THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2026

PUBLISHED EVERY OTHER THURSDAY

THE NORTH END REGIONAL REVIEW

EMAIL: DEB@REVEREJOURNAL.COM
EDITOR@REVEREJOURNAL.COM

WWW.NORTHENDREGIONALREVIEW.COM

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL BREAKFAST

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTOS

The Boston Arts Academy Spiritual Ensemble performed Bright Mansions Above.
See Pages 8 and 9 for more photos.

Left, True Compass Award recipient Byron Rushing gives his remarks.

Special to the Regional Review

With great reverence and pride in our city, Mayor Michelle Wu joined in Boston's 56th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast.

Mayor Wu offered these thoughts: Dr. King knew that when fundamental rights come under attack—when hard-won progress must be defended again and again—it becomes difficult to imagine a better future.

But he insisted that we are not truly free until we push beyond mere resistance.

He called us toward creation.

He called us to move forward with the brave work of building the Beloved Community—something too strong for fear to tear down.

And that's what we are doing in Boston, with the fierce urgency of now. We choose to go forward.

Because a Boston that moves forward together is a Boston no one can control.

We refuse to be defined by what we oppose.

We choose to be measured by what we create.

If Dr. King's life taught us one thing, it's that history does not move on its own.

So let us march forward together in the footsteps of those who set the standard here in Boston: Prince Hall. Elma Lewis. Melnea Cass. Napoleon Jones-Henderson. Allan Rohan Crite. Reverend Dr. Michael E. Haynes, and so many more.

And let us march with a new generation urging us forward.

Thank you to everyone who came together to celebrate and remember Dr. King this morning.

Special Pages 4 - 5

NEWRA rejects construction at 135 North Washington Street

By Phil Orlandella

A proposal to construct a six-story building with 13 residential units, ground floor retail space and an elevator at 135 North Washington Street was rejected by the North End/Waterfront Residents' Association (NEWRA) at its January meeting which was open to the public.

NEWRA denied the project for several reasons including height and density and use related violations identified in the City's Inspectional Services Department (ISD).

A month before at its December meeting the North End/Waterfront Neighborhood Council (NEWNC) voted 3-1 to support the proposal under the condition that the developer meet with abutters and other residents to address their concerns and issues and to return to the neighborhood group with the results.

The owner did return to NEWNC's January meeting announcing he has revised his plans changing the number of residential units from 13-6 and reduce the space between an abutting building.

He also agreed to meet with abutters and other residents to deal with concerns that include air quality, starting and ending times, days of construction, parking, street closures, clean-up and other concerns to everyone's sat-

(NEWRA *Pg. 2*)

A CAREER MILESTONE

Special to the Regional Review

North End resident Stephen Passacantilli has completed his 12th season as a high school football official and his seventh season officiating NCAA Division III football, marking an important milestone in a career characterized by steady growth, dedication, and service to the game.

A longtime member of the Association of New England Football Officials, Passacantilli has earned the respect of coaches, players, and fellow officials throughout the region. His consistent performance has led to multiple high school

(CAREER *Pg. 2*)

Stephen Passacantilli

EDITORIAL

LET'S GO PATRIOTS!

For those of us who are longtime fans of the New England Patriots, it seems like it was only yesterday that the Pats of Brady and Belichick were the dominant team in the NFL.

We were around in the early days of the AFL when the Boston Patriots were run (and eventually run into the ground) by the Sullivan family and their immediate successors, culminating with the depressing late '80s and early '90s before Bob Kraft bought the team.

But time flies (even when you're NOT having fun) and the reality is that it's been seven years since the Pats have had even a reasonable chance of reaching the Super Bowl. After two decades of our Pats grabbing the spotlight during the Brady era, we've been on the outside looking-in for these past six seasons

But after two of the most dismal seasons ever, head coach Mike Vrabel has turned the team around, along with offensive coordinator Josh McDaniel and 23 year-old, second-year quarterback Drake Maye, into a legitimate Super Bowl contender that unexpectedly is one game away from reaching the big game.

The Pats are back, bringing our region together (even for the non-sports fans among us) in a way that only a shared passion for a sports team can do.

As fans across the country have witnessed during all of the exciting playoff games these past few weeks, the difference between winning and losing often (actually, usually) comes down to one or two outstanding (or freaky) plays.

Some might call it luck -- and whether the football gods have aligned the stars (Josh Allen was eliminated and Bo Nix got injured on the second-to-last play of their game) to create a path for the Pats to reach the big game will not be known until Sunday evening's final score is posted.

But regardless of the outcome of the big game with the Broncos, we'd like to congratulate the Patriots' players and organization for a great season that made our fall Sundays a bit more fun once again.

AS WE'RE SHIVERING NEXT WEEK, REMEMBER, WE'RE HALFWAY THROUGH WINTER

When the National Weather Service issued its long-range forecast for this winter last fall, it was a good news/bad news scenario. They were predicting warmer-than-normal temperatures for our region, which was the good news (after all, who likes cold weather?), but the bad news meant that this was further evidence of climate change and global warming. Our recent winters in Eastern Mass. had been the warmest on record and that trend seemed poised to continue.

However, Ol' Man Winter had other ideas. Instead of spinning his polar vortex in a nice tight loop around the North Pole (which keeps the cold air contained around the pole), he's been playing a sort of yo-yo effect with the vortex, allowing it to dip south and bring that frigid air to us. December was the coldest December in our region in 25 years.

The chronic instability and disruption of the polar vortex has been a relatively recent phenomenon. Climatologists tell us that the colder air that we experience when the vortex dips south ironically is a sign of overall global warming. The Arctic region has been among the fastest-warming places on the planet (four times faster than the rest of the world, which is why the polar bears don't have enough sea ice for hunting seals in the summer months).

The warming of the Arctic, according to these scientists, is causing a weakening of the vortex and ultimately sending cold air much further south than usual, resulting in the record cold waves of the sort that the weatherman says is coming our way next week.

For those of us who have oil heat, prices thankfully are the lowest they've been in a few years. Users of natural gas have not been so lucky, with prices much higher than in the recent past. Many low-income families are having trouble paying their heating bills, especially with the elimination of the federal energy assistance program.

So yes, it would be nice if this winter were warmer. But as cold as the weather has been, our wintry conditions could be a lot worse (and yes, we're thinking of the Snowmageddon we experienced 11 years ago!).

On the bright side, we've already passed the halfway point of meteorological winter (the three months of December, January, and February) and the sun has been setting later and later every day (sunset is now 30 minutes later than it was on December 1), noticeably lengthening our days amidst the cold.

Hopefully, the worst of the winter of 2026 will be behind us after next week -- and we'll be on a path to glide through the month of February en route to warmer days ahead.

The Independent Newspaper Group reserves the right to edit letters for space and clarity. We regret that we cannot publish unsigned letters. Please include your street and telephone number with your submission. The Independent Newspaper Group 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 Independent Newspaper Group.

Text or attachments emailed to editor@reverejournal.com are preferred.

NEWRA *(from Page 1)*

isfaction.

He also plans to live in the building.

NEWNC President Kevin Fleming thanked the owner for participation in the community process and welcomed him into the neighborhood.

The owner plans to return to NEWRA with his revised plans and community commitment to gain the group's support.

In addition, both groups have supported three restaurant requests for full liquor licenses in accordance with the City's 2025 legislation that allows for full liquor license upgrades.

Wicked Craft Company, 54 Salem Street, Rocco's Cucina and Bar, 45 Commercial Street and Pizzeria Regina, 11 Thatcher Street received support for their filings.

Kevin Williams, artist and Emily Rose, project coordinator, Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture advised NEWRA of plans to place a new six-foot sculpture at Copps Hill Terrace to commemorate the Legacy of Phillis Wheatley Peters the first black woman to publish a book of poetry.

She is buried in an unknown grave in Copps Hill Burying Ground.

CAREER *(from Page 1)*

postseason assignments, including state semifinal playoff games, honors reserved for top-rated officials.

At the collegiate level, Passacantilli is a member of the Eastern Association of Intercollegiate Football Officials (EAIFO). His NCAA postseason experience includes first- and second-round playoff assignments and officiating the 2022 NCAA Division III National Quarterfinals, reflecting his continued advancement within the profession.

A lifelong North End resident, Passacantilli has also served the community through public service, as the Director of Constituent Services to former District 1 Boston City Councilor Sal LaMattina and as a Special Assistant to former Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh. He is currently a state and federal lobbyist with the national firm Ballard Partners.

Passacantilli is the son of Daniel and Lorraine Langone Passacantilli and the grandson of the late Albert "Blue Front" and Josephine Passacantilli, as well as the late Hon. Fred Langone and his wife Aurora. He and his wife, Renee, are the proud parents of Evan Frechette and Grace Passacantilli.

THE NORTH END REGIONAL REVIEW

- FOUNDED IN 1967 -

PUBLISHER: Debra DiGregorio
deb@reverejournal.com

PRESIDENT: Stephen Quigley
editor@beaconhilltimes.com

REPORTERS AND CONTRIBUTORS:
Stephen Quigley | Phil Orlandella | Cary Shuman

PHONE 781-485-0588 - FAX 781-485-1403

INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER GROUP, LLC

NEAA spring/summer baseball reservation underway

By John Romano

It is once again time to register for North End Athletic Association baseball for the spring and summer of 2026. While it is only January, we have been busy pulling together much of the behind the scenes pieces for another great year of baseball. We need everyone to register ASAP so we can put together all the teams, align all the coaches and assign all the sponsors! The sooner you register, the faster and better we can put everything together. Baseball is fully coordinated with the N.E.A.A. Midnight Riders Lacrosse Program so that your child can play both sports this Spring if they want and not have any conflicts.

The breakdown of registration options are listed below. Baseball is played in the Spring for ages 4-12. Traveling Baseball Program for 13-15 year olds is late Spring/ Summer. We are excited for this upcoming season.

Dodgers Traveling Baseball Program Updated:

We are extremely excited to offer a new, improved and expanded Traveling Baseball Experience this year for 13 to 15 year olds.

This year we will be having a 13 Year Old Team playing in the Lou Tompkins Allstar Baseball League. This team will be coached by Scott Perry of Charlestown along with Rick Martignetti - formerly of the NEAA Tigers.

We will also have our 15 and under team in the Lou Tompkins Allstar Baseball League: Coaches this year will be Tony Merlino and Bryce Pill. Michael DelloRusso will be the GM.

Workouts will begin in May and final teams will be chosen before the end of May. This expanded program will provide a greater opportunity for more players in the 13-15 year old age group!

Clinic, T-Ball, Minor League and Major League Programs:

We are also looking forward to our regular programs for ages 4-12 and they are as follows:

Clinic: Ages 4 Year Old Boys & Girls Saturday Mornings at 9:30am to 10:30am: Puopolo Park - Coach Marko will run this program this year.

T-Ball: Ages 5 Year Old Boys & Girls - Saturday Mornings at 10:30am to 11:30am: Puopolo Park - Coach Marko will run this program this year.

