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FRIDAY, JANUARY 16, 2026



FREE

CHARLESTOWN

PATRIOT-BRIDGE

PROJECT 351 OPENS NEW HEADQUARTERS AT HOOD PARK



COURTESY PHOTO

Chris Kaneb (Manager of Hood Park LLC) is shown cutting the ribbon along with student ambassadors from across the Commonwealth.

Local youth-led service nonprofit celebrates opening of Charlestown office with ribbon cutting

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

Project 351, a local nonprofit dedicated to youth-led service and leadership, has officially opened its new headquarters at Hood Park, a 20-acre, mixed-use development in the heart of Boston's Charlestown neighborhood.

Founded on the belief that every young person holds the power to lead with courage, compassion, and purpose, Project 351 has grown over the past 15 years into a statewide movement that unites eighth-grade Ambassadors

from each of Massachusetts' 351 cities and towns in a five-year Leadership Continuum for skill development, civic engagement, career-readiness, and transformative social impact.

Project 351's new 2,400-square-foot office marks an exciting new chapter for the non-profit, providing an expanded headquarters with dedicated space for community meetings, workshops, and convenings.

This announcement follows a ribbon cutting held Friday, January 9 at Hood Park, which marked

the formal opening of Project 351's new home, ahead of Project 351's annual statewide weekend of service and civic engagement led by young people across Massachusetts. Since 2011, 5,586 eighth grade Ambassadors have united across all facets of diversity to positively impact more than 1.5 million neighbors.

"Project 351 was born from a vision of unity and a belief in the limitless potential of young people," said Carolyn Casey, Found-

(PROJECT 351, Pg. 3)

City announces over \$300,000 in Swim Safe Grants to expand free swim lessons for youth

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

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

(SWIM SAFE, Pg. 7)

Healey announces safety reforms following release of the ALR Commission's final report

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

Governor Maura Healey announced a comprehensive set of reforms to strengthen safety, transparency and consumer protections in assisted living residences (ALRs) across Massachusetts. This action follows the submission of the ALR Commission's final report to the Legislature, which outlines both regulatory and legislative solutions to improve the safety and well-being of residents.

The ALR Commission was established through the 2024 Act to Improve Quality and Oversight of Long-Term Care and under-

took an extensive review of the ALR sector to ensure it continues to meet the needs of an aging population while prioritizing resident health and safety. The Commission was expected to file its final report on August 1, 2025. Following the tragic fire at Gabriel House in Fall River, Governor Healey signed into law an extension passed by the Legislature so that the Commission had additional time to incorporate lessons learned from the fire. The Commission voted unanimously by those in attendance to approve its

(SAFETY, Pg. 10)



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EDITORIAL

REMEMBERING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

For those of a certain age, it is hard to imagine that 2026 will mark 58 years since the assassination of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis while he was standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel on April 4, 1968. Recalling how we felt when he first heard the news of Dr. King's murder still brings chills and a deep sense of sadness that never has subsided.

For those who are too young to have been alive in that era of American history, there are a few things that everyone should know about Dr. King that should provide inspiration to all of us.

First, Dr. King was fearless. He knew from the inception of his rise to prominence of the Civil Rights movement that he would become a target for those who opposed change. Yet, even though he often told others that he believed his death would be imminent, he did not relent in his fight to continue his work in the civil rights movement.

Second, Dr. King stood for the rights of all Americans, not merely those of color. He was in Memphis because he was working with striking sanitation workers, whose pay and working conditions he was seeking to help improve. He also was an outspoken critic of the Vietnam War because he knew it to be an unjust war, not only for poor Americans who could not get a college deferment for the draft, but also for the people of Vietnam, whose homeland was being bombed into oblivion at great profit for the American military-industrial complex.

Third, Dr. King spoke forcefully about the economic inequality that existed in the 1960s -- and that has been exacerbated exponentially today -- making the attainment of the American Dream all but impossible except for a select few.

If Dr. King were alive today, there is no doubt that he would be in the forefront of the protests against the barbaric deportation program by the federal government.

Dr. King's words ring as true today as they did two generations ago. His "I Have A Dream" and "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speeches are among the most powerful orations not only in American history, but in all of Western civilization.

All of us should learn from the example set by Dr. King. His life was a testament to the idea that each of us has the power to change the world -- and that each of us has the capacity to inspire others, whether through our words or deeds, whether on a small or large scale, to make the world a better place. Many of our fellow citizens have followed the path set by Dr. King and many more will do so in the years ahead.

Dr. King often would say, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Admittedly, that "bend" often has taken a less-than-direct path in recent years.

But as we celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day this Monday, let us recall not only his memory and the many things that he accomplished, but let us also resolve never to yield to the forces of intolerance, prejudice, and hate that continue to plague our country and the world today.

STILL TIME TO GET FLU SHOTS FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR CHILDREN

An estimated 7400 Americans already have died from the flu this season. Although most deaths occur among senior citizens, young children are the next most-vulnerable group.

The tragedy is that almost all of these deaths would have been preventable if those who died had received their flu shots.

It is not surprising that this flu season has seen more hospitalizations and deaths compared to last year. Fewer Americans have received a flu shot, even though a vaccination is the number one means by which Americans of all ages can receive protection from serious illness and death.

It is estimated that 90% of pediatric deaths -- four deaths have been reported in Mass. thus far this season -- occur in children who were unvaccinated.

This tragedy in our country is the inevitable result of the spread of misinformation about the safety and efficacy of vaccines. Instead of following medical guidance, those who do not get vaccinated instead are relying on social media and other, uninformed sources to guide their medical decisions.

So our advice to everyone who is unvaccinated simply is this: Stop listening to know-nothing social media feeds and get a vaccination ASAP -- it just might save your life or that of a loved one.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

KEEP PIER 5 PUBLIC FOR ALL OF CHARLESTOWN

To the Editor:

A recent letter to the editor regarding the future of Pier 5 was spot on. How the Boston Planning and Development Agency and our elected officials could choose to approve and advance the issue of turning over the Pier to a private entity represents an egregious affront to this community.

As the writer pointed out, years of community advocacy to keep Pier 5 a public waterfront space for the over 20,000 residents and millions of annual visitors to the former Navy Yard site seems to have little input in their decision-making. It's past time for our decision-makers to do some "critical thinking." This involves looking beyond a glitzy and glossy description of this pri-

vate venue and getting the facts straight.

Charlestown is surrounded by three bodies of water. It lies in a severe flood zone and is built on wetlands, with low tree canopy, and is in the throes of climate change. Factoring in the pollution from the many highways and roadways, all of this creates a toxic environment.

The BPDA has plans to add more than 40 buildings/towers to increase the density to more than 40,000 residents in one square mile, making our community a virtual heat island and an undesirable place to live.

What must be the most crucial factor is the state of our health care system, which is in crisis. Hospital staff are leaving the health care system, hospitals and nursing home facilities are closing, and health benefits are being eliminated.

When a community has no or few outlets such as green and

blue waterfront space to catch a breath of fresh air, to enjoy outside space to socialize, and to take in our natural surroundings, our physical and mental health are compromised.

Pier 5 needs to be relooked at with serious "critical thinking." The community of Charlestown needs to advocate not only for the present, but also for future generations.

Pier 5 is iconic. It is at the head of the harbor, has historical significance, and is a community asset to bring us all together. Do we really need yet another building, a private equity firm to take over Pier 5 to enhance their pockets?

Our health and quality of life depend on our efforts to save Pier 5 and create a destination for all of Charlestown. Can you be counted on to stand up and stand out for keeping Pier 5 public?

Ann Kelleher

SEND US YOUR NEWS

The Times encourages residents to submit engagement, wedding and birth announcements, news releases, business and education briefs, sports stories and photos for publication. Items should be forwarded to our offices at 385 Broadway, Revere, MA 02151.

We also encourage readers to e-mail news releases and photos to deb@reverejournal.com.



