to pay their rent.

Due to the number of applicants, Williams said they decided to hold a lottery, and "[the Department of Neighborhood Development (DND)] is working very hard to find additional funds," she said.

Taylor Cain, the Director of the Innovation Housing Lab, said that the housing lottery form is available in six different languages, and they are also thinking about households who don't have "reliable access to the Internet."

DND Housing Policy Manager Tim Davis said that the federal CARES Act "provides significant resources which will keep many renters stabilized." He also said that Black and Latino Bostonians are most likely to be in jobs where they will be laid off.

Additionally, "we are concerned that unemployment benefits will not do enough" to help the city's 18,000 undocumented workers. "We are already working to add additional funds to the \$3 million," he said.

He said they figured that the \$3 million would go to between 700 and 800 applicants. "We're still waiting to figure out exactly how this is going to play out," he said, "considering we don't even know how long this crisis is going to last."

DND has also screened out tenants who are not from Boston to "ensure that the resources are going to the right folks. We really just want to stress that this money is not directed towards the landlord," he added, "so as to not "penalize the tenant for the landlord's inaction."

The lottery ended at noon on April 10, and the goal after the lottery is to get the payments issued before May 1, said Katie Forde, Operations Manager for the Office of Housing Stability.

City Councilor Julia Mejia asked what would be done for the residents who enter the lottery but do not win. Forde said that the city is "tracking people to make sure they don't fall through the cracks," and staff across DND who speak multiple languages have been engaged and will be in touch with those residents.

Some public comment includ-

ed concerns about undocumented immigrants and language barriers when it came to the application, as well as the short window of time for people to apply for this round of funding.

"Our focus has been on the work of this fund and we know that there's that need out there and some people might fall through the cracks and that is on us," Forde said. "We want to make sure that this is a fair and equitable process."

Councilor Edwards said that the City Council will have a "follow up conversation on this exact fund. The questions don't end today and the concerns don't end today because the crisis doesn't end today," she said. "There's lessons we can learn as we go along." She said she believes the people working in the city departments are "doing the best they can," and that she will make sure that the working session related to these hearing orders is interpreted to reach the most residents.

"This is the beginning of a conversation," she said.

GoFundMe campaign created to help neighborhood's small businesses in time of need

By Dan Murphy

A GoFundMe "crowdfunding" campaign aims will provide some much-needed relief for small neighborhood businesses now struggling in the face of COVID-19.

The idea was hatched a couple of weeks ago when longtime resident Diana Coldren reached out to Ali Ringenburg, co-president of the Beacon Hill Business Association, and pitched the idea of creating a document that would compile and list current information on neighborhood businesses, such their websites, as well as which restaurants are now offering takeout and delivery.

"I was talking to other res-

idents and thinking of ways to support local businesses, which contribute so much to the unique character of the neighborhood," Coldren said. "The people who work in these store and restaurants really are an extension of the community."

The conversation quickly turned to other ways to help out the neighborhood's businesses, and the two women settled on launching a GoFundMe campaign to raise money to cover the electric bills for the month of March for small businesses that operate within the Historic Beacon Hill District. (A "small business" is defined as one with less than 35 employees, and only neighborhood businesses that were open as of March 1,

2020, and plan to reopen are eligible.) The online campaign, which can be found at https://www.gofundme.com/f/ep67vh-supporting-beacon-hill-small-businesses?sharetype=teams&member=4202714&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=customer&utm_campaign=p_na+share-sheet&rcid=124cacdb3bc4ee898f3d5f529e77aec, aims to raise \$30,000 to achieve this goal, and proceeds will be distributed evenly among eligible businesses, with each expected to receive around \$150.

"Paying their electric bills is an easy way to help," Coldren said. "It's a small amount, but it's a gesture of good will."

Donors can also opt to send

a check payable to the Beacon Hill Business Association to Cambridge Trust, Attn: Stacy, 65 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108 by May 1, and any funds remaining after businesses receive their allotment would be used to help support a volunteer clean-up of Charles Street, Coldren said.

"What is going on with retail businesses and restaurants is pretty bleak, and it's very uncertain how much money they will receive in loans and what profit they can take in in the next couple of months," Ringenburg said.

But despite this grim outlook, she is encouraged to see the profound outpouring of support the Beacon Hill residential community has shown for the neighborhood's business community.

"It's just a great example how interconnected and involved the neighborhood has been," Ringenburg said of the GoFundMe effort, "and it's really inspiring to see how supportive, caring and industrious so many neighbors are when it comes to helping out these businesses."

ANTONIO'S (from pg. 1)

Colarusso said, and food deliveries will happen at the street level to ensure the safety of all.

Moreover, Antonio's is also showing its gratitude to Mass

General by taking 20 percent of all donations to hospital staff, "so we're helping out, too," Colarusso said.

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BACK BAY			
Cramer, Steven M	Choi, Byung W	149 Beacon St #4	\$1,075,000
White, Mary C	Shine, Timothy M	183 Commonwealth Ave #1	\$2,235,000
Kuznetsova, Zhanna	ElHariry, Iman	110 Stuart St #17A	\$1,610,000
Brown, Patrick M	Sowell, Margaret O	12 Gloucester St #4	\$1,800,000
BEACON HILL			
Lui, Qinyan	Cui, Rena R	22 Irving St #1	\$427,000
Maloney, Thomas M	Druss, Benjamin J	61 Mount Vernon St #G	\$830,000
Patel, Jayeshbhai D	Crowley, Charles B	68 Phillips St #2	\$225,000
Lee, Yu-Chi	Gomez, Dagmar B	32 Temple St #2	\$640,000
BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE			
Simson, Jacob	Clymer, Jeff D	429 Columbus Ave #2	\$1,974,000
Steiner, David	Duncan, Daniel R	148 Warren Ave #2	\$759,000
Marsh, Regan H	Curtis, Cynthia J	12 Bradford St #2	\$1,313,000
Curtis, Cynthia J	Bernstein, Daniel C	17 Bradford St #1	\$1,375,000
Wang, Yanzhi	Wu, Jiannan	75 Burbank St #401	\$495,000
Jacobson, Benjamin M	390 Windsor Pl 601	690 Commonwealth Ave #601	\$700,000
Pomper, Steven D	Ryan, Ellen A	11 Durham St #1	\$1,225,000
Kevan, Kelley A	Dhemecourt, Kirsten	46 E Springfield St #2	\$515,000
Kendall, Michael	Salvatore, Gregory J	103 Gainsborough St #402	\$590,000
Kendall, Michael	Salvatore, Gregory J	87 Gainsborough St #201	\$590,000
Diem-Nguyen, Tammy	Perahya, Alp	485-495 Harrison Ave #208	\$1,225,000
Jorgensen, Elisa M	26 Rutland Square 3 RT	26 Rutland Sq #3	\$1,900,000
Kehoe, Jonathan	Urbanista RT	1 Saint George St #3A	\$1,049,000
Markowski, Michelle S	Baker, David G	35 Symphony Rd #B	\$550,000
Au, Ernie	JP Property 1 LLC	3531 Washington St #207	\$627,000
Dorfman, Michelle L	JP Property 1 LLC	3531 Washington St #222	\$722,000
Serone Westland LLC	Chandler T 2	16-20 Westland Ave	\$24,000,000
WATERFRONT/DOWNTOWN			
Goodwin, Joseph K	Unit 27D RT	1 Avery St #27D	\$2,200,000
Jeong, Hu Y	Nashed, Michael M	2 Avery St #24A	\$1,000,000
Rosenfeld, Luke	Colacchio, Kimberly P	9-15 Battery St #8	\$760,000
Kasuli, Oli	Sarkis, George	65 E India Row #7A	\$649,000
Caswell, Mark J	Wang, Tim	85 E India Row #36D	\$665,000
Nina C Investment LLC	Nancy I Brenner Wluka	1 Franklin St #1004	\$1,775,000
Martin, Theresa	Sanderson Mary C Est	134-136 Fulton St #4	\$1,310,000

BEACON HILL BEAT

From Boston Police Area A-1

COMMUNITY SERVICE OFFICE: 617-343-4627
DRUG UNIT: 617-343-4879 • EMERGENCIES: 911

Larceny - Bicycle
04/05/20 – A victim reports he locked his bicycle (red and black; model unknown) to a bike rack at Cambridge and Joy streets

at around 10 a.m., but when he returned at approximately 12:40 p.m., it had been stolen.

