POST-GAZETTE

(Formerly LA GAZZETTA del MASSACHUSETTS)

VOL. 128 - NO. 52

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, DECEMBER 29, 2023

\$.35 A COPY



LIZJE

FIRST NIGHT

Sunday, December 31



Maddi Ryan

BOSTON COMMON

6:00pm • Frog Pond Skating Spectacular

7:00pm • City of Boston's Family Fireworks Presented by The Mugar Foundation & The City of Boston

CITY HALL

12:00pm • Performances in City Hall 6:00pm • First Night Parade

CITY HALL PAVILION

12:00pm • Boston Saxophone Quartet 2:30pm • The Lied To's

CITY HALL PLAZA

11:11am • Sweet Harmony *12:10pm* • Ava & Cam

2:00pm ● Boston Music Project 3:00pm • Tristen and

Delaney

5:00pm • LIZJE 7:20pm • Sons of Levin 8:10pm • LaQuandra Seymore

8:50pm • Guess Method

9:50pm • Nancia 10:30pm • Ayla Brown &

Rob Bellamy

11:30pm • Sammy Adams

SCIENTIST -

EXTENSION

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST,

11:00am • How Do You See the World? Experience

THE MOTHER CHURCH

+ Mapparium 2:00pm • Organ Concert

IMPROV ASYLUM

2:00pm • Improv Show 3:00pm • Improv Show 4:00pm • Improv Show

OLD SOUTH CHURCH

7:00pm • Pipes and Pops Concert

Rose Kennedy Greenway 1:00pm • Greenway Carousel

Participating Groups include the Boston Cup, Boston Windjammers, Greater Boston Chinese Cultural Association (GBCCA), Hot Tamales Brass Band, Jamaica Plain Honk Band, Miss Massachusetts, New Liberty Firetruck, New Magnolia Jazz Band, The Puppeteers' Cooperative, Red Cross Emergency



BOSTON COMMON

Experience a spectacular figure skating show produced by The Skating Club of Boston. The outdoor show offer the public a chance to see national and international competitive figure skaters, soloists, groups, wee skaters, Team Excel Synchronized Skating and Theater On Ice of Boston teams in the center of the historic and iconic

Skating Club of Boston: The Skating Club of Boston is New England's premier figure skating club, and home to a com-

THE STEPS AT **DOWNTOWN CROSSING**

12:00pm • Echoes presented by Downtown Boston BID

MONDAY, **JANUARY 1 BOSTON HARBOR**

12:00am • Boston Harbor Fireworks Presented by Meet Boston

and professionals united by their love of skating and a commitment to excellence in every aspect of the sport. The Club is currently amidst one of the most exciting.

CITY HALL PLAZA MAIN STAGE

PACO'S BAND 1:00pm

Returning to First Night this year, Paco and his band will be back on the main stage performing some of your favorite 50s and 60s hit oldies music. Through his passion for singing and entertaining, Paco hopes to help others find joy, peace and meaning through music and visual arts. Paco and his band have a repertoire ranging from holiday songs, pop-rock to classic oldies music. Be sure to watch their sizzling performance!

BOSTON COMMON FIRST NIGHT PARADE

6:00pm

We're thrilled to welcome back our First Night Parade that will take colorful and celebratory groups from City Hall Plaza to Boston Common at 6:00 PM. Once the performers pass by, the public is invited to walk along to the Boston Common, where fireworks will begin at 7:00 PM.



FROG POND SKATING **SPECTACULAR** 6:00pm

Boston Common Frog Pond.

munity of families, athletes



CITY HALL PLAZA LAQUANDRA SEYMORE 8:10pm

Hailing from Massachusetts LaQuandra is a passionate singer and songwriter whose musical journey began at the age of 11. LaQuandra's music serves as a diary of her life experiences. Her strong, emotive voice has drawn comparisons to powerhouse artists like Jennifer Hudson, Bevoncé, and a touch of Patti Labelle. She has opened up for many well known celebrity artist around the United States. Her repertoire spans genres, and her songs resonate with audiences of all ages. Her goal is to inspire people across the world and sing the music that speaks to her soul.

News Briefs

by Sal Giarratani

Biden's Border Surrender?

The Biden administration according to a NY Post front page headline (December 20th) has created chaos at our southern border as record numbers cross over illegally. Page One photo in the Post shows a lone Border Patrol agent facing down thousands of migrants lined up to enter the U.S. at Eagle Pass, Texas. A single-day record of 12,600 crossed over on Monday, December 18th and the Biden folk is letting everyone one in - ignoring the laws about who is able to put through asylum claims.

Now There are 335m of Us

Immigration powered population gains in this country for a second consecutive year and coupled with a drop in deaths from COVID-19 caused an uptick of 0.5 percent in the U.S. growth rate in 2023. Our nation added 1.6 million people more than twothirds of whom came from migration and bringing the nation's population to 335,000,000.

Birthday Milestone ...

Kiss drummer Peter Criss just turned 78 years old last Wednesday, December 20th. Singer JoJo on the very same day turned 33 years old.

Student Loan Payments Down

Nearly nine million student-loan borrowers haven't been paying their bills since payments resumed in October despite President Biden's relief programs that included a three-year payment pause.

Some 40 percent of the 22 million borrowers who had bills due after Biden's one-time forgiveness plan fell through did not make their October payments

(Continued on Page 10)



by Prof. Edmund Turiello

A weekly column highlighting some of the more interesting aspects of our ancestry . . . our lineage . . . our roots.



SPIT ON IT



Just about every old-timer I have ever met had a special cure for any ailment under the sun. The amazing thing is that many of their cures worked. I had read an interesting article in one of the Boston papers regarding the healing qualities of saliva. Through another series of coincidences, I came upon a listing of old-time cures and superstitions, so I thought I might share my good fortune.

When we come upon a dead animal in the street or in a field, we spit upon it and say, "Don't pass my family." We ward off witchcraft by spitting on the

person or things that suggests it to us. If we should happen to be too presumptuous in some of our hopes or desires, we can tone ourselves down by spitting into our bosoms. The best way to insure the success of a new remedy is to first spit upon the ground three times. Doctors will be very happy to learn that the best way to get rid of a new boil is to rub it with spit three times.

If you punch another person on the nose, you can lessen his pain and resentment by spitting in the palm of your own hand. Chopping wood or digging a ditch is made easier by first spiting on the hands. Sores or skin eruptions are kept in check by a continual application of spit. Fast relief for a pain in the neck is obtained by applying saliva with the right hand to the right knee and then with the left hand to the left knee.

Any insect that enters the ear, if spat upon, comes out (who wouldn't). It is considered to bring good luck if a man spits upon urine that he has just voided. Spitting in the right shoe before putting it on will bring good luck (and a wet foot). Spitting in someone else's shoe is sure to bring bad luck for the spitter. If a stranger looks at a sleeping baby, whoever is attending the baby should spit upon it three times in order to avoid the evil eye.

We know that saliva contains great amounts of bacteria and the bite of a human being is considered to be a most serious one. The old-fashioned remedy is to treat it with earwax. The best treatment for dog bites, however, was to apply some hair from an adult male after the hair has been mixed with vinegar. It sure makes a lot of sense, doesn't it?

NEXT ISSUE: Aphrodisiacs, etc.

BPHC Encourages Vaccination

as Respiratory Virus Cases and Hospitalizations Rise

Recent Data Shows Low Vaccination Rates

Recent data analyzed by the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) shows low vaccination rates and an increase in cases of respiratory viral illness in Boston. BPHC recommends people protect themselves and their communities from getting sick, especially as they travel and gather with loved ones.

According to data from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), twice as many people have been hospitalized with the flu or COVID-19 in Boston compared to October. ¹BPHC also measures virus levels in wastewater in Boston to track transmission of infection and has noted significant increases in the amount of COVID-19, Flu, and RSV. Compared to two weeks ago, the amount of COVID-19 in wastewater across the city of Boston is 23% higher, the flu virus is 23% higher, and RSV is 34% higher.

Staying up to date on vaccines for respiratory viruses, such as COVID-19, flu and RSV is an important strategy to reduce the risk of severe illness and hospitalization. Using DPH data, BPHC found only 15.7% of people in Boston have received the updated COVID-19 vaccine. The data also show only 33.8% of people in Boston have received a flu vaccine this season²

"Vaccination is the best way to prevent severe illness and hospitalization from COVID-19, flu and RSV, and it is not too late to protect yourself this season," said Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, Commissioner of Public Health and Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission. "We encourage residents to take advantage of opportunities for free walk-in COVID-19 vaccination and testing as well as flu shots."

For RSV vaccination, people should reach out to their healthcare provider to determine eligibility.

Standing COVID-19 and flu vaccine clinics remain at the Bruce C. Bolling Building and Boston City Hall:

Boston City Hall – 1 City Hall Square, Room 115

Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building – 2300 Washington St., Roxbury

Open Thursdays through Saturdays from 12:00-6:00 p.m.

Open Mondays from 7:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., and Wednesdays from 12:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Follow the recommended respiratory virus safety steps to reduce your risk:

- Stay home when sick.
- Consider wearing a mask: If you must leave the house

while sick.

If you are going to be in

crowded outdoor spaces.
And/or, if you are at a high risk of severe illness.

• Have COVID-19 rapid testing kits available at home to test if you have symptoms of COVID-19.

Visit walk-in and by-appointment testing sites throughout the City.

Seek treatment from a trusted healthcare provider if you test positive for COVID-19 or flu and are at a high risk for severe disease.

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Regularly disinfect and clean high touch surfaces.