Minor League Baseball: 6 to 8 Year Boys & Girls: Mon - Thurs 5:30 to 7:00pm Puopolo Park

Major League Baseball: 9 to 12 Year Old Boys and Girls: Mon - Thurs 6:00pm to 8pm Langone Park

Minor League and Major League Baseball starts with practices on April 1st. This is preseason. There will be pre-assigned practice days and times assigned to each team at the beginning of the season. Each coach may add additional practice time if there is field availability. Opening day for games is Saturday, April 25th when all teams will play. Games will then be played Monday - through Thursday for both age groups and run through mid June. Practices will be scheduled throughout that time period as well and listed in the schedule that will be posted in mid-March. Please note that bad weather/rainouts etc may cause the schedule to change.

Registration Fee is $65 per player for our age 4 - 12 year old programs. Registration fee for Dodgers is $75 per player. The NEAA will never prevent a player from participating in our programs due to the inability to pay our registration fees. If you need assistance, please contact John Romano, NEAA Sports Coordinator before registering. (617) 750-9749 or jromano45@gmail.com. For all team and league related questions, please contact: Ralph J Martignetti, Mobile: +1 857-366-1213 or Email: rmartignetti@nysir.org.

Girls 13-18 who are interested in a great softball program should contact the North End Execution. For more information, please go to their website: executionfastpitch.org

TO REGISTER for all 2026 NEAA Baseball Programs: USE this URL for the N.E.A.A. website: https://www.neaasports.org

We are also looking for volunteer coaches - please let us know if you are interested.

We look forward to another great year of baseball.

News, Notes and Whatever By Phil Orlandella

NEWRA/NEWNC SEEK MEMBERSHIPS

Both the North End/Waterfront Residents' Association (NEWRA) and the North End/Waterfront Neighborhood Council (NEWNC), volunteer neighborhood groups that care and lookout for the welfare and safety of the community can use additional members to service on the boards and their respective committees.

Becoming a member provides residents an opportunity to get involved in community related issues and concerns.

NEWRA and NEWNC conduct monthly meetings, (that are open to the public) to address agenda items that relate directly to the community.

The only difference is NEWNC members are elected by the community for two-year terms. Candidates must secure signatures of residents on a nomination paper and placed on a ballot for a public election (one day) at a designed site determined by the active group. Eight seats (half the committee) are elected every other year and results are announced the day of the election,

NEWNC will promote the election with flyers and press articles.

FOCCP HORTICULTURAL COMMITTEE CAPTURES GARDEN CONTEST

Hard work, dedication and creativeness to keep the gardens beautiful, healthy and clean earned the Friends of Christopher Columbus Park (FOCCP) Horticulture Committee the 2025 Mayor's Garden Contest.

Many visitors and residents visited the garden and enjoyed the flowers and took photos.

Reportedly, the all-volunteer group is already gearing up to win again next year.

POETRY READING AT THE LIBRARY

A poetry reading featuring local author and poet Harris Gardner was held at the North End Library sponsored by the Friends of the North End Library (FONEL).

Gardner read from his latest poetry collection, "No Time for Death".

After the reading, there was an open mic for anyone who wanted to share their own work.

Gardner has been featured at many venues in New England over the years.

OLD NORTH ILLUMINATED DIGITAL SPEAKER SERIES

Old North Illuminated will feature a compelling online conversation with Historian Jen Manion exploring queer and trans histories from early America as they appeared in print.

Set for February 11 from 7-8:30pm, Manion will explore how people understood and talked about gender identity and sexuality before modern terms like Transgender or homosexual existed.

Using newspapers, magazines and children's literature from early America, Manion will share stories of queer pioneers.

The program is part of Old North Illuminated ongoing commitment to public history and community dialogue.

To register visit www.oldnorth.com/events.

NEAA BASEBALL OPENING DAY APRIL 25

This year's North End Athletic Association (NEAA) Baseball Opening Day will take place on Saturday, April 25 and run through mid-June.

All teams will play on Opening Day and games will continue Monday through Thursday at Langone Park on Commercial Street.

"We (NEAA) are looking forward to another great year of baseball." Commissioner Ralph Martignetti said.

Opening Day will provide players the opportunity to showcase their baseball talents and offer residents a special day at the ball park that will also offer refreshments, food, several activities and events for everyone to enjoy.

Families and fans, if they choose can make a donation to the NEAA at this community event.

Local Catholic Schools offer well-rounded education beyond traditional academics

Staff Report

For parents seeking a well-rounded education, which along with a traditional academic curriculum, also emphasizes good citizenship and religious faith, the Greater Boston area offers a number of top-notch Catholic Schools.

Located at 20 Winthrop St. in Charlestown, Good Shepherd School is an independent, nonprofit Catholic preschool serving children ages 20 months to 4 years old.

"Good Shepherd School prepares its students for a life of joy by growing in the love of Jesus. We seek to integrate this belief into all aspects of our educational programs," the school's mission states.

Good Shepherd, which opened in October of 2009, was "formed through the leadership of Father James Ronan Ph.D., former Pastor of St. Mary-St Catherine of Siena parish, and a Board of parents, citizens, and friends who saw a great need for a Catholic preschool in its Charlestown neighborhood," according to the school's website.

Applications are open now through Jan. 31 for the '26-27 school year. Visit gsscharlestown.org for more information.

East Boston Central Catholic School, located at 69 London St. in East Boston, has encouraged students in kindergarten through Grade 8 to "Go Further with Faith" through its education offerings. EBCCS, which is the only parochial in East Boston also offers an Early Learning Center for ages 3-4, since it opened in 1974 as a multi-parish, collaborative elementary school serving Our Lady of the Assumption, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Most Holy Redeemer and Sacred Heart Parishes.

"East Boston Central Catholic School is committed to strong

See SCHOOLS Page 11

A POWERFUL SYMBOL OF SERVICE NOW DISPLAYED AT MC

Malden Catholic is proud to announce that David King. M.D. P '24 '28 donated his kit flag to Malden Catholic recently. Kit flags are carried by Special Operations Operators in combat and can be used to cover the body of a service member who was killed in action during a mission. Malden Catholic is grateful that this flag and Dr. King returned safely home and that Malden Catholic can display it proudly on campus.
Plaque Inscription Reads:
Be it known by all, this flag was flown in the face of the enemy on the 10th anniversary of 9/11 by COL David R. King, US Army, Joint Special Operations Command, illuminated in the dark by the light of justice, and bears witness to the removal of terrorist forces threatening the freedom of the United States of America. It was flown with great honor and pride over a secret special operations forward operating base in Afghanistan where each day Americans fought the Global War on Terrorism in remembrance of all who lost their lives. This secret forward operating base was instrumental in the eventual identification and elimination of Osama Bin Ladin.

East Boston Central Catholic School celebrates Catholic Schools Week

Staff Report

EBCCS will celebrate Catholic Schools Week with a focus on our faith, our students, our families, and our staff. Throughout the week, parents will be invited into their child's classroom to take part in a variety of activities, such as our Young Authors event, where every student in the school will have a book on display, our 7th and 8th Grade Science Fair, and engaging classroom lessons.

The events of the week highlight what makes EBCCS so special: a welcoming atmosphere, an excellent faith-based education, and a safe, loving environment. Yet when families and community members are asked what they love most about EBCCS, one word is mentioned time and again, "family."

There is no better example of what "family" means at EBCCS than this year's Legacy Gala Honorees.

On May 1st, EBCCS will honor Carol Baglio, Maryellen Punch, and the Pizzicannella Family at our annual Legacy Gala at Spinelli's in Lynnfield.

The Pizzicannella women have been a beloved staple of the EBCCS Christmas Fair for more than 20 years, generously sharing their time and talents by providing delicious homemade Italian food for our community.

Maryellen Punch served the students of EBCCS for over 25 years in the school kitchen, all while sending her three children and later her grandchildren to the school. Her dedication and care nourished generations of students, both literally and figuratively.

CARY SHUMAN PHOTO

East Boston Central Catholic School Principal Robert Casaletto (left) congratulates Business Manager and Development Director Carol Baglio on being one of honorees at the school's Legacy Gala that will be held May 1.

Carol Baglio has been the backbone of EBCCS for more than 30 years. Through her leadership, the school has remained financially sustainable, while many Catholic

See EBCCS Page 7

ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL STUDENTS EARNING THEIR GREEN THUMB

Students at St. John's School of the North End work on their gardening and growing skills in the classroom. These are just one of the many activities St. John's offers to their students.

The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy announces finalists for the 2026 Dewey Square Mural

Special to the Regional Review

The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy, the nonprofit responsible for the management and care of The Greenway, in partnership with Embrace and Everyone250, is excited to announce the selection of seven finalists (5 individual artists and 1 collaborative team of 2 artists) for the 2026 Dewey Square Mural following the Conservancy's first-ever national open call for this site. The selected artists are: Brooke Stewart and Daniela Rivera (team), Destiny Palmer, Ekua Holmes, Escif, Jasmine Chen, and Rixy.

Chosen by a distinguished panel of Boston artists, cultural leaders, and community members, these seven finalists represent a diverse range of approaches to art-making, with practices spanning muralism, abstract and figurative painting, illustration, collage-based work, printmaking, and sculpture that engage with concepts of history, belonging, materiality, and public space. Each finalist and finalist team will receive a $5,000 honorarium to develop a full mural proposal. One artist or artist team will be selected to realize the 2026 mural and will be awarded a $25,000 artist fee and a $50,000 production budget.

"This is an extraordinary and deeply thoughtful group of artists whose practices reflect the many ways people experience, remember, and shape the city," said Dr. Audrey N. Lopez, Director and Curator of Public Art at the Greenway Conservancy. "As Boston prepares for a transformational year in 2026—with monumental gatherings and increased international attention—this mural will stand at the heart of downtown as both a welcome and a provocation. New and varied perspectives on our shared history and possible futures feel more important now than ever, and this open call has surfaced artists uniquely positioned to lead that conversation."

IMAGES COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS

Finalists from top left to right: Brook Stewart, Daniela Rivera, and Destiny Palmer. Finalists from bottom left to right: Ekua Holmes, Escif, Jasmine Chen, and Rixy.

As Boston looks ahead to a year defined by both celebration and reflection, the Dewey Square Mural remains a powerful platform for public dialogue. That role takes on even greater meaning as the city approaches the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.

"The 250th anniversary is a milestone, but it's also an invitation to reckon, remember, and reimagine," said Imari Paris Jeffries, Ph.D., President and CEO of Embrace. "Through the Dewey Square Mural, these artists are helping Boston engage history as something living and unfinished, while modeling what it looks like to build belonging in public, together."

All finalists will present their proposals to the Dewey Square Artist Selection Committee, who convene during the last week of January to select one artist or artist team to commission for the 2026 Dewey Square Mural. The commissioned artist will be announced on February 10, 2026. All four runners-up will also have their proposals and other work shown on 2-D panels installed at Dewey Square Plaza from June 2026 to December 2026.

2026 Dewey Square Mural Finalists (listed alphabetically by first name)

Brooke Stewart (collaborative team with Daniela Rivera)

Boston-based interdisciplinary artist Brooke Stewart explores the intersection of art and sport through large-scale printmaking, painting, and installation. A lifelong athlete, she treats courts and playing surfaces as sacred public spaces, shaping memory and belonging. Her work has been exhibited internationally, including at MFA Boston and Tokyo University of the Arts.

