

Local news for and about Boston's best neighborhood

Church, School Partnership Builds a Library

Inspiring a Love of Reading

BY TRICIA HARVEY
SUBMITTED BY SSYP

St. Stephen's Youth Programs (SSYP) and the Blackstone Elementary School kicked off their ninth year of a formal partnership and readers of all ages celebrated their love of books. One of the signature projects of SSYP is the school library, which



Display of Gidwitz books

Continued on page 2

'Tis The Season

An Annual Celebration

COURTESY JON SEAMANS
CITY OF BOSTON

The South End was well represented by residents Shanna Pires, Curtis Jiles, and their son Jaydah, 5, at the 77th Annual Tree Lighting on Boston Common on November 29.

The celebration was presented by Mayor Martin J. Walsh and The Honourable Karen Casey, Deputy Premier of Nova Scotia, the Boston Parks and Recreation Department, The Province of Nova Scotia, Jumbotron sponsor JetBlue, and presenting sponsors Exelon Generation, the Coca-Cola Company, and Bank of America with additional support from WCVB Channel 5, Magic 106.7 FM, and the Boston Globe.

The holiday decorations throughout Boston Common and the Public Garden included the City of Boston's official 2018 Christmas tree, a 46-foot white spruce tree donated by Ross McKellar and Teresa Simpson from Oxford, Nova Scotia.



Photo by Jon Seamans

A Caroling We Go

BY MICHELE D. MANISCALCO

About 25 people gathered on the cold, clear afternoon of Sunday, December 9 in James Hayes Park at the corner of West Canton Street

and Warren Avenue for the Friends of Hayes Park's caroling party. The Friends group provided songbooks, homemade cookies and other sweets and hot cider, and neighbors of all ages sang Christmas carols and holiday tunes.

More Photos on page 3

Two for December



Production photos by Mark S. Howard

Breath and Imagination,
Lyric Stage Company of Boston and The Front Porch Collective, through December 23. 617-585-5678 or lyricstage.com

BY JULES BECKER

The Front Porch Arts Collective has found the perfect inaugural work—namely "Breath and

Twelfth Night,
Moonbox Productions, Plaza Theatre, Boston Center for the Arts, through December 30. 617-933-8600 or bostontheatrescene.com

Imagination." FPAC, committed to supporting local talent of color, is making a very welcome debut

Continued on page 4

Homes, salon damaged but residents safe in Columbus Avenue fire

BY MICHELE D. MANISCALCO

On Tuesday, December 11, a two-alarm fire at 534 Columbus Avenue displaced 29 residents and caused about \$750,000 in damage, according to Boston Fire Department (BFD) spokesperson Marc Sanders. The building, which has 15 residential units and the Cha Cha



Photo credit Boston Fire Department Twitter

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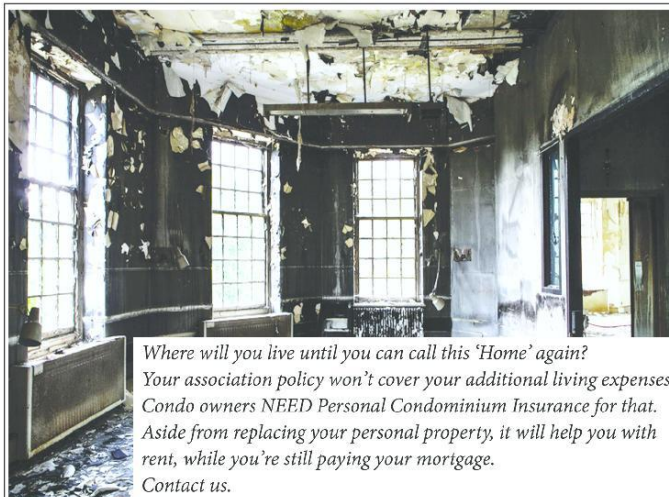
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Guest Opinion

Reducing disposable bags in Boston

BY BOSTON MAYOR MARTIN J. WALSH

The City of Boston's new plastic bag ordinance is a big step forward in our work to cut carbon emissions, reduce pollution, and create a cleaner, greener city. When the new ordinance goes into effect on December 14, 2018, stores in Boston will no longer provide plastic checkout bags to customers. Ahead of the change, we're making sure everyone has the information they need. We are answering questions and distributing reusable bags and signage throughout neighborhoods and main streets. And we're asking you to help by reminding neighbors and friends to bring a reusable bag when shopping in the city.