Older adults, adults aged 60 and older, children younger than 5 years old, pregnant people, and people with chronic medical conditions are among those at higher risk for severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

BPHC has several resources to help people stay healthy ahead of the holidays, including COVID-19 test kits and health education materials in 12 languages. Visit boston.gov/bphc-infectiousdisease to learn more.

¹ Over the past 30 days there have been 43.3 new adult COVID-19 hospitalizations per 100,000 in Boston.

This is a slight increase compared to the month of October 2023 when we had 38.4 new hospitalizations per 100,000. There have been 73.6 influenza hospitalizations per 100,000 in Boston.

This is a large increase compared to the month of October when we had 17.8 influenza hospitalizations per 100,000.

² Based on DPH data, the current COVID-19 vaccination rate for Boston residents is 15.6% from 7/2/2023 to 12/9/2023.

The flu vaccination rate for Boston residents is 33.8%.

Traffic Advisory for First Night 2024

Events Happening in the City Of Boston will Bring Some Parking Restrictions and Street Closures

People attending these events are encouraged to walk, bike, or take public transit. Information on Bluebikes, the regional bike share service, may be found on the website at https://bluebikes.com/ and information on the MBTA may be found online at https://www.mbta.com/. The MBTA advises riders to purchase a round-trip rather than a one-way ticket for a faster return trip. Walking is also a great way to move around.

DOWNTOWN (BOSTON COMMON AREA, GOVERNMENT CENTER, NORTH END) FIRST NIGHT BOSTON 2024 – Sunday, December 31, 2023

First Night Boston begins in the newly refurbished City Hall Plaza at noon on Sunday, December 31, 2023, and continues with programming throughout the day and night. The last musical performance in City Hall Plaza ends at 12:30 am on January 1, 2024.

First Night Boston is centrally located in Boston's City Hall Plaza, with additional programming happening around Boston, including the North End, Boston Common, and Back Bay.

We strongly recommend using the MBTA to travel to and from First Night Boston. Boston's City Hall is serviced by several public transportation stations, including stops on the MBTA Green Line, Blue Line, Orange Line, and several bus lines.

Visit the MBTA website for updated holiday schedule information.

Parade will begin formation at 4:00 p.m. and kicks off at 6:00 p.m. It will follow this route: Cambridge Street to Tremont Street, right onto Beacon Street, right onto Charles Street - dispersal left onto Beacon Street.

Parking restrictions will be in place to support the event on the following streets:

- Arlington Street, Both sides, from Beacon Street to Boylston Street
- Atlantic Avenue, Eastside, from East India
 Row to Commercial Street
 West side, from Commercial Wharf to Cross
- Beacon Street, Both sides, from Charles Street to Arlington Street
- Boylston Street, Northside (Public Garden side), from Arlington Street to Charles Street Both sides, from Charles Street to Tremont

Street
• Cambridge Street, Both sides, from School

- Street to New Chardon Street

 Charles Street, West side (Public Garden side)
- from Boylston Street to Beacon Street

 Charles Street South, West side (odd side, opposite the Transportation Building) from Park Plaza to Boylston Street
- Court Street, East side (City Hall side) from Court Square inbound to Cambridge Street
- Tremont Street, Both sides from School Street to Boylston Street

Events such as parades, road races, and street fairs may require road closures to accommodate the activities.

Photo Submission Guidelines

Photos submitted for publication should have a minimum resolution of 150 dpi (or ppi), 300 dpi for best results. Photos taken with camera phones are typically only 72 dpi and will be too grainy to print. If taking photos for a submission, please use a digital camera. If supplying existing photos, please submit a high-quality print for scanning.







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James V. Donnaruma Caesar L. Donnaruma Phyllis F. Donnaruma 1896 to 1953 1953 to 1971 1971 to 1990

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Friday, December 29, 2023

OUR POLICY: To help preserve the ideals and sacred traditions of this our adopted country the United States of America: To revere its laws and inspire others to respect and obey them: To strive unceasingly to quicken the public's sense of civic duty: In all ways to aid in making this country greater and better than we found it.



December 28, 2017 - December 28, 2023

Remembering

Sal Balsamo

Life changed six years ago when God called you home. Nothing is the same, but thank you for all the incredible memories and the positive impact you had on so many people. You were an extraordinary man in every way. We miss you . . . We love you

LETTERS POLICY

The Post-Gazette invites its readers to submit Letters to the Editor.

- · Letters should be typed, double-spaced and must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Anonymous letters are not accepted for publication.
- . Due to space considerations, we request that letters not exceed two double-spaced, type-written pages.
- This newspaper reserves the right to edit letters for style, grammar and taste and to limit the number of letters published from any one person or organization.
- . Deadline for submission is 12:00 noon on the Monday prior to the Friday on which the writer wishes to have the material published. Submission by the deadline does not guarantee publication.

Send letter to: Pamela Donnaruma, Editor, The Post-Gazette, P.O. Box 135, Boston, MA 02113

The opinions expressed by our columnists and contributors are not necessarily the same as those of The Post-Gazette, its publisher or editor. Photo submissions are accepted by the Post-Gazette provided they are clear, original photos. There is a \$5 charge for each photo submitted. Photos can be submitted via $e\text{-}mail: postgazette@aol.com. If you want your photos \ returned, include \ a \ self$ addressed, stamped envelope.

Making Merry

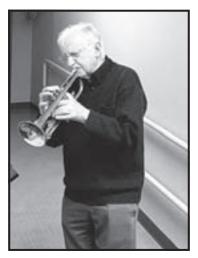
at the ABCD

North End/West End Neighborhood Service Center

The ABCD North End/West End Neighborhood Service Center (NE/WE NSC) rang in the holidays with music, a homemade ham lunch with all the trimmings, sweets and visitors from the offices of Mayor



ABCD NE_WE NSC Acting Director Julia Power behind the scenes in the kitchen



ABCD NE_WE NSC Advisory **Board Member Victor Brogna** on trumpet



ABCD Deputy Director, Legislative Affairs Aiesha Washington serving holiday ham lunches

Michelle Wu, Senator Lydia Edwards, State Representative Aaron Michlewitz, and City Councilor Gabriela "Gigi" Coletta. Over 50 North End

and West End seniors were in attendance.

Happy Holidays and may 2024 be a year of health and happiness for all!



(L-R): Director of Constituent Services Patrick Lyons, Office of State Representative Aaron Michlewitz; State Representative Aaron Michlewitz; Acting Director ABCD North End/West End NSC Julia Power; North End Liaison Cara D'Amico, Office of Mayor Wu; Scheduler Karen D'Amico, Office of Representative Aaron Michlewitz; North End Liaison Jack Imbergamo, Office of City Councilor Gabriela Coletta, District 1; and Benjamin Tayag, District Director, Office of State Senator Lydia Edwards



Volunteer David Roderick serving West End seniors



State Representative Aaron Michlewitz chatting with his constituents





TITLE SPONSOR







L'Anno Bello: A Year in Italian Folklore

Forward into the New Year!

by Ally Di Censo Symynkywicz

Sometimes, it appears as if the bulk of our Christmas festivities end the moment we flip over the December 25th calendar page. Gone are "Jingle Bells" and "All I Want for Christmas is You" from the radio, replaced by the steady rotation of everyday hits and standards. Gone are the tantalizing unwrapped presents from beneath the tree, having now been revealed of the surprises

within. However, contrary to popular perception, the season of Christmas actually lasts for a much longer time. As the old carol about the three French hens can attest, Christmas continues for twelve days after the proper feast ends. The real close of the Christmas season occurs on January 6th, or the holiday of the Epiphany. Italians afford each of the Twelve Days of Christmas a special significance. December 26th, for example, is the feast day of St. Stephen, and Italians celebrate la festa di San Stefano by visiting family or going skiing in mountain resorts. For me, the Twelve Days of Christmas contain a magical and enchanted quality, laden with the sensation of being far removed from the bustle and grind of ordinary days. I spend the Twelve Days of Christmas in a haze, taking advantage of the vacation to catch up on grading, eat leftovers from the Christmas dinner, shop in blissfully uncrowded stores, and visit family members who have arrived from overseas. However, I also prepare for the most mysterious feasts of the Twelve Days of Christmas: the twinned holidays of New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Bursting with folklore and tradition, these holidays seek to welcome a new beginning with hope and luck.

New Year's Eve carries a distinct and unique feeling from other days of the year, a strong atmosphere of anticipation and excitement. It is an aura that imbues the ordinary activities people undertake during the day on New Year's Eve — walking the dog, going to the grocery store, visiting the hair salonwith a captivating patina of both nostalgia and enthusiasm, propelled by the knowledge that old year will soon give way to a new and exciting chapter. Even



on New Year's Eve, glowing with a jewel-like blue tone indicative of the unhurriedly lengthening days. The tangible peculiarity of New Year's Eve gave birth to a plethora of luck-themed folk traditions related to the holiday. New Year's Eve is a time inherently rife with insecurity, as we ponder whether the upcoming year will be worse or better than the last, sundry superstitions seek to improve good fortune within the next twelve months. The practice of making a lot of noise at the stroke of midnight, reflected in the abundant party horns and noisemakers of today, derives from the ancient belief that supernatural creatures wandered the Earth during times of transition. Loud noises could effectively scare these evil spirits away. Certain foods also possess lucky qualities for the New Year. In Italy, lentils are considered an auspicious food for New Year's Eve, since they are thought to resemble small coins and as such attract prosperity. They are usually paired in a dish containing a spicy pork sausage known as cotecchino. My grandmother fondly remembered a more unusual luck ritual practiced in the olden days in Italy on *la Notte di San Silvestro* ("St. Sylvester's Night" — this is what Italians call New Year's Eve, since December 31st is also the feast day of the fourth century Pope Sylvester I). She had to exercise great caution walking through the streets of Naples, where she was a boarding school student in the 1940s, during this night, as people tossed old and broken items out the windows in order to ring in the New Year with a fresh start!

