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Mayor awards Community Champion Award to Rita Lara

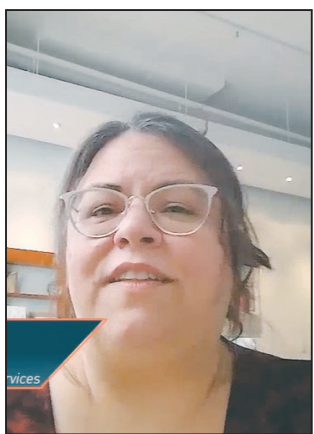
By John Lynds

Last week, Mayor Martin J. Walsh and the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA) hosted We Are Boston 2020: From Resilience to Equity on November 19, 2020. The annual end-of-the year reception celebrates Boston immigrants and their contributions to the City. This year's virtual program focused on honoring frontline workers and immigrant-serving nonprofits for their tireless work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It also highlighted how together we can move towards equity for all residents.

The Mayor awarded the 2020 "We Are Boston Community Champion Award" to Rita Lara, Executive Director of Maverick Landing Community Services, for her instrumental role in the coronavirus response.

Lara organized a collaborative of East Boston organizations to provide relief and food to those in need, including those who do not qualify for any ben-

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The Mayor awarded the 2020 "We Are Boston Community Champion Award" to Rita Lara, Executive Director of Maverick Landing Community Services, for her instrumental role in the coronavirus response.



East Boston YMCA staff and volunteers pose with the 150-plus meals they handed out Saturday to Eastie families with the help of Stop & Shop and Cargo Ventures.

East Boston YMCA holds annual turkey give-away with Stop & Shop, Cargo Ventures

By John Lynds

On Saturday, Stop & Shop teamed up with East Boston based Cargo Ventures, to sponsor Stop & Shop's annual turkey give-away for East Boston YMCA families, as well as families from the Social Centers and the Salesian Boys & Girls Club.

For the past several years, Eastie Y families have been the recipients of the generous holiday donation from Stop & Shop through the Massachusetts-based supermarket chain's Turkey Express program. Through the donation from Stop & Shop, the Y was able to give out

over 150 turkeys that will feed hundreds of local children and their families this Thanksgiving.

This year's event was a little different due to the COVID-19 pandemic and worked on a voucher redemption system in order to maintain proper social distancing and avoid crowds. However, the Y's parking lot on Bremen Street was still a beehive of activity Saturday with staff and volunteers bagging Thanksgiving Day meals with all the trimmings for Eastie families.

"We know the need for families is greater this year than ever," said Eastie Y Executive Director Joey

Gaeta. "We are thankful for our partners and community for making sure that we are able to get out 150 complete meals to the community. Partners like Stop & Shop and Cargo Ventures are really making an impact this holiday season."

This holiday season, Stop & Shop's Turkey Express program will deliver more than 21,000 turkeys to hunger relief organizations in Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island. This decades-old donation campaign is larger this year as a result of

See YMCA Page 6

Gloribel Rivas recognized by the Boston Foundation

By John Lynds

In its annual report, The Boston Foundation (TBF) decided to profile leaders of social justice and public service from across the city.

One of those remarkable leaders profiled was Gloribel Beatriz Rivas, who serves as a legislative aide to Rep Adrian Mada-

ro. Rivaas was born in El Salvador and grew up in Eastie after immigrating to the United States with her family at the age of five. As a child, she attended Boston Public

Schools, graduating from Boston Latin School and then University of Massachusetts Boston.

While in high school she got her first taste of activism after attending a workshop that Lily Huang, Executive Director of Jobs With Justice facilitated on social justice.

"I saw Lily's session online and I was beginning to get more interested in social justice," Rivas told TBF. "I had always been curious about the way that economic injustice impacts us. My par-

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Legislative Aide Gloribel Beatriz Rivas was featured in The Boston Foundation's annual report celebrating those working for social justice.

Emergency ZOOM

City, EBNHC, BPHC hold 'all hands on deck' meeting to discuss COVID in Eastie

By John Lynds

Based on the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in East Boston and across the city, state and nation, the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center (EBNHC) once again convened community leaders, elected officials and key stakeholders last Thursday during an emergency ZOOM meeting to discuss the neighborhood's rising cases.

"We are at a critical juncture in the pandemic

and need all hands on deck to stop the spread in East Boston while ensuring the medical and non-medical needs of our residents can be met," said EBNHC President and CEO Manny Lopes.

The meeting included Lopes, Mayor Martin Walsh, Rep. Adrian Mada-

ro and the BPHC's Rita Nieves and Dan Dooley. "I am so grateful to be part of this group," said Lopes at the meeting.

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EBNHC President and CEO Manny Lopes.

The Boston Globe names EBNHC a top place to work

Staff Report

East Boston Neighborhood Health Center has been named one of the Top Places to Work in Massachusetts in the 13th annual employee-based survey project from The Boston Globe. The Top Places to Work 2020 issue published online at [Globe.com/TopPlaces](https://www.boston.com/topplaces) on the night of November 19 and will publish in Globe Magazine on November 22.

Top Places to Work recognizes the most admired workplaces in the state voted on by the people who know them best—their employees. The survey measures employee opinions about their company's direction, ex-

ecution, connection, management, work, pay and benefits, and engagement. The employers are placed into one of four groups: small, with 50 to 99 employees; medium, with 100 to 249 workers; large, with 250 to 999; and largest, with 1,000 or more.

East Boston Neighborhood Health Center was ranked 22 in the largest category, with 1,300 staff members.

Founded during the Civil Rights Movement, EBNHC provides high-quality care to all without regard to age, race/ethnicity, insurance status or ability to pay. EBNHC is the largest community health center in Massachusetts and one

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eastietimes.com

Judge upholds conviction of MS-13 member for the murder of two teens in Eastie

By John Lynds

Labor Day weekend in 2015 marked the end of the summer, and teens all over East Boston spent their last days of freedom hanging out with friends before school started that Tuesday.

Tragically, 15-year-old Wilson Martinez would never make it to school to start his sophomore year at East Boston High School.

The morning before school was to start Martinez’s body was found by a dog walker along the shoreline near the skating rink. He had been beaten and stabbed numerous times.

However, Martinez’s murder that year was only the tip of the iceberg, and the beginning of a string of murders of teens in the neighborhood that spanned over a year and shook the neighborhood to its core.

Two weeks after Martinez was killed, Irvin Depazm, 15, was fatally stabbed on Trenton Street. Then on Jan. 10, Christopher Perez-De la Cruz became the third teenager to be murdered in Eastie after

he was shot and stabbed to death near 144 Falcon St. Then a fourth murder of an Eastie teen, Blanca Lainez in June 2016 followed, and then Luis Fernando Orellana Ruano who was stabbed to death at East Boston Stadium on Christmas Eve 2016.

In 2018 a violent MS-13 member, Edwin Gonzalez, was sentenced in federal court in Boston to life in prison for racketeering conspiracy involving the murder of Martinez and Perez-De la Cruz but his lawyers recently appealed the conviction.

However, last week a federal appeals court upheld the life-without-parole sentence imposed on Gonzalez for his role in the two murders.

In a 30-page decision last Tuesday, Circuit Judge Bruce Selya for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First District in Boston rejected Gonzalez’s appeal of his life sentence. Gonzalez’s lawyers tried to argue that more leniency should be applied to the sentence because Gonzalez was only 20 at the time of the murders.

However, in his ruling

Selya wrote, “The district court concluded that the grisly nature of the facts in this case warranted a life-without-parole sentence. Seen in the lurid light of the totality of the circumstances, we conclude that the district court acted within the ambit of its discretion by imposing a life-without-parole sentence.”

Gonzalez, a Salvadoran national, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge F. Dennis Saylor IV in 2018 after a multi-week trial. Gonzalez was convicted by a federal jury of conspiracy to conduct enterprise affairs through a pattern of racketeering activity, more commonly referred to as RICO or racketeering conspiracy. In addition, the jury found that Gonzalez’s racketeering activity on behalf of MS-13 included his participation in the Sept. 7, 2015 murder of Martinez and the Jan. 10, 2016 murder of Perez-De la Cruz.

According to prosecutors, Gonzalez and three others lured Martinez in a “catfishing” scheme and then brutally killed him at the beach.

Gonzalez and other defendants targeted the victim in the catfishing scheme by using a fake Facebook account to trick the victim into thinking he was talking to a girl. In reality, the Facebook account was being controlled by Gonzalez and other MS-13 members to lure suspected rivals so that the gang could murder them.

On the day of the murder, one of the other MS-13 members picked up Martinez on a scooter pretending to be a friend of the girl that Martinez was planning to meet for a date. Martinez was driven to Constitution Beach where Gonzalez and the other MS-13 members were waiting to kill him.

Gonzalez and the three other MS-13 members took turns attacking and stabbing the victim. Gonzalez and the others left the victim bleeding to death with approximately 33 sharp force injuries and numerous blunt force injuries where the assailants had punched, kicked, and struck the victim with rocks.

Following the murder

Gonzalez and two others were promoted to “home-boy,” or full members of MS-13, as a reward for their participation in the murder.

Then on Jan. 10, 2016 Gonzalez and three other MS-13 members lured Perez-De la Cruz using the same ruse that was used on Martinez. Gonzalez and the others contacted the victim through social media and asked to meet on Falcon Street. Again, convinced that the victim was a gang rival, Gonzalez and others targeted him by pretending to be a girl on Facebook. Gonzalez then went to pick up the victim, pretending to be a relative of the girl that the victim was supposed to meet for a date. When Gonzalez arrived with the victim in Eastie, the MS-13 members attacked the victim. Three of the MS-13 members, including Gonzalez, were armed with large knives and stabbed the victim repeatedly, while the fourth MS-13 member fired multiple gunshots into the victim. Gonzalez and the other MS-13 members then ran away, leaving the

teenager bleeding to death on a public street. The victim had approximately 48 sharp force injuries, multiple gunshot wounds, and multiple blunt force injuries.

One of the murderers was captured on tape stating that the “the dude [victim] was left completely destroyed” and “Sangriento [Gonzalez] whacked the guy’s hands with a machete.” The day after the murder, Gonzalez himself was captured on tape admitting to the murder and discussing further violence against potential rivals, stating, “we’re going to leave all of them chopped in pieces.”

The other three MS-13 members who committed the January 2016 murder with Gonzalez—Edwin Diaz, Jairo Perez, and Rigoberto Mejia were also charged in connection with this investigation and pleaded guilty before trial. Diaz and Perez were each sentenced to 35 years in prison, while Mejia received 27.5 years in prison

HVNA votes on three projects at November meeting

By John Lynds

At its monthly meeting earlier this month the Harbor View Neighborhood Association (HVNA) voted on three development projects.

The first project at 85-86 Horace St, the group voted 34 to 14 in favor of owners Adam and Deana Fetherson’s plan to subdivide the existing parcel at 87 Horace into two lots

and erect a single-family house.

According to the couple’s attorney, Jeff Drago, the ground floor will have a one car garage, patio, storage and mechanicals; the 2nd floor will be a kitchen, dining room, rear deck, and half bath; and the 3rd floor will be three bedrooms and two full bathrooms.

The Fethersons plan to live in the newly constructed

home to accommodate their growing family.

The group then voted 28-20 in favor of the project at 95-97 Horace St. There, owner/developer Joseph Trichilo plans to subdivide the existing 5,000 sq. ft. parcel and build a two unit condo building with two parking spaces.

According to Trichilo’s attorney, Richard Lynds, all units will be two bedroom, two bathroom units.

