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Wednesday, March 3, 2021



East Boston resident and World War II veteran Louis Ricci, age 97, received his second COVID-19 vaccine with the help of the U.S. Military at the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center (EBNHC).

97-year-old East Boston World War II veteran receives vaccine

By John Lynds

Last week, 97-year-old East Boston resident and World War II veteran Lou- is Ricci received his second COVID-19 vaccine with the help of the U.S. Military at the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center (EBNHC).

Mr. Ricci was welcomed into the Health Center by members of the Massachusetts National Guard and was like a celebrity.

“They were all so excited to see him because he’s a U.S. Navy veteran of World War II,” said Mr. Ricci’s daughter Christine McNamee.

As part of the Commonwealth’s COVID-19 Vaccination Plan, the Massachusetts National Guard has begun providing support of vaccination initiatives.

Last week ten medically qualified Guard members began partnering with the EBNHC to administer

vaccines in East Boston. Their assistance at EBNHC is expected to continue for at least three weeks to support four vaccination sites throughout EBNHC’s service area including East Boston, Chelsea, Revere and the South End. The mission is federally funded.

The Guard will continue to make qualified personnel available to the Executive Office of Health and Human Services for deployment to facilities

requesting assistance.

The National Guard has personnel with a range of applicable expertise within its ranks, including physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, emergency medical technicians, and medics. These individuals have already administered the vaccine to 1,000 eligible Massachusetts soldiers and airmen, and now shift their focus to assisting in clinical settings for eligible members of the public.

City not fooling around with restaurant owners that ignore capacity restrictions

By John Lynds

Earlier this month when Mayor Martin Walsh said the City is taking swift action when establishments do not meet safety protocols he wasn’t kidding.

Since restaurants were able to reopen with capacity restrictions during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the Boston Licensing Board has instituted a weekly standing emergency hearing on Mondays to address any violations. Those hearings have resulted in immediate closures, when necessary.

Last week the Licensing Board issued a one-day suspension to La Hacienda Restaurant on Meridian Street for exceeding 40 percent of the restaurant’s normal seating capacity.

La Hancienda’s suspension was served on Monday of this week just as

the city announced it was lifting seating capacity at area restaurants.

Throughout the winter the Inspectional Services Department worked with Boston Police, Boston Fire, the Licensing Board, and Boston Public Health Commission on enforcement. They had been in constant contact with business owners to make sure they understood the regulations.

However, some, like La Hacienda and several other Boston restaurants were unfortunately found to be in violation and issued suspensions by the Licensing Board last week.

On Monday, Walsh announced that the Governor announced that the State is moving forward in reopening.

“Starting today with Phase 3, Step 2; and starting on March 22 with

Phase 4, Step 1,” Walsh said at a press briefing Monday. “Boston is also moving forward, but we have some important exceptions to the changes going into effect today. This is consistent with the City’s cautious approach throughout the crisis. We are moving up to 50 percent maximum capacity at many indoor businesses including gyms, museums, offices, movie theaters, hotels, and stores. We are moving forward to allow the use of fitting rooms in retail stores.”

The city is lifting the capacity limit at restaurants but requiring six feet of space between tables, six people maximum per table, and 90-minute limits on seating. This, like the seating capacity restrictions, will be strictly enforced by the city.

“We are not moving

forward with live music in restaurants until at least March 22,” said Walsh. “We are not opening indoor performance venues like concert halls and theaters until at least March 22. And we are not opening higher-contact indoor recreation like roller skating, laser tag, or trampolines until at least March 22. On those steps, as well as Phase 4, the City of Boston will move forward on March 22, if our case data and public health guidance supports it.”

The Mayor emphasized that the City of Boston is committed to economic recovery and at the same time, keeping people safe and continuing to slow the spread.

“This must be our first priority,” said Walsh. “Our economic recovery depends on our public health progress.”

Manny Lopes honored by Boston City Council

Shares honor with EBNHC employees

By John Lynds

Last week East Boston Neighborhood Health Center President and CEO Manny Lopes was recognized at the Boston City Council’s Annual Black History Month Celebration as the Council honored Black essential workers in the City of Boston for their leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic.



EBNHC President and CEO Manny Lopes was recognized at the Boston City Council’s Annual Black History Month Celebration last week.

Lopes joined the health center as an 18-year-old researcher, working with the late Dr. Jim Taylor on a blood pressure study. In the ensuing years, Lopes went on to hold positions in the Human Resource and Operations Departments. Lopes later served as the Health Center’s Vice President and Chief Information Officer, providing organizational vision and leadership with an eye for technology and collaborative innovation.

Lopes has served as CEO of EBNHC since 2012 and as its president

since 2015.

In his remarks, Lopes dedicated his award to the over 1,400 employees at EBNHC.

“This is a special group to be a part of,” said Lopes at the virtual ceremony. “This year has provided us with a healthy dose of perspective across the city. We have battled be-

See LOPES Page 2

Sen. Boncore reappointed Chair of Transportation

By John Lynds

Sen. Joseph Boncore (D-Winthrop) was recently reappointed by Senate President Karen Spilka to once again chair the Joint Committee on Transportation. Boncore, who represents East Boston, Winthrop, Revere, the North End and part of Cambridge, was first appointed chair of the committee by former Senate President Harriette Chandler in 2018 after Tom McGee left the state senate to become mayor of Lynn.



Sen. Joseph Boncore.

“I want to thank Senate President Karen Spilka for reappointing me Chair of the Transportation Committee,” said Boncore. “I look forward to continuing our work to make transportation equitable, reliable and safe.”

With a major international airport, highway, and MBTA line in his district, it made sense for Spilka to reappoint Boncore chair of Transportation.

Over the years Boncore’s work on transportation has been rooted in

a commitment to the priorities of the Commonwealth-- including his transit-heavy First Suffolk and Middlesex district, which encompasses stretches of both Interstate 90 and 93, all five MBTA subway lines, Logan Airport, South Station and

See BONCORE Page 2

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eastietimes.com

East Boston Police confiscate stolen AK-47 from Havre Street apartment

By John Lynds

Just a few weeks after confiscating five guns from five individuals, officers from Boston Police’s District A-7’s station recovered a stolen AK-47 assault rifle from an apartment on Havre Street.

The 30-year-old man from Eastie, who was not immediately identified by police, was placed in custody after responding to a call for shots fired in the area of 186 Havre St.

The incident occurred just after 6:30 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 21 when officers got a call for shots fired in the area.

When they arrived, police began canvassing the area for ballistic evidence when their attention was drawn to an individual standing on a fourth-floor balcony of the Havre Street residence.

The man began hurling snowballs at the police--missing the officers



The stolen AK-47 assault rifle that was confiscated by police last week in Eastie.

by mere inches.

The officers then made their way to the fourth floor apartment and knocked on the door. The 30-year-old male suspect that was throwing snowballs answered the door but tried to shut it on the officers when he realized it was the police.

Soon after officers made a peaceful entry into the apartment where they observed an unsecured AK-47 rifle and a 12-gauge shotgun in plain view. Officers later located a 9mm

Taurus handgun. Officers continued their investigation in the partment and determined that while the male did possess a valid firearm license, the AK-47 was not registered to him. It was later determined that the rifle had previously been reported stolen in 2016 in Holbrook.

Officers later confirmed that the suspect had discharged the handgun once without causing injury to any bystanders or damage to property. It was also confirmed that the suspect had thrown the snowballs towards the officers as they searched for shell casings.

The suspect was placed in custody and has since been arraigned in East Boston District Court on charges of Unlawful Possession of a Firearm, Discharging a Firearm within 500 feet of a Dwelling, Assault by Means and Improper Storage of a Firearm.

LOCAL STUDENTS EARN ACADEMIC HONORS

EMMANUEL COLLEGE ANNOUNCES DEAN’S LIST

In honor of their outstanding academic achievement, Emmanuel College in Boston has named more than 900 students to the Dean’s List for the Fall 2020 semester. To earn a spot on the Dean’s List, Emmanuel students must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for a 16-credit semester. Local students receiving the honor include:

Stephanie Gonzalez of East Boston
Giuliana Barletta of East Boston
Emmanuel College is a co-educational, residential institution with a 17-acre campus in the heart of Boston’s educational, scientific, cultural and medical communities. Enrolling more than 2,000 undergraduate and graduate students, the College provides boundless opportunities for students to expand their worldview through rigorous coursework, significant intern-

ship and career opportunities throughout the Boston area and beyond, collaborations with distinguished and dedicated faculty, and participation in a dynamic campus community. Emmanuel’s more than 70 programs in the sciences, liberal arts, business, nursing, and education foster spirited discourse and substantive learning experiences that honor the College’s Catholic educational mission to educate the whole person and provide an ethical and relevant 21st-century education.

Lopes // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

twoen racial inequity and COVID-19 at the Health Center. We’ve seen the devastating impact of in East Boston. As we recap where we’ve been I can’t help to think about what we’ve done. Bear with me for a moment as I brag about our staff of 1,400 employees and East Boston Neighborhood Health Center. We’ve had staff working in the hot sun and freezing rain testing thousands of residents for COVID-19. We have had staff repurposed for pediatric care and prescription delivery. We’ve turned the WIC department into one of the most active and equitable vaccine delivery sites in the city.”

Lopes continued, “They are the true heroes and this award is dedicated to them as we take this moment to recognize these accomplishments.”

Lopes cautioned there are still many challenges ahead as the pandemic continues.

“It’s clear that it will

take a major effort to end the pandemic,” said Lopes. “We can and should not get caught up in the negativity but instead get excited that we have vaccines that can help us usher in the new normal. We are set up for the first miracles in Boston and together, we have established equity as a permanent priority. So as we move forward. Let’s attack this next chapter with excitement. I look forward to working with all of you to bring health and prosperity to our communities of color. Thank you to the City Council for this recognition.”

City Councilor Lydia Edwards, who nominated Lopes for the Council recognition, congratulated him on his accomplishments fighting the pandemic in her District.

“Congratulations to my friend Manny Lopes, CEO and President of the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, for his recognition at the Boston City Council’s Annual Black

History Month Celebration this past week,” said Edwards. “We honored Black essential workers in the City of Boston and I was proud to highlight Manny’s exemplary leadership during this public health crisis. We are so grateful for Manny, the staff at EBNHC, and all essential workers for the sacrifices they’ve made to keep us healthy.”

Aside from serving as President and CEO of EBNHC, Lopes is Chair of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation as well as Chair of Boston’s Board of Health. The Board of Health is the seven-member governing body that oversees the work of the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC).

Lopes attended Lesley University School of Management and has a master’s degree in business administration from Northeastern University’s Graduate School of Business.

Boncore // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

portions of the Boston Harbor.

Since being elected Boncore has advocated for increased ferry service in the Harbor, improvements to the Sumner Tunnel toll plaza, an increase in Massport mitigation to surrounding communities, late night MBTA service as well as addressing other transportation needs and improvements in his district.

In the last legislative session Boncore led efforts to pass the transportation bond bill; a \$16.5 billion investment to modernize the Commonwealth’s transportation system. In addition to the wide variety of infrastructure projects, the bond bill addresses equity in public transit by requiring a low-income fare program,

modernizes the transportation network fee structure, and decriminalizes fare evasion on MBTA service.

Boncore emerged as a staunch opponent of the MBTA’s proposed service cuts late last year due to a decrease in ridership due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Boncore argued that those who continue to utilize public transit throughout this public health crisis are the families, individuals, and essential workers who rely on it most.

Of the proposed cuts, Boncore said, “We must treat public transportation as a public good, similar to our roads and bridges. Expecting riders to face the consequences of less frequent service, delays,

and crowding is unacceptable. Especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we must prioritize public health and safety.”

Additionally, Boncore was selected to serve as a member on the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, the Senate Committee on Ethics, and the Senate Committee on Financial Services.

“I look forward to working with Senate leadership through my additional committee assignments to ensure health and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic,” he said.

Prior to joining the Senate, Boncore was an attorney in Eastie and served as the chair of the Winthrop Housing Authority.

