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FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 2026



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

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL BREAKFAST



DEREK KOUYOUNJIAN PHOTOS

*The Boston Arts Academy Spiritual Ensemble performed Bright Mansions Above.
See Pages 4 and 5 for more photos.*

Special to the Times

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

Mayor Wu offered these thoughts: Dr. King knew that when fundamental rights come under attack—when hard-won progress must be defended again

and again—it becomes difficult to imagine a better future.

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

He called us toward creation.

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

And that's what we are doing

in Boston, with the fierce urgency of now. We choose to go forward.

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

We refuse to be defined by what we oppose.

We choose to be measured by what we create.

See MLK Page 3

BEACON HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY CORNER

Bricks & Bubbles Buzz

Our Brick & Bubbles: A Celebration of Preservation fundraiser at the Liberty Hotel is less than six weeks away!

Join us on March 5th at 7pm at the Liberty Hotel for an elegant cocktail party to celebrate historic preservation in

our neighborhood, and to raise funds for the BHCA to continue our efforts in community building, civic engagement, and historic preservation.

Thank you to our corporate

sponsors (with more to come!):

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AAA Northeast
MF Reynolds
Historic Window and Door
Omni Parker House
Mass Convention Center

See BHCA Page 7

Owner makes difficult decision to close Charles Street Liquors

By Dan Murphy

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

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

His decision came amid a 'perfect storm' of professional and personal factors," according to Pederson, including changing social habits, which have impacted his business.

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

The biggest considerations in Pederson's decision, however,

were all personal.

"Last August, I suffered a minor stroke that affected my eyesight and limited my ability to drive into Boston to manage the store daily," wrote Pederson. "That health scare, combined with turning 65 this past October, really shook up my family and me. It made us realize it was time to prioritize health and family."

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

"I am not leaving the business world entirely," added Pedersen. "I still own The UPS Store on Charles Street and five others in Boston, though those are now capably managed by my daughter, Daria, and my general manager, James."

See CHARLES STREET Page 3



D. MURPHY PHOTO

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

EDITORIAL

LET'S GO PATRIOTS!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GUEST OP-ED

Your Property Matters

By Diana Coldren

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Independent Newspaper Group reserves the right to edit letters for space and clarity. The Independent Newspaper Group publishes columns, viewpoints and letters to the editor as a forum for readers to express their opinions and to encourage debate. Please note that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of The Independent Newspaper Group. Text or attachments emailed to deb@thebostonsun.com are preferred.

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NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDUP

BOOK CLUB MEETS JAN. 27 AT THE WEST END MUSEUM

The West End Museum welcomes back its West End Museum book club. This month's pick is 'From Plotzk to Boston,' a story of one young immigrant's journey to the United States. On Jan. 27, a discussion on Mary Antin's memoir will fill your mind. A limited number of paperback copies will be available to participants.

More information and links to purchase tickets can be found on the museum's website at www.westendmuseum.org/programs.

UPCOMING EVENTS CONTINUE AT MGH BLUM CENTER

The Blum Patient and Family Learning Center (Blum Center) at Massachusetts General

Hospital is hosting several educational and wellness sessions, which are free and take place at the Blum Center (MGH Main Campus, White 110), including Understanding Dementia, with a Spotlight on Alzheimer's Disease on Monday, Jan. 26, from noon to 1 p.m.; Clarity & Connection: A Guided Mind-Body Experience for the New Year on Wednesday, Jan. 28, from 5 to 6 p.m.; Acupressure, Reiki, and Sound Therapy Healing Event on Tuesday, Feb. 17, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Understanding Osteoarthritis: Keeping Your Joints Moving on Tuesday, Feb. 17, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Understanding Osteoarthritis: Keeping Your Joints Moving on Monday, Feb. 23, from noon to 1 p.m.; and Understanding Palliative Care: Caring for the Person Beyond the Diagnosis on Thursday, Feb. 26, from noon to 1 p.m.

For more information, call the Blum Center at 617-724-7352.

COME PLAY MAH JONGG AT THE WEST END COMMUNITY CENTER

Whether you are a beginner or an experienced player, you are invited to join the friendly Mah Jongg group. Instructors will be available to help new players, and everyone is welcome. Come meet new people, socialize, and play the game.

The group meets on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the West End Community (within the West End Neighborhood Center), 75 Blossom Court (entrance on Thoreau Path).

To sign up or for more information, email Audrey.Tedeman@gmail.com or [Sandy.Connor\(ssconnor46@gmail.com\)](mailto:Sandy.Connor(ssconnor46@gmail.com).

CHARLES STREET (from pg. 1)

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

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

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

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



COURTESY OF CHRIS PEDERSEN

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

been a wonderful part of mine for two decades."

Chris Pedersen invites read-

ers to contact him via email at chris@csliquors.com.

MLK (from pg. 1)

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

So let us march forward together in the footsteps of those who set the standard here

in Boston: Prince Hall, Elma Lewis, Melnea Cass, Napoleon Jones-Henderson, Allan Rohan Crite, Reverend Dr. Michael E. Haynes, and so many more.

And let us march with a new

generation urging us forward.

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

Area A-1 sees 4-percent drop in Part One crime in '25 from previous year

By Dan Murphy

As 2025 was drawing to a close, Part One crime in Area A-1 was down 4 percent from the previous year.

According to Boston Police, 2,174 incidents of Part One crime were reported in the district, which includes Beacon Hill, Chinatown, Downtown, and the North End, between Jan. 1 and Dec. 28, 2025, compared with 2,258 incidents during the same timeframe the previous year. 2025 marked a slight increase from the district's five-year average of 2,121 Part One crime incidents, however.

The number of homicides remained the same in the district, with one each in '25 and the previous year, while the five-year average in this category was 1.6 incidents.

Rapes and attempted rapes were down 24-percent as the number fell to 19 last year from 25 in 2024, while the five-year average for this category was 22.4 incidents.

Robbery and attempted robberies saw a nearly 14-percent decrease, with the number of incidents falling to 128 in '25 from 148 the previous year. This was down from district's five-year average for this category of 151 incidents.

Incidents of domestic aggravated assault were down 16 percent as the number fell to 21 from 25 in '24, while the district's five-year average for this category was 27.6 incidents.

Incidents of non-domestic aggravated assault were down more than 17 percent, with the number falling to 208 in '25 from 251 the previous year. The district's five-year average for this category was 225 incidents.

Commercial burglaries spiked nearly 58 percent as the number climbed to 123 from 78 in '24, while the five-year average for this category was 83.6 incidents.

In contrast, residential burglaries were down 12 percent, with the number falling to 44 from 50 in '24. The district's five-year average for this category was 47.6 incidents.

Incidents of larceny from a motor vehicle decreased 15 percent as the number dropped to 180 from 213 in '24, while the district's five-year average for this category was 239.8 incidents.

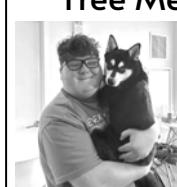
Other larcenies were down slightly, with the number dropping to 1,371 from 1,397 in '24, while the five-year average for this category was 1,225.8 incidents.

On the other hand, auto theft incidents saw a nearly 13-percent spike as the number climbed to 79 from 70 in '24. The district's five-year average for this category was 95 incidents.