Lynds said Trichilo has scaled down the project from four units with six parking spaces to the two units.

Abutters at the meeting commended Trichilo and Lynds for addressing the concerns of neighbors by reducing the size and scope of the project. Lynds said the change was in response to a desire to see more green space and improve the buffering between the project and neighbors.

“We may be able to extend the green area a bit more,” said Lynds.

In the last presentation of the evening HVNA members voted -21 against the project at 95-97 Addison St.

Owners Nick Earls and Eric DiNicola proposed to demolish the existing home and build a 10 units

condo building with 10 parking spaces on a 6,000 sq. ft. lot.

Attorney for the DiNicolas, Mike Ross, said the project is within the McClellan Economic Development Area, which makes the project tricky from a zoning standpoint. Addison Street is not zoned for residential units but is for Executive Suites.

Ross said the owners started by proposing 12 units but reduced the number of units to 10.

However, HVNA members--given all the recent development on Addison Street, were not thrilled by the idea of tearing down a small residential home and building 10 units.

While Ross said his clients have over 20 letters of support from abutters within 300 feet of the project one abutter at the meeting said he was an abutter and did not support the proposal.

Parks Department announces East Boston virtual tree removal hearing

In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 87, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department will hold a virtual public hearing on Thursday, December 3, at 10 a.m. on a request to remove two public shade trees at 202 Maverick Street in East Boston.

The request is for the removal of one linden tree measuring 12 inches dbh (diameter at breast height) and one pear tree measuring 28 inches dbh adjacent to a construction project at 202 Maverick Street.

The hearing will be held by the City of Boston’s Tree Warden (or designee). Please note that due to the current pandemic the hearing will be a virtual meeting via ZOOM. Written comments or questions may be submitted to parks@boston.gov prior to the

hearing. The information for the ZOOM hearing is as follows:

To participate by computer: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84208871844>

To participate by phone: (301) 715-8592

Webinar ID: 842 0887 1844

Public testimony will be taken, or may be provided prior to the hearing in writing to the Tree Warden, Boston Parks and Recreation Department, 1010 Massachusetts Avenue, 3rd floor, Roxbury, MA 02118 or by emailing parks@boston.gov with “East Boston Tree Hearing” in the subject line.

A final decision regarding the request will be made within two weeks of the hearing. For further information, please contact the Tree Warden at (617) 635-7275.

Baker nominates Judge Serge Georges Jr. to SJC

Gov. Charlie Baker has nominated Associate Justice for the Boston Municipal Court, Serge Georges, to serve as an Associate Justice on the Supreme Judicial Court.

“Judge Georges has served on the Boston Municipal Court with great distinction and treats all those that come before him with dignity and respect,” said Gov. Baker. “His unique voice and real world experiences will improve the quality of discussion and debate on the Commonwealth’s highest court and I am pleased to nominate him.”

The Supreme Judicial Court is the Commonwealth’s highest appellate court, consisting of the Chief Justice and six Associate Justices. The seven Justices hear appeals on a broad range of criminal and civil cases from September through May and issue written opinions that are posted online.


Judge Serge Georges serves as an Associate Justice of the Boston Municipal Court. He had a successful and diverse career as an experienced litigator prior to his appointment to the bench in 2013 by Gov. Deval Patrick. Directly prior to his appointment,

he managed his own successful solo practice concentrating in commercial and business litigation, criminal defense, and matters involving professional licensure and liability. He represented businesses and individuals in a wide range of civil disputes including breach of contract, fiduciary duty suits, employment matters, housing litigation and personal injury cases. In private practice, he also defended criminal cases, including motor vehicle offenses and violent and drug related charges. Prior to establishing his solo practice, Georges was a partner at Barron & Stadfeld, P.C., the Managing Director for Major, Lindsey & Africa, LLC, and an associate at both Todd & Weld and Rackemann, Sawyer & Brewster. He served on multiple boards during his legal career, including the Board of Governors of the Massachusetts Academy of Trial Lawyers, and he was the President of the Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association in 2013.

In his role as Associate Justice of the Boston Municipal Court, over the last seven years, he has had jurisdiction over both criminal and civil matters, including housing matters,

mental health hearings, restraining orders and small claims and civil litigation cases. Judge Georges sits in the Dorchester Division of the Boston Municipal Court, one of the most active and busiest urban courts in the Commonwealth. From 2014 to 2018, Judge Georges presided over the Dorchester Drug Court. The Dorchester Drug Court is a multidisciplinary team working with community providers, representatives from Suffolk Lawyers for Justice and the Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office to offer treatment options to those whose addictions have led them into the criminal justice system.

Judge Georges graduated from Boston College in 1992, and from Suffolk University Law School in 1996, where he has served as an adjunct professor for the past twenty years. At Suffolk Law he teaches courses in Professional Responsibility, Evidence and Trial Advocacy. He also teaches Trial Advocacy at UMass Law School. He attended Boston College High School and currently serves as vice-chair of the Board of Trustees for BC High, and remains involved with the school.



Virtual Information Session

PLAN: East Boston

Inner Harbor Designated Port Area Information Session

Wednesday, December 2

6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/EB-DPA

Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864

Meeting ID: 161 528 2318

Event Description


Please join us for an information session about the East Boston Inner Harbor Designated Port Area (DPA). Based upon a request from the City of Boston, the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM) plans to conduct a review of properties located in the East Boston Inner Harbor DPA boundary to determine whether or not they meet the state’s requirements for inclusion in the area. This determination will shape future land use and development scenarios in the East Boston Inner Harbor waterfront. Participants will learn more about how the boundary review process will work, and how it is related to PLAN: East Boston.

The event will be hosted in both English and Spanish.

For more information about PLAN: East Boston, please visit the project website at bit.ly/PlanEastBoston

Contact:

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Boston Planning & Development Agency
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bostonplans.org |  @bostonplans

Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

Guide to buying turkey raised without overusing antibiotics

As Americans head to the grocery store to purchase their Thanksgiving turkeys, U.S. PIRG has released its first ever “Talking Turkey” guide to purchasing turkeys raised without overusing antibiotics. Turkey producers use more medically important antibiotics per pound of meat produced than any other sector of the meat industry, and studies have shown that routine use of antibiotics in meat production can lead to an increase in antibiotic-resistant “superbugs.”

“Because of the coronavirus pandemic, this holiday season might look and feel different, but one thing will remain the same -- Americans will eat turkeys for Thanksgiving,” said Sydney Riess, U.S. PIRG’s public health campaigns associate. “Consumers can drive change and protect public health by buying turkeys raised without overusing antibiotics.”

Our researchers found that it’s often difficult to

find a turkey producer’s antibiotics use information on corporate websites -- and if any information is there, it’s often ambiguous or misleading. Shoppers can use U.S. PIRG’s “Talking Turkey” guide, which is based on public information about each brand’s antibiotic use that a consumer could easily access on that brand’s website. Using that information, we split the companies into three categories:

Green category: These companies have publicly available information on their websites saying that they prohibit the use of all antibiotics or the routine use of medically important antibiotics in all of the whole turkeys that they sell. Routine use refers to antibiotic use in otherwise healthy animals to prevent disease.

Yellow category: These companies may offer lines of whole turkeys raised without

antibiotics, or without the routine use of medically important antibiot-

ics. However, check your label! That policy doesn’t necessarily apply to all whole turkeys sold by the brand, based on their websites.

Red category: These companies have no or limited information about antibiotic use in whole turkeys on their websites, and what is available suggests that they continue to use medically important antibiotics routinely to prevent disease in otherwise healthy animals.

Overusing antibiotics to produce meat is one of the foremost contributors to antibiotic resistance, a public health issue that claims the lives of at least 35,000 Americans every year. If we continue to overuse these medicines, those numbers could skyrocket. If antibiotics lose their effectiveness, we’ll turn the clock back on modern medicine, making common infections, simple surgeries and childbirth much more dangerous -- even life-threatening.

Rivas // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ents are union members; they are janitors in Boston. They work in skyscrapers in the city. I grew up poor and I knew the impact that had on me—especially at a place like Boston Latin School, where so many of my peers had parents who could enroll them in very expensive tutoring to help them with their classes... We were just high school students, but I started realizing how much is stacked up against poor kids, especially in the public school system, so I became more interested in learning about income inequality and racial justice, based on these incredible discrepancies between the resources that were available to me and the resources that were available to my peers... So, when I saw that Lily was hosting this workshop on social justice, I became really excited. It turns out that she creates a space for so many young people to be involved and she gives us all a voice. Her workshop was one of the first times that I was really moved to look at social justice issues related to my community and the communities around me. That was a transformative moment, because I began to realize how a lot of history and social power structures had sort of caused the outcomes that a lot of us experience.”

Throughout college, she was an active and dedicated volunteer at the East Boston branch of City Life/Vida Urbana, a non-profit dedicated to helping people stay in their homes in the face of eviction or foreclosure.

“At City Life, I became involved in housing justice work, and after my internship, I stayed on and I continued to volunteer throughout my time in college,” she told TBF. “City Life did a lot of work in conjunction with Jobs With Justice and so I continued to do work with JWJ. I remember during

my internship when my supervisor said that we were going to go to a protest against poor labor relations at McCormick and Schmick at Faneuil Hall.”

Rivas also worked as a volunteer on the campaign of Boston City Councilor Lydia Edwards.

After graduating from college, she worked as a paralegal at FitzGerald Law Company, an immigration, personal injury, and criminal defense firm in Boston, where she was responsible for processing immigration cases, allowing her to gain a thorough understanding of the immigration process. Rivas is also a member of the Boston SPARK Council, Mayor Martin Walsh’s millennial advisory group.

In 2018, Rivas was hired by Rep. Madaro so serve as his legislative aide

“It’s been very challenging with the pandemic,” Rivas told TBF of her recent work with Rep. Madaro. “I do a mix of things, such as constituent services, which includes helping people access unemployment benefits, for example. I serve as a liaison between the Department of Unemployment Assistance and residents and ensure things are working properly. I also work with people who need housing and people

who need assistance with issues related to the RMV. Then I also help with social media and communications, ensuring that information about our work is getting out to the community. For the first time, we’ve been able to provide information in Spanish, which I feel really good about, because more than 50 percent of East Boston’s residents are Latinx and many only speak Spanish. Then, there is budget work—trying to get things in the budget. It’s a challenging job, but it’s definitely rewarding. And I like working for Rep. Madaro who represents my home town of East Boston. I attend a lot of community meetings to ensure our office stays abreast of the community’s concerns and I also provide input on policy.”

You can read Rivas’s full interview with TBF at <https://www.tbf.org/news-and-insights/reports/2020/november/2020-annual-report/gloribel-rivas-transcript>.

Congratulations to Gloribel Beatriz Rivas, my all-star legislative aide, on this well-deserved recognition,” said Rep. Madaro. “I am fortunate to work with someone so committed to social justice and public service, and our entire community is extremely proud of you.”

EBNHC // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of the largest in the nation, now serving nearly 120,000 patients and caring for almost every child living in East Boston. The South End Community Health Center (SEHC) became a part of EBNHC on July 1, 2020, thus unifying the two health centers in providing comprehensive healthcare services including pediatrics to diverse Boston-area communities.

“East Boston Neighborhood Health Center strives to be an employer of choice and we take pride in being recognized for the sixth time by the Boston Globe,” said Manny Lopes, President and CEO of EBNHC. “We are proud to be one of the largest employers in our local community, providing a great environment for our staff to flourish in and helping drive the local

economy. We are grateful to our employees for their passion and commitment to serving our communities, especially this year.”

