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Wednesday, February 11, 2026



Family and colleagues gather with legendary East Boston High School basketball coach and headmaster Michael Rubin at the unveiling ceremony designating the Michael Rubin Court at the high school in his honor.

This Honorable Court

East Boston High School Basketball court named after Michael Rubin

Story and photos by Bob Marra

After graduating from Tufts University in 1978, Michael Rubin planned to go to law school. But first, he recalls, "I was going to teach. I wanted to give back, as a tribute to a school counselor and a coach who were so influential in my life at that time."

Rubin became a Special Education teacher at East Boston's

Barnes Middle School. Having played basketball at Tufts, he took on the head coaching duties for the East Boston High junior varsity basketball team.

"Right then I knew: God put me on earth for this," he said. And so began a career that spanned 36 years—the last 35 at East Boston High School, where Rubin was a teacher, basketball coach, administrative assistant, and, ultimately,

Headmaster until his retirement in 2013.

On February 3, dozens of Rubin's former players, students, and colleagues joined several hundred fans who filled the stands at the venerable East Boston High School gym at a ceremony to unveil his signature and name upon "Michael Rubin Court" and to retire the

See RUBIN Page 4

Madaro, House pass bill to require apprenticeships in public construction

Special to the Times-Free Press

The Massachusetts House of Representatives recently passed legislation that seeks to increase the state's trades' workforce by requiring the hiring of apprentices for all contracts awarded for public works projects over \$10 million. Effective a year after signed into law, this bill would require projects to hire apprentices to work 5 percent of the total amount of hours worked, which would scale up to 10 percent in three years and 15

percent in four years.

"Investing in the trades' workforce will bolster workforce development, ensuring that the Commonwealth is able to meet the growing demands for new infrastructure projects. Apprenticeships can also lead to the creation of more union jobs and help to replace highly skilled workers who are aging out of the workforce," said House Speaker Ronald J. Mariano (D-Quincy). "I want to thank Chair McMurtry and

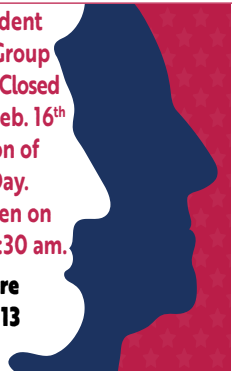
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TRASH DELAY

Due to the President's Day Holiday on Monday
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Forum

OUR LEGISLATURE SHOULD NOT STAND IN THE WAY OF WAYMO

The two bills that are circulating in the state legislature that effectively would ban autonomous, self-driving vehicles in the state not only are short-sighted, but they also will serve to perpetuate the carnage on our dangerous and deadly roads.

It is ironic that the Mass. legislature is setting up roadblocks to the implementation of a technological innovation that is sweeping across the country. Waymo already is operating in six cities with plans to expand into many more.

We in Massachusetts have always taken pride in embracing scientific achievements in the fields of tech and biotech, anchored by our world-class universities. But the legislature wants to prevent autonomous vehicles from coming to Mass. -- really???

Self-driving cars are not the wave of the future -- they already are here -- and banning them would establish our state as a backwater that refuses to move forward as we approach the middle of the 21st century.

Even more significantly, self-driving vehicles are far safer than those operated by humans, and it's not even close. Our highways and roadways are trails of death and destruction that kill 40,000 Americans each and every year (that's more than 100 deaths per day, every day) and maim hundreds of thousands more, thanks to human operators who drive drunk, distracted, and negligently.

By contrast, Waymo's accident and injury rate, based on millions of miles of real-world experience, is a small fraction of the human rate. In addition, a big plus for passengers -- especially women -- is that they do not have to contend with human operators (we'll leave it at that).

As we have noted in the past, we were skeptical about Waymo until we used it extensively on a visit to San Francisco two years ago and became convinced of the safety of self-driving vehicles (which have the added benefit of being good for the environment because they are electric).

We understand that the ride-share human operators are worried about being replaced by the robots (which is ironic, because they displaced taxi operators 20 years ago).

But in our view, public safety should be the top concern of our public officials and should take precedence over everything else.

Your opinions, please

The East Boston Times-Free Press welcomes letters to the editor. Our address is 385 Broadway, Revere, MA 02151.

Letters may also be e-mailed to editor@eastietimes.com.

Letters must be signed. We reserve the right to edit for length and content.

GUEST OP-ED

Progress updates on White Stadium

By the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services, City of Boston

Mayor Michelle Wu, in partnership with Boston Legacy Football Club ("Boston Legacy FC"), shared a progress update on the White Stadium renovation project, where construction is well underway.

"Our Boston students deserve nothing less than the best, and I'm proud to fight for our kids every day. The newly renovated White Stadium will deliver the largest community benefits deal in Boston's history," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "With construction now underway, our students and community will gather and grow in a new, world-class home for BPS athletics, owned as a public asset available in every season. Our partnership with Boston Legacy will have an enduring impact with investments in local businesses, Franklin Park, surrounding communities, and our students."

"For Boston Legacy FC, investing in White Stadium is as an investment in the next generation -- creating access, inspiration and opportunity across Boston," said Jennifer Epstein, Controlling Owner of Boston Legacy FC. "Through our privately funded commitment of more than \$250 million over the next 15 years, we're ensuring that White Stadium remains a City-owned, year-round public asset for Boston Public Schools students and the community for generations."

White Stadium Construction and Contracting Update:

The City and its General Contractor for White Stadium, BOND Building Construction (BOND), a union signatory construction firm, also announced that, after having reviewed and accepted bids for all phases of the White Stadium project (the East side), the

City has established a total construction cost of \$135 million for the publicly-funded share of the project, protected by a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) contract. The GMP was developed through a full and now complete public bidding process under state law, and the updated cost includes the pricing of a finalized design and scope, tariffs on construction materials, and market escalation.

Boston Legacy FC, the City's private funding partner for the renovation, announced today that its share of the Stadium renovation (the West side) will cost in excess of \$190 million, financed in part by a landmark loan from Bank of America.

The City and Boston Legacy FC have both completed demolition and abatement and commenced sub-surface utility and

foundation work, including upgraded power, water, and telecommunications infrastructure, which is slated to be completed in Fall 2026. Vertical construction on both sides of the athletic complex will begin at the end of March 2026. The project is expected to create more than 500 construction jobs.

MWBE and Local Business Participation Update:

The City and Boston Legacy FC jointly shared that the White Stadium project has committed \$43 million in contracts to MWBE businesses, which is 44% of all contracts awarded on the project to date. The project expects to award additional tens of millions of dollars in contracts available for eligible local businesses in

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Printer — Concord Monitor

Wu announces annual tax prep services available for residents

Special to the Times-Free Press

Mayor Michelle Wu announced that the Boston Tax Help Coalition (BTHC) has launched the 2026 tax season, offering free tax preparation for residents who earn \$70,000 per year or less. Eligible residents can file safely while maximizing their refunds and credits at one of 35 tax help sites across Boston. The service is offered remotely and in-person, and interpretation is available in Spanish, Haitian Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, Portuguese, French, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Cantonese, and American Sign Language (ASL).