CHARLESTOWN PATRIOT-BRIDGE

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Boston City Council welcomes Councilor Miniard Culpepper

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

The Boston City Council welcomed Councilor Miniard Culpepper, who began his first term representing District 7 on January 5, following a recent inauguration ceremony.

Councilor Culpepper represents the neighborhood of Roxbury and sections of Dorchester, Fenway, and the South End. Born and raised on Seaver Street in Dorchester, he was shaped by a family legacy rooted in activism, faith, and community leadership. His grandparents were the first Black couple to live on Seaver Street, and his grandfather – a pastor and NAACP leader – marched with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and helped



Councilor Miniard Culpepper

build one of Boston's first Black-owned nursery schools. That legacy instilled in him a lifelong commitment to justice and service.

A graduate of English High

School, Brandeis University, Howard Divinity School, and Suffolk University Law School, Councilor Culpepper's path to public service was deeply influenced by his early work as a lawyer, including a fight to help a friend purchase a boarded-up home in Grove Hall – an experience that shaped his understanding of housing as a cornerstone of dignity and opportunity.

His career in public service spans decades. As New England Regional Counsel for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Councilor Culpepper fought for tenants' rights, fair housing, and reinvestment in underserved neighborhoods. His work included implementing Boston's first Civil Rights

Protection Plan in public housing, exposing racial discrimination at the Boston Housing Authority, and helping secure \$25 million in federal funding to rebuild public housing developments across the city. He also advocated for affordable housing communities such as Academy Homes, A Field Estates, and the Franklin Park Apartments.

In addition to his federal service, Councilor Culpepper has remained deeply engaged at the community level. As Senior Pastor of Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church, he founded the Trotter Peace Program to support mentorship and employment opportunities for young people of color and led the Six Point Peace Plan to reduce community vio-

lence. During the pandemic, he organized grassroots vaccination and food distribution efforts to support his neighbors.

As a member of the Boston City Council, Councilor Culpepper is committed to advancing housing stability, economic opportunity, strong schools, safe and healthy communities, and a city government that is transparent, accountable, and rooted in community voice.

Guided by faith, shaped by lived experience, and grounded in decades of public service, he begins his term ready to partner with residents to deliver results for District 7 and help shape a more just and inclusive Boston.

Healey-Driscoll administration awards over \$2 million for salt marsh restoration

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

The Healey-Driscoll Administration recently announced more than \$2 million in new funding to restore and monitor salt marshes along the Massachusetts' coastline. Salt marshes protect communities from flooding, prevent damage from storms and rising seas, serve as habitat for fisheries and wildlife, and absorb carbon that would otherwise contribute to climate change.

"Salt marshes are a defining feature of the iconic Massachusetts coastline, which is why we made expediting these projects a core provision of the Mass Ready

Act," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper. "Salt marshes are powerful natural defenses—absorbing floodwaters, reducing storm surge, and protecting our communities during extreme weather events. Preserving and restoring these vital ecosystems is essential to building a more resilient Massachusetts."

"The actions we take today to protect our salt marshes will affect our climate resilience for generations," said Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer. "These restoration and monitoring efforts will create a stronger, living ecosystem that will defend our communities against harsh storms and flooding. This

funding goes a long way toward protecting natural resources and addressing climate change."

The Salt Marsh Restoration and Monitoring grants, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), will support seven projects to restore and monitor degraded salt marsh ecosystems. The resulting data will help identify particularly effective restoration techniques, and combinations of techniques, to inform future restoration efforts and investment.

"Salt marshes play a vital role in filtering pollutants, improving water quality, and protecting the health of our ecosystems and com-

munities," said MassDEP Commissioner Bonnie Heiple. "We're grateful to the many partners who have long prioritized protection and restoration of these unique ecosystems and look forward to ongoing work together to ensure salt marshes can perform these critical functions for generations to come."

The following grant proposals were selected for funding:

Permitting of Salt Marsh Restoration at Belle Isle Marsh

Mystic River Watershed Association (Boston) – \$40,000

These grants are the latest step in the Healey-Driscoll Administration's work to promote resilience

and support ecological restoration projects. Other recent initiatives have included streamlined provisions for permitting restoration projects in the Mass Ready Act, and MassDEP's issuance of guidance documents to promote salt marsh restoration. Additionally, these projects support the Massachusetts Biodiversity Goals, which name salt marsh restoration as a priority, and the Department of Fish & Game's Blue Carbon Program, which is exploring financial incentives to drive protection of these critical habitats to help the state meet its net-zero goals.

PROJECT 351 (from pg. 1)

er of Project 351. "Opening our headquarters at Hood Park marks an exciting new chapter for our movement. This campus reflects the values that define our work

-- community, collaboration, and possibility -- and provides a welcoming home where young leaders, educators, and partners can come together to build a more just, kind, and connected Massachusetts."

Since its founding in 2011, Project 351 has engaged more than 5,500 Ambassadors and Alumni, positively impacting over 1.5 million lives through service. Each year, students selected by hometown educators participate in a year-long leadership journey grounded in the organization's core values of kindness, compassion, humility, and gratitude, while developing the skills and confidence to lead lasting change.

Hood Park's mission to sup-

port organizations that strengthen community and drive positive social impact made it a strong fit for Project 351's next phase of growth.

"We are excited to welcome Project 351 to Hood Park," said Chris Kaneb, Manager of Hood Park LLC. "Hood Park is deeply committed to partnering with organizations that foster community and contribute to the mission of our campus. Project 351's dedication to creating meaningful leadership and service opportunities for youth aligns with our values and opens the door to exciting new partnerships for those who live, work, and spend time at Hood Park."

Project 351's new home at Hood Park will serve as a year-round hub for its staff, volunteers, Ambassadors, and Alumni -- supporting leadership training, service

planning, and community-building initiatives -- while enabling the organization to continue expanding its programs, convening young leaders and mentors, and mobilizing service that uplifts communities across the Commonwealth.

For more information on Project 351, please visit project351.org. For more information on Hood Park, please visit hoodpark.com.

About Project 351

Project 351 builds a more just, inclusive, and equitable world by developing change makers of compassion, courage, and skill.

Founded in 2011 in partnership with Governor Deval Patrick, Project 351 engages eighth graders representing Massachusetts' 351 cities and towns in a five-year Leadership Continuum for skill development, civic engagement, career-readiness, and transfor-

mative social impact. Since 2011, 5,586 eighth grade Ambassadors have united across all facets of diversity to positively impact more than 1.5 million neighbors. As they serve, Project 351 leaders cultivate the values of kindness, empathy and inclusion; address the causes and consequences of poverty; progress social and racial justice; and strengthen a statewide ethic of youth service and advocacy. Project 351 is a nonprofit organization motivated by Dr. King's vision of the Beloved Community and a fierce belief in the unlimited potential of young people.

About Hood Park

Hood Park is a dynamic, mixed-use urban campus in the heart of Boston's vibrant and historic Charlestown neighborhood. Originally home to the New England dairy company H.P. Hood and Sons, the 20-acre site

has been completely reimagined as an innovation district and community destination for residents, employees and visitors to live, work, play and gather. Hood Park includes first-class lab and office space, a dynamic mix of activated retail, luxury apartment living and publicly accessible open spaces including Hood Green, a one-acre lawn and focal point of the development. Pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented, Hood Park is conveniently located steps away from the MBTA Orange Line and Interstate 93 and is quickly accessible from Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville. For more information, including development updates and the latest events and activations at Hood Park, visit hoodpark.com or follow us on Instagram @HoodParkCharlestown.

2026 MFS PRO-AM SQUASH DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP



Stuart Chandler sets up a shot.



Maria Elena Ubina.



Fernanda Rocha Maturi.



Tony Simboli.

Top men and women squash players from all over the world came to the University Club in Back Bay to compete in the 34th annual MFS Pro-Am Squash Doubles Championship January 7-11. Spectators who attended the five-day event were witnesses to some of the best squash playing. A special feature of the tournament, is that many local amateur squash players were privileged to play with the pros.