Larceny
04/07/20 – A victim reported he

had a package containing clothing delivered to the front entrance of his Garden Street residence that was stolen by unknown person(s).

Attention to Detail

BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The garage door in the last clue is on 70 River Street which was built in 1869 as a stable. The architect is listed as Daniel Davies and the architectural style is Second Empire. Today the property is assessed as a two-family residential dwelling with an address of 70-82 River Street.

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

THIS WEEK'S CLUE



EDITORIAL

A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL?

The United States now is the official epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic.

We have more deaths and more cases of disease than anywhere else in the world.

However, this past weekend the experts began to give us a glimmer of hope that we are turning the tide against this dreaded foe and the possibility that our lives may return to some semblance of normality in incremental steps within 30-60 days.

We are the first to concede that there are many “ifs” to any discussion of ending the shutdown of the U.S. economy and the present lockdown mandates currently in place throughout most of the nation. A vast increase in testing in order to identify both virus carriers and those who may have immunity will be essential before we can begin to emerge meaningfully from our life of quarantine.

It also is clear that even with some sort easing of the lockdowns, life still will be far from normal: Schools most likely will remain closed for the rest of this school year, professional sports will not take place anytime soon, public gatherings of all kinds will be banned, and the travel industry will continue to be in a state of non-existence indefinitely.

But the experts’ insights about the possibility of some degree of easing of our current situation brought to mind the famous words of Winston Churchill amidst the worst days of World War II when Nazi Germany’s advance had been stopped by England with the defeat of Rommel at El Alamein:

“Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”

Our war against the coronavirus still has a long way to go. But with the outbreaks and death toll dropping in many places around the world, including New York City, perhaps we can see a pinhole of light in the long, dark tunnel in which we find ourselves.

SO LET’S TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER

The weather this April has been full of irony. We had mild months for January, February, and March, with above-average temperatures (among the warmest on record) and few storms of any consequence.

However, April has been anything but spring-like. Temperatures have been below normal and two fierce storms, including this past Monday’s, left many of us without power.

So although April thus far has ranged from seasonably unpleasant to rather ferocious, weather-wise, at least it has provided us with a diversion from our preoccupation with the coronavirus.

GUEST OP-ED

We are a resilient city of resilient people

By Mayor Martin J. Walsh

The coronavirus is unlike anything we’ve experienced in living memory, and it’s testing our city in a way that it’s never been tested before. It has required a major, all-hands-on-deck response, and it has affected every aspect of daily life in Boston. Every day, we are sending our love, our support, and our prayers to everyone who’s battling this terrible illness, and our hearts break for the families who have lost loved ones.

The grief I feel for these families is coupled with an immense sense of pride for our city. The people of Boston have shown bravery, strength, and solidarity with one another since this crisis began. We’ve had to close our schools, postpone some of our most beloved traditions, and ask residents to keep their distance from the people they love the most.

I know that these changes have been very difficult for many people. But I’m not hearing complaints; the overwhelming reaction has been support and cooperation.

People are focused on protecting their fellow Bostonians, especially the most vulnerable among us. People understand that the measures we’re taking, no matter how drastic they may feel, will save lives. That is our top priority, and the people of Boston have rallied around it. I’ve seen people, businesses, and organizations stepping up and doing the right thing. I’ve seen wonderful acts of kindness. And I’ve seen people of all ages showing what it means to be Boston strong.

In the face of challenges like

this one, our city shows its true colors. We are a resilient city of resilient people. That’s reflected in our strong neighborhoods, in our enduring traditions, and in the way we govern at the local level.

The fact is, we’ve been strengthening Boston’s ability to respond to a crisis like this for years. We’ve built deep connections between city government, neighborhood leaders, community groups, and the faith community. We’ve built up one of the strongest shelter and healthcare networks for homeless individuals in the country. We’ve made city services more accessible, in more languages, across a variety of platforms.

We’ve helped more people get connected with affordable internet. And we’ve worked to close equity gaps to make sure that more people have access to stable housing and financial safety nets. All of these things have allowed us to act swiftly, get people the information they need, and soften the blow that this public health crisis is having on our communities, our economy, and people’s lives. To me, this is the definition of resilience. It means planning ahead, and building connections before we need them, so that we can adapt to any challenge that we face.

We’ve got a long road ahead of us. Even after we overcome the immediate threat to people’s health, there will be a long economic recovery, to get our local businesses and their hard-working employees back on their feet. We will need to be flexible, and work together to get daily life back

to normal. And we will continue to grieve, together as a City, for the lives lost. Many families are experiencing incredible shock and sadness right now. We all need to give them the time and the space to mourn their loved ones, with the full support of their city behind them.

My hope is that when we get through this, we will have a new appreciation for all the things we hold dear. I hope that we will never again take simple joys and freedoms for granted.

Normally, this is one of the best times of the year in Boston. Any other year, we’d be getting ready to welcome athletes and fans from all over the world for the Boston Marathon. We’d be celebrating the home opener at Fenway Park.

We’d be holding the first of our annual coffee hours in neighborhood parks across the city. Kids and families would be enjoying the warm weather and all the festivities that come with the end of the school year.

When we get through this, and return to these traditions, it will be a cause for celebration. Each of us will have a renewed opportunity to embrace the things that make Boston the greatest city in the world. This is a defining moment in our history that will inspire new strength and resilience. I think it will inspire a new sense of what makes us Bostonians, and what makes us all family. That’s what gives me hope, and that’s what drives me, every day, to lead our City through this.

Martin J. Walsh is the Mayor of Boston

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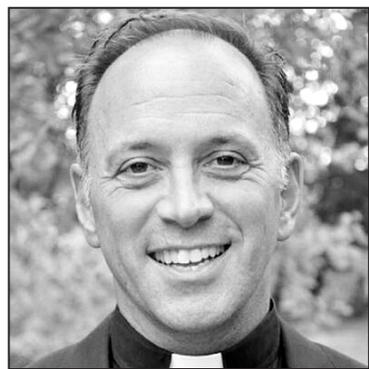
St. Cecilia continues to get message out to parishioners online

By Sun staff

While St. Cecilia Church closed its doors on March 14 and cancelled all liturgies until further notice due to COVID-19, the parish continues to get its message out online via virtual Gospel readings and other offerings.

The mission statement of Saint Cecilia Parish is an invitation to: "Discover the God who loves you. Engage with a parish that supports you. Serve the world that needs you." And, during this unprecedented time, parishioners of this vibrant Back Bay Catholic parish are doing just that. Members have embraced this call to engagement and service wholeheartedly. For the past four weeks the parish staff and lay leadership have been finding new and radical ways of adapting the patterns of pastoral service, sacramental life, and the proclamation of the Gospel. Director of Faith Formation

"We have been amazed by the energy, creativity, optimism, and resilience that we've seen emerge from our lay leadership," wrote Scott MacDonald, director of faith formation. "The community of Saint Cecilia continues to reimagine



Fr. John Unni.

new ways of participation in the most important elements of our common life as Catholic Christians."

Every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 9 a.m., parishioners can use the Zoom platform to join other members of the St. Cecilia community for a brief Gospel reading, followed by conversation and fellowship. R.S.V.P. to get the Zoom link by contacting Scott MacDonald at smacdonald@stceciliaboston.org.

Other online offerings include "Midday Reflections on Social Media," as well as Evening Prayer on Facebook Live Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. Follow St. Cecilia Parish on Facebook and Instagram at @

SaintCeciliaBoston.