“In Boston, we are proud to work together with our partners to create economic stability and pathways to financial empowerment for our residents,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “With these free, multilingual tax assistance services, residents can keep more of what they earn, access trusted financial resources, and stay rooted in our neighborhoods. I encourage all who qualify to participate and take advantage of this valuable resource.”

Led by the Worker Empowerment Cabinet, the Boston Tax

Help Coalition (BTHC) aims to expand pathways out of poverty and toward financial empowerment. The free tax preparation service helps low- to moderate-income residents keep more of their earned income by eliminating predatory, for-profit tax preparation fees. Given that BTHC clients have an average income of \$30,000, this service can provide a substantial financial boost for these households. Last year, the BTHC completed over 11,500 tax returns, putting over \$22 million in tax credits and refunds back in the pockets of Boston families and saving them approximately \$2 million in filing fees.

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

and ensures Boston’s workers and families can access the benefits they’ve earned.”

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

“The story of poverty is in large part the story of low wages,” said Joe Diamond, Executive Director, Massachusetts Association for Community Action. “Our tax sites support thousands of working people across the state to become economically stable and mobile by helping them access state and federal tax credits, including the Earned Income Tax Credit.



Depending on family size and income, taxpayers can realize over \$10,000 to spend locally, to pay bills, address debt, cover necessities, and save. We are honored to join with the Boston Tax Help Coalition to urge taxpayers to visit a tax site and work with the certified volunteer tax preparers to file a return for free.”

The BTHC relies on over 25 dedicated partners to help provide tax services each year, including the Massachusetts Association for Community Action, Action for Boston Community Development, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, and banking partners Santander, Citizens, and Harbor One. Of note, the BTHC is continuing its partnership with the Massachusetts Commission of the Blind and DEAF, Inc. to

provide dedicated service days to visually- and hearing-impaired residents. Through this partnership, the BTHC served over 188 taxpayers with disabilities in 2025. Learn more information at boston.gov/disability-tax-help.

“MCB is proud to partner with the Boston Tax Help Coalition and its Disability Working Group to ensure that people who are blind or visually impaired have access to safe, accurate, and accessible tax preparation,” said John Oliveira, Deputy Commissioner at Massachusetts Commission for the Blind. “This work goes beyond simply filing taxes—it’s about protecting our community from predatory practices, maximizing eligible benefits, and promoting

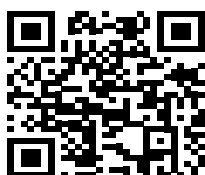
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Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

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Rubin // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“Number 1” jersey in his honor.

“I was surprised by the number of people there,” Rubin said a few days later. “I thought it would be just a small event, but I saw people from all over the city. It made me feel loved.”

Love surely was in abundance, all of it directed at the slender man with the salt-and-pepper beard wearing a grey vest over his blue East Boston Basketball sweatshirt—(and a New England Patriots cap)—who sat quietly as one speaker after another praised him for his leadership, wisdom, compassion, and discipline.

After listening to his colleague’s admiration for nearly half an hour, Rubin addressed the crowd and humbly deflected all the compliments. He wasn’t big on ceremony and glory, he said, “especially when

it’s all about me.”

But on this day, Rubin’s reticence simply did not matter. Phil Brangiforte, Rubin’s successor as East Boston Headmaster, teamed with others who were determined that Rubin’s name own a memorable place in East Boston High School lore. Or, as Brangiforte called the school, “the Castle on the Hill.”

Rubin was 24 years old when he started coaching the varsity Jets, who hadn’t achieved a winning season in decades. During his 24-year stint from 1980 to 2004, Rubin’s teams went on to win 407 games, 10 City League titles, and four Division 2 state titles during his Hall of Fame career. The Boston Globe named him “Coach of the Year” in 1985 and 1992.

Rubin was quick to credit

his success to his players and all those he worked with over the years. “I haven’t scored an official point on a basketball court since 1978,” he said with a laugh. “I stand on the shoulders of the players. All glory to the players and to God.”

Rubin’s genuine humility endeared him to those with whom he associated, and that bond is as strong today as ever. “I was honored and humbled to have him in my life,” said Headmaster Brangiforte, who graduated East Boston High in 1986. “He taught me a lot. He allowed me to flourish as a student, as a coach, and as teacher and administrator.”

Jayson Harris, an East Boston High teacher and head coach of the girls varsity basketball team, played for Rubin, but Rubin was more than just a coach. “Michael Rubin is now and has been one of the most important and influential people in my life,” said Harris. “As my coach, he taught the value of discipline, teamwork, hard work, and dedication to a common goal. As a boss, colleague, and mentor, he continued to teach me the value of hard work, the importance of strong leadership, and how I can incorporate some of that into my own life as a man, a father, a teacher, a coach and mentor now, too.”

Brangiforte summarized



Michael Rubin unveils the retired “No. 1” jersey that will hang in his honor in the EBHS gym.



Michael Rubin speaks to the audience.



East Boston Headmaster Phil Brangiforte addresses the crowd as former EBHS basketball coach and Headmaster Michael Rubin and others listen.



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Rubin’s character succinctly: “...tough, but fair. “He ran a tight ship,” said Brangiforte. “He always taught that no one player on a team was above the team, and that was true outside of sports, too. He treated everyone as if they were the best player on the team, and he always was true to what he believed.

East Boston Athletic Director Michael Smith attributes his own professional path to Rubin. “I am sincerely grateful to my former high school administrator and mentor,” Smith said. “He consistently demonstrated exceptional professionalism, thoughtful leadership, and remarkable composure in the face of constant challenges.”

Rubin learned to overcome challenges early in his life. As a child in a poor neighborhood of Memphis, Tennessee, he lost his Mom when he was 9 and his Dad two years later. Two educators guided Rubin

through his hardship. “A guidance counselor, Yvonne Green, and a coach, Lavaughn Bridges, were so important during my formative years.”

Green steered Rubin to a program that led him to a prestigious Tennessee prep school, from where he matriculated to Tufts University. Bridges instilled respect, discipline, and an appreciation for hard work. “He always wore a three-piece suit,” Rubin said. “I looked up to him, and he taught us always to be on time, be respectful, work to be your best, and if you get knocked down, get back up and try harder.”

Rubin exalts Green and Bridges. “They are the reasons that I wanted to teach before going to law school.”

