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East Boston

TIMES - FREE PRESS

Happy Holidays

Tuesday, December 22, 2020

MADARO FAMILY COMMUNITY FUND TOY DRIVE A HUGE SUCCESS



Ariel Madaro (left), Director of the Madaro Family Community Fund with her husband, Rep. Adrian Madaro (right) with Blake Shetler from the East Boston Community Soup Kitchen

Hundreds of toys collected during Rep. Adrian Madaro's Madaro Family Community Fund Eastie's Elves toy drive were organized and stored at the Logan Hyatt Hotel until they could be distributed to Eastie families and organizations. See Pages 4 and 5 for more photos.



Ariel Madaro, Director of the Madaro Family Community Fund with Milano's owner Vinny Caraglia. Milano's partnered with the community fund as a toy drop location.

Serious concerns

Energy Facilities Siting Board hears testimony on Eastie substation

By John Lynds

Despite more than a dozen city, state and federal elected officials urging Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides to postpone last Wednesday's Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) hearing on Eversource's highly controversial plan to build a new substation in East Boston, the state went ahead with its hearing. However, the EFSB delayed Thursday's expected vote on whether or not to approve Eversource's substation due to last week's snowstorm.

Last Wednesday, the EFSB heard testimony from dozens of Eastie elected officials, residents and activists who have been fighting against placing the substation City Yards in East Eagle Square for years.

Ahead of last Wednesday's hearing and on behalf of the neighborhood 16 elected officials sent a letter to Theoharides and urged her to delay the hearing and vote.

The letter cited serious concerns about the accessibility of the hearing to

Eastie residents, to which the COVID-19 pandemic has hit especially hard. The elected officials argued that with Eastie experiencing one of the highest rates of COVID-19 infection in the state the high positivity rate has led to stark economic fallout, including unemployment, food insecurity, and homelessness and holding such an important meeting and vote is unfair—given Eastie's steadfast opposition to the proposal over the years.

However, the EFSB still went forward with the hearing but Eversource's plan was condemned by attendees like City Councilor Lydia Edwards.

"I wanted to emphasize a couple things to the board," said Edwards during her Wednesday testimony. "First, as you know from the very beginning I opposed this substation in the neighborhood for several reasons. I was at one of the first meetings that your (EFSB) board came to meet the community. And for those of your board members that were

See SUBSTATION Page 2

COVID positive test rate rises 6 percent in Eastie

By John Lynds

The post Thanksgiving COVID-19 surge across Boston has slowed a bit but Mayor Martin Walsh is urging citizens to be vigilant ahead of Christmas.

According to the latest data released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), Eastie residents testing positive for COVID last week increased another six percent and one out of every four residents are still testing positive for the virus. The neighborhood

saw a dramatic 78 percent increase in positive test results the week after the Thanksgiving holiday and Mayor Martin Walsh is urging residents to be safe ahead of Christmas.

Last Friday, 28,222 Eastie residents were tested for COVID and 26.9 percent were found to be positive for the virus, a six percent increase from the 25.4 percent reported two Fridays ago. Eastie still has the highest positive test

See BUDGET Page 3

City officially breaks ground on Eastie senior housing project

By John Lynds

Last week Mayor Martin Walsh joined virtually with the East Boston Community Development Corporation (CDC) and Affirmative Investments to officially break ground on the Eastie project that will create a 42 unit residential building serving low-income seniors.

Construction began in late October on the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) approved project. The Grace Apartments located on Sumner Street adjacent to the Maverick MBTA station will be 100 percent affordable for seniors and

builds on Walsh's commitment to creating more affordable housing for older Bostonians.

"We're excited to mark the start of construction on the Grace Apartments project, which will create new affordable housing opportunities for Boston's older adults," said Walsh. "I made a commitment in my housing plan to increase the number of housing units available to older Bostonians so that they can remain in the city that they know and love. I want to thank the East Boston CDC, their development consultant Affirmative Investments, and all those involved in mak-

ing this opportunity possible. It will make a positive difference in the lives of those who call East Boston home."

The new senior residences, located at 187 Sumner St., will be built adjacent to the historic Woodbury Apartments.

The project will also renovate 17 income-restricted units at the site's existing building. Once construction is completed current Grace Apartment residents will have the option to move into the new build-

See HOUSING Page 9

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Customer spreads Holiday Cheer with \$500 tip at Cunard Tavern

By John Lynds

With the first round of citizens being vaccinated for the COVID-19 virus this very tough year seems to be ending with a glimmer of hope.

While everyone can't wait to put this year behind us, there was a bright spot in 2020 for the staff at the Cunard Tavern in Jeffries Point.

On Saturday an anonymous customer spread a little Holiday Cheer and left a \$500 tip on a \$36.38 bill. Cunard's Executive Chef Anthony Pino posted a photo of the bill on his Instagram account with the caption, "Someone tipped the service staff \$500 on a \$36 tab. Suddenly, the end of 2020 is hell of a lot better for them. Very grateful for the generosity of a lot of the guests here over the last year."

It's been a hard year for everyone but the local restaurant industry has been hit particularly hard by the pandemic and the Cunard was no exception.

At the start of the pandemic the popular Jeffries Point destination was forced to close and reevaluate how to move forward. The restaurants reopened in the spring for take out and delivery, allowed indoor dining when it was safe to do so and opened an outdoor side-walk patio throughout the summer and fall as part of the City's Public Space program.

However, the restaurant was forced to close briefly in November out of an abundance of caution after a customer tested positive for COVID.

Since the Public Space program expired earlier this month the Cunard has

refocused on socially distanced indoor dining as well as takeout and delivery.