I am not throwing anything out of my windows, but I do love to celebrate the New Year in a folksy and traditional manner with my family. We the twilight sky seems different gather together and enjoy a special meal that ends with my chocolate-vanilla marble ring cake for dessert. Ring cakes are yet another lucky food for this feast, since their shape symbolizes the cycle of the year. I enjoy hearing my grandmother tell stories about the quirky traditions that characterized New Year's Eve in her small Italian hometown, such as sweeping out the door with a broom at midnight

in order to chase away the old year. Sometimes my family plays Bingo together, known as tombola in Italian. Games of chance are popular components of New Year's festivities around the world, for they mimic the unpredictable thrill of good fortune. We watch the televised New Year's celebration in New York, and when the famed Times Square ball finally drops at midnight, we hug, kiss, and wish each other a happy New Year. This is my favorite tradition, as it reminds me that being surrounded by the love of family and friends is the best wish I can ask for all year! New Year's Day is far more low-key. Known as Capodanno, or "head of the year," in Italian, this is a day devoted to recuperating from the previous night's parties. Superstition advises that the way you start the New Year is the way you will end it, so I like to spend New Year's Day doing a little bit of all the things I love, such as writing, reading, baking, and watching a movie. New Year's Day is also laden with a unique and pleasant feeling. The sky seems bluer, the birds sing loudly, and snow sparkles like diamonds on the ground. I believe the whole world is starting anew!

The twinned holidays of New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are purely magical, brimming with mystery, anticipation, and the electrifying hope of good fortune. They are two feasts of the Christmas season that shine with unique lore and traditions. They inspire us to start a new cycle encircled by the love of family and with a hopeful optimism in our hearts. By greeting the New Year with joy and goodwill, as customs around the world dictate, we are actually creating our own good fortune. Whether we feast on lentils or shout loudly at the stroke of midnight, New Year's traditions remind us that love and confidence are exactly what we need to equip our journey into the unknown. Yes, it can prove frightening to leave behind the familiar and the comfortable and start fresh, but New Year's celebrations offer us the chance to improve our outlook on life. Without an ending, there can be no beginnings, or opportunities for journeys of self-discovery. This New Year's, surround yourself with loved ones and promise to carry an attitude of cheer and wonder for the next twelve months to come!

Happy New Year to All! Buon Anno!

Ally Di Censo Symynkywicz is a high school history teacher. *She appreciates any comments* and suggestions about Italian holidays and folklore at adicenso89@gmail.com

Remembering The Good Old Days

by Anonymous

Remember Jordan Marsh? I do as it meant so much when my mother found out she could come into the store and pick up her Jordan Marsh dollars to shop at the downtown Boston department

Same was true for Filenes, about \$200 per store if I recall correctly for Christmas shopping for her family of ten. She also had an array of door-to-door salesmen who came to the house on a weekly basis to collect their payments for the multitude of items she bought from them.

With Mr. Silverman's business card in our hand, we could get anything they needed at the Beale Brothers clothing store on Essex Street in downtown. Same was true of Mr. Brown of Brown Sales who was more pots and pans and furniture etc.

"Never turn them away without giving them something on account and a promise to make up the difference the next week," she told us. Credit was pivotal to my mother and she built up an excellent credit record while on this earth.

It must have been around 1953 - 1955 that she would take me with her to shop at Jordan Marsh. coming home with a box of Jordan Marsh blueberry muffins was a tradition as well as the turkey dinner at the old Waldorf or was it Hayes Bickford? I can't recall the place just the plate of turkey, mashed, cranberry sauce, squash and stuffing, rolls and butter.

In later life, when I lived next door to her with my own five kids, she would tell me to take her Sears card and get something for the kids. I remember as a kid going up to Upham's Corner to the State Loan Company to make a payment on her loan. This loan was usually taken out when the food bill got out of hand at Siegel's Crescent Market. She'd pay off the grocery bill and start over again. The Siegels loved her.

Well, times have changed. Jordan Marsh is long gone but credit is still a precious resource we use to keep our families functioning. Having it and keeping it a lifetime is no easy accomplishment. She always warned us not to be expecting too much for Christmas and to be happy with what we did get and as a result I can't remember any Christmas when I was disappointed with my gifts.

God bless the moms and dads of today who battle with inflation and the high cost of living, but who, like my mother, kept their families happy meeting their basic needs, especially at Christmastime while never losing their good credit. My father put his weekly pay from the Wool Store factory at Fort Point Channel on the table every Tuesday evening after coming from work. Truth is it was never enough. But my mother worked her magic and we never went without.

Merry Christmas, & Happy New Year too,

New Incoming Email Has Just Arrived

Hello Sal,

"Thank you for your always entertaining articles. In regard to your story about the planned Virgin Mary statue at the ski resort in California. If the ski resort is private property the owners have a Constitutional right to put it up, end of discussion. But this begs a bigger question, even if someone is not of a particular religion why does it "offend" them simply to see a symbol of a religion other than their own? If that's not intolerance I don't know what is."

Dan DiCenso

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Suffolk County Legislators, Parents, Early Educators, **Child Care Providers & Business Leaders Call for Action on Child Care Legislation in East Boston**

Common Start Proposals Would Make Child Care More Affordable for Families, Increase Pay for Early Educators, Provide Stability for Providers, Support Children, Boost Businesses, and Advance Economic Competitiveness and Racial & Gender Equity



Common Start Proposals Would Make Child Care More Affordable for Families, Increase Pay for Early Educators, Provide Stability for Providers, Support Children, Boost Businesses, and Advance Economic Competitiveness and Racial & Gender Equity

During a regional meeting and discussion at East Boston Social Centers recently, dozens of Suffolk County legislators, parents, caregivers, early educators, early education and child care providers, business leaders, and advocates spoke up in support of comprehensive legislation that would help make high-quality early education and child care truly affordable and accessible to all Massachusetts families.

"We at East Boston Social Centers are proud to have been part of the Common Start Coalition's work from the early stages. We are deeply grateful for the investment our champions in the legislature and Boston's city government have made in our early education and care system and are grateful for their commitment to continuing this important work," said Justin Pasquariello, Executive Director of the East Boston Social Centers. "Thank you to Rep. Madaro for his leadership and support and partnership for this event, and to Sens. DiDomenico and Edwards, Rep. Turco, and Kristin McSwain for joining this event and demonstrating their continued deep commitment to this vision. Thank you to our partners in the field, our

dren in our programs and their parents for your work together to help all children thrive. We are deeply grateful to our speakers, our guests, and everyone who has voiced support for this important work of ensuring all children have access to high-quality, affordable early education and care taught by equitably paid teachers."

Background on the Common Start Legislative Framework

The Common Start Coalition supports H.489 (filed by Representatives Gordon & Adrian Madaro) & S.301 (filed by Senators Lewis & Moran), which are co-sponsored by a large majority of legislators in both the State House of Representatives (102 legislators) and the State Senate (28 legislators). These bills would provide the specific structure that is needed to deliver affordable care options for families; significantly better pay and benefits for early educators; a permanent, stable source of funding for providers; highquality programs and services for children; and substantial relief for businesses.

Background on the Common Start Coalition's Campaign to Address the Child Care Crisis

Since 2018, the Common Start Coalition has been steadily building a broad-based coalition to advocate for affordable, accessible, high-quality early education and child care. During the 2021-2022 legislative session, the coalition developed the comprehensive Common Start legislative framework that hardworking teachers, the chil- would help children, families, question was 64%-23%.

educators, providers, businesses, and signed up a majority of legislators as cosponsors. In the spring of 2022, the coalition's vision was reflected in a major report written by the state's Early Education and Care Economic Review Commission and in legislation approved by the Legislature's Joint Committee on Education.

The Senate passed its version of the Education Committee bill unanimously in the final days of the 2021-2022 legislative session, and while the bill did not receive a vote in the House, a majority of state representatives are on record supporting the Common Start framework. Additionally, state leaders have made a major down payment on the coalition's vision over the past few years, including \$1.5 billion for early education and child care in the FY24 budget.

As the Legislative Commission report says, immediate funding is needed now, as well as in the long term, to ensure that providers can keep their programs open and pay wages sufficient to keep educators in their classrooms. Public support for state investment in early education and child care is strong, and has increased significantly over the past few years. A statewide poll of Massachusetts voters, conducted in December 2022 on behalf of the Common Start Coalition, found 73% support for the Common Start proposal, with only 18% of voters opposing it. Support was up nearly 10 points from two years prior, when the corresponding margin on that

DePasquale Ventures



www.depasqualeventures.com

In Loving Memory of Marion Elizabeth "Lizzy" DeFilipo December 17, 1998 25 Year Anniversary



Those we love don't go away They Walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard But always near Still loved, still missed And very dear.

Always in our hearts . . . Forever Missed Angelo, Carol ,Angelo, III and,Andréa

Hosting Sensory Inclusive Night

ZooLights is the ultimate experience for all things merry this time of year! On January 3, Stone Zoo will host a Sensory Inclusive Night from 4:00 p.m. -6:00 p.m. This event is designed to provide a more accessible and enjoyable experience for guests with sensory sensitivities. The evening will feature calmer, more subdued lighting and reduced or limited sounds. This experience is included with ZooLights admission. No additional tickets are required. No additional tickets are required. After 6:00 p.m. the lights and sounds will resume to their usual level.