See Pages 5, 8 and 9 for more photos.



Stuart Chandler, Maria Elena Ubina, Fernanda Rocha Maturi, and Tony Simboli.



Tony Simboli, Fernanda Rocha Maturi, Local Squash legend Tom Poor, Maria Elena Ubina, and Stuart Chandler.



Chris Spahr, Cel Kulasekaran, with Women's Pro winners Kayley Leonard and Maria Elena Ubina, and Charlie Humber.

2026 MFS PRO-AM SQUASH DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP



Gina Stoker.



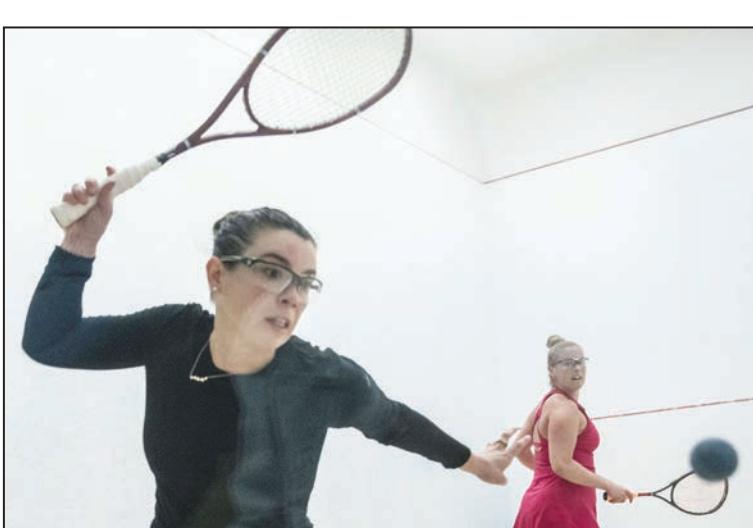
Nikki Todd strikes the ball as Gina Stoker and Kayley Leonard look on.



Gina Stoker, Kayley Leonard, Nikki Todd, and Maria Elena Ubina.



Kayley Leonard and Gina Stoker watch as Maria Elena Ubina locks in on the ball.



Maria Elena Ubina lines up a shot as Nikki Todd looks on.



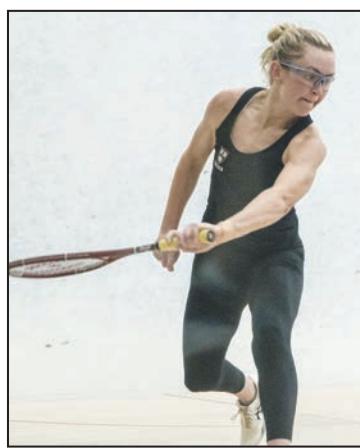
Gina Stoker (center) strikes as Kayley Leonard and Nikki Todd look on.



Gina Stoker.



Nikki Todd locks in on the ball.



Kayley Leonard.



HOIL KIM PHOTOS

Shown (above and below) are players and members of the local squash community at the annual dinner.



The Museum of African American History marks a century of Black History commemorations throughout the month of February

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

In 2026, Black History Week will celebrate its 100th anniversary. The observance was expanded into a monthlong celebration in 1970, reflecting the growing recognition of the importance of Black history and culture. To honor this historic milestone, the Museum of African American History | Boston & Nantucket (MAAH) invites the public to take part in a vibrant series of programs, many offered at no cost, at its 46 Joy Street location on Boston's Beacon Hill. From wellness and music to poetry and thought-provoking discussions, these events honor Black history, creativity, and community across generations. All programs are open to the public. To RSVP and for additional information please visit www.maah.org/events.

Threads of Legacy: Pop Up Shop

Throughout the month of February, a pop-up shop inside MAAH will feature a limited-edition

collection of silk scarves honoring the resilience, and lasting impact of the Black women leaders who lived on Beacon Hill's North Slope during the 19th century. Developed through a collaboration between MAAH and the Bee Blunt fashion brand, the designs incorporate historic maps, architectural details, and symbolic references to activism. The 25"x 25" scarves are available for \$55 each or \$160 for all three while supplies last.

Jump Into the Past: Teen Takeover

Sunday, Feb. 1, 1-3 p.m.
FREE

MAAH and the Mayor's Office for Youth and Engagement welcome teens to an afternoon of food, fun and entertainment. Young people aged 11 to 18 will take part in a scavenger hunt, connect with friends, explore exhibits, a tour the African Meeting House, and meet Boston's Youth Poet Laureate, and enjoy a performance.

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Saturdays with Sheila:

Yoga at MAAH

Saturday, Feb. 7, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

FREE

Join yogi Sheila Thorne of Bous Yoga for an all-levels yoga class which is held on the first Saturday of each month. Arrive early to secure a mat or bring one from home.

Children's Storytime: We Go Slow

Saturday, Feb. 7, 1 – 2 p.m.

FREE

Artist, poet, and author Mari-ahdessa Ekere Tallie will read from her award-winning picture book We Go Slow, which follows a young girl and her grandfather as they take a walk through their neighborhood. Ideal for children ages 4-8, this gentle and contemplative story celebrates the quiet joy of slowing down and noticing the world around us. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

A Little History for Kids: An Interactive Workshop

Celebrating Black Historical Figures

Sunday, Feb. 8, 1 – 2 p.m.

FREE

Violinist Caden Burston of Castle of Our Skins, a non-profit celebrating Black artistry through music, introduces children to historical figures including author Phillis Wheatley, inventor Garrett Morgan, and President Barak Obama. Elementary school aged children are encouraged to sing, clap, move, and imagine as they explore the stories of trailblazing figures. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

New Guinea Joy Walking Tour: A Tour Through

Boston's Black Heritage

Sunday, Feb. 8, 2-4 p.m.

\$30 for adults, \$15 for youth 18 and under.

Together, MAAH, the West End Museum and Afrimerican Academy trace Boston's earliest Black roots, from the North End's historic New Guinea Settlement to Joy Street on Beacon Hill which by the 1800s was the center of the city's burgeoning Black community. This tour looks at the lives of the free Black Bostonians who shaped history from the colonial era through abolition and beyond.

Flower Arranging With Pilon Fleur

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

FREE

Just in time for Valentine's Day, Wendy Alexis-Janvier, founder of Pilon Fleur, will guide participants as they create colorful bouquets with refreshments provided. The session will cover basic floral design techniques, including flower selection, color balance, and arrangement. Everyone will leave with a one-of-a-kind bouquet, and refreshments will be served. Donations are welcome and encouraged.

From Ideas to Institutions:

The Process of Making Black History

Friday, Feb. 13, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

FREE

Discover how Black history is created, preserved, and celebrated. Angela Tate, Chief Curator and Director of Collections at MAAH; Kyera Singleton, public historian and Executive Director of the Royall House and Slave Quarters in Medford; and educator Jennifer Turner, board director for Communitas, an organization fostering inclusive and engaged communities in Greater Boston, will share the stories, strategies, and visions behind the institutions that honor Black history.

The program will be followed by a celebration of Frederick Douglass' 208th birthday, featuring music and refreshments.

Digging Deeper into Black Voices of the Revolution

Tuesday, Feb. 17, 5-7 p.m.

FREE

Hear the stories that history often overlooks. UMass Boston Professor Dr. Nedra Lee and MAAH's Chief Curator and Director of Collections will discuss the creation of the Museum's newest exhibition, Black Voices of the Revolution. From rare artifacts to AI-driven displays, this exhibit invites visitors to engage with history in a new way.

Storytime at the Museum:

Joy Takes Root

Thursday, Feb. 19, 10-11 a.m.