Chef Pino recently introduced the restaurant's first ever "Holiday Cook-At-Home" meals.

"These prepped meals complete with instructions and easy cleanup are just what your Christmas Eve/Day needs to be stress-free," said Pino.

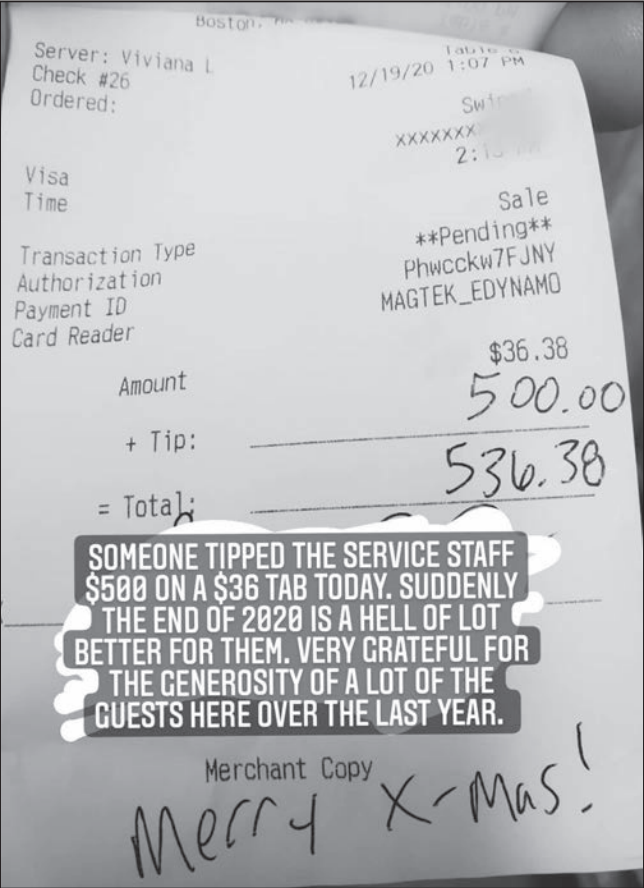
Last week, Mayor Martin Walsh addressed both public concerns about indoor dining as well as the concerns of restaurant owners that need to stay afloat.

"There are concerns about the possibility of viral transmission," said Walsh. "There are concerns about the ability of restaurants to survive closures and restrictions. I hear both of these concerns and we are responding to

both of those concerns. Our approach is to follow the Phase 2 guidance, with additional restrictions. We're restricting bar seating to special approvals, as I mentioned. And we are increasing enforcement of all the guidelines, for all licensed businesses. We will have an emergency Licensing Board meeting every Monday to address violations."

The Mayor also appealed to restaurant patrons and small business customers to be part of the solution.

"The City has heard from owners that it can be very difficult to police customers who keep their masks off or ignore distancing guidelines," said Walsh who asked everyone who dines in a restaurant or visits a store to do their part and follow the guidelines, and whenever



possible, use take-out and delivery services.

The Mayor also issued a reminder that The Re-

open Boston Fund is still accepting applications to help small businesses with debt-free grant support.

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MADARO FAMILY COMMUNITY FUND TOY DRIVE A HUGE SUCCESS

At the beginning of December the Rep. Adrian Madaro’s Madaro Family Community Fund announced it had launched an Eastie’s Elves toy collection program with toy-drive drop boxes scattered throughout the neighborhood.

The decision to collect toys in lieu of the usual annual Eastie’s Elves Gala was due to the ongoing

pandemic but that did not stop the generosity of the community.

The community fund has collected hundreds of toys that have been distributed to Eastie families and organizations, as well as families and organizations in Winthrop and Revere.

“We are very grateful to the businesses, organizations, and residential com-

munities that have partnered with us as a drop-off location this year,” said Ariel Madaro, Director of the Madaro Family Community Fund and wife of Rep. Madaro. “Even during this challenging holiday season, they have offered to help us in uplifting hundreds of families within our community.”



Volunteers organize all the toys collected during the Eastie’s Elves Toy Drive inside the Logan Hyatt Hotel until they could be distributed to Eastie families and organizations.



The Madaro Family Community Fund partnered with several businesses to sponsor toy-drive drop box locations.



One such dropbox location on Eagle Hill.



Rep. Adrian Madaro (second from left) with Eastie’s Elves volunteers during the organization of toys at the Hyatt Hotel.

May the Peace & Beauty of the Season
bring comfort to each and everyone.



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Ariel Madaro, Director of the Madaro Family Community Fund, holds up a toy Grogu from the Mandalorian.

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Happy
Holidays
& Happy
New Year



A Eastie’s Elves dropbox that was set up at the Paris Street Gym.



Katy Emerick helps out after all the toys were collected from dropboxes scattered throughout the neighborhood.

Wishing all of East Boston the
Happiest of Holidays

From the staff of...



370 East Eagle Street, East Boston, MA
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Happy Holidays
EASTIE!
Well wishes for a
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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
ADRIAN MADARO

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Wishing you and your family
Happy Holidays



CARGO VENTURES

MADARO FAMILY COMMUNITY FUND TOY DRIVE A HUGE SUCCESS



Volunteers pack up toys collected that were on their way to Eastie families and organizations.



Ariel Madaro, Director of the Madaro Family Community Fund, helps organize toys.

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Rep. Adrian Madaro picks some toys to be distributed.



Below, another photo of one of the massive piles of toys collected this month for Eastie's Elves.