This is the latest step in the Zoo's commitment to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for guests. In 2019, Zoo New England partnered with Kulture City to promote an accommodating and positive experience for guests with sensory processing needs. Sensory bags equipped with noise canceling headphones, fidget tools and verbal cue cards are available at the admissions booths. Recently, a communication board was installed at the Stone Zoo playground, which is an essential visual tool that allows non-speaking children and adults to express themselves by pointing to symbols or images.

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Friends of the North End Library Holiday Open House



Christopher Columbus Park), North End and Pat O'Connell



Tricia Sabbey (Friends of The MacDowell's from the



Thomas Sullivan and Rita Pagliuca



Entertainment by Ray Cavicchio and Sharon Zeffiro

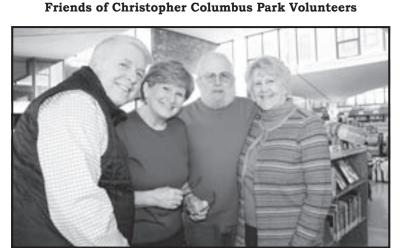


Taking Time Out



Kalina, Nevena, and Rada MacDowell of the North End

(Photos by Gerri Palladino)





Jessica Della Russo of the North End, Diane & Bob O'Leary, and Michela Begamo



Raffle Winner



Mattéo Gallo

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ACROSS

- 1. Great divide 6. Priestly vestment
- 9. Took to court
- 13. Haile Selassie's disciple
- 14. 10 decibels 15. *Appletini's _
- 16. Rose oil 17. Maui garland
- 18. Birth-related 19. *Old Fashioned liquor option
- 21. *Gin+vermouth rosso+Campari 23. Not him
- 24. Bye, in Palermo
- 25. VA.gov beneficiary 28. Puerto follower
- 30. Like Ferris Bueller
- 35. Exclude
- _ Your Enthusiasm" 39. Green-light
 40. Tiny coffee cup, or _
- 41. Cut mission short
- 43. Not final or absolute
- 44. Makes a sweater
- 46. Wing-shaped 47. Bird, in Latin
- 48. One with drug dependency
- 50. Do like a frog
- A U.S. time zone 53. Dance with #17 Across
- 55. Anatomical duct
- 57. *It usually comes in a conical glass 61. *Popular cocktail mixer
- 65. Spy's other name
- 66. Knicks' org. 68. Give a speech
- 69. Clan emblem
- 70. Party barrel 71. Clean a spill (2 words)
- 72. Part of pump 73. Sargasso or Barents 74. Same as apse
- DOWN

- 1. Sticking point, in alimentary tract 2. Possesses, archaic
- 3. *Bellini with _
- 4. Squirrel away
- 5. a.k.a. felt-pen
- 6. Competently
 7. M tley Cr e's Tommy
- 8. Russian pancakes 9. Practice in the ring
- 10. As far as (2 words)
- 11. Distinctive flair
- 12. Place for a hero15. Fluffy sweater material
- 20. "All My Children" vixen Kane 22. 2010 Movie "_ _ Pray Love"
- 24. Toyota model
- 25. *Moscow Mule spirit

Cocktails

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- © StatePoint Media
- 26. Make corrections
- 27. Shy
- 29. *___ Libre 31. Forearm bone
- 32. Not dead
- 33. Honkers

49. 252-gallon wine cask

- 34. *Lemon or orange piece 36. South American monkey
- 38. Highlands hillside 42. Crossbeam
- 45. Religious split
- 62. Nukes
- 59. Baptism or shiva, e.g. 60. Asian weight unit 61. John Galsworthy's "The Forsyte _

51. *Tequila+grapefruit juice+sparkling water 54. Kind of golf course

56. Razor sharpener

57. S.A.T. section

58. Balm ingredient

- 63. Sewing case
- 64. Gym set 67. *____'s Knees

(Solution on Page 9)

Saint Sabas

by Bennett Molinari & Richard Molinari

Sabas was born in Cappadocia in 439.AD. After an unhappy childhood in which he ran away several times, he found refuge in a monastery. While family members tried to persuade him to return home, the young boy felt drawn to monastic life. At age 18, he traveled to Jerusalem, seeking to learn more about living in solitude, Sabas entered a monastery, where he worked during the day and spent much of the night in prayer.

At the age of 30, he was given permission to spend five days each week in a nearby remote cave, engaging in prayer and manual labor in the form of weaving baskets. Following the death of his mentor, Saint Euthymius, Sabas moved farther into the desert near Jericho. There he lived for several years in a cave; a rope was his means of access. Wild herbs were his food; occasionally he was brought other food and items, while he had to go a distance for his water.

Some men came to him desiring to join him in his solitude. At first, he refused. But not long after relenting, his followers swelled to more than 150, all of them living in individual huts grouped around a church. The bishop persuaded a reluctant Sabas, then in his early 50s, to prepare for the priesthood so that he could better serve his monastic community in leadership. While functioning as abbot among a large community of monks, he felt ever called to live the life of a



hermit. Throughout each year — consistently in Lent — he left his monks for long periods of time, often to their distress. A group of 60 men left the monastery, settling at a nearby ruined facility. When Sabas learned of the difficulties they were facing, he gave them supplies and assisted in the repair of their church.

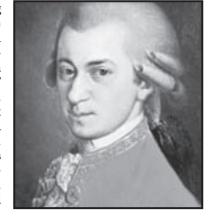
Over the years, Sabas traveled throughout Palestine, preaching the true faith and successfully bringing back many to the Church. At the age of 91, in response to a plea from the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sabas undertook a journey to Constantinople in response to the Samaritan revolt and its violent repression. He fell ill and soon after his return, died at the monastery at Mar Saba. The Feast Day of Saint Sabas is December 5th.

Leri e Oggi Yesterday & Today

A COLUMN OF PAST AND CURRENT EVENTS

by Bennett Molinari & Richard Molinari

MOZART — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) was arguably the most gifted musician in the history of classical music. His inspiration is often described as "divine," but he worked assiduously, not only to become the great composer he was, but also a conductor, virtuoso pianist, organist, and violinist. Mozart's music embraces opera, symphony, concerto, chamber, choral, instrumental, and vocal music.



Mozart was born in Salzburg, in 1756. His father, Leopold, was an ambitious composer and violinist.

Though Mozart was and still is considered a genius, he was also tactless and arrogant. He composed his first opera, *Apollo et Hyacinthus* when he was only 11. A year later, the Emperor Joseph II commissioned him to write *La Finta Semplice*.

In August 1782, he married Constanze Weber. The Mozarts' marriage seemed to be a happy one. Constanze was easy-going, free-spending, and usually pregnant. Only two of their six children survived. Post-marriage, some of Mozart's best compositions started to appear — the *Haffner* and *Linz* symphonies and five string quartets, for example.

Between 1784 and 1786, he composed nine piano concertos and three of these concurrently with *The Marriage of Figaro*. The year 1787 saw the premiere of Mozart's second opera, *Don Giovanni*. He passed away before his 36th birthday on December 5, 1791. Mozart and his wife, Constanze, had six children, of which only two boys — Karl and Franz Xavier — survived.

Despite his short life, his rapid pace of composition resulted in more than 800 works of virtually every genre of his time. Many of these compositions are acknowledged as pinnacles of the symphonic, concertante, chamber, operatic, and choral repertoire. Mozart is widely regarded as among the greatest composers in the history of Western music, with his music admired for its "melodic beauty, its formal elegance, and its richness of harmony and texture."

Wishing our readers a happy, healthy, and blessed New Year.

Boost Your Mood with Fragrant Indoor Plants

by Melinda Myers



Fragrant plants, like gardenias, add beauty indoors, boost mood, and promote relaxation. (Photo courtesy of MelindaMyers.com)

There's no need to visit a spa for a bit of soothing aromatherapy. Grow fragrant plants indoors to improve your mood and promote a sense of relaxation.

Gardenias may be the first fragrant flowering plant that comes to mind. They can be challenging but are worth the effort. Grow them in moist acidic soil, in bright light, and surrounded by other plants or on a gravel tray to increase the humidity.

Jasmines are known for their sweet fragrant flowers. Arabian Jasmine (*Jasmine sambac*) will flower indoors several times throughout the year if it receives sufficient light. Consider adding artificial lights to boost flowering. Grow this plant in a warm draft-free location and allow the soil to dry several inches below the surface before watering again.

Citrus are valued for their fruit, but they also produce fragrant flowers. Give them bright light and keep the soil slightly moist for the best results.

Stephanotis floribunda was frequently used in wedding bouquets. Grow it in a sunny window and watch for flowers to appear in spring on new growth. Complete all necessary pruning as soon as the plant stops flowering.

Plumeria are the fragrant flowers often used in Hawaiian leis. Provide bright light, moist well-drained soil, and fertilize throughout the summer to promote flowering. Allow the soil to go a bit drier during the winter. Don't panic if the plants go dormant and drop their leaves in winter. New leaves will appear as temperatures warm.

String of pearls (*Curio rowleyanus*) is a trailing succulent with leaves that resemble peas. Grow these in a brightly lit location that is a bit cooler in the winter. This along with slightly drier soil in winter can promote flowering. Its cinnamon fragrance is one you'll remember.

Another succulent that may reward you with flowers is hoya. Keep the soil a bit moister during the summer when the plant is actively growing. Allow the soil to dry slightly when the plant is resting during the winter. High humidity in spring and summer followed by cooler temperatures and drier soil in winter will encourage potbound plants to flower. Watch for fragrant flowers to form on the long leafless stems.

Give the leaves of scented geranium (*Pelargonium*) a pet and enjoy the lemon, rose, apple, peppermint, or pine fragrance. Although grown for their scented foliage they also produce pretty but less showy flowers. Place the plants in areas where you brush past the leaves or can easily give them a pat to release and enjoy the fragrance.

