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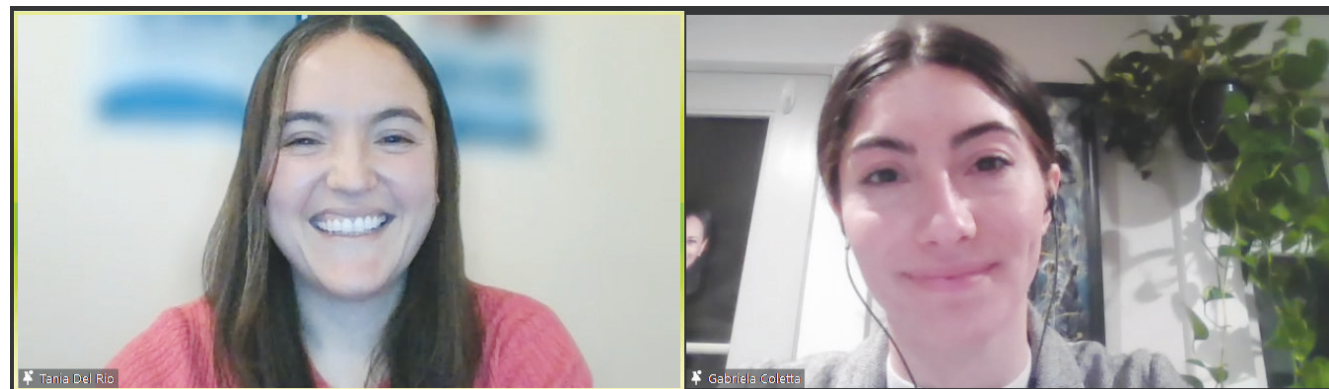
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Wednesday, February 9, 2022



City Council candidates Tania Del Rio and Gabriela Coletta during Monday's HVNA meeting.

District 1 City Council candidates stop by Monday's HVNA meeting

By John Lynds

The two candidates vying for the District 1 City Council seat stopped by Monday night's Harbor View Neighborhood Association meeting to introduce themselves to the community.

First up was candidate Tania Del Rio who recently served as the city's director of the Mayor's Office of Women's Ad-

vancement.

"My name is Tania Del Rio, I'm a BPS mom, I'm Latina immigrant originally from Mexico City, and I'm a leader with proven results in this community and in city government," said Del Rio. "I'm running for city council, because I want to be our district's strong voice for keeping this community together by fighting for attainable and affordable housing. I

also want to be fighting for quality schools and environmental justice. We, as you all know, are dealing with an urgent crisis with many of our neighbors facing displacement and our neighbors are being pushed out as our workforce housing keeps turning into luxury condos."

Del Rio said another major issue is that families are also leaving the neighborhood and city because

they feel BPS is not delivering for their children.

"All of us have to find a way to stop all of this," she said.

Del Rio said she grew up in Mexico City and spent her childhood traveling between Mexico and different US cities as her father's job took the family to different cities. After attending school in New

See CANDIDATES Page 2

Elected officials of color condemn hate directed at Mayor Wu

By John Lynds

There's a fine line between freedom of speech where one's opinion is expressed during a peaceful protest and using hateful and inflammatory language to express one's views.

Since implementing the city's vaccine mandate for all indoor venues in boston Mayor Michelle Wu has been exposed to some vile language from a group of anti-vaxxers that have camped outside her home as well as City Hall.

One can argue the language used against the City's first Asian-American female Mayor is not to express a point of view nor a disagreement with Wu's policies but language intended to intimidate.

"To have a chance at healing and building community, we can't keep normalizing hate," Wu recently tweeted. "They've shouted on megaphones

that my kids will grow up without a mom because I'll be in prison. Yesterday at dinner my son asked who else's birthday it was because the (morning) chant was "Happy Birthday, Hitler."

Anti-vaxxers outside the Mayor's home have also been heard yelling "communist c---" and a "piece of s---," as she leaves for work in the morning and returns home at night.

At a recent press conference with Wu, City Councilor Ed Flynn, who was all too familiar with protesters outside his Southie home when his father, Ray, was Boston Mayor, said the attacks against Wu are different on many levels.

"The level of intensity that's happening today wasn't there when my father was there, and I honestly believe some of it is

See HATE SPEECH Page 3

Wilmot appointed EBNHC's new President and CEO

By John Lynds

The East Boston Neighborhood Health Center's Board of Directors voted this week to appoint Greg Wilmot as the Health Center's new President and CEO. The board announced Tuesday that Wilmot, who has been serving as interim President and CEO since the departure of Manny Lopes in late October, will begin serving immediately.

"Greg assumed leader-



Greg Wilmot was named EBNHC new President and CEO Tuesday.

ship of the health center seamlessly in his inter-

im role and has expertly guided our organization through a very challenging time that has included a major COVID surge," said EBNHC Board Chair Rita Sorrento. "He has led our Executive Team in managing our complicated day to day operations and has represented himself well as a leader with all staff. His work has made a lasting impact on our patients and our community. Furthermore, Greg has earned our trust and confidence

in his ability to lead this organization and continue the health center's mission in the months and years to come."

Wilmot was recruited by Lopes in 2017 to serve as the Health Center's Executive Director of Neighborhood PACE, which saw a 48 percent growth under his leadership. Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly, or PACE Program, has allowed

See EBNHC Page 2



Superintendent Dr. Brenda Cassellius will leave her post at the end of the school year.

BPS Superintendent Cassellius to leave at end of the school year

By John Lynds

In May 2019 the Boston Public School Committee voted 5-2 to appoint Minnesota's former Commissioner of Education Dr. Brenda Cassellius as BPS's new school superintendent. At the time Cassellius beat out two other finalists, Oscar Santos, Head of School for Cathedral 7-12 High School in Boston and Marie Izquierdo, Chief Academic Officer for Miami-Dade County Public Schools in Florida, for BPS's top spot.

However, on Tuesday Dr. Cassellius sent her letter of resignation to Mayor

Michelle Wu and Boston School Committee Chair Jeri Robinson.

Dr. Cassellius wrote she will transition out of her role as superintendent at the end of the 2021/2022 school year.

"Working alongside so many people - parents, educators, community and faith leaders, and philanthropic partners - all dedicated to helping our children achieve their dreams has given new meaning to my vision of all hands on deck," said Dr. Cassellius in a statement. "Together, we've laid a stronger foundation upon which BPS

See CASSELLIUS Page 2

State Sen. Lydia Edwards endorses former Chief of Staff Gabriela Coletta for the District 1 City Council

By John Lynds

State Senator Lydia Edwards said her former Chief of Staff Gabriela Coletta is the best candidate to take over her District 1 City Council seat

when she leaves in April.

Edwards, who was sworn in as First Suffolk & Middlesex State Senator last month and will vacate her city council seat on April 30th, formally endorsed Colatta Tuesday.

"Gabriela Coletta is the most prepared, competent, and capable person to be the next City

Councilor," said Edwards Tuesday. "She is uniquely qualified for the job. She came out of Boston Public Schools, worked in government, and has done incredible work fighting to ensure Boston's waterfront is truly a waterfront for all."

Edwards said as her first Chief of Staff, Coletta demonstrated unmatched commitment, compassion, and drive, and proved she is ready to do the work of

a city councilor.

Coletta was Edwards's Campaign Manager during her historic win for City Council back in 2017. After Edwards was sworn in as the first woman of color to the seat that includes representing the neighborhoods of East Boston, in the North End and Charlestown, As Campaign Manager for Coletta activated and mobilized a grassroots campaign consisting of a broad coalition of residents, unions, volunteers, and advocacy

See COLETTA Page 3

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VALENTINE'S LOVELINES

PAGE 6



Del Rio said the city

"We're in a historic moment in our city where voters have been choosing change in recent years because I think we recognize the challenges that are in front of us require that we come together in a new way," said Del Rio. "I think that if we come together we can face these challenges head on. If I'm elected as your city councilor, I'm going to push the city to invest in housing and homeownership programs like the one that helped me. I want to see a housing information station and every high eviction area that provides people information about the right in their language. I also want us to fight for quality schools in each part of the district. I want to fight for universal Pre-K

"I decided to run for this seat because I know

Coletta, who worked to increase affordable hous-

Coletta said if elected she would be an "extremely responsive and accessi-

"It's really important that the next city councilor is also focused on the smaller nuts and bolts issues like trash, sidewalks and streets because a lot of life issues do add up and make a big impact on the lives of residents. I'm announcing here today that we're launching our "Walk and Roll" neighborhood sidewalk and street tour here in Harbor View. It's taking place on Sunday, February 20 at 10am. This is just an opportunity to review our streets, our sidewalks, trash, streetlights, and development projects to assess what's going on in our neighborhood. This is just an example of my commitment to constantly be present in this neighborhood and provide these opportunities for feedback and ideas from residents. So it would be an honor to represent you in the Boston City Council."

