



THE NORTH END

REGIONAL REVIEW

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Mayor Martin Walsh announcing the new state-wide restrictions for the city and state.

Courtesy photo

COVID positive test rate up in North End

By John Lynds

The COVID-19 surge across Boston is continuing and Mayor Martin Walsh said the city is focusing efforts on neighborhoods that have a high volume of community spread ahead of the Christmas holiday.

According to the latest data released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) last Friday, 34,688 North End, Beacon Hill, Back Bay, West End and Downtown residents were tested for COVID-19 and the data shows that 9 percent of those tested were COVID positive. This was a 52.5 percent increase from the 5.9 percent testing positive the week of Thanksgiving. The citywide positive test increased 45 percent last week and went from 11.9 percent of Boston residents testing positive for the virus to 17.3 percent.

Overall since the pandemic

began 3.8 percent of North End, Beacon Hill, Back Bay, West End and Downtown residents were found to be COVID positive.

On Monday, Mayor Walsh and Gov. Charlie Baker announced new state-wide restrictions for the city and state. In an effort to reduce the further spread of COVID and its impact on Boston's health care system and essential services, Walsh said starting Wednesday Boston will return back to a modified Phase Two, Step Two of the Reopening Massachusetts plan. The

"Unfortunately, we are at the point where we need to take stronger action to control COVID-19 in Boston, and urgently, to ensure our health care workers have the capacity to care for everyone in need," said Walsh. "We are hopeful that by reducing opportunities for transmission throughout the region, we will reduce the spread of this deadly virus and

maintain our ability to keep critical services open. We continue to urge everyone to take personal responsibility and follow the public health guidelines while visiting any public space or business, and employers to allow their employees to work from home as much as possible. Together, we will be able to get this virus under control, save lives, and ultimately come back stronger."

Returning to a modified Phase Two, Step Two requires the closure of certain businesses that were allowed to open during the Phase Three reopening plan. Gatherings in private and public settings are required to have no more than 10 people for indoor settings and 25 people for outdoor settings.

The following industries in the City of Boston are required to close starting Wednesday, December 16 for at least three weeks:

- Indoor fitness centers

(COVID Pg. 3)

NEWRA holds hotel informational meeting

By Phil Orlandella

An informational meeting was held by North End/Waterfront Residents' Association (NEWRA) to discuss a proposal by Cross Street Ventures, LLC to develop a 135-room boutique hotel on Cross Street between Endicott and Salem Streets, according to NEWRA President Cheryl Delgreco.

If approved by the community and the Boston Planning and Development Agency, the total building blueprints of the development will be approximately 13,363 square feet.

Developments will take place on the property formally occupied by J. Pace + Sons and Maria's Pastry Shop and a parking lot.

The developers have been reportedly meeting and working with the Cuttillo Park Residential Organization and others to pro-

mote the project which will have an interrogated open space air passageway to and from the park.

A restaurant with 50 to 60 seats overlooking the park is planned with the goal of deterring and removing park problems and activities that reportedly exist.

A second full-size restaurant of a similar size with the Rose Kennedy Garden seen on the front side of the hotel and Morton Street and Cuttillo Park seen in the rear.

Plans for the hotel are expected to draw inspiration from the history of the North End neighborhood according to General Manager Developer Bill Caulder a local resident who previously worked on the Victor in the Bulfinch Triangle and many other family units in the North End.

New Health Representatives

(NEWRA, Pg. 2)

Some students return to in-person learning at the Eliot School

By John Lynds

Mayor Martin Walsh and Boston Public School Superintendent Dr. Brenda Cassellius announced that approximately 1,700 students across 28 schools, including the Eliot School in the North End, returned to in-person learning on Monday.

The students returning to school this week have complex disabilities and language needs and were identified by BPS as having a high priority for in-person learning.

"After the return three weeks ago of students to our special education-focused schools we returned the next group of students on Monday, December 14,"

said Cassellius. "We are communicating directly with those families in collaboration with their school leaders to outline next steps. This group includes approximately 1,700 students across 28 schools. These plans are based on families who selected hybrid learning for their students and on each building's ability to welcome students and staff back to in-person learning. We will add free-standing air purifiers into the school buildings without HVAC systems to promote airflow."

However, the Boston Teachers Union (BTU) passed a vote of 'no confidence' in Dr. Cassellius's reopening plan.

(SCHOOLS, Pg. 2)



Regional Review wishes all a Safe & Healthy Christmas!

We look forward to seeing you in 2021

Cheers to a New Year! The next issue will be on Jan. 7, 2021



Americans are ready to be vaccinated

New survey data show only 15 percent of Americans believe a return to normal life is possible without a vaccine, a broad and bipartisan acceptance that policy makers should capitalize on.

The public opinion survey conducted by ScienceCounts, a non-profit whose mission is to promote public awareness and support for science, was conducted the week leading up to Thanksgiving attempting to understand the public's feelings on the COVID-19 pandemic and willingness to vaccinate.

While an assumed narrative exists that an individual's views on the seriousness of COVID-19, and necessity of a vaccine are bitterly partisan issues, the ScienceCounts survey indicates that conservatives, liberals, moderates, and notably black-nonhispanics alike view the pandemic as serious and will take

the vaccine even if social distancing and other disease transmission preventatives are necessary for a time after vaccination.

Some key takeaways from the survey include:

- 84 percent of survey respondents believe that a vaccine is the path to returning to normal with only 7 percent liberals / 16 percent moderates / 20 percent conservatives disagreeing.

- 53 percent of survey respondents are likely to get vaccinated once a vaccine is available, one in five are undecided at this time with Black American's making up the plurality of undecideds.

- Willingness to get vaccinated is unaffected by the possibility that mask wearing, and social distancing could remain necessary for the foreseeable future.

"We must recognize, contrary to political punditry, the

majority of Americans are ready to do what is necessary to get COVID-19 under control," said ScienceCounts Executive Director Chris Volpe. "While clear differences exist when you look at a person's political philosophy, our data tell us that the clear majority of American understand the pandemic is serious and understand taking the vaccine is the best chance we have at returning to normalcy.

"Public health and public policy leaders should recognize this and develop a COVID vaccination response plan that is ready for the silent majority of Americans – including Black Americans – to be vaccinated," he continued. "Our unique data tell us that American's are ready, willing and able to be vaccinated at levels not fully appreciated."

SCHOOLS (from pg. 1)

"The BTU has advocated to Cassellius for common sense reopening provisions such as prioritizing in-person learning for special education students, particularly those who cannot access remote learning," said the BTU in a statement after the vote.

Other asks by the BTU included safe ventilation and air quality standards; vents in bathrooms and working sinks with soap for hand-washing; a scheduling process that takes into account pre-existing medical conditions of educators and their families; PPE for educators, nurses and staff working with students who cannot socially distance or wear masks; and access to COVID-19 testing.

The union did not seek additional provision with regard to safety, instruction, or staffing issues covering the Eliot and the 27 other schools in Boston, but merely sought the same provisions that were formally agreed to by the superintendent for the first four schools that were opened last month.

"These key provisions were at last agreed to with the Superintendent in November for the initial four schools that were reopened with our support for some of our highest-need students," the statement continues. "Prior to the vote of no confidence, the union had passed a resolution calling for the same safety,

instructional, and staffing provisions that exist at the four currently open schools to be extended to the 28 additional schools where staff and students will be present on Monday."

On Monday, Mayor Walsh shot back at the BTU's no confidence vote and credited Cassellius and her team for doing this work and prioritizing the students who most need our support.

The Mayor addressed the vote that the BTU took over the week-end that criticized the district and the superintendent on Monday during a press briefing.