While Rubin’s statistical achievements as a coach are remarkable, Headmaster Brangiforte emphasized Rubin’s

THE EAST BOSTON HIGH SCHOOL TRACK TEAM



PATRICK O'CONNOR PHOTOS

The East Boston High School track team participated in the annual winter season track championship on Wednesday, February 4, at the Reggie Lewis Track Center in Roxbury.



East Boston High School track seniors who participated in the annual winter season track championship are shown above.



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Registration to open for Boston Parks Summer Sports Centers and golf lessons

Special to the Times-Free Press

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department is pleased to announce registration will open on February 6 at 12:00 p.m. for the 2026 Summer Sports Centers at East Boston Memorial Stadium in East Boston, Garvey Playground in Dorchester, Hunt-Almont Park in Mattapan, Marcella Playground in Roxbury, Ronan Park in Dorchester, and White Stadium at Franklin Park Playstead as well as Junior Golf Lessons at George Wright Municipal Golf Course. Registration for Spring First Tee Golf Lessons opens on February 23 at 12:00 p.m.

Sports Centers - Registration opens February 6 at 12:00 p.m.

Each location offers instruction in several popular sports from July 6 through August 21. All Summer Sports Centers are offered free of charge to Boston residents and open to children ages 7 to 13. Parents may register their children for just one week or the entire summer. For more information or to register online, please visit boston.gov/park-sports.

East Boston Sports Center
East Boston Memorial Park
143 Porter Street, East Boston

Please note that lunch will be provided and participants

must provide their own transportation. Pre-registration is required for both groups and individuals.

Junior Golf Lessons - Registration opens February 6 at 12:00 p.m.

George Wright Golf Course, Hyde Park

The Junior Golf Daily Lessons program, designed for beginners, provides basic instruction in the fundamentals of golf, taught by professionals at George Wright Golf Course in Hyde Park. Equipment is provided and pre-registration is required for each week. Lessons take place Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Each

Tuesday registration is for all 3 days of the week. Ages 7-14. The program is free for Boston residents.

First Tee Spring Golf Lessons - Registration opens February 23 at 12:00 p.m.

William Devine Golf Course, Franklin Park

In partnership with the Massachusetts Golf Association (MGA) and the John D. Mineck Foundation, Boston Parks and Recreation will offer young people (ages 7 to 17) an opportunity to learn the elements of golf in the First Tee of Massachusetts junior golf program at the William Devine Golf Course in Franklin Park.

Taught by PGA professionals, the sessions will run Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. (for 7 to 11-year-olds) and 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (for 12 to 17-year-olds). The program is free for Boston residents.

For more information, visit boston.gov/parks-sports or email parks@boston.gov. To stay up to date with news, events, and improvements in Boston parks, visit Boston.gov/Parks, join our email list, and follow our social channels @bostonparksdept on X, Facebook, Instagram, and now Bluesky.

Reservations for the 2026 camping season at DCR Parks are open to the public

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) announced that reservations for the 2026 state park camping season will open to the public on Wednesday, February 18, 2026, at 9 a.m. Camping season at DCR's 25 campgrounds will begin in April and continue through October.

"Camping at a DCR park is a cherished tradition for families and friends from all over - many of whom return to the same campground year after year, and in some cases for decades," said DCR Commissioner Nicole LaChapelle.

"Spending time together outdoors strengthens relationships, creates lasting memories, and helps foster the vital connection between people and nature, along with a shared responsibility to care for these special places."

Campers should note the following prior to booking a reservation:

- Reservations are available up to four months in advance of arrival.
- Same-day reservations are available until 2 p.m. daily through ReserveAmerica
- Campers should fill out all required fields of the reservation

application at the time of booking to ensure a smooth arrival.

• Visitors without a reservation are not allowed in campsites; however, day-use areas are available for gathering and outdoor activities.

• All pets must have physical proof of valid rabies vaccination. Entry may be denied at check-in if paper verification cannot be provided.

Campground-Specific Updates

• Fans of camping at Mount Greylock State Reservation and the Boston Harbor Islands are encouraged to monitor DCR's website and social media accounts for updates on the camping schedule.

• Savoy Mountain State Forest's campground will close July 31, 2026, to accommodate the construction of a new bathroom.

• This season, Washburn Island will be available for camping on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. The campground at Washburn Island is accessible by private boat only. Please note that there is no on-site

parking at the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve or at the Town of Falmouth parking lot at White's Landing. Campers are responsible for finding suitable parking arrangements.

Since last season, DCR has made several improvements to its campsites including the new yurts at both Clarksburg State Park and Nickerson State Park.

A list of DCR campsites can be found at DCR's camping webpage. Campsites vary in offered accommodations, including showers, flush toilets, and R.V. water and power hook-ups.

Yurts can be reserved at Myles Standish State Forest, Nickerson State Park, October Mountain State Forest, Clarksburg State Park, Otter River State Forest, Shawme Cromwell State Forest, Wells State Park and Willard Brook State Forest. Cabins can be rented at Mohawk Trail State Forest and Savoy Mountain State Forest. For more information on camping in cabins and yurts visit DCR's cabin and yurt camping webpage.

Additionally, approximate-

ly 20 of DCR's campgrounds have accessible campsites that all provide accessible parking, accessible restrooms, and a flat, firm and stable surface for camping. For more information on accessible campsites visit DCR's accessible camping webpage.

Last year, DCR accepted nearly 65,000 camping reservations at parks across the state. For more information and questions about the 2026 camping season, visit the agency's website or email dcrcampinginfo@mass.gov.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) oversees nearly half a million acres of land, making up one of the largest and most diverse state park systems in the country. Our work focuses on nurturing the vital connection between people and the environment by protecting, promoting, and enhancing our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the well-being of all. DCR infrastructure connects people to and through the beautiful landscapes and accessible recreational facilities we care for - strengthening our communities and driving our economy. Our staff strive to build a healthier, more resilient Massachusetts where all residents and visitors can relax, reflect, and feel a sense of belonging in our open spaces and public lands. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr or contact us at mass.parks@mass.gov.

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WARD I DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS

Wednesday, Feb 25, 2026 6pm

126 Border St, E. Boston

The Boston Ward I Committee will caucus to choose delegates to the State convention.

To vote you must be a registered Democrat residing in Ward I.

For more information contact Heather
617harbor@gmail.com

Rubin // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

human connections. "Wins and losses can never measure his true contributions and his influence on countless lives."

Harris echoed that sentiment. "Through basketball, he taught us life lessons that have carried over into other areas of life."

Harris, whose late father Leslie was an esteemed Juvenile Court judge, was one of the high school basketball players who regarded Rubin as if he was a father. "Michael Rubin has given me and my brothers so much in the way of a strong Black male role model. I am forever thankful for all he has done for me, grateful for his continued support and presence in my life, and proud to be able to say that I played for an amazing coach and learned from a great man," said Harris.