Malden Catholic on track for unprecedented growth in 2021

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Malden Catholic High School has successfully provided live and remote interactive curriculum taught in a Hybrid model throughout the fall and the school has hosted over 400 potential Class of 2025 families in-person for socially distanced small group presentations and tours. As a result, Malden Catholic has received an increased number of applications to date for the 2021/2022 school year and is anticipating double-digit growth in enrollment. MC is currently over 660 students and is expected to reach over 730 students in 2021.

“Malden Catholic is committed to educating the whole person and we were able to rise to the occasion during the pandemic. At MC, we have created an experience that has been as close to a traditional school year as possible,” stated Headmaster John K. Thornburg. “Throughout these challenging months, our entire community has maintained a strict Culture of Health, we successfully executed a Hybrid Model with best-in-class technology for optimal classroom instruction and provided active programming for our students over the past few months with 15 virtual clubs and events.” Thornburg added, “As a highly responsive educational institution, and we believe that our quick adaptation to exceptional live and virtual academic learning formats has sparked our admissions growth.”

“Our son is a Junior and he has had an amazing year with strong academics, and he has had no interruption in his education. He is at school two days per week in his cohort and is fully engaged. He is working even harder this year than in years before,” stated Kevin and Missy Barrett. “The school has done a fantastic job navigating COVID!”

Malden Catholic admissions applications will be accepted throughout December 2020 and Malden Catholic encourages students to apply from the surrounding communities. The list of accepted students will be announced on February 1, 2021.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

The Times encourages residents to submit engagement, wedding and birth announcements, news releases, business and education briefs, sports stories and photos for publication. Items should be forwarded to our offices at 385 Broadway, Revere, MA 02151. Items can also be faxed to 781-485-1403. We also encourage readers to e-mail news releases and photos to deb@reverejournal.com

We want to see you.... at home!

Telemedicine allows health care professionals to evaluate, diagnose, and treat patients at a distance using telecommunications technology, such as a smart phone or computer. Telemedicine allows us to continue to provide high-quality care to our patients during the COVID-19 pandemic while minimizing exposures.

Telemedicine appointments are being scheduled in Pediatrics, Adult Medicine, Family Medicine, Women's Health (OB/GYN), Behavioral Health, Neighborhood PACE, and other departments. We use certified medical interpreters during telemedicine appointments for languages other than English.

Do you need to schedule a telemedicine appointment with your primary care provider? Did you miss an appointment that needs to be rescheduled? If so, call 617-569-5800 to schedule a telemedicine appointment. This is especially important if you have a chronic or a behavioral health condition. You should be treated if needed, especially during this public health crisis. We're here to keep you healthy!

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Family Pack Bone In Chicken Thighs \$0.69/lb

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East Boston

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PUBLISHER: Debra DiGregorio

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THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

The Christmas season usually is the most wonderful time of the year.

But Christmas, 2020, is anything but wonderful.

We are undergoing a degree of hardship unlike any that we have experienced in our lifetime. More Americans are dying each and every day from the coronavirus than perished in any of our wars or on 9/11. As the cumulative death toll inexorably continues to climb, the total number of Americans who will have been killed by the virus likely will exceed all of the combat deaths in all of our wars against a foreign enemy.

The death count from the pandemic only tells part of the story, however. Those who have survived a bout with the virus face an uncertain future because of the serious long-term health effects on their vital organs.

The burden that has been placed upon our doctors, nurses, and other front-line workers has been enormous and continues to grow as the virus relentlessly attacks our populace and fills our hospitals to overflowing.

In addition, the economic impact of the pandemic has been profound for the millions of Americans who have lost their jobs, their businesses, and their homes. Millions of Americans, including one in five children, do not have enough to eat. The lines of cars at food banks stretch for miles.

For our nation's young people, the virus has disrupted their lives to such an extent that economists say the effects upon their education and future job prospects will linger for years to come.

The pandemic has eviscerated the usual holiday celebrations that bring together family, friends, and colleagues, adding to the mental health and anxiety issues, especially for older Americans, that are a by-product of the constant stress in our lives.

But amidst all of the chaos and danger that society is facing, this holiday season has provided us with an opportunity to discover a new-found appreciation for the things that really matter in our lives.

With the usual holiday frenzy of parties, gift-shopping, vacations, and other self-indulgent pursuits no longer viable, we have a unique opportunity to reflect on what is really important: The health and safety of ourselves and our loved ones, as well as the urgent need to assist those who find themselves in dire straits this holiday season.

We hope that all of our readers will heed the warnings of our public health officials and that those with the means to do so will help the vast numbers of our less-fortunate fellow Americans.

If we do these things, we will come to a true understanding of what the Christmas season really is all about.

Your opinions, please

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

Our fax number is 781-485-1403.

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

We reserve the right to edit for length and content.

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Assistant Marketing Director

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Reporters, Regular Contributors