"That action doesn't help our collective efforts at a critical time," said Walsh. "I value deeply the work that our teachers are doing and have done, all year, under very difficult circumstances. I am sympathetic to their concerns about COVID safety. These are all of our concerns and we are responding to those concerns. 100 percent of the safety measures that the teachers union requested are implemented in all the schools we have opened. The result is that, today, many more high needs students and their dedicated teachers and support staff are in school, working together, being safe, and learning. That's a great accomplishment by all involved. We're going to continue to support our teachers and school staff in that work. And we're going to keep our promise to the families of our city to do everything we can to get kids safely back in school, where they belong. I have absolute confidence in the Superintendent and her team's commitment to these values and this work."

NEWRA (from pg. 1)

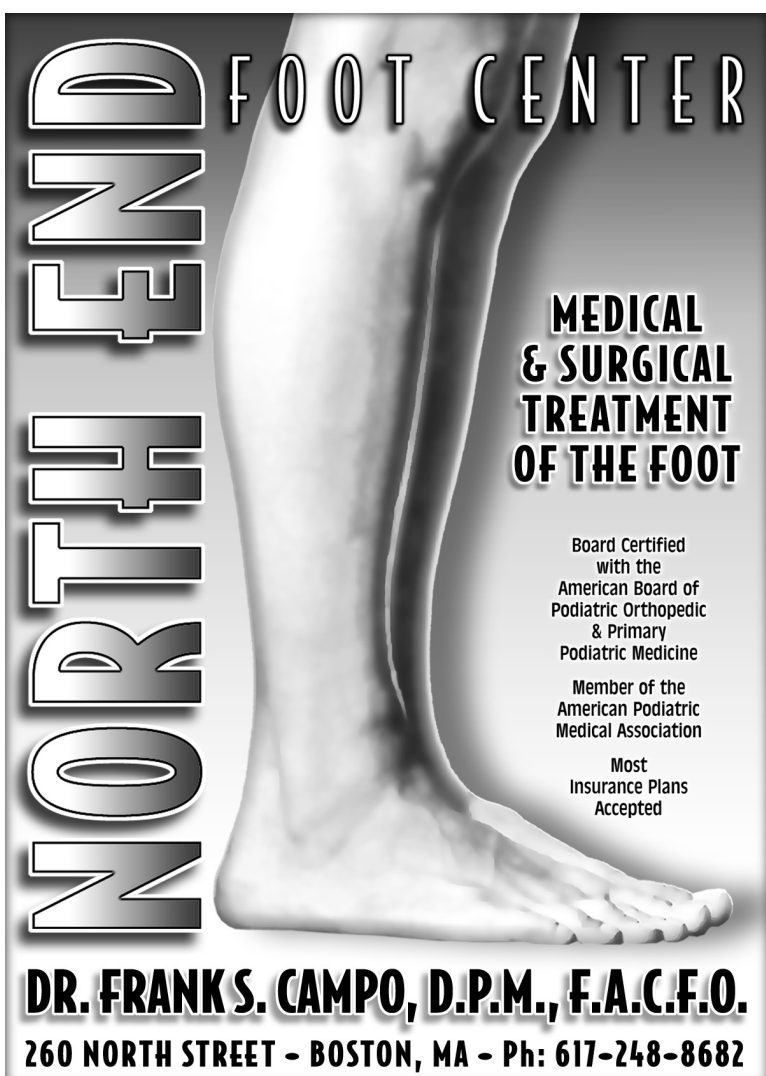
discussed their holiday fundraising campaign for its Food Insecurity Program's expanding efforts throughout the holiday season to assist needy people and families in the neighborhood.

Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) representatives presented an update on construction in the North End.

NEWRA President Cheryl Delgreco spoke about 2021 mem-

bership renewal and advise the non-profit group that the next monthly meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 14. Details will be announced.

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Most Americans will not travel for Christmas

A recent national survey commissioned by the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) shows that nearly two-thirds (69 percent) of Americans will not travel for Christmas. With a new surge in COVID-19 cases, the CDC recommending that Americans do not travel over the holiday season and new stay-at-home orders in place in states across the country, the holiday season will compound the challenges already facing the hotel industry during this public health crisis.

"We understand the importance of following CDC guidelines to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and support the government's actions. However, with the dramatic decline in travel, hotels will face a harsh winter through no fault of our own. The hotel industry needs aid to survive until travel demand returns. Given this current environment, Congress can-

not nor should not contemplate recess until a relief bill is passed now," said Chip Rogers, President and CEO of AHLA. "Millions of Americans are out of work, and thousands of small businesses are struggling to keep their doors open. We cannot afford to wait until the next Congress is sworn in for relief. We need help now."

The survey of 2,200 adults was conducted Nov. 2-4 by Morning Consult on behalf of AHLA. Key findings of the survey include the following:

- 74 percent of those traveling overnight for Christmas report they will stay with a family or friend.

- Only three in 10 (32 percent) respondents have taken an overnight vacation or leisure trip since March.

- Looking ahead to next year, 24 percent are likely to travel for spring break

- 44 percent say their next hotel

stay for vacation or leisure travel will be a year or more from now or they have no plans to stay in a hotel

- Business travel has been even more impacted as only 8 percent of Americans say they have taken an overnight business trip since March

- Only 8 percent of all adults expect to travel for business within the next six months

- 62 percent of employed Americans have no plans to stay in a hotel for business

The hotel industry is facing record job loss if Congress does not provide relief. Every hour Congress doesn't act hotels lose 400 jobs, with up to 3 million permanent jobs lost. Seventy-one percent of hotels will not be able to last another six months without immediate assistance according to a recent AHLA survey of hotel owners and operators.

IN BRIEF By Phil Orlandella

NORTH END FRIENDS OF ST. FRANCIS HOUSE WINTER DONATION DRIVE

North End Friends of St. Francis House has started to collect donations for winter hats and gloves which will be distributed to homeless and other needy people.

However, due to the pandemic, the endeavor will be handled differently than past years.

Instead of collecting hats and gloves, those interested in participating in this charitable endeavor

can make a monetary contribution and the Friends will purchase the items and deliver them to St. Francis House for distribution.

Some repeat donors have already made it possible for the purchase of 180 hats and 300 pairs of gloves.

The group's goal is to raise at least \$2,500. Thus far \$1,700 has already been received.

Checks can be made out to John Romano and mailed to Olivia Scimeca, 21 Cleveland Place, Boston, MA 02113. For details call John Romano at 617-750-9749.

North Washington Street Bridge construction look-ahead through Dec. 26

This is a brief overview of construction operations and impacts for the North Washington Street Bridge Replacement Project. MassDOT will provide additional notices as needed for high-impact work and changes to traffic configurations beyond those described below.

VIBRATORY HAMMER NOISE IMPACTS

- A vibratory hammer is being used to install the five cofferdams which will be needed to build the piers of the new bridge. Installation of each cofferdam takes about two weeks.

- The project has positioned a combination of hanging sound blankets and temporary barrier to minimize noise impacts from the vibratory hammer. These measures will be adjusted as needed and appropriate.

- Use of the vibratory hammer began on 10/6. Work hours are during the day (7 a.m. – 3 p.m.)

DESCRIPTION OF SCHEDULED WORK

- Chipping out joints in the warehouse spans, installation and maintenance of silt curtain, installation of north and south abutment bridge seat, instal-

lation of drilled shafts, excavation of piers, and cleaning of demolition site. In addition, sheeting and bracing of cofferdams will continue.

WORK HOURS

- Most work will be done during the daytime (6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

- Some work will be done overnight (4:30 p.m. – 2:30 a.m.)