Here's why we're encouraging everyone to switch to reusable bags: It's an opportunity to be good environmental stewards and responsible neighbors. Single-use plastic bags have a big impact on the environment. Plastic bags often end up in our streets and gutters,

vacant lots, and trees. They're harmful to our marine life and pollute our waterways. You can use reusable bags time and time again without tossing them in the trash, which helps to reduce waste and carbon pollution. As a city committed to being carbon free and moving toward zero waste, this is a big step in the right direction.

So, how will you carry your groceries home? Moving forward, stores will provide recyclable paper, compostable, or reusable bags to customers, starting at 5 cents per bag. This charge goes back to the businesses to help them cover the cost of new sustainable checkout bags. As a customer, you can avoid the charge by remembering to bring a reusable bag whenever you shop. Businesses will be able to use their existing inventory of plastic bags by applying for an exemption to the City's Inspectional Services Department.

Switching to reusable bags is an impor-

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Library

Continued from page 1

was without one for almost a decade before the partnership.

The Blackstone Library is open to students and teachers five days a week. With close to 12,000 well-organized volumes on the shelves, an online database of these books, regular author visits, a subscription to the search engine EBSCO, and a cheery, well-lit space, the Blackstone is one of the premier elementary school libraries in Boston Public Schools. This is all thanks to a team of dedicated volunteers and resources raised outside of the school's regular budget.

Library volunteers, who are neighborhood residents and members of suburban Episcopal churches, welcome two-thirds of the school's classrooms (23 of 35) for weekly visits to the library for read-alouds and book-borrowing. Adults work hard to get to know each young person in grades K0 to 5, helping students find the "just-right" book to read independently.

In October, young readers at the school met Newbery Honor-winning author Adam Gidwitz. This and other author visits to the Blackstone School have been made possible because of SSYP's partnership with Wondermore, Inc., a Boston-based non-profit agency that seeks to "cultivate children's curiosity, creativity, and academic achievement by igniting a love of good books."

During his time at the school, Gidwitz presented his new series, *The Unicorn Rescue Society*, and shared insights into the writing process with an enthusiastic audience of third graders. Thanks to the generosity

of Wondermore and Gidwitz, each student took home a copy of the first book in the series. Wondermore also provided copies of the next two books in the series to all the third-grade classrooms and to the Blackstone Library, where they are proving to be popular checkout choices!

In November Blackstone Library volunteers led activities at the Blackstone's Family Literacy Night, an annual event that encourages a spirit of literacy at school and at home. More than forty students visited library, bringing their friends and family members, to make bookmarks, pick up some reading-related swag, and read stories to the library's mascot, Clifford the Big Red Dog.

The library program relies on volunteers who keep their focus on supporting classroom teachers and enriching the reading experience for students.

If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities in the library, please email the Blackstone-SSYP's Library Coordinator, Tricia Harvey (tricia@ssypboston.org) to arrange a visit or join the next orientation session.

Support for the Blackstone Library can also come through donations. During this festive season, please consider donating a book from the Blackstone-SSYP Wish List, found online at Porter Square Books: www.portersquarebooks.com/wishlist/280

Be sure to mention in the Order Comments section that you are ordering for Blackstone Library to receive a 10% discount. Choose "In-store Pick-up" as the delivery option and Blackstone Volunteers will take it from there.

Tis The Season

Continued from page 1



Photo by Michele Maniscalco

Guest Opinion

Continued from page 2

tant milestone, but it's just one of the ways that you can help reduce waste. You can also use the City's trash app. It allows you to check which materials are recyclable, and reminds you of your collection schedule, which means you may never miss your recycling or yard waste pickup day again. You can learn more about upcoming hazardous waste drop-off days and composting in the city at boston.gov/trash-and-recycling-guide.