Real Estate Transfers

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119-121 Addison Street	Dcm Realty LLC	119 Addison St	\$2,450,000
119-121 Addison Street	DCM Realty LLC	121 Addison St	\$2,450,000
Bustillo, Abraham	Scuderi, Angelo	696 Bennington St	\$620,000
LT Holdings LLC	Brevard, Nathaniel	7 Cheever Ct #9	\$625,000
Munoz-Restrepo, Alexandra	First Chelsea LLC	281 Chelsea St #3	\$427,000
Kiley, Patrick J	Mt 243 Condor Street LLC	243 Condor St #1	\$705,000
Fisher, Bojan	Mosquera, Maria B	129 Lexington St	\$550,000
Stoyanov, Alexander D	Cheung, Wai Y	156 Porter St #150	\$500,000
Ldre Corp	Rivera, Reyna E	115 Princeton St	\$620,000
Samudio, Gerardo F	Ramnarain, Seema	113 Sumner St #42	\$365,000
Kamal, Nasim	Callejas, Jose A	444 Sumner St	\$1,180,000
Givens, Kaitlin S	34 West Eagle Street LLC	34 W Eagle St #2	\$550,000

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3	\$64,300	\$85,700	\$107,100
4	\$71,400	\$95,200	\$119,000
5	\$77,150	\$102,850	\$128,550
6	\$82,850	\$110,450	\$138,050

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After careful consideration and an abundance of caution, the City of Boston has decided to cancel the in-person application distribution period. If you cannot complete the application online, please call us at **781-992-5310**, to request that we mail you one and to ask us for any guidance you might need to complete the application.

Fully completed + signed applications must be submitted online or postmarked no later than **Wednesday, March 24, 2021**

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Equal Housing Opportunity

Orient Heights cannabis dispensary one step closer to reality

By John Lynds

The adult-use cannabis dispensary proposed for Orient Heights Square is one step closer to becoming a reality after it was approved by the Boston Cannabis Commission (BCC).

Following a hearing last month with the owners of Local Roots, the BCC voted to greenlight the proposal. Local Roots will now enter into a Host Community Agreement with the city and seek final approval from the Boston Zoning Board of Appeals.

Local Roots ownership team consists of current Tufts Tobacco owner Jimmy Sheena, former City Councilors Michael Ross and Sal LaMattina,

as well as Nicole Modica, (the daughter of Carla Santarpio of Santarpio’s Pizza Dave Modica, who owned Ecco for many years), Lorraine Curry, Jane England and Tracy Glissman.

“Everyone on the team lives in the neighborhood so we all got together and are attempting to do this Local Roots business,” said Ross. “Over half of the ownership are East Boston residents or have had roots here or done business here for decades and that’s why we decided to name the company Local Roots.”

Local Roots plans to take over Tufts Tobacco on Bennington Street in Orient Heights Square-- a business owned by Shee-

na for over 25 years.

At the hearing Ross said Sheena has experience running a successful and highly regulated business in the community. Like Tufts Tobacco, no one under the age of 21 would be able to step foot into the adult use facility once it is operational, so Ross said it made sense to have Sheena on the Local Roots ownership team.

At the hearing representatives from the offices of City Councilors Lydia Edwards and Anissa Es-saibi George, Rep. Adrian Madaro and Sen. Joseph Boncore, as well as the Mayor’s Office, all went on record to support the proposal.

The proposal also received backing by well

known local residents and community leaders like Joe Mario, Mary Berninger and Nancy LoConte--who all testified in favor of the proposal at the BCC hearing.

Other residents, like Orient Heights Neighborhood Council President Toni Noble, used to live above Tufts Tobacco and said Sheena was a great neighbor and the Modicas, who owns the building, were a responsive landlord.

“I am here to voice my personal support for this proposed recreational marijuana facility,” said Noble. “I actually used to live directly above Tufts Tobacco and the Modicas were always very responsive landlords--not just

to my own concerns as a tenant--but if I had any questions about the community at all. I also grew to know Jimmy (Sheena) and in my time living there he, as owner of Tufts Tobacco, was always very responsive, kind and cared not only for the building but his neighbors and the entire Orient Heights community.”

Berninger testified while she wasn’t initially thrilled about having an adult-use cannabis facility in her neighborhood she has grown to support the proposal.

“I’m a member of the Oregon Heights Neighborhood Council and I’ve observed a great deal of community outreach from the applicants,” said Ber-

ninger. “I didn’t vote for the law but it has since been settled in Massachusetts. It’s time to bring these businesses online to bring job opportunities in the community. The pandemic only heightened the need for more economic development and good paying job opportunities in East Boston.”

Only one resident spoke in opposition to the project because she felt the proponent’s plan for parking was not adequate enough and feared customers to the dispensary would double park on Bennington Street. However, according to officials, this has not been a problem with the first dispensary that opened in Eastie on Meridian Street.

Councilor Edwards launches re-election campaign with virtual kickoff

By John Lynds

Last Friday night District 1 City Councilor Lydia Edwards kicked off her re-election campaign for a third term with a virtual celebration on Facebook.

The event included a speech by Edwards as well as remarks from guest speakers and colleagues like Rep. Adrian Madaro and Sen. Joseph Boncore.

Addressing her supporters at the virtual event Edwards said the theme of 2021 and her campaign is a rebound from 2020 with hope of a brighter future for all.

“This is the comeback year,” said Edwards last Friday. “This is the comeback year for our city. This is the comeback year for all of us individually. You know 2020 was, for many of us-myself included--a very painful year. There were some unexpected losses. We all had plans and beautiful things that



City Councilor Lydia Edwards launched her re-election campaign virtually last Friday.

we wanted to see happen but they couldn’t happen. It was a year of reflection and this year will be a year of action for me.”

Edwards said she does not just want the city to be “Boston Strong” for 2021 but “Boston Stronger”.

“I want us to be the strongest we’ve ever been,” said Edwards. “I want us to be stronger, smarter and bolder. To

be so unafraid because of what we have seen throughout this pandemic. We didn’t look at some things directly in the past. A lot of things that we ignored before and how bad some of the inequities were. We didn’t have a choice not to see them during this pandemic. We didn’t have a choice not to see the food lines, not to see people who are facing eviction ...we didn’t have a choice. And so now here we are and we’re going to recover and we’re going to do it in a way that sees all of that, and addresses it as well. We’re coming back stronger than ever before.”

Edwards said Eastie is used to fighting and, with the help of her colleagues, will continue to fight for the residents of the neighborhood.

“Yes, we have been in fights and we’re going to continue fighting on things like the (Ever-source) substation,” said

Edwards. “It’s a matter of environmental justice, it’s a matter of what communities get burdened with industrial things and what communities don’t and we just don’t, take things lying down in East Boston. We’re okay with the fight, we’re okay with a long-term generational fight because at the end of the day we’re fighting for our future. We’re fighting for our homes so we’re going to fight and we’re going to continue to stay on focused and we’re going to look towards our future in East Boston.”

Edwards highlighted many of her accomplishments during her first two terms like revamping the Zoning Board of Appeals and securing 20 percent affordable housing at the proposed Suffolk Downs project.

“I’m hoping what you see is that there’s a huge return on your investment in me,” said Edwards. “I

don’t take it lightly that you went out of your way to go and vote for me or that you donated your hard earned money. I don’t take it lightly. The more support I have from all of you, the less I feel afraid of anything that comes my way or the less because I know you have my back. So I’ll be here in the fight as long as you will have me.”

Rep. Adrian Madaro said based on her record anyone would have a big uphill battle to run against Edwards in the upcoming election.

“I’m very, very proud to call Lydia (Edwards) a colleague and a friend,” said Madaro. “We have an incredible delegation here in East Boston with Lydia and Sen. (Joseph) Boncore and we do a lot of great work together. That’s why I’m proud to be supporting Lydia’s re-election campaign because the reality is Lydia

is a fighter. When she says she’s gonna do something she does it. She walks the walk, doesn’t just talk like so many people in elected office. Whether it’s fighting for housing, fighting for environmental justice on the substation, or fighting to reform City Hall and make it more accessible for residents in East Boston and across the city she is on the front lines doing that work. We are lucky to have Lydia and we are better off as a community because of her work.

Sen. Boncore added, “What Lydia’s done with her council seat is nothing short of amazing. I’m so proud to work on East Boston issues with her. She is such an economic justice warrior, an environmental justice warrior, and a social justice warrior. The work she does in the City Council makes us all proud.”

City of Boston Community Preservation Committee announces funding recommendation in Eastie

By John Lynds

Last week Mayor Martin Walsh and the City of Boston Community Preservation Committee (CPC) announced their recommendation to fund two projects in East Boston through the latest round of Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding.

The two projects in Eastie join 65 other projects citywide totaling over \$25.5 million in grants

through the current funding round.

Under Historic Preservation \$40,000 will go towards restoring Ohabei Shalom Cemetery wall and \$50,000 will go to the Chelsea Terrace Urban Garden under Open Space and Recreation.

Following the CPC’s public hearing and vote on Thursday, February 11, 2021 and Mayor Walsh’s recommendation, the proposed projects have been

filed with the Boston City Council for a vote of approval. Projects supported with Community Preservation Act funding must create or preserve affordable housing, historic sites, or open space and recreation.

“Projects supported by funding through the Community Preservation Act are a reflection of the needs and voices of the

residents in our neighborhoods. Because proposals are developed and created by Bostonians, each project directly serves each of our communities,” said Mayor Walsh. “I want to thank everyone who submitted a project proposal to improve and preserve open spaces, affordable housing or historic spaces throughout the City of Boston.”

The \$40,000 to the Ohabei Shalom Cemetery will be for rehabilitation and restoration of the historic 1903 Byron Street wall that is part of the state’s first Jewish Cemetery. The grant will pay for site work, resetting and repointing of all failed masonry.

The \$50,000 to the 6 Chelsea Terrace Urban Community Garden will

fund the design and water installation for successful crop growth to make recreational land more functional for the intended use as a community garden.

Once approved by the City Council, Boston will have awarded over \$92 million to support 198 projects across the City since residents voted to adopt the Community Preservation Act in 2016.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

Pursuant to G. L. c. 30A, §18-20

The East Boston Project Advisory Committee, Incorporated

Notice is hereby given that on **Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.** a public **MEETING** of the East Boston Project Advisory Committee, Inc., (aka **PIERPAC**) will be held via remote participation in light of the ongoing State of Emergency declared in connection with the COVID-19 Pandemic

A web link and Details on how to participate remotely shall be provided on the organization's website www.ebpierpac.org on or before **March 12, 2021** at which time you may register to participate

It is the intention of the Committee to discuss in open meeting the following matter(s):

REGULAR MEETING

a. Attendance 6:30 pm

b. Approval of Minutes December 12, 2020 6:45 pm

New Business

a. President's Comments – 7:00 pm

b. Appointment of Subcommittee on Membership – 7:15 pm

c. Appointment of Subcommittee for 2021 Operation and Maintenance Review – 7:20 pm

d. Treasurer's Report - 7:25 pm

Old Business

a. Update - Amendment to Operations, Security and Maintenance (OSM) Agreement (continued discussion) 7:30 pm

b. Update - Massport annual financial commitment (continued discussion) 7:40 pm

c. Motion to adjourn

At the conclusion of its regular business meeting and prior to adjournment, the Board, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board may hold an Executive Session pursuant to G. L. 30A.s.21 upon the conclusion of which, the Board will not resume its public meeting.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE INVITED

AND WELCOMED TO ATTEND

A copy of this notice has also been posted on the organization's website at: www.EBPIERPAC.org and has also been placed on file with the Regulations Division of the Secretary of the Commonwealth by mailing same via first class mail at least 5 days prior to the scheduled date of the meeting.

East Boston Project Advisory Committee, Inc.

By: Louise Montanino, President

Virtual Public Meeting

Guidelines for the Downtown Waterfront

Wednesday, March 10

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Zoom Link: bit.ly/2NZgDyH

Toll Free: (833) 568 - 8864

Meeting ID: 160 829 2496

Project Description:

Please join Boston Planning & Development planning for a virtual meeting to develop Design and Use Guidelines for the Downtown Waterfront. The Guidelines will inform new development and establish uniform requirements for Harborwalk, the public realm, open space resources and public use facilities. We are looking to hear your thoughts on how to better activate the Downtown Waterfront, ensure the area is welcoming and accessible to all residents and visitors, and create an improved sense of place and clarity.