St. Cecilia also maintains a YouTube channel where users can view live streams of its Sunday Masses each week beginning at 10 a.m., and view Fr. John Unni's archived homilies.

For the rest of Holy Week, St. Cecilia is offering Morning Prayer on Facebook Live at 9 a.m., a Mass live streaming on YouTube at 7:30 p.m., and Night Prayer on Facebook Live at 10 p.m. on Holy Thursday, April 9; Morning Prayer on Facebook Live at 9 a.m., as well as Stations of the Cross at noon and Celebration of the Lord's Passion at 3 p.m. on the St. Cecilia website at stceciliaboston.org on Good Friday, April 10; Morning Prayer on Facebook Live at 9 a.m., and an Easter Vigil live streaming on YouTube at 8 p.m. on Holy Saturday, April 11; and Easter Mass live streaming on YouTube at 10 a.m., and Paschal Vespers on Facebook Live at 6 p.m. on Easter Sunday, April 12.

Like so many communities of worship, Saint Cecilia has been using technology to not only maintain but to continue building community during this crisis. The weekly Sunday liturgy is live-streamed from the church

with only the pastor, Father John, a reader, and a few members of the parish music ministry present. Regular services of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer are live-streamed from a parishioner's home. Daily three-minute reflections are created by parishioners and are posted to the Saint Cecilia Facebook page.

"Father John regularly shares words of prayer, solace, and hope via Facebook. And three mornings a week there are Zoom gatherings where parishioners can hear and reflect upon the day's Gospel reading and take part in fellowship," MacDonald wrote.

Several of the parish's most active ministries focus on serving less fortunate members of the parish and the Greater Boston community. While several ministries have needed to curtail some of their activities due to the COVID-19 pandemic, two have remained very active. Saint Cecilia CARES ministry is a home visitation program with parishioners who visit the homes of the sick, isolated, and lonely members of the parish and surrounding community. Communication is now more likely to be provided through phone calls and texts, but the

CARES ministers are a source of comfort and support to these folks and a group of volunteers has been created to do shopping, dog walking, and other chores for those who are advised not to leave their homes.

Meanwhile, the parish Hunger and Homelessness ministry continues to volunteer at some of Saint Cecilia's nonprofit partner agencies despite the need to practice physical distancing. Community Servings, the Commonwealth's only nonprofit offering free, home-delivered medically-tailored meals to those with critical illnesses, has long provided some of the most popular volunteer opportunities for Saint Cecilia parishioners. With appropriate spacing and attention to hygiene, Community Servings continues to welcome volunteers from the church. The parish also has a decade-long relationship with the Catholic Charities' food pantry in Dorchester. On Saturday and Sunday mornings, parishioners drive to three Boston supermarkets, pick up donated produce and grocery items, and deliver them to the food pantry on Columbia Road.

SURGE (from pg. 1)

when more funds are available, and the federal aid should be "coming down soon" as well as state aid, he said.

So far, the Boston Resiliency Fund has distributed \$10.4 million: \$4.7 million for children, families, and seniors, \$3.7 million for healthcare for vulnerable populations, and \$2 million for home learning and other technologies. "This week, we will announce a third round of funding," he said.

Walsh continued to remind people to cover their face when outside their homes, only leave for essential items like groceries, and to wash their hands. He also warned younger people to take this virus seriously.

"Over 70 percent of our cases are not senior citizens," he said. "The number of affected young adults is almost certainly higher in reality."

He also told people not to throw their gloves or masks in the street or in parking lots. "Let's be good neighbors and let's keep making sure our communities are clean and safe."

One Boston Day

April 15 marks the 7th anniversary of the Boston Marathon

bombing, and has since become known as One Boston Day. While the day has been used in the past for people to get together in remembrance, this year it will be much different.

"Join us in standing together while standing apart," Walsh said, and proclaimed April 15 as a "city-wide day" of prayer and unity. "Everyone has a chance to slow down, reflect, and share," he said. Using the hashtag #onebostonday on social media, Bostonians can reflect and share with each other by coming together in a modified way.

"We need One Boston Day spirit now more than ever," Walsh said. "We will get through this difficult time together as One Boston."

Covid-19 Health Inequities Task Force

Mayor Walsh on April 9 announced a COVID-19 Health Inequities Task Force "to provide guidance to the City of Boston on addressing current inequities in data analysis, testing sites and health care services for Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and immigrants," according to a release from the city. "The Task Force will review existing racial and ethnic data

among Boston residents, as well as review data collection processes, data analysis and best practices related to the COVID-19 response for the Black, Latino, Asian, and immigrant populations. This guidance will support a strategy for equity and accessibility to services for populations that are historically underserved or underrepresented, including recommendations for additional resources and considerations, that can be implemented by the City of Boston and community and healthcare stakeholders that are serving as partners in this response."

Mortgage Relief Partnership With Banks

Mayor Walsh also announced that 12 of Boston's largest housing lenders will offer "at least three months of deferred mortgage payments for homeowners who contact them and demonstrate that they have been financially impacted by the public health crisis," according to a release from the city.

Lenders have also agreed to not charge late fees, and failure to pay will not be reported to credit bureaus. Rather than paying the deferred payments back

in a lump sum, lenders will work with homeowners on creating a payment plan.

Many lenders are also offering longer deferral periods, and the city recommends that homeowners contact their lenders directly. Additionally, the Boston Home Center can answer questions as well by calling 617-635-4663, ext. 3.

Dedicated Housing For First Responders, Shelter Staff, And Veterans

Mayor Walsh announced that 334 beds throughout the city have been dedicated to first responders, shelter staff, and veterans to prevent further spread of COVID-10.

Hotel Boston in Brighton will house Boston Police officers, Boston Fire and Boston EMS members who have tested positive for the virus or who may have been exposed at work and are "unable to effectively isolate at home," a release from the city states. The hotel can house 74 people in single occupancy rooms with private bathrooms and a kitchenette.

Northeastern University will also provide 135 single-occupancy

rooms in its West Village dormitory to first responders who live with someone who might be at higher risk of contracting COVID-19.

"Boston University will be providing 75 rooms to Pine Street Inn's shelter staff who have been working on the frontlines of the COVID-19 public health emergency caring for people experiencing homelessness at their shelter facilities," the release states. Additionally, "The City of Boston has been working on increasing its medical and care capacity for vulnerable populations and hospitals during the COVID-19 public health emergency. Mayor Walsh recently announced expanded capacity to help reduce congestion and increase social distancing in homeless shelters, adding 172 new beds at a Suffolk University dormitory, 75 new beds at 1515 Commonwealth Avenue in Brighton, and 55 new beds in the South End near City shelters."

For veterans, the New England Center and Home for Veterans (NECHV) will use a former nursing home facility in Brighton to temporarily relocate between 40 and 50 COVID-negative veterans.

New Charles Street salon hits unforeseen roadblock

By Dan Murphy

Rosanna Miller was ecstatic in February when she fulfilled a life-long ambition of owning her own salon with the opening of Luxor Hair Studio on Charles Street, but that dream soon hit an unforeseen roadblock with the proliferation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Miller, who worked for nearly seven years as a stylist at Adela's Hair Studio on Pinckney Street, spent more than year scouting possible locations before settling on 137 Charles St., and while there were some routine challenges delays after construction started in September, she received her final approvals on Feb. 1 to open the salon. Business started a bit slow, but it was just starting to pick up and she was planning a

grand-opening celebration when the salon was forced to close due to the coronavirus.

"Luxor is a prime example of a small business trying to establish itself on Beacon Hill that will need the support of residents going forward," said Diana Coldren, a patron of the salon and longtime neighborhood resident who, together with Ali Ringenburg, co-president of the Beacon Hill Business Association, has launched a GoFundMe "crowdfunding" campaign to pay the electric bills for the month of March for businesses operating within the Historic Beacon Hill District, including Miller's.

