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Wednesday, July 29, 2026

GOVE STREET NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION HOLDS SUMMER FIESTA



PHOTOS BY MARIANNE SALZA

Residents gathering at the corner of Gove and Orleans Street for the Gove Street Neighborhood Association Summer Fiesta on July 25.

Right, Rachel Machuca, 8, drawing on the ground with sidewalk chalk. See Pages 8 and 9 for more photos.



Eastie teen Parker Vitagliano-Hill holds rugby tournament to help raise awareness for epilepsy

By Cary Shuman

When Parker Vitagliano-Hill saw her mother, Alicia Vitagliano, working on a grant for the Epilepsy Foundation of New England, she said, 'Oh, that's pretty cool, when I get old enough, I would like to do that.'

Alicia informed her daughter that there was no age minimum for submitting grant propos-

See PARKER Page 12



Parker Vitagliano-Hill is pictured at the Rosie's Ruck Rugby Tournament with Fontbonne Principal, Maura Spignesi.

Dine Out Boston returns August 1-15

Special to the Times-Free Press

Dine Out Boston is back for its summer edition from August 1-15, 2026. Presented by Meet Boston, and in partnership with the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism and new sponsor Toast, this two-week culinary celebration features close to 200 participating

restaurants, providing diners an opportunity to enjoy delicious deals and restaurateurs the chance to bring in new patrons to their establishments.

For the first time, this year's summer program spans three Saturdays. The new Toast sponsorship will create oppor-

See DINE OUT Page 14



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Times-Free Press

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Forum

OUR LOSS....IS SALEM'S GAIN

We'd like to offer our congratulations to Dr. Tommy Welch, who has been named the new Superintendent for the Salem public schools.

Welch has served as the Boston Public Schools Region 1 Superintendent, which encompasses 15 schools in East Boston, the North End, and Charlestown, for the past 11 years. During his tenure, education professionals have recognized Region 1 as being the most successful district in the City of Boston in terms of attendance, academics, and climate and culture data.

Eastie's Bradley elementary school won the National ESEA Distinguished School Award in 2024 for exceptional student achievement and its success in serving multilingual learners and students with disabilities. Schools in Region 1 have also received the EdVestors School on the Move Prize for their rapid and significant improvement in academic achievement.

In addition, Welch, an East Boston resident, has been highly-visible in the Eastie community, both in the schools and in local organizations and youth sports programs, notably Maverick Landing Community Services, East Boston Little League, and Boston Scores (soccer), in which his children participated.

We know we join with our fellow residents in wishing Dr. Welch the best in his new endeavor. Though It may be a cliché, it truly can be said that our loss is Salem's gain.

OUR SOX ARE ON FIRE!

With all of the excitement of the World Cup, the Tall Ships, and the Revere Beach Sand Castle Festival in the rearview mirror, we were ready to settle in for a relatively-nonchalant second half of the summer season.

With the Red Sox hopelessly wallowing in the mire of mediocrity (if that), even the Sox' front office seemed to have a, "Wait 'til next year," mindset, ready to trade away some top players by the July 31 trade deadline.

But just when everyone was ready to give up on the 2026 season, the unexpected happened -- the Sox caught fire. A four-game sweep of the Yankees in late June was satisfying (because it was the Yankees), but at the time we could hardly have imagined that it would provide the spark that would jump-start the Sox into playoff contention.

Those of us who had written off the Sox in 2026 now are jumping on the bandwagon after the Sox' historic 15-game winning streak, which included sweeps of the AL Central-leading White Sox and the AL East-leading Rays, a skein that has propelled the Red Sox into the second spot in the Wild Card race.

What has been most impressive about the Sox' success is that they have accomplished it without the two players -- ace pitcher Garrett Crochet and young slugger Roman Anthony -- who were seen in the pre-season as essential to their hopes for reaching the playoffs.

The 15-game streak equals the legendary 1946 team for the longest in Red Sox history. And for those of us who are long-time Sox fans (though not quite old enough to have been around in 1946!), the recent streak recalls the 10-game streak of the 1967 Impossible Dream team and the 12-game streak that was known as "Morgan Magic" in 1988.

All three of those teams achieved great success, winning the pennants in 1946 and 1967 and the division in 1988, though they all fell short of a World Series championship.

So whether history will repeat itself in 2026 -- or whether this streak was just a mid-season fluke -- remains to be seen. But at least the streak has given us hope that this young Sox squad will remain in contention throughout the rest of the summer and has given us a reason to take a peek at the sports pages every day.

LETTER to the Editor

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LANDSCAPING

To the Editor:

I was very pleased when the North Washington Street (now Bill Russell) Bridge reopened after much anticipation, many delays and years of inconvenience. One of the special aspects of the new bridge was the landscaping: the daffodils in the spring, the trees in the middle of the walkway and the various grasses and shrubs that line both sides of the span.

On a recent walk to the North End, I noticed that the plantings are uncared-for: the vines that were meant to climb the cables are all dead. Almost all of the low-lying juniper shrubs are dead as well and need to be replaced. The blue

grasses have survived but some of the other grasses are doing poorly. There is no mulch in the planters and they are filled with weeds which are smothering and overcoming the plants which are struggling to survive. It is clear that the landscaping for the bridge is not being cared for and maintained.

It is a shame to see the plants and a vision of a beautiful bridge die after such a major investment. Is there a plan in place and were funds allocated to maintain the landscaping once the bridge was finished? Who is responsible for the landscaping now that construction is completed? My efforts to get answers to these questions have been unsuccessful but I would truly like the vision for the landscaping to succeed.

Joe Caruso

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EAST BOSTON BRANCH LIBRARY NEWS

Atlantic Works Gallery's artist of the month is Victoria DelValle

Baby Lapsit, Mondays at 11:15 am & Tuesdays at 10:30
Join us for bounces, rhymes, stories, songs, and activities. We will have the same program on Monday and Tuesday. We ask that you choose one time to attend. For ages 0-24 months.