Translation and interpretation services can be made available upon request by reaching out to chris.busch@boston.gov

mail to: **Chris Busch**

Boston Planning & Development Agency

One City Hall Square, 9th Floor

Boston, MA 02201

phone: 617.918.4451

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Teresa Polhemus, Executive Director/Secretary

East Boston

Times-Free Press

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WE MUST BE WARY OF THE VIRUS

With the arrival of the vaccines and the spring season, it is clear that there is a light at the end of the tunnel from our year-long battle with COVID-19.

However, the good news that has been seen in the past month across the country, in terms of dramatic reductions in cases, deaths, and hospitalizations, by no means should make any of us think that we can let our guard down against this shape-shifting, deadly virus.

The variants of COVID-19 that are working their way through our population are more contagious and thought to be deadlier than the original, and may even present a challenge to the efficacy of the vaccines.

In addition, very few of us actually have been vaccinated. Although the Johnson & Johnson one-shot vaccine was approved for use this past weekend, the company will not be able to begin distributing its vaccine in large numbers until the end of March.

While it may be true that we are winning the war against COVID, every American must realize that COVID-19 is a hunter and we are its prey. Until each of us can get vaccinated over the next two months, we must remain vigilant and practice all of the things we have been doing to stay safe for the past year -- wearing a mask, avoiding large groups, washing our hands frequently, and staying six feet apart from others.

The finish line is in sight -- let's go strong to the end.

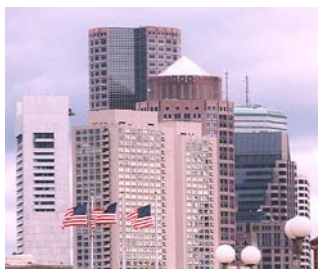
A FUTURE WITH MASKS?

There has been one positive piece of news during the otherwise tragic COVID-19 pandemic, and that is this: The number of deaths and severe illness caused by the ordinary flu is down dramatically from a typical flu season.

Epidemiologists credit this downturn to a number of factors: International travel is virtually non-existent, people are not gathering in large groups, people are working from home (and therefore not going into their offices while sick), more people got their flu shots than ever, and most of us are wearing masks.

Although the reduction in the number of deaths from the regular flu by no means offsets the increase in the deaths from COVID-19 -- COVID is estimated to be 5-10 times deadlier than the seasonal flu -- the substantial reduction in deaths from the ordinary flu gives us some hope that the lessons we have learned during this year of COVID-19 may enlighten us as to how to combat less-deadly viruses in the future.

In addition, there is no doubt that the incredible effort by the scientific community to develop an effective vaccine against COVID-19 in such a short time will pay fruits in terms of our understanding of other illnesses and our ability to fight them.



Forum



OPENING SCHOOLS... FOLLOW THE RULES

LETTER to the Editor

I GIVE THANKS TO THE HEALTH CENTER

Dear Editor,

The East Boston Health Center has been an important part of our community for many years. As a patient and speaking on behalf of my parents I give praise to the Center for its prompt and extremely efficient roll out

of the Covid-19 Vaccine Program.

The Center communicated with us in many ways to offer the vaccine and we were given prompt service when making our appointments. My parents received the vaccine at the Liverpool Street location, and at each appointment, the staff and the National Guard who facilitated the

vaccine distribution treated us respectfully. It was well organized, and I was impressed with the overall process.

They made us feel comfortable.

In these difficult times it is not easy to stay on top of our medical needs. However, the East Boston Center Health has managed to do that and more.

I give thanks to the Health Center, not only for the Vaccine rollout, but to the entire medical team that we entrust in our care.

Thank you to first responders and administrative staff at EBNHC. I value your hard work and dedication to East Boston and other communities.

Maria Capogreco

Eastie organizations receiving funding through Boston Resiliency Fund

By John Lynds

Seven East Boston organizations were included in the latest round Boston Resiliency Fund grant money.

Last Thursday, Mayor Martin announced that Central Assembly of God Church, East Boston Community Soup Kitchen, East Boston Neighborhood of Affordable Housing (NOAH), East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, East Boston Social Centers, Eastie Farm and Fair Foods Inc. will share in this latest funding round--totaling \$3.85 million in funding to 62 nonprofits in Boston.

Walsh said the organizations in this round of funding work to ensure access to food and other basic needs for Boston residents and to promote public health in the city through community-based

outreach and engagement.

"The Boston Resiliency Fund has been an invaluable resource in our efforts to support the critical services that Boston's nonprofits have continued to provide throughout the pandemic," said Walsh. "This latest round of grants is our biggest yet, and serves as our way to support these organizations for all the work that they do and for providing essential resources to our community year-round. I also want to thank the Steering Committee for their steadfast commitment to and oversight of the Fund."

According to the city, Central Assembly of God Church will use the Boston Resiliency Fund grant to continue to close the food insecurity gap experienced by Boston residents experiencing job-

lessness.

The East Boston Community Soup Kitchen will use the grant money to address the additional needs of their guests during the COVID-19 pandemic. The money will allow the soup kitchen staff to modify the way they provide meals by incorporating a take-out format and increasing its gift card distribution. The soup kitchen will use the funds to purchase items from food warehouses at a discounted rate to provide a good variety of food items to the soup kitchen's guests.

NOAH, the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center and East Boston Social Center, who have collaborated to form the "Stronger Together" team will provide nutritious food relief to Eastie households--including seniors and families. Their program will continue to purchase quality fresh produce and culturally appropriate dry goods from both The Greater Boston Food Bank and Costa Fruit and Produce in Charlestown.

Fair Foods will use this grant to sustain their weekly efforts at food distribution sites across the city and continue to grow its \$2 dollar bag sites all over Boston. In addition, Fair Foods has enlisted new and expanded distribution partners, such as Maverick Landing Community Services (MLCS) in Eastie. These partners

pick up food boxes at the Fair Foods warehouse in South Boston and conduct deliveries across the city.

Finally, Eastie Farm will use the funding to continue their work providing prepared meals, dairy, and meat to Boston residents and expand their outreach efforts.

In November the Boston Resiliency Fund paused the rapid response grant making it had been doing since late March of last year to evaluate how the Fund could best serve Boston residents with limited remaining funds. The Fund received feedback from its non-profit partners that there was still an overwhelming demand for food and other basic needs, like diapers, formula and hygiene products, and that there was a need for further education regarding public health guidance and the safety and importance of the COVID-19 vaccine. Prioritizing these two focus areas, the fund's Steering Committee reopened its grant application to any interested non-profit serving Boston residents. There were 137 applications seeking over \$19 million in aid for this funding round.

Since its launch in March of 2020, \$34.5 million has been donated to the Boston Resiliency Fund and 377 Boston-based organizations have received over \$34.1 million in funding.

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

We reserve the right to edit for length and content.

Red Cross calls for healthy blood donors following severe weather

Following record-breaking cold and winter storms that forced the cancellation of more than 10,000 blood and platelet donations in parts of the U.S. in February, the American Red Cross is urging healthy individuals, especially those with type O blood, to give now to ensure blood products are available for patient emergencies when help can't wait.

Every day thousands of patients rely on lifesaving blood donations. The need for blood is constant, even during snowstorms and the COVID-19 pandemic. To help ensure lifesaving patient care isn't

impacted, individuals are urged to make appointments to donate in the coming days and weeks by downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device.

Every day thousands of patients rely on lifesaving blood donations. The need for blood is constant, even during snowstorms and the COVID-19 pandemic. To help ensure lifesaving patient care isn't impacted, individuals in areas unaffected by severe weather are urged to make

appointments to donate by downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device.

Tina Rocco knows firsthand how important it is to have blood on hospital shelves. After welcoming baby Gemma by cesarean section, she began hemorrhaging badly and was rushed back into the operating room. "I was later told it was several pints of blood and an amazing doctor that saved my life," Rocco said. "That allowed me to hold my first daugh-

ter and go home all together as a family of three."

Before that day, Rocco hadn't known anyone who needed blood transfusions. Now, this grateful mother says, "You truly never know when you, or someone you love, might need it."

Important COVID-19 information for donors

The Red Cross is testing blood, platelet and plasma donations for COVID-19 antibodies. The test may indicate if the donor's immune system has produced antibodies to this coronavirus, regardless of whether an individual developed COVID-19 symptoms. Red Cross antibody tests will be helpful to identify individuals who have COVID-19 antibodies and may now help current coronavirus patients in need of convalescent plasma transfusions. Convalescent plasma is a type of blood donation collected from COVID-19 survivors that have antibodies that may help patients who are actively fighting the virus. Plasma from whole blood donations that test positive for

high levels of COVID-19 antibodies may be used to help COVID-19 patients.

COVID-19 antibody test results will be available within one to two weeks in the Red Cross Blood Donor App or donor portal at RedCrossBlood.org. A positive antibody test result does not confirm infection or immunity. The Red Cross is not testing donors to diagnose illness, referred to as a diagnostic test. To protect the health and safety of Red Cross staff and donors, it is important that individuals who do not feel well or believe they may be ill with COVID-19 postpone donation.

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and additional precautions – including temperature checks, social distancing and face coverings for donors and staff – have been implemented to help protect the health of all those in attendance. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment prior to arriving at

the drive and are required to wear a face covering or mask while at the drive, in alignment with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention public guidance.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities:

- Suffolk County
- Boston
- 3/4/2021: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Boston Park Plaza, 64 Arlington Street
- 3/5/2021: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., Calderwood Pavilion, 527 Tremont Street
- 3/11/2021: 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza
- 3/12/2021: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Big Night Entertainment Group, 110 Causeway Street
- 3/15/2021: 7 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Northeastern University, 77 St. Stephen Street
- 3/15/2021: 7 a.m. - 12 p.m., Flynn Cruiseport Boston, 1 Black Falcon Ave, Black Falcon Cruise Terminal
- Winthrop
- 3/8/2021: 2 p.m. - 7 p.m., Cottage Park YC, 76 Orlando Ave.

Cardinal announces 2021 Catholic Appeal

The 2021 Catholic Appeal were announced in parishes of the Archdiocese of Boston. Commitment weekend takes place the weekend of March 6 and 7, 2021. The Catholic Appeal is the annual fund that supports more than 51 central ministries that enrich parish life, Catholic schools, and the lives of those who turn to the Church for assistance.

Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley said, "There are many challenges in today's world and the Church is often the only support network for individuals and families. The Catholic Appeal helps to fund the work of our parishes, schools, and ministries – bringing hope to those most in need. During the ongoing pandemic, the work of our teams throughout the Archdiocese is especially important as we continue to safely provide services at our parishes and schools in support of the mission of the Church."

Patricia Kelleher Bartram, Interim Secretary for Institutional Advancement, said, "At the beginning of the pandemic Cardinal Seán called on us to take care of each other. That is how we live our faith together. This year in particular has seen such heartache and suffering, and yet we have seen the goodness of so many who have stepped forward to support the many programs, parishes, and schools that have brought normalcy and comfort in a year of great chaos and pain."

The Catholic Appeal funds nearly 50% of the

Archdiocese of Boston's budget. The remainder is funded by other philanthropic sources and fees for various services, programs, and resources.

Teamwork is the theme of this year's Appeal

Each year, the Catholic Appeal provides the funds needed to support our parishes, schools, and central ministries. This year, COVID-19 challenged every corner of our society to respond to this deadly threat that has claimed more than 15,000 lives in the Commonwealth and more than 500,000 nationally. The Archdiocese needed to respond quickly to the crisis.

Working as a team, with God's grace guiding us, the efforts of the Archdiocese included:

- Establishing a Pandemic Response team, involving all the key ministries and administrative offices of the Archdiocese to provide support and guidance to parishes, schools, and ministries.
- Quickly adapting to assist our school administrators and teachers in providing virtual instruction to our students in March 2020 and safely reopening our Catholic Schools with in-person classes in September 2020. In addition, we developed a formidable plan to address issues related to cases where employees or students have tested positive for COVID.
- Creating a Re-opening Work Group in Spring 2020 to help parishes adjust to the pandemic. By livestreaming Masses and

implementing virtual programs, our parishes were able to continue to serve their parishioners and most are now open for in-person Masses.