Daniela Rivera (collaborative team with Brooke Stewart)

Daniela Rivera is an artist and Professor at Wellesley College whose work examines displacement, identity, and belonging through immersive, materially rich environments. With a background spanning Chile and the U.S., Rivera's practice centers storytelling, public engagement, and collaboration, using murals as social processes that invite dialogue between community, history, and place.

Destiny Palmer

Destiny Palmer is a Boston-based artist, educator, and muralist whose work explores color as memory, inheritance, and cultural language. Inspired by women in her family and the unfinished quilt of her grandmother, Palmer's practice bridges science, history, and community storytelling, centering the unseen labor that holds cities together.

Ekua Holmes

Ekua Holmes is a Roxbury native, MassArt graduate, and celebrated mixed-media artist whose work centers children, family, and community life. Drawing from personal history and local landscapes, she builds richly textured narratives from found objects and ephemera, creating work that honors everyday beauty, resilience, and the power of self-determination.

Escif

Escif is a Valencia-based street artist active since the late 1990s whose minimalist murals use sharp lines and restrained color to question capitalism, environmental crisis, and urban life. His work has appeared at major museums and biennials worldwide, including Palais de Tokyo, Shanghai's Power Station of Art, and Banksy's Dismaland.

Jasmine Chen

Jasmine Chen is a Boston-based visual artist originally from Beijing whose work investigates memory, migration, and mixed ancestry. Her art is in the permanent collection of the Danforth Art Museum and has been exhibited throughout New England. She holds degrees from Harvard and Brandeis and has completed residencies across New England.

Rixy

Rixy is a Boston-based street artist whose work blends surrealism, intersectional feminism, and Latinx-Caribbean identity. Their murals celebrate Black and brown youth, queer communities, and diasporic storytelling through bold color and found materials. Recent commissions include the City of Boston and the Boston Triennial Public Art Accelerator.

Since 2012, the Dewey Square Mural has served as a focal point for bold, contemporary, and thought-provoking public art in downtown Boston. Working with a range of renowned artists, ten murals have been installed to date, each viewed by millions of residents, commuters, and tourists, and each sparking conversation and connection in Boston's shared public space. Six of the murals have been presented in collaboration with curatorial partners, including Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art (2012, 2013), the Museum of Fine Arts Boston (2014), MIT's List Visual Arts Center (2015), the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum (2017), and Mass MoCA (2024).

Previously commissioned artists include Os Gemeos (2012), Matthew Ritchie (2013), Shinique Smith (2014), Lawrence Weiner (2015), Mehdi Ghadyanloo (2016), Shara Hughes (2018), Super A (2019), Daniel Gordon (2021), and Jeffrey Gibson (2024). In 2022, Boston-based artist Problak and the GN Crew made history as the first local artist team to be featured, launching a mural beloved by Boston's communities, and which stayed on view for 24 months, the longest run in the program's history.

A Special Thank You to Our Supporters

The 2026 Dewey Square Mural is supported, in part, by the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism.

Project support for the Dewey Square Mural is generously provided by Meet Boston and The Lynch Foundation.

Public Art on The Greenway is made possible with major support from the Barr Foundation, Goulston & Storrs, Meet Boston, the Wagner Foundation, the Richard K. Lubin Family Foundation, the

Various Dewey Square Murals, 2012-2024.

(MURAL *Pg.* 7)

Wu announces voting stage of participatory budgeting initiative, "Ideas in Action"

Special to the Regional Review

Mayor Michelle Wu and the City of Boston's Office of Participatory Budgeting announced the voting phase for Ideas in Action, the City's participatory budgeting initiative. Over 1,200 ideas were submitted earlier this year, recommending how $2.2 million could be invested. Until February 15, 2026, Boston residents can vote to select their top five projects to help guide how $2.2 million of the City's budget will be spent on community-driven projects across the city.

Proposals for the 2026 ballot were developed through five community forums held in fall 2025, where residents worked alongside City staff to prioritize project ideas and draft proposals for the public vote. The process started in the summer of 2025 with over 1,200 ideas collected from residents.

"Our residents provided invaluable insights and their ideas will drive how we can deliver on issues that matter most in our communities," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "We are excited to have residents now vote on these proposals, and I am thankful to all community members who engaged in shaping these ideas."

Below are the 2026 ballot proposals for voters' consideration:

• Neighborhood Fresh Food Access Initiative, $500,000

• Immigrant Legal Defense Fund, $400,000

• Immigrant Stories Through Art: Creating Belonging, Building Connections, $300,000

• Workforce Training Programs Focused on Trades, $300,000

• Immigrant Career Pathways: Bridging Language and Employment, $300,000

• Youth Financial Literacy and Empowerment Workshops, $250,000

• Small Business Development Resource Program, $250,000

• Community Litter Reduction Campaign, $200,000

• Green my Block, $100,000

• Voices of Recovery: Sobriety Supports and Storytelling Pilot, $200,000

• Healing Through Art: Creative Pathways to Wellness, $300,000

• Bridging the Gap: Assistance for Housing Stability, $200,000

• Senior Caregiver Resources & Training Programs, $200,000

"The projects on this year's ballot represent the direct result of our office's deep commitment to community engagement," said Renato Castelo, Director of the Office of Participatory Budgeting. "By partnering with 19 organizations across the city, we've brought the voices of hundreds of residents to the table. I invite everyone to participate in this final step and vote for the projects that will have the greatest impact on their community."

How to Vote

• Boston residents can vote online by visiting Boston.gov/Participate.

• For in-person voting, residents can visit City Hall and or BCYF Pino; BCYF Quincy; BCYF Holland; BCYF Leahy Holloran; BCYF Vine Street; BCYF Hennigan.

Participatory budgeting voting is open to all Boston residents age 11 and older, regardless of citizenship status. Each resident is limited to one vote, and participants are encouraged to use that vote to indicate their top five preferred projects.

Cycle One Project Updates

Below are updates on the 2025 winning projects that are moving through implementation.

• Youth Reentry Supports

• In December 2025, Mayor Wu and the Office of Returning Citizens announced $250,000 in grant awards supporting programs focused on reducing youth recidivism and strengthening reentry supports for young people returning from incarceration.

• Fresh Food Access

• The Office of Food Justice reported that their 2025 project, Expand Access to Fresh Foods in Boston, has been completed. These funds supported a coordinated response to the November 2025 SNAP funding delay.

• Rental Assistance For Boston Youth

• The Office of Housing Stability continues to receive referrals from trusted community partners working with at-risk youth. Those eligible can receive assistance of up to $5,000 to help cover late rent payments or move-in costs, first/last month's rent, security deposit, and/or a broker's fee.

• Benches at High Ridership Bus Stops

• The City's Streets team is currently finalizing the procurement of 120 benches and assessing locations based on impact and need. Installation is expected by early summer 2026. All benches will include plaques acknowledging the resident-led PB process.

• Rat Prevention Initiative

• This project will expand a successful rat prevention pilot to two Boston Housing Authority developments in Brighton. PB funding will help upgrade existing residential trash collection service to commercial-level service; install metroSTOR trash, recycling and compost bins; provide in-unit trash, recycling compost containers, and education for 665 units; and install MicroShare sensors to test the effectiveness of this pilot. This project is expected to be completed by mid-2026.

• Support for Community Gardens

• GrowBoston is planning to release a grant application in early 2026, offering grants to nonprofit organizations to build community gardens on underutilized land for public access and use, prioritizing areas where people have limited access to affordable, nutritious food. This project will create a healthier environment, beautify the community, address food insecurity, and build community among residents. Garden operations must have a robust rodent management plan.

For regular project updates, visit Boston.gov/Participate.

Ideas in Action is Boston's participatory budgeting initiative, where residents help decide how to spend a portion of the City's budget on projects that benefit communities across Boston.

The Office of Participatory Budgeting (OPB) provides an official point of entry for Boston residents to contribute to the city's budget process. OPB continues to advance its mission by: furthering public engagement and direct democratic involvement; building collective capacity on issues of racial and social justice; and aligning with the City's goal of achieving and embedding equity and inclusion into City practices.

MURAL *(from Page 6)*

Mass Cultural Council, The New Commonwealth Fund, and Robert and Doris Gordon.

Additional support is provided by the Deborah Munroe Noonan Memorial Fund, Bank of America, N.A., Trustee.

Embrace and Everyone250's collaboration for the 2026 Dewey Square Mural is made possible through major support from the Barr Foundation, Nellie Mae, the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, and the City of Boston.

Special thanks to our design collaborator, Chen Luo.

About The Greenway and the Greenway Conservancy (rosekennedygreenway.org)

The Rose Kennedy Greenway is a contemporary public park in the heart of Boston and one of the most visited attractions in the Commonwealth, welcoming millions of visitors annually. The Greenway is managed by the Greenway Conservancy, a non-profit responsible for the administration and care of the park. The majority of the Conservancy's annual budget is made up of generous donations from the community, and it is with their support that the Conservancy cultivates a gathering space where all are welcome and celebrated.

The Greenway Conservancy Public Art Program brings innovative and contemporary art to Boston through free, seasonal exhibitions that engage people in meaningful experiences, interactions, and dialogue with art, each other, and the most pressing issues of our time. Past

Greenway exhibitions can be viewed on the Public Art Instagram (@greenwaypublicart) or the Conservancy's website.

About Embrace (https://www.embraceboston.org/)

Embrace is a nonprofit organization working to build a more equitable, inclusive, and connected city through art, culture, storytelling, and policy. Founded in 2017, Embrace activates public spaces, celebrates community, and drives systemic change toward a Boston where everyone feels seen, valued, and a true sense of belonging.

A founding partner of Everyone250, Boston's campaign to commemorate America's 250th anniversary through a lens of equity, justice, and belonging, Embrace creates platforms that amplify diverse voices, reimagine history, and inspire collective action. Through cultural programming, research, and creative collaboration, Embrace is fostering spaces of connection and care—shaping a future grounded in joy, justice, and shared humanity.

About Everyone250 (https://everyone250.org/)

Led by a coalition of over 100 partners in Boston's arts and culture sector including co-chairs A Beautiful Resistance, Embrace Boston, MassArt, Mass Humanities and Mathmatik Athletics, Everyone250 is redefining what it means to belong in Boston. Through storytelling, cultural celebration, and honest reflection, we shine a light on the untold histories and unsung heroes who have shaped our city over the past 250 years—ensuring every voice is heard and every person is seen.

More than a campaign, Everyone250 is a living, breathing commitment to inclusivity, representation, and the power of collective impact.

Join the Movement. Explore our mission, attend upcoming events, and help us Reveal More Boston.

EBCCS *(from pg. 4)*

schools in and around East Boston were forced to close. Working tirelessly behind the scenes, she has run countless fundraising events and served as the school's Business Manager, Advancement Director, and IT specialist. Carol's two children are proud graduates of the school, and today four of her grandchildren are continuing the legacy as current students.

Through times of celebration and challenge alike, Carol has been a steadfast presence for the EBCCS family and her own family. She is a true example of faith, leadership, and service, and embodies the very heart of what it means to be part of the EBCCS community.

We invite you to call the school (617-567-7456) to arrange a personal tour to make your family a part of our family. You can also visit us at www.ebccs.org.

ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL BREAKFAST

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTOS

Former Massachusetts State Rep. Byron Rushing with State Reps John Moran, Jeff Turco, and Russell Holmes.