FREE

Author Gwendolyn Wallace will share her children's picture book, Joy Takes Root, which follows a young girl as she connects with the earth, learns to grow plants, and honors her family's gardening traditions. Reviewers have called Joy Takes Root "a beautiful ode to both the natural world and intergenerational cultural wisdom..." Recommended for children ages 3-8. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

MAAH Lunch Club,

A Taste of the Diaspora

Saturday, Feb. 21, 12-3 p.m.

\$50 per person

Enjoy Southern hospitality at its best. Savor a flavorful meal created in collaboration with Heritage Market and award-winning chef Larry J of Larry J's BBQ Café followed by a performance and poetry workshop featuring Boston poet Amanda Shea.

Black Wellness Retreat

Sunday, Feb. 22, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

\$40 per person

This half-day retreat invites adults 18 and up to focus on rest, creativity, and connection. Through movement, storytelling, and shared meals, participants will explore ways to nurture themselves and build community. The Haus of Glitter, a dance company and performance lab, offers a space to refresh, recharge, and engage with others in meaningful ways.

US Premiere: In Search of

Phillis Wheatley Peters

Thursday, Feb. 26, 6-8 p.m.

FREE

Executive Producer and Director Leslie Askew, founder of Askew Films, and Executive Producer Turlough White, the company's head of production, will host the premiere of their new documentary In Search of Phillis Wheatley Peters. The filmmakers will examine the remarkable life of Wheatley Peters, the first African American woman—and only the third American woman—to publish a book of poetry. Enslaved in Boston and later emancipated, she mastered English, Greek, and Latin, composing elegant verse on religion, freedom, and historic figures.

Suite for a Minor Meeting,

Live Performance

Feb. 28, 5-7 p.m.

FREE

Join Tufts University Art Galleries and MAAH for Suite for a Minor Meeting, a new site-specific performance by Jonathan González, a Magical Thinking of Systems and Belief-commissioned artist who works at the intersections of choreography, sculpture, text, and media. This special presentation, featuring Ogechi Okoye and Valentine Umeh, takes place at the African Meeting House on the MAAH campus.

MCCA Board appoints John Barros Interim Executive Director

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) Board of Directors voted unanimously to appoint John Barros as Interim Executive Director of the Authority, with a start date of January 14, 2026.

Barros brings more than 25 years of leadership experience across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, with a dedicated career focused on economic development, equitable growth, and community impact. From 2014 to 2021, he served as Chief of Economic Development for the City of Boston, where he led the creation of a newly consolidated Economic Development Cabinet focused on equity and inclusion, and advanced initiatives to create jobs, strengthen tourism, train the workforce, and revitalize neighborhoods.

Most recently, Barros served as Managing Principal at Civitas Builders, a Boston-based firm focused on improving communities through responsive real estate



John Barros

development and strategic project execution.

“As Massachusetts prepares for an extraordinary, nation-leading year ahead for events, tourism and economic development, the MCCA is going to play a pivotal role,” said Governor Maura Healey. “I’m confident that under John’s experienced and strategic leadership, the Authority will con-

tinue fulfilling its mission to boost our economy and competitiveness, and I thank the MCCA Board for its work to ensure stability at this vital organization.”

Earlier in his career, Barros spent 14 years as Executive Director of the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI), leading the nation’s largest urban community land trust and helping establish it as a national model for community-driven development and equitable neighborhood revitalization.

“John will bring dynamic leadership to this important role at a consequential moment for Boston and the Commonwealth,” said Boston Mayor Michelle Wu. “His economic development experience, knowledge of the city, and dedication to community will steer the MCCA to greater collaboration and success. I look forward to working with him on making Boston the leading destination and hub—starting with preparing for a big summer as we host the 250th commemorations, Tall Ships, and the World Cup.”

As chief of Economic Devel-

opment for the City of Boston under Mayor Martin J. Walsh, Barros co-chaired the development of Imagine Boston, the city’s first citywide comprehensive plan, and oversaw initiatives focused on access to capital, local wealth creation, job connections, and neighborhood-centered growth. Under his leadership, Boston added 140,000 new jobs and significantly expanded public investment in workforce development and community-centered economic strategies.

“I am honored to step into this role at such a critical moment for the MCCA and grateful to the Board for their support and confidence,” said John Barros. “As a world-class cultural and economic engine, what happens here impacts not just Boston, but the entire Commonwealth. I am looking forward to working with the team and ensuring we continue to deliver on our mission of driving economic impact, fostering a fair and equitable workplace, and event excellence.”

As Interim Executive Director,

Barros will oversee the MCCA’s venue portfolio and operations, including the Thomas M. Menino Convention & Exhibition Center, the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center, the MassMutual Center, and the Lawn on D, while advancing the Authority’s mission to drive economic impact through events and tourism.

The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority owns and oversees the operations of the Thomas M. Menino Convention & Exhibition Center (MCEC), the John B. Hynes Veterans Memorial Convention Center, the MassMutual Center, Convention Center Carpark & The Landing in Springfield, MA, the Boston Common Parking Garage, The Lawn On D and The Lot On D. The MCCA’s mission is to deliver world-class event experiences that drive statewide economic growth, foster innovation, and exceed customer expectations all while cultivating a workplace culture that values excellence, inclusivity, and employee well-being.

SWIM SAFE (from pg. 1)

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 com-

mitment 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 after-school 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 life-saving 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 part-

nership 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.

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2026 MFS PRO-AM SQUASH DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTOS



Charlie Humber, Chris Callis, and Ryan Mullaney look on as Mark Froot strikes the ball.



Charlie Humber strikes the ball.



Charlie Humber strikes the ball.



Chris Callis, Charlie Humber, Ryan Mullaney, and Mark Froot.



Ryan Mullaney locks in on the ball before striking.



Sam Khalifa takes a shot while James Stout watches.

2026 MFS PRO-AM SQUASH DOUBLES CHAMPIONSHIP

DEREK KOUYOUNJIAN PHOTOS



Scott Arnold, Sam Khalifa, James Stout, and Chris Callis.



James Stout watches as Sam Khalifa takes a shot.



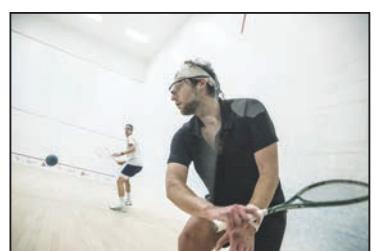
James Stout races into a shot.



Scott Arnold shoots while Chris Callis prepares to counter.



James Stout, Sam Khalifa, Chris Callis, and Scott Arnold.



Scott Arnold watched as Chris Callis takes a shot.



After winning the Men's Finals, Chris Callis and Sam Khalifa pose with Charlie Humber and Chris Spahr.



Chris Callis takes a shot.



Chris Callis watches as Scott Arnold takes a shot.



Chris Callis hits the wall following the ball as Scott Arnold prepares his shot.



HOIL KIM PHOTO

Tom Poor, (second from right) a local squash legend is shown holding his plaque for the US Squash President's Cup. This award was presented to Poor at the Pro-Am Doubles Championships that was held at the University Club over the last weekend. This award is the US Squash's highest annual service award and is regarded as its most prestigious honor. Shown with Poor from left are Tournament Committee members Charles Humber, Chris Spahr, Poor and James Zug, US Squash Senior Correspondent.



James Stout takes a shot.

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Massachusetts wins \$10 million federal grant for early literacy tutoring

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is celebrating that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has been awarded \$10 million from the U.S. Education Department in a new Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grant. The state plans to use this funding for early literacy tutoring as part of the administration's comprehensive strategy to improve literacy for all Massachusetts students.

The funding for the 2026-27 school year will support Massachusetts' no-cost, high-dosage early literacy tutoring that the state is funding with \$25 million in Fair Share dollars at 272 elementary

schools. High-dosage tutoring is an evidence-based model shown to deliver significant gains in literacy achievement, particularly for students who are behind grade level, and provides one-on-one or small-group tutoring sessions multiple times a week for at least 10 weeks.