Ringenberg said starting a new business has always been a daunting endeavor, even in the best of times.

"Opening a business is always challenging in the first year, and now is an unbelievably challenging time for all businesses," Ringenberg said. "It's an uphill battle and I really feel for her."

In the meantime, Miller has used up nearly all her savings as she waits to see if she is eligible to receive any financial assistance from the federal government or the city, but she remains thankful to her loyal clientele, especially those who have pre-paid for future services to help her get through these uncertain times.

"With all the love and support from my clients, I'm really confident that we will make it happen again pretty soon," Miller said. "I love and appreciate them all and can't wait to see them again soon."



Luxor Hair Studio at 137 Charles St.

ANTIQUES (from pg. 1)

said while the business has insurance, the policy doesn't cover the damages since the flood originated outside on the street. Her landlord also didn't help cover her losses, and the last correspondence she had with BWSC was March 16, so she isn't optimistic she'll see any relief from them either.

Her employees, many of whom are seniors and at high risk for

contracting COVID-19, worked at the store until March 15, although one staff member and returned to work for one day - Saturday, March 21.

Meanwhile, Cousineau returned from the Bahamas on March 23 only to learn she would have to close the store at noon the following day. She expected the business would reopen on April

7, but that didn't come to pass, and the shop now remains closed indefinitely.

Although Upstairs Downstairs has a website, Cousineau said it only lists a small portion of the shop's inventory, and she has found it difficult to connect with her customers virtually.

"People like to see things in person, and to measure them and



Upstairs Downstairs Antiques at 93 Charles St. is seen decorated for the holiday season.

get sense of what they are," she said. "Ours really is a people business."

Cousineau has applied for financial assistance from both the federal government and the city, but that has proven frustrating, however, since she is still awaiting the paperwork for the federal loan from Santander Bank she should have received nearly two weeks ago.

"There's no funding for us," she said. "We're like a sitting duck."

So to help defray the cost of repairing the damages to her store sustained during the flooding and to pay her rent, Cousineau has launched a GoFundMe "crowdfunding" campaign at https://www.gofundme.com/f/upstairs-downstairs-antiques?utm_medium=copy_link&utm_source=custom-

er&utm_campaign=p_lico+share-sheet with the objective of raising \$10,000.

"We have so many loyal customers," she said. "If they each gave \$10, we could reach our goal."

Cousineau said Upstairs Downstairs has also done its part in the fight against COVID-19 by donating fabrics to make face masks.

Now she is just hoping to keep the business afloat during these trying times, however.

"I miss our customers, I miss employees, I miss the store - I have such a heavy heart, and it's hard to figure out what to do here," Cousineau said. "But at the end of the day, it's important that my employees are healthy and safe, and we'll figure out the rest."

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BHCA (from pg. 1)

to support it. The first instance of this was the transformation of the old Bowdoin School on Myrtle Street. It had served as an elementary school from 1896 until 1936, after which the Boston School Committee housed its administrative offices there. When later vacated, civic leaders feared developers would purchase the property and turn it into luxury apartments. The BHCA took a firm stand against that idea, recommending instead that the property be used to meet the housing needs of seniors on the North Slope.

Whereupon the City of Boston provided public funds to encourage the conversion of the property into subsidized housing for the elderly and the poor. Volunteers from the neighborhood brought their expertise in architecture, real estate, financing and politics to acquire and renovate the building. In 1977, the Bowdoin School Apartments opened with 35 apartments on five floors with a community meeting room and lounge. Today it is a Wingate managed community.

Just a few years later, a fire destroyed a five-story apartment complex on Myrtle Street, formerly known as Beacon Chambers that housed 350 elderly men. Developers interested in converting the property to high-end condominiums rallied around the site. And again the community intervened, advocating that the building remain a sanctuary for elderly and low-income residents.

Meredith and Gene Clapp, who have been leaders in the community for many years, led a fundraising effort that enabled Rogerson Communities to buy the building and keep it affordable. The couple was subsequently honored with the Charles E. Rogerson Award for Community Service by Rogerson Communities.

Meredith Clapp continues her support of affordable housing by serving as President of the Rogerson Beacon Corporation, comprising and its three Beacon Hill properties - the Beacon House, Peter Faneuil House and the Joy Street Residence.

Another example of the com-

munity's support occurred when the Peter Faneuil School, which had served as an elementary school for Beacon Hill residents, was turned into 48 affordable apartments for individuals and families. The Beacon Hill Civic Association helped support it for six years, contributing more than \$100,000 toward its operation. It is also managed by Rogerson.

The adjacent Joy Street Residence was developed by Rogerson Communities in partnership with AIDS Action Committee of Boston. It includes 20 affordable apartments in a sober and drug-free independent residence with supportive services for low-income persons from all walks of life who are disabled by HIV/AIDS.

The Beacon Hill Civic Association remains committed to supporting affordable housing in our neighborhood.

Note from BHCA Executive Director:

THANK YOU to our neighborhood children who wrote letters and cards for Beacon House residents, and for the efforts of so many in our neighborhood to make masks for the Beacon House residents as well. Neighbors Helping Neighbors in action!

Upcoming BHCA Meetings

Thursday, April 16: Hurley Building Redevelopment Presentation (virtual), 4pm.

Tuesday, April 28: Events Committee Meeting (virtual) at 6pm.

Other upcoming BHCA Events
BHCA Annual Meeting – May 18th

Visit the Beacon Hill Civic Association website bhcvic.org or call the office (617-227-1922) for more information about any of these events.

Baker expands priority COVID-19 resources to grocery store workers

On Friday, April 10, Gov. Charlie Baker issued further public health guidance, expanded resources for critical workers and increased Massachusetts National Guard activation to support its ongoing response to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

A new Department of Public Health advisory, consistent with CDC guidance, recommends that all residents wear a mask or face covering in public when social distancing is not possible. In addition, the Executive Branch issued similar guidance to state employees recommending when masks or face coverings should be utilized while working.

The administration has also expanded access to the free priority COVID-19 testing sites for first responders located at Gillette Stadium to include grocery store workers.

Additionally, Governor Charlie Baker authorized the activation of an additional 3,000 more military personnel of the Massachusetts National Guard.

•Face Coverings and Cloth Masks Advisory: The Administration today issued guid-

ance to residents and Executive Branch employees recommending the use of a face covering or cloth mask when in situations where maintaining proper social distancing measures are not possible to prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as in a grocery store.

A face covering may include anything that covers your nose and mouth, including a mask, scarf or bandana. Health care masks, such as N95 masks, should not be used and should be preserved for health care workers and first responders. Cloth masks should not be worn by young children under the age of two, persons with difficulty breathing, or those who are unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

•Grocery Store Worker Priority Testing: The Administration and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security expanded access to the free, priority COVID-19 testing sites for first responders to now include grocery store and supermarket workers. Beginning Saturday, April 11, the men and women who provide critical access to food and other necessities

could schedule an appointment to receive COVID-19 testing at the sites located at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro. All appointments must be made in advance by the worker's supervisor or manager, and personnel do not need to be symptomatic to be eligible.

•Massachusetts National Guard Activation: Gov. Baker authorized the activation of an additional 3,000 military personnel of the Massachusetts National Guard to support the Commonwealth's COVID-19 response. This order raises the total authorization to up to 5,000 members statewide, who may be tasked with supporting requests from state agencies for equipment, logistics, warehousing and related duties. Local cities, towns and state agencies should submit requests for support through the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.

The activation reflects Governor Baker's statutory authority to activate the Massachusetts National Guard under state active duty to provide necessary assistance to state and municipal civilian authorities.

Mammograms Save Lives.

All women over 40 should have a mammogram once a year. Breast cancer found early offers the best chance to be cured. Free or low cost mammograms are available.