WORK THAT HAS BEEN COMPLETED

- Prior to 12/13, crews continued to demolish the existing bridge. The bridge is 98% demolished and work on the cofferdams is 60% complete.

TRAVEL TIPS

Westerly sidewalk, Lovejoy Wharf stairs near Converse are open to the public with the opening of the temporary bridge, the adjacent section of the Harborwalk passing under the bridge remains closed.

The Tudor Wharf Walkway (under the bridge next to the water in Paul Revere Park) will be intermittently closed for safety during construction operations, with access provided via the Water Street underpass.

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EDITORIAL

THE VIRUS IS IN OUR HOMES

We now are fully amidst the holiday season. Hanukkah is here and the Christmas and New Year's holiday week is fast-approaching.

Public health officials at all levels of government have been warning us for months that we must change our usual manner for celebrating the holidays if we are to have any chance of stopping the deadly spread of the coronavirus.

Unfortunately however, far too many of us have been ignoring these warnings. Families and friends continue to gather for holiday celebrations as if they are completely oblivious to the existence of a pandemic.

But consider these somber and alarming statistics recently released by the state: The overwhelming numbers of active coronavirus clusters across Massachusetts between the period of Nov. 1-November 28 (coinciding with the Thanksgiving holiday time frame) were traced to households, which accounted for 9393 of the state's 9883 clusters and 23,756 of the 26,451 confirmed cases.

In other words, the coronavirus is being spread by family and household members to each other.

This transmission of the virus among household members is nothing new, but its prevalence is striking -- about 90 percent of new coronavirus cases are now occurring within our homes.

The arrival of vaccines is wonderful news, but until each of us has a "jab" (that's what the British call getting a shot) in our arms, none of us are safe and all of us have to assume that everyone we come into contact with is a carrier.

We realize that staying apart from our family members and friends during the holidays is tough medicine -- but it's the only prescription that will work to suppress the spread of the virus.

THANK YOU, GOV. BAKER

We'd like to take a moment to express our appreciation to Gov. Charlie Baker, who has demonstrated incredible leadership during the past nine months of a crisis that is unprecedented in our state's history.

Day-after-day, Gov. Baker has confronted a deadly pandemic and an economic collapse (not to mention a dangerous president from his own party) with a degree of intelligence, competence, and assuredness that is unmatched by any governor in the country.

Massachusetts has been very fortunate to have Charlie Baker's steady hand at the tiller of our ship-of-state during this stormy period. And (to extend the metaphor), although we know there are still some rough seas ahead, thanks to Gov. Baker's helmsmanship, we can see clearing skies on the horizon.

REMEMBER THE NEEDY

We saw a statistic the other day that was absolutely mind-numbing: 18% of all Americans, and 24% of American children, do not have enough to eat on a daily basis.

We mention this because during this Christmas season, when many of us normally would be splurging on holiday parties, vacations, and the like, those of us who are fortunate enough not to fall within the 18% must consider how we can use our unspent resources to help our fellow Americans who are dealing with a situation that is even worse than what America faced at the height of the Great Depression.

Hopefully, Congress will get its act together shortly and provide relief for those in need. But until that happens, it is up to each of us to do what we can to assist our fellow citizens through donations to organizations -- of which there are many -- that will help to ensure that every American at least has enough to eat every day.



WINTER SOLSTICE... SHORTEST DAY. DEC. 21

GUEST OP-ED

Boston's Community Choice Electricity program is making us a more sustainable and resilient city-- here's how you can take part in it.

By Mayor Martin J. Walsh

Boston is a leader on climate action. We're preparing our communities for climate impacts like coastal flooding and heat waves, and we're cutting the emissions that cause climate change to begin with. We've committed to becoming carbon neutral by the year 2050, and we've developed a Climate Action Plan to get us there.

An important part of this work is bringing more clean, renewable energy into our city. And now, we're taking another big step in this work with the rollout of our Community Choice Electricity program. This is our policy to combine the buying power of Boston's homes and businesses, in order to get more stable and affordable electricity rates and bring more clean energy into our city. CCE allows the community to make informed electricity choices, increases utilization of renewable energy, and helps protect vulnerable populations who are most at-risk from the climate crisis.

The City has been sending notices to residents who are enrolled in Eversource Basic Service. The notice lets you know that you're being enrolled in the clean energy

program starting February 1. You don't have to do anything to get that benefit and be part of this program. The Community Choice Program is an opt-out program, meaning that customers who are on Eversource Basic Service will be automatically enrolled unless they choose to opt-out. We're also providing discounts for 20,000 low-income residents, through a solar energy program.

The opt-out period goes from December 4, 2020, through January 11, 2021. During this time, customers can opt-out by

signing and returning a postage paid opt-out card received by mail. Customers can opt-in or out at any time without penalty, and have the option to "opt-up" to receive 100 percent renewable electricity. Participation in the program will only change where a customer's electricity is coming from, not how it is delivered to their home.

The program will officially launch in February 2021 and will be the largest municipal aggrega-

(OP-ED Pg. 5)

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Baker announced \$300,000 grant to stormwater coalitions

Building on its commitment to protect and improve water quality throughout Massachusetts, the Baker-Polito Administration has announced nearly \$300,000 in grants to five multi-community stormwater coalitions across the Commonwealth to help local cities and towns meet existing and upcoming stormwater management requirements.

“The Baker-Polito Administration is committed to protecting water quality across the Commonwealth and these funds will make a real difference in the 228 communities that will benefit from these projects,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Kathleen Theoharides. “The stormwater collaboratives funded today will share resources, creative ideas and watershed protection strategies that have a proven record of success.”

“Stormwater is a significant source of water pollution across the state and is a complex issue that requires innovative ideas and cooperative solutions,” said Commissioner Martin Suuberg of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). “MassDEP is pleased to provide funding that will lessen the costs of permit compliance locally, while we continue to work closely with communities and stormwater coalitions to provide critical technical assistance.”

The projects, selected by MassDEP, were awarded to the Statewide Stormwater Coalition, Neponset River Watershed Association, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission, Charles River Watershed Association, and Massachusetts Maritime for Buzzards Bay Stormwater Collaborative.

The funding awarded by the Baker-Polito Administration will

enable Massachusetts municipalities to expand their efforts to meet Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit requirements and reduce stormwater pollution through coordinated partnerships that emphasize resource sharing. There are 260 Massachusetts municipalities subject to the current MS4 permit, issued jointly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and MassDEP, which took effect on July 1, 2018.

Permit requirements that the MS4 communities must meet include the development and implementation of a public education program, adopting more stringent local development rules, locating and removing pollutants that are illegally entering municipal stormwater systems, and installing stormwater management systems.

The groups receiving funding are:

•Statewide Stormwater Coalition – \$75,354

The Statewide Stormwater Coalition has developed education and outreach programming for more than 180 municipalities in Massachusetts that satisfies one out of six minimum control measures of the 2016 MS4 permit. For this project, the Statewide Stormwater Coalition will expand the education campaign through social media and YouTube advertising, translate video outreach materials to Spanish to reach a broader audience, and offer social media training for municipal staff on how to reach underrepresented audiences.

•Charles River Watershed Association (CRWA) – \$59,771

This project proposes a new collaboration with the Central Massachusetts Regional Stormwater Coalition to develop Phosphorus Control Plans for communities affected by the

Lakes and Ponds and Charles River Phosphorus TMDLs. CRWA will develop model Phosphorus Control Plan templates that will contain several recommendations on phosphorus reduction crediting and bylaw updates for each of the 54 communities included in the project.