John Lynds

Seth Daniel

Copy Editing, Layout

Scott Yates

Kane DiMasso-Scott

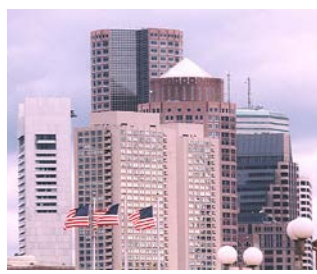
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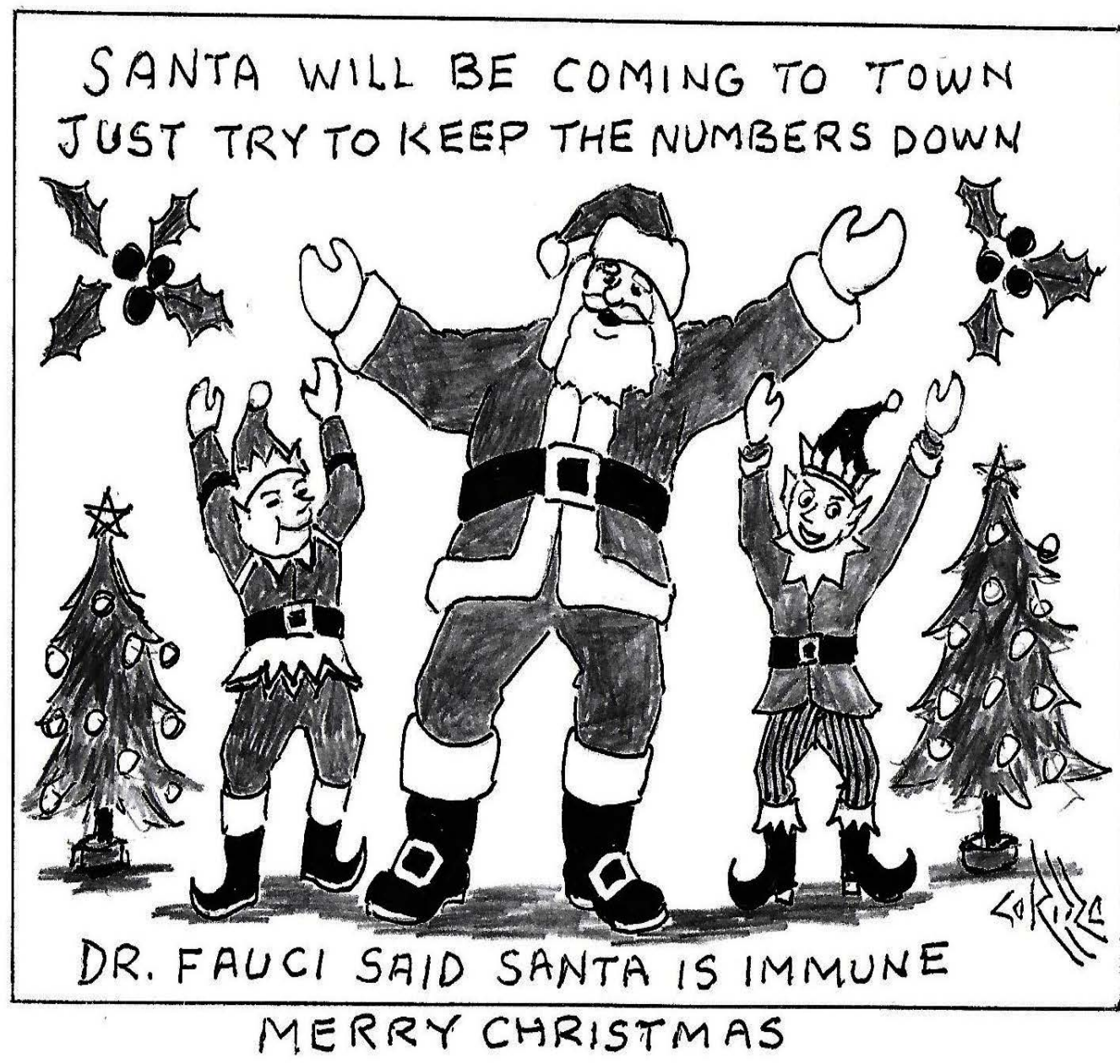
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GUEST OP-ED

Staying safe during the holiday season

By Mayor Martin J. Walsh

I want to wish everyone a very happy holiday season, and hope that the remainder of this year brings you the opportunity to reflect on this year, and take time to prioritize your health and wellness. We know that this is a very different holiday season. This is usually the time for traditions and gathering with friends and family, and many people will be hoping for some normalcy. But, as we all know, this isn't a normal year. That's why this holiday season has to look different.

We must continue to stay focused, and follow all the public health precautions, to keep our families, our communities, and ourselves safe. That means continuing to wear a mask, wash your hands on a regular basis, disinfect frequently touched surfaces, stay six feet apart from others, and avoid gatherings — especially indoor gatherings.

This vigilance is needed

now more than ever. Since Thanksgiving, we've seen significant spikes in coronavirus cases, both in Boston and across Massachusetts, on a daily basis. We are also seeing more patients admitted to our hospitals. A big source of transmission is coming from indoor, private gatherings. That is something we can all avoid, and that responsibility sits on all of our shoulders.

So, like we did before Thanksgiving, we are urging everyone to only celebrate with the people you live with. There should be no holiday parties — that means no family gatherings or assemblies of more than 10 people who aren't a part of your household. And we are strongly encouraging all Boston residents not to travel. Travel increases the chance of getting and spreading COVID-19.

I know that we are all tired of living with this virus, after nine long months of patience and sacrifices. Many of us look to the holiday season as a break

from this pandemic, but we cannot let our guard down. This may lead to some difficult conversations with our families about what to expect this year, and the stakes are too high to take chances. But just because you can't gather in person, doesn't mean you can't come together in other ways. Consider making these connections virtually. This is a time to be creative, and keep the holiday spirit alive.

When you are doing your holiday shopping, we encourage you to shop locally. Our small businesses are the backbone of our neighborhoods, and they have been struggling during this difficult time. We are encouraging people to find safe ways to support neighborhood businesses. As a reminder, we offer free, two-hour parking on Saturdays at all parking meters across the City, and this will be available until the end of the year.

I also ask everyone to think about the fami-

lies who are struggling to make ends meet. With the needs in our communities greater than ever this year, collecting toys will be a challenge for families who can't afford it. We have Toys for Tots donation boxes all across the City: at City Hall, firehouses, stand-alone BCYF centers, and City of Boston Credit Unions. If you can, please donate new, unwrapped toys to help Toys for Tots meet their goals, and help ensure every child and family can experience the joy of the holiday season.