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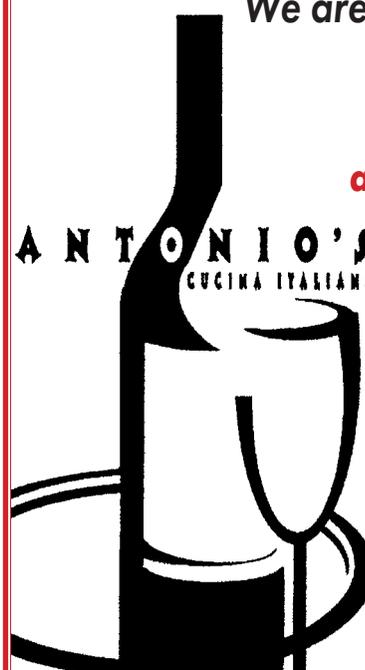
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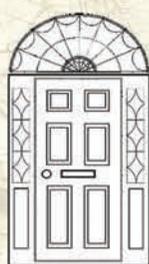
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NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDUP

Hill House Kiddie Kamp open for enrollment

Hill House, Inc. located at 127 Mount Vernon St., is currently enrolling for its Kiddie Kamp, which is specifically for kids aged 3-5 and the perfect combination of new and exciting experiences in a safe, familiar environment. Join a staff of counselors for a summer full of games, crafts, stories, songs, age-appropriate athletics and outdoor fun. Your child will build confidence, independence and friendships.

For more information on Kiddie Kamp, or how to register - some weeks are at 80-percent capacity, so don't wait - contact Chelsea Evered at 617-227-5838 or cevered@hillhouseboston.org, or visit hillhouseboston.org.

Hill House Spring Baseball League registration now open

Hill House, Inc. located at 127 Mount Vernon St., has opened up Baseball and Softball League registration. Members of the community can now register for its new Red Sox Rookie League for 4-year-olds, T-Ball (ages 5-6.5), AA Baseball (ages 6.5-7), AAA Baseball (ages 8-9) and Majors League (10- to 12-year-olds). Hill House also offers Girls Softball for 6- to 8-year-olds and 9- to 12-year-olds. All leagues are coed, and the season will begin the first week in April.

Visit <http://www.hillhouseboston.org/Athletics/Baseball.htm> for more details.

For more information on the Hill House Little League, contact Hill House Athletics Director Marshall Caldera at 617-227-5838 or mcaldera@hillhouseboston.org.

BSNJ Community Children's Chorus

The Boston Society of The New Jerusalem (BSNJ) Community Children's Chorus is a comprehensive musical training program for children in the third through seventh grades.

Your child will be participating in a program that promotes: the love of music, expressive singing, teamwork-cooperative learning, building new friendships, self-assessment and the fun of being in an outstanding program.

The group meets at 140 Bowdoin St. on Saturday mornings. Tuition is free for any child with a Greater Boston-area address. All levels of singing ability are welcome. To register, contact Carlton Doctor at 617-523-4575 or visit www.churchonthehillboston.org (click on "music.")

BSNJ/The Church On The Hill sponsors this initiative, but we are not promoting any religious ideology.

Compassionate Friends group reaches out to bereaved parents, families

The Boston Chapter of The Compassionate Friends (TCF) meets at Trinity Church on the first Tuesday of each month from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

TCF is a national self-help, mutual-assistance organization offering friendship, understanding and hope to bereaved parents and their families. Call

617-539-6424 or e-mail tcfboston@gmail.com for more information.

West End Food Pantry seeking donations

The West End Food Pantry needs help to continue serving its

more than 120 clients per month. They welcome donations to replenish the supply of food that they give out to hungry residents in the neighborhood.

The pantry is located in the West End Branch of the Boston Public Library and is staffed by volunteers from ABCD's North End/West End Neighborhood Service Center. Non-perishable (canned and boxed) items are being sought, including rice, pasta, canned tuna, canned chicken, chili, beans, vegetables, cereal, soups, cup of noodles, etc.

Donations can be left at the library, 151 Cambridge St., on Monday through Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday from noon to 8 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Introduction to laptops, eReaders and iPads at the West End Branch Library

The West End Branch of the Boston Public Library, 151 Cambridge St., offers an introduction to laptops, eReaders and iPads by appointment only. Get the most out of your eReader or Laptop. Receive tips and guidance during these one-on-one sessions. Call Branch Librarian, Helen Bender at 617-523-3957 or e-mail hbender@bpl.org to set up an appointment.

Volunteer at Spaulding Rehab

Stay active, meet new people and be connected with your community by volunteering at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital. Staff members will match your skills and interests to a volunteer opportunity. The hospital is currently recruiting volunteers, ages 18 and up, for two- to three-hour-a-week shifts for a minimum of six to 12 months commitment.

Visit www.spauldingnetwork.org for more information.

After-work tai chi group at the West End Branch Library

The West End Branch of the Boston Public Library, 151 Cambridge St., welcomes after-work tai chi group every Thursday from 5 to 6 p.m. Come and try this low impact energy exercise with yang-style tai chi instructor Arthur Soo-Hoo.

Be a friend to elderly in need

FriendshipWorks seeks caring people to offer help and support to isolated elders in the Boston area. Volunteers are needed to provide companionship and assist elders with tasks such as reading, organizing, or going for a walk - lend an hour each week and gain a friend and a new perspective. Volunteers also needed to escort elders to and from medical appointments. No car is needed and hours are flexible. For more information or to apply online, visit www.fw4elders.org or call 617-482-1510.

Local residents needed to drive cancer patients to and from treatment

The American Cancer Society is in great need of Road to Recovery volunteers to drive local cancer patients to and from their chemotherapy and/or radiation treatments. An integral part of treating cancer successfully is making sure cancer patients receive their treatments, but many find making transportation arrangements is a challenge. The American Cancer Society provided more than 19,000 rides to cancer patients in New England last year, but needs new volunteer drivers to keep up

with the demand for transportation.

Make a difference in the fight against cancer by becoming a volunteer driver for the American Cancer Society's Road to Recovery. Drivers use their own vehicle to drive patients to and from their treatments. The schedule for volunteers is flexible, and treatment appointments take place weekdays, primarily during business hours. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a volunteer driver for Road to Recovery, contact your American Cancer Society at 800-227-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

Join the Downtown Boston Rotary Club

The Downtown Boston Rotary Club, the first new Rotary Club in Boston in 100 years, holds meetings at the UMass Club in the Financial District on the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 6 to 7:15 p.m.

For more information, visit www.dbrotary.org or call 617-535-1950.

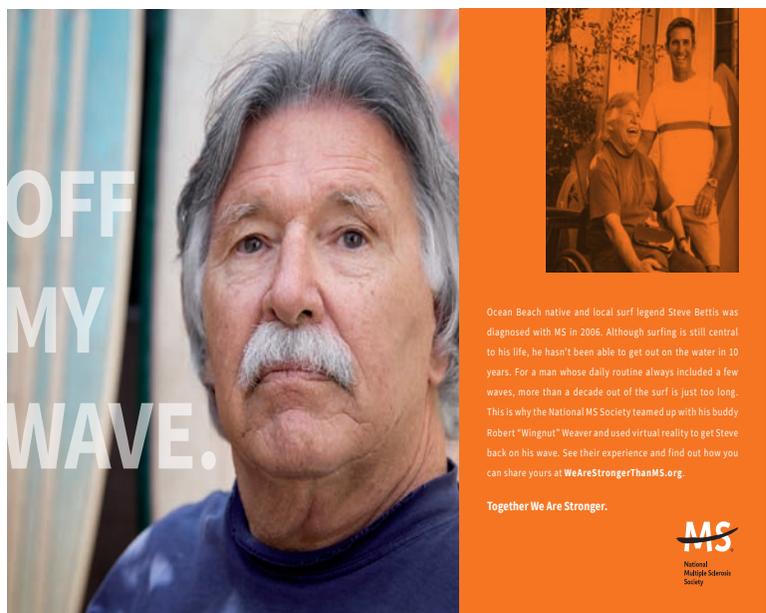
Volunteers needed for hot meal program

The North End/West End Neighborhood Service Center (NE/WE NSC), located at 1 Michelangelo St., serves a hot, fresh, home-cooked lunch to seniors in the neighborhood Mondays and Fridays, and is looking for two volunteers to help with shopping, food preparation, cooking, serving and clean-up. The non-profit providing services and programs to low-income residents of the North End, West End and Beacon Hill is looking for volunteers who can assist with the whole meal from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on a Monday and/or Friday, but can make arrangements to fit your schedule.