• In the Spring of 2020, Cardinal Seán appointed a team of priests designated with providing the Sacrament of the Sick for patients in COVID hospital wards and comforting families and healthcare workers. More than 1,100 pastoral visits have been made to COVID patients without a single priest having been infected.

As a result of this teamwork, our parishes, schools, ministries, and Archdiocese are serving more needs than ever. We could not do this without the generous help of so many.

How to participate
Due to the pandemic, we will not distribute in-pew envelopes for this year's Catholic Appeal but we will be sending appeal requests by mail and email. Individuals may also donate online at bostoncatholicappeal.org.

To learn more about the benefits of giving by direct debit, donor advised funds, stock, or IRA contribution, visit the secure website bostoncatholicappeal.org.

The Appeal is managed by Boston Catholic Development Service, an Archdiocesan ministry with a mission of seeking philanthropic support for the mission of the Church. For more information, please visit bostoncatholicappeal.org.

SJC issues new order regarding jury trials and operation of courts

The Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) has issued an updated order regarding the operation of Massachusetts state courts and courthouses during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The new order went into effect March 1, and will replace the existing order issued on September 17, 2020.

Court operations largely remain the same under the new SJC order. The principal change involves the transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the gradual resumption of jury trials. As described in the order, Phase 2 has been modified from the Phase 2 recommended by the Jury Management Advisory Committee (JMAC) in its report of July 31, 2020. The modified Phase 2 will consist of six-person jury trials, conducted in person, in a select number of locations, with limitations on the number of peremptory challenges in certain types of cases. Priority will be given to criminal cases where the defendant is in custody, although civil trials may take place. The cases that will be tried during Phase 2, as well as the locations, will be determined by the Chief Justice of the Trial Court and the Chief Justices of the applicable Trial Court de-

partments, in consultation with the Regional Administrative Justices and First Justices in each court.

During Phase 2, which is expected to last two months, all jury trials will continue to be conducted pursuant to the health and safety practices recommended by the JMAC. The SJC will issue further direction regarding the resumption of jury trials after reviewing the JMAC's evaluation of Phase 2. As throughout the pandemic, however, all plans and expectations may be adjusted at any time in the ongoing effort to balance the safety of everyone who enters a courthouse with the fundamental constitutional right to a trial by jury.

Otherwise, courts will

continue to conduct most business virtually and courthouses will continue to be physically open to the public for limited purposes, including certain other in-person proceedings. Judges will continue to schedule and conduct bench trials and other hearings, either virtually or in-person. Each Trial Court department will continue to post notices to the court system's COVID-19 webpage identifying how (virtually or in-person) it is addressing various categories of matters.

Clerks', registers', and recorder's offices will continue to be physically open to the public, while still endeavoring to conduct business virtually as much as possible.

USCIS reverts to the 2008 version of the naturalization civics test

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced last that it has reverted to the 2008 version of the naturalization civics test as of March 1.

On Dec. 1, 2020, USCIS implemented a revised naturalization civics test (2020 civics test) as part of a decennial test review and update process. USCIS determined the 2020 civics test development process, content, testing procedures, and implementation schedule may inadvertently cre-

ate potential barriers to the naturalization process. This action is consistent with the framework of the Executive Order on Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration Systems, which directs a comprehensive review of the naturalization process to eliminate barriers and make the process more accessible to all eligible individuals.

Applicants who filed their application for naturalization on or after Dec. 1, 2020, and before March 1, 2021, likely have been studying for the

2020 test; therefore, USCIS will give these applicants the option to take either the 2020 civics test or the 2008 civics test. There will be a transition period where both tests are being offered. The 2020 test will be phased out on April 19, 2021, for initial test takers. Applicants filing on or after March 1, 2021, will take the 2008 civics test.

The test items and study guides can be found on the Citizenship Resource Center on the USCIS website.

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Various payment options available. Must be at least 18 years old.



APPRENTICE APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED

THE HEAT & FROST INSULATORS UNION LOCAL 6, BOSTON, JOINT APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM IS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CAREFULLY.

Applications will be accepted from March 1 to March 31st. They will be available on our website, www.insulators6.org beginning March 1st. Print and complete an application. Mail the application to the address listed in the instructions. To apply you must meet the following requirements:

- Be 18 years of age or older by June 1, 2021.
- Be a high school graduate.
- Possess a current, valid driver's license.
- Reside within the jurisdiction of Local 6.
- Own a reliable vehicle

Note: Copies of the following documents must be submitted with your application:

1. Valid, current driver's license (No photo ID's)
2. High school diploma, GED certificate or a certified, sealed transcript showing your graduation date.
3. You must also submit a non-refundable aptitude testing fee of \$25.00. Only checks or money orders accepted, made payable to "Local 6, I.A.C."

TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION/JOB SITES: Mass., Maine, New Hampshire & Rhode Island (Driver's License and Reliable Vehicle Necessary & Required).

TERM OF APPRENTICESHIP: Four (4) years. 160 classroom hours and 1800 job site hours per year.

TESTS: General Aptitude Test and Interview; Mandatory Pre-employment Physical Exam and Drug Test.

The Heat and Frost Insulators Apprenticeship Program will not discriminate against apprenticeship applicants or apprentices based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), sexual orientation, genetic information, or because they are an individual with a disability or a person 40 years old or older. The Heat and Frost Insulators Apprenticeship Program will take affirmative action to provide equal opportunity in apprenticeship and will operate the apprenticeship program as required under Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations, part 30," 29 CFR § 30.3(c).

Zonta Club of Chelsea, North Shore and Malden celebrated Amelia Earhart Fellowship recipients

On Thursday, January 21, the Zonta clubs of Malden and Chelsea celebrated our Amelia Earhart Fellows. Amelia Earhart was a member of the Zonta Club of Medford and every year thousands of dollars are given in her name to deserving women around the globe. While this year was not the way we usually celebrate, we followed in the footsteps of the trailblazers who paved the way for us. We persisted with a little help from technology. So



Rachel Morgan.

proud to have our Governor Beatrice Schori bring greeting from the district as well as each fellow sharing their accomplish-



Cody Paige.

ments. We marked the occasion with each fellow receiving their wings, Zonta certificate and beautiful flowers.

A huge congrats to Ms. Rachel Morgan and Ms. Cody Paige! Thank you to all who joined us and celebrated and to all of those who have shown their support.

Here are our Amelia Earhart Fellows from Zonta District 1:

Rachel Morgan and Cody Paige.

Rachel Morgan, a doctoral student at MIT in the Ph.D. in space systems in the area of space telescope optical instrument development, plans to use the

US\$10,000 Zonta Fellowship to further her studies as she investigates novel optical and photonic instrumentation concepts for high-contrast imaging of exoplanets with space telescopes. In her spare time, Ms. Morgan enjoys a range of interests, including playing the saxophone and being an active member of the MIT Women in Aerospace Engineering.

Cody Paige, a doctoral student in the PH.D program, will use her fellowship to study radiation

shielding materials for space suits and systems at MIT. Ms. Paige's future goal is to enhance life on earth through space exploration. She hopes for a career in Canada in the field of space medicine to contribute to long-duration space missions. She is active in STEM programs and a new MIT project to spread climate change awareness to high school students through interactive lectures.

Weekly COVID positive test rate decreases in Eastie

By John Lynds

Last week the cumulative COVID-19 positive test rate in Eastie stayed the same and the weekly positive test rate decreased.

According to the latest data released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), of the 35,388 Eastie residents tested for COVID since the pandemic began, 18.9 percent overall were found to be positive for the virus. This was the same percentage reported by the BPHC two weeks ago.

Last week, 1,714 Eastie residents were tested for the virus last week and only 4.5 percent were positive--a 6.25 percent decrease from the 4.8 percent reported by the BPHC two weeks ago.

Citywide, 26,561 residents were tested and 3.5 percent were COVID positive--a 6.25 percent

decrease from the 3.8 percent testing positive two weeks ago.

At a press briefing Monday Mayor Martin Walsh said an average of nearly 3,800 Boston residents were tested for COVID each day last week.

"The seven-day average for daily positive tests was 161 and the average daily positive rate was 3.5 percent," said Walsh. "The City's case metrics have leveled off and even ticked upward in the last few days of data. This is not a cause for concern, but it's a good reminder not to take this positive trend for granted."

The Mayor urged everyone to remain vigilant and take all necessary precautions to protect themselves and our communities against the virus.

"That includes wearing a mask with a good fit (whether you wear one mask or two masks, make sure there is a tight fit on

the sides of your face); washing your hands frequently, with soap and warm water; continuing to socially distance and avoid gatherings; and getting tested regularly," he said.

The Mayor also encouraged seniors and everyone who is eligible to receive the vaccine to get it as soon as they can. Boston residents 65 and older can call 3-1-1 and get connected to the City's Age Strong Commission for help in multiple languages. Veterans 55 or older, enrolled in VA Healthcare, can get vaccinated at any VA health facility in Boston.

"The full schedule for vaccine eligibility is at Mass.gov/CovidVaccine," said Walsh. "And the State has a Vaccine Scheduling Resource available by calling 2-1-1."

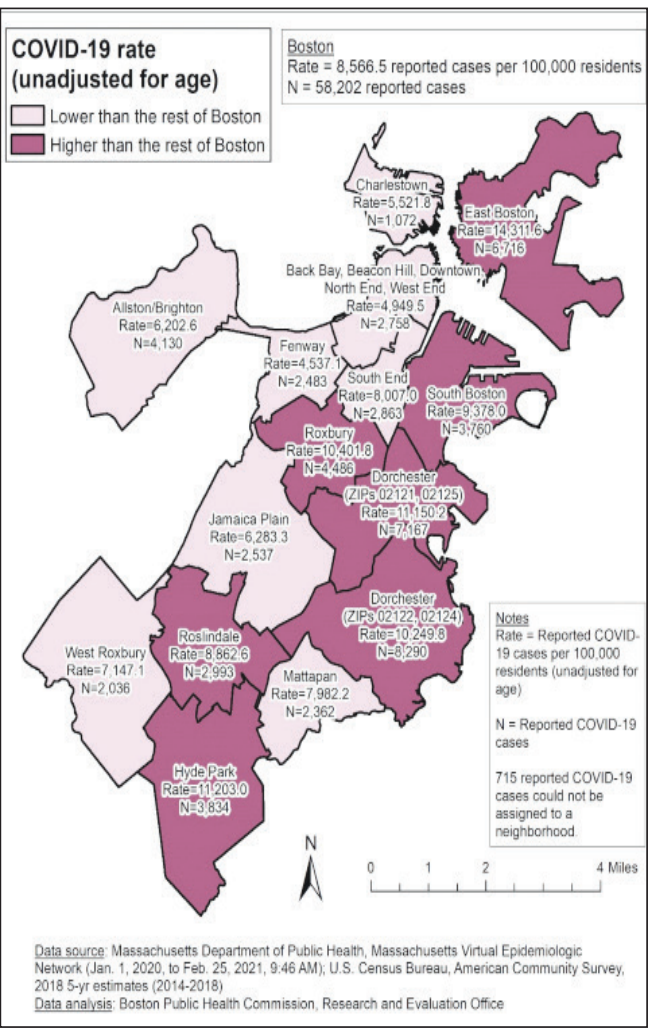
Eastie's COVID infection rate increased by only 1 percent last week and

went from 1,415.8 cases per 10,000 residents to 1,431.1 cases per 10,000 residents. The citywide average is 856.6 cases per 10,000 residents.

An additional 72 Eastie residents contracted the virus and there are now 6,716 confirmed cases, up from the 6,644 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 2.1 percent last week and went from 57,675 cases to 58,901 confirmed cases in a week. Twenty-five additional Boston residents died from the virus last week and there are now 1,273 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.

AARP Massachusetts urges full-scale mobilization of COVID vaccine rollout

With people age 50 and older accounting for 95 percent of all deaths from COVID-19, AARP Massachusetts State Director Mike Festa and State President Sandra Harris testified at a legislative hearing held before the Joint Committee on COVID-19 & Emergency Preparedness & Management.