“This was a particularly challenging year to be a great place to work, and the companies that made our list went above and beyond to keep their employees safe, engaged, and cared for,” said Katie Johnston, the Globe’s Top Places to Work editor. “From offering help with childcare to making the workplace more equitable to holding virtual talent shows, these employers showed that the best get better in crisis.”

The rankings in Top Places to Work are based on confidential survey information collected by Energage (formerly WorkplaceDynamics), an independent company specializing in employee

engagement and retention, from more than 80,000 individuals at 285 Massachusetts organizations. The winners share a few key traits, including offering progressive benefits, giving their employees a voice, and encouraging them to have some fun while they’re at it.

Top Places to Work online extras include sortable rankings and features such as showcasing companies that are going the extra mile to make their workplaces more equitable and to help employees connect with one another, and their communities, during the pandemic. All can be found at Globe.com/TopPlaces. Readers can follow the news on Twitter at [#workboston](https://twitter.com/workboston).

For more information about EBNHC’s employment opportunities, please visit careers.ebnhc.org.

Lara // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

efits.

“I’m really deeply honored to receive this Community Champion Award from the City of Boston especially during this moment in time,” said Lara. “I want to thank the Office for Immigrant Advancement for its tireless work amplifying the voice and representation for the immigrant community, which is one of our most vulnerable communities right now. There’s been so much work to do and the MOIA has done it with steadfast commitment and deep integrity. I also want to thank the Office of Food Access in the City of Boston. They’ve done an amazing job in increasing access to food for immigrants and for other people in need. We’re struggling in ways that we have not seen before this moment

in time. We’ve put community interests over anything else and we need to continue to do that. I’m really deeply grateful to all the people who give their heart and soul to creating a more socially and economically and racially just community, especially for immigrants, they are our bedrock.”

Mayor Walsh said this year, due to the ongoing pandemic, the city and its residents have been tested in every way imaginable.

“Our immigrant friends and neighbors have played a vital role in our response to the COVID-19 crisis, here in Boston and all across the United States,” said Walsh. “But I’ve always said that a city shows its true colors during the hard times. We’ve got a long road ahead of us, we’re going to keep sup-

porting one another, and we’re going to keep fighting to protect the wellbeing, the rights, and the dignity of everyone who calls our City home.”

Before the reception MOIA hosted workshops with corporate sponsors and community partners exploring the roots of systemic racism and ways to build inclusive cultures in the workplace and everyday life.

“Our work to root out systemic racism and elevate the power and agency of residents, workers and families who have been excluded from the City’s prosperity begins with each of us,” said Chief of Equity Dr. Karilyn Crockett, the keynote speaker for the reception. “Opportunities to learn together, to strategize, organize and advocate is the bedrock of

a just democracy.”

Thirty-three corporate sponsors funded this year’s We Are Boston. Their donations totaling more than \$159,000 will go towards capacity-building for immigrant-serving nonprofits.

“Thank you to the Mayor and my colleagues at City Hall for prioritizing our immigrant communities,” said MOIA’s Director Yusufi Vali. “Thank you to our nonprofits for helping families survive this pandemic, to our sponsors and those who bought tickets for your heart and generosity, and to our immigrant residents for keeping Boston diverse and making it this wonderful City that we love.”

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www.ebnhc.org/flushot

A SHORT STORY ABOUT A MOTORCYCLE. AND A SUDDEN TURN.

When she was a young college student, Elisabeth Marra had a serious motorcycle accident that ultimately changed her life. Two years after the crash, her painful open fractures had failed to heal. Then she heard about a new and complex surgery pioneered by a surgeon who used a patient’s own stem cells to concentrate the healing process. This time, her surgery and subsequent therapy were successful.

Elisabeth’s experience caused her to re-direct her own career aspirations. Inspired by the medical professionals who helped her reclaim her active lifestyle, she changed her major to study physical therapy—a profession where her own experience could help other patients prevail through difficult recoveries.

We tell Elisabeth Marra’s story here to illustrate two of the most profound messages we know. Don’t give up, and remember to give back. If reading it inspires just one more person to achieve something special, then its telling here has been well worth while.

Mammograms Save Lives.

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

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East Boston

Times-Free Press

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is a uniquely American holiday, tracing its roots back almost 400 years to the Pilgrims, long before there was even a thought of a United States of America.

Thanksgiving is the ultimate family-centered holiday. It has no religious meaning, no national-celebration connotations, and no required gift-giving. It lacks the commercialism, religiosity, solemnity, and political overtones of all of our other national observances.

It is the only day on the calendar when we have no obligation other than to spend the day with those who mean the most to us. It asks nothing more from each of us (other than for the person who is doing all the cooking!) beyond just showing up and enjoying the company of our family and friends and then having a great meal.

Even amidst this time of a raging pandemic in our country, we all can agree that Thanksgiving makes us aware of what we have to be thankful for. Despite our present trials and tribulations, Americans are remarkably fortunate to be where we are. Thanksgiving is a national celebration that serves to remind us how blessed we are at a time when circumstances are so cruel for so many others in a world in which there are more refugees than at any time since the end of World War II.

Thanksgiving serves as a rare day for relaxation, reflection, and inevitably -- at least for some of us -- a post-dinner nap or early night of sleep. In a time when so many of us are connected 24/7 to some instrument of communication, it truly is a relief to have a day when we can just shut it all off.

We wish all of our readers a happy -- and restful -- Thanksgiving.

ENJOY THE HOLIDAY SAFELY

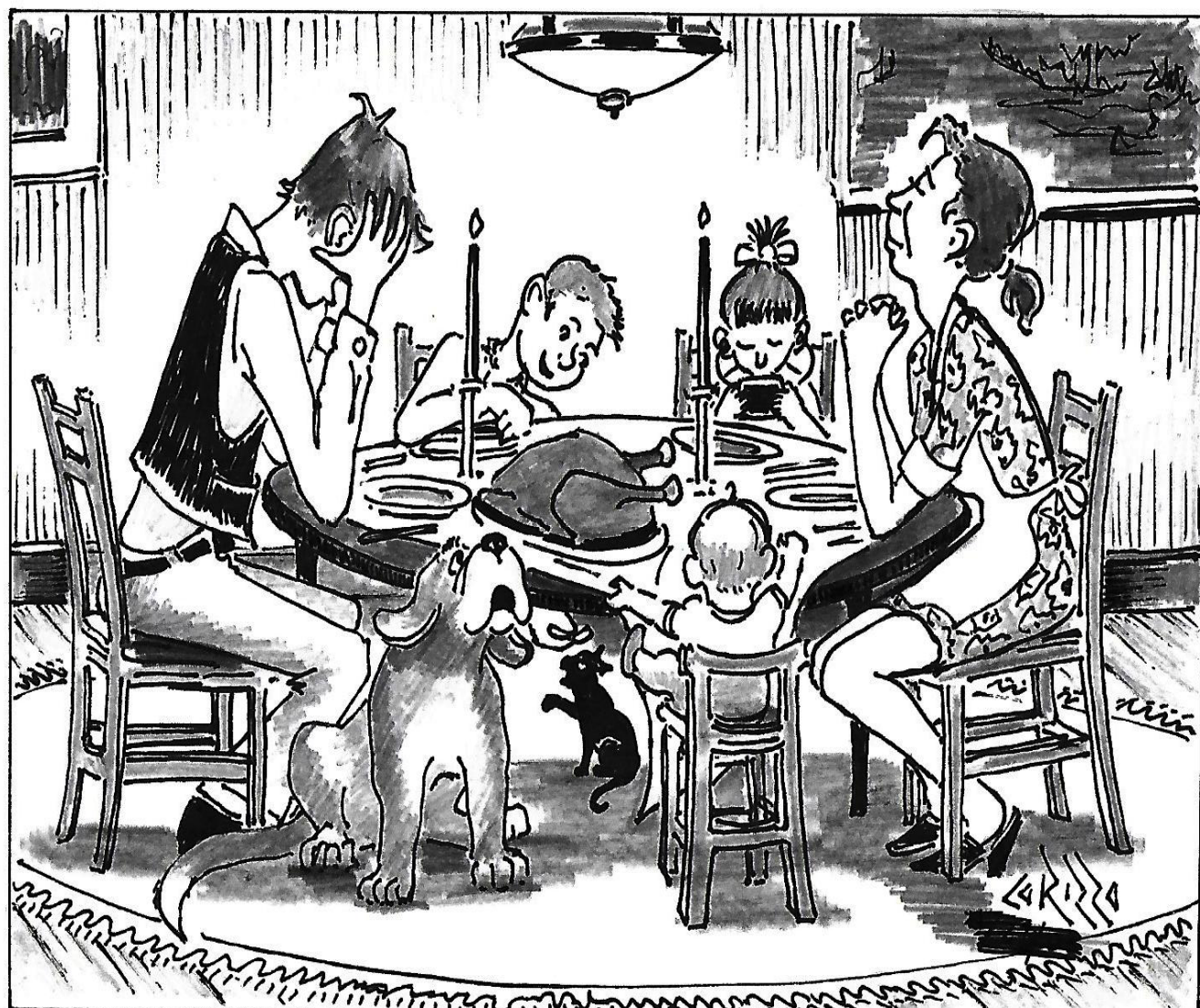
We would be remiss if we did not remind our readers to enjoy the holiday weekend, but to do so safely.

The pandemic is spreading like wildfire across our nation, shattering previous records of infection on a daily basis and requiring all of us to take every precaution to ensure that we do not spread the coronavirus among our friends and family members.

The virus does not take a holiday -- and each of us must act accordingly.



Forum



HAPPY THANKSGIVING

GUEST OP-ED

Thanksgiving 2020; home, but not alone

By Karen Lee Sobol

Has your sense of time shifted lately? Does avoiding people feel bizarre, and has Purell become your new best friend? Do you spot beauty in surprising places, and feel the rhythm of your breath inside your mask?

I've lived through this before. Then, I was solo. Now, I'm one of seven billion, living through it again, with you. Both times, with little advance notice, a deadly disease became a dire threat. Then, in 2005, I was diagnosed with a non-Hodgkin's lymphoma defined as rare and incurable. Now, in 2020, we all risk infection by COVID-19, a wildly contagious novel coronavirus with no known cure. My blood cancer was so rare it's called an orphan disease. COVID-19 is so universal it's called a pandemic.

Thinking about the Thanksgiving holiday usually energizes us. Plans often include travel, time with family and friends, and meals shared. This year, the dangers of spreading or contracting COVID-19 trigger anxiety and dread. What to do?

In 2005, I faced a similar dilemma. I was in the midst of a clinical trial with a monoclonal antibody. Because the drug had annihilated my immune system, every germ and virus, whether it came from an-

other person or naturally lived inside my body or on my skin, could pose a lethal threat. I washed and sanitized my hands obsessively and never touched my face. Social isolation was self-protection, so I left home only to go to the hospital or take solitary walks, a scarf wrapped over my nose and mouth. Holding a vision of myself as cancer-free and healthy, as though I already were, I felt that a brighter future was just a matter of time.

In a normal year, my family's Thanksgiving tradition might start by serving a mid-day meal to guests at a local shelter, then welcoming family and friends to dinner in our home. But for us 2005 was no normal year and exposing me to other people wasn't an option. Instead, we ordered in dinner for three—my husband, our teen-aged daughter, and me—and felt grateful. We connected with people by phone, and their intangible energy helped sustain my nuclear family through our crisis.

For us all, 2020 is no normal year. Together we face the potentially deadly risk of COVID-19. And we're tired of social isolation. But what opportunities we have, including the opportunity to keep ourselves, our families, and our friends, safe, and to share our resources more widely.