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

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ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL BREAKFAST



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



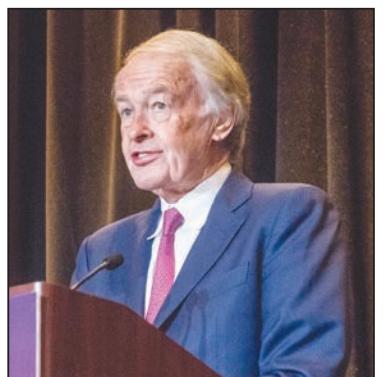
Boston Mayor Michelle Wu speaks: "We are all stronger together...we've got to get together for our people."



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



US Representative Ayanna Pressley introduces the Awards segment of the MLK Breakfast.



Sen. Edward Markey.



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



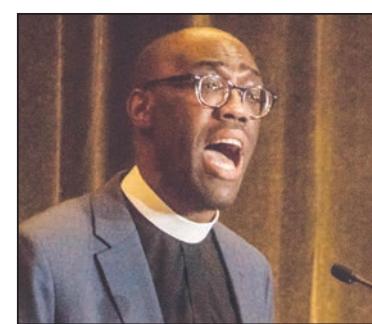
Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell.



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



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



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



Boston Children Chorus Executive Director Andrés Holder.



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



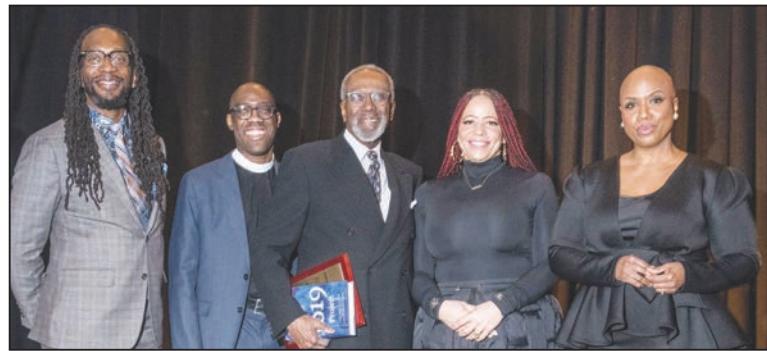
MLK Scholars receiving awards: Able Ebbi from Boston Latin School, Carl Matteus Washington and Daniel Idemudia from Boston Latin Academy, Cliddanie Bellevue, Kelyse Foster, Aeisha Beckford, and Fraydique Alexander Gaiton Rodriguez from the John D O'Bryant School, Hannah Banh from the Dr Albert D Holland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



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

ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL BREAKFAST

DEREK KOUYOUNJIAN PHOTOS



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



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



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



Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones and US Representative Ayanna Pressley with True Compass Award recipient Byron Rushing. He is a civil rights activist and community organizer as well as serving the Commonwealth as a State Representative.

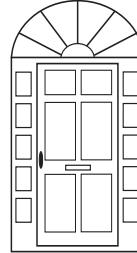
The True Compass Award is given to individuals whose life's work has contributed to the promotion of social justice, racial equality, and civil discourse.



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

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

Special to the Times

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

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

Protecting Access to Justice

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

clear limitations on arrests, detention, or custody actions within Massachusetts courthouses.

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

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

The legislation:

- Requires any law enforcement agent entering a courthouse

to identify themselves to court personnel and state their enforcement purpose

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

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

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

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

access are upheld for all.”

Strengthening Protections for Survivors of Trafficking and Serious Crimes

In late November, Senator Edwards filed An Act relative to trafficking and abuse survivors (SD 3394), a comprehensive update to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 258F concerning U and T Visa certifications. U and T visas are federal immigration protections designed for victims of serious crimes – including assault, domestic violence, kidnapping, and human trafficking – who assist law enforcement in investigations or prosecutions.

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

“People who have survived some of the horrific crimes such as slavery, trafficking, and violence, face so many obstacles as it is, in standing up to their perpetrators. We need to make sure that they feel safe to talk to local law enforcement.”

The legislation:

- Clarifies that judges, state agencies, and law enforcement entities may issue certifications
- Establishes a right to appeal previously denied certifications to the courts
- Ensures timely responses that align with the urgency of immigration proceedings.

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

RMV unveils redesigned disability placard to improve efficiency

Special to the Times

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

The updated placard features several key improvements:

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

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

The RMV's Medical Affairs division issues approximately 140,000 disability placards annually to qualified residents

on a temporary or permanent basis. Previously, the placard production process was a multi-step, labor-intensive process. The new placards eliminate the need for individual lamination, cutting processing time by 25%.

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

While the disability placards will feature a new design, the application process, certification requirements, and parking benefits have not changed, and the placard remains valid for the time it is medically necessary. Residents will continue to provide medical certification of health condition(s) with their application. Once approved, residents will be able to park in designated accessible parking spaces and meters without paying fees or penalties when displaying the placard until such time as it is no longer medically necessary.

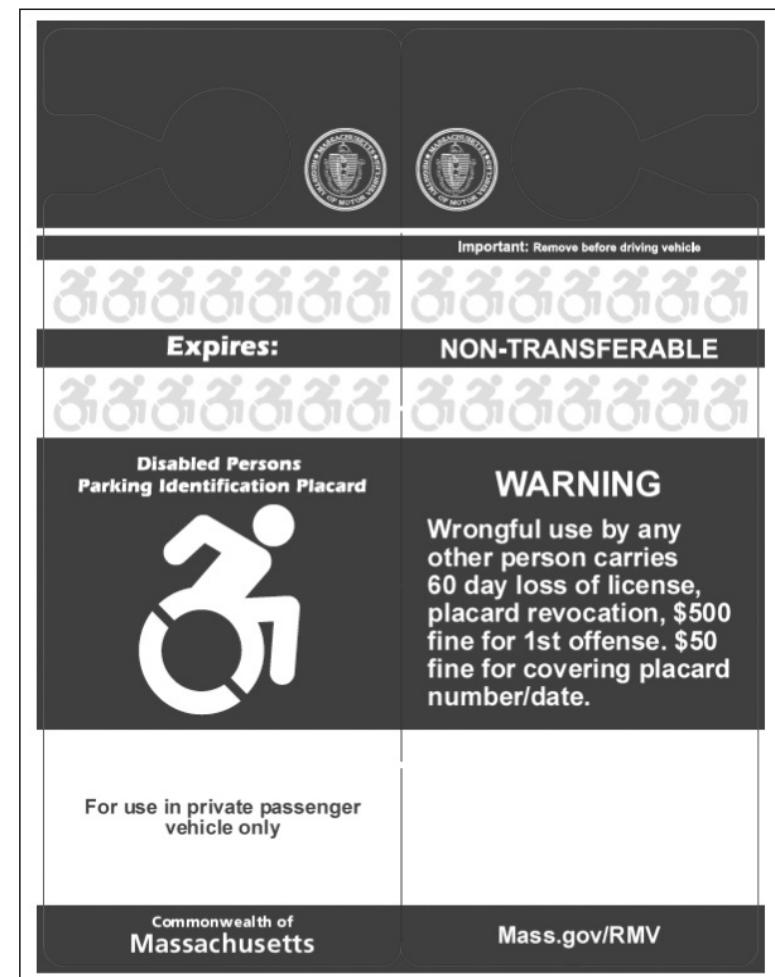
For more information, please visit mass.gov/RMV.