Storytime, Wednesdays at 10:30 am
This weekly storytime features books, songs, movement and a craft. Groups, please call ahead. For ages 2-5.

Maker Mondays, Mondays 3:30-4:30 pm
Do you like to make things? Drop in each Monday to make something fun.

Career Counseling Drop-in Hours: Thursdays, 12-5 pm
During drop-in hours, the BPL career counselor can answer job questions, connect you to services and make a follow-up plan

ESOL Conversation Group: Thursdays from 7-8 pm
Practice speaking English with other adult learners in an informal and friendly group

The East Boston Times-Free Press reserves the right to edit letters for space, accuracy and clarity. We regret that we cannot publish unsigned letters. Please include your street and telephone number with your submission. The East Boston Times-Free Press publishes columns, viewpoints and letters to the editor as a forum for readers to express their opinions and to encourage debate. Please note that the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of The East Boston Times-Free Press. Text or attachments emailed to editor@eastietimes.com are preferred.

setting. The group is led every Thursday by a volunteer teacher and will take place in-person. This is a drop-in program. No registration is required.

Creative Crafters Drop-in: Thursday, July 23rd from 6-8 pm
If you are an adult or teen who enjoys knitting, crochet, cross stitch, and other textile crafts please join us for this drop-in program. Whether you knit, quilt, or crochet, join our monthly meetups to relax, share ideas, and connect with fellow crafters. Please bring a project to work on.

Atlantic Works Gallery, 80 Border St., East Boston, is pleased to announce, “We Find Ourselves in Shape of Home,” on view August 1 through August 29. This exhibit will showcase East Boston artist, Victoria “thirteenvic” DelValle as a guest artist this month.
The opening reception is Saturday, August 1, 4-7 p.m.
Third Thursday Artist Talk and Reception is August 20, 6-9 p.m.
“We Find Ourselves in Shape of Home” is a series of drawings and paintings that examines how the Puerto Rican diaspora preserves culture through

architecture and community design. The work examines how deliberate syncretism and hybridity shape material expression, structural forms, and public spaces in Villa Victoria, creating environments that are at once familiar, unsettling, and liminal.
Through layered textures, transitional color palettes, overlapping structures, dissolving figures, and graffiti-influenced mark-making, the pieces emphasize the relationship between architecture and identity. Together, they depict spaces formed by migration, collective memory, and inher-

ited culture, while illuminating the often-overlooked histories embedded within syncretic environments.
Regular gallery hours throughout the exhibition are Fridays and Saturdays from 2 to 6 p.m., or by appointment.
Founded in 2003, Atlantic Works Gallery is a collaborative artist space dedicated to supporting its members and fostering the exchange of art and ideas.
For more information, please visit www.atlanticworks.org or follow the gallery on Instagram @awgallery.

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THE EAST BOSTON ITALIAN HERITAGE PARADE FUNDRAISER AT THE BEACHMONT VFW 6712

For many years the East Boston fall favorite was the Columbus Day Parade, gathering thousands from surrounding communities and a litany of parade favorites. Over the past years the parade has slipped away, Covid 19, funding, the Grand Marshall of all the late Albert “Buddy” Mangini no longer here to gather the troops and add that much needed spark to the event.

This year, a new committee chairman has evolved, no stranger to the East Boston Community, Joe Ruggiero and

friends. Taking up the mantle and leading the community to bring back the parade, re-named the East Boston Italian Heritage Parade. It will be held on October 11, of this year.

Last Friday evening several hundred parade supporters gathered at the Beachmont VFW, donating money for admission, carrying in an evening’s supply of treats, from Chinese food to pizza, sharing stories of past parades, and bringing out the best in the community.



Supporting the parade, Nancy Ranahan, Paula Lyons, Donna Akerson, Geneva Famulari. Standing: Dennis Ranahan and Betty Salemme.



In Eastie, it's still Disco, on the dance floor is Susan Zirpolo and Denise Giangange.



Brothers, Rich and Mark Tescione at the Beachmont VFW.



Joe Stefano and Vera Carducci supporting the East Boston Community. Vera Carducci is the Republican State Committeewoman for the Third Suffolk District, Revere, Boston, and Winthrop.



No event is an event, without a Tee shirt. Josephine Tescione was the top salesperson of the evening.



Enjoying celebrating Italian Heritage at the Beachmont VFW. Phil and Carrie Brangiforte, and Denise Delaney. Seated: Diane Di Giacomo, Ellen Vignoli, Linda Humphries, and Joann Burke.

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Chairman Joe Ruggiero was recuperating, but his team handles the check-in, Albert Verengia, Paula Pacitto, and John Verengia.

THE EAST BOSTON ITALIAN HERITAGE PARADE FUNDRAISER AT THE BEACHMONT VFW 6712



The Italian Heritage Parade Committee: Albert Mangini, John Verengia, Ann Guange, John Zirpolo, Josephine Tescione, Beverly Richards, Nick Moulaison, and Gina Guange. Chairman/organizer Joe Ruggiero recovering and will be back shortly.



Happy Birthday Dawn Clark (center) shown with family and friends. Dawn chose to celebrate her special day supporting the Italian Heritage Parade for 2026.



Checking out the raffle prizes, Sam and Marilyn Sears.



Enjoying the night, Joan Rutledge, Linoa Hazen, Fran Carbone, Josie Ruggiero, Nancy Giardina, and Deb Brennan.



Maria Capogreco and Kathy Constantino.



With extra cheese, Donna Carbone, Ann Guange, and Elaine Quartarone enjoy a treat before hitting the dance floor.



Albert Mangini handled raffle sales, shown with Rita Buono, and Shelia Powers-Girard.



East Boston's favorite son, Korean War Veteran, George Gambale was at the Italian Heritage Parade fundraiser.