Remember what they

say before an airplane takes off? "If the oxygen masks drop down, put your own mask on before assisting others."

This Thanksgiving, if you're lucky enough to have a home, please stay there. Being alone doesn't have to mean being lonely. Consider safe, helpful ways to support and connect with people. Perhaps order your dinner from a local restaurant to help keep cooks and staff employed. Perhaps donate to a local food bank or shelter so those less fortunate have meals

to nourish them. Perhaps, in recognition of the historic roots of the day, contribute to an organization like the Indigenous Environmental Network which provides desperately needed food and emergency COVID-19 relief funds to Native Americans.

With challenge comes opportunity. We have the chance to stem COVID-19's spread, and we have the chance to spread compassion. Compassion nurtures healing and hope. Its intangible energy creates real results.

When the twelve weeks of my clinical trial ended, I was frail and exhausted, but signs of cancer had decreased dramatically, and five months later, the disease was gone. It took two years and four months for my immune system to rebuild and I was able to

resume normal life. With the welcome news that a vaccine will likely be available within the next few months, I feel optimistic that our collective timeline will be much shorter.

I believe in medical science and I believe in the power of holding a vision of good health. Now, as then, I think of my favorite equation ever: Hope = Belief + Expectation. I believe, and I fully expect, we can and we will stop COVID-19.

Imagine a world free of COVID-19 as if it already exists, and hold this vision with me. Imagine a world in which we care for ourselves and each other as one family.

Now expand the vision to embrace the planet. If we actively protect and preserve biodiversity—earth's wondrously varied habitats and the countless species who thrive in them—we take a giant step to keeping hundreds of thousands of viruses in the plant and animal kingdoms where they belong, and where they won't leap to us.

Now we know. Good health is global health.

Karen Lee Sobol lives in Boston MA and is Artist and Author of Twelve Weeks: An Artist's Story of Cancer, Healing, and Hope.

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deb@reverejournal.com

ZOOM // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“We’re really providing great support to East Boston, during this very difficult time. We wanted to come together again to discuss where we stand in East Boston with the rising rates of COVID-19. As we know, this community relies heavily on the leadership of the people in this ZOOM meeting. Back in August, we had success in reducing the positivity rate in East Boston. And I believe that was in part due to the efforts from this group and spreading key messages pushing residents to get tested and distributing resources. For the next few weeks and months, we need to continue our work and renew our commitment to East Boston.”

Walsh started off by thanking the city’s partners in Eastie for their continued partnership, especially in these difficult times.

“I know they’re working long hours and making personal sacrifices, and I can’t thank them enough for all of their dedicated service and what they’ve done,” said Walsh. “In Massachusetts as of yesterday Wednesday), there were 189,518 cases of COVID-19 since the beginning and 2,744 cases were recorded yesterday. That’s a pretty significant number for one day. We haven’t really seen numbers like that since back in April and May. So as you know, this is a very serious, serious virus in Boston. We’re seeing increases here in COVID and we are entering another critical point in this pandemic. We’re seeing significant and concerning increases of COVID-19. In our city, the daily cases are starting

to look like the numbers that are around the peak in April and May. Hospital admissions are not at that level, however, they’ve increased over time. And we need to stay focused on turning this trend around.”

Walsh said one strategy to combat the rising numbers in Eastie is testing.

“We’re encouraging everyone to get tested, and to make testing part of your regular routine,” he said. “Our free mobile testing sites will remain this week in East Boston at Central Square and we have 30 other testing sites across the city. We’re not maximizing our testing capacity. So we really need to make sure that we do everything we can to get people tested. We need to make sure we get an accurate number with the virus on what the tests really are in the city.”

Walsh added that both metrics the city uses to track the rate of infection in the neighborhood are troublesome.

“Both metrics are high (in Eastie), and they’re moving in the wrong direction,” said Walsh. “East Boston also has a high percentage of the Latinx community that continues to have the highest rate of any race or ethnicity in the city of Boston. So we are working on that and we’re committed to addressing the racial and ethnic inequalities that impact COVID-19. And so it’s not just about the virus, it’s also about all the other inequities that we’re dealing with. We’re doing targeted outreach in East Boston, to work on continuing to try and help stop the spread. We continue to have conversations with community organizations,

sharing information, responding to the community, we brought back mobile testing to East Boston and we’re now looking very closely at what steps we can further do to limit the transmission.”

Walsh said that if these numbers continue to go up the city will unfortunately have to pose more restriction.

“And I think that’s the last thing we want to do for our businesses and our communities,” said Walsh. “But unfortunately, if we have to, we will always put public health first in our communities, and we also understand the impacts on our business and our economy. So we need to do whatever we can to bring down the spread.”

Rep. Madaro said the rapid spike in COVID cases in Eastie has not surprised him.

“Our community is more systematically vulnerable to the spread of COVID,” said Madaro. “And I think it’s important that we acknowledge this because there are still a lot of rumors and blame going around in terms of why East Boston numbers are higher. But you know, our numbers were higher at the beginning and they continue to be elevated now, in relation to the rest of the city and the rest of the state. The reality is we are a working class community and many of our folks do not have the privilege of working from home and working remotely like many of us on this call are doing this morning. Our constituents, our neighbors are working in maintenance and service industries, construction and hospital-ity...many industries that

really never shut down and require them to continue to go to work, continue to interact with coworkers and with the public. Good evidence of that is the fact that the Blue Line saw the lowest decrease in ridership throughout the pandemic. Beyond that, we have hosting issues here in East Boston, there’s tremendous overcrowding, people share bedrooms, there’s multi-generational apartments, folks are sharing rentals with multiple roommates and that makes isolating really difficult. So if one member of a household gets COVID, the family spread is very real. It’s very difficult to socially distance and to do many of the things that we constantly preach and promote and try to educate our communities. When folks don’t have anywhere to quarantine, we know what the result is.”

In the end, Madaro said it’s going to take a community effort to try to get these numbers down. “We really need to get the information out to our neighbors,” said Madaro. “So we have to continue to push that messaging of getting tested and convey how easy it is. It’s as simple as calling the Health



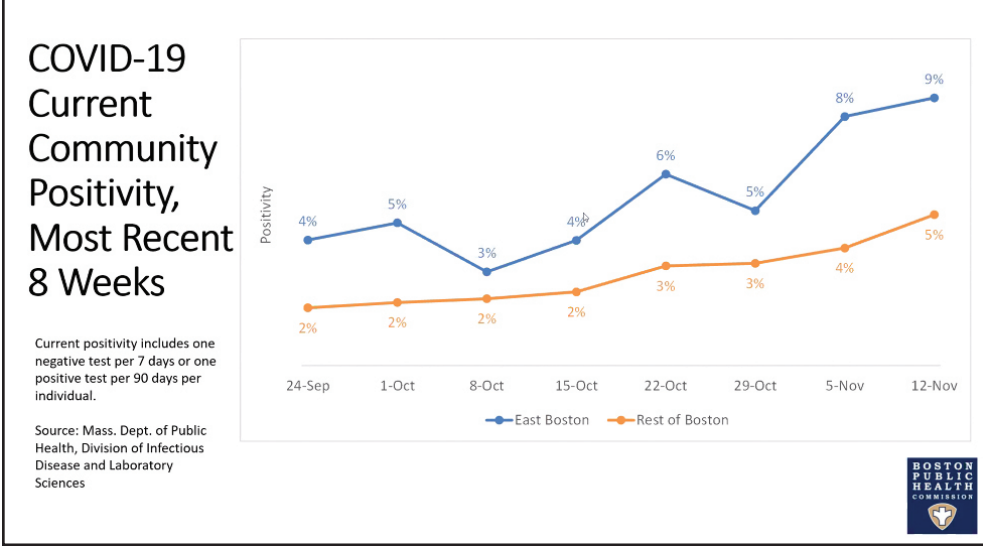
Mayor Martin Walsh.



Rep. Adrian Madaro.

Center line and making an appointment. That’s all it takes. We got to continue to push the message on wearing masks, washing hands and social distancing. It’s going to take us

all to do this. And I’m just so grateful, again, for the opportunity to bring us together to remind us that this thing is still here and it’s not going away anytime soon.”



A slide by the BPHC that shows the rate of infection in Eastie compared to the rest of Boston.

I WANT TO WISH ALL BOSTONIANS A HEALTHY AND SAFE THANKSGIVING.

While this year the holidays will look different than what we are used to and our gatherings will be smaller than usual, we are all still in this together. This has been a year that gives us a new perspective on gratitude, and I am more grateful than ever for this City's ability to come together even while keeping our distance in the battle against COVID-19. Today, let's all take time to honor the frontline workers who have fought to keep our City safe and moving forward through this pandemic. Let's show them thanks by wearing our masks, practicing social distancing, washing our hands, and getting tested. I know that if we stay vigilant this holiday season, we'll be able to fit all of our loved ones around the table at this time next year. I wish everyone a safe and healthy Thanksgiving, and I am thankful for our everyone who has kept Bostonians safe during this pandemic. Together, we will get through this stronger and more grateful than ever before.



YMCA

// CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the increased need due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to turkey donations, Stop & Shop is encouraging customers to purchase a \$10 Hunger

Box filled with trimmings for a holiday meal, such as Stop & Shop’s own brand stuffing mix, cut yams, cranberry sauce, etc. Customers can take the box

and donate it personally to their local food pantry or the store will donate it to their regional food bank. This gift will help fight hunger in the community.



Due to the pandemic the annual event worked on a voucher redemption system in order to ensure proper social distancing and avoid crowding.



The Stop & Shop truck arrives with turkeys for the company’s annual Turkey Express program.



The event helped over 150 families from the YMCA, Social Centers and Salesian Boys & Girls Club.

Eastie’s positive test rate continues to climb; neighborhood still has highest rate in the city

By John Lynds

Nearly one out of every five people tested in East Boston were found to be COVID positive according to the latest data released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC).

Last Friday the BPHC reported that of the 23,693 Eastie residents tested for COVID last week 19 percent were found to be positive for the virus, a 13 percent decrease from the 16.8 percent reported two Fridays ago. Eastie still has the highest positive test rate in Boston.

Overall since the pandemic began 14 percent of Eastie residents here have been found to be positive. The citywide positive test rate was up 29 percent and went from 7.9 percent of Boston residents testing positive for the virus to 10.2 percent last week.

At his daily press briefing last week, Mayor Martin Walsh reiterated the City’s priority in this crisis.

“To keep people safe and contain this virus, we have to follow the science and we have to follow the data,” said Walsh.

What that means, the Mayor explained, is that city public health experts collect comprehensive testing data and hospital data. They analyze it to understand how and where the virus is spreading, and the impact it is having.

“We shape our responses and our guidance based on what the data indicates,” said Walsh. “And, we share the data with the public, so you can be armed with knowledge to help keep yourself, your family, and your community safe. That’s a process of continual feedback and learning because, just as this epidemic evolves and its impact on our neigh-

borhoods evolves, our knowledge about it must evolve as well. We need to adapt and update our understanding of COVID spread in the community.”

Walsh announced that, starting this week, the City will be publishing a total of six key metrics relating to test results and hospital usage. The goal, he said, is to give residents the most current and comprehensive picture of the virus as they can.

“The more we know, and the more you know, the better informed and prepared we can all be,” he said.

Walsh emphasized that every metric right now is telling city officials that we are in the midst of a significant and concerning increase in COVID activity in the city.