"AARP Massachusetts is deeply appreciative for the efforts the legislature and the Baker Adminis-

tration has undertaken to address the unprecedented public health and economic crisis that we face as a state. In particular, we note the many actions the state has taken on a temporary or emergency basis to help Massachusetts residents better weather this pandemic. We urge you to evaluate those actions and move swiftly to ensure that the benefits they have produced continue once this emergency has

subsided.

The situation in nursing homes is particularly dire. In the Commonwealth, residents and staff of nursing homes account for nearly 60% of all COVID-19 deaths, though they are less than 1% of the population.

As the Committee continues its work, AARP Massachusetts urges the legislature and the Baker Administration to:

- Better understand why so many long term care facility residents died in Massachusetts' nursing homes;

- Make structural and systemic changes to the long term services and supports system; and

- Most importantly, learn how to prevent the state's tragic outcomes from ever happening again.

We continue to hear

from members that they are having challenges scheduling an appointment. There is incredible demand from our members for more information about when, where and how they can get a vaccine," said Festa.

Harris added, "I cannot stress enough how eager AARP Massachusetts members are to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, which offers so much promise for a return to normalcy. And, they want a system they can access to receive vaccines that works for them, and works efficiently."

AARP Massachusetts offered the following recommendations:

- Prioritize Older Residents - Since the start of the pandemic, nearly 95 percent of the deaths from COVID-19 have been

among people age 50 and older. That is why it is critical that older adults be prioritized to receive these vaccines and the associated appointments.

- A Centralized, Equitable, Accessible, User-Friendly, Vaccination Appointment System - While the Vax-Finder website and 211 call center are a significant step in the right direction, we must work quickly toward a centralized, equitable, accessible, user-friendly, vaccination appointment and confirmation system.

- Transparency of Data and Plans Related to Infections, Hospitalizations, Deaths, Vaccinations, and Appointments--AARP believes residents deserve updated data on the COVID 19 pandemic and the vaccination efforts in the Bay State. AARP MA

is pleased the Commonwealth produces daily or weekly reports.

- Enhance and Expand Communication and Outreach Efforts -- State and local governments should pro-actively reach out to those eligible for the vaccines.

"Since March 2020, we have joined together to battle coronavirus and its health and economic consequences. We now have the hope of ending the pandemic through widespread vaccination. It's time for full-scale mobilization so we will finally get back to normal. We urge the Committee to keep searching for the answers, to permanently adopt those measures that have been proven successful, and to take swift action to address the known shortfalls," said Festa.

Jeffries Point Neighborhood Association meeting set for March 8

The next Jeffries Point Neighborhood Association (JPNA) meeting is Monday, March 8, from 7-8:30 p.m

Zoom Video Conference.

We ask everyone to register 24 hours in advance to help us manage the meeting.

In order to qualify to vote at a voting meeting each person must be reg-

istered and join the meeting as an individual. You will not be counted as an attendee at a meeting should you participate in the Zoom call as a couple or family.

Hello Jeffries Point Neighborhood Association!

The following is the agenda for our upcoming monthly meeting.

AGENDA (subject to

change):

Greetings & Announcements

Boston Police Update
Lina Tramelli, Mayor's Liaison

Plan East Boston - Jason Ruggiero

East Boston Justice Transportation Coalition

Coastal Zone Management (CZM) on the East Boston DPA Review - Erikk Hokenson

VOTE: 153 Everett St - Installation of a 200 sq ft roof deck. Homeowner: Taylor Kale & Dennis Topakov

VOTE: 14 Murray Ct - Construction of a 522 sq ft roof deck and steel spiral staircase. Homeowner: Daniel Griffith & Diana Delliacona

VOTE: 34 Cottage St - Change of occupancy from a 3-family to a

4-family. Homeowner: Kieran O'Sullivan

As a reminder, all questions will be handled via the Zoom chat feature. We ask all attendees to remain muted unless called upon to speak. Looking forward to "seeing" you all there!

We are using eBallot to manage the voting process. Within 48 hours after the meeting, eligible voters will be emailed a link that will allow them to vote online. All votes must be cast by Friday, December 18th at 7pm. Late votes will not be accepted, no exceptions.

We hope you and your loved ones are well. We are all in this together as neighbors and friends. Please don't be afraid to reach out.

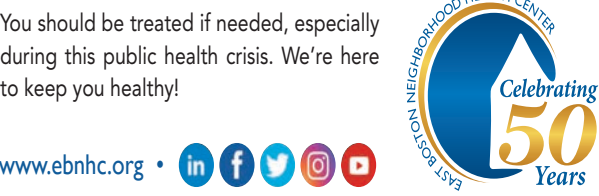
2021 meeting dates are posted at jeffriespoint.org.



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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East Boston Little League on schedule for its start to the 2021 season

By Cary Shuman

East Boston Little League, under the direction of President Chucky Cassaro and his long-time friend and colleague, local dentist Dr. Robert Gilbride, somehow guided baseball players through two separate seasons during the coronavirus last

year. After a delayed return in 2020 due to the coronavirus, EBLL held a regular season in the summer and based on that success, the board went ahead with a fall season. There were no interruptions in play during either season. Now Cassaro, Gilbride, and fellow board members

Lenny Cambria and Nick Free are back organizing the 2021 season and expressing much optimism. “Hopefully we can duplicate what happened last year, follow strict guidelines, and go forth with our new season,” said Cassaro. “We had a lot of support from the community in 2020 and we expect

a lot of players to return this year.” Cassaro said early registration for boys and girls, ages 6-16, will be held on Friday, March 5 and Friday, March 12, from 4 to 6 p.m., at Al Festa Field. The registration fee is \$100, the same as it has been for the last eight years. “We’re hoping to start the season in mid-to-late April or when weather permits,” said Cassaro. It is expected that the league will have five teams in each of the three age divisions: Minor, Major, and Senior. “We’re so glad that a lot of players are looking forward to returning to our program,” said Cassaro. “We anticipate 150-200 participants in the coming

season.” The Minor and Major League teams will play their games at Tony Congiliaro Field and Al Festa Field. The Seniors will play on the big diamond at Noyes Park. On a personal note, Chucky Cassaro is continuing treatment in his ongoing battle with cancer. “I feel great,” said Cassaro. “My treatments are going well. The Mass General doctors are fantastic, unbelievable. I was lucky enough to get my first COVID shot today (Tuesday). So life is good right now.” Cassaro is hoping to coach in the league while former EBLL home run king CJ Cassaro may make his coaching debut

alongside his dad in 2021. CJ is a baseball standout preparing for what would be his final season in the East Boston High School baseball program. CJ is a graduate of East Boston Little League and hit more than 30 home runs in his final two Major League seasons at Festa Field. He will be playing in the Eastie 18-under league this season. An honor roll student, CJ will begin college in the fall. “Hopefully CJ can play his final high school season,” said Cassaro. “I know he wants to get involved in coaching and helping the kids in this community. That’s what he wants to do.” Like father, like son.

Save the Harbor’s virtual Harpoon Shamrock Splash ends March 12



The Harpoon Shamrock Splash was the last public beach event that Save the Harbor hosted in 2020.

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay’s Harpoon Shamrock Splash is going virtual this year, as participants splash by themselves (or with their family or roommates) on their favorite beach, in pool, a snowdrift, or even in their bathtub or shower and post a short video or great photo online to win great prizes from Harpoon or flights from JetBlue.

“Last year’s Splash raised nearly \$50,000 to support free beach events and our Better Beaches program partnership with DCR,” said Save the Harbor/Save the Bay’s Executive Director Chris Mancini. “It was also the last public event we hosted in 2020, before the pandemic forced us and our community partners to move most of our free programs online.”

“We are optimistic that if people continue to wear masks, practice social distancing, and sign up for their free vaccinations as they become available, the region’s residents from Nahant to Nantasket will be able to return to our beaches again this summer, and free beach events and youth programs will be more important than ever before,” continued Mancini. “In the meantime, we have to celebrate clean water together – apart.”

Instead of celebrating for just one day on the beach in South Boston, this year’s Splash will be a two-week virtual party with the opportunity to splash wherever you are.

Save the Harbor/Save the Bay is challenging you to come up with creative (and safe) ways to “splash”. Grab a bucket of cold water, a cup of ice, fill up your bathtub, or find another fun and creative way to take a quick dip in cold water to raise money for a great cause.

Since Save the Harbor/Save the Bay began the Splash during their 25th Anniversary celebration in 2011, thousands of splashers have raised more than \$1 million dollars to support free beach events and programs in Lynn, Nahant, Revere, Winthrop, East Boston, South Boston, Dorchester, Quincy and Hull.

Proceeds from the 2021 Virtual Harpoon Shamrock Splash will be invested in organizations, programs, individuals, and creatives who empower, amplify and invest

in community members of color, said Maya Smith, the organization’s Community Engagement Manager. “Save the Harbor has recommitted ourselves to equity and antiracism in our programs and on our beaches and we are excited to see the creative ways organizations and individuals will be activating our beaches this summer!”

Even though people aren’t celebrating together with a refreshing beer after a quick dip in the clear cold water of Boston Harbor this year, Save the Harbor’s partners at Harpoon will be providing party packs to Splashers over 21. Families with young kids and people under the age of 21 will also be able to participate this year and will receive their own special party packs as well.

Register today and get cold for a great cause. Record your Splash and send it to Save the Harbor/Save the Bay (@savetheharbor #harpoonshamrock-splash) between March 1 to March 12 for a chance to win roundtrip flights* from JetBlue for biggest fundraiser, best costume, and most unique virtual Splash.

Register today at www.shamrocksplash.org to join in the fun, or make a donation to the Save the Harbor team at www.shamrocksplash.org/savetheharbor.

Save the Harbor wants to thank their program partners and our event sponsors, including Harpoon Brewery, JetBlue, Mix 104.1, The Blue Sky Collaborative, The Boston Foundation, The Richard Saltonstall Charitable Foundation, Beacon Capital Partners, P&G Gillette, National Grid, the Daily Catch, and Comcast.

In addition, Save the Harbor wants to thank Metropolitan Beaches Commission Chair Senator Brendan Crighton and the legislative and community members of the Commission for their support for our beaches and our communities. They also want to thank the Baker-Polito Administration, our partners at the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Boston Centers for Youth & Families, the YMCA of Greater Boston, and the hundreds of people who take part in the Harpoon Shamrock Splash every year, for their support.

For more information

about taking part in this year’s Virtual Harpoon Shamrock Splash, please contact Maya Smith at smith@savetheharbor.org.

* Though the fun is unlimited, some restrictions apply. See the event site for details, and for some great ideas for your Splash.

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## OBITUARIES

### Virginia “Ginger” Skoczylas

Of Winthrop, formerly of East Boston

Virginia “Ginger” (Ruggiero) Skoczylas of Winthrop, formerly of East Boston, passed away peacefully surrounded by her loving family on February 27 at the age of 78.

The devoted mother of Joseph Skoczylas and his wife, Michele (Pittman) of Winthrop, she was the cherished grandmother of Joseph Robert, Michael Carmen and Ryan James Skoczylas, all of Winthrop; dear sister of Lois Bartolomi and her husband, Tony and the late Francine D’Andrea.

Family and friends will honor Virginia’s life by gathering at the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home, 971 Saratoga St., East Boston on Saturday, March 6 from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. followed by a funeral procession to St. John the Evangelist Church

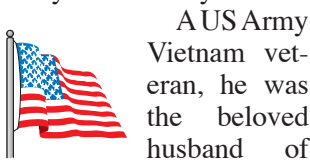


Winthrop St., Winthrop for a 10 a.m. Funeral Mass. Services will conclude with Virginia being laid to rest at Holy Cross Cemetery. Flowers appreciated or memorial donations may be made to St. Jude Childrens Hospital 262 Danny Thomas Place Memphis, TN. For more information or to send an online condolence, visit [ruggieromh.com](http://ruggieromh.com).