As a sustainable city, we're committed to reducing our waste and the carbon pollution that causes climate change. We're exploring ways to support waste reduction as well as increase opportunities for repair, reuse, re-

cycling, composting and remanufacturing. Switching to reusable bags gets us closer to that goal. I'm proud of our progress and I know there's much more work to be done – but first, let's all remember to bring our reusable bags this holiday season and remind our neighbors to do the same.

Our Office of Neighborhood Services will be distributing reusable bags to residents, and bags will also be available for pick up at Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) locations. Businesses and residents can learn more about the City's plastic bag ordinance at boston.gov/plastic-bags or by calling 311, our constituent hotline. For more information on our Climate Action Plan, please visit boston.gov/environment.

Fire

Continued from page 1

Cha beauty salon on the ground floor, was occupied when the fire broke out.

Two firefighters incurred non-life-threatening injuries, but all occupants and pets were unharmed and were evacuated safely. The fire was located primarily in the back of the building. The fire was called in at 2:40 PM as smoke rose from the upper floors of the building, with Engine 7 and Ladder 17 from the Columbus Avenue firehouse the first to arrive.

Contractors were working on the exterior

of the building, and the Fire Investigative Unit questioned workers on the scene as well as building residents and the cause of the fire is undetermined as of press time. Sanders said that Cha Cha Cha sustained water damage.

Columbus Avenue was blocked off until approximately 5:50 PM as a Public Works Department crew sanded and salted the street, which feed over with water from the fire hoses. South End/Bay Village liaison came to the scene on behalf of the Office of Neighborhood Services, which along with the BFD's Victim Assistance Unit and the Red Cross will help residents of the building find lodging and other resources.

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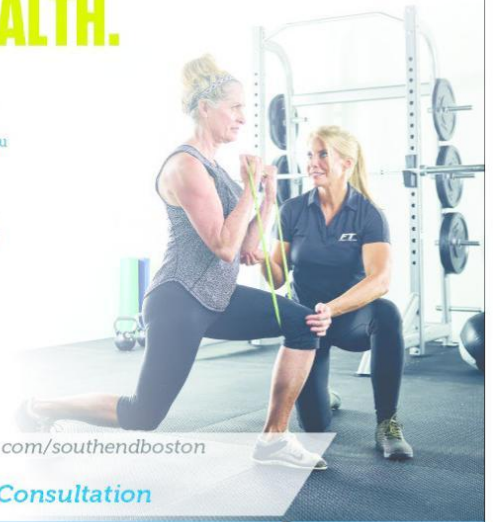
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Sharon Lyn Kelly

Sharon Lyn Kelly, 75, passed away on November 27, 2018 at the New England Medical Center (Tufts University) where she had been employed for 44 years as a registered nurse specializing in cancer treatment before her retirement. Sharon was born March 31, 1943 in Northampton, Massachusetts the daughter of Earl and Virginia (Sargent) Kelly. She was raised in Littleton, NH and was a graduate of Littleton High School. After graduating from Elliot Hospital School of Nursing in Keene, NH, in 1964, Sharon moved to Boston to become an operating room nurse. She soon grew passionate about the fight against cancer and was among the first cancer nurse specialists. She attended conferences around the country and abroad to be trained in chemotherapy treatment. Her patients appreciated her kind, straight-forward encouragement to fight for each new day as scientist continued to make new discoveries. Sharon's yearbook goal to "see the world" was abundantly fulfilled as she traveled to South America, China, India, Africa, and beyond. Some of her favorite trips were to North Carolina beaches to camp with friends and to the Maine coast to spend many wonderful vacations with her family. She also enjoyed creating exquisite needlepoint projects. Sharon loved living in Boston. Her feisty spirit, sense of adventure, forthright manner and love of life endeared her to all who knew her. She taught everyone to be their own best advocate. She will be missed by her many good friends. She will be especially missed by her brothers, Conrad Kelly and wife, Susan and Paul Kelly and wife, Martha and their families who wish to express gratitude to the staff of Tufts for their care of Sharon. There will be no funeral service; however, memorial contributions to cancer/diabetes research or animal shelters are ideas for remembrances.