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8/23 K² (MOZAMBICAN / GHANAIAN FUSION)

The next Harbor View Neighborhood Association meeting is scheduled for August 3

The next meeting of the Harbor View Neighborhood Association will be on August 3, 2026, at 6pm. The meeting is In Person only but will be streamed via Facebook for archival purposes. Attendance on Facebook does not qualify for voting. The meeting will be held in the Salesian Boys and Girls Club cafeteria, across from the Brooke Charter School on Byron Street. You can access the meeting from the front door on Byron Street which is also handicap accessible and an elevator is available for your convenience if needed, which is the handicap entry, to avoid the stairs.

La proxima reunion de Harbor View Neighborhood Association esta en tres de agosto a las 6pm. La reunion esta en persona y via Facebook. La asistencia en Facebook no califica para vota. Llega a la cafeteria del Salesian Boys y Girls Club por la calle Byron al otro lado de Brooke Charter School. Puede entrar a la junta por la

entrada principal en la calle Byron la cual puede ser utilizada por personas con discapacidades y tiene un elevador si es que es necesario para evitar las escaleras.

Agenda

Welcome/Introduction (5min)

Station 7 Police Report (15min) Officer Mosley and Sgt. Cintolo

Announcements: Hopefully, everyone had a great 4th of July and continues enjoying the summer. Free Monthly Community Dinner at Sacred Heart Parish August 12, 2026, 5pm-7pm. Wednesday Nights on the Greenway continues with Rock Night on August 5, at 6pm-8pm Bremen Street Park. A pilot project has the Greenway from Wood Island Park to Constitution Beach open until 10pm until September. The Bennington/ Saratoga Safety Project continues until Fall 2026. Please speak up! The 160 William F. McClellan Highway, Impact Ad-

visory Group (IAG) has a virtual meeting August 11, 2026, 5pm-8pm. Please remember Grace Church Food Pantry for any donations of food or money. The McLean Park project has started construction and is moving right along. Thank you to Barbara Puopolo our HVNA Subcommittee Chair who has doggedly pursued this project for us. Also, Nelle Ward the Project Manager who has provided guidance and direction. DID YOU KNOW?? Of the 19,747 housing units in East Boston 29.1% are 0-1 bedrooms, 38.1% are 2 bedrooms and 32.8% are 3+ bedrooms. Contact Information, Carlos Garcia, East Boston Liaison, Office of Neighborhood Services, ONS, carlos.garcia@boston.gov or 617-308-5725.

Maverick Landing Community Association (10min) Rita Lara and Maxwell Chezem will present on the programs and services available to those who need food assistance. Also, the impact MLCA has made with

the Grace Church Food Pantry.

Massport (30min) Anthony Guerriero, Deputy Director Federal Affairs and Community Relations Mass Port Authority and his team will update us on the ongoing work with the Service Area Project and next steps and the plans for the Byron Street access to the Mary Ellen Welch Greenway.

HVNA Board Elections (10min) The membership will vote for the new Board of Directors. The nominees are: Joseph Steffano, Michael McCormack, Kathleen O'Brien, Edward Deveau and Skip Marcella.

795 Saratoga Street (20min) This is the 2nd presentation and VOTE on this project. Attorney Richard Lynds will present on behalf of owner/developer Maraprano Development LLC. The project involves renovation of a single-family home into 3 residential units which includes a rear addition and dormers, as of right. The Zoning Code Refusal states relief needed from

BOA for EB Neighborhood Roof Structure restrictions and Side yard Insufficient.

555 Bennington Street (30min) This is the 1st presentation by Attorney Richard Lynds for owner Olsian Sasa. The proposal is to erect an addition and change occupancy from a two-family dwelling to a five-family dwelling and erect a third-floor deck. Zoning concerns include roof structure restrictions, ground floor unit use, insufficient front yard and insufficient rear yard. An abutter's meeting was held on June 24, 2026, for this project.

Please note that September 7, 2026 is Labor Day. HVNA will meet on this day rather than delay a week. We hope this works for all.

The next meeting of the HVNA will be on September 7, 2026. Visit us at <http://www.facebook.com/groups/harborviewna> or check our website at harborvieweastboston.com or board@harborviewna.org

LOCAL STUDENTS EARN ACADEMIC HONORS

DEAN'S LIST HONORS ANNOUNCED AT TUFTS UNIVERSITY

Tufts University recently announced the dean's list for the spring 2026 semester. Dean's list honors at Tufts University require a semester grade point average of 3.4 or greater. The following students were named to the dean's list:

Denilson Bejko, Class of 2027, of East Boston

Mathew Mabington, Class of 2027, of East Boston

Nicky Mandola, Class of 2029, of East Boston

Tufts University, located on campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville and Grafton, Massachusetts, and in Talloires, France, is recognized among the premier research universities in the United States. Tufts enjoys a global reputation for

academic excellence and for the preparation of students as leaders in a wide range of professions. A growing number of innovative teaching and research initiatives span all Tufts campuses, and collaboration among the faculty and students in the undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs across the university's schools is widely encouraged.

REGIS COLLEGE AWARDS DEGREES TO MORE THAN 1,000 STUDENTS, INCLUDING 628 NURSING DEGREES

As it begins to recognize its centennial year, Regis College celebrated its 96th commencement on Saturday, May 9 at the Leader Bank Pavilion, where

it awarded 1,036 degrees from associate to doctoral levels.

With more than 600 nursing students graduating, the degree was once again the highest number awarded among the university's programs amid the local, regional and national nursing shortage. To address the urgent need for health care professionals during a national and regional nursing shortage, Regis has graduated more than 3,700 nursing students in the past five years.

With her approaching retirement on June 30, Antoinette Hays, PhD, RN, reflected on her 15 years as president in her final remarks to the graduating class.

President Hays was awarded an honorary degree for her compassionate and visionary leadership. This year's commencement marks the conclu-

sion of President Hays' leadership of the university.

Kerry Kennedy, President of the Robert & Ethel Kennedy Human Rights Center delivered the commencement address and received an honorary degree.