So as you are making your holiday plans this year, I hope you will keep these points in mind. We are all in this together. Let's do our part to have a safe holiday season, so we can get back to seeing the ones we love in the new year. Thank you, and I wish you and your families a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season.

Martin J. Walsh is the Mayor of Boston.

LETTER to the Editor

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

To the Editor,
As this horrid year of 2020 mercifully concludes in a matter of days, I can only hope that 2021 will bring new hope, first with a COVID vaccine to bring the pandemic to its needed death, and second and more long-lasting that the City of Boston and its patchwork of vibrant neighborhoods survives the over development in these communities that is bringing the worst of gentrification into all of our lives.

Everywhere I look in East Boston, I see the rush to build, build and build.

Every new development comes more negative impact on poor and working people trying to stay put where they live but things keep getting more unaffordable for those least able to afford higher and higher rental costs. There's an old saying about the economy that a rising tide lifts all boats. That may work for business but not for individuals, citizens and families.

I am a good case in point. During this current year I was forced to relocate for nearly eight months after losing my long-time apartment in Eagle Hill. I never gave up, but was getting pretty frustrated and longed

to be part of East Boston again. I am now settled into my new Jeffries Point neighborhood and glad to be back home. What happened to me can't always happen for others.

Thank God, East Boston has a strong voice on the Boston City Council with Lydia Edwards. She has become a voice and vote for the working people of this neighborhood.

She seems to be striking a good balance between the wants of developers and the needs of the community's residents.

I personally believe that the 13 percent requirement for affordable units in large residential developments is too low. I also

don't believe in absolving developers from even this minimal percentage by throwing money into a fund to build affordable units elsewhere.

High end, high-rise housing is seemingly here to stay, but I believe city government needs to know when to say no too. I am not against market price housing but I think Boston should be affordable to people at all levels of the income spectrum. We don't have to wait for a vaccine to keep our neighborhoods vibrant for all. We just need the political will to do it.

Sal Giarratani
East Boston

COVID // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

rate in all of Boston.

The citywide positive test increased 17.2 percent last week and went from 17.3 percent of Boston residents testing positive for the virus to 20.3 percent.

Overall since the pandemic began 15.8 percent of Eastie residents here have been found to be positive.

At a press briefing last week the Mayor said that the number of COVID patients in Boston hospitals has continued to rise and the latest data has crossed our thresholds for concern on some metrics.

“Daily Emergency Room visits for COVID-19 have gone up for eight days in a

row,” said Walsh. “That’s a concern. The number of available adult hospital beds has gone down, and that’s a concern. Our hospitals are not in danger, at the moment, of being overwhelmed, but the trend is concerning.”

Walsh said this data confirms why Boston moved back into a temporary, modified Phase 2, Step 2 of the reopening plan, in coordination with other cities and towns. ‘

“Our focus is to keep the people of Boston safe,” he said. “That’s what every decision we make is about. We have to reduce opportunities for COVID transmission so

fewer people get sick, and so hospitals can continue to treat everyone, whether they have COVID or any other serious condition. That’s the path to a strong recovery for our city.”

The Mayor said that this is, and must be, a collective effort.

“We need everyone to be part of this. We cannot let our guards down, even a little bit,” said Walsh. “Everyone must keep wearing masks, handwashing, and avoiding crowds. When you go out, only go out for essential needs; and please follow this guidance while visiting any business.”

He also asked everyone

to make a decision to commit to safety over the holidays.

“We are living with what happened over Thanksgiving right now, and we can’t let that happen again,” said Walsh. “People should not be traveling for Christmas or hosting or attending parties of any kind. Everyone must limit gatherings to their current households.”

Walsh said the city’s roll-back to tighter restrictions is about making individual sacrifices for the greater good.

“That’s how we have to approach the holidays as well,” he said. “The holidays are a time of collec-

tive renewal during the dark winter months. That’s what we’re focused on this year, more than ever before, only in a different way.”

Eastie’s infection rate rose by 11 percent according to the data released by the BPHC last Friday. Eastie’s COVID infection rate went from 880.3 cases per 10,000 residents to 977 cases per 10,000 residents. The citywide average is 510.5 cases per 10,000 residents and Eastie still has the highest infection rates in all of Boston.

An additional 454 Eastie residents contracted the virus and there are now 4,585 confirmed cases, up

from the 4,131 reported two weeks ago.

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 5.6 percent percent last week and went from 33,323 cases to 35,201 confirmed cases in a week. Twelve more Boston residents died from the virus and there are now 965 total deaths in the city from COVID.

OBITUARIES

Michael Armata

Longtime Northeast District Manager for Adidas

Michael C. Armata, of Manhattan, formerly of East Boston, passed away suddenly on December 14 at the age of 32.

Michael was a graduate of Savio Prep Class of ‘06 and a long time Northeast District Manager for Adidas. His smile could light up a room and his laugh was contagious. He will be missed by all.

The beloved son of Michael and Andrea (Lewis) Armata of East Boston, he was the dear brother of Nicole Armata and Nick Surrette of East Boston and Matthew Armata and his fiancé, Kristine of Chelsea; cherished grandson of the late Anne and John Armata and William and Alberta Lewis; adored nephew of Joanne Sandow and the late Joan Lewis and John “Jay” Armata; devoted uncle of Chris, Cameron, Nicho-



las and Skylar and loving cousin of Jennifer and Matt Baiungo. He is also survived by many loving cousins and friends.

Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home, East Boston. Michael was laid to rest at Woodlawn Cemetery. To leave an online condolence, visit: www.ruggieromh.com.

Carmen Mario

He leaves behind many people who he loved and who will always love him

Carmen Mario, 82, of Peabody died from COVID December 14.

Carmen moved to Peabody from East Boston in 1962 with Phyllis Mario to build the successful Carmen Mario Hair Salon and Sock it To Me restaurant. Carmen (aka Mario) and his salon have been a Peabody institution for 57 years.

He was a generous donor and sponsor of many city youth and high school sports including a women’s softball league and the creator of the hockey team fashion show. Carmen retired in 2018.

Carmen was a skilled single and multi-engine pilot. His real passion was flying and teaching students out of the Beverly Airport. Due to his health, he stopped flying in 2019 but diligently continued his certifications in hopes that he could fly again.

Carmen was a strong believer in education and loved to learn. He was a self-taught flutist and had an immense appreciation for the arts, Italian culture and world history. Born into an Italian immigrant family, he worked hard at his trade, enjoyed cooking and loved a good wine.

Happiness for Mario was his family. He leaves behind many people whom he loved and will always love him, Phyllis Mario, son, Stephen Carmen



Mario, daughter Sandra Mario-Williams and her husband, Rob Williams. Clayton and Bretton Williams, his grandsons, were Carmen’s ultimate joy. He treasured their affection and above all else, was extremely proud of them. A love for golden retrievers melted his heart; Brody the family dog will miss him, too.

Also surviving is Carmen’s brother, Anthony Mario and Josie, his wife; their children: Carmen, Michelle, Christine, Al and the late Toni of Lynn; nieces and nephews of his late brother, Christy Mario include Joe, Maryann, Michael, Cathy, Martin and Christy of East Boston and the late Teresa Pittella and her children, Billy and Bobby.

A Funeral Mass will be celebrated at St. Adelaides Church, 712 Lowell Street, Peabody on Monday January 4 at 10:30 a.m. to honor his memory.

Frances DeSantis

She will be truly missed by all who knew her

Frances (DePaolo) DeSantis of Revere passed away surrounded by her loving family on December 15 at the age of 89.

Frances was a graduate of Revere High School, Class of 1949 and went on to graduate from Fisher Junior College. She was a homemaker who took great pride in raising her three children and later on her grandchildren. She enjoyed bowling, loved to travel and will be truly missed by all who knew her.

Born in Chelsea on April 19, 1931 to the late Anthony and Lena (Belmonte), she was the devoted mother of Joseph DeSantis of Revere, Janice DeSantis and her longtime companion, Rob McPherson of Chelsea and James DeSantis of Revere; cherished grandmother of Joseph DeSantis Jr. and his wife, Erin, John, Jenae and Rachael DeSantis and adored great grandmother of Lola Bartlett. She is also lovingly survived by



many cousins.

Due to the current spike in COVID-19, the guidelines issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and local officials, Funeral Services will be privately held for the immediate family under the direction of Paul Buonfiglio & Sons - Bruno Funeral Home, 128 Revere Street, Revere, MA 02151. Interment in Holy Cross Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Alzheimer’s Association, 225 N. Michigan Ave., Fl. 17, Chicago, IL 60601 or at alz.org. For guestbook please visit www.buonfiglio.com.

Nancy Cassetta

Beloved wife for 40 years

Nancy (Melchionda) Cassetta of Revere passed away on December 16 at the age of 96.

Born in Revere on July 2, 1924 to the late Michael and Carmelinda (Sarneckaro), she was the beloved wife for 40 years of the late Santo, devoted mother of Diane Iovanna and Ronald of Plymouth, cherished grandmother of David Iovanna and Tara of Plymouth, Greg Iovanna and Jessica of Duxbury and Steven Iovanna and Erin of Plymouth and adored great grandmother of Emily, Francesca, Gabby, Stella, and Abby.

She will be truly missed by all who knew her.

Due to the current spike in COVID-19, the guide-



lines issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and local officials, Funeral Services will be privately held for the immediate family under the direction of Paul Buonfiglio & Sons - Bruno Funeral Home, 128 Revere Street, Revere, MA 02151. Interment Holy Cross Cemetery. For guestbook please visit www.buonfiglio.com.

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We miss you beautiful smile, voice, but most of all your love, and nurture that you showed to each and everyone of us. Since you left us,

our lives changed and we will never be the same. Today is your birthday, and we'd give anything to kiss, hug and celebrate with you. You will always be in our hearts and prayers and hope your celebrating with your loved ones in Heaven.

Ma, Happy Heavenly Birthday our Beautiful Angel

Rest Easy

We Miss and Love You Always! Your Loving Husband, Children & Grandchildren

Ruggiero Family Memorial Home distributes toys collected in of the late Peter Felt

By John Lynds

Just after Christmas last year, the man who brought smiles to thousands of faces over the years portraying Santa Clause at the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home-sponsored tree lighting in Orient Heights Square and other community events died suddenly. Peter Felt died on Jan-

uary 3, 2020 just a few weeks after playing his beloved Santa role for the last time during Eastie’s holiday season.

In honor of his memory and the fact that COVID has cancelled the annual tree lighting that Felt was a larger than life presence at year after year, the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home hosted a toy drive in Felt’s honor this month.

Last week, Joe Ruggiero III, his family and the funeral home staff distributed the toys collected to the Madaro Family Community Fund that runs Eastie’s Elves; Mayor Walsh’s Annual Toy Drive; and other larger toy drives that distribute to families in need in Eastie and beyond.



Some of the toys collected are organized inside the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home awaiting delivery.