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Advice on Pets, Life, Love

BY MONICA COLLINS

Hello dear readers, happy holidays. There is nothing like dog company during the Christmas season when things are holly and jolly. In the South End, the Polka Dog Bakery—an “Ask Dog Lady” favorite place for years—is at 256 Shawmut Ave. Stop by and pick up treats and toys for your angel. And don’t forget to bring angel with you. Dogs are most welcome inside the store.

In celebration of the season and our dog darlings, Dog Lady thought it might be fun to reprint some of her favorite questions—and wise answers—that have appeared in this column through the years. All the questions—and the wise answers—are guaranteed to be real.

Dear Dog Lady,

’Tis the holiday season and being in a festive mood I bought my dog Max (a 75-pound pitbull/Lab mix) a pair of reindeer antlers. His coloring is such that he truly looks like a reindeer with them on, not to mention the fact he looks adorably funny. We got them at

the pet store the other day and I made him walk home with them on. He did a great job of wearing them on the short walk home and didn’t try to shake them off. When we got home, however, he gave me a look that said, “You owe me.” My question: Do I owe him?
—Brian

Dear Brian,

Your dog sounds like a sweetie—as if he’d do anything to please you. Dog Lady has a warm-fuzzy feeling from reading your note. You don’t need the antler test to be reminded of your dog’s devotion. At the very least, you owe Max a meaty meal, a tender tummy rub, and a long arduous outing—sans funny headgear.

Dear Dog Lady,

Do I get my girlfriend a pug puppy for Christmas? Her old pug died a couple of months ago about a month after we started going out. She has been really down ever since. I hope a new dog will cheer her up and make her feel good about us. She says she really wants another dog but isn’t ready yet. I found the puppy online and put down a deposit.
—Billy

Dear Billy,

Please understand you can’t throw around a dog like a stuffed animal in order to get affection. Animal activist groups discourage puppy presents—unless the person giving the dog is prepared to assume all responsibility. Animal shelters are filled with cast-off puppies in January because, after the haze from the holidays fades, living dogs require work. They need to be fed, walked and nurtured.

Also, your girl might also feel cornered by such a grandly personal gif—even if she instantly fell in love with the dog. It would be as if you gave her a diamond ring with no plans to marry. She will feel bewildered by your expectations—or lack thereof. You must always give romantic gifts in tune with the emotional tenor of the relationship.

Dear Dog Lady,

I want my dog to have a wonderful Christmas present but I have no extra income. I can barely afford to buy food for Oscar (he’s a mix of everything) so I don’t want to spend money on treats or toys. What do you recommend?
—Ray

Dear Ray,

Hearken back to the legend of a starry silent night so long ago. The animals gathered around a manger in a stable near Bethlehem and were peaceful. Let Oscar live in peace. Never yell at him. Show him respect. Just because he’s a dog doesn’t mean you should treat him like a dog. You are his leader not his dictator.

Always remember Oscar enjoys being where you are. Walking with you is your dog’s great pleasure. Your pet does not care where you work, how much money you make, what treat you gave him yesterday. He lives for now. On this holiday, Oscar’s joy in the present is the greatest present he gives you. You can give him an extra scratch behind the ears, a belly rub, and a murmured “good dog” for no reason.

Write askdoglady@gmail.com.

Theater

Continued from page 1

with Arts Emerson artist in residence Daniel Beatty’s inspiring musical tribute to black lyric tenor-composer Roland Hayes (1887-1977).

What makes the moving Lyric Stage Company of Boston presentation especially auspicious is the opportunity it provides musically gifted Boston African-American performer Davron Monroe to do full justice to the art and life of his great predecessor.

Hayes’ majestic chronicle is a tale of many cities. While he hailed from Georgia and moved (at the age of 11) with his mother Angel Mo’ to Tennessee after the death of his father, he also lived in Brookline, performed in Boston and gave concerts before kings and queens.

That majesty had as much to do with his refusal to be artistically denied in the face of racism (including) as with his undeniably large talent. Beatty’s dense 90-minute effort makes generous use of Hayes’ classical and black spiritual repertoire in demonstrating both the range of music and his indomitable spirit.