“Manny (Lopes) has been a colleague, he’s been a friend and served as a mentor on many things,” said Wilmot. “Manny recruited me to the health center and we worked together in a variety of capacities. Before I came to the Health Center and when I worked for Boston Medical Center, and Mass General we had various touch points, and so I’ve known Manny in a few different contexts. So coming into the Health

“The pandemic story has been an evolving one,” said Wilmot. “I will say our community should feel good about our response being done as part of a community effort. It took a village but our communities now have some of the highest vaccination rates as compared to any other kind of gateway community. So if you look at East Boston, Chelsea, Revere, the vaccination rates amongst Latinos in those communities were highest in the state. To date now it’s over 150,000 doses of COVID vaccine administered. That work has really helped us to mitigate what

could have been a far more deadly period during the latest surge. We know that folks got sick but those who were vaccinated and boosted for sure help to mitigate the severity of illness. That work, while still not done because we are still in a surge, mattered for our communities and we were glad to be a part of it. I grew up here in Boston and worked in health care for the last two decades around issues involving health disparities. You can predictably identify how some of this could have gone so we really created a very proactive, intentional strategy to really address equitable access to the vaccines. We built out all of our plans with a strategic purpose to really support these communities, and particularly black and brown commu-

"It's been two years now and it's definitely been an exhausting challenge for all of us," he said. "However, it has been particularly exhausting and challenging for our healthcare professionals that have

Prior to joining EBNHC in 2017, Wilmot worked at AllWays Health Partners, a member of Mass Gener-


al Brigham, where he led the organization's Mass-Health Accountable Care Organization strategy and operations. Additionally, Wilmot previously served as Boston Medical Center's director of business development, where he partnered with clinical and administrative leaders at the hospital and across key partners to create new opportunities for growth and expand clinical services and quality goals. Wilmot also worked for former Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick's Executive Office of Health and Human Services as senior advisor and director of strategy and performance management and held various operational and management roles at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts.

Dr. Cassellius said she looks forward to working with Mayor Wu. In the


Cassellius was named

“Superintendent Brenda Cassellius has given Boston three years of strong leadership and service, and we are a better city for it,” said Mayor Wu. “I am grateful for the Superintendent’s leadership, especially while navigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Her vision and relentless focus as a champion for our young people and for equity has helped BPS move forward on needed structural changes within our district. I look forward to continuing to partner with Dr. Cassellius this year and to build on

School Committee Chair Robinson added, "Boston owes Superintendent Cassellius a tremendous debt of gratitude for her transformational leadership and service on behalf of the city's children. Dr. Cassellius has been relentless in her focus on equity, never wavering in her commitment to our students and families. She set an example for those of us who share her dreams that all BPS students have equitable opportunities to achieve success in school and in life."



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Pressley introduces bill to bolster mental health resources for children and families

Staff Report

Congresswoman Ayana Pressley (MA-07), alongside Congressman Mark DeSaulnier (CA-11) and Congresswoman Doris Matsui (CA-06), introduced legislation aimed at boosting and expanding mental health services for low-income children and families.

The Early Childhood Mental Health Support Act (H.R. 6509) would require the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to work with area experts to compile and make public

evidence-based mental health, social-emotional, and behavioral health interventions for young children. The bill also provides grants to Head Start programs to implement these interventions in an effort to ensure every child has access to comprehensive health care.

“From poverty to housing, food, and health care insecurity, low-income children in my district are more vulnerable to trauma-inducing experiences that, when left unaddressed, can lead to health problems, relationship challenges, and

mental health and substance use disorders,” said Congresswoman Pressley. “The Early Childhood Mental Health Support Act would provide critical resources to prevent and address childhood trauma for low-income children and families, using best practices and culturally-competent solutions. As we recover from this pandemic and the unprecedented emotional burden on young people, this bill would provide necessary early intervention to help children heal and thrive. I am proud to join Rep. DeSaulnier in introducing

this legislation and look forward to working with him to fight to pass this bill.”

“The importance of strong behavioral health support from an early age cannot be overstated,” said Congressman DeSaulnier. “Like many families across the country, I have seen firsthand that the sooner children receive support, the better their outcomes. I am proud to work with Reps. Matsui and Pressley in ensuring these services are available at Head Start and other early education facilities, which will have a positive, lasting impact on the health and wellbeing of millions of children and families while helping to support teachers.”

“Head Start programs have proven benefits—from academic achievement to improved social skills—that provide children with a strong foundation to grow and thrive in their earliest years,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “Mental health is an important part of that foundation, and every Head Start location in the country should have access to the evidence-based tools and resources they need to best serve the behavioral health needs of children under five. I am proud to again join Congressman DeSaulnier in reintroducing the Early Childhood Mental Health Support Act, legislation that supports Head Start programs in carrying out this vision and expands access to mental and behavioral health care for young children.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that one in five children have a diagnosable mental disorder. Unfortunately, many of these children never receive a diagnosis and do not receive the behavioral health services they need. This lack of access to care can have serious consequences for children, contributing to learning challenges, difficulty forming meaningful relationships, and an increased likelihood of developing more serious mental illnesses later in life.

The Early Childhood Mental Health Support Act is supported by: National Alliance on Mental Illness, American Psychological Association, Massachusetts Head Start, Mental Health America, Trust for America’s Health, Zero to Three, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, First Five Years Fund, First Focus Campaign for Children, and Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs.

“Early intervention is one of our best tools to help realize better outcomes for children at risk of developing mental health conditions. Increasing the availability of evidence-based interventions in school settings like Head Start programs is critical to helping children and families. NAMI is grateful to Congressman DeSaulnier for his leadership in bringing the Early Childhood Mental Health Support Act forward to increase the mental health services available to our nation’s children,” said Hannah Wesolowski, Chief Advocacy Officer of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

“Early childhood is a critical period in development that sets the stage for long-term mental health. APA applauds Rep. DeSaulnier’s leadership in promoting children’s healthy social and emotional development by creating opportunities for Head Start centers to expand evidence-based interventions for parents and children through best practices, enhanced curricula and increased training,” said Arthur C. Evans Jr., Ph.D., CEO of the American Psychological Association.

“These past two years have laid bare the immediate need for expanded evidence-based mental health supports for our Commonwealth’s most vulnerable young children and families. Head Start and Early Head Start programs deserve access to all layers of interventions, resources, and funding to comprehensively wrap around children at this critical time,” said Michelle Hai-

mowitz, Executive Director of Massachusetts Head Start.

Throughout her career, Congresswoman Pressley has been a tireless advocate for trauma-conscious policymaking. In June 2021, Rep. Pressley reintroduced the STRONG Support for Children Act, her landmark legislation that takes a holistic and community-based approach to addressing the growing crisis of childhood trauma.

In December 2021, Rep. Pressley and Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (NJ-12) led their colleagues in urging President Biden and HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra to prioritize the needs of children who have lost parents and caregivers to COVID-19.

In October 2021, Rep. Pressley, along with Reps. Dina Titus (NV-01), David McKinley (WV-01) and Peter Meijer (MI-03), unveiled the Post-Disaster Mental Health Response Act, legislation to expand mental health supports for survivors of natural disasters and terrorist attacks that do not receive a “Major Disaster” declaration by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

In March 2021, Rep. Pressley sent a letter to President Biden calling on him to address the nation’s growing trauma crisis and laying out a series of steps the administration should take to confront the far-reaching hurt plaguing our communities and our nation. In April, she published an op-ed where she reflected on the collective pain experienced by communities in her district over the past year.

In July 2019, Rep. Pressley worked with Chairman Cummings to convene the first-ever Congressional hearings on childhood trauma. Watch Congresswoman Pressley’s full question line and follow-up questions here and here.

As a Boston City Councilor, she convened the Council’s first-ever listening-only session to hear directly from those impacted by the trauma of community gun violence.

Weekly COVID positive test decreases for a straight month

Citywide deaths decline

By John Lynds

The group of anti-vaxxers camped outside Mayor Michelle Wu’s home are going to have to admit sooner rather than later that her vaccination mandate for indoor venues is working to combat the latest COVID surge in the city.

Less than a month after the mandate went into effect the infection numbers in both Eastie and across the city have been on a steady decline. The city’s anti-vaxxers are going to have to come to the realization that the science is correct and being vaccinated against COVID is the best tool we have to end the pandemic.

Those still unwilling to get the vaccine should realize they are taking a big gamble with their lives by continuing to mix with the general public because the risk of severe disease among the unvaccinated is very real.

A month ago nearly 4 out of every 10 Eastie residents tested for the virus turned out to be positive but last week only 1.3 out of every 10 Eastie residents tested were positive.

Last week, 1,003 Eastie residents were tested for the virus last week and 12.8 percent were positive--this was a 38 percent decrease from the 20.6 percent that tested positive as reported by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) on January 31. The weekly positive test rate has now decreased 56 percent in Eastie since January 24.

One hundred twenty eight additional Eastie residents contracted the virus between January 31 and February 7 and there are now 13,987 confirmed cases in the neighborhood since the start of the pandemic.

The citywide weekly positive test rate also decreased last week. According to the BPHC 18,703 residents were test-

ed and 10.6 percent were COVID positive--this was a 38 percent decrease from the 17 percent that reportedly tested positive for the week ending on January 31. The weekly positive test rate has now decreased 56 percent in Boston since January 24.

The statistics released by the BPHC as part of its weekly COVID19 report breaks down the number of cases and infection rates in each neighborhood. It also breaks down the number of cases by age, gender and race.

Citywide positive cases of coronavirus increased 2.2 percent last week and went from 157,675 cases to 161,136 confirmed cases in a week.

There were 32 additional deaths in Boston from the virus in the past week and the total COVID deaths is now at 1,656. Deaths decreased 11 percent in Boston last week--four less than the 36 deaths reported by the BPHC two weeks ago.

Coletta // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

groups numbering over 500 people.

Colette went on to serve as Edward’s Chief of Staff before leaving for a job with the New England Aquarium last summer and serves as the Aquarium’s External Relations Manager where she advocates for a more resilient, inclusive, and accessible waterfront for all Bostonians.

“She knows the district like the back of her hand,” Edwards continued. “Whether by policy, project, or by pothole - she knows the work.”