Statements of Support:

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

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

“It's a huge honor to have this public domain icon now official in Massachusetts. As a parent of a child with disabilities, a pro-



The new design – front and back.

fessor for young designers and architects, and a citizen of our state, I look forward to making meaningfully accessible services for all of us.” – Sara Hendren,

Associate Professor, Art + Design and Architecture, Affiliate Faculty, Health, Humanities, and Society, Northeastern University.

Boston Public Market welcomes Marzae Cellar + Provisions, opening Spring 2026

Special to the Times

Boston Public Market is proud to announce a new partnership with Marzae, the first and only natural winery in Massachusetts, which will open Marzae Cellar + Provisions in the Market's largest retail space in Spring 2026. The addition represents a significant expansion of the Market's offerings and reflects its continued commitment to supporting New England producers through innovative, mission-aligned concepts.

Founded in 2023 by husband-and-wife team Eliot Martin and Katie Luczai, Marzae has quickly built a devoted following for its natural wines that explore the potential of the New England region while enhancing ecological health and strengthening local foodways. Their wines have been featured in top restaurants across the country and recommended by Wine Enthusiast. The Boston Public Market location fulfills the founders' long-standing vision for an urban tasting room—one designed to bring people together to enjoy regional beverages, food, and shared experiences in the heart of the city.

"Boston Public Market has always been about creating opportunities for local producers to grow while staying rooted in their values," said Cheryl Cronin, CEO of Boston Public Market. "Marzae embodies that spirit. Their commitment to New England agriculture, environ-

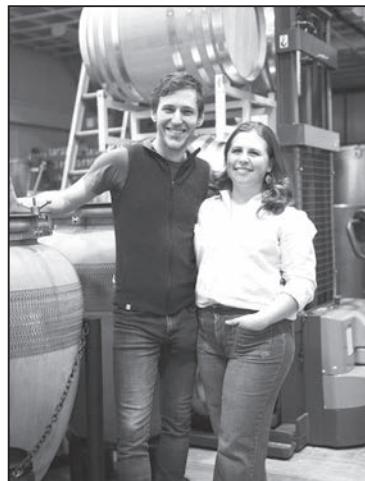


PHOTO COURTESY JENNA SARNO
Eliot Martin and Katie Luczai.

mental stewardship, and community-building makes them a natural fit for the Market, and we're thrilled to welcome them into our vendor family."

Marzae Cellar + Provisions at Boston Public Market

Marzae Cellar + Provisions will be a tasting room and gathering place where guests can enjoy Marzae's wines, aperitifs, and non-alcoholic beverages on site or take their favorites home. Designed as an inviting, unpretentious space, the concept adds a new layer to the Boston Public Market experience while remaining deeply connected to regional sourcing and sustainability.

Highlights of the concept include:

- Flexible Dining Experiences: Walk-in guests can enjoy casual, farm-to-table counter-service offerings throughout the day. In the evening, a portion

of the space will transition to a more chef-driven, seasonal dining experience by reservation at the "Kitchen Counter" bar and lounge.

- Draft Wine & Sustainability Innovation: A rarity in the region, the majority of Marzae's wines will be served on draft, significantly reducing packaging waste and carbon footprint. A refillable growler membership program will allow guests to enjoy Marzae wines at home in a more sustainable and affordable way.

- Curated Provisions: The retail component will feature a carefully selected mix of Marzae merchandise alongside favorite New England-made food and lifestyle products, reinforcing the Market's commitment to local producers.

"Our vision for Marzae has always been about more than just what's in the glass," says co-founder Eliot Martin. "It's about building community around shared passion and local foodways. We are thrilled to bring that vision to life within the Boston Public Market and welcome the city into our family."

Coinciding with the Boston Public Market opening, Marzae will launch its long-anticipated non-alcoholic brand, Off Piste Ferments, expanding inclusive beverage offerings within the Market. The opening follows a landmark period for the winery, including the launch of MASSeration, Massachusetts' first natu-

ral wine fair, and the upcoming planting of the state's first regeneratively farmed vineyard in Haverhill in June 2026.

As a nonprofit organization, the Boston Public Market Association is a "Market on a Mission" to nurture local entrepreneurs who have barriers to fully participating in the Market, educate their visitors on the importance of a resilient and equitable food system, celebrate the bounty of all of New England, and cultivate a diverse community around food.

The Boston Public Market Association, a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, developed and operates the Market with public impact goals to support: economic development, New England food system resilience, public health and education, affordability, and access. Development of the Boston Public Market in 2015 was a partnership between the Boston Public Market Association, individual and corporate donors, foundations, the City of Boston, and the project's seed funder, the Commonwealth of Massachu-

sets.

The Boston Public Market is an indoor, year-round market-place featuring about 30 New England artisans and food producers housed under one roof offering fresh foods, prepared meals, crafts, and specialty items. Residents and visitors alike can find seasonal, locally sourced food from Massachusetts and New England, including fresh produce, grocery items, dairy, seafood, baked goods, specialty items, crafts, and prepared breakfast, lunch, and dinner options. Everything sold at the Market is produced or originates in New England, as the seasons allow.

Founded in 2023 by Eliot Martin and Katie Luczai, Marzae is dedicated to producing exceptional natural wines that enhance ecological health and enrich the New England region. As the only natural winery in Massachusetts, Marzae leads the local movement through regenerative farming practices, community events like the MASSeration wine fair, and a commitment to sustainable distribution.

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BHCA (from pg. 1)

Authority

LDA Architects

Contact the BHCA office if you would like to be a sponsor of this event.

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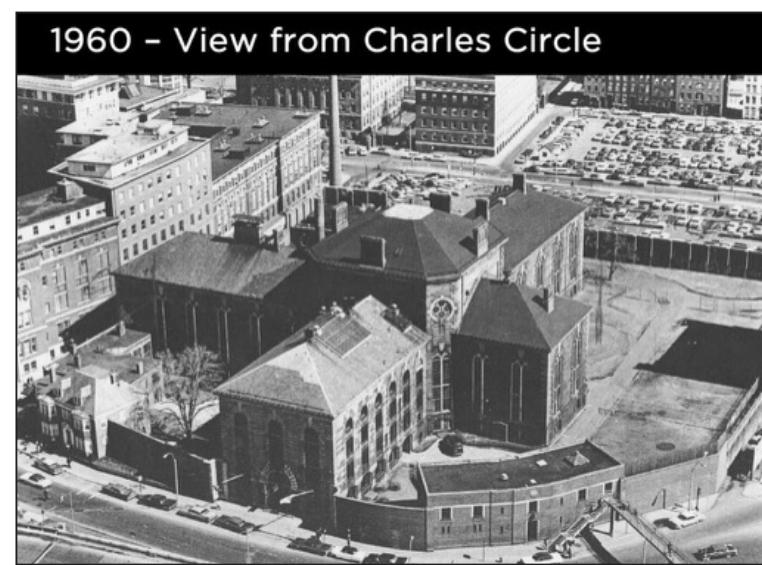
Upcoming Meetings & Events

Young Friends Social – Wednesday, January 28th, 7pm at Teddy's on the Hill, 9 Bowdoin Street

Meet & Greet – Monday, February 2nd, 6:00pm at 75 Chestnut

Zoning & Licensing Committee – Wednesday, February 4th, 6pm via Zoom.

First Friday Coffee Hour – Friday, February 6th, 8:30am at 74 Joy Street



The Charles Street Jail, circa 1960.