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu speaks: "We are all stronger together...we've got to get together for our people."

Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey spoke of remembering Rev Dr King "celebrating and affirming what Dr King represents... Freedom, equality, decency, dignity, and that we are all God's children"

US Representative Ayanna Pressley introduces the Awards segment of the MLK Breakfast.

MLK Art Award Recipients were students from the Fenway High School and Mass Art.

The Keynote Speaker was Nikole Hannah-Jones, Pulitzer Prize-winning creator of The 1619 Project:A New Origin Story.

Sen. Edward Markey.

WCVB Award winning journalist Brittany Johnson served as Leader of Ceremonies.

Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Campbell.

MLK Scholars receiving awards: Able Ebbi from Boston Latin School, Carl Matteus Washington and Daniel Idemudia from Boston Latin Academy, Cliddanie Bellevue, Kelyse Foster, Aeisha Beckford, and Fraydique Alexander Gaiton Rodriguez from the John D O'Bryant School, Hannah Banh from the Dr Albert D Holland School, and Rebecca Kabeya, Amani Pagan, Ludiane Mayara Pereira Castro, and BjBellie Jean from the Edward M Kennedy Academy for Health Careers stand with US Representative Ayanna Pressley and Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones.

The Reverend Kevin Vetiac of St Cyprian's Episcopal Church, one of the organizers of the MLK Breakfast.

Lori Harper sings Lift Every Voice And Sing, often referred to as the Black American National Anthem.

Boston Children Chorus Executive Director Andrés Holder.

The Reverend Jay Williams of the Union Combined Parish (United Methodists), one of the organizers of the MLK Breakfast.

ANNUAL MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. MEMORIAL BREAKFAST

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTOS

President of Stull And Lee Inc David Lee (center) is a recipient of the Drum Major Award. He is presented with the award by Rev Jay Williams, Rev Kevin Vetiac, Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones, and US Representative Ayanna Pressley. This award is named from what the Rev Dr King said in a 1967 sermon where he urged his congregation not to focus on his accomplishments but that he "tried to give his life serving others".

President of the Epsilon Gamma Lambda Chapter of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Andreas Douglas (right) is a recipient of the Drum Major Award. He is presented with the award with EGL Director of Membership Jason Burrell (2nd from left), Rev Jay Williams, Rev Kevin Vetiac, Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones, and US Representative Ayanna Pressley. This award is named from what the Rev Dr King said in a 1967 sermon where he urged his congregation not to focus on his accomplishments but that he "tried to give his life serving others".

Darius Smith and Neil Daniel accept the Drum Major Award on behalf of YouthBuild Boston (center). They are presented with the award by Rev Jay Williams, Rev Kevin Vetiac, Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones, and US Representative Ayanna Pressley. This award is named from what the Rev Dr King said in a 1967 sermon where he urged his congregation not to focus on his accomplishments but that he "tried to give his life serving others".

Keynote Speaker Nikole Hannah-Jones and US Representative Ayanna Pressley with True Compass Award recipient Byron Rushing. He is a civil rights activist and community organizer as well as serving the Commonwealth as a State Representative.
The True Compass Award is given to individuals whose life's work has contributed to the promotion of social justice, racial equality, and civil discourse.

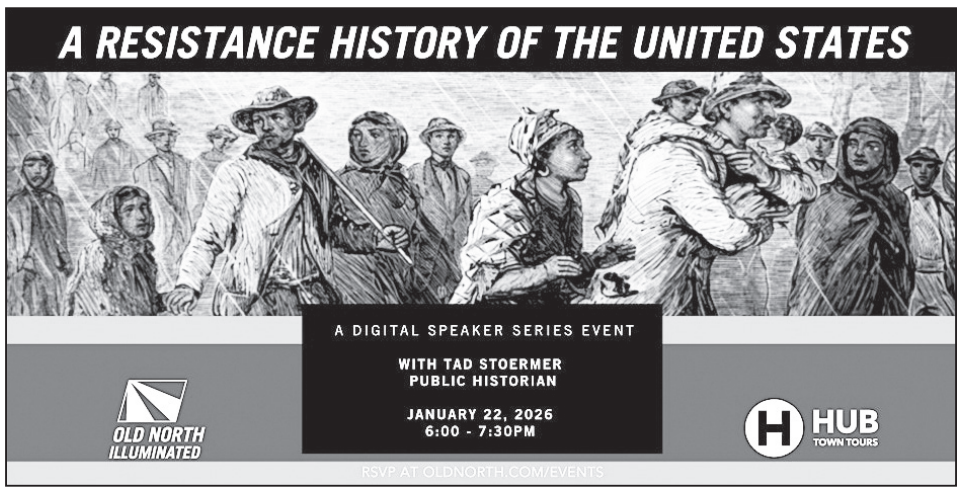
The audience applauds after the performance by the Boston Arts Academy Spiritual Ensemble.

Old North Illuminated News

Old North Illuminated Presents "A Resistance History of the United States" with Historian Tad Stoermer

Digital Speaker Series Continues on Thursday, January 22, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

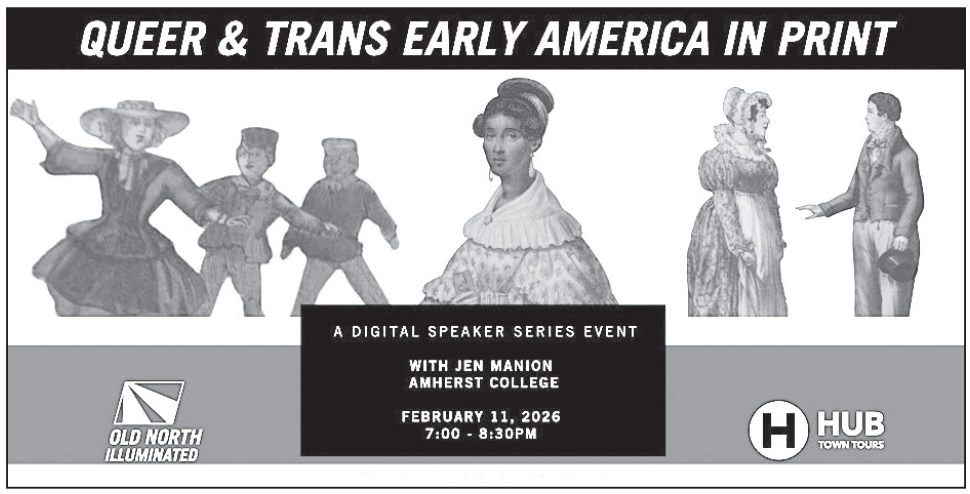
Join Old North Illuminated for a thought-provoking online conversation with public historian Tad Stoermer examining the role of resistance in shaping American history. Set for Thursday, January 22, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., Stoermer will draw from his forthcoming book, A Resistance History of the United States, in which he challenges familiar stories of the American past, arguing that the nation was shaped not by shared liberty, but by ongoing struggles between resistance and power. Through key moments such as Bacon's Rebellion and Metacomet's War, the Salem Witch Trials, and the Underground Railroad, he explores how resistance movements exposed the limits of freedom and pushed back against systems of oppression. These stories reveal how myths, selective memory, and institutional silence have long protected abusive power—and what we can learn from past resistance as we confront injustice today. The program is part of Old North Illuminated's ongoing commitment to public history and community dialogue. This virtual event is accessible with a donation of any amount to support Old North Illuminated, the nonprofit that stewards Old North Church Historic Site. The 2026 Speaker Series is brought to you in part by HUB Town Tours. To register, please visit: https://www.oldnorth.com/events/.



Old North Illuminated Presents "Queer & Trans Early America in Print" with Historian Jen Manion

Digital Speaker Series Continues on Wednesday, February 11, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Join Old North Illuminated for a compelling online conversation with historian Jen Manion exploring queer and trans histories from early America as they appeared in print. Set for Wednesday, February 11, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Manion will explore how people understood and talked about gender identity and sexuality before modern terms like "transgender" or "homosexual" existed. Using newspapers, magazines, and children's literature from early America, they will share stories of queer pioneers—including female husbands, sailors, children, and prisoners—and discuss what these accounts reveal about everyday life and identity in the past. The talk will also look at how queer and trans people were portrayed in historical media and why these stories still matter today. The program is part of Old North Illuminated's ongoing commitment to public history and community dialogue. This virtual event is accessible with a donation of any amount to support Old North Illuminated, the nonprofit that stewards Old North Church Historic Site. The 2026 Speaker Series is brought to you in part by HUB Town Tours. To register, please visit: https://www.oldnorth.com/events/.



State officials issue annual reminder on open burning season

Massachusetts' fire and environmental leaders are reminding residents to use caution, care, and common sense if they plan to burn certain agricultural waste during open burning season, which runs from January 15 to May 1.

State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine, Commissioner Bonnie Heiple of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), and Chief Fire Warden David Celino of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) said restrictions on open burning are imposed at the state and local levels.

"Open burning season applies only to specific types of fuel and is always limited based on the daily fire hazard, environmental concerns, and location," said State Fire Marshal Davine. "Even where burning is authorized, you must have a permit from your local fire department and you must be able to extinguish the fire on a moment's notice. Please make safety your priority when burning."

"Improper open burning creates safety risks and can harm air quality," said MassDEP Commissioner Bonnie Heiple. "Only burning approved natural materials — like driftwood and prunings — and burning on 'good air days,' when pollution levels are low and air circulates well, ensures these fires can be managed safely."

"Massachusetts residents have seen just how quickly outdoor fires can grow out of control," said DCR Chief Fire Warden Celino. "We encourage everyone to exercise caution - don't risk a fire that puts you, your home, or your community at risk. Burn only approved materials, always get a permit from your local fire department, and ensure that any fire is extinguished properly and completely."

These restrictions are authorized by 310 CMR 7.07, which sets baseline requirements based on air quality and allows for "no burn" days; MGL chapter 48, section 13, which prohibits any open air fire unless a permit is issued; and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code, which gives local fire chiefs the authority to impose additional limits.

Open burning is prohibited year-round in the cities and towns of Arlington, Belmont, Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Chicopee, Everett, Fall River, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Malden, Medford, New Bedford, Newton, Somerville, Springfield, Waltham, Watertown, West Springfield, and Worcester.

In the remaining communities, open burning season runs from January 15 through May 1 with the following limitations. Local fire departments may deny a permit or set additional limitations if circumstances make open burning hazardous.

Only certain agricultural waste may be burned. This includes brush, cane, driftwood, residential forestry debris, fruit tree and bush prunings, raspberry stalks, infected bee hives, trees and brush from agricultural land clearing, and fungus-infected elm wood if no other acceptable means of disposal is available. It is unlawful to burn leaves, grass, hay, stumps, tires, household trash, construction materials, demolition debris, or brush, trees, cane, or driftwood from commercial or industrial land clearing.

Open burning may only be conducted:

- With a permit issued in advance by the local fire department;
- Between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm;
- At least 75 feet from all dwellings and without causing a nuisance;
- As close as possible to the source of material being burned; and
- When it will not cause or contribute to a condition of air pollution.

Persons who burn unlawfully or allow a fire to grow out of control could be held liable for firefighting costs or face fines or even jail time.