Edwards endorsement follows endorsements by Rep. Adrian Madaro, Councilor Kenzie Bok, former Councilor Felix Arroyo and current Councilor Ricardo Arroyo.

“The endorsement of my former boss and mentor, now State Senator Lydia Edwards, means a great deal to me," said Coletta. "I've had a front row seat to her advocacy and I've learned so much about how to effectively fight for this district. I in-

tend to utilize the knowledge I gained as chief of staff to uplift our communities, to center the lived experiences of all district one residents, and advocate for what we deserve in City Hall.”

Coletta will host a weekend of action with a door knocking event

in Eastie this Saturday and in Charlestown on Sunday. The weekend of action will include help from Edwards and other elected officials that have endorsed Coletta’s candidacy. Please visit gigi4district1.us/events to sign up and learn more.



District 1 City Council Candidate Gabriela Coletta with her former boss Senator Lydia Edwards. Edwards endorsed Coletta Tuesday for the seat she will vacate on April 30th.

Hate speech // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

related to an anti-Asian sentiment that we have in this country,” he said.

Since announcing the mandate Wu has been quoting as saying, “There's constant calls associating me with the same hateful racist xenophobic language that the former president used in describing the virus and its origins and who was to blame.”

Senator/City Councilor Lydia Edwards, who supported Wu for Mayor, was an early ally that jumped to the Mayor’s defense.

“Despite this recent rash of anger and hatred, the majority of people voted for Michelle (Wu), who supported this vaccine passport mandated when she was a candidate. So I believe the majority of people in Boston support what is going on.”

However, the hateful rhetoric hasn’t seemed to slow prompting a coalition of Boston elected officials of color to condemn the hate directed at Wu.

Last week a letter signed by Edwards, Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz; U.S. Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley; City Councilors Julia Mejia, Ruthzee Louijeune, Ricardo Arroyo, Kendra Lara, Brian Worrell and Tania Fernandes

Anderson; Suffolk County District Attorney Kevin Hayden; Suffolk County Sheriff Steven Tompkins; as well as State Representatives Russell Holmes, Brandy Fluker Oakley, Chynah Tyler, Liz Miranda, Jon Santiago, and Nika Elugardo condemning the ongoing threats of violence and hateful attacks directed Wu.

“From the halls of Congress, to the steps of the State House, to the chamber of Boston City Hall, we must be unapologetic in rooting out white supremacy, racism, misogyny and hate in all of its forms,” read the letter. “Make no mistake, the relentless threats of violence and hateful attacks on Mayor Michelle Wu and her family have no place in our society and are a far cry from the political debate and peaceful dissent that is welcomed and necessary in a healthy democracy. Since beginning her term, Mayor Wu has met the moment and worked tirelessly to address many of the greatest challenges facing our communities—including combatting the ongoing pandemic that has robbed us of more than 1,600 lives across the City of Boston alone. It is

due to her brave and steadfast leadership, her commitment to science and the public health—including her common-sense and life-saving vaccine mandates—that the City of Boston is making necessary progress to combat this pandemic and protect our most vulnerable.”

The group continued that to remain silent is to be complicit, and as elected officials of color across the City of Boston, they will not stand by and watch as openly racist, anti-Asian and sexist rhetoric is normalized in our community.

“This type of vitriol, toxicity and hate is far too common for women of color in politics, and we can’t help but wonder if the same toxicity and vitriol would be directed at a mayor who wasn't a woman, a person of color, or an unapologetic history-maker like Mayor Wu is,” they wrote. “We stand in solidarity with her and call for an immediate end to this dangerous and hateful behavior.”

Wu said she knows the city is doing the right thing in order to curb the latest CVID surge.

“I won't be intimidated out of doing the right thing,” she said.

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THE 1887 ELECTORAL COUNT ACT MUST BE AMENDED

Americans always have taken for granted the sanctity and integrity of our electoral system. For decades, we routinely have sent observers to countries where democracy is a new thing to ensure that those nations conducted their elections on the up-and-up, using our electoral system as a model.

America's democratic process, we have assumed, is the gold standard for democracies around the world. We never considered that our own democracy, the world's oldest, was anything but rock-solid.

However, the 2020 Presidential election upended all of those assumptions. It turns out that what we had thought were firmly-embedded procedures are not so clear, and could be subject to a wide range of interpretation.

This lack of clarity is thanks to an arcanelly-worded statute, known as the 1887 Electoral Count Act.

The Act was enacted by Congress in 1887, 10 years after the disputed 1876 presidential election, in which several states submitted competing slates of electors and a divided Congress was unable to resolve the deadlock for weeks. Though it took Congress more than 10 years to finally pass the act, the effort to clarify some of the ambiguities contained in the Constitution concerning the Electoral College only served to create deeper ambiguities.

Up until 2020, there never had been a serious challenge to the results of a presidential election. However, as we all know by now, former President Donald Trump, aided and abetted by a large number of members of Congress, attempted to use the lack of clarity in the Electoral Count Act to overturn the Electoral College results of five states.

Fortunately, Trump's shenanigans -- as usual -- were neither well-organized nor well-focused. Further, vice-president Mike Pence was not willing to be a participant in Trump's charade.

However, Trump's gambit brought to the attention of legal scholars and our elected officials the potential for unscrupulous -- and better-organized -- actors to wreak havoc with our democratic process. All of us have come to realize that the guard rails that we had thought existed to protect our democratic norms are nothing more than a chimera.

Amending the 1887 Electoral Count Act is a non-partisan issue. Future Democrats are equally as likely as future Republicans to try to exploit the weaknesses of the act to the detriment of our democracy.

We urge both of our U.S. Senators, Ed Markey and Elizabeth Warren, as well as our members of Congress, to join with Republican colleagues such as Maine Senator Susan Collins to amend the act expeditiously.

In view of the events that took place in the aftermath of the 2020 election, this is the most urgent business that Congress can undertake in order to preserve the viability of our democracy.

A SILVER LINING TO INFLATION

We saw a report on the news the other night about the effect that inflation is having on food prices thanks to supply chain issues that have arisen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report highlighted that inflation is taking a bite (no pun intended) out of Americans' wallets because of higher prices for items such as bacon, snack foods, and soft drinks.

"That's a bad thing?" we thought to ourselves.

Americans are among the most obese and unhealthiest people in the world principally because we eat bad food -- and lots of it. The average American male today weighs 30 pounds more than the average male did 50 years ago and the average American woman today weighs as much as the average man did 50 years ago. The single-biggest risk factor -- after old age -- for a poor prognosis for a COVID-19 patient is being overweight.

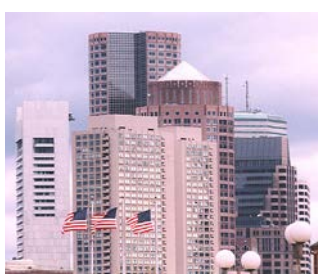
In our view, if the direct and indirect effects of COVID-19 have the result of forcing Americans to cut back on our consumption of highly-processed and junk foods, then that would be at least one good thing to come out of the otherwise ongoing tragedy of the pandemic.

Your opinions, please

The Times welcomes letters to the editor. Our mailing address is 385 Broadway, Revere, MA 02151.

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Letters may also be e-mailed to editor@eastietimes.com. Letters must be signed. We reserve the right to edit for length and content.



Forum

- ☐ SAY IT WITH FLOWERS
- ☐ SAY IT WITH DIAMONDS
- ☐ SAY IT WITH CHOCOLATES
- ☒ JUST SAY IT!



GUEST OP-ED

You can at least say howdy

soda pop or just stopping in to say "howdy."

We grew up on Milo speaking to most everyone who came and went. When a car drove by, we usually waved even though we didn't always know them. At family or church gatherings we typically talked to everyone for a minute or two and shook hands or hugged a few people.

The only time I can remember our family being speechless was when fifteen or twenty of us were sitting on the porch and a man from New York City pulled up in an older car. My grandpa had received an advertisement in the mail about a great used car he could buy for \$500. He ordered the car to surprise my grandma and we were all really surprised when this man pulled in front of the store in an old beat up looking car. He had driven the car from New York City, which was a long drive on those roads back then. After being drop jaw stunned silent for a few

minutes, everyone loosened up and eventually started talking to the man who was just doing a job but now had to get back to New York. By this time, some of us were chuckling just a little. A couple of the family members took the guy over to Kermit, West Virginia to catch a Greyhound bus to begin his long journey back home.

A part of American culture has been hand shaking and embracing those we know. A part of most American religious gatherings has been shaking hands. One church I attended insisted on everybody hugging each other.

Covid-19 has impacted our world with death, sickness and business failures. The distancing for many of us continues to be tough. We wear our masks and seldom know who else is in the grocery store. We're fearful of going to the funeral home to honor and respect the deceased. Shaking hands or embracing anyone anywhere is

typically totally unwellcome. Many holiday parties of large gatherings were fewer over the past holidays. People don't want to be sick and so the distancing continues.

We do have the telephone, social media and email which helps us at least stay connected.

However, please keep in mind, when you do recognize someone at the grocery or any public place you may not feel comfortable embracing or shaking hands, but you can still convey a greeting and kindness by at least saying "howdy."

Glenn Mollette is the publisher of Newburgh Press, Liberty Torch and various other publishing imprints; a national columnist -- American Issues and Common Sense opinions, analysis, stories and features appear each week in over 500 newspapers, websites and blogs across the United States.