While grateful for the praise, Rubin characteristically shrugs it off and prefers to reflect on his experience. "When I first started coaching, Boston schools were still dealing with the trouble that came with busing. As a coach, I became a mediator, I was able to reach Black and white kids and teach them to work together. Coaching in the city, I tried to prepare my players and students for life beyond basketball, beyond school. I knew I found my niche."

Rubin now works with the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) as a liaison to various committees and a leader of the MIAA "Respect and Civility" initiative, which emphasizes respect, fairness, civility, honesty, and responsibility as integral to all

athletic contests. Appropriately enough, they are very principles that denote Rubin's career as coach and administrator.

"I like to stay around sports and young people, to watch them grow and mature," said Rubin. "I look back on 36 years in the Boston Public Schools, and I would not change a thing."

Countless students and athletes always will be grateful that Michael Rubin chose teaching and coaching over law. And from now on, he will preside in his court, where the name Michael Rubin, painted in bright blue on the polished golden hardwood floor, will inspire future generations. As AD Smith said, no one is more deserving of the honor.

OBITUARIES

Emma Cappello

Her long life was truly a testament to a life well lived

Family and friends are respectfully invited to attend visiting hours today, Wednesday, February 11th from 3 to 7 p.m. in the Vertuccio Smith & Vazza Beechwood Home for Funerals, 262 Beach St. Revere for Emma B. (Larsen) Cappello who died on Thursday, February 5th at Seasons of Danvers following a long illness. She was in her 102nd year. A funeral will be conducted from the funeral home on Thursday, February 12th at 10 a.m. followed by a Funeral Mass at 11 a.m. in Immaculate Conception Church, 133 Beach St., Revere. Interment immediately following in Woodlawn Cemetery, Everett.

Emma was born on March 5, 1924 in Boston to her late parents, Charles and Blanche (Neveaux) Larsen. She was one of eight children raised and educated in the Jeffries Point section of East Boston. She was a graduate of East Boston High School, Class of 1942. Following high school, Emma began working at the New England Tel and Tel as a Dial Administrator, a career that would span over 35 years.

In her later years, after she was married to her husband, John "Cappy" Cappello, she and her husband moved to Bridgewater and then later to Rowley. Together they owned and operated their business, Beech Tree Stables & Tack Shop in Rowley. They also were the original founders of the Rowley Riding & Driving Club, also in Rowley. Emma had a deep love and passion for horses and for riding them. She was a past member of the Ladies Auxiliary at the VFW in



Whitman.

Emma was a social butterfly, especially in large groups and she enjoyed being around people. She took great pleasure in coordinating dances and trail rides, as well as horse shows.

Besides her busy social life, Emma enjoyed the simple things in life such as painting and reading. Her long life was truly a testament of a life well lived and she loved her family and friends along the way.

She was the beloved wife of the late John R. "Cappy" Cappello and the stepmother of Kelly LaCava and her husband, Gene of Hull; the cherished sister of Richard Larsen and his companion, Paula Zajak of Revere, who she lived with for many years and the late Helen Woodside, Charles, Clarence, Arthur, Norman and Francis Larsen. She is also lovingly survived by many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.

In lieu of flowers, remembrances may be made to the Northeast Animal Shelter, 347 Highland Ave. Salem, MA 01970. For online condolences please visit: www.vertuciosmithvazza.com

Tax Help // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

financial independence. The success of this program last year has demonstrated the power of trust, collaboration, and disability-informed services. With our new location at the Copley Branch of the Boston Public Library, and continued partnership with BTHC and the City of Boston, we are committed to expanding these services, reinforcing inclusion, and supporting the financial empowerment of every member of the Blind and Low-Vision community."

In addition to tax preparation, the BTHC connects residents to free, comprehensive financial and asset-building services to promote economic growth. This year, six tax sites, Dot House, Codman Square Health Center, Urban Edge, BHA-Charlestown WORKS, Community Economic Development Center, and the Center for Working Families, will offer clients a Financial Check-Up (FCU). The FCU is a free, optional credit advising session with a trained Financial Guide who will help residents understand their financial situa-

tion, create a personalized one-year plan to improve their credit, and provide relevant service referrals. Taxpayers who participated in the FCU improved their FICO scores by an average of 15.5 points in less than one

year. The BTHC provided credit advising and financial education to 1,135 tax clients in 2024.

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



Rich Ford

2-9-2014 2-9-2026

12 Year Remembrance

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EAST BOSTON SENIOR KAI LAUQUAN SCORES HIS 1,000TH CAREER POINT

East Boston High School senior Kai LauQuan scored his 1,000th career point in a Feb. 3 game against Charlestown High. LauQuan reached the milestone on a the night when the hallowed basketball court at the high school was named in tribute to one of school’s most esteemed and respected champions, former basketball coach and headmaster Michael Rubin (Please see related story on Page 1).



PATRICK O’CONNOR PHOTO
Head coach Tyrone Figueroa and Kai Lauquan.



BOB MARRA PHOTO
EYE ON THE PRIZE: Kai LauQuan eyes the basket on the free throw that produced his 1,000th career point.



BOB MARRA PHOTO
LONG STRETCH: Jayden Hunt (30) and Charlestown’s Kamari Day (1).



PATRICK O’CONNOR PHOTO
Honored on Senior Night at the home game on Tuesday, February 3, are #20 Noordin Abdi, #1 Kai LauQuan (with his trophy for scoring 1,000 points) #15 Emmanuel Cuascut along with the coaching staff.



BOB MARRA PHOTO
IT’S A CELEBRATION: Family, friends, coaches and East Boston Headmaster Philip Brangiforte (far right) gather at midcourt to celebrate East Boston senior Kai LauQuan after he scored his 1000th career point in East Boston’s game against Charlestown on February 3.

EAST BOSTON JETS BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM IN ACTION AGAINST CHARLESTOWN

BOB MARRA PHOTOS



OUCH: Vlad Pinto (13) ends up with the ball in his face as he is fouled on a drive to the basket.



OUT OF REACH: Kai LauQuan cannot get a hand on a rebound hauled down by Charlestown's Jeremy Baez (32).



MAKE ROOM: Stephen Lucas (2) finds a way past Charlestown center Jeremy Baez(32).



NOT THIS TIME: Kai LauQuan faced suffocating defense all night as he neared the 1000 point mark, which he achieved on a free throw with 1:36 left in the game.



LOOSE BALL FOOTRACE: East Boston's Angel Rivera (5) outruns Charlestown's (1) as the chase a loose ball.



ROAD CLOSED: Kai LauQuan has his path to the basket blocked, but he was fouled, and that set up the free throw that gave him his 1000th career point.