Find a cool spot in your home away from drafts of hot and cold air for your **lavender plant.** Make sure the plant receives plenty of sunlight from a south-facing or similar window. Consider adding artificial lights to increase your success. Water thoroughly when the top inch of soil is dry to the touch. Pour off any excess water that collects in the saucer.

Visit your local independent garden center or reputable online plant retailers that are more likely to sell these in winter. Then clear out some space on a sunny windowsill or invest in a few plant lights and start growing some fragrant plants.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the recently released Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition and Small Space Gardening. She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine. Myers' website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Crossroads Family Shelter



Chris 'Tiger" Stockbride (on the right) with AFSCME volunteers and shelter staff members.

For the second year in a row, AFSCME Council 93, led by East Boston native Eddie Nastari, has made it a Merry Christmas for the Crossroads Family Shelter's children. Eddie does not just donate money and toys, he asks every family what each child wants exactly. He raises money through the Locals of AFSCME Council 93 and then he goes shopping! Each

child gets what they asked for and that is why Eddie loves doing this. He loves helping out the families in need but also seeing the kids open up their gifts and receiving what they want.

Eddie has many helper elves at AFSCME Council 93 who come out to help deliver the toys! AFSCME comes out in full force and even brings Santa Claus from the North Pole!

Happy Mew IJear!! from





Announcement

Rachel Miselman

Candidate for Massachusetts Republican State Committee



Government works best when there are diverse voices. Communities flourish when the government operates at full tilt. At present, Massachusetts is a super majority blue state, however. Unfortunately, the consequences have been incalculable. Wrong headed policies have adversely affected the quality of our lives. Heightened tensions among different groups have acted as an obstacle to prospects of cooperation and collaboration. A rising number of Bay State residents see their future elsewhere. Perhaps most devastatingly, a lack of transparency and an absence of accountability have become hallmarks of the state's political landscape.

In Suffolk County, the aforementioned problems are especially acute. Indeed, as of October 29th of 2022, only 4.89% of registered voters were Republican. This is not only lamentable, but it is also unacceptable. I, therefore, propose that we move in a new direction. I would like to announce formally that I am running to be the State Committee woman for the Third Suffolk District on the Massachusetts Republican State Committee. This area includes the municipalities of Winthrop, Revere, and parts of Boston East Boston, the North End, Wharf District, the West End, Back Bay, Beacon Hill, and parts of Downtown and Fenway).

There must be a laser focus on kitchen table issues with an eye toward pragmatic, practicable solutions. Skills, experience, and knowledge must supersede identity, personal connections, and gimmicks in the search for candidates and operatives. This is the way toward building a Republican Party for everyone and presenting it as a truly viable alternative. To that end, I look forward to sharing my unique skill set that would enable me to perform this role. More importantly, I am eager to listen to your ideas and entertain your hopes for a more balanced, just political process.

I invite you to reach out to me at *MiselmanforMassGOP@ gmail.com or 617-372-0494*. You can also follow me on *Facebook, X,* and Instagram. I hope to see you on the campaign trail; I respectfully ask for your vote on March 5, 2024.

The time has come, the walrus said,

TO TALK OF MANY THINGS

of shoes and ships and sealing wax of cabbages and kings

by Sal Giarratani



Friday, December 22 would have been my dad's 111th birthday.



Vinny's Market on Malden Street in Revere is a pretty busy shop on Thursday afternoons. That's when you can find the latest editions of the Post-Gazette stacked next to the Revere Advocate which I write in too. Shown in photo is Al Salsgiven with Angelo Prezioso who owns this popular market.

Photo by Sal Giarratani

IS IT JUST ME, ... OR DID THIS YEAR ZIP RIGHT BY US?

Here we are with a few days to go before we say goodbye to 2023. It seems like time has gone wacko since the pandemic with social distancing, masks, and that man we can't ever forget named Fauci who seemingly popped up out of nowhere and just hangs around like a bad cold. I swear when you're an older person, the last thing you need is a pandemic or shutdown to mess up your so-called golden years.

Thank God, the worst is behind us, but there are still some folks out there that still persist. These are the people you still see masked up in their cars and in the supermarkets, too.

The one good thing about being a writer or reporter is that you get out a lot, go to lots of happy events, and just have a good time. People ask me when do I rest because they see me everywhere all the time. When do I rest? I tell them we'll all have plenty of time to rest when we're covered in dirt, but as for now, I am alive and busy.

Over the last couple of weeks, I've been pretty busy, going here, there, everywhere, and having lots of fun, too. On Friday night, December 15th, I was over at the Hyatt Regency at the airport for the Eastie Elves celebration sponsored by State Rep. Adrian Madaro. A tremendous amount of toys were collected and will make many kids happy at this time of the year. While there I ate well, danced well and I had fun bumping into old and new friends.



(L-R): Former State Rep. Jeffrey Sanchez, Revere School Board member Jacqueline Monterroso (first Latina elected to the school board), and State Rep. Jessica Ann Giannino, left to right.

(Photo by Sal Giarratani)

On December 14th, I was in Marshfield at the monthly veteran's food distribution sponsored by WMEX Radio and the Veterans Voice Network. I have been volunteering at this monthly event for a few years now along with many other volunteers with the Veterans Voice Network group.



While in Marshfield, I went inside the radio studio and spotted two old friends of mine and took a photo. Shown is Santa, Elvis Presley on his guitar and of course me Cowboy Sal.

(Photo by Ed Perry, owner of

WATD 95.9 radio station)

Later that Thursday evening I found myself at Carmella's around the corner from where I live in East Boston. Owner Nick Moulaison put on a great Pizza Night as a mini Eastie Elves fundraiser where customers could stop by to have a pizza and donate a toy. While there, a customer of his, Robert Allison, a professor of history at Suffolk University, stopped by to give Nick a signed copy of his new Boston history book.



Attending Pizza Night at Carmella's is Robert Allison handing Nick Moulaison a signed copy of his new book.

(Photo by Sal Giarratani)

Getting back to Pizza Night and the mini-Eastie Elves fundraiser at the shop, the place started getting packed quickly. It was all for a good cause and folks came with a good appetite, too. Mangia, Mangia.



(L-R): Rinata Pinto, Diana Merios, little Sofia (in the carriage), her daddy Mike Brisebois, and Nick Moulaison (Photo by Sal Giarratani)

Finally, the purpose of being at Carmella's on that night was to collect toys for all deserving children making everyone feel the spirit of giving, and in the receiving, too.



Felicia Moscone adding another toy to the growing container with all kinds of toys, which were delivered to the Eastie Elves gathering held on the following day.

(Photo by Sal Giarratani)



by John Christoforo

A Nostalgic Remembrance



New Year's Eve had always been a bit different in the Contini and Christoforo households back in the day. Babbononno, two of my uncles, Nick and Paul, and my father were musicians. When I became of age, I joined the family business and became the 3rd generation to play an instrument or two in my family. Babbononno played guitar in Italian dance bands and timpani in marching and concert bands, like the Roma Band. My uncles played sax, clarinet and flute, and Dad played bass violin, Sousaphone and tuba (bass with the dance bands), and later, bass guitar. I started out playing bass violin and added the bass guitar in the 1960s. New Year's Eve for us was not a time to celebrate, but a time to entertain and make money.

A saxophone student of Uncle Paul's, named Ray DiGiovanni, put a dance band together which became rather popular in the years after WWII, especially due to their constant appearances at the Ocean View Ballroom which was located at the beginning of Revere Beach. Of course, my uncles were in the sax section and Dad was the bass player and behind the scenes, Ray's business partner. The band was called "Ray Digg and his Orchestra," and as I said, they were quite popular with the ballroom crowd back in the day.

You may ask why there was a name change. Years ago, people with ethnic sounding names found it easier to "make it in America" with more Anglo sounding names. Raymond DiGiovanni became Ray Digg; a bandleader Uncle Nick and I worked for, George Swartz, became George Graham, My uncles shortened Contini to Conti and Dad became Johnny Christie. As I said, it was easier back then with a more American sounding name. When I came into my own, I became Johnny Christy Jr., changing Christie to Christy.

It was the tail end of 1958. I had just become a professional musician and Ray Digg had several jobs on that forth-coming New Year's Eve. Uncle Nick was to lead one of them, and Dad another. As a result, I was to take Dad's place playing bass with Ray's first band. Ray was booked in to the play for the East Boston Sons of Italy which was located on Trenton Street, near the corner of Marion in the Eagle Hill Section of East Boston. This was just around the corner from where we lived on Eutaw Street, and not yet

OCCASIONS

having my own car wasn't a problem. I could walk to work with my bass violin tucked under my arm and be there within five minutes.

Babbononno supervised when I dressed for work. By this point in his life, he was retired from both music and his daytime job, but knew what nuances were necessary for a properly attired musician. He made sure my tux pant legs were properly creased, my jacket was without a wrinkle, my formal shirt starched with each pleat falling in place without a problem, my bow tie tied correctly and my formal shoes reflecting upward. After passing inspection, I headed out to play my first New Year's Eve dance.

We were to start at 8:30 and I arrived at 7:30 to set up and look over the music. Ray Digg had a great library of music and I wanted to make sure I could handle the bass parts. All the other musicians arrived at around 8:00 pm to setup and we all conversed while setting up, as I had known most of these sidemen since I was a child. I actually grew up in the business accompanying Dad to the union every Monday, the day most of the active musicians congregated to meet with the contractors and bandleaders to secure future work.