COURTESY PHOTO

For further information on BHCA events and meetings, or

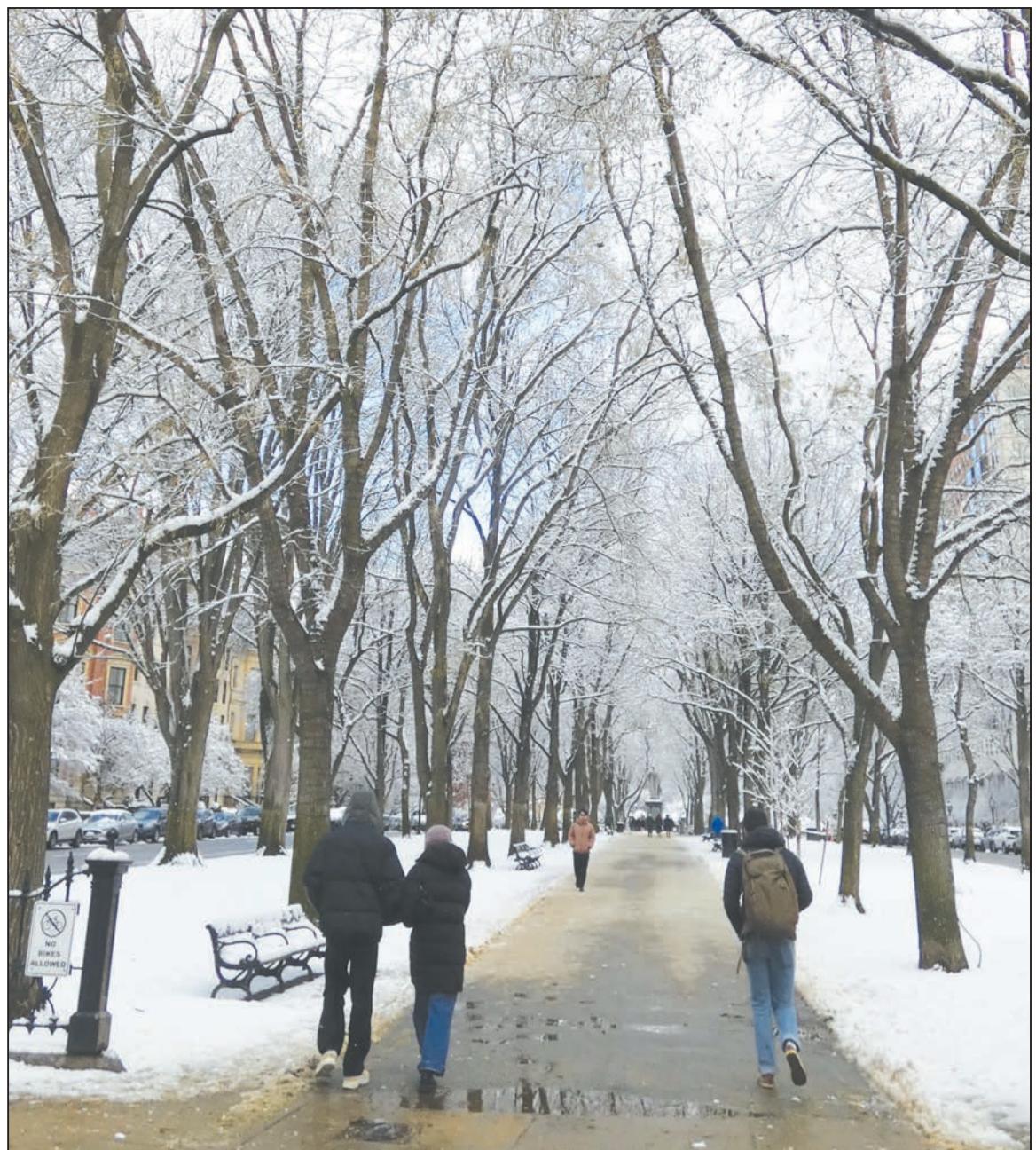
to volunteer, please contact the BHCA office at 617-227-1922.

SCENES OF WINTER AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

A winter storm arrived in Boston on the morning of Martin Luther King Day, Monday, Jan. 19, leaving about five inches of fresh snow.



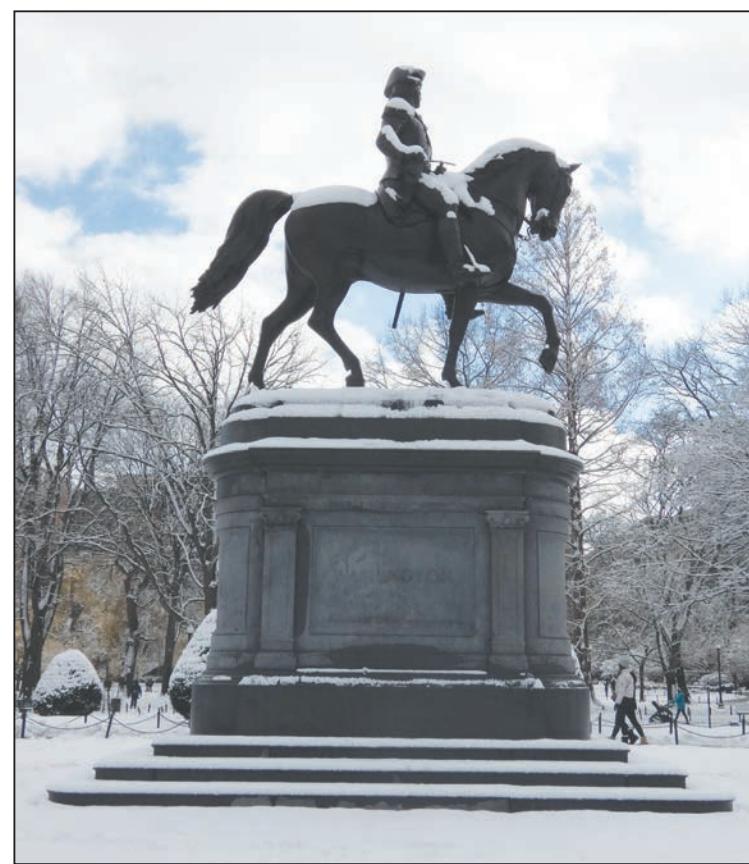
The statue of Alexander Hamilton on the Commonwealth Avenue Mall.



Pedestrians walk along the Commonwealth Avenue Mall.



A sledder traverses the Boston Common.