Massachusetts Maritime Academy for Buzzards Bay Stormwater Collaborative – \$47,000

“MS4 grants play a crucial role in assisting cities and towns with their efforts to meet stormwater management standards, and I applaud MassDEP for their commitment to supporting our municipalities’ ongoing work to protect the Commonwealth’s water resources,” said State Senator Sal DiDomenico (D-Everett). “I am especially pleased that the grant awards going to both the Charles River Watershed Association and the Statewide Stormwater Coalition will reach every municipality in my district, including historically underserved Environmental Justice communities. Ensuring that our communities have the resources they need to develop effective solutions and meet challenges will go a long way toward preventing the harmful environmental and public health effects of stormwater pollution.”

The grants are funded through the Commonwealth’s Fiscal Year 2021 capital plan’s “MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant Program.”

MassDEP is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

OPINION BY PHIL ORLANDELLA

NEWRA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL UNDERWAY

by Phil Orlandella

Membership renewals for the North End/Waterfront Residents’ Association (NEWRA) is currently underway for 2021. New members are also being sought.

The non-profit organization has a major role in the welfare and issues that directly impact the

neighborhood.

Renewals and new membership are extremely important to maintain a strong and active voice in the community.

NEWRA has a long-standing reputation of taking on the issues with positive results.

Becoming a NEWRA member is one way to support the neighborhood.

CHD calls for more study of Pfizer COVID vaccine

Children’s Health Defense (CHD) is raising significant concerns based on the briefing released for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee meeting Thursday, Dec. 10, to review the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine BNT162b2.

Less than 2.1 percent of the safety study cohort had been followed for over three months as of the Nov. 14 cutoff date. This is inadequate to determine any long-term effects of the vaccine. If the manufacturers allow vaccination of the placebo group after six months, longer follow up of these early cohorts will be lost. Manufacturers bear no liability for any adverse events under the Prep Act.

Only 2.1 percent and 1.8 percent of the study cohort included patients 75 years old and over with pre-existing medical conditions, for the vaccinated and the placebo groups, respectively. There were only 41 total African Americans over age 75 in both arms of the Pfizer vaccine study. These are insufficient samples on which to base broad recommendations for these very important and vulnerable segments of the population.

The change in the age group-

ings from 18-55 and 65-85 in Phase 1/2 to 12-15, 16-55 and >55 years of age in Expanded Phase 2/3, has limited the assessment of safety and efficacy in elderly, frail populations by combining working age, community-living empty-nesters and seniors with an older, sicker population.

In the Phase 2/3 portion, “In participants ... 75 years of age and older ... efficacy of COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine BNT162b2 was ... 100 percent (two-sided 95 percent confidence interval of -13.1 percent to 100.0 percent)....” 100 percent efficacy means that they had no COVID-19 cases in the oldest group that received the vaccine; but the confidence interval is statistically meaningless.

Also, the initial Phase 2 portion of the trial, which looked at blood immune responses to vaccination, included a maximum of 22 people over age 68 in the 65-85-year-old group. It showed that older adults did not have noteworthy immune responses until after the second vaccination. With less robust immune responses in the elderly, extensive follow up on titers and how long they last is needed.

Children’s Health Defense is calling for further intense study overall, particularly for the elderly residential population and Blacks.

Op-Ed (from pg. 4)

tion program in New England. This is an opportunity for residents to be in better control of their energy consumption by placing power in the hands of the City rather than a company or utility. I assure everyone that the City of Boston is committed to moving forward with affordable and stable electric rates, and we are a trusted resource for residents seeking information on their electricity options.

We are committed to making sure that residents have all the information they need about this program and their options. Starting December 14th, the City of Boston’s Environment Department will host a series of 11 webinars

for residents and businesses. Staff will answer questions on how the program works, customer benefits, electric rates and renewable energy offered, key features, and what to expect over the next few months as the program launches.

I encourage everyone to attend one of these webinars to learn more about how this program will benefit our goal to make Boston a more sustainable and resilient city. More information about these webinars, including instructions for registering, is available at Boston.gov/community-choice-energy.

Recently, I was named the Chair of the US Climate Mayors. This is an opportunity to highlight

the progress we’re making here in Boston, and work with our fellow cities to promote climate action at the national level, as well. As cities across the country continue to look to Boston as a leader in this work, our Community Choice Electricity program will be a key component of our efforts. I encourage all Boston residents to support this work by participating in this program, and continuing to take climate action in your everyday lives. For more information about the City of Boston’s efforts, and about other steps the City is taking, visit Boston.gov/environment.

Martin J. Walsh is the Mayor of Boston.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

The North End Regional Review encourages residents to submit birth and engagement announcements, news releases, business briefs, honor rolls, social news, sports stories, and photographs for publication. Items should be forwarded to our offices at **385 Broadway, Citizens Bank Building, Revere, MA 02151**. Items can also be faxed to 781-485-1403. The Independent also encourages readers to e-mail news releases to editor@reverejournal.com.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

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NEW Health expands Thursday COVID-19 testing hours

By John Lynds

With the COVID-19 positive test rate increasing dramatically across the city following the Thanksgiving holiday, North End Waterfront Health (NEW Health) announced it is expanding testing hours at its Hannover Street site.

"The North End site has extended its Thursday hours, with an additional testing session from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.," said NEW Health's Mary Zanol. Zanol explained that the Thursday testing session ended at 12 p.m. but the need to increase testing and

a citywide COVID spike made NEW Health decide to expand hours to help more people get tested.

There are over 30 testing sites across the city and last month NEW Health, an affiliate of Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Medical Center, announced its site in the North End will remain open to all residents and patients of the health center throughout the holiday and winter season.

According to Zanol, NEW Health testing site opened this past summer to all NEW Health patients and all residents of the North End regardless of symptoms or insurance.

The North End site is open Tuesdays 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and again from 1p.m. to 4 p.m. The site has been moved into the alleyway directly behind NEW Health at 332 Hanover Street in order to provide more cover from the elements. The new entrance is on North Bennet Street for walk-up patients only.

Appointments are required and can be made by calling 617-643-8000 for the North End location. The site will remain open as long as needed in order to ensure NEW Health is doing its part to combat COVID spread in the community.

The COVID-19 test site initiative was announced by Walsh in May as a way to help fill any gaps in testing availability, prioritizing neighborhoods and populations that need dedicated testing efforts to create equitable access to testing.

In addition to the City's two mobile testing sites, testing is available at over 30 locations across the city. Individuals can call the Mayor's Health Line with any questions using 617-534-5050.

A full list of testing sites across Boston can be found at <https://www.boston.gov/departments/public-health-commission/covid-19-testing-sites>.

Happy Holidays

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HOLIDAYS**

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

FROM THE

**RICCIO FAMILY
NORTH END**



*Have a Very Merry Christmas and a
Great New Year! Celebrate Safely*

State Representative Aaron Michlewitz

COVID (from pg. 1)

and health clubs, including gyms using alternative spaces. One-on-one personal training sessions are allowed.

- Movie theaters
- Museums
- Aquariums
- Indoor recreational and athletic facilities (except for youth 18 and under)

- This does not apply to collegiate or professional sports. Collegiate sports teams in the City of Boston may continue to use indoor recreational facilities and fitness centers.

- Indoor pools may remain open for all ages under pre-registration format structure limited to one person per swim lane.