Contact Maria Stella Gulla, director, at 617-523-8125, ext. 201, via e-mail at mariastella.gulla@bostonabcd.org for more information.

Yoga for seniors at the West End Branch Library

The West End Branch of the Boston Public Library, 151 Cambridge St., presents yoga for seniors every Tuesday from 2:45 to 3:30 p.m. Classes are led by Tatiana Nekrasova, a certified yoga instructor.



OFF MY WAVE.

Ocean Beach native and local surf legend Steve Bettis was diagnosed with MS in 2006. Although surfing is still central to his life, he hasn't been able to get out on the water in 10 years. For a man whose daily routine always included a few waves, more than a decade out of the surf is just too long. This is why the National MS Society teamed up with his buddy Robert "Wingnut" Weaver and used virtual reality to get Steve back on his wave. See their experience and find out how you can share yours at WeAreStrongerThanMS.org.

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Mass Bankers: Operative word is 'patience' with large federal loan programs

By Seth Daniel

The Massachusetts Bankers Association (MBA) reported varying degrees of success over their membership banks with the rollout of the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EDIL) – two key parts of the federal CARES Act that look to help prop up small businesses across the nation.

The PPP was the big story going into effect by taking applications at most banks starting Friday, April 3, and the rush was certainly on for small businesses with under 500 employees to participate in the \$350 billion program administered by banks and the Small Business Administration (SBA).

"The approval process and the money should start happening I think by the end of the week, at the latest, barring any unforeseen circumstances," said Daniel Forte, president and CEO of Mass Bankers. "There was \$30 billion of the \$350 billion submitted and approved nationally by Sunday. From Friday to Sunday the SBA did a year's worth of lending nationwide. That's amazing in one respect, as that's about what they do in one year, but it's also a good reminder that patience is going to be required here. I think the industry feels it's a win-win."

Forte said none of the 135 banks in his membership had any loans approved over the first weekend, but he did say several

had good experiences with the application process and successfully submitted complete applications for customers.

On Monday, April 13, Federal Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin said more than \$200 billion had been approved over the first week of the program, and he predicted that money would be in the hands of approved businesses by the end of this week. He is also working with Congress to get an additional \$250 billion in funding for the PPP to fortify the program as it has seen a flood of applicants.

"Every dollar we spend on this keeps people off unemployment and keeps business intact for when we open back up," he said. "We don't want these businesses to fall apart."

The funding was predicted even sooner than the end of this week, and for most small business owners, it can't come soon enough. Forte said the first week showed there were also hiccups and the system was a little on-the-fly and "clunky."

First, he said, the regulations of the program weren't submitted in final form until Thursday night, April 2, the night before the launch of the PPP, and there was also still no formal application.

A lot of the existing SBA lender banks, he said – which is about 1,000 of 5,200 banks in the state, got a jump start on the program. Many of them moved quickly to have online webinars and instructional calls for existing customers,

but for those without those existing banking relationships, things moved slower.

In all, he said things would likely also move slower because many banks are not physically open, and they're being flooded with so many applications.

"An example is one regional bank of ours had 25,000 applications on Wednesday and Thursday already and they had eight people to process them and they were all working out of their houses," he said. "So you have to be sympathetic to that and those issues. The operative word, again, should be patience. The banks want to get moving and small business owners want to get in the queue."

Many of the banks also reported that the portal to process applications was jammed as banks and customers tried to apply all at once Friday, April 3, and into the weekend, a problem he said likely would work its way out as time goes on.

"There were banks that started at midnight Thursday into Friday processing applications," he said. "Many were not able to immediately put those through because the portal can only accept so many hits at a time, and things get stuck. Lenders had applications, but could not access the portal because it was jammed."

He said if there is a second round or a tweak of the program, he can see there being a way for others to process the applications and the banks to disperse the

money, having a second market liquidity platform created.

"It's just not in the current business model of banks so be able to process this many loans in a week," he said.

He also said many banks have already been busy working with customers, especially borrowers looking to modify their loans or mortgages. His membership has been rushing to do those things the last three weeks, adding to the workload.

"The banks have been working with customers for three weeks now," he said. "It's not like the PPP is the only things they've done. For the customers who have been impacted by business with the COVID virus...they have already been working with banks to modify their business loans or mortgages."

In all, the programs are in great need, and Forte said the SBA is

trying to pull off an amazing feat to help with the assistance of banks in every region of the country. That will happen, but it may not be instant.

"There will be hiccups," he said. "It's nobody's fault. It's not the lenders fault, the SBA's fault, or the Administration's fault. Everyone is trying to do what they can do within current situation. We want to be part of it, but there are going to be logjams."

Business owners wishing to apply should review the information available at: <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/top-priorities/cares-act/assistance-for-small-businesses>. Borrowers will need payroll records for the past year, Tax ID numbers, and information on each individual with more than a 20 percent ownership stake in the company.

How to mail and ship without leaving the safety of your home

You don't have to go to the Post Office to use many postal products and services. In fact, most simple tasks can be done from the convenience and safety of your home with or without a computer.

Like purchasing stamps. Using your computer, you can go to the Postal Store on usps.com and select different stamp denominations. USPS will deliver them right to your home.

No computer? No problem! Ask your local Post Office or carrier to bring you a Stamps by Mail order form, complete it and put it in your mailbox with a check. Again, USPS will bring you your stamps.

What if you need to send a package? You can order free Priority Mail and Priority Mail Express boxes, or other package supplies at usps.com. Again, USPS will deliver items to your address. And at usps.com, using Click-N-

Ship, you can print a mailing label with the appropriate postage right from your computer.

Need that package picked-up? Go to usps.com and schedule a free carrier pick-up. In your request, let your local Post Office know where they can find the package or packages and the carrier will retrieve them when he or she delivers your mail.

USPS postal employees are working around the clock to ensure you get your important letters and packages. Skip the trip to the Post Office by ordering stamps, package supplies, and printing package postage from your home. We'll pick up your packages too.

It's the most effective type of social distancing around!

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

Baker provides update on hospital surge capacity

On April 9, the state provided an update on the Commonwealth's hospital capacity and efforts to add more beds to the system to meet the expected surge in COVID-19 cases, identifying the need for 14,500 treatment beds and expanding to that number through the use of field hospitals.

Hospital Surge Capacity: The Administration's COVID-19 Response Command Center released its initial projections on the surge two weeks ago. Since then, the Command Center has remained in regular contact with the Commonwealth's hospitals on a daily basis as they work to increase acute and ICU bed capacity. As of today, the Commonwealth has worked to make a total of approximately 14,500 treatment beds available ahead of the surge:

•11,000 beds could be available for ICU and acute care in the existing hospital system. This rep-

resents a breakdown of roughly 9,400 acute care beds and 1,500 ICU beds.

•Through hospital surge planning and field hospitals, the Commonwealth is bringing approximately 3,500 new beds online for ICU and acute care. This breaks down to approximately 2,500 new hospital beds coming online from hospital surge planning, and 1,000 beds coming online through field hospitals.

The Command Center continues to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on different regions and tracking how many hospital beds are available across the Commonwealth. As of April 9, hospitals had reported that 8,100 beds are occupied statewide, or approximately 55 percent (this figure includes hospitalizations for non COVID-19 patients). This meant that 6,400 beds were currently available for both ICU and acute care, or roughly 45%.