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



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

DAN MURPHY PHOTOS

SCENES OF WINTER AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

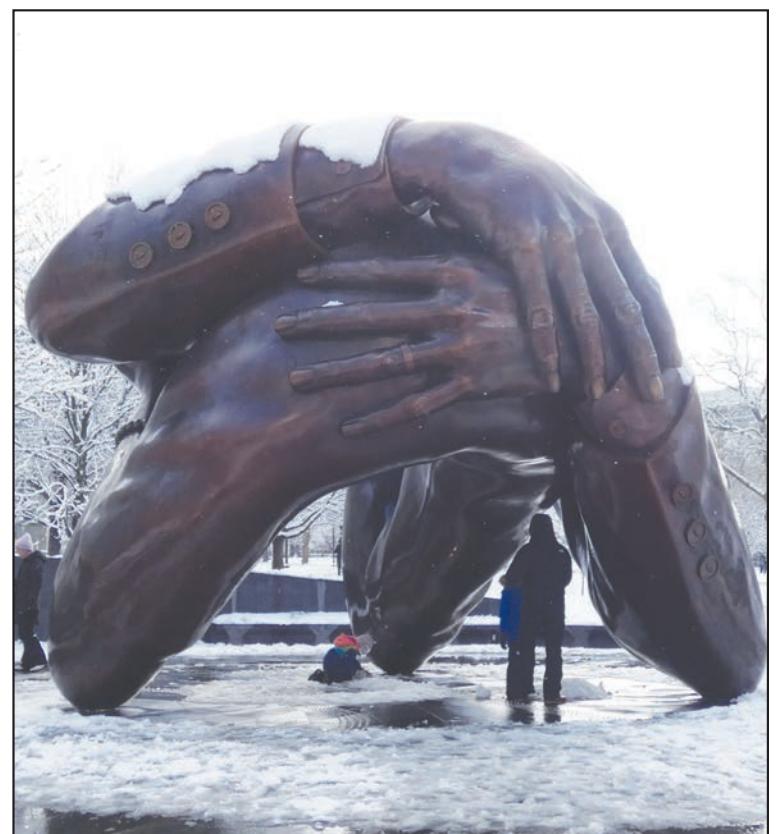
DAN MURPHY PHOTOS



Snow coats the Commonwealth Avenue Mall footbridge.



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



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

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Massachusetts wins \$10 million federal grant for early literacy tutoring

Special to the Times

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is celebrating that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has been awarded \$10 million from the U.S. Education Department in a new Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grant. The state plans to use this funding for early literacy tutoring as part of the administration's comprehensive strategy to improve literacy for all Massachusetts students.

The funding for the 2026-27 school year will support Massa-

chusetts' no-cost, high-dosage early literacy tutoring that the state is funding with \$25 million in Fair Share dollars at 272 elementary schools. High-dosage tutoring is an evidence-based model shown to deliver significant gains in literacy achievement, particularly for students who are behind grade level, and provides one-on-one or small-group tutoring sessions multiple times a week for at least 10 weeks.

"We know that improving early literacy is vitally important to improving our students' futures, and high dosage tutor-

ing has been proven to be highly effective," said Governor Maura Healey. "This \$10 million grant will help accelerate students' progress in literacy, building a stronger foundation for success in school."

"When adults work together for students' benefit, great things can happen," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "This \$10 million is a welcome investment in a priority area for our state."

This is the second federal grant the Healey-Driscoll Administration has won to support early literacy, bringing millions of federal dollars into the state to help students learn to read and read well. The state also received a \$38.4 million, over five years, federal literacy grant in September 2024.

These grants align with the administration's Lit-

eracy Launch: Reading Success from Age 3 through Grade 3 initiative. Literacy Launch is focused on transforming early literacy systems in public schools and community-based preschool programs through grants for high-quality reading materials, technical support, literacy screeners, and coaching, free professional development, and speeding up the review of teacher education programs, which are now required to provide evidence-based literacy training. The administration has secured \$35 million in state funding for the first two years of Literacy Launch through the Fiscal Year 2025 and Fiscal Year 2026 budgets.

"This federal grant, paired with other state and federal investments, is a reflection of how important early literacy is," said Education Secretary Dr.

Patrick Tutwiler. "I'm glad to see our tutoring efforts receive this additional support, because we know it's critical for students to be successful readers by third grade."

"Early literacy is an essential investment in improving student outcomes," said Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Pedro Martinez. "We want students to find joy in reading and be ready to use their literacy skills in other subjects. This tutoring will help students make that progress."

Literacy Launch efforts have included Partnership for Reading Success – Massachusetts (PRISM) grants and Literacy Launch Institutes, which trained 500 educators in summer 2025. Another 1,300 educators are expected at institutes this winter and next summer.

Historic New England announces 2026 Medal recipients

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

These distinguished honorees will be celebrated at the Historic New England Medal Gala on Saturday, March 7, at 6:30 p.m., hosted at the Fairmont Copley Plaza, Boston. The Historic New England Medal—the organization's highest annual honor—recognizes individuals whose exceptional civic and philanthropic leadership have made an enduring impact on preserving and sharing the region's rich history. This year's recipients embody that mission with distinction.

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

A transformative force in

the philanthropic and cultural life of Massachusetts, Nancy R. Coolidge has dedicated her career to strengthening the region's most important arts, education, and preservation institutions. She served as a Director of Historic New England for fourteen years, becoming one of the most influential leaders in the organization's 115-year history.

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

"Nancy's vision and dedication have elevated countless organizations across Massachusetts and beyond," said Peter Lynch, Founder of The Lynch Foundation. "Her deep belief in the power of history, education, and culture has made her a guiding light in the philanthropic community. Honoring her with this medal is both fitting and deeply deserved."

A native New Englander and a global leader in the arts, Stephen S. Lash is Chairman Emeritus of Christie's. He joined Christie's in 1976 and soon launched the auction house's U.S. presence on Park Avenue in

New York City—an innovation that reshaped the American art market. After nearly a decade as Chairman, Lash remains one of the most respected figures in the international cultural arena.

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

"Stephen's impact on Christie's, the art world, and the preservation community is immeasurable," said Bonnie Brennan, CEO of Christie's. "His integrity, vision, and passion for cultural heritage have inspired generations of colleagues and collectors. Historic New England could not have chosen a more worthy honoree."

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

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

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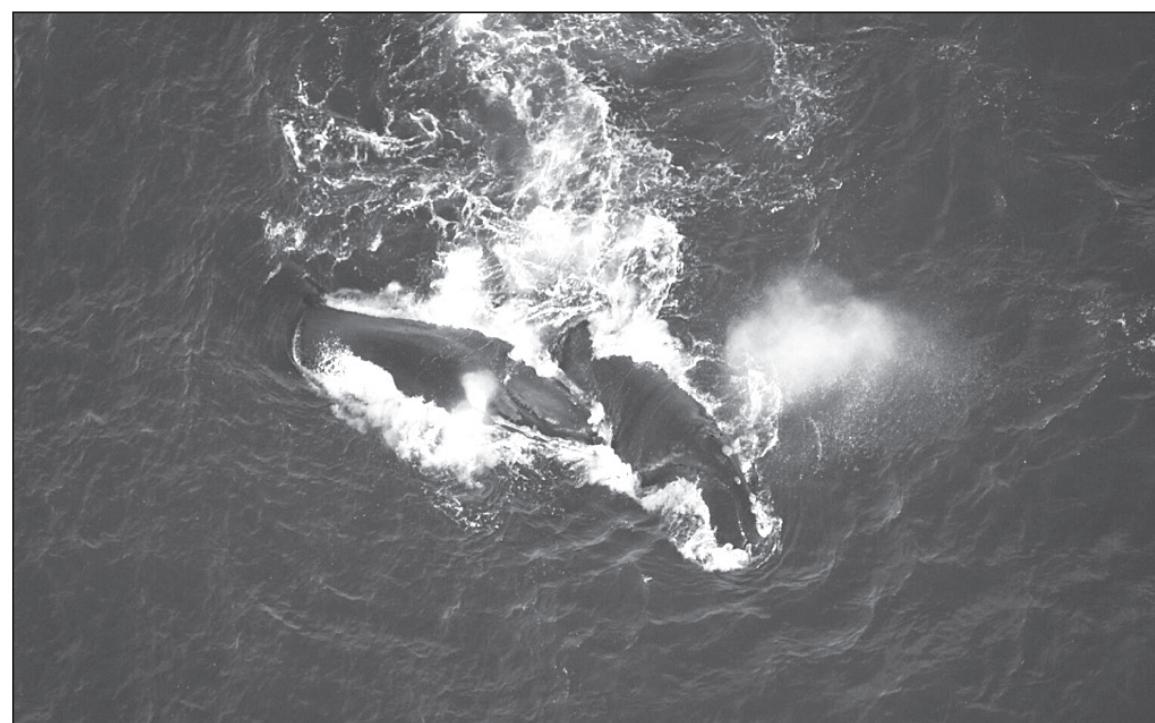
North Atlantic right whales return to southern New England waters