Open Burning Safety

- An adult should tend to the fire at all times and keep tools to extinguish it close by.
- Burn small amounts at a time.
- Never use gasoline, kerosene, or other accelerants to start the fire.
- Don't wait for the fire department to tell you that it has become unsafe to burn: put the fire out if winds pick up or the weather changes. Most fires get out of control during sudden wind changes.
- If the fire gets out of control, call the local fire department right away.

North Atlantic right whales return to southern New England waters

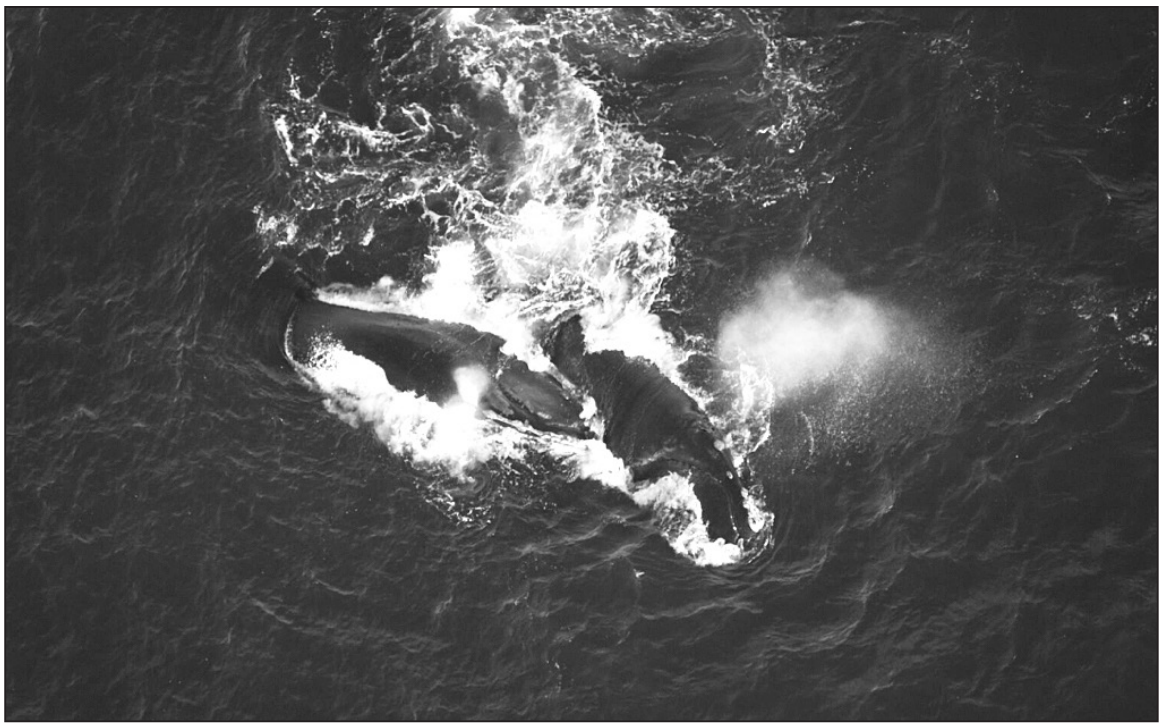
Special to the Regional Review

North Atlantic right whales have returned to the waters south of Massachusetts, prompting federal authorities to designate a voluntary slow zone.

Scientists from the New England Aquarium's Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life were flying an aerial survey on Jan. 5 when they sighted an aggregation of eight right whales 37 miles south of Nantucket. A second survey on Jan. 8 found over 20 right whales. Between both surveys, at least 23 unique whales have been identified so far. The group included two female right whales who have calved in recent years, "Braces" (Catalog #3320) and "Maple" (Catalog #1711), as well as "Atoll" (Catalog #4714), a young adult female who may be nearing calving age. These three females were all seen in surface active groups, a social behavior that involves several right whales closely interacting at the surface. These surface active groups can also provide mating opportunities, although not always. The majority of whales identified have been adult males including "Batman" (Catalog #1017) and "Dune" (Catalog #3351).

Assistant Scientist Kate Laemmle, who was one of the observers aboard the survey plane, noted the high number of these social groups in such a concentrated area.

"All around us, we saw groups of whales rolling, splashing, and bursting out of the water," Laemmle said. "Seeing these critically endangered right whales on our first surveys of the New Year is a great way to start the season and leaves us hopeful for more whales returning to the area."



NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM, TAKEN UNDER NMFS PERMIT #25739

Right whales "Maple" (Catalog #1711) and unnamed Catalog #3742 seen in a surface active group south of Nantucket, MA, on Jan. 8, 2026.

The winter/spring season marks the peak time of year for right whale sightings in southern New England waters. In addition to the Aquarium sightings south of Nantucket, the Center for Coastal Studies has also sighted right whales in Cape Cod Bay over the last month. Cape Cod Bay is subject to a mandatory slow zone for boats and ships known as a Seasonal Management Area (SMA) until May 15.

The Jan. 5 whale sightings by the Aquarium triggered the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to implement a voluntary slow speed zone called a Dynamic Management Area (DMA) for mariners to reduce their speed to 10 knots to protect the whales. The DMA is in effect until Jan. 20, one of several active voluntary slow zones from Massachusetts to Virginia due to right whale sightings. Vessel strikes are one of the leading causes of injuries and deaths for this species, which numbers about 380 individuals, making it critical that vessels slow down to the recommended speed.

"These recent sightings are an important reminder that right whales can be found throughout New England waters during the winter and spring. Reducing vessel speed in mandatory and voluntary right whale management areas is one of the most effective actions mariners can take to reduce the risk of vessel strikes and help protect this critically endangered species," said Katherine McKenna, Associate Scientist in the Aquarium's Anderson Cabot Center who was aboard the Jan. 8 survey flight.

For the past 15 years, the New England Aquarium has conducted aerial surveys over the waters south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, collecting data on all marine animals with a focus on protected species of whales and sea turtles. In recent years, the Aquarium has expanded survey coverage in New England including coastal Maine, the Gulf of Maine, and the Canyons along the shelf break. These flights help monitor changes in animal populations, identify various species, recognize trends using standardized data, and monitor aggregations. Determining where right whales occur and how they are using habitats provides crucial information that can be used to better protect endangered species like North Atlantic right whales.

The New England Aquarium is a nonprofit research and conservation organization that has protected and cared for our ocean and marine animals for more than 55 years. We provide science-based solutions and help shape policies that create measurable change to address threats the ocean faces. We inspire action through discovery and help create engaged, resilient communities.

SCHOOLS *(from Page 4)*

basic skills development within a solid Christian framework. The curriculum at all times is geared to foster the growth of individual self-worth; to develop a love and commitment to our faith; to encourage knowledge and pride in one's heritage; to develop an appreciation and respect for cultural diversities; and to develop a commitment of service to others," the school's mission states.

EBCCS conducts an ongoing enrollment for the next school year starting in the month of January. Students, new to the school, will be required to take an entrance test. Enrollment is not finalized until the school has the results of its screening test and the most recent report card from the child's current school.

Visit ebccs.org for more information.

Located at 9 Moon St. in the North End, St. John School serves students in kindergarten through the sixth grade (as well as in PK) and is a self-described "Catholic value-centered learning community dedicated to fostering the growth of each student in spirit, mind and body."

St. John, which is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and was established in 1873, offers "a strong ELA and math program coupled with a collaborative STEM program" while also offering a variety of "enrichment activities," such as yoga, pottery, chess, and Italian language study.

"St. John School exemplifies our rich history and traditions while embracing a rigorous standards-based curriculum that prepares our students for today's world while remaining strongly tied to our Catholic values," the school's mission states in part.

Visit www.sjsne.com for more information.

BC High, located at 150 Morrissey Blvd. in Boston, is a private, Jesuit, Catholic school for boys in Grades 7-12.

BC High's mission since its founding in 1863 has been "to form leaders of competence, conscience and compassion who seek to do all things ad majorem Dei gloriam – for the greater glory of God," according to the school's website. "We strive to challenge our students to become young men of integrity, educated in faith and for justice, committed to academic excellence and service to others. As a Jesuit, Catholic school, we strive to reflect the diversity of our church and community."

The Arrupe Division at BC High, which was named in honor of Father Pedro Arrupe, SJ, "provides a values-driven middle school experience for boys in Grades 7 and 8, according to the school's website. While students in Grades 9–12 are "encouraged to explore their passions while deepening their understanding of justice and purpose."

Visit bchigh.edu for more information.

Located at 99 Crystal St. in Malden, Malden Catholic High School is a private Catholic School serving students in Grades 7-12.

Malden Catholic was founded by the Xaverian Brothers in 1932 and "guided by their spiritual values of simplicity, humility, compassion, trust and zeal," according to its website.

"Malden Catholic is a co-divisional, college preparatory high school. Sponsored by the Xaverian Brothers and guided by their spiritual values of simplicity, humility, compassion, trust and zeal, we inspire all students to lives of service, leadership and excellence. An inclusive community of faith, Malden Catholic nurtures enduring personal relationships and life-long learning," the schools mission states.

In addition to its outstanding academic curriculum, Malden Catholic, a member of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA), is also renowned for its superior athletic offerings.

Visit maldencatholic.org for more information.

Located on Main Street in Hingham, Notre Dame Academy (NDA) is an independent, all-girls Roman Catholic school serving Grades 6-12.

"The Hallmarks of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur shape our school as we prepare our girls to lead a life of purpose. Our students are critical thinkers and lifelong learners. They are leaders who respect and care for others. They use their voices to speak up on behalf of those in need, looking to create a world of peace and justice. We welcome students of all religious traditions, guiding them in personal faith formation and inspiring them to see the goodness of God," according to the school's mission statement.

As the first all-girls day school in Massachusetts, NDA, which was established in 1853, strives to recognize each student's promise.

Visit ndahingham.com for more information.

Significant drought conditions declared in central and northeast regions

Drought conditions worsen in the Southeast Region, Nantucket County and Millers Basin, while conditions have improved in Dukes County

Special to the Regional Review

Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rebecca Tepper has declared the Central and Northeast Regions have worsened to a Level 2–Significant Drought. Conditions also declined in nearly all other regions, moving the Southeast Region to a Level–1 Mild Drought and the Millers River Basin to a Level 3-Critical Drought. In the Islands Region, Dukes County has returned to Normal Conditions, and Nantucket County has moved to a Level 3–Critical Drought. Conditions remain unchanged in the Western, Connecticut River Valley, and Cape Cod Regions.

Drought is a look back at conditions over a period of time. The Drought Management Task Force (DMTF) collected and analyzed data from August 2024 through December 2025. Despite minor improvements at a few locations, drought conditions have continued in most of Massachusetts.

"Continued snow and rainfall are needed to alleviate the drought that many regions in our state are experiencing this winter," said EEA Secretary Rebecca Tepper. "Groundwater levels still need to recover, so as we get closer to the growing season, we encourage everyone to continue to follow state guidance and local water restrictions. This will help ensure we have enough water available for our essential needs."

During December, Massachusetts received rainfall ranging from 3 to 4 inches, but the month ended with totals at 1-2 inches below normal. However, when looking back over the past 3 to 6 months, precipitation deficits persist.