Ray gave the downbeat at exactly 8:30. There were a few people there and they kept coming in as time went on. This was a dinner dance and we were booked until 12:30. We played various types of music, starting with fox trots, and then heading to the jitterbugs popularized by the big bands during the war. After that, it was waltz time and then Latin music time with a couple of rumbas and a new craze, the cha cha cha. At some point, we would get a request for Italian music and Ray was prepared with a medley of favorites that were mostly Italian-American.

This was back in the day before bass players were amplified and I had to slam away at the gut strings on my bass to set the heartbeat for a tenpiece band. A few years later, I switched to steel strings (which have a better sound than cat gut) and bought an amplifier and bass mike to aid in the volume I needed. It made things easier on my fingers, but this was back in the day before all of this was available, and as I said, I had to slam away to get the volume I wanted.

Even though I was the kid in the band, I held my own. The only problem was that I wasn't

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used to working with such a large band and maintaining the necessary volume, took its toll on my fingertips. I started to develop blisters. Of course, anticipating this problem, I was ready with Band Aides and a roll of adhesive tape. I began using both by 11:30. Well, midnight rolled around and we played the traditional songs to welcome in the new year. Just before 12:30, Ray announced last call for the bar and told the party goers that we were going to play our last set.

Someone walked to the stage, spoke to Ray who nodded to the man, and as we finished our last tune, were told that we were going to play a half hour overtime. The man who hired the band and Ray had just agreed on a price for us to continue. The musicians were happy about this except a young bass player. I looked under by bandaged fingers and saw only blood blisters and then realized how much my fingers hurt. I continued playing even though blood began running down a couple of strings due to a blister or two breaking. I had no alternative, I just smiled in pain and played. At 1:00 am, Ray told us we were going to play another half hour overtime. And so, we played on. About 1:15, I thought I had had it, but couldn't give in. If I did, it would be an admission of defeat and prove I wasn't ready to play at a professional level.

Just then, the cavalry arrived to save the day, Dad walked in the door. His job had ended on time and when he saw my fingers all bandaged, he, without saying anything walked on the stage, winked at me and without skipping a beat, took over to finish the half hour playing bass. I was saved. All this happened 65 years ago and that entire generation of musicians is long gone. The music has changed over the years, but to me, that great American songbook which is what we call the type of dance music from the past is still the best. The songs of Cole Porter, Gershwin, Ellington, etc....will never be surpassed by anything that's out there today. Maybe it's just me, but a lot of people agree with me. Maybe we're just the old timers, but time will be the judge.

New Year's Eve is Sunday, and at this age, if I'm awake at midnight, I'll watch the ball drop on Times Square from my living room couch. If I was one of today's young musicians, instead of a tuxedo, I'd be in jeans, a T shirt, and sneakers, with a Fender bass guitar hanging from my neck. Oh well. From the Christoforo family: thanks for reading my column and may you have a very **Happy** New Year (Felice Anno Nuovo). MAY GOD BLESS AMERICA (2024)

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New Year's Eve in Italy, while not an official public holiday, is a lively spectacle with nationwide firework displays, concerts, and parties. Southern Italy maintains charming customs like tossing old belongings out of windows at midnight, symbolizing a transition from the old to the new. On New Year's Day, a culinary tradition known as Cotechino con Lenticchie takes center stage. This dish features seasoned pork sausage on a bed of braised lentils, embodying a belief in bringing good fortune. The lentils symbolize luck, and the pork signifies prosperity, weaving together Italian traditions in a delightful blend of taste and symbolism for a year filled with abundance and positivity.

In anticipation of a better year, my own family upheld this tradition, and every New Year's Day, we enjoyed a delicious bowl of "Lentil Soup". Though my recipe doesn't include sausage in the ingredients, many include it. So, if you'd like a bit more flavor and "prosperity" in the coming year, I encourage the addition.

Auguri di Buon Anno!

LENTIL SOUP Zuppa di Lenticchie



1/2 cup olive oil
1 large Vidalia onion, finely chopped
3 carrots, peeled and chopped
3 celery stalks, chopped
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 (14 1/2-ounce) can diced tomatoes

1 pound lentils, soaked and rinsed 12 cups chicken or vegetable

stock/broth 1 cup uncooked ditalini or

elbow pasta 1 cup shredded Parmigiano cheese

Salt and pepper to taste

In a large stockpot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add onion, carrots, and celery. Sauté until tender, about 5 to 10 minutes. Add the garlic, salt and pepper, cook for an additional 3 to 4 minutes. Add the entire can of tomatoes with juice and simmer, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes. Add the lentils and the broth, stir and raise the heat. Allow to come to a boil, then immediately lower heat, cover and simmer until lentils are cooked, about a half hour. Add the pasta and simmer, until al dente. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Ladle the soup into bowls, sprinkle with grated cheese, and enjoy.

Marianna Bisignano is a psychologist for the Boston Public Schools and can be reached at nonnasrecipebox@gmail.com



THE

Johnny Christy

Orchestra

MUSIC FOR ALL

THOUGHTS BY DAN ABOUT THIS & THAT

with Daniel A. DiCenso

The Ice of Iceland



Black Sand Beach

We travel to Iceland because there is no place like it in the world. So close to two continents and yet so remote, so relatively easy to get to but so raw in its earthly beauty, its natural wonders are icons of the jewels or the earth and yet seen in such an undistilled state as can only be possible by a happy set of evolutionary circumstances.

Something so superficially trivial as the beaches of Iceland

being coated with black sand may not inspire awe (at least until witnessed in person) until the unique volcanic power in the island is considered. Of such famous beaches the aptly named Black Sand Beach is the one offering what its name suggests, a beach of black sand. But Diamond Beach yields surprises. Oh, the black sand is there aplenty but so are chunks of ice from broken up glaciers that have washed ashore and become marvels of the beach. For once a beach thrives on cold weather with its icy blocks resembling the extraterrestrial pods of any sci-fi matinee.

When we arrived, the scene was already bustling with tourists, many taking pictures of the most oddly shaped ice chunks. The tide was getting high however so the time for posing was fleeting. Still, Diamond Beach hits the senses at once, even the cold air adding to its marvel.

A few miles down the crumbling road from Diamond Beach the icebergs drift in the waters in all their gigantic





Diamond Beach

majesty. It was a sight I had to witness once, in the evening following my visit to Diamond Beach and then the following morning before the rush of tourists. Only one other visitor beat me to the icebergs that morning, a harbor seal poked its smooth head out of the waters in between two ice towers, frolicked up and under before swimming away, leaving the gigantic icebergs a scene of solitude and tranquility.



(Continued from Page)

by mid-November, Bloomberg reported, citing data from the U.S. Department of Education. There are signs that even fewer borrowers made payments in November.

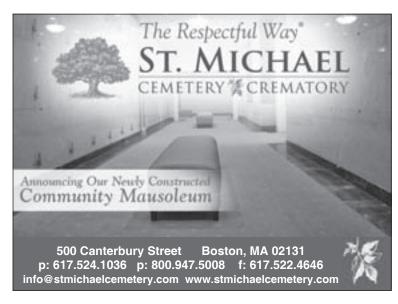
Now "Urine" California

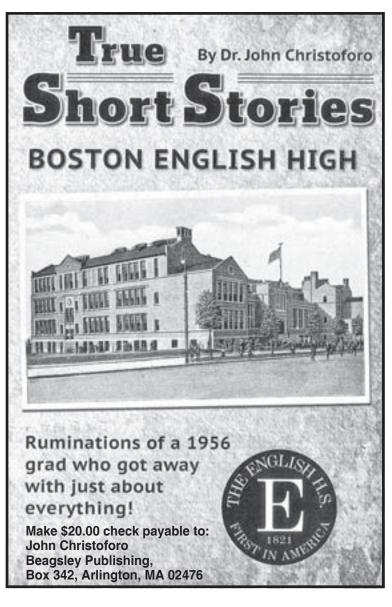
HEADLINE: "Drought-prone California OKs new rules for turning wastewater into drinking water." Ah, so that's why they call it the Golden State.

End Quote

We can see the utter moral bankruptcy in higher education with the spread of antisemitism on college campuses. The DEI bureaucracy is directly responsible for a toxic campus culture that separates everyone into oppressor versus oppressed."

-U.S. Rep. Dan Crenshaw, R-Texas







Diamond Beach



The Icebergs



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LEGAL NOTICE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court **Probate and Family Court** Middlesex Probate and Family Court 10-U Commerce Way Woburn, MA 01801 (781) 865-4000

Docket No. MI23C0596CA In the Matter of KEVEN ALBERT MC INTYRE CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME

A Petition to Change Name of Adult has been filed by **Keven Albert McIntyre** of **Devens**, **MA** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to Ahna

Rose McIntyre. IMPORTANT NOTICE

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: Middlesex Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of January 11, 2024. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

Witness, HON. TERRI L. KLUG CAFAZZO, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 14, 2023 Tara E. DeCristofaro, Register of Probate

Run Date: 12/29/2023

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Notice is hereby given by Todisco Services, Inc., of 171 Boston Street, Salem, MA pursuant to the provisions of Mass G.L. c. 255, Section 39A, that they will sell the following vehicles on or after December 30, 2023 beginning at 9:00 AM by public or private sale to satisfy their garage keepers lien for towing, storage, and notices

2012 NISSAN MAXIMA VIN # 1N4AA5AP8CC805232

2012 CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY VIN # 2C4RC1BG4CR375723

Vehicles are being stored at multiple Todisco Services, Inc. locations, and may be viewed by appointment only.