“The daily case increases we are seeing are starting to look like numbers that we saw near our peak, in April and May,” said Walsh. “Hospital admissions are not at that level, but they have increased over time. We all must be focused on turning this trend around.”

Walsh said that the City is looking closely at what steps we can take to further limit the risk of transmission.

“We have taken a cautious approach throughout this pandemic, making safety our priority,” said Walsh. “We pulled back on in-person learning in the Boston Public Schools. This week we were able to bring back 150 students with the highest needs, who desperately need in-person services. The Mayor thanked the families and teachers for making that possible. We have kept our limits on gathering sizes low. Private, indoor gatherings are limited to 10 people, and private outdoor gatherings

to 25 people. For events in public spaces, the limit is 25 people indoors and 50 people outdoors. We’ve worked with the state to limit restaurant hours and retail hours, and put in place a Stay-at-home advisory for the hours between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.”

However, the Mayor cautioned, if these case numbers continue to go up, the city will have to go further but added that he is mindful of the impact that restrictions have on the local economy and small businesses.

“But we must put the health of our community first because, in the end, there is no economic recovery without public health,” he said.

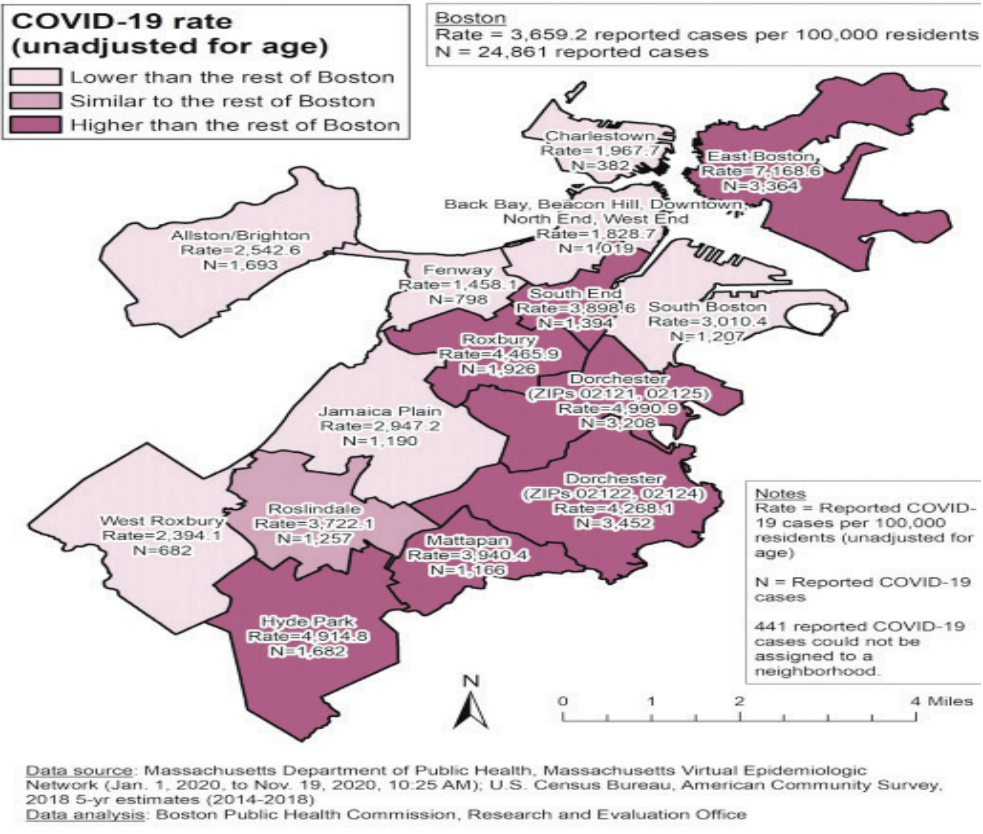
Eastie’s infection rate rose by 6.7 percent according to the data released by the BPHC last Friday. Eastie’s COVID infection rate went from 671.4 cases per 10,000 residents to 716.8 cases per 10,000 residents. The citywide average is 365.9 cases per 10,000 residents and Eastie still has one of the highest infection rates in all of Boston.

So far 3,364 Eastie residents have contracted the virus and the neighborhood accounts for 13.5 percent of all cases in Boston.

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 4 percent last week and went from 24,159 cases to 25,105 cases.

Fifteen more Boston residents died from the virus and there are now 899 total deaths in the city from COVID.



On Friday the BPHC released its weekly COVID-19 stats by neighborhood that tracks infection rates and COVID testing results in Boston neighborhoods.

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Senior housing project breaks ground

By John Lynds

The East Boston Community Development Corporation (CDC) broke ground last week on its Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) approved project to create a 42 unit residential building serving low-income seniors.

The Grace Apartments, located at 187 Sumner St. will also renovate 17 income-restricted units on the site's existing building according to Zoe Cushman of Public Relation firm Matter Now.

"Ground has officially broken on Grace Apartments," said Cushman. "The new residences will be built adjacent to the historic Woodbury Apartments, providing existing residents with the option to move into Grace Apartments upon construction completion. As part of a long-term plan, the com-

pletion of Grace Apartments will allow for future renovations to the Woodbury Building for workforce housing."

Cushman said the development answers calls from both Governor Charlie Baker and Boston Mayor Marty Walsh for improved access to affordable housing in Greater Boston and across the Commonwealth.

The project was approved at the BPDA's board meeting in January, 2019. BPDA officials said the approval of the 42 income-restricted senior units at 187 Sumner St. makes progress towards Mayor Walsh's goal of increasing affordable housing to support not only a strong middle-class, but also area seniors. Mayor Walsh has updated the City's housing targets to support the creation of new affordable housing, increase access to home-

ownership opportunities, and prevent displacement of the neighborhood's most vulnerable residents.

According to plans approved by the BPDA, the CDC project involves the construction of a new 39,067 square foot, 42-unit seven-story building and the renovation of an existing 26,800 square foot building currently on the same site in Maverick Square.

The new building will include all low-income elderly housing. The existing building, which includes 17 elderly/disabled subsidized units as well as approximately 3,000 square feet of ground floor commercial, will be converted to workforce housing units, including two affordable units.

The property consists of a 16,266-square foot parcel of land with 26,800-square foot of mixed use, residential and commercial building.

There will be no changes to the footprint of the existing building and the proposed new building will be situated behind the existing building.

The 3,798 square foot first floor will consist of a community room, kitchen, lobby, mailroom, office, and mechanical space. The lot size will accommodate five parking spaces, one of which will be handicapped accessible.

The second through seventh floors will have



Artist renderings of the Grace Apartments project. The project received BPDA approval in 2019 and broke ground last week. The project will bring 42 units of affordable senior housing to the Maverick Square area.



seven units per floor, for a total of 42 units. There will be no changes to the footprint of the existing building.

The tenants in the existing building will be given the option to move to a new unit upon completion of the first phase of the project.

The CDC has controlled the project site since the late 1970s. The property consists of an irregular

shaped 16,266 square foot parcel of land behind the existing 26,800 square foot mixed use, residential and commercial building.

The CDC sought to develop the land back in 1975 and received approvals by the then Boston Redevelopment Authority but those approvals have since expired.

The CDC held a BPDA-sponsored meeting back in September 2019 as part of the Article 80 review process and there was little to no opposition to the plans.

The CDC's Al Caldarelli argued in the project's filing that the proposed project offers the immense benefit of increas-

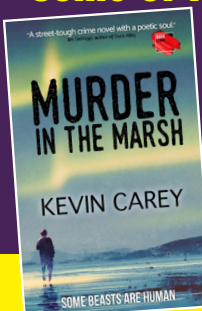
ing the number of senior affordable housing units in Maverick Square. Caldarelli added that the CDC is acutely aware of the demand for senior affordable housing in Eastie as developers and managers of several elderly affordable housing developments in the neighborhood.

"There are over one-thousand households on the CDC's waiting list for its elderly affordable housing developments," said Caldarelli. "Moreover, the proposed project will create workforce housing in the heart of Maverick Square, adding a diversity of incomes and ages to development."

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JPNA votes in favor of small project

By John Lynds

The Jeffries Point Neighborhood Association (JPNA) voted on just one small project at its November meeting earlier this month.

JPNA members voted 24 to 1 in favor of developer Claudia Sierra’s plan to extend the living space of one of the apartments into the basement and add a roof deck at 51 Jeffries Street.

“We understand that the basement was previously used as an illegal basement apartment,” said Si-

erra. “We are remodelling the 1st floor and basement to be a single unit. There will only be a bedroom/multi-function room in the basement and a bathroom. There will also be a small mechanical room in the basement.”

According to the plans filed with the JPNA and city, all utilities at the address are being replaced and Sierra is working with Eversource and National Grid to upgrade utilities. She also plans to fully sprinkle the building.

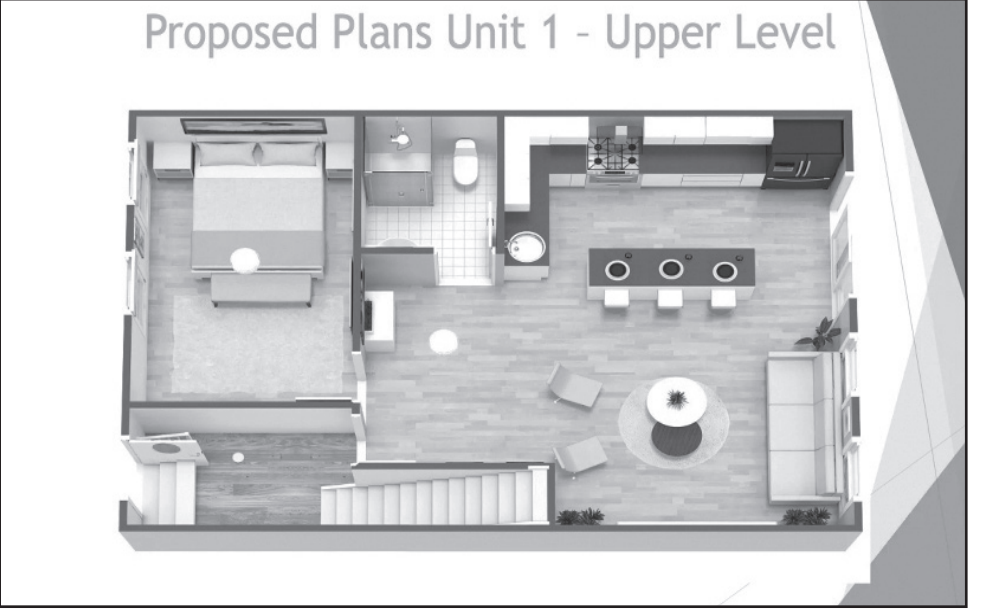
“The second and third floor units are being re-

modelled,” she said. “Each floor will be an open unit with a glass partition, configured as a nominal 1-bedroom unit.”

A new roof deck is proposed, but there will be no head-house. The roof deck will be exclusive to the 3rd floor unit and all access will be via the fire-escape stairs.

Sierra said the plan is to sell the remodeled units as condos and the building will remain a three unit building.

The only variances Sierra is seeking is for the proposed roof deck.



A drawing of the proposed expansion of the first-floor unit at 51 Jeffries Street. The project was supported by JPNA members at the group’s November meeting earlier this month.

Tawakal Halal Cafe gets a shout out in new UberEats commercial

By John Lynds

A new ad campaign by UberEats that pairs acclaimed gold medal gymnast, Simone Biles, and ‘Queer Eye’ star Jonathan Van Ness gave a plug to one of East Boston’s more celebrated restaurants.