Honorary degrees were also awarded to Kathleen Jose '87, '94, MSN, RN, former chair of the university's board and chief nursing officer of Lahey Health; Tracy Palandjian, MBA, co-founder and CEO of Social Finance; and Gerald Algere, senior vice president and managing director of institutional banking at The Washington Trust Company.

The Class of 2026 President Sarai Velez '26 and Graduate Student Speaker Lilla Torontali '24, G'26 also imparted words of inspiration on the Class of 2026.

"We learned through our time at Regis that we will fail; that things will not always go our way. In fact, we may fail more than we succeed," Velez '26 said. "But we will succeed. We will work harder, we will try again, and we will persevere. Because our resilience got us here today. We will leave this pavilion stronger and wiser than the freshmen who arrived four years ago. These degrees are a testament to our determination, and together we go into the world ready to serve the dear neighbor."

Students who were awarded degrees included:

Estefania Restrepo, of East Boston, received a Biology degree.

Alexis Wright, of East Boston, received a Medical Imaging degree.

OBITUARIES

James A. “Jimmy” Bolognese, Jr.

March 18, 1952 — July 17, 2026

 It is with heavy hearts and profound gratitude that we celebrate the life of James A. “Jimmy” Bolognese Jr., who was born on March 18, 1952, in East Boston and who departed this world on July 17, 2026 at 74 years of age.

A cherished son of the late James A., Sr. and Marion (Stella) Bolognese, Jimmy’s life was a testament to service, family, and community. A proud graduate of East Boston High School in 1969, James will be remembered as a committed veteran, having honorably served six years in the Army National Guard during the Vietnam War. His craftsmanship as a welder and welding instructor began at Wentworth Institute and led him to a notable career at the buoy depot in Weymouth, where he contributed to the maintenance of Coast Guard vessels. Additionally, he proudly served as a civilian employee of the Department of Homeland Security at Coast Guard Base Boston on Commercial Street in Boston. In his retirement, James continued to serve his community



as a van driver and senior advocate for North End Community Health Care, “Charlestown Satellite.”

James shared a remarkable 38 years of love and devotion with his beloved wife, Margaret Carolan-Bolognese. Together, they created cherished memories in Chelsea and their summer home in Wells, Maine, where they were embraced by a loving community and made numerous dear friends.

Known for his passion for cooking, travel, sports, and softball, James’s charismatic personality earned him endearing nicknames such as “Chef Bolognese,” “Doctor Bolognese,” and “Jimmy Meat Sauce.” His affection for his “Maine Coon”

feline companions, including the recently welcomed twins “Midnight and Sunshine,” will be fondly remembered alongside the love he had for his previous nine Maine Coon cats.

James is survived by his devoted wife, Margaret Carolan-Bolognese; his brother, Paul Bolognese; his sister-in-law, Debbie Bolognese; and brothers-in-law. Paul Carolan and his companion, Cheryl Zachari, and Frank Carolan. He is also cherished as an uncle by Kristen (Bolognese) Cuevas, her husband, Adrian Cuevas, and their son, Carter and his nephew, Justin Bolognese, his wife Nicole, and their son Banks.

Relatives and friends are warmly invited to attend calling hours for James A. Bolognese Jr. at the Welsh Funeral Home, 718 Broadway, Chelsea, on Monday, August 3rd from 9:30 to 11 a.m. A celebration of his life will follow at 11 a.m. concluding at the Funeral Home.

As we remember James, let us honor his spirit and the indelible mark he has left on our lives. His legacy of love, service, and joy will continue to inspire all who knew him.

In Loving Memory of
STEVEN J. VELLANTE

July 30, 2006 - July 30, 2026
20th Year Anniversary

God Called Your Name



*We knew little that morning,
God was going to call your
name.
In life we loved you dearly,
in death we do the same.
It broke our hearts to lose
you, you did not go alone,
for part of us went with you,
the day God called
your home.
You left us beautiful memo-
ries, your love is still our
guide, and although we can-
not see you,
you are always by our side.
Our family chain is broken,
and nothing seems the same, but as God calls us one
by one, the chain will link again.*

*Loved & Sadly Missed
Ma, Mark, Buster & Patti*

OBITUARIES

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GOVE STREET NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION HOLDS SUMMER FIESTA

The Gove Street Neighborhood Association (GSNA) held a Summer Fiesta on July 25 at the intersection of Gove and Orleans Street, featuring free food, lawn games, and raffles donated by The Quiet Few,

Carmella's Market, and Koro Ramen and Sushi. "This is a great opportunity to bring everybody together," said GSNA board member, Neel Batra, who has lived in the neighborhood for ten years, and

enjoyed seeing new faces in attendance. "We're neighbors, we live in the same place, we

see each other every day, and having a block party is a way to know each other better."

PHOTOS BY MARIANNE SALZA



Gove Street Neighborhood Association board members: Matt Walsh, Neel Batra, Francis Amador, and Alexandra Machuca.



Gove Street Neighborhood Association residents gathering for a Summer Fiesta on July 25.



Neel Batra, GSNA board member, speaking with Stephan Marin.



Daniel enjoying lunch with Ryan Susanto.

Can't beat this heat.

August 1 - 15, 2026

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Winston, cradled in the arms of Isa Tise Wals.



Lorraine Curry and Rick Cresta.

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GOVE STREET NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION HOLDS SUMMER FIESTA

PHOTOS BY MARIANNE SALZA



Matt Walsh, Christine Kim, Jordi Segales, and Emma, 6-weeks-old.



Erick Cannon and Jessica Gill.



Ceceilia Botreo, Luz Medina, and Lucia Garcia.



Esperanza Rojas, Ana Arevalo, and Luz Adamas.