Wu announces City's Black History Month programming

Special to the Times-Free Press

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

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

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

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

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

In observance of Black History Month, Boston Public Library (BPL) is releasing *Black Is...*, a booklist featuring recently published titles that celebrate the achievements, complexities, struggles, and culture of the Black experience. Additionally the BPL will be hosting special events for all ages at various branches. More information about the booklist and BPL events can be found here.

City of Boston Black History Month:

BCYF Black History Annual Skate Night

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

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

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

Black Veterans

Appreciation Luncheon

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

Location: Hibernian Hall,



MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY JEREMIAH ROBINSON

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

184 Dudley St, Boston, MA 02119

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

Outstanding Service awards.

Finding Acceptance as LGBTQIA2S+ in the Black Church

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

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

This in-person event brings

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

Construction // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Chair Decker for their work on this legislation, as well as all my colleagues in the House for recognizing its importance."

"Trades jobs are good jobs," said Representative Adrian Madaro. By ensuring the creation of more apprenticeships across the Commonwealth, Massachusetts will benefit from the growing trades workforce to meet the demand for new housing development, infrastructure projects, renovations and more. At the same time, our communities will benefit from the creation of new, well-paying, union jobs."

"This important legislation strengthens our apprenticeship system and ensures public construction projects create sustainable jobs and foster real career pathways," said Representative Paul McMurtry (D-Dedham), House Chair of the Labor & Workforce Development Committee. "This bill represents a meaningful investment in skilled labor, fair wages, and the future of the trades in the Commonwealth."

"At a time when the federal government is dismantling worker protections and cutting jobs, Massachusetts must lead.

The PATHS Act reaffirms our commitment to workers' rights, to a skilled and diverse workforce, and to multiple pathways to good-paying, family-sustaining careers," Representative Marjorie C. Decker (D-Cambridge), House Chair of the Joint Committee on Public Health and main sponsor of the bill. "One of the most effective ways to reduce poverty is to ensure that people are paid wages that are sustainable and aligned with the real cost of living."

Public agencies must require, as a condition of awarding a construction contract over \$10 million for any public works, that all construction managers, general contractors and subcontractors maintain or participate in an apprentice program, approved by the Division of Apprentice Standards (DAS), for each apprenticeable occupation represented in their workforce. Construction managers, general contractors and subcontractors must register all apprentices with DAS and comply with applicable apprentice-to-journeyperson ratios established by a trades licensing board or the Division.

The bill provides for an ex-

emption upon a written determination by the public agency that, after good-faith solicitation, no qualified and responsible bidder maintaining or participating in an apprentice program is reasonably available for a specific trade or scope of work. Any construction manager, general contractor and subcontractor who fails to maintain or participate in an apprentice program and is not exempt cannot be deemed a responsible and eligible bidder.

The bill also requires prevailing wage payments by employers to include apprenticeship programs approved by DAS within Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and operated in compliance with DAS. The bill establishes a Special Commission on Apprenticeships to study and make recommendations on the development, accessibility, quality, funding and utilization of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs across all industry sectors.

The bill passed the House of Representatives 154-1 and now goes to the Senate for consideration.

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Times-Free Press

White Stadium // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

the next phase of construction, and will be holding a contracting fair and other events to promote the opportunities to local businesses based in the neighborhoods surrounding Franklin Park, including Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, and Roxbury. Local businesses that have already received contracts on the White Stadium project include All-Time Services, a Labor and Janitorial Services Company, based in Roslindale, with a \$375,000 contract for labor and construction management services, and Eco Waste, a Disposal & Containerization Company, based in Dorchester, which secured a \$375,000 contract for waste management.

“Being part of the White Stadium renovation is more than a project - it’s an honor and a chance to shape our community’s future,” said Gifted Keith, Vice President of Business Development at All-Time Services. “Partnering with Bond, gives us the opportunity to build a new chapter in Boston history, this project is setting a new standard for how public investments can create real, lasting impact for our neighborhoods”

“The White Stadium project represents the type of project that creates access to opportunity for small businesses in general but especially true for minority and local owned businesses like mine,” said Jesse Jeter, president and co-founder of Eco Waste Disposal & Container Storage. “We’re excited to be part of such a special public project in our city and excited by what this level of commitment means for the long-term economic health and growth of small, local businesses.”

The City will continue to regularly convene the White Stadium Supplier Diversity Advisory Group through the winter to share contracting opportunities at White Stadium during construction and operations. The advisory group’s purpose is to ensure that local businesses are aware of contracting opportunities and to support the City and Boston Legacy FC in achieving project goals for contracting and economic development into the communities surrounding Franklin Park.

Update on Community Benefits:
Boston Legacy FC’s Private-

ly Funded Community Benefits Will Surpass \$252 Million Over 15 Years.

With an upfront private investment of more than \$190 million to deliver a world-class, publicly-owned student athletics facility, Boston Legacy FC’s privately-funded public and community benefits, guaranteed under the lease agreement negotiated in December of 2024, will surpass \$252 million over the next 15 years—the largest community benefits agreement in the City’s history. The City recently announced a community benefits agreement with the Kraft Group for the privately owned stadium in Everett that will deliver \$48 million in benefits for the City of Boston and the Charlestown neighborhood over the same period.

Mayor Wu and Boston Legacy FC also announced that the annual community benefits payments starting at \$500,000 and increasing by 3% annually, will be directed to a Community Annual Fund and supplemented through fundraising in partnership with the community to generate additional resources for community investments.

The White Stadium project includes the largest community benefits commitment from a private partner in Boston’s history. Over 15 years, those benefits include:

\$190 million private capital investment to revitalize White Stadium.

\$34 million to operate and maintain White Stadium as a year-round public asset, including resources to maintain the track and field to top standards; providing day-to-day cleaning, security, and upkeep and supporting a wide range of community and public events.

\$15.4 million in rent and City revenue sharing, to be re-invested into Franklin Park and other neighborhood properties under the terms of the George Robert White Trust, and dedicated to a new citywide BPS athletics fund.

\$9.3 million in cumulative community benefits payments from Boston Legacy FC, which will be directed to a Community Annual Fund and distributed in consultation with the City and neighborhood leaders to support economic, athletic, and community activity in

the neighborhoods of Franklin Park.

\$3.75 million to invest in Franklin Park capital projects and tree canopy, including a first-ever tree fund and a surcharge of \$1 per ticket, set to increase with inflation, a term in the lease negotiated with the support of the Franklin Park Coalition.