Special to the Times

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

Scientists from the New England Aquarium's Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life were flying an aerial survey on Jan. 5 when they sighted an aggregation of eight right whales 37 miles south of Nantucket. A second survey on Jan. 8 found over 20 right whales. Between both surveys, at least 23 unique whales have been identified so far. The group included two female right whales who have calved in recent years, "Braces" (Catalog #3320) and "Maple" (Catalog #1711), as well as "Atoll" (Catalog #4714), a young adult female who may be nearing calving age. These three females were all seen in surface active groups, a social behavior that involves several right whales closely interacting at the surface. These surface active groups can also provide mating opportunities, although not always. The majority of whales identified have been adult males including "Batman" (Catalog #1017) and "Dune" (Catalog #3351).

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



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

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

The winter/spring season marks the peak time of year for right whale sightings in southern New England waters. In addition to the Aquarium sightings south of Nantucket, the Center for Coastal Studies has also sighted right whales in Cape Cod

Bay over the last month. Cape Cod Bay is subject to a mandatory slow zone for boats and ships known as a Seasonal Management Area (SMA) until May 15.

The Jan. 5 whale sightings by the Aquarium triggered the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to implement a voluntary slow speed zone called a Dynamic Management Area (DMA) for mariners to reduce their speed to 10 knots to protect the whales. The DMA is in effect until Jan. 20, one of several active voluntary slow zones from Massa-

chusetts to Virginia due to right whale sightings. Vessel strikes are one of the leading causes of injuries and deaths for this species, which numbers about 380 individuals, making it critical that vessels slow down to the recommended speed.

"These recent sightings are an important reminder that right whales can be found throughout New England waters during the winter and spring. Reducing vessel speed in mandatory and voluntary right whale management areas is one of the most effective actions mariners can take to

reduce the risk of vessel strikes and help protect this critically endangered species," said Katherine McKenna, Associate Scientist in the Aquarium's Anderson Cabot Center who was aboard the Jan. 8 survey flight.

For the past 15 years, the New England Aquarium has conducted aerial surveys over the waters south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, collecting data on all marine animals with a focus on protected species of whales and sea turtles. In recent years, the Aquarium has expanded survey coverage in New England including coastal Maine, the Gulf of Maine, and the Canyons along the shelf break. These flights help monitor changes in animal populations, identify various species, recognize trends using standardized data, and monitor aggregations. Determining where right whales occur and how they are using habitats provides crucial information that can be used to better protect endangered species like North Atlantic right whales.

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

Building Boston 250: Momentum grows for the city's semiquincentennial

Special to the Times

Boston is preparing to mark the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution—honoring the people, ideas, and places that sparked independence. Led by the City's Commemoration Commission, planning for Boston 250 is building toward an inclusive, citywide celebration that highlights Boston's leadership in shaping a new nation.

On March 19, 2025, the Boston City Council voted to amend the ordinance establishing the Commemoration Commission as first discussed in July 2024 and as proposed by commissioner vote in October 2024. This revision reduced the number of voting members from 44 to 37, in an effort to alleviate how

often the Commission ran into the inability to have a quorum. In addition, advisory committees/stakeholder groups replace the original subcommittee structure. These groups will take no official votes but may share ideas and recommendations in a non-binding fashion. In an effort to strengthen and support the amendments to the ordinance, Commemoration Commission staff is working on bylaws to develop frameworks for the Commission to be successful in the endeavors they have been tasked with. These bylaws will exist inside of a handbook that commissioners can reference routinely.

In an effort to highlight Boston's diverse historical resources, the Boston Commemoration

Commission has compiled a list of repositories, historical collections, projects, museums, and other places where people can learn about Boston's history. With support from the Boston Public Library, this list will be made publicly accessible as the Boston Historical Collections and Resources Database, a simple, searchable database on the Library's website.

2026 is a big year for the City and for the Commemoration Commission as we mark the 250th anniversary of the Siege of Boston, the 250th Evacuation Day, Independence Day, and more. We are working hard to create unforgettable experiences, and we are looking forward to Boston 400 on the horizon!

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BHAC votes by majority to dismiss violation for unapproved window decals at proposed Charles Street cosmetics shop

By Dan Murphy

The Beacon Hill Architectural Commission voted by a majority to dismiss a violation for the unapproved temporary window decals now adorning the proposed future home of a Charles Street shop that will sell luxury skin-care products and cosmetics at the commission's first monthly public hearing of 2026, which was held virtually on Thursday, Jan. 15.

Sisley Paris Boutique intends to open a retail store in a street-level retail space at 31-33 Charles St. last occupied by Benefit Cosmetics Boutique & Browbar "sometime in June," said Jean-Raphaël Comte, manager in operations and financial development for the company.

The multiple decals, which display the company logo and store information, have been applied to the exterior of the windows, so not to impact the (invisible to the human eye) UV-filtering film that lines the interior of the windows and protects products on display in the windows from sunlight, said Comte. The decals will only remain in place until the shop opens, he added, and the applicant intends to file another application with the commission for permanent signage ahead of that time.

Staff (Nicholas Armata) informed the applicant that the decals fall under the commission's jurisdiction, whether they are applied to the interiors or exteriors of the windows, because either way, they are considered part of the windows themselves.

"These are fine. You just have to apply for them and give us set times for when they'll be up," advised Armata.

Chair Mark Kiefer acknowledged concerns raised that this case could set a troubling precedent for allowing excessive window decals in the Historic Beacon Hill District, even on only a temporary basis, and that the decals might also seem at odds with "the spirit of the guideline to limit visual clutter on Charles Street."

But on the other hand, Chair Kiefer pointed to the current condition of the now-shuttered Beacon Hill Hotel, located directly across Charles Street and adorned with plain brown paper covering the windows, as hav-



D. MURPHY PHOTOS

The Firehouse at 127 Mount Vernon St., which is home to Hill House.

ing its own "negative impacts," especially aesthetic ones.

Commissioner Maurice Finegold noted the unusual circumstance in the neighborhood of the future Sisley space as a large storefront with two entrances. The street-level retail space also rounds Chestnut Street and is comprised largely of plate-glass windows.

Chair Kiefer made a motion to dismiss the violation and ratify the existing conditions, which was supported by himself and Commissioners Finegold and Alice Richmond. The motion came with provisos that the decals remain in place for only six months from the time of the determination, and that if the decals are vandalized or otherwise defaced, the applicant is obligated to return to the commission with plans to replace them in kind or find a suitable alternative.

Vice Chair Arian Allen, who expressed concerns with the precedent this matter could set, cast the sole dissenting vote on the motion.