By Dr. Glenn Mollette

"Howdy," was a common everyday word where I grew up. Raised on old Stidham, now known as Milo road in rural Appalachia, I spent a lot of time at my Grandpa and Grandma Hinkle's store. People came and went buying gasoline, sandwich meat, snacks or groceries for the week. There were cane bottom chairs in the store. Often people would sit and chat for a while.

Regardless of how many times during the week I walked down the road to that store, the opening salutation was typically, "howdy."

People were in and out of the Hinkle store doing business. A family member was often coming or going because my grandparents had raised ten children and there were many grandchildren who frequented the Hinkle business. Often, family members were buying a

GABRIELA COLETTA IS THE FIGHTER WE NEED FOR EAST BOSTON, CHARLESTOWN, & THE NORTH END

Dear Editor,

I have written many political endorsements, including for a U.S. Senator and several state representatives. But this is the hardest endorsement I have ever written, not because I lack words of praise or examples of her work ethic, but because I have never been so deeply connected to the person I am endorsing or the office that person is seeking. I currently hold this office. I know the job and know what it takes.

I am proudly endorsing my former Chief of Staff, Gabriela Coletta, to be our next District 1 City Councilor.

Gabriela Coletta is the most prepared, competent, and capable person to be the next City Councilor. She is uniquely qualified for the job. She came out of Boston Public Schools, worked in government,

and has done incredible work fighting to ensure Boston's waterfront is truly a waterfront for all. Prior to being my Chief of staff she attended community meetings for two years listening and learning the concerns of our community and also focused on bringing more women into politics by running the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus.

As my first Chief of staff, she demonstrated unmatched commitment, compassion, and drive, and proved she is ready to do the work of a city councilor.

The Chief of Staff is everywhere the councilor goes and everywhere the councilor cannot go. She is up before and goes to bed after the councilor. She hires, coaches, and guides the staff. The Chief has set each table for easy and hard conversations; she knows the district like the back of her hand. Whether by project or by pothole she knows the work. Coletta has been able to learn from my mistakes and she has been key

to my successes. She was there for the toughest moments of this district and the biggest fights.

In the last four years, our city saw a national racial awakening and a pan-

demic. I can't say what will come up in the next several years but I can assure you there is one person who is ready to deal with whatever comes our way and that is Gabriela

See LETTERS Page 5

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OBITUARIES

Winifred McDonald

Of Saugus, formerly of East Boston

Winifred M. (Forster) McDonald, 95, of Saugus, formerly of East Boston, died February 5 at the Nevins Nursing Center in Methuen.

Born and raised in East Boston, she was born June 18, 1926 to the late Charles D. Winifred L. (Doherty) Forster.

Mrs. McDonald raised her family in Saugus and most recently lived in Lynnfield and Dracut. She had a 40-year working career in various administrative positions at the Suffolk County Private Court, the Saugus General Hospital, Fisher Scientific and Melrose-Wakefield Hospital. She had also been a soloist at St. Joseph Church in East Boston and St. Margaret's in Saugus. Mrs. McDonald enjoyed lifetime pleasures of arts and crafts, especially ceramics, attending theater, traveling and most of all, spending time with family and friends.

She was the beloved wife of the late Robert J. McDonald, Sr., the loving mother of Barbara A. Green and her husband, Michael of Barrington, RI, Mary C. Berninger and her husband, Thomas of East Boston, Ellen L. Faiella and her Husband, William of Dunstable, and Robert J. McDonald, Jr. and his wife,

Mary Ellen of Lynnfield; the sister of the late



Charles D. Forster, Jr. and Charles J. Reagan. She is also survived by 11 grandchildren and five great grandchildren as well as several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Her Funeral Mass will be celebrated in Blessed Sacrament Church, 14 Summer St, Saugus, on Friday at 11 a.m. Visitation for relatives and friends will be at the McDonald Funeral Home, 19 Yale Ave., Wakefield, MA on Thursday from 4 to 7 p.m. Interment, Holy Cross Cemetery, Malden.

Covid restrictions: In accordance with town and church guidelines as well as the wishes of the family, masks are required at the funeral home and church.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to National MS Society, PO Box #91891, Washington, D.C. 20090 or to PKU Awareness National PKU Alliance, Inc., 2809 E. Hamilton Ave., #311, Eau Claire, WI 54701.

Frederick Cornetta

Often seen at Eddie C's in East Boston

Frederick J. Cornetta of East Boston passed away on February 5.

The devoted husband of the late Clementina (Leone) Cornetta, he was the beloved father of Lisa McCarthy and her husband, Paul Sr. of Winthrop and Karen Bernabei and her husband, Dennis of New Hampshire; dear brother of the late Rose Cornetta, Raffaella Basile and Hilda Faulkner and cherished grandfather of Paul McCarthy Jr., Dennis Bernabei Jr., Vanessa Bernabei and Michaela McCarthy. He is also survived by many loving nieces and nephews.

Family and friends will honor Frederick's life by gathering at the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home, 971 Saratoga Street, Boston on Friday, February 11 from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. before leaving in procession to Sacred Heart Church, East Boston, for



a 11 a.m. mass. Services will conclude with Frederick being laid to rest at Holy Cross Cemetery in Malden with his loving wife.

Frederick was often seen at Eddie C's in East Boston. He will be missed by all. To leave an online condolence, please visit www.ruggieromh.com

In lieu of flowers memorial donations can be made in Frederick's name to Care Dimensions, 75 Sylvan Street, Suite B-102, Danvers MA 01923.

Jean Cogliano

Graduate of East Boston High School, Class of 1972

Jean M. Cogliano, 67, of Oceanside Avenue East, York Beach, Maine, passed away on Tuesday, February 1 in York Hospital.

She was born January 1, 1955 in Boston, daughter of Mary Lou (Goggia) Cogliano and the late Frank J. Cogliano Sr.

Jean graduated from East Boston High School, class of 1972 where she studied Business Education. By 1976, Jean moved to her permanent location in York Beach, Maine. She had started as a Sales Associate working at the Timberland Outlet in Kittery and then to a Senior Customer Service Specialist for Timberland LLC. in Stratham, NH for many years.

While residing in Maine, her popular phrase became her vanity license plate "HYAHUN". She made plenty of friends wherever she went including her love to laugh and never ending tan on Long Sands. Besides her plethora of friends, she was very close to her family and dedicated any time available to her four grandnieces which were her enduring world, from sleep overs, attending musicals, playing cards to the little things like picking up assorted rocks. Leaving this last quote to them "I'll always remember my girls not only my nieces, but my best friends who made



me laugh out loud!"

Besides her mother, Mary Lou Cogliano of East Boston, she leaves two brothers, Frank J. Cogliano Jr. and his wife, Eileen of York, ME and Jerry J. Cogliano of East Boston; a nephew Steven Cogliano and his wife, Ashley and their children, Jasmine and Arianna of Wells, Maine and a niece, Jennifer Vieu and her husband, Jeremy and their children, Gianna and Kayleigh of York, Maine.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to one of her two her top organizations: American Cancer Society or Autism Speaks.

A Funeral Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Saturday, February 19 in St. Christopher Church, 4 Barrell Lane, York, Maine.

Interment will be private in Woodlawn Cemetery, Everett.

Lucas & Eaton Funeral Home, York, Maine is directing arrangements. Visit www.lucaseatonfuneralhome.com for online condolences.

Mary Roach

Known for her strength, will and compassion

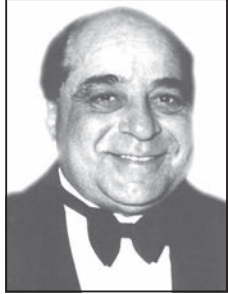
Mary (DeRuosi) Roach, a lifelong resident of East Boston, passed away peacefully on February 4 at the age of 91.

Fondly referred to as "Auntie Mary" by many, Mary devoted her time to her family and friends. She was known for her strength, will and compassion. She enjoyed playing cards with her sister, Dolores, taking walks to Central Square for errands, and gathering with friends. She will be missed by all. The beloved wife of the late Allan Roach, she was the devoted mother of the late Allan and Joseph Roach, adored aunt and second mother to Salvatore LaMattina and his wife, Lisa, of East Boston, Robert LaMattina of New Hampshire, David LaMattina of New Hampshire, John LaMattina of East Boston, Toni Guaetta of Peabody and Richard DeRuosi of Revere; dear sister of the late Dolores LaMattina, Sue DeRosa and Joseph, Angelo, Richard, David, Salvatore, Anthony, Peter and Sylvester DeRuosi. She leaves behind her granddaughter, great-grandchildren, and many great-nieces and nephews. Family and friends will honor Mary's life by gathering at Sacred Heart Church, 45 Brooks St., East Boston on Saturday, February 12 at 10 a.m. for a Funeral Mass in celebration of Mary's life. Services will conclude with Mary being laid to rest with her husband and her son at Holy Cross Cemetery in Malden. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to HarborCOV, P.O. Box 505754 Chelsea, MA 02150, www.harborcov.org in support of survivors



of domestic violence and their families. For more information or to send an online condolence, visit www.ruggieromh.com or call 617-569-0990.

7th Anniversary Alfred V. Siciliano Jr.



February 10, 2015 - February 10, 2022

Today's the anniversary of the day that I lost you. And for a time, it felt, as though My life had ended too.

But loss has taught me many things, And now I face each day with hope and happy memories to help me on the way.

And though I'm full of sadness, that you're no longer here, Your influence still guides me, And I still feel you near.

What we shared will never die, it lives within my heart. Bringing strength and comfort While we are apart.