Update on BPS Athletics:
City and Boston Legacy FC announces Seed-Funding for New BPS athletics fund:

Mayor Wu, Boston Legacy FC and Superintendent Skipper today announced the creation of a citywide BPS athletics fund, backed by commitments negotiated with Boston Legacy FC, to support student athletes, coaches, and teams across the City. The City will dedicate annual funds from revenue sharing, estimated at \$8 million over the next 15 years, to support new team uniforms and equipment, transportation and travel, special training, and other resources for BPS athletics across the City. These funds are a separate revenue stream from other community benefit payments negotiated under the lease.

“White Stadium will be a hub for student athletes and families in every season that will help bring our athletics program to the next level,” said BPS Superintendent Mary Skipper. “When it opens, our students will have a top tier facility that delivers what our teams, our students, and coaches need, along with mentorships and job opportunities. We are grateful for the continued partnership with the City and I’m excited to see our students thrive in this new and reimagined space.”

“Today’s announcement represents progress toward the commitment to award 50% of White Stadium contracting dollars to certified Minority- and Women-owned businesses, along with a historic community benefits package that will be directed by a community-appointed body,” said Senator Liz Miranda. “That’s a meaningful opportunity to build resources locally, and we’ll keep working to ensure Boston Public Schools families and our residents share directly in the benefits.”

“The White Stadium project

represents a once in a generation opportunity to deliver a state of the art recreational facility for the residents of Dorchester and Mattapan” said State Representative Russell Holmes. “I want to thank Mayor Wu and the Boston Legacy for their commitment to contracting with underutilized business enterprises and for the historic amount of community benefits being delivered”.

As the restored citywide hub of BPS athletics, the new White Stadium will be open for BPS games and practices daily, including after school and on weekends, and throughout the summer, hosting soccer, cross-country, track, cheer, and football, as well as strength training and other athletic programs. With a new regulation track, for the first time, White Stadium will also be able to host state tournaments.

BPS plans to make the new complex available to teams at every high school in the City, both for daily use by teams and as a site for home games, special matches, meets, team banquets, and tournaments. Prior to renovation, the Stadium had no indoor training spaces, lacked running water, heat, and field drainage, and was used regularly by just two high schools during the fall season, and for city cross country and City League track meets. As a citywide athletic hub, the new Stadium will be open and used by thousands of BPS students annually in both organized competition and other athletic programming, and open every day for public use and available to community-based organizations.

The final design includes a professional-grade grass field, a collegiate-level eight-lane track, dedicated strength and conditioning facilities, a sports medicine center, and flexible indoor study and community spaces.

Update on Transportation Plan:
The transportation plan for the renovated White Stadium is establishing a national benchmark for an urban stadium, and will create a new model for managing large crowd events in Franklin Park. By integrating “ticket-linked transit”—where spectators pre-select their travel mode at the point of purchase—the facility maximizes use of shuttles, rideshare, and public transit, while reducing demand for parking. Central to this strategy is the commitment to a 100% electric shuttle fleet within the first three years of operation, aligning the Stadium with Boston’s highest environmental standards and ensuring a sustainable, low-impact footprint for the surrounding Franklin Park community. The City and BPS will also be actively planning for the daily operations of the Stadium as an active BPS athletics hub and community resource. The City and BLFC are incorporating community feedback following the public release of the White Stadium Transportation Plan and will host a series of public meetings on transportation in Spring 2026 focused on addressing comments. Additional feedback can be submitted here.

Update on Boston Legacy FC:
Boston Legacy FC will kick off its inaugural season on March 14, 2026, hosting Gotham FC at Gillette Stadium. The club has announced its 23-player preliminary roster for the 2026 NWSL preseason. Boston is led by head coach Filipa Patão, who arrives from Portuguese powerhouse Benfica after guiding the women’s senior team to a 156-28-15 record across all competitions since 2020.

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Wu announces Ailin Sha as Boston's next Youth Poet Laureate

Special to the Times-Free Press

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

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

Established in 2019, the Boston Youth Poet Laureate (BYPL) celebrates the power of poetry to elevate youth voices and engage communities across Boston. The BYPL program is a collaboration between the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, the national



Ailin Sha

COURTESY PHOTO

youth literary organization Urban Word, and local youth literary organizers from the Boston Public Library, Mass Poetry, Fine Arts Work Center, 826 Boston, and GrubStreet.

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

The Boston Youth Poet Laureate is a two-year ceremonial role that elevates a young poet as a literary ambassador for the city. In partnership with

the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, the current Boston Poet Laureate, and Boston's cultural institutions—including schools, libraries, and museums—the Youth Poet Laureate brings poetry into public spaces, classrooms, and civic conversations where it is not always found.

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

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

Sha, 18, grew up in Beijing, China, and came to the U.S. when she was 11 years old. She

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

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

Sha's commitment to civic engagement includes two years as an ambassador for the Mayor's Youth Council and for A-VOYCE (Asian Voices of Youth for Community Empowerment at the Asian Community Development Corporation), where she worked alongside residents to preserve and celebrate community stories. She also interned at the Roxbury Defenders branch of the Committee for Public Counsel Services, fielding calls from incarcerated clients seeking legal assistance.

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

She envisions launching a Youth Poetry Workshop Series at the Boston Public Library—monthly gatherings where young writers can explore poetry as a means of self-expression, connection, and bringing awareness to issues they care about. Sha is also excited to develop a Poetry Pen Pal Proj-

ect connecting students across Boston Public Schools, inviting young people from different schools, neighborhoods, and backgrounds to exchange original poems inspired by shared prompts, fostering creativity, empathy, and friendships across the city.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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M&T Bank appoints Jeff Carpenter Regional President for Massachusetts

Special to the Times-Free Press

M&T Bank (NYSE:MTB) announced the appointment of Jeff Carpenter as its new Regional President of Massachusetts. With more than two decades of corporate and specialty banking experience, Carpenter brings deep regional knowledge, financial expertise and a strong record of leadership to this role, reinforcing M&T's commitment to delivering exceptional service to its customers.

Carpenter has served as Executive Vice President, Head of Specialty and Corporate Banking since 2023. In his expanded role as Regional President, he will guide M&T's regional leaders – including members of its retail banking, business banking, commercial banking, wealth management, government banking and charitable teams. Carpenter will also lead the strong, collaborative Bos-



Jeff Carpenter

ton-based team already at the core of the region's success. An active member of the Boston community, he will continue to serve on several boards, including the YMCA of Greater Boston, Just Living Communities and the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce.

"Jeff's appointment underscores M&T Bank's commitment to strong, local leader-

ship in Massachusetts as we continue to grow our presence in across New England," said Augie Chiasera, M&T Bank Senior Executive Vice President and Head of Community Markets. "Having been part of M&T for years, Jeff brings a deep understanding of our culture and strategy and will now lead an already strong, deeply engaged team in Boston. With his extensive experience in specialty and corporate banking and understanding of capital markets, Jeff is well positioned to drive growth, strengthen client relationships and deepen our community impact across the Commonwealth."