- Indoor recreational venues with potential for low-contact (batting cages, driving ranges, bowling alleys, rock-climbing)

- Sightseeing and other organized tours (bus tours, duck tours, harbor cruises, whale watching)

- Indoor historical spaces & sites

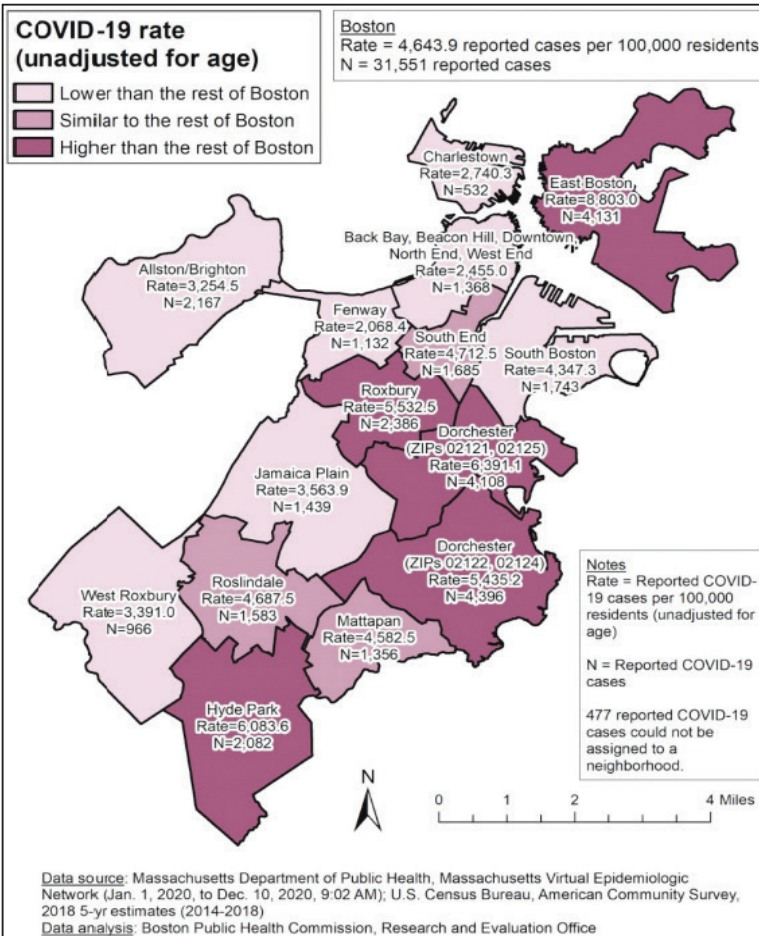
- Indoor event spaces (meeting rooms, ballrooms, private party rooms, social clubs)

- Private social clubs may continue to operate, if they serve food, consistent with restaurant guidance.

- Indoor and outdoor gaming arcades associated with gaming devices

- The Mayor said bars and restaurants may remain open with bar seating restrictions and a strictly enforced 90-minute seating limit.

The infection rate in the North End and surrounding neighborhoods increased 11.8 percent in one week according to the latest city statistics.



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

The BPHC data released last Friday showed North End, Beacon Hill, Back Bay, West End and Downtown had an infection rate of 245.5 cases per 10,000 residents, up from 219.4 cases per 10,000 residents.

One hundred forty-five additional residents became infected with the virus last week and the total number of cases in the area increased from 1,223 cases to 1,368 cases as of last Friday.

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 11 percent percent last week and went from 30,342 cases to 33,735 in a week. Twenty-seven more Boston residents died from the virus and there are now 960 total deaths in the city from COVID.

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Mayor Martin J. Walsh

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Boston Ballet presents “BB@yourhome: The Gift”

Boston Ballet presents “BB@yourhome: The Gift,” a one-hour long program featuring new works choreographed by Boston Ballet Company dancers Paul Craig, Chyrstyn Fentroy, John Lam, Haley Schwan, My’Kal Stromile, Gabriel Lorena (Boston Ballet II) and Arianna Hughlett (post graduate), set to Duke Ellington’s “Nutcracker Suite.” The classical grand pas de deux in Act II from Mikko Nissinen’s “The Nutcracker,” performed by Principal Dancers Viktorina Kapitonova and Tigran Mkrtchyan, to Pyotr Tchaikovsky’s music, enhances the program. “The Gift” will premiere on Thursday, Dec. 17, and will be available until Dec. 27. Subscribers will receive a streaming link prior to the premiere.

“This program is nothing like our traditional ‘Nutcracker,’ and unlike anything we have ever performed. Duke Ellington’s score adds a delightfully jazzy touch to the classical music we know and love,” said Artistic Director Mikko Nissinen. “Paired with choreography from seven of our dancers, it will be a unique and fun way to celebrate the holiday season.”

Duke Ellington’s ‘Nutcracker Suite’ is a jazz interpretation of Tchaikovsky’s score of ‘The Nutcracker.’ Arranged in 1960 by Ellington and his frequent collaborator Billy Strayhorn, their rendition features nine movements. Ellington (1899–1974) is considered the greatest jazz composer and bandleader of his time. He led his band for more than 50 years, composed thousands of scores, and created one of the most distinctive ensemble sounds in Western music. Boston’s own jazz aficionado Eric Jackson, from GBH, will introduce Ellington and the toe tapping score.

“I consider Ellington to be sim-

ply one of the most important and iconic American musical voices,” said Boston Ballet Music Director Mischa Santora. “I think it’s fantastic we’re adding this really fun, sophisticated, and intriguing twist to our holiday season with his music, and I can’t wait to see the choreography the dancers come up with.”

Choreographer and Principal Dancer Paul Craig said, “Hearing Ellington and Strayhorn’s reworking of familiar melodies made reimagining ‘Nutcracker’ choreography so much fun. It has been amazing getting to choreograph on and with my pod of dancers. After being quarantined for almost six months, it really is a gift to all of us.”

Choreographer and Soloist Chyrstyn Fentroy said, “Creating a section for The Gift has been a unique holiday-themed choreographic adventure. As a choreographer for this project, the familiarity of the score gives you a sense of comfort, but the subtle differences between this version and the original Tchaikovsky score allowed me to challenge myself to think outside of the ‘Nutcracker’ box and create something completely different and new.”

Choreographer and Principal Dancer John Lam said, “It has been inspiring not only to create a new visual interpretation of this piece, but to explore the magnificent counterpoints and interplay among the voices in Ellington’s virtuosic band.”

Choreographer and Second Soloist Haley Schwan said, “Duke Ellington’s music encapsulates the spirit of the holiday season that we so enjoy bringing to the people of Boston each year. This process has really been about bringing some magic to the end of 2020. I hope that our joy of being back in the studio jumps through the screen to our audience at home.”

Choreographer and Artist of the Company My’Kal Stromile said, “This project has been an exciting challenge! I wanted to create choreography that is relatable, joyful and fun, while honoring the history of the original Tchaikovsky score. Duke Ellington illustrated his interpretation of The ‘Nutcracker’ in 1960, 68 years after the original, making the music feel very modern and quite jazzy.”

Choreographer and Boston Ballet II member Gabriel Lorena says, “Ellington’s music gives me power to feel like I own the whole stage. I wanted to create a work that would make the dancers feel the same way, with a piece that would bring power, personality, musicality, and artistry from their heart to your screen.”

Choreographer and post-graduate student Arianna Hughlett said, “As a young choreographer, I am especially grateful for Boston Ballet’s trust in me to create a piece. I’m very proud to be part of an organization that has so swiftly adapted to the times in order to keep creating art. ‘The Gift’ has brought me a sense of optimism for the future that I hope reaches audiences watching from home.”

“The Gift” is the second of six BB@yourhome programming. Single tickets for “The Gift” are on sale until Dec. 27 for \$40 or it can be viewed as part of a BB@yourhome subscription. Boston Ballet’s virtual season features new creations, signature works, and classical ballet favorites captured live in-studio. Dancers have been back in the studios since September, rehearsing under a new health and safety plan, which was developed in partnership with a team of medical professionals and infectious disease specialists.

For more information on BB@yourhome, visit bostonballet.org.