Love You Always, Wife Karen, Sons Al, John, Jason, & their families

Anniversary Mass celebrated on Sunday, Feb. 13, 2022 at 12 noon at Saint Anthony's Church in Revere

Letter // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Coletta.

On May 3, 2022, I ask that Charlestown, the North End, and East Boston show up and vote for Gabriela so that she can get back to working for us. This district is my home and I have loved to represent it. It is a uniquely strong district, with three distinct neighborhoods united by a waterfront. It has been my greatest honor to serve these neighborhoods, to fight for them, and to learn from them for over four years. But I didn't do it alone. Gabriela Coletta was always there. Together we fought to serve and then served Charlestown, East Boston and the North End. We

love these communities.

To my friend and former Chief, I am so very proud of you, who you are and your incredible growth. It's time to step out in front and lead the district you have served so much. It's your time to help others shine and be seen.

Always remember to listen, follow your heart, trust your gut and don't let the highs get too high or the lows get too low because at the end of the day it is a privilege to serve.

Signed, your friend, former boss, current Senator and future constituent, Lydia



8th Anniversary Rich Ford

2-9-2014 2-9-2022

We really don't know where to start...

The day you left it broke our hearts.

Not just a crack it broke in two...

Filled with love just for you.

That love's not gone

Is kept safe inside...

But when you left part of us died.

We want to remember

The bonds we share...

But the pain in our hearts is so hard to bear.

We miss you so much and more, everyday...

And love you much more than words, can ever say.

We love you and miss you so much,
Dad, Mom, and Jennifer

1st Year Anniversary

Dolores (DeRuosi)LaMattina

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*Always Loved and Sadly Missed..
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Third Anniversary Remembrance



†
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**Carol E.
Emmett**

December 25 1936
February 1, 2019

*Your life was a gift –
A growing and loving gift
You left with us.*

*You still live in our hearts –
In the happiness we all knew, &
in the dreams we all shared...*

*She will always be remembered...forever in
our hearts, thoughts, and prayers*

Love,

Your Husband & Sons

Happy Valentine's Day



Happy Valentines Day
Grandma Lousie
Love Charlotte



Happy Valentine's
Day Dadda & Nana !
Love, Kinsley gae xoxo



Happy Valentine's
Day Sophia & Ava
Mauro



Happy Valentine's
Day Isabella Walsh

Nana,
Happy Valentie's
Day
We love you
Love Lauren, Joe,
Frank, Paul
Steph, Jenn
Sam &
Katie



Happy Valentine's
Day Birthday Auntie
Karen Love Roman



Happy Valentine's Day,
Auntie Doreen Auntie
Loreen, Uncle John
Love Roman



Happy Valentine's
Day! Love You Mom
- Abigail



Happy Valentine's
Day Papa
- Alianora, Emmalia
and Noah Durbano



Life is filled with lots of
things that make it all
worthwhile, but none
is better than your little
smile! Thank you for
filling my life with love!
Happy Valentine's day
Mikayla!



Happy Heavenly
Valentine's Day, Ma
& Johnny, Love Doreen

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EBHS HOCKEY FALLS TO MATIGNON



GO GET IT: East Boston's Robert Kubinec (9) and Matignon's Michael Loguidice go after a loose puck.



DISRUPTION: East Boston's Justin Lynch (17) defends against a shot by Matignon's Paul Magalhaes.



ARM'S LENGTH: East Boston's Mike Doe defends against Matignon's Michael Loguidice.



HARD HIT: East Boston's Vinny Almeida takes a hit along the boards as he pursues a loose puck



KICK SAVE: East Boston goalie Jacob Thomas kicks a shot aside.



ON THE MARK: Michael Noonan (20) follows through on a shot on net.



STICK SCRAMBLE: East Boston's Vinny Almeida (7) tries to steal the puck from Matignon's Alex Fucile.



EYES ON IT: East Boston's Seamus Sullivan (16) and a Matignon skater watch a puck slide out of their reach.



MAKING AN ADVANCE: East Boston's Matt Griffin (6) eyes a path through center ice.

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Tomato or Chicken Noodle Soups.....	4/¢5.00
Duncan Hines Classic or Signature Cake Mixes..	3/¢4.00
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Hunts Diced Tomatoes 14.5 oz.....	4/¢5.00
Duncan Hines Frosting	2/¢4.00
College Inn Canned Broth.....	4/¢3.00
Eggo Waffles (ex: thick & fluffy)	2/¢5.00
Boston Market Dinners	2/¢5.00
Lenders Bagels 16.5 oz (ex: N.Y. style)....	2/¢4.00
Simply Orange Juice	2/¢7.00
Best Yet Sour Cream 8 oz	79¢

Bakery

Garlic Knots.....	¢1.99
J. Skinner Assorted Danish	¢3.99
Uncle Wally's Assorted Mini Muffins	2/¢5.00

Deli

Genoa Salami.....	¢7.99/lb
Kretshmar Black Forest Ham.....	¢6.99/lb
Great Lakes Muenster Cheese.....	¢4.99/lb
Margherita Hot Cappelicola.....	¢5.99/lb

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Sweet & Juicy Honeydew.....	¢3.99
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Sweet Bite Size Grape Tomatoes pint pkg...	2/¢4.00
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Meat

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Grade A Bone In Chicken Thighs.....	¢1.49/lb
Boneless Pork Loin Chops.....	¢1.99/lb
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Chuck Pot Roast	¢6.79/lb
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Hans Kisse Cheese Tortellini Salad.....	¢6.99/lb
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No slowdown on theft of Prius catalytic converters in Eastie neighborhoods

By John Lynds

At Monday night’s Harbor View Neighborhood Association meeting, Boston Police Community Officer Tommy Dominico reported that catalytic converters are still being stolen at a record clip from Toyota Prius owners living in East Boston.

The issue came to light last year when two catalytic converters were stolen on the same night in the Orient Heights section of the neighborhood with thieves making off with the expensive part in less than a minute.

“The issue of theft of catalytic converter converters from these vehicles is still ongoing,” said Dominico at Monday night’s meeting. “Before I left the station for this meeting there was a gentleman at the front desk reporting yet another

theft so it is happening on a regular basis (in the neighborhood.”

A car’s catalytic converter acts to decrease the harmful chemicals in car emissions and the theft of these parts from Toyota Priuses are on the rise here and nationally.

Apparently thieves target these devices on the underside of cars because they contain valuable metals that act as oxidation catalysts that are mandated to reduce pollution.

The Prius catalytic converters contain platinum, palladium and rhodium and thieves can pocket up to \$200 per converter and it takes only minutes for a skilled thief to cut it from underneath the car. All the thief needs is a reciprocal saw and a steady hand. Experts believe it takes 2 to 3 minutes to pull off the heist.

This type of crime has

gotten so bad that online manufacturers sell metal plates to cover the catalytic converters, which make them more difficult to steal. Those parts are rarely covered by insurance and retail at around \$440 installed. While they’re pricey they are cheaper than the cost to replace a stolen one. Even with insurance a replacement cost around \$500. Without insurance, it could cost a Prius owner \$3,000 or more to replace.

It has gotten so bad that many Prius owners have asked Toyota to recall Priuses and install the metal plates that should have been there to begin with to protect converters.

Police urge residents to call 911 if they see someone at two or three o’clock in the morning underneath a vehicle as the crimes usually occur in the early morning hours.

Lewis joins Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston as new Nicholas President and CEO

Staff Report

Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston (BGCB) has named seasoned non-profit and community leader Robert Lewis Jr. as its new Nicholas President and CEO. Lewis will become the 16th leader of the organization in its 129-year history of youth development in the Boston area. He begins his term Monday, March 14, 2022.

Across its nine clubs in Boston, BGCB provides young people with affordable access to physically and emotionally safe en-

vironments, quality experiences, ongoing relationships with caring adults, and enriching opportunities. In 2021, 99 percent of high school seniors in BGCB’s programming graduated, with 98 percent being accepted to college or trade school and 2 percent securing jobs or internships.

Lewis joins BGCB from The BASE, an organization he founded in 2013 to harness the untapped potential of urban talent and build pathways to success through a passion for sports. Over the

past nine years as Founder and President, Lewis has driven the organization’s expansion to include boys and girls, multiple sports – including eSports – and college prep and career counseling, as well as to address barriers its participants face, including inequities, mental health, food insecurity and access to education. The BASE’s successful model has inspired the development of similar programs across the country.

“It truly takes a village

See BGCB Page 11

LOCAL STUDENT EARNS ACADEMIC HONORS

PERKINS ON DEAN’S LIST AT SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE

Springfield College has named Josiah Perkins from East Boston to the dean’s list for academic excellence for the 2021 fall semester. Perkins has a primary major of Sport Management.

The criteria for selection to the Dean’s List are

as follows: The student must have completed a minimum of 12 credit hours of graded coursework for the term, exclusive of “P” grades. The student must not have any incompletes or missing grades in the designated term. The student must have a minimum semester grade average of 3.500 for the term.

Springfield College is an independent, nonprofit, coeducational institution founded in 1885. Approximately 4,100 students, including 2,500 full-time undergraduate students, study at its main campus in Springfield, Mass., and at its regional campuses across the country. Springfield College inspires students through the guiding principles of its Humanics philosophy - educating in spirit, mind, and body for leadership in service to others.

EBCCS participating in the National School Lunch Program

Special to the Times

East Boston Central Catholic School currently participates in the National School Lunch Program. As part of this program, EBCCS offers healthy meals every school day to our students at NO COST due to the Nationwide Waiver to Allow the Seamless Summer Option through School Year 2021-2022. Students will be able to participate in these programs without having to pay a fee or submit a household application. You may contact the school at 617-567-7456 or visit us at www.ebccs.org to enroll now.