M&T Bank's Massachusetts' headquarters sits in the heart of Boston, at the intersection of innovation, medical research and higher education. Carpenter will focus on deepening partnerships across these sectors and shaping a forward-thinking workplace cul-

ture that anticipates the future and thrives on creativity and high performance.

"I am honored to be given the opportunity to lead this extraordinary team as M&T deepens its impact while supporting innovation in Massachusetts," said Carpenter. "Choosing where to bank is personal. M&T combines the strength of a large bank with local, tailored service, allowing us to support customers and communities in meaningful ways. I look forward to working across the team to strengthen client service and deliver results that help people grow their businesses, buy homes and reach their goals."

In Massachusetts, M&T Bank employs 678 people across its corporate offices and its network of 61 branches. Last year, M&T was recognized among the top 25 most charitable organizations in the state donating nearly \$5 mil-

lion to local nonprofits. In addition, our local employees provided 7300 hours of volunteer service.

Prior to joining M&T Bank, Carpenter led several Capital Markets, Commercial Banking and Credit teams at People's United Bank, Banco Santander and Sovereign Bank. Jeff holds a B.S. in Finance from Bentley University.

M&T Bank Corporation is a financial holding company headquartered in Buffalo, New York. M&T's principal banking subsidiary, M&T Bank, provides banking products and services in 12 states across the eastern U.S. from Maine to Virginia and Washington, D.C. Trust-related services are provided in select markets in the U.S. and abroad by M&T's Wilmington Trust-affiliated companies and by M&T Bank. For more information on M&T Bank, visit www.mtb.com.

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

Special to the Times-Free Press

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

Located in the heart of Bos-

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

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

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



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

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Boston Parks Department hosts February School Vacation Week activities

Special to the Times-Free Press

Children, parents, and caregivers are invited to join the Boston Parks and Recreation Department for February school vacation week. From sports clinics, to our annual Children’s Festival, and nature exploration with the Park Rangers, these activities are FREE and open to all. To learn more and register, visit boston.gov/parks.

Softball Hitting and Fielding Clinics
Tuesday, February 17 and Wednesday, February 18, 2026
2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
The Bubble at Carter Field, 709 Columbus Avenue

The program features UMass Boston softball players and coaches and is open to teams and individual players of all skill levels. Pre-registration required. Ages 10 and up.
boston.gov/parks-sports
Stable Tour with the Park Rangers Mounted Unit
Thursday, February 19, 2026
11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Franklin Park Maintenance Yard
275 Canterbury Street, Dorchester
Join the Boston Park Rangers at their stable for a tour of the facility and learn how our equine partners are fed, trained, groomed, tacked up, and ready for their patrol in the parks. All ages.

boston.gov/park-rangers
Snowshoeing Safari with the Park Rangers
Thursday, February 19, 2026
2:00 - 3:00 p.m.
William Devine Golf Course Parking Lot
1 Circuit Drive, Dorchester
Join us for an hour snowshoeing tour (or hike, depending on weather) around Boston’s historic Franklin Park. A limited supply of snowshoes will be available for use during the event. Please dress accordingly. For ages 12+.
boston.gov/park-rangers

Horse-of-Course with the Boston Park Rangers Mounted Unit
Friday, February 20, 2026
2:00 - 2:45 p.m.
William Devine Golf Course Parking Lot
1 Circuit Drive, Dorchester
Join the Boston Park Rangers for a meet-and-greet with one of our equine partners and learn how they’re fed,

groomed, tacked up, and ready for their patrol in the parks. All ages.
boston.gov/park-rangers
Baseball Hitting and Fielding Clinics
Thursday, February 19 and Friday, February 20
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
The Bubble at Carter Field, 709 Columbus Avenue
The program features UMass Boston baseball players and coaches and is open to teams and individual players of all skill levels. Pre-registration required. Ages 10-14.
boston.gov/parks-sports

Winter Festival at Franklin Park
Saturday, February 21, 2026
11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
William Devine Golf Course & Clubhouse, 1 Circuit Drive, Dorchester
This festival offers free skating, winter-themed activities, inflatable attractions, and fun giveaways for attendees of all

ages, while supplies last.
boston.gov/winterfest
Open Gym
Thursday, February 19 and Friday, February 20
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
The Bubble at Carter Field, 709 Columbus Avenue
Open Gym is available to students, families, and community members to play pick-up sports such as kickball, wiffleball, soccer, football, run laps, and more. Pre-registration required. Note: There will be no open gym on Monday, February 16 due to President’s Day.
boston.gov/parks-sports
For more information visit boston.gov/parks. To stay up to date with news, events, and improvements in Boston parks, call (617) 635-4505, join our email list at bit.ly/Get-Parks-Emails, and follow our social channels @bostonparksdept on X, Facebook, and Instagram and @parks.boston.gov on Bluesky.