In another matter, the commission unanimously approved a design review application to replace an existing intercom system at the Firehouse, located at 127 Mount Vernon St., which is home to the nonprofit community center, Hill House.

Daryl Ramdehal, senior property manager for Rogerson Communities, said the Firehouse's front door was recently replaced, along with the trim and door frame, and as a result the existing intercom system, which has been decommissioned due to its

advanced age, no longer fits in its former place.

While a temporary wireless doorbell system is currently in operation, a Hill House staff member said they had been without an intercom system for several months, making it difficult for children to safely enter and exit the building.

The applicant proposed replacing the existing intercom system with a smaller Ring system, said Ramdehal.

While the application had specified a black metal covering for the system, staff noted brass coverings for intercom systems are typically approved within the Historic Beacon Hill District.

Vice Chair Allen made a motion to approve this application as submitted, which was unanimously supported by herself and Commissioners Finegold and Richmond. (Chair Kiefer, who serves on the board for Rogerson Communities on Beacon Hill, recused himself from deliberating in this matter.)

The motion came with provisos that the covering be made of brass and its design be delegated to staff for final approval; and that shop drawings be submitted to staff detailing the new door-jamb conditions prior to work commencing.

The commission also unanimously approved a design review application to replace the existing intercom system at 40 Joy St.

Michael Fay, property manager for Street & Company, said the applicant is proposing a standard Butterfly MX unit, with a brass enclosure box, to replace the old unit, which likely dates



The proposed future home of Sisley Paris Boutique at 31-33 Charles St.

back to the 1980s.

Chair Kiefer noted that the proposed design meets the general criteria for the de facto standard staff has established for new intercom systems installed within the Beacon Hill Historic District.

When determined appropriate, the commission would consider such proposals, provided the location selected meets all of the following criteria: that the location of the cover (and intercom system) shall not be on a wall facing the street; that the property has more than two units; that the property has no plans for major internal renovations; that the location is recessed in a door vestibule; that there are not two sets of double-doors, where a device could potentially be located within, and thus exempt from commission review; and that the proposed cover wouldn't obscure trim or any other existing architectural detail.

Staff also previously stated that the commission hasn't approved, nor would it ever approve, any Butterfly intercom units with illuminated LED screens mounted on facades facing the street, if the units themselves were visible.

Chair Kiefer made a motion, which was unanimously supported, to approve the application as submitted, with provisos that a proposed brass plate be omitted from the design, so the unit box can be installed direct-

ly to the existing wood; that the postal lockbox be installed in a manner "analogous" with the brass cover immediately below it; and that shop drawings be submitted to staff prior to installation.

The commission also unanimously approved a design review application for the installation of a garage door keypad at 8 Walnut St.

The proposed battery-operated keypad, described as being small and black in color, is wireless and wouldn't require any permanent installation, including drilling into or otherwise permanently altering the granite piers on either side of the brick wall, said the applicant. (The door is located within this brick wall.)

While some suggested that the keypad should be made of brass, staff viewed it as having more of a utilitarian function, rather than being an actual architectural feature.

"That's my rationale for it being black and not brass. It's just utilitarian," added Armata.

Chair Kiefer put forth a motion to approve this application as submitted, which was unanimously supported.

The commission also unanimously approved as submitted a design review application for 59 Chestnut St., which proposed the repainting of the front door in the similar and historically appropriate Louisburg Green-HC-113.

CITY PAWS

Winterize your dog walks

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

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

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

Ways To Keep Warm

If your companion is a short-haired, skinny canine, like a Whippet or Italian Greyhound, look for signs that it is too cold for this dog to walk far. Some of

those are obvious, like shivering or trembling, a tucked tail, or a hunched posture.

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

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

We see people walking dogs without hats or gloves. Your dog may be made for winter with a double coat that insulates and sheds moisture. You have to create your own insulation by lay-

ering materials and using winter accessories to cover sources of heat loss and protect vulnerable spots like your fingers and ears. Many of these accessories also come in heated versions.

Choose Your Route

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

Windchill is real, and your route can be adjusted for it. Ed is especially good about checking all aspects of the weather before he sets out on a walk with Poppy. If the wind is going to be in your face for part of the walk, start out in that direction. Then you'll have it at your back when you are beginning to feel



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

the cold. You can also use side streets to zig-zag and give yourselves breaks from the wind.

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

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

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

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

Wu announces voting stage of participatory budgeting initiative, "Ideas in Action"

Special to the Times

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

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

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

ing these ideas."

Below are the 2026 ballot proposals for voters' consideration:

- Neighborhood Fresh Food Access Initiative, \$500,000
- Immigrant Legal Defense Fund, \$400,000
- Immigrant Stories Through Art: Creating Belonging, Building Connections, \$300,000
- Workforce Training Programs Focused on Trades, \$300,000
- Immigrant Career Pathways: Bridging Language and Employment, \$300,000
- Youth Financial Literacy and Empowerment Workshops, \$250,000
- Small Business Development Resource Program, \$250,000
- Community Litter Reduction Campaign, \$200,000
- Green my Block, \$100,000
- Voices of Recovery: Sobriety Supports and Storytelling Pilot, \$200,000
- Healing Through Art: Creative Pathways to Wellness, \$300,000
- Bridging the Gap: Assistance for Housing Stability, \$200,000
- Senior Caregiver Resources & Training Programs, \$200,000

"The projects on this year's ballot represent the direct result of our office's deep commitment

to community engagement," said Renato Castelo, Director of the Office of Participatory Budgeting. "By partnering with 19 organizations across the city, we've brought the voices of hundreds of residents to the table. I invite everyone to participate in this final step and vote for the projects that will have the greatest impact on their community."

How to Vote

Boston residents can vote online by visiting Boston.gov/Participate.

For in-person voting, residents can visit City Hall and or BCYF Pino; BCYF Quincy; BCYF Holland; BCYF Leahy Holloran; BCYF Vine Street; BCYF Hennigan.

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

Cycle One Project Updates

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

- Youth Reentry Supports
- In December 2025, Mayor Wu and the Office of Returning Citizens announced \$250,000

in grant awards supporting programs focused on reducing youth recidivism and strengthening reentry supports for young people returning from incarceration.

- Fresh Food Access
- The Office of Food Justice reported that their 2025 project, Expand Access to Fresh Foods in Boston, has been completed. These funds supported a coordinated response to the November 2025 SNAP funding delay.
- Rental Assistance For Boston Youth
- The Office of Housing Stability continues to receive referrals from trusted community partners working with at-risk youth. Those eligible can receive assistance of up to \$5,000 to help cover late rent payments or move-in costs, first/last month's rent, security deposit, and/or a broker's fee.
- Benches at High Ridership Bus Stops

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

Real Estate Transfers

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

BEACON HILL

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

BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE

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

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PHOTOS AND TEXT BY PENNY CHERUBINO

THIS WEEK'S ANSWER



The image of the statehouse in the last clue is on the plaque marking the birthplace of Charles Bulfinch on the New England Telephone and Telegraph Building in Bowdoin Square. Bulfinch is sometimes called America's first architect and was the designer of the oldest part of the Massachusetts State House and the Bulfinch Building at MGH.

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

THIS WEEK'S CLUE



OBITUARIES

All obituaries and death notices will be at a cost of \$195.00 per paper. Includes photo. No word limit. Please send to obits@reverejournal.com or call 781-485-0588

IDEAS (from pg. 13)

agement plan.