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gram Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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EBHS TRACK TEAM COMPETES AT ANNUAL CITY LEAGUE TRACK CHAMPIONSHIP



Members of the EB High track team get together for a team photo after participating in the city league track championship on Tuesday, Feb. 2 at the Reggie Lewis Track Center in Roxbury.



Sophomore Adem Ayed took Third Place in both the 1-mile and 2-mile runs, as well as Second Place in the 1,000.



junior Arisai Cordova took Third Place in both the 1-mile and 2-mile runs, as well as Second Place in the 4x4, running as anchor leg.



Jaye Kinecade, Shot put - Second Place, Michael Portillo - Senior Captain Shot put - First Place, qualified for state meet and Jeremy Nunez Pina - senior shot put in Fifth Place.

Resilient Mystic Collaborative releases Equity-based Climate Assessment

Special to the Times

The Resilient Mystic Collaborative (RMC) has released the results of a two-year groundbreaking research project involving six cities and 13 infrastructure managers to identify and manage risks to Greater Boston’s critical infrastructure from a potential major coastal storm. The Lower Mystic Regional Climate Assessment involved over 400 residents and workers most at risk of harm from infrastructure failure and identified how a hypothetical coastal storm, termed “Big Papi”, would impact Lower Mystic Watershed communities.

In 2020, six Lower Mystic Watershed communities — Charlestown, East Boston, Chelsea, Everett, Revere, Somerville and Winthrop—secured a \$390,000 regional Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness grant to understand the critical investments needed to fortify storm harden regional infrastructure from a major coastal hurricane or Nor’easter. This grant and a second grant from the Barr Foundation, allowed Arup, All Aces, the Mystic River Watershed Association, CH Consulting and six community-based organizations to produce the assessment. The six community based organizations – La Comunidad, GreenRoots, Harborkeepers, Community Action Agency of Somerville, Somerville Community Development Corporation, and TCGT entertainment, were intentionally place-based within the six municipalities to ensure trusted community engagement.

"With climate change causing more frequent extreme weather, we have to plan for how to best protect our communities, especially our residents who are most vulnerable to the effects of extreme weather," said Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. "Information from this climate assessment has already helped us update our own Hazard Mitigation Plan and will be valuable in our continued work to center equity in our climate change mitigation planning."

By completing the dual climate assessment, one focused on infrastructure and the other on social vulnerability, municipalities gained valuable insight from key infrastructure managers and Greater Boston’s vulnerable residents and workers — including:

- The most substantial infrastructure damage (i.e., cost and time to repair) would be to the Amelia Earhart Dam, Harbor Tunnels, Blue and Orange MBTA Lines and several community health centers.
- Underlying social risk factors included speaking limited English and being a person of color, Latinx or low-income. These residents tended to be concentrated in East Boston, Chelsea, Revere and Everett, the same locations where the majority of the critical infrastructure is located.
- Vulnerable communities had fragile mutual aid networks and an overly optimistic expectation of government readiness and response. Residents were unclear where to go to get the information needed to stay safe and worried about their cell networks

going down, which are their primary source of internet access.

- The regional infrastructure facilities vulnerable residents and workers most relied on were public transit and safe walking routes, cell phone/electricity to access the internet and community health centers.

When Superstorm Sandy hit New York and New Jersey, it caused lasting physical damage to the region’s infrastructure, and economic and personal damage to possibly millions of residents and workers. The Boston metropolitan region was lucky to escape such detrimental impacts from Sandy, though the storm still left thousands without power. The Lower Mystic is home to the most concentrated assembly of critical infrastructure north of New York. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recognizes 16 critical infrastructure as lifeline sectors “whose assets, systems, and networks, whether physical or virtual, are considered so vital to the United States that their incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating effect on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination thereof.”

Of these 16 lifeline sectors, the Lower Mystic is host to at least five:

- Transportation: Logan Airport, three MBTA rail lines, the Ted Williams and Callahan tunnels
- Food distribution: the New England Produce Center
- Energy: Over 100 fuel storage tanks, the Lower



PHOTO BY MIKE PETERSON

Orange line yard in the Lower Mystic River Watershed.

Mystic Generating Station

- Wastewater management: Deer Island Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Dam: Amelia Earhart Dam

The Lower Mystic is also one of the Northeast’s densest residential areas, with tremendous socioeconomic diversity, wealth disparities, and environmental justice concerns. For example, Everett and Chelsea are two of only six areas in the state where 100% of residents live in an environmental justice block group, as defined by the state.

“The pandemic made clear to the public how low-income residents and workers of color are often the first and worst to be affected by major public health emergencies. Unfortunately they are also among the most at risk from extreme weather such as big coastal storms. I’m glad to see this assessment focus on their needs first and foremost,” said Antonio Amaya, Executive Director of La Comunidad in Everett.

One of the RMC’s highest priority is to storm-harden critical regional infrastructure so that extreme weather events don’t lead to cas-

cading health and economic losses for our residents and workers who can least afford them. By centering social vulnerability and listening to the lived experience of residents and workers expected to be most negatively affected by damage to critical regional infrastructure, this assessment shifts the central question from “How much real estate value is at risk?” to “Who among us stands to lose the most?”

“The Big Papi exercise was extremely helpful to our thinking about what we need to do to prepare for Boston’s own Superstorm Sandy or Hurricane Maria. We have looked at our own vulnerabilities, but had to make assumptions about those of other systems,” said Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, Director of Planning and Sustainability at Massachusetts Water Resources Authority. “Going through a simulated big storm with the other infrastructure managers helped us all identify cascading effects and how the loss of electricity, fuel, transportation, or communications would affect our staff, our customers, and our ability to stay on line.”

Now, the RMC munic-

ipalities are developing projects to address key findings and recommendations, ensuring to focus on the primary needs of vulnerable people in the Lower Mystic.

“The Lower Mystic Regional Climate Assessment reveals opportunities for Massachusetts’ environmental justice communities most impacted by climate change to be engaged in informing actions to reduce the impact of climate emergencies,” said Dr. Atyia Martin, CEO & Founder of All Aces, Inc. "All Aces was proud to partner with the RMC on this critical project. We urge policymakers and community leaders to carefully consider these results and take the necessary steps to ensure that efforts to strengthen resilience center those disproportionately bearing the burden of threats and hazards we face.”

More detail on key findings, recommendations and analysis, including an executive summary, is available at <https://resilient-mysticriver.org/lower-mystic-learn-more/#lower-mysticassessment>.

News in Brief

PUBLIC HEARING FOR MBTA FARE TARIFF CHANGES

The MBTA will host a virtual public hearing on Thursday, February 17, at 6 p.m. to discuss fare change proposals that aim to improve equity by closing gaps in existing fare structures for Reduced Fare Riders, to minimize pandemic-related revenue implications and budget uncertainties while increasing ridership where possible, and to simplify fare tariff rules as the MBTA’s Fare Transformation Program moves forward. These changes include:

- Making the 5-Day FlexPass on mTicket for Commuter Rail permanent;
- Reducing the price of the 1-Day LinkPass;
- Expanding second transfers on Local Buses, Express Buses, and/or Subway; and
- Proposed changes for Reduced Fare Riders that include:
- Introducing the 7-Day LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders;
- Introducing Monthly Passes for Reduced Fare Riders on Commuter Rail, Ferry, and Express Bus; and
- Expanding the validity of the LinkPass for Reduced Fare Riders to Commuter Rail Zone 1A and Inner Harbor Ferry.

The MBTA welcomes public comment on these proposals. During the meeting, attendees will have the opportunity to

ask questions and provide input.

The meeting will be held via Zoom. Members of the public can register for the meeting online. The meeting will be recorded and posted online for those who cannot attend.

A virtual public meeting will also be held next Thursday, February 10, at 6 p.m..

If approved by the full MBTA Board in March, these fare changes would go into effect on July 1, 2022. The public is welcome to submit comments online through Thursday, March 3, 2022, at mbta.com/2022FareChanges or by email to publicengagement@mbta.com. The Title VI analysis will be shared with the MBTA’s Board and posted to mbta.com prior to the scheduled March 24, 2022, Board meeting.

METRO CREDIT UNION INTRODUCES NEW MORTGAGE

Metro Credit Union, Massachusetts’ largest state-chartered credit union, today announced it will begin offering a 40-year mortgage to its members, which includes options for jumbo loans and bi-weekly payments.

“Metro is very excited to add the 40-year mortgage to our existing lineup of mortgage offerings” said Robert Cashman, CEO and President of

Metro Credit Union. “The 40-year mortgage will be attractive not only to first-time homebuyers, but also to anyone having difficulty meeting loan qualifications, as well as for existing homebuyers who want to trade up to a bigger home.”

This new program will make becoming a homeowner a reality for more individuals, including first-time homebuyers who are having difficulty getting into the market. Extending the mortgage term to 40 years results in a lower monthly mortgage payment, offering housing affordability for many who are currently priced out of the market, or those having difficulty refinancing an existing loan.

For more information about Metro Credit Union, please visit MetroCU.org or follow Metro on LinkedIn.

NATIONAL BURN AWARENESS WEEK 2022 IS NOW

State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey announced that National Burn Awareness Week started on Sunday, providing an opportunity to promote awareness of burn safety strategies – especially in homes with children.