"We know that improving early literacy is vitally important to improving our students' futures, and high dosage tutoring has been proven to be highly effective," said Governor Maura Healey. "This \$10 million grant will help accelerate students' progress in literacy, building a stronger foundation for success in school."

"When adults work together for students' benefit, great things

can happen," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "This \$10 million is a welcome investment in a priority area for our state."

This is the second federal grant the Healey-Driscoll Administration has won to support early literacy, bringing millions of federal dollars into the state to help students learn to read and read well. The state also received a \$38.4 million, over five years, federal literacy grant in September 2024.

These grants align with the administration's Literacy Launch: Reading Success from Age 3 through Grade 3 initiative. Literacy Launch is focused on transforming early literacy systems in public schools and com-

munity-based preschool programs through grants for high-quality reading materials, technical support, literacy screeners, and coaching, free professional development, and speeding up the review of teacher education programs, which are now required to provide evidence-based literacy training. The administration has secured \$35 million in state funding for the first two years of Literacy Launch through the Fiscal Year 2025 and Fiscal Year 2026 budgets.

"This federal grant, paired with other state and federal investments, is a reflection of how important early literacy is," said Education Secretary Dr. Patrick Tutwiler. "I'm glad to see our

tutoring efforts receive this additional support, because we know it's critical for students to be successful readers by third grade."

"Early literacy is an essential investment in improving student outcomes," said Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Pedro Martinez. "We want students to find joy in reading and be ready to use their literacy skills in other subjects. This tutoring will help students make that progress."

Literacy Launch efforts have included Partnership for Reading Success – Massachusetts (PRISM) grants and Literacy Launch Institutes, which trained 500 educators in summer 2025. Another 1,300 educators are expected at institutes this winter and next summer.

SAFETY (from pg. 1)

final report on January 12, 2026.

The Commission's recommendations aim to ensure ALRs continue to meet the evolving needs of older adults while significantly strengthening transparency and oversight, emergency preparedness, staffing, and consumer protections. The Commission met 16 times, held two public hearings, and incorporated direct feedback from residents, families, industry experts, and first responders. Key recommendations include:

Stronger Fire Safety & Emergency Preparedness Standards – enhance inspections and coordination with local fire departments to prevent future tragedies.

Transparent Public Data – create a new statewide online database to provide families with clear access to compliance records, ownership information, and corrective action plans.

Standardize Disclosures – standardize information on services, costs, staffing, and resident rights for easier comparison across ALRs.

Staffing & Nursing Leadership Requirements – ensure every ALR has access to licensed nursing support and leadership training that matches resident needs.

Clear Assessment Practices – ensure consistent evaluations of resident needs with clear notice of any cost or care changes.

Affordability Task Force – create a task force to evaluate new models that expand access for low- and middle-income older adults.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration is taking immediate action to begin the implementation of a majority of the regulatory and administrative recommendations in this report.

"Every older adult deserves

a safe home and peace of mind, and every family deserves transparency and accountability," said Governor Maura Healey. "The heartbreaking tragedy at Gabriel House showed us that we cannot wait to strengthen protections for assisted living residents. We are taking immediate action on these recommendations so we can better protect residents, support families and ensure our assisted living system continues to serve people well into the future."

"Massachusetts has a responsibility to protect residents in every single assisted living community, and families are counting on us to get this right," said Aging & Independence Secretary and ALR Commission Chair Robin Lipson. "These changes will strengthen fire safety, clarify standards and practices that impact resident well-being, and make critical information more accessible so families can make informed decisions. We have already begun putting stronger protections in place and will work to ensure that residents across the Commonwealth are safer, better supported, and treated with the dignity they deserve."

The Commission recommends legislative action to further strengthen resident safety and consumer protections, including establishing a dedicated funding mechanism to expand state oversight and public reporting, amending state law to authorize certified medication aides in assisted living settings, and creating a statewide registry for ALR executive directors. The report also urges the review of ALR building classifications and the modernization of building code requirements. Finally, the Commission recommends forming an ALR Affordability Task Force to look into sustain-

able models that expand access for low- and middle-income older adults.

"These recommendations are very important. The Gabriel House fire in Fall River increased the urgency of action," said Senator Patricia Jehlen, member of the ALR Commission. "AGE can implement most of the recommendations about transparency and emergency preparedness without legislation. But it's important to give them the budgetary resources to enforce the rules. The legislature needs to act on the recommended statutory changes, including establishing a dedicated and sustainable funding mechanism, supported by certification and recertification fees and fines."

"ALRs are an important pillar of the Commonwealth's continuum of care for our aging population, helping older adults age in place and maintain their independence. The health, safety and well-being of these residents is paramount. This principle guided the Commission's deliberations over the past year, especially following the devastating fire at Gabriel House in Fall River," said Representative Thomas Stanley, member of the ALR Commission. "I am proud of the comprehensive recommendations the Commission produced in this final report and look forward to the work ahead, including establishing the proposed ALR Affordability Task Force. I'd like to thank my fellow commission members for their service on behalf of our older adults in ALRs and their caregivers, and salute Secretary Lipson and her team at AGE for their incredible leadership and engagement throughout this process."

"While there are quality residences across Massachusetts,

inadequate regulations have allowed bad actors to persist for far too long," said Senator Mark Montigny, lead legislative sponsor of the ALR Commission. "As the devastating Gabriel House fire showed, vulnerable lives are at stake and we need to continue to demand more action from legislators, regulators, and residence owners. I appreciate the hard work of this commission over the past year to come to a set of actionable recommendations that can be implemented immediately and in the near future to help protect residents and improve the overall assisted living model in the Commonwealth."

"I would like to thank the commission for their thoughtful review of existing policies and procedures and for the recommendations outlined in this report that will provide for important enhanced safety measures for all residents of assisted living centers throughout the state in the aftermath of the tragic Gabriel House fire," said Fall River Mayor Paul Coogan.

"I am gratified to see the ALR Commission release its report detailing a number of comprehensive reforms that will strengthen safety and increase transparency for ALRs all across the Commonwealth. The extensive reviews following the tragic fire at the Gabriel House will ensure that our seniors will not only have the latest in health and safety protocols in place, but that ALR staff will be equipped with the highest training and certifications standards in the industry. The new statewide online database will also provide families with clear access to important compliance records, ownership information, and mandate that their facility has a proven

corrective action plan in place," said Senator Michael J. Rodrigues, Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. "All older adults deserve a safe dwelling and their families the utmost in transparency and accountability for the aging parents."

"The ALR Commission Report and recommendations delivers achievable goals. Legislative action is needed to ensure uniformity and compliance," said Representative Alan Silvia (D-Fall River).

"After our community experienced the tragic and deadly fire at Gabriel House last year, we have been evaluating necessary remedies and changes to prevent catastrophes like this," said Representative Carole Fiola (D-Fall River). "Thanks to the work of this Commission, we are seeing important changes to help improve safety, affordability, and care. Thank you to Secretary Lipson and my colleague Chair Stanley for their tireless dedication to this issue."

"I thank the ALR Commission for the work and report, it brings attention to needed improvements. I applaud the state's commitment to promptly addressing the issues and listening to concerns brought forward," said Representative Steven J. Ouellette (D-Westport). "I strongly support efforts to avoid serious incidents, particularly those that help our seniors and those ability hindered."

The Commission's report contains a comprehensive set of reforms that will significantly improve resident safety and ensure families have the information they need to make informed decisions.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY EVENTS AROUND THE BOSTON AREA

Boston Children's Chorus:
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Tribute Concert
Boston Symphony Hall

On January 19, at 4 p.m. ET, BCC takes the stage at Boston's iconic Symphony Hall as we explore the legacy of Good Troublemaker, Congressman John Lewis, and his journey from the Edmund Pettus Bridge to becoming the "Conscience of Congress."

BYSO: Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Faneuil Hall Marketplace

Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras (BYSO) and The Museum of African American History come together to celebrate and honor Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on January 19, at 1 p.m. in Faneuil Hall. The tribute to Dr. King will feature classical music, spirituals and freedom songs.