The ad run, “Tonight, I’ll be eating”, features Biles and Van Ness discussing what food they will be getting delivered from UberEats as the celebrated gymnast tries to show Van Ness a thing or two about the sport—with usually hysterical results.

In one of the ads, Biles, hanging upside down exclaims, “Tonight, I’ll be eating the beef kabobs from Tawakal (Halal) Cafe in Jeffries Point”.

Owned by Yahya Noor, Tawakal Halal Cafe on the corner of Maverick and Jeffries Streets, has received nothing but accolades since opening.

Bon Appetit named the small cafe that serves up home cooked Somalia cuisine on the corner of Maverick and Jeffries Streets in East Boston to its annual “Hot 10” list saying Noor’s restaurant, “Should be your first stop off the plane” when coming to Boston.

Since opening Tawakal Halal Café, Noor has received much praise for his food, his community giving and his ability to breathe no life into a forgotten corner of Eastie that abuts Logan Airport.

Last year, Boston Magazine named Tawakal Halal Cafe to its annual “Best of Boston” list. In their review Boston Magazine writes, “From-scratch sambusa wrappers stuffed and fried to a hot, flaky crisp, followed by tangled piles of spaghetti sauced with a velvety stew of fragrantly spiced braised goat: Such soul-warm-



Acclaimed Olympics Gold Medal gymnast Simone Biles mentions Eastie’s Tawakal Halal Cafe in a new UberEats ad campaign.

ing Somali comfort food certainly takes the edge off these anxiety-ridden times. Bonus points for bottles of signature hot sauce available for enlivening humdrum home cooking with East African herbs.”

The cafe was also featured this month on the

Phantom Gourmet and appeared over the summer on Chronicle.

Noor said he wouldn’t have been able to make his restaurant a success if not for the support and love from the community, especially during this age of COVID.

“We’re in a time of cri-

sis where businesses are closing everyday,” said Noor. “As a small family business those businesses could have been us. We are blessed to say we are in business for another day and for us to get a call from UberEats saying they would like to feature us on their new campaign to

help out small businesses was something we had expected in a million years. Thank you to our dedicated customers for keeping us open. We never thought we would be getting such publicity, especially from a celebrity like Simone Biles.”

Courts extend start date for jury trials to Jan. 11, 2021

In response to the current situation in the Commonwealth with respect to COVID-19 and the expectation of rising infections during the holiday period, the Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) and the Trial Court announce further postponement of the resumption of jury trials. It is anticipated that Phase 1 of the plan previously approved in the SJC order of Sept. 17, and scheduled to begin the week of Nov. 30, now will commence the week of January 11, 2021.

Phase 1 calls for initially conducting a limited number of jury trials, with six-person juries, in a designated number of courthouses, and is expected to last for two months. The Trial Court will complete its preparations for Phase 1 over the coming weeks so that

the required comprehensive protocols that address the health and safety of jurors and other trial participants will be in place in all courthouses that are identified for Phase 1 jury trials. The Trial Court also is identifying and securing jury trial locations in those counties that do not have courthouses suitable for conducting jury trials during the pandemic.

Court leaders continue to seek to balance the critical right to trial by jury with health and safety concerns of trial participants. The Office of Jury Commissioner will cancel jurors summoned for dates before the new resumption date and trials currently scheduled will be rescheduled. Courts will continue to closely monitor the COVID-19 situation in the Commonwealth.

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION

FORMER MAYOR BRENNAN DIES

CHELSEA - John J. ‘Butch’ Brennan Jr., who served as the last mayor of Chelsea for two terms in 1988 to 1991 before the city went into receivership, died Monday after a lengthy illness. He was 76.

Mr. Brennan symbolized that anything is possible in the arena of politics with the right mix of hard work, integrity, honor, and a belief in oneself that can you help improve the lives of residents with your decisive actions and deeds.

Mr. Brennan was a bartender at Ryan’s Tavern on Fifth Street when he decided to enter Chelsea politics. Friends and bar patrons urged him to run for public office, convinced that the tall, personable, straight-talking common man could help Chelsea become a better city.

Voters responded in record numbers to Mr. Brennan’s candidacy. He topped the ticket twice in alderman-at-large races and then decided to run against incumbent mayor Thomas Nolan in 1987. He won that election and took office in January, 1988, for the first of his two terms in office.

Michael Patrick Brennan, son of John “Butch” Brennan and Kathleen Brennan, was seven years old when his father decided to run for mayor.

“I definitely have some memories of the mayoral campaigns,” said Michael. “His stickers had a black background and Brennan was written in Kelly green.”

Mr. Brennan ran a high-voltage, high-visibility campaign. The people responded enthusiastically to the towering, 6-foot-4-inch candidate who could relate well to the everyday plight and basic needs of Chelsea residents.

“I remember every Saturday morning holding signs across from the

Central Fire Station,” said Michael. “Every day my father would come home from work, eat dinner early and we’d go door to door, knocking on everyone’s door just so he could introduce himself and say that he’s there for the common person. He wanted to listen to what people wanted from a mayor.”

Brennan was answerable and accessible to residents who rallied around him, admiring this new type of politician who was one of them.

“My father would take me to the park to play catch and someone would drive by and get out of their car and say, ‘Mayor Brennan, I’m having a problem with this’ and the next day, my father would try and address it, whether it was calling the city workers to fix a pothole in front of someone’s house or something else. He just listened and he cared about people and that’s why he was so beloved.”

No matter was too big or too small for Mayor Brennan.

“There was one elderly woman who couldn’t get the newspaper anymore – I remember my father dropping the paper off at her house. He would go out of his way to deliver the newspaper on his way home from work,” said Michael. “That meant the world to her.”

Michael Patrick recalled that his stepbrother, Robert Small, also helped out immensely with their father’s campaigns and during his service as mayor. “He used to go with my dad down to the projects and help residents with their repairs. He’d tell Robert to bring his camera and he’d follow him, take pictures, and document everything.”

Kathleen Brennan, a strikingly elegant first lady of Chelsea, would assist in beautification projects throughout the city. “My

mother and dad would drive around town watering the plants at nights,” recalled Michael. “My mother took a lot of pride in that.”

With the city facing difficult financial times, Mayor Brennan tried to convince residents to vote in favor of an override of Proposition 2 ½.

“My father would walk around door to door with this can of coffee,” remembered Michael. “My father’s point was that the cost of the can of coffee is what you’d be paying once a month in taxes and that it would help the school system and he wouldn’t have to lay off firefighters and police officers. But Proposition 2 ½ lost big time. The residents turned it down. They didn’t want to do it. That’s when he reached out to the state to help Chelsea. My father thought that was the way to put the city he loved back on track to recovery after all those years of difficult financial circumstances. He pretty much gave away his job as mayor for the city he loved.”

Michael Patrick graduated from Saint Rose School, Malden Catholic High School, and Stonehill College. He played in the Chelsea Little League and for Jimmy Manzo’s Knickerbockers in the CYBL.

Tall (6-feet, 3 inches) like his father, Michael and his wife, Meghan, have two daughters.

“People still ask me if I’m related to Butch Brennan,” said Michael. “So many people call him a hero. It just makes me so proud. He did a lot for a lot of people. He was respected. It’s different when your son loves you, but when people that aren’t related to you care about you, it just makes you proud.”

A loving younger brother

William “Biff” Brennan

William “Biff” Bren-

nan, Chelsea High Class of 1971, was nine years the junior to his only brother, John “Butch” Brennan, Chelsea High Class of 1962. He said this past Monday was a difficult day in the Brennan house.

“I really had a bad day when Michael Patrick called me with the news,” said Biff. “But I have a lot of personal friends in life and they’ve been calling and texting me and getting me through it. I appreciate their condolences, but this is a big loss for me.”

Biff recalled that Butch was the best man at his wedding when he married Claudia Nowicki, a popular member of the Chelsea High School Class of 1976. Biff and Claudia have been married for 30 years.

Biff said his brother suffered a heart attack in September, 2019. He recovered and was doing well this summer but his condition deteriorated in the past few months.

“He was a great brother,” said Biff. “He was always there for me. I tried to be the same for him through the politics and the other things in life.”

The sons of the late John J. Brennan Sr. and Eileen (Ryan) Brennan, Biff Brennan and John J. Brennan Jr. grew up on Walnut Street across from the Williams School.

Biff Brennan took an active role in his brother’s campaigns. “I wrote some of the political advertisements,” said Biff. “My brother never lost an election. He topped the ticket in 1983 and 1985 and won for mayor in 1987 and 1989. Being mayor is a tough job. He tried to do a good job and I think he did.”

Mayor John J. “Butch” Brennan Jr. will always occupy a place of royalty and respect in the annals of Chelsea. He made a tough decision at a pivotal

LYNN ROTARY CLUB DONATES T POLICE DEPARTMENT



Lynn Rotary Club President William Reilly and Past President Stephen Upton donated to the Lynn Police Department 3,000 Nitrile Gloves and a case of Disinfectant Wipes. Rotary District 7930 and the Lynn Rotary Club provided the funds for this contribution. Products were purchased at ERC Wiping Products in Lynn. Pictured are William Reilly and Stephen Upton presented the donation to the Lynn Police Department.

point in the city’s history and the city is now better for it.

Biff Brennan said the family will hold a memorial observance for his brother in the spring of 2021.

SEEKING TO HELP HOMEOWNERS

CHELSEA - The City will use almost \$5 million in Rainy Day Funds to shore up a budget deficit, and City Manager Tom Ambrosino is still requesting the Council use another \$750,000 to help homeowners about to be hit with large property tax increases in the midst of the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis.

Ambrosino gave his annual report to the Council on the potential tax rate setting process, which also reveals the City’s standing on the tax bill and just how much residents can look forward (or maybe not so forward) to paying in the coming year. The tax rate for all properties is slated to be voted on by the Council Nov. 30.

“There is a large increase in values for two- and three-family homes,” said Ambrosino. “We will try to ameliorate it somewhat...but there will be significant tax increases on these two classes of property owners. There is a small increase for single-families and condo owners will get a decrease in tax bills. It is the two-family and three-family homeowners that will be impacted the most.”

Under the proposed rates, the average tax bill for a two-family will be \$4,629, which is an increase of \$442 over last year. Three-family homes would have an average tax bill of \$6,315, which is an increase of \$767 over last year.

Single-family homes would see an increase of \$63 over last year, with an average bill of \$2,705, while condo owners would see a reduction of \$237 from last year with an average bill of \$1,935.

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See REGION Page 11

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Region

// CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

have skyrocketed in Chelsea and the surrounding communities – with the values used reflected the 2019 calendar year when sales of homes were on fire.

The average value of a three-family home increased by 12.9 percent in the time assessed, and two-families increased by 11.2 percent. Single-families increased by 8.9 percent, and condos by 6.6 percent. Meanwhile, larger apartment buildings – which had increased in the double digits last year – were up only 4.1 percent. While such increases in values are wonderful if one is selling or borrowing money on their equity, they aren’t such good news when one is staying put and trying to pay increasing bills in a COVID-19 pandemic.

To combat those values and increases, Ambrosino suggested the Council approve the full 35 percent of the owner-occupant residential exemption that is available. Up to now, the City has been slowly increasing the percentage from 25 percent over a five-year period. It wasn’t to hit 35 percent until next year. However, Ambrosino said now is the time to unleash all available help to taxpayers.

“This year, given COVID-19, we should take the maximum exemption and that means taking the remaining 4 percent that is left and using it all this year,” he said.