Joe Ruggiero III during one of his many stops distributing toys his funeral home collected this month in honor of Peter Felt.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION

SEEKING MORE INFORMATION ON VACCINE

CHELSEA - City Councilor Damali Vidot said she is calling on the medical professionals in the state and in Chelsea to provide residents with more information about the coming COVID-19 vaccines, and she said as of now, she is skeptical of it even though she has an auto-immune disorder.

Vidot said she was recently asked if – as a community leader – she would advocate for residents to get the COVID vaccines.

“I said ‘no,’” she said. “I feel it would be irresponsible for me to encourage people to go get the same vaccine that I have concerns about...I do feel if the vaccine does work and it’s safe, Chelsea should be prioritized, but at the same time right now we need to be educating people about the differences between Pfizer and Moderna and Johnson & Johnson. We need to know the data. We shouldn’t blindly go into something, and I won’t encourage that, and just have people get injected with something blindly.”

She said the fact that the Operation Warp Speed vaccine program was run by the Trump Administration brings doubts into a lot of people in the community of Chelsea, and she said having a medical professional explain what has happened would be a good way to combat that.

“In my personal experience I don’t trust the vaccine because I don’t have

the research on it,” she said. “If I read the scientific studies, I won’t understand them. I need someone from the medical field to explain this to me and to the residents. I know people are tired of being at home – I get it – but we need to be careful.”

She said one of her doubts lies in the fact that the vaccine came so quickly, and she wonders how that happened. While many vaccines and therapies take years to hit the market for public use, she said some steps must have been skipped. That process is something she said people need to know about before they get in line for the vaccine in the coming months so they can weigh the risks.

Particularly, one thing she isn’t comfortable with is many people with doubts are scared to express those feelings. She said too many feel they’ll be labelled “fringe” or “anti-vaxers.”

“If our residents are too scared to say something, then that means we’re playing politics with people’s lives,” she said. “I’m not into that...We have to be cautious. I won’t be the first in line and I’m in a vulnerable category.”

VACCINE SHOTS ADMINISTERED

CHELSEA - Boston Medical Center (BMC) received the area’s first doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID19 vaccine last week, taking it into cold storage immediately and,

on Wednesday, beginning the first rounds of vaccinations on staff members.

Mass General Brigham followed suit on Tuesday, receiving 9,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine and putting it in storage as well. On Wednesday, prioritized employees began to be vaccinated.

At Mass General, the first vaccination was given to Registered Nurse Belza Betancur, a Chelsea resident, on Wednesday morning by Ellen O’Connor.

At BMC, Registered Nurse Cheryl Tull was the first BMC employee to get the vaccine around 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 16. She is also the Associate Chief Nursing Officer at the hospital. The first five vaccinations at BMC were given to Tull, a Family medicine doctor, an Infectious Diseases doctor, a respiratory therapist, and an environmental services employee whose job it is to disinfect patient rooms.

BMC said it expects to vaccinate 1,000 employees through Saturday, and a total of 2,000 by the end of next week. In the next two months, a spokesman said they expect to vaccinate 6,000 patient-facing employees using guidance from the state.

BMC said it received 1,950 doses Monday morning and planned to equitably disperse them throughout the front-line workers at the hospital, a process that started Wednesday morning.

“Monday morning, Boston Medical Center received 1,950 doses

of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID19 vaccine,” read a statement. “Beginning Wednesday, we will begin the first wave of vaccinations to front line health care workers, a group including doctors and nurses from our ICU and Emergency Department and patient floors that treat COVID-19 patients, but just as importantly, employees from environmental and support services, and other crucial positions that work in COVID-positive patient areas.”

The doses were put into a freezer at the BMC inpatient pharmacy.

Mass General Brigham (MGH) confirmed on Tuesday it had received its first shipment of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Mass General Brigham received an initial shipment of nearly 9,000 vaccine doses to be allocated proportionally across the 12 hospitals in its system. They also began vaccinating health care workers at the hospitals on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Community Health Centers like East Boston Neighborhood Health Center has been planning for their role in receiving and vaccinating workers and the public. Community health centers are expected to play a large role in the coming weeks and months as the general population starts to qualify for the vaccine.

“We are taking important steps to prepare for the COVID-19 vaccine to ensure its equitable distribution throughout our communities,” said East Boston Neighborhood Health Center CEO and President Manny Lopes.

“We have a specific team that will manage all aspects of the vaccine, from preparing for its arrival through to administering doses to our communities. Our Massachusetts COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Agreement has been approved, so we are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it becomes available. This is an important step in ensuring the safety of our communities, especially our patients that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.”

The Chief Medical Officer for the health center, Jackie Fantes said they are awaiting direction from the state Department of Public Health. She said the health center plans to vaccinate their staff and high-risk patients first.

“The big questions about how and when we will administer the vaccine will depend greatly on the guidelines developed by our partners at the Mass Department of Public Health as well as the amount of supply,” she said. “We now serve more than 100,000 patients at our East Boston, South End, Revere and Winthrop facilities. Our priority will be to admin-

ister the vaccine first to our staff and patients at high risk of complications from COVID-19, such as the elderly and those with chronic health conditions. It is also important to us to focus on vulnerable populations like those in essential worker roles or those living in multi-generational households who cannot isolate.”

In an historic press conference on Monday, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, Dr. Moncef Slaoui and General Gustave Perna – all members of the Operation Warp Speed vaccine team – reported on the first shipments of the Pfizer vaccine.

The reported that 2.9 million doses of the vaccine had been shipped and another 2.9 million would be held back for the second booster dose that will be given to those inoculated in 21 to 28 days. The Pfizer vaccine requires an initial shot and a second booster for full immunity, they said.