Cambridge MLK Day of Service and Learning

Central Square Church

The 16th annual Cambridge MLK Day of Service and Learning will be held on Monday, January 19 (2-5 p.m.). Many Helping Hands and partners organize one of the largest single-day service events in New England and we are proud that the event has become a Cambridge...

City Year Greater Boston's MLK Day of Service

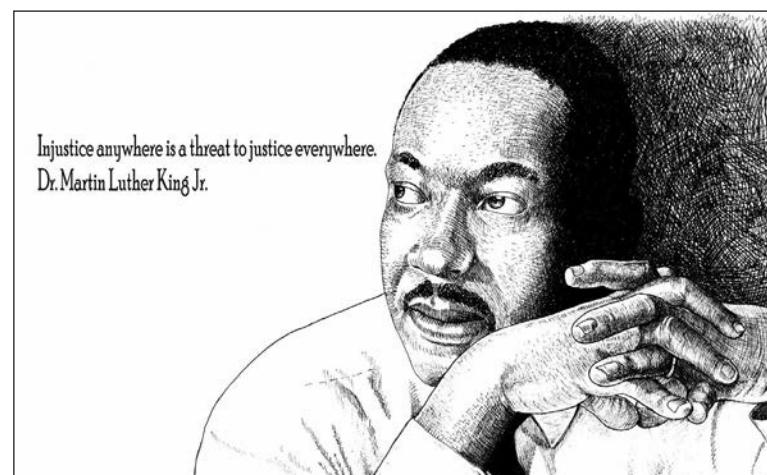
Condon K-8 School

Join us at the Condon K-8 School in South Boston for an impactful day of service on Monday, January 19, to celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and support our work in school with students. Projects will include packing resource kits for schools and community.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration

Peabody Essex Museum

Join us as we celebrate the legacy and leadership of Rev. Dr.



Martin Luther King Jr. Come explore America, A Hymnal, David Boxer's The Black Books, Alison Saar's Weight and other works that examine social justice, identity and freedom across the generations.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration 2026

George Sherman Union

An annual tradition by The Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground and its partners. *This event is not at the Howard Thurman Center. It will be held at the George Sherman Union. The Howard Thurman Center, the City of Boston, BU African American & Black Diaspora Studies.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day at Franklin Park Zoo

Franklin Park Zoo

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Franklin Park Zoo and Stone Zoo will offer free admission on Monday, January 19. Advance tickets are not required. Join us for keeper and educator chats—your chance to dive into the world of our amazing animals.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day at Stone Zoo

Stone Zoo

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Franklin Park Zoo and Stone Zoo will offer free admission on Monday, January 19.

Advance tickets are not required. Join us for keeper and educator chats—your chance to dive into the world of our amazing animals.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Free Admission

Institute of Contemporary Art

The ICA is offering FREE admission for all on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, January 19. Free advanced tickets are required and will be available to reserve beginning on Sunday, January 18 at 10 a.m. Celebrate the legacy of MLK with art-making and three acclaimed exhibitions

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast

The Westin Copley Place, Boston

On Monday, January 19, we will gather as the Beloved Community for the 56th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast. This year of commemoration, celebration, and activation carries additional historical resonance.

MLK Day

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Join us for our annual MLK Day Open House. This year, the MFA offers free admission for Massachusetts residents. Celebrate the legacy of Dr. King by surrounding yourself with art making, performances, and talks with members of our community!

Building Boston 250

Momentum grows for the city's semi-quincentennial

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

Boston is preparing to mark the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution—honoring the people, ideas, and places that sparked independence. Led by the City's Commemoration Commission, planning for Boston 250 is building toward an inclusive, city-wide celebration that highlights Boston's leadership in shaping a new nation.

On March 19, 2025, the Boston City Council voted to amend the ordinance establishing the Commemoration Commission as first discussed in July 2024 and as proposed by commissioner vote in October 2024. This revision reduced the number of voting members from 44 to 37, in an effort to alleviate how often the Commission ran into the inability to have a quorum. In addition, advisory committees/stakeholder groups replace the original subcommittee structure. These groups will take no official votes but may share ideas and recommendations in a non-binding fashion. In an effort to strengthen and support the amendments to the ordinance, Commemoration Commission staff is working on bylaws to develop frameworks for the Commission to be successful in the endeavors they have been tasked with. These bylaws will exist inside of a handbook that commissioners can reference routinely.

The Commission swore in one new member and will fill three additional seats.

The commissioners worked on an interim report that recommends commemorative activities that can be undertaken and explored for Boston 250 titled Interim Recommendations of the Boston Commemoration Commission: Commemorative Activities for Boston 250, which is now being edited based on feedback provided on the first draft.

In an effort to highlight Boston's diverse historical resources, the Boston Commemoration Commission has compiled a list of repositories, historical collections, projects, museums, and other places where people can learn about Boston's history. With support from the Boston Public Library, this list will be made publicly accessible as the Boston Historical Collections and Resources Database, a simple, searchable database on the Library's website. We envision this as a launching point for Boston residents and visitors alike who seek to deepen their understanding of our shared history. This is envisioned as a living resource, and once it is publicly accessible, users will be able to fill out a similar web form to help us fill in any gaps.

2026 is a big year for the City and for the Commemoration Commission as we mark the 250th anniversary of the Siege of Boston, the 250th Evacuation Day, Independence Day, and more. We are working hard to create unforgettable experiences, and we are looking forward to Boston 400 on the horizon!

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Our Office will be closed on **MONDAY, JAN. 19** in observation of **MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY**. The office will reopen on **Tuesday, Jan. 20**. Deadlines for ads & copy is Friday, Jan. 16.

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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 Patriot-Bridge

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.

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

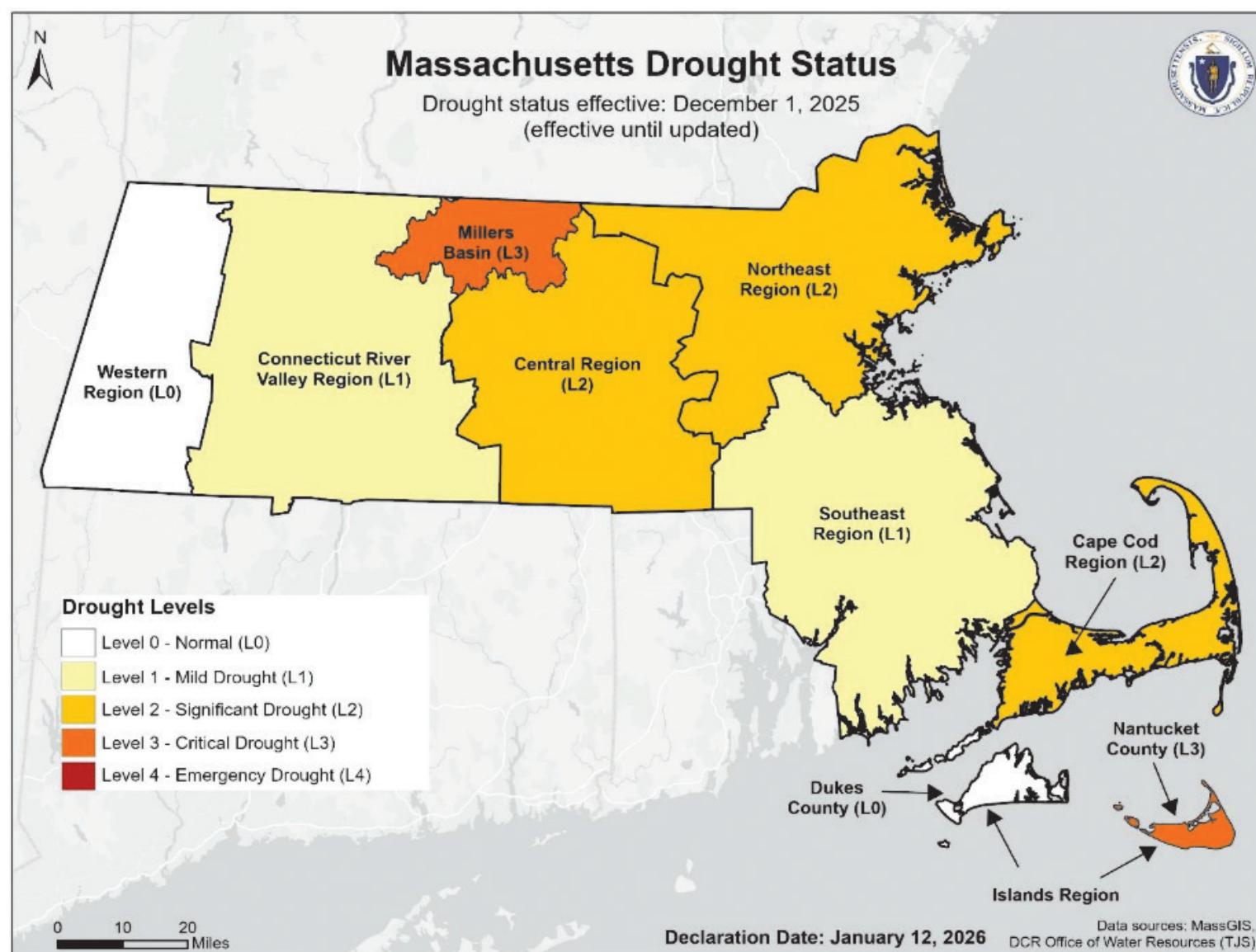
- Develop or refine your local drought management plan using guidance outlined in the state Drought Management Plan