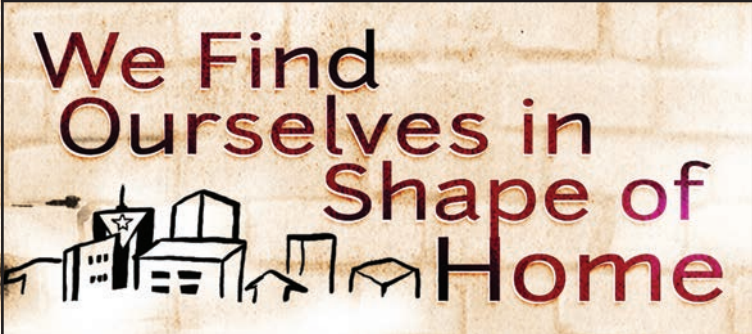
Winston, held by Isa Tise Walsh, kissing Roberto Gomez, chief of staff for State Representative Adrian Madaro.



Lorraine Curry hugging Zaida Adames.



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Third Thursday Reception: August 20, 6:00-9:00 pm
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RECYCLE

Healey-Driscoll Administration expands firefighter survival training with new mobile SCBA maze

Special to the Times-Free Press

The Massachusetts Department of Fire Services (DFS) announced the expansion of firefighter survival training at the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (MFA) with the addition of a new mobile self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) training maze. The new training system will increase access to realistic, hands-on instruction for recruit and veteran municipal firefighters across the Commonwealth.

“One of DFS’s most important responsibilities is ensuring firefighters across Massachusetts have access to the highest-quality training possible,” said Public Safety and Security Secretary Gina Kwon. “That means continually investing in modern equipment and training environments that reflect the dangerous and unpredictable conditions firefighters face in the field. Better training builds more confident, better prepared firefighters, and better prepared firefighters help make communities across Massachusetts safer.”

The new mobile training maze expands the MFA’s ability to deliver firefighter survival training both on campus and directly to local fire departments. Combined with the Academy’s existing mobile training re-

sources, it will increase access to realistic, hands-on SCBA training for recruits and experienced firefighters alike. The unit also replaces the Academy’s original Stow-based SCBA maze, ensuring this critical training remains available for years to come.

This year, DFS marks 30 years of training Massachusetts firefighters through the MFA. Since 1996, the Academy has prepared thousands of firefighters for the challenges of the job while continually evolving its training programs to reflect new technologies, emerging hazards, and best practices. The addition of the new mobile SCBA training maze builds on that legacy by giving more firefighters the opportunity to train in realistic, high-pressure environments that build the skills and confidence they need to respond safely and effectively when lives are on the line.

“The SCBA Training Maze is one of our most frequently requested training tools,” said State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine. “This new mobile unit allows us to deliver critical survival training to more firefighters in more communities while strengthening the MFA’s ability to prepare recruits and veteran firefighters for the dangerous and unpredictable conditions they face. Providing firefight-



The Massachusetts Firefighting Academy’s new SCBA Maze Trailer will provide vital firefighter safety training at the MFA’s Stow campus and at local fire departments. It replaces a 40-year-old permanent installation that is at the end of its useful lifespan.

ers with realistic training is one of the best investments we can make in their safety and the safety of the communities they serve.”

Inside the maze, firefighters navigate dark, confined, and unfamiliar environments while wearing full turnout gear and SCBA. The training is designed to build confidence under stress, improve air management, and reinforce the skills firefighters rely on during searches, rescues, and self-extraction.

Last year, the MFA’s Springfield-based mobile SCBA maze supported training for more than 500 municipal firefighters. The addition of a second road-worthy mobile unit will expand training opportunities for fire departments across Massachusetts while continuing to support recruit training at the Stow campus.

The new mobile maze is one of several investments that have strengthened training at the MFA in recent years, alongside a forcible entry trailer, flashover training prop, search and rescue buildings on the Bridgewater and Springfield campuses, a hazardous materials leak prop, and a Mobile Extraction Unit used to decontaminate firefighting gear.

DFS invested approximately \$500,000 in the new training system, supported in large part

by a \$435,000 FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant. The investment reflects DFS’s continued commitment to provid-

ing firefighters across Massachusetts with access to realistic, state-of-the-art training.



The new SCBA Maze Trailer replaces a 40-year-old permanent installation with obsolete electronics, seen here, that has exceeded its useful lifespan.



Advanced Fire Skills Program Coordinator Al Beardsley stands in the new SCBA Maze Trailer’s control room, which features a digital audio and video feed from multiple cameras inside the training area. Instructors can communicate with trainees and control lights and sound at all times.



The new SCBA Maze Trailer’s modern lights, speakers, and video monitoring system are powered by an onboard generator, allowing it to be used anywhere local fire departments need it.

NeighborHealth appoints Maria Coppenrath as Chief Financial Officer

Special to the Times-Free Press

NeighborHealth announced the appointment of Maria Coppenrath, CPA, as the organization's new Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, effective July 20, 2026.

With more than 30 years of healthcare finance experience – including over 15 years serving as CFO within complex, multi-site Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) – Coppenrath brings deep expertise in healthcare finance strategy, value-based care, 340B pharmacy operations, ACO models, and FQHC regulatory compliance.

Most recently, Coppenrath served as CFO at Caring Health Center in Springfield, Massachusetts. She has also held senior financial leadership roles at Greater Lawrence Family Health Center and Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center, where she led financial transformation initiatives, strengthened organizational sustainability, and supported significant operational growth.

Coppenrath succeeds Jamie Hazard in the CFO role following Hazard's transition to Chief Executive Officer in December of 2025. In her role as CFO, Coppenrath will oversee financial strategy, planning and operations for one of the largest community health centers in the country, with more than \$300M in annual revenue, 1700 employees, and a full complement of primary care and specialty services, a 24/7 emergency department, the Neighborhood PACE program, and multiple on-site pharmacies.

"Maria stood out throughout the search process for both her exceptional financial leadership and her deep commitment to community health," said Jamie Hazard, President and CEO of NeighborHealth. "She brings a rare combination of strategic expertise, operational excellence, and mission alignment. We are thrilled to welcome her to NeighborHealth and are



Maria Coppenrath

confident she will be an invaluable partner as we continue to strengthen and expand care for the communities we serve."