“Scalds from hot liquids have been the leading form of serious burn injuries in Massachusetts for as long as we’ve been tracking burn data, and young children are injured most often,” State

Fire Marshal Ostroskey said. “Kids under 5 suffered half of all reported scald injuries statewide in 2021.”

“A home fire is a devastating event,” said Acting Public Health Commissioner Margret Cooke. “To prevent burn injuries in the kitchen and throughout the home, it’s important for families to talk about fire safety with children and have access to safety equipment like smoke alarms throughout the home.”

This year’s Burn Awareness Week theme is “Burning Issues in the Kitchen.” According to data from the Massachusetts Burn Injury Reporting System (M-BIRS), hot cooking liquids such as boiling water, grease, and oil caused more scald burns than all other sources combined, and they represent the leading cause of all burn injuries. Children under 5 last year suffered nearly five times more of these scalds than the next leading age group.

Young children are also at disproportionate risk of injury from hot food and drinks. Although children under 5 represent about 6% of Massachusetts’ population, they suffered 82% of hot beverage scalds and 53% of hot food scalds in 2021.

Kitchen Burn Safety Tips

- Very young children love to explore their environment. They can be kept away from hot stoves,

pots, and pans with a safety gate, highchair, or playpen. Older children should be taught that the stove is a “No Kid Zone” and to stay three giant steps away from it.

- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking. Loose-fitting sleeves can catch fire if they come into contact with burners. There were five reported clothing ignitions while cooking in 2021.
- Keep hot food and drinks away from the edges of counters and tabletops. Using placemats instead of a tablecloth can reduce the risk of hot food and drinks being pulled over the edge.
- Never hold or carry a child while you have a hot drink in your hand. A wiggling baby can cause a spill that burns you or your precious cargo. If you’re on the move with hot coffee or tea, consider a travel mug if there are children underfoot.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach from your child. Help children understand that matches and lighters are tools, not toys.
- Make sure the hot water from your tap is at 120°F or lower. At 150°F, third-degree burns can occur in less than 2 seconds. To test your tap, run your hot water for a minute and then check the temperature with a kitchen thermometer; if it’s above 120°F, lower the setting on your water heater until the temperature is low

enough. When replacing your water heater, consider installing a thermostatic mixing valve that will limit the output temperature to 120°F.

Treating Burns and Scalds

- Remove victims from danger and call 911.
- Run burns under cool water. Do not put butter, grease, or ointment on a burn.
- Flush chemical burns continuously.
- Remove watches or jewelry from a burned area.
- If possible, remove clothing from a burned area. If the clothing sticks to the skin, leave it in place and cut away the rest of the fabric.
- Cover a burn with a clean sheet or towel.

Massachusetts law requires hospitals and health care providers to report any burn injury that extends over 5% or more of the victim’s body to the State Fire Marshal’s office. For 36 years, this data has been compiled through the Massachusetts Burn Injury Reporting System (M-BIRS), which was launched as a tool to identify arsonists who injured themselves while setting fires. Today, M-BIRS is also used to help fire and health officials understand burn hazards that can be mitigated through public education, regulation, or intervention strategies.

\$13 Million earmarked for electric vehicle fast-charging stations

Staff Report

In an effort to create additional infrastructure across the Commonwealth, the Baker-Polito Administration announced that \$13.1 million in grants have been awarded to 54 government and private entities including East Boston under the Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program (MassEVIP) to install 306 Direct Current Fast Charging (DCFC) electric vehicle charging ports at 150 locations. The MassEVIP DCFC program, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), provides grants covering 100 percent of the eligible cost to acquire and install publicly accessible DCFC electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at government-owned properties and 80 percent at all other locations, up to \$50,000 per charging port.

“Our administration understands the importance of reliable infrastructure supporting the Commonwealth’s energy future,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “Today’s announcement is a step towards the increased deployment of these clean vehicles, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality and public health, enhance energy diversity and promote economic growth.”

“This Direct Current Fast Charging incentive program is another example of our administration’s commitment to improving air quality for all,” said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito. “This program will support our efforts to grow the clean energy economy, transform the transportation system, and help Massachusetts attain our emissions re-

duction goals set under the Global Warming Solutions Act.”

The \$13.1 million awarded today includes \$1.5 million from Massachusetts’ \$75 million share of the \$2.925 billion Environmental Mitigation Trust established nationally under the 2016 settlement between Volkswagen (VW) and the U.S. Department of Justice, and \$11.6 million from the Massachusetts Climate Mitigation Trust. The Massachusetts VW Settlement Beneficiary Mitigation Plan (BMP) committed the Commonwealth to devoting the allowed 15 percent of VW funds to EV charging infrastructure, approximately \$11.25 million. MassDEP also offers funding for Level 1 and Level 2 EV charging stations through the Public Access, Workplace and Fleet, and Multi-Unit Dwelling and Educational Campus charging programs.

“The transportation sector accounts for more than 40 percent of the greenhouse gases emitted in Massachusetts, so the deployment of more electric vehicles is an important step towards helping the Commonwealth’s efforts to achieving our ambitious climate change mitigation goals,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides. “Significantly, this program will also support environmental justice communities with the placement of 94 of the EV charging ports in EJ areas.”

“This is the first time that these Direct Current Fast Charging grants have been offered, which will complement our local and regional efforts to deploy electric vehicles and the charging infrastructure necessary to support a cleaner transportation

system,” said MassDEP Commissioner Martin Suuberg. “Through this program, the Commonwealth and these awardees are continuing to show a commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions for the benefit of our communities and the environment.”

To further expand the Commonwealth’s EV readiness, Massachusetts is working on a regional level with the Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management (NESCAUM) to support the placement of EVs and charging stations throughout the region and to enhance the economic benefits associated with these vehicles. Additionally, some of the grantees plan to combine or leverage MassEVIP funding with make-ready infrastructure funding offered by National Grid and Ever-source.

Under the DCFC program, all awardees must allow access to, and use of, the parking spaces and the EV charging station 24 hours per day, seven days a week. For each station installed, one parking space must be designated for plug-in EV use only and marked clearly through permanent, visible signage. Active enforcement is required. Furthermore, of the 54 entities selected for grants, publicly accessible charging ports will be installed on 43 government-owned properties, including in Acton, Amherst, Belmont, Beverly, Boston, Brookline, Chelmsford, Chelsea, Chilmark, Concord, Falmouth, Hamilton, Hingham, Ipswich, Lexington, Littleton, Methuen, Middleborough, Millbury, Norwood, Peabody, Quincy, Reading, Sharon, Sherborn, Taunton, Wakefield, West Boylston, Westwood, and

Winchester. Private entities will also be installing ports in Attleboro, Barre, Belchertown, Bellingham, Billerica, Boston, Boylston, Brewster, Bridgewater, Brockton, Brookline, Burlington, Cambridge, Canton, Centerville, Chatham, Chelmsford, Chelsea, Cheshire, Chicopee, Danvers, Dorchester, East Boston, East Falmouth, Eastham, Fall River, Framingham, Gardner, Great Barrington, Greenfield, Hanover, Holyoke, Hudson, Hyannis, Ipswich, Lakeville, Lenox, Leominster, Littleton, Lynn, Marlborough, Methuen, Milford, Millbury, Nantucket, Natick, North Easton, Northampton, Norwell, Orange, Oxford, Pembroke, Pittsfield, Raynham, Rochester, Sagamore Beach, Salem, Scituate, Somerset, Somerville, South Deerfield, South Dennis, Springfield, Sturbridge, Tewksbury, Uxbridge, Wakefield, Waltham, Wareham, West Boylston, West Roxbury, West Springfield, Westfield, Westwood, Whately, Williamsburg, Wilmington, Winchester, Woburn, and Worcester.

Sturbridge’s incoming delegation member, State Senator Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) offered the following statement: “This investment by the Baker-Polito Administration is crucial to enhancing the accessibility of fast, reliable charging ports for electric vehicles. The funding for six new ports provided to Noble Energy Real Estate, LLC. in Sturbridge will ensure that electric vehicle charging is accessible in a town where two major interstates intersect. Noble Energy and all of the other recipients are deserving of this grant for putting in the work to become recipients of this competitive program.”

“I am pleased to see

this investment from the Administration, in Central Massachusetts,” said State Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer). “Funds made available to Apple Green New England Inc., in Barre, and Noble Energy Real Estate, LLC., in Sturbridge, will help to create a path forward to a sustainable and environmentally healthier future. As more fast charging ports become available, I look forward to a time when electric vehicles become a more feasible option for families in Central Mass.”

“This technology is readily available, and it is important that Massachusetts take steps like this so residents can feel secure in their decision to move towards electric vehicles,” said State Senator Patrick O’Connor (R-Weymouth). “I appreciate the efforts made by the Baker-Polito Administration and MassDEP to expand charging options throughout the South Shore.”

“I am thrilled that Chicopee, Holyoke, and Westfield will be receiving these MassEVIP Fast Charging grants to expand access to electric vehicle charging ports in our communities,” said State Senator John Velis (D-Westfield). “Electric vehicles are one of our best tools to lower our Commonwealth’s emissions and an increasing number of folks in Massachusetts are switching over to these types of cars. These 24 hour, 7 days a week, charging ports will only aid in that growth and I am grateful to the Baker-Polito Administration for their continued investments in this area.”

“I think it’s great that we are increasing the network of chargers so that electric vehicles continue to become more viable in our state,” said State Rep-

resentative Kelley Pease (R-Westfield). “As we actively take steps to become leaders in clean energy, I think many of these programs will pay off well in the future.”