East Boston Times-Free Press Drop-Off Locations

Orient Height Food Market	1016 Bennington St.	Meridian Market	357 Meridian St.
Angelos	1012 Bennington St.	Mobil Gas Station	Meridian St.
Butcher	1008 Bennington St.	Shaw's	240 Border St.
Tobacco	1006 Bennington St.	Kappy's Liquors	216 Border St.
Sunny	1000 Bennington St.	CVS	210 Border St.
Renegades	1004 Bennington St.	McDonalds	Central Square
Metro PCS	982 Saratoga St.	East Boston Social Center	68 Central St.
Catering Deli	978 Saratoga St.	Wallgreens	1 Central Sq 100 St.
Kiosco Restaurant Bar	974 Saratoga St.	Americano Express Bar	Meridian St.
Rite Aid	971 Bennington St.	Shell Gas Station	52 Meridian St.
Luna's Italian	945 Saratoga St.	Police Station	49 Meridian St.
Neptune Laundromat	Saratoga St.	Post Office	50 Meridian St.
Subway	948 Saratoga St.	East Boston Saving Bank	10 Meridian St.
Burger King	948 Saratoga St.	East Boston APAC	17 Meridian St.
Saratoga Market	16 Trident St.	Bella's Market	67 Maverick St.
Royal Famous Roast Beef	752 Bennington St.	Bank of America	Maverick St.
Lanzilli Gas Station	931 Bennington St.	Smoke Shop	Maverick St.
Lisslot Hair Salon	730 Bennington St.	PLS Check	19 Maverick St.
Century 21 Realty	620 Bennington St.	Meridian Market	121 Meridian St.
7-Eleven	120 Byron St.	Clipper Wine and Spirit	Maverick St.
Salesian Boys and Girls Club	150 Byron and Bennington St.	Station Grocery	Maverick St.
Carlos Catering	567 Bennington and Moore St.	Dunkin' Donut	Maverick St.
The Corner Mini Market	517 Bennington and Harmony St.	Tedeschi	Maverick St.
The UPS	2 Neptune Rd.	Heritage Apts	209 Sumner St.
Neptune Liquors	1 Neptune Rd.	Cross Roads Shelter	56 Havre St.
Neptune Convenience	3 Neptune Rd.	Maverick Landing	31 Liverpool St.
Neptune Laundromat	489 Saratoga St.	San Miguel Argangel	317 Sumner St.
Mellos Coffee	476 Saratoga St.	Adela's Bakery	319 Sumner St.
DA. Copas Pizza	474 Saratoga St.	Mehak Halal	Sumner St.
Laundromat	470 Saratoga St.	Wine and Barley	326 Sumner St.
Mobil Gas Station	396 Chelsea St.	Al Bar	330 Sumner St.
Spinellis	282 Bennington St.	Italian Express Pizza	336 Sumner St.
Daycare Liquors	286 Bennington St.	Family Brothers Market	339 Sumner St.
Jevelli's Restaurant	Chelsea and Day Square	Alvaro Laundromat	341 Sumner St.
Tiny Bubbles	200 Bennington St.	Sumner Market	345 Sumner St.
Lolly's Bakery	158 Bennington St.	Maverick st Market	211 Maverick St.
Sava's Market	150 Bennington and Brooks St.	Wash and Dry	209 Maverick St.
Kelly's Pub	84 Bennington St.	Laundromat	72 Chelsea St.
East Boston Comer Market	233 Marion St.	Santarpios	111 Chelsea St.
Peach's and Cream	73 Bennington St.	Old Factory Condo	156 Porter St.
East Boston Saving Bank	1 Bennington St.	Spotless	24 Porter St.
Citizens Bank	Meridian St.	East Boston YMCA	215 Bremen St.
Dunkin' Donut	Meridian St.	Boston Library	365 Bremen St.
Castello Liquors	Meridian St.	Woody's Liquors	1035 Bennington St.
The Soap Box Laundromat	299 Meridian St.	Don Orion Nursing Home	111 Orient Ave.
Angela's Coffee	131 Lexington St.	Glastone Market	3 Glastone St.
Food Market	353 Meridian St.	Continental Dry Cleaners	15 Breed St.
		Martin Community Ctr	86 Boardman St.
		Starbucks	430 McClellan Highway

Special to the Times-Free Press

The Boston Community Health Collaborative, which is facilitated by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) and convenes City departments, public health, healthcare, community based organizations, and Boston residents released the 2025-2028 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), a citywide roadmap to improve health outcomes for Boston residents and advance health equity across neighborhoods.

Building on findings from the 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), the CHIP reflects extensive input from health centers, hospitals, community-based organizations, residents, and public health leaders. Translating data and community voice into coordinated action, the 2025-2028 CHIP identifies shared priorities and strengthens coordination across sectors, helping align and advance partnerships and strategies over the next three years to reduce disparities and support Boston residents living longer, healthier lives. In line with BPHC’s Live Long and Well agenda, the

CHIP outlines a clear set of priorities, identified through data and community input, which include: housing, economic mobility and opportunity, healthy and affordable food, and access to care. These priorities reflect the conditions that most strongly influence health outcomes and guide how partners align efforts and resources across Boston.

“We continue to work across departments to ensure that all residents have access to healthy and affordable food, care, and necessary resources to live long and well,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “This plan is driven by community input — guiding our priorities and collective work to strengthen our neighborhoods. I’m grateful to the Boston Community Health Collaborative, Boston Public Health Commission, and all our partners for delivering this informative report that will help keep our communities healthy.”

“Health outcomes are determined by the conditions in which people are born, live, learn and age. In Boston, these conditions are not experienced equally, creating deep and avoidable health inequities,” said Dr. Bisola Oji-



kutu, Commissioner of Public Health for the City of Boston. “The interventions described in the Community Health Improvement Plan will help address these inequities and turn community insight into coordinated action that supports longer, healthier lives for all. Thank you to the over 1,900 neighbors who participated.”

To support the goals outlined in the CHIP, the Boston Community Health Collaborative will bring partners together regularly to learn from one another and put shared goals to action. Subcommittees will meet throughout the year to coordinate activities, develop shared approaches, and track progress.

The Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) is the country’s oldest health department and envisions a thriving Boston where all residents live healthy and fulfilling lives. To accomplish this, BPHC works in partnership with communities to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, especially those impacted by racism and systemic inequities. Learn more about our work at boston.gov/bphc.

Real Estate Transfers

BUYER 1	SELLER 1	ADDRESS	PRICE
Machacek, Miranda	125 Addison Street LLC	125 Addison St #8	\$670,000
Mansee Patel RET	230 Everett Street LLC	230 Everett St #5	\$1,360,000
Ali, Yuliya	233 Bennington Street LL	233 Bennington St	\$1,375,000
Chan, Christina	59 Falcon Street LLC	59 Falcon St #3	\$670,000



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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
WETLANDS PROGRAM

401 Water Quality Certification Application Public Notice

Pursuant to 33.U.S.C.1341 and MGL c21 §43, notice is hereby given of a 401 Water Quality Certification (WQC) application for Piers Park II Sewall Structural Rehabilitation at 95 Marginal Street, Boston, MA 02128 by Massachusetts Port Authority, One Harborside Drive, Suite 200S, Boston, MA 02128 on property owned by Massachusetts Port Authority, One Harborside Drive, Suite 200S, Boston, MA 02128.

The proposed project involves minor dredging to replace the existing deteriorating seawall with a sloped stone revetment at the southern end of Piers Park II.

Additional information may be obtained from Fiona Vardy (Foth):
Fiona.vardy@foth.com; 508-762-0784.

Written comments on this 401 WQC Application may be emailed to:
David Wong (David.W.Wong@mass.gov)
Department of Environmental Protection Wetlands Program
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114 (617) 874-7155

Within 21 days of this notice. The Department will consider all written comments on this 401 WQC Application received by the Public Comments Deadline.

Any group of ten persons of the Commonwealth, any aggrieved person, or any government body or private organization with a mandate to protect the environment that has submitted written comments may also appeal the Department's Certification and that failure to submit comments before the end of public comment period may result in the waiver of any right to an adjudicatory hearing.

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THE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER GROUP

Happy Valentine's Day



Happy Valentine's Nana, ♥ ♥
Love Isabella



Happy Valentine's Day, Cousins
Jace (left) & Miles (right).



We love you, Brooks! Happy Valentine's
Day Love Papa & Grandma



Aliza's first Valentine's Day! Your
brothers Owen & Lorenzo love you



Happy Valentine's Day
from Wendy



Happy Valentine's Day
from Jet