The current drought, which began in 2024, has had significant impacts on the natural environment, including the drying of streams in nearly all regions, lower water levels in lakes and ponds, resulting in exposed banks, and impeding fish passage out to the ocean. Although local water supplies are currently stable, as the drought persists and winter recharge is reduced, it is prudent for all to be very conservative and save water whenever possible.

As outlined in the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan, continued detailed monitoring of drought conditions must continue. The drought levels also require ongoing coordination among state and federal agencies to implement drought response actions such as water use restrictions. Additionally, engagement with municipalities, including local Boards of Health (BOH), is essential. This includes providing technical outreach and assistance to water suppliers and affected municipalities. Residents are asked to report to their local BOH in case of wells drying up; BOHs are asked to report on the condition of local private wells.

Residents can report dry environmental conditions and submit photos to help monitor the situation on the Massachusetts Water Impact Reporter. Additionally, a FAQ is now available for questions regarding the current drought status and water conservation; and private well owners can go here for information on how the drought may impact them.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will continue to assist communities in managing their water systems. The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) water supply system is not experiencing drought conditions.

Below are recommendations for communities and individuals living and working within a Level 1–Mild Drought, Level 2–Significant Drought, Level 3-Critical Drought including those utilizing a private well. Residents and businesses are strongly urged to check with their local water system in case more stringent watering restrictions are in place. Many systems may have other more severe local conditions and constraints on water supply.

For Regions in Level 3 – Critical Drought

Residents and Businesses:

- Minimize overall water use
- Follow state water conservation actions and any local water use restrictions
- Monitor total household water use shown on your water bill for sudden increases, which often indicate leaks. Use the MA Home Water Use Calculator tool to evaluate household water use.
- Fix any toilet or faucet leaks immediately. Check for leaks in homes and businesses regularly by:
  - Checking water meters for constant dial movement
  - Using dye tabs to check for toilet leaks
  - Conducting regular inspections of all pipes and fixtures, including those located in utility rooms, crawlspaces, and other hidden areas
- Use dishwashers rather than handwashing dishes. Run the dishwasher only on a full load
- Aggressively reduce indoor water use by:
  - Reducing shower length and consider using a shower timer
  - Running washing machines only on a full load
  - Not letting water run while brushing and shaving
  - Replacing old fixtures and appliances with water-efficient ones. Make sure toilets, faucets, and showerheads are WaterSense labeled
  - Stop all non-essential water use

Immediate Steps for Communities/ Municipalities:

- Provide timely information on the drought and on water conservation tips to local residents and businesses taking advantage of the state's library of outreach materials
- Enforce water use restrictions with increasingly stringent penalties
- Strongly discourage or prohibit washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing
- Establish or enhance water-use reduction targets for all water users, identify top water users and conduct targeted outreach to help curb their use

Short- and Medium-Term Steps for Communities/ Municipalities:

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the state's library of outreach materials
- Implement or establish drought surcharge or seasonal water rates
- Prepare to activate emergency inter-connections for water supply
- Develop or refine your local drought management plan using guidance outlined in the state Drought Management Plan

For Regions in Level 2 – Significant Drought

Residents and Businesses:

- Minimize overall water use;
- Follow local water use restrictions;
- Fix indoor leaks, such as from toilets, faucets, and showers, which result in more than 60 percent of indoor use; and,
- For larger buildings and businesses, conduct water audits to identify areas of leaks and potential water conservation opportunities.

Immediate Steps for Communities /Municipalities:

- Limit or prohibit washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding); personal vehicle or boat washing; and,
- Establish water-use reduction targets for all water users, identify top water users and conduct targeted outreach to help curb their use.

Short- and Medium-Term Steps for Communities/ Municipalities:

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the states library of outreach materials;
- Provide timely information to local residents and businesses;
- Implement or establish drought surcharge or seasonal water rates;
- Check emergency inter-connections for water supply; and,
- Develop or refine your local drought management plan using guidance outlined in the state Drought Management Plan.

For Regions in Level 1 – Mild Drought

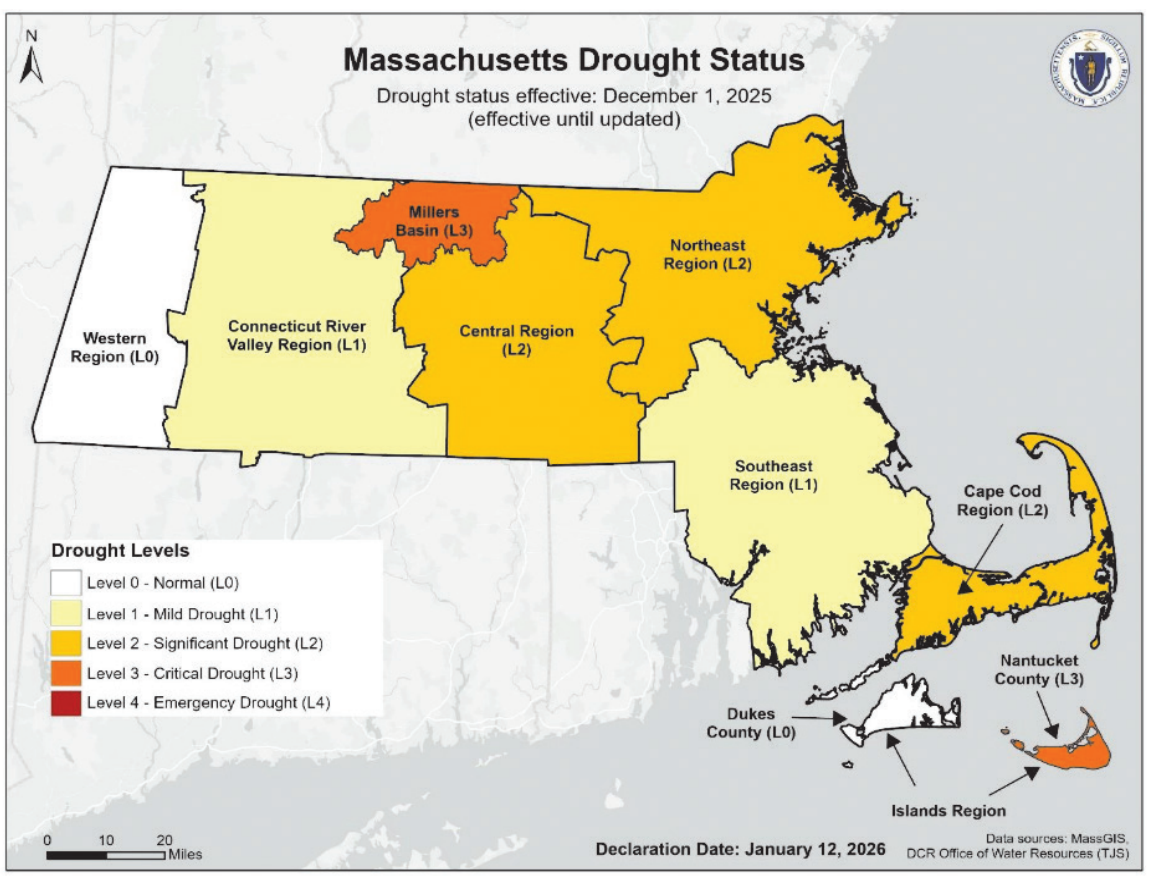
Residents and Businesses:

- Minimize overall water use;
- For larger buildings and businesses, conduct water audits to identify areas of leaks and potential water conservation opportunities;

Communities/Municipalities:

- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication, taking advantage of the state's library of outreach materials;
- Provide timely drought and water conservation information to residents and businesses;
- Check emergency inter-connections for water supply; and,
- Develop a local drought management plan (learn more here).

State agencies will continue to closely monitor and assess conditions across the state, coordinate any needed dissemination of information to the public, and help federal, state, and local agencies prepare additional responses that may be needed in the future. The DMTF will meet again on February 10 at 9:30 AM. For further information on water conservation and what residents can do, visit the EEA's drought and water conservation pages.



Officials announce over $300,000 in Swim Safe Grants to expand free swim lessons for youth

Special to the Regional Review

The City of Boston's Office of Human Services and Boston Centers for Youth & Families announced the award of Swim Safe grants totaling $314,118 to 15 Boston-based nonprofit organizations to expand access to free beginner swim lessons for young people across the city. The grants bolster Boston's ongoing efforts to enhance water safety and equitable access to aquatics programming.

"This investment of City funds ensures that every young person has access to free swim lessons, building on our ongoing commitment to water safety," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "I'm grateful to the Office of Human Services and BCYF for awarding these grants, which will allow us to expand access to aquatic programming for thousands of Boston youth. I encourage all Boston families to take advantage of this critical resource and enroll in programming."

Grant awards range from $2,200 to $100,000 and are drawn from the City of Boston FY26 Operating Budget. They will support a range of organizations to provide free swim lessons throughout the school year, including large aquatics providers as well as school-based programs serving Boston Public Schools students. Through this grant, Boston expects to see over 2,500 youth complete beginner swim lessons. These free lessons are offered in addition to the thousands of free lessons provided by the staff at Boston Centers for Youth & Families aquatics sites.

Grantees include the following organizations:

- YMCA of Greater Boston (9 locations)
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston (4 locations)
- Boys & Girls Club of Dorchester (Dorchester)
- Salvation Army Kroc Center (Dorchester)
- West End House (Allston-Brighton)
- Tierney Learning Center (South Boston)
- Friends of the Hernandez School (Roxbury)
- Bridge Boston Charter School (Roxbury)
- Modest Women Swim, Too! (Roxbury)
- Omega Men in Action (Roxbury)
- Ohrenberger School (West Roxbury)
- Blackstone Elementary School (South End)
- Hurley School (South End)
- Swim Freedom (Roxbury)
- Edusports (Mattapan)

"Our Swim Safe grants continue to strengthen Boston's commitment to ensuring every child has access to this essential life skill," said José F. Massó, Chief of Human Services. "Thanks to this year's grantees, we're not only reaching thousands of young people but also expanding the network of providers who can help keep our young people safe around the water."

"This year's grant awards represent a major investment in water safety and equitable access," said Marta E. Rivera, Commissioner of Boston Centers for Youth & Families. "In collaboration with our aquatics partners, BCYF is ensuring that every Boston family has free and inclusive access to swimming and helping to break down barriers and provide high-quality programming that serves the incredible diversity of our city."

In addition to long-standing Swim Safe partners that operate pools and provide youth swim lessons, including the YMCA of Greater Boston, Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston, Boys & Girls Club of Dorchester, and the West End House, this year's cohort introduces several new grantees proposing to add swim lessons into existing school-based and after-school programs. These new providers will help deliver swim instruction to elementary-age students in Boston Public Schools, as well as youth enrolled in afterschool enrichment programs, significantly broadening the reach of the Swim Safe initiative. New school partners include the Ohrenberger School in West Roxbury and the Blackstone Elementary School in the South End.

"We are thrilled to be able to offer swim lessons to our families that otherwise would not have the chance to take swim lessons without the Swim Safe grant," said Courtney Sheppeck, Principal of the Blackstone K-6 Elementary School. "We feel swimming should be taught to all students across the city. The Swim Safe grant will give more students the opportunity to learn this essential life skill."