Born and raised in Everett, Massachusetts, Coppenrath distinguishes herself through her collaborative leadership style, ability to translate complex financial concepts into actionable insights, and prov-

en track record of building high-performing finance teams.

"NeighborHealth is well known for its innovation, compassion, and service, and I am honored to be part of an organization so deeply committed to equitable, community-based care," said Coppenrath. "As a first-generation Italian American and the daughter of immigrants, I understand the hopes, sacrifices, and resilience that shape so many of the families NeighborHealth serves. That personal connection makes it especially meaningful to join an organization that has long been a trusted resource for immigrant communities. I look forward to partnering with the leadership team and staff to support NeighborHealth's continued growth, strengthen its mission, and ensure its long-term sustainability."

Coppenrath joins NeighborHealth following a highly competitive national search. She is

the recipient of numerous professional recognitions, including the National Association of Community Health Centers' Jeffrey T. Latman Leadership in Healthcare Finance Award, and serves as Treasurer on the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers. She is also on the Board of Directors of CapitalLink, which provides financial advisory services to community health centers in Massachusetts.

NeighborHealth, formerly East Boston Neighborhood Health Center, is one of the nation's largest Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and the largest community-based primary care health system in Massachusetts, serving more than 120,000 people and recognized by the Health

Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as a National Quality Leader. For more than 50 years, NeighborHealth has offered access to comprehensive primary care, specialty care and emergency care for patients in the Commonwealth. In a first-of-its-kind merger in 2020, East Boston Neighborhood Health Center joined forces with the South End Community Health Center and expanded services to patients who live and work in Boston's South End and Roxbury neighborhoods. NeighborHealth champions innovative care models to actively bridge health equity gaps in our low-income and immigrant communities with services unique from other healthcare providers in our state. For more information, visit www.neighborhealth.com.

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Parker // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

als. “I told, Parker, ‘whenever you have an idea, please let me know, and we’ll support you.’”

Within minutes, Parker told her mother she had “a great idea.”

“Instantly, Parker had this idea for a rugby 7s tournament in the summer to help raise money to help other kids around New England defray the cost of seizure alert dogs.”

Utilizing the funds from a grant by the Epilepsy Foundation of New England’s Blue Skies Challenge, Parker started the New England Rugby 7s Tournament, which she called Rosie’s Ruck. The inaugural event was held Sunday, July 19 at the Irish Cultural Center of Greater Boston in Canton. The tournament was a huge success with six teams of adults competing. Interestingly, the Tartan Army - the huge contingent of soccer fans who were in the Boston area for the World Cup - was among the attendees at the tournament. The Scots even took the field in their kilts and participated in a rugby match.

Inspired by her sister

Parker’s noble endeavor was



Pictured above is Rosie, a chocolate Labrador service dog.

inspired by her younger sister Alana Vitagliano-Hill’s journey. At the age of two, Alana was diagnosed with epilepsy.

“We wanting to do something actionable and getting a seizure alert dog was something that was very important to us,” said Alicia. “Alana’s treatment team at Mass General Hospital thought it would be a great idea. They helped us get connected with a dog trainer, and we were able to have the dog trainer handpick Rosie for us from an ethical breeder, which was really important to us. Rosie trained with her for about a year to 18 months, and then moved in with us full time, and Roise is a five-year-old chocolate labrador right now.”

Parker said she saw the positive impact that Rosie had on

her sister’s life and wanted to help other children.

“I wanted to make sure that every kid around New England had a service dog that could help them,” said Parker. “My sister has had a better life. It’s very important because some kids with epilepsy don’t have seizure alert dogs, and that can be very tough on their family money-wise. Because if your child has epilepsy and they have a seizure, you might not know it, and that’s why a dog can be very helpful.”

Parker said she chose the sport of rugby for the tournament because she herself is a rugby player “and it’s a community-based sport.”

Parker plays for the Mystic Rugby Club, which is the one of the oldest and most celebrated rugby clubs in the region.

“Parker has been playing rugby since she was four years old, and Alana (who is eight years old and a student at the Bradley School in East Boston) also plays,” said Alicia. “And my husband [Jayson Hill] is a rugby coach as well.”

Parker also plays ice hockey for the North America Hockey

Association (NAHA) Junior Hawks program based in Canton. She will be a candidate for the girls’ hockey team at Fontbonne Academy where she is an eighth grader.

Parker inherited her passion for sports and her excellence in athletics from her parents. Alicia played field hockey, basketball, and softball at the Pingree School in Hamilton and was a softball player at Scripps College in California. Jayson Hill was a track and soccer standout at Danvers High School.

A display of superb leadership

Parker’s total command of the tournament process from its inception to completion was indeed an impressive feat.

“Parker did all of it,” said her mother. “She proposed the grant and was asked to present it live in front of 200 adults. At the tournament itself, Parker did interviews and answered tons of questions about epilepsy and helped people try rugby for the first time. She was doing a little bit of everything.”

Parker also designed the logo and selected the trophies

for the tournament, whose proceeds went to the Rosie’s Ruck Foundation. Families will be able to apply to Rosie’s Ruck for grants to help defray the cost of obtaining a dog and its training.

“There are only a few people around the country that will train for seizure alert dogs,” noted Alicia. “We were lucky enough to find a trainer in North Chelmsford, Nicole Tran of Canine Odyssey. She was terrific.”

Proud parents

Understandably, Alicia and Jayson are proud of daughter Parker’s tournament-organizing efforts.

“We’re so proud of both our daughters,” said Alicia. “We’re so excited to see all the potential that Parker will be unfolding with Alana. I know she doesn’t particularly love compliments from her mom, but I am over the moon excited about what she started, and what she’s going to continue to do as she gets older.”

(Information from press materials was used in the compilation of this story).