HUD, VA announce support to help homeless veterans

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced it is awarding \$804,181 in rental assistance in Massachusetts to house 63 veterans at risk of experiencing homelessness. This funding is part of \$46 million being awarded nationally.

The local agencies providing supportive housing include:

- Boston Housing Authority \$263,028 – 20 vouchers

- New Bedford Housing Authority \$43,473 – seven vouchers

- Quincy Housing Authority \$249,796 – 16 vouchers

- Barnstable Housing Authority \$51,900 – five vouchers

- Milton Housing Authority \$139,733 – 10 vouchers

- Mass DHCD \$56,251 – 5 vouchers

The supportive housing assistance is provided through the HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) Program, which combines rental assistance from HUD with case management and clinical services provided by the VA.

A component of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, the HUD-VASH vouchers being awarded today enable homeless veterans to obtain affordable, decent housing in the private market. These vouchers are critical tools in helping communities effectively end homelessness among veterans.

“We’ve made significant progress reducing homelessness among

veterans here in Massachusetts,” said David Tille, HUD New England Regional Administrator. “These vouchers will continue to help communities build on these gains, providing targeted assistance to those in need to ensure that every veteran has a home.”

“Ending veteran homelessness has been a top priority for the Trump Administration since day one,” said HUD Secretary Ben Carson. “We have an obligation to ensure that our nation’s veterans, who have given so much for our country are not left out on the streets. They fought for us, now it’s time for us to fight for them.”

In the HUD-VASH program, VA Medical Centers (VAMCs) assess veterans experiencing homelessness before referring them to local housing agencies for these vouchers. Decisions are based on a variety of factors, most importantly the duration of homelessness and the need for longer term, more intensive support in obtaining and maintaining permanent housing. The HUD-VASH program includes both the rental assistance the voucher provides and the comprehensive case management that VAMC staff offers.

Veterans participating in the HUD-VASH program rent privately owned housing and generally contribute no more than 30 percent of their income toward rent. VA offers eligible homeless veterans clinical and supportive services through its medical centers across the U.S., Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands

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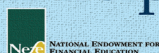
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COMMUNITY NEWS

NEWRA MEETS TONIGHT

North End/Waterfront Residents' Association (NEWRA) will hold its monthly meeting, tonight, Thursday, December 10.

The agenda includes: Principal of GM Development Bill

Caulder will present details of a proposed 135-room boutique hotel on Cross Street.

HOLIDAY CHOIR SOCIAL

North End Music and Performing Arts Center (NEMPAC) will hold a Holiday Choir Social on Sunday, December 20 at 1 p.m.

WILL BE MISSED

Nancy Caruso of the North End recently passed away. A true community activist, Nancy was a member of several neighborhood community groups and involved in many neighborhood issues relating to the welfare of the North End.

50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Former North Enders, Mary (McGonagle) and Phil Orlandella recently celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

They are the proud parents of three children and seven grandchildren.

WINTER HATS AND GLOVES DRIVE

North End Friends of St. Francis Houses collecting donations to purchase winter hats and gloves for the needy. For information call John Romano at 617-750-9749.

NEWNC MEETING

The next North End/Waterfront Neighborhood Council (NEWNC) monthly meeting will be held on Monday, January 11 at 7 p.m. It will be a virtual meeting.

FOOD PROGRAM DONATIONS

Donations are being accepted for the Food Insecurity Program at the NEW Health this holiday season. Over 100 families per month are served including children from the Eliot School. For details call 857-238-1176.

CANDLELIGHT VIRTUAL WALK

The Candlelight Labyrinth Walk was held, virtually, on Sunday, December 13 at 4 p.m. at the American Heritage Park on the Greenway between the Carousel Park and the North End Park.

TURKEY GIVEAWAY

A Turkey giveaway was held at the Nazzaro Community Center

along with Representative Aaron Micheliwitz and Senator Joe Boncore.

100TH BIRTHDAY

North End resident Anna Ruvido recently celebrated her 100th birthday. Happy Birthday Anna.

NORTH END CHRISTMAS FUND

The North End Christmas Fund which has been providing help to families and seniors for over 40 years is seeking donations to continue this endeavor.

Checks can be sent to North End Waterfront Health c/o North End Christmas Fund Committee, 332 Hanover Street, Boston, MA 02113.

CENTER PROVIDES FREE MEALS

Nazzaro Community Center serves meals through Boston Eats; the Nazzaro Community Center helps provide a food resource for Boston youths who rely on school meals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Breakfast and lunch are provided at no cost to youth under 18 through December.

N.E. CHRISTMAS TREE IN PLACE

The North End Christmas Tree is in place on Cross and Hanover Streets organized by the North End Beautification Committee.

No lighting this year but the tree is decorated with wreaths and other decorations.

NSC HOLIDAY ASSISTANCE

The next round of helping seniors and families will take place for the December holidays at the North End/West and Neighborhood Center. For details call 617-523-8125.

FREE GARAGE PARKING ENDS

Complimentary parking for North End residents at the Government Center Garage due to the loss of street parking due to the outdoor café zone has come to an end.

PUBLIC SKATING AT N.E. RINK

Public skating at the North End Steriti Rink on Commercial Street is now available at different hours. Schedule can be picked up at the rink.

FONEBI RECEIVES GRANT

Friends of North End Bocce, Inc. (FONEBI) Has received a

grant from the Massachusetts Department of Recreation and Conservation for \$4,600 to renovate the inside bocce court inside the Steriti Rink. FONEBI matched the grant with \$2,300.

STORIES OF THE OLD NORTH

Looking to the future, the Old North Foundation is aiming to create a site wide interpretation plan in 2021 that reflects the rich and diverse stories of the past.

WATER MAIN BREAK

Both Charter and Unity Streets were flooded and twenty-five residents were without water while the Boston Water and Sewer Commission (BWSC) responded to a water main break in the North End. BWSC eventually fix the water main and water was restored.

TABLE MERCATO OPENS ITS DOORS

Table Mercato, 111 Hanover Street is in the neighborhood.

Table Mercato is an Italian business serving coffee, groceries, meals including sandwiches, salad, pizza, fresh bread, charcuterie bread and homemade sweets.

NEWNC HOLDS HOTEL MEETING

North End/Waterfront Neighborhood Council (NEWNC) held an informational meeting regarding a proposal to develop a 135-room hotel with two restaurants on Cross Street. More meetings on this issue will be held.

MBTA POLICE OFFERING FACE MASKS

MBTA Transit Police have started offering face masks to transit riders in need of face covering.

TOUR LOCAL CENTER

For a tour of the North End Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, 70 Fulton Street, North End call 617-843-5001.

NEW YEAR'S EVE ICE SCULPTURE STROLL

Friends of Christopher Columbus Park (FOCCP) will sponsor a whimsical ice sculpture on the Harbor Walk in the park as part of the Boston Harbor NOW annual New Year's Eve waterfront ice sculpture stroll on Thursday, December 31 from 1 to 4 p.m. A map of the sites will be posted on FOCCP's website.

NO HARBOR FIREWORKS

Abiding by City and State

NORTHENDWATERFRONT.COM

CALLING IT A DAY

After 12 years NorthEndWaterfront.com will be winding down over the next few months and cease publishing in January 2021, according to Matt Conti founder of the community publication.

COVID-19 regulations, FOCCP will not bring in the 2021 with Fireworks on the Harbor.

LOCAL HEALTH CENTER NEWS

A whole new level of post-acute care has been introduced by the North End Rehabilitation and Health Center, 70 North Street.

The Center, a 100-bed site is the only downtown area with a skilled nursing facility.

Renovations are under way and expansion of specialized clinical programs are under way.