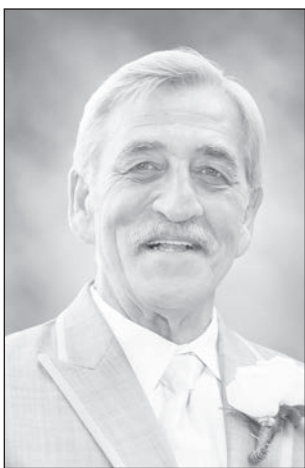
### Laurence Coughlin

Of East Boston

Laurence C. Coughlin, 70, of East Boston, passed away on February 22.



AUS Army Vietnam veteran, he was the beloved husband of Lorraine (Basil) Coughlin, cherished son of the late Rena (Gilbride) Coughlin, loving father of Rena DiPrisco and her husband, Victor of Winthrop and Christopher Coughlin and his wife, Christine of Wilmington; adored grandfather of Carmen and Nickolas DiPrisco and James and Jake Coughlin; dear brother of James Coughlin and Mary Johnston, both of East Boston and the late Judith Morgan, Michael, Kathleen, Gerard and Martin Coughlin. He is also survived by many nieces, nephews and cousins.



Funeral arrangements were by Vazza’s “Beechwood” Funeral Home, 262 Beach St., Revere. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Laurence’s name to The Salvation Army 147 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116-5197. [www.vazzafunerals.com](http://www.vazzafunerals.com).

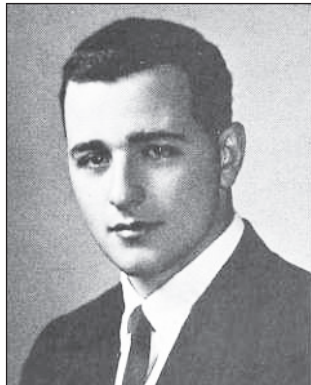
### Joseph(DeGuglielmo) Williams

Military veteran, attorney, avid golfer, loving husband and father

Joseph “Digger” (DeGuglielmo) Williams of Malden, 79, peacefully passed away of natural causes on February 22.

He was predeceased by his parents, Joseph DeGuglielmo and Maria Assunta (Januario) DeGuglielmo of Revere; his siblings Victor DeGuglielmo, Carmine DeGuglielmo, Lucy Cifuni and Jeanne “Chickie” Carbone and wife Lana Canavan Williams. He is survived by his children: Robert DeGuglielmo, Matthew Williams, Amy Neal and grandchildren, Jake Neal and Rebecca Neal.

Joe attended Revere High School, received his undergraduate degree at Boston College, and graduated from Suffolk Law School. He was a military veteran, attorney, avid golfer, loving husband, and father. Throughout his life he remained close to his high school and college friends who describe him as unselfish, generous, gregarious, close



to brilliant, unwavering, faithful and an all-star athlete. His childhood dream was to play third base for the Boston Red Sox. Joe spent many years in Bedford, NH raising a family with Lana while running a successful law practice. He formed life-long relationships with neighbors, friends, and business partners.

At Joe’s request, no service will be held. Donations may be made to the Revere Beach Partnership, [www.reverebeachpartnership.com](http://www.reverebeachpartnership.com) or the American Cancer Society, [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) For guest book please visit [www.buonfiglio.com](http://www.buonfiglio.com).

### Charles Amirault

Of East Boston

Charles G. Amirault of East Boston passed away on Monday, February 22 at the age of 63.

The loving son of the late Charles and Mary (Doherty) Amirault, he was the devoted father of Shane Amirault of Addison, Texas; dear brother of Kathleen Murphy and her husband, Thomas of Woburn and the late Stephen P. and Michael C. Amirault and the cherished uncle of Jean Paul Montgomery, Stephen Montgomery, Sean Amirault, Shane Amirault and Andrew Murphy. He is also survived by many loving cousins.

In accordance with the



Amirault family’s wishes, all services will be private. Memorial donations can be made to the MSP-CA, Attention: Donations, 350 South Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02130. To leave an online condolence visit [www.ruggieromh.com](http://www.ruggieromh.com).

### John Alesio Perrella Jr.,

MBTA retiree

John Alesio Perrella, Jr., lifelong resident of Revere, died on February 24 surrounded by his loving family at the age of 71.

John relished the time he spent with his family and would do anything for them. He was a driver and collector for the M.B.T.A. before his retirement. John enjoyed the countless trips he took with his friends on his Harley Davidson. He will be truly missed by all who knew him.

Born in Revere on April 30, 1949 to Marie (Frongillo) of Revere and the late John Perrella, he was the beloved husband of 36 years to the late Janis (Wood). John has spent the last 12 years with his partner, Diane Selvite-la. He was the devoted father of Lori Farrington of Connecticut, Leanne Perrella and her fiancé, Robert Pagliarulo of New Hampshire, Anthony Perrella and his fiancé, Mi-



chelle Onessimo of Revere, and the late John Perrella III; dear brother of Janice Modica of East Boston and Kenneth Perrella and his wife, Nancy of Revere and the cherished grandfather of 10. He is also survived by many loving aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews.

Funeral arrangements were entrusted the Paul Buonfiglio & Sons-Bruno Funeral Home, Revere. Interment was in Woodlawn Cemetery. For guest book, please visit [www.buonfiglio.com](http://www.buonfiglio.com).

## MVES Healthy Aging Program empowers seniors by offering information, peer support

Diabetes. Healthy eating. Stress reduction. Fall prevention. These issues all affect older adults yet many do not know where to turn for resources to help them address these challenges effectively. Enter the Healthy Aging Program at Mystic Valley Elder Services (MVES), a comprehensive program of classes designed specifically for seniors wanting to remain healthy and independent in their own homes.

“Open to any older adult from the 11 communities served by MVES, our classes provide the perfect platform for learning and sharing,” says Donna Covelle, Healthy Aging Program coordinator for MVES. “In addition, our classes are made available at no cost, making them accessible to any older adult wanting to participate.”

MVES Healthy Aging Program offerings include a chronic disease self-management class, diabetes self-management class, healthy eating for successful living class, fall prevention class, and tai chi classes. Classes are held in series ranging from 6-8 weeks. Each class typically has between eight and 12 participants.

Prior to the onset of the pandemic last March, classes were made available in person at a number of area venues. Covelle points out that MVES was able to quickly pivot and shift some of the classes to Zoom starting last spring. More virtual classes will be announced this spring, all offering technical support for operating Zoom.

“Apart from providing a wealth of helpful information for local seniors, our Healthy Aging Program classes offer a way for seniors to socialize with others facing similar challenges,” says Covelle. “We have seen many friendships blossom from our programs.”

To make the Healthy Aging Program classes come to fruition in the past, Covelle partnered with local senior centers, housing authorities and libraries. Susan Tilton, outreach coordinator for

the Edith O’Leary Senior Center in North Reading, says, “It’s been great that MVES has been offering the Healthy Aging Program for North Reading seniors. They have learned to take more control of their health, live safely and more independently. Because of the programs you have offered over Zoom, you have reached more homebound seniors and opened them up socially.”

“I enjoyed every minute,” says Marie Cantone of Malden, who recently took the Healthy Eating series over Zoom. “The instructors did a great job introducing all of us to healthy options and helped us to set and reach goals. If I were to sum up what I am leaving these classes with, it would be the confidence to say ‘I can do it!’ – an amazing result that I am sure is shared by all participants.”

Medford resident Anna Jones explains, “My mother and grandmother passed away at early ages, so I did not have elderly role models to know what to expect now that I am 70 years old. The virtual Healthy Aging Program classes were a huge help to me because they taught me about aging, illness and prevention and how to care for myself.”

Jones continues, “The instructors who taught the classes were compassionate, understanding and knowledgeable. The virtual option was great because I didn’t have to worry about traveling. Please keep them coming!”

Covelle concludes that while MVES looks forward to reintroducing in-person classes in the future when it is safe to do so, the virtual offerings have proven to be a tremendous success. “Participant feedback is so important to us and we are delighted to hear from so many elders that these classes have served them well,” she says.

To learn more about the MVES Healthy Aging Program, please visit [mves.org](http://mves.org) or contact Donna Covelle at [dcovelle@mves.org](mailto:dcovelle@mves.org) or 781-388-4867.

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## MFA receives gift of 48 Henryk Ross photographs depicting life inside a WWII Jewish Ghetto

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), has received a gift of 48 photographs by Henryk Ross (1910–1991), which offer an extraordinarily rare glimpse of life inside Poland’s Lodz Ghetto during the Holocaust. Donated to the MFA by collector Howard Greenberg, the group of gelatin silver prints was originally given directly by Ross to Lova Szmuszkowicz, later Leon Sutton (1909–2007), a fellow survivor of the Lodz Ghetto who brought them to the U.S. when he immigrated to New York City in 1947. The prints represent a significant range of both official images, which Ross took as a photographer for the ghetto’s Department of Statistics, and the unofficial photographs that he took secretly at great personal risk, which documented the grim realities of life inside.

“This extraordinary collection of images reminds us of photography’s power to preserve and amplify the full emotional range of lived experience. Together, these 48 photographs serve as both memory and documentary evidence of the extremes of war. They are powerful and memorable,” said Matthew Teitelbaum, Ann and Graham Gund Director. “Imagine the journey: passed from the photographer to a fellow prisoner in the Lodz Ghetto, hidden and brought to New York City in a small envelope, passed from one generation to another after a lifetime of care, and now preserved permanently in one of America’s great collections of photography. That, too, is powerful and memorable.”

The Lodz Ghetto was the longest-existing and second-largest, after Warsaw, of at least 1,000 ghettos established by the Nazis to isolate Jews within the Eastern European cities that the regime occupied between 1939 and 1945. Previously a photojournalist for the Polish press, Ross was confined

to the ghetto in 1940 with his wife, Stefania. Put to work by the Nazi regime, Ross was assigned to illustrate the productivity and efficiency of the ghetto and make identification cards for registered workers. At the same time, the photographs that Ross took in secret documented the ghetto’s deplorable and steadily deteriorating living conditions as well as the deportations of residents to extermination camps at Chelmno and Auschwitz.

When the Nazis ordered the final liquidation of the Lodz Ghetto in 1944, Ross was among a group of about 900 residents held back to clean up and gather property from empty buildings, while Sutton was among those deported to Auschwitz. It was then that Ross buried a box of his negatives in the ground. Three months after the ghetto was liberated by the Russian Red Army in January 1945, he excavated the box. The prints in the group acquired by the MFA—the first photographs by Ross to enter the Museum’s collection and among the rare few owned by a U.S. museum—were made before 1945 and given by Ross directly to Sutton, who returned to Lodz after Auschwitz’s liberation and subsequently brought them to New York City.

Sutton’s son, Paul Sutton, inherited the photographs from his father and understood their importance after seeing Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross, an exhibition that the MFA hosted in 2017. Sutton then contacted Greenberg, a prominent collector of photography and gallery dealer, who purchased the group and subsequently donated it to the Museum.

“I am so excited and deeply gratified to see that my father’s collection of original Henryk Ross images will be residing in the permanent collection of the MFA,” said Sutton. “After traveling to Boston

to view the Memory Unearthed exhibition at the Museum in April 2017, I knew how significant my father’s collection was and wanted very much to see the photographs preserved. Having these images added to the permanent collection of the MFA is an extreme honor to the legacy of my father, who personally received these images from Mr. Ross in Lodz and then preserved these images for many years until he entrusted them to me. As the first-generation Jewish American son of two Polish Holocaust survivors I do strongly feel that we must never forget. I would like to thank Howard Greenberg for his support and efforts to facilitate their accession to the MFA and MFA’s Kristen Gresh for her enthusiasm and professionalism in completing this acquisition.”

Born in Lodz, Poland, Leon Sutton was the son of a textile factory owner and lived in the Lodz Ghetto during World War II. After receiving the photographs from Ross and bringing them to the U.S., Sutton kept them in an envelope, where they have been preciously held for most of the last 75 years. The prints’ exceptional provenance allows the MFA to preserve and tell multiple stories, including that of emigration from Europe after World War II.

“The journey of these photographs is fascinating, one that touches many different people along the way—starting with their beginning with the courageous Henryk Ross, passed to his friend Leon Sutton, then to his son Paul and acquired by me two years ago. We’re all delighted that these works will find a final home at the MFA and be shared with generations to come,” said Greenberg. “It is especially meaningful for me to be able to donate them in honor of Jacques Preis, trustee of the Leonian Trust, who believes in the power of



Untitled photograph from Litzmann (Lodz Ghetto), 1940–45, Henryk Ross.

photography. The story of Leon Sutton—and all the brave people who endured the Lodz Ghetto and those who perished—should never be forgotten.”