NEWS IN BRIEF

OVERNIGHT CLOSURE OF SUMNER TUNNEL

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) is announcing that the Sumner Tunnel / Route 1A southbound will close to all traffic on Friday, July 31, at 11 p.m. and will reopen to traffic at 6 a.m. the following morning. Travel through the Ted Williams Tunnel (I-90) and Callahan Tunnel (Route 1A northbound) will remain available. A signed detour will be in place during the closure.

This closure is necessary for crews to safely conduct repairs and maintenance activities.

Appropriate signage, law enforcement details, and mes-

saging will be in place to guide drivers through the work area.

Drivers traveling through the affected areas should expect delays, reduce speed, and use caution.

All scheduled work is weather dependent and subject to change without notice.

For more information on traffic conditions, travelers are encouraged to:

- Download the Mass511 mobile app or visit www.mass511.com to view live cameras, travel times, real-time traffic conditions, and project information before setting out on the road. Users can subscribe to receive text and email alerts for traffic conditions.

- Dial 511 and select a route to hear real-time conditions.

- Follow @MassDOT on X, (formerly known as Twitter), to receive regular updates on road and traffic conditions.

COTTAGE PARK HOSTS 32ND ANNUAL REGATTA TO BENEFIT MAKE-A-WISH

Cottage Park Yacht Club’s 32nd annual Regatta to benefit Make-A-Wish provides a chance for sailors of all ages to compete for a good cause and the whole community to contribute to a nonprofit that grants wishes for children suffering

serious illnesses.

The three-day event, Friday, July 31 through Sunday, Aug. 2, provides funds for wishes that range from meeting a famous sports hero to a trip to Disneyland to building a backyard playscape to many others that spring from the mind of a child. What they all have in common is they shine a ray of hope at what is often a dark time in the lives of the children and their families.

The Summer Soiree starts the Make-A-Wish weekend at CPYC and is open to the community. It opens Friday evening at 6:30 p.m. and features an open bar, tastings from local restaurants and breweries,

silent auctions and raffles, as well as live music from local favorites John Polino and the Second Hand Band.

CPYC has set a goal of raising \$100,000 this year, adding to the \$1 million it topped last year in its contributions over the years as a Make-A-Wish community partner. The nonprofit’s local chapter honored CPYC with its “Community Hero Award” last year, in recognition of the club’s efforts to help children suffering from cancer, cerebral palsy, leukemia and other serious illnesses.

Community members can help in ways big and small:

Mayor Wu highlights traffic and pedestrian safety plans for streets

By Adam Swift

In the wake of the death of Boston transportation planner Louisa Gag earlier this month, Mayor Michelle Wu has released plans to make city streets safer.

Gag was killed on her bicycle when she was riding near Roxbury Crossing and was fatally struck on Tremont Street by the driver of a truck.

Following the fatal accident, District 5 Councilor Enrique Pepén and Council President Liz Breadon brought forth two measures to the council pushing for safer streets.

“Louisa was killed on her bicycle blocks from an intersection your administration has studied and stalled,” an open letter to the Mayor signed by the two councilors and 4,000 others stated. “She was not the first. We have been losing neighbors to these streets for years, and we have been warning you, specifically and repeatedly, that more deaths were coming.”

On July 22, the council unanimously approved a measure that calls on the mayor and her administration to pursue infrastructure projects that protect people walking, biking, riding transit, using mobility devices, and traveling with children.

Pepén and Breadon also introduced an ordinance requiring the city to report publicly on its street projects each year.

On Friday, July 24, Wu released a six page letter detailing the city’s approach to delivering street safety improvements for all roadway users.

“Residents deserve clarity about our vision for streets that are safe, beautiful, and family-friendly,” Wu stated. “I am writing today to detail our immediate response to the crash that took Louisa’s life, our approach to delivering street safety improvements for all roadway users, and the work ahead.”

The immediate response outlined by the mayor includes supporting the administration’s Streets Cabinet staff. Chris Osgood, Senior Advisor for Infrastructure and former Chief of Streets, and Tali Robbins, Deputy Chief of Policy, will support the Streets Cabinet full-time.

“They started in these roles on Monday, July 13th, providing guidance and direction on policy, planning, and major capital projects, and they will meet monthly with leaders of advocacy organizations to facilitate ongoing, direct dialogue,” Wu wrote. “Over the coming weeks, I am also con-

vening a group of advisors to assess the Streets Cabinet’s organizational structure, staff capacity, and resource needs. This group will advise on ways to improve and accelerate the delivery of safer streets and critical services. In close coordination with the ongoing law enforcement investigation, the City will conduct a comprehensive safety and urban design evaluation of the Tremont Street corridor in Mission Hill to identify important fixes.”

The team has been reviewing bike lanes that use or previously used flex posts to determine where cast-in-place or other more durable barriers will be installed.

“We will expand the use of more durable protective barriers wherever feasible, including by coordinating upcoming resurfacing with installations later this year,” the mayor stated. “And we are installing quick-build barriers in priority locations where more permanent construction is not possible this year, such as the cycle tracks around the Boston Common and the Public Garden, and along Western Avenue.”

The Boston Police Department has determined that a large truck was involved in the crash that took Gag’s life. Wu noted that trucks and oth-

er heavy commercial vehicles have been involved in the majority of fatal crashes involving cyclists over the past decade and a significant share of fatal pedestrian crashes.

“The City’s truck side-guard ordinance applies to City vehicles and those contracted for City projects, but we need protections for all trucks and large commercial vehicles on Boston’s streets,” Wu said. “In the coming months, we will work to advance more comprehensive truck safety legislation, strengthen side-guard enforcement, review City routes used by heavy commercial vehicles, and assess additional safety measures to prevent future crashes.”

More than a decade ago, Boston became a Vision Zero city, committing to eliminate fatal and serious traffic crashes, according to Wu. Since then, she said the city has made significant progress to make streets safer, that there is still much work to do. The City’s Vision Zero dashboard is currently updated with data through June 2026. Going forward, Wu said the city will update the dashboard monthly and expand its analysis to target locations and conditions for needed interventions.