Set during 1887-1942 at Angel Mo’ ’s farm in “the flatwoods of a Negro settlement in Georgia,” this informative work goes all the way back to the tenor’s enchantment as a youth with a (scratchy) Canuso recording and

his memories of singing scales and musical exercises. Look for Schuman concert lieder and African-American spirituals, all sung with vibrant tone by Monroe.

On the plaintive Donizetti aria “Una furtiva lagrima,” he displays the kind of sharp phrasing and beautiful high register that Hayes himself would admire. Monroe also shares rich harmony and strong exchanges—both heated and tender—with Angel Mo’, played with tenacity and warmth by Yewande Odeto Yinbo. Premier local actor Maurice Emmanuel Parent (two Norton and three IRNE awards), in a terrific professional directing debut, sharply captures all of Hayes’ moments of frustration and anger as well as his gratifying musical and personal successes. Asher Denburg’s musical direction is equally stunning.

At one point, Hayes is justly called an “extraordinary artist.” Monroe and “Breath and Imagination” deserve the same high praise.

.....
Moonbox Productions has brought very fresh approaches to such musicals as “The Wild Party” and “Cabaret” (the latter a hauntingly powerful revival). Now they are trying to do the same with Shakespeare’s seminal comedy “Twelfth Night” at Boston Center for the Arts Plaza Theatre. To that end, Evan Turassini actually sings the beginning of Duke Orsino’s famous “If music be the food of love” initial speech, and sheets of metal

achieve the sound of the pivotal opening storm. Thanks to a tour de force performance by gifted Matthew Zahnzinger (“Amadeus” and “The Thirty-Nine Steps among others), Malvolio’s adoration of Olivia and his dupery by her cousin Toby Belch and his entourage achieve both pathos and humor.

If director Allison Olivia Choat does not fully push the proverbial envelope in other ways, her generally satisfying cast does make savory fare of this play’s always intriguing combination of sibling reunion and ambiguous relationships—with Orsino attracted to Caesario (Viola of course in disguise) and Antonio’s very bromantic feeling for Viola’s twin brother Sebastian. Evan Turassini and Charlotte Kinder—properly vulnerable though quick witted as Viola/Caesario—have good chemistry. Sarah Gazdowicz as Olivia has the right subdued demeanor as a widow attracted to Caesario and convincing authority with her household. Zahnzinger is a scene stealing hoot as Malvolio sports yellow stockings and arrives cross-gartered thinking he will please Olivia. Arthur Gomez displays appealing comic ease and sings with panache as Feste the Jester.

Moonbox “Twelfth Night” could do with more risk-taking, but a spirited cast keeps it safely off the rocks.

39/49

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10th Annual Shop with a Cop Event Held at Target in South Bay

SUBMITTED BY BPD/

On Monday, December 14, 2015, members of the Boston Police Department enjoyed participating in the 10th Annual "Shop with a Cop: Heroes & Helpers Holiday Celebration" held at the South Bay Target Store in Dorchester. Officers from districts across the city along with volunteers from several outside police and first-responder agencies paired up

with over three hundred deserving children from every neighborhood in Boston to pick out a special holiday gift. The event was hosted by Mayor Walsh and Commissioner Gross and generously funded by the Boston Police Activities/Athletics League (P.A.L.), Target and several other charitable organizations. Our officers enjoyed sharing their time while bringing a little holiday magic to these grateful children and their families during this season of giving.



Photos courtesy bpdnews.com

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Discussing Homelessness

SUBMITTED BY WILDER STRATEGIES

Rev. Liz Walker, Roxbury Presbyterian Church; Jamila Bradley, Educator and Youth homelessness prevention advocate; Chris Gardner, Author, portrayed by actor Will Smith in the movie 'Pursuit of Happyness'

engage in a discussion on preventing youth homelessness at Liberty Mutual Insurance in Boston on Thursday, December 6. Liberty Mutual focuses its philanthropic giving in areas that affect the region's most vulnerable communities, particularly youth who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability.



Rev. Liz Walker, Roxbury Presbyterian Church; Jamila Bradley, Educator and Youth homelessness prevention advocate; Chris Gardner, Author

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