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 per-



Meet Boston announces exciting winter activities

Frostival Lodge furnished by Wayfair at Copley Square and a spectacular Ferris Wheel on the Greenway

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

The inaugural Boston Frostival swings back into gear this February with two signature activations – the Frostival Lodge furnished by Wayfair at Copley Square opening February 6, and the 75-foot Frostival Ferris Wheel on the Greenway operating throughout the entire month of February. Following the scintillating drone shows that captivated thousands in December, this winter celebration promises to wow residents and visitors alike.

"Frostival represents our dedicated effort to reimagine winter in Boston with new and interactive programming that is appealing to audiences of all ages," said Meet Boston CEO Martha J. Sheridan. "The activation at Copley Square will be an anchor for us, creating memorable winter experiences to drive new and repeat visitation. Imagine the magic of a Scandinavian landscape, a chateau in the Italian Alps, a cozy alpine lodge in Quebec, all coming to life in the heart of Back Bay with a distinctly Boston flair. Book your trip today!"

The Frostival Lodge furnished by Wayfair will feature fun and festive offerings thanks to a unique partnership between Meet Boston, Eataly, Wayfair, and NBC Boston. Wayfair will outfit the space with cozy, comfortable cabin furniture and decor, and the entire collection is shoppable on their site. Eataly will offer food and drink options befitting a winter wonder-

land. Visitors can immerse themselves in Winter Games-themed programming that brings a taste of Milan-Cortina to Copley Square.

"We're thrilled to partner with Meet Boston to help bring The Frostival Lodge to life in our own backyard," said Kate Gulliver, chief financial officer at Wayfair. "As the trusted destination for all things home, Wayfair's unparalleled selection helped us curate cozy furniture and décor that make the Frostival Lodge a warm, welcoming space all season long. We're incredibly thankful to our partners at Meet Boston for the opportunity to collaborate on an experience that celebrates the city we call home."

"As your Milan/Cortina Winter Games destination, NBC Boston is proud to partner with Meet Boston to bring all the excitement to Frostival," said Chris Wayland, President and General Manager of the Boston stations of NBC and Telemundo. "We are thrilled to support Boston's latest and most exciting winter attraction and enhance with Olympic-themed content that Bostonians won't want to miss."

In addition to warming nooks and a heated outdoor patio, the Frostival Lodge furnished by Wayfair will include the following activities:

- Weekly trivia nights
- Kids movie time with silent Disco headphones
- Small-scale live musical performances



Artist's rendering of the Frostival Lodge at Copley Square.

- Curling lane and cornhole boards
- Table-top and group games such as Scrabble, Jenga, chess, and backgammon
- Winter Games in Italy watch parties
- Winter Games-themed and Valentine's Day-themed Kids Crafts
- Pasta-making classes for food enthusiasts

Please visit meetboston.com/frostival for a full lineup of programming. Additional events will be added in the weeks to come.

While the Lodge is generating buzz in Back Bay, Meet Boston is also working with the Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy

to install a 75-foot Ferris Wheel adjacent to the park's iconic carousel. The Frostival Ferris Wheel will operate Wednesday through Sunday between January 31 and March 1. And for the first time ever, the carousel will be open during weekends in February.

"The Ferris Wheel on The Greenway is a perfect symbol of what Frostival represents — bringing people together in unexpected ways, even in the coldest months," said Chris Cook, Executive Director of the Kennedy Greenway Conservancy. "Thanks to our partnership with Meet Boston, we're able to turn The Greenway into a true winter destination for residents and visitors alike."

DROUGHT (from pg. 12)

cent 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 state's 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;
- 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.

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Annas Café.....	275 Medford St.
Jenny's Pizza	320 Medford St.
Waverly Café	229 Bunker Hill St.
Bunker Hill Liquors.....	200 Bunker Hill St.
Kennedy Center	55 Bunker Hill St.
McCarthy's Liquors.....	9 Moulton St.
Bunker Hill Cleaners	Moulton St.
Police Station.....	20 Vine St. Hayes Sq.
Santander Bank	437 Rutherford Ave.
7/11 Store	269 Main St.
Zelma Lacey House.....	9 W School St.
Gatehouse Apartment.....	75 W School St.
Ace Hardware	Bunker Hill Mall
CVS	Bunker Hill Mall
Citizens Bank.....	Bunker Hill Mall
Whole Food Market.....	Bunker Hill Mall
MGH Health Care Center.....	73 High St.
7/11 Store	Thompson Sq.
Charlestown Liquors	Thompson Sq.
Starbucks	Thompson Sq.
Cambridge Savings	Thompson Sq.
Warren Tavern.....	2 Pleasant St. & Main St.
Constellation Wharf Condos	1 Constellation Wharf
Harborview	250 First Ave.
Basilica.....	106 13th St.
Anchorage Apartment	103 13th Ave.
Parris Landing	42 Eighth St.
Tuttles Clevergreen Cleaners	197 Eighth St.
Flagship Wharf.....	197 Eighth St.
Style Café.....	197 Eighth St.
Building 104	104 First Ave.
Building 110	110 First Ave.
MGH Institute.....	26 First Ave.
7/11 Store	1 First Ave.

Healey-Driscoll administration awards over \$2 million for salt marsh restoration

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

The Healey-Driscoll Administration today announced more than \$2 million in new funding to restore and monitor salt marshes along the Massachusetts' coastline. Salt marshes protect communities from flooding, prevent damage from storms and rising seas, serve as habitat for fisheries and wildlife, and absorb carbon that would otherwise contribute to climate change.

"Salt marshes are a defining feature of the iconic Massachusetts coastline, which is why we made expediting these projects a core provision of the Mass Ready Act," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper. "Salt marshes are powerful natural defenses—absorbing floodwaters, reducing storm surge, and protecting our communities during extreme weather events. Preserving and restoring these vital ecosystems is essential to building a more resilient Massachusetts."

"The actions we take today to protect our salt marshes will affect

our climate resilience for generations," said Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer. "These restoration and monitoring efforts will create a stronger, living ecosystem that will defend our communities against harsh storms and flooding. This funding goes a long way toward protecting natural resources and addressing climate change."