> Signed Todisco Services, Inc. Run dates: 12/15, 12/22, 12/29/2023

LEGAL NOTICE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court **Probate and Family Court**

Middlesex Probate and Family Court 10-U Commerce Way Woburn, MA 01801 (781) 865-4000

Docket No. MI23P6552GD

CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF **GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED** PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304

> In the matter of ABDULMOHEEN FAISAL of Burlington, MA

RESPONDENT Alleged Incapacitated Person

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Angel M. Faisal of Burlington, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that Abdulmoheen Faisal is in need of a Guardian and requesting that Angel M. Faisal of Burlington, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve Without Surety on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of January 12, 2024. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

Witness, HON. TERRI L. KLUG CAFAZZO, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 15, 2023

Tara E. DeCristofaro, Register of Probate Run date: 12/29/2023

LEGAL NOTICE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court **Probate and Family Court Suffolk Probate and Family Court** 24 New Chardon Street Boston, MA 02114 617-788-8300

Docket No. SU23D2008DR **DIVORCE SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION AND MAILING**

MICHELLE McGREW

EDWARD McGREW To the Defendant:

The Plaintiff has filed a Complaint for Divorce requesting that the Court grant a divorce for rretrievable Breakdown.

The Complaint is on file at the Court. An Automatic Restraining Order has been entered in this matter preventing you from taking any action which would negatively impact the current financial status of either party. SEE Supplemental Probate Court Rule 411.

You are hereby summoned and required to serve upon Michelle McGrew, 149 Jamey Drive, East Rochester, NH 03868 your answer, if any, on or before January 29, 2024. If you fail to do so, the court will proceed to the hearing and adjudication of this action. You are also required to file a copy of your answer, if any, in the office of the Register of this Court.

Witness, HON. BRIAN J. DUNN, First Justice of this Court

Date: December 14, 2023

Vincent Procopio, Register of Probate Run date: 12/29/2023

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Notice is hereby given by Todisco Services, Inc., of 171 Boston Street, Salem, MA pursuant to the provisions of Mass G.L. c. 255, Section 39A, that they will sell the following vehicles on or after January 13, 2024 beginning at 9:00 AM by public or private sale to satisfy their garage keepers lien for towing, storage, and notices of sale.

2003 VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT VIN # WVWTH63B83P057354

2015 INFINITI Q50 VIN # JN1BV7AR4FM408036

2007 NISSAN SENTRA VIN # 3N1AB61E97L625752

2003 TOYOTA CAMRY VIN # 4T1BF32K83U035904

Vehicles are being stored at multiple Todisco Services, Inc. locations, and may be viewed by appointment only

Signed Todisco Services, Inc.

Run dates: 12/29/2023 - 1/05, 1/12/2024

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Notice is hereby given by **Todisco Services**, **Inc.**, **of 171 Boston Street**, Salem, MA pursuant to the provisions of Mass G.L. c. 255, Section 39A, that they will sell the following vehicles on or after January 06, 2024 beginning at 9:00 AM by public or private sale to satisfy their garage keepers lien for towing, storage, and notices of sale.

2006 HONDA CIVIC VIN # 2HGFG12856H573884 2020 KIA OPTIMA VIN # 5XXGT4L38LG432695

2006 MAZDA MAZDA6 VIN # 1YVHP84D665M45018

2009 TOYOTA SCION TC VIN # JTKDE167390282413

2019 TOYOTA CAMRY

VIN # 4T1B11HK6KU758515 **2012 NISSAN ALTIMA**

VIN # 1N4AL2AP6CN490959 2009 HONDA ACCORD

VIN # 1HGCP36829A040113 2021 ZHEN ZN50QT/ZN150T

VIN # L5YACBPZ4M1115463 2004 VOLVO S60

VIN # YV1RS59V342386270 2011 TOYOTA SCION XB

VIN # JTLZE4FE0B1126363 2017 CHEVROLET TRAX

VIN # 3GNCJKSB7HL271941 **2018 YONGFU YN50QT-8**

VIN # LL0TCAPH2JY491041 2023 BMW 330i

VIN # 3MW69FF08P8C96635 2001 HONDA CIVIC

VIN # 1HGEM22971L055595 Vehicles are being stored at multiple Todisco Services, Inc. locations, and may be viewed

by appointment only. Signed Todisco Services, Inc. Run dates: 12/22, 12/29, 2023 - 1/05/2024



EXTRA Innings

by Sal Giarratani



Red Sox Pitching More Deja Vu All Over Again

The Red Sox have been showing their true colors this offseason but doing nothing to strengthen the team going into 2024. Now that the Sox have let Yoshinobu Yamamoto slip through their fingers. Something by the way is never really shocking for John Henry. El Cheapo should be his nickname! Right!

The Red Sox are now thinking of getting James Paxton, 35, and growing older by the minute. He has already spent two seasons with Boston, mostly unremembered on the mound. Well, he's a free agent now and hasn't made it through a full season since 2019. All this tells me, we will probably spend too much money acquiring him and he isn't likely about to turn into Sandy Koufax anytime soon.

I am glad we passed up on reacquiring Eduardo Rodriguez because he should be glad someone else gave him big bucks for '24, I'm only glad it wasn't us.

Now, before anyone throws Rafael Devers at me, and his 10-year, \$313 million extension last January as a sign that the Sox are really willing to get and

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF SALE

Notice is hereby given by Stephens Automotive Transport, 60 Union Street, Medford, MA 02155, pursuant to the provisions of G.L.c.255 39A, that on January 03, 2024 at 10AM, at said address, the following motor vehicle(s) will be sold, in as is condition, no keys, at public sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for towing, storage, and expenses of

2011 CHEVROLET EXPRESS, WHITE VIN # 1GCZGTCG5B1126025

2001 HONDA ODYSSEY, GRAY VIN # 2HKRL18691H540741

2004 FORD EXPEDITION, BLACK VIN # 1FMRU13W64LB82448

2003 HONDA PILOT, GRAY VIN # 2HKYF185X3H602208 2006 PONTIAC G6, GRAY

VIN # 1G2ZH158664169370 2007 FORD E250, WHITE

VIN # 1FTNE24L87DA53393 2016 HONDA CIVIC. BLACK VIN # 19XFC2F51GE223407

2012 HONDA CIVIC, BLUE VIN # 2HGFB2F89CH531924 2008 HUMMER H3. BLACK

VIN # 5GTEN13E488120572 2003 MAZDA TRIBUTE, SILVER

VIN # 4F2YZ94113KM50989 2010 FORD FOCUS, BLACK

VIN # 1FAHP3GN8AW175702 2012 NISSAN VERSA, BLACK VIN # 3N1CN7AP7CL922567

2006 ACURA TSX, BLUE VIN # JH4CL95926C035063

2014 HONDA ODYSSEY, WHITE VIN # 5FNRL5H67EB035972

2004 SUZUKI GSXR600, YELLOW VIN # JS1GN7CA142105910

2005 MERCEDES BENZ E500, BLACK VIN # WDBUF83J85X170607 2000 TOYOTA COROLLA, BROWN

VIN # 2T1BR12E3YC354979 2004 TOYOTA PRIUS, BLACK VIN # JTDKB20U940087663

2018 NISSAN SENTRA, BLACK VIN # 3N1AB7AP7JY332417

2009 FORD EXPLORER, WHITE VIN # 1FMEU74E89UA05375 2009 MAZDA 6, SILVER VIN # 1YVHP81A895M04498

2006 MERCURY MARINER GRAY VIN # 4M2CU57146DJ08193 2003 HONDA CIVIC, WHITE

VIN # 2HGES16563H514297 2001 MERCURY SABLE, SILVER

VIN # 1MEFM53U51A629077 Run dates: 12/15, 12/22, 12/29/2023 keep good talent. One must also remember the reported booing of John Henry's appearance at Fenway during a 2022 home game. I think the fans in reality had much to do with the extension contract even being a possibility.

Bottom Line: Here we are about to celebrate the start of a new year and we find ourselves waiting to see if Brian Cashman and the Yankees will go after free agents such as the Padres' Blake Snell or the Rangers' Jordan Montgomery. If we strike out and let the Yankees beat us to the punch, Boston fans will know ticket prices will go up with talent on the field going down, down, down.

Boston fans get what they deserve, higher prices for more meaningless games.

LEGAL NOTICE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court **Probate and Family Court**

Middlesex Probate and Family Court 10-U Commerce Way Woburn, MA 01801 (781) 865-4000 Docket No. MI23C1304CA

In the Matter of NATALIE ANNE DIACOVO CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME

A Petition to Change Name of Adult has been filed by **Natalie Anne Diacovo** of Somerville, MA requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to Natalie Anne Diacovo-Rebuffot.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: Middlesex Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of January 09, 2024. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

Witness, HON. TERRI L. KLUG CAFAZZO, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 12, 2023 Tara E. DeCristofaro, Register of Probate

Run Date: 12/29/2023

This reaction by fans made more sense back in my boyhood days sitting in the bleachers when the most I paid was \$1.25 per ticket and .25 cents for popcorn.

The ownership of the Boston Red Sox has apparently taken advantage of Red Sox Nation fans long enough. Either we ante up or kiss them goodbye. Can Red Sox fans do that? If they don't, don't come complaining to me. You get what you deserve and you will pay dearly for your ballpark seats, too.

LEGAL NOTICE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court **Probate and Family Court** Middlesex Probate and Family Court 10-U Commerce Way Woburn, MA 01801 (781) 865-4000

> Docket No. MI21P1892EA CITATION ON PETITION FOR ALLOWANCE OF ACCOUNT

In the matter of SUSAN CAMPBELL BROWNSBERGER Also Known As SUSAN C. BROWNSBERGER

Date of Death: February 08, 2021

To all interested persons:

A Petition has been filed by Carl N. Brownsberger of Belmont, MA requesting allowance of the First and Final account(s) as Personal Representative and any other relief as requested in the Petition.

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 January 10, 2024.