Field Hospitals: In the coming days, hundreds of new beds will come online that will help the Commonwealth significantly ramp up care capacity ahead of the surge to support existing hospitals. The Command Center is targeting five alternate care sites. These field hospitals will serve as an alternative site for hospitals to treat patients, particularly individuals who need acute care. They are being built all around the state to ensure all residents have access to this emergency care. The field hospital at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center opened late last week. Field hospitals at the DCU Center in Worcester and Newton Pavilion in Boston started accepting patients April 8. Over the coming week, additional facilities will open up in Cape Cod, Springfield, and Lowell. All in all, these facilities will provide approximately 1,000 additional beds for patients who do not require ICU-level care.



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Neighborhood retail businesses weathering unprecedented losses
 By Dan Murphy

As retail businesses in the neighborhood scramble to adjust their business models in the face of COVID-19, they are weathering unprecedented - and unexpected - revenue losses.

"As a small business that has relied heavily on foot traffic up until now, we have seen our sales dwindle down to about 10 percent of what a typical March or April period would be, and we're now relying on online sales only," said Jennifer Hill, owner of Blackstone's of Beacon Hill and its sister establishment, KitchenWares by Blackstones, at 46 Charles St. A lot of stores didn't already have websites - we did - and everyone was enhancing and getting their products up online."

Both businesses have seen "considerable" spikes in online sales within the last two weeks, Hill said, but neither is profitable at the moment, so she was faced with the difficult decision of furloughing the store manager.

"We realize how important our store manager is to our success so we have furloughed her so she has been able to access to the unemployment benefits until life returns to a new normal in the coming months," Hill said.

Now, like many other business owners, Hill is applying for federal government assistance via the \$2.2 trillion CARES Act (H.R. 748) -

(Losses Pg. 5)

'Virtual Vilna' brings Vilna Shul online
 By Dan Murphy

Since the Vilna Shul closed the doors to its 18 Phillips St. headquarters last month due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Boston's Center for Jewish Culture has launched "Virtual Vilna," bringing its programming online to more than 1,200 visitors in just the first two weeks.

"When everyone became homebound, we decided it was time to launch a virtual initiative, and it's been met with immense success," said Lynne Krasker Schultz, director of communications. "It provides the opportunity to reach people who wouldn't have the physical ability to walk through our doors. People from Costa Rica, Spain and Israel have attended programs, and from the U.S., we've had people from Cincinnati, Chicago, San Francisco, San Antonio and all up and down the East Coast, including, of course, all over the Boston area."

"Virtual Vilna" offerings to date have included "Meditation through a Jewish Lens," Jewish genealogy, challah baking and adult education classes, among other programming made available through the Zoom and Facebook platforms, and new content is being added to The Vilna Shul website on a daily basis, such as a live site on a daily basis, such as a live reading by author Susan Solomon from her children's book "Stella the Ambassador" on Tuesday, April 14, at 9:30 a.m.

The Vilna Shul is also soliciting suggestions for new classes and programming from the public via email at info@vlnashul.org, and in response to one suggestion, has enlisted the Yiddish Bookstore in Amherst to design the curriculum

(ONLINE Pg. 5)

Harvard Gardens provides MGH staff with free bagged lunches
 By Dan Murphy

The Harvard Gardens distributed hundreds of free bagged lunches to Mass General Hospital doctors and staff on Wednesday, April 1, in a display of gratitude to healthcare professionals working in the age of COVID-19.

Patrick Lyons, CEO of the Lyons Group, which has operated Harvard Gardens since 1999, and a Beacon Hill resident, credits the idea to treat the hospital's workers to a "grab-and-go" bagged lunch consisting of a sandwich, an apple and a bottled water from a table outside the Cambridge Street restaurant to his wife, Kristina, who is currently finishing up at the Harvard School of Public Health.

"She's really in a quagmire trying to get Personal Protective Equipment for the hospital - it's very complicated and most efforts lead to dead ends," Lyons said. "So out of frustration we thought, 'What can we do? We have a restaurant - let's mobilize it.'"

(LUNCHES Pg. 2)

Mass General workers help themselves to "grab-and-go" bagged lunches, courtesy of Harvard Gardens.

Photos courtesy of Harvard Gardens

For the latest news in Beacon Hill that you need to know, check www.beaconhilltimes.com

FOR ALL THE LATEST NEWS IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD

Baker provides update on hospital surge capacity

On April 9, the state provided an update on the Commonwealth's hospital capacity and efforts to add more beds to the system to meet the expected surge in COVID-19 cases, identifying the need for 14,500 treatment beds and expanding to that number through the use of field hospitals.

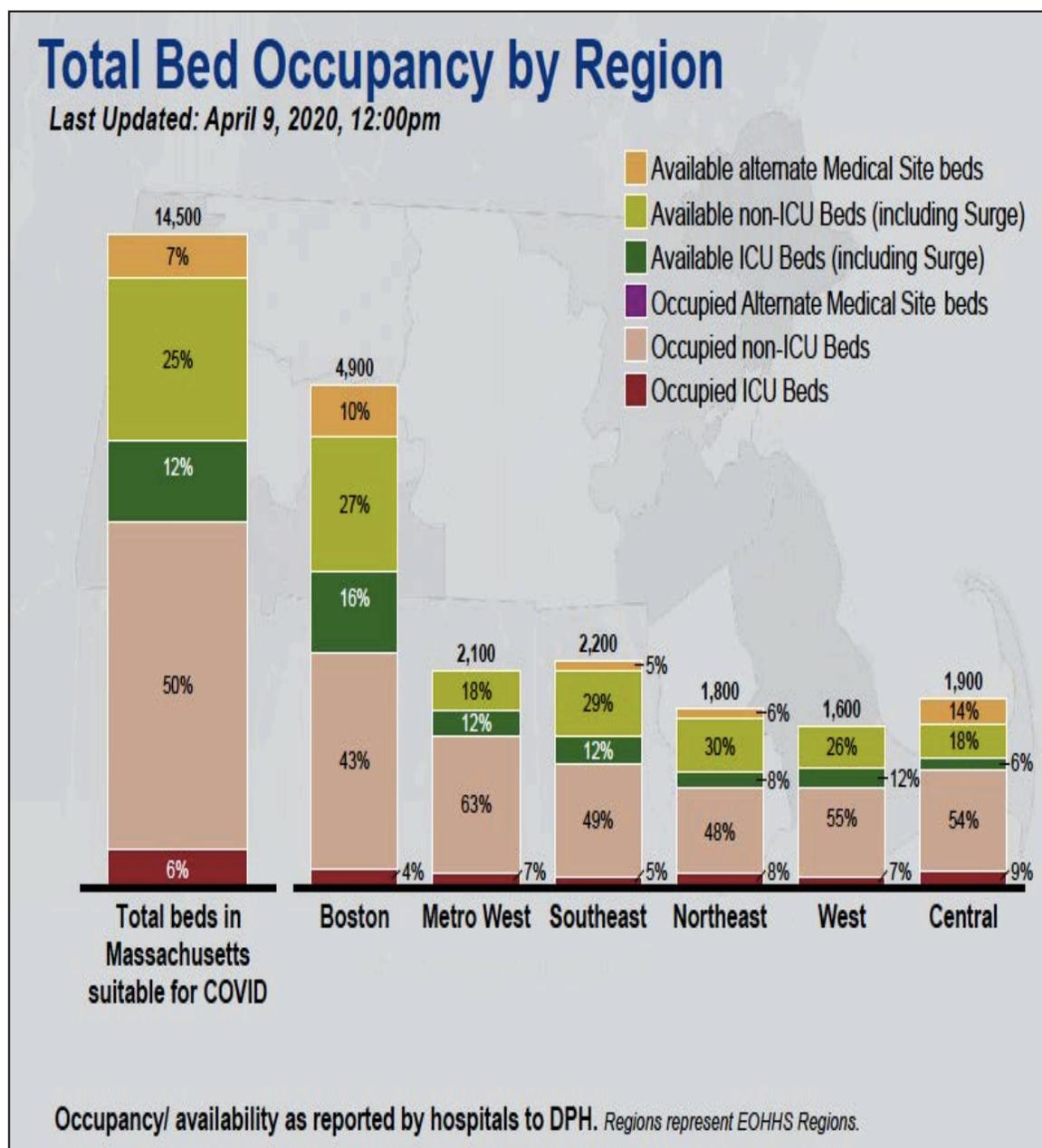
Hospital Surge Capacity: The Administration's COVID-19 Response Command Center released its initial projections on the surge two weeks ago. Since then, the Command Center has remained in regular contact with the Commonwealth's hospitals on a daily basis as they work to increase acute and ICU bed capacity. As of today, the Commonwealth has worked to make a total of approximately 14,500 treatment beds available ahead of the surge:

- 11,000 beds could be available for ICU and acute care in the existing hospital system. This represents a breakdown of roughly 9,400 acute care beds and 1,500 ICU beds.