The Salt Marsh Restoration and Monitoring grants, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), will support seven projects to restore and monitor degraded salt marsh ecosystems. The resulting data will help identify particularly effective restoration techniques, and combinations of techniques, to inform future restoration efforts and investment.

"Salt marshes play a vital role in filtering pollutants, improving water quality, and protecting the health of our ecosystems and communities," said MassDEP Commissioner Bonnie Heiple. "We're grateful to the many partners who have long prioritized protection and restoration of these unique

ecosystems and look forward to ongoing work together to ensure salt marshes can perform these critical functions for generations to come."

The following grant proposals were selected for funding:

Permitting of Salt Marsh Restoration at Belle Isle Marsh

Mystic River Watershed Association (Boston) - \$40,000

These grants are the latest step in the Healey-Driscoll Administration's work to promote resilience and support ecological restoration projects. Other recent initiatives have included streamlined provisions for permitting restoration projects in the Mass Ready Act, and MassDEP's issuance of guidance documents to promote salt marsh restoration. Additionally, these projects support the Massachusetts Biodiversity Goals, which name salt marsh restoration as a priority, and the Department of Fish & Game's Blue Carbon Program, which is exploring financial incentives to drive protection of these critical habitats to help the state meet its net-zero goals.

LEGAL NOTICE - legals@charlestownbridge.com

LEGAL NOTICE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

THE TRIAL COURT

PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT
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24 New Chardon Street
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(617)788-8300

CITATION ON PETITION FOR

FORMAL ADJUDICATION

Docket No. SU26P0016EA

Estate of: Frederick Mark Fucci

Also Known As: F Mark Fucci

Date of Death: 08/22/2025

To all interested persons:

A Petition for Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed

by Talbot R. Fucci of Denver, CO requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: Talbot R. Fucci of Denver, CO and Frederick G. Fucci of Huntington Beach, CA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance

and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 02/18/2026.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION
UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS
UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is

not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration. WITNESS, Hon. Janine D Rivers, First Justice of this Court. Date: January 07, 2026
Stephanie L Everett, Esq., Register of Probate

1-16-26
CT

DO YOU NEED TO PLACE A LEGAL NOTICE?

Don't Forget to check with the Courts
to see if you qualify for a FEE WAIVER

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

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

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.

With over 38 years of legal experience and a career dedicated to serving the LGBTQ+ community, Scott E. Squillace, Esq. brings extensive knowledge and practical guidance to this important topic. He is the author of *Whether-to-Wed: A Legal and Tax Guide for Gay and Lesbian Couples* and has spoken nationally on LGBTQ+ estate planning. He is the founder of Squillace & Associates, P.C., a boutique law firm locat-

ed in Boston's historic Back Bay. His practice focuses on estate and business planning, with a special emphasis on tax and philanthropic planning for high-net-worth individuals and families.

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.

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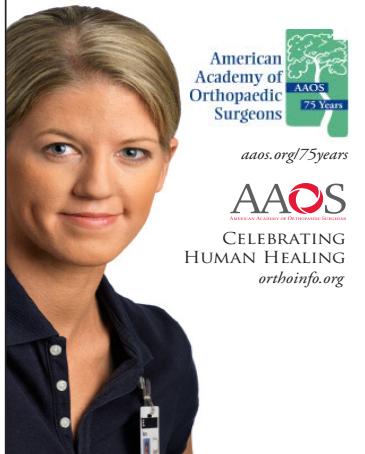
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A SHORT STORY ABOUT A MOTORCYCLE. AND A SUDDEN TURN.

When she was a young college student, Elisabeth Marra had a serious motorcycle accident that ultimately changed her life. Two years after the crash, her painful open fractures had failed to heal. Then she heard about a new and complex surgery pioneered by a surgeon who used a patient's own stem cells to concentrate the healing process. This time, her surgery and subsequent therapy were successful.

Elisabeth's experience caused her to redirect her own career aspirations. Inspired by the medical professionals who helped her reclaim her active lifestyle, she changed her major to study physical therapy—a profession where her own experience could help other patients prevail through difficult recoveries.

We tell Elisabeth Marra's story here to illustrate two of the most profound messages we know. Don't give up, and remember to give back. If reading it inspires just one more person to achieve something special, then its telling here has been well worth while.



All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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FRESH AND LOCAL

Savory pancakes

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

When you think of pancakes, do you picture a stack of golden discs with a big pat of melting butter and a cascade of maple syrup? That is one side of the pancake story. The other side is all the savory pancakes that people enjoy around the world. Today, we'll give you some ideas for pancakes that are perfect for a hearty breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

World Tour

You may have already enjoyed savory pancakes in international versions at home or abroad. Perhaps you've tasted French crêpes or buckwheat gallettes, Indian roti, Japanese okonomiyaki, Vietnamese banh xeo, Ethiopian injera, Latin American tortillas, or Eastern European Blini, but didn't consider these pancakes.

Wikipedia defines this food as "... a flat type of batter bread like cake, often thin and round, pre-

pared from a starch-based batter that may contain eggs, milk, and butter, and then cooked on a hot surface such as a griddle or frying pan."

Pick Your Starch

Many pancakes begin with all-purpose flour. But that is not the only option you can use to explore the world of savory pancakes. Injera is made with teff flour, and the batter is fermented to create the lovely texture that soaks up and holds the food you pick up with it.

Buckwheat gallets may be made with 100% gluten-free buckwheat flour. However, many cooks add some wheat flour because it makes the batter easier to work with. If you're gluten intolerant, ask before you order this pancake. The same is true of buckwheat blini.

Cornmeal pancakes are among our favorites. Johnny cakes, or journey cakes, are traditional New



A Dutch Baby is another pancake variation you can fill with savory ingredients.

England cuisine said to have originated in Rhode Island. Think of the mix-ins you can add to a cornmeal pancake to create a savory meal. Beyond tacos or arepas, we recommend making a simple cornmeal pancake recipe with less sugar, adding corn kernels, jalapeño, and chili powder, and

topping it with leftover meat and cheese.

Chickpea flour is used to make pancakes in both Asia and Italy. The website Serious Eats has a great article on Italian farinata, with tips to make it without ending up with a dry, uninteresting result. Like many serious eaters,

Daniel Gritzer uses ratios. "The key to custardy farinata is to use the right ratio of water to chickpea flour: three to one by weight, respectively. You'll end up with a batter that looks very thin and watery: That's okay, it's what you want."

Mix, Top, Fill, or Roll

How you turn a pancake savory is up to you. You can add mix-ins from a favorite flavor profile. You can use it as a base and top it with the ingredients from an Irish breakfast. You can fill it and roll it like a crêpe or roti. As is often the case with classic foods, you can create a great meal with leftovers and reduce food waste.

One final note that may account for many pancake failures is that many recipes call for resting the batter for a recommended period. Resting allows the flour to hydrate fully and, in some cases, ferment.

When you see a form of pancake on an ethnic food menu, give it a try. If you love it, you can check out the recipe. You might find it is relatively simple to make, and could add some variety to your menu rotation.

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Celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2026

January 25 - January 31
#CSW26

National Catholic Schools Week (CSW) is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. CSW runs from the last Sunday in January through the following Saturday.

The Catholic Schools Week (CSW) 2023 - 2026 theme is "Catholic Schools: United in Faith and Community."

Catholic schools have an irreplaceable role in the Church's evangelizing mission. Building on the central goal of Catholic schools to form saints, Catholic schools teach and embrace the whole person, body, mind and spirit.

The fact that all members of a Catholic school community share the Christian vision of faith that Christ is the foundation of Catholic education is what unites the school as a faith-filled community.

While faith is the binding element in Catholic schools, the Church reiterates that parents are the first teachers of their children. Holding this tenet, Catholic school communities expand beyond the walls of school buildings to envelop the family as an integral part of the school community. Together teachers, administrators, staff, students and parents fuel the light of faith by integrating culture with faith and living.

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