A significant addition to the MFA’s documentary holdings, the photographs by Ross bolster the Museum’s mission to represent the many different histories of the medium. They complement the MFA’s

growing collection of photographs from World War II and join those of other Jewish photojournalists, including Robert Capa, Eva Besnyo, Roman Vishniac and Clemens Kalisher.

“These photographs provide an intimate visual record of a harrowing time in history,” said Kristen Gresh, Estrellita and Yusuf Karsh Senior Curator

of Photographs. “One of the images in particular is incredible to see because we have only ever seen a reproduction of a damaged negative likely from the same roll of film that had looked as though it had been burned. Seeing the print of this otherwise lost moment in time is a truly moving experience.”

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE REGION

AMBROSINO DELIVERS ANNUAL STATE OF CITY

CHELSEA - City Manager Tom Ambrosino delivered his annual State of the City address to the Council, going through the lows of 2020 while identifying the pitfalls coming in 2021, but also noting that he is more optimistic at the moment than he has been over the last year.

“It’s been the hardest on me in my 30 years of public service, and it’s probably been the hardest on this City in its history,” he said. “However, I have to say for the last few months I actually feel a sense of optimism – optimism ground in the belief that despite a still-raging pandemic and despite continued economic turmoil and notwithstanding unresolved racial injustice, we do seem poised as a City and a nation to turn a corner. The vaccines are here, and though distribution is frustratingly slow, it is here.

“I feel confident this virus will be brought to heal in Chelsea in the next few months,” he said, noting an incredible moment for the hard-hit community.

His address began with discussion those hard hit times. He noted that the City had been “unprecedented and tragic,” calling out the 218 deaths that occurred in Chelsea alone due to COVID-19. He added in the racial injustice brought to light after the George Floyd murder, the insurrection at the nation’s Capitol building, among other events.

“A year like that could easily leave one completely discouraged,” he

said. “That’s not how I look back on this past year, certainly not as the leader of this City. In the midst of all that darkness, there was some light and it was a light that was clearly visible here in Chelsea. Most apparent from the way this City rallied together to respond to the pandemic.”

At that, Ambrosino highlighted the work Chelsea did to provide relief to residents, and noted once again it was more than any City its size had done for to support its residents. That included rental assistance, small business assistance, food pantries, the COVID isolation hotel, the Legal Aid Clinic and the innovative Chelsea Eats debit card program.

“(Chelsea Eats) was one of the largest pilots in the nation of direct, unfettered money to those in need,” he said. “That’s a program that could become a national model for how you deliver effective safety net relief.”

Ambrosino also highlighted the work that was done over the summer to respond to racial inequities in City government. He said they moved fast to establish the Diversity and Equity Office, and are only days away from picking its first director.

Beyond the victories in 2020, Ambrosino reiterated four challenges in 2021 that he also identified during the January inauguration of the City Council.

“Significant challenges confront us now as we speak,” he said.

One of those issues is housing insecurity, and he said the City is going to have to somehow address the rent backlogs that exist and will only

grow as time passes by.

He also highlighted the package of zoning changes that was sent to the Council after a mostly-positive recommendation from the Planning Board. One of the key changes there include building more density. Meanwhile, a Home Rule Petition approved in the State Legislature not long ago allows for Tax Title properties in the City to be transferred to the Affordable Housing Trust Fund for development of affordable housing – a first in any community.

I expect very shortly that Board will come to the Council seeking a transfer for their first project,” he said.

A second concern is rebuilding the small business community. He said the City is going to have to invest significant money to get small businesses away from the crisis stage and back to sustainability. He said he has tasked the City’s Community Development office with getting out into the community and beginning that work.

Rebuild Small Biz Community

“I have instructed the DHCD to spend the next month working closely with the business community and the Council to develop ideas how we might most effectively jump start that sector with government support,” he said. “I expect that could include assistance for outdoor dining, a second round of the storefront improvement program and perhaps sponsoring some events to draw business to the commercial sector once it is safe for larger gatherings. The details are still in development, but the City is

OFFICIALS TOUR LOCAL VACCINATION SITES



AG Maura Healey toured the Chelsea vaccination site on Monday morning. She is shown in the vaccine room – formerly the conference room at La Colaborativa – with EBNHC CEO Manny Lopes and La Colaborativa Director Gladys Vega.

committed to using government resources to fuel this business recovery.”

Meanwhile, while small business is getting on firm financial ground, Ambrosino said the City needs to begin thinking about building back its reserves. The pandemic caused the City to reach deep into its Rainy Day Fund, with the Fund having been at around \$25 million before the pandemic, and now at \$15 million. He said they spent \$12 million to support residents, and \$5 million of that came from the City’s savings. Another \$5 million was used to prop up the budget this year due to declining revenues.

“We do have some work to build back up our financial strength,” he said. “I will say things are not as bleak as those circumstances first indicated. In fact the economic prospects

for FY22 are looking better...Re-building \$10 million of our reserves will be difficult but we will begin that in FY22.”

Finally, the last point of attention he said needed to be the school system. He said Chelsea Public Schools will not be able to function without help from the City.

Wrapping it up, Ambrosino said he remains hopeful for 2021 and that working together, City leaders will find their way out of the pandemic.

“I have every faith and confidence that working together with you we’ll find the right path forward in 2021,” he said. “Our City was tested and shaken in 2020. I’ll quote one of my favorite Bible verses, ‘We were hard pressed on every side, but we were not crushed.’ Instead we emerged intact and the State of Chelsea tonight remains steady, strong and determined.”

BLACK COMMUNITY HONORS TRAILBLAZERS

CHELSEA - The Chelsea Black Community was set to honor its “Chelsea Trailblazers,” bringing to a close the organization’s schedule of events in celebration of Black History Month.

CBC President Joan Cromwell said the community celebration would recognize “Chelsea Trailblazers through the COVID-19 pandemic and social injustice.”

Cromwell and other CBC leaders are being lauded for the varied schedule of events that were well attended via Zoom.

“The month was amazing,” said Cromwell. “It was informative, full of education and awareness. We had close to 100 people at some of the

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Region // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

events.”

Last week Superior Court Justice Angel Kelley led a panel that discussed initiatives in addressing racial disparities as well as ideas for community partnership and employment opportunity. Chelsea’s well-known spiritual leader, Rev. Dr. Sandra Whitley, facilitated the event on Zoom.

“I think the discussion was helpful in terms of knowing where we’re going as our community while developing a relationship with the Chelsea court system,” said Cromwell.

The CBC leader said she appreciated the planning efforts of Bunker Hill Community Dean Sharon Caulfield, School Committee member Henry Wilson, and board member Dakeya Christmas.

“Sharon was incredible in her organizing role,” said Cromwell. “Her implementation of the Black History Month photo exhibit at the Salvation Army was dynamic. Her photos were displayed beautifully.”

Councilor-at-Large Leo Robinson, dean of Chelsea city government, said the CBC and its multi-faced observance of Black History Month effectively raised awareness about important issues affecting the city.

“I know this year was challenging because of COVID-19, but they stepped up commendably again to educate and inform Chelsea residents about the organization’s key goals and objectives,” said Robinson. “I would like to see the organization (CBC) expand its involvement in the community by having its members consider positions on our city boards and groups such as the City Council.”

Among the highlights of Wednesday’s “Chelsea Trailblazers” were slated to be: a poem recitation by Desayna Christmas; a musical tribute of recognition to the Chelsea Trailblazers by accomplished singer Annie Cheevers, daughter of former Chelsea resident Maria Schneiderman Cheevers; and a tribute of gratitude to the Chelsea School Department and Supt. of Schools Dr. Almi Abeyta by President Cromwell’s son, Kyle Umemba, and daughter, Jayde Umemba.

**HAVING HARD TIME FINDING QUALIFIED CANDIDATES**

EVERETT - City officials told the City Council that they are having a hard time filling critical positions in the administration, including the Election Commissioner, Diversity Director and the Planning and Development Director, among others.

To that end they told the Council they would be hiring an outside job recruiter to try to lure candidates to these City positions, some of which have been vacant for some time.

Councilor Fred Capone brought the matter up in an order on the agenda asking about the Elections Commissioner and the Library Director. The Council just recent-

ly filled the ISD Director position with longtime Facilities Director George Lane, but so far many key positions remain vacant and the City continues to have difficulty finding a good group of candidates.

“We really want a diverse group of candidates that we have not been able to attract to date,” said Mayoral Chief of Staff Erin Deveney.

City Solicitor Colleen Mejia said they do plan to hire a recruiting company to help draw attention to the many key positions that are and remain vacant.

For the Planning Director, the City got 12 applications, but none of them were fully qualified and that position remains open.

“We hope to get a better array of candidates to meet our needs,” said Deveney.

For the new director of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – proposed more than a year ago – that position also remains open and has not had qualified candidates to date. The City has sought help from Boston on the matter, while at the same time Chelsea had more than 60 candidates apply for a similar position there and are in the final stages of making a hiring choice.

The City has advertised that position several times over the past year, but has yet to get the pool of applicants it wants to move forward.

“It’s troubling what we’re hearing and a city as vibrant and flourishing as ours would have that problem,” said Capone.

With a Municipal Election on the horizon, many on the Council were troubled that there is not an Elections Commissioner yet. The job has fallen to City Clerk Sergio Cornelio, who ran the last Presidential Election in 2020, but does need a Commissioner in place.

Councilor Michael McLaughlin said having such a person in place for the upcoming election is going to be a top priority – especially with so many changes to voting methods.

“Things can and do happen quickly if there isn’t someone watching what is going on,” he said. “I’ve experienced some disheartening things in the past and don’t want to see those same things in this election.”

That was echoed by Councilor Gerly Adrien, and Councilor Jimmy Tri Le.

“This needs to happen sooner rather than later to hire outside personnel to take charge of these positions,” Le said.

Capone was also interested in the Library Director, which he has been talking about for some time. The former Library Director resigned abruptly in 2019, and City Solicitor Matt Lattanzi has been serving in that role since then. Deveney said he can serve for up to three years in the position, and they did look for a director but didn’t find one they wanted. Apparently they got qualified candidates, but most wanted to do the job remotely at the time and the City didn’t want to go that direction.

Deveney said they are currently using existing resources to run the library, which is at very limited capacity due to COVID-19 realities.

Capone said he would rather see the hiring of a Library Director rather than a restructuring and a temporary post for Lattanzi.

“You need a librarian running a library system and a director of libraries putting a long-term plan together,” he said. “While I appreciate what is being done now, you need a full-time Library Director in there.”

•FACE PAGES AND THE LIKE

For some on the City Council, Facebook, e-mails and Zoom are just one big electronic mess and a lot of members would rather avoid including them as part of their meeting structure. However, the Council voted 6-3 to return broadcasting their meetings on Facebook live as well as the typical cable TV and online portals. Those voting against were Councilors John Hanlon, Wayne Matewsky and Jimmy Tri Le.

Councilor Stephanie Martins brought the matter to the Council on Monday night at the meeting and indicated she would like to bring the Facebook broadcast back to help expand accessibility to the public.

The Council took the broadcast off of Facebook live last year, even though others like the School Committee kept it on. Councilor Rosa DiFlorio said she took it off because members were complaining to her about negative and distasteful remarks that were being made in the ‘Comments’ section during the meetings. Some of those comments were directed at councilors, and she said a number of the members wanted it shut down, so she did.

However, she said she’s a “strong woman” and she’s in favor of the Facebook broadcast, and can take the negativity. She did say having it on Facebook drew criticism from “outside people” as far away as New York, New Jersey and Baltimore, and she would only like to hear such criticism from Everett residents.

Martins and Councilor Anthony DiPierro

implored the Council members to call on their supporters and family members to be kind and courteous if the Facebook broadcast returns, along with the comments, which by law can be erased en masse at the end of the meeting. It has been alleged that the negative comments last year were coming from supporters and family members of elected officials.