- Through hospital surge planning and field hospitals, the Commonwealth is bringing approximately 3,500 new beds online for ICU and acute care. This breaks down to approximately 2,500 new hospital beds coming online from hospital surge planning, and 1,000 beds coming online through field hospitals.

The Command Center continues to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on different regions and tracking how many hospital beds are available across the Commonwealth. As of April 9, hospitals had reported that 8,100 beds are occupied statewide, or approximately 55 percent (this figure includes hospitalizations for non COVID-19 patients). This meant that 6,400 beds were currently available for both ICU and acute care, or roughly 45%.

Field Hospitals: In the coming days, hundreds of new beds will come online that will help the Commonwealth significantly ramp up care capacity ahead of the surge to support existing hospitals. The Command Center is targeting five alternate care sites. These field hospitals will serve as an alternative site for hospitals to treat patients, particularly individuals who need acute care. They are being built all around the state to ensure all residents have access to this emergency care. The field hospital at the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center opened late last week. Field hospitals at the DCU Center in Worcester and Newton Pavilion in Boston started accepting patients April 8. Over the coming week, additional facilities will open up in Cape Cod, Springfield, and Lowell. All in all, these facilities will provide approximately 1,000 addition-



al beds for patients who do not require ICU-level care.

Spanish language unemployment application available from State

On Friday, April 10, the state launched a Spanish language online, mobile-friendly, unemployment benefits application for those who need to apply.

The new, secure application for Spanish speakers is available through mass.gov/deseempleo, the Spanish language website for unemployment in Massachusetts.

The Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) will make language applications available in Portuguese, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Vietnamese and additional languages in the coming days.

The Department of Unemployment Assistance is focused on supporting workers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to process claims as quickly as possible. The new Spanish mobile-friendly application is among several efforts to reach and assist all individuals who are eligible for unemployment benefits and provide the financial assistance they need. Other efforts include:

- Rapidly updating the DUA website with the latest information that claimants and employers need to know, what the latest federal legislation means for them, and a step-by-step guide to filing a claim available in multiple languages.

- The unemployment contact form to reach a DUA agent is also available in multiple languages.

- Hosting daily town halls in both English and Spanish, which have been attended by over 100,000 constituents. Individuals can sign up to attend a virtual town hall at mass.gov/unemployment/townhall or at mass.gov/deseempleo.

- Deploying over 600 new remote employees to keep pace with the increased volume of unemployment insurance claims, and adding language capacities in the call center to better serve residents across the state.

- Legislation proposed and signed by Governor Baker waiving the one-week waiting period to collect an unemployment claim payment.

COVID-19 Text Alerts in Spanish now available

The state announced on Friday, April 10, that its COVID-19 text message alert system "AlertsMA" is now available in Spanish. This expansion of the text-alert system means that the same text alerts that are distributed via the English-language system will now be available to Spanish-language users.

Users can subscribe to the Spanish-language service by texting 'COVIDMAESP' to 888-777.

"Throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, we have consistently reminded residents to get their information from trusted sources, and with the expansion of the AlertsMA text alert system, we are making it easier for Spanish-speaking residents to access important updates from the Commonwealth," said Governor

Charlie Baker. "This new service builds on our efforts to keep people in all communities across the Commonwealth informed as we confront COVID-19 together."

Since its launch on March 24, more than 215,000 individuals have signed up to receive text-message updates from AlertsMA.

The Spanish-language text alerts are the latest effort from the Commonwealth to deliver crucial COVID-19 information to non-English speakers. All of Mass.Gov (including formation "at _blank" Mass.Gov/COVID19) is available in 13 different languages, and the Commonwealth's non-emergency help line, 2-1-1 is available in over 150 languages. Several agencies, including the Department of Public Health and the Department of

Unemployment Assistance, offer additional fact sheets available in multiple languages.

The Commonwealth's Executive Office of Technology Services and Security partnered with Everbridge, a Massachusetts-based company whose platform powers AlertsMA, to initially bring the notification service online. The Commonwealth and Everbridge partnered with UMass Medical School and the Center for Health Impact for Spanish-language translation services.

The Commonwealth will continue to promote the service on Mass.gov, through digital displays and billboards at the MBTA, via MassDOT, and through social media.

FRESH AND LOCAL**Feta for flavor**

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

You'll almost always find a container with a block of feta cheese floating in brine in our refrigerator. With a bit of care on your part, feta is a cheese that will last for a long time and may actually improve as it ages in its brine bath. It is also a pantry ingredient that can add tang to a quickly tossed-together supper or turn into a last-minute appetizer for an impromptu gathering.

"The Cheese Lover's Companion" says, "Feta has been made in Greece and other Balkan countries for centuries and is one of the world's oldest cheeses. Directions for making it can be found in Homer's Odyssey. Initially making feta was a way for shepherds to preserve the milk of their wandering flocks."

Friends of Feta

Many of our favorite foods

to mix with feta come from the cuisines of Greece, the Balkans, and the Middle East. Think about a traditional Greek salad and you'll find some perfect matches for feta – olives, cucumbers, peppers, oregano, lemon, olive oil, and pitas on the side. Other complementary foods are lamb, eggplant, honey, figs, chickpeas, garlic, mint, and thyme.

Our house version of the Greek salad uses green olives marinated in preserved lemon and garlic, fennel, and avocado in addition to the usual candidates. The feta and avocado work together to add a creaminess to the dressing.

Take Care of Your Feta

Epicurious offered the following advice on keeping Feta fresh, "So, let's say you toss out the liquid accidentally, or the feta at your local grocery store comes in an air-tight sealed package with-



Our house version of a Greek salad uses green olives marinated in preserved lemon and garlic, fennel, and avocado in addition to the usual candidates.

out brine. You can easily save the remaining cheese by making your own brine. Just combine 2 cups water with 2 tsp. kosher salt, stirring until the salt dissolves. Store the leftover feta in the brine, making sure the cheese is covered completely."

We would add that it is always

better to keep the brine that came with your cheese if you can. That brine may have been made from the whey that was left behind when the feta was created and will have more flavor. Yes, add some more salty water if the liquid in your container is not covering the cheese, but do hold onto that

flavorful original brine.

Don't Like Feta?

We understand there may be people who don't like or can't eat cheese. But, if you are a cheese lover and don't like feta, we suggest you try a different style. A lot of what is on offer in supermarkets is industrially produced and made with cow's milk. That style may lack the nuance of smaller batch products. We also prefer fetas made with sheep's milk or a mixture of sheep and goat. As with any cheese, we prefer to buy whole pieces and slice or crumble it ourselves.

In general, we will opt for a commercial product from Greece packed in or covered with brine. When we make a trip to Watertown to buy feta in the Middle Eastern markets, we'll buy the milder French feta that is Ed's favorite and the tangy Bulgarian feta that Penny likes best.

Feta is like cheddar in the range of flavors and styles you can find. We're starting to hear about some artisan feta makers and look forward to finding their products as we visit cheese shops and specialty grocers in the months ahead.

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

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