Typically, tax increases have been approached with sympathy, but an understanding that taxes have been going up for a long time. However, with the economic distress put on the City by COVID-19 – from job loss to tenants not paying rent – Ambrosino said there had to be a different approach.

Ambrosino recommended the Council use more Rainy Day Funds to help all homeowners dispel the increase in taxes through the new Homeowner Stabilization Fund. He said that Fund has \$250,000 in it, but an addition of \$750,000 would put it at \$1 million and would allow a great amount of help.

Other forms of help, he said, would end up helping absentee landlords and industrial property owners, and spread thin the help for those most affected. With the Fund, they can target the help.

“The other ways are not the most effective way in my opinion to assist the two- and three-family homeowners who will suffer from these large tax

increases in COVID-19 times,” he said. “What I suggest is we add funds to the existing Homeowner Stabilization Fund.

On Tuesday, the City announced the Homeowner Stabilization Program application period had been extended to November 30.

The City’s finances which had been strong for some time, have suffered greatly under COVID-19. First, excise taxes that are mostly paid in Chelsea by Enterprise Car Rental for its airport activities has plummeted. Last year, the City collected \$12 million in excise tax, but that has been reduced to \$5.4 million as airport activity has decreased by 90 percent, Ambrosino said.

Hotel/Motel Room Taxes also decreased significantly, going from \$1.95 million to \$700,000 this year. In all, receipts across the board were down, and previously they had been growing steadily each year.

Councilor Giovanni Recupero said he felt there was a problem with valuations, and with some changes in the Assessor’s Office, he asked for a meeting to talk about the values with them.

“Apartment buildings didn’t go up substantially,” he said. “The last couple of years they didn’t increase as significantly as the two- and three-families. It doesn’t make sense. They’re the ones making all the money and they didn’t raise as significantly.”

Council President Roy Avellaneda agreed that there seemed to be some issues with the values, and he echoed that he wanted to speak with the Assessors.

“I want to echo some of the concerns that my colleague has,” he said.

“There are a number of inconsistencies in the property values I saw,” he said. “I don’t think enough work was done to update the values from a couple of years ago to now. Values in certain spots went up, but not in the larger buildings. I don’t see the larger building values going up and I think they should...The best thing we can do is make sure the values are fair to everyone and I want to say the values I saw posted weren’t fair.”

Todd Taylor asked about the Fund and how people would qualify for it, as many people with high incomes on documents have lost their jobs or significant parts of their income. He said a lot of people who have recently

been hit with economic pain might be missed with traditional documentation.

Ambrosino said for most of the COVID programs, they have allowed people to self-certify, and they have had no problems.

“Our experience is people have been honest about it,” he said.

CALMER WITH RECENT COVID SPIKE

EVERETT - Whether it’s raising kids or treating COVID, the second time is always a little bit easier, and as the so-called “second wave” begins to hit the Everett and Chelsea communities – and show up at CHA Everett Hospital – things are much more calm than in the first go-around.

“When people came in last spring, we felt frantic and brought in supplemental oxygen and begged for the oxygen levels to go up and people to be able to breath,” said Dr. Melisa Lai-Becker, chief of the Emergency Department at CHA Everett. “We didn’t know. Now we know what’s going on. We let them know we’re pretty sure they have COVID and we flip them on their belly and suddenly they’re breathing easier. We know we don’t have to pump the oxygen into them like a fire hose...Everyone is more calm about being able to talk about (treatment)...and what we’re going to be able to do. It’s so nice to have a pre-flight checklist to go over with patients now. I guess we’re just accepting how it can work without engaging in all the psychic drama that it took previously.”

That said, there are preparations underway for the increased numbers that are coming into the hospital in fits and spurts. Lai-Becker said there will be days when everyone who comes in seems to have COVID-19, and then there will be days when no one has it, followed by another day with heavy cases. It is a trend, she said, and the hospital has spent much of this month re-bolstering their protocols, hiring more staff to prepare and getting plenty of supplies in order.

“There are no major numbers or breakthroughs or setbacks,” she said. “That’s all good and no major explosions either. There is a growth of cases in the community and the positivity rates and we’re admitting more people... However, the other good thing is it’s not an exponential increase of cases

either. It’s still big numbers, but at the same time it didn’t double, so that’s good...I guess it’s also just realizing that viruses like the flu love the cold, dry air.”

The differences between the first and second waves has also been dramatic in the age range and the mystery in which how the disease has been contracted, Lai-Becker said. It is a much younger group of people, and many of them have been doing all the right things for the health protocols, but somehow got sick anyway.

“I want to confirm for people that last spring our hospital was filled with a lot of different populations and Nursing Home populations,” she said. “Now, as we look at the start of winter, it seems like we have plenty of people that are 20 or 30 years old. In the spring, it felt like the 30 or 40 year olds were in the front line essential jobs – like a grocery store cashier...This time there seems to be just enough people saying they don’t know where they got it. It is a bit of a puzzle. Many say they have been doing all the right things for the last six months...It’s not like they attended a 200-person wedding.”

Right now, the hospital is in an enviable position, as they invested in several different testing platforms and ample testing supplies. When people come into the Emergency Room, there is plenty of ability to test people for the traditional flu and COVID-19. That was a testament, she said, to the Laboratory Department at CHA which was very scrappy in securing testing equipment during the surge last spring, and then continuing with that push through the summer so that any second wave wouldn’t come without supplies – including all of the PPE that was missing in the spring at times.

Adding onto that the fact that the hospital has adopted newly-informed COVID precautions that are constantly changing with new discoveries and conditions, and Lai-Becker said the hospital is very safe and fully supplied.

“I believe we hit an inflection point in the summer and still are at that point where it’s safer in the hospital than to go grocery shopping,” she said, “just because of all the precautions everyone around you is taking at the hospital.”

That, of course, is one of the key differences between then and now. The

preparations are in place and the experience of the first time around was so valuable that health professionals still maintain a confidence even as cases do go up week after week. That brings about a contentious issue regarding another lockdown or shutdown, something Dr. Lai-Becker said probably isn’t necessary again. Instead of lockdowns, she said it should be more about adjusting to the circumstances as they come – being vigilant and going back to good habits when cases increase.

“Look at the fact that hospitals operate and grocery stores operate and they do it by wearing a mask in the hospital and they wash their hands thoroughly,” she said. “People are still functioning. We’re not shut down. In a hospital people will be able to maintain some perspective. It’s not a shutdown or a lockdown. It’s just adjusting to what precautions we’re taking. We’re going into winter now and viruses love cold, dry air. I don’t know why, but they do, and we should remember that.”

TESTING PLATFORMS INVESTMENT

One of the great items of readiness marked off on the CHA Everett checklist is the fact that the hospital and the network invested in testing and testing supplies – multiple different kinds and platforms so that a second wave wouldn’t cause the same disruption as the first wave when testing was in short supply.

The Laboratory and Pathology Departments both got on waiting lists for different analyzing systems and testing supplies in the surge, and then took advantage of that place in line when their number was called in the early summer. Then throughout the summer they continued to invest in testing kits to be ready for any second wave.

It has proven to be a good ally now that more people are arriving in the Emergency Room with COVID symptoms. They can be quickly tested with quick turnarounds – as opposed to the spring when testing had to be done off-site and often delayed due to supply issues.

“We’re very fortunate that our Lab and Pathology Department, they did not want to take any chances of running out of any one type of test,” she said. “We have several different platforms and a couple of different analyzers. That’s been a

pretty good boon for us in our supply chain...So it’s been a lot to run all these different types of tests and to have enough agents and supplies and testing kits on hand. We’re positioned well.”

To date, since March, CHA has done 81,000 tests and around 4,250 have come back positive.

COME TO THE HOSPITAL

Dr. Lai-Becker said they are also encouraging people to come to the hospital when they are experiencing non-COVID emergencies – such as chest pains or stomach pains or any other injuries.

She said there was a clear message in the spring to not come to the hospital, but that time has passed and they now want patients to come in if they feel a health issues. Ignoring the emergency visits and even check-ups and follow-up visits can complicate health problems.

She stressed that the hospital is very safe, even with the increase in cases lately.

“If you’re having chest pains, that’s a good reason to come to the hospital,” she said. “If you have belly pain, that’s a good reason to come to the hospital. We really want to encourage people to come to the hospital when they need to. It is safe.”

PIONEER CHARTER TAKES DIFFERENT APPROACH

EVERETT - One of the keys so far to a successful school year at Everett’s Pioneer Charter School has been keeping teachers in the classroom, even as students tune in remotely on computers from their homes.

Pioneer has taken a different approach than some other schools to try to give some continuity to the students working from home, and also to make teaching easier and from a familiar space. While other schools like Everett Public Schools don’t require teachers in the classroom – though some choose to do so – Chelsea Schools have required teachers to teach from the classroom two days a week. However, Pioneer has taken the approach that if the students can’t be at school, at least they can watch their teachers there.


“We thought it was a good idea with all our students being out of the building a long time and not having a school structure in place,” said School Executive Director Sanela Jonuz. “Teachers had everything they need right

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Workers and riders rally on November 19 for a safe transit system

Transit riders, workers, and community leaders came together Thursday, Nov. 19, to oppose significant service and job cuts proposed for the MBTA. The rolling demonstration through downtown Boston ended with a rally at the State Transportation Building, and emotional testimonials from speakers about the pain these cuts will inflict on families and communities throughout the state.

Communities that rely on public transit have been shaken by recent proposals from MBTA executives to enact devastating cuts to the agency, slashing commuter rail, bus, subway, and ferry service. Public Transit Public Good, a broad coalition of transit workers and riders, organized the rally in advance of an MBTA hearing that evening.

“The state has been devastated by the coronavirus pandemic. People need support, not a rollback in essential services,” said Lee Matsueda, Executive Director of Community Labor United, which convenes the Public Transit Public Good coalition. “Now more than ever, we need a safe, affordable, and accessible transit system that works for all.”

“Transit justice is social justice,” said Jim Evers, President, Boston Carmen’s Union, Local 589. “Public transit is a public good, and we’re in this

fight for the long haul.”

“There are many neighborhoods that could become inaccessible without adequate public transportation, limiting the ability of people to access critical health services,” said Susan Backstrom, Member, GreenRoots. “The MBTA and our elected officials need to consider the needs of the people in these neighborhoods before just cutting them off from the services they desperately need.”

The rally-goers urged the FMCB to rethink these deep and long-term cuts and instead seek new revenues. President-Elect Biden has pledged hundreds of millions in infrastructure investments.

Here in Massachusetts, progressive revenues could be generated by raising the corporate income tax rate and other measures. It is foolish to make drastic, long-lasting cuts when new resources could become available. Most of the proposed cuts would take place beginning in July 2021.

Riders throughout the MBTA system still take hundreds of thousands of trips a day to get to work, school, medical appointments, and other important destinations. The essential workers we rely on during the pandemic need reliable and uncrowded public transportation to get to and from work safely.

Hundreds of jobs will be lost if the MBTA’s Fiscal Management and Control Board votes to approve proposed cuts. Sweeping layoffs across the system would further destabilize Massachusetts families and communities and leave the MBTA unable to quickly restart cut services as demand for public transit rebounds.

“We’re the ones keeping this system running,” said Karen Maxwell, Assistant Secretary, Boston Carmen’s Union, Local 589. “Cuts are not acceptable.”

The pandemic-induced drop in fare revenue has exacerbated the MBTA’s chronic underfunding and our Commonwealth’s public transit system. Instead of cuts, the coalition asks the FMCB to focus instead on capturing sustainable, progressive, and equitable new revenue.”