Those shipments would continue through Tuesday, and Wednesday and the rest of the week likely, Perna said. He said they have used a public/private partnership with the federal government, UPS and FedEx to distribute the doses, and now are entering into a “steady drumbeat” of constant shipments as the days and weeks go on.

“The point here is the initial push that we have shows we can execute,” he said. “Now we’re starting our drumbeat of continuous shipments of vaccine.”

All vaccine shipments destinations and dosage amounts are determined by each state’s governor, they said. For Massachusetts, Gov. Charlie Baker issues an initial priority list last week that is now being followed in the first dosages. There were 636 sites across the United States identified to Operation Warp Speed, with 145 getting shipments on Monday.

There were 425 that would receive shipments on Tuesday, and 66 on Wednesday.

All expected the Moderna vaccine, also a two-shot program, to get emergency use authorization by the weekend, and that would start to be shipped out by next Monday, Dec. 21. There would be approximately 100 million doses of that vaccine available initially as there has been more time to manufacture in the run-up to authorization.

They expected to be able to vaccinate 100 million people by the end of the 1st quarter of 2021. That will be bolstered if a Johnson & Johnson vaccine – a one shot program – is approved for emergency use in late January or early February. Another vaccine by AstraZeneca is

also on the same timetable and could be in use before the end of the first quarter, Slaoui said.

Meanwhile, Azar said they are confident they will have enough vaccine for anyone that wants it and that no American would have to pay for the vaccine if they want it.

“No American faces an out of pocket expense for this vaccine,” Azar said.

The Centers for Disease Control has authorized \$140 million to pay for long-term planning for the vaccine. Meanwhile, Operation Warp Speed is paying for the vaccine cost and all of the supplies, including syringes and other materials.

EXELON DONATES COATS TO EPS

EVERETT - As part of its continued support of the Everett Public Schools, Exelon Generation has graciously donated 300 winter coats to our students through a collaboration with Operation Warm. This is the third consecutive year Exelon has made this generous gesture to provide warmth to hundreds of children. The coats will be distributed to students throughout the district, under the direction of principals and assistant principals, over the rest of the holiday season.

“We’re pleased to help Everett Public School students dress warmly for our cold New England winters,” said Archie Gleason, General Manager, Northeast Region, Exelon Generation. “On behalf of our district, my sincerest thanks to Mr. Gleason and the employees of Exelon Generation for this thoughtful and timely donation,” said Superintendent of Schools Priya Tahiliani. “These are very challenging times, and we are grateful for Exelon helping us endure them. These coats will certainly brighten the holidays for our students.”

Operation Warm is a national nonprofit that creates brand new, high-quality coats for children in need. Every child, regardless of their economic situation, deserves a brand-new coat. They partner with compassionate individuals and organizations across North America to give the gift of warmth, confidence and hope to millions of children in need. Operation Warm believes a brand-new coat is more than a coat, promoting self-esteem, school attendance and outdoor play. To learn more about Operation Warm, visit OperationWarm.org.

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Housing // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ing. As part of a long-term plan, the completion of Grace Apartments will allow for future renovations to the Woodbury Building for workforce housing.

“The need for affordable senior housing is always growing. I am proud to have supported this project and thank the administration and the East Boston CDC for helping to make it a reality,” said City Councilor Lydia Edwards. “I look forward to its completion and will continue fighting to make sure everyone has access to housing.”

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 homeownership opportunities, and prevent displacement of the neighborhood’s most vulnerable residents.

“MassHousing is excited to be part of a project that is going to create 42 brand-new apartment homes for lower-income elderly residents in the heart of East Boston,” said MassHousing Executive Director Chrystal Kornegay. “We were pleased to collaborate with the East Boston Community Development Corporation, Affirmative Investments, the City of Boston, and our state partners, to provide this new housing for Boston seniors, who will be able to live affordably in the city for many years to come.”

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 seven units per floor, for a total of 42 units.

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.

“We are very grateful to Mayor Walsh, the City of Boston, MassHousing, and our partners at the State for working with us to make this project a reality,” said President of the East Boston CDC Al Caldarelli. “We are proud to have worked creatively with DiMella Shaffer Architects and Affirmative Investments to make use of the land we already owned and turn it into 42 much needed affordable apartments for low-income seniors in our community.”

SPECIALIST NICK SHEA FROM EBHS SWIM TEAM TO THE US ARMY

Nick Shea did East Boston High School proud upon his graduation in 2017, and is currently making his country proud by serving in the US Army. Specialist Shea is serving at Fort Drum, New York in Unit A Company (2-10). He is attached to the Assault Helicopter Battalion with the 10th Mountain Division. Before being sent to Fort Drum Nick served in Korea and fought in Afghanistan under Operation Freedom’s Sentinel. Nick was a great student athlete at East Boston HS and was a Conference All Star swimmer and still holds a record in the 200 Medley Relay.



COMPLIMENTARY HOLIDAY MEAL



In an effort to show support and gratitude to first responders, Loretta’s Last Call on Lansdowne Street provided complimentary holiday meals to the members of the Boston Police and EMS Union, the BPPA, yesterday. The boxed meal was subsidized by Jägermeister and the meal was delivered to the BPPA Headquarters in Dorchester. nFeeding the First Responders: Loretta’s Last Call Brings Holiday Cheer to Boston Police Patrolmen Association with Meal Delivery. Pictured L to R) BPPA (Boston Police Patrolmen Association) President Larry Calderone, Jägermeister Representative Madeline Conover and Loretta’s Last Call General Manager, Myles Kopka.

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