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 date, action may be taken without further notice to you.

Witness, HON. TERRI L. KLUG CAFAZZO,

First Justice of this Court. Date: December 13, 2023

Tara E. DeCristofaro, Register of Probate

Run date: 12/29/2023

LEGAL NOTICE

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court Department MIDDLESEX, SS

Probate and Family Court Docket No. MI23E0036PP

To: John Conroy of Dracut, MA and Tim Conroy of Dracut, MA and to all other persons interested.

A petition has been presented to said Court by John Conroy of Dracut, MA representing that they hold as co-tenants in an undivided part or share of certain land lying in Dracut, in the County of Middlesex, and briefly described

146 Haverhill Street, Dracut, MA 01826

The land in Dracut, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, in that part thereof called "Ellsmere," being Lot 369 on a plan entitled "Plan of Building Lots in Dracut, Mass. belonging to the Syndicate Land Company, Samuel B. Wyman and George H. Taylor, Trustees" dated 1897, Smith & Brooks, C.E.'s, recorded with Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds, Book of Plans 13, Plan 1 and bounded and

Beginning on the Southwesterly corner of the premises at land of Thomas Fay; thence Southeasterly along said Fay land 46.8 feet; thence at right angles with said last mentioned land southerly 24.5 feet to Lot 368; thence Easterly 205.4 feet to Haverhill Street; thence Northerly along said street 200. feet to a stone bound point; thence running Northerly along Essex Street 640.55 feet to a stone bound point; thence 6.26 feet to a strip of land 1. foot wide, being reserved by the Syndicated Land Co.; thence Westerly 117.11 feet to land of said Fay; thence Southerly 775.02 feet to the point of beginning; containing according to said plan 124.813 square feet of land; be said contents and any or all of said measurements more or less and however otherwise said premises may be measured. bounded or described.

Being all and the same premises conveyed to the Grantors by deed of Mark D. Rutherford, Trustee of JMD, II Realty Trust dated September 25, 1998 and recorded with the Middlesex North District Registry of Deeds at Book 9609, Page 290.

Setting forth that the petitioner desires that all said land may be ordered to be sold at private sale for not less than (\$450,000.00) Four Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars, and praying that partition may be made of all the land aforesaid according to law, and to that end, that commissioner be appointed to make such partition and be ordered to make sale and conveyance of all, or any portion of said land which the Court finds cannot be advantageously divided, either at private sale or public auction, and be ordered to distribute and pay over the net proceeds thereof in such a manner as to make the partition just and equal.

If you desire to object thereto you or your attorney should file a written appearance and answer in said Court at Lowell before ten o'clock, on the 30th day of January 2024 the return date of this citation. Witness, Honorable Terri Klug-Cafazzo, Esquire, First Justice of said Court, this 19th Day of

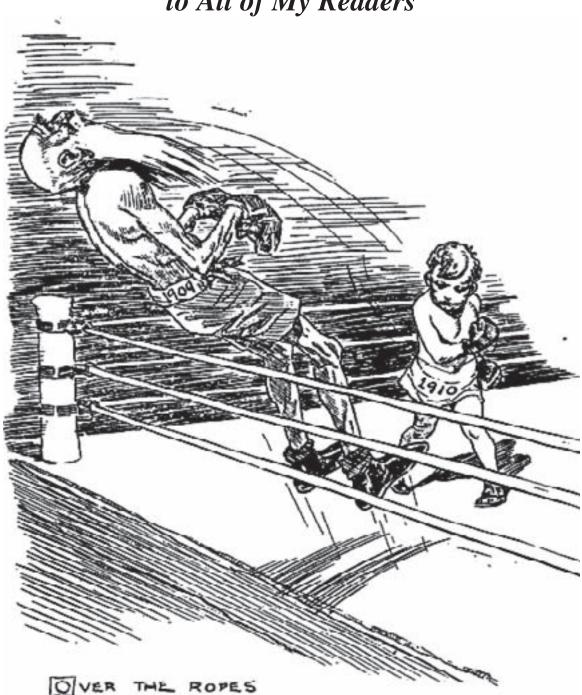
> Tara E. DeCristofaro. Register of Probate

Run dates: 12/22, 12/29, 2023 - 01/05/2024

Boxing Ringside WITH BOBBY FRANKLIN

Happy New Year

to All of My Readers



There is a tendency as one year comes to a close and a new year is about to begin to look back and say, "I'm sure glad that year is done with, it was awful." I guess it is just human nature. At least we take a positive outlook on the coming year. Just remember that despite all of the terrible news we are fed on a daily basis, we have it pretty darn good in this country. Never in human history has the standard of living come anywhere close to the heights we have achieved. And despite all of the negative things we hear and the bad people we are told about, the vast majority of our fellow citizens are good and decent people. Just think about you friends and neighbors. Even if they have traits you don't like and perhaps differ with your politically, I'm sure you trust them and know they would help you if needed.

As the New Year approaches don't give up on America. It always has been and will continue to be that Beacon of Hope for all people.

I wish you all many blessings in 2024, and don't forget to smile!



HOOPS and HOCKEY in the HUB



by Richard Preiss

There will be another first for women's athletics at the TD Garden in 2024.

Earlier it was announced that the final round of the Women's Beanpot will be held at the Garden on January 23. That is when the two victorious teams from the tournament's opening night on January 16 at campus sites will meet at the Garden for the title.

The two teams that lost on opening night will start the action with a consolation game late in the afternoon.

The next first for women's sports at the Garden will come on August 20 when the facility on Causeway Street hosts its first ever WNBA contest. And the game will be unique in more ways than one.

The matchup — between the Connecticut Sun and the Los Angeles Sparks — will come just days after the league resumes play after going on a multi-week shutdown so that the circuit's star players can participate in the 2024 Olympics in Paris.

The league's 26th season will start on May 14 and play until the shutdown begins in the middle of July.

On July 18 the league will pause for the Olympics, a break that will continue through August 14.

When Connecticut meets Los Angeles at the Garden, it will be the first game on the parquet floor since the final Celtics home game of the 2024 NBA playoffs — with, of course, a date and final outcome for the Celtics yet to be determined at this time as the calendar flips to a new year.

One of the objectives of the game is to widen the branding of the Connecticut Sun from a team representing just the Nutmeg State into one that is representing the entire region — New England's team in the WNBA, if you will.

"The Sun is New England's professional women's basket-ball team with passionate fans across the region," stated team president Jen Rizzotti in a press release.

"Hosting our game in Boston, a place full of such a rich, winning tradition for New England sports, just makes sense. Our vision is to provide access and exposure to the Connecticut Sun brand to thousands of sports fans, children and their families — and for young girls to see firsthand they can play at Boston's hallowed TD Garden."

Rizzotti also gave credit to Garden executives and the front office management of the Celtics for "sharing their world class fan experience playbook with us. We are proud to be New England's WNBA team and we can't wait to shine in Boston."

Connecticut is unusual in the WNBA in that it is the only team in the league never to share a market with an NBA team. The franchise was moved to Connecticut from Florida in 2002 based upon the popularity of the UConn women's basketball program. Indeed, over the years, a number of former UConn stars have played for the Sun.

Although this will be the WN-BA's 28th season it will be the 21st for the Sun. The team was founded as the Orlando Miracle. The franchise moved to Uncasville, CT — the site of the Mohegan Sun Casino — in 2003 and

immediately experienced success, winning consecutive conference titles in 2004 and 2005. It also won a conference title in 2022. The team has never won the overall WNBA Championship.

The matchup with the Los Angeles Sparks at the Garden is an attempt to build on the rivalry that has existed between the Celtics and the Lakers for decades. Whether a WNBA version will take hold or not is anyone's guess but be assured that the chant of "Beat L.A." will be heard on a night in late summer on Causeway Street for the first time.

In 2023, the Sun finished second in the Eastern Conference and third overall in the entire WNBA with a fine 27-13 record.

In contrast, the Sparks finished fourth in the Western Conference and ninth in the league overall with a 17-23 mark.

In the first round of the playoffs this fall, Connecticut downed the Minnesota Lynx 2-1 in a best-of-three series and then was defeated by the New York Liberty 3-1 in a best-of-five second round series. The Sparks did not make the 2023 playoffs.

Presiding over the Sun is head coach Stephanie White, who has been in her position with the Connecticut team for only a little over 13 months — since November 21, 2022.

In her first season this past summer, she piloted the Sun to the most victories (27) in franchise history. For her leadership she was named the Coach of the Year by both the league and the Associated Press. Her efforts culminated with the Sun making the playoffs for the seventh consecutive year and advancing to the league semifinals for the fifth consecutive postseason. A native of Indiana, she was a collegiate star at Purdue, leading the Boilermakers to the 1999 NCAA Championship while earning Big Ten Player of the Year honors as well as the Wade Trophy (best upper class women's Player of the Year) that same season.

In her four-year college career at Purdue she scored 2,182 points. She was inducted into the Purdue Athletics Hall of Fame in 2006.

After college she played in the WNBA for five seasons with Charlotte and Indiana and later served as an assistant coach at Toledo, Kansas State and Ball State as well as the head mentor at Vanderbilt. In the WNBA, she served as both an assistant coach and head coach with Indiana; she also was an assistant coach with Chicago.

So, this is something new for the Garden — women's professional basketball. But, of course, women have played there before. Remember, the NCAA Division One Women's Final Four was at the Garden in 2006 (won by the University of Maryland over Duke). High school girls' basketball playoff games have been played there while figure skating and gymnastics competitions also have been held there.

Thus, the WNBA game represents an expansion of athletic opportunities for female athletes at the Garden. We look forward to seeing additional opportunities offered there in a variety of sports as time goes on.