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

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

benefit communities across Boston.

The Office of Participatory Budgeting (OPB) provides an official point of entry for Boston residents to contribute to the city's budget process. OPB continues to advance its mission

by: furthering public engagement and direct democratic involvement; building collective capacity on issues of racial and social justice; and aligning with the City's goal of achieving and embedding equity and inclusion into City practices.

Beloved Service Dog rescue to be honored at celebration of life event at Copley Square BPL

Special to Times

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

Participants can register at: <https://bpl.bibliocommons.com/events>.

NEADS Service Dogs, headquartered in Princeton, Mass., will be onsite to reflect on Rescue's legacy and answer questions about the organization. For 50 years, NEADS has offered the widest array of Service Dog programs in the industry, including Service Dogs for adults and chil-

dren with physical disabilities, Service Dogs for veterans, and Service Dogs for people with hearing loss or deafness. NEADS also provides Assistance/Facility Dogs for professionals in the classroom, hospital, first-responder, courthouse, and therapeutic settings.

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

Rescue was named ASPCA Dog of the Year and was the inspiration for the New York Times bestselling 'Rescue & Jessica: A Life-Changing Friend-

ship.' The children's book is based on their real-life partnership and reflects their love and teamwork. In addition to changing Jessica's life, the story of Rescue continues to inspire children and adults alike.

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

Steven trained over 20 dogs for NEADS during his time in

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

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

This special event is designed for children who grew up loving Rescue, and for all who wish to honor his memory. Rescue's

final gift is helping communities talk openly about grief and loss and how sharing stories can bring comfort and healing.

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

Officials issue reminder on open burning season

Massachusetts' fire and environmental leaders are reminding residents to use caution, care, and common sense if they plan to burn certain agricultural waste during open burning season, which runs from January 15 to May 1.

State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine, Commissioner Bonnie Heiple of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), and Chief Fire Warden David Celino of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) said restrictions on open burning are imposed at the state and local levels.

These restrictions are authorized by 310 CMR 7.07, which sets baseline requirements based on air quality and allows for "no burn" days; MGL chapter 48, section 13, which prohibits any open air fire unless a permit is issued; and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code, which gives local fire chiefs the authority to impose additional limits.

Open burning is prohibited year-round in the cities and towns of Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Malden, Medford, New Bedford, Newton, Somerville, Springfield, Waltham, Watertown, West Springfield, and Worcester.

In the remaining communities, open burning season runs from January 15 through May

1 with the following limitations. Local fire departments may deny a permit or set additional limitations if circumstances make open burning hazardous.

Only certain agricultural waste may be burned. This includes brush, cane, driftwood, residential forestry debris, fruit tree and bush prunings, raspberry stalks, infected bee hives, trees and brush from agricultural land clearing, and fungus-infected elm wood if no other acceptable means of disposal is available. It is unlawful to burn leaves, grass, hay, stumps, tires, household trash, construction materials, demolition debris, or brush, trees, cane, or driftwood from commercial or industrial land clearing.

Open burning may only be conducted:

- With a permit issued in advance by the local fire department;
- Between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm;
- At least 75 feet from all dwellings and without causing a nuisance;
- As close as possible to the source of material being burned; and
- When it will not cause or contribute to a condition of air pollution.

Persons who burn unlawfully or allow a fire to grow out of control could be held liable for firefighting costs or face fines or even jail time.

Open Burning Safety

- An adult should tend to the

fire at all times and keep tools to extinguish it close by.

- Burn small amounts at a time.
- Never use gasoline, kerosene, or other accelerants to start the fire.
- Don't wait for the fire department to tell you that it has become unsafe to burn: put the fire out if winds pick up or the weather changes. Most fires get out of control during sudden wind changes.
- If the fire gets out of control, call the local fire department right away.

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Beacon Hill Times Pick-Up Locations

Antonio's	288 Cambridge St.
Simmon's Liquors	210 Cambridge St.
Jobi Liquors.....	170 Cambridge St.
7-Eleven.....	122 Cambridge St.
West End Library.....	151 Cambridge St.
Charles St. Liquors	143 Charles St.
U.S. Post Office.....	136 Charles St.
Gary Drug	53 Charles St.
Bank of America.....	39 Charles St.
Charles St. Supply.....	54 Charles St.
Cobblestones	30 Charles St.
DeLuca's	11 Charles St.
Beacon Hill Wine	Charles St.
UPS	Charles St.
Remax 119	Charles St.
Cheers.....	84 Beacon St.
Emerson Place	10 Blossom St.
Beacon Hill Market	61 Anderson
Beacon Capitol Market	30 Myrtle St.
City Convenience.....	23 Beacon St.
Capital Coffee House	122 Bowdoin St.
Richdale Food	Beacon & Bowdoin St.
River House.....	145 Pinckney St.
West End Place	150 Stanford St.

Apartment Building locations:

8 Whittier Place	1 Emerson Place
6 Whittier Place	0 Emerson Place
150 Stanford St.	45 Temple St.
1 Longfellow	10 Bowdoin St.
4 Longfellow	122 Bowdoin St.
5 Longfellow	144 Bowdoin St.
2 Hawthorne Place	130 Bowdoin St.
3 Hawthorne Place	45 Myrtle St.
9 Hawthorne Place	19 Myrtle St.
Emerson Place	65 Martha Rd.
4 Emerson Place	

Meet Boston announces exciting winter activities

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

Special to the Times

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

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

trip today!"

The Frostival Lodge furnished by Wayfair will feature fun and festive offerings thanks to a unique partnership between Meet Boston, Eataly, Wayfair, and NBC Boston. Wayfair will outfit the space with cozy, comfortable cabin furniture and decor, and the entire collection is shoppable on their site. Eataly will offer food and drink options befitting a winter wonderland. Visitors can immerse themselves in Winter Games-themed programming that brings a taste of Milan-Cortina to Copley Square.

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



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

home."

"As your Milan/Cortina Winter Games destination, NBC Boston is proud to partner with Meet Boston to bring all the excitement to Frostival," said Chris Wayland, President and General Manager of the Boston stations of NBC and Telemundo. "We are thrilled to support Boston's latest and most exciting

winter attraction and enhance with Olympic-themed content that Bostonians won't want to miss."

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

- Weekly trivia nights
- Kids movie time with silent Disco headphones
- Small-scale live musical performances
- Curling lane and cornhole boards
- Table-top and group games such as Scrabble, Jenga, chess, and backgammon
- Winter Games in Italy watch parties
- Winter Games-themed and Valentine's Day-themed Kids Crafts
- Pasta-making classes for food enthusiasts

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

While the Lodge is generating buzz in Back Bay, Meet Boston is also working with the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy to install a 75-foot Ferris Wheel adjacent to the park's iconic carousel. The Frostival Ferris Wheel

will operate Wednesday through Sunday between January 31 and March 1. And for the first time ever, the carousel will be open during weekends in February.

"The Ferris Wheel on The Greenway is a perfect symbol of what Frostival represents — bringing people together in unexpected ways, even in the coldest months," said Chris Cook, Executive Director of the Kennedy Greenway Conservancy. "Thanks to our partnership with Meet Boston, we're able to turn The Greenway into a true winter destination for residents and visitors alike."

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

Thank you to our clients for 2025 and looking forward to a bright 2026!



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