TWO HOURS OF FREE PARKING

As a way to support Boston's small businesses during the holiday season, the City of Boston will

allow two hours of free parking at the City's 8,000-meter spaces on Saturdays.

OLD NORTH SEEKS PROGRAM SPONSORS

The Old North Church Foundation of Boston, Inc., is seeking sponsors to continue to provide programs to students and teachers throughout the country, as they prepare for a mostly virtual 2020-2021 school year. This year there is a need due to the pandemic and the foundation's dependency on tourism revenue.

The Old North will shift to a virtual strategy with engaging content that combines a core history curriculum.

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VFW NORTH END POST 144 VETERAN'S DAY CEREMONY



Photo courtesy of Michele Morgan

The North End Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 144 held their annual ceremonies to honor and remember the U.S. military veterans of the North End. Prayers, wreath laying, and remembrances took place on the Paul Revere Mall (Prado) and at the Iraq-Afghanistan Memorial behind Old North Church. Following the ceremonies, the veterans attended mass at St. Leonard Church with Fr. Michael Della Penna. Photographer Michele Morgan was on hand and shares this photo gallery.

Outdoor seating on private property extended, Public Space program ends

By John Lynds

Mayor Martin Walsh reminded owners that outdoor dining on private property was extended indefinitely without the need for further permits.

However, the city's "Public Space" program expired Tuesday. Restaurant owners in the North End trying to increase business by providing an outdoor dining option will now have to start packing up their outdoor tables, chairs, heating lamps and barriers and rely solely on limited indoor dining throughout the winter months if they don't have private space for outdoor dining.

The Public Space program allowed restaurants throughout the North End to use city sidewalks, streets, parking lots and to set up tables, chairs and other amenities for outdoor dining.

"For restaurants, we have plans to continue our outdoor dining option," said Walsh last week during a press conference. "The public space ended on December 1. But, outdoor dining may continue on private property indefinitely. In addition, we are working on an outdoor dining program for the spring."

North End restaurateur Frank DePasquale told WGBH last week, "To tell you the truth, I'm a little scared. The weather is changing and there goes our outside seating, and honestly, I see tough times."

The North End and Boston's restaurant industry has been hit particularly hard by the ongoing pandemic. Tough regulations for indoor dining and other restrictions imposed by the state during the latest COVID spike made the Public Space program a godsend for some.

To offer some relief the Walsh Administration launched the Public Space program last spring

(OUTDOOR SEATING-19, Pg. 7)

North End Christmas Fund needs your support

Staff report

For more than 40 years the North End Christmas Fund has been providing help to families and seniors at Christmas time. The program was started by Uncle Fred Carangelo working with the various social service agencies in the neighborhood to help those who may have lost their job, had a health crisis, financial need or maybe just needed some cheering up at the holiday due to loneliness or loss of a loved one during the past year. This tradition is carried on by a committee of about a dozen people led by Robert "Ted" Tomasone and agencies like the North Health Center, North End Athletic Association, Nazzaro Center, North End Against Drugs, A.B.C.D. - North End/West End Service Center, North End Seniors and Ausonia Council Knights of Columbus.

Each year a fabulous luncheon is held at Filippo's Restaurant and with the generosity of the Frattaroli Family, a fantastic raffle and many donations, we raise approximately \$15,000. For the last several years more than 200 checks per year have been distributed to those who need our help.

As one can imagine, due to COVID-19, the annual luncheon was not held, however the need is anticipated to be greater than ever! Friends and neighbors are needed to make a contribution of any kind to help support this great institution and carry on the tradition started by Uncle Fred more than 40 years ago.

Donations made out to the North End Christmas Fund can be mailed to:

North End Waterfront Health
c/o North End Christmas Fund Committee
332 Hanover Street
Boston, Mass. 02113

Thank you in advance for your generous, continued support of the families and seniors of our beloved neighborhood and may you and your families have a Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday Season.

COVID update for North End and surrounding area

By John Lynds

After experiencing a 25 percent increase two weeks ago, the positive test rate in the North End and surrounding neighborhoods decreased by nearly 60 percent last week according to the latest data released by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) on Friday.

Last week the BPHC reported that 32,056 North End, Beacon Hill, Back Bay, West End and Downtown residents were tested for COVID-19 and the data shows that 2.8 percent of those tested were COVID positive. This was a 59 percent decrease from the 6.9 percent testing positive as reported two weeks ago. The citywide positive test rate average was 5 percent—a 50 percent percent increase from the 10.2 percent that tested positive two weeks ago.

Overall since the pandemic began 3.4 percent of North End, Beacon Hill, Back Bay, West End and Downtown residents were found to be COVID positive.

At his daily press briefing Tuesday, Mayor Martin Walsh said that in the two weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, Boston's numbers went in the right direction.

"But, we expect to see an increase when the impact of Thanksgiving activity makes it into the testing data," said

(COVID-19, Pg. 2)

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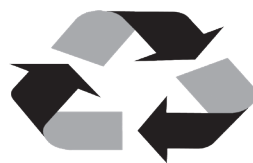
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Kornowski, Sophie		Kenneth J Barr RET	261 Commonwealth Ave #7	\$1,892,500
Izzar, Rachid		Corcoran, Leo J	90 Commonwealth Ave #7	\$2,275,000
Marnell, Richard		Cricket RET	9 Dartmouth Pl	\$2,800,000
Immobiliare Santa Per Azi		Joel Warren Lidz RET	234 Marlborough St #2	\$1,070,000
Gloucester St Prop LLC		Mearn, Christopher	12 Gloucester St #3	\$710,000
BEACON HILL				
Brickman, Jason		Ronthal, Berenice	94 Beacon St #4	\$2,000,000
Barry, Kevin M		Beal Robert L Est	21 Brimmer St	\$6,600,000
Barry, Kevin M		Beal Robert L Est	70 Brimmer St #311	\$6,600,000
Doucette, Joan F		Codazzi, Daniel	15 River St #401	\$895,000
BAY VILLAGE/SOUTH END/KENMORE				
Perkins, Ashley N		DeVincentis, Alexia	66 Appleton St #3	\$607,500
Simha, Vikram		Chu, Jaclyn H	1 Charles St S #1504	\$1,975,000
FTP RET 2004		Regan RET	15-17 Harcourt St #306	\$1,565,000
Thopsey, Brian F		Orefice, Robert	700 Harrison Ave #409	\$1,000,000
Ledonne, Eric		Dinicola, Giovanna	12 Keswick St #3	\$810,000
Gamache, Matt G		Martinelli, Roberta	5 Keswick St #3	\$898,000
Slifka, Max		Metzger, Terry L	298 Shawmut Ave #5	\$1,950,000
Lake, Craig A		Noonan, Mary J	602 Tremont St #3	\$1,150,000
Pappas, Felicia A		Douglas L Wooden T	22 Upton St #4	\$1,840,000
WATERFRONT/DOWNTOWN				
Cao, Chenyu		He, Ran	80 Broad St #609	\$650,000
Tamayo, Byron O		Ahearn, Rachel E	151 Tremont St #16C	\$595,000
Jeffrey D Furber RET		Shah, Deborah	165 Tremont St #1002	\$1,250,000
Lee, Brian		Lee, Chung H	165 Tremont St #201	\$1,426,000
He, Ran		Ganda, Kiran	580 Washington St #810	\$875,000

DID YOU KNOW? Recycled newspapers can be made into

cereal boxes, egg cartons, pencil barrels, grocery bags, tissue paper and many other products, including new newspapers!



Pet safety tips for the holidays

We all know that cats and dogs love to chew (and unfortunately swallow) a surprising array of household items. In fact, one of the most common claims we receive at Trupanion is for Foreign Body Ingestion.