New this year, budgeted costs have been capped at $200 or less per child, ensuring that the maximum amount of funding goes directly to swim instruction rather than administrative costs. This grant cycle will also serve as a pilot period to assess this cost-efficiency strategy.

"The Salvation Army Boston Kroc Center is proud to provide safe, accessible swim opportunities that empower young people to build confidence, develop lifesaving skills, and enjoy the water responsibly. Through the Swim Safe initiative, we've been able to expand our reach and create a supportive environment where children and families feel welcomed, protected, and encouraged," said Stephanie Lorfils, Program Director of Salvation Army Boston Kroc Center. "This partnership allows us to strengthen our commitment to water safety and ensure that every child in our community has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive in and around the pool."

By the conclusion of this grant cycle, the city expects more than 2,500 young people to have received free swim lessons during the school year. There will be an expanded pool of swim providers participating in Swim Safe, increasing the number of accessible, community-based swim lessons available to Boston residents.

The Human Services cabinet oversees six departments that provide direct services to Boston residents: Boston Centers for Youth & Families, Boston Public Library, Age Strong Commission, Office of Youth Engagement & Advancement, Office of Returning Citizens and the Office of Veterans' Services. The mission of the Human Services cabinet is to provide equitable access to high quality services, resources, and opportunities so that every Boston resident - especially those with the greatest needs - has what they need to thrive. In pursuit of this mission, the departments in the Human Services Cabinet meet residents where they are - in their homes, neighborhoods, and communities - to break down barriers to critical resources.

Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) is the City of Boston's largest youth and human service agency. BCYF operates 35 community centers in Boston that offer a variety of engaging and enriching programs for people of all ages created through community input and need. BCYF also oversees many citywide programs.

Edwards advances legislation to ensure fairness, due process, and access to the courts for all

Special to the Regional Review

Senator Lydia Edwards has filed legislation reaffirming a fundamental promise of our democracy: that everyone has fair and safe access to the courts. At a time when increased immigration enforcement activity has created fear around courthouses, the legislation ensures that all residents can participate in legal proceedings, assert their rights, and seek justice without intimidation or obstruction.

This legislation is one of two major initiatives introduced by Senator Edwards to safeguard residents of the Commonwealth. The newest bill joins a bill filed in November to update Massachusetts' U and T Visa law to better protect trafficking and abuse survivors.

Protecting Access to Justice

An Act protecting access to justice (SD 3607), filed today by Senator Edwards, establishes clear limitations on arrests, detention, or custody actions within Massachusetts courthouses.

The proposal is rooted in a simple principle: courthouses must remain safe spaces where justice is practiced without fear. Increased ICE activity in and around courthouses has not only undermined the sense of safety within these buildings, but also has had a chilling effect on access to the courts – stripping residents of their ability to fully exercise their right to due process.

As a result, justice itself is being disrupted. Witnesses are afraid to testify, individuals are avoiding regularly scheduled hearings, and in some cases prosecutors have been unable to complete trials. When people cannot safely access the courts, the entire justice system suffers.

The legislation:

• Requires any law enforcement agent entering a courthouse to identify themselves to court personnel and state their enforcement purpose

• Mandates judicial warrants or judicial approval for any civil arrest.

• Bans face coverings that obscure identity in the courthouse, unless medically necessary

The legislation is designed to protect the integrity of judicial proceedings, preserve public trust in the courts, and enhance public safety. Similar courthouse-protection laws have been enacted in states including Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York.

"Courthouses exist so people can seek justice – not to be places of fear or enforcement ambush," said Senator Edwards. "When individuals are too afraid to show up to court, justice breaks down for everyone. This legislation is about defending the rule of law, safeguarding due process, and ensuring our courts remain places where fairness and equal access are upheld for all."

Strengthening Protections for Survivors of Trafficking and Serious Crimes

In late November, Senator Edwards filed An Act relative to trafficking and abuse survivors (SD 3394), a comprehensive update to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 258F concerning U and T Visa certifications. U and T visas are federal immigration protections designed for victims of serious crimes – including assault, domestic violence, kidnapping, and human trafficking – who assist law enforcement in investigations or prosecutions.

The current state law requires a 90-day response to U and T Visa certification requests, a delay that can leave some vulnerable during critical moments. The proposed legislation shortens that timeline to 30 days, and to 10 days in extreme circumstances, such as when a survivor is already in deportation.

"People who have survived some of the horrific crimes such as slavery, trafficking, and violence, face so many obstacles as it is, in standing up to their perpetrators. We need to make sure that they feel safe to talk to local law enforcement."

The legislation:

• Clarifies that judges, state agencies, and law enforcement entities may issue certifications

• Establishes a right to appeal previously denied certifications to the courts

• Ensures timely responses that align with the urgency of immigration proceedings.

This legislation, if passed, would assure that victims and witnesses of crime will feel safe to come forward. "This is what will help keep our communities safer, when people feel safe to come out of the shadows, seek justice and our courts remain bastions of access to justice." Senator Edwards

RMV unveils redesigned disability placard to improve efficiency

Special to the Regional Review

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) announced the introduction of a newly redesigned Disability Placard, created to improve security, curb fraud, and expedite delivery. Current placards will remain valid until their expiration date.

The updated placard features several key improvements:

· A modern design incorporating the widely accepted universal accessibility logo

· Durable material embedded with security features to deter fraud

· Bilingual instructions in both English and Spanish

"This redesign reflects our commitment to improving services for residents with disabilities while modernizing our operations," said Interim MassDOT Secretary and MBTA General Manager Phil Eng. "The new placard is not only easier to read but also reflects current design standards nationally. I want to thank Registrar Colleen Ogilvie and the entire RMV team for their leadership on behalf of the people we serve."

The RMV's Medical Affairs division issues approximately 140,000 disability placards annually to qualified residents on a temporary or permanent basis. Previously, the placard production process was a multi-step, labor-intensive process. The new placards eliminate the need for individual lamination, cutting processing time by 25%.

"The updated design of the disability placard reflects the RMV's ongoing commitment to accessibility and safety," said Registrar Colleen Ogilvie. "I'm pleased that we can get the placards to customers sooner using a new and innovative process. As a reminder, disability placards are issued to an individual and are not transferable to family members or friends."

While the disability placards will feature a new design, the application process, certification requirements, and parking benefits have not changed, and the placard remains valid for the time it is medically necessary. Residents will continue to provide medical certification of health condition(s) with their application. Once approved, residents will be able to park in designated accessible parking spaces and meters without paying fees or penalties when displaying the placard until such time as it is no longer medically necessary.

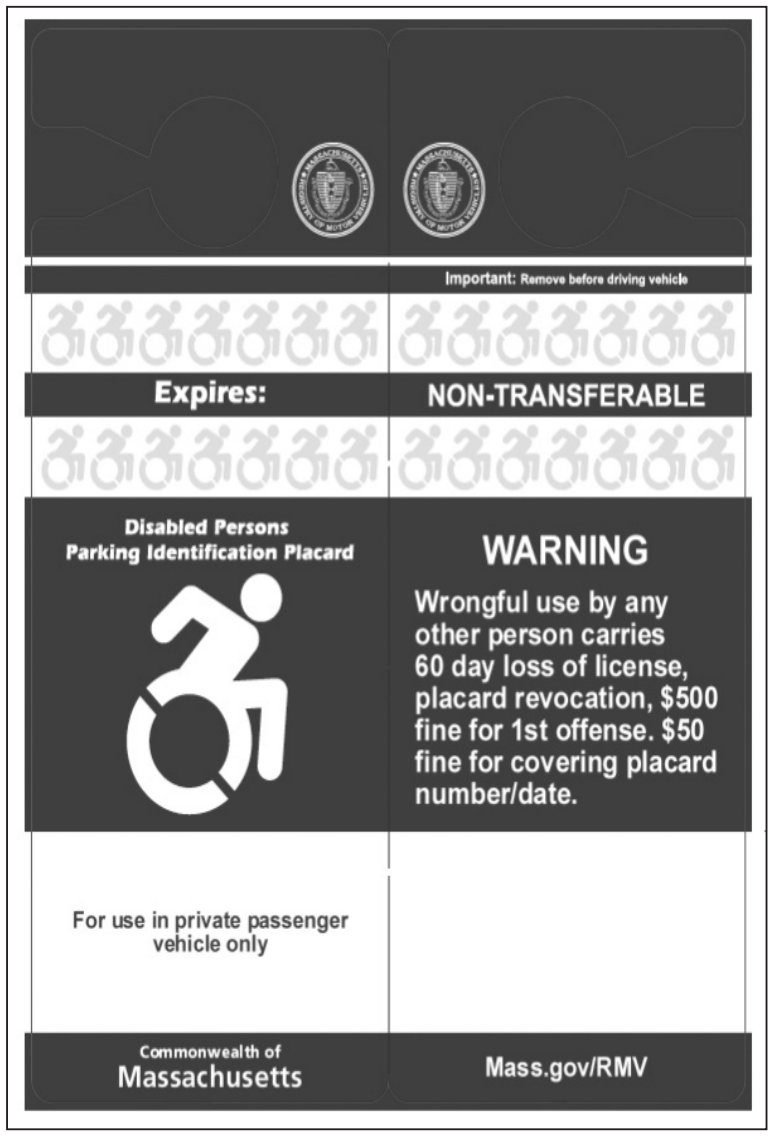
For more information, please visit mass.gov/RMV.

Statements of Support:

"Disability placards allow people with disabilities who need them to better access and independently navigate their communities. The words and images used in these highly visible placards matter. We applaud our colleagues at MassDOT for updating these placards to address concerns raised by the disability community and more efficiently provide the access to daily life that people with disabilities deserve." – Allan Motenko, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD)

"The new disability placard is an important step forward in making Massachusetts a more accessible and inclusive state for everyone. By modernizing the placard system, we are improving accessibility and ensuring that people with disabilities have equitable access to the services, destinations and opportunities they rely on every day. I commend MassDOT for working alongside partners and stakeholders from this community on this milestone." – Dr. Lisa Iezzoni

"It's a huge honor to have this public domain icon now official in Massachusetts. As a parent of a child with disabilities, a professor for young designers and architects, and a citizen of our state, I look forward to making meaningfully accessible services for all of us." – Sara Hendren, Associate Professor, Art + Design and Architecture, Affiliate Faculty, Health, Humanities, and Society, Northeastern University.



The new design – front and back.

Boston Public Market Welcomes Marzae Cellar + Provisions, Opening Spring 2026

Special to the Regional Review

Boston Public Market is proud to announce a new partnership with Marzae, the first and only natural winery in Massachusetts, which will open Marzae Cellar + Provisions in the Market's largest retail space in Spring 2026. The addition represents a significant expansion of the Market's offerings and reflects its continued commitment to supporting New England producers through innovative, mission-aligned concepts.

Founded in 2023 by husband-and-wife team Eliot Martin and Katie Luczai, Marzae has quickly built a devoted following for its natural wines that explore the potential of the New England region while enhancing ecological health and strengthening local foodways. Their wines have been featured in top restaurants across the country and recommended by Wine Enthusiast. The Boston Public Market location fulfills the founders' long-standing vision for an urban tasting room—one designed to bring people together to enjoy regional beverages, food, and shared experiences in the heart of the city.