On a national level, the Governors from nine states, including Massachusetts, announced a groundbreaking initiative in 2013 to put 3.3 million light-duty zero-emission vehicles (ZEVs) on the road within a dozen years. As a first step in this plan, the governors in California, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Vermont – later joined by New Jersey – signed a cooperative agreement that identifies specific actions these states will undertake, such as including ZEVs in their public fleets and developing common signage standards, to help build a robust national market for battery- and hydrogen-power electric cars.

For more information on the EV charging infrastructure programs administered by MassDEP, please visit the agency’s Volkswagen Diesel Settlements and Environmental Mitigation webpage here.

MassDEP’s mission is to protect and enhance the Commonwealth’s natural resources – air, water and land – to provide for the health, safety and welfare of all people, and a clean and safe environment for future generations. In carrying out this mission, MassDEP commits to address and advance environmental justice and equity for all people of the Commonwealth, provide meaningful, inclusive opportunities for people to participate in agency decisions that affect their lives and ensure a diverse workforce that reflects the communities served by the agency.

Justice Department announces strategy to combat human trafficking

Staff Report

U.S. Attorney General Merrick B. Garland and U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts Rachael S. Rollins have announced the Justice Department’s new National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking pursuant to the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which aims to enhance the Department’s capacity to prevent human trafficking; prosecute human trafficking cases; and support and protect human trafficking victims and survivors.

Among other things, the Justice Department’s multi-year strategy to combat all forms of human trafficking will:

- Strengthen engagement, coordination, and joint efforts to combat human trafficking by prosecutors in all 94 U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and by federal law enforcement agents nationwide.
- Establish federally funded, locally led anti-human trafficking task forces that support sustained state law enforcement leadership and comprehensive victim assistance.
- Step up departmental efforts to end forced labor by increasing attention, resources and coordination in labor trafficking investigations and prosecutions.
- Enhance initiatives to reduce vulnerability of American Indians and Alaska Natives to violent crime, including human trafficking, and to locate missing children.
- Develop and implement new victim screen-

ing protocols to identify potential human trafficking victims during law enforcement operations and encourage victims to share important information.

- Increase capacity to provide victim-centered assistance to trafficking survivors, including by supporting efforts to deliver financial restoration to victims.
- Expand dissemination of federal human trafficking training, guidance and expertise.
- Advance innovative demand-reduction strategies.

“The fight against sex and labor trafficking, and supporting these victims, is one of my highest priorities for this office. Coordination among local, state and federal partners to provide a victim-centered approach to prevent human trafficking in the District will be further enhanced by the Justice Department’s newly released strategy,” said U.S. Attorney Rachael S. Rollins. “Human trafficking has a devastating and sustained impact on victims and their loved ones. My office will spare no resource in identifying, prosecuting and holding traffickers accountable to the fullest extent of the law.”

“Human trafficking is an insidious crime,” said U.S. Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. “Traffickers exploit and endanger some of the most vulnerable members of our society and cause their victims unimaginable harm. The Justice Department’s new National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking will

bring the full force of the Department to this fight.”

The District of Massachusetts has established itself as a leader in the fight to address human trafficking.

Since 2017, the Department of Justice has committed approximately \$235 million in federal grants throughout the District of Massachusetts to aid in the fight against sex and labor trafficking and support victims of crime, including survivors of human trafficking. These funding streams have supported health and human service organizations providing direct services to survivors, state and local human trafficking prevention programs, law enforcement trainings and other support to victims and minor victims of human trafficking.

In FY2021, the following federal grants were awarded in Massachusetts to support local and state anti-trafficking programs, and provide direct services to victims of crime, including survivors of human trafficking:

- Baystate Medical Center, Inc., \$600,000
- Ascentria Community Services, Inc., \$800,000
- Attorney General’s Office, \$1,558,000
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts: \$21,488,509

In 2019, the U.S. Department of Justice awarded the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office \$799,744 to develop a Massachusetts Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking. The Commonwealth’s Anti-Trafficking (CAT) Task Force is a federally funded, multi-

disciplinary approach that is the first of its kind and a national model for locally led anti-human trafficking task forces. This effort is a collaboration between the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office, direct service providers, and state, local and federal law enforcement to proactively investigate and effectively prosecute human trafficking in Massachusetts while also providing trauma informed comprehensive services for vic-

tims of human trafficking.

The Massachusetts CAT Task Force receives referrals for all types of human trafficking cases. Referrals or questions should be communicated to the CAT Task Force through the Attorney General’s Office or via email to CATTaskForce@mass.gov. If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

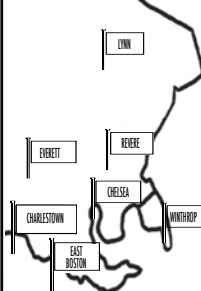
If you believe that you or someone you know may be a victim of human trafficking, please contact the National Human Traf-

ficking Resource Center Hotline at 1-888-373-7888, or Text 233733.

To receive more information related to applying for federal grant programs to support anti-trafficking work, please visit www.grants.gov.

The Department’s strategy will be implemented under the direction of the National Human Trafficking Coordinator designated by the Attorney General in accordance with the Abolish Human Trafficking Act of 2017.

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Harbor House Collective up and running in Chelsea

Grand opening events scheduled for Friday through Sunday

By John Lynds

Harbor House Collective, Chelsea’s new adult-use cannabis dispensary and cultivation facility, is up and running and will hold a series of special grand opening events this weekend.

Owned by the Londono family, who ran a successful wholesale flower business from the spot for years, Harbor House Collective began selling a wide array of cannabis products produced from the dispensary’s onsite grown facility at 80 Eastern Ave. While the Londono family will continue



Buoys and lobster traps make up some of the nautical-themed interior decor.

to operate the flower business at a new location they converted their Eastern Avenue warehouse into a 20,000-square-foot verti-

cally integrated marijuana facility. The dispensary was approved by the Chelsea Zoning Board in 2019.

Harbor House Collective’s General Manager Mike Kerwin said on Friday, Feb. 11 the dispensary will join community partners in cutting the ribbon on the new facility at 1 p.m. The event will feature a food truck, music as well as the unveiling of some new cannabis products not yet on the menu.

“So we opened our doors on December 27 so it has been all word of mouth as we worked out some of the kinks,” said Kerwin. “We will cut the ribbon on the new facility at 1 p.m. Friday and we will have a food truck.



The reception area has notes of the nautical theming present throughout the dispensary.



The sales floor at Harbor House Collective.



The facade of Harbor House Collective complimented by the recent snowfall throughout the City.

Across the Border, for customers on both Friday and Saturday. We will also be offering a bunch of new products that haven’t made it to the menu yet with some new pricing on products.”

Kerwin, who holds a medical marijuana license and has used cannabis to control his epilepsy since his youth, said the final product produced from Harbor House Collective’s onsite grow facility is some of the best cannabis products in the state.

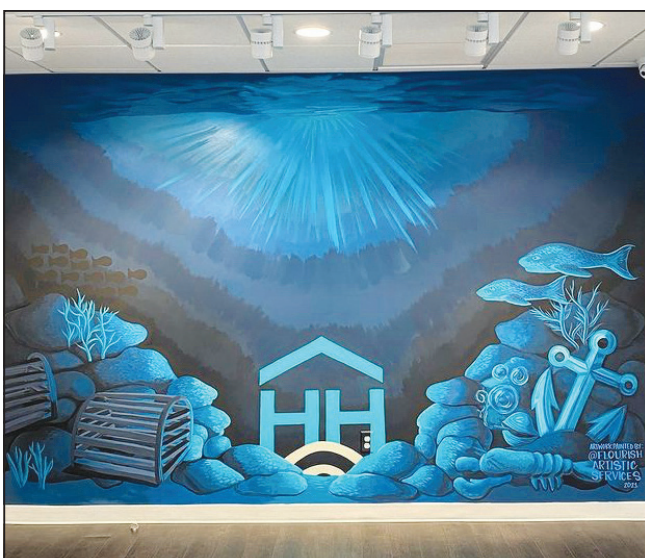
“Specifically our flower, which is grown with care under the right conditions, so when you put good stuff in you get good stuff out,” said Kerwin. “People are coming from all around to come and get our product because it’s really hard to find good stuff, especially cannabis concentrates, in Massachusetts. A lot of folks with medical cards, including myself, would travel to Maine or Rhode Island to get better products.”

Kerwin said Harbor House Collective aims to end the cross border hunt for superior cannabis by offering a top quality product.

“When it comes to Cannabis flowers and products, we only want the best, and we want the same for our customers,” he said. “At Harbor House Collective we strive for the highest quality cannabis by starting with a focus on a premium selection of cannabis genetics. Our cultivation team is always improving by handpicking our genetics in-house ensuring each strain has been hunted, grown, and manicured following our strict attention to details in terpenes, potency, and overall appeal to the consumer. We grow our plants locally, adhering to industry best practices.”

With a statewide focus on getting more equitable licenses to minority owned dispensaries, Harbor House Collective is a true family-run, minority-owned marijuana establishment.

“We’ve hired over 65% of local people with 45 % from Chelsea and Revere,” said Kerwin. “Thirty two percent of employ-



A deep sea mural greets guests as they walk through the front door into reception.

ees are female and 59% are minorities so we really have been trying to focus on creating a business that is representative of the community.”

Kerwin said the Londono family has had strong

roots in Chelsea for a longtime. Father Miguel Londono is the principal owner while his son, Gabriel, will serve as CEO.

Harbor House Collective’s hours are Monday - Saturday 10 am- 8 pm.

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