The holidays, along with all of its festive decorations, provides additional chewing opportunities – and potential emergency visits to the veterinarian – for our furry friends. So as we all start to deck the halls this holiday season, Trupanion, a leader in medical insurance for cats & dogs, offers up these 5 holiday items (along with related mishaps from Holidays past) to keep pets away from this holiday season.

1) Tinsel

Tinsel and ribbon can cause a tangled mess in the intestines if swallowed by a pet – ideally it should not be used in households with cats. A British Shorthair cat from Oregon ingested tinsel which resulted in a trip to the veterinary – the Trupanion policy paid out \$807.

2) Ornaments

Make sure to hang any small or fragile ornaments high enough on your tree to avoid the wagging tail of your dog or a paw swipe from your cat. Although keep in mind, that for many cats there is no safe height. A lovable pooch in Washington state made an emergency visit to the vet when they ate a Christmas ornament – the Trupanion policy paid out \$4,495.

3) Holiday lights

Pets are drawn to holiday lights, just like we are. The only difference is they may be tempted to chew on them. Be sure to also

keep the electrical cords taped down or out of reach. A Brittany spaniel from Indiana succumbed to the temptation to chew and ingested some Christmas lights. After a trip to the veterinarian the Trupanion policy paid out \$1,566.

4) Turkey bones

Bones from turkey and other traditional main courses around the holidays can have dangerous effects when in the mouths of dogs and cats. Cooked bones especially can splinter and break, causing serious internal injury. An enthusiastic dog in Alberta found himself at the veterinarian after he ingested some turkey bones a few days after Christmas – the Trupanion policy paid out \$3,800.

5) Holiday plants and trees

Many holiday plants can cause gastrointestinal upset if ingested by your dog or cat. These include holly, mistletoe and amaryllis. A Shih Tzu from California ingested poinsettias, which are toxic to dogs. After a trip to the veterinarian the Shih Tzu was back in tip top shape – the Trupanion policy paid out \$59. Lilies are also extremely toxic for cats, even contact with the pollen or water in the vase may be enough to cause kidney failure.

“If you have a Christmas tree, make sure it is secure – it doesn’t take much for a cat or excited dog to knock it over,” said Dr. Sarah Nold, Staff Veterinarian at Trupanion. “You should also take care to restrict your pet’s access to the tree’s water or ingestion of the tree’s needles, because both may cause vomiting and diarrhea, and can contribute to a tipped tree.”

**You’d think at least one
of them could tell you
how to renew a passport.**



Not everyone in the government knows everything about the government. So when you need official info about Social Security, getting a passport, renewing a driver’s license, or if you’re just checking your local weather, go to FirstGov.gov. A monumental source of useful information.

FIRSTGOV.gov
1 (800) FED INFO

A public service message from the U.S. General Services Administration.

CITY PAWS

Protect pet-friendly housing

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

One of our least favorite phrases is “No Pets.” As life-long animal lovers, we cringe when we see these words attached to everything from hotel and rental listings, doors to shops, and parks.

We realize that many prohibitions began because irresponsible people let their animals run amok, damage property, or disturb others. As responsible pet guardians, we’re more upset by these scofflaws than those who live without pets. We know that scofflaws provide pet-haters with the ammunition needed to add restrictions and take away options for those who live with animals.

Protecting Your Pet-Friendly Building

If you live in a multi-family, pet-friendly building, your day-to-day behavior can help keep it that way. Be the kind of neighbor you’d want to have. People who oppose pets in buildings are con-

cerned about the annoyance of dogs barking inside homes and common areas.

Terriers are barkers. Our Poppy would be a nuisance to our neighbors if we didn’t stop her immediately. We correct her at the first sound and send her to her quiet spot. There, she is supposed to lie down with head on her paws and wait quietly. She knows that if she barks again, she’ll find herself in a time-out in the bathroom with the door closed.

When we leave her alone in our condo, she is in her crate, away from the door, and has background music to help block any sound that might cause her to bark. Most non-stop barkers are left loose in the home, sit by the door listening to every sound, respond by barking, and are very annoying to neighbors.

If your dog barks in response to other dogs or people in the common areas, you need to be prepared to keep moving when you’re with your dog. Save activ-

ities like dropping off trash, conversing with neighbors or staff for times when you are alone. Even if your dog is not a barker, hanging around common areas with a dog can cause other dogs to bark and endanger the right to have dogs in your building.

Respect Rules!

Buildings that allow animals usually have rules. Ask what they are and follow them to the letter of the law. Commonly, dogs are not allowed off-leash anywhere outside your home, and you are responsible for picking up after your animal. Simple enough, but we see these broken in our community all the time.

There are also common-sense rules that make you a better neighbor. Walk your dog away from the building’s doorways, stairways, fencing, and plantings before you allow him to relieve himself.

Fess-up About Damage

If your animal ever relieves



Walk your dog away from doorways, stairways, fencing, and plantings before you allow him to relieve himself. (Photo: istockphone.com)

itself inside your common areas because it is ill or because you were late to bring it outside, clean it up yourself. Self-report the incident to management so they can deep-clean the area, preventing

other dogs from marking over the spot.

Here’s a tip that might catch a mess. Keep a waterproof puppy pad near your dog’s leash. Then if you know something might hap-

Rep. Pressley introduces Transit Parity Resolution

Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA-07), along with 32 Members of Congress, introduced the Transit Parity Resolution last week calling for equal funding for transit and highways.

Currently, Congress uses a 40-year precedent to determine funding for highways and public transportation. Since 1982, approximately 80 percent of federal transportation program funding has been allocated to highways, while only 20 percent has been allocated to public transit. When this 80-20 split was decided, it was intended to be a user fee, but since 2008 over \$144 billion in general taxpayer dollars have been used to supplement dwindling gas tax revenues for highway and transit spending. This split is out of step with the current needs of our country and leaves too many reliant on deteriorating transit systems with infrequent and unreliable service.

“Public transit is a public good, and it’s past time our government treat it like one,” said Congresswoman Pressley. “For too long, our federal transportation investments have prioritized highways

over public transit, incentivizing travel in private cars which increases traffic congestion, produces pollution, and exacerbates racial and economic inequality. Today, we have an opportunity and an obligation to fundamentally realign our federal transportation policy to center community connectivity and emphasize equity, access, and sustainability. As transportation agencies in my district and across the country face record budget shortfalls due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we must act swiftly to make the investments in public transit our communities deserve by establishing real funding parity. This is about addressing the damage from this epidemic and committing to the future of our transit systems. I’m proud to stand with Congressman García, Chairman Jeffries, and our colleagues in calling on Congress to do just that.”

Said Will Anderson, Sierra Club’s Associate Director of Legislative/Administrative Advocacy for the Clean Transportation for All campaign, “The Sierra Club supports Congressman García’s resolution to acknowledge fre-

quent and reliable public transportation as the civil right and climate change solution that it is by adequately funding it. We must treat public transit as essential infrastructure—just like roads, bridges, tunnels and utilities—that is crucial to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of our communities.”

In October 2019, Congresswoman Pressley founded the Future of Transportation Caucus, a Congressional caucus focused on centering equity, access, and sustainability in our transportation systems. In June, in response to the COVID-19 crisis, she led a letter advocating for \$50 billion in annual emergency funds to support and sustain our nation’s public transit systems. Later that month, she introduced the Freedom to Move Act, which would provide federal grants to transit agencies that move to a fare-free model. Rep. Pressley is also a co-chair of the Congressional Bike Caucus and a tireless advocate for sustainable and equity focused transportation and infrastructure policies.

Your voice matters! Ensure that Massachusetts fights the climate crisis, and supports a speedy and just economic recovery.

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