"Boston Public Market has always been about creating opportunities for local producers to grow while staying rooted in their values," said Cheryl Cronin, CEO

PHOTO COURTESY JENNA SARNO

Eliot Martin and Katie Luczai.

of Boston Public Market. "Marzae embodies that spirit. Their commitment to New England agriculture, environmental stewardship, and community-building makes them a natural fit for the Market, and we're thrilled to welcome them into our vendor family."

Marzae Cellar + Provisions at Boston Public Market

Marzae Cellar + Provisions will be a tasting room and gathering place where guests can enjoy Marzae's wines, aperitifs, and non-alcoholic beverages on site or take their favorites home. Designed as an inviting, unpretentious space, the concept adds a new layer to the Boston Public Market experience while remaining deeply connected to regional sourcing and sustainability.

Highlights of the concept include:

• Flexible Dining Experiences: Walk-in guests can enjoy casual, farm-to-table counter-service offerings throughout the day. In the evening, a portion of the space will transition to a more chef-driven, seasonal dining experience by reservation at the "Kitchen Counter" bar and lounge.

• Draft Wine & Sustainability Innovation: A rarity in the region, the majority of Marzae's wines will be served on draft, significantly reducing packaging waste and carbon footprint. A refillable growler membership program will allow guests to enjoy Marzae wines at home in a more sustainable and affordable way.

• Curated Provisions: The retail component will feature a carefully selected mix of Marzae merchandise alongside favorite New England-made food and lifestyle products, reinforcing the Market's commitment to local producers.

"Our vision for Marzae has always been about more than just what's in the glass," says co-founder Eliot Martin. "It's about building community around shared passion and local foodways. We are thrilled to bring that vision to life within the Boston Public Market and welcome the city into our family."

Coinciding with the Boston Public Market opening, Marzae will launch its long-anticipated non-alcoholic brand, Off Piste Ferments, expanding inclusive beverage offerings within the Market. The opening follows a landmark period for the winery, including the launch of MASSeration, Massachusetts' first natural wine fair, and the upcoming planting of the state's first regeneratively farmed vineyard in Haverhill in June 2026.

As a nonprofit organization, the Boston Public Market Association is a "Market on a Mission" to nurture local entrepreneurs who have barriers to fully participating in the Market, educate their visitors on the importance of a resilient and equitable food system, celebrate the bounty of all of New England, and cultivate a diverse community around food.

The Boston Public Market Association, a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, developed and operates the Market with public impact goals to support: economic development, New England food system resilience, public health and education, affordability, and access. Development of the Boston Public Market in 2015 was a partnership between the Boston Public Market Association, individual and corporate donors, foundations, the City of Boston, and the project's seed funder, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Boston Public Market is an indoor, year-round marketplace featuring about 30 New England artisans and food producers housed under one roof offering fresh foods, prepared meals, crafts, and specialty items. Residents and visitors alike can find seasonal, locally sourced food from Massachusetts and New England, including fresh produce, grocery items, dairy, seafood, baked goods, specialty items, crafts, and prepared breakfast, lunch, and dinner options. Everything sold at the Market is produced or originates in New England, as the seasons allow.

Founded in 2023 by Eliot Martin and Katie Luczai, Marzae is dedicated to producing exceptional natural wines that enhance ecological health and enrich the New England region. As the only natural winery in Massachusetts, Marzae leads the local movement through regenerative farming practices, community events like the MASSeration wine fair, and a commitment to sustainable distribution.

MassDOT announces annual Safe Routes to School Program Yard Sign Design Contest

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), through its Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program, is pleased to announce the launch of the 2026 Yard Sign Design Contest. The annual contest raises awareness for transportation-related themes that help support school safety for walking and biking to school and is open to students in second through eighth grade who attend participating SRTS partner public schools. To become an SRTS partner, school administrators can connect with their Outreach Coordinator or fill out the online form.

"Massachusetts schools are ranked # 1 in the nation and under Governor Healey, safety for all will always be our top priority. As MassDOT launches this year's Safe Routes to School contest, we take great pride in partnering with schools, communities and today's youth to promote safety across all modes of travel to and from school," said Interim MassDOT Secretary and MBTA General Manager Phil Eng. "By making it fun for students and adults of all ages, it reminds us all that no matter what age we are, we can all participate, teach and learn. Watching the next generation help shape a safer, healthier transportation system for everyone who walks, bikes, rides and drives or takes transit across our state demonstrates the importance of education and that the future is bright."

This year's theme is centered around "no idling." Students are tasked with creating original designs that highlight the importance of turning off vehicle engines to promote a healthy environment for nearby pedestrians. For the fourth year in a row, multilingual designs are highly encouraged.

All contest materials including a blank template will be available on the Safe Routes to School website under the Encouragement page. You can also view winning designs from past contest themes. All designs must be submitted by Monday, February 23, 2026.

The Massachusetts SRTS Program, sponsored by MassDOT and with funds from the Federal Highway Administration, promotes safer routes for students to actively get to and from school by fostering partnerships between community-led organizations, local law enforcement, education leaders, and public health departments. The Program currently serves more than 1,290 schools in over 285 communities across the Commonwealth. Through these partnerships, the Massachusetts SRTS Program highlights the importance of pedestrian and bicycle safety. SRTS also provides information, materials, and resources to support schools and communities with their local SRTS initiatives.

For more information on Massachusetts Safe Routes to School visit:

www.mass.gov/safe-routes-to-school

www.facebook.com/SafeRoutes.MA

www.twitter.com/SafeRoutes_MA

www.instagram.com/srts_ma

www.linkedin.com/company/ma-safe-routes-to-school

City Paws

Winterize your dog walks

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

It's tempting to look out on a winter day with snow, rain, icy sidewalks, or below-freezing temperatures and decide to forgo a substantial walk with your dog. Just a quick trip to do their business has to be enough on the worst of days. However, with proper dress for both of you and picking your time with the help of radar, those days can be limited.

We also know that some dogs hate walking in the rain and snow. However, there are pups like our Poppy who love the quiet and calm that snowy days can bring. All these factors enter into your decision to take longer winter walks.

Ways To Keep Warm

If your companion is a short-haired, skinny canine, like a Whippet or Italian Greyhound, look for signs that it is too cold for this dog to walk far. Some of those are obvious, like shivering or trembling, a tucked tail, or a hunched posture.

We recently discovered heated vests thanks to a friend who uses them on cool days in Florida and on her cruises to northern destinations. These are also available for dogs. We both wear shoes and boots with Arctic Grip Vibram soles to keep from slipping on icy sidewalks. These are available on many shoe brands and really make a difference, even on black ice.

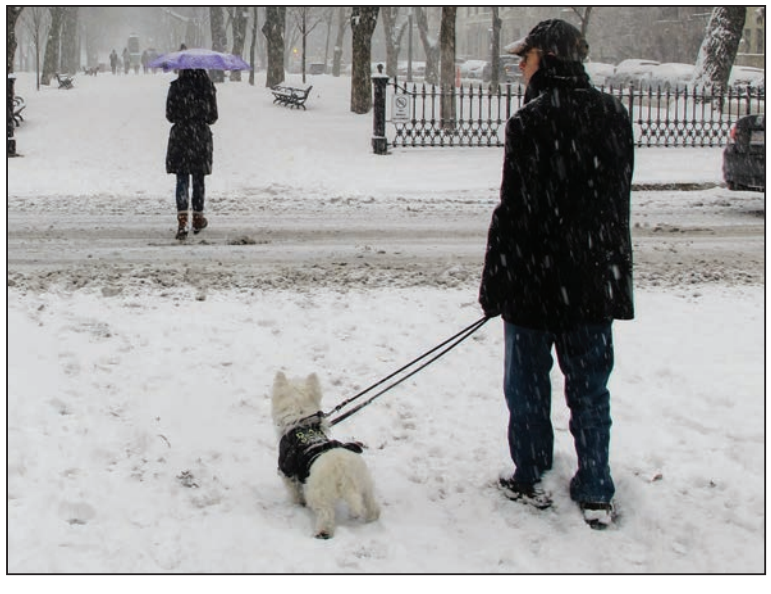
You can choose shorter walks, layers of fabric to insulate, or heated vests. Even with these precautions, you have to be aware when you are not walking an Alaskan Malamute or Siberian Husky.

We see people walking dogs without hats or gloves. Your dog may be made for winter with a double coat that insulates and sheds moisture. You have to create your own insulation by layering materials and using winter accessories to cover sources of heat loss and protect vulnerable spots like your fingers and ears. Many of these accessories also come in heated versions.

Choose Your Route

Many of us have normal walking routes that are either a long loop or a straight-out-and-back path. These need to be adapted for nasty days. Consider smaller loops that will take you back to your home to decide if you or your dog has had enough for that day. You can always do a second or even third loop.

Windchill is real, and your route can be adjusted for it. Ed is especially good about checking all aspects of the weather before he sets out on a walk with Poppy. If the wind is going to be in your face for part of the walk, start out in that direction. Then you'll have it at your back when you are beginning to feel the cold. You can also use side streets to zig-zag and give yourselves breaks from the wind.



Dressing smart and planning well can make winter walks longer and more fulfilling for both you and your dog.

Consider taking some warming breaks along the way. If your area has some dog-friendly shops, transit stations, hotels, malls, or other warm places, visit them to take a break. If you do, please be considerate of these havens by being as unintrusive as possible. Pause at the entrance to let your dog shake off snow and ice, support the business with your patronage, and be aware that being there is a privilege, not a right, in most cases.

Planning well, having the right warming gear, and knowing your dog will set you on the right path for cold winter walks.

Do you have a question or topic for City Paws? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.

BPLF hosts free estate planning webinar for same-sex couples and non-traditional families

The Boston Public Library Fund (BPLF) is proud to announce that it will host an online Zoom free webinar on Wednesday, February 4, 12:30-1:30 p.m., featuring Scott E. Squillace, Esq., for an in-depth program exploring the unique estate planning considerations affecting same-sex couples and non-traditional families.

In the wake of shifting federal administrations, LGBTQ+ individuals have faced evolving questions about marriage rights, legal protections, and long-term planning. This program will trace the history of LGBTQ+ rights and the development of key case law, examining how these legal changes impact estate planning today. Attendees will gain insight into the advantages and disadvantages of marriage from tax and estate perspectives, as well as the specialized planning strategies available to same-sex couples. Mr. Squillace will also discuss emerging risks in the current political climate and outline proactive steps attorneys and clients can take to safeguard their interests.

This free webinar is essential for same-sex couples considering marriage and for professionals advising them on estate planning strategies. Following the presentation, Mr. Squillace will answer questions from the audience. Register here: www.bplfund.org/events.

The mission of the BPLF is to provide financial support to the Boston Public Library, ensuring that it remains viable, engaging, accessible, and free to all. The fund fulfills this mission by working in partnership with the library, donors, and other funders in supporting BPL programs and special initiatives. Support from the Fund supplements, but does not supplant, other BPL resources, including City of Boston funding.

Scott holds a bachelor's degree from Fordham University, studied at the Sorbonne University in Paris, and earned his J.D. from the Columbus School of Law at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. He resides in Boston, MA and Palm Springs, CA, with his husband and their two silver labs.