In its effort to make transit safe for our communities, the coalition announced that it would begin a sweeping advertising campaign hitting airwaves next week. Ads will air during primetime and daytime television on top-rated television stations, including CNN, MSNBC History, and CNBC. The campaign will also be featured on digital platforms.

Baker-Polito administration announces \$10 million to community foundations for immediate COVID-19 relief

The Baker-Polito Administration announced \$10 million in immediate relief and support to individuals and households experiencing severe economic hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds, awarded to 14 organizations through the Community Foundations Grant Program for COVID-19 Relief, can be used for vital services such as food security, housing and utilities support, emergency childcare and transportation, and other unmet needs of the community.

“This pandemic has created challenges for families across Massachusetts, including food insecurity, housing instability, and a lack of childcare, and these grants build on the Commonwealth’s efforts to help residents access these essential services and items,” said Secretary of Housing and

Economic Development Mike Kennealy. “We appreciate the partnership of the Legislature in moving this funding forward, and applaud the work of so many organizations across the state helping people to access critical aid.”

“We are pleased to award these grants to regional and local organizations to help achieve goals such as keeping people in their homes, providing nourishing food, and supporting remote work and school,” said Undersecretary of Housing and Community Development Jennifer Maddox. “These additional resources complement the Eviction Diversion Initiative and other administration programs that boost the critical safety nets for our most disadvantaged and at-risk communities.”

The Community Foundation Grant awards continue the Administration’s efforts to support the individuals and families who have been hit especially hard during the pandemic, and are part of Partnerships for Recovery, the comprehensive plan to stabilize and grow the Commonwealth’s economy. These one-time grants to community organizations range from \$200,000 to nearly \$1.7 million. Each foundation will regrant program funds to local or regional community-based organizations that have the capacity to efficiently provide immediate relief and support for individuals and families.

The Community Foundations Grant Program for COVID-19 Relief was authorized under Chapter 124 of the Acts of 2020 (Supplemental Budget), to grant \$10 million in funds to eligible Community Foundations for immediate COVID-19-related needs. Applications were

evaluated based on both the Community Foundation’s history of funded activities and proposed activities to serve the intended populations, and allocations were based on a formula determined by the demographics identified in the Supplemental Budget language. The program is administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development and the Department of Housing and Community Development.

“As Massachusetts experiences a second COVID-19 surge, there are so many people suffering and in need of help,” said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland). “Our priorities in the Senate have been to provide immediate access to emergency food support, mental health support, rental and utility assistance, emergency childcare, educational support, and emergency financial support for individuals with COVID. We are fortunate to be able to work with outstanding community partners such as Foundation for MetroWest to provide these critical resources in a timely and effective manner.”

“Since the onset of the pandemic, the House has worked to provide relief to the most vulnerable among us with funding for housing, food security, unemployment benefits and economic development,” said House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo (D-Winthrop). “Our communities need support during these unprecedented times, and these investments will go into the hands of groups that directly serve those in need across the Commonwealth.”

In May 2020, the Baker-Polito Administration created a new Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program as part of a \$56 million investment to combat urgent food insecurity for some Massachusetts families and individuals as a result of COVID-19. To date, the Administration has awarded over \$17.7 million in grants through four rounds of funding, ensuring that Massachusetts’ farmers, fishermen and other local food producers are better connected to a strong, resilient food system to help mitigate future food supply and distribution disruption.

The Boston Foundation Boston, Braintree, Chelsea, Everett, Lynn, Malden, Quincy, Randolph, Revere, Weymouth Housing support, utilities, food security, technology needs for remote work, school, transportation \$1,690,681

OBITUARIES

Michael Angelo Cardinale, Jr. Master Electrician

Michael Angelo Cardinale, Jr., 74, of Hudson, formerly of East Boston, passed away Wednesday, November 18 surrounded by his family after fighting a long battle against Mesothelioma.

Michael was born in Boston, the son of the late, Michael A. and Florence (Morello) Cardinale, Sr. He graduated in 1964 from Boston Trade High School, where he studied electrical wiring. Michael became a master electrician in 1972 and founded Cardinale Electric Co. in 1973, a business he shared with his son, Michael Anthony since 2003. Michael also served as the Wiring Inspector for the Town of Hudson for over 25 years. All who knew Michael will miss him dearly.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 47 years, Donna (McDonald) Cardinale and he was the

Thomas Donovan Orient Heights Yacht Club Vice Commander

Thomas J. Donovan of Winthrop passed away on November 18.

Thomas loved dogs. He was a past member of the VFW and the Vice Commander of the Orient Heights Yacht Club. Thomas was also a veteran of the United States Navy.

He was the devoted husband of Mary P. (Cohan) Donovan, loving father of Ian Donovan, Christine Noel, Kara Kelley and Erin Kehoe; cherished grandfather of Mark, Emily, Julia, Nora, Spencer, Kylie and Dannika.

Family and friends will honor Thomas’s life by gathering at the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home, 971 Saratoga Street, Orient Heights East Boston on Friday, November 27 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a memorial service celebrating his life. All services will be held in accordance with Phase-3 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts phased reopening plan due to COVID-19. Face coverings are required to be worn and social distancing measures are encouraged. For more information, please visit www.ruggieromh.com.



John “Bubba” DiGirolamo Of East Boston


John “Bubba” A. DiGirolamo of East Boston passed away surrounded by his loving family on Tuesday, November 17 at the age of 63.

He was the loving long-time fiancé of Mary Bagarella, devoted father of Rene, Ashley and Christopher Bagarella, dear brother of Maria Day and her husband, Richard and Joseph DiGirolamo; adored grandfather of

Kailee Bright, Salvatore LaBella, Avianna Raposo and Leah Bagarella and is also survived by many loving nieces and nephews.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, all services will be held privately for the immediate family. John will be laid to rest in Woodlawn Cemetery in Everett. For more information please visit www.ruggieromh.com.

To place a memoriam in the Times Free Press, please call 781-485-0588



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MassDOT advisory for Thanksgiving holiday travel

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is reminding members of the public to plan ahead for the upcoming Thanksgiving Holiday week, utilize the appropriate technology tools to make informed decisions, and be aware there may be limited public amenities on trips due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, travelers should pack essential items including face coverings, and, if visiting specific states, travelers will be required to quarantine for 14 days upon return to Massachusetts.

“As per the CDC’s strong recommendation, we are asking people not to travel for Thanksgiving because of Covid-19,” said Highway Administrator Jonathan Gulliver, adding, “But if you must be on the roadway, you are advised to plan ahead, minimize stops, be aware of all out-of-state quarantine requirements, wear a face covering if you are traveling with someone not living in your household, and take all necessary precautions to protect yourself and your family.”

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has information about the pandemic and regulations pertaining to COVID-19, including the need to quarantine for 14 days when returning to Massachusetts after visiting specific states. Information can be found at: www.mass.gov/coronavirus.

The High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane

on I-93 between Boston and Quincy will extend its hours to be open from 2 to 8 p.m., on Tuesday, Nov. 24, and from 1 to 8 p.m., on Wednesday, Nov. 25. The HOV lane will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 26, and Friday, Nov. 27, and will resume normal operations on Monday, Nov. 30. Meanwhile, the Sumner Tunnel swing lane continues to remain suspended until further notice.

For information about MBTA schedules on Wednesday, Nov. 25, and Thursday, Nov. 26, please visit: www.mbt.com/holidays. Customers are reminded that face masks or face coverings are required while on-board MBTA vehicles and within the MBTA system. For more information and travel tips, please visit www.mbt.com/ridesafes.

The public is reminded that Thursday, Nov. 26, is a state holiday and among offices closed are those of the Registry of Motor Vehicles. Customer service centers which have been open during the pandemic will reopen by appointment only on Friday, Nov. 27.

Meanwhile, AAA members may visit any AAA location by appointment for some Registry transactions and more than 40 Registry transactions can be done online: www.mass.gov/RMV.

Massport is expecting an increase in passengers at Boston Logan International Airport around the holiday.

The Authority has taken a number of precautions at Logan International Airport in order to ensure passengers have a safe and healthy travel experience. These initiatives include:

- Enhanced cleaning efforts, focusing on high-traffic touch points throughout the terminals, walkways, baggage and garage facilities;
- Face coverings are now required for all passengers and visitors while at the airport;
- There are a number of floor markers and signage in place to remind passengers to maintain social distancing;
- Airline ticket counters and boarding areas, as well as concessions and TSA checkpoints all have touchless transactions;
- All bathrooms are now equipped with touchless soap and water dispensers, and touchless hand sanitizer stations are located throughout each terminal;
- Travelers departing from Logan should be aware of any travel restrictions at their destination;
- Travelers arriving at Logan Airport should be aware the Commonwealth is asking visitors to fill out an online travel form, to self-quarantine for 14 days or produce a negative coronavirus test. The online form and more information can be found here: www.mass.gov/forms/massachusetts-travel-form
- Coronavirus testing is now available at Logan Airport’s Terminal E Arrivals area. The testing

facility, known as XPress-Check, is offering a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or nasal swab test, a blood antibody test, and will soon offer the rapid test.

Drivers are reminded that if transporting other people who are not in the immediate family, face coverings should be worn by everyone in that vehicle. For traffic and road conditions, drivers may use the following options to make decisions:

- Download MassDOT’s GoTime mobile app and view real-time traffic conditions before setting out on the road.
- Visit www.mass511.com to view travel times, road construction, traffic alerts or crashes along a route. Incidents, road closures, lane closures, real-time live traffic cameras, and weather alerts/forecasts, can all be viewed on the interactive live Traffic Map.
- Dial 511 from a landline or cell phone to hear information on current conditions on major roadways.
- Register for a Mass511 account to create and personalize routes and alerts to be notified of events on those routes ahead of time.
- Follow MassDOT on Twitter @MassDOT to find out about impacts on traffic flow on major state highways.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation wishes all members of the public a safe and enjoyable holiday.

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Lovin’ Spoonfuls’ 10th annual ultimate tailgate party brings together over 300 attendees virtually in support of food rescue

On Wednesday, Nov. 18, the 10th annual Ultimate Tailgate Party to benefit Lovin’ Spoonfuls (sponsored by Constant Contact, Tito’s Handmade Vodka and Whole Foods Market) drew over 300 attendees to celebrate Spoonfuls’ impact over the last year and to generate ongoing support for Spoonfuls’ food rescue operations.

Lovin’ Spoonfuls rescues and delivers roughly 85,000 pounds of food to those in need each week throughout Greater Boston, MetroWest and Hampden County (Springfield). With over \$100,000 raised on Nov. 18, donations from the Virtual Tailgate along with contributions through Dec. 1 will be matched dollar for dollar, up to \$30,000, by

Tito’s Handmade Vodka and Constant Contact. For every \$1 donated, Spoonfuls is able to rescue three pounds of food, enough to feed one person for a day.

“For us, 2020 was supposed to be our 10-year anniversary and what a milestone that is. Tailgate is, and always has been, my favorite part of the year, since the beginning. And as we realized

it would have to take a different shape this year, I was pretty disappointed,” said founder and executive director Ashley Stanley during the program. “Tonight though, all I feel is gratitude because, while tonight isn’t what we envisioned, it’s exactly what it should be. It’s about something bigger. It’s about all of us. And it’s about the others.”

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of life. It turns what we have
into enough, and more. It turns
denial into acceptance, chaos
to order, confusion to clarity. It
can turn a meal into a feast, a
house into a home, a stranger
into a friend.

Gratitude makes
sense of our past,
brings peace
for today and
creates a vision
for tomorrow.

HAPPY
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