Wu said the administration

will use that data to keep streets reliable, well maintained, and resilient. She also pledged to protect and connect Boston’s cycling network and improve school zone and pedestrian safety.

“Investing in safe sidewalks, curb ramps, crosswalks, and roadways improves safety and mobility for everyone—particularly for residents with disabilities, seniors, and other pedestrians,” Wu stated.

There will also be a focus on targeted, effective enforcement and the use of technology to tackle traffic issues.

Wu also pointed to a number of recently completed infrastructure projects as well as others that are in progress or the planning stages that will improve safety for pedestrians, motorists, and cyclists.

“Boston should be a city where every resident and visitor can move comfortably and confidently, enjoy beautiful public spaces, and feel part of a community that is home for everyone,” Wu stated. “We will carry forward Louisa’s legacy by working to make this vision a reality. There is much more work ahead. I look forward to getting it done together.”

Briefs // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

donate and become an event sponsor, register your sailboat for the Saturday pursuit race at Regattaman.com, and attend

the Friday night fundraising Soiree (July 31 6:30 p.m. at CPYC, open to the public). To buy Soiree tickets, donate to



A look at last year’s event at the Cottage park Yacht Club.

Make-A-Wish, or to see other details, check out CPYC’s Make-A-Wish website at makeawish.cpyc.org.

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Dine Out // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tunities for diners to discover and support their favorite local restaurants through Toast Local, the neighborhood app that helps guests find new restaurants, book a table, and get rewarded. Patrons can also order ahead for pickup, customize and pay in seconds. Toast Local makes it easy to enjoy the best of Boston.

This summer's Dine Out Boston comes on the heels of one of the most historic sum-

mers ever, with FIFA World Cup 2026, America's 250th celebrations, and Sail Boston generating global attention for Boston and all of its great culinary and cultural assets. The MICHELIN Guide's inaugural Northeast Cities edition launched last November, and this summer's Dine Out Boston will include several Michelin-recognized establishments. The program will also feature many first time Dine Out Bos-

ton participants, with Rosa y Marigold, Maple & Ash, and Fallow Kin all set to make their Dine Out debuts. Also joining for the first time are all five Fuji locations, F1 Arcade in the Seaport, and World Cup favorite The Haven in Jamaica Plain.

"Boston's culinary scene is receiving the recognition it deserves. We are a premier dining destination and we want residents and visitors alike to experience it through our Dine Out Boston program," said Martha J. Sheridan, President & CEO of Meet Boston. "With three Saturdays on the table, Dine Out Boston is perfect for a family excursion, date night, or a gathering with friends or colleagues. Diners can explore specially priced menus at restaurants across Greater Boston, with a wide range of cuisines to choose from throughout all 23 Boston neighborhoods, Cambridge, Somerville, Brookline and beyond. Pair your Dine Out experience with a concert, museum visit, outdoor movie, or a trip to Fenway to see the red-hot Red Sox."

Meet Boston recently became the first destination partner to launch Mindtrip's WhatsApp integration, extending AI-powered destination discovery and trip planning to one of the world's most widely used messaging platforms. While designed to help visitors explore Greater Boston year-

round, the tool is also a valuable resource during Dine Out Boston, helping diners discover participating restaurants, make reservations, and plan an itinerary around their meal. Meet Boston is also introducing a new Dine Out Boston Bandwango pass: a free, browser-based mobile passport that allows diners to check in at participating restaurants and local attractions, redeem special offers, and earn prizes while exploring Greater Boston.

Meet Boston invites all diners to experience Boston's diverse restaurant scene in new ways. Explore more about Boston's culinary scene at www.meetboston.com/culinary and please view our Summer 2026 Dine Out Boston montage.

Participating restaurants will offer prix fixe menus for lunch and dinner, with many offering takeout and delivery options as well. Restaurants select one of three price points and customize their lunch and dinner menus: lunch at \$27, \$32 or \$36 and dinner at \$38, \$46, or \$55. Restaurants can offer as many courses as they desire at their selected price. A full list of participating restaurants is here.

Visit DineOutBoston.com to browse menus and make reservations. Extend your Dine Out Boston experience and sleep in with an overnight getaway package at a selection of participating hotels.

As always, Dine Out Boston includes an important charitable component and this summer's program will benefit Blue Hill Observatory, Revere Beach Partnership, and the Veronica Robles Cultural Center. Diners are encouraged to participate in the Dine Out Boston auction in which they can bid on \$100 participating restaurant certificates; more information at DOBAuction.com.

Follow Dine Out Boston social channels to learn more: @dineoutboston on Facebook and Instagram.

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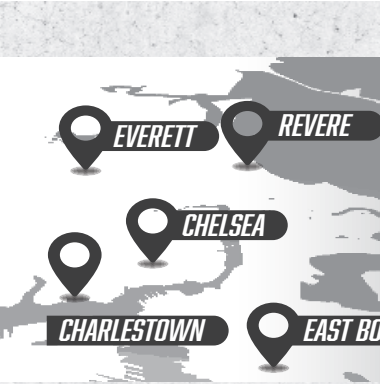
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MAYOR MICHELLE WU VISITS PIERS PARK SAILING CENTER

Special to the Times-Free Press

On Monday, Mayor Michelle Wu visited the Piers Park Sail-

ing Center and meet with young people to highlight the City's summer youth jobs program. The Mayor also celebrated the second year of Boston's Youth Climate Corps and announce that applications are open for the Boston Youth Climate Action Fund, a grant supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies to help finance youth-led climate resilience projects across Bos-

ton neighborhoods. At the event, Mayor Wu also join youth sailors for a quick ride around the harbor.



Shown are scenes from Mayor Michelle Wu's visit the Piers Park Sailing Center. MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY ISABEL LEON