Councilor Hanlon, who has emerged during the pandemic as one thoroughly opposed to anything technological or electronic, said having the Facebook, or Facebook pages, would be a huge mistake.

Council President Wayne Matewsky agreed with him, noting that the City is only required to broadcast the meetings on cable television by law, and everything else is just a courtesy. “I’m absolutely not in favor of this,” said Hanlon. “I think it will extend our meetings three times longer...I get 165 e-mails a day and I don’t need Facebook pages to make it worse.”

**DeMARIA WANTS TEACHERS TO BE VACCINATED**

EVERETT - Mayor Carlo DeMaria has not given up on his plan to try to get teachers in the Everett Public Schools (EPS) vaccinated ahead of schedule so as to enter into a smoother and safer return to hybrid education.

At the School Committee meeting Feb. 16, and reiterated this week, the mayor said he is continuing to plead with Gov. Charlie Baker to allow Everett to be a pilot program in the state when it comes to teacher vaccination.

“I’m still not giving up hope,” he said. “We did face a setback on our plan to vaccinate teachers, but I’m not giving up hope the governor would allow just the City of Everett in a pilot program to vaccinate,” he said. “We would accommodate those 75-plus and 65-plus, those with two co-morbidities and also vaccinate our teachers. We are running into situations where we have our vaccination clinic and we do have ample spots open. We could instead be vaccinating teachers.

There’s pressure to get teachers vaccinated even though information was shared that school children aren’t a contributor to the spread.”

Supt. Tahiliani is joining the mayor in that push as well, and also said they are formulating a wait list of teachers were there any leftover vaccine available that had been unused at the end of any clinic.

The Everett Teacher’s Association (ETA) is working with the Everett Public Schools and the mayor on that wait list, in addition to pushing for vaccination as well.

**ST. MARY’S GIRLS HOOP TEAM TAKES LEAGUE CUP**

LYNN - It wasn’t easy, but when all was said and done in an historic season that was complicated by an ongoing pandemic, the St. Mary’s High School basketball girls team was No. 1 – again.

Though they won’t be officially crowned as state champions for the second year in a row, Jeff Newhall’s 2020-21 Lady Spartans were unquestionably one of the best teams in the state.

Twenty wins – the most in the state. Another title in the highly competitive Catholic Central League. A 1,000-point scorer in Division 1-bound Sacred Heart commit Maiya Bergdorf. One of the most successful players in school history is Endicott-College bound Nicolette D’Itria, who led a senior class that produced 80 wins in four years.

A rising star guard in sophomore Yirsy Queliz who will be a future All-Scholastic if she is not one already. The superb sixth-person junior who became a huge contributor as a starter as a senior, Alyssa Grossi. And the breakout season of St. Mary’s next great all-around player, sophomore Kellyn Preira.

On Saturday at the Tony Conigliaro Gymnasium that would have been packed for the championship showdown against rival Fenwick under normal circumstances, St. Mary’s showed its mettle.

After pulling away to a substantial lead in the third quarter, St. Mary’s held off the fast-closing Crusaders to take a 46-40

victory and the CCL Cup championship trophy.

D’Itria was the unofficial MVP of the game, with 15 points, seven rebounds and four assists. D’Itria took over the proceedings with three successive 3-pointers in third quarter that helped expand the lead to 39-16.

“It feels great to be CCL champions and especially to get the chance to beat Fenwick in our home gym – it’s a great way to end our senior season,” said D’Itria. “Eventually my shots started falling at the right time. I had a great five years (grades 8-12) with Coach Newhall and all the coaches. It was a great team to be with each year.”

Newhall said that D’Itria was a difference maker in the title game.

“Nicolette played well all game, but the three 3-pointers in third quarter – that’s when we made our run,” said Newhall. “That’s probably the sequence that won the game for us.”

Queliz had nine points and will return next year to pilot a potential run to the Garden. Preira (7 points) and Grossi (6) played well for the Spartans. Grossi was also the game’s leading rebounder with 11 cars. Bergdorf, a talented 6-foot center, emerged from early foul trouble to score six points and end her special career with a second consecutive championship.

“When you look back at the season, you can’t help but be more than happy,” said Newhall, whose career record is now a lofty 323-137. “We were the best team in the regular season and the best team in the post season.”

Newhall thanked his five seniors – Nicolette D’Itria, Alyssa Grossi, Maiya Bergdorf, Van Nguyen, and Pej’ae Parent – for their contributions to the program.

“We have five great seniors that have been through a lot,” said Newhall. “They go out as winners and they’ve had an unbelievable run. It’s going to be tough to see them move on, but the future is bright.”

Newhall was assisted on the St. Mary’s staff by coaches Jim Foley, Mike Jalbert, Tim Spinney, Alison McCarthy, and Victoria Ault.

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# Lovin’ Spoonfuls addresses an ongoing need for healthy food

With Massachusetts tackling the single greatest percentage increase in food insecurity anywhere in the nation, Lovin’ Spoonfuls rescued and distributed more food in 2020 than at any point in its 10-year history. The equivalent of 3.3 million meals were created as a result of rescuing over four million pounds of food in 2020. Since their inception in January 2010, Lovin’ Spoonfuls has redistributed over 19 million pounds of fresh, healthy food that would have otherwise gone to landfills throughout the Commonwealth; about 40% of food in the United States goes to waste each year.

To help support their continued, increased efforts during the pandemic, Lovin’ Spoonfuls is hosting a virtual Chef-A-Thon fundraiser. From March 22 to March 25, join Chefs Daniel Bojorquez (La Brasa), Tracy Chang (PAGU), Douglass William (MIDA) and Karen Akunowicz (Fox & the Knife) to benefit Lovin’ Spoonfuls and their restaurant partners that have been impacted by COVID-19.

•COVID 1 Year & 2020 Final Numbers

“To say that 2020 was challenging is perhaps an obvious understatement. While the collective struggles of both COVID-19 and a social reckoning that brought our country to its knees remain with us, we are grateful for the opportunity to continue to serve over the last year,” said founder and executive director Ashley Stanley. “Even in unprecedented need, our frontline workers stood ready to assist, and they did. Our services provided immediate relief to individuals and families hit hardest by the pandemic.”

In 2020, Lovin’ Spoonfuls:

- Rescued over 4 million pounds of food in total during the pandemic; equivalent to over 3.3 million meals
- Serviced over 170 non-profit partners during the pandemic
- *16% of partners relied on Lovin’ Spoonfuls for majority of their food needs
- Onboarded 25 new non-profit partners in response to COVID-19
- Added a new permanent Greater Boston route to further serve partners in Chelsea, Revere, Everett, East Boston & Lynn



Lovin’ Spoonfuls food rescue program is having a Chef A Thon fundraiser in March featuring four great chefs.

- Rescued (by the pound; percentage of total haul):
- *Produce: 1,680,000 pounds (42%)
- *Dairy: 560,000 pounds (14%)
- *Bakery items: 560,000 pounds (14%)
- *Meat: 440,000 pounds (11%)
- *Grocery (non-perishables): 360,000 pounds (9%)
- *Prepared Foods/Grab & Go meals: 320,000 pounds (8%)
- *Miscellaneous (frozen items and meals): 80,000 pounds (2%)

•Offset the equivalent of 1,168 cars of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

To learn more about Lovin’ Spoonfuls or to donate to the organization, please visit [lovinspoonfulsinc.org](https://lovinspoonfulsinc.org).

Join Lovin’ Spoonfuls for a virtual fundraiser that will feature four nights of family-friendly cooking demos with some of Massachusetts’ top chefs.

From 6pm to 7pm on March 22 to March 25, cook alongside:

- Monday, March 22: Daniel Bojorquez; Owner/Executive Chef of La Brasa
- Tuesday, March 23: Tracy Chang; Chef/Owner of PAGU
- Wednesday, March 24: Douglass Williams; Food & Wine Best New Chefs 2020 and Chef/Owner of Mida
- Thursday, March 25: Karen Akunowicz; James Beard Award Winner, Best Chef Northeast, Top Chef Seasons 13 & 17 All Stars

LA, and Chef/Owner of Fox & the Knife

Tickets are \$15 per night or \$50 for all four nights, and can be purchased at: <https://one.bidpal.net/march21chefathon>. For tickets purchased before March 1, 2021, code “ChefaThon25” can be applied for an early bird discount. Proceeds from this event series will benefit Lovin’ Spoonfuls and their restaurant partners/supporters that have been impacted by COVID-19.

# Nationwide unemployment scam targets Massachusetts claimants

The Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) released updated information regarding the scope and extent of the national unemployment fraud scam as it relates to Massachusetts. As previously announced, criminal enterprises in possession of stolen personal information from earlier, unrelated commercial data breaches continue to attempt to file large numbers of illegitimate unemployment claims through the Massachusetts unemployment system.

To ensure the integrity of the unemployment system, DUA continues to apply enhanced identity verification measures that may temporarily delay the payment timeframe for some unemployment claims in Massachusetts. DUA is also working with state and federal law enforcement agencies, municipalities, and dedicated constituent service personnel to address the national unemployment fraud scheme and recover fraudulent payments. DUA’s analysis of the

fraud scheme includes both claims that have been reported by individuals whose identity was used for a fraudulent claim and claims that have failed ID verification and other program integrity measures.

Individuals who believe a false unemployment claim has been filed in their name are urged to utilize the Department of Unemployment Assistance fraud contact form at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/report-unemployment-benefits-fraud>.

The DUA call center handles around 16,000 calls per day and is staffed by around 670 individuals with an additional 300 people who work on the adjudication of unemployment claims apart from the call center. The DUA customer service department can be reached at (877) 626-6800. The highest traffic hours for the DUA call center are on Monday mornings.

•1099s Related to Fraud

1099-G forms are typically sent to unemployment claimants for tax filing purposes, covering benefits received for the previous year. DUA has excluded sending 1099-Gs to individuals who reported a fraudulent claim filed in their name as long as the information matched with those in the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Unemployment Insurance Online (UIO) systems. However, if an individual has received a 1099-G reflecting payments of benefits that the individual never applied for or received, they should fill out the fraud reporting form: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/report-unemployment-benefits-fraud>. DUA will issue corrected 1099-Gs for those individuals and will send the corrected information to the IRS and DOR as well. Individuals who receive a 1099-G in error will not be required to pay taxes on benefits.

•Unemployment Insurance Phishing Scam

Claimants should also be aware of an unemployment phishing scam that is occurring in Massachusetts and similarly in other states. Massachusetts constituents have received a text message that includes a link requesting unemployment claimants enter their login and password on a site that looks similar to the official Unemployment Insurance (UI) Online website. If a claimant has received this text message, please do not respond. Responses to requests from DUA should only be uploaded through your secure account at <https://uionline.detma.org/Claimant/Core/Login.ASPX> or <https://duaverify.eol.state.ma.us>. DUA will never ask a claimant to reply to a text or email with personal information.

•Massachusetts Unemployment Claimant Fraud Data

*Unemployment claims submitted to Unemployment Insurance Online (UIO) - April 2020 through January 2021

Total claims submitted: 1.2M

Total claims eligible to be paid: 957K

Total claims denied: 261K

Total appeals pending: 28K

*Unemployment claims submitted to Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) - April 2020 through January 2021

Total claims submitted: 946K

Total claims eligible to be paid: 282K

Total claims denied: 627K

Total appeals pending: 40K

*Claims identified as fraud due to reporting by individuals - April 2020 through January 2021

PUA and UIO: 156K

*Issued Payments Confirmed to be Fraudulent - April 2020 through January 2021

PUA and UIO: \$219M

Additional Issued Payments which are Potentially Fraudulent - April 2020 through January 2021

PUA and UIO: \$468M

*Recovered Fraudulent Payments - April 2020 through January 2021

PUA and UIO: \$252M

*Total Confirmed Payments to Unemployment Claimants - April 2020 through January 2021

PUA and UIO: \$15.7B

*Fraudulent Payments Prevented from Disbursement - April 2020 through January 2021

PUA and UIO: \$19.2B

The Department of Unemployment Assistance continues to analyze this ongoing national fraud scheme and has engaged a nationally recognized forensic accounting firm to assist in the fraud investigation. The above figures may be subject to change based upon that analysis.

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